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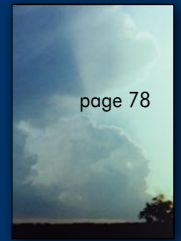
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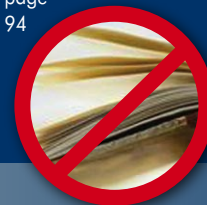
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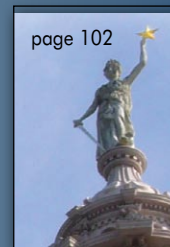
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BY
MARIBEL
CASTRO

My husband and I are thoroughly enjoying West Texas after our recent move to Lubbock. While he has jumped into his new job with his usual dedication, I have done the same in my new position as a high school librarian. Still, we have found time for some enjoyment as we recently saw the legendary Flatlanders at the famed Cactus Theater. One of their songs, "You Gotta Pay the Alligator," is a hilarious tale about how we all have to pay for our mistakes. The song had us laughing endlessly.

Back in my former library in Houston, I had made up my mind that non-fiction collections were becoming irrelevant in school libraries, so I subconsciously justified not buying materials for the school library, because the collection itself had become stagnant. I rationalized that no one was checking out the materials. The non-fiction collection was becoming more of a collection of dust than anything else. In fact, after truly assessing the purchases I had made over the span of the last few years as a librarian, I realized I bought very few non-fiction titles.

With all that in mind, I drafted a plan to cut non-fiction down to half its size by weeding all those materials that were MUSTY. I explained that, given how much of the content was readily available via our online subscription databases and eBook collection, there was no longer a need for the eight-foot high shelving. I requested that new four-foot high shelving be purchased for our library to allow our tight space to have a more "open" feel to it.

My husband, himself a school administrator and avid library supporter, thought my proposal was

crazy! He was completely beside himself when I explained that books on space, technology, animals, sports, etc., were no longer needed in the library, because they are quickly dated, and therefore a waste of limited resources.

The discussion escalated both in tone and passion, and I said he had no concept of the needs of our students who are digital natives and that he was behaving like a typical administrator who didn't want to throw anything away, no matter how little value these materials had to the student. He was aghast that I would deliberately deny a student a book on animals, planets, or skateboarding because I believed they no longer had value. I was obviously not getting any love or understanding on this one, and we dropped the subject before one of us ended up sleeping on the couch for the night.

So there I am on the first day of school at my new job in Lubbock, excited because the library is open during lunch allowing for more opportunity to engage with kids. A freshman boy, who did not seem to have many friends, walks up to the circulation desk and asks me a question I could not understand because of his shyness. I walked around the counter and leaned into him to better hear him. "Mrs. Castro," he asked, "do you have any books on skateboarding?" Being new to the collection, I said I wasn't sure, but I told him that we would hunt together. Sure enough, we found two books on skateboarding and another book that he requested, *The Guinness Book of World Records 2005*. It did not matter to him that the books were outdated;

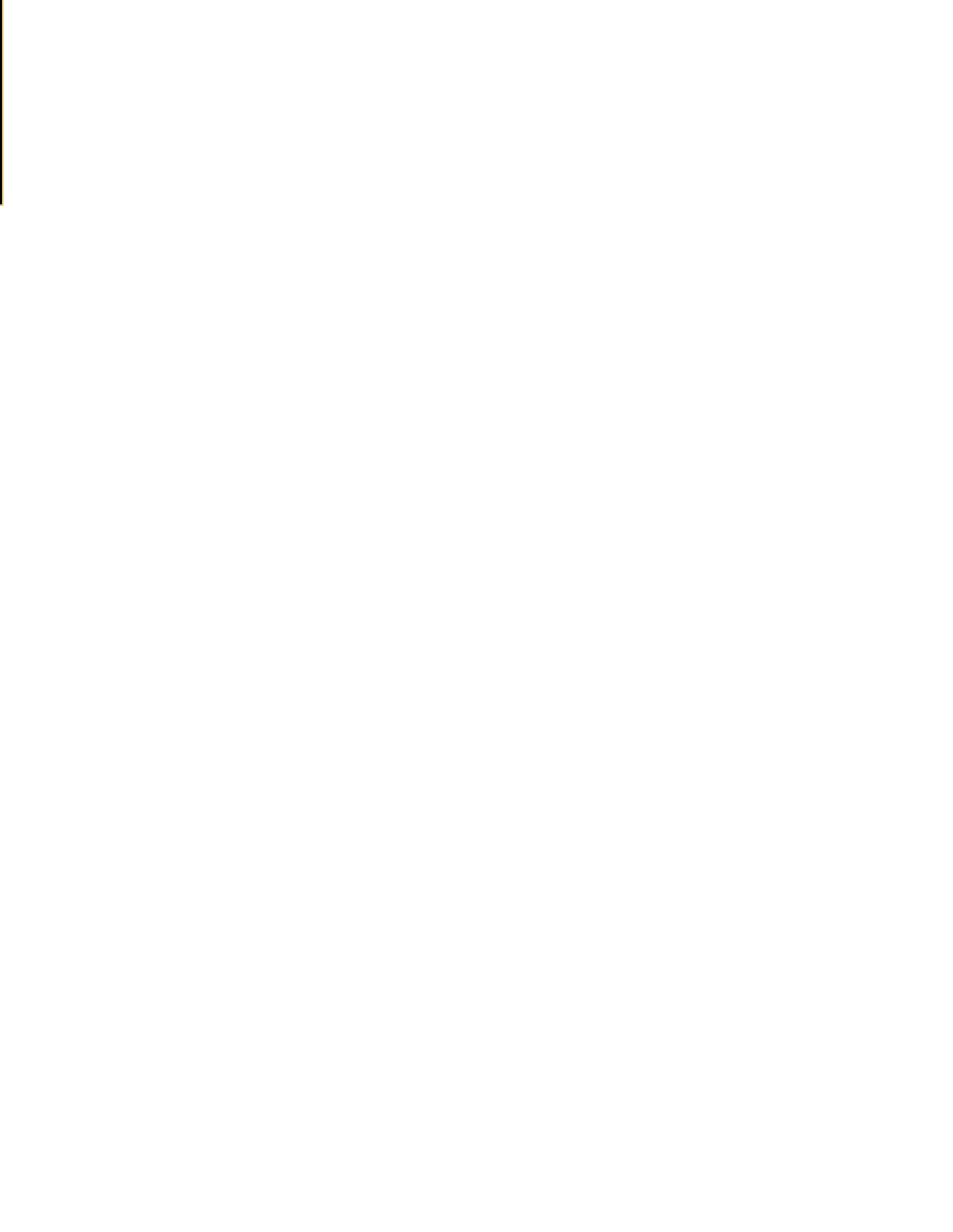
he walked out happy while tears welled in my eyes.

I spent much time during that week processing what had happened with the freshman boy. I took care of the patron's needs first, which should always be our first concern as library professionals. However, I had to disengage myself from my opinion that non-fiction books held little meaning in a highly Google-ized world. Not all of our students/patrons who walk through our libraries have Internet access at home.

Some of you are probably wondering how I could have missed the obvious, but it is easy to do. Think about how widespread the idea is that the Internet has made libraries irrelevant. Then, look at your patrons as they walk through the door. Do they have the same perception?

I made a similar mistake, because I accepted universal demand for online content as the standard by which I should build (or not build) the collection and made broad assumptions about local needs. As disappointed as I am in myself for the shortfall in my practice, I am excited about the conversations I am having regarding areas of my collection that my students know better than I do.

I suppose that sooner or later, as the song goes, "you have to pay the alligator!" ★



Just on the Horizon – A New Day for School Librarianship or the Perfect Storm

BY GLORIA MERAZ

“I feel like I have an expiration date stamped on my forehead.”

Uttered by one of the most talented leaders in Texas school libraries, this statement captures the deep concern many feel over the future of school library programs.

For years, we’ve talked about the evolution in librarianship due to changes in technology and the new learning styles afforded by those changes. We’ve talked about the need to transform libraries and library services. And while we’ve covered a lot of distance (though most of it has been in our own waters), we still hear challenges to our relevancy from the media and stakeholders. Despite all this though, we’re still here.

So what is the difference now? Is there a new level of urgency? Is our time, indeed, running out?

We find ourselves heading into a perfect storm of dangers: budget cuts, increased public scrutiny of all school services including school libraries, an educational culture demanding systemic integration and accountability (an area which librarians have historically been reluctant to embrace), a professional culture that has, at times, too often overlooked complacency within its own ranks, and a student population with unparalleled technological access and skills that enable extraordinary independence. Above all of this though is one startling reality: in a recent survey, 50% of Texas middle school students report rarely using school library resources – the historical stake of school library programs. The measure of our next generation of users – 1% off from the majority – is that they can do without us for resources (the very thing on which most library program have been built). The storm clouds are in near sight.

So the answer to the essential question above is yes; if we stay on this course, our “expiration date” will be upon us. If we’re not brave and deliberate, we are going to drown still believing this tempest is no different from others we’ve weathered. While many librarians may not be alarmed, the rest of us must make decisions based on our futures and the viability of the profession we leave behind. With concerted and committed effort, it is most certainly not too late!

We need a fundamental shift in how we approach our role in education both in terms of what we do and how we communicate that work. I’m not saying that we should throw out everything (or even most) of what school libraries do now; it’s that we must recast those activities in a language, metrics, and framework reflecting today’s breadth of needed educational outcomes – not 20th century library tasks. The problem is NOT that we lack expertise in effective and sophisticated learning approaches, and it’s NOT that we lack a talented group of professionals. The problem is that, as a profession, we remain largely insular and passive, and we tend to wait for someone else to proclaim us as relevant.

Successful school library programs are dynamic enterprises not tethered to a physical space, format of resource, or style of learning. Moreover, library activities should align clearly and naturally with statewide educational goals, and librarians should be both accountable and recognized for their work and contribution to student learning. Tackling the current school library standards with an eye to this aim is a great place to start.

We must also move beyond expecting others to “simply get us.” I’ve often

heard librarians lament that, if we could just get administrators to take the time to understand all that we do, they would support school library programs. When I hear these comments, I remember one nationally-renowned school librarian in San Antonio saying, “If we offer indispensable services and teaching at our campuses, then we ARE indispensable.”

The true test of our strength as a profession must come from our ability to integrate – integrate curriculum standards, pedagogy, technologies, resources, self-empowering instruction, and critical thinking skills into a learning experience that is meaningful and engaging. We must shape and deliver learning experiences that build skills and address an individual’s needs. And, we must be willing to constantly re-engineer those experiences in new contexts and new environments – that’s how we prove our relevancy to the public and stakeholders.

Being “keepers of knowledge or information” is no longer a desirable job description. In today’s information world, everyone qualifies. It isn’t even enough to be the masters of information searching. Online search engines (whether for better or worse) are the default and will likely improve significantly in the coming years.

The practice of school librarianship should be a proactive enterprise of designing and implementing creative instructional activities and experiences related to information access, research, and literacy (of all types). If that is not our *collective* professional practice now, if that is not where we are navigating, then we are off course and headed right into a storm from which we may not emerge. ✪

Cultivating an Entrepreneurial Spirit

BY CYNTHIA PFLEDDERER & KERRY MCGEATH

Entrepreneur: *n.* A person who manages an operation or enterprise by taking the initiative and risk involved in developing new ideas.

So, you want to be innovative? You want to bring fresh ideas into your library? How about getting your staff excited about coming to work in the morning? You can accomplish all of this by cultivating an entrepreneurial spirit in your team. That means you put your staff in a business frame of mind and encourage them to explore how running a library can be improved with new technologies, new processes, new programs, better marketing, etc. Why would you want to do this? Because when you open the door to creativity and give your staff a voice in the operation, you get more than a boatload of new ideas; you get buy-in to the goals of the library. You have empowered your staff and given them a voice to help you achieve the mission you set for your organization.

By focusing creativity and providing direction, the management team provides that leadership and helps to hone in on which ideas are doable and worth the effort. The management's focus must first be on diffusing the ideals of the organization throughout the team, be that superior customer service, collection focus, or some other key to success in your community. These aspects of the overall mission set the bounds for entrepreneurial thought and help to ward off unproductive ventures.

To stimulate the core movement, the management team must be willing to take risks themselves. It is important to get away from the negative auto response that sometimes develops when we are too focused on the small details and not the big picture. How many of the decisions made each day are a result of a reaction to something instead of planned action which is in accordance with the key goals? We must see our organizations on a path, going to a pre-conceived destination; and the entrepreneurship within the staff will blazon a new trail but always with the destination in sight.

Start by asking, what if this was my own business? What would I do differently if staying in business relied upon my ability to assess the market demands, implement appropriate technologies, change business practices, etc., to meet the evolving interests and needs of my customers? We will argue that our business does, in fact, rely on these things. Ingenuity is the offspring of need. If we believe that we need to do these things, as much as the business owner who will not make rent

next month if he is not successful this month, then we find that we develop a sense of immediacy.

This sense of immediacy is key to the energy that drives development. If we approach new ideas with the passion of an old dog on a hot day, not much is going to happen. But by embracing the dynamic environment of information science, we put ourselves in the position of being leaders. A leader looks long-range, anticipates changes, is willing to take the risks, accepts the failures, and learns from them. In reading *The Big Rich*, by Bryan Burrough, we were struck by a passage referring to Roy Cullen, a fifth grade dropout that went on to become one of the big four Texas oil tycoons. This stands out because of the risk he took going from working as a cotton farmer, and an unsuccessful one at that, into the business of wildcatting oil fields. Burroughs notes that Cullen spent over \$250,000 of other people's money drilling for oil and came up dry in all attempts. But what he did get was an expensive education on oil fields and a reputation for being hard-working and honest. He took a risk and he failed miserably at first, but he learned lessons, gained credibility, and persevered until he was one of the most successful Texans of all time.

Risk comes in all sizes and maybe some of us are ready for big risks and some of us like to take our risks a step at a time.

Regardless of the approach, it is imperative to leave ourselves open to failure if we are to learn and succeed over time.

So if the management is on board and ready to embrace this revitalizing spirit, how do we get the staff oriented and focused? How do we jockey this horse so that it doesn't fall on its face right out of the starting gate? Well, you've got to direct it

and feed it right. Direction starts with clear articulation of the goals and opportunities. Notice we use the word opportunities instead of expectations – delivery is everything. Directors, focus your attention on your management staff, the ones that filter the goals to the staff on the front lines. Management, focus on your departments. Staff, focus on your area within the departments. But everyone keep an eye on the ball. At every level, in every size of library, there is an opportunity to take what we do and make it fresh, make it better, make it integral to the success of the overall goal of the organization.

Feed the ingenuity that is brewing in newly energized staff. Where do we find fresh ideas? We begin by looking at ourselves with fresh eyes and asking why things are done a

Innovation by definition will not be accepted at first. It takes repeated attempts, endless demonstrations, monotonous rehearsals, before innovation can be accepted and internalized by an organization. This requires "courageous patience".

– Warren Bennis, leadership pioneer

certain way. We look at others in the field to see how they may be doing something differently. We look outside of our field at businesses and other organizations such as museums or zoos. How are they changing what they do to make themselves more available, more efficient? But let's not stop there. We can find ideas online, in magazines, in books, television, movies... So many places to look ("Oh, the things you can think!" Seuss).

Recently, we toured the mall in our area to ask ourselves how businesses were marketing themselves. We began to talk about the "experience." That's all the rage, isn't it? To make everything an experience, whether we are buying coffee or overpriced jeans? Why? Because it works, people like it.

We stepped into a popular clothing store and one staff member stated,

I like to shop in this store, because it has blinds on the windows, suggesting that it is exclusive and requires you to venture inside to see their line. When you do, you are transported by the design, the style, the sound, and the scent to another place like Cape Cod, where you are always young and cool. But they also offer quality product, and the day they don't, I'm done with them – no matter the cool factor.

We questioned ourselves about the marketing strategy. What have they done here to create this environment? Why did they

do that? Is this reproducible in the library? Is it a value added experience or appropriate for our community?

Ideas are found everywhere and at any time. Take, for instance, a bottle of shampoo observed by one of our staff members. It asked on the container, what is the average number of bubbles found in a bottle of champagne? The answer? On the conditioner, of course. So the company has added fun trivia to their packaging to improve the customer experience, but you have to buy both to get the answer. Immediately our staff member began to ask herself, is this a concept we can use in the library? Maybe. Ideas of trivia questions from books in the collection began to formulate in her mind, and she proposed it to us. Will it ever see the light of day? That isn't the question; the question is, has creativity been inspired in the staff? And the answer is yes; the spirit of entrepreneurial thought holds value and it is alive and well at Southlake Public Library. We challenge everyone to risk unleashing this spirit within your organizations and discover the hidden value in your own staff. Oh yeah, and there are about 58 million bubbles in a bottle of champagne. No charge. ✪

Cynthia Pfledderer is the public services manager at Southlake Public Library. Kerry McGeath is city librarian and deputy director of community services for the City of Southlake.

Speak Up Survey: Educational Technology and Learning for Today's Children

BY JULIE EVANS AND LAURIE SMITH, PROJECT TOMORROW

Editor's Note: The content below is largely adapted from *Creating Our Future: Students Speak Up about their Vision for 21st Century Learning* (National Findings of the 2009 Speak Up Survey, K-12 Students and Parents by Project Tomorrow, March 2010).

Introduction

Since 2003, the Speak Up National Research Project has provided the nation with a realistic view about how technology is used, or not in many cases, to enhance student achievement, teacher effectiveness, and overall educational productivity. The Speak Up data first documented and continues to reveal each year the increasingly significant digital disconnect between our students' values and aspirations about the use of technology for learning and the values and aspirations of their less technology-comfortable teachers and administrators. Students, regardless of community demographics, socio-economic backgrounds, gender, and grade, tell us year after year that the failure to incorporate emerging technologies in school is, in fact, holding back their education and, in many ways, disengaging them from learning. In communities across the nation, the hard realization that today's students are not using the tools or learning the skills they need to be well prepared to participate, thrive, and compete in our economy is actually exacerbating the existing relevancy crisis in American education.

Students rapidly assimilate and adapt the technologies they use in their personal lives to enhance their productivity in learning and, in essence, are functioning as a Digital Advance Team for the rest of us. The Speak Up 2009 findings illustrate how students are using technology in and out of the classroom for learning and are creating an experience-based vision and blueprint for the role of emerging technologies in 21st century learning.

About the Speak Up National Research Project and Speak Up 2009

Speak Up is a national initiative of Project Tomorrow, the nation's leading education nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring that today's students are well prepared to be tomorrow's innovators, leaders, and engaged citizens. Since fall 2003, the Speak Up National Research Project has annually collected and reported the views of over 1.85 million K-12 students, teachers, administrators, and parents representing over 23,000 schools in all 50 states. The Speak Up data represent the largest collection of authentic, unfiltered stakeholder input on education, technology, 21st century skills, schools of the future, and science and math instruction. Education, business, and policy leaders report using the data regularly to inform federal, state, and local education programs.

In fall 2009, Project Tomorrow surveyed 299,677 K-12 students, 26,312 parents, 38,642 teachers, 1,987 pre-service teachers and 3,947 administrators representing 5,757

schools and 1,215 districts including public (97 percent) and private (3 percent) schools. Schools were located in urban (38 percent), suburban (31 percent), and rural (32 percent) communities. Over one-half of the schools were Title I eligible (an indicator of student population poverty), and 42 percent of the participating schools had more than 50 percent minority population attending.

Texas Librarians and Media Specialists Speak Up

In 2009, Project Tomorrow collaborated with the Texas Library Association to invite school librarians and media specialists in Texas to respond to the survey. While in previous years, librarians and media specialists participated in Speak Up through the teacher survey, we felt that these educators had a unique perspective to contribute to the conversation and that we should focus on them during Speak Up 2009. As a result, we launched a special marketing campaign in Texas to reach school librarians. A total of 1,210 librarians from Texas responded to the survey, representing 63 percent of the total number of librarians who participated in the survey nationally.

The Texas data reveal areas where librarians' comfort with and use of technology is markedly stronger than teachers but that teachers are more intensely using technology in certain areas of the curriculum. The results also indicate how librarians and media specialists as a group engage in continuing education and their preferences for using technology. Librarians and media specialists in Texas (53 percent) are more likely than teachers (36 percent) to report that the effective integration of technology is extremely important to their students' success, and they are also more likely to consider themselves more expert than most of their peers in the use of technology. These educators are leading the charge in their use of technology for professional tasks, and they are more likely than teachers to use technology to conduct research or read text-based materials online. Like students, they are more comfortable creating and sharing digital media products (such as creating multi-media presentations, videos, music or pictures, listening to podcasts, or watching videos). Similarly, librarians and media specialists are also comfortable learning collaboratively as they participate in online professional learning communities, video conferences or webinars, and blogs or wiki postings.

This use of technology for professional reasons translates into the strategies that librarians and media specialists use to create socially based, digitally-rich learning experiences for students. When asked



Julie
Evans

Laurie Smith

about the technology they use to enhance student achievement, librarians and media specialists are more likely than classroom teachers to cite Internet resources, collaboration tools, digital resources, video conferences, and webinars. They are also more likely to use document cameras (such as ELMO's), flip cameras, and digital media tools. For the most part, librarians and media specialists use technology to facilitate student learning in the same way as teachers; however, they are more likely to have students create movies or animation projects, facilitate group collaboration, or have students conduct investigations.

Another component of the Speak Up project in Texas was to gain a better understanding about how middle school students use resources in their school library. We found that 13 percent of middle school students use library or computer lab technology every week. Top student library resources are: computer lab (37 percent), Internet research for school projects (23 percent) or personal reasons (14 percent), printed (27 percent) and online books (19 percent), as well as online encyclopedias (17 percent). According to students, they learn about Internet safety and how to use technology in the library (20 percent), as a regular part of their class (22 percent), or in a technology applications class (21 percent). As "Free Agent Learners," students also learn these skills on their own (35 percent) or from their parents (25 percent).

Our partnership with the Texas Library Association and the resulting Speak Up 2009 data confirm that librarians and media

specialists do, in fact, have a unique perspective to contribute to the conversations about 21st century learning.

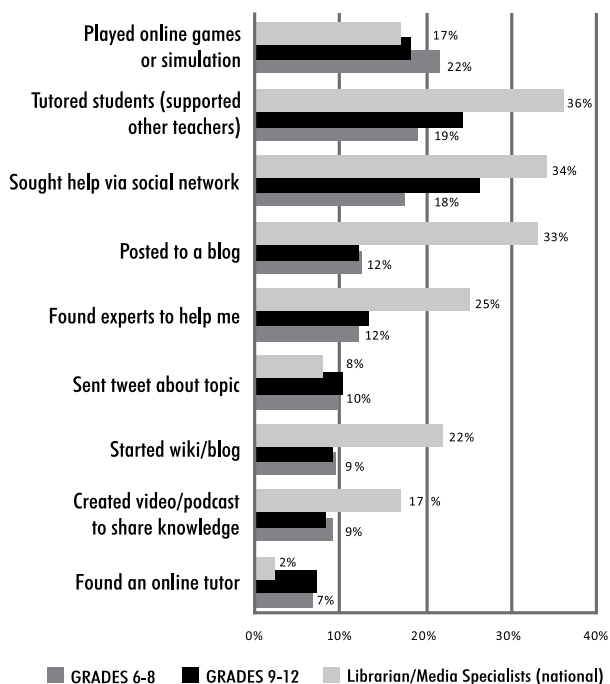
Creating Our Future: Students Speak Up about Their Vision for 21st Century Learning

The Speak Up 2009 national findings provide compelling evidence that our nation's K-12 students are increasingly taking responsibility for their own learning, defining their own education path through alternative sources, and feeling not just a right but a responsibility for creating personalized learning experiences. This "Free Agent Learner" student profile is not a future unattainable persona for students but rather describes the way many students are approaching learning. For these students, the schoolhouse, the teacher, and the textbook no longer have an exclusive monopoly on knowledge, content, or even the education process. Not surprisingly, students are leveraging a wide range of learning resources, tools, applications, outside experts, and each other to create personalized learning experiences.

In their quest to define their own learning path, students seek help from other students, share information and tutor each other via Facebook, take online assessments and tests to evaluate their own knowledge about a particular topic, or use cell phone applications for self-organization and increased productivity. They also take online classes not for a grade but to learn more about a subject that interests them, access podcasts and videos for help in classes where they are struggling, and find experts (including other students) to

connect with online to exchange new ideas and explore content in a myriad of new ways (Figure 1). These students are not necessarily waiting for their school to provide the tools or applications to accomplish their goals; they are instead taking their future into their own hands by adapting the tools they are accustomed to in their personal life for learning. Our nation's students are, in fact, through their fearless adoption and clever adaptation of emerging technologies and tools, developing and implementing their own vision for 21st century learning. They are, in the absence of a more relevant learning process, creating their own future.

Figure 1: "Free Agent" Learners: Use technology on their own for learning



In our report, *Creating Our Future: Students Speak Up about their Vision for 21st Century Learning*, we identify the three essential elements of this new emerging student vision. At the heart of each element is the innovative use of emerging technologies including online learning, mobile devices, Web 2.0 tools, and digital content. While these three essential elements represent some dramatically new approaches to teaching and learning in a classroom setting, the incorporation of these tools and applications is merely a natural extension of the way students are currently living and learning outside of the classroom. Thus, if we listen to students' recommendations, we can create relevant learning experiences and begin to close the persistent digital disconnect between students and educators. By watching and listening to students, we can gain insights about creating engaging learning environments. Defining the essential elements is the first step to envisioning the new path:

- **Social based learning** – Students want to leverage emerging communications and collaboration tools to create and personalize networks of experts to inform their education process.
- **Un-tethered learning** – Students envision technology-enabled learning experiences that transcend the classroom

walls and are not limited by resource constraints, traditional funding streams, geography, community assets, or even teacher knowledge or skills.

- **Digitally rich learning** – Students see the use of relevancy-based digital tools, content, and resources as a key to driving learning productivity, not just about engaging students in learning.

The full report, available on the Project Tomorrow website (www.tomorrow.org), provides a selection of Speak Up data findings that demonstrate how students are leveraging emerging technologies to implement their vision. Their aspirations for using technology more effectively in a traditional classroom can be a catalyst for transformational change in our nation's classrooms and libraries.

Essential Element 1: Social-based learning

To provide clarity to the value that students place on social-based learning, the Speak Up data provide new insights into how they are using advanced communications and collaboration tools, both in their personal, outside of school, technology-infused lives (Figure 2), and at school. Additionally, the Speak Up data help to illustrate the challenges students face when they attempt to leverage these same tools to achieve greater productivity at school.

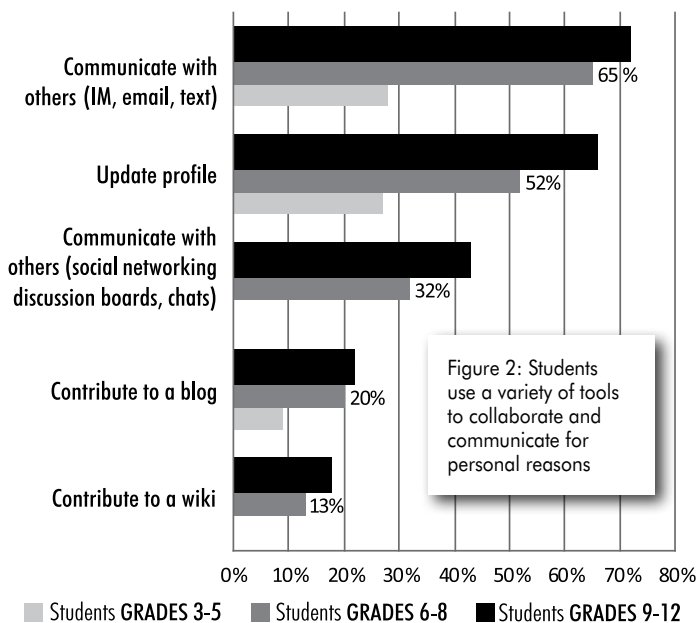


Figure 2: Students use a variety of tools to collaborate and communicate for personal reasons

Of special significance is that 43 percent of students in grades 9-12 and 34 percent of middle school students say that their primary vehicle today for communicating with their friends online is through their social networking sites.

While students are developing these skills outside of school, many schools are not taking advantage of either the tools or the students' knowledge about how to use these tools within the classroom. About one-third of middle school and high school students report that two major obstacles to using technology more effectively at school is their inability to access personal communications accounts or send messages to classmates during the school day.

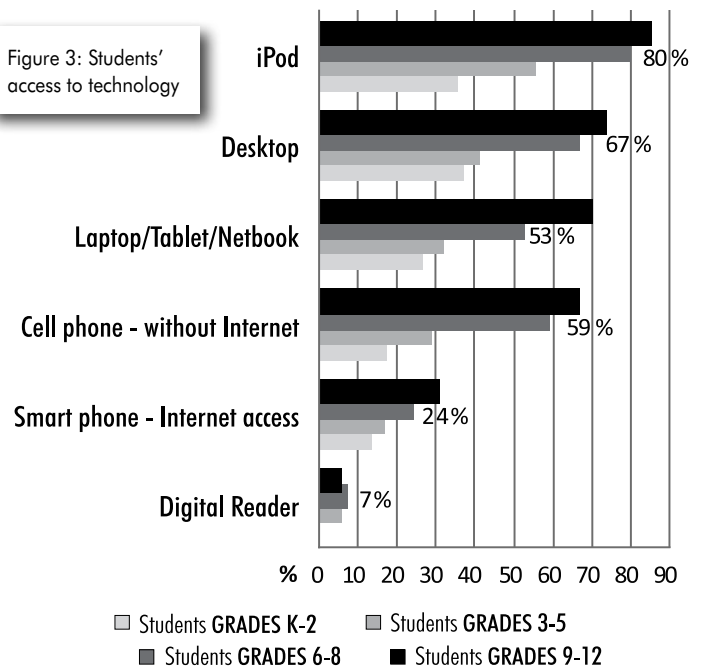
Not surprisingly, therefore, one-third of middle and high school students want their school to provide access to students' personal communications accounts and to allow access to their social networking sites. Notably, students also want to be able to use these tools to communicate with their teachers according to one-third of middle and high school students.

To help students realize their vision for a socially based learning environment, librarians and media specialists, as well as parents, can be effective allies. The Speak Up 2009 data reveal that librarians and media specialists have experience with collaboration tools such as blogs, social networking sites, wikis, and bookmarking tools and are more likely than classroom teachers to use these tools to enhance student achievement.

Essential Element 2: Un-tethered learning

Technology and Internet access provide students with diverse opportunities for learning and remove the constraints of geography, time, resources, teacher quality, or community assets; in essence, their learning is un-tethered from the classroom. The Speak Up 2009 data reveal students have personal access to a variety of technology (Figure 3), and they use their devices to personalize their learning and increase productivity. Due to the lack of resources in their own community or concerns about the quality or effectiveness of their teachers or textbooks, students in many communities feel a strong need to access online resources. Students also report they want to use their mobile devices to look

Figure 3: Students' access to technology



up information on the Internet, take notes or record lectures, work on projects with classmates, access online textbooks, take videos of class presentations or experiments, or play educational games. Students also want to use their mobile devices to communicate with classmates and teachers, receive reminders and alerts, or organize their work for school.

In a sense, un-tethered learning that leverages the best educational content and learning experiences, wherever it may be in the world, is truly the ultimate classroom for today's students.

Essential Element 3: Digitally-rich learning experiences

Today's students are immersed in the sophisticated use of digital media, tools, and content in most aspects of their lives. Not surprisingly, therefore, today's youth are consummate documentarians, documenting their lives as they unfold with photos, videos, blog entries, lists of favorites, explicitly named networks of friends and colleagues, status postings and rankings from online games, and opinions on just about everything that is occurring in their universe. Technology-enabled resources and applications are highly engaging for the students and provide them with new ways to approach self-directed learning and educational productivity. The Speak Up data provide new insights about how students are currently using digital media tools for school (Figure 4) and outside of school, providing guidance about student preferences for digitally-rich learning environments.

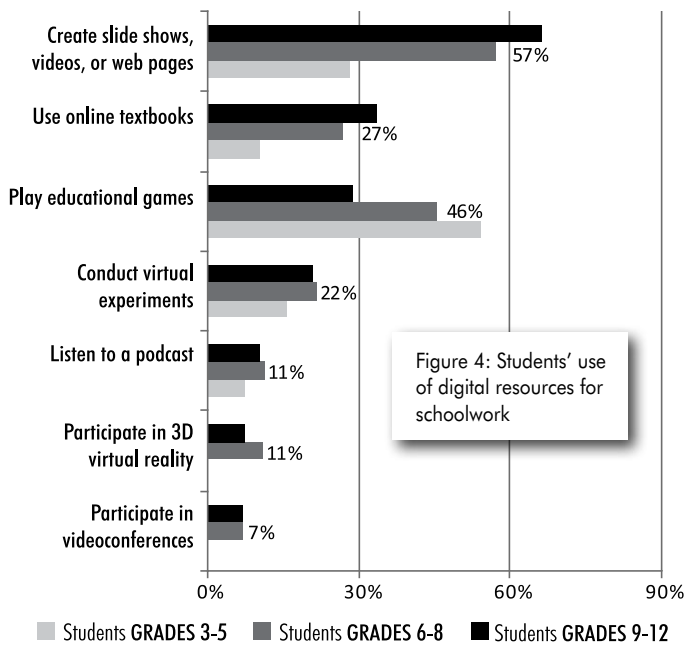


Figure 4: Students' use of digital resources for schoolwork

By comparison, outside of school, students seek out opportunities to contribute new content as they develop or modify digital media, create new work using pre-existing text, graphics (MashUp), or contribute to blogs or wikis. The process of creating content is a key characteristic of the "Free Agent Learner" who relishes the opportunity to learn through interactive experiences. In a digitally-rich learning environment, the creation process is as important as, or sometimes even more important than, the end result. Students' desire to use games and online textbooks for learning is particularly demonstrative of how students want to leverage digitally-rich learning experiences within their unique vision for education.

Librarians and media specialists are well poised to mentor teachers as they seek to create digitally-rich learning experiences for their students. For example, students have a strong desire to create slide shows, videos, and Web pages; librarians and media specialists can

take this opportunity to leverage their experience with digital media tools and resources to help teachers enhance their ability to facilitate digitally-rich learning experiences. Furthermore, librarians and media specialists can work with teachers to help them effectively integrate the use of videoconferences and podcasts into their classroom. Similarly, teachers have an opportunity to introduce librarians and media specialists to the power of online textbooks and the use of educational games to enhance student achievement.

Ending Thoughts

Each year through the Speak Up survey, focus groups, and panel discussions, we ask our nation's students to envision their ultimate school. The data and our subsequent conversations point to one resounding fact: Though often not explicitly stated, our nation's students already have a plan in mind and are effectively leveraging technology to create their own vision for 21st century learning. Students want to interact and learn from their own personalized network of experts using innovative communications and collaboration tools. They learn 24/7 and want tools and processes that are not tethered to time, place, and geographic boundaries. They also recognize from their own experiences that the best way to facilitate their learning and productivity is through the effective use of rich and relevant digital tools, content, and resources.

Speak Up has a rich tradition of informing local, state, and national policies, and we encourage you to think about how you might leverage the Speak Up data to inform your practice, as well as the services and resources provided by your library. The Speak Up data reveal that librarians and media specialists have the skills needed to help students realize their vision for un-tethered, socially based, digitally-rich learning experiences. How might you help teachers effectively integrate technology and online resources into learning experiences, both in and out of the classroom, for students? In addition, knowing that students show an overwhelming desire to learn through collaborative online tools and communities, how can the library provide these opportunities to students? More importantly, as students embrace responsibility for their own learning, how might we help them understand the inherent responsibilities of being a "Free-Agent Learner" and the ethical use of technology? 🌟

Julie Evans is chief executive officer and Laurie Smith is director of research and evaluation with Project Tomorrow.

Be sure to join Evans and Smith for a free webinar on the Speak Up Survey results. Hear more about the exciting and challenging insights gathered from almost 300,000 stakeholders nationwide, including Texas school librarians. Get a sneak peak at the 2010 survey and find out how you might leverage data from this incredible tool at your own campus or district. The webinar will be held on November 16 at 2 PM CST. CPE credit will be provided. To register, go to: www.txla.org/secure/meeting-login.

THREE SIMPLE RULES FOR GREAT PRESENTATIONS

BY LEE ANDREW HILYER

INTRODUCTION

In the 15 years I've been a librarian, I've attended many PowerPoint presentations that were nothing more than an endless series of text-laden slides, made worse by the speaker narrating them verbatim. (I bet you can recount similar experiences.) Rare was the experience of actually learning something useful from such a presentation. Sadly, I seldom remembered what these presentations were about and often discarded the accompanying handouts full of three- and four-word bullet points because they made no sense without the speaker's narration. Presentations are an integral part of our lives as librarians: Why do we waste our time and resources attending presentations of ultimately little or no value to us? Even worse, why do we (as presenters) spend our precious time constructing ineffective presentations that do nothing for our audiences but bore or frustrate them?

Despite all of the obstacles and roadblocks to effective and efficient learning created during a typical presentation situation, we as audience members have adapted. We expend a large amount of brain resources straining to sift through the torrent of information released upon us, trying to grasp the "big picture," or attempting to identify that key idea that we can take back to our own library. Rather than being properly guided through the presentation content and assisted in mentally organizing and integrating it with personal knowledge and experiences, the speaker often moves too quickly through too much information, leaving little time to actually learn something. When the presentation is over and audience members leave the room, they are often "glad it's over" rather than excited and interested in learning more about the topic presented.

So how can we as presenters remedy this situation? Fortunately, you don't need a degree in education or extensive practice in public speaking to drastically improve your presentations and create an environment where your audience can connect with your topic and use the information you've given them to improve services or to develop new ones. Three simple rules, if followed consistently from planning through preparation and delivery of your presentation, are all it takes to dramatically improve your presentation and increase the potential for positive learning outcomes for your audience.

RULE #1: SAY THE WORDS

The main reason people come to a presentation is to hear someone speak.



Verbal communication is the dominant form of human communication; humans love to talk to one another. Over time, our human brains have adapted the structures and systems necessary to create and to process spoken speech. One of these structures is our short-term memory. Also known as "working memory," this is a temporary mental workspace where conscious thoughts are processed and where we do much of the "heavy lifting" of thinking and learning. Working memory has a finite capacity and only stores information temporarily while in use. Long-term memory is the space where information and experiences are stored (relatively permanently) in our brains.

Think of your working memory as similar to the RAM (random access memory) in your computer and your long-term memory as its hard drive. While reading this article, you are activating the structures and processes involved in reading comprehension, moving them from your long-term memory (your "hard drive") to your working memory (your RAM) so that you can process and understand this article's content. When you finish reading and pick up a tennis racquet, your working memory replaces those procedures with ones related to controlling and moving the racquet.

And just as your computer's RAM is limited, so is your working memory. George Miller's well-known 1956 article¹ states that most people can hold seven items of information (plus or minus two) in their working memory; in reality, that number is closer to four (or fewer if the concepts are sufficiently complex).² As a presenter, you must think very carefully about what you want to tell the audience, and you must acknowledge that you cannot cover the depth and breadth of your topic in a typical presentation session lasting 45 minutes to one hour. This is a common problem with many presentations.

Instead, focus on the three or four most important points about your content and structure your presentation around those. Present these points, elaborate upon them with relevant examples, and use the last few minutes of the presentation to review those points. Good presenters are aware of the space and time limitations of working memory and structure their content to avoid overloading the audience with too much information. Don't worry that you have to eliminate good

information from your presentation; Rule # 3 below gives you the opportunity to provide the audience with additional avenues for exploring your topic.

Begin your presentation planning by first spending some time thinking about what the audience needs to know about your topic as well as some of the characteristics of your audience. Do they work in public services or technical services? Will they be experts or novices with respect to the content presented? The answers to these questions will shape the presentation you design.

Second, avoid beginning your presentation preparation in PowerPoint. PowerPoint's structure forces you into a linear, slide-by-slide model of thinking. Instead, write a "report" (or detailed outline) on your topic.³ Writing documents is a far more common task than creating presentations. For most people it is an easier place to start that enables you to include all of your topic ideas. You can then rearrange and reorganize your thoughts into a coherent presentation "script."

Remember the primary reason people attend presentations is to hear someone speak. Armed with your script, you can then identify the three to four key points you will cover in your oral presentation. Spend some time practicing with your script so that you can confidently guide your audience through the topic without having to refer constantly to your notes.

RULE #2: SHOW THE PICTURES

People remember more information when spoken words are combined with relevant pictures.

While verbal information is the dominant form of communication, we actually remember pictures better than spoken words. This is known as the "picture superiority effect."⁴ Even better recall of information can be achieved when pictures are used together with spoken words. This is known as the "multimedia principle": People learn better from words and pictures than from words alone.⁵ This is the fundamental idea behind using slides or other visuals during a presentation. When you listen to spoken information, three days later you'll remember about 10% of the information. Add a relevant picture to that information, and you'll be able to remember about 65% of the information presented, a whopping 55% increase in retention.⁶

Both visual information and speech are processed in working memory. Research has demonstrated the existence of two distinct "channels" within working memory, each of which processes a particular type of information. The auditory channel processes speech while the visual channel processes incoming visual information.⁷ Even with two separate processing channels, cumulative storage space in working memory remains at about four items at any one time.

For maximum learning potential, combine well-practiced spoken narration with carefully selected, high quality and

relevant imagery. "Storyboarding," an easy technique borrowed from moviemaking, can help you plan your slides. Storyboards are a series of drawings that help you illustrate a sequence of images for your presentation.

Select storyboard ideas from your script and, using simple shapes and stick figures, draw some pictures that graphically explain or enhance some facts or a key content point.⁸ Explore multiple options for each idea. For example, if I want to illustrate the concept of "growth," I could use images from nature (trees and plants), from farming (seeds or rows of crops), or an image of a kitchen doorway where a family tracks the heights of its children. Double-check your ideas with a trusted colleague if you're unsure about a particular image.

Review your sketches and select your best graphic ideas. Search stock photo websites for images (or videos) to download. Obtaining professional-quality photos used to be an expensive and difficult undertaking. Today, there are countless websites where you can locate royalty-free high-resolution (1024 X 768 or greater) images to use in your presentations.⁹ These sites are also great for ideas and inspiration.

Avoid using clip art as it is perceived as less professional than photographs. The photographs you do use should include people whenever possible as audiences respond better to images with people in them, especially if they are facing the camera. Use one large image per slide when possible and enlarge the image to full screen size. Don't worry about an "average" or "recommended" amount of slides: use as many or as few slides as you need.

After creating your slides, integrate them with your script over several rounds of practice to develop your timing (you want to be sure that your slides keep pace with your spoken remarks). You also need to verify that your images look professional and appropriate when projected at large sizes. Schedule enough time before the presentation to practice before one or two people who will give you honest feedback about your performance.

RULE #3: TEXT IS FOR TAKE-AWAY

Displayed text (hereafter referred to as "text") requires more working memory resources than you might expect; eliminate text from your slides to avoid overloading working memory.

If you remember nothing else from this article, remember this: **Do NOT fill your slides with text; put it in a handout.**

Following this rule will have the most impact on your presentations. Text is processed differently in the brain than spoken speech or visual images. Text is first processed in the visual channel, but because of the intricate relationship between written and spoken language, final processing is handled by the auditory channel, which is, in a typical presentation situation, already full of verbal information from the presenter.

Here's another way to look at it: Think of the last time you were at the airport trying to read and someone sat down next to you talking on their cell phone. What happened? Your attention, previously focused on the article in your lap, was probably redirected towards your new neighbor. If he continued to talk on the phone you may have found it more difficult to concentrate on your reading while trying to ignore the incoming verbal information. The same thing occurs in working memory during a typical presentation situation with a speaker talking while simultaneously displaying a text-filled slide. When multiple streams of information attempt to use the same, limited-capacity auditory channel, cognitive overload occurs, and learning is obstructed and frustration begins.¹⁰ Moving text from slides to your spoken remarks or to a separate handout reduces the competition for auditory channel resources, making it easier for your audience to process the information presented.

To implement Rule #3: Text is for Take-Away, thoroughly review your slides and remove excessive text or convert it into images. Image-dominant slides take advantage of both the multimedia principle (people learn better from words and pictures than from words alone) and the picture superiority effect (people remember pictures better than spoken words). Note that some text on slides is acceptable, but limit yourself to one or two lines and use complete sentences (subject-verb-object).¹¹

Another way to balance the cognitive load between working memory channels is to relocate text from your slides to a handout. A handout is an opportunity to elaborate further on your topic and to provide additional resources such as a bibliography or list of Web resources. The handout should not be an afterthought. Rather, it should be an important part of your presentation planning.

Adopting the Three Rules approach means that just using your slides as a handout will no longer be sufficient. What will a series of image slides with minimal text mean to someone who was not in the room to hear you speak? As the presenter, YOU provide the verbal information that makes those beautiful, image-filled slides meaningful. Without that essential component, your ideas are subject to misinterpretation or confusion. The audience will appreciate a well-planned, information-rich handout (distributed at the end of your presentation after you have finished speaking) they can take with them to read and digest later at their own pace.

In addition to being a resource for more in-depth learning, handouts also represent a potential distraction, especially if distributed at the start of the presentation; give them out at the end of the presentation. Working memory channels will already be full with your slides and your spoken remarks. Adding a handout creates an additional stream of information competing for working memory resources.

As with any rule, there are exceptions. If you are discussing detailed data tables or complicated spreadsheets, distribute those on paper at the point in your presentation where they are needed. Handouts of this type support more efficient learning than when that same information is displayed on a PowerPoint slide. While the slide might be visible for only 15-20 seconds, audience members can consult paper handouts at length.

SUMMARY

To summarize, there are three simple rules you can use to guide you through your next presentation:

1. Say the Words: What are the three (or four) key points the audience should learn? Identify those, elaborate upon them with rich examples, and eliminate nice-to-know, but not critical information.
2. Show the Pictures: What images illustrate or reinforce your main points? Free sources abound for high-quality photographs and line art; you have no more excuses for using clip art. Remember: Words + Pictures = Better Learning.
3. Text is for Take-Away: Avoid overloading your audience with competing streams of information. Move that text from your slides to a handout (or website) that they can review at their leisure.

Start slowly and make incremental changes in your presentation methods. Begin your next presentation by writing a report instead of starting in PowerPoint. Next, replace the text on only one or two of your slides with pictures. As you get comfortable, replace more text until your slides are mostly (if not completely) image-based. Finally, take your handouts in new directions: create a booklet, print up some stickers or choreograph an interpretive dance – it doesn't matter, just be creative!

This approach entails a tremendous amount of time and effort – probably a lot more than you may have spent on past presentations. I spend roughly 18 hours of preparation and practice on each presentation I give; you may need more or less, depending on the situation. Designing and delivering an effective presentation where the audience enjoys themselves AND learns something new requires this level of extensive thought and preparation. However, the rewards of an effective presentation, both for yourself and for your audience, are well worth it.

Resources to support you are available at: <http://presentations4librarians.wordpress.com/tla>. I look forward to your questions and comments.

Lee Andrew Hilyer is the head of information and access services at the University of Houston Libraries.

Join Lee Hilyer for a free webinar program, part of TLA's Strategic Initiatives series, on November 9 at 2 PM. Hilyer will continue his discussion on presentations skills as he provides practical, step-by-step techniques for implementing the three rules and designing effective slides. "Before and after" examples will be included.

Notes

1. Miller, G.A. 1956. "The magical number seven, plus or minus two: some limits on our capacity for processing information." *Psychological Review*, 63: 81-97.
2. Cowan, N. 2001. "The magical number 4 in short-term memory: A reconsideration of mental storage capacity." *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 24, 97-185.
3. For detailed outlines, I recommend using the templates found in: Atkinson, Cliff. 2007. *Beyond Bullet Points: Using Microsoft® Office PowerPoint® 2007 to Create Presentations That Inform, Motivate, and Inspire*. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Press. <http://www.beyondbulletpoints.com/public/department464.cfm>.
4. For information on the picture superiority effect, see Lidwell, W., Holden, K. and Butler, J. 2003. *Universal Principles of Design*. Gloucester, MA: Rockport.
5. Mayer, R.E. 2001. *Multimedia Learning*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
6. See Lidwell, et al., 2003.
7. See Baddeley, A.D. 1998. *Human Memory: Theory and Practice*. Rev. Ed. Boston: Allyn & Bacon. And Paivio, A. 1986. *Mental Representations: A Dual-Coding Approach*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
8. See Roam, Dan. 2008. *The Back of the Napkin: Solving Problems and Selling Ideas with Pictures*. New York: Portfolio for techniques to help you enhance your visualization skills.
9. Visit the Resources page at <http://presentations4librarians.wordpress.com> for my favorite free image sources.
10. See Clark, R.C., Nguyen, F., and Sweller, J. 2006. *Efficiency in Learning: Evidence-Based Guidelines to Manage Cognitive Load*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass for more information on cognitive load (and overload).
11. Search the web for "assertion-evidence slide design." Created by Dr. Michael Alley, this technique for slides works well within the Three Rules framework and is being tested by him and his colleagues for effectiveness. Preliminary results show a statistically significant increase in test scores of students who attended lectures using this slide design versus traditional PowerPoint slides. ☘

Engaging in Effective Communications Strategies during the Local Budgeting Process

BY DALE McNEILL

Often, when we think about budgets

and budgeting, our first thought is of numbers. Maybe there's a knot in your stomach thinking about trying to stretch a little bit of money a long way. Will jobs be affected? Will we have to reduce hours? Will line items change and, if so, by how much? Numbers can seem to rule us, especially during the budgeting process. But numbers are only one part of budgeting; people and relationships are equally important, and sometimes they wield a greater impact in how we deal with budgets and the aftermath of tightening resources.

The key to encouraging people and building strong relationships is communication – the consistent, honest, and open flow of information. While there are so many components related to effective budgeting and advocacy, I'll focus here on communication with and among staff and stakeholders, in particular, in providing the tools and opportunities to allow people to become invested in the process and the outcome. The more people are engaged in the budgeting process, the more they are likely to be an advocate (at whatever level is right and appropriate for them) and to remain committed to providing the best library services possible – even if budget cuts do come.

I've heard many library directors say that the worst thing about dealing with budget cuts is the drain on staff morale. While implementing the cuts themselves is hard, finding a way to keep staff motivated is challenging. There may be no magic potion to cure the budget blues, but we do have ways of helping staff and supporters feel a part of the process and, consequently, a part of the solution in helping the city or county meet its fiscal target and providing consistently strong library services to communities despite budget cuts (especially if the library has a plan to work towards restoration of funding).

Everyone has a role and a voice

While the library director can set a productive tone by leading and listening, all staff members must also follow suit by being engaged, receptive, and responsive. It's often easy to vilify – the "bosses," politicians, etc. – during vulnerable times. The

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truth is that no one, least of all the people with whom you work most closely, relishes having to make hard decisions, especially ones that might affect services and jobs.

Maintaining a calm and professional outlook is important. You'll still be working with co-workers tomorrow (if not in the same library, well, remember that the library world is very small).

It's especially important not to

assume that you know why someone is doing something or why certain decisions were made. Instead, ask the person. Plan. The more quickly library administrators and staff move to an open discussion about the budget (and the potential scenarios it allows). The likely result of such discussions rarely makes everyone happy, but the important outcome is to come up with a plan that makes sense and can be understood by library staff and support groups.

If at all possible, involve the public and elected officials in a discussion of priorities. Get your board to visit with local elected officials to find out their views and perspective on local needs. Conduct an online survey or focus groups with patrons. Whether you are a large library or a small one, there are multiple avenues to gather public ideas, even if your timeframe is short.

Understand the budget process

The beginning of all good communication is knowing that you have the facts right. Of course, the library director and administrative staff understand the local government budget process, but do front line staffers? Do your support groups? Understanding the budget process involves knowing how the local government is funded (e.g., the source of revenues), how the budget cycle plays out from draft proposals to final votes, and how input and changes are offered during the budget process. Is there a one page flow chart you have on the budget process that is part of your staff orientation? Do you have such a resource available to your support groups? Of course, the level of detail will be quite different for a library director than for a customer service representative, but each library employee should have a solid understanding of the overall budget process.

Clarity and consistent information on the process (which may change from year-to-year, so your information needs to be constantly updated) not only helps people feel empowered; it allows staff and supporters to see proposals and decisions within a context of steps and a timeframe in which to make a difference. This knowledge can reduce the feeling of "being caught off guard" while also conveying a sense of urgency (without undue panic).

Learn what the executives of the funding authority (mayor, city manager, county commissioners, etc.) are looking for in a budget. Make it a point of finding out what is most persuasive to them. Are the individual lines important? Is the focus more on broader programs? Are numbers more important or are stories more important – or are both equally important?

Understand the library budget

Once you understand the budget process for the larger governing body, it's time to get a clear grasp of the library budget. Know what kinds of budgets your library encompasses. There's probably at least a capital budget and an operating budget. Find out about both. Be informed about the processes and what can and cannot be funded from each budget. Understand the sources of funding, whether that's sales taxes, property taxes, bond issues, or others. Understand whether funds are collected specifically for the library or are allocated from the general fund to the library.

You can't really do anything else if you don't understand the process used for your library. You may need to focus information about the library in terms of groups of customers served, by building (that is, each branch might have a separate "program"), by type of service (reference, programs for youth, circulating books, local archives, etc.), or as a single entity with explanation for each line of the budget. Those are only

examples, as there are many budget processes at work. It's often useful for all library staff to understand the basic budget structure so that reports, data collection, and customer stories can all be supporting that structure.

Some things to look for: what percentage of the city's budget is the library budget, how much of the library budget is for people, how much of the library budget is for books, how much (on average) does a resident of the city or county pay for library services. It's important for all staff to have an overview of the library resources and expenditures and to be able to speak easily about it. Even though requests from local media will likely be answered by only a few selected people, to provide a consistent response, every library employee should know this information. They will likely be asked questions about the budget at the supermarket, in their place of worship, doing the laundry, or in many other places when library funding is on the news. It doesn't help the library's cause for most people's answer to be "I don't know."

Building the budget; Focus on mission

Often, when revenues are down, the library (along with other departments) is going to be smaller. It's important to maintain mission-driven plans to both expand and contract library services. The best way to do this will vary greatly from one community to another. Some libraries faced with reducing hours would do the right thing to make sure they maintain weekend hours. Other libraries, though, would be responding most effectively to their community by maintaining weekday hours after school. Be bold – but no bolder than you are actually prepared to implement.

Most library directors and administrators welcome ideas from staff at all levels during this process. That doesn't mean that every staff idea will be acted upon (just as every management idea isn't acted upon). It also means that if you're doing something important for the mission of the library, you should be sure that it's well known within the library itself. What are the most important services that the library provides in this community? What could the library do without? (By the way, I think that many of the metaphors that we've used in the past for this process don't work now. We can't "trim the fat," as there isn't any "fat." We can't simply "downsize" in many cases as there's not a lot left to shrink. If we think of our bodies, it may feel more like amputation than dieting. For some, it may be helpful to think of the past budgets as a block of marble. The task now, as for a sculptor, is to take away everything that's not essential, while carefully maintaining everything vital. The result can be beautiful, but it will always be very different from that block of stone.)

Aim your budget to the future

It's important to remember that, no matter how dire current budgets may be, there will be a time when local tax revenues

will increase. Even as staffing and programs of service are reduced, plan for how staffing and programs of service would be returned. Whatever steps are taken in budget reductions will not be forgotten in budget restorations. If the library really can maintain current hours and services while losing 3% of positions through attrition, be honest about that, both in the library and to the city (or other funder). Don't expect to reduce staff, keep services, and then later say that it takes more staff to operate the library. Sometimes hours can be maintained, but service levels cannot. In that case, the library should plan for restoring the service levels, rather than restoring hours. If a certain amount of materials funding is decreased to eliminate a service to homebound customers and if the library believes this to be an important service, plan from the beginning to replace the service when the materials budget is replaced.

Understand both law and local practice relating to advocacy

The funding authority of the library will generally issue policies relating to elections, ethics, conflict of interest, and so on. Find them, read them, and understand them. These policies exist for important reasons. Passionate advocacy should help the library, not hurt the library or you. It's fairly easy to understand the legal aspect of these requirements. Local practice is a little more complicated. Do rallies make sense in your community, or will they be more likely to irritate elected officials? What about petitions? Just because something hasn't been done before doesn't mean it's a bad idea, but it should be carefully considered.

And, REMEMBER, you have boards, friends groups, and lay supporters who will WANT to go beyond what library staff can do. Let them. If you worry about having inconsistent messages, keep in mind that the more you involve them in talks about priorities and how to handle budget situations, the more they will understand and the more likely they are to work in concert with library proposals.

At the end of the day, supporters can and SHOULD speak out with their own voice. But if you nurture your support group and communicate with them so they are fully apprised of what challenges and decisions the library must make, more often than not, you will have an effective champion complementing your efforts.

Build relationships

Everyone who works at the library is already building relationships. But if it hasn't been done with intentionality, now is the time. Grow, strengthen, and begin relationships with local businesses, schools, houses of worship, parent groups, civic groups, and so on. At the same time, keep other city or county departments in mind. Grow and develop relationships with those departments. There are many ways that the library and its employees can have rewarding

relationships with departments responsible for health and human services, water, public works, law enforcement, fire prevention, and many others.

These departments and their employees can be strong advocates for the library. Keep in mind that, in most relationships, both parties will both give and receive – though one may give more and the other give less. These relationships can be as simple as remembering your cousin who works for the water department and having lunch now and then – with some stories about things the library is doing and some questions about the water department – or as complex as department director-level partnerships to provide mini offices for police officers in branch libraries. The library may provide research services for other departments and may, in turn, ask for the demographics being used by the planning department. The opportunities are many.

If you're actually in the midst of budget reductions, this can be a very powerful time to work together with organizations outside the funding structure or among the various departments of government. However, these relationships should be considered carefully, especially higher level-relationships, to provide the most benefits to the residents. When, for example, the director of the street department is advocating for the library, because a librarian invited her to read at a storytime, elected officials will hear something different than advocacy only from traditional library supporters.

The best PR is frontline staff

A friendly, service-oriented staff who gives patrons a positive and productive experience is bar none the library's best tool for enlisting supporters. A key component to keeping staff operating at its best is to keep up morale and commitment to the library – even during hard budget times. A staff that feels disenfranchised is less likely to keep up a positive attitude. While many factors influence staff morale, keeping staff informed and (if you are a staff member) staying informed and responsive is a professional responsibility we all share. No one – not administrators or frontline staff – can afford to linger in disappointment or apathy. Library staff may have to take on new roles and revise practices, and this is usually hard, but be creative. Find ways of rewarding and recognizing each other's contributions.

Staff at all the appropriate levels (and in a smaller library, that means all staff) should be part of a communication plan. How should each person respond to a reporter? What should staff members say when their neighbors ask "Why do we even need libraries? Doesn't everyone have the Internet?" Review again the rules and practices of the city or county that relate to advocacy. This is especially important if there is to be an election, whether of officials, a levy, or a bond.

Tell the library story

Armed with knowledge of the budget and of the library itself, always be ready to tell the story of the library. Every library employee knows that what they're doing is important. Don't be shy about telling people just that. Remind people of the benefits of the library and the great services it provides. The library may provide talking points for employees or a handout. Make use of these, whether at your child's sports event, place of worship, or supermarket. Other library employees will be telling the library story in the newspaper, on television, on the radio, to the mayor, and so on. Still, each employee can tell other people what the library does well.

Consider the audience in each case. For some, a few statistics will be most useful. For others, a story about a grandparent learning to send photo attachments at a library class will resonate more clearly. That is to say, while the point will be the same, you won't present the same details to the city controller as to a Sunday school class. The message should generally be brief and positive. It can be both useful and enjoyable to review ways to clearly convey the library message at a staff meeting or in other ways with a group of co-workers. It may even lend itself to a fun reward or recognition activity.

Start over

After the budget is passed, whether it's what you wanted or less, it's important to continue communication. It's equally important to engage residents, library staff, and others in the process of planning for the next year's budget. It's never too soon to begin anew. ✪

Dale McNeill is director of public library service at Queens Library (New York).

Join Dale McNeill in an open discussion about planning for and dealing with library budget cuts. Learn more about communication strategies and hear examples of activities and resources to develop and use. This interactive webinar welcomes all participants to share their stories, ideas, and to ask McNeill for suggestions on current scenarios. This free webinar is part of TLA's Strategic Initiative series and will take place on October 20 at 3 PM (CST). To register, go to: www.txla.org/secure/meeting-login. CPE credit will be offered.

Free People Read Freely

The 14th Annual Report on Challenged and Banned Books in Texas Public Schools 2009-2010 School Year

A PROJECT OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION OF TEXAS

BY JESSIE TORRISI WITH KATHRYN BRIMACOMBE

Editor's Note: This text is adapted from the ACLU's annual Banned Books Report. The complete report is available online at the ACLU of Texas website for the Banned Books Project at: www.aclutx.org/projects/bannedbooks.php. The final report includes an ACLU of Texas interview with Mary McDonagh Murphy, author of *Scout, Atticus & Boo: A Celebration of Fifty Years of "To Kill a Mockingbird"* and producer of the documentary film *Hey, Boo: Harper Lee & "To Kill a Mockingbird."*

The Texas Library Association conveys its deep thanks to the ACLU of Texas and its volunteers and staff who work so diligently each year to prepare this report. An extraordinary tool for assessing and protecting our collective right to read and learn, the Banned Books report is a vital document for all of us who care about the right to open inquiry.

An Overview of Censorship in Texas

In a world where adults and teenagers are ever more swamped with information, the simple pleasure of getting lost in the pages of a good book has never felt better. In a well-written story, the powerful themes that propel society forward and define the directions of our lives – from love, oppression, and the growing pains of childhood to war and peace – are brought before us. We come out wiser, more compassionate, and more emboldened for having dipped our imaginations, our intellects, and hearts into worlds beyond the confines of our own.

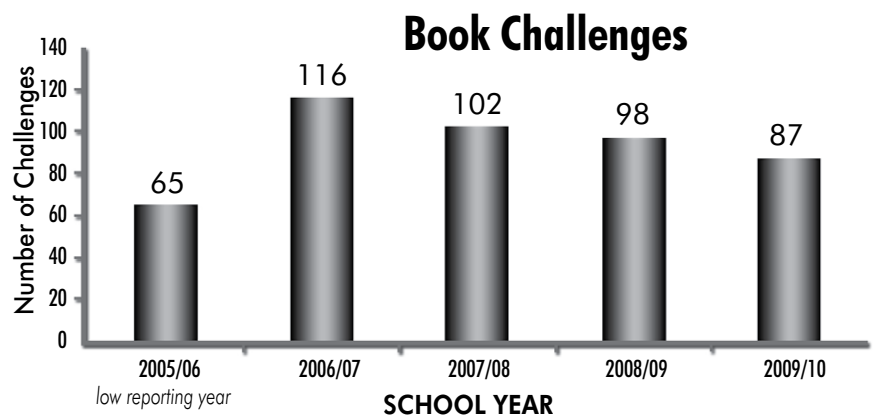
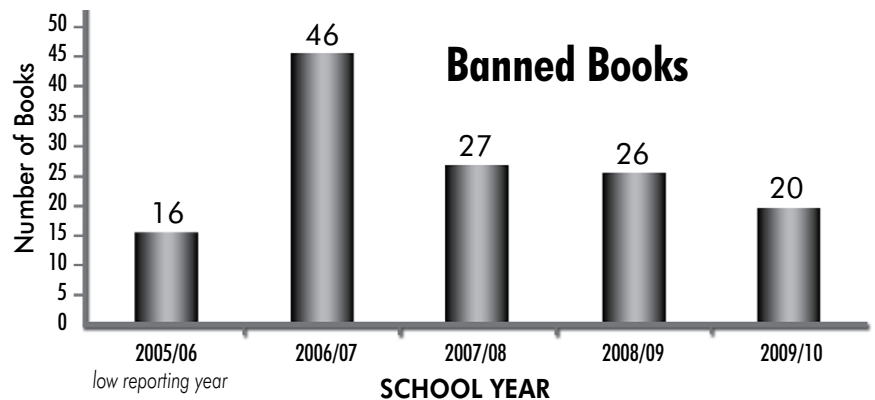
Unfortunately, as the ACLU of Texas' 14th Banned Books report will show not all see it that way. The good news is: when it comes to the outright banning of books, this year was better than last year. We have seen a slight but steady decrease in both the number of books challenged and banned since the 2007-2008 school year. The bad news is: of those challenges brought before school administrators this year, 44 percent led to a book being banned or restricted.

This year, we sent out requests to every school district and most charter schools in Texas. We were after basic information on whether books have been banned or restricted, and what mechanisms schools use before pulling a book from their library shelves or school curriculum. 954 out of almost 1,300 districts answered our requests for information.

We found that, throughout Texas, books were challenged 87 times. Twenty books were banned, while another 16 were restricted. Much likely, this number is higher as those districts that responded to our survey are likely those with attitudes and policies most protective of free speech and access to books.

In a marked shift from last year, only about a third of the books banned were in elementary schools. The overwhelming majority was in middle schools. While parents, teachers, and librarians are understandably protective of exposing small children to adult content, the worry seems to be spreading to pre-teens now too. Some of these actions seem downright over-reactive. Hunt Elementary in Cuero ISD, for example, removed *Time-Life Magazine* from its library. *In Our Mothers' House*, a book about a multi-racial family headed by lesbian parents, was banned at Glen Rose Intermediate, reflecting the tendency to try to wall off adolescent children from anything that deviates from "traditional" family values. Often, a parent or teacher will note that a book is simply not "age appropriate" without providing details as to what exactly they are opposed to.

We are concerned that schools are pulling books from their libraries without evaluating whether they are in fact damaging to kids, whether they contain information that may help



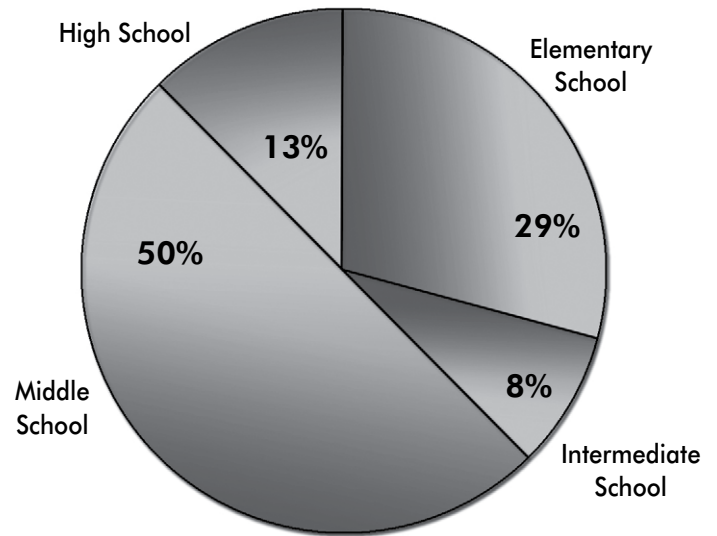
prepare children for the future, and whether presenting material in a proper context would be better than banning it.

Where Books Were Banned

Geographically, the greatest numbers of challenges came from Leander ISD, with Round Rock and Cypress-Fairbanks ISDs close behind. In Leander, the entire *Gossip Girl* series by Cecily von Ziegesar was nearly banned for inappropriate language, drugs, and sexual content. The books were challenged not in a middle or elementary school as expected, but at Vandegrift High School by a ninth grader's parent. After bringing the books before the review committee, the committee decided to ban books written after the series had passed from von Ziegesar to a ghostwriter; the reason cited was "poorer literary quality." Other materials challenged in Leander include Jerry Seinfeld's *Halloween*, the *Encyclopedia Horrificca*, *Beyond the Grave*, *La Historia de los Colores*, and a video on drug awareness entitled, *Reality Matters: Under the Influence*.

Nearly every challenge was initiated by a concerned parent or guardian with a few exceptions, where teachers or students brought the book to the administration's attention. At Canyon Vista Middle School in Round Rock, in two cases, a parent wanted a book banned but refused to read it in order to discuss it with school administrators. In another instance, a parent objected to a picture showing a girl with her "back exposed"

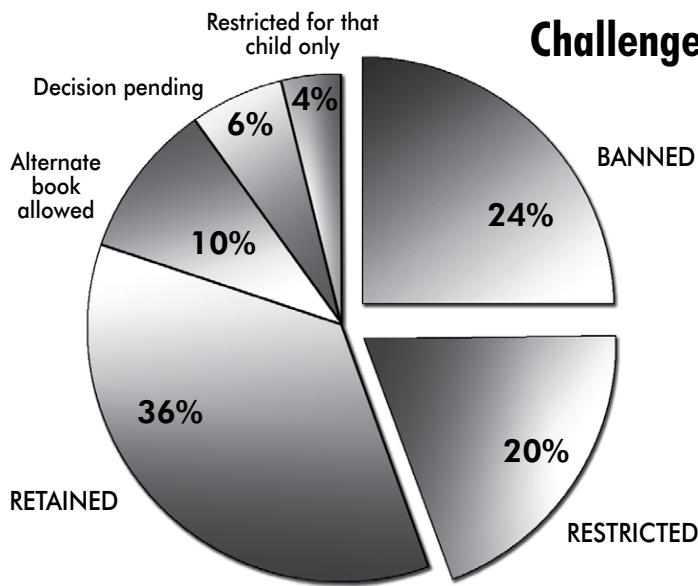
Banned Books by Age Range



and "bra unhooked." There were complaints about a book that dealt with suicide – a topic one parent felt hit too close to home – and the unseemly language in a memoir by an 18-year-old Iraq War veteran.

Some districts indeed take matters of intellectual freedom and a student's right to read very seriously. Though there were six challenges in Round Rock ISD – including *Thirteen Reasons*

Outcome of Challenge



Why, Suck It Up, and the *Guinness Book of World Records*, mostly for profanity or horror – no books were restricted or removed.

Similarly, we were pleased to see that Houston ISD, the largest school district in the state and the one with the most challenges just two years ago, reportedly had no incidents of books being challenged or removed in 2010.

Why Books Were Banned

As important as what books are banned is why books are banned. Often, it comes down to sex or nudity. Sexual content, however, can be a very loose term. Maurice Sendak's *In the Night Kitchen* was challenged for a cartoon drawing showing the little boy tumbling in a dream sequence with no diaper on. Concerns about nudity were also behind an attempt to get *Guinness Book of World Records* taken out of one elementary school.

We provided schools with 12 common reasons books are challenged along with an "other" category to track why books were challenged. This is what we found:

Judy Blume seems to raise the ire of strict parents year after year for its girl narrators that confront puberty and the desires and fears of adolescence in diary entries. In 2010, Blume's *Then Again, Maybe I Won't* and *Forever* were banned in Thrall and Cuero ISDs, while her *It's Not the End of the World* was restricted for using the word "Goddamn." This is a disappointment; while Blume's books are challenged every year, none were banned in Texas during the 2008-2009 school. In Leander, however, which boasts the most challenges of any school district, a discussion between

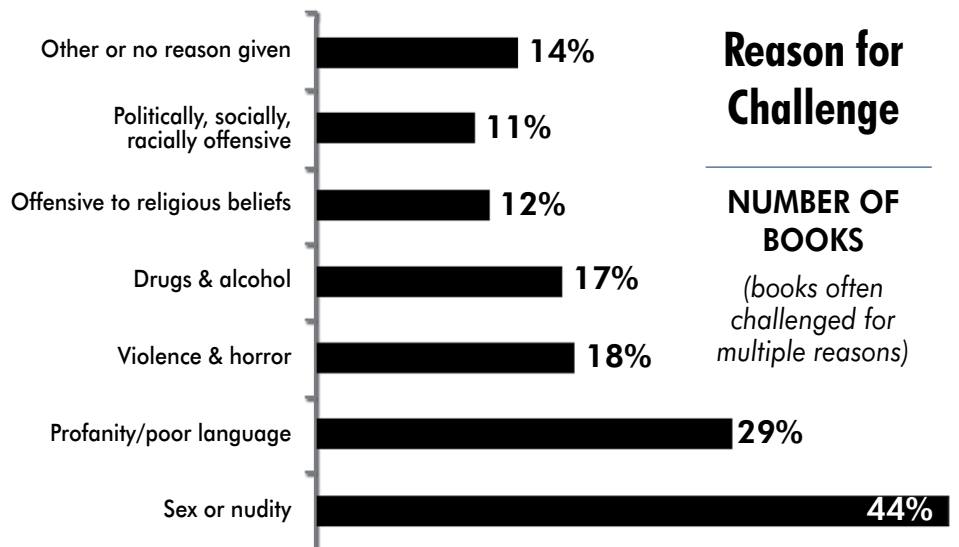
the school principal and librarian resulted in keeping the ever-popular *Are You There God, It's Me Margaret* at school. Interestingly, Blume's books contain very little actual sexual content, especially when compared to the way teen sexuality and behavior is portrayed on TV. Rather, it is the narrators' willingness to openly admit to questions, fears, and curiosity about sex that seems to threaten parents.

Religious objections were also at the root of many challenges. Just as Harry Potter was attacked in many districts a few years ago, any book seen to be promoting sorcery, paganism, and witchcraft came under fire in 2010. These complaints call into question the line between deeply personal beliefs and the need to develop a curriculum relevant to children from many different backgrounds.

Violence or horror is a similar way to voice the same objection. Together, these two categories make up a quarter of all challenges. While certain sects of Christianity consistently take issue with wizard, ghost, and goblin books, believing they represent the occult, others take these tales for completely fictional fantastical worlds where vampires roam the night, smart kids have special powers, and children are encouraged to use their imaginations to the greatest degree possible.

Vampires, however, seemed to be more objectionable last year – when Stephenville ISD banned all 11 books from Richelle Mead's *Vampire Academy* and P.C. Cast's *House of Night* series. We were pleasantly surprised that Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* series was only challenged in one school district this year; in that case, the student whose parent objected was assigned an alternative book. As always, the question becomes: should the tastes or beliefs of a few rule the reading lists for us all? Should parents have the last word on what their children ought to be exposed to?

Complaints that a book is "politically, racially, socially offensive" were also numerous this year. *In the Lake of the*



Woods by Tim O'Brien, whose real life-inspired stories on Vietnam earned him a Pulitzer and National Book Award nomination, made this list. So did *Chains* by Laurie Halse Anderson, *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid* by Jeff Kinney, and *Give a Boy a Gun* by Todd Strasser. None of these books, however, were actually removed from schools.

Ellen Hopkins's books – which include *Burned*, *Cranked*, *Glass*, *Identical*, and *Impulse* – were challenged at several schools for taking on a dysfunctional family haunted by an abusive, alcoholic father. One district left the book on the library shelves but took it off a required reading list. Another restricted the books to 11th and 12th graders.

Among the notable literature that made our “challenged” list this year are *Flowers for Algernon*, *Catcher in the Rye*, and *The Kite Runner*.

This year, we feature *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, which has long been on the bulls-eye for those who police reading lists. (See the complete Banned Books report at www.aclutx.org/projects/bannedbooks.php.) This story of a six-year-old girl who confronts the complex racial overtones of her Southern town became an instant classic when it was released. We talk with Mary McDonagh Murphy, whose new book *Scout, Atticus & Boo*, reflects on the significance of

the book 50 years later. Its power to move people – and its perhaps unintended themes of feminism, the bitter remnants of slavery, and the importance of one person (no matter how small) standing up to injustice – continues to draw lots of attention.

In Eden Valley, Minnesota, in the 1970's *To Kill a Mockingbird* was temporarily banned for the words “damn” and “whore lady.” More recently, it's come under fire for use of the N word. Black parents and even the NAACP have protested on several occasions when the book is included in elementary and middle school reading lists.

In 1995, the book was removed from a high school library in Louisiana and then banned from a Lindale, Texas advanced placement reading list, often reserved for juniors and seniors, because the book “conflicted with the values of the community.”

To Kill a Mockingbird is one of the modern classics, alongside *Of Mice and Men* and *Catcher in the Rye*, which routinely draws complaints for profanity, unpleasant racial themes, and sexuality. The book was banned by one Oklahoma district in 2001. In Texas, it has come under fire as recently as 2008. Hardly a year goes by when the book is not challenged somewhere in the US.

Due Process Before Pulling a Book

When a book is challenged by a parent or school district resident, the process by which a district responds often affects whether the book gets banned as much as the content of the book. Two hundred schools reported that when a book is challenged, the decision of whether to ban it is made by the “administration only” or “librarian only.” This means the decision is likely made by a single person. Another 130 rely on the “School Board only” to review challenged books.

Five hundred districts use a review committee, often comprised of the principal or superintendent, school librarian, teachers, parents, and ideally some students. This is clearly a more democratic way to make decisions that affect the student body, possibly for decades to come. Oftentimes, the librarian will be encouraged to read and review the book and present an opinion to others. This creates some safeguards that one parent’s whims, religious beliefs or personal objections do not rob a whole community of the opportunity to expand their world through reading.

In Leander ISD, which had the most challenges this year, both the person challenging the book and the review committee *must read* the books before making a decision. In Round Rock, which had the second highest number of challenges, teachers, parents, administrators, and students sit on the review committee. The superintendent makes decisions as well, but only those decisions made by the Round Rock School Board are final.

Many districts may choose some intermediary option that falls short of banning a book but does restrict access to it. Often, a district will decide a given book is only acceptable for a student of a certain age or grade level, or they will require parental permission before a student can check it out. And if a parent objects to a book that is assigned by a teacher, usually the teacher will offer an alternative assignment. Last year, 22 percent of challenges led to a restriction. This year, the number was nearly identical, with 20 percent of challenges leading to restricted access based on age. In another four percent of cases, the students whose parents

objected were not allowed to read the book though other students retained access to it.

Equally significant is whether the decision made is “permanent.” Although many districts claim to have reconsideration procedures once a book is removed from library shelves, 455 districts – more than half of those who answered the question– reported that all decisions are final. This means there is no way for a teacher, student, or community member to appeal the decision and reintroduce the question of whether a book belongs in the classroom once controversy around an issue may have died down.

Where would be today if our children were still prohibited from reading *To Kill A Mockingbird*? Key to democracy and open information is the ability to revisit situations. It is crucial that, in due time, when it becomes clear that Harry Potter readers do not take up witchcraft and put spells on their teachers, or that the values put forth by a book like *To Kill a Mockingbird* are ones we should aspire to rather than fear, school administrators are open to putting a book back into library circulation.

In the best of worlds, when a parent challenges a book, this can be a good way of creating a community or school-wide discussion on issues raised by the book. Certainly this was true with *To Kill a Mockingbird* in the 1960’s and with Judy Blume books, even today. Educators are forced to read, perhaps for the first time, literature that is popular with their students. Parents are encouraged to read as well and see what their children are drawn to and discussing.

Books don’t corrupt us. They guide us through the complexities of life, arm us with information, and help us develop our own moral compasses. From high literature to pulp fiction, if it gets a child to read, can it really be that bad?

We would like to thank the schools that took the time to answer our survey, and above all, the librarians across Texas who continue to foster a curiosity for learning and a love of reading.

Texas Library Association

The Texas Library Association believes that the freedom to read is a corollary of the First Amendment’s guarantees of a free press. The Association’s Intellectual Freedom Committee helps protect this right by responding to librarians facing book challenges, offering model policies and procedures, tracking reports of book challenges by its members, and supporting policies and laws that preserve and protect access to information. The Committee also makes itself available as a resource to librarians facing intellectual freedom challenges.

Freedom to read means individuals should have the freedom to choose among reading materials and open access to a diversity of resources. It means that these rights should be protected against attempts – legal or otherwise – to censor reading materials or control the process.

Jessie Torrisi is a volunteer for the ACLU of Texas.

Kathryn Brimacombe is public affairs coordinator for the ACLU of Texas.

A SHORT SUMMARY OF EACH CHALLENGED BOOK

1. *A Child Called It* – David J. Pelzer
An autobiography of Pelzer's childhood with his abusive, alcoholic mother.
2. *About Sardine In Outer Space 4*
Emmanuel Guibert
A whimsically illustrated account of a space-pirate's adventures with his friends.
3. *Achingly Alice*
Phyllis Reynolds Naylor
Alice, an eighth grader, attempts to navigate adolescence and confronts her relationships and sexuality head-on.
4. *Alice On Her Way*
Phyllis Reynolds Naylor
Alice, along with several of her friends, further explores her sexuality with the help of an uncharacteristically liberal church-sponsored program.
5. *And Tango Makes Three*
Peter Parnell and Justin Richardson
At New York City's Central Park Zoo, two male penguins fall in love and start a family by taking turns sitting on an abandoned egg until it hatches.
6. *Are You There God? It's Me Margaret*
Judy Blume
An 11-year-old Margaret's exploration of puberty and adolescent spiritual relationships.
7. *Beyond The Grave* – Judith Herbst
A parapsychological book discussing topics such as ghosts, spontaneous human combustion, and near-death experiences.
8. *Bleach* – Tite Kubo
A series of graphic novels depicting the adventures of a Soul Reaper, who guides deceased spirits to the afterlife.
9. *Blood And Chocolate*
Annette Curtis Klause
A teenage werewolf finds herself stuck between the human and paranormal worlds when she falls in love with a high school boy.
10. *Bloodline* – Kate Cary
A dramatic war story in which a woman must decide whether or not to follow the man she loves and become a vampire.
11. *Bone Dance* – Martha Brooks
As a teenager, Alexandra becomes the owner of a prairie home near an ancient Native American burial ground. When she takes up residence at this home, she begins encounter ghosts and other mythological Native American spirits.
12. *Born To Rock* – Gordan Korman
After a debate involving homophobia and accusations of cheating, high school student Leo sets out to find his biological father, a punk-rock band member. The former president of his high school's Young Republican club, Leo is forced to reexamine his life and his principles along his journey.
13. *Burned* – Ellen Hopkins
Escaping an abusive home life and beginning to live with her aunt, teenage Pattyn begins to question her Mormon religion and relationships.
14. *Chains* – Laurie Halse Anderson
The story of a teenage slave who, during the American Revolution, works as a spy for the rebels.
15. *Crank* – Ellen Hopkins
Written in verse, 15-year-old narrator Kristina reveals how she became addicted to crank, and how the stimulant turned her from straight-A student to drug addict.
16. *Crystal Meth and Other Amphetamines* – Karla Fitzhugh
An informative description of various amphetamines. Also examines the behavior of young persons in regards to amphetamines.
17. *Dorling Kindersly Visual Encyclopedia*
John Farndon
An encyclopedia with categories such as the Earth, the human body, and society and history.
18. *Draw Me A Star* – Eric Carle
A young boy creates an entire world around a simple drawing of a star.
19. *Eight Seconds* – Jean Ferris
An upcoming senior in high school, John attends a rodeo camp, where he discovers his own homosexuality and must confront what this realization means for his future.
20. *Encyclopedia Horrificca* – Joshua Gee
An encyclopedia of mythical creatures, such as aliens, vampires, mermaids, and zombies.
21. *Eye Candy* – R.L. Stine
Experimenting with online dating, Lindsey finds herself dating four men at once. However, after an anonymous, threatening message from one of the men, Lindsey feels forced to say yes to everything each man demands.
22. *Far From Xanadu* – Julie Anne Peters
Protagonist Mike (born Mary-Elizabeth) must come to terms with her homosexuality as she ponders her escape from her small-town home.
23. *Feed* – M.T. Anderson
A tale of a society in which infants are "plugged in" to computers that dictate their desires and behaviors.
24. *Flowers For Algernon* – Daniel Keyes
Mentally-challenged Charlie becomes the first human subject for an IQ-increasing brain operation. Once his IQ begins to climb, however, Charlie must confront the cruelty of his "friends" and the other stresses that come with extreme intellect.
25. *Forever* – Judy Blume
A story of first love that explores the sexuality and passionate relationship between two high school students.

26. *Ghosts of War* – Ryan Smithson
A true account of Smithson's enlistment into the Army following 9/11. Following his return home from Iraq, he must deal with PTSD.
27. *Give A Boy A Gun* – Todd Strasser
Two bullied high school students hold their fellow classmates hostage with stolen guns and homemade bombs.
28. *Glass* – Ellen Hopkins
The sequel to *Crank*, this is the continuing story of Kristina and drug addiction. Told in verse, it's a harrowing and disturbing look at addiction and the damage that it inflicts.
29. *Go Ask Alice* – Anonymous
This anonymous account of an adolescent rapidly losing control explores topics such as drug addiction and mental illness.
30. *Gossip Girl* series
Cecily von Ziegesar
A series of novels that explores the lives of elite, privileged young women in New York City.
31. *Guinness Book of World Records*
A book of world records, ranging from articles about the oldest Titanic survivor to some of the world's most intriguing cultural rituals. Also includes sections on the human body, sports, and engineering and technology.
32. *Halloween* – Jerry Seinfeld
A children's humor book that recounts a young Jerry Seinfeld's trick-or-treating adventures.
33. *Hip Hop: Jay Z* – Geoff Barnes
A biography of musical artist Jay-Z that details his journey from adolescent drug dealer to multi-million dollar businessman and performer.
34. *Hotlanta* – Denene Millner
The story of twins who, despite living privileged lives, must deal with an incarcerated father, a murder, and insincere relationships.
35. *Identical* – Ellen Hopkins
A story of a severely dysfunctional family whose teenage twin daughters are in physical danger and emotional crisis.
36. *If Pigs Could Fly... And Other Deep Thoughts* – Bruce Lansky
A collection of poems on topics such as dirty socks and toothless relatives.
37. *Impulse* – Ellen Hopkins
Three troubled teens cross paths at Aspen Springs, a psychiatric hospital, after attempting suicide.
38. *In Our Mothers' House*
Patricia Polacco
This book describes the happy and well-adjusted life of a family with two mothers who raise several racially different children.
39. *In the Lake of the Woods*
Tim O'Brien
After John's bid for Senate is derailed due to his behavior during the Vietnam War, his wife Kathy disappears, which raises new questions about John's past.
40. *In The Night Kitchen*
Maurice Sendak
A nighttime adventure in a baker's kitchen narrated by a child.
41. *It* – Stephen King
Having already once thwarted an evil responsible for several gruesome murders, a group of seven individuals is called upon again to battle evil.
42. *It's Not the End of the World*
Judy Blume
Young Karen plots to resolve her family's problems and prevent her parents from getting a divorce.
43. *It's Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies...* – Robie Harris
An informative reference book that covers topics such as puberty, birth control, and conception.
44. *Las Aventuras Del Super-Bebe Panal*
Dav Pilkey
A Spanish-language graphic novel of Captain Underpants and his companions, who favor potty-humored adventures.
45. *Tom Brown's Schooldays*
Thomas Hughes
A semi-autobiographical account of a young boy's experiences with bullying and friendships.
46. *More Horowitz Horror*
Anthony Horowitz
Nine horror stories, involving things such as a cell phone that receives calls from the dead and other paranormal activity.
47. *My Sister's Keeper* – Jodi Picoult
A story of one girl's fight to keep her organs her own, despite having been genetically engineered to be a perfect match for her cancer-stricken sister.
48. *Naruto* – Kishimoto
A series of graphic novels that details the adventures of a young ninja.
49. *No, David!* – David Shannon
An illustrated children's book that portrays the title character doing a variety of mischievous things.
50. *Olive's Ocean* – Kevin Henkes
After receiving a note from a deceased classmate, a young girl realizes her own mortality while also experiencing many of her life's "firsts."
51. *Paranoid Park* – Blake Nelson
A teenage boy must face the guilt he experiences after inadvertently causing a man's death.
52. *Parrot In The Oven* – Victor Martinez
As he matures, a Hispanic teenager is confronted with poverty, neighborhood gangs, and familial strife.
53. *Reality Matters: Under The Influence* (VIDEO)
A video that explores the potential harms of alcohol on teenagers.
54. *She's Got The Beat* – Nancy Krulik
Upon arriving at college, Miranda begins taking drum lessons, which lead her to romance and new friendships.
55. *Snitch* – Allison van Diepen
High school student Julia joins a gang, only to be confronted with drugs, sex, violence, and unstable relationships.

56. *Spanking Shakespeare* – Jake Wizner
As part of a school project, teenager Shakespeare Shapiro meticulously documents his senior year.
57. *Story of Colors/La Historia De Los Colores* – Subcomandante Marcos
A Mexican folk tale that describes how the gods created the colors of the world.
58. *Suck It Up* – Brian Meehl
The story of a special-needs misfit vampire.
59. *The Catcher In The Rye*
J.D. Salinger
Having been expelled from prep school, narrator Holden Caulfield describes his disillusion with the world.
60. *The Cookcamp* – Gary Paulsen
Sent to live with his grandmother in a remote part of Minnesota, a young boy longs for his parents while also admiring the workmen near his grandmother's house.
61. *The Creature from the Depths*
Mark Kidwell
A graphic novel that tells the story of a deep sea treasure guarded by a mythical monster.
62. *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid*
Jeff Kinney
Middle-school student Greg is forced, by his mother, to keep a diary of the school year's events.
63. *The History and Methods of Torture*
Brian Innes
A historical account of 3,000 years of torture in various locations around the world.
64. *The Hunger Games*
Suzanne Collins
In a dystopic future world, a teenage girl is forced to participate in a worldwide competition that is part entertainment, part violence.
65. *The Idiots Guide to Wicca & Witchcraft* – Denise Zimmerman and Katherine A. Gleason
A "how-to" book giving a history of witchcraft and earth-based religion. Also provides advice for casting spells.
66. *The Kite Runner* – Khaled Hosseini
Haunted by an act of childhood disloyalty, protagonist Amir returns to Afghanistan and witnesses many of the injustices perpetrated by the Taliban.
67. *The Schernoff Discoveries*
Gary Paulsen
A story of two awkward adolescents who experience first dates, joyrides, and other adventures.
68. *The True Meaning of Cleavage*
Mariah Fredericks
Two high school friends are torn apart when one decides to have a secret affair with a fellow classmate.
69. *The World's Most Evil People*
Rodney Castleden
An account of some of the world's most evil individuals, including Vlad the Impaler and Stalin that also details the individuals' preferred methods of torture, killing, maiming, etc.
70. *Then Again, Maybe I Won't*
Judy Blume
Already having to deal with the awkwardness of adolescence, protagonist Tony must also face the changes that arise when his father becomes rich and moves his family to a wealthy city.
71. *Thirteen Reasons Why* – Jay Asher
A teenage boy receives tapes of a dead classmate's voice and begins to investigate the circumstances that led up to the classmate's suicide.
72. *Time-Life Magazine*
A worldwide news magazine.
73. *ttfn* – Lauren Myracle
Through instant message language, three high school friends weather the trials of moving, drug experimentation, and relationships.
74. *Twilight*
Stephanie Meyer
High school student Bella falls in love with her fellow classmate Edward, who is a vampire.
75. *Wake* – Lisa McMann
Teenage Janie is capable of seeing into other people's dreams, and she begins to wonder how this ability will affect her own future.
76. *What My Mother Doesn't Know*
Sonya Sones
Protagonist Sophie experiences a series of teenage crushes and deals with the embarrassment of her mother's soap-opera devotion.
77. *Would I Lie to You*
Cecily von Ziegesar
Another Gossip Girl novel detailing the lives and experiences of privileged New York City teenagers; this particular story takes place in the Hamptons, the summer before the main characters begin college.
78. *Zombies On The Loose*
Anne Rooney
Contains sections such as "a zombie legend," "zombie slaves," and "are zombies real?" 🌟



Marching Toward the Session, The 82nd Marching on the Capitol Legislature

BY GLORIA MERAZ

When the State Legislature convenes

on January 11, 2011, lawmakers will have to deal with an estimated \$18 billion budget deficit, redistricting, health reform legislation, gambling proposals, environmental regulation, and possible upheaval in the Speaker's race. And those are just the items we know of now.

For libraries (and for all other special interest groups), the crux of our efforts will most likely involve protecting funding for programs and services. With the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, the Texas Education Agency, and institutions of higher education (along with everyone else) having to offer up budget cuts, the mantra coming from the Capitol is *protect, protect, protect*.

All agencies had to submit proposals for a 5% and 10% cut in the next biennium (2012-2013). These proposals come on top of cuts implemented in the current biennium. If any of the proposals for the State Library programs are implemented, library programs will be hit hard. Most of the cuts proposed are in Loan Star Libraries, the Library System grant (System Negotiated Grants), and TexShare. All areas of the agency budget also sustain smaller cuts.

In its final budget deliberations, the State Library Commission approved the agency's Legislative Appropriations Request (i.e., final budget proposal for the biennium). It also included the agency's request for exceptional items funding (new funding). In the priority order assigned by the Commission, the exceptional items are: 1) a new building for archival storage, \$27,802,260; 2) technology for the Talking Book Program, \$340,000; 3) 2 FTEs and supplies for an electronic records program, \$486,300; 4) TexShare Online funding to cover inflationary cost increases for TexShare, the K-12 database program, and funding for a testing and certification resource database for all users, \$4,012,000; and 5) Loan Star Libraries, \$4 million. All items are for the biennium.

At TEA, the agency is proposing some cuts to the Technology Allotment, the source of funding for the K-12 database program and a per pupil allotment for technology. While it is unclear as to whether that cut, if implemented, will change rider funding, any cuts to education funding (and TEA is proposing cuts in many areas) are detrimental to student learning.

Another critical issue for education stakeholders is continuation of the statewide telecommunications discounts. Originally established in 1995 as part of the state's massive deregulation efforts, the discounts require providers to offer certain services, such as T1 lines (among others), at 105% or 110% of long-term incremental costs. These discounts were extended in 2005 but are set to expire on January 1, 2012 unless legislative action is taken this session.

In 2006, the Public Utility Commission of Texas reported that the annual value of the discount program for eligible entities was close to \$100 million. The PUC also concluded that, "The expiration of the state telecommunications discount program in January 2012 could have a significant adverse impact on Texas's schools, libraries, and nonprofit health-care institutions."

Library supporters will continue efforts to keep funding for library programs as strong as possible – especially in the wake of massive cuts at the local, district, and institutional level. All types of libraries are reporting cuts to hours of operation, materials budgets, staff, and other programs. For these reasons, the state role is supporting strong library programs is even more crucial than ever.

www.tsla.org/advocate

The screenshot shows the TLA website's 'Advocate' page. The header includes the TLA logo and 'TEXAS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION'. A navigation bar contains links for Home, About TLA, Be a Member, Attend Events, Advocate, Career Resources, Texas Libraries, and MyTLA. The main content area is titled 'Advocate' and features a sub-section 'Overview: Advocacy and Government Affairs'. The text describes TLA as a 501(c)(3) non-profit that supports library interests by advocating for policies and funding that support libraries, librarians, and educational initiatives. It encourages all library supporters to speak out for libraries. Below this, there is a 'Topics' section with a list of discussion points: 'Who participates in TLA Advocacy?', 'How can I support TLA Advocacy?', 'How can I learn more about becoming a strong advocate for libraries?', 'How does TLA decide what issues to pursue?', 'Does TLA offer a scorecard of elected officials and does it endorse candidates?', and 'Who can I contact to learn more?'. To the right, there is a 'Policy News: Happening Now!' section with several news items, including 'Fight to Restore Funding to America's Libraries: Take ACTION!', 'Take the Strategy on the Telecom Discount!', 'Rules under review affecting school libraries. See Commissioner's Rules Notice page.', 'School library supporters may want to comment on rules pertaining to school library facilities and reporting requirements (Chapter: 61, School Districts) and educator award programs (Chapter 102, Subchapter FF). Each rule has a comment link.', and 'Texas State Library and Archives Commission adopts rules on Textiles and Library Systems.'

To learn more about TLA's legislative

Overview of Issues for the 82nd Legislature

TSLAC AND TEA Budgets

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) provides services to libraries, researchers, and state government. Budget cuts to Loan Star Libraries, Library System funding, TexShare, or other programs will result in a marked decrease in services statewide. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) supports K-12 education and includes funding for the K-12 database program through the Technology Allotment rider.

Legislative Action Needed

Protect TSLAC's budget (See Article I of the General Appropriations Act) and TEA's budget (See Article III of the General Appropriations Act.)

TexShare Online Information

This item encompasses TexShare, which makes world-class online library of research materials available to all the state's universities and communities, and the K-12 Database Program, which offers K-12 students access to digital instructional materials.

Legislative Action Needed

Appropriate \$4.012 million for TexShare Online Information as requested in TSLAC's exceptional items request. This funding is needed to offset inflationary cost increases (and avoid a cut to current resources) and will allow for resources to support training for police officers, first responders, and countless other learners.

Loan Star Libraries

This grant program awards funds to public libraries throughout the state to support communities.

Legislative Action Needed

Appropriate an additional \$4 million for Loan Star Libraries as requested in the TSLAC's exceptional items request. The funding will offset cuts and will help libraries maintain hours of operation and other services.

Telecommunications Discounts

This statewide program for schools, libraries, and higher education requires providers to offer certain services (such as T1 lines and fiber connections) at no more than 110% of costs. The program expires on January 1, 2012.

Legislative Action Needed

Continuation of the program; Amend the *Utilities Code* (Chapters 58 & 59).

Strong School Libraries

School libraries and certified school librarians are critical in supporting education and ensuring that students master the complex world of information, technology, and digital literacy.

Regulatory Action Needed

Inclusion of benchmarks for strong school libraries in TEA campus distinction categories.



2005 Rally at the Texas State Capitol

program, see www.txla.org/advocate.

Are you ready? Are you prepared for the upcoming legislative session?
Most importantly, is your legislator prepared to address library issues?

Getting Ready for the Session: A Must-Do Mission for All Library Supporters

BY SUSAN MANN

It is not too late to start!!

Here are a few things you can do to be in the best position possible for the start of the legislative session in January.

- Meet your state representative and state senator. (This is the MOST important.)
- Make sure they know who you are.
- Show up at events in your area for these legislators.
- Make an appointment with them to discuss library issues. Use TLA's overview sheet (available on the TLA website) to help you. Remember, it is much easier to talk to them now before the session starts.
- Share how the various state programs impact your library. Tell them how difficult it is to sustain services with all the cuts that have been made while your usage has continued to increase. Quickly add how devastating it will be to sustain the statewide cuts that have been proposed. Give examples of things that will be impacted: reduced hours, reduced staff, reduced number of materials (e.g., books, magazines, DVD's), no computer upgrades. Stress how much the public depends on the library for their Internet access and how often it is the only way people have to apply for jobs and other assistance. Remind them that during difficult financial times more and more people turn to the library.
- Above all else come to your meeting prepared. Know your facts. They are always impressed by relevant statistics.
- Be ready for anything! Brush up on your current events; know the projected deficit for the state. All of this could be handy when entering in a discussion. They love to know how things are "playing" in their districts. All of this will signal you are well-informed and well-connected locally.
- Keep your information short and to the point. They are busy – maybe not as busy as during a session, but always be respectful of their time.
- Don't stray from the issue at hand. You are there to talk about library issues. Stick with library issues.

YOUR GOAL: Visit with your state senator and representative by December 1.

If there is a contested election in your area:

- Make sure to meet both candidates.
- Talk to them about their beliefs on funding for libraries and education. Try to find out if libraries will take the first and the deepest cuts or do they believe in spreading the cuts around so everyone is treated fairly.
- Host a meet and greet at your library. Invite all candidates. Allow them to speak or have prepared questions. If it would be better in your community schedule two events. (Make sure both candidates know that the other is going to be there and make sure they understand the format for the event.) It is always best to have no surprises! Your support groups – such as friends group or parent group – can help you organize the event.
- Publicize the event heavily in the community. You want to show you can draw a large crowd. This is a service to your patrons allowing them an opportunity to meet the person who will be representing their area.
- Be careful if you choose to publicly endorse one candidate over another. (This can get tricky and sticky... Proceed with Caution.)
- Share any information you ascertain about the candidates' pledges in support of libraries. The more people who know their stance on issues the more accountable they will have to be.
- After the election, quickly contact the winner's office and schedule a meeting.
- Make sure you congratulate the candidate and their staff on the victory. (This is one of the times that having an election event at your library may pay off.)

Things to remember:

- Be their resource. Inform them of community activities. Advise them who they need to visit. Let them know if you have a new mayor, city manager, or school superintendent. Know your community and what is important to the citizens and share that with them. They will always appreciate a little "heads up" information.
- Remember to always look and act like a professional. You want to be taken seriously and to be someone who is trusted.
- Keep in contact with the office and legislator.
- Your future relationship depends on the credibility you are building now.

LEGISLATIVE DAY

BY GLORIA MERAZ

Make plans now to participate in TLA's 2011 Legislative Day, which will be held in Austin, February 15-16, 2011. Delegate training will be held the evening of February 15 at the Hyatt at Lady Bird Lake. Attendees will participate in visits to various legislator offices on the 16th. All meetings will be coordinated by assigned delegate leaders, who will work with their team of library supporters to make all 150 state representatives and 31 senators aware of the needs of Texas libraries.

Please be aware that you must reserve your own room. The TLA special rate for February 15 and 16 is \$145 for a single/double, \$174 for triple, and \$199 for a quad. The firm hotel deadline is January 20, 2011. To make a reservation, call the Hyatt (512/477-1234 or 800/223-1234) and ask for the Texas Library Association group rate.

To register online, go to www.txla.org and click "Register" for Legislative Day. The registration form is one of the options listed through TLA's online event registration system.

The Latest in Legislative News and Legislative Day, 2011

Join TLA Legislative Committee Chair Joyce Baumbach, TLA Legislative Committee Vice-Chair Susan Mann, TLA Director of Communications Gloria Meraz, and TLA Policy Analyst Marty De Leon for a discussion about the upcoming legislative session, issues, and advocacy opportunities. Bring your

questions and ideas. The free webinar is intended for anyone interested in supporting libraries. Registration is limited to the first 150 participants.

This one-hour webinar will be offered at 2 pm (CST) on November 8 and 3:30 pm (CST) on January 12. To register, go to www.txla.org/ce.

RALLY at the Capitol

Imagine yourself dressed in red, surrounded by a sea of thousands of library supporters (also wearing red) on the south steps of the Texas Capitol. The RALLY for Texas Libraries is the only place to be on Wednesday, April 13, 2011. A built-in part of conference, this event will have the entire Texas Capitol in rapt attention to the urgent and persuasive cheering of Texas library supporters.

For those of you not in attendance at the 2005 Rally, don't miss the chance to be part of Texas library history. We'll have drummers, authors, and legislators talking about libraries and helping us make the case for increased support of our state's libraries and statewide library programs.

We had about 2,500 librarians at the rally in 2005.

We learned that the library rally could even be heard inside the four-foot granite walls of the Capitol.

Let's show them – we were just warming up!

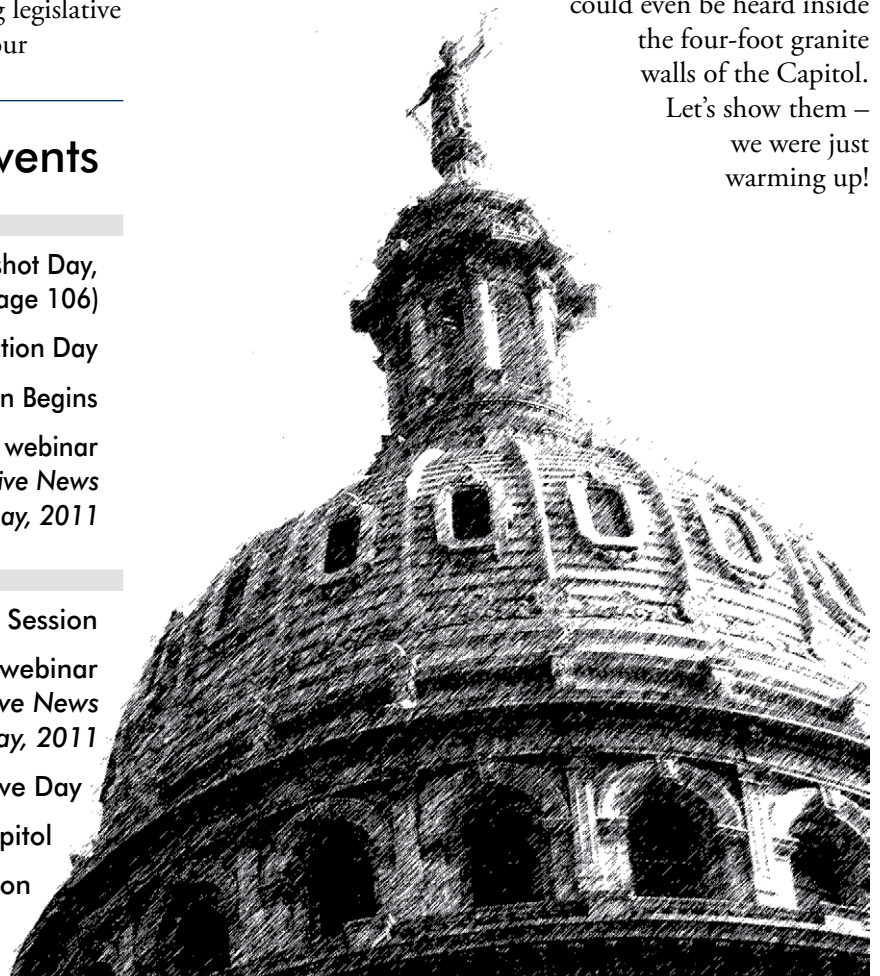
Key Dates and Events

2010

- October Texas Library Snapshot Day, Fall 2010 (See article on page 106)
- November 2 Election Day
- November 8 Prefiling of Legislation Begins
- November 9 TLA free webinar
The Latest in Legislative News and Legislative Day, 2011

2011

- January 11 Start of the 82nd Legislative Session
- January 12 TLA free webinar
The Latest in Legislative News and Legislative Day, 2011
- February 16 TLA Legislative Day
- April 13 Texas Librarian RALLY at the Capitol
- May 30 End of the 82nd Regular Session



TEXAS LIBRARY SNAPSHOT DAY

ZOOMING IN ON YOU! FALL 2010

In anticipation of the State Legislative Session, TLA will once again sponsor Texas Library Snapshot Day.

Pick any day in October to gather and submit information about your library. It is a “snapshot” of a day in the life of your library. Library Snapshot Day provides a way for libraries of all types across a state to show what happens in a single day.

The Snapshot Day we held last April proved very successful, with over 500 libraries participating. We want to make sure hundreds more libraries participate this fall, as all of the information we collect will help us make our case at the Capitol!

This initiative provides an easy means to collect statistics, photos, and stories to help us show the value of libraries to decision-makers and to increase public awareness. Remember, part of the key here is to keep data collection simple and consistent across libraries, across the state, and across the country.

How does Library Snapshot Day work?

Pick a single day in October 2010.

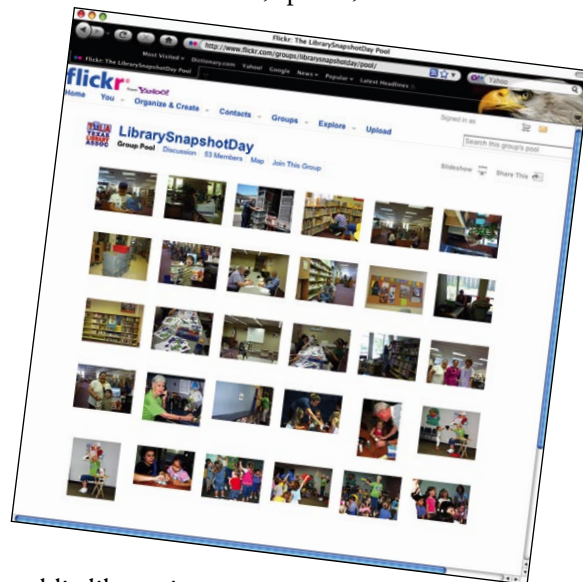
Promote that day to your community and/or students and faculty. Let them know you’ll be “snapping” a shot of the library’s activities that day. It’s our way of asking patrons to say “cheese!”

Collect data, stories, and photographs on that date.

Upload that information to the Texas Library Snapshot Day Web form. Be sure to upload your information by November 8, 2010. You can upload photos to the TLA Flickr group: <http://www.flickr.com/groups/librariansnapshotday/>.

We have set up a special website for this event: www.texaslibrarysnapshotday.org. There, you’ll find the report from

the spring event. You’ll also have access to a resource library of template press releases, photo and video release forms, bookmarks, summary sheets, tips for using the information to talk with elected officials, and patron input forms for public, school, special, and academic libraries.



The public library input form is also available in Spanish. You can also download a copy of the survey questionnaire and instructions so that you’ll know what data you’ll be collecting.

Here are some librarian comments for the spring Snapshot Day event.

- Our patrons and staff had a lot of fun participating and may make it a tradition.
- We tried to make it a big event on campus. I believe it can help in staff bonding and camaraderie.
- This was an excellent way to demonstrate how libraries are used. It should be continued.
- We had a wonderful day during snapshot. We helped out lots of patrons and each one enjoyed having their picture taken.
- I hate that “Snapshot Day” was limited to one day. We have so many great programs and activities all week long!
- It was interesting to see just how much happens in just one day.
- Next time – avoid the end of the semester and TAKS time. [We are!]

Texas LIBRARY SNAPSHOT Day



ZOOMING IN ON YOU

An Interview with Texas PTA's Kyle Ward

Editor's Note: Texas PTA Executive Director Kyle Ward visited with TLJ recently to talk about his work with one of the state's premier groups for child advocacy. Ward has led Texas PTA through many innovations and has championed the cause of school library services within his organization.



Photos courtesy of Texas PTA

TLJ: *What is your background and how did you come to be executive director of PTA?*

KW: I was fortunate to be named executive director in February 2006. I am a product of public school and have always valued education and those who make learning fun but who also stretch our students beyond their comfort zone. After graduating from college, I started my nonprofit career with the Boy Scouts of America followed by nearly 17 years with the national office of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD). I have always worked for organizations that embrace advocacy, so Texas PTA is a natural fit. My wife and I volunteered for PTA long before me serving as executive director was even a possibility. It was a huge decision for us to leave our home, friends, and school in the Denton area and move to Austin, but it has proven to be a great decision.

TLJ: *What is it about Texas PTA that makes it such a force in child advocacy?*

KW: It has a proven track record. We have a formula that works. Our members are the driving force behind our success. This 100-year-old plus association has not only talked the talk but walked the walk.

If you research changes which have made a difference in the lives of Texas children, you will often trace the path to success back to PTA. Whether it's protecting our children's health, education, or well being in general, PTA has and will continue to be "the voice for all children." While we reached the century mark, we have so much more to do.



TLJ: *How would you describe your leadership style and what is your philosophy for working with such a large and diverse group as Texas PTA?*

KW: My leadership style is built on focusing on others and helping them succeed. Leading is not a dictatorship; it's a partnership. Success is not a one person show. My goal is to be the conductor, but the real music comes from the symphony. There is nothing more gratifying than giving volunteers and staff the tools and confidence they need and to watch them exceed your expectations. My philosophy is we should be all about our members. They are the heroes who work every day to make PTA the best advocate Texas students have. There is one primary question I ask every day – "What do our members need and what are we doing to provide it?"

TLJ: *What are some of the highlights of your work with Texas PTA?*

KW: It is invigorating to testify at the Capitol on our legislative priorities. Few people have the opportunity to talk about things which can make a difference for so many students. I am humbled each time I meet with a member, elected official, or corporate leader who articulates the value of Texas PTA. Last year as I was riding in a convertible in downtown Dallas as part of our centennial celebration, I was moved to hear shouts of, "Way to go PTA. Thank you, PTA." It reminded me that I work for a spectacular association. PTA is truly a household name. I am fortunate to work with dynamic volunteers and staff members who are passionate about what we do. Every time I speak at an event on the steps of the Capitol, I swell with pride, Texas pride, of course.

TLJ: *Under your guidance, Texas PTA has really taken a strong position in support of school libraries. What*

Kyle Ward (FAR RIGHT) and other Texas PTA supporters present a Legislative Honor Roll certificate to Rep. Rob Eissler, Public Education Chairman (CENTER).

does this collaboration mean for parents and school librarians?

KW: I am so proud of the work TLA and Texas PTA are doing together. The first time I met Pat Smith, I knew that we were destined to work together. I believe our collaboration means we are stronger together than separate. United we show our commitment to sustaining strong school libraries. Librarians need advocates too, and what better advocates than parents and teachers! Public education, in general, should be collaborative, because one piece does not work near as well without all the other pieces. A school library has and always will be the foundation for learning. PTA, like mom and apple pie, will always stand up for our libraries.

TLJ: *Given the economy, there is a lot of concern about non-profits and membership organizations. Yet, member groups driven by educational concerns (like Texas PTA and TLA) are thriving. Why do you think that is?*

KW: I think the tough economy has been a wakeup call and a reminder that we should all do a better job of prioritizing. The economy has caused us all to think about how we spend our time and money. Fewer dollars redirect us to things that don't cost a lot but make a huge difference. This economy has shifted us to a more giving group of individuals. And in many instances, I see people turning to their friends in associations like TLA and Texas PTA for support, and we will always be here regardless of what the stock market is doing.

TLJ: *What big issues are coming up for Texas PTA in the coming year?*

KW: We will always stick to core issues – school funding, healthy lifestyles, the environment, and safety. The next legislative session, so I keep hearing, will be tough in light of the state's deficit. This will probably be a “monitor closely” session. Our main objective is to ensure Texas students and the public education system are not the only things on the chopping block to cure the ailing budget. We must protect education, because without it, our future is in jeopardy. We want to focus on issues that matter and that are on the minds and hearts of parents. We are very concerned about the growing problem of bullying and childhood obesity. Be assured Texas PTA will be there to support TLA and its important work.

TLJ: *What keeps you motivated?*

KW: My family is my rock. They support my frequent absences in the evenings and on weekends. Results keep me motivated. I have to see that what we are doing is making a difference. Being around positive people also keeps me motivated. And knowing that every day whatever I say or do can make a difference in the life of a child – that's the biggest motivator. ★

TEXAS BOOK FESTIVAL



Look who's coming!

| | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie | Crimm | Nicole LaPorte | Lupe Ruiz-Flores |
| Terry Allen | Justin Cronin | Justine Larbalestier | Shawn Sahn |
| Jonathan Alter | Molly Caldwell Crosby | Michael Largo | René Saldaña Jr. |
| M.T. Anderson | James Crowley | Gary M. Lavergne | John Phillip Santos |
| Laurie R. King | Matt de la Peña | Ingrid Law | Gerald D. Saxon |
| Arthur Andersson | Jesús F. de la Teja | Alex Lemon | Steven P. Schneider |
| Ann Angel | Frank Deford | Lance Letscher | Reefka Schneider |
| Wendy Barker | Anna Dewdney | Simon LeVay | Bob Shea |
| T.A. Barron | Tony DiTerlizzi | Matt Lewis | Hampton Sides |
| Chris Barton | Doug Dorst | Josh Lewis | Jake Silverstein |
| Rick Bass | David R. Dow | Terry Lickona | Thad Sitton |
| Yoram Bauman | Jennifer Egan | Jeff Lindsay | Joseph Skibell |
| Bonny Becker | Martha Egan | David Lipsky | Rebecca Skloot |
| Malcolm Beith | Owen Egerton | John D. Lukacs | Mark Haskell Smith |
| Mike Bender | Jonathan Eig | April Lurie | Cynthia Leitich Smith |
| Ari Berman | Robert K. Elder | Alison Macor | Tamler Sommers |
| Lou Berney | James Fallows | Deborah Madison | Dr. Cuthbert Soup |
| Ingrid Betancourt | Deborah Fallows | Karl Marlantes | Ilan Stavans |
| Alan Birkelbach | Noah Feldman | Wes Marshall | Mark Steinbauer |
| Lisa Birnback | Rob Fink | Russell L. Martin III | T.J. Stiles |
| Holly Black | Maria Finn | Joyce Maynard | Marianne Stockebrand |
| Walter R. Borneman | Neil Foley | Leila Meacham | Margaret Stohl |
| Charles Bowden | Carrie Fountain | David Means | Robert Stone |
| Jan Bozarth | Ian Frazier | Philipp Meyer | DJ Stout |
| H.W. Brands | Stephen Fried | Rick Meyerowitz | Susan Straight |
| Heather Brewer | Cristina García | Kirsten Miller | Hank Stuever |
| Alice Leora Briggs | Kami Garcia | Tom Miller | Gayle Sulik |
| Peter Brown | Xavier Garza | Bill Minutaglio | J. Courtney Sullivan |
| Alton Brown | Michael L. Gillette | Debra Monroe | James Swanson |
| Monica Brown | Julia Glass | David Montejano | Carmen Tafolla |
| Robert Bryce | Emily Fox Gordon | Magaly Morales | Jean Teasdale |
| Michael Buckley | John Gosselink | James McGrath Morris | Andrés Tijerina |
| Marina Budhos | David Grann | Joanne B. Mulcahy | Tim Tingle |
| Laura Bush | Keith Graves | Antonya Nelson | David Todd |
| David Bush | Tom Grimes | Scott Newton | Duncan Tonatiuh |
| Bobby Byrd | S.C. Gwynne | Michele Norris | Karen Valby |
| John William Byrd | James L. Haley | Deborah Noyes | Abraham Verghese |
| Meg Cabot | Oscar Andrew Hammerstein | Elizabeth Nunez | Ed Vuilliamy |
| Thomas Cahill | Stephen Hardin | Joseph O'Neill | S. Craig Watkins |
| Gail Caldwell | Sam Harris | P.J. O'Rourke | Max Watman |
| Don Carleton | Christopher Heaney | Mark Oldman | Steven Weinberg |
| Naomi Mitchell Carrier | Bethany Hegedus | Robin Oliveira | Ann Weisgarber |
| Susan Casey | Heloise | Cynthia Orozco | Scott Westerfeld |
| Eva Castellanoz | Amanda Hesser | Carolyn Osborn | Matthew White |
| Jennifer Cervantes | Bill Hobby | Jim Parsons | David Wiesner |
| Doug Chernack | John Hofmeister | Sara Pennypacker | Isabel Wilkerson |
| Cinda Williams Chima | Phillip Hoose | Renato Poliafito | Jeff Wilson |
| C.J. Chivers | James Hynes | Andrew Porter | Geoff Wingham |
| Melissa Clark | Varian Johnson | Lisa Railsback | Chris Wise |
| Roy Peter Clark | Maira Kalman | Raúl Ramos | Jane Roberts Wood |
| William Jelani Cobb | Doug Kennedy | Jeanne Campbell | Jonathan Woods |
| Carolyn Cohagan | Diana Kennedy | Reesman | Bryan Woolley |
| Sarah Cortez | Kathleen Kent | Jan Reid | Ben Yagoda |
| Jerry Craft | Chip Kidd | Dana Reinhardt | Brian Yansky |
| Andrea Cremer | Julie Klausner | Eugene Richards | Emilio Zamora |
| Carolina Castillo | Thomas H. Kreneck | Eugene Robinson | Jeffrey Zaslow |
| | Charles Kravand | Claire Robinson | |
| | Randall Lane | Karl Rove | |

The Texas Book Festival celebrates its 15th anniversary

with a star-studded lineup of 226 authors, including Laura W. Bush, the honorary chair and founder of the Book Festival. Guests can enjoy the festivities on October 16 and 17 in and around the Texas State Capitol and nearby venues. The Book Festival is free and fun for all ages.

In addition to participating in the Festival, Mrs. Bush will speak at the First Edition Literary Gala along with Pulitzer Prize-winning author Michael Cunningham and Michele Norris. Tickets to the Friday, October 15 gala can be purchased online at www.texasbookfestival.org.

Headlining authors at this year's Festival include Pulitzer Prize-winners Eugene Robinson and Michael Cunningham, Sam Harris, Alton Brown, Abraham Verghese, Joyce Maynard, Meg Cabot, Matt de la Peña, Jennifer Egan, and Justin Cronin. News and political junkies can hear from P.J. O'Rourke, Karl Rove, Jonathan Alter and William Jelani Cobb, and from journalists Michele Norris, Ian Frazier, Jake Silverstein, Robert Bryce and S.C. Gwynne.

Food lovers can see Food Network TV stars Alton Brown and Claire Robinson as well as Mexican cooking authority Diana Kennedy, *The New York Times* columnist Amanda Hesser and the owners of New York City's Baked, Matt Lewis and Renato Poliafito. Household hints will pour from Heloise; *True Prep* authors Lisa Birnbach and Chip Kidd will explore the "new" old preppy style. *Awkward Family Photos* authors Mike Bender and Doug Chernack along with comedian Julie Klausner will keep festival goers in stitches.

Music fans can linger over 35 years of *Austin City Limits* photographs or



visit the Music Tent and listen to acts including Terry Allen, 'Til We're Blue or Destroy, Bobby Whitlock & La Guerrilla, and Shinyribs.

Young adult readers will find their favorite authors including Holly Black, Laurie Halse Anderson, T.A. Barron, Naomi Mitchell Carrier, and Dr. Cuthbert Soup and children will meet *Llama Llama* series author Anna Dewdney, Carmen Tafolla, Alan Birkelbach, and David Wiesner. The Children's Entertainment tent will feature Sara Hickman and whimsical acts by the Fairy Godmother Academy. And, of course, a highlight will include the unveiling of the 2011 Texas Bluebonnet Award Master List on October 16 at 3:30. For the complete list of authors and more visit texasbookfestival.org.

About the Texas Book Festival

Founded in 1995 by Laura W. Bush and a group of interested volunteers, the Texas Book Festival is held every year on the grounds of the Texas State Capitol. Today the TBF – with the help of the Texas community, a statewide advisory committee, and nearly 1,000 volunteers – has awarded more than \$2.5 million in grants to Texas public libraries. In addition, more than 35,000 children in low-income schools have been reached with the TBF literacy program, Reading Rock Stars, providing for many the first book they've ever owned. TBF is expanding its literary programming and events year-round.

**TEXAS
BOOK
FESTIVAL**

AWARDS

It is awards season again. Be sure to check the TLA awards pages for information about association-wide awards and unit-level awards and stipends:

www.txla.org/awards

www.txla.org/tla-awards

www.txla.org/unit-awards

Association awards include: Librarian of the Year, Wayne Williams Library Project of the Year, Lifetime Achievement, Outstanding Services to Libraries, Benefactor, Distinguished Service, and Libraries Change Communities. TLA depends on its members to identify individuals, organizations, and projects most worthy of recognition for having advanced the cause of Texas libraries. Every worthy librarian or project has the potential to win.

TLA Scholarships, Grants, and Stipends

The Scholarship and Research Committee of the Texas Library Association invites TLA members to submit applications for scholarships, research grants, and conference stipends to be awarded in the spring of 2011. To apply for any TLA scholarship, grant or stipend, applicants will need to complete the online application found on the TLA website.

The Scholarship and Research Committee will make the following awards:

- Walter H. Escue Memorial Scholarship, \$1,000
- Ray C. Janeway Scholarship, \$2,000
- TLA Summer School Scholarship, \$500
- Garrett Scholarship, \$1,000
- Demco, Inc./TLA Research Grant, up to \$2,000
- Vivian Greenfield Education Award, \$1,500
- Escue Annual Conference Stipend, \$ 250
- Van Dusen - Tobin - Kaiser Scholarship (*awarded in even numbered years*)

TLA has an information booth at the Festival each year. Stop by for a visit if you're in town for the event.

Please visit the TLA website for information on the specific requirements for each award. Applicants must be TLA members to apply. Scholarship applicants must also be accepted as a graduate student at a Texas ALA-Accredited Library Program.

The Scholarship and Research Committee has prepared a tip sheet to assist applicants. The full tip sheet is available on the online application website; below are areas of note.

- Carefully read and follow application instructions.
- Allow sufficient time to prepare your application, find persons to provide references, and order official transcripts.
- Essay - Your essay is the single most important part of your application. This is your chance to help the Scholarship Committee get to know you. Take time in its preparation.
- Deadlines - Note the deadlines of the application process. Failure to meet a deadline will remove your application from consideration.
- Letters of Recommendation and References - References should be by those who are able to evaluate your likelihood for academic success, previous or current work experience, and/or career potential.

Questions about the application process should be directed to Sandy Gillman, chair of the TLA Scholarship and Research Committee, sandyg@plano.gov.

PR Branding Iron Awards

Be sure to apply for TLA's Public Relations Branding Iron Awards. With multiple categories, make sure you and your staff are being recognized for all the good work you are doing promoting your library and its services!

Texas State Library and Archives Commission Awarded \$8 Million to Increase Computer Access for Texans

Thousands of Texans will gain access to new educational and economic opportunities through a major federal grant awarded to the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. The nearly \$8 million grant, from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, will be matched by nearly \$3.7 million from the Commission and its partners in an initiative to provide public computing capabilities to underserved people throughout the state.

The Technology Expertise, Access, and Learning for All Texans project – TEAL – will fund new or upgraded computer centers at 38 libraries and branches, plus community colleges, public schools, recreation centers, and health facilities, as well as three mobile learning labs that will be used to provide computer training wherever it's needed.

With more than 1 million unemployed Texans, a 16.3 percent poverty level, and the lowest percentage of high school graduates per capita of any state,

Texas desperately needs to close the digital divide so all its residents can learn, work, and prosper. The federal Broadband Technology Opportunities Program grant will fund upgrades at 125 public computer centers and create 30 new ones, including 2,200 new and 480 upgraded work stations, enabling an additional 76,000 users a week to obtain computer access while increasing average connection speeds by 5Mbps. For the 67 percent of Texans whose local library provides their only source of free computer access – and only resource for online learning, job hunting, social networking, and other pursuits essential to productive participation in society – these funds will foster life-changing opportunities.

The Commission will oversee the project, which includes 38 public libraries and library systems serving 6.9 million Texans, 28 percent of the state's population. They range from the Houston Public Library System, which serves more than 2 million people, to Valley Mills Public Library, which serves 1,389. In addition to Houston, the Austin, Arlington, Harris County, and San Antonio library systems are participating, along with 33 other libraries. For full details, see www.tsl.state.tx.us.

Laredo Public Library staff members, Laredo Mayor Raul Salinas, Rep. Richard Pena Raymond (D-Laredo), and Deborah Littrell, TSLAC Library Development director, in a ceremonial presentation of Loan Star Grant funds.



DISTRICT MEETINGS

The fall meetings and conferences of TLA's 10 districts are underway. Districts 1, 2, and 6 convened in September, so their events are omitted from this listing. For full details of the programs at the TLA district meetings, visit the TLA website : <http://www.txla.org/district-meetings>.

DISTRICT 3

Monday, October 18

8:30 AM - 2:45 PM

D3.Ten: Technology Conference
(in partnership with Central Texas Library System)

Gullett Elementary School, Austin

DISTRICT 4

Thursday & Friday

October 21-22

Omni Marina Hotel
707 North Shoreline Drive
Corpus Christi

DISTRICT 5

Tuesday, October 12

8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Sockwell Center, Plano

DISTRICT 7

Saturday, November 13

Trinity Valley School

DISTRICT 8

Saturday, October 30 (tentative)

Clear Creek ISD

DISTRICT 9

Saturday, October 23

9:30 AM - 3:30 PM

South Plains College
Levelland

DISTRICT 10

Saturday, October 16

9:30 AM - 1:30 PM

Schreiner University
Kerrville

Contributed Papers for TLA 2011

The TLA 2011 Annual Conference Program Committee seeks contributed papers for the conference in Austin, April 12-15. The theme for the conference is *Libraries Crossing Boundaries/Bibliotecas Cruzando Fronteras*. Papers on any topic will be accepted.

Share your ideas with fellow colleagues by describing projects and/or research in a paper that can be presented in a twenty-minute time period. Presenters must be registered for the conference.

Check Us Out on MyTLA

TLA's new website offers members a host of new resources and networking opportunities. MyTLA, a social networking component designed specifically for the association community, allows TLA members to build customizable profiles and preferences. Members can form new communities with other members based on shared interests; members can upload resources and get content alerts when something is added to the website that is of particular interest to them; and, of course, members have control over privacy settings.

Here are a few highlights of new features on the website:

- MyTLA with customizable homepage

A page at www.txla.org/members-only differentiates between the features and functions of MyTLA and the Members Only section of the website.

Send a proposal describing the content of the paper you would like to present at the 2011 conference. The online submission form is available on the TLA website at www.txla.org/call-for-papers. Submission deadline for the proposal is in early October, and the finished paper – due by 12 midnight CDT, Friday, December 4, 2010 – may be sent as an email attachment to: Ann Noble (aanoble@hbu.edu) and Deborah Halsted (deborah.halsted@exch.library.tmc.edu).

- Content alerts on MyTLA
- Member matching (find members with similar interests!)
- New content areas: *Standards and Laws for Libraries, Research and Statistics, Overview of Texas Libraries*

We encourage members to sign on MyTLA and create their profiles. The login for MyTLA is the same as for the old Members Only section of the TLA website, which remains in place for secure member transactions. Features such as officer reports, the membership directory, registration and application forms, etc., are still in that section of the website. You'll find a link to the Members Only area at the top of the right column after you reach your profile page inside MyTLA.

Activate your new MyTLA account:
<http://my.txla.org/> or just click on
MyTLA at the top right of the TLA homepage.

The screenshot shows the Texas Library Association website. The header includes the TLA logo and navigation links: Home, About TLA, Be a Member, Attend Events, Advocate, Career Resources, Texas Libraries, and MyTLA. The main content area is titled "Members Only and MyTLA" and lists two areas requiring a member login: "Members Only" (A Secure Business Environment) and "MyTLA" (A Professional Networking Environment). The MyTLA section lists various features such as creating a member profile, building a contact list, and participating in discussions.

CONTINUING corner EDUCATION

Continuing education credit is available for registered participants of TLA's Strategic Initiatives and premium webinars. Registration is limited to the first 150 participants. To register, go to TLA's CE page at: www.txla.org/CE. Please note: all times are Central Standard Time.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Fall Webinar Series

Provided at No Cost to TLA Members

Engaging in Effective Communications Strategies during the Local Budgeting Process in Public Libraries

3:00-4:00 PM, OCTOBER 20, 2010

Join Dale McNeill in an open discussion about planning for and dealing with library budget cuts. Learn more about communication strategies and hear examples of activities and resources to develop and use. This interactive webinar welcomes all participants to share their stories, ideas, and to ask McNeill for suggestions on current scenarios.

Three Simple Rules for Great Presentations

2:00-3:00 PM, NOVEMBER 9, 2010

Join Lee Hilyer of the University of Houston Libraries for a discussion of making the most out of your presentations. He describes three simple rules that can dramatically improve the delivery of your presentations – whether

to an audience of students or faculty. He will provide practical, step-by-step techniques, and “before and after” examples will be discussed.

Speak Up Survey: Educational Technology and Learning for Today's Children

2:00-3:00 PM, NOVEMBER 16

Be sure to join Project Tomorrow's Julie Evans and Laurie Smith for an overview of the national 2009 Speak Up Survey, which for the first time contains information about Texas school librarians. Hear more about the exciting and challenging insights gathered from almost 300,000 stakeholders nationwide. Get a sneak peak at the 2010 survey and find out how you might leverage data from this incredible tool at your own campus or district.

The Latest in Legislative News and Legislative Day, 2011

3:30 – 4:30 PM, NOVEMBER 8, 2010
2:00 – 3:00 PM, JANUARY 12, 2011

Join TLA Legislative Committee Chair Joyce Baumbach, TLA Legislative Committee Vice-Chair Susan Mann, TLA Director of Communications Gloria Meraz, and TLA Policy Analyst Marty DeLeon for a discussion about the upcoming legislative session, issues, and advocacy

PREMIUM WEBINARS

TLA Members \$45
Non-members \$55

Group Rate: \$35 per person for groups of five or more, must be paid in one sum. Please contact the TLA CE specialist for details at tedw@txla.org or 512-328-1518 / 800-580-2852.

Gretchen McCord Hoffmann will continue her webinar series, *Getting a Handle on Copyright*. Each program may be taken as a stand-alone class.

This six-part series (you can register for one, several, or all of the components) covers general copyright principles; the application of current copyright laws in your library; the use of various types of library materials and applicable copyright policies; and the possible implication of social media, libraries, and copyright laws. The series components will be tailored for public and school libraries. While advantages exist for taking the entire series, each webinar stands alone as a separate program.

Copyright Issues in School Libraries

OCTOBER 5 • 3:30-4:30 PM CDT

Engage in discussion regarding how to deal with copyright concerns in situations commonly encountered in school libraries, such as the conditions under which the school or library may show movies to students; copying works from one medium into another; classroom photocopying; and the library's potential liability for actions of library users.

Copyright Issues in Academic Libraries

OCTOBER 26 • 3:30-4:30 PM CDT

Engage in discussion regarding how to deal with copyright concerns in situations commonly encountered in academic libraries, such as the use of print course packs and content management technology such as Blackboard; electronic reserves; classroom photocopying; and the library's potential liability for actions of library users.

ARE YOU READY TO BE A TALL TEXAN?

The TALL Texans Leadership Development Institute, held in June, provides advanced leadership and management education in service to all the libraries of Texas and the communities they serve. The program is designed for TLA members who are mid-career library and information science practitioners (degreed and non-degreed), who are currently employed in the field, and who have at least five years of experience in a professional level position in library and/or information science. “Lay” library supporters with at least three years of service to the library community are also encouraged to apply.

Application for the 2011 class opens this fall: WWW.TXLA.ORG/TALLTEXANS ✪