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From the President by James C. Cooper → 2

Letter to the Editor → 4

We Love Libraries by Wally Eberhard → 5

My Own Private Library by Stacy L. Brown → 6

Employee Development
Using WebCT Vista
by Jennifer Link Jones → 8

Academic Librarians and Faculty Status:
Mountain, Molehill or Mesa
by Alan Bernstein → 12

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act:
How It Pertains to Georgia Libraries
by Diana J. Very → 16

In the News → 20

On the COVER

Atlanta Thrashers hockey mascot Thrash (left) takes time out to read to Little Thrash at the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System’s East Point branch. Georgia Public Library Service, along with the Atlanta Hawks and Thrashers, will kick off their fifth annual Check-it-Out Reading Challenge on June 1. The popular program encourages young readers to spend part of their summer’s free time reading—and earn basketball- and hockey-related rewards in the process. Any child enrolled in grades pre-K-12 in the state of Georgia may participate by having a parent or guardian log on to www.checkitoutreading.com, either on a home computer or a public-access computer at the library. (Photo by Jason Duignan)
Can you believe that we already have finished the first quarter of 2009? Time does seem to move quickly when we are busy, and GLA certainly has been filled with a lot of activity this year!

Our annual Georgia Library Day was Feb. 26 at the Capitol, and as usual, we had great attendance at this event. Almost 300 library advocates met to discuss issues involving Georgia libraries before visiting the “Gold Dome,” where they visited with legislators and voiced their concerns. School libraries, public libraries, and academic libraries continue to see annual use increases of well over 10 percent, and during times of economic recession, the role of libraries in the lives of our citizens is more important than ever. And although the use of computers as a library service is more important as an information tool, the demand for books continues to increase as well.

Many thanks for Chris Huff, systems librarian at Ingram Library at the University of West Georgia and chairman of the Legislative Committee of GLA, for coordinating this year’s Library Day. In recognition of the importance of libraries to our economy, Chris distributed fortune cookies to all attendees and all legislators that included the message, “Libraries Bring Good Fortune to All Georgians.” What an important message to convey to our elected officials!

One noteworthy area of activity within GLA this year has been a new group called the Atlanta Emerging Librarians, operating as a part of the New Members Round Table. This group consists of library and information students and new graduates, and their meetings have attracted up to 75 participants.

On Jan. 15, these enthusiastic members hosted an informal meeting at Manuel’s Tavern, where they were able to meet with a variety of local library administrators. I was privileged to participate in this occasion, and I must say that I learned a lot and thoroughly enjoyed the evening. Many thanks to Shelly Rogers, current chair of NMRT; Sarah Steiner, previous NMRT chair; and all of the members of the Atlanta Emerging Librarians for their dynamic leadership in our profession!

Finally, as president of Georgia Library Association in 2009, I also serve as chairman of this year’s COMO Steering Committee. We are looking forward to this year’s COMO XXI Conference, to be held Oct. 7-9 in Columbus. This year’s theme is COMO XXI: Connect, Collaborate, Communicate. Every GLA member has expertise that is of interest to other librarians, and I want to ask each of you to submit a program proposal when the “call for proposals” is issued soon. We need your help to make this COMO Conference the very best ever!

We’re off to a great start in 2009. Thanks to all of you for being actively involved in Georgia Library Association!

— James C. Cooper
President
Georgia Library Association

Visit the Georgia Library Association on the Web! gla.georgialibraries.org
Dear Editor:

Thank you for your many years of hard work and for making sure our profession has a written voice in Georgia. I appreciate the opportunity to voice my opinion through such a professional journal. The 2009 Library Day at the state Capitol was a very productive one for my library, and I hope it was equally so for many others. I have attended so many Library Days that I may have a slight advantage over newer librarians in how to make the most of it. I always bring some of my library board trustees and, often, a few members from our Friends organization. I feel an obligation to make a strong showing at the Capitol, because we are geographically close, and many other library supporters are not. Our senators and representatives have come to expect us there, and they look for us.

The first Library Day at our state Capitol was held in the late 1970s, and it was sponsored by trustees from around the state. When the Georgia Council for Public Libraries was founded, it helped continue Library Day at the Capitol. For many years, Georgia Council sponsored and organized the event. Over the years, several different meeting and lunching places were used, and the day was structured a little differently from time to time. We even called it Library Legislative Day at one point. Around 1999, I recommended to the Georgia Council that the responsibility for Library Day be shifted to GLA, because I consider it a larger and perhaps more inclusive organization. My staff and I planned and implemented Library Day for a few years during this transition until GLA worked it into a rotating responsibility.

The purpose of Library Day, I believe, was — and is — to ADVOCATE to our state lawmakers for libraries across Georgia. For many years, it was just public libraries, but especially after the birth of GALILEO, we saw the value and strength of ALL libraries working together with and for each other. Media specialists and academic librarians and their legislative needs are now included among the day's topics and in the information that is distributed. But the purpose still is for ADVOCACY. Most of us know from the plethora of advocacy training lately that a VOLUNTEER trustee or Friend of the Library is worth five — maybe even 10 — paid librarians when it comes to advocating for our libraries. Unfortunately, academic libraries and media centers often do not have those same teams of unpaid advocates as public libraries, who promote and support libraries because they believe in them. The good news, however, is that public library advocates believe in academic libraries and media centers, too!

I want to encourage the leadership of the Georgia Library Association to reconsider the reason we have Library Day. Consider structuring the morning preparation so that our volunteers — our trustees and Friends — will feel like it is for THEM, to prepare and to help them to go across the street and tell every Georgia legislator how great and necessary our libraries are to their respective communities and institutions — and to Georgia as a whole. I believe this would be more effective than a morning filled with long speeches from professionals to professionals, only one or two of whom kept to their allotted five minutes this year! The printed flyers, bookmarks and pamphlets were OUTSTANDING this year; they are the perfect tools for the advocates to deliver. But please provide our valuable volunteers with written legislative priorities and a two- or three-sentence message, and I believe they will continue to come to Atlanta for this special day at the Capitol and to ADVOCATE to their legislators on behalf of ALL libraries.

Sincerely,

Deborah S. Manget
Library Director, Conyers-Rockdale Library System
I will be much obliged if some kind librarian will send me a citation or two along the lines of *A Natural History of the Friends of Libraries Movement in the USA*.

If such a history hasn’t been written, it should be. My hypothesis is this: In the United States, citizens have historically been drawn to the idea that reading and books are important. That idea soon expanded to say that a community — whether of like-minded individuals or a political unit — might create a collection of books to be shared and, along with this, a place to share ideas about what those books had to say.

The protagonist in the opening chapter of a Friends history would have to be that amazing American, Benjamin Franklin — printer, editor, postmaster, scientist, revolutionary, statesman, philosopher. And, the father of the public library in America. In 1731 he led a group of Philadelphians in organizing a subscription library. If we pool our resources through a modest membership fee, said Ben, we can assemble a collection of books that will surpass what any individual might afford.

Today’s Friends groups — there are nearly 200 in Georgia alone — play an important role across America. They promote public awareness of the role of the community library, and they raise funds to supplement public funds for operation, salaries and programs. Beyond that, they are as individual as their communities are different.

I did a quick Google search using the terms “Friends of the Library” and “history” and wound up with 7,000 hits. Some were born during the Great Depression to preserve and support libraries. Most appeared to emerge in the last half of the 20th century. Friends groups have staying power, make a measurable impact on library programs and services, and represent the best in American volunteerism.

We are in the midst of an economic crisis with sobering and confusing impact on all of us. Ironically, library use and demand for services are up, while money is disappearing.

Friends in Georgia and elsewhere should not be viewed as the 82nd Airborne parachuting in to rescue the besieged garrison, i.e., the library. Friends have been there for a long time and continue their work at this moment in history.

We asked Friends groups across the state to send us information about their activities in the year. The list so far is long and impressive. The dollar amount is more than $300,000, and that’s probably a figure that doesn’t reflect all Friends giving. They are stepping up during the budget crunch to fill particular needs and continue the extras that enrich programming.

In Hart County, for instance, Friends have pledged funds to support purchase of the New York Times top 10 best-sellers. Friends in the Chattahoochee Valley Regional System gave $25,000 for a new branch library plus $35,000 for programming and staff support. Calhoun-Gordon Friends played a part in the opening of a downtown, storefront “Book Nook” annex. The successful campaign for a $275 million library bond issue for the Atlanta-Fulton County system involved active support by Friends groups across the system.

Libraries can and do operate without Friends groups. But Friends long ago demonstrated — like Benjamin Franklin and his colleagues — the positive power of dedicated, organized volunteers.

— Wally Eberhard

The author is president of Friends of Georgia Libraries and a trustee of the Athens-Clarke County Library. He is a former journalist and retired journalism professor from the Grady College of Journalism at the University of Georgia. His e-mail address is wbe1955@aol.com.

We Love LIBRARIES!
A Peek Inside the Personal Library of a Librarian

by Stacy L. Brown

For many years, my mother, who taught high school English, made it her mission in life to ensure that my brother and I received a proper education. One way of achieving this goal was to take us to the neighborhood public library during our summer school breaks. I always looked forward to going there, as they conducted field trips, taught us how to make potholders out of old fabric scraps and volcanoes out of baking soda, showed movies, and had scheduled summer reading sessions.

Obviously the reading sessions made a big impression on my mother, because she began constructing summer reading lists for my brother and me. These lists consisted of approximately 10 titles of her choosing, and she required us to give her a report after finishing them. We dreaded this aspect of summer break, as it cut into precious time that could be better spent outdoors. Our fantasies about staging a revolt were frequent.

It wasn’t until I entered high school that I came to truly appreciate her efforts. English was always my preferred area of study, and I was exposed to classical and contemporary literature, fiction, prose, and poetry. Since my mother was a teacher, she had scores of books for me to peruse, and I would immerse myself in the dark tales of Edgar Allan Poe; William Shakespeare’s complex, yet thrilling plays; or the despondent poetry of Charles Baudelaire and Emily Dickinson. Fortunately, many of these gems have since been passed along to me, and I’ve happily integrated them into my ever-expanding library.

College saw a tremendous growth spurt in my collection. I majored in English and history, and some of the books from courses I liked quickly began to fill my bookcases. I saved most of the anthologies, poetry books, and novels that I read for my studies. The works of Virginia Woolf, Mary Shelley, Henry David Thoreau, James Joyce, Oscar Wilde, and Charles Dickens lined my shelves, as well as the poetry of Homer and Milton, William Wordsworth, e.e.Cummings, Walt Whitman, William Blake, Pablo Neruda, and Rainer Rilke. I gave Jack Kerouac, one of my most beloved writers, an entire shelf devoted solely to his short stories, prose, poetry, biographies, letters, autobiographical novels, and photographs from his beatnik years. The fictions of William Faulkner, Toni Morrison, Kurt Vonnegut, early Stephen King, Alice Walker, Vladimir Nabokov, and Ralph Ellison also have a section all to themselves.

Many of my history books were salvaged and incorporated, too. Dreadfully verbose texts, which contained vivid depictions of historical heroes and villains, famous battles of defeat and victory, peace treaties and accords, and tales of corrupt officials and dictators being stripped of their power. Maps were of great interest as well, and two of my most cherished books are a couple of old world atlases: extremely large volumes that detail rivers, islands, seas and oceans, latitudes and longitudes, mountains, and many country and continent facts.

I continued to build my personal library by visiting every flea market, garage sale, Goodwill, secondhand bookstore, and Salvation Army I could find. Used books were usually cheap, priced between a dime and a few dollars, so I was able to return home with bags full of literary treasures.

These jaunts eventually morphed into running contests with my friends, in which all of us tried to find the most...
desirable and interesting books to discuss at parties, weddings, or over a nice meal. It was during this period that I managed to acquire a slightly worn copy of Parker’s Astrology, great edition of Dante’s Inferno, complete with seven illustration plates by William Blake; a first edition of Marianne Moore’s Selected Poems; a signed copy of Derek Walcott’s The Odyssey; and a sailboat plan book containing actual blueprints, entitled The Rudder.

Additionally, art and photography books mingle with their shelf mates. Taking photographs has been a passion of mine since my early teenage years, and I have gradually acquired biographies, personal writings, and collections of photographs from masters such as Ansel Adams, Margaret Bourke-White, Annie Leibovitz, Diane Arbus, and Dorothea Lange. Moreover, I’ve obtained numerous books about particular artists I admire: Edward Hopper, Georgia O’Keeffe, Gustav Klimt, Alphonse Mucha, Frida Kahlo, Erte, and Wen Cheng-ming, to name a few. These books discuss their eccentric personal lives and reveal the inspirations behind their masterpieces.

Needless to say, my private library is a colorful mix that remains in a state of continual growth. In recent years, as I pursued a library science degree, most of my time was consumed with library-related reading materials. Now that I’ve graduated, I have begun to reacquaint myself with the texts that line my bookcases, and as I continue to build a collection filled with special works that evoke memories from my past, I eagerly await the arrival of the next great book that will find its way to my shelves.

Stacy L. Brown is assistant librarian for Public Services at Georgia Highlands College (formerly Floyd College) in Rome, Ga.
Employee Development Using WebCT Vista
by Jennifer Link Jones

In November 2007, Georgia State University Library celebrated the grand opening of its extensively renovated spaces. Two buildings, Library North and Library South, underwent a $20 million transformation. Improved lighting, new furniture, more than 50 study rooms, and expanded pedestrian bridges connecting the library buildings have contributed toward a more welcoming, user-centered space. Students love the renovations and are spilling through the doors in waves.

Part of the renovation was a technology upgrade: more than 350 new computers were installed in the library's new Information Commons and Learning Commons. The computers are equipped with over 100 software programs, including the Microsoft Office products, SPSS, EndNote, and AutoCad.

This new technology called for additional technical support. The library collaborated with the campus Information Systems & Technology (IS&T) department and established two computer technical support desks within the library. These desks are staffed by student employees of IS&T who remain quite busy. If patrons are lined up waiting for help at the support desks, then library employees are expected to provide technical support as well. With so much new technology, library administration was challenged to ensure that library employees could provide adequate technology support to patrons.

Public Services Technology Competencies
As the training & assessment librarian, I began identifying the technical skills and knowledge required of every employee working at one of the public service points: the research support desk, the media center, and the circulation desk. I, together with representatives from the Learning Commons, Liaison & Outreach Services, and Access & Media Services departments, developed a skills set, which we entitled the Public Services Technology Competencies. Once the competencies list was developed, we created a process for assessing employees’ knowledge and abilities relative to the list in order to measure training needs. Employees used a checklist-style document for self-assessment and were realistic about their knowledge and skill levels. Some employees added additional items to the list on which they felt they needed training, so the self-assessment became an ad hoc survey tool as well.

Issues
Based on the self-assessments, employees needed training on a number of topics. I found this exciting, since employee development is my job, but difficult given the number of employees affected and their work schedules. As is the case in most libraries, University Library employees’ varied work schedules make scheduling face-to-face training a challenge. On a typical weekday, the library is open to employees from 7 a.m. to 12 a.m. We have full-time, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. employees; full-time employees who work only evenings and weekends; part-time employees; and many employees who take advantage of our flex-time system to start and leave early, start and leave late, or stretch the day to accommodate several hours off to attend a university class. Another consideration was that public services employees all work at a public service point, which makes scheduling training difficult due to desk shifts that must be covered. I needed a way to provide the competencies information to everyone, regardless of work schedule.

An additional factor of planning training was that face-to-face instruction, while ideal for information retention and participant engagement, is impractical when only a few employees need training on the topic being presented. The self-assessments uncovered some topics
on which only a few employees felt uncomfortable, so I
needed a way to accommodate the needs of those who
required training while presenting the information so that
topics could be skipped by those who knew them well.
The obvious solution to the problem of providing
convenient, efficient training was to put it online and
make it self-paced.

The next issue to think about was what form the online
training should take. Our library currently uses an intranet
for internal communication and a wiki for collaborative
projects. The collaborative nature of the wiki was not an
appropriate medium for conveying the technology
competencies training. I needed a way to monitor
employee progress, since employees were expected to
become proficient in particular skills and knowledge. The
intranet did not inherently provide a system for
monitoring progress. I decided to take advantage of our
campus course management system (CMS), WebCT Vista.
I had experience using WebCT Vista to create library
instruction modules and collaborate with a teaching
faculty member in a previous position as instructional
design librarian, so I was familiar with the interface. I
needed to incorporate an assessment instrument into the
online training, and WebCT provides quiz-creation tools.
For these reasons, WebCT seemed like a logical solution
to deliver employee training.

Constructing the Learning Modules
To begin setting up the technology competencies course
in WebCT, I contacted the WebCT support desk on
campus, explained why I wanted a course and provided
my WebCT user name. Within 24 hours of my request,
the support desk created a course with me as the
instructor.

Learning modules in WebCT can contain “content
pages,” which look and function like standard Web
pages. A content page either can be created outside of
WebCT and uploaded into a course file database, or the
instructor can create content files within WebCT. Other
component options that can be added to learning
modules are URLs, which link to Web content outside of
WebCT, assessments; whiteboards; chats; discussions;
assignments; and syllabi. WebCT automatically generates
a sidebar on the left side of each learning module, and
each component of the learning module is a navigational
link in the sidebar.

I determined the technology competencies course content
based on the self-assessments, and I created eight distinct
learning modules for content. Each module can be taken
independently, so that employees easily can skip content
they already know well. Some content I wanted to
incorporate into the modules existed elsewhere — mainly
on the library’s intranet and on the university’s public Web
site. To avoid duplicating this content, I used WebCT’s
URL feature, which is a link to a Web page that is
displayed within WebCT. I linked to various pages of the
Research Support Desk Manual on the intranet, other
intranet pages I had created, and Web pages from the
university’s Digital Aquarium, the high-end, multimedia
campus computer lab (see figures 1 and 2).

Incorporating Videos and YouTube
Some of the most frequently checked items on the
technology competencies self-assessments were the items
having to do with microforms. Successfully learning to
use microforms requires seeing how to use them, so I
thought this content would be a good candidate for
video format. I made three short videos on loading
microfilm; loading microfiche; and zooming, focusing,
and rotating microforms. I created a library training
account at YouTube (http://www.youtube.com) and
uploaded the videos. YouTube provides a piece of code
with each video for embedding the video in a Web page.
I used this code to embed each video into its own content
file (see figure 3). The videos were the most popular item
among all of the learning modules, and they even
received a few ratings and comments from external
viewers who found them searching YouTube.

Figure 1. The design/editing side of one of the learning modules

Figure 2. The student view of the same learning module
Camtasia Screen Animations

One learning module was devoted to software applications available from library computers. Employees are expected to be able to provide basic support on the Microsoft Office applications Word, PowerPoint, and Excel. These “basic support” tasks are best learned by observing and practicing, so I developed eight short screen animation videos using Macromedia Camtasia on topics including printing gridlines in Excel, changing page orientation in Word, and animating objects in PowerPoint (see figure 4). The animated tutorials ranged from 30 seconds to two minutes.

Assessments

As noted previously, WebCT provides easy-to-use tools for creating and customizing assessment items. The instructor can set options such as the number of tries a student is allowed per assessment and the time limit the student has for completing the assessment. It is also flexible as to how answers can be submitted; for example, if there is more than one correct answer, then the instructor can indicate that multiple correct answers should be recognized. WebCT maintains records for the instructor, including quiz attempts and quiz scores for each student.

For the technology competencies assessments, I built a brief quiz within each learning module, employing multiple choice, true/false, and fill-in-the-blank question types (see figure 5). The quizzes were graded, and the grades were recorded in my WebCT Vista grade book. This allowed me to check progress, find out who had completed all of the assessments, and give progress reports to supervisors. I allowed for two tries per quiz, and I imposed a time limit of five minutes on each 3-6 question quiz. All of the questions could be answered from learning module content. In fact, employees were free to “cheat” and look back over the module for help answering the questions. The intent was to provide a review for employees and to highlight the most important points.

Testing

Once I completed the first draft of the modules, I recruited testers from among the group of employees who would use the tutorials for training. I wanted testers who were somewhat familiar with and who had a stake in the content. Three testers provided valuable, thorough suggestions and corrections. After the modules were tested and edited, the Public Services Technology Competencies course was announced to all relevant employees.
The Challenges
The greatest challenge in implementing the technology competencies training plan was getting buy-in from three department heads and approximately 50 employees. One department head imposed a deadline for employees to complete the learning modules, which motivated that department's employees. Some employees were reluctant, because they believed the modules would be time-consuming. I assured them that, based on testing, they could complete all the modules in under two hours and reminded them that the modules did not have to be taken in sequence or in one sitting. These assurances motivated some employees. Other employees did not see this as serious training, because 1) it was online, and 2) it was not fully endorsed by their department heads. For a project like this to have the greatest impact, completion of the training should be tied to employee goals or evaluation.

Another challenge was logging into the course. Some employees had dual student-employee status, which meant they had two usernames and did not know which one to use. Faculty log in differently than staff, so access instructions had to be specific according to position. For security reasons, I could not access employees’ passwords, so employees had to contact the campus WebCT support unit for assistance. Most employees were able to access the course without any problems, but a few employees had to go between me and the WebCT support unit before they could log in successfully.

The Successes
While I have not created any follow-up assessment tool to evaluate employees’ reactions as to how the technology competencies learning modules helped them better perform their jobs, the training appears to have been successful. Anecdotally, through conversations and e-mails, I know employees appreciated being able to work at their own pace and the ability to review modules at will. Employees liked the different types of content, especially the videos and screen animations, and some showed concern when they didn’t score 100 percent on every quiz. Everyone wanted to succeed. Supervisors appreciated getting reports about employees’ progress toward completing the modules.

Overall, employees now seem more comfortable with the technology the library provides, which I believe can be attributed to their knowing where they can find the information they need to learn about technology. Employees’ anxiety about the library providing access to an array of resources combined with no central place to go to learn about them led some people to believe they knew less than they did.

Conclusions
Although a face-to-face, hands-on class is a desirable format for technology training, efficiency and outreach to the greatest number of employees must be considered. Putting technology training online can reach a larger employee audience while maximizing convenience to the individual learner.

When planning employee development, inventory the skills and tasks necessary for the project and then honestly evaluate your strengths. Investigate what campus technologies and technological support are available to you. If your campus uses a CMS; provides quiz-development software; and/or offers support through workshops, consultations with instructional technologists, and the use of a technology lab, then use these resources before you invest in them or try to train yourself to use them. Seek out the people who can help you produce the best product.

The experience of delivering training using a CMS at Georgia State has shown how this effort can benefit both the employee and the library. Employees appreciate the convenience and efficiency of the online training opportunities created for them, and they easily can keep their skills and knowledge current. Their technological proficiency means that they can provide outstanding service and support to patrons, which, in turn, benefits the library.

Jennifer Link Jones is a training and assessment librarian at the Georgia State University Library in Atlanta.

Endnotes:
Academic Librarians and Faculty Status: Mountain, Molehill or Mesa
by Alan Bernstein

The academic librarian plays an important role in the overall mission of any university (Bell, 2000; Farber, 1999; Guskin, Stoffle, & Boisse, 1979/1980). This role is both overt in the day-to-day involvement between librarian and students and faculty in the institution as well as subtle in the librarian's continual awareness of changes in available resources and technologies to aid the campus community (Cardina & Wicks, 2004; MacAdam, 2000). Though the academic librarian, clearly, is a vital member of the university community, his or her organizational classification in the hierarchy of the institution can be murky, and this murkiness may have effects, both understated and profound, on the librarian's attitude, motivation, and outlook regarding his or her chosen profession (Hill, 1994; Julien & Given, 2002/2003).

This paper will be a brief examination of the literature pertinent to academic librarian classification vis-a-vis job satisfaction, sense of worth and place, and commitment both to the librarian profession and to the educative mission of the librarian's academic institution. At the conclusion, some personal observations will be offered.

Issues regarding classification status for academic librarians have made fodder for scholarly articles, books, and theses for a long time. A quick glance through the literature reveals a decidedly higher percentage of authors favoring some form of faculty classification for academic librarians (with corresponding pay and benefits). However, there are a number of alternative positions rationally and eloquently expressed in the myriad of topical journal articles as well. At the farther end of the spectrum, there are strong judgments expressed by some in the profession (a celebrated example is forthcoming) that faculty status is clearly counterintuitive, counterproductive, and ought to be particularly avoided at all academic institutions (e.g., Cronin, 2001; Kingma & McCombs, 1995). Some interesting studies and opinion pieces have been written on how personality traits coupled with status affect academic librarians' motivation and general job satisfaction (pertinent examples include Hegg, 1985/1986; Leckie & Brett, 1999; Williamson, Pemberton, & Lounsbury, 2005).

As college and university attendance dramatically rose in the 1960s and early 1970s, the need for more librarians in these schools grew as well. The substantial increase in academic librarians joining the employ of many colleges and universities during this period led to revisions and innovations in the ways these librarians came to be classified. These revisions and innovations, in sometimes stark contrast to the traditional classifying of academic librarians as glorified staff, led to a profusion of articles and other scholarly works on the subject – a profusion that continues to present day. The subject of classification for academic librarians remains a mainstay theme in many respected library journals.

The subject and debate regarding how librarians are (or should be) classified in the academic institution date back well over a hundred years. The traditional academic librarian role as a technician and book-shelver was challenged as far back as the late 19th century when H. A. Sawtelle (1878) wrote of the inspiring work libraries did in guiding college students in their reading and use of library resources. Famed Harvard librarian Justin Winsor spoke of the vital role the librarian and library play in the academic community, “To fulfill its rightful destiny, the library should become the central agency of our college methods, and not remain a subordinate one, which it is too often” (Circulars of Information, 1880, p.7). Nearly 50 years later, writing on the state of the academic librarian, George Works (1927) echoed the same sentiments when he wrote, “too many faculty members and administrative officers are prone to think of the library staff, aside from the titular librarian [director], as
persons who are discharging responsibilities essentially clerical in nature” (p. 80).

Though the issues existing between librarians and teaching faculty – essentially, the origins of librarian dissatisfaction with their classification status – have their roots back to the time of librarians first being granted licensure as professionals in their field (Marchant, 1969), it was the boon of enrolled students in higher education in the 1960s that saw the problem burst into greater prominence. Arthur McAnally (1971) discussed, in some detail, the problems academic librarians faced in trying to garner professional status, respect and compensation in the community of teaching faculty. Some of the specific obstructions to professionalism McAnally cited included the generally low status of the library profession, the autocracy of many library directors, many state boards of education (dating back to the 1940s) opposing and refusing recognition of librarians as faculty, the lack of support by the American Library Association, and the pervasive attitude of university faculty, dismissing librarians as merely academic support staff (pp. 20-23).

From the early 1970s until today, there have been over 100 articles in peer-reviewed academic journals on the subject of classification status and academic librarians.

The predominant view in these articles is that academic librarians ought to be classified, remunerated, and respected in the same manner as their compatriots teaching in classrooms around the campus. There are some notable exceptions. Blaise Cronin (2001), in a famous editorial piece entitled “The Mother of all Myths,” extolled the irrelevancies and dangers of academic librarians being granted faculty status, claiming, “[t]enure and the paraphernalia of the academic calling have nothing to do with the praxis of librarianship” (p. 144). Later in the same editorial, he writes, “the obsession with status merely detracts from customer service and weakens the profession’s public image” (p. 144).

Regarding classification, the academic librarian can find himself or herself in one of several modes. There are colleges and universities that classify librarians the same as teaching faculty with all concomitant rights, privileges, and remunerations. This is extremely rare, though. At best, librarians so classified usually cannot expect the 10-month contracts of most teaching faculty and must work the more common 12-month term. Nevertheless, librarians classified in this way enjoy promotion and tenure opportunities, serve on faculty senates and committees, have access to faculty development grants and sabbatical leave, and are paid a salary equitable to their teaching colleagues.
Many institutions classify their librarians in a somewhat quasi-faculty status. Often, they are not titled as professor, associate professor, and so on; may or may not have tenure opportunity; and have limited access to other “perks” such as faculty development monies and sabbatical leaves. Though their level of institutional equality and respect may be, arguably, lower, librarians so classified often do not have the associated pressures of publications or conference presentations akin to their teaching colleagues.

Based on a 1980s survey, over 75 percent of American colleges and universities classify their librarians as faculty (in one form or another), the other 25 percent classifying librarians in some support staff modality (DeBoer, K. & Culotta, W., 1987). Many schools group librarians with administrative staff, similar in substance to how an assistant registrar, athletic coach, or health center nurse might be classified. There is no opportunity for academic promotion, tenure, or involvement with university governance, but pay and (nonfaculty-related) benefits are, generally, equitable. Why is faculty status advantageous? Or, is it not advantageous at all?

The plethora of articles on academic librarians and classification status and the breadth of research that has been done tend to support the contentions that faculty status increases librarians’ opportunities for positional advancement and better pay. These, naturally, are the concrete, palpable end results of a desired classification. The preeminent psychological components of faculty classification may be less overt than the material factors mentioned above but are no less significant: namely, the increase in general motivation and initiative, the greater sense of commitment both to the institution and the library profession, and the facilitating of a higher level of involvement with the educative mission of both the library, specifically, and the college or university, generally. Simply put, “equal status” to teaching faculty has vast material and embedded rewards (Buschman, 1989; Feldman & Sciammarella, 2000; Kilpatrick, 1982).

An important corollary to classification status and librarian satisfaction is how the academic librarian is involved in the educative mission of his or her institution, both overtly and perceived. Are there connections between a librarian’s involvement with the educative mission of his or her institution and job satisfaction, motivation, or commitment to professional development and permanence in the library? There is some existing literature on the topic of academic librarians and involvement in institutional educative mission (examples include Badke, 2005; Bell, 2000; Farber, 1999; Guskin, Stoffle, & Boisse, 1979/80; Leckie & Fullerton, 1999; Meringolo, 2006; Owusu-Ansah, 2001; Wilkinson, 2000) but little analysis of how this involvement correlates to overall job satisfaction and motivation level. This is a fertile area for further research as I would contend that, indeed, it is the inherent involvement that academic librarians (whether they be in public, technical or computer services) have with the educative mission of their institution that not merely helps propel better performance but pedagogically fuses them with their classroom teaching colleagues.

The constituent of authors who speak out against classifying academic librarians as faculty frankly regard such status as either counterintuitive to the roles academic librarians are educated, hired, and trained to fulfill or find such status problematic, for it includes levels of commitment to research and professional presentations beyond that which these librarians should be expected to execute. Fred Batt (1985) saw faculty status as more of a liability than an asset, more of a hindrance than a help. Though Batt contended that some academic librarian positions might be suitable for faculty classification,

\[
(F)aculty\text{ status should not be considered for positions such as cataloging, acquisitions, or circulation librarians. Although these jobs constitute important work, nothing in them even remotely approximates what one would consider a higher education faculty member.} \quad \text{(p. 119)}
\]

Ultimately, the preponderance of literature indicates that academic librarians fall into one of three groups:

1. They desire to be classified as faculty because it is both philosophically, as well as pragmatically, appropriate given their role in promoting and participating in the educative mission of the college or university. This is, clearly, the majority opinion.
2. They desire **not** to be classified as faculty if it means having to jump through the hoops of publication and presentation in order to get promoted or tenured. This view has a smaller, but particularly vocal, following.
3. They do not care how they are classified so long as their pay and benefits are equitable geo-economically with their professional peers. Research indicates this to be the least chosen option, yet there is strong anecdotal evidence for its popularity.

The classification status of the academic librarian is clearly not a molehill. The continuing appearance of the issue in library journals over the last 30 years is testimony to its persistent interest and importance both philosophically and pragmatically in the hearts and minds of many librarians. The issue, though, need not be considered a mountain either. If there is administrative recognition of the both conspicuous and intrinsic role that academic
librarians play (all academic librarians, not just the public service corps that interacts directly with students) in helping fulfill the educational mission of the institution, classification issues, generally, and respect/remuneration issues specifically, might become extinct or, at least, moot. The path to such recognition and reclassification (for those academic librarians not presently faculty-classified including those who fear it due to unsuitable tenure and promotion procedures) lies in revamping antiquated or inappropriate policies and procedures surrounding academic faculty.

A master’s degree in library science (or equivalent) is the terminal degree for a librarian’s professional status. Having a second (subject) master’s is nice but not necessary. Having a doctorate in library science is useful, and sometimes obligatory, for assuming higher-level administrative positions in some academic libraries but still is not necessary to be regarded as a professional librarian.

There are other academic fields where a master’s degree is usually regarded as sufficiently “terminal” to allow teaching. Examples of such disciplines often include nursing, dance, art, and “professional” areas such as medicine and law. The point is this: lack of a doctorate is not preclusion to faculty status.

I believe that faculty classification for academic librarians is not merely appropriate but obligatory. A cursory glance through promotion and tenure procedures at a sampling of various state colleges and universities shows that flexibility is becoming the norm. The reality is that what history professors do, what communication arts professors do, or what kinesiology professors do may not compartmentalize to a one-size-fits-all schemata when assessing one’s worth to the college or university. And so it is with academic librarians. Their contribution to the educative mission of the institution may, arguably, trump any given arts and science or business school or college of education professor. Academic librarians are fundamental members of the pedagogical team. It is inherent in their training and implicit in their performance. The issue of academic libraries and faculty status is not a pseudo-problem, (i.e., a molehill), but it should not be viewed as an insurmountable mountain either.  

Alan Bernstein is circulation manager of the Odom Library at Valdosta State University.

References:


The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act: How It Pertains to Georgia’s Libraries
by Diana J. Very

On Feb. 17, less than a month after President Barack Obama took office, his stimulus plan was signed and ready to hit the streets of America. Many people scrambled to read the 407-page document that outlines the plan designed to bring the United States to a more prosperous and stable economic time. Those of us in Georgia’s library community are among them.

There’s money out there and we want some!

Stimulus Public Law 111-5, The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) is intended to “make supplemental appropriations for job preservation and creation, infrastructure investment, energy efficiency and science, assistance to the unemployed, and State and local fiscal stabilization, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2009” (Stimulus Public Law 111-5, 2009). This legislation opens several opportunities for Georgia libraries to provide Internet connections, library service projects, additions to collections, additional computer labs for patrons, and federally funded employment opportunities for special populations. The key for this funding, however, is to work with community partners at the local level.

One of the main features about ARRA is that it did not create new programs. The funding is added to existing programs that have provided measurable results in the past. This action means that new policies did not have to be approved and new agencies were not created. This saved considerable time and money, providing funds quickly to local governments.

The public is aware of ARRA because of the publicity and attention given it by the media. Not many people will take the time to read ARRA, however, depriving them of a fuller understanding of how it affects local-level economies. The programs are not magic policies that will eliminate the economic woes of the country; their goal is to provide increased funding for programs that work.

The biggest challenge for library administrators at this time is to stay informed.

The Obama administration has created a Web site, www.recovery.gov, to provide up-to-date information about planning and implementation of ARRA. Additionally, the Web site www.grants.gov provides information about grant opportunities from federal agencies.

Funding opportunities that public libraries need to watch for are from:

- Department of Rural Development,
- Department of Commerce,
- Department of Energy (DOE),
- National Endowment for the Arts,
- Department of Labor (DOL),
- Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and
- Department of Education (DOE).

Sign up for an e-mail subscription at http://www.grants.gov/applicants/email_subscription.jsp. This will provide you with daily notification of grant opportunities. The site includes links with information about the full solicitation process for each grant. Below are two examples of opportunities that were sent through this subscription e-mail.

Note that the second example states that this program is directly from ARRA legislation.
USDA
United States Department of Agriculture
Business and Cooperative Programs
Inviting Applications for Rural Business Opportunity Grants
Modification 1
http://www07.grants.gov/search/search.do?&mode=VIEW&flag2006=false&oppId=46134

DOE
US Department of Energy
National Energy Technology Laboratory
Recovery Act - State Energy Program
Modification 2
http://www07.grants.gov/search/search.do?&mode=VIEW&flag2006=false&oppId=46184

The Office of the Governor for the State of Georgia created a Web site of state agency contacts for assistance with ARRA: http://stimulusaccountability.ga.gov/00/channel_modifieddate/0,2096,134245182_134289176,00.html. “Staff from the following state agencies will be glad to assist you with questions regarding funding, timelines, the grant process or any other inquiries you have regarding the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act,” it states. This is a great benefit to local agencies looking to stay informed.

The U.S. Department of Labor, at the time of this writing, is sending out instructions for state agencies to prepare their state plans to incorporate the activities for the ARRA funding (Small, 2009). Much of those funds will pass through the state level to local Workforce Investment Boards (WIB) to distribute to career centers, training centers and other vendors who apply for grant funding of their programs. The local library systems can apply for grants from the WIB in their region. Programs that use library expertise, such as computer training and collection development, can be funded through DOL grants. The WIB executive director is a great resource of information about where and how to apply. One example is the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Workforce Investment Board (HGAWIB) in Region 9, which covers the counties of Appling, Bleckley, Candler, Dodge, Emanuel, Evans, Jeff Davis, Johnson, Laurens, Montgomery, Tattnall, Telfair, Toombs, Treutlen, Wayne, Wheeler, and Wilcox (HGAWIB, 2009). Gina Thomas from Ocmulgee Library System in Bleckley is a board member of this WIB. When libraries partner with local career centers, it benefits both agencies. Together, libraries and career centers offer computers and collections for researching job opportunities. Working together prevents duplication of services and provides alternative services as well as building knowledge of each other’s abilities to serve the community. School boards, regional agricultural agencies, and regional art organizations are also excellent partners for various programs.

Below are opportunities written in ARRA legislation, including the page number for quick reference. The items bulleted with the check mark are ideas for which public library programs are eligible. With creative planning and partnering, you may discover many more opportunities.

Title IV – Energy and Water Development
Department of Energy
Energy Programs
Page H.R. 1-24
Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability
$100,000,000 shall be available for worker training activities.

✓ Possible use of computer labs at libraries for worker training, buy mobile training labs to be used for training sessions, buy materials for collection specific to career and occupation reference.
✓ Partner with Georgia Department of Labor/Employment and Training to provide training sessions, computer labs, and materials.

Title VII – Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Other Related Agencies
Page H.R. 1-57
National Endowment for the Arts
Grants and Administration
$50,000,000 to be distributed in direct grants to fund arts projects and activities that preserve jobs in non-profit arts sector threatened by declines in philanthropic and other support during the current economic downturn. Forty percent distributed to state art agencies and regional arts organizations, 60 percent for competitive projects.

✓ Folk art projects in rural Georgia, art festivals in partnership with community organizations, galleries provided in library buildings.
✓ Possible library projects, paintings, murals, etc., from local artists through grant funding.
✓ Library programs of art instruction, art appreciation, etc., grant paying for professional instruction from local artists.

General Provisions – This Title
Section 702
Page H.R. 1-58
In carrying out the work for which funds in this title are...
being made available, the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture shall utilize, where practicable, the Public Lands Corps, Youth Conservation Corps, Student Conservation Association, Job Corps, and other related partnerships with federal, state, local, tribal or nonprofit groups that serve young adults.

- Libraries partner with these youth organizations to provide teen programs.

**Title VIII – Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies**

**Department of Labor**

*Page H.R. 1-58*

**Training and Employment Services**

$500,000,000 for grants to states for adult employment and training activities, including supportive services and needs-related payments described in the Workforce Investment Act (WIA).

$1,200,000,000 for grants to the states for youth activities, including summer employment for youth.

$1,250,000,000 for grants to states for dislocated worker employment and training activities.

- Partner with local Workforce Development Centers for use of computer lab for training. They supply the money for computer lab and collection materials, library supplies space for training.
- Summer employment of teens at the library paid through federal funds. Get painting, clean-up and landscaping projects done with teen workers.
- Possible staff opportunities or work training opportunities.

**Community Service Employment for Older Americans**

$120,000,000 for grants to carry out Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965.

- Work with the local employment office to hire older citizens who can provide assistance with circulation desk, monitoring services, shelving, etc.

**Department of Education**

*Page H.R. 1-69*

**Rehabilitation Service and Disability Research**

$34,300,000 shall be for services for older blind individuals.

- Funding for additional programs for this population through GLASS and subregionals.

**Title XIV – State Fiscal Stabilization Fund**

**Department of Education**

*Page H.R. 1-166*

**Section 14002 – State Use of Funds**

(a) **Education Fund**

In general, for each fiscal year, the governor shall use 81.8 percent of the state’s allocation under section 14001(d) for the support of elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education and, as applicable, early childhood education programs and services.

- Expanded Prime Time and Summer Reading Programs are early childhood education and may qualify in the state allocation.

(b) **Other Government Services**

In general, the Governor shall use 18.2 percent of the state’s allocation under section 14001 for public safety and other government services, which may include assistance for elementary and secondary education and public institutions of higher education, and for modernization, renovation, or repair of public school facilities and institutions of higher education facilities, including modernization, renovation, and repairs that are consistent with a recognized green building rating system.

- “Available for other government services,” may include funding for “green” libraries

**Section 14005 - State Application**

*Page H.R. 1-168*

(a) The governor of a state desiring to receive an allocation under section 14001 shall submit an application at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may reasonable require.

- Need to make sure that public libraries are included in State Application for Funding.

(d)(4)(C) The state will take steps to improve state academic content standards and student academic achievement standards consistent with America COMPETES Act.

- Work with Education Department programs to improve test scores by providing practice tests, SAT prep workshops in cooperation with area colleges.
- Partner with schools for homework help, collection materials for class projects, and other partnership programs.
Section 14007 – Innovation Fund
Page H.R. 1-170
$650,000,000 to establish Innovation Fund, which shall consist of academic achievement awards that recognize eligible entities that make significant gains in closing the achievement gap.

✔ Partner with schools to provide programs that will qualify for awards.

Division B – Tax, Unemployment, Health, State Fiscal Relief, and Other Provisions
Title VI – Broadband Technology and Opportunities Program
Page H.R. 1-398
Section 6001 – Broadband Technology Opportunities Program
(b)(3)(A) Purpose to provide broadband education, awareness, training, access, equipment, and support to schools, libraries, medical and healthcare providers, community colleges and other institutions of higher education, and other community support organizations and entities to facilitate greater use of broadband service by or through these organizations.

✔ Multiple opportunities to provide access to broadband services.

One of the purposes of the Obama stimulus plan is to provide state and local fiscal stabilization. Georgia libraries have been hit with losses from both state and local budgets, but the federal government is offering a provision of support until states and local governments can support themselves.

Use of stimulus funds will highlight the initiative and creativity of library personnel. Partnering with other agencies at this time with programs directed toward communities and the families that live in them will highlight the crucial need for libraries in an economic downturn. Participation in these opportunities is optional, but using the funds as investments in Georgia’s communities is a defining mission of library service.

References:

Off the SHELF

“Off the Shelf,” our book review section, will return in the next issue. Georgia Library Quarterly reviews books on aspects of life in Georgia and the South, including history, literature, politics, education and genealogy. Materials written by Southern authors or published by regional publishers may also be considered, as well as those on libraries and librarianship. For submission information, please contact:

Sarah McGhee, Off the Shelf Co-editor, Chestatee Regional Library System, smcghee@chestateelibrary.org
Karen Odom, Off the Shelf Co-editor, Houston County Public Libraries, kodom@houpl.org

See previous Off the Shelf reviews at http://gla.georgialibraries.org/glq_bookreviews.htm
Library Day brings together 300 legislators, advocates

Almost 300 library advocates celebrated their love for and support of libraries at the annual Georgia Library Day, held Feb. 26 at the Floyd Building in downtown Atlanta. The sold-out event was again co-sponsored by the Georgia Library Association (GLA), the Georgia Association for Instructional Technology (GAIT), the Georgia Library Media Association (GLMA) and Georgia Public Library Service.

Among the morning’s highlights was the address delivered by Sen. Jack Hill (R-Reidsville), chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee. Hill commended Gov. Sonny Perdue’s budget recommendations for fiscal year 2010, which included almost $19 million to assist with the design and construction of 11 important new library projects throughout the state. “I don’t think you could invest in a better piece of infrastructure than libraries,” Hill said.

Other speakers included Jim Cooper, president of GLA; Dr. Lamar Veatch, state librarian; Pam Smith of the Georgia Department of Education; Merryl Penson, executive director of Library Services for the University System of Georgia; Giselle Escobar, president of GAIT; Susan Grigsby, president of GLMA; Christian Kruse, chairman of the Georgia Council of Public Libraries; and Wally Eberhard, president of Friends of Georgia Libraries.

Following the program, attendees walked across the street to the Capitol, where they visited a number of legislators to thank them for their support and to further advocate on behalf of their local libraries. Attendees then returned to the Floyd Building for lunch.

Rep. Bob Smith (R-Watkinsville), vice chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, hosted an afternoon gathering for library directors and board members who have capital projects recommended by the governor on this year’s list.

Held at the Capitol, the meeting afforded library representatives and advocates the opportunity to express their enthusiastic support for the construction projects in their communities.

GSU’s Long named “2009 Mover & Shaker” by Library Journal

In its March issue, Library Journal added Georgia State University librarian Casey Long to its list of “Movers & Shakers” for 2009.

The magazine selected Long because of her determination to improve student information literacy. As a business liaison librarian for the Georgia State University Library, Long found that many seniors in the business program were not adequately prepared to do their research. In 2006 and 2007, she received instruction awards from the College of Business and the University Center for Teaching and Learning. Both were for developing an instruction session that she quantitatively proved to be effective at improving how students find
and utilize information. Armed with this evidence, Long is convincing business instructors to integrate an undergraduate information literacy program into their core business classes. By working strategically with three core courses, Long hopes to ensure all undergraduate business students are prepared with the information-seeking skills necessary for success in their careers.

She maintains this engaging curriculum by sustaining relationships with faculty throughout the business school. Casey Long’s commitment to assisting the university community is why Library Journal selected her for the Movers & Shakers of 2009. Through her “zealous pursuit” of a thriving information literacy program, she is helping define the future of libraries with fresh ideas and devoted service.

Agnes Scott College news and notes

Erica Bodnar has joined Agnes Scott College as access services librarian. She holds an MLS degree from Indiana University and bachelor's degree in art history from the University of Georgia. She previously worked for the libraries at Oglethorpe University and Georgia Tech.

Augusta State library news and notes

Augusta State University (ASU) will receive a grant under the new American Heritage Preservation Program awarded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and the Bank of America Charitable Foundation. “With these awards, communities will be able to rescue exceptional objects that link their pasts to their futures,” said Anne-Imelda M. Radice, IMLS director. “This grant program is an important part of IMLS’ Connecting to Collections: A Call to Action, a multiyear, multipronged initiative to protect our national treasures.”

ASU will purchase environmental-monitoring equipment and software to help maintain proper storage conditions for library special collection materials and archeological artifacts. Among the materials benefiting from this monitoring will be colonial-era Georgia documents and Southeastern Native American artifacts dating from the Mississippian period.

Emory University library news and notes

Xuemao Wang has been selected for the newly established position of associate vice provost (AVP) for the Emory University Libraries. Wang comes to Emory from The Johns Hopkins University, where he served as head of library systems for the Sheridan Libraries. As AVP, he will work closely with Rick Luce, vice provost and director of libraries, to implement the libraries’ vision and strategic initiatives. Wang will have direct responsibilities for managing the General Libraries’ operational areas for general collections, technical services and user services. “Wang joins the library’s leadership team at a time when innovations in methods of scholarship, learning and research — and the technology infrastructure that advances those innovations — are radically transforming the role of Emory’s research library and its staff,” said Luce.

During his tenure at Johns Hopkins, Wang led a strategic initiative across its five-campus library system to establish a foundation for collaboratively sharing information technologies and services.

Emory University Libraries has also named Kevin Young curator of literary collections at the Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library.

Georgia Southern news and notes

Georgia Southern University celebrated the expansion and renovation of the Zach S. Henderson Library with a ribbon cutting Jan. 21 in the library atrium. Hosted by President Bruce Grube, the event culminated a major capital project that began in the summer of 2004. The $22.75 million expansion/renovation added 101,000 square feet to the library's original 132,000.

“It is tremendous to see this dream come true and be so enthusiastically received by students and faculty,” said Bede Mitchell, dean of the library.

“This is a critical project to the university and has significance beyond what most people can imagine,” President Grube said. “When we can improve the major academic resource on campus, we can improve everything we’re doing academically.”

The library has come a long way since Georgia Southern’s days as First District A&M School – when the first library was housed in a small room in the Marvin Pittman Administration Building with 1,000 volumes, pamphlets and bulletins and 50 magazines and periodicals. The Rosenwald Library opened on Sweetheart Circle in 1938, and the Zach S. Henderson Library opened in today’s location in 1975.

The current library opened to the public on Sept. 22, 2008. It houses more than 600,000 books and bound periodicals; 890,000 microform units; almost 750,000 government documents; and more than 46,000 electronic journals. The library has more than 300 computers, and wireless is available throughout the building.
Mercer University news and notes

The staff of the Swilley Library at Mercer University in Atlanta distributed a reminder of the library’s presence to all students the week of Valentine’s Day. The 4-by-5.5-inch cards were made from recycled paper.

University of West Georgia news and notes

Dr. D. Russell Bailey, library director at Phillips Memorial Library, Providence College, Providence, R.I., will be the 2009 Charles Beard Lecture Series speaker. The Beard Lecture will serve as the keynote address for the 2009 Atlanta Area Bibliographic Instruction Group conference “The Learning Commons: New Frontiers in Instruction,” to be held at the University of West Georgia on May 29. Mary Jane Rootes, assistant professor and instructional services librarian, is president of BIG. Dr. Bailey co-authored “Transforming Library Service Through Information Commons: Case Studies for the Digital Age” (ALA 2008) with Barbara Tierney, and “Information Commons Handbook” (Neal Schuman 2006) with Tierney and Donald Beagle. Charles Beard served as director of university libraries at the University of West Georgia from 1978-2004. The lecture series, GLA’s Charles Beard Library Advocacy Award, and the Charles Beard Scholarship awarded annually by GLA are among the memorials honoring his many years of service.

The University of West Georgia has named Jan Ruskell professor and librarian emeritus. Ruskell served as a member of the faculty in the Irvine Sullivan Ingram Library from 1970 until her retirement in 2008. She influenced the growth and direction of the library as interlibrary loan librarian, map librarian, bibliographic instruction coordinator and reference coordinator, and she started the university’s online “Ask a Librarian” service.

Shelley Rogers has been appointed assistant professor and senior cataloging librarian. She holds an MLS from the University of Michigan and master’s and bachelor’s degrees from Kent State University.

Charles Sicignano has been appointed instructor and electronic resources librarian. He holds the MLS from Florida State University and a bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of Tennessee.
Library Journal has recognized the Athens Regional Library System’s Pinewoods Library and Learning Center as one of the top three small libraries in America. In its February issue, the highest-circulated trade publication for librarians named Pinewoods a finalist for 2009 Best Small Library in America, an annual award sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The annual award showcases libraries providing outstanding service to populations of 25,000 or less.

The library has become the primary resource and information center for the nearly 18,000 Hispanic immigrants who live in Clarke County. Pinewoods is often the first stop for many new immigrants who want to learn English and computer skills. Among its specialties are adult education programs, including English as a Second Language classes, family literacy activities and what Library Journal describes as “a vibrant volunteer-driven after-school tutoring program.”

“The Pinewoods library is a microcosm of everything offered at each of our libraries,” Ames said, “so for this branch to be recognized as one of the top small libraries nationwide speaks highly of our system as a whole.”

Library Journal recognized the Athens library system just a few days after it received another national honor in the form of a $94,510 grant to support grassroots financial literacy in the Athens community. On Jan. 21, the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA) Investor Education Foundation and the American Library Association announced nearly $882,000 in grants to 12 recipients as a part of the “Smart Investing @ your library” initiative.

According to Ames, the FINRA grant will enable the library to undertake a basic financial literacy initiative helping low-income workers with low educational attainment; to integrate financial literacy education into GED preparation at five community sites; and to expand partnerships with local organizations, including public schools and the Family and Consumer Economics College at the University of Georgia.

The Milner Award was created in 1982 by the Friends of the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System using a gift from Vera Milner, a former Atlanta schoolteacher. The fact that the winner is selected exclusively by the children makes the Milner Award one of a kind.

Programs reserved for the students who voted were held at Atlanta-Fulton Public Library’s Central Library in January. For more information on the Milner Award, visit www.themilneraward.org or www.afpls.org.

In the current economic downturn, public libraries are helping more people than ever before with job searches. Deborah Moorman, manager of the Coastal Plain Regional Library System’s Irwin County Public Library in Ocilla, took that help to a higher level.

“We recently had a man come in who had just moved his family from Atlanta to Ocilla,” Moorman explained. “He had lost his job and was looking for another one using one of our public-access computers. He found something suitable and had filled out his application, but he ran into a snag: Even though the application form was online, the company wanted the application faxed to them, and the man did not have the $5 it would take to pay the faxing fees.”

The man asked Moorman if she could trust him to pay the $5 when he got his first paycheck. “I told him we would write out IOU, and he could pay the library when he got paid,” Moorman said. “About three weeks later, he came in and paid the fax fees. He had gotten the job, was now employed and wanted to keep his word. It renewed my faith in humanity, and I’m very happy for him.”

Prior to the January Gwinnett County Public Library board of trustee’s meeting, retired Major Charles Hyder presented Phyllis Oxendine, board of trustees member, an award for her support of veterans in Gwinnett County.

Major Hyder’s suggestions and support for the library system helped us identify and further respond to specific customer information needs and enhance access in the branches and online.
The Gwinnett County Public Library has also been awarded the 2009 John Cotton Dana Public Relations Award. The announcement was made at the American Library Association (ALA) Mid-Winter Conference in Denver on Jan. 24. Since 1946, the John Cotton Dana Library Public Relations Award recognizes and honors outstanding achievement in library public relations. It is considered to be the most prestigious of all library awards in the field of public relations and marketing.

“We are very proud and honored to be a recipient of the John Cotton Dana Award. It is a tribute to the success of the Gwinnett Reading Festival and to the hard work of our new public relations director, Michelle Long. We look forward to another great festival this year. This accomplishment was possible because of the enormous support received from library staff and volunteers, partners and sponsors, and the community,” said Nancy Stanbery-Kellam, director.

Gwinnett County Public Library recently welcomed two new board members. Both Babs Wagoner and Phillip Saxton were appointed to the Gwinnett County Public Library board of trustees on Jan. 6. Phyllis Oxendine was reappointed and nominated by Charles Bannister, County Commission chair. In addition to Wagoner, Saxton and Oxendine, members of the board include K. Dale Todd and Margaret Tiller.

Mountain Regional news and notes

Because of the tremendous growth in use and maintenance and repair issues with the now 20-year-old Towns County Public Library building, Commissioner Bill Kendall requested that the Mountain Regional Library System apply for a state grant to provide funds to renovate the library and add about 3,000 sq. ft.

Donna Howell, regional library director, prepared the application to send to the state library for consideration. Kendall signed the state capital outlay grant application guaranteeing local funds of $100,000 to match $900,000 in state grants that will be required for the project. If the grant application is successful, the funding may be available for the project to begin in July of 2010. The state’s capital outlay grant program is a tremendous value for the community and for the state.

The Towns County Public Library is bursting at the seams! The library was completed in 1989; that year, 4,963 people came into the library and checked out 8,385 books. There were no computers; no children’s programs; no videos, DVDs or audio books or music on CD; and very few books on the shelves. In fiscal year 2008, more than 25,000 people used the library; checked out more than 40,000 items; used the 12 library computers more than 8,000 times; and more than 1,300 Towns County children attended library sponsored programs. More than 40 percent of Towns County residents have a library card.

The executive committee of the Mountain Regional Library System board of trustees has approved Jack Bailey of Bailey Associates Architects of Gainesville as the architect for the renovation and addition project for the Union County Public Library. The countywide capital SPLOST passed in February 2008 provides for up to $900,000 in funding for library improvements. In addition, the Mountain Regional Library System has applied for a state capital outlay grant of about $1.7 million using the county SPLOST funds as the required local match.

The plan is for the library to remain at its current location but it will be almost doubled in size, and the existing structure will be completely renovated. The Friends of Union County Library have been raising funds, with support from local businesses and individuals, for their LEAF (Library Furnishings and Enrichment) Fund, which will be used to supplement the SPLOST and state grant. If the state grant is approved during the current legislative session, the project could break ground as early as July 1.
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