

ONLINE NEWSLETTER

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From Larry Nesbit:

Good News -

Your School Library and Information Technologies degree continues to get good reviews from outside evaluations. During the past year we have been certified by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and accredited by both NCATE and the Middle States Association for Higher Education. These were all nice to hear, but they are not as exciting as being selected by the US News and World Report as one of the best 150 online programs in the United States as happened a few months ago.

Just this past week Ms. Deb Kachel and I were interviewed by a reporter for the Institute of Museums and Library Service (this is the top funding organization for libraries in the U.S. and is the body which awarded MU the grant for \$360,000 for the scholarship and principal training program) and our program is going to be featured in the next IMLS newsletter. In addition, they will use parts of the story in other publications so please don't be surprised when you see stories about our program in the national press.

This is only possible because we have excellent students like you who are willing to work hard to learn the content, exceptional faculty who are committed to providing excellent learning opportunities, and Mansfield University staff who provide the needed services

and infrastructure so you may actually enroll in a fully supported program.

Congratulations to all of you in helping Mansfield University offer a quality program. Maybe we will end up on a national talk show in a few more months!

A Passion Lived

Carrie Gardner



Three years ago, a friend was collecting essays on what being an American meant. I agreed to write an essay for her collection. I spent months researching the origins of the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution. I wrote an essay that traced the major themes in the documents to their philosophical origin. It was torture. Two days before it was due, I shared it with my oldest and dearest friend. He shocked me by crumpling the paper and tossing it on the floor. He said, "I've known you 21 years and I don't know why you care so much about Intellectual Freedom. If you explore that, you will be doing yourself a favor and you will save the readers from a boring essay on ancient philosophy." His words stung but they caused me to

do some much-needed soul searching. For the first time in my life, I asked the person looking back at me from the mirror, why do you spend the majority of your free time writing, speaking and serving on committees---all of which revolve around intellectual freedom. My definition of intellectual freedom is: The absence of any person, policy or procedure that prevents someone from accessing the information they want. After much soul searching I found my answer and rewrote my essay.

I wrote: Political, social and economic factors created the climate that swept Adolf Hitler to power in Germany while my father's age took him to the European theater of World War II. Hitler took his life because of the failure of his war machine and my father was given a new lease on his. Dad felt this way not because his life was spared on Omaha Beach, but because he learned firsthand what effect the lack of democracy, the absence of civil rights, and the squelching of speech had in Germany and Europe. He realized that he was a citizen of the United States of America and as such would return to a country that was founded on documents that guaranteed him and the people he loved the right to many freedoms.

During most evenings of my childhood, my father discussed these freedoms with me. We debated, discussed and argued over the forces at work that gave and took freedoms from people. He asked me questions and rarely gave me answers. When does someone have the right to govern another person? Who should control information? What is information? Is murder ever justified? How much freedom is too much?

The result of this unorthodox childhood was that I became a rabid supporter of individual liberties, specifically, an individual's right to access the information they want and intellectual freedom. I selected librarianship because it is the profession in our society given the role of information gatekeeper.

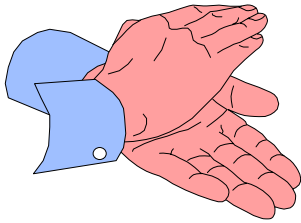
My professional experience includes work with the American Library Association Intellectual Freedom Committee and Round Table, the American Association of School Librarians Intellectual Freedom Committee and the Pennsylvania School Librarians Association Intellectual Freedom Committee, as well as an instructor of the Access and Legal Issues in the Information Age class for Mansfield University.

When I was asked to write this article I realized that once again, I needed to do some soul searching. I decided that students should know that my teaching the Access and Legal Issues course provides another outlet for me to live my passion, intellectual freedom. The more interesting point is that this outlet allows me to interact with people from all over the world who have something in common: We are all learning how to help young people access and use information in order that they may become productive citizens. A more noble cause surely can not exist.

The Student Online Handbook: A New Information Tool

Our Portal Page now provides students with a new button marked "Student Handbook" that provides another information tool for students in the

online program. We encourage all students to go to the portal page <http://library.mnsfld.edu/schoolib.html> and click on the button "Student Handbook" and browse this new tool. The manual contains valuable information that most students will need from time to time. Perhaps students may want to print out a copy so they can browse at their leisure. However, when facing a problem or concern about a process or procedure, we encourage students to check the online manual to make certain that they have access to the latest information. Please send suggestions for changes or additions to the Online Manual to Doris Dorwart d.dorwart@worldnet.att.net.



MORE GOOD NEWS!

We recently started sharing information about school librarian openings with our students. And, it didn't them long to jump on this opportunity. We are pleased to announce that one student was hired for one of the positions we announced, while another is in the interviewing process.

A student from New York also found a job as a school library media specialist in another school and credits her Mansfield program with making this possible.

Another student informed me that she was elected Department Chair and is excited about this new opportunity. We are very pleased that our students are achieving their goals as a result of their hard work. Just think of the impact that our talented and well-educated students will have on thousands and thousands of students! Congratulations to all.

Got an Idea? Need Money? Write a Proposal!

Christina Sellen

In the summer of 2001, I wrote a grant entitled "Science Rocks!" as part of Dr. Dorwart's Library Advocacy Course.

I had previously conducted a collection analysis when I took Deb Kachel's Collection Development course and determined that my library's collection was in need of new science materials. I used the information gathered in this course to form the basis for my statement of need in my proposal. I supported the need with information I found in *School Library Journal* regarding the escalating cost of nonfiction materials, as well as data that indicated science materials become outdated and need replacing every 4-5 years.

Dr. Dorwart, who is a successful grant writer, reviewed my proposal and made suggestions. I incorporated her ideas and included the proposal in my portfolio when I applied for the library media position last summer. I found that administrators love it when you show an interest in seeking outside funding through grant writing! I got the job, and my principal immediately submitted my

proposal to the Rose Tree Media Education Foundation, which primarily funds projects for our school district. I had to rewrite the proposal to fit the application form, but I am currently enjoying spending the \$1,200 I received for library materials.



Moving On: Jean Tuzinski's Retirement Party

No, Jean is not leaving the Mansfield Program. However, she is retiring from the West Shore School District. I asked Jean to give us a few words about her career and her plans for the future. Here is what she had to say:

My career in school libraries has run the gamut from K-12th grade. I only missed 3rd! School library work always was exciting because it was ever changing in almost every aspect. The students were the main constant and I could count on seeing all types of learners. My Tamaqua Area Senior High School Library was ahead of its time from the "getgo" in 1967. Working in IU29 for Dr. Fogarty as part of ACCESS PA support was the refreshing change I needed in 1988. In 1989 I joined Doris Dorwart in the Division of School Library Media Services and, trust me, we were never bored. Then in 1993 I was off to the West Shore School District to work in the high schools. One year

later, I moved to the middle school level and became their Department Head. Since then, I worked in the middle school and various elementaries and assisted in automating all four district middle schools and nine elementary schools.

As to my future, I have no specific plans. I thoroughly enjoy my Mansfield teaching: it has been another challenge and most rewarding. I am working with several other school librarians to deliver an "Expand the Power" workshop/notebook which will be a Commonwealth Libraries staff development program similar to the Power Library Training programs. Beyond that, I will work on restoring my home, tending my sheep, traveling, antiquing, collecting Native American artifacts and skiing.

All of us at Mansfield University want to wish Jean a happy, healthy retirement and we look forward to her continued involvement in our program.