

Florida Libraries



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Libraries . . .
connecting people,
information, and
knowledge

Highlights of the 2009 FLA Annual Conference • The Perfect Storm: Budget Cuts
Hurricane Preparedness and Response for Florida Public Libraries

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Correction:

In the Fall 2008 article "Desperate Times, Desperate Measures: The Great Depression and Florida Libraries," the captions for the Homestead Library and the Coral Gables Women's Club were reversed on pages 6 and 7.



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Libraries...

Connecting People, Information, and Knowledge

Join us for the 86th annual conference of the Florida Library Association! This year, the conference will be May 5-8 at the beautiful Doubletree Hotel which is at the entrance to Universal Orlando.

What a year it has been! The buzz words are: economy, budget cuts, stimulus package, and bailout. Yes, we are facing many challenges and, as a result, libraries are making difficult decisions while doing their best to fulfill service promises.



Mercedes Clement

The theme of the 2009 conference is: "Libraries...connecting people, information and knowledge." It is obvious to me that libraries have to connect with others in order to meet the challenges ahead. The 2009 conference will focus on exploring the many

ways to achieve our goal of connecting our communities with the emerging knowledge of the universe. Our programs will focus on positive ways to meet budgetary challenges. Don't miss out!

Conference Planning Chair Carol Russo and Local Arrangement Co-Chairs Dee Bozeman and Peggy Gunnell have lined up outstanding speakers and networking events. You'll learn ways to meet challenges and gain innovative ideas for your library.

- Preconference workshops on May 5 include grant writing, reaching teens, dealing with copyright, resource sharing, and learning new technologies.
- The opening session on May 6 will feature two eminent leaders in the library world: Dr. Richard Madaus, Executive Director of Community College Library Automation (CCLA) and Jim Rettig, President of the American Library Association.
- Breakout sessions on May 6-8 feature dozens of dynamic programs, includ-

ing tips on stretching library budgets, creating sustainable funding, embedded librarianship, and staying connected in a disconnected world.

- Opportunities for networking include the welcome reception, refreshment breaks with exhibitors, alumni receptions, group gatherings at restaurants and the President's Reception and Scholarship Fundraiser.
- Bob Morris, bestselling Florida author of *Bermuda Schwartz* and *A Deadly Silver Sea*, will speak at the closing luncheon and awards program.

As you can see, there will be something for everyone. Join us to connect with people, information, and knowledge. By doing so, you will enhance your experience and opportunities.

To register for the conference, please go to www.flalib.org where you'll find the latest information. Thank you for supporting your Association.

— Mercedes Clement

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By Faye Roberts

Florida's libraries need FLA today more than ever. And the Florida Library Association needs you. Be sure to renew your membership for 2009 and be part of your professional association.

Advocating for Libraries

The special Legislative session held on the state budget in January provided a glimpse of funding issues still to come. FLA's Legislative Committee under the leadership of Lisa Manners worked hard to keep FLA members and library leaders informed during this fast-paced period. Join this group for Library Days in Tallahassee March 10-11 and talk with your elected leaders about the value of library services. Use the advocacy resources at www.flalib.org to increase your effectiveness. If you can, donate to the Advocacy Honor Roll to support FLA's work in this area.

Volunteers Move FLA Forward

The enthusiasm of FLA's many active volun-

teers is inspiring. From the Executive Board to FLA's committees and member groups to its dedicated members, there is a passion for libraries and the benefits they provide. Much of the work of FLA is done by its committees. For example, the Intellectual Freedom Committee has rewritten the Intellectual Freedom Manual to assist librarians facing challenges. The Awards and Scholarship Committees are actively promoting opportunities to recognize and develop libraries, programs, and staff. The Library Personnel Recruiting Committee is planning helps for job seekers during the annual conference.

Here are a few additional examples of recent initiatives by FLA members:

- Min Tong of the University of Central Florida organized ABC's of Diversity, a continuing education program held in Clermont.
- Christine Dunn of the Monroe County Public Library conducted a feasibility study for future continuing education programs in the Keys.
- Barbara Correll of the Fort Lauderdale

Friends and Claire Hauenstein of Lee County's South County Regional Friends developed a PowerPoint program on Friends' Web sites that was presented to Friends groups around the state.

2009 Annual Conference

The 2009 conference will be just as inspiring, with talented presenters from Florida and other areas of the country sharing the best of their knowledge and experience. Under the leadership of President Mercedes Clement and Conference Chair Carol Russo, the conference will focus on how FLA can help libraries and library staffs during these challenging times.

With such enthusiasm, it's a joy to work with you all. Your Association office is doing well in its still-new location in Lake City. Administrative Assistant Kelly Green and I are only a phone call or e-mail away whenever you need our help.

FLA is about all of us working together. And it's more important now than ever.



Hurricane Preparedness and Response for Florida Public Libraries:

Best Practices and Strategies

By Charles R. McClure, Joe Ryan, Lauren H. Mandel, John Brobst,
Charles C. Hinnant, Jordon Andrade, and John T. Snead

Since 2000, fifty-one hurricanes or other severe storm systems have impacted the state of Florida, resulting in over \$64 billion in damage and 149 related fatalities.¹

Historically, more hurricanes hit Florida than any other U.S. state.² Florida

public libraries have responded by taking steps to better prepare for these emergency situations and to better serve their local communities during times of disaster.

In support of their communities, public libraries have adapted their service roles to provide their communities with emergency support and to assist hurricane victims. Public libraries across the state have opened their doors to help get evacuees much needed information, assisted in obtaining government assistance for those in need, and aided individuals in locating family and friends. Until now, there has been no systematic effort to organize and assist all Florida public libraries in providing improved hurricane planning and response services.

Grant Funds Hurricane Preparedness Project

In response to this need, the Information Use Management & Policy Institute (Information Institute) at Florida State University (FSU) received a grant from FSU's Florida Catastrophic Storm Risk Management Center to assist public libraries in helping their communities better prepare for and recover from hurricanes. The Information Institute is identifying best practices and strategies from public libraries in disaster-response situations so others may learn from their experiences. Leveraging this informa-

tion is especially important given the limited information about hurricane and disaster preparedness available to public librarians. While the project's emphasis is on determining how a public library can help its community, the project also identifies practical steps taken by libraries to better prepare for hurricanes and other disasters.

Initial site visits with Gulf Coast libraries and interviews with library managers and emergency responders have led to preliminary findings regarding public library emergency response services roles and the importance of partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies when responding to hurricanes and disasters. Preliminary findings also show that a number of Florida public libraries are effective team members that work with various government agencies preparing for and responding to hurricanes and other disasters. The project draws on collaboration with public library managers, the State Library and Archives of Florida, SOLINET, emergency responders, and others to develop training and resources to assist Florida public librarians in helping their communities.

Libraries Respond to Hurricanes

Since 2004, the Information Institute has collected data describing Florida and Gulf Coast public libraries' roles and services in hurricane/disaster preparedness and response.³ These data show that a number of public libraries are partners in local hurricane/disaster preparedness and response teams; that they contribute a range of skills and knowledge to handling information management and communication prior to, during, and after such storms; and that the public recognizes the public library as a trusted and effective government agency.

After the 2006 hurricane season, eight major areas emerged in which libraries played a key role:^{4,5}

- Helping communities prepare before the storms

- Providing emergency information after the storms
- Providing shelter
- Providing physical aid
- Caring for community members in need
- Working with partner government and relief organizations
- Cleaning up damage
- Providing continuity of services, stress reduction, and restoring normalcy

Libraries provided these services throughout Florida and the Gulf Coast region, employing trained staff, library resources, Internet access, and many other resources to assist their communities in hurricane preparedness and recovery.

Emergency Management Roles and Responsibilities

As part of the current project, Information Institute staff collected various plans, services, and activities that demonstrate public libraries' engagement with hurricane preparedness and response activities and interviewed over 150 library staff, emergency-response personnel, and others. Also, the project team met with various local and state officials to understand better the local and situational factors affecting public libraries' ability to provide hurricane preparedness and response services successfully. Preliminary findings from this project suggest a range of public library hurricane service roles and responsibilities, as well as the value of building a response network.

- **Ensure library continuity and restoration:** Plan for and take actions to ensure continuity of library operations and services after a hurricane.
- **Extend normal library services in abnormal times:** Restore hope and re-establish a neighborhood government presence by offering stress reduction,

“The project’s efforts will equip public libraries to respond more successfully to hurricanes and other disasters and, in partnership with other agencies, mitigate some of the damage and destructions that these hurricanes bring to the state.”

a return to normalcy, and family relief services, both inside the library and through outreach efforts.

- **Be a community communication hub:** Offer emergency responders and the public reliable, secure means of communication during disaster recovery.
- **Offer E-Government service and support:** Provide access to E-Government via technology; locate information, resources and benefits; aid in completion of forms; and link residents and E-Government agencies together.
- **Be a community information hub:** Offer to residents, evacuees, and emergency managers accurate information to prepare for and recover from hurricane threats.
- **Be a community organizer and meeting place:** Help organize community services and provide meeting facilities and office space.
- **Support small business recovery:** Assist small businesses in finding the information and support they need to reopen for business.

- **Serve as a point of distribution (POD):** Manage and distribute meals, sandbags, ice, tarps, etc.
- **Provide on demand emergency services:** Respond to requests from emergency management or local government and improvise new activities without respect to traditional library roles.
- **Go where locally assigned:** In many Florida counties, all government personnel register with county emergency personnel managers for hurricane assignment.

These service roles begin to describe a menu of possible activities in which a public library might be involved. Clearly, not all public libraries can assume all of these service roles. But depending on resources, local government and community needs, and the library’s relationship with emergency providers, some of these service roles may be especially appropriate for an individual library. These service roles are currently being further defined and made operational for use by individual libraries.

Strategic thinking about which hurricane service roles a specific public library can adopt may improve community hurricane

preparation and response efforts. These role descriptions may also be useful for library directors when explaining to potential partners what public libraries have done and can do related to community hurricane response, keeping in mind that “...local governments don’t think of you as an emergency provider, but people do.”⁶

Building a Response Network

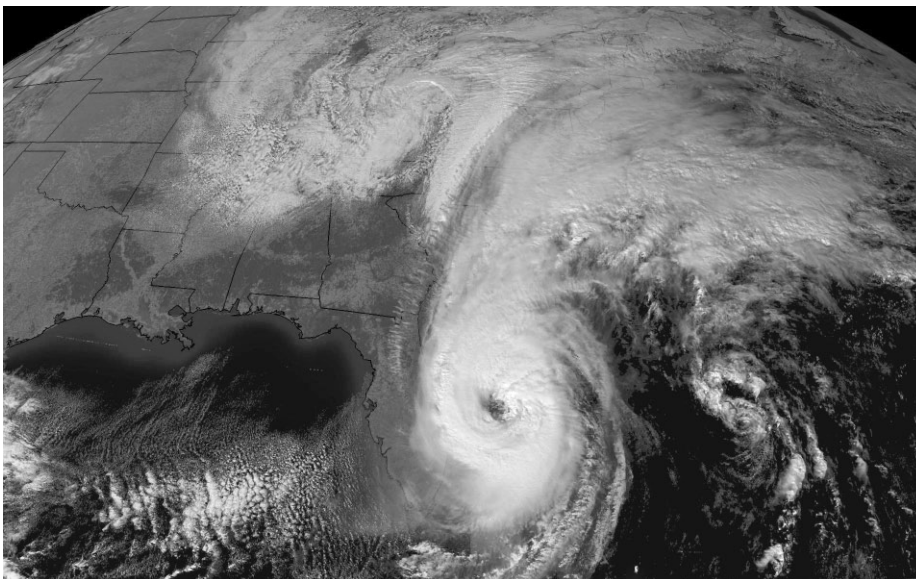
Before disaster strikes, library managers have an opportunity to focus on what they can control and manage: preparing the library facility and staff, finding partners to help, and pre-coordinating emergency response activities as much as is reasonable. The team approach has been proven to yield rewards greater than individual, independent efforts by a single agency. A library manager noted, “If I can build a relationship with directors of [local, state, and federal] agencies, it brings credibility of libraries to the table.”⁷

The first step in managing hurricane response partnerships is to gain a better awareness of what each potential partner does in community hurricane response. Discussions need to be open and frank about the resources necessary to provide services and meet partner needs with a range of local emergency responders and others.

The next step is to pre-coordinate what the library can contribute, what the library needs from each partner, and how library activities can mesh with other partners’ activities. The library and its partners should prepare and test these new arrangements prior to an emergency. Working out the details in advance saves time, significantly improves response, and results in forming bonds of trust and understanding.

After a storm strikes, it is useful to assess what worked, what didn’t, and then determine what else can be done to better assist the community. In initiating these collaborative efforts, keep in mind that making arrangements to aid each other and to coordinate these activities takes time, and that what is possible may vary from location to location due to local situations and library-county policies.

Multi-type Library Cooperatives (MLCs), the State Library and Archives of Florida, *continues on page 6*



NOAA satellite image of Hurricane Wilma October 24, 2005 (available from http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hurricane_Wilma_200510241815.jpg)

“While the project’s emphasis is on determining how a public library can help its community, the project also identifies practical steps taken by libraries to better prepare for hurricanes and other disasters.”

large library systems, libraries adjacent to hurricane-affected libraries, library vendors, SOLINET, and others can all make significant hurricane-response contributions. The key, however, is for the public library to (1) clarify relationships, responsibilities, and activities with other community, state, and federal emergency agencies prior to a hurricane, and (2) understand which of the above service roles it has the capacity and knowledge to offer to its local community.

Project Products

Ongoing project activities, including the development of a Web portal and training sessions, will ease the disaster response burden on Florida public librarians, improve the state’s overall disaster preparedness and response, reduce the public’s risk, and contribute successful strategies for mitigating the impact of a hurricane/disaster on a local community.

Web Portal

One important aspect of this project is assuring that the information, resources, and best practices are available to all public libraries. With that in mind, project staff members have

been developing a Web portal that will serve as an easy-to-use resource for librarians. The portal contains valuable information on all aspects of hurricane preparedness, such as guidance on developing effective hurricane plans, integrating efforts with governmental agencies, and identifying best practices for public librarians. This portal will be a dynamic, content-rich Web site that delivers timely and relevant information to librarians, including emergency information, Web-based resources, and informative Web links across multiple resources. Interactive features will help promote collaboration and information exchange as libraries prepare for and react to emergencies, as well as promoting more effective communication with the emergency response organizations that serve local communities.

The Web portal is currently available at <http://www.ii.fsu.edu/hurricanes>. The site will undergo continuous development and updating to provide the latest information available. Employing the Web portal approach provides the capability to consolidate and organize numerous resources in an easy structure while providing timely and relevant content.

Training Sessions

Project staff members are assessing how libraries can best provide hurricane preparedness and response services in light of available skills and capacities at the library. At the same time, the Information Institute is developing statewide training sessions for public librarians and local officials, so that the findings from the project can be made available to the broader library and government communities. The training sessions will focus on ways libraries and other agencies can better collaborate, enhance their skills, and provide targeted services for hurricane preparedness and response.

Florida librarians will have opportunities to attend training sessions conducted by the Information Institute at each of the Multi-type Library Cooperatives (MLC) throughout the state as listed in Figure 1. Additional training opportunities are being identified and will be posted on the Institute’s Web site when available.

Benefit to Florida Libraries and Florida Residents

Many Florida public libraries already provide a range of useful services and activities in

Hurricane Preparedness and Response Training Sessions in 2009		
Tentative date	Location	Contact
April 13	Panhandle Library Access Network (PLAN), Panama City Beach, FL	http://www.plan.lib.fl.us (850) 233-9051
April 14 & 16	Northeast Florida Library Information Network (NEFLIN), Orange Park, FL	http://www.neflin.org (904) 278-5620
April 17-18	Central Florida Library Cooperative (CFLC), Maitland, FL	http://www.cflc.net (407) 644.9050
April 24	Tampa Bay Library Consortium (TBLC) Tampa, FL	http://www.tbtc.org (813) 622-8252
April 22 & 23	Southeast Florida Library Information Network (SEFLIN), Boca Raton, FL	http://www.seflin.org (877) 733.5460
April 27	Southwest Florida Library Network (SWFLN), Fort Myers, FL	http://www.swfln.org (239) 745-3720.

Figure 1: Training Schedule [Note: Times and dates may change]



LeRoy Collins Leon County Public Library serves as a FEMA/State Disaster Recovery Center. Photograph courtesy of Judith Ring, Director, State Library and Archives of Florida, with the permission of Helen Moeller, Director, LeRoy Collins Leon County Public Library System.

preparing for a hurricane or disaster, in spite of the lack of guidelines, recommendations, or best practices available to assist them in these roles. Libraries involved in the provision of disaster services have learned by doing, and there has been no systematic effort to share what was learned at these individual libraries with all Florida public libraries.

The dissemination of best practices, service roles, and other information via the project Web site should be an important contribution. The project's efforts to develop plans, guidelines, service roles, and best practices will equip public libraries to respond more successfully to hurricanes and other disasters and, in partnership with other agencies, mitigate some of the damage and destruction that these hurricanes bring to the state.

Next Steps

Project staff continues to analyze findings from the various interviews, focus groups, and meetings that have occurred. These previous and ongoing discussions will result in the following:

- **Expanded Web site.** The project Web site will continue to expand and develop to include more and better organized information resources that will benefit public librarians as they prepare for and respond to hurricanes. In addition, interactive Web 2.0 tools will be tested and incorporated.
- **Detailed service roles.** The service roles described earlier in this paper will be detailed specifically in terms of how these roles can be accomplished, the resources needed to provide these services, and the type of training and knowledge needed by library staff to successfully provide the service roles.
- **Customized local information online templates.** Project staff members are developing "brochures" that individual

public libraries can customize via a basic template to provide a range of local information for residents, emergency providers, and evacuees.

- **Visibility for the role of public libraries in hurricanes.** While many public librarians are very much aware of the role they play in hurricane preparedness and response, other community members, local and state government officials, and non-government emergency groups are not. The project will continue to bring local, state, and national attention to the important roles libraries play in hurricane preparedness and response.
- **Training.** In addition to training sessions established at all six Multi-type Library Cooperatives in the state (see Figure 1), further training will be offered and made available online via the project Web site through various instructional modules and webcasts.
- **Extending project partners.** There has been wide interest in the project from many public libraries in the Gulf Coast, as well as in states along the Atlantic coast. Project staff intends to identify additional partners to participate in the project and to determine the extent to which the project can be transferred to other states with a history of hurricane disasters.

These outline some of the major steps that project staff will be taking in the near future. A presentation at the 2009 Florida Library Association annual conference will provide an additional update. The interest in this project from many individuals and organizations has been significant, and the staff expects to continue to expand and improve the products and services that will result from the project.

Acknowledgements

The Information Institute acknowledges the generous help and support from project partners, the State Library and Archives of Florida and SOLINET, as well as Florida MLCs, librarians, and emergency management personnel who shared their time and experiences. Additional acknowledgement goes to Institute staff for their work on this project, including Mike Falcon, Bradley Wade Bishop, and Lynne Hinnant.

The authors of this article work in the Information Use Management and Policy Institute in Florida State University's College of Information. Charles R. McClure is Francis Eppes Professor and Director; Charles C. Hinnant is Assistant Professor and Assistant Director; John T. Snead is Manager for Research Development; Joe Ryan is Senior Research Associate; and Lauren H. Mandel, John Brobst, and Jordon Andrade are Research Associates.

Notes

- 1 Wikipedia, "List of Florida Hurricanes," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Florida_hurricanes.
- 2 Jerry D. Jarrell et al., "The Deadliest, Costliest, and Most Intense United States Hurricanes from 1900 to 2000," NOAA Technical Memorandum, NWS TPC-1,(2001), <http://www.aoml.noaa.gov/hrd/Landsea/deadly/index.html>.
- 3 Information Institute, Florida Electronic Library Five-Year Evaluation 2003-2007. (Tallahassee, FL: Florida State University, Information Institute [for the State Library of Florida], with others).
- 4 Paul T. Jaeger et al., "The 2004 and 2005 Gulf Coast Hurricanes: Evolving Roles and Lessons Learned for Public Libraries," *Public Library Quarterly*, 25 (2007): 199-214.
- 5 John Carlo Bertot et al., "Public Access Computing and Internet Access in Public Libraries: The Role of Public Libraries in E-government and Emergency Situations," First Monday, 11 (September 2006), <http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/1392/1310>.
- 6 Interview with library manager, October 11, 2008.
- 7 Interview with library manager, October 15, 2008.

A Perfect Storm

in Public Funding for Florida Libraries

By Ruth O'Donnell and Faye Roberts

Sebastian Junger's book *The Perfect Storm* and the feature film based on it, created a new term for the results of multiple forces occurring simultaneously to cause chaos. Florida's public libraries and the services they provide are being buffeted by just such a storm—a funding crisis occurring just as Floridians need more library service. A range of causes which resulted in service reductions in fiscal years 2007-08 and 2008-09 continue, creating annual and sometimes semi-annual budget cuts. Meanwhile, the current national economic recession is causing a significant increase in library use as Americans rely even more on these public services.

This article reports and analyzes the results of a survey of Florida public libraries conducted in October 2008 for the Florida Library Association (FLA) by Ruth O'Donnell, Library Consultant.

Elements of the Storm

Funding losses came from multiple directions. The first two relate to local property, or *ad valorem*, taxes; the last three are results of reduced state revenue.

1. The Florida Legislature approved a roll-back of *ad valorem* taxes in 2007 in response to a new governor's mandate for tax reduction. Local governments, the source of over 95 percent of public library funding, were required to both freeze tax rates and roll back tax collections to a previous year.
2. In November 2007, Florida voters passed Amendment One to the state constitution changing the *ad valorem* tax laws. This change capped property tax increases and made other changes, including altering Florida's Homestead Exemption. Amendment One is the major factor in severely reduced local revenue.
3. The Florida Legislature reduced state aid to libraries in fiscal years 2007-08 and 2008-09. State aid peaked at \$33.4 million in 2000-01, but dropped steadily to \$31.85 million over three years before increasing slightly to \$31.99 million in fiscal year 2006-07. The following year, fiscal year 2007-08, state aid was again at \$31.99 million, but this appropriation was reduced by four percent to \$26.7 million by the end of the fiscal year. Yet another cut came in January 2009. At this writing, state aid for fiscal year 2008-2009 is \$23.3 million, a 27 percent cut from the appropriation for 2006-07 and a nearly 30% drop from 2000-01. These cuts are due to state revenue reductions resulting from the national economic downturn and recession.
4. In the past two years, state funding for library construction grants has been zero. This program can provide up to \$500,000 to counties and cities for construction of new facilities and for renovation or expansion of existing buildings. Earlier in this decade, these

grants were consistently supported with as much as \$10 million. This loss is also due to the state's economic condition.

5. State funding for other grant programs supporting libraries was eliminated (Community Libraries in Caring) or reduced (Multi-type Library Cooperatives) in January 2009.

The final element of this perfect storm is not a funding issue, but an increase in library use, a phenomenon that has received national attention. A January 7, 2009 broadcast of the *Diane Rehm Show* on National Public Radio was a forum for library experts and callers to discuss the phenomenon of people flocking to libraries in recent months.

Jim Carlton, in a *Wall Street Journal* article published on January 15, 2009 wrote "...libraries across the country are reporting jumps in attendance of as much as 65% over the past year, as newly unemployed people flock to branches to fill out résumés and scan ads for job listings." He said, "Many jobless people are reporting to the library as they used to report to the office." He further noted, "Other recession-weary patrons are turning to libraries for cheap entertainment—killing time with the free computers, video rentals and, of course, books." He commented that "The library in Winter Park, Fla. reports a 25% increase in checkouts of its books and other materials over the past 15 months, even as its budget for stocking new items has been cut 12%." Comments from Florida librarians responding to this survey verify these reports.

Figure 1: Impact of Budget Cuts on Facilities Maintenance

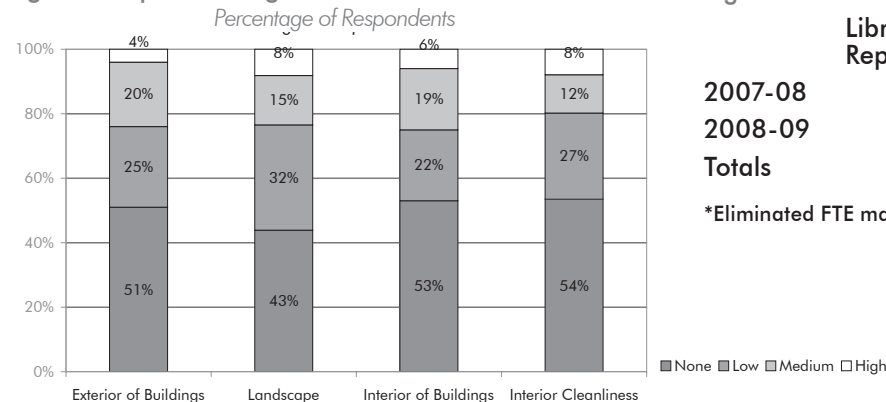


Figure 2: FTEs Frozen or Eliminated

	Libraries Reporting	FTE Frozen	Libraries Reporting	FTE Eliminated*
2007-08	41	300.1	30	280.2
2008-09	27	290.5	36	241.0
Totals		590.6		521.2

*Eliminated FTE may have been reported as frozen the previous year.

Survey Methods and Respondents

Public library directors were asked to respond to an online survey asking about the impact of budget reductions in fiscal years 2006-07 and 2007-08 on revenue, facilities, staffing, and services.

Eighty-five library directors responded to the survey. They represent libraries of all sizes and include all but one of the major library systems in the state. Of all the library directors offered an opportunity to respond to the survey, sixty percent chose to do so. Two of the respondents manage multi-county cooperative headquarters from which services are delivered. Forty-four respondents from counties operating library services (70 percent of possible county library respondents) completed the survey. Forty-three respondents were from municipally governed libraries.

Survey Results

Facilities

Although no library facility closings have been reported to date, directors expect continued budget reductions may cause branch closings in fiscal year 2009-10. New construction and renovation/expansion of existing buildings have also been significantly impacted. Forty-six library directors report a total of 420,700 square feet of new planned library space was put on hold over the last two years. Renovations and expansions were also affected as twenty-five libraries have delayed projects.

Efforts to seek state construction funds have slowed in the last two years, as well. Five respondents report withdrawing grant applications and fourteen decided not to apply. Nine have applied, however, and thirteen resubmitted applications that were not funded in a previous year. This is a positive sign that governing bodies are hoping to get construction going again.

When budgets are tight, facility maintenance can suffer. Survey responses on this

topic are shown in Figure 1. About a quarter of respondents report an impact on maintenance. Respondents managing county library systems commented that keeping facilities clean and in working order is an increasing problem because they rely on a shrinking county staff to maintain buildings. Others say that repairs such as painting and new carpet have been put on hold indefinitely.

Another facility-related survey question was about mobile services, such as bookmobiles and other service delivery vehicles. Four directors report closing such services, and one has reduced the number of service stops. Mobile service is usually provided for those who live far from a library or cannot get to a library on their own. Budget reductions have reduced public library service to these people.

Library Staffing

Public library service is staff intensive and budgets reflect that. Most libraries commit two-thirds to three-quarters of their budgets to personnel costs. It is no surprise, then, that library directors reported significant reductions in staffing due to budget cuts. These are summarized in Figure 2. In fiscal year 2006-07, Florida public libraries reported 7,286.83 in full-time equivalent (FTE) for total paid staff. Given that the data reported here are from sixty percent of Florida libraries, it is reasonable to extrapolate and conclude that the state's libraries have lost between twelve to fifteen percent of the FTEs available in 2006-07.

The chart in Figure 3 depicts the level of impact of staff reductions on library services. Respondent comments indicate that where new square footage has been added: no new staff was hired; materials processing methods have changed; processing backlogs are a problem; interlibrary loan service is reduced or more costly for customers; and full-time positions are being replaced with part-time employees to reduce the cost of benefits. Small

libraries and small branches of larger systems are hit particularly hard by the loss of even one or two positions. Use of volunteers is on the increase; and there is a skill drain as trained employees and experienced specialists cannot be replaced.

Library Collections

The materials that libraries provide to the public for check-out and use in the library are another major component of library budgets. Survey responses indicate that a total of \$11,480,629 was lost from the budgets of reporting libraries during the two-year period. Library directors were asked to identify categories of their collections that were most affected by the cuts. This loss of nearly \$11.5 million in collection funds is a reduction of fifteen percent from the amount expended on collections in fiscal year 2006-07.

Figure 4 shows the percentages that respondents reported budgets were cut for each collection category. The categories covered both formats and materials types. Print materials, including subscriptions and reference, were hardest hit by cuts in collection budgets. Audio-visual items, youth materials and databases were also reduced. Electronic subscriptions, popular materials, and special collections were identified less often as being impacted by budget cuts.

Library Services

The loss of staff negatively affects services. Personnel reductions result in corresponding reductions in hours of service and in the direct services provided by library staff members. Survey respondents were asked to report the number of hours of operation cut in each of the two years. For fiscal year 2007-08, twenty-two respondents reported cuts in hours totaling 29,156 hours of service lost. In fiscal year 2008-09 hours were cut by 27,038, slightly less than the year before. In total, 56,194 hours of service were lost in the

continues on page 10

Figure 3: Impact from Loss of Personnel

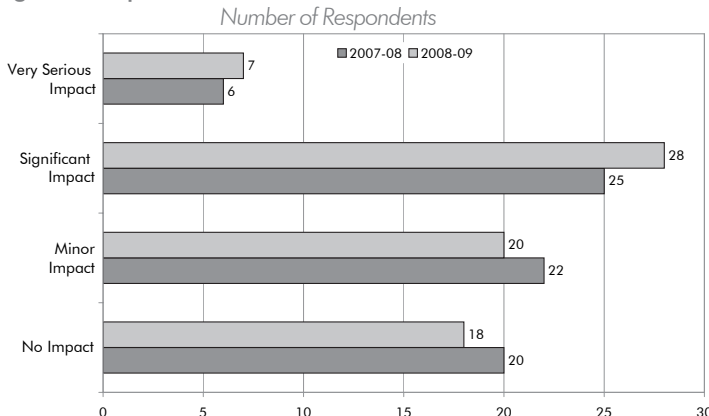
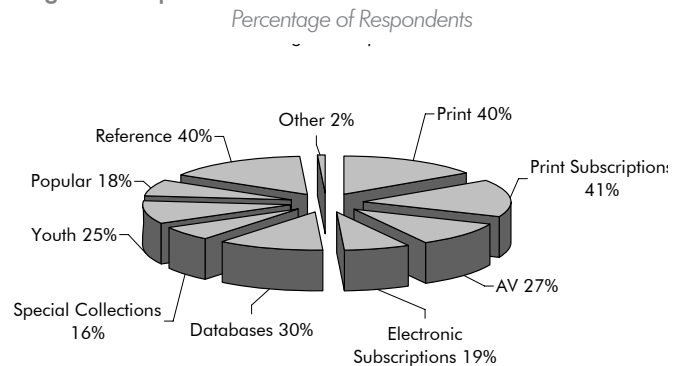


Figure 4: Impact on Collections



Budget Cuts Impact Florida's Academic Libraries

By Gloria Colvin

A recent survey of state university libraries' administrators indicates that budget reductions over the past two years are significantly affecting staffing levels and collections, and, to a lesser extent, hours of operation and levels of service. At the same time, usage of these libraries is growing, both in terms of gate counts and circulation. Most growth is seen as part of a trend of increasing usage or a result of increased enrollment, and not a result of economic pressure. New College's Cook Library, though, reports increased usage of its library by members of the community.

The survey of public libraries described in the accompanying article was modified slightly for the state university libraries and sent to library administrators at the eleven universities in the state system. All libraries, with the exception of the University of North Florida, responded to the survey.

All of the reporting SULs, with the exception of Florida Atlantic University (FAU), have had staff positions frozen during the past two years and five libraries have lost positions. Florida State (FSU), the University of Florida (UF), and the University of South Florida (USF) have experienced the greatest losses with a total loss of 22.5 positions at FSU, 13 at UF, and 21 positions frozen at USF. Most administrators consider the staff reductions at their respective institutions as having a significant impact on the operations of the library.

Cuts in collections budgets are affecting most of the libraries. The University of West Florida (UWF) has experienced the most severe loss, with a 29.4 percent reduction since 2007. Hardest hit are print materials and subscriptions. UWF faculty in disciplines that rely primarily on print publications are expressing great concern about the cuts to the materials budget. Subscriptions to databases are also being cancelled by a number of the libraries. Other materials affected by cuts include special collections (USF), popular materials (USF), scholarly monographs (UF), and audiovisuals (FAMU, UWF).

Several libraries (UWF, FAU, UCF, and FSU) have reduced hours by a few per week. FSU introduced a 24/5 schedule at its main library in January 2007, and a year later has scaled back to fewer hours than its pre-24/5 schedule. New College reports that frequently there is only one staff member or student employee in the building, and it has recently hired a security guard.

With the exception of USF and UF, all libraries report reductions in services. Reference services have been affected more than any other service, presumably due to reduced staffing and, perhaps, less demand. Instruction and interlibrary loan are also impacted at several schools. Florida International University has scaled back its digital initiatives, and UCF notes an impact on cataloging.

Additional cuts are expected in the coming year. As news of the state's economy continues to worsen, several libraries are planning for budget cuts in the range of 8 to 10 percent in the next fiscal year. In many cases, these cuts will significantly damage the libraries' ability to carry out core services.

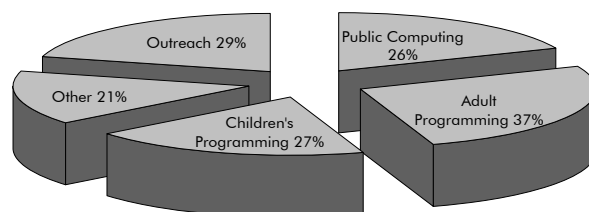
Perfect Storm *continues from page 9*

responding libraries, a loss of over four percent from the hours available in fiscal year 2006-07.

Figure 5 shows the percentage of respondents who reported budget-related reductions to such services as programming for adults and children, public computing, and outreach. Reduction in programs was as high as thirty-seven percent for adult programming, a significant impact.

Figure 5: Impact on Services

Percentage of Respondents reporting reduced services by type of service



Increased Service Demands

Experience tells us that people use library services more in hard times. That is particularly true now that libraries offer free access to the Internet, the preferred and sometimes only method of seeking jobs and accessing social services. Survey respondents were asked to provide usage statistics for September 2007 and September 2008. These include door counts of library visitors, circulation of library materials, and computer use. These data provide a snapshot of the difference in one month's use between 2007 and 2008.

Respondents reported an increase of 6.7 percent in door counts, 9.7 percent in circulation, and 7 percent in computer use. Many noted that these increases occurred even though service hours had been cut and collections were damaged by funding cuts. Since the survey was conducted, the surveyors received comments indicating increases in use of upwards of twenty-five to thirty percent at many Florida libraries.

Comments by survey respondents indicate a marked increase in demand for library computers. One director believes people are cancelling their home Internet access and relying on the library. Telephone reference requests and Web site hits are also increasing, according to another director. According to several directors, meeting room use has increased as local agencies and businesses seek free space. An interesting comment from one director is the impact on staff dealing with people in great need: her employees are struggling to balance library-use policies with the changing needs of library users. Another staff concern is that library users are more frequently irritable and are more often disputing fines and fees.

Summary

In her comment about increasing library usage, Collier County Public Library Director Marilyn Matthes states the situation succinctly, "More people using more library services provided by fewer people." The data support this assertion. More people are more frequently using library services and materials. They are seeking these services in libraries with less space than is needed to meet an every-increasing array of needs, and there are fewer library employees to provide these services. The need is growing while the ability to meet it is shrinking.

Recent discussions with library directors lead the authors to believe that budgets in fiscal year 2009-10 will see the greatest cuts so far. The impact of Amendment One and the economic recession are catching up with county and city governments. Florida libraries can expect some hard times ahead, but also know that libraries will be a vital element in the lives of many more Floridians. And that's a really good thing.

Ruth O'Donnell is a library consultant and former Executive Director of the Florida Library Association. Faye Roberts is Executive Director of the Florida Library Association.

Exchanging Recipes for IT Success

Librarians show off copies of the MaintainIT Project's newest cookbook, *The Joy of Computing—Planning for Success*.



Recent news accounts have reported on the increases in circulation and usage that libraries across the country are experiencing – primarily attributing the upsurge to the country's current economic woes. Outpacing the increase in circulation of books and media is the use of library computers. Used by everyone from college students who have canceled their Internet subscriptions to older individuals re-entering the workforce, these machines are getting a more strenuous workout than ever before. In many public libraries that do not have their own information technology (IT) staffs, librarians are responsible for maintaining the public computers. How do they do it? With a little help from their friends—fellow librarians.

Tech Soup's "MaintainIT Project"

Three years ago, TechSoup, a nonprofit organization with extensive experience helping other nonprofits use technology effectively, started the MaintainIT Project with a Gates Foundation grant. As a hub of the program, the program initiated "cookbooks"—free online resources, written by librarians from around the country, featuring current ideas and best practices for planning, building, and managing library computer technology. Librarians also contributed their expertise on topics ranging from security solutions and strategic maintenance practices to community-building experiences involving Web 2.0 tools and vital partnerships. The project's first two cookbooks were *Recipes for a 5-Star Library and Small and Rural Libraries*.

Newest Cookbook

MaintainIT has just launched its third and final cookbook, entitled *Joy of Computing—Planning for Success: A Guide for the Overworked Librarian*. Its purpose is to provide details needed "to get a library's technology up and running properly, sustain its growth, and ensure its viability."¹ Accompanying the cookbook is an online toolkit containing "how to" resources, quick references, lists of questions to ask, and other helpful resources that supplement the information found in the cookbook.

More than one hundred librarians from across the country, including several from

All of the information is based on the real life experiences and successes of librarians across the country and is supported by a complete set of online tools.

Florida, contributed their knowledge and experience to these two publications. The Florida contributors include Rhonda Hawley, Polk County Cooperative; Robin Henderson, Monroe County Public Library; Chad Mairn, West St. Petersburg Community Library; Carrie McBee, Polk County Cooperative; Anne Rice, Monroe County Public Library; Michael Fettes, Alachua County Library; and Sherry Millington, Suwanee River Regional Library.

"Planning for Success" Contents

"Planning for Success" is organized into six key sections.

- **Planning and Decision Making** covers creating a technology plan that ties in with a library's strategic priorities and goals, building a technology team, costs and benefits of technology, evaluating technology, and keeping up with the latest developments in technology.
- **Communication and Partnerships** provides tips on communicating about

technology from "techie" and "non-techie" perspectives with various groups of stakeholders. It also includes some guidelines for establishing partnerships.

- **Buying and Deploying Technology** explores some of the actions and decisions administrators need to consider when planning purchases, installations, and upgrades.
- **Maintaining and Sustaining Technology** deals with issues of day-to-day management of public computers.
- **Networking and Security** covers some of the basic standards and practices for ensuring a library's network security.
- **Innovation** explores some of the new ways in which libraries are using technology, including collaborative Web 2.0 applications, open-source software, and gaming.

Each section of the cookbook is divided into chapters, which include an explanation of the topic, a rationale for why it is important, key actions that should be taken, "stories from the field," and lists of further resources. Throughout the cookbook, there are links to parallel sections of the toolkit and to other online resources.

This cookbook and the other two written previously are all available at no charge and may be downloaded as pdf documents. The MaintainIT Project also offers blog posts, case studies, and free thirty-minute webinars for the most current ideas and best practices for planning, building, and managing your library's public computers. All of the MaintainIT materials are available on the MaintainIT Web site (<http://www.maintainitproject.org/cookbooks>).

Krista Van Lewen, a public relations consultant, supplied material and information for this article.

Notes

- 1 *Joy of Computing—Planning for Success* (MaintainIT Project, TechSoup 2008), 4, <http://www.maintainitproject.org/files/Planning%20for%20Success%20Cookbook.pdf>

Developing Tolerance and Understanding of Family Diversity Through Children's Literature

By Madeline Kovarik

The 2000 Census estimates that a quarter-million children nationwide are being raised in same-sex households. These children are not being raised in one geographic area or setting; 96 percent of all counties in the United States have at least one same-sex couple raising children under the age of 18. One-third of all female same-sex-couple households and one-fifth of all male same-sex-couple households report having at least one child in the household. Florida data indicated that 17 percent of same-sex households had children present.¹

Prejudice And Discrimination

An American Academy of Pediatrics study indicates that children growing up in same-sex partnership households "fare as well in emotional, cognitive, social, and sexual functioning as do children whose parents are heterosexual."² Research indicates that there are no significant developmental differences or negative effects on children of same-sex parents. These youths, however, do report facing significantly more prejudice and discrimination because of societal homophobia and transphobia. According to a 2001 study, students who have same-sex parents experience harassment at the same rate as students who themselves are gay.³

Children who are raised in same-sex households do not have a greater likelihood of becoming gay or lesbian. It is, however, important to acknowledge and address sexual orientation in all children. In 2005, Harris Interactive conducted a study of 3,400 students. They found that the second most common reason for harassment was perceived sexual orientation (one-third of all the study students indicated that they had been harassed because it was perceived that their sexual orientation was homosexual or bisexual).⁴

Role of Libraries

Libraries must address these issues by offering books in the children's collection that help children identify with, understand, or

become tolerant of families that are different from their own. The American Library Association policy manual states that libraries carry a responsibility to contribute to "ameliorating or solving the critical problems of society; support for efforts to help inform and educate the people of the United States."⁵ One such issue that needs to be addressed is gay and lesbian sexual orientation and children's literature. By having children's books that address this issue, libraries better serve the needs of all people, including children.

Collection Challenges

Including books on gay and lesbian topics is not without controversy. In the recent past, there have been several court cases concerning children's books that focus on gay and lesbian issues, most involving school libraries. One such case occurred when two pairs of parents filed suit against the Lexington (Massachusetts) School Board for violating their parental rights because the book *And Tango Makes Three* by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell was available in a school library. The parents in this case claimed that the presence of the book in the school library violated their ability to manage their children's religious training. The Lexington School District argued that the book served a "legitimate state interest" and that issues of diversity belonged in the school environment. The courts agreed. In February 2008, the Massachusetts federal Court of Appeals ruled that the use of children's books in elementary schools to promote tolerance and understanding of gay people was within the guidelines of the law and did not infringe on parents' "free exercise right" or interfere with the due process clauses of the U.S. Constitution.

And Tango Makes Three has been one of the most controversial children's books in recent years. According to WorldCat, more than forty public libraries in Florida had copies of *And Tango Makes Three* available for their patrons. The location of the book in the largest five counties' libraries—Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, Hillsborough, and Pinellas—varied from picture books to easy reader to juvenile fiction, but each county system proved its willingness to

include children's literature that promotes tolerance and understanding.

Libraries wanting to expand their selection of children's books on these topics might consider the following titles:

Aldrich, A.R. (2003). *How my family came to be: Daddy, Papa and me*. New Family Press.

An adopted child finds a home filled with love when he helps two men change from being partners into being a family.

Bosche, S. (1983). *Jenny lives with Eric & Martin*. The Gay Men's Press.

Jenny is a 5-year-old girl who lives in Denmark with her father and Eric, his partner. Jenny's biological mother, father and Jenny prepare a surprise party for Eric. The book focuses on the events of the weekend. Some readers may have objections or questions about some photos included in the book.

Brannen, S.S. (2008). *Uncle Bobby's wedding*. Putnam Juvenile.

Chloe, a guinea pig, has a big problem – her favorite uncle (Bobby) is getting married to his partner (Jamie). Chloe feels that Uncle Bobby doesn't need the attention of anyone but her. She soon discovers that having two uncles is even better than having just one.

Bryan, J. (2006). *The different dragon*. Two Lives Publishing.

Noah lives with his two moms. At bedtime he asks for a story about a dragon who does not want to be fierce anymore.

Considine, K.T. (2005). *Emma and Meesha my boy: a two mom story*. Two Mom Books.

Emma is a child with two mothers. She also has a pet cat that she must learn to care for and love.

Crowther, K. (2000). *Jack and Jim*. Hyperion.

Jack, a blackbird, and Jim, a seagull, develop a closeness that is not readily accepted by others.

- DeHaan, L. (2004). *King & King & family*. Tricycle Press.
This book is the sequel to *King & King*. On the way home from their honeymoon in the jungle, King Lee and King Bertie discover a young girl who has stowed away. They adopt the child and create a family.
- De Haan, L. & Nijiland, S. (2002). *King & King*. Tricycle Press.
The queen is retiring and the prince must find a bride. He soon discovers that his perfect princess is a prince.
- Edmonds, B.L. (2000). *When grown-ups fall in love*. Hundredth Munchy Publications
This book is a rather forced poem with a good message; that there are all types of loving families.
- Edmonds, B.L. (2000). *Mama eat ant! Yuk!* Hundredth Munchy Publications.
One-year-old Emma, her Mama and Mommy, and her siblings are sitting down for breakfast when one mom eats some ant covered raisins.
- Elwin, R. & Paulse, M. (2000) *Asha's mums*. Children's Press.
Asha, an African-Canadian girl, wants to go on a field trip but is told that her form is not completed correctly because her mother and father have not signed the form. The book shows Asha's two mothers working with the school to correct the situation.
- Fierstein, H. (2005). *The sissy duckling*. Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing.
Elmer is a male duck who likes different things than other male ducks. When his father is shot by a hunter, Elmer nurses him back to health and becomes a hero.
- Fox-Lee, K. & Fox-Lee, S. (2005). *What are parents?* Story Thyme Publishing.
Each family is unique. The authors focus on all types of parents but the primary focus remains on the love they have for their child.
- Gonzalez, R. (2005). *Antonio's card*. Children's Book Press.
Antonio has two mothers. As Mother's Day approaches he makes a card for each. When others begin to bully his family, Antonio must make some difficult choices.
- Gregg, J. (2004). *Flying free*. Book Surge Publishing.
Five-year-old Violet catches a fire-fly and decides to use it as a nightlight. Her two mothers support her idea. The story is told through the viewpoint of the firefly.
- Hoffman, E. (2002). *Best, best colors: Los Mejores Colores*. Redleaf Press.
An African-American child with two mothers learns to be proud of the family that he has. He demonstrates this by attending the Pride Parade.
- Kuklin, S. (2006). *Families*. Hyperion Books
Interviews and photos from fifteen different types of families including one where a young girl is being raised by two fathers and how they managed "Mom's Weekend" at a residential camp.
- Newman, L. (1989). *Heather has two mommies*. Alyson Books.
Heather has two mothers: Jane, her biological mother, and Kate, her mother's partner. In playgroup, Heather begins to feel badly because she does not have a father. Heather learns, however, that the most important element in a family is love.
- Newman, L. (2002). *Felicia's favorite story*. Two Lives Publishing.
Felicia is a child adopted by two female partners. She wants to hear a bedtime story about her adoption.
- Okimoto, J. D. & Aoki, E. M. (2002). *The white swan express*. Clarion Books.
Four Chinese children are adopted into four different types of loving families in North America.
- Parnell, P. & Richardson, J. (2005). *And Tango makes three*. Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing.
Based on a real-world occurrence at the New York Central Park Zoo, two male penguins adopt an egg, hatch it, and raise the chick as their own.
- Parr, T. (2003). *The family book*. Little, Brown Young Readers.
This book features many different types and characteristics of families including same sex parents.
- Settingington, K. (2004). *Mom & Mum are getting married*. Second Story Press.
Rosie helps plan her two mother's wedding only to have the rings get lost!
- Simon, N. (2003). *All families are special*. Albert Whitman & Company.
A classroom discussion leads to a sharing of many different types of families.
- Valentine, J. (2004). *The duke who outlawed jelly beans and other stories*. Alyson Books
Five fairy tales that feature many family configurations.
- Valentine, J. (2004). *One dad, two dad, brown dad, blue dads*. Alyson Books.
Two children, one with a mother and father and the other with two dads, compare their families and discover that, in many ways, dads are the same.
- Valentine, J. (2004). *The daddy machine*. Alyson Books.
Two children are being raised by two mothers. They wonder what having a dad might be like so they create a machine to create one (and one more, and one more . . .).
- Wickens, E. (1994). *Anna Day and the o-ring*. Alyson Books.
Evan and his mothers are building a tent for his birthday when they discover that an important piece, the o-ring, is missing.
- Wilhoite, M. (2000). *Daddy's wedding*. Alyson books.
Nick serves as the best man in his biological father and his partner's wedding. This book is a sequel to *Daddy's Roommate*.
- Wilhoite, M. (1991). *Daddy's roommate*. Alyson books.
A child looks at his father and his partner, Frank, and discovers there are many types of love.

Dr. Madeline Kovarik is Assistant Professor of Education at Rollins College.

Notes

- 1 U.S. Census Bureau, "Married-Couple and Unmarried Partner Households: 2000," *Census 2000 Special Reports*, <http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/cenr-5.pdf>.
- 2 American Academy of Pediatrics, "Technical Report: Coparent or Second-Parent Adoption by Same-Sex Parents," *Pediatrics*, 109, no. 2 (2002): 341-344.
- 3 T. Namsel et al, "Bullying Behaviors Among U.S. Youth: Prevalence and Association with Psychological Adjustment," *JAMA*. 16 (2001):2094-2100.
- 4 Harris Interactive, "From Teasing to Torment: School Climate in America - A National Report on School Bullying," <http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/newsletters/clientnews/GLSEN2005.pdf>.
- 5 American Library Association, *ALA Policy Manual*, <http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/governance/policymanual/index.cfm>.

Highlights of the 2009 FLA Annual Conference

The 2009 FLA Annual Conference returns to Orlando May 5-8. Lodging, programs, and exhibits will all be conveniently located in the newly remodeled Doubletree Hotel at the entrance to Universal Orlando. The theme for the conference—libraries...connecting

people, information, and knowledge—reflects FLA President Mercedes Clement's goal of "connecting our communities with the emerging knowledge of the universe."

Tuesday will feature a full day of

preconference workshops, followed by three days of engaging programs that promise to educate, inspire, and entertain. Keynote speakers, James Rettig, President of the American Library Association, and Richard Madaus, Executive Director of the College Center for Library Automation, will open the conference on Wednesday.

Plenty of time is built into the schedule for connecting with old friends and becoming acquainted with new ones. A welcome reception will be held on Tuesday evening, and morning coffees will take place each morning before the programs start. New members can learn more about FLA and ways to become involved in the association at the new members' orientation on Wednesday morning. You'll want to spend time visiting the exhibits, enjoying refreshments breaks with the exhibitors, and bidding on items in the silent auction that will help fund FLA's scholarships. On Thursday evening, FLA and

the Florida Book Awards Board will host a banquet honoring this year's recipients of the Florida Book Award. Plan on staying for lunch and the closing session at the close of the conference on Friday.

In addition to focusing on the conference theme, many of this year's programs reflect the difficult financial situation facing Florida libraries this year. A number offer very practical suggestions for economical programs, products, or initiatives. Others provide advice on extending resources and locating additional funding sources. The following are just a sample of the many, varied programs selected for this year's conference.

Technology

You can't beat the price for these sessions packed with practical information on some free, open-source applications and other technology that can benefit internal library operations and library patrons. The two pre-conferences are hands-on sessions.

GIMP: Digital Image Tricks

Preconference, Tuesday, May 5, 1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Speaker: Paul Alford, Learning Services Manager, Citrus County Library System

This is a hands-on opportunity to create and manipulate digital images for programs, Web design, and other publications using GIMP, a freely available open-source application.

Audacity: Digital Audio Tricks

Preconference, Tuesday, May 5, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Speaker: Paul Alford, Learning Services Manager, Citrus County Library System

As digital audio grows in popularity, the tools for creating and listening to audio feeds and products have also increased. This session will provide hands-on instruction in using the freely available Audacity program; re-

coding original audio; editing and adding special effects; and sequencing and producing a finished product.

Open-Source Applications for Libraries

Thursday, May 7, 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Speaker: Nicole C. Engard, Open Source Evangelist, Liblime

Open-source software applications are those whose source code is available for user modification. This introduction to the open-source philosophy dispels myths, explains what open source means to libraries, and provides a toolbox of freely available open-source products.

Web-Based Video Conferencing for Libraries

Friday, May 8, 8:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.

Speaker: Charles R. Mayberry, Director of Information Services, Southeast Florida Library Information Network

With reduced travel budgets, video conferencing is in demand. This session includes a survey of the technology and its benefits in the library setting, along with a non-technical description of how to acquire and manage the service.

Web 2.0 Outreach Blogs: Innovative Strategies for Connecting Libraries to their Communities

Wednesday, May 6, 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Speaker: Gina Clifford, Webmaster, University of South Florida

In academic settings, outreach blogs can enhance communication with faculty and the community. Learn about the organizational features of blogs, tips for content and design, Google gadgets, and Library 2.0 features.

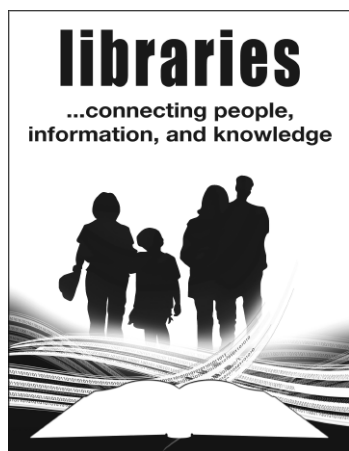
Mashing up Library Resources for International Students

Wednesday, May 6, 3:30 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.

Speaker: Aysegul Kapucu, Reference Instructor Librarian and Renee Cole Montgomery, Outreach Librarian, University of Central Florida Libraries

UCF Libraries are reaching out to international students by mashing up content and services with Google Maps, del.icio.us,

continues on page 16



Richard Madaus



James Rettig

11 Tips

for the FLA conference from a new librarian

By Jared Hoppenfeld

Remember how it felt to be the new kid in school? You didn't have any friends and didn't know your schedule, how things worked, or who to go to for help. That is a good metaphor for one's first experience at a professional conference. As uncomfortable as first experiences may be, they are necessary to get ahead in life or in one's career.

Membership, and more importantly, participation in a professional organization is important, especially at the beginning of one's professional career. Participation may include reading the literature published by one's organization, participating in a committee or member group, or attending an annual conference.

Last year, I attended my fourth Florida Library Association Annual Conference, but my first after becoming a librarian. As a new librarian, the first thing I considered was which sessions I should attend to advance my career, but this is just one of many things I have learned about attending a conference. The following are some additional lessons that I would like to share, lessons that may help others who are new to librarianship.

Tip #1

Attend a state conference first.

Attending your first professional conference can be a bit overwhelming. I remember attending the American Library Association (ALA) Annual Conference as a student when it was in Orlando in 2004. I was only able to attend the exhibits that year, but it was enough to overwhelm me completely. I had no idea where to begin. Since then, I have attended some FLA conferences and this past summer I attended my first full ALA conference. Having attended the smaller and more manageable state conference first, I understood the need for a schedule, snacks, comfortable shoes, and the numerous other "valuables" one needs at a conference. Thus, if you want to be a super professional at the "super-sized" ALA, my suggestion is to attend the smaller-scaled state conference first.

"Whether you are a library student or currently working at a library, conferences are excellent opportunities to establish new connections."

Tip #2

Attach yourself to an experienced conference attendee.

Before attending the conference, it is a good idea to speak with someone who has attended before and get some tips. I spoke with my director prior to my first conferences, and this made a world of difference. I learned about scheduling, networking, and enjoying the conferences from her. You might also try to go with a colleague your first time so you will feel more comfortable and more inclined to attend events. I believe this encourages us to attend social events, speak out at sessions, and make new contacts. It is also a good idea to attend with an experienced librarian because he or she can introduce you to even more potential colleagues.

Tip #3

Look through the conference program before you go.

There are a couple reasons to look at the conference program prior to attending: 1) find out where and when programs and poster sessions will occur and 2) find out which vendors will attend. Although there were some time slots when I had four different sessions I wanted to attend, I put together a schedule to guide me throughout the week at FLA. It is a good idea to include room locations in your schedule so you do not end up scrambling to find your next event. You never have to feel tied to one session. Many attendees split their time between a couple sessions, i.e. leaving one session halfway through and moving on to the next. It is also helpful knowing which vendors will be at the conference so that you come prepared with any vendor-specific questions.

Tip #4

Take the time to make contacts and network.

No matter how many sessions you decide to attend, every minute of the conference is a potential time

for networking. Whether you are a library student or currently working at a library, conferences are excellent opportunities to establish new connections.

Go to the lectures and social events and meet new people. I have observed many occurrences where strangers begin talking about what they are doing at their libraries and before they know it, new ideas (as well as contact information) are being exchanged. I have seen this happen in a large group as well as in one-on-one situations. Another reason to socialize at a conference is that you (and I especially mean library students) never know when you are going to meet your next boss, so get out there and network!

Tip #5

Find your fun session.

Your conference experience should be a memorable one, one filled with insightful and enjoyable moments. Yes, people go to FLA's Annual Conference to learn new things, meet new people, and catch up with old friends. There are so many sessions you can attend that will be beneficial to your library and to your career. As important as it is to learn new things, I have always made sure I attend at least one session that is just going to be "fun."

Tip #6

Attend at least one session related to technology.

The world of technology is the opposite of fun to some people. However, as scary as the term might be to some, it really is important to keep up with the technology being used in libraries of all types. Even if you are not tech savvy, attending a technology session will at least familiarize you with some terminology, and there might even be a demonstration on how to use a Web site or program.

Tip #7

Speak up!

If you are sitting in on a session and you have a question or something to add from your own experiences, speak up! Conference pre-

continues on page 16

11 Tips for attending conferences *continues from page 15*

senters welcome added input from their audiences as everyone is there to learn new things. Contributing to a session is not only a form of information sharing, but is another way of finding new contacts and beginning new conversations.

Tip
#8

Have fun!

All work and no play can make a librarian grumpy. This is reason enough why conferences do not have to be all business. FLA Annual Conferences have been located in some pretty amazing locations in recent years, including Jacksonville, Orlando, and St. Pete Beach. There have been plenty of recreational activities for attendees while staying in these great cities. I recommend enjoying the host city, whether that means a night out on the town, experiencing the joy of a theme park, or lounging at the hotel.

Tip
#9

Get involved.

Besides attending the conference, there are a myriad of other ways to become professionally involved with FLA. There are sixteen committees and twenty-nine member groups in FLA. Your participation depends on you!

You can volunteer to be as active as you want to be, whether it is helping to plan events, writing for the News Digest online or Florida Libraries journal, or leading a member group or committee. In addition to being a great way to meet people and serve the profession, involvement on a committee is “a good reason for your boss to send you back to the conference next year.”¹ If you are feeling ambitious, you can strive one day to be a

member of the FLA Executive Board, or maybe even president! The amount you put into the association will come back to you many times over.

Resources for Becoming Professionally Involved

About ALA

<http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/index.cfm>

ALA New Members Round Table

<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/rts/nmrt/index.cfm>

About FLA

http://www.flalib.org/about_fl.php

FLA Membership Information

<http://www.flalib.org/membership.php>

FLA Annual Conference

http://www.flalib.org/conference_2009.php

FLA committees

<http://www.flalib.org/committees.php>

FLA member groups

http://www.flalib.org/memb_res_tab_files/Member%20Group%20Leadership5_31_08.pdf

Tip
#11

attended the conference, I feel more comfortable mingling with the attendees and speaking about what I do in my library. After attending several conferences, you may find yourself thinking, as I did at last year's FLA conference, “Hey, I could have participated in that panel!” That may be exactly what you find yourself doing at a future conference!

Jared Hoppenfeld is the Research Librarian for Business at the University of South Florida Tampa Library.

Notes

1 J. Siess, “It's Conference Time again! Tips and Tricks from a Twenty-Plus-Year Veteran,” *One-Person Library* 18, no. 1 (May 2001): 3-4.

Conference Highlights

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widgets, instant messaging, podcasting, RSS feeds and other Web 2.0 applications. Learn about these and new service-oriented Web sites that are based on survey responses from international students.

Wikis and Blogs: Cost-Effective Methods for Teaching Information Literacy and Fun for All

Friday, May 8, 10:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

Speakers: Kiersten Cox, Instructor, School of Library and Information Science, University of South Florida; Tracey Reed, Computer Services Librarian, Clearwater Public Library; Brian Walton, Senior Librarian, Tampa-Hillsborough Public Library

Limited funds for information literacy training? Wikis and blogs are effective, low cost, and fun ways to provide instruction. Learn how wikis replace FAQs and how blogs can enhance communication. Update your Web skills with these innovative tools to reach patrons, students, and library staff.

Funding

Never has it been more critical for libraries to seek outside funding and to develop new ways to improve their financial situation than the present. A number of programs address ways to develop funding sources, tips for including grant writing, techniques for effective advocacy, and methods for donor identification and cultivation. Other programs offer money-saving suggestions and innovative approaches to building support for libraries.

Creating Sustainable Funding for Your Library

Wednesday, May 6, 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Speaker: Julie Goebel, Coach, Benevon

This fast-paced session introduces you to the Benevon model for building sustainable funding from passionate lifelong donors. The Benevon approach includes implementing mission-focused, permission-based fundraising, making your library more visible in your community, and identifying and cultivating donors who will give to operations, capital, and endowment.



Julie Goebel

Building a Library Business Case

Thursday, May 7, 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Speaker: Anita S. Duckor, Change Strategist Consultant, Duckor & Associates, Inc.

What is required to build strong financial support for a library in the 21st century? It isn't just having a strong advocacy strategy – a comprehensive business case (rationale) is required. The presentation will include best practices from the business world customized for the public library sector.



Anita Duckor

Grants for Libraries

Preconference, Tuesday, May 5, 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Speaker: Stephanie Gerding, author of Grants for Libraries and PLA's Bringing in the Money column and co-author of the Library Grants Blog

Discover the knowledge and confidence you need to get grants for your library. Find out who has funding for libraries and the easiest method for writing grant proposals. Hear real library grant success stories. Participants will learn an easy-to-follow grant process cycle and how to locate grant sources with short applications. Worksheets and resource lists will be provided along with invaluable practical guidance.

Tips from Scrooge: Creative Ways to Stretch Your Library Budget

Thursday, May 7, 8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Speakers: Barbara D. Oeffner, Coordinator, Hendry County Library Cooperative; Florida Thomas, Director, Harlem Library

Learn to get the most “bang for the buck” from available funds. Topics include how to get free materials for programs, where to buy books at the best price, and how to stretch your staff without burning them out. Other tips for expanding a limited budget include obtaining donations, developing volunteers, and finding low-cost programs.

Innovating, Finding and Communicating the Value of Your Library

Thursday, May 7, 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Speakers: Dr. Glen Holt, Editor, Public Library Quarterly and author; Dr. Leslie Holt, author and researcher

Unreliable funding can be a quagmire for libraries. This session includes information on how librarians in the U.S. and other nations have innovated to deal with poor finances, to record the value of library services, and communicate that value through public media and institutional channels. Participants will gain a casebook explaining how libraries have used innovation, self-study, and communication to improve their financial situation.

Administration/Management

Roles of Florida Public Libraries in Hurricane/Disaster Preparedness and Response

Wednesday, May 6, 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Speakers: Charles R. McClure, Principal Investigator and Joye Ryan, Project Coordinator, Use of Florida Public Library in Hurricane Preparedness and Recovery Study, College of Information, Florida State University

Libraries are proving to be effective team members in government preparation for and response to disasters. This presentation describes the libraries' role in helping communities recover from disaster and presents practical strategies for coordinating services with local, state, and federal agencies.

What to Do When Law Enforcement Arrives

Wednesday, May 6, 3:30 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.

Speaker: Rebecca S. Trammell, Law Library Director and Associate Professor of Law, Stetson University College of Law

This program explains legal documents, such as warrants, subpoenas, and national security letters, that librarians may encounter. It also addresses parameters of the “PATRIOT Act” in relation to libraries and covers policies and procedures that can aid when law enforcement officers request confidential information.

Reorganizing Use of Library Space to Meet Changing Needs

Wednesday, May 6, 3:30 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.

Speakers: Ruth O'Donnell, Library Consultant; Ward Friszolowski, Architect, Harvard Jolly; Anne Haywood, Director, Bruton Memorial Library; Cherry Alexander, Director, Tallahassee Community College Library; Jeff Hunt, Library Interiors

A panel of facilities experts and library directors describe how available space can be reallocated to improve services when new space isn't an option.

Library Expansion 101

Thursday, May 7, 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Speakers: Paul W. Portal, Principal & Senior Architect, Long & Associate Architects/Engineers, Inc; Ron Cupler, Project Director, Biltmore Construction; Lana Bullian, Director, Safety Harbor Public Library

Considering expansion? Find out about determining need, obtaining public support and funding, developing a master plan, executing design and coordinating construction. Three presenters use a recently completed project to explain major expansion and renovation steps for an existing facility.

What I've Learned from 35 Years of Mistakes: Creating a Risk-Tolerant Workplace

Thursday, May 7, 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Speaker: J. Robert Verbesey, Director of Library Services, Canizaro Library, Ave Maria University

This program, which invites feedback and questioning, focuses on the fundamental importance of both learning from mistakes and of creating a risk-tolerant workplace. The presenter, who has managed public and academic libraries since 1974, uses examples of mistakes (his and others) from which lessons can be drawn.

Planning Strategic Connections: How to Connect with your Staff and Patrons in Strategic Planning

Thursday, May 7, 8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Speakers: Rachel Besara, Library Operations Supervisor; Ted Chaffin, Undergraduate Services Librarian; Jacqueline Druash, Undergraduate Instruction Librarian, Annette Weglinski, HR Team Leader. All speakers are with Florida State University Libraries.

A panel from Florida State University's Dirac Science and Strozier Libraries discusses how to include staff, patrons, and other stakeholders in the library's strategic planning process. Techniques developed in an academic setting are also applicable to public libraries.

What's the Score: Tracking Success with the Library Scorecard

Friday, May 8, 10:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

Speaker: Kathryn Robinson, Division Head, Reference and Information, Orange County Library System

The balanced scorecard, a strategic planning and management system, is used by businesses, government, and nonprofits to align activities with the organization's vision. This

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session describes how and why scorecards are used and one library's experience with them.

Marketing

Public Relations 101: The Who, What, Where, When and How of Public Relations

Wednesday, May 6, 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Speakers: Heather O'Connell, Community Relations Coordinator, Lee County Library System; Jean Martin, Reference Services Supervisor, Deerfield Percy White Branch, Broward County Library; Michael Pate, Assistant Director, Highlands County Library System

With recent budget cuts, many library employees must assume unfamiliar duties, including public relations. This workshop provides a basic course in public relations for those who are new to or not yet comfortable in this role. Panelists address various aspects of PR and provide templates for press releases.

Leaders in Libraries: The Magic of Marketing!

Thursday, May 7, 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Speaker: David Bendekovic, Vice President, Polaris Library Systems

Are you a whiz at marketing, but want a refresher? Are you a pro at promotions, but a novice at targeting your services to different groups? Through insights from leading libraries, discover how marketing can position the library as your community's "go-to" source for information.

Services for Children and Youth

Lights, Camera, Story!

Preconference, Tuesday, May 5, 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Speakers: Kevin Mikey and Riley Roam, Video Storytellers/Producers, Page Turner Adventures, Inc.

Workshop participants will learn to teach teens the basics of script writing, story boards, shooting and editing.

Alphabet Bites to Smarty Pants: What Will Kids Learn Next?

Wednesday, May 6, 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Speakers: Wendy Prasad, Librarian and Jim Elder, Web Design Specialist, Orange County Library System

Preparing preschool children to learn in kindergarten is a critical concern in Florida. Hear how one library created its own programs to teach reading readiness concepts.

Storytime Bootcamp

Wednesday, May 6, 3:30 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.

Speaker: Susan Mankowski, Early Childhood Specialist, Jacksonville Public Library

This training provides research, strategies, resources, and practice in implementing storytimes for children from infancy through age 5. Developmental expectations, scenarios, and music are all part of the fun!

Do It on the Cheap! Cost Effective Youth Programming

Thursday, May 7, 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Speakers: Phyllis Gorshe, Head of Youth Services and Olivia Wilson, Librarian I, Dunedin Public Library

Feeling the budget crunch? Join us for youth programming ideas that are cost effective, fun, and educational. This session will include creative programs for babies, kids, tweens, and teens that will bring in crowds without breaking the bank.

Connecting Teens with Libraries: Teen Programs Outside the Box

Friday, May 8, 8:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.

Speakers: Lisa M. Kreutter, Reference & Young Adult Librarian, DeRay Beach Public Library; Jennifer Rodrick, Youth Services Manager, West Palm Beach Public Library; Karyn Dombrosky, Southwest County Regional Youth Services Supervisor, Palm Beach County Library System

Teens are hard to reach. Three teen librarians describe programs that work and why, including gaming, multi-library cooperative events, Teen Tech Week and Teen Read Week programs.

Collections

Bringing Preservation to the Forefront: Preservation Initiatives at UCF Libraries

Friday, May 8, 8:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.

Speakers: Michael A. Arthur, Head of Acquisitions & Collection Services and Lee Dotson, Digital Services Librarian, University of Central Florida

Rare and circulating library materials, both print and nonprint, are candidates for proper care. Session topics include developing library-wide understanding of preservation issues and securing administrative support. Presenters will explore preservation initiatives for libraries of all sizes, highlighting UCF's efforts and initiatives.

Connecting to Collections: Preserving Special Collections in Florida

Friday, May 8, 10:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

Speakers: Linda McKee, Head Librarian, John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art Library; Susan Stover, Library Director, Mote Marine Laboratory Library; Corinne Johnson, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Research, College of Information, Florida State University; Tomaro Taylor, University Librarian, Special Collections and Latin American & Caribbean Studies, University of South Florida; Graig Shaak, Associate Director Emeritus, Florida Museum of Natural History

Florida's special collections are susceptible to damage because of environmental conditions and improper storage. Experts from museums, archives, and libraries discuss results of a statewide survey of Florida's collections and strategies to educate legislators and public officials about the need to preserve and conserve these treasures.

Maximum Floatation: Floating the Collection

Wednesday, May 6, 3:30 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.

Speakers: Sarabeth Kalajian, General Manager; Andrea Ginsky, Public Service Manager; Melisse Hypponen, ILL System Administrator; Laurie Bates-Weir, Webmistress; Diane McCauley, Administrative Specialist; Trina Turton, Library Supervisor. All speakers are with the Sarasota County Library System.

Sarasota County Library System has begun floating its entire collection. Learn how this was implemented, what preparation and training was needed, and the results.

Copyright Issues for Libraries: Understanding What's Legal, What's Fair, and What's Best Practice

Preconference, Tuesday, May 6, 1:00-5:00

Speakers: Gail Clement, Head of the Digital Collections Center, Florida International University and former ALA Copyright Scholar; Peter Picerno, Electronic Resources Librarian and Licensing Specialist, Florida International University; and Megan Waters, Director of Information Services, The Miami Herald Media Company.

This interactive workshop will explore issues librarians face in managing copyrighted materials as they strive to connect communities and content. Topics to be covered include copyright audits, risk assessment, library exclusions, fair use, licensing and permissions, and the publisher's perspective.

Curious Florida Fauna

By Nancy Pike

Visitors find our state exotic partly because there are so many curious living things in Florida. For example, why has a clumsy creature with a brain no bigger than a walnut, or an armored shell with its mouth between its legs, outlived the dinosaurs? And what about a stationary creature the size of a volleyball that can filter enough water in a day to fill a small swimming pool?

All three of them, the American Alligator, the horseshoe crab, and the sponge, have been here in Florida for millions of years. They will probably be here after we are gone – that is, if we don't destroy them first.

Alligators

In 1987, the American Alligator was named the official state reptile of Florida. The *Alligator Mississippiensis* grows eleven to fourteen feet long and can weigh more than one thousand pounds. Despite being around for about 140 million years, by the 1960s the alligator was driven almost to extinction through over-hunting and was placed on the federal endangered species list. Recovery was quick, buttressed by the state's authorization of commercial alligator farms in 1985 so that the market for hides and meat could be met without excessive hunting. There are now strict laws that control hunts; licensed trappers can harvest only a limited number of wild alligators each year.

The Florida Department of Agriculture estimates that there are about a million wild alligators in Florida, living in all of its counties. Carnivores, adults will eat almost anything, including cans and rocks. They have been known to attack humans and pets, too, usually in areas where they have been fed by people. Florida law prohibits feeding wild alligators because they soon lose their fear



of people and become a threat. Nonetheless, alligators also benefit the environment. Gator holes provide vital water to other animals in the dry season. Moreover, scientists are investigating alligator fluids for anti-microbial proteins that may be effective in combating drug-resistant bacteria in humans.

Horseshoe Crabs

The horseshoe crab, an unusual looking arthropod, is commonly found in the Gulf of Mexico. It can grow up to two feet long, including its tail, with the female usually larger than the male. Eggs laid by the horseshoe crab are an important source of nourishment for numerous birds and animals.

The horseshoe crab has five pairs of eyes and can live for up to thirty years. The fossil record shows that the species is hundreds of millions of years old, changing little in all that time. Its blood is blue, being based on copper rather than iron. Scientists harvest this valuable blood, without killing the crab, and use it to test vaccines for the presence of harmful endotoxins.

Sponges

Sponges, too, have medical value. Non-commercial sponge varieties are being investigated for pharmaceutical use. In fact, one of the first drugs for treating cancer was isolated from sponges.

There are about nine thousand species of sponge. Only five of them are commercially harvested in Florida. Until the mid-nineteenth century, commercial sponges came from the Mediterranean Sea. Once they were discovered in Florida, Cuba, and the Caribbean, they were soon heavily harvested, mainly in the Florida Keys. In the 1890s, the development of diving gear made deep diving for them farther north in the Gulf of Mexico possible. This development led to the rapid growth of the sponge industry in Tarpon Springs. However, within fifty years, the sponge business had diminished greatly throughout Florida due to over-fishing, disease, and the introduction of synthetic sponges.

In the 1980s, a blight killed Mediterranean sponges, which allowed the Florida market to recover somewhat. Since sponges tend to live closely in one area, they are especially vulnerable to disease. This has prevented successful "farming," although the planting of sponges has been tried. Their very vulnerability serves an important ecological purpose by signaling harmful changes in the surrounding waters.

Nancy Pike is a former president of the Florida Library Association.

To learn more about these curious Florida fauna, check out these books and Web sites:

The Alligator Book by C.C. Lockwood. Louisiana University Press, 2002.

<http://www.fws.gov/endangered/factsheets/alligator.pdf>

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/UW230>

Extraordinary Horseshoe Crabs by Julie Dunlap. CarolRhoda Books, 1999. (For ages 4-8)

<http://www.horseshoecrab.org>

Creatures of the Sea: Sponges by Kris Hirschmann. KidHaven Press, 2005. (YA)

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/SG045>

By Joyce Sparrow



Margo Hammond, former book editor for the *St. Petersburg Times* and past president of the Southern Book Critics Circle, and Ellen Heltzel, a member of the National Book Critics Board, have created a Web site—www.thebookbabes.com—offering reading recommendations and commentary. As a companion, Hammond and Heltzel have published *Between the Covers: The Book Babes' Guide to a Woman's Reading Pleasure* (Da Capo Press, 2008), a thoughtful book about fiction and nonfiction reading selections for women.

Since the publication of early reading group guides such as Ellen Slezak's *The Book Group Book* (Chicago Review Press, 1993), *The Reading Group Handbook* by Rachel W. Jacobsohn (Hyperion, 1994) and Nancy Pearl's *Book Lust* (Sasquatch Books, 2003), I have always been a fan of books about reading books. I enjoy learning what other people recommend and why. Whether it is discussing a good book with a library patron at the circulation desk or listening to relatives talk about the latest Danielle Steel novel, I am fascinated with why people choose to read the books that they do. As a result, I have been led to many novels and nonfiction books I would have never picked up and consequently enjoyed books by Stephen King, Tom Clancy, and Orson Scott Card.

Recommendations and Reflections

Some of the recommended books in *Between the Covers* are old favorites that I, too, would include on my all-time reading



list, but the Book Babes will make readers take a second look at some titles that have been on their own personal reading lists for five, ten, or fifteen years and prompt them to finally pick up the title.

Between the Covers is not just a list of recommended novels. What make it an important book are Hammond's and Heltzel's reflections on each of the more than five hundred suggestions, arranged in lists of ten. Many times these include a personal story from the authors' own experiences with a book. Heltzel contributes an essay praising the works of Margaret Atwood. Hammond tells the story of her mother who, prior to her death at the age of ninety-two, realized her dream of becoming a writer.

Recommended Florida Writers

Florida writers and books set in Florida are included in *Between the Covers*. One essay discusses Marjory Stoneman Douglas as a champion for the Everglades. Edna Buchanan's Miami crime writing is mentioned, as is *The Garden of Last Days* by Andre Dubus III. Susan Orlean's *The Orchid Thief* is there, and Carl Hiassen's *Skinny Dip* made the cut. *Dust on the Tracks* by Zora Neale Hurston is also suggested. To show how far reaching the reading recommendation are, Tampa resident Tony Dungy's memoir, *Quiet Strength: The Principles, Practices, & Priorities of a Winning Life*, is also on the Book Babes' reading list.

Following Women's Lives

The eight sections of the book cover the stages and experiences of life from "Babes We Love" about women who have earned a place in history to "Babes Without Borders" showing Hammond and Heltzel's widespread "genre-busting" interest in "high-brow, lowbrow, popular, and Literature with a capital L." A woman's emotional and physical health, along with appropriate reading selections, is outlined in "The Babe Inside." Sibling rivalry and the importance of girlfriends are celebrated with reading recommendations of well-recognized authors such as Jonathan Franzen, Khaled Hosseini, Ann Patchett, and Marilynne Robinson.

There are two sections that address writers on writing. From the creative side, Hammond and Heltzel make recommendations for books that will "Tap Your Inner Artist." The "Books About Books" chapter offers ten recommendations on reading and writing. The authors conclude by identifying the books they couldn't live without.

Between the Covers is as great a selection for reader's advisory and book group leaders as it is for general discussion about what people like and don't like to read. It is a good addition to personal libraries as well. Much like people who like to read about cooking and recipes, covered in the chapter called "10 That Hold the Winning Recipe," this is a perfect selection for those who read about reading.

Joyce Sparrow works for the Juvenile Justice Welfare Board of Pinellas County. Contact her at jsparrow@jubpinellas.org.

Florida Library Association

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