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Finding Community:
Civics, Cyberspace and Change

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*Rural Libraries/
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Finding Community:
Civics, Cyberspace and Change

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Vol 14 • No 1 Spring 2008	*Libraries in Popular Media*	January 15, 2008	March 15, 2008	Maureen Cole Eugene Public Library
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Finding Community:
Civics, Cyberspace and Change

This issue of the *OLA Quarterly* celebrates the ways in which we, as librarians, search for and serve communities that operate in a morphing virtual information environment while retaining our traditional mission of serving each member of our community with equity. The major essays written by our colleagues in this issue are meant to help us think in different and creative ways about who our patrons are and how we can continue to serve individuals in our communities in the various ways they seek information.

"Finding Community" was the theme for this year's Conference. The environment of the Internet has changed the vision of what the public believes their information and social community to be and libraries need to reflect and empower this dramatic change in order to continue to be a player in people's information universe.

Initially this issue of the *OLA Quarterly* was planned to highlight and summarize programs at the OLA Conference that brought new insight and practical responses to this reality. But a most curious and symbolic event occurred in the immediate wake of the Conference. The article on NW Central reveals how this one powerful new community, dedicated to continuing professional education, instantly created the very data we were trying to collect and disseminate in the old fashioned way. It is prophetic that topics for this *Quarterly* should appear so promptly in a virtual online environment and render their reprise here unnecessary.

In this issue, therefore, I have gathered essays about the theme itself. Some are philosophical, like Jim Scheppke's reflection on the library profession's response to horizontal collaboration described in Thomas Friedman's book, The World is Flat, or Bruce Flath's cautionary tale, "Talking with the Enemy." I hope we can also learn to think of Library as Place with a different social face, as shown in Lyn Craig's article "LEO: Shining Bright on Communities", or Library as Non-place in many of its functions, as seen in the responses to a social networking uses questionnaire posted by Abigail Elder of Multnomah County. Rivka Sass, in an essay derived from her Keynote Address, reminds us that integration of library systems into the simplicity of function that characterizes most other transactions today is critical to retaining social relevance in a competitive world. And Kat Davis' essay on "The Librarian's Mind" is a paean to one powerful resource we have to achieve this.

What opportunities are out there for new communities of interest that will fulfill the library's mission in a changing world? Check out the article on 'Zines, where, much like NW Central, content derives from and for special interest groups in an easily accessible format for both creation and access. "Libraries2go" describes a new technology community formed to check-out audiobook content without form or place.

From the Vision 2010 Redux meeting in June, 2006, one of the 5 unmet goals for the decade is creating a vision of what an e-library could be. In March the e-services Think Tank of NextGen librarians gathered and created an inspiring and amazing document of possibilities.

To be sure, the whole question of our "community" become a question of our role in society. I hope you enjoy this issue, as well as the trip out on the Internet to enjoy summaries of programs from our outstanding conference.

Aletha Bonebrake
OLA President
Guest Editor

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Talking with the Enemy

by Bruce Flath
Cataloger,
Mount Angel Abbey Library

That librarianship is a profession in change is obvious to most observers. That librarians are willing to look deeply into the ways that they and their profession could change is not. Certainly, many have discussed the effects of technology and economic and cultural shifts on the profession, but few have considered what it would really take to change deeply from within librarianship itself. It just might take the courageous act of seeing ourselves from the point of view of those who hold very different opinions of libraries and library services.

As a cataloger at the Mount Angel Abbey Library, I have the good fortune of working in a building designed by one of the world's greatest architects, the Finnish Alvar Aalto, whose signature designs include curved, open spaces and lots of natural light from spacious windows. This library must contain the most enviable environment for technical services in Oregon. From my desk I can look out of a large picture window from the top of Mount Angel onto the surrounding farmland and into the mountainous distance. By only slightly shifting myself in my chair I can gaze upon a variety of views.

As I look out on the landscape of librarianship, however, I am dismayed at the narrow view I often see. It seems as if librarians are much too comfortable with blinkered views of their purpose and their missions. Far too often we miss innovations because we fail to look at issues differently from our accustomed vantage point. Much discussion of the contemporary mission of librarianship seems to consist in preaching to the choir. Of course all librarians endorse such concepts as intellectual freedom, serving the under served, and more funding for expanded services. Who wouldn't? And yet there are strong voices in authority and public policy making which disagree with our strongly held beliefs.

It shouldn't come as a shock to some librarians that there are people who actively work against these positions. In the face of challenges to strongly held beliefs, however, human nature makes it easy to demonize and then refuse to even acknowledge those who hold differing opinions. But, sometimes all it takes is a slight change of perspective to move past this natural tendency. The following is a personal example.

As incoming chair of the International Relations Roundtable, I was invited to attend the OLA summer retreat in 2006. About a week prior to the retreat, I had cataloged a new book whose title, *How to Change the World,* immediately intrigued me. The title seemed ambitious enough but its subtitle even more so for it promised *how ordinary people can accomplish extraordinary results*. In reading the book I was struck by how the author, Robert E. Quinn, insisted that in order to affect what he called "deep" or "transformative change" within organizations we need to look from the point of view of those who oppose or resist that change.

In Quinn's model of organizational transformation, change agents often move through a regular succession of strategies. He calls the first strategy, "the telling strategy," the attempt to persuade others to change by using rational arguments. If this doesn't work, then they move to "the forcing strategy," where they try to use the power of authority or threats to cause change. Next, they may employ "the participating strategy" of dialog and negotiation. Quinn was surprised to discover however that this strategy did not always provide lasting change. Finally, he proposed the use of "the transforming strategy," part of which is to think yourself into the position of those who oppose change.

Those of us who regularly read library literature and attend conferences often come across such words or phrases as "intellectual freedom" or "Library 2.0." We encounter them so often that we may stop thinking critically about their meanings and instead react emotionally and automatically to them.

Take the word "community," for example. What comes to mind when you think about community?

At the last meeting of the OLA summer retreat, Aletha Bonebrake, the current President of OLA, asked participants to brainstorm on the effects communities have on libraries and vice versa. Many of the usual responses were trotted out. By focusing on the groups that are traditionally supportive of libraries, there was a sense of "been there, done that." Many of the participants looked bored and frustrated. Hoping to find the proverbial elephant in the room that no one wanted to look at, I began searching for a way to change the direction of the meeting.

That's when I realized that the participants had not quite figured out what Aletha meant by the word "community." I understood that what she wanted us to do was to consider groups which we don't normally consider, groups which had "agendas," as she called them, different from our own as a profession. This tied in well with what I had just read in Quinn concerning a change of view. Some of these entities were easy to identify and name—Google, for example. Some of these groups were much more difficult to identify and we struggled with ways to name them. An example of that kind of group was "people who want to remove or restrict various materials in libraries." Labeling these people as "censors" we might have fallen into the trap of demonizing and therefore dismissing them as an important community to reach out to.

The meeting came alive. Although it was visibly uncomfortable for people to set their focus on these "communities," it was also invigorating. This was not the same old stuff. By slightly shifting the perspectives of the participants, the group was able to break through to a more successful mode of working together.

Most library directors—of public or private libraries—are well aware that there are those who oppose increases in funding. It is easy to fall into the trap of asking how dare they block what is obviously an intrinsic good? It is also easy to take the path of least resistance and talk only with those who support you. On the other hand, it takes courage to set aside your own emotions to engage in dialog with those who think differently. As Aletha says when she faces a library levy, the first action she takes as library director is to "talk with the enemy."

Could this present a model for the manner in which we as a group could begin to transform our profession? Do we need to think beyond being awed at the rapid changes in technology both in our profession and in society and consider what it would take to make deep changes from within? To compete and survive in uncertain economic times we need to move beyond the buzzword phrases so popular in our profession. To paraphrase Hilary Clinton, "It takes a whole community to support a library," not just select already supportive elements. But, in order to do that we need to stop dismissing the non-supportive elements.

Will you join me in talking with the enemy? One way to begin might be to open an online dialog describing the experiences librarians have had in dealing with those with opposing viewpoints. It just might spark a transformative change.

Reference

Quinn, R.E. (2000). *Change the world: how ordinary people can accomplish extraordinary results*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

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Community Builds Libraries

by Jim Scheppke
Oregon State Librarian

We are going from a world where value is created in vertical silos of command and control to a world where value will be created increasingly horizontally by who you choose to connect and collaborate with.
— Thomas Friedman

In this issue of the *OLA Quarterly,* our President has asked me and others to reflect on her presidential theme, "Finding Community." Much has been written recently about how libraries can "build community." There are ample opportunities to observe this phenomenon here in Oregon.

To brag on Aletha a bit, anytime (and I mean *anytime*) I meet someone who hails from Baker County, and I bring up the subject of the Baker County Library, I never fail to get the same response. It appears that anyone you meet from Baker County can go on and on about how outstanding their public library is, and what an asset it is to everyone in the community. And they never fail to mention Aletha by name, and to praise her leadership and what she has done to put the Library at the center of the community.

Here's another example. It's hard to find any silver lining in the disaster that has befallen the public libraries in southern Oregon due to the expiration of federal funding that the counties had relied on for nearly a century. But if you doubt that libraries build community—a community of readers, a community of learners, a community of people who still believe that libraries are indispensable—all you have to do is pick up the *Medford Mail-Tribune* from any given day in the past several months. Turn to the editorial page and you will see this community speaking loud and clear. The outpouring of support for the Jackson County

Library has really been inspiring. It's been there in the paper nearly every day. And it was out in the street, at a rally held on January 31st that drew about 300 citizens who then proceeded to testify to Jackson County Commissioners at a public hearing on the future of the library. A Commissioner who I spoke to after the hearing said it could have gone on most of the day if they hadn't cut it off after three hours.

I could cite many examples of how Oregon libraries have done a good job of building community. And not just public libraries. Oregon academic libraries have done a particularly good job of building new facilities in the past couple of decades that are designed to be at the center of their campus community, and to attract students to surroundings that are beautiful and comfortable and inspiring — just the place for a campus community of learners. For public, academic, and other types of libraries, leadership has been the key to building community, and I think this generation of library leaders in Oregon will be remembered as one of the best.

But what I spend more of my time thinking about these days is not how libraries build community, but how community can build libraries. "Community" as a business strategy. Thomas Friedman's *The World is Flat* has done the most to popularize this notion. Friedman's ideas have been controversial. Some see him as simply an apologist for the worst aspects of the global economy. But I happen to agree with him that the global economy is here to stay, and that it brings more opportunity, not less, to people in the U.S. and people around the globe. It challenges the dominance of the U.S., but this may be a good thing in the long run. We still have many advantages here that can keep our economy strong in a flat world, given the right political and economic leadership.

The old-style organization that won't thrive in a flat world is characterized by Friedman as "the vertical silo of command and control." Unfortunately, this kind of organization was pretty much the norm for libraries for centuries. To cite an obvious example, until quite recently it was the stated or unstated goal of most libraries to independently acquire as many books as possible—to fill their silos, as it were, as much as they could. If the silo gets filled, you build a bigger silo.

You still see vestiges of this way of thinking. Even though the Web site of the Association of Research Libraries states that membership "is necessarily limited to research institutions sharing common values, goals, interests, and needs," to qualify as a member, an academic library is judged on the number of volumes in its collections, volumes added, periodical holdings, and annual expenditures. These are the big silos of the academic library world. Of course the business need to try to mimic the Library of Alexandria went away decades ago with the advent of library automation, which brought with it effective and efficient ways for libraries to share their resources. These systems continue to improve and become more effective and efficient all the time. (Strangely enough, the ARL libraries are in the vanguard of libraries allowing a commercial online advertising company to digitize millions of their holdings without compensation, perhaps bringing us closer than we might realize to the day when big silos of books become totally irrelevant.)

And how about "command and control?" Do we still find that in the library world? When I first came to the State Library in 1986 there were still a lot of long-time employees who could tell hair-raising stories about the many rules and restrictions that controlled the work of State Library employees in years past. To hear these stories it was hard not to imagine a kind of caste system that was more about conferring rank and privilege than it was about the best way to get work done. I don't think the State Library was much different from other libraries of that era. Our old friend Melvil Dewey was the father of library "command and control," at least in this country, among his many other, more useful, innovations. The library culture he invented in the late 19th century persisted well into the 20th.

I think we have gotten well beyond all this in most libraries. What a relief! But have we fully embraced the new way of doing business that Friedman advocates? Call it "connect and collaborate," as he does, or call it, more simply, "community." Again, we can see some good examples here in Oregon.

How about the Orbis Cascade Alliance? What began as a Meyer Memorial Trust Grant to the University of Oregon to try to promote resource sharing among a handful of academic libraries in Oregon has become a tremendously successful community of libraries, big and small, throughout the Northwest, meeting a wide and growing range of needs, not only for resource sharing, but for ground delivery, cooperative licensing, and in the future, shared storage, preservation and digitization. For academic libraries in particular, the Alliance has become a fully integrated and indispensable part of how they do business.

Another favorite example of mine, from the public library world, is the Oregon Digital Library Consortium that was established last year by the eight largest public libraries and library federations in Oregon for the purpose of more cost-effectively providing their users with downloadable audiobooks. This year about two dozen more public libraries are planning the join the Consortium. Who would have predicted, say, ten years ago, that the Multnomah County Library and the Curry Public Library in Gold Beach would be sharing the same collection of downloadable audiobooks? And yet, from a business standpoint, this "community" effort by public libraries, large and small, makes sense.

While you can point to these and other examples of Oregon libraries doing business in a new way, the "community" way, I believe we still have a long way to go to maximize the potential for libraries to work together. For a glimpse of one potential future, look how far Georgia has gone with its Evergreen project. In case you haven't been paying attention, Evergreen is a new open source integrated library system that serves nearly all of the public libraries in Georgia. In a way, it creates one public library system for the entire state that gives public library users access to millions of books and other library materials throughout the state. It also saves a huge amount of money, compared to the cost of purchasing and maintaining integrated library systems for individual public libraries or even groups of public libraries (as we mostly do in Oregon).

When libraries adopt business practices that maximize "community," does it take away from their ability to be perceived and valued as a unique component of their own community? Do libraries risk becoming homogenized, like franchise stores? I don't think so. If done right, the "community" business practices all operate in the background, and the face that libraries present to their communities is the same.

So I hope in the decades ahead, Oregon libraries will continue on their current, successful path. Let us continue to "find community"—by building it with our customers, and building it with ourselves.

Finding Community:
Civics, Cyberspace and Change in the Age of Integration

by Rivkah K. Sass
Executive Director,
Omaha Public Library

I want to thank the Oregon Library Association for the opportunity to deliver the keynote address at the annual conference on April 19, 2007. I especially want to thank the audience for allowing me to share my worries, fears and optimism about the importance of libraries and our changing roles. In addition, I appreciate the opportunity to attempt to translate my talk into a brief article.

Having worked as a librarian for nearly three decades, I'm closer to the end of my career than the beginning. Thus, perhaps I worry more that my life's work will ultimately mean so little to the world than someone who is closer to the beginning might. We live in a world where communities can decide to let their public libraries close their doors, where obtaining a degree can be done entirely without setting one foot inside a library, let alone actually talking with a librarian, and where in middle class communities, people who should know better dismiss the library with comments such as, "I buy my books and I have a computer with Internet access."

Technology is increasingly becoming more and more integrated and customer expectations are constantly shifting, so what's the role for libraries? Do we have one? Given funding for libraries and the lack of innovation from our primary vendors, what chance do we have to keep up with changing customer expectations, especially when the news announces that a 13-year-old girl just won $25,000 for spelling "supercallifragilisticexpealidocious" faster than her closest competitor, a 21-year-old?*

Integration

What is integration anyway? My favorite definition comes from a futurist named Pip Coburn who describes integration as "making things work really well together ...complexity can become simple ..." To me that is pretty much the opposite of how most technology in libraries actually works. While our customers thrive with life with eBay, use PayPal effortlessly, and routinely pay their bills online, the basic technology used by libraries, our integrated library systems, are built on platforms that have not essentially changed in more than two decades. It's only a matter of time before the vendors who depend on our survival will truly need to worry about theirs. Instead of making things harder for us, shouldn't they be working with us to innovate?

A Different Kind of Integration—How Do We Have a Place at the Table if We Can't Find the Table?

Librarians are very good at talking with one another but seem to be missing the mark with initiatives that might allow us to thrive in the bigger world. One such example is the "Every Child Ready to Read" initiative developed by the Public Library Association. It is meant to promote libraries and librarians as leaders in helping very young children develop the skills they need to start school. A visit to the ALA Web site confirms that ECRR is a "joint project of the Public Library Association and the Association for Library Service to Children." While many of us have incorporated ECRR into our strategic plans and methods of service delivery, it has already been overshadowed by another joint project, "Born Learning" (http://bornlearning.org), an initiative developed through a partnership of United Way of

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America and United Way Success By 6, the Ad Council, Civitas and Families and Work Institute. The tools are bright, colorful, easy to use, and mention libraries exactly once. Thus, several years of effort on the part of libraries (and probably several hundred thousand dollars) have brought us little or no attention, and not even acknowledgement that we might have something to share! What were we thinking? Why weren't we at the table?

So What is Our Real Business?

It might be 2007, we might increasingly be managing a downward spiral, but there really is hope! Libraries and librarians are still in the business of fostering engagement, excitement, enthusiasm, curiosity and passion. Most of us are passionate about what we do and treat our work as a calling rather than a job. We need to be open and vocal about our value in a healthy vibrant world, and we need to help our communities, whether we serve in an academic, school or public library setting, engage with ideas, debate and excitement about what the future holds.

If our vendors won't help us, what if we help ourselves? What if libraries worked together to build the systems we really need to deliver the goods the ways our customers want? Surely it would be cheaper for all of us to collaborate and cooperate and build the systems we need together. Do we dare explore open source? Do we dare understand and promote the creative commons? Do we dare follow eBay's lead and assume that people are mostly good (it would be easier than some of the supposed safeguards we have in place)? Do we dare make things more convenient for our users? If not, why not?

I believe with all my heart that libraries are meant to be the keepers of the flame. We must be the saviors of the idea, and be proud that we are defenders of democracy.

What is Our Future?

I believe that there is strength in partnerships and that partnerships are limited only by our imaginations. From modern dance performance to celebrating our "one book one city" efforts, to working with pediatricians, schools, radio stations, and healthy community initiatives, we can do anything, and in the doing, can demonstrate that libraries are alive, lively vibrant centers to our communities. We can consciously choose to make libraries the engaged, fun centers of human thought they were meant to be, and we can choose to help our users feel smart the moment they access us online, walk through the door or call. We can make dynamic connections that help people see the world in all possible ways, and we can celebrate!

Maggie Kuhn, founder of the Grey Panthers, used to say, "Speak your mind, even if your voice shakes." I can think of no better advice if libraries are going to survive and thrive.

*NOTE: The Associated Press reported the story of thirteen-year-old Morgan Pozgar, of Claysburg, PA, who was crowned LG National Texting champion on April 21, 2007 after she typed "supercalifragilistic-expialidocious" from *Mary Poppins* in 15 seconds. The wire story began, "–OMG!"

Report on the Vision 2010 Think Tank Meeting

by Jeremy Frumkin
Gray Chair
for Innovative Library Services,
Oregon State University

On March 8, 2007, representatives from libraries across the state of Oregon attended a one-day meeting at Oregon State University's Valley Library to address the future of technology as related to libraries in the state of Oregon. This group was presented the following context:

> *Libraries are in an age where technological change and advancement are increasingly causing us to reexamine our traditional roles and the services we provide to our communities. Search engines such as Google, Google Scholar, Yahoo, and Microsoft Live, as well as other services such as Amazon, Flickr, and Wikipedia, are now primary discovery tools for most library users. Library users also are now expecting online services that are as easy and fun to use as commercial online services. They now see the library as only part of a much greater information ecosystem.*

Given this context, what new approaches and new services should Oregon Libraries be undertaking to better meet the needs and wants of our customers? How can Oregon Libraries better prepare for our digital future?

This group was charged with developing a brainstormed list of potential services/initiatives, along with the identification of a core subset of these new initiatives, and suggestions as to how to move forward on these initiatives.

The list of brainstormed items is presented within Appendix A. Four items were identified as a core subset. These four items are:

1) An examination of current OLA standards in regards to core electronic services, digital initiatives, and requirements for RFPs.

2) A statewide open source catalog/integrated library system/universal discovery tool that promotes a consistent experience.

3) Social software for libraries.

4) A statewide standard which requires a minimal level of online services at all libraries

As a next step on these potential efforts, the group is presenting this executive summary to OLA, along with the notes from the meeting. The group is recommending that OLA establish efforts to pursue each of these activities.

Appendix A
- What needs to be done?
- Continuing education
- Marketing
- Marketing in new, fun ways (I)
- Statewide standards
- Minimal level of online services (III)
- OLA standards
- Spec's into RFPs (II)
- Statewide support for network infrastructure for new media
- New technology
- Library Web site as social space (I)
- Service that removes barrier between 'Web' library (I)

Brainstorming
- Minimal level of online services for all libraries, # see below
- Identify core digital library services

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- Creating a basic standard
- Surveying
- Marketing the library as a source of all types of materials, not just books
- Services that focus on DVDs, CDs, etc.
- Staff training for new e-services
- Reexamine OLA standards
- E-services, digital initiatives, promote change (VIII)
- Downloadable anything (II)
- iTunes for libraries
- Required requirements for RFPs (III)
- Content creation studios in libraries (I)
- Statewide support for network infrastructure for new media
- Statewide support for legislative issues
- Templates for forward thinking job descriptions and core competencies
- Providing a service that allows patrons to choose to share information while protecting privacy
- Statewide unified discovery tool (I)
- Make our library into discoverable via any search tool (I)
- Statewide marketing in social software spaces (I)
- Libraries as social software spaces (VI)
- Statewide library thing (I)
- Statewide technology guru
- 5-year public library strategic plan model that includes digital services component
- Online collaboration for library staff
- Technology planning institute

- Statewide OS ILS or catalog that promotes a consistent experience (VI)
- Library 'on'
- Library Web site templates with standard core services
- Library games or video
- Providing human interactive services
- Developing qualitative measures
- Richer information experience
- Creation of multimedia content
- New books
- Subversive/viral marketing (I)
- Make it easy to link to the library
- Service that removes the barrier between 'Web' info. and 'library' info (I)
- 2nd life demo
- Continuing new tech and change education
- Charlette-Mecklenborg model
- Modeling new technologies
- Create OLA technology division (II)
- Mobile device compatible (II)
- Services
- Cell phones
- IPods
- PDAs
- Compatible DRM
- Virtual branches/materials
- Spaces = still real?
- Rich browse experience
- Give them a place to go when the first try doesn't work

- Providing a path of continuation
- Are we the destination of intermediary (finding info/providing info)
- Use the structures we already have differently
- Change the user's discovery experience
- Identify where we add value
- Remember and recognize the human/social aspect of discovery
- Take advantage of the rich data we have
- Make the hidden info we have, available
- Keep the value of the local community, interest community
- How can users add their value?
- Tagging/folksonomy
- Think about providing community/connection
- Everything we do, pit it out there, findable on the Web
- In silos? Dispersed throughout

OLA Standards Reexamination/Support

- Standards around collection development and managing content
- Minimal level of services described by OLA standards
- Form a group to explore approaches in this area

Libraries as Social Spaces

- Online discussions
- Integrating with Flicker, Delicious, etc.
- Seamless user experience
- Personal identity
- Library isn't the only content creator

- Content creation, sharing
- Centering around people
- Personal portals
- In and out
- Library blog
- Tagging
- Friends
- Linking to materials that people are using
- X-box live, exp.

Statewide Library OS ILS

- Usability and user interface features
- Catalog front end
- Explore back end components
- Including courier services, delivery
- Universal discovery tool
- Includes catalog
- Extends beyond
- Separation of data from presentation
- Might be able to include resource sharing

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Library2go:
a Technology Community is Born

by Teresa Landers
Deputy Library Director,
Corvallis-Benton County Public
Library

The Oregon Digital Library Consortium is, in essence, a community of technology partners. This article describes how and why it was formed, how it functions and thus, how it represents the theme of this issue, "Finding Community."

In April 2005, Jim Scheppke, State Librarian, called together representatives from public libraries from throughout the State of Oregon to meet during the OLA conference to discuss the idea of combining resources to provide downloadable audio books to public library patrons in Oregon. He had already done a great deal of preliminary work by getting BCR (Bibliographical Center for Research) to agree to be the fiscal agent and by talking to the folks at Overdrive (Digital Library Reserve) for the provision of content. They had experience with like consortia throughout the country.

This large group met several times and finally coalesced into a core group of eight interested libraries: Corvallis-Benton County Public Library, Deschutes County Library, Eugene Public Library, Jackson County Library, Library Information Network of Clackamas County, Multnomah County Library, Salem Public Library, and Washington County Cooperative Library Services. The next step was to create a cooperative agreement that would protect all members as well as serve as a structure under which the group could operate and make decisions. To this end, by-laws were developed and signed, and each entity signed a separate agreement with BCR.

Ready to go, the next step was electing officers and assigning committees and task forces. Teresa Landers of Corvallis was elected Chair for the first 18-month period with Barbara O'Neil as Vice-Chair. Committees and task forces included: Selection, with one representative from each interested library; Training; Web Design and

Marketing; and Cataloging. Committee names are representative of function with the Cataloging committee charged with working out the details of libraries who want them, receiving the MARC record for each title ordered so they can be included in that library's database, searchable like all other library materials. All these committees had/have representatives from the member libraries so that all efforts are collaborative.

A graphics person from Washington County designed the logo and the Web Design and Marketing team took charge of designing the Web site. We branded the collaborative effort under the banner of "Library2go." We selected a name that would not limit us to expanding our offerings beyond downloadable audio books should we choose to expand in the future.

Perhaps the most difficult task after coming up with by-laws agreeable to eight different jurisdictions with eight different city/county attorneys, was agreeing on loan periods and other circulation policies as we could only have one unified set of parameters. But, this was a group determined to show that eight libraries could come to agreement and we did—and really very painlessly.

Each library worked individually with the Digital Library Reserve (DLR) to get their ILS to interface with the DLR system. An opening day collection was purchased using a $25,000 initial assessment for the first six months, with the idea that we would contribute an additional $25,000 for the purchase of materials for the fiscal year beginning July 2006.

The ODLC Overdrive site for downloadable audio books went live on Janu-

ary 31, 2006—about 10 months after the initial meeting. Success was instantaneous and overwhelming. It became immediately evident that more materials were needed since everything was checked out with holds on just about everything within three days of going live.

When it became obvious that we had seriously underestimated demand for the service, the ODLC board assessed each library for a total of $15,000 more during the 05/06 fiscal year. We purchased materials beyond the opening day collection in February 2006 (Maximum Access aka Always Available titles), April 2006, and three times in May 2006, including another 50 Maximum Access titles. By March holds were down to 3,700 from the initial high of 8,500 in February. With additional funds totaling about $100,000 in 2006/2007 holds are now averaging about 1,500 and the collection has grown from 325 on opening day to 150 titles that are always available, and over 800 items that are one checkout at a time per copy. We are adding 150–200 titles per month.

Since opening day the ODLC has been dealing with a number of issues:

- **Keeping holds to a reasonable level. To this end we developed a business plan which includes addressing collection issues such as holds.** A holds ratio of 5:1 has been established with no more than 15 copies of any one title purchased

- **Tweaking circulation policies—number of holds, checkout period, checkout limits, etc.—to best meet the needs of the majority of our patrons.**

- **Expanding collection purchases to include children's, young adult and**

video materials. This one is still under discussion and grant funding for initial purchases is being explored.

- **Expanding membership to other public libraries.** This is happening as of July 1, 2008. Eight new libraries are joining: Albany Public Library, Baker County Public Library, the Chemeketa Cooperative Regional Library Service which replaces Salem Public Library; the Coastal Resource Sharing Network, Curry Public Library District, Klamath County Library District, Seaside Public Library, and St. Helens Public Library. Deschutes County Library is withdrawing.

- **Incompatibility with the Apple format so that it does not work with Ipods or Macs.** This is a major public relations issue but is essentially a decision by Apple to not provide the necessary digital rights licensing to allow compatibility.

The future for the ODLC looks bright. We continue to expand the collection and work together in setting direction and making decisions for the good of all involved. This partnership allows us to pool resources so that we are not each paying for the administrative and overhead costs involved with a service such as this. No one of us is paying more than what we were each individually quoted before the consortium formed, and most are paying a great deal less. The amount of savings varies by size of library. The greatest advantage is that very small libraries (our smallest as of July 2007 will be 5,000) are enjoying the same access to service as our largest library (6.7 million) and it works well for everyone.

How does this fit into the theme of "Finding Community?" The ODLC is a

community of interest that fulfills each library's mission to provide materials in as many formats as our patrons' demand. While each member has its own specific mission we are joined in an overarching mission as public libraries committed to providing excellent customer service as defined by our patrons. The success of the ODLC is an indication that we are meeting our patrons needs. Two customer surveys were done in the first 18 months of operation and we always receive very high ratings, including 92 percent who say they will use the service again. An interesting anecdote is that our single largest group of users is women over the age of 45!

We are able to share resources in a way very different from the physical models of resource sharing, whose success is mixed. We do not need to concern ourselves with transporting materials to and from each other's physical location, which saves time and staff.

There is also a sustainability aspect to the project. No gas is used to courier materials, nor is any used by patrons who don't need to come in to the physical library but can access these materials from home. There is no redundant purchasing of materials and storage media. This saves a lot on plastic packaging materials alone! Staff resources are conserved by not having to process and circulate physical materials. The only group that has ever met physically is the Board. All others have only met virtually.

The ODLC has also demonstrated that libraries representing different constituencies CAN come together and agree on a variety of issues from circulation policies to collection management. We have found community as we communicate and resolve our differences, and as staff from each institution work together whether it be designing the Web page or marketing, or selecting materials. Even though most of the committee members have never met in person, they work together to accomplish a common mission.

There is no doubt that Library2go is a branded identity for a consortium of like-minded libraries. But it is more than a brand or a partnership between 14 member libraries. It is a virtual community for 2.6 million residents of Oregon.

Communication as Community:
The New Room

*Responses posted
by Abigail Elder*

Libs-or is a community of professionals that has provided news, ideas and answers to Oregon librarians for over a decade. Listservs such as this have served as forerunners to a new era of real-time interactive communication just coming into adolescence in Web 2.0 applications. The following responses are to a query in libs-or as to how libraries might use the new communication platforms both to mirror patron behaviors and expectations and to adapt these pervasive new tools for library services. Here are ideas from colleagues who are beginning to embrace a Web 2.0 future.

Responses from libs-or request for social networking examples April 2007 were gathered and shared on libs-or by Abigail Elder, Multnomah County Library.

Eugene Public Library
Margaret E. Hazel
margaret.e.hazel@ci.eugene.or.us

I'm doing a program for the OLA Conference on SS and Intellectual Freedom, so at one point I breezed thru the list of library Web sites for Oregon, and grabbed this info:

- McMinnville is using IM a librarian (teen)
- JCPL had a book blog
- Lincoln City uses a blog as their Web site
- Tigard has RSS feeds on their City site for library events
- CRSN has RSS for new books, etc.
- Wilsonville has a MySpace page for teens
- Woodburn has RSS for new books for teens, etc. thru their catalog

Eugene Public has nothing yet, but will be implementing RSS in our site and catalog. We are talking about implementing a wiki for the staff side, and maybe blogs for the public side. Other City of Eugene agencies are using MySpace to connect with teens and summer temp workers in Rec.

Hillsboro Library
Carol Reich
carolr@ci.hillsboro.or.us

Hillsboro is using Flickr to share construction photos with the public while our Main library is being completed.

I set up a wiki for a 3-library grant group (Hillsboro, Beaverton and Cedar Mill) to use while purchasing world languages. Worldlanguages.pbwiki.com

We use chat during our L-net shift.

Multnomah County Library
Sara Ryan
sryan@multcolib.org

We're working on a blog for our Teen Council members. The idea is that they'll be able to communicate about projects, discuss books, movies, games, and anything else of interest, and encourage other teens to get involved with the library. Using the best practice recommended by the Young Adult Library Services Association, the Teen Council members will be in charge: they'll provide the content and moderate comments. Librarians will be able to comment, but not post.

- RSS Feeds will be implemented soon
- Library has (or will have) a presence on MySpace

OSHA Library
Jane S. Kirby
Jane.S.Kirby@state.or.us

The Oregon OSHA Resource Center participates in "Safety Matters" the OR-OSHA blog, hosted on WordPress.

I post abstracts of workplace safety and health news articles, book reviews, and reviews of recommended Web sites. Weekly messages from our agency administrator and the weekly agency newsletter are also included. Ellis Brasch, our technical writer/editor, posts opinion and information pieces; he is also the blog administrator.

We initiated the blog as another means of intra-agency communication but it is still a fairly "quiet" space … that may change as folks become more familiar and comfortable with social networking Web sites. "Safety Matters" is designed for intra-agency use only (to encourage candid communication) so I can't send you the link.

I realize that our agency is somewhat outside your scope of "youth and teens" but thought you might be interested in hearing about a special/technical library perspective.

OSU Valley Library
Laurie Bridges
laurie.bridges@oregonstate.edu

Five librarians at OSU (including myself) started a new blog only 3 weeks ago, and we already have 104 subscribers to the RSS feed! Our intended audience is anyone that loves cool information tools on the internet: infodoodads.com.

Multnomah County Library Champions Portland Zine Scene

by Sarah Nelsen
School Corps Librarian,
Multnomah County Library

In 2005, Multnomah County Library created a stir in the Portland zine* community when six librarians hosted a table in the exhibit hall at the three-day Portland Zine Symposium. Charter members of the library's Zine Library Group, the librarians had come together with a common interest: getting zines, independently produced publications, in the public library. The ZLG included a youth services librarian and two generalist reference librarians from Central Library, a branch reference librarian, a youth outreach librarian, and the library's teen services specialist. The group has recently expanded to include a manager from Central Library and two library assistants from branches.

Portland Zine Symposium

Many symposium participants greeted the ZLG with surprise, asking questions about the library's role in the zine community. They also shared a great deal of enthusiasm and support and offered many positive comments, such as these:

> Wow, the library is here! I love the library!

> The Portland library is the best!

> How can I get my zine in the library? I'm happy to donate it.

> When is the library going to get zines?

The symposium helped the ZLG build connections with the local community, promote the library's upcoming *Zinesters Talking* lecture series, and gauge interest in a possible permanent collection of zines at the library.

The ZLG returned to the Portland Zine Symposium in 2006, again staffing a table in the exhibit hall and this time presenting "zines + libraries = luv," a workshop for library customers who want to encourage zines in their libraries. The workshop arms attendees with vocabulary and ideas for talking with public and school library staff about starting zine collections and programming.

Zinesters Talking

In the fall of 2005, the ZLG presented *Zinesters Talking*, a series of three evening events at which local zinesters (zine authors) read from their works. The ZLG invited zinesters recommended by the librarian at Portland's Independent Publishing Resource Center and offered them an honorarium to speak. A different Multnomah County Library location hosted each event, and a local vegan grocery donated snacks for all of them. All events were held on a Tuesday or Wednesday.

The ZLG enlisted the library's in-house public relations department to help promote *Zinesters Talking* with flyers, a press release and exposure on the library Web site. To maximize exposure and community involvement, the ZLG also targeted some niche markets on its own, sending announcements to alternative news sources and community calendars. Local zinesters helped design flyers, and ZLG members hand-delivered publicity materials to area coffee shops, music stores, book and magazine shops, cafes, and other outlets. Delivering flyers

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to local businesses gave ZLG members another opportunity to network within their communities. Because zinesters designed the flyers and increased their "cool factor," other members of the zine community recognized the flyers more easily. Advertising in alternative media and in targeted external locations made the information about *Zinesters Talking* available to people who might not encounter it through the library's usual PR efforts.

The 2005 *Zinesters Talking* series was very successful. The events drew from 20 to 60 people, at times leaving standing room only. The readers engaged the audience with creative presentations. Some used PowerPoint or slide shows to illustrate their readings, and one reader sang his zine with live musical accompaniment. Audience members appreciated the opportunity to purchase zines directly from the readers following the events, and they consistently responded with gratitude, positive feedback, and requests for similar events.

The library followed up *Zinesters Talking 2005* with an expanded *Zinesters Talking*

2006, a six-part series held at two locations. Attendance and enthusiasm continued to be high at the 2006 events. The final evening offered audience members a chance to read from their own zines. The ZLG is now preparing for Zinesters Talking 2007.

Community Connections: IPRC and Microcosm

Two local organizations have been important partners with the library on zine projects. The Independent Publishing Resource Center (www.iprc.org) offers space and equipment to people who want to create and publish zines, as well as a circulating zine collection. The ZLG has worked closely with the IPRC librarian to promote events and solicit programming and collection suggestions. During spring break in 2005, the IPRC presented zine-making workshops for teens at several library locations. The library still offers this popular program.

Microcosm Publishing, a local zine distro (distributor) (www.microcosmpublishing.com) has been another important
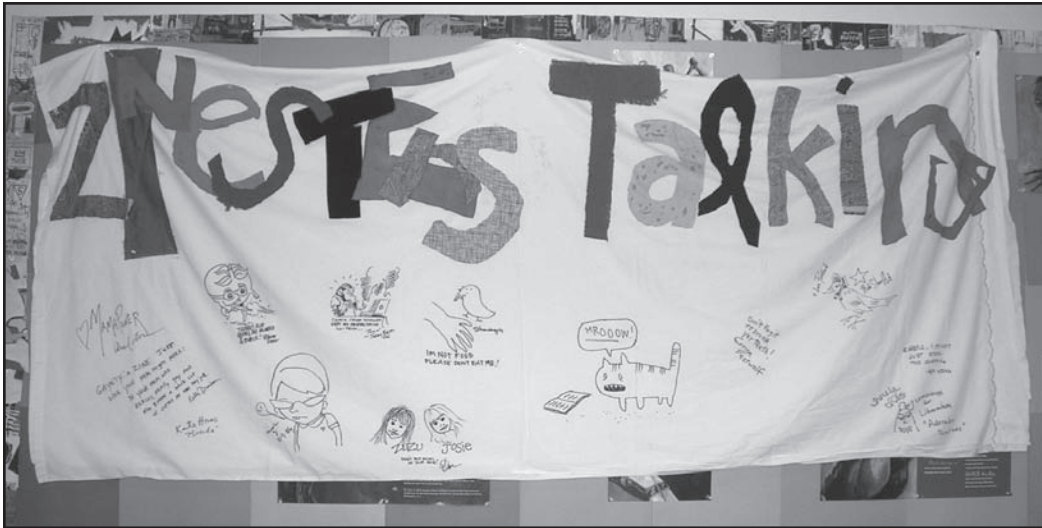
connection among zines, zinesters, and the library. The library purchases zines through Microcosm, and the ZLG has tapped Microcosm's employees for collection suggestions and potential *Zinesters Talking* readers. The ZLG organized two library showings of *$100 and a T-Shirt: a Documentary about Zines in the Northwest*, a film created by Microcosm employees and Portland zinesters and distributed by Microcosm Publishing.

A Permanent Home for Zines at the Library

After several years of hard work and successful programming, the ZLG attained its ultimate goal: a permanent home for zines at the library. In January 2007, the ZLG hosted a collection party at Central Library. Nearly 100 community members came to celebrate the new permanent collection, which is housed in the periodicals room at Central Library, as well as at five branch libraries. Zines are circulating well, and the library gets regular customer requests for more zines. Zines fill gaps in the library's collection, present alternative viewpoints, and have created a link with the Portland zine community.

The ZLG is an excellent example of the outreach opportunities presented by fostering library employees' connections to and interests in the community. At Multnomah County Library, a group of librarians from different departments and locations had a common interest and saw a gap in the library's services. They used unconventional public relations tactics to advertise events and partnered with local businesses and organizations. Then they built upon the success of their outreach and programming to establish a permanent zine collection at the library. ❧

*For more information on what a zine is, see Multnomah County Library's Zines Web site: www.multcolib.org/books/zines.

NW Central—Connecting the Dots

by Maureen T. Cole
Senior Librarian,
Technical Services,
Eugene Public Library

A huge dot was connected to another huge dot while I was sitting in the NW Central session at the conference when Margaret Hazel asked if program presenters could post their information to this site. The answer: Of course! It is simply up to us to let them know that this is available. I talked to Jere White after that session and we agreed that I would draft up a letter from both of us that could be sent directly to divisions for distribution to their program people, out on Libs-Or, through memberclicks, in the Hotline, and anywhere we could think of in order to alert both the program presenters and attendees. Also, if this is a good idea, we can work this into the process for programs people next year.

Here, then, is the letter that went out the last week in April, just after the OLA Conference.

Dear Conference Presenters:

Many of you have asked if there is a site to which you can post your presentation and handouts. Many of your attendees have asked the same question. Now there is an answer to that question which includes a resounding YES! You can post your material at:

To add content to this Web site, simply create a free account by clicking 'login/register' on the left hand side of the page, then 'add content' under the 'add and find resources' tab. This is also a way that you can communicate with your attendees, if you wish.

This Web site, which is a centralized continuing education site for the Northwest region, is the outgrowth of a PORTALS project and LSTA grant. The project is fully sanctioned by OLA, which recently voted to create a new OLA board position which will act as liaison to NW Central. OLA intends that this site become the forum for all OLA continuing education activities.

Adding your content to this site will add icing to the cake of your wonderful presentations. Thanks for participating in OLA's 2007 Annual Conference and thanks for adding valuable and useful information to NW Central.

Please let us know if you have any questions. Keep on educating!

Jere White
2007 Annual Conference Programs Chair

Mo Cole
NW Central Advisory Group member and
OLA Past President

Northwest Central
Northwest CE Network of
Training Resources for All Libraries

NW Central Building Blocks

by Aletha Bonebrake
OLA President

S ee below for today's (May 2) snapshot the most recent page of posts on NW Central. There are powerpoints, essays, summaries, notes and comments on content, and not only from the recent OLA Conference but also from Online NW's Conference in February, as well as announcements of upcoming workshops and trainings and links to other content pages. The richness we experience at this site mirrors the richness of content found by the public in similar interest-specific wikis and blogs. It is clear that for ourselves and our patrons, technology has created community that doesn't use a building, and content that never sits on a shelf. This is what I think of as the cyberspace community of tomorrow, but arriving today as isolated ships on the horizon. As information managers they should be our joy, and managing access, mediating value and promoting awareness will be our survival.

recent posts

Type	Post	Author	Replies	Last post
Contributed Content	Oregon Library Association MLS Scholarships.	gkleslie	0	1 hour 31 min ago
Contributed Content	Oregon Library Association Children's Services Division Scholarship	sengelfried	0	2 hours 3 min ago
Event	You Bought What??! Unraveling the Mysteries of Collection Development	KimStorbeck	0	1 day 23 hours ago
Contributed Content	Cataloging 101: The Basics (powerpoint and handout)	dspidal	0	3 days 4 hours ago
Contributed Content	Cataloging 102: DVD Videorecordings (powerpoint slideshow and handout)	dspidal	0	3 days 5 hours ago
Event	BCR FFF: Making Sense of the Standards Menu: Sushi, Counter, and SERU	BCR	0	3 days 6 hours ago
Event	BCR FFF: Books on the Net: The Mass Digtization Projects of Google Book and Internet Archive	BCR	0	3 days 6 hours ago
Contributed Content	The Secrets to Keeping Your Secrets in the 2.0 Library / Privacy in Practice	alan cordle	0	3 days 21 hours ago
Contributed Content	The Future of the Catalog: an Overview of Current Developments and Trends	boockm	0	1 week 6 hours ago
Contributed Content	Through the Back Door: The Role of Qualitative Surveys in Change Management	jtapper	0	1 week 1 day ago
Contributed Content	Supporting the Import-Export Business: Small Business Development Center (PowerPoint)	Heidi Senior	0	1 week 1 day ago
Contributed Content	RSS: The Backbone of Key Web 2.0 Applications	absherl	0	1 week 2 days ago
Event	Reference Forum : The Ins and Outs of Multnomah County Library Outreach	mclreferencetraining	0	1 week 3 days ago
Event	Reference Forum : The Ins and Outs of Multnomah County Library Outreach	mclreferencetraining	0	1 week 3 days ago
Event	Reference Forum : Who You Gonna Call? Referring Patrons to Local Information Resources	mclreferencetraining	0	1 week 3 days ago
Event	Reference Forum : Who You Gonna Call? Referring Patrons to Local Information Resources	mclreferencetraining	0	1 week 3 days ago
Event	BCR Weblive: OCLC WorldCat Resource Sharing Basics	BCR	0	1 week 4 days ago
Event	BCR Weblive: Local Holdings Record Maintenance with the OCLC Connexion Browser	BCR	0	1 week 4 days ago
Contributed Content	Cyberspace en Espanol Presentation (OLA 2007)	lvik	0	1 week 4 days ago
Contributed Content	Outreach for Local Government Officials	aklaviolette	0	1 week 6 days ago
Contributed Content	Active Wisdom: Boomers in Libraries	abigail	0	1 week 6 days ago
Contributed Content	Web Design Initiatives: University of Oregon and Willamette University	bkelm	0	2 weeks 6 hours ago
Contributed Content	OnlineNW Conferences	Ken Watson	3	2 weeks 1 day ago
Contributed Content	Ready to Read Grant	Katie Anderson	0	2 weeks 1 day ago
Contributed Content	The Googlization of Information: Google's Influential Reach Over Information	John Repplinger	0	2 weeks 2 days ago

LEO:
Shining Bright on Communities

by Lyn Craig
Executive Director,
Libraries of Eastern Oregon

LEO
LIBRARIES of EASTERN OREGON

Many points of light, one bright future

Like libraries everywhere, Libraries of Eastern Oregon (LEO) seeks to enhance civic engagement, social capital and the personal development of individuals—recognizing the benefits to society of a well-informed citizenry and the worth of each person regardless of socio-economic factors.

LEO walks a fine balance between helping remote, rural libraries maintain traditional, internal services and values that are reflective of the communities they serve—while at the same time convening connection with distant partners who help build community with unprecedented offerings, delivery and promise.

Maintaining this balance requires rural library staff to have passion for community outreach, a willingness to explore new means of service delivery, an entrepreneurial spirit, and a deep respect for the patrons and places they serve.

By embracing these ideals, public libraries in Eastern Oregon meet this year's OLA presidential theme of "Finding Community" to a degree that now serves as a model for remote, rural places elsewhere. As LEO and the region's libraries look ahead, successes to date lay a clear path to a most exciting future.

LEO emerged following two years of informal meetings among public librarians. The State Library provided funding for three years for an in-depth study to explore various governance options for a 10-county library district, and also provided funding for a 500-household survey. About the same time that initial State Library funding became available, the working committee organized formally in order to secure foundation grants for enhanced library services. LEO was recognized by the IRS as a nonprofit in December 2000.

While there was insufficient public support for the 10-county district, survey results indicated that residents value their libraries tremendously. Rather than disband after the study, board members opted to continue working together. Grants had been obtained for extended hours at several of the smallest libraries, Books for Babies programs, and other collaborative projects.

"We just didn't want to go back to working largely in isolation," remembers Jolyn Wynn, Harney County library director. "We valued networking and getting together. It's been great to collaborate on projects and stay informed as to what other libraries in the area are doing. LEO is important to all of us."

LEO's mission is "To create and deliver opportunities for 21st century public library services in Eastern Oregon." Today LEO represents 47 public libraries in 14 counties—Baker, Crook, Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Jefferson, Lake, Malheur, Morrow, Sherman, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa and Wheeler—and is reportedly the geographically-largest library consortium in the continental U.S., covering an area of 54,680 square miles or more than half the land mass of Oregon.

Nearly the entire LEO territory is impoverished with many parts of the region having among the lowest per capita income in the nation. The region's public libraries continue to lag behind others in more populated areas with several operating annually at less than $15 per capita, or less than the cost of one hardcover book. Only a very few have funding for adult programming in their annual budgets. Funding for libraries is severely impacted by persistent poverty, vast distances between communities and sparse population.

After the governance study, LEO staff continued on in a volunteer capacity for several months. A strategic vision was developed—

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"Lighting Up the Libraries." Lighting Up called for rural public libraries to become revitalized as essential 21st century learning centers and was adopted by former Gov. Kitzhaber as the sixth highest priority sustainability project under the Oregon Solutions program.

Subsequently, the Oregon Legislature provided funding for a comprehensive, on-site assessment of all LEO libraries. LEO also obtained grants for region wide heritage and technology assessments. Needs identified in the assessments continue to guide LEO's efforts. Adult programming was cited as one of the highest needs by nearly all of the libraries.

When the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI) approached LEO regarding interest in jointly submitting a federal funding request to bring science programs to the region through public libraries and schools, the answer was a resounding yes.

> Our partnership with LEO will allow library patrons to have the unique opportunity to examine objects first-hand, question, discourse or chat with scholars or each other, and then place those experiences in a national context through a distance learning visit to our collection.
>
> —SUSAN NICHOLS,
> LUNDER EDUCATION CHAIR,
> SMITHSONIAN AMERICAN ART MUSEUM

While LEO valued the partnership and programs OMSI could bring, OMSI valued working with rural libraries as the heart of the many remote communities where the metropolitan museum had not yet had a presence. "Our relationship with LEO has surpassed all of our expectations," said Dr. Marilyn Johnson, OMSI director of research and development. "We've been able to bring programs to the furthest corners of Oregon. LEO managed all of the logistics and all we had to do in each instance was simply to show up."

Thanks to the support of the entire Oregon federal delegation, over the past three years the LEO-OMSI partnership received $1.9 million in funding through a special NASA education account. Another $1.9 million request is pending.

LEO and OMSI named their partnership STARS—Science, Technology and Rural Students. The STARS program serves students and lifelong learners of all ages. To date 246 teachers and librarians have participated in professional development workshops; 600+ Eastern Oregon students have had overnight camp-ins at OMSI; telescopes and global positioning units have been provided to all LEO libraries for patron check-out; OMSI's portable planetarium has been brought to 42 LEO communities; and portable OMSI exhibits have been developed for LEO libraries.

Additionally, LEO has used STARS funding to bring programs (and $15,000 worth of meteorites) from Portland State University's Cascadia Meteorite Laboratory throughout the region. LEO contracted with Bob Duke, astronomy columnist for the Oregonian to bring his stargazing program to nearly all of the LEO libraries. While STARS also provided funding for eight videoconferencing units, LEO obtained another federal grant for 13 more units.

In 2006 several STARS components were adopted as official NASA national education policy. NASA also provided funds to bring the meteorite program to rural communities statewide. LEO is facilitating that effort and is working with OMSI to expand STARS to other parts of Oregon and the Northwest.

Participation at STARS programs in the LEO region has been overwhelming. A stargazing program held outdoors on an icy evening in January 2007 at Ione (pop. 330) brought out 74 residents. Meteorite programs at Arlington (pop. 524) attracted 56 attendees, at Fossil (pop. 370) 58 persons, and at Madras (pop. 5,078) 104 persons. A March 2007 videoconference program on paleontology broadcast from OMSI to five rural libraries attracted more than 200 persons.

"Our normal attendance at an event is now between 50 to 100 people," said Marie Baldo, director of the Hermiston Public Library. "Our patrons are amazed and appreciative of the quality programming that has become available in their own small city."

Last year LEO launched a partnership with the Oregon Council for the Humanities (OCH) to bring Chautauqua programs to libraries across the region. The program has been extremely well received. LEO provides lodging for program presenters and libraries agree to host a Chautauqua on their own the following year. OCH recently assisted LEO in bringing one of its On Principle programs to several LEO libraries.

A mention of LEO successes on National Public Radio early last year caught the attention of the Smithsonian American Art Museum (SAAM). LEO staff met with SAAM officials in Washington, D.C. while there to encourage continued Congressional funding for the STARS program.

SAAM's director of education and distance learning manager toured the LEO region last fall and visited several libraries over 860 miles and six days. Launched in May '07, SAAM videoconference programs were developed specifically for LEO communities and broadcast to one library at a time for increased interaction between rural residents and museum staff. The Smithsonian art museum has not previously collaborated with rural libraries and considers the partnership as a national model.

"I think LEO is considered as hope and opportunity," said Crook County library director Rick Chrisinger. "So many things have happened that wouldn't have happened if we were still on our own. LEO is meaningful and has become one of the most positive things in my life."

Each year LEO offers professional development workshops in library services and continues to write grants to serve the region's libraries—such as the recent "Folk Art at the Libraries" project through the Oregon Arts Commission and ArtsEast, and free family museum passes for patron check-out. Initiatives for 2007 include early literacy, continued professional development and increased civic engagement by LEO.

Last year LEO updated its strategic plan. The Ford Institute provided technical assistance funding for every board member to participate in intense fund development training from the Portland-based TACS. This year the Oregon Community Foundation is providing technical assistance in helping LEO to establish an endowment fund that will help sustain library programs in the region for the long term.

"If someone had done this for the libraries of Eastern Oregon at, say, the end of World War II, the libraries wouldn't be lacking in funds for programs today," said Dick Pugh, scientist and founder of an endowment fund for PSU meteorite lab.

To bring its partners together, in early 2007 LEO developed "A Sense of Place" as an educational platform for program delivery. Grants are pending. The themed approach appeals to lifelong learners and diverse interests throughout the region. SAAM is developing programs that connect art and place and in April convened a round table of nationally known artists, distributed as a live Webcast, to discuss what "sense of place" means to them. OMSI programs will focus on our place in the cosmos; OCH will assist with presenters to discuss place from a humanities point of view. PSU, other program providers and area museums will be involved.

"'A Sense of Place' will provide valuable opportunities for Oregonians to engage in critical thinking and deep conversations that are necessary in the 21st century," said OCH program director Carol Hickman. "It's a stellar roster of partners and OCH is proud to be among them."

Over the past four years, nearly one third of LEO libraries has undertaken architectural studies or has implemented facility expansion, renovation or construction. The region's librarians continually think outside the box and are leaders in innovation. Examples: The Oregon Trail Library District's non-mobile bookmobile placed at Irrigon while fund raising is underway to establish a branch library, and the renowned Western History Room at the Harney County Library, which attracts writers and researchers from across the West.

At Athena, with grant resources provided by LEO a handful of citizens raised $900,000 in just a few months for their new library. Baker County Library District continues to serve as a regional leader and recently opened its espresso shop. Outreach services via eye-catching vans for seniors and preschoolers by the Hermiston Pub-

lic Library and Wallowa County Library, respectively, are exemplary. The Umatilla County Special Library District's Up and Away early literacy program has already triggered increased skills in reading. Several LEO libraries have formed partnerships with local museums for archival preservation.

These library and LEO efforts have helped build community at home by presenting offerings that reach across a previously underserved population. Community is strengthened, too, by outside partners who enhance library services and who value the region's libraries for the important role they play in connecting persons and society. Through the public library, rural residents come together for civic engagement and shared lifelong learning experiences.

"LEO's mission goes far beyond supporting libraries: it is to provide expanded horizons for individuals in our region," said Jo Cowling, La Grande library director and LEO chair. "More than making the libraries themselves relevant, LEO's work reminds our citizens that education, entertainment and communal gathering are vital to livability in all communities."

LEO meets monthly. Its board of directors includes Jo Cowling, La Grande Public Library; Aletha Bonebrake, retired librarian from Baker County; Jolyn Wynn, Harney County Library; Ken Reading, Umatilla County Special Library District; Marie Baldo, Hermiston Public Library; Marsha Richmond, Oregon Trail Library District; Rick Chrisinger, Crook County Library; Pam Hankins, library director for Grant, Gilliam, Wheeler and Sherman County school districts; Megan Brandsma, Grant County Children's Services and Referral; and Sondra Lino, Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation. For further information: www.librariesofeasternoregon.org.

Serve your Community:
Give Them a Piece of Your Mind

by Kat Davis
Director,
Union County Library
District Project

Long ago and far away, in the era of card files and date stamps, I had a conversation with my boss, the City Manager, about adding responsibility for planning community classes to my librarian duties. Trying to help me see the light, he said, "You know, the way I look at it, the public library provides access to resources. Right now that access is through books and magazines, cassettes and video tapes, art prints, puppets, reading programs, lectures and materials on microfilm and microfiche. These are all different formats for providing access to information. Why, any book you have in this library could be a door to a new program or a new area of service—so isn't offering a class on brewing beer just as valid a format as a book on brewing beer?"

Although at the time I recall thinking he might be a bit cracked, I came to see this man as a visionary and a great mentor. As I clarified my own philosophy of library service it was wonderful to have someone challenge me to think outside the box. In my case, that box came to mean library walls. My boss was right. Any part of a library collection can be highlighted as a special program or area of service. It all depends on the effort we make to get out there and identify the needs of the surprisingly different groups that live in the areas we serve—and on whom we depend for library support.

A modern, creative library has boundless opportunities available to tailor responsive, meaningful library service around an intimate knowledge of the concerns, issues, interests and quirks of the public it serves. Closely examining sub-sets of need can yield information on the many "communities" that exist within our service areas. This kind of informed, community-focused service becomes the basis for a symbiotic relationship that can help a community, and its library, thrive.

As we do that extraordinarily important process of needs assessment in our communities, it is very liberating to remember: library resources may come in any format.

I propose that the way a librarian's mind processes information, the way we think, may be one of the library's least marketed and most valuable resources. The creative librarian, willing to step outside the library walls and actively participate in the strategic analysis of community needs and issues, can position the services of the public library to become interwoven with community solutions. When the equation becomes, Library Services = Community Solutions, that also means that Community Solutions = Library Services!

Just think of the qualities we may bring to bear on community issues: librarians are organizers, coordinators and planners. We are skilled at seeing needs on the one hand, resources on the other and matching them up in effective, creative, and often innovative ways. Within the library we call this reference service or information and referral. With a shift in focus to the many, unique communities beyond the library walls, these same skills can be applied towards building bridges between organizations and resources to design effective new programs and service delivery strategies. Instead of just pulling print resources together to answer a question, why not also pull real-life resources together to address real-life community needs?

The Internet has shown us that information may be brought to new consumers and put to new uses by synthesizing resources into an easily accessible and user-friendly format. Just as websites organize information on mortgage loans or travel services from many sources and make it easy to find and use, librarians, with

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minds steeped in the philosophy of collaboration, can perform needs assessments in their service areas, make connections between disparate community resources, and bring them together in value-added ways. Whether addressing issues of poverty, community development, health care, literacy or planning for a skate park, the Librarian's Mind can be applied to create interfaces between existing organizations to build capacity for the infrastructure our user-communities need to thrive.

Union County: real life example

Targeting illiteracy has been identified as a critical issue in our rural towns. Developing reading and writing skills is a key strategy out of the poverty that impacts too large a number of our local families. Municipal planning documents cited the need for developing literacy programs and services, yet a full spectrum of literacy programs were already available, tucked into the services of public schools, libraries and social service agencies. Until recently, many of these services were not aware of each other's programs. Why not? Are these programs reaching their audience? Are other programs needed? Are the services effective? Could existing programs and services be more effective if they worked as part of a coordinated effort?

This situation provided an opportunity for libraries in Union County to look outward to the salient issues of the community that supports them and to apply our skills to assemble information, collaborate, partner, share—and support the growth of a new "literacy community".

The Library District Project for Union County provided organizational support to form the Literacy Alliance of Union County. After the basic efforts to create a structure were put in place this fruitful cross-pollination of expertise has grown like Topsy, improving public awareness of literacy services and enhancing the library's involvement in the fiber of the greater community. None of this required anything beyond applying that basic approach of "resources on the one hand and needs on the other". The resources we've provided are primarily in the format of librarians' knowledge and skills. How librarians think about information resources may be just as important as the "stuff" within the facility walls or even the facilities themselves.

Libraries are being challenged to redefine their purpose in the 21st century. What makes the library different than a bookstore or the Internet? Why is a public library necessary? The challenges facing public libraries aren't that much different than those facing the local, downtown merchant when the "Big Box" store moves into town. We too must work harder at providing specialized customer service. That means doing an excellent job of assessing public needs and identifying the "communities" we serve. When we discuss the significance of libraries we should remember to emphasize that library resources may come in any format; that those formats may be tailored to meet the needs of unique communities within the areas we serve; and that the most valuable resource may be librarians who are willing to get beyond the library walls and offer the public a piece of their mind.