

ACRL 13th National Conference, Baltimore MD
Sailing into the Future ~ Charting Our Destiny
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The ACRL 13th National Conference brochure stated that it was “the **must-attend** event for every academic and research librarian” and I have to agree they were right! I began the conference by running right into Sally Anderson from North Park College on my way to the Opening Keynote Session. One of the best things about conferences is networking and connecting with people who you have not seen in a while and finding out what is new with them and their institution. For the next hour and a half, Michael Eric Dyson totally revved up the crowd with his interesting views on racial conflict, hip hop culture, library experiences, research rewards, political ideas, and gracious comments on librarians. He loves books, especially the smell of them and the feel of them. He also loves us and he told us how much he appreciates libraries and the role they continue to play in his life and the lives of others. His Baptist Preacher style was just invigorating and was truly a great beginning to a wonderful conference. The crowd responded with great rounds of applause after his presentation.

I began my conference days before I attended on the internet by searching for sessions, contributed papers, posters, keynotes, and the Cyber Zed Shed demonstrations, with the Online Session Builder. What a great device! And it actually worked on the ALA website. After looking through the dance card of events and picking and choosing what I wanted to do, it printed it all out on a handy sheet I took with me in my bag. The only other paper piece from the conference I had with me was the Pocket Program, another great invention from this conference. I highly recommend this for all future conferences planners. It is one handy sheet which can be folded, map like, to each day and has a concise schedule of all sessions and the room numbers. Great resource if you decided to leave a session because it didn't turn out to be what you thought it might be. We have all been there and done that.

After the Opening Keynote, I went for first pass through the exhibit hall and was pleased to see a good showing of vendors. I told the Choice Online people how much I detested their new, glitzy, very hard to load, ordering system and begged them to keep the old system. They informed me that they still had a few bugs to work out and that they would be leaving the old system up until it was all resolved. I felt better. After the exhibit opening we met up with a bunch of librarians and went to dinner at a micro brewery in the Inner Harbor area. This was another great chance to network with people. What a lovely convention area in Baltimore's Inner Harbor. It was all very close together, clean, safe, and tons of restaurants, museums, and shops, with a skyway that ran it all together. I would definitely go back there. And, it is only about 25 minutes out of Washington, D.C. by car and you could go by train too.

The first session I attended was on Friday morning, *From Midnight to Breakfast to Facebook.com: Social Networking and the Small College Library* and the second companion session was *Privacy and Library 2.0: How do they Connect*. In the first session, Elizabeth Wavle, from Emira College, in the Finger Lakes region of New York, gave us an interesting view of her use of Facebook to do social networking with the students from her college. A small liberal arts school, she connects on a daily basis with students, students groups, advising, and is very open about her personal tastes towards music, books, politics, and movies, in her online profile in Facebook. She showed us her site, her friends, her rants, her pictures. She also mentioned that Facebook no longer allows libraries to have a presence on their site but only allows individuals access to accounts. She uses Facebook to keep in constant contact with her students, sometimes answering a question or two but mostly for the social qualities of the site. When asked if she felt there were any issues, she did show us a slide of underage student drinking alcohol that she had seen on his account but she felt because it was such a small group of students she was not pleased with what she saw but could talk to them because she did know all of them so well. And that is where I believe librarians have to make their own decisions because I personally do not want to know what they are doing illegally because I would then feel legally that I might have to act and I would not want that responsibility. Interestingly, many people in the audience seemed to express the same concern. And this is what I really liked about the sessions was that they took time to answer questions and there were plenty of microphones set up to allow for librarians to hear one another.

The second presenter, Edward Corrado, a System's Librarian, from The College of New Jersey, spoke about privacy issues. In his paper he finds that Librarians are concerned with privacy but that this concern doesn't always lead to action. He also found that Librarians thought that privacy should be part of Information Literacy Instruction and I agree. And he further related that privacy and new technology in libraries has been an issue for sometime and I also agree with this. His best statement was that libraries need to realize that the social network is not going away and it is instead getting larger and we need to relate to it. From You Tube, MySpace, Facebook, Multiply, del.icio.us, and Second Life, social networking and electronic relationships are here and there are privacy issues with them. He also looked at the Patriot Act and how Libraries are reacting to these concerns. I enjoyed the fact that Edward presented both the questions and the concerns that we librarians are facing. I really enjoyed the questions afterwards that there were some answers to but, there were other questions which only time and the courts will answer. It was a great start to my conference learning.

My next stop was the Poster Sessions and it was packed. I was so glad I had written the number of all the posters I wanted to see so I could easily grab the handouts if the presenters were mobbed with others. One of the most interesting was *Teaching Google Scholar: Lessons Learned at Northwestern University Library*, and it was amazing to see their findings that while it didn't match up to paid for services it wasn't that bad either, kind of scary. Another good poster, and there were many, *But did they get it?? Collaborating with Faculty to Assess Information Literacy Learning*, with Lesli Bussert from University of Washington Bothell/Cascadia Community College, was also interesting in her approach to collaboration with faculty and then the assessment issues

that follow. I grabbed a few more handouts and then it was time for the Keynote Luncheon with John Waters.

Have you ever had then lunch and then laughed so hard that you wish you had not eaten lunch? Well, listening to John Waters shock a room full of librarians was just amazing. I have seen a number of his world-famous films so I was expecting laughter but when he described us as *twisted people* I knew we were in trouble. He was a little over the top at times but I really enjoyed his “in your face” humor. I am not going to repeat his best statements because if you didn’t attend you missed it big time and without the context of the room you probably would not appreciate his sentiments. Great keynote!

I attended many sessions but another one I am going to report on is *The New Academic Library-Building Institutional Repositories to Support Changing Scholarly and Research Processes*. I really wasn’t exactly sure what this was going to be on but I am so glad I went. Basically, we need to save and archive what we have digitally created. I have always felt this way. We need to keep a record of what we have done to learn from it to see how we have changed and evolved. It is also a record of our teaching. We need to know how to keep it, how to archive it, and how to tag it or keep record of it. There is great deal of information which is deleted and replaced on a regular basis and it would be good if we saved it before we delete it. I think this is a great idea and I believe we unfortunately don’t always value our own creations and we don’t always assess it either. On a regular basis I use resources that are extremely simple like the some our original websites and frankly I think some of those simple sites did the best jobs of presenting information to people unlike some of the amazingly complicated pages you can find up on the web today. This session was great and I am simplifying it a bit today but the concept presented of saving our online creations was so simple and yet so smart. Another great presentation!

Did I mention that the weather was perfect and that most of the time you were fine without a coat? And the evening out for the All-Conference Reception at the National Aquarium was just so cool. They have over 10,500 aquatic animals and an award winning exhibit call Australia Wild Extremes that was really neat. Also, the journey into the mysteries of water and the natural world in the Pier 3 Pavilion was just beautiful. And again, I enjoyed meeting people I know from across the state and meeting people from other parts of the country too. And I can not complete my report without commenting on my Director’s presentation *From Option to Opportunity: Concrete Was to Attract the Next Generation of Academic Librarians*. It was a panel presentation that discussed ways in which libraries attract library students to work in academic libraries. It was well attended and a great presentation. It was also fun to see all the many past interns who have worked with Susan in attendance and to see the variety of places they now work and live in this country.

Many thanks to LIBRAS for funding this great educational opportunity.