

Birds of a feather: Three roundtables

By Anna Babluck.

The Birds of a Feather (S8) session at this year's B.C. Library Conference consisted of three casual drop-in discussion groups in one room: "Get the Heck Out of the Library," "Greening Our Libraries," and "Licence to Stretch Your MLIS."

Three seminar-style discussion groups convened in one room for this casual drop-in session. This was the first year that the B.C. Library Conference held roundtable sessions in this format and although nobody dropped in later as all the concurrent sessions ran the full time allotted, intimate groups were formed from the start. This resulted in personalized conversations and advice as well as fantastic networking opportunities. Everyone felt that their groups were a great success and the attendees left happy and informed!

Get the Heck Out of the Library

This brain-storming roundtable was led by Avi Silberstein, Greater Victoria Public Library's Outreach Librarian. This group got the heck out of the conference room and into the sunshine to discuss their unique communities and devise potential outreach initiatives for each library. This session was truly an inspiring show of collaboration! As well, each attendee received a limited-edition, signed copy of Avi's *Rules for Wacky and Wonderful Outreach*.

Greening Our Libraries

This roundtable focused on a current hot-topic inside and outside the library world. The session was led by two founding members of West Vancouver Memorial Library's Green Team, Julie Backer and Sue Kent. The mandate of the Green Team is to work on creating an environmentally sustainable library by assessing everything from paint to transportation. These green gurus have over ten years of collective experience in environmental sustainability for libraries and were pleased to share their knowledge with the attendees, who of course, had their own suggestions in turn.

The group focused on easy steps that can be taken by any library to decrease their environmental impact as well as ways to encourage library staff to follow these measures. This group may have been small, but they were encouragingly zealous!

These green advocates discussed how to encourage the participation of staff, trustees, municipalities and campuses in library environmental efforts. Participants shared their libraries' green successes and challenges with topics ranging from encouraging greener methods of transit to waterless urinals and from the marketing of green efforts to placement of garbage cans and recycling bins and everything in between! Attendees came away inspired to make their libraries even greener.

- with notes from Julie Backer

Licence to Stretch Your MLIS

The third group dug right into the core of current issues in information studies with a discussion of non-traditional careers. "Licence to Stretch Your MLIS" was led by a slew of professionals including UBC iSchool Services Coordinator Michelle Mallette, UBC Arts Coop Coordinator Anna Jubilo, UBC User Experience and Usability Coordinator Rex Turgano and Managing Librarian at the B.C. Ministry of Justice, Kristin Hodgins.

As libraries are cut back and technology advances, many young professionals are searching for work outside the library bubble in positions such as information architecture, usability services, and information asset management (to name a few out of dozens.) This group definitely came prepared with lists of potential job titles plastering the walls and useful handouts galore.

Attendees discussed the difficulty of searching for work outside libraries and the pigeonholing that occurred due to the word "library" in their degree. The session leaders, for their part, offered up their experiences as examples, passed around sample job postings and discussed application and interview strategies. The big lessons seemed to be not to undervalue your soft skills when selling yourself and to brush up your hard skills as needed later using free tools such as MOOCs (massive open online courses) and CodeAcademy (www.codecademy.com). Great advice all around!

Anna Babluck is an MLIS student at UBC, communications officer/webmaster for BCLA's student chapter and the library co-coordinator at Qmunity: BC's Queer Resource Centre.