

CONNECTICUT LIBRARIES

A Publication of
the Connecticut
Library
Association

TREASURES

Railroad History Archive Dodd Research Center University of Connecticut

by Tom Newman

Transportation is a big issue for many Connecticut citizens. Whether stuck in a traffic jam on I95, or stranded at Bradley Airport with a ticket to a cancelled flight, or making the weekly contribution to Exxon/Mobil's profits, today's travelers are apt to dream about the days when the railroads worked well and went everywhere. Few realize that just 100 years ago you could take a train to almost every city and town in Connecticut.

Starting in the 1830s, various railroad companies began building rail lines through southern New England, and by 1872, through consolidation and mergers, the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad

had become one of the major railroad empires in the United States. The corporate records of this railroad, commonly known as the New Haven Railroad, are held at the Dodd Research Center at the University of Connecticut and serve as the nucleus of one of the largest railroad history collections in the Northeast.

The New Haven Railroad records span over 2,100 linear feet and deal largely with the administrative, financial, legal, and real estate transaction files of the company. Though the records do not include the personnel files that many genealogists search for, they do contain many corporate records of predecessor and subsidiary lines, such as the Central New England Railway, the Providence and Fishkill Railroad, the Housatonic Railroad, and others. The New Haven Railroad remained in business until 1969 when mismanagement and competition from the airplane and automobile industries led to its failure.

This huge collection of corporate records became accessible to researchers at UConn and railroad buffs everywhere in 1989, and then became a part of the Dodd Research Center in 1996. As often happens with the establishment of such an important core collection, the New Haven Railroad archives attracts donations from many private collectors, railroad enthusiasts, and researchers.

Among the most important of these donated collections are the Prop-

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Fidel Castro took a ride on the New Haven Railroad when he visited the U. S. in 1959. Charles Gunn Collection



New Haven Railroad's famous Comet train, 1930s. Joseph Snopek Collection



The Canaan, CT railroad station



A Norwich & Worcester Railroad train

OBVERSION

Real Librarians Don't Scream. Often

My wife and I spent one dark and rainy evening of our honeymoon watching *The Blair Witch Project* in a log cabin huddled in the backwoods of Washington State. It took a little time for our sense of marital bliss to reassert itself after my new spouse was forced to spend the next couple of days coaxing her gibbering wreck of a husband out from behind the sofa. I've never really been able to look a chipmunk properly in the eye since that rural foray, and it taught me a valuable lesson: I am, at heart, an urban creature.

I like my lattes, my wine bars, and the cosmopolitan lifestyle of a suave librarian about town, even if that town happens to be New Haven, CT.

My decision, then, to attend the 2008 New England Library Leadership Symposium (NELLS), deep in the toothless banjo-playing boondocks of upstate Massachusetts was, well, courageous at the very least. The location chosen to host this year's jamboree bore an unsettling resemblance to that spooky hotel in *The Shining*, and its extensive grounds were positively *awash* with beasties red in tooth, claw and intent. During our first hour at NELLS, I formed a closer relationship with my new roommate—a lovely fellow from New Hampshire—



Julian Aiken

than he might perhaps have wished, springing bodily into his arms with a piercing cry of "Save Me!" upon spotting a pair (*a pair!*) of snakes crossing our path as we walked together by the thoroughly scenic and lovely lake. At the conclusion of NELLS, my rural experiences included, in addition to the aforementioned slithery brutes: one beaver, a few deer, various feathered things, numerous squirrels, and more chipmunks than you could shake a stick at, and believe me, I tried. Oh, and one bat, but more on that later.

By the end of the NELLS week I was a quivering wreck, sporting an attractive case of poison ivy, near-terminal sunburn, mosquito bites on my unmentionables, and more facial hair than you'd generally find this side of Alaska. (I'd forgotten my razor.) Upon returning home, my daughter compared me, unfavorably, to Tom Hanks in *Castaway*. (This was after she was finally able to regain her breath after rolling around on the floor for a few minutes, helpless with laughter.) And, you know, I don't think I've ever had a more fun and productive time in my adult life (barring, perhaps, that one occasion involving

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BOOKS LOOKING AT

Perfect Phrases for Writing Grant Proposals

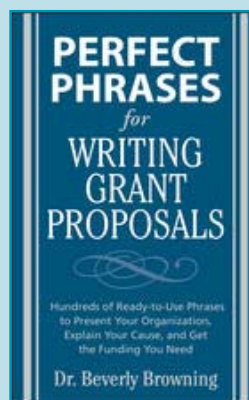
by Beverly Browning (McGraw-Hill, 2008)

In his early-days-of-television quiz show, "You Bet Your Life," comedian and game show host Groucho Marx used to tell contestants, "Say the secret word and you'll win one-hundred dollars." When a guest just happened to say the secret word, a duck that looked remarkably like Groucho would drop down from the ceiling with the cash.

The subtitle of Beverly Browning's book promises to provide you with "Hundreds of Ready-to-Use Phrases to Present Your Organization, Explain Your Cause, and Get the Funding You Need." However, Browning knows that it takes much more than accidentally saying the right words in order to coax funding from foundations and other grant-making bodies. It takes planning and conscious effort. She tells us how to give the funding source the information it needs in order to respond positively to our requests.

If you are looking for "secret words" that will guarantee funding of your grant proposals, you will not find them here. None of Browning's terminology will cause you to sit up and say, "Now, why didn't I think of that?" In fact, you may have already used some of Browning's phrases in grant requests that you have worked on.

Still, there is much value in this slim volume, value of at least two types. First, *Perfect Phrases* is valuable in the same way that a thesaurus is. When we are at a loss for the right word, we turn to a thesaurus to help us recall terms with which we are already familiar. Such is the case with *Perfect Phrases*. Someone stuck for a word or sentence while working on a grant proposal can consult the relevant section of this book and borrow some of its phraseology. Probably, most of



us do something similar when we haul out an old grant or budget request because we need a little help with the drafting of a new document.

Browning's book is valuable in a second, and more important, way. Her book offers excellent advice on how to structure your grant request and on what types of information to include in it. Despite the varieties of formats that we encounter in applying for grants, the author identifies the basic components that we can expect to find in most applications.

The first of these is an introduction to your organization, including a description of its accomplishments. You then move on to your programs and activities in order to demonstrate what types of things you are doing well. Next comes a description of your target population. This section must provide demographics, but it should also explain how members of this target audience are stakeholders in the project. Show how their input has been considered in your planning. It is then time to discuss your community, your partner organizations, and their roles in the project.

In the next section, you will start describing the project itself. State the need. Support it with statistics and financial information, but do not shrink from getting a little emotional about the importance of meeting the needs your project will address. Move on to a clear and direct description of the project and how closely it fits into your organization's mission. You will now define your project's overall goals and its specific, measurable, and realistic objectives. Add a time line for accomplishing those objectives. It is a good idea, if not a requirement, to tell the funding source who will be working on

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Vince Juliano
Book Review Editor

OBVERSION

Continued from page 2

a case of Jack Daniels and the entire Canadian Olympic Curling team, but we don't know each other well enough for full disclosure on that subject just yet.)

NELLS is a four-day intensive course for up-and-coming library leaders. Created through a cooperative effort of the New England Library Association and all six New England state library associations, it aims to foster the mentoring and development of leaders for library associations, both state and regional. Or to put it another way, it takes a bunch of New England librarians and sends them out into the woods without a compass or, in my case at least, a clue; there to learn, bond, and develop as professionals and leaders.

Now, call me a hairy old cynic, but I'd be the first to admit that I had my doubts about the value of the curriculum before I arrived. Can leadership really be taught? Can't everything you need to know about leadership be learned within the pages of Patrick O'Brian's novels of 18th century naval warfare ("Ahoy m' hearties! Scupper the main-brace and hoist the cabin-boy!")? Was it time to stop using the cat o' nine tails in my department? But under the brilliant guidance of Maureen Sullivan, Betsy Bray, and Cheryl Bryan, along with a truly splendid group of mentors, it quickly became apparent that there was lots we could learn, from the NELLS leaders and from each other. Nor was that learning confined to the classroom. Some of the finest conversations I enjoyed, for example, took place in the swimming pool (and they weren't all exclusively concerned with the best cream to treat my nasty foot rash).

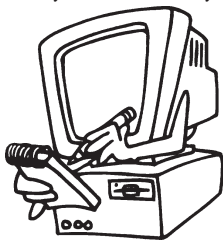
Indeed, wonderful though the classroom experience was, an incident on the last day of NELLS illustrated both the advantages and terrible dangers of sending a group of librarians off to frolic in the wilds. We were in our final review session, the sun was shining and the debate was sparkling. Suddenly, and to my abject terror, a bat swooped into the classroom. *A bat!* To steal a line from *Apocalypse Now*, "The horror! The horror!" As I dived beneath my chair, squealing for mercy or, perhaps, a final latte, the rest of the class sprang into action like a well-oiled machine. Loose hair was tied up, doors and windows were flung open, file folders were flapped, and a cup of milky coffee was thrust into my sweaty, shaking paws as the bat swooped gracefully out and away. I could, and still can, only babble in grateful relief that the participants of NELLS 2008 provided so fitting an example of cool, calm teamwork and leadership when the chips were down and the banjos were strumming.

Julian Aiken is the reference and technology librarian at Wallingford Public Library.

Connecticut Libraries solicits articles, news, opinions, and photographs about matters of interest to the state's library community. Send contributions to:

David Kapp, Editor
davidkapp@comcast.net
Phone: (860) 647-0697
4 Llynwood Drive
Bolton, CT 06043

Deadline: Second Friday of the month prior to publication.



FROM THE PRESIDENT



Kathy Leeds

When Times Get Tough, The Tough Get Going

I can't pick up a newspaper or magazine these days without seeing an article about the worsening economy. The evening news is full of stories about declining property values and increasing prices for food and gas. Coming months will undoubtedly challenge libraries as

we struggle to serve the influx of patrons who arrive at the first hint of economic difficulties. Who are they, and why do they come in such numbers when times are tough?

- They are parents who come to borrow books, CDs and DVDs that, in better times, they would have purchased for their children.
- They are the unemployed who come to access books about updating a resume or composing a cover letter, newspapers that include employment ads, databases that provide company information—materials that may help them find a job.
- They are first-time job seekers and those for whom English is not their native tongue, who come to improve computing and language skills.
- They are readers who no longer can afford the latest best seller or multiple magazine subscriptions and are saving money by using the library's collections.
- They are families without home air conditioning or PCs, who visit the library in the dog days of summer to use computers in comfort.
- They are folks who seek to escape the economic downturn through entertainment and culture, coming to watch a film, see a concert, or to borrow music or a movie.
- They are families who have chosen "staycations" to conserve dollars, deciding to sample what's free and fun and close to home.
- They are the homeless who view libraries as safe havens, who show up for the day as soon as nighttime shelters have closed.

Funding for libraries is often reduced during tough economic times, making it hard to serve our increasing number of patrons adequately. As municipalities struggle with the rising cost of energy and insurance while revenue tied to property values erodes, they may be tempted to cut "non-essential" services. Failure to recognize how critical library services are for the continued economic health of our communities and the intellectual, cultural, and social life of our constituents may lead those who govern to minimize the importance of those services and make library budgets a target for the fiscal chopping block. For libraries that rely on Friends organizations and grants from corporations and philanthropic organizations, donors are likely to limit their gifts when times are hard, giving less and only to groups they think do the most good.

How can we continue to serve the needs of our growing community of users when belt tightening is the order of the day? First and foremost, we must avoid being marginalized by town managers and donors. We must heed the words of Carl Sagan who said, "I think the health of our civilization, the depth of our awareness about the underpinnings of our culture and our concern for the future can all be tested by how well we support our libraries."

Short-sighted focus on financial pot holes today can cost society enormous amounts down the road. Community priorities must include maintaining an environment that encourages learning and celebrates the thrill of discovery. As former U. S. Poet Laureate Rita Dove so eloquently put it, "The library is an arena of possibility, opening both a window into the soul and a door onto the world." The window and the door to which she refers are critical architectural elements of the human habitat.

As lyrical as this sentiment is, our job is down to earth. We need to convince our stakeholders that in difficult economic times, libraries are safety nets for society. Whether eloquence or statistics are required, we need to muster what it takes to get our message across to those who matter—and CLA can help us succeed. I look forward to the year ahead as we gather to learn and share tactics and techniques, not only to stay afloat, but also to thrive.

Kathy Leeds is executive director of the Wilton Library. Contact her at kcleeds@wiltonlibrary.org.

HIGHLIGHTS

President Kathy Leeds noted: 1) A request for a \$1,500 contribution to the CT Children's Book Fair has been referred to the Grants Committee. 2) The Friends of CT Libraries donated \$100 in support of the Excellence in Public Library Service Awards. 3) CLA is invited to join the CT Human Rights Coalition to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A statewide conference is planned for December 6 at Quinnipiac University. 4) CLA is also invited to participate in the CHC's "Reading for Meaning Consortium," a group promoting partnerships among "like-minded" organizations. 5) There is an initiative to merge the CASL and CLA conferences in 2010.

Treasurer Alison Wang presented the CLA FY09 Budget. Approved as presented. Reporting for the Finance Committee, she also noted: 1) Funds needed to balance the FY09 budget will come from the FY08 surplus. 2) When there is a deficit in the year-end budget, the new budget must be reduced. 3) Membership needs to increase in order to meet the financial goals of the coming year.

CLA/CLC Contract Chris Bradley presented the FY09 contract for services provided to CLA by CLC. Changes include a 4% salary increase for CLA staff and contractors, an increase in CLA coordinator's hours from 17.5 to 22.5 to account for conference work, and reinstating parking fees. Approved as presented.

ACLB Stan Siegel said that ACLB would also contribute \$100 toward the Excellence in Public Service Awards.

CLC Chris Bradley announced CLC's September 16 Management Conference for public and academic library directors at the New Haven Lawn Club. Topics: finance, technology, human resources, leadership, and the future of libraries.

CSL Ken Wiggan reported that the Governor has imposed a 5% reduction on all accounts. State Aid Grants to Public Libraries and Connecticut are exempt. CSL has experienced reduced LSTA funding and a 20% decline in revenues to the Historic Documents Preservation Account due to the slow down in house sales. iConn was reduced by approximately \$103,000, but the vendors responded to a request for a one time discount; no databases will be cut. CLC and CSL are partnering with *Library Journal* to present the Design Institute, December 4 at the Legislative Office Building. The workshop features architects and vendors focused on design challenges based on real-world projects, including going green.

Editorial David Kapp announced that Tom Newman is the new chair of the Editorial Committee.

Grants Chris Bradley reported that the new committee's charge would be to focus on the CLA mission to promote and support Connecticut libraries and librarians. The committee will review funding requests and bring recommendations to the Board for approval.

Intellectual Freedom Peter Chase proposed that CLA co-sponsor three Banned Books Week (September 27-October 4) events with the ALCU/CT: 1) An author presentation on the banning of comic books in the 50s and 60s; 2) A debate on civil liberties by candidates for the 4th Congressional District; A dance featuring songs that have been censored.

NELA Mary Etter reported that NELS was very successful. Gail Zeiba, an attendee, spoke of her positive experience at the event. The NELA Conference is scheduled for October 19-21 in Manchester, NH.

Region 2 Jay Johnston introduced Regional Representative Hal Bright. The Town of Farmington is going to referendum regarding a \$1 million grant from CSL for renovation of a branch.

Region 5 Maribeth Breen reported: 1) Guilford will reopen its Park Street library in September. 2) Westbrook PL will return to its renovated facility by mid-September. 3) Middlesex County libraries received a grant to increase environmental awareness and usage of county libraries.

Region 6 Theresa Conley reported that, on the advice of Chris Bradley, four small Region 6 libraries formed an ad hoc consortium to apply for a technology grant and succeeded in getting funds for library laptops.

LOOKING AT BOOKS

Continued from page 2

the project, their qualifications, and their project responsibilities. Wrap things up with your plan on how to evaluate the project. Restate the objectives, explain who will do the evaluation, state your methods for collecting data, and describe your reporting procedures.

If you are writing your first grant request, you will find *Perfect Phrases* invaluable. The book breaks down what you should include in your request and suggests ways to express that content. If you are an experienced grant writer, it may cause you to reconsider how you express what you put into your proposals. There is room for both hard data and emotion in that grant application! Following the advice you find in *Perfect Phrases* will not guarantee that your next grant request will be funded, but it should mean that your request will be better organized and worded to attract the serious consideration of the funding body.

There are several titles in the *Perfect Phrases* series. I recently checked out *Perfect Phrases for Performance Reviews*. Like Browning, authors Douglas Max and Robert Bacal pack a lot of information and advice into a small package. Ironically, even without the phrases, both books are worth reading.

When you submit your grant application or conduct that performance review, I'm sure the authors would advise against using the imperfect phrase, "Tell 'em Groucho sent you!"

See www.ctlibraryassociation.org/lookbooks/lookbook.htm for more book reviews by Vince Juliano.

Read Catherine Ahern's article on page 11 for more tips on how to create a successful grant application.

Friends Making Friends

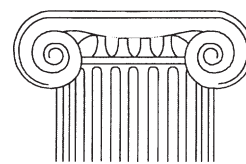
October 18
Cragin Memorial Library, Colchester
October 28
Trumbull Public Library

9:30 Coffee
10:00-12:00 Program both days

Sponsored by
Friends of CT Libraries

These workshops will present examples of Friends collaborating with non-profit and municipal organizations for the benefit of both groups. Small group discussions will follow the presentation. Sign up for either session with Mary Engels at 800-437-2313 or mengels@cslib.org. Free. Details at www.cslib.org/focl.

HERITAGE



Nine years of planning and implementation culminated on June 8, 2008 in the Grand Opening of the renovated and expanded Simsbury Public Library. More than 1,000 people attended the event, which included a parade, a group hug of the 42,000 sq. ft. building, and performances by local talent.

In 2006, Simsbury residents voted, by a margin of two to one, to expand and renovate the library. The renovation was necessitated by extensive community use; Simsbury Public Library has one of the highest per capita circulations in the state and, in 2002, was listed in the Hennen Index as one of the top 100 public libraries in the country.

The renovated, two-story red brick building enjoys an abundance of natural light, expansive as well as intimate interior spaces, large bay windows, a grand staircase, a beautifully appointed courtyard, and murals depicting scenes from the town. Set in grounds originally planned by Frederick Law Olmsted, the library is located in the town center, contributing to the vitality of the area by drawing both residents and visitors downtown.

The Children's Area (doubled in size)

- *Science and Discovery Center*—a program room where children can experiment with math and science
- *Baby Room*—a soft, clean space for our youngest patrons to attend lapsit programs, and a convenient place for nursing Moms
- *Reading Nook*—a large, brightly-cushioned window seat area away from the crowds
- *Children's Media Hub*—displays and promotes children's media, listening and viewing stations for media use
- *Computer Play Stations*—an introduction to computers for pre-schoolers
- *Study and Homework Center*—for grades 4-6, featuring study tables, comfortable seating and computers
- *Pre-school Play and Parent Area*—a space for cooperative play, with age-appropriate toys and furniture and comfortable seating for parents
- *Parent and Child Reading Area*—comfortable seating, age appropriate materials and parenting collections
- *Game Center*—a four-computer hub for web-based gaming

The Adult Area

- *Teen Space*—equipped with cool seating and a large LCD panel for gaming and videos, with sound control managed at the circulation desk
- *Technology Learning Center*—a 20-computer instruction center for hands-on learning. Classes start in September and are targeted to job seekers, entrepreneurs, seniors and students. When not in use for classes, the TLC is the main cluster of computers available for public use.
- *Media Wing*—a 3,400 sq. ft. area dedicated to new materials and new formats, which also serves as the main lounge area in the library
- *Friends Café*—with soon-to-come bistro seating

- *Fireside Reading Area*—features a gas fireplace with comfortable seating adjacent to the Friends Café.
- *Quiet Study*—24 individually lighted and wired carrels along the perimeter of the building.
- *Business Resource Center*—includes the business collections, print and online; the office of the business outreach librarian; two work/study rooms where business people may use laptops and cell phones simultaneously; a small conference room with a flat panel LCD that can be reserved by business people making presentations to their clients.

Meeting Spaces

- *Program Room*—for 150 people, with built-in presentation equipment and surround sound. Also features a picture hanging system continued into adjacent corridors to form a large gallery
- *Conference Rooms*—two rooms for 12 people each

New Technology

- *Electronic Bulletin Boards*—for posting library events and meetings
- *Flat LCD Panels*—for gaming, videos and computer presentations
- *Mobile Printable Whiteboard*
- *Smart Board*—in the Technology Learning Center and a mobile smart board that can be moved wherever needed
- *Phone System with Voice Over IP*—and paging system, handheld phones at service desks to improve staff mobility
- *Wireless Capability*—throughout the building

There is also a drive up book drop, a total of 107 parking spaces, and a 3,400 sq. ft. area for future expansion.

Library staffing has not been increased although the building almost doubled in size. Sight lines for supervision are excellent throughout the building. A security system has been installed in the meeting rooms and at entrances and remote areas so that staff can use this tool as needed.

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Simsbury Public Library

by Susan Bullock

Library Director

Susan Bullock

Program Consultant

Nolan Lushington

Architect

Dale Cutler,

Kenyon and Cutler

Architects, Avon

Project Manager

James Russo

Contractor

W.J. Mountford

Movers

Amodio Movers

Technology Consultant

Gary Feld, Information

Technology Management

Building

Total 42,600;

Original 1985, 23,000 sq. ft.;

Addition 2008, 19,600 sq. ft.

Project Cost

Total \$7.5M;

Simsbury \$5.6M; State

grant \$500K; Other \$1.4M

Construction Time

12 months

Temporary Library

8,000 sq. ft.

Population

24,000



Simsbury residents line up to give their new library a hug on Grand Opening Day, June 8, 2008.

CLA Fall Meetings

CLA Joint Children's Roundtable Wednesday, September 17 Wallingford Public Library Sponsor: Children's Section

- 8:30** Coffee/Registration
- 9:00** Welcome, Gail Zeiba & Caitlin Augusta
- 9:10** CSL Update, Linda Williams & Susan Cormier
- 10:00** **Meagan Lambert, Eric Carle Museum: "From Cover to Cover: The Whole Book Approach to Evaluating and Using Picture Books"** This workshop will give librarians/educators the tools to evaluate picture books as an art form and to use this critical engagement as a platform for leading interactive story times.
- 12:00** Lunch
- 1:15** **Judy Stoughton, Mansfield Library: "Puppet Partners"** Are you intrigued by puppetry but reluctant to try it? This program will encourage you to add some puppet pizzazz to your story times. You'll learn how to incorporate puppetry into existing programs using a "host" and a "lead" puppet, with suggestions for how to start at the basic level and build from there. You'll also get technique tips and practice ideas to help you gain confidence. Puppetry is fun and easy once you learn how!
- 2:45** Evaluations



Registration includes morning opener and lunch. RSVP by September 12.

Name(s) _____

Library _____

Email _____

Number Attending _____

CLA Member _____

Non-member _____

FEE CLA member \$35, non-member \$45. Make checks payable to CLA and send to: Gail Zeiba, Willimantic Public Library, P.O. Box 218, Willimantic CT, 06226. If you need special accommodations, please contact Gail Zeiba two weeks prior to the event, 860-465-3082 or gzeiba@biblio.org.

Expand Your Horizons with a Touch of CLASS

CLA Support Staff Annual Conference

Friday, November 7
Middlesex Community College
Middletown

SESSIONS Crafting a Press Release/ Publicity Program, A/V Cataloging, Hands-on Software Training, Wiki while you Work, Humor in the Workplace, Better Searching using Google, Children/Teen Readers Advisory, Gardening Reference session presented by a CT Master Gardener and much, much more.

Keynote Speaker: Gene Kinnaly
"Lessons Learned: Three Decades at the Library of Congress"

FEE \$40 CLA members, \$50 Non-members (Includes breakfast, lunch & refreshments)
Online Registration available at www.ctlibraryassociation.org

This Old Library: Richardson Libraries & Historic Library Renovations

Wednesday, October 1, 10:00 – Noon
West Hartford Public Library
Sponsor: Public Library Section

Henry Hobson Richardson's 19th century Romanesque libraries are characterized by massive



stone walls, dramatic semicircular arches, and dynamic interior spaces, as illustrated by the Public Library of New London. This visually exciting and informative look at library and architectural history will be presented in West Hartford's newly renovated Noah Webster Library by **Abigail van Slyck**, Dayton Professor of Art History and Director of Architectural Studies, Connecticut College, and **Bruce Tuthill**, Tuthill and Wells Architects.

CLA Members \$5, non-members \$15.
Please register with Liz Thornton at bentley@biblio.org.



Alex Flinn
Young Adult Author

YA Joint Roundtable presents

Monday, November 17
9:30 - 4:00

West Hartford Public Library
Sponsor: Young Adult Section

“Why Teens Should Read Realistic Fiction” Alex Flinn is a former attorney whose fascination with witness reliability and bias led her to write *Fade to Black* and other ALA Award-winning books for young adults: *Breathing Underwater*, *Breaking Point*, and *Nothing to Lose*.

Schedule: 9:30 Registration/
continental breakfast
10:00 Alex Flinn presentation
12:00 Lunch
1:00 Alex Flinn presentation
3:00 Autograph session.

Fee \$50, includes breakfast and lunch

Open Source ILS Technical Showcase

Thursday, November 6
Windsor Public Library

9:00 Registration
9:30-3:30 Program

Sponsor:
CLA Technical Services Section

FEATURING Joshua Ferraro from Koha/
LibLime and Rob Karen from Waldo and
others (including Evergreen) who are
either developers of open source ILSs
or have implemented them in their
libraries. **FEE** \$25 CLA members, \$35
non-members, includes lunch.
REGISTRATION Mail check payable to
CLA to Susan O'Brien, Arnold Bernhard
Library, Quinnipiac University, 275
Mount Carmel Ave, Hamden, CT 06518.

CLA Fall Meetings

Podcasts and Videos

New Instruction Techniques to Reach The Academic iPod Generation

Friday, October 24, Wallingford Public Library
9:30 Registration/Coffee, 10:00–Noon Program
Sponsor: College and University Library Section

A Panel Presentation With: **Debra Herman**, Digital Resources Librarian & Electronic Resources Information Services Manager, CCSU; **Ramona Islam**, Reference Librarian & Instruction Coordinator, Fairfield University; **Susan Slaga**, Reference Librarian, CCSU; **Lei Wang**, Instructional Design Librarian, Cushing-Whitney Medical Library, Yale University

Registration Deadline: October 17

Name _____ Title _____
Library and Institution _____
Work Address _____
Email _____ Work Phone _____

FEE \$10 CLA member, \$20 non-member. Join CLA today at www.ctlibraryassociation.org and save.

Amount Enclosed: CLA member \$10 _____ Non-member \$20 _____

Make checks payable to Connecticut Library Association.

Send this form with your check to Lynn Johnson-Corcoran, Elihu Burritt Library, Central CT State University, 1615 Stanley Street, New Britain, CT 06050. If you require special accommodation, contact Lynn Johnson-Corcoran at corcoran@ccsu.edu or 860-832-2059 or by October 15.

Walk-in registrations welcome.



TECHNOLOGY

Technology Forecast



Kate Sheehan

Predicting which technologies will dominate, which trends will come to fruition and which baskets to put our eggs in can feel like life-or-death decision-making, especially when the end of libraries is a popular prediction.

Returning from last summer's ALA's Annual Conference, I was struck anew by a seemingly universal desire among librarians: the need to predict the future. This, of course, is not just endemic to librarians; the weather is the last part of a newscast because it holds the most universal appeal. We are all terribly curious about what's going to happen next.

Library tech presentations usually devote at least a slide or two to selling an idea or new technology to library administrators. Of paramount concern: will our patrons use/need/want this? Will this be hard? What will the return on investment be? In short, if we do this, what will happen? But technology isn't the weather, though we might benefit from treating it a little more like meteorology.

If the local forecast predicts an 80% chance of rain, we grab our umbrellas as we head out the door. If you're like me, you will leave your umbrella in the car and then curse yourself when it is pouring and you have to leave the building. Otherwise, you'll remember to carry your umbrella with you during the day. If it rains, hooray! You're prepared. If it doesn't, you might grumble that you've been carrying your umbrella around with you for no reason, but you wouldn't give up on meteorology.

The time to try out new technologies is when they're just that: new. Waiting until all of your patrons, and all of their friends, are using a no-longer-new technology is the meteorological equivalent of carrying your umbrella but waiting until you're soaked before opening it up. Not only did you lose out on the effectiveness of your umbrella, but you also employed just a fraction of your umbrella's potential usefulness.

We all like to be right. We like to bring our umbrella and then need it. But we don't learn much from being right—wrong is where the biggest information nuggets live.

Predicting which technologies will dominate, which trends will come to fruition and which baskets to put our eggs in can feel like life-or-death decision-making, especially when the end of libraries is a popular prediction. One might think, that technologists are loath to make assertive predictions, lest they be laughed into the dustbin of silicon history when proven wrong.

Nothing could be further from the truth. People whose livelihood depends on their grasp of technology and its future path gleefully make painfully incorrect assertions about coming changes all the time. Bill Bryson's charming *A Short History of Nearly Everything* chronicles much of the history of science, complete with terribly bad assertions from brilliant scientists. Lord Kelvin, who we are indebted to for the calculation of absolute zero, clung to his measurements of the age of the earth well after it was clear that he was incorrect. Bryson's book is filled with great scientists making inaccurate proclamations and continuing to have glorious careers.

For a more modern example, we can turn to *Wired* magazine. That venerable tech publication has turned 15 and has been celebrating with lists of predictions they got wrong. Check out five things *Wired* pronounced dead prematurely (www.wired.com/techbiz/media/magazine/16-07/st_15deadthings), including futurism: "Predicting the death of

predictions? Niiiiice." An enterprise seemingly built on its ability to predict technological changes is happy to flaunt their flubs. Three separate galleries of "Gear Lust Gone Bad" are the trick candles on their birthday cake (www.wired.com/techbiz/media/multimedia/2008/05/ff_15th_fetish1). \$250,000 aquatic car, anyone?

Wired's founding editor penned a love letter to the magazine, telling his kids about the dawn of the Digital Revolution and how *Wired* stayed afloat despite some monstrously bad predictions and piles of criticism even when they were right. What was key for the people behind *Wired* was not each and every curve in the technological road, but paying attention to the world and their readers. "We at *Wired* saw it coming, because our mission was to connect our readers to the reality of our times." (www.wired.com/techbiz/media/magazine/16-06/ff_15th_rossetto)

Libraries aren't responsible for the bleeding edge of technology, but we do have an obligation to meet our patrons where they are and where they're going. We don't have to be right in every prediction we make but waiting for absolute certainty about a technology before trying it is far worse than trying out a technology that turns out to be a flop.

Fortunately, emerging technologies (many of which have emerged, taken root and flourished outside of the library) are increasingly cheaper and easier to experiment with. This isn't building a reinforced bunker in preparation for a coming hurricane, this is grabbing your umbrella on your way out the door.

The MARS, RSS, and RUSA sections of ALA hosted a preconference on virtual reference at Annual. Many of the techniques discussed were hardly new—in searching for the presentations online, I found similar presentations from three years ago and online reference has been around since 1995. Connecticut has already started down this path with InfoAnytime and the Meebo widgets that adorn many of our webpages. The presentations from this preconference aren't online as of this writing, but an attendee posted thorough notes. For starters, here are the highlights of the presentation on SMS (text-message) reference librarianlikeme.wordpress.com/2008/06/27/reinvented-reference-4-emerging-technologies-for-reference-services-michelle-jacobs/. Adopting most of these "emerging" technologies doesn't require tremendous expense or staff time, just a change in attitude.

For many librarians, technology is increasingly about Meebo widgets and trying new things and less about server farms and the next "big thing." Technology isn't about predicting. It's about experimenting and playing. Libraries that have tried Learning 2.0 know that, the folks at *Wired* live it, and more and more librarians are changing their relationship with the tools at their disposal. We might as well grab our umbrellas before we head out—the forecast isn't always accurate, but it's not such a burden to be prepared.

Kate Sheehan is head of knowledge services at Darien Library. Contact her at ksheehan@darienlibrary.org.

There is only one word that can approximate the essence of Susan Hansen: *eclectic*. Hansen grew up in Queens in a traditional Irish family and recalls being “the meanest tomboy in Queens Village.” Nevertheless, she claims that she behaved herself in Catholic school for fear of the nuns; shaking her head, she remembers that they were “old, mean, and they hit you whether you were good or not.” As a child, Hansen “imagined I’d be a cowboy when I grew up,” and says, “being a librarian never crossed my mind.”

Hansen worked her way through SUNY Cortland, earning degrees in English, psychology and secondary education. She also studied “astronomy and physics just for fun.” During one of her last semesters, desperate for money and with no prospects, Hansen turned to a source of income that many unfortunate women are forced into: tree logging.

After graduation, Hansen taught at Commack High School South on Long Island, where her first job was remedial English for 12th grade jocks. Early evidence of her positive attitude, Hansen recalls them as “great kids.” Moving on to teach English at Tompkins-Cortland Community College in upstate New York, she was nominated to be the Teacher in Space, an honor eventually won by Christa McAuliffe. “I’d still hitch a ride on the shuttle if NASA offered,” she quips.

Because Hansen was “always, always, always interested in space” and fascinated with astronauts, one life highlight came in 2000 when John Glenn autographed books for her and her children. “I sat in the cold drizzle outside Barnes & Noble for hours,” she recalls.

After getting married she moved around the country a lot, which brought many odd jobs—and even odder volunteer positions. She describes “manning the phones at the suicide hotline in Poughkeepsie” as a burn-out job, but also tended injured baby seals at the Seattle aquarium, was an EMT, did freelance graphic design, and learned the ins and outs of defending herself with a kubotan (look it up).

When she came to Connecticut, Hansen substitute taught until one class of particularly obnoxious fifth graders turned her off teaching for good. “Those kids,” she says, eyes downcast, “absolutely *broke* me.” Luckily for librarianship, her next job was as a part-time circulation desk assistant at the Howard Whittemore Library in Naugatuck.

Since she knew a thing or two about the nascent computer world of the day, including how to create web pages, Whittemore mined her skills, and Hansen quickly realized that librarianship was a good match. She enrolled in the MLS program at Southern Connecticut State University, earning her degree two years later in 1996.

Hansen landed in West Hartford eight years ago as collection development librarian and quickly picked up some reference desk duties. “Being a librarian on a public service desk is a special job for special people,” she says. “Think of all the people we help. It’s different every day,” she enthuses, and



If Susan Hansen won the lottery, she says she would go back to school to earn all the interesting degrees she doesn’t yet have.

laughingly adds “and that’s why we all hate it sometimes!” Hansen “loves everything about the public library, even patrons with mental health issues. Some of these folks are our best customers,” she says.

Hansen next became head of the library’s teen services at a time when the teen room was a hang out for undesirables who scared most YAs away. After trying to engage these bad eggs, she instituted guidelines, then rules and consequences, and also chronicled incidents in reports that carried library bans. Though it took a long time, they eventually got the message, and the atmosphere shifted. Meanwhile, Hansen successfully lured teens with good programming (like a wildly successful stock market game) and a teen advisory board.

A little over a year ago Hansen became manager of the Bishops Corner Branch Library, and she loves being part of West Hartford’s northern neighborhood. She works with the Bishops Corner neighborhood group, a collective of residents and business owners who talk to government officials, make plans, and solve issues. The group is currently working toward making the Bishop’s Corner area an art corridor.

Management issues are Hansen’s only complaint; “It gets hectic,” she says, reciting the litany of issues. “Another light is out, the toilet’s broken, the AC isn’t working.” Brightening, she adds, “The staff are so nice; they more than make up for it.”

Hansen functions as senior outreach programmer for the library system and thinks it is great that her branch is connected to the Bishop’s Corner Senior Center. She notes that as a profession, “We need to actively engage older adults, offer them an opportunity to run their own show, present workshops on what they want, teach them skills, share travel experiences,” and more. Hansen enthuses, “It can be anything, as long as it takes place in the library and is open to the community,” and cheerfully wrestles with getting “older adults as excited about sharing their life experiences at the library as they are about Elderhostel.”

Hansen has two children of whom she is immensely proud; her son is entering his senior year in high school, and Harvard Law School recently appointed her daughter, a human rights lawyer, as a lecturer on law.

Susan Hansen is an eclectic, card-carrying dreamer brimming with positivity. She aspires to take glassblowing classes at the Corning Museum of Glass and is looking forward to trying a biathlon in the winter.

And no profile of her would be complete without mentioning Tuva, a Russian federal republic in southern Siberia. Tuva was something of a Holy Grail for famed physicist and Nobel Prize-winner Richard Feynman. As a student of physics and a Feynman fan, Hansen learned of his lifelong desire to visit Tuva, all but impossible during the Cold War. Hansen plans to visit Tuva in 2018 to celebrate the centennial of Feynman’s birth and to complete his dream.

Douglas Lord is LSTA program assistant for the Connecticut State Library.

SPOTLIGHT

Susan Hansen
*Manager,
Bishops Corner
Branch Library,
West Hartford*



Douglas Lord

There is only one word that can approximate the essence of Susan Hansen: eclectic.



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EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Tom Newman, *Chair*,

Carol Abatelli, Sharon Clapp,

Bruce Johnston,

Vince Juliano, David Kapp,

Kirsten Kilbourn, Douglas Lord,

Pam Najarian, Kate Sheehan

EDITOR

David Kapp

davidkapp@comcast.net

860-647-0697

WEBMASTER

Kirsten Kilbourn

claweb@ctlibrarians.org

CLA STAFF

Pam Najarian, Coordinator

cla@ctlibrarians.org

860-346-2444 (v) 860-344-9199 (f)

PO Box 75, Middletown, CT

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TREASURES

Continued from page 1

erty Valuation Maps created in 1915 by order of the Interstate Commerce Commission, and the Railroad Stations and Structures collection. The maps and drawings provide detailed information on the real estate holdings and buildings that were a major part of the rail lines. Of particular interest are architectural drawings of many of the stations, freight houses and other structures of the New Haven Railroad.

Photographs make up a particularly valuable and accessible part of the Railroad History Archive. There are approximately 50,000 photos and postcards, with many scenes of stations, locomotives, bridges, and the landscapes through which the railroads passed. Charles B. Gunn, the official photographer of the New Haven Railroad during the 1950s, documented the devastation of the 1955 floods. The papers of Harry E. Brown, an electrical engineer with the company, include many photos of the New Haven Railroad's electrification project. The New Haven Railroad is renowned as the first mainline railroad in the United States to use alternating current electricity, which it generated from its own power station at Cos Cob, Connecticut, to power its trains from New Haven into New York City.

Besides the popular photograph collections, other resources include annual reports, leases and other real estate information, ledgers, stock certificates and timetables.

Laura Katz Smith, curator of the Railroad History Archive, sees a variety of researchers, including railroad enthusiasts, hobbyists, modelers, graduate students, genealogists, local history researchers, and Department of Transportation employees. Lawyers handling property disputes, landowners, land surveyors, and Rails to Trails promoters are particularly interested in the Property Valuation Maps. Architects and town officials often want to see the photographs and drawings of railroad stations and auxiliary buildings.

Smith emphasizes that though she has an interest in and appreciation for railroad history, she approaches the subject first as an archivist and librarian. Most reference questions are unique and require a unique response. Many serious research visits require careful preparation beforehand, and she does as much as she can to help people who can't visit in person.

Railroad enthusiasts can be a passionate group of researchers, but they aren't the only ones passionate about historical accuracy. Smith says that

more than one novelist has contacted her for information on old train timetables. Often the author will want to place his characters in a historically accurate setting and will want to know where a train went and when, how long the journey took, and how much it cost.

Smith is involved in several projects to mount the collection's materials to the Internet:

- The Railroad History Archive (railroads.uconn.edu) is the gateway to general information about the Railroad History Archive.
- UConn Libraries' Digital Mosaic site (images.lib.uconn.edu) includes pictures of "Steam and Electric Locomotives of the New Haven Railroad," part of the Fred Otto Makowsky Papers, and 900 Connecticut maps from the "New Haven Railroad Valuation Maps." There are 2,600 maps in this collection and more maps are being digitized.
- Many photographs of Connecticut railroad stations are available in Connecticut History Online (www.cthistoryonline.org).
- Information about the New Haven Railroad's railroad electrification project is available at railroads.uconn.edu/locomotives/electrification.htm.

For more information on the Dodd Center, see doddcenter.uconn.edu. ■



Tom Newman is assistant director, Middletown Library Service Center.

HERITAGE

Continued from page 5

Original plans called for inclusion of a radio frequency identification (RFID) system for self check-in and check out. Although funding could not stretch to cover this \$200,000 expense, the building is RFID ready. The library has applied for a HUD grant to fund this project, which is seen as essential if staffing costs are not to increase.

The library has a staff of 21 FTE (14 FT and 23 PT). It is open 68 hours/week, including evenings and weekends through most of the year. More than 200 volunteers complement the staff's work and ensure that we have a vibrant, well-funded, full-service library.

The library's mission is to make it easier for residents of all ages to adapt to their changing world, whether it is a preschooler getting ready to enter the school system, a college graduate applying for his first job, an adult undergoing divorce, an entrepreneur starting a business, a spouse facing Alzheimer's, or a baby boomer planning to retire. Through freely available materials and programs, we connect people to resources, information, and other people who can help them.

Contact Susan Bullock at sbullock@simsburylibrary.info or 860-658-7663 x2103.

Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro and her staff organized a Grants Forum in July to assist nonprofit organizations, local government staff, and others in Connecticut's Third District to locate grant sources and to help them apply for grants effectively. In her opening remarks, DeLauro stressed that her office is available to help with grant writing efforts; Amanda Freund is the grants coordinator there. Letters of support also may be requested from the congresswoman to help your cause.

Consultants Jim Farnam and Kate Iovieno, who help companies and groups prepare grant applications, then presented "Sharpening Your Competitive Edge." Along with pointers on how to improve one's grant presentation, they also encouraged us to think from the potential funder's perspective. "What is the grantor's mission and how does your request fit into it?" is a key question to ask.

The presenters also talked about preparing your organization to apply for grants. Having a strategic plan is important, as is having a clean, logical presentation. Farnam spoke of having a "memorable narrative." Your proposal may be competing against hundreds of others; what will make yours stand out to the reviewer? There were good suggestions for layout and additional ways to improve the application. Make sure that the data you supply is up-to-date; a good site for local demographic info is www.ctdatahaven.org. Finally, building relationships and support in the community goes a long way when the time comes to look for outside funding.

Next we heard from Marilyn Lasky, from the Boston office of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. She gave a very clear report on how to navigate grants.gov, which is now the way to apply for federal grants; most grants are

processed online. An organization planning to apply for a federal grant should register ahead of time with grants.gov; this will help to expedite the application process. An organization can also sign up to receive email notifications of grant activity from relevant government departments. The website includes a place to have your application reviewed for errors or omissions. Lasky suggests sending in your application at least 48 hours ahead of the deadline. This allows time to respond to any questions from the agency or to update sections as needed. Finally, another online tool for finding government funds is the *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance*, www.cfda.gov. The online product is more up-to-date than the printed volume.

The final presentation, "Alternatives to Government Awards," was offered by a panel of representatives from several foundations: the Community Foundation of Greater New Haven, www.cfnh.org; the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Foundation, www.wcgmf.org; the New Alliance Foundation, www.newalliancebank.com (click on "Community Commitment"), and AT&T Connecticut, www.att.com/foundation.

We learned a bit about each organization, their priorities, and their timing of awards. AT&T emphasizes youth, workplace preparedness, and lowering the dropout rate. The Graustein Foundation focuses on programs for children and early school success. All of the presenters mentioned that discretionary funds are available and encouraged organizations to contact them as needed. This excellent program packed a great deal of information into a half-day session. ■

Catherine Ahern is head of information services at Middletown's Russell Library.

Tips for Winning A Grant

by Catherine Ahern

See Vince Juliano's book review of *Perfect Phrases for Writing Grant Proposals* in this issue, page 2.

Marilyn Lasky gave a very clear report on how to navigate grants.gov, which is now the way to apply for federal grants; most grants are processed online.

It Takes Two to Tango

ACLB Annual Leadership Conference
Friday, October 31, Waters Edge, Westbrook

Keynote Cathy DeRosa, OCLC vice president, "From Awareness Funding: A Study of Library Support in America." **Breakout Sessions** "Freedom of Information," "State of the State," "Working With Library Friends," "Running Effective Board Meetings," "Telling Your Story for Effective Fundraising." **Concluding Speaker** Karen Hyman, executive director, South Jersey Library Cooperative, "Customer Centered Library." **Luncheon and ACLB Awards** Details and registration at www.aclb.org.



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Samuel Brown, a Project Amigo volunteer, delivered books to a mini-library for Mexican children in July.

Samuel Brown, director of the Naugatuck Valley Community College Library, spent a week in Colima, Mexico in July, visiting with friends and seeing some of the projects to which his Rotary Club district has contributed. His favorites were the mini-libraries put together by Project Amigo, which solicits donations to purchase books and bookcases for poor schools, orphanages, and care facilities in Mexico. Approximately 250 mini-libraries have been distributed throughout the State of Colima. Volunteers come during the year to assemble and deliver the libraries and to read to the children.

Mini-libraries include 200 mostly hardcover children's books in Spanish—80% of the authors are Mexican—and a sturdy bookcase. The books are purchased wholesale in Guadalajara and Mexico City. Sometimes Project Amigo volunteers bring new books with them for inclusion in the mini-libraries. Samuel was able to do this thanks to Eric Thronson, EBIS sales manager at Baker & Taylor, who facilitated the contribution by Baker & Taylor of 49 Spanish-language graphic novels.

Children who use the mini-libraries are delighted by the colorful array of books in their own language. For those whose native language is Nahuatl, a language spoken in central Mexico, the books provide an enjoyable introduction to the Spanish language and motivate the children to learn Spanish, a necessary skill for success in the public schools.

Each mini-library costs \$1,000. If ten people pool funds and donate one mini-library, their names and organizations can be listed on a plaque and mounted to a bookcase. Visit www.projectamigo.org/VOLMain.htm#JanWorkWeek for more information about Project Amigo.

Join Me @ CLA



Membership in CLA has offered many opportunities to meet colleagues across the state and, most recently, across New England, through my participation in the New England Library Leadership Symposium. When I step outside my library to learn from the library community, I am reminded of how much we all have in common, and my passion for library work and library advocacy is renewed.

Beth Crowley
Children's Services Supervisor
Groton Public Library

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