

REFERENCE NOTES

A program of the Minnesota Higher Education Services Office (HESO) at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities

September 1999

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INFORMATION BITS

Rubberbands

To improve our delivery of reference materials, we have started using large four-prong rubber bands to bind together the reference question memo and accompanying books. Since these rubberbands are fairly expensive, as far as rubberbands go, we would like to try and reuse them. We would appreciate it if you could please send them back to us through the delivery system.

Reference staff initials on web form browse

We have added a new feature to the browse section of our online Web form. Under "Assigned to:" you can identify the MINITEX Reference staff member who is working on your question. If you have information to add or questions about your request, you may contact the person associated with your question directly.

Resources for Paraprofessionals

This month *Reference Notes* is featuring articles of interest to library paraprofessionals. Nancy King and Debbie Willms agreed to write about SSPIN and the Minnesota Voluntary Certification Programs for Library Workers. Our thanks to Nancy and Debbie for their contributions.

Support Staff and Paraprofessional Interest Section (SSPIN)

By Nancy King, Arrowhead Library System, Chair of SSPIN

SSPIN started in 1976 as a round table of the Minnesota Library Association. Its original purpose was to discuss, explore, and communicate the concerns of the non-MLS library worker. In 1996, SSPIN achieved section status in MLA.

SSPIN's goals are: To promote and encourage development of all library personnel at all job levels; to provide opportunities for these personnel to meet and exchange information about common concerns; to plan for and present programs at conferences which explore these concerns. SSPIN offers the opportunity to work for other library staff and with the leadership of the state organization.

SSPIN communicates with its membership through the publication of LinkUp!, a quarterly newsletter; a statewide listserv; and the SSPIN web page at www.gac.edu/Academics/Resources/Library/SSPIN/index.html

This fall at the MLA annual conference, SSPIN continues its strong presence by sponsoring or cosponsoring eleven sessions. This is more than any other section or division. Also, many of the people on the conference committee are SSPIN members, including arrangements co-chairs, registration chair, silent auction chair, and program evaluations. SSPIN also provides leadership on the MLA board including the current Vice Chair, Secretary, and Legislative Vice Chair. SSPIN also has officers serving as chairs or co-chairs of various MLA committees including the membership committee and continuing education committee.

MLA has been very receptive of SSPIN's leadership in the organization. In recent years, SSPIN has been both the fastest growing and most active subunit of MLA. Being a member of SSPIN provides an increase in both personal and job satisfaction and furnishes the feeling that we too are professionals in the library field.

ALA's Support Staff Interests Round Table (SSIRT)

SSIRT provides a place within ALA for addressing issues concerning library support staff and paraprofessionals. Its membership consists of staff representing every type of library from public to corporate.

SSIRT is a great resource for library support staff and paraprofessionals. It works to foster communication among library staff about issues such as access to continuing education and training; lack of support and recognition; lack of a paraprofessional certification program; lack of benefits; keeping up with technological changes; and lack of career advancement opportunities. Those are just a few of SSIRT's concerns.

If you have any questions about joining SSIRT, check out their Web page at <http://www.ala.org/ssirt/member.html>, or contact ALA Membership Services at 1-800-545-2433, press 9.



Reference Notes

MINITEX Library Information Network
University of Minnesota, S-33 Wilson Library
309 19th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55455-0414

Reference Phone.....612-624-4150, WATS 800-462-5348
Main/Reference Fax.....612-624-4508

Beccone, Jean.....612-626-9843, becco001@tc.umn.edu
Friedmann, Beth.....612-624-7873, fried004@tc.umn.edu
Parker, Mary.....612-624-1024, m-park1@tc.umn.edu
Woessner, Jeanette.....612-624-5025, woess001@tc.umn.edu

Main Website.....www-minitex.lib.umn.edu

Reference Email.....ref@othello.lib.umn.edu

Office Hours.....Mon-Fri., 8:00am-4:30pm

Reference Intake Form.....
.....<http://kinglear.lib.umn.edu/reference/refdb>

Minnesota Voluntary Library Certification

*By Debbie Willms – Training and Organizational
Development Coordinator, Saint Paul Public Library*

The Minnesota Voluntary Certification Program for Public Library Workers was launched as a three year pilot in 1997. From the start, the program was carried on the back of tireless volunteers who identified competencies, wrote curriculum, approved classes, and taught workshops. Another group of volunteers, the participants, responded to the program as soon as it was offered in March of that year. The goal for both groups of volunteers was the same: to equip all library workers with the tools and knowledge needed to provide excellent service to their patrons.

The more than two hundred participants who have registered for Voluntary Certification during the last three years are support and paraprofessional staff in public libraries across the state. They all attend ten hours of mandatory workshops entitled *What Is Library Service* and complete extensive homework assignments to meet their Philosophy competencies. This common experience lays the groundwork for an additional 50 hours of individual work in Technology, Technical Service and Public Service. Guided by a personal development plan, each participant assesses his or her competency in each area and seeks educational opportunities to meet the identified needs. The first individuals to complete the process expect to be certified this fall.

In June 1999, independent evaluators conducted a review of the Voluntary Certification Program. Their observations and recommendations will help to strengthen the program as it moves from the pilot to operational status in 2000. The value to each library and participant will be as unique as the program design. At the Saint Paul Public Library success is sometimes measured in the number of participants who drop out. Since 1997, thirty staff have begun the program and three have withdrawn to begin study for an advanced degree in library science. Two others are considering which program they will attend. These highly motivated, skilled staff will impact the operation of this or other libraries for years to come.

Provision of excellent customer service has always been at the heart of Voluntary Certification. As the program becomes a fixture in Minnesota, it fulfills the promise of all the volunteers – planners, trainers, and participants – who have made it possible. The library user in Minnesota is the biggest winner!

To find out more about the Minnesota Voluntary Certification Program visit the Web site at:

<http://www.arrowhead.lib.mn.us/certification/>

“The Internet Public Library” [http:// www.ipl.org](http://www.ipl.org)

“The Internet is a mess.” So proclaims the Internet Public Library Mission Statement. If you are not familiar with the Internet Public Library (IPL), make sure you take some time to check it out. It has taken on the job of providing library services to the Internet community by “finding, evaluating, selecting, organizing, describing and creating quality information resources.”

The Internet Public Library began as a project of a graduate seminar in the School of Information and Library Studies at the University of Michigan in 1995. It continues today with a director and three full time staff. On its FAQ (frequently asked questions) page it acknowledges it is “an experiment, trying to discover and promote the most effective roles and contributions of librarians to the Internet and vice versa.” Today it is sustained by grants from the School of Information via the W.K Kellogg Foundation and by gifts of the Friends of the Library.

The site uses the library building as a metaphor that allows the user to make connections with traditional library collections. The four major divisions for its collections are

Reference, the Reading Room, Libraries and Librarians, and Young People. Currently its collections contain 23,913 items. The collections have been carefully selected and described by one of the IPL staff members. The descriptions include enough information to let a user quickly determine if the site will be a useful one for their needs. In addition, the entries are being assigned “subject headings” so that a site search using subject terms should result in more focused results.

In addition to a list of frequently asked reference questions, specialized pathfinders, and special resources for libraries and librarians, the site offers an “Ask a Question” service that provides a place for Internet users to ask questions that will be answered by volunteer librarians. The instructions and form for using this service make it quite clear that this is not intended as an in depth reference service. It is a service that will answer brief, factual questions or suggest resources that might be useful for finding the needed information.

So if you are still frustrated by Internet searching, even when you use the particular searching conventions suggested by your favorite search engines, give the Internet Public Library a try. It appears to have cleaned up some of the “mess” of Web sites out on the Internet.

MINITEX and OCLC Institute Seminars

MINITEX and OCLC Institute are pleased to offer two seminars to be held in Wilson Library at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities Campus:

“Continuity and Innovation in Resource Sharing” Nov. 3-4, 1999

What does resource sharing mean in a world of networked digital resources, and how will it be practiced? Examination of current models and practices, relevant trends, and the findings of the ARL ILL/DD Performance Measures Study provides the background for theoretical and practical discussions. A plenary exercise in critical analysis helps you focus on current resource sharing models and their future. Facilitated small-group discussions and group reports take up trend analysis, action planning, and consensus building for desired futures.

For more information or to register: <http://www.oclc.org/institute/continuity.htm>

“Knowledge Access Management for Reference Librarians” Nov. 15-17, 1999

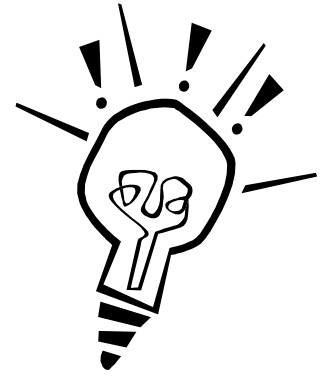
This 2.5-day seminar examines key issues in knowledge management with a special emphasis on reference services. Based on the popular seminar, “Knowledge Access Management: Tools and Concepts for Next-Generation Catalogers,” this seminar reviews current trends in catalog management with a focus on current and emerging methods of knowledge access and user service. Revisit the foundations of the catalog and explore metadata and other alternative resource description systems and their applications.

Demonstrations of various systems and tools provide an overview of technological applications. A plenary exercise in critical analysis helps participants to focus on current reference models and their future. Facilitated small-group discussions and group reports take up trend analysis, action planning, and consensus building for desired futures.

For more information or to register: <http://www.oclc.org/institute/regseminar2ref.htm>

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

Occasionally, MINITEX Reference Services receives a request for a poem, quotation, picture, story or something that cannot be found by checking standard sources. The Reference staff would like to appeal to the collective memory of MINITEX participants for assistance. Please forward any leads on the following questions to Reference Services at: **612-624-4150** or **800-462-5348**. Here is what we are looking for:



Information on the artist Arthur Hutchins who painted oil on canvas (221).

Information Found!

More information was found on our question concerning the Sheets Rockford Silver Plate Company (107). We received a call from Maureen Bell from Hennepin County Library who found a list of this company's flatware patterns in a book from the Hennepin County Library collection.

We also received some wonderful information from Pam Newsome from the MN/DOT Library on the King of Trails question (15). Pam found the King of Trails mentioned in the *Registered Trails Index* put out by the Minnesota Highway Department. It appears that on January 30, 1917, Charles M. Babcock, the Commissioner of Highways, approved an application made by the King of Trails Association (Minnesota Division) to register the highway "as starting from Winnipeg, thru counties of Kittson, Marshall, Polk, Norman, Clay, Wilkin, Traverse, Big Stone, and terminating at Pac Qui Parle, Yellow Medicine, Lincoln, Pipestone, and Rock to be known as King of Trails." The trail is marked by a yellow sign with the letters KT (in black) aligned vertically.

Robbie LaFleur at the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library also called in on this question. She thinks that the KT Trail is the same as Polk County Road 9.

Thanks to Maureen, Pam, and Robbie for helping us answer these two Requests for Assistance!

MINITEX Library Information Network

University of Minnesota

S-33 Wilson Library

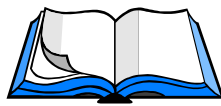
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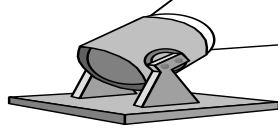
do you think about *Reference Notes*?

great reference books



topics you would like addressed

fantastic web sites



spotlight on your
reference library

We would like to know what you would like to see in upcoming *Reference Notes*. Please either call us at 800-462-5348, send us an e-mail (see page 2 for addresses), or fill in your comments below and mail this form to MINITEX Reference.

Terrific web sites, reference books, and other sources you use:

Comments / Suggestions:

Name: (optional) _____

Library: (optional) _____ Phone: (optional) _____

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1999 EVENTS CALENDAR

- June 5-10 **Special Library Association** will be holding their annual conference at the Minneapolis Convention Center. Please see their web site for more information: www.sla.org/conf/99conf/index.shtml
- June 16 **Academic Library Advocacy Day** at St. John's University in Collegeville, MN
- July 2, 1999 **National Literacy Day** Contact: Focus on Literacy, Inc., P.O. Box 504, Laurel Springs, NJ 08021