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RHODE ISLAND Library Association

Bulletin

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Winter, 2000

President's Message

-Helena F. Rodrigues, D.A.

What a year to celebrate an anniversary as we mark the end of one century and the beginning of a new one. Among the celebrations this year is the Library of Congress Bicentennial. One of the most popular events in the long list of festivities is the issuance of a commemorative postage stamp by the United States Postal Service on April 24, 2000 in the Library's Thomas Jefferson Building in Washington, D.C. From that day through May 31, libraries across the country will hold second-day issue ceremonies. It is expected that every state and the District of Columbia will participate. What a great opportunity to "Celebrate America's Library and America's Libraries," ALA's 1999-2000 theme for promoting libraries and building partnerships.

According to the press release from the Bicentennial Program Office, the subject of the commemorative stamp features the

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Library Profile: WESTERLY PUBLIC LIBRARY

WESTERLY PUBLIC LIBRARY: THE HEART OF THE TOWN

The Memorial and Library Association has served the communities of Westerly and Pawcatuck for 105 years, and Sallie Coy was an efficient and faithful part of that service for over fifty years. She came to the library in the fall of 1911

and left it in 1960 after serving as Head Librarian for thirty years.

At the turn of the century, Harriet Wilcox, the benefactor of the Westerly Public Library and Wilcox Park, had said, "I want the library to be the very heart of the town." Miss Coy's annual reports to the Board of Trustees document a lifelong commitment to that wish and they also reflect the tenor of the times.

In 1934 there had been concern in the country that workers would not know how to use the leisure time caused by the new industrial order. There was also fear that motion pictures would corrupt the

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Homework Center at the Greenville Public Library

Young Adults Welcome!

Greenville Public Library has a new homework center. The library, located in the town of Smithfield, Rhode Island, has a population of approximately 20,000 people who are served by two public libraries, Greenville being the larger of the two. The collection is slightly over 70,000 items with an annual circulation of 160,000. The library has twenty-three public computer workstations, all but three of which have direct Internet access and several on-line databases subscribed to by this library or a member of the public library circulation system consortium named CLAN (Cooperating Libraries Automated Network). Internet access is provided through CLAN, and several on-line databases are purchased by the Greenville Library and supplemented with shared databases purchased by other CLAN library members with grant monies. Greenville Library has a local area network and a CD-ROM server with twenty-eight drives, as well as a Web page with links to professionally selected sites on the World Wide Web. Sites are organized by age level into children's, young adult and adult, with some duplication of sites.

The homework center at the Greenville Public Library is a creative solution to various problems involving teens in the library that surfaced in the spring of 1998. Existing policies and procedures for dealing with unruly behavior failed at that time to provide the library's staff with sufficient leverage to bring an intensifying set of problems under control. Regular fist fights between teens, shouting matches between teens and library staff, groups of young people moving through the library as if in search of a confrontation, and regular vandalism of books and library furniture made a new approach imperative.

Initial efforts to contain the situation included variations of the existing policies and procedures. These guidelines, however, were meant to deal with occasional teen confrontations involving shouting and pushing or hostile encoun-

ters between adults and teens that got out of hand. Staff meetings reviewing these policies and procedures in the spring of 1998 revealed high emotions and frustration among the staff in the midst of escalating problems. A consultant involved in both youth counseling and staff training was brought in with the hope that the staff could learn what motivates teen behavior and also to receive instruction on how to interact more effectively with teens and anyone acting in an unruly manner.

The mounting violence and vandalism required immediate attention. A security service was hired to provide a guard to monitor the building between the hours of 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. on weekdays, but the plan presented its own set of problems. General rowdiness was temporarily minimized, while rumors began to circulate through the public school that there were armed guards in the building, even though the security guards did not carry any weapons. Some young people avoided the library out of fear, while others were attracted by the prospect of seeing a fight. Harassment of the security guards followed the brief respite and culminated in a teen assault upon a guard. The security service was immediately withdrawn. The situation was getting worse and something needed to be done.

Ongoing staff meetings with the consultant, as well as observation of the situations arising between 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. daily, led to the theory that the problems might be caused by perception and environment. Young people, using the library after a long day of school, wanted to "vent", to express themselves. These teens physically occupied the entire area of the main library level during the after-school period. This left only random seating available for adults wishing to use the library at these times. It forced adults and teens to sit in very close proximity. The lack of free space combined with the conversation and exuberance of the teens annoyed the adults trying to use the library. This annoyance carried over into staff attitudes and was being reflected in the physical environ-

ment of the library. A territorial "us" versus "them" attitude was developing. Young people felt uncomfortable and unwelcome upon entering the building and adults felt uncomfortable surrounded by teens. The challenge was how to make both the young people and the adults comfortable and to meet the needs of both groups while using the library.

The paradigm shifted: the staff would ascertain the needs of the teens using the library after school. Teens wanted a place to study in which they could work together on projects, talk to one another and use computers for homework and chatting. The result was that the library administration determined that the role of this public library was to provide a safe place for young people to congregate after school, one in which they could talk and do homework, separate and apart from adults using the library. Once that basic decision was made, more details of the solution became apparent. There is a lower level in the library building that had been used as meeting space since an expansion and renovation project that was completed in 1991. Access to the lower level is by elevator and stairway, both of which are kept locked when the meeting rooms are not in use. In order to house the homework center on the lower level it would have to be staffed and all unstaffed areas would have to be monitored.

In June 1998 a grant proposal was written to the Champlin Foundations for the creation of a homework and computer center, which was funded in December of the same year. The proposal included a security camera system with eight cameras connected to a special video recorder capable of taping forty hours from each camera simultaneously. Monitors for the system are located at the circulation desk on the main level and in the homework center at the staff desk. The grant also included tables with transparent tops to hold the computers with the monitors below the glass, which allows the tables to be

(Continued on page 5)

Library Profile (Cont.)

morals of our nation's youth. In response, Miss Coy instituted a cooperative effort with all the organizations that "might possibly offer permanent interests." She said, "Have we the right to condemn the movies unless we introduce really worth while entertainment or provide other things of interest?"

Perhaps not everyone agreed with her approach to library service. In 1936 she wrote, "Many people are inclined to decry the library of today as having gone too far afield in its desire to meet the cultural needs of its community in ways that do not deal primarily with books and reading." She went on to deliver a ringing defense of her library. "If we regard the library not only as a depository for the printed cultural resources of the community, but also as a vital force in its social coordination, then every activity that tends to set men free from wrong thinking, from materialism, from lack of appreciation of the best in living, in music, in drama, in recreation, and especially free from the utter drabness of empty lives, is worthy of a place in our program."

During the Great Depression, libraries across the nation showed a dramatic increase in circulation of books. "Much of the reading during the early days of the depression was in the nature of a painless time killer, but gradually

there developed a demand for books of greater value.... Hope had not then vanished that some time there might be an opportunity again for craftsmen, machinists and the like..." she wrote.

Although the Library itself was not damaged during the 1938 hurricane, Miss Coy reported, "The loss of life and property at the beaches has to some degree affected every person in the community. For many months our people were in no mood for normal functions and since the losses sustained in the Park compelled the curtailment of all unnecessary expense, many of our usual activities in the Library have been omitted."

That year she wrote, "Many of the questions in [the reference] department have reflected the war situation. A man whose brothers and sisters were in Poland previous to the war, but whom he had not heard from since the outbreak of hostilities, sought eagerly to learn whether their village is now in Germany or Russia."

In 1942 she wrote, "As soon as the United States entered the war we began to study the best methods for protecting our more valuable books in preparation for air raids, and as time went on our plans for protection grew more inclusive.

We are now prepared for black-out with a room shelter and plans for protection of people and property. One member of the staff is a qualified Air Raid Warden and several have enrolled in Red Cross first aid classes."

"To see the walls covered with posters urging the public to save fats, conserve fuel and buy bonds, to read signs pointing the way to War Information Center, Red Cross Meeting or round table discussion on price control, to hear the telephone ringing constantly with requests for information on every conceivable subject from the duties of a chipper to recipes using sugar substitutes or possibly the latest priority ratings—all this a far cry from the average man's idea of the library as a dispenser of culture and a quiet haven for reading and contemplation. Such, however, is a picture of a modern library in a world at war."

When the war ended, Sallie Coy described the role of the library. "In the days and weeks that will follow the cessation of war, the library will be one of the vital forces in every community as it seeks to speed up the process of re-conversion and the rehabilitation of the service men and women. In a larger sense, however, the library has an even more important role, that of creating an informed public

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RILA Spring Conference Update

The Rhode Island Library Association Spring Conference is packed with two days of programming of interest to librarians of all types.

Johnson & Wales University Library in downtown Providence is the site again this year. On Thursday we feature both the President's speaker, philanthropist Alan Shawn Feinstein, and dinner speaker, author Bob Leuci. The annual RILA business meeting is Thursday morning.

This year conference planners aimed at presenting a range of topics that demonstrate librarians' interests above and beyond our library walls. "Related Works: Learning from Colleagues and Friends" calls on professionals from among our colleagues in other fields, as well as searching out librarians with special skills to explore new avenues in librarianship.

Here's a sampling of the lineup: Thursday, June 1, "Reducing the Risk of Violent Workers", "Tips from E-commerce for Library Websites", "Business Trends/EDC and Business Outreach/PPL", "Feng Shui Comes to the Library"; Friday, June 2, "Sensible Health Practices in
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THE RHODE ISLAND LIBRARY ASSOCIATION "AWARDS 2000"

The annual awards process provides the opportunity for special recognition of the accomplishments, service, and commitment of trustees, librarians and others. The RILA Executive Board encourages you to nominate a deserving colleague for this year's awards.

Criteria for Trustee of the Year Award

Any trustee of any library who has served on his/her board for at least three years is eligible for this award. These are suggested guidelines, but by no means the only ones, upon which a nomination may be made:

- Nominee worked in a readily identifiable way to develop/improve library service to a community, or to a specific segment within the community.
- Nominee successfully lobbied for increased funding and/or resources for his/her library.
- Nominee fashioned a plan that successfully enhanced the library's role in the community.
- Nominee was instrumental in networking with trustees of other libraries to foster cooperative planning or activities.

Criteria for Outstanding Librarian Award

This award honors the career

accomplishments of a librarian who has demonstrated an outstanding record of service to both his/her library and to the library profession. The nominee must be a member of the Rhode Island Library Association.

Guidelines for nomination include:

- Development of outstanding service in field(s) of expertise, e.g. children's, administrative, technical.
- Involvement in statewide library activities.
- Record of professional library leadership.
- Encouragement of community/institutional support for the library.

Criteria for Citation of Merit

This award is conferred upon citizens who are neither librarians nor library trustees who have made outstanding contributions to quality library service. This award may be given to a group of people or to an individual.

The RILA Executive Board will determine award recipients based on the letters of recommendation.

This year's nominations are due by May 4, 2000. Nomination letters should be sent to Cindy Lunghofer, East Providence Public Library, 41 Grove Ave., East Providence, RI 02914.

The Board reserves the right not to present these awards in any given year.

Homework Center, Cont.

used for classroom instruction without the monitors obstructing anyone's view. The grant provided funding for wiring to connect the homework center's computers to the local area network and the necessary connectors and equipment to make this possible. There are ten workstations for the public and one for the staff. The grant also purchased a three-printer stand and the necessary wiring and equipment to attach existing printers, two color HP's and a laser printer, to the network. Fully adjustable, ergonomically designed computer chairs accommodating people of different heights and body shapes, were included in the grant in order to combine a welcoming atmosphere with a comfortable space. Existing chairs and folding tables are available for group projects. A recycled desk and an existing wall phone completed the equipment and furnishings.

When the homework center opened in March of 1999 it was staffed by one of the two reference librarians on duty in the afternoon. The reasoning was that if the young people were concentrated in the homework center, then one of the reference librarians on duty originally to help handle the afternoon influx of young people could be spared from the main level. It was discovered, however, that reference questions were still being taken to the reference department on the main level, and an increasing number of adults began returning to the library in the afternoons keeping reference demands on the main level high. The homework center is open from September through May. When it reopened in September of 1999 a college student majoring in computer science was hired to staff the room and its hours of operation were expanded to include Saturday. The staff person's knowledge of computers allows him to assist students with accessing the Internet, using computer software and printing. He is able to troubleshoot network problems and assists the technology coordinator with loading new programs, anti-virus updates and routine hardware and software maintenance tasks.

The rules for using the homework center were written by the staff and published before the center opened. Each person entering the homework center is given a copy of the rules, and they are posted outside

the door. Informing users of the rules before using the homework center has resulted in few behavior problems.

Activity in the homework center and the effects of its presence on the library in general are being closely monitored. The most immediate positive result has been that the majority of the young people using the library after school use the equipment and study tables in the homework center, rather than the computers and furniture on the main level. The teens are better behaved and congregate in or near the homework center rather than roaming around on the main level. There has also been a marked reduction in behavior problems in the library. Usage of the center in December was 222. As noted above, adults are returning to the library during the 2-5 p.m. time period.

The homework center is used as an adult computer training lab two nights a month. The number of classes will be increased as additional staff time becomes available. The computers are also being booked by local librarians and Greenville staff needing to do group training workshops on particular databases and programs. Recently NELINET booked the room for a First Search training class. An overhead projector, also purchased with the Champlin Foundations grant, is most useful for class room instruction.

Future considerations for the homework center include vending machines for snacks and juices to be located in the large hallway outside the room. Food would augment the creation of an inviting atmosphere that allows teens to study, work in groups and talk with their friends. The homework center provides a valuable service to the community by accommodating latch key youth and offering them a safe and constructive place to spend the after-school time period, academic help and a good impression of the library that will need their support when they become tax-paying adults.

Written By:
Christopher LaRoux,
Director, Greenville Public Library

WESTERLY PUBLIC LIBRARY (Cont.)

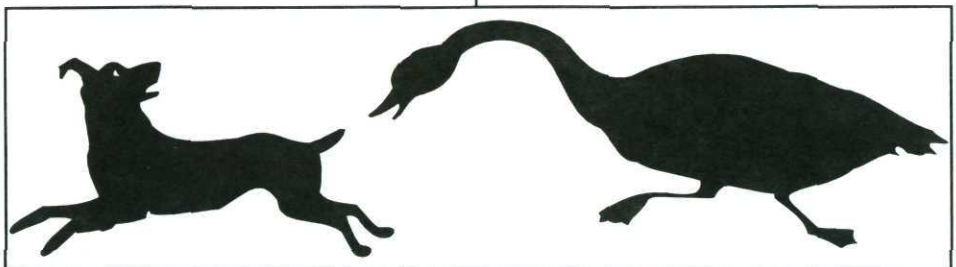
capable of grappling with the problems of a global world, for no peace that we establish today can hope to endure unless a substantial number of men and women in the world are aware of the problems and act accordingly."

As we prepare for the new century, libraries across the nation are touting new initiatives to become community centers. Westerly Public Library has served that function for 105 years. In 1999, they held a series of discussions on environmental policy and world peace, they were the site for a forum on town government, they host a chess club in the children's room; they had a series of story hours for children with developmental delays. People came to the Library to get tax forms, health information, travel information; they came to learn how to write a resume, how to cook mulligatawny soup, how to spell "mulligatawny", how to use the Internet. They strolled through Wilcox Park, watched "The Taming of the Shrew," thrilled to the fireworks at the Summer Pops Concert, climbed the Runaway Bunny, listened to speeches, photographed marriages, fed the ducks, giggled under the weeping birch.

For over one hundred years, Westerly and Pawcatuck have benefited from the vision of Harriet and Stephen Wilcox. They gave the people a library and a Park.

Charles Shea is a Trustee of the Memorial and Library Association of Westerly and owner of Shea's Office Products in Pawcatuck.

Article Written By Charles Shea





REPORT OF RILA'S BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE ON

THE BURGER REPORT TO THE LIBRARY BOARD OF

RHODE ISLAND Jan 10, 2000

The BRC was established to act as a broad based reactor panel to Leslie Berger's NEW POSSIBILITIES report. Eighteen library organizations were represented on the BRC. The goal was to review the 12 recommendations of the report and to present to the Library Board of Rhode Island priorities for implementation.

The review process was approached with three working assumptions. (1.) The Burger report was viewed as dealing primarily with an electronic information environment for Rhode Island and with the development of a multi-type library network. The Report is not viewed as a comprehensive study for library services in the state. (2.) A spectrum of other challenges equally deserving the attention of the Library Board exist. These include but are not limited to preservation, collection development of print formats, services to the disadvantaged populations and capital repair funding. (3.) The close relationship of many of the Report's recommendations encouraged the BRC to use a cluster approach for determining priorities for implementation.

The review process was driven by the work of five task forces, technology initiatives, community literacy, funding, infrastructure and governance & planning. The BRC and the task forces with a total participation of over 45 library advocates and librarians worked over

the summer.

The final report was developed in the fall, and was organized around three recommendation clusters. Each cluster deals with 3 to 5 recommendations from the Burger Report, Cluster One has the highest priority for implementation. Cluster One deals primarily with the development of an integrated statewide network environment and the necessary technology enhancements. Cluster Two addresses literacy, public relations and public library funding issues. Cluster Three is concerned with funding for expanded network development and standards for school and public libraries.

Many of the BRC recommendations closely mirror the Berger recommendations however, there are several important areas where alternative approaches or ongoing concerns are noted and further attention and discussion by the Library Board of Rhode Island is strongly encouraged.

The final report was presented to the Library Board in January and can be reviewed at the LORI web-site under Library Programs. At the March meeting recommendations of Cluster One with the addition of the public relations initiative from Cluster Two were endorsed by the Board.



An Interview With
CAROL DiPRETE

After 16 years as Dean of Libraries at Roger Williams University, Carol DiPrete has left to take on a new challenge. Carol has accepted the position of Director of Libraries at Zayed University in the United Arab Emirates. There Carol will be developing the personnel, facilities and collections of the libraries which may involve the construction of two library buildings.

Zayed University was founded in 1998 to provide baccalaureate degree-granting programs for women and encompasses campuses in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. The student body is comprised of female national students. Students are expected to be on campus five days a week, eight hours a day and engage in formal course work, independent study, and extracurricular activities. There is also a strong commitment to make the students computer literate and all freshmen are required to purchase a laptop computer.

Carol looks forward to the challenge

(Continued on page 7)

Carol DiPrete

Continued

of helping to develop an institution while using all the skills she has developed over her career as a librarian. Since she is basically starting from scratch, she is eager to create a library which will balance print and electronic resources. For instance, Carol will primarily be subscribing to electronic journals in order to assure timely arrival of information. Scanned books will also comprise a majority of the collection and then gaps will be analyzed to see what print resources needs to be purchased. Outsourcing will also be very prevalent at the libraries.

Zayed University is very technologically advanced and each desk is equipped with a port for students to plug their laptop into. The administration is strongly committed to incorporating information literacy throughout the curriculum.

Collection development needs to be performed carefully since nothing can be purchased which may be offensive to the culture of the United Arab Emirates. Selection of books must be carefully reviewed since works which include discussion of Israel are not allowed. Among other works, The Diary of Ann Frank is considered offensive to the culture.

The culture will be an adjustment for Carol. She will need to constantly remind herself that she is a guest and also a female in a Muslim country which has very different norms than the United States. Thursday through Friday constitutes the weekend. Women are expected to dress modestly. Although the temperature routinely reaches 120 degrees with high humidity in the summer, women are not allowed to wear shorts or any garments which are sleeveless.

Another big challenge for Carol will be recruitment of librarians. All

professionals hired must be natives of English speaking countries. The average salary for librarians is about \$40,000-\$50,000 per year and includes housing and transportation. An attractive offer for the right person.

Carol will be living in Dubai which is a major trade center. Dubai can be compared to New York City and is the most liberal of the emirates. When asked what she would miss most, Carol quickly responded "friends and family". She stated that she finds that librarians are the nicest and most intelligent people she knows. For those who have known Carol for any amount of time, I am sure they feel the same way about her.

By John Fobert

Conference Update Cont.

the Library", "The Pleasures of Listening: Audiobooks", "Collection Development: Fantasy", "Teaching Teachers to Use the Internet", and "Meditation for the Working Person".

Other sessions will address cataloging electronic data, school-library cooperation, WGBH's new literacy tie-in, plants in the library, finding math, science and visual resources on the web, and more collection development advice in travel, DVD, and Christian fiction.

As always, we urge you to register early, and join your friends and colleagues for a stimulating and enjoyable professional development event, the RILA Spring Conference 2000.

Submitted by Pat LaRose

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS:

- Dorothy Frechette was named COLA's Sweetheart of the Year
- Betsy Peck Learned is the acting Director of Libraries at Roger Williams University
- Jackie Cooper begins May 8 as Collection Development Librarian at PPL's central branch
- Sarah Weed begins May 1 as Regional Librarian for the Rochambeau branch of PPL
- Whitney Pape is the NEH Preservation Librarian at Brown University
- Li Wang is Curator of the East Asian Collection at Brown University
- Donna DiMichelle and Karen Mellor are now working at OLIS
- Julie McBride is part of Reference at Pawtucket Public Library
- Colleen Wolf is Electronic Resources Librarian at Pawtucket Public Library

President's Message

Continued from Page 1

interior dome of the Library's Main Reading Room. The unseen painting within the circle or "eye"

OFFICIAL FIRST DAY OF ISSUE



THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
WASHINGTON, D.C.

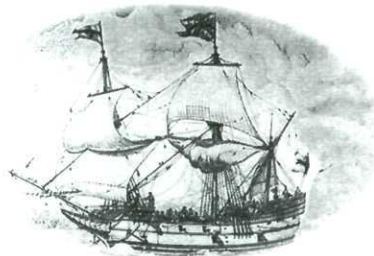
THE MAIN
READING ROOM

Saluting the
Library of Congress

TREASURY OF
OUR NATION'S HISTORY

Above: Library of Congress Cachet from 1982

of the Reading Room dome is the image of a woman representing

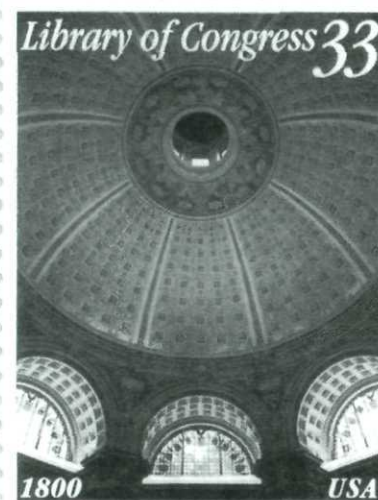


Above: Cachet from the Commonwealth of Virginia

"Human Understanding." This theme symbolizes the Bicentennial goal of stimulating creativity and ensuring a free society through the greater use of libraries everywhere.

The last Library of Congress Commemorative Stamp was issued in 1982. The design consisted of a simple black and white sketch of

the Library's Jefferson Building with "Library of Congress" lettering in red. The value of the stamp was 20 cents, and I was beginning my library career as a preliminary cataloguer on the second floor of the Madison Building. It seems like only yesterday...



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DOROTHY B. FRECHETTE
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