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Spring 2004

SMALL LIBRARIES DIVISION



Is Small Still Small?

A Retreat for Directors, Administrators, and Trustees of Ohio's Small Public Libraries

In 2004 shrinking budgets, expanding expectations, ever-faster increases in applications of information technology, and questions over what free access to information really means to a library and its community aren't just issues for "big" libraries any more. Small might still mean small in terms of square footage, dollars available per capita, and FTEs, but it doesn't mean small in terms of the challenges and opportunities people who run small libraries face every day.

Ohio Library Council's Small Libraries Division is pleased to offer an opportunity for directors, clerk-treasurers, managers and trustees of small libraries to retreat from the "daily grind" to the restful setting of Mohican State Park. Get

reacquainted with colleagues who share your issues, make new contacts and, most of all, take back to your libraries ideas generated by an array of learning sessions specially geared to meet the needs of small, public libraries. To review the complete agenda for this program and to register to attend go to the OLC website, www.olc.org, and look under Educational Opportunities. (The complete URL is <http://www.olc.org/WorkshopDescription.asp?ID=244>.)

Besides many good conference sessions, the featured speaker will be Mary Bushing, Library Consultant and Educator. Mary will set the stage for the work of the conference by addressing issues of professionalism and survival on the front lines of American librarianship. In the evening, relax over a casual dinner and meet Dr. Paul Gaus, a professor of alternative cultures at the College of Wooster, who writes with authority and warmth about the mysterious Amish. He'll talk about his work as well as outside challenges to the Amish culture. We'll keep the evening short, casual, entertaining and enjoyable.

Thank you to the following sponsors who have generously underwritten this conference: NORWELD, the Ohio Library Foundation and an Institute of Museum and Library Services LSTA grant awarded by the State Library of Ohio.

Direct any questions about this event to Wayne Piper, OLC Director of Professional Development, at wpiper@olc.org.

One Book, Two Counties

By Virginia Sharp March, Harbor-Topky Memorial Library

What if everybody reads the same book? That's the question the public libraries of Trumbull and Ashtabula counties asked with their second *One Book, Two Counties* project, which ran March 1 through April 16, 2004.

What Book Was Used?

The book chosen for the two-county reading project was *Inherit the Wind* by Ohio natives Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee. Published in 1955, this play is a fictionalized version of the 1925 Scopes "monkey" trial in Tennessee in which creationism vs. evolution in the classroom was the hotly-debated topic.

"We chose this book because of the Ohio connection of the authors and also the Trumbull and Ashtabula county connections to Clarence Darrow, who was the defense attorney at the Scopes trial," said Virginia March, director at Harbor-Topky Memorial Library. "The play is a classic and the topic it explores still making news today."

What's the Project's Goal?

The project seeks to expand the scope of reading as a solitary activity. "Sometimes, readers want to share their thoughts about what they read and see what others think," said Donna Wall, assistant director of the Ashtabula County District Library. "If everybody reads the same book, it would give a starting place for discussion and bring readers together."

"Our main goal is to encourage people to come together and discuss a book of relevance to the community and beyond," Wall said.

What Can Patrons Do After Reading the Book?

After reading *Inherit the Wind*, participants had the opportunity to attend book discussion groups at the public libraries involved.

Programming on topics relating to the book's timeframe, the 1920s, was offered by some libraries as well as screenings of the film version of *Inherit the Wind*. One successful program was on Sunday, March 21 when the boyhood home of Clarence Darrow in Kinsman was open for special tours for those involved in the *One Book* project. The owner of the home graciously allowed more than 150 people to tour her home.

Two other highlights included actors portraying Clarence Darrow in the one-man play *Clarence Darrow* by David W. Rintels. The play is based on Irving Stone's novel *Clarence Darrow for the Defense*. Both performances were free and open to the public. The Trumbull County performance was held at Judge Andrew Logan's courtroom in the Trumbull County Courthouse.

Other promotions of the project included Representative L. George Distel (99th District) posing for pictures with the book, the Ashtabula County Commissioners issuing a proclamation in honor of the project, area high schools promoting the book within their schools, local newspaper coverage and talk shows on the local radio stations.

To learn more about the programs, visit www.wtcp.lib.oh.us/onebooktwocounties/home.htm

Small Libraries Division Update

By Virginia Sharp March, Coordinator

The purpose of the Small Libraries Division is to represent the interests of, and provide for administrators, staff members, and trustees of small libraries on issues of particular concern to small libraries in Ohio.

The Unit Objectives for 2004 include

1. Sponsor a Small Libraries Conference in 2004 for Directors, Administrative Staff, and Clerk-Treasurers.
2. Partner with Management and Administration Division to develop a program to be used by local libraries for trustee education.
3. Expand, enhance and promote the Small Libraries Listserv.
4. Publish a bi-annual online Small Libraries Newsletter
5. Maintain a high profile of the Small Libraries Division by:
 - Offering five programs for Chapter conferences
 - Sponsor or partner with another Division, a program for the 2004 OLC Annual Conference
 - Participating in OLC Connects at Annual Conference 2004
6. To maintain a strong representation of Small Libraries within the OLC Leadership, at least one name will be submitted for nomination to the OLC Board of Directors.

Small Libraries Division Update...continued

The Division has also worked on a definition of Small Libraries. The group is starting with the following definition:

A small library as defined by the Small Libraries Division includes but is not limited to libraries that meet one of the following criteria -

- An operating budget under \$1,000,000.
- A service population of less than 15,000.

This definition will be discussed further because qualifications need to be added, such as does the operating budget include levy monies or not, etc. Any input can be given to any member of the Small Libraries Division.

More information about the Small Libraries Division can be accessed via the OLC Web site. Members can also register for the Small Libraries Listserv – a great way to communicate with others from similar libraries.

Puskarich Public Library Honored

The Puskarich Public Library System recently earned the distinction of “Library of the Month” by WebJunction, an online community of libraries and other agencies sharing knowledge and experience to provide the broadest public access to information technology.

In 2002, the Puskarich Public Library System was one of many Ohio libraries that were awarded a technology grant

from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which enabled the library to vastly improve its computer based service to its patrons. A natural extension has been the development of a broad range of relationships that form a web of mutual community support and good will.

Under the leadership of library director Sandi Thompson, the library was selected “Library of the Month” because it best exemplifies the working partnership with other community organizations, local schools, government agencies, local historical societies, and children’s services groups.

In addition, the Puskarich Public Library has partnered with nine other libraries to develop an online digital history collection, the “Digital Shoebox”, a web site that showcases southeastern Ohio photos and documents preserved in digital format.

For an in depth look at the article entitled “Puskarich Public Library: Perfect Partnerships” log onto <http://www.webjunction.org>. Click on *Community Center* then *Library of the Month Archive*.

Librarians from Small Library Division Attend PLA & Gates Workshop

By Lorrie Wheeler, Director, Claymont Public Library

Jan Haines of the State Library, Lorrie Wheeler of Claymont Public Library, and Vickie Eckenrod of Seneca East Public Library were three Ohio librarians fortunate enough to

be selected to attend a one-day workshop titled *How to Sustain Access in Rural Public Libraries* at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in Seattle, Washington. Sandra Nelson was the lead facilitator for the day’s work. The workshop focused on providing practical assistance to small, rural librarians who were looking for examples and best practices for sustaining public access technologies to our patrons. Librarians from rural communities throughout the country had the opportunity to discuss their challenges and to share their success stories, best practices, and creative strategies for gaining resources and support from their local communities.

The local librarians worked separately from the state librarians to attain a list of the issues each felt held top priority. Technical support was important at both levels, but state agencies tended to want to provide training and advocacy, while many local librarians wanted “hands on” tech support. Another idea, which came from the session I attended, was to provide a troubleshooting guide, like a FAQ, on a state-supported web site. Vicki and Jan both attended the Tuesday session, and I believe the output of their session may have differed some from the one I attended on Monday.

Gates has trained 2522 people, and donated and supported 1852 computers in 345 Ohio library buildings. Those of us who have benefited from the foundation know how our libraries have dramatically changed since they started their library endowment. We were told at the workshop, that the

Librarians from Small Library Division Attend PLA & Gates Workshop ...continued

library program is winding down, and that what we see in the future will be very different from the level of commitment the foundation has given libraries in the past.

Nonetheless, Bill Gates Sr. did speak at the Public Library Association's annual meeting, and he gave librarians hope that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation will not altogether abandon public libraries. A new publication titled "Toward Equality of Access: The Role of Public Librarians in Addressing the Digital Divide" was distributed at the conference. The report was sponsored by the Foundation and developed in partnership with many other organizations. If anyone would like to read the report it is available online at www.gatesfoundation.org.

On the fun side, Seattle and PLA were absolutely wonderful experiences for me. I had never been to either. The conference site and content were great. I met some very good people (how could you not with over 8000 public librarians in your midst!), ate great food, and came back with lots of free books and tons of new ideas! I am very thankful to the State Library for inviting me and to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for sponsoring the whole event.

Volunteers – a Connection to Your Community

By Arleen Leslie, Technology/HR
Coordinator, Marysville Public
Library

Volunteers may first be thought of as a solution to shrinking budgets, but in reality they become very important as a connection to your community. A successful volunteer program will result in volunteers becoming ambassadors for the library and the services it offers to your community.

An efficient, well-organized program takes time to manage, especially in the start up of a new program. *Managing Library Volunteers; A Practical Toolkit* by Preston Driggers and Eileen Dumas published by ALA is an excellent hands-on-guide to recruiting, training, managing and recognizing library volunteers that will help you to both start from scratch or reenergize the system you already have. For a complete description go to the ALA Online Store, www.alastore.ala.org, (ISBN 0-8389-0806-3).

The *NFP Toolkit* (not-for-profit) web site is a valuable tool that will assist in volunteer management and communication at your library. By integrating volunteer database software with the power of the Internet the NFP Toolkit will accomplish the following for you:

- Manage volunteers more effectively
- Recruit volunteers over the internet
- Search for the right volunteer for the job
- Track volunteer commitments

- Track and report volunteer hours
- Provide scheduling information to volunteers online

Communicate with volunteers

- Send email to one volunteer or to a select group of volunteers
- Create phone lists or mailing labels
- Filter the volunteer database to reach just the right volunteers

Working with boards and committees

- Log meeting hours
- Automated committee group e-mailing list for all committee members

Your library may qualify for a free license for this software. Checkout their website www.nfptoolkit.com for more information and eligibility for free software. Checkout the Marysville Public Library website www.marysvillelib.org to see how a library links to the software.

Group Effort in New London Helps Honor Ohio Bicentennial

By Ellen Simmons, Reflector
Correspondent, and submitted by
Toni R. Whitney, Director,
New London Public Library

Ohio's Bicentennial is over but the New London Public Library has two unique quilts that were made in honor of the occasion.

The idea came from Chris Kaufman, a member of the library staff, who shared it with Toni Whitney, the library director, and the rest of the staff – they all supported it.

Group Effort in New London Helps Honor Ohio Bicentennial ...continued

Last spring they asked area adults and children to make quilt blocks to commemorate the bicentennial in some way, and 21 adults and 28 children responded.

The 67 by 90 adult quilt is made up of 31 blocks made in a wide variety of styles including pieced, cross-stitched, paper pieced, appliquéd, machine and hand embroidered.

Each quilter chose and created her own pattern, and the result is a colorful collage of blocks all pertaining to Ohio in some way.

Kaufman sewed the blocks together and they were then machine-quilted by library patron, Cheryl Randleman, at a demonstration for all the participants.

The kids made their blocks in a series of workshops at the library using fabric markers and ink to carry out whatever pattern they chose, and again, the result is a colorful display of blocks.

The children's blocks portray the state flag, a Cedar Point roller coaster, an outline of the state and other scenes depicting something meaningful to the child and relating to the state.

Kaufman says the kids ranged in age from five to 13 and attended several area schools including New London, Western Reserve and South Central.

Kaufman, who has worked at the library since 1995, says she really enjoyed working with the kids as they created their blocks. She says she could tell

many of them put a lot of thought into their pattern, and she feels the experience helped to make the bicentennial a memorable event in their lives.

This quilt is being voluntarily hand-quilted by library staff members.

Both quilts will soon be on display at the library where the public may come in and enjoy the handiwork.

Old Friend Receives Facelift

Submitted by Toni R. Whitney, Small Libraries Division Action Council Member and OWUG Participant

Our old friend, the OPLIN web site, has been undergoing a facelift over the past year under the direction of Joel Husenits, OPLIN Managing Editor. OPLIN chose the Battelle organization to do the redesign, and their plan called for the formation of a focus group to steer the graphic design and functionality of the website. That group, called OWUG (OPLIN Web Users Group), was formed last fall when librarians around the state responded to a plea on the OPLIN listserv inviting interested parties to respond. The group periodically critiqued changes in the site providing the OPLIN team input as to the visual appeal of proposed updates, remarks on user friendliness, and comments regarding specific items of the change.

One of the major features being implemented in the new site is the WebFeat "OneSearch" tool on the Research Databases page. WebFeat will allow patrons to search all of the OPLIN databases simultaneously with one click.

Graphic changes are included throughout the site, with new navigational tools in the OH! Teen pages. Graphics on the OH! Teen page posed many concerns for the group, and it was decided to go with one of the original concepts at this time perhaps revisiting changes in the future by enlisting the aid of a teen focus group.

The web site will have a new URL: <http://www.oplin.org>. Any direct links from individual library websites to the OPLIN site (individual databases, homepage, Discover Ohio, or the like) will have a new URL. OPLIN will compile a list of the most frequently-linked areas for the libraries to use when updating their links.

"We are shooting for a May unveiling to the general public, but may allow libraries to begin using the site in April", says Husenits.