



PNLA Quarterly Special on COVID-19



A woman wears a mask during the 1918 flu epidemic. (Getty Images)

Editors, Jennifer Ward and Robert Perret

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A Message From the President: Wow! What a year!

Jenny Grenfell, PNLA Co-President



I want to start off by welcoming Jennifer Ward and Robert Perret as the new editors of the PNLA Quarterly! After a short hiatus we are excited to have the PNLA Quarterly back in action and we look forward to the vision Robert and Jennifer bring to this important publication.

This first issue of the re-emerging publication is dedicated to our stories of how the pandemic has impacted our library world. When seen from the proverbial “10,000-foot view” this global event has reenergized our libraries in many ways. We have had to reevaluate what is important about what we do and reimagine how we can safely provide the services that are critical to our patrons. Many of us have had to learn new ways of doing things. While not something we might have sought out, one might imagine that the result will be better for everyone.

In a closer view, PNLA has been impacted in how we carry out our activities. Fortunately, the Board had already made the shift to Zoom meetings, but our annual conference was another matter entirely. This event is valued highly by our membership for the opportunities it offers to share, learn, and network among our international community of libraries. The conference committee reluctantly concluded that trying to hold the anticipated joint conference with AKLA in the beautiful city of Juneau would not be a wise move, and that we would be better off to cancel the event. Out of the ashes of that decision rose a new opportunity. The PNLA Virtual Poster Session will be held August 4-7. Erin Hvizdak and Ilana Kingsley have done a great job of recruiting presenters and setting up what is sure to be a great event! Be watching for more information on our webpage (pnla.org) and on social media.

Each of our libraries has been impacted – schools and universities were suddenly faced with finding the best way to help their students learn in an online environment, we all were eager to find out the best way to safely work with our collections, and in my world of public libraries we have had to design and implement curbside service. For some of us this was not a new idea – but others of us are facing an entirely new paradigm and way of working with our communities. I found myself learning multiple programs and technologies after comfortably thinking I might make it to retirement without needing to scale that mountain! I, personally, am glad for the push this has given me to keep learning and improving the way I work with colleagues and patrons alike.

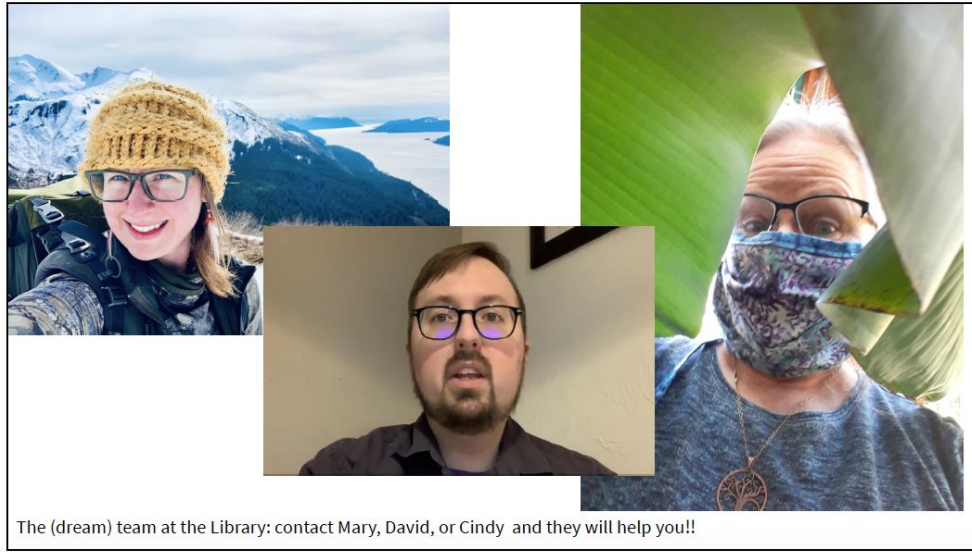
Whatever your journey, we hope that you will find yourself in this issue of the PNLQ Quarterly. Stay safe and well, and we look forward to a future where libraries are more relevant than ever!

Letter from the Editor

Jennifer Ward, co-editor

Greetings from Juneau, Alaska. I am writing my first editor's note for *PNLA Quarterly* from my home office, which is a shared (and shifting) space depending on the needs of myself, a child, a dog, and a partner also working home. It got pretty dicey a few times when we all had Zoom meetings scheduled at the same time (that is, except for the dog—he has been thrilled with the home office situation). My experience is not unique, and, despite the difficulties of providing services, attending meetings, coordinating with colleagues, tending to children and pets, and being productive from home, I have found this to be a heartening time in what we actually have been able to accomplish. I see these accomplishments in the essays published here.

One example of coordination during Covid for me was at UAS Egan Library. A team of us met over Zoom to coordinate our response to a cohort of education students (pre-service teachers) who would normally be camped out in our building perusing our special collection of Juvenile Alaskana books. Since we would not be able to host the faculty member and her students this year in-person, we drafted policies and procedures for these students to order books to be delivered to their locations throughout Alaska. We created recorded instructional Zoom tutorials on searching the catalog, colorful handouts on the collections, walk-throughs of the physical collection using iPhone video clips, and follow-up reference help to make sure these students had what they needed of our collection. As I said, it has been heartening, and I am so proud to be working with the team at my library.



I am also so proud to be working with Robert Perret as co-editor of this journal. We are both excited to provide a platform for insightful, scholarly, and timely discussion in the field of library and information science in the Pacific Northwest.

The essays we publish in this special issue represent the resiliency, innovation, and historical context of Pacific Northwest libraries and librarians in 2020 during Covid-19. As I read through these essays, I have been struck by the innovation and passion displayed within my profession. Through and through, librarians have adjusted and adapted to the times, continuing to provide services to our communities.

Symptoms without the Disease: Doubt, Distrust, and Inaction

In February 2020, I was ill with a cough, sore throat, and fever. I had just started a new job at the beginning of the month, and had not yet accumulated any sick days to take off. This lack of sick days was significant because of the ongoing fever, and that the cough was not subsiding and it was keeping me up at night. I decided it was in my best interest and my new co-workers to stay home from work so nobody else would get sick. I ended up staying home for a full week because my symptoms only got worse. I went to an urgent care facility, which gave me a chest x-ray and diagnosed my ailment as bronchitis. I was prescribed antibiotics, and once they kicked in, I started to feel better. Despite the bronchitis diagnosis, there is a small corner of doubt in my mind that I might have had something more serious such as the COVID-19 virus. This doubt will always make me wonder how close to the edge of my mortality I came to, or worse, how close I came to transmitting something to others.

One insidious thing the COVID-19 virus does, whether you are infected or not, is to sow the seeds of doubt. This doubt infects our day-to-day lives and makes our world seem paralyzing, terrifying, anxiety-inducing, and everything in-between. The virus imparts a dark questioning of yourself and others that buzzes in your head once you step outside your door. The situation adds a distrustful but real element to the traditional set of *Who, What, Where, When, and How* questions when you find yourself in public: *Who around me has been exposed to the virus? What measures are people around me doing to protect themselves (and me)? Where have people around me been that might have exposed them to the virus? When was the last time people around me had their temperature checked? How do I know you won't infect me?* The problem is getting accurate information about these crucial questions for your safety and that of others. Thus, trustworthy information in this pandemic is a precious commodity, and seemingly becomes one part of the panacea necessary to overcome the virus. Yet, the societal situation around the virus certainly creates some noise about what is known, unknown, and to be trusted. Shannon and Weaver posited a classic communication model that includes noise as part of the message

transmission process[1]. This noise reduces the clarity and fidelity of the message between the message sender and the message receiver. In a pandemic world, whatever is communicated seemingly will always have the noise of the virus as part of its message.

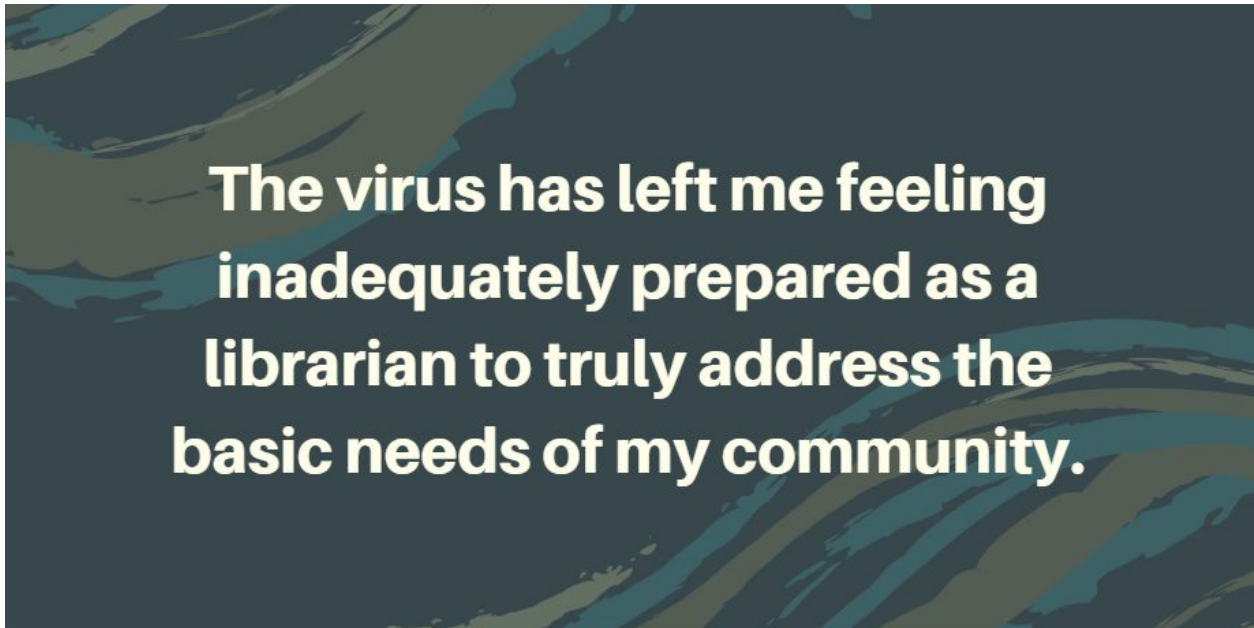
This viral noise is a real and ongoing reality that might never find its way out of library systems of communication. In my practice as a library assessment coordinator, I will continually encounter this noise when I look at benchmarking my library's efforts against others. Benchmarking is a standard assessment technique to compare progress, efficiency, and impact with peer institutions. However, the COVID-19 virus has disrupted library services and created a cascade of budget issues that makes looking at previous benchmarking data seem a useless exercise in comparing rotten apples. For my work, the virus will always be a piece of disruptive information that will forever need to be accounted for.

Thinking of the virus as not just noise, but an actual piece of information, is not far off the mark. An article about the pandemic in *The New York Times* starts off: "A virus, at heart, is information, a packet of data that benefits from being shared... It would be more accurate to say that we find ourselves at odds with a microscopic photocopy machine.[2]" The viral copy machine is a good analogy. We can imagine how the virus seeks to replicate its deadly message over and over. It also makes one think of a copy machine that imparts too much toner on its copies and smudges any other piece of paper it comes in contact with. On the flip side, it has been pointed out by Goffman and Newill (1967) that the act of communicating information can be represented as an epidemic process[3].

Ideas are embedded in a vehicle called information which acts as the agency of transmission. Hence information is made of complex atomic elements called ideas and knowledge is a result of an interaction between a target individual and the information through which certain ideas are being communicated from a certain source. Knowledge is communicated from individual to individual within a population. In the

case of an infectious disease, the infectious material plays the role of the idea; there is an agent by which the infectious material is transmitted; the target object and the infectious material may or may not result in a case of disease, just as the interaction between an individual and an idea may or may not result in the accumulation of knowledge. (pg. 317)

In this light, information is a virus in and of itself. It is strange to think that all this time, libraries have really been viral epicenters of information.



**The virus has left me feeling
inadequately prepared as a
librarian to truly address the
basic needs of my community.**

So, is the virus information, or is information a virus, or by some magic transitive property is it both? Perhaps the answer is irrelevant, as Thomas McLuhan strongly suggested that the "medium is the message.[4]" The medium dictates the individual and societal conditions on how we understand, interact, and ultimately (and fittingly in the case of a virus) absorb a message that has been communicated. What then does the virus as a medium tell us about ourselves? First off, a virus is a living biological entity and requires a living host to work its voodoo copy machine replication magic. Despite the destructive potential of the COVID-19 virus, the viral medium is one that prioritizes the living for the virus to survive. Another aspect of the virus as a medium is that it is so small that it cannot be seen

with the human eye. To see a virus as a medium, we must use scientific instruments and research processes. We also must trust these methodologies and the scientists to be accurate and truthful when reporting out. Taken together, the medium of the virus is constructed around prioritizing biological life, science, and trust. Looking at the splintered political world today, I am not sure if society is ready to accept any message conveyed in a medium dependent on these characteristics, which is more than unfortunate, as it is potentially deadly.

While looking at the COVID-19 virus through the lenses of information, communication, and medium of communication is an amusing intellectual exercise, I am not sure how comforting that is for those struck by the disease or caught in economic distress from its societal fallout. Unfortunately, knowledge without action becomes just more white noise, feeding the anxiety levels of the uncertainty-generating machine that reside inside all of us. While prioritizing the lives of others and trusting science might have reduced the noise and uncertainty around the virus to save lives -- the lived reality is that people are physically and emotionally suffering no matter what they do during the pandemic. As an information professional, I could say remember to evaluate your sources, trust the research, and on and on. These are excellent pieces of advice and the typical lifelong learning skills we want to instill, but they feel like impotent platitudes with no real agency. How can my profession rise to the occasion to help my community find essential resources such as food, housing, and stable employment during a pandemic? I don't have a satisfactory answer or a very meaningful response. The virus has left me feeling inadequately prepared as a librarian to truly address the basic needs of my community. Ultimately, the virus has challenged my assumptions about my role as a librarian, the trust I have in others, and how best to move forward.

Rick Stoddart is the Library Assessment Coordinator at the University of Oregon Libraries

[1] Shannon Weaver Communication Model:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shannon%E2%80%93Weaver_model

[2] Burdick, A (2020), Monster or Machine? A Profile of the Coronavirus at 6 Months Our "hidden enemy," in plain sight. *New York Times* June 2, 2020

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/02/health/coronavirus-profile-covid.html?>

[3] Goffman, W., & Newill, V. (1967). Communication and Epidemic Processes. *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London. Series A, Mathematical and Physical Sciences*, 298(1454), 316-334. Retrieved May 27, 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/2416066

[4] Marshall McLuhan https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_medium_is_the_message

Covid Update from Idaho: Book Lottery

I love giving books to kids, and have done so in many settings for years. This year I'm participating in a new kind of book distribution: socially-distanced book give-aways.



Here's how it works. Parents and kids drive up to the pickup location at School X to retrieve a packet of homework or grab and go lunch. A masked and gloved "car monitor" asks the parent for the grade of each child. A typical list looks like this: Grade 1 boy, Grade 6 girl, and infant; bilingual or Spanish books preferred. The car monitor relays this information to similarly masked and gloved library staff at the book table, who quickly select two books for each child, going on this (admittedly extremely limited) information. Some books get replaced due to comments such as, "I already read that," but most are accepted and taken home. Each child also receives a simple printed reading log. Completing 16 days of reading, hopefully four days a week for four weeks, qualifies the child to be entered in a library drawing to receive a set of magnetic tiles. The kids won't return the physical logs, they'll just update teachers that they finished.

My goal in doing this seemingly crazy style of give-away is to allow kids without electronic access at home a way to keep reading. A side benefit is the possibility that kids might get a book they never would have chosen themselves but that they enjoy nonetheless. The school seemed quite happy with the event, and parents shared positive feedback as well. We'll be repeating it at other sites in the coming weeks as often as I can gather books that have been quarantined and cleaned, or are quarantined and new.

I can't wait to let kids choose their own books again! But in the meantime, something is better than nothing. Sadly, in my town as well as

many others across the nation, home libraries aren't a priority because parents have to choose food or rent instead of books. Given that harsh reality, the books given out this year seem like winning the lottery!



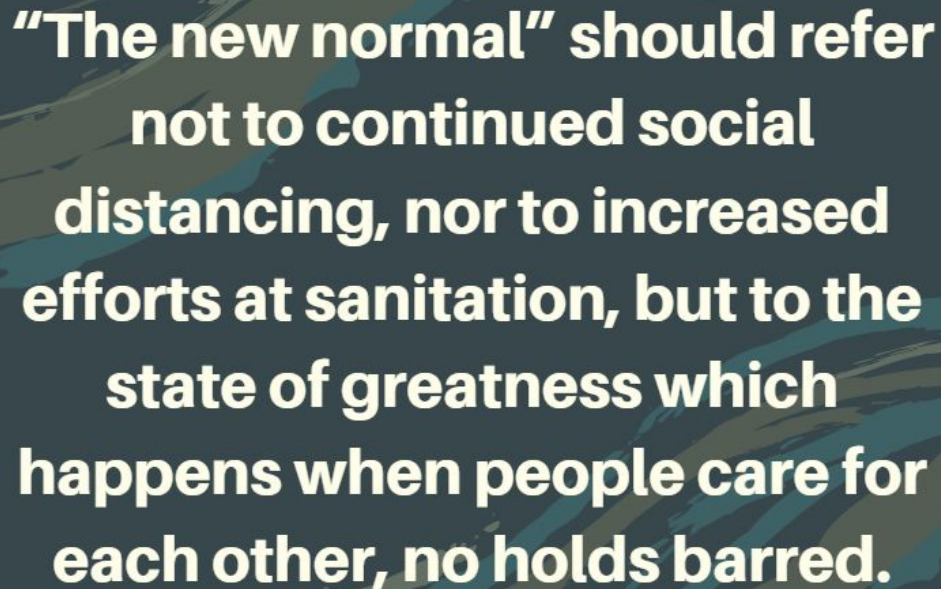
Fiona May is Youth Services Supervisor at Caldwell Public Library

The New Normal

In my 49 years on the planet, I have experienced a number of unlikely emergencies. Consequently, I am not one to minimize risk. And yet, when it became clear that COVID-19 would require social distancing on a large scale, it felt unreal, a scene from a movie with a plotline set ever so slightly in the future. I didn't even think to pack up my most important office belongings during the week or so between beginning to work from home and the full lockdown of the Boise State University campus.

Funny thing, in retrospect a pandemic is far more likely than having one's house set on fire by the neighbor's ex-girlfriend, but there you have it. Another funny thing - in truth, shifting to work from home was not logistically difficult. My job does not require special equipment or, usually, in-person contact with others.

While on the one hand the situation left me feeling removed, on the other I have found myself deeply proud of the library where I work, of the people with whom I work, and of my profession. Immediately after the closure, library administrators went out of their way to find tasks for those staff with jobs that don't easily lend themselves to working from home. At the same time, colleagues sent news of professional development webinars, newspaper archives, templates for communicating with our faculty, and announcements of open collections faster than I could take in the information. I was literally swimming in resources.



“The new normal” should refer not to continued social distancing, nor to increased efforts at sanitation, but to the state of greatness which happens when people care for each other, no holds barred.

I also feel proud of my community, having seen members of a local mutual aid group offer money to perfect strangers; restaurants provide box lunches for children and families; and small businesses raise funds to support other local small businesses. Over the past three months I have been surrounded by ingenuity, kindness, and quick action. and this has touched me profoundly.

In sum, I would have it that “the new normal,” should refer not to continued social distancing, nor to increased efforts at sanitation, but to the state of greatness which happens when people care for each other, no holds barred.

Ellie Dworak is the Data Visualization Librarian at Boise State University.

The Fort Saskatchewan Public Library

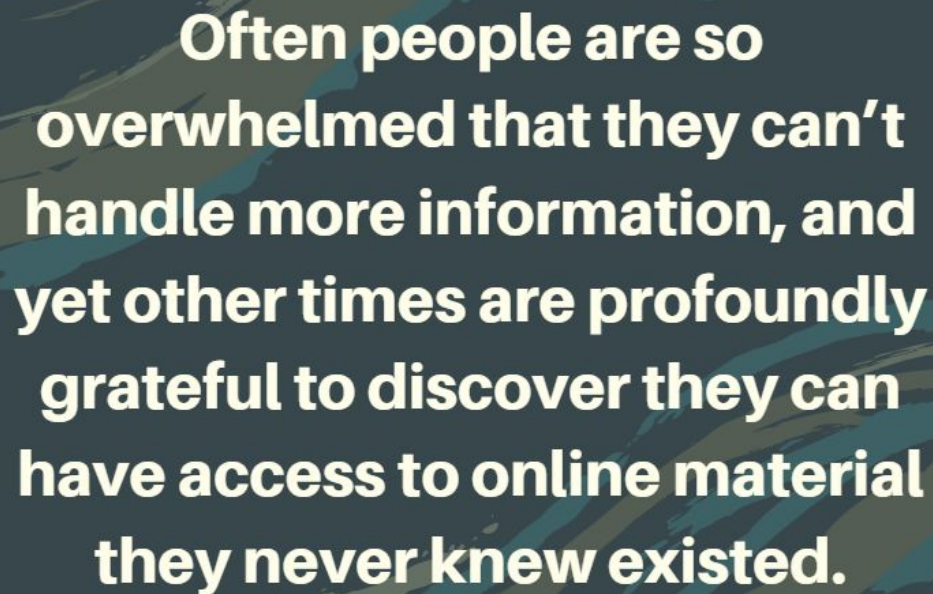
Like many libraries, Fort Saskatchewan Public Library was closed quite abruptly with little warning to the public following the recommendation of our municipal and provincial governments on March 15th. With no foreknowledge or ability to warn patrons ahead of time, one day we were open, and then the next day closed until further notice. We posted on all our social media platforms right away as well as posters on our windows to ensure the public that we will eventually reopen, this is temporary, and to keep checking with us for updates.

This made quite a few people upset, so our biggest priority right away was ensuring that we could talk on the phone to everyone who had questions for as long as they needed and to respond to emails and social media ASAP. Sometimes these phone calls could go on for over an hour as people poured out to us their own anxieties and uncertainties about what would happen with their children out of school and their own jobs in question. It was a very emotionally trying time for both staff and patrons, but we had a lot of great public feedback about our staff's communication skills.

We still had almost all full staff coming in for several weeks to man the phones and respond to emails. Management was immediately accommodating to all staff who did not feel comfortable coming into the library space. Within 4 days of closure, staff were beginning to be set-up to work remotely from home—our IT guys were incredibly on the ball. Some people took home library laptops to work on while others used various programs to remote into their library work computer to continue to have access to files and programs located only on library computers. No one was penalized in any way for not coming in.

One of the first outreach responses we had was to begin online programming within 4 days of our closure. At first we offered only storytimes, then quickly branched out to science videos, craft activities, read-a-longs, book binges, and book clubs to cover a wider variety of age groups. We began offering recommendations via a blog on our website and also a telephone check-in service where we call someone on a regular basis

to touch base and provide personalized recommendations. We are lucky to have already cultivated a great working relationship with our local newspaper and managed to have a series of articles in the paper reminding people of our updated services almost every week.



Often people are so overwhelmed that they can't handle more information, and yet other times are profoundly grateful to discover they can have access to online material they never knew existed.

Keeping in mind that our service theme this year was Seniors, we changed the evening phone hours 5-9 to be primarily tech help, created a chair yoga routine to view online, and started an online garden chat group so people could see and talk to each other featuring a rotating cast of local experts. We expanded our efforts to reach the community by partnering up with a variety of previously uncontacted local groups (the Amateur Radio Club for example!) and created a database and network to share new library programs and services as they were rolled out. We also partnered with our city to have a flyer included in monthly utility bills that are mailed out to reach people who don't frequent social media, check their email often, or simply don't have access to the internet.

This included news about submitting to our Living Classics Cookbook project and when we began curb-side service of donated or deleted materials. The curb-side service was explosively popular, especially with our partnership of a local community services department that agreed to deliver books to homebound people. Since we did not want these items returned, we opened it up to the general public and no library card was needed to

access this service. It was so popular, in fact, that we ran out of materials in just a few weeks!

We did significantly reduce in-house staffing hours in mid-April. This meant all of our 5 pages were temporarily furloughed and part-time staff had hours reduced but retained full benefits. We have continued to offer the same hours of services so when you call during our regular hours, you're still going to get a friendly voice that can guide you through using ebooks, renew your card, or just listen. We've found that listening has been the real key and to only gently suggest other services that haven't been specifically asked for. Often people are so overwhelmed that they can't handle more information, and yet other times are profoundly grateful to discover they can have access to online material they never knew existed.

Soon we will begin offering curbside pickup of library materials that patrons can request from our collection. We're still in the process of finalizing that process, including if we're going to lower the limit of holds patrons can put on items as the default in our system is currently 50! We're planning on mostly modeling it on our current curbside service with slight alterations. For returns, we're severely limiting interaction with them and locked our book drop only a few days after we closed. After we roll out curbside pickup for holds, we'll open our book drop once a week and leave items untouched for 3 days to limit staff exposure. We've also decided to waive all fines on all items for the foreseeable future.

To try to keep in touch with a dispersed workforce, we started with non-mandatory daily zoom meetings, then twice a week, and now we do once a week. We found that with so many departments also doing zoom meetings and staff having to zoom meet with a variety of outside agencies, fewer all staff meetings meant fewer scheduling conflicts and less zoom burnout. We did not require any staff to be on camera to attend zoom meetings to lessen the pressure of being "on" all the time. Our Director keeps in daily contact with all staff either by zoom meetings, email, or phone calls. While we continue working through this weirdly isolating experience, many of us have had the opportunity to reach out and make new connections.

The amount of online learning by staff via webinars and online conferences has absolutely exploded. There's been so much fantastic online discussions and new connections made that would never have been even imagined previously. With so many conferences moving online to either a vastly reduced price or becoming free, it's amazing to have so many more staff be able to pursue career development opportunities and strengthen their skills. And then for staff to discuss these experiences together and share interpretations and new ideas has made our collaborative skills even stronger.

We've taken this patron-less opportunity to review many outdated policy procedures, update our OHS information, optimize our furniture placement, re-organize our collections locations, shelf-read, and weed. As we look forward to the time when we can actually allow people physically back into the library space, we're planning on what we can do to mitigate contagion and spread and protect both staff and the public. We'll be moving our self check-out stations further apart, reorganizing public computers, limiting time each patron can spend on them, moving staff workstations to ensure adequate social distancing space, continuing to provide proper PPE and personalized hand sanitizer to each staff member, and an almost countless variety of other measures.

As much as we plan, we have to continually make changes to accommodate updated safety protocols issued by the city and province. It's an ongoing challenge that everyone reading this understands!

It might be trite but it's true: this will all end and we'll return back to work. It can be hard to admit that things won't be the same as they were before, might never exactly be, but we'll adapt. If there's one thing that libraries and library workers are pretty fantastic at doing, it's adapting! When more staff return to the library, it'll be a challenge to learn how to work together again, and to see how we've all changed. I'm personally very much looking forward to the day when I can greet all my regulars by name in person and give them a big smile.

Sue Karp is a Library Assistant at the Fort Saskatchewan Public Library

Off the Beaten Path

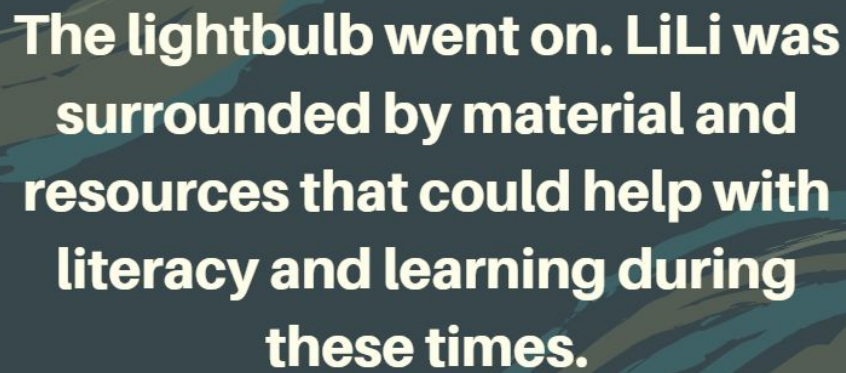
Meet LiLi. The little non-bookmobile that could.



Library Live (LiLi) outside a bowling alley turned food bank during the pandemic.

LiLi, the affectionate name and acronym of Library Live and on Tour is an outreach service with Fraser Valley Regional Library in metro Vancouver, BC. LiLi's goal is to engage with vulnerable and marginalized populations across FVRL's 15 municipalities. We want to welcome everyone back to the library by breaking library stereotypes that include: people with fines are unwelcome, the library only offers books and those who don't feel comfortable because of their socio-economic status.

When the wave of library closures began due to the pandemic, LiLi was not exempt. I phoned shelters, food banks, transition homes and mental health facilities with news the library would not be visiting for the unknown future.



The lightbulb went on. LiLi was surrounded by material and resources that could help with literacy and learning during these times.

As I prepped LiLi for parking for an indefinite amount of time, I looked around the small garage - there were many books surrounding us! At this point, I should share that in addition to community organizations and services, LiLi partners with an adult literacy college and book distributor to share free books with our communities. In a normal season, we would share books at farmer's markets, parenting sessions, as well as community lunch or shelter visits. Now, looking at the boxes (and boxes!) of books, it seemed a shame for the dust to collect.

Current news and staff discussions filled the days. It became apparent that due to the digital divide, not everyone in our communities could access digital library services or virtual library programs. The lightbulb went on. LiLi was surrounded by material and resources that could help with literacy and learning during these times.

We began a new routine, LiLi and I, with phone calls and emails to community organizations still physically serving their clients while social distancing. Food banks, transition homes for women, modular housing sites, shelters and Indigenous communities gratefully accepted the donations. We made new connections with organizations that would not typically fit a library visit pre-pandemic, such as safe houses for women and children. Some organizations turned down the offer, citing not taking donations or closure of services.

The pandemic has certainly changed the operation of LiLi, and while we don't know the future, it's been an adventurous few weeks. From searching for new connections to dropping off books in a closed bowling alley-turned-food bank, LiLi and I are adapting to a new working environment. The bright side remains: to date, we have provided 900+ books to our partners and community members. Literacy and learning are still skills to nurture even if school's out or someone has a lot of free time. Perhaps they can enter another world and escape reality.



Food bank volunteers accept books and coloring books from the FVRL Library Live service.

Janeen Parent is a Community Development Specialist at Fraser Valley Regional Library

One Public Library's Story of COVID 19

Public Libraries deal with a great amount of change on a daily basis. Each user that walks through the door brings their own wants, needs, and problems that affect the services they are looking for. At Missoula Public Library, 2020 has been a little crazy as the Library Staff prepare to move to a new Library. As any building project timelines shift with winter weather, rainy seasons, delays in products, but never did we think of a Pandemic. This was not something we were prepared for.

COVID-19 was blooming all around us but Montana was slow to have the first cases. Once COVID ramped up in the Eastern part of the State, Missoula announced its first case. The Missoula County Health Department kicked right in and all departments began to make a plan. On March 15, MPL closed the doors to the public and began curbside service. Three days went very well and then on March 19, "shelter in place" orders were declared by Governor Bullock. New plan, all 50 staff needed to work from home. As staff was preparing for a new building while working in the old building, IT had ordered all the laptops that would be vendored after the move. Some laptops were ready for use and all the staff that needed a computer went home armed with the tools they needed to work from home. Little did we know that 11 weeks later some would still be working from home.

It was time to pull all the stops out and for each staff member to use all the skills they possessed to bring programming, story times and information to MPL users who still had holds sitting on the shelf, those planning on tiny tales later in the week or users with checked out items to return for something different. Many staff do not have duties that lend well for distance working so they performed data entry for the Missoulian Index (newspaper) that MPL has built and maintains. Over 43,000 new entries were entered into the index by staff during the 11 weeks. The selectors took turns going to the library to continue a deep weeding before moving to the new building. This continues to be true at this time.

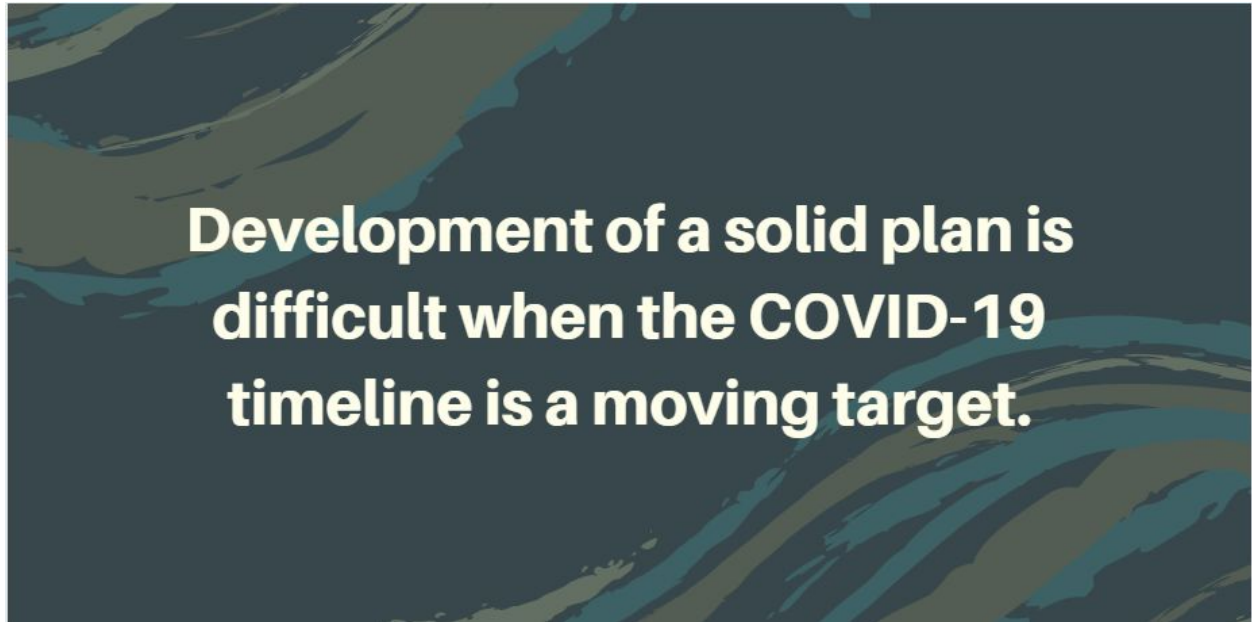
On May 5, 2020, Reference and Circulation staff who were not high risk returned to work to provide curbside service. The rules were stringent. The plan was made in conjunction with the Environmental Health Department.

- Staff must take temperatures before working (if anyone feels sick, they are asked to stay home)
- Wash hands and use hand sanitizer often
- Maintain 6 Feet of distance between staff and users
- Wear a mask
- Bag all items for the users and hand the items to users by handles, maintaining safe distance
- If users are walking or biking, staff wear a face shield or push items to them in a shopping cart
- Limit face-to-face time with users
- Clean all surfaces every hour
- No returns until August 4, 2020 – at this time there is not space to quarantine returns for 72 hours before shelving. Once MPL is in the new building there will be plenty of space to quarantine materials before check in.

The first day back to work, the holds list contained over 900 items. As the week progressed, the list was smaller but the phone calls continued to grow. Curb service continues and on June 8, hours of service will increase as Phase 2 of the Governor’s plan is carried out.

When adversity strikes, staff dig deep to do the work they feel is important. Wi-Fi is available outside the library and as you pass by, you find people parking, sitting, and laying around the building making it look abandoned. At one point, the maintenance staff had to stop a group of individuals from cooking on a stove outside the building. The problem was, the stove was plugged into an outlet that was vandalized so it could be used. This all caused issues for the law enforcement who need to ensure the safety of all. Library Administration was asked to limit the hours of Internet access with the thought that people would not stay around if the access was not on. Wi-Fi access remained on so citizens could continue to do necessary work online. At this time it continues to be a problem and full staff will not return to work till mid-July when staff begin to move collections and other items to the new building. The “Summer Reading Program” and Free Lunch program begins next week, looking much different from the past. No face-to-face programming will take place. Social distancing and masks will be required to keep all safe. Staff will provide bagged weekly programs to the public on a

table in the parking lot. An online tutorial of how-to videos will accompany the packet so participants can assemble the weekly experience. Bagged lunches will also be served in the same fashion so the neighborhood youth who eat lunch at the library during the summer months can still be nourished in mind and body.



As the community moves into a new building in August, the experience will be much different than expected. The Grand Opening celebration has been postponed. The number of users entering the building at one time will be limited, browsing will not be allowed, research will be by appointment, passports and notary will be appointment only, computer usage will be limited to one hour per day and staff will spend a great deal of time disinfecting surfaces. Development of a solid plan is difficult when the COVID-19 timeline is a moving target. We are developing a plan for opening with MSR design, and AE design, the Architecture firms who planned the new space. Smaller communities will be pre-COVID-19 much faster than larger communities. The sheer amount of users will make that difference.

Honore Bray is Director of the Missoula Public Library

Perspectives on Shifting Front-Facing Work

The Central Washington University (CWU) Libraries serves about 11,000 students, consists of three locations (Ellensburg, Lynnwood, and Des Moines) and employs approximately 40 faculty and staff members, along with two dozen student employees. Up until March 18th, we were operating under regular business hours; all services and programming went relatively uninterrupted. However, once we received word of a potential COVID-19 exposure at our James E. Brooks Library location in Ellensburg, our employees shifted to remote work with just a few hours' notice. For the first time in CWU's 129-year history, all spring classes are offered online, and the majority of campus buildings remain closed.

The shift to virtual services has created a monumental pivot of our daily tasks and forced us to reevaluate some of our approaches to services. For this piece, I interviewed three of my colleagues at the James E. Brooks Library who work in highly collaborative, public-facing units of our library: instruction, circulation, and outreach.

- Elizabeth Brown, Associate Professor and Instruction Coordinator, manages our library instruction and heads up our Library and Information Science program. She will be taking over as faculty chair starting July 1 of this year.
- Erin Bledsoe, Circulation Services Technician, helps manage Primo and circulation workflows. Last year, Erin led the charge to implement the cloud-based interlibrary loan management system, Tipasa.
- Maureen Rust, Associate Professor and Student Engagement and Community Outreach Librarian, develops library programming and works closely with departments across campus as well as the greater Ellensburg community.

What is the most significant way COVID-19 has affected your work?

Elizabeth: Methods of interaction and engagement are probably the most affected area of my work and require a lot more intentional thinking and planning. Since you can't casually bump into people in the library or on

campus, you also can't count on having a quick follow up about a project or a check-in with a student about their research. You have to plan every conversation and decide whether it's an email, a phone call, or a video conversation. I think more of my time is spent scheduling those conversations than before. On a reflective note, working from home has made me appreciate and recognize the many aspects of my job that are already online or translate easily.

Erin: People. I think circulation staff are traditionally the front-line of the library. It is the everyday interactions that feed our love for the library and its patrons. I have always said that I am at work awake more than I am at home awake, so the coworker relationships are an important part of our lives. Coworker relationships also translate to student worker relationships. Circulation is a family; we have the distant family (patrons) and the close family (coworkers). I [also] realized that all of my work can be done at home. I am primarily at work to support, train, and manage my student workers. Everything else can be done remotely.

Maureen: The biggest change is working remotely. Achieving my outreach and engagement responsibilities have required a 180° pivot to developing virtual activities and events. In addition to the activities themselves, the COVID-19 shut down required developing procedures for planning and promoting outreach and engagement programming virtually.

How has this situation changed the way you look at your work?

Elizabeth: Being online only has put into sharp focus all the quirks that set online learning apart from in-person and I have to think creatively about serving the CWU students and faculty. It has definitely forced me to think a lot about content in context and emphasize the fun parts of learning where I can. The rollercoaster of news stories during COVID-19 creates a soup of information that makes it difficult to make decisions in. Using fun and interesting examples to demystify information finding and using are something I always try to do through my instruction, but I try to be even more intentional about it now.

Erin: It hasn't changed the way I look at circ/ILL. The situation has shown that circulation is involved with almost all facets of the library. Circulation is not only the checking in/out items, but it is also the shelving, the listening to

patrons about their needs, it's the reference questions we field through email and troubleshooting ILL requests, it's the back office configuration of Alma and Primo, the maintenance of the collection, the security of the building. The circ staff at many of the libraries in the Orbis Cascade Alliance, circ staff are the only ones still working from the building.

Maureen: It took some time to get my mind around what online programs would look like. Since the beginning of the shutdown the library has been able to offer a variety of online programming, including: haiku and limerick contests, virtual community-wide Cultural Conversations, an English department book give-away competition funded by our Friends of the Library, an open, virtual meet-up with the Dean of Libraries, and workshops and panel presentations. We also partnered with Dining Services, Residential Life, and Housing to provide free waffles for on-campus students prior to Finals Week.

A lot of our programming is created to provide de-stressing activities for students during Finals Week. This quarter we have modified our traditional offerings to meet the online format:

- Paws and Relax Therapy Dogs: This quarter we will invite students to join virtually with their furry friends. We will be joined by a certified animal massage therapist who will demonstrate how to provide our pets with calming massage.
- Jazz and Crafts: Instead of live music and crafts, we are directing participants to the library's access to Ken Burns' *Jazz* documentary. For the crafts portion, a guest artist from a local gallery will demonstrate crafts that can be done at home, with commonly found household materials.
- The Music Library created a music playlist, directing students to a variety of different musical genres found in our online collection.

Developing online engagement activities has provided an opportunity to "step outside the box," creating experiences that may, in the end, be even more accessible for students than our traditional face-to-face programming. This is certainly true for students at our campus centers and those who are primarily distance students, virus or no.

Are there any remote services or resources you would like to see offered at our library given the uncertainty of in-person classes in the fall?

Elizabeth: I see a lot more tutorials and videos in everyone's future and I think some better tutorial-creating software across campus would be well-received.

Erin: Depending on how many people are in Ellensburg, it would be nice to have curbside pickup. I think the circulation department is set up rather well for more use of the current offerings. I think that teaching faculty will be more likely to utilize the library's offerings in fall because they have had time to think about how they can change their syllabi. Everyone was in such a rush to change to online classes in the spring that no one really knew of what the library was going to offer.

Maureen: I feel our university has done a miraculous job in switching to online delivery in such a short period of time. My biggest concern is that everyone, students, faculty, and staff, have the technology they need to succeed in their studies and their professional responsibilities. CWU has worked hard to provide everyone with the computers, software, and Wi-Fi hotspots needed to make this work. But looking ahead, I feel the faculty and staff should be provided with university funded equipment and connection, or else compensated for the personal equipment and connection that makes this online environment possible.

Do you have any resources or recommendations related to your area of work you would like to share?

Elizabeth: One of my go-to sites for ideas in information literacy instruction is the [New Literacies Alliance](#). They have some wonderful creative commons licensed lesson plans and I appreciate how they can work separately or with other material. While this recommendation is neither a tool nor a site, they are absolutely a resource. I really value being able to reach out to my colleagues in the region for instruction ideas or to learn about what they have going on. If you don't already have a relationship with the academic librarians in your state, I highly recommend getting in touch with the library instruction folks.

Erin: Stay positive, I really think that people feed from it. Always be open to change. Make sure someone is comfortable in Alma configuration prior to emergencies. Many libraries haven't touched configuration since migration.

Maureen: I have been careful to not duplicate programming that is readily available from other sources. CWU created a Virtual Engagement task force made up of departments from across campus (student success, disability services, advising, recreation, orientation and transitions, residence life, the library, etc.). We meet bi-weekly and share the programming we are planning. This helps to avoid duplication of efforts. It also assists in cross-promoting outreach happening across campus.

A few days after these interviews were conducted, CWU's president announced the plan for Fall 2020. Rather than the typical 10-week session, the institution will be following an accelerated quarter, running from early September and ending just before Thanksgiving in order to avoid a potential second wave of coronavirus cases. Instructors will be given the choice of teaching online, in-person, or a combination of the two modalities.

This approach presents several logistical challenges for us: the uncertainty of knowing how many students will be returning to campus, the added workload involved with planning for both in-person and remote services, and the ambiguity around when exactly our library locations will be allowed to reopen under phase three of Governor Jay Inslee's "[Safe Start Washington](#)" plan. As difficult as it might be to coordinate, as you can see from the responses from my colleagues above, our experience in the previous quarter has equipped us with the knowledge necessary to carefully and capably serve our campus as our community begins to slowly reopen.



Lauren Wittek is Assistant Professor and User Experience & Assessment Librarian at James E. Brooks Library

What We Are Doing in La Grande at Cook Memorial Library

- Through our OverDrive Advantage account, we've enabled their low-cost/free Cost Per Checkout collection of nearly 100,000 titles that are always available (no wait, no holds) to our patrons. And we're acquiring some of the bigger authors' releases on this account too.
- We rolled out hoopla to our patrons at the end of March and there's been less of a need to promote it because everyone's online looking for resources.
- We're seeing increased use of Freegal, Kanopy, and Freading too. We're still figuring out the budget impacts of these cost per use resources but our patrons have certainly embraced them.
- We have a new-found use for our YouTube channel where we're now uploading weekly story times, chapter book readings, and we're exploring adult programming options.
- We're moving forward on a partnership with Eastern Oregon University to have work study students create content for our YouTube channel too. One student will conduct a Spanish language story time with a STEAM craft component and another student will be creating a health/fitness series aimed at youth (possibly 2 series – very young kids and then older kids). The students will also be writing all the press materials to promote these programs as well as learning video editing and content creation.
- In partnership with Parks & Rec, Police, Fire, and City Hall, the Library is working to launch a "Say Hi La Grande" campaign where all residents are being encouraged to step outside their homes at 7pm nightly and way and say hi to their neighbors. We're also sponsoring a "happiest window" and "best sidewalk chalk art" contests where participants can upload their photos to the Say Hi La Grande Facebook page and the top 3 in each category will win prizes purchased from and in support of local businesses. The campaign can be found at www.Facebook.com/SayHiLaGrande or at #SayHiLaGrande. It's just starting to generate buzz here at the end of the week so fingers crossed it becomes a successful attempt at building and uniting community.

- The Library has contacted Grande Ronde Hospital and let them know that, if the need arises, the Library can use its 3D printer to print face masks, ear protectors, and other medical supplies.
- We've 3D-printed "ear savers" for the masks that the residents of the Grande Ronde Retirement Center are required to wear when out of their room/residence.
- We've increased our use of social media and engagement levels of our patrons have risen.
- The Library's website maintains a [COVID-19](#) page with links to authoritative and factual sites, including links to CARES information and Oregon Employment Dept. We've also set up a "[Things to Do When Bored](#)" page which features a curated list of sites offering activities and resources to patrons of all ages.
- With the move to virtual meetings, there has been a need for devices among the City Council and the Finance/Budget Committee. The Library has saved the City from having to buy devices for these members by providing Chromebooks to them so that they can continue to fully participate in our democratic processes.
- The Library has been working closely with our Director of Economic Development. The Library has been including in our weekly newsletter information about what resources are available to local businesses and employees thru CARES and the City's Emergency Loan programs. The City did not have a complete list of all businesses in the City so I reached out InfoUSA to have them generate a comprehensive (and low cost) list of all businesses within the city borders. The City wanted to reach out to every business on that list to check in and ask them what assistance they might need; in an attempt to call that list in a timely fashion, Library and Parks & Rec staff devoted several hours each day to calling each business.
- The Library was instrumental in moving our weekly Department Heads meeting to a virtual platform as we have the technology skills that are lacking in City Hall staff.
- As the recipient of an ALA Census 2020 mini-grant, the Library continues to promote the Census on social media and thru press releases. We are currently strategizing about how to reach those in our community/county who would be undercounted; the hope is to partner with a key Latinx organization that has strong roots in Eastern Oregon with the hope that they can help reach those without digital access or English as a first language.

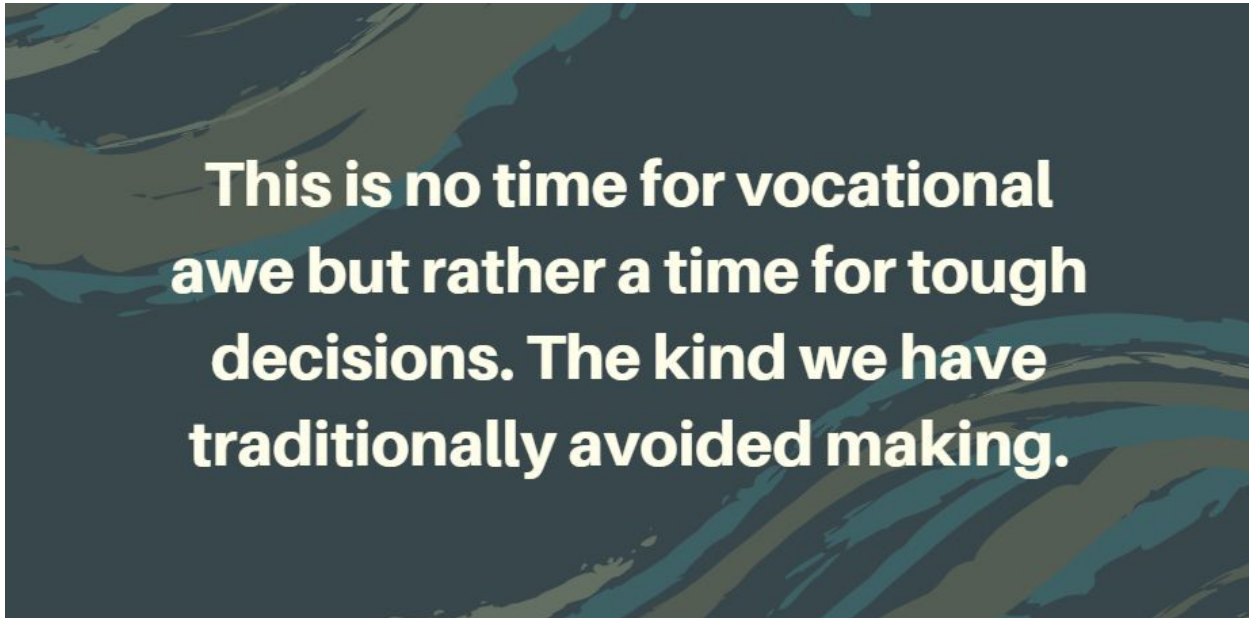
- Summer Reading program will become an entirely virtual program and staff are busy planning how that will look. We did make the decision this week that rather than books and other trinkets as prizes we would devote a large chunk of our R2L grant to buying gift certificates or items from and in support of local businesses.
- We have enabled our WiFi to be on 24/7 and have promoted that availability to our community.
- Sometime in mid- to late-May, we will be implementing a “Library Take Out” service in order to start getting physical materials back into the hands of our patrons.

We’re continuing to respond to our community’s needs and so this list will change and probably grow as we work to establish the library as an essential and vital service.

Kip M Roberson is Library Director at Cook Memorial Library

Easy Questions, Hard Answers

I left my office expecting to be gone for two weeks. Two weeks that now seems like a different lifetime. Thankfully, the bulk of our formal library instruction was done, but reference made a hard transition online. We have had chat reference for years, of course, but that attracted a certain kind of patron. The neophyte who truly didn't know where to start using the library. Easy questions, easy answers. General queries about hours, general complaints about noise, the minutiae of library reference interactions. As the semester has wound on, the neophytes have disappeared, finishing up their papers and moving on to whatever we all face this summer and beyond. What is left, now, are faculty and graduate students. Serious researchers. The kind accustomed to being self-sufficient, or else to dropping by the office of their preferred librarian and conducting their research like small talk. They don't like the new arrangements and they have axes to grind. Their home set-up, maybe ancient, maybe light years beyond the university equipment, doesn't work the way they are accustomed to. It doesn't remember the passwords that their office computer does. Doesn't have the same plug-ins. The VPN their department mandated doesn't play well with our proxy server. Why doesn't everything just work like it should? Easy questions, hard answers.



**This is no time for vocational
awe but rather a time for tough
decisions. The kind we have
traditionally avoided making.**

Like many places, this all comes on the heels of budget cuts and strategic reallocations of collection budgets. There had been some solidarity before. They understood runaway inflation costs and the dysfunctional scholarly publishing ecosystem and why it had to stop. At least a little. Now online access is the only access and they just want it back. Hard questions, easy answers. What does it mean to be a library during quarantine? What does it mean to be a librarian? What is an essential library service and what is fat that can be cut? Do we even worry about the digital divide anymore? Wifi hotspots and going all-digital completely cuts some vulnerable populations off, but what else are we meant to do? This is no time for vocational awe but rather a time for tough decisions. The kind we have traditionally avoided making. Just leaving the door open has been a panacea, but it is one we can no longer reach for. At least, not for now. We have long asked what is a library without a librarian? Now we ask, what is a librarian without a library? Like many homecomings, I expect my office to look so much smaller than I remembered when I return at the end of this strange odyssey. What did I learn, I wonder? And what am I going to do about it?

Robert Perret is the Embedded Special Collections and Archive Librarian at the University of Idaho

**Resilience and Flexibility:
Adaptive Responses to the COVID-19 Shutdown
at the University of Washington Libraries Special Collections**

Authors: Allee Monheim, Conor M. Casey, Ann Lally, Crystal Rodgers, Anne Jenner, John D. Bolcer, Hannah L. Palin, Emily Dominick, Sandra Kroupa, Lisa Oberg

Introduction

The University of Washington Special Collections brings together many of the University's most rare and unique objects. There are six major curatorial areas in Special Collections: Book Arts and Rare Books, Historical Visual Materials, the Pacific Northwest Collection, University Archives, the Labor Archives of Washington (in collaboration with the Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies), and the Washington State Jewish Archives (in collaboration with the Washington State Jewish Historical Society). Special Collections has approximately 20 staff members and more than 40 student workers and volunteers who work to care for and provide access to this rare and unique material.

Washington Governor Jay Inslee issued his "Stay Home - Stay Healthy" proclamation on March 25, 2020 - right at the end of the University of Washington's Winter Quarter. Soon after, University leadership made the decision to move all instruction online for Spring Quarter (March 30-June 5). Following all of this, staff in Special Collections (like everyone else), tried to imagine how they would be able to carry on their work remotely. As so much of the work in Special Collections is tied to handling of physical materials, this shift was one which left staff feeling disconnected from their day-to-day work. Through the creative and collective efforts of staff, online projects were developed with the remote resources at hand and staff were able to focus on projects such as data clean-up, transcription and enhancing finding aids. Staff also had to consider how to move regular services that typically required in person access to material - such as collection development, instruction, exhibits, and outreach - online. This paper provides an overview of these efforts, and how Special Collections is working during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keeping Students and Temporary Part-time or Project Staff Members Working

Staff were aware of the potential closure of Special Collections prior to it actually happening, so brainstorming began early for possible projects for students and staff whose jobs would not translate well to remote work.

Supervisors had to consider that every individual student's and staff member's home life and commitments during this time would look different. Many of our students and staff members have dispersed to other locations in order to shelter with family, are having to juggle work responsibilities with commitments at home like elder or child care, or simply don't have access to the technology at home that they do at work. Furthermore, there is the issue of the skills and knowledge required to work on a particular project that had to be considered; students and other part-time workers, for example, don't typically have as much time to dedicate to learning a new skill, so projects that require a lot of training weren't the best choice for them. With this in mind, supervisors were able to give students and staff members permission to work outside Special Collections' normal business hours (when applicable). The projects assigned to these students and staff members were ones that could be completed at any time and whose progress could be tracked easily to allow supervisors to follow up and pinpoint areas where additional training would be needed. Below are some examples of projects students and staff have been working on during the pandemic.

Professional Development

When considering how to approach work during this time, supervisors have been able to rethink what constitutes "work" during this time. For example, a majority of student workers in Special Collections are graduate students who are interested in pursuing careers as information professions who have accepted positions in Special Collections to gain professional experience. With this in mind, Special Collections has encouraged them to seek out webinars, workshops, and other professional development opportunities offered through the University of Washington Libraries system and beyond (provided that it has a potentially relevant application to Special Collections). Students and part time staff have also been encouraged to attend meetings and virtual events that may not have fit in their schedule before. Aside from the more obvious benefits of professional development,

the hope is that they will feel more connected to Special Collections and more aware of the type of work that happens within the department and in the wider libraries.

Manuscript Collection Processing

Special Collections did not furlough students and project archivists who were paid from project budget lines. Students and staff who were able to continue components of their work remotely did so - and some who weren't able to do so without access to physical collections were even given permission to take collections home. Special Collections has also worked with administration and essential onsite staff to designate dates and times where select staff members were permitted to enter the building for a short time in order to collect more work. For the safety of those coming to campus and the essential onsite staff, a cap was placed on the number of staff members allowed into the building during these times. To maximize the amount of work collected per visit, Special Collections staff coordinated with each other to create lists and gather material for colleagues that was delivered via socially distanced drop offs later.

Despite this, there was simply no way to gather enough work in two days to keep everyone working on projects for several months - particularly since at this point of this writing, there's no set date or plan for Special Collections staff to return to on-site work. To help offset this, supervisors have met with their students and staff to rethink how to approach their work at this time or to reassign them to other work in order to allow them to continue working.

Finding Aid Enhancement Projects

Another project that students and staff have been assigned to is the Legacy Finding Aid Project. This project began in 2014 as a digitization and markup project that was piloted with collections in the Labor Archives of Washington. The project was later scaled up in 2015-2016 to digitize and append more than 3,000 legacy paper finding aids and box inventories for archival collections to online finding aids.

Prior to Special Collections' closure, some of these collections had already entered the next planned phase of the project workflow: Optical character recognition (OCR) was applied and corrected, added to a spreadsheet template, marked up into Encoded Archival Description (EAD), and corrected through a quality assurance phase before finalization.^[1]

Unfortunately, not all of the digitized finding aids and box inventories were able to enter this phase of the workflow in the initial run of the project. However, with the need for projects that could be done remotely, students who had the necessary skills to work on this project were reassigned to it and have been working on OCR correction, markup into EAD, quality control, and correction of the remaining digitized finding aids.

Another finding aid enhancement project is writing biographical notes for more than 1,700 finding aids lacking them. This project was selected for remote work since much of the research can be done using online sources such as newspaper databases, Historylink.org, Blackpast.org, and Wikipedia. Those working on this project can use the existing finding aid inventory to learn about the content of the collection and to find clues about the person they are researching to verify biographical information they find online. The additional information provided by biographical notes will increase discoverability of the finding aids and potentially bring light to otherwise hidden collections.

Students and staff are also adding links to archived websites into our online finding aids. Because Special Collections relies on Archive-It to crawl, store, and preserve these website crawls, no .warc (Web ARChive) files have been officially accessioned into our local preservation repository. Instead, the EAD Related Materials field was chosen as the most appropriate field to reference these external archival captures.

Transcription Projects

Many student workers, particularly those with limited technical expertise, have been assigned to transcription projects. While Special Collections and UW Libraries have always been aware that the transcription of resources is an important step in making our resources searchable and accessible for those who are visually or hearing impaired, it is also a very time consuming project that requires a significant human investment. However, due to its asynchronous nature and the sheer volume of materials needing transcription, it has been a fantastic project for student workers during this time. Special Collections students have transcribed diaries, audio interviews, and videos. Furthermore, some staff outside of Special Collections have “loaned” their students to these projects. The students are paid off their original budgets, but spend their time working on Special Collections transcription projects, ensuring that they are able to continue getting paid.

Tracking Projects and Maintaining Communication

Tracking projects and maintaining departmental communication has been one of the most significant challenges in this new working environment. Zoom fatigue, overloaded email inboxes, and consideration for differing home situations makes coming up with a single approach to this very difficult. Special Collections has used a few different tools and methods to try and navigate the situation.

Tracking Projects

Thankfully, there were already many workflows in Special Collections that employed tools to facilitate online project management and collaboration. For example, both the Labor Archives of Washington and Special Collections' Technical Services department use Asana to track work such as accessioning, archival processing, exhibit work, and more. Special Collections staff have also made use of Google Drive and Google Docs to engage in collaborative work. For example, most of the transcription work students are doing has been done in Google Docs, and this article written collaboratively by Special Collections staff using Google Docs. Google Docs and Google Sheets have also been used to finalize inventories, prepare online finding aids, as well as for reporting. UW Libraries also employs tools that allow for file sharing and remote access and collaboration in other ways (such as Microsoft OneDrive and SharePoint, which allow for file sharing). Remote Desktop also allows staff and students to access computers on campus, which has also helped to mitigate technological issues with individuals' personal computers.

Departmental Communication

In addition to the more traditional communication venues like email, Special Collections has made heavy use of Slack for quick communication without bogging down individual inboxes. The Special Collections Slack Workspace has a #telework_checkins channel for staff to check in when they start work and out when they leave, or to let each other know that they won't be available for an extended period of time. Many of the units within Special Collections also have their own channels to discuss their work as well - one of the student workers even created a dedicated student channel to try and capture some of the camaraderie they normally experience when working together.

Prior to the closure Special Collections staff had a weekly huddle every Tuesday to touch base, and the tradition has continued on Zoom. In addition to the weekly staff huddles, supervisors of student workers have also been holding office hours several times a week to give the students a chance to check in with their supervisor and with each other. Many of our student workers are members of very tight teams, so it has helped to maintain some semblance of that close working relationship, even in isolation.

Collection Development

Even though Special Collections staff are unable to physically access or take in collections at the moment, active collection development is still ongoing. Below are examples of some of the collection development work being done during the pandemic.

Transfers to University Archives

The University of Washington Archives are still receiving transfer requests, though they are fewer in number than usual. The normal workflow for these transfers involves some preliminary phone conversations to gather background information about the work of the University office in question, discuss the types of records to be transferred, and provide guidance on interpreting University record schedules and archival collecting priorities. Typically this would be followed by a site visit to either review, or even directly approve or decline the records for transfer. The initial conversations have been carrying on as normal, but in most cases the transfer can go no further. When the records are approved, the University offices are instructed to hold the records in place until both the University office and Special Collections are re-opened. Some offices have gone so far as to make detailed surveys of their records, which has enabled University Archives staff to conduct an in-depth appraisal remotely.

Special Collections also works with faculty donors on an individual basis. Since the closure, there have been retirements and, sadly, deaths of longtime faculty. Preliminary appraisal conversations, like those outlined above, have been conducted with the faculty members or their estates to give them guidance on sorting, evaluating, and preparing their papers. Likewise, they have also been asked to hold the records until such time as Special Collections reopens and can physically receive them.

Over the past few years Special Collections, in cooperation with the UW Libraries Preservation Department, has been building capacity to receive, ingest, store, preserve, and provide access to archival electronic records. These are records that can actually be directly acquired while working remotely, and staff have been able to make several electronic records consultations and begin arrangements to transfer a batch of electronic records from one campus office. While campus offices have not yet frequently looked to transfer electronic records to the Archives, more inquiries are anticipated as campus staff continue to work remotely.

Collecting COVID-19 materials

It has been clear to everyone that the COVID-19 epidemic is a history in the making. Because of this staff have also made efforts to collect material being created related to the pandemic as it happens, in addition to regular collection development efforts. Below are some examples of this work.

COVID-19 Impacts to the region

The University of Washington Libraries has had an active web archiving program since 2013 through the Internet Archive's Archive-It service <https://archive-it.org/organizations/729> . The Libraries currently crawls websites covering the University of Washington, the Pacific Northwest, labor, visual materials and some areas covered by our International Studies librarians. In response to the Stay Home Stay Safe order Special Collections curators began identifying additional seeds and areas of interest to target for expanded web crawling with the goal of documenting the political, social, cultural, health and economic impacts to the region. For example, Archives staff consulted with records managers in the School of Medicine to identify a large number of websites related to UW COVID-19 research and care that had not previously been captured through institutional web crawls.

In addition, an adhoc web archiving cooperative collection development group was formed under the auspices of the Orbis Cascade Alliance, but with other non Alliance partners to share URLs currently being crawled by each organization in order to avoid duplication of archived URLs across the region. This effort is lightweight, relying on a shared spreadsheet to collect the URLs currently being archived by each organization.

"Archiving the Now" for essential workers during COVID-19

Labor Archives of Washington curatorial staff approached Service Employees International Union 1199 NW, (a union representing nurses and other health care workers throughout Washington); United Food and Commercial Workers, Local 21 (the union representing grocery, retail, and health care workers in Washington); and Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 587 (a union representing transit workers in King County) to make sure any physical and digital ephemera documenting their response and experience to COVID-19 are retained and set aside. This conversation is part of LAW's regular records management and curation process, and is facilitated by existing relationships. The current conversation was a precaution against them discarding materials because of transmission worries, encouraging organizations to save materials and set them aside for later curation.

Online Graduation Events and the University Archives

Every year the University of Washington hosts dozens of departmental commencement events in addition to the larger campus-wide event. This year, as the University prepares to host commencement events via Zoom, a small team in the Libraries is preparing recommendations to help those departments holding these Zoom events record and transfer recordings in the most "preservation friendly" manner possible, while also preparing to receive these Zoom recordings as is. As these recordings are transferred to the Archives, they will be working with the various departments on maintaining student privacy protections as outlined in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Regional Records Survey of the Labor Community

The [Regional Labor Records Survey](#) is an ongoing project of the Labor Archives of Washington, surveying labor union locals and labor affiliated organizations in the Pacific Northwest to gather information about the records created and kept by these organizations to better understand records management and preservation issues they might be facing and gauge interest in taking advantage of the LAW's services, including records management and preservation consultations, oral history interviews, and collection donations to the archives. Prior to the shelter in place order, plans for direct outreach to organizations that had yet to complete the survey were already underway, including email and postcard mailers sent out to everyone on a master contact sheet of over 868 organizations compiled by

the processing archivist for the LAW, who is the lead on the records survey project.

With the help of two student assistants, LAW staff were able to begin the next major phase of survey outreach while working from home- calling directly the approximately 671 organizations with available phone numbers to promote the survey. Phone calls are still the primary mode of communication for many folks within the labor community, making this phase of outreach a critical step in cultivating relationships with officers and office managers within union locals in hopes of having their organization represented within the survey data. In light of the pandemic, this outreach comes at a critical time for labor unions that are undoubtedly working overtime to ensure a variety of protections are in place for workers who are on the frontlines during the pandemic or displaced from their jobs. We want the Labor Archives of Washington to be front of mind for organizations that might be dealing with impacts of the pandemic as well as mergers with other union locals, office moves, and other major events that affect the management of union records. Survey data, which also asks respondents to indicate the urgency of their needs, will also help the LAW's collection development efforts in prioritizing communication with these organizations and planning for potential records donations to the archives in the future. Allowing LAW to plan strategically for future collections, enables us to understand the contents of and risks to collections, the estimated costs of processing, and potential storage needs before the collections are even donated.

Since the direct call phase began, there has been a notable uptick in survey submissions with 9 surveys completed by contacted unions in under a month. Prior to this outreach, 9 surveys had been submitted spottily over the course of 7 months since the survey opened in September 2019.

Remote Oral history Interviews

One of the primary activities of the Jewish Archives Committee (JAC) of the Washington State Jewish Archives is the Oral History Program. JAC volunteers have conducted nearly 500 in-person oral history interviews, including narrators such as: artists, Holocaust survivors, Rabbis, business and political leaders, orthodox pioneers, Sephardic immigrants, and more. The program workflow consists of an Interviewer selecting and corresponding with Narrators; research and development of question sets;

meeting in-person to record the interview^[2]; creating and approving a transcript; capturing biographical and summary information; and finally accessioning the interview with UW Special Collections staff to be made publicly available.

It is currently prohibited to conduct interviews in-person, and there will continue to be health and safety concerns going forward for conducting in-person interviews even when Washington begins to reopen. Some Narrators may also feel uncomfortable with in-person interviews and unwilling to participate. However, Washington State serves as a unique and insightful location for the COVID-19 pandemic. The Life Center of Kirkland, an assisted living home, was one of the first known viral outbreak epicenters in the United States. In addition, UW Medicine is leading clinical trials and collaborating with the broader health community on implementing tests and pioneering treatments.

In recognition of all these factors, the WSJA Oral History Program is embarking on a new methodology to expand capabilities for Narrators to self-submit and for Interviewers to conduct remote oral histories with Narrators. This process will involve a scaffolding approach employing a variety of options in order to provide maximum opportunities for fuller project participation from Narrators. In certain cases, there may be unequal access to technology, issues of consent, and other factors impacting participation. Narrators will have the opportunity to self-submit content, as well as participate in oral history interviews conducted by the Interviewer. Tools will include Story Aperture, the Washington Jewish Museum online submission form, and video conference platforms.

Implementing this new methodology will bring a range of opportunities and challenges. One immediate benefit is the increase in outreach opportunities for people to volunteer their own stories, images, and videos. In addition, WSJA will now have a wider geographic diversity in subject matter, as historical collecting patterns have focused on the Seattle-Tacoma area. There is a savings in time and resources as well, since travel is not necessary.

Challenges include addressing any inequalities in access to technology, of which the scaffolding approach will be a possible solution. The Baylor University Institute for Oral History in a webinar on remote interviews also mentioned the difficulties of building trust between the Interviewer and

Narrator. It may be harder to read body language, the responses to questions may be shorter with less depth, and perhaps there is increased reluctance to speak of controversial or sensitive topics in a remote setting.^[3]

From a technology perspective, there are also increased dependencies that can impact the deliverables. The Interviewer will have limited control over the network connection, hardware, and audio/video quality for the Narrator. Certain traditional archival standards, such as broadcast quality audio, will be difficult or impossible to achieve.

Instruction

Instruction with primary source materials has always been a key part of Special Collections' mission, with a particular emphasis on allowing students to handle original material whenever possible. Social distancing presents a challenge to this teaching model. First, because instructors are unable to be in the same room as students, students are unable to handle material. Second, because staff aren't allowed to go into work and retrieve material, instructors are limited to what has already been scanned or their personal collections.

In one case the Book Arts and Rare Books Curator was asked to teach a class in historical book arts for an English Literature class. Typically for classes like this, a selection of materials would be gathered to serve as samples that would supplement a lecture in the Special Collections classroom. This particular instruction session was only one hour, but it took over 40 hours to prepare. The class was on the physical construction of books, so the instructor had to locate demonstrative images for each stage of construction and arrange them accordingly. It took a significant amount of time to select images, document, and arrange them for the class.

Generally speaking, Special Collections has seen a considerable drop in requests for instruction sessions. For example, the Book Arts and Rare Books Curator alone typically teaches anywhere from 20-50 instruction sessions each quarter, but there have only been approximately 15 requests for Spring Quarter. This drop is not unexpected - the actual material being taught may not have drastically changed, but handling physical material is one of the most significant draws to having an instruction session in Special Collections.

Reference and Reproductions Questions

The inability to access any physical collections has considerably inhibited staff's ability to answer reference questions and to fill reproduction requests. Prior to the shutdown and immediately afterward, Public Services staff had several meetings to discuss what reference and reproduction might look like throughout isolation and quarantine.

Remote reference has continued as much as possible. While there are some questions that simply can't be answered without physical access to materials, reference staff still attempt to answer the questions as thoroughly as possible. Using the front matter in finding aids, cataloging records accessible through online systems or remote desktop, and digital collections staff have been able to help users answer some basic questions about collections. Reference staff have also had to be more creative about where to do research - looking through databases, ebooks, and other institutions' digital collections to find answers. While this approach is a little more time consuming, there has been a decrease in remote reference questions, which has allowed for more time to be spent on the questions that do come through. This has also been a great research exercise for the library science graduate students who work in Public Services.

There was discussion about what, if any, reproduction services would be provided to users. There is no access to physical materials, but Special Collections does have a small image bank of high resolution scans. Staff discussed the possibility of filling reproduction requests only for items that were in the image bank, but ultimately decided against it. There were two main reasons for this - first, the image bank contains only a small fraction of the collection. The likelihood that a requested image would actually be in the image bank was very small, so ultimately users would get their hopes up unnecessarily and staff time would be wasted. Furthermore, there was concern about creating disparities in services. Users are able to download low resolution images from the digital collection, and permission for use requests are still being processed for those images.

One of the most significant challenges reference staff faced with moving all services online has been managing users' expectations. In addition to only being able to provide limited services now, it is unlikely that Special Collections will be able to return to full operation without a period of transition. Many members of Special Collections' student workforce have returned home - leaving the city, state, and even the country in some cases

- and recalling them will take time. To help manage expectations regarding current services, reference staff have worked to ensure that consistent messaging is present on all platforms - website, voicemail, social media accounts, and on all email and messaging accounts that have auto-replies. In addition, when discussing plans for future research visits or reproductions requests, reference staff are very clear with users that the University's plans to open remain unclear at this time.

Outreach during COVID

Outreach has always been an important category of work for Special Collections - raising the awareness of our collections in not only the campus community, but the wider Pacific Northwest research community is key to ensuring the collections get used. Now that users are unable to come to campus to use the collections, staff have had to work hard to ensure that users don't forget Special Collections exists during this time.

Social Media

Special Collections' social media was very active prior to the move to remote work. The accounts are run by Public Services staff and posts weekly, referring to a calendar created by the Public Services Librarian that covers national holidays and observances, historical anniversaries, humorous holidays, and more. This calendar is a function of the Social Media Plan that was also developed by the Public Service Librarian and designed to raise awareness of the depth and breadth of Special Collections' holdings. Because the calendar is a Google Calendar and the social media accounts are managed online through Hootsuite, a program that allows users to manage multiple social media accounts in one place, these efforts have continued as normal.

By nature, archives and special collections are often intimidating to users - an image that Special Collections has worked very hard to change in many ways, including our user interactions in the reading room. However, once Special Collections closed the reading room, there is no way to provide the one on one human interaction that is so critical to demystifying and humanizing Special Collections. With this in mind, the Public Service Librarian started scheduling a number of "Meet the staff" posts to provide that human touch that was missing. Staff members shared a picture of themselves and/or some material they particularly enjoyed, talked about their jobs, and shared fun facts about themselves. There have also been

some posts tagged #librariansathome, which features pictures of staff's home workstations, pets, kids, etc. and included links to remote reference forms to encourage people to reach out with questions. While neither of these two social media campaigns will replace one on one interactions, they will hopefully help to continue making Special Collections more approachable.

In addition to previously mentioned posts, the Special Collections accounts have also been featuring pictures of objects from a pop up exhibit about author Betty MacDonald. The exhibit went up to celebrate the opening of the Betty MacDonald Papers - but the university closed campus shortly after. Before the official closing, staff took pictures of all the objects in the collection and have been posting them regularly on social media - effectively changing it from exhibit to social media campaign. Thankfully this switch allows the collection and its materials to still be celebrated and shared, even if the impact of the exhibit as a whole has not been able to be appreciated by the public.

Outreach Events

Another way Special Collections works hard to raise its profile among stakeholder communities is by participating and scheduling in events . While many events have been canceled or postponed as the pandemic has continued on, Special Collections staff did identify some events that translated well to the online environment.

Meet the Special Collections Staff Event

The "Meet the Special Collections Staff" event had been held twice before. The event was created after a survey of student workers and volunteers showed that they felt isolated and detached from the rest of Special Collections. Most of them reported that they didn't really know anyone else in the department aside from their supervisors and immediate coworkers. Special Collections also invited students in the Museology and Library Science programs, as they often join Special Collections as student workers, volunteers, capstone participants, and directed fieldwork participants.

When the event is held in person, it gives participants the opportunity to sit down and talk one on one (or in small groups) to archivists, librarians, curators, and technical services staff. The event organizers provide a set of ice-breaker questions, and the participants meet with each staff member for

five minutes, rotating through until they've spoken to everyone. Past events have been incredibly successful – internal participants had the chance to get to know their coworkers, and the students in the Museology and Library Science programs had the opportunity to learn about the different careers in Special Collections and learn about different ways to get involved in the department.

The event organizers thought this would translate reasonably well to the virtual environment - though it wasn't exactly the same as the in-person iterations. In this version, the staff members spoke about their jobs to the larger group and there was a Q&A session at the end of the event. While this did mean that the participants didn't get one on one time with staff members, it did allow the event organizers to open the event to more UW Libraries staff. They weren't initially included in the event before, as the event organizers wanted to ensure that the focus was on the students and volunteers. But, without the one-on-one sessions this was no longer an issue - furthermore, by opening it to other staff in the libraries, it provided another event they could attend during work hours. Event organizers also recorded the session, so those who could not attend were able to view it later.

Special Collections Student Workshare

The Special Collections Student workshare is an event where student workers in Special Collections do a short presentation about their job or a project they're doing in Special Collections. It was created to inform UW Libraries staff and student workers about the important work and learning that students were doing in Special Collections. It also gives students the opportunity to practice public speaking and giving job talks, as well as letting them know their contributions are valued.

The event has been held twice before, and a third one was planned for Spring Quarter before the campus shut down. Fortunately, this event has translated almost perfectly to the virtual environment - rather than hold the event in the Special Collections classroom, it is held over Zoom, and the presenters are able to show their presentations through screen sharing.

Exhibits

The statewide mandatory shutdown impacted a long-scheduled and large-scale exhibit commemorating the 40th anniversary of the eruption of Mount St. Helens and its significant impact on the region. The exhibit's

scheduled run, April 6 through August 14, 2020, was timed to correspond to events leading up to the eruption and display materials from the collections that tell the story of the eruption, the rescue operations, the local and regional response, as well as recovery. A natural alternative was to turn the exhibit into an online exhibit/website, but without access to the collections there was no way to honor the original launch date. Furthermore, curatorial staff had to consider how much the public wanted to focus on disasters, and ultimately felt the need to change how the topic was approached. Curatorial staff also had to select a sustainable and manageable online platform for the exhibit and do some team skill building to translate the prepared exhibit cases to web pages. The project remains in progress with a hope to have a soft launch during the originally scheduled exhibit run.

The shutdown has provided opportunities in other areas as well: Staff have used the time to explore the possibilities and challenges of migrating legacy digital exhibits and building new digital exhibits in new platforms, including Omeka and GitHub static pages as an overlay for a ContentDM backend. Proofs of concepts are under development as the strengths and weaknesses of the different platforms are assessed.

Special Collections going forward

All these remote activities have provided staff with the opportunity to think more deeply about current practices and advance the norms they had been operating under. For example, the in-person staff meeting is one activity that likely will be approached differently in the future. Staff have come together weekly to share what they are working on and it has worked well. This method of gathering will enable us to rethink how staff structure their time and identify when in-person meetings are needed and what updates can be handled remotely. In addition, previously not all employment classes had equal opportunity to work from home. While the job duties of many staff are closely tied to material handling, everyone has aspects of their job which lends itself to working from home in the future.

This reflection has also led staff to rethink policy and procedures. Establishing appointments for researchers and coordinating even more closely with them in advance to identify materials prior to a research visit will help maintain social distancing protocols when Special Collections transitions back to full operations. It will also assist in scheduling staff, anticipating there will be staffing cuts in the future due to economic fallout

from the situation. This crisis is also helping staff to look at other efficiencies in providing public service.

Although all the staff were committed to accomplishing as much as they could throughout this entire quarantine period, the first priority was their health and well-being. Many had other family obligations in the home they had to juggle, in addition to their work, so Special Collections adopted the philosophy “we were doing our best work under the circumstances” over “working from home” knowing and acknowledging that productivity could not be measured by the same standards. The use of designated channels in Slack provided the staff with a single way of sharing work questions, COVID memes and details about their baking successes, which had not been fully utilized previously. Having made this transition with full staff participation in an online collaborative communication workspace, Special Collections will build upon this momentum in the future as an effective way to stay connected.

^[1]Casey, Conor. 2015. "Enhancing Intellectual Access and Discovery of Collections via Online Finding Aids: Recent Advances in the University of Washington Libraries Special Collections." University of Washington Libraries and University of Washington Information School Faculty and Doctoral Student Research Conversation; Casey, Conor. 2017. "Start Where You Are. Use What You Have. Do What You Can': Enhancing Access to Collections Employing Existing Tools and Resources." Northwest Archivists/Conference of Intermountain Archivists Joint Annual Meeting, Boise, Idaho, May 2017; Casey, Conor. 2019 "Tailoring ArchivesSpace Workflows to the Resources and Needs of Your Repository." Northwest Archivists/Conference of Intermountain Archivists Joint Annual Meeting, Bozeman, Montana, May 2019.

^[2] To date, nearly all the recordings are in audio format, comprising 99% of the total. A few recordings are in video format

^[3] "Oral History at a Distance: Conducting Remote Interviews," Oral History Association, <https://www.oralhistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Oral-History-at-a-Distance-Webinar-Slideshow.pdf> (accessed May 6, 2020)