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# Musing on the Numbers



BY MELODY KELLY

With my last president's column I must confess to being an NPR (National Public Radio) junky. I'm not looking for a 12-step program to kick my habit, although these days my family wishes I would as they are subjected to more information than they want to know. My local station (90.1 KERA) is on 24 hours a day (in my home, in my car, in my office); it is the background noise of my life and takes me from my own life and local community into the wider American experience. Then, after 10 pm, when the station changes to BBC World, my background noise has an international focus.

Sadly, these days the air waves are filled with numbers, and the numbers aren't good: the number of unemployed, the number of foreclosed housing stock available, the number of bank failures, the latest numbers on the cost of war, the figures for the economic bailout/stimulus package, the cost of health care, the number of boomers delaying retirement, the number of people

affected by famine, global warming, etc. These numbers from numerous surveys and reports keep haunting me; they are unrelenting, so distressing, and so beyond my immediate ability to make a difference.

As I lay in bed one night, I thought of Carl Sagan's vast expanse of the universe when I heard the phrase "billions and billions," and I whispered out loud to the dark, "Have you any numbers other than a billion?" "Yes," was the reply from the radio, "Trillions!" I next whispered, "Oh, where can I turn to find comfort in numbers?" But no reply came from my radio, and the cats expressed their annoyance at being disturbed from their slumbers by my outbursts.

Now, I have found an answer and must share it with you. The Texas Library Association Voters Survey [www.txla.org/html/pr/survey.html] is out, and the report from this survey does provide comfort in numbers and demonstrates that librarians can and do make a difference.

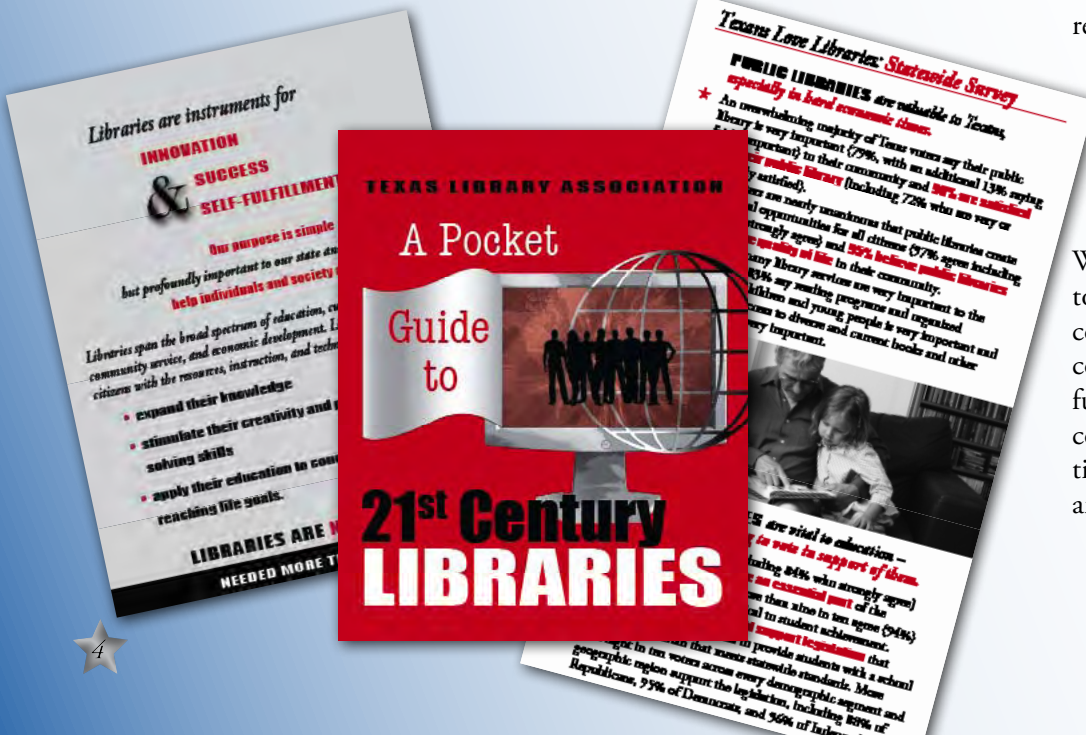
As I write this column, I have the survey report website up, and I'm flipping through the red spiral-bound "Texas Library Association: A Pocket Guide to 21st Century Libraries." From these sources (which include data from ALA's *Libraries Connect Communities*), several numbers leapt out and gave me immediate comfort.

- 99% of Texas voters believe school libraries are essential to education and will vote in support of them;
- 74% of Texas libraries report they are the only provider of free Internet access in their communities;
- Over 75% of Texas public libraries report they regularly help users understand and use e-government services; and
- 65% of Texas libraries provide services for job seekers, including assistance in resume building, job searches, and enhancing job skills.

And the survey proves that voters respond to these services:

83% of Texas voters believe public libraries support the economy through job skills training, career and job information, and resource for local businesses.

While we all struggle professionally to stretch our budgets to meet our community's needs, we can find comfort in these numbers, because our fundamental mission is valued by our community – particularly in difficult times. After all, Texas libraries create and sustain communities. ☆



# Where the Rubber Meets the Road

## remember

our discussions about Google and our concern that people would minimize the role of the library at this threshold of seemingly unlimited information access?

While we must still strive to be fully competitive in all information areas (and the competition is pressing), the current state of economic affairs has brought attention back to the power of libraries.

And the overwhelming need for them.



Here are just a few of the many recent headlines about libraries.

- “When times are tough, the borrowing business booms,” *Midland Reporter-Telegram*, March 8, 2009: Midland library cardholders on the rise
- “Recession Means Both Feast, Famine at Libraries,” DFW NBC, March 4, 2009: Arlington, circulation is up 20%
- “Longview Library Use Up,” CBS 19, March 3, 2009: Story time is up by 38%
- “Libraries seeing usage and circulation grow, budgets shrink,” *Star-Telegram*, March 13, 2009: Fort Worth libraries have seen a 20% increase in library cards; Mansfield has seen a 12% increase in circulation and library card holders; Haltom City reports a 30% increase in visits
- “Library usage on the rise,” *The Terrell Tribune*, February 24, 2009: Riter C. Hulsey Public Library reports double-digit increases in patrons using the library
- “Libraries face cuts, as users increase,” Khou.com, February 22, 2009: Circulation is up 16% at Plano Public Library
- “Economy drives traffic to libraries,” *Reporter News*, February 20, 2009: Abilene Public Library reports increase in circulation and visitors
- “Tyler Public Library Use Increased 23 Percent in Spend-Thrift Economy,” *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, February 18, 2009

- “More folks checking out the Library,” *Austin American-Statesman*, February 16, 2009: Increase in circulation reported by libraries in Travis and Williamson counties, Round Rock, and Austin

When the rubber meets the road, a library is so much more than the sum of its parts. Yes, libraries are about programs, services, books, the Internet, and resources. But the traction that has carried libraries from century to century, from generation to generation is the uncorrupted equality, access to learning, and hope libraries provide. Our libraries are not just a collection of resources; they are institutions that bear out the civic responsibility of a government to sustain its people, to invest wisely for the betterment and safety of citizens, and to serve as a sentry against ignorance and a partner for achieving prosperity.

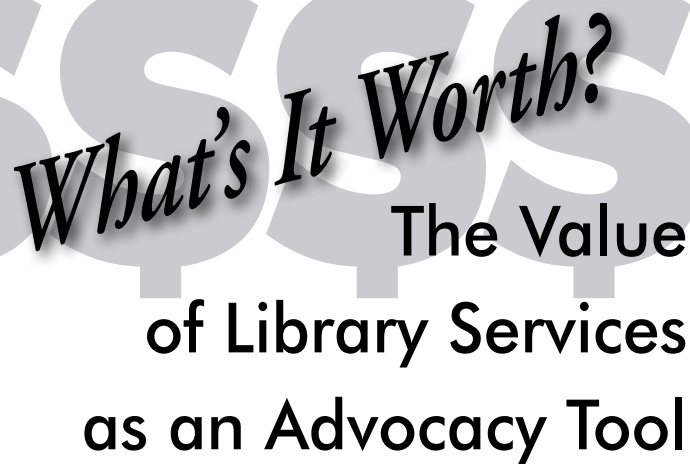
### *Google is just Google.*

Even as budgets are cut, libraries – by sheer demand of those millions who need them – produce more, circulate more, serve more. I don’t know of many other industries that can say the same.

As we fight for our libraries, our budgets, our hours, our staff, we are armed with the powerful proof of public demand. Libraries are needed more than ever. In this time of stress, libraries should be open longer and offer more services to the people of Texas.

If you haven’t shared your own library’s story with those who make decisions about your library, tell them – when it comes to helping people find jobs and get through tough times, a library is where the rubber meets the road. ★





# What's It Worth?

## The Value of Library Services as an Advocacy Tool

BY JOHN PECORARO

I am not an economist. I don't fully understand the concepts of *cost-benefit ratio*, *return on investment*, or *contingent valuation*. What I do know is that all types of libraries provide services whose value far exceeds their budgets, and that this is important information that should be shared with library stakeholders.

For the past two years, I have prepared reports for the 43 public libraries in the Big Country Library System (BCLS) detailing the value of the services they provide. I did not originate the idea of a spreadsheet to calculate the value of a library's services. Full credit for that development goes to the staff of the Highlands Regional Library Cooperative (NJ).<sup>1</sup> I did adapt the template to reflect statistics available in the Texas Public Library Annual Report. The resulting value of library services report provides a snapshot of the library's services, assigns dollar costs to each service, and calculates the total value. This total value of a library's services when compared to the library's actual budget for the year ideally shows a return on investment greater than 100%.

The template is meant to be a starting place. Libraries can determine the services to highlight. All that is required is that a realistic value be assigned to the service and that statistics are readily available. The spreadsheet template and values price list I used for BCLS libraries is available on the web at [www.bclstx.org/best-practices/value-of-services.xls/view](http://www.bclstx.org/best-practices/value-of-services.xls/view). The West Texas Library System has also crafted a return on investment worksheet.

Libraries can also offer personal value calculators to their users. The calculators enable individual users to add up the value of the collections and services they use during a visit to the library. Several examples can be found on the Internet: Maine State Library [www.maine.gov/msl/services/calculator.htm](http://www.maine.gov/msl/services/calculator.htm); Chelmsford Public Library (MA) [www.chelmsfordlibrary.org/library\\_info/calculator.html](http://www.chelmsfordlibrary.org/library_info/calculator.html); and Library Research Service (CO) [www.lrs.org/public/roi/usercalculator.php](http://www.lrs.org/public/roi/usercalculator.php). Each site allows other libraries to download the code for the calculator onto their own websites.

The spreadsheet template isn't the only format available for libraries eager to share their value information with funders and other stakeholders. If you are more comfortable with a narrative format, try composing a letter demonstrating the impact of your library on the community. You can find an example of a letter from a library director to the mayor and the library's trustees on WebJunction.<sup>2</sup>

The format of the value of library services report is no problem. Librarians don't have to reinvent the wheel; the work is already done. The problem comes in determining the worth of specific library services. The report *Economic Impact of Libraries in Indiana* refers to this conundrum for economists, "Libraries provide valuable services to the community, most of which are free, and hence, have no observable price."<sup>3</sup> To determine a cost-benefit ratio, there must be a cost. Of course there is a cost. Nothing is free in government, and libraries are government-supported for the most part, be they city, county, or library district public libraries, public school libraries, or public colleges and university libraries. Government-supported equals tax-supported, and we all know who pays the taxes. If library services are not free, what do they cost? Librarians have to be able to explain to their customers the price of things: books, magazines, DVDs, CDs, databases, computer time, and meeting room use. Another way of saying this is that librarians have to be able to explain the costs their users avoid by using the library (the value of what they are ostensibly getting "for free").

How do we determine the value of a library service? Unfortunately, no standard exists for computing the value of the circulation of a book, for example. Do we:

- a. Use the full cover price, because this is the retail price the user might be expected to pay, and so avoids by checking out the book;
- b. Use a discounted price, since the user could expect a discount if purchasing the item from Amazon.com;
- c. Use the library's discounted price (what the library paid for the item);
- d. Use an average retail price, such as reported in the *Bowker Annual*;
- e. Use a formula to determine the value of book as a used item; or
- f. Determine the price of a book rental (since the user isn't actually buying the book).

There may be additional alternatives. The important thing to consider is whether the values you determine for your library's services are going to make sense to the people with whom you share this information. The more detailed you track what it is your library does, the more comprehensive your value of services report will be. Highlands Regional Library Cooperative includes an extensive price list on its website.

According to American Library Association's strategic plan, *ALA Ahead to 2010*,<sup>4</sup> a major theme of advocacy should be to:

- Increase public awareness of the value and impact of libraries of all types.
- Increase support for research and evaluation to provide evidence regarding the value and impact of libraries.
- Increase public awareness of the value and impact of librarians and library staff.

What can you do? Glen Holt, in his article *Communicating the Value of Your Libraries*,<sup>5</sup> enumerates several actions librarians must take to convince stakeholders of the value their institutions bring to their communities:

1. Library staff (especially the library's spokespeople) should communicate the library's value to users constantly:
  - Focus on quality in services;
  - Remember that value is a two-way street (in addition to the value of services, demonstrate how the library values the community);
  - Pay attention to what library users value (you can find a checklist of what services library users value in *Worth Their Weight: An Assessment of the Evolving Field of Library Valuation*);<sup>6</sup> and
  - Communicate the value of services in ways users will understand.
2. Emphasize the fact that the library saves its users time and money.
3. Stress the cost-effectiveness of the library in providing the materials users want.
4. Recognize the central role that children play in family life. Don't neglect children's services. Parents and caregivers see vibrant children's programming as evidence of the value libraries give their families.
5. Don't forget that library users take good technology for granted: computers with all the software they want, the fastest Internet, and wireless access.
6. Demonstrate that the library operates in a businesslike way.
7. Demonstrate that the library is a community organization that is involved with the community and in partnerships with educational and cultural organizations.
8. Talk about library services in the language of *WIIFM* (what's in it for me). Most library users, while they may attribute spiritual values to their libraries, don't use them for those reasons. They don't say, "Today's the day I go to the library because it is the foundation of American democracy," or "I'm off to the library for another dose of imagination." Library users visit the library to fulfill a basic

need: for a book or article, to use a computer, to find a piece of information, or to attend a program.

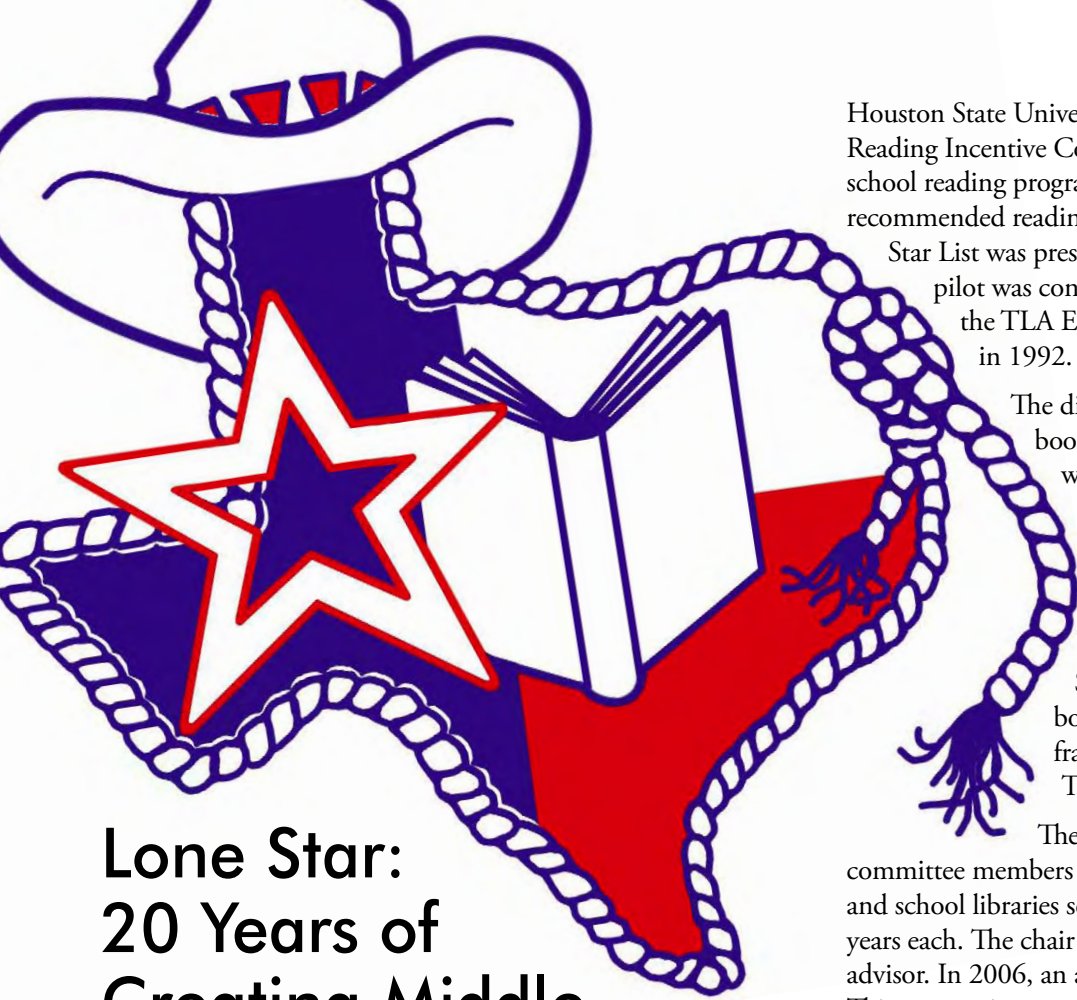
9. Above all, show that the library gives back maximum value for the money the community has invested in it.

Stories speak louder than statistics. Whenever possible, use personal anecdotes. Identify witnesses who will testify, "This is how the library helped me find a job; earn my GED; graduate from college; find my family." The crucial question you are attempting to answer for your community is this, "What difference does the library make?" As library professionals, we must continually ask ourselves, "What has changed as a result of what I do? How does my library and my library staff influence in a positive way the community we serve?" Sharing information about what library services and collections are worth and the value the community receives for its investment can go a long way to providing the answers.

John Pecoraro is coordinator of  
Big Country Library System.

## NOTES

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# Lone Star: 20 Years of Creating Middle School Readers

BY JENNIFER SMITH

*It is what you read when you don't have to that determines what you will be when you can't help it.*

—OSCAR WILDE

The Texas Lone Star Reading List helps middle school students choose books to satisfy their curiosity and become lifelong readers. The Lone Star List comprises 20 recently published books recommended for *recreational* reading for students in grades 6, 7, and 8; and, though the criteria for inclusion on the list have evolved over the past 20 years, the list has a big impact on librarians, teachers, readers, and authors. Texas librarians have come up with some very innovative ways to use the list in their reading programs. And from what we hear, the list even has an impact on reading lists for other states!

## Lone Star History

Following the success of the Texas Bluebonnet Award program for third through sixth grades, the Young Adult Round Table (YART) decided to investigate the creation of a statewide reading incentive program for middle schools. Several Texas school districts had already created programs for their middle schools, most notably Spring ISD's Jackrabbit Award. YART chair Sandra Bull appointed Lesta Burt, a professor at Sam

Houston State University, to chair the *ad hoc* Young Adult Reading Incentive Committee that would create a pilot middle school reading program. The committee chose to create a recommended reading list rather than an award. The first Lone Star List was presented at the 1990 annual conference. The pilot was considered a great success and was accepted by the TLA Executive Board as a standing committee in 1992.

The distinctive Lone Star logo, consisting of a book and a star overlaying a Texas shaped flag, was created through a competition among sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. A total of 1462 entries were received. Justin Macha, a seventh grader at George Junior High School in Lamar Consolidated School District, created the winning logo. Scholastic Books gave Justin a \$500 savings bond, and Econoclad Books presented framed copies of the logo to Justin and to the TLA headquarters.

The basic framework created by the original committee members remains intact. Nine librarians from public and school libraries serve on the committee for a period of three years each. The chair serves for two years and one year as an advisor. In 2006, an administrative assistant position was added. This non-voting member is the contact point for publishers.

The criteria for books on the list have changed some over the years. The original criteria allowed for books published in the previous five years, while the current criteria require books to be published in the last two years. With this change in publishing dates, the recommendation that at least half the books be in paperback was dropped.

The list still focuses primarily on fiction books. Among the 400 books selected over the last 20 years, five have been classified as non-fiction and five as poetry. Realistic, historical, and fantasy make up the bulk of novels. One book of short stories has made the list as well.

## How Librarians Use Lone Star

The Lone Star List is intended as a starting point for librarians to suggest books for their middle school patrons. The books are recommended for recreational reading. Unlike other lists, students do not participate in a statewide vote for their favorite book. Instead, librarians across the state have created some amazing programs using the Lone Star List.

Waco ISD has a Battle of the Books competition using the Lone Star List. According to Gillian Wiseman at the Waco-McLennan County Library, "Each school buys the books, has the team read as many as they can, and then the kids compete to answer as many questions correctly as they can."

Abilene ISD honors all students who read 15 or more Lone Star books with a luncheon. Last year, they had six students



who read all 20 books and 10 students who have been recognized for three years!

Michelle Carter from Rosenberg ISD continues her school's tradition of "a Lone Star luncheon at a local Mexican restaurant at the end of the year; anyone who had read at least 5 books could attend, and those who read all 20 received an autographed copy from the list. Without fail, at least half would read all 20. The smallest group I ever took was 25; the largest was 60."

Donna MacKinney, librarian at Rice Middle School Library, Plano ISD, gets her book club involved promoting Lone Star.

As soon as I get the next year's list, I have my 7th and 8th grade book club kids pull all that we already own and start reading them. The BC kids LOVE having exclusive access. We discuss them at meetings and online in a discussion board. In addition to the normal book discussion kind of comments, I ask them to give me "age advisories," particularly in terms of our incoming 6th grade population. This year I'll ask them to do book trailers and/or alternate covers for books they feel need them.

Librarians are making great use of the technology as well. At San Juan Middle School in Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD, Letty Gonzalez and Rosana Gutierrez sponsor a pizza party and book talk teleconference with another school.

The students really enjoy seeing and talking to the kids from LBJ Middle School, the school we've been partnering with for the last few years. It's an informal talk; we just hold up

one of the books and ask what they liked/didn't like about it, and it's amazing how much these kids will say. There are some titles that have really opened up to a lot of discussion. Even one of our math teachers joins us.

Lauri York at Westover Park Junior High in Canyon ISD uses the list to teach her students how to use the Internet.

At the beginning of the year, I handed out a list of the books, showed the students how to navigate on the website through txla ([www.txla.org](http://www.txla.org)), and then challenged all students to read all 20 books by May of 2009. Any student who reads all 20 books and scores at least a 70 percent on a test about the books will be put in a drawing to win an I-Touch.

Jo Martin, librarian at Keefer Crossing Middle School in New Caney ISD, uses a blog to challenge herself and her students to read the Lone Star books. "I offer a free poster from time to time, and the teachers offer extra credit to blog postings that are worthy. My students are very excited about the challenge and so am I!"

Leissa Kimball (La Vernia ISD), Debbie Andrews (Danny Jones Middle School, Mansfield ISD), and Kristen Gladden (Ross Sterling Middle School, Humble ISD) have taken advantage of Animoto. Check out Kristen's video at <http://animoto.com/play/IW6vK9r4r1gGxNu1syahWg>.

Leissa Kimball is also encouraging her students to "Read Like a Rockstar."

The students read a Lone Star book to receive a punchcard. Then they receive another punch for every other book (doesn't have to be Lone Star) they read throughout the school year. When their card is full, they get on the guest list for our end of the year Guitar Hero party. So far, the students have been so enthusiastic about it, I've had to allow Lone Star books from past years to count IF they read them this year, because I can't keep this year's books on the shelf.

Lone Star helps public librarians make the connection with their middle school readers. Jennifer Shelly at Irving Public Library made a school visit with great results.

My visit at Barbara Bush Middle School allowed the students to get to know me, and many of them now come up and talk to me here at the library. So, the Lone Star List helped build a bridge between the school and the library.

Gillian Wiseman (Waco-McLennan County Library) served as an assistant, a quiz builder, and as official timekeeper/scorer for Waco ISD's Battle of the Books. "I'll do the same this year, and we hope the program will grow each year."

The Lone Star committee strives to find books that will reach all middle schoolers from that reluctant sixth grade boy to the high-level eighth grade girl and everyone in between. Sometimes, a book makes the list that comes at the right time for the right audience. *Dark Water Rising* by Marian Hale from the 2008-2009 list is one of those books. Several librarians mentioned the impact this book has made.

Jennifer Shelly (Irving Public Library) shared the book with middle school students in Carrollton-Farmers Branch.

Since the book is about the great Galveston flood, it was an opportunity to tie into their curriculum of Texas history. We also have a lot of Katrina evacuees, so I used the book to speak to the students about similarities in their situation and the situation from Galveston. Many of the students immediately checked out the book.

Jo Martin (New Caney ISD): "Because of Hurricane Ike, we received an overwhelming response for *Dark Water Rising*."

How are you using the Lone Star Reading List? Add your comments to our wiki and find some new ideas for your library: <http://LoneStarreadinglist.wikispaces.com/>

## Authors React to Lone Star

The Lone Star List is popular not only with Texas middle schoolers and librarians but with authors as well.

Maribel Castro (St. John's School, Houston) shares a story about Sam Enthoven, whose first book *Black Tattoo* made the 2007-08 list.

I mailed him a copy of Perma-Bound's colorful Lone Star Poster which featured his book. Sam emailed me immediately after receiving it and said, "It was so kind of you to send it to me: seeing *Black Tat* there with all those

fine books gives me quite a kick, I can tell you. Hee hee hee!" He signed his email "The Scourge invites you to a showdown in Hell, Sam."

Carl Deuker, who has five books on Lone Star, writes:

The Lone Star nominations are like the stars elementary teachers put on stellar work. We get older, and we pretend to have outgrown those sort of things, but the truth is . . . we don't. The nominations are stars on my paper, and they give me a boost of confidence, something I always need, and I don't think I'm unusual.

Brian Meehl's *Suck It Up* made the 2009 Lone Star List, his second book to do so.

Having a book on the Lone Star Reading List certainly raises a book's profile in the crowded YA and middle reader market. I certainly get email from a lot of readers, teachers, and librarians that wouldn't have selected one of my books to read if it weren't on a state reading list. So, from an author's point of view, these lists are great for finding new readers, and it's an honor and benefit to be on one.

My editor tells me is that it's one of the more prestigious ones, and many other states use it, or select from it, to make their own reading lists. At 20, I wouldn't call it the "old gray lady" of reading lists. But it certainly has a stellar reputation.

Jordan Sonnenblick, who has three books on the list, shares Meehl's observation about the impact of Lone Star on other state reading lists.

Because it's the "fastest" state list I know (i.e., the books have just come out when they hit the LS, while other states wait up to four years after publication date), other states watch Texas and pay extra attention to the LS books when they go to compose their own state candidate lists. I think that the LS exposure has been an excellent springboard for getting my books onto other state lists.

I definitely get more visit invites from Texas than from any other state except Illinois, where my first book actually won the state book award. In fact, in another state where my book won the whole state award, I barely get any visit offers at all. What this seems to indicate is that just being ON the LS List has at least as much impact as being the winner in some other places.

April Lurie writes,

Honestly, I was stunned when I heard *Brothers, Boyfriends & Other Criminal Minds* was selected for the Lone Star List. I didn't think a Mafia story set in 1977 Brooklyn would fly in Texas! But it did. The response has been overwhelming. I've received numerous emails from students telling me how much they've enjoyed my book, and I've been able to visit several Texas middle schools. I'm so honored to be a part of this outstanding community.





Roland Smith is also thrilled to be a part of Lone Star.

To have one book on the Texas Lone Star List is a fabulous honor. To have four books on the list in the past 20 years is humbling, considering how many other great books are out there that don't make the list. When I write a book, I'm trying to create readers; when I visit a school to speak, I'm trying to create readers. Having a book on the Texas Lone Star List actually does create readers, because it is perhaps the most prestigious state reading list in the country. I've been told that other state reading list committees use the books on the Lone Star in their deliberations for choosing the books on their lists. So, impact is national, not just within the great state of Texas.

Some of my most ardent fans are from Texas. Their emails usually begin: "I'm reading the books on the Texas Lone Star List and ..." Or, "You may not know this, Mr. Smith, but your book is on the Texas Lone Star..." Believe me, I know when my book is on the list! And I am very, very grateful.

And we are grateful to the authors, librarians, and teachers who help us create readers. ★

Jennifer Smith is librarian at Legacy Middle School, East Central ISD (San Antonio).

# LONE STAR Anniversary Facts

Number of Books Honored: **400**

Number of Authors: **287** (and one editor)

Publishers: over **50**

Author with the most books on the list:

Carolyn B. Cooney - 9 books

Authors with 6 books on the list: 2

Gary Paulsen and Neal Shusterman

Number with 5 books on the list: 4

Number with 4 books on the list: 5

Number with 3 books on the list: 16

20  
YEARS

To see all the Lone Star lists, go to:

<http://www.txla.org/groups/yart/lonestarlists.html>

# LIBRARIAN ON BOARD!

BY ELIZABETH FIGA  
AND TONDA BONE

## *Online Classroom Library Services to Distance E-Learning Students: A Service Analysis Using Survey and Interview Research Techniques<sup>1</sup>*

### INTRODUCTION

Over the last several years, the University of North Texas (UNT), like many other academic institutions, has made a concerted effort to extend its course and degree offerings to students both within and outside of its immediate geographic area through distance education.<sup>2</sup> While technology enables such extended academic opportunities, it also creates challenges. One such challenge is the changing relationship between students and the library. In the distance learning environment, it is common for students to never set foot on the campus – including, of course, physically visiting the library.

As online library services and collections have expanded, developing knowledge and skills in the use of those resources has also proven a challenge for both students and the faculty/librarians who teach them. In this paper, we examine the addition of a librarian integrated into the online classroom as a way to supplement the loss of the face-to-face relationship that exists or can potentially exist with students in the real-time, real-place campus library setting. More significantly, we suggest this is a proactive solution to the changing nature of library use for online students.

### *Virtualizing Reference Service*

The forms of library services available to traditional and distance learners need to be equitable in order for the particular distance learning course itself to be equitable to that of its traditional counterpart. The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL, 2004), in its *Guidelines for Distance Learning Library Services*, asserts the services provided on the traditional campus setting for students and faculty should also be available to the distance learning community members.

Libraries and universities have implemented a number of features to enhance remote access to library services, with an emphasis on providing equitable services for distance

learners as compared to services obtained on campus. Efforts to “virtualize” reference services are one method for solving the issue of equitable support related to library access and services. These efforts include access and delivery services that we now take for granted, such as online cataloging and inter-library loan (Kearley & Phillips, 2004). More current library services oriented toward online learners now include online information literacy courses (Lee & Yaegle, 2005); “Ask a Librarian” contact tools, including email, chat, and instant messaging (e.g., “Strategies for the library: CMS integration barriers,” 2005); “embedded” librarians that act as co-instructors (Dinwiddie, 2005); virtual reference librarians (Ramsay & Kinnie, 2006); and technological methods including blogs, wikis, RSS feeds, and the like (Drumm & Havens, 2005; Jurkowski, 2003).

The University of North Texas (UNT) Libraries wanted to extend the concept of virtual reference even further. In 2005, UNT Library Services proposed a new program called Librarian in the Classroom (LITC). This service, proposed by the university librarian with oversight for user instruction, would affiliate one librarian with an instructor’s online course(s). The librarian would have subject specialization related to the course content and would assist the faculty with opportunities to provide library-related services to the online students. The service would extend beyond traditional reference activities by providing students with personalized service from a librarian they know by name, who also is well-versed in the course and the discipline and serves as the students’ direct “point person.”

In the fall 2005 semester, Elizabeth Figa, professor in the School of Library and Information Sciences (SLIS), became the first faculty member on the UNT campus to bring the LITC concept to a university course. A discussion forum in two online courses was developed to facilitate student-librarian communication. The librarian was given instructor-level log-in access to the courses and the LITC discussion forum to deliver services online and to arrange consultations with students. Figa also provided access for the LITC to the private faculty board, where the teaching team and librarian could discuss course assignments, teaching strategies, student issues, etc.

The LITC concept can be seen to embody many of the current trends and practices in virtual librarianship, even as it extends them. For example, we extend practices of “Ask a Librarian”

tools of chatting with or emailing a reference librarian (“Strategies for the library: CMS integration barriers,” 2005) by providing contact with a *specific* librarian who specializes in the course’s discipline. Our LITC component provides an additional way to foster community and communication within the online course environment, separate from blogs, wikis, RSS feeds, and the like (Jurkowski, 2003; “Strategies for the library: CMS integration barriers,” 2005). This LITC model reflects an expanded role as the librarian moves beyond service provider to collaborative partner by working closely as part of the teaching team and engaging with students in need of research guidance and information literacy development.

## THE RESEARCH PARADIGM

Our research goal was to capture insights into the impact, perceptions, and outcomes of the LITC service, as experienced by students, the librarian, and the course professor. To describe the student experience, we utilized data collected from 122 surveys administered to students taught in the WebCT Vista (now Blackboard Vista) environment during the fall and spring semesters of the 2005-2007 academic years. We used interview data from the course professor (Elizabeth Figa) and LITC (Erin O’Toole) to explore the professional and administrative aspects of the LITC.

## RESULTS

### *Student Response*

Student response to the LITC was predominantly positive, with 95.08% of respondents (N=122, n=116) rating the service as “very positive” or “positive.” Although email, chat, and IM are available within the courseware, and though O’Toole provides library-based contact information to the students as well, respondents indicate the dedicated LITC discussion board is the preferred mode of interacting with the course librarian, with 99.19% supporting this format (though 72.73% noted they might also be interested in chat, if it was controlled for “talking over” one another). Comments reflect that students felt comfortable asking questions, while noting that “shier” students could still benefit by reading the librarian’s responses to their peers’ questions. Students also recognize and appreciate learning from each other’s questions: 95.61% of respondents (N=114, n=109) indicated they benefit from viewing other students’ posts and the replies to them.

In addition to exploring student reactions and usage patterns, by questioning students about their perceived information requirements, we delineated six areas of information need. From 61 responses (N=102), we found students felt they needed assistance with (ranked by response rate, highest to lowest): 1) learning to locate and use the various library resources, 2) receiving specific course-related assistance regarding assignments, 3) developing strategies for effective searching, 4) developing research agendas, 5) writing up

results, and 6) recognizing authoritativeness of sources. These information needs are illustrated in Figure 1.

**Figure 1. Delineated Information Needs**

### STUDENT-PERCEIVED INFORMATION NEEDS

- Proficiency in locating and using the various library resources
- Course-related assistance with assignments
- Strategies for effective searching
- Research agenda development
- Research results write-up
- Ability to determine authoritativeness of sources

### *Faculty and Librarian Response*

Figa notes that her involvement in this project was made incredibly easy because of the interest and commitment of the librarian to this collaborative partnership: “Erin is a consummate team player and is willing to take risks to try new innovations. For example, she came up with the weekly ‘Search Strategy Tips,’ which became very popular with the students.” Figa believes her biggest gain as a professor was the presence of a member of the full-time library staff integrated into the classroom to help with issues that would be better addressed by insider-librarian knowledge and problem-solving.

O’Toole believes the service mediates numerous issues distance learners face, while also fostering a spirit of camaraderie and support. The LITC is able not only to provide bibliographic instruction and reference services but also to act as a liaison between the students and the UNT Libraries. The librarian also provides technological troubleshooting assistance and alerts students to fixes and work-arounds with electronic resource access and online library access issues. O’Toole adds,

I think LITC overcomes the distance learning student’s apprehension of asking questions of librarians whom they have never seen or with whom they have never had any interaction. I imagine that the UNT Libraries seem a huge, amorphous bureaucracy for the distance learning student, and having their own liaison makes the [UNT] Libraries seem more personal.

### *Time Commitment*

O’Toole notes that in the information access and retrieval course, she averages four to five hours per week reading posts and responding to students. In addition, O’Toole expects she averages one to two hours per week conducting research as part of the response process to the student inquiry or issue.



By comparison, O'Toole notes an average reference session with an on-campus student takes approximately 30 minutes. However, she feels the time spent on LITC reference needs is well spent because "the answer reaches 100 or more people, rather than just one."

For Figa, the LITC does more than just save her time. She can rely on O'Toole to focus on library instruction and reference services related to course assignments, which allows Figa to focus more on assisting students with help on the very busy assignments board. Figa adds the partnership "also helps keep me abreast of current trends in information literacy instruction, which is part of the content I teach! It is very much a win-win situation."

### *Does the program advance the mission of library services to e-learning students?*

Both Figa and O'Toole are experienced reference librarians, though Figa is not currently working as a librarian. And, both firmly believe LITC enriches the distance student's learning experience. Reference librarianship is more than bibliographic instruction; librarians are expected to provide computer and technology training and procedural guidance in addition to assisting students with detailed searching. O'Toole notes that these additional tasks strengthen her LITC role as an information literacy instructor. As well, it is because of the more general reference issues – such as access – that O'Toole believes the deeper role of information conduit can develop:

Students will eventually start asking me more actual reference questions, as opposed to just technical or procedural questions. By answering those initial questions promptly and in a friendly manner, I believe that the students start to trust me with more substantial questions, e.g., whether a topic will work for an assignment, what would be the best resources for an interdisciplinary topic, such as feminism. I was very pleased when a student this semester asked about the actual algorithm used by Vivisimo. This indicates to me that I am considered an information *resource* rather than simply the person who makes it possible for students to complete their assignments.

The LITC experience allows O'Toole to foster a personal relationship with the online learners that emulates those she creates with her on-campus students. Figa notes that the needs of distance e-learning students are complex, and the LITC service not only advances the mission of library services to all students, including those living at a distance, but also advances the mission of providing excellent instructional services:

Students learning by distance are mediated in everything they do. Lectures, content, discussion, email; almost everything except live chat is done asynchronously. The LITC is an additional partner in the online learning

experience and helps bridge the gap by offering an exclusive relationship with one librarian who has expertise in the course content and knowledge of pedagogical strategies and course assignments. The LITC is a dedicated person known to the students with whom they can form a relationship that is every bit as valuable and essential as the relationship with the course instructor.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Our research examined the implementation of a novel approach to embedded librarianship – a librarian in the online classroom – that extends embedded librarianship to encompass group instruction related specifically to the course subject matter, provide personalized instruction on refining and researching topics (including implementing a virtual reference interview to guide the librarian's assistance), and provide formal informal instruction in general bibliographic literacy. Student survey results indicate distance-learning students perceive the service to be extremely valuable.

The Librarian in the Classroom initiative is now a three-year initiative that has proven to be a value-added contribution to advance equitable access to library services for students – distance students as well as on-campus students who also take online courses. The general assessment for the LITC service component, including limitations, is summarized in Figure 2.

Future study on this initiative includes examining and coding the individual posts to each LITC board in Figa's courses. We expect to find patterns emerging indicative of specific needs and issues faced by distance-learning students. We have added a "hints and tips" board that encourages students to read the questions of other students and to participate in responding to their peers. And, we plan to explore the benefits of this type of faculty/librarian/student collaborative interaction in addressing student information needs.

O'Toole's comment on her experience with LITC sums up the benefits: "Sometimes I am contacted by students after they have moved on to other courses. It is gratifying to know that they found my assistance helpful and think of me again when they have library questions." And, after all, is that not the primary purpose of the reference experience? Our results indicate this approach helps fulfill the need of providing equitable reference services to distance-learning students.

The data revealed that LITC service appears to have been well received by students and is an excellent pedagogical enhancement. The LITC project continued in 2008, including the pre- and post-assessment data collection process to facilitate faculty and LITC understanding of student perceptions, measuring of outcomes, and planning for future efforts to enhance equitable library services to distance learning students.

The LITC program appears to offer substantial benefits to students, in addition to providing opportunities for focused information literacy instruction. This project presented an

Figure 2. Overall Assessment

## CONCLUSIONS

- Students value and benefit from the LITC Service
- Enhances learning and application of new skills in both school and personal life
- Encourages students to make greater use of the university library and hopefully of other libraries once they graduate
- LITC extends efforts to provide equitable library services to distance and online learners
- LITC also supports on-campus students enrolled in online courses
- Data indicate the acquisition of improved and new library use skills
- Students perceive the service as “special” and “just for them”
- In our view, it has a big payoff without a lot of “overhead” or extraordinary time commitment for the faculty and librarian
- Helps ensure student success
- Value-added pedagogical strategy
- The LITC service has been mentioned in university distributed end-of-semester student course evaluations (narrative comments section) every semester it has been offered
- Anecdotally, the professor believes the LITC service has an impact on student “over all” course satisfaction, but there is no empirical or assessment data to support this

## LIMITATIONS LIST

- Requires student “buy in”
- Librarian needs to set a limit on commitment hours per week
- Collecting and reporting service data
- Asynchronous service schedule
- Online learning system challenges
- Library access problems
- Replication on large scale initiative

opportunity for the study of student opinions and attitudes about the concept of the LITC as well as examining information outcomes to understand its impact and benefits. Though LITC was not developed nor initiated under the auspice of an established model, our experiences in developing, implementing, and evaluating the service have allowed us to develop a framework for improvements and procedures for the future.

Elizabeth Figa is associate professor in the Department of Library and Information Sciences at University of North Texas. Tonda Bone is a doctoral student in the Interdisciplinary Information Science Doctoral Program at the University of North Texas.

## NOTES

1. This research was funded by a 2006 DEMCO, Inc. / Texas Library Association Research Grant. This paper has been prepared as required for acceptance to the Texas Library Association conference contributed papers. The actual presentation may have had additional data included.
2. UNT is the largest provider of online courses in the state of Texas, according to the UNT Center of Distributed Learning’s website (<http://cdl.unt.edu/>).

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# Evolve Your Research Guides into the Web 2.0 Ecosystem

BY CHARLES ALLAN

**WEB 2.0** technologies offer the opportunity for subject research guides to grow in functionality and depth. Research guides – even the newest generation of Internet research guides – still have not fully taken advantage of the new Web 2.0 capabilities. Web 2.0 technologies such as blogs, YouTube, social bookmarking sites such as delicious (<http://delicious.com>), and Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com>) and Myspace (<http://www.myspace.com>) can host evolved versions of your library's research guides and instructional materials. The Web 2.0 can even encourage us to re-conceptualize the research guide itself. You can create an intricate knowledge base that addresses patrons' specific needs. All it takes is an enthusiasm on your part and your subject area expertise. The dividends are greater communication between library and patron, increased reach to larger audiences, and easier access in the Internet age.

## The Primeval Research Guide

Even in the Internet age, Web-based research guides often bear the telltale marks of a form that was conceived for a different technology. The chief problem with paper handouts is that information must be kept short and general in order to avoid visual overload. Then, there is the problem of producing too many research guides on too many subjects. This explains why research guides – even now – are usually lists of resources on very broad subject areas (e.g., history, political science, anthropology, etc.). The most valuable instructional advice and commentary is by necessity kept to a minimum.

All of this hampers the effectiveness of the traditional research guide in providing library instruction. Patrons come to the library – or the library's website – usually with a task or specific question (Wilson, 1999). Even if they do not, a skilled librarian will detect that the patron does, in fact, have a definite problem in mind. Information should be provided to patrons with the principle of specificity in mind.

This is where Web 2.0 guides represent a new conceptualization of research guides and not just the ability to move a list of resources onto the Web. Highly specialized, small entries – such as a YouTube tutorial or blog entry – will satisfy many users' questions. Information overload is not an issue since each entry addresses a specific point. In fact,

traditional research guides that include everything may present more of an information overload hazard.

## What to Put in Blogs, YouTube, Facebook, and MySpace

Youtube, Facebook and Myspace, and blogging are Web 2.0 technologies that allow us to create an enormous amount of specific material targeted to patrons' needs. So what kind of material should you write about? You will draw on your professional judgment as a librarian as well as your experiences at the desk and working with specific classes. I have written material on the resources available for major subject areas, discussed non-obvious subject headings, the trickier-to-use databases, database searching tips, and graduate students' need to research dissertations and use Worldcat. I have also shamelessly promoted my favorite economics or reference books that have proved so useful to me in the past. I have also listened to students' questions at the reference desk and addressed their questions that I did not anticipate.

## Blogs

Blogs were originally designed to be online journals. However, blogs can be easily repurposed to support a detailed research guide. Starting a blog is easy: there are many free blog hosting sites such as Google blogger (<http://www.blogger.com>). The procedure is simple: write entries devoted to a task or focused idea, include links and video as necessary, and assign subject tags. The blog user can use the blog subject tags to set their own educational path.

There are a few ground rules to all blog writing in general and specifically to blogs repurposed as research guides. You should probably limit yourself to one subject area per blog, keep the posts short, continue to generate new, interesting posts, and do not engage in blog mission creep with current news items or developments in the library information world. Try also to include a summary of your intentions on the front page. On my blog, I have permanently posted that this blog is intended to be used as an economics and business research guide by navigating the subject tags.

My blog is located at <http://charallan.blogspot.com>. I write short, informative posts that demonstrate how to find special kinds of information and how to use databases, identify great websites for business information, and provide tricky subject headings. I try to write with a light, humorous touch, and each entry is illustrated with an interesting image. I have used famous paintings, images from pop culture, and interesting photographs. The end result is more visually interesting than a typical research guide. However, each blog entry title is always strictly descriptive. The titles are the first thing a reader sees and should be clear.

Blog use is easy to track. Site counters record the number of visitors (<http://www.sitemeter.com> provides a free counter to



install). Blog use by patrons is gaining acceptance but is still at low levels. The response when the blog is demonstrated in person is overwhelmingly positive. However, the blog format is very new, and there may be need still to promote greater awareness. I have noticed that the business blog is good for staff training in business resources and is often used by fellow librarians.

Some of my favorite information blogs are Gov Gab, the U.S. government information blog (<http://blog.usa.gov/roller/>); Chad Boeninger's Business Blog: Tips, Tricks, and Tools for the Business Researcher (<http://www.library.ohiou.edu/subjects/businessblog/>); and the Library of Congress blog (<http://www.loc.gov/blog/>). These blogs are not simply news feeds – they teach research skills on a topic.

## YouTube

YouTube is a visual medium. It is a good place to keep screen shot tutorials, database navigation (either for general or specific tasks), and pictures that show physical locations in the library. Moving screenshots, screen stills, and actual pictures can be used in the same presentation. Audio-visual learners should favor this format. Creation is simple with a video tutorial making program such as Camtasia. After you have completed your tutorial, convert the file into a format such as .wmv or .avi and upload to your YouTube account. Checking patron use of the tutorials is very easy – YouTube provides counters for the viewing totals of each video. Our YouTube site at Alkek Library is located at <http://www.youtube.com/alkeklibrary>.

YouTube video material does have some weaknesses. The YouTube screen can be blurry or too small, so do not expect to show any amount of meaningful written material (such as lists of URLs). You must copiously use the zoom-in feature of your screen capture program in order for your screen shots to be visible. A little experimentation should give you the right dimensions.

## Social Networking: Facebook and MySpace

Many libraries have moved onto social networks in recent months. Facebook and Myspace allow the creation and maintenance of social networks. Your profile can post status updates, links, and pictures. The appeal of social networks to patrons lies in the familiar interface and ease of use. Social networking sites are good for posting library news items, links, and a small number of videos, and for providing librarian contact information.

However, evolving your research guides into social networking sites may be problematic. The construction of these sites does not allow the creation of a large knowledge base. Posts are too brief, and older posts are simply listed in chronological order. The inability to use subject tags deeply exacerbates the problem of creating a reference knowledge base. Many librarians also report a lack of friends on

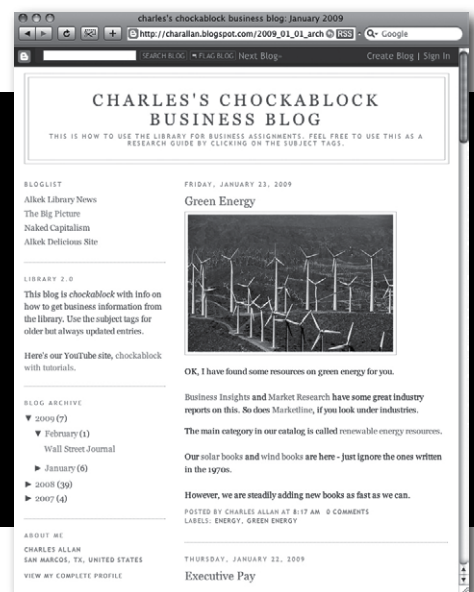
Facebook. Laurie Charnigo, who co-founded the Facebook group Librarians and Facebook, states that, "It seems students are not very interested with any sort of educational experiences with online social networks" (Ishizuka, 2007).

## Evolution or Extinction?

This article has been a remainder to not simply recreate your research guide "lists" in Web 2.0 technology. The capacity in 2.0 exists for rich and detailed entries that users should find useful. A good sized knowledge base of frequently asked questions and good information has as much impact as a lengthy conversation with an expert. Of course, this idea has some drawbacks: most of the formats are repurposed from other uses (and therefore not ideally suited for their new purpose), the sites are external to the library home page, and the patron may not know of their existence or be used to searching for library information in these ways.

Evolving the knowledge base in your research guide is an ongoing process. However, the creation of a good-sized initial knowledge base should only take a few minutes a day over two to three months. Most librarians enjoying sharing their knowledge and making it more accessible. Evolved research guides in 2.0 technologies are a great way to stay relevant or even improve that relevancy to society. After you spend a few months creating material for your 2.0 knowledge base, many more patrons will be impressed with how much librarians know as well as getting better access to your knowledge. This is not just a way to give great service – it is also a good survival strategy.

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# Texans Have Spoken: *Texas Library Association* Public Opinion Survey

BY GLORIA MERAZ

I remember being at a state budget hearing a few sessions ago. The committee was hearing testimony from a group discussing the very small amount of state funding directed at their programs. (Sound familiar?) Anyway, the witness concluded his testimony by pointing out to the committee that Texas ranked 49<sup>th</sup> in state funds for their programs. To which the chairman answered with something like, “Yeah, well, we rank 50<sup>th</sup> in [I think it was] nursing care! Texas is just different and those state by state numbers don’t mean much here.”

## Working towards a Survey

So goes the lesson: national statistics are fine, but the real driving point for decisions is local data. In order to talk about Texas needs and goals, we need the voice of Texans on those needs and goals.

And so, the Texas Library Association (TLA) undertook an important and ambitious initiative: a statewide poll of Texas registered voters on the issue of public and school libraries. This effort was a first for TLA. The cost and sweep of the project was large. As part of our effort of transforming Texas libraries – to better understand, respond to, and advocate for the library programs needed by the public – the survey has formed an incredibly important foundation from which to pursue many priorities.

The survey itself would not have been possible without the generous support of the Brown Foundation of Houston and the Tocker Foundation of Austin. Both foundations have shown a tremendous commitment to education, communities, and libraries, and their support of this project will translate into our ability to better serve the people of the state.

While we were determining the best way of moving forward, several groups – including TLA’s Public Relations Committee and Legislative Committee – offered feedback and thoughts on existing data sources. The American Library Association, OCLC, and other groups have conducted many effective national surveys ranging in topics and target groups. Some surveys, such as those conducted of libraries themselves (like *Libraries Connect Communities: Public Library Funding & Technology Access Study*), provide extremely useful information about the use of Texas libraries in key areas.

The goal of the TLA survey was, at once, very specific and broad. We wanted to hear the voice of Texans – the actual voters and taxpayers who must ultimately support Texas libraries. National surveys could not be sources of this type of information, since a critical number of respondents had to be reached to determine (with confidence) results that were truly representative of the state’s public opinion. That outcome required extensive in-state polling. In short, we wanted to prove that when we say, “Texans love libraries,” we mean “Texans REALLY love libraries!”

## ABOUT THE SURVEY

<b>Method:</b>	Statewide telephone survey
<b>Data Collection:</b>	October 17 to November 2, 2008 <i>(Taken when news of the economic recession was fully underway.)</i>
<b>Sample Size:</b>	1,201 interviews total <i>(Note: A total of 800 -1,000 interviews is considered a solid number for a national level poll. Often, news shows will use polls with an 800 interviewee total. This means the Texas survey is very robust.)</i>
<b>Sample:</b>	A “random-digit dial” sample was used, whereby every household in our defined geographic region had an equal probability of being reached. Participants were then screened by age (adults 18 and older) and voter registration status (currently registered to vote in Texas at the address where they received the call).
<b>Weighting:</b>	Data were weighted to reflect the proper demographic and geographic distribution of the adult voter population (guided by 2008 exit polls and Texas Secretary of State registered voter data). Age and party affiliation were weighted.
<b>Margin of Error:</b>	Estimated margin of error at the 95% confidence level for proportions near 50% is $\pm 2.8\%$ .

**“Public libraries are a good value for the tax dollar.”**

## Crafting the Poll

A prime directive we all felt was to ensure that the survey findings were unassailably credible. Once we knew what type of poll we wanted to conduct, we researched the top polling companies in the country. We selected KRC because of its vast experience on the national level, politics, non-profits, for-profits, libraries, and Texas.

Our initial discussions quickly led us to a plan to develop a survey of Texas registered voters – the highest criteria to establish in such polls but a needed one for public policy. We developed our research goals, worked KRC to describe the types of data we wanted back, and offered some general categories of questions; and then KRC actually developed the question set.

### Our Research Objectives

- To gauge perceptions of public and school libraries and librarians among Texas voters;
- To determine levels of support for and satisfaction with public and school libraries;
- To understand drivers of support and desire for library services;
- To measure voter support for a greater public commitment to community libraries; and,
- To serve as set of benchmark measures.

Early on, we had wanted to create one or possibly two surveys that could assess public opinion about school, public, and academic libraries. That plan proved problematic given the difficulties of polling mass Texas voters on higher education libraries, when the majority of Texans do not have college experience. Representatives of some universities felt that such a public opinion measure would not be adequately descriptive since, again, the target respondents would likely have limited interaction with academic libraries. Additionally, the academic community felt that there were several existing mechanisms that could be used as a start to gauge how a different assessment of users of academic libraries could be ascertained. So, for those reasons, a survey (or some equivalent assessment tool) was determined to form a later step in TLA's assessment efforts. Discussions on how to approach academic assessment are slated to begin at annual conference.

With our immediate road plan laid out, KRC set a timeline to conduct the survey at the end of October and the beginning of November. As it turns out, our survey was concluded right before Election Day. We had worried about

people having “poll fatigue” and that news of the recession would affect the results. That was not to be the case.

## The Survey Itself

When we first started crafting the survey, we came up with questions that would take about 40 minutes to answer. Clearly, we had to pare down our questions to the essence of the information we wanted. KRC explained that a 15-minute survey was an industry standard for our type of poll and that we should gain what we needed. So we worked dutifully to get to that magic number.

The survey was conducted in both English and Spanish through random dialing. This assured the broadness of the survey. If the respondent was not a Texas registered voter, the call was terminated. So the 1,201 random interviews conducted were all of Texas registered voters. And, to give you a sense of the reliability of that number, national political polls (which are often cited on cable and news channels) consist usually of 800 to 1,000 interviews, and that is considered a strong and viable survey. The TLA survey is *very* robust.

## The Questions

In developing the questions, we looked toward a few questions posed on national surveys to allow us some points of comparison with national figures. We also crafted questions based on the economic situation and wrote very specific questions about school libraries that, to our knowledge, have never been posed to the public before. These questions included the very pressing issue of the role of school libraries in the educational process, the value of professional school libraries, the affiliation of school libraries with classroom instruction, and the public's willingness to support legislation about school librarians.

## The Findings: Texans **REALLY DO** Love Libraries!

The results were overwhelming! More than eight in 10 Texas voters say they would support more funding for public and school libraries. And, a majority of Texans are opposed to any cuts. ***At least seven in 10 voters across every geographic, demographic, and political group support increased funding!***

A breakdown of several of the key areas is shown in Figures 1 and 2. The full findings of the survey are available at [www.txla.org/html/pr/survey.html](http://www.txla.org/html/pr/survey.html).

***“School libraries are important to their community.”***



FIGURE 1: SURVEY FINDINGS

SCHOOL LIBRARY DATA

*Texas Voters Say ...*

<b>99%</b> total agree (84% strongly agree)	<i>School libraries and professional librarians are essential to the education of Texas children.</i>
<b>98%</b> total importance (90% very important)	<i>School libraries are as important as classroom education.</i>
<b>82%</b> (major contribution) More than eight in 10 say...	<i>School libraries make a major contribution to children's education.</i>
<b>93%</b> total agree	<i>School libraries serve as another classroom.</i>
<b>98%</b> total agree (84% strongly agree)	<i>School libraries are essential because they help children develop reading and research skills.</i>
<b>97%</b> total agree (77% strongly agree)	<i>There is a link between academic success and strong school libraries.</i>
<b>94%</b> total agree (71% strongly agree)	<i>Professional school librarians are critical to student achievement.</i>
<b>93%</b> total support (77% strongly support)	<i>Texas voters are willing to take their support of school libraries to the legislature. More than nine in 10 voters support statewide legislation to require access to a school library and professional librarian.</i>
<b>82%</b> total support (and at least seven in 10 ACROSS EVERY demographic, geographic, and political group support increases)	<i>Even in these difficult budget times, voters want more funding for school libraries.</i>
<b>87%</b>	<i>They would be bothered by cuts to school libraries.</i>

FIGURE 2: SURVEY FINDINGS

PUBLIC LIBRARY DATA

*Texas Voters ...*

<b>92%</b> total importance (79% very important)	<i>Say public libraries are important to their community</i>
<b>90%</b> total satisfied	<i>Are satisfied with their public library.</i>
<b>97%</b> total agree	<i>Are nearly unanimous in their belief that public libraries create education opportunities for all citizens</i>
<b>95%</b> total agree	<i>Believe public libraries improve the quality of life in their community.</i>
<b>90%</b> total agree	<i>Find public libraries valuable to Texans and their communities in these turbulent times – providing important resources to families and job seekers</i>
<b>83%</b> total agree	<i>Public libraries support the economy through job skills training, career and job information and resources for local businesses.</i>
<b>96%</b> total agree	<i>Say providing free access to information and resources is very important</i>
<b>97%</b> total agree	<i>Rank library programs and activities for children, teens, and adults as very important.</i>
<b>81%</b> total support (and at least 7 in 10 voters across every demographic, geographic, or political groups supports increasing funds for public libraries)	<i>Texas voters want more funding for public libraries.</i>
<b>94%</b> total agree	<i>Texas voters believe public libraries are a good value for the tax dollar.</i>
<b>87%</b> total agree	<i>Nearly nine in 10 say their public library deserves more funding.</i>
<b>86%</b> bothered (61% bothered a great deal)	<i>Voters do not want any more cuts to public libraries.</i>

## *The overall assessment of survey*

- Texas voters have a high intensity of support for libraries, with intensity meaning these supporters are likely to take action.
- The public sees the benefits of libraries linked to the resources, programs, and reading skills taught.
- The survey found no “negative” area of data – that is, all of the survey questions yielded findings that support the value of public and school libraries.
- Because the survey was conducted during the economic crisis, responses show very strong commitment to increasing funds for libraries.
- While all groups support libraries, the most intense supporters are female, less affluent, African-American, and Hispanic voters.
- The demographic, geographical, and political breakdown of respondents mirrors the state’s population.

The data is also tabulated according to six primary geographic and media markets in the state. These regions include Southeast, Central, Northeast, Northwest, West, and South, and the findings can be drilled down to these geographic regions within the state.

## Deployment of the Survey

TLA officially released the findings of the survey on January 15 and then released information in conjunction with TLA’s Legislative Day (February 25) and legislative platform. The survey was sent to over 3,000 state media outlets, and numerous stories have been published.

Our goal is that the data are used to support our requests for increased statewide funding and increased local support of libraries, especially as many local jurisdictions and schools are facing cuts. Survey information such as ours has a relatively long shelf life, so we expect that the information will be useful over the long-term and help libraries make the case for increased support at all levels.

## Using the Data

### *Framing the Survey Results*

The survey is an **assessment tool**. One of the most critical tasks is to present survey findings in a way that makes the numbers meaningful. First and foremost, we must make decision-makers understand that surveys – and certainly the TLA survey – provide information useful for making decisions. It also shows our own commitment to evaluate

ourselves and programming to ensure that, when we go forward with requests, we are honestly asking for support of programs and resources that are valued by voters.

As a recent state hearing, Julie Todaro, dean of library services for Austin Community College, was testifying on behalf of TLA and our support of increased funding for library programs. She introduced the survey by saying that the Association believes in assessment and that part of our commitment in working with legislators was to evaluate our own programs so that we could appear before them with information supporting the requests that we make.

Every committee member looked up and directly at Todaro, clearly interested in the idea that, as a stakeholder group, we were assessing our own requests. That framework is a very powerful start to telling our story in numbers.

As you think about the TLA survey, and any other such assessment tool you undertake, keep in mind the survey represents:

- an **investment of resources** to determine if libraries are “going in the right direction” —  
*Are we providing resources and services that people need?*  
*Do voters value those resources?*  
*Are they willing to support them?*
- a **commitment** to measure our own operations and services to verify their success
- a **strategy** to determine priority needs in communities and among voters for continued library services and programs
- **objective measurement** demonstrating the will of Texas voters
- a **partnership with governing officials** to base funding and policy requests on the will of Texas voters

### *Communications Moving Forward*

**Communications should emphasize what voters most value about public libraries and what they would like to protect.**

- Texans most value public libraries for the access, opportunities, and resources they provide for everyone. Messaging should focus on the diversity of resources and the free access libraries provide for the whole community – and what this access means to their quality of life.
- While most believe education and literacy are the strongest contributions of their public library, a majority of voters also understands the economic contributions

# ***“Public libraries are a good value for the tax dollar.”***

libraries make to families and the larger community – no small issue in these turbulent economic times.

- Stress voters’ biggest concerns about funding cuts – reduced access to books and resources.

**For school libraries, emphasize the essential contributions of strong school libraries** – every child has an opportunity to read and learn and children learn general reading and research skills.

- Messaging to legislators should underscore the strong voter belief that school libraries are as essential as classroom

education and make major contributions to the education of Texas children.

- However, focusing on the unique contribution of school libraries to round out and encourage student development/achievement may be more persuasive than casting libraries as an actual extension of the classroom.
- Voters believe students should have access to a school library and professional librarian and are willing to support legislation, although reduction in library staff as a potential result of funding cuts was not as concerning as fewer books and resources being available.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

<i>GENDER</i>	
Male	38%
Female	52%
<i>AGE</i>	
18-24	8%
25-34	19%
35-44	22%
45-54	22%
55-64	16%
65-74	8%
75+	6%
<i>Regardless of how you plan to vote, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat or something else?</i>	
Republican	34%
Democrat	34%
Independent/other	24%
<i>Conduct Interview in English or Spanish?</i>	
English	94%
Spanish	6%

<i>Are you a parent or guardian of any children under age 18 living in your household?</i>	
No	33%
Yes	67%
<i>Which of the following age groups does/do your child(ren) fall into? (N=401)</i>	
Under age 3	25%
Age 3-6	31%
Age 7-11	37%
Age 12-17	46%
<i>Which of the following broad categories includes your total annual household income before taxes?</i>	
Under \$20,000	12%
Between \$20K - \$30K	12%
Between \$30K - \$40K	13%
Between \$40K - \$50K	11%
Between \$50K - \$75K	17%
Between \$75K - \$100K	11%
Between \$100K - \$150K	8%
\$150K or more	4%

***Texas voters do not want any more cuts to public libraries. Texas voters say they would be bothered by cuts to school libraries.***

93%

## Using statistics to respond to questions

A DECISION MAKER SAYS:

*We value school librarians, but we are in a budget crisis, and we have to make some painful decisions.*

RESPONSE: These are hard times and making decisions based on what our communities and parents support most for education has to come first. That is why school library programs – and school librarians – must remain a priority for the schools. An almost universal majority of Texas voters – 99% – agree that school libraries and librarians are essential to the education of Texas children. 97% see a link between academic success and strong school libraries, a fact that is clearly demonstrated through countless national studies.

A DECISION MAKER SAYS:

*We know that our community libraries are a wonderful resource in our town, but we have to make hard choices. While unfortunate, if we close our libraries for a few hours, we are not compromising the health and safety of our community.*

RESPONSE: A strong and healthy community is built on several key factors, not the least of which is quality of life and workforce and educational opportunities. Libraries are essential in deploying these services and helping individuals and the business community prosper. Texas voters believe this in resounding numbers: Nine out of 10 say that their library is central to their community and valuable in tough economic times. Not surprisingly, the great majority of Texas voters want more funding – not less – for the public library.

A DECISION MAKER SAYS:

*Of course school libraries are important, and every school should work with volunteers to make the best school library possible. Our role is to focus on the basics – strong classroom instruction. But, I have a ton of my own books I'm happy to donate to my school library.*

RESPONSE: A staggering 98% of Texas voters believe that school libraries are as important to the educational process as classroom instruction. In fact, nine out of 10 see the school library as a second classroom. School libraries are not outside of the instructional arena; they *are* instruction. School libraries are essential because they help children develop reading and research skills – that is what 98% of voters agree on. The fact is that parents and people out in our communities consider school libraries as a necessary part of education – one that 93% said they are willing to support in legislation.

A DECISION MAKER SAYS:

*We need to make cuts to the library, but we want to do so in a way that minimizes impact on our community.*

RESPONSE: Almost 10 out of 10 voters say that the library's provision of free Internet access, free resources, and programs and services for the community are very important. The public can only access these resources if the library is open – that takes staff, hours available throughout the day and throughout the city, and materials for people to use. No matter what cuts are made, the public will feel the impact. With the vast majority of voters saying that libraries are especially needed during hard economic times and wanting to see funding increases, cuts to the library will have a negative affect on our community. ★



# Voices from the Past

## Librarians on Libraries during the 1930s

EDITOR'S NOTE: the following passages are taken from various issues of TLA's *News Notes* (the original name for the *Texas Library Journal*) in the 1930s.

### *Libraries and Patriotism*

ALA President FRANK P. GRAHAM of the University of North Carolina, in an address before the American Library Association on "The Public Library in American Life," offered these thoughts (at right) on budget-making, the depression, and libraries:

JULIA IDESON  
*Past TLA President*  
(JANUARY 1933)

In spite of economic changes that seem to be taking place, human habits will not change so suddenly that libraries will be dispensed with today or tomorrow.

They have existed through many ages and librarians have been among the officials of every country and kingdom as custodians of books. It is as interpreters of books that libraries have grown and expanded in a republic that turns eagerly to books and believes faithfully in education for all.

If we have to fight for a few years for our professional existence, we will only be enduring what millions are enduring for mere physical existence, and in the end we will come out stronger in our own faith and more firmly placed in the public's confidence, because, so surely as man cannot live by bread alone, communities once accustomed to book service will refuse to be without a public library.

The depression which we are experiencing at present, tests what we really believe in. Budget-making in a depression searches through the stuff of our convictions. All our historic American shibboleths about equality of opportunity are tested in their sincerity, not on the Fourth of July, but when we come to make the budget of a community or commonwealth. A deep cut in the library budget can cut deep into the social returns of a democracy to those who do the work of the world. The schools and libraries are the chief resources with which we will restore and advance the good things in common life. To tear down is a wasteful way to save. Let us save at every point, tighten our belts all along the budgetary line, but let us have no hysterical runs on the schools and libraries. Let us not surrender to depression, defeatism and despair, but rather create our way out by the long-run building up of capacities and powers of the people. Creative librarianship is calling upon great resources of the mind and spirit. We cannot cut the libraries and pinch our way out of the depression. We must continue to invest in intellectual and spiritual resources of youth and the people.

FRANK P. GRAHAM

# Texas Libraries and the Depression (April 1932)

Years ago John Ruskin said: "There is only one cure for public distress, and that is public education directed to make men thoughtful, merciful and just." Perhaps no institution in our time could be more instrumental in developing this public education than the public library, and libraries as Mr. Dudgeon so aptly says in the January *ALA Bulletin*, are like the Israelites of old being asked to make bricks without straw. To determine something of what the depression is doing to Texas libraries questionnaires were sent to 35 of the larger public and county libraries. Twenty-three replies were received. Seventeen libraries reported decreases in funds. Four reported no decreases thus far. Two have increases. Five reported a cut in salaries, however, in many cases salaries were indeed too low to cut. Eleven reported a cut in the book fund.

## CARNEGIE LIBRARY, BELTON

Depression reduced the book fund. Some gifts to this fund in the past were not made in 1931.

## CARNEGIE PUBLIC LIBRARY, TYLER

We have been fortunate in our part of the state during this time of depression. The development of the East Texas oil field has helped Tyler and the surrounding territory to a condition more nearly normal. However we have not entirely escaped. There are a great number of unemployed men and women in and about Tyler. This condition is apparent in the reading rooms of the public library. As yet no salary cuts; nor has it been necessary to reduce our book fund or administration expenses.

## EL PASO PUBLIC LIBRARY

Income reduced from \$41,716.15 to \$36,000. Salaries cut 10 per cent. \$250 cut from periodical subscriptions. Library closed on Sundays, and two stations will be closed the end of May.

## HARLINGEN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Income reduced to \$100 per month. Staff paid 20 cents an hour. Three books bought since last November.

## SAN ANTONIO PUBLIC LIBRARY

The income not reduced; however, the task of serving a patronage which has more than doubled has been possible only by practicing strict economy.

Realizing that the responsibilities of the library were increasing in this time of unemployment, those in charge budgeted carefully for the current year to the end that this near the close of the fiscal year (June 1, 1932) the San Antonio library finds expenditures well within its regular income.

In face of the fact that circulation figures were doubling and use of the Reference and Reading Rooms were being taxed to the utmost, something had to be done to relieve the strain of added work without addition of workers. To meet this situation each phase of library operation was reviewed with the thought of economizing effort. This resulted in adjustments in desk schedules, re-assigning of routine tasks, simplifying of the system of book ordering, re-arrangement of the charging of books making renewals unnecessary. Through these and similar economic measures that the library been able to serve, to a fair degree of efficiency, a larger number of patrons whose reading needs have not only grown greater but more vital in this period of forced leisure. ★



TLA staff photo

# From Indifference to *Making a Difference*

BY JENNIFER ANTHONY

*The MaintainIT Project works with librarians throughout the country to help them manage library technology. Here is the story of one Texas library IT manager and his work as head of technical services. David Emprimo of Jacksonville Public Library once avoided computers at all costs. Now, as head of technical services, he is in charge of maintaining the library's computers.*

Jacksonville Public Library (JPL) serves a population of approximately 14,000 people in the city of Jacksonville in East Texas but also extends its services to people who live within Cherokee County. The library has 18 public-access computers with Internet access and six more to search the card catalog. The staff consists of eight people, which includes Emprimo, the library director, the children's librarian, and five other full- and part-time employees who work at the circulation desk over the course of the day.

## **Becoming IT**

With a chuckle, Emprimo says that he is in charge of maintaining the computers "for better or for worse." When he was younger, he says, he was not a computer person and avoided them "as long as possible, until I was in college." He took a computer literacy course in high school but "would not touch a computer outside of school." But his first job at the library was doing data entry, and when he came on full-time, the staff looked at him and said, "Okay, he's young, he's male. That's our computer guy."

## **Getting help from IT consultants and the community**

Emprimo has come a long way from his days of shunning computers. He has learned a great deal from attending workshops and studying on his own. But he has also learned from the library's IT consultants, explaining, "There is not one computer consultant in town who considers [his knowledge] as a trade secret. They are very free with their knowledge and we've had a wonderful relationship with them."

He says that from the very beginning he has let the consultants know he wants to learn how to do some of the work himself. They are generous with their information, knowing that he will call them when he needs additional assistance. He describes the relationship as "a give and take." The consultants are local and can offer the library immediate

on site help and good warranties. Between 60 to 80 percent of the time, the consultants are able to underbid other organizations. Emprimo explains that these consultants are well aware of the library's setup and do not try to sell him things he does not need.

Emprimo says that he can usually fix software issues, but his biggest challenges have to do with hardware. He is able to do such tasks as switching out a hard drive and installing memory and CD-ROMs but calls in a local consultant for more difficult tasks.

When looking for an IT person, he advises that one should give priority to those who are familiar with modern equipment. They must also understand the library environment, recognizing that it has different needs than a business. He is particularly savvy about a library's unique needs, as he also works in a seminary in which the setup is completely different. At the library, Emprimo runs programs locally on each computer so a server problem won't affect the resources on the public access computers. In contrast, he says, it makes more sense to have everything centralized at the seminary.

He adds that they also have an informal partnership with community organizations. He explains that people from the church libraries will sometimes call him with questions. In addition to the consultants, he doesn't have any qualms about calling people in the community who he knows can help him.

## **Working as a team**

Emprimo appears to have an equally positive relationship with his staff. He explains that when his staff are having technical troubles, he just tries to reassure them that everyone experiences those same problems when they're starting out. He adds, "A lot of it is in the way you phrase your answer." In other words, in a non-accusatory tone, he tells employees that it is not what they are doing wrong – it's the way that the computer needs it to be done. He says his front desk staff do their best to help patrons with basic troubleshooting issues before they call on him.

Similarly, he also has a good relationship with the library director, who, he says, is always open to his ideas. He explains that when he presents suggestions to her, that "a good portion of the time we end up going with, if not exactly what I've suggested, at least a compromise."

## **From indifference to making a difference**

JPL offered its first dial-up Internet-access computer in 1997. Later that same year, the library obtained 10 more computers and instituted a time limit policy. Patrons have access to computers for 30 minutes on Saturdays, when the library is only open for four hours, and an hour on weekdays. When



they first started, they used a sign-in sheet; and patrons had access to the computers on a first-come, first-served basis.

But Emprimo is always on the lookout for time-saving tips and methods. One such discovery is WatchDog, a computer and network monitoring software. He installed it on each individual machine and found that the computers no longer required a great deal of maintenance. He used to have to import the passwords each night, but he tinkered around with the computers one night and found that WatchDog kept the passwords in a registry key. Within an hour, he discovered it was possible to set up the computers so that they imported that registry key each time Windows starts. The library's new computers have Centurion Guard, which offers hard drive and configuration protection.

Emprimo really works to let the computers do as much as possible. On Sundays, when the library is closed, he leaves the computers turned on to let them do their maintenance. One principal consideration in choosing maintenance software is that it does as much of the general cleanup on its own. He has a folder on every computer of free clean-up software that includes SpyBot Search & Destroy, an anti-spyware software, and CCleaner, a freeware system optimization, privacy, and cleaning tool.

He says that the library is using open-source software as much as possible, given that a lot of it is written for Linux. He adds, "I'm very big on free software – if I can find it, I will use it, even if it means using two or three different programs to do what I could do with one that I had to pay for." Currently, the only open-source used on the public computers is Firefox, a free Internet browser provided by the Mozilla project.

He admits that staff need to update their technology plan. In the past they have used Belarc Advisor, a system management tool that builds a detailed profile of a computer's installed software and hardware. The next time staff create a plan, though, he intends to use TechAtlas, a free resource for libraries to support technology planning and management. In regards to the future, he keeps an eye on current trends and conducts an assessment of patrons' needs every two to three years.

He has also considered using Enterprise software but, because he buys a few computers at a time, feels it would be prohibitive to keep disk images of so many set-ups. He adds that he would like to aim toward a more standardized system but has yet to discuss that with the library director.

## **Staff successes**

JPL has been offering computer classes to its patrons for more than five years, using funds from the Texas State Library's Loan Star Libraries program. But because they were

using public access computers for the classes, the sessions were limited to two weekday mornings before noon, when the library was closed to the public.

Staff decided to put together a thin client lab, or a group of client computers that depends primarily on the central server for processing activities and focuses on conveying input and output between the user and the remote server. Emprimo explains that the library's entire computer lab fits into a regular blue storage unit, and he wanted to set up something in the library's auditorium that they could set up and tear down easily. They considered using laptops but had read that laptops are harder for older patrons to handle. With thin clients, patrons could still "get the experience of a full-size computer, but it wouldn't take up as much room." They finally ended up choosing Hewlett Packard thin clients with 17-inch flat screen monitors and set them up in the auditorium in a U-shaped formation whenever classes are in session.

The library applied for and received a grant that covered the costs of the thin clients, along with the server, the licenses, and the software – and allowed for 11 connections to the thin clients. It also allowed for three extra rounds of classes for the first year, bringing the total to six rounds for that year. They now offer the classes in the afternoons and evenings – whenever the auditorium is not in use. Each round runs about five weeks and includes classes on Microsoft Windows, file management, Internet, email, Word, Excel, and Powerpoint.

## **Future plans**

Emprimo explains that in terms of future plans, "at the moment, we are sort of at a plateau." They are still using Windows XP and are not yet ready to implement Windows Vista because neither he nor his staff knows much about Vista. For the same reasons, they are still using Microsoft Office 2003 instead of Office 2007.

But he has come a long ways from the days when he would shy away from computers. As he explains, "There was a time when I'd open up a computer and be afraid to touch anything. I'm not as afraid now to reach in there and fiddle around. The greatest success is that we're able to do a lot of [maintenance] ourselves. There is very little that we are not able to take care of ourselves. I think a lot of libraries would find that they could do the same thing. It just takes getting in there and doing it." And, he adds, "You're never too old or young to get in there and learn it." ✪

Jennifer Anthony is a MaintainIT contributor.



# Successful RFID Conversion TIPS

BY TODD J. HUMBLE

**M**any problems will unfold during an RFID implementation, and the following are the key issues we have learned in the past year at North Richland Hills Public Library.

Estimating the labor involved to handle every single item for conversion to RFID is tricky. A quick number to use would likely be 300 items per hour if you have a conversion station in the stacks with an automated label dispenser. With two person teams, we achieved as high as 600 items per hour. We did have some materials, like CDs, that required a slower processing time (about 10 items per hour).

Many libraries have likely used foil backed labels – provided by many of the major library supply distributors – that are not compatible with RFID chips. These foil hub tags should be removed if you want to tag these high theft risk materials. We tried many commercial cleaners and eventually found that water made the best remover for the common style we had used for many years. After soaking the disc in a tray of water, we lightly used a label scraper to peel off the foil menace and used a small amount of commercial cleaner to remove the remaining residue.

How many tags to use per item? On books, this is easy: one per item. On media, this is a local decision. We chose one for audiobooks since they have had virtually no theft at our facilities over the years. Applying one to the last disc is a popular option; but, due to the masking qualities of CDs, it might not sense the disc tag even if it is there in a 20 piece set. On DVDs and CDs, we used one per case and one on the most critical piece of the set (i.e., the feature movie). If you want to be certain every single piece of a set is tagged in a kit, you will need more tags and testing of your system to find out how many tags can be used together before they start masking each other.

With multi-piece CD/DVD sets, you may wish to break them into smaller sets as the discs can have unforeseen reception issues. Although the labels our vendor provided are the best of their size, we have found that switching to full disc sized tags instead of hub tags has significantly improved the reception of the items by our various RFID antennas.

RFID reception antennas are found in staff workstations, self-checks, automated book-drops, sorting systems, security gates, and hand held scanners used for inventory functions. Since each of these devices will typically have a different antenna size and strength, you should test materials with all of

these devices at the beginning of your conversion. This testing will allow you to know which places provide the best reception and reduce the need to retag materials at a later point.

Not getting an automated sorter will significantly reduce the labor saving capabilities of an RFID conversion. This should not be considered an option; it's a necessity.

Not tagging every item in the collection is a common shortcut because some materials are just difficult to convert. Placing a label on these materials stating "must be checked out at the circulation desk" is the common solution to these items. Since we are 100% RFID, this was not an option for us.

We took the time to color copy or scan our board books so that when a tag was placed into the item we were able to apply a copy of the damaged image or story over the tag. Some facilities have resorted to the outside of some of these materials, but this will cost you a new tag every few circulations. Taking the time to copy or scan a piece for repair will also be needed for some adult materials where stories or referenced materials are in the tags landing field. Tagging without consideration of the future reader is careless, so establish a guideline of which text and images are important to preserve during conversion. We have also cut and masked parts of covers as well to address high foil content in some book jackets. (Based on our 200,000 item conversion, this will be around 1 per 1,000 that has a potentially tag reception killing foiled cover to address.)

Elimination of barcodes or the combining of barcodes onto the RFID label is a mistake to avoid as the traditional barcode is your cheap backup system. You can choose to relocate where they are placed, though, since they are no longer the crucial reference point they traditionally have been. Combining it also means that it cannot be masked as previously discussed for content preservation.

Stick to RFID standards to insure you can utilize many different vendors' tags to maximize your system's performance and on-going costs. When bidding your system, break the labels out as a separate package to insure you get your best pricing.

Once you start your conversion, start using the tags in circulation to find any issues you may have overlooked. Talk to other libraries that are using the vendors you are considering and try to test each material type in multiple ways before mass conversion to insure you've found all your potential issues.

How do you property stamp your books? Consider all processes as this conversion is the perfect time to reconsider and improve other practices. ★

Todd J. Humble is a supervisor at  
North Richland Hills Public Library.

# The Texas PTA: SMART on Literacy

BY STACY GLOVER

**I**F you ask a PTA parent in Texas, they can tell you that the Texas PTA is the strongest child-focused organization in the state. They can tell you that Texas PTA advocates in the Texas State Legislature for laws affecting the lives of children. They can tell you that Texas PTA has been a voice for Texas children for years, even decades. What they may not be able to tell you is how long Texas PTA has been a force and voice for Texas children. In 2009, Texas PTA will celebrate its Centennial. That's right... Texas PTA is 100 years old!

In 1909, a young mother named Ella Caruthers Porter established a Texas state branch of the National Congress of Mothers, as National PTA was called at that time, with the purpose of bringing together other parents with the same needs and questions regarding parenting, child welfare issues, and the betterment of the home. Texas PTA, in its first few years, was the first state organization to:

- Call together 18 state organizations to discuss the conditions affecting children's lives and to focus on fundamental needs,
- Develop an educational campaign for birth registration, and
- Promote an infant mortality survey.

Texas PTA has been an advocacy leader from its inception, and this legacy continues today. In the early days, Texas PTA was instrumental in introducing laws to inspect the health of public school children, to establish kindergartens, and to create a child-welfare commission. Today, Texas PTA is still one of the strongest child advocacy associations, focusing on clean school bus emissions, healthy lifestyles for children, strengthening child passenger restraint laws, and reforming the accountability system in Texas public schools.

PTA is committed to library programs and to literacy projects, and has a strong history advocating and supporting these programs. National PTA has the following position on libraries, as stated on their website

National PTA believes that students need access to information in order to explore and experience the diversity of ideas in a pluralistic society. PTA recognizes and supports the rights of parents to guide their children in choosing appropriate reading and educational materials. PTA supports the rights of both public libraries and school libraries to provide materials and information that include all points of view on current and historical issues and that are free of censorship based on bias, partisanship or doctrinal disapproval.

National PTA encourages its members, including the members of Texas PTA, to advocate for laws and policies that support a person's right to use a library, regardless of race, sex or religion, to provide school libraries with materials that challenge students

but are free of bias, and to maintain school libraries and media centers in public schools with full school board support. Kyle Ward, executive director for Texas PTA, said,

As a parent and leader in PTA, I realize the importance of maintaining strong libraries in our schools. As technology, curriculum and learning processes continue to advance and become more sophisticated as each decade passes, it is crucial we ensure our students have access to state-of-the-art libraries with certified school librarians. Texas students deserve the best, and our librarians play a significant role in public education.

Texas PTA has recently introduced its new literacy program, SMART (Start Meeting and Reading Together) to encourage schools to promote literacy. This program has several components, including:

- Encouraging students to share books with Title I schools, shelters, and child advocacy associations and decorating collection bins in the schools for those donations;
- Hosting a book sale to raise money or donate to local libraries in honor of the Texas PTA Centennial;
- Distributing books to early childhood centers or pediatric clinics;
- Hosting a Family Reading Night, with families taking home free books for a family reading challenge; and
- Taking the SMART 100 Read Challenge, encouraging students and families to read 100 stories, 100 pages, 100 minutes, or 100 books in honor of the Texas PTA Centennial.

You can find more information about the SMART program at <http://getsmarttexas.org/>. Students can participate by sending pictures and stories of their SMART program and even download a customizable certificate to keep.

Texas PTA has proven that it can be a powerful voice for the children of Texas in many ways and has proven that it can withstand the test of time. Texas PTA's mission is three-fold: to be a powerful voice for all children, to be a relevant resource for families and communities, and to be a strong advocate for the education and well-being of every child. This was true 100 years ago, it is true today, and it will be true 100 years from today. Here's to Texas PTA...yesterday, today, and tomorrow. ★



Stacy Glover is director of communications for the Texas PTA.



## Legislative Day

TLA held its biennial Legislative Day on February 24 and 25, 2009 in Austin. This two-day event showcased library legislative issues, and over 200 library supporters from around the state participated. All delegates were trained on the issues and then visited with legislators and their staffs at the Capitol.

This event featured a special presentation on TLA's recent public opinion poll, which offered wonderful statistics on the overwhelming public support for Texas libraries. Delegates used this information in their meetings with legislative offices. The gathering was capped off with an informal get-together at Scholtz Garten, where delegates discussed the day's activities and swapped stories. One delegate leader recounted how she started collecting business cards from senators pledging their support for libraries.

TLA is grateful to our Legislative Day sponsors: EBSCO Information Services, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., Lee and Low Books, and ProQuest. With their assistance, TLA was able to produce valuable and Texas specific information to deliver to elected officials.

We also offer our sincere gratitude to all of the volunteers, delegates, and delegate leaders who traveled to Austin to participate in this crucial event. It is your voice that makes the difference.

## Legislative Update

At the time of printing, the state budget committees are finalizing their respective proposals. The House Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government designated that funding requests for databases, Loan Star Libraries, and Systems be included in Article XI of the state's budget.

Article XI is basically a "pending area" so that, if the state determines it can expend additional funds than what is estimated, items in Article XI are funded. Items placed in Article XI are not approved into agency budgets, but



they are held for future consideration. The bad news is that Article XI is somewhat wish list funding, but the good news is that items have not been rejected and can, on occasion, be approved.

The full House Appropriation Committee is expected to consider the subcommittee proposals soon. We hope that massive stakeholder communication to members of the Appropriations Committee will persuade them to include library programs into the final budget for the State Library.

The Senate Finance Committee accepted workgroup recommendations to increase the Loan Star Libraries program by \$3 million over the biennium, increase the Systems program by \$1 million over the biennium, and increase funding for the Talking Book Program by \$275,000 over the biennium. A total of about \$8.7 million over the biennium for TexShare and K-12 database content (combined amount) was placed in Article XI.

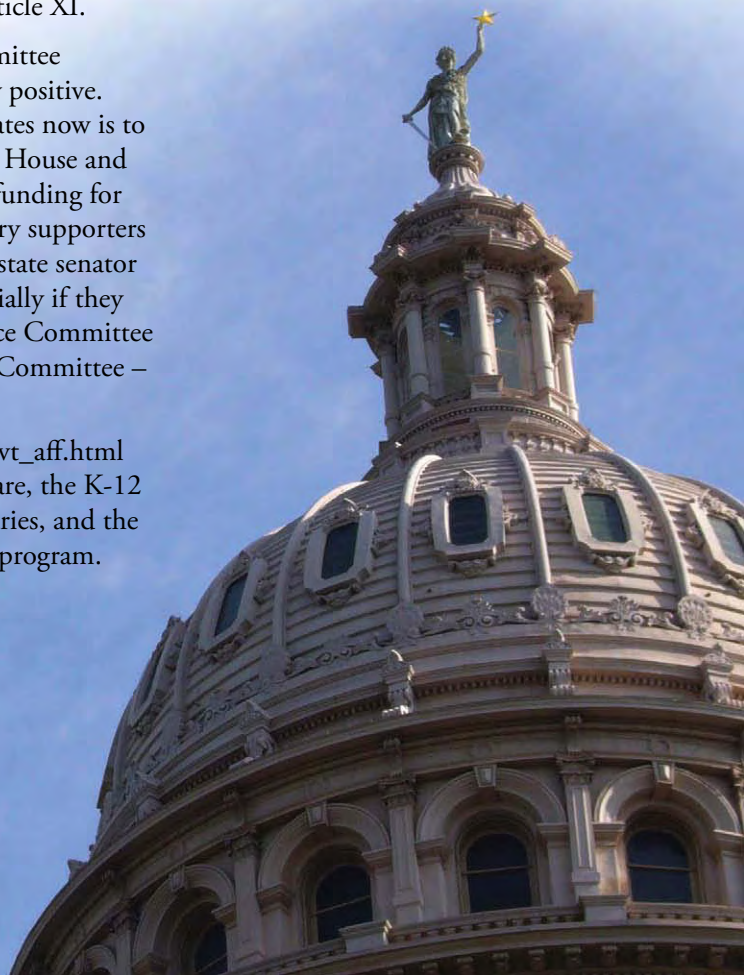
The Senate Finance Committee recommendations are very positive. The task for library advocates now is to try to assure that both the House and Senate approve increased funding for library programs. All library supporters are urged to contact their state senator and representative – especially if they serve on the Senate Finance Committee or House Appropriations Committee – about library programs.

See [www.tsla.org/html/govt\\_aff.html](http://www.tsla.org/html/govt_aff.html) for information on TexShare, the K-12 databases, Loan Star Libraries, and the Regional Library Systems program.

We need your support to increase library funding. Please take the time to contact your elected officials. Also, please urge friends and colleagues to contact them.

### *Senate Finance Committee*

- Sen. Kip Averitt (R-Waco); (512)463-0122; FX: (512) 475-3729
- Sen. Robert Deuell (R-Greenville); (512)463-0102; FX: (512) 463-7202
- Sen. Robert Duncan (R-Lubbock); (512)463-0128; FX: (512) 463-2424
- Sen. Kevin Eltife (R-Tyler); (512)463-0101; FX: (512) 475-3751
- Sen. Chris Harris (R-Arlington); (512)463-0109; FX: (512) 463-7003
- Sen. Juan Hinojosa (D-McAllen) (Vice-Chair); (512)463-0120; FX: (512) 463-0229
- Sen. Eddie Lucio (D-Brownsville); (512)463-0127; FX: (512) 463-0061
- Sen. Jane Nelson (R-Lewisville); (512)463-0112; FX: (512) 463-0923
- Sen. Steve Ogden (R-Bryan) (Chair); (512)463-0105; FX: (512) 463-5713
- Sen. Kel Seliger (R-Amarillo); (512)463-0131; FX: (512) 475-3733
- Sen. Florence Shapiro (R-Plano); (512)463-0108; FX: (512) 463-7579



- Sen. Royce West (D-Dallas); (512)463-0123; FX: (512) 463-0299
- Sen. John Whitmire (D-Houston); (512)463-0115; FX: (512) 475-3737
- Sen. Tommy Williams (R-The Woodlands); (512)463-0104; FX: (512) 463-6373
- Sen. Judith Zaffirini; (D-Laredo); (512)463-0121; FX: (512) 475-3738

### *House Appropriations Committee*

- Rep. Jimmie Aycock (R-Killeen); (512) 463-0684; FX: (512) 482-8284
- Rep. Fred Brown (R-College Station); (512) 463-0698; FX: (512) 463-5109
- Rep. Angie Button (R-Garland); (512) 463-0486; FX: (512) 480-0512
- Rep. Norma Chavez (D-El Paso); (512) 463-0622; FX: (512) 478-6755
- Rep. Ellen Cohen (D-Houston); (512) 463-0389; FX: (512) 463-1374
- Rep. Brandon Creighton (R-Conroe); (512) 463-0726; FX: (512) 463-8428
- Rep. Myra Crownover (R-Denton); (512) 463-0582; FX: (512) 463-0471

- Rep. Drew Darby (R-San Angelo); (512) 463-0331; FX: (512) 463-5896
- Rep. Joe Driver (R-Garland); (512) 463-0574; FX: (512) 463-5896
- Rep. Dawnna Dukes (D-Austin); (512) 463-0506; FX: (512) 463-7864
- Rep. Al Edwards (D-Houston); (512) 463-0518; FX: (512) 463-5896
- Rep. Craig Eiland (D-Galveston); (512) 463-0502; FX: (512) 469-0149
- Rep. Kino Flores (D-Palmview); (512) 463-0704; FX: (512) 463-5364
- Rep. Helen Giddings (D-Dallas); (512) 463-0953; FX: (512) 463-5887
- Rep. Abel Herrero (D-Robstown); (512) 463-0462; FX: (512) 463-1705
- Rep. Scott Hochberg (D-Houston); (512) 463-0492; FX: (512) 463-5896
- Rep. Carl Isett (R-Lubbock); (512) 463-0676; FX: (512) 708-8427
- Rep. Susan King (R-Abilene); (512) 463-0718; FX: (512) 463-5896
- Rep. Ruth McClendon (D-San Antonio); (512) 463-0708; FX: (512) 463-7071

- Rep. Doug Miller (R-New Braunfels); (512) 463-0325; FX: (512) 463-5896
- Rep. Geanie Morrison (R-Victoria); (512) 463-0456; FX: (512) 476-3933
- Rep. John Otto (R-Dayton); (512) 463-0570; FX: (512) 463-8571
- Rep. Jim Pitts (R-Waxahachie) (Chair); (512) 463-0516; FX: (512) 463-1051
- Rep. Richard Raymond (D-Laredo) (V-Chair); (512) 463-0558; FX: (512) 463-6296
- Rep. Debbie Riddle (R-Tomball); (512) 463-0572; FX: (512) 463-1908
- Rep. Michael Villarreal (D-San Antonio); (512) 463-0532; FX: (512) 463-7675
- Rep. John Zerwas (R-Richmond); (512) 463-0657; FX: (512) 236-0713

To find out who represents you and how to contact them, go to:

[www.fyi.legis.state.tx.us/](http://www.fyi.legis.state.tx.us/).





## Federal Stimulus Bill

The Texas Library Association is working to promote library eligibility for state stimulus funds. Rhoda Goldberg, director of the Harris County Public Library, is chairing TLA's Committee on Economic Stabilization Funding.

Information, including a breakdown of potential federal and state dollars that may affect libraries, is available from the TLA website ([www.txla.org](http://www.txla.org)). Click on *Texas Libraries and Stimulus Funding*. Please check the website for updates. Also, note that the Texas Comptroller has an extended spreadsheet showing the latest information regarding all components of stimulus funding regarding Texas. See [www.cpa.state.tx.us/finances/stimulus/EstimatedStimulusImpactonTexas.pdf](http://www.cpa.state.tx.us/finances/stimulus/EstimatedStimulusImpactonTexas.pdf).

State Librarian Peggy Rudd appeared before the House Select Committee on Federal Economic Stabilization Funding and discussed a wide array of programs and services that libraries of all types can undertake through stimulus funding. This hearing and others may be accessed online on the Texas House of Representatives website at [www.house.state.tx.us/media/welcome.php](http://www.house.state.tx.us/media/welcome.php).



## TALL Texans Institute Announces Class of 2009 and New Location

The newest TALL Texans will be looking forward to a new home this year. The event will be held at Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House in Lake Dallas. The move to a new location was based on several factors.

"TALL Texans works best with a balance of librarians from different types of libraries," says Ted Wanner, Institute Coordinator. "As the K-12 school year has started going later and later into June, our options for different locations have become more limited. We actually had to change the dates this year to avoid losing the K-12 applicants. We were very fortunate that a wonderful new site was available for the time frame we needed."

Montserrat is a newly-remodeled campus that caters to retreats for adults. Meeting rooms are large and well-equipped with ADA access to all buildings. The campus features its own library. Dormitories include both double and single rooms. A chef prepares healthy adult meals and wine is served with dinner.

Topics covered during the four-day seminar will include leadership competencies, leader effectiveness, power and influence, risk behaviors, diagnosing sources of conflict and disagreement, negotiation and collaboration, effective

teambuilding, organizational culture, appreciative inquiry, coaching, and mentoring. Librarians return to their home institutions prepared to be better leaders in their communities and in the profession as a whole.

### *Experience and Enthusiasm*

Facilitators Maureen Sullivan and Jack Siggins will be returning for their 15th year with the institute. Maureen Sullivan is an organizational development consultant whose practice focuses on the delivery of consulting and training services to libraries and other information organizations. She is on the faculty of the annual ACRL/Harvard Leadership Institute and is a professor of practice in the new Ph.D./ Managerial Leadership in the Information Professions program at the Simmons College Graduate School of Library and Information Science. Jack Siggins is the university librarian at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. He has served as a consultant for dozens of institutions, primarily in the areas of strategic planning, team building, resource sharing, benchmarking, and organizational restructuring.

The mentors for 2009 will be headlined by Patrick Heath, incoming TLA president, longtime library supporter, veteran mentor, and former mayor of Boerne, Texas. The new president-elect of TLA should also be on hand – either Maribel Garza-Castro, Saint John's School in Houston, or Mary Jo Humphreys, Round Rock ISD. Other mentors include academic library directors Brett Kirkpatrick of UT Medical Branch in Galveston and Tracey Mendoza of Northeast Lakeview College in San Antonio, public library director Becky Sullivan of Riter C. Hulsey Public Library in Terrell, and associate executive director Robert Watkins of Amigos Library Services, Inc.

The TALL Texans Institute receives generous sponsorship from DEMCO and several divisions, districts, round tables, and interest groups within TLA. Texas Library Association is also grateful to the institutions that fund their librarians' registration for the event.

### *Class of 2009*

The Texas Library Association welcomes 24 new TALL Texans for 2009:

- Jennifer Anderson**, Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi
- Sue Bennett**, Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Austin
- Kaye Bray**, School of Library & Information Studies, Texas Woman's University, Denton
- Becky Calzada**, Cypress Elementary School, Cedar Park
- Susan Chandler**, Sterling Municipal Library, Baytown
- Lynne Craddock**, Martin Luther King Jr. Branch, Dallas Public Library
- Carmen Escamilla**, John B. Alexander High School, Laredo
- David Fettke**, Humanities Division, Dallas Public Library

**Cara Fong**, Nimitz High School, Houston  
**Stephanie Fulton**, UT M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, Houston  
**WyLaina Hildreth**, Denton Public Library  
**Gail Johnston**, Texas A&M University, Commerce  
**Karen Kessel**, Science -Hall Elementary School, Kyle  
**April Kessler**, University of Texas at Austin  
**Becky Lee**, Valley Oaks Elementary School, Houston  
**John Maxstadt**, Texas A&M International University, Laredo  
**Denise Milton**, Jasper Public Library  
**Marci Peschke**, Kramer Elementary School, Dallas  
**Pat Peters**, Lewisville Public Library  
**Kelly Skovbjerg**, Boerne Public Library  
**Jennifer Smith**, Legacy Middle School, San Antonio  
**Sara Tebes**, Irving Public Library  
**Jennifer Turney**, Angleton High School  
**Loren Zawodny**, R. B. Tullis Branch, Montgomery County Memorial Library System

Applications for the 2010 TALL Texans program will be available at the TLA website on October 1, 2009.

## Disaster Relief

Last fall, when Hurricane Ike struck Texas and caused such devastation in its wake, the library community rallied to assist affected libraries. By donating to the TLA Disaster Relief Fund, TLA members were able to support the recovery efforts of several libraries in southeast Texas.

*Here are a couple of letters back from those libraries.*

“On behalf of the students and staff at Sour Lake Elementary, it is with deep gratitude I write this letter to you and TLA, thanking you for the \$2,500 grant. I have been a TLA member for ten years and my heart swells with pride to be a part of an organization that supports its members. It has been a challenge to deal with hurricane damages, but we have been encouraged by special assistance from our community and the TLA Relief Grant. Once again, thank you for the encouragement.”

• • •

“On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff, patrons of the Rosenberg Library, I would like to thank the TLA and the TLA Disaster Relief Committee for the Disaster Relief grant of \$6,500. The generous donation from the Texas Library Association will be of great help in expediting our library’s recovery from the Hurricane Ike disaster. As part of the recovery process, our Board of Directors has approved proposals to relocate vital building systems, which were devastated by the Hurricane Ike storm surge, to the upper floors of the library.

Our goal is to make these critical systems less vulnerable in the event of future flooding. TLA’s support of the Rosenberg Library is warmly appreciated. On a personal note, I would like to say that this gift has great meaning for me as a librarian, because I know that most library organizations have very limited funds. The gift from the Texas Library Association will be permanently recorded in a special donors’ album.”

## TexShare Ads

EBSCO Information Services developed a radio spot promoting library services in Texas. The announcements tell listeners of the powerful community resources they have available to them, with library services available both on-site and on-line. A file of the ad will be posted on the TexShare homepage at [www.texshare.edu](http://www.texshare.edu) for your listening convenience.

The radio spots ran in the Central Texas area February 16 through March 9 on the following stations: KHFI at 96.7, KLBJ at AM 590, KVET at 98.1, and KKMJ at 95.5.

Visit [www.texshare.edu/statistics/radiospots.html](http://www.texshare.edu/statistics/radiospots.html) for more information.

## One Potato, Two Potato

*Wins the 2009 Texas  
Bluebonnet Award*

*One Potato, Two Potato* received the votes of over 23,000 school children to win the 2009 Texas Bluebonnet Award. Author Cynthia DeFelice shares the award with illustrator Andrea U'Ren. The author and illustrator will accept their awards at the Texas Bluebonnet Award Author Session at TLA's annual conference in Houston.

This year, a total of 151,631 votes were cast. The Texas Bluebonnet Award is one of the highest honors in children's literature; and every year, the Texas Bluebonnet Reading List and programming librarians create around it foster a love of reading in children statewide.

## Eighth Annual Texas Book Festival/UII Fiction Writing Contest

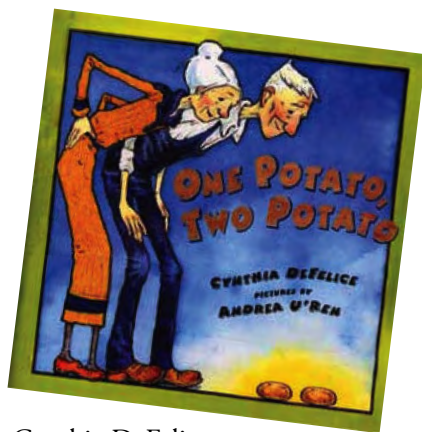
The University Interscholastic League and Texas Book Festival announce the 8th annual Fiction Writing Contest. Texas junior high and high school students are invited to submit a piece of original fiction, no more than 2,000 words in length, to be judged by Texas authors, some of whom will appear at the 2009 Texas Book Festival, October 31 and November 1 in Austin.

Entries should focus on the theme, "In My Own Backyard." Judges will look for excellence in use of dialogue, character development, setting, imagery, plot, conflict, and resolution. Submitted entries will be considered in three divisions: Grades 7-8, Grades 9-10, and Grades 11-12. Authors will enter the division for which they were a student during the 2008-09 school year.

Schools are limited to three entries per division. There is no entry fee. Entries must be double-spaced and formatted as a Microsoft Word document, then faxed to the Texas Book Festival office at 512/322-0722 no later than July 1, 2009.

Prizes will be awarded to the first, second, and third place winners per division. First place winners will be invited to Austin to receive an award and to read their works during the 2009 Texas Book Festival. Winning entries will be published on the Texas Book Festival website.

For additional information, contact Bobby Hawthorne at [bhawthorne@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:bhawthorne@mail.utexas.edu). Entry forms are posted at [www.texasbookfestival.org](http://www.texasbookfestival.org) and on [www.uil.utexas.edu](http://www.uil.utexas.edu). ✪



# On the CENTENNIAL of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission

*For 100  
years  
of service*

TO THE PEOPLE  
OF TEXAS AND THE  
LIBRARIES THAT  
SUPPORT THEM,  
THE MEMBERS OF  
THE TEXAS LIBRARY  
ASSOCIATION WISH  
THE COMMISSION A



## *Happy Birthday!*

*We commend all current and former staff,  
commissioners, and constituents for  
a century of commitment  
and enterprise  
to better the lives of  
people in Texas.*

