

NJALA QUARTERLY REVIEW

A Newsletter for Library Assistants



A Publication of the

New Jersey Association of Library Assistants



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Distribution Manager: Heather Rivera

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Message from the President

Thank goodness the season is changing. We've had enough of hurricanes, earthquakes, humidity, and the like! Speaking of the earthquake, I was eating my lunch alone in the break room when I felt the floor shaking under my feet. I thought it felt like an earthquake, having experienced one in Philadelphia when I was a teenager. And to my surprise it was. What an unusual thing to occur in the Northeast!

The winds were howling in central Jersey during the night of tropical storm Irene's visit. Here at the Mary Jacobs library we had a tree fall on our roof during that night. It created a hole in the roof, which enabled rain to get in. Fortunately no library materials were nearby. Only our office space was damaged. Everything was cleaned up and repaired quickly so we were able to open a day and a half after the hurricane.

A tree fell behind my house that night too. It was a huge, healthy maple tree whose branches brushed against the side of the house as it fell, causing some damage to the house and smashing our gas grill. We were very lucky that that was all it did. The house shook when it fell giving me a good fright. Living near the Raritan and Millstone Rivers, I have seen that many people experienced horrible flooding and power outages, and I hope the worst is over for you and you are well on the road to normalcy.

Mark your calendars for the 2012 conference which will be held on Tuesday, June 12 at the Conference center at Mercer. The Conference Planning Committee is hard at work putting the conference together. The theme of the 2012 conference is "Embracing the Changing Needs of Libraries." What an exciting time it is to be involved in our professional organization and our careers. I hope to see you there!



Suzanne Ridzy

NJALA IS YOUR ORGANIZATION

OR *Why Should I Attend the Meeting?*

On many evaluations of our annual conference, our membership meeting is listed as the least valuable part of the conference. I find it necessary to explain the importance of the Annual Meeting that is held at our conference each year after lunch.

If we did not have an organization, there would be no conferences for library assistants! NJALA's Constitution and By-Laws require us to have a General Session once a year. This session is held at our annual conference because this is the only time our membership would be excused from work to attend the meeting. At the General Session, the regular membership receives the reports of the Executive Council and Standing Committees, nominates and elects the officers on the Executive Council, takes any action recommended by the Executive Council, and under new business may suggest directions in which the association may proceed. This is also the only time that the membership gets a chance to get together and network with one another.

When you are having lunch and you are thinking, "Why do we need to have this meeting?" Remember, if there is no organization, then there would be no conferences for library assistants, and you would be having lunch at your library, watching the librarians go to conferences. I urge you to support your organization and keep NJALA viable, and help it to provide you with continuing education for your profession.

John Guido

Connections

This is a continuation of the report on the Tabletop Surveys, created and compiled by Marie Krosnick, for the last NJALA conference. Thanks to those of you who participated. While reading and using these suggestions you might come up with more of your own to share with us. Your newsletter editor is always looking for ways to connect, network, and cooperate with other library employees. Let her know what good ideas you come up with, and they may be printed in the next issue! Or they could be a feature on our website.

The **PINK** cards covered little things that can make a difference. Why didn't I think about that! What simple ideas or great ideas have shown up at your work place? What Ideas have sparked the public interest or attention / made daily jobs easier/ saved some money/ used creative recycling of materials...

If you are collaborating on a document or a project **DON'T** keep e-mailing multiple copies and drafts - use a free cloud - storage service like **GOOGLE DOCS** or **DROPBOX** to give everyone access to a single copy - **No More Version Confusion!**

The book discussions and author talks in the reading room of our library have really drawn in the public. These activities have been a big plus.

FOOD FOR FUNDS During National Library Week our library offers customers fine reduction (Max. \$10) for 2 non-perishable items, which we donate to community food bank.

If a patron doesn't show up with their library card, they must present a photo ID. This prevents abuse of library cards.

We keep a list of next month's Best Sellers at the desk so people can place holds in advance. Patrons love this!

We unblocked the inside book drop (after 25 years), so material is not lost.

We are now enjoying a multitude of activities which are free for adults - Spanish & French Classes, Zumba, Yoga, sea glass jewelry making, basket weaving... just to name a few.



We increased the number of DVDs/Videos that patrons may borrow at one time.

We have many programs for children and adults. We have afternoon movies and play the newest one on Tuesday nights. People seem to enjoy what we have.

We need to try more online outreach - Facebook, twitter - to get the community more involved in the library. Community outreach is key!

We use scrap paper for/from patrons and have several strategically placed receptacles for cans, bottles, paper, etc.

You know how people come up to the Reference Desk, hesitantly, saying, "I hate to bother you....." Put up a sign at the desk saying, "**PLEASE DISTURB!**"

We hung a clothesline behind the children's circulation desk and have gotten only positive responses as well as finding the owners of our lost and found items. We wish we could figure out good idea for adult stuff.

We have many branches in our system. While helping at one of them, I noticed that they labeled the edge of the counter with the branch names to coincide with the bags of books being sent to each of them. It sure made it easier for someone filling in.

We cut up recycled paper into scratch pads by rubber-banding a stack and gluing one side.

ORANGE cards – What’s bugging you? %! x*%\$#@!!!.....: What topics/work concerns would you like to discuss/share/fix/vent? What would be the best format: conference session, Facebook, e-mail, website, seminar, power lunch, blog? NEWSLETTER?

I would like to cover how to provide services in tough budgeting times. What should the priorities be?

How about having a fundraiser to keep libraries open—a fundraiser that the community and patrons can participate in.

I would like to “share.” Best format would be the website.

“We are underappreciated by the library professionals, and we are very underpaid. What can we do?”

At times it seems we are understaffed. I also think there should be a limit on holds, especially shelf items. The best format is the website.

We should all be doing an equal amount of work. And, helping out more by answering phones. The website would be the best.

My concern is criticism from local officials, who aren’t library patrons and who know nothing about how the library works.

We only hear the negative from the Librarian and not the positive, and we do really good customer service.

Sometimes it seems we are afraid of social networking (Twitter/Facebook), because of the stigma attached to it and the theory that it does not complement academia. But I say, “Where the students are we go!”

I feel there is a need to be more involved with the community—whether it’s opening the conference/program rooms for book clubs, creating and updating an active Facebook page, or partnering with the schools. We need the library to be where people love to go—not where they don’t feel welcome.

I vote for a seminar/power lunch.

Ed. note: There are some really good suggestions here. Who’s going to institute them? Who wants to get involved and contribute to the website or the newsletter? Who will set up a Facebook or Twitter account? Who’s willing to discuss these procedures with the NJALA Executive Council? I’ve been the newsletter editor for many years and have frequently resorted to begging NJALA members to send me articles. Where are the contributors? Over the years there have been very interesting, thoughtful articles about our members and their libraries, but I’ve got to say: they are too few and far between. This is a great start; now someone has to run with it!

Annette Tyler
NJALA Quarterly Review Editor



A Free Day A Free Conference

At the September meeting of the Conference Planning Committee there was a drawing to see who would win free registration for the 2012 conference. Nadirah Raheem of the East Orange Public Library is the lucky winner.



2012 Conference Co-Chairs are:

Connie Reese
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& Deborah Blackwell
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Oh What a Beautiful Day

The 25th annual conference was held on a beautiful day in a beautiful new setting, including outdoor dining. A number of attendees filled out the conference evaluation form to let us know what they thought was of the most interest and the most valuable part of the conference.

The following is a sampling of the comments from conference goers.

Most people learned about the conference through their library, supervisor, membership, previously attended, co-worker, mail, newsletter, and e-mail.

The keynote speaker, Nancy Dowd, who is the Director of Marketing for the New Jersey State Library, was very well spoken, and the topic was awesome. The speech set the tone for the conference. This year's keynote was very motivating; she was inspirational and validated the work of library assistants.

The most valuable classes were: public speaking, stress management, Microsoft Publisher, Book Café, Aiding Adult Literacy, I Love This Place.

The best reason to attend the conference: Continuing education, networking (with public library employees) with people from all over New Jersey, programs, conference brochure and program descriptions, listening to new ideas and learning new skills, encouragement, and the keynote speech.

If you have an idea for the conference or would like to expand an idea listed below, or if you know of a person who could present an interesting topic please contact the Co-Chairs. The following are some of the programs suggested for next year: book repair workshop, helping children learn, diversity, public speaking, customer service, children & youth programs, stress management, motivating teens, clean & clutter, "librarian

attitudes," children's authors, current issues concerning New Jersey libraries, concerns over censorship, dealing with local government, developing an AV collection for your communication, publication, more advanced computer software, on-line resources, Outlook, how to use e-mail more effectively, Excel, managing workload, streamlining procedures, generation gap (changing technology), True Colors, Fish, software, how to start a book club, dealing with difficult co-workers, programs about animals, Google workshops, ready reference, e-readers, management, communication, social networking to promote libraries, how to dress for work.



The next NJALA Conference and Annual Meeting will be held at the Mercer County Community College on June 12, 2012. The theme of this day will be *Embracing the Changing Needs of Libraries*. Please join our planning meetings or volunteer to host



<u>Conference Planning Meeting Schedule</u>	
October 13	Galloway Township Library
November 18	TBA
December 14	SCLS, Rocky Hill
January 24	Bordentown Public Library
February 28	Bernards Township Library
March 23	OCL, Toms River
April 19	TBA
May 16	TBA
June 7	Mercer County Community



And Now a Word from our Liaison, Marilyn Jack-Brown:



A New Round of Library Support Staff Certification Registration Assistance Awards Offered by LSSIRT and Six States

Trish Palluck, Chair of the Library Support Staff Interests Round Table (LSSIRT) recently announced that LSSIRT is offering another round of financial assistance to library support staff applying for certification in the American Library Association's Library Support Staff Certification (LSSC) Program. The LSSC Program offers library support staff the opportunity to achieve recognition for their existing skills and knowledge, to gain new skills and knowledge, and to enhance their library's service to the public.

Six states are also participating: [The Colorado Library Consortium](#), [Idaho Commission for Libraries](#), [State Library of Louisiana](#), [Mississippi Library Commission](#), [Oregon State Library](#), [Washington State Library](#), and the [Wyoming State Library](#).

The Library Support Staff Interest Round Table will be offering 50 Registration Assistance Awards this fall. These Awards are for \$175, one-half of the LSSC registration fee. Successful award recipients will pay the remainder of the fee. An application form to apply for the Registration Assistance Awards is available on the LSSIRT Website at www.ala.org/lssirt. The recipients of the Award will be chosen by a random drawing in late November.

Applications will begin to be accepted on October 1 and will continue until November 15 at both the national and state level. You may apply at both the national and state level, however you may only receive one award.

The state-level organizations have up to 10 Awards to distribute. To apply for an award from the participating states, please contact the participating state organization. Only library support staff living in that state are eligible to apply at the state level.

The LSSC Program is partially funded by a grant to the American Library Association (ALA) from the federal Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), and managed by the ALA-Allied Professional Association.

Library Support Staff Certification (LSSC) provides a path to recognition and awareness of the critical role that library support staff play in the delivery of quality library service. To achieve certification, support staff must achieve six of ten competency sets either through development of an online portfolio or by taking approved courses. The competency sets are: Foundation of Library Service; Technology; Communication and Teamwork; Access Services; Adult Readers' Advisory Services; Cataloging and Classification; Collection Management; Reference and Information Services; Supervision and Management; and Youth Services.

Nancy Bolt, Co-Project Director of LSSC commented, "The LSSC Program is really pleased that LSSIRT is continuing the Registration Assistance Awards. Library Support Staff will receive the recognition that they deserve by participating in LSSC. We appreciate IMLS' support in recognizing the importance of qualified library support staff in providing excellent library service."

To be eligible to participate in LSSC and thus receive an Assistance Award, applicants must have a high school degree or its equivalent and have worked for the equivalent of one year (1820 hours) as a library staff member or volunteer within the last five years.

Detailed additional information on support staff certification is available on the LSSC website: www.ala-apa.org/lssc.

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Greetings from the Past

Happy Fall Y'all! I hope everyone had a great summer.

In 2011, not only was I President of NJALA, we were also celebrating our 25th Anniversary. This year I continue on the NJALA Executive Council as Immediate Past President.

During this year our Conference Planning Committee made several changes to our conference. After long deliberation we decided to change the conference to a one day seminar. We also decided to change the venue to Mercer County Conference Center, which is more centrally located in New Jersey. With all of the positive feedback we received, I believe our two major decisions were positive ones. Next year, I am pleased to announce, that Mercer County Conference Center will again be hosting our conference. The event will take place on Tuesday, June 12, 2012.

I would encourage anyone who has attended our conference to get on board and be part of the Conference Planning Committee. We only meet once a month, at various locations around the state, and are always looking for new members and ideas. We have a lot of fun planning this yearly event.

Sincerely,
Cathy Lynch
Immediate Past President



Explosion Update from the Joint

It's been almost a year and a half since the underground explosion, on May 3, 2010, at the Joint Free Public Library of Morristown and Morris Township forced the library to close its doors for about 8 months and sent the staff to off-site locations such as local homes, a church across the street, a storefront across another

street, and libraries around the county and the state.

In all that time staff and patrons have been depending on the State Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to find out the cause of the explosion, and of many manhole cover explosions around town. Finally on September 21, 2011 the BPU unanimously voted to authorize an independent study of Jersey Central Power & Light's (JCP&L) underground system. So far the BPU officials have been relying on reports made by companies operating underground utilities.

The decision to conduct an in-house investigation by a qualified engineering firm was made in the wake of one woman's suffering second-degree burns on part of her left arm when a manhole cover blew into the air just inches from her car a few blocks from the library. Power outages in the aftermath of Hurricane Irene also played a part in the decision. The engineers will be chosen from a list provided by JCP&L, and the power company will pay for the investigation...

Annette Tyler
Morristown & Morris Township Library



DEADLINE
for the next

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is January 9, 2012

Feel free to send your articles or other information anytime before this date to:

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