



ARSL
The Association for Rural & Small Libraries



Fall 2015

Member Newsletter

President's Update

Hi! My name is Jet Kofot, and I'm pleased and proud to be your new president. I work for the State Library of Iowa as a library consultant. I provide training and support for the 89 libraries in my district. Rural and small libraries are close to my heart. I worked as a library director in a community of fewer than 5,000 people, and 80% of the libraries in my district are in communities under 1,000 people. On a personal note I have six children and eleven grandchildren. My husband is a heavy equipment operator. I've lived in Iowa all of my life, and we currently live on an acreage in the north central part of the state.



I'm looking forward to the coming year! We have a great group of people on the board and we have an ambitious agenda.

I will be forming two task forces. One will begin to look at how we can move from a working board to a governing board with a paid staff person. The other will look at how we can provide a higher level of training that could result in some type of certification program. I'm sure that, once again, this year we'll have opportunities to collaborate with other organizations. We will, of course, continue to work on the projects and programs we've been involved in as well as our next conference in Fargo for 2016.

I'm excited to serve as your president. Please, be sure to let me know if you have any questions or concerns.



Conference Wrap-Up

A record 510 people were Rockin' in Little Rock at ARSL 2015. For those not lucky enough to experience the excitement first hand, here is the conference wrap-up from the perspective of a first time attendee. We hope you start planning now to budget, fund-raise, or search for professional development scholarships to join us at ARSL 2016, Oct. 27-29 in Fargo, ND.

By: Ryan Deery
Sutton's Bay Bingham Library District, Michigan

As an ARSL member that grew up and works less than two hours from the Canadian border, the opportunity to both visit the south and experience my first conference had me giddy for months. I loaded up my car and set off from northern Michigan for the wilds of Arkansas. After spending two days camping in the spectacularly gorgeous Ozark Mountains, I drove into Little Rock ready to see the city, network with fellow rural librarians, and learn as much as I could.

I first got to experience Little Rock from a refurbished Italian trolley on the trolley tour that ended at the not-to-be-missed Clinton Presidential Center. A short stroll from all things Clinton deposited me at the Welcome Reception at the Central Arkansas Library System Main Library where I enjoyed a lovely library, local beer, tasty food, and best of all, the company of hundreds of librarians.

Just when I thought it was time to get serious at the opening keynote Thursday morning, I instead laughed to tears while learning the Arkansas Razorbacks "Woo! Pig Sooie!" (See above photo) Chant from book lover and Arkansas TV and radio personality Craig O'Neill. Then the break-out sessions began and the heavy learning got underway.

Each time slot was chock full of informative sessions with topics drawn from youth services, management, tech, marketing, programming, and more. Nearly overwhelmed by the choices, I spent three days wandering from enlightening session after session such as Rebecca Lemons' "Managing Employee Performance; or, How to Boss Your Friends Around" which turned out to be one of my conference favorites. Yet packed in between these great sessions was a truly phenomenal line-up of keynote speakers.

Josh Hanagarne author of "The World's Strongest Librarian" took the stage to tell us his incredibly

moving story. Local author Dr. Daniel Black exhorted the power of libraries, writing, and reading. P.C. Cast cracked everyone up with stories of being saved by librarians, and architect Zachary Benedict closed the conference by describing the effect of libraries and librarians on their communities in ways we all need to shout from roof tops.

My evenings were just as full as I hopped foot and mouth into the ARSL Conference Dine-Around tradition. I joined a group of 15 librarians for a meal at a gypsy restaurant one night and a gourmet meal at a five-star hotel the next while hundreds of other librarians got together at restaurants all over Little Rock to trade tales and tips.

Overall, I spent four fantastic days chatting and learning with librarians from Alaska to Louisiana that served communities from 250 to 25,000 and throughout it all, one thought kept popping into my head;

I am home.

Treasurer's Report

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Vicki Bartz presented a financial report for the annual business meeting held in Little Rock this year. The organization is strong and the 2014 fiscal year posted \$1365 in revenue over expenses. The current balance as of August 31, 2015 was \$216,312.80, however, conference expenses have not been deducted from this balance.

The organization continues to grow and we are fast approaching 1,000 members. Conference continues to be our main source of income and the Little Rock conference was shaping up to be a very successful year.

Website Round-Up

By: Gina Wilson

Thomasville Public Library, Alabama

recitethis.com Just enter your quote, pick your style, and select CREATE to produce a visually appealing project. You can post directly to FB, Twitter, Pinterest, Tumblr, and StumbleUpon, download the image, or share with a permalink.

life.familyeducation.com Great online calendar (Search 'calendar' at top right of home page); There's something worth celebrating every day! You'll find all major holidays, events, and celebrations, plus really fun ones like National Hamburger Day. A great tool for programming.



ARSL Board Meets

Immediately following conference, the ARSL Board met for a two day work session. Here the new Secretary and Treasurer were elected. This year Carolyn Peterson will serve as Secretary and Susan Hughes will serve as Treasurer. We would like to thank them for their time and service to the organization as they require several additional hours of volunteer work.

Each volunteer board member works on at least one of ARSL's various committees. During this meeting, goals were also discussed for 2016. Active committees for this year include: Executive, Partnerships, Finance, Conference, and Marketing/Communications. Those interested in working with any of these committees should email us at rurallibraries@gmail.com. Also for those interested in following board meetings, they are open to members. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 18, at 10:30 am Central Time. Our meetings are conducted using the Zoom meeting platform and information regarding how to access the meeting will go out on the electronic discussion list a week or so before the meeting.

ARSL Website

[Pinterest.com](https://www.pinterest.com) Are you using Pinterest for community engagement? I used Pinterest to plan a really cute community garden plot themed 'Reading helps the mind bloom'. For fall, I used Pinterest to brainstorm turnips. Did you know that Henry Wadsworth Longfellow has a poem about a turnip? The garden has turned out to be a great community outreach tool. This fall, you guessed it, I'm planting turnips with a tip of the hat to Mr. Longfellow. I like to search 'book or library humor', save a few pics and periodically post to the library's FB for a fresh zing. I've got a board with pics of library spaces that I love - a great way to communicate with an architect. Great ideas for crafts, repurposing old books, and designing reading displays.

komando.com "America's Digital Goddess" The name alone makes you want to check it out. The goddess really does know her tech stuff. Check it out weekly for the latest tech buzzes and fixes.

Readinggroupguides.com Free and well organized with popular titles that clubs want to discuss. My readers want the questions in advance to enhance their reading experience. I've found that Goodreads is hit or miss for printable questions, but this site consistently delivers the content that saves time when preparing for book club. They have a good email newsletter, too.

Want to share your favorite websites or people to follow on Twitter? Submit them to rurallibraries@gmail.com

Policy Corner

Voluntary Leave Transfers

***By: Austin Stroud
Bloomfield Eastern Green Public Library, Indiana***

The Bloomfield-Eastern Greene County Public Library, located in Bloomfield, Indiana, serves just over

Have you taken a look at the [ARSL website](https://www.arsl.org) lately? We would like to thank our volunteer webmaster, Kieran Hlxon, for all his work in developing a new, fresh, and mobile friendly site. We would also like to thank Meredith Wickham for her work on the [Jobs Listing page](#) along with Cynthia Hughes for her work updating content in various areas. Our volunteers are really amazing!

Upcoming Events

Finding and Training Volunteer Technology Instructors - FREE Webinar

Wednesday, November 4, 3:00 ET / 12:00 PT

Registration:

<http://www.webjunction.org/events/webjunction/finding-and-training-volunteer-technology-instructors.html>

Small libraries are often challenged to find the staff, skills, or time needed to meet growing community needs and demands for digital literacy training. Volunteers could help you meet these challenges! Learn strategies from two successful state-wide projects eager to share tools and curriculum to help get volunteers ready for technology training in your small or rural library. California's [Get Involved: Powered by Your Library](#) provides libraries with tools to recruit, train and retain skilled volunteers. And [Guiding Ohio Online](#) has created curriculum for volunteers to deliver digital literacy training through computer classes and one-on-one computer assistance in libraries of all sizes. Project staff will share their expertise and experience to help you build the program that is right for your community.

This webinar is hosted in collaboration with WebJunction.

Presented by: **Carla Lehn**, Library Development Services, California State Library; **Mandy Knapp** and **Evan Struble**, Library Consultants, State Library of Ohio

15,000 residents in six townships. The county is large, rural, and located in south central Indiana just 35 minutes west of Bloomington (home of Indiana University). The library employs 24, 21 of which are part-time, and has one branch library in addition to the main library.

With no safeguard in place for staff members who miss work, such as short or long-term disability offered at the library, we felt the need to create a policy to protect staff members in illness. We reviewed similar policies from the nearby Crane Naval Base and the local school corporation and came up with the following.

Staff members with excess paid time off (PTO) at the end of the year have their extra leave time go into a sick bank. This sick bank time is only accessible to employees after missing three consecutive days due to illness, along with a doctor's note. However, being a part-time heavy library, most staff members had little to nothing extra to put into this sick bank. This led to a donation type policy where any employee may donate accrued PTO to other employees who need sick leave because of a medical emergency for either the employee or a family member meeting our definition (i.e. spouse, child, parents, etc.).

Any employee that anticipates needing leave time transferred to them, must let the director know that they are in need. Once the director approves, a call for donated leave time will be sent out to all staff members. No specifics about the employee needing leave time, or the medical emergency itself, will be disclosed by the director to other employees. Here employees who would like to donate leave time to the staff member fills out an application to become a leave donor, along with specifying the number of hours they wish to donate. Leave donations must be in one-hour increments. The treasurer will make changes to employee PTO balances after reviewing the leave donations. The director will notify all staff when there is no longer a need for donated leave time.

We have had staff members take advantage of this policy multiple times since it was put into place. The staff's willingness to help out one another, and act as a family, has been amazing. Those of us at small, rural libraries have a bond like no other so this family feeling is not unique to us. Since the policy was put into place, we have had no employees out for illness lose pay. This policy is not intended to be a long-term solution, however, more of a short-term solution to help make time off for a personal or family illness less stressful. If you would like to hear more about this policy, or receive a copy of it, feel free to contact library director, Austin Stroud, at astroud@begcpl.info.

Successful Programming

My Dolly and Me Tea

**By: Susie Pulley, Director
Van Zandt County Library, Texas**

Each year for National Library Week, our Friends of the Library group helps me with a program activity each day during the week. Most of the programs have attendance around 10-20 individuals. We have had programs such as Local Author Events, Spinning Wool, Churning Butter, Knitting and Crochet, Medical Information Programs, etc.



This year we decided to do something after school for our children as one of our events. We had a My Dolly and Me Tea. One of my FOL members makes American Girl Doll Clothes and sells them. She decided to make an outfit for all the girls to take home with their dolls. I suggested we should take reservations but the FOL thought we wouldn't have that many. We did our normal advertising and

expected from 10-20 girls and their dolls. The cookies were made, fruit and juice were bought. Tables were set. We were ready!

The day of the event, holy cow, 64 girls showed up with their dolls and their moms and grandmothers! We quickly started dividing the fruit cups – yes you can make 20 fruit cups stretch to 64! Thankfully we had enough juice and instead of everyone getting 3 cookies, they received 1. The girls had a blast. The mothers and grandmothers LOVED seeing the girls enjoy their tea. The Friends President did an excellent presentation of what a “High Tea” would be like and how we were “Americanizing” it with juice etc. Instead of everyone getting an outfit for their doll, we played games and the winners got to pick an outfit.

Overall it was a wonderful success and out of that program the Friends have realized a fundraising activity. Several Moms said they had paid \$45 for a true “American Girl Doll” Tea Party and would gladly pay a fee for such a wonderful program. Our next one is scheduled in April 2016 and reservations are being taken with a maximum of 20 girls, their dolls and their moms. Sometimes out of disaster comes a great reward.

Summer Reading Success

By: Alice Chambers

Fairfield Bay Library, Arkansas

The Fairfield Bay Library is unique in that it is mainly a small retirement community, but also has a Wyndham Resort that brings visitors to the community all summer long. Each summer our library invites the children of surrounding communities, and the visiting children from the resort to be a part of our summer reading program. There are approximately 30 to 40 children who participate in this program.

This summer we added Tuesday Reading time to the summer reading program and generally there were from three to nine children who would come to this program. During this time I had children who were just here for a week and children who were here for the summer, and local children from the surrounding communities.

We had the best time. I would read the story and then we would have question and answer time, a snack and then the children could check out books. One of the things that made this such a special time was I had three autistic children who attended - they loved the stories, the snacks, and the ability to check out books. Getting a library card was such a treat! All of the books came back each week and also great big smiles.

The other great experience was being with three children who are being raised by their great grandmother - an autistic boy, and his two sisters. One of his sisters, Clair, was my champion reader for the summer - she read 101 books - many of which was read to her brother and sister.

It was a great reading summer here in our little retirement town!

[Visit our Website](#)

STAY CONNECTED

