

Invitation to the ACRL President's Program in Atlanta

The top five reasons you need to be there

by Lee C. Van Orsdel

ALA's Annual Conference in Atlanta, on June 13–19, 2002, offers an overwhelming number of opportunities to look and learn, to network and engage, to consider new ideas and challenge old ones. Some of those opportunities—the best of them—will enlarge the ways you think and act as an academic librarian. The ACRL President's Program, "Transformational Learning Communities: Claiming Our Future," promises to be such an opportunity. For those who need to be persuaded, here are the top five reasons you need to be there:

Reason #5: You'll experience ACRL in one of its most effective and necessary roles: fostering learning communities.

As members of ACRL, we *are* part of a learning community. Something wonderful happens when we gather to learn from each other and from experts who have knowledge that is relevant to our professional development. The ACRL President's Program is our annual convocation—a time when we gather to celebrate some of our best people and some of our best ideas; a time to wrestle with issues that affect the way we lead on our campuses and in our libraries. The President's

Program is always a good place to be on the Monday afternoon of ALA Annual Conference.

Reason #4: You'll get to see how a dozen or more of your forward-thinking colleagues put the concepts of learning communities into action.

If the devil is in the details, then the poster session that follows the keynote address and panel responses should expand the learning experience for participants by connecting theory to practice. Librarians from 15 to 20 institutions will be on hand to talk about their experiences with learning communities on their campuses. Handouts will be available, so you can take the best ideas home with you.

Reason #3: The Reactor Panel (a.k.a. librarians who respond to the keynote address) consists of three outstanding colleagues you will want to hear: Theresa Byrd, Randy Hensley, and Joan Lippincott.

Theresa S. Byrd is director of libraries at Ohio Wesleyan University and a member of the ACRL Board. An enthusiastic champion of information literacy, Byrd has a good perspective on learning communities in smaller academic institutions. Her experience in

About the author

Lee C. Van Orsdel is dean of libraries at Eastern Kentucky University, e-mail: lee.vanorsdel@eku.edu

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#2. Barbara Leigh Smith (a.k.a. the Keynote Speaker) is one of the most important voices in the nation on learning communities, and she's coming to help us learn about their potential for reforming higher education.

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higher education includes a stint with community colleges in Virginia, various leadership roles on her campus and in professional organizations, and extensive work with consortia. She currently serves on the OhioLINK Board.

Randy Burke Hensley hails from the University of Hawaii at Manoa (UHM), where he is head of public services. Hensley's passion for teaching and learning earned him the Miriam Dudley Instruction Librarian Award in 2002 and the UHM Library Innovation in Instruction Award in 2001. He is a regular faculty member of the ACRL Institute for Information Literacy Immersion Program. He has published and presented extensively on learning communities and on learning styles.

Joan Lippincott, an experienced librarian and associate executive director of the Coalition for Networked Information (CNI), understands the impact of technology on teach-

ing and learning, particularly in collaborative environments, better than most. She was instrumental in establishing CNI's New Learning Communities program to identify and model innovative uses of networked information and collaborative teaching and learning practices. In the March issue of *C&RL News*, Lippincott speaks powerfully in favor of librarians as participants in, not just adjuncts to, teaching and learning communities on college campuses.¹

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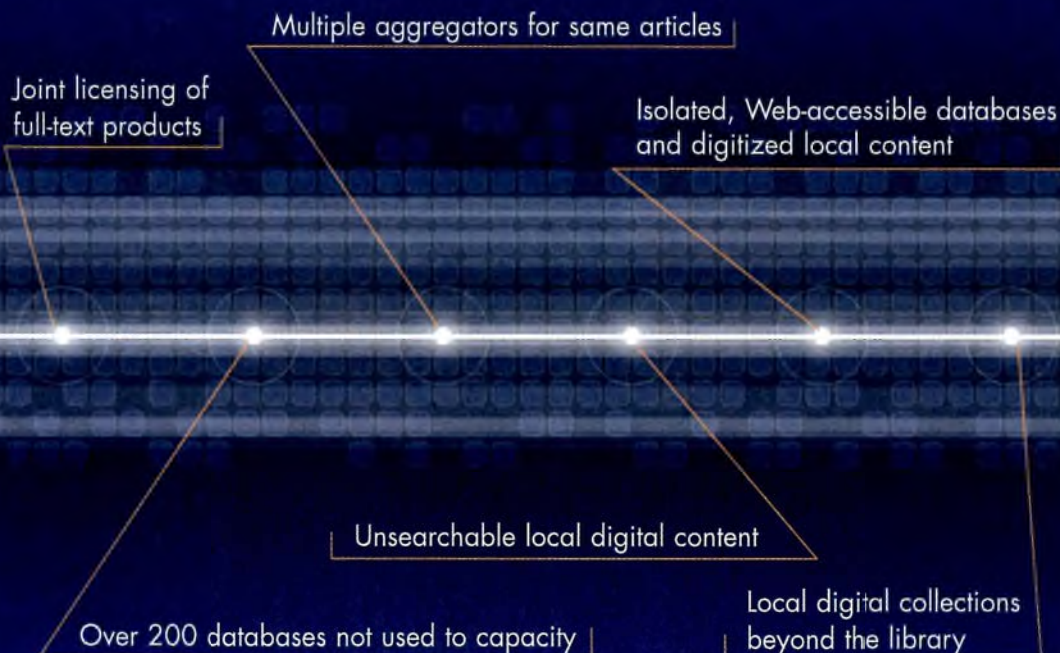
Smith could well be called an icon in the field of learning communities in the United States. In the 1980s, Smith was the provost and vice president for academic affairs at Evergreen State College, an innovative consortium of 48 colleges and universities in the state of Washington. While there, she founded the Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education, out of which grew the learning community models that have spread across the nation. Smith is currently codirector of the National Learning Community Project, funded by the Pew Charitable Trust. Her experiences in higher education administration, in curriculum innovation, and in the development of collaborative teaching and learning methods are impressive. Smith's perspectives on the emergent use of learning communities in higher education will be stimulating and challenging.

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The learning communities movement is one of the most powerful ideas in higher education today. It is a concept with many applications, but it is strongly associated with
(continued on page 377)

The President's Program will be held in Atlanta on Monday, June 17, 2002, from 2:00–5:00 p.m. Visit the President's Page at <http://www.ala.org/acrl/prespage.html>.

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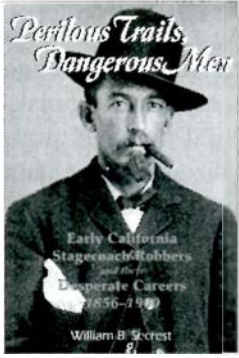
Since 1999, ACS Publications will have introduced a total of 6 new publications:

Organic Letters (1999), *Journal of Combinatorial Chemistry* (1999), *Biomacromolecules* (2000), *Crystal Growth & Design* and *Nano Letters* (both in 2001), and the recently launched *Journal of Proteome Research* (2002).

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stagecoaches in California from 1856 to 1900. Richly illustrated with mug shots of the criminals and the lawmen who nabbed them, this well-researched rogue's gallery provides a glimpse of the reality behind the Western



myth. Included is the famous Charles "Black Bart" Bowles, who robbed 28 stages in eight years and posed as a gentleman miner in San Francisco between holdups; Bill Miner, the legendary train-robbing "Grey Fox," who spent much of his life in various prisons; John and

Charley Ruggles, who were lynched in Redding in 1892 after a botched and bloody robbery; and the Tom Bell gang, who engineered the first stagecoach holdup in California in 1856. Secrest intersperses all this history with interesting sidebars on the parts of an 1840s Concord coach, famous stage drivers, how to drive a stagecoach, the types of guns used in robberies, and the books and songs of the era. \$15.95. Word Dancer Press, 8386 N. Madsen, Clovis, CA 93611. ISBN 1-884995-24-1.

Resting Places, by Scott Wilson (432 pages, November 2001), identifies the grave site or other final disposal of the remains of 7,182 famous persons, primarily Americans and Europeans. The exact cemetery plot or area where the ashes were scattered is given if known, along with gravestone inscriptions, monument details, and other circumstances of burial. Wilson takes three full pages to list all of his acknowledgments, but he singles out reference librarians for special praise because they "have taken up the search through old newspaper microfilm or county cemetery records, with an increasing interest of their own in where the subject of each particular search was or was not interred." An index of place names identifies the famous in each locality. \$85.00. McFarland. ISBN 0-7864-1014-0.

A related title is *Suicide in the Entertainment Industry*, by David K. Frasier (428 pages, February 2002), which offers the details of 840 suicides by people in show business (vaudeville, film, theater, dance, and music) from 1905 to 2000. A macabre yet fascinating

catalog, this book makes one wonder whether self-inflicted death is an occupational hazard in the entertainment industry. Both famous (Kurt Cobain, Brian Keith, Inger Stevens, and Gig Young) and minor figures (Rusty Hamer, who played Danny Thomas's son in the TV sitcom *Make Room for Daddy*; Chief Long Lance, an actor-writer who claimed to be a Blackfoot Indian but who 50 years after his death was revealed as an African-American from North Carolina; and Clara Blandick, who played Auntie Em in *The Wizard of Oz*) are profiled. A few questionable suicides are listed, including Marilyn Monroe, George Reeves, and Alan Ladd. \$65.00. McFarland. ISBN 0-7864-1038-8.

Skulls and Skeletons: Human Bone Collections and Accumulations, by Christine Quigley (263 pages, October 2001), completes this trio of postmortem publications. Quigley describes catacombs, ossuaries, mass graves, prehistoric excavations, private collections, and institutions that have preserved human skeletal remains, and looks at why these collections are important scientifically and historically. \$39.95. McFarland. ISBN 0-7864-1068-X. ■

("Invitation to . . ." continued from page 342) campus efforts to retain students and to increase their success. For academic libraries, the concept has tremendous potential to "ensure the library's relevance to [our institutions'] educational and research programs," as ACRL President Mary Reichel declared when she announced her presidential theme.²

Indeed, the idea of learning communities gives form, structure, and language to our desire for continuous learning, for creative connectivity, and for diversity on our campuses, in our libraries, and in our professional associations. Sounds like an idea worth showing up for.

Notes

1. Joan K. Lippincott, "Developing collaborative relationships," *College & Research Libraries News* 63, 3 (2002): 191.

2. Mary Reichel, "ACRL: The learning community for excellence in academic libraries," *College & Research Libraries News* 62, 8 (2001): 820. ■