

Florida Libraries



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Open Libraries, Open Minds

Literary Love Affair • The Power of Partnerships • Floridiana with a Twist: Sunshine State Parks
Opening Minds through Engaging Discussion • Library as the Third Place
Yeah Write! • Florida Reads: Personalities and Politics
Building a Statewide Academic Book Collection

| TABLE OF CONTENTS |



President's Column	3
<i>By John J. Callahan III</i>	
Literary Love Affair: How the Love of Books Helped Shape the History of Clermont, Florida	4
<i>By Doris Bloodsworth</i>	
Editors' Column	7
<i>By Gloria Colvin and Maria Gebhardt</i>	
The Power of Partnerships: Opening Children's Minds Through Collaborative Early-Learning Programs.....	8
<i>By Judiann M. Rakes</i>	
Floridiana with a Twist: Sunshine State Parks: Diverse Sites to Explore and Enjoy	11
<i>By Nancy Pike</i>	
Opening Minds through Engaging Discussion: The Salon at the East Lake Community Library	12
<i>By Miriam Lane and Nancy Kerr</i>	
Library as the Third Place.....	14
<i>By Gene Coppola</i>	
Yeah Write! Teaching Creative Writing at the Library	16
<i>By Lauren Gibaldi</i>	
Florida Reads: Personalities and Politics	20
<i>By Joyce Sparrow</i>	
Building a Statewide Academic Book Collection	21
<i>By Roy Ziegler and Deborah Robinson</i>	
Executive Director's Column.....	25
<i>By Faye C. Roberts</i>	
FLA Conference 2011.....	26



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To paraphrase Charles Dickens in *A Tale of Two Cities*, “It was the best of times; it was the worst of times.” In the past few years libraries of all types have been experiencing unprecedented growth in usage. At least partially due to the economic downturn, public libraries have seen visitor counts, computer use and materials circulation increase as much as fifty percent or more in the past three years. Academic libraries have installed learning commons in their buildings and have re-connected with students making the library once again the place to be on campus. However, because of the recession and the resulting declining tax support, libraries are struggling to maintain services to a continually expanding clientele. I have chosen as my theme for my year in office and the 2011 FLA Annual Conference the tag line of *Open Libraries, Open Minds*. The theme can be interpreted on several levels.

At the most basic level, if libraries are going to continue to meet the increasing demand for service, they must remain open to the public during convenient hours. On the state level, FLA leaders, FLA’s Legislative Committee, FLA’s lobbyist, and thousands of public supporters have been successful in arguing for a share of the state budget to support public libraries. Many libraries, particularly in our less-populated areas, depend on state aid for their survival. FLA will be initiating new advocacy programs to assist libraries, friends, and board members as they support local efforts to maintain library budgets. Public libraries have survived through the years by adapting to changing conditions. Today’s public libraries continue to provide traditional service but they have also become centers of community life. Many libraries serve as job centers with staff assisting job seekers in finding opportunities and filing online applications. Library computer skills

classes are helping dislocated workers and opening doors to new possibilities. Nationally syndicated newspaper columnist Neil Peirce recently wrote “Opening doors? It’s true that funds saved or restored to libraries may mean deeper, sometimes very painful cuts in other parts of city and county budgets. But what’s more American than open doors? Seen that way, libraries have been enablers of generations of American dreams.”

On a different level, Open Libraries can address how people will access your library’s resources. How will people connect to your library? Rapidly changing technology including social networks and mobile technology has the potential to open libraries 24/7 as we adapt our service delivery techniques. The 2011 FLA Annual Conference will emphasize new technologies and how to incorporate them into your service plans.

Regarding Open Minds, libraries have traditionally strived to make available information from a variety of viewpoints. As centers of community life, libraries are hosting lectures and discussion groups in an atmosphere that encourages public participation. Libraries continue to be advocates for intellectual freedom and the public’s right to know.

2011 is expected to once again present a difficult environment for library funding. FLA remains strong as an organization and we will continue to advocate for all types of libraries. I look forward to working with you through the coming year as we build a stronger community of librarians and libraries.



John J. Callahan III
President, 2010-2011

LITERARY LOVE AFFAIR: HOW THE LOVE OF BOOKS HELPED SHAPE THE HISTORY OF CLERMONT, FLORIDA

By Doris Bloodsworth

In the black-and-white photo taken on Christmas Day 1894, the members of Clermont's early Literary Club show no hint that within the week, their way of life – and that of most pioneer Floridians – would be changed in dramatic ways that present-day Floridians can scarcely grasp. Cooperville, as the early tomato-growing Clermont was known, would soon be devastated by the Great Freeze of 1894.¹



1894 Literary Club

The killer freeze, and an even harsher one the following February, would wipe out nearly all the produce and citrus, causing extreme hardship to the early settlers. But the punishing force of nature could not diminish the community's passion for books. Through the years, Clermont residents' love affair with literature would remain a priority, culminating in the current \$12.7 million Cooper Memorial Library that sits atop one of the highest points in Florida.²

Ann Dupee, a former newspaper editor who joined the library board in 1971 and continues as a member of both the Cooper Memorial Library Association Board and the Friends of Cooper Memorial Library, said that the close ties between the library and the community go back many decades. "Until a few years ago, our library had been totally administered by unpaid, dedicated, local residents with the sole purpose to provide the best services possible, thus making it an essential part of our history," Dupee said.³

LIBRARY'S BEGINNINGS

While Clermont residents were gathering to share books from its earliest days, the library got its start in the most unlikely of places – the broken promises of a traveling salesman. It was 1905 when an unidentified salesman stopped at the Hoobler boarding house run by the Benjamin McCain family. The salesman promised to donate enough books to start a town library if he was able to sell his Chautauqua lectures, a series of tent meetings that featured orators, performers, comedians, and evangelists. William Jennings Bryan, of the Scopes Trial fame, was one of the most famous Chautauqua speakers.

The McCains and several others in the community contributed money to purchase the lecture series. A few lectures materialized, but Clermont residents never received the promised books. Undeterred, the Clermont book lovers held onto money that had been intended as a payment for the final lecture and decided to organize their own library. Mrs. Payson Pierce became the first librarian, and she offered her home for book storage and opened it to the public on Saturday afternoons. On May 19, 1906, the first library card was issued to Ben Abberger, according to *Clermont: Gem of the Hills* by Miriam Johnson and Rosemary Young.⁴

LIBRARY MOVES

Eventually, the book collection moved to another home and then to Grace Baptist Church. In 1914, the Clermont Library Club directors decided to build a permanent library on land leased to them by Alice Cooper, a member of the family for whom the early Cooperville settlement was named.

The Library Club voted to build a wood-frame structure that was similar to the Maitland library in neighboring Orange County. The 720-square foot, \$600 building included a fireplace and heart-pine floors. Local historians recall that the new library was a source of tremendous pride

and that many townspeople donated labor and materials. At the November 3, 1914 grand opening, guests were treated to punch and music played on a gramophone. Even teens were swept up in the passion for reading that wafted through the Clermont hillsides. The 1927 Clermont High School yearbook includes a photo of the CHS Literary Club.



EXPANDED COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Until 1936, the women of the Library Club supported the library with money and librarians. But in the midst of the Great Depression, they asked for help from the Clermont City Council, which had met for a year in the library, and the Clermont Woman's Club. The city agreed to maintain the building and property. The Woman's Club took over sponsorship of the library. Woman's Club President Helen Cooper Kreider donated the property outright and the library was named Cooper Memorial Library to honor her family's commitment to sharing their love of books.

A library board and dues were established. During the 1940s and 1950s, the Lollipop Club became a popular children's reading program that became a model for the rest of the county.

From the 1950s through the 1970s, the library continued to expand, thanks to numerous legacy gifts from townspeople who appreciated the library's importance to the community. The gifts were administered by the Cooper Memorial Library Association, which had incorporated as a nonprofit in 1952. In 1974, the library gained another support group aptly named Friends of Cooper Memorial Library.

In 1980, the thriving city made a major commitment when the Library Association, supported by clubs,

businesses, and individual supporters, raised \$80,000 to renovate a 6,000-square-foot bank building for an expanded library. Clermont residents supported the project with three-year pledges.⁵

One of the high points in the city's and library's history came later that year when townsfolk formed a human chain from the old library to the newly renovated one as a means of transferring the books. The book brigade included men, women, and children as well as a veteran in a wheelchair.

"It was an amazing honor to be part of the early book brigade when I was seven," said Mike Delaney, a member of Friends of the Library. "It was an experience that I will never forget that brought the community together."⁶

ECONOMIC CYCLES

In the decade that followed, Clermont faced history-altering changes as three freezes, ending with a frigid Christmas Day in 1989, would again wipe out Clermont's citrus and agriculture. The once lush, green hills that had given the town its "Gem of the Hills" reputation turned into barren swells of sand and clay.

Still, Cooper Memorial Library remained an important part of the city's downtown business district and a popular center for children and adults. During the 1990s, Clermont rebounded and library usage soared, as new retirees and families discovered the charms that had always drawn people to the area, such as the chain of lakes and many recreational opportunities.

NEW BUILDING

In 2009, Cooper Memorial, which became a branch of the Lake County Library System seven years earlier, joined with Lake-Sumter Community College and the University of Central Florida to build a state-of-the-art, 50,000-square-foot library. The hilltop library boasts, among other amenities, more than 68,000 books and a room dedicated to preserving significant Clermont historical records and reference materials for genealogists and researchers.⁷

During the official grand opening in October 2009, the library gave a nod to its historical ties to the community with a ceremonial book brigade

that drew hundreds wishing to commemorate the 1980 event. Participants included Fire Chief Carle Bishop, the great-great grandson of the founding Cooper family, and also included members of the Cooper Memorial Library Association and Friends of the Library. Lake-Sumter Community College President Charles Mojock likened the event to a “community barn-raising.”⁸

“I’ve lived around the world and never seen such real affection and sense of connection between a library and the people,” said Jody Close, president of the Friends of Cooper Memorial Library. “This personal relationship is evident in the smiles and memories that surface with each conversation about the library. So, we felt we weren’t just passing books, we were passing on the love of books.”⁹

The new Cooper Memorial Library has experienced an explosion in new members and has set records in the number of books checked out each month. But sentimental Clermont residents are not likely to forget the library’s more modest beginnings. Just a few miles away, in the Historical Village, stands “the Little Cooper,” as the original library is fondly called. In Clermont, the love of books will always be an affair to remember.

Doris Bloodsworth is a member of the Friends of Cooper Memorial Library.

NOTES

¹ Doris Bloodsworth, *Images of America: Clermont* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2010), 35.

² Roxanne Brown, “Cooper Memorial Library Marks Grand Opening,” *The Daily Commercial*, October 3, 2009, Local News section.

³ Ann Dupee, e-mail message to author, June 18, 2010.

⁴ Miriam W. Johnson and Rosemary Y. Young, *Clermont: Gem of the Hills* (Tallahassee: Rose Printing Company, 1984), 142, 284-292.

⁵ Ibid.

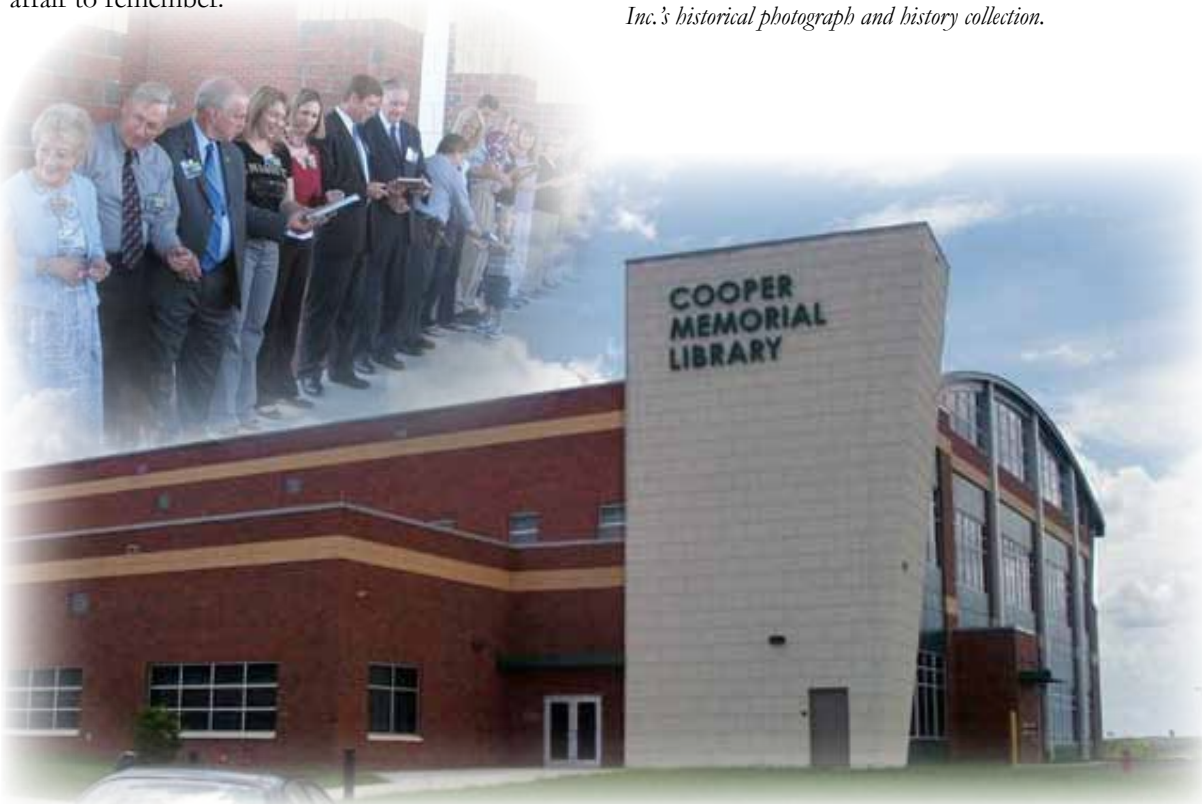
⁶ Mike Delaney, e-mail message to author, June 21, 2010.

⁷ Caryl Harris, telephone interview, June 24, 2010.

⁸ Roxanne Brown, “Cooper Memorial Library Marks Grand Opening,” *The Daily Commercial*, October 3, 2009, Local News section.

⁹ Jody Close, e-mail message to author, June 23, 2010

Photos are courtesy of the Cooper Memorial Library Association, Inc.’s historical photograph and history collection.



| EDITORS' COLUMN |

It has been a privilege and a pleasure to serve as editor of *Florida Libraries* these past ten years. When I began, I was fairly new to Florida and editing this magazine has been a wonderful way to learn about many of the innovative programs, services, and resources offered by libraries in Florida and to get to know many people in the state's library community.

At the time I began my term as editor, *Florida Libraries* was moving from a bi-monthly publication to a semi-annual one. The content changed from a mix of news and articles to primarily one of feature articles, along with several regular columns and updates on activities of the Florida Library Association. Each fall issue was devoted to a particular theme, which allowed it to focus on trends in libraries. I tried to achieve a balance between articles on public and academic libraries, and occasionally on special and school libraries. We also introduced a peer-review process for that issue in order to maintain a high quality of articles. Now, *Florida Libraries* is indexed by two major vendors, Wilson

and EBSCO, and provided in full text in some of their databases.

Producing a magazine involves the work of many people, and I want to thank all of those who wrote and submitted articles; Nancy Pike and Joyce Sparrow who regularly contributed the "Floridana with a Twist" and "Florida Reads" columns respectively; the editorial committee members who regularly reviewed and proofread articles; the countless external reviewers who evaluated submissions; and Faye Gibson who designed and laid out each issue.

Now *Florida Libraries* is beginning a new stage as an electronic publication. I'm pleased to turn over the position as editor to the very capable hands of Maria Gebhardt who brings lots of editorial and design experience to the position.



Gloria Colvin
Past Editor

When I was selected to be the new editor of *Florida Libraries*, I was both honored and thrilled. Gloria Colvin has done a wonderful job as our most recent editor, and her work has elevated the journal and brought it to its current level of excellence. As I begin my new role as editor, I will have the opportunity to interact directly with my colleagues to create an informative, interesting reflection of our work as well as a chronicle of our libraries' ever-changing role in the future of our communities and society.

With technology now at the forefront of our profession, it is exciting that *Florida Libraries* begins its emergence as an electronic publication, a transition that opens up new ways for us to communicate and share our knowledge, ideas, and innovations. As a Libraries Manager with Broward County Library for almost seven years and previously in the private sector for a decade, I have worked extensively on online publications and marketing campaigns, and I am eager to

work with and learn from other professionals as we move toward the future of libraries.

I also look forward to utilizing my educational and professional experience in both marketing and library science to help share and promote the wonderful things that Florida librarians are doing in the both public and academic settings. As a native Floridian, I earned my Master of Science degree in Library and Information Studies from Florida State University and will graduate this December with my Master of Business Administration in Marketing from Florida Atlantic University. I believe that our state fosters a unique, diverse, and multicultural atmosphere that is only enhanced by the quality of Florida's libraries.

Our libraries have wonderful stories to tell, and *Florida Libraries* will be our place to share them.



Maria Gebhardt
Editor

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS: OPENING CHILDREN'S MINDS THROUGH COLLABORATIVE EARLY-LEARNING PROGRAMS

By Judiann M. Rakes



YOUNG MINDS, BIG OPPORTUNITIES

For better or worse, our experience forms us, as our past impacts our feelings, actions, and thoughts. During infancy and early childhood, children are especially vulnerable, with daily activities directing the brain's physical development as well as personality and intelligence. Early language enrichment such as adults talking, signing, or reading to children "...[C]an advance the development of children from all backgrounds to realize biological potentials well beyond norms commonly found from cultural atypical models of socialization..."²

But limitations on parents' time or finances often leave many children's chances of success in the hands of community-provided early language programs. When these organizations unite and work together, their collaborative efforts and resources improve the future of all children as well as their families and communities.

MAKING IT HAPPEN: TWO GROUPS, ONE PURPOSE

One such collaboration was kindled four years ago between Volusia County's Daytona Beach Regional Library and the Early Learning Coalition of Flagler and Volusia (ELCFV). Located just a few blocks from each other, each had volunteer groups providing storytelling services in child-care settings. Both worked toward the same goal: to promote early learning for all Daytona Beach children. However, neither recognized the other's overlapping services until the Early Learning Coalition reserved a library

meeting room for training purposes. The two groups quickly formed a partnership that eliminated duplication of effort and best employed each organization's resources and expertise.

The ELCFV is one of thirty-one Early Learning Coalitions within Florida that help prepare children for kindergarten and lifelong educational success. They do this by offering training and curriculum ideas to school readiness and Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten programs and by developing parents' teaching skills. Now, the ELCFV and the Daytona Beach Regional Library work together to advance quality early learning for children.

UNITING FOR SUCCESS

The two organizations have coordinated tasks to efficiently place volunteer storytellers in child-care centers. Children's Librarian Cammie Newton recruits volunteers and then transfers their contact information to the ELCFV's Literacy Coordinator, Jennifer Tinstman. Tinstman handles volunteer management, ensuring that background checks and proper training take place before volunteers are matched with child-care providers. These volunteers have retained the name of the Friends of the Library storytelling group, Book Friends. Although the Book Friends are managed by the ELCFV, the library gives them lenient agreement library cards so that they can leave library items with child-care centers between weekly visits. Additionally, librarians are available to Book Friends volunteers for assistance in locating items on desired themes and choosing age-appropriate material. Through this cooperation, the ELCFV gains volunteer candidates while the library is freed from the expense and time involved in screening, training, and supervising volunteers. Best of all, the area's children receive higher-quality educational story-time services.

NEW EARLY LEARNING MATERIALS ENERGIZE EFFORTS

The community also benefits from the numerous early-learning materials the ELCFV generously donated to the libraries. Approximately three years ago, ELCFV donated hundreds of new educational CDs, books, and activity kits purchased specifically

for Volusia County's public libraries. Several children's librarians were called in from multiple branches to process the materials and re-package them for circulation. All Volusia County public libraries received some early-learning items, although the county's six regional branches received complete collections. The following year, the county received yet another generous delivery of donated materials. ELCFV's Tinstman explained, "We wanted everyone to have access to the materials without having to purchase them."

REAPING THE BENEFITS

Countywide circulation of the donated early-learning activity kits alone (not counting books and CDs) totaled 2,689 as of June 2010. Without these donations, the libraries would not have been able to afford to purchase the many items. Commercial and family-based child-care centers, tutors, home-school groups, and families also save money by borrowing the materials rather than buying. Popular in-house use of the donations includes the library's own story time. According to Children's Librarian Newton, "The early learning kits' oversized books with matching props of story characters bring stories to life and make story time more fun." The Daytona Beach Regional Library's auditorium is filled with excited children at story time. As soon as one of the oversized books is opened, all the children stop what they are doing, look toward the narrator, and move forward on the area rug as though a magnetic force has been activated. Newton describes her library patrons as consisting largely of homeschooled and disadvantaged populations.

One unemployed father, with weekend and summer custody of his three children, consistently uses the donated early-learning materials. With help from his church and the regional library's open-access resources, this man is able to provide safe, educational experiences for his children. Although he prefers to remain anonymous, he was candid about how those experiences have enriched his children's lives. His six-year-old son has problems learning, the result of a history of strokes, and he is too active to learn via computers. Using the early-learning materials, the boy has mastered identifying shapes, colors, and numbers and can now count. The father added, "His ability to follow directions has also greatly improved." All three of his children enjoy the library's early-learning material collection. The man



shared, "It makes me happy that I can work with the kids in such a productive and educational manner."

Shannon Eric is a homeschooling parent who recently moved to Daytona Beach with her husband and two sons, ages six and four. Upon discovering the Daytona Beach Regional Library's early-learning kit collection, she remembers thinking, "These are exactly what I need!" She recognized the items as tools that truly work, based on her five years of experience teaching preschool. She knows that engaging multiple senses and making learning fun are essential for sustaining children's interest. Her oldest son is a "very busy child," yet he learns well playing with the early-learning kit props while she teaches. Each learning kit comes with instructions for versatile uses, so Eric borrows a single kit weekly and uses the same kit differently for each boy. For instance, with one counting kit, her youngest practices counting while her oldest learns addition. "By the time I return [the] kits my sons have mastered the skills taught in them," this mother attests. She also appreciates the varying themes offered through the large collection. Again, using counting kits as an example, she points out how counting different figures – whether they be insects, vehicles, or dinosaurs – makes counting more fun. "Variety is the spice of life," Eric reminds us, and this variety comes at no charge.

EVERYONE WINS

Everyone wins from the stimulating circulation materials and the engaging storytelling services. Children's Librarian Newton commented, "Working together, we are able to provide stronger community services." According to Tinstman of the ELCFV, "The single most important element for success in school is access to books. Reading to young children contributes to language development, readiness for school, and children seeing reading and learning as fun – which creates lifelong learners." The groundwork is being laid for strong adults in the future.

The ELCFV and the Daytona Beach Regional Library each benefit from the partnership as well. The library gains the pleasure of seeing preschoolers clearly excited about materials they fell in love with at child care. ELCFV staff is available to substitute in library story time if a library needs extra help.

Also, both entities promote community awareness for each other. One way the ELCFV advocates library use is through its literacy program, Reading

Makes Me Smile. Through this program, child-care centers send fliers and library-card applications home with children and urge that library books be borrowed for books-only show-and-tell sessions. Surveys credit this literacy program with families' increasing use and enjoyment of libraries. Another mutually advantageous event has been Newton's appearance on the ELCFV's television program, *Child Flight*, which provides local audiences with child-development information.

The ELCFV's Tinstman appreciates the library staff's availability and their volunteer recruitment leads, commenting, "Ours is a perfect partnership!" Newton most values the ELCFV's expert advice on preparing preschool-age library patrons for kindergarten. Most importantly, however, both agencies benefit by achieving their shared goal of improved education for children, an effort with enduring societal effects.

CREATING PARTNERSHIPS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Others can develop successful partnerships that enable libraries to efficiently improve services. The first step is to get out and make connections. Join community organizations, volunteer to serve on a board of a neighboring agency, or organize a panel discussion with like-minded institutions to explore solutions to common problems. The perfect partner is not likely to walk through a library's doors seeking meeting room space, as occurred at Daytona Beach's library.

The Daytona Beach Regional Library exemplifies the value of social responsibility and models how open libraries can open minds. Its librarians are amenable to working with other agencies, and diverse families are benefiting as a result of resourceful division of labor. Through collaboration between two exceptional organizations, the formative minds of Daytona Beach preschoolers are receiving superior stimulation. Their futures depend on it.

Judiann Rakes is an MLIS student at the University of South Florida.

NOTES

- ¹ *American Academy of Pediatrics, Committee on Early Childhood, Adoption, and Dependent Care*, "Quality early education and child care from birth to kindergarten," *Pediatrics* 115, no. 1, (January 2005): 187-191. <http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/pediatrics;115/1/187>
- ² William Fowler, Karen Ogston Gloria Roberts-Fiati, and Amy Swenson, "Day Care and Home Intervention Studies," *Early Child Development and Care* 135, no. 1, (1997): 41-77. doi: 10.1080/0300443971350105.
- ³ Early Learning Coalition of Flagler and Volusia, "Literacy and Your Little One," *Child Flight: Resources to Help Little Ones Soar!* (2008) <http://www.elcfv.org/ChildFlight.asp>.

QUALITY EARLY LEARNING MATERIALS AVAILABLE TO ALL



The substantial collection of educational materials generously donated by the Early Learning Coalition of Flagler and Volusia include books, CDs, puzzles, and activity kits made by primary manufacturers. They cover essential topics, such as the five senses, patterns, compound words, weather and seasons, color mixing, life cycles, nutrition, and the Spanish language. More specifically, one called "Cookies on a Plate" teaches counting in a gamelike manner. Another offers sea life specimens in durable encasements. Last but not least, themed kits especially useful in group storytelling settings often contain oversized books and toy story characters which promote children's participation.

FLORIDIANA WITH A TWIST

SUNSHINE STATE PARKS: DIVERSE SITES TO EXPLORE AND ENJOY

By Nancy Pike

2010 is the 75th anniversary of Florida state parks.

Ironically, like our country's national parks, the Florida park system was given a boost by the Great Depression. The creation of the Works Projects Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps set in motion activity that Florida residents can applaud today. Although the Florida State Legislature created the Florida State Park system in 1925 to provide free parks for public recreation and preservation, no funds were appropriated. But with the impetus of that 1935 effort to get the economy started, the Florida Board of Forestry was able to survey the state for areas that could be used for state parks and forests, and work started.

Although the effort faltered during World War II, in 1947 Senator LeRoy Collins (later the thirty-third Governor of Florida) sponsored a resolution that created a new Board of Parks and Historic Memorials. Funding subsequently increased over the years and park properties were added throughout the state. Today we have 160 state parks that are unique and well-maintained. In fact, the Florida Park Service is the only two-time winner of the National Gold Medal for state parks, having been recognized by the National Recreation and Park Association as the nation's best state park system in 2000 and again in 2005.

VARIED SITES

The state has an interesting mix of types of properties. They fall into six main categories: state park, state recreation area, state special feature site (e.g., archaeological, historical, geological, botanical), state preserve, state ornamental garden, and state museum.

CIVIL WAR BATTLEFIELD

Olustee Battlefield in Baker County was acquired in 1909, the first unit of what later became the Florida State

Park System. Remember the Oscar-winning movie *Glory*, starring Denzel Washington? Scenes were filmed during a reenactment at this park, which was the site of Florida's largest Civil War battle. Reenactments take place there every February and an annual exposition focusing on the era takes place in late summer.

FLORIDA CAVERNS

Florida Caverns State Park in Marianna is the only Florida park to offer cave tours to the public. Work started on this property in 1935, even before it was a state park. It opened officially to the public in 1942. Fossils, including sharks teeth, can be found in the cave, which was formed millions of years ago when sea levels fell.

BEACHES

As might be expected, Florida's parks include incredible beaches. Bahia Honda State Park in the Florida Keys was named America's Best Beach in 1992 by Dr. Stephen Leatherman, better known as "Dr. Beach." In 1994, Grayton Beach State Park ranked the best, followed by St. Andrews State Park in 1995, St. Joseph Peninsula State Park in 2002, and Caladesi Island State Park in 2008. John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park, almost seventy nautical square miles in size, was the first undersea park in the United States.

WAKULLA SPRINGS

A number of parks have natural and archeological significance including the lands around Wakulla Springs, one of the largest and deepest freshwater springs in the world that have been inhabited for nearly 15,000 years. The park, located just south of Tallahassee, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is designated a National Natural Landmark. It may be most famous for the 1954 horror movie, *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*, which was filmed at the springs.

KORESHAN STATE PARK

Many sites are of historical interest, such as Koreshan State Park near Ft. Myers. This is where Dr. Cyrus R. Teed's utopian community of two hundred followers moved in 1894 when they left New York. The members believed that the entire universe existed within a giant, hollow sphere. The Koreshans built and operated a printing facility, boat works, cement works, sawmill, bakery, store, and hostelry. Several of the primary buildings still exist at the park.

Like libraries, parks need support in this time of decreasing funding. In 2008-2009, more than 6,000 volunteers contributed more than 1.2 million hours, making this the largest volunteer program of any state park system in the nation.

Details about the park celebration with a locator map of all 160 parks plus a short description of each is at the official Web site <http://www.FloridaStateParks.org>. A link to each park's Web site is there and at <http://www.stateparks.com/fl.html>. For hiking recommendations, see <http://www.floridatrail.org/State-Park-Hikes.html>. You can also check these books: *Florida Magnificent Wilderness* by James Valentine (Pineapple Press, 2006), and *Florida State Parks: a complete recreational guide* by Michal Strutin (Mountaineers Books, 2000). There is also a helpful iPhone app to download for a small sum at iTunes.

Nancy Pike is former Director of the Sarasota County Library System and former President of FLA.



OPENING MINDS THROUGH ENGAGING DISCUSSION: THE SALON AT THE EAST LAKE COMMUNITY LIBRARY

By Miriam Lane and Nancy Kerr

What is the most important invention/event of the last 1,000 years?

What book has contributed to your personal growth?

Which character trait do you most admire?

Answering one of these questions is the springboard to an interesting evening of conversation at the “Salon” at Pinellas County’s East Lake Community Library that serves Palm Harbor, Tarpon Springs, and the surrounding area. Evolving from Socrates’ discourses in ancient Greece, the Salon is based on discussion groups that existed in Victorian England.

To attract patrons and pique curiosity in this new library program, which launched in the fall of 2009, floor stickers announced “It’s Coming,” “Soon,” and “Sign-up!” No information was divulged by the library staff, apart from asking those interested to sign up. The mysterious event that inspired intense speculation (Was it a beer tasting group? A barbershop quartet?) was a success and has remained so.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

The chosen topic for the first evening was “The top ten inventions of the last 1,000 years.” Ideas ranged from the polio vaccine to the steam engine. Participants can propose topics through e-mail prior to the monthly meeting or at the beginning of the meeting, and those in attendance vote to select the topic for that meeting. Other topics that have been discussed include “What person most influenced your life?,” “Why are so many people unhappy?,” and “What role has religion played throughout history?” The most recent meeting was especially enjoyable to the group.

Each participant was asked to bring in and share a poem, quotation, or saying that was beneficial to him or her, and to explain and explore its personal significance.

BUILDING TOLERANCE AND RESPECT

Topics evolve into conversations about the cultural, socio-economic, religious, environmental, and emotional components of people’s judgments, opinions, and beliefs. Led by Library Assistant Craig Stiver, the meetings are casual and informal with an atmosphere that is fun, supportive, and intellectually stimulating. Stiver quietly and politely keeps everyone on track, giving each person the opportunity to contribute. Participants respect each other’s opinions and are encouraged to probe each other’s ideas without provoking strong negative emotions. The sharing atmosphere has created new levels of tolerance, ability and willingness to listen to different viewpoints, and respect for others’ opinions. The dialogue is concentrated on the attitude of “Let me hear your angle on this issue and we’ll discuss it!” instead of “I’m right and this is how it is!”

New ideas and strengths are developed as information is shared among the varied members. Having educational diversity in the group was a goal that has been attained. Members include a former judge, school teachers, homemakers, and retirees. In addition, the group is composed of library patrons from their early 20s to mid-80s; the

ratio of men to women is approximately 60 to 40 percent. Membership has increased and remains fairly stable with about eighteen members. Conceived as a fluid, evolving group, future meetings may involve attendees in instructing or entertaining the group in whatever skills or talents they may have.

OUTCOMES

After the first meeting, a participant was overheard saying, “What a great format for a group discussion, and what a great mix of people, too.” Friendships have developed and are growing to relationships outside of the library; an outcome valued by facilitator Stiver, a philosopher in his own way, kind, patient and non-judgmental. Stiver started the Salon because he thought that there are not many opportunities for people from different backgrounds to learn from each other and because people are searching for a meaningful exchange of ideas. Other than just providing a meeting place, the library, believes Stiver, “is, to me, a place for connection between people, staff, and community: a conduit for knowledge and diversion.” He feels that the library is a definite factor in the success of the Salon.

His advice for other libraries that might want to start a similar group is to use guerilla marketing as a key to attracting interest. Don’t do a typical 8 ½” x 11” notice on the front desk. The other half of his advice is to try not to get involved in the discussion: “Don’t insert yourself into the group or be judgmental.”

One of the participants refers to this monthly meeting, as the “highlights of our lives.” High praise, indeed. The Salon has been a positive addition to East Lake Community Library’s programs and is a good illustration of the concept of “Open Libraries, Open Minds.”

Miriam Lane is Secretary and Nancy Kerr is Newsletter Editor of the Friends of East Lake Community Library.

LIBRARY AS THE THIRD PLACE

By Gene Coppola

There is a buzz in the library world that libraries are now the “third place”. I heard that other institutions see themselves as something similar. As a matter of fact, the CEO of Starbucks, Howard Schultz, also sees his stores as filling this need. So what is this “third place,” and why is it important?

The “third place” is where you go and spend time in addition to your home and workplace. In his influential book *The Great, Good Place*, Ray Oldenburg argues that “third places” are important for civil society, democracy, and civic engagement. “Third places” are “anchors” of community life and facilities and foster broader, more creative interaction. Further, Oldenburg suggests these hallmarks of a true “third place”:

- free or inexpensive;
- food and drink, while not essential, are important;
- highly accessible;
- proximity for many;
- involve regulars - those who habitually congregate there;
- welcoming and comfortable;
- both new friends and old should be found there.

Isn't that what public libraries do and have been doing since their doors first opened? Haven't they been exhibiting these hallmarks (especially the “free” part) for quite some time already? And, if so, does that mean they are more than just books? Yes, yes, and yes!

Over the years, I have written in the local community paper about the various services public libraries offer and how they continue expanding today. I have talked about Palm Harbor Library’s “Deaf Literacy” opportunities, audio books, music CDs, DVDs, teen and intergenerational programs, the Business Center, the Adaptive Toy Collection for mentally delayed and physically challenged individuals, wireless capability, as well as online resources. However, throughout all these evolving services the library has always hosted (for free), a neutral location for face-to-face dialogues, be they formal or not, of issues confronting our community.

Such instances included “Meet the Candidates” and “Legislative Breakfast” forums in cooperation with the Palm Harbor Chamber of Commerce; the “Teen Town Hall” where only teens were allowed to raise questions to local community leaders; the on-going “Socrates’ Café” which provides opportunities to debate current issues; Palm Harbor Library’s Book Club; and an “Ethics in Business” panel discussion. These are all forms of what a true “third place” should be: a forum of continuous “civic engagements”.

Public libraries have been referred to as “Temples of Civic Engagement” for their central role in bridging the full divides of people by bringing them back to the “public square”. Public libraries may be seen in many ways, but in this regard they are:

- civic information centers;
- partners in public service;
- a public forum;
- an enabler of civic literacy;
- a public advocate.

Author and chronicler of the disintegration and revival of the American community, Robert Putnam, stated that “Citizenship is not a spectator sport”. The staff at Palm Harbor Library couldn't agree more. The library has served as an election site and recently began offering early voting. Also beginning later this year, the library will initiate a series of public discussions under the National Issues Forum Institute (<http://www.nifi.org>) as one more way to engage the community in confronting issues through raising awareness and soliciting ideas.

A wise old sage once said, “When you are growing up, there are two institutional places that affect you



most powerfully - the church, which belongs to God, and the public library, which belongs to you”.

The public library is a great equalizer. Looks like Keith Richards of The Rolling Stones knew his “third place”.

So are these “places” still important today? In light of increased unemployment coupled with uncertainty in

our times here and abroad, the answer is yes. It was yes when “Third Place” was the popular buzz, and it will still be yes when it is not.

When you’re seeking your “third place”, you’ll have several choices. Starbucks could be one of them. Your public library will always be another.

Gene Coppola is Director of the Palm Harbor Library.



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TEACHING CREATIVE WRITING AT THE LIBRARY

By Lauren Gibaldi

In school, students are taught to write well. They learn grammar and penmanship, nouns and verbs. They learn how to write a five-paragraph essay on Thomas Jefferson, but not often can they just write for themselves. Rarely do they get the chance to write what they want – be it about zombies or love. Creative writing is a valuable skill for children, students, and adults. The ability to turn words into stories is powerful. The ability to create a new world is magical.

While creative writing is not often offered as a class in school, it can be one at the library. The library, as a free public resource, can be a place where children and adolescents hone their creative prowess. Already full of decades of literature, it is a place for them to not only look at writing, but to contribute to it as well. They can find inspiration from just viewing the stacks of books lining each wall.

One Saturday afternoon in June 2010, I faced nine tweens, aged ten to twelve at the Winter Park Public Library. They sat around two tables, looking at me with wide eyes and tapping pencils. As a current magazine editor and MLIS student, I had the idea to start a writing seminar for students who wanted writing practice outside of school. I knew from my experience as a former high school English teacher that children wanted to sharpen their skills, yet rarely were given the opportunity. As a volunteer at the Winter Park Library, I found the library a comfortable and familiar place to facilitate this, and earlier in the year I suggested the idea for this workshop.

The library advertised it as a two-part workshop that allowed tweens to think creatively when writing short stories, poetry, and essays. There were no grades and no rules. Students were given the opportunity to meet other writers and



share ideas. The goal was to collect their stories at the end of the workshop and publish them in a book, so the students would have a visual reminder of their success and, hopefully, the determination to continue writing.

I opened the first class with an explanation:

“We’re here to write about what we want, not what we’re told to write. There are no rules to writing, no wrong ways to do it. I don’t want five-paragraph essays, and I won’t mark off if you forget a comma. In fact, there are no grades. If you want to write about vampires, go ahead. I want you to find writing fun.”

Each straight-backed student loosened his or her shoulders ever-so slightly. Over the next two hours, the students wrote down their ideas and turned them into stories.

BEGINNING STEPS OF CREATING A WRITING PROGRAM

When creating a writing program, work with the library’s Youth Services Librarians to formulate a plan. Decide at least two months in advance on the program’s title, the number of participants, dates, and materials needed. Keep the registration small (maximum fifteen students), since it is such an intimate program. Provide loose-leaf paper, pencils, and snacks, since many will come without materials.

Decide on a schedule that works best with the library. Originally, the plan was to hold four one-hour sessions one night a week. Due to scheduling issues, it changed to two, two-hour sessions.

Advertise the program in the library's monthly calendar and display posters around town and within the library itself. Try to have popular local blogs, especially those connected with newspapers, mention it as well, by sending out press releases. Aside from buying paper for fliers, all of the marketing is free.

Research ways to create the final product: the published book. There are numerous self-publishing resources available, and they are easily found online. (Lulu¹ was the choice for this program. It offered complete creative control and extremely low prices.)

During the weeks leading up to the program, develop the lesson plans. Using writing games, prompts and exercises I had utilized while teaching, I created a curriculum that would start with a quick interactive lesson and then allow students time to write their own stories.

FIRST MEETING

Open the class with a general introduction, and warm the students up by letting them introduce themselves. As Prichard suggests in his article on creative writing, the students created a list of rules for the class. Like Prichard, the rules started with "Don't interrupt when someone is talking or reading," and "don't laugh, unless the story or writing is supposed to be funny."² Sharing writing is always frightening, regardless of age, so make the students as comfortable as possible.



After creating the aforementioned rules, discuss different types of writing (fiction, non-fiction, short stories, etc.), and have the students list examples of each. Continue with different writing styles. As an example, I showed them *TTYL* by Lauren Myracle, a young adult book written completely in online chat messages.³ It is a far cry from traditional novels, but illustrated the idea that everything is writing – including text messages and e-mails. This got their attention.

LESSONS AND EXERCISES

Instead of having the students take notes or answer long questions, I simply suggested a topic and had them react to it. For instance, in one lesson, the discussion was on villains. The goal was to show them that even a villain, when written correctly, has a reason behind his or her actions. Since all of them had read the Harry Potter series, the group discussed Voldemort – who he was, his childhood, why he turned bad, what made him a villain.⁴ This was a fun lesson, because they all knew – and vehemently hated – Voldemort. Most were shy at first, but as answers poured out, enthusiasm ran high, and many tried to answer first, fearing someone else might steal their glory.

As an exercise to complement that, the students picked a fairy tale and told it from the villain's point of view – giving them a back-story, a history. Using a topic that is familiar with them makes it easier for them to get into the exercise. The results were unique and entertaining. Cinderella's stepmother was hated by her parents, and only wanted the best for her daughters. The Big Bad Wolf was seeking revenge after the three little pigs robbed him

on his birthday. Their stories were full of the creativity they rarely use elsewhere.

After they finish writing (give the students as long as they need; stop when most are finished and starting to look bored), have the students discuss their ideas and read their stories aloud. Encourage them to share their writings and get feedback, but don't expect that they will right away.

At first, no one wanted to read aloud in the class, and instead they summarized their idea. While that was all right, because it was a writing class, I wanted to hear what they had written. Initially, only two outgoing young girls read, but slowly more hands were raised. There was no pressure put on the students, and if nobody wanted to share, the class progressed to the next lesson. They were less nervous because of this; they were relaxed when reading, and comfortable with saying they did not want to read. Give them time to achieve this comfort level – eventually they will open up. As Mellon wrote, “Acknowledging the anxiety and its legitimacy, and then providing successful experiences to counteract the anxiety, is the most effective method.”⁵



Once each lesson is complete, end the class by telling each student how well he or she did, and encourage them all to return to the following class, if one is scheduled. If not, push them to continue writing. A simple compliment could persuade them to write willingly on their own.

SUBSEQUENT CLASSES

If a subsequent class is scheduled, make sure all lessons and exercises are not continued

from the previous week since not all of the students may return. Instead, use new lessons and exercises so repeat students can learn something different and not feel as if they are wasting their time.

In this class, all but one student returned for the second lesson. Rather than being shy, the students jumped right into the session, as they were already comfortable. They reflected on the previous week's class, and brought up jokes the group shared. They even discussed their *own* writing and included the new students by hinting at what they may learn within the following two hours.

In his writing, Street states that giving students more authority over their learning, allows them to overcome negative attitudes toward writing.⁶ Giving them control of their creations got them excited about the exercises.

Review the rules and overview of the class once again to accommodate the new students. Then, get started. They'll already have their pencils ready.

RESPONSE

The students enjoyed the class. They thanked me for showing them that writing does not just have to be scholarly; it can be entertaining. Creative writing is an incredibly important asset for any child, as it is a way to facilitate their personal development. It allows them to use a creative part of their mind and explore possibilities not experienced in real life. It gives them the opportunity to deal with issues by writing them out and even to understand themselves better through this self-analysis. Ultimately, it could help them succeed in school, too, because it addresses another learning style.

To create the final book, use the template provided by the chosen self-publishing Web site) and upload one piece of writing from each student. Lulu provides a base price for the book (in this case, \$4). If possible, offer each

child one free copy, and then give parents the opportunity to buy additional copies online something most self-publishers allow. A Web site such as Lulu produces a book that looks professionally done, and it is a lasting memento of the students' achievements.

CHALLENGES

While the creative writing program can be a benefit to children of all ages, be sure to split up the age groups. Although only a year apart, maturity levels vary, especially between eleven and twelve. With teenagers, it is possible to work on revising writings since they understand critiques better, whereas it is harder for tweens.

While a one-shot synchronous class could be beneficial, the option of attending multiple classes may lead to better writers. It allows the students to perfect their ability over a longer timeframe and encourages them to write more. Be mindful when choosing the timeframe for the lessons. Two hours may seem long, but it gives the students more time to warm up.

When creating the lessons, it is important to consider both genders, as well as the age group. For one exercise, the students had to create a story around graffiti found on a wall. One example that was given was "CB loves TL," and, knowing that there were boys in the class who did not want to write about love, a second example, "Batman rules!" was provided.

It is important to continuously remind the students to be themselves and to write what they want. Once that comfort level is reached, they are more willing to share. Similarly, encouragement is necessary. Engaging them in discussion and encouraging them to continue talking helps them develop their thoughts. Children and adolescents have so many ideas at once that it is often hard for them to narrow thoughts down. Talking out their ideas allows them to focus better. Writing lets them open their minds and think creatively. Since the library is a safe and familiar place, it serves as a sound forum for them to express themselves.

Most importantly, relate to them. Speak to the students professionally, yet still in a friendly manner. Encourage them to share their personal stories and add relatable ones. Discussing popular culture lets them open up. Having a discourse at this level makes them more comfortable, and, in writing, that's important. If they are not comfortable, they will never reveal their writing.

As the students left after the last class, I couldn't help but feel pride. They may not all become writers, but they did produce something. I had the privilege to see them open up and create something unique.

One girl, far more mature than the others, gave me her story in private, to see what I thought. At the end of a piece about a baker, she wrote, "This is my wonderland." When creating their book, I titled it *Wonderland*, because that's what writing is – a fictional place that inspires and delights.

Their writings are their wonderlands.

Lauren Gibaldi is a magazine editor and library volunteer currently enrolled as a MLIS student at FSU, specializing in youth services.

NOTES

¹ Lulu, <http://www.lulu.com>.

² Heather Prichard, "Write Here, Write Now: Holding a Creative Writing Workshop Series at Your Library," *Young Adult Library Services* 6, no. 4 (Summer 2008): 19.

³ Lauren Myracle, *TTYL* (New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2004).

⁴ J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (New York, NY: Scholastic Inc., 1997).

⁵ Esther S. Grassian and Joan R. Kaplowitz, *Information Literacy Instruction: Theory and Practice* (New York, NY: Neal Schuman Publishers, Inc.), 71.

⁶ Chris Street, "A Reluctant Writer's Entry into a Community of Writers," *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 48, no. 8 (May 2005): 640.

FLORIDA READS

Personalities and Politics

The personalities and politics of the human and animal worlds are similar themes in two new Florida nonfiction books by award-winning journalists. Both books are guaranteed to liven up a book discussion group with conversations about freedom and captivity.

Zoo Story: Life in the Garden of Captives by **Thomas French** (Hyperion, 2010 ISBN: 978-1-4013-2346-2 \$24.99) Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Thomas French winds his way through the human and animal personalities at Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo much the same way visitors wander from exhibit to exhibit while walking the zoo's paths. After spending four years observing life at the zoo, French published a fair-minded and comprehensible inquiry into daily operations at Lowry Park, currently ranked as the Best Zoo in the United States by *Parents*® magazine. French backs up his research with extensive notes and a solid biography, and credits Yann Martel, author of the novel *Life of Pi* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2002), who inspired French to chronicle daily life inside a zoo.

The book focuses on the emotional complexity French observes in many of the zoo animals, such as Herman the chimpanzee, Enshalla the Sumatran tiger, and Rango the orangutan. Equally, French studies habits of the zookeepers who divide themselves into two groups: the "bunnyhuggers" who name the animals in their care and are drawn to whatever aspects of the animals remind them of themselves, and the "non-bunnyhuggers" who have a more scientific approach and revel in the otherness of the animals that terrifies and disgusts other people. He shows that life and death are part of the daily fabric of a zoo. From the patients at the zoo's manatee hospital to the elephants flown in cargo planes from Africa to the United States, French provides a revealing and informative insight into Lowry Park.

On the political side, French chronicles the rise and fall of the "White Devil", the zoo's former CEO Lex Salisbury who developed and ruled his "stationary ark". Much of Salisbury's story unfolded in the last year with accusations of criminal activities and conflict of interest during his tenure.

French uses the phrase "garden of captives" to describe the zoo as a "... living catalogue of our fears and obsessions, the ways we see animals and see ourselves, all things we prefer not to see at all." He believes that the zoo shows mankind's "longing for the wildness we have lost inside ourselves" and "... our instinct to exalt nature and control it".

Manatee Insanity: Inside the War over Florida's Most Famous Endangered Species by **Craig Pittman** (University of Florida Press, 2010 ISBN: 978-0-8130-3462-1 \$27.50)

Craig Pittman, an award-winning environmental journalist for the *St. Petersburg Times* refers to manatees as the "hippies of the animal kingdom" because of their

By Joyce Sparrow



vegetarian diet, nonviolent nature, and powerful sex drive. Using notes from his work at the *St. Petersburg Times* along with new research, Pittman begins his investigation and analysis of manatees back in the 1880s when manatees were hunted for their food value, especially as a key ingredient in Gypsy Stew.

In 1893, the first manatee conservation awareness campaign began to let people know manatees were not for eating anymore. By the 1920s, Miami was the center of motorboat racing and the intersection of fast moving boats and slower-moving manatees created problems. In the 1950s scientist Joseph Curtis Moore, Jr., began the practice of identifying and differentiating among the manatees in the wild with hand-drawn sketches of their boat propeller scars.

Pittman discusses the conservation efforts of James A. "Buddy" Powell, Jr. a Crystal River teenager who worked with researchers including ecologist and explorer Jacques Cousteau in the 1960s to promote the general public's awareness of the plight of the manatee. Many locals regarded the manatees as navigational hazards or Sunday dinner. The conservationists, on the other hand, asked the government to place limits on human behavior to benefit wildlife. In 1981 singer Jimmy Buffet recognized the manatee as a symbol of his newly adopted state and agreed to lend his time, effort, and money to the Save the Manatee Club and lead efforts to have manatees put on the endangered species list because of lost habitat caused by the real estate development on the Florida coasts. As time moved forward, elected officials such as Florida Governors Bob Graham, Jeb Bush, and Charlie Crist became involved in the arguments among the boaters and environmentalists. Local business people came to rely on the tourists who travel to Florida each year to see manatees.

Pittman takes readers from Miami to Kings Bay and Crystal River, to the Lowry Park Zoo's manatee hospital, and to the Florida Marine Mammal Pathology Laboratory on the campus of Eckerd College to gain an understanding of all the time, money, and energy involved in the protection and study of manatees. Pittman's tone throughout the book is one of slight amusement yet sincere interest in what he appropriately calls "Manatee Insanity". The book is published as part of the University of Florida Press' on-going series on Florida history and culture.

Please note my new contact information: joycehopesparrow@gmail.com.

BUILDING A STATEWIDE ACADEMIC BOOK COLLECTION

By Roy Ziegler and Deborah Robinson



In October of 2008, *Florida Libraries* published “Janus in the Sunshine,”¹ an article detailing the efforts within Florida’s State University System (SUS) to implement Ross Atkinson’s challenges for the future of collection development. At the 2005 Janus Conference on Research Library Collections, Ross Atkinson presented six challenges that needed to be met to assure the future viability of academic libraries.

Ross Atkinson’s Six Key Challenges² are:

1. RECON (Converting the Scholarly Record)

Full-text retrospective conversion of print resources to digital form made accessible via the Internet will extend the intellectual life of the material and create an international asset that will increase the discoverability and use of scholarly material.

2. PROCON (Prospective Conversion/ Born Digital)

Preservation of material that is already available digitally provides permanent distribution and access to the material. The slower the migration to provide digital access the greater the impact on scholarship and the ability to share knowledge.

3. Creating Core Collections

Academic libraries agree to provide access to the common core of research material and then distribute the responsibility for acquiring the advanced resources.

4. Licensing Principles and Publisher Relations

Create a library market for resources. Traditionally libraries have not worked well together to agree on best licensing terms for electronic resources. Libraries must cooperate and establish acceptable conditions for licensing products in the future.

5. Archiving Print, Digital, and Born-Digital

Maintain the legacy print collections by sharing the responsibility with other libraries. Permanently preserve scholarly information and make it accessible for future generations. This applies to all formats of information.

6. Alternative Channels for Scholarly Communication

There needs to be a more effective model for scholars to transfer their research to other scholars. The traditional model of scholarly publishing doesn’t serve the writers and readers well. A different approach that will present meaningful alternatives is needed.

In the two years since the Florida Libraries article appeared, the Collections Planning Committee (CPC) of the Council of State University Libraries (CSUL) has continued to make progress on addressing many of these challenges.

In the fall of 2009 a group of interested academic libraries from the Florida College System (FCS), Independent Colleges and Universities (ICUF), and the SUS formed a working group to create a statewide academic book contract. This effort would closely align with Atkinson’s “Creating Core Collections” challenge. The working group believed that the best starting point for building not only core collections, but also stronger unique collections would be through greater resource sharing, collaboration, and reliance on each other. In December of 2009, the CPC’s Statewide Academic Book Vendor Task Force submitted its report to CSUL detailing the need for a statewide book contract. The following section is an excerpt from that report.

STATEWIDE BOOK CONTRACTS: BACKGROUND AND HISTORY³

In 1998, Ohio was the first state to recognize the value of implementing a statewide resource sharing contract for the purchase of academic

books. Based on collection analysis that Dr. Anna Perrault from USF's [University of South Florida's] School of Library and Information Science conducted for Ohio academic libraries, the collections were found to be very similar with high levels of duplication. The impact was that less unique content was being acquired and their collections were weaker than they had anticipated. Ohio's response was to establish a working relationship with an academic book vendor (in this instance YBP [Yankee Book Peddler]), to develop an interface so that participating institutions could see both their individual book-ordering history and the order history for all participating institutions. They also created the Not Bought in Ohio (NBIO) report that identified books that were not acquired. The list is used to purchase materials missed during the regular ordering cycle. OhioLINK's primary goal was to achieve stronger and more diverse collections statewide. Along the way they also realized greater discounts due to the volume of sales tied to the multi-institutional contract.

A number of other states (Colorado, Illinois, Missouri, Oregon, Washington, and Wisconsin) have voluntary statewide contracts for a primary domestic academic book vendor. As with Ohio, most contracts include community colleges and both public and private non-profit colleges and universities. The contracts include the typical range of service options available to individual institutions, including approval plans, title-by-title selection, cataloging services, shelf-ready processing, online ordering and electronic invoicing. But the key feature necessary to facilitate collaborative collection development is access to a dynamic online database that provides a real-time shared view of the book ordering history for all participating libraries. This powerful tool opens the vendor's database to the membership so that genuine shared collection development can take place.

A TASK FORCE FORMS

In December of 2009, the Statewide Primary Academic Book Vendor Task Force submitted its report to CSUL. The primary recommendation was to issue a competitive bid document to secure a vendor, favorable discount schedule, and specified services. CSUL believed it was not a good time to continue support for the project and the recommendation was not adopted. Even with this setback, most members of the task force wanted to continue to develop a competitive bid document and give all academic institutions the option to participate on a voluntary basis.

CSUL's Statewide Primary Academic Book Vendor Task Force would become the Primary Academic Book Vendor Task Force and ITN Evaluation Team. The structure of the new Task Force would include two voting members from ICUF, two from the FCS, and two SUS institutions. Without oversight from an organized consortia, the initiative was more of a gathering of interested parties working together to accomplish a common set of goals. With participation from different types of academic institutions, the group believed that it represented all of Florida's college and university libraries.

The following goals were established:

- Build stronger collections with less duplication and more unique content.
- Lower costs for materials and services.
- Enter into a strategic alliance with the vendor awarded the contract.
- Invite all academic libraries in the state to participate and become a partner.
- Expand the idea of library collections from institutional to statewide asset.

VENDOR SELECTION

Three days after the December CSUL meeting, Baker and Taylor announced their purchase of Blackwell Book Services and that Blackwell would be integrated into Baker and Taylor's academic book division, YBP. This was of immediate concern for the task force. If there were not enough companies willing to bid for Florida's academic library book business, some of the goals would not be achievable. A quick call to Coutts confirmed that there was another company capable of responding to a bid document.

In early February, the Invitation to Negotiate (ITN) document was posted and various academic book vendors were notified of the posting. In early March, the response period closed and two vendors - Coutts and YBP - who met all of the required criteria were short-listed and would receive further consideration. The two vendors were given another set of questions and asked to respond prior to face-to-face negotiations that would take place at Seminole State College on March 24-25.

In early May the contract was awarded to Coutts. The evaluation team believed that Coutts represented the best choices for accomplishing the previously stated goals. Academic libraries typically receive 15-18% discounts, with additional shipping and handling charges. Discounts for

the Florida statewide book contract will be in the 19-22% range with no shipping and handling charges and no charge for Coutts' OASIS (Online Acquisition and Selection Information System) database. Coutts also offers the same discount for all e-book orders and waives the annual fee for its MyiLibrary platform. "Lightening Source," Coutts' and Ingram's print-on-demand service, prints over twenty million books annually and has a database of over two million titles from thousands of publishers. This assures access to many books that were previously out of print.

At the lowest discount level, several million dollars of business is likely to return an extra \$200,000 to \$300,000 of savings. If the statewide annual spending on the contract reaches the \$10,000,000 mark, the additional savings would reach \$1,000,000 per year. With so much good, what's to lose?

BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

Even with so many advantages to join the contract, it's clearly not just a change of vendors. It is a change in the way the state's academic libraries build their collections from an institutional perspective to one of a statewide shared responsibility, and this requires trusting that another library will have the book available when a student or faculty member at the local institution needs it. In considering whether to participate in this change, several areas of concern have been expressed.

Institutions may fear that they will lose control over how collections are built and that this will dilute the strength of specialized subject area holdings. Concerns that institutional collections will become more homogeneous and therefore won't be as relevant to local users may overshadow the benefits of the statewide contract for some libraries.

In fact, the opposite is true. By reducing the amount of duplication via approval plans and title-by-title selection, funds are available to acquire unique materials. As libraries develop collections and acquire distribution tools such as universal borrowing for print and statewide licensed e-book collections, local collections will become stronger. Implementing a Books Not Bought report that lists quality titles not selected by participating institutions will identify books that should be considered for purchase within the state.

As with any change in a routine operation, there will be those who do not have adequate personnel

to facilitate the transition. For others, there may be a wait and see attitude. The cost of re-profiling an approval plan is not insignificant. Re-establishing a shelf-ready book profile takes effort and time to get it right. Re-profiling an approval plan and learning a new ordering database takes time. These are real issues but will diminish once the transitional period has been completed."

Institutions may be slow to migrate to the new vendor and platform. This will impede progress toward achieving statewide goals. It is important to start gradually with a few institutions that will champion the plan. If the model proves to be successful, others will become interested and will be more likely to participate. There is nothing wrong with being cautious. It is a voluntary program. However the true benefit of the project will not be realized until a significant number of academic libraries participate.

POTENTIAL FOR POSITIVE IMPACT

Academic libraries in Florida are likely to be using five or six major academic book distributors. Building a local collection for local constituents is not feasible in today's economic climate. Institutional material budgets will certainly continue to feel pressure and continue to shrink while the demands for content continue to grow.

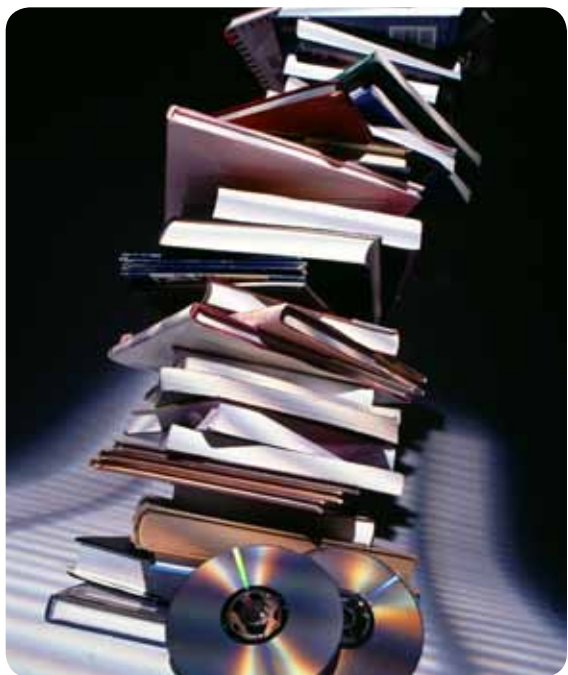
This resource sharing project, undertaken by the Florida Board of Governors and the institutional Purchasing Officers Group of the SUS have identified this project as one of four statewide initiatives that can save money and demonstrate greater cooperation through sharing resources.

Recent legislative action has focused a sharp lens on the work of libraries in Florida and, in particular, the work of academic libraries. Greater resource sharing and cooperation for the benefit of all Florida students, K-16 and beyond, has been specified in several key areas of the 2010 General Appropriations Act (GAA). This project, undertaken jointly, cooperatively, and voluntarily by the FCS, ICUF, and SUS libraries stands as an exemplary model of exactly the kind of activity the Florida Legislative imagines as it seeks to maximize the state's resources for the benefit of all citizens in the state.

The ability to demonstrate cooperation across different library types will be a good strategic move so that statewide funding sources will recognize the effort to do the most with what we have, even when it means working closely with rival institutions.

Due to shrinking budgets, it is critical that SUS, FCS, and ICUF academic libraries implement collaborative ventures and strategies that will help all of the participating institutions to be more innovative and sustainable.

By sharing best practices for resource acquisition, licensing strategies, technology expertise, and staffing infrastructure; Florida's academic libraries can find many efficiencies to drive down costs and improve operations that work in concert for the common goals of all. For example, volume discounts will translate into additional funds for more books and other resources.



A statewide e-book collection with unlimited simultaneous users is achievable for a four year undergraduate core collection that would consist primarily of university press books. Material that is available via a shared e-book platform and via MARC records in the institution's online catalog increases visibility to enhance access to the content. The price for each shared e-book is dramatically less per institution than having a print copy on the shelf. This frees libraries to acquire greater amounts of unique material, print or electronic, for local collections. If the e-book vendor is MyiLibrary and the order platform is OASIS, the order history for the shared e-book collection and institutional book orders will be posted in real time so that all participating libraries will be able to make more informed purchasing decisions. This model is highly desirable because it builds on the efficiency and sustainability model."

Establishing a working relationship with the vendor will provide tools to drive new developments and increased access to content. "Coutts Communities," the suite of tools that enable collaborative work within OASIS, includes a functionality that allows libraries to create a network of other libraries with which they share bibliographic information. Florida academic libraries will play a key role in the future developments of this platform and will be able to help create a system that facilitates greater levels of collaborative collection development across the state.

In the state of Florida, there is a long history of building strong book collections in our libraries, for local constituents, but the economic realities of providing an ever-increasing amount of resources at ever-increasing costs is forcing us to rethink how we can meet the needs of students and faculty. It is a bold idea for academic libraries to consider a "One state, One library" model where the shared collection has many physical campuses and many more branches while at the same time being virtual and not location bound. This is a significant change, but when planned for and priorities set, great things can be accomplished. A statewide academic book collection is within reach, but we must open our minds to the possibility that strengthening our reliance on each other, collectively selecting and cost effectively acquiring greater amounts of information is the best way to open our libraries to a brighter future.

Roy Ziegler is Associate Director for Collection Development at Florida State University Libraries and Deborah Robinson was the Director of Libraries at St. Petersburg College and is now at Tallahassee Community College.

NOTES

¹ Roy Ziegler, "Janus in the Sunshine," *Florida Libraries* 51: no. 2 (Fall 2008): 10-12.

² Ross Atkinson, "Six Key Challenges for the Future of Collection Development," *Library Resources & Technical Services* 50: no. 4 (Oct. 2006): 244-51.

³ Michael Arthur, Brenda Wright, Michael Luesebrink, and Roy Ziegler, report of the Statewide Primary Academic Book Vendor Task Force to the Council of State University Libraries, Dec. 3, 2009, <http://csul.net/cmc/StatewidePrimaryAcademicBookVendorReport.pdf>.

| EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COLUMN |
FALL 2010

As autumn approaches, FLA's program year is well underway. The FLA Executive Board met twice over the summer, both times in online meetings. We are grateful to the Southeast Florida Library Information Network for the use of SEFLIN Connect software, which is also available to FLA committees and member groups for their meetings.

FLA has a new editor for *Florida Libraries* and a new conference management company. This issue of *Florida Libraries* is the first for Editor Maria Gebhardt, a Libraries Manager with Broward County Libraries who has worked extensively in marketing, publishing and Web design. Our new conference management company is *A Plan to Meet*, headed by Sharon Gray, Certified Meeting Planner, whose office is in Tallahassee.

FLA work has continued through the summer. The Legislative Committee arranged to present awards to nineteen state leaders for their work in maintaining State Aid funding for public libraries. FLA will continue its advocacy efforts and the legislative platform for 2011 has already been adopted. In August, FLA and the Panhandle Library Access Network (PLAN) held a successful Unconference attended by fifty-one participants from Panhandle libraries and featuring two online programs by presenters at remote locations.

With the support of Florida's six multitype library cooperatives, FLA is pleased to

present six workshops to be held across the state in early December. Sally Gardner Reed, Executive Director of the Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations (ALTAFF – formerly FOLUSA) will present *Raising Funds, Raising Friends, Raising Our Voices* and there will be opportunities for open discussion and idea sharing, too. These workshops are open to all library staff, Friends, and supporters. See the FLA Web site, <http://www.flalib.org>, to register.

FLA's committees have begun their work and member groups have organized. Scholarship applications (submissions due February 1) and FLA award forms (nominations due February 28) have been updated and are available on the Web site. The Membership Committee's Recruitment and Retention Plan has been approved by the FLA Board. Several committees and member groups have collaborated on proposals for the 2011 conference.

Planning is well underway for the 2011 annual conference to be held May 4-6 at the Doubletree Hotel at the Entrance to Universal Orlando. Watch for conference details and registration information later this fall.

There's a lot going on with the Florida Library Association. Thanks for being a part of it!



Faye C. Roberts
Executive Director

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