Western Maryland Regional Library

LEARNING NEWSLETTER

Serving Allegany, Garrett and Washington counties

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December 2010

Renee Mason is . . .

Marketing the Staff Spotlight

Reflecting on TedX Mid-Atlantic

WCFL's Loo-Wow! Of Learning

Lessons Learned From PaLA

WCFL Has Left the Building...Finally.

Database Dives, Like Polar Bear Plunges but Different

Renee Mason is All About the 'Tude

Julie Zamostny: Hi Renee, thanks so much for agreeing to be in the staff spotlight for this issue of the Western Maryland Regional Library's Learning Newsletter. I think it is important for your colleagues across all three counties to learn about you as a person, your marketing talents, as well as your award winning customer service attitude! Let's start with some background information. Tell us about your work with the Allegany County Library System: how long have you been working there, what are your primary responsibilities, and what your favorite part is about doing what you do.

Renee Mason: Six years ago in August of 2004, I started working as Communications Assistant at the South Cumberland Branch of the Allegany County Library System. I work part-time contractual. Recently my hours increased from 20 to 28 hours per week. My primary job responsibility is to design and produce system-wide promotional materials for our library services. I use desktop publishing tools and skills to create the Alle Update Newsletter, the monthly ACLS Library Email News, system-wide posters and flyers, brochures, bookmarks, etc. I also work on library signage and special campaign projects like the READ posters. Currently, I am creating an annual report in the form of a 2011 Calendar.

My favorite parts about my job? I have flexible hours-this is important for when I have a project due by certain date and the flexibility helps me to better care for my family. I am also thrilled to have artistic license in the graphic creations I make. Most importantly, I work with a wonderful staff.

JZ: From an outsider's point of view it seems like the marketing world is rapidly evolving with the online flood of social media outlets plus the ubiquitous swarm of smart phones and remote Internet connectivity. What are your thoughts on these factors and their impacts on your marketing efforts, especially within the library world?

RM: Our library administration has been quick to adapt to ever changing social media. Other staff members post announcements on Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, and on the scrolling events bar on our homepage. Of course, press releases are sent to local newspapers and radio stations via email and fax.
The impact on our library marketing? We need social media management to manage our online and social presence efficiently and effectively. Digital technology makes it easier for people to have long-distance interaction. I think one of our library marketing goals should be to have a library presence where we can build an open community forum for patron input and dialogue. Patrons can already participate in our online venues and they can even review books on our website.

JZ: Do you have a philosophy of marketing? Can you describe it for us?

RM: My philosophy fits closest to the Societal Marketing Philosophy, "Let's meet the market needs, our business objectives, and do so in a way that also enhances the well being of society". Library marketing is about doing everything we can to place our products or services in the hands of patrons and potential patrons. Utilizing creative marketing campaigns that spark attention and interest helps bring about public awareness of our services. Libraries are offering a convergence of digital technologies, library materials, and physical places for face-to-face interaction. Ultimately this helps with human self actualization--growing into a better human being.

JZ: Let's talk about customer service. You won Allegany County Library System's Customer Service Attitude award in September after your colleagues wrote in several recommendations on your behalf citing your above-and-beyond efforts with the 50th Anniversary celebration events that took place over several months this past summer. Tell us what you did to prepare for that mega event and tell us more about how you went above-and-beyond during the actual celebrations!

RM: I have been involved with the ACLS 50th Anniversary for two years. In February of 2009, staff chose the final logo from a number of my logo drafts. The logo was used on promotional materials and letterhead in 2010. Through the 2009 year I contacted John & Amy Shuman, correspondents of Allegany Magazine, to notify them of our events. Our 50th Anniversary Celebration is a featured article in

Renee Mason is All About the 'Tude

the June/July 2010 issue.

In 2008, students in Penny Knobel-Besa's photography class took photographs of our libraries. This partnership helped us have more library photographs to use in our 50th Anniversary promotional materials. Using the photographs, I created materials for our showcases highlighting the Photograph Contest during National Library Week. I also created a hanging mobile for Westernport's Library, including photo cubes and library cover art CDs.

I worked with Lisa McKenney and Linda Burkey to develop the pamphlet "Allegany County Library System: A Brief History", which was available for patrons throughout our libraries and was distributed at the anniversary events. I also provided the cover for the 50th Anniversary Poetry Booklet and I provided the logo which was printed on our commemorative gift: bags and beach balls.

In April 2010, I gathered photographs and captions for Jill Craig, Digitization Librarian, at Western Maryland Regional Library. She helped us commemorate our 50th Anniversary by digitizing photos, articles, and other ephemera from the library's archive, and hosting the collection on Whilbr at http://www.whilbr.org/CLS_50thAnniversary/index.aspx. Jill has graciously sent us Whilbr cups, so in September, I created a Whilbr cup display with fans and bookmarks.

Starting in our March/April Alle Update Newsletter we listed the anniversary celebrations. Each event involved creating a poster and handouts. I tried a new campaign for the South Cumberland Fair- I created and distributed "tickets" for students in local schools. We had folks calling in for more tickets to come to the *free* library event! A local printer produced the banner I designed for the celebration and we rotated the banner to each library. I talked with folks in the community about the anniversary as I distributed the posters and handouts.

I attended all six major events celebrating our anniversary: Al Feldstein spoke about his book *The Great Cumberland Floods: Disaster in the Queen City* at Frostburg Community Library; The South Cumberland Fair with magician Mr. Dave Thomen; History speakers Francis Zumbrun & Jeff Korman during Heritage Days at Washington Street Library; the Westernport Opening with magician Mike Rose, George's Creek Campfire during George's Creek Days, and the Sock Hop at LaVale.

My camera was in hand for all six events. We needed a face painter at the South Cumberland Fair so I handed my camera over to my sons, who took turns snapping away. My son, Billy, provided music entertainment, playing acoustic guitar at the Fair, the Campfire, and at Westernport's Opening. At the George's Creek Campfire we were short on staff, so the branch manager volunteered Billy to be Smokey Bear. Yes, he secretly liked being a dancing bear! It was interesting to see how each event seemed to be reflective of the library and its community. For instance, the teens at George's Creek Branch have a heavy interest in music and this is reflected in their summer events. At the campfire, a teen boy had a music jam session with my mother, spanning the cultural, genre, and age distance.

JZ: As with marketing, do you have a philosophy of customer service? Can you share it with us?

RM: I think our mission statement wraps it up nicely, "The Allegany County Library System enriches people's lives by providing information, materials, services, and entertaining programs to promote our community, lifelong learning, and opportunity for all."

JZ: To wrap up I have some fun, getting-to-know-you questions that I'd like to ask. First, given the choice of anyone in the world, whom would you want as a dinner guest and why?

RM: Jesus, to ask him what he thinks of Christianity, what were his intentions, and if our religious interpretations of what Christian doctrine says about him is true, and about the Trinity (but then maybe that counts as Three?).

JZ: Lastly, if you could wake up tomorrow having gained one quality or ability, what would it be?

RM: To be an Adobe Certified Expert Master with InDesign CS5 so I can quickly and efficiently produce more fabulous marketing materials for our library.

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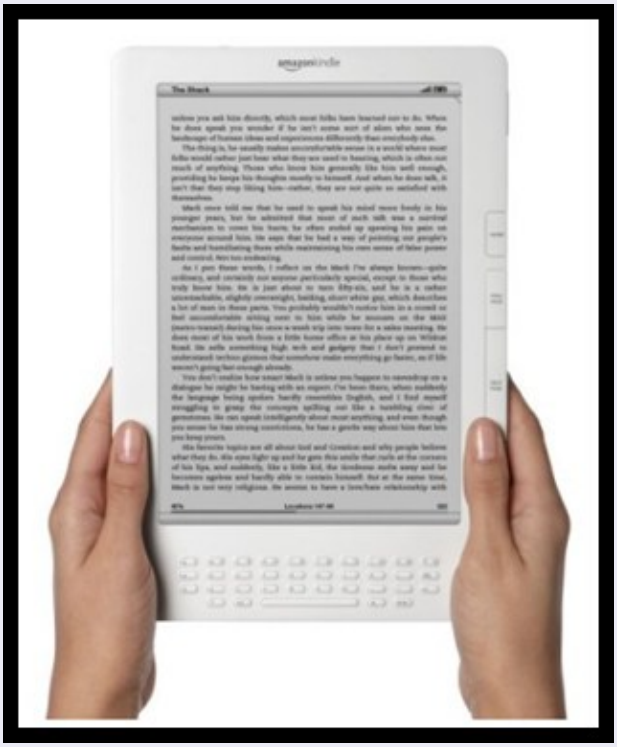
A Kindle in Kind Saves Nine?

Lisa McKenney, ACLS, guest author

I really enjoy my Kindle. I purchased what is now known as a First Generation Kindle in July 2008. My family and I were taking a trip to Ireland in Fall 2008, and after reading up, I knew I had a long flight ahead of me both ways. I wasn't sure how I would like it since I do enjoy the traditional book-on-lap scenario. Would I like the clicking to turn the page? How hard would it be to get the books downloaded? Would I have problems with the Whispernet connection in our area?

Turns out, using the Kindle is a breeze. Downloading the titles literally take me minutes, and I find that the story is the story—it doesn't matter how it is being discovered. If it is a good story, it will be just as enjoyable on the Kindle as it would be in the printed version. And, the beauty of it is that I can have a great selection of titles on my device that fits in my purse, rather than be limited to one book or worry about lugging around multiple heavy books.

I am a regular customer of Amazon.com and I respect them as a company. I've never received anything but top service from them, have rarely had an issue with an order, and I feel their prices are fair. For Kindle, there is a selection of titles that are free, and a larger selection that are to be purchased. In some cases, the free ones that I've selected are classic favorites, like Pride and Prejudice—the kind of books that you will pick up to re-read and enjoy. Other times, Amazon runs some promotional sales, where a Sci-Fi publisher would offer some titles for free. I discovered Naomi Novik's great



Temeraire series this way (His Majesty's Dragon is the first in the series).

As for the books I'm willing to pay for: I'm a librarian and check out many materials from our libraries, but you know how there are those books that you want to check out the moment they come out? Brisingr by Christopher Paolini was one title that I wanted badly when it first came out. In other cases, I oftentimes use the Kindle when traveling on vacation, particularly if I want to delve into a series without filling up my bags. I've read the Percy Jackson series by Rick Riordan, the Maximum Ride series by James Patterson, and many of the titles in the Star Trek paperback series. Of course, any and all Star Wars books that come out in ebook format are a must for me J The cool thing about the juvenile and teen books are (a) I enjoy reading these titles moreso than adult titles in many cases and (b) they are cheaper to purchase from Amazon.com. I do read the occasional book that is written for my level occasionally. ;)

For cons, on the old version of Kindle that I have, the navigation uses a quirky scroll wheel and the menu system takes some getting used to. Also, this particular model does not work well when there is little to no light. Neither of these are insurmountable. I understand that the later versions have made a lot of improvements in these areas.

So, all in all, I'm a fan of the Kindle and ebook devices in general.

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Shots from WCFL's Loo-Wow! of Learning

Staff day was held on November 11, 2010. The workshop was: *Ethics and Serving the Public: Concepts and Tools*, as presented by Jack Marshall, Esq from ProEthics, LTD.

Top left: Charlotte Seibert
Top right: Jack Marshall, Kathleen O'Connell, and Mary Baykan
Middle: WCFL Service Award Winners
Bottom left: Barb Kroneswitter & Carol Appenzellar
Bottom right: Jeff Ridgeway, Harry Sterling, and Shannon Kraushaar

TED^{x} MidAtlantic, Ideas Worth Spreading

John Taube, ACLS, Guest Author

I wanted to go to TEDx because, I like hearing ideas and perceptions from industries and smart people outside of the field of libraries. I also am a big fan of their video casts of the official TED in California. I enter these meetings with a bias, I love it when someone can tie a seemingly distant concern in an understandable package and connect it to my world. I have yet to watch a TED video that didn't inspire me or made me want to share my newly gained insights with everyone.

Two of my favorite lines from TEDx and why they stuck with me.

From my belief that futures are to be created, Saras Sarasvathy said, "To the extent we can control the future, we don't need to predict it," and, "the possible world lies within the actual world."

From my belief that people come first, Otis Rolley said, "the city is the social network where relationships exist," and that, "we must invest in institutions that value the people before you invest in physical things like buildings."

I started to get sleepy as we left at 4:30 AM to get there on time, so several of my notes drift off as I did. I thought the 3D photo machine was pretty cool, but scarily accurate.

I have yet to watch a TED video that didn't inspire me or made me want to share my newly gained insights with everyone.

But to compensate, I just finished reading Power of Pull, by John Hagel, John Seely Brown and Lang Davison. They say the push economy is fading away and that the way of the future is *pull*. Think of a push economy like a "planned society" or a large bureaucracy where we are cogs to a centralized power. In *pull* we are all contributors and seek to follow our passion as a route to success. Through current means and technology we can 1) access people and resources we need, 2) attract the people and resources we need and, 3) individually find the ability to pull from within ourselves the insight and performance required to more effectively achieve our potential.

The power of *pull* echoes the themes of the two TEDx presenters by saying, "if we are serious about developing our own talent, we must find ways to connect with and collaborate with all of those smart people outside our organization. We should aggressively create opportunities for people within our organization to work with leading edge talent outside our organization. In driving scalable learning, we must expand our horizons far beyond the boundaries of our own firm."

We need to begin to realize that *what is* is only a precursor of what could be and that we can play a leading role in helping to realize that potential.

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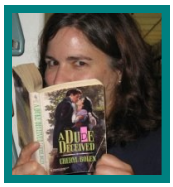
Lessons Learned from PaLA, Oct. 22-24



Carrie Willson-Plymire, WCFL/ WMRL, guest columnist

I'm in Lancaster, PA at the Pennsylvania Library Association Conference observing and gathering good ideas to bring back to Maryland for MLA where I will have the pleasure of being the conference director in 2012.

Marylanders spotted/chatted-up: John Venditttta, former associate director of WMRL, Bob Baldwin, director of Allegany Community College, and Laura Greenlee who used to work in adult reference and is now at the head librarian in Greencastle.

Conference 101

3 Things I Learned:

1. Start on time and proceed as though the room is packed, even if there are only 10 people there
2. PA has a new member reception -- what if we have a non-member reception and use it as a way to recruit new members? I think that might be an idea that is best not thought too hard about...but the idea of not inviting non-members to the party seemed wrong, if non-members can't see why the association is fun and worthwhile, why would they join
3. Since PA has a much longer conference, every meal is not booked at the hotel and accompanied by a speaker -- they do dine-outs, some with speakers/authors and others with interest groups at area restaurants.

1 Thing I Squared Away:

PA also does a raffle for vendor prizes, but instead of giving everyone one ticket in their registration packet the way we do in MD, they give tickets to the vendors who can give them out to people who stop and talk to them. It's another way of encouraging interaction with the vendors which is rather brilliant. In MD we collect stamps from the vendors, that can be entered for a prize, but I like the raffle tickets, it's pretty straight forward.

Something I Need to Work on:

PA has something called PALS - Pennsylvania Academy for Leadership Studies - track down the chair of that program, Tina Hertel and see what can be learned and turned into a MLA pre-conference

Future Proofing Your Libraries

This was a program presented by Randy Hudson of Hayes Large Architects.

3 Things I Learned:

1. Shopping has colonized the world - patrons want solitude and social interaction in the same place, preferably with food oriented retail opportunities (especially for students and Mom's with fussy hungry children)
2. Library as a place to make things - create things (art and design programs)
3. Touch screens increase usage - what if the library catalog was as easy to use and interactive and VISUAL as the MTO screen at Sheetz?!

1 Thing I Squared Away:

Patrons in general and younger users in particular want a good space to work/study/collaborate in and they want self-check but they also want help to be available if it is needed. "alone but not lonely" spaces

Something I Need to Work on:

U Penn has video software and equipment for practice interviewing - you can watch yourself and get feedback (from a librarian?) Ω

Want to read about more learning adventures?

Visit the Western Maryland Learning Journal Blog at: http://westernmdlearning.blogspot.org

WCFL Has (finally) Left the Building

Pat Wishard, WCFL, Guest Author

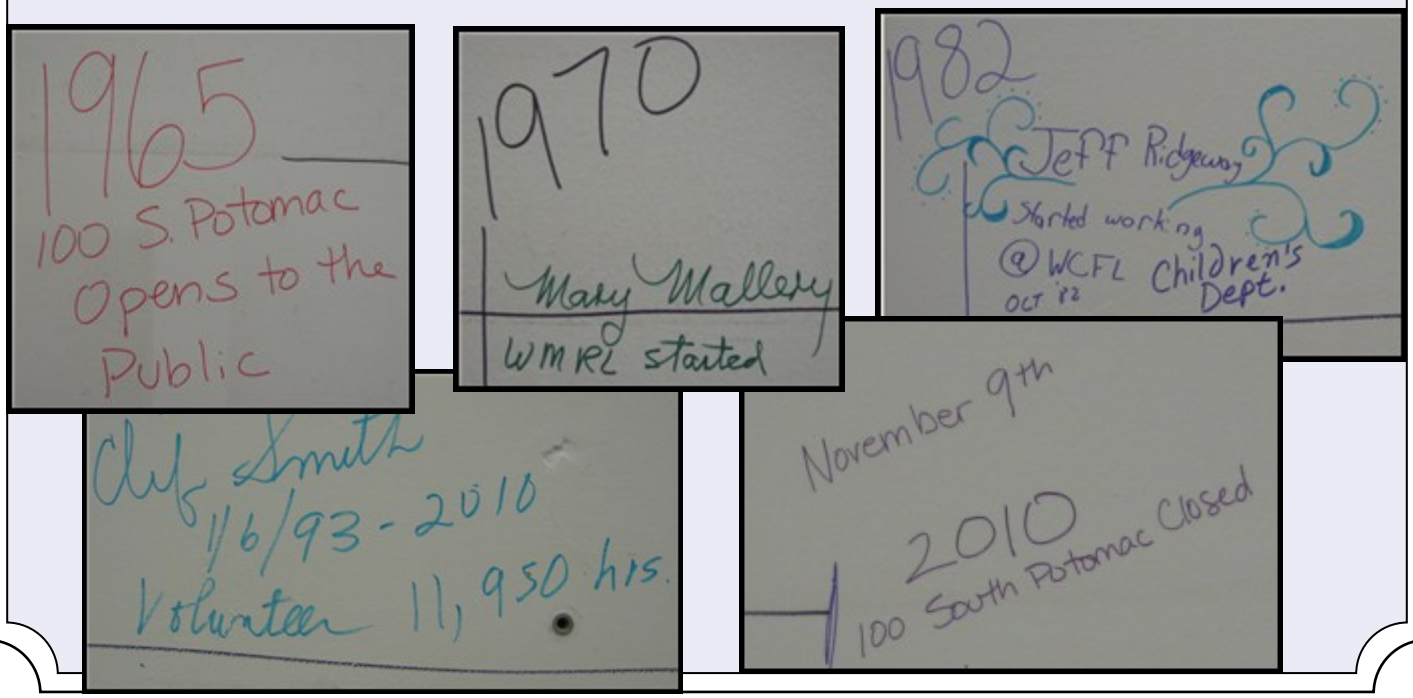
There were merely patterns on the floor where library shelving had previously stood. A portion of the circulation and reference desks kept company with folding tables and the soft red chairs that once were a part of the community room. A ladder was propped lonely against one wall. Evening light filtered in through the picture windows and reflected off the opposite marble wall. Though empty of books the Central Library building was filled with memories. WCFL staff came together the night of November 20 to share these memories and say goodbye to the building that has served the citizens of Washington County since 1965.

Director Mary Baykan greeted all who gathered in this grand building. She recalled her decision to move her family to Maryland and take over the helm at WCFL. Pointing out the time line that had been drawn on the children's department wall, she then asked the staff to share their memories and enter their names along with their employment dates on this line. Laughter and joy filled the evening as we listened to stories of how people came to the library (some having never worked anyplace else but at this grand old dame) and how this library family has become and remains a central part of their lives even though they are temporarily scattered.

The Central Library closed at 9:00 pm on Tuesday November the 9th. Though many items had been moved early, the movers arrived at 8:00 am on November the 10th to begin moving offices, the stacks, and the proverbial anything that was not nailed down. What was nailed down was scheduled for moving later in the week. The online services were temporarily shutdown on Tuesday, November the 10th as moving the server began. A miraculously smooth move brought the WCFL website and all online services back up and operating by 5:00 pm on Wednesday, November the 11th. The North Pointe annex opened on Monday, November15th and the West Washington Street facility opened on Tuesday, November16th.

The last box has now been unpacked and the relocated shelves have all been labeled and filled with books. The children's story-time rug now welcomes children and toddlers to story-time at the North Pointe Annex. The county high school yearbooks have found their way to the West Washington Street Annex. And though the books stored at the Phoenix Warehouse may have been disappointed to have not been chosen to live at one of the new facilities, they bask in the knowledge that they can be shipped to the patron on request.

This $24 million construction project is expected to take 18 – 24 months to complete. Please visit www.washcolibrary.org often for updates as the Alice Virginia & David W Fletcher Branch of the Washington County Free Library takes shape.



Take a Database Dive

Julie Zamostny, WMRL, usual contributor

You've heard of the Polar Bear Plunge, right? For those of you who have not heard of it, the Polar Bear Plunge is an annual event that takes place in various cities across the world, during which participants pay a fee (usually as part of a charity fundraiser) to plunge themselves into lakes, ponds, oceans, and other bodies of water that are usually at just-above-freezing temperatures.

The 2010-2011 Database Dive is similar yet different.

No, there is no fee.

No, you will not be subjected to hypothermic-like environments.

Yes, you will submerse yourself in sometimes familiar, sometimes foreign territories (a.k.a. databases).

This course is an updated version of the Bite-Sized Bits of Databases course Jennifer Spriggs created for the 2008-2009 winter season. It will still be organized in a 23 Things, self-paced format.

The content has been expanded to include approximately 26 databases and it will cover 13 weeks of winter beginning January 3rd and ending April 4th.

By participating you have the potential to earn up to 19.5 contact hours toward certification / credentialing.

For more information and to register please visit:

http://bit.ly/gpkXwm

Or contact Julie Zamostny, jzamostny@washcolibrary.org

Did You Know?

The Plungapalooza event in Maryland is the largest polar bear plunge in the United States and it is held annually at Sandy Pointe State Park. (Source: http://www.plungemd.com/about_us.shtml)

Fantastic Fiction = Fantastic Web Site

Sherry Dickens and Sharon Guy, ACLS, Guest Authors

www.fantasticfiction.co.uk

I know everyone's first reaction is: "Oh no, not another web site!" But Fantastic Fiction (FF) is worthy of a quick examination for anyone who is involved with obtaining books for collection development or readers' advisory. When canvassing the site you will notice the alphabet on the top left hand corner for browsing by author. There are also two search boxes on the top right hand corner, one for authors and one for titles. There are also tabs that run across top for more specified searches as well. As you scroll down the page, FF also offers up new releases in the different genres. The new releases are shown up to 3 months in advance, in hardback as well as paperback.

For a test run you can type in any author you choose but to show you all the advantages of site type in Diana Palmer. As you scroll down, information on the author is shown, then upcoming releases as well as re-releases. In addition, all omnibuses that author has contributed to are included and at the bottom of the page, similar authors are listed and hyperlinked for your convenience.

Another good test run is to type in Michael Stackpole; it shows his series and as you scroll down it also includes series to which he has contributed.

FF is great for tracking series. Look to the top of the page and on right side is the word, "series." Click on this and then research a popular series, (even one with different contributing authors), such as "39 Clues." This will take you to a list of all titles as well as the different contributors.

As with anything, there are pros and cons. Does FF list all series written? No. Will every author ever published be there? No. Additional drawbacks include: gaps in coverage of Christian Inspirational Fiction; the genre dropdown menu is limited, Western Fiction is not well represented, and if you're spelling challenged like I am, the site's sensitivity to correct spelling may be a hindrance.

The pros far outweigh the cons, however: the site is free; you do not have to create an account; it interfaces with Facebook and also with Amazon.

I hope this helps anyone who has run into that wall of frustration when trying to find out how many titles are in a series and in what order they run. This is a wonderful website to just go and explore.

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January 2011 Learning Events

MON	TUE	WED	THU
3	4	5	6 Rev Up Your Search Engines, pt. 3
10 Mock Newbery Award Discussion	11	12 Technology Toys and Tools: Choosing, Using, and Unconfusing in the World of Social Media	13 Tech Tools With Tine: 1hr of Facebook
17	18	19 Change Anything! The New Science of Personal Success.	20 Tech Tools with Tine: 1hr of NetVibes
24	25 Get Your Geek On! Improve Local Funding Through Community Advocacy	26	27 Understanding Unemployment Insurance and its Impact on Your Library Customers.
31			

January 6, 2011	Rev Up Your Search Engines, pt. 3	Register here: http://bit.ly/dULL4M
January 10, 2011	Mock Newbery Award Discussion	Register here: http://bit.ly/gRV6i6
January 12, 2010	Technology Toys and Tools: Choosing, Using, and Unconfusing in the World of Social Media	Register here: http://bit.ly/euPKH2
January 13, 2011	Tech Tools with Tine: One Hour of Facebook	Register here: http://bit.ly/f2cJVh
January 19, 2011	Change Anything: The New Science of Personal Success	Register here: http://bit.ly/gAT4zW
January 20, 2011	Tech Tools with Tine: One Hour of NetVibes	Register here: http://bit.ly/exD6mj
January 25, 2011	Get Your Geek On: Improve Local Funding Through Community Advocacy	Register here: http://bit.ly/hYKJCr
January 27, 2011	Understanding Unemployment Insurance and its Impact on Your Library Customers	Register here: http://bit.ly/h4NMAp

For more information, or to register for any of the training events advertised in this newsletter, please contact Julie Zamostny.

Phone: 301-331-3821 Email: jzamostny@washcolibrary.org Twitter: @jzamostny