



Republican Valley Library System

VALLEYTALK

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Featured Library: Franklin Public Library

There is something about Franklin Public Library that makes a person smile. Is it the location of the building...in the city park, or the inviting, open look of the building, or is it the director, Linda Gooder? Linda has been the director since April of 1994, but she wasn't originally from Franklin. She moved 17 years ago from Kearney to Franklin and still has trouble with the fast and sturdy grapevine which is present in every small town. Everyone knows everything about each other and if they don't they will make it up, but they will also pick up your newspaper if you are gone and lend a helping hand whenever one is needed. The library is open 32 hours per week and circulation has increased significantly since she has been the director.

In June of 2006, 2032 items were checked out and 1316 users came into the library. Franklin is a town of 900 people, so either there are many repeat users, or many out-of-town patrons or some of both. Linda allows people who are not residents of Franklin to purchase a Family Library card for \$7.50 per year. Anyone outside of the Franklin city limits can purchase a Family card and use the library. Since Franklin is very close to the Kansas/Nebraska border,



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2006-2007 RVLS Board Meetings

September 15, 2006:
North Platte
Community College,
North Campus

November 3, 2006:
C.B. Preston Memorial
Library (Orleans)

January 12, 2007:
vonRiesen Library,
McCook Community
College

March 2, 2007:
Hastings College
Perkins Library

June 1, 2007:
RVLS Board and
Annual Meetings
**Location to be
announced*

*We encourage
attendance! All
board meetings
begin at 10 a.m.*



(Continued from page 1)

Featured Library: Franklin Public Library

many people come from Kansas to use the library. Linda thinks the key to increasing library utilization is as simple as buying books and materials which people want to use and read. It goes back to the old “know your user” adage from some of the beginning classes in library school.

Linda knows her users; she had 80 kids participate in summer reading this year. They collected reading minutes and got prizes from

Oriental Trading Company and a pizza party in the park. Kids of all ages come to the library to do puzzles and games, or to play with the puppets and toys which she has available



for them. They come to wait for the swimming pool to open and sometimes, they just come to read.

Adult readers are thrilled to get the newest books and Linda orders romance, religious fiction, mystery, non-fiction and books on tape and CD. There is always a jig-saw puzzle to be put together for the adult users. Franklin has a great genealogy collection. Lincoln resident Lynn Henning-Chase has adopted Franklin Public Library to create and house genealogical books and records. She clips and saves every obituary from Franklin County and stores them in an organized card file in the library. She also puts together books which can be purchased from her on Franklin County



genealogy. One day a few weeks ago, Linda had a couple from Germany and later a couple from England in the library to look at the genealogical research that the library has on file.

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RVLS NEWS

The following **storykits** have recently been revamped: Dino-sauring into Books, Fall Fun, Just Ducky, Pirate's Plunder, Rounding Up Readers, Safari and There's Something in My Pocket. Borrow them to find out what's new and improved! Call the System Office at 800-569-4961 or email rvlsasst@tcgcs.com or rvlsadmin@inebraska.com to reserve/borrow a kit. Go to www.nlc.state.ne.us/system/republican/storykits.html to see inventory of storykits.

The **Lied Imperial Public Library** (pictured below), was dedicated on May 28, 2006. The building addition had been in the works since the library outgrew its facility in 1995. and the first funds for the expansion were generated in 1996. The dedication and open house included a ribbon cutting ceremony, speakers, refreshments and music. Congratulations on your new facility!



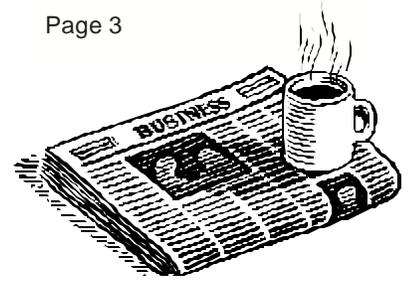
Trenton Public Library has a new email address: [<read2trenton@gpcom.net>](mailto:read2trenton@gpcom.net).

Vicki Casper, Director of **Hildreth Public Library**, is now also the director of **Axtell Public Library**. Axtell Public Library's new hours will be: Mondays 10am-6pm, Thursdays 9am-12pm and Saturdays 1pm-5pm. **Janice Soderquist**, former Director at Axtell, is now working at an implement dealership.

Trent Benjamin will be the new High School and Elementary media specialist at **Holdrege Public Schools**. Welcome to RVLS, Trent!

Cindy Kuklis, media specialist at **Brady Public School**, reported that a bond was passed for \$4 million and that an extensive remodeling project will soon commence. The library will almost double in size! Best wishes for your remodel!

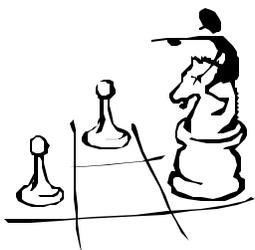
Director **Mary Statz** reported that forty-three kids—a larger-than-anticipated number—walked into **Nelson Public Library** on the first day of its



Send us news of your latest programs, projects, and accomplishments at rvlsasst@tcgcs.com or call 800-569-4961.

summer reading program. SRP was kicked off in May at the Lawrence grade school with a puppet show, "Two Bad Mice," put on by Trish Place from the Omaha Puppet Theatre. Two of the program sessions involved presentations of working dogs, one a guide and service dog from KSDS out of Washington, KS and the other a "deputy" dog from the Webster County Sheriff's Department. Eros and his handler, Officer Beckman, showed the kids how he sniffs out drugs and finds lost kids. The final day of summer reading culminated with a Chinese Dragon parade in the street, grilled hot dogs, chips, animal cookies, puppy chow and popsicles delivered by the Schwans man.

Carolyn Clark from **North Platte Public Library** has been elected to the Board of Directors for the Nebraska Center for the Book. Congratulations, Carolyn!



Scholarship Committee to Sponsor Silent Auction

The NLA Scholarship Committee will hold a silent auction at this year's annual NLA/NEMA conference. All proceeds from the auction will assist students who are attending graduate school or additional training to enhance their library skills.

The committee is requesting donations of new items that can be sold. If you have items, please contact Mary Gubbels of Omaha, home phone 402-592-8408 or work 402-597-2040; or Myrna Tewes of Lincoln, home phone 402-304-2878, so that delivery arrangements can be made. If you have questions about the auction, please contact Kathy Jacobs, Scholarship Committee Chair, at the South Sioux City Public Library, 402-494-7545 or e-mail <kjacobs@southsiouxcity.org>.



It's Your Move

LaDonna Schluterbusch, Hoesch Memorial Library (Alma),

recommends the following websites to assist in choosing books for discussion groups:

* **Fiction Connection** (on NebraskAccess) offers recommendations based on reading preferences.

* **readinggroupguides.com** provides over 1,000 guides from a variety of publishers; search by author, title, genre, subject.

* **bookbrowse.com**

* **bookspot.com** links to reading guides provided by the book publisher.

* **readinggroupchoices.com**

Panhandle Library System has a **new website**. Find it at <www.nlc.state.ne.us/system/panhandle>.

If reading old-guard style manuals such as Strunk & White's *Elements of Style* make you snore, zap the zzzzzzzs away with ***Spunk & Bite: A Writer's Guide to Punchier, More Engaging Language & Style*** by Arthur Plotnik (0-375-72115-0, \$16.95). Plotnik punches a parcel of pizzazz into his composition guidebook. He starts with a word about flexibility (in a section called Unstrunktion!) and proceeds through topics such as Freshness, Texture, Word, Force, Form, Clarity, and Contemporaneity.

[Note: Susan read it from cover to cover, as if it were a novel, then

made her last semester's Composition students read it, too!]

Go to <<http://www.authorbuzz.com/dearreader/>> to "meet" three-to-six authors per week through special messages they have written to "Dear Reader" (that's you!). The site also offers news about author tours, contest information, freebies and more.

FOLUSA has a new website (unveiled on June 1). Check out the new look at <<http://www.folusa.org/>>.

The July/August 2006 issue of *Edutopia* contains an article that compares "**kid-safe**" **search engines**. Go to http://www.edutopia.org/magazine/ed1article.php?id=art_1573&issue=jul_06>. The sites compared are: <askforkids.com/>, <www.kidsclick.org>, <onekey.com>, <redzee.com>, and, <yahooligans.yahoo.com/>.

Looking for a new **series for seven-year-olds**? Susan met Annie Barrows, author of *Ivy and Bean* (0811849031, \$14.95). The second book about the pair of friends, *Ivy & Bean: The Ghost That Had to Go*, will be released this November (0811849104, \$14.95).

Check out **New Orleans puppeteers Calliope Puppets**,

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On the Bookshelf



The following items have been recently added to the RVLS Professional Collection:

- ◆ *An Evening with Joseph Janes, The Internet Librarian*, Spring Colloquium sponsored by Eastern Library System, Southeast Library System, Omaha Public Library, Lincoln City Libraries, and the University of Nebraska-Omaha (4/8/2006) * Available in VHS or DVD—please specify.
- ◆ “Information Literacy for the 21st Century Learner” College of DuPage Teleconference sponsored by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and Network of Illinois Learning Resources in Community Colleges (NILRC), Videotape (6/2/2006).
- ◆ “Confronting the Crisis in Library Education” College of DuPage Teleconference sponsored by the American Library Association, Videotape (6/9/2006).

Books on CD

- ◆ *The Book of the Dead* by Douglas Preston & Lincoln Child
- ◆ *Digging to America* by Anne Tyler
- ◆ *Dead Watch* by John Sandford
- ◆ *Dispatches from the Edge: A Memoir of War, Disasters, and Survival* by Anderson Cooper
- ◆ *Everything Is Illuminated* by Jonathan Safran Foer
- ◆ *Hoot* by Carl Hiaasen
- ◆ *Jubal Sackett* by Louis L'Amour
- ◆ *Miss Julia Stands Her Ground* by Ann B. Ross
- ◆ *One Thousand White Women: The Journals of May Dodd* by Jim Fergus
- ◆ *The Pact* by Jodi Picoult
- ◆ *Reading Lolita in Tehran* by Azar Nafisi
- ◆ *Sherlock Holmes: 3 Tales of Avarice* (“The Adventure of the Priory School,” “The Red-Headed League,” & “The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle”) by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
- ◆ *Telegraph Days* by Larry McMurtry
- ◆ *The Time Traveler's Wife* by Audrey Niffenegger

Magazine

RVLS has just subscribed to **bookmarks magazine**, a collection support tool that reviews more than 500 books each month from more than 50 major publications. Each issue also looks at timeless novels, biographies and histories.

If you would like to borrow these items or be placed on the **bookmarks magazine's** routing list, please contact the System office at 800-569-4961 or rvlsasst@tcgcs.com. If you would like to see list of all available items (including magazines routed), go to www.nlc.state.ne.us/system/republican/professional.html.





Future happenings

August 25th Computer/Digital Camera Workshop, Hastings College. John Seyfarth will answer your questions about computer problems and give you other computer information. In the afternoon, there will be a hands-on digital camera workshop. Cosponsored by RVLS and MLS. Registration form at <http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/system/republican/PC%20problems_digital%20clicks.pdf>.

September 21st Media Specialists' Day at ESU 9 in Hastings (see inserted flyer)

September 22nd Media Specialists' Day at ESU 11 in Holdrege. (see inserted flyer)

These will be open to anyone in the library world, but will be aimed specifically at those who work in schools.

September 25th ESU 15 in McCook. This is the Fall In-service for the ESU 15 schools.

Oct. 25-27 NLA/NEMA Quest Center, Omaha. Plan to attend this convention as the keynote speakers are outstanding. See inserted application form for RVLS Scholarships.

RVLS Calendar

August 2006

25—PC Problems & Digital Clicks, 9:30am-3:30pm, Wilson Center, Hastings College.

September 2006

5—Recipients of CE & Training Grants will be announced

14-16—Plum Creek Children's Literacy Festival, <http://www.cune.edu/2005a.asp?durki=2040&site=2&return=15>

14—An Evening with Jamie LaRue, Fall Colloquium 2006, 5:30-9:30, Cornhusker Hotel, Lincoln. See inserted flyer.

15—RVLS Board Meeting, 10am, North Platte Community College, North Campus.

20—Alex Kava, One Book One Nebraska Visit, Hastings Public Library, 7-9pm

21—Media Specialists' Day, ESU 9, Hastings.

22—Media Specialists' Day, ESU 11, Holdrege.

22-23—North Platte Literary Festival

23—Alex Kava, One Book One Nebraska Visit, North Platte Literature Festival

25—Fall Inservice ESU 15 at McCook Public School

October 2006

6-8—Nebraska Center for the Book Festival at Nebraska Wesleyan University

25-27—NLA/NEMA Convention, Omaha Qwest Center.

31—Basic Skills: Public Administration, North Platte Community College, North Campus; for info, go to www.nlc.state.ne.us/scripts/training/eventshow.asp?ProgID=7832

November 2006

3—RVLS Board Meeting, 10am, C.B. Preston Memorial Library (Orleans).

7—Basic Skills: Public Administration, North Platte Community College, North Campus

14—Basic Skills: Public Administration, North Platte Community College, North Campus

13-20—Children's Book Week, <http://www.cbcbooks.org/cbw/>

January 2007

12—RVLS Board Meeting, 10am, McCook Community College.



Before you settle in for your light summer reading . . .

By Brenda Ealey, Administrator, Southeast Library System

I had the opportunity to attend Law for Librarians, as a representative of Nebraska Library Association, April 4-6 in Chicago. There were representatives from all 50 states, and we were immersed in legal issues such as: the First Amendment, religious issues, Internet, CIPA, USA Patriot Act, sexual harassment, labeling, meeting rooms, exhibit spaces and literature distribution, challenges to library resources, privacy & confidentiality, youth access, advocacy and media relations. Needless to say, I've got information that would fill several pages on all those topics!

Here are a few highlights:

Policy is key. *It's the foundation you stand on regarding library services. It should be enforced consistently and be viewpoint neutral. When you write a policy you write in a means of appeal and apply it equally. Ideally, policy should be introduced in one board meeting and then adopted at the next, reinforcing an open practice and opportunity for comment. Ask, "What about intellectual freedom?" with every library policy.*

Library actions and decisions made in order to avoid controversy often get you into trouble, *particularly when you're talking about a public forum or space: bulletin boards, meeting rooms, exhibits, or literature distribution. Once you've opened up to the public you can't discriminate based on the content of their speech.*

In the library hiring process, policy should be shared and situational questions asked to gauge understanding. *This is also a good practice with library boards and administration. Review your library mission, the Bill of Rights (State and US), the Freedom to Read Statement, and an overall philosophy of your collection development based on mission and community served. From the beginning, it's important employees understand access issues and First Amendment rights.*

Libraries are about access in every way; reading, listening and viewing are individual private matters. *While anyone is free to select or reject materials for themselves or their own minor children, the freedom of others to read or inquire will not be restricted. Library materials are not restricted, sequestered, altered or labeled by the library because of controversy about the author or the subject matter.*

Don't use forms as a substitution for conversations with your library customers. *Make sure to follow procedures even if customer complaints seem frivolous.*

*The 1st & 4th Amendments speak to the right to privacy: **right to read and receive ideas without government intrusion and right to be secure against unreasonable searches and seizures by the government.** Additionally, all 50 states and the District of Columbia protect the privacy of library records through statutes, or in 2 states through Attorney Generals' opinions. Library records should not be released without legal documents, such as a subpoena or search warrant. Evidence unlawfully seized can not be used in an investigation.*

Young people have First Amendment rights. *Required parental permission forms create a stigma and are a barrier to access. Don't have any illusion that you can sanitize a youth collection or section. Youth have the same information needs as adults, except perhaps on a smaller scale.*

Librarians need to build a relationship with local media, *which means making yourself easy to find. If you're not available someone else will speak for you. Letters to the editor and call-ins to radio are ways of making the library visible. Read, listen and watch media which will give you an insight to their style, type of stories, and how they work. Be prepared by identifying potential allies and adversaries, and have a crisis communication plan ahead of a crisis. Keep policies and key messages together for easy access – and practice using them.*

The only speech not protected is obscene speech. Just because something is sexually explicit does not mean it's obscene.

*Finally, **advocacy is having a clear message and delivering it;** turning passive support to active support or educated action. There should be no ask at the beginning – first go out and make friends. Tell your story – make it personal or humanize. Be brief, appreciative, specific, and informative – be happy or at least courteous. "If you think you're too small to be effective, you obviously haven't been in bed with a mosquito." (attributed to Anita Roddick, activist and entrepreneur)*

I also came back with some things to follow-up on, questions to answer, and goals to achieve:

*Nebraska needs to recruit participants in the **Lawyers for Libraries program**, an ongoing project of the ALA*

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New Orleans: A Study in Contradictions

By Susan Franklin

Desolation and vibrancy. Upheaval and normalcy. Discomfort and comfort. Despair and loss, hope and renewal. The American Library Association Annual Conference, held at Morial Convention Center (<http://www.mccno.com/>), New Orleans, Louisiana, June 24-28, 2006 was a study in contradictions. This, my first trip to the Big Easy, was marked with the eeriness of knowing that the city I experienced is unquestionably **not** the city it was a mere year ago. It was a particularly unsettling feeling. The hospitality industry miraculously accommodated the reported 17,000 attendees of ALA's Annual Convention, but the strain was visible beneath the veneer of normalcy. Everywhere I went, people asked, "Are you a librarian?" It was like being a celebrity; *we* know librarians are worthy of celebrity status...finally, someone else does, too! ALA was the first major organization not to renege on its convention reservations and the gratitude was evident in myriad ways from signs welcoming ALA and librarians to the queries and thanks of individual people. It was an energizing, yet wistful experience, a teeter-totter of emotions.

I arrived in New Orleans at 6pm on Friday. My flight was serenaded by a jazz-playing troupe at the baggage retrieval conveyor belt. My first perusal of the city, as I was being shuttled to my hotel, included boats in the middle of highway medians and a bevy of abandoned cars, towed to (their final?) resting places underneath a freeway bypass. The anomalies stuck out like sore thumbs, crudely displaying a slice of Katrina's devastation. A corporate convention planner later told me that librarians were not supposed to see any of the traces of the storm; the city intended to present itself to us in its best form.

My hotel, The Bourbon Orleans (<http://www.bourbonorleans.com/>), was situated delightfully right in the middle of the French Quarter, spanning a block on the intersection of Bourbon and Orleans streets. I dropped my bags off and hopped in a cab to get to "Many Voices, One Nation: New Orleans," a special event "celebrating diverse literary voices and the unifying role that libraries play in building a literate nation." The program began with a mesmerizing performance by the Guardians of the Flame of the Mardi Gras Indians, a tradition started in the 1880s. The costumes were amazing—feathers and glitter and sparklies—as they chanted and danced into the Napoleon Ballroom of the New Orleans Hilton Hotel, a spectacle in itself. Following the procession, twelve authors, poets and prominent N.O. people addressed the crowd, singing, reading from their novels, reciting their poetry or performing in other ways.

I attended "AASL's Celebrate Conference" on Saturday morning, at which veteran ALA goers dispense pearls of wisdom for relative newbies. Then, I hit The Stacks, the vendor area and started wending my way around, collecting goodies and seeing the latest in all areas of librarianship, knowledge and technology.

Madeleine Albright keynoted the opening general session, at which New Orleans Mayor C. Ray Nagin and others also spoke to thank ALA for its patronage. A \$17 million grant was announced for New Orleans libraries, given by the Gates Foundation, IMLS and the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund. Albright, recent author of *The Mighty and the Almighty: Reflections on America, God and World Affairs*, joked about the lack of technology in libraries when she first started using them: phones still had cords, mail was of the stamped kind, and a web was what you found when dusting in a corner. After praising libraries and their role in democracy, she turned to her book, noting her belief that we have to find a way to reconcile religion with government.

On Monday, First Lady Laura Bush appeared at a National Town Hall meeting on school libraries. "School Libraries Work: Rebuilding for Learning" was sponsored by Scholastic and the American Association of School Libraries (AASL); it was moderated by Lester Holt, NBC News Weekend TODAY Anchor. After much confusion caused by conflicting information about security measures, Bush addressed the crowd of about 1,000. Her message was that schools are essential to rebuilding the devastated Gulf Coast and that libraries, in turn, are an essential part of schools. Bush recognized and praised New Orleans superintendents and librarians who labored to restore libraries and schools before FEMA funding came through. "Never have state school officials and school superintendents had to restore entire school districts as fast as they can without a tax base to refinance construction," she acknowledged. Bush exited directly following her speech, after which a panel of school library experts discussed the challenges and triumphs that have occurred in the aftermath of the storm and speculated as to the work



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office for Intellectual Freedom designed to build a national network of attorneys committed to the defense of the First Amendment, Freedom to Read and the application of constitutional law to library policies, principles, and problems. We could start by sending our NLA lobbyist. (www.ala.org/ala/oif/oifprograms/lawforlib/lawyerslibraries.htm)

More of us need to consider being **members of the Freedom to Read Foundation**, and certainly NLA should be a member. This foundation was established to promote and defend the 1st Amendment and to support libraries in their efforts to foster individual 1st Amendment freedoms. (www.ala.org/ala/ourassociation/othergroups/ftrf/freedomreadfoundation.htm)

Find out what the **Nebraska state law is on child abandonment**. Does Nebraska have a **harmful to minors law**? What does state law say about **holding parents responsible for children's debts**? (<http://srvwww.unicam.state.ne.us/Statutes2005.html>)

Each state is being encouraged to develop training over the next two years in the area of Intellectual Freedom. That will be a collaborative effort that includes the NLA Intellectual Freedom Committee and the Nebraska Library Commission. First on the slate will be Candace Morgan, who will be speaking at the NLA/NEMA Conference in Omaha this fall. Morgan chairs the steering committee of the Lawyers for Libraries program and is vice president of the Freedom to Read Foundation, as well as a 40-year veteran in the library profession.

In brainstorming with other states in our region, **we identified multiple intellectual freedom modules for training needs**, all of which could be addressed independently, and each of which would include a library policy segment. Included were: meeting rooms and bulletin boards; challenges; labeling; USA Patriot Act; media/advocacy; confidentiality; harassment; and youth access.

Finally, SELS now has some great resources and information on a variety of issues from writing collection, Internet use, privacy and library user/usage policies; to responding to complaints; dealing with the media; advocacy; conducting privacy audits; and sample federal forms (warrants & subpoenas) that we'd be delighted to share. I also have quite a collection of statutes and case laws that pertain to access, confidentiality, and other related intellectual freedom issues in case you have the desire to do some legal reading- instead of light, fluffy beach books.



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It's Your Move

www.calliopepuppets.net. The handmade puppets were the most exquisite Susan had ever seen!

Sylvan Dell Publishing is a young company that creates "picture books that excite children's imagination, are artistically spectacular, and have educational value." Each book contains a "For Creative Minds" section with fun facts, crafts, vocabulary and math games. Check it out at <http://www.sylvandellpublishing.com/>.

Find **downloadable "Quotable Facts" bookmarks** at www.ala.org/quotablefacts.

Hastings Public Library has three paperback Mar-Line tower displays (rotor island) and several other heavy duty paper back racks for sale. Price is negotiable. Make an offer. If you want to get an idea of what they look like, check the 2006 DEMCO catalog, p. 652. Contact Linda M. Rea, 402-461-2348, lrea@hastings.lib.ne.us.

Go to www.onebookonenebraska.org/2006programs.htm for a schedule of the **34 Alex Kava author visits** September 7 through October 19. (RVLS sites September 20 & 23—see Calendar on page 6).



Nebraska Library Leadership Institute Graduates Reunited for Knee-Slapping Reunion



Why didn't the skeleton cross the road? Because he didn't have enough guts.

Corny joke, but did you laugh? Did you chuckle or even crack a smile? The attendees of the Nebraska Library Leadership Reunion, July 10, Seward Public Library, laughed as they learned about the important role humor plays in our lives.

Sue Brown (pictured below, right), UNL Extension Educator for Adams County, garnered chortles, chuckles, laughs, smiles, and even that hard-sought-after prize for comedians, the snort, as she talked about Humor in the Workplace.

According to research, Sue said, we need to laugh thirty to forty times a day. People who do so are far more creative than their non-laughing counterparts. The inability or unwillingness to laugh in our daily lives makes people perceive challenges differently; laughers tend to look on the bright side of things, while unlaughers cling to pessimism.

Sue said that we stop having fun in our lives around the fourth grade; at that age, *nothing* is funny and we are unable to laugh at ourselves. Our respective upbringings, including how much humor was present in our homes, influence our adult attitudes toward humor and how we use humor. It's important, Sue argued, that humor not be used to hurt anyone's feelings or to insult anyone's heritage. In other words, *I* can make jokes about my red hair and pale skin, but it's not appropriate for *you* to call me Carrot Top, freckle face, Casper the Ghost, or Opie (yes, I had some pop-culture-savvy peers). Gee, my childhood would have been happier if my peers had followed that advice!



Sue recommended fighting the urge to remember the things that go wrong in our lives; instead, we should focus on what put smiles on our faces. Because the older we get, the more experiences we have and the faster we forget things, Sue suggested keeping a "humor diary." Writing down the humorous events, the gaffes and the jokes that make us laugh will allow us to relive them. Throughout her presentation, Sue shared numerous stories about her family, her upbringing, herself, and her job, all areas of our lives that are rife for recording in a humor diary.

Research also shows, Sue pointed out, that people who are under stress lose their senses of humor and asked us if we had "humor rooms" in our libraries. If we know people need thirty-forty laughs per day, how are we contributing to the quota? We go places where we think we're going to have fun, Sue postulated; therefore, libraries need to provide levity and humor or people are not going to want to come to them. Sue posed an interesting question: is there a difference in the way we program during the

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View the
 “Vital Vibrant Visionary
 NLA/NEMA 2006 Conference”

CRITERIA

The Republican Valley Library System is offering **SEVEN** \$200 scholarships to attend the NLA/NEMA Conference in Omaha on October 25-27th.

Don't pass up the opportunity to apply for this *very valuable venture*.

Scholarship money can be applied to any of your conference expenses.

To apply, submit a 1-3 paragraph essay about why you want to attend this conference. In addition, please include in your essay whether this is the first time to attend an NLA/NEMA conference; what goals you have set for this year in your library; what your favorite aspect of the library is; and how long you've worked in a library (if applicable). Please also provide: your name, address, telephone number, email address, library & position (Director, Staff, Trustee, RVLS Board Member).

- All RVLS library personnel (full-time or part-time), trustees and RVLS Board Members may apply.
- Libraries may have more than one applicant, but only one scholarship will be awarded to each library.
- Applications must be received by **September 5, 2006**. Mail or email your application to:
 Sherry Houston
 Republican Valley Library Sys
 2727 West 2nd St. #233
 Hastings, NE 68901
 rvlsadmin@inebraska.com
- Each recipient will be asked to write a short article about his/her convention experiences for *VALLEYTALK*.

Scholarship winners will be notified by September 15.

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NELLI Reunited

summer as opposed to during the rest of the year? More to the point, is there a noticeable seasonal difference in the fun-factor of our patrons and the enthusiasm with which they come to our libraries? Sue also advocates for home humor havens; we should have areas of our home that are fun (I automatically exclude the kitchen and laundry room from that description!).

In the workplace or at home—wherever you are—if you can laugh at panic and/or crisis periods, Sue argues that you will be able to find more creative solutions to whatever challenges you face. The ability to laugh in the face of difficulty is compromised by certain factors that make us more vulnerable to stress. Sue handed out a psychologist-developed instrument that gauges how vulnerable one is to stress. Factors that influence our stress levels include: balanced meals/diet, amount of sleep, giving and receiving of affection, social/family support/network, exercise, use of tobacco and alcohol, BMI/general fitness, income, religious beliefs, community/social involvement, ability to vent, ability to communicate with cohabitants about chores/money/daily living issues, ability to manage time/be organized, caffeine consumption, the frequency with which one takes quiet time for oneself during the day, and the frequency with which one does something fun at least once a week.

Sue then addressed leadership styles via color-coded working styles (e.g. Blue = socially inclined in the workplace; Gold = orderly/productive). Depending on which style one is, one's approach to humor in the workplace will vary.

Sue also posited that there are only two kinds of people in the world—90/10s or 10/90s—and that *you* are one or the other. The first type, 90/10s, are the people who always have great days. 90/10s look on the bright side of things and are able to laugh at themselves and find the humor in challenging or stressful situations. The other type of people, 10/90s, are those who always find something wrong; they look on the negative side of things. Be a 90/10, Sue urged, and avoid the 10/90s in your workplace.

Most of the crowd had bellyaches from clucking-and-cackling, guffawing, giggling and whooping at Sue's anecdotes and humor-research wisdom. Sue's distilled advice is: keep humor diaries; be 90/10 people; be able to laugh at yourself; and use and encourage humor in the workplace.



Following lunch, Kathy Ellerton, Northeast Library System Administrator, led the group in a team-building exercise. The task: for small groups each to build an “egg-catcher” using only the materials given, which included a piece of poster board, a length of masking tape, two rubber-bands, a plastic sandwich baggie, toothpicks, bendy-straws and two markers. The goal: to build a device that would catch an egg, unbroken, from a height of six feet and to create a sales pitch for said device. Heads were put together, and all of the teams' devices creatively pitched and safely caught the eggs. Brenda Ealey, Tom Schmidt and Nancy Busch are pictured giving their salespitch before launching their egg.

Until the next Nebraska Library Leadership Institute Reunion, keep laughing and finding the humor in your lives and workplaces and keep working as a team to face the challenges and chores in your libraries!



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New Orleans: A Study in Contradictions

that is yet to come.

The most remarkable session I attended was Anderson Cooper's address to a crowd much, much larger than that present for the First Lady's address. Cooper, host of CNN's Anderson Cooper 360 and son of Gloria Vanderbilt, was poignant and touching, articulate and raw in his emotion for the Katrina victims; he had to pause twice to compose himself when tears threatened to overtake him. Cooper began by thanking ALA for coming to New Orleans and for "leading the way as librarians have over the years." He briefly talked about his difficult entry into the news/reporting business and joked that his mother, while brilliant and talented, is not the most practical woman in the world; the sum total of her advice to him was, "Wear vertical stripes [when you go ask for jobs] because they're slimming." Cooper shared that he suffered from mild dyslexia, yet said there was



always something about the weight of words and the smell of books that fascinated him. The balance of Cooper's speech focused on stories he *lived* during his coverage of Katrina and his plea to us, librarians, not to let the world forget what happened there. "The winds of Katrina are still blowing," Cooper said as he choked up, pausing to regain his composure. Although Cooper has made repeated trips to New Orleans since the storm, this was the first time he had been inside the convention center. Cooper spoke of a police chief who slept in his car at a Wal-Mart, a woman named Ethel Freeman who survived the storm but who died at the Morial Convention Center—the very same in which we were seated—for lack of medical care, and an out-of-town physician who stayed and opened a medical clinic for first-responders. Cooper argued that New Orleans is unique as cities go in that it does not attempt to cover its history or conceal the shameful parts. "This city provides a unique lesson in remembrance. New Orleans has never tried to erase its past. New

Orleans keeps it all and just layers the history one on top of the other; even if it is painful, we don't erase it." One example Cooper gave was of a school named after a Ku Klux Klan member; the name has not been chiseled away, concealed; it is there beside the new name. History is alive in New Orleans, Cooper said. The good, the bad, the ugly—it's all there, coexisting. Cooper urged us, as librarians, to safeguard the memories. "New Orleans needs you to remember what you have seen here in your eyes, hearts and concerns," Cooper emotionally pleaded. Following his poignant address, he tirelessly autographed his book, *Dispatches from the Edge: A Memoir of War, Disasters, and Survival*, which I read in one sitting after returning from the convention.

Cooper's speech affected me, as I'm sure it did thousands of others, profoundly. It was too difficult to reconcile the heinous images and anecdotes that he relayed with the Morial Convention Center as it was, rife with bubbiness, congeniality, continuing ed, networking, fellowship, and vendors giving away feather boas, Mardi Gras beads, (non-alcoholic) Hurricanes, and prizes. It was difficult to reconcile the scenery, sanitized for our sake, of the French Quarter and of the luxurious amenities of the conference hotels with the loss and devastation of the natives who stumbled over themselves to make sure our stay was pristine and enjoyable.

Having not been to New Orleans previously, it was impossible for me to get a benchmark for whether the French Quarter I experienced was close to the French Quarter of pre-Katrina; I suspect it's not. Bourbon Street was predictably smelly and rife with revelers and souvenir shops, bars and strip-clubs. One tiny bar, the name of which I did not take note, creatively conjured three drink specials for librarians: the SHH!, complete with a drawing of an index finger placed to lips, was a Sweet & Sour Hennessey; the Dewey Decimal was Dewar's and water; the Bookmark was Maker's Mark and Soda. The bar, which seated about seven people, carries the distinction of having been the only bar that remained open during the entirety of Katrina. The restaurants were fantastic. I had a gourmet burger at Yo Mama's Bar and Grill (<http://www.yomamasneworleans.com/>), an omelet and Bananas Foster so tasty it made me weep at Petunia's (<http://www.petuniasrestaurant.com/>), and a Midwestern-worthy steak at Star Steak & Lobster House.

Everywhere I went, there was a gratitude of emotional outpouring as natives told their own Katrina stories and thanked me (and all librarians) for coming to the convention. The city was awash in gratitude that ALA had the confidence in it to come. Their words, however, did not do justice to what I saw with my own eyes when a fellow Nebraskan, Deb Levitov, into whom I serendipitously ran, and I took a taxi to the Lower Ninth Ward. Our tour guide, a 50-something black woman, had evacuated the

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New Orleans: A Study in Contradictions

Sunday before the storm hit, but her daughter and other family members had not been so fortunate. Her home suffered eight feet of water damage and she returned to Baton Rouge and commuted to New Orleans to drive cab until just recently when a friend sublet his French Quarter apartment to her.

As we drove across the bridge, the landscape changed, the mood changed, the feel of the air changed. Driving through the mostly deserted streets, we saw automobiles twisted and wrecked, rusted and smashed. We saw homes literally lifted into the street, homes so damaged razing is the only option. We saw debris and litter that were once someone's possessions. Offsetting the damage and despair and hopelessness were spots of hope: homes whose owners intended to rebuild. The telltale FEMA trailer signaled the impending rebirth and, often, the homeowners were sitting on the porches, defiantly signaling that they were there to stay. Street after street, we saw the juxtaposition of abandonment and devastation, hope and chance for rebirth. We even had the opportunity to go into a home, the friend of the taxi driver, a remarkable woman who, alone, is raising her daughter's children, 13 and 15. She was one of the few on her block, mere blocks from one of the broken levees, who is choosing to rebuild. Her ranch style home, perfectly landscaped outside, is gutted on the inside and has already been bleached by the government to obliterate mold. She graciously gave us a tour of the inside of her gutted home and spoke to us about her particular story and her decision to return, when many others are not. It was an amazing experience.

As I reflect on my time in New Orleans, I return to the idea of contradictions: the weakness of the infrastructure and the restored surface librarians saw; devastated in the face of the chore of rebuilding and optimism that it can and will be done; vulnerability, but overriding that, the resilience of the city. My time in New Orleans was an educational experience, in more ways than one; it touched my heart, as well as my brain.



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Featured Library: Franklin Public Library

Two years ago, a man came into the library and just looked around and visited for a time. He then sent Linda a letter saying Franklin Public Library would be the recipient of a grant from the Perkins (Kool-Aid) Foundation. So a check from them comes in the mail every year. Now that is my kind of grant writing!

Linda's long time assistant, Roberta Yelken, is retiring so Linda has been taking applications for her replacement. It will be a change for Franklin Public Library as Roberta was working when Linda started.

When I set up the interview with Linda, I was going to go to the public library on a Wednesday in July, but when my husband had open-heart surgery, I didn't want to be that far from home so I called and changed the date. She said who did your husband's surgery and I told her Dr. Raines. She said that is my son-in-law. What a coincidence! And he is a very good son-in-law to have, in my opinion.

As I was walking out the door, I noticed a cute cup with a registration box beside it. It is her mug of the month give-away. Every month, Linda finds a mug that is fun and gives it away. People over 18 just have to register for it when they are in the library and she draws for the winner. She said everyone is just delighted when they win. What a great idea, mugs, books, maybe that is why everyone is smiling when they go to Franklin Public Library.



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RVLS NEWS

Kay Northey is retiring from **North Platte Public Schools** as the Elementary Media Specialist and is being replaced by **Ann Matzke**. Welcome to RVLS, Ann!

Chris Uridil is the new Media Specialist at **Blue Hill Public Schools**. Welcome, Chris!



Don't forget to register for PC Problems & Digital Clicks, computer/digital camera workshop with John Seyfarth, on August 25. See Page 6 for more details or go to http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/system/republican/PC%20problems_digital%20clicks.pdf for registration flyer.

According to the "what's new @ your library," Summer 2006 Update, a "New Household Survey Finds That Americans value Their Libraries and Librarians." This Campaign for America's Libraries survey found that:

- ♦ "Almost 9 in 10 Americans (89%) report being satisfied with their public libraries."
- ♦ "More than one-third of Americans (36%) put the benefits of libraries at the top of the public services list, a 6 percentage point increase from 2002."
- ♦ "Nine in 10 Americans (92%) continue to say that public libraries will be needed in the future, even with all of the information available on the Internet."

BASIC SKILLS: PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The Basic Skills class Public Administration will be offered at North Platte Community College, North Campus in North Platte, NE. Cindy Mielke the director of Goodall City Public Library, Ogallala, will be the teacher.

The dates are Oct. 31, Nov. 7 and Nov. 14.

To register, go to this site or call Richard Miller at the Nebraska Library Commission 800-307-2665.

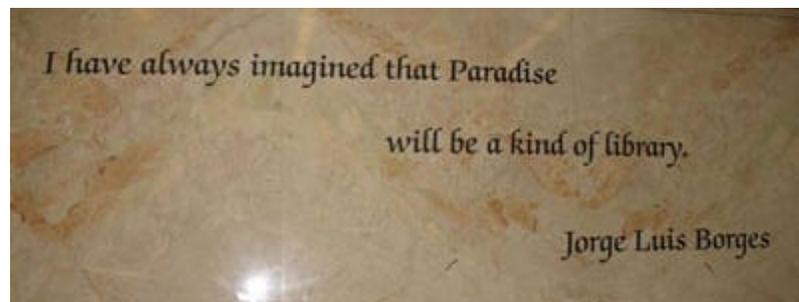
<http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/scripts/training/eventshow.asp?ProgID=7832>

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Perkins Library, Hastings College, recently sprinkled some thoughts around the library in the form of vinyl letter quotations. In addition to the pictured thoughts, "Caution: Ideas Inside" greets you in the foyer and Groucho Marx's quotation, "Outside a dog, a book is man's best friend, inside a book, it's too dark to read" adorns the 2nd floor classroom window. The quotations were purchased from www.wisedecor.com (800-634-0467) but other internet companies or local sign makers will also be able to supply them in a variety of colors and fonts. Pricing is by size of font and length of quotation. The words are very easy to apply to any smooth surface and can be removed when necessary.