

CONNECTICUT LIBRARIES

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Association

Getting Books to Older Adults

Hunting for Best Practices

by Douglas Lord

A creature named ‘best practices’ lives somewhere in libraryland; its name arises frequently when discussing LSTA grants. Everyone wants to capture best practices, surely. But what are they? Where are they? And how do we get them? My task: find them and report back.

I first stalked this elusive beast at the Enfield PL because I’d heard good things about their *Words on Wheels* homebound service. Lisa Sprague is public services librarian there; when not on desk, she’s programming, doing mystical web stuff, or handing out chocolate. Sprague implemented *Words on Wheels* last year with help from a \$22,859 LSTA grant.



Lisa Sprague

“Best practices, eh?” Lisa queries. “Yeah,” I say, realizing only then that I don’t really know what I’m hunting. “Well,” says Sprague, “best practices are those characteristics of a project that can serve as lessons for others performing similar work.” Elated at Sprague’s elucidation, maybe she has some, I ask, “Whaddya got?”

We Visit A Senior Center Seeing is believing, so we venture to St. Joseph’s Residence, run by the Little Sisters of the Poor who care for and serve elderly in 31 countries, including some folks right here in Enfield. Sprague sets up her wares in the program room, and at 2:00 o’clock there’s a flurry of activity with residents shuffling in on walkers and softly sweeping the floor with their slippers. The residents love Sprague. They seem hesitant to take more than a few books, but she encourages them to take as many as they like. I notice that she speaks slowly and clearly to the seniors and when I ask her for other tips she says, with a grin, “I’m a lot nicer than I would be normally.”

I hope this program doesn’t go away!” worries Kathi Carney, activities director at St. Joe’s. “I have 88 voters in this place!” she declares, adding that there are “more readers here than in the general population; they just can’t make it to the library.”

Residents bubble with comments. “Once I start a book I can’t put it down,” says Marian Cunningham, “This is a great idea; brings the books right to us.” Another resident says, “We’re so happy that the library hasn’t forgotten us.” An elderly couple enters together to browse. “Oooh, that’s heavy,” the woman says, hefting a huge tome. “This is like a brand new book!” the man exclaims. I note that it is indeed a brand new copy of *Witness to Hope: The Biography of John Paul II*



Frank MacDonald

that clocks in at 1,056 pages. Frank MacDonald, 91, a resident watercolorist whose paintings are in demand, asks about singer Michael Buble, and Fernande St. Pierre

pops her head in to ask, “How about a good agent for someone who’s writing a book?”



Fernande St. Pierre

Sprague also travels to another local residence, Blair Manor, and her house-to-house trade is approaching a dozen homes. I ask about all the what-ifs involved in homebound services: What if your client has a zillion cats? Or a big dog, and you have allergies? What if the person you’re visiting is a total jerk? “I can deal with a big dog since I’m allergy-free and enjoy animals,” she says, “but a yappy little dog would set my teeth on edge.”

Yappy Dogs Be Damned. We Deliver Books to the Homebound Having picked up the trail of ‘best practices’ from Lisa Sprague, I pack my gear and head to Old Lyme’s Phoebe Noyes Griffin Library, where Director Mary Fiorelli has used an \$18,779 LSTA grant to kick-start delivery of books to homebound residents and to the Lymes Senior Cen-

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OBVERSION

Best Sellers or Just Sellers?

How the Famous NYT List Is Made

I like to draw on topical material from *The New York Times*. Its coverage can sometimes be polarizing, but while I know folks who loathe and love the paper, I have yet to find anyone who regards it as boring or mediocre. And say what you will about other aspects of its content, the *Times* carries a lot of news about books and libraries.

In recent years, the *Times* has experienced a number of serious ethical lapses, ranging from reporters who invented articles out of whole cloth to an interviewer who moved questions and answers around and embellished some quotes in the interest of making her column more readable.

Following a series of such embarrassments a few years back, the paper created the position of *public editor* to serve as watchdog over its newsgathering and reporting practices. The current editor, Clark Hoyt, does a splendid job of keeping an eye on what the paper prints and is fearless in writing about it. I wish all newspapers had a similar position.

Hoyt recently turned his attention to the *NYT* Best-Seller List ("Books for the Ages, if Not for the Best-Seller List," 10/21/07), which he described as "a powerful and mysterious institution." Well, powerful yes, but how could a list of



William Uricchio

best-selling books be mysterious? Isn't it just derived from sales figures?

Hoyt's interest was piqued by the sudden disappearance from the list of Elie Weisel's *Night*, which had been there for a very long time, ranking at number 9 the week before it vanished. His investigation revealed a number of remarkable things about the list: older books like *Night* are eventually declared "evergreens" and deleted, regardless of sales figures, to make room for newer titles;

the list is assembled by the news surveys department, not by the knowledgeable editor in whose section it appears; sales figures come from a varying number of selling sources, not from a standard set of outlets; and there are no specific requirements for how sales numbers are submitted—some are for all books sold by a supplier, some sellers give numbers only for current best sellers, and others include numbers for new books in addition to the latest top items.

By varying its sources of data and not revealing their names, as is done for similar lists by others, the *Times* seeks to avoid publishers "making strategic

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BOOKS LOOKING AT

Microtrends: The Small Forces Behind Tomorrow's Big Changes

by Mark J. Penn (Hatchett Book Group, 2007)

Interesting stuff here. Interesting for politicos like Penn, who is an adviser to the Clintons, and also for people like us, who want to know as much as we can about the people whom we serve, which, in the library business, is pretty much everyone.

Penn's claim to fame (besides managing Hilary Clinton's presidential campaign) is the identification of a small group of people who turned out to be very important to Bill Clinton's 1996 reelection campaign. Remember the soccer moms? If not, *Microtrends* is not for you. Likewise, if you didn't like Malcolm Gladwell's *Blink* or *The Tipping Point*, and definitely not if you haven't been tempted to browse through *Freakonomics*.

And, browse is definitely the way to take on *Microtrends*. Penn encourages browsing by dividing his content into 70 microtrends grouped under fifteen subheadings (like Work Life, Race and Religion, Leisure and Entertainment, Education; you get the idea).

Penn contends that we are a collection of communities with many individual tastes and lifestyles, and those who know how to identify these microtrends can "transform a business enterprise, tip an election, spark a movement, or change a life." I don't know about life changing, but I do recommend *Microtrends* as a good browse for those who would think about how people in these emerging groups might best use the library.

Although I don't think the projected increase in the number of Cougars (read and find out—pp. 7-11) will affect the way we do business in libraries, the increase in the number of Extreme Commuters and Stay-At-Home Workers should certainly affect public library use during the now less crowded daytime hours. Certainly, public libraries have already been feeling the effects of the increase in America's Home-Schooled



and DIYDS—Do-It-Yourself-Doctors, which, according to Penn, is the biggest trend in American health care. We'd better listen carefully when people come to the library to research their symptoms and diagnose their illnesses because, in 2000, the number of Americans with hearing loss—Hard-Of-Hearers—reached almost 30 million, more than double what it had been in the 1970s. That's one in every 10 Americans!

Other microtrends already affecting libraries are the Caffeine Crazy's and the Pet Parents.

First they want coffee; now they want to bring Fido in for a cup too! Children's librarians know about "Pampering Parents," many of whom you've run into or afoul of by now. All librarians know more than we want to about XXX Men, the 40 million American adults who regularly visit Internet pornography sites. "That's more than ten times the number of people who regularly watch baseball," says Penn, "and which one...do we call America's pastime?"

On the downside is the projected increase in Newly Released Ex-Cons. In 1973, about 100,000 people were coming out of prison every year. Today, that number has grown by something like 600 %. So many people are being released from prison now because we sent so many more to prison during our get-tough-on-crime spree in the 1980s and early 1990s.

We already have a challenging time serving Native Language Speakers from households that the U.S. Census calls "linguistically isolated," meaning no one in the household speaks English very well. In recent years, the number of such households has shot up by more than 50% to nearly 12 million people. As Penn says, "That's about 1 in every 25 households. It's nearly the population of Guatemala."

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Christine Bradley
Guest Reviewer

OBVERSION

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bulk buys to inflate sales numbers." This sounds like a good thing, especially given the suspicion that many of the "great book" comments on Amazon come from people affiliated with the publishers of the books being praised.

Hoyt noted that inclusion on the *NYT* best-seller list is very important to authors, publishers and sellers not only for the prestige it confers but also for the financial benefit that can be expected. A Stanford University professor who studied the sales impact of being listed discovered that books on the compilation sell an average of 57% more copies than less fortunate titles.

As part of his examination, Hoyt also learned that the *Times* is considering the creation of a new best-seller list for classics like *Night*. He wasn't convinced of the value of yet another list and concluded, "For my money, if the main list is a best sellers list, it ought to reflect what's selling best, classics and new books alike." I think, however, that the creation of different lists, already done by the *NYT* for paperbacks, self-help books and others, is a practical approach. A single list attempting to show best selling fiction, non-fiction, paperbacks, children's titles and so forth would be very unwieldy and, I suspect, very difficult to construct. One list made up of all best sellers regardless of type would take us back to the days when most of the top slots were occupied by self-help books, closing out other kinds of valuable books.

An alternative source of information for librarians looking for genuine best sellers might be a subscription to the proprietary BookScan provided by Nielsen which, according to its website, includes specific sales numbers provided by 4,500 retailers. A writer at Slate.com noted that these numbers can be fun to look at since some books being touted as "best sellers" by other listing services, the press, or on television can be anything but. For example, one year "BookScan figures... show[ed] that the finalists for the fiction category of the National Book Award were a bunch of poorly selling obscurities." ("Book Clubbed" by Daniel Gross, posted Friday, June 2, 2006. www.slate.com/id/2142810/)

Since poorly selling obscurities are typically the kind of book I find interesting, I propose that the *Times* create such a list for people like me. We're too caught up in bean-counting madness with lists based on sales figures. "Good and interesting books" is a category too often missing from our discussions; I say "hooray" if those kinds of books get National Book Awards.

William Uricchio is Director of the Trecker Library on UConn's Greater Hartford Campus. Contact him at william.urichio@uconn.edu.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT



Carl Antonucci

The CLA Legislative Committee

One of the meetings that I attend as CLA President is the monthly CLA Legislative Committee meeting, co-chaired by Mike Moran, from Asnuntuck Community College, and Peter Ciparelli, from the New London Public Library. Before becoming a regular attendee, I hadn't realized how much good work the committee does for Connecticut libraries. The committee is responsible for drafting CLA's annual legislative agenda and for informing legislators about the needs of the state's public libraries.

Approximately 8% of the CLA budget supports the work of Barry Williams, CLA's lobbyist in Hartford. As a result of his efforts, CLA has been very successful with each year's legislative agenda. Unfortunately, due to health problems, Barry has had to resign this position. On behalf of the organization, I want to thank him for his years of hard work on behalf of CLA and to wish him well in the future. Barry's act will be a hard one to follow, but he has offered to assist CLA in hiring a new lobbyist.

The Executive Board approved CLA's FY2009 legislative agenda at its November meeting. I've included that agenda below and I want to thank the members of the Legislative Committee for the work they do to make legislators aware of the needs of Connecticut libraries.

Please mark your calendars for the CLA Legislative Breakfast Reception, which will be held at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford on Wednesday, March 5 from 8:00 to 9:30. This year's breakfast is being planned by Suzanne Maryeski, from the Farmington Public Library, and Rob Walsh, from Three Rivers Community College.

CLA Legislative Agenda, FY2009

Achieve full funding for Connecticutcard

Connecticard is a statewide program that allows all Connecticut citizens to use their library card in any public library in the state. Last year, over 4.6 million items were borrowed under this program. A consultant hired by the State Library recently determined that the actual median cost of a Connecticutcard transaction is \$1.05, which would require \$4.9 million for the program to be fully funded. Despite a welcome increase of \$250,000 in FY2008 to \$1,226,028, reimbursement to participating libraries has only risen to \$0.27 per item. CLA seeks additional annual increases over the next several years until this \$4.9 million goal is achieved.

Increase funding for Connecticut Library Consortium and InfoAnytime Program

CLC's program of statewide cooperative services for 900 member libraries was funded by the General Assembly at \$350,000 in FY2008. CLA seeks \$375,000 for CLC to continue its programs in FY2009. CLC's InfoAnytime program was funded by the General Assembly at \$150,000 in FY2008. InfoAnytime provides librarians online 24/7 to answer reference questions for 175 public and academic libraries statewide, with 60-70 questions being answered daily. CLA seeks \$200,000 for CLC to continue this service in FY2009. InfoAnytime is funded on the same local funds/state funds cost model that supports CLC's other programs.

Maintain funding for Public Library Construction Grants

This program was funded by the General Assembly at \$8.5 million in FY2008, a substantial increase from \$3,500,000 in FY2007. With a growing list of Connecticut libraries in need of new buildings, renovations, expansions, ADA improvements, remodeling, and energy conservation, CLA seeks to increase this funding to \$10,000,000 in FY2009.

Increase funding for iCONN

iCONN, Connecticut's research engine, provides an extensive set of online resources to all state residents. In FY2007 iCONN saw a small increase to \$2,067,485, which allowed the addition of the *Historical Hartford Courier* (1764-1922). CLA advocates increased support

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HIGHLIGHTS

President Carl Antonucci noted that the Executive Director of the Commission on the Permanent Status of Women has asked to meet to discuss how the commission might work with CLA. He presented information on several software packages to support online registration for CLA events, specifically for the conference. The cost would range from \$3,500 to \$5,000. Jay Johnston moved that the president be empowered to appoint a committee to research and purchase a software package that would facilitate online registration for CLA events at a cost not to exceed \$7,000. Motion adopted.

Nutmeg Donation The board considered a request from the Children's Section to increase CLA's donation to the Nutmeg Award program from \$750 to \$1000. The board opted to donate \$750 as budgeted for 2007-2008.

Conference 2009 Alice Knapp, co-chair of the 2009 conference, moved that CLA meet at the Omni Hotel in New Haven. She also moved that the 2009 Conference be held on Wednesday – Friday, April 29 – May 1. Both motions approved.

Conference Honoraria & Fees Carl distributed a draft policy outlining guidelines for compensation and accommodations of conference speakers, guests, volunteers, and staff. Following discussion and some changes, the document was approved.

Personnel Alice Knapp recommended a 3% increase in the minimum salary guideline for entry-level MLS positions. Board approved the following, effective July 1: hourly rate, \$24.55; 35-hour workweek, \$46,028; 37½ hour workweek, \$49,316; 40 hour work week, \$52,603.

ACLB Stan Siegel reported that Sharon Brettschneider has been elected to the ACLB Board.

Awards Barbara Bailey informed the board that information about the annual CLA awards will be published in the January and February issues of *Connecticut Libraries*. Deadline for nominations is March 3.

CLC Chris Bradley announced that Trendspotting will be held March 14 at the New Haven Lawn Club and that OCLC training is underway.

CSL Sharon Brettschneider reported that the CLASS salary survey is on the State Library survey monkey. She noted that 180 public libraries submitted their annual data in November. The State Library Board has approved seven construction grants (Bethel PL; Brooklyn Town Library; Barney Library, Farmington; Albany Branch Library, Hartford; Atwater Memorial Library, North Branford; Terryville PL; Ferguson Library, Stamford) for a total of \$5,060,204 from state bond funds.

Career Recruitment Debbie Herman reported that 2008 CLA scholarship applications are available on the web site.

Editorial Carol Abatelli reported that the CLA website has been totally revised and encouraged members to use it and to let her know if other changes are needed. David Kapp reported that he had received 18 applications to write for CL's *Obversion* column. The Editorial Team selected three new columnists: Julian Aiken (Wallingford PL), Joe Goberman (Groton PL), and Michele Jacobson (Bridgeport PL).

Friends Sharon Brettschneider reported that the Friends annual meeting will be June 14, with Wendell Minor as keynote speaker.

Legislative Mike Moran reported that CLA lobbyist Barry Williams has resigned due to poor health. Barry will be honored at the March 4 Legislative Breakfast. Several people recommended that regional legislative receptions be resumed and that the Legislator of the Year award be revived.

Membership Janet Woycik reported 808 current CLA members. Non-renewing members will be contacted by email.

NELA Mary Etter reported that NELA is planning its 2008 New England Library Leadership Symposium (NELLS). She noted that PEG funding is available to support attendance.

Publicity Betty Anne Reiter reported on new categories for the publicity awards: blogs, pod-casts, and video entries. Deadline for submission of entries is January 15; forms are on the website.

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LOOKING AT BOOKS

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But there is also good news for us in *Microtrends*, like the increase in LAS—Long Attention Spanners. Penn says, "While many marketers and politicians have been perfecting communications aimed at ADD America, they would be wise to pay attention to America's LAS." In fact, in 2005, the best-selling books in America were, on average, over 100 pages longer than they had been ten years before.

Finally, there are the Social Geeks. As we who work in libraries are well aware, the social uses of technology, with its new emphasis on connecting, have far outstripped the antisocial purposes that technology used to serve. People, especially young people, enjoy socializing in online communities like MySpace and Facebook. Then there are the Video Game Grown Ups. As of 2006, the average video/computer-game player was 33 years old. According to the Entertainment Software Association, gamers under age 18 actually make up less than one-third of all players, while people over 50 make up 25 %.

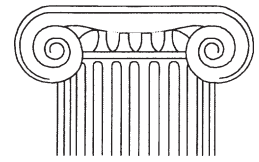
So, there is interesting stuff for all of us to learn about microtrends, those small population groups that either are, or soon will be, populating our libraries. And, *Microtrends* is a pleasant diversion. Archery Moms, Tech Fatales, Young Knitters—you can't make this stuff up!

Christine Bradley is the Executive Director of the Connecticut Library Consortium.



Liberty Bank presented Arthur S. Meyers, director of Middletown's Russell Library, with the 2007 Liberty Bank Community Diversity Award on November 29. Meyers received his award from bank officials at a gala reception attended by some 200 friends, family members, bank officers, and community leaders. "Arthur Meyers personifies the characteristics we look for in selecting the recipient of our Community Diversity Award," said Liberty Bank president and CEO Chandler J. Howard. "He not only embraces the concept of diversity on a personal level, but also leads others to embrace it as well. Through both his profession and his community activities, he quietly and persistently encourages us to better understand the differences between people and to look beyond them to our common humanity." Photo (left to right): Liberty Bank President and CEO Chandler Howard, Russell Library Director Arthur S. Meyers, and Liberty Bank Chairman Mark Gingras

HERITAGE



Connecticut Excellence in Public Library Architecture Awards are presented every three years to encourage excellence in the architectural design and functional planning of public library buildings in the state. This year, a jury panel of librarians Karen Mellor and Douglas Pearce and architects Stephen Hale and Jay Litman, all from out of state, reviewed and evaluated 16 construction projects completed between 2001 and 2006.

Scotland Public Library The winner for public libraries of fewer than 18,000 sq. ft. is the Scotland Public Library, a new 7,000 sq. ft. building. Scotland is a small, rural New England town in the northeast corner of the state with a population of 1,699. The library's architect is Angela D. Cahill of Schoenhardt Architecture + Interior Design. Local businessman Andrew D'Elia donated funds for the purchase of land and construction of the building, making the library a public/private partnership in the true Carnegie tradition. The building also contains a 1,000 sq. ft. museum featuring D'Elia's collection of antique tools. The cost of this project, \$1,688,709, represents good value for the community.



Scotland Public Library's architect made excellent use of a challenging site, including the design of a nature walk with raised boardwalks through existing wetlands.

Photo: Jay Cassano Photography

Jurors commented that the architect has made excellent use of a challenging site, including the design of a nature walk with raised boardwalks through existing wetlands. The interior layout, with clear sight lines, enables effective oversight of activities by a small staff. The building was designed with high quality, attractive finishes that will stand up to public use for many years to come. It has well-proportioned interior spaces with interesting detailing, such as tall casement windows, stained glass, and coffered ceilings. To supplement natural lighting, the architect employed thoughtful use of artificial lighting that is efficient and glare free. A mural in the children's room adds color and vitality to the space. The design appears to be adaptable to the changing needs of the community and to future technological innovations. The covered drive-up book drop is convenient for patrons, especially in snowy or wet weather.

Wilton Library The winner for public libraries over 18,000 sq. ft. is the Wilton Library, a 50,000 sq. ft. addition and renovation project. With a population of 17,633, Wilton is located in Fairfield County, north of the City of Norwalk. The architect is Tai Soo Kim of Tai Soo Kim Partners. The cost of this project, \$11,400,000, while not inexpensive, represents exceptional value for the community.

Jurors commented that the architect's addition enhanced the design of the existing building while maintaining the clean

elegance of its modern, Bauhaus-inspired style. Most of the exterior walls in public areas are glass, thereby providing a close connection to the outside and an abundance of light. The interior's neutral color palette enhances the distribution of natural light. The building has two open-air courtyards where customers can read or use their laptops during good weather or look out to enjoy the beauty of falling snow in winter. The main meeting room is a beautiful and flexible space that expands into an inspirational outdoor courtyard area. The design of this space to accommodate concerts is exquisite! The lighting, both artificial and natural, is well conceived and particularly attractive at night, when it creates a warm and welcoming oasis. The building design approaches a green standard through the use of natural light.

The overall design exceeds the stated objectives of the library's long-range plan. The expanded library is adaptable to the changing needs of the community and to future technological innovations. The layout is customer and staff friendly because the majority of public services are on the first floor.

The placement of the children's library is convenient for parents and children while being acoustically separate from the rest of the library. Jurors also appreciated the inclusion of a full service drive-up window.

Fairfield Public Library Jurors awarded an honorable mention to Fairfield Public Library, where Herbert S. Newman of Herbert S. Newman and Partners P.C. Architect have created an attractive composition with new building elements complementing and enhancing older historic architecture with imaginatively designed modern elements. This is a complex design where architects faced many challenges, especially unifying multiple levels from several previous additions. The building has a variety of interesting and colorful spaces in a mix of styles. The new interior and casework elements are clean and well designed.

Michael Joyce, Argyle Design, Inc., designed an innovative children's space that invites exploration, discovery, and learning. To make children feel welcome and secure, he divided the area into "neighborhoods" based on familiar landmarks in the Town of Fairfield: a gazebo, a lighthouse, a town green, a country store, a farmyard, a book shop, a train station, and a town hall.



Wilton Library's main meeting room can be opened into an outdoor courtyard to accommodate concerts. Photo: Woodruff & Brown Photography and Paul Warchol

Mary Louise Jensen, Connecticut State Library building consultant, was the non-voting facilitator for the jury. The awards are sponsored by: CSL, CLA, ACLB, FOCL, and AIA/CT and will be presented during CLA's Annual Conference in April. This article will also appear in the CSL's CONNector and on webjunction.

Excellence in Public Library Architecture Awards 2008

by Mary Louise Jensen

GETTING BOOKS TO OLDER ADULTS

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Mary Fiorelli

ter (serving Lyme and Old Lyme). Fiorelli leveraged her program by riding along on service visits with the local Meals on Wheels coordinator, Judy Winer, who's proved invaluable by prepping Fiorelli on clients and their individual issues (e.g., 'he's stone deaf,' 'she'd be a good one').

Fiorelli and Winer agree that if reading is already an established habit, then seniors are amenable. Selling homebound book services to those who were not avid readers or regular library users, however, is enormously hard. After a few ride-alongs and after developing a great brochure and poster, Fiorelli has built an audience of 18 homebound patrons who borrow about 400 items monthly. The routine proves time-intensive (about 30 miles round trip) and requires patience because all these folks have stories that she needs to hear.

Fiorelli acknowledges potential problems I mention: dogs, cats, and, possibly, dirty old men, noting that there are few controls of the unknown. She relates how she sees the sense of privacy erode in old age, describing how one of her male clients welcomed her while sitting on the toilet.

Fiorelli lets 'best practices' slip out in conversation and learns from what's not working; CD players and cassette players aren't circulating, so Fiorelli wants to try a new one recommended by Hartford's NEAT Marketplace. She is also thinking about contacting local churches to try to combine book delivery with their ministries' home services.

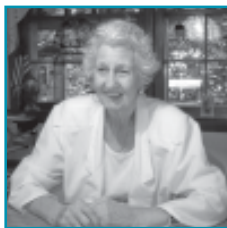
The home visits, though, make up for any possible downside. One patron, Anne Kinsella, 88, has a slight Scottish brogue. Hard of hearing and nearly blind, she lives alone and is doing pretty



Werneth Noyes

well; it's inspiring to see this tough, but sweet, lady. Werneth Noyes, a 94-year-old former library volunteer, embodies a lot of the reasons that libraries want to start homebound visits: She's humble, grateful, and classy. Spending time with

Werneth makes you feel like you're rubbing shoulders with someone important. And who, asks Fiorelli, is more important than our patrons?



Anne Kinsella

The Trail Leads Back To The Library At Washington's Gunn Memorial Library, Kristine Dyson conjured up the *Gunn Your Mind* project with \$5,397 in LSTA funds. The project lured older adults back to the library with MP3 players and also featured a film festival, a discussion series and other programs. Dyson even tied in an MP3-themed summer reading project; prizes included a Creative Zen 1GB player, books by local authors, and a pack of DVD films. As often as not, these new customers came looking for a book and walked out with the digital version plus the player.

Perpetually smiling and gentle, Dyson knows her customers; she threw a wrap-up party for participants, complete with cake and ice cream. Attendees engaged in an animated discussion of the how-to of the players and everything related to them. Dyson received lots of good feedback, fielding questions about how the players worked, licensing and copyright

issues, subscription details, and publishing industry goings-on. All the users agreed that using the MP3 players got easier to use with practice. After testing a few models, Dyson eventually settled on the Zen Nano. Although it does not bookmark, this flash player resumes where one stops reading, is reasonably priced for its 1GB capacity, and most important, was found to be the simplest to use. Due to lack of patron familiarity with MP3 technology; however, librarians can expect to provide lots of handholding, which could possibly affect network speed and security and overall project sustainability.

One Gunn patron, Madeline Revere, who describes herself as a "huge listener," said that audio books are "great for me" and uses them when gardening or doing chores. Revere noted how "very fortunate we are to have Kristine Dyson," characterizing her as a "sweetheart." Revere likes the player's size and the fact that there are no tapes or CDs to change; she recently listened to Michael Pollan's *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*. Revere bought her own 2 GB player after using the library's machine, and the only downside she sees is that because the subscription is available over the Internet, she comes to the library less frequently.

My hunt for the 'best practices' animal concluded in Washington. In addition to repeating the successes and strengths of these programs in our own communities, we can glean a few reliable best practices that always work for older patrons: Be nice. Go to their homes. Lure them with one-on-one services. Cake, ice cream and prizes are good. ■

Douglas Lord is LSTA coordinator for CSL. All photos: Douglas Lord.



Kristine Dyson

Money, Money, Money

CLA's Career Recruitment Committee offers scholarships to CT residents who are enrolled in MLS or LTA degree programs. Two MLS scholarships in the amount of \$1,500 each and two LTA scholarships in the amount of \$700 each are available. Scholarship winners also receive free CLA membership and paid registration and lunch at the CLA Annual Conference. See www.ctlibraryassociation.org/scholarship.htm for details and application forms. For more information, Contact Debbie Herman at hermand@ccsu.edu or 860-832-2084. Deadline: February 1, 2008

TECHNOLOGY



Bridgeport Public Library installed Envisionware sign-up and print management software for public computers last October. It is an awesome product that saves considerable staff time. In the process of troubleshooting and fine-tuning our installation I spent a lot of time in the trenches helping patrons use the public access computers.

It was an eye-opening experience. Folks would ask me about Word functions that I don't use in my day-to-day work. They would do things to their documents that I had never seen before. Worst of all, they wanted me to undo what they had done! The undo arrow became my best friend. Good techie that I am, I made myself cheat sheets with tips and tricks to help me assist the public, and which I now share with you.

- The Num Lock key took on an importance that it never had before. If patrons failed to have num lock on and used the keypads on the keyboard, their barcodes were not entered and they couldn't get a reservation or enter their barcodes into the computers.
- Who knew that those laser barcode readers were not as easy to use as I had imagined? Ours definitely have a sweet spot. "Watch that red line," I told patron after patron. If a patron does not scan his card just so, he won't get a reservation. If you install barcode readers at your self-checkout stations, I imagine you face the same challenge.
- Typos also took on a meaning I had never foreseen. At first, patron barcodes were masked for patron privacy as they typed them in; folks just could not enter those 14 digits correctly. Time after time, the computer told them that they should go to the circulation desk. In week two, the masking was removed to the relief of staff and patrons.
- One of the first Word questions I had was "How do I double-space my document?" Easy one I thought. Well, I couldn't find it quickly with my vast tech experience. Answer: In Word, go to the "format" menu on the toolbar, chose "paragraph," and then "line spacing" has a drop down menu with "double" as a choice.
- Then there was the patron who had a document full of dots and what looked like musical notes. There was simply a tool bar item that turned the line break and spacing symbols on and off. I have taught classes in Word but had never used that function.
- There was also the gentleman who had run the spelling and grammar check with no errors and asked me to look over his paper. Sadly, it made little sense although the spelling and grammar were fine. So I guess spell check and grammar check are not as good as I thought.

Working with the public was great and I learned a lot about how people use the computers at BPL; they needed tech advice that I hadn't imagined. Then it occurred to me, why not ask the Connecticut library community what tech advice they need? Maybe you are looking for a new receipt printer (don't buy the Epson TM 220 I bought for the Envisionware project), or

wondering how to share a printer with multiple PCs, why you don't have gridlines on an Excel document, or what online site you can use to host your intranet or email.

Perhaps the tech columnists from *Connecticut Libraries* can help. Bruce Johnston, Sharon Clapp, Kate Sheehan and I are looking for new ideas for articles. If you've got a problem or a suggestion for a column, email me at sboyd@bridgeportpubliclibrary.org. Be sure to include "TechTips" in the subject line, as I am very quick to delete email with an address I don't recognize—a good tech tip, by the way.

While no one can have all the tech answers you need, including the *CL* tech columnists, we'll take a stab at answering your questions. Think of us as the Car Talk guys on NPR except we handle tech issues in libraries. Some topics may turn into entire articles while others may make it into a Question and Answer format in a column called TechTips. I am also not above picking your brains. If you have a wonderful TechTip to share with CL readers, don't hesitate to send it to me and I will pass it along in the TechTip column with proper credit.

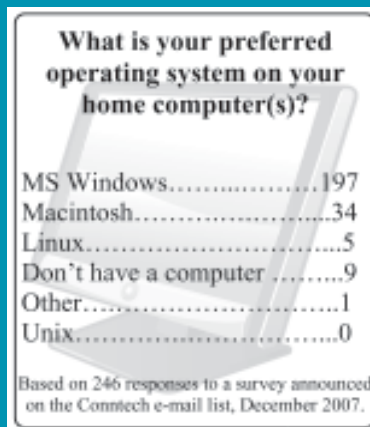
You can be anonymous if you wish, but remember, there are no dumb tech questions. Some techies claim that their users make ID10t errors; well, I suspect I've made most of the ID10t errors and asked many of the same questions you have while managing technology at my library. So email me some questions and topics for technology columns. I promise to write back, even if just to say I feel your pain and have not a clue how to solve your problem. I'm optimistic, however; there are wonderful tech resources out there, in print on the Internet, and in the collective wisdom of tech-minded librarians. What have you got to lose? TTYL—talk to you later.

Sylvia Boyd is Technology Coordinator for Bridgeport PL. Contact her at sboyd@bridgeportpubliclibrary.org.

A New Year. A New Column: TechTips



Sylvia Boyd



Creating a Social OPAC

by Hing Wu

[In a] Social OPAC, . . . users collaborate, interact and contribute information through the online catalog. The result . . . is the enhancement of the . . . library experience for users, creating a sense of ownership.

John Blyberg, head of technology and digital initiatives at Darien Library, presented the first half of CLA's Technical Services Section fall program at Farmington Library. Blyberg is the pioneer who implemented Social OPAC, a prominent feature of the Ann Arbor District Library website. Social OPAC, in which users collaborate, interact and contribute information through the online catalog, is deemed a milestone in library networking. The result of these activities is the enhancement of the overall library experience for users, creating a sense of ownership. This collective intelligence becomes more meaningful and valuable to the local library community.

Blyberg defined three types of social catalogs. An example of the "pseudo/semi-social," with authority presented as collaboration, can be found at Michigan State University, www.magic.msu.edu, where subject headings are shown as a tag cloud-like structure but with no feedback or interaction from the community.

A second type is the "syndicated social catalog" in which data is provided by a third party such as LibraryThing, www.librarything.com. Kate Sheehan, coordinator of library automation at Danbury Library, which uses the service, enthusiastically explained, LibraryThing is a social networking site that allows users to catalog their own books, create tags, review books and participate in book discussions.

By integrating LibraryThing's user-generated data into the Danbury Library catalog, Sheehan said, the library provides a new way to explore and enhance what is already there. Social data does not replace MARC and LCSH information, nor can users add tags. LibraryThing draws the unstructured, powerful intelligence of a social network into the catalog, Sheehan said, and is inexpensive and fun to use. She is impressed by their service and the ease of its application. It is a "gentle innovation" that both the staff and public like.

The third type of social catalog is the "individually social," as exemplified by the Ann Arbor District Library catalog, www.aadl.org. In this case, according to Blyberg, a set of social networking tools is integrated into the catalog, allowing users to rate, review, comment on, and tag items. Users can build personal collections showing the books they have read, and develop individual tag collections to organize titles according to those tags. The rating, reviewing and commenting functions allow users to build communities of similar interests. A Personal

Review Management feature helps users to organize book reviews sorted by title, author, and usefulness.

Still another example of social OPAC is the Hennepin County Library Catalog, www.hclib.org, where readers can post comments on items found in the catalog. Through its Catalog News section, readers are directed to www.facebook.com where HCL has created a presence to share information and tools with the Facebook community.

On the academic library front, the University of Rochester's River Campus Libraries are working on the "next-generation catalog," known as eXtensible Catalog (XC). According to their press release, "XC has the potential to allow future library users at any level of proficiency to get more out of academic library collections and to give academic libraries more control over how best to help people gather information." (See their website www.rochester.edu/news for updates.)

The perception that the OPAC is a passive entity soon to be replaced by Google is no longer valid. The Social OPAC is a fast growing trend that brings communities together to use and share data in a way that is much more engaging, meaningful—and fun! ■

Hing Wu is Media/Technical Services Librarian at the Hilton C. Buley Library, Southern Connecticut State University.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Continued from page 3

for this successful program to \$3,067,485 in FY2009. This increase will expand the resources available to students and residents and result in significant savings to local communities.

Extend confidentiality of library records to academic libraries

CLA recommends extension of the new statutory language regarding confidentiality of public library records included in PA 07-227 to apply to all academic libraries in Connecticut.

Conference 2008 Update I am pleased to announce that Stephanie Maatta, assistant professor, University of South Florida School of Library and Information Science, will speak at our annual conference. She is the author of *Library Journal's* annual placement and salary survey, *What's an MLIS Worth?* Dr. Maatta will speak on the present and future outlook of careers in librarianship.



Stephanie Maatta

Carl Antonucci is Director of the Capital Community College Library. Contact him at cantonucci@ccc.comment.edu.

Carol Taylor has devoted her entire career to helping visually impaired people gain access to the written word. Yet no one in her early life was blind or otherwise handicapped. She attributes her lifelong interest in helping those with visual impairments experience the joy of reading to her own love of books. As a young girl she read in bed with a flashlight after her parents had told her to go to sleep. "When I read the story of Helen Keller, I became fascinated by the way she had overcome her handicaps and made a life for herself," she explains.



As director of the Library for the Blind & Physically Handicapped, Carol Taylor administers a collection of more than 63,000 titles and 250,000 volumes.

Photo: Douglas Lord

Carol's family moved to Gainesville, Florida during her high school years so that her father could attend the University of Florida. Although proud of her dad's mid-life return to school, she didn't want to be a freshman at the school where he was a senior, so she opted for Florida State. There, she majored in social work and minored in education, becoming the first FSU student to intern in both fields. She learned how to teach Braille and graduated in 1972 with certification to teach blind and partially sighted K-12 students.

After graduation, Carol worked for a year in Brevard County teaching visually handicapped students who had been mainstreamed into regular classes. The following year she and her new husband moved to Indianapolis where she taught elementary grades at the Indiana School for the Blind. There, she worked with a student whose hearing and vision were both impaired, and she still recalls how gratifying it felt to be able to help someone the way Anne Sullivan had helped Helen Keller. Two years later, Carol and her husband moved to Martinsville, Indiana, where she taught public school children with multiple disabilities.

In 1979 Carol's life abruptly changed direction when her marriage ended; she left teaching to accept the directorship of the Indiana History Project at the Indiana Historical Society. This position was created as a result of the Society's having received a large bequest from the estate of pharmaceutical industrialist Eli Lilly, who was visually impaired. The Society wished to memorialize its benefactor by recording its printed Indiana history collections for the benefit of those who are blind or otherwise unable to read print.

As director of the project, Carol oversaw a long-term volunteer book-recording program. The tapes produced by the project became part of the Indiana Talking Book and Braille Library, which, like the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped here in Connecticut, is part of the Library of Congress's National Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped network.

Having entered the library field, Carol was eager to gain professional certification. She obtained a fellowship to get her MLS at Indiana University in Bloomington and graduated in 1983, after a hectic year of traveling 40 miles back and forth

to school while continuing to work three-quarter time at the Indiana Historical Society.

In 1989, Carol resigned her position as director of the Indiana History Project to accept her current position as director of the Connecticut Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (LBPH) in Rocky Hill. Shortly before leaving Indiana, she married Steven Taylor, whom she had met through her work at the Indiana Historical Society.

As director of LBPH, Carol administers a collection of more than 63,000 titles and 250,000 volumes. The collection contains

both Talking Books and materials in Braille. The Library of Congress provides most items, but volunteers at various locations across the state produce additional titles of local interest. Talking Books differ from other audio books in that their narrators read without dramatic interpretation, allowing listeners to interpret the text for themselves. And, since they are recorded at a very slow speed, they require special playback equipment. All LBPH patrons are provided with the required Talking Books player.

Carol noted that Talking Books will soon be available in a form of flash memory, and that LBPH has been a participant in field-testing the new technology, now in its final stage. The new format will allow an entire book to be played from a single cartridge that is easier to manipulate and more durable than the cassettes currently in use. The new technology will also allow listeners to bookmark chapters and to skip from one chapter to another. Also, the player for the new cartridge weighs less than the current player.

As director of LBPH, Carol has focused on outreach, publicizing the library's services to public librarians, senior center clientele, low vision support groups, ophthalmologists, and others. LBPH circulates between 200,000 and 230,000 items per year, with as many as 1,500 items being mailed out in a single day. Volunteers, including some from organizations like Goodwill and Options, pull and reshelve tapes, mail them to patrons, inspect returned tapes, and repair damaged ones on a daily basis. Carol makes a point of getting to know each volunteer.

In January 2004, Carol suffered a great loss when her husband Steve died of cancer. Shortly before he passed away, the couple was featured in the Love Story column of the *Hartford Courant's* LIFE section. (See "He Caught Her Off Guard, and They Became Soul Mates," by Korky Vann, November 16, 2003.) Carol would like her friends at LBPH and the State Library to know how much their support has meant to her since Steve's death.

It's difficult to imagine Carol ever retiring from LBPH, but she does have a retirement dream: to work at the Cora Belden Library in Rocky Hill with Betsy Bray! Until then, you can reach her at ctaylor@cslib.org or 860-721-2021.

Carol Abatelli is head of collections & electronic services at ECSU's Smith Library.

SPOTLIGHT

Carol Taylor *Director, Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped*



Carol Abatelli



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Career Renewal 2007

A CLASS Conference Report

by Sandy Brooks

About 90 support staff from all types of libraries attended the CLA Support Staff Section's annual conference on November 2 at Manchester Community College. CLA President Carl Antonucci, MCC Library Director Randy Fournier, and CLASS Chairperson John Cayer welcomed the group.

Workshops included a back-by-popular-demand session on "Extreme Customer Service" with Louise Berry and Alan Grey (Darien PL), who spoke about how their library goes above-and-beyond with a program for "customer service," not "customer sacrifice." They reminded us that customer service is more than just saying "no" with a smile! A concurrent session was "Career Counseling," presented by Brandon Hooker, a research analyst with the CT Dept. of Labor. Hooker established immediate rapport with his audience by showcasing his knowledge of the CT job market, its history and trends, and how skills acquired by support staff via library technologies and procedures can translate into many other career opportunities.

Mary Ellen Bowen, serials librarian at CCSU, enlightened her audience on "Journal Management in the 21st Century." The decision to retain a journal in print, or online, or both, is often based on whether the discipline requires primary source information, statistical analysis based on usage studies, and ILL requests. Also discussed were the advantages and disadvantages of using journal aggregators versus single subscriptions, the complexities involved with license agreements, and negotiating contracts with vendors. "Hands-on" software training for MS Word 2007 by Diane Lindsay of MCC was the final offering of the morning.

A buffet lunch provided opportunities for networking with colleagues. In the afternoon, a second round of workshops began with "Blogging to be Organized," presented by Nick Lux, information technology consultant for NELINET. He gave an historical overview of blogging, explained current trends, and introduced tools that make both job-related and personal blogging easy and accessible. Gail Hurley, CT statewide library catalog coordinator, discussed recent enhancements to iCONN. New features include different ways of viewing and sorting results; try it out at www.iconn.org.

The CT Dept. of Labor offered "Resume Writing for Career Advancement" with Anne

Banaszewski. And nearby, Amy Terlaga of Bibliomation presented research on virtual reference, which can include email, instant messaging, chat, or co-browsing software to assist patrons remotely. Young people use these methods to communicate and expect to interface with the library in these ways. Many states now have statewide virtual reference programs, and Amy updated us on CT's version, InfoAnytime.

The day ended with a fascinating and moving keynote presentation by Peter Chase, director of the Plainville Public Library and chair of CLA's Intellectual Freedom Committee. Peter was one of the now well-known "CT 4" who, served by the FBI with a National Security Letter and placed under a gag order, chose to fight the order.



Peter Chase

Peter described the hardships and discouragement he felt while under the gag order. After the Patriot Act was renewed, the government released the CT 4 from the gag order, but they remain the only US citizens who can legally talk about and show a copy of the NSL they received. All other recipients—tens of thousands of them— are under permanent gag orders! This enlightening presentation reminded us all about our rights as citizens, and our patrons' right to expect their library use to remain confidential. Peter and his colleagues won the Paul Howard Award for Courage from the ALA and the Roger Baldwin Medal of Liberty from the ACLU for their bravery.

Attendees left feeling both dismayed and uplifted by the subject of the keynote speech, and with an arsenal of new skills and ideas to take back to their workplaces. ■

Sandy Brooks is Head of Technical Services at ECSU's Smith Library.

HIGHLIGHTS

Continued from page 4

Region 3 Siobhan Grogan reported that the Moosup PL received funds from Jewett City Saving for 34 software packages for a pre-literacy program. Cragin Memorial Library Friends had a successful "Pet Photos with Santa" fundraiser, netting \$800.

Region 4 Janet Woycik reported that Fairfield PL hosted Winter Words, a writer's conference with authors and "would-be" authors. Publishers were on hand to read manuscripts and offer advice.

New Business Hali Keeler showed the board a half-page ad promoting libraries in the *Willimantic Chronicle*. The origin of the ad is not known. Kathy Leeds reported that, in light of the mounting number of hate crimes in Connecticut, Wilton Library, along with other community groups, is planning a program to address this issue.

Nominations Sought for 2008 CLA Awards

CLA is seeking nominations for the following awards honoring career achievement and/or outstanding accomplishments in 2007. Winners will be honored at a ceremony during the Annual Conference at the Mystic Marriott Hotel in Groton, April 28-30.

- **Adeline Mix** Honors a student in a full or part-time program leading to the LTA or MLS degree
- **Faith Hektoen** Honors career achievement in the field of children's services, or an outstanding program or project that has had a significant impact on library service for children in Connecticut
- **Intellectual Freedom** Honors an individual(s) for the demonstration of extraordinary personal courage in the defense of intellectual freedom, or for implementation of a successful and creative project to raise awareness of intellectual freedom issues, or for a published work on intellectual freedom
- **News Media** Honors a journalist or news media organization for coverage of libraries and/or principles of librarianship in an exemplary way during 2007
- **Outstanding Librarian** Honors the career accomplishments of a librarian who has demonstrated a record of outstanding service to his or her library and to the library profession
- **Special Achievement** Honors an individual who, in 2007, implemented a project or initiated a program having significant impact on a library, the community, or the profession
- **Support Staff** Honors an outstanding library assistant or support staff member
- **Supporter of Support Staff** Honors a library administrator or manager who promotes the role of library assistants and support staff

Deadline for Nominations: Friday, March 7, 2008
See www.ctlibraryassociation.org for requirements and nomination forms.



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Planned Obsolescence

by Patricia Jackson

If you can leave your position for three months and nothing bad happens, you've pretty much worked yourself out of a job.

It wasn't my intention to make myself obsolete.

In an attempt to keep departmental operations running smoothly while I was on maternity leave last summer, I conducted a flurry of timesaving and crosstraining activities, seizing the perfect opportunity to reorganize job responsibilities. In the process I became a little, shall we say, extraneous.

If you can leave your position for three months and nothing bad happens, you've pretty much worked yourself out of a job. I'm okay with that—good with it, in fact, because now I have time to work on interesting projects and to write this article.

One of my undergraduate professors told me that, as a recreation major, I should strive to “work myself out of a job,” meaning that I should guide individuals towards independent participation. That's part of it. In my experience, the other part of “working yourself out of a job” means you no longer actually have a job (at least, not the one you knew).

The prospect of being on maternity leave for three months propelled me to consider why I was cataloging when there was a bright, college educated, and eager para-professional ready to take on new responsibilities. And, holy cow, what other tasks was I performing in order to secure my job as stated in my job description? Eureka! Things could be different if I tried to work myself out of a job.

I needed to eliminate, alter, and delegate major segments of my job description. To accomplish that, the responsibilities of everyone in the department needed to be examined. We reorganized and retrained to leverage each individual's

strengths. We demanded more from our primary jobber, and they produced results. We created time where there was none.

After we streamlined our processes, nobody could claim that they didn't have time to assume new responsibilities. Not “having time” is a huge pet peeve of mine. Maybe people who tell you they “don't have time” are just too polite to say that they have differing priorities, or that they think your idea/project/company is less than worthwhile. I think people who “don't have time,” or “can't make time,” or “can't find time” are in serious self-denial.

Obsolescence has broader library implications as well. Perhaps we, as a profession, should strive to work ourselves out of a job, enabling patrons to access the information they need directly. Can we allow our patrons to provide information, enabling them to communicate with each other freely? Are we, in fact, barriers to information at times, forcing patrons to go through us as intermediaries because we haven't given them the necessary tools to do things for themselves?

After all this reorganization I do have one confession: I am still picking up the mail from the department mailbox. I started doing it again when I returned from maternity leave. That's my mistake. I really need to find out who took over that task while I was away. ■

Patricia Jackson is still supervising the Acquisitions and Cataloging Department at Stamford's Ferguson Library. You can reach her at pat@fergusonlibrary.org.