



Texas Library Journal

VOLUME 77 , NO. 4 • WINTER 2001

- 2 President's Perspective: *Come Celebrate Our Illustrious Past and Gallant Future***
Herman Totten
- 4 Editorial: *Libraries after 9/11***
Gloria Meraz
- 6 Graphic Novels in Libraries**
Robert G. Weiner
- 11 From the Trenches: Library Leaders on TIF**
TIF and the Texas Library Future 11
Harold Billings
The State's Ongoing Role 13
Rhoda Goldberg
Electronic Infrastructure in Public Education 14
Caroline Kienzle
Electronic Resources in Academic Libraries 15
Joe Dahlstrom
- 16 Ruminations about Books:
Past, Present, and Future**
Bonnie Juergens
- 20 Revising School Library Programs:
Standards and Guidelines for Texas**
Christine McNew
- 23 The t-X-la Files**
Janis C. Test
- 27 Newsnotes**
- 30 TexShare Database Training**
Belinda Boon and Dawn Vogler
- 32 The VIA Connection**
Joe Garcia and Jerry Hedgecock

[BACK to Table of Contents](#)



Come Celebrate Our Illustrious Past and Gallant Future

President's Perspective

BY HERMAN TOTTEN



Throughout its history, the Texas Library Association (TLA) has held **outstanding** conferences; however, because 2002 is the centennial year of our Association, the 2002 Annual Conference will be a **unique** celebratory opportunity for the TLA Membership.

The 2002 Program Planning Committee and I, as you know, adopted the TLA Centennial Celebration Committee's logo and theme, *Preserving the Past – Shaping the Future*. Your president has always felt that TLA's future will be much more illustrious than her gallant past, so I invite you to come celebrate this **unique** conference in Dallas, April 23-26, 2002. Because the conference coincides with TLA's centennial anniversary, we have planned an outstanding array of special programs and activities.

The speakers for our general sessions will carry our conference theme throughout their presentations. Stephen H. Murdock, demographer for the State of Texas, will reveal the *future* face of Texas, its diversity, and the implications for libraries and our clientele. Historian Robert Caro will delight us with his latest volume on the life of Lyndon Baines Johnson – what secrets will he reveal? Congressman Major Owens (our only librarian in Congress!) will present, along with Bruce Sterling, author of provocative science fiction books. Nationally known author Sarah Weddington will also speak.

A special committee has selected 100 library champions who will be recognized in an invitational activity called a Texas Tea. The conference will also feature popular entertainers like our very own Brave Combo, as well as Tish Hinojosa, who is branching

out from her professional singing career into children's writing.

We have provided specialized tracks to guide attendees through the week. Look for motivating discourses on library education, recruitment to the profession, diversity, and access.

Your president has always felt that TLA's future would be much more illustrious than her gallant past . . .

Because the education of future information professionals is far too important to be the responsibility of library educators alone, the CONFERENCE WITHIN A CONFERENCE, focusing on the future of library and information studies education, will offer an open dialogue among **all** of the stakeholders in the library and information profession. Stakeholders

include **practitioners in libraries** (i.e., persons actively working in academic, public, school, and special library environments); **practitioners in non-traditional environments** such as corporate, non-profit, social services, or dot-coms; **library trustees** from city, county, and private library governing and advisory boards; and **advocates** – those who are interested in the promotion of libraries, library legislation, and services.

The CONFERENCE WITHIN A CONFERENCE will feature three distinct, but interrelated, programs. Attendees can choose to attend one, two, or all three as a series to receive a comprehensive view of the future of library and information studies education. The three programs are "**Voices Projecting the Future of Library and Information Studies Education**," "**Ethnic Diversity in Library and Information Studies Education**," and a complete audience participation activity, called "**Table Talk**."

[BACK to Table of Contents](#)

Robert Martin, director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services, will preside over “**Voices Projecting the Future of Library Education.**”

Before the conference, four seasoned library educators will write papers that will be placed on our website for review by TLA conference attendees. The four educators, who will expound on their papers during the conference, are Mary Berry, chairman of the Department of Library Science, Sam Houston State University; Andrew Dillon, dean of the School of Library and Information Sciences, The University of Texas at Austin; Keith Swigger, dean of the College of Professional Education and interim director of the School of Library and Information Studies, Texas Woman’s University; and Philip B. Turner, dean of the School of Library and Information Sciences and associate vice president for Academic Affairs for Distance Education, School of Library and Information Sciences, University of North Texas.

Two persons will write formal reactions to the papers and expound on their reactions at the CONFERENCE WITHIN A CONFERENCE. The two reactors are Florence Mason, F. Mason and Associates, Dallas, Texas, adjunct faculty member, University of North Texas and Syracuse University; and Randy Wallace, student, School of Library and Information Sciences, University of North Texas.

Yvonne J. Chandler, associate professor, School of Library and Information Sciences at the University of North Texas, will preside over the **Ethnic Diversity in Library and Information Studies Education.** Three ethnically diverse information professionals will write papers to present at the CONFERENCE WITHIN A CONFERENCE.

E.J. Josey, professor emeritus, University of Pittsburgh School of Library and Information Sciences, will develop a paper speaking to the value added by students of color being a part of Library and Information Studies programs in general. Margo Gutiérrez, librarian/ bibliographer, Mexican American and Latino Studies, Benson Latin American Collection at The University of Texas at Austin General Libraries, will develop a paper speaking to the recruitment of students of color in Library and Information Studies. Lotsee Patterson, professor, School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Oklahoma, will develop a paper speaking to the importance of retention of students of color in LIS programs.

Julie B. Todaro, past president of the Texas Library Association, will preside over “**Table Talk.**” This portion of the CONFERENCE WITHIN A CONFERENCE is an outgrowth of the library education summit held during the 2001 TLA Annual Assembly, also facilitated by Dr. Todaro. The discussion will continue with the direct participation of all of the stakeholders (e.g., **practitioners in libraries, practitioners in nontraditional environments, library trustees, and advocates**) and give them the opportunity to bring their aggregate wisdom to bear on three questions that emerged from the participants of the 2001 Annual Assembly. Currently enrolled students in the four library and information studies programs in Texas public institutions will serve as recorders and reporters at each table. The results will be published as an executive summary in a forthcoming issue of the *Texas Library Journal*.

*The **3** questions, all to be addressed to practitioners, are as follows:*

- 1) What do you believe the core knowledge/competencies of the profession to be?
- 2) What are the core values of the profession?
- 3) Is there value in continuing the requirement of ALA accreditation in library and information science education and in hiring?

By discussing these questions and analyzing the accrued information, we hope to achieve the following:

- 1) A succinct definition of what the core knowledge/competencies of the profession are to both practitioners and educators;
- 2) A succinct definition of what the core values of the profession are to both practitioners and educators;
- 3) A consensus view of ALA accreditation in light of the following questions. Is accreditation outdated or unnecessary? Do educators and practitioners “miss out” on good candidates simply because they do not have an accredited degree? ★



LIBRARIES AFTER 9/11

BY GLORIA MERAZ

We begin
by openly
celebrating the
patriotism
inherent in
libraries.

On October 26, President George W. Bush signed into law the PATRIOT Act, a broad piece of legislation ostensibly designed to expand the federal government's ability to fight terrorism. Had this law been introduced in the U.S. Congress before September 11, chances are that it would not have passed.

However, as we have all undoubtedly heard or commented, the events of 9/11 have changed the country. The extent of that change remains to be determined, not so much by the length of legal enforceability of the new statute or the duration of military action, but by the commitment of the American people to accept new responsibilities while clinging to cherished principles.

For libraries and librarians, times of political unrest tend to draw attention to us. This spotlight is not unwarranted. Libraries are not only a symbol of our country's right to freedom and opportunity; libraries are also a living and breathing creature of democratic process and progress.

And, as we well understand these days, democracy is a gateway—an open door that cannot discriminate. Since 9/11, we have learned that the ease of travel and communication

within the United States facilitated the terrorists' activities. To fully understand and document those actions, law enforcement and government officials have initiated a broad investigation, one that includes libraries, where suspected terrorists had used computers to communicate.

The investigation, along with the national interest to prevent such actions from occurring in the future, are indicative of a national psychology primarily concerned with gaining control over and preventing future terrorist activity. To do that, many Americans (although not the majority) are willing to tolerate certain limitations on individual rights, according to a recent CNN/Gallup Poll.

I suspect that many librarians are suffering from mixed feelings about this. The magnitude of September 11 has left us all rethinking our role in the world, as individuals and as professionals. As individuals, we have the luxury of self-accountability. As librarians, we are part of an existing professional ethos, one that stridently denounces any limitation on civil liberties and that requires disclosure of personal information only when faced with a court order.

[BACK to Table of Contents](#)

For its part, the library community (as a collective body) opposes the wave of willing self-censorship. Library publications are filled with heated condemnation against actions by librarians who hand over any records without proper legal exigencies. Some librarians point out, however, that circumstances today are unique and that libraries have first a responsibility to the safety of our communities. To some extent, the philosophy of the debate is not new. After all, we have been debating Intellectual Freedom issues, such as censorship and Internet filtering, for many years now. What is new, however, is the almost total unity in the American perspective. Stopping terrorism is the national priority and anything that is perceived to impede that effort meets with widespread disapproval, including our own at times. In short, we are struggling to reconcile our natural inclination to support unstintingly our country and our commitment to do our job, which involves questioning the broad reach of governmental powers. There is no easy comfort.

September 11 is the watershed event of our generation. That day was the culmination of a catastrophic expression of an idea—one meant to oppose and destroy. The wound inflicted on us that day is deep, painful, and senseless. The seemingly impenetrable fortress of the democratic ideal was attacked and is now being tested.

None of us can say what the world or even the library world will face in the coming months and years. But, I will say that I have faith

in our profession. I have faith that we are part of the answer. We are a profession working in the trade of ideas. We are a defense against events like those of 9/11. We encourage informed thinking and critical judgment. As much as we encourage people to discover all their possibilities, we promote searching for facts and diverse viewpoints. We provide the tools necessary to form sound answers to questions raised. We are a source of education, stability, and objectivity. We serve all, and we do so according to, and abiding by, the United States Constitution and the laws of this country and our state.

Ideas are our specialty. And the need to preserve the public's ability to hold sovereignty over its own ideas is the most direct contribution we can make in the short term and in years to come. We have withstood censorship and war before. We have accepted compromise when we needed to and fought when we had to.

Protecting Intellectual Freedom is not just a "stand." The debate we must sometimes raise is an expected and necessary corrective measure in national discourse and policy. We are a fundamental mechanism of democracy. And, as in the system of checks and balances created by the American Founding Fathers, the importance of libraries (and our mission) is strengthened by the equally important demands of law enforcement. We are by no means adversaries.

The role of libraries is quite clear—articulated in irrefutable language that was crafted by

generation after generation of librarians who worked with the people of their communities to build a better future for one and all. If we believed in the principles of open access to information and Intellectual Freedom before September 11, how can we minimize them now? Yes, the world is different, but what must remain are our principles. So how do we work in today's time? The question of the day is procedural—not philosophical.

We begin by openly celebrating the patriotism inherent in libraries. We continue providing resources for our patrons to help them understand and deal with the events of 9/11. We work to ensure the physical safety of our patrons and collections. We continue making diverse viewpoints available and our libraries places of discourse and understanding. We continue cooperating with law enforcement officials by adhering to existing laws, which are designed to preserve privacy and set a framework for lawful investigations. In emergency situations, we respond with our best and most professional judgment, and we respect colleagues who find themselves in the unenviable position of having to make such judgments.

Despite these difficult times, I count librarians among the luckiest of all people. Though we may question many events today, we do not question our importance to this country. And without a doubt, we are an instrument of progress and vital life. Yes, some things have changed—but fortunately, not everything. 🌟



GRAPHIC NOVELS *in Libraries*

BY ROBERT G. WEINER

I would describe graphic/comic novels as having boxed pictures with text that jointly tell a graphic story. I include books like *Garfield*, *Pokemon*, *Far Side*, Japanese Manga titles, superheroes, and Archie books in this category. A wide range of titles extending from humor, fiction, and non-fiction also fall into this genre. While all of these titles enjoy wide readership, clearly the superhero variety draws the most attention from patrons. In the sections that follow, I will relate the experience of the Lubbock City-County Library in collecting graphic novels and will offer resources and suggest titles that may help your library begin building a graphic novel program.

Graphic novels can provide a cost-effective means of increasing circulation in your library and can please your patrons immeasurably. I've always had a love affair with comic literature and have read and collected comics and graphic novels on and off for years. When I became a librarian, it seemed natural that I would want to start a graphic novel collection in the library where I worked.

The Lubbock library system first started collecting graphic novels about four years ago. At that time, I approached my supervisor and asked if it would be all right if I ordered several Spider Man, Superman, and Batman books. Not knowing if there would be any demand for such materials, my boss said, "Sure, try it and see if anyone checks them out." Much to our surprise, the demand surpassed our expectations. When Star Wars Episode I was released, we bought many of the Star Wars graphic novels, and the demand went up even further. Since that time, the Lubbock library system has worked to build one of the best graphic novel collections in the country. We currently have 840 such items.

Because the words "comic" or "graphic novels" still have the stigma of being hack literature or just something from the funny papers, many librarians consider this type of reading material to be inappropriate for a library and resist its acceptance. Indeed, when we started collecting graphic novels, there were those who thought we were wasting time and money. I heard comments like, "I can't believe you're buying comic books." And, "I don't want those books in my branch library." My supervisor always responded with, "Do they circulate? If they don't, then we'll stop buying them." The fact is they do circulate; and, thankfully, level heads prevailed. Therefore, we were able to continue to build our extensive collection.

It's important to point out that the stigma of having "comics" in your collection is changing. The cover story in the July 2001 issue of *Today's Librarian* featured graphic novels in libraries, and ALA is having a pre-conference workshop on graphic novels at their 2002 meeting in Atlanta. ALA even has put a website for nominating graphic novels of outstanding quality at www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists/poppare/02poparnoms.html.

Librarians who collect (or want to collect) graphic novels can access an email list on the topic. The list is GNLIB-L (Graphic Novels in Libraries), and its motto is "Over 200 Librarians Can't Be Wrong!" Mainstream culture is finally recognizing the genre in such publications as *Entertainment Weekly*, which has praised Marvel Comics' *Ultimate Spider Man* and *Black Panther* series. Numerous graphic novels have won awards for their content and quality. *Nam* by Doug Murray was voted "best media of the Vietnam War" by the Veteran

[BACK to Table of Contents](#)

group, Bravo Organization. It even beat out the movie, *Platoon*. Other titles such as *Jimmy Corrigan*, *Sandman*, *Batman: Mad Love*, *Watchmen*, and *Age of Bronze* also have won recognition and awards.

Superheroes like Batman, Captain America, and Superman have had over 50-year careers in popular culture and have come and gone many times. Superheroes are currently enjoying popularity in popular culture unparalleled in the history of the genre. The success of the 2000's X-Men movie demonstrates that superheroes have (and create) a vast audience. Syndicated shows such as *Smallville*, *Mutant X*, and *JLA* are among the highest rated independent television shows, and there are currently over 20 feature films based on superhero characters in production. These include *Spider Man*, *The Hulk*, *Batman 5*, *Wonder Woman*, *Catwoman*, *Iron Fist*, *Daredevil*, *The Fantastic Four*, *X-Men 2*, *Judge Dredd*, *Ghost Rider*, *Aquaman*, and many others.

While perhaps in the past, Odysseus and Aeneas were the heroic mythological figures, Batman, Superman, Spider Man, and the X-Men have replaced them to create a modern legendary paradigm. Writing about the Marvel Comics Universe, Peter Sanderson states, "... the stories of the Marvel Universe constitute a modern-day mythology, equally vast in scope, whose heroes' strivings, usually represented through physical conflict against their foes, serve as metaphors for our own struggles in life on a grander scale" (pg. 8). The superhero has become an allegory to our own lives and provides a means of escape for both adults and children, as did the "classics" of literature from bygone days. Graphic novels in your library can help fill this void.

I can't tell you how many times an adult patron, referring to our collection, has said to me, "I wish these were in my library when I was a kid." In fact, one of the most surprising results of developing this collection is the number of adults interested in graphic novels. In fact, we have more adult use than teen or child use. The median age range of graphic readers is 22-40; however, the overall range is 5-72. We once had a lady patron who bragged that she was 72 years old and enjoyed reading X-Men books.

I want to stress the importance of having plenty of superhero titles in your collection. You may even want to complement your collection with superhero oriented print novels. Just about anything about the X-Men will have wide appeal and wide readership. While I would certainly suggest that you buy non-fiction and non-superhero graphic titles, they will not circulate as aggressively as traditional superhero fare. For example,

comparing the following non-fiction title, *Keepers of the Faith*, by Jeffery Jones, to a copy of Brian Michael Bendis' *Ultimate Spider Man*, the former had five circulations as of 2/11/2001, while the latter had seventeen circulations since 6/17/2001. Rick Geary's *The Fatal Bullet* had nine circulations since 7/20/2000, while a copy of *X-Men Visionaries: the Joe Madureira Collection* had 34 circulations since 10/20/2000. Our general circulation period is three weeks.

I recommend also that your library buy not just standard superhero books but also titles like *Pokemon* and *Dragon Ball Z* (which is currently one of the hottest Japanese anime shows and manga titles around), *Classics Illustrated* graphic novels, and non-fiction titles such as *Maus*. We've also seen our interlibrary loan statistics go up because nearly every day a request comes in to borrow a graphic novel.

To further illustrate in more detail how well graphic novels and related materials circulate, I've listed ten titles and examples of their circulation records. All figures are as of 11/2/2001. I've included the date the item was first entered into our catalog, how many copies are in the system, and the overall circulation record of all copies. In some cases, where a single copy had a very high circulation, I've included that as well.



Photos: Robert G. Weiner; Mahon Library, Lubbock

[BACK to Table of Contents](#)

Sample Titles: Use Data

Marvel Universe, Peter Sanderson
(ISBN: 0810981718) 7/10/2000
8 copies-116 circulations
1 copy had 19 circulations

Spider Man: Goblin Moon, Kurt Busiek
(ISBN: 0425174034) 9/25/2000
3 copies-35 circulations
1 copy had 19 circulations

Superman vs. The Revenge Squad, Karl Kesel
(ISBN: 0425170829) 7/29/99
2 copies-45 circulations
1 copy had 28 circulations

Spider Man vs. The Green Goblin, Stan Lee
(ISBN: 078510139x) 1/10/2001
1 copy had 28 circulations

Star Wars: Boba Fett: Enemy of the Empire,
John Wagner
(ISBN: 156971407x) 2/20/2000
5 copies 106 circulations
1 copy had 34 circulations

JLA: Strength in Numbers, Grant Morrison
(ISBN: 1563894351) 1/10/2001
1 copy-had 25 circulations

The Golden Age of Marvel Comics, vol.2,
Mickey Spillane
(ISBN: 0785107134) 11/19/99

5 copies-113 circulations
1 copy had 43 circulations

X-Men: Legends, Stan Lee
(ISBN-0425170829) 6/22/2000
12 copies 157 circulations
1 copy had 34 circulations

X-Men Movie Adaptation, Ralph Macchio
(ISBN: 0785107495) 6/22/2000
18 copies-216 circulations
1 copy had 23 circulations

Catwoman: the Catfile, Jim Starlin
(ISBN: 1563892626) 7/20/2000
1 copy-26 circulations

Promotion

As with all new acquisitions, patrons need to first know about new materials before they can start checking them out. Here are some of the methods we used at Lubbock to publicize our graphic novel collections that may also work in your library.

1. Separate the collection into its own area. Don't shelve your collection with the rest of your books under the Dewey or Library of Congress classifications.
2. Make a display for the collection with colorful posters and signs so patrons will notice it. Patrons really do respond to the images, and your library staff will be surprised at just how popular a collection of graphic novels can become.
3. Promote the collection directly to individual library patrons. Whenever I see people looking at our collection, I approach them and ask who their favorite character is and then proceed to recommend some titles.
4. Let the media know about your collection and put up flyers in bookstores and comic shops. Once the word gets out, you will have regular graphic novel readers coming to your library looking for new titles and wondering what is good. In fact, I've personally gotten to know the faces and names of at least 20 people who regularly check graphic novels out from our collection. They enjoy coming in and talking about the latest books and trends in the comic world. They request new titles and, most importantly, are especially appreciative of the services you provide.
5. Cultivate a relationship with local comic shops and bookstores, which now carry many graphic novels. If you can get an account with them, it will be beneficial in two ways. First, most stores will allow tremendous discounts for libraries, and second, when a special item comes out

that the owner knows your patrons will want, s/he may order some extra copies for the you. This helps your library keep current with the newest releases. Comic distributors, such as Diamond, encourage libraries to become involved with their local comic shop. The local comic shop here in Lubbock, Star Books and Comics, has been one of our library's most outspoken graphic novel program supporters. We've developed a mutually beneficial relationship with the owner who has on occasion special ordered items which are not usually available through traditional vendors.

6. Highlight the collection on your website. The Lubbock library system brought attention to its collection through our catalog. If you go to our web page at library.ci.lubbock.tx.us/opac/, you'll see:



If you click on "Graphic Novels: Your favorite comics all grown up," you'll see that we have categorized the items by selected characters and by year within the two main comics companies, DC and Marvel. We even have a section to search for comic-related videos:

[BACK to Table of Contents](#)



Resources

There are a number of print and Internet resources available to help your library start and keep up to date with a graphic novel collection. The monthly print magazine, *Previews*,

published by Diamond distributors, lists titles and provides synopses of upcoming releases two months in advance. I would urge your library to subscribe to this publication to stay abreast of trends in graphic literature. In addition, they have a website specifically for libraries who collect graphic novels: bookshelf.diamondcomics.com/. To find the latest news and reviews, go to www.amazon.com, which will be of particular help when you are trying to build a collection. You can do a keyword search for titles like Batman or X-Men, or you can search by publisher (e.g., Marvel, Image, Dark Horse, DC, Humanoids, and others). It is very helpful to see what a certain company has in print that you may want to order. Other helpful websites include:

- www.e-lubbock.com/star/ontheshelf.shtml, a local resource, which lists upcoming releases weekly, by publishing company;
- ublib.buffalo.edu/libraries/units/lml/Collections/docs/comics.html, excellent Buffalo University comic resource site, which includes links to history, reviews, and publishers;
- my.voyager.net/~sraiteri/comicslinks.htm, a website put together by librarian Steve Raiteri that provides links to comic resources and is a useful reference tool; and
- library.ci.lubbock.tx.us/bridwell/programs/comics.htm, a website which was used for a program at Lubbock City Library system for “Comics On the Internet.”

Some print sources you might want to consult include Stephen Weiner’s (no relation) *101 Best Graphic Novels* and Joss O’ Kelly’s *Son of Invisible Art: Graphic Novels in Libraries*. Both books are rich sources of information on graphic novels.

Recommended Titles for a Starter Collection

This is by no means a definitive list, and it does reflect my own “favorites list.” There are many other wonderful titles that could benefit your library. However, the titles listed below provide a good starting point for building a collection.

Bendis, Brian Michael, Bill Jemas, Mark Bagley, Art Thibert, and Dan Panosian. *Ultimate Spider-Man: Power and Responsibility*. New York: Marvel Comics, 2001. ISBN: 078510786x. (A retelling of the Spider-Man story for contemporary times. Critically acclaimed by *Wizard* and *Entertainment Weekly*. One of the best-written and thoroughly enjoyable graphic novels ever published.)

Brevoort, Tom and Glen Greenbert eds. Introduction by Roy Thomas. *The Golden Age of Marvel Comics, volume I*. New York: Marvel Comics, 1997. ISBN:0785105646. (Reprints of original comics from the forties and fifties when Marvel was Timely comics. Characters include Captain America, Sub-Mariner, Human Torch, The Vision, and Black Knight.)

Busiek, Kurt, Roger Stern, Carlos Pacheco, Jesus Merinso, Steve Oliff, and Richard Starkings. *Avengers Forever*. New York: Marvel Comics, 2000. ISBN: 0785107568. (The Avengers go through the past and the future to save their ally Rick Jones. This is a direct sequel to the *Avengers: The Kree-Skrull War*, ISBN: 0785107452.)

Busiek, Kurt, Brent E. Anderson, Richard Starkings, John Gausshell, Steve Buccellato, Electric Crayon, and Alex Ross. *Astro City: Life in the Big City*. New York: DC Comics, 1996. ISBN: 156389551x. (One of the most unique superhero series published in comics today taking place in the mythical Astro City. Characters include the Samaritan, Silver Agent, and Crackerjack. Other titles include *The Tarnished Angel*, ISBN: 15639663x, and *Family Album*, ISBN: 1563895528.)

Davis, Alan, Terry Kavan, Howard Mackie, Breet Booth, Jeff Johnson, Adam Kubert, Brandon Peterson, Tom Raney, Batt, Scott Hanna, Dan Panosian, Cam Smith, and Tim Townsend. *Astonishing X-Men: Deathwish*. New York: Marvel Comics, 2000. ISBN-0785107541. (The X-Men’s mentor Xavier turns on his X-Men, and the team splinters.)

DeFalco, Tom, Pat Olliffe, Ron Frenz, Al Williamson, Bill Sienkiewicz, Janice Chiang, and Chris Eliopoulos. *Spider-Girl*. New York: Marvel Comics, 2001. ISBN: 0785108157. (Peter Parker’s daughter, May Day, inherits his spider powers and follows in her father’s footsteps. One of the most well-written graphic novels ever published.)

Jurgens, Dan, Andy Park, Jonathan Sibal, and Jonathan D. Smith. *Tomb Raider: Mystic Artifacts*. Orange, Cal: Top Cow Productions: Image Comics, 2001. ISBN: 1582402027. (The further adventures of the popular video game and movie character, Laura Croft.)

- Kirby, Jack and Joe Simon. *Captain America: The Classic Years, volume 2*. New York: Marvel Comics, 2000. ISBN-0785107436. (A wonderful collection reprinting nos. 6-10 of the original Captain America comic series from the 1940s. The first volume is out of print.)
- Lee, Stan and Jack Kirby. *The Essential Captain America, volume I*. New York: Marvel Comics, 2001. ISBN: 0785107401. (A black and white reprint of stories from *Tales of Suspense 59-99* and *Captain America 100-102*. The *Essential* series provide a very economical way to get continuity of stories. Other titles in the series include Thor, X-Men, Spider Man, Silver Surfer, Dr. Strange, Conan, Iron Man, Ant Man, Howard the Duck, Fantastic Four, and Hulk.)
- Lee, Stan with Scott Williams, Alex Sinclair, M. Uslan, G. Colan, T. Palmer, and L. Hindziarski. *Just Imagine Stan Lee's Wonder Woman*. New York: D. C. Comics, 2001. ISBN: 56389841. (A retelling of the Wonder Woman origin story with WW as a South American Indian goddess.)
- Micheline, David, John Romita, Jr. and Bob Layton. *Power of Iron Man*. New York: Marvel Comics, 1989. ISBN: 087135599X. (One of the most intense stories ever written in graphic literature. Shows Iron Man's alter ego Tony Stark's descent into alcoholism.)
- Millar, Mark, Adam Kubert, Andy Kubert, Art Thibert, Danny Mike, Richard Isamove, Brian Haberlin, Richard Starkings, and Wes Abbott. *Ultimate X-Men: The Tomorrow People*. New York: Marvel Comics, 2001. ISBN-0785107886. (A modern retelling of the X-Men's origins. Wolverine is one of the original X-Men in this story.)
- Niven, Larry (Introduction). *Mystery in Space: Pulp Fiction Library*. New York: DC Comics, 1999. ISBN: 1563894947. (A fun collection of science fiction comic reprints spanning the forties through the eighties.)
- Priest, Christopher, Mark Texeira, Vince Evans, and Joe Quesada. *Black Panther*. New York: Marvel Comics, 2001. ISBN: 0785107894. (The critically acclaimed series featuring the very first African American superhero, Black Panther.)
- Ross, Alex, Jim Krueger, John Paul Lean, Bill Reinhold, Todd Klein, Matt Hollingsworth, Melissa Edwards, and James Sinclair. *Earth X: The Collected Edition*. New York: Marvel Comics, 2000. ISBN: 075810755x. (One of the most original collections ever published combining both graphic texts with written narrative. Picture the Marvel Universe far into the future where Spider Man and Captain America are in their golden years. Makes extended use of the character Machine Man X-51.)
- Toth, Alex, E. Nelson Bridwell *et al.* *Superfriends*. New York: DC Comics, 2001. ISBN: 1563897164. (A collection based on the 1970s' television show.)
- Vietch, Tom, Cam Kennedy, Dave Dorman, and Todd Klein. *Star Wars Dark Empire, volumes I and II*. Milwaukee. Dark Horse Comics, 1995, 1996. ISBN: 1569710732 (vol. I) 156971194 (vol. II). (An epic story taking place right after the *Return of the Jedi* movie where Luke goes to the "Dark Side.")
- Wolfman, Marv, George Perez, Dick Giordano, Mike Decarlo, Jerry Ordway, Anthony Tollin, Carl Gafford, Tom McCraw, and John Costanza. *Crisis on Infinite Earths*. New York: D.C. Comics, 2000. ISBN: 1563897504. (The series that shook the comic world in which major heroes die, and others are drastically changed.) ★

Robert G. Weiner is a reference librarian at the Mahon Library in Lubbock. He gives special thanks to Ed Veal, Robert Mora, and the Graphic Novels in Libraries email list for their assistance with this project. A special thank you to Jane Clausen.

Bibliography

- Diamond Comic Distributors. *Previews*. (Published 12 times a year by Diamond Comic Distributors, 1966 Greenspring Drive, Suite 300, Timonium, MD 21093.)
- Hundley, Kimberly. "Graphic Novels: Comics Format Gains Strength in Library Market." *Today's Librarian*. July 2001: 12-15.
- Murray, Doug, Michael Golden, and Larry Hama. *The 'Nam*. New York: Marvel Comics, 1999. ISBN: 0785107185.
- O' Kelly, Joss. *Son of Invisible Art: Graphic Novels for Libraries*. Aylesbury: Library and Information Service for Schools, 2001. ISBN: 0860596052.
- Sanderson, Peter. *Marvel Universe*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1996. ISBN: 0810981718.
- Weiner, Stephen. *101 Best Graphic Novels*. New York: NBM, 2001. ISBN: 1561632848.

FROM THE TRENCHES: *Library Leaders* on TIF

TIF and the Texas Library Future HAROLD BILLINGS

Since the publication of the fall issue of the *Texas Library Journal*, I have received numerous comments about the state of electronic resources and technology in Texas. In particular, library leaders throughout the state have articulated a concern about the effect the changing context for library services and uncertain future of funding for electronic resources and infrastructure may have on all types of libraries.

The series of commentaries that follow focus on the challenges library leaders envision as libraries, along with public and higher educational institutions, face the potential sunset of the Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund (TIF) in the near future. The articles discuss the need to re-evaluate the ways libraries measure their effectiveness, advocate the importance of continued state investment in our digital future, and understand the relationship between libraries and TIF.

Interestingly, as these library leaders comment on the challenges of providing (and advocating for) electronic resources both as a cohesive library community and within their own library settings, they anchor their observations in one unassailable conclusion: Texas libraries are connected by and to TIF. To neglect one is to neglect the other.

Gloria Meraz, *Editor*

The importance of the Fall 2001 issue of the *Texas Library Journal* cannot be overstated. Containing as it does a description of the current state of digital library services in Texas and the role that several organizations continue to play in the success thus far achieved, this issue needs to be placed in the hands of every legislator and other appropriate leaders across the State. Every librarian and anyone else who has any responsibility for library safekeeping in their hands should study the content of this carefully.

Unfortunately, what may be missed in this group of excellent articles is a message that deserves greater magnification. The future of Texas libraries is becoming inextricably tied to the Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund and the information-supporting structure that it has thus far helped build. Without widespread support for its current programs, and its re-establishment in coming years, the infrastructure built thus far might collapse like an uncompleted bridge.

The seriousness of this and other issues that do not appear to be on the radar screens of many librarians cloud the larger picture of how TIF and Texas libraries may fare in an extremely uncertain future.

It is disappointing, but not surprising, that a number of our librarians and leaders in other areas appear not to grasp the full scope of the major challenges that lie ahead for our libraries and institutions, or the reality of the political situation within which the TIF Board must function. These pressures apply to the stability of TIF funding for current programs and the prospects for an ongoing TIF-based role in telecommunication foundations for Texas libraries, health institutions, and higher education.

The future of TIF, and even its present resource base, seems clearly at risk, and other major political, fiscal, and educational issues at work in Texas heighten that concern.

Librarians must understand that the state is going to establish new funding models and accountability requirements for our libraries and for higher education in general—accountability measures that we have not had to meet in the past, ones based on outcomes rather than output. While many state agencies and institutions have met Mr. Outcome in recent years, our libraries generally have not had to address accountability in that way.

The State will obviously take a hard look at the “like Topsy-grown” funding streams that higher education has been creating in order to achieve even minimally sufficient revenue to maintain their operations and programs. We can expect a serious effort by the State to rationalize tuition, fees, income from endowments, the return of indirect costs, direct service charges, and other funding mechanisms—as they presently exist in so many different models throughout our academic systems.

The interests of higher education in Texas could best be served by the delegation of these responsibilities to the boards of each institution or educational system.

[BACK to Table of Contents](#)

The State could adopt additional requirements for funding justification and its related accountability, and perhaps a much different approach to present formula funding. It is completely unlikely that there will ever be a return to those now almost-golden days when the State dictated that dedicated library funding would increase by some known percentage each year, even if full-formula funding was never actually achieved. The State will not do it; and our presidents will continue to want the fuller freedom they have at present to allocate revenue from the broadest possible pools of money based on total, local institutional priorities.

At the same time that our Legislature and its committees will be looking at these issues—while they debate a new tax structure for Texas—our own institutions should be looking for more creative mechanisms to enlarge and manage the total resource base of our institutions, including the possible privatization of some programs and their funding flows, the construction of private foundations, as well as re-engineering local operations and educational programs. Much of this will likely be challenged by the State.

Recognition of the means by which TIF funding and strategic partnerships have leveraged library resources to promote improved information access progress in Texas, at lower costs per information unit delivered, is a key to whether there will be further support and further urging toward greater efficiencies through resource sharing.

The building up of information sharing through the new technologies has been a hallmark of this new century. The State will demand more. We should all expect pressure to construct new cooperative programs across type-of-library borders in order to gain new funding. We should anticipate requirements for the provision of matching funds from every agency that dispenses grants for library activities.

Libraries in Texas are fortunate that they have a strong Texas State Library and the Texas Education Agency to speak up on their behalf and the presence of programs that exemplify the virtues of collaboration. The success of partnerships among libraries allied in such efforts as TexShare and the UT System Library Cooperative Program, as examples, will attract additional support, but will also have the Legislature, Regents, the Higher Education Coordinating Board, and others promoting even more of this good thing, on a broader basis. An

alliance of libraries in higher educational systems—an alliance of systems—could well be urged in the next few years. Our present governing systems of higher education may not remain sacred.

How will our libraries react to these opportunities and pressures? Who will speak up for our libraries when questions and new possibilities both arrive, or when the future of TIF sees sunset, and our accounts are measured by outcomes that will be difficult to define and express? School libraries and public libraries have bodies that can help address these needs, but there is no separate formal agency for academic libraries. The success of a single mechanism to combine the interests of all types of libraries into joint programs that assist every citizen of Texas is hard to imagine given the present scene.

Might it be an umbrella of library voices and influence that overrides the “Library of Texas” (LoT) initiative, however large or strong a full embodiment of that instrument becomes revealed? Or might that concept be enlarged and made even bolder than it now stands? At present, the LoT appears to be a service concept rather than an organizational one—especially an organizational partnership that can shout the information and technological needs of all libraries in Texas, including the promotion of future funding for TIF. Without TIF’s leadership and its funding support, the necessary telecommunications infrastructure is unlikely to ever be fully constructed, the information highway kept in repair, or the training components and quality content developed that TIF now so wisely includes in its projected sphere of funding assistance.

There does not appear to be an Arthur of legend waiting to be born again to solve these problems for us, to help promote TIF, influence its programs, and maneuver our libraries through these other uncertain waters. It looks like we must take them on ourselves—perhaps within the arms of the Texas Library Association, perhaps through a rejuvenation of the Texas Council of State University Libraries and its community college and private academic counterparts to join the voices of public and school libraries—but with much more recognition and a greater understanding of these many issues than seems now apparent.

Harold Billings is director of General Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.

The State's Ongoing RoleBY RHODA GOLDBERG

"We must all hang together, or assuredly we will certainly hang separately."

Benjamin Franklin

Harold Billings is absolutely correct when he concludes "...the future of Texas libraries has become inextricably tied to the Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund..." While this statement is certainly proven by the fact that the state's major library resource-sharing programs (TexShare and the Texas Library Connection) and many library telecommunications infrastructure needs are funded by TIF, the connection between TIF and libraries speaks to a deeper, though less obvious link—that of the state's role in libraries across Texas.

While all types of libraries continue to fight for increased state funding for library services, the one area that has received direct investment across all types of libraries is technology and telecommunications services. Through TIF, the state accepted responsibility for a critical need in our state; and, for libraries, this state mandate has meant an unprecedented infusion of funding both for telecommunications infrastructure and technology and also for electronic content in the form of TLC and TexShare.

I cannot begin to imagine the impact of losing access to the TexShare databases, of having to scale down resources, or of taking from an already overburdened budget to replace electronic resources. As a public librarian, I will not find an alternative to providing the roughly \$900,000 worth of databases available through TexShare with "other budget resources." The only option is a drastic reduction and regression of services, say going back to the early 1990s.

What is equally as alarming as the prospect of a sudden end to TIF support is the withdrawal of the state's most tangible commitment to the digital future of citizens. Make no mistake, losing funding for the resources and infrastructure our patrons have come to expect would be disastrous; but, losing the progress that libraries have fought so hard to gain would literally set us back to the 1980s.

Over the last two decades, libraries have made fundamental progress in two key areas: collaboration

and, through TIF, establishment of a concrete relationship between the state's vision for its own development and the role of libraries. Cooperation among such numerous and diverse institutions such as libraries is astonishing. We in the library world seem relatively unaware of this feat, but how many other examples of hundreds or thousands (in the case of TLC) of separate institutions successfully sharing resources does Texas have? As librarians, we all know the logistical mountains that had to be climbed, but the point is that our users now enjoy seamless access to an enormous "pool" of resources. That is monumental progress by anyone's standard.

Through libraries' deployment of advanced telecommunications services and electronic content, we have fulfilled the state's mandate not only because "that is what libraries do," but also because we were acknowledged in TIF's enabling legislation as a group of institutions charged with a particular state mission *and* given state resources to achieve those ends.

We cannot lose that relationship. We cannot lose that funding. We know that infrastructure must be updated continually and that electronic resources must be accessible in perpetuity. TIF is not only a thing—it represents a state of mind.

Our challenge in the immediate future is to make this case to decision-makers with whom we have contact. We must address some hard questions. What will happen if the present allocation structure is changed in the next legislative session? What will happen if TIF is not extended? Will databases that make information resources available to all Texans, whether the library they use is a small public library or a large university like The University of Texas, no longer be available? How will public schools be able to provide databases to students across Texas? Where will the funding for training staff on how to use databases effectively come from?

Librarians and their supporters must redouble their efforts in the areas of awareness, advocacy, and cooperation to insure that Texas libraries continue to receive the financial support necessary for maintaining and increasing access to electronic resources. We must demonstrate that the outcome of TIF funding and cooperative programs is a better-informed Texan who can compete readily in the global economy.

[BACK to Table of Contents](#)

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission and the Texas Education Agency must lead an effective awareness campaign that demonstrates the value of TIF library funding. This campaign needs to concentrate on different audiences—from local and state elected officials to school superintendents and school board members. Other groups like the Higher Education Coordinating Board, the original governing agency for TexShare, need to see how TIF funding has expanded TexShare offerings to higher education institutions.

The TIF Task Force of the Texas Library Association has begun to address these issues. TLA, working with TEA and TSLAC, must devote resources and energy to the task of both maintaining and improving the telecommunications infrastructure and digital resources that are so vital to library users in the beginning of the 21st Century. Most importantly, though, librarians should educate users about the library services they value and help promote the need for continued funding for electronic resources and the continuation of TIF and its commitment to libraries.

Rhoda Goldberg is the assistant director of the Harris County Public Library and chairs the TLA TIF Taskforce.

Electronic Infrastructure in Public Education CAROLINE KIENZLE

The continuation of state funding for electronic resources and the Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund is critical. Since the establishment of TIF, which led to the Texas Library Connection, Texas has enjoyed an electronic infrastructure that allows schools in Van Horn and Highland Park access to the same wealth of resources. This service is both cost effective and efficient. But to assume, as some lawmakers may well do, that the provision of statewide databases represents the final chapter of TIF funding for libraries is the same as believing that the mandate to deploy advanced telecommunication services to Texans has been fulfilled. This assumption is wrong. The state mandate has not been fulfilled—how can it be?

Remember when not too long ago we thought, “If only we had an Apple 2E lab, we’d be able to really teach

technology.” Remember when our goal was a lab, or two labs, or a computer in every classroom, or media retrieval, or a distance-learning lab? Do we really think we know the future? Haven’t we learned that technology defines its own future? Some school districts used TIF for basics, such as connectivity, while others used it for things like distance learning. Shouldn’t the school districts that are now getting connected and online be given the chance when they are ready to have distance-learning labs? Advances in technology seem virtually boundless and so must be our ability to provide that technology to our students and library users.

Getting connected and having resources characterize only the first stage of technology deployment in schools, the initial goal that fueled TIF funding. But other challenges—many we have not yet even conceived—await us. One challenge that some of us are already grappling with is how to connect our students to resources from their home. In my district, the majority of people live at or below the poverty level. Just yesterday, a student at our new Academy, where every student receives a laptop, asked the librarian after she completed a lesson on databases available to students from home, “Miss, what if you don’t have Internet at home?” Recognition of that gap in access needs to shape the questions we bring to the Legislature: What do we tell students who are eager to continue their work from home but are denied access because of poverty? Don’t we need to connect them too? Don’t we still have a state commitment to make libraries accessible in as many ways as we can?

In Irving we can imagine the benefit to our community of having an Irving portal. We could overcome language and cultural barriers, unite our community, and bring parents into the schools as true partners. To think that the telecommunications deployment job is done—that TIF can go away in four years—is outrageous. We have only just begun; we must bring a sense of urgency to all stakeholders in the State of Texas. Schools offer connections that help children move beyond their neighborhoods into the larger world. They cannot take that journey without funding. That responsibility is one of the most urgent needs in our state.

We have built networks, selected quality resources, and begun the job of educating teachers on the use of technology in teaching and learning. As Texas becomes a minority majority state, the importance of making parents their child’s first teacher becomes a critical foundation for the overall education of the state’s residents. How do we reach parents who are newly arrived in this country and who must overcome language and other barriers? Technology is proving to be one of

[BACK to Table of Contents](#)

the great levelers in education. But to fulfill that equity of education, we must first offer equity in access.

Today, in my district, all of our schools are connected. We are fortunate enough to have a robust network, computers for staff, students, classrooms, and libraries. Our district technology plan calls for every student to have a digital device: for high school students, it will be a laptop; for middle school students, it might be a handheld device or a laptop; and for elementary age children, it will be something else. Once students have a device, we must begin plans to guarantee access to resources 24/7. Our vision in the Irving ISD is to connect the home and the parent to create a community of learners. We have an opportunity to continue in this exciting path but only with the kind of financial resources we have had available through TIF.

Simply put, we are just not done. To say that TIF goes away in four years without some other comparable source is unthinkable. We have only just begun with the infrastructure and resources now available. We have just started to understand the need—and the possibilities. If we cannot continue this work in the future, we will be facing our own versions of the Apple2Es of the 21st century.

Caroline Kienzle is the director of library services at the Irving Independent School District.

Electronic Resources in Academic Libraries.....BY JOE DAHLSTROM

The electronic content articles in the fall 2001 issue of *Texas Library Journal* did an excellent job of documenting the history of TexShare, the Texas Library Connection (TLC), and the recent major role of the Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund (TIF) Board in providing start-up funding for the “Library of Texas” (LoT) initiative. The issue raised in these articles on continued funding for statewide database licensing is *the* major question that should concern not only librarians, but also *all* Texans.

From an academic perspective, electronic databases have shifted in a short eight years from a useful *supplement* to library collections to the *core* of many libraries’ research resources. For libraries serving distance-learning students in off-campus or online courses, remote access to electronic resources is the

primary method of providing those students with access to research materials. When given a choice, many on-campus students, whether residential or commuting, prefer to conduct research from places outside of the library (e.g., home, dormitory room, campus computer lab, workplace, etc.).

Without the TexShare/LoT databases, few of us could afford even a small portion of the electronic resources we currently provide. What will happen in four years, when our monthly telephone bills no longer show a small amount collected for the Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund and the TIF Board is scheduled to fade away into state agency history? It is unlikely that the legislature will support statewide database licensing at its current level from general revenue funds. With the current direction of the economy, general revenue funding is an extremely remote possibility; even with an improvement in the economy, the picture does not look much brighter.

The only workable solution is to educate the legislature and all Texans about the importance of continued life for the Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund Board. In addition to the database issue, I cannot foresee at time when our telecommunications infrastructure will not need ongoing support to keep up with new developments in technology.

How do we develop a plan and proceed to educate policy makers about the importance of extending the life of the TIF Board? The continuation of statewide database licensing is vital to higher education and to all the citizens of Texas. The key to accomplishing this is the Texas Library Association and its legislative efforts. TLA must take the leadership role and secure involvement from other groups, including the Texas Council of State University Librarians (TCSUL), the Texas Council of Community/Junior College Librarians (TCC/JCL), the Texas Council of Independent University Librarians (TICUL), the Texas Association of School Library Administrators (TASLA), the Texas Municipal Library Directors (TMLD), local boards, governing bodies, friends groups, and any other group of librarians and/or library supporters that we can identify.

Without the continuation of TIF, TexShare and the Library of Texas may become answers in a Texas Trivial Pursuit game of the future. It will be remembered fondly at TLA conferences when participants in the TLA History Committee’s War Stories program begin with “Remember when...” ✪

Joe Dahlstrom is director of libraries at Victoria College and the University of Houston –Victoria.

[BACK to Table of Contents](#)

Ruminations About Books: Past, Present, and Future

BY BONNIE JUERGENS

This article began as a presentation I gave at the Northeast Texas Library System (NETLS) 2001 annual meeting, a celebration honoring volunteers in public libraries. I subsequently welcomed the opportunity to convert my presentation into an article for the *Texas Library Journal* as we celebrate the centennial year of the Texas Library Association. I've had books on my mind quite a bit in this era when some folks predict so eagerly their demise. What "demise," I ask myself, are they actually predicting? Certainly not the demise of the *content* we're accustomed to obtaining from books. But is the physical format alone the item in question?

I believe citizens are so willing to contribute time and money to library endeavors for two reasons: their recognition of the value of libraries to our society and their own love of books. Will the second reason disappear?

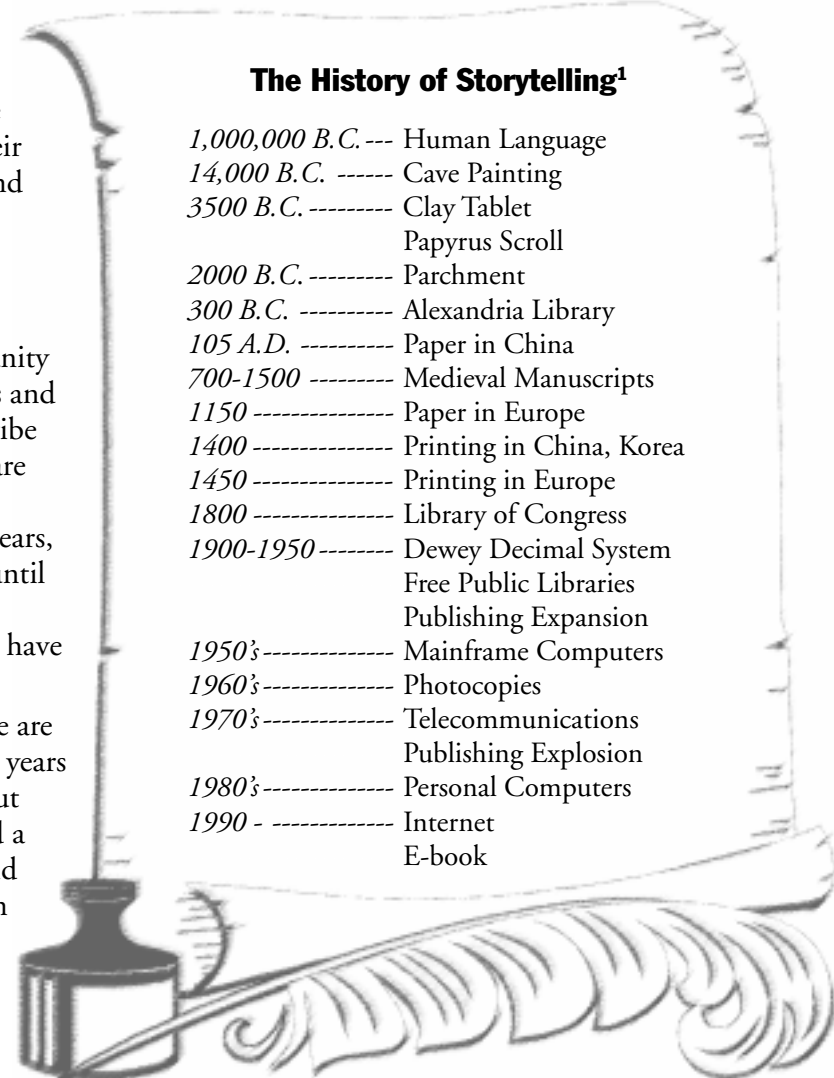
Communication and Writing

One of the most defining characteristics of humanity is our ability to communicate about complex things and in complex ways. In that context, which I will describe as *storytelling*, I pose the question: How important are books? Recent history shows them to be critically important for mass communication. For over 500 years, books have informed and entertained us. Literacy, until recently most closely associated with books, is so important to the advancement of humanity that we have been called the *literate species*.

And yet, as we look back in time – WAY back, we are reminded that humans spent their first four million years without language and another 986,000 years without written communication. Cave paintings represented a graphical form of storytelling that survived flood and pestilence but was neither detailed nor portable. Ten thousand years later, clay tablets improved on both counts and were used primarily to support commerce. It took another fifteen hundred years for society to produce something we consider to be

literature. *Gilgamesh*, circa 2000 B.C., is a story about a hero descended from the only survivors of a great flood. Gilgamesh became obsessed with death and obtained a plant that could guarantee eternal life, only to have it stolen by a serpent. Old Testament parallels abound. The story was told and therefore preserved on 12 clay tablets.² About the same time *Gilgamesh* was being saved for posterity, scribes in Asia were writing on parchment and those in Egypt were creating *The Book of the Dead* on papyrus scrolls.

The History of Storytelling¹



1,000,000 B.C. ---	Human Language
14,000 B.C. -----	Cave Painting
3500 B.C. -----	Clay Tablet
	Papyrus Scroll
2000 B.C. -----	Parchment
300 B.C. -----	Alexandria Library
105 A.D. -----	Paper in China
700-1500 -----	Medieval Manuscripts
1150 -----	Paper in Europe
1400 -----	Printing in China, Korea
1450 -----	Printing in Europe
1800 -----	Library of Congress
1900-1950 -----	Dewey Decimal System
	Free Public Libraries
	Publishing Expansion
1950's -----	Mainframe Computers
1960's -----	Photocopies
1970's -----	Telecommunications
	Publishing Explosion
1980's -----	Personal Computers
1990 - -----	Internet
	E-book

[BACK to Table of Contents](#)

Compiling the Written Word

The famous first library at Alexandria didn't appear on the scene until 1700 years later. Like compiling of *The Oxford English Dictionary*³ some 2100 years later and half a world away, collection development for the Alexandria Library was a communal activity, dependent upon contributions from throughout the known world. The overall communal and contributory approaches applied to both the world's first great library and the English language's first great dictionary remind me of the history of WorldCat⁴, the modern world's largest and most impressive union catalog, a feat of which American librarians can be exceedingly proud.

The library at Alexandria existed for 700 years – longer than we have had the advantages of the printing press. And in Europe, starting about 700 A.D., the prevailing literacy technology for approximately 800 years was hand-written manuscripts. Illuminated in some cultures and painstakingly created in all, manuscripts exhibited three primary characteristics: 1) the creation of each was laborious and slow; 2) each became a forum for artistic expression; and 3) each copy offered an opportunity for the copyist to exercise great power – the power of revision, reinterpretation, even overt distortion. Hmmm, that sounds very similar to the concerns librarians express about authentication in today's Internet environment!

The power exercised by scribes in a largely illiterate society was described recently on National Public Radio (NPR). A Mayan scholar from Ohio State University was quoted on NPR's *On the Media* on July 29, 2001, describing the amazing power scribes held in the Mayan society. When scribes fell out of favor or royal power changed hands, elaborate public ceremonies were held to publicize the pulling of fingernails and breaking of fingers to control the creation and dissemination of information – a startling form of censorship for today's librarians to contemplate!

Thus, written communication progressed from clay tablets and pounded papyrus reeds to paper and, in 1450, the invention of Gutenberg's printing press. The printing press represented a revolutionary technology that contributed greatly to the fomenting of actual revolutions. Contemplate the impact Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Mao's little red book, and de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* had on the Civil War, China, and the sexual revolution.

Books and Learning

Now contemplate the impact on learning and even thinking that book-based storytelling has had on humans. I am not referring here to the much-touted qualities of affordability, transportability, and convenience, all of which I agree are important, but all of which, I believe, can be matched and enhanced by the coming communications technologies. The qualities of book-based storytelling I'm focusing on include: 1) linear progression; 2) creation by individuals; and 3) the use of words to engage the brain. These qualities literally shape the human intellectual act of learning from the content of books. The *one-two-three-ness* of chapters and *a-b-c-ness* of indexing, the logical and essentially *linear* progression of the story that makes order out of chaos are definitional qualities of the book. How much of today's linear approach to communicating can be attributed to the influence of the book over the past 500 years? How much of the way humans even *think* stems from such externally imposed structure?

I first became interested in this topic in 1984, when I was conducting a computer literacy program for library faculty at Texas A&M University and discovered *Mindstorms*, by Seymour Papert. Papert stated, "...I believe that certain uses of very powerful computational technology ... can provide children with new possibilities for learning and thinking ... working with computers can have a powerful influence on how people think."⁵

Books tend to be created by individuals or groups of individuals, leading to clearly defined crediting conventions such as the attribution of *main entry* in librarianship and *citation* among scholars. Books depend primarily upon words to engage the brain. Yes, there are picture books and comic books and most recently children's books with sounds and even scratch-and-sniff stickers! But most of the books employing the senses of sight, sound, and smell still rely on words to tie it all together, to "paint a picture" that tells a story. The use of words to create pictures in the reader's mind is perhaps a point best driven home by the familiar comment "the book was lots better than the movie."

But times are definitely changing. Linton Weeks, in his lively series of three articles about the future of books in April 2001's *Washington Post*, states that "The power of the book – to change a life or a country – has been diluted by films and television and newspapers and radio and the Internet."⁶ Weeks cites Professor David Orr's

commentary from the August 1999 issue of *Conservation Biology*: "...the human vocabulary is shrinking. By one reckoning...the working vocabulary of 14-year-olds in America has plummeted from 25,000 words in 1950 to 10,000 words today."⁷ What does this mean for a society that has long asserted language is what makes us human?

Storytelling in a New Age

Whatever their vocabulary level, America's young people are exhibiting creativity and intellectual skills very differently from earlier generations. *Library Hotline* on September 17, 2001, reported that "...nine in ten school age children...had access to a computer in 2000."⁸

Thomas Paine said every generation has the right to define its own culture, and it is abundantly clear that today's technology is helping today's generation *redefine storytelling*. Gaming is the cultural engagement of choice by young people today. Interactivity is a must. Video games seem to be setting the standard for engaging young people's imaginations and creativity.

The future of storytelling appears to contain characteristics exactly opposite those of the book. Non-linear story progression is both comprehensible and compelling to today's young people. Collaborative rather than individual creation is becoming the norm. Weeks quotes Robert Coover, an English professor at Brown University considered to be the godfather of hypertext fiction, to help explain this: "There is a voracious appetite among the present generation of readers for lots of bells and whistles, and the numbing variety of new tools required to produce these hypermedia artifacts encourages more collaboration, as writers join together to create works with designers, composers, graphic artists, filmmakers and other writers."⁹

The third characteristic of books, that of relying primarily upon words to tell the story, simply does not apply in the new environment. Multiple senses must be

engaged to comprehend the story. Sven Birkerts, in his beautifully written and thoughtful book *The Gutenberg Elegies*, speaks despairingly of the "...millennial transformation of society,"¹⁰ saying, "We are poised at the brink of what may prove to be a kind of species mutation."¹¹ Weeks posits a "Post-Book Literacy in which reading plays a smaller part. The new multimedia literacy will require the quick and sure assimilation of – and response to – fast-flowing images and sounds and sensory assaults. People will be valued for multiprocessing, not focusing on one page of text after another after another."¹²

Think about the television advertisements aimed at young people today. They are characterized by a wild juxtaposition of colors, lots of seemingly unrelated sound, and motion, motion, motion. Frequently my husband and I turn to each other after observing such commercials, asking, "Did you pick up on what that was even advertising?" We don't *think* in the way the intended recipients of today's advertising messages do.

Check out some of the online, collaborative e-publishing cited by Weeks in his *Washington Post* series. These include *Journal E*, *The Story of You*, and *Sunshine*. And think about the array of toys already available with which we can experiment in the brave new storytelling world evolving before our eyes. Okay, so many of these are currently clunky, awkward, heavy, expensive, or limited in other ways. All that will change. What won't change is the need for librarians and information specialists to help consumers of information make sense of it all. As librarians, we know that our tools change, our collections change, our settings change. Our basic purposes do not change. They are the same today as they were 100 years ago when the Texas Library Association came into being.

Revolutionizing the Reading Experience Today...

- BookBuilder
- E-dition
- Everbooks
- Fatbrain
- InstaBook
- *Journal E*
- Lightning Print
- Microsoft Reader
- NetLibrary
- PalmPilot
- RCA e-book
- Rocket e-books
- Softbooks
- Sprout

Basic Purposes of Libraries:

Now and Future

- Organize / Store / Retrieve Information
- Distribute information / ideas / entertainment
- Facilitate learning
- Turn data into information into knowledge
- Support values of a free society

What Lies Ahead...

Here is my vision of the future of the book. Handheld readers will be slim, lightweight, flexible, and wonderfully convenient. Wall screens will be ubiquitous. The user will control where and how the desired content is displayed. Since holography will be so highly advanced that the individual at the other end of our telephone conversation looks three-dimensionally lifelike, the visuals we see as part of our “reading” experience will be equally three-dimensional. The user will control the size of the display and, within that, the size of individual elements of content. The user will determine whether information is to be received silently, via written characters and pictures, or orally, in a user-selected human voice.

Content itself will be available in a wide variety of media, from thumbnail-sized discs or marbles that can be collected, carried, and loaded into readers to the ever-expanding wireless networks on which one can bounce effortlessly from one source to another. Book lovers will pay significant prices to collect books the way antique lovers collect antiques today. Beautifully tooled and decorated leather boxes will store particularly treasured electronic copies the way beautifully bound books are preferred by some today. As for content, it too will be user-selected on a spectrum from print alone to modern hypermedia productions, but it will still be storytelling. “Reading” as we know it today will be supplemented with other sensory elements to convey knowledge to the brain.

I will end by returning to the question I posed in my introduction. Will “the love of books” disappear? There is the love of the *content* of books, and there is the love of *books*. For those for whom the two are inseparable, the answer must be no, the love of books won’t disappear; but perhaps eventually all the people who love books in the traditional form will disappear. I think that could take a very, very, long time. Weeks asks: “If it has no pages, just a magic tablet that emits sounds, sights, smells and tastes, is a book still a book?”¹³ For me, the answer is yes. I can accept “a substantial compilation of ideas or actions commonly displayed on a viewing device” as the future definition of “book.” As a librarian, I must be a philistine: I’ve always loved the content more than the package. ☛

**Bonnie Juergens is the executive director
of Amigos Library Services.**

Notes

1. The dates in this chart come from 1) The New Columbia Encyclopedia; 2) the three-article series by Weeks, or 3) general knowledge of the author.
2. Contrary to the version given by Weeks in Part 1 of his series, this version is verified in the New Columbia Encyclopedia, page 1085.
3. Simon Winchester tells the fascinating story of the creation of the OED in his highly readable *The Professor and the Madman*.
4. WorldCat is the current name of the OCLC online union catalog.
5. Papert, pp 17-18 and 28
6. Weeks, Part 2, p 2 of 12
7. Weeks, Part 3, p 9 of 13
8. *Library Hotline*, pp 4-5
9. Weeks, Part 3, pp 4-5 of 13
10. Birkerts, pp 3-5
11. Ibid, p 31
12. Weeks, Part 3, pp 10-11 of 13
13. Weeks, Part 1, p 8 of 10

Bibliography

- Birkerts, Sven. *The Gutenberg Elegies: The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age*. Boston, MA: Faber and Faber, 1994.
- Harris, William H. and Judith S Levey, ed. *The New Columbia Encyclopedia*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1975.
- Journal E*. www.journale.com.
- Kurzweil, Raymond. *An Online Poetry Assistant: The Story of You* www.kurzweilcyberart.com.
- Papert, Seymour. *Mindstorms: Children, Computers, and Powerful Ideas*, New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1980.
- “Nine out of Ten Children Have Computer Access.” *Library Hotline* (September 17, 2001): 4-5.
- Rabyd, Bobby. *First Interactive Novel: Sunshine '69*. Sonicnet, 1996. www.sunshine69.com.
- Weeks, Linton. “The Last Book” parts 1 (“The End” April 24, 2001), 2 (“In the Beginning” April 25, 2001) and 3 (“The Story of You” April 26, 2001) in *The Washington Post*.
- Winchester, Simon. *The Professor and the Madman: A Tale of Murder, Insanity, and the Making of the Oxford English Dictionary*, New York: HarperPerennial, 1999.

Revising School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas

BY CHRISTINE MCNEW

Since the development of *School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas* in 1995, both national and state level school library standards have moved from quantitative to qualitative measures for determining library program development. In Texas, the context for these school standards has also changed, due in great part to the recent revision of certification requirements for school librarians. Accordingly, *Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas* is now being updated to reflect activities and resources in today's school libraries.

Members of the committees now revising the standards and guidelines hail from cities large and small from Pleasanton to Plano, San Antonio to Sugar Land, and El Paso to Houston; and much of their work is being conducted through teleconferences, email, electronic mail lists, and websites! Who is on these committees and what are they doing? You can read all about it, including minutes from the teleconferences, by visiting www.tsl.state.tx.us/ld/schoollibs/committees/index.html. And, you can provide your suggestions for needed revisions by subscribing to TSLSCHLIB (an electronic mail list) and posting your comments. To subscribe, send a message to listproc@link.tsl.state.tx.us. In the body of the e-mail, type "subscribe tslschlib firstname lastname." School librarians, library staff, teachers, school administrators, parents, and students may subscribe to this electronic mail list and post their comments on the standards.

When the 74th Legislature rewrote the Texas Education Code in 1995, Section 33.021 of SB 1 stated:

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission, in consultation with the State Board of Education, shall adopt standards for school library services. A school district shall consider the standards in developing, implementing, or expanding library services.

Accordingly, the Steering Committee includes Peggy Rudd and Christine McNew, Texas State Library; Anita Givens and Mary Lankford, Texas Education Agency; Barry Bishop, Spring Branch Independent School District; Julie Todaro, Austin Community College; Barbara Bertoldo, Alamo Heights High School; and JoAnne Moore, ESC 13.

The overarching goal of the committee's work is to revise current Texas school library standards to conform with:

- 1) The new State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) "Guidelines for Certification of Texas School Librarians";
- 2) The American Association of School Librarians (AASL) *Information Power*; and
- 3) Recommendations for revision based on the Texas Study on school libraries that was conducted last year for the Texas State Library;
- 4) Additional relevant state and national documents, including the State of Texas Master Plan for Educational Technology 2000-2003, and
- 5) Comments on needed revisions from librarians and administrators throughout the state.

This goal will be accomplished in accordance with the following vision and mission statement and core values that were developed by the advisory committee.

VISION OF TEXAS SCHOOL LIBRARIES

Texas school libraries provide a learning climate that fuels the spirit of inquiry and directs problem solving and creativity. Texans will have opportunities to become educated, informed, engaged citizens through the resources, services, and expertise provided by school librarians.

Mission

The mission of the school library program and school librarian is to ensure that students, teachers, administrators, and staff are effective users of ideas and information. This mission is accomplished by:

- Providing intellectual and physical access to materials in all formats;
- Providing instruction to foster competence and stimulate interest in reading, viewing, and using information and ideas;
- Collaborating with other educators to plan, design, teach, and evaluate information literacy learning experiences to meet the needs of all students; and
- Demonstrating effective leadership strategies in the

[BACK to Table of Contents](#)

administration of the program and in making connections to the broader learning community.

Adapted from AASL Information Power, 1998 Library Media Standards for Teachers of Students ages 3-18+, 2001. American Association of School Librarians (AASL) is a division of the American Library Association.

Core Values

Texas School librarians work collaboratively in communities of inquiry to achieve the following core values:

Academic Achievement. Texas school libraries provide a quality library program that results in improved student academic achievement.

Access For All. Texas school libraries provide equitable and universal access to all members of the school learning community.

Reading. Texas school libraries encourage and engage students to read, view, and listen for both understanding and enjoyment. We value an atmosphere charged with a passion for reading, learning, and the pursuit of each individual's interests.

Lifelong Learning. Texas school libraries teach skills and habits of "learning how to learn" so that students become self-reliant, independent adults and responsible, contributing citizens.

Technology. Texas school libraries embrace and implement technology and teach students to use it responsibly and effectively to provide them with the knowledge and skills required for the 21st century.

Innovation. Texas school libraries investigate, initiate, and implement positive change and new ideas that will effectively prepare students for life.

Intellectual Freedom. Texas school libraries promote, develop, and facilitate age-appropriate access to all expressions of knowledge, opinion, and intellectual activity.

The revised standards will have six components that correspond to the six standards outlined in the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) Guidelines for Certification of Texas School Librarians which are online at www.sbec.state.tx.us/stand_framework/stand_framework.htm. They are:

Standard 1. Learner Centered Teaching and Learning

Standard 2. Learner Centered Program Leadership and Management

Standard 3. Learner Centered Technology and Information Access

Standard 4. Learner Centered Library Environment

Standard 5. Learner Centered Connections to Community

Standard 6. Learner Centered Information Science and Librarianship

Information about the committees, their members, and their work, including minutes from teleconferences, are available on the School Library Standards Web page at www.tsl.state.tx.us/ld/schoollibs/committees/index.html. The organizational chart that follows outlines the structure of the committees and is followed by a description of their responsibilities and the names of Advisory and Reaction Committee members and the Component Committee co-chairs.

The **Steering Committee**, whose members are listed above, has the following charge:

- Develop expectations/objectives for subcommittees;
- Establish timeline for revising standards;
- Evaluate the work of all subcommittees; and
- Edit, revise, and prepare the final document.

The **Advisory Committee** consists of TASL and TLA members, ESC staff, principals, school board members, university and college representatives, librarians, and district library and technology coordinators. Co-chairs



"A good choice for preschool story hours or for primary units on communities or transportation."
Book List

"corrals the rhythms of the day"
Kirkus Reviews pointer

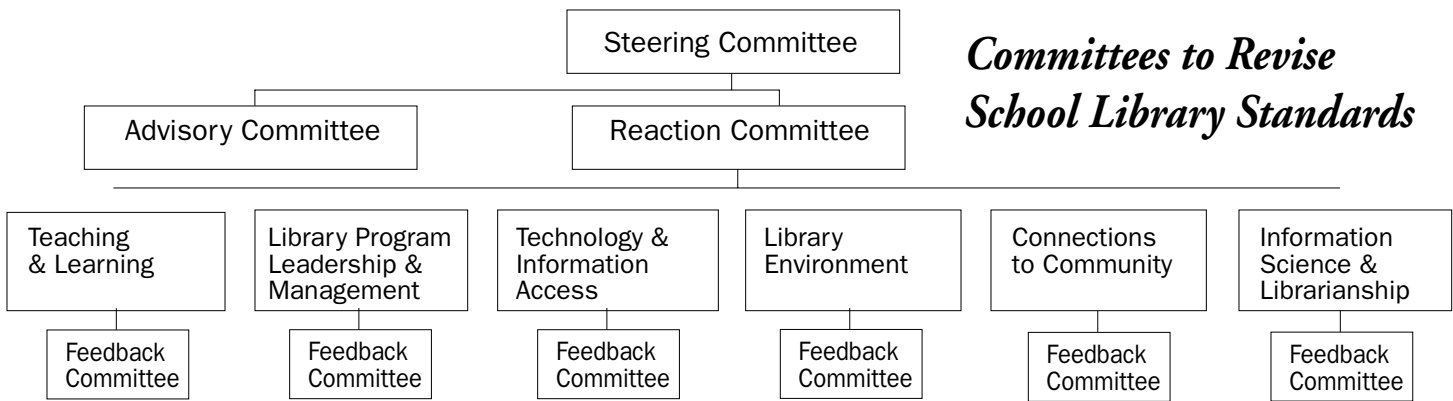
DELIVERY by Anastasia Suen
Illustrated by Wade Zahares
0-670-88420-3 Ages 3-8 \$15.99
0-14-230003-9 \$6.99 paperback

Anastasia Suen
is the author of more than fifty books for children. For curriculum connections or school and library programs, visit www.asuen.com
asuen@asuen.com



[BACK to Table of Contents](#)

Committees to Revise School Library Standards



are Barbara Bertoldo and JoAnne Moore, and Committee members are Bev Golden, Carol Simpson, Ed Rawlinson, Jean Ehnebuske, Jim Hundemer, James Fuller, Laquetta Kennedy, Maureen White, Mike Foster, and Susan Meyer. Their responsibilities are to:

- Develop a vision statement for the revised *Standards and Guidelines*;
- Provide advice, reaction, and approval for work proposed by Steering Committee;
- Advise the Component Committee co-chairs as they revise the standards;
- Review drafts of the revised standards and provide comments; and
- Seek input from peers and provide input from the perspective of their working situation as board member, administrator, etc.

The **Reaction Committee** consists of TASL, TLA members, ESC staff, principals, school board members, university and college representatives, librarians, and district library coordinators. The co-chairs are Cherry Fuller and Tish Mulkey, and committee members are Anne Smelley, Barbara Immroth, Cathy Conger, Charlotte Parker, Dale Morton, Doris Rome, Eileen Dunne, Jane Ann Thompson, Jean Heath, Joe Williams, Joy McGregor, Judy Driskell, and Mary Berry. Their responsibilities are to:

- Advise the Component Committee Co-Chairs as they revise the standards; and
- Review drafts of the revised standards and provide comments.

The **Component Committees** consist of district level supervisors, ESC staff, and librarians. Committee co-chairs and the charge to their committees are:

1. Teaching and Learning Committee: Donna Duncan and Caroline Kienzle
2. Program Leadership and Management Committee: Linda Rivera and Sharon Carr

3. Technology and Information Access Committee: Becky Pruett and Diane Durbin
4. Library Environment Committee: Mary Long and Jacky Irby
5. Connections to Community Committee: Carol Box and Carolyn McCown
6. Information Science and Librarianship Committee: Maria Elena Ovalle and Gloria Dennis

Revise and rewrite individual components of the standards, incorporating the SBEC guidelines, *Information Power*, state and national guidelines, additional relevant documents, including the *State of Texas Master Plan for Educational Technology 2000-2003*, and comments and recommendations from librarians throughout Texas.

The **Feedback Groups** are building-level staff including librarians, teachers, school board members, principals, parents, and students. They will serve as a sounding board and react to a draft of the revised draft of the standards.

A first draft of the revised *Standards and Guidelines* is scheduled for completion by February 28, 2002. A second draft will be presented at TLA in April for comments from librarians from throughout Texas. It will also be uploaded onto the School Library Standards website for comments from librarians, teachers, school board members, principals, parents, and students. The second draft will be presented to the Texas Association of School Library Administrators in June. The committees will consider all comments in developing the final draft, which will be presented to the Texas State Board of Education and Texas State Library and Archives Commission for approval in November, 2002. The revision will require approximately one and one-half years. The revised *Standards and Guidelines* will be published in the Texas Register and will take effect in early 2003.

Christine McNew is the youth services consultant for the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

[BACK to Table of Contents](#)

The t-X-la Files

—Our Secret History Revealed!

BY JANIS C. TEST

You're probably wondering, "Just how many secrets can a group of librarians have?" Well, more than you might think. Forget the official stuff you hear about TLA. Ignore the published information in the *Intellectual Freedom Handbook*, the widely popular reading lists, TLA's legislative bulletins. Set aside *TLACast* and forget about conference programs. I'm about to reveal the true nature of Texas librarians. I guess I can start with the stag parties and male stripping; or, on second thought, I think I'll lead gradually into that topic.

First, let me review the background of the t-X-la Files, so that you can independently judge the veracity and importance of the information I am about to disclose. These files have been in existence for about 25 years. During every annual conference and annual assembly, a stealthy group of librarians (a.k.a., the History of TLA Committee) has been interviewing members of the library community in an oral history project designed to capture the information that "doesn't make it into the 'official' TLA record." No one has remained unscathed...or, that is to say...no one has been ignored. The names of the participants have not been changed.

While TLA's oral histories preserve the personal accounts of many Texas library leaders who describe major library events, the tapes and transcripts also contain surprising "tidbits" about TLA's past. The oral history project began (and continues) as a means to augment the Association's archival evidence. The oral histories are notable not only for the personal and colorful description of the Texas library community's progress over the last 50 years; but, also, they keep alive many of the tales that have long since been forgotten. Over the next year, the membership of TLA will have an opportunity to consider the most notable benchmarks of

TLA's past. For now, let's take a look at some of the less auspicious but still entertaining stories from the t-X-la files. And, I think we'll see that the more times change, the more they stay the same.

In the beginning...selecting the first conference date

The Texas Library Association was organized in Austin, Texas on June 9, 1902 under the sponsorship of the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs and The University of Texas. Thirty-eight charter members elected UT President William L. Prather as the organization's first president. Although not a librarian (an attorney, actually), Prather had a great love of books and understood the significance of having a professional organization to represent libraries. A close friend of Robert E. Lee (even serving as a pallbearer at Lee's funeral in 1870), Prather was responsible for selecting June 9 as the charter meeting for the Association.

Experts from across the state have long considered the question (I know *we* all think about it), Why did Prather pick June 9? Was it perhaps to mark some special anniversary or personal event? What was special about June 9? Well, for starters, Peter the Great of Russia was born on June 9, and Secretariat won the Triple Crown in horseracing (but, of course, that was 71 years after the date in question). The answer to this long mystery is more imaginative that you might realize. You must search your mind and heart to discover what is nearest and dearest to every librarian and library supporter who must travel for a conference. Discounts! That's right. Practical Prather (as he will henceforth be known) picked June 9 to coincide with UT's graduation ceremony so that librarians traveling by rail could make the most of the discounted rates. Sounds just like a library administrator, doesn't he?

[BACK to Table of Contents](#)

No we didn't lie! TLA really did go to Mineral Wells and Abilene!

Most of us have become so accustomed to the Houston, Dallas, and San Antonio convention centers that we have a favorite escalator, restroom, and water fountain in each building all picked out. We know just how many minutes it will take us to walk from the convention center to our favorite restaurants, and we look for the same spots in the rug during long programs. While we may occasionally bemoan the lack of diversity in our conference venues, we do benefit from a certain consistency that our colleagues from 50 years back did not have. In fact, our library predecessors had to keep figuring out conference logistics EVERY YEAR. For us, that would be the equivalent of the San Antonio convention center being remodeled each and every conference. (I'll give you a moment to pause and let that sink in. Remember San Antonio last year?)

Back when TLA was not hosting a conference for eight thousand plus people, we could actually go to small and middle-sized cities throughout the state. Librarians flocked to places like Mineral Wells, Abilene, Corpus Christi, El Paso, Waco, Lubbock, Beaumont, and Corsicana. In 1949 and 1963, conference was held in Abilene at the Windsor Hotel in downtown. During a 1993 oral history, Callie Fae Milliken, former director of Abilene Christian University Libraries, said this about the Abilene conference experience:

I was in Houston in 1948 and they [Abilene librarians] had worked so hard, I understand, to bring the convention to Abilene because Abilene resources were so meager. Libraries were small and they felt that the convention would give a boost to this area. Those of us from Houston were rather appalled to find out that we were going to have to drive down to a ranch in Albany 60 miles away for our program. But I just loved it; and the first thing I asked her [Thelma Andrews, then director of the Abilene Public Library] when I found out that the convention was going to come to Abilene in '63 was did she think that she could arrange the Fandangle again? And she smiled and said, "Well, I think so." Maybe 500 people attended at that time.

According to Milliken, these conferences offered "three general sessions, the group sessions, the library school dinners and the one ... evening program." She

then points out proudly, "Of course with ours, we went to the Fandangle where they have barbecue out on the ground at this fabulous Walt Matthews Ranch, a few miles out of Albany, and that was our entertainment." A 60-mile commute for free West Texas barbecue? Actually, that sounds pretty reasonable...

Now what about all those TLA themes?

To address the question foremost in your mind: No, the TLA Executive Board does not have some secret charter that requires them to force presidents to pick conference themes. In fact, before 1948, there were no stated themes for annual conference. Former TLA Executive Director Jerre Hetherington said in her 1985 interview:

In 1949, the theme of the conference was 'A Challenge to Every Texan: More Libraries and More Librarians' and that certainly sounds very, very up-to-date. In 1950, there was no stated theme for the meeting, which was held, I will have you know, in the completely air-conditioned and newly decorated Rice Hotel. Single rooms with bath were \$4 - \$6 and doubles were \$6 - \$9 and suites were \$10.

Those, indeed, were the good old days! Since the early 1950s, all TLA conferences have been given themes.

So what do presidents really think about conference?

In short, they think it's frightening! The oral histories certainly offer past presidents a chance to reveal all the snags and bumps along the way to shaping a good conference. Every TLA officer and committee chair knows just how many things *can* go wrong during annual conference—even with the best-laid plans. Among the trials and tribulations of being a TLA president, Joe Dahlstrom (TLA President, 1986-87) described on heart-stopping occasion:

When the speaker showed up about 45 minutes late, Mickey Boyvey had to fill in and talk . . . for an extended length of time. And that was always the greatest fear, you know, "Is the speaker here?" The things you worry about most are problems during conferences. Either the speaker does not show up; the bus transportation is lousy; people get sick after a meal function; you know, whatever.

Fortunately, none of these things happened during Dahlstrom's term of office.

Another TLA president wasn't so lucky during her conference. Thelma Andrews, then director of the Abilene Public Library and TLA president from 1958-59, suffered from what almost everyone who has to go up in front of a crowd fears. In her 1985 oral history interview, Jerre Hetherington said: "Hate to tell you what happened to her. She fell off the platform at a TLA meeting." In her usual understated and double-meaning fashion, Hetherington added, "That shakes the president up." Hetherington went on to say that Andrews was not upset, and her experience helped set a "practice" of sorts.

She wasn't too badly hurt, but that's just half the reason that for the past several years some of you have seen me going across the platform before the meeting and sort of jumping up and down on the boards. Not only did Thelma fall off, but at one conference, in Galveston, the Executive Board and I were seated at the head table when the platform underneath my chair slowly gave way and the audience tells me that I slowly sank from view ... but I arose from the ashes. But I did at that time begin to check all the podiums all the way.

When Elizabeth Crabb became president (1982-83), the President's Party was traditionally "by invitation only." During her 1994 interview, she told Erma Jean Loveland:

It was only for the big shots. You know, you had to have a name, you had to have a position to even be invited, and nobody crashed the party. I thought, "Be Damned, I am not going to let that happen in my year in the presidency." We were at the Hilton on the River (in San Antonio) and had an elegant suite, you know, like the president usually does. We had an open house for all members of the association and we had it for two nights because it was in the president's suite because most people had never seen the president's suite before and this was a really fancy one. I thought, be damned, you know. I am a lowly person and we'll invite everybody to come. So we had it for two nights and you could come either night that you wanted to. And we served champagne; it was the most expensive president's party that anybody had ever had and everybody came. It was just a great and grand and glorious thing. No invitations had to be extended because everybody was invited. That was the best thing I did all my year.

Elizabeth Crabb started a trend. Now, president's parties are open to the entire membership, although they are held in a larger venue than a hotel suite. (Note from membership to Herman Totten: Can we revisit the free champagne issue?)

Some random factoids and—oh, yes—the stag parties and male stripping

Factoid 1: Which person has been president of TLA more than any other in history? Two men have the distinction of being three-term presidents . . . Erwin Winkler, from 1911-1914, and Ray Janeway, more recently. Jerre Hetherington said in her 1985 interview, "I'm am not exactly sure how Ray kept being elected president of the association. I don't know whether it was his wit, or his charm or whether it was his ability to smoke a cigar so continuously, but he was a good president all three times."

Factoid 2: Did you know that TLA was the first library association in the U.S. to have its own building? Although TLA was founded in Austin, the headquarters was in Houston for many years. It was moved to Austin in 1983 during the term of James O. Wallace, director of libraries at San Antonio College. The Association bought the condominium at the end of his term. During the move, TLA worked out of the executive director's garage—it wasn't the first time that had happened.

Factoid 3: Did you know that we have a 2076 legacy fund? Mary Lankford established this TLA endowment in 1976 during her tenure as TLA president. The money is on deposit, and it can't be touched for any purpose until the year 2076.

TLA has its bits of racy history, too. When Paul Parham was president (1976-1977), for instance, TLA sold a T-shirt with the inscription, "Take a book to bed instead!" Apparently, it was a big seller. And, annual conference used to feature some less than politically correct events (at least by today's standards). According to Hetherington, in 1948, there was a stag breakfast at the conference. Hetherington said "I am not exactly sure about the program for the stag breakfast, but that certainly is male chauvinism if I ever heard about it." Anybody still remember that one?

On the other hand, women in the library world have had some fun of their own. At a more recent event (the ALA-TLA Chili Cook-off in San Antonio during ALA Midwinter), one well-known male library director

performed a partial striptease to the loud cheers of his colleagues. I can't be sure, but I think that same library director is working on evening out past inequities, as he was also the "honoree" of a belly dancing routine at this past year's annual assembly. I haven't quite made up my mind if this falls under progress or not. It certainly does fall, however, under continued good times.

On a more serious note

During Richard O'Keeffe's presidency (1973-1974), TLA persuaded the Texas State Library to participate in a coordinated legislative effort that has since become one of TLA's strong points. That was also the year when librarians tried to have a provision put into the new proposed State Constitution. It would have read: "It is hereby declared to be the policy of the state to promote the establishment and development of free public libraries and to accept the obligation of their support by the state and its divisions and municipalities in such a manner as may be required by law." As we now know, the effort failed when the entire constitutional package went down the drain. O'Keeffe added,

It just didn't come to fruition. And I don't know that there has been an appropriate opportunity to try to place libraries and library services into a new Texas Constitution. But we tried at that time and it was kind of fun to do it. I think that some of the legislators who were on that Commission were kind of surprised to hear this come up. But they weren't unfriendly; they were just non-committal. But the Association was ready to ask other librarians and lay supporters of libraries to play a vital role in molding this if it had developed.

Funding has always been a key issue with libraries. In 1994, Elizabeth Crabb gave us a unique and realistic look at the hard job of starting libraries when she was coordinator of the Northeast Texas Library System.

One of my jobs is to stamp out libraries. My job is to go out and convince the city council and all of these

people who are dying for a library that they can't afford one. You have got to tell them how expensive libraries are. It is easy to establish a library; the problem comes in getting the funds year after year after year to make it go and make it a good library. So I go out hell-bent on stamping out the library, and I have only stamped out one library in all of my 18 plus years. Some of the communities that I swore couldn't do it are some of our star examples now of what can happen if the community really wants a library. . . For a little, bitty community . . . what you



do is that you go out there and scare the hell out of them right at first so they know exactly what to expect. Then you say, "Okay, if you want a damn library, this is how much it is going to cost you."

For those who knew Elizabeth Crabb, these words of solid wisdom bring back a familiar voice. The oral history tape of Crabb's interview is a remarkable testament to the power of personal narrative, and how much distant voices still mean to us today.

What doesn't change

And last but not least, something to remember as we embark on the second hundred years of the Texas Library Association: Texas librarians are indomitable! Dr. Edward G. Holley, library director of the University of Houston and TLA president from 1971-1972, put it this way:

I came from a rather conservative part of the country; and I spent six or seven years at Illinois where a lot of people thought that if you wanted to do something, there were any number of reasons why you shouldn't do it. Texas librarians, and Texans generally, thought if something ought to be done, why, of course, it will be done. I mean there was this spirit, of course, we will do it.

Long live the library spirit! And long live TLA! ☺

Janis C. Test is the head of information services at Abilene Public Library.

BACK to Table of Contents



NEWSNOTES

Texas Book Festival



The seventh annual Texas Book Festival (TBF) once again drew large crowds at the State Capitol

grounds in Austin. Held November 16 - 18, the TBF featured programs, author signings, booths, and entertainment. This year, the Festival expects to tally over \$200,000 that will go toward grants benefiting public libraries throughout state.

The majority of Texas public libraries have already received grants; and, with this year's funding, that number will increase. For many libraries in the state, the grants offer the opportunity to fill needs in existing collections or the chance to begin new programming by funding the purchase of new book materials. Last year, many libraries were able to expand book selections, including children's materials, young adult titles, and Spanish-language materials.

Although the Festival has just concluded, plans are already underway for the eighth annual Texas Book Festival to be held in November 2002. Grants from the 2001 Festival will be awarded in April 2002 during the annual Texas Library Association conference in Dallas.

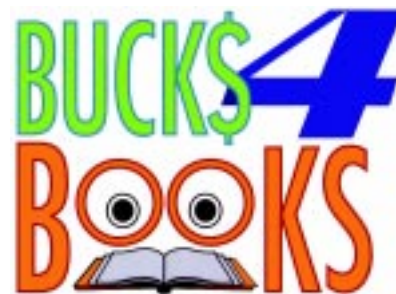
Bucks for Books

Bucks for Books, the H-E-B grocery store checkout campaign designed to raise money and awareness for Austin area public libraries, just completed another successful year. H-E-B is the largest privately owned grocery store in the United States and has a long history of community involvement.

The Bucks for Books campaign is part of the Austin Public Library Foundation's ongoing effort to raise money to build APL collections. The local television station, KVUE 24, supports the efforts with public service announcements, and the library gets the word out through bookmarks. The campaign brings in about \$15,000 annually at almost no cost to the library or the Foundation.

According to Library Foundation Past President JJ Baskin, the purpose of Bucks for Books is two-fold: "First, this campaign is an education effort. All great libraries now receive significant support from non-governmental sources. Second, this effort makes an immediate impact on the quality of our libraries throughout Central Texas."

Contributions to local libraries are made as customers check out at H-E-B stores throughout Central Texas. "This is a very simple way for our customers to get involved and give back to the local community," says Kate Brown, H-E-B director of community affairs and Austin Public Library Foundation Board member. "They can pick up a \$1, \$2, or \$3 Bucks for Books coupon at the register and add it to their grocery bill; and the funds go directly to the library in their neighborhood. It's quick and easy, and the response last year was very positive from both our shoppers and our partners (employees)."



[BACK to Table of Contents](#)

E-Books and Book Surfing

San Antonio Public Library (SAPL) is plugged into e-books! On Monday, October 1, the library began a pilot e-book program, and customers are now able to check out e-book readers at five locations around the city. Patrons can use a library or remote computer to access netLibrary e-books.

SAPL distributed a total of 14 e-book readers to the Central Library, Cortez Branch Library, Brook Hollow Branch Library, Carver Branch Library, and Great Northwest Branch Library. Each reader weighs approximately 18 ounces and holds around 20 books. The readers also offer a choice of two print sizes and have a rechargeable battery that lasts between 20 and 40 hours. The readers at the branch libraries and two at the Central Library will be "samplers," loaded with about 15 titles, including thrillers, romances, mysteries, and non-fiction by popular authors.

The e-book readers are available for free checkout by library patrons with a valid library card and photo ID. Each e-book user will be asked to sign a borrowing agreement, and patrons under 18 will be required to have a parent or guardian with them to sign the agreement. The readers can be checked out for three weeks with no renewals and, unlike other library materials, must be returned to the location where they were checked out.

Through netLibrary, SAPL is also offering online electronic versions of copyrighted, recently published books and access to more than 3,500 public domain titles, including literary classics and historical documents. Unlike the titles available with the e-book readers, netLibrary books must be read on a computer. Anyone can browse netLibrary books (view them for a short period of time), but to check out a book for an extended period of time (download it for future use) or access netLibrary from a remote computer, a customer must set up a free account with netLibrary. An account may be set up at any library location. Once the account has been opened, users can get to netLibrary from any computer with Internet access.

Baker and Taylor Lawsuit

In August 2000, the Texas Attorney General, along with the U.S. Department of Justice and 17 other state attorneys general, reached a settlement in a lawsuit with Baker and Taylor. The settlement resolved a dispute alleging that the company and its former owner, W.R. Grace & Co., were involved in a scheme to overcharge schools and libraries for their book purchases beginning in 1980.

In late October of this year, the Texas AG's office completed a plan to distribute the Texas settlement money of \$1.7 million. The AG's office is now working on dispersing the funding to the affected public schools and libraries. School libraries should contact their superintendents for information about the settlement.



Rain Is Not My Indian Name

BY TEXAS AUTHOR

Cynthia Leitich Smith

from HarperCollins Children's Books and Listening Library

"Tender, funny, and full of sharp wordplay." **Kirkus Reviews**

"A wonderful novel" **School Library Journal**

<http://www.cynthialeitichsmith.com>
GIANT CHILDREN'S LITERATURE RESOURCE SITE

BACK to Table of Contents

Policy Update

While the Texas Legislature will not meet for another year, lawmakers are busy preparing for policy debate during the 78th Legislative Session. Here is a look at some political activity related to library issues:

The **Uniform Computer Information Transactions Act (UCITA)** was not a subject listed to be studied in either the State House or Senate interim committee charges. The library community, along with other UCITA opponents, was pleased that state legislators have decided against a formal study of this fundamentally flawed draft law.

In other UCITA news, the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws (NCCUSL) has just completed hearings on UCITA, which is now a topic of consideration by the American Bar Association (ABA). The hearings, which were held in mid-November in Washington, provided an opportunity for additional public input and spurred the ABA's attention to this controversial proposed legislation. The Texas Library Association worked with ALA and other groups opposed to UCITA to plan and present library concerns and proposed amendments.

NCCUSL decided against voting on any proposed changes during the hearings and will instead continue reviewing concerns. The position the ABA may eventually take on UCITA is unclear at this time. While 33 state attorneys general recently reaffirmed their concerns about UCITA (Texas AG John Cornyn was not among them), it is likely that NCCUSL will again seek to introduce UCITA in various state legislatures in January.

The **Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund** is to be a topic of study for the House Committee on State Affairs, which is chaired by Rep. Steve Wolens (D-Dallas). The official charge includes a mandate to review overall telecommunications and broadband deployment in the state. Additionally, the charge reads,

Review the activities and mission of the Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund, assess the extent to which the Fund has met the goal of extending services to underserved client groups, and consider whether the need for the Fund's programs extends beyond the statutory termination.

The committee's interim work should begin in January 2002.

The House Committee on Education, which is chaired by Paul Sadler (D-Henderson), will study the extent and causes of the state's **shortage of education professionals** and will work with the House Committee on Appropriations to consider measures that the state and local districts might take to reduce that shortage.

House Speaker Pete Laney and Lt. Governor Bill Ratliff have initiated a joint interim committee to review **funding for higher education**. The committee will

make recommendations regarding the structure and requirements for use of higher education excellence funding in Texas. The committee shall also review current higher education funding formulas and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's procedures and recommendations regarding current formulas.

Rep. Robert Junell (D-San Angelo) and Sen. Steve Ogden (R-Bryan) co-chair the committee.

Houston Votes for Libraries

Stepping forward, on Tuesday, November 6, Houston voters helped jump-start Houston Public Library's Strategic Master Plan – "Standards for Excellence" – by approving the City of Houston Proposition E bond issue. Proposition E was passed by an overwhelming 72% of votes. With passage of this bond, Houston Public Library will now have \$40 million in capital investment for improving library facilities.

The Master Plan represents a significant financial commitment, with the capital cost for implementing the facilities standards in branch libraries at \$260 million, including the cost of land acquisition, design, construction, equipment, and materials.

Brownsville Voters Give Library Thumbs Up!



Voters approved \$3 million for a branch library to be built in a southern neighborhood in Brownsville. This branch is the first of three scheduled to be built over the next ten years. The Library Board hopes to build a state-of-the-art 20,000 plus square foot branch library with additional matching funds, grants, and donations.

[BACK to Table of Contents](#)

TexShare

DATABASE TRAINING

BY BELINDA BOON AND DAWN VOGLER

Background

TexShare is an umbrella term for several resource-sharing programs enjoyed by academic and public libraries, including statewide interlibrary loan, reciprocal borrowing, courier service, a grant program, and access to online commercial databases. The project has gone through a number of changes since it was first proposed as an academic resource-sharing project in 1988. Today, TexShare is coordinated by the Library Resource Sharing Division of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) and is managing the transition from a resource-sharing program for academic institutions to one that fosters resource sharing among academic libraries, public libraries, and libraries of clinical medicine. (For more information about the TexShare program, contact Beverley Shirley, Director, Library Resource Sharing Division, at beverley.shirley@tsl.state.tx.us or 512-463-5433.)

TexShare Databases

The online databases program is one of the most popular and well-known components of TexShare. Sixty commercial database products have been licensed to TSLAC for use by more than 600 libraries and their patrons in Texas. The databases contain large amounts of information organized especially for rapid search and retrieval from any personal computer.

These products would be prohibitively expensive for most individual libraries and some library consortia. But while libraries agree that the databases are tremendously worthwhile resources, the funding for them may be in jeopardy. It is essential that librarians throughout the state learn to use the databases effectively and to demonstrate the benefits of these products to their users. To help facilitate these activities, TSLAC has contracted with various database vendors to offer training around the state.

Developing Training

How does TSLAC decide what kind of training to provide? Each TexShare program has a working group made up of academic and public librarians who make recommendations to TSLAC about the programs. The

Education Working Group is responsible for surveying the TexShare membership about their training needs. Surveys are sent electronically to everyone on the TexShare discussion list asking for feedback on training for the online databases. Surveys were distributed in March 1999, February 2000, and February 2001. The next survey will be developed in early 2002. (For more information or to provide feedback about this process, contact Belinda Boon, manager, Continuing Education and Consulting, at bboon@tsl.state.tx.us or 512-463-6624.)

Once training needs are established, staff of TSLAC's Library Development Division (LDD) meet with the database vendors to go over the content of the workshops and to set up training dates and locations. LDD staff also creates online registration pages so that library staff can register for any workshop at their convenience.

Current Training Schedule

Hands-on training for the TexShare databases is well underway in all areas of Texas. Based on input gathered by the Education Working Group, the majority of TexShare training for 2001 has focused on Gale Group and EBSCO products. Gale and EBSCO databases comprise more than half of the TexShare database program and are the most heavily used products. Gale Group databases provided through TexShare include *Literature Resource Center*, *Health Reference Center Academic*, *Business and Company Resource Center*, and *Student Reference Center Gold*. EBSCO products such as *ERIC*, *Medline*, *Applied Science & Technology Abstracts* and *Academic Search Premier* are among the most popular in TexShare.

The LDD took on its largest TexShare training effort to date in fall 2001, offering 88 EBSCO database training sessions across the state. Beginning in August 2001 and continuing into 2002, five EBSCO trainers will be delivering two-hour introductions to the general databases, followed by an additional session on administering the EBSCO products available through TexShare.

[BACK to Table of Contents](#)

The general overview training is recommended for all levels of library staff and includes the following elements:

- An overview of the EBSCO databases available through TexShare;
- Search tips and strategies for effective use of the databases; and
- Information on integrating the databases into traditional library services such as ILL, technical services, and OPAC systems.

An administrator training session follows the general overview training and is recommended for library staff interested in maximizing online resources and those responsible for systems administration. Some of the elements included in this section of the workshop include:

- Controlling the availability of full text and integrating locally held magazines;
- Exploration of customization features; and
- Instruction on obtaining usage statistics.

To date, over 60 EBSCO training sessions have been completed, and nearly 800 library staff members have been trained. The 10 regional library systems have played an integral role in setting up workshops for public libraries. Systems that have not yet completed the training will do so in early 2002. Academic library training sessions were scheduled to provide statewide coverage, with each of the five trainers tackling specific geographic regions of the state. Scheduling for academic and public library sessions is ongoing. Institutions interested in hosting TexShare training should contact Dawn Vogler, Continuing Education Consultant, Library Development Division, at dvogler@tsl.state.tx.us or 512-936-4449.

Gale Group database training, incorporating revised and updated content reflecting new databases and new interfaces, took place this fall. It will be offered again in mid-2002. Gale trainer, Juanell Marks, completed her 30th, daylong, hands-on workshop in early November. More than 320 academic and public library staff benefited from her expertise. Response to the workshops was extremely positive, and evaluation forms indicate

that participants appreciated the length of time they had to navigate and test the various databases. The LDD is now planning future Gale training that will begin in the summer of 2002.

Future Plans

Early in 2002, LDD will offer eight hands-on FirstSearch workshops with AMIGOS trainer Frederick Landin. Training will focus on the FirstSearch Base Package currently available to both academic and public libraries. Some of the databases included in this training are, *World Almanac*, *GPO*, and *WorldCat*. The LDD is currently identifying locations for FirstSearch training. More information will be available on the TSLAC

website, through mailing list announcements, and through the regional library systems.

Since many academic and public library staff received the general overview training on the Gale Group and EBSCO databases in 2000 and 2001, the LDD is considering focusing on topic-specific (business, homework help, health) or database-specific workshops in 2002. Feedback on the content of future database

training is welcomed and encouraged by the LDD. To contribute ideas or for information about the training, contact Dawn Vogler.

Library staff interested in TexShare training opportunities should consult the Texas State Library and Archives Commission Library Development Division's continuing education website at www.tsl.state.tx.us/ld/workshops/index.html. This website is updated regularly, and new training sites are added on a weekly basis. Libraries interested in hosting TexShare training events should forward questions to Dawn Vogler at dvogler@tsl.state.tx.us or 512-936-4449. ★

Training Schedule

(full schedule available at www.tsl.state.tx.us/ld/workshops/index.html)

Fall, 2001 – 60 EBSCO training sessions completed

Fall, 2001 – 30 Gale Group training sessions completed

Spring, 2002 – EBSCO training continues, approximately 28 additional sessions

Spring, 2002 – 8 FirstSearch workshops

Mid-2002 – Gale Training

2002 – Topic-specific or database specific training (to be determined by LDD)

Belinda Boon is manager for continuing education at the Library Development Division of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. Dawn Vogler is a consultant for continuing education at the Library Development Division of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

BACK to Table of Contents

The

VIA

BY JOE GARCIA AND
JERRY HEDGECOCK

The Brownsville Public Library is the founding member of the Valley Information Alliance (VIA) consortium of 20 public libraries operating in South Texas. This consortium provides Internet and wide-area-network connectivity services via high-speed digital lines connecting all the libraries in Cameron and Hidalgo counties.



The network has been a catalyst for tremendous change for all the libraries in the consortium, and it has made a huge impact on our patronage. Many participating libraries have experienced more than a fifty percent increase in patronage. This increase results primarily from individuals who want Internet access.

Many of our local communities face a poverty problem, a situation that has often prevented sizable portions of our residents from experiencing the Information Super Highway and participating in the worldwide digital community. As in all parts of the country, local libraries are addressing this need by providing free access through hundreds of terminals and dial-up lines. This access makes electronic resources available, facilitates education, and gives individuals access to email. These services have proven to be a tremendous draw in this area. Before, many residents would rarely, if ever, visit a library. Now, thousands of people visit our library on a weekly basis for Internet access and, as importantly, to communicate with friends and family, both here in Texas and in other parts of the world.

Nuts and Bolts

Operated by Brownsville Public Library (BPL), the VIA network began providing service in 1997 after

receiving a grant from the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. The grant enabled what became the first phase of the network project by providing Internet services to all the libraries from a central provider site under the management of Brownsville. The service provider made available the original central equipment location as a hosting service. This would later be changed when Brownsville took over the direct housing of the equipment.

Brownsville Public Library contracted with an Internet Service Provider to house the central routing equipment and to provide all of the remote router equipment for each of the original 16 member libraries.

Each library was brought online via a T1 (1.54Mbps) communications line that was connected to the central router, which in turn was connected to a VIA-shared T1 to the Internet for connectivity for the libraries. This shared T1 line was ample to supply Internet services to the libraries for about two years, after which the library's Internet usage began growing at such a phenomenal rate that it became imperative to find an economical method to provide greater bandwidth within the same annual support budget for the project. Since the project's inception, the addition of four new members to the

[BACK to Table of Contents](#)

consortium has placed increased demands on the single T1. It soon became obvious that, as growth continued, a more reliable, stable, and expandable system was needed to support the consortium members.

This realization brought about phase two of our network plan. To do this, the VIA consortium studied different methods of providing this service, and the group determined that the best long term solution was to take direct control, both physically and managerially, over the network and relocate all of the central equipment to the Brownsville Public Library, where Brownsville would then acquire backbone Internet provider service directly for the consortium. In effect, BPL has become the Internet service provider for the consortium directly.

After several years of operation, the consortium outgrew the original central and remote router equipment and was no longer able to support the quality-of-service requirements that members were seeking to offer through their Internet access. New equipment had to be acquired and, after extensive research, BPL standardized the consortium on CISCO equipment. All of the new equipment was provided for by grants with local matching funds where necessary.

BPL has been able to provide double the amount of bandwidth (3.08Mbps) that the former ISP provided the VIA consortium at the same price as the previous provider. This cost efficiency has resulted in increased growth of Internet-related services by member libraries for their patrons and a great improvement to quality of service. Brownsville Public Library and VIA are currently working on a new expansion of bandwidth from the current 3.08Mbps to 9Mbps via a T3 line. This expansion in bandwidth should handle the current and projected growth for the next two years.

Libraries Running Cities...

Given the BPL successful network administration, Brownsville Public Library has now also become the service provider for the City of Brownsville, as well as other city-related partners such as our local economic development council. Brownsville provides access to city government through a combination of dial-up access and ISDN and T1 lines. The Library serves as the central backbone for the city's wide-area-network and is currently expanding city services, connecting by dedicated line to every city department.

Many VIA members have also taken advantage of this capability to provide access to their own city governments. BPL provides them service, and they in turn provide access to their governing bodies. Libraries such as Donna Public Library of the City of Donna, Speer Memorial Library of Mission, and Harlingen Public Library of Harlingen have all provided access through dedicated T1 or ISDN lines to their city governments. Others, such as the Ethel L. Whipple Memorial Library of Los Fresnos,

Port Isabel Public Library of Port Isabel, and Hidalgo Public Library of Hidalgo, have provided access through dial-up access. These and several other members are providing dial-up access for their patrons as a free service.

Currently, the VIA network has more than 450 permanently connected public Internet access workstations, over 150 staff stations, and 120 dial-up lines, while nine dedicated municipal connections via



Photos: James McCoy

ISDN or T1 provide library-to-city government access.

With grants from the Gates Library Foundation and Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund Board (TIFB), VIA is expecting more than 80 new additional Internet access stations to be added by the end of 2001.

Where VIA Goes Next

Several libraries, including Brownsville Public Library, have already implemented an IP Telephony phone system that replaced the existing library phone systems. The telephony phone system provides the capabilities for voice connectivity over the VIA wide-area-network among participating the libraries. Savings on long distance costs will provide economic incentives for facilitating and sharing information with interlibrary loan among libraries. It is expected that within the next two years that two thirds of the libraries will be using a common IP Telephony system to accommodate voice communications over the Internet and avoid costly toll charges.

Brownsville, along with Harlingen and Donna Public Libraries, are working together on a new Media Archive Database for the preservation of local history and information. This database will be accessible over the Internet and it will contain local history materials consisting of maps, photos, documents and multimedia. The three libraries cooperated on the development of this project by setting standards and project goals. Brownsville



Photo: James McCoy

provided the server, hard drive storage, and the Content Media Database software for the project. Donna and Harlingen are working on material contributions. The first materials made available via the Internet are expected to be online for the public in January of 2002. The database has been in development for more than a year. As of September 2001, all VIA members have joined this project and will be participating in adding items to the database in 2002. Many libraries have identified this project as one of the most important since the founding of the consortium and, VIA members believe that preserving our history electronically will be another cornerstone for service to our communities.

The Valley Information Alliance has grown into a strong partnership among the libraries of the Rio Grande Valley. VIA's continued growth and expansion of services will help assure an equality of service for all residents of South Texas. We must continue to evolve our services to meet the ever increasing and varying demands of our communities, while also serving traditional needs and those of the future. ★

Joe Garcia is director of Brownsville Public Library. Jerry Hedgecock is systems analyst and head of technical services at Brownsville Public Library.