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Albright College Gingrich Library

Thank You for Wierdness: Teen Programming at the Muhlenberg Community Library

Bryan Sotnyk

Candidate for the degree

Bachelor of Arts

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for

College Honors

Departmental Distinction in English

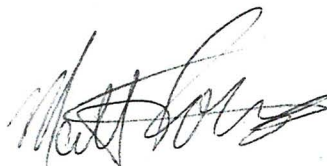
Alberto Cacicedo, Ph. D.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alberto', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mary Jane Androne, Ph. D.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Jane Androne', written in a cursive style.

Matt Fotis, Ph. D.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matt Fotis', written in a cursive style.

Albright College Gingrich Library

F. Wilbur Gingrich Library
Special Collections Department
Albright College

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Title: *Thank You for Wisdom: Teen Programming at the Muhlenberg Community Library*

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Date:

4/21/14

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Albright College Gingrich Library

Documentarian's Workbook

Senior Honors Thesis Accompanying Materials
Bryan Sotnyk

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Creative Process Write-up

In addition to creating a 7-12 minute documentary for my Senior Honors Thesis, I will be compiling and chronicling the work I've done through the process in what I'm entitling a "Documentarian's Work Book". This document will include, but is not limited to, the blog posts I have been writing throughout my time at the library, general discussion pieces about the nature of my work in the library, journal entries about my process post-filming, responses to some of the research I've done for the project, statistics based on a survey the teen patrons filled out, followed by my updated bibliography/works cited page. In creating this, I'm hoping to come to many different conclusions on my work throughout the year, whether they are basic conclusions about library services for teens or realizations about the creative process associated with documentary filmmaking. I will also include a section dedicated to the impact of social media on this project and how it relates to the lives of the teens I've been working closely with throughout the year. Below you will find the link to my blog for this project.

<http://storytimewmrb.wordpress.com/>

Dear Parents or Guardians,

My name is Bryan Sotnyk. I am a senior at Albright College majoring in English and I am writing to you to request that I be given permission to film your children for a documentary I am making for my Senior Honors Thesis at my school.

My interest in Children/Young Adult Librarianship started when I interned at my local public library in New Jersey two summers ago. I had the pleasure of creating and running unique programs for the children of my community and I delighted in being able to bring them joy and encouraging them to read. As an English major, I understand how important books are to the world and as a student my ability to read well and my enjoyment of it has greatly impacted my academic career greatly.

I plan to create a 7-12 minute documentary on the positive impact of teen programming in public libraries and would involve me filming some of the events and getting the impressions of the kids about the events and programs as they experience them. This documentary will be presented during Albright's Honors Week this coming May and hopefully at the library itself around the same time. I have been granted the opportunity to work under Deanne Boyer and my experiences thus far at the library have inspired and encouraged me to carry on with my quest in becoming a librarian and creating this documentary.

Feel free to navigate to the Blog/Journal I will be keeping throughout the year at the link listed below. I plan on writing on this site every week about my experiences at the library and on the progress on my documentary and other related topics.

storytimewmrb.wordpress.com

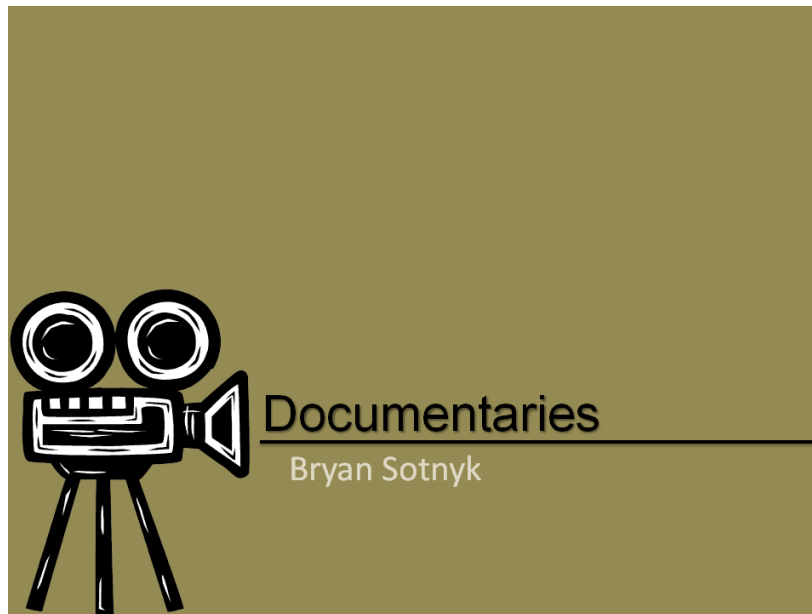
I would love to answer any questions you may have about my project and you can feel free to email me at the address below. Thank you in advance for taking the time to read through this message. Have a fantastic day.

Bryan Sotnyk
bryan.sotnyk001@albright.edu

Albright College Graduate Library

Preliminary Research on Documentaries for Theater 383

The following slides come from the research I did for my Screenwriting class in the Fall of 2013. The class was focused on the structure of the screenplay and I was able to complete the following slides as part of my Honors credit for the course. They were presented to the class with accompanying film clips from popular documentaries and have served as a basis for the structure of my documentary.



3 Types

<p>Informational</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on facts • Intended to teach • Similar to a research paper <p>Example: Ken Burns' The Civil War</p>	<p>Opinionated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Politically/ journalistically charged • Intended to bring forth info or prove point • Similar to newspaper article <p>Example Michael Moore's Fahrenheit 9/11</p>	<p>Journey</p> <p>Based on narrator's journey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often has deeper message • Similar to a creative story <p>Example: 180° South</p>
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General Structure

- Same basic structure
 - Hook: presented earlier than standard film
 - Plot points are less strict; story progresses as information does
 - Relies heavily on the material rather than outer themes
 - Often has particular viewpoint being expressed
- Overall, they are made/watched because people are interested in their subjects

Related Topics

- The Office & Parks and Recreation
 - Satirizing the form
- History Channel
 - Condensing and mainstreaming the form
- “Based on a true story”
 - Why they aren’t documentaries
- [Artful documentaries](#)
 - Silent or image based documentaries

Issues

- Low funding leads to lack of interest
- Low box office return leads to lack of funding
- Specialized interests lead to lack of audience
- Biases often alienate viewers (Moore films...)



Famous Examples

- March of the Penguins
 - Academy Award winner 2005
- An Inconvenient Truth
 - Academy Award winner 2006
- Man on Wire
 - Academy Award winner 2008
- Justin Bieber: Never Say Never
 - Highest grossing opening weekend for documentary

Albion College Gingrich Library

Blog post from 10/20/13 entitled “Welcome!”.

As of 2/25/14, post has 12 views and 2 comments.

The title of this blog comes from a program I ran at the Jefferson Township Public Library in 2012 known as “Singing Storytime with Mr. Bryan” in which I played my guitar and other instruments and read stories, encouraging dancing and singing and reading in one magnificent package. The children always called me Mr. Bryan and would sometimes approach me asking for more songs and more stories after the program was over. This is where my passion for the Public Library was truly solidified and I decided I must make a career out of these sorts of action.

The library is a place of openness and expression, filled with the information necessary for anyone to succeed. The creative freedom and empowerment I feel in a library is something I wish to extend to all, which leads me to my Thesis.

I am taking part in the Senior Honors Thesis program at my college and I have been granted the opportunity to create a 7-12 minute documentary about the positive impact programming in public libraries has on the patrons. I will be observing and volunteering at the [Muhlenberg Community Library](#) and shaping my experiences, as well as interviews with the patrons and the librarians, into my documentary to show just how amazing the library can be.

My goal is to post weekly about my times at the library and I will also reserve this space for the sharing of my opinions on articles I may read about libraries.

Thank you so much for your time and I hope you can join me as I progress through this project.

Blog post from 11/14/13 entitled “Teen Cafe”.

As of 2/25/14, post has 16 views.

I’ve been visiting the library as much as my schedule will allow me to, which is typically on Monday’s and Wednesday’s for what is called “Teen Cafe”. This is an hour long after school program that gives the Teens the opportunity to hang out in the Teen section of the library. There are laptops available to be checked out and an Xbox 360, which admittedly gets most of the attention. In addition to these more technological and newer types of entertainment, many kids also elect to take part in a craft of some kind that Deanne throws together. This juxtaposition of new librarianship and old/stereotypical is exactly why I feel as though this library, and Deanne for that matter, truly “get it” and know exactly how to set up service for Teens.

My biggest problem as a budding young’un (not that I’m not still just the same thing) was my constant search for something to do, but much more importantly *somewhere to do it*. Countless teenage conversations with my friends centered on “where” to go rather than what we actually wanted to do when we got there. We talked about having a “place” to do something, and we knew it would be great if we found it. My basement was a poor substitute to this hallowed place and everyone knows that hanging out at your own house kinda stinks in the first place, so we were stuck. If I had an environment like the one at the Muhlenberg Community Library, I may have spent a bit more time around books than stuck in front of my computer or twiddling my thumbs in a New Jersey basement (not that thumb twiddling doesn’t have its merits; I did end up being able to hone a [craft](#) of my own during this time).

The other aspect of Teen Cafe that truly intrigues me is the idea of the library as a place to learn. Obviously, I love books. But also obviously, many teens do not or they find it hard to embrace literature as a legitimate form of entertainment/mind expansion due to peer pressure.

Deanne crafts the Teen Library itself as a safe place for readers and her interesting programming and engaging nature helps to encourage reading and make it seem cool. She has done this by creating Monster Quest.

Monster Quest is essentially a modified version of the popular card game [Munchkin](#). Players level up in this modified version by reading books (1 book = 1 level up) and they have to travel across the board to fight monsters and gain attributes for their self created characters as they go along. Cool, right? The game not only encourages expression in creating a funny character (some have mustaches, some are based on preexisting characters, some are simply named Bob), but also gives the kids a real reason for reading. A ransom note appeared at the beginning of the year explaining that one of the beloved mascots of the library, the white lion cleverly named Antonio, had been kidnapped and they kids must venture to the dungeon and fight the evil dragon to find him. Any teen that reads 10 books or more by a certain date will also be recognized in a special ceremony for their efforts, giving them even more incentive for their quest. This program has it all. It encourages reading, it's fun, and the kids love it. They could not wait to tell me all about it on my first day and even invited me to play (I politely declined since I'm at an unfair advantage as an English major). Below is a picture of the board Deanne created so you get an idea of how intricate it can be (**picture withheld to preserve space**).

Albright College
C. McGrath Library

Blog post from 12/03/13 entitled “Muhlenberg Community Library featured in Reading Eagle article”.

As of 2/25/14, post has 0 views.

The beginning of the post includes a link to a Reading Eagle article entitled “Youths book time at Muhlenberg library” by Liam Migdail-Smith. You can find my written response to this article/post later in this document.

The kids were ecstatic during their first ever Teen Open House, and the Reading Eagle stopped by to see what all the fuss was about. There were tours, there was cake and hot dogs, and there was plenty of fun as the doors were open and the laughs were plenty. I’m actually in the far background of the second posted picture and I’m so proud of all the kids I’m proud to call my newest friends at the library.

Blog post from 12/03/13 entitled “Working with the fun”.

As of 2/25/14, post has 13 views.

It’s coming to the end of my penultimate semester at Albright College, and I’ve been having a blast. Classes have been thrilling, I’ve completed all of my major assignments for the semester, and I’ve had the pleasure of working at the library for almost three months. I’ve not regretted a second and I feel as though the project is truly coming into its own.

I title this post as such because as I’ve been working at the library and hanging out with the kids, I’ve found it difficult to split my time between the aforementioned work and hang out time.

What’s so amazing about these kids is how inclusive they are. They make me feel as if I was no different, despite coming from an entirely different background and lifestyle and age group.

They’re becoming my friends and they’re becoming an important part of my week as I look forward to going to the library.

Thus far, I’ve filmed roughly a half hour of footage of mostly stock shots and one that I believe will hold the title of the documentary (to be revealed at a later date). I’ve had multiple discussions with Deanne about the work she does and how she feels it impacts the teens and I’m very excited to interview her in the coming months.

I guess I’m posting this to prove that I have done work, but I’m also posting this as a validation. My father always says you should find work you love because then it isn’t work. I can confidently say that being with the teens and taking part in the programming and everything I’ve done so far has given me personal confirmation and satisfaction. I’ve found work that’s not work, and it’s the best feeling in the world.

Blog post from 12/10/13 entitled “Looking back to look forward”.

As of 2/25/14, post has 5 views and 1 favorite.

The beginning of this post links to an article from the LA Times written in 1988 by Carol Aronoff entitled “Is the Time Past for Public Libraries? Rethinking a California Institution”, about the state of libraries and their future relevancy.

In my research for this project, I’ve come upon countless articles that ask the age-old (apparently) question:

“Are libraries still relevant?”

This article seems to be a sort of peak for this sort of article and I am going to directly refer to it in my final product. I understand it was written with old statistics and in a region other than the one I am studying in/grew up in, but I feel as though the questions asked and the answers the world has provided by now are very relevant to my project. Particularly, I’d like to point out the following quote:

“Given this sobering news, what can be said about the future of the public library in California? Is it doomed, like the dinosaur? Or can it, like the primate, develop adaptive skills to survive in a changing environment?” (Aronoff)

Libraries, in my experience, are some of the most progressive and adaptable places in the world. The environment is always conducive to creativity and openness. The “latchkey children” that come in are accepted and generally have a great time (Aronoff). Instead of picking the author’s argument apart (again, I understand this was written in an entirely different *world* compared to the one we live in), I’d rather like to point out how the library has adapted. The flexible nature of this cornerstone of public life is one of its many endearing traits and libraries

everywhere should rejoice simply because they exist in the capacity they do today.

Bringing this home even more is the fact that I'm working at a library that is truly on the cutting edge of sophistication and evolution. Our library lets kids be kids and treats them like the adults they will ultimately become. They offer services catered to them and, in many cases, crafted by them to engage and encourage growth. It is the perfect place.

So as to not seem like I'm making fun of the writer of this article, I'm going to quote one last time:

“So is the public library in danger of extinction? I don't think so—at least not yet. This summer's discussions will be reinvigorating, because they will be on a topic dear to the heart of every librarian—how to serve our communities.” (Aronoff)

I'm happy to report, Ms. Aronoff, that the library is still very much in existence and they are morphing into the community cornerstones that you had envisioned way back in 1988. Kudos for looking forward and kudos for keeping the hope alive.

Blog post from 1/8/14 entitled “I have a title (maybe . . .) and other exciting news!”.

As of 2/25/14, post has 6 views and 6 favorites.

This post begins with what is going to be the title card for the documentary; it is an index card with the words “I’m thankful for wierdness” written on it. I understand this is written incorrectly, but I feel as though it encapsulates everything I’ve learned this year (more on that later).

And there you have it! As I’ve moved through this project, I’ve begun to realize that the teens I interact with are totally insane and unique individuals with their own wild talents, senses of humor, and mannerisms. So, “I’m Thankful for Wierdness” will most likely serve as the title of my documentary. This card comes from a project the teens did around Thanksgiving where they were asked what they were thankful for both in real life and in the library. I was delighted by this sentiment. As I’ve always found myself a tad embarrassed by my eccentricities, but this truly shows how Deanne has created an environment that encourages personal growth to the point of pride in one’s own strangeness. Needless to say, I love it!

My other exciting news is entirely different, but entirely related. I am happy to announce to you all that I received my acceptance email from the University of Illinois and I’ll be attending GSLIS next fall in order to receive my MLIS from them. I’m beyond excited and I’m still in shock and I cannot wait to start learning everything about libraries from the best school that teaches it.

Blog post from 1/21/14 entitled “The day my work became significant”.

As of 2/25/14, post has 20 views, 2 comments, and 2 favorites.

When working on a project for a long time, I often find myself losing interest and finding reasons to want to give up. I could be working on a song for my band and think the melody is lackluster, and within moments the entire song is scrapped and I’m listing my guitar on Craigslist. I’m certain this doubt is universal, but it is particularly awful when it has to do with my future.

Don’t get me wrong, I have loved every moment I’ve spent at the library this past semester. It has truly opened my eyes and shown me that I really want to and can do this. Sometimes, though, I just don’t want to work on my project anymore or I don’t even want to be a librarian because I could never inspire or encourage the teens the way Deanne does.

Then I had a moment.

Deanne threw together a Divergent Book Club in anticipation of seeing the film when it comes out in March. Essentially, the teens will read a select amount of the novel then discuss every Thursday and do related activities. Many kids jumped at the opportunity to join this group, and that, in and of itself, is a major feat in my mind since many of them continually profess their disdain for reading and school. There is one teen that truly surprised me of all of them, though, and I thank him for reinvigorating my library drive.

Brian definitely feels as though we have a running competition. The first time I met Brian, he immediately challenged me to a game of Call of Duty to prove who truly deserved the name “Brian”. I insisted we could share the title (specifically because we spell it differently), but Brian needed to know it was his. I complied and promptly lost the game. Naturally, Brian gloated and everyone seemed shocked that someone as old as me could lose at such a game,

though I continually reminded them I detest Call of Duty and most first-person shooters.

Brian is a self-proclaimed book-hater, like most of his comrades that flock to the Xbox every Teen Cafe. I've never seen him crack open a spine or do homework or do anything except play Call of Duty and yell a lot. I like Brian a lot simply because he's so genuinely himself, but it always upsets a reader to see a non-reader. When the time came to sign up for the Book Club, I doubted Brian would even look back at the sheet. I honestly don't know how I ended up in the discussion I'm about to detail with Brian, but it happened. That's what's important.

Brian and some of the other teens were talking about Divergent and I mentioned to the group how I would be part of their group. We discussed how we would see the film in March and how exciting the series seemed. At some point, the conversation meandered into the following:

Brian: I could finish this book before you any day.

Bryan (me): Never, dude. I'm a reading machine. I guarantee I could finish it before you.

Brian: Let's bet on it! I bet you . . .

Bryan: How about this. I bet you a large popcorn at the movie that I will finish this book before you do.

Brian: You're ON!

And so it was determined, with Deanne overseeing, that I would buy Brian a popcorn if he finished the book first, and if I finished the book first, I would get the satisfaction of winning. Brian took his book, I took mine, and off we were for the day.

Wednesday rolls around, I'm doing crafts with some of the teens, and Brian swaggers into the Teen Library with a million dollar smile, proudly carrying his copy of Divergent. "Hey, dude. How far did you get?" I ask.

"I have 8 chapters left. You're going DOWN." Brian's smile someone gets larger and he

goes to his usual spot near the Xbox and waits his turn to play. I'm visibly shocked and Deanne smiles from across the room. My only thought is: "I'm going to lose."

The weekend passes and it comes to Monday. I've yet to read even a word, and here comes Brian. "Done. I finished it. You owe me a large popcorn!" I am in disbelief and to check the validity of his statements, Deanne gives him a short quiz that he could only do well on if he finished the book. He gets a perfect score and jubilantly yells, "I WIN! HA!"

Here's the moment where I realized I'm doing exactly what I should be doing.

Bryan: But Brian, I thought you hated reading?

Brian: I do! But I won!

Bryan: Ah, but you miss my point. I won.

Brian: What?! No you didn't! I finished the book and you owe me a popcorn!

Bryan: No, you won there. But I won in a different way. I got you to read.

It was sneaky, and I can't honestly say this was my master plan, but it certainly turned out all right. And it was in Brian's disbelief and his near implosion as being hoodwinked into reading *an entire book* that I realized that I am doing exactly what I should be doing.

And I absolutely love it.

Blog post from 2/14/14 entitled “Snow . . . and a little bit of love”.

As of 2/25/14, post has 13 views and 1 favorite.

Happy Valentine’s Day to all of you and I do hope you’ve found a way to love somebody or yourself. Self love is some of the most important love and it opens up the world to outside love! But enough of all of that.

I’ve had a very interesting start to my final semester as an undergrad. As we end our third week, I have only had one full week of classes due to inclement weather and have therefore missed a lot of time working at the library or working directly on the documentary. I apologize for the lack of posting.

Our improv night at the library was cancelled, but it has been rescheduled for sometime in April. Luckily, the weather held out and we were able to host our “Love Stinks Party” on Wednesday. The kids were encouraged to wear black and openly express their distaste for love and all things romantic. Above is the cookie cake that one girl made for the event and I contributed by bringing heart shaped cookies and black icing to destroy them with.

What was most endearing about this event was not the food or the joking about love and romanticism. It was the programs Deanne prepared for the kids and how they were both inviting and fun while also encouraging growth of skills and creativity.

The teens were split up into groups and were tasked with writing the best breakup letter they could muster. Most letters were over the top expressions of pure hatred and hilarious jabs at a non-existent “ex”, but some groups truly engaged and wrote heartfelt or truly weird notes to their fictional significant others. I was the butt of a joke for one teen as he wrote a letter as my girlfriend to me breaking up for “not proposing after a year” (evidently I’ve been managing my relationship incorrectly). It was not the hilarity of the note that stuck out to me, it was more the

level of engagement the author had with the work. I'd hesitate to call this an exercise in true creative writing, but I would not shy from saying this was a great way for the kids to become in touch with their creative minds in order to express a sort of true emotion. One girl wrote a particularly strong letter, one Deanne and I decided we wouldn't entirely mind receiving in the given situation, and she expressed how much she really enjoyed the exercise. This may not have been her artistic epiphany and realization of pure talent, but I feel as though this type of program can serve as the impetus for further exploration of a certain type of creativity that a school may not offer.

That's truly the glory of the library, in my opinion. The teens choose to show up to these events and they choose to engage in the programs, unlike in school where they are often forced to participate and therefore come at things with a certain level of apathy. By providing the opportunity to freely express and joke, the kids are encouraged to truly come into themselves and work the way they want to and find skills and talents that they may have ignored elsewhere.

I feel as though this is the true message I'm getting at with all of these posts and this entire project, and I hope it comes through in my documentary. Thanks for reading and, again, have a great Valentine's Day. Spend it with a loved one. If you are without one of those, find a good friend to spend it with or just live your life and do your thing. There's nothing wrong with being alone or not being in love. We just had a party in honor of it and I'd say none of those teens felt alone that day.

Teen Library Survey

1. How do you identify?

☐ Male

☐ Transgender

☐ Female

☐ Other: _____

2. What grade are you in?

☐ 6th grade

☐ Freshman

☐ 7th grade

☐ Sophomore

☐ 8th grade

☐ Junior

3. To which racial or ethnic background do you most identify? ***This question is optional.***

☐ White/Caucasian

☐ Latino/Hispanic

☐ African American (non-Hispanic)

☐ Native American

☐ Asian/Pacific Islanders

☐ Other: _____

4. Why do you come to the Teen Library? Please choose your **TOP TWO** answers. ***Be honest.***

☐ For books

☐ So I don't have to go home

☐ For the Xbox

☐ Because I can meet other kids like me

☐ For the environment

☐ For the programs

☐ Because my friends go here

☐ Because it's cool

☐ To do my homework

☐ Because my parents make me

5. If you chose "For the Xbox" in question 4, do you/your parents own a video gaming system?

☐ Yes

☐ No

6. What is your favorite regular program this library offers?

☐ T.A.B.

☐ Parties

☐ Teen Café

☐ Craft/Work related programs

☐ Movie Nights

☐ Other: _____

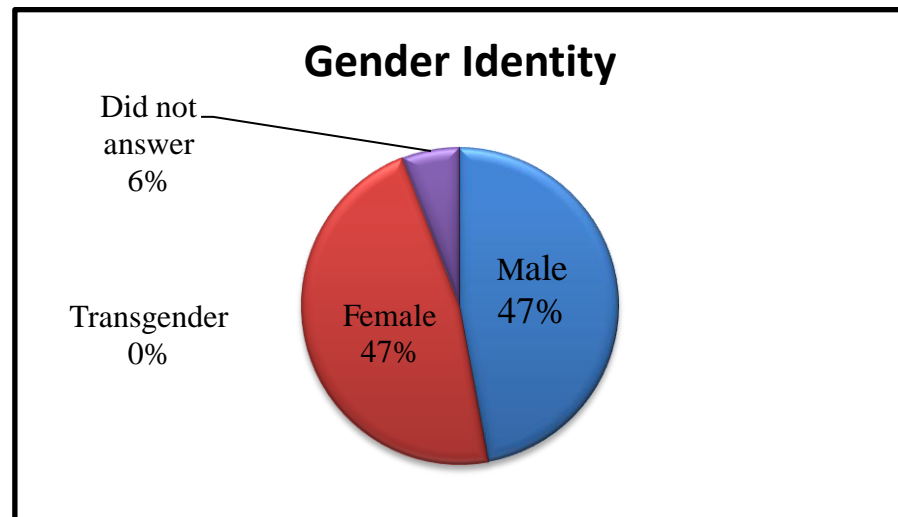
If you have any comments or remarks, please write them on the back of this sheet before giving it to Bryan.

Thanks! You can now have a piece of candy!

Survey Results with Graphs

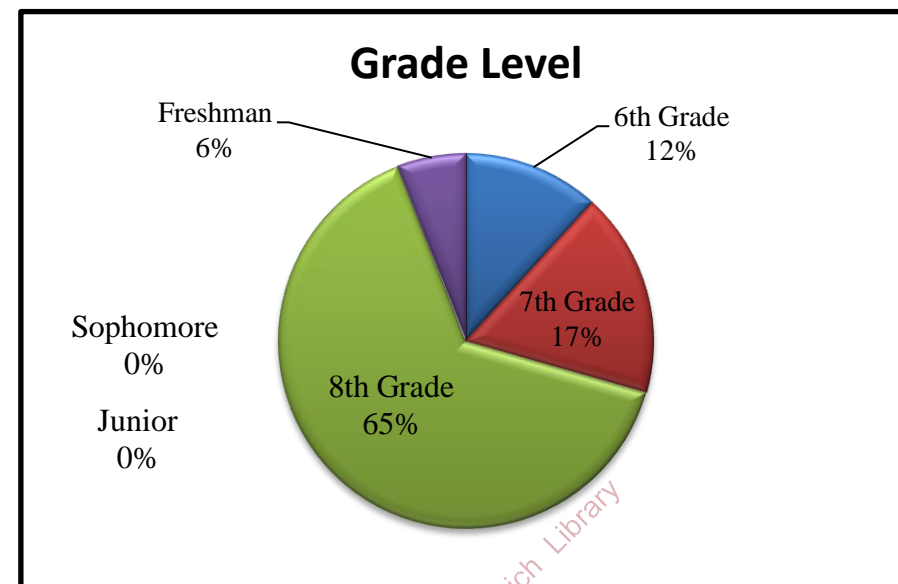
Question 1

Gender Identity	
Male	8
Female	8
Transgender	0
Did not answer	1
Total	17



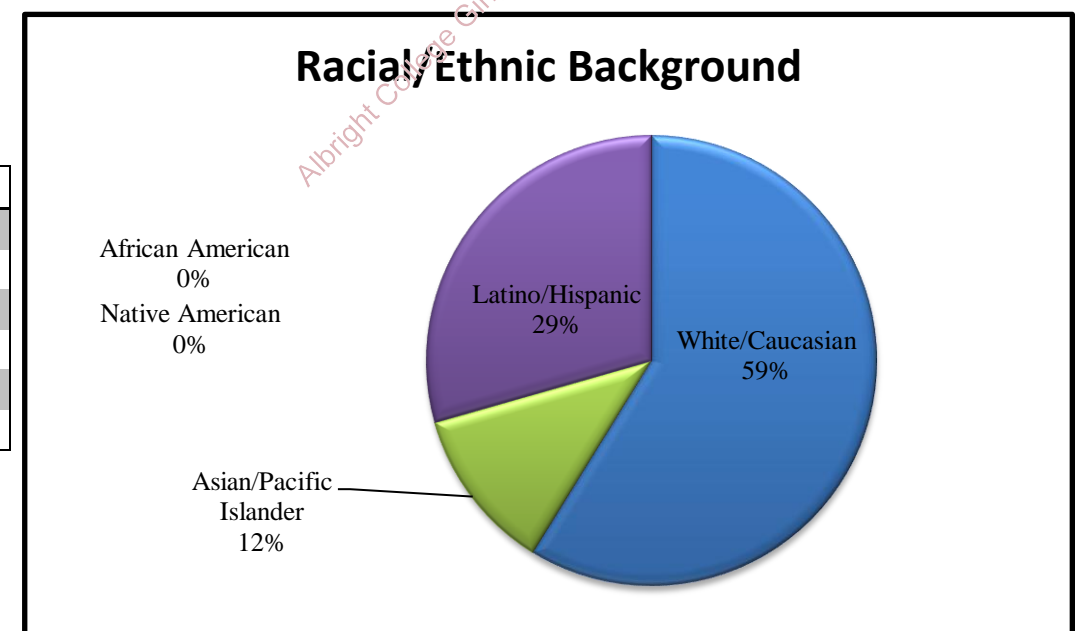
Question 2

Grade Level	
6th Grade	2
7th Grade	3
8th Grade	11
Freshman	1
Sophomore	0
Junior	0
Total	17



Question 3

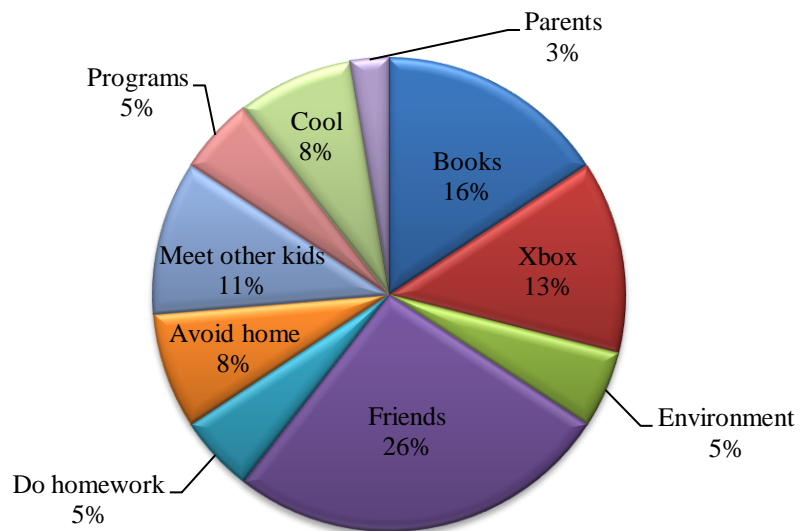
Racial/Ethnic Background	
White/Caucasian	10
African American	0
Asian/Pacific Islander	2
Latino/Hispanic	5
Native American	0
Total	17



Question 4

Reason	
Books	6
Xbox	5
Environment	2
Friends	10
Do homework	2
Avoid home	3
Meet other kids	4
Programs	2
Cool	3
Parents	1

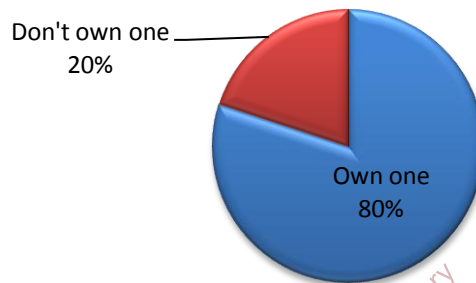
Reason for coming to the Library



Question 5

Xbox	
Own one	4
Don't own one	1

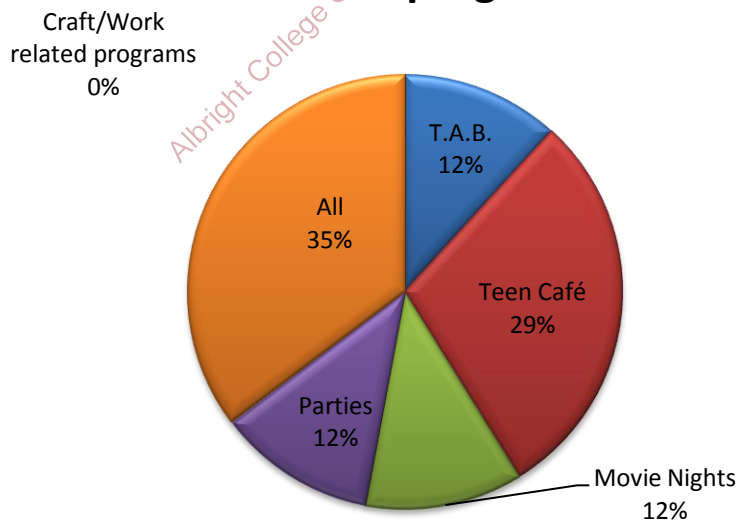
Ownership of video gaming system



Question 6

Favorite Program	
T.A.B.	2
Teen Café	5
Movie Nights	2
Parties	2
Craft/Work programs	0
All	6
Total	17

Favorite program



Analysis of Survey Results

The data from my survey of the Teens in the Muhlenberg Community Library brings me to many conclusions that I had not originally envisioned. The biggest surprise came in the lack of choices for the Xbox as the primary reason for spending time at the library and the evident important of books. 26% of Teens choosing their friends as their primary reason is not a wholly outlandish choice, but the preference of 16% for books to 13% for Xbox shows just how important Literature is to this group of individuals. IT is also important to note the racial diversity of the Teens, a result that mirrors the layout of the community as a whole. The lack of choice of a favorite and preference for all programs also shows how effective the Muhlenberg Community Library is in planning diverse and engaging programs for all types of patrons. Another interesting statistic is the fact that a combined 19% of Teens chose the “coolness” and social advantages of the library, showing that the library is indeed a great place to be among their peers.

I conducted the following interview with Maria E. G. Long, Young Adult program coordinator at the Reading Public Library, on January 7, 2014 via email in order to gain some perspective about the state of libraries in Berks County aside from the Muhlenberg Community Library.

Bryan: Name and official title.

Maria: Maria E. G. Long, Young Adult program coordinator/Librarian at the Reading Public Library.

Bryan: How have the funding cuts to Berks County libraries impacted your library?

Maria: Our hours have been cut especially the branches they have been reduced to three working days, and in 2009 there was a major employee lay-offs. We are working with reduce staffing as of this point.

Bryan: Typically speaking, how many children or teens do you see coming to your programs in a week?

Maria: It varies depending on what is happening. Typically, we see over a hundred families sometimes more in a week. We do keep track of patron participation per program and we tally patron per visiting hour. Summer time it is higher due to our annual summer Reading program. Winter time you will see a drop due to cold weather and it getting dark early.

Bryan: Does the presence of the teens assist the library as a whole (more patrons or in other ways)?

Maria: Definitely, teens are a hot topic because that is the age that where we see a drop in reading. It is amazing how many we see. So, a strong teen presence is a benefit and a

plus to keep the literacy momentum going. Successful readers turn into successful benefactors in the future. We have a lot of success stories.

Bryan: How much do you feel location plays into a libraries success? As I'm certain you know, the Muhlenberg Community Library (who I'm using as the base for my documentary) is located on the campus of the school, giving them the advantage of being very close to the children and teens in the area. How does your location negatively or positively impact your library?

Maria: Our library has four branches, and so there is one branch located in central parts of the Reading. Down town is the hub, you have a lot of the schools, churches, and businesses on Penn St. The draw back to the city is the limited parking during main business hours 8-5. The main library does have free parking available behind it, but a lot of people aren't aware of it and the space is limited as are the branch lots, and when weather gets bad you tend to get non patron vehicles illegally parking in our lot which frustrates daily users and employees.

Bryan: If given more of a budget, in what area would you attempt to improve your own library?

Maria: Health and vacation benefits for the non-city and all employees, further education for staff, security guards for the branches, and more maintenance crew for all branches.

Bryan: What do you feel draws children, teens, and adults to the library? Is it simply the conventional services we associate with libraries (books, free internet access, other media) or is it the programming and special services of your library?

Maria: I think it's a mixture of all those things. We have an exceptional staff and we have great relationships with our patrons. The kids and teens think of us as their friends and

sometimes the extra parents away from home. Some of our patrons have rough home lives and they feel safe being with us.

Bryan: What's the most important adaptation libraries must make for future success?

Maria: Staying current with all flows of technology, social trends, and resources.

Editor's Journal #1: File types are important . . .

Posted on 3/21/14

I've finally begun the editing process for my documentary! And I've already hit my first major setback.

After completing my interviews and most of my filming back in January, I've essentially been sitting on my footage and working on really pointing this project to its goal in my mind. Today, I decided to begin the actual work of editing and finalizing my project. I went to the Mac Lab, plugged in the flash drive I purchased especially for this project, and opened iMovie hoping to jump right into my work. Then I learned about .mts files.

.mts files are essentially the compact version of HD video files stored on certain types of camcorders. After copy-pasting the files from the camera directly to my flash drive (using my Windows PC), I never noticed that these files were in a strange format. When working with iMovie and Mac's in general, it turns out that these files are essentially useless as the program and computer do not recognize them whatsoever. Great. This meant I had over a half hour of essential interview footage that I could not manipulate. After about an hour of playing around with these files, I found out there was almost nothing I could do.

My workaround ended up focusing on reconverting the files to camcorder files, then re-syncing them to my profile on the Mac. I did this by recording approximately the same amount of blank footage with the camcorder. This created two types of files on the camera itself, a .mts one and another in a different folder. By deleting the existing .mtf file, I was able to rename my pre-existing files as the one I had just delete and iMovie would assume the one file was now the other! Yay!

The next problem became that I do not have enough space on my student profile for these files. One interview lasts about twenty minutes and account for roughly 15 gigs of data that I cannot allocate for on my profile.

For every victory, there's always a loss of some kind it seems. I now consider myself behind on this project, but I'm hoping to be able to work with the files on my PC.

Lesson: file types are important and you should always pay attention to how you save and import things.

Editor's Journal #2: Conversions and Conventions

Posted on 3/30/14

A bullet dodged, and a few others that I'm now more fully aware of highlight my second editing experience.

After posting that lengthy tirade on my apparent incompetency with file types and camcorders, I am happy to announce that I was able to successfully convert all of my improper files to usable ones and I have begun the true editing process for my project. The picture of the cnet logo above is simply there since that website became my saving grace (and I was able to avoid downloading any malicious malware or anything else that typically accompanies their downloads). After roughly 2 and a half hours, all interview files were converted to working files and I am now almost finished with the editing of the interview sections of the documentary. Below is a screenshot of my progress thus far, with a total of roughly 15 minutes of edited interview footage.

This footage will be greatly reduced in the finished project and I am almost finished drafting the portions that I will be speaking (to be recorded later today using a ZOOM Handy Recorded H4n).

One thing I've found throughout this process is how one should conduct an interview for a documentary. It is most important to allow your interviewee to speak, and I have found myself having to lose some footage because I was speaking over or during important bits of dialogue. The interviewee should feel natural speaking with you about the subject, but you should by no means try and simulate a normal conversation (especially if you speak extremely loudly like I do). It's this sort of convention that will ultimately separate my documentary from one of a higher caliber. I'm content with what I do have and there's a lot to work with, but it is important

to note that it would be easier/better if I had tried to talk less or considered recording audio in a different manner.

Albright College Gingrich Library

Rough Script

Narrator: In her 1988 article for the Los Angeles Times, Carol Aronoff, former Director of the Santa Monica Public Library and former President of the California Library Association asks, “Are Public Libraries facing extinction?”

To quickly answer this question, one need only look to the Pew Research Center’s recent survey results, which yield that “90% of Americans ages 16 and older said that the closing of their local public library would have an impact on their community.”

With these two statements in mind, I have set out to determine what it is that makes libraries so enduring in this day and age, and I think a few of my newly acquired friends may have the answer.

Weird? Yeah, that makes sense.

In a county plagued by budget cuts and lack of funding, the Muhlenberg Community Library is unique for its innovative programming and ideal location. Located within walking distance from the area elementary school, the library has the advantage of bringing in students as they leave the school, and Deanne works to tailor her programming to the library’s advantage.

Such an ideal location needs to be aided by creative programming, and Deanne tries her best to cater to her audience.

In a survey I conducted with the Teens, I was shocked to find out that the Xbox is not the number one reason they go to Teen Café. Most said they come to the Library to be with their friends and, surprisingly enough, more Teens chose books over the Xbox as their reason for coming.

One of the most creative programs Deanne employs is one she designed herself called Monster Quest. The game is based on the popular Munchkin card game series and essentially challenges the Teens to read in order to level up a character they design in order to fight monsters. I’ll let Dominic explain it in his own words.

In total, the Teens ended up reading 164 books in just a few months, showing just how effective this game really was. It’s these sorts of programs that encourage avid readers to continue doing so, but Deanne has also told me how many non-readers have become converts.

With a heightened reading level, Teens also end up influencing their lives in more ways than simply becoming more bookish.

Along with the more leisure based programming, Deanne also makes sure to prepare the Teens for the real-world that they are rapidly approaching with programs geared toward career development and skill-building.

Not only does the library provide the Teens exposure to careers and skills that they may find useful in the future, but Deanne has also set up the Teen Library so that the Teens are the ones running the show.

It's not simply that the Teens create their own rules; it's that they follow them and expect them to be followed by their peers. They are simple, modest, and empowering in ways they may not find elsewhere.

And this isn't just me thinking or saying this. The Teens themselves really do enjoy it here.

With all of these natural advantages and creative leadership, the library has seen results.

To conclude, I'll jump back to my original sources. Carol Aronoff's article is obviously dated, but its central question is one that is still often being asked. Aronoff explains how the growing ethnic diversity lends itself to a lack of library use, and eventually goes on to say that "closer coordination between the library's adult and children's services would be one way to introduce minority adults to library use." What better way to coordinate adult and children's services by splitting the middle and working to create Teen leaders that will eventually move on to become community leaders and lifetime library users?

As previously stated, "90% of Americans ages 16 and older said that the closing of their local public library would have an impact on their community," but I can honestly say that 100% of these Teens, all of whom are aged under 16, would be devastated if their Public Library were to fall to extinction.

By following the Muhlenberg Community Library's model, Public Libraries would be better equipped to serve Teens and would therefore be more equipped to become a community center and remain the valuable resource it already is.

So, it may be "weird" that Teens are the driving force behind this amazing library, and they themselves may be weird for any number of reasons, but that weirdness is what makes them unique and it's what makes them important. When they thank the library for weirdness, they are thanking the library for acceptance and empowerment.

And in the spirit of that weirdness, and because I would be remiss and open to scorn from my new friends at the library if I didn't, I share with you this clip of myself, Maria, and Bieber eating the cupcakes we made back in November. I thank them for their weirdness and for allowing me to be a part of it.

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