

Letter To Libraries Online

An Electronic Newsletter



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LIBRARY BOARD NEWS

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STATE LIBRARY BOARD ADOPTS RULE CHANGES

At their meeting in Salem on February 3rd, the State Library Board adopted changes to Oregon Administrative Rules governing several State Library programs. The rule changes were needed because of bills passed in the 2005 Legislative Assembly. The Board deleted references to maintenance of support provisions for the Ready to Read Grant program,

responding to the passage of HB 2919 which eliminated those provisions. The Board revised rules governing the Statewide Database Licensing Program to add tribal libraries to the program. This was in accordance with HB 2674, which made tribal libraries eligible for State Library resource sharing programs. The Board accepted the recommendation of the Statewide Database Licensing Advisory Committee (SDLAC) to continue with a representative from the Oregon Educational Technology Consortium to SDLAC. The new rules will also add a tribal library representative to SDLAC. HB 2118 required many changes to the rules governing the State Documents Depository Program, which the Board adopted, including elimination of the "core depository libraries," reduction of the full depository libraries to nine, and a more detailed definition of a "public document."

The Board also adopted staff recommendations for changes to the State Library's performance measures, and heard a report on the annual customer satisfaction survey recently conducted by the Government Research and Electronic Services team. The next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 5th, at 1 p.m. at the State Library.

STATE LIBRARY NEWS

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ARLENE WEIBLE JOINS THE STATE LIBRARY STAFF

The Government Resources and Electronic Services Team welcomes Arlene Weible, who began February 1st as the new Cataloging Services Librarian. Arlene has worked in Government Documents at Yale University, Willamette University, Washington State Library, and most recently at the University of North Texas. Arlene's responsibilities at the State Library will include the cataloging aspects of the new digital state documents repository. She will be working with library staff to establish work flow and cataloging standards for bibliographic records for items in the repository. Arlene is the current chair of the Government Documents Roundtable of the American Library Association.

LETTERS ABOUT LITERATURE

The Oregon State Library is again coordinating Oregon's Letters About Literature contest from The Center for the Book. To read more about this remarkable contest, check it out at <http://oregon.gov/OSL/LD/aboutcenter.shtml>. School age youth write letters to authors of books that have in some way had an impact on

their life and submit them to the Center for the Book. There are three levels for entries: elementary, middle and high school. Oregon had 1292 entries and 95 semifinalists. Local authors, library staff and supporters serve as the judges for our Oregon semifinalists. Oregon's winners will be announced at a celebration on April 3rd, at the State Library, from 4:00-5:30 p.m.

TALKING BOOK AND BRAILLE SERVICES PROVIDES VOTER GUIDES

The Talking Book and Braille Services program is working in conjunction with the Secretary of State's Office and League of Women Voters to provide election information to people with vision or physical disabilities. The League of Women Voters will be producing two guides for the Primary and General Election. The first guide is the Non-partisan Voters' Guide and the second is the Easy to Read Voters' Guide. These guides will be sent to TBABS patrons in cassette format unless specifically requested in an alternate format. People who are visually or physically disabled and are not members of the Talking Book program may also receive these guides through TBABS. Please either call us on behalf of a qualified patron or give our toll-free number to your patron (800- 452-0292).

OTHER LIBRARY NEWS

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WOMANS DAY ASKS READERS HOW LIBRARIES CHANGE LIVES

Womans Day magazine wants to learn how the library has changed lives. In the March 7th issue, the magazine declares that libraries are magical places and asks readers to submit their stories in 700 words or less. Stories can be sent to womansday@ala.org from now until May 10, 2006, when the promotion closes. Four of the submissions will be featured in an upcoming issue of Womans Day.

Librarians can promote the initiative in their library by downloading free promotional tools from the ALA website, <http://www.ala.org/ala/pio/campaign/sponsorship/wdchangelives.htm>. Tools include a sample press release, downloadable logos, sample newsletter copy and flyer.

PS. (FROM THE STATE LIBRARIAN)

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The fifty or so librarians from public, school and academic libraries who came to the Knight Library in Eugene on January 27th for the Oregon Virtual Reference Summit had a lot to celebrate.

For one, the L-net service continues to grow and serve more Oregonians every month. In fact, January 2006, was the best month ever for L-net use with 1,734 transactions. Compare that to a year ago, when L-net only logged 602 transactions, and it is obvious that L-net is on track. More Oregon libraries are joining up to help staff L-net to meet the increasing demand. There are now 22 libraries that contribute reference librarians to staff the service about 50 hours a week. Another reason to celebrate is a successful transition to the new QuestionPoint software, though some of the features won't be available for a few weeks yet.

A highlight of the conference were remarks by the U of O's University Librarian Deborah Carver. Deb shared three things that make her enthusiastic about the future of e-reference service. First is the fact that traditional desk-based reference service scales very poorly, especially on college campuses, but in public and school libraries too. E-reference has the potential to serve many more students and citizens than traditional reference service ever could. Second is the fact that e-reference is aligned with behavioral and technology trends, particularly among students. "Convergence" is a trend in information technology, with devices that combine communications and information access. But "convergence" is also a trend in students behavior, where the distinction between communication and information seeking is blurring. The third thing that Carver likes about e-reference is that it represents risk-taking on the part of librarians and library managers. Carver believes that for libraries to thrive in this century, we have to be willing to take risks on new and unproven ways of doing business.

Another highlight of the conference was a booklet that L-net Coordinator Caleb Tucker-Raymond prepared with all of the positive feedback that the service has received since its inception. It's very affirming to read comments like, "AMAZING! I was really stumped. Even Google produced no results. But the Library did. Makes me smile."

And speaking of affirming the value of L-net, when the State Library was staffing the service in January, our librarian Jerry Curry ended up helping an Oregonian reporter who was trying it for the first time. He was researching an article he was writing on, of all things, roller derby in Oregon. He said he decided to try L-net when the reference desk phone number at the Multnomah County Library was busy. His

comment: "I was really impressed with the quick response and Jerry's outstanding research."

If your library is not among the 22 libraries participating in L-net, you should think about doing so. The commitment is not huge (you can choose to staff the service for just an hour or two a week if you'd like), and you'll learn how to provide information to library users in a whole new way. I believe that e-reference is probably what reference service will become. The technology and the methods will likely change in ways we can't even imagine, but the idea of connecting with our customers on the Web is here to stay. And doing so will make our reference services more valuable than ever. -- Jim Schepcke

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