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Will the Library Doors be Open Next Year?

With major budget problems looming again next year, many school districts are planning to cut back on school library services. A number of the planned cuts in personnel will violate the provisions of the state's Basic Education Plan <www.ride.ri.gov>, and all of them will mean less library services and books for school kids. Woonsocket plans to have no librarians in the elementary schools next year, and only one librarian at the high school and middle school. Other districts—including Bristol/Warren, Burrillville, Chariho, Coventry, East Greenwich, Lincoln, Newport, North Kingstown, Scituate, and Warwick—are also proposing layoffs. Take action—contact your local school committee.

“An abundance of evidence strongly supports the connection between student achievement and the presence of school libraries with qualified school library media specialists. When library media specialists work with teachers to support learning opportunities with books, computer resources, and more, students learn more, get better grades, and score higher on standardized tests than their peers in schools without good libraries.” *School Libraries Work!* <www.scholastic.com>, 2008



COLA's Annual Meeting 2008

COLA's Sweetheart

Peter L. Lewiss, RI State Representative (Westerly)

Chairman of the Karla Harry Commission on Libraries in Rhode Island

Representative Lewiss has demonstrated a strong commitment to Rhode Island libraries during his ten-year tenure in the General Assembly. As Chair of the Karla Harry Commission on Libraries, created to conduct a comprehensive look at the role and function of all types of libraries throughout Rhode Island, he oversaw SurfRI, the six-week trial website sampling of more than 40 informational databases that all Rhode Islanders could use from home, work, school, or their local public library. During the 2007 legislative session, Rep. Lewiss was the prime sponsor of H5589, to create and maintain a statewide library catalog, providing access to online databases with state funding. In 2004 he was the prime sponsor of legislation which increased the state's share of support to local public libraries. According to Kathryn Taylor, Executive Director of the Westerly Public Library, "Representative Lewiss has been an Incorporator of the Memorial and Library Association of Westerly for 11 years. He is not only an advocate, but a strong financial supporter as well... "

The guest speaker at the 2008 COLA Annual Meeting & Reception, James T. Campbell of Brown University, spoke about “Priscilla’s Homecoming: Retracing the Journey of an Enslaved African Child Across Two and a Half Centuries.” Professor Campbell read several moving passages from “The Language We Cry In”, the epilogue to his book, *Middle Passages: African American Journeys to Africa, 1787-2005*. The selected passages recount details of his trip to Sierra Leone in the company of filmmaker Joseph Opala. Mr. Opala has organized three African American homecomings to Sierra Leone since discovering a connection between Gullah communities in South Carolina and Sierra Leone through his recordings of previously unidentified Gullah songs. Professor Campbell’s book evolved from his service as Chairman of the Brown University Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice, organized to investigate the history of Brown’s connection to slavery.

“Maybe it’s just an occupational hazard as an historian, but I believe that the past matters. I believe that the more a society is able to understand and confront its past, the healthier it will be. The stories that we tell about our past not only shape who we are as a society but also shape the matrix of political possibility in the present.”

~ James T. Campbell

WILLIAM E. REEVES FRIENDS AWARDS 2008

Presented by Joan Ress Reeves

The COLA Friends Awards are presented annually in memory of William E. Reeves.

Fundraising—In May of 2007 the **Friends of the Cumberland Public Library** opened their permanent **Friends Bookstore**, operated completely by volunteers. Led by President Nancy Chaput, Friends set up the shelving, arranged for collecting RI sales tax, trained volunteers, and organized the stock. In its first seven and a half months the store has netted \$7,200.

Education— **Friends of the Hope Library Association** sponsored **Navigating the Past: The Voyage of the Slave Ship Sally Exhibit**, jointly produced by Brown University’s Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice and the Rhode Island Historical Society. In conjunction with the month-long exhibit, Professor James Campbell from Brown University presented a related slide and lecture program, explaining Rhode Island’s role in the slave trade. Chair Janet Hanson noted the Scituate connections in the presen-

tation—the Brown brothers owned Hope Furnace, and the captain of the Sally, Ezek Hopkins, was a resident.

Outreach—As part of their efforts to promote the Library as a learning resource for the greater East Bay Community, the **Friends of the Roger Williams University Library** started a Great Decisions Discussion Group using materials from the Foreign Policy Association, the nation’s oldest organization devoted to citizen education in world affairs. Friends Chair Elizabeth W. Arnold describes the sessions, held at the Bristol Statehouse, as an opportunity to recruit new friends. The program, which features a short video on the topic for the month followed by open discussion and a ballot, forwards the resulting opinion to the Foreign Policy Association.

Community Service—Friends of Libraries U.S.A. (FOLUSA) recognized the National Friends of Library Week outreach display board and bookmarks produced by the **Friends of the Mohr Public Library**.

Carole Norberg, Friends President, writes that their goal was “to provide awareness to the community about the vital role libraries play in our lives.”



Using quotes provided by FOLUSA as their creative influence, the Friends produced an eye-catching display board, plus book marks and showcased their new Friends book bags and mugs.

The Linda Aldrich scholarships, for GSLIS students planning a career in school library media services, were awarded this year to **Ellen Basso** and **Jennifer Swartz**. Ellen is a URI computer science graduate, who discovered, after working at GTECH and raising a family, that she enjoyed children's literature, and volunteering at the library of the Hanaford School in East Greenwich. Jennifer Swartz

also volunteered in the library at Hanaford School, deciding to enroll in the University of Rhode Island's library program, completing her student teaching at Cole Middle School in East Greenwich and at the Captain Isaac Paine Elementary School in Foster.

COLA awarded the William Bergeron Public Library Scholarship

to **Edward Garcia**, former DJ and station manager at WRIU. While at URI, Ed worked for the American Diabetes Association, managing the Rhode Island office, where he did fund-raising and advocacy. The recipient of a Prism Plus fellowship at URI, Ed would like to work in a public library as a reference librarian after graduation and eventually as a library director.

For more information and pictures from the Annual Meeting, please visit the COLA website at <www.bodees.com/COLA/COLA.htm>

Library News

Plan a Spring Library Visit

The new Jesse M. Smith Library in Burrillville has just opened, and it's definitely worth a visit. The **North** section of the Friday, March 28 *Providence Journal* describes it as "Designed for Gathering." With its large windows, cozy spots, and engaging river views, it's sure to become a favorite local spot. For more information, including pictures, check out the OLIS web site <www.olis.ri.gov>.

Rhode Island Historical Society Catalog Online

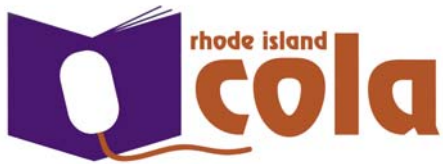
Check out NETOP (<http://www.rihs.org>) for access to the diverse holdings of the Rhode Island Historical Society (RIHS), including books, manuscripts, film, newspapers, maps, museum objects, paintings, textiles, furniture, and much more. While NETOP currently describes only a portion of the RIHS holdings, new items are being added every day. This is a monumental first step toward a complete migration of the RIHS paper card catalog, which originated over 185 years ago with the founding of the Society in 1822. Made possible by a \$75,000 Museums for America grant from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), project funds purchased software and data conversion services, while RIHS matched funding with over 5,400 staff hours.

~From the Office of Library and Information (OLIS) website.

RILINK Schools Get Federal Grant from OLIS for Subscription to World Book Online

Thanks to a grant from the Office of Library and Information Services under the federal Library Services and Technology Act, students, teachers and parents at all 91 school library members of the Rhode Island Library Information for Kids have access to World Book Online. For younger students World Book features a rewarding online learning experience with thousands of easy-to-read articles, engaging images and illustrations, interactive games and activities, and teacher resources. For older students and teachers it offers an expansive reference database that includes an extensive multimedia collection, thousands of editor-selected Web sites, plus correlations to Rhode Island curriculum standards. The subscription also includes 1.3 million pages of primary source documents, including 5,500 full text e-books. Students and teachers can save their research on their own individual My Research Page.





Rhode Island Coalition of Library Advocates

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Did You Know?

Computer-savvy adults ages 18 to 30 were the biggest library users in the U.S. last year, according to a recent survey. Internet users were more than twice as likely to patronize libraries as non-Internet users. More than two-thirds of library visitors in all age groups said they used computers while at the library. 65% of them looked up information on the Internet, while 62% used computers to check into the library's resources. One major surprise was the finding that people in the Gen Y generation are more likely than their elders to use libraries when they face problems. Gen Ys are also more likely to patronize libraries for all kinds of reasons. "Instead of the internet making libraries less relevant, internet use seems to create an information hunger that libraries help satisfy." ~ Pew Internet & American Life Project. (2007). *Information Searches That Solve Problems.*

COLA is a statewide, grass-roots library support group. COLA's work includes legislative advocacy, community education, public awareness, and support for library Friends groups.

Library Quotables...

"My best friend is a person who will give me a book I have not read."

~Abraham Lincoln

www.bodees.com/COLA/COLA.htm

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