



## Rhode Island Coalition of Library Advocates

**NEWSLETTER**  
**Fall, 2013**

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**You are invited!**

### **The Essential Library: Community Leadership Strategies**

Monday, November 18, 2013

1:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Barrington Public Library

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**Presenter(s)/Discussion Leader(s):** John Chrastka, EveryLibrary

The Coalition of Library Advocates (COLA), the Rhode Island Library Association (RILA), and the RI Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS) are teaming up to present an afternoon focused on community asset building.

John Chrastka, a long-time library trustee and founder of EveryLibrary, will talk about his experiences and share advice and techniques on how to identify, communicate and build relationships with the leaders and organizations in your community and how to strengthen



partnerships among librarians, trustees and other stakeholders. A panel will share lessons learned from this fall's Geek the Library campaign sponsored by RILA. Bring your own questions and insights to the short breakout session, and expect a wealth of ideas and information you can use.

**Registration required.** Limited to 75 participants. Sign up free at <http://www.olis.ri.gov/services/ce/regis.php>

**Intended Audience:** Library directors and staff, trustees, friends, and other library supporters

## COLA ACTIVITIES, 2012-13

COLA has kept busy since our last newsletter. Highlights:

**October 21, 2012:** COLA joined with other Rhode Island library groups to host a reception for Senator Jack Reed (D-RI), who has long been a powerful advocate of libraries. His support for the Institute of Museum and Library Service (IMLS), the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), and other measures has been critical for public libraries. He was instrumental in funding the Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL) grants, and he supports the Strengthening Kids' Interest in Learning and Libraries (SKILLS) Act, which would give more students access to effective school library programs. In 2012 the American Library Association (ALA) gave Reed its highest honor, an honorary lifetime membership (COLA's own Chair Emerita, Joan Ress Reeves, nominated him), and the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) presented him with its Crystal Apple award. The presidents of ALA and AASL were at RISD to congratulate him, along with about 130 enthusiastic Rhode Island fans. The food was elegant, the speeches and the company were outstanding. It was a perfect event, except for one thing: Senator Reed missed it, because his plane was grounded in DC.

**February 12, 2013:** Days after a powerful blizzard shut down Rhode Island, COLA stalwarts dug out for our annual meeting at the State House. Highlights:

- **Sweethearts of the Year** are Senator David Bates (Rep., Barrington/Bristol) and Representative Joy Hearn (Dem., Barrington/East Providence), in recognition of their distinguished service to Rhode Island's libraries and bipartisan effectiveness as co-chairs of the Karla Harry Commission on Libraries.
- The 2013 **Linda Aldrich School Library Media Scholarship** was awarded to Kristin Ripley-McNamar.
- The 2013 **William Bergeron Public Library Scholarship** was awarded to Rhoads Elliott Stevens.
- **Guest speaker** Dr. Renee Hobbs of URI's Harrington School discussed four central values for the rapidly changing field of librarianship: memory, search, community, and voice.

**April 2, 2013:** The Board voted against raising dues, and added lower rates for students and retirees.

**September 10, 2013:** The Board endorsed RILA's fall Geek the Library campaign. Geek the Library is a nationwide library-awareness movement, sponsored by OCLC with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The campaign defines "to geek" as a verb: to love, celebrate, know a lot about. COLA geeks libraries.

**November 18, 2013:** COLA is again collaborating with OLIS and RILA to bring you a speaker and panel with exciting practical ideas about winning support for your library (see front page).

**February 11, 2014:** Save this date for our annual reception and meeting at the State House, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

### FRIENDS' CORNER

We are looking for information from any of the Friends Groups at the many libraries around the state. If you have an event you would like to publicize or have someone you would like to recognize statewide, please contact Gale Eaton at [gale.eaton@verizon.net](mailto:gale.eaton@verizon.net) with the details for inclusion in the next newsletter. The deadline for inclusion is December 31.

October 20-26 is National Friends of Libraries Week. See [http://www.ala.org/united/grants\\_awards/friends/friendsweek](http://www.ala.org/united/grants_awards/friends/friendsweek) for tools and ideas.

## BANNED WEBSITES AWARENESS

By Nancy McEnanly, MLS

Everyone has been aware of *Banned Books Week* and its emphasis on educating the public about censorship attempts in public and school libraries. However, a new issue is appearing which, according to *USA Today*, appears to be more of a threat to students' education and intellectual freedom. In an article from July 24, 2011, teachers said "filtering software and school rules designed to keep out violence and pornography are also blocking key educational and otherwise useful sites, including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube—not to mention Google and National Geographic."

In response to this growing issue, the American Library Association recognized September 28, 2011, the middle of *Banned Books Week*, as *Banned Websites Awareness Day*.

In an unscientific poll of 216 EdWeb.net members, 87% reported that Facebook and MySpace were blocked, 62% said they were unable to access YouTube, 47% were unable to access personal email. More surprisingly, 27% said Google Docs were blocked, 23% reported Google Images blocked and 14% were unable to use the Google search engine. In other surveys, teachers from various districts across the country reported they are unable to access *Skype*, *Glogster*, *Blogspot*, and *Khan Academy*. (In a side note, Providence does not currently block the various Google products, *Glogster*, *Blogspot*, or *Khan Academy*.)

The Internet has a great deal of potential to help teach today's youth, sometimes referred to as 'Digital Natives' because they have grown up surrounded by these electronic resources and devices. Among the top reasons districts are adopting these so-called Web 2.0 technologies are the ability to address students' individual learning needs, engaging students' attention and increasing students'

options for access to teaching and learning. In a survey of 500 district level Technology Directors, 65% responded that online communication tools are the most widely used technologies used by over 75% of their teachers, while 50% reported that more than 75% use digital resources in the curriculum. 77% of the respondents agreed that Web 2.0 has value for teaching and learning, but 70% block online social networking and 72% block chat rooms in the classrooms.

Barriers to implementing the use of these technologies can be broken down into two general categories: human and technological. Human factors include the need for someone to monitor appropriate use of the resources, lack of teacher knowledge on using the technology effectively and general perceptions about the lack of instructional value or appropriateness of the technology. Technology concerns include student safety, concerns about district network or data security, and limited support systems, including tech personnel for instruction and trouble-shooting. Although there is broad agreement that Web 2.0 applications have educational value, the use of these tools remains in the hands of individual pioneering classrooms. The critical need to use these technologies is widely espoused by districts across the nation, but few have begun to systemically research, plan or implement effective uses of the tools; neither have they restructured their schools to enable participatory reform.

The need to protect users of these new technologies became evident soon after they started to become widely available. In response, in 1974, Congress passed the *Family Educational Rights and Protection Act* (FERPA), which allows students access to their own records in order to correct or update them, and requires prior consent, with a few exceptions, before release of personal information.

This was followed in 1998 with the *Children's Online Privacy Protection Act* (COPPA) designed to

protect the identity and private information of children under the age of 13. It details the responsibilities of websites in protecting the privacy of children and restricts marketing to them. Then in 2000, Congress passed the controversial *Children's Internet Protection Act* (CIPA). This law requires schools and libraries to provide filtering software on computers accessed by children through the age of 17 as a condition of acceptance of federal funds called E-Rates which help them fund the availability of these new technologies. The controversy is due to the way CIPA has been administered by public library and school officials.

The original intent of the filtering software was to protect underage children from pornography and other undesirable websites in order to keep them safe from child predators. Many locations interpreted this to include social networking sites like *Facebook* or *MySpace*. Filters were also set up to block words with perceived sexual content. The outcome has been far-reaching. Students doing research on a number of topics can find themselves blocked from legitimate resources. For example, a student doing research on cancer for a health class can find *The American Cancer Society* blocked in some systems because the word 'breast' is displayed prominently.

Many educators have begun to embrace the potential uses of the new technologies available online. One example is the class whose teacher set up a class *Facebook* page which allowed students to share their ideas while working on a class project. Students from previous classes even checked in there and helped critiquing and editing the students currently enrolled. However, teachers are often finding themselves blocked from using some of the most useful communications tools ranging from *Facebook* to *Twitter* to personal email. The collaborative possibilities between teachers and students, as well as students with each other, are lost when students do not receive the immediate feedback. As a result, teachers in various locations

are beginning to protest the extent of what they see as overzealous filtering.

In the Spring of 2011, in a comment on a community board on EdWeb.net, Michelle Luhtala, an award-winning library media specialist in Connecticut, mentioned that she would be turning *Banned Books Week* into *Banned Websites Week*. Others joined her in her cause, including the New England Library Association. The proposal was quickly acknowledged by the American Association of School Librarians, a division of the American Library Association. It proclaimed September 28, 2011, the middle of *Banned Books Week* as *Banned Websites Awareness Day*. In an effort to create awareness, one school, which normally has an open environment, blocked the most commonly blocked sites. Students, who were all aware of why they were blocked that day, were upset at the lack of freedom and the limitations imposed upon them. AASL celebrated the third annual Banned Websites Awareness Day in September.

In August, 2011, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) clarified an earlier ruling which resulted in widespread blocking of social media sites by school districts. In their statement, they said, "*Although it is possible that certain individual Facebook or MySpace pages could potentially contain material harmful to minors, we do not find that these websites are per se 'harmful to minors' or fall into one of the categories that schools and libraries must block.*" As a result, districts have until July 2012 to meet the new federal mandate by updating their Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs) to allow appropriate use of these sites. Schools must now show more specificity in how they are teaching students about appropriate online behaviors, whether that interaction takes place at home or at school. These lessons include cyber-bullying awareness, prevention and intervention. School Boards will need to adapt current policies for both students and staff members to include responsible use of both current and emerging technologies.

## ADVOCATING OUR COMMUNITIES, BUILDING OUR LIBRARIES

Our friends and allies in the RI library community have also been busy. Governor Chafee has declared October **Information Literacy Month** in RI, and RILA and SLRI are cosponsoring an Information Literacy Social in URI's Galanti Lounge, October 15, 4:30 – 7:00 p.m. For more information, visit [www.rilibraries.org/](http://www.rilibraries.org/).

RILA's fall 2013 fundraiser is a Tattooed Librarians/Library Workers of Rhode Island calendar for 2014. Do your holiday shopping at <http://rilibraries.org/tattooed-librarians-ocean-state>.

The October 25 Cornucopia of Rhode Island conference at CCRI's Knight Campus will look at "More Than Slavery: The History of African-Americans in Rhode Island, 1650 – Present." See [cornucopiaofri.blogspot.com/](http://cornucopiaofri.blogspot.com/) for information.

At the last North Atlantic Health Sciences Libraries (NAHSL) conference, Michelle Kraft gave a course on "The Evolving Librarian." Sally Gore's class notes read like a comic strip and a call to arms: "Do libraries matter? ACTION! Get busy, folks!": <http://librarianhats.net/2013/09/20/caught-on-sketchbook/>. This year's conference will be at Falmouth, MA, October 27-29.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

As I write this (October 2), the United States government is temporarily shut down. This affects RI libraries in many ways. Obviously the flow of federal funds is cut off. The Institute of Museum and Library Services is closed. IMLS is the federal agency that disperses grants and funds to libraries under the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA).

But the flow of information is also curtailed. I cannot go to the IMLS website to find out how much libraries depend on federal funding. (Back in 2004, federal sources accounted for just one per cent of public library funding nationwide.) The websites of the U.S. Census and the Library of Congress are closed. So are many others that librarians consult frequently.

Last fall, after Hurricane Sandy, we hunkered down and waited for the power to come back on; some of us had generators. This fall, as we wait for the government to come back on, I turn to the Internet Archive and the Wayback Machine: <http://archive.org/web/web.php>. They captured the IMLS website in September; the latest survey of public libraries is under "Research." (As of FY 2010, federal sources accounted for 0.5 percent of public library revenue.)

Keep posted on library advocacy needs at our website, [colari.org](http://colari.org), or the American Library Association's advocacy pages, <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/> – and please join us to help support RI libraries of all types.

And keep us posted on your library's advocacy needs and efforts. COLA is a grass-roots organization. We need to hear from you.

Cordially,

*Gale Eaton*, Chair

Non-Profit Organization

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**Rhode Island Coalition of Library Advocates  
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***A Call to All Rhode Island Library Friends Groups***

Now is the time to toot your horn, showcase your accomplishments – and most important, be a model for other Friends Groups across Rhode Island.

Nominate your Friends Group for a **William E. Reeves Recognition Award**, to be presented at the COLA Annual Meeting in February at the Rhode Island State House.

Each winning Friends Group will receive an Award Certificate and a check for \$100 (One Hundred Dollars). All eligible Friends Groups are invited to enter. A maximum of four awards will be granted. Friends Groups must be members of COLA to be eligible. One entry per group. Decision of judges is final.

Categories are: Fundraising, Outreach, Education, and Community Service. Applications must be received by **January 31, 2014**.

Mail or e-mail your completed application (as inserted in this newsletter or posted to [www.colari.org](http://www.colari.org)) along with any printed publicity, photos, and other supporting materials to:

COLA, P.O. Box 3777, Cranston, RI 02910, Attn: Reeves Award, or [cola.rhodeisland@gmail.com](mailto:cola.rhodeisland@gmail.com)