

REFERENCE SECTION QUARTERLY

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A Message from the Section President, Theresa Agostinelli

I am thrilled to be serving as President of the NJLA Reference Section this year. Thank you to my coworkers and supervisors at the Monroe Township Public Library for their support as I begin this position. We have come a long way since I served as President nine years ago. I would like to extend a big thank you to Past President, Matt Latham for all of your contributions to the Section this past year. Highlights from Matt's term include a joint program with the History and Preservation Section at the Plainfield Library, and a fantastic panel of managers and directors sharing their advice on managing your library career. Matt has been a friendly and welcoming presence at all Section events, and he is still offering tremendous help behind the scenes. We have an enthusiastic and active Board, and it should be a great year.

The Reference Section continued our tradition of presenting valuable and informative programs at this year's NJLA Conference. I co-presented two programs, contributed to the Emerging Technology Section's Lightning Lunch, and presented a poster session with Jill Stafford, Section Vice President. The kindness and support that I received from fellow librarians before, during, and after these presentations made the experience a highly rewarding one, despite the nerves that I felt in the months leading up to the Conference. One key moment for me was listening to Nate Hill's Keynote Address with my colleagues from the Monroe Township Public Library. I left feeling invigorated, and grateful to be working in a library where we can make great things happen together.

Planning is well underway for our sixth annual Adult Services Forum, which will take place on Monday, October 27th at the Monmouth County Library System Headquarters. The theme this year will be Advocacy, Marketing, and More. We are pleased to announce that the Northvale Residents will be delivering our keynote speech, along with Robert White, Director of BCCLS. For those of you that are unfamiliar with the Northvale Residents, they are a group of highly motivated residents advocating for the return of their BCCLS municipal library, which they lost in 2011. Come out to show your support to this amazing organization, and learn more about their savvy marketing tips. Additional presenters include Sophie Brookover, John LeMasnay, Marie Radford, Melissa Brisbin, and more.

Reference has certainly evolved since I earned my MLS back in 1996, and the Section has adapted accordingly, offering a wide variety of programming to address the needs of librarians in these changing times. We are only as good as our members and we want your ideas. If you have a program suggestion, or would like to suggest a meeting location or topic, please attend a meeting or email me your ideas. I can be reached at theresacahill@hotmail.com.

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Reference Section 2013-2014: Year in Reflection by Matt Latham

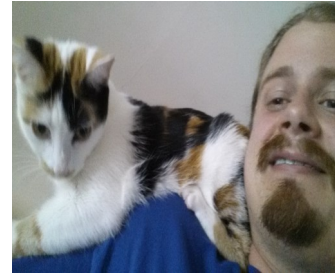
While my term as President of the Reference Section has come to a close, I am still very enthusiastic about the work and members of the Reference Section. Despite a good amount of work, and maybe a little stress now and again, it was my pleasure to serve as the President of the Reference Section for this term. The best benefit of serving was the opportunity to get to know a lot of enthusiastic and fun librarians. I've been able to learn veritable plethora (Star Trek reference anyone?) from the many great people I've met in the Section and from working as the President of the Section. All of this information and wisdom has led me to be a better librarian and to doing better things at my home library. Serving with NJLA in general offers great rewards in terms of knowledge, networking and new friendships: if you aren't involved now I recommend that you get involved!

Now that I've said all that, I'd like to reflect on some of the cool things that the Section's members have been able to do this year. Anyone who has volunteered for the Section this year, for both large and small tasks, should feel good about the things we've been able to create and the benefit fellow librarians have received as a result. At the end of a president's term, they are asked to submit a list of actions and accomplishments for their section, here's a quick look at some of the things we've been able to do this year:

1. Adult Services Forum – over 100 people in attendance, 9 unique programs, 1 keynote address, displays, NJLA store, and of course food. A great day and our big event for the year was made possible by hard work all around. This event is our annual chance to tailor a mini-conference of our own design.
2. NJLA Conference – we had three main sponsored programs + lots of co-sponsorships. All of our programs were well attended and provided great value.
3. Unique Events/Meetings – all of these were big successes. Thanks to the History and Preservation Section for having us on board for the Plainfield event.
 - a. Managing Your Librarian Career panel discussion
 - b. Genealogy Workshop and Tour at the Plainfield Library
 - c. Tour of the Monroe Township Public Library's Studio M
4. Newsletter – after a little bump, we now have rebooted the newsletter with a new editor and co-editor team who bring some new, fun ideas to the newsletter.
5. Newly Elected FULL Executive Board – I'm really excited about this coming year's Reference Section Executive Board. We have a lot of great people serving and creative leadership – I expect the section will do some cool things this year.

I think the Reference Section had a lot to offer this year, including some creative and helpful events. I've had a great experience working as the President of the Section – meeting great people, working on creative projects and collaborating with librarians across the state. I think the coming year will bring even greater things from the Section, with benefits to both our members and the greater librarian community. My thanks to everyone who worked for and with the Section this year!

BIOGRAPHY



I've spent the last six years at the Hoboken Public Library working on a wide array of different projects – from unique programming to teaching classes to policy and management. In 2014, I won funding from LibraryLinkNJ to create a makerspace at HPL, which is launching this August under my management. I've also served as union president, successfully negotiating a new labor contract. For the past years I've gotten much more involved in NJLA, serving as Reference Section President last year and speaking at both the 2013 and 2014 conferences. This year I begin a new term as a Member-at-Large for the Executive Board.

Preconference Recap: Takin' it to the Streets by Jill D'Amico

Many of us don't think much of being able to produce identification when asked—but without a place to live or a job, it becomes a much more difficult prospect.

That's the issue that opened Takin' it to the Streets: New Ideas for Transformational Outreach, a preconference held at this year's 2014 NJLA annual conference. Organizers aimed to present a holistic approach to respectfully and effectively serving library patrons by hosting speakers from an array of backgrounds and experience.

Policies, staff training, outreach are all integral considerations to make sure we are serving all members of the public, but perhaps even more so for those without stable housing.

Attendees were encouraged to actively work with these patrons and help them with their needs, as opposed to viewing them as a nuisance and ignoring the issue.

Vikki Terrile, director of Community Library Services at the Queens Public Library pointed out that some homeless patrons aren't easily identified, as much of their efforts are aimed at not attracting attention.

Terrile works closely with schools and community organizations to reach families experiencing homelessness where they are.

She's hosted library programs and brought services to shelters, and encouraged outreach and promotion in places like laundromats and supermarkets.

She suggested the local McKinney-Vento liaison as a key partner in providing library service to homeless children and teens. This is a legally mandated position required to be in every school district.

Collection development is another consideration for serving people experiencing homelessness. Sam Miller and Jean Rice, of Picture the Homeless, a New York City-based advocacy organization, spoke about their experience creating a library for the homeless.

Last year, the group realized a longtime dream in opening the Jean Rice Liberation Reference Library out of their office in the Bronx. Rice spoke about the need for current and accessible material such as legal reference, books on social justice, philosophy, as well as popular fiction. The group is working on a reading list that will be distributed to public libraries.

Data from the Department of Housing and Urban Development shows that while homelessness in New Jersey has declined in recent years, the number of chronically homeless people is on the rise—

Biography



Jill D'Amico is an adult services librarian at East Brunswick Public Library.

“ Many of us don't think much of being able to produce identification when asked—but without a place to live or a job, it becomes a much more difficult prospect.”

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Preconference Recap: Takin' it to the Streets by Jill D'Amico (Continued From Page 3)

and it is far from an urban issue. Veterans are among the homeless spread across the state, and some are sheltering in encampments in suburban and rural areas.

GI Go Fund Executive Director Jack Fanous spoke on how veterans are unique in their position as people used to “the system.” However, some veterans run into discharge issues that prevent them from accessing benefits. He encouraged libraries to partner with organizations serving veterans, and have information on hand about VA benefits, free local legal assistance, and job training.

“Libraries are in a unique position to inform, enable, and engage members of their communities—we look forward to continue sharing ideas and resources.”

Jaime Angelini of the Mental Health Association in Atlantic County offered guidance in working with homeless patrons who are also dealing with mental health issues. Having contact information for crisis lines and a good relationship with your local mental health organization(s) is a good way to stay ahead of an issue that reaches far into communities.

Attendees provided great feedback that will drive the conversation forward. Libraries are in a unique position to inform, enable, and engage members of their communities—we look forward to continue sharing ideas and resources.

Takeaway tips

- Have local shelter, school contact and crisis line information at all service desks—try customizing a resource guide for your area (sample [here](#)), and give it out
- Consider staff training so policies are enforced consistently and fairly
- Review policies (library cards, behavioral, computer usage) that may exclude certain members of the community, and consider how they can be updated
- Make meeting rooms or other available space available for offsite meetings between social service organizations and clients
- Identify and work with the McKinney-Vento liaison in your school district to provide outreach and support
- Have a presence at local events for veterans, including “stand downs” and distribution drives
- Consider mental health training, such as Mental Health First Aid, for frontline staff

This program was sponsored by the

Diversity & Outreach, Reference, Urban Libraries and Young Adult sections of NJLA.

Create & Curate: Making Social Media Work For Libraries by Theresa Agostinelli

One of the most valuable programs that I attended at the NJLA Conference was Create & Curate: Making Social Media Work For Libraries presented by Karen Vaias and Karen Olivari from the Bernards Township Public Library. This program was chock full of great ideas on becoming a social media guru with little time or effort required. Here are some of the tips that they shared.

Social media posts are more successful when photos are included. One suggestion was to always have a smartphone or tablet available for taking pictures. These images can be uploaded to your library's Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest accounts with library hashtags. Pictures of people are particularly appealing. This is a great way to put a human face to your library's staff members, including those that work behind the scenes. It can also provide evidence of how your library brings the community together through programming and more.

Your social media content should not just be about you. Are your posts limited to program dates and library closures? If so, you need to expand your content. Looking for inspiration? Start following other libraries, area organizations and businesses and repost their content. Stay up-to-date on community events including concerts, fairs, and more and post about them. Keep your followers informed about road closings, weather updates, and more. Find out about events that are happening nationally, or around the world and share links and information about

them. This will help to make your social media accounts valuable resources for your patrons and others.

If you are pressed for time, try scheduling posts through Facebook's new scheduling feature. Use Hootsuite to post content to more than one account. Encourage your patrons, volunteers, and fellow staff members to use your library's hashtag to post images and content to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest. Seek out the assistance of promotional partners. People presenting at your library can add library hashtagged content to their social media accounts.

Create a Pinterest account and schedule staff members to create one or two boards per month. This will ensure that the account is consistently updated. Encourage staff members to tie boards to different events, campaigns, and initiatives such as summer reading programs.

Create stop motion promotional videos using Vine and Windows Movie Maker. Teens are usually pretty tech-savvy and creative, and this can be a fun program for them. Here is a link to a video that the presenters created to promote this program: tinyurl.com/lgmw2sh.

I left with several ideas that could be easily implemented at my library. Two that have already been used on the Monroe Township Public Library's Facebook account include posting weekly pictures for Throwback Thursday, and Facebook Family Challenges. I have not created any stop motion videos yet, but they are next on my list.

The program was sponsored by the NJLA Reference Section.



BIOGRAPHY

Theresa Agostinelli is a librarian at the Monroe Township Public Library where she coordinates adult computer classes and services for job seekers. She also teaches craft and cooking classes, and S.T.E.M. programs for kids and teens at the Library. Theresa is the president of the NJLA Reference Section and the moderator of the popular Facebook group, Technology Training & Libraries. She is also the leader of her daughter's Girl Scout troop.

“Pictures of people are particularly appealing. This is a great way to put a human face to your library's staff members, including those that work behind the scenes. It can also provide evidence of how your library brings the community together through programming and more.”

Interview with an NJLA Conference Presenter: Steve Hrubes

Steve Hrubes presented three sessions at NJLA '14: 3D Printing Without the Programming, Minecraft Programs in Your Library, and What Little Hands Can Do: Making the Most of Makerspaces for Children. He agreed to an interview to discuss his experience as a conference presenter.

RSQ: What do you do at Monroe Township Public Library?

SH: I'm the coordinator for Monroe Township Public Library's maker studio, Studio M, as well as a part of the reference staff.

RSQ: How are you involved with NJLA?

SH: I'm a member of NJLA's Member Services Committee. It's a great committee filled with dedicated people. The mission of the committee is to grow NJLA membership as well as retain current members. We also organize outings and meet-ups to foster networking. We've got some meet-ups coming up soon, so I encourage you to attend. Information can be found on NJLA's website, as well as on NJLA Member Services Facebook page.

RSQ: How did you become a presenter for three sessions?

SH: I was part of three presentations because I'm surrounded by great librarians, who wanted to share our experiences with the New Jersey library community. Collaborating with my colleagues allowed for us to determine what things we were already doing that would be of interest to other librarians. Luckily, the Conference Committee felt that sessions on 3D printing and Minecraft were worthy of wider attention and approved our proposals.

I was able to present at a third session in a very serendipitous way; my colleague, Lynnette Fucci was in need of a replacement speaker, after a member of the presentation was unable to attend. If an opportunity presents itself, I encourage you to take it.

It's not unusual for librarians to present at multiple presentations during Annual Conference. My friend, and co-worker, Tyler Rousseau, also presented at several sessions during the year's Conference.



Biography

Having earned his Master of Library and Information Science from Rutgers University in 2011, Stephen Hrubes currently works at Monroe Township Public Library as coordinator of the Studio M maker studio and as part of the reference staff. Before entering the world of libraries, he was a veteran comic book retailer for more than fifteen years, and then gave it up for the glamour of librarianship.

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Interview with an NJLA Conference Presenter: Steve Hrubes

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Attendance at the sessions was healthy. To me, the best part of a session is the question and answer period. I feel it's a good indicator of how engaged your audience is. I'm happy to say that we had very engaged audiences that had great questions and shared their own experiences. I walked away from the sessions with some new ideas myself, and I think that really emphasizes the value of the Conference; the exchange of ideas to help us both gain new knowledge and also improve what we're currently doing.

RSQ: What was your favorite aspect of this past NJLA conference?

SH: My favorite aspect of Annual Conference is the opportunity it offers to meet and speak with other librarians around the state and candidly speak about what we're doing in our libraries. The chance to network can't be beaten.

RSQ: Will you do as many presentations for next year's conference?

SH: If the conference committee feels that I have something interesting to share with the library community, I'd happily present again. It was a great experience that allowed me to hone my presentation skills; skills that come in handy when I do outreach for my job at Monroe Township Public Library.

An OP-ED By Andy Woodworth

The eternal thankless question that the organization and the conference committee must face every year is where to have the annual librarian conference. Should it be at the Revel? Or Long Branch? Or should the organization find a new venue? With the planning, contracts, and expectations, and having given the situation my complete attention and exhaustive thought (all thirty seconds leading up to the typing of the first sentence), here is my conclusion.

The answer is moot.

There is literally nowhere in the state in which people will be happy for the annual conference. Even for such a small state, the membership has an imaginary travel radius which puts most viable venues "too far". Roughly, this means a circle in the middle of the state which is full of suburbia, the turnpike, and not much else. No one has ever uttered the phrase "come to scenic Jamesburg!" on purpose unless they live there. With nowhere to go, the librarians will turn to room drinking which in turn leads to more encounters with hotel security who had no idea librarians could be so rowdy. That won't work.

If the conference is by the Shore, it jacks up the price of the accommodations and food based on the calendar. Anything in the summer will be a torture as your thoughts drift away from the session you attended towards contemplating why you are not sitting by the pool instead. Of course, you could have it in the middle of winter which begs the inevitable question as to why we are at the beach when we can't lay out, swim, or otherwise do summertime things. In fact, being near any body of water is just a bad idea.

You could ignore travel restrictions and go with a conference outside the middle of the state, but there are problems with that solution. The conference can't be in the north end of the state. There are bears there and it is bad publicity for a librarian to be eaten by a bear. It can't be in the south end either. There are Pineys there and it would also be bad publicity for a librarian to be eaten by Pine Barren folk.

In conclusion, the conference site selection process is screwed. The best we can hope for is that the people who make this decision have a drink or two, hold their noses, and pick a venue using the time honored technique, "random finger on a map". We should do our best to support them as volunteers within the organization that are attending to all the details that make the conference a place for librarians to gather, exchange ideas, and learn new things. It's a thankless job and they deserve something more than complaints for their efforts.

Like alcohol. And lots of it.

Middlesex County Fair August 4th-August 10th

We arranged to have a table at the Middlesex County Fair from August 4th-August 10th. This was a great way to get the word out about libraries in a fun and relaxed atmosphere. This project was truly a collaborative effort. Cheryl McBride, our NJLA Librarian of the Year, has generously purchased "Librarians of the Universe" t-shirts for all participants, registered to sit at the table for four time slots, and packed everything up at the end of the Fair. The Libraries of Middlesex and NJLA generously purchased gummy "book worms" and "bugs" as Fair giveaways. The NJ State Library has donated Super Librarian pins, pens, coloring booklets, and informational bookmarks. The East Brunswick Public Library delivered a table that was used throughout the week, and contributed craft supplies for the whole week, and the Monroe Township Public Library contributed a prize wheel. Over twenty NJ librarians volunteered their time to staff the table.



Friends, Camaraderie, and Beer...and an NJLA Conference,

I've attended the NJLA Conference every year for the past six years, but this year I think I got the most out of the conference. This is not to say that previous conferences were somehow not as rewarding or valuable. I think I simply got a lot more from the conference by being more involved in NJLA. Though I did lay the groundwork last year as I gave my first co-presentation at NJLA '13 and at the time was the VP of the Reference Section. This year I was again presenting on a panel discussion and came in as the President of the Reference Section, having worked with various members on creating sponsored proposals and programs for the conference. More than that, over the past year I've gotten to work with and know a lot of great librarians all around the state. It was that perhaps more than anything else that made this NJLA '14 unique.

The NJLA Conference first and foremost offers an array of different programs, speakers and opportunities to learn and grow as a librarian. However, there is a whole other side to the conference that provides great value as well: the chance to see and catch up with library colleagues from around the state. Working with NJLA and knowing many people already makes this that much better of a bonus for the conference. It's a chance to maybe talk a little shop, get a little guidance and make friends with people who, big shock, are probably a lot like you. The Members Services Section also did a great job at fostering this spirit throughout the year, but also at the conference offering several mixer events at various locations in Revel. I was certainly on board with this as it allowed me to chat with friends while sampling some delicious NJ brew (Carton and Cape May Brewing, respectively). I happily discovered that librarians are frequently a craft beer loving group. For those inclined, you might search Facebook groups for a special group: NJ Librarian Craft Beer Enthusiasts. :) Also, if you get a chance to stay over at the hotel during the conference, the camaraderie continues after the day's events are done.

In the end, I think that the conference offers a chance to catch up with friends and colleagues from around the state, and the mixers provide a relaxed atmosphere to do just that. Being involved with NJLA makes this that much better of an experience as you get to build relationships and participate in some of the work NJLA does. There have been many times where I've reached out to people I've met through NJLA and the conference to ask questions and get advice. Having this option has been a big help to myself as well as my library. More than anything else, working with great people through NJLA has rejuvenated my enthusiasm for my profession. This is what NJLA and the annual conference can offer you, and the more you are involved the more you get out of it.

Conclusion from the Co-Editor

As we wrap-up the conference in Atlantic City, we reflect on the significance of the various meetings that we attended and what they mean for the future of libraries. How will our patrons benefit from our new insight? What does this mean for the future of the library industry? Where do we go from here?

We should also think about the impact of technology on the industry. As our practice evolves and we move away from the brick and mortar of physical libraries (and into the digital world) should we embrace the change or hide from it? Technology is changing the library industry for better or for worse. We will further explore the impact of technology on the concept of the library in the next issue of the newsletter. In the meantime we are accepting any suggestions for improvements as we continue to publish the newsletter.

Please send your comments to bryan.eichner@gmail.com. We will do our best to implement your suggestions and increase the quality of the newsletter. Enjoy the rest of your summer and we will see you in the Fall.

-Bryan Eichner



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NJLA REFERENCE SECTION MISSION STATEMENT

The section fosters professional development and networking opportunities for reference librarians.

Members plan continuing education programs, including a major workshop in the fall, programs at the annual NJLA Conference, opportunities to interact with colleagues and tours of specialized libraries or collections.

It is the goal of this newsletter to provide a forum for New Jersey reference librarians, from public, academic and school libraries, to read and write about the issues that they face.

Save the Date!

6th Annual Adult Services Forum

Monday, October 27th, 9:00 a.m.—3:30 p.m.

Monmouth County Library HEADQUARTERS

www.adultservicesforum.info

