



ohio library council

Promoting our libraries. Inventing our future.

# division newsletter

SPRING 2005

## SMALL LIBRARIES DIVISION



### “DON’T TREAD ON ME” SMALL LIBRARIES AND CONSOLIDATION

*By Bill Martino  
Coordinator, Small Libraries Division  
Director, Minerva Public Library*

Many political pundits have characterized Stark County, Ohio as a bellwether county. In fact, several national newspapers and news magazines covered Stark County quite extensively during the last presidential election. It appears that people from Stark County reflect on a small scale the many political, religious, social and behavioral nuances evident in the United States. I feel that in terms of Ohio libraries and the issue of consolidation, we are also a bellwether county.

In 2004 the issue of library consolidation was brought up to the seven independent library systems in Stark County. Opinions ranged from a desire to actively seek

consolidation to outright resentment that such a topic was even brought up. Eventually, the local paper also entered the fray and several articles were written on the whole issue of consolidation and its merits and disadvantages. The seven directors and a representative from each of their boards did eventually meet as a group (with one director abstaining). Many different opinions were voiced and everyone went home with the vague understanding that the topic would be discussed again in the future. In subsequent meetings it was determined to pursue a course of “Cooperation” between the libraries and to leave the issue of consolidation for later discussion.

Much of the initial opposition for consolidation sprang from several of the smaller libraries fearing a loss of local control. There was the sense that these smaller libraries were running fine and, further, that they were better able to understand the wants and needs of their local patrons. Other issues centered around potential Board of Trustees appointments (i.e. would one member from each library board constitute the new board), potential impact on the staff (would there be layoffs, some libraries were unions other were not, would branches be closed etc...) and geographical issues (several of the libraries received funding from more than one county ... if the new system became a county system would funding be lost from other counties within the service district).

On the plus side there is the possibility, of course, of saving

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## CONSOLIDATION

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money. Duplicate staff members could be reassigned or let go of, Directors could become branch managers (or let go of ... which would probably save more money) and the buying power of a large system could result in greater discounts from vendors (due to the increased number of purchases). Another advantage would be that patrons in the county would only need one card and that there would be more uniform circulation policies (i.e. all videos go out for two days as opposed to "Library A" which circulates them for one week and "Library B" for three days).

However, some questions remain. Who would be the director of this new system... the director with the most seniority or the director from the largest library? Would citizens countywide be taxed for those libraries with existing levies? Would there be a fair allocation of materials to the smaller libraries? And finally, would consolidation truly benefit all concerned or would it, in fact, favor the larger library systems by increasing its share of LLGSF money which the larger systems could then dole out as they saw fit.

The whole topic of consolidation is obviously quite complex. I realize that this article only hints at some of the issues that can be raised by consolidation. Each county may, in fact, have its own unique peculiarities that would either hamper or benefit consolidation. Hopefully, future discussions on this topic will be open-minded and beneficially advantageous to all parties

concerned. Small independent libraries are crucial components of smaller communities around the state – to completely eliminate any trace of their local identity would be criminal.

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## REGIONAL LIBRARY SYSTEMS HELP LIBRARIES SUCCEED

*By Lorrie Wheeler  
Director, Claymont School District  
Public Library*

Many small libraries are members of a regional library system in the state of Ohio. As a member of the board of the MOLO system, I have been involved with discussions about the impact of the 10 percent budget reduction for regionals, which Governor Taft has proposed.

I am a very strong advocate for regional libraries, given my history with MOLO. My library career originally started when MOLO was based in Louisville, and was funded with LSCA funds. I have seen the scope of regionals change dramatically over those decades, and fully appreciate their value to libraries. Regionals give our staff the opportunity to network with other library employees, to get professional continuing education without driving a long distance, and to have access to good technical support (from someone who knows Ohio libraries!) at a reasonable rate. Those services just cover the basics of what regionals do. There are seven of them in Ohio—NOLA, CAMLS, MOLO, OVAL, SOLO, NORWELD, and GCLC—and each one provide services that are unique to its library members.

We all know that libraries in Ohio are the best in the nation. Our regional systems have helped small libraries stay current with the plethora of changes we have seen in the last five to 10 years. We are the best because we provide the best services to our customers! Yet keeping current requires money, time, education, and dedication to the library field. Small libraries cannot do it alone—we need each other, and the regional systems help to bring us together in a manageable sized group.

All libraries are faced with budget reductions due to the state of our economy. Most of us will work together to get beyond the budget decreases, but unfortunately, some regional systems will not be able to survive more decreases. The State Library is working with the regional systems and their representatives to develop a new model for regional library systems.

The task forces will be working on the revised model for the next two months. The representatives will meet again in June 2005 to discuss what direction regional systems will be taking. As representatives of small libraries, now is the time for you to share with State Librarian Jo Budler what your regional system does for you and your community.

Change is inevitable. As a member of the Small Libraries Division, I urge you to provide direction to those who are making the changes so that all libraries benefit from the future changes in the structure and content of regional library systems.

## OHIO LIBRARIAN ATTENDS OXFORD ROUND TABLE IN ENGLAND



Lisa Rohrbaugh,  
Director of the  
East Palestine  
Memorial Public  
Library, just  
returned from  
attending the

Oxford Round Table at the University of Oxford in England. She was one of 40 people from countries around the world selected to participate in a weeklong series of debates and discussions concerning the topic of freedom. Particular emphasis concerned freedom of information, mass media, libraries, journalism, the USA PATRIOT Act, open records laws, and other related issues. Conference attendees included colleagues from Peru, Poland, the United Kingdom, Canada, Denmark and the United States. Besides librarians, professionals from various levels of academia, and law as well as journalism attended the conference that ran from March 20-25.

The paper that Rohrbaugh critiqued was "The Liberal Struggle for Press Freedom," written by Kirsten Mogensen of Roskilde University, Denmark. The paper dealt with the assassination of Dutch filmmaker, Theo van Gogh, and focused on the religious and secular positions regarding the Netherland's laws and attitudes regarding freedom of speech and the press relating to religious issues.

## HOW TO BE A "WINNING" LIBRARY

*By Georgiana Huizenga  
Director, The Harris-Elmore Public  
Library*

The Harris-Elmore Public Library just might be the "winningest" library in the state! In the past five years the library has won or placed in five national contests.

The first contest won was the "MSNBC's Headliners and Legends with Matt Lauer" contest in 2000. The second grade classes at Woodmore Elementary School, which serves our community present a "wax museum" every year in February. Each child portrays a character from American history and parents, other relatives and the community at large are invited to the presentation. I contacted one of the second grade teachers (a regular patron) and invited the children to repeat the program on a Saturday at the library.

We created fliers for each child to take home, and one of our staff members created a display publicizing the event, and promoting "Headliners and Legends with Woodmore Second Graders". We took pictures of each child and videotaped the presentation. Our efforts brought us a check for \$1,000 from MSNBC which we used to expand our juvenile biography collection. When we found out we won, we treated the children who participated to a pizza party.

Other contests were a "Roaring Twenties" contest sponsored by A&E, which featured the high school jazz band, and a display commemorating the anniversary of the

assassination of JFK sponsored by the History Channel. We placed as a runner-up in these two contests, and earned a clock and a DVD player respectively. Most recently we won a contest commemorating the anniversary of D-Day with a display from WWII veterans and we also hosted a Memorial Day continental breakfast honoring those same veterans. This event was so successful we decided to repeat the breakfast every year. This contest was also sponsored by the History Channel and we won the grand prize of \$1000.



@your library"

Probably the most exciting contest was the "Drive to Read" contest in 2003 sponsored by ALA and Hershey's milk. For this we challenged the language arts students in the Woodmore School District and Genoa Area School District served by our branch library. Students were expected to do a project based upon ALA's best books of 2002. We called the local contest the "Route 51 Challenge" as SR 51 runs through both communities. The school with the most entries won a pizza party. To promote the contest we decorated the 1904 Elmore car, which is housed in our library, to look like a racecar with the "Drive to Read" logo. We also borrowed racing memorabilia from a community member who is a racecar driver, and whose family uses the library. For our efforts we won the Grand Prize of a visit from a 53' semi

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## **"WINNING" LIBRARY** *...continued*

holding Hershey's Chocolate Milk and milkshakes, complete with carnival games and wide-screen TV featuring MTV-type music. Since our parking lot is small, we partnered with the local Methodist Church, and used their parking lot. The church decided to provide free hot dogs to all those who attended the program. I believe most of the town of Elmore came to this event as well as our local congresswoman.

How do we do it? We are very fortunate to have on staff a very talented and creative person who does fabulous displays. We also respond to emails and letters announcing various contests instead of just either deleting them or throwing the letters away. We also have a very supportive community for everything, which supports all of our programs. We work closely with our schools, senior citizens' groups, and other members of the community. In fact, all of the contests we have entered have involved a partnership with at least one other community group or individual patron or patrons. We also follow the directions for each contest to the letter. Thus, a creative and enthusiastic staff and a supportive community all contribute to our "winning ways."

## **A CREATIVE USE FOR DISPLAY CASES**

*By Jo Anne Chaffee  
Branch Manager, Berlin Township  
Library*

At the Berlin Township Public Library we utilize a locking display case. We have our patrons (all ages) share a collection of theirs with us for one month. We have a sign up sheet listing each month for the whole year. When the patron comes in and fills the display case, the staff will then pull books from our shelves that compliment the patron's collection (which can be charged out) and these will be placed near the display.



We have had: tea pots, aprons, stuffed animals, dolls, wood carvings, baskets, jewelry, glass, Barbies, Santas, mice, aluminumware, and many more, these are just a few ideas. The community enjoys taking part in this and the person displaying the items usually brings in family and friends to show what they have displayed. This helps to have patrons take an interest in the library and increases circulation. Good Luck!

## **Your 2005 Small Libraries Division Action Council**

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