
SOUTH JERSEY REGIONAL LIBRARY COOPERATIVE

YOUTH NEWS

FALL 2004

Collaborating with Colleagues: How to Get Them on Your Side

Although I have been a teacher for over twenty years, I am relatively new to librarianship. In fact, I am the first certified professional to oversee our elementary (pre-K through 8) school library media center. I soon discovered that it was important to educate fellow teachers, administration, and parents about my role and responsibilities and about how the library could become an important integral part of the school curriculum.

I approached this challenge in a variety of ways. For instance, I wrote a monthly newsletter for parents updating them on special events like an American Girls Tea or the Battle of the Books and informing them about what each grade was working on in the library media center. I also created a separate newsletter targeted at the teachers called Library-Link. This publication informed them of new acquisitions, shared resources they might find interesting or helpful, and elicited input regarding collection development, for example. I also organized an annual event for teachers called "Breakfast and Books." Each fall, I would invite colleagues to come to the LMC to peruse displays of new books and other materials and then enjoy a continental breakfast. Food, I find, is a powerful inducement.

In addition to raising awareness of the library and the collection, I also tried to facilitate library use by bringing resources directly to the users or potential users. I set up a professional library in the teacher's room. Professional journals, catalogues, and other resources are conveniently located right at the teachers' fingertips. I also generated a list of our audiovisual resources and made a concerted effort to purchase titles that would support or extend the curriculum. This list is placed directly in teacher's mailboxes. I also created "Theme Boxes" – portable cartons stuffed with resources on popular themes. For example, when the sixth grade social studies teacher was beginning a unit on the Middle Ages, I would

Continued on page 2



FROM THE EDITORS' DESK

We thank Carol Bruno, Sea Isle City Public School, for agreeing to be this issue's guest editor.

The guest editor for the winter edition will be Deitra Oliver, McQuire Air Force Base Library.

Hopefully everyone had a nice summer and successful summer reading programs.

Happy fall!

Co-editors:
Ann Wodarczyk
Denise Saia

The Slayage Conference

How many of you would confess to being a fan of the television shows Buffy the Vampire Slayer or of her counterpart in demonic battle, Angel? For the uninitiated, Buffy is a teenage girl, especially chosen like many girls before her, to be a combatant in the fight against evil. Angel, a 250 year old vampire, cursed with a soul by gypsies, helps the supernaturally gifted young woman in her mission. Eventually he must leave to struggle on alone in Los Angeles, on his own television show.

Intrigued by vampires since reading Bram Stoker's Dracula and watching Dark Shadows, the vampire soap opera, in high school, I have been a fan of Buffy since the first episode in 1996. I have kept this a secret, fearful of the rolling eyes of other adults who dismissed both shows as teen cult television. However, this past Memorial Day weekend, my obsession was vindicated. I attended the Slayage Conference, an international academic meeting on Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Angel convened at Middle Tennessee State, in Nashville. Professors, authors, and fans from around the world arrived to present papers and seriously discuss topics devolved from the series. Everyone was approachable. Quite often there were spur of the moment conversations in the hallways, at meals or in the lounge late into the night.

Topics ran the gamut: "Interpersonal Relationships in the Buffyverse: The Connection with Everyday Life," by a professor in Communication Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, "Warrior Heroes: Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Beowulf," from a professor at Henderson Community College; "Using Buffy to Teach Sartre," from the University of Huddersfield, England; "Monsters and Mean Streets: Angel and the Legacy of Film Noir," from a professor at Yale.

As a former English teacher and now as a librarian, I was especially interested in the use of Buffy and Angel in the classroom to inspire reading and writing: "Buffy the Vampire Slayer as a Pedagogical Tool in the Composition

Continued on page 2

deliver a theme box related to that subject to her classroom. It contains traditional print resources, but also copies of pertinent web pages or a pathfinder, videos, activity guides, templates for shields, crowns, and stained glass windows, and more. The box would often be accompanied by a classroom library of apropos titles. Teachers really appreciate these resources delivered right to their door!

In addition, for grades pre-K thru sixth, library lessons are taught collaboratively with the classroom teachers. Classroom teachers contribute their unique perspective and grade level expertise to the class. They also help monitor library manners while I am occupied at the circulation desk or while helping individual students locate books. Most importantly, we work together to coordinate library lessons with classroom themes and subject areas. This requires regular communication and cooperative planning. Ideally, it would be helpful to have collaborative planning time. We don't, but have still created some wonderful lessons that connect content areas and informational literacy skills.

The first grade teacher, for example, likes to begin the year with a unit on apples and Johnny Appleseed. Naturally, this provides an opportunity for highlighting the nonfiction and folklore sections, but I also designed an apple-shaped booklet about basic library skills that I use with the students. When the booklet is complete, we make a simple apple treat as a concluding activity. Similarly, with the upcoming presidential elections, the fifth grade teacher and I moved our unit on presidential biographies to this month. Each student utilizes a variety of resources (biography, encyclopedia, and websites) to learn about one of the American presidents. These facts will be compiled into a brief biography and then displayed in timeline format with accompanying presidential portraits. This activity will certainly complement the students' interest in and understanding of current events as they unfold this fall.

One of the most successful ways I have found for enticing colleagues to use and appreciate the library, is to design thematic activities that incorporate a number of content areas and often conclude with an exciting activity. I was awarded a number of mini-grants that helped fund some of these projects. Third graders researched wetland flora and fauna, created a Power Point field guide based on what they learned, and visited the Wetlands Institute in Stone Harbor as the result of one such grant. A grant is not necessary, however, to create a meaningful educational experience incorporating library skills. Last year, one group learned about the experiences of immigrants coming to America. We concluded their research with a simulation experience utilizing students from our local high school who posed as the officials immigrants would have encountered on Ellis Island. Everyone was in costume, the classroom became the processing center, and the older students spoke only in French or Spanish to provide the younger students with an idea of what that experience would have been like for their ancestors. It was a powerful experience for everyone!

There really are endless opportunities for covering information literacy standards, collaborating with colleagues, and providing students with meaningful, interesting – even fun – activities. And there is nothing like successful activities plus helpful resources and services to convince teachers of the value of the library media center!

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Slayage, Continued from page 1

Classroom.” “Some Assembly Required: Building a Course with Buffy the Vampire Slayer,” and “Shakespeare in Sunnydale,” were just a few of the papers offered in this area. Although all of the papers presented were geared toward college level classes, I served on a question and answer panel in one of the pedagogy seminars. We discussed the exciting possibilities of using the shows as “hooks” in both reading and writing classes at the high school level, because of the creative use of language, mythology and metaphor, but also the “dangers” of using these shows, given the frequent challenges to books like the Harry Potter series.

There have been several books written using the shows and their characters as a way to broach a variety of subjects. What Would Buffy Do? Is a collection of essays using the many questions and messages from the show to discuss spiritual questions such as “Be a Hero, Even When You’d Rather Go to the Mall: The Power of Self-Sacrifice.” Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Philosophy broaches more philosophical concepts such as “High School is Hell: metaphor Made Literal in Buffy the Vampire Slayer.”

Slayer Slang is a lexicon of terms from the shows that have entered modern English. The author lists the words and the episode in which they originated. He then provides uses of that word outside of the show such as in newspapers, magazines, film, etc. Adding “age” to the ends of words is common on Buffy – words such as slayage, kissage, sparkage, are just a few. Adding “y” to various words is also prevalent – glowery, judgy, hackery, groiny are examples. Guiltapalooza is used to mean excessive guilt. Michael Adams, the author, attended the conference and gave a keynote address.

In his keynote address, David Bianculli, a media critic for the New York Post, and author of *Teeliteracy: Taking Television Seriously*, discussed why he believed both shows were critically valuable. He is a rabid fan of Buffy and Angel and of everything that involves Joss Whedon, the creator of both shows.

For me and all of the other obsessed Jossverse groupies, the conference was intellectually stimulating and great fun. It was so successful, there will be another in 2006. This one will add *Firefly*, another Joss Whedon show too quickly cancelled, to the forum. Hopefully, by then I will have my own paper to present.

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BOOKLIST

Adams, Michael. *Slayer Slang*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Bianculli, David. *Teeliteracy: Taking Television Seriously*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000.

Riess, Jana. *What Would Buffy Do? The Vampire Slayer as Spiritual Guide*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004.

South, James B., ed. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Philosophy*. Chicago: Carus Publishing Co., 2003.

Wilcox, Rhonda V. and David Lavery, ed. *Fighting the Forces: What's at Stake in Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002.

Yeffeth, Glenn, ed. *Seven Seasons of Buffy: Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers Discuss their Favorite Television Show*. Texas: BenBella Books, 2003.

Laughter: The Best Medicine for Stress?

One of the librarians I contacted to write an article for this issue of Youth News recently informed me that she had been hospitalized with high blood pressure and would be unable to complete the piece. That got me thinking. So many colleagues I have spoken with over the summer months have talked about various kinds of job-related stress. Although the manifestation of the pressure has taken a variety of forms – increased responsibilities and reduced assistance, misunderstanding about the librarian’s occupation, interest in finding employment elsewhere or anxiously anticipating retirement – the result is the same: stress.

Some causes of stress are difficult to alleviate. Educating administrators or colleagues, eliciting parents or others to support your program, increasing awareness of the services provided by the professional librarian/media specialist or other proactive strategies, may address some causes. But in the short term, how do you alleviate stress? I decided to try to discover some practical suggestions. A quick search of the internet uncovered these fun facts from www.medi-smart.com:

- Laughter can reduce stress hormones.
- Laughter boosts your immune system.
- Laughter lowers your blood pressure.
- Laughter can exercise certain muscles (diaphragm, abdominal, facial, neck, back and leg).

...and finally, this great news – laughing 100 times is the equivalent to 15 minutes on an exercise bike or 10 minutes on a rowing machine! I guess we should all be rushing out to purchase joke books to keep on our desks in case of “emergency” or signing up for a Joke of the Day e-mail service! Some websites offered more prosaic solutions, however. Two (one from the Tripler Army Medical Center in Hawaii and the other www.purdue.edu) had identical lists of “101 Ways to Cope with Stress.” A few of their suggestions include:

- #1. Get up 15 minutes earlier.
- #9. Say “no” more often.
- #20. Look at challenges differently.
- #28. Say something nice to someone.
- #43. Look up at the stars.
- #44. Practice breathing slowly.

Breathing was also on the list of cures at the website www.healinggateways.com on their list of “50 Simple Ways to Reduce Stress.” This site also reminded the reader that stress is caused by occurrences most of us would classify as “good” like falling in love, a wedding, new job, and the like. It is the “...interpretation of these events (that) determines whether they are viewed as preferred or non-preferred stress.” In addition to breathing (taking 10 slow, deep breaths in through your nose, out through your mouth), this site recommends: asking for what you want, drinking eight 8 oz. glasses of water a day, 15 minutes of meditation, forgiving yourself and others, and hugging as stress-busters.

I guess the most compelling idea I came away with was that whatever your stress – preferred or non-preferred – you can respond to a situation we all recognize as detrimental to our physical and emotional well-being. You can proactively battle the Stress Monster! (This article is dedicated to my colleague, Susan, with best wishes for her complete recovery).

Carol Bruno, Educational Media Specialist,
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Blog Talk

Blogs or weblogs are diaries that individuals or groups publish on the web. The authors are called bloggers. Individual weblog entries are typically called posts to blogspace. Weblogs cover a wide range of topics ranging from matters of public concern such as politics to more personal issues. Some are published by academics and some by people who are experts in their field; others may be authored by sports fans or stay at home moms. A number of software tools and web hosting solutions now make it easy for anyone and everyone to publish weblogs.

Some examples of how teachers make use of this new technology include using blogspace to: replace the standard class web page; link to internet sites related to their course; organize class seminars and to provide summaries of readings; and allow students to create their own blogs.

SOME LIBRARY AND EDUCATION BLOG SITES TO LEARN FROM:

- **Uthink**, the blogging project at the University of Minnesota Libraries. One of the best examples of how academic libraries can lead in the creation of content for users. <http://blog.lib.umn.edu>.
- **Always Running** is an interactive writing project connecting two California continuation high schools. Students at these schools explore and compare contemporary issues in their own communities. <http://blogs.writingproject.org/blogwrite118>
- **LISNews** is a collaborative weblog devoted to current events and news in the world of Library and Information Science. A dedicated team of authors scouts the web to find stories they find interesting along with original stories, interviews and reviews. <http://www.lisnews.com/about.shtml>.
- **Librarian and Information Science News.** Blog Search is blog search engine-directory that allows you to search the internet for blogs by subject areas. Blog Search Engine <http://www.blogsearchengine.com>.
- **Peter Scott’s Library Blog.** Peter Scott is best know as the compiler of the first hypertext index of internet resources, Hytelnet, which was first released in 1991. He works at the University of Saskatchewan Library. <http://blog.xrefer.com/>.

SOME SCHOOL LIBRARY BLOGS

- <http://blog.xrefer.com/schoollibraryblogs.html>.

SOME PUBLIC LIBRARY BLOGS

- <http://blog.xrefer.com/publiclibraryblogs.html>.

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Calendar

South Jersey Group Book Evaluation

(all meetings are Wednesdays at 3:30 pm)

- **November 17** – Wildwood High School Library, 4300 Pacific Ave., Wildwood. Contact: Kathy Fulginiti, 609-522-7922, x409.
- **January 12, 2005** – Ocean City High School Library, 501 Atlantic Ave., Ocean City. Contact: Joan Vicari, 609-399-1290, x 222 (snow date: 1/19)
- **March 16, 2005** – Cape May County Special Services School District, 4 Moore Rd., Cape May Court House. Contact: Amy Hufana, 609-465-2723, x 3310 (snow date: 3/23)

West Jersey Group Book Evaluation

(all meetings are Friday at 9:30 am)

- **November 12** – Haddon Township High School Library, 406 Memorial Ave., Westmont. Contact: Arlene Baker, 856-869-7793.
- **January 14, 2005** – Camden County Library, South County Branch, 35 Coopers Folly Rd., Atco. Contact: Lin Flores, 856-753-2537, x 4405 (snow date: 1/21)
- **March 11, 2005** – Burlington County Library, Cinnaminson Branch, 1619 Riverton Rd., Cinnaminson. Contact: Peggy King, 856-829-9340 (snow date: 3/18)

EMANJ Fall Conference

The 26th annual EMANj conference, “Reel in Results@Your Library” will be held Dec. 2 thru Dec. 4 at the Hilton at East Brunswick (NJ Turnpike Exit 9, East Brunswick, New Jersey.) The conference program and registration materials are available at: <http://www.emanj.org/Conferences.htm>.

South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative

YOUTH NEWS

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YOUTH NEWS is the newsletter of the South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative Youth Services Committee, Char: Denise Saia, Franklin Township Library, Franklinville. SJRLC Director: Karen D. Hyman. Telephone: (856) 346-1222, FAX: (856) 346-2839. The South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative is part of the New Jersey Library Network and serves the counties of Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem. SJRLC is supported from State funds appropriated for the New Jersey Library Network. YOUTH NEWS is published three times a year and is distributed to libraries as part of membership benefits. EDITORS: Ann Wodarczyk, Gloucester County Library, Mullica Hill and Denise Saia, Franklin Township Library, Franklinville, NJ. Design and layout by Peter Bromberg, Program Development Coordinator, SJRLC, based on a design by the Community Relations Department of the Atlantic County Library System.