

# LearningExchange

December 2009

“School ends, but education doesn’t.”

Volume 26, Number 2

## Beantown Welcomes LearnRT

by Carol A. Mahoney, Director, Greenwich Library



*Welcome to Boston -  
Places To See & Things To Do  
(When You Aren't in Meetings!)*

The ALA Midwinter Meeting will be held at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center in the Seaport section of Boston. South Station, a transportation hub for Boston, is located close to the convention center. Public transportation is convenient and makes moving around the city very easy. Buy yourself a Charlie card and you can go everywhere! If you like to walk and the weather is not too cold or snowy, the Rose Kennedy Greenway, 15 acres of public parkland located opposite South Station, takes you from Chinatown up to the North End.

The Children's Museum, [www.bostonchildrensmuseum.org](http://www.bostonchildrensmuseum.org), and the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) [www.icaboston.org](http://www.icaboston.org), are within walking distance of the convention center. The Children's Museum was recently renovated and the ICA has an incredible location on the waterfront. The New England Aquarium, [www.neaq.org](http://www.neaq.org), is located just beyond the Boston Harbor Hotel and the seals may still be outside for viewing.

Faneuil Hall Marketplace is an easy walk from the Aquarium or the North End. With more than 100 stores and 17 restaurants it's not hard to find something to buy or a place to eat. From open seating in the main rotunda of the Hall to a branch of the Cheers bar you can find a variety of food to satisfy

everyone's cravings. Another "must stop" is the Union Oyster House, 41 Union Street - it is just around the corner from Faneuil Hall and opposite City Hall. The Union Oyster House began in 1826 and is America's oldest restaurant. Getting a seat at the Oyster Bar is a treat but you can sit anywhere and enjoy the food.

Looking for a sweet treat? Head back to the North End for dessert and cappuccino. Hanover Street and side streets in the North End offer a variety of restaurants and bakeries to choose from.

Take the Red Line to the Museum of Science in Cambridge to catch the new Harry Potter exhibit, [www.mos.org](http://www.mos.org). The exhibit is a collection of authentic props and costumes from the films, placed in incredible settings that bring the movies alive again.

*Continued as Boston, page 7*



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/13299338@N00/49189747>

## LearnRT Board Meetings - Join Us Virtually!

The **LearningExchange** is the official publication of the Learning Round Table (LearnRT) of the American Library Association.

It is distributed free to members of LearnRT and is published quarterly in September, December, March and June.

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**GENERAL** questions about LearnRT should be sent to:  
[info@alalearning.org](mailto:info@alalearning.org)

**What:** All Learning Round Table members (and other interested folks) are invited to attend the LearnRT virtual monthly meetings. We use the meetings for updates and follow-ups to committee work, discussions, sharing and announcements.

Virtual Meeting Times:

2:00 - 3:00 pm EDT

### 2010 Virtual Meeting Dates

- Thursday, January 21
- Wednesday, February 17
- Thursday, March 11
- Wednesday, April 21
- Thursday, May 13
- Wednesday, June 16



### How:

We're using ALA's OPAL web-conferencing platform for these meetings.

Location/Log In:

<http://www.conference321.com/masteradmin/room.asp?id=rs423c62c43df0>

.....or join us in person!

If you're attending one of these Library conferences, come to a meeting - we'd love to see you!

January 15 - 19, 2010: ALA Midwinter Meeting, Boston, MA

March 23-27, 2010: PLA 13th Annual Conference, Portland, OR

June 24 - 29, 2010: ALA Annual Conference, Washington, D.C.



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## The Editors' Corner

We were excited to receive two member submissions for this issue, which coincidentally, fit together really well! Steve Wishnack reminds us about the importance of positive attitude in a customer service environment, while Robin Shader provides an example of attitude in action at the Chattahoochee Valley Libraries.

We want these kinds of newsletter articles from our members - because that is what makes the LearningExchange - well, a learning exchange!

If you have training ideas, techniques, or experiences to share, please send them to us at [editor@alalearning.org](mailto:editor@alalearning.org)

Kimberly and Dawn  
LearningExchange Editors

## It's All About Attitude!

### *Attitude: the key to service success*

by Steve Wishnack, ([swishnack@thinkanddo.us](mailto:swishnack@thinkanddo.us))

Attitude is the single most important factor in determining whether customers come back, even to the library, and maintaining healthy, helpful attitudes in assisting patrons is directly related to their support (or lack of support) for a library and its staff.



Attitude is basically how we feel about things, like our job, our customers, our coworkers. Attitudes come from inside us, and are expressed in our body language, facial expression, our tone of voice and in the words we use.

- Healthy attitudes are positive, productive, and help to connect us with our customers (patrons).
- Healthy attitudes let people know you care about them, their problem, question, concern or issue.

Deadly attitudes are negative, destructive, and disconnect us from customers. An attitude of indifference is the most deadly of all attitudes. To a customer, indifference means 'they don't care about me', and it is the leading cause of customer dissatisfaction and defections, causing them to seek our services somewhere else.

Attitudes are important because they leave impressions, which last long after the interaction ends. That impression is the memory of what the experience felt like to a customer the last they sought help from someone at the library. Attitudes are important because they are contagious, and spread very easily, both the healthy ones and the deadly ones.

***Our job in assisting patrons is to spread healthy attitudes, the kind worth catching!***

Steve Wishnack is the President of Think & Do  
<http://www.thinkanddo.us/>



## The Smile Campaign

by Robin Shader, ([rshader@cvrls.net](mailto:rshader@cvrls.net))

***Does your staff need a morale boost? Try a smile! We did!***

The Chattahoochee Valley Libraries, GA embarked on a Smile campaign for the month of July 2009. The goal of this one-month promotion was to create a more positive environment for customers and staff by focusing on one detail – smiling.

When times are tough and staff feel overworked and underappreciated, they tend to let those feelings show on their faces, in their voices and in their writing. The Smile Campaign was designed to communicate the importance of smiling and offering a pleasant demeanor when assisting both internal and external customers, and to encourage supervisors to recognize staff members who exhibit this behavior.

*See Smile Campaign... continued on page 4*

*Smile Campaign, continued from page 3*

The rules for the program were simple. Staff could nominate co-workers for a Smiley by informing the person's supervisor. The supervisor rewarded the nominee with a Smiley pin. Once the person earned five Smileys, she/he traded them in for a recognition pin. Supervisors were responsible for ensuring that all staff members earned their recognition pin.

The supplies we used for the program included inexpensive Smiley pins (enough so that each staff member could earn 5 pins), "Attitude is Everything" recognition pins (one per staff member) and small, laminated "Remember to Smile!" reminder cards for the phones. We made the laminated phone cards in-house and purchased the pins (both kinds) for about \$2.50 per person. If you don't have a budget for fancy pins, homemade stickers or some other kind of incentive would probably work just fine.

Having an incentive to participate and something to win seemed to motivate many of the staff. An additional Smile Campaign incentive was that the branch with the most positive comment cards (with comments about helpful, friendly staff) during the month of July received breakfast on me. The

winning branch, North Columbus Public Library, clearly had a good time with the program. They included the customers in their fun, and many of the comment cards were from customers nominating individual staff members for a Smiley!

It is several months later and many staff members are still proudly wearing their smiley buttons (they did not want to give them back!) and their "Attitude is Everything" pin. The pins are a constant reminder of the power of a positive attitude and a smile.

*Robin Shader is the Deputy Director of the Chattahoochee Valley Libraries, and a new member of LearnRT!*



**Chattahoochee Valley Libraries**  
*One Card...a World of Possibilities!*

### ***LearnRT Membership Benefit***

All LearnRT members are entitled to AMA "member only" benefits

- Exclusive discounts and special offers
- Preferred pricing on all AMA seminars
- Unlimited access to Members-only Website
- 50% discounts on seminar "Last-Minute Seats"
- Access to special track on HR/Training issues
- Access and benefit from case studies
- Use of interactive self-assessments



Visit the AMA website at <http://www.amanet.org/>

Contact Dawn Lowe-Wincentsen for LearnRT "member only" website access information  
[dawn.lowe.win@gmail.com](mailto:dawn.lowe.win@gmail.com)



## Member Profile: Kate Laughlin

([kate@wla.org](mailto:kate@wla.org))



### **Organization and your position there:**

Washington Library Association (WLA) Program Coordinator.

### **How long have you had this job?**

Since October 1st, 2009! I was hired to develop and coordinate programs for the Washington Library Association membership.

In addition to my work with WLA, I provide training and consultation services of various kinds around the Pacific Northwest. Prior to moving into contract work, I was the Training Coordinator for the Seattle Public Library. I am currently the vice-chairperson for WALT (WA Library Trainers), an interest group of WLA. Before working in libraries (which included front line work and management prior to being in HR), I had an interesting history in antiquarian bookselling.

### **Describe your typical work assignments:**

This is a new way of doing business for WLA. They have contracted with me to help increase and enrich the continuing education opportunities for WLA's members throughout the state. I am working closely with WLA's interest groups to identify and develop conference programs and other learning events. I will also be coordinating small and medium-sized member libraries to collaborate regionally on CE programs.

In addition to my work with WLA, in November I delivered a workshop I developed called "How To Get Your Customer Service Groove Back" for a regional

consortium of libraries in eastern Washington and Idaho. I also recently completed a project with a library system on the Olympic Peninsula wherein I mentored a team of staff trainers in how to customize and deliver a particular staff training. They had no budget for a Training Coordinator, so contracting with me for this "train the trainer" approach worked well for them.

### **What was your most interesting library-related job before your present position? Why?**

The most "interesting" job I've had was probably during the time I worked a split position on the circulation desks for two of Seattle's more colorful branches. Every day was a new adventure, it was never dull, and I always felt appreciated by the communities. While I have loved aspects of every job I've had in or with libraries, I especially love delivering training that I know will make a real and immediate difference in the lives of the staff receiving it, and therefore in the lives of the patrons or internal customers that they serve.

### **What is the most helpful training resource that you use on a regular basis?**

There are so many great resources out there, but the one I consider most valuable by far is WALT, the CE-related interest group for WLA. I have been a member for many years, and have found that the more involved I become, the more I gain in educational value, fresh ideas, and collegial support. I encourage anyone working in or for libraries to find their own "community of practice." In doing so, you will tap into a wealth of resources and new friends!

### **What training idea do you want to share with LearnRT members?**

I have long wanted to develop a series called "Snack Classes" for our busy professionals. This would be a Menu of online synchronous and archived mini classes of 20-60 minutes. In keeping the options plentiful, short, accessible, and tasty, our overworked library staff could find the just-in-time CE energy boosts they need, in portions they can devour during a single lunch break. All I need is a library that wants me to develop this series!

## **New ideas to share?**

Send your articles to the editors at

[editor@allearning.org](mailto:editor@allearning.org)

## The Competency Index

By Kimberly Chapman ([chapmank@u.library.arizona.edu](mailto:chapmank@u.library.arizona.edu)) & Betha Gutsche ([gutscheb@oclc.org](mailto:gutscheb@oclc.org))



WebJunction announced the release of the *Competency Index for the Library Field* this past June. Betha Gutsche, Program Manager for WebJunction (and LearnRT Board Member) worked diligently on this online publication that can be used by all types of libraries.

The index is freely available online as a downloadable PDF from WebJunction. It is a compilation of competency statements addressing a broad spectrum of library practice and service. The index is described as “a competency LEGO® set - building blocks from which to construct a foundation for your organization that will help guide the development of staff training, recruiting, succession planning, and other personnel strategies.

The index is divided into broad sections including: *Library Management, Personal-Interpersonal, Public Services, Technical Services, Technology: Core Skills, and Technology: Systems & IT*. Competency statements for topical areas are supported with lists of skills and knowledge that demonstrate the competency. The index provides links to the original sources for competency statements; in addition, the website provides links to competency sets from a variety of organizations. Jennifer Millikan, Director of Library Services & Technology at Kirkwood Public Library in Missouri, states “*This will come in handy as we are trying to put something together for our staff!*”

*“I sent it to my Director, it will come in VERY handy as I develop competencies and learning paths for our staff.”*

*Marianne Lenox, Staff & Volunteer Development Coordinator, Huntsville-Madison County Public Library*

Visit WebJunction and learn how the Competency Index can help your library! <http://www.webjunction.org/competencies>

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*Boston, continued from page 1* The original Boston Garden is located in the heart of the city near Newbury Street. Check out the Make Way for Ducklings statue. Lots of high-end and not-so-high-end stores, cafes, and restaurants can be found along the entire length of Newbury Street. Stephanie’s, on the corner of Newbury and Exeter, advertises “sophisticated comfort food.”

The Boston Public Library is also in this area, at 500 Boylston Street. Located on the Green line (Copley-Boston Public Library stop), the McKim building offers amazing murals by John Singer Sargent, the Chavannes Gallery, and the Abbey Room. Downstairs the Map Room Café is open daily from 9:00 – 5:00, Mon. - Sat. and the Courtyard restaurant offers lunch from 11:30-2:30 and high tea on Wed. – Fri. from 2:00-4:00.

When you leave the library you are just a few blocks away from the South End neighborhood of the city and you will find many shops and restaurants. As you head to the South End from Dartmouth Street you can stop for some sushi at Douzo, 131 Dartmouth Street. In the South End the choices can be overwhelming but try Rocca Kitchen & Bar at 500 Harrison Avenue for a great meal or B & G Oysters at 500 Tremont Street for seafood.

Getting a ticket to a Red Sox game during the season can be very difficult and costly but taking a tour of Fenway Park during the winter means you have the park to yourself. Long running shows to consider for the evening are Blue Man Group and Shear Madness. Check out the Boston Globe’s daily calendar for other theatre information.

*Carol A. Mahoney, Director, Greenwich Library was formerly Neighborhood Services Manager for the Boston Public Library*

**Attending the ALA Midwinter Meeting?  
Learning Round Table Events Are Open To All!  
January 15-19, 2009, Boston**

Friday, January 15      3:30 pm - 5:00 pm      Meet and Greet      INTER-Rose Kennedy II

Meet and greet members of the Learning Round Table (formerly CLENE). Learn more about what we do and why we do it. Bring your out-of-the-box ideas for ways in which the Learning Round Table might partner with or support the goals of your ALA division, round table or committee.

Saturday, January 16      8:00 am -12:00 pm      Board Meeting I      BCEC-Room 156C

Open Meeting - you do not have to be a LearnRT Board member to attend. We welcome all who love learning!

Sunday, January 17      10:30 am - 12:30 pm      Training Showcase Planning      BCEC-Room 161

This is the initial planning meeting for our 2010 ALA Annual flagship event. If you have ideas, suggestions, want to volunteer to help with the Training Showcase or are simply curious, please attend.

Monday, January 18      10:00 am - 12:00 pm      Board Meeting II      BCEC-Room 206A

Monday, January 18      1:30 pm - 3:30 pm      Staff Development Discussion      BCEC-Room 203

Come early and stay for the raffle. This is a great energizer for those who are new to staff training/staff development as well as for those who have been at it for awhile.

**For more information from ALA about the conference, see the website at:  
<http://www.ala.org/ala/conferencesevents/upcoming/annual/index.cfm>**

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