

Generating commonality when you are the odd one out

By Jennifer Wilson

(Session 40) As a service profession in the twenty-first century, librarianship is grappling with outdated perceptions of our role and our skills. In spite of a shared desire amongst librarians to educate our patrons, our financiers, and the public about the role that librarians could play in an information society, there has been some hesitancy to explore the different branches of librarianship in order to educate each other about the multiplicity of roles filled by those attending this conference. For some students, myself included, special libraries are a source of curiosity and, in some cases, misconception. One of the most important facts shared at The Insider Report session was that special libraries are not distinguished by their collections, which can indeed be unique, but rather by their clientele. This aha! moment was followed by many others from Christina Tooulias-Santolin and Trish LeBlanc.

As a special librarian there are opportunities to work alongside your clients and develop meaningful relationships in which your searching and filtering expertise help them to accomplish their goals. There are opportunities to refine your skill sets and develop new ones including collection development, instructional strategy, and management expertise. To take advantage of the opportunities presented to special librarians you do not necessarily need a background in the subject area that you wish to serve, but rather a willingness to develop a detailed knowledge of the research environment that will best serve your clients needs.

The emphasis on customer service, research, and professional development is common across different library sectors. I, for one, am now ready to be part of this odd, but interesting, world of special libraries.

Thank a volunteer today!

In alphabetical order, our thanks and yours go to:

Erin Alcock, Selma Amaral, Annette Anthony, Theresa Antle, Aspi Balsara, Anne Bowden, Grace Butler, Gillian Byrne, Patrick Callanan, Sandy Cameron, Bernie Conran, Jewel Cousens, Lynn Cuff, Lynda Daneliuk, Karen Darby, Junli Diao, Christine Doody, Dan Duda, Laura Dunne, Sue Fahey, Alison Farrell, Colleen Field, Lori Fleming, Andy Fowler, Shannon Gordon, Hollis Harding, Les Harding, Anne Hart, Sharon Hewitt, Krista Hill, Leanne Hindmarch, Karen Hutchens, Liz Icenhower, Donna Inkpen, Lorraine Jackson, Marguerite Jones, Debra Kearsey, Blanche Keating, Heather Keeling, Carol Kennedy, Barbara King, Katie Lawton, Trish LeBlanc, Karen Lippold, Angela Lonardo, Betty MacDonald, Cameron McKay, Debra Mann, Jennifer Mersereau, Alison Mews, Heather Myers, Stan Orlov, Patricia Parsons, Pearce J. Penney, Stacey Penney, Karen Pottle-Fewer, Heather Pretty, Cynthia Priddle, Susan Prior, Suanne Reid, Joan Ritcey, Heather Roberts, Wendy Rodgers, Polly Ross, Jane Ryan, Shirley Scott, Sue Sexty, Jana Sheardown, Sheila Soulier, Darrell Squires, Roxanne Sutton, Dianne Taylor-Harding, Liza-Ann Tucker, Mary Chacko Varghese, Keith Walker, Pat Warner, Peter Webster, John Whelan, Colleen Woolgar, Shelley Zettler

From Sea to Sea...

See you in Vancouver for CLA 2008!



St. John's, Day 3: Long may your big jib draw

Thank you CLA Staff!

Organizing a national conference is always a demanding job; CLA Staffers meet that challenge each year with aplomb. Please make sure you express your thanks to CLA staff, especially Sylvie, Brenda and Judy.

Looking to hire or be hired?

Check out the Job Link Centre, located in the Placentia Room at the Delta. The Job Link provides a coffee house atmosphere with computers for checking out jib ads, and chances to meet and mingle with prospective employers.

Correction

There was a misspelling of the Student to CLA Ryan Marttala's name in issue 1 of the Signal. Our apologies. Ryan is the student to CLA from the University of Western Ontario. Ryan holds a music degree and recently started his MLIS studies along with his wife, Andrea.

Thank you, speakers!

It is through conference speakers, and the conversations and connections they inspire, that librarianship grows.

The final countdown

750+ delegates	22 posters
107 speakers	4 preconferences
100+ volunteers	3 keynotes
95 exhibitors	2 specialty tracks

Marilyn Rennick

The Signal Newsletter is generously sponsored by:



DiscoverStation:
Better Public
Computing.

The Internet Café, sponsored by Userful, is available in the Placentia Room in the Delta Hotel in the afternoon Wednesday, all day Thursday & Friday and Saturday morning or visit us at Booth 82. Check your e-mail and try out Userful's innovative public computing solution designed specifically to save costs and improve service at libraries.

The Spirit of Place

By Joanne Bergen

(Session 8) If “libraries are social places as well as information places”, what considerations must be discussed when building or renovating? From practical answers through a world tour of beautifully functional buildings to a discussion of the future consciousness of environmental buildings, listeners were given the vision and tools in this session.

First, libraries must be planned around services and the people who use them; service should not be fit into a lovely inefficient space. Bill Mitchell provided listeners with a practical checklist for library evaluation.

Jean McKendry encapsulated the ideas succinctly by stating, “...libraries have always served the community.” Time must be taken to plan for the physical and psychological comforts of users. Natural lighting, seamless technology and moveable furniture are a few suggestions to ensure that libraries are “making spaces to house the readers – not the books.”

Stephen Teeple moved to a more contemplative, emotional plane. Architecture is more than a physical space; it is also a symbolic concept. Sustainable construction is developing a new imaginative shape and form to libraries. Environmental architecture takes its’ form from the environment the library will exist in. As libraries are symbolically part of the community in which they serve, so too can their physical buildings become part of the landscape of the community.

I will be reviewing the material provided again with the renovation my school is undertaking. As Bill Mitchell reminded us through a quote by Paul Goldberger, “A library should generate an atmosphere both exciting and refreshing – it must settle down so that it can be comfortably used.”



Please mind your P's and Q's!

By Chad Murphy

“I never really knew diversity until I went to the United Arab Emirates. For me, this experience was transformative!” – Sybil Harrison, Hamilton Public Library.

(Session 26) Are you adventurous, or even flexible? If so, there are many opportunities to consider working in an overseas library. The panel of five presenters; Bob McKee, Sybil Harrison, Larry McCallum, Janis Rapchuk, and Sue Adams discussed the idea of overseas librarianship.

The Canadian presence is becoming more apparent in countries such as the United Arab Emirates and Afghanistan. However, is this opportunity suited for everyone? These speakers suggested three major character traits which a possible candidate must possess.

First, being flexible is a must. Opportunities and changes in an established plan may sometimes change the initial prospect of how one would proceed. Furthermore, the notion of flexibility also applies to one's personal lifestyle. The environment changes the individual, and as a result, the individual must be willing to accept this change.

The next important characteristic is personal authenticity. Don't forget, you are entering another culture, a place where only trust can form a solid connection between oneself and the local population. You must communicate with them in a genuine fashion. Be yourself – the people will recognize your sincere dedication, which will create a friendly bond, an attitude that Canadians are credited with having.

Lastly is the idea of incorporating the current local technology and applications with those you bring. The location may not be as technologically advanced, which creates a barrier. To overcome this obstacle, teach them at a pace which makes them comfortable.

Overseas librarianship, wherever the destination, is a rewarding experience. If you have the ambition and are adventurous, this would be the career choice for you! Why not catch a flight and take networking to a new level? But remember: please mind your p's and q's, as you are a guest in their native land!

You Only Live Twice

By Jan Dawson

(Session 31) As of 3:17pm on May 25, 2007, the virtual environment known as Second Life had 6, 671, 732 residents. This has exceeded creator Linden Lab's expectations of 2 million residents when launched in 2003. With Second Life turning open source as of this year, control and development has been passed over to its users. There has been much debate about whether Second Life is a gaming environment or not, however one could argue that it is all in how you wish to use it.

Librarians are using it by developing virtual libraries and educational institutions on Information Island, connecting with new generations of library users. Canada's presence is a strong one with Mount Saint Vincent University, McMaster University, BCCLA, LAC/BAC, Loyalist College, and Mohawk College, all as registered landowners. Pilot projects for distance education, information literacy initiatives, and meeting spaces for regular university classes are under way and already producing positive feedback.

Visit Second Life at www.secondlife.com to create your avatar, become acquainted with the way things work on Orientation Island, fly over to Information Island, and play a part by volunteering at the virtual chat reference desk. While you're on the island, visit MSVU's storefront at <http://slurl.com/secondlife/Cybrary%20City/29/10/24> or McMaster's storefront at <http://slurl.com/secondlife/Cybrary%20City/31/186/42>. If you are already a resident in Second Life looking for land to plant your ideas on, you can visit Canada Nexus at <http://slurl.com/secondlife/Cybrary%20City/216/169/24> and inquire with Donna Dinberg (SL identity: Dinnie Devonshire) about available land. Session presenters Krista Godfrey (SL identity: Danu Dahlstrom), Denyse Rodrigues (SL identity: Xav Serrati), Nancy Collins (SL identity: Spicer Babe), and Donna Bourne-Tyson (SL identity: Laken Burns) are happy to chat or IM with you any time. So what are you waiting for? Go to Second Life and create your avatar now!

Keeping the Magic Alive

by Krista Jorgensen

Yesterday Mary Pratt, APLA's keynote speaker, offered a presentation on how childhood library experiences help develop and foster an interest and love for learning through reading and the arts. Pratt evoked the nostalgia of her childhood library. The librarian, Miss Louise Hill, brought the magic of books, paper and print to life, allowing Pratt to turn the pages of the great Audubon books. The pages were thin and delicate, with elaborate typesets. They had what Miss Hill referred to as “perfect illustrations”, though Pratt stated the illustrations were stylized. The serendipitous acquisition of knowledge was like a treasure hunt for young Mary Pratt who rarely went to the library with a specific title in mind.

Attaining knowledge by chance offered a sense of empowerment. Today's youth feel this way when serendipitously acquiring knowledge, though they no longer have to go to the library in person to have this experience.

In Pratt's day libraries, librarians and library staff were the “keepers of the keys” and the “home of the grail”. Today it is the job of libraries and librarians to open the doors and share the keys to discovering knowledge.

Libraries champion freedom of information and encourage learning. Children with all interests and backgrounds are welcome into public libraries where many forms of media permeate their lives.

The importance of libraries remains and continues to grow. Libraries and staff who offer information literacy, encouragement and mentorship are sure to share the magic of libraries with youth and jump start a positive lifelong learning experience.

All conference photographs in the Signal are courtesy of Marilyn Rennick.