Tidbits

- Bartow Public Library is working on providing Hotspots available for checkout to Bartow library users. Available through T-Mobile, they hope to give their community an opportunity for Internet access in the remote parts of their area lacking direct lines. Other Polk County Libraries - Lakeland and Winter Haven - have already begun this device checkout to great success. They hope to have hotspot devices available by mid-July or August 2017.

- Jessica Szempruch recently “emerged” from the ALA 2017 Emerging Leaders program, following her successful poster presentation at ALA Annual in Chicago. Jessica’s Emerging Leaders project had her working alongside colleagues from four other institutions on behalf of the ALA Learning Round Table (LearnRT) to develop conference presentation tips and best practices, as well as map out a process for a presentation review mentoring service. Deliverables created by the group will available for future presentation-goers via ALA’s conference website and LearnRT. Jessica welcomes questions regarding this project, or Emerging Leaders in general; please feel free to email her at jessica.szempruch@gmail.com

SIS FLA 2017 Scholarship - Conference Summaries

Adam E. Berkowitz

I had three goals in mind when entering the conference on May 10, 2017: 1) network with professionals attending the conference, 2) gain a better understanding of what librarians do beyond what I have been taught in my classes, and 3) form an understanding of what this conference has to offer so that I can report it to the Suncoast Information Specialists. This conference far exceeded my expectations, and the value of what I have gained cannot be measured.

While attending the conference, I went to several presentations. Many of which dealt with how to prepare college students for their responsibilities and obligations. As librarians, we consider the success of every student to be of the utmost importance. However, we must remember that although teaching students how to use library resources is our primary role in the university system, we also concern ourselves with their mental and physical well-being as well as how to prepare them for their lives proceeding their graduation. We can be more effective in accomplishing these tasks by not only investing time in our own professional development, but also through interdepartmental collaborations. Librarians should be called upon by professors to explain to students how to use the library resources, and librarians should take the initiative to inform certain professors and departments of their content specialty. Libraries should establish cooperative events with career services as well as writing centers, and student organizations. All of these ideas, and more which were suggested during conference workshops will lead to a more integrated and engaging library experience for the students. These initiatives will benefit the students during their studies at the university and as graduates while they seek employment.

I also learned a tremendous amount about the roles of academic and public libraries in emergency situations. The top priority of a library in such a situation is to provide a sense of safety and a return to normalcy. Libraries are supposed to have contingency plans for fires, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, earthquakes, blackouts, insect and pest infestations, and more. I, personally, found the lengths to which libraries go in order to protect their patrons to be inspiring. I was especially impressed with the role that the Ferguson Public Library played during the riots in...
Ferguson, Missouri in 2014 and 2015. During this period of civil upheaval, schools were temporarily closed; however, the public library remained open so as to provide a safe venue for students to meet with their teachers, and continue with their coursework. The library provides a sanctuary to its patrons in times when life is interrupted by severe, life threatening events. It is important to understand the role in which the librarian may find him/herself, and it is important to surround one’s self with reliable staff members who can react effectively in times of emergency.

The opportunities to network with other librarians was just as important as the time I spent in the workshops. By speaking with other librarians, many of whom were at one time students at the University of South Florida like myself, I was able to compare their library school experiences with my own. I received feedback on the coursework I am pursuing, and furthered my understanding of how my newly acquired knowledge and skills will be applied in the field. I consider myself to be lucky, and am most appreciative for the opportunity afforded to me by the Suncoast Information Specialists. Without this opportunity, I most likely would not have met such fantastic individuals who strive to not only make librarianship more formidable, but also wish to invest in me as a student. I have learned that these librarians see MLIS students as a breath of fresh air, and individuals to whom they can pass on the torch. Upon retiring, librarians want to be ensured that library school graduates are fully prepared to carry on the responsibility of serving the institution’s patrons. I, for one, look forward to fully preparing myself to continue and further such a legacy.

Arlene Haessler

First, I would like to thank the Suncoast Information Specialists for awarding me with the scholarship to attend the FLA Annual Conference this year. As an online student in a rural area with an interest in academic and medical librarianship I have few opportunities to interact with LIS professionals working in those areas, nor with my fellow students, professors and future colleagues. Last summer I was able to attend two conferences, the Science Boot Camp for Librarians Southeast and the SAA in Atlanta. I also attended the small, but mighty Florida Health Sciences Library Association meeting in March, but I did not make it to the FLA Annual Conference last year and I did not think I would be able to afford it this year. Then I was awarded the SIS scholarship and asked to volunteer for our department with some reimbursement and with this assistance was able to attend!

I spent many hours looking through the schedule and trying to decide how I could be in two places at once (sometimes more). I settled on a few primary interests and decided to play it by ear the rest of the time. Wednesday morning began with the new attendee orientation and then the keynote speaker, Toni Tipton-Martin. The story of her work was fascinating and an inspiration. My next stop was the section, So You Want to be a Faculty Librarian? This was such a useful presentation, the presenters described the process for hiring in their university libraries, but also were able to generalize it a bit so that I left with a deeper understanding of the expectations if I were ever to land that coveted academic library interview.

I was interested in a couple of committees and saw a familiar name from the Science Boot Camp on the Leadership Development Committee. One of the nicest qualities of FLA is how small it is, I was able to track Renaine Julian from FSU down easily. After speaking with him about the committee, I decided to attend the Library Leadership Roundtable that afternoon and the LDC’s meeting the next morning. While I am far from a leadership role in LIS, I am currently trying to manage the Keys Chapter of the Florida State Massage Therapy Association (FSMTA) to get them prepared for when I move on. We have struggled for years with bringing in new members as well as having them take on leadership roles (I think this is a familiar problem with any volunteer run association). With the LDC I was hoping I would both gain some inspiration for inspiring leadership in my current colleagues as well as build transferable skills and I was not