Message from the President
By Richard Conroy, CLA President 2013-2014

“There’s a unique culture in libraries that hasn’t really evolved to reflect the economic realities that all municipalities face.” That’s a direct quote from Danbury Mayor Mark Boughton. It appeared in an article published in the Danbury News Times last month about the decision by Michele Capozella, director of the Danbury Public Library, to resign after less than a year in her position. Ms. Capozella was frustrated because she felt the City had imposed such severe cuts to her budget that she was incapable of adequately providing services to her patrons. According to the article, the Library currently has 28 unfilled positions (including Children’s Librarian and Assistant Director) due to budget constraints.

Mr. Boughton’s comment implies that those of us who staff Connecticut’s public libraries are oblivious to the fact that our state and nation have suffered through a severe economic downturn during the past five years. To the contrary we are, of course, all too aware of the situation. Mr. Boughton is also an announced candidate for governor of the State of Connecticut. I mention that fact to underscore the importance of library advocacy.

During the last session of the Connecticut State Legislature CLA was instrumental in securing passage of H.B. 5614: An Act Concerning A Study Regarding the Availability of Electronic Books to Users of Public Libraries. That endeavor was successful, but it was a very near thing and might easily have gone the other way if it were not for some heroic last minute efforts to sway key legislators made by a handful of librarians. It didn’t have to be that way, though. All it would have taken to have this act sail through would be for a critical mass of librarians, library board members and library patrons to contact their legislators and let them know how important this piece of legislation was. Unfortunately, that was not the case.

It’s sad to say, but as we all know, many legislators, mayors, first selectmen, etc subscribe wholly or in part to Mr. Boughton’s point of view. It is critical for librarians, who have a professional mission to provide information, to be assertive when it becomes necessary to get the facts about libraries to key political players. If we fail to do so we assume a large share of the blame when budgets are cut and services are curtailed. So please take it very seriously the next time you are asked by the CLA Legislative Committee to step up and contact your legislators about issues that are of vital importance to our profession and those we serve.

Richard Conroy is Director of the Essex Library Association.
“I wish I had a dollar for every obituary request I have fielded. That seems to be the most common genealogy query.”

CT Librarian: Michael Spellmon

I became interested in genealogy when I was 18 years old. I was fortunate enough to know four of my eight great-grandparents. I am also a history buff. I earned my BA in history (after earning a BS in biology), then an MA in history. In 1992, I began practicing genealogy professionally. I was living in Salt Lake City at the time. This allowed me to take courses and attend workshops sponsored by the LDS Church. In 2002, I began working full-time as a genealogist, specializing in Native American genealogy. I eventually did research for several area tribes. When I began working full-time for GPL, I stopped doing research for individuals and now spend more time providing lectures and workshops. I have given talks at several public libraries, provided workshops at research centers, and spoke at genealogy conferences.

I received my MLS from Southern Connecticut State University in 2002. I started working at GPL in 2002 as a substitute librarian. At the time, I was the Administrative Librarian at the Indian & Colonial Research Center in Old Mystic. In 2007, I became a permanent part-time reference librarian, then in 2009, I became a full-time librarian.

I think it was a natural transition from genealogist to librarian. Genealogy requires discipline and the ability to conduct research properly. In both fields, you learn about the best resources available to answer specific questions. As a professional genealogist, you also must employ good customer relations skills. You need to ask the client questions to ascertain what they are looking for, much like a reference interview.

As I stated, I knew four of eight of my great-grandparents, and all four grandparents. I learned a lot about my family history from conversations with them. I had some interesting relatives. One great grandmother spent thirty years in vaudeville as a juggler. My grandmother had a singing career, then retired from that to become an artist. The stories I heard sparked my interest in my ancestry.

I wish I had a dollar for every obituary request I have fielded. That seems to be the most common genealogy query. I also have “newbies” ask me about getting started. I run a monthly genealogy club at GPL, and have taught a nine part Beginning Genealogy course there. I also run an annual Local History Fair, and an annual Ancestor Roadshow. Because of the programming I developed, I’ve become know as the resident genealogist. As far as sources or advice, it varies based upon the information being sought. But if I had to rank my favorite sites, I would have to say familysearch.org, cyndislist.com, findagrave.com and ancestry.com are my big four.

I became interested in the CLA Career Development Committee because of my concern with training and development for all library staff. After I earned my MA in History, I naturally entered the Retail Sales
“Face” books: how do they work?
by Bruce Johnston

Does your library have a social media presence? What does your library seek to achieve with it? Today’s article will discuss building and maintaining a social media presence on behalf of your library.

Let us first discuss what “social media” means. I prefer a broader definition that includes websites where people build descriptive personal profiles and/or blog to share and keep up with friends, the “broadcast” type that seems to get celebrities in trouble regularly, and other forums where self-defined, like-minded groups come together to discuss their topical interests. In all of these, it is the individual users themselves who create most of the content, rather than a vendor or sponsor. And for all of these, you have to be a participant on some level to gain access to what goes on within.

What does the nature of social media imply for a library’s presence there? Simply put, it means that compared to your library’s website, your library’s social media presence has to be more actively managed in order to remain visible to your audience. For example, you can have a Twitter account, but nobody will ever know, and even interested people who discover and follow it will forget if you don’t “tweet”, or send out messages regularly.

Once your library is prepared for the care and feeding of a social networking presence somewhere, you have to choose one or more appropriate venues for the audience you want to reach. In a university library where I work, Facebook currently reigns as the dominant leader of social networking sites for the student body, followed by Twitter. Among fellow university employees, I see LinkedIn profiles more. From this, it is apparent that social media is contextual, dependent upon your current status or interests.

If you are going to work in social media, know your audience, and keep up with them. Our library has a Facebook page today, but that will change when the next big thing for college students comes along and takes them away. Remember MySpace? If you are only recently looking into social networking for a university library, you might not. And that’s the point. What is important and interesting for your audience today may be defunct tomorrow.

Once you identify the social media your target audience prefers, learn what they want to receive from the library when they are in that space. This is the most important point to be made about this topic. If you participate in social media outside of work, you know what you glance over, ignore, or even block from view entirely. Your library’s social media content will be judged accordingly. Make it interesting. Make it useful. Make it matter to your audience. If you reach the right people and deliver something they are looking for and value, then your library’s social media presence will be a resounding success.

Field. I worked as a store manager and regional trainer for fourteen years at several locations around the country. I saw training as the best insurance of providing excellent customer service, and meeting sales goals. Several of my employees were promoted to management positions because I saw training as the most important aspect of running a store. When I felt comfortable in my library career, I sought out an avenue that would allow me to help other librarians. The Career Development was a good fit.

When I’m not working, I work on my genealogy, scour eBay for collectibles, and plan trips. I enjoy travelling and have been to over forty countries in the past ten years. Some of my favorite trips have been to Egypt (and a cruise on the Nile), to the Galapagos Islands, and to Helsinki Finland. During the Nile trip, the company held a photo contest with a prize of a Rhine River cruise. I was fortunate to win it. In the Galapagos, I was amazed that animals have no fear of humans. I had baby seals scurry up the beach to greet me, Blue Footed Boobies allow me to view their babies up close, and a Galapagos hawk land four feet from me. In Helsinki, I spent two days at the National Archives and traced my Finnish ancestry back to the 1730s.
Another bylaw change will allow for students, support staff and trustees to choose a joint membership in CLA and ALA. This will introduce emerging librarians and library supporters to the national organization at an affordable level. Individual CLA only memberships will remain as an option.

The committee is continuing to pursue additional member benefits and recently added two membership discounts—for long term care insurance and medical pet insurance. Procedures for obtaining the discounts will be available on the CLA website. Plans for regional social “meet-ups” are in the works and the Committee welcomes suggestions for other discount programs, activities and benefits that can be offered to members.

The bylaws referendum will be conducted via email—check your “inbox” and be sure to cast your vote! ♦
For the 123rd Annual CLA Conference we will be returning to the Crowne Plaza in Cromwell on April 28th and 29th. This year’s theme is

"Recharge! - Your Creativity, Your Library, Your Career."

We are now accepting program submissions. In looking at last year’s feedback, some of the things that CLA members are looking for at this year’s conference are fresh ideas about the future of libraries, technology and career development.

The deadline for submission is Friday, November 15th. You can submit your programs by filling going to:


Program submission guidelines can be found at:

https://ctlibraryassociation.org/content.php?page=CLA_Conference_2014 (you will need to log in to the CLA website).

We’re looking forward to a great conference! If you have any questions, you can email us at jndeely@russell.lioninc.org or can geli@ci.milford.ct.us

Jason Neely and Chris Angeli

Blast from the Past

On June 6th, Governor Dannel P. Malloy signed AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY REGARDING THE AVAILABILITY OF ELECTRONIC BOOKS TO USERS OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES. Our “Blast from the Past” this issue shows a different Governor signing library legislation. The photo was originally published in Connecticut Libraries in September of 1996.
Heard on CONNtech

"Public libraries are always evolving, sometimes based primarily on our more traditional roles, sometimes through public demand to fill an unmet need that might appear to be a far cry from our informational and literary roots. Ultimately, in each community, we tend to continue doing the things that work there and gradually dispense with the things that don’t go over so well. While (you and) I have been around long enough to have seen our share of great ideas that bombed, in contrast, many services that we take for granted today as "traditional" services were once questioned as to whether or not they belonged in a library."

~ Vince Juliano, Russell Library

"I am (also) NOT what someone I was speaking to recently described as a Library Trend Lemming either. I still believe there is great value in traditional library service but due to changes in our work and budget challenges we do need to figure out how to stay relevant. There is a balance to be achieved here and that is what I am working towards."

~ Beth Crowley, Scranton Library

"I went to a User eXperience Professionals meetup last week that featured neurolinguist Kath Straub (from Usability.org). The point that she made was that people are so overwhelmed by the array of options that we offer on our websites and the impersonal way in which we present them, that they’re longing for a human being to say "start here" and to really guide them and help them along the way. (In the world of the web, this translates to making your website more of a decision-making engine, using plain language, and adding in human help/live chat for guidance whenever possible & appropriate.) In a world where there are so many online options, people will seek out (and even pay extra) for that type of experience. It’s the librarians in the library who provide their users with the very human and interactive experience, though we may not package/market this aspect of our services well.

~Sharon Clapp, Elihu Burritt Library at Central Connecticut State University

"Just a few years ago I remember sitting in a conference for Librarians for America’s Neighborhoods hosted by the Urban Libraries Council. The speaker, Martin Gomez, asked the audience our reason for choosing librarianship as a profession. One by one, library students and newbie library staff spoke about their passion for books and reading. When my turn arrived I announced that I was becoming a librarian because I hated to read and that books were more a stone around a neck than a life jacket. A learning disability made reading less than pleasurable. I love people and stories. I became a librarian because my local branch in New Haven literally saved my life during a personal disaster. It was my shelter. My life experience has taught me that librarians are about growing wisdom and nurturing hope. We do that by connecting people to what they need, whether it is the newest James Patterson, finding the closest soup kitchen or creating programs and spaces which give wings to people’s dreams. Our profession is a noble one and is always evolving because it reflects the needs and growth of our species."

~ Melissa Canham-Clyne, Clark Memorial Library
The 8th National Conference of African American Librarians was held in the Greater Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky area, August 7-11, 2013. Our theme for the conference was Culture Keepers VIII: Challenges of the 21st Century: Empowering People, Changing Lives.

The conference was located in historic Covington Kentucky near the Ohio River. Librarians from Ohio and Kentucky worked hard at making sure that the conference attendees were introduced to the highlights of both areas with tours and visits to local libraries and museums.

Conference activities included stimulating speakers, knowledgeable authors, sponsored sessions on grant writing, health and wellness, other informative workshops focusing on technology, leadership and management; innovation and creativity; diversity and cultural heritage; advocacy, outreach, and community engagement; collections development; programs; and services for all library types including HBCU’s and 1890 land-grant libraries.

A few highlights of the conference were: the new/first time attendee’s sessions, interesting dialog; poster session presented by energetic library students and newly library graduates; the opening, closing and luncheon author sessions featured many well-known writers such as:

- Dr. Melissa Harris-Perry author of *Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes, and Black Women in America* (Yale, 2011) and the host of MSNBC’s weekend talk show shared insights into her life as a TV personality;
- Frank X Walker, author of *Turn Me Loose: The Unghosting of Medgar Evers*, (University of Georgia Press, 2013). 2013-2014 Kentucky poet laureate and originator of the word 'Affrilachia' to describe the culture of African Americans living in the Appalachian region;
- U.S. Congressman John Lewis (D-Ga.) author of *March*, often called "one of the most courageous persons the Civil Rights Movement ever produced;"
- Mary Monroe, author of *Lost Daughters* (Kensington, May 2013); Tanner Colby, author of *Some of My Best Friends Are Black;*
- Kwame Alexander a well-known children’s author, *Acoustic Rooster and His Barnyard Friends* (Sleeping Bear Press, 2011) and
- Dr. Goulda Downer, PhD, RD, LN, CNS, the Founder, President, and CEO of Washington, DC-based METROPLEX Health and Nutrition Services.

The conference was not only centered on various workshops but there were organized tours to the Cincinnati Museum Center, National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center in Wilberforce, Ohio and the National Underground Freedom Center and daily cultural activities for the attendees and guests. It was a nice celebration of African American history, culture, and community.

Connecticut's professional organization of over 1,000 librarians, library staff, friends, and trustees working together: to improve library service to Connecticut, to advance the interests of librarians, library staff, and librarianship, and to increase public awareness of libraries and library services.

CLA Today is the newsletter of the Connecticut Library Association. Published every other month, it is posted to the CLA website.

Please send submissions for future issues to editor Jennifer Datum at editor@ctlibrarians.org

If you are interested in serving on the Editorial Board, contact Douglas Lord at Douglas.Lord@ct.gov

ctlibraryassociation.org
CLASS Professional Development Conference

Friday, November 1, 2013,
8:30 am-3:10 pm

Gray Conference Center, University of Hartford,
West Hartford, CT

Class has planned an exciting, professional development program. Registration is open until October 25th, on the CLA website. Space is limited, so don't delay.

CLASS officers for 2013-2014 are:
Chair - Kathleen Cataldi, Wesleyan University
kcataldi@wesleyan.edu
Vice-chair – Mary Schweitzer, Eastern CT State University
schweitzerm@easternct.edu
Secretary - Sandy Smith Rosado, Eastern CT State University
rosados@easternct.edu

For questions about the CLASS Conference registration, contact Jennifer Hadley of CLASS at jthom@wesleyan.edu.

The CLA YA Section annual meeting is coming up! This November, join other local YA librarians as we focus on the theme of “On the Fringe: Teens and Tough Issues.” The event will kick off with mk eagle, author of Answering Teen’s Tough Questions and school librarian for Holliston High School in Massachusetts. mk’s presentation will focus on talking about controversial topics with teens, creating strategies for supporting teens, and how to develop protocol for these sensitive situations. Next, Christina Hill, of Prosser Public Library in Bloomfield, CT, will present on graphic novels as well as on the new D.R.A.F.T. Literacy program for reluctant male readers in her library’s community. We will wrap up the afternoon with an author panel on bullying. Authors Susane Colasanti (Keep Holding On), Nora Raleigh Baskin (Run), and Elaine Wolf (Camp) will discuss their YA books on the subject and answer questions.

The logistics: the annual meeting will take place on Thursday, November 7, at Wallingford Public Library. The event will run from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. If you would like to register, please visit the CLA website. A detailed schedule is available on the CLA site. Please note that the registration fee must be paid in full prior to start of the session. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact your CLA YA Section Co-Chairs - Kristi Sadowski (ksadowski at coventryct.org) or Bailey Ortiz, (bortiz at newingtonct.gov).

Exploring the Virtual Library: Solutions and Insights for Teaching with Discovery Tools

November 13, 2013
9:30 AM - 1:00 PM

Wallingford Public Library
Collaborative Solutions for Teaching with Discovery Tools and How Students Virtually Approach the Library

Web Redesign Inspiration

November 15, 2013
9:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Middletown Library Service Center
Ideas > Apps > Technology > Research & Services

eBooks: Are We Ready? Are Our Users Ready?
(Technical Services Section Fall Program)

December 05, 2013
9:00 AM - 12:30 PM

Farmington Library Community Room
Learn about user adoption of eBooks and how academic, public and school libraries are managing eBooks on the back-end.
It’s Awards Season by Stephen Schmidt

Among the many reasons to love autumn is that it is awards season for the book publishing industry. Two of the literary world’s biggest prizes, the Man Booker Prize and the National Book Awards, will be announced in the upcoming weeks. Winning these awards can make an author’s career and greatly help a publisher’s bottom line.

The Man Booker Prize is awarded each year for the best original full-length novel, written in the English language, by a citizen of the territories of the British Empire, the Republic of Ireland, or Zimbabwe. The National Book Awards are a set of annual U.S. literary awards in four categories, fiction, non-fiction, poetry and young people’s literature. The winners of these awards are met with much anticipation among book lovers and industry insiders. It also sends folks to libraries and book stores in droves.

Both of these awards are, coincidentally, undergoing big changes. In September 2013, it was announced that future Man Booker Prize awards would consider authors from anywhere in the world, so long as their work was in written in English and published in the UK. This change proved controversial in literary circles. Some have welcomed the expansion of the field. Others say American novelists will come to dominate the prize and the award will lose its British flavor. This change is set to take place next year.

This year, the National Book Award finalists were released in a series of four longlists consisting of ten books apiece. Five finalists in each category will be selected by October 16, and winners will be announced in New York City on November 20. This year, the National Book Foundation, which sponsors the awards, introduced the concept of longlists in order to build anticipation for the prizes.

Since Hilary Mantel hasn’t published a book this year, the field for the Booker prize is wide open. Mantel has won the past two years. Among this year’s six nominees is Jim Crace for his excellent and strange novel Harvest. Crace says this is his final book and this may sway the judges. Jhumpa Lahiri’s novel The Lowland has been nominated for both the Booker and National Book Award. The book has received nearly unanimous praise. The bookmakers in England favor Crace to take home the award. You can see the full list here: http://www.themanbookerprize.com/news/man-booker-shortlist-2013

As for the National Book Awards, George Saunders’ much lauded short story collection The Tenth of December is a strong contender to bring home the fiction prize. James McBride also has a chance for his novel The Good Lord Bird. In the non-fiction category, Lawrence Wright’s book Going Clear was a hit among Greenwich Library patrons as was George Packer’s book The Unwinding.

Notable in the Young People’s Literature category is Gene Leun Yang’s paired novels set during China’s Boxer Rebellion, Boxers and Saints. Yang is the first cartoonist to be a National Book Award finalist for a graphic novel. You can see the full lists here: http://www.nationalbook.org/nba2013.html#.UkMbtYashLc

Regardless who wins, the Greenwich Library has all the titles, including some in audio and eBook formats.

Stephen Schmidt is a librarian at the Greenwich Library. He orders fiction titles for the library, manages the website at Greenwichlibrary.org and stills listens to vinyl records.

This article was originally published in Greenwich Time.