

CONNECTICUT LIBRARIES

We Built it, and They Came

E-GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES
by Dana Lucisano

E-government, or e-gov, refers to the government's use of technology, particularly the Internet, to deliver information or services. An international phenomenon involving all levels of government, it can have many benefits for individual citizens and for society.

E-government is great for people like librarians, who are on the Internet practically all day. I am so conditioned to doing things online that, if I couldn't find the registration form for swimming lessons on my town's website, I would probably resent having to call the parks and recreation office to request it.

The potential for e-gov to enhance our well-being is far more than a question of convenience; many government agencies are using the Internet to do some truly amazing things. The U.S. Commerce Department, for example, has a new service called the Physical Oceanographic Real-Time System (PORTS), which delivers vital information in *real-time* to pilots navigating ships into various U.S. ports. There's a ripple effect: by helping mariners, you make it easier to move cargo through these ports, thereby facilitating trade.

While e-gov can enhance safety and raise our standard of living when used creatively, its mere existence doesn't necessarily mean it is usable. During the 1990s, government entities rushed to develop websites to keep up with the times. Here in Connecticut, the legislature attempted to impose order on the à la carte menu of online services by launching its first unified website in 1996, and creating a Department of Information Technology to oversee web architecture the following year.

The fact that Connecticut's portal was not rated very highly in 2001 or 2008 may be good news for us, because it means that people need librarians to do what we've always done: help them sift through information.

On the federal level, Congress passed the E-Government Act of 2002, creating an Office of E-Government & Information Technology. Interestingly, the act requires heads of federal agencies to consider the impact of their decisions on those who don't have home or work-based access to the Internet. Public libraries are mentioned as access points.

But you may recall Katrina and the other Gulf storms in 2004 and 2005. People who lost their homes had to file FEMA forms online. Then came the new Medicare Part D prescription drug plan, which also required computer skills to get through the enrollment process. So much for Washington's good inten-



Over the years, the UConn Library has commissioned artworks to remind visitors of the enduring importance of books. German sculptors Wolfgang Kubach and Anna-Maria Wilmsen created *Stonebook Universe*, a massive, 12-ton, Finnish granite 'book', for the center of the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center entrance plaza. Read about this ongoing program on pages 6-7.

tions. By default, librarians became overnight experts on FEMA forms and Medicare Part D.

Concurrent with the implementation of e-government on the federal and state levels, public libraries across the United States were building the technological foundation that would pave the way for our assumption of a new service role—E-government services provider. Charles R. McClure and Paul T. Jaeger describe the librarian's new job as follows:

"Community residents rely on the public library to access federal, state, and local information and to interact effectively with these government units to obtain specific services such as completing benefits forms and obtaining child support. Staff must be knowledgeable about the range of federal, state, and local e-government services available and being requested, they must be able to assist the user in completing these forms, and they must be able to help users obtain additional information from the agencies as needed." (Charles R.

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A Juicy Fruit Future

CELEBRATING TECHNOLOGIES GREAT AND SMALL

by William Uricchio

HIGH

CLA Executive Board
Meeting of August 6, 2009
Middlesex Community College

Two important technology anniversaries were marked this summer. Forty years ago, humankind took a giant leap forward with Neil Armstrong's first steps on the moon. And 35 years ago, automation took a significant step toward its future at a supermarket in Troy, Ohio, when a pack of Juicy Fruit gum bearing a barcode was checked out. This new device would forever alter the worlds of commerce and librarianship.

At the time, the coming of barcodes seemed insignificant relative to the lunar landing, but the long term impact of that little striped label has probably been more important to our daily lives and profession than the ambitious and wildly successful space program that ended in 1972. It is hard to imagine what library service would be like today without barcodes.

About a decade after the barcode made its appearance, the automated network where I worked was preparing for its first library to come online. Some members of our operation came up with a clever approach to announcing the new system—zebras, representing our barcode-based technology. These images, announcing, "The Zebras are Coming," appeared on posters, flyers, and circulation desks throughout the capital region. The PR campaign worked beautifully, capturing the interest of press and public alike. And the zebra barcodes, with their low cost and easy implementation, have remained viable after decades of use.

Recently, many libraries have moved away from zebras to RFID (Radio Frequency Identification). This newer technology allows bibliographic and item information to ride with each volume and, in some cases, personal information can be imbedded in library and identification cards. The barcode industry has responded to RFIDs, which cost at least ten times more than barcodes per unit, with a new generation of products.

For example, the Databar carries information such as the expiration date for produce; it will show up in grocery

stores next January. The Data Matrix holds large amounts of data in a non-stripe format.

Finally, a brand new approach using tiny LEDs (Light Emitting Diodes) to hold data that can be read from a distance by cell phones may be the biggest challenge yet to barcodes, and perhaps even to RFIDs, The Zebra-RFID-LED battle seems to be in full swing, even if RFIDs and LEDs may hold a technological edge with their wireless capabilities.

The idea of using barcode-like images to hold large amounts of data is not new. In the 1980s, a few publishers hoped for wide implementation of the Cauzin Softstrip, a matrix barcode holding machine-readable bibliographic data and printed on a publication's verso page. Using a special wand, an operator could scan the information into a computer, instantly and flawlessly creating an online record for cataloging or other purposes. A journal I wrote for at the time, *Library Hi-Tech*, not only promoted this idea but also used softstrips in its own issues. Unfortunately the publishing version of this product turned out to be more like the ill-fated Apollo 13 than the successful mission of the Apollo 11.

Reading about the 35th anniversary of barcodes reminded me of an article I once wrote for *The Journal of Irreproducible Results*, a seemingly serious publication that contained some rather suspect scientific information. (See "Debit Barcodes," *JIR*, January 1993)

The major advance discussed in my pretensively researched paper was a new kind of barcode printed with vegetable dyes (I chose red beets) known to fade over time. Imprinted with a barcode that would fade within two weeks, for example, a carton containing milk past its prime could not be checked out at the register. Further, a customer could tell if a product was too old simply by looking at the barcode; the stripes would have disappeared. These time-sensitive "debit barcodes" were proposed for use in medicine (to date prescriptions), defense (for determining the potency of ammunition), and even libraries (to tell when a

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ACLPD The council is seeking membership nominations for the following categories: Library user, Regions 1, 2, and 6. Contact Jaime Hammond, jhammond@nvcc.commnet.edu.

ADA Mary Engels distributed a website list of information on ADA requirements and resources to be considered when planning programs. Ken Wiggin noted that "accessibility" refers to websites, as well. The committee is planning a workshop, "It Takes More Than a Ramp," for November 2 in Wallingford.

ALA Jay Johnston noted that there is no mention of libraries in the federal stimulus package and that he is working with others at ALA to secure an audience with the President of the United States.

Budget FY2010 Alison Wang distributed a preliminary budget proposal for FY2010. It was noted that CLA Bylaws call for the Budget Committee to prepare an annual working budget for submission to the Executive Board for action. No vote on the budget was taken. A revised budget proposal will be reviewed at the September meeting.

Career Development David Boudinot said that the committee plans to discuss another speed mentoring event and CLA's minimum salary guidelines.

Children Caitlyn Augusta and Beth Crowley asked that any profit from its September meeting be used to benefit Nutmeg. CLA did not donate to Nutmeg last year; the Children's Section believes it is important for CLA to recognize its role in founding the Nutmeg Award and serving as a co-sponsor.

CLASS Laurie Colburn said that the section is planning two workshops for the fall in lieu of an all-day conference.

Conference 2010 Jaime Hammond reported that the committee is negotiating with Mohegan Sun for a two-day conference. The theme of the conference, "Our Common Ground," refers to common interests among different types of libraries and library workers.

CSL Ken Wiggin reported that CSL is operating under an executive order and spending is limited to emergency purchases. He expressed gratitude to vendors, who have received only a small portion of what



William Uricchio
is director of the
Trekker Library on UConn's
Greater Hartford campus.
william.uricchio@uconn.edu

they are owed, for continuing to allow access to iConn databases and reQuest. A new iConn search page will be launched in August, and 1,300 downloadable audio books will soon be available through iConn. CSL has lost 19% of its staff due to retirements.

Development Barbara Bailey requested and received volunteers to work with her on a review of CLA's strategic plan.

Donations Requests for donations include: 1) ALA Emerging Leaders Program candidates, 2) Nutmeg, and 3) UConn Children's Book Fair. A moratorium has been placed on all donations until a budget is adopted, at which time the requests will be reviewed by the Grants Committee.

Editorial Bill Uricchio distributed and discussed results of the survey of CLA members regarding online vs. print format for Connecticut Libraries. David Kapp, CL editor, described the challenges the committee has faced due to changing budget proposals and noted the cost savings that already have been achieved. The committee expressed the need for budgetary decisions about CL to be made jointly with the Budget Committee and the Editorial Committee. Following a lengthy discussion, Theresa Conley moved that the board authorize two more print editions of CL, allowing time for the CLA leadership to meet with the Editorial Committee and prepare a plan for the future of the publication to be discussed at the October meeting. Motion passed.

Friends Carl Nawrocki reported that FOCL's fall workshop is scheduled for November 14 at Middlesex Community College.

Intellectual Freedom Peter Chase noted that Banned Books Week is September 22 – October 3 and encouraged libraries to set up a display.

Leadership Institute Jay Johnston noted that 70 people have registered for the conference on August 14, 2009 at the University of Hartford and thanked Randi Ashton Pritting for providing the venue. All participants will receive a certificate for attending.

Legislative Carl Antonucci distributed a report from CLA lobbyist, Bobby Shea, including names and contact information for key budget negotiators. The need to continue writing to legislators and thanking those that support libraries was emphasized.

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Membership

BENEFITS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

by Randi Ashton-Pritting

- **Member** is defined as: a body part or organ; a unit of structure in a plant body; one of the individuals composing a group; constituent part of a whole.
- **Membership** is defined as: a state or status of being a member; the body of members.
- **Part** is defined as: one of the often indefinite or unequal subdivisions into which something is or is regarded as divided and which together constitute the whole; an essential portion or integral element.

When you examine these words, you find that to be a **member** is to be **part** of a larger body or **membership**. The Connecticut Library Association is on the edge of something great—an opportunity to rethink, refocus on what is important to the membership.

We live in interesting times. People are rethinking their finances, making choices about which personal and professional memberships to renew, and what groups to join. CLA is one of many choices, all of them competing for your attention and support. Competition is a good thing. It puts opportunities on the table. It offers value or no value. The member decides.

However, it is the responsibility of the association to set the values, offer opportunities and list the responsibilities of the membership. **Responsibility** is defined as: the quality or state of being responsible as a) moral, legal, or mental accountability (I'd like to add financial accountability), b) reliability, trustworthiness; and something for which one is responsible: burden (i.e., duty).

CLA is asking members to be a part of a larger group, or membership, that has responsibility to the whole, with a duty to carry on the work and the mission of the association.

People join professional organizations for many reasons. Why should you join, or renew your membership in the Connecticut Library Association? CLA is your **advocate** in both Hartford and Washington, D.C. CLA plans and lobbies

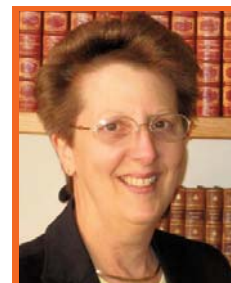
for multi-million dollar legislative packages that improve the quality of library services statewide. CLA offers numerous opportunities for **continuing education and networking**—workshops, section programs, and the best annual state library conference in New England. CLA supports individuals and institutions in **intellectual freedom** cases and alerts the library community to attempts to restrict access to information or to invade patron privacy. CLA has an up-to-date **jobs website** for those who are seeking employment. CLA creates and promotes an annual **minimum salary** guideline that has proven to be effective in improving the salaries of librarians. CLA members receive **Connecticut Libraries**, with a variety of articles written by our colleagues.

Now, is the time to invest in yourself and your professional organization; join CLA and encourage others to join. Ask those hard questions: *Why aren't you a member? What would encourage you to join? What are you looking for in a professional organization? Are you interested in being active on a committee but have no idea how to go about joining? Are you questioning the value of membership? Do you understand what CLA stands for? Now, a hard one, do you think CLA is tuned in to the 21st century minds of up and coming library leaders? Then listen to the answers. I mean, really listen.*

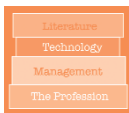
It is the responsibility of members to relay your answers, and the ones you hear from prospective members, to the CLA Board and the New Members Roundtable (Maura Deedy, mdeedy@fergusonlibrary.org). The Development Committee is dusting off CLA's 2004 strategic report. Your comments on that effort are invaluable as well (Barbara Bailey, barbara.bailey@glastonbury-ct.gov).

CLA is looking at a lot of hard work in the next couple of years to make our

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Randi Ashton-Pritting
is director of the
University of
Hartford Libraries.
pritting@hartford.edu



The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao

BY JUNOT DÍAZ (RIVERHEAD BOOKS, 2007)

A Review by Shelley Roseman

The *Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* is a glimpse into the life of a first-generation Dominican-American “ghetto nerd,” as well as a look at the challenges of assimilation and fading family ties. *Wao* goes way beyond being a diaspora novel about a Latino misfit branded a “hard core sci-fi and fantasy man”; it’s inherently about fates linked by an inter-generational curse.

The novel shifts gears frequently, from Oscar de Leon’s world in Paterson, New Jersey to his Caribbean roots. Diaz cleverly chronicles the saga of Oscar’s family in the Dominican Republic through bittersweet narrations, providing a history lesson of sorts on Rafael Trujillo’s infamous reign of terror.

There are so many dimensions to this story that you understand why book clubs have flocked to it. It has also made it onto many high school summer reading lists, which speaks well of districts willing to overlook some crude language for what may be a Dominican version of *Catcher in the Rye*, with a bit of Gabriel Garcia Marquez thrown in.

The novel begins with an unknown narrator, who comes and goes throughout the story, depicting Oscar, a young man apparently stuck in the eighties and obsessed with writing and reading apocalyptic themes. He’s perpetually drowning in self-pity because he’s an undiscovered Dominican Tolkien. Expletives in both Spanish and English complement descriptions of Oscar’s bizarre world. Intertwined with his ranting are the various family skeletons that were by no means left behind. An ongoing theme throughout the novel is the *fuku’*, a curse that apparently brought the de Leon family to ruin in the Dominican Republic and continues to haunt them in contemporary times. The *fuku’* serves to anchor the story as the narrators tell tales of Trujillo, seen as the “homeboy” who terrorized Santo Domingo “like it was his own private Mordor.”



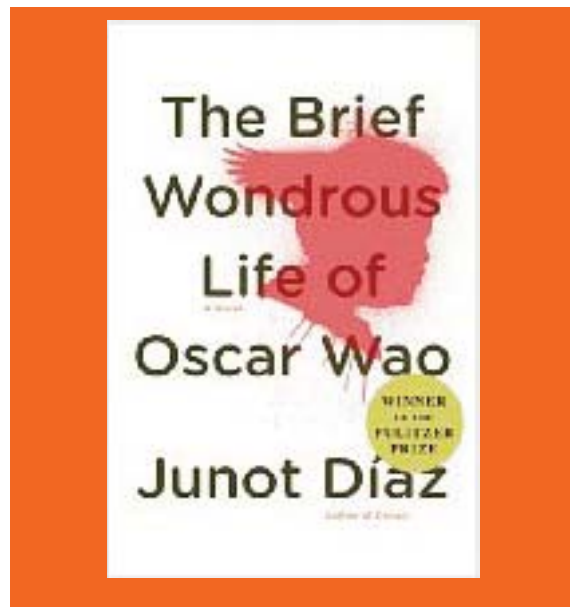
Shelley Roseman is the library director on UConn’s Waterbury campus. shelley.roseman@uconn.edu

References to Tolkien and Marvel Comics’ heroes and villains are everywhere but are not always explained, which can be frustrating for the reader who is out of the loop. As the story unfolds, other narrators jump in, interrupting the flow of the story and often leaving you quite disoriented. The reader may wonder if this is a novel or a collection of related short stories.

While enduring the chaotic interruptions and fragmented narrations, one begins to hear the voice of La Inca, the matriarch of the family. Through her words, you gradually piece together the story of supernatural powers, amulets, treason, incarcerations, torture, and gangsters ingrained in the family history and part of the luggage that “mami” brought into “Nuevo York.” Despite its many voices, the underlying one speaks of identity, as described in the first epigraph of the novel asking, “Of what import are brief, nameless lives...?”

It is challenging to be objective when critiquing a novel that has been crowned with both a Pulitzer and a National Book Critics Circle award. A quick search of the blogosphere brings up hundreds of reviews from readers struggling to make sense of *Wao* as they reflect on both the good and the ugly within the book. Language seems to be a point of contention. Oscar “Wao,” the protagonist’s college nickname, is a corrupted version of Wilde, forewarning the reader about the tone of the novel, which includes a great deal of Spanglish slang. One blogger actually counted 300 Spanish words and phrases that were never defined (bookclubclassics.com/Blog/sunday-salon-oscar-wao).

As a bi-lingual reader, I can assure you that there are few secrets to uncover and little that you’ll miss of the plot by not knowing Spanish, though many of these words reflect the mild irony and edginess within the culture that defines



Oscar’s world. Then again, Diaz told an interviewer that if you read *Wao* “with a dictionary and an encyclopedia ...you might miss some of the music that way.”

The casual use of the N-word is another issue. Still, inappropriate diction, tone, and sentence structure reflect Oscar’s imperfect world, a world in which he’s not quite sure where he belongs. Diaz alludes to this in the second epigraph, quoting West Indian poet Derek Walcott: “I have Dutch, nigger, and English in me, and either I’m nobody, or I’m a nation.”

The uninhibited and lively prose, Dominican lingo, and popular culture icons will entertain and enlighten you. *Wao* is a story well worth reading. It is Diaz’s long awaited debut novel following *Drown*, a short story collection published in 1996. In that collection, the reader first meets one of this novel’s narrators. Along with Julia Alvarez, Diaz provides a peek into the lives of the Dominican community, which now makes up one of the largest minority groups in the U.S. and is on its way to establishing its own niche under the vague category of Hispanic/Latino literature.

Janis Franco

REFERENCE LIBRARIAN, MERIDEN PUBLIC LIBRARY

by Carol Abatelli

One of the people best versed in the history of Meriden, Connecticut's "Silver City," didn't grow up there. Janis Franco, the local history specialist at Meriden PL for the past 17 years, was born in Milford and grew up in Bridgeport. From her first day at Meriden, however, Jan felt at home. "Meriden reminds me of Bridgeport the way it was when I was a kid," she explains. "Working at Meriden Public Library was fun from the start."

Jan began her library career as a teenage library page working in the High School Room (i.e., the YA section) of Bridgeport PL under Lois Jennings. After graduating from high school, she worked at the Stratford Library as a library assistant for several years before deciding to attend Southern Connecticut State University. She eventually earned two master's degrees from Southern, one in counseling and another in library science.

Along the way, Jan married, had two daughters, and worked for 15 years at North Branford PL. After receiving her MLS degree in 1991, Jan accepted a librarian position at the Hammonasset School Library; unfortunately, the school closed the following year. Jan next worked at Meriden PL on a part-time basis but soon moved into her current position as a full time reference librarian.

A key function of her new position was to oversee the Meriden Room, so Jan began to familiarize herself with the city and its history by driving around each of Meriden's neighborhoods and studying the library's clipping file for information about the places she visited. "I became fascinated by the city," she says.

For those who are unfamiliar with Meriden, the city was once home to many manufacturers of household luxuries that today have become valuable antiques. At the turn of the 20th century, companies like International Silver Corporation, Handel Lamps, and Wilcox and White, which made player pianos, were located in Meriden. The Meriden Room houses much rare information that provides a glimpse into those bygone days. There are 19th and 20th century town histories, maps, phone books, city documents, and city

Meriden PL's local history specialist, Jan Franco, is dedicated to documenting and preserving Connecticut's cemeteries. Her passion for the task has led her to visit every town in the state and to take more than 45,000 photographs.



directories as far back as the late 1860s. In addition to materials focused on the city, the Meriden Room also contains Connecticut town histories, military histories, family histories and genealogies, and periodicals related to Connecticut history and genealogy.

Other historical resources in the library's general collections include the microfilm index to the Barbour Collection of Connecticut Vital Statistics for Meriden 1806-1853, microfilm of those volumes of the Hale Collection of Connecticut Headstone Inscriptions that pertain to Meriden, 19th and 20th century Meriden newspapers on microfilm, and the aforementioned clipping file of articles about Meriden and its citizens.

In 1993, when Jan moved to her current position, it was thought that daily indexing of the *Meriden Record-Journal* would eliminate the need to maintain the clipping file. Jan set to work on the index, but soon found that discontinuing the file was very unpopular with patrons. As a result, she resumed clipping articles for the file, as well as indexing the paper, which she has done every day for 17 years. Recently, she also began to index the pre-1993 materials in the clipping file. "In case I ever retire!" she laughs.

As much as she enjoys organizing the library's local history collections, Jan loves helping people use them to connect with the past and enrich their lives. Each week she receives questions about all aspects of Meriden history, including inquiries from those searching for lost family members. In one such case, the information that Jan supplied helped reunite a patron with his lost half-sister. Another case that proved especially grat-

ifying was helping a pair of young people from the Netherlands find information about American soldiers buried in a cemetery in their town. "These young people had no relationship to the soldiers, but they were trying to preserve their graves out of respect," Jan explains. "I was touched by their efforts."

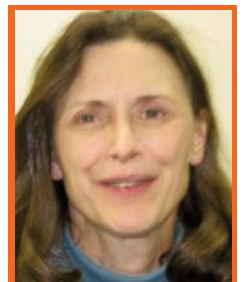
Jan serves on the board of the Meriden Historical Society, which maintains the Andrews Homestead, an 18th century house museum, and its own research resources, including records of old Meriden companies, a photograph collection, and a number of valuable artifacts. Jan acts as a liaison between the library and the society, enabling the two organizations to better coordinate their efforts to serve the Meriden community.

Jan's hobbies include gardening and listening to music, but she has too little time to pursue these activities due to another hobby that has grown into a serious avocation: her interest in documenting and preserving Connecticut's cemeteries, a passion that has led her to visit every town in the state and to take over 45,000 photographs.

Jan uploads the information she collects about cemeteries to a website: Find A Grave (www.findagrave.com) where researchers can search over 35 million grave records to locate burials of ancestors or famous individuals. She is the Find a Grave "county keeper" for New Haven, Middlesex, and Hartford counties, which means that she is responsible to review information submitted by others about cemeteries in these three Connecticut counties.

Jan's interest in and knowledge of Connecticut cemeteries has been the subject of several articles in local newspapers. (See "Grave Topic? Yes, But No Reason to Get Morbid" by Steven Scarpa in the 4/23/2007 edition of the *Meriden Record-Journal* and "A Grave Situation" by Ben Rayner in the 6/28/2007 edition of the *North Branford Sound*.) In 2007, she lectured about Meriden's cemeteries in a talk entitled "The History and Beauty of Meriden's Cemeteries: Who is Buried Where and Why Should We Care?"

You can contact Jan at Meriden's reference desk 203-238-2346 or by email francojan@hotmail.com.



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

The iconography of Books

UConn ART REMINDS VISITORS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF BOOKS AND LIBRARIES

by Norman D. Stevens

Despite the continuing shift to electronic media, books remain an essential part of the history of information and libraries. Over the years, the University of Connecticut Libraries has enhanced the appearance of its buildings, and the library experience of users, through temporary exhibitions and the display of paintings, prints, photography and sculpture. A significant number of permanent artworks in and around the Homer Babbidge Library and the Dodd Research Center represent books, their content, and other aspects of information as icons and symbols of culture. These pieces remind visitors of the role that books have played in our history and continue to play in our lives; some refer to the challenges that the book format faces in contemporary society.

Research Center was being planned. By that time, the State of Connecticut had an art-in-public-buildings program that dedicated part of the budget for every new state construction project to the purchase of works of art for that project. Working closely with the Connecticut Commission on the Arts, the library chose the German sculptors Wolfgang Kubach and Anna-Maria Wilmsen to create *Stonebook Universe*, a massive, 12-ton, Finnish granite 'book' that now occupies the center of the Dodd Research Center's entrance plaza. (See page 1.) In the fall of 1995, and in conjunction with the installation of their sculpture, 40 other Kubach-Wilmsen works were exhibited in the Babbidge Library.

A smaller sculpted book by Kubach-Wilmsen is displayed on the Dodd Research Center's service desk, in the company of a small collection of miniature stone books supported by marble book-shaped bookends—all part of the center's collection of book-shaped objects. A number of other bookends, from a collection donated by Norman Stevens, can be found in the John P. McDonald Reading Room and in other areas of the center. No matter what their size, the stone from which these objects have been shaped speaks to the persistence of books in society. (www.findlay.com/pages/Kubach.htm)

In 2005, the library mounted an exhibit of wood sculptures by New Bedford (MA) artist John Magnan in Babbidge Library's Gallery on the Plaza. Magnan carves faithful replicas of books in wood, following the growth rings found in the tree, and a number of these were featured in his exhibit. The library purchased one of his sculptures, *Pencil Book*, and it is now displayed near the entrance to the library. Magnan carved and donated a second book for the Dodd Research Center, which is displayed on shelves near the entrance to the reading room. (www.johnmagnan.com/)

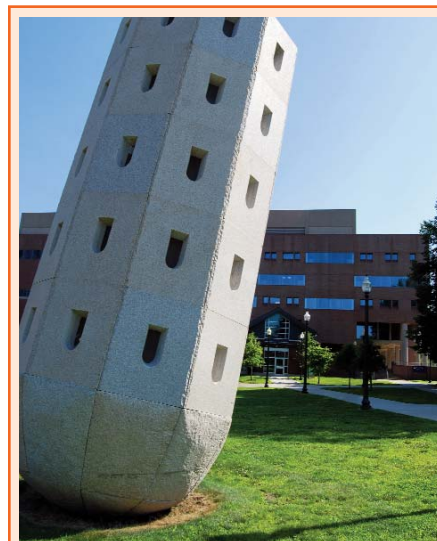
Israeli artist Ilan Averbuch is the designer and architect of the colossal concrete sculpture, *Dove Tower* and *Steps to the Bottom of the Pyramid*, which was commissioned in 2005 as part of the art-in-public-buildings program during the construction of UConn's new Information Technologies building. This piece is sited in a grassy area opposite the west entrance to Babbidge Library and near the entrance to an underground IT facility that occupies the lowest level of the Babbidge building. Harking back to the days before email and instant communication, continued on page 7



Dudley Giberson's blown glass triptych in UConn's Homer Babbidge Library includes hundreds of symbols that humans have created to communicate with one another, from the earliest cave drawings to the alphabet we use today.

The library's first major work of art to explore the theme of human communication was installed in the late 1970s, during the construction of the Homer Babbidge Library. Using private funds, the library commissioned Dudley Giberson, a New Hampshire glassblower, to create a three-panel stained glass window, measuring 25' long by 5' high. The panels incorporate hundreds of small *murinis*, each a cross section, or slice, of a round glass mosaic cane in which patterns or images have been embedded. In the case of Giberson's window, each of the *murinis* contains the representation of a symbol that humans have created to communicate with one another, from the earliest cave drawings to the alphabet we use today. Located on the Basement Level, adjacent to the Stevens Gallery, the symbols flow across the triptych, representing time, "like water in a river bed, bobbing and churning, always changing," and inviting the viewer to reflect on the evolution of human society and our need to communicate. (www.lib.uconn.edu/about/exhibits/GlassCompanions/muruni.jpg)

A second opportunity to acquire a major work of art for the UConn Libraries occurred in the early 1990s, when the Dodd



Ilan Auerbuch's *Dove Tower* references an era before the days of instant electronic communication, when doves were used to carry information over long distances.

THE ICONOGRAPHY OF BOOKS

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Dove Tower refers to an earlier mode of communication—the use of doves to carry information over long distances, as was done, for example, in the Franco-Prussian War. During the Siege of Paris from September 1870 to January 1871, the French microfilmed messages, which were then carried across the German lines by pigeons. (www.uconnmagazine.uconn.edu/smmr2005/smmr05lw.html)

Endangered Species, a major sculpture by internationally known sculptor, printmaker and painter Werner Pfeiffer, was installed in 2008 in Babbidge Library's bustling Bookworms Café, a prime campus location for studying, socializing and eating. An earlier version of the sculpture was included in an exhibit of Pfeiffer's work that was presented in Babbidge Library in the 1980s.

The current installation, measuring 7' by 24' and enclosed in glass, was donated by the artist. In it, Pfeiffer comments on the many ways that books have been censored and the challenge they now face from electronic media. Using real books in a variety of shapes and sizes, Pfeiffer silences them by sealing them shut, wrapping them in white paper, and mutilating them with saws, nails, hammers, rope, and the like. They are then placed on shelves lined with pages from a dictionary. A preservationist's nightmare perhaps, but Pfeiffer's message is very graphically conveyed. (advance.uconn.edu/2008/081020/08102007.htm)

These works of art will be joined this fall by a new installation, *Hamlet: A Cast of Shadows*, that is being designed and created by California book artist Linda Foster, with assistance from the Bloomfield design and signage firm ARTfx. Working from a quotation in *Hamlet* (Polonius: "What do you read, my Lord?" *Hamlet*: "Words, words, words."), Foster's work will focus on the noun "words." Translated into multiple languages and

reproduced in three-inch-high letters cut from clear vinyl, "words" will be affixed, upside down and reversed, to the interior of a 25' wall of windows on the west side of Babbidge Library. Light from the afternoon sun will project the words as legible shadows on the carpet below. The shadows will shift in shape and size with the seasonal journey of the earth, marking time and space. About her project, Foster says, "I'm looking at this project as an artist's book and thinking of the window as a transparent page, with the text on the page cast out into the room as shadows. There's a collective body of knowledge, ideas and images that gets cast onto our thinking, influencing how we think." (news.uconn.edu/2009/February/rel09013.html)

While no 'grand plan' has guided the installation of these works of art in the UConn Libraries, taken together these icons of the book and information, serve to remind visitors to the Homer Babbidge Library and the Dodd Research Center of the historical significance of libraries and their critical role in the future.

Norman D. Stevens is director emeritus of the University of Connecticut Libraries. All photos by Suzanne Zack.



Endangered Species is sculptor Werner Pfeiffer's commentary on the many ways that books have been censored and the challenge they now face from electronic media.

Fall Meeting Calendar

Many details are yet to be announced, so watch the appropriate websites for undated information.

CLA Career Development Committee Fall Meeting **Tuesday, September 15, 200, Middletown Library Service Center, 10:00-Noon**

Agenda: Planning the next Speed Mentorship event, annual salary guidelines, mentorship guidelines, scholarship planning, 2010 CLA Conference program ideas.

Contact: David Boudinot, david@hchlibrary.org, 860-669-2342

CLA Children's Section Annual Meeting **Wednesday, September 23, Wallingford PL, 9 to 3:30**

Surviving and Thriving in Stressful Times Morning session will include programs on Stress and Humor and a Summer Reading Wrap-up. Afternoon programs include Affordable Technology and Low Cost Programming for Children's Services.

Fee: \$35 CLA members \$45 non-members, lunch and coffee included. Registration deadline: September 18. Contact: Caitlin Augusta, caitlinreads@gmail.com

Association of Connecticut Library Boards Annual Leadership Conference

Friday, October 16, Waters Edge Resort, Westbrook, Connecticut
Tapping the Money Tree Ideas for ways to increase the library's outside-sourced revenue stream and to demonstrate the library's value to its community. Details at www.aclb.org. Contact: Stan Siegel, info@nplboard, 203-853-0085

New England Library Association Annual Conference **Sunday-Tuesday, October 18-20, CT Convention Center, Hartford**

It's Happening in Hartford.

Details at www.nelib.org/conference/2009/index.htm

CLA ADA Committee Fall Meeting **Monday, November 2, Wallingford PL**

It Takes More Than a Ramp

Contact: Mary Engels, mengels@cslib.org, 860-704-2207

CLA Staff Support Section (CLASS) Fall Workshop **Friday, November 6, Middlesex Community College** Details to come

CLA YA Section Joint Roundtable **Thursday, November 12, New Britain PL, 9:00-3:30**

Making It Work: Teen Programs on a Tight Budget Morning session: YA Programming on a Budget with RoseMary Honnold, editor of VOYA, YA programming specialist, and author of 101+ Programs for Teens That Work. Afternoon session: Fun and Frugal Programming, ideas presented by a group of local librarians. End the day by mingling with your colleagues, sharing and borrowing ideas.

Contact: Jessica Miller, jmmiller@nbpl.info, 860-224-3155, x119

Friends of Connecticut Libraries Fall Workshop **Saturday, November 14, Middlesex Community College** Contact: Carl Nawrocki, carlybilly@aol.com, 860-859-1641



Smith Library is one of the largest and most active departments on Eastern Connecticut State University's website. More than any other area of the university, we rely on our website to deliver products and services used by the entire university community to get their work done. Online courses require that we offer patrons a robust, full-featured experience on the web, since travel to campus is not an option.

So how do we do it? This article explains how some of our functionality is purchased and maintained by vendors, making it possible to offer services that could not be done in-house.

Application Service Providers are not new. Ever since online connectivity has been fast, reliable, and secure enough, we have had the option of moving functions out of the library and having them supported somewhere else, by someone else.

My first such experience was when a former employer replaced its local library catalog server with a web-based catalog that was located off-site on hardware we did not need to manage. It was a fun project to work on, and an end-of-project analysis comparing the former internal costs with the price of the new service demonstrated that we provided a better product for lower ongoing costs.

Your library doesn't need to undertake a big project in order to benefit from

hosted services. For example, we have recently contracted with Springshare to set up LibGuides for our library. LibGuides is a hosted application that enables librarians to quickly create, copy, and edit web pages to be used as subject guides for each of the university's major departments. The interface for producing the pages requires little or no understanding of the HTML or script supporting them. Users simply create or locate the content they want to include

and enter it onto a page. The entire product is viewed and managed via a web browser, and once they are completed, pages are linked from the library's website.



Bruce Johnston is systems librarian at Eastern Connecticut State University. johnstonb@easternct.edu

Overall, this is an easier product to work with than Dreamweaver or some other webpage editing software, and the fact that we aren't responsible for maintaining the hardware or software in-house makes it an even better value for us.

We use another hosted application to provide our live, online chat reference service: Boldchat, from Bold Software, LLC. This very functional application provides the necessary script to embed a "click here to chat with us" box on our library home page. This link automatically connects a patron to a chat window when a reference librarian is online, and directs the patron to our e-mail reference box if no reference librarian is on duty. Reference librarians connect to the application via a client that can be installed on any computer.

Boldchat enables patrons to converse with a reference librarian via a chat window with no specialized software on their end, just the browser that they used to get to the library website. On the back end, the application records the number of inquiries we receive this way and, optionally, allows patrons to save and forward chat sessions to an e-mail address for future reference.

Boldchat provides a lot of functionality that would be difficult to build, maintain, and troubleshoot in-house. This was a concern when the library decided to try offering chat reference, but before we knew if it would be well received or used enough to justify the investment. However, purchased annually as a service, the software was quick and easy to implement. We began live chat service almost immediately after purchase, with minimal training or instruction. In addition, we had no commitment beyond a one-year contract, which we would not have renewed if the effort had not proven worthwhile.

Hosted applications are definitely worth considering if your library wants to

BUILD IT OR BUY IT?

HOSTED SERVICES FOR YOUR LIBRARY WEBSITE

by Bruce Johnston

try something new, but doesn't have the resources to build it in-house.

Our most significant hosted service is the inter-library loan (ILL) operation. Since 2005, we have used OCLC's ILLiad, hosted by Alas Systems, Inc. This application has gradually replaced our home-grown paper request forms as well as our initial online request forms, which were developed in-house. It is now used to manage and track both borrowing and lending requests. We still use separate document transmission software, but

Application Service Providers can be an option for reducing costs, for offering functionality where internal resources are lacking, or even a little of both.

may eventually use that component of ILLiad as well. In short, it has rewritten the entire workflow of

our ILL office, which involves librarians, staff and several students, depending on the time of year.

Assessing the value of this hosted service is a bit tricky. It is expensive, and it would be hard to demonstrate that enough labor is saved to justify the cost compared to our previous workflow, which was in fact pretty efficient for the number of transactions handled. However, cost is not the only factor in this case. ILLiad is a unique application, with no real competitors. It is simply too big, with too many features, to even seriously consider building a substitute in-house. If you must have the functionality, buying it is the only option here.

Application Service Providers can be an option for reducing costs, for offering functionality where internal resources are lacking, or even a little of both. If your staff has good ideas for new services and features to offer, but not enough people, expertise or funding to do it in-house, investigate the availability of a hosted service provider to get you what you need. You might discover you can do it, after all.

VERSO

continued from page 2

reference book's information was outdated). Alas, I sent my article to the editor of *JIR* instead of to the U. S. Patent Office for registration and so remain a financial ruin today, even as the very similar Databar seems ready for liftoff.

The introduction of barcodes and that first lunar landing have at least one technology in common. The supermarket event that brought us zebras is also considered by many to be the first practical application of lasers, which had been considered by some to be an interesting but impractical technology. A little known aspect of the lunar landing is that the astronauts left a mirror behind. For a number of years, astronomers and others bounced laser signals off it, tracking them from earth. I am sorry that researchers involved with our profession (we are a science after all) did not participate in these experiments. I will never know if a barcode on a monograph in Paris could have been "read" by a laser wand in Hartford. The possibilities for a children's book called *Huckleberry Friend*, the *French Moon Zebra* might have been endless.

PRESIDENT

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organization viable, interesting, receptive, responsive, progressive, and financially responsible to the members. We need to pull in the spending, curb our demand for additional funds, be creative on how we look for funding, and be responsible to the entire CLA membership.

What CLA needs to do is the same thing every town, city, state, organization, and family is doing at this very moment. Families are saving at a greater rate than in years past. Organizations are making hard decisions: What do we buy? Who remains employed? How do we streamline and stay competitive in these turbulent times?

The outcome—CLA should emerge from the flames as the strongest professional library organization in the state of Connecticut, an organization that is responsible to the members, to the profession, and offers unquestioned value.

HIGHLIGHTS

continued from page 3

Membership Pam Najarian reported that there are 473 new and renewed members for 2009-2010.

NELA Mary Etter reported that NELA has cancelled its summer leadership program but plans to launch an electronic discussion group. NELA's Annual Conference will be held in Hartford, October 18-20.

President Randi Ashton-Pritting discussed her plans for CLA and opportunities to make CLA stronger during this time of fiscal challenge. She recommended that the Membership Committee target library schools with information about CLA and that New Members Roundtable become more active. She suggested that the Development Committee update CLA's strategic plan. She will include more committee reports in the board meeting and suggested that committee reports be posted on the website in order to share news and information with the library community. She received a letter of thanks from Russell Library for the \$100 check for the Connecticut Excellence in Public Library Service Award, and she introduced Su Epstein of the Saxton B. Little Memorial Library in Columbia as the new Region 3 representative.

Procedures Sandy Smith Rosado reminded members that the CLA website has committee information as well as the CLA Bylaws.

Publicity Betty Anne Reiter said that the committee would not exhibit library photos at the Legislative Office Building in 2010. They are looking at presenting "A Day in the Life of Connecticut Libraries," modeled after a program in New Jersey, instead.

Region 2 Hal Bright's report included information on activities at the Berlin-Peck Library. Farmington Library has begun renovation of the Barney Library branch. Burlington PL kicked off summer reading by unveiling a mobile made from children's sketches. Bristol PL is using "Be Creative at Your Library" for the entire library's summer reading theme.

Region 5 Maribeth Breen reported that Hamden PL received approval and funding for a Public Library Construction Grant project scheduled to start this fall. Hamden Legislative Council voted to continue funding Sunday hours. A Durham rally to support library funding in the state budget attracted 100 supporters, including state legislators, and made the front page of the *Middletown Press*.

Region 6 Theresa Conley noted that 12 libraries in Eastern Connecticut are presenting the Connecticut Author's Trail. The Town of Lyme is acquiring land adjacent to the library, which will allow for a new building or expansion.



www.ctlibraryassociation.org

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Editorial Team

Carol Abatelli, Julian Aiken, Maxine Bleiweis,
Sharon Clapp, Steve Cauffman,
Bruce Johnston, Vince Juliano, David Kapp,
Kirsten Kilbourn, Douglas Lord,
Pam Najarian, Tom Newman (*Chair*),
Kate Sheehan, William Uricchio

Webmaster (Acting) Debbie Herman
claweb@ctlibrarians.org

CLA Office

Pam Najarian, Coordinator
cla@ctlibrarians.org
860-346-2444 (v) 860-344-9199 (f)
PO Box 75, Middletown, CT 06457

Jobline

www.ctlibrarians.org/ctlibs/jobs.html

Send articles, news items, opinions and photographs relating to the Connecticut library community to:

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



E-Government & Public Libraries: A Chronology

1994

- 20.9% of libraries are connected to the Internet.

1995

- CT Department of Revenue Services (DRS) launches its website .

1996

- 45% of libraries are connected to the Internet.
- Telecommunications Act of 1996
- Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA)
- CT launches its first unified website: ConneCT (www.state.ct.us).

1997

- The average number of public access Internet workstations is 5.7.
- Creation of the Connecticut Department of Information Technology
- Gates Foundation launches its grant program.
- DRS implements e-filing of taxes.

1998

- 88% of libraries offer public access to the Internet.

2001

- CT's portal ranked 39th in the nation for usability.

2002

- E-Government Act of 2002
- The average number of public access Internet workstations is 10.8.

2005

- 18% of libraries offer wi-fi.

2006

- 36.7% percent of libraries offer wi-fi.
- 63.3% of libraries have bandwidth speed greater than 769 kbps.
- 74 CT agencies and organizations are on the state Internet portal system, up from 60 the previous year.

2007

- 99.7% of libraries are connected to the Internet.
- 99.1 percent of public libraries offer public access to the Internet.
- Average bandwidth speed decreased slightly from previous year.
- Only 36.4% of libraries report bandwidth is sufficient to meet patron needs.
- Average number of public access Internet workstations is 10.7.
- 73% of libraries are the only provider of free public Internet access in their communities.

2008

- 102 live websites are affiliated with CT state agencies and organizations, up from 85 the previous year.
- Libraries offer technology training. Most popular topics are: Internet use, computer skills, and online searching.
- National study ranking e-government in all 50 states ranks CT 28th. Maine ranks first; Wyoming fiftieth.

2009

- Obama Administration implements the "Open Government Initiative," which aims to use the Internet to bring the federal government closer to citizens.
- IRS reports increased popularity of e-filing.

Please contact the author for references to the sources for the above information.

WE BUILT IT, AND THEY CAME

continued from page 1

McClure and Paul T. Jaeger, *Public Libraries and Internet Service Roles*, Chicago: ALA, 2009, p. 50)

We built it—the technological base—and they came. Because we had the requisite capability, or so they thought, legislators viewed us as the logical partner in making e-government feasible. That's right, they really can't do it without us unless they are prepared to leave a significant portion of the population behind. In approximately three out of every four communities in the U.S., the public library is the only provider of free public Internet access.

Despite grants from LSTA and the Gates Foundation, libraries have acquired technology mostly with municipal taxes. During the early 1990s, we were becoming aware of the importance of the Internet. Yet, 15 years ago, only 20.9% of all public libraries had a single Internet connection. Over the next decade, there would be dramatic growth in all of the key indicators of Internet connectivity. Then, sometime between 2002 and 2007, growth started to level off. The number of public access workstations remained basically level between 2002 and 2007. Bandwidth actually went down slightly.

You probably are already familiar with the reasons for the lack of growth: no space for additional workstations, no new funding for staff to maintain the technology. These constraints might not be cause for concern if the outside world were also standing still. But as government agencies add more content and features to their websites, the public naturally expects us to keep pace.

Consider a basic government function like revenue collection and the many ways your library has become indispensable to the process. How many times each day do you download a tax form for someone during tax season? The instructions for completing and filing tax forms can be lengthy, which is a problem if there is only one printer. People are using library computers to e-file their taxes. This also presents problems because, in many libraries, public workstations time out after a certain number of minutes. The staff is under pressure to grant extensions, and if there aren't enough public workstations to keep up with demand, this means longer waits for other patrons.

Here at Silas Bronson Library in Waterbury, the AARP used to provide just tax counseling for seniors. Now, they e-file the forms from the library, using our wi-fi connection. And don't forget what's happening on the local level. Waterbury's assessor's office sends people to the library so they can go to a website to check the assessed value of their property. At certain times of the year, the boundaries between the library and the tax department are so blurred, we could almost be working for them.

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CT LIBRARIES

WESTBROOK PUBLIC LIBRARY

by Lewis B. Daniels

On September 16, 2009, after 18 months in rented temporary quarters, the Westbrook Public Library reopened in a renovated and expanded facility. Originally built in 1977 to replace the first town library on the Westbrook town green, the library had 12,000 sq. ft. of space on two floors of 6,000 sq. ft. each. Services and collections occupied the main level; a community room, literacy volunteers office, mechanical areas, and storage spaces were located on the basement level.

Serving a community of more than 6,000 permanent residents, and many more summer homeowners and visitors, the main floor had become extremely overcrowded, and the 888 sq. ft. children's area was obviously undersized.

The library board and staff considered a variety of options to address the library's space needs and ultimately decided to pursue a renovation and expansion of the existing building. With the support of town government and the townspeople, a building committee was established in 2001. Architect Kenneth Best, formerly of Best Joslin Architects and currently with Drummey Rosane Anderson Architects, was selected to design a renovated and expanded library.

The estimated cost of the project was \$4,275,000, funded by a \$3,550,000 bond issue, a \$500,000 state public library construction grant, and \$225,000 in local contributions. The general contractor was Barr, Inc. of Putnam, CT.

The main level and basement level are now roughly 9,500 sq. ft. each for total space of 19,088 sq. ft. The existing structure, designed by local architect Thomas L. Elliott, has been completely reconfigured and renovated. The addition and the existing structure have been gracefully integrated into a handsome exterior. The interior retains the original open truss design and is bright, open, and welcoming. The new children's room is 2,600 sq. ft. with a separate story hour and craft room.

Unusual design elements include a striking cupola and a custom-built upholstered window seat below a handsome bay window in the children's room. Large arched windows offer wonderful views of the surroundings and admit considerable natural light. Cozy seating areas are tucked beneath the windows.

Wired and wi-fi access to the Internet is available throughout the building. An elevator provides easy movement between floors. New shelving, attractive tack boards, slat wall displays, and a beautiful circu-



The CSL Division of Library Development and the Westbrook Public Library will present a free Libratrechts workshop at the library on September 14, from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The library is located at 61 Goodspeed Dr., Westbrook, CT 06498. Photo Darlene Briggs

lation desk dress up the interior. The community room on the lower level is completely refurbished and a small conference room has been added.

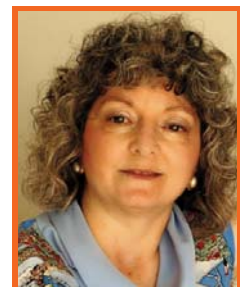
Lewis B. Daniels is director of the Westbrook Public Library.

WE BUILT IT, AND THEY CAME

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How does the owner of a small family restaurant feel when a bus crammed with tourists pulls into the parking lot? The tone in the library literature and within ALA has been very positive with respect to our new role as e-government services provider, but with a cautionary note. We may have reached a point where we cannot fulfill this role effectively without substantial new funding. It is ironic that as e-government is expanding at an explosive rate, library budgets are shrinking.

When will the next "surge" in demand for our assistance hit? We cannot even foresee whether it will be the result of decisions made at the federal, state, or local level. Will we be able to rise to the occasion as they did in Florida after Katrina, with existing equipment and staff? If not, will some other public or private institution better equipped to fill this role bypass us? Given the uncertainty regarding the future of traditional library services in an electronic age, I don't like the thought of being bypassed.



Dana M. Lucisano is a reference librarian at Waterbury's Bronson Library. She chairs CLA's Reference and Adult Services Section and is a member of ALA's Subcommittee on e-Government.



PO Box 75, Middletown, CT 06457
www.ctlibraryassociation.org

Connecticut Libraries

September 2009 -- Volume 51, Number 7

Do you feel like you're working for the IRS in April? Dana Lucisano explains why. *Page 1*

Which has had more impact on your life: the lunar landing or barcodes? Bill Uricchio argues for the latter. *Page 2*

Randi Ashton-Pritting talks about the benefits and responsibilities of membership. *Page 3*

Shelley Roseman says *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* is difficult and profane—but worth it. *Page 4*

Janis Franco may know more about Meriden than anybody else in town, according to Carol Abatelli. *Page 5*

Norman Stevens describes UConn's growing collection of commissioned artworks relating to books and information. *Page 6-7*

Why build it when you can buy it? Bruce Johnston explains the advantages of the latter. *Page 8*

CT Libraries: Westbrook Public Library. *Page 11*

Project Aims to Improve Communication with CLA Members

CLA is embarking on a project to update and expand its membership database to allow better communication with and service for members of the association. We all are aware of the speed and power of electronic communications—not to mention their cost saving potential, so part of the project will be to gather email addresses from all members.

Although listservs Conntech and CLclist reach many in the state, the list we develop from our improved database will be the first to apply to CLA members only, allowing us to poll and inform them about issues of particular interest and concern. We will use the new emailing list judiciously, of course, and solely for the benefit of the association and its membership.

While we haven't discussed categorization to allow members to choose the sorts of messages they would like to receive, that potential certainly exists. Under consideration are announcements of fall meetings, the annual conference program, pdf versions of *Connecticut Libraries*, and membership renewal reminders.

Some current members may not have an email address, and there may be others who do not wish to share their address. We would especially like to hear about those concerns and address them since we believe that this new tool will allow us to offer significantly better service to the membership than is currently available. The launch date for this project is TBA, but we'll keep you posted. If you have comments, please forward them to Randi Ashton-Pritting at 860-768-4268 or pritting@hartford.edu.

Kathy Leeds, past president of CLA and executive director, Wilton Library

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Join Us @ CLA

FAIR WARNING: YOU HAVE TO PAY TO PLAY

Receipt of *Connecticut Libraries* is a benefit of membership in the Connecticut Library Association.

A recent review of the membership files revealed that many people who are receiving Connecticut Libraries have not renewed their membership since it expired at the end of June 2009. If your dues for FY2009/2010 have not been paid by September 30, reluctantly we will have to drop you from the membership rolls, and the October edition of the magazine will be your last issue.

Membership dues also help to pay for the CLA lobbyist who, in this difficult legislative season, has been hard at work arguing against draconian cuts to services that affect every library in Connecticut.

The current recession has hit CLA finances hard, nearly depleting a once healthy investment fund that had served to supplement membership dues in better days. More than any time in recent memory, CLA needs the broadest possible support from the Connecticut library community.

If you have not renewed your membership, we hope that you've just forgotten and that you will take steps immediately to renew it—and your support for CLA.

If you are unsure of your membership status, please inquire by sending a note to cla@ctlibrarians.org, or by calling the CLA office at 860-346-2444. You can renew your membership at www.ctlibraryassociation.org/member.htm.

We want to say "Welcome back," not "Farewell."