FEATURE – Antony Brewerton
Wear lipstick, have a tattoo, belly-dance, then get naked: The making of a virtual librarian
NewBreed was initially inspired by an article written by Antony Brewerton in the November-December 1999 issue of **Impact: Journal of the Career Development Group**. With permission, we're reprinting it here for our first feature article. Antony embodies the philosophy of a NewBreed Librarian.

INTERVIEW – NewBreed Librarian
NewBreed plans to use this space to interview people who have an impact on the work we do, whether they are librarians, social commentators, educators, musicians, or puppeteers. For our first issue, we thought we'd introduce you to NewBreed Librarian by interviewing ourselves: Juanita Benedicto and Colleen Bell. We're OK with that if you are.

PEOPLE
For our debut, Newbreed is featuring six outstanding information professionals. For some time, we have been visiting their sites on a weekly – if not daily – basis as they always have something to offer. Their sites generate useful and pertinent information that demonstrate a dedication to the profession. These are the folks who incite a pride for librarianship.

ASK SUSU
Susu, our sometimes irreverent advice columnist, answers your questions about work, school, the job hunt, and librarianship in general. In this issue, Susu tackles the thorny issue of whether potential employers should pay for your interview expenses.

TECH TALK
What's up your sleeve, Meister? Tricks and treats from NewBreed'ers and their guests. In this issue, Ryan Holsten starts us off with two simple HTML tricks.

LETTERS
Say What? If you have something to say, we want to hear it. **Send us** your letters and we'll post them here. If you're responding to an article or interview, place the headline in the subject of your email.

NewBreed was initially inspired by an article written by Antony Brewerton in the November-December 1999 issue of **Impact: Journal of the Career Development Group**. With permission, we're reprinting it here for our first feature article. Antony embodies the philosophy of a NewBreed Librarian.

Wear lipstick, have a tattoo, belly-dance, then get naked: The making of a virtual librarian
ANTONY BREWERTON

I have a reputation. No, not as a naked, tattooed, belly-dancing librarian into facial decoration (well, a boy has got to have some secrets!). I have a reputation as someone ever so slightly obsessed with the image of our profession.

One of the key benefits of this reputation is that friends – and strangers – are always willing to give me fresh examples of (usually quite appalling) representations of libraries and library workers in the popular media. Work colleagues can always be relied upon to inform me of relevant programmes I might have missed from last night's television, or to cram clippings from newspapers I would never normally read into my pigeon hole. (I once even received a copy of the *Daily Express* from one anonymous donor.) And strangers? The Library World is such a wonderful community that if you write an article on the image of librarianship, you always (he hinted with hope!) get sent examples of good, bad and ugly librarians from the stage, screen and literature, within a week of publication.

Over the years, I have collected folders full of academic articles (containing footnotes and bibliographies pointing to more evidence); letters describing adverts, books and films; quotes from novels; annotated programme details from *The Radio Times*; and scraps of paper with hurriedly scribbled plot outlines from TV sitcoms or transcripts of the observations of 'hilarious' radio DJs, all referring (in one way or another) to our profession.

Now I am running out of space. But now (it seems) a solution has arrived to save the day. The Internet – that up-to-the-minute, space-saving, reference tool that we all adore – seems more crammed with images of librarians than the folders in my back bedroom.

So where should the image-obsessed, web-surfing library professional begin? A quick search on *Alta Vista* for 'librarian*' will uncover over a million hits [1]. It is the intention of this article to give some

pointers to interesting sites and useful gateways, and to explore what types of 'image sources' and 'image representations' are available in cyberspace.

IMAGE SITES

'Image' sites on the World Wide Web normally fall into one of two categories:

1. Studies of the image; and
2. 'Image busting' sites.

1. STUDIES OF THE IMAGE
The sites concerned with studies of the image of the profession are sometimes in essay format, often as electronic versions of articles previously published in librarianship journals. Most sites, though, take the form of resource lists, indexes (sometimes abstracted) collecting and classifying examples of the image from various media. Although there is obvious overlap, such sites tend to concentrate on one of the following: fictional portrayals of the profession; media portrayals; or library/book world quotations.

1.1 FICTIONAL LIBRARIANS
A good starting point for anyone interested in the image of the profession in general – and negative stereotypes in particular – is Stacie Marinelli and Tim Baker's site *Image and the librarian: an exploration of a changing profession* [**2**]. As well as some analysis of the image, the key beauty of this site is that it includes an impressive collection of resource lists, cataloguing books, journal articles and relevant web sites (with hypertext links) concerned with the 'history of librarians', 'stereotypic images', 'professional status and image' and 'changing technology'. Both highly academic and more frivolous works are listed, and despite its American bias this is a highly recommended site.

More 'popular' in its approach is *Libraries FAQ*. Section 7 [**3**] covers culture and includes details of, and links to, library lyrics pages, materials on libraries in novels and a brief mention of librarianship and television. The latter two media seem to be surprisingly under-represented on the Web (unless I am missing something!) and the serious researcher may wish to check out more traditional sources [**4**]. Having said this, that *bete noire* of sitcoms, *Sorry!*, does have its programme details posted in cyberspace [**5**]. You might be surprised to discover that Timothy Lumsden actually survived for seven series before the BBC – or was it an irate librarian? – decided to kill him off.

Comic strip librarians
Also crammed in my folders are stray cartoons of librarians or comic strip characters in library settings. Many of these have been found by accident whilst reading newspapers and magazines. We all know that Bat Girl was a librarian and that Calvin (of *Calvin and Hobbes* fame) has a rather difficult relationship with his local library staff, but where can we turn for a comprehensive list of libraries and librarians in comic strips?

One of the sites indexed by Marinelli and Baker is Steven Bergson's *Librarians in comics: sources* [**6**]. Dividing his site into 'comic strips' and 'comic books', Bergson has provided useful abstracts to describe the comics' action in relation to the library world. One of the problems with (syndicated) comic strips is referencing, and although dates are sometimes included, some of the strips may still prove difficult to track down. (Far more reassuring is the comic books list where tighter bibliographic control can be exercised.) Less far-reaching, but in some ways more useful (especially for the novice comic strip searcher), is *Library cartoons: an annotated bibliography* [**7**]. This lists a small handful of titles (focusing on particular strips like *Bloom County*, *Dilbert* and *Robotman*), but quantity is made up for

with quality. Each example is given its own page which includes a 'description' (with quotatable dialogue faithfully reproduced), 'source' and any additional 'comments'. Some examples (including Funky Winterbean's encounter with Internet filtering and – my personal favourite – Calvin discovering that his library book is overdue) even have hypertext links to copies of the strips themselves.

Reel librarians
The vast majority of the image resource sites on the Web are concerned with the portrayal of librarians in the theatre and film. Frederick Duda's *Librarians on stage and screen* [**8**], a chronological overview of (briefly abstracted) examples, is a good starting point. Shoji Ichimura's *Librarians in film: a filmography* [**9**] similarly offers a chronological approach, but only provides titles. The site also appears to have been last updated in 1995, so its use is limited, but it does contain a list of over 30 Japanese films that do not appear to be indexed elsewhere.

A different approach is adopted by Steven Schmidt, the author of the excellent *The depiction of libraries, librarians and the book arts in film and television* [**10**] and the forthcoming book, *Librarians on film* [**11**]. His web site lists his top ten films featuring libraries, librarians and the arts [**12**]. Alongside negative images (Donna Read [sic] in *It's a wonderful life*), Schmidt selects humorous examples (Conan the Librarian in *UHF*) and several very positive portrayals (*Desk set*, *Angel at my table* and *Salmonberries*). On the essay front, Stephen Walker and V. Lonnie Lawson's *The librarian stereotype and the movies* [**13**] deserves special mention. This eminently readable piece considers the concept of stereotyping, the tasks undertaken by librarians on the screen, the qualities of typical male and female library workers in film, and librarianship in comedy, thriller and fantasy genres. This is an excellent study that focuses on 30 films. Why so few? Initial searches threw up limited references to librarianship as a central theme. As the authors rather drily point out: 'librarians make infrequent appearances [in films]. One reason for this rarity is the non-cinematic nature of a librarian's work. Answering reference questions is not the stuff of movie action.'

The Daddy of all the film sites, though, has to be Martin Raish's brilliant *Librarians in the movies: an annotated filmography* [**14**]. I first became aware of this database in 1992 when Ann O'Brien sent me a print-out (a version of this with additional commentary was subsequently published in the journal *Collection management* [**15**]). Since 1992, the filmography has not only grown in scope, but the original A-Z list has been more closely classified. Now four groups appear: Group A – films including the portrayal of librarians/library staff; Group B – films including the portrayal of libraries; Group C – films in which unseen librarians or libraries are mentioned; Group D – about 115 films requiring further research to add them to one of the above groups. The filmography is extensive in coverage (over 300 films), well organised and abstracted, and bang up to date (I checked recently (2 August 1999) and *The Mummy* is included!). No serious researcher into the image of librarians in cinema could survive without this site.

1.2 'REAL' LIBRARIANS
It is not just my folders that are crammed with examples of the image. In my work office, above the filing cabinets, is a hoardings poster for the *Oxford Mail* that reads 'OXFORD: LIBRARIAN FOILS RAIDERS'. From my recollection, the actual story [**16**] was nothing to do with a library and made only one mention of professional status, but the stereotype was still played to good effect: 'meek and mild librarian becomes have-a-go hero'.

Finding real life stories about librarians that hint at the image has never been easy. Searches of newspaper databases under 'librarian' are invariably inconclusive as the stereotype tends to be played subtly, and (what often amounts to) lazy journalism is hardly indexed! Help – to a certain extent – is

available on the Internet. The American *Librarian.net* [17] provides a daily news service with links to librarian-based stories. Although some of these are described as 'sensible' (a story from 21 July 1999, for example, considers DSE and office environments and the two entries for 1 July review US filtering initiatives), the vast majority are far from sensible. Some hint at established stereotypes (librarians and cats appear for 28 July), whilst others are just plain bizarre ('librarian misplaces ashes' (21 July) and 'TV star runs over librarian in his Ferrari, TV star sues librarian' (17 July) are my two favourites). In many ways, this is a site that needs to be seen to be believed!

1.3 QUOTATION SITES
In the past, anyone seeking an apposite quotation about libraries or librarians was forced to scan the indexes of guides like the Oxford dictionary of quotations or Stevenson's book of quotations. These always seemed to contain the same tired remarks and Emerson's meek young men growing up in libraries are now etched on my mind forever [18].

Web sites like IFLA's Quotations about libraries and librarians [19] and the ALA's Quotes about libraries and books [20] not only bring a whole host of quotations together by subject, they also seem to be providing an airing ground for lesser-known observations. My personal favourite is Sir William Osler's definition (from the IFLA site) of what makes a good librarian:

"The librarian of today, and it will be true still more of the librarians of tomorrow, are not fiery dragons interposed between the people and the books. They are useful public servants, who manage libraries in the interest of the public... Many still think that a great reader, or a writer of books, will make an excellent librarian. This is pure fallacy."

Incidentally, this view that librarians should be people – rather than book – orientated (more later) was propounded in 1917.

2. THE 'IMAGE BUSTERS'

So – depending partly on the particular field of investigation – the researcher interested in the image of the library and information science profession is generally well-served by the Internet. Increasingly, though, new sites connected with the image are more concerned with busting the image than merely cataloguing it.

'Image busting' sites cover a multitude of interests and only a few of the more well-known sites can be covered here. Their primary aim is (it seems) to present an alternative image of librarians, a more vibrant, positive 20th (or 21st) Century view than the (19th Century) dusty, quiet world of Miss Bun and Mister Ineffectual. Given the nature of the Internet, some of these sites are rather leftfield to say the least.

The Bellydancing Librarian
An excellent starting point in any tour of the image-busting back roads of the Information Superhighway is *The Bellydancing Librarian* [21]. Eris Weaver's wonderful little site sets out to smash two stereotypes: the 'fashion-stunted, book-dusting librarian' misconception and the 'belly-dancers are really strippers if not whores' slur. As well as providing links to a Gallery of bellydancing librarians, the site also acts as a gateway to belly-dancing – sorry, Raks Sharki – sites and 'other fabulous, stereotype-smashing librarians'. Some of these sites will already be familiar to the image researcher: *Image and the librarian: an exploration of a changing profession*, *Librarians in the movies* and *Librarians in comics* are all listed. The rest are more typical image-busting pages.

Some of these are 'humorous' sites, proving that we are not all stuffy professionals. *The Laughing Librarian* [**22**] offers signs to put up in your library (office!?), quotations for sig. files and links to other 'funny' sites. *Fun for bookworms* [**23**] has similar objectives. Some of the attached sites are more successful than others, and (in my experience) the best tend to be the ones where you (as a librarian) end up smiling knowingly rather than laughing out loud.

Other sites are more serious. *The Progressive Librarians Guild* [**24**] stresses the social responsibility of library workers and produces a radical on-line journal. The more populist *Street Librarian* [**25**] supports similar issues and promotes the alternative media. *The Anarchist Librarians web* [**26**] ('Boring Mission Statement: We don't have one') is big on freedom of information/anti-filtering, and (along with the *Anarchism, radical librarians, infoshops* site [**27**]) provides excellent links to alternative information sources on the Web.

Naked librarians
Other image-busting sites are often more concerned with the image of individuals, rather than the interests of the profession as a whole. *The Barbarian Librarian* [**28**] is a rather strange little site merely content with showing a real-life librarian who likes to eschew 'normal' work attire to dress as a, erm, barbarian.

Some sites go further. The tense sexual atmosphere of the quiet library and the repressed sexuality of library workers are well established elements of the image [**29**]. As one might expect, the sexual side of the image is given much attention on the Web. Naked librarians abound. One of the resource sites – *The Image of librarians in pornography* [**30**] – presents a bibliography of adult novels featuring librarians, and *Librarian.net* seems to have three or four naked librarian stories each month. Most (in)famous of all, though, is *Naked Librarians* [**31**] which contains two screens of (mostly Art Deco or Pre-Raphaelite) naked people on tasteful bookplates, plus links to photo sites of 'the lovely Taryn from Nerve Mag' and 'Donna Does the Library'. At this point – in the tradition of the *News of the World* – your investigative reporter made his excuses and left Netscape...

Modified librarians
Until recently, the only reference I could recall to librarians and tattoos came in a copy of the cult comic magazine *Deadline*. In the December 1993/January 1994 issue, the character Dogmeat (half dog/half man: don't ask) gets excited at the prospect of photographing 'a coach load of young female librarians' with tattoos (of the Rolling Stones logo and Sonic the Hedgehog) in 'unusual places' [**32**].

The World Wide Web has showed us that the tattooed librarian is not mere fantasy. *The Modified Librarian* [**33**] provides 'a forum for the discussion of body modification in the context of librarianship'. It includes 'rants' and other writings from individual librarians, plus photographs of their various body modifications (like Sadie's pierced tongue and Andrew's tiger tattoo). This site has been widely reported and already another librarian is looking for recruits for a tattooed librarians web site [**34**].

The Lipstick Librarian
'She's bold!! She's sassy!! She's helpful!! She's... The Lipstick Librarian!'

The Queen of all the image-busting sites, though, has to be The Lipstick Librarian [**35**]. Possibly the most well-known of all these sites, the 'LL' is more Paris '99 than Dewey 21. 'Lipstick Librarianship', we are informed, 'is a state-of-mind, an outlook'. It is all about style in the face of adversity:

'What makes a Lipstick Librarian? Money? Fame? Beauty? A mastery of AACR2 and reference interview techniques? No! It's the ability to look fabulous while poking around a dot-matrix printer with a bent paper-clip.'

Linda Absher's multi-award winning site has been making librarians (and others) laugh since 1997 with its life-saving beauty tips, 'essential' bibliography and 'have you got LL tendencies' quiz. You can now even get a Lipstick Librarian T-shirt.

If the *Lipstick Librarian* gets her way, librarians will never be seen as dowdy ever again!

3. ANALYSIS

So what are we to make of these sites? The 'studies of the image' sites are less controversial, 'more scholarly' as *The Bellydancing Librarian* would have it. These provide a useful – and, in some cases, almost essential – reference tool, and reference tools (as we all know) are ideally suited to the electronic media. But what of the 'image-busting' sites? These are often viewed (at best) as mere whimsy: the *Mediawatching* column of the *Library Association Record*, for example, often starts with a review of these 'weird and wonderful' sites before getting on with the serious business of scanning the broadsheets [36]. At worst, they are seen as frivolous nonsense: although *PICK* provides a gateway on its LIS reference page [37] to 'jokes about librarians', the section is actually titled 'Jokes [not really recommended]'.

So do the image busters carry out any more positive functions? Do they show librarianship to be vibrant, vital and fun? Do they provide a positive image of the profession? Do they really talk about librarianship at all?'

Some of the more 'serious' sites are undoubtedly passionate about our profession. The more political Progressive/Anarchist/Street Librarians stress our responsibility as guardians and promoters of information, emphasising the commitment that takes librarianship beyond the mere status of 'a job'. Sites like *Women in the history of American librarianship* [38] provide inspirational examples from our past, and *Great librarians on the Web* [39] links us to the metadata pioneers of today.

Even the more 'frivolous' sites offer positive images. Pearson's humorous poem *The Reference Librarian* [40] and the more prosaic *Reference encounters* site [41] both convey the varied nature of enquiry work. Dan, *The Ska Librarian* [42], may be alternatively known as 'the librarian that looks like a big skinhead who will eat my child', but he still refers to his library (the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts) with affection as an 'amazing resource'.

Other sites are more explicit in their approach. *Thwart not the librarian!* [43] (which contains a cartoon of a barbarian librarian) asserts that librarians are not 'diminutive civil servants, scuttling about 'Sssh-ing' people and stamping things.' Oh no. 'Librarians are all-knowing and all-seeing. They bring order to chaos. They bring wisdom and culture to the masses. They preserve every aspect of human knowledge. Librarians rule.'

But what of the belly-dancing, tattooed lipstick librarians? Are they not merely concerned with non-librarian aspects of librarians' lives? What is the point of these sites? As well as being just plain funny (any anyone who does not laugh at *The Lipstick Librarian's* bibliography – which lists such classics as 'The glasses/earring ratio: which should be larger?', 'Circulate THIS!! When Circ Librarians go bad' and

'Cataloguers who love AACR2 too much' from that popular journal Cataloguing obsession weekly – needs a vacation, help or a career change!) they can – I believe – fulfill a more serious role.

One of the main problems with the image is (it has to be said) that it is partly based on reality. It is also partly self-inflicted and partly self-perpetuating. Our profession is still viewed by many people as book-centred, the ideal refuge for the shrinking violet, for the 'reader'. We still get references for prospective members of staff (always written by non-librarians, of course) saying 'X is a quiet girl...ideally suited to library work'. We still get – some 80 years after Olser's observations – people in interviews saying that they want to work in libraries because they like reading books. When will they say that they are interested in library work because they like people?

As Andrew Stenson [**44**] recently pointed out:

'The continued viability of the profession is critically dependent on the recruitment and training of people who can meet future challenges. There is growing evidence from a number of research projects to suggest that this issue is fundamental and that professionals everywhere need to reflect on the implications.'

Recent reports like the *SKIP Report* [**45**] and the TFPL and Loughborough University studies outlined by Stenson have stressed the importance of recruiting staff with the appropriate personal qualities, particularly communication and interpersonal skills. It is relatively easy to teach technical skills. Changing personalities is less simple.

As a profession, we need to give out the message – in any medium available – that we are not the refuge of the quiet and scared, that we are not living in the 19th Century, but that this is a confident, go ahead, passionate profession with its heart on its sleeve rather than its hair in a bun. How else are we to ensure that we will attract out-going, communicative, 'people' people to librarianship? As we have seen, many of the image-busting sites convey the excitement and passion of the profession. And the other sites? We also need to demonstrate to vibrant, sparky individuals who might have librarian tendencies, but feel that this staid profession is not for them, that if they have a cute tattoo (or just an acute sense of humour) they will fit in.

And finally...
I hope this has given you a taster of what is available, where, and what is worth tracking down. I will finish now, so you can go surfing (or image-busting) yourself, but in the spirit of *The Lipstick Librarian* I will leave you with advice for the surfer:

1. always wear sun block
2. never wear Speedos
3. stick to the most stylish sites

Happy surfing!

Antony Brewerton
Subject Team Leader (Arts, Social Sciences & Health Care)
Oxford Brookes University Library

REFERENCES

Note: all web sites listed were accessible at the given addresses in August 1999.

[1] 1,052,470 web sites (to be precise) at 10.00 am on 5 August 1999.

[2] http://www.wam.umd.edu/~staciemm/project/ImageHomepage.htm [see instead **http://www.wam.umd.edu/~herodf/ImageHomepage.htm** (NBL)]

[3] http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Acropolis/2161/libfaq7.htm [link inactive January 2001 (NBL)]

[4] See for example: Taylor, Alan (ed). *Long overdue*, Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1993; Black, Sharon. Checking out the librarian: the depiction of librarians and libraries on prime time television. *Popular culture in libraries*, 1 (4), 1993, p.35-62.

[5] **http://www.phill.co.uk/comedy/sorry/**

[6] **http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Acropolis/2161/**

[7] **http://pw1.netcom.com/~dplourde/cartoons/index.html**

[8] http://www.ala.org/editions/wlh/movies.html [link inactive January 2001 (NBL)]

[9] http://www.bekkoame.or.jp/~ichimura/libmvdb/libmvdbE.htm [link inactive January 2001 (NBL)]

[10] *Indiana libraries*, 15 (2), 1996, p.15-56

[11] Jefferson: McFarland & Co, 2000

[12] **http://www.iupui.edu/it/libref/lib_film.html**

[13] **http://wings.buffalo.edu/publications/mcjrnl/v1n1/image.html**

[14] **http://www.lib.byu.edu/dept/libsci/films/introduction.html**

[15] O'Brien, Anne & Raish, Martin. The image of the librarian in commercial motion pictures: an annotated filmography. *Collection management*, 17 (3), 1993, p.61-84.

[16] *Oxford Mail*, 19 April 1991.

[17] **http://www.librarian.net/**

[18] *Nature addresses and lectures: the American scholar*, quoted in *Stevenson's book of quotations* (10th ed.), London: Cassell, 1967, p.1108 (quotation 13).

[19] http://ifla.inist.fr/ifla/I/humour/subj.htm [link inactive January 2001 (NBL)]

[20] http://www.ala.org/editions/wlh/quotes.html [link inactive January 2001 (NBL)]

[21] **http://www.wco.com/~eris/bdlib.html**

[22] **http://internettrash.com/users/lafnlibn/**

[23] **http://sussex.njstatelib.org/njlib/lbhumtoc.htm**

[24] **http://www.libr.org/PLG/**

[25] **http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/Cafe/7423**

[26] **http://burn.ucsd.edu/~mai/librarians.html**

[27] **http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/Cafe/7423/radlib.html**

[28] **http://pages.hotbot.com/books/barbarianlibrarian/**

[29] Brewerton, Antony. Sex, lies and stereotypes. *Assistant librarian*, 86 (2), February 1993, p.22-27.

[30] **http://www.84.com/libraryporn.htm**

[31] **http://www.jessamyn.com/naked/choose.html**

[32] Philip Bond. Dogmeat. *Deadline*, Issue 58, December 1993/January 1994, p.38-41.

[33] **http://www.bmeworld.com/gailcat/index.html**

[34] See *Tattooed? Librarian?* at **http://www.jessamyn.com/me/readthis.html**

[35] **http://www.teleport.com/~petlin/liplib/**

[36] See, for example, columns from December 1998 (100 (12), p.676), January 1999 (101 (1), p.64) and August 1999 (101 (8), p.496).

[37] **http://www.aber.ac.uk/~tplwww/e/ref.html**

[38] **http://www.pe.net/~ellerbee/wom_lib.html**

[39] **http://www.sau.edu/bestinfo/Library/libindex.htm#great**

[40] http://www.ala.org/editions/wlh/reflibn.html [link inactive January 2001 (NBL)]

[41] **http://www.geocities.com/Wellesley/Veranda/3035/q62299.html**

[42] **http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/Village/3497/**

[43] **http://www.msu.edu/~olseneri/library.html**

[44] Stenson, Andrew. Where is the passion to succeed? *Library and Information Appointments*, 2 (17), 13 August 1999, App 334.

[45] Garrod, Penny and Sidgreaves, Ivan. *SKIP: skills for the new information professionals*, Plymouth: University of Plymouth, 1998. See particularly para. 2.13.6

NewBreed plans to use this space to interview people who have an impact on the work we do, whether they are librarians, social commentators, educators, musicians, or puppeteers. For our first issue, we thought we'd introduce you to NewBreed Librarian by interviewing ourselves: Juanita Benedicto and Colleen Bell. We're OK with that if you are.

What is NewBreed Librarian?

JB: It's a one-stop shop for new or soon-to-be librarians. We plan to offer more as it matures and finds its way, but for now our goal is communication, collaboration, and developing a professional presence on the web that librarians can identify with. Currently the stereotype (blows and) does not reflect the diversity of work that we do. We want to be represented – not for our non-stereotypical status, but because librarianship is exciting and important.
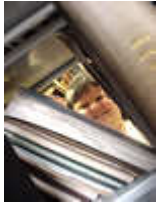
CB: Our primary audience is new librarians, within their first couple of years, as well as those just entering the field or considering librarianship as a career. But in reality our audience is anyone who is excited about the possibilities that an MLS presents, whether they choose to work in libraries or follow an alternative path.

Where did the idea come from?

CB: Juanita dreamt about it one night and woke up with it fully formed in her mind. She spent the whole reference department meeting that morning shaking in her seat and trying to share the idea with me from across the table by mouthing the words.

JB: Actually, the birthing process took place over months. I had been checking out designer web sites for some time, admiring their sense of community and collaboration using this medium (the web). Then I read **Antony's article** and soon after **Surfstation** debuted. The two just came together. If designers could use the web to knit the design community together and grow from that collaboration, librarians could, too. It was about time that we had more to offer than Modified, Barbarian, Lipstick, and Naked Librarians. I wanted to use the web to its potential and thought that as a profession we were missing the boat big time.

Who is NewBreed Librarian?

JB: For the time being, it's just Ms. Bell and I, and our invisible friend, Susu. But we're hoping over time to bring more NewBreed'ers in.

CB: We really want this to be the Sesame Street of librarianship – not any one kind of library or national focus, but a celebration of the cultural, intellectual, political, and social diversity we find in our profession.

What's the biggest challenge that you think lies ahead for the NewBreed emprise?

CB: Right now, it's only the two of us, both with full-time jobs. I guess just finding the time is a big challenge.

JB: Agreeing on a font size.

For our debut, Newbreed is featuring six outstanding information professionals. For some time, we have been visiting their sites on a weekly – if not daily – basis as they always have something to offer. Their sites generate useful and pertinent information that demonstrate a dedication to the profession. These are the folks who incite a pride for librarianship.

We asked each of them to respond to the question, "What makes librarianship exciting to you?"

Rory Litwin, Library Juice
http://libr.org/Juice/

If you want to keep up with current events on the library and information landscape from a wide variety of perspectives and sources, Library Juice is your place. The site also includes quotes and homepages of the week. Refreshingly simple in design, Rory packs each edition with library rich content.

What makes librarianship exciting to you?

Libraries are special because they are at once communitarian, libertarian, and models for sustainability.

They are communitarian in the economic sense because they are built on solidarity. A community pools its resources in order to share them.

Libraries are libertarian in the social/intellectual sense because of the ethic of intellectual freedom, which says that all ideas should be included and nothing censored.

This combination of economic communitarianism and social/intellectual libertarianism creates the ideal support system for a democratic society, because the library provides everyone with access to ideas and provides access to every idea.

In addition, libraries are models for sustainable systems. By following the "borrow, don't buy" ethic, libraries provide an alternative to consumerism, an alternative to environmentally unsound overproduction and spiritually unsound overconsumption.

And libraries excite me further because they need to be changed. They tend to leave out alternative or street-level materials; there is presently a tendency toward privatization of services and functions (with attendant barriers to access); libraries and library organizations need their decision-making processes democratized; access to local community information in libraries

needs to be improved; and we need to advance the library paradigm of information access, to freshly propagate the idea of libraries in society.

Jessamyn West, librarian.net
http://www.librarian.net/

Guru to many, Jessamyn *rocks*. If you're not already familiar with her weblog, bookmark it. You'll be back.

What makes librarianship exciting to you?

The fact that championing freedom to read and free access to information is not just lip service, it's a job description.

John Buschman, Progressive Librarian's Guild
http://libr.org/PL/

This intelligent and thought-provoking forum features articles, book reviews, and bibliographies that explore progressive perspectives on librarianship and beyond.

What makes librarianship exciting to you?

Three things:

First, at its best, librarianship IS intellectual work. This is a moniker that many in the profession shy away from, but without conceptualizing our work this way, we don't even rise to the level of good technicians. On the other hand, when one looks at the sweep and scope of printed material – and how it must be selected, organized, made relevant to our publics, preserved – then you begin to realize what a unique chance we have to work with ideas in a culture that is increasingly banal and commercial. Now, take the description of our unfinished work with print, and then reach out (as we do) to electronic, audiovisual, and ephemeral materials, and you've got a profession with a big agenda. We have intellectual work to tackle – critiquing, shaping, and assembling resources for the public's intellectual inquiry and the preservation of cultural production. That aspect of our work has to be protected, and the best way to do that is to chock it full of thinkers.

Second, we're actually on the forefront of some of the most interesting professional/intellectual issues of our time. For instance, intellectual freedom is constantly being tested, limited, expanded, and put into action on the shelves of public and school libraries and on the screens of their computers every day. The expansion and the limits of professional autonomy and academic freedom are being defined not by professors at universities through their teaching in research, but rather in the work of librarians/academic professionals in maintaining and expanding (or losing) control over their libraries and their libraries' resources in an increasingly corporate information and management environment. It isn't always easy, but it is interesting.

Third, the old conservative traditions of the field leave it wide open to intellectual dynamism. (You may read that sentence anyway you like!) If you are an expansive and critical thinker who can put your ideas into action, then things in our profession are wide open to you: offering new services, shaping your own institution, publishing, etc. I am definitely NOT speaking of just

web-and-net-and-digital resources here: our bandwagon fascination with them has been really, really mindless. Rather, in this particular example our field is ready and in real need of good, sharp, extensive evaluation, critique and comparison of those electronic resources and their cost and access software. So far, most of what has been done in our field just fawns over the corporate bells and whistles, rather than really evaluating what you get for the buck and how restrictive the licenses are. That is just one example of what needs to be done.

Chris Dodge, the Street Librarian
http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/Cafe/7423/

Chris Dodge amalgamates alternative press links and was also the editor of the MSRRT Newsletter, a publication of Minnesota Library Association Social Responsibilities Round Table for activist librarians.

What makes librarianship exciting to you?

Sharing books and magazines and videos and zines and CDs and information that people want (and need) to know about, if only they had a clue.

Making connections fortuitously in the cause of a happier, more joyful world.

Imparting passion about poetry, truth, beauty, freedom, ornithology.

Teaching people to do it themselves.

Linking those who quest for knowledge, those who love learning, with the tools and resources necessary to learn and to grow.

Promoting alternatives to mass media which offer a respite from cynicism and foster the idea that committed individuals and groups can make a difference.

Saving the past from being forgotten. (Viva Voltairine de Cleyre!)

Keeping hope alive for the future.

Ensuring real diversity in library materials.

Imparting curiosity.

Working to make public libraries free for all.

Countering consumerism and commercialism in publishing.

Educating library users to stand up for their rights, how to ask for what they want, even though their stereotypes of what sort of things are generally not in libraries (but OUGHT to be) is often accurate (say, adult comics, punk music, erotica, small circulation magazines, zines, and street newspapers, to name a few).

Modeling appropriate technology, from the grassroots: pen and paper and phone calls, sometimes.

Showing that a library is not so much about a collection of books on shelves so much as an attitude that can move wherever the librarian goes.

To continue to dream and invent the role of activist librarian.

Blake Carver, LISnews
http://lisnews.com/

Conceived and created by Blake Carver, LISNews is a clean and tight website devoted to current events and news in – broadly speaking – library and information science.

What makes librarianship exciting to you?

I've given this some thought, well, more than some thought, alot of thought. I wandered around at the **ALA Midwinter meeting**, surrounded by thousands of librarians looking for inspiration, and answers. I sat and thought. I pondered, postulated, theorized and waxed poetic, looking for the perfect answer. I looked at **other peoples answers**. I even asked jeeves **what he thought**.

The question itself implies that I find librarianship exciting, and I'm not sure that I do. After all, what is librarianship? Most people think it's sitting at a reference desk, shushing people, and stamping books. Of course WE all know it's more than just shushing people, it's cleaning up after them, scolding them for looking at porn, going to conferences, and complaining about low pay.

OK... so it's more than that, but it seems like that's about it most of the time, doesn't it? So what is it that a librarian does, what is librarianship? Ask 10 librarians and you're likely to get 10 different answers.

Librarian's like Dan Chudnov of **OSS4LIB.org** write code and do "geeky" things most of the day. Solo librarians like **Rory Litwin** do everything from ordering books, to dusting the shelves. Librarians like **Jessamyn West**... well I'm not sure what she does, but she seems to move around alot. Librarians like **me** aren't even in a library any more, I write code for an internet company all day. Other librarians like me do cool stuff like information architecture, and they aren't in a library either. While still in the field of "librarianship", are we still librarians if we don't work in a library?

Louis Rosenfeld and Peter Morville founded **Argus Associates** "the premier provider of professional information architecture consulting services". They are part of the new branch of librarianship called "Information Architecture". Information Architects figure out what a web site will do and then they construct blueprints and plans before the site is actually put together and used. It's really a perfect job for a "librarian", since it's all about where stuff goes, how it's organized and how stuff is used. Since we are all obsessed with organization and perfection (let's just assume the stereotypes are true), librarians fit into this detail oriented job perfectly. I'm not sure if we are still librarians, those of us who left the library behind.

You can take the librarian out of the library, but you can't take the library out of the library, it's really a lifestyle, a way of being, not just a job for many of us.

Most "librarians" are still working in what we currently consider a library. You know... a **big building** full of books, and now, computers. There may even be a card catalog somewhere,

though I doubt it's being used. Smaller libraries need folks who are jacks of all trades. With fewer staff members you need to know cataloging, reference, systems and management. If you're lucky enough to work in a big fancy research library at a big fancy college like **Harvard**, or the **University of Oregon**, you can specialize in **one special thing** or **another**. Since these jobs need special skills, they tend to pay better (note: I didn't say they pay good, just better) than the smaller libraries. It almost seems like the less you know the more you're paid. We also have an unprecedented number of jobs available to us outside of the traditional library setting.

For me it's the jobs outside of the libraries that are most exciting right now. That doesn't mean I won't return to a library some day, I actually hope to, sooner than later. It's really exciting being apart of something new, something that didn't even exist 5 years ago. It's exciting being in a company surrounded by 22 year olds that make more in a year than I made in 3 years in a library. It's exciting to never know for sure if I'll be paid on Friday, or **laid off** on Monday. The internet revolution (**beware of the buzz**) is being driven, in part, by librarians. It was **a librarian** that coined the phrase "surfing the net". Being part of the hype is cool, and exciting while it's happening, though painful and almost embarrassing when it's over.

The time we (as librarians) are living in now is really exciting. The past 7 or 8 years **since** the web took off has been an unprecedented, and most likely never repeated, time in our history. The WWW/Internet has changed our profession more than most others. I doubt there is a profession that hasn't been impacted in some way by the internet, but ours has been moved and shaken like few others. We must now deal with **filters**, **porn**, **legislation**, job cuts, obsolescence, and **misconceptions** like never before.

One of the most dangerous misconceptions is that libraries are useless and outdated. Everything people need can be found on the internet, why the heck do we need a library? This is so far untrue, but it could turn into a self-fulfilling prophecy. People think like this... they then vote like this... they don't support the local (or campus) library... and all of a sudden, there are no libraries, and everything everyone needs IS on the internet, because they have managed to kill libraries. I hope we are decades from this point in time, but it may come some day. That's just one more thing that makes this time so exciting, and librarianship so exciting.

Things have changed in ways we are not even aware of yet, and this pace of change will continue for the foreseeable future. With the internet and other technologies rapidly evolving and competition from the private sector (**questia**, **etc**...) starting to pick up, we could be in for even more excitement in the years to come. I hope it's not my **lack of historical knowledge**, but this seems to be the most amazing and exciting time to be a librarian, more exciting and scary than at anytime in the past.

Our jobs as librarians will continue to evolve around us, and in spite of us, at a pace that has never been, or will never be, matched at any point in our professions history. It is indeed an exciting time to be a librarian, or part of the profession know as Librarianship.

Marylaine Block, Ex Libris: a Weekly E-Zine for Librarians

Marylaine Block offers ideas about the profession and the Internet, and provides occasional book reviews. Probably the most valuable section of the site are the Internet guru interviews.

What makes librarianship exciting to you?

It combines so many things I love – books, ideas, information, and their free exchange among people who care about them. I'm proud that we are equalizers, offering knowledge and literature and art and music free to all people who want to know, to understand, and to better their condition in life. I'm proud of a professional code of ethics which demands that we treat all our users with respect, honoring their information needs regardless of their age, race, religion or class. I'm proud that whenever powerful people try to "protect" people right out of their right to books or music or ideas, the ALA stands beside the ACLU waving the first amendment in their faces. I'm proud of our long tradition of sorting through all the world's written record and selecting the best for our community of users. Our understanding of what good information looks like and our ability to organize it and retrieve it make us invaluable in the Internet era of too much information.

The problem is, the public doesn't know that. We've been genteel and unassertive, waiting for people to come to us. The challenge for our professional survival is for librarians to move out into the community, physically and virtually, offering information and training to all segments of our population. We need to be seen as vital to the building and revitalization of our communities.

Susu, our sometimes irreverent advice columnist, answers your questions about work, school, the job hunt, and librarianship in general. In this issue, Susu tackles the thorny issue of whether potential employers should pay for your interview expenses.

Dear Susu, Recently I applied for a job five states west of mine. I was invited to come for an interview, but was told that I would have to pay all of my expenses for what would essentially be a two-day trip. I just graduated from library school and can't afford the airfare, let alone the hotel expenses. Shouldn't my potential employer pick up the tab?

Unemployed in Urbana

Dear Unemployed,

Your question recently came up on The New Librarians Discussion List (newlib-l), and lots of folks had plenty to say. Opinions weighed in on both ends of the scale and every point in between.

Some thought if you want the job badly enough, you should be willing to do all it takes to get there, including making a financial investment in the search process. Buy lottery tickets, go into debt, lap dance... just get yourself to the interview so they can fall in love with you and give you the position.

Others emphasized the other side of the coin: if a prospective employer is interested enough to bring you in for an on-site interview, they should be willing to pay for your expenses.

In one case described on newlib-l, the candidate was told the library would consider only local candidates first. Personally, this is not the type of organization I would want to work for, one that places geography and convenience above ability, not to mention charm, warmth and personality. Consider the interview process as a blueprint: if they cut corners here, you can be pretty sure "haphazard" is modus-operandus for the organizational culture there.

I'm not saying the library *should* pay for your costs. The reality is that there is no standard for who picks up the tab. Most libraries recognize the costs associated with the hunt for new employees, and that they have a certain obligation to cover at least some of them. Smaller libraries may be less able to pay for interview expenses, but they probably tend to advertise locally rather than nationally. In most cases, conclude that a library should be prepared to cover at least a portion of the costs if they advertise nationally.

Also, the type of job will often determine who picks up the tab. When you're just starting out, you may have to negotiate who pays what, with each of you pitching in. As you move up in your career, you'll

find that employers are often willing to not only pick up interviewing expenses, but relocation costs as well.

Outside of libraries, situations differ widely. Many technology-oriented companies, for example, won't even consider applications from outside the local area, because the expectation is that people in technology-related fields will move on before the company can recoup its inital investment. But if this is where you want to be, figure out an area you would be satisfied living in that also provides the best chance for employment, then relocate before starting the job search. If you know someone in the area who will lend you their address for the duration of the job hunt, you might be able to secure an interview remotely; however, you'll still need to pay for your interview expenses.

If you find yourself in this position again, negotiate with the employer about interview expenses. Remember: it never hurts to ask. And if the employer is unwilling or unable to at least share the expenses associated with the interview, you need to ask yourself (and the potential employer) if this is an indication of what you'll experience once you're on the job. You want to be sure that there's room (and funding) for your professional growth and development.

What's up your sleeve, Meister? Tricks and treats from NewBreed'ers and their guests. In this issue, Ryan Holsten starts us off with two simple HTML tricks.

Ryan Holsten
Ryan is a respected web designer who runs his company, Spinalchord, out of San Francisco, CA. He's also responsible for Invertebrae, a collection of mentors, teachers, workshops, and pupils that learn and collaborate over the Internet.

URLs:
http://www.liftingfaces.com/
http://www.spinalchord.com/
http://www.invertebrae.com/

tip 1
no href outlines

To get rid of that annoying outline that Internet Explorer places around alink after you've click on it, add the following code to your anchor tag:

`onfocus="this.blur();"`

So if your tag used to be...

`<a href="nobox.html" target="_blank">`

...you would add the code to make it look like so:

`<a href="nobox.html" target="_blank" onfocus="this.blur();">`

This code simply tells the link that when you click on it (bring it into focus) to not outline itself (so blur it when it's focused, if that makes sense).

tip 2
upper-left placement

To get your images lined up against the top-left corner of the page without the usual margin, add the following code to your body tag:

topmargin=0 leftmargin=0 marginwidth=0 marginheight=0

So locate the following tag in your HTML document...

<body>

...and add the following (inside the angle brackets), thus:

<body topmargin=0 leftmargin=0 marginwidth=0 marginheight=0>

You have to use all 4 attributes because the battle between Netscape and Internet Explorer is neverending, and each refer to different attributes to change the margins.

20 MAR 01 :: **"I wanted to cluster myself with great and like-minded people who share a common vision of building better Web sites and then taking those experiences and portfolio pieces ... to market."**

Support Group for Information Architecture at the University of Hawaii:
http://www2.hawaii.edu/~mwhang/SGIA/

This is the first student-based support group dedicated to fostering support, growth, education, research, and practical experience in the field of information architecture – the art and science of organizing, scaling, structuring, and indexing Web sites and complex information systems.

The organization is for students and by students who want to gain more experience in a collaborative and team-based environment, building better Web sites putting the user at the heart of the design process.

The idea was inspired by me a graduate student at the UH School of Library and Information Science. I wanted to cluster myself with great and like-minded people who share a common vision of building better Web sites and then taking those experiences and portfolio pieces (in this case academic/research-based Web sites) to market.

I also realized that traditionally librarians are the human search engine, negotiating users' information needs with the actual book, journal, magazine, etc...This will continue to be the paradigm. However, in a networked environment, librarians are building Web interfaces (complete Web sites) that allows the users to search for the information themselves in the absence of librarians (people-support). The Web enhances remote access very much like digital archives.

So the challenge for today's librarians are to build better Web sites focusing on what the user's goals are and finding ways to connect users to them.

Anyway, aloha from the Hawaiian Islands and cheers.

Sincerely yours,
Michael Whang

Masters of Library and Information Science candidate
University of Hawaii at Manoa
School of Library and Information Science
2550 The Mall
Honolulu, HI 96822

12 FEB 01 :: **"Whether I consciously think about it or not, the library is now just as Java-cookie-style-sheet-XML-oriented as other online providers in cyberspace."**

Dear NewBreed:

I work as an administrator in an academic research library, and I've been around long enough to have supervised filing in the old card catalog. Well, enough ancient history...

The other day I sat in on an interview session for a programming production manager. This person will be expected to "oversee and implement programming and technology solutions for Web and multimedia projects." All the other staff in attendance worked in various aspects of library systems and IT operations. At one point, I made the comment that the library was not currently serving up any dynamically generated web pages, and one of the students in the room quickly said, "I thought that Janus was a Java based application that did precisely that." (Janus is the name of the library's information system and includes the online catalog.)

I was quite taken aback and then, in a startled moment, realized how different my conception of the library is from that of this young, techno-savvy student who works in one of the library's computer labs. Of course he was right but, in my mind, the online catalog didn't count. The library's vendor is responsible for all the coding and basic functionality of the system. The catalog had also evolved over time and it's history as a card based tool is just as fresh in my mind as the current web based interface.

It hit me that students today and others who aren't blinded by an in-house library mindset don't make the same distinctions that I do. To them the library offers tremendous amounts of information over the web using sophisticated technologies. Whether I consciously think about it or not, the library is now just as Java-cookie-style-sheet-XML-oriented as other online providers in cyberspace.

I thought to myself ... perhaps we're a NewBreed organization after all. At some point, just when I wasn't looking – at least not clearly enough – the library got with the program. Who serves up dynamically generated web pages? I guess we do... amazing!

Mark Watson
AUL for Technical Services
University of Oregon

Readers Respond to TechTalk

07 FEB 01 :: **"Some of us prefer to navigate with the keyboard instead of the mouse"**

Though I appreciate Ryan Holsten's attention to detail, his tip "no href outlines" (Tech Talk, 02/01) doesn't take into account that some of us – okay, okay, 0.001% of us – prefer to navigate simple pages with the keyboard instead of the mouse, tabbing through links and pressing Enter to follow them. The href outlines may be unsightly, but they're the only way I know where I am when I'm navigating via keyboard!

Clay Combs
Memphis, Tenn.

Editor's note: Good point, Clay. As a Netscape user, I'm familiar with its tab behavior (outlines around the links you tab to, but not when you use your mouse). I didn't realize that IE doesn't make the same distinction. CB

---

05 FEB 01 :: **"The reason I take this discussion seriously is because it does not represent an individual opinion but the opinion of a growing number of people who are re-formulating a worldview where freedom is being defined as individual economic freedom."**

I thought New Breed Librarian would like to know about this discussion in Colorado Springs letters to the editor suggesting public libraries be excluded from public tax support. The reason I take this discussion seriously is because it does not represent an individual opinion but the opinion of a growing number of people who are re-formulating a worldview where freedom is being defined as individual economic freedom. This is coupled with the anti-tax movement that is trying to de-fund all public tax money for most public service with the belief that government should primarily "provide for the common defense". Do not under estimate the seriousness of this worldview. As our culture turns more and more to the business model, public service is becoming synonymous with customer service. When this happens it brings with it values that are contradictory to a free and civil society.

Thank you for your efforts,
J. Jordet, MLS student

This is a forwarded message
==============Original message text==============
To all librarians in all types of libraries. We're in this together!

In the Sunday, Jan. 28 Gazette newspaper (Colorado Springs), a staff editorial suggested that in the age of the Internet we should eliminate the entire idea of tax-supported libraries. Why build any more libraries when you can find everything on the Internet? Why not just let everybody, rich or poor, buy cheap paperbacks at garage sales? Everybody who uses the public library should pay a usage fee. While the editorial praised the leadership of the Pikes Peak Library District for forming focus groups to consider the future of the library, the general message of the editorial was that libraries no longer serve any useful purpose.

My own reaction to the ideas expressed by the Gazette editorial staff was one of disbelief, but it did not translate into action. My secretary, Nancy White, on the other hand, rushed to her computer to submit a reply to the editor. She wrote an excellent, thoughtful letter, and I really wanted to share it with the library community. Nancy's letter was published four days after the original editorial.

Read the original Gazette editorial first. It'll make you steam (or cry):

http://www.gazette.com/archive/01-01-28/daily/opin1.html

Next, read Nancy's response. You'll have to scroll down to the last editorial on the web page below:

http://www.gazette.com/archive/01-02-01/daily/opin3.html

Today's Gazette (Feb. 2) has an editor's reply to Nancy's letter and others. He hasn't heard a word. It's written by Dan Njegomir, and the heading is "Would you pay a dime to read 'War and Peace'?"

http://www.gazette.com/opin.html

Tomorrow you'll find the reply in the archives for Feb. 2, 2001.

[Original email modifed to exclude author's name and contact information].

Readers Respond to Susu

02 FEB 01 :: **"I probably missed out on a few wonderful jobs before I wised up."**

I agree with the invisible Susu, it is a thorny issue. However, I have to make one comment from personal experience. When I first began to look for a professional job, everyone was giving me advise and saying that I wouldn't want to work for anyone who didn't pay my interview expenses. Well, I probably missed out on a few wonderful jobs before I wised up.

Okay, so I wasn't able to move across the country. I drove myself to some interviews and accepted a great entry-level position...at my expense. After working and learning there for a few years, I decided I was ready to advance to a new challenge, and began a search for my next job. Man, was this search ever different! I had fully paid interviews, with airplane tickets, hotels, meals, and even cab fare paid for! I also had negotiating power when the offers came. I'm just glad I came out of the clouds and made a big (and yes, expensive) effort to find a job and prove myself. Once you land that first job, you HAVE to use it to make a niche... what makes you different from every other MLS grad? What do YOU have to offer that the person interviewed before you didn't?

Stacey Shoup
Southeastern Library Network (SOLINET)