

Illinois Library Association 2008 Annual Conference Report

I attended the Conference on Wednesday, September 24 and attended the following sessions:

The New Inquisition, presented by Jamie LaRue, Director of the Douglas County (CO) Libraries (keynote address). LaRue, having extensive experience with censorship, offered insights on the isolation of librarians when confronted with censorship, and the importance of support from library associations. He also addressed issues of censorship in libraries, indicating that the primary years for parental censorship are 4-6, a time of special protectiveness, and 14-16, a time of grief for parents, when children can no longer be effectively protected from the outside world. Also discussed was the violence of fairy tales (discussed in Bruno Bettelheim's *The Uses of Enchantment; the Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*) and how children need stories to provide tools to deal with the world and to assist them in "crafting their own ways to happiness." LaRue emphasized ways of responding respectfully to censorship challenges so that all parties are carefully listened to and provided with options.

Celebrating Abraham Lincoln through Primary Sources from the Library of Congress, presented by Byron D. Holdiman, Quincy University. The presenter discussed the vast resources of both primary and secondary materials on Abraham Lincoln available through the Library of Congress website, describing the site as a "giant archives." Resources include The American Memory Collection, Lincoln manuscripts, papers, addresses, and letters, and primary materials in Lincoln's handwriting. Less obvious ways of researching Lincoln are letters sent to Lincoln from specific towns (can be used for geneology), interviews with people who met Lincoln, music, and articles from African American newspapers of this period. Lincoln research has special significance during the Lincoln-Douglas Debate Sesquicentennial and Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial.

Susan Roman, Dean of the Graduate School of Library and Information Sciences at Dominican University spoke at the References Service Forum Luncheon on library education and of the emphasis on the library user ("Focus on the user and all else will follow."), "seamless" reference service, and how librarianship is viewed as one of the best careers by *U.S. News and World Report*. Roman stated that the library is "a growing organism" and provided Pew data to support her claims, including the increase in library usage, especially by young adults. Further, libraries will continue to have a significant community role as they promote "social inclusion" and "harness the collective intelligence."

Pig, Hip, Cozy Dogs, and Truck Stops: Route 66 Preservation at the State Library, presented by Blaine Redemer, Illinois State Library. This session offered a discussion of current collecting of documents, oral histories, and aerial photos by the Route 66 Archives and Research Collaborative, including the Illinois State Library and institutions in states with endangered sites along the Route 66 corridor. Research includes a study of the cultural heritage of small towns and how they were linked by Route 66 to larger cities, creating tourist destinations, the economic development of small businesses along Route 66, the development of the trucking industry, the beginnings of the motel industry, the development of technology in road construction in the twentieth century (the "Good Highways Movement" began in 1926 and highways

were WPA and CCC projects). Also important are the relationship of Route 66 to popular culture, and the cultural shifts following the development of superhighways.

“I’m Coming Out”: The Ins and Outs of Serving GLBTQ Teens, presented by Monica Harris, Oak Park Public Library. Perspectives on how libraries can serve gay and transgender teens, current appropriate terminology to utilize, collection development and book lists, how to display collections, and the importance of a supportive community.

I appreciate the opportunity to attend the Illinois Library Association Conference. Thank you for your support.

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