



**C**hapbook...

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**Message From The Chair**

There's a chill in the air, the maples in the front yard are bare already and the pecan tree in the backyard is nearly empty (darn those pesky squirrels). I pulled out my sweaters and I'm ready for the holidays, or not!

Where has the time gone? Seems it was just yesterday we were wrapping up our summer reading and holding our breath, awaiting approval of our travel plans for the conference. Yes, things were tough all over and getting tougher and changes were being made. Our charge was to work smarter, collaborate more, assess every program and outreach opportunity, fill in the gaps left by those less fortunate, and plan less by recycling programs. This is not an easy task to completely rethink what you have been doing for years. Easy or not it is necessary to commit to the change in order to help our individual systems weather the storm of today's economy. Take it as a personal challenge to develop those partnerships within the community to ease the burden of programming and still bring fresh innovative opportunities to your patrons.

With that charge given, let me share the highlights of the 58<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference which took place in Greenville, N.C. from Oct 6-9. Where do I begin? The Youth Services Section sponsored many of the conference sessions beginning with Children's Programming 101. This program, meant for the new children's specialist or the librarian who wears all the hats, was attended by a fair amount of veteran children's librarians who just wanted to see if you could teach an old dog new tricks. Brandon Bensley of Greensboro Public Library's Glenwood Branch shared her formula for preschool storytimes, afterschool and family programming. Many ideas were shared among those present.

For the first time in a long while, the Youth Services Section and the Public Library Section partnered to provide sessions on Gaming for Teens, Gaming as Art and Gaming on a Shoestring. Thanks to this partnership we were able to bring Beth Krommes, 2009 Caldecott Winner for *A House in the Night*, as a featured speaker at our annual YSS breakfast. In the break out sessions which followed the breakfast, Beth shared the whirlwind experience of going from small town New Hampshire to the bright lights and big city book tours of a Caldecott winner. Also, speaking at our breakfast event was Kerry Madden, author of the Maggie Valley Trilogy, which began with *Gentle's Holler*. Kerry shared the research needed for not only the mountain trilogy but also for her newest book the biography of Harper Lee, author of *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Our largest crowd turned out for Jana Guitar's presentation on The Manga Experience: how to start a Manga art club for teens. Jana began her Manga career just a few years ago at the Camp Lejeune Base Library in an effort to draw teens in. She now visits other libraries across the state to share her success.

With the conference behind us, YSS is looking forward to our biennial retreat in the fall of 2010. Make plans now to attend because you will not be disappointed. Send any ideas for programs or special guests you would like to see presented to [cynthia.dye@greensboro-nc.gov](mailto:cynthia.dye@greensboro-nc.gov). As always, I welcome your comments and suggestions for YSS.

Cindy Dye, YSS

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## All About Connie

By Loretta Talbert, the (outgoing) Chapbook Editor

Invite our readership to submit articles to the Chapbook; to share your tried and true special programs, or interesting projects, or upcoming events whereby all readers may be informed or even motivated to try something new. There is no deadline.



This is the usual blurb that you normally read after the “Message From the Chair”. However, now you will send your article as a single-spaced, 1-4-page word attachment to our new incoming editor to be published online.

I have enjoyed serving on the YSS Executive Board for ten years. I have loved every minute working with these wonderful people. Your board members are dedicated to passionately serving the needs of today’s youth. Since I will be retiring soon, I gladly hand over the editing pen to an old friend and very accomplished writer, Connie Purcell, whom I hope will enjoy many years deliriously editing articles for Chapbook. You will find in her a kindred spirit.

Connie Purcell is a second career children’s librarian, a first generation college graduate, and an advocate for children, libraries, and services to underserved populations. After nine years at the Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, first as a youth specialist, then as library supervisor, Connie accepted a position with the Hickory Public Library as head of youth and outreach services in October 2009. A long-time member of NCLA’s Children’s Services Section and sometimes contributor to the Chapbook, Connie appreciated the opportunity to participate in Track I of the NCLA Leadership Institute in October 2008.

From 2006-2009 Connie served as chair of the Advisory Committee to the Office for Literacy and Outreach Services (OLOS) to the American Library Association. During this time she co-authored the OLOS toolkit called *How to Serve the World at Your Library* and collaborated on the ALA’s Equity of Access statement. She also represented youth services in public librarianship at the Professional Options Fair for the Spectrum Scholars.

Connie graduated summa cum laud from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in the bachelor’s degree major Social Thought and Political Economy (STPEC) in 1998. She received her MLIS from the University of North Carolina Greensboro in 2005. Officially known as “Miss Connie” among her most important constituents, the library storytime crowd, Miss Connie has two wonderfully bright and talented grown children, three cats, and one half-dozen varieties of roses in her small garden.

You may send Connie your articles to be included in the Chapbook at the following email address:

[cpurcell@ci.hickory.nc.us](mailto:cpurcell@ci.hickory.nc.us)

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## **Unifying Our Services**

An Information Services employee and a Circulation Services employee join the children's department, and find both challenges and opportunities to learn, to teach and to grow.

By Sue Bucaccio and Ian Rennie

### **Introduction**



With the economy in a downturn, and this affecting the provision of library services across the country and throughout the world, library services are looking for ways to continue providing the best possible service we can. One of the suggested initiatives for maintaining and if possible increasing service excellence is unified services, namely the attempt to provide as many library services as possible at any given point of contact with the public.

At North County Regional Library in Huntersville, attempts to promote unified services and deal with staffing shortages have been seen in two different directions. The library's three service desks now endeavor to offer the same level and quality of service, whether the desk is the Children's, Information, or Circulation desk. Beyond this, the library has also attempted to unify many of the duties performed by different departments. All departments now shelve, check in, and pull book drops. Adult programming, formerly offered only by the Information Services department, is now offered by staff from all three departments. Shouldering the burden of increasing duties as staffing levels either freeze or shrink requires staff to be adaptable and willing to do whatever work is required of them.

As well as the tasks performed by the library being shared among departments, staff of the different departments have also been moved around, in order to provide shared expertise in each area of the library. Staff from the circulation department has been moved to both Children's and Information Services, and staffs from these two departments have exchanged positions. The result is, hopefully, a unified library where skills are shared among individuals and departments for the better operation of the building as a whole.

The writers of this article, Sue Bucaccio and Ian Rennie, were employed in, respectively, the Circulation and Information Services departments before being moved to the Children's Department. In this article we hope to discuss our experiences of the move, our adjustment to the new department, and the ways in which the new arrangement has affected the department and ourselves.

### **Sue B's Experience.**

Working in the circulation department for the last eight years, mostly with adults, and then moving to the children's department is like comparing apples and oranges.

When working at the circulation desk, I would never know what kind of patron I would have next. Would they be friendly when I check them out? Would they suddenly blow up because they had a fine or a lost book? I always had to keep an open mind. I also had to stay proficient in a lot of skills, such as check-out, check-in, and shelving.

It's been an interesting three months now working in the children's department. I have learned that our patrons are very different from the ones I used to check out. Most come in smiling and eager for me to help them out. I get a special kick whenever I am able to find just what they need or offer suggestions.

Another interesting aspect of being in the children's department is doing children's programs. Having worked in schools for 24 years, I felt this would be no big deal. I found it more challenging than I first thought. I didn't realize how much work goes into putting on a children's program. I also found that I seem to have a wider range of duties here in children's than I did in circulation. When not helping patrons, I'm checking in books, shelving them, and pulling the book drop.

I feel that the experience of working at a circulation desk has been a great help. The children's department has not previously had to check patrons out, but now staff at all desks check folks out, and I have been able to help the children's staff with checking out and processing applications.

### **Ian R's Experience.**

Ironically, until I got my job in the Information Services department at North County, most of the library jobs I had applied for were children's services ones. I even volunteered in the children's room at the Main Library while trying to get work within the library system. Finding myself in Information Services five years ago was a distinct change of pace, almost as big a change of pace as moving from there to children's services three months ago.

To say that the two areas of service have different paces is to understate the issue. Working with children is a noble cause, and requires a very different set of customer service skills than working with adults. For a start, when working with children you have to address two audiences simultaneously: the child and the parent, and there will be times when you will have to favor one over the other.

For another, there is a very different expectation of knowledge from a child patron than from an adult patron. They don't necessarily know less about what they want, they just know different things. An eight year old girl might now, for example, that Junie B Jones has a baby brother called Ollie, best friends called Lucille, Grace, and Herb, and a first

grade teacher called Mr. Scary, but they might not know who Barbara Park is. Children as an audience are also much more likely to be open and receptive to suggestions about books. I believe that most children have an innate love of reading that is often extinguished as they move to young adulthood and adulthood. One of the primary jobs of a children's librarian is to feed the fires of this love and turn voracious young readers into voracious adult readers. Hence, one of the major challenges of moving to the children's department was making sure that my skills at reader's advisory were sufficient to the task. This can require knowledge of children's literature that is not just broad but also deep. Not just who writes Young James Bond, but who writes other books like that, and do any of them have female heroes? Not just people looking for Katie Kazoo, but people looking for books sort of like that, only with fairies, and funny, and less than a hundred pages, and between a 2.0 and a 3.5 on a local elementary school's AR list.

Often I have found that the most interesting parts of what I have to do and have to know are the things I already knew, and now have to apply in a different way. I know a lot about Powerpoint, for example, and teach a class in using it, but I can't say I'd given much thought to using it to make handouts for a storytime. While the position is in the same building, and to a degree involves the same patrons, it engages them in such different ways and with such different expectations that in many ways it's an entirely different place.

The biggest challenge is likely to be participation in storytimes. I have helped out in children's programming before, and have usually enjoyed it greatly, but until now I have never been the only person in the room. I'm looking forward to learning by participation.

The other area I'm looking forward to the most is sharing the skills I have with the department, and finding ways to make the things I can do useful to children's services. My background and my expertise strongly relate to computers, so I have tried to find ways to make my computer skills of use to the department, such as making powerpoint presentations to display our upcoming programs, helping out with the Bookhive book review site, and working on making electronic bibliographies.

I think the biggest thing I can bring, though, is enthusiasm, and a willingness to learn from anyone and share any knowledge I have.

## **Conclusion**

Library services for all ages are in the process of making considerable changes. The impact of new technologies, new service models, and changing revenue situations mean that libraries have to be adaptable and open to change. One of the changes is that the people working at the children's desk may not be people who entered the building as children's librarians. This does not mean they will not be enthusiastic, or that they do not wish to assist in the provision of service, just that they will bring different skills to the department, and in the process they will have to pick up the existing skills of the position.

Ultimately, such sharing is a large net positive, both for the children's department and for library services as a whole. The more we share, and the more we are willing to learn, the better service we can offer. The more we can get people from circulation, reference and any other department enthusiastic about children's services, the broader and more bountiful our skill set is, meaning that every librarian is in some way a children's librarian, and every desk can function as a children's desk.

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Fantastic Mr. Fox  
Reviewed by Claire Ramsey  
(c) December 2009

Mrs. Fox said it all: "My husband is a fantastic fox!" I waited for that line throughout the movie (it occurs several times in the book) and I was not disappointed.

Nor was I disappointed in the movie. The only people who might be disappointed are: Roald Dahl purists, protective parents, and Mr. Boggis, Mr. Bunce, and Mr. Bean.

To purists: this movie is clearly and upfront "based on" Roald Dahl's work. If you want a literal translation of this story to film, complete with stills from the book, I am sure Weston Woods has one somewhere, still in its little plastic filmstrip case. Personally, I will *read* the book again when I want the original story... This film is a fantastic film.

To parents: despite the fact that this is a Disney movie, stop-motion animated, and an animal story based on one of Roald Dahl's less edgy works... **THIS IS NOT A CHILDREN'S MOVIE.** If you object to "positive role model" characters like Mr. Fox drinking, stealing, and cussing (literally -- all instances where the "F" word would fit are replaced by the word "cuss"), then this is not the evening's entertainment for you. It is, however, a natural for teens. I am sure Hot Topic already has fantastic Fantastic Mr. Fox merchandise.

A few things I, as an ex-librarian, enjoyed:

1. This movie is the answer to kids' innocence regarding where food comes from (clue: it's not only the store, kids!) Follow the fantastic food from the farm...
2. All of my favorite sayings and characters from the book made it into the movie, especially the jingle about Messrs. Boggis, Bunce, and Bean, and the character of Rat. (Ratty, Badger, and Mole... hmm, maybe they'll do *Wind in the Willows* next...)
3. The scientific names of most of the underground creatures are given, charmingly.
4. The film tends to follow the story's chapters, though it adds a couple at beginning and end.

A few fun story additions to watch for:

1. the Whack-Bat game (cricket, somewhat weakly disguised...)
2. the oh-so-cool-but-what-was-it-doing-there appearance of the wolf near the story's end...
3. the replacement of the three little fox children into one fox child, one fox cousin, and one foxy friend (but maybe more fox children will be coming along...)
4. and finally, to Mr. Boggis, Mr. Bunce, and Mr. Bean: keep on waiting at Mr. Fox's hole -- I am sure he will eventually come out (in, say, fifty fantastic fox years.)

Once more, this film is a fantastic film, and Mrs. Fox's husband is a fantastic fox!

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