

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

LSTA Success Story	2
CT Librarian	4
MakerSpace Celebration	5
Bibliophile Bear	5
CT Author	6
Open Source Library Software	7
PEG Grants Available	8
CLA Archives Organized	9

2014 Conference



The CLA 2014 Conference will be held on **April 28-29** at Crowne Plaza Hartford - Cromwell.

Membership Matters!

by Richard Conroy, CLA President 2013-2014

Membership matters! It was my honor and privilege to assume the role of CLA President at our June Executive Board meeting. One of my priorities this year will be to help spread the word to others about the value of membership in our organization. I first became active with CLA about five years ago when I joined the Career Development Committee. I did so because I wanted to give something back to a profession that has provided me with a tremendous amount of personal satisfaction.

Once I became more involved I gained a deeper appreciation for all that CLA does for its members. Scholarships, PEG grants, workshops, the Annual Conference, the recently held Library Leadership Institute, and the upcoming Information Literacy Conference are just a few of the ways that CLA serves our profession. Perhaps most importantly, CLA offers numerous opportunities to network with your peers, an intangible but extremely valuable, benefit.

I am also very pleased and proud to be able to say that CLA played a major role in the passage of HB 5614 during the most recent session of the State Legislature. As a result,

Connecticut became the first state in the nation to enact legislation that mandates an investigation of publishers' practices regarding the sale of ebooks to public libraries. I can think of no better example of the important ways in which CLA advocates for its members.

Our organization currently has over 700 members. That number may sound impressive, but it represents a small fraction of those who are employed by, or who directly support in other ways, Connecticut's libraries. The Connecticut Library Association has been an outstanding resource for all of our state's libraries including public, academic, school and special institutions, since its inception in 1891. Please help spread the word about the important work that CLA is doing among your colleagues and encourage those who are not already members to join today. ♦

Richard Conroy is Director of the Essex Library Association.



LSTA Success Story by Douglas Lord

Start Your Own ESL Family Welcome Center – Big Picture to Nuts and Bolts



Are you seeing lots of different ESL and immigrant populations in your town? Would you like to create a child-appropriate ELL Center with multicultural programming and materials for this special population – but don't have the cash on hand to do so?

You're not alone. Few libraries have the resources and staff to create a multi-pronged approach to address the literacy needs of children and families who speak English as a Second Language.

That's why it's important to follow the leads of large libraries and grant recipients; copying their successes and best practices will help you start successfully. The Queens (NY) Library, for example, is notable for its intensive [Immigrant Family Literacy Program](#), while the Houston Public Library and Children's Museum of Houston partner on [Para los Niños](#) (For the Children), a family learning program serving parents whose first language is Spanish. The New York Public Library created outreach sites at neighborhood health clinics and hospitals with the [Vamos A Leer a Nuestros Niños](#) (Let's Read to Our Children) project where staff modeled reading aloud and distributed bilingual and Spanish language books.

Brooklyn, NY also had a program titled Para los Niños. [Adriana Mitchell](#), Children's Librarian at [Windsor Terrace](#) Library (one of the BPL's 58 neighborhood libraries), says, "we offered bilingual (English/Spanish) story times that welcomed Latinos and any family interested in learning another language. We focused on demonstrating activities parents could easily do to develop literacy, numeracy, science concepts and social and emotional development at home with their children using readily accessible materials. Families had the opportunity to come to the library and participate in a safe, educational environment for free. This proved a great opportunity

to engage Latino families that were not familiar with what the library offered and served as platform to create new and life time library users."

According to a recent American Library Association's study, *native language literacy is a significant factor when developing programs and services for non-English speakers.*

A little closer to home, the Hartford Public Library (HPL) implemented the '**Family Welcome Initiative**' (FWI) across its ten locations beginning in 2011. Sue Cormier, Children's Consultant for the Connecticut State Library said of the project, "Elements of Hartford's grant, such as working with community partners, developing diverse collections and creating welcoming multicultural spaces could be replicated in any library to the benefit of all families." She added, "Connecticut's libraries, large and small, are part of an increasingly global society."

Perhaps you have started working on your library's ELL collection; by knowing the specific language needs of your community and making a few key purchases you can kick-start your own 'Family Welcome Center' and grow it over time.

COMMUNICATING, ASSESSING NEEDS

Knowing the ethnic makeup of your community is key. In Hartford, a remarkable 22% of residents (27,545 people) are foreign-born; the city is 41% Hispanic / Latino, and 72% of that group identify Latin America as their birthplace. A staggering 47% of the population aged 5 years and over speak a language other than English at home, and the Hartford Public Schools report over 50 languages spoken by students.

HPL has been welcoming diverse families to the library for many years and wanted FWI to be a respectful, positive place.

CONTINUED ON P. 3



They knew that researching the languages spoken in town was important, but that on-the-ground communication is much more useful. Librarians need to know that talking to people – users, non-users, sister organizations – helps determine needs. Why do they come to the library? Why *don't* they come? Might your town have undocumented residents or refugees? Many librarians are surprised to learn that Hartford and its environs are home to a lot of refugee families resettled through the efforts of [Catholic Charities](#).

The library conducted an assessment of parent/caregiver needs regarding multicultural programs and services in February 2011 at three locations: downtown, the Mark Twain Branch (Asylum Hill neighborhood) and the Camp Field Branch (South End neighborhood). Results showed that 70% of the respondents spoke a language other than English at home, 63% were interested in bilingual story times, and 86% were interested in more youth reading materials in their home languages. 93% favored the library offering ongoing multicultural programs for children and families.

Similarly, the library sought the expertise of the city's [Early Learning Centers](#) (ELC) as sister organizations. Interviews with directors had one thing in common: all advocated for bilingual, multilingual, and multicultural materials along with story time programs in native languages. These, they explained, would help patrons maintain a connection to their cultural background and develop the fundamental early literacy skills that build successful readers.

In response, the library developed a program of family-centric bilingual and multicultural story times to help make the English-language learning process more accessible and effective for children aged three to seven and their parents and guardians who are English Language Learners; the project included materials in the home languages of families.

IMPLEMENTATION

To ramp up FWI, HPL applied for and

received a \$26,870 Library Services and Technology Act ([LSTA](#)) grant. High-quality, age-appropriate English language learning materials celebrated and affirmed participant's cultural and linguistic heritages. Youth Librarians offered story times at multiple sites – seventeen schools and ELC locations and HPL's [nine library sites](#) - based on picture books that depicted a variety of racial, ethnic and cultural groups. The stories helped children develop an awareness of themselves and others from different ethnic backgrounds.

Funding enabled circulation of thousands of library materials and programming opportunities that cemented the library as the community's best resource for multicultural families. An impressive total of 675 persons were served with 162 ELL story times held for families. The lesson plans incorporated multicultural concepts; children enjoyed cultural games focused on "favorites" (e.g., foods, colors, and holidays) and made crafts like flags, fans, maracas, and rain sticks.

HPL placed a premium on robust in-service training to ensure long-term success. Among other CE opportunities that served a total of about 70 library and ELC staff, the library held two professionally-facilitated [multicultural workshops](#) featuring [Dr. William Howe](#), program manager for culturally responsive education, multicultural education, and civil rights at the Connecticut Department of Education. Library staff and ELC teachers improved their ability to work with culturally diverse populations by providing appropriate, respectful, and supportive multicultural services; the training was [videoed](#) and viewed by about 45 staffers (read the October, 2012 *CLA Today* article about Howe's workshops [here](#)).

Another element of success was getting programs *out* of the library when possible; events at community centers, like three family multicultural storytelling events that featured multicultural storytellers, allowed parents easy opportunities to embrace their ethnicity and get to know the library's range of services.

Funding also underwrote a Family Multicultural Fair that promoted heritage and celebrated diversity. Families listened to bilingual stories in Spanish, Portuguese, Hindi, and French/Haitian; with storytelling, art, games, and music, the fair drew 360 patrons. Many adults took the opportunity to read stories in their native language and the fair featured a Portuguese musical performance by the preschoolers and teachers of Our Lady of Fatima daycare. Participating families even brought traditional native foods. Each library branch's children's room hosted country craft fairs where local students selected countries to study; resulting displays were exhibited for three weeks; similarly, partner sites displayed multicultural library materials and hosted special family story times during open houses. One school brought their predominantly Spanish customers to the library to enjoy the new materials and resources.

Throughout the project, staff received positive feedback from parents and caregivers and saw steady increases in families visiting library locations for monthly family story times. ELC staff made referrals to the library, and teachers appreciated the multicultural books, videos and CDs that matched with their curriculum themes.

OUTPUTS, MATERIALS

During its first year, FWI served 80 families, trained 98 ELC staff members, served approximately 565 children aged three to seven, and circulated 1,011 LSTA-funded items. A total of 170 ELC families attended Family Multicultural Night events. The bilingual story times in Spanish, Hindi, French, and Portuguese attracted 75 child and parent attendees; 120 people attended library tours, during which 90 library cards were issued. Additionally, 721 bilingual books were put into circulation; roughly half were Spanish, 10% were Portuguese, and 12% were Chinese. Amid a sprinkling of Polish and Arabic titles there were also Somali materials and French titles for Hartford's sizeable Hai-

CONTINUED ON P. 9

CT Librarian: Siobhan Grogan



"I am satisfied with having started the "Cruisers" a group of volunteers who shelf read and also vacuum the shelves and books. The library, like much of Mexico, is an indoor/outdoor type of facility, which is wonderful but brings in a staggering amount of dust into the stacks."

Growing up in Cos Cob, Connecticut, our small branch library was just two blocks away across the Post Road, so I have been a lifelong library user. After graduating from Villanova University and doing some traveling I wound up in New Haven and then Bozrah teaching GED classes. When I saw an opening for a Library Assistant at Cragin Memorial Library in Colchester, I saw an opportunity to work in familiar surroundings, meet people and learn more about library work. The Director then, Elsie Treggor had worked at the Homer Babidge Library and was enthusiastic about jump starting Cragin, which was very small but had a forwarding looking Board of Trustees and Friends group. Ms. Treggor encouraged me to continue with my education and I enrolled at SCSU and received my MLS in 1998. When Cragin's Director retired I became Co-Director with Debra Carrier-Perry, who moved on to Hartford PL, and I served as Director from 1997 to 2009.

My husband (a Baltimorean who never loved New England climate) and I decided after visiting different parts of Mexico for several years, that we would like to make a change before we got too old or too complacent. Our two children were finished college and we were both healthy and somewhat ad-

venturous. We loved the colors, culture, climate, cuisine and people of Mexico and we speak conversational Spanish. We chose Oaxaca (wa- HOCK- ah) for the reasons above; the weather is just fabulous with cool nights and warm days all year round. Oaxaca is located in a high valley at 5,000 feet in the Sierra Madres and the city is a UNESCO World Heritage site, with wonderful architecture, cobblestoned streets, astounding gastronomy (the land of the seven moles!) as well as ubiquitous and cheap public transportation.

The Oaxaca Lending Library was started in the mid 1960s (oaxlibrary.org) by expats and today is a bustling meeting place, with memberships at about \$30 per year. There are two part time Oaxacan employees and everything else (financial, plant maintenance, book selection, programs and events, fund raising, greeters, circ. desk, a Saturday bilingual story time, etc.) is run by volunteers. It is a phenomenal place, with over 20,000 books (most in English) DVDs books on CD, magazines, public computers, wifi, and even a café! There are about 2,000 foreigners who live in the city and environs six or months of the year or more, with another 2,000 who live in other parts of Oaxaca, which is about the size of Maine but very moun-

tainous; it takes eight hours to get to the beach – less than 175 miles. Of course between November and April this number swells). Many residents have fascinating backgrounds and former lives; plenty of artists and writers, travelers, Fulbright scholars and seekers; many offer to give presentations at the OLL. I met the wonderful children's author Harry Allard soon after moving here; by the way there is a new Miss Nelson book coming soon. I plan to get more involved with the library (OLL) later on but for now I am satisfied with having started the "Cruisers" a group of volunteers who shelf read and also vacuum the shelves and books. The library, like much of Mexico, is an indoor/outdoor type of facility, which is wonderful but brings in a staggering amount of dust into the stacks. This is a flexible and satisfying job and one certainly learns the collection; I admit I'm yearning to do some weeding.

My job is as a teacher ("profe" or "maestra") at Universidad La Salle Oaxaca (ulsaoaxaca.edu.mx) which is affiliated with the LaSalle high schools and colleges all around the world. I got certified as an ESL instructor in Guadalajara after leaving Connecticut in 2009. There are about 1500 students studying towards twelve degrees/majors and all are

CONTINUED ON P. 10

MakerSpace Celebration



Westport Library recently celebrated the first anniversary of their MakerSpace with a big birthday party. The birthday cake, picture above, is completely edible except for a few wooden dowels on top! The party attracted well over 100 people, who decorated electric-light party hats and listened to talks about the history and future of the MakerSpace. The library plans to move ahead with more making, instruction and 3D printing! ♦

The Hungry Bibliophile Bear

West Hartford Library (West Hartford, CT) patron Bob Snook was on vacation in New Hampshire during the 4th of July when a curious bear took an interest in his library book (Red Country by Joe Abercrombie, for those who are curious). To quote Francis Bacon, “Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.” Needless to say, this was the best story we have heard regarding the need to pay a replacement cost on an item. The West Hartford Library was voted best library in the region by Hartford Magazine for 2013, and consists of three library branches, serving a population of over 60,000. ♦



Pictured: Bob Snook and the Hungry Bibliophile Bear. Photo credit: Bob and Alyssa Snook.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Richard Conroy

Essex Library Association

Vice President/President Elect

David Boudinot

Henry Carter Hull Library

Past President/Nominations

Carl DeMilia

New Milford Public Library

Treasurer

Christina Baum

Southern Connecticut State

University

Recording Secretary

Michele Martin

Greenwich Library

Region 1 Rep

Patricia Lunn

Region 2 Rep

Marjorie Ruschau

Region 3 Rep

Peter F. Ciparelli

Region 4 Rep

Sheri Szymanski

Region 5 Rep

Christy Billings

Region 6 Rep

Kate Byroade

ALA Chapter Councilor

Carl A. Antonucci

NELA Representative

Dana Tonkonow

CT Author: Mark Rubinstein interviewed by Douglas Lord

“Writing is a labor of pure love. I can't imagine not writing. I don't know what I'd do with myself”

~ Mark Rubinstein



Connecticut author Mark Rubinstein, author of [Love Gone Mad](#) (on sale September 1st from Thunder Lake) and 2012's [Mad Dog House](#) has an unlikely-sounding pedigree. After completing an undergraduate degree in business administration at NYU he became an Army field medic; post-service he attended medical school specializing in psychiatry. He went into private practice in New York City, taught psychiatric residents and mental health professionals, and also practiced forensic psychiatry. Before turning to fiction, Rubinstein coauthored five medical self-help books on subjects as varied as the emotional development of children to a primer on the physical and psychological experience of cosmetic facial surgery. Rubinstein lives with his wife and “as many dogs as she will allow in the house.”

You write a lot; what's coming up for you? In about 10 months *Mad Dog Justice* (sequel to *Mad Dog House*) comes out, and about 10 months after that *Assassin's Lullaby* will be released. It's something of a legal thriller about a writer in the D.A.'s sights because his wife's death is similar to a novel he's writing. I try to write thrillers that combine my medical and psychiatric training with some of my experience as a forensic psychiatrist. After that, I have started another novel called *Bedlam's Door*.

What book do you wish you had written and why? Philip Roth's *American Pastoral* is one of the finest novels I've ever read. Lyrical, poignant, and beautifully written when Roth was at the peak of his considerable powers.

How much re-writing and self-editing do you do? When do you show it to someone else? Writing is essentially re-writing. You must write, re-write, edit, re-edit, re-write again. Then you perhaps show it to an objective critic. After he/she goes over it, you must begin all over again. It can seem endless but eventually, you reach the point of diminishing returns and must hand it in.

Have you ever gotten 'writer's block?' While some mornings I feel an initial reluctance, real writers' block has never happened

to me. I don't believe there's such a thing. Rather, it's something that can happen when a writer is unwilling (for whatever reason) to undertake the hard slog of writing – and believe me, writing is very hard work. You must bare your soul -warts, blemishes and all - and have to be willing to mercilessly slice, cut, and dice your writing. Above all, you must be willing to have some people absolutely loathe what you've written even as others love it.

Was it difficult to switch between writing self-help and thrillers? Medical self-help books were a lot of fun. It was great 'translating' sophisticated medical concepts and terminology into language understandable and helpful to lay people, but there's nothing like creating fiction. It's like you enter into another zone--I suppose any kind of creativity has its own aura, whether one is a painter, sculptor, or artist in any endeavor. It's almost like being a child again; you're free to use your imagination and just "make stuff up." Where else can you get away with that?

How easy is it to concoct villains? Dark characters are interesting when you make them conflicted and complicated - the way most people truly are. Villains are people - complex, flawed, and multi-dimensional. Conrad Wilson (from *Love Gone Mad*) is part Jason (from the 'Halloween' movies), part super-athlete, and part violent, intellectually gifted man. He's also a jealous, paranoid, out-of-control monster. I had no trouble concocting him – but I wouldn't want to meet him in a dark alley. Roddy Dolan, the protagonist in *Mad Dog House*, has a great deal going on in his psyche. He pays a price for that, and is quite heroic in his way. Fiction, fantasy, psychiatry, medicine, imagination and life ... they all combine (I hope) when I write.

What Muppet would you be? I always loved that little blue guy Grover.

What have you read recently? Along with some literary fiction I recently read Joseph Finder's [Killer Instinct](#) and Linwood Barclay's [Never Look Away](#). ♦

Douglas Lord is the LSTA Coordinator at the Connecticut State Library

Open Source Library Software: Risks and Rewards

by **Bruce Johnston**, Systems Librarian at the J. Eugene Smith Library, Eastern Connecticut State University

Recently I had an experience with an open source library application that drew on everything I knew, plus a couple of things that I had to learn very quickly, in order to resolve a crisis. I am withholding names to protect the innocent, as it really wasn't the software's fault. It was given the blessing to exist by our institution's IT department, who even supplied a server and storage, and I had built it over a year ago for one of our library departments. Then suddenly, a few weeks ago, we received 2 weeks' notice that IT was pulling the plug on the server and to "get all our stuff off of it," as it was being decommissioned.

My daily work involves many technical things, as you might guess. The true art and wonder of my job, however, is in working with the people on both sides of the technology divide. It might all be (mostly) in English, but the two sides speak completely different languages, and I routinely see the results of miscommunication. I often feel stuck in the middle, but it is from this perspective that I see both the risks and rewards of using open source library software, or home grown applications. In this brief article, I hope to stimulate some thinking about the instances where you have considered and possibly implemented "free" software for specific library purposes, to help assess the relative safety and benefits of venturing down that path.

What software do you depend upon in your library? There is the integrated library system, of course. Most libraries understand its core importance, and as a result, most pay for a vendor-supported system, often pooling resources by joining a consortium. There are some intrepid libraries out there using open source software for this set of functions, but not many, and most of them secure third-party application support. But what about smaller library functions? Perhaps a special proprietary collection is managed with a home-grown database application, or an open source tool. Someone may discover some free software out there that would allow your library to do something new, and you want to "keep up" with other libraries. When do you decide to use free software over paid software? Is there a mechanism for re-evaluating the decision as circumstances change?

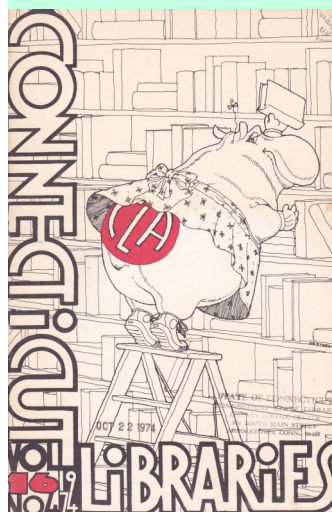
In the above example of the software that required an emergency rescue, there were a couple of lessons to be learned. First, successfully building it created an immediate dependency on it by the department. While the department head and I still agree this was the right tool for the job, I think we underestimated the resulting importance of this software for the department. If there had been a narrow choice between the open source product and paid software, this almost certainly would have biased the decision to purchase and implement a product that was vendor supported.

Second, although I was aware that this software had a database

component, I did not realize the work that went into it after it was up and running was cumulative. The software produced and exported a separate, finished product, and I thought the story ended there. However, the data entered into it remains in the software for ongoing use. As the department had revised their procedures to use this software as a central component of their workflow, this effectively meant that an entire year of work for the whole department was at risk if the cumulative data wasn't successfully migrated. It all worked out, but if this had been a vendor supported product, we could have pursued options for hosting and long-term data backup that the open source software simply doesn't have. Even now, I am not entirely comfortable with the level of risk exposure in using open source software for what has evolved into such an integral part of the department's work.

I mentioned earlier that I see both risks and rewards in using open source software. Potential benefits are usually more obvious. It allows the library to try something new for little upfront cost compared to a paid product. It might also provide functionality that simply isn't available from any software currently on the market. And it is professionally worthwhile to regularly try new things that may improve old practices. However, if an open source project exceeds expectations and really takes off, it is up to the library to maintain its awareness of the importance of open source software in its daily work, and to manage the potential risk accordingly. Good luck with your next project! ♦

Blast from the Past



This was the cover of *Connecticut Libraries* Vol. 16 No. 4 from 1974. It was the first issue under the direction of a newly constituted editorial committee. The change was occasioned by the resignation of Meredith Bloss, who for the previous seven years served as Editor-in-Chief. ♦

PEG Grants Available

by **Marjorie Ruschau**, Region 2 representative and librarian at Meriden Public Library

Do you want to become a star librarian but can't afford the class that might help you do so? And your town doesn't have the money to pay for it?

Let the Connecticut Library Association come to your rescue! The CLA offers Program for Education grants, commonly known as PEG grants, to its members to improve their knowledge and skills. The money can be used for continuing education programs, workshops, institutes or other activities.

However, PEG grants can't be used to help you get your degree. They also can't help you with that cooking class you have always wanted to take or those tango lessons in case you bump into Maksim Chmerkovskiy.

But they can make it possible for you to attend a workshop on how to plan activities that will appeal to teens or take a class on how to get the word out about what a great library your town offers.

Two recent recipients of \$400 PEG grants – Brandie Doyle and Chris Angeli, both of Middletown's Russell Library – will use them to attend the 2013 New England Library Leadership Symposium.

CLA members are limited to one award a year, and that award can't exceed \$400. But you won't get the money until you have completed the class and turned in all your receipts and a written report on it. The report should summarize the class and how it will help you at the library – basically a "what I did on my summer vacation" without the "summer" or the "vacation" parts. The report might be published in CLA Today if the editor chooses.

If CLA is flooded with grant requests, preference will be given to first-time applicants. Applicants do not have to have library science degrees. Library technical assistants, clerks or others who work in a library will also be considered.

To apply for a grant, fill out the application available on the CLA website and mail it to Peter Ciparelli, Killingly Public Library, 25 Westcott Road, Danielson, CT 06239 or fax it to him at 860 779-1823. For more information about the grants, see the CLA website or contact Ciparelli. ♦

Outgoing CLA President Carl DeMilia (right), passes the gavel to incoming CLA President Richard Conroy (left) at the June, 2013 Board Meeting.



Connecticut's professional organization of over 1,000 librarians, library staff, friends, and trustees working together: to improve library service to Connecticut, to advance the interests of librarians, library staff, and librarianship, and to increase public awareness of libraries and library services.

CLA Today is the newsletter of the Connecticut Library Association. Published every other month, it is posted to the CLA website. Please send submissions for future issues to editor Jennifer Datum at editor@ctlibrarians.org.

If you are interested in serving on the Editorial Board, contact Douglas Lord at Douglas.Lord@ct.gov.

www.ctlibraryassociation.org



tian Creole population. Multicultural DVDs and CDs as well as ‘Teach Me More English’ audio CDs were added, as was phonemic-awareness software, [TeLL Me More English](#), and [EuroTalk Interactive Vocabulary Builder Learn American English](#).

Additionally, LSTA provided critical, often overlooked, background funding for program supplies ranging from [multicultural crayons](#) and googly eyes to markers, stampers, and flyers.

OUTCOMES

The project also achieved strong outcome based evaluation indicators, a set of principles that attempt to answer that toughest of questions: ‘What difference did this project make?’ Statistically valid gains go a long way toward demonstrating a programs’ impact to city and school officials. For every rise in a family’s pre-literacy and literacy levels there is a concomitant drop in the need for remedial school instruction – and funding saved on remedial teachers.

Positive outcomes included 70% (or 56 of 80) of participating parents and guardians reporting a 14% increase in how often they read to their children within a month of beginning FWI activities; there was a similar 16% rise in how long they read.

Library and ELC staff demonstrated advances as well. Among other measures, 95% (or 23 of 24) reported a 62% improvement in their ability to support library customers with cultural needs and differences after the two training sessions. There were also knowledge gains about the five early literacy skills (talking, singing, reading, writing, playing) that help children become successful readers.

Materials/Bibliography

Close to 60% of the grant funds went for library materials. Unfortunately, two vendors ([Multicultural Books and Videos](#) and [Christian Books](#)) caused significant project delays when they backordered items marked as ‘in stock.’ The lesson: verify before ordering!

Representative bibliography; see the growing list [here](#). ♦



CLA Archives Organized



The CLA Archives closet “before.”

A group of volunteers, consisting of Douglas Lord, Arianna Schlegel, Lindsay Riordan, Jennifer Keohane and Jennifer Datum, spent a recent Friday evening cleaning out the contents of the CLA “Archives” (a.k.a. messy closet) at the CLC offices. Their goal was to sort the many files into rough categories in preparation for Jerry Seagrave, CLA Archivist, to come in and determine what needs to be kept. The ultimate goal will be a well-organized record of CLA history, and to have relevant documents and files uploaded to the CLA website as a resource for all. ♦



Lindsay, Doug and Arianna posing with the sorted boxes “after.”



required to take a minimum of four semesters of English.

I volunteer for a splendid organization called Libros Para Pueblos (Books for Towns) (librosparapueblos.org) which began about 15 years ago in Oaxaca city with some interested expats providing books to some primary school near where they lived. Today we have over 70 libraries around the state. All libraries must have strong town support, including providing staff and building "face out" shelving for the collection so that the children can see the bright colors of the illustrated covers. The town official must agree that the books are allowed to be checked out; a novel concept in many areas. Sponsors give \$600 a year so that new books can be purchased for the library annually. These are delivered by the LPP volunteers.

Music, art and dancing are big part of Mexican culture; unfortunately, reading is not; especially reading for pleasure. LPP's goal is to help children discover the joys of reading for fun. Public libraries in Mexico tend to be more archival; full of historic materials and nonfiction, much of which would probably be weeded in the US; there is little popular fiction and very little if anything circulates. Oaxaca does have more than several special libraries, including graphic arts, Oaxacan history even a small two room public newspaper library/reading room in the center of town, by the ethnobotanical garden.

Of course I am homesick at times but I am happy in my new life. Oaxaca's airport has a direct flight to Houston and last Christmas a not so early flight had me there and onward so I was walking in downtown Philadelphia by 4:00 pm. We have had visitors and of course the internet and Skype have changed everything about the way we can keep in touch.

My own reading? I am still a mystery lover; Donna Leon, P.D. James, Simenon, J.L. Burke but am currently reading Doris Lessing (how did I miss her?!) and some Mexican history; some lovely person donates *The New Yorker* so that is a treat; I also love getting recommendations from other readers. In Spanish I read the newspaper (sooo slowly) children's books and my language workbooks. It is a struggle to keep motivated to keep improving with the language but I do want to get to the next level. Traveling for LPP keeps me energized with this and I recently helped with a story hour ([El Pato en Bicicleta / Duck on a Bike](#) by David Shannon) in Teposcolula, a picturesque village amidst rolling green hills about two hours from Oaxaca City. ♦

If any librarians or library staff members in Connecticut would be interested in sponsoring a children's library in Oaxaca, please contact Siobhan: siobhan.grogan@yahoo.com.