REFERENCE SECTION QUARTERLY

A MESSAGE FROM THE SECTION PRESIDENT

Please help me welcome David Calvanico, Head of Reference at Mount Laurel Public Library, as our section's new Vice President/President Elect! David has been an active member for several years and a Member-at-Large since July 2007. We are thrilled to have him in this active position and I look forward to working alongside him for the next couple of years.

We will be having a section business meeting on Thursday, October 23rd at 10:00 am at Seton Hall University's Walsh Library. Since David was voted in as our VP, we now have an open position of Member-at-Large and will be voting in a new member at this meeting. We will also be voting on a new Secretary as Kathleen Devonshire needed to step down. We appreciate all Kathy's hard work over the last year and she has assured me that she will continue to be involved in the section. Thanks Kathy!

The Reference Section is planning several events, so watch for the details and join us if you can.

If you have any questions, comments, suggestions, please feel free to contact me (lcoats@monmouth.edu or 732-923-4537).

Happy Halloween!

Lisa Coats

THE POWER OF CUSTOMER COMMENTS

Next time someone tells you reference is dead, look them straight in the eye and tell them it just ain't so. And you have the customer feedback to prove it!

At QandANJ.org we've been collecting customer comments since the beginning of or project. We have thousands upon thousands of comments collected over the past seven years, and if they tell us anything, it's this: People need reference service and when they get it, boy, are they appreciative!

Here is just a small selection of the comments we received this past year:

"Sometimes we search for things online and just aren't sure where the reliable sources are, especially when researching a new topic. In those situations, this Q and A is ideal because the librarians know a ton of information about reliable sources."

"The librarian I worked with was friendly and knowledgeable. She/he found exactly the information I needed. Thank you."

"I am very happy to have found this service. You know sometimes you just need to get things off your chest in a positive way, after trying so many different avenues you just need someone else to help. The person who helped me was very understanding. I will recommend this service to anyone."

"The librarian that helped me today, was extremely helpful and answered not just one but all of the questions we asked. i would recommend this service to anyone at all. thank you so much for all of your help!! hopefully ill get an A!!"

"I like that they tell you where they found the information. My Mom tries to help and we both try everything before we ask the Librarian… We both think this is the greatest ever."

"I have been trying to research a topic for about a week now on the internet and have reached only too complex or not enough info websites. The 2 websites they got for me in a matter of seconds were perfect for my project."

"Sometimes it is hard to navigate through all the information that the internet provides. It is nice to get help when looking for a specific topic and you don't have a lot of time to sift through thousands of websites."

"Hi I am a parent…. I thank you along with my daughter.. we do not know what we would do without you. We do try google and ask jeeves but sometimes we cannot find what the teacher wants. We know we can get help if things get too bad thank you"

I have no doubt that your customers feel the same way about your service. The question is, are you asking them? Are you collecting their stories and sharing them with staff, board members and funders? If not, you're missing a great opportunity to reinforce the fact that library service makes a difference in peoples' lives.

Peter Bromberg
Assistant Director
South Jersey Regional
Library Cooperative

DID YOU SEE THE NEW QANDANJ.ORG COMMERCIAL?

During the 2008 MTV Video Music Awards on September 7th, the brand new QandANJ.org commercial, "The Knowledge Guru," premiered to rave reviews! To view the new commercial and last year's award winning video, please visit www.QandANJ.org/commercial.

South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative (SJRLC) staff wrote this commercial for a slightly older audience, and specifically wanted to target college students. We also wanted it to immediately catch the attention of viewers, and to be memorable. I really think we accomplished that. Working with a new production studio was exciting, and they let us provide most of the creative input. We are so proud of what came out of the collaboration!

This year, the commercial was shown for a few weeks following the VMAs on several channels besides MTV. It played in the evenings on VH1 and E!: Entertainment Television. We also chose time slots during Cartoon Network's "Adult Swim" and Bravo's "Project Runway." The commercial will continue to air during future episodes of "Project Runway" up until the finale on October 15th.

QandANJ.org, New Jersey's 24/7 free, web-based question-answering service, is supported by the New Jersey State Library, managed by SJRLC, staffed by member libraries in the New Jersey Library Network and funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Beth Cackowski
QandANJ.org Project Coordinator
South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative

Step into the Spotlight

Have you just started your first job at the reference desk?

Are you a seasoned librarian, bringing your expertise to a new library?

Does your experience from another career give you an edge in reference work?

The Reference Section wants to know! Send us a paragraph about yourself, or suggest to a colleague that they do the same, and we'll consider it for our next issue.

New Jersey librarians deserve attention for their skill and dedication. We look forward to reading about you!

Send your story to:
mmaziekien@bccls.org
or
jlichtenwalner@scotlib.org

FREE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FROM THE NATIONAL NETWORK OF LIBRARIES OF MEDICINE

The Middle Atlantic Region (MAR) of the National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NN/LM) offers numerous free classes for librarians and information professionals. Courses cover consumer health, technology, resource sharing, and medical information searching. MAR offers both in-person classes and convenient, 1-hour online training sessions. You can learn more about our educational opportunities at our web site: http://nnlm.gov/mar/training/.

On-Site Learning
In-person classes range in length from 2 to 4 hours, and all are accredited for Medical Library Association continuing education units. Through an in-person class, you can learn how to conduct a reference interview for consumer health, optimize a PubMed search to locate peer-reviewed journal articles about nursing, get involved with patient safety at your hospital, and much more.

Online Opportunities
Online classes are a quick, convenient way to stay current on health sciences information topics. From the convenience of your office, you can dial a toll-free telephone number, visit the class URL, then listen in with your colleagues to a live web conference facilitated by a MAR staff member. Our online classes cover copyright and interlibrary loan, free web-based productivity tools, and NLM's toxicology resources, just to name a few.

Customized Education
We can also schedule a free, in-person or online class to meet your organization's specific needs. We encourage you to gather a group of eight or more information professionals—perhaps through a local library consortium or library association chapter—for customized learning.

Browse our Training & Outreach Calendar (http://nnlm.gov/mar/training/calendar.html) to find an online or in-person class near you. To register for a class, send an e-mail to rml@library.med.nyu.edu. To request a customized class, contact Arpita Bose, MAR Outreach and Communications Coordinator, at arpita.bose@nyumc.org.

The National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NN/LM) is a unique program coordinated by the National Library of Medicine (NLM) to advance the progress of medicine and improve the public health. It fulfills its mission by providing health professionals with access to biomedical information, while offering the public the resources they need to make informed decisions about health.

New York University Langone Medical Center's Ehrman Medical Library administers the program in the Middle Atlantic Region, which includes Delaware, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania.

Abigail Kennedy-Grant
Administrative Assistant
National Network of
Libraries of Medicine

What To Do Now, and Why: The Future of Libraries and Librarianship"

"Hardly a day goes by that a new opportunity or technology or idea comes whizzing past at the speed of light, and most people can be forgiven for feeling overwhelmed and a little guilty for not taking them all on. In this talk, I want to help people to think about what makes the most sense in this fast-paced World of Tomorrow we're now in."

-Keynote speaker Dr. Joe Janes, Associate Dean, Information School, University of Washington and American Libraries Columnist

October 24, 2008 @ 10:30 AM
Rutgers University Alexander Library
Scholarly Communications Center, TLH, 4th Floor

Breakfast and lunch provided

A joint program sponsored by Rutgers University Libraries & Rutgers University School for Communication, Information and Library Studies LIS Program and Dean's Office

POWERFUL BUSINESS RESOURCE AVAILABLE THROUGH NJKI

Business Source® Premier, one of the leading databases for business information, is available once again through the New Jersey Knowledge Initiative. New Jersey library cardholders can access this resource at http://www.jerseyclicks.org.

Designed to meet the diverse information needs of New Jersey's businesses, researchers, and general public, Business Source® Premier offers:

o Full text from 2,300 quality magazines and journals going back to 1965
o Market Research Reports
o Industry Reports
o Country Reports
o Company Profiles and SWOT Analyses
o Regional Business News with daily updates. Regional Business News provides comprehensive full text articles from more than 50 regional business publications (including titles from Crain Communications)

Alka Bhatnagar
Analysis and Trends Analyst
New Jersey State Library

VOLUNTEERS WANTED FOR PHONEBOOK EXCHANGE

What is the most frequently used print source in our library? Looking at the phone book collection near our Reference Desk (yes, we still have one), the answer is apparent. Despite the proliferation of online telephone directories, the public and staff still need the paper versions, especially for the Yellow Page ads and the convenience of quickly scanning all the Presleys, whether listed as Elvis, Elvis Aaron, or E.A. Unfortunately, maintaining only New Jersey coverage now runs over $2,600 (excluding non-Verizon books).

After we received our 2007 Morris Area directories I posted a giveaway/exchange of our 2006 editions on our region's listserv and directly to seven libraries in other regions. Of the twenty-five directories I offered, three are left. As a result of exchanges, half of our New Jersey directory collection is now only a year old at no cost to us. Additionally, our County Telephone Services was happy to take some older non-Morris Area directories that would have been discarded.

More libraries could benefit from such giveaway/exchanges if interregional listserv postings were less cumbersome. Until the technology changes, I would be willing to function as a startup coordinator for such a project. This undertaking would require a volunteer from each region to forward their region's phone book offers to counterparts in other regions, and to receive other regions' offers to be posted on their listserv. Once the offers are posted, interested libraries could contact the offering library directly to arrange delivery.

Libraries attached to or near government offices could request these offices collect and donate their extra directories. Since an area's directories are updated annually in a specific month, this should require no more work than posting or responding to other offers of discarded materials.

If you would like to volunteer, have a better idea, or both, please contact me at (973) 285-6930 x237, or at fsoriano@co.morris.nj.us.

Frank Soriano
Reference Librarian
Morris County Library

Do you have a new reference librarian on your staff?
Let us know!

Did you host an exciting, informative, well-attended program?
Let us know!

Did your library win a grant or an award?
Let us know!

Send an e-mail to:

mmaziekien@bccls.org

or

jlichtenwalner@scotlib.org

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT DESK SCHEDULING SOLUTIONS

After spending two years working on better solutions, we have learned what to look for in scheduling software and have found a solution for our library. For any busy scheduler in the library, the core capabilities are:
*an easy to use interface, to visually see available staff and what they are assigned to
*features to help both the scheduler and individual staff members
*the ability to create different views for print and online schedules
*real-time updates, immediately reflected in what people see

One essential issue is that scheduling is driven by three different perspectives. These three views may conflict with each other, and most software is biased toward one of these differing sets of priorities:
1.Manager (group) view – to create the schedules, see the big picture, make changes on the fly, and print out various scheduling views for staff.
2.Staff (personal) view—to see their own schedule, their desk schedule, and if another staff member is available.
3.User (public) view- to see the library instruction, one-on-one or other service schedules.

The most flexible scheduling packages allow one to allocate staff easily and create views for the individual staff member to use. For the manager, the fastest way to schedule is have a visual view of one week at a time. To accomplish both of these tasks simultaneously, you need to use a two-tier system. Tier one is simply the hours each employee is working on a particular day. Tier two allows you to assign tasks for service assignments to available staff. Many software packages do not employ this system, or a click and drag fea-

ture (the easiest way to quickly make and change assignments).

Creating the schedule is one issue; creating reports or views from the resulting calendar is a separate problem. The "perfect" layout of the calendar is a matter of opinion, but one must experiment with formats and get input from the staff. You also need multiple outputs: personal calendars, group calendars, instruction calendars, etc. It is essential that you can publish these views to a secure website or calendar site for immediate and easy access. Paper versions at a busy library will not do, and remote access to the calendars is highly desirable.

What events do you need to include in your calendar? Think long and hard about this. The tendency is to try to keep it simple, but leaving locations or types of activities off will only complicate matters later. My schedule has 12 tier one locations (including off-campus) and 13 service points (assigned duties). Tracking off-campus categories is important for HR reporting. The more detailed you are, the easier it is to find someone or change what they are doing.

What Software to Choose

After using paper and pencil, then Excel sheets, then MS Outlook, our scheduling grew complex enough to demand a full-featured scheduling package. If you try a web search, you will find many "free" software tools for calendars and scheduling. Those we tried were either heavily focused on individuals rather than institutions, or were far too simplistic. For the best results, try the commercial package vendors, obtain a demo version of their software, and really give them a try. Make

sure that the vendor has already sold and implemented its solution for libraries.

The clear winner for us was Schedule 3W from Dymaxion Research. Schedule 3W helps us handle hour-by-hour changes, which are then quickly reflected in what everyone sees. The interface offers "reports" (31 different views) that we can print, email, or post directly to the web. We have an interactive module on a protected site, so staff can create their own views on-the-fly (the "Web View" option).

Contact information for the software vendors I encountered are given below, along with some of our comments as an input for you to use. Since scheduling is such a distinctive process, please review all of these yourselves. Our opinions are just our own.

Schedule 3W.
www.schedule3w.com.
(902) 422-1973.
The best of what we tried. We are now using this package.

Google Calendar.
www.google.com.
We tried this free, fairly intuitive website. You need to create an account with Google, then have people contribute to it. We found this to be too simple for our needs.

Scheduleline.
www.scheduline.com.
(800) 251-5009.
The folks at this small outfit were very diligent in helping us. The software is designed to handle many people and a huge variety of tasks. Obviously it has been used by a variety of firms, but not too many libraries. I found the complexity to be too much to deal with.

Visual Staff Scheduler.
www.abs-usa.com.
We downloaded the demo version and tried using it with our reference desk schedules. I was unable to output the calendars I needed.

WhenToWork.
www.whentowork.com.
We have heard good reports from some libraries that use this package. I see it mentioned on the listservs.

Schedule Source.
www.schedulesource.com.
(800) 340-0763
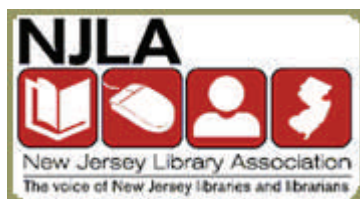Another package that has been mentioned on the listservs.

ScheduleSoft 4.0.
www.schedulesoft.com.
(800) 416-9006. Another full-featured package.

iCalendar.
Our IT staff created a scheduling package for our tutoring center. We looked at ways to modify it for the library, but decided against it after seeing that support was unavailable. iCalendar is noted as a standard (RFC 2445) for the network exchange of calendar data. If you have the IT staff to help, maybe you can create your own homegrown solution. The standard is sometimes referred to as "iCal", also is the name of an Apple, Inc. program. The implementations of the standard include both platform and add-ons for most of the major calendar packages, including Microsoft Outlook.

Mark Thompson
Assistant Director for Patron
Information Services
Bergen Community College

NJLA Reference Section Mission Statement

The section fosters professional development and networking opportunities for reference librarians. Members plan continuing education programs, including a major workshop during the year, programs at the annual NJLA Conference, opportunities to interact with colleagues and tours of specialized libraries or collections.

It is the goal of this newsletter to provide a forum for New Jersey reference librarians, from public, academic and school libraries, to read and write about the issues that they face.

flickr™ **LOVES YOU** + NJLA Reference Section
= Happiness

Check us out at flickr.com/photos/njlareferencesection

We're also on NJLA's new wiki:
http://njla.pbwiki.com/Reference