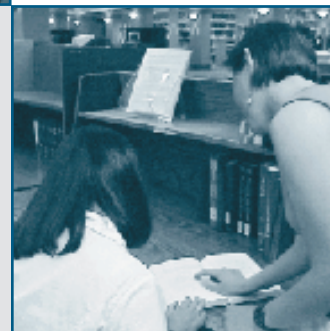
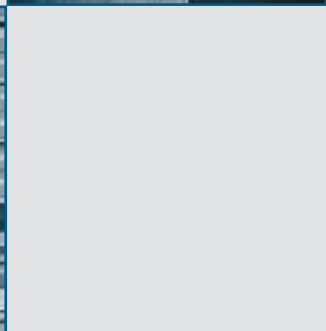


OLA

Quarterly



The Heart of a Librarian



In this Issue

*Discovering the Heart
of a Librarian*

Looking Forward with Heart

*The Challenge of Teaching
to the Heart and Mind*

The Heart of a Librarian

... and more



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OLA QUARTERLY

The Heart of a Librarian

This special issue of *OLA Quarterly* takes a contemplative look at the passion and dedication librarians share for their chosen profession. These articles deal with the heart of a librarian and the manner in which people express themselves in the work that they do. A good librarian effuses a strong sense of self into their industry, as it is truly a part of who they are. Admirable librarianship cannot be reduced to systematic strategy or learned technique; rather, it stems from an integrated identity and the work itself becomes a vehicle that exercises our passions and develops our character. This issue demonstrates how librarians around the state are expressing their passionate selves through the dynamic work that they do. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to serve as editor for such a heartfelt issue.

Juanita Benedicto, *Guest Editor*
University of Oregon

Juanita Benedicto is the Social Sciences Reference Librarian at the Knight Library, University of Oregon. She can be reached at juanitab@oregon.uoregon.edu.

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Discovering the Heart of a Librarian

by Pam North
Reference Librarian
Sherwood Public Library

To paraphrase an obscure 1980's rock group, Holly and the Italians (who had already taken liberties with Shakespeare's famous words): "Some people achieve greatness, some have greatness thrust upon them, and then there are those who were born librarians."

I understand there are those who have always known what they wanted to be "when they grew up." I, however, was not lucky enough to be among them. The characteristics of being "born a librarian" did not expose themselves to me clearly at an early age. The signs were veiled by a wide array of unrelated talents and diverse occupational desires. I recall wanting to be a postman, a geologist, a horticulturist and a writer, among other things. The idea of becoming a librarian simply never occurred to me.

As a latecomer to the library profession, I look back and can identify different aspects of my early life as being "risk factors" that were trying to alert me to my condition all along. It was a long journey before I discovered that I possessed the heart of a librarian.

Risk Factors

The first hint that I might have the heart of a librarian surfaced as a preschooler. Back in the days when the girls at Girl's Polytechnic High School had me in their charge they would write progress reports for our parents. In them they would say the usual things like, "Pam is a cheerful little girl," but there was also the more than occasional mention that "Pam prefers to be the postman to the Mommy" and "She enjoys handing out papers." Looking back, I consider this the first indication of desiring a public service occupation and enjoying the service component of work.

The years advanced and I found I loved books and reading. I would struggle with how I should arrange my small bookshelf—by author or by title? A disorganized bookshelf was simply unacceptable to me.

I remember my mother deliberating on the value of purchasing an encyclopedia for me—and choosing to do so, much to my heart's delight. It was *World Book*, and although I was still a little young for its pages the accompanying *ChildCraft* was just right. I would spend

hours pouring over those volumes in the quest to know a little about a lot. Eager to learn, curious about new ideas and information, I was unknowingly becoming a prime candidate for librarianship.

In grade school I loved the library. Shelves and shelves of books, some so high I needed a step stool to reach the ones on the top. The books were in order, a special order designed just for libraries. If I found a book I liked on skiing, I knew it would be in the exact same place the next time I looked for it. And there was our librarian, Miss Skorpen, who occasionally let me stamp due dates in the books of my classmates. Such joy! Opening books and removing the cards, stamping the due dates and filing the cards by date (and alphabetically) in the wooden box at the librarian's desk. I found the activity and the environment of the library intoxicating—even addictive. Soon I was helping Miss Skorpen a little bit each week. Perhaps then, I should have sensed the beating of a librarian's heart.



Reading, writing and RESEARCH! Pam is never at a loss for resources as they're always a swivel away.

Every Monday during the school year I attended ballet class after school. Ballet class was joyfully followed by a visit to the Woodstock Branch of the Multnomah County Library. Clad in black leotard and pink tights I would find my favorites: *Where the Wild Things Are* and *Chicken Soup with Rice* by Sendak, Krauss' *A Hole Is To Dig* and *The Story about Ping* by Flack. As I grew older I discovered the books of Laura Ingalls Wilder, Frances Hodgson Burnett and Lucy Maud Montgomery.

The library and the wonderful volumes it contained always promised a new adventure, new “friends” and new ideas.

Denial

Eighth grade graduation ushers in many changes, and my experience was no exception. I no longer wanted to take ballet, I left my beloved grade school for high school and I fell out of love with books and libraries and in love with a whole new set of friends and activities. Drama, tennis, soccer, watching the boys’ teams practice and play, working at the local garden center and just “hangin’ out” filled my days. I believe the only book I read for pleasure during high school was *Forever* by Judy Blume. And, heck, that was just because it was a “bad” book that had caused a great deal of controversy among the teachers.

The high school library held no allure for me. It was old and dark and the librarian was a man. Imagine



Another happy patron, satisfied with the information supplied by her helpful and friendly reference librarian.

that, a man as a librarian—and he seemed to like doing audio visual tasks rather than “library” ones. I spiraled into a period of complete library denial. It wasn’t cool to read (or to let anyone know you studied, for that matter) and I certainly intended to be cool. My heart’s condition was thoroughly concealed during my peer-driven teenage years.

I did, at one point during my junior year, briefly think about attending the University of Oregon for its library school—yet another indicator of my underlying propensity for librarianship. But alas, the school had announced its pending closure before I could apply.

Diagnosis

As a senior at Oregon State University I found that I needed an extra term to fit in some required hours. This meant I needed a job to finance that extra term. Was it dumb luck or was it fate that Kerr Library was the only respondent to a broadcast letter and resume that I sent to nearly every office on campus and in town? I was hired as a Serials Assistant (and learned what the word “serials” meant) and I began to re-discover the allure of the library. At first the appeal was merely atmospheric: cool and quiet, the library was welcoming and comfortable. I had always felt at ease in this sort of environment. Soon, the process of handling the journals, peering into their pages and being a part of organizing them was an eagerly-anticipated part of my day.

The discovery and appreciation of the tiny West Linn Public Library jarred my senses once again when I moved to town in 1985. Housed in a small room off the side of a fire hall, it was cozy and pleasant and the staff was friendly and fun. I was drawn to the place and felt that somehow through this little library I might become involved in my new community. I visited often and eventually volunteered. As the library grew, so did my interest in it and I applied for an appointment to the Library Board. Although not selected the first time around, I applied again and was chosen. For a period of time, this position was enough to fill my hidden librarian’s heart.

Working as a technical writer, I was introduced to the Internet in 1992. Something about this new information tool attracted my interest. Although it was text-based and clumsy to navigate, I sensed a great potential in it. Every day I was communicating with people all around the world, acquiring information important to my work and to my life. I became a part of “virtual communities” who shared and learned together. Soon, I was training staff to use the Internet, where I saw even greater possibilities and found the reward of helping connect people with information. My “students” could do research from their desks, collaborate with colleagues through their keyboards and spend less time tracking down journal articles and talking on the telephone. It was this experience, and the reward of helping others find the resources they were searching for, that opened my heart to its true calling.

Finally, there was the outright coincidence of learning that Emporia State University was bringing its MLS program to Oregon. I was a guest at a county library conference (for serving on a successful serial levy committee) when I heard the news. My heart soared at the realization there was an opportunity to attend library school. I applied at the last minute, endured

the most nerve-racking interview of my life (all on my end, I assure you) and ultimately was accepted. The rest, as they say, is history.

Living with the Heart of a Librarian

Today I live a full, active and satisfying life with my librarian's heart. It took a long time for me to recognize and welcome it, and now I understand that perhaps I was "born a librarian" after all. Every day I am excited about what I do and feel valued for doing it. As reference librarian at Sherwood Public Library I know that no one day will be the same as any other—and that knowledge makes my heart sing.

Since discovering my heart's chosen profession I've found I am a better "me," a happier "me" and a truer vision of what I guess I was really meant to be. Being a librarian allows me to fulfill my need to be in a "helping profession," permits me to enhance the quality of life of others and is just plain enjoyable and satisfying. I have found there are four primary areas of librarianship that help me to thrive and be a better person.

Librarians value learning—learning ourselves and helping others to learn. Our environments foster education and grant the opportunity to grow intellectually every day. Each and every bit of information we come into contact with is potentially valuable to us and to our profession.

We are a collegial community, a community where information is shared, not protected. I have always been a team player, and here the sport is information. I'm proud of what we can accomplish when we work together.


As a librarian I have gained a greater sense of self-worth and professionalism. We are vested with the power and unique responsibility to enhance the quality of people's lives. By providing excellent service and accurate information we become the "gatekeepers of possibility." I am proud to be a librarian and I value the importance of the library and all it has to offer.

By providing excellent service and accurate information we become the "gatekeepers of possibility."

Finally, there is the librarian's core value of bringing people and information together. It is what we are all about and it is what brings me the greatest reward. Regardless of message or form or delivery mechanism, it is the librarian's skill in guiding, interpreting and explaining information that makes it accessible to others. Ours is a service profession where people truly matter—all people and each person. We believe that each person is guaranteed equity of access to information. In today's fertile and prolific information landscape, access for everyone is more important than ever before. I feel fortunate to bring people together with the resources they need.

Indications for the Future

Harold Billings, Director of General Libraries at the University of Texas at Austin, once wrote: "Just as the librarians of today are shaping the library of tomorrow, the librarians of tomorrow are being shaped today. Knowledgeable in library and information science, technologically informed, educated broadly in the basic precepts of art and humane concern, dedicated to public service, willing to be leaders and to take risks in shaping the future information society—in whatever other dimension and form it comes—the librarians of the future, like the best librarians of yesterday and today, should be conceived in the truest of renaissance traditions."

I believe he has captured what should be at the heart of every librarian. I know it is at the center of mine. 

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Pam North

Looking Forward with Heart

by *Katy Lenn*

Reference Librarian

Knight Library, University of Oregon

There are many aspects of librarianship that draw us to this profession and make us glad we made the career choice we did. Even the most stout-hearted librarian, however, experiences bouts of burn-out. We all recognize the culprits that drain us of our energy: computers that don't cooperate, ungrateful or cranky patrons, materials that stubbornly refuse to fit Library of Congress subject headings.

Luckily, most of us stouthearted librarians have at least one thing, one aspect of our job, that reinvigorates us during these lulls in our biblio-zeal—a talisman or crystal that revitalizes the bruised enthusiasm. For me that talisman is teaching. Specifically, the true joy I experience when teaching senior citizens, or, as I prefer to call them as I approach joining that demographic, “older adults.” Just the process of writing about my experiences with them brings a smile to my face.

I am fortunate to have the opportunity to teach older adults in a variety of settings. I teach classes for the Learning in Retirement program run through the University of Oregon's Continuing Education Department. I have also branched out into offering workshops to OASIS, an education and volunteer program in Eugene. Both of these programs are geared toward people over the age of 55. I have had students who ranged from

55 to 90+. I've taught “Introduction to the Internet”, “Power Searching,” and “Researching in the University of Oregon Library.”

My courses have evolved over the years. When I first began teaching “Introduction to the Internet” a few years back, we would spend time working with the mouse, pointing and clicking. I was a very proud mother hen after a recent “Power Searching” class when some of the students who had attended one of my first “Introduction to the Internet” courses were discussing scanners, digital cameras, and DPI as if these things were second nature.

Teaching, at its worst, is like pulling teeth without anesthetic. Motivation is not always part of the average undergraduate's demeanor when they walk into a college classroom for a library session. They are there because they are required to be there. Some actively participate without prodding, but others just don't see the value or feel they already know the information.

Older students are a breath of fresh air. They are at a point in their lives where they could easily rationalize a life spent on a golf course or relaxing on a beach, yet here they are, spending the day in a classroom.

Instructors could not ask for better students than the older adult. They energize a room with their enthusiasm and desire to learn. They bring with them an appreciation for the opportunity to learn. They readily admit what they don't know and are anxious to fill the gaps. Whereas some regular classes can drain an instructor because they take so much effort to encourage participation and active learning, a session with older adults only leaves me excited and happy about my chosen profession and feeling very appreciated. Almost every older adult class ends in applause—quite an ego booster.

See Looking Forward page 16



Katy Lenn enjoys the enthusiasm older library users exhibit.

The Challenge of Teaching to the Heart and Mind

by John Budd

School of Information Science
and Learning Technologies
University of Missouri-Columbia

It's probably a safe assumption that almost all of the contributors to this special issue of the *Oregon Library Association Quarterly* are practicing librarians. These remarks may be a bit of a departure from the other comments. Actually, this may be a fortuitous time for a library and information science educator to be speaking about the rewards, the gratifications, the excitement, and the sense of purpose of teaching in this field. The recent ALA-sponsored Congress on Professional Education was convened to address some concerns with LIS education now and into the future. I won't pretend that there is no reason for concern; the degree of change we've all faced has produced some tensions and, perhaps, some uncertainty. The change has certainly affected LIS master's programs, and many programs have altered their curricula and even their missions in some response to the change. I will hasten to state here that the following represents only my own personal experience and thoughts; I do not pretend to speak for all of LIS education or even any one program.

With the above as a preface, let me introduce myself. I earned a master's degree in LIS in 1979 and worked for several years in an academic library. Early in my career I was drawn to the educational side of the profession, in part because it would present an opportunity to investigate some of the questions that the profession faces, and in larger part because it would offer an opportunity to influence the future of the profession. As we all know, the particulars of an educational program tend to be somewhat fleeting; we may recall only a limited number of specific exercises or assignments a few years after graduation, if any at all. On the other hand, a rewarding educational experience can have a transforming effect. It can reshape our thinking and our ways of looking at the purpose of the profession. It is that potential that drew me to the life of a teacher. This may seem a bit egotistical, but I've always felt that by reaching people through teaching and scholarship, I could realize one of my deepest desires—to change thinking in LIS.

Some aspects of teaching are skill-based and can be learned. These include the organization of a course, communication of expectations for student performance, effective presentation of material, use of various media, and eliciting participation by all involved. These elements are necessary for a meaningful educational experience, but they may not be sufficient. I believe something additional is needed for the experience to be transformative—the teacher has to be genuinely excited by the content. The teacher must believe that the course content is rooted in the purpose of our profession and that learning is the route to realizing that purpose. In my own experience, the teachers who have made a difference have been those who are not just knowledgeable and who don't just have a command of pedagogical skills. The transforming teachers, for me, have been those who have been able to shift my entire perspective, to alter the ways in which I've thought. These individuals, among whom have been Edward G. Holley and Lester Asheim, have brought out in me not just an understanding of the functions of libraries and librarianship, but a deep sense of personal fulfillment in this work.

Of course that sense of fulfillment is essentially reflective of what students experience. It does the teacher little

The teacher must believe that the course content is rooted in the purpose of our profession and that learning is the route to realizing that purpose.

good to think that she or he is doing a great job if none of the students really learn. The sense of fulfillment extends beyond learning (although learning is certainly an essential part of the experience). I feel the greatest personal reward when a student becomes excited about our profession and is motivated to contribute to librarianship. It's extremely gratifying to see former students at conferences and to find out that they are now active in our associations and are working at state, regional, and national levels for the betterment of the profession. Without that activity by students I confess there is a feeling of failure. As Juanita Benedicto said in her call for papers, "Good librarianship cannot be reduced to systematic strategy or learned technique." There is much more than that to a profession.

We have to recognize that it's not possible for a teacher to give students identity—that must come from within. It is possible for the teacher to exemplify what the

profession and the discipline stand for. That necessitates a genuine sense of identity on the part of the teacher. The individuals mentioned above showed me, during my own student experience, the possibilities of librarianship. They never failed to present their ideas about the purpose of librarianship or to communicate their own quest to know more about what we do. That intellectual curiosity, so essential to their roles as teachers, helped me to find my own way. I should hasten to add that the discovery of professional identity is never complete; it's not a single event. It's a lifelong journey of learning, of seeking knowledge. Realization that there is no end to discovery may be daunting, but acceptance that learning and discovery continue throughout our lives is, for me, one of the most exciting and sustaining parts of professional life.

I mentioned earlier that the ideal educational experience is transformative: it should elicit a change in all involved. That requires my being open to learning from students, hearing their thoughts and ideas and finding meaning in what they say. It also requires, I believe, searching for intersections and unifications of the various elements of our profession. A frequently-stated concern by students and practitioners is that educational programs focus too much on theory, to the detriment of practice. I see our educational responsibility as seeking out the conjoining of theory and practice. It's not possible to have an idea of professional purpose without theorizing. Each time we consider better ways to organize collections and to serve communities we think about the conceptual foundations of librarianship. These are substantial challenges, but they also represent the excitement of our field. They represent the most fundamental task of the teacher—enabling an understanding on the parts of students that practice is a critical process, a process of conception and then application of the ideas we develop regarding organization, service, etc. The challenge for me is developing such an understanding for myself. What this means is that I have to be willing to transform.

A recent experience probably illustrates most clearly what can be the best thing about teaching. During the spring semester of 1999 several students expressed the desire to discuss the issues that are affecting us all in librarianship and further said that they didn't find sufficient opportunity for discussion in formal classes. We decided to get together once a week at a local coffee shop. Each of us brings something to the discussion—an article in a journal, a posting from a listserv, a statement from a Web site. We can then exchange ideas about the topics the students are most interested in. This has been a very rewarding experience. Everyone is there by choice, not because we're scheduled for a class. Everyone can get as animated and passionate about a topic as she or he wants. Each person can challenge the rest. The structure of an official course sometimes limits the subject matter and the willingness of people to speak. A less formal setting allows everyone to shed some insecurity and to explore ideas. I look forward to

each Thursday afternoon and the opportunity to see the light in students' eyes and to hear the excitement in their voices. Maybe that's the ultimate teaching experience. Maybe that's what makes it worthwhile for me.

It may be apparent from this piece that I really can't separate mind from heart. For me the excitement of learning and discovery strikes at the core of my being. This is what led me to the job I have, and it's what keeps me in it. It's difficult to describe the almost physical thrill of a new idea or of coming to a clearer understanding of some issue related to our discipline. Trying to instill some of that excitement, trying to foster the connection between mind and heart in students, is the purpose I find in LIS education. And just as mind and heart are linked for me, so too are the personal and the professional. My answers to the questions of what I do and what I am would be essentially the same. I don't think I'd want it any other way. ☐

You can reach John Budd at libsjmb@showme.missouri.edu.

It's difficult to describe the almost physical thrill of a new idea or of coming to a clearer understanding of some issue related to our discipline. Trying to instill some of that excitement, trying to foster the connection between mind and heart in students, is the purpose I find in LIS education.

The Sharing Heart

by *Steven Engelfried*
Children's Librarian
Deschutes Public Library System

I never thought of being a librarian when I was a kid. Not even as a fallback just in case my inevitably successful NBA career was cut short by injury. But if I had said I'd be a librarian someday, people who knew me would have said: "That's perfect. Libraries are quiet, and so are you." Fifteen years later, with a fruitless English degree (my inevitably successful great American novel didn't materialize either) and three years as a bookkeeper (the most exciting thing about that career was being able to say that my job title had three consecutive double letters... somehow, that's not enough), I thought about becoming a librarian. I liked books and I was kind of interested in computers. Besides, I was still one of the most introverted people I'd ever met (although, of course, introverts don't meet many people). So I pictured myself quietly cataloguing books in a basement room somewhere, or maybe pursuing research relentlessly. Others would turn my humble efforts into ground-breaking literature and I would quietly claim a bit of credit for myself.

I enrolled in the University of California, Berkeley Library School and took some classes. They were interesting enough, but "Children's Literature" stood out. This class made me remember where my love of reading really started. When I was a kid, I not only read books, but I talked about them with brothers and sisters (I had six). It struck me that I might really enjoy talking about books with people and sharing favorite authors and stories just like I did with my family growing up. I realized a children's librarian does this. So the following semester I took "Storytelling." The notion of telling a story to classmates, most of whom had done this before, terrified me; but things I learned in the class helped me through it. I came to realize that the folk tales I would tell had survived hundreds of years and thousands of storytellers. No one had killed them yet. So a shy, introverted former bookkeeper couldn't do much harm, as long as he stuck to the story. I practiced *The Foolish Man*, my first tale, for weeks until I knew it perfectly. The events of the story were so neatly contrived that the audience would get it, regardless of my delivery. The performance was not perfect, but the story worked, and the pattern of relying on the strength of the story has carried me through twelve years as a children's librarian.

Soon after library school I found a job and started telling stories and talking about books with kids. For the most part the first year went pretty well, although there were some difficult moments. During a televised awards presentation for young authors I forgot my speech and stared silently at the camera for thirty seconds. It felt like thirty years. But dreaded moments like these weren't such a big deal. The smiles and appreciation that came my way easily outweighed the mistakes. I found that by putting myself in front of a group of kids, armed with good books and stories, I was making a difference! Kids would ask for copies of the titles, and kindergartners would acquire their first library cards with excitement glowing in their eyes. Even the rough times ended triumphantly. I visited one fifth grade class during my first year in which the teacher had absolutely no control, and I felt like I was talking to the air. I pushed on, telling myself that the books I'd selected were worth the effort. A few days later, one girl from that class came in asking for a book I'd talked about, *Julie of the Wolves*. I found out then that I could handle being ignored by 29 kids if the 30th listened and became excited about reading.

By choosing good books and stories, I recognized I didn't have to win an audience over with my person-



Steven marches in a parade as "Cat in the Hat."

ality. *Frog and Toad* were the funny guys, and *The Gunniwolf* was scary. Me, I was simply the go-between, introducing the characters to the kids. But things eventually got muddled. Maybe the characters in the stories were funny, but I was the one receiving the laughter, not *Frog and Toad*. I'd walk into a classroom with books and maybe a puppet or two and I'd hear someone say, "this guy's funny." I have to admit, I loved it! Gradually I got to a point where I was glad, even eager, to share the spotlight with the characters in my stories. In other words: I became a ham. After years of avoiding any kind of attention, I actually looked forward to standing in front of a bunch of kids and entertaining them (as long as I had the security of books and puppets along with me). I like to think I've kept things in perspective. I realize I'd be nothing without *Anansi the Spider* and *The Big Bad Wolf*, and that if I were asked to speak to a group of kids about anything that didn't have to do with books and the library I'd be just another boring grown-up. But this shtick works out fine, because spreading the library message is not only fun, but what I want to do.

The work I do is important. I knew from the start that getting kids excited about books, reading, and the library was valuable, and that people who did this made a

difference in the world. It would have been disappointing to have missed out just because I was shy. 🐸

You can reach Steven at stevene@co.deschutes.or.us.

By choosing good books and stories, I recognized I didn't have to win an audience over with my personality. *Frog and Toad* were the funny guys, and *The Gunniwolf* was scary. Me, I was simply the go-between, introducing the characters to the kids.



Halloween storytelling.

Creating a Forum: Planning Author Events at the Tigard Public Library

by *Kate Miller*
Adult Services Librarian
Tigard Public Library

I grew up in New York around writers because my mother and her cohorts were writers. The writing community in New York is immense in comparison to the more intimate writing community in Oregon. Directly after college, I moved to Portland and took a job in a small bookstore. Arriving in Oregon in 1992, I had never heard such names as Tom Spanbauer or Ursula Le Guin. How amazing it was to learn not only their names but also their faces, for they, among others, were regular customers at the store. Meeting authors was just one of the perks of working at the bookstore. Little did I know the value those exchanges would have in the career ahead of me.

Over the three years I worked at the bookstore, I tried to figure out what I wanted to do for a career. I realized that in many ways, I was doing the work I was cut out for. The library degree was, for me, a natural way to extend the love I had for helping customers find good books to read.

When I got out of library school I was sure that I wanted to work in an academic library. Most of my coursework had focused on the academic environment, and I believed that academic library work would be the most prestigious. Ironically, at the time I was applying, most of the jobs announced were public positions. Now, having

worked in a public library for a year and a half, I feel that I belong in the public sector. My bookstore background in popular literature and my familiarity with serving the general public are perfectly suited to the setting of the public library.

My job is threefold: I work on the reference desk, I do collection development for adult fiction, literature and non-fiction bestsellers, and I design programs for adult patrons. The reference work most closely mirrors the work I did before, especially when the questions involve readers' advisory. I lean heavily on my knowledge of the bookstore's inventory in readers' advisory as well as in my collection development duties. I find tremendous satisfaction in the three arenas of my position. But of all three, it is the work I have done implementing programs that has allowed me to soar both professionally and personally, as it's here that I find I most challenge myself and reap the greatest rewards, or conversely, the most significant let-downs. I find that planning these programs reveals a lot about who I am.

The 1998 season was the first opportunity I had to work on the six-week Adult Reading Program that Tigard Public Library offers every fall. The program's finale is a gala to which the patrons who have completed the program are invited. In the previous season, a precedent was set to have regional authors appear at the gala to speak to the guests. This time, it was up to me to arrange for the authors to appear.

It was easier than I imagined. The Adult Reading Program is a very popular one, and each year approximately seventy-five people receive invitations to come to the gala with a guest. We routinely have a turnout of over one hundred people for the event. Naturally, authors are thrilled to be asked to speak and sign books when you can guarantee them a sizable audience. So I was eager to offer authors the chance to participate. The only difficult part was choosing which authors to call.



Twenty-two people attended the Gregg Kleiner event. Here, Kate Miller is flanked by audience members during a discussion about *Where River Turns to Sky*.



Gregg Kleiner and Kate Miller enjoy the comments from the audience.

Joanna Rose, author of the novel, *Little Miss Strange*, was first. I chose her for a couple of reasons. Although *Little Miss Strange* was her first published novel, the book was a word-of-mouth hit in the Portland area, and Rose's name was quickly gaining recognition. In addition, as a former bookstore employee I knew that Joanna Rose was the publicist and literary programmer for Powell's books, and I hoped that she would empathize with me, a new librarian launching a literary program. As it turned out, Rose was thrilled to be asked to speak at the gala, and she gave me the names of several other authors she thought might also be interested. After talking with Rose, I felt closer to the center of the Oregon writing community than ever before. And within a couple of weeks, I had commitments from five authors to speak at the gala. But there was still much work to be done.

The entire project took place over four months. Coordinating the actual author appearances was only a part of the process. I arranged with a local bookseller to sell the authors' books at the gala. I helped plan a book-talk program to kick off the six week reading program in which we book-talked the gala authors' books to entice patrons to finish the program and attend the gala. And there was endless paperwork to prepare: publicity, handouts, surveys, etc. Planning a program of this scale required an enormous effort by a committee of staff members and volunteers. There were times when I felt engulfed, but I was also proud of all that was accomplished, and, along the way, I gained a sense of ownership of the process.

All of the preparation culminated that night in late November as the guests and authors began to arrive. I have memories of travelling with my mother when she went out on tour for a book. I remember the graciousness of the librarians and booksellers who hosted us, how enamored they were to be in the presence of my mother, the author. Now I was the enamored one meeting each of the authors, hosting them, introducing them before their speeches.



Gregg Kleiner reads from his book.

Each one got up and talked about how libraries had influenced their lives and their writing careers. Their words were potent, like a compelling sermon, writers talking to readers about the importance of libraries. It was magical to see how our readers were moved, spell-bound even. For me, it served as a poignant reminder of why I chose a career in this field. In my work as a librarian, I match people up with books I hope they will love, and, in doing so, I help to form connections between readers and writers. The gala offered me an opportunity to bring writers and readers together in a room. For Tigard Library readers, spending this time with the authors was a gift, a chance for them to feel kindred with a writer whose words they admired. That night, I felt I delivered a valuable service to our patrons.

After the gala, I was excited. I was sure that a congregation had been created, and that these patrons would show up in droves to attend author readings and subsequent events at the library. I immediately booked Floyd Skloot, an Oregon Book Awards nominee, to read from his novel and talk about his experience as a book reviewer at *The Oregonian*. As a bonus, I asked him to preview a selection of books soon to be reviewed.

I went all out with publicity. I wrote an article for the local paper, *Cityscape*, and listed it in the monthly calendar. I reviewed the novel, *The Open Door*, for a local paper called *The Regal Courier* and mentioned the event. I got it listed in the *Willamette Week* and in two separate listings in *The Oregonian*. I created a knockout poster with Skloot's photograph and distributed it to bookstores and the senior center, as well as around the library. I phoned a number of the gala guests to invite them personally. I implored my friends, my family, my coworkers, and members of my writing group to attend.

The event was scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on a Thursday evening. At 7:05 I had the circulation staff make a final announcement over the P.A. and then I told Mr. Skloot to go ahead and get started. There were seven people in the room, including two other staff members, Skloot, his wife and myself. It was a wonderful program, and Floyd Skloot was remarkably gracious to go on with it, though I could tell he was discouraged. For my part, I was mortified because it seemed to be such a waste of his time. I apologized to him, and made a commitment to myself to find another avenue, a way to prevent what happened to Skloot from happening to other authors. I decided that I would spend the winter gathering an audience. Only after the formation of a dedicated group, would I invite another writer to the library.

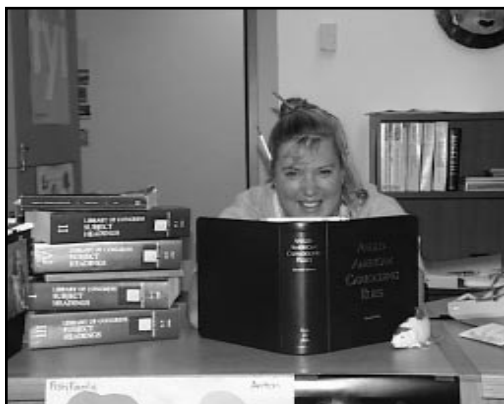
One of my goals had been to start a book discussion group. A number of patrons had requested it, but I

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Cataloging the Heart of a Librarian

by *Lenora Oftedahl*
Librarian
StreamNet Library, Columbia River
Inter-Tribal Fish Commission

- 043 n-us-or #a n-us-wa
090 Z638.4 .C38 #b O37 1966
100 Jans, Karla J. #q (Karla Jean), #d 1940-
245 Lenora Anne Oftedahl #h [realia] / #c by
Karla J. Jans & William T. Jans
246 Lenora Anne Jans.
250 1st edition
260 Memphis, Tenn. : K.J. & W.T. Jans,
1966.
300 1 human body ; 175 cm.
440 Bill Jans Family siblings ; #v no. 2
500 Favorite high: Hitting the final action when
entering a new record on OCLC and making
them pay.
500 Other interests include crafts, sewing,
gardening, playing, collecting Sylvester and
other cats, rescuing animals and being gener-
ally happy.



So, this is what AACR2R looks like!

545 An intensely curious person who enjoys starting and learning new things. Finishing things is a separate issue. Has a husband and two children who suffer because of and from her addiction to books and reading.

561 Born in Memphis, Tenn., lived in Washington, Guam, California, Virginia, Arizona, South Dakota and returned to Washington. Spent time as Technical Services Coordinator at Northern State University, Substitute Librarian at Ft. Vancouver Regional Library, Assistant Librarian and now Librarian at the StreamNet Library, Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.

600 Oftedahl, Lenora A. #q (Lenora Anne), #d 1966-

650 Catalogers #z Washington.

650 Working mothers #z Oregon.

650 Encyclopedists.

700 Jans, William T. #q (William Thomas), #d 1941-

Ok, so I didn't exactly start out my life wanting to be a librarian. The career found me. After numerous doors were slammed shut in my face, I finally found one that opened to graduate school in library science at the University of Arizona. Here, I was granted fantastic opportunities to work in not just one of the many libraries, but two: music and law. I cataloged and organized all kinds of material and through this, I realized I wanted to bring order to the chaos. Cataloging, classifying, putting things where I believed they should go... this is the puzzle I wanted to solve.

A couple of years later, I graduated and leapt into my first professional position, my eyes on the heavens and my feet on the ground. During my first year, I identified at least ten years' worth of cataloging projects I wanted to complete. My aim was to make materials easier for students to find. I bent rules about cataloging videos so they would sit next to the books they were based on rather than in the movie section of the library. I made no judgments about how well the details and plot of the movie matched those written by the author (that's harder than some think). Through all the long hours coupled with little pay, it was the endorphins firing in my brain from the joy I felt doing this work (like when I created a good catalog record on OCLC) that really kept me going.

About six years later my family and I moved to the Pacific Northwest where I got a job as a Substitute Librarian working in reference. While being a reference librarian can be great fun, (ah, the questions you get

See Oftedahl page 16

The Heart of a Librarian

by *Rebecca Cohen*
Newport Public Library

The heart of this librarian began to form at the age of three when I was first introduced to the magic of libraries. I wanted to live there, to curl up on a bookshelf at night and simply stay. Having grown up in small-town Oregon, the only libraries I knew were the tiny, volunteer-run variety open two or three days a week. Yet, they never ceased to delight me. To me, the people who sat at the desk were my ticket to the entire world and beyond. No matter what I wanted to know or read, they found it for me.

Although my enthusiasm for libraries never faded, it wasn't until my children were born that I seriously contemplated a professional relationship with my beloved libraries. Attending weekly storytimes at the small town library with my children put me under the spell of Blythe Jorgensen. Her enthusiasm was contagious and my budding interest in children's librarianship blossomed under her mentorship. After ten years of workshops, classes, and storytimes, I was hired for my first (and so far only) job as a children's librarian.

What a surprise to discover that librarianship was so much more than storytimes and reference desk hours. As a librarian, people expected me to know everything—well, almost—or at least be able to find it. From the exact date of Tzar Alexander's execution to snoring remedies, I heard it all. A funny thing happened over the years: I found that I could answer these questions, or at least confidently know how to go about doing so.

It was an even greater revelation to discover what being a children's librarian had done for me outside the library. I'm popular! I'm often stopped in the grocery store by a "knee-hugger" whose parent looks on with consternation as a child attaches herself to me and declares that she loves me, my stories, and most especially, my mascot, Lawrence the Library Bunny. It's also not uncommon to find myself processing a reference query for someone while standing in the line at the bank. Then there's always the race down the halls at one of the schools to act as a courier of materials overdue to their library but improperly returned to ours. And of course, my favorite: doing reader's advisory everywhere I go.

As significant as these outward developments are, the changes to my inner self are even more profound. At one time, the thought of speaking to 600 high school



Rebecca Cohen,
Storyweaver at the
Newport Public
Library.

students at an all school assembly was enough to bring on an anxiety attack. Now, just the anticipation sharpens all my senses! I go into overdrive and expect that what I say and do

will be received with some degree of success. It is that absolute expectation of success that most amazes me. Furthermore, the confidence gained after presenting thousands of such programs to all different types of people seeps into many aspects of my life. I now find myself at family reunions, company picnics, or large gatherings of any kind being the one who readily steps forward when a "director" is required. If an invitation to speak is given, my hand is up.

Another quality that has carried over from my work as a librarian is an amazing ability to organize anything. Summer reading programs demand the absolute most when it comes to detail and follow-up. This trait has transferred to home life in unexpected ways. In my previous life, I "piled, not filed." Now, my grocery list gets written down in order of the aisles at my favorite store and the bookcases at home are organized by Dewey, sans the spine labels. Thanks to this organizational expertise, I've had a number of sublime moments when an event that I've coordinated goes off flawlessly.

All these qualities have been a great benefit to my life, but what I treasure most is the standing I've earned with the children of my community. Being loved by innumerable children is a benefit that I never envisioned when I began this work. Knowing that children and parents trust me implicitly fills me with pride as well as an awesome responsibility to merit that stature and the privilege. It reaffirms my underlying belief in being ever upright and true, for there are always little ones watching, and learning from me. Librarianship keeps me honest. 📖

You can reach Rebecca at storyweaver@newportnet.com.

Growing from the Heart

by *Claudia Jones*
Wallowa County Library

My affinity with Oregon libraries began more than forty years ago in rural Josephine County. Raised in a family of avid readers, library outings were an important part of our weekly schedule. My mother had a passion for mystery and intrigue. While my brother and I were happily occupied in the children's room, she would head off into the stacks in search of the latest Agatha Christie or Dell Shannon. Her love of reading had a powerful influence on us as children, establishing a pattern we would follow later with our own families. Because the public library was a welcoming place, and my introduction to the world of books a happy one, I've maintained a strong connection to libraries wherever we've lived.

During the early 1970's, I worked in the circulation and reference departments at the Jackson County Library System. Cross-training opportunities in branches, periodicals and children's services provided a broad level of experience that served me well in later years as our family was an itinerant one. My husband's profession required frequent moves to small towns around Oregon and I discovered that volunteering was an excellent means of becoming involved in each new community. As soon as we finished unpacking, we'd head off in search of the local library. Offering to shelve books and provide weekly story times was a great icebreaker, and one guaranteed to make friends with staff and townspeople alike.



Claudia loads the van for a trip to the Troy branch library.

Today I am the director of a small rural library system in northeast Oregon. The variety of skills and experience I've gained from more than three decades of library work have been essential to the position I now hold. My job description includes the usual requirement for knowledge of collection development, youth services, reference, cataloging and budgeting, and I often find myself filling the roles of three people in a single morning. The challenge of "doing it all" is balanced by the unique opportunities that come from living and working in a small community.



New library bookcases built by Bob Jones, library volunteer.

I've found that there is no such thing as a typical day for the librarian of a small rural library. There are entire weeks when the phone never stops ringing, the books pile up in heaps, and it seems as if every student in the county is doing a report on the same subject. That's about the time that the computer goes down or the bathroom sink springs a leak! Because I am the only paid staff, my responsibilities extend to building and equipment maintenance too. During the winter months I shovel the snow away from the front door where it slides off the metal roof and lands in a heap. It can be a real adventure just digging the library van out from the drifts where it has been buried by the city snowplow. For major projects I call on the library's volunteer maintenance man, mechanic and carpenter... my husband Bob. Endlessly supportive and good-natured, he has built bookcases, repaired leaking faucets and installed storm windows. During last winter's cold snap when the water pipes froze solid for three days, he crawled under the building in below zero temperatures to thaw them and apply insulation. In addition to his contributions of time and energy, the gift I value the most is his recognition and support of what I do. His belief in me has strengthened me and given me the confidence to explore new possibilities.

Much of what I like best about working in rural library settings is the variety of tasks and the ingenious methods we devise to provide service. Most days I find my-

self juggling meetings and book orders with story time schedules and requests for curriculum support materials from one of the area schools. The Troy and Imnaha branch libraries, located in one-room schoolhouses in remote canyons, serve as both school and community libraries. Requests for materials about ancient civilizations or the seasons are followed by appeals for books on pruning trees or raising rabbits. Responding to requests from these remote locations is a challenge in itself. Concerned about timely delivery of materials, but constrained by a limited postage budget, the solution came in the guise of the local sanitation crew. Now our garbage truck drivers volunteer to transport boxes of books to the canyons on their regularly scheduled pick-up days.

This arrangement is due to a close association with the Child Care Resource & Referral director whose husband is one of the drivers. The library/CCR&R partnership was formed four years ago with the advent of the library's Training Wheels program. This service to daycares and preschools provides onsite story times, monthly newsletters for parents, and circulating boxes of children's materials. The success of the program is largely due to the support of local partners and additional funding from a state library grant. It's meeting challenges like these that invigorate me and remind me each day why I do what I do.

I have grown in this job in ways I never expected.



The road to Troy.

Eleven years ago, the job's most pressing needs consisted of organization, collection development and the coordination of services with local libraries. Each of these areas required a combination of skills and personal strength I could assuredly provide. The growth of library programs and outreach services in recent years has challenged and strengthened me to a much greater degree. Presentations to local agencies and service organizations have become easier. Those who know me now will have difficulty believing I was painfully shy as a child. I have learned to ask for donations to support programming, and am always gratified at the response. Further, my first grant proposal

ultimately funded the Training Wheels project. When faced with the task of describing the need for reliable transportation on remote canyon roads, I resorted to taking pictures of the roads I traveled and the ancient police car that served as my library-on-wheels. I have learned that communicating need and being passionate about a program may be as important in successful grant writing as the mechanics are. It is my belief that a strong commitment to service, knowing how to stretch dollars, and a sense of humor are vitally important. Being passionate about what I do carries me over the difficult times of budget reductions, personnel issues, long hours and short pay. Being passionate also helps me stay open to change.

I am a librarian today because of parents who first introduced me to the magic and wonder of books, and dedicated library staffs who nurtured my love for reading. This profession has provided me with opportunities for professional as well as personal growth. I have been able to pursue an interest in working with children and families, and have participated in collaborations to develop community outreach programs. Partnerships with local and state agencies have increased my awareness of current issues, and have challenged me to rethink the library's role in serving families.

I have worked with librarians from around the state and am privileged to call many of you friends. Your commitment to libraries and your willingness to lend support and encouragement has inspired me. There isn't anything else I'd rather be doing than working in Oregon libraries. ☑

Claudia Jones can be reached at claudia@oregontrail.net.



Celebrating the Week of the Young Child at Storytime.

Looking Forward

(Continued from page 5)



To be fair to the undergraduates, they are often concerned about grades, tests, or assignments. One of the benefits of an older adult class is that they are unencumbered by these burdens. Many sessions are run in more of a workshop fashion. This arrangement makes it easier for the instructor, and also creates a more relaxed learning environment for the student.

As with most learning experiences, the teacher usually learns something in a class. For me, that effect is magnified in a class of older students. The lifetime of experiences they've had and share with the class can be fascinating. Their research topics also reflect their life experiences and diversity. The stereotypical geriatric topics—Medicare, social security, and health problems do not dominate their interests. I've learned about artists, other countries, historical events (from people who participated in the events), and wines by helping them with their research interests. In addition, as I am unlikely to know the latest hip-hop star, I appreciate that older students understand my references to older topics and events.

Finally, at a deeper level, I think I enjoy this group of students because I find them reassuring. It is exciting to see what the "third age" has in store for me. I have living proof that the mass media stereotype is not the norm.

These instructional experiences touch many of the reasons I became a librarian. I am able to share my knowledge, work with people, delve into interesting topics and information needs, and create independent researchers all while working with a receptive and grateful audience.

I hope that every librarian has a talisman that invigorates and reinforces their reason for being a librarian as much as mine does. ☐

In addition to working with older adults, Katy is involved in UO's Get Ready Program and is the education and linguistics specialist. Katy can be reached at klenn@oregon.uoregon.edu.

Oftedahl

(Continued from page 12)



(at a public library information desk) it just doesn't flip my switch the way a really good cataloging challenge can. When I got hired to catalog at the StreamNet Library, Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, it was just what I was after: a challenge. How does one catalog on OCLC for a library with a very small budget allowance for OCLC? The cataloger has to do a lot of original work. I try. In fact, OCLC owed us money for a couple of months. I hope other libraries find my work acceptable.

And how does all this show in my daily life? Check the introduction. I cataloged myself for fun! My work is a challenge. I thrive on challenges. It's an exercise to look up the rules, find the correct MARC tag for a Provenance note, and look up the class number for a person. I could have chosen other classifications to be sure, but my life revolves around organization and accurate, detailed description of the world around me. To look at my house, one would never guess just how passionately I feel about my chosen profession and cataloging. I vibrate with emotion; my soul sings out with glee that I have found a field where I get to feel this joy every day of my life. I WANT to go to work everyday, and not just because they pay me. I would volunteer to do this work, but my husband has this thing about paying the bills.

My husband says I'm a workaholic. I'm not really because I don't view what I do as work. I'm playing a grand and wonderful game. This is FUN. Reading is FUN. Being around so much information is FUN. Being able to find out what the outhouse down the street is worth to a collection is FUN. Classifying the hundredth book in SH167 is FUN. Finding out which MARC tag the Hydrologic Unit Code belongs in is FUN. Creating the perfect catalog record is the ultimate bliss. I have yet to reach Nirvana, but I strive for it everyday.

Cataloging is not the be all and end all of librarianship for me. I enjoy playing sleuth and tracking down that elusive unpublished manuscript for the scientist working on white sturgeon. I get a kick out of helping the fifth-grade student find a recipe from Medieval times. There are times I even find myself enjoying the administrative that comes with running the whole show. But if you want to know what makes me soar, it's bringing order to chaos: creating structure out of the ambiguous, disembodied information landscape that occupies my desk and fills my work week. Give me my AACR2R, LCSH and all the other cataloging tools, lock me in a room and I'll catalog the carpet if you leave me there long enough, loving every minute. ☐

Lenora Oftedahl can be reached at fishlib@critfc.org.

Creating a Forum

(Continued from page 11)

had been so busy working on the Adult Reading Program events, that I had not had time to organize it. In January, I began by putting out calls to those interested to attend a planning meeting, which resulted in a group of twelve planners who came together in February. At this meeting, we decided to meet once a month and to read primarily general fiction but also popular non-fiction. I proposed that we read books written by local authors on a quarterly basis, and promised I would arrange for those authors to attend the discussions. They agreed with this proposal.

The book group has proven to be a solid program. I have a mailing list of over twenty people. On average, twelve show up for a meeting. In June, I have scheduled Gregg Kleiner to facilitate the discussion of his novel *Where River Turns to Sky*. It tells the story of six strangers who take up residency in a ramshackle mansion in order to live their final days with company and dignity. I expect an engaging discussion, and I have my fingers crossed that there will be people there to participate in it. I have done the publicity. I have designed the poster. I have told my family and friends. I have told the discussion group members to bring their families and friends. But whether or not I fill the house, I am secure knowing that there are twelve to twenty people out there reading Kleiner's book who will have a vested interest in attending. And I am confident that they will.

In a year and a half, I have had triumph and heartache in my work implementing literary programs at the Tigard Library. The Adult Reading Program was an invigorating way to begin my work, but the overwhelming success of the gala set me up for disappointment in implementing programs on a smaller scale. The Adult Reading Program is an established program, and the gala is a lavish affair. For many of our adult patrons, the six-week program may be the only time all year they commit to reading. The Skloot event suffered because it fell outside of the Adult Reading Program. And yet, professionally, it is necessary for me to develop signa-

ture programs that do not fall within the Adult Reading Program. Involving writers in library programs is, for me, at the core of literary programming. Thus, my challenge has been to find a way to motivate patrons to attend other author-related events at the library.

I am hoping the book discussion group will provide an additional venue for hosting authors at the Tigard Library. For Gregg Kleiner's visit, I decided to have the author facilitate the discussion of his own book. In the future, I would also like to have authors facilitate discussions of books they love by other authors rather than their own books. Although the discussions will probably not have the grandeur of the gala event, I am excited to be able to offer book group members the chance to gather around a table for a discussion with an author. In an intimate setting, I hope to foster a sense of familiarity between the book group members and the community of writers.

As a bookstore clerk, I was enchanted to discover my own proximity to this region of writers. As a librarian, I work to introduce library patrons to books written by local authors. Part of this work involves creating opportunities for readers to meet with the authors of books they've enjoyed. Devising this forum has been difficult, but it has caused me to scrutinize both my methods and my reasons for pursuing it. I have discovered that providing this service to Tigard patrons is the fundamental mission of my work, and that the process of making it happen is essential to my development as a librarian. It causes me to discover my passions in the field. As I carve out my niche in the profession, I begin to recognize myself, and to realize how my own identity is intrinsically linked to the kind of librarian I continue to become. ■

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