DRAFT MINUTES
PLG Conversation & Meeting
January 25, 2013 – 4:30-5:30 p.m.
Seattle, Sheraton – Willow Room

PRESENT: Mark Hudson, Michael Gritchfield, Howard Besser, KP, Zora Sampson, Jonathan Betz-Zall, Lisa Gieskes, Merve Fejzula, Julie Winkelstein, Elise Daney, Lauren Woody, Fred Stoss, Kevin Colman, Natalie Harger, Peter McDonald, Erin Ziegenfuss, Deborah Sandler, Elaine Harger, plus about 10 people who didn’t know to sign in.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: What does it mean to be a progressive librarian during times of economic and environmental crisis?

Given the disinformation and misinformation from the federal government on environmental issues, it is the obligation of librarians to reveal truths and realities of the situation. Access to water is a serious concern. Glaciers provide drinking water to entire populations. When they melt, entire countries will run out of water.

The worst enemy of progressive librarianship is liberal librarianship, which so pervasively accepts the neoliberal way of business. We need to convince liberal librarians that neoliberalism’s attacks on the public sphere puts libraries in jeopardy.

The quality of library services and commitment to universal access is under all-out attack. Libraries are pressured to offer “consumer experiences” to “customers.” The language of crisis predominates – “swimming in the shark tank” is how one administrator characterized our library’s situation.

Librarians are gone from the Beaverton School District, home to Nike and Intel. There is money. My concern is a corporate take over of our schools.

Technology has become everything. It is very disturbing to watch and very difficult to counter this mindset.

The role of progressive librarianship is to come up with support for all our libraries, and to counter all the negativity with action. We can talk like this all we want, but I want to see more action.

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Draft Minutes (continued)

Why aren’t more people outraged and active in opposing what’s happening? Rutgers University attempted a consolidation of its three campuses, which would have closed the Camden campus. Only a few faculty and librarians opposed this, but the community eventually succeeded in keeping Camden open.

Actionable items are helpful to me. Conversations like this spiral into generalities and we get nowhere. What inspires me is how Twitter was used for the revolution in Egypt.

Progressive librarianship recognizes that there is no such thing as objectivity, but there is fairness. Being radical means you look to the cause of problems and seek to work them out. Librarians are essential because we share information, and PLG is important because with Progressive Librarian we share our experiences and thoughts on matters like we’re discussing broadly.

The responsibility of progressive librarianship is to reach out to marginalized communities.

Progressive librarianship can offer alternative ways to address economic and environmental crisis.

We need to have conversations amongst ourselves about cuts and how to deal with them. For example, staffing is a big issue. Professional librarians are being replaced with paraprofessionals, and library users don’t know that the person who is helping them isn’t a trained librarian.

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I don’t like the question. The task of progressive librarianship is to balance our long range vision/ideas/plans with short range responses. We must articulate a value system that is not subject to the ability of neoliberalism and capitalism to recover from crisis. For example, information is NOT a commodity, and it is the job of progressive librarianship to challenge this widespread belief.

People have already said things I would say, but it is useful for me to reconnect with progressive ancestors and history now. Libraries can be spaces for healing our relationships with one another and the planet.

Progressive librarians are like the canaries in the coal mine. They tell me what I should be paying attention to.

I’m inspired by Russ Feingold’s work to establish the Progressive Party, which recognizes the necessity of connecting people of all minds, to normalize intelligent conversation between people. I find hope in starshine.

Progressive librarianship has a voice, and is a rabblerouser.

The question must be related to the communities we’re serving. There is some amazing activism going on in our communities and I see windows for change.

PLG BUSINESS: Elaine informed the group that PLG is in need of volunteers for book review editor, a chair of the Braverman essay contest, and members to assist in reviewing PLG’s guidelines for the coordinating committee, and asked people to speak with her if they were interested. She also encouraged people to get the “Join PLG” flyer, and invited everyone to attend the PLG dinner after the meeting at the Black Coffee Coop and the reception on Sunday at Left Bank Books.

Meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.
Aaron Swartz

On January 11, 2013, internet activist Aaron Swartz passed away. Swartz, co-author of RSS, co-founder of Reddit, member of the Creative Commons team, and founder of Demand Progress, was only 26.

In January 2011, Swartz was arrested by the federal government for downloading massive numbers of articles from JSTOR and faced a number of charges. If found guilty, he would have faced up to 35 years in prison.

On Tuesday, January 29, a memorial resolution honouring Aaron Swartz was unanimously passed by ALA Council. In the footnotes, it is noted that the PLG membership endorsed this resolution.

To read the resolution, visit [http://connect.ala.org/node/199158](http://connect.ala.org/node/199158)
Update from London, ON Chapter

Public Library Budget: Members spoke at a city council budget meeting in defence of the public library. Council later did not vote to freeze the London Public Library's budget.

Library and Archives Canada: We are looking for submissions of any writing relating to the situation at Library and Archives Canada. We also put together a bibliography of articles on LAC cuts in case people are unaware of what's going on right now in Canada.

For more information on these initiatives and on the London PLG Chapter, visit http://plglondon.wordpress.com/

Remember, the Bulletin needs updates from the PLG membership so we can spread the word about all of the good work that we are collectively doing!

Got an update? Send it to sarahbarriage@gmail.com