

## **A Merging of Passions**

### ***How One Librarian's Love of Teaching Enhances and Informs her Technology Know-How***

Somewhere along the way, there is always that one librarian who seems to be just as excited—if not more—than you or the other patrons about the pursuit and sharing of knowledge and information. Annie Adamson, a librarian of Caldwell Public Library, is one such enthusiastic—and enthusing—example.

Annie's passion for learning and sharing what she has learned was first parlayed into education. After several years spent splitting her time between teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) in middle school and working as a part-time librarian at Parma Public Library, she returned to higher education to pursue a teaching degree. From there, she took her current job as a System Administrator/Teen Young Adult Librarian/Reference Clerk at Caldwell Public Library in Caldwell, Idaho.

### **Lifelong Learner**

Annie is the quintessential example of a lifelong learner. To keep herself up-to-date, she attends sessions offered by the Idaho Library Association and the Bibliographic Center for Research (BCR), a nonprofit, multi-state library cooperative that has provided library and information services since 1935. Annie's recent training in Boise, which included such topics as podcasting and Wikipedia, has been supplemented with Webinars and online courses.

Annie also has another key information resource. Caldwell Public Library is one of nine libraries included in the LYNX! Consortium, which has an Open Access agreement that allows materials to be shared among partner libraries. Members also meet regularly and are part of a listserv through which they discuss IT issues. According to Annie, members help each other keep informed on the “latest and greatest.” If a problem or question should arise, she says, there is undoubtedly someone else in the Consortium who has experienced that same issue. For example, because Caldwell Library was the first in the Consortium to take on the Microsoft Shared Toolkit—now SteadyState—Annie was able to answer other librarian's questions when their libraries followed suit.

## Information Sharing

Annie's current position has also enabled her to make use of her experience and love for teaching. Back in August 2000, as part of Caldwell Library's grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, a trainer visited the library to set up the computers and wire it for Internet access. Annie counts her experience with the trainer as the impetus that sparked her love of computers.

"She let me help her, which was so cool. That's really what started me in loving the computers so much."

She has learned quite a bit since then, while conducting staff and patron training in her library. One interesting bit of information she gleaned is that the best time to offer public classes is in January, because many people receive new computers for the holidays and are eager to learn how to use them.

Many of Annie's students are senior citizens, eager to learn e-mail and other programs, like Microsoft Word. Annie shared the excitement she feels when she recognizes that "gleam and spark in their eyes" when they figure something out. One intrepid 78-year-old participant called Annie with some questions after returning home from a class. Unable to help him over the phone, he returned to the library with his laptop in tow, and Annie set to work to help him. When they were done, Annie explains, the man was so excited and so happy that he had tears in his eyes. She is humble about the experience, sharing, "I just have a passion to help people learn."

Annie has also learned a great deal from her teen patrons, "who are willing to teach this old dog some new tricks," such as "You Tube and other newer sites." Annie explains that she tries to impart some of her knowledge to the teens every once in a while, but, she adds with a laugh, "they sometimes know more than me."

Annie also contributes to staff training. The latest staff training event, held in October, focused on NetLibrary. Annie created a curriculum for trainings, showed staff the new databases that have gone online, and fielded her coworkers' questions and problems. Annie offered that she and the Head Reference Librarian complement one another; while her colleague "goes to books to find the answers, [she goes] electronically."

Annie is one of those lucky individuals who has managed to merge two of her passions. She explains, "I love teaching and I *do* love my library job as well. It's so cool, because what I can do here at Caldwell is both of them. I can teach computer classes and still be a librarian."