

Mystery conference  Open source software

PNLA QUARTERLY

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PNLA QUARTERLY

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President's Message

Kathy Watson



The Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition was a world's fair held in Seattle in June of 1909, on the grounds of the University of Washington campus. Much of what happened at that world's fair is now only part of history. However, an event unfolded there that holds great significance for many of us today.

During the fair, a three day conference was held at the University, and the Pacific Northwest Library Association was born. PNLA's centennial year is drawing near, and it gives us much to reflect upon. What is happening now with our organization, how to best celebrate our 100th anniversary, where do we go from here, all are thoughts we must engage.

What's happening now? Leadership changes occurred during the November and February board meetings. The newly elected treasurer, Jennifer Stutesman resigned and was replaced by the Washington state representative, Katie Cargill. Katie is an experienced and dynamic treasurer, and is already streamlining the various processes for those who follow in her footsteps. Our president, Connie Forst, resigned at the February board meeting. According to the by-laws, it is my duty as 1st Vice President/President Elect, to assume presidential responsibilities. PNLA has been blessed with strong and capable leaders since its inception, and today is no different. Although there are new members, such as myself, on our board, the experience and wisdom of board members like Christine Sheppard, Susannah Price, Michael Burris, Jason Openo, and Brent Roberts, stabilize our newness, and assure our organization of that knowledge which can only be gained by having been there.

I also currently have the pleasure of working with a great group of PNLA members putting together the 2008 Annual Conference in Post Falls, Idaho. "Libraries Go Wild: Beyond the Expected" is our theme. Plan on being there for a "wild" and wonderful time!

The Leadership Institute (PNLA Leads) will be held at Schweitzer Mountain Resort in north Idaho in October. Mary DeWalt is a creative and tireless worker who has helped to bring an outstanding leadership experience to the Pacific Northwest.

How do we best celebrate our Centennial Anniversary? A part of that celebration will be our annual conference, in Missoula, Montana. Montana's representative, Mary Lou Mires is already hard at work on that conference, and I am sure that it will be superb! What does it mean to celebrate your 100th birthday, and what do you see as the ways and means of celebration? Let us know!

And last, but certainly not least, where do we want our organization to go from here? This is an issue the board will be concentrating on at our November meeting, and we would very much like to hear your thoughts on the subject. PNLA was organized to help mitigate the vast distances and communication difficulties endemic to our region. We all share similar problems, challenges, and joys in our library work, and PNLA is the best way to meet and network with librarians on an international level.

I am from southeastern Idaho, have been a librarian for 32 years, and feel that I have "come home" with my PNLA involvement. PNLA Leads was a never to be forgotten experience. The PNLA members I have met and had the pleasure of working with quickly imprinted a special, positive mark on my life; and the knowledge that there are many more growing experiences coming my way because I have become involved adds excitement to every day.

Keep in touch. Add your thoughts. Get involved. The Pacific Northwest Library Association is your "home" too. ■

MISSION

The Pacific Northwest Library Association is an organization of people who work in, with, and for libraries. Its mission is to facilitate and encourage communication, networking, and information exchange for the development and support of libraries and librarianship in the Pacific Northwest.

From the Editor

MARY K. BOLIN

This issue has a number of papers from authors who are students in Library and Information Science programs. They represent the many interesting issues that engage us at the moment, and they reflect the high quality of new librarians that we can look forward to. In addition to those articles, we have the enlightening and entertaining account by Diane Rice on how to stage a mystery conference. ■

Call For Submissions

All contributors are required to include a short, 100-word biography and mailing address with their submissions. Each contributor receives a complimentary copy of the issue in which his/her article appears.

Submit feature articles of 1,000-6,000 words on any topic in librarianship or a related field.

We are always looking for short, 400-500 word descriptions of great ideas in libraries. If you have a new project or innovative way of delivering service that you think others might learn from, please submit it.

Summer 2008 Issue (Deadline June 1, 2008)

Fall 2008 Issue (Deadline September 1, 2008)

Please email submissions to mbolin2@unl.edu in rtf or doc format.

Submission Guidelines

Format

Please submit all documents as either a .doc or an .rtf

Font style

PNLA Quarterly publishes in the Verdana font, size 8.

Spacing and punctuation:

- Please use a single space after a period.
- Please use full double dashes (i.e., "--" not "--")
- Please place punctuation within the quotation marks.
- Please omit <http://> when quoting Web site addresses
- Please place titles within text in italics (not underlined).
- Please do not capitalize nouns such as "librarian" unless the word is included in a title.

Spelling

Web site, Internet, email, ILL; please use the spelling conventions of your country.

Citation Style

Please use whatever style you wish, as long as it is used consistently.

Additional Information

Please submit a 100-word biography and postal address with article.

The Elements of a Mystery Conference: Murder in the Grove

DIANE B. RICE

It is a lovely Spring day in Boise, Idaho and I have just finished reading another mystery for pleasure. This last one threw me into the world of art forgery, murders and museum vaults. There are a large number of readers of mysteries that reflect interests in a diversity of topics and settings available in, "one of the fastest growing and most creative genres; Mysteries have steadily risen in popularity during the latter half of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first." (May, 2007 SLIS 5410 textbook) What's not to like about the mystery genre, it gives the reader and writers a chance to solve perplexing and sometimes intimidating problems within the safety of the two covers of a book?

Moving from the page to my neighborhood, I have had the privilege of listening to and meeting some of the authors of mysteries that I have enjoyed. The opportunity that made this possible occurs here in early June, an annual event called "Murder in the Grove", which is a conference for both readers and writers of this genre. It is also a brief two day adventure into understanding and sharing an admiration of its genesis. I think back on the luncheon speech given by Martha Grimes in 2005 about her "famelessness" as I wander the fiction stacks of the public library. I will always treasure the collection of Poe I won there with dessert too. Now it hosts upwards of 200 people from its much smaller beginning.

The conference which began almost ten years ago was conceived of by writer and attorney Maureen Harty, who moved to Boise from California. She also founded Partners in Crime, the local chapter of a national group Sisters in Crime. As stated in the March 2007 *Crime Report* "We are called 'partners' instead of 'sisters' to empathize our openness to both men and women." (www.partnersincrimeboise.com)

One of the authors and organizers stated it is also "the largest mystery and suspense fiction conferences held in the Rocky Mountain and Pacific Northwest" (Joanne Pence, 2005, e-mail attachment to LIBIDAHO listserv sent Friday, April 29, 2005)

Former President Dianne Anderson wrote this about Murder in the Grove:

"Over the past ten years, the conference grew from a single track on a single day to the present configuration. We now have: a contest for non-published writers of mystery/suspense, a one-day writing workshop preceding the conference proper, a book signing by all speakers/authors at a local bookstore, and then the conference itself featuring three tracks. (**the tracks are for writers, for readers and for the curious*)

When we make up the program, we try to present short workshop sessions that are mainly of interest to writers, panel discussions that probably draw more readers, and sessions on forensics that draw from both groups. Writers want to make their books more accurate and readers are curious about the reality compared to the TV images we get." (**Speaking personally, attendees also want to see the faces of the people who create and publish in the genre, and those of other fans*)

"The official sponsor is the Popular Fiction Association of Idaho, Inc. in conjunction with partners in Crime and Coeur Du Bois (the local chapter of RWA- Romance Writers of America). Murder on the Grove has had some terrific speakers. Our Guests of Honor have included Marcia Muller, Sue Grafton, Michael Connelly and Anne Perry, among others equally notable. I am amazed every year at the graciousness shown by these well-known writers who are kind enough to accept an invitation to appear, speak, and be presented with our award, now known as 'The Bloody Pen.'" (Anderson, 2007)

Originally the mystery writing contest idea came up in 2005 and was limited to 75 entries, constrained by finding readers qualified to evaluate the manuscripts submitted. Currently entries can be submitted by people from outside the U.S. with no requirement to attend the conference. The

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Library Services in an E-Learning Environment... cont.

flexibility in learning styles and approaches while providing tools and support. According to Pilder (2003), the e-learning environment provides these key elements:

- Support before, during and after an e-learning class.
- Accessibility to resources around the clock
- Comprehensive content
- Interactive learning community
- Choice for learners

E-learning is both self-directed and resource-based learning. To work in this environment, students need cognitive skills, i.e. negotiation of meaning, reflective analysis, and metacognition (Phelps and Kerr 2004), aptitude for self-learning, and confidence in information seeking and evaluation (Gaimster and Gray, 2004). To develop learning skills requires a suitable learning environment (Figure 1). Such an environment has the following characteristics (Al-Khanjari, et al., 2005):

- No face-to-face interaction.
- Students depend upon online resources only.
- Students are expected to have access to Internet and a course management system (CMS)
- The CMS must provide (groupware) tools supporting collaborative and interactive learning.



Fig. 1: E-learning environment

Source: Al-Khanjari, et al. (2005)

The constructivist approach to learning asserts that cognitive skills can be developed in an interaction-rich environment. Interactions can include those with instructors, peers, specialists, and resources (Swan, 2004).

The e-learning environment is an integrated one that uses digital library technology. The features of the e-learning environment are (Dhanasegaran, 2006):

- Tools for teaching and learning are portable.
- Teaching and learning anywhere any time.
- Alternative models for paying for education will evolve.
- Students will be consumers with substantive amount of choice.
- Increased level of student activities.
- Degrees may be obtained with a much increased level of institutional mix.
- Learning is moving off the campus to the home, the workplace, the field.

Library Services in the E-Learning Environment

Libraries are taking steps to integrate their systems and services into the e-learning environment. It is essential to assess services from the perspective of a student in the learning management system (or CMS) environment. Academic institutions will require infrastructure and services to support a range of systems for managing digital assets. It is important for libraries to participate in initiatives by the library community for developing common infrastructure (McLean and Sanders, 2003). These areas are not the exclusive domain

of the library community, but efforts by libraries may be influential in an uncertain environment. Other library services provided in an e-learning environment are:

Email: According to Mare and Poulter, (2006), email is the first step in providing a reference service in an e-learning environment. It does not offer the instantaneous response and immediate gratification of a face-to-face interview or web-based searching (Mare and Poulter, 2006). Similarly, it does not allow for a reference interview and the burden of answering questions falls on the librarians. While email transactions were thought to be a breakthrough, they are now viewed with frustration by clients who want an immediate answer (Bordhardt, and Croud, 2001).

- 24/7 Services: 24/7 reference allows users in the e-learning environment to get answers in real time from reference staff (OCLC 2008).
- Reference information services: This is a process that uses a variety of methods, including course-integrated library instruction, personal assistance at the reference desk, office consultations, and instructional guides to introduce users to both traditional library resources and new information technologies (Library Trinity, 2006).
- Selective dissemination of information (SDI): SDI alerts users in the e-learning environment to the latest publications in their specified field(s) of interest (D'Antoni, 2006).
- Alert, bibliographic, and mentoring services. Alert services allow users to create custom searches that run every day against the institutional databases (Lynch, 1995). Bibliographic services enable library content and services to be integrated within campus virtual learning environments/course management systems (VLE/CMS) such as WebCT, Blackboard, etc. (University of California Libraries, 2005). Mentoring services are a collaborative effort to provide support for instructors in an e-learning environment, by enabling those who have questions about pedagogical topics, methods, issues, or specific classes to communicate with more experienced colleagues (D'Antoni, 2006).
- User support and chat service: Answers to questions about computer hardware and software, networking, accessing the network from off-campus, obtaining an e-mail/network account, advising, counseling, library registration, and others are provided (D'Antoni, 2006). Chat service allows the librarian and student to remain in contact while the student tries search strategies provided by the librarian (University of Leicester Library, 2002). Stemper and Butler (2001) observe that interactive reference (e.g., chat, videoconferencing) present staffing requirements that resemble that of the traditional reference desk.

Tips for Librarians

Librarians must understand how learning is changing. Many institutions now have a blended mode of learning, combining face-to-face with online. Other institutions operate entirely online. Libraries have a number of roles to play in these new learning environments. Yang (2005) outlines "strategic imperatives for libraries":

- Be proactive in positioning library in e-learning space.
- Establish a position on Institutional Repository management issues.
- Establish a vision of library network service presence.
- Develop tangible value-added services through the linkage of library systems infrastructure to learning

Library Services in an E-Learning Environment... cont.

management systems.

Librarians must use leadership skills, a self-motivated attitude, and sharpened skills along with sound IT and management techniques (Prakash and Swarup, 2006).

According to Mare and Poulter (2006), we must be:

- Constantly searching for new methods to improve their services both electronically and traditionally.
- Need to be proactive in taking up new technologies and services as things evolve.
- Develop collection development policies that reflect the need to acquire information in varied format.
- Have high level skills of information technology.

To ensure that librarians have these skills, e-learning and similar issues must be part of library education. Refresher courses and continuing education must be offered to current library staff.

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How Can Academic Librarians Educate Students About Plagiarism?

EMILY DUST NIMSAKONT

It is no secret that plagiarism occurs on college campuses today. While some plagiarism, such as buying term papers from online sources, is done intentionally, in many more cases, it is likely that students simply do not know that what they are doing is wrong. As Madray (2007) points out, because so many resources are available electronically, it is easy to confuse students' effortless use of technology with educated use of information. They can navigate web sites, blogs, and social networking tools with ease, but that does not mean that they possess the necessary skills to process the information in a meaningful way and give credit for the information that they find.

Many people have credited the Internet with creating a generation of students who are unclear about the ideas of plagiarism and intellectual property. Students believe that because they have easy access to information on the Web, they are also allowed to use this information without giving credit to their sources (Madray, 2007). In addition, online sources of information have made it easier for students to borrow directly from their sources. Instead of having to copy from a print source, they can simply cut and paste information into their papers. This was illustrated by a case at Virginia Tech University, where four students turned in nearly identical papers for a class. They did not copy off of each other; rather, they all coincidentally chose the same paper on the Internet to pass off as their own (Auer and Krupar, 2001).

Even if students realize that plagiarism is wrong, they simply may never have learned how to avoid it. They may be unsure of their writing skills or confused by the rules of the various citation styles that they are told to use. Studies like the one conducted by Roig (1997) show that many students can not correctly differentiate between correctly paraphrased text and plagiarized text, which suggests that they would find it challenging to avoid plagiarism in their own writing.

Recently, several librarians have addressed the issue of plagiarism education, particularly the fact that simply scaring students through discussion of academic dishonesty policies is not the most effective way to educate them about how to avoid plagiarism; a concerted effort must be made to help students understand why plagiarism is wrong. Many students do not think about plagiarism in the same way that members of the academic community do. Wood (2004) claims that the students she has encountered see plagiarism as a minor offense. She writes, "It is my experience in talking with students accused of academic dishonesty that they believe firmly that they are moral, honest, and ethical people and would never do something as dishonest as to steal. They do not see plagiarism as stealing" (p. 238).

To counteract this attitude among students, an effort should be made to educate them about the big-picture ramifications of plagiarism and how it affects the creative process. Badke (2007) provides some examples of the type of things that students should be taught about plagiarism. For instance, students need to learn about the idea of intellectual property and the fact that information is always connected to the person who created it. Also, students need to learn to recognize their role in the ongoing discussion that takes place during the research process and realize that "linking the names of authors to their words and their ideas both maintains the power of what they have written and allows me, the researcher to interact with them as peers – evaluating, challenging, and ultimately concluding which voice is most likely correct" (p. 60). Students should be taught to see themselves as researchers who are developing their own thoughts on subjects, not just compiling the thoughts of others. As Wood says, "Students need to understand that by plagiarizing the words of others, they are not allowing their own academic voice to grow and be heard" (p. 239).

How can this type of instruction be accomplished? One important aspect is the integration of anti-plagiarism instruction into education about the research process as a whole. Several librarians have suggested that the emphasizing the importance of time-management skills for research projects would reduce the number of students who plagiarize due to last-minute panic (Auer and Krupar, 2001; Wilhoit, 1994). Librarians can

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encourage faculty members to require students to check in with them along the way, submitting research topics, possible sources, outlines, and rough drafts in advance of the due date for a research project (Hamilton, 2003). Placing anti-plagiarism instruction in the larger context of the research process not only helps students avoid plagiarism due to time issues, but also encourages students to realize that plagiarism prevents them from accomplishing effective research, writing, and learning.

In addition to portraying plagiarism avoidance as part of a larger research process, it is important to actually instruct students on how to write without plagiarizing. Both librarians and writing instructors have offered some suggestions for helping students learn how to paraphrase without plagiarizing their sources. Bronshteyn and Baladad (2006) lay out a six-step exercise which asks students to practice both paraphrasing and using direct quotes from sources, while citing correctly. Shirley (2004) relates a technique for teaching paraphrasing that asks students to identify the main ideas in an excerpt from a source, practice turning these ideas into a paraphrased paragraph, and practice identifying passages based on the original excerpt that are not paraphrased correctly. As the last step in the exercise, students choose their own sources and practice paraphrasing on their own. Other examples of anti-plagiarism exercises can be found online. Hunter's (2001) "Exercise on Citation and Paraphrasing" is located at web.grinnell.edu/writinglab/CitationGuides/indivex2.html, and Frodesen's (n.d.) "Developing Paraphrasing Skills: A Pre-Paraphrasing Mini-Lesson" can be found at www.ucop.edu/dws/lounge/dws_ml_pre_paraphrasing.pdf.

The main disadvantage that librarians face in implementing these approaches to anti-plagiarism instruction is the nature of their interactions with students. Librarians often interact with students only in relatively brief exchanges at the reference desk, one-time library use instruction presentations, or at best, semester long library instruction classes where many different topics are covered and there is not much time to devote to a discussion of plagiarism. When it comes to anti-plagiarism instruction, to be most effective, instructors and students should have a decent amount of time to devote to the topic; for example, Shirley writes about her experiences with teaching students about plagiarism, "In my own first-year writing courses, I have found it useful to spend several days taking students through a sequence of six exercises designed to help them understand what paraphrasing is, how it differs from summarizing, and how they can incorporate effective, acceptable paraphrases into their own research based-papers" (2004, p.186). Spending days on paraphrasing, one subset of anti-plagiarism instruction, or even on the whole topic of plagiarism, is not a luxury that most librarians have.

Are there ways that librarians can overcome this obstacle of limited interaction with students? One way in which the effect of this obstacle can be diminished is through increased interaction between librarians and teaching faculty. Working with faculty members on specific assignments for particular classes, librarians can encourage students to come to them as they progress on their research projects and remind them of the things that they need to do to avoid plagiarism. Beyond this, working with individual faculty members gives librarians the chance to develop discipline-specific anti-plagiarism instruction. According to Lampert (2004), anti-plagiarism instruction that is tailored to a specific discipline is more effective than generic instruction for a number of reasons. The instruction can be placed in the context of a code of ethics specific to the discipline. Also, focusing on the citation standards for a particular discipline can be more manageable for students than learning about a number of different standards. Additionally, it has been observed that students are more likely to plagiarize in introductory classes that they are required to take regardless of their major (Hamilton, 2003);

students may be more likely to heed a discussion of plagiarism in an upper-level class in their specific major, especially when it is made clear that this is not simply something that they need to know to get through school, but something that can have an impact on their career in their chosen field.

Another way that librarians have dealt with the issue of lack of interaction with students is by developing web-based instruction resources that students can consult on their own time. Sometimes, these resources take the form of online text-based guides. This is the case at Delta State University, where the plagiarism guide for students includes a definition of plagiarism, examples of plagiarism, plagiarism prevention tips, and a list of citation manuals (Mounce, 2004). This guide can be found at www.deltastate.edu/pages/1268.asp. Another example of web-based instruction is the use of interactive tutorials. For example, San Jose State University has an online tutorial titled "Plagiarism: The Crime of Intellectual Kidnapping," which includes examples of paraphrasing. Students are given the chance to compare paraphrased passages with excerpts from the original source (Jackson, 2006). Although not the same as multiple in-person sessions of instruction on paraphrasing, the tutorial, located at tutorials.sjlibrary.org/tutorial/plagiarism/selector.htm, does give students a chance to reflect on examples of paraphrasing and plagiarism, and to do so without a librarian being present. Additionally, addressing the issue of plagiarism on the library's web site ideally will let students know that the librarians are knowledgeable about how to avoid plagiarism and that the library is a place that they can come for help on plagiarism-related issues.

By adopting some of these approaches to anti-plagiarism instruction, including collaborating with faculty and designing web-based instruction tools, librarians can create for themselves an increased presence on campus as people who can help students avoid plagiarism. This presence should be the goal of librarians who are looking to do their part to educate students about plagiarism. If librarians are seen as people who can help explain the often-confusing rules and practices surrounding research and writing, rather than as disciplinarians looking to punish students, then they can increase their effectiveness in preventing plagiarism.

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The Elements of a Mystery Conference: Murder in the Grove... cont.

some of them for 20 years. Nice, too, to share war stories and be reminded that while these are difficult times for writers—changing media and technologies, the rise of the used-book market, the decline of independent bookstores, Google wanting to copy everything in print without worrying about copyright—we're in it together. It was a great relief to listen to other writers--even experienced ones!--describe how they grope their way through to the book's conclusion, with many detours along the path. And enlightening to hear other writers' horror stories about editors and copy-editors (who probably have horror stories about authors who don't meet their deadlines or whose manuscripts are full of--gasp! grammatical errors). We live and work separately (writers are a notoriously independent lot); it's a pleasure to get together every now and then and remind ourselves that we all face the same problems." (Albert, *Lifescapes* blog Oct. 2, 2005) She also used this quote on her webpage:

"We keep each other alive with our stories. We need to share them, as much as we need to share food. We also require for our health the presence of good companions. One of the most extraordinary things about the land is that it knows this—and it compels language from some of us so that as a community we may converse about this or that place, and speak of the need."

~Barry Lopez

I laughed when reading author Sylvia Hubbard's (Founder of Motown Writers Network) thoughts of attending Murder in the Grove as a speaker:

"Oh boy oh boy! My first murder mystery conference. (<http://Murderinthegrove.com>) thought, what the heck is your problem Sylvia. You're traveling all the way from Detroit, to Boise with the intentions of talking about murder with all white people. Now that really didn't bother me. I'm color blind and a writer is a writer and I love just talking about it to anyone given the chance, LOL, but even my dad was like, you sure its not a trap? I laughed him and all my other friends' crazy remarks off and left for Boise. Getting there was a trip and the layover in Denver made my plane late.

So when I was supposed to speak at 10:30am, I arrived CP on time, but in truth, I came in at 11am. I was going to just sit in the back because of my lateness as I walked in to a quiet all white room of people with four men sitting up in the front speaking of Eclecticism in Sleuthing Panel with: Bob Weibezahl, Michael Sherer, C.J. Box, & Kirk Russell. Honored at knowing I was going to speak on that, I was very upset at myself for not being on time. That is until Michael starts motioning me to come sit up front with them, while noisily scooting his chair over. I grab a chair, very embarrassed over my lateness and sit down hoping no one asks me any questions. They do. 'So Sylvia, tell us about your sleuth,' Bob asks.

Of course I haven't read *Stone's Revenge* in a couple of years, but the story is a part of me and I'm able to describe how David has a matter of time to find out if William Stone is the real killer all the while also trying to find out who the mysterious man Abigail McPherson is seeing behind her father's (the city's prosecuting attorney) back (which of course is William). Someone asks me, 'Was it harder to write from a man's point of view or writing about the evil things William had to do?'

Good question and I just jump into being the old Sylvia. Silly, witty and full of energy. 'Writing from a man's point of view is well... simple,' I tease. (The crowd laughs.) 'Just kidding. I'd have to say writing about evil - since I'm such a sweet person (Shut up Donna and Sydney). Although,' I say to the crowd. 'It was so much easier being evil every 28 days.' The entire room erupted in laughter - even the men on the panel.

I apologize for the crude remark, but as the time went on the room seemed very lively. It was cool. I was just praying no one asked me to spell or say Eclecticism. As the day wore on, I had a ball in Boise! The gathering of minds is so fun and I couldn't believe all the things I learned. I met Anne Perry who is a magnificent Historical Mystery Writer and also Joanne Pence, Denise Dietz, Pari... oh my goodness, I forget how to spell her name, but she kept us up all night in the bar of the hotel like a wonderful host asking questions, getting us to converse and just enjoying what all the writers had to offer. I loved

The Elements of a Mystery Conference: Murder in the Grove... cont.

it!" (Hubbard, June 2006 How to Love A Black Woman blog)

Numerous positive comments in e-mails from DOROTHYL@LISTSERV.KENT.EDU can be found from other attending authors, i.e. Pat Browning, Deborah Donnelly, Pari Noskin Taichert, Kathy Lynn Emerson and Meg Chittenden. Also literary agent/editor Janet Reid stated in e-mail:

"Murder in the Grove is a wonderful conference. I was pleased to be invited several years ago and it was well organized, well-executed (pardon the pun) and a ton of fun. I recommend it wholeheartedly." (Reid, September 11, 2006)

From Pat Browning author: "Boise SinC's Murder in the Grove May 13 was total immersion in book talk, the writing of books, the selling of books, the buying of books." (May 2000) I like the comment by Pari Noskin Taichert:

"I think the majority of the people attending were authors/writers. This was interesting and gave the con a slightly different feel than others I've attended I know some kinds of authors might feel that these kinds of conferences aren't worth the effort because of this. But, writers had darn well be readers. And we all need to support and encourage each other." (Taichert, June 2006)

Finally, the pulling together of bibliophiles of all ages and sexes is a wonderful thing, and I would like to include another set of voices from the community the local public librarians, Susana Ossandon is a Reference Librarian and co-worker who has this to say:

"The conference keeps getting better. This time the conference had more attendees, and there were more authors. The president of the Boise chapter of Partners in Crime was very appreciative of the library bag filled with paperbacks donated by ACL. She announced the library's donation during the raffle. I had also given her Dan Lester's name and telephone to put their conference information on LIBIDAHO. As a result, librarians from outside Boise signed up for the conference. I ran into people I know from the Pocatello library.

I kept to the Readers' track at this conference. I attended the Skullduggery: Hard-Boiled Detectives, Humor in Mystery, Deadly Valentine: Romance in Mystery, Dead Man's Island: Setting in Mystery, and Yankee Doodle Dead: History in Mystery. All the sessions were well done. The introduction to the keynote speaker, Carolyn Hart, mentioned that one of her books, *Letter from Home*, had been short listed for the Pulitzer Prize. Ridley Pearson was there, and, as always, spoke humorously about his work. His latest collaboration with Dave Barry has produced a children's book, *Peter and the Starcatchers*.

One of the main reasons I like going to this conference is that it is an easy way to keep up Readers Advisory skills. I can't read everything, but I need to know of as many authors as possible. Hearing them in person makes a stronger impression than just reading a book review. I also enjoy hearing authors whose works I've read. Authors Betty Webb and Kathy Lynn Emerson were at this conference. Their books are worlds apart, but both authors are well spoken and informative.

Also, hearing new to me authors speak of their work helps with Collection Development. I heard six new to me authors (Carl Brookins, Claire Johnson, Margaret Dumas, Kit Sloane, Christine Kling and Twist Phelan) who I want to read. ACL only had one author's books. I've filled out two purchase requests for the two books that look like potential best sellers. In addition, I heard a soon to be published author named Conda Douglas who lives in Sun Valley. Her yet untitled book is to be published next year and is set in Sun Valley.

I came back from the conference with some goodies. I am donating the two books I received. Copies of the magazine, *Mystery Scene*, are in the kitchen and circulating reference. All the bookmarks are on Reference desk #1's holder. I am keeping the chocolate." (Ossandon, Report to Director June 2005)

From my own perspective I will share just a little because interviewing and looking at posts by writers is somewhat debilitating in thinking of adding words of wisdom to the mix. From my own experiences at the 2005 "Death on Demand" event from my notes, one of the portions of the conference I attended were signings by Phillip Margolin and Jonnie Jacobs. She is fascinated by what lies behind the doors of modern suburbia and delights in the idea of the soccer Mom, or person who takes care of your mail when you are on vacation, being the criminal. She has a Kate Austin character she described, as "when Lucille Ball meets The Streets of San Francisco". The other main character is lawyer Callie O'Brien (her 6th book is coming out this year) who is edgier, single and "not as lean and mean as she hopes". J.J. said however C.O. is "younger, braver and quicker than she is" so she gets to be all her characters and that's what she likes!

Phillip Margolin said, "To write change your concept of time. If you write one page a day you will have a book by the end of the year". He wrote 4 hours a day on weekends with family, school and kids. He spends 3-4 years getting a book plot, but won't start it till he has an ending. Then he talks out an outline. Doesn't get writer's block because he knows where the book is going, but the work is in getting from A to C. He just writes then gets to qualify stating "Just sit on your butt and write. Do it for fun, don't think about it!" He got a C grade in his one Creative Writing course. When he began writing he had 5 chapters and an outline done. He was living in Oregon and had no confidence in his ability.

An old friend of his mentioned that he worked for the third largest publishing firm. He submitted the work and got a contract and agent. He talked about one of his books *Gone But Not Forgotten*. As a lawyer, "when you have lunch with serial killers, arsonists and rapists, they kind of begin to seem normal after a number of years." In *Heartstone*, it was written about the most astonishing murder he learned about in more than 20 years. He recommends John Connelly, an Irish writer and his four books in his favorite books list, is jealous of *The Concrete Blonde* plot, and likes thrillers Ellery Queen, Ross MacDonald's *The Chill* and Ruth Rendell's *Shake Hands Forever*.

Jonnie Jacobs said, "In the mystery field there's a fair amount of pressure for a book a year, partly because of the voracious readers." She never throws anything away and continually rewrites the section she is working on; starting out with dialogue and sentence fragments, things that aren't really coherent, but to get the flow. She doesn't outline because a dot-to-dot format never comes alive for her. She thinks your first novel is your best chance to make a mark.

continued

The Elements of a Mystery Conference: Murder in the Grove... cont.

All of the author's final comments on finding the confidence to write:

P.M. (Philip Margolin) "I have the attention span of a gnat and keep the doors down and the door shut."

R.P. (Ridley Pearson) He feels like an imposter and someone will catch on.

M.C. (Michael Connelly) "On the plane flying here I did not have to go to the bathroom, but I walked up and down looking to see if anyone was reading my books."

J.P. (Joanne Pence) "Writer's are egotists with inferiority complexes."

Finally after attending for two years and writing my own ideas that came from participation in the Murder in the Grove conference there is one I may have overheard but has stuck with me, the way we become better writers is to read, read and then write, read and then write... and I intend to make that happen until the next conference in June.

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DOROTHY-L Official Homepage <http://www.dorothyL.com>
"DorothyL is a discussion and idea list for the lovers of the mystery genre. It was concocted by a group of librarians at a July 1991 Washington, D.C. meeting of the Association of Research Libraries and named in honor of one of the greatest mystery writers." The following people are the Moderators aka Listowners:

Michael J. Kovacs

aka The Saint

Michael.TheSaint@gmail.com

[Harriet Vane and The Saint's critters](#)

Diane K. Kovacs

aka Harriet Vane

diane@kovacs.com

Kara L. Robinson

aka Danger Mouse

krobinso@kent.edu

[Danger Mouse's Baby Mouse](#)

Publisher, Bookstore and Reader websites/ Newsletters:

ShawGuides.com (General info. on <http://www.murderinthegrove.com>)

www.cluelass.com (aka Kate Derie) w/ newsletter "Deathstyles" <http://www.cluelass.com/public/Deathstyles35.pdf>

<http://blackravenpress.com> (Lynn Kaczmarek & Chris Aldrich) "Mystery News"

www.who-dunnit.com

www.pbclibrary.org/read-mysteries.htm (Palm Beach County Library System)

www.bookpassage.com (San Francisco, CA bookstores)

<http://www.partnersincrimeboise.com> (Angie Abderhalden) "Crime Report"

Authors (who have also commented online upon MITG) websites:

Kathy Lynn Emerson- www.kathyllynemerson.com

Deborah Donnelly- www.deborahdonnelly.org

Joanne Pence- www.joanepence.com

Pari Noskin Taichert- www.murderati.com & www.parioskintaichert.com

www.parioskintaichert.com

T.L. Cooper- www.tlcooper.com (Chairman Popular Fiction Assoc. of Idaho, Inc.) ■

Open Source Meets Turnkey: Koha for Software, LibLime for Support... cont.

through LibLime, or pay their own technical staff to implement it. When an addition is sponsored, it is then added back into the code base and released for other libraries. Ferraro says: "If you want something developed you have the option to sponsor development through a software provider like LibLime" (Ferraro, 2005b). The more libraries that sponsor development projects for Koha, the better the software will get.

There are several options for support through LibLime. They offer turnkey hosted support, which requires little to no technical expertise from the library, self hosted solutions, or a limited support option for libraries with knowledgeable technical staff (Rogers, 2007, para. 8). LibLime supports Koha, Koha ZOOM, and Evergreen. It is important to note that while Evergreen has a competing service provider in the US (Equinox software: esilibrary.com/esi/), Koha does not.

Strengths of Koha and Koha ZOOM

Public Interface

One of the major advantages of Koha as an ILS is its public interface. While many ILS vendors have been developing applications to improve the user interface of ILS systems (which must be purchased separately) Koha, and especially Koha ZOOM, feature a robust and usable OPAC interface. The importance of interface is hard to overestimate: for many library users, the OPAC is the library. Marshall Breeding said he "believe[s] that failure to make progress in this area can foster a creep of irrelevancy as potential users increasingly rely on information resources provided by entities other than libraries" (Breeding, 2007b, para. 1). Breeding continues, saying a next generation interface is "more in tune with current Web technologies and user expectations. It's broader in scope, takes advantage of search technologies and techniques that are closer to the state-of-the-art, and offers more dynamic interactions with library users" (Breeding, 2007b, para. 6).

Koha certainly succeeds in many of these expectations. The interface is customizable and can be made to match a library's existing web design. Koha ZOOM offers advanced searching features like excellent relevancy ranking, faceted search, spell check, and RSS feeds for searches. Users can also re-rank searches many ways, including "'field-weighted,' 'relevancy ranked,' 'popularity,' 'author,' 'call number,' 'dates,' and 'title'" (Anonymous, 2007b, para. 14). Many of these features are absent or poorly implemented in other ILS offerings.

Search

Koha ZOOM, which incorporates Index Data's search product Zebra, excels in search technology and relevancy ranking. Speed is noticeably improved from Koha Classic, and Koha ZOOM can scale much larger than Koha Classic while still providing speedy search results (Eby, 2007, para. 1).

Eby quotes Owen Leonard, webmaster of Nelsonville Public Library System as saying Koha ZOOM "really leverages the full potential of the MARC format to bring advanced and intuitive search functionality to our patrons. The OPAC also now [allows] us to integrate content from external web services to expand and improve the information we offer to our patrons" (Eby, 2007, para. 3). The search as implemented on Nelsonville Public Library System's site is very zippy, and provides very relevant results.

Weaknesses of Koha and KohaZOOM

Cataloging and other back end functions

While the public face of the ILS is clearly Koha's strength, its weakness lies in some of the back end functions. The system is entirely web based, and though that can be advantageous for some library systems, particularly ones that want to run thin clients for workstations, it comes with a certain lack of usability. Nicole Engard says "One feature that I was not impressed with this time around ... was the cataloging module" (2007, para. 21). The cataloging module provides a somewhat clunky interface for data entry, forcing the user to use the mouse quite a bit and use tabs to access different part of the record. In the inaugural issue of "The Code4Lib Journal," BWS Johnson wrote "Cataloguing for a large institution would be tough [in Koha]. Holdings information is a bit bodged at the moment. The cataloguing module is certainly clunky to use" (2007, para. 13). If a library were to sponsor a more robust cataloging interface, though, this issue would improve.

Lack of technical staff

Though LibLime offers a turnkey solution for LibLime, many of the advantages of open source are lost if no one in the organization knows anything about coding or open source. To get the most from the software and the system, the library should be able to at least evaluate problems, submit bug reports, and make decisions about the sponsorship of new code. Because of the funding structures of some libraries, it may not be possible to have technical staff on hand. For example, the technical staff of some public libraries is shared with the city. Without some technical expertise, a library may lose out on some of the important benefits. Still, a hosted solution from LibLime should certainly be evaluated along with other options.

Future

LibLime appears to be growing quickly as the buzz surrounding open source software in the library community continues to grow. LibLime's flagship product, Koha ZOOM, will continue to get better as more libraries sponsor development of the code. The next probable development in the open source market is the emergence of new vendors to support the same products, and this may be the best thing for open source. Many tout the lack of vendor lock in as one of the reasons to try open source, but currently there is not much competition, especially in the US. An anonymous author said "if LibLime isn't offering the best services to [their] customers, [the customers] have the opportunity to look elsewhere for support" (Anonymous, 2007a, p. 35). This advantage is lost if there is no other vendor to turn to. I believe more competition in the open source market could actually help LibLime, because libraries would see that the product is not tied to one vendor, and would therefore be more likely to try open source.

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Annual gross salary (in the currency of your country of residence)

- () Up to 9,999 \$30.00
(Includes retired, unemployed or not employed in the library field)
- () \$10,000 to \$19,999 \$40.00
- () \$20,000 to \$29,999 \$50.00
- () \$30,000 to \$39,999 \$60.00
- () \$40,000 to \$49,999 \$70.00
- () \$50,000 to \$59,999 \$80.00
- () \$60,000 and over ... \$90.00

Amount Enclosed \$ _____
(in the currency of country of residence)

I would be willing to serve on:
the PNLA Board Yes _____
PNLA Committees Yes _____

Circle interests (PNLA will help you connect):
Academic Management
Intellectual Freedom Reference
Resource Development Serving Christian Community
Library Instruction Youth Services

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