



Fall, 2002

# Connections



## Happy Birthday Q and A NJ!

Virtual Reference Service receives renewed LSTA funding; partners with Tutor.com

The Q and A NJ virtual reference project ([www.qandanj.org](http://www.qandanj.org)) celebrates one year of live service to the public on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2002.

Q and A NJ opened its virtual doors on October 1, 2001 as a pilot program consisting of public libraries, two community colleges, the New Jersey State Library, the Educational Information and Resource Center, New Jersey Nightline and the University of Medicine and Dentistry Health Sciences Library. It has since grown to include over 250 librarians at 33 libraries, receiving over 2500 questions a month.

Q and A NJ has received national and international attention as the only statewide virtual reference project, and one of the busiest virtual reference services in the world.

Q and A NJ grew out of an SJRLC "Leap Forward" planning day that was held on February 29, 2000. In October of 2000, the SJRLC board voted to fund the entire cost of the project startup, and Q and A NJ was born.

The project soon expanded to include libraries from across the state and SJRLC Director Karen Hyman, with the encouragement of State Librarian, Norma Blake, applied for LSTA funding to finance the growing project.

The State Library granted the money in June 2001, which enabled Q and A NJ to hire Marianne Sweet as Project Coordinator. Marianne has been invaluable to the growth and success of the project.

Q and A NJ recently received LSTA funding for a second year. Future plans for the project include tutoring services through a partnership with tutor.com, the addition of participating libraries, and the use of virtual reference

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**--SAVE THIS DATE--**

*December 12, 2002*

*1:30 – 4:00PM*

**SJRLC Fall Membership Meeting**  
Marriott Seaview, Absecon

**Duncan Smith**, creator of Novelist will be speaking.

Q and A NJ partners with Tutor.com to bring live homework help to students.

Students using Q and A NJ will now be able to connect to a live tutor through a partnership with Tutor.com. Tutors will be online between the hours of 2PM and 10PM, seven days a week. This new service will be available through [qandanj.org](http://qandanj.org) beginning Sept. 23<sup>rd</sup>. ✓

## Q and A NJ: What We've learned

By Karen Hyman

**Virtual Reference is a service that the public loves.** Q and A NJ's pop-up customer survey generates comments like: "My mom and I looked everywhere and couldn't find this information until we came to you." "I love the personal touch...a live person to answer my question." "I'm still at home in my pajamas and using this service. This was really fun." "I'm handicapped and, for the first time in years, I'm really using the library again."

**In terms of publicity, the project has a greater significance for every kind of library and information service.** Customers and the press report their surprise and delight that libraries answer questions and that libraries have resources available over the Web.

**We're breaking new ground technically and more significantly in terms of policies, procedures, staffing, and the role of the library.** In fact, the technical issues are being solved more rapidly than the human and organizational ones. (Helping library staff to acquire new skills and organizations to embrace new roles is an important aspect of the project.) All things considered, our participating libraries have an amazing can-do spirit.

**Virtual reference service crystallizes the same issues with which libraries have dealt for decades.** The challenge is recognizing the similarities to the "real" reference desk issues and realizing that many solutions are actually easier in the virtual environment-or at least no harder.

**The success of Q and A NJ is all about relationships and mutual respect among its librarians.** We benefit from our collective experience, a willingness to venture into the unknown, a cooperative spirit, and enthusiasm.

**It's exciting doing something truly new!**

## Focus on Fiction (Reader's Services, that is)

New SJRLC Committee is formed; Duncan Smith coming to South Jersey for annual membership meeting, Dec 12<sup>th</sup> at the Marriott Seaview Resort.

The South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative has formed a Reader's Services committee which will focus on consciousness-raising for libraries on the current trends in collection development, displays, merchandising, marketing and use of website in offering and promoting reader's services.

The Committee will work with SJRLC to present programs aimed at helping libraries further develop, re-evaluate and promote reader's services. C.L. Quillen (who will be starting at the Mount Laurel Library on October 1<sup>st</sup>), Chairs the Committee and has also developed and presented a popular, ongoing reader's advisory/Novelist class. Upcoming classes are listed on the SJRLC website (sjrlc.org).

One Committee recommendation is already taking shape. **Duncan Smith**, the creator of "Novelist", the premier, online reader's advisory tool, will be coming to South Jersey to speak at the SJRLC membership meeting, scheduled to take place on December 12th at the Marriott Seaview Resort in Absecon. If you've had the opportunity to hear Duncan speak, you know that he's not to missed!

## You are not alone: Statewide Reference Services are there for you.

Free supplemental reference services are available to you! The Camden County Library offers backup reference services through their toll-free number (800-443-0315) and email ([njref@camden.lib.nj.us](mailto:njref@camden.lib.nj.us)). They also maintain a "Virtual Reference Desk" and offer pathfinders on many topics. Please see their webpage at <http://njref.camden.lib.nj.us> for more information.

The Newark Public Library also offers backup reference help. Newark has specialties in art and music; business, patents and trademarks; and U.S. government publications. For more information about services and resources available from The Newark Public Library please see their webpage at: <http://www.npl.org/statewide>.

## 2003 Leadership Academy

Applications are now being accepted for the 25 open slots in the second annual New Jersey Academy of Library Leadership . (review process begins February 1, 2003)

The Academy for 2003 will be a one week (July 27- August 1) residential program led by Maureen Sullivan, a renowned library leadership authority.

Thanks to a subsidy from the NJ State Library with LSTA funding the 2003 Leadership Academy will be FREE to participants.

The Academy, administered by CJRLC for the NJ Library Network is open to all types of NJ librarians (and convenient for school librarians!)

The ideal applicant will be a mid-career librarian who is ready for increased involvement in the New Jersey library community. Selection will be based on personal qualifications, and also to ensure that the Academy participants represent as many types of librarianship and areas of the state as possible.

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software to host online classes and book chats.

## Q and A NJ Librarian honored with National Award

Congratulations to Q and A NJ librarian, Elizabeth Cronin of Ocean County Library, who won the Samuel S. Green award for exemplary Virtual Reference. The award includes \$500 and a trip to the LITA National Forum in Houston in October, where the award will be presented.

For more information on Q and A NJ and a list of participating libraries, please see: <http://www.QandANJ.org>

*Q and A NJ is supported by the NJ State Library with federal Library Services and Technology Act funds and administered by the South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative. ✓*

## Q and A NJ: Real Feedback From Real People

Library customers LOVE virtual reference service. Over 30% of all Q and A NJ users take the time to fill out the pop-up survey at the end of each session. The majority of comments, well over 95%, are positive. The first week of September brought almost 100 comments; here are a few of them.

**Occupation:** physician **Gender:** Male **Age:** 60up  
**Comments:** I was very impressed; I could not have found it without your help. Thank you so much!!!

**Occupation:** College student **Gender:** Female  
**Age:** 19to35 **Comments:** It was fast, accurate and to the point! Great Work, I was astonished that it operates past 9pm.

**Occupation:** business manager **Gender:** Male  
**Age:** 36to59 **Comments:** I like that it's fast and easy to use; librarians are always courteous and extremely knowledgeable.

**Occupation:** Homemaker **Gender:** Female  
**Age:** 60up **Comments:** It is quick, easy and right at my finger tips in the comfort of my own home.

**Occupation:** Personal Chef **Gender:** Male  
**Age:** 19to35 **Comments:** I enjoyed how polite and helpful the librarian was, it was a great experience. The service is perfect, in my opinion. Thank you for being there.

**Occupation:** house grandmother/disabled  
**Age:** 36to59 **Gender:** Female **Comments:** I'm new on the net and I just found out I could access all this wonderful info. from the library!! I'm so grateful. I am ecstatic about the whole darn thing!

**Occupation:** philanthropist (wife), U.S. corporate exec (husband), high school students (kids)  
**Age:** 36to59 **Gender:** Female **Comments:** I liked the speed, the candor and the human interaction.

**Grade:** High school **Age:** 1to18 **Gender:** Male  
**Comments:** the librarian was helpful, kind, and courteous. Just, thank you! this site offers remarkable resources and it saved me 3 hours of rooting around by myself! ✓

## JerseyCat: 500+ Libraries now live on Statewide ILL System

South Jersey Libraries bid farewell to SOJOURN this summer, and joined the statewide ILL system, JerseyCat. There are currently over 500 libraries across the state participating in the JerseyCat system.

It should come as no surprise if JerseyCat seems eerily similar to SOJOURN, because it is based on the same Autographics "Impact Online" software. The main difference between JerseyCat and SOJOURN is that JerseyCat permits real-time searching of selected library catalogs, and of course the growing pains of any new system.

All libraries in the state are eligible to join the new ILL system. Larger libraries with Z39.50 compliant catalogs may be designated as "z sites", and their catalogs will be searched in real time. Most libraries in the state will be part of the union catalog.

The State Library is administering the JerseyCat system, and will continue to host trainings and convene user group meetings around the state.

For more information on how to join JerseyCat, training dates, project staff contacts, logins and more, please see: [sjrlc.org/jersecat.htm](http://sjrlc.org/jersecat.htm) ✓

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Interested librarians should send a resume, letter of application including two references, and letter of institutional support to Connie Paul, CJRLC, 4400 Rt. 9 South, Suite 3400, Freehold, NJ 07728. The letter of application should indicate the usefulness of the Academy in future plans.

For more information see:

<http://www.cjrlc.org/leadershipacademy.htm> ✓

## News around the Region

- ✓ That new voice that you hear when you call SJRLC is **Judy Rapp**. Judy comes to us with a background in county social services. Welcome Judy!
- ✓ **Maxine Mino** is retiring after 25 years in the library world. She has worked at the Gloucester County Library for over 20 years, and earlier worked at the Margaret Heggan Library. Reflecting on her career, Maxine said, "I have met and worked with wonderful people from many libraries in South Jersey over the years and I would like to say 'Good-Bye' to all my friends and colleagues in the ILL Depts. in Gloucester, Camden, Burlington, and Atlantic Counties." Maxine's last day is Sept. 20.
- ✓ **C.L. Quillen**, will be bringing her reader's services expertise to the Mount Laurel Library. She joins the staff on October 1<sup>st</sup>.
- ✓ **Mindy Johnson** will be joining the Camden County Library as Customer Education Librarian.
- ✓ **Ann Hill and Julieta Dias** of Washington Township High School (Sewell) have a book coming out this fall. They describe Tooting Your Own Horn: Web-Based Public Relations for the 21st Century Librarian as a "hands-on book for promoting your library and its programs using your home page." It is being published by Linworth Publishing.
- ✓ **Delsea Regional High School's** program, "A Community of Readers", developed by **Mary Moyer** and **Rosalie Baker**, received a Best Practice Award from the NJ Dept. of Education in the category of Public Engagement.

### Upcoming Events

- ✓ **Youth Services Forum**, Oct 7<sup>th</sup> at the Monmouth Co. Library. See [sjrlc.org](http://sjrlc.org) for details.
- ✓ **EMA Conference**: Oct 27-29<sup>th</sup>. For details, see: [www.emanj.org/Conferences.html](http://www.emanj.org/Conferences.html) ✓

## Happy Retirement to Donna Hallowell!

After more than four years with the Region, Donna Hallowell is retiring as SJRLC's Administrative Assistant. Everyone at SJRLC would like to wish Donna a very Happy Retirement.

**Thank you for everything Donna!**

**Connections** is the newsletter of the South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative (SJRLC). SJRLC is a multi-type library membership organization including 560+ academic, institutional, public, school and special libraries in Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem counties. SJRLC is part of the New Jersey Library Network. SJRLC services are funded from State tax funds appropriated for the New Jersey Library Network.