Lately a lot of people I talk with have been asking me about the future of libraries. Friends, relatives, strangers, you name it. At least this time it’s being phrased as a question. Ten years ago we were being told by some that the Internet, more specifically the World Wide Web, meant the imminent demise of the library. It seemed a natural conclusion. If you can get all your information via the computer, why bother with the library?

Those of us who work in libraries tended to respond to this initial challenge in two ways—patient explanations that the bulk of recorded information was not online and assertions that people would still need our help to access the information that was online. We have done a good job over the years at providing this help, including research assistance, information literacy classes, public computers, and subscription access to databases and other resources. Business is booming at most libraries, and it sure does not feel like we are in any danger of becoming obsolete.

Yet the recent conversations I have been having about the future of libraries make me wonder. Most of them center on changes in the publishing industry due to the rapid growth in ebooks. As physical objects, print books are suited to lending and require a local place to house them. Not so for ebooks. If you disregard DRM/copyright, it is much easier
June Pinnell-Stephens

Long-time American Library Association activist June Pinnell-Stephens attends her last ALA council meeting June 28, 2011. A strong proponent of intellectual freedom and a frequent contributor to AkLA-L, June bid ALA Council farewell, but could it really be her last ALA meeting?

Sue Sherif
Alaska State Library

June received the Robert B. Downs Intellectual Freedom Award from the University of Illinois in 2003 and the Roll of Honor Award from the Freedom to Read Foundation in 2004. She is a past-president of the Alaska and the Pacific Northwest Library Associations, served four terms as president of the ACLU of Alaska, and is currently on the Executive Board of the American Library Association. She likes www.Truthdig.com, a progressive journal of news and opinion. ❖

IN MEMORY: DICK ENGEN

November 23, 1927 - July 15, 2011

Dick was born in Aberdeen and died in Salem, Oregon, at the age of 83—two days after his 36th wedding anniversary to his wife, Rebecca Bartels Engen.

His dream job came along in 1967 when Dick was hired as the Director of the Alaska State Library. Alaska was new to statehood (1959), and there was much to do. During his tenure the number of libraries in the state increased from 37 to over 100. He developed a statewide library network linked by computers. He also set up a state film library and facilities for the blind and handicapped. The Alaska State Museum also came under his directorship. Alaska is a huge state in area, so sometimes providing services had to be done with innovation. Because Alaskans fly a lot, the free “fly with a book” program started in Alaska airports. In Southeast Alaska, the “book boat” was used to deliver library service to small villages and logging camps. In 1986 Dick retired after 19 years. He’s often referred to as the “father of Alaska libraries.”

In 1996, Dick was presented an Honorary Doctor of Letters by the University of Alaska Anchorage. In their words, “The University of Alaska is honored to recognize his foresight, hard work and dedication to the state of Alaska.”

to copy an ebook than to lend it. Indeed, “lending” an ebook is really just a form of DRM that is controlled by the publisher. And other than acquiring a reader, there is no reason to visit a physical location to access the ebooks themselves if you have an Internet connection.

It could be argued that there are three broad reasons people use libraries—they can’t find the information anywhere else; it’s more economical; or they just like visiting the library. It turns out that the first reason is fading rapidly as the vast bulk of recorded information moves online. Of course there will always be special collections and archives that house unique information, but this function is a bit different than the idea of the lending library.

It seems as if libraries are on firm ground with the second reason since they provide access to econtent via subscriptions that individuals could not otherwise afford. But this access will probably be provided through cooperatives at a state or regional level versus the local library (e.g., Alaska Digital Pipeline).

The third reason (i.e., that people go to libraries because they like them) is perhaps the most compelling and enduring. Many things fall under this banner—the library as place, the user experience, library as community center, library as temple of learning, etc. Just as people still go to movie theaters in the age of Netflix and home theaters, people will still want to gather around the idea of shared knowledge and life-long learning.

Public access computing provided by libraries falls across all three reasons. Often the library is the only access point for some while for others the library provides cheaper access or a better user experience. For example, many students at the academic library where I work use the library computers even though they have a laptop or a computer back in the dorm room.

As the digital age comes to full fruition, libraries are facing a transform in technology and content as radical as the shift from hand-lettered scrolls to printed books. Libraries will survive, but the way we do business will change."

“As the digital age comes to full fruition, libraries are facing a transform in technology and content as radical as the shift from hand-lettered scrolls to printed books. Libraries will survive, but the way we do business will change.”
The Togiak Library was vandalized several times in April and May. In April, our door was damaged and several DVDs and computer programs were stolen. In May, all the book cases were pushed over and the books piled on the floor. Then syrup was poured over the books. The damage was over $2,500, resulting in the loss of many books.

Yet, despite the vandalism we did not close down. We are open to all in our community, because our library believes that free access to books and education are guaranteed to everyone. We will not allow the vandalism of one or two to close our doors.

We appreciate the support and patronage that we have received from our community, from the Friends of the Library of Dillingham, from Senator Lisa Murkowski, Togiak River Lodge, the Pebble Foundation, the Rasmuson Foundation, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Alaska State Library, the Fisheries Foundation, the Gates Foundation, the Togiak Traditional Council, Togiak Natives Limited, and from friends of libraries everywhere.

At this point, we have received plenty of donated books. What we would welcome now would be financial support for our move to new space.

Our contact information is P.O. Box 353, Togiak, AK 99678. Our phone is 907-493-5566 and email is lrichesin@swrsd.org

Working with the City of Togiak, we are planning to move into the newly renovated old Togiak School which will give us much more space, as well as a building that does not leak.

The Togiak Public Library started in 2003 in a small 300-square foot office. In 2006 we moved to our current space of about 850 square feet. We have about 8,400 books and 180 videos. We had a circulation in 2010-11 of about 1,900 items, with over 2,000 visitors in the year.

We have enjoyed support from our community, which includes about 350 patrons in Togiak, Twin Hills, and Platinum. One of our strong supporters is the current mayor, James Forbes, a local businessman. Another strong supporter is the former mayor, Gary Carlos, another local businessman.

Togiak Library is a voluntary library. We have about 12 volunteer librarians from the community as well as teachers from Togiak School. In the summer our library hosts Summer School, sponsored by Togiak School, where about a dozen high school students earn credits.

Throughout the year we have visitors who use our computers for job search, resume preparation, scholarship applications, as

(Cont. on pg. 6)
well as to submit their PFD applications. The library is a favorite place for kids to hang out and check MySpace and FaceBook, as well as to relax and read. In the summer, local fishermen as well as visitors get books to read during breaks in fishing.

We are excited about plans to move across the street to the renovated old Togiak School. Our current building has a leaky roof and drafty windows. The new space will be larger and more economical to heat in the winter.

The Shop Class at Togiak School is building a large ramp and stairway for our new entrance. They will also prepare a large new outdoor sign.

Dale Richesin has worked as the Board Secretary and Librarian since 2004. His primary role has been to coordinate volunteers and to write grants. He has been a high school teacher at Togiak School since 2004. He was born in Juneau, and went to school in Selawik and Kotzebue.

Dale Richesin,
Togiak Public Library

The inside of this building is quite a contrast to the outside! (Page 5)
The second case of vandalism at the Togiak library.

All the book-cases were pushed over and the books piled on the floor; then syrup was poured over the books. ✿

Dale Richesin,
Togiak Public Library
STATE RECORDS WORKSHOP IN HISTORIC NOMES

Alaska State Historical Records Advisory Board Holds Meeting and Workshop in Historic Nome

The Alaska State Historical Records Advisory Board–ASHRAB–is Alaska’s referee board for grant proposals made to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission–NHPRC, the National Archives grant funding agency.

ASHRAB also takes an active interest in archives, manuscript and records management issues generally, throughout Alaska.

To connect directly to its constituency across the state the board held its semi-annual meeting in Nome, hosted by the Carrie McLain Museum, June 15-16. The previous day, June 14 the Board sponsored a basic archives and collections workshop. While people from other areas attended, most participants came from smaller communities in Western and Northern Alaska. Instructors were State Archivist Dean Dawson, UAA Archives Archivist Megan Friedel, UAF’s Alaska and Polar Regions Head Bridget Burke, and Larry Hibpsman of the State Archvies.

Workshop presentations are available at http://archives.alaska.gov/for_professionals/for_archives_professionals.html. For details please contact the Alaska State Archives (907-465-2241).

(Cont. on pg. 10)
Bridget Burke, Head of Alaska and Polar Regions Department, UAF, instructs the Nome Basic Archives Workshop, June 14, 2011

Alaska State Historical Records Advisory Board meets in Nome, June 15, 2011

Larry Hibpshman, Archivist
Alaska State Archives
The State Archives opened its first small exhibit in nearly two decades, a collaborative effort, April 30. Abby Focht, Larry Hibpshman and Linda Wynne of the State Archives designed the exhibit with support from Bob Banghart and other Alaska State Museum staff. THE ROAD TO STATEHOOD examines the ongoing Statehood concept from 1897 (yes! 1897!) through the present. Most items are drawn from State Archives collections; the State Archivist Dean Dawson lent a mint condition 1959 license plate, and the Office of the Governor lent a 6’x4’ 49 star flag.

You can see the exhibit through the end of the year.

Then something new from State Archives holdings will replace it. ❖

Larry Hibpshman
Alaska State Archives

Musk ox graze near Nome, June 17, 2011

Dredge dragline equipment, Nome, June 16, 2011
IN MEMORY: BELLE DAWSON

Alaska wildlife artist Belle Dawson died peacefully at home in Anchorage on Tuesday morning June 28, 2011.

Belle was born in Manhattan, New York, on April 17, 1922. She earned a degree in fine arts from California State University at San Jose and a Masters in Library Science from the University of Denver.

Her adventurous spirit led her to accept assignments in Korea, Japan, and as far north as Prudhoe Bay as a librarian, illustrator, and arts and crafts director with the Army and Air Force Special Services. She came to Alaska in 1972 to work as director of technical services for the Loussac Library.


The 40-year-old company is declaring bankruptcy due to competition from e-books and discount stores. At its peak in 2003, Borders operated 1,249 Borders and Waldenbooks stores.

Tom and Louis Borders opened their first store in 1971, selling used books in Ann Arbor, Mich.

Kmart Corp acquired Borders in 1992, forming a book unit with Waldenbooks. It then spun the bookstores off as a separate company in 1995, the same year a company called Amazon.com started selling books online. In 2001, Borders contracted out its e-commerce business to Amazon.com. It was said that “Amazon had no incentive whatsoever to promote Borders. It really marked the beginning of the end.”


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**General guidelines to publication in Newspoke, Alaska Library Association newsletter:**

**Not accepted:** paid advertising; material intended to “sell; make a profit” rather than to “inform.” Submissions viewed as advertisements, unless item is of particular interest to Alaska, Alaskan patrons and/or libraries, or is submitted by an AkLA member.

**Accepted:** Alaskana—books, book reviews, or articles relating to, or of interest to, Alaskan librarians and/or their patrons. Informative material related to libraries and librarian-ship, especially in regard to Alaska.

Most anything submitted by AkLA members—reasonably “tasteful and well-written,” of an appropriate length (much leeway here); author is willing to submit to possible editorial changes, which may include length, spellings, downsizing of convoluted sentences... (Editor will make every effort to let the author know of, and pre-approve, any significant changes before the material is published in Newspoke.)

**Other**—determined on an individual basis by “the committee” (defined as a group of at least three AkLA members). If the Newspoke editor or the individual submitting has questions or concerns about any submission, the matter will be sent on to the Newspoke Committee.
http://www.jokeroo.com
http://www.google.com/search?q=book+art
ALASKA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
PO Box 81084
Fairbanks, AK 99708

CALENDAR

Alaska Writers Conference, Coast International Inn, Anchorage, AK       Sep. 9, 2011
American Library Association Midwinter Meeting, Dallas, TX             Jan. 20-24, 2012