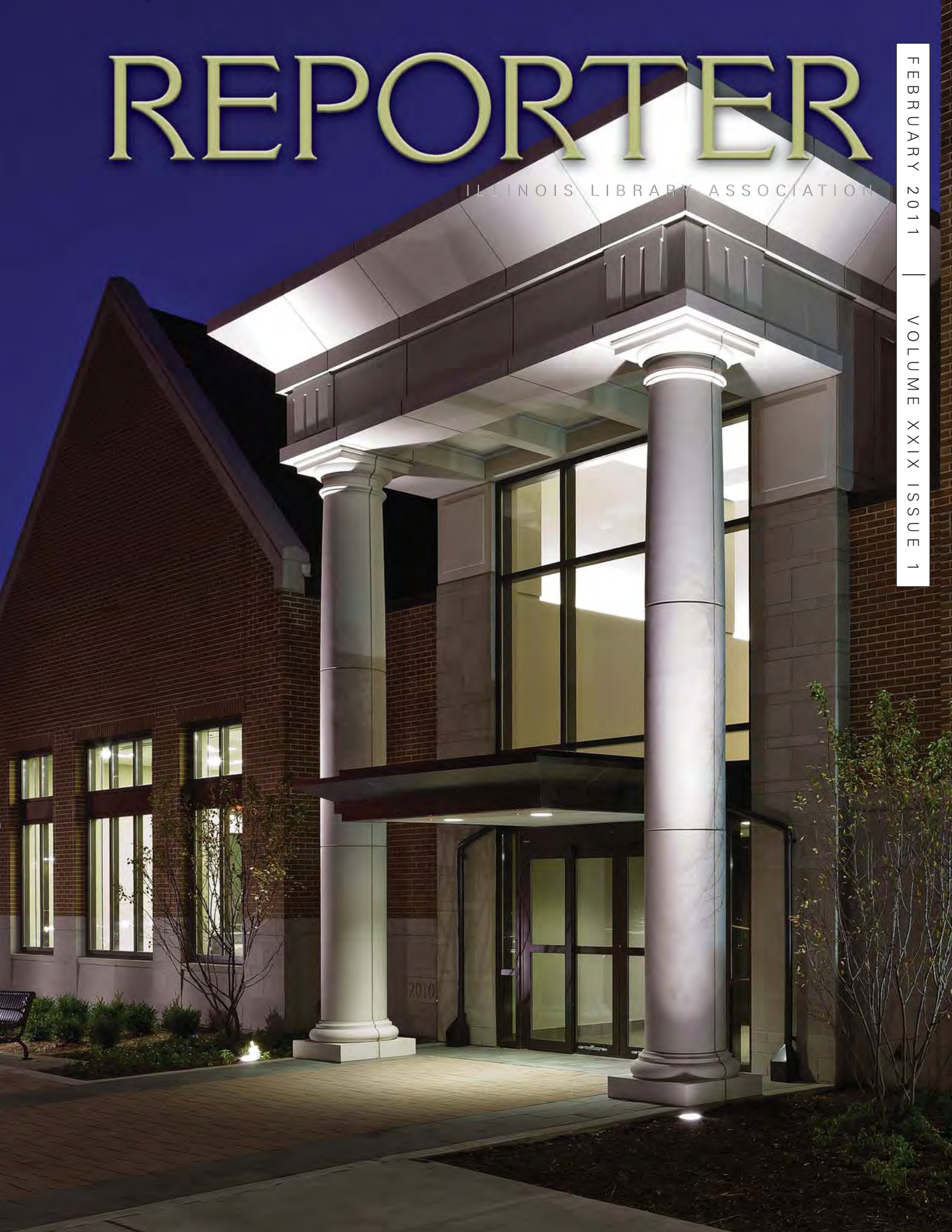


REPORTER

ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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The Illinois Library Association Reporter

is a forum for those who are improving and reinventing Illinois libraries, with articles that seek to: explore new ideas and practices from all types of libraries and library systems; examine the challenges facing the profession; and inform the library community and its supporters with news and comment about important issues. The *ILA Reporter* is produced and circulated with the purpose of enhancing and supporting the value of libraries, which provide free and equal access to information. This access is essential for an open democratic society, an informed electorate, and the advancement of knowledge for all people.



ON THE COVER

Glenview Public Library. Our fourteenth architectural review highlighting new Illinois library buildings or additions; see article beginning on page 8. Photo credit: ballogphoto.com

The Illinois Library Association is the voice for Illinois libraries and the millions who depend on them. It provides leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library services in Illinois and for the library community in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all. It is the eighth oldest library association in the world and the third largest state association in the United States, with members in academic, public, school, government, and special libraries. Its 3,700 members are primarily librarians and library staff, but also trustees, publishers, and other supporters.

The Illinois Library Association has three full-time staff members. It is governed by a sixteen-member executive board, made up of elected officers. The association employs the services of Kolkmeier Consulting for legislative advocacy. ILA is a 501(c)(3) charitable and educational organization.

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Show Me the Money: Privatization and the Public Library

Libraries have had record numbers of users in the last few years, something public library administrators once hoped would be a way to justify budgets and expansion plans. Unfortunately, it is not better staff and services that dramatically boosted our statistics, but the downturn in the economy and the many people who are jobless. Along with expanding workloads, most libraries are finding that funding is drying up. Property values and retail sales seem to drop more each month. Consequently, increased usage comes at a cost, for society and for the library.

Although the unstable economy might raise a red flag about unregulated business practices, some government administrators see a financial crisis as a time to become more “business-like.” This seems counterintuitive to me. I believe in the more traditional and truly conservative idea that public services should be insulated from the fluctuations of the economy.

Libraries are not-for-profit institutions and their overall administration does not fit the business model particularly well. This model promotes efficiency and ever increasing profitability, while essentially ignoring the ethics of our profession. Those ethics are the heart of what we do. Our code includes dedication to the following core values: equitable access, accuracy, resistance to censorship, intellectual freedom, treatment of colleagues with respect and fairness, advocating conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees, and striving for excellence in our profession. (American Library Association (ALA) Code of Ethics, 1995)

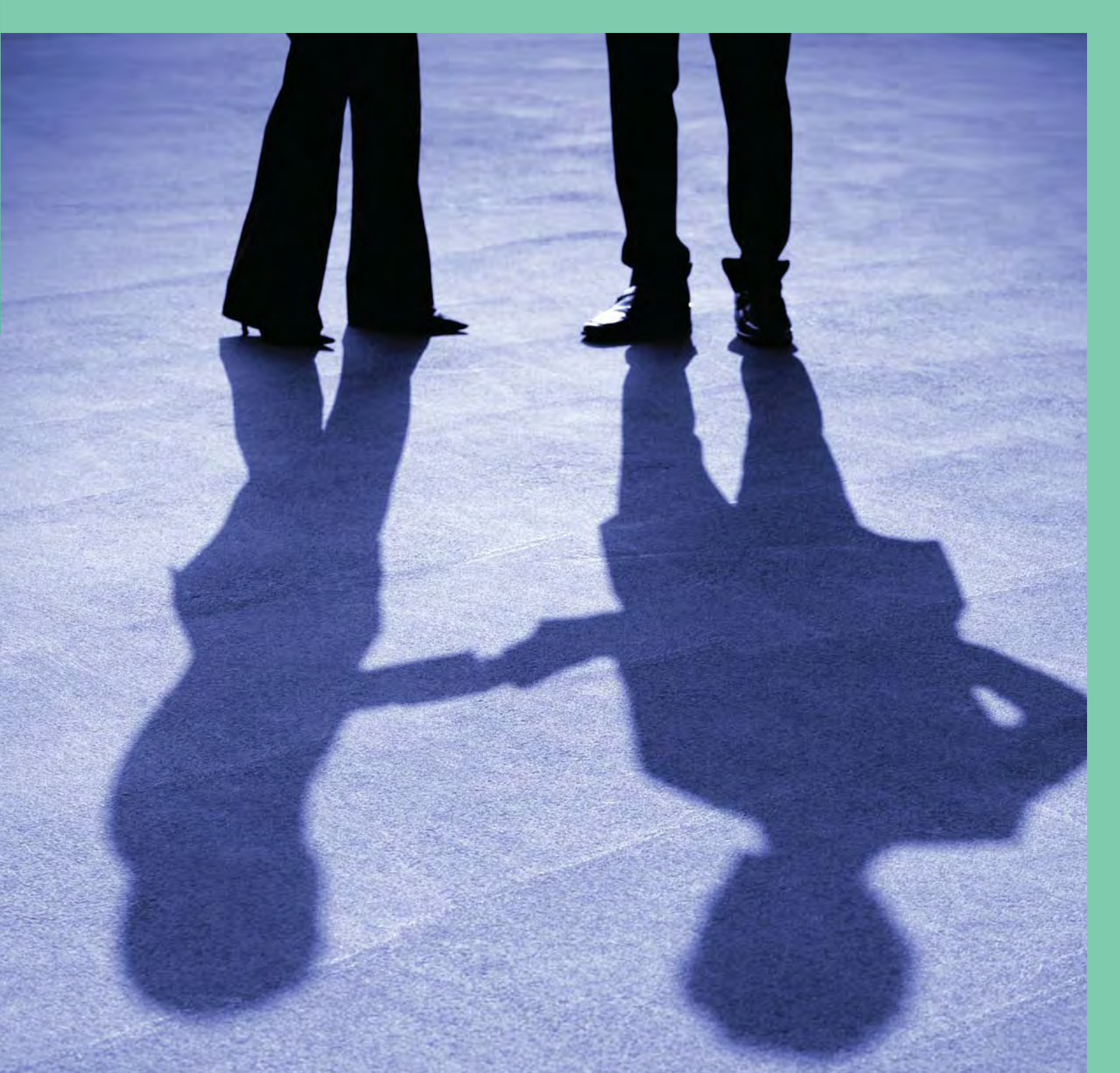
The success and survival of public libraries is due to the heroism of everyday librarians that continue serving the common good, despite the vagaries of a capitalistic marketplace. Government administrators or library boards may believe the cutbacks required by restricted funds are not only justified by the economic downturn, but desirable because they lead to a more streamlined library. This view begs the question of the most efficient, cost-effective way to run our public libraries: to privatize or not?

THE OAK BROOK EXPERIENCE


My personal experience with privatization came through my former role as director of the Oak Brook Public Library. Although privatization was rejected, at least for the present, the Village of Oak Brook Board of Trustees considered turning to an outside, for-profit company to manage the library.

A good source of historical information and theory on privatizing the administration of public libraries is provided in Heather Hill's 2009 doctoral thesis, *Outsourcing the Public Library: A Critical Discourse Analysis*. Hill discusses “New Public Management theory,” predicated on the belief that (1) the less local government intervenes in services that can be provided by the marketplace the better, and (2) all choices are verifiable and result in well-informed decisions. The idea of traditional services for less money and without the messiness of the human factor can be very seductive. (Hill, p. 9) Fire protection, transit service, school bus operations, education, and waste disposal are among the services that have been contracted out to the private sector. So why not the public library?

[continued on page 6]



“Libraries are not-for-profit institutions and their overall administration does not fit the business model particularly well.”



“The question remains:
are the needs of the
community being met?”

[continued from page 4]

Oak Brook’s village board contracted with Library Associates Companies (LAC), a California-based consulting firm with an Illinois office, to report on possible efficiencies to be found in changing how our library conducted its work. The proposal set out to “perform a Workflow Analysis and Staffing Audit in order to make recommendations as to the reduction of library costs by \$300,000 and to explore the feasibility of outsourcing as a possible solution to that end.” (LAC proposal, p. 3) Questions for staff as part of the study included, “How would you feel about a reduction in salary? How would you feel about a staff layoff? Would you offer part-time to full-time staff? What about paying more for health care?”

In the end, LAC did not propose outsourcing or privatizing the Oak Brook library. No public library in Illinois has yet outsourced its management. Library Systems and Services, Inc. (LSSI) is the only company currently privatizing public library management. Despite its impressive marketing efforts, LSSI has a limited and mixed history of success.

According to Hill’s research, fourteen communities in California, Texas, Kansas, Tennessee, and Oregon had privatized both management and staff as of 2009. Four other communities outsourced management only and are no longer doing so; nine other communities explored outsourcing but declined to do so. (Hill, Appendix B, p. 119) A recent article by Brian Kenney in *Library Journal* was critical of a presentation at the Public Library Association conference in 2010, characterizing it as an “infomercial” for LSSI. The session was titled “Outsourcing Public Library Services: Pros and Cons.”

HOW DOES PRIVATIZATION WORK?

Typically, management of the library is reassigned by contract to a private vendor. The contract is almost always written by the vendor. Again, according to Hill’s research, all of the LSSI contracts she was able to locate are consistently similar; some of the municipalities were unable to locate or furnish their contracts.

Observations based on the contracts Hill examined included the following:

- One would imagine a contractual definition of what a well-run library is and provides, but this is absent.
- The language used in the contracts reduces the public library to a commodity and patrons to customers.
- Oversight of the contract is provided by an administrator under contract to the private company; in effect, the desire for less government, less work, and lower costs, leads to scant supervision.

The actual change in management is accomplished by terminating the library employees, with the private company rehiring those they need, usually at reduced pay. The administrator is often the only professional in the library, while paraprofessionals do the bulk of the work. Library staff members are no longer public employees, so no longer receive the same health care coverage or retirement benefits. The vendor’s profit derives from salaries, benefits, and materials budgets; in cases Hill observed, these were renegotiated downward after an initial introductory period. The question remains: are the needs of the community being met while efficiencies lead to cheaper labor?

A SKEPTICAL VIEW

My own experiences and observations have led me to be skeptical of the promises offered in privatizing or outsourcing the management and staffing of libraries. For the community these can be summarized as minimal library services, collections, and professional staff. From a staff perspective, privatization means loss of a job or poorer health care and retirement benefits, lower salaries, and more work.

As to ethical concerns, a private company may decide to use or sell patron records for marketing purposes and feel no obligation to adhere to the ALA's stand on retaining private information. Underserved populations may get short shrift, since the contractor will focus on easily achieved benchmarks of success. Sunshine laws do not apply in private industry. When the public good is not easily quantified, standards in collection development and services become prey to economics and the profit motive.

If that is not enough to make one skeptical of privatization, its history should be. Matt Sylvain, in discussing the LSSI-run Riverside (Calif.) library system, notes that the unit cost for service delivery increased by 58 percent after an initial introduction. Sylvain writes that the Fargo (N.Dak.) library system, when run by LSSI, was delinquent in its bills and the contract was terminated. He concludes, "So with LSSI we could spend more, get less, and send our money to a business hundreds of miles away." (Sylvain)

ADVOCACY AND OTHER RESPONSES

The Friends of the Oak Brook Public Library was against privatizing and protested at several village board meetings, wrote letters, and called trustees. Because of their advocacy, the Village of Oak Brook board members determined privatization would be a last resort, though they retain the option. Protests are not always as effective. According to Hill, "In one community, a library board member called citizen protest of outsourcing the library 'misguided' and that 'it's a normal reaction to change, and people fear change, but we have the best interests of everybody in mind.'" (Hill, p. 81)

What do you do if your governing body is considering privatizing/outsourcing your library? My advice is to be proactive: make the best case you can, and if necessary, make budget cuts and rework your current organizational structure. A privatized library is one that resides outside of the control of the community and ultimately is unresponsive to its needs. Where capitalism reigns, the benchmarks of success have little to do with community needs. Whoever defines a good library and what model to use, defines where the budget is spent. We librarians must remain skeptical of the for-profit world and use only what is helpful to our mission. We cannot embrace a business model that devalues what makes our profession rich and different, no matter the easy enticements that are offered.

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ILA



Photograph by ballogphoto.com



This is the fourteenth in a series of articles highlighting new library buildings or additions. Each year we feature noteworthy academic, school, special, or public libraries whose innovative concepts merit attention.

Please send suggestions for future library features to ILA, 33 W. Grand Ave., Suite 301, Chicago, IL 60654; phone: (312) 644-1896; fax: (312) 644-1899; e-mail: doyle@ila.org.

Glenview Public Library



Photograph by ballogphoto.com

The Glenview Public Library was founded by a group of visionaries in the midst of the Great Depression. From the original home in the historic Village Hall to the move to a permanent facility in 1955, the library has spread its roots in the same corner of downtown Glenview, evolving with the aspirations of each new generation.

After additions in 1968 and 1986, the determination was made to replace the 50,908-square-foot library with a new 85,000-square-foot state-of-the-art facility, reflecting the demands of a culturally diverse population in a rapidly changing technological society. The new library's location, size, design, and function were debated for over a decade. In the end, a plan for the new library emerged — one that looks toward the future while respecting deeply cherished historic foundations.

A VISION, A GOAL, A CELEBRATION

Inherent in the Village's Downtown Development Plan, the Glenview Library was to serve as an anchor to a struggling business district, while providing a cultural center in the heart of the village. Emerging from the formal "Building Program," developed by project architects PSA-Dewberry, Inc. and with input from the Glenview Library Joint Administrative Committee, the vision of the new library incorporated several driving principles:

- Flexibility and versatility of design with respect for fundamental elements of library service, while planning for future technologies
- A location accessible by multiple modes of transportation, amidst downtown businesses, residences, and parks
- Expanded community gathering and program spaces
- Quiet areas of study

An architectural style rooted in historic motifs and weaving in contemporary influences was developed to bridge the different generations that a public library serves. Recognition of fundamental environmental responsibilities was paramount in the planning process — reduction of storm water impact and overall energy consumption, as well as sustainability in choice of building materials, finishes, and infrastructure design were all addressed. A professional work environment for librarians, administrators, volunteers, and support staff that reflects their commitment to the profession and to the community, while fostering ongoing patron and peer-to-peer interaction, were other important considerations in the design.

After a comprehensive site study and evaluation, the decision was made to keep the library at its current downtown location. In order to accommodate the larger footprint of the new building and the additional parking required, the former Post Office and Epcoco Paint Store sites were made available. The village exercised its home rule authority and sold \$26.3 million in bonds to finance the project. An additional \$1 million from village funds was also committed for green enhancements to the new facility.

The construction team was assembled, including the architects (PSA-Dewberry, Inc.), construction manager (Bulley & Andrews, LLC), and owner's representative (The AT Group, Inc.). The library board, director, management team, and Friends organization supported the team. Additionally, a dynamic volunteer Capital Campaign committee was formed, ultimately raising over \$800,000 to supplement the building project. The first community celebration took place with the groundbreaking ceremony on November 1, 2008. The building project will reach completion with the construction of a parking facility on the site of the old library in spring 2011.

A NEW LIBRARY RISES

A labor strike and environmental remediation notwithstanding, the project was delivered on time and within budget. On Saturday, October 9, 2010, the new Glenview Public Library opened its doors. More than 6,100 guests crossed the threshold in only four hours on opening day. During the two-week celebratory period, 36,500 patrons explored the new facility and over 2,000 guests participated in the “Festival of Programs,” a full roster of special activities and staff-guided tours.

The public was introduced to many special features of the new library including the 160-seat community room; a dedicated youth services program room; the teen scene, complete with a plasma TV and computers for gaming; a warm and inviting fireplace, surrounded by comfortable lounge furniture; a casual reading area with a dramatic vaulted ceiling; a well-equipped technology lab; an 80 percent increase in public access computers; ten private study rooms, including one for patrons with special needs; a genealogy and local history room for specialty research; and an inaugural art exhibit in the public art gallery.

Each new feature encourages the library to live its core mission to educate, enrich, inspire, and entertain ... the new Glenview Public Library, a decade in the making and a legacy for the generations.

Fast Facts

Building:	85,000 square feet
Project Costs:	\$28,857,181
Seating:	368 general public; 278 public meeting rooms
Collections:	Print: 237,762; AV: 35,100
Computers:	Tech lab: 22 Public computing area: 28 Teen scene: 4 Youth services: 12/2 AWE Card catalog: 14 Express: 6
Hours:	72 per week
Staff:	41 full-time; 86 part-time
Architect:	PSA-Dewberry, Inc.
Engineers:	PSA-Dewberry, Inc. Cowhey Gudmundson Leder, Ltd.
Interiors:	PSA-Dewberry, Inc.
Landscape Architect:	Schoppe Design Associates, Inc.
Construction:	Bulley & Andrews, LLC
Owner’s Representative:	The AT Group, Inc.
Web site:	www.glenviewpl.org



Photograph by Nancy Sheeber, Glenview Public Library



Photograph by ballogphoto.com

Anne West Lindsey District Library



The new Anne West Lindsey District Library, formerly the Carterville Public Library, was the vision of Anne West Lindsey who was born on March 29, 1914 in Carterville, Illinois. Mrs. Lindsey died on October 29, 2005 at the age of 91. It was Anne's desire to have a library built on her property. Through her bequest, the library received 1.5 million dollars and 5.4 acres of land for the purpose of building a library for the community. Over the years, Anne had many offers to purchase this land, but she always said no. She told the prospective buyers that one day there would be a library on her property — that was her dream, which became a reality in May 2010.

Anne West Lindsey grew up to become a writer. During her professional career, she worked as a freelance writer, reporter, feature writer, and columnist on a number of midwestern and eastern newspapers. The title of her newspaper column was "North, South, East Anne West." She wrote for 125 different magazines in the U.S. and abroad. She was also the author of both short and book length fiction. Some of her stories were made for television on major networks.

She not only taught high school, but also taught professional writing at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. She was a lecturer at various U.S. colleges and universities and a national lecturer and staff member for the American writers conferences.

Anne's mother, Mae West, was one of the first volunteer librarians in the early years of Carterville's history when the library consisted of a room in the local bank. Anne remembered going to the library after school was out and enjoyed her memories of that time. Concerning the library Anne said, "I remembered the room as such a warm friendly place — and have loved libraries ever since!"

The groundbreaking for the new library occurred in November 2008 and the library was finished in April 2010 in time to open on May 3, 2010. The library is approximately a half mile from downtown and is situated in a residential area surrounded by a natural forest. The new library is approximately three times the size of the former building, which had been the library's home for thirty years. The library offers a community room, children's area, media center, genealogy/local history room, and a spacious parking area out front.

In 2007, the library changed from a city library to a district library and now serves 9,676 residents in the new service area, which encompasses the towns of Carterville, Crainville, Cambria, and the unincorporated area within the boundaries of the school district. The library automated its collection in 2008.

Fast Facts

Building:	8,364 square feet
Project Costs:	\$1,756,988
Furnishings Cost:	\$72,049
Seating:	General public: 22 Children's area: 20 Community room: 25
Collections:	33,000
Computers:	General public: 7 Dedicated card catalog: 2 Staff: 5
Hours:	45 per week
Staff:	Full-time: 1, Part-time: 3
Architect:	White & Borgognoni Architects, P.C.
Landscape Architect:	White & Borgognoni Architects, P.C.
Structural Engineer:	Fendrich Engineering
Mechanical Engineer:	Asaturian Eaton & Associates
Civil Engineer:	John H. Crawford & Associates
Interiors:	White & Borgognoni Architects, P.C.
General Contractor :	Evrard-Strang Construction, Inc.
Web site:	www.awlindsey.lib.il.us



The new library was designed and constructed not only to be environmentally safe and energy efficient, but is also aesthetically pleasing, spacious, comfortable, and provides a warm inviting atmosphere for the library user and for the library staff to work.

The library facility provides a geothermal heat and cooling system, corkwood floors which absorb sound and are easy on one's bone structure, a heavy, solid front door that is American Disability Act (ADA) accessible with an assistive device and panic bar, a mold and algae resistant shingled roof, automatic water faucets which control the flow of water, and energy efficient thermal paned windows. In the front of the library building there is an adequate, safe, well-lit, and convenient parking area available during all hours of service. There is a patio on the back of the building where library users can sit and read on nicer days in the spring, summer, and fall.

The library building also provides a balance of natural lighting, direct lighting, and indirect lighting, which provides uniform non-glare illumination. The lighting system is motion sensitive and turns on and off as the library users enter or exit an area.

Photo credit: White & Borgognoni Architects, P.C.



Fox Lake District Library



In orientation and form the new Fox Lake District Library literally welcomes users with open arms, its exterior angles recalling an open book and expressing one of the facility's main purposes.

Located at 255 East Grand Avenue in Fox Lake, the 45,000-square-foot facility utilizes a selection of exterior materials and textures that, with the building's massing, express one of the library board's design philosophies: in aspect the facility should offer both a welcoming embrace and an expression of aspiration and possibility. The architect's extensive use of brick and a rough quarried sandstone in entry and pedestrian areas imparts a traditional feel, while the transition in the building's soaring lines and entryway to sleek modern materials such as glass, smooth resin panels, and extruded aluminum speaks to the future.

An arc of illuminated oval bollards and pedestrian scaled "torch" luminaires distinguish the entry plaza, welcoming users during the library's dusk and nighttime hours.

Typically busy areas of a modern public library are concentrated on the facility's main floor, with the children's room, circulation, and audiovisual areas united by a central lobby floored with ribbons of terrazzo that on sunny days delight the eye with a sprinkling of nacreous abalone chips. The double height entry created by a surrounding stairway invites users to the second

floor adult services area. Patrons mounting the stairs cross a broad terrazzo landing under large lantern style light fixtures that draw the eye upward to a cherry wood lobby ceiling.

The architect's use of natural light is a distinguishing aspect of the library's design. Large expanses of glass on the building's northern exposure and use of fritted and tinted glass allow natural light to enter the building while minimizing glare, heat gain, and utility costs. A row of clerestory windows above the main second floor roof illuminates the adult services area while enhancing the visual interest of the building's second level.

The library's interiors largely utilize warm color schemes and emphasize comfortable seating, with forty-six upholstered chairs distributed through lounge, periodical browsing, and quiet reading areas. Soft chairs with tablet arms facilitate laptop use while power and data plug-ins are liberally scattered through the building, with many positioned below study tables for convenience of users.

A much-discussed feature of the library's interior is the "symphony bench," an enticing wave of formed cherry wood rectangles united by sleek chrome legs. Centered under clerestory windows that bisect the library's upper level, opposite the adult services desk, the bench is occasionally mistaken for a work of art and inspires a frequent question: "Can we sit on it?" The answers is, "Yes!"

A "tree" theme realized in the children's department is among the unique decorative elements of the facility. Large molded glass panels create a tree image in doors giving access to the children's area from the library's main lobby. Laser cutouts in oak, ginkgo, and aspen leaf patterns adorn the backs of twenty-six contoured maple children's room study chairs.

This theme is continued in the children's department with a large "story tree" surrounded by bench seating, crafted by wood artisans as an homage to a much-loved papier-mâché tree that had sheltered generations of young readers in the library's prior facility. This fantasy tree is centered in an undulating cove of low easy book shelving that creates an air of privacy and quiet, and is bedecked with whimsical colored birds that delight both preschoolers and their parents.



The imaginations of young readers are further stimulated by unique suspended decorative canopies in translucent lime and cerulean that ribbon overhead in the children's room, echoing blue and green highlights in the area's carpeting.

Other elements of its design emphasize the library's role as a gathering place and cultural nexus of the community. A 125-seat public meeting room welcomes local, nonprofit organizations as a comfortable meeting place equipped with the latest audiovisual equipment. Off the lobby, a fourteen-seat café provides a welcoming oasis for patrons using the facility for extended periods. The library's traditional role as a refuge of solace and intellectual possibility is reflected in a cantilevered second floor quiet reading room that is flooded with natural light.

The library's written building program stresses that its design should express the facility's importance in the civic, educational, and cultural life of the community. The library board, staff, and community of users feel that the architect has achieved this important directive through distinguished sitting, thoughtful materials selection, and elegant planning of spaces in the new Fox Lake District Library facility.



Fast Facts

Building:	45,000 square feet
Project Costs:	\$15,573,590
Seating:	223
Collections:	Books: 67,653 Audio books: 3,093 Music: 2,265 DVDs and video: 4,150 Magazines and newspapers: 277
Computers:	Adult public: 24 Express Internet: 2 Reference database: 2 Children's: 9 OPAC: 7 Laptops: 16 Staff: 37
Hours:	72 per week (school year); 68 (summer)
Staff:	23
Architect:	PSA-Dewberry/BCA Architects
Project Manager:	Michael Mackey
Engineers:	Larson Engineering (structural) McClure Engineering (civil) Metro Design (mechanical, electrical, plumbing, fire protection)
Building Program:	Richard E. Thompson
Interiors:	Sara Chrzanowski, IIDA, PSA-Dewberry/BCA Architects
Construction:	A. J. Maggio Co.
Owner's Representative:	Norman J. Eallonardo
Web site:	www.fllib.org

Palestine Public Library District



The Palestine Public Library District is located in southeastern Illinois. Palestine, one of the oldest towns in the state, is an agricultural community situated along the Wabash River. The Woman's Club started a reading center in 1973, which in 1977, residents approved as a library. As the library collection grew, it became necessary to purchase a building, an old grocery store on Main Street. By 1988, the library had become Palestine Public Library District and another precinct was added, bringing the service area to 2,446 people.

Quickly, the library again began to run out of space as the material collection continued to increase, and the need for more computers grew. An addition was added in 1990, bringing the square footage to 2,374. Circulation of the library's collection wasn't the only thing happening in the library. Many in the community couldn't afford a computer or had a very slow connection speed, so the library became the place to access the world. Six computers were eventually available and placed wherever there was space. The library was also the only place in town to provide many services, such as photocopying and faxing. The children's programs, which drew more than one hundred children during the summer, had to be held off-site.

In 2001, board president Don Winter appointed a committee to search for options for the library's space problems. The committee suggested a new building be constructed. A site was found next to the new elementary/junior high school and plans were made to purchase the lot. Unfortunately, in 2007, to the shock and sorrow of the community, Don Winter and his wife, Inez, were killed in an automobile accident. Don and Inez left the library \$550,000 with instructions to build the library, but not name it after them. Plans that had begun a few years ago proceeded and bids were accepted. The total cost of the project came in at approximately \$800,000. With only \$73,000 of additional funds available, the dream of a new library still seemed out of reach. But in March 2009, the board unanimously voted to proceed with the plans. Groundbreaking was held in May 2009. Fundraisers were held, grants and letters of support were written, and a local bank offered to loan the library needed funds at a low interest rate. Donations poured in — from individuals and corporations — and by the time the new building was finished in May 2010, the library only needed to borrow \$25,000!



Illinois Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White dedicated the library on July 22, 2010. The new building more than doubled the space which includes an open area for the library's many programs, a computer area with space for ten public computers, a local history/genealogy room, office and workroom space, a partial basement, and study/reading areas. The library is in the process of purchasing furnishings and equipment to fill the new building with a matching grant from USDA in the amount of \$50,000. The community is proud of its new library and visits to the library have increased 40 percent.

Fast Facts

Building:	5,131 square feet
Project Costs:	\$800,000
Seating:	General Public: 45; Study: 16
Collections:	19,871
Computers:	6 public, growth to 10
Hours:	36 per week
Staff:	Full-time: 1; Part-time: 3
Architect:	Myszak & Palmer, Inc.
Construction:	Ellerman Construction
Web site:	www.palestinelibrary.org



Ten Timely Tips for a Successful Renovation or Construction Project

What could a buffalo head, Art Institute lions, musical notes, a 3-D ball, and Santa Claus possibly have in common? For participants involved in renovating an existing library space, each of these seemingly unrelated objects and images represented different experiences, ideas, or memories related to stairways! At a weekly construction meeting well into the renovation of the second floor of the main library of the Palatine Public Library District, the architects and clients who were reimagining and reshaping the space shared these staircase stories as a mark of how far they'd come in finding a common vision. The climate of trust, productivity, clear communications, and problem-solving that had been established was as important to this successful renovation as the blueprints and construction materials themselves.

While every renovation or construction project is unique, the following ten practices that emerged from our experience had a huge impact and led to our success. We share them in a spirit of both cooperation and pride, and wish you every success in your own efforts!

THINK BIG.

Small improvements are both easy and worthwhile. But tackling bigger issues that may have some initial downsides are the ones that can really pay off. In our case, it was turning underutilized workrooms into public space and widening the monumental stair to provide better linkage between floors. Both required inconvenient demolition and a greater amount of construction effort and cost, but they were the changes that made a big impact on actual patron use. The time to think about big changes is at the beginning. You can always scale back if you need to, but you'll miss the chance to even explore if you put them off until you're already under way.

DO A COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT.

Palatine Library began its assessment with one-on-one interviews with each board member, staff interviews departmentally and jointly, and with multiple strategies for reaching the public. Questions included current use of the library, likes and dislikes, operational needs and deficiencies, and potential future changes. Focus groups were held at multiple times of day, at the main library and a branch, and one session was conducted in Spanish. Paper questionnaires for library patrons were supplemented by online surveys. All of the collected data were used to establish needs, goals, and priorities, which grew from actual data and not rule-of-thumb formulas.

[continued on page 20]



USE EXISTING SPACE CREATIVELY.

Consider existing construction and existing spaces and take advantage of them, perhaps with a new purpose. For this renovation, a small but impactful café/vending area was carved from an area that had housed microfiche readers. Located near plumbing lines, the area provided full-height walls that could be integrated into the core area. In another example, a row of unused typing rooms was eliminated with minimal construction, expanding the formerly crowded audiovisual area. Evaluate every square foot of space and make each one count.

STRIVE FOR CLARITY.

The complexity of library functions should be distilled into plans and spaces that have a clearly evident logic. The general public must be able to quickly comprehend the library plan and be able to easily locate the spaces and places and materials that they need. Clarity of spatial organization also assists with security by avoiding hidden corners and provides long-term flexibility by keeping open spaces contiguous. We eliminated remote corners by grouping workroom and office areas, while keeping public areas open and simply defined without intervening partitions. Furniture, including shelving, was used to define the space.

IMPLEMENT GREEN STRATEGIES.

Reusing and repurposing existing building components are green strategies that divert demolition debris from landfills, shorten lead times, and reduce cost. Reused items — such as the millwork, ceiling tile and grid, systems furniture, frames, doors, sidelights, and hardware that were relocated and incorporated into the renovation — match the other building components, an aesthetic advantage. And of course, incorporating sustainable practices supports library and societal-environmental goals.

THINK LONG TERM.

Even if funds do not allow for addressing every problem all at once, it is important to have a long-term road map. This starts with a comprehensive assessment for problem definition and concludes with preliminary plans and budgets for a master plan. Future changes in the library's needs can be considered and (to a degree) anticipated. Priorities can be set, and construction work completed today will not interfere with other renovation needs tomorrow.

BE READY FOR SURPRISES.

Renovation by its nature deals with existing conditions. As-built drawings, even if you have them, may not be complete or fully accurate; systems may not be in the anticipated condition, floors may be unacceptably out of level. Not all conditions can be known in advance, no matter how comprehensive the field survey. Be prepared financially and mentally. Maintain a healthy contingency fund and be prepared to act decisively to keep the construction moving.

WELCOME THE CONTRACTOR AND WORKMEN.

You will be living together for months. Welcome the contractor into your building, making sure that the relationship remains cordial. You may not always agree, and there will be tough discussions along the way, but the goal for everyone is a successful project completion. Expect the staff and workmen to exhibit mutual respect and communicate that expectation at the start of the construction. Make the experience as cooperative and genial as possible.



COMMUNICATE!

The entire team must keep communication lines open, and be clear about who will be responsible for what decisions. Owners, architects, and contractors have well-established contractual roles, but additional clarity should be established early. Establish early on who at the architectural firm has the responsibility and authority to make decisions, provide information, or resolve problems. Who on the library's side will be making the technology decisions, who signs off on any payment issues, and who will be in charge of moving library furniture in advance of construction? Similar role clarification is needed for the entire project team. Weekly coordination meetings are invaluable, as is the formal record of decisions. Beyond the immediate project team, the public and the entire library staff must also be kept abreast of developments. Newsletters, press releases, signage, and blogs are all tools utilized to get out the message during the course of the project.

PAY ON TIME.

Nothing sours a business relationship faster than non-payment. Since libraries have established schedules for board meetings where payments are approved, make sure that both the contractor and the architect know what your dates are. Payment requests from the contractor will need to be approved by the architect and then sent to the library or its fiscal agent for payment. Have a discussion at your first project meeting about how this process will work, so that everyone understands the deadlines. And, make sure your internal processes are clear and timely.

ILA



Are We Still Building?

A Look at the Literature and Around the Country

Earlier in the century — yes, this century is now old enough to have an “earlier” period — the arguments for new public library buildings hinged on library as community center, as well as leveraging economic development. Those arguments are still being used in the post-recession reality, bolstered by increasing usage statistics, especially those that point to workforce development — everything from job searches to literacy and other new skills needed for a retooled employment picture.

Arrayed on the other side of the equation, though, are the limitations of financial resources in the “new” economy, along with some question of future demand. On the resource side most local governments are struggling, private philanthropy is still recovering from the 2008 crash, and individuals are nervous about their own financial future and wary of higher taxes. Despite the current upsurge in demand for library service, some wonder about the need for physical space in an increasingly wireless and downloadable world.

If we compare generalized data over the past decade, there doesn't appear to be a major shift in the level of construction under way. In 2002, *Library Journal* reported 100 new libraries under construction that year, along with 111 renovations or additions. In 2010, the American Library Association's (ALA) State of American Libraries report cited 80 new libraries under construction with 90 additions, renovations, or remodeling projects. In terms of total dollars, \$788 million was the estimated total cost for the 2002 projects, with \$1,138 million in 2009.

While these totals may be lower than some boom years in the 1980s and 1990s, they remain both significant and relatively stable. As with any global snapshot, it's difficult to tell what this means in terms of individual communities, much less how it helps us predict the future. Still, it appears that the decision to invest in library buildings is one being made by communities of all shapes and sizes, in all parts of the country. Looking at how and where and why these decisions are made might help when it comes time for your community to face the question.

MAKING THE CASE

One thing is clear. No community is going to support building a new library without a set of compelling reasons. Fortunately, several national organizations have been working on this over the last decade and there's a wealth of downloadable models to investigate before you start building your own case.

A 2007 study funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, *Worth Their Weight: An Assessment of the Evolving Field of Library Valuation*, is a 104-page document filled with tools and measurements aimed at advocacy. The two major findings are that while a business orientation that seeks to establish an economic return on investment for library buildings and services is both necessary and possible, measures that also take into account the social return on investment round out the picture.

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SAN DIEGO MAIN LIBRARY

LIBRARY

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Worth Their Weight also collects seventeen studies of the economic impact of libraries in communities as diverse as Seattle and southwestern Ohio. One of the report's key recommendations is the need for more sharing of information, suggesting the formation of a "Collaboratory," an online, interactive research forum. At the very least, the report's executive summary, key findings, and key recommendations are a good starting point for any library that wants to quantify its value.

Three studies from the Urban Libraries Council (ULC) over the past decade demonstrate an evolving set of strategies for justifying library buildings. The first in 2005, *The Engaged Library: Chicago Stories of Community Building*, examines libraries as community assets. Addressing both the physical space as a combination anchor and "spark" for surrounding development, as well as the need for libraries to go outside their own doors to draw the community in, the report focused on branch libraries in Chicago.

In 2007, ULC published *Making Cities Stronger: Public Library Contributions to Local Economic Development*, moving toward more purely economic reasons, as well as social ones, and specifically deals with library as place. Examples include integrating libraries into commercial areas, developing libraries as mixed-use space, creating hybrids of school and public libraries, even as tenants in residential developments. The economic arguments cite the stability of libraries as long-term tenants and their noncompetitive nature with other local businesses.

Most recently, ULC's 2010 study, *Partners for the Future: Public Libraries and Local Governments Creating Sustainable Communities*, reflects current thinking on community needs. Literacy, unemployment, small business development, and green strategies are all part of the mix. Given shrinking budgets, building projects that can demonstrate a triple threat — provide economic and workforce development, conserve environmental resources and model "green" practices, all while providing equity of access — are the most likely to succeed.

Madison (Wisc.) Public Library Meyer Scherer & Rockcastle Potter Lawson Architects



“As we enter the second decade of the twenty-first century, libraries still seem to be able to command pride of place. If they need to share that place with other partners, businesses, or neighbors, maybe that’s not such a bad thing.”

A PLACE TO FIND AND SHARE IDEAS

Two major library construction projects currently under way — one in Madison (Wisc.) and one in San Diego (Calif.) — applied many of the strategies described above to good effect, along with finding their own local twists to get the last of the pieces to fall into place. While their arguments document quantifiable economic, social, and environmental benefits, they also make a case for less tangible benefits, some of which can only be imagined.

Madison was well along the way to building a downtown library on a new site when they made a midcourse correction and decided to build from the ground up on the footprint of the old library. Blogging that the revamped plan was the best solution, Madison’s Mayor Dave Cieslewicz called the new library “a place to find and share ideas,” and emphasized both the cost savings and environmental benefits of using the old site.

One of the arguments for the new central library in San Diego is that it “will be a new civic icon that embodies San Diego’s commitment to the future,” demonstrating the symbolic as well as material aspects of a place. With two floors of the nine-story structure reserved for a charter high school, the building also clearly demonstrates the kinds of mixed-use strategies that can bring more parties to the table.

As we enter the second decade of the twenty-first century, libraries still seem to be able to command pride of place. If they need to share that place with other partners, businesses, or neighbors, maybe that’s not such a bad thing.

RESOURCES

Statistical Information

The State of America’s Libraries: 2010. Chicago: American Library Association, 2010. http://www.ala.org/ala/newspresscenter/mediapresscenter/americaslibraries/ALA_Report_2010-ATI001-NEW1.pdf

Libraries: Industry Report. The Gale Group, 2010. <http://business.highbeam.com/industry-reports/business/libraries>

Research Studies

The Engaged Library: Chicago Stories of Community Building. Chicago: Urban Libraries Council, 2005. <http://urbanlibraries.org/associations/9851/files/Engaged%20Library%20Full%20Report.pdf>

Making Cities Stronger: Public Library Contributions to Local Economic Development. Chicago: Urban Libraries Council, 2007. http://urbanlibraries.org/associations/9851/files/making_cities_stronger.pdf

Partners for the Future: Public Libraries and Local Governments Creating Sustainable Communities. Chicago: Urban Library Council, 2010. http://urbanlibraries.org/associations/9851/files/0110ulc_sustainability_singlepages_rev.pdf

Worth Their Weight: An Assessment of the Evolving Field of Library Valuation. New York: Americans for Libraries Council, 2007. <http://www.bibliotheksportal.de/fileadmin/0themen/Management/dokumente/WorthTheirWeight.pdf>

Case Studies/Examples

Albanese, Andrew Richard. “Libraries as Equity Building Blocks: Public Libraries Play New Role as Investment Magnets for Community Revitalization.” *Library Journal*, May 5, 2001. <http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA75220.html>

Webb, Terry (ed.) *Building Libraries for the 21st Century: The Shape of Information*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, 2004.

“A Place to Find and Share Ideas.” Mayor Dave’s Blog, Madison, Wisc. December 8, 2010. <http://www.cityofmadison.com/mayor/blog/index.cfm?Id=424>

San Diego Public Library. <https://www.supportmylibrary.org/centrallibrary/aboutproject>



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Wendy Xie, Orland Park Public Library

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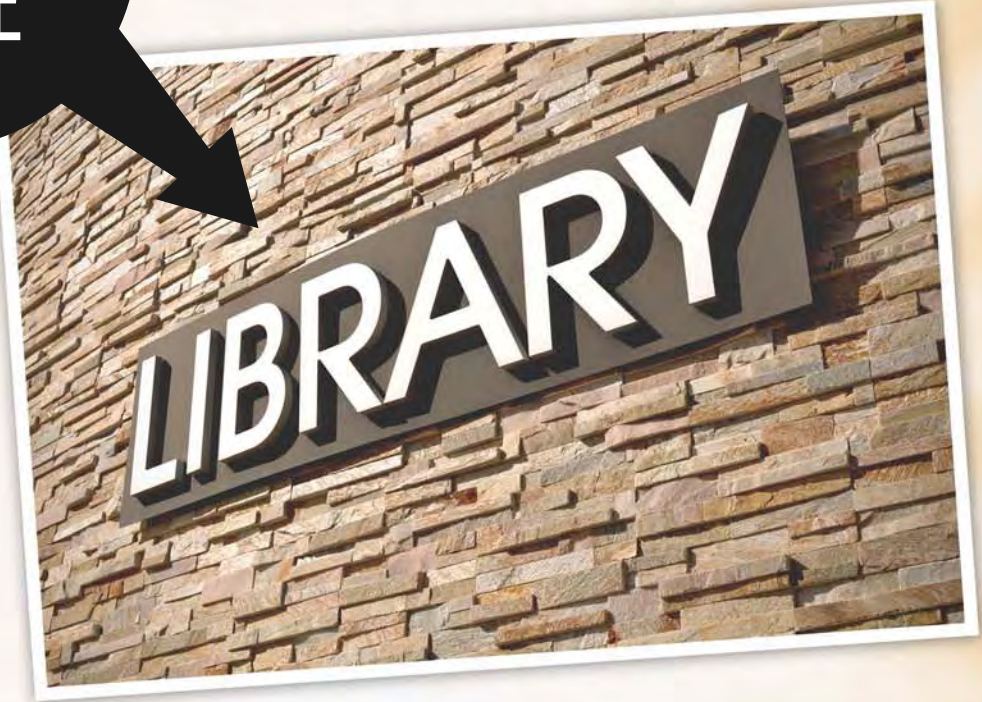
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Maria Otero-Boisvert, Dominican University, River Forest
Daniel Rogers, Chicago
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PLA
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Sally in Libraryland

Whether your library calls it Staff Training Day, Staff Institute Day, Staff Day, or something else, I hope your library has a day dedicated to staff — to offer training, observe significant service anniversaries, and give staff a chance to interact without the pressure of work that has to be done. It's been my privilege over the past six months or so to attend several of these, and while it appears that the goals are similar — professional development, recognition, team building — each library has unique elements in their mix. The one constant is food: there is always, always food. And lots of it! And a great deal of that food, I have noticed, is chocolate.

I've spoken to lots of library people about these events, and I offer you ten things that contribute to a successful Staff Day. Or Staff Institute. Or Staff Training Day. Whichever.

- **Food.** Continental breakfast is always appreciated, lunch is a treat, and dessert is wildly popular. Having snacks available throughout the day is a bonus.
- **Enough time.** Most libraries I spoke to had set aside a full day.
- **Full participation.** When I asked one group how on earth they got 100 percent of the staff there, they laughed and said it was required. If that's what it takes, that's what it takes. At the very least, every manager should be required to attend. Non-participation tends to be a trickle-down affair.
- **A sense of importance to the day.** Not an event for sweats and raggedy jeans, since no patrons are around, but for respecting each other and looking like it. Gail Borden Public Library District in Elgin had live music at lunch. A buffet line with a classical guitar accompaniment elevates the day — and spirits — more than you can imagine.
- **Appropriate room setup.** People seemed to like the arrangement generally known as classroom style, where four to six people are seated around each table, if the space is available to do it. Auditorium style — rows of chairs — did not seem to lend itself to as much inter-staff interaction, and interaction is something many staff value about these events.
- **A training topic that is relevant to everyone on staff.** And if the relevance is not immediately obvious, having it pointed out gently ahead of time makes it easier for, say, cataloguers to see that customer service applies to their jobs, even though most of their customers are internal.
- **Some fun.** Indian Trails Public Library District has a long-standing singing group — the Tone Defs — that entertains at lunch with song parodies that are new each year. A Library Olympics with such events as Speed Shelving (with points for accuracy), book cart races, and puppet tossing (for distance — why should the preschoolers have all the fun?), or a treasure hunt breaks up the day, gets people moving, and gives staff a common topic of conversation for weeks afterward.
- **An opportunity to understand what other departments do.** Often there are afternoon breakout sessions, where staff can attend a storytime, see what steps new materials go through from boxes to shelves, or find out how Circ gets patron holds located, sorted, and available so quickly.

- **An opportunity to get to know each other, and/or the library, better.** A couple of years ago, Brookfield Public Library posted pictures of staff pets, and everyone tried to match pets with their owners — there were prizes! This year people submitted the titles of their favorite books — matching those was almost as hard as the pets! I've seen similar exercises done with photos of staff as babies, close-ups of just staff smiles, and cars! Barrington Area Library had a virtual scavenger hunt, using about twenty photos of things around the library in extreme close-up or cropped-in details. They wisely encouraged collaboration — I believe it would have been impossible for one person to recognize everything! Staff bingo has been popular in several places, and it's always entertaining to see people dashing around a room getting other people to initial appropriate squares.

- **Words of encouragement, praise, and gratitude.** Staff knows that there are always problems to be dealt with and are perfectly willing to deal with them — just not on Staff Day. Most see it as a day for learning something, celebrating the library and each other, and having a little fun with their co-workers along the way. A savvy library staffer said, “If you wouldn't discuss your child's messy room at his birthday party, don't use Staff Day to chastise staff. And if you would? Please don't come.”

So there you have ten things I've learned. Does your library have a Staff Day (by whatever name)? What parts have worked really well for you? What do you wish you could do, or stop doing? E-mail me at sallyinlibraryland@yahoo.com. **ILA**



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If you have any questions about the ILA Awards, please contact the ILA office at (312) 644-1896, or ila@ila.org.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ILA CANDIDATES FOR 2011

The ILA Nominating Committee has announced the candidates for election in the spring of 2011.

For vice president/president-elect (three-year term beginning July 1, 2011 — June 30, 2014):

President-Elect candidates

Charm Ruhnke, Peru Public Library

Pam Van Kirk, Galesburg Public Library

Board of Directors (three-year term beginning July 1, 2011 — June 30, 2014). A candidate from each pairing will be elected in accordance with the ILA bylaws as amended at the 1998 ILA Annual Conference; a total of four directors will be elected to serve three-year terms on the ILA board.

Director-at-Large:

Jennifer E. Bueche, Gail Borden Public Library District, Elgin

Kate Hall, New Lenox Public Library District

Director-at-Large:

Jeanne Hamilton, Helen Matthes Library, Effingham

John E. Sayers, Kewanee Public Library District

Director-at-Large:

David H. Carlson, Southern Illinois University Carbondale

Ellen Sutton, College of DuPage Library, Glen Ellyn

Director-at-Large:

Scott E. Pointon, Des Plaines Valley Public Library District,
Lockport

Alissa Williams, Pekin Public Library

Any ILA member wishing to be added to the ballot by petition may call the ILA office for information. Nominations by petition for an elective office shall be proposed in writing by at least one hundred (100) personal members of the association and delivered to the executive office by March 1, 2011. Candidates for director nominated by petition shall be added to the slate and placed in the paired candidate group that most clearly matches the affiliations of the petitioner as determined by the nominating committee. Petition candidates for vice president/president-elect will be added to the presidential slate as requested. The polls will open electronically April 1, 2011. In addition, paper ballots will be sent to persons requesting one. The return deadline is thirty (30) days after the ballot is postmarked. The electronic polls will close April 30.

Serving on the nominating committee are Bradley F. Baker, Mary S. Pergander, Phyllis C. Self, Sally Decker Smith, Diana Brawley Sussman, Marsha E. Westfall, and Carole A. Medal, chair.

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National Library Legislative Day

May 10, 2011 Mark your calendar for National Library Legislative Day, Tuesday, May 10, 2011. With a new political climate in both the House and the Senate, this is a very critical and exciting time for us to get our message out to Congress. A variety of activities have been designed to prepare National Library Legislative Day participants for an informed and effective day of congressional visits.

Accommodations: ILA has reserved a block of rooms at the Capitol Hill Suites, 200 C St., S.E., Washington, DC 20003; phone: (202) 543-6000; fax: (202) 547-0883; \$249 single, \$269 double, \$289 triple, and \$309 quad, 14.5 percent sales taxes are not included. Room rates include continental breakfast. High-speed wired and wireless Internet access are available complimentary within guest suites. When making reservations, please mention the **Illinois Library Association**. The cut-off date for reservations is April 8, 2011. At that time any unsold rooms will be released to the hotel for general sale. Reservations received after the cut-off date will be on a space and rate available basis only.

SUNDAY, MAY 8

The Association for Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends, and Foundations and the ALA Washington Office (1615 New Hampshire Ave., NW, First Floor, Washington, DC 20009) are sponsoring a preconference from 2:00 to 5:30 P.M. The preconference will feature How to Lobby — Lobbying 101 (2:00–3:30 P.M.) and Lobbying — The Next Level (4:00–5:30 P.M.).

MONDAY, MAY 9

9:00 A.M. Participants may want to attend the ALA briefing day to be held at the Liaison Capitol Hill, an Affinia Hotel, 415 New Jersey Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20001. This full day (9:00 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.) of issues briefings is designed to prepare participants for congressional visits.

5:00 – 7:00 P.M. The National Library Legislative Day Committee has scheduled a Congressional Reception (location to be announced). All representatives and senators will be sent invitations to attend the reception. Congressional staff is also being invited.

6:00 P.M. This day's events will continue with a cocktail hour (6:00–7:00 P.M.) and dinner (7:00 P.M.) at the Capitol Hill Club, 300 First St., SE, Washington, DC 20003; phone: (202) 484-4590. Attendance at dinner is optional. Our speaker will be Susan H. Hildreth, director of the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services.

TUESDAY, MAY 10

8:30 – 9:45 A.M. A kick-off with a brief summary of key issues has been scheduled at a location to be announced on Capitol Hill.

9:45 A.M. The delegation will "Hit the Hill," with scheduled congressional appointments.

3:00 P.M. Currently, the tentative scheduled meeting with Illinois Senators Dick Durbin and Mark Kirk.

REGISTRATION FORM

Name: _____

Institution: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Daytime Phone: _____

Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Your registration fee includes legislative materials, coffee breaks at the briefing sessions, and the Congressional Reception on Wednesday evening, organized by the National Library Legislative Day Committee. \$25 of your registration fee goes to the ALA for coffee breaks, room rental, and speakers; \$15 goes to ILA for registration, organizing the packets, dinner, and Congressional appointments; and \$5 goes for speaker and guest expenses.

\$45 for ILA Members \$55 for nonmembers

\$55 for dinner on Monday night at the Capitol Hill Club, 300 First St., SE, Washington, DC 20003; phone: (202) 484-4590. All dinners will be served with warm breads, butternut squash and corn chowder, seasonal baby greens with tomatoes, cucumbers, and carrots, served with house dressing, chef's selection of potatoes and vegetables, raspberry and white chocolate layer cake, coffee, decaffeinated coffee, and a selection of fine teas. A cash bar will be available. Price includes 10 percent District of Columbia sales tax and 20 percent gratuity. Please choose one of the following menu options:

Stuffed chicken breast, sundried tomatoes, spinach and mushrooms, basil cream sauce

Baked salmon with lemon caper sauce

Vegetarian lasagna, thin egg pasta, seasonal vegetables, béchamel sauce

Method of Payment:

Check or money order for \$ _____ made payable to ILA or

MasterCard VISA Discover AmEx

Credit Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____

Name on Card: _____

Signature: _____

While attending the 2011 National Library Legislative Day, I will be staying at _____ (name of hotel or other accommodations).

Deadline for registration is May 1, 2011.

Cancellations must be received in writing before May 1. Cancellations received after May 1 and before May 10 will receive a 50 percent refund. No refunds will be given for cancellations received on or after May 10. Confirmations and additional information will be sent after the registration deadline. Send payment to the ILA Office, 33 W. Grand Ave., Suite 301, Chicago, IL 60654, fax: (312) 644-1899, <http://www.ila.org/events>.

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10:00 – 10:30 AM Author book signings and no conflict exhibitor time

Session 1

10:30 – 11:30 AM (choose one)

- Author Conversations
- Gotta Love Dot Gov
- Is Your Indoor Air Toxic?
- Diversity Dialogue Café
- Vintage Cookbooks
- Delivering on Yes
- Ten Fitness Myths to Break
- The Adaptability APP!
- The Best of Book-Elation
- Never Put Ketchup on a Hot Dog!
- Yes! Book Clubs Are FUN

Session 2

11:45 AM – 12:45 PM (choose one)

- Author Conversations
- Dramatic Book Review
- Difficult Conversations
- Retirement Freedom
- Service Outside the Box
- 2011 iREAD Showcase
- Fifteen Food Choices to a Healthier You
- Colleagues – an App for That! (Part 1)
- Innovation Starts with “I”
- Author Talk, Robin Okrant
- Point, Click, and Earn

12:45 PM – 2:00 PM LUNCH

Entree will be Cheese Lasagna

Session 3

2:15 – 3:15 PM (choose one)

- DIY for YAs
- Support Staff and Collection Development
- Put Punch in Your Program
- Spine Control
- RDA, the Next Phase
- Informed Investing
- Creating Computer Curricula for Adults
- Colleagues – an App for That! (Part 2)
- Beyond Books
- Living Oprah*: Robin Okrant

Conference costs:

\$125 per person = \$ _____

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◀ MY TURN ▶

| Shawn Strecker, Elmwood Park Public Library |

Smart-sourcing

“Times are tough.” I can’t count the number of times I have heard that phrase in my long and varied library career. I learned how to type card catalog cards at ISU, I have spent hours looking for citations that now would take seconds, and waited weeks to obtain that article on interlibrary loan. Many things about my chosen career have changed dramatically over the years, but budget constraints are not one of them.

Despite the current “tough times,” I can’t complain too much. My library is in a village that understands the importance of the local public library and they value our contribution. I have been asked to maintain a flat budget for the last few years. Flat is better than asking for a reduction, but as we all know, a flat budget is in reality a reduced budget. So I constantly need to look at my budget for places to reduce or shift costs.

At the same time, our circulation and patronage is up 20 percent over last year. How can I continue to provide this increased service with my flat budget? As the director, I need to find a way to shift some of my limited resources to public service. There is the “punish the patron” ideology of saving money by way of reducing hours, eliminating services, and slashing the materials budget. Instead of these, I choose to look for other cost-saving measures that do not affect the patron’s experience of the library. How we purchase, catalog, and process the materials we provide is one such area.

At the 2009 ILA Annual Conference, I attended a presentation called “*Outsourcing Technical Services*” given by Donna Pistolis and Rohini Bokka. After this presentation, I realized that I had found a function I could change that would save money and give patrons better service than they have now. This isn’t a new idea or “rocket science,” as outsourcing technical services has been hotly debated for many years. “Does outsourcing really save you money?” “Will the quality be as good as in-house processing?” These are both very valid questions and very real concerns.

Outsourcing is not an “all or nothing” process; it can be done incrementally. You can only get your books covered or they can come ready to be put on the shelf with records already downloaded to your database. You can ease into outsourcing as you begin to work with your vendor.

When you begin to look at outsourcing technical services, it becomes an opportunity to improve how your material is processed. You should not go into outsourcing with the mindset of getting the vendor to exactly replicate what you do now. Vendors work with many libraries and you can benefit from their extensive experiences and best practices to improve the way your material is processed. Be open to their suggestions.

At our library we are using label printers, our color copier, scissors, and six different kinds of tape to individually process material. For example, for some DVDs we have to copy artwork and literally cut and paste it to get it to fit the special cases we buy for our security system. Vendors who do DVD processing have specialized, sophisticated equipment and produce a more professional product for us that has all the circulation and property information we need on the piece.

Is it a matter of ego? Can no one else process material as well as we can? I am a firm believer in communication between public and technical services so that the material we purchase is cataloged and processed in a way that works for our particular patrons. Outsourcing vendors can offer solutions that will work for your particular patrons and your library. Some of the work gets shifted back to the reference librarians who select the material. They now have to consider at the time of ordering where the material will be located and what exception the vendor needs to make to that particular piece. However, the majority of what we purchase is straightforward and would be the same in any library.



“How long does it take to process a book?” This is a running joke in my library. It is the favorite question of my trustees, and everyone who has ever worked in technical services gets asked. We all answer it the same way... “Well it depends on what the book is, how much cataloging, how much processing, etc.” This is never the answer that trustees or patrons are looking for; they want a definitive answer about how quickly material can get to the library and get on the shelf. Items can reach the shelf in hours or a single day, rather than the days or weeks it takes staff to catalog and process. Outsourcing all or parts of technical services can improve the time it takes to process a book and, in turn, improve your services to patrons.

Outsourcing technical services may offer a better use of staff resources, a chance to improve processes based on vendor suggestion, an opportunity to remain focused on more essential public services, a reduction in operating costs, and an improved turnaround time for getting materials to the shelf. **ILA**

Library Jobline of Illinois



<http://www.ila.org/jobline>

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