

Chair's Column: WLA Conference

My, how time flies when you're
(fill in the blank: having fun, working
hard, hardly working, no that last
one's just wrong!).

It's hard to believe that it's been about a year since the last issue of the *Advocate*, the newsletter for WLFFTA, the Washington Library Friends, Foundations, Trustees, and Advocates Interest Group, which is an interest group of the Washington Library Association (WLA).

There, now that we've gotten the acronyms out of the way, maybe we can get back to business. So here we are, with another newsletter. Better late than never, we hope!

Next week, many of us are heading off to Wenatchee for the WLA Conference. Looking through the program, there are lots of sessions that would be of interest to those reading this newsletter, if just for the purpose of keeping up to date on what libraries are doing, and what is considered cutting edge in library services and programming these days.

So consider coming on over to Wenatchee, and joining us for what promises to be a not only educational, but a stimulating and entertaining conference as well! Here are some program highlights:

How to Pin, Tweet and Like Your Way Into Your Patrons' Lives – Join staff from three public library systems for a collaborative panel discussion about how we are engaging with our patrons on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and other social media realms.

Looking at the Book Publishing Landscape – Whether you're interested in writing a book and having it published, or providing better writer's advisory for your patrons, there are many choices available now. There is



the traditional publishing route involving an agent and a publisher. There is also digital publishing either by a traditional publisher or DIY. What are the pros and cons of each?

Guerilla Storytime – What do you do when a kid is screaming in story time? How about when a parent answers their phone mid-story? Are you looking for fresh story time activities? Join us as we tackle these issues and more!

The Adolescent Brain, Behavior and Beyond – Adolescence is a time of rapid change and growth. Developments in the tween and teen brain manifest themselves in your library in the form of inexplicable new behaviors. Gain a basic understanding of neurological activity during the tween and teen years, possible behaviors you might anticipate, and the effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) on the brains of young people. We will also briefly address developmentally appropriate responses to a variety of tween and teen behaviors.

Adults Just Wanna Have Fun: Adult Programming Beyond Lectures – Many public libraries promote themselves as centers of lifelong learning, but fail to engage adults 20-55. Both notoriously underserved "emerging adults" in their 20s and 30s and middle-aged adults who find that there are more learning opportunities for their children than for themselves need creative, social, hands-on programs to attract them back to the library. Learn how to remind your adult patrons—and yourself!—that lifelong

learning really is fun and fulfilling.

Get Local! Collect, Digitize and Share – Whether you are looking to start your own grassroots digitization project or provide access to existing collections or materials, the challenges can be daunting. Join seasoned professionals as they share their unique experiences in how they located the materials, found funding, learned what technology was used, and solved the myriad unforeseen hurdles to sharing images, oral histories, ebooks, etc.

Sex in the Library – The authors of "Sex in the Library: A Guide to Sexual Content in Teen Literature" explain their unique and popular approach to talking to parents, teachers, administrators and librarians about selection, mission statements, censorship, and the power of school and public librarians working together.

IG Networking Lunch – In addition to programs like these, plus many more, Thursday's luncheon is specifically devoted to WLA's Interest Groups. After going through a buffet style lunch line, attendees will have the opportunity to hear briefly from each IG, and then to meet with their individual IGs.

The meeting time will be divided into 2 distinct segments so that each attendee can meet with at least two Interest Groups. Please stop by the WLFFTA table to say hello, and to express any thoughts or ideas you have about how this IG can serve you better. We hope to see you there!

Will Stuiwenga is WLFFTA Newsletter Editor, and outgoing Chair. Contact him at will.stuiwenga@sos.wa.gov or 360.704.5217

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Local Newspaper Features Whitman County Friend



Kristie Kirkpatrick, Director of the Whitman County Rural Library District, reports that a local newspaper recently featured Friend of the Library, Wanda Alderman, as their senior of the week. Here is part of the nomination the library submitted:

Wanda Alderman is a tireless volunteer for Whitman County Library's Rural Heritage project. She served as president of the Friends of the Library from 2010-2012 and also volunteers for a variety of community organizations. Because Wanda means so much to us, the library's staff, friends and trustees, we are nominating her as senior of the week.

Wanda is enthusiastic, loves genealogy and knows just about everyone in Whitman County. These traits make her the perfect community liaison for Whitman County's Rural Heritage online digitization project.

Through her day-to-day contacts, Wanda discovers residents who have historic photos and encourages them to be a part of the project. She then interviews, researches and reports the critical information about the photographs that become a part of the official database cataloging.

Whitman County Library's Rural Heritage collection is among the most popular in the state and can be accessed through the library's website at www.whitco.lib.wa.us.

Citizens-Save-Libraries Grants Due May 5

Applications for cycle two of the Citizens-Save-Libraries grants from United for Libraries, made possible by a grant from the Neal-Schuman Foundation, are due May 5.

The 10 libraries that are selected will receive two days of onsite consultation by advocacy experts, who will help friends of the library groups, library directors and trustees develop individual blueprints for advocacy campaigns to restore, increase or save threatened library budgets.

Among the criteria to apply is a willingness to "pay it forward" by sharing what is learned with others in their states through presentations at local conferences, articles written for the state library association journal and a willingness to answer questions and support other advocacy campaigns via digital media and Skype. The first 10 libraries were selected in 2013.

As part of the grant, a Citizens-Save-Libraries Power Guide that lays out a step-by-step blueprint for libraries to follow in generating advocacy campaigns is available to all libraries at no cost. The Power Guide is available at www.ala.org/united/powerguide.

To apply for the grants, visit www.ala.org/united/grants_awards_neal-schuman.

The Neal-Schuman Foundation, now disbanded, was established in 2000 by [Neal-Schuman Publishers'](#) founders Patricia Glass Schuman and John Vincent Neal, and strove to aid and promote charitable research and education for the improvement of libraries. An active American Library Association member and past president (1991-92), Schuman founded the Library Advocacy Now program and co-founded the Library Champions program.

United for Libraries: The Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations, is a division of the American Library Association that supports those who govern, promote, advocate, and fundraise for libraries. United for Libraries brings

Bellevue Book Shop Funds Library Programs



The Corner Book Shop at the Bellevue Library of the King County Library System continues to be a healthy source of funding for events and programs for the Bellevue Libraries. The Shop was opened in 1993 and was remodeled in 2013.

The shop is staffed by volunteers, all members of the Bellevue Friends of the Library. All the books are received as donations and then sorted and priced for sale. Monies earned support programs, events and activities at the Bellevue, Lake Hills & Crossroads libraries.

Programs for children include World Language Story Times, summertime concerts & Halloween and summer school book giveaways. Support for Young Adults includes SAT prep classes, employment exploration & writing and poetry workshops. Adult programs include many that recognize the diverse population of our communities including book study groups, music and dance programs, opera previews and a world cinema salon.

These programs are held throughout the year and help attract, entertain and educate a steady stream of patrons in our libraries.

together library Trustees, advocates, friends, and foundations into a partnership that creates a powerful force for libraries in the 21st century. For more information or to join United for Libraries, visit the [United for Libraries website](http://www.ala.org/united) or contact Jillian Kalonick at (312) 280-2161 or jkalonick@ala.org.

Growing Your Online Used Book Sale Business (Part 2 of 2)

Part 1 of this article appeared in the previous issue of the *Advocate*, which can be found online at <http://www.wla.org/wlffta-communications>.

The Friends of the Johnson County (Kan.) Library (JCL) began selling materials online in 2004 with one person. That year, 116 items were sold, generating \$3,900 in income. In 2012, the Friends of JCL online sales total was \$144,000 from 6,850

items. The current online operation consists of a paid part-time Internet sales manager and 14 volunteers, who list and ship materials to worldwide destinations Monday through Friday. Internet sales now represent more than one-third of the Friends' income, which also includes funds generated at two large annual book sales (June and November) and from two used book stores in branch library locations.

If your Friends organization has had moderate success with online book selling and is generating some good sales each month, it may be time to consider growing that part of your Friends revenue stream. With the popularity of e-books and a somewhat depressed economy, it makes sense to expand your operations and offer more materials to potential book buyers outside of your community. Additional investments will need to be made in equipment, supplies, software, and people, but the return on those investments can be extremely worthwhile.

Recruiting additional volunteers

Because selling items online is labor intensive, your organization will need more volunteers to serve as listers. Look for people who have at least some basic computer and web knowledge and enjoy spending time in front of a screen. Add to that a love of books and a willingness to learn new things, and you have the ideal candidate.

Make sure your procedures are updated and that you have good training materials for those you recruit so they can get up to speed on how to list and ship. Written job descriptions are helpful when enlisting potential volunteers.

You may also need additional volunteers to serve as packers and shippers, since your volume will increase. Once a list is printed off, this person would pull the items from inventory, pack, affix labels and postage, and take the items to the post office. Look for someone who is good on detail and follow-through, and has a vehicle to make deliveries to the post office. Depending on your volume, this could be one or more volunteers. The Friends of JCL has a different individual come in each weekday to serve in this capacity. You want to avoid having items that have been "sold" sitting around more than a day or two before shipping, as this affects your seller rating.

Other specialized volunteers would be people to come in once or twice a year to do a shelf check on your inventory to make sure those items listed are on your shelves and where they belong. This project could take several days. Consider those with good attention to detail that have no mobility issues, and enjoy list checking and looking for misplaced items. This could also be assigned to a team of volunteers



(corporate, club, honor society group, etc.) who could swoop in and get the job done in a shorter time frame.

Adding equipment

Growing your internet business means you will probably need more time slots when listers come in, as well as additional computers with internet access and one or more printers. Although some listers may be able to

work from a home computer, there can be some problems with hauling items home to look up and not having a supervisor to assist when questions arise. Find someone to donate equipment or use some of your Friends funds to purchase computers.

You will also need to acquire additional shelving and storage for the greater number of items you will be listing. Check with your library for any surplus shelving or check local used office furniture and fixture stores. They may also have computer and printer work stands or desks and office chairs. Put some feelers out with local businesses who may have furniture or shelving to donate to your nonprofit cause.

Additional packing materials, boxes, and computer labels will also be needed, and your postage costs will increase as you grow your business. These may be purchased

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Special Offer for Washington State groups

Join your Trustees, Friends, or Foundation group by July 30, 2014, and receive 15 months of membership for the price of 12. To take advantage of this special offer, call (800) 545-2433, ext. 2161 or email united@ala.org.

locally or online.

Use of scanners

You have seen book dealers at your book sales using scanners. Friends of JCL decided it was time to invest in scanners so as not to miss a book that could bring in a much higher price than at a book sale. As books and audiovisual items are sorted, each one is scanned. Those that will bring a higher price are culled out and set aside for lookup.

One of the best investments your organization can make is the purchase of handheld scanners (they can be \$500 or more each) that read the retail barcode on the book. Develop a relationship with a company such as ScoutPal, which provides the downloaded database and software to display the Amazon price and sales ranking. You can purchase handheld scanners or use cell phones that have scanning capabilities.

The value of the item is displayed when the barcode is scanned, and this can help you determine how the item should be sold: through a book sale, at a used book store, or online, and what price you should set. A good rank means that the item is a good seller. Example: a number 1 ranking means it is a popular-selling item, and a number 10,000 ranking means there are 9,999 items that are better sellers.

The selling prices of the book are also listed. You want to look for items with low rankings and high value. The sorters determine if the book should be sold online and pass the book on to the internet sales listers. They look up the description and price and make the final determination on whether to list online and at what price.

Changing your value threshold

As you begin to use scanners you will quickly learn that you may want to reduce your criteria for selling an item online. The Friends of JCL reduced their threshold from \$25 to \$10 for books and found that many audiovisual items (DVDs, CDs, and even some VHS) had value. Shipping audiovisual items is less costly than a heavy textbook or coffee table book, so there is significant savings. The threshold you set goes hand in hand with the number of volunteer hours available for listing and shipping, and the amount

of inventory you can reasonably store.

Multiple sites, inventory, and order management

The next thing you should consider is how many online sites you wish to list with. There can be problems with multiple sites if you are listing one item on several sites. It takes more time to list and remove items. Also, if the number of rejected orders reaches a high level, an online vendor may drop you, as they want to maintain their reputation.

To make life easier and keep your volunteer hours down, you may want to consider contracting with an order and inventory management company such as FillZ, Monsoon, BookTrakker, etc. These companies have a relationship with online book selling companies and you can list on all sites with a touch of a button. These include Amazon, Alibris, AbeBooks, Biblio, and eBay, which are popular online book sellers.

There is a cost associated with this in addition to the online seller charges. Do your homework on the costs to list individually and to list with a multiple site vendor.

Funds for items sold are normally directly deposited into your organization's bank account. The exception is eBay, which collects money through PayPal. A PayPal account is necessary if you add your items to eBay.

Everything you list with an inventory and order management company is entered one time and most listings are sent to all vendors. Another benefit is that the company surfs for orders multiple times per day. You do not need to check your accounts manually on each site. If an item is sold, it is deleted on all sites, which reduces the double orders. All orders are then processed through the company. By listing with an inventory and order management company, it is easy to run reports that can be used for monthly sales totals as well total inventory listings.

Mailing shortcuts

Set up an account with an online postage vendor. It is quick and easy to print off your own postage with Endicia (or other online postage companies such as Stamps.com). Copy and paste shipping information from the

ADVOCATE

Receiving the *ADVOCATE*, a publication of the WLA Washington Library Friends, Foundations, Trustees & Advocates Interest Group, is a benefit of membership.

The deadline for submissions is open. Contact the editor for specific issue deadlines. More information about WLFFTA can be found at wlfFTA.wla.org.

Comments and suggestions for articles and WLFFTA activities are welcome.

Views and opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect those held by the editor, WLA, or the WLFFTA Board.

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packing slip to the Endicia shipping label, enter the weight after weighing the item on a postage scale, and print the label and postage. If possible, use library rate mail.

You will need a supply of mailing supplies: padded envelopes (small books, audiovisual materials), tear-proof envelopes (paperbacks), several sizes of boxes, U.S. Post Office flat rate Priority Mail boxes, and packing materials (40# craft paper, bubble wrap). Establish standard size boxes and order from a local box vendor. Take items to the post office daily.

Monthly and annual reporting

It is important to keep statistics on what is selling and to note each month something that might be of interest to your board members. Highlight the high dollar orders, their titles and those items that ship internationally. You will find that an obscure book, booklet, or audiovisual item may bring in hundreds of dollars.

As you grow your online used book sale business, it will be important to compare your costs with the return on your investment. At year-end, provide a cost analysis of total sales and operating costs to accurately portray that the increased revenue along with increased costs makes online selling worthwhile for your organization.

By Marsha Bennett, Community Relations Manager, Johnson County (Kan.) Library; in cooperation with Matt Delany, Internet Sales Supervisor, Friends of the Johnson County Library. Reprinted by permission.