Liz Mengel

Sailing into the future—Charting our destiny

The 13th National Conference wrap up

The ACRL 13th National Conference, "Sailing into the Future: Charting our Destiny," was held in Baltimore, March 29–April 1, 2007. Conference attendees were greeted with beautiful mid-Atlantic spring weather as they met with colleagues and vendors, renewed old acquaintances, explored uncharted territory, challenged assumptions, and shared research results. The Baltimore conference chair, Mary Reichel (university librarian, Appalachian State University), and the conference committee members produced a conference filled with interesting keynote and invited speakers, papers, panels, poster sessions, workshops, roundtable discussions, precon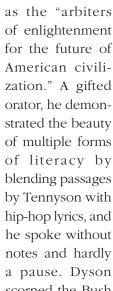ference workshops, cyber zed presentations, and much, much more. The conference was educational, entertaining, and, yes, even provocative.

The committee's efforts were appreciated by the more than 3,000 conference participants, which included 1,028 first-time attendees and 85 scholarship recipients. The conference drew a total of 4,784 attendees (including paid registrants, exhibitors, staff, and guests), a record-breaking number and 21 percent increase from the previous attendance record. Attendees came from all 50 states and from 27 countries.

ACRL Executive Director Mary Ellen Davis, ACRL President Pamela Snelson, and ACRL National Conference Chair Mary Reichel kick off the 13th National Conference in Baltimore.

Keynotes

The opening keynote on March 29, was presented by Michael Eric Dyson (Avalon Foundation professor in the humanities and professor of religious studies and Africana studies, University of Pennsylvania). Dyson started the conference with a passionate, perhaps controversial, address about the value of diversity, dissent, and self-expression. He commented on the importance of librarians, who he described as the "arbiters of enlightenment for the future of American civilization." A gifted orator, he demonstrated the beauty of multiple forms of literacy by blending passages by Tennyson with hip-hop lyrics, and he spoke without notes and hardly a pause. Dyson scorned the Bush administration for its anti-intellectualism. He also denigrated Bill Cosby for his criticism of the dress and speech of young African Americans, which Dyson considers a part of their quest for self-determination. Dyson compared himself to a Trojan horse; he has entry to elite circles because of his education

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Opening keynote speaker Michael Eric Dyson talked about diversity, dissent, and self-expression.

and appearance, but he uses this access to voice his radical views.

He called for librarians to also be like Trojan horses in their mission to provide access to knowledge, a forum for ideas, and the opportunity for the young to become "addicted to learning," and thus become all they can be. Dyson was equally eloquent in the question-and-answer follow-up. When asked about his religious beliefs, he responded that, for him, God is present wherever there is compassion and people working together to help one another, and that God was really all about love, a concluding response that brought an enthusiastic standing ovation.

Friday's lunch keynote was Baltimore's own John Waters. Waters, an actor, writer, director, and producer is best known for his boundary-pushing films, such as *Pink Flamingos, Polyester, Cecil B. DeMented,* and *Hairspray*. He did not disappoint the audience with a hilarious and uncensored hour of anecdotes from his more than 40 years of filmmaking. He even offered advice to librarians on how to make libraries "cool again." While many of the suggestions will probably not be implemented—one never knows—someday you may walk into a library to see naked librarians helping throngs of patrons! One can only wonder if Waters was channeling Ranganathan when he said, "There's a book for everyone." Then added a twist by saying, "You have to remember that it is impossible to commit a crime while reading a book." While some attendees may have been wondering what the connection was between Waters and libraries, ACRL President Paula Snelson remarked afterward, "It's all about freedom of speech. We have to walk the walk." Waters has been a long-time proponent of freedom of expression.

The closing keynote address was from long-time National Public Radio correspondent Nina Totenberg. She provided an overview of some of the legal issues that she has covered in her 30-plus years covering the Supreme Court and the role of the press in society. She provided amusing stories of notes passed between Chief Justice Warren Berger and fellow judges. Totenberg emphasized the value of the free press in a democratic society and emphasized how important it is for journalists to protect their sources. In various administrations there have been attempts to limit access to information through classifying documents. Usually this classification is to avoid political embarrassment rather than protect national security, and she gave the example of the Pentagon Papers.

Missed a session?

Audiorecordings of ACRL National Conference sessions are available for purchase at www.cmc-net.com/ (click on the ACRL logo).You can also order the 13th National Conference Proceedings online at www. acrl.org/publications.

All in all it was a busy but energizing four days for the attendees. In addition to all the activity of the conference, the nice weather allowed for delightful strolls along Baltimore's famed Inner Harbor and easy perusal of its shops and restaurants. Baltimore lived up to its nickname,"Charm City," and the conference offered excellent opportunities to network and exchange ideas on research, practices, and visions in the field of academic and research librarianship. One conference attendee may have said it best,"I realized that ACRL is the place to focus my professional membership on.This is *my* conference."

Citing a case against two former lobbyists for the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, Totenberg concluded that now there is an attempt to charge those who gain access to classified documents, even unwittingly, not just those who provide such information.

Invited papers

Four invited papers were featured on Friday and Saturday. Luz Mangurian (professor emerita, Towson University) presented "Learning, Emotion and their Application for Teaching." Her discussion topics included an overview of neurosciences and pedagogical research on learning and the importance of emotion in facilitating learning.

David Silver (assistant professor, media studies and director, Resource Center for Cyberculture Studies, University of San Francisco) discussed "Digital Media, Learning, and Libraries: Web2.0, Learning 2.0, and Libraries 2.0." His talk centered on how social software and new

The first-time attendee orientation session provided an opportunity to learn more about ACRL and get tips on the conference.

forms of social interaction are encouraging users to contribute in new ways, such as social tagging in the library catalog.

Sanford Ungar (president, Goucher College) spoke about "Education Without Boundaries: The Goucher Experiment." Conference attendees learned about the Goucher plan, which requires all undergraduates to study abroad in order to graduate. He also discussed the new Athenaeum at the heart of the campus that includes a new state-of-the-art library.

Tracy Mitrano (director of IT Policy and of Computer Policy and Law Program, Cornell University) presented "From Soup to Nuts: Copyright, Electronic Surveillance and Social Networking Technologies." Her presentation touched on a little bit of everything of interest to librarians in terms of digital copyright, social networking, and electronic surveillance since the passage of the USA PATRIOT Act.

Tracks

The conference program was divided into six main tracks: Attracting and Thriving; Collaborations, Content, Collections, and Access; The Environment for Libraries; Libraries and the Imagination; and Teaching and Learning. In addition to these tracks the programs also addressed the seven specific conference themes of Deep Waters (challenges), Getting Your Sea Legs (early career issues), Hoisting the Sails (leadership), Lifelines (values), Passport to Success (effective practices), Squalls (controversies), and Rocking the Boat (innovation).

Highlights from the Attracting and Thriving track included the session "Work Behavior Type and Myers Briggs Personality Type Preferences of Academic Librarians: Change over Time?" Carol Ritzen Kem (University of Florida) presented her research on the changing Myers Briggs Type Indicators of academic librarians between 2003 and 2006. How to deal with resolving conflicts in diverse cultural backgrounds was the topic of Matthew Johnson and Henry Bourgeois' (Stirfry Seminars) session. The presenters discussed different methods attendees can use to create a sense of community between diverse groups and individuals. Remaining relevant in a world of "Amazoogle" was the theme of the forum presented by Richard Dougherty, (Dougherty and Associates), Gary Pitkin, (University of Northern Colorado), Steven Bell (Temple University), Wendy Lougee, (University of Minnesota), and Michelle Jabcobs (University

Fresh perspective: A first-time attendee's experience

As a recent MLS graduate employed at a community college library, I had the fortunate opportunity to attend the ACRL National Conference in Baltimore, thanks to scholarships from ACRL and the Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records.

I was not sure exactly what to expect at the ACRL conference. Would I be overwhelmed with activities and crowds? Would there be long lines and logistical hassles? Any concerns I may have had quickly dissipated. I found the ACRL National Conference to be an ideal size in terms of number of participants (record attendance of more than 3,000!) and exhibitors, and most importantly, selection of presentations to attend. The conference was big enough that there were more than enough great things to do and participate in, but not so big that it was overwhelming or impersonal.

I arrived the evening before the preconferences and picked up my registration materials without having to wait in a long line. I was impressed with how well-organized the check-in process was. I spent the rest of the evening planning my schedule for the following days.

First-time attendee orientation

After attending a presession workshop on library liaison programs, I headed to the First-Time Attendee Orientation. The orientation is definitely something I would recommend to other first-time attendees! After getting information about the conference schedule we moved into the neighboring room, which was set up in a job fair fashion, with at least 30 people at individual tables waiting to speak to us. People representing a variety of areas of interest were there to discuss topics such as how to get involved with the various ACRL Sections, publishing opportunities, and restaurant and sightseeing information in the surrounding Baltimore area. In fact, the orientation was where I met Stephanie Orphan, editor-in-chief of *C&RL News.* Meeting Stephanie landed me this writing gig!

One of my favorite things about the ACRL conference was the roundtable sessions. During two separate sessions, pre-identified discussion topics were selected for each of the 50 tables. The sessions I attended included five to seven people from various sized institutions all interested in discussing the particular topic at hand. I was able to share things I am doing at our community college library, as well as get input and ideas on how other libraries are addressing similar challenges and opportunities. In fact, one of the roundtable discussions lead me to an exhibitor I was not familiar with who may be able to assist me with a project I am exploring.

Navigating the conference

I attended six-to-seven sessions each day of the conference. These sessions covered topics such as marketing the library, the use of Wikipedia, the effectiveness of different library instruction delivery methods, and the future of eBooks. All of the time slots offered multiple topics that interested me. Prioritizing which session to attend and which to miss was difficult.

In between sessions I visited the exhibitors. Although I did not have time to stop at all of the exhibits, I did have several conversations with individuals about their company's products or services. Some of these conversations netted definite decisions regarding things I wanted to do when I got back home, while others resulted in me walking away with some good information to explore further in the near future.

During the final evening a special reception was held for all conference participants at the National Aquarium. The aquarium was open exclusively for ACRL conference attendees; we had full access to the entire aquarium to explore at our leisure. Delicious desserts and an assortment of beverages were set up throughout the aquarium for us to enjoy. Having the chance to see this nationally recognized facility was a terrific experience. Had this reception not been arranged, I don't know if I would have seen the aquarium; my days were so full with conference activities that by the time the evening rolled around, I had only enough energy to grab some dinner and head back to the hotel. Having the ticket to the reception motivated me to venture out after dark and see Baltimore's most popular tourist attraction.

Although my first conference experience is officially behind me, I will be working over the summer to implement some of the things I have learned. I am already looking forward to the next ACRL National Conference, which will be held in Seattle, March 2009. I would encourage those who are new to our profession or have not been to an ACRL conference to attend, as well. You will return home with many new ideas and a renewed sense of professional pride and purpose.—*Beckie Madaras, Yavapai College, Beckie_Madaras@yc.edu*

John Waters entertained conference-goers with his keynote talk during Friday's luncheon. Later, he gracioulsy participated in an interview with ACRL President Pamela Snelson, ACRL Conference Program Committee member Carlos Melian, ACRL member David Free, and ACRL Content Strategist Kathryn Deiss. Listen to the recording at blogs.ala.org/acrlpodcast.php.

in the Humanities at the University of Nebraska.

The Content, Collections, and Access track was expressed in a number of papers. The paper presented by James Neal (Columbia University) on faculty attitudes toward scholarly publishing drew a large crowd that wanted to hear about trends and issues unearthed through faculty focus groups at Columbia. A number of sessions on electronic books were available at the conference, including Bonnie Tijerina, Tammy Sugarman, and Heather Jeffcoat King's panel on the e-book evolution and how these new resources affect libraries collections.

The Libraries and the Imagination track produced sessions such as Judi Briden, Ann Marshall, and Vicki Burns' session on the two-year ethnographic study of how under-graduates do their work at the University of Rochester. Also in this track was the contributed paper "Academic Success: How Library Services Make a Difference" from Ying Zhong and Johanna Alexander (University of California-Bakersfield). Laurie Allen (University of Pennsylvania) did an excellent follow up to the Cyber Zed Shed presentation on PennTags. Her contributed paper, "PennTags: Creating and Using an Academic Social Bookmarking Tool," illustrated how the tool has allowed them to expand their services and how it supports the use of their resources.

The Teaching and Learning track found papers such as Liz Cooper, Anna Van Scoyoc, and Chris Palazzolo's "Reaching the Faculty of the Future Now: Marketing Instructional Services to Graduate Students." This team from Emory University discussed how they are partnering with the graduate school's teacher training program to provide instructional services to their graduate students. Also in this track was the

of California-Merced). They discussed how disruptive technologies, academic priorities, research methods, publishing, and user expectations and preferences hit librarians as one single, powerful wave of change.

In the Collaborations track Michael Levin-Clark (University of Denver) discussed how the Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries built a consortial monographic purchase plan. Susan Ware and Courtney Young, (both from Pennsylvania State University) presented the paper "Virtual Teams: Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing Across Time and Distance," which examined how multicampus staffing of their virtual reference desk has introduced innovative organization changes at Pennsylvania State University. Andrew Jewell, Brian Pytlik Zillig, and Katherine Walter (University of Nebraska-Lincoln) presented the panel session "Networking Across the Campus: Collaborative Partnerships through Humanities Computing." The session focused on how collaboration built a successful Center for Digital Research

Put Seattle on your travel schedule

Mark your calendars! Join your colleagues in Seattle, March 12–15, 2009, for ACRL's 14th National Conference "Pushing the Edge: Explore, Engage, Extend." Betsy Wilson (University of Washington) chairs the 14th National Conference Executive Committee. The Call for Participation will be issued this fall.

panel session "Library as Laboratory: Special Collections in Undergraduate Education." This panel demonstrated how libraries can actively engage undergraduates and faculty in the transformative experience of original, primary-source research using special collections. The contributed paper "Build It and What? Measuring the Implementation and Outcomes of an Information Commons," presented by Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis' Rachel Applegate, described how to use a multifaceted, data-driven approach to information commons design and how to evaluate patron behaviors, desires, and outcomes.

In the Environment for Libraries track there were several sessions on advocacy- across the campus. The ACRL University Libraries Section-sponsored workshop "Campus Advocacy: Involving All Staff in Influencing Campus Dynamics" explored the campus organization, its evolving nature and its trends, and illustrated ways individuals can develop strategies and action plans for their campuses. The panel session "Inside the Academic Administrator's Mind: What They Really Think About Library Value and Support" posed the question: Do you know what information administrators want in order to make informed library funding decisions?

The conference also presented numerous poster sessions and roundtables. Poster sessions spanned various topics, including wikis, research tools, the Google phenomenon, recreational reading, usability testing, blogs, databases, and more. Roundtable presenters facilitated discussions on topics such as plagiarism, branch libraries, electronic reference collections, empowering department heads, and federated searching.

Top ten assumptions

The ACRL Research Committee unveiled its top ten assumptions for the future of academic libraries at the conference. The committee developed the list from an extensive literature review and environmental scans. The panel of Jim Mullins (Purdue University), Doug Lederman (Inside Higher Ed), Sherrie Schmidt (Arizona State University), Pam Snelson (Franklin

Nina Totenberg wrapped up the conference with an informative and anecdote-filled closing keynote address.

& Marshall College), and Julie Todaro (Austin Community College) presented the list and addressed questions from the audience. The assumptions are:

1. There will be an increased emphasis on digitizing collections, preserving digital archives, and improving methods of data storage and retrieval.

2. The skill set for librarians will continue to evolve in response to the needs and expectations of the changing populations (student and faculty) that they serve.

3. Students and faculty will increasingly demand faster and greater access to services.

4. Debates about intellectual property will become increasingly common in higher education.

5. The demand for technology-related services will grow and require additional funding.

6. Higher education will increasingly view the institution as a business.

7. Students will increasingly view themselves as customers and consumers, expecting high-quality facilities and services.

8. Distance learning will be an increasingly common option in higher education, and will coexist but not threaten brick-and-mortar models.

9. Free public access to information stemming from publicly funded research will continue to grow.

10. Privacy will continue to be an important issue to librarianship.

New in 2007

A new addition to the conference this year was the Cyber Zed Shed, which provided 20-minute presentations on how librarians are using new technology in innovative ways. Topics included wikis, blogs, smart phones, social tagging, video IM, Squidoo, and more.
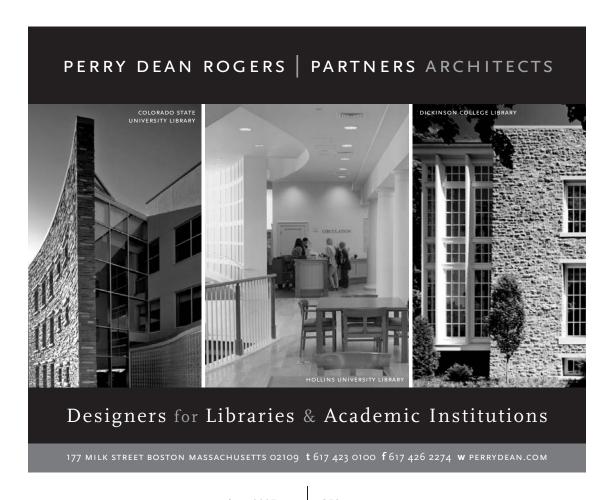
Also new this year was a conference wiki. The wiki was available for all attendees to exchange information about conference programs, events, exhibits, the City of Baltimore, and more. Planning, discussions, networking, and post-conference recapping are encouraged. The wiki is still available at wikis.ala. org/acrlbaltimore/index.php/Main_Page.

There is also the official ACRL National Conference blog at www.learningtimes.net /acrlblog/, where you can check out what your fellows attendees are talking about.

Virtual conference

All conference attendees enjoy the added benefit of being able to participate in the virtual conference online community for free. Individuals who could not make it to Baltimore had the opportunity to register for the virtual conference. The virtual conference, held completely online, offers an on-demand recording of Michael Eric Dyson's opening keynote presentation, an interview with John Waters, 17 Webcasts, text of contributed and invited papers, exhibitor poster sessions, discussion boards, speaker handouts, and more. The virtual conference online community will remain available to both virtual and face-to-face conference attendees through April 2008. Log in to access the archived Webcasts or to join the conversation; discussion threads include:

• Textbooks on reserve—legal and ethical issues

• Perceptions of Campus-Level Advocacy and Influence Strategies among Senior Administrators

• Moving Libraries to the Network Level

• Designing a Library Environment that Promotes Learning **𝓃**