REPORTER

ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

JUNE 2010 | VOLUME XXVIII ISSUE 3

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

This illuminated manuscript page from a 1435 French book of hours measures 6.5 by 4.5 inches. It is from the Earnest Calkins collection on the book arts at the Knox College's Seymour Library. For more on Knox College Special Collections, see article beginning on page 10.

Photography by Peter Bailley and MaryJo McAndrew.

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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See ILA calendar for submission deadlines for the *ILA Reporter.* Copy should be submitted by e-mail to ila@ila.org. Copy may also be submitted on disk or faxed to (312) 644-1899. You are encouraged to include digital or film photos (black/white or color) and graphics (on disk or camera-ready) with your articles, which will be included on a space-available basis.

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Illinois Library Association

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Bringing the Outside In … and the Inside Out will be the ILA Reporter *lead articles for 2010.*

As society experiences changes in technology, communication and community, and the economy, librarians are re-examining how, when, where, and to whom they offer services. From education to advocacy, marketing to materials, topics will cover a range of issues important to libraries today.

"How are libraries defining and redefining their role and mission in their communities?" The June lead article by Valerie Stern explores using retail strategies in public libraries; and the My Turn column by Gretel Stock-Kupperman discusses the Customer-Focused Library.

This series of articles in the 2010 ILA Reporter *aims to highlight efforts of the bricks-and-mortar libraries in our communities, businesses, and schools, to adapt to the ever-increasing virtual demands of our society and the evolving ways in which we are learning, communicating, and seeking information.*

Valerie Stern, Ela Area Public Library District

Why We Borrow? Using Retail Strategies in Public Libraries

As the Internet and more retail outlets offer resources that libraries previously monopolized, libraries are taking notice and some are even adjusting their missions. The traditional concept of libraries may become extinct. Rather than being a storehouse of books and a quiet place to read, today's library aims to focus on the needs of a wide range of customers. Believe it or not, there's a science behind how library users are using your library and what they are borrowing.

IT'S SCIENCE

The nationally recognized retail space consulting company Envirosell, Inc., uses the basic idea of environmental psychology, that our surroundings influence our behavior. Today's library users are being shaped by their retail interactions and experience. Our user expectations are changing, yet libraries have been slow to evaluate their spaces and service based on retail experiences and standards. We all know that library usage has risen, but do you really know how your customers are using your library? And, if retailers are using more rigorous scientific techniques to improve their bottom line, why can't libraries?

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TRACKING LIBRARY USERS

In 2008, the Metropolitan Library System (MLS), in partnership with four Chicago area member libraries, received a federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant provided by the Institute of Museum and Library Services to hire Envirosell, Inc., to help understand the changing needs of library users. Titled Customer-Focused Library, the grant studied four libraries, three public, and one academic, using a combination of observation, interviews, and video. Mapping programs tracked and timed visitors' movements and interactions within the library, exit surveys documented users' experience in the library and recorded services used, and small video cameras installed in key areas of the libraries captured behavioral patterns, traffic flow, and wait and transaction times.

The research objectives of the grant were fairly simple — to not only understand visitor behavior, but also to measure visitor interactions and to learn how public libraries can better service and educate their visitors.

SURPRISING OUTCOMES

Detlav Pansch, former director of Frankfort Public Library District, one of the libraries who partnered with MLS for the grant, was eager to participate in the study. "This was a great opportunity to have our library looked at by a nationally-recognized consulting company," said Pansch. "It was a chance to not only learn but to confirm what we do."

Here are some surprising, and important, findings captured from the study:

Visitor Profile

- 95 percent of visitors used the library once per month, more than half visited once per week.
- The majority of library users visited alone.
- 56 percent spent less than ten minutes in the library, a surprising finding more typically associated with bookstores and grocery stores.
- Two-thirds did not know what they wanted before they arrived.

Visitor Behavior

- One-third of patrons visited a desk as their first destination.
- Age affected what patrons did during their visit. Younger patrons used the computers and seldom visited sections with circulating materials. Older patrons were less likely to use the computers and self-check.
- Services and resources used most were circulation (60 percent), Internet access (18 percent), online library catalog use (15 percent), and reference services (15 percent).
- Two-thirds of patrons used the library for reading or conversation, and 15 percent of weekly visitors did not borrow from the library.
- Half of patrons pulled an item off the shelf while browsing, with more items pulled in AV collections.
- 70 percent of visitors checked out books, 51 percent checked out AV materials.

Assistance

- Over half of patrons, excluding circulation transactions, were observed receiving assistance of some kind.
- Finding items on the shelf caused the greatest need for assistance, followed by finding the right section. Less than 15 percent of patrons needed help with guiding research, explaining services, and recommending items.

Signage

- Only 12 percent of patrons viewed library signage. Patrons aged 45-64 were most likely to view signs, with patrons 34 and under least likely.
- Stacks signage was viewed by 45 percent of people who viewed signs.

While some of these key findings might be obvious, such as younger patrons using the library more for computers and less for checking out materials, there were a few that were surprising. Gretel Stock-Kupperman, the staff member at Metropolitan Library System who wrote and coordinated the grant, agrees. "The most surprising finding about library visitors was that about half primarily visit alone, and are only in the library for less than ten minutes," said Stock-Kupperman. "We also learned from Envirosell staff that there is often confusing language used on signs, with a large amount of jargon or abbreviations that meant more to staff than to the patrons." Detlav Pansch concurs. "Signage on desks is often overlooked and too small. The patron waiting can't see them, and the person who is engaging with library staff doesn't need them."

GOING RETAIL

Evaluating Your Space

"The experience we create by scientifically understanding how customers interact with our library can make a big difference," said Mary Beth Campe, executive director of the Ela Area Public Library District in Lake Zurich. In 2009, Campe spearheaded a reorganization of Ela Library's Popular Materials Department based on retail models and research. The monthlong renovation gave a tremendous boost to circulation. Following the project, Campe was often asked if the library bought more materials. "The number of materials did not change, but the retail-like setup showcases the collections in a way more conducive to shopping, including more displays." By implementing face-out shelving, and creating more spaces to gather and browse collections, the renovated space not only met more needs of their patrons but also significantly improved the overall atmosphere of service.

"When we implemented face-out shelving in Frankfort's Children's Department, books circulated 40 percent more than when shelved traditionally. This also alleviated space concerns by frequency of circulation," said Pansch.

Whether your library has a high budget, low budget, or no budget at all, Envirosell suggests these strategies for using space creatively:

- Group computer workstations, lounge seating, and periodicals to create an area for patrons who are waiting for a computer to become available.
- Consider how space is used. Allow for gathering and loud spaces as well as quiet spaces.
- Reevaluate the necessity of sections with little or no visitation.
- Face-out shelving makes retrieval of materials slightly more difficult, but dramatically increases circulation. Consider sacrificing quantity for quality in face-out arrangements.
- Investigate flexible signage and fixtures for future renovations or new libraries.
- Recognize the unutilized or underutilized spaces in the library and adjust the layout accordingly.

"Before the reorganization project, our 400+ collection of magazines was rarely circulated and difficult to browse," said Campe. "We decided to take advantage of cover art and provide a way to pair users with the materials. Simply by relocating the collection and making it more visible and easier to use, magazine circulation has increased 40 percent."

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WHY SOME BOOKS DON'T GET CHECKED OUT

Consider the case of a bookstore owner who is completely convinced of the value of his or her merchandise but cannot manage to sell any of it. An environmental psychologist could observe that, while the books are superb treasures, the store's mood deters spending. The aisles are cramped, the furnishings are old, and there aren't signs breaking up the stock of books into categories, making it hard for a shopper to go from genre to genre.

Environmental psychology is well applied when the bookstore engages in customer-focused practices. Make aisles navigable, easily identifiable, play music that encourages movement from aisle to aisle, and present books aesthetically instead of as a mere collection of books. There's no doubt about it, the longer a shopper spends in a store, the more they will buy.

The parallels between retail and libraries are not that far off. Whether you're browsing for books or shopping for clothing, how we shop will always be the same. Envirosell founder Paco Underhill states that, "how we design stores, use signage, and visually merchandise products is becoming less of a pure art form and more of a hybrid of creativity and science. The challenge is identifying what stays the same and what changes." The more pleasant the customer finds the environment, the longer he/she will stay in the store, the more sections they will shop, the more items they will shop, and the more items they will purchase.

Here are some suggestions for getting your patrons to check out more and return for additional services:

- Bring images into the space to create a more visually stimulating environment.
- Change displays frequently, at least monthly or even weekly, to recapture patron's attention, based on frequency of library visits.
- Group all AV materials together and position the section close to circulation to encourage impulse borrowing.
- Offer more ways to partner patrons with materials. Best sellers, new releases and a designated area for staff recommendations are a good start.
- Find ways to extend service beyond the desk, and get to where your patrons are.
- Consider ways to work within the Dewey Decimal System in order to free up how books are displayed.

BREAKING UP WITH DEWEY

Even before they participated in the Envirosell study, the Frankfort Public Library took the bold step of replacing the Dewey Decimal Classification with a new word-based classification in 2008. In a recent *Library Journal* article on Movers & Shakers, Frankfort Public Library's Melissa Rice stated, "The goal is to improve user experience. Our library has embraced 'deconstructing' our collections and getting down to answering the questions: How do people look for materials? What do you expect to find in a health collection? A language arts collection?" says Rice. "I encourage all of my staff to reevaluate our services, our collections, and, fundamentally, what we do. After all, we are here to serve the community."

More recently, the Rakow Branch of the Gail Borden Public Library decided to follow this theory and place less emphasis on the Dewey classification and more emphasis on empowering the customer.

"We knew when planning was under way for the branch, that we needed to focus on popular materials," stated director of branch services Margaret Peebles. "We use a bookstore merchandising model with face-out displays and browser friendly categories. Using this method, patrons can browse to their favorite category, and staff can still search particular items using the Dewey label."

Peebles agrees that lessons learned from retail have created satisfied patrons. "Overall, when I see a customer browsing the stacks and finding an interesting book on display — one they perhaps would not have noticed before — I feel like that is a great experience for that customer. To me, that is what merchandising the collection does — gives the user a successful library experience."

LOOKING AHEAD

Employing retail techniques may at first feel uncomfortable to libraries and librarians; however, they are not strange to our patrons. Consider visiting one of the libraries above — or visiting another library that is new to you — and evaluating your experience as a user, a customer. You might also consider inviting other librarians or visitors to your community to record their experience in your library. The idea of providing the most helpful service to our patrons is a long tradition in our libraries; the use of environmental psychology is another method of evaluating how to offer the most user-focused service possible. ILA

Illinois Library Laws & Rules in Effect January 2010

This updated edition of *Illinois Library Laws and Rules* is an essential reference tool for librarians, library trustees, lawmakers, and others in need of the body of law affecting Illinois libraries. Included in this edition are laws and regulations that affect local libraries, library systems, the Illinois State Library, the Illinois Records Act, and the Illinois Open Meetings Act. In addition, this edition contains two articles on the legislative process: "Creating or Changing Illinois State Law," by ILA Executive Director Robert P. Doyle, and "Case Studies in Advocacy: Passing and Defeating Bills on Behalf of Illinois Libraries," by ILA Legislative Consultant Kiplund Kolkmeier.

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If you have ordered the publication through the DuPage Library System, Lewis & Clark Library System, or Rolling Prairie Library System, please do not submit a duplicate order.

Jeff Douglas, Knox College

Gems on the Prairie

This lithograph of the New Orleans waterfront by French artist Ambroise-Louis Garneray dates from the 1840s.
It is from the Preston Player collection of books, maps, and prints of the Mississippi River valley in the Knox College library.

The story of classmates from Knox College coming together to build a significant special collection for the college library is one of serendipity and circumstance at the turn of the last century, still benefiting students today and into the future.

Edward Caldwell and John Huston Finley shared a love of books as students at Knox College in Galesburg in the 1880s. In a roundabout way, their friendship led to the creation of Knox's distinguished rare book collections many years later. As undergraduates, they collaborated in 1887 to publish the first catalog of the Knox College library. The college library was then housed in a single room in the college's Old Main. Finley later became president of Knox. Caldwell pursued a career in publishing in New York, where he played a crucial role in the merger of the McGraw and Hill publishing companies in 1909.

A student of the early history of the Midwest, Finley published his *The French in the Heart of America* in 1915. In honor of his old friend's academic career and interests, Caldwell began funding and building a "Finley collection on the history and romance of the Northwest" for Knox College's library. He was in the right place at the right time — New York City in the 1920s — to achieve his goal of assembling a collection of material on "the early history, romance, and subsequent development of the Northwest, the Mississippi Valley, and especially the state of Illinois." New York's network of rare book dealers had access to both European book collections offered on the international market and to early American books and maps that were then prized more by scholars than by collectors. A well-informed book collector with a plan could make a little money go a long way.

The Finley Collection, though, was to become something even greater than Caldwell meant it to be. Prior to the nineteenth century, the histories of the Midwest and the Mississippi River Valley were most often addressed in books and maps on the new world in general. Caldwell found himself collecting the seventeenth and eighteenth century European accounts of travel and exploration in North America by familiar names such as Champlain, Marquette, LaSalle, and Hennepin in as many editions and translations as possible. His Midwestern collection became, in part, a broader collection on the European colonization of North America. The elaborately decorated bindings and fine press work that distinguish these volumes also serve to illustrate the best of the applied book arts over a period of more than two hundred years. Many of these titles include folding maps that would have been the first maps of their new American colonies that European readers would have seen.

Nineteenth-century American imprints documenting the settlement and development of the Midwest, though, were the larger part of the Finley Collection and remain so today. These include immigrant guides, county and township histories, county biographical directories, plat books, view books, and a variety of the other publishing genres and formats that flourished as cheap printing methods developed and audiences for local and regional publications grew.

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Photography in this story by Peter Bailley and MaryJo McAndrew.

Ernest Hemingway's first novel, *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), was published in London and Berlin as *Fiesta.*

George Washington Williams, author of this *History of the Negro Troops in the War of the Rebellion* (1888), enlisted in a Massachusetts African-American regiment in 1864 at the age of 14.

A Victorious Union (1893) was the final volume of 'The Blue and the Gray Afloat,' a popular juvenile series of Civil War novels.

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A MAGNET FOR MORE

When planning began in the 1920s for Knox College's first library building, providing a suitable home for the library's new rare book collections became a central part of the building program. Henry Seymour, another classmate of Caldwell's and another avid supporter of Knox's library, financed and planned the library that ultimately bore his name. The two men worked together with librarian Lucius Elder and the project architect to design four distinct rooms to house both existing and planned rare book collections. In time, the Finley Room and its collection emerged as the centerpiece of the library's special collections. If Seymour Library was the heart of the Knox campus, the Finley Room became the heart of Seymour Library.

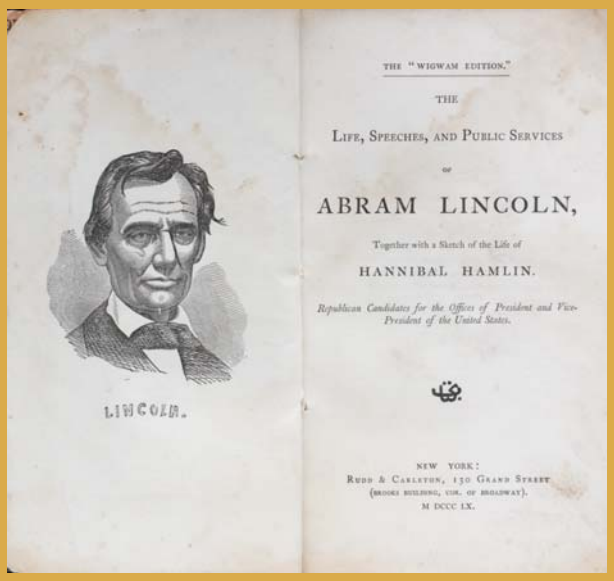
The Finley Collection also served as a magnet for other privately held collections: when Preston Player, a New York engineer and bibliophile, died in 1932 leaving no family behind, Caldwell made a successful case with his executors to send his collection of books, maps, and prints on the Mississippi River to Knox. The Player Collection was a perfect complement to the Finley Collection, supporting a multidisciplinary Midwestern area studies program that began in the 1940s and later included a "Great River" course on the Mississippi.

In the following decades, Seymour Library's special collections grew to include:

- A large collection of Civil War documents, regimental histories, biographies, and fiction donated by Chicago collector Ray D. Smith and his son Clifford. The Smith Collection has grown since 1990 to include material on slavery, abolitionism, and reconstruction;
- A collection of books and manuscripts on Ernest Hemingway and the Lost Generation assembled by James Hughes, president of the Hughes and Hewes art and antiques firm in Chicago; and
- A collection of Edgar Lee Masters' books and papers donated by his son Hardin Wallace Masters.

Perhaps the single most treasured volume in the Finley Collection is Thomas Jefferys' 1776 *American Atlas.* This invaluable collection of thirty oversized and illustrated maps of North America looks back to the age of European exploration in America even as it looks forward to the founding and growth of the American republic. Charles Frederick Strong, a Warren County farmer who began collecting American maps and atlases as a graduate student at the University of Chicago, gave the atlas to the library. In 1985, his extensive collection of maps, atlases, and published reports on the nineteenth-century King and Wheeler surveys of the American West expanded the library's collections of Americana into new geographical territory.

Vachel Lindsay quickly sketched this whimsical drawing of Thoth, the ibis-headed Egyptian god of learning and writing, inside the front cover of a first edition of his *Golden Whales of California and Other Rhymes in the American Language* (1920).



Chicago's 'Great Wigwam' on Lake Street gave its name to the cheaply produced 'Wigwam Edition' of *The Life, Speeches, and Public Services of Abram Lincoln* (1860) — the first book-length biography of Lincoln — after Lincoln was nominated for president there.

THE NEXT GENERATION: STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

From the time the first Finley titles were received in 1924, librarian Lucius Elder began identifying students with the language skills necessary to apply the early French accounts of the Mississippi River valley to their course work. This was the beginning of a long history at Knox of undergraduate research and study built around the library's special collections. Many of the Midwest studies courses met in the Finley Room, immersing students in primary sources on Midwestern history and culture. Though students in history courses, art history courses, and a Hemingway seminar are the most consistent readers in special collections today, faculty and students in a wide variety of the college's academic departments and programs discover new uses for them with every new academic term.

Knox's rare book, manuscript, and archival collections rotate in and out of exhibits in the library throughout the year. In recent years, the interdisciplinary range of the collections and the variety of formats that they include have supported:

- An exhibit illustrating the 1840s Mormon community at Nauvoo marking the completion of the rebuilt Nauvoo Temple in 2002.
- An exhibit of American and European editions of published reports of the Lewis and Clark expedition on its bicentennial anniversary in 2004.
- A comprehensive exhibit of the library's Lincoln Collection during the 2009 Lincoln bicentennial. The library's collection of early biographical sources on Lincoln was assembled from existing collections and from ongoing acquisitions following the founding of Knox's Lincoln Studies Center in 1997.
- Most recently, the threatened closure of the Springfield home of poet Vachel Lindsay inspired an exhibit of the library's heavily annotated and autographed Lindsay imprints, broadsides, and other ephemera.

Today, digital technologies allow us to create permanent exhibits online. The Finley Collection and the Player Collection are the major sources of two recent digitization projects: "Railroads in the Midwest: Early Documents and Images" (available at http://collections.carli.illinois.edu/) and "The Illinois Military Tract: Preserving Primary and Secondary Resources" (available through the Internet Archive).

The Henry M. Seymour Library that opened on the Knox campus in 1928 has been extensively expanded and renovated since then, but the tradition of collecting rare books and teaching with them that began in an era of book collectors and benefactors continues here today. The development and conservation of these collections are supported now by endowments funded by Strong and by the late Chicago antiquarian booksellers Margery Hamill and Frances Barker. All of the library's rare book and archival collections were relocated in 1989 to a more secure and environmentally sound facility within the library. And though the Finley Room is now a group study room, a bookcase there is home to a large part of the nineteenth-century college library cataloged by the young John Finley and Edward Caldwell.

Bob Harris, Helen M. Plum Memorial Public Library District,
Charm Ruhnke, Lewis & Clark Library System,
and **Carole Medal,** Gail Borden Public Library District

Library Districts: The Good, the Bad, the Beautiful, and the Ugly

The past few years have seen libraries all over the state grappling with tight budgets, both their own and those of the governmental units that support or control them. Most public libraries in Illinois fall into one of two categories — municipal libraries that are part of an overall city, village, or township budget, or library districts that have independent levying authority. Just to put this in context, slightly more than half of the state's public libraries are library districts.

State law governs both entities to some extent, but rather than looking at this from a strictly legalistic point of view, the *ILA Reporter* decided to ask a few people with extensive experience in forming, working with, or operating library districts to try and simplify a complex subject into some manageable information.

The three ILA members who helped develop this Q&A are Bob Harris, Helen M. Plum Memorial Public Library District (Lombard); Carole Medal, Gail Borden Public Library District (Elgin); and Charm Ruhnke, Lewis & Clark Library System (Edwardsville). Collectively, they have extensive and varied experiences with both types of libraries and generously agreed to share information and insights.

Q: What is your own personal experience with library districts?

Ruhnke: As a Lewis & Clark Library System consultant, I have worked with five groups establishing library districts in their communities, eleven others converting from municipal to district, and with six libraries already having district status. I have also worked with several communities interested in creating a library within their area.

Medal: I worked in municipal libraries for twenty-four years of my career and have now been in a library district for the past five years. I much prefer the library district.

Harris: I was director of the Bartlett Public Library District from 1978 to 1980. As director of the Helen M. Plum Memorial Library, I recently oversaw its conversion to a library district.

Q: What would your first piece of advice be to a library considering district status?

Ruhnke: Think about why you are considering district status. After the library's original establishment, this is the biggest decision or change to a library. Ask yourself, what is the current relationship between your library and the municipality? Is it a friendly, working relationship? Is it adversarial? How will district status change the issues the library is facing?

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"Think about why you are considering district status. After the library's original establishment, this is the biggest decision or change to a library."

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Harris: Get a copy of the *Public Library District Handbook* (December 2009) available from the Shawnee Library Web site (http://www.lcls.org/2009/09/expansion-of-library-services) and read it.

Q: What are some of the reasons a library might choose district status?

Harris: Assuming it's the library's own choice, the best reason is to extend library service into unserved areas. A "second best" reason is to divorce from the municipality, in case political and/or administrative working relationships have become unworkable, or for financial reasons.

Ruhnke: In my experience, independence from municipal politics and bringing library service to unserved areas via annexation to the district are main reasons a library becomes a district. Interestingly, independence from municipal politics seems to be the most frequent reason. Sometimes, the library does not want to become a library district, the municipality is the instigator for the conversion.

Medal: A district library is not subject to decisions made by a separate elected body that may or may not have the library's (and therefore the community's) best interests at heart. Unfortunately, too often these elected officials and the staff that report to them have little knowledge about library operations and, even given the opportunity, they don't really want to learn. They do not realize the impact their decisions have on the community because more often than not, they are not library users. The only time their decisions (that have adversely affected the library) are changed is if the community rises up in force to take issue with their action(s).

Q: Is there a typical first step or steps in the process?

Ruhnke: First, learn about the establishment/conversion steps, by talking with your library system, reading *Public Library District Handbook* (December 2009), talking with other library districts, and, of course, reading 75 ILCS 16 et seq., which is the Illinois law that governs establishment of library districts. Next, the trustees need to discuss their concerns and hopes for the new district. Before any official decision is reached, the library trustees must talk with an attorney familiar with library district law.

"A district library is not subject to decisions made by a separate elected body that may or may not have the library's (and therefore the community's) best interests at heart."

Harris: First read the *Handbook,* and then inform the library's lawyer of your interest in converting. Learn about every single thing the municipality does for the library currently at little or no financial cost, which the library district would have to pay for. These could include everything from Tax Increment Financing (TIF) rebates and personal property replacement tax, to paying for (or arranging for free) utility costs, health insurance, building and grounds maintenance, payroll and audit costs, retirement funding, legal costs, etc. Then do some financial forecasting for the next few years. Also, make sure existing intergovernmental agreements will still be in place after the conversion.

Q: What do you think are the most important benefits/drawbacks?

Medal: With a district library, there are no "go-betweens" or "middlemen." The library has a direct financial relationship with its taxpayers. Oftentimes this means that there is more administrative work, and the costs associated with it, that falls on a library district. However, even this is changing, as municipalities begin requiring their libraries to pay "their fair share" for services previously done by the municipality at no cost to the library.

I like to think of library districts as being "masters of their own fate." Yes, we are working under the burden of tax caps and we must pay for our own electricity, not having the advantage of the municipal franchises with the utility companies. But, most importantly, the library district has control over all its decisions and it has the power to plan without being thrown a curve ball at the eleventh hour in the budget process.

Ruhnke: Independence. This is both an important benefit, and a drawback. Not having the municipality as a possible safety net is scary. But not having the municipality micromanage the library is a benefit. For some city libraries, another drawback is the elected library board; this will be the first time some have ever filed petitions for a trustee election. For other libraries, an elected library board is exactly what is needed.

Harris: Benefits include the possibility of extending library service to the unserved beyond municipal boundaries, freedom to hold referenda without municipal approval, and freedom from control or interference by the municipality in library business. Drawbacks include additional costs for things not currently funded by the library, additional legal fees for help with the budget process and trustee elections, having to learn new ways of doing things, and additional staff time during the election process. It also can be very expensive for legal fees during the year before conversion, as one makes sure everything is in place.

Q: In your experience, how do municipalities react to libraries choosing to pursue district status? How does the public react?

Ruhnke: Municipalities tend to be ecstatic. They want the library off the municipality's tax levy, so encourage the library to convert to district status. I worked with one conversion where the municipality was ready to pass the ordinance before the library board had a chance to adopt the conversion resolution (75 ILCS 16/10-15)! That was an easy conversion. Infrequently, the municipality erects roadblocks due to negative publicity concerns; they are afraid the community will be unhappy the library is "leaving" the municipality.

Harris: The municipality requested our conversion, to meet their own needs, and they were pleased we agreed to convert. The public's reaction was a request for information on what this means in the first place (difference between village and district libraries), why we are doing this, how this would change their usage of the library, and learning what it would cost them (will my taxes increase?).

Q: Can you comment on types of costs involved, both up front and operating costs?

Ruhnke: The library will have attorney and court filing fees. Another possible cost is the legal description survey. Over time, the library's new name is changed on the borrower cards, stationary, building sign, etc., but the costs related to name-change can be spread over several years. If the municipality paid for any of the library's utilities or maintenance, this cost moves to the library district.

Harris: We incurred huge legal fees during the twelve months before conversion, as we had many questions and wanted to make sure we thought of everything that goes into the final court order that allows conversion. In our case, the library already paid for everything ourselves (health insurance, audit, most utilities, grounds maintenance, payroll, etc.). The only new cost is paying an electric bill, and some first-year legal fees.

Q: Can you give some idea of how long the process may take?

Ruhnke: The process can be as short as sixty days or take years. The actual legal process is short, sixty to ninety days maximum depending on the court date. However, the discussion between library and municipality concerning district conversion may cover years.

Harris: It took us about twelve months from the time the village requested this, until the December 1, 2010, court date, at which time the court order was entered creating the library district. However, beyond that, figure eighteen months (after conversion) before the library district gets its own income from a levy as a district library.

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[continued from page 17]

Q: What does a library need in terms of outside assistance — lawyers, accountants, advisors, etc.?

Ruhnke: The library needs an attorney familiar with library district law, ideally one who has assisted other libraries to either establish or convert to library district status. While the process is straightforward, for many circuit court judges and county clerks, this is their first experience with the forms and petitions involved with district conversion. Having an experienced lawyer helps the process.

Harris: Legal advice, and possibly a financial consulting firm that is well versed in library finance. On a few occasions, I sought advice from Charm Ruhnke or Denise Zielinski, DuPage Library System.

Q: This gets pretty technical, but if you can, describe or comment on the "switch over" from the standpoint of tax revenue.

Ruhnke: The tax levy deadline is December of any year. So when a library converts to district it remains under the tax levy that was filed the prior December, receiving that tax revenue as usual. The new district has the responsibility to file its tax levy by the next, upcoming December. An experienced attorney is critical to ensure the district has all the appropriate budget and tax levy ordinances accurately completed. The Illinois Statutes indicate the library's tax levy continues: *"In any county or counties in which more than one year will elapse between the effective date of the final order entered by the circuit court and the levy of an annual public library tax of the district library created as a result of a conversion, the corporate authority of the public tax supported library shall continue the library's tax."* (75 ILCS 16/10-50; see also 16/5-45, 16/5-40.

It is different if the library is a newly established library district, where prior library service did not exist. In this instance, the new library district will not receive any tax revenue until the summer after their first tax levy ordinance (December of any year). So the library district might be without income for nearly a year.

By the way, if the municipal library received corporate personal property replacement funds, the library district will also receive the personal property replacement funds; 75 ILCS 16/10-45 (a) specifically addresses this issue. The Illinois Department of Revenue can answer questions on this issue.

Harris: The Village of Lombard historically levied the library's employer's share of IMRF/FICA/Medicare. This amounted in tax year 2008 to about $312,000. The court order "transferred over" that amount from the Village of Lombard levy to the Plum Library District levy, effective with tax year 2010 (taxes to be received June 1, 2011). On the 2010 tax bills, the village's levy should decrease by $312,000, and the library's levy should increase by $312,000. We are non-home rule, governed by the Property Tax Cap law, and all else remains as it would normally under the tax cap.

"The library needs an attorney familiar with library district law, ideally one who has assisted other libraries to either establish or convert to library district status."

WHAT EVERY LIBRARY WANTS TO KNOW (BUT IS AFRAID TO ASK) ABOUT BECOMING A LIBRARY DISTRICT

Q: Why didn't you make us do this years ago?

Ruhnke: When a library asks me this (as many do,) I just smile.

Harris: For my library, I'm glad we didn't do it until now. At this time, as Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) costs soar, as a new district we will only be charged about eight percent for the employer's share.

Q: Do we still receive the Personal Property Replacement taxes?

Ruhnke: Yes, the law specifically addresses this issue under 75 ILCS 16/10-45 (a).

Q: Can we join IMRF?

Harris: You not only can, you must join IMRF as a new IMRF employer, once you become a district, assuming you still want to offer IMRF to your staff.

Q: How soon can we annex?

Ruhnke: As soon as the establishment date in the circuit court's final order has passed. But, practically, the library district should wait until they are more comfortable with the new district procedures and filings.

Harris: As far as I know, immediately after the "effective date." Our effective date was January 1, 2010, so we could annex an interested homeowner January 2, 2010.

Q: How much (area) can we annex?

Ruhnke: The entire school district served by the library district, which is unserved by another public library or library district. See 75 ILCS 16/15 et seq for more information on Annexation; also the Administrative Ready Reference, 2009 (http://il.webjunction.org/readyref).

Harris: As far as I know, we can annex up to the borders of other existing libraries.

Q: When does our tax money arrive?

Ruhnke: For a converting library, there will not be any break in the tax money cycle. For newly established districts, the tax money arrives the summer after the first tax levy ordinance, which is in December of any year.

Harris: Our effective date was January 1, 2010. The first opportunity to file a levy as a district is December 2010. The money from that levy arrives from DuPage County June 1, 2011, with the first tax installment.

Q: Does every board action have to be in ordinance format?

Harris: I have never gotten a solid answer on this, and apparently it's not written down anywhere. Our lawyer told me that anything dealing with money, or a "significant decision" of the library board should be an ordinance.

Q: Where does the ordinance book stay? Can it leave the library?

Ruhnke: The ordinance book stays in the library, as per 75 ILCS 16/1-40, specifically section (d).

Q: What is the difference between ordinances and the board minutes?

Harris: Ordinances are laws passed by the library board of trustees. Minutes are a written record of all public actions of the board.

Q: How do we deal with public fears and reactions?

Harris: We created a display in the display case, and I would be happy to share the wording. We made it crystal clear that there would be no changes whatsoever in the way people use the library — getting a card, using our services or collections, etc. We noted that of the twenty-eight public libraries in the DuPage Library System, thirteen of them are already districts. We assured people that their taxes would not increase between the village and the library, although the percentages would vary. I also wrote a flyer to hand out to answer every conceivable question, and I am happy to share this.

2010 ELECTION RESULTS

VICE PRESIDENT/PRESIDENT-ELECT

485 Lynn Elam,
Hinsdale Public Library

348 Sheree Kozel-La Ha,
Homer Township Public Library District

Lynn Elam will begin her three-year term on July 1, 2010, running through June 30, 2013.

Board of Directors (a three-year term beginning July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2013). One candidate from each pairing was elected in accordance with the ILA bylaws as amended at the 1998 ILA Annual Conference.

DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE:

490 Laura L. Barnes,
Illinois Sustainable Technology Center,
Champaign

327 Joyce L. Fedeczko,
Library Associates Companies

DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE:

437 Cynthia Fuerst,
Vernon Area Public Library District

381 Deirdre Brennan,
Oak Park Public Library

DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE:

643 Leslie Warren,
Moraine Valley Community College,
Palos Hills

163 Arlene Dueker,
Kaskaskia College, Centralia

DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE:

418 Amanda McKay,
Lewis & Clark Library System, Edwardsville

402 Lori Bell,
Alliance Library System, East Peoria

This was the sixth year that ILA experimented with electronic voting. In 2010, with 3,059 personal members eligible to vote: 840 voted **(27 percent)**, breaking down to: 776 electronic (2,639 electronic voters or 29 percent) and 64 paper (420 eligible paper voters or 15 percent).

In 2009, with 2,477 personal members eligible to vote: 834 voted (34 percent), breaking down to: 762 electronic (2,004 eligible electronic voters or 38 percent) and 74 paper (473 eligible paper voters or 16 percent).

As a point of comparison, in the 2010 American Library Association (ALA) election, with 55,330 eligible to vote: 11,069 voted **(20 percent)**. In the 2009 ALA election, with 56,069 eligible to vote: 13,125 voted (23.41 percent), breaking down to: 12,610 electronic (26 percent) and 500 paper (6.62 percent). In the 2008 ALA election, with 59,141 eligible to vote: 17,089 voted (28.90 percent), breaking down to: 15,655 electronic (32.52 percent) and 1,434 paper (13.04 percent).

Year	Ballots returned	Total personal members	Percent of membership
2010	840	3,059 personal members	27 percent
2009	834	2,477 personal members	34 percent
2008	839	2,459 personal members	34 percent
2007	613	2,457 personal members	25 percent
2006	648	2,453 personal members	26 percent
2005	472	2,462 personal members	19 percent
2004	727	2,330 personal members	31 percent
2003	742	2,403 personal members	31 percent
2002	787	2,481 personal members	32 percent
2001	817	2,456 personal members	33 percent
2000	914	2,532 personal members	36 percent
1999	982	2,471 personal members	40 percent
1998	1,110	2,489 personal members	45 percent
1997	886	2,262 personal members	39 percent

ILA Welcomes New Members

We would love to welcome your friends and colleagues, too. By sponsoring a new member, you share the benefits of membership with others … and help create a stronger and more effective voice to promote the highest quality library services for all people in Illinois.

INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS

Northbrook School District 27

PERSONAL MEMBERS

Jan Adamczyk, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Robert E. Barnes, Joliet
Katie Burke, Messenger Public Library of North Aurora
Jeanne Cross, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale
Melissa DeVerger, Blessing Health Professions Library, Quincy
Lee E. Jankowski, Griggsville Public Library
Renee T. Keilman, Des Plaines Valley Public Library District, Lockport
Mary Jo Lepo, Arlington Heights Memorial Library
Jose A. Maldonado, Arlington Heights Memorial Library
Amy Schlumpf Manion, Aurora University Library
Megan McNitt, Charleston
Joel Meisenheimer, Woodridge Public Library
Tori Melican, Normal Public Library
Elizabeth Morris, Barrington Area Library
Denise Murray, Woodridge Public Library
Ron Oberman, Skokie Public Library
Gloriane Peck, Chicago
Jessica Pollitt, Fox Lake Public Library District
Susan Roczniak, Peotone
Tammy Sayles, Western Illinois University, Macomb
Mary Ann Scherer, Addison Public Library
Anne Wilson, Mount Prospect Public Library
Anne Wolfe, Edwardsville Public Library

STUDENT MEMBERS

Alan L. Cohen, Waukegan
Rhea E. Hunter, Waubonsee Community College, Sugar Grove
Anthony Molaro, Messenger Public Library of North Aurora
Mona Reynolds, Mount Prospect Public Library
Mikki Smith, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Jody L. Studer, Homer Township Public Library District, Homer Glen

TRUSTEE MEMBERS

D. J. Leonhardt, Waukegan Public Library

Sally Decker Smith, Indian Trails Public Library District, Wheeling

Sally in Libraryland

Those of us who have been lucky enough to help new librarians succeed know how good it feels when one of them does, and even moves forward and up. That's happened here, when Michele Davis, a librarian who first came to us as a practicum student at Dominican and then began her career here, was recently promoted to a management position. And this led to wonderful and far-ranging conversations with her and several other people about being a good boss, whether you boss a handful of pages, a department, or an entire library. We pondered whether the same things apply outside the library world, but we decided it didn't matter, because this is the world we're in. Based on those conversations, I offer you:

THINGS A GOOD BOSS KNOWS:

1. **That people are watching, and listening.** Your boss (or if you're the director, your board, who is, after all, the boss of you) your staff, your customers — all are paying attention. The boss sets the tone for whatever piece of the organization they're boss of. How you dress, how you talk about your patrons or staff when they're not around, how you talk about YOUR boss and your library's policies and practices — it all gets noticed. So a good boss models excellent library deportment as close to all times as humanly possible. And vents at home.

2. **How to motivate people — individually.** The best boss/mentor I ever had, Elaine Burke, said that the essence of good management is making people feel good about what they're doing. How to do that varies from person to person. Some people love public praise — others hate it. Some like new challenges as a reward — others would feel punished by getting a new project. Most library people are fond of chocolate, but not all. Very few staff members' motivators will match the boss's, and that is not a character flaw. A good boss makes a point of learning who responds best to what encouragement, and provides as much of it as possible.

3. **That performance evaluations should never be a surprise.** It practically goes without saying that almost everyone hates performance evaluations, and is convinced that their library has the worst possible tool for doing them. But if do them you must, waiting for an annual appraisal to tell someone that their arriving late at the desk for the past six months has been an issue for the rest of the department is a bad idea. It deprives them of the opportunity to correct their behavior quickly, and makes the boss look ineffective to the rest of the department, who likely expected the problem to be dealt with as soon as it arose. Similarly, waiting six months for appraisal day to acknowledge a project well done isn't very motivating. A good boss engages in ongoing conversations with her/his entire staff, and deals with the high and low points of staff behavior as they occur. Then the good stuff becomes part of the written evaluation, and the quickly resolved bad stuff doesn't — because a good boss would never feel a need to document the fact that a staff member was late for her desk shift twice last July.

4. **That staff members are people.** And gets to know them on a personal level. Not in an intrusive way, and certainly not in ways that violate federal laws like Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Photos on desks can be a great indicator of what's important to staff members besides their jobs. Who has five cats, or nine grandchildren, or has been to the Alps, does not directly relate to anyone's job — but it does connect boss and staff in their individual realities and provide an excellent starting point for a human-to-human relationship. Because odds are that sooner or later individual realities are going to intrude in the workplace (if your boss knows you have kids or an elderly parent, the shock when one of them gets sick and you have to flee is much less), and a good boss wants to be supportive.

5. **That the boss is not always the smartest person in the room.** Most library people are pretty smart. But nobody in the world is smart about everything. Depending on the topic or problem at hand, the person with the best idea for solving it could be the boss — but it just as easily could be a page who's been with the library for fifteen years who has been paying attention OR a new hire in any position who sees things with fresh eyes. So a good boss values the input of everyone whichever team they are on. And a corollary is that a good boss understands that people who are DOING a job often have a clearer view of what precisely the job entails. A good boss listens.

6. **That sometimes being the boss means doing stuff you hate.** Most normal people do not love confrontation, but a boss who can't deal with disciplining staff when it's needed, or going toe-to-toe with an abusive patron or a hostile sales rep, and avoids doing it, is not only not doing what they were hired to do, they are also demonstrating a potentially exploitable weakness. (See item #1.) Nobody loves attending funerals, but a good boss does when appropriate. A good boss does the job, even the unpleasant parts.

7. **Not to play favorites.** We're all human, and all humans are going to like some people better than others. Good bosses remember that this is the workplace, and favoritism has no place in it. (See item #1, again). Good bosses can find common ground with every staff member, whether or not they grew up in the same neighborhood, share an ethnicity or age group, or love or hate sports!

8. **What library policies are — or finds out quickly when something comes up.** Does your sick leave policy allow staff to take a sick day to care for a family member? What if the family member who was sick was a cat? If your library reimburses mileage, what are the rules about that? If a staff member files a charge of racial harassment, what do you do? A good boss knows that policies are there to help everyone, and makes use of them for everyone.

So there you have the points that came up in a raft of conversations. Most of the people reading this either ARE a boss, or HAVE a boss, or both. What do you think? Are some of these points off base? Is your brain screaming out obvious ones I missed? Let me know! E-mail me at sallyinlibraryland@yahoo.com and I'll share.

MY TURN

Gretel Stock-Kupperman, library consultant and director of the Todd Wehr Memorial Library at

The Customer-Focused Library

The Customer-Focused Library (CFL) project began in typical fashion at the Metropolitan Library System (MLS): one of our library members brought us a great idea, and we were in a position to run with it.

Nicky Seidl, library director at Evergreen Park Public Library, brought a need for an examination of library spaces based on the work of Paco Underhill, author of *Why We Buy.* Seidl asserted that the studies done in big libraries in California weren't as applicable to smaller settings. As a new library system consultant in early 2007, I was excited to take on her idea. Fortunately for us, federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grants provided by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and awarded by the Illinois State Library had just been announced, and the Libraries: Innovate, Create, Collaborate category fit the bill perfectly.

Seidl's great idea got me kicked off in a great direction. The more I looked into research and articles on library space, and the more I visited libraries, I realized that there was a fundamental disconnect in many cases between how libraries envisioned their space versus how people were using it. Libraries compete with Borders and Starbucks as gathering and information spaces, yet still have a "warehouse" approach to their facility. Most of our patrons spend their time navigating through the retail world, and then we make them relearn how to find things using our language and organization systems. If libraries are trying to be the center of the community, shouldn't they feel at home in the space?

These questions and more drove me to write the grant to bring in Envirosell, Paco Underhill's retail consulting firm, to study three MLS public libraries and one academic. Since Envirosell was the expert at advising major retail enterprises, its insight into how people are approaching library space would be invaluable. Equally important were the partners on the grant. The libraries selected to participate had to be willing to open up their libraries and implement some of the suggestions by Envirosell, which was no small risk. All of the libraries involved embraced the spirit of the grant, and were able to deliver results to their patrons.

When the study was complete, the data was a real eye-opener. The data about visitor rates, the amount of assistance they needed, and the gross inadequacy of library signage very clearly pointed out typical faults in library spaces. Simple questions had profound implications: If the desk closest to the door is where patrons go for assistance, can the person there answer their questions and create a welcoming tone? Do they have the skills, abilities, and knowledge to create a positive customer experience? It became evident that a lot of library spaces and practices were centered not around the patron, but around the library institution. The data challenged the grant team to change that.

Through this collaboration, there were several exciting results. Each of the four grant partners made changes to their spaces and practices. Some were small changes, some were large renovations, but all had a profound impact on how their patrons viewed their space. The momentum of the project continues, as I've conducted planning and in-service sessions for ten libraries locally, and gotten numerous inquiries about the project from outside the state. The project has even had an impact on the national and international scene, with a very popular WebJunction session that had 250 attendees.

While it's easy to focus on the success of this individual project, there are some good lessons I learned that apply to all endeavors. Good ideas come from many places; it's what you do with them that has an impact. The great idea for the CFL project came from an MLS library that had a specific need, and we were able to run with it. If the idea hadn't come to us, we wouldn't have done the project or had such a strong success.

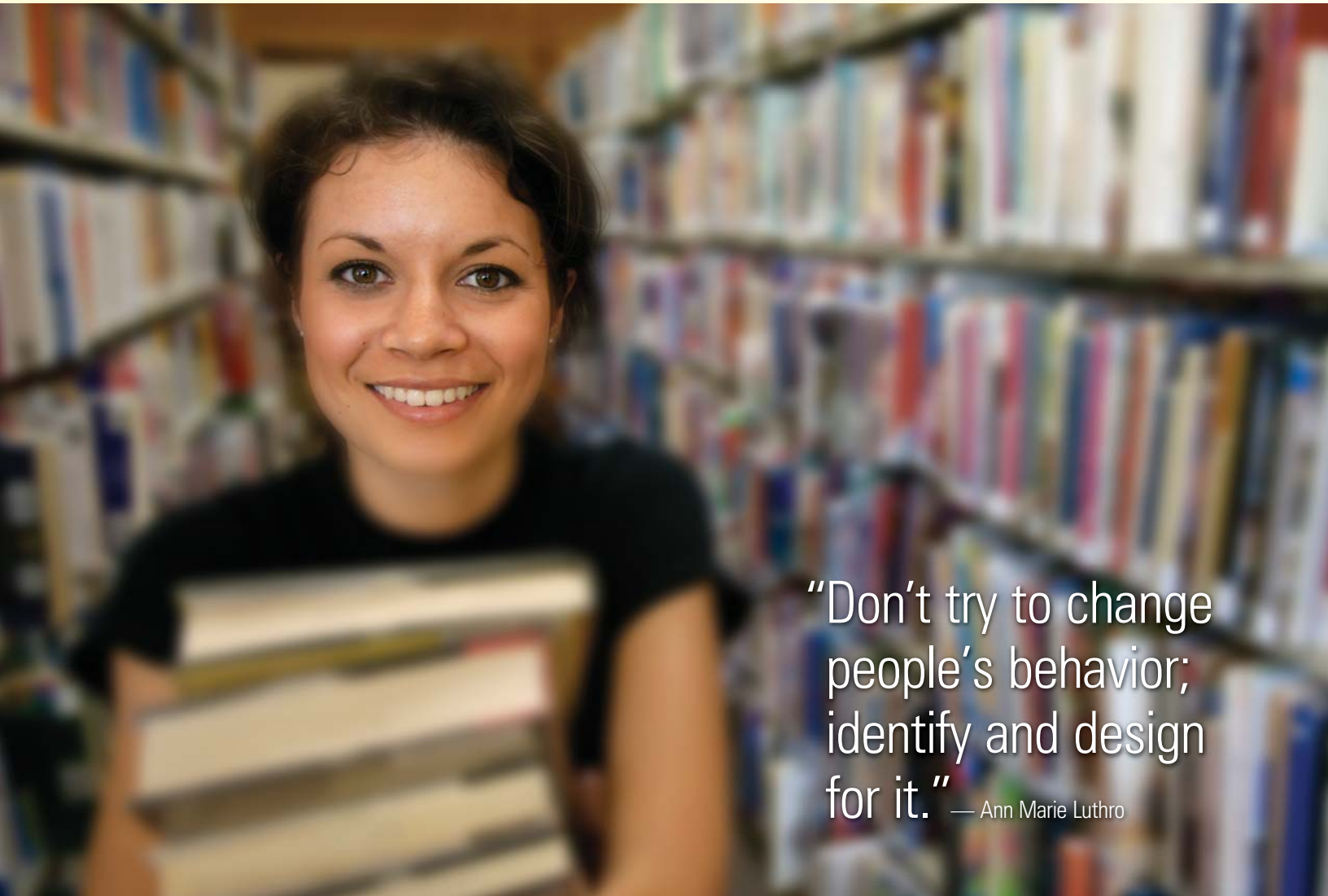
Examine all your assumptions. Just because it's been done, or it's what you do, doesn't mean you should continue doing so. This applies to space, practices, and behaviors.

Observe, and then design. One of my favorite quotes from Envirosell's Ann Marie Luthro is, "Don't try to change people's behavior; identify and design for it." We need to let go of notions that our way is better if the patron needs things different.

Collaborate for success. The grant was such a major success because of the people involved, the dedication of the libraries, and the expertise of the consultants. Without any one of these elements, the project would not have happened.

Overall, the most powerful aspect of this project for me was the unique ability of individual libraries to make change that empowers, enriches, and enlightens their patrons. Seemingly simple changes, like removing paperback spinners from an underused space or using painted wooden letters above the circulation desk as a sign, changed how patrons interacted with the library on a fundamental level. People were engaged in library services, felt more comfortable in library spaces, and were made aware of even more resources at their disposal.

All of these changes were in the hands of the library staff. All it took was focus, research, and determination to try something new to make it happen. This core of service inherent in libraries is truly reflected in the spirit of the Customer-Focused Library project.



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