

## From The President

by Anne Houston, [annehouston2@hotmail.com](mailto:annehouston2@hotmail.com)

### Looking North to Toronto

This is a busy time of year for LIRT officers and committee chairs, as we prepare for the upcoming Annual Conference. We have a great program planned for Toronto, entitled "Critical Thinking: Teaching Thought and Process". The program will be held on Sunday, June 22, and will feature two experts in the area of critical thinking, Craig Gibson and Joyce Kasman Valenza. The program will also include a series of poster sessions. LIRT programs are always among the most stimulating at each Annual conference, so please plan to attend. In addition to the program, we will have a booth in the exhibit hall, and sponsor our Bites with LIRT lunch outings.

Another major LIRT event is in the works: we are hard at work planning our retreat to be held in San Diego, immediately before Midwinter 2004. The retreat will give LIRT leaders a chance to step back and examine where our organization has been and where we want it to go. While the number of participants will be limited, the input of all LIRT members will be welcome before and after the retreat, as we explore these important issues.

In other LIRT news, we have recently established an unrestricted long-term investment (an endowment, that is) to help plan for our future financial health. The endowment is largely the result of work by our treasurer, Trisha Stevenson Medeiros. While the endowment is initially unrestricted, we plan to restrict it in the future so that the resulting proceeds can be used to fund scholarships or awards for LIRT members. LIRT also plans to establish a regular fund-raising event to add to the endowment. A task force will soon begin looking at possibilities for future LIRT scholarships or awards.

As this is my final "From the President" column, I'd like to add that I've been honored to be President of such a fine organization for the past year. I am continually amazed at the energy and dedication of LIRT officers, committee members and chairs, and other LIRT members that I've had a chance to meet and talk with. I'm proud of the work we do!

*See you all in Toronto !*

### LIRT Annual Program



Sunday  
June 22 from 10:30 am-12: 30 pm.  
Westin Harbour Castle, Metro BR West

#### Critical Thinking: Teaching Thought and Process

What is your definition of critical thinking?  
How does it apply to developing library instruction programs?

Join us as we examine the challenges of teaching critical thinking. Together we will strive to define the theory and practice behind this important component of information literacy.

Craig Gibson, expert theorist from George Mason University and Joyce Kasman Valenza, groundbreaking practitioner from Springfield Township High School (Pennsylvania), will explore these aspects of critical thinking.

The program will include a poster sessions.

#### About the speakers:

Craig Gibson is Associate University Librarian for Public Services at George Mason University in Fairfax, VA, where he is responsible for reference and instruction, interlibrary loan and document delivery, government documents, and access services in the main library. Craig's previous experience includes positions at Washington State

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#### Annual - Toronto

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URL: <<http://www.baylor.edu/LIRT/lirtnews>>

Editor: Caryl

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**Editor's Note: LIRT sponsored two discussion forums during the midwinter conference in Philadelphia. The report of the Teaching, Learning, and Technology Committee was published in the March issue of LIRT News. The following report is an overview of the second discussion forum sponsored by the Transitions to College Committee.**

This article is a truly collaborative effort by current members of the Committee: Pam Baker, Jennifer Brown, Rachel Fleming May, Trisha Mileham, Cindi Raquepau, Ashley Robinson, Deb Rollins, and Julie Wood.

On Sunday, January 26, 2003, 40-45 people gathered for the Transitions to College Committee Discussion Forum. The discussion forum served to address the overall premise that transitioning to college is a K-20+ issue that also transcends the boundaries of library type (academic, public, or school). While each table had five areas to consider in that premise, the dynamic of those involved at each table determined the final discussion results. The five areas of consideration were:

- 1) Library anxiety: all types of students.
- 2) Commonalities/shared strengths of the AASL *Information Power* and the



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## LIRT's Top Twenty for 2002

Selected and reviewed by the Continuing Education Committee: Terri Holtze, Camille McCutcheon, Jim Millhorn, Frances Nadeau (Chair,) and Ericka Raber.

*This year marked the first time that virtual members participated in reading, evaluating and selecting LIRT's Top Twenty. Committee members reviewed over eighty articles relating to information literacy and library instruction. At ALA Midwinter, three members met to select the final Top Twenty.*

*The committee tried to include articles from school, special and public libraries; from countries other than the United States; from differing points of view on a variety of subjects; and from a variety of journals. Articles from public libraries eluded us. The prominent topic was assessment as instruction librarians analyzed the impact of their teaching on student learning. Although one-fourth of our selections came from The Journal of Academic Librarianship, we believe these articles explore a variety of issues relevant to all library instruction programs.*

1. Arp, Lori; Woodard, Beth S.  
"Recent Trends in Information



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information literacy model, and suggests that information literacy be reconceptualized to stress learning and sociotechnical fluency.

16. O'Connor, Lisa G.; Radcliff, Carolyn J.; Gedeon, Julie A. "Applying Systems Design and Item Response Theory to the Problem of Measuring Information Literacy Skills." College & Research Libraries 63.6 (Nov. 2002): 528-543.

These authors describe developing an assessment instrument designed to link information literacy skills to student learning. After reviewing other tests, the authors developed their own, which they named SAILS (Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills.) In order to create a test credible enough to compete for limited university funding, they involved an expert in testing, reviewed the questions in small groups, and carefully considered the placement of the questions. Although the test itself is not provided, many questions are shared, as is the URL for the SAILS web site.

17. Rader, Hannelore B. "Teaching and Assessing Information Skills in the Twenty-first Century: A Global Perspective." \_\_\_\_\_



*Poster Sessions*







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Join us for BITES with LIRT in Toronto, Ontario June 21-22-23, 2003

Once again, LIRT is organizing groups for lunch at modestly priced restaurants during the ALA Annual Conference, but this year you might get to sit next to a Canadian Librarian at the joint ALA-CLA meeting in Toronto. This is your opportunity to meet and eat with other librarians interested in library instruction from two countries!

LIRT welcomes anyone who has an interest in instruction from all types of libraries. You need not be a member of LIRT to participate. We hope you will join us in this opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences about library instruction in a relaxed setting. The CLA local arrangements group will help us pick the restaurants and as soon as the selection is made we will be post details and maps on the LIRT website. Enjoy a stimulating and fun lunch with LIRT—good food, good company, and interesting conversation. We will make the arrangements; all you have to do is reserve your spot and show up! Deadline is June 13, 2003. Confirmations will be sent by e-mail.

Send requests for reservations to: [ssc@lib-mail.humboldt.edu](mailto:ssc@lib-mail.humboldt.edu)  
Sharon Chadwick, Science Librarian  
The Library, Humboldt State University, One Harpst St.  
Arcata, CA 95521-8299 (707) 826-4955 (w) (707) 826-4900 (f)

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**BITES REGISTRATION FORM**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Institution: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail : \_\_\_\_\_

Join us as many times as you'd like. Please mark your preference(s) below:

Saturday, June 21, 2003, 12:30 p.m.

Sunday, June 22, 2003, 12:30 p.m.

Monday June 23, 2003, 12:30 p.m.

Are you a LIRT member? yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to join LIRT and become active in a committee? yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

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**We need you!**  
**Please send us your contributions from**  
√ **Public libraries**  
√ **Academic libraries**  
√ **School libraries**  
√ **Special libraries**

**Special tips and success stories, we would like to have articles about teaching strategies that have worked for you. Please contact our editor at [cegray@vt.edu](mailto:cegray@vt.edu). See our guidelines page at <http://www.baylor.edu/~LIRTguidelines.html>**

(news of interest to librarians)

- Sitelines – <http://www.workingfaster.com/sitelines/> (updates searchers on key search tools and developments)
- Other Similar Weblogs — <http://www.rcpl.info/services/liblog.html#blogs>

However blogs hold even more potential for libraries and enhanced services. Consider some of these possibilities:

- Develop multiple blogs that focus on information or resources in specific content areas. Two current examples are:
  - The Education Librarian – <http://www.educationlibrarian.com/>
  - EngLib – <http://www.englishlib.info/>
- Use blogs to announce new electronic resources.
- Use blogs to announce trials for electronic resources, perhaps even providing users with the opportunity to comment on the use of the resources.
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Resource anxiety: even if students are computer literate or skilled, chances are that they have not had much experience with subscription databases and other reference materials. Even more dangerous, this group may be even less likely than those without computer skills to actually seek our help. They may believe that they can find everything they need by themselves, "on the web." "Vastly different" interfaces of our electronic resources create anxiety and a high learning curve for new library users.

Techno-anxiety: many librarians agreed that we often ascribe to "Generation Y" a greater level of comfort and skill in the area of technology than is appropriate. It's worth remembering that not all Americans under the age of twenty have high levels of experience with and knowledge of computer applications, mousing, keyboarding, email, and Internet usage. We tend to look out for this with returning students, but this causes stress for many younger students as well.

Librarians need to carefully evaluate their working assumptions related to student computer skills/student comfort with using computers. We appear to make a lot of assumptions.

The transition from high school to college is an institution-wide challenge with bearing on recruitment and retention

### Needs and Problems

We need to update articles written and research done in past years, particularly in regard to what college freshmen know about information. More data is needed to assess college student information literacy skills to serve as a baseline. Surveying freshmen might be a way to find out where they think they are and where they really are. It would be great to have that information and to be able to hand students a document telling them where we want them to be as grads and provide a curriculum of baseline skills. Such instruments would also provide a basis for teaching in context as well as demonstrating to students that we might actually have something to teach them.

One common call of media specialists is that they need to hear how information literacy will improve their school's test scores. Information literacy needs to be practical and explainable to various school administrators and boards.

We need practical means of implementing standards – sharing ideas, techniques, what works, ways around problems of time and money, identifying problems at the high school level that can rear their heads in college, tailoring ideas, and programs to meet needs of specific institutions.

The need is to develop a common language for dialog between all who assist students in research and instruction; establish and encourage dialog between the instructional technology faculty/staff, the counseling faculty/staff, and the librarians. Librarians have a responsibility to identify and reach out to all groups to help them make this information literacy transition, but there is not "one-size-fits-all" fix.

Various other problems identified and discussed: become teachers who do not use school libraries

- faculty who themselves struggle with technology and/or with library resources
- lack of accreditation by many of the people who run school libraries, i.e. lack of state standards (and these have greatly eroded over the past ten years or so)
- time
- money
- low salaries for librarians
- the perception that academic librarians are at the "top of the food chain"

### Action Strategies

#### Across communities:

- Outreach between high school groups, public libraries, and academic libraries is an essential component to improving the transitional issues in a community.
- Academic librarians need to realize the pressures that school media specialists are under: time, money, resources and the growing pressure for schools to achieve success on standardized tests. Academic librarians usually have a little more say about their daily scheduling than do school media specialists and public librarians.
- Collaborate and share information with other librarians. All librarians in communities have a role to play in this transition: media specialists, community college, college and university, and public librarians have information and resources to share. Share information about students and their stresses with other faculty and staff in the students' life, such as staff from counseling centers, teaching faculty, and so on.
- Collaborate with high school guidance counselors to get a "heads up" about incoming students and their skill levels. Work with AP/honors teachers as well as media specialists, to form partnerships for school visits/field trips to campus as well as by making school visits.
- Academic librarians need to help teach the teachers: K-12 teachers, school media specialists, and education majors, who can then pass library skills on to their students.

#### Within a library setting:

- Empowering peers to teach peers is one way we can make an impact over anxiety.
- Improve day-to-day communication, or take steps to prevent miscommunication. Identify common

Additional Resources (books):

More information is available for these books at <http://www.amazon.com>

Bausch, Paul, Matthew Haughey, Meg Hourihan. We Blog: Publishing Online with Weblogs. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2002.

Blood, Rebecca. The Weblog Handbook: Practical Advice on Creating and Maintaining Your Blog. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing, 2002.

Blood, Rebecca and the Editors of Perseus Publishing. We've Got Blog: How Weblogs are Changing Our Culture. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing, 2002

Chromatic, Brian Aker, and David Krieger. Running Weblogs with Slash. Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly, 2002.

Hill, Brad. Weblogs for Dummies. Hungry Minds, 2003.

Powers, Shelley, Cory Doctorow, J. Scott Johnson, Mena G. Trott, Benjamin Trott. Essential Blogging. Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly, 2002.

Stauffer, Todd. Blog On: Building Online Communities with Web Logs. McGraw-Hill Osborne Media, 2002. Media

Stone, Biz. Blogging: Genius Strategies for Instant Web Content. Indianapolis, IN: New Riders, 2002.

As always, send questions and comments to:

Snail Mail: Tech Talk  
Billie Peterson-Lugo  
Moody Memorial Library  
P. O. Box 97143  
Waco, TX 76798-7143

E-Mail: [Billie\\_Peterson@baylor.edu](mailto:Billie_Peterson@baylor.edu)



Library Instruction Round Table News  
c/o Lorelle Swader  
American Library Association  
50 E. Huron Street  
Chicago, IL 60611