
SOUTH JERSEY REGIONAL LIBRARY COOPERATIVE

YOUTH NEWS

Fall 2005

Librarianship

A Challenging But Rewarding Profession

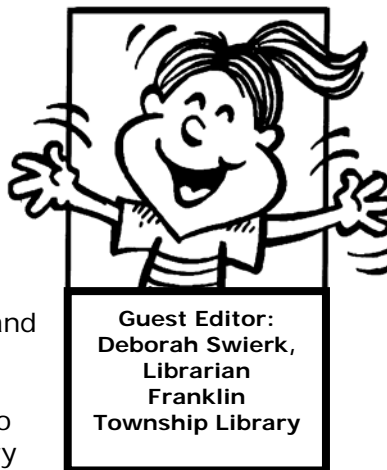
The field of librarianship consists of various challenges, daily headaches, and many rewards. A new librarian in the field can expect the unexpected. For example, all library staff is expected to take continuing education credits every year. This includes training in customer service, computers, and technology. There are many seminars on how to get along with people, staff and patrons.

Besides hours of training and seminars, there are a million little projects going on at once. Librarians are experts at multi-tasking. New librarians must get used to the fast-paced environment of reference, circulation, and patron services.

New librarians must learn to answer various reference questions and deal with many interesting people, good and bad. One of the biggest concerns in libraries today is computers, which make librarians' lives both easier and harder. Librarians are expected to solve, at least, minor computer problems on a daily basis and deal with computer sign ups.

Overall, librarianship has more rewards than hardships. Nine out of ten patrons are nice and very reasonable. Librarians learn a lot about everything and it is enjoyable to help people. A library works like a well-oiled machine and librarians work together to make it a safe, informative, and enjoyable place to work. While every library is different, librarianship requires patience and remembering that patrons come first – everything else can wait.

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The New Young Adult Librarian

When I was hired as a library intern at the Franklin Township Library in rural Franklinville, I was asked to develop the young adult collection and facilitate young adult programming. I had just taken a Young Adult Literature course at Rowan and was feeling inspired and eager to implement what I had learned.

The reality of working with young adults, while certainly rewarding, is more often challenging. One of the initial programs that I instituted was a Teen Advisory Council. The first meeting attracted just five teens; however, almost two years later, those five core members remain as part of an even dozen. They do not always attend every meeting but for the most part, they do try.

Whenever possible, I try to reach teens using the technology that is so second nature to them. With the new school year underway, the Council elected new officers and voted on bylaws. This year, I requested that interested candidates post their campaign speeches on Teenbuzz, a blog that I created specifically for members of the Council. It was a way for me to encourage them to visit the blog, where I post items of interest, such as upcoming library events or school activities that members are involved in. I learned to blog by taking a workshop hosted by the South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative. The previous school year, the Council held online elections

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Finding My Niche

My First Year as a School Media Specialist

When I received the call offering me a position as one of the school media specialists for Washington Township High School last November, I have to admit that I experienced mixed feelings about accepting the position. At the time, I was nearing the end of the Master of Arts in Library Science Program at Rowan University, but I still had to write my thesis and complete one more three credit course before earning my MA. I had been working as a substitute teacher for Washington Township High School for the two years while I was a graduate student at Rowan, so I had the opportunity to see the Instructional Media Program that I would be working in first hand. This is what led to feelings ranging from delight to trepidation when I received that phone call.

I knew enough about the program to know that I was extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to work in the Washington Township IMC as my first job as a school media specialist. The principals outlined in *Information Power* were taken to heart and used to create a dynamic program complete with an information literacy curriculum rich with collaborative lessons involving technology and research. I could drop in during any given period and the library was abuzz with activity. In a nutshell, what I saw going on was exactly what I was learning about in my graduate classes. This was also what led to my nervousness toward working in such a program as my first professional experience in a library. I knew that I would be thrown right into the mix of things immediately and had doubts about how prepared I was to handle it all.

I was right about one thing. When I began working in January, I felt as if I had been thrown into a tornado, albeit an organized and productive tornado, but the effect was the same. The IMC daily schedule was booked solid, so on most days I was team teaching six periods of our eight period day then would stay after school two days a week to work with the thirty-forty kids that needed extra help. I learned very quickly that I was excellent at multitasking and that it was possible to catalog the cart of videos that I had inherited in my office during the five minute break between periods. I still felt very fortunate to work in such a great school, but I did have a hard time catching my breath between writing my thesis at night and getting accustomed to such a fast pace during the day.

Once I did catch my breath, I realized that I wanted to go beyond just following the designed curriculum; I wanted to make my own niche. There were so many ideas and strategies that I had read about or discussed

during my graduate courses that I knew would be beneficial to the program. First, I decided to plan a Poetry Celebration to celebrate National Poetry Month. The day included a variety of activities including poetry readings, an interpretive dance, poetry read in sign language, and a discussion of songs as poetry. The student book club collected used books and sold hot chocolate and snacks throughout the day to raise money for local women's shelters. Taking on such a large project would not have worked without a lot of support, so the success of the day showed me that I would be able implement a number of my ideas and that I was an equal partner with the other media

See Finding My Niche, continued on page3, column 2.

Book Donations

The Franklin Township Library recently received a generous donation from the now defunct Library Safety and Security Council. The director was asked to spend the monies on the purchase of both juvenile and adult books focusing on safety concerns in public places, in the library and on the internet.

The following is an annotated bibliography of the books purchased.

Chaiet, Donna. The Safe Zone. A Kid's Guide to Personal Safety. NY: Beech Tree, 1998. Various self-defense options are discussed that might be used in an uncomfortable or unsafe situation. (Juvenile).

DeBecker, Gavin. Protecting the Gift. NY: Dell Publishing, 1999. Practical steps to enhancing children's safety are discussed.

Knittel, John. Everything You Need to Know about the Dangers of Computer Hacking. NY: Rosen Publishing Group, Inc., 2003. Discusses computer hacking, who does it, and how dangerous it is. (Young adult).

Peikari, Cyrus. Security Warrior. CA: O'Reilly Media Inc., 2004. Useful information on computer security.

Raatma, Lucia. Safety in Public Places. MN: The Child's World, 2005. Part of the Living Well series. Focuses on being safe in crowds, public places, and at the amusement park. (Juvenile).

Roddel, Victoria. Stay Safe in Cyberspace. FL: Cyber Criminals Most Wanted LLC, 2002. A general reference source focusing on internet safety for the internet user.

Shuman, Bruce. Case Studies in Library Security. CA: Libraries Unlimited, 2002. A professional resource that provides information about a variety of library security problems.

Wolinsky, Art. Safe Surfing on the Internet. NJ: Enslow Publishers, Inc., 2003. Part of the Internet Library series. An in-depth discussion of safety issues that also includes relevant laws, policies, and privacy issues. (Juvenile).

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Young Adult, continued from page 1, column 2.

using a ballot that I created in SurveyMonkey.com. I have had mixed results with both methods, which I find interesting. While teens are comfortable using technology, not every teen is technology – oriented. Some still prefer a telephone call or face – to – face contact.

Although Council meetings do follow an agenda, I make every attempt to increase the “fun” quotient for members, such as offering a “behind – the – scenes” tour of the library followed up with a library scavenger hunt. Even though members may have participated in the tour the previous year, they always seem interested in repeating the experience (dividing the members into competitive teams for the scavenger hunt and promising a cool prize is always a strong motivator).

Another Council activity that has been a big draw is our Poetry and Coffeehouse Night held in honor of National Poetry Month. Taking a page from *101+ Teen Programs That Work* (Honnold, R. (2003). NY: Neal-Schuman Publishers, Inc.), I try to set the mood by covering the tables with Kraft paper and setting out poetry books, pencils for doodling, a votive candle, and a menu of beverages and snacks (Honnold, p. 94). One year, I even had a teen come and softly play his guitar in the background. That was the year that we all wore the beret when we got up to read our poems. Last April, I invited members from the Society for Poets of Southern New Jersey to attend. To inspire the teens, the Society’s representatives first guided them through a short writing exercise, which was followed by an alternating poetry reading; first a Society member read a poem, then a teen, and so on. The evening was a big success, as almost every teen in attendance read a poem that they had prepared and looked forward to reading.

In addition to the monthly Council meetings, I also facilitate a monthly Teen Manga Club. The Manga Club members tend to be the younger teens and are extremely enthusiastic about all things “manga.” As such, they are an excellent resource for developing your library’s manga collection. This particular club is not as formal as the Teen Advisory Council. I just make sure a room is available for them each month, set out snacks, paper and pencils, and whatever new items from the collection that I think may interest them. I do try to keep them busy, though, as they are less likely to get into trouble that way. For example, last year I asked one of the members to teach a craft workshop for the club. I have found that many teens are eager to share ideas with their peers. I had noticed that this particular teen always brought an interesting book bag to each meeting. I asked her about it and it turned out that she had made it herself. All of the other members had been admiring her book bag so I asked her to teach them how to make one of their own. I supplied all of the materials, covered the tables with Kraft paper, and had a popular CD playing in the

Continued, next column.

background. This particular event was very well attended. Before the teens left, I took a photo of each person’s bag and posted it on the library’s website.

Along with monthly programs, I have also tried to offer workshops that I think teens would enjoy, such as scrapbooking, origami, and conversational Japanese. This past summer, we offered a “Flip Flop Fantasy” class. The library supplied the materials and the teens created whimsical flip flops that they modeled for each other afterwards. The previous year, I invited a business teacher from the Washington Township High School to present a “Personal Finance for Teens” workshop. Topics included opening a savings and checking account, writing checks, using ATM and debit cards, credit cards and debt, and completing Federal and State withholding forms for employment. As I often do, I compiled a bibliography to accompany this workshop so that the teens could do further research on their own. It is surprising how very little many teens know about these important issues.

Having finally finished my master’s degree in May, I can honestly say that this was the best career choice that I could have ever made. I truly enjoy working with young adults and teaching them about the great resources that the library has available. As I have previously mentioned, it can be challenging at times; however, there are many resources available to new young adult librarians. I have already mentioned a few, such as professional sources, workshops, local organizations or educators. I also find many wonderful ideas posted by colleagues on professional listservs, such as NJ YAC, the listserv for New Jersey Young Adult and Children’s Librarians. Fellow employees can be helpful as well; many of them have watched these teens grow up and are more than willing to promote a program or event. Let us not forget the teens themselves. Take every opportunity to ask them for collection and program suggestions. They enjoy having the chance to share their thoughts and ideas.

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Finding My Niche continued from page 2, column 1

specialists. Since April, I have been working with the other media specialists to implement more of the ideas that interested me including developing a graphic novel collection, reorganizing the student volunteers, and the promotion of contemporary young adult literature.

The first year of any new job or profession will always come with obstacles, and beginning this job while I was still a graduate student added to the insanity. Having the opportunity to share my ideas and put many of them into practice helped me through that crazy time and has added a new level of enjoyment for me. I will always love the teaching aspect of my job and am grateful that the teachers and administration at Washington Township high school realize the value of the IMC, but the special projects are what keep me going. If I had any advice for a first year school media specialist it would be to think of that one idea or that one discussion that truly sparked your interest and see how you can make it work for your media center. Find your niche.

Stephanie Gaughan, Washington Township High School
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CALENDAR

South Group Book Evaluation

Meets Wednesdays, 3:30 pm

Nov. 16: Atlantic County Library System, Pleasantville. Contact person: Pam Saunders, psaunders@acmail.aclink.org, 609-641-1778

Jan. 18: Middle Township High School Library. Contact person: Sue Rohrman, 609-465-1866 (snow date Jan. 25)

Mar. 15: Wildwood High School Library. Contact person: Kathy Fulginiti, 609-522-7922, x409.

West Group Book Evaluation

Meets Fridays, 9:30 am

Nov. 18: Camden County Library, Bellmawr Branch. Contact person: Tina Eckenroth, 856-772-1636.

Jan. 20: Haddon Township High School Library. Contact person: Arlene Baker, 856-869-7793 (snow date Jan. 27).

Mar. 17: Waterford Township Library. Contact person: Eva Lynch, 856-767-7727.

FROM THE EDITORS' DESK

We would like to thank our guest editor, Deborah Swierk, librarian at the Franklin Township Library, for her work in putting together this issue that focuses on articles reflecting the thoughts of new librarians.

Please share with us activities that you are doing in your library; everyone loves to hear what someone else is doing.

Wishing all a happy and well holiday season.

Co-editors: Ann Wodarczyk and Denise Saia

New Book Eval Procedures

www.sjrhc.org/bookeval

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, NJ 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.