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Instructions for authors

The PNLA Quarterly publishes both peer-reviewed and high-quality non-peer reviewed articles. Please indicate whether you would like your article to go through blind peer review when you submit it.

Authors should include a 100-word biography and mailing address with their submissions. Submit feature articles of approximately 1,000-6,000 words on any topic in librarianship or a related field. Issue deadlines are

Peer-reviewed articles:

October 1 (Winter)

January 1 (Spring)

April 1 (Summer)

July 1 (Fall)

Non-peer-reviewed articles

October 1 (Fall)

January 1 (Winter)

April 1 (Spring)

July 1 (Summer) for non-peer-reviewed content.

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

Would you like to serve as a peer reviewer? Please contact the editor at mbolin2@unl.edu
As I begin my year as PNLA President, the association is in a bit of a quandary. And it is a quandary that, in many ways, revolves around the question, “how do you measure success?” As many of you know (some by being in attendance, some by wondering “the conference went where?”), the 2010 PNLA conference was recently held in Victoria, BC. The conference was held jointly with the Washington Library Association. In reading through the comments made on the evaluations, the conference was pretty popular. As the co-chair of the conference (a shout-out to my co-chair, Phil Heikkinen and the awesome planning committee!), I take pride that by most measures the conference was a hit. The program was excellent, there was buzz about the keynote speaker, social events were a lot of fun and the weather in Victoria was spectacular. On the other hand, when the final accounting was finished, the two associations found themselves facing a $23,000 shortfall. So was the conference a success or a failure?

The same question can be asked of PNLA. Are we succeeding, or failing? As with the Victoria conference, it all depends on how you define the terms. To many of those who are active participants in the association, PNLA is a success, although a moderate one. PNLA has a number of projects in which it can take pride. The annual conference, PNLA Leads, YRCA and the Quarterly are all services that continue to hold value for members. Those people who have drunk the PNLA kool-aid are extremely loyal to the association and provide great support. The many familiar faces in Victoria bear this out.

But as with many library associations, there are just not enough of these members. PNLA membership has waned in recent years, never enough to get us to the crisis stage, but enough to set off some major warning flares. So are we succeeding or failing?

The answer for both the conference and association question is “both”. Now, I can almost see your eyes roll while you silently accuse me of being a fence-sitter, but, hear me out. One of the major roles of the conference, from an association governance viewpoint, is to provide a revenue stream to support other PNLA activities. By that measure, we failed…and failed big time! But from a member viewpoint, the conference is about great sessions and networking. So there was a certain success achieved. As for the association as a whole, we have failed at the key task, which is to grow the membership.
Over the next year, we will be looking very closely at the services PNLA offers, and working to advocate regarding their value to the library community. Where the perceived value is lacking, changes will be made to increase value. We need to ensure that the annual conference continues to be of the highest quality possible, but as importantly, we need to ensure it is financially viable. We need to ensure the ongoing success of PNLA Leads. We will continue to reach out to Leads “grads”, who are the best advocates for the program. We need the Young Readers Choice Award remains the book award program for the Pacific Northwest. And we need to ensure the Quarterly remains a relevant publication in the new world of tweets, Facebook, and blogs. Work on that front has already begun. The move to make the Quarterly a refereed publication is nearing completion. This will be a very useful tool for those in academic libraries.

As I stated earlier, those who are part of the PNLA “family” know how great PNLA is. The challenge for me as President, and for the Board is to grow our extended family. Spread the word!

From the Editor

MARY BOLIN

This issue contains presentations from the PNLA Annual Conference, which took place in Victoria, British Columbia this past August. I am very excited about this group of presentations. They are interesting and substantial, full of wonderful information on a range of interesting topics. You can look forward to seeing more conference presentations published in the next issue, Winter 2011, and they will be equally worthwhile and well-done.

The PNLA Quarterly is now making the transition to being a peer-reviewed journal. Some of the content of the Winter 2011 issue will be peer-reviewed. This will provide another outlet for scholarly communication for librarians seeking a peer-reviewed venue for their publications. There will probably be a mix of peer-reviewed and high-quality but not peer-reviewed content for some time, and perhaps always. The Instructions for Authors has been updated to reflect the peer review option. We are always looking for peer reviewers as well. If you would like to serve in this capacity, please contact me.
Reading the Region 2009-2010: Award Books, Award Programs, and the Latest Winning Titles from Around the PNLA Region

JANELLE M. ZAUHA

Janelle M. Zauha is Reference Librarian & Professor, Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana. She can be reached at: jzauha@montana.edu

Introduction

Since 2006, this program has been offered at the PNLA annual conference and a bibliography of current winners has been written up for the PNLA Quarterly conference issue (with the exception of 2007). This year’s program in Victoria, BC again included librarians from around the region performing book talks on their favorite award winners. Many thanks are due to them for their energy, interest, and, in some cases, bravery. From Alaska, we had Helen Hill, Alaska PNLA Representative and Director of the Homer Public Library; from Alberta, Christine Sheppard, Alberta PNLA Representative and Executive Director of the Library Association of Alberta; from British Columbia, Adrienne Wass, British Columbia PNLA Representative, Manager, Community Development, Greater Victoria Public Library; from Idaho, Liesl Seborg, Idaho PNLA Representative, Librarian-Branch Lead, Ada Community Library in Boise; from Montana, Mary Lou Mires, Montana PNLA Representative, and Reference Librarian, D’Arcy McNickle Library, Salish Kootenai College in Ronan, and Jan Zauha, Past PNLA President, Reference Librarian and Professor, Montana State University in Bozeman; and from Washington, Barbra Meisenheimer, YRCA chair and Community Librarian at Vancouver Mall Community Library, and Susan Anderson, Washington PNLA Representative from Eastern Washington University in Cheney.

While the loss of Oregon from the PNLA region in 2009 meant fewer books and one less librarian for our panel this year, the addition of some newly discovered awards given by our host city, Victoria, made up for that gap. Another great crop of books emerged in this year’s book talks, featuring troubled teens, huge fires and troubled men, the story of candy, the quest for love, lighthouses and shipwrecks, unrequited dreams, art, cowboys, cats and dogs, and nearly any other topic of importance imaginable. In addition, this year we called for book recommendations from our audience, so our list of 2009-2010 official awards is augmented by a compilation of 21 recommended titles, their category (fiction, YA, etc.), and any comments or additional information the attendee wanted to include.

Local and regional book awards like these continue to require special tracking through annual programs such as this. Not only are they under the radar of those who follow higher profile national awards, these awards are more likely to change, move, start up, or simply disappear from year to year. This year, however, a new resource offers help beyond the Pacific Northwest region. Coast to Coast: Exploring State Book Awards by Janet W. Hilbun and Jane H. Claes (Libraries Unlimited 2010) traces the history of state book awards, how they work, who sponsors them, how selections are made and other details, including a section titled “How Can You Use State Book Award Programs?” that lists promotional ideas for schools and libraries. Although Hilbun and Claes focus primarily on book awards that benefit young readers, their index of state programs is very useful in its
inclusion of prior winners, selection criteria, and other information for each award. Some awards from the Pacific Northwest states are missed in their overview, and no Canadian programs are covered, but if you are interested in seeing how pervasive these award programs are, Coast to Coast is a book worth adding to your collection – as well as all the books listed below!

**REGIONAL AWARDS**

**Pacific Northwest Library Association (PNLA) Young Readers Choice Award 2010 Winners** ([www.pnla.org/yrca/](http://www.pnla.org/yrca/))

- Intermediate Division (7th-9th Grades): *Schooled* by Gordon Korman (Hyperion)
- Senior Division (10th – 12th grades): *City of Bones* by Cassandra Clare (McElderry)

**Pacific Northwest Booksellers Award 2010 Winners** ([www.pnba.org/Awards2010.htm](http://www.pnba.org/Awards2010.htm))

- *The Big Burn* by Timothy Egan (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt)
- *Boneshaker* by Cherie Priest (Tor Books)
- *The Crying Tree* by Naseem Rakha (Broadway Books)
- *The Collector: David Douglas and the Natural History of the Northwest* by Jack Nisbet (Sasquatch Books)
- *All In a Day* by Cynthia Rylant, illustrations by Nikki McClure (Abrams Books for Young Readers)

**American Indian Youth Literature (AILA) Award 2010 Winners** ([www.ailanet.org](http://www.ailanet.org))

- Best Picture Book: *A Coyote Solstice Tale* by Thomas King, illustrations by Gary Clement (Groundwood Books)
- Best Middle School Book: *Meet Christopher: An Osage Indian Boy from Oklahoma* by Genevieve Simermeyer, photographs by Katherine Fogden (National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution in association with Council Oak Books)
- Best Young Adult Book: *Between the Deep Blue Sea and Me: A Novel* by Lurline Wailana McGregor (Kamehameha Publishing)

**ALASKA**

**Alaskana Award – Adult Fiction or Non-Fiction** ([www.akla.org/newspoke/pdf/apr-jun-10.pdf](http://www.akla.org/newspoke/pdf/apr-jun-10.pdf))


**Forget Me Not Award – Children’s Literature**

- 2009 Winner: *Big Alaska: Journey Across America’s Most Amazing State* by Debbie S. Miller, illustrations by John Van Zyle (Walker Books for Young Readers)

**Alberta**

**Alberta Readers’ Choice Award** ([www.albertareaderschoice.ca/portal.cfm](http://www.albertareaderschoice.ca/portal.cfm))

- 2010 Winner: *Fishing for Bacon* by Michael Davie (NeWest Press)

**Book Publishers’ Association of Alberta 2010 Awards** ([www.bookpublishers.ab.ca](http://www.bookpublishers.ab.ca))

- Children’s & Young Adult Book Award: *Theo in the Spotlight* by Patti McIntosh, illustrations by Tara Langlois (Maggie & Pierrot)
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- Scholarly & Academic Book Award: **People of the Lakes** by Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and Shirleen Smith (The University of Alberta Press)
- Trade Fiction Book Award: **Seal Intestine Raincoat** by Rosie Chard (NeWest Press)
- Trade Non-Fiction Award: **Vistas: Artists on the Canadian Pacific Railway** by Roger G. Boulet (Glenbow Museum)
- Louis Hole Award for Editorial Excellence: **People of the Lakes** by Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and Shirleen Smith, production editor Mary Lou Roy, copy editor Meaghan Craven (The University of Alberta Press)
- Poetry Book Award: **subUrban Legends** by Joan Crate (Freehand Books)
- Alberta Book Design Awards:
  - Book Cover: **Buying Cigarettes for the Dog** by Stuart Ross, cover design by Fidel Pena (Freehand Books)
  - Book Design: **The Incomparable Honeybee** by Reese Halter, book design by Chyla Cardinal (Rocky Mountain Books)
  - Book Illustration: **Theo in the Spotlight** by Patti McIntosh, illustrations by Tara Langlois (Maggie & Pierrot)

Rocky Mountain Book Awards (grades 4-7) (rmba.lethsd.ab.ca)
- 2010 Winner: **Word Nerd** by Susin Nielsen (Tundra Books)

Writer’s Guild of Alberta 2010 Winners (www.writersguild.ab.ca)
- Georges Bugnet Award for Novel: **Fishing for Bacon** by Michael Davie (NeWest Press)
- Stephan G. Stephansson Award for Poetry: **Frenzy** by Catherine Owen (Anvil Press)
- Wilfred Eggleston Award for Non-Fiction: **Beyond Belfast: A 560-Mile Walk Across Northern Ireland on Sore Feet** by Will Ferguson (Penguin Group Canada)
- Gwen Pharis Ringwood Award for Drama: **The Drowning Girls, from The Drowning Girls/Comrades** by Beth Graham, Charlie Tomlinson and Daniela Vlaskalic (Playwrights Canada Press)
- R. Ross Annett Award for Children’s Literature: **The Broken Thread** by Linda Smith (Coteau Books)

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Red Cedar Book Award 2009/2010 Winners (grades 4-7) (www.redcedaraward.ca)
- Information Book Award: **Sweet: The Delicious Story of Candy** by Ann Love and Jane Drake, illustrations by Claudia Davila (Tundra Books)
- Fiction: **Dear Jo: The Story of Losing Leah…and Searching for Hope** by Christina Kilbourne (Lobster Press)

BC Book Prizes 2010 Winners (www.bcbookprizes.ca)
- Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize:
  - Winner: **Having Faith in the Polar Girls’ Prison** by Cathleen With (Penguin Group Canada)
  - Finalist: **Vanishing and Other Stories** by Deborah Willis (Harper Perennial)
- Roderick Haig-Brown Regional Prize: **Encyclopedia of Raincoast Place Names: A Complete Reference to Coastal British Columbia** by Andrew Scott (Harbour Publishing)
- Hubert Evans Non-Fiction Prize: **Small Beneath the Sky: A Prairie Memoir** by Lorna Crozier (Greystone Books)
- Bill Duthie Booksellers’ Choice Award: **Trauma Farm: A Rebel History of Rural Life** by Brian Brett (Greystone Books)
- Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize: **is a door** by Fred Wah (Talonbooks)
• Christie Harris Illustrated Children's Literature Prize: *Maggie Can't Wait* by Frieda Wishinsky, illustrations by Dean Griffiths (Fitzhenry & Whiteside)
• Sheila Egoff Children's Prize: *The Gryphon Project* by Carrie Mac (Penguin Group Canada)

**Bolen Books Children’s Book Prize** ([victoriabookprizes.ca](http://victoriabookprizes.ca))
• 2009 Winner: *Graveyard of the Sea* by Penny Draper (Published by Coteau Books)

**City of Victoria Butler Book Prize** ([victoriabookprizes.ca](http://victoriabookprizes.ca))
• 2009 Winner: *Red Dog Red Dog* by Patrick Lane (Published by McClelland & Stewart)

**Stellar Awards 2010** (ages 13-19) ([www.stellaraward.ca](http://www.stellaraward.ca))
• Winner: *Choices* by Deborah Lynn Jacobs (Roaring Brook)

**Chocolate Lily Awards 2010 Winners** ([www.chocolatelilyawards.com](http://www.chocolatelilyawards.com))
• Best Picture Book: *Penguin and the Cupcake* by Ashley Spires (Simply Read Books)
• Best Chapter Book/Novel: *Meeting Miss 405* by Lois Peterson (Orca Book Publishers)

**IDAHO**

**Idaho Library Association Book Award** ([http://www.idaholibraries.org/node/113](http://www.idaholibraries.org/node/113))
• 2008 Winner (most recent): *James Castle: A Retrospective* edited by Ann Percy (Yale University Press)
• 2008 Honorable Mentions:
  o *The Enders Hotel: A Memoir* by Brandon R. Schrand (Univ of Nebraska Press)
  o *Owyhee Canyonlands* by Mark Lisk (Caxton Press)

**MONTANA**

**Montana Book Award 2009 Winners** ([www.montanabookaward.org](http://www.montanabookaward.org))
Winner: *House on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet* by Jamie Ford (Ballantine Books)
• Honor books:
  o *The 600 Hours of Edward* by Craig Lancaster (Riverbend Publishing)
  o *The Big Burn* by Timothy Egan (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt)
  o *The Selected Works of T.S. Spivet* by Reif Larsen (Penguin)
  o *Stick Horses and Other Stories of Ranch Life* by Wallace MacRae (Gibbs Smith)

**Treasure State Award** (K-12 picture book award) ([http://www.montanareads.org/tsa.html](http://www.montanareads.org/tsa.html))
• 2010 Winner: *The Two Bobbies: A True Story of Hurricane Katrina, Friendship, and Survival* by Kirby Larsen and Mary Nethery, illustrations by Jean Cassells (Walker & Company)

• 2009 Best Fiction Book Award Winner: *So Brave Young and Handsome* by Leif Enger (Atlantic Monthly Press)
2009 Best First Book Award Winner: **Horses that Buck: The Story of Champion Bronc Rider Bill Smith** by Margot Kahn (University of Oklahoma Press)

2009 Zonta Award for Best Woman Writer: **Roadmap to Holland: How I Found My Way Through My Son’s First Two Years with Down Syndrome** by Jennifer Graf Groneberg (New American Library)

2009 Best Poetry Book: **Made Flesh** by Craig Arnold (Copper Canyon Press)

**WASHINGTON**

Children’s Choice Picture Book Award ([www wlma org/wccpba](http://www.wlma.org/wccpba))
- 2010 Winner: **The Two Bobbies: A True Story of Hurricane Katrina, Friendship, and Survival** by Kirby Larsen and Mary Nethery, illustrations by Jean Cassells (Walker & Company)

Evergreen Young Adult Award ([www kcls org/evergreen/](http://www.kcls.org/evergreen/))
- 2010 Winner: **Unwind** by Neal Shusterman (Simon and Schuster Children’s Publishing)

Sasquatch Reading Award ([www wlma org/sasquatch](http://www.wlma.org/sasquatch))
- 2010 Winner: **Deep and Dark and Dangerous** by Mary Downing Hahn (Sandpiper)

Washington State Book Awards 2009 Winners ([www spl org/default asp pageID=about leaders washingtoncenter](http://www.spl.org/default.asp?pageID=about_leaders_washingtoncenter))
- Fiction: **All About Lulu** by Jonathan Evison (Soft Skull Press)
- Poetry: **A Map of the Night** by David Wagoner (University of Illinois Press)
- History/Biography: **Dark Water: Flood and Redemption in the City of Masterpieces** by Robert Clark (Doubleday)
- General Nonfiction: **S’abadeb: The Gifts: Pacific Coast Salish Arts and Artists** by Barbara Brotherton (Seattle Art Museum in association with University of Washington Press)

Scandiuuzzi Children's Book Award 2009 Winners (from the Washington State Book Awards):
- **What to do About Alice? How Alice Roosevelt Broke the Rules, Charmed the World, and Drove Her Father Teddy Crazy!** by Barbara Kerley, illustrations by Edwin Fotheringham (Scholastic)
- **Emperors of the Ice: A True Story of Disaster in the Antarctic, 1910-1913** by Richard Farr (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux)

**READING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PNLA PROGRAM AUDIENCE**

- **Alanna: The First Adventure** by Tamora Pierce
  YA fiction, recommended out of Idaho. Also recommends anything by this author because they have strong female characters solving problems with their talents and companions.

- **Bastard Out of Carolina** by Dorothy Allison
  Adult fiction, recommended from Okotoks, AB.

- **Both Ways is the Only Way I Want It** by Maile Meloy
  Adult fiction, story collection, also recommends anything by this author.
• **Country Driving: A Journey Through China From Farm to Factory** by Peter Hessler
  *Adult non-fiction*, recommended from San Juan Island, WA.

• **Crabbe** by William Bell
  *YA fiction*, recommended from Okotoks, AB.

• **Crunch** by Leslie Connor
  *Older elementary/YA fiction*.

• **Dork Diaries: Tales From a Not-So-Fabulous Life** by Rachel Renee Russell
  *YA fiction*, like Diary of a Wimpy Kid, but for girls.

• **Double Take: A Memoir** by Kevin Connolly
  *Adult/YA non-fiction*.

• **Fiddler in the Subway** by Gene Weingarten
  *Adult non-fiction*, short essays/columns.

• **The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo** by Steig Larsson
  *Adult mystery*.

• **Hungry: A Mother and Daughter Fight Anorexia** by Sheila Himmel and Lisa Himmel
  *Non-fiction*, published as adult, but could be YA, recommended by Rosalie Olds.

• **The Lacuna** by Barbara Kingsolver
  *Adult fiction*, recommended from Polson, MT.

• **Lips Touch: Three Times** by Laini Taylor
  *YA/adult fiction* by a Portland area author. Three stories about the life-changing power of a kiss. Gorgeous, gorgeous writing and illustrations, recommended by Julie Graham of Yakima, WA.

• **A Load of Old Bones** by Suzette A. Hill
  *Adult mystery*: A vicar, a cat, a dog – and one heck of a twist. If you hate animal cozies, this one’s for you. Hilarious!

• **Shopping for Porcupine: A Life in Arctic Alaska** by Seth Kantner
  *Adult non-fiction*, recommended by Ellen Fitzgerald of Seattle Public Library

• **Son of Hamas: A Gripping Account of Terror, Betrayal, Political Intrigue, and Unthinkable Choices** by Mosab Hassan Yousef
  *Adult non-fiction*.

• **Sons from Afar** by Cynthia Voight
  *YA fiction*.

• **The Sparrow** by Mary Doria Russell
  *Adult fiction*, recommended from Washington.

• **Three Day Road** by Joseph Boyden
Adult fiction, first novel, recommended from Port Moody Public Library, outside Vancouver, BC.

- **The Work of Wolves** by Kent Meyers  
  Adult fiction, recommended from Montana

- **Work Song** by Ivan Doig  
  Adult fiction, recommended from Montana
The BIG Island of Children’s Graphic Novels

JANET WEBER

Janet Weber, MLIS, is Youth Services Librarian at Tigard Public Library, Tigard, Oregon. She can be reached at: weberjanet@hotmail.com.

Introduction

Juvenile Graphic Novel Collection at the Tigard, Oregon, Public Library

History: 2006

- Unveiled the last week of May 2006 with nearly 100 items in collection, 59 circulations in one week
- Prize drawing for children who checked out juvenile graphic novels during June
- 306 items circulated in June 2006
- 450 items in collection at end of June (FY06-07)
- 623 items circulated in August 2006
- $4,600.00 allocated for FY2006-07 budget
- 9,394 items circulated during 2006-07 FY

History: 2007

- $6,500.00 budget for FY 2007-08
- Summer months see over 1,000 circulations
- 1,590 items circulated in July 2007—HIGHEST RECORD TO DATE
- End of 2007-08 fiscal year (June 2008): 17,571 total items circulated
- Over 1,700 items in collection (July 2008)
- Average circulation of each item is 8.22%
- Circulation of collection accounts for almost 1% of entire library circulation (.93%)
History: 2008

- $7,000.00 budget for 2008-09 fiscal year
- 1,923 items circulated in June 2008
- 2,095 items circulated in July 2008
- Over 2,000 items in collection, October 2008
- 22,658 items circulated during FY08-09

Below: Tigard Public Library Juvenile Graphic Novel Collection 10/08

History: 2009

- $8,000 budget for FY 09-10
- 2,395 items in collection (on 3/31/09)
- 47 items on hold for patrons at the beginning of March
- 768 items out at one time at the beginning of March
- 29,287 items circulated during FY09-10
- Circulated 29,287 items during FY2009-10
TODAY: August 2010

- $8,000 budget for FY2010-11
- 2,965 items circulated in July 2010 (NEW RECORD!)
- 3,450 items in collection, 1,328 items checked out (7/30/10)

What is a graphic novel?

Graphic novels are a book format in which a narrative is conveyed with sequential art. Others may describe graphic novels as a book written and illustrated in the style of a comic book, where frames and speech bubbles tell a story.
A Graphic Novel Can Be:

- A collection of previously published comic books that present one story
- An original publication using traditional comic book characters
- An original publication that has nothing to do with traditional comics

What is a comic book?

- A traditional staple bound, serialized pamphlet or periodical that tells a story using sequential art.

Comic Strips

- “Comic strips” are what you see in the funny pages of the newspaper. They can be told in one to several panels.
- Comic strip collections contain serialized newspaper strips that don’t necessarily have a continuous storyline connecting them.
Comic strips are usually included in graphic novel collections because they are now being bound as books into large compilations or collections. Think of them like a full season of your favorite TV show on DVD.

**What about books with text and comic style sequences?**

This is a new trend called a “graphic novella”. It contains text with comic style sequences periodically placed throughout the book. I don’t consider these full-fledged graphic novels and place them in the juvenile fiction collection.

**What is manga?**

- Japanese comics in print form, traditionally read back to front, right to left, and typically illustrated in black and white.
- These are not to be confused with anime, which is the Japanese term used for animation.

“Manga style” is used to describe graphic novels created outside of Japan that use the manga style and format such as the traditional manga trim size, black & white art, and stylistic elements common to manga that includes simple drawings and characters with large eyes, over-exaggerated emotions, use of fewer words to tell the story and the use of symbols to convey emotions. This style is also referred to as “American Manga”
Manga series usually have storylines that flow from one graphic novel to the next in the series. So, you’ll need to keep on ordering continuing editions. With ongoing plotlines, having a missing title can be detrimental.
Why Have a Graphic Novel Collection?

- “Comics” are a time-honored American literary art form
- Broadens and strengthens library collections
- Attracts new readers and students of all ages and skill levels to your library
- Popular with avid readers
- Adds to children’s reading pleasure
- Provides another format to a previously published work—like classics
- Appeals to a wide range of religious groups and ethnic and social classes because they can empathize with the newly-empowered characters in super-hero graphic novels
- Appeals to artists and art students
- As an art form, graphic novels stimulate interest in developing illustration skills
- Appeals to television and movie watchers because many graphic novels are based on TV show and movie characters
- Appeals to video and computer gamers because many graphic novels are based on video or computer game characters
- Increases circulation!!!
- They’re great for reluctant readers because:
  - They capture and maintain the reader's interest
  - Illustrations provide contextual clues to the written text, ideal for remedial reading programs
• Art and text teaches readers to interpret and analyze text
• Relies on reader participation to visualize events between panels, which helps teach reading comprehension and cause-and-effect relationships
• Improves reading comprehension and narration skills
• Reluctant readers receive a non-threatening reading practice experience

Below: Children enjoying graphic novels at the library

What makes it appropriate for Children?

Many individuals are concerned about content in graphic novels such as violence, sex, drugs, etc. What you can consider for a juvenile graphic novel collection is that the books contain much of the same content as they would see in a TV show or Movie geared at their age level.
Comics Code Authority (CCA)

Created through congressional hearings in 1954, after the publication of Dr. Frederic Wertham’s *Seduction of the Innocent*. The CCA is a set of guidelines for regulating the portrayal of sex, violence, and antisocial activity in American comic books. Today, publishers have to go through the Comics Magazine Association of America to make sure every panel in a comic meets the CCA guidelines. After approval, the publisher can place the CCA Seal on the cover of comics. Many publishers choose not to go through the CCA process. There is no one standard system or graphic novel ratings system for age appropriateness. Many publishers choose to develop their own rating system.
Publisher Ratings

Most publishers rate their books: "All Ages", "Everyone", "Ages 6+", "Youth 10+", "Teen"—all of which are usually located somewhere on the book cover. Check print or online catalogs for age rating if it is not located on the book.

DC Comics Ratings
http://www.dccomics.com/dcu/

- AR=All Readers: Material sufficient for any age. Little or no violence, no foul language, nudity, or adult situations
- PR=Permitted Readers: Material sufficient for teen or young adults, with parental or guardian permission. May contain violence or sensitive language. Does not contain nudity or profanity.
- MR=Mature Readers: Material for adult or mature readers only. May contain violence, adult language, nudity, and/or adult situations.
Diamond Book Distributors Ratings:
http://www.diamondbookdistributors.com/

- All Ages
- Children Ages 10 and under
- Young Adult Ages 11 to 16
- Mature Readers Ages 16 and up

Marvel Ratings:

www.marvel.com

- All Ages
- T+ Suggested for Teens 13 and up. Parents are advised they may want to read before or along with younger children
- Parental Advisory Suggested for 15 and up, includes more mature themes and/or graphic imagery
- MAX: Explicit Content Suggested for ages 18 and up

TOKYOPOP Ratings
www.tokyopop.com

- A=All Ages No offensive material
- Y=Youth, Ages 10+ Appropriate for ages 10 & up, may contain violence
- T=Teen, Ages 13+ Appropriate for ages 13 & up, may contain violence, profanity, and semi-nudity
- OT=Older Teen, Ages 16+ Appropriate for ages 16 & up, may contain violence, profanity, semi-nudity, and some sexual themes
- M=Mature, Ages 18+ Appropriate for ages 18 & up, may contain graphic violence, nudity, profanity, sex, and intense sexual themes

Viz Media Ratings

www.viz.com

- A=All Ages No offensive material
- Y=Youth Appropriate for ages 10+, may contain violence
- T=Teen Appropriate for ages 13+, may contain violence, profanity, and semi-nudity
- OT=Older Teen Appropriate for ages 16+, may contain violence, profanity, semi-nudity, and some sexual themes
- M=Mature Appropriate for ages 18+, may contain graphic violence, nudity, profanity, sex, and intense sexual themes

CMX Media Ratings

http://www.dccomics.com/graphic_novels/?cat=CMX

- E=Everyone
- T=Teen
- M=Mature
- Ratings Image Examples
When there are no ratings

Some publishers choose not to rate their books. Sometimes there are ratings on the website or catalog, but not on the book. Be aware that many “cutesie” covers seen on manga series books are geared for 13+. If in doubt, don’t order it. It’s better to be safe than sorry. If you get books pre-processed, see if you can get them unprocessed in case you need to send it back. If you meet with vendors, preview books before ordering them. Check other library catalogs to see where the item is placed in their collection, such as local public libraries or OCLC. Many publishers are very happy to provide librarians with age-appropriate suggestions. They really know their products! BWI’s Collection Development Department welcomes questions regarding the content of specific graphic novels. 1-800-888-4478 www.bwibooks.com

Evaluating Graphic Novels

Elementary School/Ages 7-12

- Main characters should be younger, either children or animals, or be similar to animated characters such as those in Disney or Warner Bros. Cartoons.
- Story intensity and violence should be at the level of a G-rated movie. Think “Finding Nemo” and “Bambi” -- it must not be too scary.
- The writing should be aimed at the primary audience (some humor may be somewhat more sophisticated).
- The art must be clear, whether in black-and-white or in color, and the format (panel placement) should be easy to follow.
- *Owly* by Andy Runton is an excellent example.
Source: Brodart Graphic Novels GUIDELINES FOR SELECTING KID-SAFE GRAPHIC NOVELS
http://www.graphicnovels.brodart.com/selection_criteria.htm

Middle School/Ages 10-14

- Main characters can be older, such as pre-teens and teenagers.
- Some superhero titles, such as Teen Titans Go, are fine for this age level; violence is at a minimal level.
- At this age level, stories such as the Star Wars comics are fine; there's some violence, but no blood and gore, and it must be necessary to the plot.
- Intensity of the story should be at the level of the Star Wars comics which are fairly similar to the intensity of the Harry Potter books. The scare factor should be no more intense than that in Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets.
- Many pre-teens and younger teens have no problems following the Japanese manga format, reading left to right.
Source: Brodart Graphic Novels GUIDELINES FOR SELECTING KID-SAFE GRAPHIC NOVELS
http://www.graphicnovels.brodart.com/selection_criteria.htm

- For more detailed information on graphic novels, see Scholastic’s “Using Graphic
  Novels in the Classroom: A Guide for Teachers and Librarians”
- BWI’s The Public Librarian’s Guide to Graphic Novels is also a fantastic resource
  which contains a detailed section on “The Essentials of Evaluating Graphic Novels”. It
  contains info on panel structure, images, words, and text.
- Email me (janetw@tigard-or.gov) if you would like a copy of this pdf—write “BWI
  PDF” in the subject line.

Developing a Collection

Be sure to have money budgeted for purchasing graphic novels. Write a collection
development plan or write something into your collection development policy. (Email me if
you would like a copy of mine). Determine what your user group interests and needs are.
Preview graphic novel catalogs and publisher websites for ideas on what is available.

Cataloging Your Collection

Determine where you will house the collection. Ask yourself these questions:

- How will they be cataloged?
- Interfile them into the juvenile fiction collection?
- Place them in 741.5 with all comics?
- Interfile your nonfiction titles into non-fiction?
- Catalog non-fiction as fiction titles?
- Have a separate collection just for graphic novels?
Where can I find graphic novels for children?

- School Library Journal
- Publisher’s Weekly
- www.getgraphic.org
- http://www.noflyingnotights.com/sidekicks/
- Children’s GN publishers (catalogs & websites such as Stone Arch Books, Papercutz)
- Check the publisher age ratings for titles

Types of Graphic Novels for Children (and examples)

**Book/Novel Adaptations**

- Artemis Fowl
- Alex Rider
- Classics (Red Badge of Courage, The Hobbit)
- Goosebumps
- Babysitter’s Club
- Hardy Boys
- Nancy Drew
- Time Warp Trio
- Warriors
- The Tale of Despereaux

Christian

- Manga Bible
- Tomo
- Son of Samson
- TimeFlyz
- Kingdom: A Biblical Epic
- Hand of the Morningstar
- Manga Messiah
Television Shows

- Kim Possible
- That’s So Raven
- Lizzie McGuire
- Fairly Odd Parents
- Many Disney titles
- Inside Cinemanga
Comic Book Compilations

- Garfield
- Calvin and Hobbes
- Dennis the Menace
- Little Lulu
- Little Orphan Annie
- Peanuts
- Mutts
- Archie
- Betty & Veronica
- Jughead
- Popeye
- Superman
- Walt Disney Comics
Early/Beginner Readers

- Toon Books
- Phonics Comics
- Jr. Cinemanga (Primarily My Little Pony, Sesame Street & Disney Titles)
- DK Readers
Manga

- Angelic Layer
- Beyblade
- Cardcaptor Sakura
- Di Gi Charat
- Dr. Slump (even though age rating on book is 13+)
- Dream Saga
- Hikaru No Go

- Kamichama Karin
- Kingdom Hearts
- Legendz
- Peach Fuzz
- Spirited Away
- Yotsuba&!
- Yu-Gi-Oh! GX
American Manga/Manga Style

- Manga Metamorphosis
- Manga Bible Series
- Sabrina the Teenage Witch Series
- W.I.T.C.H. Series
- Little Women published by Y.kids
- Zoids Series
Non-Fiction

- *Amelia Earhart Free in the Skies*
- *The Hindenburg Disaster*
- *Houdini: The Handcuff King*
- *The Sinking of the Titanic*
- *Young Riders of the Pony Express*
- *UFOs: The Roswell Incident*
Series

- Babymouse
- Bone
- TinTin
- Asterix
- Mercer Mayer's Critter Kids Adventures
Stand Alone Titles

- Queen Bee by Chynna Clugston
- To Dance: A Memoir by Siena Cherson Siegel
- City of Light, City of Dark: A Comic Book Novel by Avi
- Into the Volcano by Don Wood
- Rapunzel’s Revenge by Shannon Hale
- Salamander Dream by Hope Larson
Picturebook Style (Bound like Picture Books)

- The Strongest Man in the World: Louis Cyr, by Nicolas Debon
- Around the World by John Coy
- The Adventures of Polo by Regis Faller
- The Ant or the Grasshopper? By Toni Morrison
- The Last Knight: An Introduction to Don Quixote by Miquel de Cervantes by Will Eisner
- Spiderman
- Superman
- X-men
- Zorro
- The Incredible Hulk
-Pokémon
- Scooby-Doo
- Sponge Bob
- Star Wars Clone Wars Adventures
- Teen Titans
- Indiana Jones

**Wordless Books**

- *Korgi: Book 1* by Christian Slade
- *Owly* by Andy Runton, Top Shelf
- *A.L.I.E.E.N.: archives of lost issues and earthly editions of extraterrestrial novelties* by Lewis Trondheim
- *Robot Dreams* by Sara Varon
Graphic Novellas (Part Graphic Novel/Part Text)

- Abadazad Series by J.M. DeMatteis, Hyperion Books for Children
- The Dopple Ganger Chronicles by G.P. Taylor
- The Fog Mound Series by Susan Schade & Jon Buller, Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers
- Twisted Journeys Series by Various Authors, Graphic Universe
- Prince of Underwhere Series by Bruce Hale
- Dragonbreath by Ursula Vernon, Dial Books

Collection Concerns

- Content—is it age appropriate for children?
- Bindings—Purchase paperback or hardback?
- Paperbacks bindings falling apart--due to high usage (Tokyopo Cinemanga paperbacks are notorious for falling apart!)
- Items get mis-shelved—YA graphic novels and Adult graphic novels end up on J Graphic shelves, or in J Fiction

- Book Size--Books are published in many different sizes, leading to books being "squished together"
• Education—Having to educate others on what graphic novels are and what they can do for readers, especially for reluctant readers and reading comprehension
• Discarding of materials—when they are no longer repairable—replace popular items, or buy multiple copies? Follow your library’s policy for withdrawing items from the collection
Preventing Challenges & Dealing With Them

- Educate library users and patrons on what graphic novels are. Explain that graphic novels are a format, not a genre. They can be written on every genre on any topic.
- Be sure your collection is clearly marked for the appropriate age range (Most challenges come from parents who’ve allowed their children to read a graphic novel that is clearly marked for an older audience)
- You may want to sticker/label your collection with age categories
- Don’t mix all different age levels of graphic novels together. If you have adult collections in your library, keep the gn’s for adults far away from the gn’s for kids
- Make sure the graphic novels in your collection are clearly appropriate for children
- Follow your library’s policy on book challenges
- Preventing Challenges & Dealing With Them
- Resources for dealing with challenges:
  - Comic Book Legal Defense Fund [www.cbldf.org](http://www.cbldf.org)
Marketing Your Collection

- Use posters and signage
- Face out books/display books
- Provide handouts/activity sheets
- Offer graphic novels when conducting reader’s advisory or when assisting reluctant readers
- Booktalk titles from your collection
- Show off collection during library tours
- Conduct a prize drawing. At first, I had a prize drawing for children each time they came to the library for a prize drawing, which lasted for a month.
- Include a comic to educate people on what graphic novels are. [http://www.artbomb.net/comics/introgndld.jsp](http://www.artbomb.net/comics/introgndld.jsp)
- Have readers create promotional posters to encourage others to read gn’s
- Have students write their own mini-graphic novel
- Invite a graphic artist or cartoonist to visit for a presentation
- Plan a program with a local comic book store
- Comics in the Classroom [www.comicsintheclassroom.net](http://www.comicsintheclassroom.net)
- Publisher websites offer many activity ideas and reproducible items
Questions?

Please don’t hesitate to contact me if you have any questions once you get back to your library. If you would like to learn more about graphic novels for children, don’t forget about the Fall 2010 ALSC Online Education course, “Introduction to Graphic Novels for Children”

http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/edcareeers/profdevelopment/alscweb/index.cfm

- A six-week course using Moodle
- ALSC Members $95
- ALA Members $145
- Non-Members $165

What’s the Big Idea? Introducing Math & Science Concepts to Young Patrons

JENNY GRENFELL

Jenny Grenfell is Youth Services Librarian at the Timberland Regional Library in Washington. and Jenny Grenfell). She can be reached at: jgrenfell@trlib.org. Beth Rosaniais Children’s Section Supervisor/Bellevue Cluster, at the King County Library System in Washington. She can be reached at: edrosania@kcls.org

Introduction

What math or science concept did you use most recently in your children’s programming? Remember those five little ducks? Counting and subtraction! What about the story time about autumn that you just presented? Seasons, weather, leaves changing color - lots of science in that one! As youth services librarians we incorporate basic math and science concepts more often than we realize. The purpose of “What’s the Big Idea” is to make these connections purposeful, meaningful, and FUN for the children we serve.

“What’s the Big Idea” is the latest Mother Goose program out of the Vermont Center for the Book, with funding provided by the National Science Foundation. The program content was first tested by librarians from a variety of library systems which included large, small, urban, and rural libraries. The concepts and activities are adaptable to multiple age groups, and are easily implemented. The philosophy is to infuse preschool activities with science and math content, skills and processes. The hope is that librarians will view the activities they already do through a different lens. One key is to ask two questions: “Is this a meaningful activity for children?” and “Am I helping them make sense of their world?”

So, what is different about the Big Idea? The program is divided into three focus areas: “More than Counting”, “Patterns and Relationships”, and “Shapes and Spaces”. Each
area has a goal and some main concepts. Each has many picture books that relate, and several activities. This article, with its limited space, will give a brief overview. You are encouraged to check out the other resources for more information!

**More than Counting**

The goal of this focus area is for children to explore numbers and operations, while developing their math skills, concepts, and vocabulary. The key concepts involve the relationships between numbers, between numbers and things, measuring, and estimation. *Anno’s Counting Book* (Anno) is an excellent example of a picture book that can be used in this way. As the illustrations progress through the year and seasons, children can count the growing stack of blocks representing the progressing number, or they can look for increasing numbers of bridges, evergreen trees, deciduous trees, children and so much more! *Who Sank the Boat* (Allen) invites children to predict how many animals the boat will hold, and whether size will make a difference in the seaworthiness of the craft! *Actual Size* (Jenkins) introduces size comparisons and is a great segue to measurement. How many linking cubes tall is your friend? How many of your feet tall is the librarian? Who is the tallest child at storytime? These are just some of the books and activities that naturally employ the concepts found in this theme. The three main sections are:

- **Counting:** one-to-one correspondence, counting, numerical order, and using numbers to collect and represent data. For young children, number sense is about understanding the different uses for numbers. Not only can they count, but they can put things into groups and compare the size of the groups. Making a visual representation, such as a bar graph, shows them that numbers can be shown graphically as well.

  Other books relating to this concept: *Over in the Meadow* (Langstaff), *10 Minutes till Bedtime* (Rathmann), and *My Little Sister Ate One Hare* (Grossman).

- **Sets:** sorting, matching, part-part-whole - which leads to number sentences, addition and subtraction. Talking about collections (*Let’s Go Rock Collecting* - Gans; *Hannah’s Collections* - Jocelyn) is a great way to introduce a sorting activity.

  Books relating to this concept: *Two of Everything: a Chinese folktale* (Hong), *How Do You Count a Dozen Ducklings* (Chae), *Centipede’s 100 Shoes* (Ross)

- **Measurement:** measuring length, weight, standard units, non-standard units, estimation

  Books that fit into this concept: *Weighing the Elephant* (Ye), *Is a Blue Whale the Biggest Thing There Is?* (Wells), *Inch by Inch* (Lionni)

**Patterns and Relationships**

*The Little Red Hen, The Three Bears, The Three Little Pigs* - what do these stories (and many others) have in common? They all have a pattern that children can easily learn and repeat. Learning to find, create, copy, and extend patterns is essential for discovering the relationships that function in the world. The goal of this section is to lay groundwork for general math and science skills. There are four major areas:
• **Finding Patterns:** The key themes within this concept are pattern recognition, continuation, variation, and creation. *The Doorbell Rang* (Hutchins) is full of visual and narrative patterns, and extension activities with buttons, linking cubes, or colored paper allow children to practice reproducing patterns and creating patterns of their own. *Lots and Lots of Zebra Stripes* (Swinburne) looks at patterns in nature, while *Hop Jump* (Walsh) appeals to the preschooler’s need to move. The wonderful thing about patterns is that they are not just visual - story times based on this theme can easily involve music and movement as well as stories! After reading *Hop Jump*, have children follow a simple two-part pattern (hop + jump). Challenge them to add in a third movement, and older children can take this even farther.

• **Relationships:** Children learn about relationships when they sort, make comparisons, talk about their bedtime routine, and recognize changes in their environment. Learning to identify what is the same or different is important in learning to recognize relationships. Important themes are recognizing attributes, making comparisons, sorting, and working with sequences.

  Some titles relating to this concept: *Just a Little Bit* (Tompert), *Moonbear Shadow* (Asch), and *Hannah’s Collections* (Jocelyn).

• **Growth (Change over Time):** Children are fascinated by how things grow. Observing how things change over time - including themselves - is an important part of making sense of the world around them. We often focus on seeds in the springtime, but one activity that can be done anytime is to show the stages in germinating a bean seed. Place a bean seed between two wet paper towels. The next day add another bean seed, and continue this for a few days. Keep the towels moist - putting them in a sandwich bag is a good way to help them. As the seeds start to germinate kids will be able to observe the changes and compare between the seeds at different stages. They can record the changes by drawing what they see, or practice their narrative skills by telling someone about it. A good story to accompany this activity is “The Garden” from *Frog and Toad Together* (Lobel).

  Other titles about growth are: *Now I’m Big* (Miller), *When Frank Was Four* (Lester), *The Carrot Seed* (Krauss).

• **Weather (Change over Time):** Weather is all around us, and we in the northwest have a lot to choose from! Weather is a perfect topic for encouraging youngsters to observe and identify change, patterns, and relationships. A weather station can introduce them to ways of observing and recording what they see, and is a perfect activity to continue at home.

  Some books about weather are: *The Snowy Day* (Keats), *In the Rain with Baby Duck* (Hest), and *The Wind Blew* (Hutchins).

**Spaces and Shapes: Geometry for Young Children**

No theorems here! The goal of this section is to lay groundwork for future experiences with geometry. Geometry involves the concepts of shape, size, position, direction and movement. As children become familiar with these attributes they develop spatial reasoning, which helps them understand their physical world and gives them a great base for later work in the areas of math, science, socials studies, and art. Children learn best through hands-on experience, and nowhere is that more apparent or easy to achieve than in this group of three concepts!
• **Exploring Shapes:** Topics include naming shapes, recognizing and comparing attributes, and exploring what happens when shapes are sorted and combined. *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (Carle) involves circles, *Knuffle Bunny* (Willems) uses a variety of shapes, and *Hippos Go Berserk!* (Boynton) has squares and rectangles. The same sorts of activities used in the Patterns and Relationships section will work well with shapes, too! Tangrams and quilts are also activities that fall into this category.

Other books involving shapes: *Grandfather Tang’s Story* (Tompert), *Mouse Shapes* (Walsh), *Shape Capers* (Falwell).

• **Spaces and Places:** This concept involves spatial thinking. Activities such as following a treasure map, going on a scavenger hunt, finding a book in the library, or working through an obstacle course all involve these concepts. When children explore this area they give directions, make maps, and notice and talk about the relative position of one thing to another.

Any book about taking a walk or going on a trip offers opportunities to talk about maps and following (or giving) directions. Some such titles are: *The Big Trip* (Gorbachev), *Rosie’s Walk* (Hutchins), *On the Road* (Steggal).

• **Building and Construction:** Actually constructing something helps children learn in a very practical way not only about how shapes combine and work together, but also about the forces acting upon structures (gravity, friction, wind). They learn the relationship between form and its function of holding together, and the importance of balance, strength, materials, and design so their construct does not fall down (*The Three Little Pigs*). Block building has been receiving a lot of attention lately as a critical early childhood skill, and the library is a great place to incorporate this activity.

Some books that facilitate conversations and activities about building: *Twenty-One Elephants* (Prince), *Changes, Changes* (Hutchins), *Roxaboxen* (Cooney).

It is important to remember that this is NOT a new program, nor is it a new list of “should do” to add to your already overloaded agenda. Rather it is a new lens through which to see the programming already in place. You were going to do the “Three Little Pigs” anyway … be intentional about discussing why the houses fell down (or didn’t). As you read *Rosie’s Walk*, recognize the opportunity to discuss (and even act out) the path Rosie takes through the barnyard. Don’t just read about rain - measure it! Make windsocks and watch them blow. Mother Goose has lots of materials and programming ideas available, but it is important to note that these are not the only way to present the concepts. The themes can be presented very effectively with materials and activities already present within the library. Actively involve children in exploring and making sense of the world around them. You will strengthen them on their journey towards literacy and life-long learning!

A couple of notes:

1. For more information regarding books, activities, and other resources, go to the NW Central link on the PNLA website. The session handouts for "What’s the Big Idea" are in the Youth Services section.
You may also contact Jenny Grenfell at jgrenfell@trlib.org for more information.

2. Important: The Washington State Library recently purchased a Big Idea kit for every public library in that state. If you have not received yours, check with your central office, or contact Martha Shinners directly at martha.shinners@sos.wa.gov, or 360-570-5567.

Resources used for this article:


www.mothergooseprograms.org. Mother Goose Programs website

Sex in the Library

MARY JO HELLER

AARENE STORMS

Mary Jo Heller is Library Media Specialist at Einstein Middle School in Shoreline, Washington. She can be reached at: mary.jo.heller@shorelineschools.org. Aarene Storms is Teen Librarian at the King County Library System in Washington. She can be reached at: astorms@kcls.org

Introduction

Our Sex in the Library presentation began because of an incident in 2001:

Aarene says:

Mary Jo started it. She bought a copy of Deal With It: a whole new approach to your body, brain and life as a teenage gurl for her middle school library collection. Deal With It was on the 2001 Quick Pick list issued by the American Library Association, a list of books that are quick to pick, quick to read. Perfect springtime reading for 7th and 8th graders, she

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thought. A little too perfect, as it turned out. The book got checked out immediately. And then it got renewed. And then it went out on reserve, and quickly got a big stack of names on the waiting list.

Something about the popularity of the book made Mary Jo’s librarian superpowers start to tingle. She put the book on hold for herself, and took a long, careful look at the contents. Hmm. Good information. Very hip layout. Snazzy illustrations. Up-to-date resources. So far so good. Then, she got to page 88, which dealt with oral sex. Hmm. Maybe a little TOO much information for 7th and 8th graders...? Just to make sure, Mary Jo showed the book to the school health/sex ed teachers. Hmm. They liked the information, the layout, the illustrations, and the resources. Then they got to page 88 and handed the book back. “No way,” they said. “The parents would FREAK....”

So, Mary Jo called me.

Mary Jo says:

Deal With It is full of really pertinent information in a teen appeal layout that invites reading. There are some kids who need MOST of the information in this book. Libraries are all about getting information to the students. The public library is the perfect vehicle for getting that particular information to the students, but the middle school library is not. And that got us thinking: Maybe there are some other books we should be looking at that we could “share” and still get those appropriate books to the students who need them. So, we asked ourselves, just what is appropriate for the middle school? What is appropriate for the public library? And how, or even why are those things different?

We need to spur the imaginations of students, to enable them to think and react in a safe setting while exploring some necessary social areas to provide them a knowledge base in our present day society. Maybe we should talk about mission statements.

OK, Aarene said, but isn’t that kind of boring?

Can’t we work with both our missions and talk about the books that we love (or hate) and somehow work with the students too, to figure out what they really want and need? After all, our missions are vastly different, but our goal is the same: helping students through fiction. Our presentation, Sex in the Library, was developed for students (and then for librarians, and then for the parents in the PTA) to talk about books that might not be on their radar screen, but need to be discussed in a way that allows each reader consider the content, the quality, the theme, and yes, the sex.

We don’t agree on all the books. Aarene loves some books that Mary Jo hates, and Mary Jo loves some books that leave Aarene yawning. That’s okay: by showing our audiences that we disagree, we encourage them to develop their own criteria for choosing appropriate books. Each session of our program is different, led by the needs of the audience and their own libraries.

We begin each session by selecting a theme, for example, death.

For many reasons, teen books that deal with death often also deal with sex. Teens who know that they are dying will sometimes seek out sexual experiences that they would otherwise avoid, as Tessa does in Before I
Die by Jenny Downham. In this book, Tessa’s leukemia has recurred, and the doctors can do nothing. Tessa prepares for her own death by making a list of things she wants to experience before she dies—including sex, drugs, and rock-and-roll. She doesn’t include “falling in love” on her list, but happily for the reader, it happens anyway. Is this book appropriate for middle school audiences?

Mary Jo says: No, not really. I know students who would love the book, cry through 3 kleenex boxes, and move on. But I know more students who are not ready at all for death to open the playing field for these experiences that we ask our students to avoid. Granted, in this setting, Tessa’s reaction is not only human, it is very normal. I’m not sure all junior high students would get that. That’s where Aarene and the public library come in— I can send those students I know would love this book to her, while giving my other students something they could better handle. For example: Deadline.

In Deadline by Chris Crutcher, Ben learns his diagnosis on page one: an aggressive blood disease, with no effective treatments. Ben’s doctor estimates that the high school senior has less than a year to live. Ben makes a wish-list of experiences and accomplishments: he wants to challenge himself academically by reading books that his social studies teacher hates. He wants to challenge himself physically by turning out for football, despite being physically ill-suited to the game. He also wants to challenge himself socially, by asking the most beautiful girl he’s ever met for a date. Not all of Ben’s “bucket list” choices are actions that we recommend. However, unlike the on-page experience of Jenny Downham’s book, the integrity of Chris Crutcher’s story is maintained when the sexual activity occurs off-page.

Off-page sex makes the content much easier to justify in a public middle school. We call this literary device “Star Trek Sex”, referring to the tactful way that Captain Kirk romanced his way through the universe without alarming late-1960’s television censors, and we appreciate when modern authors use this technique to make their books acceptable and accessible for school libraries.

Ultimately, our Sex in the Library discussions cover books about abuse, homosexuality, polygamy, longing, lusting and falling in love. SITL books are serious, funny, sad, quirky, controversial, and sometimes just plain wonderful.

We recommend that you, school and public librarians, team up, work together, then go out and talk to your kids and their parents.

Most of all: Have Fun! Isn’t that what you wanted from this profession?

The full list and both Aarene and Mary Jo’s reviews can be found at:

Reaching Out to At-Risk Teens: Building Literacy with Incarcerated Youth

STEPHANIE GUERRA

Stephanie Guerra teaches in the College of Education at Seattle University. She can be reached at: guerras@seattleu.edu

Introduction

This session is designed to help librarians establish outreach programs to juvenile correctional facilities and other facilities that serve at-risk youth, such as residential treatment programs, boot camps, behavior modification facilities, etc.

Goals:

- The audience will understand the demographics of at-risk teens.
- The audience will be familiar with the young adult street literature genre and equipped to develop selection policies for the books most likely to engage at-risk teens.
- The audience will feel prepared to work effectively with penal institutions, particularly in terms of dealing with potential conflict around literature selection policies.

Literacy as a Protective Factor for At-Risk Teens

Research consistently points to literacy as a major protective factor for at-risk youth (Archwamety & Katisiyannis, 2000; Brunner, 1993). For incarcerated teens, literacy skills are strongly correlated to a lower chance of recidivism (Christle & Yell, 2008). In fact, reading instruction has been more effective than shock incarceration or boot camps at reducing recidivism (Center on Crime, Communities and Culture, 1997). As literacy professionals with a wide knowledge of contemporary literature, librarians are in a unique position to serve this population. In particular, they can point incarcerated teens toward books they’ll connect with and enjoy, and help build their identities as readers.

One of the most important ways that librarians can serve incarcerated teens is by establishing outreach programs to local juvenile correctional facilities or similar institutions. Very few juvenile correctional facilities have libraries; most rely on public or school librarians and charitable organizations for outreach. Depending on the interests and abilities of the librarians involved, outreach may include literacy instruction in addition to check-out services. Such literacy instruction may be of critical importance to incarcerated teens, since for many of them, their education in custody is the last they will receive. Less than 12 percent of incarcerated teens go on post-release to graduate high school or earn any other kind of degree (Chung, Little, Steinberg, & Altschuler, 2005. See also Habermann & Quinn, 1986; and LeBlanc, Pfannenstiel, & Tashjian, 1991). In other words, correctional education is a last chance for teachers and librarians to help many at-risk teens build literacy skills.
Demographics of Incarcerated Teens

In order to best serve a population, an understanding of the group’s trends and demographics is helpful. The following statistics are drawn from the last Department of Justice (DOJ) census report published in 2006, using data from 2004. Unfortunately, the DOJ only publishes a major census approximately every five years, so this is the most recent data available (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006):

- On any given day, more than 100,000 teens are incarcerated in the United States.
- In addition to the 100,000 in juvenile correctional facilities, on a typical day in 2004 about 7,000 persons younger than 18 were inmates in adult jails.
- The Department of Justice projects that the juvenile prison population will be 36 percent higher in 2020 than it was in 2000.
- The US has a higher juvenile crime rate than any other industrialized nation in the world.
- The inmate population racial breakdown is 38% Black, 19% Hispanic, and 39% White (the remaining few percent are primarily Native American and Asian). Between now and 2020, the Hispanic population in custody is predicted to grow at a much faster rate than the other groups.
- 85% of teens in custody are male.

Lifestyle factors common to many at-risk and incarcerated teens include:

- Poverty
- Abuse
- High rates of drop-out and expulsion
- Grade retention
- Gang involvement
- Substance abuse or addiction
- Incarcerated sibling or parent
- Homelessness
- Teen pregnancy/parenthood
- Unemployed/underemployed
- Involved with transitioning from the child welfare or juvenile justice systems

In addition to the above common disruptive lifestyle factors, an estimated 45% - 70% of teens in custody suffer from learning disabilities and emotional behavioral disorders (Quinn, Rutherford, Leone, Osher & Poirier, 2005). The majority of them also have trouble reading. On average, incarcerated youth are reading at a fourth grade level and more than one third of incarcerated youth are illiterate (Brunner, 1993).

It is no coincidence that so many incarcerated teens have extremely poor literacy skills; in studies of juvenile offenders, reading difficulty is documented as one of the leading risk factors for delinquency (Brunner, 1993; Drakeford, 2002; Gellert & Elbro, 1999; Leone et al., 2005; Malmgren & Leone, 2000). But there is a positive flip-side to that discouraging relationship: reading remediation is a powerful deterrent to recidivism. Moreover, literacy instruction does not need to be long term to make a difference; gains in literacy skills may be made with instruction that lasts for as little as 10 weeks (Drakeford, 2002. See also Malmgren & Leone, 2000 and Hodges, Giuliotti, and Porpotage, 1994).
Considering the benefits of even short term instruction, there can be little doubt about the advantages of helping incarcerated students build a long-term leisure reading habit. Here librarians can contribute by introducing incarcerated teens to literature they will love and connect with. But how to accomplish this proposition? Many incarcerated teens have never finished a book of their own volition before; their entertainment is almost exclusively audio and visual. What kinds of books can make an impression and leave them wanting to come back for more?

Street Literature

Street literature, also called urban literature, gangsta lit, hip-hop lit, Black pulp-fiction, and ghetto fiction (see Hill, Pérez, and Irby, 2008; Marshall, Staples, & Gibson, 2009) is fiction about the harsh realities of living in the ghetto or barrio with all of its crime, poverty, hustling, dealing, gangs, prostitution, incarceration, drugs and other troubling elements (see Hill et al., 2008; Morris, Hughes-Hassell, Agosto, & Cottman, 2006). In other words, street literature captures worlds familiar to many at-risk and incarcerated teens. It is typically written in African American Vernacular English (AAVE) or Chicano English, dialects spoken by many incarcerated teens.

The young adult street literature genre is slightly gentler than its adult counterpart, but still contains significant language, violence, sex, drugs, crime, and other elements that characterize inner city living. The teen genre includes mainstream books by authors like Walter Dean Myers, Sharon Flake, Paul Volponi and the writers of the Bluford series as well as edgier works by authors like Coe Booth, Sister Souljah and Omar Tyree.

Both young adult and adult street literature generates controversy among educators, the general public and especially among African American literary critics and writers. There are many in the black community who feel that the books both glorify problems that are destroying urban neighborhoods and promote negative stereotypes about people of color. Author Nick Chiles (2006) writes:

As a black author, I had certainly become familiar with the sexualization and degradation of black fiction. Over the last several years, I had watched the shelves of black bookstores around the country and the tables of street vendors, particularly in New York City, become overrun with novels that seemed to appeal exclusively to our most prurient natures -- as if these nasty books were pairing off back in the stockrooms like little paperback rabbits and churning out even more graphic offspring that make Ralph Ellison books cringe into a dusty corner. (p. 15)

Many critics also feel that street literature is sexist, featuring flat female characters that depend on their sexuality and powerful criminal men for their livelihoods and identities. Too, there is controversy around the issue of language and the possibility that AAVE and Chicano English set a poor model for literacy (see Ratner, p. 2, 2010).

Although there are many who take issue with street literature, supporters argue that street literature has accomplished major victories for literacy. Simply put, street literature is creating huge numbers of new readers. J. Rosen, a writer for Newsweek, notes, “Urban literature is capturing that most elusive and desirable demographic group: young black men” (2004, para. 6). Many fans also contend that street literature represents a real facet of life and should be accessible to the young readers for whom these stories are most relevant. As Josh Westbrook famously put it, “Kids are living stories every day that we wouldn’t let them read” (as cited in Hamilton, 2009, para. 48).
Given the range of issues around street literature, it can be controversial to make these books available in a school library, let alone bring them into a juvenile correctional facility housing a vulnerable population of students who are in custody for some of the very issues the books address.

So why recommend street literature for incarcerated teens?

On a number of different measures, street literature is likely to be engaging for incarcerated teens and encourage them to form the leisure reading habit (Guerra, 2010). Because of the dearth of research on best practices in literacy instruction for juvenile correctional populations and because of the disproportionate number of minorities, males, and challenged readers in the system, it is also helpful to consider the research on literacy instruction for these populations. The literature is remarkably consistent, showing that in order to engage these types of readers, we need:

- Free choice in reading materials (Brozo, 2002; Guthrie, Alao, & Rinehart, 1997; Oldfather, 1995; Turner, 1995): While there is no data on the literature preferences of incarcerated teens, a genre analysis of several juvenile correctional facility Amazon.com wish lists shows that of the books requested by incarcerated teens, over 50 percent are from the street literature genre (Guerra, 2010).
- Reading material that corresponds to readers’ interests (Alexander, Kulikowich, & Hetton, 1994; Glasgow, 1996; Guthrie et al., 1997; Osmont, 1987). While there is little to no data on the interests of incarcerated teens, it is possible to draw some conclusions about their interests based on their reasons for incarceration and statistics about their common lifestyle factors (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). Unfortunately, many of these teens are likely interested in gangs, drugs, and crime, all of which feature prominently in street literature (Guerra, 2010).
- Reading material in which readers can “see” themselves (Bishop 1992; Diamond & Moore, 1995; Mason & Au 1991; Norton, 1992, as cited in Gay, 2000). Research (cited above) shows that there are significant personal, academic and social benefits when students have access to books in which the characters are similar to themselves in terms of race, culture, socioeconomic status, and lived experience. For many incarcerated teens, street literature is one of the few genres that feature protagonists with whom they can identify.

Culturally responsive teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1994) – or “using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them” (Gay, 2000, p. 29). In content, street literature reflects the home cultures of many incarcerated teens. In form, it is an academic medium (literature). Thus it has potential to act in the service of culturally responsive teaching as a bridge between students’ home culture and academic skills.

The aforementioned findings appear intuitive: connect students with books that resonate with their lives; connect them with books in which they can see themselves; connect them with books that match their interests – and they may engage with reading. And for these at-risk and incarcerated students, street literature is a genre that can often accomplish that end. But there is a great deal of controversy about bringing these titles into correctional facilities or other facilities serving at-risk youth.
Working with Penal Institutions

Most juvenile correctional facilities have lists of prohibited literacy materials. Here is an example:

Staff will not distribute any publication or materials determined to be detrimental to the security, good order, or discipline of the inmates. Publications which may not be distributed include but are not limited to those which meet one of the following criteria:

(a) they depict or describe procedures for the construction or use of weapons, ammunition, bombs or incendiary devices;

(b) they depict, encourage, or describe methods of escape from correctional facilities, or contains blueprints, drawings or similar descriptions of the same;

(c) they depict or describe procedures for the brewing of alcoholic beverages, or the manufacture of drugs;

(d) they are written in code;

(e) they depict, describe or encourage activities which may lead to the use of physical violence or group disruption;

(f) they encourage or instruct in the commission of criminal activity;

(g) they contain sexually explicit material which by its nature or content pose a threat to the security, good order, or discipline of the XXX

(h) homophobic, pornographic, obscene or sexually explicit material or other visual depictions that are harmful to students;

(i) materials that use obscene, abusive, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, disrespectful, or sexually explicit language;

(j) materials that use language or images that are inappropriate in the education setting or disruptive to the educational process;

(k) information or materials that could cause damage or danger of disruption to the educational process;

(l) materials that use language or images that advocate violence or discrimination toward other people (hate literature) or that may constitute harassment or discrimination or create a serious danger of violence in the facility;

(m) materials depicting martial arts; and

(n) materials depicting tattooing (yalsalockdown@ala.org, accessed 9/17/2009).

Most of these restrictions appear reasonable, considering the population in question. However, several of them, such as e, f, i, and j, are worded in a way that leaves a good
deal open to the interpretation of correctional personnel (an umbrella term for correctional officers, administrators, and mental health professionals). This is where the conflict begins. Most librarians are committed to intellectual freedom and the rights of individuals to access whatever reading material they choose. Correctional personnel, on the other hand, have different foci: rehabilitating youth and facility security. Frequently rehabilitative and security concerns conflict with intellectual freedom and freedom of access, creating tense or even hostile relationships between librarians and correctional personnel.

Correctional security concerns are straightforward and involve physical features of reading materials like staples in the binding of magazines, hard covers on books, and the possibility of using books to hide contraband. The levels of security restrictions depend on the facility and whether the teens in question are classified as minimum, medium, or maximum security. Usually these restrictions are inflexible.

Rehabilitative concerns can be more fluid, and this is where lists of prohibited content become relevant. In brief, administrators and mental health professionals are concerned about literature that romanticizes the behaviors that landed teens in custody in the first place. They fear that street literature may trigger backsliding. Their concerns are based on well-documented research:

- Literature has the power to shape, change, or reinforce beliefs (Green & Brock, 2000; Prentice, Gerrig, & Bailis, 1997; Slater, 1990; Strange & Leung, 1999; Wheeler, Green & Brock, 1999).
- People accept new ideas more easily when their minds are primed for stories rather than analysis (Escalas, 2007; Green, 2004).

Moreover, these effects are most likely to occur when a reader can make connections between the narrative and their own experiences:

- Readers who make connections between the narrative and their own experiences are more likely to report changes in beliefs and shifts in self-perception. (Kuiken et al., 2004)
- Readers’ prior knowledge and social experiences similar to story content is correlated to higher levels of absorption in the story and a greater likelihood of demonstrating story-consistent beliefs (Green, 2004; see also Busselle & Greenberg, 2000 and Potter, 1988).

In other words, literature that reflects teens’ lived experiences has a better chance of changing – or confirming – the way they think about or do things. And for many teens, street literature is the genre that most closely reflects their lived experiences. Therefore, correctional personnel are justified when they argue that for certain individuals, certain street literature titles may trigger backsliding into substance abuse, gang involvement, and other problem behaviors. They actually have a basis in research, and they’re acting “in loco parentis” for some very troubled teens.

Unfortunately, many correctional personnel take an “all or nothing” approach. The urban settings, strong language, non-standard dialects, and gritty themes of street literature act for them as a red flag signaling the kinds of books that might act counterproductively to their clients’ rehabilitation. In response they rule out the whole street literature genre, facilitated by flexible interpretations of lists of prohibited literature content.
This is a serious oversight that may deprive many incarcerated youth of a chance to connect with literature. As a society, we cannot afford to do that. As William Brozo (2002) writes, “…to presume that reading itself will transform conditions that plague young men such as poverty, alcohol and drug abuse, crime, and irresponsible fathering is recklessly naïve; however, to ignore the potential of active literacy for ensuring that fewer adolescent males become nowhere kids is equally naïve” (p. 156).

So how can librarians best communicate with correctional personnel? How can they avoid polemics? And how can they build relationships of trust with correctional personnel so that without dishonesty, they can bring in books – often street literature – that the juvenile inmates will love and connect with?

There are two messages important for librarians to convey to correctional personnel:

- Librarians must make it clear that they understand rehabilitative concerns and do not want to introduce material that may trigger teens’ backsliding into addictions, gang involvement, or other problem behaviors. While acknowledging that correctional personnel are acting in loco parentis and have the legal right to restrict materials, librarians should remind correctional personnel that they are united in the aim of helping inmates avoid recidivism, drawing attention to the research showing that building literacy is a significant part of achieving that aim.

- Librarians need to show correctional personnel that distinctions are possible within the street literature genre. They need to demonstrate that there is street literature of excellent literary quality that deals with the profound themes of humanity set in contexts, peopled with characters and written in dialects that will be familiar to teens in custody. Librarians need to be clear that they are not just offering the teens books with gangs, sex, language and violence because “that’s what they know.” That logic won’t hold up in a correctional facility. Librarians should be ready with examples to prove that there is street literature that has the gritty elements of street life, the strong language and content that teens can relate to, and positive messages of hope and transformation. The best of this literature may have sexual content, but it does not demean women. It may have violent content, but it does not glorify violence. It may address gangs and drug use, but it does not romanticize either. It may be about people of color in difficult situations, but it is not racist. It is captivating, well-told literature about teens struggling with and often overcoming the incredible challenges they face in the ghetto, barrio, or correctional facility. In other words, in order to bring in the literature that is likely to engage incarcerated teens, librarians need to show correctional personnel that they can make discriminating choices based on the needs of the population they are serving.

Crafting Selection Policies

How to make these choices? In order to craft an effective selection policy, it is important to take into consideration the characteristics of the population being served. Are they older male incarcerated teens classified as maximum security? Are they young teenage girls in a foster care setting? Are they at-risk teens coming to a library of their own volition for literature circles? Are they drug-addicted young mothers in a rehabilitation clinic? Are they repeat offenders in a boot-camp setting? Each sub-group of at-risk teens will have slightly different needs, and it is necessary to do preliminary research about the group in question in order to identify those needs.
After doing some preliminary research, it can be helpful to devise a question (or questions) to guide literature selection. For example, when developing selection policies for teens incarcerated in a traditional correctional setting, librarians might take into account the fact that the large majority of juvenile offenses are personal crimes or property crimes (Snyder and Sickmund, 2006) – in other words, offenses against an individual or a piece of property that belongs to someone else. It seems clear that acting in the best interests of others is a skill lacking for many juvenile offenders. Therefore, a useful evaluative question might be: “Is one of the main character(s) ultimately successful in doing what is right for the people around them?”

In other situations, exclusive selection policies may be appropriate. For instance, when librarians do outreach to former or current gang members, it may be wise to exclude literature that is closely affiliated with any single gang. For example, although War of the Bloods in My Veins (Morris, 2009) is an excellent memoir, it celebrates Bloods and denigrates Crips to level that could be inflammatory for a mixed group of gang members. On the other hand, books like Retaliation (Shiraz, 2008) or Homeboyz (Sitomer, 2008) explore the implications of gang membership without promoting or insulting any one group.

Just as exclusive policies can be appropriate in some situations, others call for inclusive selection. For example, when doing outreach to pregnant teens, it may be helpful to seek out literature that specifically addresses teen pregnancy such as The First Part Last (Johnson, 2010), Like Sisters on the Home Front (Garcia, 1998) and Baby Girl (Adams, 2007). Literature selections for teens with a history of drug dealing might include titles about young drug dealers finding motivation and strategies to quit dealing like Street Pharm (Diepen, 2006) and Dope Sick (Myers, 2009). Book choices for teens in foster care could include stories set in group or foster homes, like Last Chance Texaco (Harting, 2004), Ball Don’t Lie (De la Pena, 2007), and America (Frank, 2002).

These are just a few examples of ways to craft deliberate selection policies based on the needs of specific populations. Regardless of the subgroup of at-risk teens being served, if librarians can demonstrate to correctional personnel (or other administrators) that thought and care has gone into selection policies, the personnel will be more likely to relax regulations and allow titles that might otherwise be prohibited. Ultimately, mutual respect and cooperation between librarians and correctional personnel can only benefit the teens being served. It is important to remember that both groups are working toward the same goal: helping teens build productive lives with no recidivism. Literacy is an important aspect of reaching that goal, and in this area librarians have a great deal to offer this population in need.

Works Cited


Reference Service Innovations: Present and Future: Responses for a Panel

AHNIWA FERRARI

Ahniwa Ferrari is Online Resources Consultant at the Washington State Library. She can be reached at: ahniwa.ferrari@sos.wa.gov

Introduction

I had the pleasure of [virtually] being part of a panel at the WLA/PNLA conference in Victoria. The panel was called “Reference Service Innovations: Present and Future”, and my fellow panelists and I were given some excellent questions to consider.

Since I wasn’t sure how the technology would play out (I was a virtual presenter on a panel that was otherwise physically present at the conference), I recorded the questions with my answers and sent them along so that I could be represented even if the technology failed. Thankfully the technology worked, more or less, but I’m happy to have my thoughts recorded all the same so that I can share them here with you.

The questions were provided by Heather McLeland-Wieser at the Seattle Public Library. These answers represent some of my thoughts on the future of reference service. I hope they’re of interest.

1. I personally am very intrigued by “reference service at the point of need.”
   Do you have any examples of libraries who are trying this innovation? How is it really an innovation? Are they doing this digitally or in person?

   “Point of need” is one of those terms that I’m guilty of using but I’m still not 100% sure what it means. I suppose it means the point when someone realizes that have a specific need, which would be more a “point of realization” … but I’ll try not to get too semantic.

   I forget who it was, but at the Internet Librarian conference last year someone said that what we should do is follow our users around (physically and on our web sites), and pay attention to every place that the user gets frustrated. It could be in the library catalog, or in the stacks, or trying to find the right database. And then at all of these spots of frustration, which are the points of need, we should make ourselves available to help. “Having trouble? Get help from a librarian.” And we should do this so well that it should seem like magic.

   To me “point of need” isn’t a reference idea, but a more holistic service idea. If someone is at the stacks with a call # in their hand and they realize they don’t have any clue about how to use that # to find the item they want, our point of need service would have anticipated that, and we would having some sort of finding aid there at the stacks to get them where they need to be.

   Of course, this finding aid could be a reference librarian, and you could put them out there in a roving reference model, or provide the user some way to contact them from
where they are. I assume that it’s no longer really a point of need service if you put a sign up saying, “Can’t find your book, go ask the librarian at the reference desk.” So you could put some way to contact them, maybe a computer terminal that connects to chat – though if you’re doing that, you could also put an interactive map of the stacks there, too, and that might be more useful. Or you could put the reference desk phone # up at the end of each shelving unit, and let your librarians decide if they want to talk the user through over the phone, or meet them in the stacks.

In terms of specific examples, the Norlin Library at the University of Colorado at Boulder is running a pilot “information kiosk” program, putting customized kiosks at a number of pre-determined points of need. They’ll have one kiosk at their main stacks, another at their defunct government information desk, and have plans for a number of others. These kiosks will provide catalog access, maps, and of course, links to chat with a reference librarian.

I do like the idea of kiosks, especially those that are customized with services that exactly match the anticipated need for their location. It’s got an automated component, as well as a live component by offering chat, which I think works well together.

For my money, what point of need really means is that we either have to be really good at anticipating need, or we need to provide reference access points in as many places as we possibly can. In a physical sense, this means that we should be visible everywhere in the library, as well as in schools and community centers. In a virtual sense, we should give our reference services more visibility on our websites, and we should work with community partners to have links on their websites too. Moving beyond the web, we should have at least ONE way for mobile users to get in touch (aside from calling) – be that SMS reference, or a great app, or a clean mobile website.

In short, our users will choose their points of need. It’s our job to be ubiquitous.

2. **Cost of service delivery has become a huge obstacle for many library systems as they try to innovate. Are there innovations that can be accomplished with minimal upfront costs? Are there innovations that have a larger upfront cost but that will require lower staffing and servicing costs down the road?**

   Well, here in Washington the cost for the virtual reference coop is picked up by the State Library, so that’s a free service for libraries to use, which continues to innovate. My experience in reference service is that innovation doesn’t cost in terms of money, though, but in staff time, and that’s a harder obstacle to overcome.

   I think that putting ourselves out there in social networks is a fairly low-cost way to improve our service delivery, but like most things, libraries will probably get more out of it the more they put into it, again in terms of time.

   I think that in terms of point of need innovations, there is a lot we can do at a very low cost. Something as simple as the right sign at the right place can be the perfect service delivery, and for what, like a dollar in printing costs? And the same thing with websites, all we have to do is watch our users, and then make sure we are providing the right services in the right places.
I think that subject guides and screencasts are both underused technologies that have a low cost and can be used innovatively. In a talk I gave to academic librarians earlier this year I said that we need to learn how to clone ourselves. What I mean is that there are a lot of tools to record our expertise, be those tools that actually, literally record our faces and put them up on a website to talk to users on our behalf, or tools that record our expertise and make it easily findable by our users. Pretty much all of us are already doing this, I mean what library doesn’t have some sort of subject guide on its website … but in general we’re not doing it very well, either in terms of getting our users to look at and use the guides, or in terms of making the guides EASY to locate and use.

3. Many people think innovation must involve technology – what is your opinion? Do you have some examples of innovations that aren’t technology oriented?

Absolutely. I think the best example of non-tech reference innovation is to embed reference librarians in the community. In terms of public libraries, this means getting our reference librarians out of the library in some sort of visible way and out among people: in cafes … in the park … at the farmer’s market. They should have some sort of card pointing out their reference service, online, in-person, mobile … all of that, but they should also be willing and able to answer questions on the spot. They can focus more specific reference services in more specific venues: neighborhood resources at neighborhood association meetings, local history and legal resources at community or city council meetings, business advice and resources at the downtown business association.

Jamie LaRue, the director of the Douglas County Libraries in Colorado, has been embedding librarians in the community for a few years now, and says now: “The community meeting doesn’t begin until the librarian shows up … they don’t believe anything important can get done until the librarian is there.”

You can consider mobile innovations to be technologically-driven, but the fact is that they’re much more about place than they are about technology. It isn’t the fact that I can ask a question with my mobile phone, it’s the fact that I can ask a question when it occurs to me, in the car or at the café or the movies or wherever. I don’t really care that I’m using a technological device to do it, I just like that I can do it, wherever I happen to be.

And that’s great, because we can get out to these places on mobile devices but we can also explore ways to be there in person, to expand beyond our walls and find those places of need where our users want us, maybe even need us, but are not (yet) used to seeing us.

4. What one service or technology do you think has the greatest potential to change the way we deliver reference in the future and why?

I don’t think there’s any way around saying that the answer to this is mobile technology, that is mobile phones and everything that goes along with them, apps, SMS, the mobile web … this is seriously changing the game, in terms of user expectations and also in terms of the role of the library.

And it’s interesting because right now we can do anything, all the old stuff that we’ve been doing, and if it’s mobile than it’s automatically innovative. Placing holds online? People have been able to do that for years and years. Placing holds via their mobile device? Innovation! Even being able to search the catalog via a mobile device is considering
innovative right now, which is all well and good but I’m not sure what it says about actual new innovative services. Yeah, we should make all our core services mobile, getting books and asking questions and such, but we should move beyond that too.

The one mobile technology that I really like for libraries in the future is augmented reality. I like the idea of looking at the world through a lens that provides information about what I’m looking at, in real time and wherever I happen to be. This totally seems like science fiction but it’s already something you can do with just an iPhone and a free app (Layar). For libraries, application could be static – look through your phone to find the book in the library, or look at a book in the library to find other books like that book, or browse based on author or subject – or it could be more interactive, use the phones camera as a live co-browse of the world, with a librarian watching with you and helping you make sense of what you’re looking at. This seems even more sci-fi but we could already be doing this with apps like Facetime and librarians that are willing to try something a little different.

PNLA’s Next 100 Years: Help Shape the Future

JASON OPENO

Jason Openo is the Manager of the Whitemud Crossing Branch of the Edmonton Public Library. He can be reached at: JOpeno@EPL.CA

Introduction

At the WLA/PNLA Conference in Victoria, members of the PNLA Board and representatives from Alaska (2), Alberta (3), British Columbia (2), Idaho (4), Montana (2), Washington (6), and Oregon (1) met to discuss how PNLA could better demonstrate its value and continue to play a vital and unique role in the Northwest library landscape.

The conversation began with a general discussion amongst the participants about the changing nature of professional associations within the Northwest region. Many library associations, but not all, have been struggling the past few years due to the ongoing recession. Several associations said they had seen a decrease in membership. Possible reasons for this include an increased competition for scarce travel dollars coupled with technological changes, such social networks and online education opportunities, which have displaced the need for annual conferences and association meetings as the only venues for networking and professional development. Networks, knowledge, and skills can be built without the need for physical travel. The enduring challenge for each and every association, no matter what the change, is to demonstrate its value to its membership.

To that end, the PNLA Board reviewed with the State and Provincial representatives PNLA’s core activities, with the intent to find out from the participants if each of these were considered important and possessed value. PNLA’s core activities include:
PNLA Leadership Institute – There was a high level of enthusiasm expressed for the biennial PNLA Leadership Institute. Ideas from the participants suggested that a panel of LEADS participants should be convened at every conference to continue to build awareness of this training opportunity. Some regional competition to the Leadership Institute takes the form of the Northern Exposure to Leadership Institute (NELI) in Canada.

Young Readers Choice Award (YRCA) – The readers choice model for YRCA has been adopted by British Columbia in the form of the Red Cedar awards and in Oregon, in the newly formed Oregon Readers Choice Awards. YRCA has significantly less importance in these two regions, but YRCA remains a recognizable brand within the region. Founded by Harry Hartman, Seattle bookseller, in 1955, YRCA has been a high profile award in the past and is still heavily promoted in Alaska, Alberta, Idaho, Montana, and Washington. The school librarians present as part of this discussion said that YRCA titles still provided a great short list to promote reading. Participants expressed a desire to have YRCA information more accessible.

Direct financial sponsorship to State and Provincial Associations – Over the past two years, the PNLA Board has voted to provide direct financial sponsorship of conference activities. Has this improved awareness of PNLA and helped build favorable associations with PNLA at the local levels? The participants seemed to think so, but there is no way to definitively prove if this has been the case.

Annual conference – The participants in the conversation expressed that it is easy to suffer from myopia, and regional conference representation includes greater variety for sessions. Some expressed that ALA and PLA conferences can be overwhelming from a size perspective, whereas the PNLA conference is a comfortable size that still provides a wider network. Several participants expressed the sentiment that there is something unique to Northwest region, including the high number of rural libraries not run by a degreed librarian. Some ideas for how to improve the conference included actively recruiting the best sessions from the local conferences and incorporating resume review sessions and a jobs area for students and professionals looking for their next career step.

PNLA Job Board – the PNLA Jobs is the most visited part of the PNLA webpage, visited 41,000 times per month.

The PNLA Quarterly – The PNLA Quarterly offers an opportunity for librarians to publish articles in a regional publication. The PNLA Board is presently exploring the prospect of making the PNLA Quarterly a refereed publication.

These are the core activities upon which PNLA expends energy and effort. More research needs to be done to determine how valuable each of these activities is to the membership of PNLA, as well as those who are not members but continue to support PNLA through advocacy for PNLA at the local level. For PNLA, its membership responsibilities extend to the State and Provincial library associations within the region, and so the questions for consideration are:

- What can PNLA do to help local associations achieve their goals? And,
- What can we do regionally that we cannot do alone?

The one hour and fifteen minute conversation session did not allow time to fully explore these questions with the group, but conference sponsorship, YRCA, and PNLA Leads were the most obvious answers to these questions. PNLA’s State and Provincial representatives will hopefully have further conversations with their individual associations over the course of the next year so that the PNLA Board will have more data and ideas as it plans for its Second Century of Leadership and Cooperation.
Digital Tattoo: What’s Yours?

JENNIFER GOERZEN

TRISH ROSSEEL

Jennifer Goerzen is the Digital Tattoo Project Coordinator at the libraries of the University of British Columbia (UBC). She is an MLIS candidate at the School of Library, Archival, and Information Studies at UBC. As a Coordinator of the Digital Tattoo Project, she contributes to the website tutorial content and facilitates workshops and presentations to share this exciting resource with students, faculty and colleagues. She can be reached at: UBCdigital.tattoo@ubc.ca. Trish Rosseel is the Teaching & Learning Librarian at UBC Library. In this role, she works collaboratively with library colleagues and partners across campus to coordinate, design, develop and deliver responsive and innovative instruction programs for the UBC community. She can be reached at: UBC trish.rosseel@ubc.ca.

Introduction

What is one of the most frequently asked questions at a Digital Tattoo workshop? How can I remove something from the Internet?

The Digital Tattoo is a project based out of the University of British Columbia that seeks to bring awareness about managing one’s online rights and responsibilities. The metaphor of a tattoo is fitting because what we do online is just like one. It’s highly visible and can be a creative form of self-expression, but it can also be misinterpreted or viewed out of context and once there... it’s extremely difficult to remove. Our goal is to encourage others to make informed choices to proactively build their digital identities. We've created an interactive online tutorial covering numerous topics. Visitors can learn about protecting their personal information, their computer, or the numerous options for connecting online. Issues are explored in relation to one’s personal, academic and professional spheres. In 2010, a new module about publishing online has also been added with content about intellectual property and copyright, libel and defamation, freelance and open access publishing, and UBC's informational repository cIRcle.

Project Context

Our technological abilities outstrip the judgment needed for an online environment that is optimized for sharing and the free flow of information. Many things haven't changed. People continue to redefine their personal and professional identities while organizations and technologies evolve. We still search for social connections and validation, and youth are still exploring and taking risks. “What has changed is the fact that there could very well be a permanent record of all of this, one with implications that can't yet be predicted or controlled” (Common Sense Media).

There are myriad opportunities to connect, network, and socialize online, some with more impact than others. This year Facebook exceeded 500 million users and if it were a country, Facebook would now be the third largest in the world (between the United States at ~300 million and India at ~1.2 billion) (Globe and Mail, 2010). To date, the demographic most affected by these kinds of social networking tools appears to be our young adults. Disturbing press about cyberbullying, sexting and questionable profile pictures suggests that
today’s youth are cavalier about the information they share online, but this is a false assumption. In fact, research published out of Harvard’s Berkman Centre regarding youth views about web privacy, security and online identity finds that youth aspire to the same levels of privacy desired by adults (Hoofnagle, King, Li & Turow, 2010). Furthermore, the majority of young Internet users are actually becoming the most vigilant population restricting access to their personal information (Pew Internet & American Life Project, 2010). Media coverage about youth committing serious social errors online can be deceiving. For most, it’s not that they don’t care but that education is needed to inform the choices they are making.

Growth in social networking site usage is definitely not limited to young adults. Recent research finds that these tools are more important than ever to our older population with more than a quarter (27%) of Americans aged 50+ using social media websites (AARP). As more people engage online, it will be important to define and put into practice our concept of digital citizenship.

Digital Tattoo: What’s yours?

The first step toward managing one’s digital dossier is to become familiar with the information about you already available online. Using tools like Google, pipi.com, MITs Personas, Spezify.com and the Wayback Machine, it is useful to search yourself and to consider whether the content found represents an accurate picture of who you are. If your name is common, it may be harder to find accurate information about you, or easier to confuse you with someone you’d rather not be associated with. It’s interesting to note that search engine optimization (SEO) and domain name availability have claimed their place in an expectant parent’s arsenal of baby-name choosing tools (Boyd, 2010). On the other hand, if your name is unusual it may make it easier for others to find details you’d prefer to keep private.

Considering your Digital Tattoo

For any content posted online, consider who your audience might be. People, regardless of their age or reasons for participation, need to understand that being online is essentially like being in public. We don’t always know who is viewing our information and what their intentions are for using it. The Internet provides the potential to interact with a vast audience, one that is invisible and anonymous. Added to this is the fact that many online tools are defaulted for information sharing. If you prefer to keep your personal information private, it is wise to adjust your browser settings as well as your privacy settings on social networking sites. Use strong passwords, known only to you, and ultimately limit the amount of personal information you give out online. Consider whether you want to share information publicly before posting anything, anywhere. This is especially true of online content that is hosted on a server in the United States because of the USA Patriot Act. Ask yourself when you last read the “fine print” before clicking “I accept”.

Some online content is simply beyond our control. Today, electronic data may be collected about us from before we are even born. E-health records and family blogs with ultrasound pictures or birth announcements are just the beginning. Our search habits, shopping preferences and email content may be tracked, often without our awareness. Many people worry about the “security of financial information, advertisers getting access to personal information shared on a social networking site, or government surveillance of online activities…” and “recent research has suggested that the majority of American adults do not want internet marketers to tailor advertising to their interests, particularly when that
involves online data collection and monitoring‖ (Pew Internet & American Life Project, 2010). How valuable is the convenience of online shopping with saved profiles on sites such as Amazon, iTunes, Netflix or eBay to you? Does your participation mean this kind of data collection is acceptable to you?

Whether it’s fair or not, people make judgments based on information they read about others online. As a result, our digital footprint can have lasting effects on personal, academic and career opportunities. Any desire to separate our professional and personal identities is becoming increasingly difficult. “One in four employed adults says their company has policies about how they present themselves online” (Pew Internet & American Life Project, 2010).

A debate over whether employers should search for information about potential candidates online raises interesting arguments. In the interests of long term retention and workplace compatibility, it might seem desirable to learn as much about a future employee as possible. On the other hand, there are clear guidelines for criteria that are legally allowed in the hiring process. Once viewed, is it possible for employers to ignore online information that should not be part of the screening process (i.e. age, religion, political views, etc.)? In the future, will it be possible to move past youthful indiscretions captured online? In Germany, government has recently tabled legislation restricting the Internet content employers can use when recruiting (NYTimes.com). Though difficult to enforce, this is a useful reminder that policies regulating the sharing and use of personal online information are still evolving at this time.

Another important consideration is that our online content is essentially permanent. This is not only due to caching (i.e., archive.org’s Wayback Machine) but because all digital content can be easily moved around the Internet. In a world of copy/paste, re-tweet, embed, etc. any digital content including photos, emails, IMs, video, etc. can be “taken out of context and used in ways that the author didn't intend” (Common Sense Media). For these reasons, we like to use the phrase “think before you ink.”

Creating Your Digital Tattoo

Despite these cautions, for those who are well informed the online environment provides fantastic opportunities. There are increasing avenues to research interests in depth, and to learn from a diversity of voices. Those otherwise unable to participate, due to location or logistical hurdles, now have the opportunity to join online conversations. People reluctant to speak up in a group setting have a more comfortable means for contributing to a discussion as well.

Desirable professional networking and teambuilding skills can be honed using social media tools. Managing and nurturing a team is considered a key asset in today’s workforce, and the Internet provides yet another place to take advantage of this skill set. The adage “it’s not what you know, but who you know” now extends beyond the water cooler, coffee shop and golf course. International communities have formed to achieve remarkable results, such as the rapid sharing of data and subsequent publication of peer-reviewed research. This kind of collaboration extends beyond the academic and professional spheres. Many online groups meet to discuss shared interests, hobbies, or even to fundraise for a shared cause.

One of the surest ways to manage your digital identity is to actively contribute online content you want others to see (or at least to ensure that it dominates that first page of
search results). Creating professional profiles, blogs or e-portfolios as a way to market and share work is becoming easier. Professional networks on twitter and blogging sites are also increasingly useful in some professions. The decision to follow this trend is a highly individual one. It’s useful to consider whether you have the interest and/or capacity to maintain your networks and to stay current with the social media tools you use. As in any community, it is also important to reciprocate and share. Starting small with connections to people you already know is wise, and limiting use to the tools you enjoy most will likely build the greatest consistency (UBC Wiki). Connect, create and enjoy!

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References


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