

AKLA OIL SPILL PANEL

REPORTED BY: KATIE SLOAN, DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

To those of us involved in dealing with the information needs created by the Exxon-Valdez Oil Spill, the Oil Spill panel at AKLA was just like another of our teleconferences, only this time we could see each other! Sherry Taber, moderator for the session, introduced the panel members, and asked that each speaker discuss how their library responded to requests for oil spill information, and how they would do it differently next time.

The program began with an informative and entertaining slide show presentation by NOAA Auke Bay Fisheries Laboratory Librarian, Paula Johnson. NOAA has been monitoring Prince William Sound since the inception of the oil pipeline, and Paula's library has a wealth of oil-related marine information. This data was very much in demand after the spill. Paula showed slides of the Sound in its pristine state, the area during and after the spill, including the impact on the wildlife, and she also shared pictures of her library. Her slide showing the rise in interlibrary loan requests after the spill was most impressive! Paula said in the future she would hire more help, as she and her part-time library assistant had to put in a lot of overtime to keep up with the demands. Paula's "show" has been getting rave reviews, and several other groups have asked her to repeat it for them. Opening the program with this presentation really got us all in the mood to talk about the impacts the spill had on our own libraries.

Dwight Ittner from Rasmuson Library at UAF also showed a few slides. He had Ron Inoye's collection of political cartoons about the oil spill. Dwight said the impact was felt primarily in the increase of interlibrary loans (most of them from Paula!) and that there didn't seem to be too much demand from faculty and students. He also said that the Technical Services people had to push to get the oil spill materials cataloged right away, which indirectly affected regular library service.

Cathy Vitale from the Alaska Resources Library said they noticed quite an increase in patrons -- research agencies, lawyers, and anyone from the public who thought they might be involved in the aftermath of the spill. They fielded a lot of reference questions, working closely with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife and State Fish & Game libraries. They downloaded biology-related records on Prince William Sound from LaserCat, and followed up with a second bibliography that included areas covered by the spill as it moved south. Though the libraries were coordinated fairly soon after the spill, even earlier coordination might have been better. Cathy feels ARL did a good job responding to the crisis.

Sue Lattin from the legal services division of CACI, a private company, announced that the Justice Department had hired CACI to plan and set up a repository library of oil spill materials for the public. The library is to be housed in the Simpson Building in Anchorage, and the Justice Dept. is currently trying to get operating funds from different agencies. The library will have Coast Guard spill response (cleanup) information, a large newsclipping collection, and microfilm. They will do photocopying,

interlibrary loans, and track FOIA (Freedom of Information) requests. The first floor of the building will be open to the public; the second floor will house more sensitive materials. Further information can be obtained from Sue at 278-8012.

Sharon Palmissano gave the group the newspaper library's perspective. There were only two people staffing the Anchorage Daily News Library when the spill happened, and everything went nuts overnight. They were able to get at Vutext stories via dialup, and were asked some hard questions, such as, "What's Joe Hazelwood's home address in New York?" Sharon figures some 800 stories were done on the oil spill, and that her library provided information needed for many of them. She said she wished she had known other libraries collections better, that might have been helpful in her work on the spill.

The Valdez Consortium Library was hit harder than just about anyone. Doreen Hodges told of the tremendous number of ILLs that were requested after the spill. There was a need to get information to a site immediately, and that was sometimes tricky. Because of the influx of folks coming to Valdez -- Exxon representatives, DEC staffers, researchers, wildlife biologists, legislators, clean-up workers and service personnel -- Valdez Public went from a small-community library to the New York Public overnight! And not all of the impact had to do with the spill. The increase in population made demands on the regular collection as well; circulation went skyhigh. Doreen warned other librarians a check-out policy needs to be established before a crisis like this occurs. Everyone applied for a library card, including many transients, and she figures they lost \$2,500 in books never returned to the Library. Doreen said the increased work created long hours for her and her staff, two of whom she lost to "burnout." She said she was very proud of them, and that their efforts resulted in increased respect for what "the local library" can do.

The Dept. of Environmental Conservation was in the thick of the spill from day one. DEC Librarian Katie Sloan felt the impact the day of the spill, when her clerical person was whisked away to work full-time for the Public Information Office; there has been no clerical help since that day. As the DEC Library serves regional and district offices throughout the state, requests came from everywhere. There was a dramatic increase in literature searches and interlibrary loans, and many requests for the Oil Spill Contingency Plan, for which the Dept. was responsible. Katie sent a bibliography of DEC's oil spill holdings, and oil-related materials to the State Library. She found other libraries' bibliographies very helpful in filling requests as well. Probably the greatest impact of the spill was the loss of the Library itself. Because of the new offices and positions created in response to the spill, and the lack of space to house them, the DEC Library was put in storage in July. This has made dealing with the increased requests for information even more difficult. The Library is not expected to be re-established until DEC's new building is completed next year, however some

reference materials and periodicals were recently reclaimed from storage. Katie thinks next time she would practice outreach more aggressively -- contacting researchers to see how the library can help instead of waiting until they contacted her.

Our moderator, Sherry Taber, reported on the State Library's response to the spill. An oil spill section was established immediately, where all materials coming in to ASL would be placed. Technical Services cataloged oil-related documents before anything else so that these would be available right away. Next Sherry set up a library teleconference to coordinate oil spill information dissemination. It was decided that there would be three regional centers, ASL in Juneau, ARL in Anchorage and UAF in Fairbanks, and all oil information would be sent to each regional library. Many bibliographies were generated from both large and small libraries, and these were available at the regional libraries. Sherry also obtained audio tapes of the Alaska Public Broadcasting Network's coverage of the oil spill from start to finish, including hundreds of hours of hearings testimony. Copies of these will be housed at UAF, Valdez Public, Anchorage Municipal, NOAA/Auke Bay Fish Lab Library and UAS.

There was a lot of discussion and participation throughout the session, and towards the close questions from the audience were taken. Everyone agreed that the early coordination work helped all librarians field reference questions better. Sherry prepared a questionnaire for the panel and audience to fill out, which is reprinted below. These questions give us all something to think about in planning library response to events like the Exxon-Valdez Oil Spill.

HOW WOULD WE DO IT NEXT TIME?

The purpose of this questionnaire is to find out what we learned as librarians about responding to information needs for a major disaster. All types of patrons in all types of libraries needed vast quantities of information immediately. How could we bring resources together faster, better, more economically or more efficiently the next time around? Please answer the following questions and elaborate as you see fit. The responses will be analyzed and a short article written for NEWSPOKE or SOURDOUGH.

1. Was the Oil Spill teleconference for librarians an effective way to share information among librarians from the various types of libraries? What other ideas do you have for sharing information under such circumstances?
2. What was the most common way your library obtained the information needed by library users?
3. Was the identification of resource libraries and contact people in each region of the state useful? If not, what would have been more helpful?
4. What internal communication means did you use to share information with your staff?
5. Which bibliographies did you find most useful?
6. What comments did your library receive from patrons suggesting specific services which would have been useful?

7. What do you think would have been the most useful thing that DIDN'T happen in response to the Oil Spill, as it relates to library services?

8. What could YOU have done differently to have had a more positive impact on library service in this situation?

9. Other comments?

Please complete and return to Sherry Taber, Alaska State Library, P.O. Box G, Juneau, AK, 99811. Thank you!

DISASTER PLANNING WORKSHOP

PRESENTED BY: BARBARA MACLEAN, ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL LIBRARY

AND CATHIE INNES-TAYLOR, UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA, ANCHORAGE

REPORTED BY CAROL McCABE, JUNEAU PUBLIC LIBRARY

"Plan your Next Disaster" was an interactive workshop presented by two members of the statewide Collection Development Steering Committee. Barbara MacLean, Collection Development Coordinator for the Anchorage Municipal Libraries, and Cathie Innes-Taylor, Acquisitions Librarian for the University of Alaska Anchorage Library, presented a model disaster plan for group discussion. Each workshop participant received and helped to critique a draft of the DISASTER PLAN WORKBOOK FOR ALASKAN LIBRARIES, which was prepared by Barbara and Cathie, and which was funded by an interlibrary cooperation grant from the Alaska State Library.

One key issue for Alaskan libraries in preparing for potential disasters is the feasibility in our state of vacuum or freeze drying as a restoration technique for water damaged books. The guideline of over 2000 irreplaceable items was given as the point at which it may be cost effective, but for most Alaskan libraries, fan drying or replacement will be the practical choice. Another key concern--and with this one several in the audience had very recent experience to draw upon--is volcanic ash fallout procedure. Advice from our local experts included 1) close off the building's heating and venting systems and windows, 2) turn off computer equipment and cover with plastic, and 3) use vacuum to clean ash accumulation from surfaces before using water (Which can produce a "glue" from the ash).

FUNDAMENTALS OF OPTICAL IMAGING

PRESENTED BY LAUREN BARKER

REPORTED BY BETH ODSEN, ANCHORAGE LAW LIBRARY

Optical imaging is a new technology that handles graphics, photographs, and text all in the same medium. Lauren Barker, Information Analyst at BP Exploration, is managing a pilot project for the company. She shared several insights about the benefits of optical imaging and how to start up a project of your own.

Benefits:

1. SPACE REDUCTION. Optical imaging compresses the white spaces in text for storage and then decompresses it for display on a screen or printer. Imagine 40,000 pages of text all

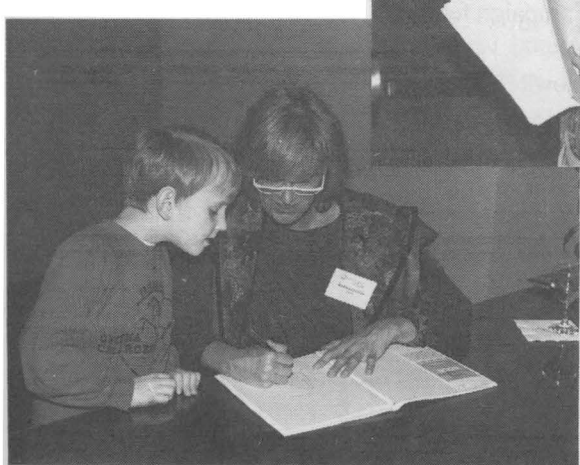
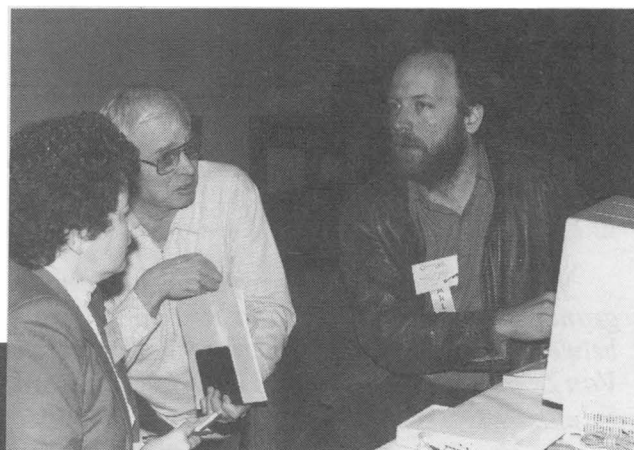
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