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Alki



Overwhelm/Overcome

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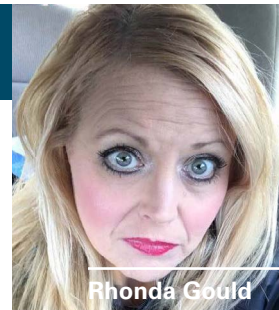
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It Doesn't Have To Be This Way!

by Rhonda Gould

What are some of the things in your life that overwhelm you? Is it work, family obligations, money, isolation, lack of time for yourself, all of the above? Or could it be the smaller things in combination with life's responsibilities that spiral out of your control?

I am definitely a "overwhelmed with smaller things" person. Crumbs on the kitchen floor or an open kitchen cabinet door will cause me more agony than my car overheating on I-5. I say that only somewhat facetiously, but if you ask my husband he will agree, especially about the crumbs on the floor!

Each of us deals with overwhelming situations every day. Channeling a positive mindset for the large and small requires constant diligence but over the years I have learned several things that have helped me juggle work and life and not lose sleep.

The first is to prioritize what is truly important. Is it worth it? Will it be worth it tomorrow? Next week? Next year? This includes relationships with family, friends, and colleagues. It can be taking care of your health, ensuring that those important to you have the care they need. This is more about the WHO in your life, as opposed to the WHAT.

“ And finally, be true to yourself. If a situation isn't working out for you and you feel like you've given it due diligence, don't be afraid to kick it to the curb. ”

The next consideration is about the who AND the what, or in other words, If I don't accomplish this today, how will it affect others? How will it affect me? What are the consequences beyond today? I'm a bit of a daydreamer and sometimes I like to sit and "have a think". But can I afford to do that when I have deadlines to meet? Will thinking something through make the task easier or harder? Will a brief

mental vacation help me or make a situation worse?

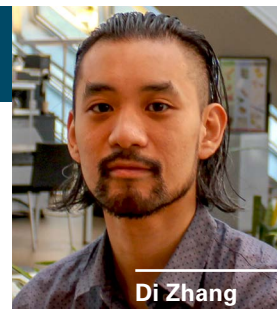
You need to have comrades and cohorts in crime. These are your trusted peeps, the ones who will laugh and cry with you, and the ones who will offer sound (and sometimes unsolicited!) advice. I think of comrades as those in your profession you can turn to for anything ranging from career advice to those you know you well enough to give you a good job reference. The cohorts in crime are friends and sometimes family who will provide you with a safe space for venting. About everything!

And finally, be true to yourself. If a situation isn't working out for you and you feel like you've given it due diligence, don't be afraid to kick it to the curb. Try something new. Move on from a relationship, work to make a change. Be fearless, and overcome the overwhelm. 📖

Rhonda K. Gould is President of WLA and Executive Director of the Walla Walla County Rural Library District.

The Other Side of Overwhelmed

by Di Zhang



We've all been there before: the point where we're being stretched beyond thin, with more responsibilities and fewer resources, one thing after another added to our proverbial, overflowing plate and less time to spend with ourselves and our loved ones doing things that rejuvenate us. And it seems like we're there more and more often these days, whether in our families and communities or as library workers serving those communities. At least that's been the case for me.

In late January 2019, I returned to the office after the Martin Luther King Jr. Day weekend—a desperately needed three days off—hoping to catch up on some past-due work. I thought I was off to a great start when I arrived at the Central Library at 8:50 a.m. for my 9:00 a.m. shift. Quite the opposite. As soon as I opened up my email I realized that I was supposed to be at the Greenwood Branch in forty minutes to take a three hour “Business Concepts” training and it would be impossible to get there on time. To make matters worse, I had also asked to meet virtually with the Washington State Library’s tech person at 9:00 a.m. to go over the Zoom software I would use for an upcoming webinar on fake news. Following that meeting, I was to attend a Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) Change Team meeting where we were selecting new members for the team. Suddenly, I realized that I had triple booked myself that morning and a deep dread started to sink my stomach.

I'll won't get into the nitty gritty of how I juggled this situation to a mostly-satisfactory resolution. Really, it was maintaining a sense of calm, prioritizing tasks, and proactively communicating that saved me. That and a lot of apologizing. I think the most helpful thing was bringing myself back to the moment and focusing on the task at hand once I had a gameplan, however imperfect it was.

This issue of *Alki* is about a feeling that we're all too familiar with, the feeling of being overwhelmed. Frank Brasile describes the current state of the e-collection at The Seattle Public Library, where eBook circulation has more than doubled in the past six years without a corresponding doubling in budget (p. 5). Our jobs regularly require us to make tough decisions with limited resources, like responding to shelter needs when extreme weather hits (p. 8) or stepping up to help a partner give a presentation when a government shutdown disrupts plans for programs (p. 14). On the flip side, these challenging times are opportunities to rise to the occasion, to support one another, strengthen our connections and

our commitment to service, and overcome adversity.

Elsewhere in this issue, Diane Froelich reflects on how she flips her fears about her own technology abilities into an asset when assisting patrons who also have reservations about learning new tech (p. 23). You'll also find tips on mindfulness for library workers (p. 10) and other concrete strategies for self-care (p. 16). And Michael Ebburg reminds us there are many potential ways to achieve peace of mind and enlightenment in his poem “The Zen of Shelving Books” (p. 15).

We feature the innovative sewing program that is gaining popularity at Vancouver Community Library (p. 22), and a successful campaign by the North Olympic Library System (NOLS) to increase patron usage of OverDrive materials (p. 26). Sam Wallin shares experiences from participating in the first annual exchange program between Fort Vancouver Regional Libraries and Xiamen Municipal Library, where a strong partnership between library systems on different continents is creating exciting learning opportunities for everyone involved (p. 19). And Magenta Loera previews her upcoming OLA-WLA Conference workshop about making oral history collections more accessible to underrepresented communities (p. 25).

In our regular features, David Wright declares that there is no shame in being a self-help junkie (which bodes well for me), highlighting books that are full of motivating and helpful coaching (p. 28). Darcy McMurtery compiles a list of “Top Ten Worst Things Ever Said” with a number ten I'm sure you'd agree with (p. 31). Brooke Shirts shines a spotlight on Children's and Young Adult fantasy novels that are bending the genre towards inclusivity and social issues relevant to our times (p. 29).

This marks my first issue as the new editor of *Alki*. In putting this issue together, I certainly had moments of feeling overwhelmed—worrying about getting enough content, snow delays and encroaching deadlines, whether I was correctly following guidelines and etiquette. I'm so thankful to have been able to lean on the former editors, Frank Brasile and Sheri Boggs, as well as the entire *Alki* Editorial Board and the contributors. In the end, we got it done as a team. So the next time you're feeling overwhelmed, remember that you're not alone. There are people in your life who can help, you have a deeper reserve than you know, and you most definitely will overcome. On that note, I hope you enjoy this issue of *Alki*. 📖

Di

Di Zhang is an Adult Services Librarian at The Seattle Public Library and editor of *Alki*.

I Want it All. And I Want it Now.

by Frank Brasile

Cassettes. Film reels. Vinyl. Microfiche. Library collections have changed over time as new formats emerge and old formats are retired. In the past, this was fairly straightforward. VHS tapes were replaced by DVDs. Cassette tapes were replaced by CDs. Sure, there was a time when both formats overlapped, but it was only a matter of time before VHS and cassette tapes (and players, producers and consumers) rode off into the sunset.

There was also a time when many people in the book business – publishers, booksellers and librarians – expected print books would be replaced by eBooks. That seems unlikely to occur anytime in the foreseeable future. And the explosion of streaming media platforms this decade has made music, film and television more accessible than ever before.

Today's library collections reflect a different reality. Instead of one format replacing another, formats now coexist. Want to read *Educated* by Tara Westover? Great! Would you like the print book, the large print book, the book on CD, the eBook or the eAudiobook? That's right – patrons have five formats to choose from (and that's just for materials in English). Want to listen to Queen's Greatest Hits? Fabulous. Would you like to check out the CD, download songs or stream the album?

This is a great time to be a library patron. They have more options than ever before to consume content. There are more formats to choose from, and they are more flexible than ever, allowing patrons to interact with material on the road, in the office, or atop a mountain. But it presents significant challenges to many libraries, whose collection materials budgets have been cut at many libraries, or remained flat at best.

When your patrons want it all, what's a library to do?

Frank Brasile is a Selection Librarian with The Seattle Public Library and reviews books for Shelf Awareness.

eBooks and eAudioBooks

In 2012, Seattle voters approved a seven-year Seattle Public Library (SPL) Levy to supplement funding from the City of Seattle and the Seattle Public Library Foundation. A portion of the levy infused the SPL's materials budget, with funds earmarked to increase digital offerings in the form of eBooks and eAudiobooks (SPL uses OverDrive for their platform). At the time, only two of the Big Six (now the Big Five) publishers – HarperCollins

and Random House – made their titles available to libraries to purchase (Penguin had withdrawn from library lending during this time).

Within a year, Penguin re-entered the market following its merger with Random House, and Hachette joined for the first time; a year later, Simon & Schuster made their entire catalog available, and Macmillan dipped their toe in to the library market, first with their backlist and eventually their frontlist. By the end of 2014 – just two years after the levy passed – all of the Big Six publishers were lending to libraries, thanks in part to the

American Library Association's advocacy. The Foundation, well aware of the library's need to meet patron expectations, generously responded to each of these entries into the library market with financial support. Hooray! Now we could offer digital collections with new releases and popular backlist titles that patrons desired.

What was a boon for patrons soon became a conundrum for our selection librarians. Not only were tens of thousands of titles suddenly available, the terms of business were especially challenging. Access is either perpetual (the copies we license we own forever) or metered (licenses that expire after a period of time, or after a specific amount of checkouts). On top of that, pricing for three of the Big Five is inflated, often several times more than the retail price.

Not only do selection librarians have to manage many complex

“ Not only do selection librarians have to manage many complex business models, they have to do it with a budget based on the eBook market from 2012. From 2013 to 2018, eBook circulation at SPL has more than doubled, an astonishing figure in just six years. ”

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BIG 5 EBOOK MARKET SUMMARY*		
PUBLISHER	LICENSE MODEL	PRICING
HarperCollins	Metered. One copy/One user license expires after twenty six checkouts. Need to repurchase to maintain access.	Competitive** pricing. Consistent with print retail price regardless of frontlist/backlist.
Penguin Random House	Metered. One copy/One user license expires after two years. Need to repurchase to maintain access. New model implemented 10/1/18 following merger.	Inflated*** pricing. \$55 for adult frontlist, \$45 for teen frontlist, \$35 for children's frontlist. Some imprints retain pricing consistent with print. \$40 for selected backlist.
Hachette	Perpetual Access. One copy/one user license does not expire and we own in perpetuity.	Inflated pricing. Varies between \$75 to \$150 for adult frontlist. No significant discount for backlist.
Macmillan	Metered. One copy/One user license expires after fifty two checkouts or two years, whichever comes first. Need to repurchase to maintain access.	Inflated pricing. \$60 for frontlist, \$40 for backlist regardless of audience.
Simon & Schuster	Metered. One copy/One user license expires after one year. Need to repurchase to maintain access.	Competitive pricing. Consistent with print retail price regardless of frontlist/backlist.

* For the period of 9/1/17-9/30/18

**"Competitive" = consistent with pricing for the same content in print

***"Inflated" = higher cost for digital content than for the same content in print

business models, they have to do it with a budget based on the eBook market from 2012. From 2013 to 2018, eBook circulation at SPL has more than doubled, an astonishing figure in just six years. Even with support from the Foundation and the Levy, budgets have not doubled to accommodate this significant increase in eBook readership.

And then there are eAudiobooks. It's the fastest growing segment in the publishing industry, and taking the retail and library markets by storm. The terms of business for eAudiobooks is simpler than for eBooks – all licenses are for perpetual access, so purchases are straightforward and don't need to be revisited. However, while eBook readership doubled, eAudiobook readership *nearly quadrupled* in the same time period. On top of that, the cost of eAudiobooks is extremely high, averaging nearly \$65 a license, with many over the \$100 threshold. While it's easier to manage the eAudiobook collection, the explosive growth of this format

was not anticipated in 2012, and the high cost of use has serious implications.

Streaming Media.

In 2012, there were limited options for streaming media in the library market. SPL offered two services at the time. For visual media there was Access Video, which hosts educational programs in a subscription model similar to databases where we pay an annual fee; for music, the only option was Freegal, also a subscription model, allowing patrons to download up to five songs per week per user. A few years later, Freegal added streaming which allows patrons 3 hours per day to listen. In 2018, SPL and Freegal moved to an unlimited streaming license, dropping the three-hour per day limit. Providing unlimited access to Freegal's music library made patrons quite happy, while adding an additional financial burden on our budget.

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In 2013, Midwest Tape introduced hoopla, a streaming service that provided patrons with access to eBooks, eAudiobooks, movies and television, and SPL was one of the earliest adopters. SPL chose not to duplicate our eBook and eAudio holdings and selected the music, movies and television options only; comics were a new feature that was added later. Patrons are able to check out up to twenty items per month, and each item ranges from \$0.99 to \$2.99 per checkout. As hoopla's content grew, its popularity steadily increased, and the monthly allocation for hoopla was revised every few months as patron demand outstripped the budget time after time. As a result, SPL has had to limit checkouts on a daily basis, turning away frustrated patrons by mid-afternoon.

Kanopy became the latest streaming media service adopted by SPL. In 2017, *The New York Times* featured an article about Kanopy when the New York Public Library added it to their digital collection. Within days, hundreds of SPL patrons inquired about adding Kanopy at SPL, and now patrons can watch classic films, independent cinema and notable documentaries. The conundrum is the same – more content to satisfy patrons, and more pressure to find resources to meet demand.

What's next?

It's clear that patrons are interested in digital media, but funding these resources is one of the biggest challenges facing collection services. There is only so much that can be done within the confines of the materials budget. Reallocating funds from one resource to another is not as easy as it sounds. A print book can be significantly less than its digital counterpart. The hardcover edition of *Educated* is \$28.00 retail (and we pay much less with discounts provided by our vendor). Its digital counterparts are \$55 for the eBook and \$95 for the eAudiobook. Because digital can cost four to six times more than print, moving funds from print to digital not only has a disproportionately negative effect on the print budget but also further disenfranchises patrons by perpetuating the digital divide.

While digital media circulation has enjoyed double-digit growth, print circulation has declined – but not at the same rate. Decreases in circulation of print books have been in the single digits – and in 2018 the trend was reversed, largely in part to SPL's popular Peak Picks program which makes popular titles available to patrons without having to place a hold. Declines in physical media checkouts have been steeper, but they are still important components of SPL's collection. Many music CDs are not available digitally, and frequently new films are released in DVD before they're available in a streaming service, making it the only option to watch the latest movies. DVDs continue to be one of SPL's highest circulating formats.

“Determining how to allocate the library materials budget has become increasingly complex in recent years” says Helen Gutierrez, Collection Services Manager with SPL. Data is undeniably important, but “there is no single measure by which we can

determine performance across all formats for all audiences, and no certain formula for achieving the ‘right’ budget allocation.” Even SPL's multiple funding streams, which includes the Foundation, Friends of the Library and private gifts, come with challenges. “Each funding stream has its spending parameters – what can and cannot be purchased with those funds” Gutierrez says. “I may be asked to consider adding a database to support homework help, but the funds I have available to me may be earmarked for print materials only.”

Seeking funds beyond the materials budget also has its limitations. As a large urban system, SPL has a number of complex issues that require major financial commitments: the upkeep of the architecturally significant Central library as well as more than two dozen branches, including Carnegie libraries in need of upgrades; security to keep our patrons and staff safe; outreach activities to bring library services to disenfranchised and marginalized groups; adding and upgrading existing technology; and offering a broader range of programs to meet the changing needs of the community.

The options we are left with have negative repercussions. We could reduce checkouts by lowering the monthly caps that patrons can borrow against. We could extend our holds to copy ratio out further so we are purchasing fewer copies, resulting in longer wait times. We could select fewer titles and/or copies and slow the growth of new titles in the collection. We could reduce or eliminate other formats. We could reduce the number of holds patrons can place or reduce the threshold for streaming media. All may accomplish our goal of reducing costs, but they negatively impact patrons and decrease customer satisfaction. While we have been working with vendors to develop better tools to aid us in managing digital collections and demand, these factors need to be considered as we move forward.

A success story.

One recent success has been the addition of “Always Available” content in OverDrive. In 2018, we added a collection of seventy five Lonely Planet travel guides, which patrons can check out at any time, as many times as they want. We also added fifty of the most popular audiobooks from Tantor Media to provide unlimited access to popular titles. For bestsellers like *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*, we no longer have to purchase copies throughout the year to meet demand.

Seattle is consistently regarded as one of America's most well-read cities, and UNESCO designated Seattle a City of Literature in 2017. It's also home to the Seattle International Film Festival, the largest film festival in the United States. And Seattle is home to a thriving music scene, with Sub Pop Records regarded as one of the nation's premier independent record labels. Our patrons are passionate, engaged, and hungry for resources to inform, enrich and entertain. How to provide our patrons with rich, accessible collections with limited funds is a challenge of monumental proportions. But we are up for the challenge. 📖

Shelter Overwhelm: One Community's Response

by Suzane Carlson-Prandini

On Thursday, February 6, 2019 the Bellingham Public Library opened as usual, but with an added element of service to the community: The Emergency Day Center (EDC) went operational for the first time.

What is the EDC and why is it located at the library? Residents of Bellingham, like many other people around Washington State, experience extremely low residential vacancy rates, increasingly expensive housing, as well as increasing numbers of people who find themselves without housing for a multitude of reasons.

Bellingham has a network of social services that include housing, but there is only one low barrier shelter run by the Lighthouse Mission Ministries. Various nonprofits, religious organizations, and the current City administration have made efforts to address the needs of unhoused citizens with a specific focus on the winter months. Over the last couple of years, there have been a number of efforts to expand shelter capacity, but determining a location for an additional facility has proven fruitless. As a result, demand on existing services sometimes exceeds capacity, especially during times of extreme weather.

Knowing that shelter capacity would be exceeded this winter, the current City administration reached out to various City departments and community partners to meet the imminent need. This resulted in several trial solutions,

“ People expressed support and gratitude for the library playing a role in caring for those most vulnerable in our community during a time of high need. ”

including a contingency plan to use the Bellingham Public Library's Lecture Room as an Emergency Day Center.

Two conditions must be met in order for the EDC to open: A life-endangering weather event occurring and the Lighthouse Mission Drop-In Center exceeding capacity. The EDC doesn't become a drop-in center, however. Local churches

already have an established backup plan for nights when the Drop-In Center at the Lighthouse Mission is too full. What was required was a place during the day for the women selected for the overflow night program. It needed to be a place the women could safely stay between the hours of 7 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. The library provides the space by re-assigning any programs to other library spaces and

providing a cart of free books, coloring pages, and puzzles. The Lighthouse Mission provides staffing for the room as well as coordinates a midday meal, beverages, and snacks with financial support from the City. By creating a place for these women to be during the day, the Drop-In Center gains capacity.

A number of City departments and community partners coordinated efforts during the ten day period that the EDC remained open. These included the Lighthouse Mission Ministries staff,

Police, the Homeless Outreach Team, Whatcom County's Certified Emergency Response Team, the Mayor's Office, Planning, Facilities, and Library staff.

This particular winter storm provided learning opportunities for



Bellingham Public Library during a February 2019 snow storm

Suzane Carlson-Prandini is a Public Services Librarian at Bellingham Public Library.

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all through its duration and intensity. Drop-In Center capacity was further challenged by both a frozen water pipe and a frozen sewer pipe, leaving the Drop-In Center without running water or functioning indoor toilets for days on end, further exacerbating an extremely challenging and crowded living environment.

The storm also stretched staffing capacity at multiple organizations. The library struggled to adequately staff all buildings, especially on the day the City closed due to inclement weather.

For the first time in memory, library staff were deemed essential personnel during a City closure. Branch libraries remained closed allowing available staff who could make it to work to report to the Central Branch, thus keeping the doors open to the public.

Community member and staff responses to library resources being deployed in such a fashion ranged across the spectrum. People expressed support and gratitude for the library playing a role in caring for those most vulnerable in our community during a time of high need. Others expressed dismay that their library had been turned into a warming center and shelter. Yet others demanded to know why only a small number of preselected people were allowed access to the EDC. They expressed anger and frustration that more wasn't being done to address the suffering of people still on the streets.

Assessment of efforts is currently underway and there are numerous impacts to be evaluated. Whether the EDC opens again at the library depends on future forecasts and the will of the community at large to create alternatives.

Regardless of where one stands on the topic of library space as shelter, it quickly became evident that the library, both online and in the physical building, became a place for community discussion on a pressing community topic. If libraries are indeed places for civic engagement and discourse, then in this moment Bellingham Public Library exemplified the concept of library as forum.



Lecture Room at Bellingham Public Library, which functioned as an Emergency Day Center during inclement weather

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Membership information is at wla.org/membership.

Yoga and Mindfulness in Libraries — and for Library Staff

by Linda Johns

It's noon on Thursday, a time when patrons often make a quick stop to dash into their local library. In Colfax, instead of heading to the checkout desk, a few – with yoga mats tucked under their arms – make their way to the [Whitman County Library](#) meeting room for “Flex & Flow” Yoga. The fifty-minute class would be a welcome mid-day break no matter where you live, but it's especially appreciated in a town where the closest yoga studio is at least twenty minutes away.

Across the state on Vashon Island, Saturday mornings mean a free drop-in yoga class at the [Vashon Library](#) (King County Library System) for a variety of residents. Some come regularly, says Adult/Teen Services Librarian Erin Rozewicz, and yet each week they also have unique visitors. “This is some patrons' first encounter with yoga and we are happy to be that jump off point,” she says. A recent new participant had been advised to try yoga for some back issues, and chose the library for a first experience. Like we see with many programs and events, people are often more comfortable trying something at the library, a place they've come to trust.

Yoga classes at the [Liberty Lake Library](#) are offered as part of an ongoing family program and are designed to be one-offs and drop-ins suitable for beginners – without the pressure (and price) of many yoga studios, says Joanne Percy, Adult Services Library Associate at Liberty Lake. They've offered periodic yoga classes for the last three years and just added meditation classes to the lineup.

“One of the reasons I chose the meditation program was off the back of a life coaching program we ran at the beginning of January [2019],” says Percy. Of the twelve people in the class, more than half expressed struggles with anxiety and/or depression, or were currently experiencing a difficult life event. Anecdotal testimony for how mindfulness helps with anxiety and depression is abundant and for the past decade scientific research has examined it as well.

“Our goal is to offer as many diverse service options as possible to our patrons, to be able to promote wellness and, as we do with our multi sensory story times, have open programing that is engaging and builds a sense of community at the library.”

A 2014 study reported from Johns Hopkins University is just one of dozens suggesting that mindful meditation can help ease psychological stresses, such as anxiety and depression .

Budget, as always, is a consideration for public yoga classes, and Washington libraries are trying a myriad of methods for bringing health programs to their patrons. At Liberty Lake, classes are free and Percy has scoured sales and thrift stores to find mats and other props. At the Vashon Library, they started with mats, straps, blankets, and

bolsters borrowed from the yoga studio. The Friends group has been buying equipment as well. At Whitman County Library, participants pay a nominal fee to offset payment for the instructor, says Kristie Kirkpatrick, director of the Whitman County Rural Library District. They can also bring their own mats, but the library received a grant from a local health care insurer to buy mats, bolsters, blocks, blankets, and straps. A member of their Friends group even paid for senior citizens to take yoga and other classes for free. One patron told Kirkpatrick, “I am seventy-nine years old and I wouldn't be nearly so healthy if I hadn't done yoga these last ten years.”

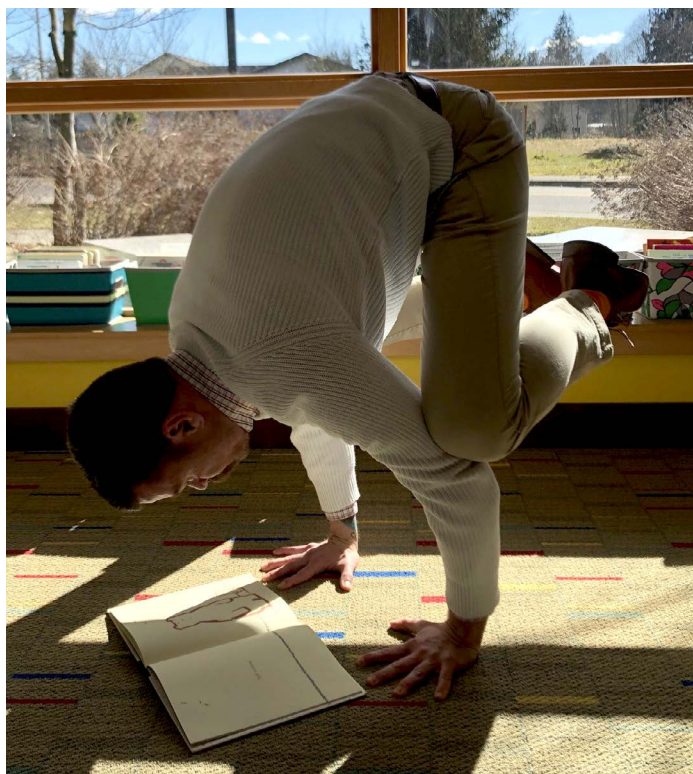
Building on Partnerships

For public-facing and patron-focused programs, one key is to find the right community partner, whether you initiate contact or someone from the community comes to you.

At the [Washington Talking Book and Braille Library](#), yoga instructor Alice Graden of Blind and Low Vision Yoga approached Library Director Danielle Miller with the idea of offering a free class for blind and low-vision patrons. “Our goal is to offer as many diverse service options as possible to our patrons, to be able to promote wellness and, as we do with our multi sensory story times, have open programing that is engaging and builds a sense of community at the library,” says Miller. Graden's experience, including working for the Department for the Services of the Blind as well as focusing on adaptive movement, made yoga an appealing program to offer. For the drop-in yoga sessions, Graden brings adaptive

Linda Johns is co-manager of Washington Center for the Book and a librarian at The Seattle Public Library. She is a member of the Alki Editorial Board.

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Brian Hulsey, Library Circulation Supervisor of Granite Falls Library, Sno-Isle Libraries, practices yoga at his library

equipment and works individually with participants. Her goal: to bring joyful movement to those with vision difficulties.

Vashon Library’s Rozewicz approached Island Yoga Center with the idea of offering free community programs. The owner, Kathryn Payne, was receptive to the idea of making yoga accessible to anyone and now donates her time. “We are very lucky,” says Rozewicz. “Kathryn is the reason why the program is successful as she is doing it because she loves doing it. You can’t fake passion like this.”

Vashon Library also partners with the local parks department to do Yoga on the Lawn in warmer weather months, and plans are underway for this summer as well.

“I haven’t seen a case where patrons didn’t leave smiling,” Rozewicz says about all of their yoga offerings. “It’s one of the few programs I receive a thank you from every time.”

Mindfulness for Library Staff

Community members and library management can see a clear benefit for yoga and mindfulness classes made available to the public. And clearly libraries play a crucial role in removing cost barriers to make opportunities accessible to more people. But what about library staff members? We’re always looking at ways to serve the

public, but rarely do we look at what we can do for ourselves and our work teams in terms of wellness and health.

In researching this article for Alki, I did not come across libraries in our state that are currently offering formal programs and encouragement, or informal avenues, to encourage employees to pursue stress reduction through mindfulness, meditation, or yoga. (Apologies if there are libraries out there who are doing this; we’d love to hear from you.)

That means it’s up to employees with an interest in these topics to raise awareness with their management and leadership teams. Arm yourself with data on the benefits of mindfulness, and then make the connection to how that is helpful for library staff who juggle patron needs, social services, reference work, outreach, budget cuts, and community expectations. The American Library Association’s attention to the subject through publications and online courses can be a help.

“Mindfulness not only offers the possibility of a healthy life/career balance for librarians themselves, but in challenging times of rapid social change and uncertainty, it also represents a powerful way to build community resilience,” starts a [release from ALA](#) on the new book *Recipes for Mindfulness in Your Library: Supporting Resilience*

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and Community Engagement (link at end of article). “In fact, mindfulness experiences can be structured to nurture the kind of civic engagement and discourse essential for library support.” A solid endorsement that needs only to substitute the word “librarians” with “library staff.”

Mindfulness and quiet time for reflection is being recognized at conferences and workshops as well. At ALA Midwinter in Seattle this year, a room at the Washington State Convention and Trade Center was set aside for any attendee to use. Katie Scherrer, a yoga teacher and mindfulness coach (and a librarian) with [Connected Communities](#) in Lexington Kentucky, held

mindfulness drop-in sessions in a common area at ALA Midwinter as well. “There is a lot of change in our profession right now, some very much needed, and I truly believe in the power of mindfulness as a skill to help us navigate that change even when it is difficult,” says Scherrer.

“I have been practicing mindfulness since 2009, which is also the year that I took my first professional librarian position,” she continues. “I was young and ambitious in a challenging work environment, and mindfulness helped me learn to develop more effective strategies for accomplishing my goals.”

Scherrer says the gift a mindfulness practice brings is that it “affords us more ‘space’ between stimulus and response. Rather than running on autopilot – the reactions we are conditioned to generate from our individual and cultural socialization – we see what is happening with greater clarity. We feel the tightness in our chest and the flush in our cheeks as they are happening and can identify, wow, I’m feeling angry in response to this situation.” We can use that information, then, to act in an authentic and constructive manner, rather than being controlled by the anger and acting in a way that is harmful to ourselves and others.

If mindfulness is a new concept to you personally (sure, you know about it, but perhaps have never experimented), it’s easy to try. There are numerous apps available with guided meditations and introductions to the practice, not to mention books, DVDs, and online resources through libraries. You don’t have to commit to long sessions or even a daily practice.

“Research has shown that as little as three 10-minute meditation

“ Rather than running on autopilot – the reactions we are conditioned to generate from our individual and cultural socialization – we see what is happening with greater clarity. We feel the tightness in our chest and the flush in our cheeks as they are happening and can identify, wow, I'm feeling angry in response to this situation. ”

sessions a week provide measurable benefits in immune system function, stress reduction, pain control, and a variety of other conditions,” says Tracy Weber, a yoga instructor (former studio owner) and author of the [Downward Dog mystery series](#). “Basically, if stress makes something worse, meditation can make it better. That said, there’s absolutely nothing wrong with meditation more often or for longer time periods. In fact, there is likely to be an increased benefit to doing so. But three 10-minute sessions a week seems to be a sweet spot that most people can fit into their busy schedules.”

So, how about trying it out on a work break? Is there an area in

your library that you can designate as a “quiet” area for reflection and meditation? This needn’t be a large or formal area. In my work group, there’s a storage area filled with books and some of us take short breaks in there, simply putting a “meditation in progress” sign on the door, as one would do for a phone call. I know someone who takes super short meditation breaks at her desk in the back of her library; if her headphones are on, it’s already a signal to not disturb. And if someone does interrupt a meditation session, it’s not that big of a deal. If your break room has windows, perhaps a chair could be positioned to face outside. If it helps, let your close coworkers know that part of your 15-minute break is going to include some quiet time. All you really need is a set of headphones and intent.

Resources for Mindfulness in Library Work

As library professionals, you have access to a variety of books, DVDs, periodicals, and other resources to explore mindfulness. Yet, how can any of us resist a book list?

For Your Bookshelf:

[The Mindful Librarian: Connecting the Practice of Mindfulness to Librarianship](#) by Richard Moniz, Joe Eshleman, Jo Henry, Howard Slutzky, and Lisa Moniz (ALA Editions)

[Recipes for Mindfulness in Your Library: Supporting Resilience and Community Engagement](#), edited by Madeleine Charney, Jenny Colvin, and Richard Moniz (ALA Editions, 2019)

[Seven Practices of a Mindful Leader: Lessons from Google and a Zen Monastery Kitchen](#) by Marc Lesser (New World Library, 2019)

[How We Work: Live Your Purpose, Reclaim Your Sanity, and](#)

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Stepping Up When Things Shut Down: How the Seattle Public Library Supports Partners and Patrons

by Di Zhang

Beginning in December 2018 and continuing into January 2019, the federal government partially shut down for a period of 35 days, the longest in history. This would prove to have unexpected effects that rippled through the economy and society, including our local small businesses and libraries. The Seattle Public Library (SPL) witnessed this first hand in the business community we actively serve. Here are three cases where partners and patrons were affected by the shutdown and where SPL was there to lend support.

ALA Midwinter 2019

Michael Dowling runs the national [Money Smart Week](#) program. Held each year during April (this year's is March 30th - April 6th), Money Smart Week helps consumers better manage their personal finances through programs at local libraries. Dowling was planning to lead a Money Smart Week [workshop](#) with partners at January's American Library Association Midwinter Meeting when he encountered a problem: many potential speakers were federal employees who were unexpectedly furloughed by the shutdown. So Dowling reached out to librarians from SPL who had participated in Money Smart Week for years. Quick to step up to help, Huong Nguyen made herself available to speak about how SPL has embraced Money Smart Week. During the session, Nguyen shared that any library- public, academic, school, and even prison libraries- can sign up to participate in Money Smart Week. According to her, it's important "to hear how libraries do it and how they might do it." Nguyen provided examples of programs SPL has offered and how we've partnered with government institutions like The Washington Attorney General's Office ([Student Loan Repayment and Options](#)) and nonprofits like Seattle Credit Union ([Preventing Identity Theft](#)).

“When the shutdown happened, SPL gave me a secure, quiet place to do appointments, rather than a Starbucks where I'd have to compete with other customers... Offices were opened up for me, security opened the doors for me early. One of the staff even brought back a bag that I had left in the room. The library continues to be a great partner.”

That wasn't the only ALA session affected by the government shutdown. The [Financial Literacy: Free Resources for Librarians](#) event had to change its roster and content due to participants such as the Federal Trade Commission and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau not being able to attend. Nguyen, also a speaker at this workshop, said a crucial speaker was missing from one of the panels due to the shutdown, leading to a restructuring of the day-long event. While the remaining speakers soldiered through, the ability for attendees to network and connect with federal resources was diminished.

Energize Your Business and SCORE Partnership

[Energize Your Business](#) is a series of three workshops offered by

SPL's Library to Business program and is geared at helping existing small business owners grow their business with resources and expert advice. Jay Lyman, the lead for Library to Business, was in the final stages of planning the series when the Small Business Administration, a government agency and an integral partner, was shut down. Even though the series was still able to help forty one people, attendance was lower than normal.

“When you work with partners, you rely on them to let the community know what's going on. The communication is very crucial to the success of the program.” said Nguyen, also part of the Library to Business team, reflecting on the situation. That last minute communication and marketing push was hampered by the absence of SBA. According to Nguyen, it's almost impossible to know all the “what ifs” and domino effects that something like a shutdown can have.

And as Lyman describes it, “[we] had other great partners that stepped up but we missed [SBA]. SBA does a lot for businesses. They host SCORE counseling and workshops, fund partners SPL

Di Zhang is an Adult Services Librarian at The Seattle Public Library and editor of ALKI.

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works with, and host [Lyman] at library workshops at library locations as well as online.”

But the shutdown also affected partners, and there were opportunities for SPL to step up once again. Larry Weinberg, a SCORE counselor who mentors business owners, usually uses the SBA office to meet with clients. During the shutdown, Weinberg reached out to Lyman for a space to meet with clients:

“When the shutdown happened, SPL gave me a secure, quiet place to do appointments, rather than a Starbucks where I’d have to compete with other customers... Offices were opened up for me, security opened the doors for me early. One of the staff even brought back a bag that I had left in the room. The library continues to be a great partner.”

According to both Lyman and Weinberg, this is a testament to the strong partnership between the Library and SCORE after having worked closely together on Business “Open House,” outreach, speaking at events, and lots of other past collaboration.

Larry had a few final words to say about Lyman and the Library to Business team: “SCORE has many great partners. PTAC, EEOC, and multiple non profits just to name a few. And having been a mentor now for three years I regularly reach out to the experts in their fields for additional help above and beyond what I believe I can provide. However, SPL is my ‘go to’ partner. When I have a client that needs data where it be statistics, competition, comparative gross margins for similar size business and/or virtually anything else I often refer clients to Jay Lyman and his team. Invariably the next day I am copied on an e-mail to my client providing them with a range of times and choices to meet. Clients come back to me and rave about the help that Jay and his team provide them with information to help guide them in their business decisions. In our (SCORE) efforts to help our client during the shutdown I too can rave about the help that SPL provided. They went above and beyond. Thank you Jay and the entire team!”

Library to Business Appointments

During the shutdown, SPL also saw opportunities to directly help patrons begin their journey as entrepreneurs. One such patron was furloughed during the shutdown and came to the Central Library to inquire about business resources. She saw this as a great time to get started on a general contracting business she had in mind for years. Lindy Gerdes, a SPL librarian who leads [business appointments](#), met with the patron and pointed her to resources she could use and made referrals to outside partners. Before the business appointment, the patron didn’t know anything about the small business help the Library offered, but she walked away with next steps for her business. The appointment also sparked a second business idea, one which would require market research (the type of information SPL’s business librarians can really help dig into). More

than anything, it opened a door to a relationship with the patron, who can continue to use SPL as a resource.

The recent government shutdown showed us that relationships-forged through mutual interests, collaboration, and ongoing effort-are the fuel that keeps us going through difficult terrain. In times of uncertainty and scarce resources, we rely on our partners to show up for us, and we also show up for our partners and our customers. In the end, relationships are vital to fulfilling the mission of The Seattle Public Library: to bring people, information and ideas together to enrich lives and build community. 📖

Yoga and Mindfulness - 4 *continued from page 12*

[Embrace the Daily Grind](#) by Leah Weiss (based on a course at the Stanford Graduate School of Business, HarperCollins, 2018)

[Meditation Is Not What You Think: Mindfulness and Why It Is So Important](#) by Jon Kabat-Zinn (Hachette Books, 2018)

[The Mindful Day: Practical Ways to Find Focus, Calm, and Joy from Morning to Evening](#) by Laurie Cameron (National Geographic, 2018; Mindfulness expert Cameron is a veteran of Google’s Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute)

More to explore:

Mindfulness for Librarians, a Facebook group administered and moderated by librarians; open to all library workers but you must ask to join. I’ve found this to be a great resource for ideas. The group hosts monthly Google Hangouts with a theme to explore.

Programming Librarian Interest Group, another Facebook group moderated by library workers. A wide array of topics, but if you’re seeking information on starting yoga and mindfulness programs for your patrons or staff, this could be a great place to get ideas and support. 📖

NOTES

1. Goyal M, Singh S, Sibinga EMS, Gould NF, Rowland-Seymour A, Sharma R, Berger Z, Sleicher D, Maron DD, Shihab HM, Ranasinghe PD, Linn S, Saha S, Bass EB, Haythornthwaite JA, “Meditation Programs for Psychological Stress and Well-Being,” Comparative Effectiveness Review, No. 124. (Prepared by Johns Hopkins University Evidence-based Practice Center under Contract No. 290-2007-10061–I.) AHRQ Publication No. 13(14)-EHC116-EF. Rockville, MD: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, January 2014. www.effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/reports/final.cfm

The Zen of Shelving Books (poem)

by Michael Ebburg

As the wordless afternoon sun
slants through this great cubist Chartres of a reading-room
it illuminates something of incomparable simplicity
and exceptional beauty:

hands reach for book
lift book from cart
find place in range
put book on shelf

One hundred, two hundred, three hundred times a day
there is nothing but this single moment
(over and over again)

Each book
not a mere object
but a precious cargo of knowledge
someone's life that was, or will be
and is.

quiet — lucid — present
Here.
Now.

Most people think the work of shelving books is
drudgery
boring
exhausting
“How can you do such a tedious, tiresome job
day in and day out, year in and year out?”
Little do they realize
it is actually a hidden path to enlightenment

this book... this cover... this call-number... this shelf
this gesture... this breath... this heartbeat... this life

Many forms of meditational practice
focus on the intentionality of repeating
simple, ordinary, “empty” things
(sometimes combined with strenuous physical exertion)
in order to be profoundly

in the moment
and achieve a state of
mindfulness within mindlessness.
Book-shelving is my meditational practice.

People spend years studying ancient teachings
or sweating in yoga classes
they pay seminar “gurus” thousands of dollars
and travel to India or Tibet
in search of this awareness
I get it right here in the library, every day at work
without even opening a book—
and I have the privilege of doing this for my job

“the little things...
there's nothing bigger
than the little things”

Here's a secret:
Book-shelving is essential
to the functioning of an organized and efficient library
but it is far more
than just a means to an end:
It is an end in and of itself
...and therefore also a beginning
If you can find meaning
in this meaningless activity
and make it your own,
then you can find meaning in all of life.

I don't know much,
but this much I do know:
the sound a book makes
as it leaves my hand
and finds its place on the shelf
is the sound of one hand clapping.

Michael Ebburg works for the Seattle Public Library.

How to Love Your Job and Yourself When Your Job Isn't Loving You Back: Strategies for Difficult Times From a Public Library Staff Perspective

by Kelsey Smith

Allow me to begin on a non-scholarly and personal note by saying this: I have well and truly struggled with writing this article. I started with grand ambitions and so much to say. I wanted to write about the frustrations that my coworkers have been experiencing in our library system as we cope with what feels like huge momentous shifts in our organization, including changes that impact our core philosophy of service and how we do our jobs. I wanted to write about how serious budgetary concerns drive the need to make these big changes, and the eternal problems engendered by the necessary but problematic need to do more with less, and

that these are not unique problems in public libraries. I wanted to reflect on how the concepts of “resilience” and “embracing change” can have unintended consequences that make library workers feel as though it is problematic to have any concerns about decisions that affect our jobs and our libraries. I wanted to share a conversation about self-care I recently had with some of my peers that made me realize I am very bad at taking care of myself. I wanted to write about “vocational awe”¹ and how much my job and my patrons mean to me, to the point that I lay awake at night thinking of the best ways to organize and deliver programs, collections, and services for our patrons. I wanted to convey how much pride I take in the work that I do, and how I’m struggling with throwing any shade on a library system that I love very deeply. But mostly, as a person who has so very much to learn in this area, I wanted to write about self-care for public library staff.

Self-care has become a ubiquitous buzzword in these times of an overworked and stressed out citizenry. It has been my experience that most people who are drawn to public library work are not in it for the money since most public library staff do not receive a median wage in the United States. They do the work because they

“ Avoid thinking about your job in terms of vocational awe—a set of ideas, values, and assumptions librarians have about themselves and the profession that result in beliefs that libraries as institutions are inherently good and sacred, and therefore beyond critique.”

strongly believe in the power of the public library to equalize and uplift communities. They believe this even in times of scarcity when public library budgets are barely sufficient for operations on a basic level. These sparse budgets drive the need for low pay, minimal staffing levels and “doing more with less,” which in turn leads to burnout, organizational dysfunction, and increased stress leading to illness and absenteeism. Since we remain a tenacious lot who continue to believe in the power of the public library, we clearly need to step it up in our self-care efforts so that we can help ourselves, and in turn, help each

other.

The question remains: how do we actually do this? Recently, on a Library Think Tank Facebook group, a second-year public librarian asked for advice on best practices for avoiding burnout². One of the first responses really resonated with me— you work to live your life, and you don’t let your work become your life³. There are lots of ways to encourage this goal while on the job. Here are just a few:

- Ask for help at work when you need it. You are not alone.
- Set boundaries and reasonable expectations with both your patrons and your coworkers. You are amazing, and people expect a lot from you. A large part of our public library work requires providing intense emotional labor on a daily basis. Setting boundaries allows you to serve more people with your expertise and compassion.
- Remind yourself of why your job is meaningful for you. Take a moment to appreciate the many positive interactions you have with the public every day instead of focusing on the negative interactions that often have more of an emotional impact.
- Provide reasonable, scalable services. Are you allowing yourself a reasonable amount of time for the tasks you undertake?

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Kelsey Smith is an Adult Services Librarian Senior at Lacey Timberland Library.

Is that epic program you're planning going to stress you out for weeks? If so, consider how you might be able to change this. (Note: I am terrible at this.)

- Voice concerns in a professional fashion to people that you trust. If you're concerned, there's a good chance others are too.
- Be a supportive coworker. If you're a manager, be a supportive manager. Bring snacks, and encourage laughter on the job. Give your coworkers and staff recognition when you see them doing good work. Advocate for your staff. We all need each other to succeed.
- Does your library system have a union? Remember that you are your union, and your union is your voice.
- Use your vacation hours. You have earned them. No guilt.
- Take your sanctioned breaks at work. You have earned them as well.
- Give yourself quiet off-desk tasks to take a short break from interactions with the public.
- Do your best to carve out time and space for yourself and your coworkers to take "creativity breaks" and explore new ideas⁴. Many tech companies provide space and time for their staff to "play," theorizing that play increases cognitive function, productivity, and workplace satisfaction while also decreasing burnout⁵.
- Provide boundaries for your workday. Don't check your work email when you aren't at work. Don't do your job when you aren't at work. Don't work late or come in early without adjusting your schedule on another day. Give yourself time to take care of you.
- Avoid thinking about your job in terms of vocational awe— "a set of ideas, values, and assumptions librarians have about themselves and the profession that result in beliefs that libraries as institutions are inherently good and sacred, and therefore beyond critique⁶." Thinking about our jobs in this way unintentionally places the burden of failure or success on library staff, rather than considering the idea that the concept

“ I highly recommend all library staff check out the amazing LIS Mental Health compilation zines, Reserve and Renew. There are currently two issues, and they speak to the intersection of mental health and library work in a way that makes me feel less alone. ”

of a library as an institution may itself be flawed. Vocational awe doesn't allow us the space to make mistakes and learn from them so that we may do better next time.

If none of these strategies seem to be working, you may want to ask yourself honestly if you fundamentally enjoy providing direct services to the public. If you don't, maybe you would find more satisfaction in technical services or other areas that work less with the general public. There is space for many different kinds of workers in the field of librarianship, and you are not a failure if you discover that an intensive public service

position isn't for you.

When you're not at work, your agency and self-care options increase significantly. I spoke to my coworker Donna Feddern about some specific self-care strategies that she uses and encourages her staff to use as well:

- Find an exercise strategy that works for you. If you aren't a person who will go to the gym, consider a treadmill. Take some walks. Do some morning stretching or yoga.
- Spent time outside. Check out the concept of "forest bathing" to learn more about the benefits of spending time in nature.
- Meditation. There are tons of meditation apps that you can download for free on your device. Popular apps include Insight Timer, Calm, and Headspace. Donna spends ten minutes with a meditation app every morning and falls asleep to one at night. She also likes ASMR (autonomous sensory meridian response) personal attention recordings while falling asleep at night.
- Try to be in the moment instead of focusing on what is coming next.
- Keep yourself busy, but not so busy that you don't have time to reflect and get in touch with yourself.
- Use your medical benefits. Get regular checkups. If you take medication, get your medication levels checked regularly.
- If you're on Facebook, there are several Mindfulness groups for library staff that you might want to explore for additional resources and conversation.

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A cursory facebook request on my personal page produced some great suggestions from other friends ranging from small ideas to big. They included spending time with animals, swimming, social time, date nights, reading, creative outlets and hobbies, healthy eating, drinking tea, eating chocolate, taking personal days, getting massages and acupuncture, getting enough sleep, minimizing screen time, reminding yourself that you matter, utilizing your EAP benefits, attending therapy, and retirement or finding new work (suggested by four people!).

Finally, I highly recommend all library staff check out the amazing LIS Mental Health compilation zines, Reserve and Renew. There are currently two issues, and they speak to the intersection of mental health and library work in a way that makes me feel less alone. The LIS Mental Health organizers also host regular Twitter chats and provide additional resources through a regularly updated, editable [Google doc](#).

Some other strategies that work for me personally include pursuing professional development opportunities like conferences and workshops to recharge my librarianship battery, finding tasks at work that give me pleasure, and getting involved in my community in other ways that remind me that I am not my job. I get a lot of personal pleasure out of helping to run a community letterpress studio in Olympia, Washington and co-organizing the annual Olympia Zine Fest. I jokingly refer to these as my unpaid jobs, but they both involve making decisions together with a group of dedicated and passionate volunteers and they bring me great personal satisfaction. I'm also not afraid to say that I engage in activities that would make a wellness coach twitch—binge-watching TV, looking at funny animal videos and memes, having an occasional cocktail, salty, or sugary treat. I believe I mentioned that I wasn't good at this self-care business. Mostly, just make sure to remind yourself that your job is only one part of your life. Remind yourself that you matter, that taking care of yourself means that you are better able to take care of others, and that we are all in this glorious soup together. 📖

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1 "Anonymous Asks, Library Think Tank Discussion," Library Think Tank #ALATT. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ALAtthinkTANK> (accessed February 5, 2019).

2 "Anonymous Asks, Library Think."

3 Ibid.

4 "Interview with Donna Feddern." Telephone interview by author, February 21, 2019. Donna Feddern is the manager of the Shelton and Hoodspout Timberland Libraries.

5 Kline, Kenny. "5 Reasons Why You Should Allow Playtime in the Office." Inc.com. <https://www.inc.com/kenny-kline/5-reasons-why-you-should-allow-playtime-in-the-office.html> (accessed February 20, 2019).

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Walker, Cecily, Kelly McElroy, Jessica Schomberg, Kate Deibel, Court, Abigail Phillips, Violet Fox, Annie Pho, Nicole Gustavsen, Marisol Moreno Ortiz, and Katie Whitney. LIS Mental Health. "LIS Mental Health aims to raise awareness of mental health among library and archives workers." <https://tinyurl.com/lismentalhealth19>

The First Annual Xiamen Library Exchange

by Sam Wallin

After twenty eight hours, two layovers, three flights, and four airports, Sam Wallin and Jennifer Hauan, two librarians from Fort Vancouver Regional Libraries (FVRL) arrived in Xiamen, Fujian, China for two weeks of touring libraries, learning from librarians and library staff, and sharing similarities and differences between the practices and experiences of FVRL and Xiamen Municipal Library (XML). A month later Miss Ye Yayun and Miss Lai Suqin, two librarians from XML arrived in Southwest Washington for a similar experience. The exchange was the result of several years of relationship building and several months of planning, but the results have been well worth the time and effort.

History

How did this program get started? It has its roots in the long-running Horner Library Staff Exchange between the State of Oregon and Fujian Province. Through the Horner Exchange, librarians from Oregon and Southwest Washington libraries travelled to China to spend time touring Fujian Province, delivering presentations and learning from librarians in various locations. The counterpart to this experience was the arrival of librarians from Fujian Province for a similar experience in Oregon. Amy Lee, a librarian with Fort Vancouver Regional Libraries, is fluent in English, Mandarin, and Cantonese. She was able to participate in the Horner Exchange as a volunteer, later as a delegate/interpreter, and in 2016 as an honored guest for a twentieth anniversary reunion of the Horner Exchange in Fujian Province.

While the Horner Library Staff Exchange continues to raise funding for the project, Amy Lee had been working with contacts she had made in Xiamen for several years to establish a more focused exchange program between FVRL and XML. In 2018, with financial assistance from the Fort Vancouver Regional Library Foundation, everything came together at last to enable the exchange to work.

XML and FVRL, Compared

Xiamen is a city of about four million people on the coast of China across the strait from Taiwan. Much of the city's urban core is on an island about seven miles in diameter, but is also growing steadily out on the mainland. To an American, a city of four million may seem quite large, but in China, Xiamen is considered to be a mid-

sized city. Xiamen is made up of six districts, each with its own local government structure and funding: Siming, Xiangan, Jimei, Tongan, Huli, and Haicang. The Xiamen Municipal Library is based in Siming District, on the central island, but provides some services in partnership with the libraries of the other five districts, and in some cases fully operates libraries in those other districts. To an outsider, these relationships may seem confusing and complex, the more so because of differences in how cities and districts are defined, and what may seem normal or familiar.

Fort Vancouver Regional Library District serves Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat Counties, as well as the City of Woodland, but not the City of Camas, in Southwest Washington State. The service population is approaching 500,000, with most of the population in Clark County, in Vancouver and the surrounding areas.

Two FVRL Librarians in Xiamen

Sam and Jennifer arrived on October 31, 2018, and had the rest of that day to settle in before the whirlwind of touring and learning would begin. Also present for the first week were FVRL Executive Director Amelia Shelley and FVRL Public Services Director Amy Lee to officially sign a Memorandum of Understanding with XML, formalizing the new partnership. While every day was filled with new places and experiences, several continue to stand out to the participants.

The Xiamen Library Conference

All four of the travelers from FVRL were guest speakers at the



From left, Sam Wallin, Jennifer Hauan, Amy Lee, Amelia Shelley

Sam Wallin is an Analyst and Project Coordinator in Fort Vancouver Regional Libraries.

annual Xiamen Library Conference for librarians of all types in Xiamen. They had written their presentations several months before, and each had been translated into Chinese by Amy Lee. The Xiamen Library Conference was an opportunity to share with public, school, and academic librarians from around the region. Jennifer presented about FVRL services and locations, Amelia presented on children's literature reading levels, and Sam presented about ebook management practices at FVRL. Amy Lee and one of the Chinese librarians, Xue Hanqiu, interpreted the presentations for the audience.

The Jimei Library

Just one month prior to Sam and Jennifer's arrival, the newest library in Xiamen had opened, attracting over 36,000 visitors on the first day. This 650,000 square foot facility in Jimei district includes many traditional and familiar library spaces, but also provides access to a host of innovative and inspiring new spaces as well. Some of these spaces include:

1. A large area on the ground floor that is open 24/7, with a browsing collection on RFID shelving. Users return materials by shelving them anywhere. This leaves materials out of order, but it's not a problem because users can use touch screen computers or an app on their phone to search for items in the collection and find its location on a map.
2. Two separate "living room" style movie theatres, one with six easy chairs and one with about twenty, which families or groups can reserve for events or parties. There is a wide selection of films available for viewing.
3. A television recording studio with a wraparound blue-screen, lighting, and a sound booth.
4. Two professional grade sound recording studios, complete with musical instruments and equipment.
5. A large auditorium and stage with a movie screen, digital projector, up-to-date light and sound systems, and comfortable stadium seating. The library has agreements with local cinemas to show thirty first-run movies annually, simultaneously with the cinemas.
6. A 90,000 square foot children's area, across one side of the ground floor of the library. While somewhat quiet during the week, on weekends the children's area sees about 5,000 visitors each day.
7. A massive 19,000 square foot atrium in the center of the Jimei library is capped by a dome of 119 feet diameter. The dome is made of windows and automatic slats that move throughout the day to allow the right amount of sunlight into the atrium.

Gulangyu Island

Across the bay from the main island of Xiamen lies the much smaller island of Gulangyu, a UNESCO world heritage site. Starting in about 1843, the island became the site where delegations from other nations of the world lived. As a result, the island features architectural styles from both Chinese and Western sources, resulting in a fusion that is unique to the area. The island allows pedestrian traffic only, and is accessed by ferries. On this island, XML operates a 15,000 square foot library in a historical building overlooking a soccer field surrounded by Victorian era buildings. During their visit, the librarians were shown an installation on the top floor of the library showing information about the typhoon that wrought havoc on the Xiamen area in 2016, and the efforts made to quickly repair damage and clean up debris.



Across one of the streets of Gulangyu, a large tree still leans, downed during the typhoon and left as a reminder of the devastation.

The Xiamen Mobile Library

XML operates one bookmobile, providing service to many different sites around Xiamen. We were able to ride twice on the bookmobile; once to visit a rural grade school, and a second time to visit community sites on the outskirts of the urban area. At the



Sam Wallin and Jennifer Hauan prepare to board the XML mobile library

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school, students excitedly lined up outside their classroom, books in hand, and walked to the bookmobile to hand in their books and take turns climbing the stairs and searching the stacks for something new to read. Even though Sam and Jennifer wore the red vests that marked them as official library volunteers, some of the students were a bit shy of the visitors at first. However, many more were interested in having their picture taken with them. The principal informed Sam and Jennifer that they were the first non-Chinese people many of his students had ever met in person.

During their visit, Sam and Jennifer discovered that while there are many interesting differences to note between the two library districts, the similarities were most inspiring: Staff are dedicated to providing great service to the public, and work hard to help connect readers with books and materials. This rough translation of the XML mission statement expresses ideas familiar to all American libraries: "Free access for all, Services for everyone, Sharing with each other."



From left: Amy Lee, Lai Suqin, Jennifer Hauan, Ye Yayun

Volunteerism

Volunteerism is strong at FVRL and they were impressed with the options for volunteers. At FVRL, volunteers do not shelve or do other tasks that paid staff do, but they do help out in other ways. For example, some FVRL libraries host 'conversation circles' where participants practice conversing in a second language. These circles are all hosted by volunteers who speak the language. Other volunteers participate as part of larger projects like book sales. Each FVRL library has a Friends of the Library group, all of whom are volunteers, that raises funds and supports the library in the community. At XML, a rotating group of university students volunteer at the larger libraries on weekends, helping to check in and shelve materials. There is high turnover, so a lot of additional staff time is spent training and guiding new volunteers as they learn how to do their tasks. The librarians were interested in developing meaningful ways for community members to volunteer, with the hope of building more consistent volunteer support.

Weeding

FVRL libraries weed out older and damaged materials, and generally try to keep shelves tidy and fresh looking. The visiting librarians noted that the condition of the FVRL collection was very good.



The room in the main library of XML where additional materials are kept.



From left, XML Public Services Director Fu Hong, FVRL Analyst Sam Wallin, XML Executive Director Lin Liping, FVRL Executive Director Amelia Shelley, FVRL Public Services Director Amy Lee, FVRL Branch Manager Jennifer Hauan

Two XML Librarians in America

Two XML librarians arrived for a ten day visit, in early December, 2018. Sam and Jennifer were heavily involved in preparing for their arrival, and hosting their excursions. Within their ten day visit, the librarians were able to visit every FVRL branch in the 4,200 square mile service district, viewing library programs, chatting with staff, and learning about our services. They were also able to visit the library at WSU-Vancouver, the Washington State School for the Blind, two Multnomah County libraries, the Confucius Institute at Portland State University, and the library at the Oregon School of Oriental Medicine. Another day involved a journey to Seattle and back, with visits to Seattle Public Library, the University of Washington campus, and Chihuly Garden and Glass.

When asked for their observations of our libraries and our services, the librarians shared several things they had noted, which they hoped to share with their colleagues in China.

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Bursting At the Seams

by *Hanna White*

In September of 2018, Vancouver Community Library offered its first Sewing Machines 101 program to the public. Three attendees, including one library intern and a library staffer, sewed 5”X9” drawstring bags which could be used to hold a cell phone, sunglasses, etc. Four months later, we taught the same project to a full group of 8 attendees and had to turn away several people at the door. As-of this writing, the program, currently offered monthly, has been maxed out five times in a row.

We’ve been extremely excited about the success of the class, which draws patrons from a variety of demographics and experience levels and is one of the most asked about programs at the library according to frontline staff. As interest in the program has grown, so has interest in next-step classes and the ability to use the machines independently. Staff have also expressed interest both in learning how to use the machines and in donating fabric and other materials.

The team behind our sewing programs currently consists of three staff. One part-time and one full-time paraprofessional, both experienced sewists, plan and teach the classes as a unit. They rely on a full-time supervisory librarian for support with materials, scheduling, etc. Coordinating our responses to these requests in a prompt, flexible, and realistic manner has been an exciting challenge over the past several months. No public library staff member wants to say “no,” but the time, money, logistics, and liability involved in hands-on, materials-intensive maker programming can be, at times, overwhelming, especially since we lack a dedicated makerspace.


In the past few months, we’ve adopted several strategies going forward to help us stay afloat. Often, we meet informally on Sunday mornings once-a-week before the library opens to discuss concerns and ideas. Two non-programming staff with sewing experience have been tapped to assist with programs as-needed, such as by preparing materials and stepping in to facilitate if one of the regular instructors is absent. We requested feedback from patrons attending the class on what other sewing programs they’d be interested in

“ You have sewing machines at the library? That’s so awesome! ”

seeing, and have kept a running tally of those numbers. Finally, we reached out to some local sewing machine shops and other textile businesses to ask if they’d be willing to meet and chat with us about partnership options.

As a result, starting in April, we’ll be offering our 101 class twice a month, rather than once a month. We facilitated a one-hour staff training using the same project that we currently use for the class. We plan to hold a one-off mending program in March, to be repeated depending on its success. We modified language from other libraries’ makerspace agreements and our pre-existing 3D Printing agreement to create a process for patrons to license to use a sewing machine whenever they want. We inventoried our donated fabric and came up with a plan for weeding and criteria for future donations. And in a few months, we hope to have a local sewing instructor come to give a talk on how to sew from a pattern.

This talk (rather than workshop) based structure for makerspace programming is a new frontier for us. Initially, we were focused firmly on having patrons learn hands-on skills, sometimes at the exclusion of information such as terminology. Using the machines to create and take home a completed product is a satisfying experience for our patrons, especially for first-timers. However, as demand for intermediate programs has grown, we have realized this format isn’t sustainable at higher levels of instruction. The materials alone could quickly become cost-prohibitive if we wanted all attending patrons to be able to construct the pattern we chose, and sewing beyond a beginner level requires a certain degree of technical knowledge. We are hopeful for the possibilities of this lecture-based structure to provide patrons with the knowledge they need to proceed with construction independently.

While the format described here will not be useful for all libraries, we encourage any libraries who are starting or continuing with makerspace programming to consider including textile arts as part of their offerings. Despite perceptions of sewing as a dying art, our community’s response to our sewing programs has been robust and positive. Even months in, we are often satisfied to hear patrons review our list of programs and proclaim: “You have sewing machines at the library? That’s so awesome!” 

Hanna White is a Senior Library Assistant at Vancouver Community Library, Co-chair of the WLA Library and Information Student Section (LISS) for 2019, and MLIS online candidate at the University of Washington iSchool.

Facing My Fears In Order to Serve the Patrons

by Diane Froelich

I am (hopefully) at the midpoint of my life, and working towards beginning a new career in librarianship, a field in which budgets are minimal, staff are overtaxed, and patrons are in need of critical services. Correspondingly, I am sometimes overwhelmed thinking about what my future career path might look like. Did I make a wise choice deciding to invest my time and money in earning an MLS? Will I be able to find a job as a librarian that will make my efforts worthwhile? Despite these concerns, I rarely dwell on such issues for long; instead, each new detail I learn about the field affirms my deep and mounting fascination with libraries, as well as a belief in their vital importance. And this in turn drives me to work towards becoming the most effective, skillful librarian I can be, even when doing so feels so hard. To elaborate some of the challenges I am working through on the road to becoming a librarian, I'd like to share some of my recent experiences as a Technology Help Intern.

Currently, as part of my studies, I am performing an internship providing technology help to patrons at the Lacey Timberland Library, a public library branch of the Timberland Regional Library system. Because providing technology support is an essential function of public library work, my internship is affording me an excellent opportunity to gain relevant skills that will

further my career. I am correspondingly thrilled by and grateful for this opportunity. However, in practice, performing these duties means that I must repeatedly challenge myself to flex and increase my technology know-how muscles, as I am by no means a computer expert. While I have a decent amount of familiarity

Diane Froelich is a graduate student at Emporia State University and an Aide at the Elma Timberland Library.

“ I am gaining greater knowledge and skill with technology as well as learning to be mentally prepared and confident in my abilities to problem solve in the moment. ”

“ Every time I help someone scan a document, adjust the settings on their email, or learn to navigate some aspect of software, my concern about my limited abilities with technology falls aside. ”

with computers, I only purchased my first PC two years ago and my overall technological abilities, while not limited, are selective.

Nonetheless, because I want to become a capable, adept librarian, I simply need to push through, even when I don't feel ready.

Here is an excerpt from my internship journal which demonstrates the demands and gratification offered by this internship:

The first person I met with today had just been gifted a phone (their daughter's old one). They couldn't

locate some of its functions, and they also didn't know how to access voice mail. As I had just been in the similar situation of being gifted a phone which I had to learn to navigate – part of which involved a two-week period of not knowing how to set-up my voice mail – after playing around and trying a few things, I was easily able

to problem solve these issues for the patron. I made sure that they could see what I was doing and that I didn't immediately know the answers, in case seeing any part of that might be helpful/instructive.

The second person I assisted was someone I had worked with the previous week. (Aside: I appreciate that she obviously has limited computer knowledge, yet she persists in learning how to accomplish the tasks she wants to get done.) This week she wanted

to figure out how to edit a PDF attachment in the specific manner requested of her. This involved using a program the patron did not have downloaded on their computer. I sought the assistance of library staff to support with this issue as I wasn't sure how to appropriately or efficiently guide someone through downloading software. During this process, I saw the librarian offer simple, clear and non-opinion-based assistance, which offered me a great lesson for how to engage with similar situations in the future.

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After we helped download this program onto the patron's computer, I needed to wrap up our time together as another patron was waiting. Before I left the current patron, we practiced the steps needed to access the pertinent files and information, so that she could work on the project at home by herself, where there wouldn't be anyone to support her if she got stuck on these initial steps. This experience was empowering for me and hopefully instructive to the patron as well.

My experiences this week are exemplar of the fact that while sometimes I know the exact, precise answer to a patron's question, generally I don't. Instead I must call on my own medium level of tech knowledge, along with my budding sense of confidence, to figure out the solution on the spot. All of which once again illustrates how, through this internship, I am gaining greater knowledge and skill with technology as well as learning to be mentally prepared and confident in my abilities to problem solve in the moment.

I wish the latter could be more widely imparted to many of the patrons who express overwhelm pertaining to technology, as I know that I, the person there to assist them, am constantly confounded by computers and working to figure things out, yet I am generally able to prevail. Technology can be alien and the associated stress can feel insurmountable, but this doesn't need to be the case, especially when there is free Tech help offered at the library. Correspondingly, something I am hoping for is to increase one or more person's confidence that they can problem solve their technology challenges, either on their own, with the support of the library, or some other safe resource. Lastly, I am feeling very grateful to the library for offering this free and essential assistance to the community.

Every time I help someone scan a document, adjust the settings on their email, or learn to navigate some aspect of software, my concern about my limited abilities with technology falls aside. This is in part because it feels good to overcome a challenge, and increase my confidence and skill level, while hopefully imparting some of these same benefits to the patron. Additionally, providing technology help to patrons is rewarding. It connects me with library efforts to provide the community free and safe technological support. Thus, while individual patron interactions range from fun to daunting to mundane, the awareness I hold of the importance of libraries, and how much I want to join this profession, motivates me to push through and continue forward. 📖

Libraries in China weed very lightly, generally removing items only if they are damaged beyond repair. Collection size is one of many different statistical measures that Chinese libraries are evaluated on, so there is an incentive to keep as many items as possible. While visiting the main library in Xiamen, Sam and Jennifer were shown the room where additional materials are stored in row upon row of high-density mobile shelving. If an item from the collection is requested, staff locate and retrieve it.

Service consistency

The librarians were impressed with the consistency of services throughout FVRL, even though libraries and communities are separated by great distances. There are six districts in Xiamen, and each district governs the libraries in that district. XML is in Siming district, but works with the libraries in the other districts, often providing materials and sometimes providing technology to facilitate library use. However, they have little say in how services are administered, so readers may have very different experiences at libraries around the area.

Youth services

They thought very highly of FVRL's approach to youth services, including the way services are delineated into narrow age ranges such as Babies, Toddlers, Pre-School, School-Age, Tween, and Teen. At XML they have some separation between early learning and school age materials and programs, but very little for teens. Most teen materials and services are put together with adults, and teen use of libraries focuses primarily on using it as a place to study. Part of the reason for this is teens spend a lot of time at school, or working on schoolwork, so there is little time for the kind of activities libraries might be able to offer. During their visit to FVRL, the librarians observed a group of teens playing Dungeons and Dragons, and were very impressed, both with the number of teens engaged and with the game itself, which they were not familiar with.

Though this exchange builds in many ways on the Horner Exchange, it has taken the exchange concept in a different direction. The Xiamen Library Exchange focuses on developing long-term relationships between two library systems for the purpose of learning from, and being a resource for each other as we continue developing new services for our users. Both libraries are working on setting up the next exchange for 2019. If it can be sustained over time, it may serve as a model for other library systems seeking to forge new connections with libraries and librarians in other countries.

If you are interested in learning more about this exchange, or to look at a lot of more pictures from the adventure, Sam and Jennifer kept a blog of their experiences at <https://chinaexchangedotblog.wordpress.com/>. 📖

Making Oral History Collections More Accessible to Underrepresented Communities: A workshop at the OLA-WLA joint conference

by Magenta Loera

In October of 2017, three Library and Information Science graduate students and I interviewed Indigenous and First Nations students from the University of Washington, the University of Alaska Anchorage and the University of Montana. We wanted to better understand what oral histories mean to them and how libraries can best

serve their needs and interests. An overwhelming majority of the student participants stated that oral histories are invaluable to their communities, identities, culture, and education. This finding was not surprising, given that oral histories play a unique role in preserving non-hegemonic knowledge systems.

Unfortunately, information by and about Indigenous people, especially information that is accurate and unbiased, continues to be largely neglected and undervalued in academic institutions. Nearly 90% of student participants said that they experienced direct barriers to accessing Indigenous knowledge, and in particular oral histories, through libraries. One student explained:

“ I value oral histories very much so but it’s not something that is widely used or accepted in the academic world.”


“I value oral histories very much so but it’s not something that is widely used or accepted in the academic world.”

By giving equal representation to oral histories through libraries, we help elevate the perspectives of underrepresented communities whose knowledge has not been

documented in written record. This April, we will be facilitating a workshop titled “Making Oral History Collections More Accessible to Underrepresented Communities” at the 2019 Oregon and Washington Library Association Conference in Vancouver, WA. Through this workshop, participants will have the opportunity to engage in a shared discussion about potential actionable ideas drawn from both the qualitative feedback we gathered and relevant LIS literature. Participants will also learn



about the struggles and successes of ongoing oral history projects.

To learn more visit the OLA-WLA Conference page: <https://www.wla.org/2019-ola-wla-conference-home> 

Assessing the Needs of Indigenous and First Nations Students and the Value of Oral History Collections and Projects

Lauren Nagasawa, Magenta Loera, Meneka Thiru, Sam Buechler

Magenta Loera is a Research and Learning Services Specialist at University of Washington Libraries

Staff Education & Patron Engagement to Increase Downloadable Circulation

by Sarah Morrison

100,000 Washington Anytime Library Checkouts

In January 2018, the North Olympic Library System (NOLS) launched a campaign to increase patron usage of OverDrive (Washington Anytime Library), with the goal of reaching 100,000 checkouts before the end of the year. Campaign components included staff education and updates, increased online visibility, and increased in-person patron education through one-on-one training sessions. NOLS offers OverDrive through a consortium of forty five public libraries in Washington, called the Washington Anytime Library. The 2018 campaign was called 100K WAL CKOs, or 100,000 Washington Anytime Library Checkouts.

Staff noticed the opportunity for an awareness campaign when looking at 2017 checkout statistics and anticipating 2018 use. It was anticipated that NOLS patrons were likely to check out 95,000 to 99,000 items in 2018. A time-limited, measurable goal was set to achieve 100,000 checkouts during 2018.

This project became highly successful, bumping circulation up by 23% from 2017 stats, and increasing unique users by 22%. The campaign involved several components: staff training, scheduled programs, one-on-one programs, public communications, content acquisition, and monitoring.

Staff Training

All staff system-wide had already received training on OverDrive, Libby, and the Washington Anytime Library and were familiar with the basics of the service. Front-line service staff had also previously had access to additional training, maintaining the system-wide service standard that all desk staff at all locations can help patrons set up apps and programs, navigate the collection, checkout, read or listen, and return items. All front-line staff are able to help patrons with the basic steps and know how to access appropriate support in the event of an error message or other problems. Refresher training was offered to any interested staff members and new staff as needed.

Staff were introduced to the campaign during the January all-staff meeting. A follow-up email was sent the same day to all staff in all departments. Both the presentation during the all-staff meeting and the all-staff email explained the purpose of the campaign, staff expectations, and opportunities for additional staff involvement.

Sarah Morrison is a Librarian II in the North Olympic Library System, Port Angeles Main Library.

Patron Education

Patron education was offered in two ways, through scheduled open-house programs and through one-on-one appointments scheduled by request. Drop-in programs were held at three of the four NOLS locations during January 2018. Several staff were present at each program to walk patrons step-by-step through the download process on their personal devices, and to answer general questions about the system. At branches with larger patron turn-out, patrons were grouped at tables according to the type of device they brought. Due to its popularity, a second program was offered at the Sequim Branch Library in June 2018, just before summer travel and the Summer Reading Program. The January programs saw patrons in attendance, and 11 attended the repeat program in June.

Also in January 2018, NOLS launched one-on-one patron education at all branches and supported this with a new online request form. The Port Angeles location began offering one-on-one patron education appointments, called Tech-Know-Logy sessions, during limited months in 2015 and later expanded to allowing appointments to be made year-round. In a Tech-Know-Logy appointment, a patron can sit down one-on-one with a staff member for customized help. Mostly this has been used for OverDrive, Libby, and the Washington Anytime Library, but is also appropriate for Hoopla, database instruction, or in-depth help with other Library online resources. For any downloadable resources, patrons receive help on setting up the app on their personal device and practice finding material and checking out titles. Since patrons all have different technology experience and comfort levels, and there are so many different types of devices available, patrons were becoming frustrated with the previous class-style models of offering this education. Individual Tech-Know-Logy sessions bypass the difficulties inherent in teaching a large group of patrons, all of whom have different devices.

After offering Tech-Know-Logy appointments at Port Angeles for a few years, system-wide Tech-Know-Logy appointments were launched in January 2018. An [online request](#) form was launched at the same time, so patrons could request specific dates, times, and branches. During 2018, seventy four patrons received help via Tech-Know-Logy appointments.

Public Communications

NOLS publicizes upcoming programs in a number of ways, including press releases sent to local media outlets, entries added to the library online events calendar and community calendars,

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posting content to the [NOLS Facebook](#) page and creating Facebook events, creating flyers to share both inside branches and around the community, and regularly updating the NOLS [website](#). These methods of program publicity were used with all four open-house programs, and to increase awareness of Tech-Know-Logy appointments.

NOLS made frequent use of the Facebook page to promote the Washington Anytime Library throughout the campaign. Posts were scheduled throughout the year, with additional content scheduled weekly in the spring and fall. Content for posts was created in-house as well as harvested from OverDrive publications and outlets such as the [OverDrive Resource Center](#) and OverDrive's [Pinterest](#) page.

NOLS also created a custom landing page on the website, since removed, which summarized the project for the public and gave links to the Washington Anytime Library collection and the Tech-Know-Logy request form.

NOLS also used all of these methods throughout the year to promote several special programs through OverDrive, including three Big Library Read events, the Audiobook Sync program, and the twentieth anniversary of the release of Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone.

Content Acquisition

NOLS makes regular purchases in OverDrive to meet the annual spending amount set by the consortium. New materials, both eBook and eAudiobook, are purchased at least monthly, and patrons submit requests through NOLS' online [Suggest It!](#) form. NOLS also participates in Advantage Plus. New Advantage copies, chosen based on hold numbers and holds ratios, are ordered as frequently as every other week, depending on demand. With Advantage Plus options, NOLS' Advantage titles are then shared to the consortium, based on inactivity, monthly.

Program Monitoring

During 2018, staff monitored the total number of checkouts and also the number of unique users throughout the year. Monthly email updates were sent to all staff members throughout the system to keep them up to date with current statistics and serve as reminders to continue suggesting downloadables to patrons when opportunities arose.

Results

NOLS' goal of 100,000 checkouts in 2018 was reached on November 26, with a final 2018 checkout total of 111,283. The

2016 checkouts were 20% higher than 2015, but checkouts increased less than 13% in 2017. The 111,283 checkouts in 2018 surpass 2017's 90,000 by over 23%.

At the same time that NOLS staff were compiling end-of-the-year statistics, OverDrive also announced that usage among public library patrons everywhere was up in 2018—by 22% (<https://tinyurl.com/yxgkasbc>). Information is not yet available on the likely reason(s) for this success: how many libraries used social media and staff engagement to increase patron awareness, or how much of the increase can be ascribed to patrons discovering the “free version of Audible,” for example. Looking only at the five libraries in the WAL closest to NOLS in population size, every library experienced an increase in downloads—between 16% and 29.9%. Some of those libraries report doing nothing new to promote the service—continuing their in-house tech sessions and sometimes putting up a flyer—while others released videos and custom promotional materials commissioned from marketing companies. For four of the six libraries in this unscientific examination (Whatcom County Library System, Bellingham Public Library, NOLS, Longview Public Library, Richland Public Library, and Puyallup Public Library), 2018 represented the highest rate of circulation increase since 2015; two did increase circulation during 2018, but had higher rates of increase in previous years.



Staff received monthly updates regarding WAL CKOs

Regardless of the impetus, 2018 saw an increase in not only NOLS OverDrive checkouts, but also in the number of unique patrons accessing the service. More NOLS patrons heard about the service for the first time, or decided to finally give it a try. The number of unique patrons who checked out a Washington Anytime Library item actually fell from

2016 to 2017, but in 2018, the number of unique users rose by over 22%, similar to the checkout growth.

Staff have recently reviewed statistics for the individual patrons who checked out WAL materials in 2018. There were 3,845 NOLS users, representing all four branches, including the Homebound program, who borrowed an item from the WAL last year. Some were power users—with twenty seven different people each borrowing 250 items or more. Many were experimenters—630 people borrowed only one item. NOLS compiled these statistics by accessing the Unique User Activity report in Marketplace, and cross-referencing the supplied information against the ILS. While 46.8% of users are registered to the Port Angeles Main Library, a respectable 46.6% are registered at the Sequim Branch Library. Staff plan to use this information to market the service more effectively to specific groups at the different branch locations in the future. 📖

I'd Rather Be Reading

by David Wright

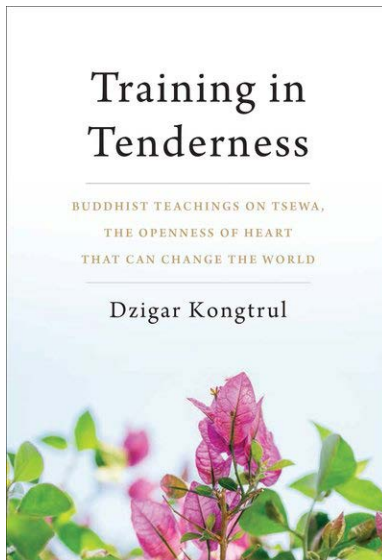


Confessions of a Self-Help Junkie

We library workers champion all kinds of reading, for all kinds of reasons. “Never apologize for your reading tastes” is our motto and our mantra. I myself have been known to revel in the pulpiest of fiction, such as cheesy paperback action series from the seventies with names like *The Destroyer and The Penetrator*, and wouldn’t dream of greeting anyone else’s reading pleasures – however guilty -- with anything less than enthusiasm. Why is it then, that I reflexively shrivel a little in embarrassment when someone asks what I’ve been reading lately, and the answer turns out to be three or four “self-help” books? Am I that ashamed to need a little help?

The truth is that in our sometimes overwhelming line of work we can all use a little boost from time to time. Of course self-help is where you find it, and many of us prefer to get our life lessons from fiction; witness the current vogue for poignant, life affirming stories of second chances and mid-life course corrections. But there’s no substitute for having your own personal life coach near at hand, offering healing, encouragement and fresh motivation as you limp homeward after a particularly challenging day. Personally I prefer self-help on audio, as I rest my screen-weary eyes and let those replenishing words wash over me. In this way I have enjoyed the varied advice of such counselors as Pema Chodron, Brené Brown, David Lynch, Twyla Tharp, Danielle LaPorte, Ryan Holiday, Anne Lamott, Annie Dillard, Elaine de Botton, Michael Hyatt, and yes, Marie Kondo.

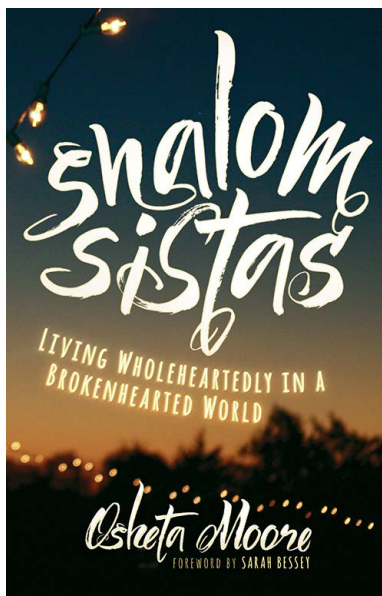
Patrons often ask us where the self-help section is, which can be tricky given that what they’re seeking might be found in a variety of areas, ranging from memoir to business to health to creativity to addiction to psychology to philosophy to religion, and beyond. I’m often tempted to quip like a short order cook: “You want God with that?” Some books combine these approaches, as in my favorite career guide, Laurence Boldt’s *Zen and the Art of Making a Living: A Practical Guide to Creative Career Design*, found in the 650’s, but a terrific workbook for any seeker, young or



old, wondering what to do with their life.

While library workers can certainly be found sifting through books on leadership or organization in the 600’s, the most taxing emotional challenges in our profession might send many us into the 200’s, seeking to replenish our spirit and sense of compassion. Dzigar Kongtrul Rinpoche’s *Training in Tenderness: Buddhist Teachings on Tsewa, the Radical Openness of Heart that Can Change the World* offers an eye- and heart-opening contemplation of the basic drive towards sympathy and compassion that exists within us all, offering practical strategies for softening our hearts and thereby easing the emotional labor we are called on daily to perform.

Osheta Moore takes us on a radically different spiritual journey that leads to some strikingly similar conclusions in her *Shalom Sistas: Living Wholeheartedly in a Brokenhearted World*.



Based on her own spiritual reawakening in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, Moore offers up twelve steps toward become a peacemaker in the world, including seeing the beauty, telling better stories, choosing subversive joy, building bridges, and dropping ‘love bombs.’ Whether or not you share Moore’s Christian faith, you’ll find much in these pages to inspire and refresh your own mission in life, and in libraries.

My own twenty-years-of-service plaque having already acquired a thin layer of dust, I suppose I’m the ideal demographic for Jessica Hagerty’s insightful and inspiring *Life Reimagined: The Science, Art and Opportunity of Midlife*. The book works particularly well as an audiobook, owing to NPR correspondent Hagerty’s skillful delivery, not to mention her thoughtful writing. Combining candid personal memoir with interviews and research, Hagerty offers up an engaging and empowering look at aspects of

midlife, such as wisdom and the aging brain, our relationship with work and with others, and the value of seeking purpose over illusory happiness. With humor and humility, she dispels the myth of the midlife crisis, showing how life after forty is often characterized by fulfilling, enriching experiences and fresh opportunities to refocus,

David Wright is Reader Services Librarian at the Central Branch of The Seattle Public Library, a frequent speaker and trainer at library conferences, and a regular contributor to Booklist, The Seattle Times, and other publications.

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Read This Book

Fantasy Fiction That's Worth the Trip

by Brooke Shirts and the Puget Sound Council for the Review of Children's and Young Adult Literature

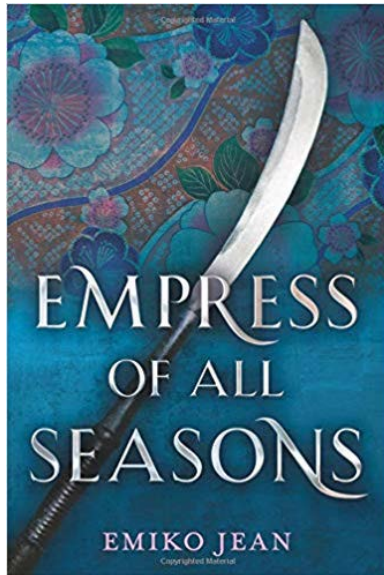
As a genre, fantasy fiction is often remarkably polarizing among librarians. Some of us love the wands and swordplay, while others wouldn't embark on a page-turning mystic quest if you paid them. But one truth remains: this is a genre with proven, enduring popularity among young readers, which is fortunately encouraging publishers to expand the borders of what fantasy can and should be. Yes, there are still heavy shelves laden with multi-volume, thick-as-your-wrist fantasy epics, but emerging from their shadow are concise, innovative novels. Some sneak in a bit of nonfiction along with the magic, some tackle surprisingly relevant social issues, and some even – hooray! – are set in non-European-inspired fictional worlds.

Whether you're die hard fan of fantasy, or someone who still feels out of place in lands of magic, give these a try -- Read This Book!

Empress of All Seasons.

Jean, Emiko. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018. ISBN: 9780544530942. Grades 8-12. Reviewed by Eve Datisman, Retired Teacher-Librarian, Port Angeles High School. It's hard not to be engaged when the first line introducing a character is "Breathing in the dark, and not her own." Each generation a competition is held to find the empress of Honoku. The rules are simple: contestants must survive the palace's four enchanted seasonal rooms;

she must marry the prince; she must be human. None of the yōkai (supernatural beings) can compete. Because Mari is plain, she has spent her whole life training to compete; wining should be easy, but not if the emperor finds out her secret. Jean presents a story written from three points of view: Mari, the main character; Akira, her best friend; and Taro, the future emperor that incorporates Japanese folklore elements to question the power structures of both heaven and earth, male, female and yōkai that energizes the folklore genre. Fans of Victoria Aveyard's "Red Queen" series and Cindy Pon's Serpentine will love this.



Brooke Shirts is the Chairperson of the Puget Sound Council for the Review of Children's and Young Adult Literature.

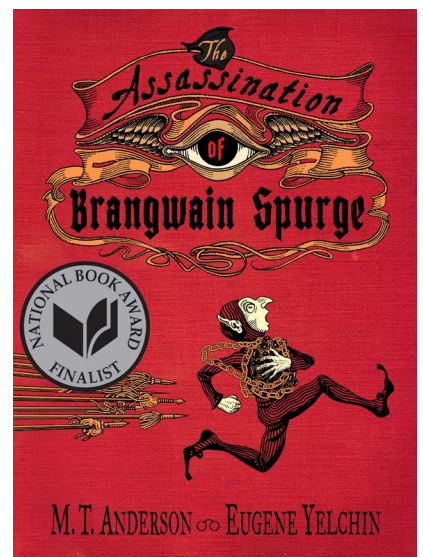
The Shadow Hand

(Babysitting Nightmares series). Shepherd, Kat. Imprint, 2018. ISBN:9781250156969. Grades 5-8. Reviewed by Karen Williams, Retired, North Beach Elementary. Rebecca Chin is babysitting for baby Kyle which she enjoys and finds easy. One evening with Kyle while his parents are out for dinner, the lights go out from what she believes was an electrical, thunder storm. However, no one else had the same experience with a storm that evening. Weird things begin to happen like a usually locked window that opens up, strange handprints appear all over the walls and ceiling, and Kyle starts to act strange. His favorite toy pal, Bearbear, which he usually cuddles up tight gets thrown out of his crib. Rebecca's fellow sitters Tanya, Clio, and Maggie find out with the help of Clio's aunt that a ruler of darkness, the Night Queen, has taken Kyle, leaving in his place a changeling. Only the girls can save Kyle and the Babysitting Nightmares series begins. Middle school girl readers will be fans and looking out for mysterious changes in their charges. Reviewed in Booklist and SLJ.



The Assassination of Brangwain Spurge.

Anderson, M.T. illus. Eugene Yelchin. Candlewick Press, 2018. ISBN: 9780763698225. Grades 5-8. Reviewed by Eve Datisman, Retired Teacher-Librarian, Port Angeles High School. Brangwain Spurge, elfin historian, is sent by crossbow capsule to the goblin court of Ghogh the Evil One. He is carrying with him a priceless goblin artifact

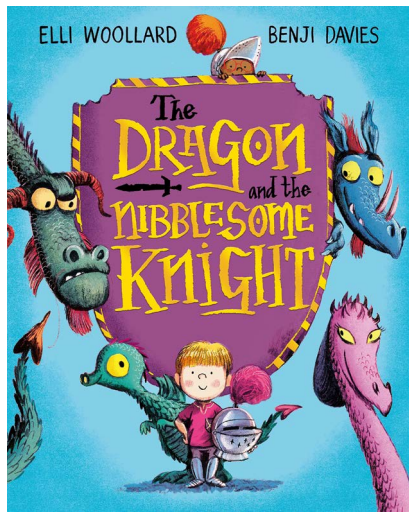


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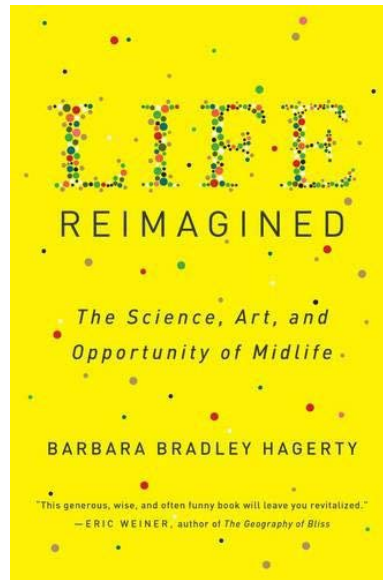
that unbeknownst to him is actually a weapon of mass destruction and is a basis for the series of plots, counter plot and betrayals. Spurge is hosted by the goblin archivist Werfel who is delighted and sees opportunities for diplomacy not available in 100 years after the last Elfin-Goblin War. Spurge is a disappointment; he's not intersected and further he is disdainful of everything which leads to Werfel trying to keep him and later both of them alive and strips them of their misconceptions. Letters from the spy master let the readers in on the machinations. Yelchins illustrations in medieval style carry the story forward by providing details that the readers don't get from text. Older readers will appreciate the timely biting satire that references a political climate marked by a lack of civility, underhanded diplomacy, fake news, widespread bigotry and prejudice, and the dehumanization of marginalized people.

The Dragon and the Nibblesome Knight.

Woolard, Elli. illus. Benji Davies. Henry Holt & Company, 2018. ISBN: 9781250150202. Grades K-3. Reviewed by Sharon Turpin, Retired, Parkwood Elementary. A full page Mapped of Hardbottom's and the Surrounding Lands starts this tale about James a young boy studying at Professor Hardbottom's Academy for Young Knights who



encounters what he thinks is a duck that has crash landed into the lake. Without his armor, the young dragon assumes James is just a boy, not a nibblesome knight that he's been charged with finding and eating on his first solo adventure. James helps the "duckie" get out of the water, puts a sling on his arm, gives him honey for his "sore" throat, and feeds him fruit from the trees. The next morning Dram has recovered, and before he finds his nibblesome knight, he wants to thank James. But when they encounter each other on the Sports Day field of battle—Dragons vs. Knights, they can't fight each other because they're friends. The rest follow suit and have a happy feast together rather than of each other. The rollicking, clever rhyming text combined with the large, detailed, colorful, humorous illustrations make this a wonderful offering with a valuable message.

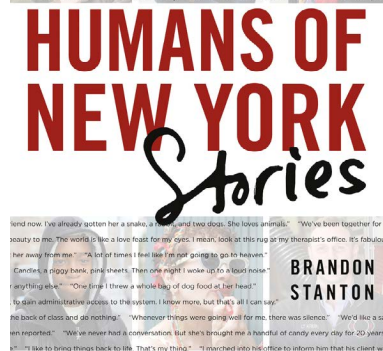


refresh and thrive. As she puts it, midlife "is more mountaintop than valley." A great book to lure you out of a mid-career slump.

Of course there are days when people – our patrons, the public – exhaust us. Yet I find our patrons can energize and buoy us as well, in much the same way Brandon Stanton's books – *Humans of New York*, and *Humans of New York: Stories* – do. If on some tiring Sunday afternoon on the desk you find patrons starting to merge into 'them,' dip into the pages of these books or the blog that inspired them, and be refreshed and reminded of the infinite variety, pathos and fascination of other people, each with their own story to tell. Although not about libraries, few books capture so well that marvelous feeling of interacting with and serving all kinds of people in this very special place.



"Henry takes opportunities to vent his divorce. And that person wasn't me." "I should have just kept working with you. I think it doesn't matter how clever you are if nobody wants to work with you." "I was literally crushed in Vietnam." "I say no. I'm not going anywhere!" "If I'm at the bar, I've got to have a drink. Then the next thing I know, I'm drunk on the ceiling, and I remember thinking, Oh, I did it." "The Henry says I'm just like my mother. He hates my mother, so of something that he lives grateful for." "My job was to stand in front of the boiler and keep an eye on the hoses of my dairy." "I've been having really weird dreams ever since." "I just sat there for a long time, and I found God." "The activity." "Kurt Vonnegut called me his best friend-in-prison." "I don't think my wife is The One." "His dad didn't see him, I turned to a friend, and said, He's the one." He was gorgeous. Sometimes I still look at him, and this is to write me these love letters that blow me away." "He likes to take the lead, so I'll pretend to read more quietly."



and now I've already gotten her a spa kit and two books. She loves animals." "We've been together for two years to me. The world is a love fest for my eyes. I mean, look at this rap so my therapist's office, it's fabulous!" "her away from me." "A lot of times I feel like I'm not going to go to heaven." "Candle, a piggy bank, pink sheets, then one night I woke up to a body pose." "anything else." "One time I threw a whole bag of dog food at her head." "to deny administrative access to the system. I know more, but that's all I can say." "he back of class and do nothing." "Whenever things were going well for me, there was silence." "Word like a salt in reported." "We've never had a conversation, but she's brought me a handful of candy every day for 20 years." "I'm like to bring things back to life. That's my thing." "I marched into his office to inform him that his client was..."

Dispatches from Swellville

by Darcy McMurtery



Current school districts around the state are making moves to cut hours or lay off school librarians in order to save money. We are arrogant as a species. We love to think that what we say is important enough to broadcast in all mediums. I sifted through an overwhelming amount of bad predictions and terrible quotes for this column. I tip my hat to school librarians of past, present and future. Why future? Because there is no future without school librarians.

-DM

Top Ten Worst Things Ever Said

1. **“Stocks have reached what looks like a permanently high plateau.”**
Irving Fisher, Yale economics professor, 1929
2. **“If excessive smoking actually plays a role in the production of lung cancer, it is a minor one.”**
W.C. Heuper, National Cancer Institute, 1954
3. **“Children just aren’t interested in Witches and Wizards anymore.”**
Anonymous publishing executive in a note to JK Rowling
4. **“There is no danger that the Titanic will sink. The boat is unsinkable and only inconvenience will be suffered by the passengers.”**
Phillip Franklin, V.P., White Star Line
5. **“The horse is here to stay, but the automobile is only a novelty- a fad.”**
President of Michigan Savings Bank to Henry Ford’s lawyer, advising him not to invest in the Ford Motor Company
6. **“There are not enough Indians in the world to defeat the Seventh Cavalry.”**
Custer before the Battle of the Little Big Horn
7. **“We don’t like their sound and guitar music is on the way out.”**
Decca Recording Company on declining to sign The Beatles, 1962
8. **“It’ll be gone by June.”**
Variety magazine on rock n’ roll, 1955
9. **“Whatever happens the U.S. Navy is not going to be caught napping.”**
Frank Knox, U.S. Secretary of the Navy, December 4, 1941
10. **“Let’s just cut school librarian hours in order to save money.”**
School boards everywhere

WLA Thanks Our Organizational Members

Organizational Members

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Bellingham Public Library
Bellingham Technical College Library
Big Bend Community College Bonaudi Library
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Centralia College Library
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Community Colleges of Spokane - Library Services
Eastern Washington University Libraries
Ellensburg Public Library
Everett Public Library
Foley Ctr. Library Gonzaga University
Fort Vancouver Regional Library District
Grandview Library
Green River Community College
Jefferson County Library
King County Library System
Kitsap Regional Library
La Conner Regional Library District
Lake Washington Institute of Technology
Longview Public Library
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Neill Public Library
North Central Regional Library
North Seattle College
Northwest Council for Computer Education
Orcas Island Library District
Pierce College Library
Port Townsend Public Library
Primary Source
Puyallup Public Library
Renton Technical College Library
Ritzville Library District #2
San Juan Island Library
Seattle Central College Library
Seattle Public Library
Skagit Valley College/Norwood
Sno-Isle Libraries
Spokane County Library District
Spokane Public Library
Stevens County Rural Library District
Tacoma Public Library
The Evergreen State College
Upper Skagit Library
Walla Walla Community College Library
Walla Walla County Rural Library District
Washington Center for the Book
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Washington State Library
Whatcom Community College
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