

Director's Corner—"Save Professionalism" —by Roger Carswell

The Sept 1 issue of *Library Journal* contained an article which got my attention titled "Save Professionalism". I'm still mulling over the article, but I think I largely agree with it.

Bill Crowley, the author, starts out with this provocative sentence: "The public library cannot compete in the information marketplace". Whoa! Isn't that just what we think we are doing? What purpose do we serve if we can't compete? Crowley goes on to say that to survive, we must get back to our roots in education. Our prime pur-

pose is not information, but education. The traditional triad of library roles is that we meet the informational, educational, and recreational needs of the community. But, Crowley says, sometime after World War II the informational role began to be regarded as supreme. Educational and, especially, recreational roles were regarded as secondary. By trying to put all our eggs in one basket, information, we have put ourselves at risk in a networked, digitized world. Google and others in the information marketplace provide infor-

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Wither/Whither (your choice) Imagination . . . By Harry Willems

What do you do with a stadium video board? Put it in the library parking lot. Grabbing the attention of patrons and communicating library services and events is the "wild idea" that came out of a planning session, one of 22 held in the System during August and September. Getting board members to let their imaginations run wild is not a trivial task; board members usually have some imagination, but if they broadcast their ideas they are labeled as day-dreamers or worse, cranks. I developed the idea that the aging process does not necessarily stifle imagination and creativity, but it does, however, invoke the "depression" or 1930's mentality.

"Imagination is more important than knowledge."

—Albert Einstein

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mation (if not always the best information) more conveniently and at lower cost.

To survive, we must look elsewhere. Crowley says that our library forebears had it right when they deemed the public library to be fundamentally educational in nature. Libraries were to provide the opportunity for continued self-education, building on what was available through formal education. Even the recreational activities of a public library (popular reading) support educational goals, particularly children's reading and learning.

Much of this seems to me to have the ring of truth. Even very large, well-financed libraries can probably never compete with a Google. Our reference statistics have fallen off dramatically. If that's so, why aren't our libraries sitting abandoned with staff lonelier than the Maytag repairman? Yet, most of us are so busy we can hardly keep up. It's because our educational and recreational roles are just as important as ever.

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Practicality and necessity are the bane of imaginative ideas. This mentality is not limited to seniors, even some younger board members become way too practical to be good at visioning. I simply cannot be more emphatic; the core of what makes a good library board is vision and imagination. Albert Einstein said: "Imagination is more important than knowledge."

Stump art: start up the chainsaw Mabel

I suspect that in a few years there's going to be a new kind of art around the gulf coast area; stump art. You've seen it. A giant old tree succumbs to a disaster, hurricane, tornado etc. Then a Gino Salerno (stump artist from Wichita <http://www.kake.com/news/features/4/54172.html>) comes along with a loving touch chain saw and whittles it down to an artful masterpiece. But, ya can't do it with a twig or a sapling. Wild ideas are like giant stumps that can be trimmed and molded into a working program or service for the library. This is what board meetings are for. Rather than spending time on cookie platters or minutes of previous meetings, or even the librarian's report—these can be read before hand and voted on in one-fell-swoop (consent agenda), a majority of the board meeting should be used to whittle on wild ideas.

Cure for the common board, or let's do something exciting

Problems finding board members? Can't find the type of board member to help carry out the library plan (board crafting)? Poor attendance at board

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“Rolling and Reading”—Robie Martin

Cooler weather brings warm thoughts to mind. For us librarian-types it's easy to conjure up all manner of scenes involving a good book – sipping a cup of perfect tea while perusing a journal, wrapped up in a quilt at night with the latest thriller, a stolen hour outdoors when the chores can wait just a bit longer. We all must balance time spent on what we ought to be reading against what we want to read when we do find that coveted time to crack open a cover.

There is a way to squeeze a few more titles onto your “I Just Finished . . .” list and if you haven't taken advantage of this little tip, you really should give it a try: audiobooks. Don't save those recorded books for your next road trip. You will be amazed at how quickly you can devour an average-sized book by listening to it while driving to work and the grocery store. You may coax your body into a little longer workout if you take a book-on-tape with you to the gym or to the park for your walk. Most library collections offer CD and cassette tape format and most collections of this type are growing.

If the idea of listening to a book is new to you, it would be wise to be selective in your initial choices of titles and narrators. As with anything, there are superb narrations available and then there are plenty of other recordings that leave you wondering . . . well, you know what I mean. I utilize the great little (and growing!) collection of audio titles available at Parson Public Library and rely on the always-wonderful inter-library loan department at the SEK System Library for my listening pleasure. Here are a few titles that have caused me to drive right on past my driveway for one more trip around the block before pulling in:

Sahara Special, Esme Codell. Listening Library. 2003. Narrator Phylicia Rashad brilliantly portrays a colorful collection of students in a classroom where learning celebrates uniqueness.

Artemis Fowl, Eoin Colfer. Listening Library. 2002. Narrated by the author, this is a wild and wacky tale of magic and technology.

Peter and the Starcatchers, Dave Barry. Brilliance Corp. 2004. Jim Dale (yes, the Harry Potter Jim Dale) narrates this rollicking explanation of how Peter Pan and the Lost Boys first came to Neverland. How DOES Jim Dale keep coming up with these great voices??

Bucking the Sarge, Christopher Paul Curtis. Listening Library. 2004. Narrated by Michael Boatman, Luther T. Farrell comes to life in this story as he tries to keep his sense of humor and morals while bucking his shady and manipulative mother, The Sarge.







Feed, M. T. Anderson. Listening Library. 2003. David Aaron Baker narrates this brilliant satire of a futuristic Earth.

Da Vinci Code, Dan Brown. Random House Audio. 2003. Now that this highly-touted intelligent thriller is back on library shelves, you may have lost interest in getting your hands on it. Try listening to Paul Michael's excellent narration.

ICE Melts: Closure of Library Services Certificate Program

It is with sadness that I am announcing the end of the Library Services Certificate Program (LSCP) offered at SLIM through the Institute for Continuous Education (ICE). This decision was not easy and it is based upon the excellent work of Cathy Hoy, Amanda Engelman, and Cindi Hickey. Over the past year they have conducted research and developed thoughtful reports on the assets and drawbacks of the LSCP. These reports are available on the SLIM website at http://slim.emporia.edu/about/pressreleases/dean_0805.htm.

Cathy Hoy's research showed that those involved with the certificate program believe in the high quality of the content of the courses and the overall curriculum, citing such things as:

-  usefulness of the application of the library-skills course work to library work,
-  improved job performance resulting from participating in the program,
-  well-prepared instructors, who provided practical information,
-  stimulating interaction and networking among peers,
-  responsiveness of SLIM, ICE, LSCP staff to the needs of students, and,
-  benefits of cooperation among SLIM/ICE, the State Library, and the regional library systems.

There are, however, some problems that could not be overcome. These include: low enrollment in classes; credit vs. non-credit problems; cost effectiveness for participants (costs for tuition, travel, lodging, and time from work were not offset by increases in salaries or promotions); length of time to complete a certificate (sometimes as much as two years); and sufficient funding to sustain and grow the program.

During its existence, 41 students were active in the program, 17 completed a certificate (8 Generalist, 4 Library Administration, 2 Information Sources & Services, 2 Youth Services, 1 Technology), and 45 different classes were offered. This shows the dedication of the students, instructors, and libraries to the profession, communities, and personal continuing education. This may be the best legacy of the LSCP.

The information from Cathy's reports will be shared with the State Library's Task Forces on Continuing Education. I believe that the reports will be very helpful in guiding the future of continuing education for all Kansas library workers and trustees. We at SLIM look forward to helping to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to continue their own lifelong learning.

Ann L. O'Neill,
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Around the System

Coffeyville—Karyl Buffington, director of Coffeyville Public Library since 1977, will retire February 1, 2006. She has served in the public library and related fields since 1960.

Buffington credits working in the University of Arkansas libraries as a student assistant for influencing her career choice. Graduating in 1964 with a minor in library science, she worked for one year as Archivist at the Menninger Foundation in Topeka, and one year at Topeka Public Library as reader's advisor and KIC librarian.

Buffington became the reference librarian at Coffeyville Public Library in 1966. She received her MLS from Emporia State University in 1971. When Don Drenner retired in 1977, Buffington was selected to be the new director, and has remained in that position for 28 years.

Buffington oversaw the construction of a new building in 1979, and an addition in 1998. Implementation of the automated circulation and catalog system, Internet service, and other technologies as they became available were all a part of her tenure.

On the regional and state level Buffington has served as Kansas Library Association President, Southeast Kansas Library System President, and spent three separate terms on the SEKLS Executive Board as secretary and treasurer.

Buffington is looking forward to continuing her association with church and other local groups in her retirement. She also expects to FINALLY have some time to get back to reading and quilting.

SEKLS Rotation—Please keep the YA books in the YA Section of your Rotation Boxes. Do not mix them with the Juvenile books. — **Kathryn Herder**

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meetings? Got the “we tried it and it didn’t work” syndrome? Well, step right in and find the most amazing cure-all for the common board; do something exciting. We may not find the “what have you done for me lately” (whydfml) experience much to our liking at first. It requires us to be creative, to use imaginative programming all the time. Makes us tired just thinking about it, doesn’t it? What if your library board was the most exciting place to be in town? What if the board becomes known for doing exciting programming and providing imaginative solutions to the needs of the community? Who would take notice? When you approach the funding authority for more money they will look at your community support and determine the consequences for not supporting the most exciting game in town.

Budgeting to a plan

Roy Bird from the State Library of Kansas is fond of saying: “you don’t plan to a budget, you budget to a plan.” Strategic planning becomes the venue for dreaming up wild ideas. Once your plan, your roadmap, is in place, you determine the amount of money needed to fund your plan. One might ask, do we need to get the money first to do exciting things, or do we do exciting things to get noticed and then get more money? Chicken and egg thing again. There are no easy answers, but this is part of the challenge that the board faces to get the library moving.

Steering or just turning the wheel

As a youngster growing up in the central valley of California, I would go to my grandpa’s small farm. I would head for the barn, or tractor shed, as soon as we stopped on that dusty farmyard and race my brother to the small Ford tractor. Being the older of the two I’d usually win. Up on the tractor we’d climb, and sitting in the seat I’d crank the wheel to and fro imagining driving around the farmyard. I realize now that I was not steering that red and gray farm tool; I was just turning the wheel, watching the two front ribbed tires jerk back and forth. Library boards can end up sitting in the seat of library tractor cranking the wheel to and fro, but if the library is not moving you’re not steering. Your core duty as a board member is not to endlessly turn the wheel (unproductive board meetings). Your job is to keep the library fresh and exciting; this is movement.

Thinking big in a small town

Have you ever seen a town of 90 people with a new library? Have you ever seen a town with less than 600 population with a three quarters of a million dollar library? Savonburg and Winchester, Kansas are these two libraries. It takes a determined imaginative library board and it takes asking two questions--What if? and Why not? Library boards need to “honor the past and imagine the future.” (Cerritos library video shown at the Public Library Roundtable Conference in Wichita September 30, 05)

QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS

Below are some of the questions we've dealt with in the past several months which may be of interest to other libraries.

Q. When should libraries close for inclement weather?

A. There's no one right answer. However, here are a few observations.

Libraries rarely, if ever, automatically close when the schools close. Schools have to worry about busing kids and also about the fact that kids are required to come. No one is required to come to the library, so it's not the same situation.

However, most libraries do occasionally close or delay opening because of bad weather--libraries with steps and no ground level entrance more so than others. Extremely poor road conditions, inability to clear the library's sidewalks, and a sustained power outage are factors which should be taken into consideration when deciding whether to close. In many cases, whether non-emergency government offices or major employers close is considered.

The decision to close would normally be made by the librarian. In some cases, there may be a requirement to consult with the board president or, if unavailable, another board officer.

Q. Should pay for time spent attending workshops be treated the same as other pay? Or should it be more like mileage reimbursement, with a separate check and no withholdings?

A. Pay for time at workshops should be handled the same as pay for anything else. It's part of salary/wages. Pay for workshops is like any other kind of pay. There's no need for a separate check, withholdings must be made, it gets reported on your W-2, etc. Mileage reimbursement is not salary or wages (unless you pay more than the IRS allowed rate of 48.5 cents per mile, in which case the excess does have to be counted as salary).

Q. May we move our bank accounts to a bank outside our county?

A. Not usually. According to K.S.A. 9-1401, municipal or quasi-municipal corporations must have accounts in banks or other financial institutions with a main or branch bank located in the same county as long as there are satisfactory securities pledged.

Q. We received a substantial bequest which is invested in stocks. Our mayor thinks we cannot invest money in this way. Is this something we can do?

A. Yes. Library boards are authorized to receive and accept gifts and donations to the library and administer it in accordance with any provisions thereof. This authorization is found in K.S.A. 12-1225(h) as part of the general enumeration of the powers and duties of the library board. While for other funds libraries fall under the same law about how public funds may be invested as other public entities do, K.S.A. 12-1225(h) contains a specific authorization for library boards to invest gift funds "in the manner the board deems will best serve the interests of the library". The statute mentions receiving dividends, rent, and other income from investment of the gift, so obviously holding of stock, real property, etc. is anticipated.

SEKLS CALENDAR

October—December (*) *Cyberseries*

Oct. 11	SEKLS 10th Annual In-Service	Westminster Woods
Oct. 20	School Library In-Service	Greenbush
Oct. 28	Every Child Ready to Read	Garnett
Nov. 4	SEKLS Annual Meeting	Iola—Sys. Office
Nov. 9	Proquest Database training	Pittsburg
Nov. 9	Win 2000/XP Troubleshooting	Pittsburg
Nov. 10	Proquest Database training	Garnett
Nov. 10	Win 2000/XP Troubleshooting	Garnett
Nov. 18	Director’s meeting	Neodesha
Dec. 6	Advanced Word (beyond bolding and italics)	Savonburg
Dec. 12	Executive board Meeting	Iola

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