

NEWS LIBRARY News

Vol. 19, No. 1/ Fall, 1996

NLN FEATURE

RESEARCH AT THE GOP CONVENTION

BY KRISTINE BERG

As soon as San Diego was officially chosen to be the site of the 1996 Republican National Convention, reporters from The San Diego Union-Tribune and related Copley News Service requested an on-site librarian. Finally, a little recognition of the newspaper librarians increasingly important role in reporting had come our way. We were happy for the opportunity to work in the midst of such an important event.

To avoid too much overtime and allow several of us to be a part of history, the decision was made to bring as many of our staff to the convention center as possible. A total of five librarians were able to work at least a couple hours during the day, while I was there every night for the sake of continuity. Our work station included a regular library PC (with full access to the Internet, Nexis, Dialog, etc.), a number of reference books, many of my notes and computer files, and very importantly, our own phone line, so we could easily contact our main library for requests that needed resources unavailable in our office.

Requests for research came in spurts, with large blocks of time when no on-site reporter needed library services. Thursday night, which we expected to be the busiest given the speeches by Bob Dole and Jack Kemp, was actually the slowest, leaving me with hours of down time. At other times, however, we felt deluged by the number of requests—sometimes five or six from one reporter—and rushed due to the tight deadlines.

Although many reporters and editors

requested library services in the five days we were at the center, the reporters we helped the most seemed to be in earshot of the research terminal. If I could overhear their conversations, I could turn to them and say, I can find that for you. Similarly, the reporters sitting on either side of our terminal could easily turn their computer screens to ask for spelling checks.

We had been told in advance that one of our primary jobs would be to work with one reporter who was fact-checking convention speeches. After months of second guessing what might be the most difficult political and economic questions that might come my way, I was pleasantly surprised when this task was made immensely easier by unnamed Democratic campaign workers who, anticipating Republican remarks, faxed responses to our reporter of any conflict they saw between Republican speakers comments and the actual facts. These faxes included sources (e.g., see Money Magazine, August 1996), making it easy to check some of the statistics and economics in question. Typical questions were: Did Bill Clinton really implement the largest tax increase in history? Does 40% of every dollar earned go to taxes? and Have interest rates jumped since Clinton vetoed the GOP balanced budget plan?

Other questions we were asked included: How is San Diego being covered in the national media? What percentage of Republican delegates are Asians? and What was San Diego's August weather like in the previous 10 (or 15 or 20) years?



Photo: Gerald McClard, The San Diego Union-Tribune
Robert Dole and his wife, Elizabeth after receiving the Republican Party nomination.

On balance, we were fairly pleased with the library's role at the convention. It was interesting to work more closely with the reporters, and, despite some small continuity problems in regards to transportation, security checks, etc., I'm glad several of my colleagues were able to visit the convention site. During the convention, and many times since, we have been told by reporters and editors how appreciative they were to have a librarian close by.

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THE ASIDE BAR



CATHERINE KITCHELL

I made plans (and paid for the plane tickets) to go to Las Vegas for a few days before I realized when the deadline for my first solo News Library News would be. So if this issue is a little late I guess it fits the new "party girl" image of librarians.

Huh? What "party girl" image of librarians you are perhaps thinking? Well you need to get hip here. Fox premiered a new TV show called "Party Girl" based on the independent movie of the same name. While I can't recommend the show as brilliant theater, it is cute (Tom Shales of The Washington Post loved it) and it does radically change the image of the librarian.

Mary (Christine Taylor) is our heroine. She's more than a little ditzy - she stores perfume bottles in the refrigerator (there is no food in

there) and uses the lettuce dryer to dry her gloves (actually not a bad use for the thing). She's cute and perky though and wants to make sure everyone is having a good time. She hits a rough spot and her godmother (Swoosie Kurtz), head librarian at a branch of New York Public Library, refuses to bail her out again. So Mary needs a job.

Her godmother makes it clear she can not be a librarian. Because to be a librarian you need to be a professional and have a Masters in Library Science. She actually says this. And also states that to be even a library clerk you "need to have some skills." Mary convinces her that she has some skills but pretty thoroughly botches her attempts to refile books and is fired. Fortunately, Mary's roommate

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News Library News Fall, 1996 Vol. 19, No. 1

News Library News (ISSN 1047-417X) is the bulletin of the News Division of the Special Libraries Association. SLA Headquarters address is: SLA, 1700 Eighteenth St. N.W., Washington, DC 20009. The phone number is: 202-234-4700. News Library News is published four times a year by the division. Reproduction in whole or part without permission is prohibited.

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NOTES FROM THE CHAIR



BY TERESA LEONARD

Knowing we're all so busy with more than we can do, I have felt hesitant about asking people to add one more thing to their plates: a leadership role in the division.

I shouldn't have worried.

Everyone that I've contacted to work on committees has joyfully accepted the task and many are bubbling over with ideas about how to do the job.

Of course, the same thing happened last year as we were putting together the Boston conference. People had ideas about programs, they volunteered to present, and whenever I put out a call for volunteers, my mailbox would be full the very next day.

It looks like an exciting year ahead for the division. Barbara Hijek has already gotten things underway collecting email address updates for the membership directory. And she's looking into how we can keep this information online so that no one has to suffer the isolation of a changed email address.

Technology is the place to be, and as Linda Chapman mentioned at our business meeting, the subgroups of the Automation/Technology committee welcome input from the membership on what topics to address. The committee consists of six special interest groups: CAR, CD-ROM, digital imaging, text archiving, keywords, and Internet. Some have already made some good headway. The Keywords SIG has proposed a keyword list for us to test with our emerging digital photo archives, and the CAR SIG is discussing professional standards for doing and teaching computer-assisted journalism.

Awards

During the past few years, the news division has been well represented in Association awards. Nomination for awards can be made by groups or by individuals. Give some consideration to the award descriptions and to the contributions of division members.

Several news division members have been SLA Fellows. Qualifications for this honor are leadership in the field of special librarianship and outstanding contributions and expected future service to the association.

The SLA Hall of Fame award is given to a member at or near the end of an active professional career and celebrates an extended and sustained period of distinguished service to the association in all spheres.

The John Cotton Dana Award recognizes a member for exceptional service to special

librarianship, and the President's Award recognizes notable contributions during the past year.

In addition to the traditional association awards, there are a few that seem to be tailor-made for news librarians. The Information Today Award for Innovations in Technology is presented for innovative uses and application of technology in a special library setting. The Public Relations Achievement Award recognizes work in promoting the profession, the chapter or division, and the library.

Finally, the SLA Media Award goes to a journalist who produces outstanding coverage of the special libraries profession. It is intended to encourage journalists to develop stories about special libraries and the information professionals who manage them.

Nominations for all awards should be submitted by December 6.

"In addition to the traditional association awards, there are a few that seem to be tailor-made for news librarians."

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The New York Times

L E A D I N G T H E W A Y



PEOPLE

By THERESA KIELY

First Edition

Christine V. Baird published her first newspaper story in the Sunday Star-Ledger on August 4, 1996, "Straight To The Point." Baird wrote about the history and production of pencils in New Jersey.

Last year Sacramento Bee researcher **Rebecca Boyd** collaborated with a reporter Mareva Brown on "Beyond Death Row," a special project following up condemned inmates who were paroled during the 1970s hiatus of capital punishment. Boyd spent countless hours tracking down the former convicts and their families. Now the series has won the Gold Medallion Award presented by The State Bar of California.

Olympic Effort

Congratulations to chief librarian **Linda Ronan** and research librarian **Joy Birdsong** at Sports Illustrated. Their central role in preparing for the Olympics was noted in the July 22, 1996 Olympic Preview Issue of Sports Illustrated. The accompanying graphic, at left, by Nigel Holmes nicely illustrates their work.

Promotions and Changes

In August 1996, **Mary Ann Skinner** was promoted to an Assistant Managing Editor. She is the Director of Information and Technology for Newsday, the sixth largest metropolitan newspaper in the United States.

Skinner graduated from Columbia University with a Master's Degree in Library Science in 1973. She was hired by Newsday as a library technician in February 1974. In rapid succession she was promoted to researcher, librarian, and library manager. In 1985, she completed the

conversion of Newsday's clip library to an electronic text library. In July 1986, she was promoted to Library Director and in 1992 she became manager of the editorial department's Electronic Systems Group.

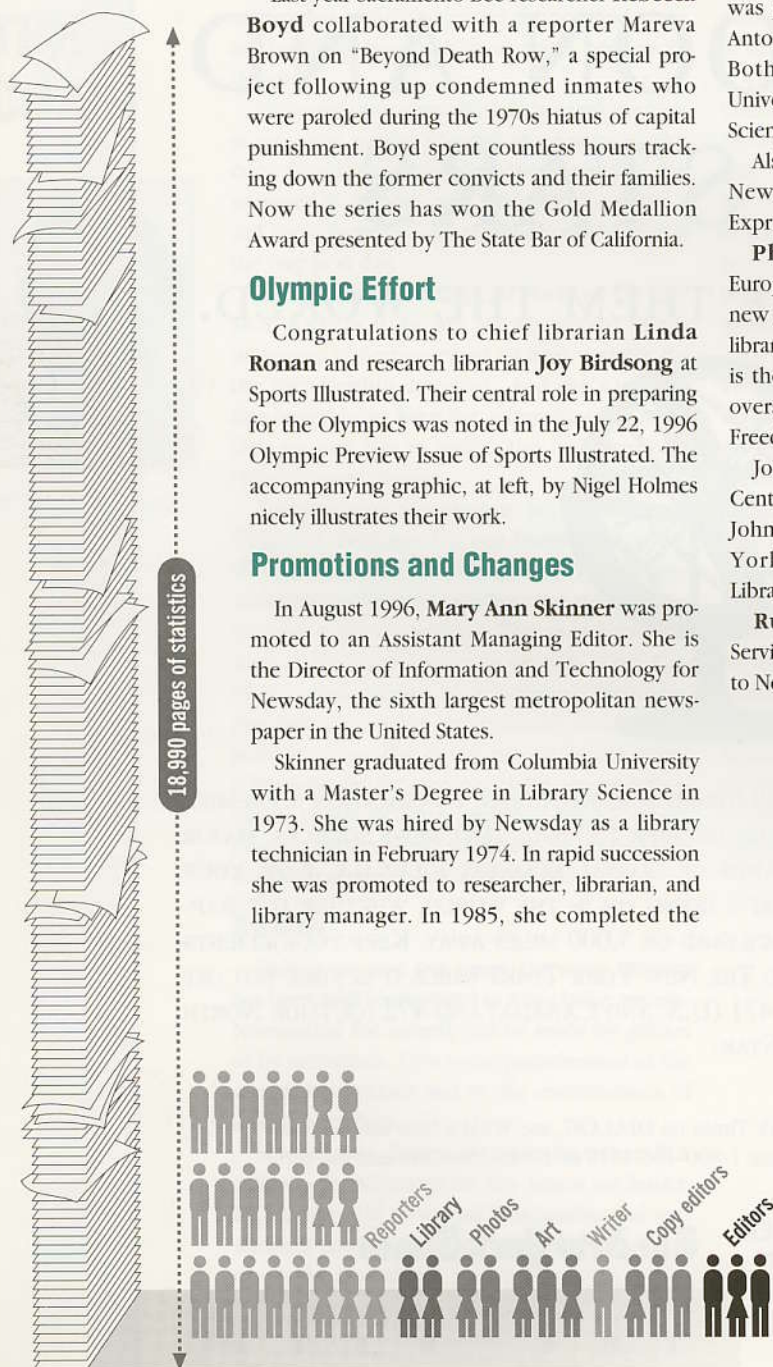
Jennifer Small was promoted to Assistant Editor, Information Services and **Jalyn Mask** was promoted to News Researcher at the San Antonio Express-News in San Antonio, Texas. Both Small and Mask are graduates of the University of Texas at Austin, School of Library Science.

Also, **Kelly Guckian** has been promoted to News Researcher/Photos at the San Antonio Express-News.

Phyllis Lyons is the new Manager of European Programs at the Freedom Forum. Her new duties include supervising the international libraries for the Freedom Forum. Nancy Stewart is the new Manager of Library Operations and oversees daily operations of the library at the Freedom Forum in Arlington, VA.

Joining the staff of the ABC News Research Center in Washington DC is **John Dittmann**. John comes to ABC from NBC News in New York where he was a News Reference Librarian/Researcher.

Ruth Tenenbaum, Supervisor, Research Services for ABC News in New York is moving to Newsweek.



Artwork courtesy of Nigel Holmes for Sports Illustrated.



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IN THE BIG TENT

BY JOHN W. BECKHAM

My first 1996 convention assignment was to wait for deliveries and electricians at the Los Angeles Times' 3,000 square-foot work space the week before the convention. The print media worked out of five giant tents that had been set up in the United Center's parking lots. The tents were freezing and so windy that nothing could be left unless it was taped down. The "bring sweaters" message I sent to L.A. and D.C. surprised many after Chicago's 1995 heatwave killed hundreds.

Then I installed a telecommunications program and Nexis on my PC. It was bring your own software—the Lexis homepage does work—and lists of access numbers.

Then I tested the fax machines, beepers and cellular phones. The main phone rang on my desk and I would transfer calls to reporters and editors—meaning I had to learn over 40 names and faces. Even with extensions posted on their PCs it was amusing since the reporters wandered around the work space all the time. I usually waved and pointed them to the nearest phone.

The questions were diverse. "When did John Belushi die?" was not in any of my political resources. "This is how you spell Chelsea, right?" An amazed photographer gasped: "This map of Chicago doesn't have Indiana! Don't we have a map that has Indiana?" (Turn it over, and "Voila," Indiana!)

The tougher questions included, "When was the last time Chicago had a Republican mayor? When was the last time a Republican carried Chicago in a presidential election?" Not in my Chicago almanac, and books were arranged by county more often than not (and Cook County outside of Chicago proper voted differently). The Chicago Public Library's municipal reference desk came to the rescue—even they had to check back year by year.

Then the local requests, "Where is the nearest welfare office?" I called public aid, "Hi, I am out here at the United Center, where is the nearest welfare office?" I handed him the address and a map. "Can I walk there? Is it safe?" I assured him it was today, but after the convention he should take a cab and keep the meter running.

This speech. That speech. Many speeches were available at a few locations in the media pavilions.

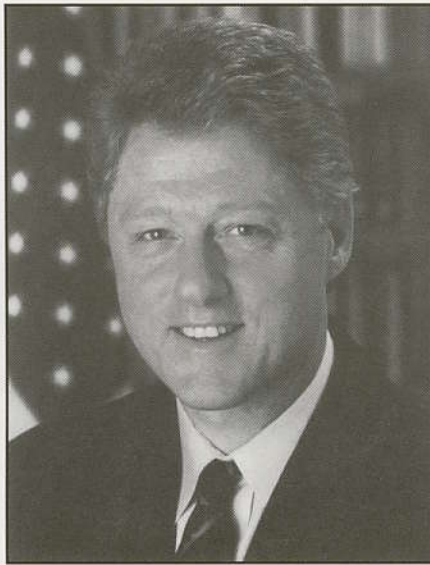
As were lists of the delegates—with correct spellings. A key each day was the National Journal Convention Daily that had a schedule of the day's big events, as well as maps of the tents and lists of key phone numbers.

Suddenly after days of no news tedium a story. Sex, prostitution, gossip, Clinton confidants. First in the New York Post—I sent an intern to get originals. A quick read sourced the story as the Star—a part of the National Enquirer—

another number on my Rolodex. They faxed the upcoming Dick Morris story and I copied and stapled it to the New York Post story with a few Morris profiles. Several read it during Clinton's acceptance speech.

Then it was over. I deleted all the files I had installed on the PC and rode the last van back. The 8:30 a.m. to midnight days were over.

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President Bill Clinton, 1996 Democratic Presidential Candidate

SAN DIEGO BOUND

BY MALOY MOORE

On Friday, August 9th, I drove the 134 miles from Los Angeles to San Diego—site of the 1996 Republican Convention. I went to San Diego before the convention was scheduled to begin to help out with what would be that weekend's story—the announcement of Bob Dole's running mate.

Prior to leaving Los Angeles I had all the programs from my computer copied to a computer that was shipped to the Marriott Hotel, where we set-up our newsroom.

I had put together brief demographic profiles of San Diego and the United States. These profiles included racial breakdowns, age distribution, and figures for median household and family income. I also gathered much of the data beforehand for the various graphics we ran throughout the week—including the 'State of the Nation' graphic which ran on Wednesday, August 14th.

I brought with me biographical background and cite lists for all the potential candidates. From James Baker to Carroll Campbell; from Connie Mack to Jack Kemp, I was ready to pull together an excellent packet on Dole's vice presidential candidate. I also brought 'The Almanac of American Politics 1996,' the 'National Party Conventions 1831-1992,' the 'Guide to the 1996 Presidential Election,' the 'Vote Smart Web Yellow Pages,' and 'The Reporter's Source Book.'

Besides the print sources, I had access to Lexis/Nexis, DowJones, Knight-Ridder, DataTimes, Claritas (demographics), TimesOnline (the database for Los Angeles Times stories), a database of presidential candidate speeches (an internal database which I maintain), and the Los Angeles Times Editorial Library's web page. I had a phone at my work station and a beeper on my belt. I was definitely wired and ready to go.

At each stage of the convention, from Jack Kemp's announcement to the speeches of Nancy Reagan, Susan Molinari, and Elizabeth Dole; to those whose presence was notably absent,

Continued on next page

PLANNING FOR THE SCRIPTED EVENT

BY JOHN JANSSON

At The Chicago Tribune it turned out that the demand for support from the Information Center was greater in the weeks before the conventions were held rather than during the conventions.

Planning began a full year earlier, when the budget was set up. The editors looked at clips from the 1968 Democratic National Convention plus clips and printouts of our coverage of other national political conventions. One editor printed out full pages from microfilm from '68, mainly to figure out how we would provide better coverage this time.

At least six months before the conventions began:

1. The people in the new electronic publishing group got our clips and photos from the 1968 Convention and posted them.

2. We set up a sharing agreement with the San Diego Union-Tribune. Once every week or two we faxed copies of our preconvention stories to each other. As the convention time neared, we increased the frequency of transmissions.

The managers on both the photo and research side set up tight policies regarding the time photos or clips could be checked out. Basically, the rule was 24 hours. If they went to any area, such as the Magazine, that is not staffed (or worse, locked up) on the weekend, we arranged to make sure we had adequate access to the material.

About a week before the Democrats arrived we made 50 copies of selected pages from the Tribune of the 1968 convention coverage and 100 copies of a set of clips from the same period. Our reporters gobbled them up, but to my surprise, few outside journalists asked for them.

During both convention weeks, the researchers worked later shifts so we had stronger coverage from 5 to 11 p.m. Each researcher was alerted that he/she would be asked to work an extra hour for O.T. or comp time if needed. As it turned out, there was not great demand in the evening, so almost no one worked the extra hour. During the Democratic convention, we adjusted the work schedules back to match the actual demand for information.

I did not propose sending researchers to either convention site since it had been scripted so completely in advance, right down to the spontaneous demonstrators. I felt the researchers would be more effective in the office, just a phone call away. Judging from comments I heard I would probably suggest the same procedure next time.

Next time we will probably adjust our hours later, but only somewhat. For an in-town convention, we probably will continue to have strong coverage until nearly midnight, mainly for unexpected requests.



Vice President Al Gore, 1996 Democratic Vice Presidential Candidate

John Jansson is Editor, Information Services at the Chicago Tribune. He can be reached on e-mail at Jansson435@aol.com

SAN DIEGO BOUND

Continued from previous page

Newt Gingrich, Pat Buchanan, and Pete Wilson; to Bob Dole's acceptance speech, I was called upon to answer a wide range of questions.

- * What is the date of birth for Assemblyman Curt Pringle?

- * How many members of the media went to the 1976 Republican convention?

- * Find stories about Jack Kemp being an 'ideas' man.

- * What was the final vote on Prop. 187?

- * What are Jack Kemp's positions on English only, juvenile crime, and DC statehood?

- * How many delegates did Buchanan have in 1992? And what was his influence at the 1992

convention?

- * Have any other vice presidential candidates been from Buffalo?

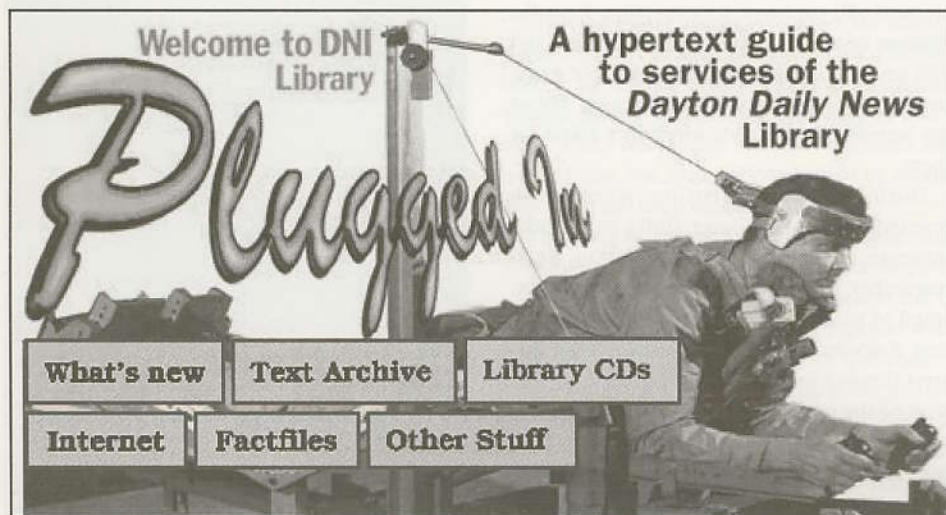
The nature of the questions and the volume of requests required that I call upon my colleagues in Los Angeles for assistance. I was in San Diego to answer reporter's questions and to be a promoter for the library by making sure that their questions were answered thoroughly and promptly. This was an arrangement that benefited the library, the writers, and myself.

I learned from being in San Diego, where the Editorial Library established a mobile library, that I was both librarian and facilitator. My role was to make sure that the reporters got the

information they needed to write their stories. My presence was a reminder to reporters and editors of the integral relationship the library has in the production of the newspaper.

Maloy Moore is a Senior Librarian for the Los Angeles Times. E-mail for Maloy can be sent to Maloy.Moore@latimes.com

WEBBING THE NEWSROOM



BY MICHAEL JESSE

It just might be that the most useful thing news librarians can do with World Wide Web technology is stay off the Web. Sure, it's cool to have your own websites accessible around the world, but your primary clients are still just down the hall—in the newsroom.

And it so happens that the two primary tools used in websites—HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) and Netscape-style web browsers—are also ideal for use on local area networks like those now in use at many newspapers.

If your newspaper has moved from the old mainframe-based front ends to a Macintosh or PC network, you might think about setting up a library-newsroom "intranet."

What is an intranet? It is very much like a website, but it isn't on the Internet; it lives in your local network and is therefore accessible only in-house. Each reporter's Mac or PC has a copy of Netscape the default homepage is set the library's introductory screen.

Internet hotlists and library manuals

So what would you do with an intranet? One of the most popular uses of library-based newsroom intranets is in maintaining lists of recommended websites.

Another ideal topic is the stuff you normally put on paper "cheatsheets." Now, instead of putting instructional material on paper you can put them on your intranet. The reporter can have an active library search open in one window,

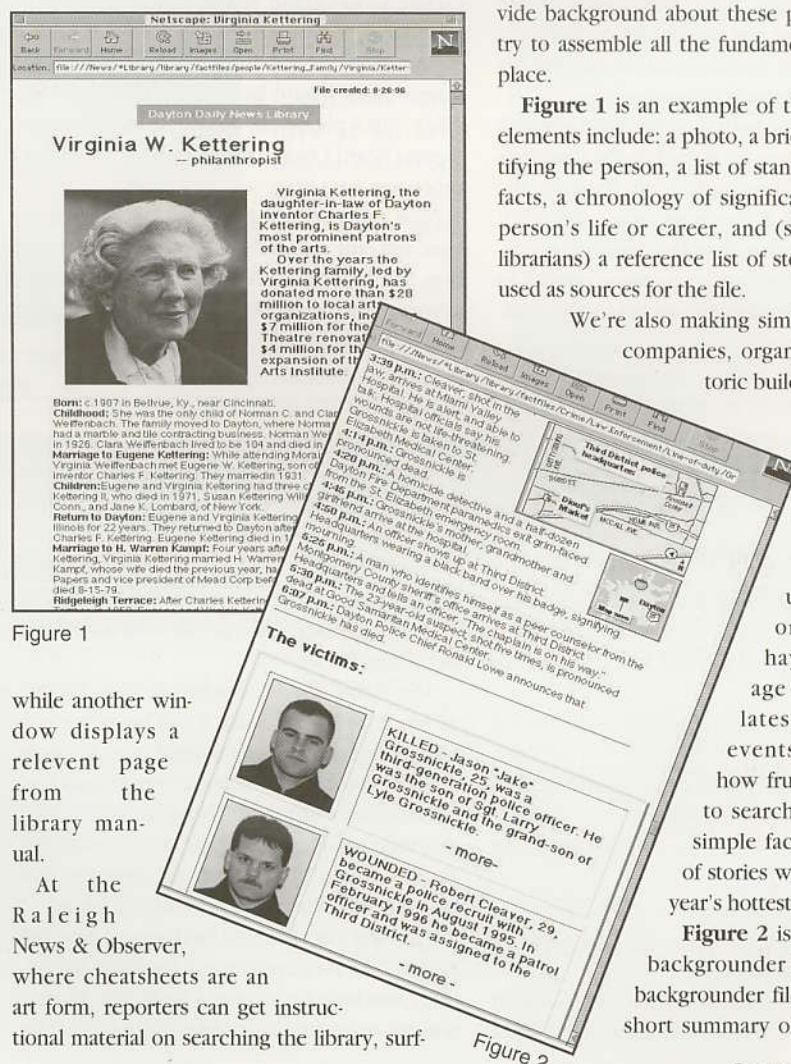


Figure 1

while another window displays a relevant page from the library manual.

At the Raleigh News & Observer, where cheatsheets are an art form, reporters can get instructional material on searching the library, surf-

ing the Internet, or on linking to any of several independent databases which the Nando library maintains.

A news library encyclopedia

At the Dayton Daily News Library we're taking a somewhat different approach. Although we also have lists of websites and instructional pages on how to use our library system, we're putting most of our efforts into what can best be compared to an electronic encyclopedia.

Working from the motherlode of raw material which is the full archive, we pull out facts, dates, definitions and chronologies on those topics which we consider the most important, and we reassemble them into encyclopedia-style entries, accompanied by images, in a web-style hypertext environment.

One of the most common file types is the bio dossier. Every community has its "newsmakers" who are in the paper on a regular basis. Since we know we will be asked again and again to provide background about these public figures we try to assemble all the fundamental facts in one place.

Figure 1 is an example of this. The standard elements include: a photo, a brief statement identifying the person, a list of standard biographical facts, a chronology of significant events in the person's life or career, and (since we're good librarians) a reference list of stories which were used as sources for the file.

We're also making similar files on local companies, organizations and historic buildings.

Another file type is the "news event back-grounder" file.

This is especially useful in bringing order to the haystack of coverage which accumulates in OJ-sized events. We all know how frustrating it can be to search for a seemingly simple fact amid hundreds of stories written about LAST year's hottest news event.

Figure 2 is an example of a backgrounder file. In a typical backgrounder file we start with a short summary of what the event

Figure 2

Continued on next page

WEBBING THE NEWSROOM

Continued from previous page

was all about, then follow with more detail in the form of a chronology and a list of the key people involved.

Of course, the idea of the library assembling fact files is not a new idea. Probably a lot of news libraries do this in one form or another. I remember Barb Hoffman of the Indianapolis Star making extensive backgrounder files on ATEX a decade ago.

But HTML and Netscape provide a level of functionality which far exceeds anything we could do in those days. Because we're using hypertext, we can link files together when context warrants. And when we list sources at the bottom of a file, we can link each reference to the complete story it represents.

You can even build a library search statement into a link, so that a user reading a bio file can click on link which says "click here for the most recent stories on this subject" and thereby invoke a search on your library archive. At the Sacramento Bee, Pete Basofin has cooked up a

way (using software called Cold Fusion) to make it easy to search statistical databases from his intranet pages.

At Dayton, the long-term plan is to build up a multi-media electronic encyclopedia (including QuickTime video clips from our sister TV station), compiled by librarians and based largely on the content of our published paper. It is intended to be a companion to the current electronic library and to compensate for the cumbersome nature of the full archive.

And the Internet? I suppose we'll be there too eventually, when our depth of content is sufficient and when transacting business on the web

NEWS DIVISION HAS AN OFFICIAL WEBMASTER

Carolyn Edds of the Spartanburg, SC Herald-Journal has become the first official Webmaster for the News Division. She takes over from our first web-builder, Pete Basofin, who was elected to be Director of Publications.

One of her first duties has been to put up handouts and other material from the speakers at the Boston conference on the Division website. She's done this by linking the conference schedule to the related material. Check out the website for lots of valuable info. If you haven't already bookmarked it, the address is: <http://www4.nando.net/prof/poynter/nd/ndmenu.html>

is a little more ironed out. In the meantime, we're incubating on our intranet.

Michael Jesse is Library Director at the Dayton Daily News. You can reach him by e-mail at michael_jesse@dni.com

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THOSE WHO CAN, STILL CAN TEACH

BY BRUCE ROSENSTEIN

George Bernard Shaw said: "He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches." Whatever you may think of these sentiments, I discovered you can be a practitioner and teacher at the same time. But only if you're prepared to invest the time, effort and dedication.

My first formal teaching experience came last summer, as an adjunct professor at my alma mater, The Catholic University of America School of Library and Information Science. The course: LSC #818, The Special Library/Information Center.

One of the most rewarding aspects of teaching was the transformation of 25 names on a sheet of paper (the class list I was given a week before the course started), to real people I would get to know over six weeks. (This was an intensive summer course with two classes a week; three hours 10 minutes per session.)

Most had library experience and had completed at least half their courses; about a third were nearly finished. Some were already working in special libraries, including four at area news libraries (three at The Washington Post and one at The Sun, in Baltimore).

Each class was a combination of lecture and discussion. I encouraged class participation, but didn't grade on it. Some of the people who received the highest grades barely said a word during class.

Themes running throughout the course included people/professional skills, downsizing, the virtual library, marketing, creativity, communications, customer service, ethics and entrepreneurship.

Inevitably, management had to be a crucial component of the course. Besides readings from the library literature, I assigned articles from The Financial Times, Fortune and Harvard Business Review.

And early on I announced that management guru Peter Drucker was to be the "unofficial patron saint" of the course. I only assigned one Drucker reading (a Wall Street Journal article),

but referred to him often.

Besides mid-term and final exams, half their grade was determined by a site visit project. They were assigned to pick a special library, extensively interview at least one person on the staff, and write a detailed, 10-12 page report, including a bibliography specific to the subject matter of the library.

This led to some wonderful original research. The students reported on a variety of special libraries, including The U.S. State Department, National Zoological Park Branch Library, the Urban Institute, The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, The National Soft Drink Association and the United States Marine Band Library.

News libraries weren't left out: two projects covered separate libraries within the National Geographic Society, one reported on the photo library at U.S. News & World Report, and others did National Public Radio and the Washington bureau of The New York Times.

The final component of the project was a mandatory, but ungraded five-minute presentation. I wanted to give them experience doing presentations, but without the pressure of grading. They were strictly held to the time allowed, on the theory they wouldn't be allowed to exceed the time limit in the 'real world'.

About midway through the course, USA TODAY foreign correspondent Jack Kelley made a guest appearance, representing the library patron with extreme needs. He brought artifacts from his war reporting in the Middle East and Africa, and told the class that when he was calling our library from remote war sites, he didn't have time to wait around for answers. The class was transfixed, and bombarded him with questions.

For the session before the final exam, we met for the first half of class at USA TODAY. Library Director Barbara Maxwell spoke to the class and answered questions, followed by a ses-

sion with several patrons from both the editorial and business sides of the company. The students were given a tour of the library and newsrooms, and an inside look at our in-house databases.

We then walked across the street to The Freedom Forum, where with the help of librarians Nancy Stewart and Phyllis Lyons, we held a Special Library Symposium. Participating were eleven local librarians, including Melinda Carlson of ABC News, Michael Gray of the Voice of America, Karen Mark of the National Health Care Association, John Latham of the Special Libraries Association and Thomas Mann of the Library of Congress.

If you're considering adjunct teaching, make sure you have the support of your organization. And be prepared to put in lots of time before the course starts preparing a syllabus, taking care of bureaucratic matters with the school, writing lecture notes, etc. You will need

"One of the most rewarding aspects of teaching was the transformation of 25 names on a sheet of paper..."

to be available to answer student questions outside of class time, even if it's only by e-mail or telephone. Grading papers and exams is time consuming.

Books aimed at new teachers were helpful to me, including Gilbert Highet's classic *The Art of Teaching* (Vintage Books, 1950), and *The Professor Business* by Barbara J. Flood and Joy K. Moll (Learned Information, Inc., 1990), which is exclusively written for new and adjunct professors.

Perhaps the biggest payoff is that becoming a good teacher will help you become a better librarian.

Bruce Rosenstein is a reference librarian at USA TODAY. He can be reached by e-mail at brosenst@usatpoc.gannett.com

AWARDS COMMITTEE SEEKING NOMINATIONS

The News Division Awards Committee is seeking nominations for Division awards. Committee members are Charlie Campo, chair; Linda Henderson, Elizabeth Haworth, Diane Logsdon and Margaret Neu.

You may nominate in as few or as many categories as you wish, but all submissions must be accompanied by supporting documentation. Deadline for submission is January 15, 1997.

Division awards are:

The Joseph F. Kwapil Award, which is given for major achievement in the field of news librarianship and for outstanding service to the News Division. It is given to a member who has actively participated in the division's programs

and projects for a continuous period of ten years or more.

The Agnes Henebry Roll of Honor, which is given to a member or former member for service to the Division and for participation in Division programs and projects.

The Certificate of Appreciation is given periodically to an individual or institution for outstanding contribution in the field of information science and/or news librarianship.

Please mail your nominations to Charlie Campo, Bangor Daily News Library, P.O. Box 1329, Bangor, ME 04402-1329, fax to (207) 990-8160, or e-mail to banglib1@aol.com

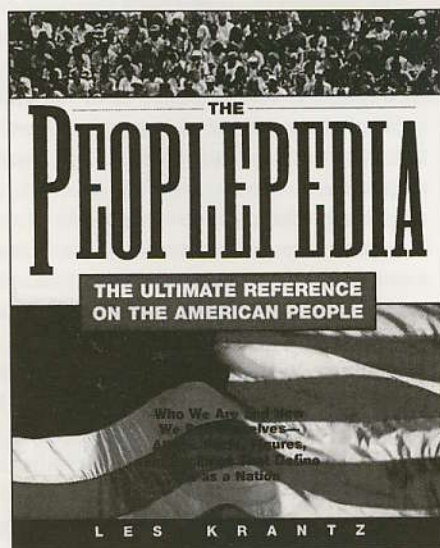
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PLAY ON WORDS: AUKML STYLE

United Kingdom Media Librarians Meeting Durham, England July 5-7, 1996

BY BARBARA SEMONCHE

THE CASTING CALL

The e-mail message came to me in mid-May from Judith Dunn, Editorial Services Manager, News International Newspapers in London and 1996 chair of the Association of United Kingdom Media Librarians (AUKML). She needed someone to fill in for Nora Paul as a speaker at the AUKML's annual conference in early July. Nora couldn't make it and regrettably neither could M.J. Crowley nor Kurt Foss well known among News Division members and most recently speakers for the News Division's CE seminar in Boston. M.J. was moving her household that weekend and Kurt had other engagements. Was I free to travel to Durham, England? In July?

Ordinarily, being third or fourth choice is not all that appealing, but being considered in the same company as these particular choices, the cream of the high-tech crop in our profession, I didn't think twice. I accepted.

THE PRODUCERS

Judging by the amount of time, talent, and energy required to produce our News Division's annual conference programs, I was eager to see how our UK cousins handled the challenge. To say that I was highly impressed is an understatement. And the Brits, Scots, Irish and Welsh do enjoy skillful understatements. Of course, a bit of exaggeration and humor does enhance the telling of the story as I came to appreciate in short order. The members and leaders of AUKML take their work, but not themselves, seriously. They knew how to have fun and get the job done.

For this conference, AUKML's tenth anniversary, the program "producers" were Mary Batten, library researcher for the Financial Times and Peter Chapman, librarian with the North of England Newspapers. They expertly gathered key players, selected the best venue, garnered generous backers and kept the pace lively, the wit sharp and the timing impeccable.

THE SCRIPT

My role called for me to portray the realities of computer-assisted research in media libraries. From the US perspective. The UK actor for this role was Annabel Heighton-Colley reporter/researcher with BBC's Panorama.

The BBC! Great Scott!! I really would have to get my act together.

My script was written in HTML so I could use it on my web site as a teleprompter in case I forgot my lines. Thus ably supported by the Wide World Web and a computer-assisted presentation program, Astound, I was ready for my debut.

From previously published AUKML conference scripts I learned about the ongoing members' interest in the impact of technology on their roles as media librarians. Where can they learn more about what is available? How can this new hardware and software be evaluated properly? Who is using these new tools in newspapers and broadcast organizations? What are the ethics of selling information? What can the Internet and the World Wide Web really offer? Is outsourcing of library services a threat or a challenge? Can we control our own career development? What vendors will give us "hands on" experience and training with new technology?

Hmmmm, not so different from our News Division's concerns.

THE BACKERS

It was FT Profile who sponsored the Sunday morning session for which I was invited to speak. The program was sponsored in memory of former FT Profile representative, Kevin Connolly, who was a long-time friend and supporter of AUKML members and programs. I learned that Mr. Connolly was a gentleman with a sense of humor, a sense of direction, and a sense of balance. All three traits happily enhanced his warm and generous relationships with his colleagues, media librarians in the UK.

Other AUKML conference backers included:

Cascade Systems Ltd.

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Nexis/Lexis

Televisual Data

THE PLAYERS

The leading role belonged to veteran AUKML speaker, Allan Prosser, Director & Editor, Third Wave Publishing Ltd. As keynoter he addressed the directions for librarians in multimedia companies.

Next on stage was Alan Gibson, Managing Director of Televisual Data Ltd, who was provocative with a positive view of outsourcing tasks in media libraries. He spoke convincingly of executives' need to preserve the intellectual assets of their media businesses while avoiding decision gridlock. Further, he suggested convincingly, that media librarians can either learn to manage outsourcing in their departments or be prepared to have it done for them.

Following the business side of media was Fiona Boyde, deputy librarian with The Scotsman Publications Ltd who came prepared to discuss developing a career in news librarianship.

Sylvia P. Webb, independent consultant, led a lively session on news library career development. She was witty and engaging. The audience responded enthusiastically. She touched the imagination of all of the delegates. We needed that!

The program continued with the delightfully broad Scottish accent of Ian Watson, assistant IT Manager Information Services Caledonian Newspapers. Ian launched into his sharp-humored description of "Hanging on to the Coat-Tails: Or the Librarian in the Rapidly Changing Organization."

Audience participation in the form of questions put to the speakers was rousing and created a strong thirst for "tea." Properly fortified, speakers and audience hung out in the vendors' suite getting "hands on" experience.

Returning to the program were Sarah Adair, one of AUKML's founders, and Judith Dunn. In a reflective yet celebratory mood, the two leaders recapped AUKML's history and invited the delegates to participate in planning its future.

Continued on next page

PLAY ON WORDS: AUKML STYLE

Continued from previous page

Imagine my reaction when the delegates turned to the question of "What do we (should we) call ourselves?" During the thoughtful but strongly debated issue, one of the delegates turned to me in the back of the room and inquired, "What do the American media librarians think about this issue."

I responded recapping the News Division's bumpy ride from Newspaper Division to News Division and then onto the more colorful descriptions of news librarians as: "cybrarians," "hired guns on the information frontier," "attack librarians (political campaign opposition research)," "mad max(ine)s charging onto the 21st century information highway scooping up factoids to arm the word warriors," and then on to the more generally respected job titles of "news researchers" or "information managers/editors." I reassured them that, indeed, many of us still referred to ourselves as "librarians," but that while our job titles might remain the same, our job descriptions were changing rapidly now and will do so even more in the future.

On that note, the players exited, joined in a walking tour of historic Durham Cathedral and then reconvened with the delegates in the hotel bar. Restored to their earlier vigor and suitably costumed in gala finery, the participants gathered for a champagne reception and banquet. Perhaps a bit more subdued than the "raucous caucus" tone of News Division banquets, but nonetheless entertaining. The occasion was reminiscent of the early days of the Division. It was an especially enjoyable feeling.

THE STAGE

Rooms and facilities at the Royal County Hotel in Durham, England were at once comfortable and charming. Network access to online sources, especially Netscape, was difficult, but then it usually is in hotels. Most speakers came equipped with their own laptops and computer software so the show did go on. Peter Chapman arranged for a projector to be available which offered excellent views of our computer screens.

THE PERFORMANCE

Co-starring in the Sunday morning performance was BBC Panorama's Annabel Colley. Her

presentation was titled, "Computer-Assisted Research: The View from the UK." Annabel's practical guide, containing links to vital web sites in the UK, was enlivened by her bright delivery and enhanced even further with real-life examples of her deadline research success stories. Annabel's handouts provided the core links in AUKML's post-conference web site.

As the last speaker, I became, by default, the "footnoter." Coming at the end of the program, I thought a little theatrical-type entertainment might be in order.

So, I began my presentation, "Computer-Assisted Research in Media Libraries: The View from the United States," with a scene from Michael Frayn's early 1980s play about a British newspaper library, "Alphabetical Order." The contrast just might be provocative and appealing, I thought.

Conspiring the previous evening with Justin Arundale, senior lecturer at the School of Information Management in Brighton, to play one of the two characters in the scene, I was understandably uneasy about how it would come off.

Not to worry. The audience roared its approval of Justin, playing the role of "John," a thirtyish, rumped, mannered reporter with the accent and style of New College and All Souls whose connection with the world and people around him seems intermittent and haphazard. My lines, as "Leslie, the neophyte librarian," were limited to two and as such served merely as a foil to Justin's brilliant performance.

A full description of the scene is available as part of my entire presentation at the following URL: <http://sunsite.unc.edu/journalism/aukml.html>

Gathering myself together after such an uproarious beginning was not easy, but I turned my husband's IBM Think Pad (yes, Jack made the trip with me, thank goodness!) and continued with the presentation.

I covered the origins of CAR, examples of CAR reporting from courtrooms (Barlett and Steele's 1972 legendary court study in Philadelphia) to hog pens (Pat Stith and Joby Warrick in collaboration with The News & Observers' researchers, especially Brooke Cain, in the 1996 Pulitzer Prize winning series on Boss Hog in North Carolina). I continued with the concept of CAR, the First

Amendment, press freedoms, public records access (and challenges!), DeFleur's CAR methodology, CAR tools and training for reporters, editors and researchers, and concluding with Nora Paul's essay on news librarians' roles after the death of the morgue. It was a lot to cover in a short time, but I did it.

THE REVIEW

The US reviewer (me?) gives the conference performers and program a four-star rating. While confessing to an overwhelmingly favorable bias, she nonetheless refuses to alter her judgment and even stands ready to defend it to any and all challengers, even the ones from the UK.

AUKML is a relatively young group of professionals, holding their first meeting in 1986. These media librarians come from richly varied backgrounds and experiences. Some are from large "national" news organizations; others are from smaller "regional" newspapers. While some interests are shared, there are others that are not. Planning programs for a diverse group at different stages of technological and managerial support is a challenge even for veteran associations. That the leadership of AUKML is keeping these issues, trends and concerns in mind while shouldering the responsibilities for keeping the profession of media librarianship alive and well in the UK is a tribute to everyone.

I am honored to be a part of the tenth anniversary of AUKML and look forward to seeing the association flourish in the 21st century.

THE FUTURE

AUKML now has a prototype of its own home page on the World Wide Web. The URL is: <http://sunsite.unc.edu/journalism/ukmedia.html>

What is more, AUKML will have its own listserv in due course. Justin Arundale will be the list-owner. We plan to maintain close contact between the new mailing list in the UK and NewsLib, SLA News Division's list in the US.

The world just got a little smaller as opportunities for electronic communication became larger.

Barbara P. Semonche is Library Director, UNC-CH School of Journalism and Mass Communication. She can be reached by e-mail at semonch@gibbs.oit.unc.edu

THE ASIDE BAR

Continued from page 2

comes to the rescue. He reminds her that she is quite good at organizing things—indeed her clothes are arranged alphabetically, Armani, Byblos, Chanel, etc. Perhaps if she just thinks of the library as a big closet all will be well.

Naturally it all is. She sneaks in and refills all the books and keeps her job and brings some spunk to the place. Not that *we* need to be reminded that there is spunk in libraries. We already know it—but it's nice that someone out there at Fox realizes it too.

As this article is going to press, word is that Fox has cancelled "Party Girl." What this means for the image of librarians will have to be saved for a later issue.



The cast of the now cancelled PARTY GIRL (L-R): John Cameron Mitchell as Derrick, Merrin Dungey as Wanda, Christine Taylor as Mary, Mat Borlenghi as Oneal and Swoosie Kurtz as Judy Burkhart.

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