
❖ SMILETTTER ❖

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From the Director

The Readers Advisory Group has its next meeting on Thursday, June 4 at 9:30. Discussion and bibliography of cookbooks that include nutritional information, “chic lit” titles and a special guest, JoAnne Griebel, for the area of genealogy are on the agenda. This is an excellent way to network with others from other types of libraries. Trends and concerns are also discussed and ideas are shared. The bibliographies are posted and available on the SMILE website after the discussion.



As a reminder, the vendor discounts are good through September of 2009. Renewal of these discounts is a summer project. Use the present list which can be accessed from the SMILE web site for your orders now and through this fall or until the new list becomes available.

This is my last column as I will be retiring June 30 at the end of my contract and SMILE’s fiscal year 2009. It is both a sad and exciting time of changes for me as well as SMILE. Dayle Zelenka will become director of both SMILE and Traverse des Sioux in July and form a new administrative structure. He will be getting to know all of you and I think you will be pleased with his enthusiasm and energy. I will work on some projects at home, travel and most of all not be driving about 100 miles per day. I did this daily driving when I came to Minnesota and attended Mankato State as it was called then. Somehow it didn’t seem as much of a struggle as it has the last few years. I will miss working with all of you but know that SMILE will be in capable hands.

*“To be able to fill leisure intelligently is the last product of civilization,
and at present very few people have reached this level.” ---Bertrand Russell*

Nancy

New Director

Dayle Zelenka assumes the dual director responsibilities of the **Traverse des Sioux (TdS) Regional Public Library System** and the **Southcentral Minnesota Inter-Library Exchange (SMILE)** multitype library cooperative on June 1.

Mr. Zelenka will work with the TdS and SMILE governing boards, who have identical memberships, to create a new administrative structure for the two organizations, which have identical jurisdictional boundaries. The dual board decided to explore management efficiencies when SMILE director Nancy Steele informed the board earlier of her intention to retire in 2009.

Mr. Zelenka has spent the past thirteen years at the North Park University (Chicago) Brandel Library, leaving his current position of Director of Technical Services and Systems. He is a publicly-elected member of the Skokie Public Library Board of Trustees since 2005. He also won election among his library colleagues in 2006 to the North Suburban Library System Board of Directors and leaves as legislative chair of that library-support agency. He also has served on the Illinois Library Association Executive Board since 2007.

Mr. Zelenka has a Bachelor of Arts in Chinese Studies from Grinnell (Iowa) College, Master of Library Science from Indiana University, and Masters in Business Administration and Business Management from North Park University.



Resilient resource

24 April 2009



Under funded and under appreciated, libraries are ready to prove themselves.

Library usage is up. Library funding is down. But what has not been as well-publicized is that while libraries have had to make cuts, their already conservative budgeting has left them better prepared for the economic hardships that are throwing other institutions into chaos and closure. Instead of entering panic mode, libraries are doing what they do best—providing resources to those who need them. “Libraries have always played a vital role in the success of individuals and communities,” says Mark Ranum, the legislative committee chair for the Minnesota Library Association.



While many are turning to libraries for cheaper ways to enjoy books, films, music, and Internet access, libraries also contain a wealth of information for job hunters. University of Minnesota neonatology freshman Chalonne Wilson started taking her homework to the library in March. Motivated by the somber economic news, she is working harder in school to be more prepared to find a job after graduation. “The field I’m going into is pretty secure, but I still feel like I have to buckle down and study,” she says.

These usage trends are true for academic libraries as well. According to the budget overview from January 2009, University of Minnesota Libraries saw an 8.5 percent increase in library facility use over the past year, while use of the Libraries’ e-collections rose 30 percent.

These impressive numbers don’t necessarily mean that libraries are recession-resistant. Ranum says the two areas most affected by budget cuts are staffing and collections. Staff members at the Plum Creek Library System in southwest Minnesota, where Ranum is a director, have taken one day of unpaid leave each month to help balance the budget.

The Eden Prairie branch of Hennepin County Libraries is also experiencing difficulties from being short staffed. “The recession has simultaneously increased traffic and made us less able to cope with said traffic,” says support staff member Ali Jaafar.

Academic libraries face additional challenges. The types of materials the University of Minnesota Libraries purchase, such as academic journals, also carry an exorbitant amount of inflation, between 8 and 10 percent each year. In terms of an annual budget increase, “we need close to \$1 million to keep pace,” says university librarian Wendy Lougee.

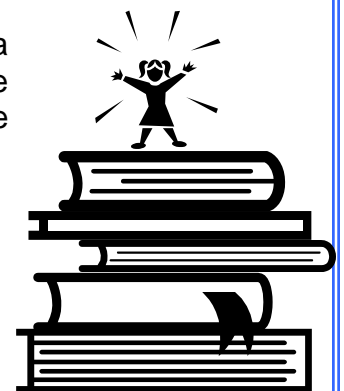
To close this gap in last year’s budget, University Libraries reconfigured or eliminated 22 positions, switched to only providing journals in electronic formats, reduced collection commitments, and combined operations of some library branches.

These choices left the University Libraries in a good news/bad news situation. They eliminated \$1 million from the budget last year, leaving \$1 million less for them to cut in the future.

While it is likely that libraries will continue to face difficulties, thus far their importance has outweighed their economic hardships. “Libraries are, in a way, the backbone of democracy,” Jaafar says. “They give the people free and easy access to information and services that would otherwise cost time and money that most Americans do not have.”

—SAGE DAHLEN

Article taken from *Mettle*, <http://mettle.umn.edu/?p=978>



CALENDAR

June 2: Babe Ruth played his last game (1935)

June 4: Readers Advisory Group at 9:30

June 11: Advisory Committee meeting at 3:00

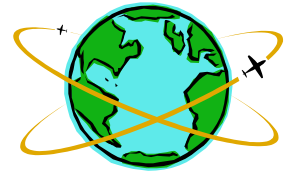
June 18: Governing Board Meeting follows TdS

June 24-25: Quarterly Multi-type systems director's meeting at SMILE



**National Audubon Society:
Pennies for the Planet**

Pennies for the Planet helps young people get involved with conservation by taking part in local conservation



action projects, and by collecting, saving, and sending in pennies for national and worldwide conservation projects. In this year's Pennies for the Planet campaign, students and their families can learn about three conservation projects around the U.S. that need help. Each Pennies project represents a conservation effort that will leave a legacy for future generations. Maximum award: National Audubon Society staff will visit prize-winning school to create a program about wildlife and wild places. Eligibility: kids working in classrooms, clubs, Scout troops, other groups, and on their own. Deadline: N/A.

Go to <http://www.togethergreen.org/p4p/Educators.aspx>

WebJunction Minnesota

Matt Lee Announced a new WebJunction Minnesota group dedicated to helping media specialists and school library staff highlight the value of their media centers to their institutions. The "MN Promoting Your Media Center to Teachers" group encourages participation in online discussions about successful strategies to reach out to teachers and students.

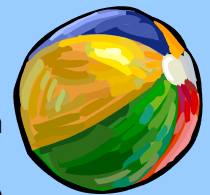
For more information go to:
<http://mn.webjunction.org/lmcpromo>

**Jenny Jepsen
Martin County Library
SMILE Honorarium Write-Up**

Thank you to SMILE for providing me with an honorarium this year! The honorarium enabled me to attend the Minnesota Library Association's Institute for Leadership Excellence. MILE is held every two years and enables 25 participants from all types of libraries to get together and learn about leadership.

Not only did I have a chance to learn more about myself as a leader, I was able to take a "strengths assessment" that showed me where my true strengths are. One of my goals this year is to try and utilize those strengths more in the workplace. Additionally, I had a chance to set some goals for myself (both immediate and long term.) It was a great chance to sit down and think about what I'd like to see happen here at the Martin County Library!

At the end of MILE, we each receive a mentor who will help us stay on track with our goals. In addition to having a mentor to share thoughts and ideas with, I have 25 new library friends! The ability to network and share ideas with other librarians from around the state of Minnesota was truly a wonderful opportunity. Thank you again to SMILE for providing me with this opportunity!

**SMILETTER**

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File This for Use Next Year-

Dweeber.com is the social networking site for student homework collaboration. Dweeber enables students to solve problems together, participate in virtual study sessions, and communicate with friends around schoolwork in a number of ways. The collaborative whiteboard can be used to solve math and science problems or to create joint drawings and diagrams. Dweeber allows students to create a SMART profile and discover how they learn best and then apply this knowledge to improve their schoolwork and ultimately their self esteem. It is targeted towards students aged 13 and

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* "A life without love is like a *
* year without summer." *
* -Swedish Proverb *

