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RHODE ISLAND Library Association *Bulletin*

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Summer 1998

President's Message

KATHY ELLEN BULLARD

GREETINGS! It never fails to astonish me, as it did yet again at the recent American Library Association conference in Washington, D.C. Librarians are an incredibly talented, intelligent, and thoughtful group of people. And whenever I find myself in the midst of a group of them (is there a special word for a group of librarians?), it makes me justly proud to be a part of the library world. Most of us also don't think of our positions as "just a job", but closer to a calling. We are passionately committed to providing for the informational and recreational needs of our customers.

A recent ALA/ Gallup poll tells us that an estimated 64% of the population use their libraries at least once a year. Of that 64%, the average usage is 7 times per year. In other words, of those that *do* use the library, it's a fairly substantial amount of use. And, in spite of 36% not having used their library within a year, when the total group was asked if they thought libraries would continue to exist in the future, 90% responded positively. Respondents were also asked how they would rank the benefits of the public library compared to the

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After "QUERTY": Keeping Up With Technology

ROBERT L. BALLIOT

IT WAS AN ELECTIVE—something to help round out a college prep curriculum. On "state-of-the-art" manual Underwood typewriters our typing class pecked out ASDF JKL over and over again in a loose chorus of keystrokes. There were no F-keys or numeric pads, no Ctrl or ALT and errors would be laboriously painted over with correction fluid. And so we learned the "QUERTY" keyboard to produce letters and reports.

Over the last 25 years the complexity of the keyboard has more than doubled. About fifty more keys have been added to the keyboard since my typing course. That complexity is mirrored by librarianship. The technological advancements and our potential to use them as intellectual tools have led to revolutionary methods of serving our patrons. But training is necessary to effectively use state of the art technology and the need for training goes far beyond mastering the "QUERTY" keyboard.

Academic librarians may receive technology training through their parent campuses. And, public librarians can often utilize campus-based training in Rhode Island. Simmons, NELINET and URI have led technology training for librarians in the Rhode Island area by providing formal classroom training specific to librarianship. Roger Williams University, Johnson & Wales, the New England Institute of Technology, Katherine

Gibbs, RIC, and Brown Learning Community also provide good opportunities for campus-based training. Andy Egan has set up training through OLIS with Merle Ilgenfritz <www.ilgenfritz.com> at CCRI-Lincoln in a number of Windows-based applications. Several private training companies are also marketing to libraries, including New Horizons Computer Learning Center in Cranston and HomeKey Inc. in Johnston.

However, with small staffs and budgets it is often difficult to afford the time or the money to participate in the formal classroom setting. And, the training offered may not be specific to librarianship. The technological capacity to store and transmit information is not the same as creating intellectual access to that information. Advanced training in networking and program

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languages can be interesting and helpful for systems librarians but not so helpful in advancing the ability of catalog or reference librarians.

One alternative to the classroom is collaborative mentoring. Over the last year the Rhode Island Reference Round Table has offered several sessions on a variety of topics to librarians. Subject specific searches utilizing state of the art technology have been explained. I have offered two online training guides for the internet, *How to Search the WWW* <www.ultranet.com/~egrlib/tutor.htm> and *How to Search for Medical Information* <www.ultranet.com/~egrlib/www.htm>. The process used to create these documents is simple and they can support those who have been individually trained as referral documents, as online instruction, or distributed in printed format. Mike Silvia and Sheila Carlson have also provided two training sessions on Eudora to support the changes to the LORI configuration.

Another alternative is formal in-house training. In-house training can be the most cost-effective method of bringing a large staff up to speed. The costs are fixed (staff time to develop the program) and the rewards can be great. Mary Bucher Ross, Staff Internet Trainer at the Seattle Public Library, reports that about three months ago her library began a "program called 'Internet Information Services Training,' aimed at all staff who provide reference services." The program is designed around demonstrated levels of competency and level of reference service provided and has been very well received. "The instruction, including the examples used and the practice exercises, stems from real experience at the reference desk." Patricia Belcastro (belcaspa@oplin.lib.oh.us) of the Rocky River Public Library in Ohio has also developed an excellent in-house training program. Her "Hands On Training (HOT)" group has developed a excellent guide showing strategies and goals of in-house training. A copy of the RRPL program

will be made available through OLIS library.

Another alternative is online instruction. Perhaps the best example of online reference training comes from The University of Minnesota Library's *Research QuickStudy* <tutorial.lib.umn.edu>. *QuickStudy* incorporates Internet and traditional print references on very well organized subject specific pathways. Learn It Online a division of Ziff-Davis Education <corp.learnitonline.com> has been utilized by Jim Hollinger, District Services Coordinator of the Dauphin County Library System in Harrisburg, PA, who has "104 staff signed up" for this Microsoft based instruction. It is available for a reasonable fee anywhere there is Internet access. Margaret Sander, Assistant Director of the Orrville Public Library also recommends Patrick Crispin's free web-based instruction *Roadmap* at <www.tourbus.com> as a training tool.

Perhaps the most ambitious training method is being undertaken by the South Central Regional Library Council in NY State at <www.lakenet.org>. Network Manager Lesli LaRocco reports that one of their "training solutions has been to set up a mobile training lab which consist of 10 Win 95 client computers, one Win NT server, one router and one fast modem. In our 10,000-square-mile rural region, computer labs are hard to come by. Having a lab that can be set up in about half an hour and used to train software on or off the Internet with nothing more than a room, a few electrical outlets, and a single phone line has been a real convenience for our trainees."

Fortunately Rhode Island libraries have benefited tremendously from the generosity of the Champlin Foundations, which has made computers available in facilities large and small. The challenge for us is to become expert in their use by taking advantage of training opportunities of all kinds so that our users fully benefit from all that technology has to offer.

My typing teacher retired several years ago. His efforts now go towards

his magnificent garden. The seeds he sowed with "QUERTY" continue to grow.

Robert Balliot (egrlib@ri-ultranet.com) is the Information Services Librarian at the East Greenwich Free Library

Lobbying Effort Results in Major Increase in State Aid to Libraries

A HEALTHY STRIDE TOWARD REACHING a level of State funding equaling twenty-five percent of local support for public library services was achieved with the passage the State budget for fiscal 1999 that included an additional \$1.2 million in State aid for libraries. This brings total state support for public library services to approximately 15% of local support. Legislation enacted in 1989 provided, that by the year 2000, the State share should be 25%. The \$1.2 million will be divided evenly, with \$600,000 allocated for the state grant-in-aid to cities and towns program and \$600,00 in increased funding for state resource sharing grants.

Much of the credit for this substantial increase in state funding goes to RILA's Legislative Action Committee (LAC). David Macksam, Director of the Cranston Public Library and Co-Chair of the LAC along with Dale Thompson of the Providence Public Library, notes that the tried and true political advice of keeping your message simple and repeating it often, stressing local impact and engaging in plenty of grass roots lobbying worked well this year.

He described the lobbying effort thusly:

- Public libraries began the year by informing their representatives and senators of the uses that were made of the increased funding in 1997. Paying the costs of participating in the Cooperating

Libraries Automated Network, improving collections and staffing, increasing hours open and providing additional programs for children were direct results of the 1997 funding from the state.

- Regional legislative breakfasts were held in the spring for library staff, trustees, friends groups and legislators to highlight the progress made and to reinforce the need for taking the next step toward achieving the 25% funding level.

And he noted that Representative David Panciera of Westerly worked tirelessly to keep the statehouse and the Finance Committee's attention focused on the library funding issue.

Certainly the Rhode Island library community owes a special thanks to Representative David Panciera, our librarian in the General Assembly, for his astute stewardship. (Unfortunately for us, David has chosen not to run for re-election this year.)

And just as certainly a very special thanks is owed to RILA's Legislative Action Committee, whose members include Maria Baxter, Kathy Ellen Bullard, Ann Crawford, Donna Dufault, Fran Farrell-Bergeron, Dorothy Frechette, Jim Giles, Beth Perry, Susan Reed, and Anne Toll and Co-Chairs David Macksam and Dale Thompson.

The achievement of the 25% State funding share by the year 2000 remains a major challenge, requiring even larger strides in 1999. Hopefully the news will be just as good next year.

From the Committees...

Continuing Education

Committee: The CE Committee recently sponsored a "Basic Book Repair" workshop at the Cranston Public Library which was attended by twenty people representing various types of libraries. All gave high marks to workshop leader Michelle Venditelli, Bindery Manager at Brown University, and the three members of

her staff, who demonstrated various repair techniques on books brought in by the attendees. The response was so good that this may become an annual offering of the CE Committee.

Federal Relations Committee:

As the 105th Congress races to the end (target date for adjournment is October 9), action on several library issues is heating up. These issues remain extremely fluid as changes seem to be occurring every day. Here's the status of four major federal legislative issues as of the time of this writing.

INTERNET FILTERING: On July 23 the Senate passed the FY 1999 appropriations bill for the departments of Commerce, Justice, and State (S. 2260). This bill included an amendment (S. amdt. 3228) offered by Sen. McCain (R-AZ) that requires schools and libraries receiving universal service discounts to place filtering software on one or more computers with Internet access to block out material which is "deemed inappropriate for minors." The amendment allows for local determination of what content is deemed inappropriate for minors.

The library community has opposed the McCain amendment, stating that local policies are more appropriate and effective in dealing with children's access to the Internet, and that this provision will mandate a costly "solution" that will do little to protect children or create a safe and educational environment.

Another amendment (S. amdt. 3227), offered by Sen. Coats (R-IN), included in the appropriations bill restricts the commercial distribution via the World Wide Web of material "harmful to minors," defines the type of material included under this category, and imposes criminal penalties for violations. The library community has opposed the Coats amendment on the grounds of intellectual freedom, stating that there are more appropriate approaches to guiding Internet access.

E-RATE: The E-rate telecommunications discounts for schools and libraries have come under fire by a

number of congressional attacks dubbing it "the Gore tax." One of the most recent developments includes a bill announced on July 23 by Sen. Burns (R-MT) and Rep. Tauzin (R-LA) which would eliminate the Schools and Libraries Corporation, the entity that presently administers the E-rate program, and move the program from the Federal Communications Commission to a block grant program administered by the Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration.

The bill also would use a one percent federal excise tax on telephone bills to fund the program. School and library advocates are waiting to see the language of the bill once it is introduced in order to fully examine the effects of this proposal.

Meanwhile, an amendment to the Commerce, Justice, State, and Judiciary appropriations bill (H.R. 4276) was expected from Rep. Scarborough (R-FL) during the first week in August that would prohibit the FCC from expending funds to collect contributions from telecommunications carriers for the E-rate discount program. This amendment effectively would freeze the E-rate in place without funding, and the 32,000 applications submitted to the E-rate program would be locked out.

RILA members are strongly encouraged to contact their Members of Congress to defeat the Scarborough amendment and other assaults on the E-rate program.

DIGITAL COPYRIGHT: The bill to implement the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) treaties (H.R. 2281/S. 2037) has emerged from two House committees with jurisdiction in different versions. A compromise amendment on fair use was approved by the House Commerce Committee, thanks to the efforts of Rep. Scot Klug (R-WI) and Rep. Rick Boucher (D-VA). The bill as approved by the House Judiciary Committee, however, contains no fair use provisions and is strongly opposed by the library community.

As the clock winds down on the session, it remains a controversy which version of the bill will be sent to the House floor for action. Meanwhile, a House bill (H.R. 2652) that would grant sweeping new protections to compilations of facts was passed by the House in May. A hearing is scheduled for September 9 on the Senate version of the bill (S. 2291). For the latest information on digital copyright issues, consult the Digital Futures Coalition website at: <www.dfc.org/>.

TITLE 44 REFORM: On July 29, the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration held a hearing on S. 2288, the bill to reform Title 44, the law governing the Government Printing Office and the Federal Depository Library Program. Among the witnesses supporting the bill were three librarians, jointly representing seven national library associations. Dan O'Mahony, RILA/FRC chair and chair of the Inter-Association Working Group on Government Information Policy (IAWG), was one of the witnesses at the hearing. (Barbara Weaver, RI/OLIS Director, also is a member of the IAWG.)

The IAWG has worked with congressional staff and others over the past year and a half to develop S. 2288 and recommends its enactment. RILA members are strongly encouraged to contact members of RI's congressional delegation immediately to urge RI's Senators to co-sponsor and support S. 2288, and to urge RI's Representatives to support S. 2288 when action on the bill is taken up by the House. More information about S. 2288 is available at the IAWG website: <www.lib.berkeley.edu/IAWG/>.

Intellectual Freedom

Committee: 1) The IFC program at RILA's annual conference in June featured UMass-Dartmouth Professor John Carroll, who spoke about censorship on the Internet. The session was well attended and the audience had numerous questions after the talk.

2) "Banned Books Week" takes place September 26-October 3 of this

year and the IFC has purchased the *Banned Books Kit* from ALA which includes posters, bookmarks, and a resource book. Anyone who would like to borrow materials from the kit or have pages from the resource book photocopied should contact Carla Weiss, IFC Chair at Rhode Island College (456-8125 or cweiss@grog.ric.edu). The Banned Books web site can be found at <www.ala.org/bbooks>.

3) ALA has issued two documents, *Guidelines and Considerations for Developing a Public Library Internet Use Policy* <www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/internet.html> and *Frequently Asked Internet Questions* <www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/interfaq.html>.

4) The IFC is always looking for new members; contact Carla Weiss if you are interested in joining.

ALA in DC

FRANK IACONO, ALA COUNCILOR

IT CERTAINLY WASN'T THE WEATHER that drew a record crowd—including many folks from the Ocean State—to Washington, DC for ALA's Annual Conference that took place from June 26th to July 1st. But despite the rather spread out meeting and housing locales, turn out they did—some even in Boy Scout uniforms (see below). As always it was a full week for your RILA representative on Council and I offer the following as a summation of the proceedings:

- President Ann Symons met with chapter councilors to talk about her initiatives for the upcoming year. All relate to the promotion of intellectual freedom and they include: prepared programs relating to the Internet and filtering that will be made available to state and regional library associations for conference or other CE offerings; the unveiling of "Libraries: An American Value: a 21st Century Intellectual Freedom Statement" at next year's Midwinter conference; and, her giving

an intellectual freedom gift to new library school graduates for the duration of her presidency.

- ALA Executive Director Bill Gordon briefed councilors on his activities and future plans. One novel way he has been gaining input from ALA members is his "call a member a day" program. He calls a member, chosen at random from the ALA membership directory, each day and simply asks for comments, suggestions, etc. about ALA. So to all you ALA members out there, you just might receive a call one day from one Mr. Gordon.

- Once again both scheduled membership meetings reverted to simple information exchange sessions since the 1% quorum (over 500 members) necessary to conduct these meetings was not present. This has been a constant source of consternation and frustration for those members who would like to have their issues and resolutions brought to Council.

The 1% quorum was adopted by Council a few years back and has resulted in non-meetings. However, at Council Session III a resolution to reduce the quorum to one-half of 1% was defeated. Until this situation is resolved there will continue to be hard feelings among those who feel that they have been cut off from the democratic process that ALA so often prides itself on.

- As always Council met three times. Unfortunately it did not accomplish a lot this time. Some of the highlights/lowlights were action/inaction related to:

- **the Boy Scouts.** The recent Boy Scouts of America announcement that it will deny membership to anyone who does not recognize a supreme being or who identifies himself as a homosexual runs counter to ALA policy that it will not maintain a formal relationship with any organization that practices discrimination. The ALA Executive Board submitted clarifications and definitions of the terms "formal relationship" and "informal relationship" to Council at the confer-

ence. Council voted to postpone discussion of that document to permit its members to read and understand what the definitions mean.

A resolution regarding ALA's relationship with the BSA was also postponed until Midwinter since debate on this issue would be affected by the Executive Board document. Needless to say, the two councilors who attended Council II in their Boy Scout uniforms will be back at Midwinter in their winter BSA regalia when Council takes up the issue again.

– **socially responsible investing.** Council voted to refer the Resolution on Socially Responsible Investment, to the ALA Executive Board, which would report to Council at the 1999 Midwinter Meeting. The resolution would have ALA place its Endowment Fund and other investments in socially responsible financial instruments, as defined by an investment code of conduct based on the *Code of Conduct for Businesses Operating in South Africa*, prepared by the South Africa Council of Churches (July 1993) as guidelines for investment in post-apartheid South Africa.

ALA Council had previously endorsed this code but apparently has not implemented it. As ALA's endowment approaches \$10 million this increasingly is becoming a hot topic at least with some councilors.

– **library education.** Concern among councilors about the rapidly changing curricula and program names at various American library schools resulted in a resolution to direct the Committee on Accreditation to work with an "advisory task force" to draft standards for the education of librarians.

The proposed resolution noted that children's services, young adult services, reference service, school librarianship and cataloging are being de-emphasized or ignored in favor of more technologically-based curricula in many graduate school programs purporting to be offering advanced degrees in librarianship. The resolution was, in effect, tabled, because

ALA plans to hold a summit on library education.

• The two meetings of the Chapter Relations Committee (CRC) I attended offered, among other things, some interesting results of two surveys the CRC conducted earlier in the year. In one survey chapters indicated that their top three priorities are:

1) membership recruitment and retention; 2) quality, affordable continuing education; and 3) a tie between advocacy for libraries/librarianship and encouraging the active involvement of association members. In the other survey, information was gathered regarding membership recruitment, retention, and recognition activities in the chapters.

• The Spectrum Initiative begins its second year in operation and the Association continues to raise money for this worthy cause. In an extraordinary announcement on the floor of Council, Betty Turock, Past President of ALA, announced that the Turock family is making a \$25,000 challenge to ALA members. The Turocks will match dollar for dollar, up to \$25,000, all donations made to the Spectrum Initiative between now and Midwinter 1999. This challenge is not made lightly and is a considerable commitment of the Turock family resources. Full details will appear in *American Libraries*.

All donations made payable to ALA, mailed to ALA headquarters, and designated for the Spectrum Initiative will qualify for the challenge match. Contact this reporter for more information.

In winding up this report, I'll just add that hearing Doris Kearns Goodwin speak at the PLA President's Program and attending the "Celebration of the Life of Arthur Curley" were personal highlights of this conference. And for more information about the conference and ALA in general be sure to check out the ALA homepage at <www.ala.org>.

NELA Assists RI Spectrum Scholarship Recipients

THE NEW ENGLAND LIBRARY ASSOCIATION recently voted to award grants of \$2500 each to the four New England recipients of the 1998-1999 American Library Association (ALA) Spectrum Scholarships. Among the four are Rhode Island Spectrum scholars Alicia Antone of East Providence and Barbara Kenney of North Kingstown.

As Spectrum scholars, Alicia and Barbara receive \$5,000 scholarships from the American Library Association for their library



Alicia Antone

education. Under the Spectrum Initiative, developed in 1997, \$1.3 million was pledged by ALA to support 150 Spectrum Scholarships over three years to encourage and assist under-represented groups to pursue careers in library and information science.

Alicia and Barbara were guests of ALA at its recent Annual Conference in Washington, D.C. and attended



Barbara Kenney

a special reception for all fifty Spectrum scholars. Each reported that besides being somewhat overwhelmed by the scope and size of the conference, they found it to be an immensely exciting and stimulating experience.

BULLETIN BOARD

The Providence Public Library recently announced that its Special Collections Department has received two generous donations from prominent Providence families. Its heavily used Nicholson Whaling Collection, bequeathed to the library in 1956 by Paul C. Nicholson, son of the founder of the Nicholson File Company, recently was endowed with \$300,000 by members of the family to ensure the preservation and growth of the collection and promote its use.

The collection contains 750 manuscript log books of whaling voyages and is the third largest such collection in the world. And it also includes scrimshaw, harpoons, a narwhal tusk, ship models, prints and photographs, three 19th century periodicals, and about 2,000 printed books. The second donation, made by the Joukowsky Family Foundation, will provide \$30,000 over three years to enable the Special Collections Department to clear up a backlog of several thousand cataloged or partially cataloged books. With this money the Library will be hiring a part-time cataloger to enter these books into the CLAN database.

The Board of Trustees of the East Providence Public Library made a renewed commitment to Branch Library Service. The decision was made to emphasize our neighborhood libraries. Now offered at each location are more current fiction and non-fiction titles; video and audio collections; and Internet and word processing capabilities. In addition, a librarian was appointed to each Branch. The Rumford Branch Librarian is Denise Inman, the Riverside Branch Librarian is Sarah Capobianco; and the Fuller Branch Librarian is Alicia Antone.

This summer has seen an increase in use at these neighborhood libraries with record attendance at summer reading programs and events for children and adults. All three branches

are open Monday through Thursday 10 am-6pm and Saturday 10 am-5pm.

On June 22nd, the mayor of Cumberland, the governor, lieutenant governor and other honored guests were on hand for the groundbreaking ceremonies for the new \$3.6 million addition to the Cumberland Public Library. The new addition will house all public service areas, including an expanded children's room with its own program room on the first floor. Circulation and technical services will also be on the first floor. The second floor will hold the reference and young adult areas, the adult collection, a Rhode Island Room and study rooms. The original building will be reconfigured to include a large and small meeting room, administration offices and stored periodicals.

The theme for next year's National Library Week, April 11-17, will be "Read! Learn! Connect! @ the Library." The annual observance will feature a national photo contest sponsored by the American Library Association (ALA) and the Library of Congress.

U.S. libraries of all types are eligible to apply for a \$4,000 National Library Week Grant sponsored by the Grolier Educational Corporation for the best library promotion tied to the goals and theme of National Library Week. The deadline is October 15, 1998. The winner will be notified in December.

The photo contest, titled "Beyond Words: Celebrating America's Libraries," invites amateur and professional photographers to capture the spirit of our nation's libraries and how they touch our lives. Libraries of all types are encouraged to sponsor local contests in early 1999 and to announce local winners during National Library Week. Local winners must be forwarded for national judging by May 1. The contest is underwritten by Ingram Library Services.

Tips for celebrating National Library Week, applications for the

Grolier National Library Grant and photo contest guidelines are available on the ALA Web page at <www.ala.org>. Materials are also available from the ALA Public Information Office, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. Telephone: 800-545-2433, ext. 5044/4041. E-mail: pio@ala.org.

A \$2000 award for creative training programs for adults and or youth is available to public libraries nationally from Highsmith, Inc. The focus of the award is on planning and implementing a creative program or service using technology. Public libraries of any size are eligible and selection is based on the quality of creative training programs which improve the use of new technology in public libraries. Applications are due by December 1, 1998 and may be obtained from the Public Library Association of ALA by calling 1-800-545-2433, ext.5 or by visiting the PLA web site.

PEOPLE

BRENDA ANDRADE is now a Reference Librarian at CCRI's Warwick campus. JONATHAN ANDERSON is the new Technical Services/Reference Librarian at the Marian J. Mohr Memorial Library in Johnston.

ROBERT BALLIOT, Information Services Librarian at the East Greenwich Free Library, recently was named the RI state winner of the first annual "MCI Cybrarian of the Year" award. He is one of 51 winners in the national award program that "honors librarians' efforts as Internet innovators in sharing the wonders of the World Wide Web with their communities."

LYNDA BRONAUGH is now Director of Library Functions at the Redwood Library and Athenaeum.

ROSEMARY CULLEN was promoted to Head Special Collections Librarian at Brown University earlier this year.

LIZ GONCALO has left the Naval War College Library where she was Acquisitions Librarian for a Reference

Librarian position at the Memphis Public Library.

CLAIRE HOLST and **MARGARET HOLMES** have joined the reference staff of the East Providence Public Library on a part-time basis.

CYNTHIA LUNGHOFFER recently was appointed Adult Services Librarian at the East Providence Public Library.

MARY MACDONALD is a recent appointment to the reference staff at URI.

ANN RAWLINSON has been appointed a Reference Librarian at the Providence Public Library (PPL). She had been Branch Librarian at PPL's Wanskuck Branch.

JEAN RUSSELL, a Children's Librarian at the Warwick Public Library for over 10 years, recently retired.

WILLIAM SCHNELLER was appointed Shared Resources Coordinator at PPL in May. He formerly was ILL and Subregional Librarian at the New Bedford PL.

TOM SHANNAHAN, Director of the Central Falls PL, was appointed Chair of CLAN in May.

NANCY SOUSA recently was appointed Branch Librarian at Cranston Public Library's Knightsville Branch.

KATHRYN TAYLOR has been appointed Director of the Westerly Public Library and will begin her new assignment in early September. She is the former Director of the Littleton (NH) Public Library, which won the 1998 "Excellence in Small/Rural Public Libraries" award given annually by the ALA.

ELEANOR UHLINGER is now Director of Marine Sciences Information Services, at URI's Pell Library.

CHRIS WALLACE recently was appointed Chief of Children's and Youth Services at the Woonsocket-Harris Public Library.

RITA WARNOCK, Curator of BroadSides at Brown University's John Hay Library, retired in April after 31 years of service.

JEANINE WILLIAMSON was appointed Reference/Interlibrary Loan Librarian at URI earlier this year.

LISA ZAWADZKI recently was appointed an Information Services Librarian at Cranston Public Library.

President's Message

continued from page 1

benefits of other tax supported services. The majority placed public libraries squarely in the middle. Combined with those that ranked it at the top, you have an very strong case for a large base of solid support.

So the question has to be asked, if we have that core support, how come many libraries never seem to have adequate fiscal support? Should we ask ourselves "are we as politically involved as we should be?" We all know that in our work capacities we cannot endorse particular candidates. But on a personal level, we *can* be political. And as a group we can certainly be political. But sometimes we're so afraid of alienating anyone, that we fail to "grow" strong library supporters because they don't see politically active people behind the librarian facade. And that's regrettable. For far worse than being seen as a special interest group, at least in my opinion, is being seen as inconsequential.

The continuing success in the increase of state aid is proof that as a group we can exert influence (unless, of course, you believe that the General Assembly "remembered" all on their own that there was a law awaiting implementation during the next economic upturn). I am not suggesting that we plaster our cars with bumper stickers and our yards with placards. I am not even suggesting that we chose sides.

What I am suggesting is that we get busy and *ASK QUESTIONS* of individual candidates. Why shouldn't we know whether one gubernatorial candidate is a stronger library supporter than another? Why shouldn't we know what each person running for City Council or General Assembly believes is the role of the public and school library? Why can't we insist that candidates go on record with their support of libraries.

Don't pass up those opportunities to speak with politicians running for

office. Go to those coffee klatches, go to those fund-raisers, go to those forums, call in on that local radio show—and ask about their support of public and school libraries. Do it politely, tactfully, respectfully, and evenhandedly, but **DO IT !**. Will you sometimes be expected to contribute? Yes, but that doesn't mean you have to—you won't be asked to another gathering, but you will still have had that one opportunity. And it also doesn't mean that you, as an individual, can't contribute to all the candidates if your personal budget allows.

I will be instructing the Legislative Action Committee to write a letter to each gubernatorial candidates asking for either a brief position statement on public and school libraries, or consenting to an brief interview on the subject for publication in print or online, to share with all RILA members.

RILA does not and will not endorse any candidates, but it will disseminate the views related to libraries of any and all candidates who will publicly share those views with us. But it's up to each individual in their own communities to make that kind of dialogue happen locally.

DATES

September:

National Library Card Sign-up Month

September 14-20:

Kids Online Week

September 26-October 3:

Banned Books Week

October 4-6:

New England Library Association Annual Conference, Providence, RI

October 19-25:

Teen Read Week

November 16-22:

National Children's Book Week

Gallup Poll On Use of Libraries

DESPITE SUPER BOOKSTORES, VIDEO STORES, HEALTH CLUBS AND HOME COMPUTERS VYING FOR ATTENTION, Americans continue to use their public libraries in record numbers, according to a new poll conducted by the Gallup Organization for the American Library Association (ALA).

The poll found 66% of Americans used a public library at least once in the last year—in person, by telephone or online. Sixty-five percent consulted a librarian. The number of library visitors—64 percent—is up 13 percent since 1978. Most—81 percent—checked out a book. Fifty-one percent used reference materials; 50 percent read newspapers and magazines; 32 percent borrowed records, CDs or videos. Nineteen percent called the library for information. Seventeen percent said they connected to the Internet—and 9 percent say they connected to the library online from their homes or offices. A large majority—90 percent—said they believe libraries will continue to be a necessary service despite the growing availability of computers. Two out of 5 (40 percent) said they consider the library one of the most important tax supported services.

Slightly more women (53 percent) than men report using the library. The survey found the heaviest library use is by those ages 35-54 (43 percent). Thirty-five percent of library users are 18-34 and 22 percent over age 55. Of those who use libraries, 35 percent are college graduates, 34 percent had some college, and 31 percent had high school diplomas or less. Thirty-five percent have children and two-thirds of those say they take them to the library.

More than a quarter (26 percent) of the library users have incomes of \$60,000 or more, 20 percent have incomes of \$40,000-\$60,000; and 29 percent have incomes of \$20,000-\$40,000. Fourteen percent have incomes of \$20,000 or less.

The telephone survey, conducted in May 1998 for ALA by the Gallup Organization, was of a randomly selected national sample of 1,000 adults. The margin of error is plus or minus three percentage points.

For a copy of the poll contact Frank Iacono at OLIS at 222-5816.

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