

# Rural Library

## Services Newsletter

*Addressing trends, challenges & current issues facing rural libraries since 1989.*

July / August 2007  
Volume 18 Issue 4



### The Constant Advocate: The Rural Library Director

- Do not whine about money, staff, people who don't use the library, etc. Do not send this message out to the public. They don't want to be a part of something that isn't seen as successful.
- Volunteers are the strongest part of a library component.
- People stop in to visit. It is an important part of your role. If you have glass windows in your office, open your blinds.
- Anyone who has ever helped at the library feel they "own" a part of the library — they become advocates.
- Seize opportunities to utilize people's talents.
- People like to go places where people know their names. Call patrons by their names.
- Reach out to the community. Provide projects for Eagle Scouts, Garden Clubs, etc.
- Circulation staff deserve a lot of credit. They deal with all the "issues".
- Trust your staff and their ideas.

[Beth Wheeler Fox. 2006 Librarian of the Year for the State of Texas] See page 6 for more wisdom from Beth.

## THE CRACKER BARREL



### Your Library's Slogan

Every time I attend a national conference I am energized, revitalized and inspired — sometimes just by listening to what colleagues from throughout the country are doing. Other times by listening to well-known authors and entertainers praise libraries and librarians and their dedication to providing library service. Sometimes there are "eureka moments" but many times there are "aha" moments. Like the time at an ALA conference when I attended an "Informational Needs of Gays and Lesbians" session in San Francisco. I shyly attended the program with a colleague, not knowing what to expect, but realizing I had narrow-minded preconceived notions. I sat in the back of the room, and then, like a sponge, soaked in the information that articulate, well-prepared presenters provided. Presentations identified the wide audience that needs information about a segment of the population that might be gay or lesbian. I learned that there are many people who need this information besides the preconceived target audience. There are pastors, councilors, teachers, family members, and the list goes on. It was an "aha" moment.

My "aha" moments at the recent ALA conference in Washington DC included a session on marketing by "word-of-mouth" (see article on page 5 of this issue.) The speaker got the audience thinking about advertising slogans that have become ingrained in our popular culture. Who doesn't know the brand that is associated with the following: *When it Rains it Pours; Just Do It; We Try Harder; Have it Your Way, Plop, Plop, Fizz, Fizz, Oh What a Relief it Is, Does She or Doesn't She?, Strong enough for a Man, but Made for a Woman, It keeps going and going and going.* (See page 2.)

According to "sloganalysis", there are 10 key benchmarks to a good slogan: 1. Its memorable; 2. It recalls the brand name; 3. It includes a key benefit; 4. It differentiates the brand; 5. It reflects the brand personality; 6. It's believable; 7. It's strategic; 8. It's competitive; 9. It's original; 10. It's not in current use by others.

*Continued on page two*

## The Cracker Barrel

*Continued from page one*

Does your library have a slogan? The American Library Association has had successful campaigns with "Libraries Change Lives" and "@ the Library". Some sample library slogans include: "Your information professionals." "Info to go." "Naperville's Neighborhood of Knowledge." "Your Field of Knowledge" (The library's name is "The Field Library".) "Information is Power." "The People's University." "You should go." "Growing, Caring, Innovative."

Choosing a slogan, brand, or tagline can be an energizing exercise for your staff. Try this: ask staff members to come up with a list of action words that describe the

library and it's services. Then, come up with a unique slogan or brand or tagline that can be used for marketing and sound bite purposes. Whether or not you use the slogan is beside the point. The main focus here is to encourage staff members to identify the positive qualities of their library and be reminded of why they do what they do and of the richness, heritage and purpose of our rural public libraries. — SP

## Match the Slogan to the Brand

**When it Rains it Pours**

**Burger King**

**Just Do It**

**Energizer Batteries**

**We Try Harder**

**Clairol**

**Have it Your Way**

**Avis**

**Plop, Plop, Fizz, Fizz, Oh What a Relief it Is**

**Alka Seltzer**

**Does She or Doesn't She?**

**Morton Salt (since 1911)**

**Strong enough for a Man, but Made for a Woman**

**Nike**

**It keeps going and going and going**

**Secret Deodorant**

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# Focus on Trustees

**David Miller**

State Library of  
Ohio Board Member



*David Miller has been named to the National Advocacy Honor Roll of the American Library Association and the Association for Library Trustees and Advocates. He is past president of the State Library of Ohio Board, the Ohio Library Trustees Association and the Wood County District Public Library Board. Miller is editor of the Sentinel-Tribune newspaper in Bowling Green, Ohio. Comments on columns or suggestions for future columns may be sent to him at: [dcmliller@wcnnet.org](mailto:dcmliller@wcnnet.org) or by calling (419) 352-4611.*

**L**ibrary boards are no different than any other volunteer boards when it comes to one aspect — the need for board members to show respect for their peers.

Board members can respectfully disagree with each other as long as the disagreement stays centered on the issue and not directed at the other trustee.

Directing the criticism at the individual not only embarrasses the trustee, but it makes the other board members and the audience feel very uncomfortable. If it happens on a consistent basis it often will lead to resignations not only by the target of the criticism, but also by other board members. They didn't volunteer to have to sit through meetings where people are afraid to speak for fear of being verbally abused.

If it happens more than once the board president should speak privately to the offending board member before the next meeting. If the person refuses to change his or her ways, the board president could consider ruling the individual out of order at future meetings — but that also creates an extremely uncomfortable atmosphere for all people at the meeting.

Another option if the person refuses to quit making personal attacks is to inform the appointing authority about the individual's rudeness. If there is a provision for removal of a board member, this option should be explored.

Actions, or sometimes lack of actions, by board members can also show disrespect for their peers. Following are some ideas to help avoid such problems:

- ☛ Give input when asked — If a trustee sends out a proposal to his or her peers to get input before a meeting, the other board members should not wait until the meeting to criticize it. Respond to the request for input in a timely manner, even if it's to say that "it looks fine to me."
- ☛ Offer ideas of your own — If a board member does not like the proposal, he or she should offer ideas on how it could be improved or explain how an alternative proposal would be better. Just saying you don't like it without giving any advice beyond that is not constructive criticism.
- ☛ Do your homework — Another action that you occasionally see on boards is when a trustee clearly has not read a proposal but then proceeds to speak against it. Board members should never come to a meeting without having read the board packets mailed or e-mailed to them in advance. As long as the packets arrive at least three or four days in advance of the meeting all board members should have ample time to review the materials.
- ☛ Offer to work on a solution — If the board member offering a proposal has worked on it individually or on a board committee, be willing to work with him or her to come up with a better idea. Just telling the trustee to try again on his or her own isn't a good way to treat a peer.

A healthy board environment is one where the library trustees feel free to speak honestly about the issues before the board. Given the issues facing libraries today, and given the problem of never having enough money to do everything they want to do, board members will have differences of opinion on many issues.

A board meeting, or committee meeting should be a forum where brainstorming can occur to find solutions to issues on the agenda. Board members should feel free to offer their own thoughts without fear of being personally criticized for what they say.

## Don't miss these conferences!



### Association for Rural & Small Libraries Conference

September 26-28, 2007

[Holiday Inn on the Lane](http://www.holidayinn.com)

328 West Lane Ave, Columbus, Ohio 43201

Phone: 614.294.4848

Register online:

<http://www.bcr.org/ARSL/registration.html>

#### Highlighted Events:

- ☛ **Not a techie? Not a problem! Practical tips and techniques for supporting public computing in small libraries** Barbara Gersh, Project Manager, MaintainIT, TechSoup.org, San Francisco, California
- ☛ **Finding the public's view of your library—then, what do do with it?** Mary Baykan, Director, Washington County Free Library (2007 Librarian of the Year), Hagerstown, Maryland.
- ☛ **What it takes to be the "Best Small Library in America".** Rebecca Miler, Executive Editor, Library Journal, New York, New York, and Herb Landau, Director, Milanof-Schock Public Library, Mr. Joy, Pennsylvania, winner of the 2006 event.
- ☛ **Looking at the future—is there one for rural and small libraries?** Stephen Abram, Vice President of Innovation, Sirsi/Dynix, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
- ☛ **Exploring the world of American Indian libraries.** Lotsee Patterson, Professor, School of Library and Information Studies, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.
- ☛ **What's a library for nowadays?** Sally Reed, Executive Director, FOLUSA: Friends of Libraries USA, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Breakout session will cover topics such as: literacy services, youth services, online databases, marketing, WebJunction, library staff, trustees, customer service and bookmobiles.

Register today! Don't miss out!



### Public Library Association 12th National Conference

Register online beginning September 2007:

<http://www.placonference.org>

The biennial National Conference is the premier event for the public libraries, drawing librarians, library support staff, trustees, Friends, and library vendors from across the country and around the world.

The PLA National Conference has a reputation for excellence and offers attendees more than a hundred high-quality educational programs, world-class speakers, a bustling exhibits hall, and countless networking opportunities and social events, making the conference one of the most popular and successful events for the public library world.

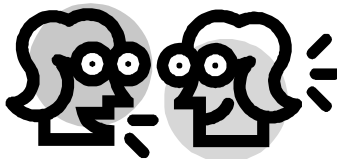
The 2008 conference promises more of the same in Minneapolis, a city that continually tops travel destination lists for its cutting-edge architecture, vibrant arts scene, award-winning theatre, tax-free shopping, and renowned restaurants.

Bookmark [www.placonference.org](http://www.placonference.org) and check back often for updated information on registration, conference programming, special events, travel, and insider tips on everything Minneapolis has to offer.

[Note: The editor of this newsletter will be presenting a program on developing websites for your public library. Hope to see you in Minneapolis!]



## Word of Mouth Marketing



Those who believe in libraries can help get the message across and can, by their own enthusiasm, inspire others to use and support the library. The passionate staff member can be a library's best promoter.

There are a few "must haves" for successful "word of mouth" marketing:

☛ **Good Product:** A library must have a product that is worthy of the energy and the pride of the staff "talking it up". New best sellers, free internet access, new movies, great children's services. These are all service points that beg to be "talked about".

☛ **A Plan:** A library must have a plan of action. Each department must know what the other departments are doing. They must organize and share information. Creative energy should be channeled. With a plan, and everyone on the same page, word of mouth marketing has more of an impact.

☛ **A Clear, Memorable Message:** This message should be strong and consistent and something that you can say and remember... like a slogan. "Please tell your friends." Each employee should have their own personal message. This message is what a staff member would say when people ask them "what they do for a living?" Possible answers: "I'm your librarian." "I get to spend thousands of dollars on books". Think about what you would say. With the traditional dusty/musty image of libraries, it doesn't take too much to surprise and delight.

☛ **A Prepared and Committed Sales Force:** The library staff and volunteers are champions

for the library. Everyone needs to be on the same page. If there is a new service, each library champion should be prepared with the same information to promote this service via word of mouth. Each staff member or volunteer has their own personal network. Consider the "3 Bs" when getting the word out: barbershops, beauty shops, and bar rooms. One key message should be, "Do you have a library card?" Regarding 24 Hour Reference, "We're up when you are."

☛ **People Willing to Testify:** Ask local community leaders if you can quote them. These are real people telling real stories — their stories — about what they think of the library. Put their quotes on the library website.

☛ **Provide Staff with a Message Card:** Type up message cards with facts and bullet points about the library. Make sure your staff is trained in all the resources and services the library offers, including online resources.

[Source: Word of Mouth Marketing is Everybody's Job. Conference Notes: ALA. Washington D.C. June 23, 2007.]

### Sample Message Card for Staff:

#### Your Library Facts & Figures

- ☛ The Anytown Public Library checked out over 200,000 items in 2006.
- ☛ Did you know that the Anytown Public Library provides free meeting space to non-profit organizations?
- ☛ Over 20,000 people used library computers in 2006.
- ☛ Did you know that library cards are free? Do you have a library card?
- ☛ Over 500 children attended library programs this summer.
- ☛ Did you know you can reach a reference librarian in the middle of the night? Did you know the library participates in 24/7 reference?
- ☛ Did you know the library has a fax machine, color copy, scanner and laminator?
- ☛ You can bring your laptop to the library and access the Internet via our wireless connections.
- ☛ The library costs less than \$40.00 per citizen per year to operate. That's less than .11 per day! Talk about value!

## Rules of Brainstorming...

Brainstorming can be defined as a conference technique of solving specific problems, amassing information, stimulating creative thinking, developing new ideas, etc., by unrestrained and spontaneous participation in discussion.

### Key concepts:

**Conference technique** of solving problems — this means that more than one person is involved.

**Amassing information** — this implies that everyone involved has to contribute information. Offer a lot of ideas.

**Stimulate creative thinking** — outside the box, wild and crazy, etc.

**New ideas** — are spawned by the creative juices of input. One thought or idea leads to another. Exaggerate ideas that are offered.

**Unrestrained & spontaneous** — unchecked, free of constraint, unrepressed, say what comes to mind, shout out bizarre and the seemingly ridiculous.

### 5 Commandments of Brainstorming:

❖ Thou must be free to say whatever pops into thou's mind. Every participant and their ideas are treated equally.

❖ Thou shalt share "aha, light bulb and epiphany" moments

❖ Thou shalt not be a naysayer ("that will never work") or a wet blanket thrower ("we tried it that way and it won't work").

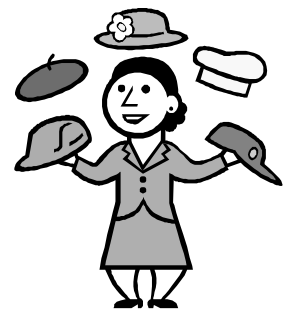
❖ Thou shalt not pass judgment on the ideas offered.

❖ Thou shalt write down everything that is said so thou can go back and read the spontaneous thoughts and ideas.

Brainstorming can result in multiple ideas being meshed to a workable solution. No one person can brainstorm by themselves... they can write down all their ideas, but there is no other participant from which to gain inspiration or bounce off ideas. Be open to the process of brainstorming and embrace the ingenious results! — SP

## Wisdom from Beth Wheeler Fox *State of Texas* *2006 Librarian of the Year*

- Our library serves 25K people and circulate half a million items. We work with 110 volunteers a week. Teenagers make up almost 50% of our volunteers. Over 800 teenagers have come through our volunteer program. They will be library supporters for life.
- The many hats of a rural library director include: flexible, have a sense of humor, be a motivator, diplomat, tenacious, people-person, visionary, entrepreneur, decision maker, organizer, and innovator.
- A person once ran their car into the library and created a big hole. This was a big story and provided a great marketing opportunity.
- You must have a sense of humor. We once lost a \$25K donation check. It made front page news. When the check was reissued it was stapled to a 2'x4' poster. (I guess so we wouldn't lose it.) That photo made the front page, too.
- Hold an "eventless" fundraising campaign. Tell potential donors, "Your \$25 donation will keep you from spending a Friday night at a dinner with a dry chicken." Or, "For \$250 you don't have to bid on a black velvet Elvis painting."
- Recruit volunteers by leaning over the desk. They are flattered. Just ask them.
- Volunteers are crucial and create good will and energy for the library. Consider four-hour shifts at the circulation desk. Volunteers can check in/out, take fines, renew cards, shelve, and help process books.
- Rural library directors are leaders. Beth Wheeler Fox shares, "Sometimes I feel like I'm a terrier dog running behind a group of staff yapping."





## Ask Gayle

*"Ask Gayle" is a periodic column written by S. Gayle Hazelbaker, Director of the Tecumseh District Library (MI). Gayle has extensive experience in addressing management issues in the small public library. E-mail your queries confidentially to: [sghazelbaker@tecumseh.lib.mi.us](mailto:sghazelbaker@tecumseh.lib.mi.us).*

Dear Gayle,

I've been working the library for over 10 years. I seem to be burned out, but there is no other job in our small town. Sometimes I just dread coming to work. I work full time and my benefits are pretty good. How can I change my attitude and start enjoying my job again?

Signed,  
Sick of it.

Dear Sick,

Well, I'm sorry to hear of your dilemma. Working full time, you spend more time at work than anywhere else! To feel as you currently do about your employment makes life miserable indeed. Hopefully, you will find a nugget of inspiration in my answer and get back to feeling good about the library.

A couple of questions for you: Are you healthy? Getting enough rest? Good nutrition? Adequate exercise? Is your life outside of the library going well?

If you answer yes to all of these questions, then we can assume you do have plain old job blues. If you answer no to those questions, seek assistance to rule out depression or a physical cause for your burned out attitude.

For the sake of my reply, I'm going to assume you are fit as a fiddle. Over 10 years is a long time to be in the same job. However, I've always found that working in a small library allows one to do a lot of different tasks, making for a rich and varied experience. Variety is the spice of life. Or so I've read. Is there a job in the library that you've never done? If so, learn how and see if you can't add it to your daily routine. Perhaps you could begin a new service for your community. It doesn't need to be big, elaborate or expensive. Look around your town and be creative. Once you get your mind moving in a creative manner, the spark may return.

Try to remember why you wanted to work in a library in the first place. You write that you want to enjoy your job "again". What first excited you about your job? Concentrate on that, whatever it is and see if you can bring back your initial excitement. Once you get even a glimpse of that old spark, do what you can to fan it and bring it back to a flame.

Most importantly remember that our thoughts create our reality. Sometimes our attitude goes south because we feel trapped. Your letter states that you can't quit your job because the benefits are pretty good and there are no other jobs in your small town. Even with those facts, you are still not trapped. You still have a choice. You get to choose each and everyday what your attitude will be. What you think about your job creates your feelings about it. If you think your job is a drag, it will be. And conversely if you fill your head with positive thoughts, you will feel better.

This is not necessarily easy, but if you keep with it and consistently replace the negative thoughts with positive ones, it will work. In time the positive thoughts will come easier until you won't even be trying. Fake it 'til it takes! That's my motto!

I am confident you can, and will be, happy in your job once more.

Best of luck,

Gayle

## Bookmobile Ponderings from the ALA Conference in Washington DC

### Honor the Past... Create the Future

- Value the people you serve. Providing service to shut-ins should be a priority.
- A bookmobile may not be cost effective, but mobile service allows us to do things in areas that have been traditionally neglected by the library.
- What would library service to the homeless look like? You have to get the library out to where the people are. The success of this service is not measured in terms of cost effectiveness but by the measure of changed lives.
- Specialized bookmobiles provide service to children in child care centers and low-income housing communities. Emerging literacy is crucial in the development of the pre-five-year-old. The children that need the literacy development and opportunities are not coming to the library. The bookmobile needs to go to the places where the kids do not get to the library.
- A "tech lab" bookmobile is wheel-chair accessible and has eight laptop workstations connected to the Internet. This mobile service is used for training for seniors, young adults, low-income populations, new immigrants, and in workplaces where there are migrant or non-English speaking workforces. ESL classes are offered in these locations.
- Bookmobiles provide continued library service when library buildings are closed for whatever reason, renovation, disaster, etc.
- Mobile service is much more than stops in rural areas. Many times the staff and volunteers on bookmobiles are much more than deliverers of books and resources. They also spend time with patrons, laugh with them and are sometimes their only contact or visitor.
- Look for ways to reinvent yourself. Always notice what is going on in your community or
- Bookmobile staff are ambassadors to the unlibrarianly (new word) inclined.
- Consider finding sponsors to pay for the wrapping of new graphics on the bookmobile. Their logos can go on the back of the unit. The bookmobile becomes a traveling billboard for supporters of the service.
- Bookmobiles can be used as training centers for initial employment and work re-entry programs including résumé assistance, teen job preparation and on site assistance with relocation.
- Bookmobiles can be training centers for day-care workers by providing onsite workshops. Teaching day care workers how to do story times will enhance their job skills. Using the children for the demonstration enhances the children's' reading experience. Most staff at day care centers are untrained and unable to get to the training.
- One bookmobile rotates foreign language materials (27 different languages), provides computer with Internet use, works with refugee assimilation, offers ESL classes. This bus has "hello" in 97 languages printed on the side.
- Youth held in half-way houses with other teens and gang members use a bookmobile. They ask for different information. The bookmobile serves as a touchstone to the outside world and the potential they might have for a good future.
- Service points include rural schools and communities with no libraries; visits to second grade classes making sure all children have library cards; purchase a large magnetic sign that says "We're Open" and put it on the side of the bookmobile.
- Give stickers to children, "I visited the Bookmobile today!" or "I heard a story at the library today!"
- Bookmobile librarians and staff are the gatekeepers to information and knowledge.

[Source: Mobile Outreach: Access at its Best. ALA Conference Notes. Washington DC. June 24,2007. Thanks to Cleveland P.L.; Memphis-Shelby Co. P.L.; King Co. P.L.; and library staff from Florida, Texas, Ohio, Oklahoma, Utah, Wyoming, Illinois, Puerto Rico, California.]