It seems as though we’ve spent a lot of time lately explaining ourselves in the media. For those of you who missed it, a letter to the editor proclaimed that a Library staffer had told a customer that we throw the classics out because no one reads them. Just as we answered that complaint, another letter pointed out that we are throwing out lots of books in the dumpster.

We successfully responded to both letters. Our replies are on the website, rpl.org, if you haven’t seen them. Thanks to Laura-Ellen, Rachael and Chester for their help in crafting the responses and disseminating them to Facebook, the Town Talk website, rpl.org, etc.

Now the ongoing job for RPL staff and the Board is to share our responses with people who may have missed reading them in the paper. It would have been great if the letter writers had called in and asked about their concerns, instead of starting with a public approach. Please encourage customers to call us directly with their questions and complaints.

It was pointed out to me that even this sort of negative exposure is good in a way. It gets the Library into the public’s mind as something people care about. Another good point is that it’s years until the next tax election.
News from the Front Lines
Laura-Ellen Ayres, Assistant Director for Direct Services & ILS

On Tuesday, July 23rd, prisoners from the Rapides Parish Sheriff’s Office came to the Main Library to “deep clean.” The library was closed from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Linda Green said she had never seen anyone so happy to work! They did a great job, and really enjoyed themselves. Not the least of the reasons (other than not being in a cell) was the great lunch that Lisa and her helpers provided for them. This is an annual event, and we so appreciate Sheriff Hilton and his staff working with us every year to clean the library.

Also, this time of the year we are all working on our project to promote donations to assist homeless students in Rapides Parish schools. While we accept donations all year, in the three weeks before school starts, we work hard to make the public aware that they can bring gently used uniforms and other new clothing or school supplies to ANY library branch. After collection, we will route items over to Lynda Ellington, RPSB Homeless Liaison.

Here is what Linda wrote to us last year about our efforts: “The uniforms and school supplies you donated, by our estimation was about $3,500.00, but the actual worth in schools that were served with high homeless populations is priceless.”

Our drive to support homeless students was originally started by Branch Manager Brenda Manning, who has since retired. Pam Martin continues to be our liaison with the School Board. Working with community partners to help children succeed in school is certainly right in line with the overall goals of the Library.

THANK YOU for all that you are doing to make this project a success!

Quips and Quotes from around the Parish

In response to the Letters to the Editor: “I love my library! I deal with the sweetest ladies and if they don't have the book I want, they get it for me.....I download music from the website and ebooks on my computer. I am so sorry someone greatly misled this lady, I will never believe they "throw away books!" Keep up the good work!” —Cindy Burr, Rapides Parish Library Facebook Fan

The members of the Palestine United Methodist Church would like to thank Mariann Strange and the Robertson Branch of the Rapides Parish Library for supporting our Senior Health Fair on June 28 at the Ball Senior Center. Your support is very much appreciated by our Missions and Outreach Committee. We thank you so much for participating in this outreach event. This was our first Senior Fair/Expo and it was a great success. We are already discussing plans for another event in 2014! We hope that you will be able to participate once again and help the seniors in our area. —Sincerely, Rev. Jerry Crise, Pastor

The Lecompte Garden Club voted the Old Lecompte High School including the Johnson Branch “Learning Garden” as Civic Garden of the Month for July.
Health Tips no. 8 “Omega-3 Fatty Acids”

The website Helpguide.org tells us that omega-3 fatty acids are among the most important substances that we can get from food or dietary supplements. Research has shown that they can: prevent and reduce the symptoms of depression; protect against memory loss and dementia; reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke and cancer; ease arthritis, joint pain, and inflammatory skin conditions; and, support a healthy pregnancy. Omega-3 fatty acids in your diet can help you battle fatigue, sharpen your memory, and balance your mood. They can be helpful in the treatment of depression, ADHD and bipolar disorder.

The best forms of omega-3’s are called EPA and DHA. They are found in fatty fish, such as salmon, herring, mackerel, anchovies or sardines. If you’re a vegetarian or you don’t like fish, consider a fish oil supplement.

Look for the EPA or DHA levels on the label. If the bottle tells you that the capsules contain 1000 mg of fish oil, but the small print says that the EPA or DHA level is 300 mg, that means that you need about three capsules daily to get near the American Heart Association’s recommended dosage of 1000 mg per day. Keep in mind that your food choices and a multi-vitamin might also add to your omega-3 intake. Two to three servings of the right fish per week do the job as well.
Bouquets of Thanks

To: Rachael
From: Steve
For your initiative in getting our process of updating policies into better shape.

To: Linda
From: Steve
For handling yet another “people” issue with diplomacy and skill.

To Les:
From Steve:
For your work in getting the automatic door project moving forward.

Hineston Branch wants to take this opportunity to relay our gratitude to our Outreach Department. Whether we are in need of supplies for Summer Reading, or reading medals, you guys are a dream team! You are approachable, understanding, and efficient to the max!
From: Donna Crawford

To: Karla and Robert
From: Donna L.
Thanks for all you do to help our Summer Reading

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To: Bouquets of Thanks

Programs go so smoothly! I appreciate your efforts very much!

Bouquets to Candace for hosting the “As Young As You Feel Day” in Faith’s absence, and to Cynthia McGinnis for hosting the “Lego Club” meeting. Faith and I appreciate your willingness to help. From: Linda

Bouquets to Lisa Salard who is always willing to help whenever and wherever she can. She is truly our “Ambassador.” From: Linda

To: Rusty, for donating the vertical files from LSUA. We obtained some very good historical information to add to our vertical files. From: Linda

To: Les, James and Jason
From: Margie
I appreciate all your great ideas and then all the furniture moving to help me get an office area.

To: Janie, Roland, and Bill
From: Margie
I appreciate all that you did, and how swiftly you did it, to get my office up and running.

To: Jimmy and Laura-Ellen
From: Margie
Thank you for my phone extension (1103). It really helps.

To: Henry
From: Clara and Margie
Thank you for always making sure we have what we need!

A HUGE “Thank You” to Jan Jeffus and Jane Thurmond for all their extra work in the last few weeks. Also a great big “Thanks” to Tammy D. for all her help in the transition period to my new duties as Bookmobile manager. From: Londa

To: Joyce Hamilton & Jonathan Westbrook
From: Amanda Huffman
I want to thank both of you for your help typing Bib records for the items requested while Angela was on vacation. I really appreciate all you did to help me.

To: Candace, Linda, Lisa, and LaKeisha
volunteering to manage the LEGO Club meeting while I was on vacation. Your hard work put smiles on a lot of kids’ faces. Awesome Teamwork!

To: Brenda
From: Faith
I appreciate you stepping in to do storytime while I was out. I appreciate all the planning you did to make sure the children would have a wonderful time. Great Job!

To: Carolyn Coldwell, for her selection of new subs. She did an excellent job of hiring 5 ladies who have finished all of their training and has become a part of the RPL team. From: Mariann

To: Angela, Amanda and Richard, for the work they do every day to make sure our customers are able to get items from outside of our parish. We tend to forget that the thanks we receive at the branches are really thanks you three should be getting. From: Mariann

To: James
From: Laura-Ellen
Thank you so much for being responsible to keep the planters at the front of Main Library looking spiffy!

To: IT Staff
From: Laura-Ellen
Thank you so much for being so helpful to me personally as we have worked through “My PC is SLOW!” – “My mouse won’t work!” and “My keyboard won’t either” issues. I appreciate y’all so much!
The month of August celebrates vacationing in the Americas. Whether traveling in luxury or in primitive conditions, tourists are encouraged to explore South, Central and North America. Experiencing the Americas in a variety of ways unlocks new worlds for all travelers.

August is the time for you to begin to plan your next vacation adventure and your own American Adventures Month event.

From across the desk we see many customers checking out the travel guides for all the different areas and countries, planning their adventures for the summer. By the time this article is printed I will be traveling, not far, but in this country, to Chicago, IL, for my family reunion. This will also my first airplane adventure. I also know of co-worker traveling to Italy (I wish it were me), for the summer. Our customers come back excited with their many stories of their travels to other regions and countries by plane, train, motorcycle, car, etc. We heard about adventures of whitewater river rafting in Colorado, Disney’s theme parks in California and Florida, camping and hiking in the National Forests, tours in foreign countries and historic sites around the world.

This adventure month was founded by its spokesperson, American Adventurer Peter Kulkkula who truly celebrates all that the Americas offer. Peter’s motto, “I hope to see you on the byways, waterways, highways, and skyways of the Americas as you experience many great adventures.”

Brenda Harvey, Main Circulation
Libraries Make a Difference—Westside Regional

Tammy DiBartolo—Often when people think of a library they think of books, movies, and programs like the Summer Reading Program. Sometimes we take for granted just how important our jobs really are. Last night at Westside Regional Library, as I was preparing for an adult program with Chef William LeRoux from Diamond Grill, a boy who was about twelve years old came up to me with a flyer for the program. He pointed to it and said “Where is the Chef?” He had a very heavy accent and I could tell that he was struggling to find the words in English so that I could understand him. I asked him if he wanted to stay for the program and he said “yes.” He came in and sat down with a pencil and paper and paid strict attention during the entire presentation.

About midway through the program his father came in and decided to stay for the program, too. They sampled the food, asked questions and met others who were attending the program. As I was straightening up the room, the father came over to me and in very broken English said, “Thank you, for this. We moved here in April and my son came to a craft program here. Every time we come here he looks on the table for flyers for programs that he would like to attend. I feel safe letting him come here. You make us feel welcome.”

There is not much more that I can add to this. This pretty much says it all. We touch lives and what we do at the library makes a difference!


“Farming on the Farm” Angola Prison Farm Display at Westside Regional Library

Henry McCall, making deliveries at West Side Regional Library

There was a full house enjoying Harvey Rabbit at the McDonald Branch SRP, held at Harmony Baptist Church
**Johnson Branch “Artist Among Us”**

**Mary Mahoney**—Several years ago, Gary Steckler came to the Johnson Branch Library in search of titles on drawing and painting with watercolors. My predecessor, Mary Rabalais, introduced him to our wonderful collection. As a retired attorney, his interest had leaned toward the visual arts. However, it was the encouragement of a former colleague, the Honorable Appellate Judge John Saunders of the 3rd circuit, who compelled Mr. Steckler to either lecture at LSU or start painting himself. He chose the latter and the rest is history.

Gary Steckler’s paintings line the top book shelves of our fair Johnson Branch. His paintings have been showcased in several art galleries, restaurants, and gift shops across Louisiana. They are currently on exhibit at the Alexandria Museum of Art for the Annual Exhibition, “Artists Among Us”.

Mr. Steckler’s two daughters, Victoria and Anna, visited the Johnson Branch with their mother, Carol Steckler, in June. They proudly presented their amazing Art and History Projects to be displayed at our library. Anna Steckler researched the battles of the Pacific during World War II and placed Third in the Regionals. She then went on to the State Competition.

Victoria Steckler researched and displayed the colorful plantation life of Artist Clementine Hunter. She also went to the Regionals with her sister. Both young ladies attend Bayou Chicot Elementary in the 5th grade.

The Johnson Branch has been happy to share their creative gifts and talents with the Lecompte Community.

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![Gary Steckler’s paintings on display at the Alexandria Museum of Art for the Annual Exhibition, “Artists Among Us”.

Steckler’s art is on display at the Johnson Branch Library.

Victoria and Anna Steckler’s “Amazing Art and History” Projects on display at the Johnson Branch.
The HR Corner  Stacy Dubrock, Human Resources

DROP Participation in Parochial Retirement

“DROP is an option for those members who are eligible for normal retirement. The plan allows the pension benefit that is accrued at the time of entry into DROP to be calculated and to accumulate with the retirement system while the DROP participant continues to work, freezing the future retirement benefit at retirement. The pension benefit is calculated as if the member is actually retiring.”

Eligibility and Restrictions:
“A member who becomes a DROP participant ceases to be a member of the system and loses all rights of membership. No credit for retirement is earned during DROP.”

Here is an example:
If you are at 27 years and you enter drop for 3 years, you are actually “retiring” in the system at 27 years. Your monthly benefit will be calculated based on your earnings and deposits for 27 years and not 30. DROP allows PERS to hold your retirement checks for those 3 years that you are working and then send you a one-time check for those 3 years of checks that they held. The 3 years you work during DROP will be not counted in any way.

⇒ This will result in a smaller monthly retirement amount since it is based on the 27 years calculation and the fact that you forfeited earning additional credit during the DROP period. Any raises earned during those 3 DROP years will not be used in the calculations.

⇒ The only advantage of entering DROP is that one-time check that holds 3 years’ worth of benefits.

⇒ If you would like the benefit of a higher monthly payment and the payment to be based on the 30 year calculation, do not use the DROP option. If you are in need of a big one-time check then the DROP option may be for you.

⇒ You may convert any unused sick leave to retirement credit that will be used in your monthly calculations at the time you file paperwork for normal retirement or for entering DROP.

If you have a question that relates directly to you, please contact Stacy Dubrock at ext. 1005.

Publication Design 101
Rachael Hartman

When creating a publication, be it a newsletter, party invitation, a book, etc., consistency and repetition help tie all of the information together and provide a launching pad for the design.

⇒ I used consistency in my font choice throughout the Ripple, and between the last edition and this one. I kept certain elements the same, and kept the general order of the publication the same as last month’s.

⇒ This August edition of the Ripple has a summer theme. I used repetition with hot air balloons throughout the document to evoke feelings associated with summer. The bright colored and free-flying balloons represent fun, freedom, and adventure—Summer. Even the bouquets I chose were mini-hot air balloons.

Consistency and repetition bring unity and strength to a document. Remember these two important principals of design as you create your next RPL publication.
“One soon learns that so long as books are kept open then minds can never be closed.” —Ronald Reagan

“A library is not a luxury, but one of the necessities of life.”
—Henry Ward Beecher

“Librarians are the last defense between society and chaos.” —Sean McMullen

“I do things like get in a taxi and say, ‘The library, and step on it.’” —David Foster Wallace

“You dropped $150,000 on an education you could have got for $1.50 in late charges at the public library!”—Matt Damon as Will Hunting, in the movie Good Will Hunting

“The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who can’t read them.” —Mark Twain

“This is a library. Kids and adventures welcome. All others stay out.” —Dean Koontz, Cold Fire

“My best friend is a person who will give me a book I have not read.” —Abraham Lincoln

5 Tips to Save $$ This Summer

1. Turn off the air conditioning.
   This doesn’t mean you have to suffer through sweltering heat, but you should be aware of the weather so that you can maximize efficiency and save money by using it only when needed. For example, if it is going to be a cool night, turn off the air before heading to bed and open a few windows.

2. Cook outside. Using the stove or baking in the oven can create a lot of excess heat that has nowhere to go except in your house. Consider taking meal plans to the barbecue grill outside so that you can keep your cool inside.

3. Let your laundry dry outside. If you have the ability to hang up laundry outside, let the sun and warm summer breeze do the drying for you. Even if you can’t hang up clothes outside, try using your dryer on a lower heat setting or only partially drying your shirts and letting them air dry the rest of the way.

4. Replace your air conditioner filters. This can be easy to overlook, but a dirty filter can increase cooling costs. Dirty filters restrict the airflow and the efficiency of the air conditioner, which translates into more run time and higher cooling costs. Filters are cheap, so replace them regularly.

5. Plan ahead for future home and garden projects. As summer begins to wind down, it is a perfect time to be on the lookout for season ending sales. Landscape plants, tools, and other outdoor project materials tend to go on sale as people begin to look toward autumn and spending less time outside.

From About.com
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In light of the recent flurry of interest in what happens to the Library’s unwanted books: Wes Saunders reported July 25th that a large quantity of books that had been placed on Main’s free table showed up the very next day as a donation at Westside! Maybe someone thought that they’d get a better home. —Steve

Happy August Birthday!