

11-1996

Bulletin of the Rhode Island Library Association v. 69, no. 11-12

RILA

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/rila_bulletin

Recommended Citation

RILA, "Bulletin of the Rhode Island Library Association v. 69, no. 11-12" (1996). *RILA Bulletin*. Book 237.
https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/rila_bulletin/237https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/rila_bulletin/237

This Book is brought to you by the University of Rhode Island. It has been accepted for inclusion in RILA Bulletin by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@URI. For more information, please contact digitalcommons-group@uri.edu. For permission to reuse copyrighted content, contact the author directly.



RHODE ISLAND Library Association *Bulletin*

Volume/No. V. 69, N. 11&12

ISSN:0146-8685

November & December 1996

President's Message

SUSAN REED

AFTER A YEAR OF WATCHING Donna preside as president, I'm still not ready to take over. There is a lot of organizational history that I still have to learn. I really don't have enough time to commit to doing the good job I want to do as president, but I am going to do it, and do it to the best of my ability. I've learned over the years that you can't wait for all conditions to be perfect to do something. We (you and I) will have to make those conditions perfect.

So I've gotten a cardboard file box, and I am getting myself organized. The RILA Executive Board and Committee Chairs from last year and this year have gotten together for an organizational meeting. We discussed a number of things that we would like to put forth as priorities for RILA to accomplish this year. Some of them are: funding of the RILA Legislative proposal by the General Assembly; increasing membership; and providing continuing educational programs. We are committed to using the internet to help keep everyone informed on what is happening. So we have asked Committees to put their meeting notes on the

(continued on page 6)

No Orange Anywhere, or, What About the Cherry Trees?

THE WARWICK PUBLIC LIBRARY will begin construction on a \$5 million expansion and renovation project early next spring. It is hard to believe the current building is thirty years old, but the heating ducts, air conditioning system, and roof betray its youthful appearance. Twenty years have passed since the building was renovated, a project which opened the entire first floor to the public and moved the administrative offices and the Technical Services Department to the upper floors. Since that renovation, more than five million people have walked on the carpet and sat, some not so gently, on the furniture.

When the project is completed, the library will almost double in size, going from 38,000 to 70,000 square feet. This will mean more of just about everything – more patron seating, more stack space, more computer terminals. The way these various elements fit together was in large part determined early in the planning process as the staff began thinking about the services that would be offered, how they would be delivered, and how these services related to one another.

The preliminary wish list for the library included an auditorium which could serve as a performance space for the entire community, an adequate children's program room, doubling the library's seating capacity, upgrading the heating and air conditioning sys-

tem, and major repairs to the roof. In 1995 when the City of Warwick appropriated \$25,000 for the preparation of schematic designs, planning began in earnest.

Eleven architectural firms, seven of which had experience designing public libraries, responded to the request for proposals. By the time the list of architects had been narrowed to five, the Building Program had been completed. In the Building Program, a 55-page document, each library function was defined in terms of its particular needs for staff, furnishings and equipment, and collections. This included every function from parking to story hours. At this point we also tried to determine practical relationships among various functions.

In order to write a program that would meet the needs and expectations of those who use the library, several public meetings were held last fall. Two

What's Inside...

President's Message.....	1
No Orange Anywhere.....	1
Happy Holidays	3
RILA's 1997 Legislative Agenda	4
Bulletin Board	5
People.....	5
1997 RILA Awards Winners.....	6
Job Announcement.....	7
Editor's Journal	<i>Back Cover</i>

meetings were also held with staff members to get their input. In addition, we invited a diverse group of library users to participate in a focus group which addressed questions about making the library easier to use, the changes they would like to see, and strategies to encourage support for the building project. Many suggestions from these meetings were incorporated into the final plans.

"No orange anywhere" was a plea heard from users and staff alike. The library decor, a product of the mid-70's, is awash in orange—tangerine, melon, pumpkin, tomato—carpets, upholstery, and stack end panels in a number of variations on the theme.

An important lesson we learned from talking to people was that they didn't think the library needed an auditorium. It turned out to be a negative hot button, so we changed the building program, substituting a meeting room for the auditorium. We also learned that people wanted a place to get something to eat and drink, hence, the café. We knew at the outset that the beloved (by some) cherry trees, located behind the library, were an issue that wouldn't go away. Although they were described as "magical," we knew there was no way to fit a 70,000 square foot building on the existing site without "impacting" the cherry trees.

The building program was sent to the five firms the Board would interview. The architects responded to the building program during the interviews, translating the program into a concept for a public library. It was fascinating to see five completely different visions based on the same document. The only thing they had in common was that they all recognized the importance of retaining at least the feeling and the atmosphere that the cherry trees lend to the library.

Keyes Associates was selected to do the schematic design for the library and for several months we worked with Jay Litman and other members of the firm to come up with a design that met the criteria set out in the building program.

From aesthetic and design matters, we shifted our attention to the political sphere. We felt that a bond issue had a greater chance of being approved in a special election, but we knew the City didn't want to incur the expense of one. The best hope would be that there would be a School Committee primary in June and the referendum would be included on the ballot. Complicating the matter were four additional projects – recreation and open space, transportation, schools, and a new fire station – all vying for funding. There was some talk of rolling all of the projects together or at least linking the library and one other project. All along we argued that it would be better to have them all listed separately, each to be voted up or down on its own merits. We talked to the Mayor and to several City Council members about why this would be advantageous for the library and were delighted when we learned that not only would the project be listed alone, but it would be listed first.

With a June election, efforts could be targeted to a much smaller group of voters than would be possible in a general election, especially in a Presidential election year. In recent June elections voter turnout hovered around 5,000. All we had to do was to convince 2,501 voters that the project was worthwhile. Our strategy was to educate and motivate voters who were likely to approve the referendum and to hope that anyone who might be opposed wouldn't find out an election was taking place. Mailings were sent to members of the Friends of the Library and to adult Warwick residents who are library card holders and had borrowed materials during the previous year. We didn't go out to speak at senior centers, Rotary, or PTA meetings. We spoke to people who would be likely to support the project and we found them at the library. On June 4, our strategy was proven sound when the library bond issue passed with 77% of the vote—the highest approval rate of any of the bond issues.

In July, the City Council approved the extension of our contract with Keyes to encompass design development and construction administration. Since then we have been working to refine the plans, giving even more thought to how work will be done in the new spaces.

The plans include a two story addition to the back of the building which will house meeting rooms, the children's room, and a café. A one story addition to the front of the building will serve as a reading room. Most of the library's collection along with a mix of tables, carrels and comfortable seating will be located along Sandy Lane.

Among the features of the building will be a two story glass atrium entryway off of which will be two meeting rooms, the café, and the public rest rooms. The location of the meeting center on the first floor will make it possible for meetings to be held when the rest of the library is closed. Adjacent to the atrium and café will be a patio and garden area looking out onto the lawn and a pleasant grove of trees.

On the main floor will be a large area for current magazines and new books. This will be an area featuring lots of comfortable seating and natural light. There will be a cluster of small rooms for tutoring and group study as well as for access to personal computers and AV equipment. A quiet study room will seat sixty.

The Children's room will be located on the second floor in a space approximately three times larger than the present Children's room. There will be a fully equipped program room to accommodate story hours and craft programs as well as separate areas designed to meet the needs of pre-schoolers and school-age children. The picture book area will have a window seat as well as comfortable seating where parents can sit and read to their children.

At this point the library staff and library users are excited about the prospect of having a new library. We are looking forward with great antici-

pation to the official opening for the expanded and renovated Warwick Public Library – 1/1/99 seems like a good date.

— Carol S. Drought is Deputy Director at the Warwick Public Library

Happy Holidays!!

the second annual RILA Bulletin column on Books and Reading....

Once again the RILA Bulletin asked librarians to recommend favorite books and authors. The response, though not as overwhelming as last year, still contains some interesting recommendations and fascinating comments. Hope you enjoy!!

Some librarians have a hard time coming up with a “best book.” So many of us are readers, were readers as children, and will always be readers. So the only referrals I can make are to books I remember well, or think of often. I also suggest them to others.

From childhood I remember a *Shirley Temple Collection of Fairytales*, which included my favorites, “Rumpelstiltskin,” “The Seven Wild Swans,” and “The Emperor’s New Clothes.”

From young adult years I remember *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley and *Catcher in the Rye* by J. D. Salinger. These are two books I have often re-read as an adult. They were good stories, with good strong character development, and there was so much more there, too. In *Brave New World*, there were questions about politics, and humanism and the future, and nature versus nurture, and manipulation, and genetics, and on and on. In *Catcher in the Rye* Holden Caulfield was a young person, too, dealing with life and thoughts, and adults, and school, and everything, and writing about it in a very realistic way. I ended up reading everything J.D. Salinger wrote that I could find.

In college I was very interested in drama and theater. Books I

remember reading were: *Acting is Believing*, and Shakespeare’s plays. One teacher had us read *Zen and the Art of Archery*, and that got onto reading about Zen. I still have a little gem of a book called *Zen Telegrams*, that I found in a bookstore around that time.

Since I became a librarian I have read so many books of different kinds. I sort of feel it is part of my job to try a variety of writing. One book that I can recommend is a science fiction book. *Ender’s Game* by Orson Scott Card is the best young adult science fiction book I have ever read. This book has the action of a Star Wars, a cute and smart young man as the protagonist, and the depth of a *Brave New World*. And there are sequels, so if you really liked it, there’s more to delve into. I have read all in the series – *Speaker for the Dead* and *Xenocide*. Moreover, I feel this book is great for adult readers, too.

I don’t really like biographies much, but one I enjoyed was *Surely You’re Joking, Mr. Feynman*, by Richard Feynman. Feynman is the scientist who is sometimes referred to as the best mind since Einstein. His writing is easy, and casual. He explains scientific details so I could understand them. I particularly remember his stories of being on the committee that investigated the Challenger shuttle explosion. He was the first to suggest that the O-rings had been the source of failure.

I could name a few more books, but this should give you some idea of how difficult naming a best book can be. Thinking of one leads to another – and I haven’t even mentioned favorite poems or short stories!!

Patricia LaRose
Newport Public Library

I really enjoy Cathie Pelletier’s books, especially in the summer. They take place in northern Maine and they make me feel very cool! Beaming Sonny Home was this year’s model. It’s very 90’s – about the human condition and being glued to the tube in America, and what it can do to people’s mindsets. It’s

not totally depressing – C. Pelletier is hilarious at times. I’d love to have lunch with her – a long one!

Rowena Burke
South Kingstown Public Library

Let me recommend *Death on a Vineyard Beach* by Philip R. Craig. The author writes good mystery stories set on Martha’s Vineyard. In addition to the mystery storylines he provides delicious descriptions of the local cuisine. I sometimes feel I’ve been on a mini-vacation after reading one of his books. Last year he spoke at the Friend’s Annual Luncheon. He seemed to enjoy speaking to the group as much as the Friends enjoyed listening to him. He is a real library lover!

Anon

Notes from a Small Island by Bill Bryson is my recommendation. Prior to returning to the United States after 20 years in England, the author made a farewell pilgrimage about Great Britain. Bryson, one of the most entertaining writers on the English language, has now produced a funny, irreverent and affectionate look at England and the English people.

Cynthia Archambault
Warwick Public Library

The Ladder of Years by Anne Tyler is my recommendation. Anne Tyler grows on a reader’s taste and pleasure. She slips now and then and her readers don’t want to notice it for they know they will get their reward eventually for their loyalty. They see only the wonderful, insightful remarks she makes on life and its workings. Her latest book however, surprises even those devoted fans. *The Ladder of Years* is a totally different bag of tricks. When I first read it as an excerpt in a popular magazine I asked myself, “Why is she doing this? A run-away housewife? God, what writers won’t do just to keep on publishing!” My devotion to Tyler, however, prompted me to read the recently published book and that is when my attitude totally changed. The book is

unique. The theme is dug out from where veins of gold are hidden. The emotions are like a beach blanket where everyone fits. The reading is smooth and steady, fast and climbing. What married woman has not thought of running away from her husband, who, being human, has to have behavioral flaws such as impatience, arrogance, indifference and contempt one time or another. Delia, with two sisters and a strong father, goes through a time machine of escape and return. If she went to an amusement park, her first ride undoubtedly would be on a roller coaster. But in real life she runs away from her family, friends and cat, and makes her life in another town totally new. She gives herself the chance to live like a human being the way she wants to live, all by herself – self-centered, okay, okay – selfishly, too. But there's a trap. You cannot run away for there is no virgin hole any more in the universe where you can make it for you still have to eat, smile, work and love. Once she discovers this, Delia comes back to her own home. Her husband has not changed from what we can see, but in Delia's eyes he has changed enough. Even though he doesn't invite her, she is ready to forgive him sufficiently to creep under the blanket with him the first night of her return home.

The book is successful, as is the story for all those who are ready and willing to like the story as it is. Bring to it what you can, then you get a lot to take away with you.

*Indu Suryanarayan,
Johnson & Wales University*

I recommend Leading Change by John P. Kotter. For anyone managing a department or organization, John Kotter offers a practical guide to this subject, with lots of examples. He explains that transforming an organization is a very long-term process, which must be driven by a shared sense of urgency and must create a shared vision of the future, which becomes part of an organization's day-to-day operation. Successful change involves daily management participation, short-term wins, and a long-term

change in an organization's culture. John Kotter firmly believes that change requires the development of leaders who must have a commitment to life-long learning. If your organization is experiencing change, you should definitely consider adding this book to your personal collection.

*Dorothy Frechette
DSLS*

The best new book I read (well, listened to on tape, if that counts) was *Undaunted Courage: Meriweather Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West* by Stephen Ambrose. It was excellent! Filled with so much detail about the Lewis and Clark expedition and how it came about. Also, lots of biographical information about Lewis and Jefferson. Ambrose brings to life one of America's most monumental events with countless real life characters that experience adventure, joy, tragedy and pain in the uncharted territory Jefferson bought from France.

*Jenny LaPerriere
East Providence Public
Library*

This past year I discovered Laurie King and the Beekeeper's Apprentice. I am always somewhat leery of Sherlock Holmes/Conan Doyle wannabes. Often they just do NOT capture the ambience of the original. Laurie King comes very close. Our hero is not Sherlock Holmes, but young, feminist Mary Russell, who quickly and competently becomes Holmes' new Watson with a twist. The twist being that she is almost Holmes' equal in intelligence. Holmes, now in retirement (a keeper of bees no less), undertakes to teach her the skills of the consulting detective.

The book is wonderfully written. The characters, Holmes, Mary, Dr. Watson and Mrs. Hudson, are all there and very well drawn. I recommend Beekeeper's Apprentice (and its sequel A Monstrous Regiment of Women) highly.

*Mattie Gustafson
Newport Public Library*

RILA's 1997 Legislative Agenda

The Rhode Island Library Association's 1997 legislative agenda was announced at the Fall Business Meeting and consists of the following funding priorities listed in order of legislative effort:

1. State funding to cover all costs for public library membership and participation in CLAN (Cooperating Libraries Automated Network). This would amount to approximately \$1 million.
2. State funding of approximately \$50,000 for the RHILINET statewide delivery system. Moneys would be used both to increase the number of libraries receiving deliveries and to increase the number of stops at libraries that currently are delivery sites.
3. Establishment of a state fund of approximately \$300,000 for literacy programs in libraries. This would replace funds that were previously available via the Federal Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) Title VI grant program.
4. State funding (approximately \$50,000) for continuation and upgrading of the CRIARL (Consortium of RI Academic and Research Libraries) Union List of Serials project.
5. A one-time state set aside of \$100,000 in seed money for public libraries that would like to increase their hours of operation.

Later, at its December meeting, the Government Relations Committee agreed to make state funding of CLAN the focus of their legislative effort for 1997.

BULLETIN BOARD

Five members of the RILA Executive Board – Kathy Ellen Bullard, Donna Dufault, Frank Iacono, David Macksam, and Sue Reed – represented the Association at the Library Board of Rhode Island Leadership Retreat held on November 2 at the Aldrich Mansion. The retreat consisted of a gathering of representatives of the various statewide library groups to discuss library issues and develop and prioritize strategies for improving library service for all Rhode Islanders. In addition to RILA and the Library Board of RI, other groups represented were DSLS, RIEMA, COLA, CRIARL, CLAN, the RI Chapter of the Special Libraries Association, and the URI Graduate School of Library and Information Studies.



RIEMA (the Rhode Island Educational Media Association) now has a World Wide Web site that provides comprehensive information about the Association and many links to sites of interest to school librarians and teachers. Their WEB address is: <http://www.ri.net/RIEMA/home.html>. RIEMA also has established a listserve that is open to both members and non-members. To subscribe send an e-mail message to Carol Anderheggen at Carolan@ids.net, put RIEMA-L as the subject and give your name. RIEMA also recently announced that its 1997 conference will be held on March 21st at the Providence Marriott.



CLAN, the Cooperating Libraries Automated Network, now has a homepage on the Web. It can be found at www.clan.lib.ri.us.



Nominations and applications were due on December 1st for the first Futas Catalyst for Change Award established last year by the American Library Association (ALA). ALA publicized the award as follows: "This new award recognizes and honors a librarian who invests time and talent to make positive changes in the profession of librarianship. The award is

named in memory of Elizabeth Dorothy Futas, an active member of ALA who died in 1995. Futas had served on ALA Council and as chair of the Public Awareness Committee and had been a mentor to many new members of the profession. She was director of the University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Library and Information Studies. Criteria for the award include taking risks to further the profession, helping new librarians grow and achieve, working for changes within the American Library Association or other library organizations, and/or inspiring colleagues to excel or to make the impossible possible. The Futas jury, chaired by Patricia Glass Schuman, president of Neal-Schuman Publishers, Inc., will review applications during the ALA Midwinter Meeting, February 14-19, in Washington, D.C. The award recipient will be announced prior to the 1997 ALA Annual Conference in San Francisco."



The Northeast Documents Conservation Center (NEDCC) now has a homepage on the World Wide Web. Besides offering a wealth of information about the NEDCC and its programs, the site also includes an extensive section of frequently asked questions, connections to related internet sources, and information on funding sources for preservation. The NEDCC homepage is found at <http://www.nedcc.org>.

Another handy site related to preservation is at Dartmouth College, which has mounted a manual of simple book repairs on the World Wide Web. It covers guiding principles, parts of a book, tools, setting up a repair area, identifying materials appropriate for repair, and instructions for ten repairs. This information is available at: <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~preserve/tofc.html>.



Providence Public Library recently announced the addition of 100 circulating CD-ROM titles to its collection. They are available for loan for up to one week. The CD-ROMs are for use

on multimedia IBM-compatible PCs, with some also compatible with Macintosh computers.

PEOPLE

Ginny Benson, former Director of the Hope Library in Scituate, is now a librarian at North Attleboro High School.

Gavin Ferriby is the Editor of the CRIARL Union List and is based at Brown University.

Peter T. Gebhard III is Providence Public Library's new Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

Sharon Giacobbi, Circulation Supervisor at Rhode Island College, was appointed Chair of the New England Library Association Support Staff Association.

Gretchen Hanley has been appointed Librarian at Cross' Mills Library in Charlestown.

Abdul Hannawi recently was named Middle Eastern Studies Bibliographer at Brown University.

Mary-Jo Kline was appointed Curator, Special Collections at Brown University's John Hay Library.

Sylvia Krausse has been appointed Chair of Public Services at the University of RI.

Kenneth Krepp recently joined the Reference Unit staff at URI.

Leslie McDonough, former Director of Tyler Free Library in Foster, is now Director of the Hope Library in Scituate.

Deborah Mongeau has been appointed Head of Reference at URI.

Alberto Pereira, Community Libraries Consultant at DSLS, recently retired after more than twenty-five years of service.

Ann Richard is the new Director of the Tiverton Public Library. She formerly was Children's Librarian at the Millicent Library in Fairhaven, Massachusetts.

Tom Shannahan, Director of the Central Falls Public Library, recently was inducted into the William Blackstone Society. The Society, formed in 1988, recognizes those who promote the Blackstone Valley's history and culture without compensation. As the city's resident expert on area Civil War veterans and keeper of a collection of paintings by the town's most famous artist, Lorenzo DeNevers, Tom became the seventh member of the Society.

Joan Smith is now Branch Librarian at the Oaklawn Branch of the Cranston Public Library.

Peggy Sylvia recently was appointed Assistant Children's Librarian at the West Warwick Public Library.

Michale Vocino is now Interim Dean of University Libraries at URI.

Gayle Wolstenholme is the new Director of the Glocester Manton Public Library in Chepachet. She succeeds her mother, Mary Gallagher, who is staying on at the library as a staff librarian.

In Memoriam

Kathleen McCahey, a librarian at Providence Public Library for more than twenty years, passed away in early November. She will be greatly missed by her many friends among the RI library community.

President's Message

continued from page 1

listserv so all the members can keep up with current RILA news. Next year at this time we should be able to look back and see that much has been accomplished.

*Susan Reed, President
Rhode Island Library Association*

1997 RILA Awards Winners

FIVE LIBRARY SUPPORTERS were honored by the Rhode Island Library Association at its Annual Business Meeting on November 13th at the Barrington Public Library.

President Donna Dufault presented the "Trustee of the Year" award to **Anthony Ricci**, for over twenty years of exemplary service as a member of the Cranston Public Library Board of Trustees.

She also presented four "RILA Library Champion" awards to four members of the R.I. General Assembly. This new award recognizes state legislators who have been strong supporters of libraries and library services. This year's recipients were:



Photo: Joe McGovern, DSLS

RILA's Trustee of the Year Tony Ricci of the Cranston Public Library receiving a Mayors Proclamation from Cranston Director David Macksam as Board Chair Henry Priest looks on.

Senator Sandra K. Hanaway of Cumberland, who has served as a member of the Library Board of R.I. and sponsored and guided into passage a bill that assured that donations to the Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped would be used for that purpose and not be incorporated into the State's General Fund;



Representative Frank Montanaro receives a Library Champion Award from RILA President Donna Dufault

Photo: Joe McGovern, DSLS

Representative Beatrice Lanzi of Cranston, who last session introduced a floor amendment calling for strong support of public libraries, added to a bill calling for a referendum on the section of the State Constitution entitled, "Education." Her amendment was approved by a vote of fifty-one to thirty-one;

Representative Frank Montanaro of Cranston, who introduced five bills in support of increased library funding during this past session and also helped in 1995 to delay hasty action and promote creative thinking on the question of where best to situate the Department of State Library Services (DSL) in a streamlined state government;

Representative Antonio J. Pires, whose leadership in 1995 was essential in forestalling the merger of the Department of State Library Services with the Department of Education (a proposal opposed by RILA) and who was "instrumental in bringing about the smooth and friendly transfer of DSLS to the Department of Administration."



Photo: Joe McGovern, DSLS

Incoming RILA President Susan Reed presides at the Fall Business Meeting

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT: Managing Editor, RILA Bulletin

Editorial Responsibility for the RILA Bulletin: The Managing Editor is appointed by the President and serves as Chair of the Publications Committee. The Publications Committee shall be responsible for selection and editing of material for, and publication and distribution of, the *Bulletin*. Controversial material that falls within the *Bulletin's* editorial guidelines shall not be rejected or deleted solely on the basis of its subject matter. The Managing Editor shall assume ultimate responsibility for the contents of the *Bulletin*.

Duties: Overall responsibility for the production and publication of six issues per year of the *RILA Bulletin*.

Calls, organizes, and presides at regular meetings of the Publications Committee to plan future issues and discuss all matters relating to the *Bulletin*.

Prepares an annual budget for the production of the *Bulletin* for submission to the RILA Treasurer.

Prepares an annual report of the Publications Committee.

Attends Executive Board meetings and reports for the Publications Committee.

Oversees all aspects regarding the planning, production, and distribution of each issue of the *RILA Bulletin*, including:

- Writing editorials, editorial comments, authors bios as needed
- Soliciting copy from regular columnists (i.e. President, Preservation Columnist, etc.)
- Receiving and initially arranging all copy
- Submitting copy to desktop publisher for production of initial draft
- Providing draft copy to Technical Editor for proofreading
- Returning proofed copy to desktop publisher for production of final edition
- Supplying final copy to printer for production of necessary copies
- Arranging delivery of/delivering each issue from printer to mailer

Receives and approves of all bills related to the publication of each issue of the *Bulletin* and submits them to Treasurer for payment.

Stipend: \$180 per issue

Reply To: Susan Reed, President, RILA, Pawtucket Public Library, 13 Summer St., Pawtucket, RI 02860 Tel: 401-725-3714

Editor's Journal *Continued from Back Cover*

2. The language engenders guilt, furtiveness, censure. (I did a tour of Roget's *Thesaurus* and the word *finis* appears alongside the words punishment, penalty, and condemnation.)

3. This language ("overdue fines") sets up an adversarial relationship between the person who owes the fine (the customer/patron/guest we are supposed to be serving) and the person trying to collect the fine (usually a circulation staff person who didn't set the fines in the first place and is now called upon to defend the library's policies and collect all moneys due).

I am not suggesting that libraries do away with overdue fines. Many libraries (my own included) rely on these moneys as a significant source of funding. But I am exploring the idea that a change in language might assist with a change in attitude and atmos-

phere for both staff and patrons. We are a service-based institution and many feel uncomfortable when our job requires a shift from service to censure.

I have not yet come up with what I consider adequate substitute language. I have thought of "late fees" or "reader-ship fees" but nothing really does the trick. A colleague of mine had a wonderful idea with regard to videos and their special fines. Videos circulate for three days and the overdue fine for videos is \$2.00/day. Patrons who miss this little fact are horrified when they bring three or four videos back two or three days late: \$18.00 in fines! Instead of calling them overdue fines or late fees, why can't we simply say video rental is free for the first three days. Thereafter we charge \$2.00 per day – just like the video stores.

Don't mistake me. I am not suggesting that a change in language will effect miraculous changes in the atti-

tudes of either patrons or staff members. The Saturn team presented many ideas that would seem in some ways to be applicable to libraries. And at Saturn the language did not, by itself, bring about a change in the "culture" of car selling. Language was part of a much larger group of foundational changes that were happening at all levels of the Saturn Corporation.

LAMA has an institute available called *Organizational Culture: Transforming Your Library for Success*. This institute explores the library's culture: its underlying assumptions, beliefs, values, norms, and expectations. It then tries to help participants learn how to change the culture and communicate that change to the outside community. Maybe we should bring this institute to Rhode Island and begin to explore a transformation of our libraries' culture at this basic level.

Editor's Journal **Saturn, the Library and Language**

Two gentlemen, not from Verona, but from the Saturn Automobile Corporation, came to talk to RILA the other day. Their talk on "customer satisfaction the Saturn way" was intriguing.

From its inception the goal at Saturn was to completely reinvent how an automobile was made and then sold. They accomplished this transformation in many ways: through training, team building, a customer-focused philosophy, leadership development, etc. But one of the more engaging aspects of the transformation – at least for me – was their decision to rewrite the language of retail car sales. There are no salespeople at a Saturn retail facility – they are all sales consultants. And sales consultants work with guests, not customers. Their goal is customer enthusiasm, not satisfaction. They talk about teams, not departments (i.e., the parts team, the service team, etc.).

Listening to them one might have the initial impression that this attention to language changes was just window dressing. Lip service (literally) to a gimmicky way to sell you a car. But after listening to both gentlemen for a while, I became convinced that they meant what they said and believed in how they said it. The new language (among other things) served as a foundation for an entirely new attitude and atmosphere. The bottom line goal is still selling cars, but the *process* of getting there seemed to make a big difference to both the Saturn team (employees) and their guests (customers).

How important is language, then? What's in a name? How important is the language you use to describe *what* you do to *how* you do it? And can this kind of language shift be applied to libraries?

My library (as I am sure most libraries do) has an occasional problem with people (customers? patrons? guests?) and overdue fines. They are convinced they returned a particular book on time; or sure that they paid all that was required the last time they were in the library; or appalled at the amount of fines they have built up. Now – a change in language will not make these situations disappear. But I am beginning to think that the words "overdue fines" are an unfortunate choice for several reasons.

1. These words are relics, left over from a time when libraries were seen as guardians of or keepers of books, and those who dared keep things longer than the allotted time were sinners.

continued on page 7

The *RILA BULLETIN* is published six times per year by the Rhode Island Library Association. Managing Editor: Mattie Gustafson, Newport Public Library, Box 8, Newport, RI 02840 (847-8720); Copy Editor: Wendy Knickerbocker, James P. Adams Library, Rhode Island College, Providence, RI 02908 (456-9605); News Editor: Frank Iacono, DSLS, 300 Richmond Street, Providence, RI 02903-4222 (277-2726); Subscriptions Editor: John Fobert, Roger Williams University Library, Bristol, RI 02809 (254-3374); Advertising Editor: Cynthia Archambault, Warwick Public Library, Warwick, RI 02886 (739-5440); Feature Columnist: Ann M. Dodge, John Hay Library, Brown University, Providence, RI 02912 (863-1502). A current list of RILA Executive Board Members and Committee Chairs is available in Volume 68, No. 9 & 10. Subscriptions: free to members; \$15/year in U.S.; \$20/year foreign. Advertising: \$130 full page; \$65 half page; \$40 quarter page; \$15 business card size. Change of address: members contact the Membership Committee Co-Chairs, Patience Bliss, Providence Public Library, 225 Washington Street, Providence, RI 02903 (455-8000) and Carol DiPrete, Roger Williams University Library, Bristol, RI 02809 (254-3063). Subscription correspondence: contact Subscriptions Editor. For further information, contact the appropriate Editor. Technical Production: Verbatim, Inc., 769B Hope Street, Providence, RI 02906 (273-6930). Printing by Lewis Graphics, 269 Macklin Street, Cranston, RI 02920 (943-8300). LC 57-26438.

RHODE ISLAND LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
300 Richmond Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-4222

Please note our new address!

P.O. Box 7858

Warwick, RI 02887-7858

RITA H. WARNOCK
271 Doyle Ave
Providence RI 02906-

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Providence, R.I.
PERMIT NO. 210