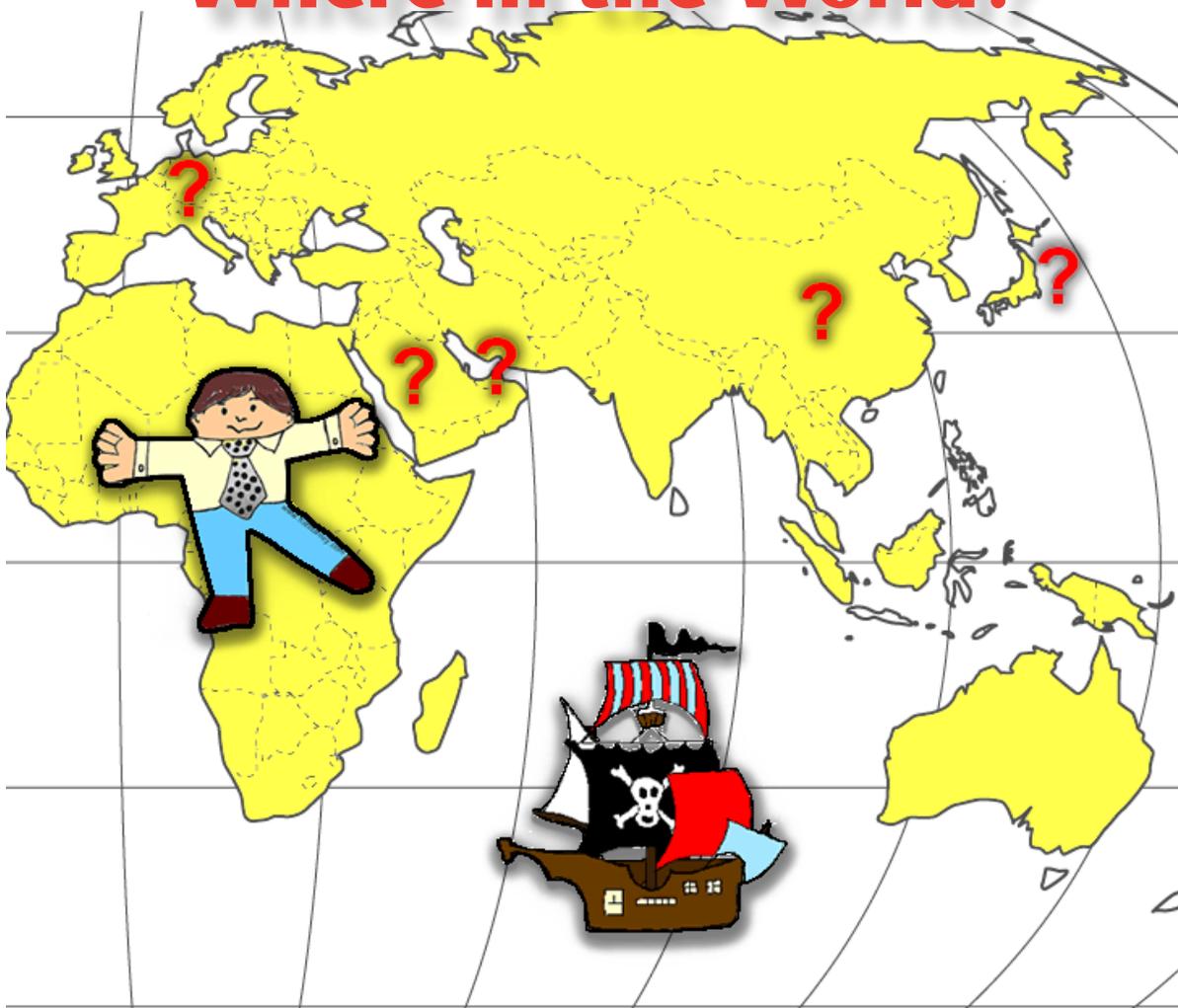


# INTERCHANGE

Journal of the Oregon Association of School Libraries

Spring 2010

**“Where in the World?”**



**School Libraries Overseas**

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# INTERCHANGE

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dba Oregon Educational Media Association**

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OASL provides progressive leadership to pursue excellence in school library media programs by:

- advocating information literacy for all students;
- supporting the highest levels of library media services in schools;
- supporting reading instruction and enjoyment of literature;
- strengthening member professionalism through communication and educational opportunities;
- promoting visibility in education, government and the community

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## Where in the World? School Libraries Overseas

by Janet Murray, Guest Editor



*Janet's friends organized her May 2008 retirement party at a Japanese restaurant by the sea.*

In an earlier chapter in my life, I was an enthusiastic promoter of the Internet's capacity for telecommunications and research. Bob Jonas enrolled in one of the first summer courses I offered as a facilitator for the Online Internet Institute. Although I was the instructor, it was really an adventure in collaborative learning. Before the graphical interface we now know as the World Wide Web was developed, there was a text-based search application known as "gopher." At the end of that course, Bob presented me with a gopher puppet to provide a visual representation of something that was fairly mysterious to Internet novices.

In the same pioneer spirit (but coincidentally), in the late 1990's, we both chose to accept employment in school libraries overseas. Bob describes his adventure in international schools, while I worked for the Department of Defense Dependents' Schools. Former OEMA President Jim Tindall also worked for DoDDS early in his career. There's a persistent theme in these three articles: we all enjoyed the chance to travel, learned to be flexible in our expectations and adaptable to local conditions, and took advantage of the incredible opportunity to learn about other parts of the world.

Bob's wife Susan Stronach exemplifies flexibility: she describes the multiple teaching positions in which she served while awaiting a library opening. Now she has the ideal job as a "librarian in disguise."

While I was in Japan, I had the opportunity to work with American-trained librarians who were anxious to introduce American-style librarianship to Japanese schools. Their story is reprinted with permission.

Robert Sams and his sister Laura have taken a different approach to global issues: as wildlife photographers, they were inspired to show children how they are connected to the oceans, even if they don't live near an ocean. Their book and film have led them to the world of education as guest presenters; their trip to Dubai was sponsored by the Save Our Seas foundation.

If you are intrigued by the possibility of living and working overseas, see the web resources listed at the end of Jonas' article and of mine. If you are not, you can still enrich your students' lives by collecting and promoting multicultural and international literature.

Despite living and working overseas, Bob and I have not abandoned our Oregon roots: we both bought retirement homes on the Oregon coast. I'm living in mine, happily retired, while Bob is still living the adventure.



**From the...**

## **President's Desktop Laptop**

*by Carol Dinges, OASL President*

### **“Need information? Ask a librarian.”**

Where do we school librarians turn when we need information? We ask our fellow school librarians via the OASL Listserv.

Earlier in my career, I was a language arts teacher in medium-to-large high schools. I was always surrounded by fellow language arts teachers to whom I could (and often did) turn to for advice and ideas. It came as an unexpected shock to suddenly lose that supportive community when I changed jobs and became the only library media specialist in my school district. I felt like the sole survivor of a shipwreck, on my own to fend off the sharks circling my leaky raft.

Then I discovered the OASL listserv.

At first I simply read the queries and responses, picking up some good ideas here and there, but not really becoming an active participant. I didn't consider it a significant part of my membership in OASL until one fateful day when I was informed that my library was about to be gutted and rebuilt, and it was my responsibility to figure out how to pack up, move out, and run a library program while “in exile.” As soon as I finished breathing into a paper bag to control my panic-induced hyperventilation, I rather timidly posted a question on the listserv asking if anyone else had done this.

The answers poured in. Come to find out, quite a few of you had gone through the same ordeal, and you had excellent advice and encouraging words for surviving and thriving during a library remodel. We moved out and continued to offer an almost full-service library program from “camp library,” due in large part to the excellent suggestions from my cyber-community of fellow librarians.

Lately I've been reading a series of posts about how others deal with overdue fines. While it wasn't a question that I had asked, the questions and answers I've been reading have caused me to reflect on my own practice – to rethink how to best encourage circulation while at the same time prompting students to be responsible for returning books in a timely manner in my own library.

I know, I know... E-mail messages can fill our inboxes with all kinds of things we're not interested in. However, the online discussions on the OASL listserv are often worth tuning into, even if they don't appear at first to affect us. I wasn't thinking about modifying my overdue fine policy, but reading the various responses made me aware that there were issues I hadn't considered before – and that perhaps I should be revisiting my policies. In short, the OASL listserv provides the platform for us to connect with one another to find answers, share ideas, and, ultimately, grow as professionals.

And it lets us librarians ask a librarian, too.

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*Carol Dinges is the current president of OASL. She is a library media specialist at Lebanon High School.*

## International Library Adventure

by Bob Jonas

### Opportunities Overseas— If I knew then what I know now...

I would have done anything years ago to prepare myself to work overseas. But to start this adventure at the age of forty-eight has, in many ways, been an even more meaningful experience. From an educator's well-developed perspective (appreciation for schools that are well funded, kids that come to school ready to learn, and parents that appreciate and value what educators do), my situation is great. For school librarians, the opportunities are stupendous. One of the most highly revered positions in overseas schools right now is the library job. The gene pool is very slim and as the International Baccalaureate (IB) has escalated all over the world, the value placed on research and the promotion of higher level thinking skills has grown tremendously.

My wife (the lovely Ms. Susan) and I both went through the library program at PSU many years ago. You can only imagine the difficulty in finding two library jobs at any school starting at the same time. One of the great things about working internationally is the variety and flexibility schools have in deciding their needs. In addition to the jobs you are hired for, schools will often take advantage of other strengths, sometimes

strengths you never knew you had. One of our best friends was hired to be a tech director even though the position was not fully open. In the meantime, he was asked to teach PE, with an emphasis on swimming. He did not know how to swim!

While I have always started as the K–5 librarian, Susan has had to wait to join me. She has taught middle school language arts/social studies, middle school yearbook, computing, and now, in her current position as K–12 tech integration specialist, she has a résumé that any school would find irresistible. After working in jobs she never dreamed she would have, Susan has been a librarian to kindergarteners, middle and high school kids, and at one school became the Director of Libraries.

### Benefits

When we first got married we knew that travel and working overseas would be an important part of our future. Our primary



*After once again not listening to his wife, Bob contemplates what to do after missing a bus in the middle of nowhere, somewhere in Slovenia.*

intent was always adventure, gaining new perspectives, working with kids and teachers from around the world, while not having to take money out of the bank to support our wanderlust. After our first month in Shanghai, we still had one of our salaries in the bank and about half of the other one. We saved more in the first month overseas than we had in four years in Beaverton—and the Beaverton School District is first rate.

Most good international schools pay for your housing and airfare. You pay for things like telephone, Internet and cable service, and groceries. In two of our posts, we had to pay a minimal local income tax, but as U.S. citizens, we have always had overseas exemptions. In twelve years, we have never been required to pay federal or state income tax. Perks vary at different schools, but some of the most common ones are:

1. excellent professional development,
2. flights home every year or every other year,
3. first rate retirement plans,
4. personal or sick leave days paid for if not used,
5. storage allowance, and
6. top of the line health benefits.

Imagine using your professional funds to attend conferences or

*Continued next page*

workshops in places like Saigon, Bangkok, Chicago, Beijing, Geneva, and Singapore! We have been to all of these cities for conferences.

### **Budget and Orders**

At one of the first meetings with my superintendent in Shanghai, I was asked, “Bob, do you think \$250,000.00 will be enough for the library program?” After my jaw dropped to the floor, my mind whirled with questions like, “What is this based on?” But I wisely held onto that question. The school was growing fast but after never having had more than a few thousand dollars to spend in the States, I was a bit overwhelmed. Still, I had no problem spending and spending and spending. I became the Head Librarian that first year with the responsibility for four growing libraries and an unbelievable budget. During the years we were in Shanghai, we were Follett’s single biggest customer. What a fantastic experience that was.

Ordering is similar in many international schools in that almost all the school’s orders must be placed by the end of December. They are then sent to an international jobber in the States, who pulls all the school’s orders together for container shipment before the next school year begins. By so doing, customs and duties can be avoided in many countries. Depending on where you are, some things are readily available, some impossible to get. We have almost always

ordered 95% of our books from Follett, but there has always been enough flexibility to place quick orders through Amazon, a local English language bookstore, or another international vendor close by.

Book fairs are structured a bit differently because you cannot send any of the books back. To compensate, Scholastic gives a 45% discount. We can then hold a second book fair, sell remaining books at student stores, or just add them to a book fair the following year. Author visits are common although expensive. We have sponsored authors like Roland Smith, Jack Gantos, John Marsden, Joan Bauer, Ruth Heller, and Mem Fox. When you work in an exotic location, they love to come visit.

### **Finding jobs**

In our twelve years overseas, we have worked at five schools. To help us find jobs we have used a company called Search Associates ([www.searchassociates.com](http://www.searchassociates.com)) with excellent results. Although our first job fair was sponsored

by ECIS (European Council of International Schools) in Vancouver, B.C. (where we were offered jobs in Kuwait and Kazakhstan), we waited a month to attend a Search Associates fair in Carmel, California. This was the fair where we were offered our first jobs in Shanghai. After three years, we attended another Search Fair in Boston where we were hired for jobs in Santiago, Chile. Three years in South America, back to Boston, and the next jobs in Beijing. After two years in Beijing, we were asked to help start a brand new school in Hong Kong. One catch: it would not be ready for another year, so we took the entire year off to travel. We loved Hong Kong but the school turned out to be nothing more than a marketing scheme, so this time we recruited at a Search Fair in Bangkok.

At the fair in Bangkok we had to take deep breaths and allow ourselves to be guided by common international school wisdom—be flexible. You never know where a great school may be hiding or is about to be



*Nothing like stepping outside your 500 sq. ft. apartment in one of the most densely packed cities on earth, and instantly joining 150,000 of your Hong Kong neighbors*

resurrected. So here we are, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in a part of the world we never thought we would work. It is not for everyone, but one of the most common refrains from those who have lived here for years is, “We came for a year or two, and ten, fifteen years later we still love it.” We have had more opportunities in this school than we had ever dreamed. The staff, kids, and administration are fantastic. Can you imagine? We are the advisors to this year’s prom committee. We have been asked to give two workshops in a month at a conference in Bangkok (all expenses paid); we have started a Battle of the Books at the middle school and elementary at the same time—all in our first year.

Who knows how long we will be in Arabia, but for now, the future includes implementing Textbook Manager, totally remodeling both libraries, and integrating what we do in a way we have always dreamed about. Not to mention trips to the Pyramids, the safari we have always imagined ourselves taking, Beirut, Damascus, Jordan, Tunisia, Tripoli, etc. etc. Our first trip out of the Kingdom was for a week to Greece, so we are off to a great start.

### **Travel!**

For those adventure seekers and travel buffs—we have traveled in forty countries and twice been on trips that took us around the world. We have gone from the straits of Magellan, to the

straits of Malacca, through the Baltic from Helsinki to Stockholm, from as far south as Tierra del Fuego, to as far north as Harbin, China. From exotic sandy beach vacations in Boracay in the Philippines, to Kota Kinabalu in Malaysia, Hainan Island off the coast of China, to Koh Samui, Thailand—we have sunned. We have trekked in the jungles of Borneo, traveled to the furthest reaches of Tibet and all over China, journeyed through the wilds of Patagonia, tangoed in Buenos Aires, spent a week on Easter Island and a week in Machu Picchu, and trekked halfway up the Karakoram highway from Kashgar to Islamabad. One of our most memorable summers found us traveling the length of Russia on the Tran Serbian Express—from Beijing to Moscow with many great stops in between. And more. All the international schools where we have worked are considered top tier schools. They are not all like this: we have been lucky. In the year 2000, there were 1700 international schools; today there are over 5000. Many of these new schools require close scrutiny as do a number of other schools. Remember, this is an adventure and being flexible is very important. When we first started out we thought,



*In the Monkey Forest in Bali, Bob finally found a willing audience to listen to his tales of adventure.*

along with almost all first timers, that Western Europe would be great. And it might be if you are willing to work where almost none of your expenses are paid, and local taxes hover at about 40%. There is such a huge pool of trailing spouses with a teaching credential, and so many who want to work in this area, that it is easy to get teachers who will work for very little. If we were just starting out, London or Paris or Madrid would have been a great first post. For us, dipping into our savings just to survive was not an option. Again, the great thing about working internationally is the variety of experiences – there is something to suit everyone, as long as you are flexible.

*Continued next page*



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## Recruiting Resources for International Teachers

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Search Associates. [www.searchassociates.com](http://www.searchassociates.com)



International School Services. [www.iss.edu](http://www.iss.edu)



University of Northern Iowa. [www.uni.edu/placement/overseas/osfair.html](http://www.uni.edu/placement/overseas/osfair.html)

- ECIS—European Council of International Schools. [www.ecis.org](http://www.ecis.org)



AASSA—American Association of Schools of South America. [www.aassa.com](http://www.aassa.com)



EARCOS—East Asia Regional Council of Overseas Schools. [www.earcos.org](http://www.earcos.org)

- The International Educator (not a recruiting company but an excellent resource). [www.tieonline.com](http://www.tieonline.com)
- International Schools Review. [www.internationalschoolsreview.com](http://www.internationalschoolsreview.com) This site, where teachers can write a review about schools or Directors where they have worked, is another excellent resource.

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*Bob Jonas began plotting his worldwide travels after reading Thor Heyerdahl's Kon Tiki when he was ten. The Merchant Marine wouldn't have him at the age of 18 because of all those who were sidestepping the draft, so after some of his own sidestepping with a university adventure, he finally graduated and found some of the travel he craved in a semi truck that he drove over a million miles in 12 western states for more years than he wishes to remember. After finally finding the love of his life (the perfect traveling partner) and the perfect job, he hit the road for good.*

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## Librarian in Disguise

by Susan Stronach

### Library background enhances teaching

So what's it like to be a misplaced librarian, masquerading as a Technology Integration Specialist, while living in a foreign land? Well, it's a lot like being a librarian. Having taught overseas for 12 of my 15 years in education and being married to another librarian, I have had to assume many identities to survive. It's difficult to find two library positions open at a school at the same time, so I have taught in the classroom and the computer lab and now find myself with the auspicious title of Technology Integration Specialist (TIS).

In every teaching position I have assumed, I was able to use my library background to drive my teaching. Imagine being fortunate enough to take kids all the way through the Big6 process to reflection and to take them to the library where I can team-teach with my husband. All of those experiences have allowed me to see what it's like from the perspective of the classroom teacher and have primed me for my newest position. Now, as a TIS, I can concentrate on team-teaching with classroom teachers both in their rooms and in the library, where we integrate the technology that develops 21<sup>ST</sup> Century Skills and I can introduce them to the library as an important learning environment.

### 21<sup>ST</sup> Century Learning Skills

There is a lot of talk about 21<sup>ST</sup> Century Learning Skills and what we want our kids to be able to do when they graduate. We want them to be independent users of information, critical thinkers, creative collaborators, and all that good stuff. Sound familiar? It's what we've been teaching in the library profession all along. I am fortunate enough to now work for an administrator who gets it. He understands that the tools and skills and habits librarians teach and promote are the same as those 21<sup>ST</sup> Century Skills everyone is talking about. He sees the importance of having a team of people who work with

classroom teachers to make sure our students are learning these skills and are able to use them independently when they graduate. And he recognizes that my library background makes me a natural leader in this charge.

Our current school is equipped with Smart boards and projectors in almost every classroom and multiple computer labs at each level in both platforms. We also have laptop carts available for class use that can be checked out online by teachers. In the library, we have gotten away from computer carrels and bought netbooks for students to check out and use on the couches or tables,

depending on their learning style. We are a technology-rich school! Our Internet connection speed is slow, which frustrates the kids, but that is typical here in this country.

As in most international school environments, we are fortunate enough to have a tech support team that is fabulous, so I don't have to worry about hardware issues or networking. There are also technology teachers who teach courses from basic applications to multi-media. I get to focus on true



*Working with eighth grade students on the research process at the American International School in Riyadh.*

*Continued next page*

integration and team-teaching with our great staff of teachers who are so happy to have someone to work with to enhance their lessons and curriculum. I give workshops to teachers on blended learning and technology integration. I also give informal, one-on-one sessions to teachers who may want to know more about their Smart Board, or how to use *Noodle Bib* and EBSCO for their own Master's research.

### **Teaching research skills with technology**

In most schools where we have taught, there has been a large portion of the budget allotted to online databases and resources. These are fabulous tools when you have the time to teach kids how to use them. My husband and I have taught kids that they use the same strategies for finding information from online databases as they do naturally when searching on the internet or using the online catalog.

We even make the connection to using indexes and tables of contents in print materials. Making these connections early provides a base for our kids to find, organize and use the information they find effectively.

In my role as TIS, I have concentrated on teaching kids how to use tools like *NoodleBib* and *Turn It In* so they are responsible users of information. *NoodleBib's* electronic notecards have really helped my students achieve that "Aha!" moment in research as they can see how

research is a process and can be broken down into steps, and how they can easily manipulate and organize their information and store it online. The citation process can be tedious but each step is an opportunity for the kids to think about and make a decision along the way. I can also work with my librarian husband to teach the location and access pieces, explaining the library catalog, how it is connected to the actual books and how they can make sense of all of the information they find there.

I have worked with teachers to set up and administer blogs for the English classes so students can publish their work to a larger audience. I am currently working with the eighth graders on a semester long journey through the research process and am able to guide them to make connections between the tools they are using and their own learning. For them, research is less a mystery now, and more a clear process of finding information, organizing it and using it to support their ideas or predictions.

So what is it like to be a librarian in disguise, masquerading as a Technology Integration Specialist in a foreign land? It is almost like I get to do everything a librarian does except for the literature promotion—that isn't in my job description, but I do promote literature when I can. The flexibility of my position allows me to spend a lot of time in the library and the kids have

come to think of me as part of the library team, coming to me for book suggestions whenever I'm around. Next year, if all the planets align, I will be officially in the library part time in addition to my tech integration role, but with a focus on grades 6–12 instead of trying to cover the whole school, K–12. All in all, it is a fantastic job and an opportunity to work alongside a great librarian as well.

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*After three years as a librarian in the Beaverton School District, Susan left the U.S. for new adventures. These would include three years in Shanghai, teaching 6<sup>TH</sup> & 8<sup>TH</sup> grade LA/SS, computers, yearbook and having a student teacher, all before moving back into the library, sharing grades K–8. The next adventure was in Santiago, Chile, where she once again returned to the classroom for the first year, teaching LA/SS to 6<sup>TH</sup> graders, before taking over as the Director of Libraries and as the 6–12 librarian. Then it was back to China, Beijing this time for two years teaching grades 6–7 technology. With no hope for a library job there, she and her husband took a year off to travel and order books for a local start-up school in Hong Kong. They would spend the following two years in Hong Kong, building the libraries, Susan in the secondary and Bob in the primary. Her current adventure is in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, at the American School, where she is serving as the Technology Integration Specialist, K–12 and hopes to move to ½ time library, ½ time TIS next year.*

## Living and Working Overseas

by Janet Murray

### The impetus

In the spring of 1997, the American Association of School Librarians held their annual conference in Portland. Members of (what was then) OEMA were invited to host dinners and tours of their school libraries. Serendipitously, one of my dinner guests was recruiting for Department of Defense Dependents' Schools (DoDDS). She said they were looking for "techie librarians" because they had just rewritten the certification requirements to include more technology and redefined their school librarians as "Information Specialists" in response to the first edition of *Information Power*. That was the start of a dramatic new chapter in my life.

### About DoDEA

The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) manages schools which "serve the children of military service members and Department of Defense civilian employees throughout the world. Today, DoDEA operates 192 public schools in 14 districts located in 12 foreign countries, seven states, Guam, and Puerto Rico." DoDDS schools offer an American curriculum and are fully accredited by U.S. accreditation agencies. Certification requirements, salaries and benefits are uniform throughout the system.

As suggested by the recruiter,

DoDEA has a serious commitment to the use of technology. Each school has an Educational Technologist who helps teachers adapt computer applications to their curriculum and an Administrative Technologist who oversees the technical operations of the network. DoDEA also features a significant commitment to professional development for its staff.

### The schools

I spent eleven years - six in the high school and five in the middle school - working on Yokosuka Naval Base in Yokosuka, Japan. The environment in a DoDDS school is very similar to that in a stateside school: high school students play football, basketball, volleyball, soccer, baseball and other traditional sports. They play in the band and sing in the choir; they produce plays and video; they create art and participate in Model United Nations.

Middle school students exhibit all the hormonal exuberance of their stateside counterparts. They also have a wide choice of after school activities. In the library, we participated in *Read Across America* week, complete with costumes, hosted Scholastic Book Fairs, the sixth grade invention project, the Geography Bee, faculty meetings and parties as well as instruction and circulation!

Although the curriculum is similar, there are some significant



*The Yokosuka Middle School library hosted Scholastic Book Fairs, the sixth grade invention project, the Geography Bee, Read Across America events, faculty meetings and parties as well as instruction and circulation.*

additions: DoDDS schools offer instruction in the host country's language and culture. Imagine the field trips! Because of its inextricable connection to the military, DoDDS also offers a Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps program in its high schools.

Faculties are primarily composed of experienced American teachers, counselors and administrators. They participate in faculty meetings, serve on school improvement committees, prepare for accreditation visits, and act as coaches and advisors for after school activities. Virtually every school has a certified Information Specialist (school librarian); an additional staff member (clerical assistant) depends upon the school's enrollment.

DoDDS orders library books and processing from a contracted jobber. Of course, it takes longer to obtain the newest books,

*Continued next page*

and one's budget is locally determined. DoDDS also has a centrally adopted library automation program into which the catalog and student records can be imported.

As a passionate advocate of using the World Wide Web effectively for school research, I worked with many teachers who were willing to collaborate in instruction. Of course, some of them were not enthusiastic about the impact of technology. Just as in the Portland Public Schools in which I served prior to 1997, I adopted a variety of strategies to engage teachers in collaboration. Knowing their curriculum is critical; tactfully offering your expert assistance is just as important there as anywhere.

### The place

In the Winter '97 issue of the *Interchange*, I published an article describing my first impressions of living in Japan. At the time, "I was so sure I would be comfortable living in Japan that I often commented, 'working on a military base may be the more challenging cultural adjustment.'" Both statements are still true: I loved living in Japan, only once applying for a transfer, and the military environment was a totally new experience for me.

Some people choose to confine their activities to the base, and rarely if ever venture out to discover the richness of the country in which they are located. That was an attitude I could not understand; I lived off base "on the economy" and never sought to move into base housing, even

when I became eligible.

However, there were some surprises, even though DoDDS attempts to provide detailed information in advance of one's move overseas. I knew Japanese housing would be smaller than in the U.S., but it was a shock to discover that Japanese homes do not have central heating (or air conditioning) or even insulation! The wall mounted heating and cooling units are a testimony to the excellence of Japanese design, but the remote controls are labeled in Kanji. To combat the cold, some apartments come with a heated toilet seat as well as the traditional deep tub called an *ofuro*.

Japan is a safe and orderly country, where the trains are remarkably efficient and the people are unfailingly polite. The Japanese drive on the other side of the road, and the roads are very narrow. Although they study English in school, many people are reluctant to speak it. *Romaji* (recognizable English letter) characters were added to many signs in preparation for the Nagano Olympics.

Although Tokyo is a bustling, crowded metropolis, the



*Murray grandtwins at Kumano shrine in my Yokosuka neighborhood. (2008)*

countryside is lovely. One finds Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples tucked away even in small neighborhoods. The culture is rich in history, and I appreciated the opportunity to learn more about it.

Working on a navy base gave me a new perspective on the lives of service members, and a profound appreciation for their dedication to keeping America safe. Families move every two to three years, so the composition of the school varies correspondingly. Family life shifts between one parent and two, depending on whether or not the service member is out to sea or deployed.

As a U.S. citizen overseas, there are some advantages to working for the government. The Department of Defense provides or subsidizes housing and medical care, and imports American products to sell at prices lower than one would expect. The U.S. Postal Service airlifts mail, so one pays U.S. postage as though you were mailing from San Francisco (Pacific) or New York (Europe). Benefits are the same as for federal employees. Salaries are based on the average in large metropolitan school districts.

### The adventure

Librarians are lifelong learners! I took advantage of my overseas employment to explore and learn about Japan as well as other Asian countries. Nearby Kamakura hosted the first samurai administration; it was the feudal capital of Japan in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Shinto shrines

and Buddhist temples are now a major tourist attraction in a town that also features the summer homes (and beautiful gardens) of prominent literati in the 20<sup>TH</sup> century. Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park features volcanic topography, hot springs resorts, sulfur mines, outstanding views, an open air sculpture museum, and the historic Hakone Checkpoint, where identification passes for feudal travelers were inspected. The annual Black Ship Festival in Shimoda celebrates the arrival of Commodore Perry, the opening of Japan to the world, and Japanese/American friendship.

My daughter and I took a bullet train to its terminus in Fukuoka, stopping to see Hiroshima on the way. Then we drove to Kyushu, the next island south of Honshu (home to Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka), because she wanted to see rural Japan. Before I went, I don't think I even really appreciated the fact that Japan is composed of islands, so it was funny to hear people in Okinawa refer to those larger islands as "mainland Japan."

In China, I climbed the Great Wall, suffered through a Gobi



*Chinese billboards urge "Say 'Hello' to everyone!" —and the children do! (Guilin, 2002).*

Desert sandstorm in Tiananmen Square, saw the terra cotta warriors in Xi'an, and marveled at the beauty of the Li River valley. Hong Kong and Shanghai are bustling metropolitan cities. British colonialism influenced the architecture in Singapore, but it also preserves the cultural heritage of the many ethnic groups who live there. Little India, the Arab District and Chinatown are distinctive areas of the island city.

I spent one Christmas in Thailand and another in Australia. I was invited to speak at an EARCOS conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Although Asian cultures share some characteristics, they are each highly distinctive. In my American educational experience, that part of the world was almost universally neglected. My life has been immeasurably enriched by the time I spent living and working overseas.

If you crave adventure, enjoy travel, and are curious and open to new experiences, living and working overseas can be an amazing opportunity. Travel is not as easy as it used to be, and it takes longer to get from one place to another in Asia than it does in Europe. Some people describe DoDDS as "the best kept secret in American education." Now you know.

#### **For more information and pictures:**

- DoDEA: Department of Defense Education Activity. <http://dodea.edu/home>

- Office of Overseas Schools (U.S. State Department). [www.state.gov/m/a/os](http://www.state.gov/m/a/os). "The mission of the Office of Overseas Schools is to promote quality educational opportunities at the elementary and secondary level for dependents of American citizens carrying out our programs and interests of the U.S. Government abroad."
- "Culture Shift: Living in Japan" *Interchange* Winter '97. <http://janetsinfo.com/oema97.html>
- "Travels in Asia" <http://janetsinfo.com/travels.htm>

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*By redefining the school librarian as an "Information Specialist" in terms familiar to advocates of the American Association of School Librarians' Information Power, the Department of Defense Dependents Schools lured Janet Murray away from the Portland Public Schools to Kinnick High School in Yokosuka, Japan. An early enthusiast for electronic access to information, Janet was one of the co-founders of K12Net, a global collection of bulletin board systems for educators. She was the first Telecommunications Chair and Webmaster for the Oregon Educational Media Association, and stayed in electronic communication while she was overseas, not only editing a magazine and teaching an online course, but writing a book—all from the other side of the ocean. You can contact her by e-mail at [jmurray@janetsinfo.com](mailto:jmurray@janetsinfo.com).*

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## The Added Value of Career-Related Travel

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*by Jim Tindall*

Robert Louis Stevenson wrote, “For my part, I travel not to go anywhere, but to go. I travel for travel’s sake. The great affair is to move.”

When I was a young teacher at the Annie Wright School in Tacoma, my wife, Pam, and I shared a goal of working overseas. With two years of experience under my belt, I applied to the Department of Defense Dependents’ Schools. The paperwork and the interview went well and I accepted a position in Mannheim, West Germany. The DoDDS experience began with what all travel requires: flexibility and open-mindedness. In early August, government-contracted movers packed up our household and shipped out our vehicle.

We left for a trip to Victoria, and when we returned to our empty house, we found a letter waiting for us, “Welcome to Nuernberg American High School!” While I thought I was heading to Germany to be a language arts and social studies teacher, someone someplace had a better idea. Apparently, because I had experience at a boarding school, DoDDS decided to place me as a dormitory counselor in Nuernberg, which housed the sons and daughters of soldiers guarding the West German-Czech border. Eventually we were reunited with our

possessions and our VW bus. That change made all the difference.

I found myself part of a team of five in Nuernberg, along with another man and two women, and a supervisor for about forty high school kids. Our four years in our little apartment in Unterfurberg were marvelous. No homework and long weekends were customary, so from this hub of transportation in central Bavaria, we traveled every weekend.

Our trips took us to Checkpoint Charlie on the Berlin Wall. We looked out from the bunker outside our motel room in Israel into the barren but heavily armed hills of the Golan Heights. Some

of the places we visited—like Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany—no longer exist. We hiked the city walls of Dubrovnik and strolled the Turkish Bridge in Mostar, both doomed to the destruction of the Balkans conflicts of the 90’s.

We weigh our wanderlust every so often (from 1995–98 we lived in Petersburg, Alaska), and perhaps we may leave home again in search of adventure.

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*Jim Tindall resides in Husum, Washington, and works for North Wasco County School District where he manages five school libraries.*



*Pam and Jim Tindall in a Nuernberg beer garden (1982).*

## Japanese Librarians Learning from American School Librarianship

by Chiaki Sakai, MLIS • University of Hawaii

Yuriko Nakamura, Ph.D. candidate • Graduate School of Education, University of Tokyo  
and Yumi Kitamura, Librarian, The Center for Southeast Asian Studies • Kyoto University

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[http://www.infotoday.com/MMSchools/may02/sakai\\_nakamura\\_kitamura.htm](http://www.infotoday.com/MMSchools/may02/sakai_nakamura_kitamura.htm)

### School Libraries in Japan

Current Japanese school libraries were somewhat influenced by American librarians, who came to Japan and helped establish new school libraries right after World War II. The idea of librarianship was also brought to Japan at this time. However, it did not weave well into the school libraries, primarily because of the very conservative Japanese teaching/learning style. Japanese education had centered on memorizing facts from textbooks and did not require students to use a library or the librarian's help for their studies.

Two different types of librarians emerged in Japanese schools during the past 55 years. One is called *shisho-kyoyu* (teacher-librarian), who is a teacher with the *shisho-kyoyu* certificate. This position is legally defined in the School Library Law of 1953. However, there are currently only about 600 *shisho-kyoyu* (see **Table 1**). *Shisho-kyoyu* are also subject teachers, and most of them do not work in the library on a daily basis.

The other librarian at school is called *gakko-shisho* (school librarian). The *gakko-shisho* performs the clerical tasks of maintaining the school library and is not allowed to teach students. Certainly, there have been difficulties in coordinating the roles of these two positions for the establishment of professional school librarianship. However,

everyone knows that we have to work together to promote the development of school libraries.

### Introducing the Internet: An Opportunity for School Librarians

The three of us studied library and information science at the University of Hawaii from 1997 to 1999. We learned what American librarianship means. We had opportunities to see and hear what librarians were capable of doing with their knowledge and skills and passion. The experience in the U.S. totally changed our image of librarians.

Unfortunately, in Japan, school librarianship is not regarded as a profession or philosophical belief backed up by rich knowledge and solid skills acquired through an MLIS education. We were concerned that the stagnant situation of the school libraries in Japan would never change if no one tries to become a coordinator to integrate all the personnel and resources we have now to move forward. Somebody needs to point the way.

It just so happens that every school

in Japan will be connected to the Internet this year, and that the School Library Law was amended in 1997 to appoint at least one *shisho-kyoyu* in each school with more than 12 classes by April 2003. More than 25,000 *shisho-kyoyu* will be officially appointed in 2003 (see **Table 2**). We saw great opportunities in these movements. People are paying attention to the Internet and its possibilities. And newly appointed *shisho-kyoyu* could assume the leadership role to use the Internet effectively as a strong research tool at schools, if they are willing to take the step. There is huge momentum to solve some fundamental problems and issues surrounding school libraries.

We planned a symposium to introduce the theories and skills necessary to make good use of Internet resources in school libraries. Luckily, we were able to get cooperation from other members who would reinforce the program contents. Associate Professor Nemoto at the Graduate School of Education, University of Tokyo, agreed to become our supervisor and advisor for the symposium project. Professor

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*Editor's Note: It is my pleasure to introduce to you three young women with whom I have been working for the past year. Inspired by what they learned while earning MLIS degrees at the University of Hawaii, they are now attempting to introduce the American concept of school librarianship in Japanese schools. They hope someday to be able to tell us about the well-founded librarianship unique to Japanese culture.*

—Janet Murray, Associate Editor, MultiMedia Schools

Elementary School	319
Junior High School	176
High School	64
Special Education Schools	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>574</b>

Year →	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	Total
<b>Estimation for Elementary Schools</b>	258	478	1,553	2,261	9,652	14,202
<i>Percent</i>	1.8	3.4	10.9	15.9	68.0	100
<b>Estimation for Junior High Schools</b>	148	561	740	1,110	4,378	6,937
<i>Percent</i>	2.1	8.1	10.7	16.0	63.1	100
<b>Estimation for High Schools</b>	76	208	266	486	2,740	3,776
<i>Percent</i>	2.0	5.5	7.0	12.9	72.6	100
<b>Estimation for Special Education Schools</b>	12	22	90	176	637	937
<i>Percent</i>	1.3	2.3	9.6	18.8	68.0	100
<b>Total</b>	494	1,269	2,649	4,033	17,047	25,852
<i>Percent</i>	1.9	4.9	10.3	15.6	67.3	100

Horikawa at Shimane Women's College willingly accepted our invitation to participate. Two doctoral students at the University of Tokyo, Mr. Yoshikane and Mr. Koga, also joined the project.

At our initial preparation meeting, we agreed to put priority on children's needs and provide the symposium attendees with necessary theories and skills to create a school library media program to achieve this goal. That was another concept we had learned in the U.S.: "user-centered library service." We proposed to discuss what the school library professional should and can do for student learning.

### **The Symposium**

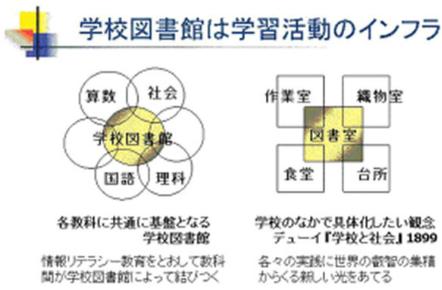
After nearly a 1-year preparation period, we held our first symposium, "Updating Knowledge and Skills of School Library Practitioners for Introducing the

Internet," on January 26, 2002. About 80 people attended the symposium. That was more than we had expected. It was very encouraging to know so many people had become interested in our project. Most of the participants were secondary school teachers. We also had some university librarians, library school instructors, and library school students.

The symposium included six short presentations and a guest speaker who talked about her experiences as an American school librarian. Three commentators gave their insights on the symposium theme from their backgrounds and experiences. Mr. Koga was pursuing his MLIS in the U.S. at the time and was therefore unavailable for the symposium, but he provided us a chapter on copyright issues for the symposium text.

The symposium was quite successful for a first-time trial. We asked the attendees to fill out a questionnaire in order to collect feedback. Forty-seven answers were returned. One was very satisfied with the symposium content, 39 were satisfied, and six were somewhat satisfied. Several people commented that they were encouraged by hearing the experiences and stories from our guest speaker, Janet Murray, about the application of librarianship knowledge and skills to everyday work. Multiple respondents said that the demonstration of practical skills was very useful to them. We also learned that now they need sample lesson plans integrating the Internet resources and want information on what kinds of new problems can be expected when introducing the Internet to school libraries in the near future.

*Continued next page*



In a slide used in the library skills symposium in Japan, Professor Teruyo Horikawa compared the current movement toward cross-curricular education reflecting information literacy skills (left) to John Dewey's conception of the school library in "The School and Society" (1899) (right).

### Looking Ahead

We are in the process of digesting the feedback from symposium attendees and commentators in order to reflect the real needs of practitioners in our future plans. We are hoping to keep this project ongoing. One of our next goals is to revise the symposium text and formally publish it so that we will be able to reach more school library practitioners.

Several people joined the listserv maintained by Nakamura after the symposium. They are the ones who are eager to exchange ideas and experiences with their colleagues. Hot topics include automation

projects in school libraries, collaboration with subject teachers, and the difference between research assignment approaches in the past and today. We will build a database reflecting the information gathered through the listserv discussion.

American librarianship may not have been fully implemented in Japanese school libraries when it was first introduced 55 years ago, but it is now rediscovered and redefined in this era of technology. This time, we hope it will be interpreted by the practitioners so that it will root and grow to become uniquely Japanese school librarianship.

Some people said that the symposium content was overwhelming for a 1-day study, and that the content should be made into a series of lectures or workshops. We must not overlook the frustration and anxiety that school library practitioners will experience in assuming this new role and responsibility. Personnel management and issues need to be discussed in the future as well.

**Where are they now?** The symposium text was published as *School Library in the Age of Internet* (Tokyo: Tokyo Denki University Press, 2003). It has sold 4500 copies. As in the United States, students must be certified teachers before they can receive the *shisho-kyoyu* certificate. About 206 Japanese universities and colleges currently offer courses to certify *shisho-kyoyu*; fifty-two institutions offer summer programs to qualify for the certificate.

Chiaki Sakai is currently the Japanese studies librarian at the University of Iowa. Yumi Kitamura is still the Asian Studies librarian at Kyoto University. She recently submitted her dissertation to complete her PhD studies.

Dr. Yuriko Nakamura completed her PhD in 2004, and is now a junior associate professor at Doshisha University in Kyoto. She published her dissertation *School Library Reform in occupied Japan: an analysis of the collaboration between Japanese and Americans*. She is teaching courses to undergraduates working on *shisho* (literally, librarians in public libraries) certification as well as teaching and coordinating the certification of *shisho-kyoyu* for Doshisha University.

*Inspired by the library skills symposium, Japanese librarians came to observe sixth grade students using the Internet for school research at Yokosuka Middle School on Yokosuka Navy Base in November, 2004. For more pictures, see <http://janetsinfo.com/ymsjplib.html>.*





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## A Pirate's Life for Me

### And a Hook for Readers and Writers Around the Globe

*by Robert Sams*

#### Becoming a Pirate

I haven't always been a pirate. In fact, I never really intended to be one. It was just one of those things that happened. One day, I was your average, clean-cut guy, and the next day I was walking around with a tri-corner hat, a scruffy red beard and a steel hook for a hand.

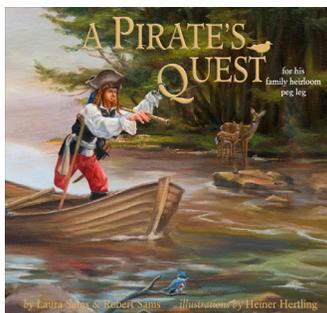
I often wonder what my parents must think. They probably reminisce about their little, blonde-haired boy running around the yard with his plastic sword and eye-patch as they lovingly looked on, never believing that this might become his profession.

Now, before you get your pantaloons in a bunch, please know that I have had nothing to do with the recent piracy off the coast of eastern Africa. My story is completely different. My story has to do with extraordinary teachers and librarians around the globe, who are using the power of pirates to inspire young, critically thinking readers. Allow me to explain.

My sister, Laura, and I work together as wildlife filmmakers and have a passion for education. We especially enjoy projects that help people open their eyes to the wonders of nature, often in their own backyards. It is sometimes easy to feel disconnected to the nature that we encounter every day, but it is even easier to feel disconnected to the nature that we rarely encounter or only see on television.

A few years ago, while scuba diving off the coast of Florida,

Laura and I noticed what looked like a group of jellyfish floating near the surface. We swam closer and found that they were actually clear plastic bags that had been pulled from shore with the outgoing tide. It was easy imagining a hungry sea turtle making the same mistake. We began to wonder about the story behind these plastic bags. Where had they come from, and how far had the water carried them? Imagine if one of these bags had begun its journey in the Great Lakes near Michigan, then traveled over the Niagara Falls and out the St. Lawrence Seaway before reaching the gulf stream of the Atlantic Ocean. Now that's a connection! Someone's action hundreds of miles away could affect an animal in the middle of the ocean.



*A Pirate's Quest: For His Family Heirloom Peg Leg*

This experience inspired us to show children how they are connected to the ocean, even if they don't live near the ocean. We wrote a story about a one-legged pirate on a grand quest to find his family heirloom peg leg that fell

into a tiny lake far from the sea. To find it, he must follow the moving water from the lakes to the rivers to the ocean. That story became a song, which inspired a movie and in turn inspired a picture book, called *A Pirate's Quest*.

With the help of a costume designer and a makeup artist, I became the pirate – a red-haired, weather-beaten pirate who looked as though he'd just crawled to shore after a shipwreck. I sang the song in the movie, and I modeled for our book's illustrator, and then I was very fortunate to start visiting schools to share our work.

#### The Educational Power of Pirates

It might seem odd to use a pirate as an educational and inspirational tool, since pirates have never been considered good role models. One of the most infamous pirates in history, Edward "Blackbeard" Teach, would set fire to wicks of hemp within his beard to frighten and subdue his captives. *Treasure Island's* Long John Silver was certainly a deceptive character who could be your best friend and murder you at the same time. However, the idea of pirates has always been a powerful one. It reaches into our hearts and awakens our thirst for adventure. Like digging for buried treasure hidden within our own chests, it uncovers our inner fascinations.

Our fascination with pirates has woven its way into our popular culture. Disney's *Pirates of the Caribbean* introduced us to the

endearingly selfish Captain Jack Sparrow and opened our minds to the idea that pirates can be heroic. The annual event International Talk Like a Pirate Day ([www.talklikeapirate.com](http://www.talklikeapirate.com)) takes place on September 19<sup>th</sup> and has inspired the widespread notion that it is fun to be a pirate for a day. Pirate festivals have even become wildly popular family events all across the United States. Simply put, pirates are alluring.

### Pirates Inspire Readers

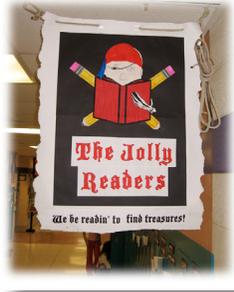
Children are often captivated by pirates, and teachers are quick to jump on themes that will motivate their students. I have met more than one reading specialist who has used pirate adventures to motivate children who struggle to read. I have walked down school halls decorated in pirate-themed poetry, short stories and artwork. At a school in Oregon, I found students and staff dressed as a crew of pirates in seafaring regalia. Similarly, at a Pennsylvania school, the entire kindergarten sported black paper hats, red sashes and even pirate hooks fashioned from red plastic cups and aluminum foil – costumes used for a “Reader’s Theater” they had written.



*Kindergarteners dressed as pirates at a Pennsylvania school.*

In Michigan, an entire school building was transformed into a pirate’s paradise designed as

motivation for a month-long focus on literacy. The hallways donned flags like “The SS Jolly Reader” and “We Arrr Greedy Readers!” Teachers used a pirate’s treasure map to monitor reading goals – the more pages the students read, the closer they got to the final treasure. What was the final treasure? In front of the students, the school Principal would actually walk a plank and fall into a local river. The educational power of pirates is real.



*A pirate-themed banner promoting reading at a Michigan elementary school.*

### Pirates Inspire Writers and Activists - Internationally

I have also seen the educational potential for pirates internationally. While visiting several international schools in Dubai, I was asked to share my pirate story as a way of inspiring students to write their own stories. After meeting with students, we all held our hands like hooks high in the air and yelled, “As I sail the seven seas, and write me own stories, I promise to work very hard, and to always use the letter ‘arrrrr!’” After our visit, the schools then encouraged students to write stories that could help their own community. Dubai is a wonderland of modern engineering sprung from the sands and tropical waters of the Persian Gulf, but the development of this architectural marvel came without much consideration for the ecology of the region. The coral reefs that

once bordered those shores are now covered over by man-made islands. The students wrote stories about the ocean and organized a family night to raise money for a local conservation group. In their case, stories about pirates led to students becoming active citizens – and isn’t that part of what literacy is about?

It has been a great honor to meet so many passionate educators around the globe. One of my greatest hopes as a wildlife filmmaker and children’s book author is that my stories may inspire children to share their own stories. If being a pirate means I can inspire children to use their creativity to share the things they love, then it’s a pirate’s life for me.

*Robert Sams is a wildlife filmmaker, author and cofounder of Sisbro Studios (which stands for sister/brother studios). Robert and his sister, Laura, work together to create films, books and educational media that help people discover the natural world, and laugh along the way. Together, they co-authored A Pirate’s Quest, the winner of the Midwest Book Award for Best Children’s Picture Book. Their accompanying film The Riddle in a Bottle has won more than twenty international awards. Read more about Sisbro Studios on their Web site ([www.sisbro.com](http://www.sisbro.com)) or contact them via email at [info@sisbro.com](mailto:info@sisbro.com).*



*Laura and Robert Sams*



## Classified Memorandum:

For Paraprofessionals In School Libraries

By Meg Miranda

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**Note to my readers:** For this issue of the Interchange I have chosen to be a bit sentimental instead of practical. I'll return to the useful me in the next issue.

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I was very fortunate to be able to attend an overseas school when I was in high school. My father was a scientific advisor for the US Army and was assigned to the South America office. He oversaw the Army's bio-medical grant program. We spent four years in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. We actually lived on Ipanema Beach (you know the song - "Girl from Ipanema").

Escola Americana (fondly known as EA) was a K-12 school with about 1,000 students. I graduated in a class of 80 students. There were sixteen languages in addition to English and Portuguese spoken by students in my graduating class. All of our class went on to college. About half of the students at EA were American. Most of their fathers worked for the US Embassy. A quarter of the school's students were from other countries and the other fourth were Brazilian. Not only were the students from around the world, the teachers were also. Most of the instructors were from the States, a number were Brazilian (it was strange to have a Brazilian teacher for English!), and there were quite a few European teachers as well. Our school was not only an international school; it was truly a multi-national school.

Resources – textbooks and library books were difficult to come by since they had to be imported. But with small class sizes we had excellent, individualized instruction. I have

to admit that studying US History in Brazil with a multi-national class offered a different perspective than I would have received had I been stateside. The teacher, fresh out of college, had to teach it as if it were a foreign history.

To say the least, Rio was a fun place to be as a teenager. And EA was a fun school to attend. We were a close knit group – everyone was accepted. New students found that they easily fit in. We all knew what it was like to be the new kid at school and so we welcomed everyone. In fact, we still do! At our class reunions we've heard that many spouses much prefer our reunions over their own class/school reunions because we include everyone. And their reunions don't include carnival dancing and conga lines!

Since I work in a school library, at my last reunion, I had to apologize to my school librarian for excessive talking in the library. She laughed and said that didn't bother her as much as the guys trying to see how many kids they could get on a book cart.

Attending an international school was quite an experience. Although my parents took me kicking and screaming to Brazil, once I arrived I knew that it was an experience of a lifetime, and I have never regretted it. I have a dream to work in an international school after I retire from my current position. I hope it happens.

*Meg Miranda, OASL Para-professional Representative, is classified librarian at  
Linus Pauling Middle School in Corvallis.*



## Intellectual Freedom

by Leigh Morlock,  
*Intellectual Freedom Chair*

A Springfield parent's recent challenge of Oregon Battle of the Books' title *Nineteen Minutes* by Jodi Picoult got me thinking, as usual, about intellectual freedom. But this challenge struck me in a new way, too. Perhaps it was the specific elements cited as objectionable—characters using profanity, sexually-charged scenes—or perhaps it was the idea that a single and particular four-letter word could have the power to change an experience from benign to offensive for a reader. Whatever it was, I was aware of a sudden expansion in my own understanding of freedom, in my own internal conversation about censorship and merit.

Intellectual Freedom. It is a heady concept, one that rides comfortably alongside other heady concepts—Art and Truth, for example. It's tempting to think, for a moment or two, that if only the writer would consider audience sentiment a bit more, if only she would edit those hard-sounding expletives, those precise and unflinching descriptions of genitalia, those raw-edged moments of grit, well, then we could still have and love the story, right? Its themes, its basic essence or soul would be retained – in just a slightly sanitized form. No harm done. Right?

So thought Thomas and Harriet Bowdler, the brother and sister duo responsible for an expurgated family-friendly Shakespeare collection, first published in 1807. In this version, Ophelia accidentally drowned and characters cried out to the generic heavens, rather than to God himself. Obviously these changes are significant and have far-reaching implications inside Shakespeare's work. The difference between accidental death and suicide means exploring utter helplessness in two totally different ways. But even changing the single Shakespearian word – for example, changing Lady Macbeth's famous spot from a "damned" to a "crimson" one seems, at least to most modern literary-minded folk, a kind of sacrilege.

"But," I picture our book challenger protesting, forefinger held aloft, "Jodi Picoult is no Shakespeare." And I have to agree. After all, only

Shakespeare is Shakespeare. So what makes Picoult's words worth protecting, worth fighting for? What turns a piece of writing into art? This is an eternally-faceted discussion, but my favorite bits of light reflect high concepts. Truth, for example. "Some people don't want to hear the truth," says Stephen King in his writing memoir *On Writing*, "but that's not your problem... The important question has nothing to do with whether the talk in your story is sacred or profane; the only question is how it rings on the page and in the ear." Truth for many of his characters, according to King, means they don't often shout "Sugar!" after smashing a thumb with a hammer.

Art, as a concept, may be even more abstract than Truth. It may, indeed, be the most abstract of all. Those of us susceptible to the charm of words, becoming as somnolent and meditative as a smoked bumblebee when the right combination hits us, know that the pleasure and magic of reading come from particularities: diction, cadence, any of a myriad of syntactical and storyline choices, and that, with each unique combination from each unique author, the experience of reading alters us, subtly or grandly, but ever altering, ever broadening. How extraordinary it is that no two human beings are capable of producing identical pieces of art. A mind is more individual than a fingerprint, and infinitely more complex. And, if I understand nothing more about Truth or Art, then I understand that the particularities, the specifics, the most infinitesimal details, are what create experience. They are worth defending, those particularities, whether they be Shakespeare's or Picoult's or Morrison's or King's or Dickens' or yours or mine. And I understand that the pursuit of Truth takes courage, the courage to report what Dad really says when he hits his thumb with a hammer, what that protagonist's experience was really like in the backseat of the car, what it means to have a drunk mother, to fall in love, to see beauty. This, after all, is freedom.

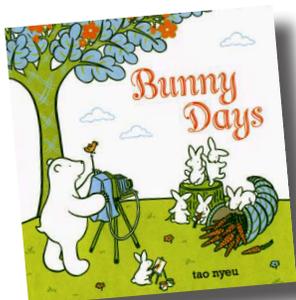
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*Leigh Morlock is librarian at Health and Science school in the Beaverton School District, and teaches at PSU. Reach her at: lamorlock@hotmail.com.*



## New Favorites

Book Reviews by Joann Lumm



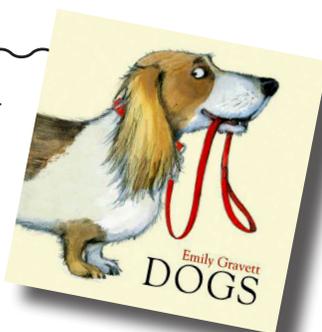
Nyeu, Tao. *Bunny Days*. Illus. 2010. Dial Books, an imprint of The Penguin Group. 48p. \$16.99 (978-0-8037-3330-5)

Ages 3-6. Six adorable little bunnies have a challenging mishap in

each of the three chapters in this quirky read-aloud. After Mr. Goat splashes the bunnies with mud, good neighbor Bear puts the bunnies in a washer on delicate cycle and hangs them on a clothesline to dry. When Mr. Goat inadvertently cuts off the bunnies' tails while trimming his hedge, Bear knows just what to do...he sews their tails back on! The unusual, silkscreened illustrations add to the simplicity of this happy little community where problems are easily and quickly fixed. The retro screen prints for each story feature one color scheme; for example, two gradations of teal stand in stark contrast to the white bear and bunnies in *Muddy Bunnies*, capturing the simplicity of each adventure. Young children are sure to gasp at the bunnies' problems and laugh at the Bear's solutions in this book that will be read again and again. This delightful book will lend itself to discussions about being a good neighbor and enduring trials.

Gravett, Emily. *Dogs*. Illus. 2010. Simon & Schuster. 183p. \$15.99 (978-1-4169-8703-1)

Ages 4-7. The acclaimed author/illustrator of *Orange Pear Apple Bear* brilliantly captures the personality and antics of each dog through brief text and insightful and charming illustrations in this must-have canine



picture book. On each two-page spread, two dogs are described in opposite terms, e.g., tough, (Bulldog), soft (Bijon); big (Great Dane), small (Chihuahua). Each page's soft yellow background provides a calm and neutral palette to showcase the personality and characteristic antics of the featured breed (e.g., a hyper Dalmatian with his tongue out jumping in the air, a stout bulldog with a stick in its mouth wagging a tail). The spectacularly rendered dogs are often humorously punctuated with red or pink collars, sweaters, toys and bows. The surprise twist at the end of the book revealing that the storyteller has been a cat is sure to delight each young reader: "But the dog that I love best? Let's see... (Next page) ...is any dog that won't chase me! For the inquisitive reader, most of the dogs' breeds are identified on the end pages.

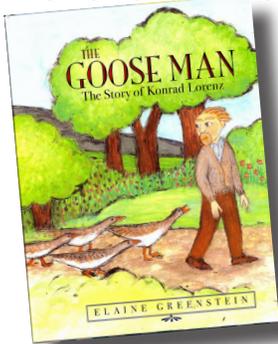


Long, Sylvia. *Thumbelina*. Illus. 2010. Chronicle Books. 46p. \$17.99 (978-0-8118-5522-8)

Ages 4-9. In this stunning version of *Thumbelina*,

Sylvia Long's lush and detailed paintings will sweep children into the natural yet magical world of this beloved, diminutive creature. Long ago, in a magical land, tiny *Thumbelina* appeared in a beautiful flower. She was quite happy and content living with the kind woman, when a large toad snatched her away while sleeping in her elegantly polished walnut shell. Far away from home, *Thumbelina* escapes from the ensuing marriage to Toad, only to face another proposal to a mole! Eventually her kindness shown to a swallow is returned as he flies her far away to a meadow filled with flowers. Long's signature watercolor paintings

showing intense, deep, and vibrant color detailing blades of grass, intricacies of the field mouse's tunnels and other spectacular scenes will be pored over and enjoyed on each reading. Her masterful use of alternating scale, e.g., close-ups and distant representations as well as the shifting from horizontal to vertical page positioning adds the unexpected to this familiar and loved Hans Christian Andersen fairytale.



Greenstein, Elaine. *The Goose Man: The Story of Konrad Lorenz*. Illus. 2009. Clarion Books, and imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 40p. \$16.99 (978-0-547-08459-6)

Ages 4–8.

“Martina and Martin were

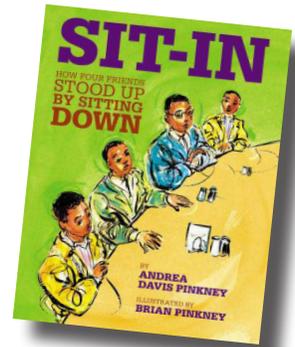
the only geese that ever slept in Konrad's bedroom every night. Sometimes Konrad slept outside with the geese to learn what they did at night, but he wasn't a goose, and he missed his bed.” In this quickly paced, unique biographical account, Konrad Lorenz's (1903–1989) passion for science and his deep love for animals unfold. This well-known, Pulitzer Prize-winning scientist was fascinated by geese and assorted wildlife as a young child. At 30 years of age, he devoted the rest of his life to studying geese, and his persistent power of observation led him to understand the goose's language of chirps. The author's excellent use of a narrative in time-order sequence provides an understandable framework for children to absorb the unstated concepts of inductive reasoning, imprinting, and bonding. Reminiscent of Van Gogh's art, Greenstein has created compelling brightly-colored, gouache, ink, and colored pencil illustrations in a child-like post-impressionist style. Through including tidbits of information that children would be naturally interested in as well as the explicit use

of action verbs (e.g., “Geese followed Konrad everywhere.”), children will stay riveted to the life of this inspirational man.

Pinkney, Andrea Davis. *Sit-In: How Four Friends Stood Up by Sitting Down*. Illus. by Brian Pinkney. 2010. Little, Brown. 40p. \$16.99 (978-0-316-07016-4)

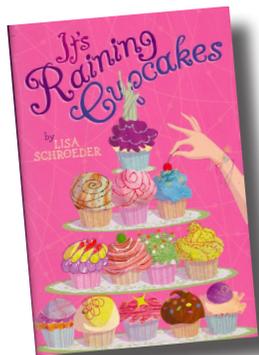
Ages 6–12.

The Greensboro sit-ins of 1960, a defining moment in the struggle for racial equality, come to life in this comprehensive account of four resolute, young black men who stood up to segregation by sitting down at the Woolworth's lunch



counter in North Carolina. The author's use of the motif of a “recipe” for integration and his use of Martin Luther King's words are creatively woven throughout the account: “They ignored the law, and refused to leave until they were served. / Those kids had a recipe, too. / A new brew called integration.” Brian Pinkney's signature watercolor and ink illustrations of swirling lines contrasted with sketch-like images capture the significance of the “Greensboro Four”. The beautiful changes in the background watercolor washes from orange, to green, to blue, to pink, etc. perhaps imply the students' labored passage of time of the day-after-day vigil at the lunch counter. An annotated Civil Rights Timeline at the end of the book (e.g., 1954. *Brown V. Board of Education*, 1961 “Freedom Rides”) as well as an extensive list of recommended books and websites will inspire additional research on the Civil Rights Movement. Dr. King's words, “We must meet violence with nonviolence.” resonate throughout this exceptional book.

*Continued next page*



Schroeder, Lisa. *It's Raining Cupcakes*. 2010. Aladdin, an imprint of Simon & Schuster. 193p. \$16.99 (978-1-4169-9084-0)

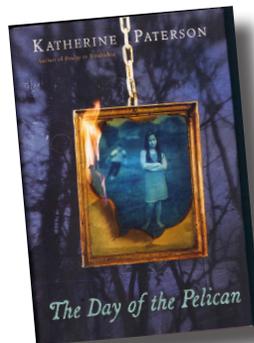
Ages 10–14.

Twelve-year old Isabel dreams of traveling away from her small, Oregon town to distant and fascinating

places. Everyone seems to be getting on a plane except for her. Her best friend, Sophie, is headed to the Grand Canyon; Stan, who owns the barber shop next door, is going to England; and the young woman artist who lives in the apartment above hers just came back from Hawaii! But Isabel's life is busy since she and her dad are helping her frightened and emotionally debilitated mother open up her dream cupcake shop. When Isabel learns of a baking contest whose winners travel to New York City, Isabel is determined to win. The themes of friendship, love, belonging, and contentment are masterfully and deeply woven through this honest and heartwarming book. Ultimately, Isabel learns that it wasn't Willow, Oregon, that she wanted to get away from, but her own self-absorbed, emotionally fragile mother. The rich, interesting supporting characters amid the quirky template of cupcakes richly add to the mother/daughter dynamics in Schroeder's perfect debut middle grade novel.

Paterson, Katherine. *The Day of the Pelican*. 2009. Clarion Books, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 145p. \$16.00 (978-0-547-18188-2)

Ages 13 and up.



In 1998, eleven-year old Meli's life in Kosovo is turned upside down when her thirteen-year-old brother Mehmet is captured by the Serbian police, beaten, and left to die. Once he escapes, Mehmet is convinced that the Kosovo Liberation Army

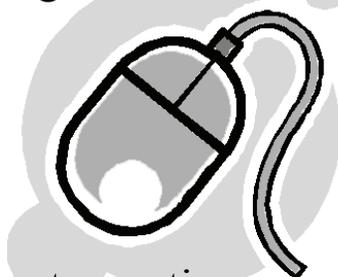
(KLA) will save his people. The conflicting emotions developed specifically in Meli, Mehmet, and Baba as they are forced from their beloved homeland to various refugee camps, and eventually to America, help to balance out the plot-driven novel detailing the ethnic cleansing of Albanians from Kosovo. Once in America, the family faces mounting obstacles: language, employment, peer acceptance, and racial profiling after 9/11. Although Patterson has skillfully tempered the hardships and horrendous realities of the Kosovo refugees by using the perspective of a child, there are veiled references to rape, genocide, and torture making this novel more appropriate for mature middle school readers and up. In the Historical Notes section, Patterson gives needed background information on Kosovo's history. Discussions regarding family loyalty, desperation, triumph of the human spirit, and the treatment of refugees in America are sure to result from this much-needed novel that gives a face to persecution in our present world .

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*Joann S. Lum is a former classroom teacher, reading specialist and educational consultant.*

# INTERCHANGE

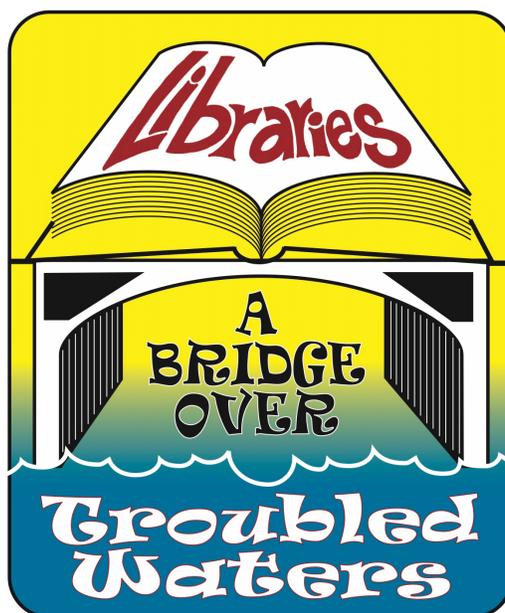
Beginning with the Winter 2010 issue, OASL's *Interchange* will be published fully online. All OASL members will have access to a PDF version of the magazine at no charge.



Members wishing to continue receiving a paper copy by mail may choose this option in Memberclicks when renewing your membership. The cost will be \$15 per year (3 issues).

More details to follow in the Fall *Interchange*.

Don't miss the  
**Fall Conference**  
in Bend, Oregon!



Mark your  
calendars for  
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### **INTERCHANGE**

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