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PUBLIC LIBRARIES

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January/February 2003   **Vol. 42, No. 1**

READERS respond

Why I Don't Love the MLS

I would like to applaud Renée Vaillancourt for bringing up the issue of the excessiveness of the MLS in her September/October "Editor's Note" titled "Why Do You Love Your Job?" There are a lot of reasons why we love being librarians, but my number-one reason for hating it is that I went into debt getting an education that really has not benefited my job performance.

There is no "perhaps" in addressing this issue. In an effort to fight the low opinion of professional librarians held by even Dewey himself, the profession has gone to the opposite end of the spectrum by justifying their professional credentials through overeducation. What makes this an immediate problem is that most library schools are no longer even carrying a bachelor's program in library science. I find this to be, without question, the most serious problem facing libraries and librarians today because it strikes to the heart of who we are. Do you have any suggestions on how to address this issue?

The number-one reason for loving my job: it's the only profession offering a service guaranteed to improve your life.—*Gregory V. McClay, Systems Librarian, Billerica (Mass.) Public Library*

[Editor's Note: Readers are invited to respond directly to Gregory McClay at gmcclay@mailserv.mvlv.lib.ma.us.] ∎

Proposed Bylaws Change

At the 2002 ALA Annual Conference the Public Library Association (PLA) Board of Directors expressed interest in amending the PLA bylaws to include the PLA Representative to ALA Council as a member of the PLA Executive Committee. The PLA Executive Committee reviewed this request at their fall meeting, and voted to take the proposed bylaws amendment to the membership for a vote as part of the Spring 2003 ALA Election.

PLA is the only ALA division whose ALA Division Councilor is not a member of its Executive Committee. Amending the bylaws to make our councilor a permanent member of the PLA Executive Committee will help the councilor to better understand the philosophies that guide PLA and will enable the councilor to more successfully represent PLA at ALA Council sessions. If the PLA membership approves this amendment, the Executive Committee will increase by one voting member. The PLA Executive Committee will then consist of 6 voting members and one non-voting member, the PLA Executive Director.

The proposed change to the PLA Bylaws is underlined:

Article IV OFFICERS AND DUTIES, Sec. 3. The Executive Committee will consist of the president, vice-president, immediate past president, the chairs of the clusters, <u>and the PLA division councilor</u>. The Executive Director will serve as a non-voting member of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will have the authority to act for the Board of Directors between Board meetings.

Public Libraries encourages letters to the editor. Letters are used on a space-available basis and may be excerpted. Preference will be given to letters that address issues raised by the magazine. Acceptance is at the editor's discretion. Send to Renée Vaillancourt McGrath, 248A N. Higgins Ave. #145, Missoula, MT 59802; publiclibraries@aol.com.

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AccessAbilities

Renée Vaillancourt McGrath
Feature Editor

Several new books are encouraging parents to use American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate with their (hearing) children before they learn to speak. Although this technique wasn't around when I was young, I have been interested in ASL for as long as I can remember. As a child, I used to accompany the parent of one of my classmates to the Deaf club that met at her church. I later took a semester off from college to work with children in the deaf-blind program at Perkins School for the Blind (where Helen Keller met her teacher, Annie Sullivan). During my senior year of college, I took a year-long course in ASL and hired a Deaf tutor to help me maintain my skills after I graduated.

It wasn't until I took that class, taught by Julie White at Brown University, that I learned that ASL is a language of its own, with a grammatical structure that is different from spoken English. Deaf (and hearing) people who use ASL to communicate often consider themselves to be part of a distinct Deaf culture (capitalized, to distinguish it from physical hearing loss), which has its own customs, traditions, and stories.

In library school I continued my ASL training at Gallaudet Univerisity and became involved with the Friends of Libraries for Deaf Action (FOLDA), whose mission is to promote access to library resources for the Deaf community.[1] Having never heard English spoken, many people who are born deaf have difficulty learning to read, and some never master this skill, which could provide them with so much of the information that they are not able to receive through hearing. The article "Our Deaf Family Needs to Read, Too" by Rosa Rodriguez and Monica Reed in this issue describes one library's attempts to address this matter.

Since some Deaf people associate reading with failure, libraries will need to make an extra effort to attract this segment of the population. Other people with disabilities, including those with hearing loss that occurred later in life, may also be reluctant to use the library, unless they know that its resources will be made accessible to them. As a young librarian, I briefly worked in Boston Public Library's Access Center, serving people with disabilities. It was one of the most difficult jobs that I have ever had, since it required that I provide service to a population that I was not a part of.

Children's and young adult librarians face similar challenges in serving a population of which they are not a part, although they at least have the advantage of having once been a child or a teenager. Librarians whose primary responsibility is to work with people with disabilities or seniors need to be especially careful to involve their constituents in decision making about services in their libraries, especially if those librarians have not experienced the same type of challenges as the population that they serve. At least not yet . . .

As our population ages, thanks to advances in health care and medical technologies, more people will experience some form of disability at some point in their lives. Learning to provide effective library services to people with disabilities will not only ensure fair and equal access to all members of our communities, but may also help us learn to cope with our own inevitable challenges in life.

I am honored to have been invited to represent the library community, with my Deaf library colleague Alice L. Hagemeyer, at the World Federation of the Deaf in Montreal later this year. We will be spreading the word about "The Red Notebook," a resource to help Deaf patrons learn to use the library.[2] I am looking forward to meeting Deaf people from around the world and seeing the unique sign languages that they use to communicate in different countries. I have the feeling that in that setting, I will be the one with the disability.

A Word about Words

There appears to be a movement to put "people first" when talking about issues of disability. So it is generally considered more polite to refer to someone as a *person with a disability* rather than as a *disabled person*. That said, there are many people with disabilities who prefer other terms, such as *differabilities* and even some who are not opposed to the term *handicapped*.

The authors in this issue have the utmost respect for their patrons with disabilities. Several of the authors are people with disabilities themselves. For this reason, I have not standardized the way that disabilities and people with disabilities are referred to in this issue. I believe that the variety of ways of talking about these issues reflects the variety of personalities within the library and disability communities.

References and Notes

1. The FOLDA Web site is currently under construction. Contact Alice Hagemeyer at alicehagemeyer@aol.com for more information.
2. Alice L. Hagemeyer, "The Red Notebook" (Friends of Libraries for Deaf Action, 2002)

Written October 2002. Contact the feature editor at 248A N. Higgins Ave. #145, Missoula MT 59802; publiclibraries@aol.com.

Yesterday I Started a New Job

Jo Ann Pinder

Yesterday, I started a new job. I still work in the same place, for the same library system, but the appointment of a new library board member gives me the opportunity to begin anew. Recently he visited us for his first orientation session. Just as our new staff members receive more than forty hours of training during their first weeks on the job, the education of a board member begins before the first board meeting. On this first visit he picked up several notebooks full of budget and financial information, policies, the strategic plan, organizational charts, and the material management publications, which include the policy, the plan, weeding guidelines, and the procedure for reconsideration of materials. He toured headquarters, and each department director introduced the staff and gave a brief overview of the functions accomplished in the department. In the weeks to come, we will have three or four two-hour sessions focusing on the budget, the staff, the collection, and the board's role in each.

But our training of this or any board member won't stop with those sessions. The department directors and I prepare a report each month that keeps the board up-to-date on what is happening in our areas of responsibility. Every week clippings of the library's press coverage and any library handouts being distributed in the branches are mailed to the board. After our weekly Directors Administrative Council meeting, the question is asked "What did we discuss today of which we need to make the board aware? Any information that answers this question is then sent to them via e-mail.

Why do we spend so much time in the education of our board? Beside the obvious reason—because we work for them—it makes good sense. The more educated the library board is about practices, strengths, weaknesses, mission, vision, and structure, the better decisions they'll make concerning policy and budget issues. They are better able to handle the community's questions and concerns about the library. They are also better equipped to advocate for the library with elected officials and taxpayers.

Board education makes us better employees. Developing the training makes us concentrate on what the board needs to know and how best to present it. The training materials are reviewed to ensure they are current. And many times it gives just the push that is needed to finish a new brochure or other project that has spent too much time on a to-do list! Board training is a time when we account for why we do things. It makes us review current practice and consider if that practice makes sense. A well-placed question or comment from a new board member might give the answer to a much-discussed problem. So like any good training, the trainer learns from the trainee.

The library system for which I work will get three new board members in the next three months. Each orientation session will give staff an opportunity to experience again the thrill of explaining the role of the public library in the community and the way in which our library plays this role. And with each session we will learn something about our community from a new point of view. Each board member brings an opportunity to see the library from a different set of eyes, an opportunity to provide better public service, and an opportunity to reflect on how much fun working in a public library can be—where each day is different, and the job is always new. ■

on the AGENDA

2003

January 24–29
ALA Midwinter Meeting
Philadelphia

March 6–8
PLA Spring Symposium
Chicago

June 19–25
ALA Annual Conference
Toronto, Canada

2004

January 9–14
ALA Midwinter Meeting
San Diego, Calif.

February 24–28
PLA 2004 National Conference
Seattle

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Huh? What?

Interacting with Your Hard of Hearing Patrons

Janet McKenna

According to Self Help for Hard of Hearing People (SHHH), an educational and support group for people "who do not hear well," more than twenty-eight million Americans of all ages have imperfect hearing. More than one-third of seniors sixty-five and older have a significant hearing loss. One in eight baby boomers and more than twelve million people in the workplace between ages sixteen and sixty-four are hard of hearing.[1] Overwhelmingly, hard of hearing library patrons speak to communicate, eschewing sign language. Librarians can enhance their relationship with this clientele by adapting their means of speaking and changing the library just a bit to make it more accessible.

Q: How frequently do public library staff encounter patrons with hearing loss?

A: Probably every day, but they might not know it.

Who are these people and why should librarians be aware of them? What are common characteristics? How can library staff interact with hard of hearing patrons at the reference or circulation desk and in library programs so that the patrons can understand what is being said without embarrassing them? What resources exist about dealing with this communication disability second in prevalence only to arthritis?

As a profoundly hard of hearing librarian, I can corroborate that all but a tiny fraction of hearing-impaired individuals use speech to communicate. We interact with the hearing world and have little if any knowledge of sign language. Many grew up with normal hearing only to lose it gradually later in life. Some became profoundly hard of hearing within a short time span. Some have had slow, lifelong-progressive hearing losses.

We are everyone, any person seeking information on any topic in a public library—except that we cannot understand speech well.

Invisible Disability

Hearing loss is the invisible disability. Library staff generally cannot recognize hard of hearing patrons simply by looking at them. What hard of hearing patrons do understand, with or without hearing aids, is less than perfect. Speech and environmental sounds are not so much muffled as distorted. Listeners miss words and phrases, understanding only parts of sentences, and are always several seconds behind in any conversation, frequently oblivious to the point and responding inappropriately. Worse, we think we understand words but frequently receive a garbled transmission.

A patron who keeps nodding affirmatively and smiling but makes no comment or an inappropriate one (bluffing) may have a hearing loss. The individual may speak loudly or whisper, being unable to judge the volume of his or her own voice. Many hard of hearing people strongly resist telling you they can't hear or don't understand what is being said. They don't want to bother or make a fuss, or they think that their medical problems are not your business anyhow. It may be advisable to surreptitiously look for hearing aids.

Since these folks' best communication is visual, resorting to paper and pencil can clarify a reference interview—asking whether you can write it down is advisable. Sometimes moving to a quieter location will facilitate a dialogue. When I played this game I was relieved if an observant service person helpfully asked, "Do you have a hearing loss?" If your patron brushes you off with, "I can find it myself" when obviously lost, your best negotiating skills are called for. Walk them to the shelves and catalog. Repeat if necessary, using different words to say the same thing if the patron cannot understand.

Look at Me

Hard of hearing people tend to supplement what they hear (or think they hear) with speechreading, combining sounds they understand with deciphering or decoding what they visualize on a speaker's lips and face as talk is produced to fill in the gaps. Unfortunately not all speech components can be visualized. Also some (*b*, *p*, and *m*) look identical on the lips. Speechreading can be difficult, especially when the librarian is at the computer, in a noisy circulation area, in a group, or at a

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Some Hearing Loss Organizations

Self Help for Hard of Hearing People
    2610 Woodmont Ave., Ste. 1200
    Bethesda, MD 20897
    www.shhh.org
League for the Hard of Hearing
    71 W. 23 St.
    New York, NY 10010
    www.lhh.org
American Speech Language Hearing Association
    1080 Rockville Pike
    Rockville, MD 20852
    www.asha.org
Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
    3417 Volta Pl.
    Washington, DC 20007
    www.agbell.org
Cochlear Implant Association
    5335 Wisconsin Ave. NW
    Washington, DC 20015
    www.cici.org

Resources on Hearing Loss

Biderman, Beverly. *Wired for Sound: A Journey into Hearing* (Toronto: Trifolium, 1998). A Canadian woman with a genetic hearing loss since childhood learns how to hear with a cochlear implant. Essential purchase, an ALA book of the year.

Burkey, John M. et al. *Hearing Better: Understanding Your Hearing and Ear Care Options* (Parkland, Fla.: Universal Publishers/Publish.com, 1999). Medical solutions to a variety of hearing disorders are discussed, with hearing aids, assistive devices, or cochlear implants recommended when medicine is ineffective. Check your insurance coverage first, suggest the authors.

Carmen, Richard, ed. *Consumer Handbook on Hearing Loss and Hearing Aids* (Sedona, Ariz.: Auricle Ink, 1998). Hearing aids can help most people with hearing loss, say the contributors, who provide voluminous information about fitting and maintenance. Also included are chapters on assistive listening devices and ways to improve listening.

Come Hear with Me (New York: League for the Hard of Hearing, 1998). Video. New technology has created a plethora of assistive listening devices to help with telephoning, warning, understanding at meetings, and coping with the sounds of daily life. Essential purchase.

Dugan, Marcia. *Keys to Living with Hearing Loss,* rev. ed. (Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet, 2003). The hard of hearing author leads beginners from early signs of deafness through coping with their new hearing aids in hospitals, theaters, and on the job. The contents of the ADA are stressed. Essential purchase.

Harvey, Michael A. *Odyssey of Hearing Loss* (San Diego: Dawn Sign Pr., 1998). Case histories of acquired hearing losses and their effects on clients of a hearing psychologist. Many useful quotes.

Harvey, Michael A. *Listening with the Heart* (San Diego: Dawn Sign Pr., 2001). More cases of how psychological, social, and spiritual influences shape one's experience of hearing loss, affecting not only the individual but also his or her family and associates.

Koop, C. Everett. *Getting the Most from Your Hearing Aids* (Burke, Va.: CDR Production, 1994). Video. Hearing aid wearer Koop uses real situations to demonstrate the frustrations of hearing loss and the benefits, imperfections, and care of hearing aids. Open captioned. Essential purchase.

Myers, David G. *Quiet World: Living with Hearing Loss* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Pr., 2000). A psychologist and professor's journal accurately portrays the frustration and embarrassment of descent into deafness, from missing sounds, answering inappropriately, and finally obtaining a hearing aid.

"One Voice: Hearing Accessibility Handbook: A Guide for Congregations" (Rochester, N.Y.: Rochester SHHH, 2002). A free pamphlet addressed to houses of worship to "bring together the most useful and cost effective information . . . regarding . . . assistive listening systems and how congregations can better respond to the needs of hard of hearing people." Useful for any organization with a meeting room. For more information contact Joan Ewing at jewing1@rochester.rr.com.

Pope, Ann. *Hear: Solutions, Skills, and Sources for People with Hearing Loss* (New York: DK Publ., 1997). Illustrations, quotes, questionnaires, and sidebars show the mechanisms of hearing and sound. Valuable for suggestions on coping strategies and assistive listening devices.

Romoff, Arlene. *Hear Again: Back to Life with a Cochlear Implant* (New York, League for the Hard of Hearing, 1999). Cochlear implantee Romoff's year-long journal originally appeared online on an electronic discussion list, describing how she re-experienced sounds, speech, and music after a long-term progressive hearing loss. Unlike Biderman, above, Romoff enjoyed normal hearing until her twenties and provides a slightly different perspective.

Staab, Wayne J. *Hearing Aids: A User's Guide,* 2nd ed. (Phoenix, Ariz.: Wayne J. Staab, 1999). Excellent charts and training tips encourage the hearing aid consumer to accept that the sooner hearing loss is admitted and remedied, the better for themselves and their associates.

Stenross, Barbara. *Missed Connections: Hard of Hearing in a Hearing World* (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Pr., 1999). The author uses "going to the meeting" of Self Help for Hard of Hearing to present situations, problems, and technology in social situations, within the family or at work.

Turkington, Carol, and Allen E. Sussman. *Living with Hearing Loss* (New York: Checkmark Books, 2000). Crammed with information on hearing loss in adults and children, hearing aids, and assistive devices. One-hundred and eighty pages of entries define organizations, terms, famous people either deaf (e.g., Beethoven) or working with the deaf (e.g., Gallaudet). A long list of organizations includes contact information.

Vernon, Jack A., and Barbara Tabachnick Sanders. *Tinnitus: Questions and Answers* (Needham Heights, Mass.: Allyn and Bacon, 2001). Answers to patients' questions about the "ringing, hissing, buzzing, chirping, or other noise heard in the head" and only perceived by the person with the disorder.

Wayner, Donna S. *Hear What You've Been Missing: How to Cope with Hearing Loss* (New York: Wiley, 1998). Question and answer format targeted to the beginner. Useful black-and-white drawings, information on assistive listening devices, glossary of terms.

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library program. Droopy moustaches covering the mouth also impede communication.

Good communication is eye to eye, face to face. If your hearing-challenged patrons cannot see your face, they will probably miss or misunderstand much of what you say as you try to assist them. Look at them. Stand up from behind your desk so you are at face level. Do not shout, but slow your speech down a bit. Speak distinctly; it is not necessary to ex-ag-ger-ate because that destroys the rhythm of sentences. Hard of hearing people constantly complain of well-meaning personnel

who begin a sentence distinctly only to speed up and drop their voices by the end.

Ambient noise is deadly for hard of hearing people because it masks speech sounds. Unlike the wonders of real ears, most hearing aids amplify all sounds. Instead of filtering out unimportant background noise, they make all of it loud and thus less comprehensible than ever.

Hearing Aid? Maybe

Unfortunately not all hard of hearing people use or can benefit from hearing aids. According to SHHH, five to nine years is a typical span for late-deafened adults to realize, admit, and do something about their hearing loss.[2] Why so long? In most cases acquired hearing loss is sneaky and gradual. Can it be? Am I imagining things? Why is it I can understand some things

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Communication is a two-way process. If one participant hears badly, part of the process is ineffective. Hearing loss can be isolating for hearing-impaired persons and frustrating for them and their friends, families, and coworkers.

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some times and not others? Understand some people and not others? Also, hearing aids are expensive, rarely covered by insurance, take some dexterity to manipulate, and require time in which to acclimate. In addition, the idea of dropping into the "disabled" category can be psychologically devastating.

Communication is a two-way process. If one participant hears badly, part of the process is ineffective. Hearing loss can be isolating for hearing-impaired persons and frustrating for them and their friends, families, and coworkers.

Not until I was loaned a textbook for audiologists in the 1980s did I realize that feelings of grief over my hearing loss were normal, common, and nothing to be ashamed of. Only recently have hard of hearing authors written books about their own experiences. The newly diagnosed or person with suspected hearing loss can benefit enormously from books and videos produced by those who have been there, done that (see the resource list on previous page for some suggested titles).

What might a suspected or newly diagnosed hard of hearing individual, family member, or spouse want to know? As with any medical condition, they need to know what questions to ask a doctor or audiologist. How is hearing evaluated? Can hearing loss be helped? What kinds of hearing aids are available? Many people only know what their grandparents used. Where do I buy one? How much does it cost? Will it enable me to understand at the movies, watching television, in restau-

rants, at work, in places of worship? Suppose my disability gets worse? Where can I talk to others with the same condition?

Finding Information

Look for resources under "hearing disorders," "hearing loss" or "cochlear implants." Sometimes titles are classified under "deaf" or "deafness." Books or videos on sign language are not relevant for hard of hearing people who do not communicate in sign language and typically do not consider themselves part of the culturally deaf community.

Technology has exploded for the benefit of people with hearing loss since the mid-1990s. Older books and pamphlets should be treated as any other noncurrent medical information in a fast-changing field—they should not be occupying shelf space and possibly misleading readers. A thorough weeding of your collection may be appropriate. One new development is the cochlear implant, a device that directly stimulates the auditory nerve, bypassing a badly functioning inner ear. Any library resource on hearing loss omitting mention of cochlear implants should be discarded.

Pamphlets are inexpensive, timely sources of information. That infinite resource, the Internet, has dozens of sites on hearing loss for the computer-literate. A volume control to increase loudness should be a part of the library pay telephone.

Patrons who cannot understand live speech also cannot understand videos and DVDs. Your audiovisual collection should feature closed-captioned titles. This enhancement looks like subtitles and can be viewed easily on televisions manufactured since 1993. The captioning feature can be turned on by people who want to use it, but the same videos can be viewed without captions for those who don't need them. The captioning symbol, a little box with a tail in one corner—or "cc"—should appear on the label.

Any speaker in all but the tiniest room should use a microphone. An assistive listening system, like those used in theaters, makes programs easier to understand. People with hearing loss are covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Do not let a speaker say, "I don't need to use the microphone, everyone can hear me, right?"

Because their disability makes participation in crowd events difficult, hard of hearing people can be your most faithful clients. They read. And they will be grateful for a librarian who makes the effort to communicate with them. ■

Janet McKenna is the Local History Librarian at the North Tonawanda Public Library in New York; jmckenna@ntonawanda. lib.ny.us.

References

1. Self-Help for Hard of Hearing People, "Take Care of Your Ears: They Connect You to the World" and "Questions and Answers on Hearing Loss"(Washington, D.C.: Self-Help for Hard of Hearing People).
2. Marcia B. Dugan, *Keys to Living with Hearing Loss* (Hauppauge, N.Y.: Barrons, 1997).

TTY Information and Communication Access for Libraries

People in Baltimore County, Maryland, who are deaf or have speech disabilities can now call directly to a library staffer by using Baltimore County Public Library's (BCPL) newly installed communication system, teletypewriter (TTY) information and communication access for libraries (TICAL). When customers dial the special TICAL number ([410] 821-5705) on their TTY or computer modem, they can communicate with their choice of BCPL's sixteen libraries and administrative offices to obtain the information they need.

TICAL consists of a client/server software program and accompanying hardware made by NXI Communications, distributed locally by TeleSonic, and installed on the library system's internal computer network. By using one of the computers equipped with TICAL, library staff can communicate to obtain information at different branches as well as place calls to deaf customers and those with speech disabilities without using a TTY. The program provides the same links for any library employee who is deaf or who may have a speech disability. The installa-

tion of TICAL adds to the specialized equipment and materials BCPL provides for its customers, who may have previously found limited opportunity to access regular resources.

For further information, call (410) 887-6196 or visit bcplonline.org.

NLS Announces Two Telecommunications Initiatives Available to the Blind

The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) in the Library of Congress announced its collaboration with NFB-NEWSLINE and Bookshare.org, two telecommunications technology initiatives that will benefit eligible blind and physically handicapped readers.

NFB-NEWSLINE, a service of the National Federation of the Blind (NFB), provides audio versions of daily newspapers through a toll-free telephone number available 24/7 and free to anyone in the United States who is eligible to receive services from NLS. Daily newspapers provided on NFB-NEWSLINE include *USA Today, Chicago Tribune, New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times,* and *Wall Street Journal.* The goal of

NFB-NEWSLINE is to provide at least two newspapers from each state.

Bookshare.org, an online Web service, allows individuals to download more than eight thousand books in Braille. It also provides the capability to listen to books with the aid of synthetic speech software.

For more information about NFB-NEWSLINE, see www.nfb.org or call (410) 659-9314. For more information about Bookshare.org., see www.benetech.org or call (650) 475-5440. A demonstration of the service can been seen at www.bookshare.org/demo.

Kids Share Love of Reading as Neighborhood Book Buddies

"Book Buddies is about big kids helping little kids to read," explained Williamsburg Regional Library bookmobile patron Dominique Gray at a recent awards ceremony honoring her neighborhood's Book Buddies participants. The program began to take shape during one of the bookmobile's regular visits to the Burnt Ordinary apartments in Toano, Virginia, as bookmobile director Eletha Davis explained at the National Education Association's (NEA) Read Across America event.

Read Across America is an annual reading motivation and awareness program that calls for every child in every community to celebrate reading on or around Dr. Seuss's March 2 birthday. The neighborhood kids were enthusiastic about celebrating not only Seuss's birthday but also promising to read thirty minutes a day throughout the entire month of March. Five-year-old Troy James expressed his concern that the younger children in the neighborhood couldn't partici-

Bookmobile director Eletha Davis with Book Buddies founder JoDarah Prescott and her book buddy Troy James.

pate if they didn't read as well as the older kids. JoDarah Prescott responded by offering to read to Troy on the bus. "I'll be your buddy," she said, and the Book Buddies program was born.

JoDarah, an intelligent and thoughtful eleven-year-old, mainly helps Troy read his homework books and materials. She thinks the Book Buddies program is important because it helps keep kids away from violence. On helping neighborhood kids, she says, "People read to us when we were little, so we should read to them." She hopes to work for the Williamsburg Regional bookmobile someday.

"Now I know more words," Troy says about Book Buddies. "It helps me in school, and it's fun." Troy's mother, Leslie James, agreed. In just a few months, she has seen his reading skills improve and says Troy recognizes a lot more words as a result of JoDarah's help.

As the Book Buddies program has grown, seventeen pairs of children are now involved, improving their literacy skills and motivating others to read. It has also been started in other communities that the bookmobile visits.

"Book Buddies provided us with the perfect opportunity to get children excited

about reading, improve their literary skills, and build their civic capabilities through community service," says Davis. "It's really exciting to see the children so enthusiastic about reading." Through the leadership and example of Davis and her bookmobile staff, Book Buddies emerged from the minds of local children. "The old Chinese proverb, 'Tell me and I will forget, show me and I may remember, involve me and I will understand,' is proven true by Book Buddies," she says.

NEA and Youth Service America have recognized the bookmobile's Book Buddies program with a grant of $200, one of the thirteen Youth Leaders for Literacy programs chosen as winners nationwide.

For more information about the winning programs, see NEA's Web site at www.nea.org/readacross/pressroom/youthleaders02pr.html.

Southeast Michigan Libraries Go the Extra MILE

Libraries in southeast Michigan have created a network that provides one-stop shopping for library patrons. The Michigan Library Exchange (MILE) makes it easy to browse Michigan's largest library collection and request books online anywhere, anytime. The new electronic service uses the Internet to connect more than 120 libraries and branches in southeast Michigan. Hopefully, this will become a model for a statewide project to link all of Michigan's library collections.

Using specific telecommunications and information protocols that allow for communication between library systems, MILE provides a virtual regional library holdings catalog on the Web, allows people to directly request books owned by other libraries, and provides delivery of requested books to people at their home library. Up until now libraries have used a traditional interlibrary loan system, which is staff intensive and subject to delays. This new model allows the library patron to identify and request the books they want directly. Participating libraries use software to allow their local automation systems to interact with each other by placing the request, alerting the owning library to send the book, and, if the patron wishes, alerting the patron via e-mail when the book has arrived.

"Improving service, increasing efficiency, and lowering costs are major undertakings in any project. In this demonstration project we believe we can do all three simultaneously," said MILE Steering Committee chair Louise Bugg. For more information, contact Bugg at (313) 577-4058.

Radio Eye Highlights New Lineup on Library Channel 20

Visually impaired Lexington (Ky.) residents can now hear the local newspaper read from 8 to 10 A.M. Monday through Friday on the Lexington Public Library's cable channel. The broadcast began last spring on library cable channel 20, in conjunction with Central Kentucky Radio Eye (CKRE), a nonprofit reading service for the visually impaired.

The broadcast expands the accessibility the visually impaired have to the CKRE broadcasts, which in the past could only be picked up by those who have a special receiver. CKRE airs a com-

Highlands Ranch Lions Club members test the Open Book software and scanner package donated by the club to the Highlands Ranch Library.

plete schedule of readings from newspaper and magazines, but is beginning on channel 20 with one of its most popular segments—the *Lexington Herald-Leader*.

For more information, visit www.lexpublib.org.

Lions Donate Open Book Software

The Highlands Ranch Lions Club recently donated Open Book software to the Highlands Ranch Library in Douglas County, Colorado. The software is designed for readers who are blind or have another visual impairment, including dyslexia.

Open Book software converts a printed page into electronic text that can be read aloud through the software's included voice synthesizer and shown on a customizable screen display by simply scanning the printed text. The program also converts text that is embedded in graphics for unbeatable accessibility. There are user-defined settings for magnification, character spacing, color, and contrast as well as exclusive reading enhancement features that are easy to use and flexible for both novice and advanced users.

For more information, please contact the Highlands Ranch Library at (303) 791-7703.

Information Brochures in Multiple Languages

At the King County Library System in Issaquah, Washington, there is now information about library services available in seven different languages: Hmong, Punjabi, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese.

Easy-to-read "Welcome to Your Library" brochures provide straightforward information about book discussion groups, workshops, using computers, available programs, and more. The brochures are also available on audiocassette so patrons can listen to the information in their native language. These translations were developed as part of a special grant through the Puget Sound Educational Services District and the King County Library System.

For more information, visit www.kcls.org. ■

Disabilities in the Library

Nann Blaine Hilyard

Organizing information and making it available are what libraries are all about. Every librarian I know sincerely wants to serve everyone in the community. How can we make accommodation for people with disabilities without diminishing services to the rest of our patrons?

For this edition of "Perspectives," we invited essays on any aspect of disabilities and library services. The contributions reflect those diverse topics. One librarian with a disability writes about its effect on how she does her job. A library director tells us about the decision to hire a librarian with a disability and its positive impact on the entire library. Library outreach services benefit the homebound patron who receives them and the library staff members who provide them. Libraries in two very different communities remodeled their facilities to provide access; they added adaptive equipment for the new patrons drawn in by the remodeling. Adapting the audio in AV for the deaf and hearing impaired began as one library's project and has been taken up by others.

From the Librarian's Perspective

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When a patron calls West Regional Library (WRL) in Plantation, Florida, part of the Broward County Libraries, a librarian with a unique but clear speech pattern may answer. The librarian may also ask a patron to write down a call number because her handwriting is not clear. When assisting a person, this librarian may use a trackball or a mouse with two hands.

I am that librarian. I was born with cerebral palsy, nonprogressive brain damage that affects my speech, fine motor ability, and balance. I need to use a railing to descend stairs, yet I walk too fast for my patrons when taking them to the shelves. I graduated with my MLS in August 2001 from Emporia (Kans.) State University. As I started to job hunt, I received conflicting messages about whether or not to tell potential employers about my disability. Faculty at my school said it would be fine to tell employers, but human resource staff from a library

system said not to mention my disability. Since I was applying nationwide and had several phone interviews, I decided to briefly explain my cerebral palsy at the beginning of each interview and invite my interviewers to ask me to repeat anything they did not understand. No one asked me to repeat. I had four phone interviews and visited two library systems. I chose to move to Plantation and started in October at WRL. After I accepted the position, I e-mailed my supervisor that I had cerebral palsy. I said that I would need to do all written work on a computer and that I needed a trackball instead of a mouse to access the computer and a headphone set to take phone calls (I later found it was not useful). When I started, the trackball and headphone set were available.

My coworkers at WRL welcomed me and taught me what I needed to know as a new employee. At the library we always have two librarians working at the reference desk, so it is easy to share tasks. When a patron needs help with feeding microfilm into the reader or replacing a typewriter ribbon, I may take a phone call or help a patron locate a book while another librarian does the task, which is difficult for me.

One of my concerns when I started was how I would do at the reference desk during busy times. On Sundays during the school year, reference librarians may answer two- to three-hundred questions in a four-hour period. We often have three or four librarians working at the desk. I worked every other Sunday for most of my first year and, while I felt harried, I assisted many patrons. When I started, I worried that my speech might not be clear enough or that my reduced typing speed might reduce my effectiveness. I have grown to be very comfortable at the reference desk, and my supervisor says I do fine. Infrequently I have a patron who thinks I am deaf or asks me to repeat. When I am off the desk, I create consumer health guides for different medical conditions, teach basic computer classes, do collection development, and create readers' advisory lists.

I enjoy my position and its variety of tasks. With minor adaptations, I am an effective reference librarian. I look forward to expanding my abilities and to welcoming patrons with my unique speech pattern.

Giving Someone a Chance

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A dozen years ago, the Merri-Hill-Rock co-op, a group of libraries in Merrimack, Hillsborough, and Rockingham counties in New Hampshire, hosted a program featuring a deaf woman discussing employees with disabilities. Shortly after that, our cataloger resigned when her husband got a job transfer. We put our job ad out, and as coincidences happen, one of the two applicants was a deaf woman, a graduate of Gallaudet University with an MLS from the University of Maryland.

I reasoned that if this person could graduate with an MLS from a hearing library school, she could make it in our library as the cataloger. The board was apprehensive and even expressed concern about having a sign language interpreter for the interview. Kathy passed the interview with flying colors,

and we found we could communicate by writing (this was long before e-mail).

We prepared for the first staff meeting by lining up another sign language interpreter. The staff was mesmerized. Although Kathy appreciated having the interpreter at the meeting, she realized that most of what we discussed was public service information. She wrote me that she thought we could dispense with the interpreter and I could just give her the meeting notes, which I always prepared afterward anyway.

The staff quickly grew to love Kathy, and to learn a few signs themselves. She was delighted to have a chance to work full-time in her chosen profession. Thanks to all of the online cataloging available, and getting a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), she was able to succeed in our library.

An added bonus was that when deaf patrons came in, Kathy assisted at the desk. She was pleased to use her skills and do different library work, if only for a few minutes now and then.

Outreach Services in Fargo

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The Fargo Public Library (FPL) began a formal outreach program to homebound people with disabilities in the late 1980s. Since then the program has made a significant difference in the lives of many library patrons.

J. C.'s story is typical of the patrons in our program. She has a rare disease that causes broken bones that must be treated with hospital stays. Yet she lives in her own home with the help of caregivers. She is always delighted to have a visit from the outreach service. I met J. C. several years ago. She grew up in Fargo, but like many people, her working years were spent out of state. Her career began on Wall Street and continued at the World Bank in Washington, D. C. She remembers fondly her childhood home and using Fargo's Carnegie library at an early age. She credits her North Dakota background with her ability to adapt and overcome life's challenges in all the places she has lived.

Her initial requests for outreach service included Value Line and information regarding specific stocks. Among other library services that J. C. requests are copies of editorials, profiles and numbers for national companies, definitions of terms, and book requests for detailed financial materials, which are filled by interlibrary loan.

J. C. calls FPL's outreach service "a miracle from heaven." She goes on to say, "The library is the cultural center of the community, with valuable resources, audio books, and talking books that are read by gifted readers." J. C. is a goodwill ambassador for the library and constant advocate who praises the staff members, writes letters to the local newspaper, and enlightens others in our community about the services of the library.

Our outreach service touches lives in many ways. Obviously patrons benefit from receiving library materials. The library benefits from the goodwill. And we, the staff, benefit from being allowed into the personal world of people with so much to teach us and so many stories to tell.

What's New @ Our Library: Adaptive Technology

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The Newburyport Public Library (NPL) has made fully accessible library services and programs a priority. In 2001 our historic library building (built in 1771) was renovated and expanded to ensure barrier-free access that is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In 2002, with Library Services and Technology (LSTA) grant funding administered by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, the library was able to provide assistive computer hardware and software for visually impaired and blind users who require specialized library services.

Our library is older than the nation. Located in an historic seaside community, NPL serves a population of between 16,000 and 16,700. Although the city's economic base has transitioned from clipper ships to textiles to shoes, and now to tourism and light industry, this population figure has remained stable for decades, if not centuries.

City ordinances mandate that it is a function of the public library to provide professional and broad-based services to all Newburyport citizens; the library's mission advises that no citizen should be unserved or underserved by the library. We offer a forum for ideas in a variety of formats and technologies. For many people with disabilities, the personal computer can be a most liberating and enabling technology.[1]

Our library was one of four in the state to receive a two-year, $20,000 Serving People with Disabilities grant. As part of the grant application, we conducted a citywide user needs assessment survey. We updated the library's long-range plan to reflect our commitment to "improving, facilitating, and expanding access to resources and information for persons with disabilities."[2]

In response to the survey, and to obtain further information on the particular needs of persons with disabilities within Newburyport and surrounding communities, the library partnered with local agencies, including the Council on Aging, the Pentucket Area Early Intervention Program, and the Newburyport Emergency Management Association as well as the city's ADA coordinator. Informed individuals also offered valuable observations, support, and hard data. It was estimated that approximately 1,850 citizens within the greater Newburyport library community, both consumers and caregivers, could eventually benefit from adaptive technology, alternative format materials, and other assistive devices.

First-year funding was allocated for the purchase of two fully networked Pentium IV computer workstations with scanners attached and loaded with the OpenBook scanning software text reader, which reads text aloud. Each workstation also has the MAGic screen magnification program and the JAWS synthesized speech program, which can read anything aloud, allowing patrons to receive and send e-mail, scan headlines of daily newspapers, and visit Web sites. The adaptive computers have large print keyboards and nineteen-inch monitors. The workstations have both speakers and headphones, and print jobs spool to a networked printer within the library's technology

center. We have found that equipment placed within a common, shared library service area or department provides and promotes inclusion of persons and programs and is critical to adaptive service success, both practically and philosophically. The library has also purchased a video magnifier (CCTV) with a portable, height-adjustable table that resides in the library's reading room as well as additional audiobooks, audio described and closed-captioned videos, and large print reference materials.

Adaptive technology at NPL was heralded with a celebratory open house in the library's program room on a spring afternoon in 2002. A representative from the board of library commissioners and members of Adaptive Technology Consulting, which was an invaluable advisor to this project, were on hand with library staff members to greet interested persons and invited guests and to show off the library's new equipment and materials.

To date, largely as a result of several highly descriptive *Newburyport Daily News* feature articles written by an attendee at the open house, a dozen individuals, eighteen nursing home residents, and two representatives from other Massachusetts public libraries have either made inquiries or scheduled training time. We have begun to record patron training and equipment use statistics. So far, the program has been terrifically well received.

The library's Web site, www.newburyportpl.org, has been updated by adding a Services for People with Disabilities page, which more accurately reflects NPL's inclusive philosophy, describes library and consortium services in general, and links to programs for the underserved specifically.

In *Our Singular Strengths,* Michael Gorman has recreated Ranganathan's "Five Laws of Librarianship" to reflect contemporary library philosophy:

- Libraries serve humanity.
- Respect all forms by which knowledge is communicated.
- Use technology intelligently to enhance service.
- Protect free access to knowledge.
- Honor the past and create the future.[3]

By turning to technology to aid visually impaired patrons, NPL is making a trip to the library more rewarding for many area residents.

[Feature Editor's Note: For more information about the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners grants for serving people with disabilities, see the feature article "Nothing about Me without Me: Planning Library Services for People with Disabilities" by Shelley Quezada in this issue.]

Challenge Your Library to Serve Challenged Individuals

Marsha Werle
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Libraries must meet the challenge of serving all patrons in their community, including people with disabilities. It is shameful that it has to take a law to get businesses, schools, and libraries to comply with standards of excellence for those with disabilities. However, law can give librarians a tool to bring to our library boards to promote change through remodeling, materials, equipment, signage, and attitude.

The staff and board of trustees of the Emmett (Idaho) Public Library (EPL) were prompted to imagine we were confined to a wheelchair and had to answer nature's call, immediately, but there were no facilities specially equipped for our needs. If that is not a stressful enough situation, we imagined ourselves blind, needing reference information, and in unfamiliar surroundings. Then, we imagined having attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, Down Syndrome, autism, or Tourette's Syndrome. Would we feel welcome at our library? Would we feel welcome anywhere? Would we even leave home?

Our city-operated library was constructed in 1972. As is true of most small libraries, it has always been short of funds to meet the needs of all its patrons. The staff and board of trustees wanted to do something to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) signed into law on July 26, 1990. There were arguments that our library was built before any of these requirements were issued. Did that point help challenged members of our community? No.

Throughout the first part of the 1990s, we asked ourselves what we could do with little or no money. It was a slow process, but we gradually began accomplishing things.

We were fortunate that the original architect made the single-story building accessible all the way from the parking lots. We asked the City of Emmett to paint handicapped parking spaces in our two parking lots. This was done for free.

We installed an inexpensive, battery-operated doorbell on our front door for those who need assistance in opening doors. Grants and donations provided money to accomplish several projects. Our swinging front doors were hard to pull open, so we put in new, easy-opening arms. This unit was expensive, but the doors now open with light pressure.

We replaced doorknob handles throughout the library with lever handles. The locksmith was able to obtain used commercial handles at about half the cost of new.

One of our former library board members worked for a nursing home. She brought a large wheelchair into the library and we tested the library entrance, aisles between the book stacks, doorways, and bathrooms. Our doors all passed and there was only one questionable aisle. The staff and public bathrooms were unusable, however. The doors would not even close. We asked the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to send someone to our library to do a survey. The surveyor's recommendations included adding international access sign symbols and Braille imprints and remodeling the bathrooms for handicapped access. In addition, we needed to improve the height of bars, dispensers, mirrors, stools, and sinks in the bathrooms to meet ADA standards. He advised us that electric wheelchairs required the most room to maneuver. We spent two years consulting architects. We were puzzled about whether to remodel the old bathrooms or build new ones. We also had to decide whether to add on to the building or work in our existing space.

The deadline for meeting ADA standards came and went. All we could do was to report our efforts. This we did. Once a decision had been made to solve our problem, it took three years of concentrated fund-raising and grant writing to produce two new ADA-compliant bathrooms in our existing conference room by the year 2000.

We purchased an adjustable table on wheels and put it at wheelchair height so patrons with disabilities could fill out

library cards, do research, and so forth. Our patrons have free use of large print software and Internet services on four out of eight public computer stations. The other four free stations will have that ability when we upgrade the software.

Two members of our community passed away and left the library Optelec 20/20 and Aladdin TeleSensory machines, which magnify images from such items as printed materials, prescription bottles, checkbooks, and photographs. The two machines are available to all patrons. When we had to replace our old water fountain, we made certain that the new one was handicapped accessible.

For more than twenty-five years, we have kept our vision-impaired patrons in mind. In addition to our growing large-print collection, we receive a borrowed large-print collection from the Idaho State Library (ISL), which is located in Boise, about forty miles away. A patron voluntarily goes to the state library every three months to borrow fifty large-print books for the library, hauling them all herself. She says that way she can be assured of having sufficient material she likes to read. She always honors the requests of other patrons. Before she volunteered, the librarians replenished the borrowed collection from the state library. The Friends of the Library have given continued support by providing subscriptions of large-print books for the patrons in addition to the books the library purchases in this category. Several grants have added materials to the area.

We have increased our audiotape collection for both blind and sighted patrons. We participate in a consortium of libraries in the area that trades about sixty tapes every two months. This gives our patrons an even larger selection than our own from which to choose. Ever since ISL began offering its collection of audio tapes and special tape machines to the blind and handicapped, the library staff has encouraged and instructed patrons in need of this service on how to access it.

For the last two years, EPL has worked with Community Partnerships (CP), a private business that provides developmental therapy for individuals with disabilities. CP brings clients of various ages to the library daily to use community resources to teach their clients how to live effectively. Clients use the library conference room to eat lunch and work. The rest of the library is used to do research, practice living skills, and access the computers. CP raised half of the money, and the library chipped in the other half, to purchase two independent-living software programs with sufficient licensing for the library computers. These two programs provide lessons such as using money, shopping, and using the telephone for users with various levels of learning. We installed both programs on all of our public computers. They are currently being used by CP clients and by other children, teens, and adults who wish to learn basic living skills.

International symbol of access signs with Braille imprints now hang on the library walls. Consider simplified signs for your library that feature large print and pictures not only for the vision-impaired but for illiterate patrons wishing to learn to read. Display signs that show the librarians' willingness to help and that encourage all patrons to ask for help.

Ten years ago, we had an average of two wheelchairs enter the library each year. Today, at least one enters daily, and several others frequent our establishment. Every time a challenged person thanks our staff for having an accessible bathroom, a really cool software program, or a good selection of books, we feel a sense of accomplishment to have made it all available.

Many of us take our freedom of movement and thought for granted. Those who are challenged every day of their lives need to be given the consideration of others. If your library does not instigate the changes needed to provide that consideration, who will?

Signs of Success: ASL Access Opens the Door between Deaf and Hearing

Kathleen Kelly MacMillan
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Imagine a place where a deaf child, a hearing parent, a sign language interpreter, a public school teacher, a deaf adult, and a hearing child who's having trouble with reading could all find the resources they need. Where is that place? The public library—or it can be, thanks to the ASL Access video collection.

ASL Access, founded by Christine Wixtrom of Alexandria, Virginia, is a nonprofit, volunteer-run organization that provides public libraries with American Sign Language (ASL) resources. It serves as a link between video distributors and librarians, harnessing the knowledge of countless deaf and hard-of-hearing advisors as well as teachers of the deaf, librarians, and sign language instructors to select quality sign language videotapes for the collection.

The ASL Access video collection includes more than two hundred videos covering everything from children's stories told in ASL, to Deaf culture, to ASL instruction, to ASL poetry and literature. ASL is not, as many people think, merely a series of gestures corresponding to English words. Rather, it is a language in its own right. For this reason, ASL Access carefully screens all videos in the collection for adherence to ASL linguistic structures and accurate portrayals of deaf culture. As most public librarians lack the background to evaluate these criteria themselves, ASL Access provides an invaluable service.

Purchasing the collection, which is only available as a package, also simplifies the process by allowing the library to receive the entire collection from one vendor. Harris Communications has recently allied with ASL Access to distribute most of the titles in the collection, some of which are exclusively available through ASL Access. The cost of the collection, which runs about $8,000, is strictly for the videos. There is no charge for ASL Access's services in ordering and shipping the videos, and the organization also provides free custom publicity fliers and guidebooks to accompany the collection. In addition, librarians may consult with ASL Access volunteers on how to promote the collection as well as get suggestions for additions to the collection and more information about specific titles.

ASL Access video collections are currently available in thirteen libraries across the United States, with four more scheduled to open shortly. Collections may be found in Washington, D.C., Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Florida, Arkansas, Mississippi, Idaho, and California.

Response from the public has been enthusiastic. Turner Freeman, film and video librarian at the District of Columbia Public Library, commented:

It instantly became one of the most widely circulated collections my audio visual division has ever had available for

public use. The demand is nothing short of phenomenal. If they had doubled or tripled the number of individual titles, I'm sure the result would be the same. . . . I've always been proud of the video collection I've developed for this library, but nothing in our division compares to this! There's rarely more than 30 percent of the collection available at any given time.

Patty Zabel, of Fort Smith (Ark.) Public Library, agreed:

The response has been wonderful. Having a dedication ceremony that involved the Arkansas State Association for the Deaf got us lots of press attention, which meant even more people heard about the new collection. We even received an award from the state association for supporting sign language communication. I don't know if there's a larger demand because it's a better, larger collection, or if there are just more people who know about it. We've already had requests for additional materials that build on the collection. Our Friends of the Library group purchased them for us.

Other librarians sense the unique opportunity the ASL Access video collection has to draw in deaf patrons. For many deaf people who were born deaf or become deaf at any early age, English is a second language (ASL is usually their first); most public libraries have traditionally offered few resources in their natural language. When Lorri Henry of South Mississippi Regional Library in Columbia found the link to the ASL Access Web site while researching schooling options for a patron with a deaf son, it got her thinking. "At the time . . . I had worked here for only a little over a year, and in that time I had personally come into contact with eight people of various ages who were deaf. It made me wonder how many I had *not* come into contact with because they didn't think the public library had anything new to offer them."

In other cases, members of the deaf community themselves have become advocates for the collection. When Richard Cohen, a certified deaf interpreter and ASL instructor, moved to Howard County, Maryland, from New Jersey, he pressed his local library to purchase the collection. Cohen had served as treasurer of the Northwest Jersey Association of the Deaf, which raised funds for the Clifford R. Rowley ASL video collection at the Morris County Library in Whippany, New Jersey. After a meeting with the county executive, Cohen, with the support of the Howard County Association of the Deaf, was able to convince Howard County Library (HCL) to purchase the ASL Access video collection. The collection opened in July 2002, accompanied by a memorial fund named in honor of George W. Veditz, a deaf Marylander who strove to preserve the history of ASL by recording some of the only surviving footage of its use in the early part of this century. Veditz's famous address, "On the Preservation of Sign Language," may be seen on the video *The Preservation of American Sign Language,* which is part of the ASL Access video collection.[4] Like many of the deaf culture videos in the collection, this presentation features English voice-over so that both hearing and deaf viewers may enjoy it. Veditz, who served as president of the National Association of the Deaf, would no doubt be pleased to know that the memorial fund set up by HCL in his honor will be used to support the purchase of additional ASL materials for the library.

From the librarian's standpoint, purchasing the ASL Access video collection is a practical choice. "We had gotten grant money in the mid-1990s for a small collection of signed videos, so we knew the need and interest was there," says Zabel. "I also remember how difficult it was to find the videos. I spent many hours putting that collection together, and it was a quarter of the size of the ASL Access video collection. The ASL Access staff has put together a great collection and made it easy for libraries to provide access to materials for their deaf community." Indeed, it is this aspect of the collection that makes it most appealing and practical for librarians. ASL Access provides, free of charge, the knowledge and time to order and review these videos, saving libraries an enormous amount of staff time.

Why should public libraries be concerned with providing the resources in the ASL Access video collection? ASL is one of the most-used languages in the United States, after English, Cohen points out.[5] In many cases, deaf people have nowhere else to go to find these resources. "But the collection is for the hearing, too," he adds. "Not just the deaf. It's for the family and friends of the deaf, for teachers, and for other people who are interested in sign language."

Recent research has shown that hearing children can benefit from sign language in education as well. Jan Hafer of Gallaudet University instructs teachers in using sign language in the classroom on her Web site, www.signingforall.com. She notes:

Signing is an effective and motivating strategy to help students learn to use and retain vocabulary associated with various units of study in all subject areas. There are times when the students may not have frequent exposure to the key vocabulary associated with topics and, therefore, have difficulty processing the meaning of identified words. Teachers have found that introducing and discussing the sign associated with the vocabulary helps the students understand, process, and retain the vocabulary and concepts.[6]

Indeed, a public librarian need look no further than infant storytimes, where parents are increasingly using basic signs to communicate with their hearing children, or the increased circulation of such books as *Baby Signs: How to Talk with Your Baby before Your Baby Can Talk* to see that public interest in sign language is on the rise.[7]

The ASL Access video collection, quite simply, supports the mission of the public library to serve the community. To Patty Zabel, this collection is fundamentally no different from other special collections: "We try to provide materials for all kinds of special groups, from new readers to Vietnamese readers. ASL is a visual-gestural language, so instead of collecting books, as we do for Spanish and Vietnamese, we collect videos." Lorri Henry agrees. "Why? I really tried to think of a deep philosophical answer for this question, because it is a very important question, but the truest and best answer I could think of is because we are a public library. It is our responsibility to try our very darnedest to provide something for everyone if at all possible. It's the right thing to do."

Christine Wixtrom grew up a few blocks away from the California School for the Deaf in Riverside. She remembers seeing how the deaf children looked on the playground as they signed to each other and to their teachers. "I was almost jealous!" she says. "I saw a happy community." Later she had several deaf neighbors and began to learn sign language, or what she refers to as "the most incredible gift of my life." In time she

went on to work as a sign language interpreter, tutor, teacher of deaf children, parent educator, and instructor for adults. "In each of these experiences I witnessed individuals with a tremendous thirst for sign language. In 1997, I received—literally in a flash—a vision for putting ASL in public libraries," she says. "I worked with my husband and a lawyer friend to set up a nonprofit organization to fund the project. Within four months, ASL Access was born."

It would take two full years, however, before the first collection was placed in a library. Wixtrom enlisted the help of many volunteer video evaluators and made numerous attempts to raise funds. That first collection, purchased by more than forty separate schools, agencies, companies, and artists, was donated to the District of Columbia Public Library in honor of the library's first librarian to the deaf community and current ASL Access advisory board member, Alice L. Hagemeyer. Wixtrom is proud of what ASL Access has accomplished, even as she strives to place the collection into even more libraries. "To date, with the assistance of many local sponsors, library Friends groups, and independent fund-raisers, and with the cooperation of responsive and forward-looking library administrators, we have had the privilege of placing seventeen ASL Access video collections in ten states."

Cathleen Wortman, assistant manager of integrated library systems at Baltimore (Md.) County Public Library (BCPL), developed a personal interest in ASL resources when her son lost his hearing as a result of a severe case of bacterial meningitis. The Robert Joseph Wortman American Sign Language video collection, named in honor of her son, opened at BCPL last year, to great fanfare. Wortman is proud of this and the other diversity initiatives her library has taken. "Public libraries have a responsibility to provide information for all segments of the population, the deaf and hard of hearing included," she says. "The ASL Access collection is an easy way for libraries to start a collection. I hope it doesn't stop there."

Cohen hopes the same. He encourages libraries to use the ASL Access video collection as a beginning, and to think about the practical ways libraries can better serve deaf patrons. "Provide a TV and VCR near the collection," he says, pleased that HCL has recently agreed to do so. "This will let people see the videos before they check them out." The key to a successful collection, he says, is to have a staff that understands its purpose and can promote it to the public, both deaf and hearing.

When asked about her ultimate dream for ASL Access, Wixtrom emphasized instead a vision for libraries and their patrons:

I envision every deaf child in North America having the chance to bring home an armful of ASL stories from his neighborhood library. I treasure an image of parents welcoming their deaf children into family conversations, thanks to ASL lessons from library shelves. I picture hearing children signing with their deaf friends at school, sign language interpreters growing their skills with free local resources. I imagine deaf adults discovering vital health resources in their own language, as well as enriching historical information, inspirational stories, and signed folklore, right at their fingertips. And I see a new, friendly camaraderie among deaf and hearing people in social cir-

cles, workplaces, houses of worship, community service organizations, and—especially—in homes. All this, thanks to the public library.

Knowledge, we know, is contagious. By placing the ASL Access video collection in public libraries, we offer increased knowledge of ASL and deaf culture. Alice L. Hagemeyer recalls a conversation she had with a deaf gentleman while serving as librarian to the deaf community at the District of Columbia Public Library. "[He] listened to my wishful hope that one day deaf people would see terms such as 'deaf and dumb' and other similar negative remarks disappear from the media. I told him that I believed that such remarks were commonly made because of a scarcity of good information." ASL Access offers public libraries the chance to offer good information to their patrons and may help erase some of those misconceptions about deaf people and American Sign Language.

For more information about ASL Access, visit www.aslaccess.org. For more information about ASL and deafness, visit the Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center Web site at http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu.

Conclusion

People with disabilities can enhance the quality of our libraries. They provide us with new opportunities to learn, grow, and serve. I hope that there will be an "aha!" or two among these essays to inspire you. ■

The purpose of this column is to offer varied perspectives on subjects of interest to the public library profession. All correspondence should be directed to the contributing editors. **Hampton (Skip) Auld** is Assistant Director, Chesterfield County Public Library, 9501 Lori Rd., Chesterfield, VA 23832-0297, (804) 748-1767; auldh@co.chesterfield.va.us. **Nann Blaine Hilyard** has been a public library administrator for more than twenty-five years, 1912 Hazelwood Dr., Lindenhurst, IL 60046-7019; nbhlibn@aol.com.

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InterViews

How Cleveland Serves the Deaf Community

Abigail Noland

I saw the ad for the Coventry Village branch manager position at the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library (CHUHPL) in Ohio just over a year ago. My glasses slid down my nose and the tight bun on the back of my hair unraveled. The ad said "knowledge of American Sign Language (ASL) a plus." I couldn't believe my good luck. I'd be able to return to my native Cleveland—home of Drew Carey and Kathy Buckley, the nationally known deaf comedienne, author, and inspirational speaker—and serve the community I'd fallen in love with years ago.

My branch is the smallest of the three branches in our system, which is not the largest library system in the Cleveland area by any means. But our commitment to service is huge. Coventry Village serves the general public as well as the Deaf Community. Our population is vibrant and diverse. We are the best of what a small public library can be in a city, serving people from all walks of life from all over the world. The building itself is a beautifully maintained historical landmark complete with fireplace, chandeliers, and high ceilings with crown molding. We share our building with a youth center and a local pottery co-op called Clayworks.

CHUHPL is fortunate to have a director, Steve Wood, who has been committed to serving patrons from the Deaf Community for years. Commitment is one of the foundational elements to serving the Deaf Community. It's very common for those with hearing to come and go in the life of deaf people. We are temporarily captivated by their beautiful and expressive sign language, or we find their culture unique and fascinating. Then we become frustrated with trying to communicate in the other American language. Our enthusiasm dwindles. However, Wood has held on by providing basic services that enable librarians to serve the Deaf Community, their families, and the professionals that serve them.

For example, Wood has a budget for interpreters at the main library and the branches. He provides a generous budget for deaf materials, including videos, books, periodicals, and software. He has provided monies for continual sign language training of staff at the branch. For me, he provides encouragement. He sends local reporters my way when they are looking for an interesting story. During the lean times with state grant cuts he does not look at services to deaf patrons as something expendable.

But it takes more than a committed director. It takes the staff of the entire organization to believe in providing services for the deaf. Serving deaf patrons is well integrated throughout the CHUHPL system. For example, the librarians take time to know what specialized programs and materials Coventry Village offers. The technology department processes specialized materials that they would otherwise never have to catalog—no copy cataloging for these items. The publicity department realizes that outreach to the Deaf Community takes longer and uses different media than other programs. Other branch managers willingly share their larger computer room for computer training for the deaf patrons. My list could go on and on. The point is, it takes a committed team to bring the consistency needed to serve our patrons.

What's the Difference?

You're probably wondering right now what deaf materials are and why you'd have to purchase anything different. Or maybe you're asking yourself why a librarian can't just communicate with deaf patrons by writing notes back and forth. But if you put it in the context of a library's commitment to diversity, you'd realize that you've probably already purchased books in Spanish and other languages that reflect the community in which you live.

English is a second language to most deaf persons, not all. So here is Deaf Culture mini-lesson 1: There are deaf persons who use the oral method. They read lips. (No small feat. Go to the mirror and mouth the words "buddy" and "putty." Do *you* see a difference?) There are deaf persons who use pure ASL, which has a grammar all its own. And there are deaf persons who use a mixture of lipreading, gestures, mime, Pidgin English, and ASL. This is called total communication. Each of these modes of communication has a philosophy all its own.

But English as spoken by people with hearing is not a deaf person's first mode of communication. The Deaf Culture is a visual culture, so videotapes comprise the majority of the materials I order. Not just closed-captioned videotapes, but videos with signing. I'm fortunate because, although our library system does not have the space for many permanent collections, we are committed to archiving materials about Deaf Culture. This brings in interpreting students from as far as the west side of Cleveland on a regular basis to do their research papers.

In 1998 a united student effort at Gallaudet University called the Deaf President Now movement resulted in the first deaf president of the university in its history.[1] It was an empowering moment that became a momentum. If there is one thing the Deaf President Now movement emphasized, it was that persons with hearing disabilities were tired of being patronized.

Our staff classes are taught by members of the Cleveland SignStage Theatre, a nationally known theater for the deaf and one of the first in the United States. Our Proud Hands Classes are taught by members of the Deaf Community. Proud Hands

meets every other week in a relaxed and fun atmosphere in which basic signs are taught to people of all ages. Whenever we can, wherever we can, we bring people in from the community for their community. Which brings me to every librarian's favorite topic . . .

Grants, Grants, Grants

Director Wood does provide us monies for materials, staff classes, and interpreters, but our library can't afford to provide it all. We are fortunate to have received multiple grants from the Society for the Deaf, a local group of predominantly deaf people and their family members who donate to many of Cleveland-area deaf students, programs, and organizations. The society has allowed us to offer total communication classes. Why are we offering this class? Because 90 percent of deaf people are born into hearing families, and because 90 percent of deaf people have hearing children, there is a need for family members to learn sign language.[2] This type of sign language is not offered at the area college, therefore we offer it through the auspices of the Society for the Deaf. It is free as far as the patrons are concerned, and it is taught by members of the Cleveland SignStage Theatre.

Off Center

In the recent past, deaf schools were *the* place for the community to gather. More recently, more and more of these schools are closing due to mainstreaming, so Deaf Communities are under a shift to find their centers. With the loss of centers, so goes the loss of shared information. That's where a library can step in. A library is a place where you access information. Part of that is knowing what your local area can offer. Building up a network of people who work with the deaf in your local community is priceless. We are fortunate to be in a city that has these services. However, I have found that one organization doesn't necessarily know what an other organization is doing. There is always the frustration of duplicating services and wasting limited resources in doing so.

Therefore, I view part of my job as a liaison. I gather information for the library's bulletin boards. Any relevant community events are printed out and posted in our building on our deaf events bulletin board. Any library events that are inclusive of the Deaf Community I send to the Cleveland Deaf Group Home Page (www.netlink.net/mp/mskh/cleve1.htm), which posts events in the Cleveland area. Still, no matter how many Wyntells (an e-mail/pager device) or deaf chat groups are out there, word of hand is still the preferred method to get the information out in our community.[3]

Keeping Up

Deaf Culture mini-lesson 2: You've just been introduced to a person who is deaf and you sign to them, "Hi. Nice to meet you."

If you're a deaf person, you're likely to hear in response, "Nice to meet you. What [deaf] school did you go to?" Or, as in my case, as a person with hearing, "Why do you know sign language? Where did you learn it? Who was your teacher? Do you know so-and-so?"

These are the cultural norms for the community. It helps everyone get oriented. The community of signers is like a small, close-knit family. After all, most of the kids attending deaf schools were miles and miles away from their parents for most of the year. Maybe they'd see them on weekends. And most of their parents were not fluent ASL users.

So, why did I learn sign language? My father and husband are both severely hearing impaired. Do they sign? Some, and I wish they did more. I learned in seminary, then the first Vista programs in Berkeley, California. Vista's ASL program focuses on understanding Deaf Culture as well as learning the language and the communications process between the Deaf and hearing communities. My first teacher was Kathy Black, a former chaplain at Gallaudet University and someone I will never forget.

Sometimes it is a slow dance, but I have those moments where I know I've got the right moves. For example, I am fortunate in having the benefit of government activists who want to do programs for the community. We have had great success working with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the Civil Rights Offices, which bring information to the Deaf Community about basic rights.

Recently, we hosted an EEOC program on the American Disabilities Act that focused on rights for the deaf. The president of EEOC's Cleveland chapter, Michael Fetzer, spoke to the largest crowd of deaf patrons we had ever had for a program. The interpreter's fingers were flying. During the program, as I was checking my e-mail at the reference desk, a message from the DeafMatrix electronic discussion list popped up. The sister of a student who had been molested at St. Rita's School for the Deaf was looking for other students who have had similar experiences. She and more than twenty other people in Ohio were gathering to take legal action. I was able to pop into the program and ask anyone if they were interested in contacting the woman. Twenty hands shot up.

If you're a librarian like me, you live for these moments. The patrons you are helping don't even know you can do that for them. Oh yes, we have a teletypewriter, but when a deaf patron walks in and a librarian signs to them "Can I help you?" the look on their faces makes it all worthwhile. That reaction motivates me to work toward that day when persons in the Deaf Community never show that look again. ■

Abigail Noland is the Coventry Village Branch Manager at the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library in Ohio; anoland@heightslibrary.org. For additional Deaf resources, visit www.heightslibrary.org/deaf/shtml.

References and Notes

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3. A March 1999 *Wall Street Journal* article called WyndTell "the deaf community's equivalent to a cell phone." See Wynd Communications, Why Choose WyndTell? Accessed Oct. 11, 2002, www.wynd.com/products/whyChooseWyndtell.

Librarians Made My Education Possible

An Interview with Brooke Ellison

Brendan Dowling

In 1990, when Brooke Ellison was eleven, she was struck by a car on her way home from school. The accident left her ventilator dependent and quadriplegic, paralyzed below the neck. The accident had a transforming effect on not only Brooke, but also on her entire family. Her mother, Jean, left her teaching job and became Brooke's full-time caretaker to ensure that Brooke could remain enrolled in her public school system. Jean accompanied Brooke to school every day from eighth grade through high school, and when Brooke was accepted at Harvard University, Jean followed her daughter to Cambridge. In their book, *Miracles Happen,* Brooke and Jean recount their challenging journey from the date of the accident through Brooke's graduation from Harvard, discussing the inner strength they relied on to overcome their many obstacles. This interview was conducted via e-mail in May 2001.

PL: Talk a little bit about how the book came to be. When did you decide this was something the two of you wanted to do? What was your writing process like? What were your goals in writing the book?

BE: The concept of writing *Miracles Happen* came about close to the end of my senior year at Harvard. My graduation had been getting a great deal of attention, and I was being encouraged by several sources to record my experiences in the form of a book. At first I was a bit reluctant to do that, as I didn't want to call much more attention to myself. However, after having several conversations with my family, we came to the conclusion that perhaps other people facing challenging situations might benefit from hearing our story, and that notion was the driving force behind us writing our book.

Initially *Miracles Happen* was just going to be in my own voice, but it soon became obvious that the best way to tell the story most fully would be to provide my mother's perspective also. Throughout the entire writing process, what kept us motivated was the knowledge that others might gain something from our story and may be able to overcome whatever difficulties they face.

PL: You deal very fairly with people who weren't always considerate of your needs, such as some of the night nurses in the rehab center, members of your town's school board, and some of your friends. Have you heard from any of these people since the book was published? What has been their reaction?

BE: Yes, I have been in contact with several of the people who treated me less than fairly over the years. Most notably, David has come back into my life, we have reconciled and have resumed our friendship. [In *Miracles Happen*, Brooke recounts how David, a high school friend, ends their friendship after he becomes jealous of Brooke when she is accepted to Harvard.] All of these people have responded favorably to the book, as what I had described was all factual. I really have had no room in my life for resentment or anger of any kind, so I have forgiven all of these people and have tried to embrace them back into my life. That being said, there hasn't been any problem with anything I had discussed in the book.

PL: You're an extraordinarily disciplined student. What roles have books and libraries played in your life?

BE: Books and libraries of all kinds have played an enormous role in my education, as well as my recreation, throughout the years. I love literature and have relied heavily on it as a source of enjoyment. Further, my textbooks were invaluable to my education and to helping me get where I am today. Libraries only serve to strengthen this. Particularly when I was a student at Harvard, the libraries, librarians, and media specialists made certain that my needs were met in the best way possible, which made my education happen. From ordering books on tape to photocopying class material, libraries and librarians have helped make my education possible. And this has continued until now. I often visit my local library to take out books and videos and, as a matter of fact, will be having a book signing there next month [June 2001].

PL: You and your father are writing a novel together. What is it about, and how is that project going?

BE: My father and I are planning on writing a novel; however, we have not yet started, as I have been very busy traveling and speaking publicly. We are hoping that an opportunity to do this will be on the horizon soon. Tentatively, we would like to write a fiction piece, again about a family undergoing difficulty. Although this will be fictitious in nature, we hope to deliver a message at the same time.

PL: How is the TV movie based on your book coming along?

BE: At this time, Christopher Reeve, the producers, and we are still waiting to get the go-ahead from ABC before the project can be started. Due to the terrible events of September 11, the schedule had been shifted and ABC had to revamp its plans. However, as far as I know right now, it still is in the planning

stages and thought very highly of by the network.

PL: Describe your work with the National Organization on Disability (NOD) [a nonprofit organization whose mission is to "promote the full and equal participation and contribution of America's 54 million men, women, and children with disabilities in all aspects of life"]. How did you come to serve on its board and what issues are you focusing on?

BE: Shortly after my graduation from Harvard, I received a letter from the chairperson of NOD, explaining the organization, its purpose, and their interest in me. Based on the letter, they had been observing me for quite some time and very much wanted me to be a part of their board of directors. I was overwhelmed by their interest. Through my involvement with NOD, I think I have had the opportunity to help people who face challenges similar to my own.

Specifically, I have tried to address the chronic problem of airline travel for people in wheelchairs. There are no wheelchair sections in airplanes as there are in public venues and other forms of public transportation. This immediately creates a problem for people who are confined to wheelchairs. In order for them to utilize airline travel, wheelchair users must be lifted out of their wheelchairs, placed into an aisle chair that resembles a baby stroller, wheeled by the airline staff to an ordinary airplane seat, transferred over to the seat, and have the reverse done on arrival of destination. Wheelchairs are then stored in the cargo area of the plane, with little or no guarantee of their safety. This strips the wheelchair user of his or her mobility. The potential for danger and damage is very clear, but, more importantly, it creates a tremendous loss of dignity for those who have to be subject to it. I plan to address this issue in my future endeavors. Changes have to come from the airlines.

Also, I helped judge the accessibility of cities across the country in the Accessible America program. In addition, I write a column for the NOD Web site that relates personal stories and addresses issues of all kinds. Finally, I was fortunate enough to be able to speak at the tenth anniversary of the ADA in Washington, D.C., in July 2000. Through all of the work that NOD does, we try to touch upon all aspects of life for people with disabilities, targeting the broad areas of employment, health care, religion, transportation, and recreation.

PL: How did you come to work as a public speaker? What types of groups do you address and what have been their reactions?

BE: My work as a public speaker also came about immediately after my graduation from Harvard, as people read about my interest in doing so. Over the past two years, I have spoken somewhere around thirty times to audiences of all kinds
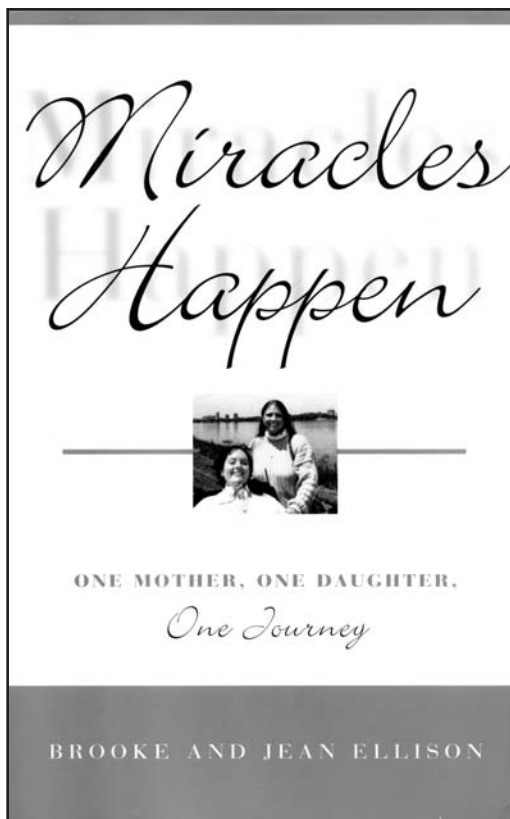
and of all ages, ranging from young schoolchildren to businessmen and politicians. Almost always I deliver the message of hope and of overcoming adversity. I use my own experiences as a framework and then specialize the rest to whatever audience I am addressing. After my talk I answer questions, which have spanned all sorts of topics. So far, I have gotten very favorable responses, which has made me feel wonderful. People have told me that their lives have been changed after having heard me speak, and that they are now driven to achieve their goals in life. I would have never before imagined myself doing anything like this but am very thankful that I have been able to, as I feel like I have been able to directly affect people. The speaking that I have done has really highlighted my years since my graduation from Harvard.

PL: How can libraries better serve the needs of people with disabilities?

BE: By and large, libraries I have experienced have been very good about meeting my needs. However, I can only speak for myself. I would say that for libraries to meet the needs of everyone, they have to listen to the problems and challenges that people face on an individual basis and work from there. The world of books and literature is so vast and valuable that it should be enjoyed by everyone; in order to make that happen, whatever unique obstacles exist should be eliminated in the best way possible. This is a twofold process—first, the needs must be known; and second, action must be taken to meet them.

PL: What's next for you?

BE: There are several things on the agenda for the future. I have applied to graduate school and have been accepted to several programs. Among these, though, was a master's program in public policy at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, and that is where I plan to continue my education. I was awarded a full-tuition fellowship to study there, and I am very excited to resume school. I hope that through my education at the Kennedy School I can help shape policy and issues that directly affect people's lives. My mother will have to accompany me, and the arrangement will be very similar to my undergraduate career, with my father coming up to visit on the weekends. In addition to graduate school, I would like to continue speaking and writing as long as time allows. Also, depending on what happens with the movie, I'm sure we will be fairly busy with that. All in all, I am very excited about what is to come. ■

Brendan Dowling is the Editorial Assistant for *Public Libraries*. He interviewed Brooke Ellison via e-mail in May 2001; bdowling@ ala.org.

Locating Public Records

Not an Easy Task

Steven M. Cohen

Since the terror attacks on September 11, the media has been flooded with reports about the privacy of the American public. The main issue: Should the protection of the country outweigh the privacy values that this nation has been built upon? Also, does the public have the right to a majority of available public records provided by state and federal law, or should that information remain sealed in order to continue defending our country from terrorism? There are two issues here: First, the invasion of privacy made popular by the signing of the USA PATRIOT Act, a portion of which allows the FBI to seize public library and bookstore records of patrons that they deem suspicious. Second, and the aspect that will be discussed in this column, the vital information that is of public record and how users can go about locating it.

Regarding the latter, two recent news events are relevant. First, in November 2001, President Bush issued an executive order that restricted access to the presidential records of two former leaders, George H. W. Bush and Ronald Reagan. The order nullifies the Presidential Records Act of 1978 that allows the public to obtain records of past presidents no later than twelve years after the president leaves office. These records are a part of American history, and the information found in those records are of grave importance to historians, journalists, librarians, and the general public as a whole. Many organizations, including Public Citizen and the American Historical Association, filed suit. Prompted by the suit, in July 2002 the White House approved the release of some, but not all, papers of Presidents Reagan and George H. W. Bush. For more information on the Executive Order and the lawsuit, see the **ALA Office of Intellectual Freedom** Web site (www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/executiveorder13233.html) dedicated to this issue.

In a related story, the state librarian of Virginia has taken the state's governor to task about releasing his documents to the state library for archiving purposes. While Virginia state law does not require the governor to pass on all of his papers to the library (personal and private documents are not released), the two have been debating which papers should be handed over. In late August to early September 2002, the two men were on their way to an agreement as to which records were to be released.

So, what type of data is considered public record? Such records are usually kept by government agencies, either at the federal, state, or local level, and can come from a variety of sources. Some examples of public records include mortgage information, property records, real estate tax records, corporation filings, court documents, patents, doctor registration records, sex offender data, prison inmate documentation, professional licensing information, and unclaimed property. While some of this information is available on the Web, it is important to note that many of these items are only available by contacting the authority in charge of the data, and an actual trip to the building may be in order. Also, many records are sealed by a judge's order, and many others require a **Freedom of Information Act** (www.usdoj.gov/04foia/index.html) request in order to be viewed. Vital records, such as birth and death certificates, are not considered public records—they can only be obtained by the people personally involved—although the **Social Security Death Index** (http://ssdi.genealogy.rootsweb.com) provides birth and death dates.

While it is sometimes difficult to gain access to public record documents, the Internet has made locating them much easier. Using a search engine is one way to find these records, but not the best way, as most of the information is stored in databases whose contents are hidden from search-engine robots. Such databases have been dubbed the Invisible Web. The most effective avenue for public record research is via directories created by people, not by computer indexing programs.

Search Systems (www.searchsystems.net) is the leading source for public records, with more than 8,400 free searchable records and many more that are fee-based. Extensive search and advanced search options are available, but I tend to find the browsing capabilities easier to navigate, especially since the site has a simple layout. Search Systems contains links to public records for all states in the United States as well as Canadian provinces; it also has links to public records worldwide and even **outer space** (www.searchsystems.net/list.php?nid=153). In the United States databases, each state can be narrowed down again to a specific geographic location (for example, New York is broken out into cities, counties, and regional areas).

Search Systems links to mostly free databases, but there are some that have fees attached. Those databases are clearly marked with dollar signs. Also, to keep up to date with new resources added to the site, be sure to check out the **New Sites** page (www.searchsystems.net/newsites.php). One flaw with Search Systems is the lack of annotations attached to the links. Having these would save precious time in searching for the correct public records database.

Real Estate Information and Public Records Research (www.netronline.com/public_records.htm) is another tool for locating public records. Mostly geared toward property records, this site provides links to official state and county Web sites that have public record data available online. Each state section is broken out into counties. At the county level, contact phone numbers are provided for entities that deal with real estate, such as the tax assessor, recorder, and treasurer offices,

with links to their respective Web sites. In addition, if the data is available online, a direct link to the database is provided. This site will also provide access to actual document images for a fee, if available.

The two directories mentioned above only list databases by state. **Public Record Finder** (www.publicrecordfinder.com) lists them by category. While some of the sites listed here are not public records per se—such as telephone directories and busi-

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Recently the media has focused attention on public records. This attention, combined with the privacy factors that come into play, may change the availability of public records. This could have positive and negative consequences for the general public . . .

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ness finders, which are valuable reference tools in their own right—there is quite a lot of information here. The categories are loosely divided into two main sections, free public record sites and free public reference sites. The free public records sites include information on vital records and court records as well as on criminal and sex offenders. For those who like to browse by state, this option is also available. The public record finder is filled with many advertisements that are not easy on the eyes, and the information is somewhat scarce, but it is worth a look if other methods do not pan out.

BRB Publications (www.brbpub.com) reports on searching and understanding public records. Their site is full of valuable information on retrieving public records. First, there is a fee-based database titled the Public Record Research System that provides an online directory of more than twenty-six thousand government agencies that have records. The site also has a database titled the Public Record Retrieval Network that lists local document retrieval companies that will go to the courts, county clerks, or other state or other government agency and obtain copies (often, certified copies are needed) of the necessary papers. The site also provides a lengthy list of more than twelve hundred Web sites that contain public records, arranged by state. Last, unlike the other sites mentioned in this column, BRB publications prints articles pertaining to public record search and retrieval.

Investigative Resource Center (www.factfind.com/database.htm) is another public record gateway that is well worth a look. It is broken down into four main categories: USA nationwide, USA statewide, open source records Canada, and open source records worldwide. There are other sections on the site

that will be useful for reference staff, such as news and information, but these do not contain public record databases. Each database mentioned in the public record sections contains lengthy annotations as well as a mention of any cost, although many are free. There are many sites that I located here that were not available on any other list mentioned previously.

Locating public records can be a difficult task. Sometimes the databases are outdated or contain incorrect information (even government workers make mistakes—the data is entered in by humans); sometimes the search engines are incorrectly built, producing false results. Recently the media has focused attention on public records.[1] This attention, combined with the privacy factors that come into play, may change the availability of public records. This could have positive and negative consequences for the general public: positive in that their privacy will be protected more and the chances of being scammed are lower, and negative in the sense that people wouldn't be able to question governmental actions, the real reason why public records are open to everyone. To be sure, this makes for interesting times. ■

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Reference and Note

1. See, for example, Jennifer Lee, "Dirty Laundry, Online for All to See," New York Times. Accessed Sept. 6, 2002, www.nytimes.com/2002/09/05/technology/circuits/05CINC.html.

Resources

ALA page on George W. Bush Executive Order
    www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/executiveorder13233.html
BRB Publications
    www.brbpub.com
Freedom of Information Act
    www.usdoj.gov/04foia/index.html
Investigative Resource Center
    www.factfind.com/database.htm
Public Record Finder
    www.publicrecordfinder.com
Real Estate Information and Public Records Research
    www.netronline.com/public_records.htm
Search Systems
    www.searchsystems.net
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      www.searchsystems.net/list.php?nid=153
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      www.searchsystems.net/newsites.php
Social Security Death Index
    http://ssdi.genealogy.rootsweb.com

Teaching Library Skills through Technology

Paula Wilson

Tech Talk explores issues that public librarians face when they offer electronic services and network content. It aims to create a bridge between the practical and theoretical issues related to technology.

Most bibliographic instruction in public libraries occurs informally during the reference interview while serving the patron at his or her point of need. Whereas universities and colleges support formal bibliographic instruction programs, most library user education occurring at public libraries is done individually. Some libraries have hired trainers to train the public in computer use and have integrated teaching library skills into a subject- or audience-specific instructional program, such as seniors online or genealogy.

A literature search on the topic of bibliographic instruction in public libraries retrieved a surprisingly small number of publications on the topic of library user education in public libraries. The following keywords and subject headings were used: *information literacy, library skills, library orientation and tours, bibliographic instruction,* and *library user education.*

A thorough review of the literature was found in "Information Literacy and Public Libraries: A Community-Based Approach" by Susan Jackson.[1] Jackson provides a lengthy bibliography of resources about library instruction in public libraries. There are also many library systems offering training that may not be touted as library instruction, and these are not found in the literature under the terms listed above. Many of the computer training initiatives currently underway may be focusing on information literacy in their computer instruction classes. In public libraries, we find ourselves integrating the teaching of the library catalog, online databases, and Web sites within classes for beginning Internet users. Introduction to the Internet sounds much more appealing to public library customers than a class by the title of Library Skills 101. Since Jackson wrote this article several things have happened to our library world:

- the Internet became mainstream, and libraries connected to it;
- libraries began offering Internet connections to patrons;
- libraries set up Web sites offering many of their services and collections online;
- patrons seemed content going to Google and Ask Jeeves for their reference needs;
- libraries increased training in the use of new technology to the staff and the public; and

- users are now discovering that libraries are offering value-added online services.

As the general public becomes increasingly comfortable logging on to the library Web site to do their research, how can libraries reach out to remote patrons? Many libraries are teaching library skills to remote patrons in the form of virtual tours, online tutorials, and guides to the collections. Libraries have also produced CD-ROMs that patrons can use to learn about the library.

Lift Off to the Library, a multimedia CD-ROM developed for children ages four to eleven by the Baltimore County Public Library in 1998, includes interactive games that allow children to design their own library, deliver materials to the library, and shelve books. All public libraries and more than two thousand public and private elementary schools in Maryland received the CD-ROM. Its accompanying Web site can be found at www.liftoff.org. Another library-produced CD-ROM from Anne Arundel County (Md.) Public Library titled *Chris' Secret Weapon* was developed for middle and high school students to promote the library as a resource for homework assignments.[2] The use of CD-ROMs as a promotional tool may prove to be one of many ways to educate our customers outside of our buildings.

Below you will find examples of some of the many Web sites that offer online library orientations, tutorials, and guides to the collection. These sites were accessed in October 2002.

Let's Visit the Library: Library Orientations and Virtual Tours

These Web sites cover basic library tours, directions, and the physical layout of the buildings:

- The Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County (PLCMC) in North Carolina offers multimedia tours that describe their major services, architectural design, and Brarydog research portal. PLCMC uses Flash to produce some of their guides. www.plcmc.org/multimedia/default. htm
- The Wayne (N.J.) Public Library posts thirty-two thumbnail photographs that represent each part of the library and include a brief caption and link to a larger photograph. www.waynepubliclibrary.org/virtour.shtml
- The Public Library of Mount Vernon and Knox County in Ohio offers a virtual tour starting out with a photograph of the library's front doors. When you click on the doors to begin the tour you are presented with floor plans for the library. As you run your mouse over the name of each room you discover headings that provide links to further information about that location and the service or collection occupying its space. www.knox.net/knox/library/about/tour/welcome.htm

- The tour from the Fairfax County (Va.) Public Library is created for preschoolers and illustrates the many programs and collections available to them. The use of basic words, phrases, and relevant images in this tour are some of its strengths. www.co.fairfax.va.us/library/tots/tour/tour01.htm
- You can view nine panoramic views of the Tempe (Ariz.) Public Library. When the mouse is placed over a photo you can click and drag for more viewer control or use keys on the keyboard to zoom in and out. www.tempe.gov/library/360

Teaching the Collection: Guides

These Web sites cover subject-oriented or more in-depth guides to collections:

- The Boston Public Library (BPL) site is rich in history, art, and architecture and includes walking tours and descriptions of wall paintings and other art. BPL also includes a number of library research guides. They make good use of the Web by integrating links to the resources described throughout the guide. www.bpl.org/guides/index.htm
- The Map Division of the Humanities and Social Sciences Library at the New York Public Library posts descriptions of their map collection and services offered. It also includes images of the various types of maps available. www.nypl.org/research/chss/map/map.html
- San Jose (Calif.) Public Library's California Room is a collection of materials on California and local history. The library provides a virtual tour with photographs and text. Along with relevant links, the pages provide simple navigation by use of an index on each of the nine Web pages. www.sjpl.lib.ca.us/Calif/vtour/s1.htm

Teaching Library Skills: Tutorials

These Web sites offer tutorials that educate users in information literacy.

- Interactive tutorials available at the Hennepin County (Minn.) Library include a tour of their Web page, an information literacy quiz, and a tutorial on locating full-text magazine and newspaper articles. These self-paced tutorials require the Macromedia Authorware plug-in to view. www.hclib.org/pub/training.
- Four NETS for Better Searching (http://webquest.sdsu.edu/searching/fournets.htm) is a webquest that teaches search engine skills. A webquest is an inquiry-oriented activity in which much of the information that learners interact with comes from resources on the Internet. Webquests are mostly intended for school and academic audiences because of their evaluative component and collaborative nature. However, they may be adapted to be of use in public libraries. Webquests are not widely used in public libraries, leaving a lot of room for development in this area. They differ from online tutorials because they involve the use of a rubric, a tool for measuring the student's success in completing the tasks involved in the webquest. For more information on creating webquests visit Bernie Dodge's Web page, http://webquest.sdsu.edu/webquest.html.

User education may take the form of orientations and tours, guides to the collection, or interactive tutorials. I believe that interactive tutorials, like the one produced at the Hennepin County Library, have the most potential for development and are the least untilized among public libraries. While libraries continue to serve more and more patrons online, it becomes necessary to provide user education. Although libraries continue to improve the usability of their Web sites and signage and the placement of materials and services in their physical buildings, users will continue to have questions about how to find and use library resources. It is up to us to show them how. ■

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AccessAbility @ Cleveland Public Library

Barbara T. Mates

Creating programs that are accessible to the entire community is not a difficult or expensive process, it simply takes some forethought. Presented in this article are several programs that were developed by staff and are enjoyed by the patrons of the Cleveland (Ohio) Public Library. With the exception of the mobile services element, the programs did not require much planning time or a large budget.

Within the last decade much has been written on the need for libraries to install and maintain adaptive computer workstations and accessible Web sites for patrons with special access needs. Although the focus on technology continues to be maintained, it is also necessary for libraries to develop and maintain library programs for their patrons who have accessibility issues. The primary reason for this is that, with the exception of formal computer classes, most computer interactions do not encourage socialization. It is important for our patrons with disabilities to know that there is a place for them in every library initiative. Likewise, it is equally important for patrons without disabilities to be reminded that, while some of their neighbors may need special accommodations, they are still a part of the community.

Within the last five years the staff of the Cleveland (Ohio) Public Library (CPL) has sought to develop programs and services that encourage adults and children with various disabilities to use the library and its facilities. It was with great pride that CPL accepted the 2001 Association of Specialized Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA) National Organization on Disability Award. (ASLCA is a division of the American Library Association [ALA].) The award recognizes innovative and well-organized projects that successfully develop and expand services for people with disabilities. Most of these innovations are either no- or low-cost (less than $100), do not require a lot of staff time, and bring satisfaction and growth to both the participants and library staff. In addition, they are easy to duplicate.

The Braille Read Together Program

The Braille Read Together program is a cooperative effort of CPL, the Cleveland Sight Center (CSC), and two consumer groups—the National Federation of the Blind and the American Conference of the Blind. The program partners youths who are learning to read Braille with adults who are proficient in Braille. To encourage camaraderie and peer support the partners meet as a group biweekly at the Martin Luther King branch

library to read Braille together. The tutors are usually members of the consumer groups or have been identified by the members; the library does not become involved in the recruiting process. The children are referred to the program through mailings to patrons of the Library for the Blind (LB) and CSC.

Because Braille must be touched to be read, each partner must have a copy of the book. Duplicate books are provided by LB to allow both the child and adult to have a copy of the book. To supplement the collection, low-cost Braille books are purchased through Seedlings (www.seedlings.org), a nonprofit organization. For added interest, news articles and Internet stories are embossed and used in the sessions. All of the young readers are invited to join the summer and winter reading clubs and attend special events.

What makes the club unique, however, is the special partnerships it maintains with various agencies in the community. For example, the kick-off events for the reading clubs are held at the Cleveland Children's Museum, which has labeled all exhibits in Braille, giving the youngsters a chance to learn how reading Braille enhances their lives. Similar events are held at the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Cleveland Zoo, which, in addition to encouraging the reading of Braille, invites children and their families to visit.

Libraries that wish to emulate this program need only contact the Regional Library for the Blind (www.loc.gov/nls/reference/directories/address.html) to obtain books and contact names from the various consumer groups. If the library is located in a metropolitan area, contacts can also be made with rehabilitation centers that can help market the program to their clients.

The Sensory Garden

Like libraries, communities are enriched with the addition of green space. When CPL decided to create a garden, the decision was made to create one that could be enjoyed by all members of the community. The garden was installed on the property shared by LB, the Memorial-Nottingham branch library, and CPL's technical services department. The cur-

rent design incorporates a raised elliptical bed that, in season, is filled with plants that invite visitors to touch and inhale their scents. The raised bed is the correct height for wheelchair users to simply reach out and enjoy such plantings as soft lamb's ears, furry chenille plants, citrusy geraniums, and spicy oregano. Other beds are filled with richly textured hosta, grasses, and fragrant lavender. Specimens are labeled in large print and Braille, making it a garden for all senses.

The garden is used for programs and as a place for neighbors to meet and read or gossip about the day's events. Readers who cannot visit the garden can take an online tour at www.cpl.org/ExhibitHall.asp?FormMode=ExhibitGarden. Recently, a young bride wishing to have some wedding photographs taken in her neighborhood had the pictures taken in the garden, as she felt it incorporated a sense of "universal joy."

Poetry Club

Poetry gives us an avenue that we can use to express our emotions or desires as well as share in the emotions of others. Working with the staff of the Memorial-Nottingham Branch Library, the LB staff formed a poetry club. On a monthly basis, patrons gather to discuss the poetry of such famous poets as Robert Frost and Langston Hughes as well as to share their own poetry. The poetry allows patrons to release their feelings and understand one another.

Sighted patrons read the poems in print, while those with low vision are provided large-print versions and blind patrons are provided Braille or recorded copies. One gentleman commented that poetry was something he was always curious about but never had time to explore. Now, with the help of group members, he is growing to really love it.

The Book Club

There are several book clubs within CPL, but one of them, the Talking Book Connection, was founded as a book club that would only select books available in alternate formats. The group is composed of sighted, visually impaired, and blind patrons. Library staff who lead the group choose to listen to the books along with the visually impaired members of the group in an attempt to experience the book using the same sense. Staff note how dramatically different it is to listen to a book like *Sula* by Toni Morrison as opposed to reading the print version of the book. Discussions are always lively and make the members feel empowered by words.

Tour of the CPL Sensory Garden

The group recently decided that it wanted to expand its purpose beyond reading to include helping to enlighten youth about the abilities of people who do not have use of all of their senses. For instance, it wishes to host a Dancing Wheels recital for neighborhood children, with members facilitating the arrangements. Dancing Wheels is a dance troop composed of persons in wheelchairs and those that are ambulatory.

Basketball and Baseball @ your library™

As part of the ALA/Easter Seals AccessAbility@ your library™ campaign, CPL held a rather unique kick-off event in the Memorial-Nottingham and South Brooklyn branch libraries. Staff set up an appealing display of books regarding persons with disabilities—the complete list may be found at www.ala.org/news/v7n10/children.html—and shared a few stories with young patrons. Then something unusual took place in the library setting: two members of the Cleveland Wheelchair Cavaliers demonstrated their skills by dribbling and passing the ball and playing keep away with children from nearby schools. The Cavs explained their respective disabilities as well as their abilities. After the children made a few unsuccessful attempts to steal the ball away from the players, they no longer saw the wheelchair, only the player. Every child wanted an autograph, which the players willingly gave.

The Cleveland Wheelchair Cavs playing "keep away" with a young library patron at the Memorial-Nottingham Branch

Affectionately nicknamed "Bessie," CPL's mobile services unit accommodates all patrons, regardless of their abilities or disabilities.

December 2001 and received a warm and appreciative welcome from patrons. The unit has a wheelchair lift and is outfitted with adaptive technology software and CCTV. Facilities routinely visited include children's residential rehabilitation, senior citizen, and rehabilitation facilities. The staff of the mobile unit are also able to demonstrate special audio playback units provided by the National Library Service for the Blind. Staff of the children's rehabilitation facility state that borrowing books from the mobile library gives children an opportunity to participate in library activities in the same manner as their friends without disabilities.

Most of the National Basketball Association's affiliates support wheelchair basketball teams. To inquire about the availability of a team in your library's area, visit www.nwba.org.

Baseball is synonymous with summertime and fun. In June the Cleveland Scrappers demonstrated that you do not have to be sighted to play and enjoy baseball. The front lawn of the library's Lakeshore facility became a temporary baseball diamond, and the sounds of beep ball were heard. Played worldwide, beep ball is based on baseball and played by blind, partially sighted, and sighted players. Sighted patrons were invited to don a blindfold to experience the game. The game requires the batter to hit a beeping ball and run to a beeping base before the opposing team's fielders catch the ball. Timing oneself to swing as the unseen ball got louder was not the only challenge: running to the beeping bases without being able to see the ground proved to be a trial, as well. Sighted patrons learned a lesson through this interaction. There are many sanctioned beep ball teams around the world, with new teams starting up yearly. For further information visit www.nbba.org/pictures.htm.

Touching Museum Artifacts

Although many museums are now granting sight-impaired patrons tactile access to selected pieces of sculpture, most curators still prohibit the touching of such pieces as armor or ancient Inca masks on display in the galleries. However, many of these same museums,

in community outreach initiatives, are allowing some of their duplicate specimens to travel to schools and libraries. While these programs are designed for youth, they can be adapted for adults who have never seen art.

The Cleveland Museum of Art was asked by library staff if it was possible to adapt their Art to Go program to accommodate blind and visually impaired adults. The museum staff thought about how this could be accomplished and developed a new program. The results were phenomenal. Older adults who had only heard about knights in shining armor were able to hold authentic chain mail, touch a chest plate made of armor, and try on an articulated glove. Other successful exhibits included ancient and current ceremonial masks as well as a trunk of mysterious artifacts that encouraged patrons to guess what the items were. Patrons attending these programs, prompted by their own enthusiasm, ended up inviting museum staff back for another program.

The People's University on Wheels

Under the directive of CPL director Andrew Venable, and with the generous support of the Judd Foundation, a full-service, thirty-two-foot mobile library was purchased to serve residents who were unable to visit one of the library's traditional facilities but still wished to physically select their own books. The mobile library began to make stops in

The Key to Successful Programs

Finding programs that work well for all patrons is not difficult but does require thought. It is important to choose programs that employ touch and sound. It is also essential to market them properly. For instance, other successful programs hosted by CPL included a music recital made up of musicians who did not object to passing their instruments around to be touched by those who wanted to "see" what the instrument looked like and a visit from staff of a living museum who recreated a Wagons West auction. This auction conveyed the excitement and perils of our country's westward movement by organizing patrons into "family" groups and giving them each $125 (with each denomination in a different size to facilitate identification by the visually impaired patrons) to bid on scarce provisions needed for a
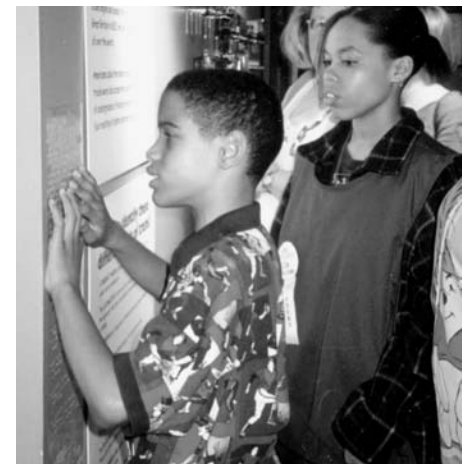
Braille Read Together children practicing Braille skills at the Children's Museum (a CPL partner)

new life in the Connecticut Western Reserve (northeast Ohio). After the auction was over, the auctioneer evaluated each group's choices and determined its chances of survival. Unfortunately, only one family "survived."

With a little imagination, almost any program can be shared by all community members, even film series. For example, when North Coast (including greater Cleveland) residents decided to share the book *To Kill a Mockingbird*, patrons who were blind or visually impaired read the book in Braille or listened to the recorded edition. Study guides were translated into large print and Braille. One group that had a significant number of blind members who wished to explore variations of the book decided to view the film version and used the audio-described version of the movie starring Gregory Peck to do so.

Audio-described videos use voice to convey important visual cues, such as scenery and the actions of characters who are not speaking. Many classic movies are available in audio-described formats and do not cost any more than their nondescribed counterparts. Two North American companies that sell audio-described videos include WGBH Media Access Group (http://main.wgbh.org/wgbh/access/dvs/dvshvcatalog.html) and Audio-Vision Canada (www.audiovision.ca/estore.asp). It is also useful to remember that most popular releases are closed-captioned, which can easily be activated for patrons with hearing impairments. All televisions produced within the last decade allow the viewing of programs produced with closed captions. VHS and digital video playback units also have this feature, which can be quickly activated. All units have help screens that instruct users on how to perform this task.

If we have any doubts about the appropriateness of a program, we ask a few patrons who have a disability if they would attend the program if the library were to host it. We have found our advisors to be honest and straightforward in their responses, which often ends up saving the library time and money. It is also a good idea to plan programs with input from people with disabilities from the start.

It is important to be sure that the marketing tools you use reach the appropriate audience and are accessible to them. While using a calligraphy font on marbled paper may be aesthetically pleasing, it will not be readable by a majority of people with low vision. The CPL staff has found that flyers that have simple graphics and use a font similar to Arial or Tahoma in at least fourteen-point type get read when sent to agencies. Staff members try to distribute the flyers to agencies that serve persons with disabilities, use direct mailings to patrons identified as having disabilities, and post the information on the library's Web site.

CPL staff and administrators and community partners obtain much pleasure and satisfaction in creating and promoting inclusive programs. Patrons gain knowledge and enjoyment from the efforts. In short, creating inclusive programs is a win-win situation for the entire community. ■

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Training Rewards and Challenges of Serving Library Users with Disabilities

Cynthia Holt and Wanda Hole

The need for effective library service to people with disabilities will continue to grow with the aging of the baby boomers. Training is an essential component of effective service. This article discusses training rewards and challenges and includes training scenarios to illustrate how patrons work to accomplish their objectives.

Y ou helped change my life." This statement is a profound testimony to the impact a library can have on library patrons with disabilities. Few experiences are as rewarding as providing the resources and services that enable individuals with disabilities to become independent library users. The Special Needs Center (SNC) at the Phoenix Public Library (PPL) is often an initial point of contact for individuals who are newly disabled. They come to learn how to use the assistive technology as part of the rehabilitative process. We don't usually think of a library as a major force for rehabilitation, but both rehabilitation professionals and their clients have told us this is so. Over the years we have speculated about the reason for this. Why do some folks choose the library over other agencies? Why do professionals who serve clients with disabilities refer their clients to the library for assistive technology training? Perhaps it is because the library is viewed as neutral territory, devoid of political agendas—just there to serve the needs of all patrons. Perhaps people feel the library is the best place to address accessibility issues because it focuses on access to information. Whatever the reason, it is gratifying to know that public libraries can serve a vital role in reaching out to the disability community.

SNC is designed to make PPL's services and resources accessible to people with disabilities. This goal has remained constant since 1983, when the center officially opened. SNC is open all hours the library is open and is staffed with three full-time and three part-time employees. The materials collection includes disability information and an in-depth collection about sign language, Braille publications, videos, descriptive video service videos, and large-type books. Accessible computer technology makes it possible for library users with disabilities to use the full range of library materials as well as resources beyond the center. There are four fully adjustable workstations with assistive technology to meet a variety of needs. It is not unusual to find all four workstations in use. Through the years, training the center's users is where we have learned the most and where we have received the greatest rewards.

Training Rewards

A major reward in serving patrons with disabilities is finding the solutions that make inaccessible library resources accessible. One way to start is by thinking about what is needed to accommodate a specific disability. For example, how can a patron who is blind access the library's electronic catalog? How can a person with a mobility impairment that prevents typing on a keyboard use the library's computers to access Web sites? A solution to the first situation is screen-reading software. The second situation might be solved with voice-activated software. A great deal has been written about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and ways libraries can accommodate for disabilities, so we won't go into that here.[1] In some cases accommodations may require structural changes. Other solutions can be found in the use of assistive technology. However, just having the latest assistive technology does not guarantee the technology will be used to its full potential. Not all individuals with disabilities are familiar with assistive technology. Training is the link connecting assistive technology to patron use, and it needs to be part of any plan to meet the needs of library users with disabilities.

Most libraries offer some type of computer training, whether it is formalized in a classroom setting, offered on a one-on-one basis, or provided informally as requested by patrons. While libraries differ in the type of classes offered and material covered, for most libraries the goal is to help patrons gain the computer skills needed to use basic library information. Are you ready to provide the same level of assistance for all your patrons?

A Training Scenario

You have just returned from lunch and are getting ready to teach the class Introduction to the Internet. You race to the classroom and boot up sixteen PCs. You see from the registration that you will have a full class of sixteen students. You have taught this class many times, and you enjoy seeing the students leave the class with the skills necessary to begin navigating the Web. The eager students,

many of them seniors, come into the classroom talking to each other about their past experience with computers, their technology fears, and their desire to "get with the times and learn this." You've just introduced yourself when one of the students raises a hand and says, "I don't think I can see this thing. How am I going to do this? Darn, I really wanted to learn about the Internet. Don't you have anything to help me?"

Maybe you have already experienced a similar situation. There could be several appropriate ways to respond, but you must be prepared. If you interact with patrons during the registration process, this would be an opportunity to ask if any accommodations are needed. Even so, some potential students may not really know until they arrive that their functional limitations will come into play. Some students can quickly be accommodated in a regular class setting. Some library users with disabilities will need a different pathway to provide them with the same content that you provide in classes for the public.

You need to have a plan both now and in the future. Services for library users with disabilities are very likely to become more critical in the future. As demographics continue to shift with the aging baby boomers, the number of people with disabilities will increase. The American Foundation for the Blind reports that one in six Americans age sixty-five and older is blind or severely visually impaired; this population is expected to more than double by 2030.[2] While the types of disabilities will vary among the aging population, the need to access written materials, either printed or on a computer screen, will remain. An important aspect of that access, both now and in the future, is training. That is our focus here—meeting the challenge of training patrons with disabilities.

The Training Challenge

Training has been an integral part of SNC's services to individuals with disabilities since the center was established nearly twenty years ago. This includes training for library users with disabilities as well as for members of their families and professionals who serve clients with disabilities. Successful training requires commitment by library administration and staff, a belief in the value of training, and an understanding of the training role and training process.

The Librarian as Trainer

Many terms can be used to describe the trainer's role: facilitator, guide, change agent, teacher. In this age of rapid change and depersonalization, Jerry Apps says teachers who work with adult learners need a new approach. His approach, Teaching from the Heart, means "teaching from the depths of who we are with the hope that we will touch the heart of those with whom we work."[3] We believe this approach is particularly applicable to training library users with disabilities. It helps establish a relationship of trust in which the trainer and patron work together to accomplish the patron's goals. Individuals with disabilities who come to us for training may be trying to adjust to numerous life changes as well as their disabilities, and they need to adapt to a different way of accessing information—for example, auditory rather than visual. For some patrons, their first encounter with assistive technology is at the library. Some have never used a computer. Some may even be technophobic. These folks need assurance they will not break the equipment and that it is okay to make mistakes. Sometimes a patron will doubt his or her ability to learn. Past failures can have long-lasting effects when it comes to learning something new. For these patrons it is important that their first learning experience be a successful one. Given all the issues patrons may bring into the training, it is clear that our approach must be more than just show and tell. Trainers need to create an atmosphere in which the learner feels accepted, comfortable, and capable. Trainers need to establish a training process that enables patrons to meet their goals. Trainers need to teach from the heart.

What do patrons need to know? Training is an organized process that helps trainees learn the skills necessary to perform specific tasks. Effective training empowers library patrons with disabilities by teaching them new ways to access information and knowledge. A major training challenge is finding out what patrons need and want to know. There are many ways to do this, including using interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, and task analysis.

Interviews

An initial interview gives insight into what a new patron needs to learn. This is similar to probing, verifying, and following up in a reference interview. The purpose of the initial interview is to determine what the individual wants to accomplish and to find out something about the nature of his or her disability. Each person with a disability has unique needs and preferences. All people who are legally blind do not have the same visual impairment. What helps one person will not necessarily be helpful to another. Some folks come knowing how to use a computer and something about assistive technology; others know little about either. Some may only want a demonstration of the technology to help them make decisions about what to purchase. The initial interview helps match assistive technology to patron needs.

Information gained through the interview makes it possible to design an individualized training program appropriate to the patron's needs, disability, and knowledge level. If there are prerequisites for what the patron wants to learn, this is the time to find out if the person has those necessary prerequisites. If not, are you prepared to provide that training, or will you refer the patron to another source? If a person who recently lost his vision wants to independently search your library catalog for recorded books but has not used screen-reading software before, how will you assist? Online or self-paced tutorials are available for some assistive technologies. For example, Freedom Scientific offers several tutorials for JAWS, a screen-reading software program. These kinds of tutorials may be excellent for some people, but many will want and need assistance along the way.

The interview also provides opportunities for just-in-time training. For example, a patron indicated she needed to meet a quick deadline. To do this she needed to use a computer with screen-reading and word-processing software. She was familiar with the center's screen reader but not the word-processing software. The interview indicated this was not the time for systematic training. What she requested was a staff member who could answer her word-processing questions. This training approach enabled the patron to meet her objective and deadline.

Questionnaires

To help design group training programs we've used mail-out questionnaires in various formats, including regular print, large print, and Braille. User responses help determine what training is needed,

days and times for training, what format training materials need to take, and if potential participants want training materials in advance of training.

Focus Groups

A focus group was particularly helpful to us in designing a training program for DragonDictate voice-activated software. Focus group members consisted of eight individuals who were representative of folks who would benefit from the software. Four members were computer users with disabilities, two were familiar with the software, and two members came from organizations that serve clients with disabilities. Besides identifying skills that needed to be learned and prerequisites, this group provided helpful suggestions, such as not to give people unrealistic expectations.

Task Analysis

Task analysis is another needs-assessment tool. We used it to provide the foundation for determining the content for an information connection workshop that introduced patrons who are blind and visually impaired to the Internet, e-mail, and scanning technology. At the beginning of each workshop session participants were given the opportunity to tell what they wanted and needed to learn. This particular workshop demonstrates the importance

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[Realize] how important it is to listen to patrons. Listen to their needs, listen to their solutions for training problems, and listen to their triumphs.

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of close ties between library and community. AT&T had given the library a grant to fund public computer training and agreed that this was an important aspect. Cost is one of those training challenges that may be offset by businesses or organizations that have an interest in technology and disabilities.

The above examples focus on identifying needs for specific training, either individualized or group. When we designed a needs assessment to help in SNC's long-range planning we incorporated in the survey a section on training needs.[4] This was in keeping with our belief that training plays a central role in meeting the needs of library users with disabilities. Whatever form needs assessment takes, the purpose is to give us information upon which to base training. If the library is in the early stages of becoming more inclusive in services for people with disabilities, the process outlined in *Planning for Library Services to People with Disabilities* by Rubin is a solid way to begin.[5] Each of the ten steps in this planning process could incorporate information about training needs.

Planning and Presenting the Training Program

What's next? Once training needs are identified, they can be used to develop training goals and objectives. Goals are broad general statements that tell what is to be learned. Objectives are specific statements that tell what the learner will be able to do at the end of the training. Objectives help us select training content, the order in which skills need to be taught, and what learning activities to provide. The purpose of all of this is to design training that meets patrons' needs. Conducting the training comes next. What follows are a few training scenarios from SNC.

Most training at the center is individualized. Generally, a patron makes an appointment to come to the center for training. Sometimes patrons with their own assistive technology who cannot come to the library will need training. A library user who is blind wanted to use the library catalog from home. He uses a Braille display that only displays eighty characters at a time. As part of the training he requested Braille copies of the catalog screens in order to orientate himself to the catalog's menu choices and search engine. SNC has a Braille embosser and Braille translation software and was able to produce Braille copies of the catalog screens. Once the patron understood how to maneuver around the screen and where the prompts that required response were located, he became an independent user. Although this user does not come to the library, there is a commitment to serve his training needs. There is also a commitment to try and find solutions for difficult training situations. This is an advantage of individualized training: the trainer can give full attention to one patron's needs. Often the patron identifies his or her own unique training solution, as the following case illustrates.

A young man with a learning disability and limited reading skills came to learn how to use DragonDictate. He also had some speech patterns that were difficult for the software to recognize. Given these factors, he did not seem a likely candidate for training. However he had great determination, patience, and persistence. When he came across words he didn't know he typed them into his Franklin Speller and had them pronounced. His plan for learning DragonDictate was to have a staff member sit by him and dictate the words softly to him so he could repeat them for the software. For some this process of training might be too slow, but not for this wonderfully determined patron. This might be considered to be beyond the scope of the library's role, but since patrons without disabilities come to the library to use word processing software, we needed to provide the same opportunity to those who need additional assistance. We also felt we were meeting a need that wasn't being met elsewhere in the community. In the end, this patron met his goals and the objectives of learning DragonDictate. He was able to independently dictate and print a letter. A reward for both staff and patron came when he called to say the state's rehabilitation services provided funds for his own computer with DragonDictate and Naturally Speaking. From this training experience, staff once again realized how important it is to listen to patrons. Listen to their needs, listen to their solutions for training problems, and listen to their triumphs.

Earlier, in connection with needs assessment, we mentioned the information connection workshop. We used group training for this workshop because we wanted to reach as many people as possible at one time. Efficiency was important. In addition, this was an introduction to Internet access. Participants who wanted more in-depth training could schedule a time to receive individualized training. Group training works well when the intent of training is to introduce a new item and acquaint trainees with the possibilities. Some people prefer to learn in groups; they like to learn from each other. Group learning also helps fulfill some needs for socialization. We have seen friendships form

for them, they may become frustrated and even angry. And sometimes that disappointment, frustration, or anger is directed at their trainer. At that point we need to accept their feelings, listen to their complaints, and reassure them that if at some time in the future they want to come back and try again we'll be there to help. Leave that training door open.

Throughout the years we've talked to our patrons about what makes training effective. We've also talked with librarians, agency trainers, and assistive technology vendors about successful training.[6] The training tips (see sidebar) they shared with us provide a foundation for developing effective training. The challenge is to provide training that meets the patrons' needs. The reward is seeing patrons meet their training objectives. And what they learn at a public library often changes their lives. ∎

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as a result of patrons meeting through training. This is another benefit of training that should not be taken lightly. Patrons with disabilities learn much from one another. Their shared experience greatly enriches the training environment.

Evaluating the Training

Did the training work? No training is complete without evaluating how effective it was. Clearly written and measurable objectives are a primary source for evaluation. If the patron met the stated objectives, the training worked. Observations, end-of-training evaluation, and follow-up evaluation after time has lapsed are some of the ways we have evaluated training. Evaluation can tell us if objectives were met, how well the training process worked, how the patrons have used what they learned, how future training can be improved, and what additional training is needed.

As in life, not all training is successful. There are patrons who are still trying to adjust to their disabilities. They want the assistive technology to allow them to do things the same way they did before the disability. When this doesn't happen, they may be disappointed. If learning to use the technology is not easy

Our Deaf Family Needs to Read, Too

Rosa Rodriguez and Monica Reed

The Safety Harbor (Fla.) Public Library has found that the only way to provide quality library service to the area's Deaf community has been to teach our Deaf patrons to read. The library has had a great impact on the lives of the Deaf, who have not only learned reading, writing, and arithmetic, but also gained valuable life skills. This small library has become a bridge to the world for the Deaf community in Pinellas County. We have been given a unique opportunity to see firsthand how public libraries can make a dramatic difference in people's lives.

The Safety Harbor (Fla.) Public Library serves a city of 17,000 in Pinellas County. Small in size for the area, the city's nearness to beaches, Tampa, St. Petersburg, and airports, as well as its small-town charm and beauty, make it an ideal suburban community. There is a great deal of diversity in housing, economics, ethnicity, and educational levels. The community tends to be well-off, well-educated, and well-served by city, county, and state agencies. Recent development has been very upscale, but there are still pockets of inexpensive housing and rentals, many of which are within walking distance of the library, an eight-year-old, 15,000-square-foot facility.

The Tampa Bay area, including Pinellas County, is nationally known by those in the field of Deafness for the array of services provided to the Deaf. Services in the area range from educational and mental health to social and vocational opportunities. The county's Deaf population is one of the largest in the nation and is growing rapidly as individuals from different parts of the country come searching for needed services not provided elsewhere. (The Deaf community is, in itself, a culture, a group of individuals with their own language, traditions, and worldview. We use the capitalized term *Deaf* to refer to this community, whereas the lowercase *deaf* is more often used to refer to a medical condition. For the purpose of this article, *Deaf* will be used to refer to individuals who are Deaf, deaf, or hard of hearing.)

In 1995 a group of Deaf people started visiting the library every day and wandering around. They would write notes, but the notes rarely made any sense to library staff. We learned that these Deaf patrons were living in one of several group homes not far from the library. Using some community contacts, we found out who ran the group homes and that their entire population was Deaf. We made contact and began a journey that has taken our library many miles in directions we could never have imagined.

We did what public libraries everywhere do. We looked at our community and responded to needs that we saw. First, we found other service providers in the area who could help us out. We found many partners who each had a role in the life of this Deaf community. But we kept running up against one deficiency we couldn't solve—literacy. There was no agency able to handle the special literacy needs for this community. We knew we couldn't provide any meaningful library services to them without starting with literacy. Several Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grants gave us the hope that we really could do something for them—teach them to read.

We built a Deaf literacy program dedicated to teaching literacy skills to the Deaf population in the area. The library used local funding to start up a collection of materials related to Deafness, American Sign Language (ASL), and Deaf culture. In 1998 and 1999, we received LSTA grants to start up the literacy program. We hired a part-time teacher who is fluent in ASL and started classes. In our first week we expected ten to fifteen students, but fifty showed up.

In 2000 we proposed that the Pinellas Public Library Cooperative (PPLC) adopt the program permanently. We were fortunate to work with caring people at the cooperative who believed in library services for all. In light of the previous years' successes and the evident needs facing the Deaf community, the cooperative board realized this program could be effective countywide. Since then, PPLC has provided funding for a full-time staff person, supplies, student transportation, and some programming. The program now recruits students from all over the county.

Why Literacy?

Ninety percent of Deaf children are born to parents who are hearing.[1] Parents who are in denial about their child's Deafness or are confused about which approach to take aren't ready to learn a new language. Most parents of Deaf children have no experience with Deafness, do not know any sign language, and are not aware of what their children are missing.

For children born today, the health and education professions are aware of the necessity of early intervention. However, every day we meet adults who are the product of no intervention at all.

We meet people who did not learn any language in the critical early years. We meet people who did not have the experience of absorbing culture from their environment. We meet people who spent so much time during school learning basic communication skills that they learned little else.

Language acquisition begins early. The average age of diagnosis of hearing loss is three years old. Deaf children can't learn from their families by listening to what is going on. Since much language learning is incidental, Deaf children in a hearing household are deprived of the natural avenues for learning. Starting in school with limited language skills, these children are not ready to learn to read. National statistics indicate that 75 percent of eighteen-year-old Deaf people are functionally illiterate. The average reading level of Deaf high school graduates in the United States is roughly third or fourth grade.[2]

We can testify that there are Deaf people who overcome these obstacles and learn. They become successful, productive, and happy adults. But we have seen many individuals who are still struggling. We see people who were abused because they are Deaf. We see people whose parents were told by well-meaning professionals not to expect too much of them because they are Deaf. We see people who graduated from high school without even the most basic literacy skills.

We have also seen evidence of the resilience of human nature. Faced with isolation from the hearing world, the Deaf have created their own community and language, American Sign Language (ASL). ASL has been passed from hand to hand for generations, sometimes against the wishes of the hearing helpers of the Deaf. It is as different from English as any foreign language, with a unique grammar and structure. The Deaf community is a thriving cultural minority with its own language, custom, traditions, and worldview.

Why the Library?

Our first impetus to do anything at all for the Deaf came from a library tour organized by one of the group homes. The library director was demonstrating the computer catalog, and all of the tour participants clamored for materials about the Deaf. The library had only a few items. We almost lost them that

day—why would they come back if we didn't have anything about them?

Now that the program has matured, we know the answer to the question "Why the library?" is "Because we are the best place to do it." The Deaf classroom in the library is the place where formal teaching occurs; the rest of the library is the laboratory where learning continues, addressing every aspect of their lives. We have the information and the tools they have always lacked. We can connect our Deaf patrons to the world with books, computers, videos, our staff, and our programs. They come to the author talks, they come to our family storytimes, and they use our computers daily. They are regulars at the reference desk. They are regulars at the circulation desk using not just the Deaf collection, but the whole collection.

How Did We Do It?

One of the earliest developments in the program, even before the grants started, was the weekly ASL class taught by Rusty, our first and longest-lasting Deaf volunteer. Currently we have three sessions, one for children and beginning and intermediate levels for adults. Sign language class participants are mostly

hearing individuals who either have a Deaf family member or are just interested in learning a new language. The weekly attendance is regularly close to fifty. Library staff members are encouraged to sit in on the classes. Volunteers from the classes have been extremely helpful to the literacy program. They assist with tutoring and modeling English writing by e-mailing students. Deaf students write thank-you notes and maintain contact with these volunteers via e-mail.

Another early service the library provided is the Deaf collection. The library is fortunate to have the Chrissie Elmore Memorial Fund, created by a former librarian who left her estate to the library after her death. This fund provided seed money for the Deaf collection. It now numbers more than fifteen hundred items, including fiction and nonfiction books, children's books, magazines, and videos. The emphasis has been in collecting Deaf culture and ASL materials. Some of the material is scholarly, but most is intended for general audiences. Recently we split off the growing collection of items relating to literacy into a separate literacy collection.

Before we went to the state library for our initial LSTA grant, we needed to demonstrate that we had established

partnerships in the community we were attempting to serve. Since our initial contacts with the Deaf community and the service providers, we have had successful relationships with several groups.

The St. Petersburg College interpreter training program has been our closest partner. We have had a number of volunteer interpreting students and interns working under our Deaf literacy teacher's watchful eye. Members of the faculty have helped us out with special programs as interpreters and guides to

> The Deaf community is a real community, with its own culture, language, and membership criteria. We are fortunate to be considered part of that community . . .

artistic expression in ASL.

DSC has been a partner, primarily as a source of information and communication with the larger Deaf community. We have jointly sponsored programs with them.

The Safety Harbor Neighborhood Family Center has been available to help our students with referrals, the food bank, and other services. They gratefully turned their Deaf GED students over to us, and refer any Deaf clients seeking literacy or other classes to us. We also refer students to them when such social services as food pantry, assistance programs for women and children, and case management are needed.

Safety Harbor cooperates with PPLC by providing space for the Deaf learning center classroom in the library as well as ongoing support for interpreters, programs, and the Deaf collection from the library's budget.

The Friends of the Safety Harbor Public Library have provided funds for a video camera. The Clearwater Junior Women's Club gave $2,500 for a computer. We were able to get an in-kind grant of $2,000 in literacy publications from New Readers Press. Allegany Franciscan Foundation donated $5,000 toward classroom materials, a computer, and some of the costs for community-based instruc-

tion. Since 1998, the Espiritu Santo Catholic Church in Safety Harbor has been sponsoring our Christmas party and paying for Christmas gifts delivered by a Deaf Santa Claus to all our students.

During the program's first year, students were recruited informally from the Safety Harbor Deaf community. Students came to the program invited by a friend, referred by a caseworker, or just by walking into the library and finding out that services for the Deaf were being provided. The Deaf collection has attracted many Deaf people and professionals working in the field of Deafness. Many Deaf individuals have been drawn to the program by our interpreted computer classes.

Our classes feature an immediate problem-solving approach to student needs. Students are rewarded for their efforts and hard work. Setting realistic program and student goals has been key to our success. Reading and writing are encouraged by allowing the students to work on material they have selected that is of interest to them. Community-based instruction activities or field trips are also provided to complement class material. These activities are a fun learning experience. Our students did not know how banks worked. They had never been to a museum. They did not know how to ride the bus. We have encouraged student involvement and participation in both Deaf and hearing community activities. Picnics or parties are planned monthly to celebrate holidays, birthdays, and student accomplishments.

A favorite and most effective teaching tool is our use of computers and the Internet. Students write letters, communicate with family and friends, and find information about subjects that matter to them, such as medication, health, and finances. We have weekly computer sessions on Friday nights when the library is closed. We have had a number of special computer classes geared to our Deaf students.

We have children of Deaf adults (CODA) coming to the library daily. CODAs encounter the same language acquisition difficulties as their Deaf parents. The library's family story times have provided a venue for interaction of Deaf and hearing parents and children. Staff and volunteers provide weekly homework assistance for school-age CODAs. We have several hearing children and adults regularly reading stories to CODA toddlers to provide needed language modeling and interaction.

One of the advantages we have as a small library is that all of our staff interacts daily with the Deaf. Everyone on the library staff has learned to communicate with the Deaf, and several are moderately fluent in ASL. The library currently employs three Deaf people, and all of our staff meetings are interpreted.

What Can You Do?

First find out what you need to do. Who is providing service to the Deaf in your community? What services are being provided? How big is your Deaf community, and where are they located? Like most linguistic minorities, the Deaf try to live near each other and near where services are provided in their language.

Next ask yourself what resources you have. Are there any staff members that know ASL or are willing to learn? Is there anyplace where sign language is taught? Can you be the champion, or can you find one in your administration? What sources of funding do you have to start with?

Then define your goals. Small steps can be very useful. Maybe literacy cannot be the first goal; you might have to start with access. We have an obligation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to provide interpreters for all the programs the Deaf want to attend. That can be costly and not easy to get budgeted. Putting a little notice in the program's announcement, "sign language interpreters will be provided if . . ." is not enough. Try to anticipate which programs the Deaf in your community would be interested in, provide an interpreter, and then specifically invite members of the Deaf community.

Find other ways to make your library Deaf friendly. Look at your policies. We still have regular problems with circulating books and videos to our Deaf community. Our first problem was that they did not understand that they could take things out. When they got the picture, we had problems with them taking things out without checking them out. We are past that now. Mostly now, when they check things out, they can't get them back on time. They rack up huge (to them) fines and stop coming for a while. We negotiate with individuals to try to impress on them the responsibility of returning things on time without making the burden of the fines so great that they just can't afford to use the library.

> Our classes feature an immediate problem-solving approach to student needs. Students are rewarded for their efforts and hard work. Setting realistic program and student goals has been key to our success.

Look at your collection. Just having *The Week the World Heard Gallaudet* is not enough.[3] A wonderful source to start with is Harris Communications (http://harriscomm.com, a vendor devoted exclusively to materials and technology about the Deaf), but even running the term *Deaf* in your vendor's database will yield a bounty. Also check out publications from Gallaudet University (http://gupress.gallaudet.edu), the only liberal arts college devoted to the Deaf—they are an incredibly rich resource.

Look at your library programs. Can you adapt a program specifically for the Deaf community? We have had numerous programs just for the Deaf, based on specific, current needs, including landlord and tenant rights, parenting, the ADA, and hurricane preparedness among others. Our favorite special program was when we invited the former Miss Deaf America Lauren Teruel. She came to Pinellas for a weekend, spoke about literacy and Deafness, and told wonderful stories. The whole Deaf community came out for each of her presentations. She was personable and gracious and wrote to some of our students afterwards.

Conclusion

To us, the most important signs of progress are the little triumphs. When the student who did not know the alphabet could write a note to order a pizza from a local restaurant, we were elated. When a student who could not sign in sentences performed a complete children's picture book in ASL with expression and understanding, we wiped the tears from our eyes. When we saw a Deaf mother signing stories to her baby, we cheered. We mourn for the ones we lose, the student who was thrown out of his house and is now homeless. We find ourselves doing plenty that is not in our job descriptions: making phone calls, visiting in the hospital, watching a baby during a parenting program, helping another student prepare for the written driver's test. The Deaf community is a real community, with its own culture, language, and membership criteria. We are fortunate to be considered part of that community, but just providing classes and books is not enough. We have made friends and learned their language. We go to gatherings, hold parties and picnics. We celebrate births and deaths, birthdays, and new jobs. It has taken a while, but the library is now part of the Deaf community, a place that is trusted, respected, and used. ∎

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Nothing about Me without Me

Planning for Library Services for People with Disabilities

Shelley Quezada

This article describes elements of the Planning for Library Services for People with Disabilities program, which was developed in Massachusetts and based on PLA's *Planning for Results*. Planning for Library Services for People with Disabilities helps libraries design programs and services to address the specific needs of a growing population of people with disabilities. Emphasis is on using consumer input in plan design, with practical steps on how to achieve it.

Sharon, a visually impaired woman, approached the circulation desk at her public library to request some extra help in getting a book. "The clerk's response," said Sharon, "was to take a deep breath followed by an audible sigh." That sigh communicated the clerk's feelings of being put upon and asked to do something outside her normal routine. The sigh was a throwaway response from the clerk, but to Sharon, a still-memorable and unpleasant association with the library.

Several years ago the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC), which oversees library services in the state, conducted a series of statewide focus groups with both library users and nonusers. An emerging theme raised by at least one person in every group related to the issue of disabilities. Access into older library buildings remains a major problem. One man recounted his father's difficulty in negotiating a wheelchair through the staff workroom, the only accessible entrance to the library. This elderly patron was constantly frustrated, and he felt he was disturbing staff trying to reach the public part of the building. Unfortunately it is not uncommon for library staff to dismiss providing services to people with disabilities, implying that the situation is beyond their control. Often they use the building as a reason to absolve themselves. Preferring to put things on the back burner, they hope for major structural changes or a new building.

New Technologies

These incidents sum up a continuing challenge that new advances in technology have not overcome. In the twelve years since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities

Act (ADA), there have been improvements in library services and programs through new tools and technology that have proved beneficial for all users. Automatic door openers in some facilities have aided mothers with children in strollers as much as those with mobility impairments. Improved access through video magnification, speech recognition, scanners, and Braille input and output are examples of a host of evolving assistive devices. As Joe Lazarro, director of adaptive technology at the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind observed, "The personal computer represents an electronic bill of rights for persons with disabilities."[1]

Curb cuts in the sidewalk have helped users of wheelchairs and have also been a boon to those on inline skates or bicycles. Notwithstanding the increased accessibility afforded by the many electronic curb cuts, MBLC continues to focus considerable energy on helping libraries carry out a planning process to address larger issues of staff attitude and user involvement.

Nothing about Me, without Me

"Nothing about me, without me" is a common phrase used within the disability community to describe the need for user input into the development of services that are designed for them. Many libraries have quickly adopted new assitive technology without including potential users in the discussion.

Frequently, there is the tendency to designate a particular staff member as the keeper of information about disability services, such as an appointed ADA coordinator or a technically qualified staff member who takes on the responsibility to learn about and maintain adaptive equipment

MBLC regularly receives questions for technical assistance for a quick fix to a complex question. For example, a library receiving a windfall of several thousand dollars from the local Lions Club for purchasing adaptive technology will request a standardized list of appropriate equipment. However, when queried on such specifics as "Have you made an effort to reach out to people with disabilities in your community?" or

"Has an advisory board been set up, as is recommended under the ADA, to develop a plan for your town?" the library is often unable to respond. Further questions about the specific technology needs of people with disabilities in the community or whether the library's board of trustees has crafted a policy to cover services to all users sometimes end up in "just give us a list, folks, not a lecture."

Several times a year, MBLC receives phone calls about dealing with issues of accommodation. Often this is related to a request from the parent of a deaf or hearing-impaired child who is anxious for the child to participate in a story hour. Another concern may come from a children's librarian who is trying to cope with a child with a learning disability who is excessively disruptive during story hour. Staff members are looking for guidance in issue interpretation, which involves the civil rights of those with disabilities and children's rights to enjoy a story hour without disruption. While there are no easy answers to these questions, it is clear that many library staff members are unprepared to deal with these incidents, wishing to receive some kind of simple solution to their problem. Often this happens when their own trustees or staff may have never addressed these issues by developing and setting policy.

While there has been legislation in place for several years that mandates planning by a public facility, librarians need guidance in how to formulate that plan. This, along with receiving many questions on disability issues, prompted MBLC to develop a mechanism to help libraries carry out the spirit of the law and provide equal access to all users. The response was to adapt a process based on the steps involved in *Planning for Results*.[2] Using this approach, new information about the needs of people with disabilities could be integrated into a library's existing plan without requiring the library to develop a separate planning document.

Planning Workshops

In 1999 MBLC contracted with library consultant Rhea Joyce Rubin of Rubin Consulting in Oakland, California, who served as one of the trainers of *Planning for Results* and was then chair of ALA's Disability Assembly, to come up with such a process. Rubin worked with a statewide advisory group from different types of libraries and users with varying disabilities to formulate a process that could be integrated into a library's existing plan. The final document, "Planning for Library Services for People with Disabilities: A Process for Libraries in Massachusetts":

1. ensured that all parts of the plan were inclusive;
2. included objectives and activities related to people with disabilities that were based on identified issues;
3. made services available on an equal basis to all members of the community;
4. proposed development of services and strategies to attract people with disabilities to the library; and
5. reinforced the library's role as an information access point for people with disabilities and their families and care providers.[3]

In addition to developing a readable, usable, and clearly written document, Rubin was brought to Massachusetts by MBLC to conduct two-day workshops for implementing this planning process. Included in this training program was a half-day session in which participants are immersed in a simulated experience of what it is like to be visually or hearing impaired or to explore library resources in a wheelchair. In another session, a panel of consumers spoke about barriers they had experienced in using the library. This aspect of the training allowed library staff to get up close and personal and ask questions to and respond to questions from consumers with disabilities. At the conclusion, under the direction of an expert trainer, participants were well positioned to take the plan back to their communities, roll up their sleeves, and get to work. Although Rubin conducted these sessions in person, she has also put together a training manual that provides techniques to be used in conducting future workshops.

The Planning Process

"Planning for Library Services for People with Disabilities" includes a ten-step process that is already familiar to those involved in long-range planning. Of significance in this process are three separate scan instruments and a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) exercise. The first step requires conducting a library scan designed to determine the extent that the facility is in compliance with the ADA.

A second survey, the community scan, requires the collection of data about specific populations residing in the community. It also calls for calculating real numbers of school-age, adult, and older adult populations. The library must try to identify, as accurately as possible, the number of people who are blind or visually impaired; have speech or language impairments; have mobility impairments; are deaf or hard of hearing; and have learning disabilities, developmental disabilities, mental retardation, or severe mental illness. In many cases such statistics are difficult to obtain, as much of the information is tabulated differently or maintained by various state agencies. However, this survey does encourage library staff to seek information from provider organizations and other groups working with this population. This demonstrates that the library is open to input from community groups that might be asked to work on a draft plan. In some cases, coming up with exact numbers of potential users has been almost impossible. When this occurs, the planning process provides a percentage figure from among the general population that can be applied to an individual community.

The third scan queries users and nonusers with different types of disabilities about issues related to library use. Available in multiple formats, including large print, Braille, and audiotape, this questionnaire requires support from independent living centers or other advocacy groups to distribute the questionnaire to clients. The Springfield (Mass.) Library has also translated the survey into Spanish in an effort to reach members traditionally underrepresented in this kind of survey. The scan asks hard questions, including the way(s) a specific disability might hinder library use. This provides information for consumers to learn which programs and services are offered at the library and establishes the best ways the library can communicate with these patrons in the future.

Careful attention must be paid to the selection process for members who will serve on an advisory committee, as they are a sounding board for the constituent groups they represent. This committee of between twelve and eighteen members should include people with different types of disabilities, caregivers or family members of people with disabilities,

"You Want Us to Do What?"

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The Springfield (Mass.) Library is known for aggressively pursuing Library Service and Technology (LSTA) grants through the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) as well as any other funding agencies. An extremely tight budget forces us to pursue outside funding for many of the expanded and innovative services we would like to offer.

But this was the first time Shelley Quezada, an MBLC consultant, had asked us to attend a multiday training session; form an advisory committee; perform strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) exercises; and survey our community—all before she would even give us the related grant application form.

However, I'm now convinced that all the work that went into preparing for the application process paid off by making the grantwriting and implementation of the project a breeze. How else would we know that our extensive collection of audiobooks lacked materials on disabilities issues, highly sought after by citizens with disabilities? We update our large print collections on a regular basis; why were we still lacking the newest bestseller titles that are always of great interest to all library users? Our circulating collections contain updated information on all manner of issues of health, law, education, and disability, but where were the books written by people with disabilities on these topics? Our Web page was approved by Bobby (http://bobby.cast.org/html/en/index.jsp), which was created by the Center for Applied Special Technology to help Web authors identify and repair significant barriers to access by individuals with disabilities, but were people with disabilities taking advantage of all the connections to be made through our page? Certainly we had gaps to fill, if not in the collection itself then in the way we communicated to people about what we do offer and how to access it.

Improving communications proved to be another recurring theme that surfaced in the SWOT exercises and the community scan. Our survey results substantiate a lack of good publicity—only about half of the survey participants responded at all to how they found out about programs and services at the library. None of the respondents indicated a disability-focused publication or news source. (An earlier survey of all local residents also indicated the library needs to better inform residents of the services we provide.) We knew we needed to take steps to inform Springfield residents with disabilities that their library provides telephone, teletypwriter (TTY), fax, and e-mail reference; a Bobby-approved Web site with disability links; and free reserves, interlibrary loans, and branch transfers. We needed to publicize our collections of fiction and nonfiction materials on disability themes and how we would be expanding them.

One of the innovative ways we have begun to address these needs are by using *Disabilities Resources Monthly,* a monthly publication highlighting books, pamphlets, Web sites, and other resources not often reviewed elsewhere, as a selection source. It includes a wide range of topics, from education inclusion to sexuality, diabetes to wheelchair purchasing. A handy periodical for you and your patrons, subscription information, and downloadable back issues are available at www.disabilityresources.org/DRMpubs-DRM.html.

We also developed a mailing list of agencies serving and employing people with disabilities in order to get the word out about our programs. During the SWOT exercises, the advisory committee spoke often of the public transportation system used by many people with mobility impairments or other disabilities, and the long waiting and riding times as well as the unreliable schedules. We began using this transportation system as a place to distribute our literature, so that our target audience people with long rides could learn of our programs.

There's a guiding principle that I reflect on when I feel unsure about how to proceed in establishing or implementing a new library service. You not only have to ask people what they want, you also have to listen to what they say. I keep a yellowed note taped to my computer reminding me of this simple, but not easy, motto. Asking and listening to our advisory committee opened our eyes to important deficiencies and areas to grow in our library. So the next time someone asks you to plan library services for people with disabilities, without asking you to get input from your community, tell them, "You want me to do what?"

[Editor's note: For information about another library's experience with the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners grant funds for serving people with disabilities, see "What's New @ Our Library: Adaptive Technology" by Nancy Alcorn in this issue's "Perspectives" column.]

members of organizations (advocates) or staff of those agencies, special education directors or teachers, and members of the library staff. Issues relating to youth and older adults should also be represented.

Advisory members are asked to attend a one-day meeting in which a major activity is participation in a SWOT exercise that helps identify key issues of importance to the representatives and aids the library in determining what it can address. Convening this type of meeting may open dialog with traditionally underrepresented members of the community. Frequently an expectation from these meetings is that library staff members are going to do something about people's concerns. Based upon results of the surveys and the advisory meeting, the library is asked to come up with a draft plan.

The time devoted to conducting the surveys, communicating with individuals (both consumers and advocates), holding an advisory meeting, and actually working on the plan is considerable.

MBLC has offered libraries that engaged in this planning effort the opportunity to apply for $20,000 in Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds to address the needs of people with disabilities as outlined in their plan.

Lessons Learned

More than 120 people in the state have attended a series of two-day training workshops and follow-up sessions over

the past three years. While the actual number of libraries applying for grants has been smaller, the planning process has in some way reached at least one quarter of public libraries in the state. To date, close to thirty libraries have been funded for two-year projects totaling more than $500,000 in LSTA funds. It is important to note that although the majority that have benefited are public libraries, the plan is designed to be used by all types of libraries. Funded projects now take place in universities, a hospital, and a prison library using this process.

While the opportunity to apply for federal funds may be a motivating factor for libraries to participate in the planning process, a more open dialog with constituents and their communities has kept the library staff sustained in carrying the plan out, effectively changing how staff think about and relate to people with disabilities in their communities. Project directors underscore the critical need of training for all staff—not just those who normally come in contact with the public. Certain training addresses use of new adaptive technologies, while customer service training places renewed emphasis on the needs of the library user. A staff person who attends a workshop in which a visually impaired woman recounts her negative experience at the circulation desk will be far more thoughtful when dealing with similar situations. After one training session, a staff person commented, "We have a patron in a wheelchair whose speech is difficult to understand. Before the workshop I was uncomfortable asking him to repeat himself, but now I feel more at ease in doing so."

Among the key points reinforced in customer service training sessions:

- do not make broad assumptions about people's needs, rather ask what help is desired;
- treat people with disabilities the same as any other patron;
- do not be afraid to ask questions;
- address the person directly, even if he or she has a personal care assistant with them;
- respect a person's space;
- keep the library environment barrier free—from time to time do a spot check to see if chairs block the aisles or if there is a clear path to the computer terminal; and
- improve signage, including signs offering assistance if necessary.

According to a Center for Disease Control and Prevention report, by the year 2030 the number of older Americans will have more than doubled.[4] Through this process many libraries have discovered that socially isolated older adults are one of the fastest growing segments of our service population. These adults are beginning to experience problems with their hearing and vision as well as mobility impairments. At the same time, more than half the people who sign up to learn computer and Internet skills, part of our LSTA-funded information literacy projects, are seniors. Many are anxious to learn how to use e-mail so they can correspond with their grandchildren and other family and friends. As the director of the Council on Aging commented in a support letter to the Beaman Library in West Boylston, Massachusetts, "We constantly see evidence that anyone who keeps his/her mind and body more active and in touch with current events will live a healthier and happier life." It is a natural next step that our libraries provide a workstation with accommodation for adults with low vision so they can send e-mail or access the catalog.

Another important accommodation should be a text telephone for the hearing impaired. According to the ADA, one telecommunications device with a typewriter-style keyboard, readout display, and phone line connector or acoustic coupler for a standard telephone handset must be provided inside any building that has four or more public pay telephones, counting both interior and exterior phones. The device, known as a teletypewriter (TTY) or telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), allows users to type and read messages over the telephone lines rather than talk and listen like hearing telephone users. (The terms TTY and TDD are often used interchangeably, although some deaf people prefer the term TTY since the device is not strictly for the deaf but rather is used to facilitate communication between deaf and hearing people.) TDD-compatible modems can also be added to personal computers to enable them to send and receive TDD calls. This equipment should be standard in most large and medium-sized public libraries. If the general expectation is that most libraries own a TDD, more people who are deaf or hearing impaired would ask for it. This service needs to be promoted as a resource the library owns, and the phone number should be plainly

displayed on all brochures, newsletters, and publicity.

Recently, Beth Goldman, outreach coordinator of the Morrill Memorial Library in Norwood, Massachusetts, presented a great achievers story hour for children featuring stories about peo-

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> Project directors underscore the critical need of training for all staff—not just those who normally come in contact with the public. Certain training addresses use of new adaptive technologies, while customer service training places renewed emphasis on the needs of the library user.

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ple with disabilities. She invited a member of her project advisory board who uses a prosthesis to be part of the presentation. In her thank-you letter after the program she wrote him, "You were terrific as a presenter at our story hour. Your meaningful and funny approach captivated children and adults allowing them to explore how one lives . . . with one arm. And when I say explore, I mean it literally, as kids came up and touched your manufactured shoulder!" She went on to say, "At our last [advisory] meeting you challenged members to define what a disability is. By placing the definition of a disability within the context of the agency's function, you underscored that the person is not the disability, which is exactly what we hope will be recognized by patrons and staff through our programs." This comment echoes the message conveyed on a button distributed by the San Francisco Public Library at a recent ALA Diversity Fair: "Attitudes are the *Real* Disability."

Many improvements in service that should be taking place in our libraries are actually low- or no-cost. Staffs of state agencies and local organizations designed to serve people with disabilities

are often eager to give information-training sessions for libraries. A number of service groups, such as the Lions, can

> Thoughtful and well-ordered processes ensure that we include all relevant input as we continue to strengthen our commitment . . .

provide supplemental funding for new equipment, especially for use with a constituent group whom they have traditionally championed.

Summary

The discoveries made by members of the library community who have participated in the planning process described earlier have reached far beyond their own communities. They have worked with members of their own resource-sharing networks and regional systems to promote the value of this planning process to their peers. They have organized informational sessions on disability issues and sponsored vendor fairs showcasing adaptive technology. They have held training sessions on customer service for people with disabilities and asked colleagues from surrounding towns to participate. They have written articles for local newspapers and encouraged people with disabilities to take their place at the table along with other stakeholders. Individual library experiences increasingly demonstrate the value of listening to the community we serve. Thoughtful and well-ordered processes ensure that we include all relevant input as we continue to strengthen our commitment and enrich the outcome for all users

In January 2001 ALA Council approved the Library Services for People with Disabilities Policy written by the Americans with Disabilities Act Assembly, a representational group administered by the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA), a division of the American Library Association. This policy, while welcome, must be part of an all-encompassing strategy. In order to implement any policy, our libraries need more than piecemeal efforts. Setting up a workstation with assistive technology alone will not reach scores of people in our community who do not know about or use our services unless it is part of a larger plan to include those who would use it as well as their families and care providers. The plan must also be designed to educate all library staff. A viable process that has been field-tested in Massachusetts for more than three years is now available in *Planning for Library Services for People with Disabilities,* an ASCLA publication that is an adaptation of our planning process.[5]

When Lisa Wenner, director of the Meekins Library in Williamsburg, Massachusetts, applied for grant funds, she stated in her application, "I'm in the service business. For years we have been planning to renovate and expand our main library. A primary reason is to make the building accessible. Recently, a middle-aged woman with post-polio syndrome wrote on a user survey, 'I hunger for the day when I can get into the Meekins Library.' At an advisory meeting, another woman told me that she didn't know how much longer she could carry her motor impaired son into the library." Thanks to the workshops and funding offered through MBLC, patrons like these will soon have full access to the range of library services that they deserve. ■

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The DAISY Consortium

The Digital Accessible Information System (DAISY) Consortium was formed by talking-book libraries to lead a worldwide transition from analog to digital talking-books. The consortium believes that all published information should be available to people with print disabilities at the same time and at no greater cost, in an accessible, feature-rich, navigable format.

The consortium works to develop the international standard and implementation strategies for the production, exchange, and use of digital talking books in both developed and developing countries—with special attention to integration with mainstream technology—to ensure timely access to information for all people with print disabilities.

The major goals of the consortium are:
- to create and promote the worldwide standard for accessible navigation and structuring of digital talking books

- to encourage and foster the establishment and development of digital talking book library services in both developed and developing countries
- to maximize the accessibility and utility of electronic books and multimedia documents for people with print disabilities
- to secure the recognition and adoption of DAISY standard for navigable multimedia documents among mainstream product developers and book publishers
- to foster the establishment and development of a global talking-book library, which transcends geographic boundaries and linguistic differences and which embraces cultural diversity

For more information, contact William Jolley, Secretary General, the DAISY Consortium, wjolley@bigpond.com or visit www.daisy.org.

Your Books Are in the Mail

Launching a Books by Mail Program

Karen Strauss

While far from being the first public library to do so, the San Francisco Public Library recently launched a books by mail program that extends free mail service to homebound patrons. In the future, mail services also will be offered to able-bodied patrons on a cost-recovery basis. The program, created after a thirteen-month-long effort, expands the services now offered to a limited number of homebound patrons.

Twenty-six branches, the main library, and two bookmobiles of the San Francisco Public Library (SFPL) serve the 776,733 residents of the city and county of San Francisco; it is believed that no resident lives more than two miles from an SFPL facility.[1] Despite this impressive library saturation, the need for service to patrons who are homebound has become impossible to ignore: within San Francisco, 13.7 percent of residents are aged sixty-five and over (higher than the 12.4 percent found nationally to be sixty-five and over) and 87.6 percent of those residents have a disability.[2] Depending on the severity of these disabilities—and not even counting the number of people under sixty-five who may have severe disabilities—more than 93,000 people ages sixty-five and over may benefit from a books by mail program.

Previous Service

Until May 2002, public library service to homebound San Franciscans was limited to those who receive monthly visits by SFPL's Library on Wheels (LOW) senior outreach bookmobile; have disabling HIV and are being visited by Friends for Life (FFL) volunteers; or have authorized a second user of their library cards, usually healthcare workers, family, or friends, who retrieve material on their behalf.

Over the years we have received—and saved—numerous requests for mail service from San Franciscans who cannot visit the library, have no one to send on their behalf, do not qualify for service from LOW or FFL, and who are, effectively, cut off from the library.

By spring 2001, SFPL administration had received from the library commission and the San Francisco board of supervisors approval for a fee-based books by mail

program, intended to be yet another of the remote services offered by SFPL. But first, library administration decided to create a free books by mail pilot program for patrons who are homebound, simultaneously uncovering—and solving—problems on a small scale before launching service citywide.

Creating a Plan

In late spring 2001, a seven-person task force with representatives from borrower services (the circulation staff who will be responsible once service is made available to the entire city), FFL, and interlibrary loan was authorized to design SFPL's books by mail program. Our mission was to create a mail system that could serve homebound patrons with circulating books (other media are now included) and be expanded later to provide mail service to all SFPL patrons, homebound or not.

First, two library technicians on our task force did online and in-person research on how mail service is provided at public libraries in Contra Costa County, California; Lee County, Florida; Napa City-County, California; Gwinnett County, Georgia; and Broward County, Florida. They compiled facts about materials loaned, loan periods, mailing equipment, program use, and patron responsibilities.

This formed the starting point for our discussions about how to design SFPL's program. Issues we considered included:

- patron authentication—homebound patrons would identify themselves to us with a brief application on which they would be asked to state why they cannot visit the library;
- delivery methods—although messenger service is a viable option in a city of fewer than forty-nine square miles, budget realities made the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) the clear economic choice;
- fines and fees—patrons would still be responsible for late, lost, and damaged books, but not those lost by USPS; and
- loan limits—although walk-in patrons can borrow fifty items, we could not reasonably expect books by

mail patrons to track more than one reusable mailbag at a time. The quantity of items that fit into the reusable mailbags depends, of course, on their size. Generally, four to five large-print books fit comfortably into one of our 14x18" bags. Because the number of items per mailing will vary, we tell patrons we will send as many of their requests as will fit in our mailbag. When they return one batch of titles along with the mailbag, we send another batch.

Testing the Waters

While still hammering out these and other details, we conducted a small test to help us determine how long to allow for mail delivery in San Francisco. We also wanted to see whether letter carriers delivering oversized packages would leave them at front doors, take them back to the post office for in-person pickup (most unhelpful for homebound patrons), or make the effort to place them in someone's hands. Our belief was that because letter carriers know the customers on their routes who are home during the day, they would do anything within reason to deliver the mail.

We sent two packages of books to the homes of each of five task force members who lived in the city. For each person, one package was sent first class and the other was sent library rate. In addition to a few library books, each envelope contained a return envelope with prepaid postage in the same amount as outgoing postage. Impressively, most packages were delivered within two days of being sent, whether from or to the library. An exception was a package that took two weeks to come back to the library, although its companion bag mailed at the same time was received within a few days.

By late summer, with results from our test mailing in hand and answers to most of our own questions, we charted a plan and walked the library's public service chiefs through it. Allowing for time to dot the i's and cross the t's, we felt we would be ready to offer service in spring 2002. Therefore, we were ready to begin discussions with USPS.

A Little Help from Our Friends

Members of the electronic discussion list BKMOB-L@LISTSERV.CLARION.EDU (http://eagle.clarion.edu/~grads/dsri/listserv.html), moderated by Bernard

Vavrek of the Center for the Study of Rural Librarianship at Clarion University of Pennsylvania, provided a lot of help. Because programs that provide bookmobiles often provide other services to patrons who have difficulty visiting library buildings, members of this list are knowledgeable on a host of outreach topics. In November 2001 we posted a query to the list asking for experiences with USPS vis-à-vis books by mail programs.

Quick and informative replies came from Kathy Mayo, Lee County (Fla.) Library System; Marilyn Ring-Nelson and Russell Agana, Seattle (Wash.) Public Library; Carol Torrens and Bonnie Becker, Bloomington (Ill.) Public Library; and Libby Nobis, San Diego County (Calif.) Public Library. Colleagues shared advice about working with USPS and sent samples of their program materials. These books by mail programs provided an elegant template upon which SFPL modeled its own program; never was anyone less than generous in sharing knowledge and details.

Working with USPS

Dozens of books by mail programs throughout the country began and successfully provide service without conferring with USPS. However, many of these librarians and technicians suggested we talk with USPS at the outset to head off any problems before our program got off the ground. One cautionary tale was told by a librarian whose system was wrongly accused by USPS of reusing their mail tags (and, therefore, postage), forcing that library to take time and effort to prove its honesty.

Three task force members met with USPS representatives in early fall 2001 in a session arranged by the head of the city's mail services department. We presented our ideas for launching a program to serve homebound San Franciscans. We showed sample nylon and canvas mailbags. We zeroed in on how postage would not be reused, but that each and every mailing would be paid for. We listened to the arguments for first class versus library rate. We learned that packages sent library rate could take an almost unlimited amount of time to be delivered and were unlikely to be looked for very seriously if lost. We discussed the logistics of carriers ringing doorbells for bags too big to fit in mailboxes and how patrons would put those same bags back in carriers' hands when they were ready

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to be returned to the library. We shared with them the results of our test mailing and, in the end, left our sample bags with the representatives to take back to their coworkers for thorough examination.

Six weeks later, we heard from USPS representatives that the envelopes would be acceptable. We agreed to another test mailing, this time by library rate to one of the USPS representatives using a nylon mailbag. Again, the package was delivered within two business days. This and the results of our earlier test helped us decide that library rate would be the economical and efficient choice for sending books by mail.

The Nitty Gritty

When we got to the point of choosing a vendor (A. Rifkin Co. in Pennsylvania,

www.arifkin.com) and 14x18" two-ply canvas mailbags, we checked and double-checked with USPS to ensure we positioned the words "library mail" (formerly "library rate") and our return address accurately and knew exactly how to word the return address labels.

In March 2002 we made a status report to library administration, providing a preview of the new Web pages (http://sfpl4.sfpl.org/access_services/Friends.htm) describing books by mail and other services to patrons who are homebound. Subsequent show-and-tell presentations to circulation staff and branch managers gave most staff a visual aid to connect with information about the program, which they were encouraged to share with appropriate patrons.

We placed orders in April for three hundred bags, a thousand clear pull ties for outbound mail, and five hundred yellow ties for return mail (we would have purchased the same number for each bag but the manufacturer required a minimum order of a thousand outbound [clear] ties). We received the materials in May and sent invitations to more than six dozen people on file who had expressed a need for a delivery service. In the months since then—based solely on this one mailing and in-house word-of-mouth—more than 12 percent of those notified requested library service via books by mail.

From May to November 2001 the cash outlay for this service was less than $2,500. The bulk of the expenses was devoted to buying reusable mailbags and accessories ($2,100) and the postage spent on providing the service ($250).

Staff members estimate they spend approximately twenty hours a week on this service, registering new patrons, taking requests, pulling books and preparing mailbags for mailing, and filling reference requests. The librarian and technician who work full time providing services to homebound patrons (including staffing our senoir bookmobile) each devotes a portion of their work week to books by mail.

Where We Stand

As of this writing, we have sent to and received from patrons many mailbags containing books, books on tape, CDs, and videos. Because SFPL allows reserves on all circulating items, we can fill patrons' requests for materials in collections at any of our twenty-nine locations. The instructions we enclose with each mailbag explain the correct repackaging methods. We walk our patrons through these instructions and, with one exception, have received intact all materials meant for the library.

One patron uses books by mail to give her son-in-law a break from making frequent trips to the library on her behalf. Another patron uses the service to supplement the monthly visits LOW makes to her retirement home. Yet another takes advantage of books by mail when her Meals on Wheels volunteer is unable to drop by. In all cases, books by mail is bringing to homebound San Franciscans the pleasure that so many library users around the country have enjoyed for years.

Conclusion

We will provide and evaluate the use and costs of books by mail for at least six months. The potential for growth is enormous, both for serving homebound patrons and those who are able-bodied. Anecdotal experience shared by others confirms that many public libraries' free books by mail programs are widely used by patrons who are homebound, yet those that offer a fee-based service are not as popular.

In the meantime, we are proud to have joined the ranks of those public libraries serving their homebound patrons by mail. And, as far as we can tell, many of those patrons are delighted that SFPL has done so. ∎

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Karen Strauss is the former Program Manager of Outreach and Community Database Services at San Francisco Public Library (SFPL). She is currently the Art/Music/Recreation and Business/Science/Technology Manager at SFPL; karens@sfpl.org. Current and former SFPL Books by Mail Task Force members are Lorena Arroyo, Dorothy Coakley, Marti Goddard, Michael Hudson, Catherine Low, Karen Strauss, and Linda Suzuki. The group was convened by Roberto Esteves, Chief, Information Resource Management, SFPL. Cora Iezza is currently coordinating the books by mail program and can be reached at ciezza@sfpl.org.

Library Services for People with Disabilities Policy

The American Library Association recognizes that people with disabilities are a large and neglected minority in the community and are severely underrepresented in the library profession. Disabilities cause many personal challenges. In addition, many people with disabilities face economic inequity, illiteracy, cultural isolation, and discrimination in education, employment, and the broad range of societal activities.

Libraries play a catalytic role in the lives of people with disabilities by facilitating their full participation in society. Libraries should use strategies based upon the principles of universal design to ensure that library policy, resources, and services meet the needs of all people.

ALA, through its divisions, offices, and units and through collaborations with outside associations and agencies is dedicated to eradicating inequities and improving attitudes toward and services and opportunities for people with disabilities.

—*excerpted from "Library Services for People with Disabilities," written by the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies, a division of the American Library Association (ALA), and approved by ALA Council, January 16, 2001; full text available at www.ala.org/ascla/access_policy.html*

What's So Special about Special Needs?

Mimi McCain

Providing services to the disability community begins with funding but ultimately depends on much more. Training, familiarity with specific disability issues, support from library administration, and the dedication of staff are the prerequisites of success.

Within the next decade, special needs won't seem as special as they do today. The mass arrival of society's dominant age group into the fifty-five to sixty-five range has already begun and will revise the standards for needed—and expected—library services for many years to come.

Currently, the disability community in most jurisdictions is a marginalized group of potential clients whose members are just beginning to emerge from the shadowy fringes of the demographic landscape. However, their increasing numbers, the scope of their needs, and their evolving political confidence are converging in the growing awareness of those who provide their services. Such awareness eventually reaches the point at which it jolts one awake with its enormity. My experience in the city of Phoenix is a good example.

Phoenix is the center of a large metropolitan area in Maricopa County with twenty-four cities and towns, some with such familiar names as Mesa, Tempe, and Scottsdale, and others poised to become household names as well, such as Chandler, Buckeye, and Peoria. The county as a whole saw its population pass the three million mark in the 2000 census with an increase of almost a million people in the 1990s. The overwhelming majority of that growth occurred in the Phoenix metro area. The city alone is now home to approximately 1,350,000 people.

The relevance of these statistics is that well over 250,000 people have a disability in some recognized form, to some extent, just within city boundaries. Half of them are likely to have a severe disability. And like everywhere else, their numbers are increasing. This is especially true in the Phoenix area, as we are home to a number of older persons. Fortunately, the city has long recognized the needs of the disability community and has given its members a head start in gaining equal access to information and related services.

The Special Needs Center

The Special Needs Center (SNC) of the Phoenix Public Library (PPL) is now in its nineteenth year of operation, having opened its doors in 1983 with the assistance of a Library Services and Technology Act grant. The center's mission is to provide the full range of library services to all people with disabilities, including those who are blind or have visual impairments, are deaf or hard of hearing, or have learning disabilities or mobility issues.

Naturally, ensuring physical accessibility is paramount. Therefore, SNC is located on the first floor of the Burton Barr Central Library, immediately after the check-in desk. The library is located about a mile north of the downtown area on a main arterial route. With an entrance just a few yards from Central Avenue, SNC is fully accessible by regular bus service and private transportation. Built in 1995, the library is inherently ADA compliant. The center follows PPL's normal schedule and is open seventy-four hours per week. Once inside, patrons enter a welcoming, friendly environment that was designed specifically with them in mind.

By consolidating specialized staff, resources, and services, the intellectual and cultural wealth typically found in a public library can easily be utilized by people who have had difficulty in accessing such information in the past.

Our Staff

Visitors to the center are greeted by knowledgeable staff, some of whom share disabilities in common with their clientele. The staff consists of one Librarian III (the supervisor), two full-time library assistants (one of these positions is in the process of being reclassified to Librarian I), three part-time library assistants who total seventy hours per week, and two library clerks who, together, work thirty-four hours per week.

The staff members are knowledgeable and sensitive regarding typical issues associated with particular disabilities, and always display patience and proper disability etiquette. For three staff members, this comes as second nature. Two of them are fluent in American Sign Language (ASL) and have close personal and professional ties to the deaf and hard of hearing communities. One of the part-time library assistants has an MS in deaf studies and works full-time for the Phoenix Day School for the Deaf. Another staff member is blind and is a full-time state employee as a counselor for the blind. He is also one of our resident experts on much of the assistive technology. Our other expert, one of the library assistants, is a ten-year veteran of SNC.

Special Training

One of the leading organizations in the world for the collection, dissemination,

and advancement of knowledge pertaining to assistive technology is the California State University at Northridge (CSUN) Center on Disabilities (www. csun.edu/cod). One of the benchmarks for practitioners in the area of special needs is graduation from the CSUN certificate program in applications in assistive technology. Thanks to the city's tuition reimbursement plan, I was able to complete the program, which consisted of six intensive online modules followed by five days of classroom training. The experience was gratifying and unforgettable. I would highly recommend it to anyone who is serious about this field.

Topics covered in the training included assistive technology (AT) for the deaf and hard of hearing, AT for the blind and visually impaired, speech recognition, AT for persons with learning and cognitive disabilities, and the future of AT. It is not an inexpensive program. The cost is $1,995 plus travel and lodging. But the quality of the instruction and information, as well as the contacts you establish with other practitioners, vendors, and members of the disability community, are invaluable.

CSUN also conducts an annual international conference in Los Angeles on technology and persons with disabilities. Held in March, the week-long conference is complete with preconference workshops and a surprising variety of vendor demonstrations. The conference has grown so large it uses all the meeting rooms and ballrooms in both the Marriott and Hilton hotels at Los Angeles International Airport. Subjects are presented for the low-tech novice, the special needs generalist, specialists in various areas, and, of course, the techno-wizards. The amount of information can be overwhelming. Nevertheless, all attendees regret the end of the week as it approaches. In addition to the knowledge they gain, the networking opportunities are invaluable.

Having a trained staff is, of course, an essential part of the equation. But the center could not operate—it could not be what it is—without specialized equipment and materials.

Special Technology

In Phoenix, we believe that assistive technology is vital in leveling the playing field for those with disabilities, especially at the public library, where our mission is to provide access to information to all members of the community. Therefore, our computer workplace for people with disabilities contains a noteworthy array of equipment and software. It has five fully adjustable workstations and more than four hundred registered users.

Four of the computers have Pentium III processors, nineteen-inch flat-screen monitors, Hewlett-Packard ScanJet 6200C scanners, and Hewlett-Packard Laser Jet 6P printers on a shared network. All of the computers have Internet access and word processing capability. Two of the workstations are outfitted for patrons with vision loss, two are for those with learning disabilities, and one is specifically configured for patrons who are learning ASL.

For patrons who are blind or visually impaired, and for those with learning disabilities, the computer workplace includes the following hardware and regularly updated software:

- JAWS screen readers
- MAGic magnification system
- Alva forty-cell Braille display
- Juliet four-page-per-minute Braille embosser
- Versapoint 40 single-side embosser
- PageKeeper scanning system
- Kurzweil 1000 scan/read/edit emboss system
- Kurzweil 3000 scan/read/edit system
- Duxbury Braille editing/translation system
- DragonDictate and Naturally Speaking voice input systems
- closed circuit television print enlargers
- Shure stand microphone and headset microphone
- large-type keyboard with Braille overlay

Prices for the items listed above range from $300 for the MAGic magnification system to $12,000 for the Alva Braille display. Pricing can and does change periodically depending on a number of variables, including purchase price versus license update, the prevailing market in your part of the country, and vendor upgrades with corresponding price increases and maintenance agreement costs. But the most important point is one that may be easy to overlook: namely, it doesn't take a substantial investment to begin providing service for your disability community. In fact, it's advisable to start simple. Research your community before buying so your new equipment doesn't gather dust. The representatives of the target community will be more than happy to provide you with any level of information you need to make informed purchasing decisions.

Our equipment money comes from the library general fund, grants, and community philanthropic groups. For instance, the workstation for persons who are learning ASL was funded through a grant from the Arizona Community Foundation. The following CD-ROMs were also received from the grant and are available for use at the workstation:

- *American Sign Language Dictionary* by Martin Sternberg
- *ASL Vocabulary/Grammar/Sentences*
- *Sign Language for Everyone*
- *Subtle Messages: Non-Manual Grammar "Markers"*
- *SignLink*
- *Aesop's Fables* in ASL
- *Mexican-American Folktales* in ASL
- *Rosie's Walk* in ASL

Even though the equipment and software mentioned above seems extensive, it still does not cover all specialized functions for which patrons may require assistance. Therefore, the following equipment is also available:

- computer-assisted notetaker system (CANS)—allows a hearing person to summarize notes of a meeting or event while it is being conducted and project the notes on a projection screen for deaf and hard of hearing participants to read. The system includes a Toshiba T190CT laptop computer, InFocus 1600LC liquid crystal projection panel, and a Dukane 641 overhead projector.
- Seiko Quicktionary reading pen—a handheld scanner shaped like a writing pen that reads aloud the words being scanned and includes a talking dictionary.
- IntelliKeys Classic alternative keyboard and key overlays—provides maneuverable accessibility and large letters for those who may have difficulty using a standard keyboard.
- Kensington Expert Pro mouse trackball—regular, off-the-shelf trackball provides an accessible computer interface for patrons unable to use a standard mouse.

- UltraTec MiniPrint 225 telecommunication device for the deaf (TDD)—permits complete telephone use for deaf and hard of hearing patrons.
- Perkins manual Braille embosser/typewriter—allows an operator to transpose information into Braille format.
- Comtrex M-72 series FM assistive listening device—noncirculating amplification device that allows hard of hearing patrons to fully participate in meetings and programs at the library.
- The Marco Polo GPS location device—enables visually impaired patrons independent movement throughout the library.

Also available are a photocopy machine that enlarges to 800 percent and scooters for patrons who may have difficulty navigating through the five-story building.

Special Materials

SNC has a materials collection of more than 3,000 specialized items, including Braille periodicals; more than 250 picture books with Braille overlay; adult and juvenile materials on special needs topics; 58 special needs journals; 8 large type circulating periodicals; and government documents on ADA, Social Security benefits, and special education. The center also circulates descriptive video service videos, which provide blind and low-vision patrons with descriptive narrative to convey relevant details of the video scene.

There is also a large collection of sign language and deaf studies materials that supplements a sign language program at the local community college. In addition, there are more than eighty videos available on deaf studies, finger spelling, and learning ASL. There are also more than a thousand closed-captioned videos.

PPL, in agreement with the Arizona State Braille and Talking Book Library, provides information, applications, and equipment for the Talking Books program. SNC is also a distribution point for teletypewriter (TTY) applications and for the annual TTY directory that is published by the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Our specialized materials are supplemented by a collection of more than fourteen thousand large-type books that are also available via the books by mail program.

The Toybrary

SNC's Toybrary provides a special, unique service for our youngest patrons—a free toy-lending service whose items are designed to assist parents of children with disabilities or professionals who work with those children. The Toybrary was started with a grant from America West Airlines and is currently funded by local philanthropic organizations.

Most kids grow up taking toys for granted. But children gather information about the world through play. Therefore, the toys in the Toybrary are specially chosen to provide the child with the first opportunity to control some part of his or her environment. The toys are purchased through catalogs specifically for children with special needs and are used to teach children about causal relationships, stimulate and increase self-awareness, enhance motor skills, and assist in perceptual and learning development. We currently have more than 250 such toys.

Toys are borrowed for a six-week period. Three toys and, if needed, one adapted switch, may be borrowed at a time. The adapted switch functions as an extension of the on-off switch; it allows children who experience difficulty in locating and operating the small on-off switch on battery-powered toys to easily use toys with the touch of a large, sensitive push-button at the end of a cord attached to the toy.

The toys may be renewed just like other library materials. When returned, the toys are sterilized with rubbing alcohol.

Specialized Services

Patrons can make appointments for individualized instruction on how to use any of the assistive technology. They can also request an appointment for assistance with writing or typing. Requests of this type are honored based on staff availability. But even when availability is not an issue, there is a limit of one scheduled visit per week not to exceed two hours. Of course, the patron can use the center whenever it's open, and we will gladly provide attentive customer service as needed, just as we would for any other patron. But the unlimited provision of tutorial or administrative assistance holds the potential of straining customer service resources to the breaking point. Therefore, an approved policy stating the parameters of your service model is a recommended preventive measure.

We will also accommodate users with functional limitations who need assistance in performing simple word processing tasks. However, the library

> **SNC's Toybrary provides a special, unique service for our youngest patrons—a free toy-lending service whose items are designed to assist parents of children with disabilities or professionals who work with those children.**

does not offer secretarial services for any patrons, and staff is not held accountable for content, proofreading, or spelling errors. A final, important point is that staff members do not fill out legal or medical forms or draft such documents.

Typically, patrons who do not have a disability must come to the library to do their own research. However, when a patron with a disability establishes a relationship with SNC staff and fills out a request for reasonable accommodation for services, a staff member will perform research; photocopy needed articles or pictures, often enlarging the print; and send the information to the patron free of charge. Patrons who ask for this accommodation usually are those who have chemical sensitivities, severe mobility issues, or serious medical conditions.

Programs and Community Outreach

Due to our location and unique ability to provide disability services, SNC is often asked to cosponsor programs with various community organizations. Many of the programs are held at the library, but

we also go to off-site locations to plan events, operate an information booth, make presentations, and host events.

Some events have been so successful that they are now held annually. Examples include an ASL storytime to celebrate Deaf Awareness Week in September, the White Cane Awareness Walkathon in October that uses a one-mile route around the library, and the Vision Rehabilitation and Technology Expo (VRATE) in November, an event that SNC cosponsors. VRATE, which features technology and guest speakers on blindness and low-vision issues, was held at the central library its first two years. It became so popular it now is held at the Phoenix Civic Plaza.

As supervisor and primary spokesperson of the center, I also attend numerous events throughout the year to demonstrate to the disability community how important they are to the library. Outreach is vital to the success of SNC because it shows our support and provides us an opportunity to advertise who we are and what we can offer. Outreach is one of the main reasons we are so well known and used by the community. Therefore, one practical point of interest to administrators is that it is necessary to have at least one exempt employee assigned to special needs, since so many of the events are held on weekends and evenings and just seem to have a way of falling on scheduled days off.

Due to the partnering relationships that have evolved, many organizations work with us on a regular basis by cosponsoring programs, using us as a distribution point for materials and information, having us serve on their committees, asking for advice, and making recommendations for equipment and materials purchases. Some of those organizations are listed in the sidebar.

A *Byte* from the Center

A quarterly newsletter is sent to our patrons via e-mail, recorded cassette, or regular mail in large-print format. The *Byte* contains pertinent information about new equipment in the computer workplace, days of closure for the library, staff changes, new Web sites of interest, and community events or articles of interest to the disability community. For instance, the summer 2002 issue included details about the summer reading program at the Foundation for Blind Children. The *Byte* is another way we keep in touch with our patrons so they know what to expect the next time they visit us.

City Commitment

The most important asset SNC has is the support of city hall and the library ad-

ministration. Our four-term mayor, Skip Rimza, has demonstrated a strong track record of recognizing public sector responsibility to dedicate services to people with disabilities. He is enthusiastically joined in this support by Peggy Bilsten, a member of the city council and a strong advocate with personal ties to the blind community.

SNC is fully funded from the city's general fund according to typical guidelines used for all other library sections, and is supplemented by private and corporate donations. And as mentioned previously, the city's tuition reimbursement and training funds enable the training needed to provide customized professional services.

Summary

When you think of the special populations in your service area, remember those with disabilities who are still an underserved or nonserved entity in many jurisdictions. They are a larger part of your patron base than you might imagine, and, as stated in the ADA, are entitled to the same services as any other group. Having an accessible building is a beginning, but it only enables the effort to provide equal access in a larger sense. The commitment of decision makers and the dedication of staff are also required. For example, having assistive technology in your library is essential, but you also need trained staff members who can provide instruction on its use and potential.

The advancing technology aimed at our patrons' liberation, coupled with the dedication of a community of sensitive knowledge workers at the library, can facilitate a revolutionary positive change in their lives. The ensuing benefits and feelings of pride occur not only for those who so enthusiastically utilize the services, but also for those of us in the library community who are willing to invest the resources and effort. ∎

Mimi McCain is the supervisor of the Special Needs Center at the Phoenix Public Library; mimi.mccain@phxlib.org.

ASCLA Advocates for People with Disabilities

Cathleen Bourdon

The Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA), a division of the American Library Association, is a vocal advocate for the rights of people with disabilities to access library services.

ASCLA members are happy to help other librarians improve services for people with disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act Assembly, the Library Service to People with Visual or Physical Disabilities Forum, the Library Service to the Deaf Forum, and the Academic Libraries Accessibility and Disability Services Discussion Group all meet at ALA's Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference. For those who prefer to network electronically, ASCLA has a variety of discussion lists at www.ala.org/ascla/lists.html.

The ADA Assembly recently drafted the policy statement "Library Services for People with Disabilities." The full text of the policy, approved by ALA Council in 2001, is available at www.ala.org/ascla/access_policy.html.

People with disabilities can be found on both sides of the desk—as patrons and as employees. Recruiting people with disabilities to the profession is a major goal of the division and is spearheaded by the Century Scholarship. The scholarship, funded entirely by donations from members, is the only ALA scholarship targeted for people with disabilities.

Accessibility expert Rhea Rubin explains how to make sure facilities and services are available on an equal basis to everyone in the ASCLA publication *Planning for Library Services to People with Disabilities*. Rubin lays out a ten-step process that is designed to work with an existing library plan. See www.ala.org/ascla/pubs.html for more information.

Fifty-four million Americans (more than one in five) have disabilities, and the number will likely rise as the population ages. Libraries must ensure that their services and equipment are accessible to all people in the community. ASCLA members are experts in this area and are happy to assist other librarians. Find out more at www.ala.org/ascla.

Cathleen Bourdon is Executive Director of both the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies and the Reference and User Services Association, divisions of the American Library Association.

Spring Symposium Update

The PLA Spring Symposium will be held March 6–8, 2003, at the Palmer House Hilton Hotel in Chicago. The deadline for advance registration is January 27, 2003. Any registrations received after January 27, 2003, will be processed at higher "on-site" rates. If you miss advance registration and plan to register on-site the first day of the symposium, you must con-

tact the PLA office (at 1-800-545-2433, ext. 5026) to verify that space is still available in your workshop of choice. Due to space limitations, we cannot guarantee entrance to on-site registrants.

Symposium attendees will have the choice of attending one of five programs that cover all aspects of librarianship: "Building the Perfect Library"; "Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Effectiveness"; "Power Up with Print: Connecting Teens and Reading in a Digital Age"; "Emergent Literacy, Part II: Research and Preschool Services"; and "Staffing for Results."

Noted children's author Mem Fox will keynote the opening general session. Fox, whose books include *Possum Magic, Time for Bed,* and *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge,* frequently links the joyful experience of families reading together to children's future success. She has also written several books addressing literacy, including *Reading Magic* and *Radical Reflections: Passionate Opinions on Teaching Learning and Living.* The recipient of numerous writing awards, Fox was a professor of literacy studies prior to embarking on her writing career.

In addition, the 2003 Spring Symposium will also offer tours of the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio and the Newberry Library, an author luncheon, and other special events. Registration information for these events will be available shortly. Please visit www.pla.org for updates or more information.

ALA Divisions AASL, ACRL, and PLA Announce Cooperative Recruitment Effort

The American Association of School Librarians (AASL), the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), and the Public Library Association (PLA) have joined forces with associations across America in support of National Job Shadow Day. Job Shadow Day (www.jobshadow.org), now in its sixth year, will kick off nationally on January 31, 2003. The kick-off begins a year-long initiative that gives students across America the chance to "shadow" a workplace mentor as he or she goes through a day on the job. Young people nationwide will get an up-close look at how skills learned in school are put to use in the workplace. It is anticipated that more than one million students and 100,000 businesses nationwide will participate. School, academic, and public librarians will receive information and support from the three divisions to participate in the program as part of recruitment efforts associationwide.

The divisions will develop materials and promotions—which will be available on their Web sites and at library conferences, beginning with the 2003 ALA Midwinter Meeting in Philadelphia—to assist librarians in their efforts. Further, the

BY the BOOK

Coaching in the Library
A Management Strategy for Achieving Excellence

By Ruth F. Metz. Chicago: ALA. 2001. 105p. $45 ($40.50 ALA members) (ISBN 0-8389-0809-8).

"No matter what your position is in the organization, you are either making the library better or you are making it worse" (3). With this statement, Metz underscores the primary purpose of her book: to describe coaching techniques and explain the ways in which their successful adoption can create a more humane organization; to define what is required of a successful coach; and to emphasize the importance of skilled coaches to the library environment. Her belief is that every employee in the library organization can choose to be contributive or critical. A critical library environment threatens performance and creates a negative and unhealthy situation where employees are hesitant about learning new skills or taking on increased responsibilities. At best, a critical supervisor will achieve short-term results. Coaching skills, when properly developed, enhance performance and motivate employees at all levels, creating a more affirming working environment where customers are served effectively.

As Metz defines it here, coaching is "fundamentally a commitment to teaching and reinforcing the behavior we want in our organizations" (2). The coach acts as a model for desired behavior in all employees. Rather than administering a punitive response to negative behaviors, the goal of the coach should be to interact with others in ways that reinforce positive behaviors and reward the learning process. Anyone in the organization with willingness, skills, and abilities is a potential coach, regardless of official title or position.

Coaching is a process that requires a variety of skills, such as listening, observing, analyzing, communicating, and providing feedback. Metz provides examples that show how coaching techniques can be applied within the organization in response to a variety of situations. While some situations require only short-term, basic coaching, others may call for long-term commitment at a more intense level.

The coaching process consists of three stages. The first, or initial stage, occurs when the relationship between coach and player is first established. In the second phase, or content stage, issues are examined and begin to be understood. The wrap-up, or final phase, brings closure and resolution. Throughout the coaching process, the player and coach are working together. Without commitment by both the player and coach, Metz stresses, the coach cannot be effective. The player must do the work to produce the changed behavior, or achieve the goal, with the assistance of the coach.

As libraries respond to constant challenges created by technology and to the increasingly consumer-driven marketplace, it is vital to foster a positive environment where growth and learning are facilitated. Coaching can help librarians create this type of work environment.

Coaching in the Library will be very useful for any employee interested in improved performance and more effective customer service within the library setting, regardless of their position in the organizational structure.—*Carla Roberts, Muskingum County (Ohio) Library System*

Introducing the Internet to Young Learners
Ready-to-Go Activities and Lesson Plans

By Linda W. Braun. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2001. 147p. $35 (ISBN 1-55570-404-2) LC 00-051976.

There are a number of titles on the market that introduce children to the Internet, but *Introducing the Internet to Young Learners: Ready-to-Go Activities and Lesson Plans* is one that stands out among the rest. Written by Linda Braun, the founder and director of Librarians and Educators Online (LEO), the goal is simply stated: "to help those who work and live with children figure out techniques for integrating the Internet into educational settings in meaningful ways" (xi). This title meets that goal admirably. While aimed at librarians, teachers, and parents, almost anyone needing a simple introduction to the Internet will find this book helpful and easy to use.

The book is divided into four well-defined units: learning about the Internet, using and exploring the Web, e-mail, and chat and instant messaging. Each unit provides an informational overview followed by pretested lesson plans and activities. The detailed lesson plans provide much of the substance of this book and include such details as student prerequisites, technology requirements to complete the lesson, appropriate grade levels, curriculum connections, student skills and outcomes, extension activities, procedures to follow when implementing the activities, reproducible activity sheets, and, finally, a list of more than 120 recommended Web sites to use for each lesson. As with any title that includes Web sites as an integral part of the text, accessibility is a major concern. A random test of these sites proved a near 100 percent accessibility rate.

Of particular note in unit 4 is the small dos and don'ts section on Internet safety. The author lists six important tips for chat and instant message users.

Overall, this book gives a particularly good explanation of the Internet and its functions while providing lessons to help integrate it into the learning environment. Librarians, teachers, and parents should consider this a worthwhile purchase.—*Ellen Bassett, Cook Memorial Public Library, Libertyville, Illinois*

The Information Professional's Guide to Career Development Online

By Sarah L. Nesbeitt and Rachel Singer Gordon. Medford, N.J.: Information Today, 2002. 401p. $29.50 (ISBN 1-57387-124-9).

If readers are familiar with the authors' Web sites, Library Job Postings on the Internet and LISjobs.com, they might assume that this book would be about job search resources on the Internet. In fact, that is only a small part of what is covered in this thorough (and thoroughly readable) discussion of the career development resources available online to aid librarians in maintaining and improving their knowledge and skills in the ever-changing field of library and

information science. The authors address getting connected to the Internet; networking online; keeping abreast of current issues in the field; getting involved in professional organizations; reading and contributing to professional literature; researching LIS programs and continuing education opportunities; and applying for scholarships, grants, and awards. They also discuss electronic résumés, job hunting, and researching prospective employers online.

While it's tempting to read only selected chapters in a book on career development, this is one that should be read cover to cover because doing so allows the reader to think about all that is entailed in the concept of career development, why it's important to us as information professionals, and the various ways of developing and maintaining our professional knowledge and skills.

The authors try to balance the needs and interests of library and information professionals working in a variety of settings, so while the section on publishing might be of more interest to academic librarians, who generally have to publish in order to get tenure, many public and school librarians will also be interested in learning about writing book reviews and other articles for professional publication.

The Information Professional's Guide to Career Development Online is filled with practical information and valuable insights. The chapter "Researching Employment Situations," for instance, offers useful tips on how to find a library or organization's Web site, what to look for on the Web site, and how to interpret what you find. In "Networking Online," the authors stress the importance of keeping your comments on electronic discussion lists professional—many lists maintain an online archive accessible to search engines, and one careless comment may come back to haunt you years later.

The book includes extensive appendixes, an index, and one fairly unique feature—a companion Web site that con-

tains links to all the online resources mentioned in the book. The authors plan to verify the links on a semiannual basis, which should help keep the information from becoming outdated too quickly.

The Information Professional's Guide to Career Development Online is a valuable tool for both new librarians and seasoned professionals and is highly recommended for all types of libraries.—*Vicki Nesting, St. Charles Parish Library, Destrehan, La.*

Digital Futures

Strategies for the Information Age

By Marilyn Deegan and Simon Tanner. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2002. 276p. $55 (ISBN 1-55570-437-9) LC 2001056296.

As rich with potential as the computer and Internet revolution is, library professionals are well aware—sometimes painfully aware—of the practical paradoxes and challenges it entails. New technologies do not change the old reality: consumers with immediate information needs often lack the knowledge and skills to match those needs effectively with available resources. Nonetheless, purveyors of the new media promise, and users often expect, direct, effortless access to the right information without the mediating expertise of librarians.

In *Digital Futures: Strategies for the Information Age*, Marilyn Deegan and Simon Tanner counter this notion, revealing instead through an encouraging and thought-provoking exploration the crucial role librarians have in designing and managing successful public access to this electronic information universe.

The authors begin their work by placing the technology of digitalization into social, cultural, and historical context. The book balances practical explanations of how to design and develop digital resources with discussions of the dilemmas inherent in using this expensive, constantly changing, and, therefore, unstable technology.

Digital Futures describes and gives Web links to examples of a range of digitalization applications. These include individual projects, such as the online Gutenberg Bibles collection; the collection of outsourced CD and online products by conventional libraries; the development of shared resource networks by library systems and consortia; and portals, library home pages designed to attract and hold customers by their facilitation of online use. The relevant chapters examine both specific technical issues and broader managerial concerns for each type of application.

Deegan and Tanner are advocates for digitalization, yet their book is appropriately cautionary about several concerns. One of these is the perception of naive users that they can get all their information in a one-stop shop. The authors argue that libraries can offer a realistic first stop enhanced by the guidance and expertise of librarians. This added value is crucial they claim in a later chapter on economic factors, as the new market economy favors perceived value over actual assets, the more traditional measure of library worth. Finally, they examine a range of paradoxes implicit in the technology itself. The most pronounced of these is that, though digitalization is touted as a medium for preservation, the constant upgrading of both hardware and software means recorded data will cease to be decodable unless project designers plan to compensate for data impermanence from the start.

The authors assert that a library is defined not by its collection or its infrastructure, but by its librarians. Libraries are essentially about open, equitable access to information and the means to interpret and use it. Despite the power and promise of digital media, technical, social, legal, and economic factors can create a complex set of boundaries to such access for the general public. Deegan and Tanner hope that library professionals will become familiar enough with the relevant technical and management skills that they can be digital librarians—

well-trained intermediaries who can adjust and tame this technology. Whether or not readers are directly involved in digital projects, they will find this book an insightful and challenging introduction to that process.—*Michael Austin Shell, Jacksonville (Fla.) Public Library*

The Readers' Advisor's Companion

Edited by Kenneth D. Shearer and Robert Burgin. Englewood, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited, 2001. 303p. $37.50 (ISBN 1-56308-880-0) LC 2001-054774.

In this follow-up to Shearer's *Guiding the Reader to the Next Book,* editors Kenneth Shearer and Robert Burgin have assembled sixteen new articles that explore readers' advisory education, current practices, and visions of the future.

The first section, "The Education of Advisors and the Foundations for Professional Practice," includes three articles about how library education programs are failing to provide the readers' advisory training needed to serve today's library patrons, as well as fascinating pieces by Duncan Smith ("Reinventing Readers' Advisory") and Catherine Sheldrick Ross ("What We Know from Readers about the Experience of Reading").

Part 2, "Advisory Services in Public and School Libraries Today: The State of the Art," may be of most interest to practicing readers' advisors. It includes Anna May's detailed analysis of readers' advisory transactions in one library system along with practical information from Joyce Saricks on integrating readers' advisory tools into successful transactions, Nora Armstrong on indirect advisory services, and Roberta Johnson on readers' advisory tools on the Internet.

The third section of the book, "Envisioning an Expanded Advisory Services Role in Libraries," includes a wide variety of offerings. Among the most interesting are Alma Dawson and Connie Van Fleet's look at readers' advisory in a multicultural

society and Robert Burgin's discussion of nonfiction readers' advisory. Angelina Benedetti's article on readers' advisory services to teens could easily have been included in the second section, while the topic of audiovisual advisory services deserved a more serious examination than it was given here. Also included in this section is an article on the St. Louis Public Library's vision for a planned center for the reader to be built in their main library.

While there are many strong pieces in this book, there are also some weak spots. The article on the reader's altered state of consciousness, while interesting, does little to improve our knowledge of the readers' advisory transaction. The inclusion of only one article on readers' advisory in school libraries makes the topic appear peripheral when it certainly should not be. Randy Pitman's brief and breezy article on handling audiovisual advisory questions offers little guidance to librarians eager for information and resources to assist in this area.

The editors hope that this book will "become a companion and a handy reference for the school or public librarian who deals with students and the general public" and serve as "a textbook for a graduate course in readers' advisory" (xiii). Unfortunately, *The Readers' Advisor's Companion* is not the kind of book one would reach for again and again in the course of serving patrons, nor is it the comprehensive readers' advisory textbook that is needed for graduate study. Still, for those interested in the theory and practice of readers' advisory and some of the latest research on the subject, there is

much valuable material here.—*Vicki Nesting, St. Charles Parish Library, Destrehan, La.*

Music, Culture, and the Library
An Analysis of Discourses

By Sanna Talja. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow, 2001. 248p. $60. (ISBN 0-8108-4026-X).

Libraries are not merely storehouses of documentary expressions of culture, they are themselves agents of culture, defining their missions and meeting their obligations amid the same forces of taste, politics, economics, and ideology that motivate and constrain the thinkers, writers, and artists to whose works libraries facilitate access and order. Applying techniques of discourse analysis, Sanna Talja, a researcher with the Academy of Finland's Research Programme in Media Culture, demonstrates how libraries participate in culture, striving to balance competing values of quality and equality along with other cultural agents, such as musical artists, vendors of musical product, the media, and scholars.

Discourse analysis, simply put, identifies common thematic and rhetorical principles that structure texts. The texts comprising Talja's discourses include statements by Finnish librarians and library users whom she interviewed, music scholars, professional musicians, and excerpts of government policies. In spite of the differences in training and experience of her subjects, she finds similarities among the discourses that allow her to define several repertoires, or ways of talking about music and culture, that generate shared perspectives on music. Each repertoire

implies a particular view of music and thus frames the way a person using it, even if unwittingly, characterizes his or her opinions about music.

At the heart of the book, Talja devotes a chapter to each of three predominant repertoires: the common culture repertoire, which views music in terms of levels of education of musicians and their audiences, and levels of governmental support of music culture; the consumer culture repertoire, which treats music production as an industry and audiences as consumers; and the mosaic culture repertoire, which takes a relativist approach to culture, regarding the value of music in terms of the diverse cultural backgrounds of its audiences. These three repertoires are, of course, often reflected in library collection and service policies. The strength of Talja's work is to provide a framework for expressing this fact and for demonstrating how libraries function both within and for culture.

Unfortunately, serious language issues, perhaps related to the text's translation from Finnish to English, burden the work. Grammatical and stylistic shortcomings arise page after page, some resulting in perplexing ambiguities, others leading to awkward phrasing.

More substantively, while Talja briefly assures Anglo-American librarians that Finnish library service principles are essentially the same as those in the United States, she also writes that Finnish government policy overtly put forth strong didactic, culture-instilling directives for building library collections.

This scholarly volume is recommended to those librarians and students of culture with a penchant for theory and with the patience to wade through the difficult language of this English edition.—*Dean C. Rowan, Law Student, Albany, California* ∎

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NEW PRODUCT NEWS

CPORTAL Creates a Total Community Information Solution

Fretwell-Downing has launched CPORTAL—a new community information network solution. It allows online library catalogs and other Web sites to integrate with preexisting internal databases, giving the public access to previously inaccessible information. With CPORTAL software, libraries can:

- Allow patrons to simultaneously search a wide range of both internal and online Web sites and databases to receive a single set of results.
- Select which information resources are the most appropriate and reliable for their community and whether they are maintained by the library, government agency, or within the community.
- Offer patrons access to geographical information systems that enable place-name searching.
- Provide a searching solution that complies with internationally recognized e-government standards.

www.fdusa.com

Digital Talking Books Coming to National Library Service for Blind and Physically Handicapped: Standards Approved and Player Designed

The National Information Standards Organization (NISO) has announced that the national standard for the digital talking book (DTB) has been approved (ANSI/NISO Z39.86-2002). DTBs are collections of electronic files arranged to present information to the blind and physically handicapped reader via alternative media. The most common medium will be human

speech. However, a DTB produced in accordance with the new standard can include a file containing the contents of the document in text form, thereby permitting output via synthetic speech, refreshable Braille display devices, or visual display in large print.

The NISO DTB standard, whose development was coordinated by the Library of Congress's National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS), will make electronic resources presented in DTB format more accessible to print-disabled readers worldwide.

This standard, like all NISO standards, is available for downloading free from the NISO Web site at www.niso.org.

In related news, winning entries in the Digital Talking Book Player Competition, sponsored by the Industrial Designers Society of America (IDSA) in cooperation with NLS, were chosen June 7, 2002. Six student-designed entries were selected for awards. The competition drew 146 entries from 28 design schools across the country.

Lachezar Tsvetanov, a senior from the University of Bridgeport in Connecticut, won first place and $5,000 with an entry he called the Dook. The winning model resembles a book that opens to reveal a speaker and audio controls.

"I developed the concept of a book for my entry because many people could relate to the fact that a high percentage of talking-book readers are older. They would have something in front of them that resembles a book . . . something they were familiar with before losing their sight. And young people who use the Dook will feel they don't stand out in a crowd because it looks like a book," Tsvetanov explained.

NLS has approximately 730,000 analog cassette talking book playback machines in use worldwide today and

maintains an inventory of more than 23 million copies of audio books and magazines. NLS planning envisions the introduction of digital talking books by the end of 2008.

www.loc.gov/nls

New Staff Scheduling Software Now Available

Dymaxion Research, developer of MEDIANET for media and equipment scheduling, announces their latest innovation, MEDIANET Staff Scheduler v1.00. The program handles staff scheduling needs of organizations with numerous part-time staff or extended hours.

MEDIANET Staff Scheduler tracks:

- when each person wants to work and when they can't work;
- how many people should be working at different times on different days for each project; and
- staff location.

The actual scheduling is done by one or both of:

- the standard work week for individuals (for example, Joe works help desk every Wednesday and Friday afternoon and is the receptionist on Wednesday mornings); and
- who covers each work location for specific dates and times.

The scheduler automatically tracks history and number of hours that each person is scheduled to work each week. There is an optional interface with Medianet for assigning individual operators to specific events.

www.schedule3w.com

OpenBook Scanning and Reading Software Now Shipping Version 6.0

Freedom Scientific is now shipping its new OpenBook version 6.0 scanning and reading software with features for blind and low-vision users needing access to text and text embedded in graphics, including PDF files.

OpenBook's lineup of features includes speech available with IBM ViaVoice 6.4 and optical character recogni-

tion with the new Fine Reader 6.0 engine. With the Freedom Import printer, text that is deeply embedded in graphics is easily extracted and recognized. Connect Outloud Web access software is included as an optional install for Braille and speech access to the operating system, as well as Internet Explorer and Outlook Express, Adobe Acrobat Reader, and an MP3 player. In addition, portability of documents is available, as users can now convert scanned files into MP3 or WAV formats.

Once scanned, OpenBook 6.0 converts your printed page into electronic information to be read aloud through its included voice synthesizer and shown on a customizable screen display with a variety of settings for those with low vision. There are user-defined settings for magnification, character spacing, color and contrast as well as exclusive reading enhancement features that are easy to use and flexible for both the novice and advanced user.

www.freedomscientific.com

Fundamentalism and Violence Video

Fundamentalism and Violence is a two-hour video dialogue featuring Jewish, Christian, and Muslim leaders. Why did the attacks on September 11 happen? Can they happen again? What can be done to prevent these attacks . . . and what does fundamentalism really signify? In this panel discussion, Karen Armstrong, Susannah Heschel, Jim Wallis, and Feisal Abdul Rauf explore the origins of fundamentalism and the incidence of violence—and terrorism—in all three Abrahamic faith traditions. This video will spark discussion, study, and reflection in classes and study groups of all sizes. The panel dialogue challenges viewers to think and prompts interactivity, encouraged by the study guide and transcript that accompany each videotape.

www.trinitywallstreet.org/tv/ FundViolence.shtml

MARCIVE Offers New Genre Authorities Processing

Libraries with genre headings in their bibliographic records can now update obsolete genre headings and provide cross-references in their local online public access catalogs through MARCIVE's genre authorities processing.

Many libraries have applied additional access points to their bibliographic records in compliance with *Guidelines on Subject Access to Individual Works of Fiction, Drama, Etc.* When the second edition came out, some of those guidelines

were changed. Librarians who wished to have a consistent, authoritative catalog would have had to update all existing affected bibliographic records individually. With MARCIVE's processing, obsolete genre headings can be upgraded to the correct heading automatically.

www.marcive.com

Greeting Card and Bookmark in One

In My Book combines a greeting card and bookmark together in one package. The long-line card starts out as a great way to convey greetings to friends and has a perforated, detachable bookmark as the front of the card. The cards are printed on thick, textured ivory stock, and each one is packaged in cellophane with a bright red envelope for mailing.

In My Book greeting card-bookmarks offer twelve different literary-oriented styles. All greetings begin with "In my book" and conclude with such sentiments as "you're novel," "you're a classic," and "you're a mystery." Sophisticated and playful pen-and-ink illustrations by Meredith Hamilton correspond to the messages on the card. In My Book (the cards and company of the same name) was created by Robin K. Blum.

The greeting card-bookmarks are currently sold by nearly three hundred library friends groups, bookstores, gift shops, museums, and stationers across the country, from Alaska and Hawaii to New York. A custom black wire spinner rack is available to hold five different styles of the retailer's choice.

www.inmybook.com

In My Book greeting card bookmarks in wire spinner rack

Bookshare.org and Braille Institute Work Together to Increase Access to Braille Books

Bookshare.org's extensive online collection of electronic books can now be seamlessly ordered as hard-copy Braille books to be embossed and proofread by professionals at Braille Institute of America, significantly increasing access to books for Braille readers nationwide.

Bookshare.org, launched earlier this year by its nonprofit creator Benetech, offers blind, dyslexic, and other individuals with disabilities access to more than ten thousand digital books online by enabling members of this community to legally share scanned books. Until now, Bookshare.org has operated exclusively as a subscription service, where members register on the Web site, provide proof of a qualifying disability, and pay an annual subscription fee to access book files. Subscribers download books to listen to on their computers using a synthetic voice or to read using a refreshable Braille device.

Through this partnership with the Braille Institute, Bookshare.org can now make its books available to a wider audience, including school libraries, parents, or friends wanting to give the gift of a book, or the individual Braille reader who prefers to purchase only a few books instead of the annual Bookshare.org subscription.

The books available from Bookshare.org originate primarily as scanned books submitted by members and volunteers. Tens of thousands of individuals with print disabilities across the United States regularly scan books to make them accessible for their own use. Bookshare.org leverages the collections of these individuals, eliminating significant duplication of effort so that the same popular book need never be scanned twice. Subscribers pay an annual fee of $50, with a one-time set-up fee of $25, for access to the full collection. The number of books that can be made available by Bookshare.org is limited only by the number of volunteers willing to scan and submit books.

With the launch of this new partnership, ordering a book in hard-copy Braille can be done all in one visit, directly from the Bookshare.org Web site. Users simply search for their book and select the embossed Braille option. After filling out a simple online order form and submitting payment, the book order and any proofreading requested is sent to the Braille Institute and the completed book is mailed directly to the customer. There is no requirement to be a subscribing member to the Bookshare.org service to order embossed Braille books.

Instructions to Authors

Public Libraries, the official journal of the Public Library Association, is always eager to publish quality work of interest to public librarians. The following options are available to prospective authors:

- **Feature articles.** These are usually ten to twenty pages double-spaced. (Contact Renée Vaillancourt McGrath at publiclibraries@aol.com)
- **"Verso" pieces.** These express opinions or present viewpoints and are not to be longer than six pages. (Contact Renée Vaillancourt McGrath at publiclibraries@aol.com)
- Library news for **"Tales from the Front."** (Contact Jennifer Ries-Taggart at jtaggart@mcls.rochester.lib.ny.us)
- Items for **"News from PLA."** (Contact Kathleen Hughes at khughes@ala.org)
- **Vendor announcements.** (Contact Vicki Nesting at vnestin@bellsouth.net)
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Please follow the procedures outlined below when preparing manuscripts to be submitted to *Public Libraries*.

Mechanics

Manuscripts should be submitted on a PC-compatible disk or as an e-mail attachment (preferably in Microsoft Word format). Please write both **your name** and the **type** of word processing program (including **version**) on the disk label (or include in the text of an e-mail).

- Submit a separate cover page stating the author's name, address, telephone, and e-mail, and a brief, descriptive title of the proposed article. The author's name should not appear anywhere else on the manuscript.
- Do not use automatic formatting templates. Make the manuscript format as streamlined and simple as possible. Specialized formatting may be lost in translation from one program to another.
- Justify text on the left margin only (i.e., ragged right).
- Double-space the entire manuscript, including quotes and references.
- Number all pages.
- Add two hard returns between paragraphs to delineate them. Do not indent at the start of a new paragraph.
- Do not use the automatic footnote/endnote feature on your word processing program. Create endnotes manually at the end of the article.
- Do not use characters that do not appear on the standard keyboard, such as bullets or arrows. Indicate special characters in angled brackets as necessary (e.g., <left arrow>). Such characters are embedded later during the production process.

Style

- **Abstract.** Include two or three sentences summarizing the content of the article before the first paragraph of the text.

- **Spelling and use.** Consult the *Random House Webster's College Dictionary* for spelling and usage.
- **Style.** Consult the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th edition (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Pr., 1993) for capitalization, puncuation, abbreviations, etc.
- **Presentation.** Write in a clear, simple style. Use the active voice whenever possible. Avoid overly long sentences.
- **Subheadings.** Break up long sections of text with subheadings. All nouns, pronouns, modifiers, and verbs in the subhead should be capitalized.
- **References.** *Public Libraries* uses numbered endnotes, the standard humanities style detailed in the *Chicago Manual of Style,* chapter 15. References should appear at the end of the paper in the order in which they are cited in the text. Bibliographic references should not include works not cited in the text. Please refer to the preferred form for citations in past issues of the magazine and the *Chicago Manual of Style*.
- **Revision.** Articles are edited for clarity and space. When extensive revision is required, the manuscript is returned to the author for approval.

Photographs, Tables, and Graphs

- Photographs enhancing the content of the manuscript are welcomed. Print copies are preferred over digital copies, unless digital copies are prepared at high resolution, suitable for magazine printing. Web-quality files, such as gifs, cannot be used. Please include captions for all photos submitted.
- Tables and graphs should be prepared using a spreadsheet program such as Lotus or Excel, if possible.
- Number tables and graphs consecutively and save each as a separate file. Indicate their placement within the text with the note *[insert table 00 here]*.
- Provide each table or graph with a brief, descriptive caption.
- Use tables and graphs sparingly. Consider the relationship of the tables and graphs to the text in light of the appearance of the printed page.
- Provide data points for all graphs by marking them on a printout or including them in the software program. In some instances a graph may benefit from being recreated on our software.
- You need not provide graphs in final form. If you prefer, you may provide a rough version or even a sketch. If so, please mark all data points clearly. We will create the graphic. You will have a chance to review the graphic when you review your typeset pages during the proofing stage.
- For complicated illustrations such as maps or screen captures of Web pages, prepare TIF files on a separate disk labeled with the name of the author and the type and name of each file. As with photos, these files must be of high resolution, suitable for magazine printing, not just Web use.

If you have any questions about manuscript preparation or submission, please contact Renée Vaillancourt McGrath, Feature Editor, at publiclibraries@aol.com.

Submission and After

Manuscripts are evaluated by the feature editor and a panel of persons knowledgeable about the topic of the work. The evaluation process generally takes eight to twelve weeks. Articles are scheduled for publication mostly in the order of acceptance, except where space considerations dictate. For example, the number of pages available might require a longer or shorter article to complete the issue's allotted page count.

Send the original, a disk copy, plus two paper copies of the manuscript (or an electronic copy, as an e-mail attachment) along with your name, address, telephone, and fax and e-mail addresses to: Renée Vaillancourt McGrath, Feature Editor, 248A. N. Higgins Ave. #145, Missoula MT 59802. Queries can be addressed to publiclibraries@aol.com.

Receipt of all manuscripts is acknowledged. However, manuscripts cannot be returned unless a self-addressed envelope, large enough to contain the manuscript and with sufficient postage, is provided. Please feel free to contact Renée Vaillancourt McGrath at (406) 777-1228 or Kathleen Hughes at the PLA office, 800-545-2433, extension 4028, for more information. Your queries and suggestions are welcomed. ■

divisions hope to feature job shadow success stories in division print and Web publications. Learn about successful Job Shadow Days hosted by librarians and gain useful tips online at www.ala.org/acrl/jsd.html.

Please check division Web pages for more information and updates: AASL, www.ala.org/aasl/jobshadow; ACRL, www. ala.org/acrl; and PLA, www.pla.org/projects/jobshadow.html and by phone at 1-800-545-2433, ext. 5PLA.

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What made you decide to become a public librarian? PLA would like to know! We are collecting your stories to post on our recruitment Web page. This page is being developed for people interested in public librarianship as a career. Your real-life stories help PLA promote the profession and shatter the stereotypes. Read current examples at www.pla.org/projects/ testimonial.html and consider submitting yours to bmacikas@ ala.org. We'd love to use your photo, too.

Save the Date

PLA 2004—PLA's tenth national conference and sixtieth birthday celebratration—will be held February 24–28, 2004, in Seattle, Washington. The conference will feature more than 100 continuing education programs, preconference workshops, talk table sessions, author luncheons, tours of Seattle, and much more, including our very first fun run (a 5K). In addition, the exhibits hall will contain nearly 800 booths to explore. Several special exhibit events, including an opening reception and coffee breaks, are scheduled throughout the conference. PLA members receive discounted registration as well as conference information and updates. Visit www.ala.org/membership/membfees.html to become a member. ■

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www.bookshare.org

World's First High-Resolution, Active-Matrix Color Display with Electronic Ink Demonstrated

E Ink Corporation and two strategic development partners—TOPPAN Printing and Royal Philips Electronics—have announced the demonstration of the world's first high-resolution, active-matrix color display developed with electronic ink. A prototype of the display was first exhibited to industry leaders at the Society for Information Display (SID) Symposium, Seminar, and Exhibition in Boston, Massachusetts, in June 2002.

This color display was developed jointly by integrating technologies from all three parties—E Ink's electronic ink technology, a custom color filter array produced by TOPPAN, and an active matrix backplane from Philips. This ultra-low power, reflective, image-stable color display is capable of displaying 4,096 colors and is being developed for multiple mobile applications, including PDAs, mobile communications devices, and electronic readers. The display measures 5" diagonally with a resolution of 320 x 234 (80 pixels per inch).

The color electronic ink displays are targeted for commercialization in 2004.

Using E Ink's electronic ink technology in components made by TOPPAN, Philips plans to first introduce monochrome displays (initially ranging from black and white to four-bit gray scale) for handheld devices and portable consumer electronics in 2003.

Color electronic ink displays promise a number of major benefits for handheld applications compared to existing display solutions. Unlike LCDs and OLEDs, electronic ink displays have a paper-like look with readability under all lighting conditions, including bright sunlight. LCDs typically have a narrow viewing angle, beyond which the color image is effectively lost. Color electronic ink displays can be viewed or illuminated from any angle without any loss of contrast and brightness.

www.eink.com ■

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