

TO: ALA Executive Board

RE: Third quarter 2009 Media Relations Activities Report

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:

Information Item – No Action Required

ACTION REQUESTED BY:

Cathleen Bourdon, Associate Executive Director, Communications and Member Relations

CONTACT PERSONS:

Mark Gould, Director, Public Information Office, 312-280-5042,
mgould@ala.org

Macey Morales, Media Relations Manager, 312-280-4393, mmorales@ala.org;

DRAFT OF MOTION:

NA

DATE: September 29, 2009

BACKGROUND:

Media relations activities for the past quarter (Mid June - September) have focused in several areas:

- ALA Annual Conference
- Library Card Sign-up Month
- Banned Books Week
- Library use during economic recession

Since our last report to the Executive Board, the American Library Association's (ALA) media analysis service of online news scans found more than 3,000 articles that mentioned ALA, representing a circulation of more than 565 billion with a publicity value of more than \$9.7 million.

According to the Newspaper Association of America, there are more than 1,400 daily newspapers and 6,700 weekly newspapers in the United States, so the following list of placements should be viewed as a snapshot of coverage achieved by the ALA.

Summary

During the third quarter, Chicago proved to be a solid market for the American Library Association's (ALA) Annual Meeting, July 9 – 15, McCormick Place West. The ALA's Public Information Office (PIO) secured multiple placements with local print, radio and television media. Interview topics ranged from conference programs to the value of libraries and librarians and the surge in library use during tough economic times.

More than 115 reporters and producers were onsite, including C-SPAN, WGN-TV, CBS Sunday Morning News, HARPO Radio, Chicago Public Radio (NPR Affiliate), *Pioneer Press* and many other library and education trade press.



Coverage began with an op-ed piece entitled “In Web age, libraries more important than ever” that appeared in the *Chicago Sun-Times*. The op-ed was drafted by the PIO on behalf of ALA President Jim Rettig and Chicago Public Library Commissioner Mary Dempsey. The piece focused on the resources available in libraries that can help patrons cope with the downturn in the economy. It also mentioned the ALA Annual Conference and Chicago Public Library programs and resources.

PIO also secured multiple live in studio interviews. WGN Radio's “Noon Show with Bob Sirott,” featured ALA President Jim Rettig and host Steve Bertrand who discussed the value of libraries and conference programs; WGN Radio's “The Nick Digilio Show,” included a lengthy Saturday segment with ALA

President Elect Camila Alire that focused on the value of libraries. On Friday, WLS TV (ABC 7) midday newscast featured author and library advocate Sharon Robinson, who discussed the ALA's Public Programs Office exhibit “Pride and Passion: The African American Baseball Experience.”

ALA spokespersons also participated in several other radio phone interviews. Deidre Ross of ALA Conference Services spoke with Pittsburgh NPR affiliate WDUQ-FM regarding the Library Book Cart Drill Team Championship; and Jim Rettig was interviewed about the conference by WBBM News Radio 780, one of the city's top rated outlets and WBBM-FM.



CLTV, the 24-hour cable news station that reaches 1.5 million households, shadowed “Libraries Build Communities” volunteers as they planted a new garden for the Academy for Global Citizenship School. Jim Rettig and volunteers talked with the news crew about the value of libraries and how librarians and staff make a difference in the communities that they serve. The piece aired throughout the weekend on CLTV.

PIO also worked with ALA leadership and EMIERT to respond to inquiries regarding the cancellation of Perspectives on Islam: Beyond the Stereotyping panel that was scheduled on Sunday. *The Washington Times*, Chicago Public Radio, and a few other media inquired about the matter.

This quarter, hundreds of libraries celebrated Library Card Sign-up Month. Held annually each September, Library Card Sign-up Month is a time when the ALA and libraries across the country remind parents that a library card is the most important school supply of all.

Two-thirds of Americans have library cards. Get yours today! September is Library Card Sign-up Month



Hundreds of libraries throughout the country held special programs and events to encourage communities to take advantage of many free resources libraries offer.

This year Olympic gold medalist and 2008 WNBA Rookie of the Year Candace Parker served as Honorary Chair of Library Card Sign-up Month.

Parker was featured in a print public service announcement (PSA) campaign that promoted the value of libraries. The PSA highlighted the resources libraries offer, delivering the message that they are available for free with a library card.



The Campaign for America's Libraries secured placements with *AARP*, *Sports Illustrated* and *Family Fun*. Parker's audio PSAs aired via Westwood One and were shared and aired with hundreds of CBS radio affiliates.

The third edition of the Public Library Funding and Technology study was released on Sept. 15. The study provided valuable data on the use of technology in public libraries. PIO worked closely with ALA's Office for Research and Statistics and secured placement with NPR Web, *USA Today*, American Public Media and a variety of library trade and governing publications.



This year marked the 28th anniversary of Banned Books Week, which took place Sept. 26 – Oct. 3. A special 'Read Out' event in Chicago kicked off the week with 'banned' authors reading from their recently challenged or banned books on September 26. Chris Crutcher, author of *Athletic Shorts* served as the event's emcee.

Participating best-selling authors included Cecily von Ziegesar, *Gossip Girls* series; Sarah Brannen, *Uncle Bobby's Wedding*; Stephen Chbosky, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*; Lauren Myracle, *TTYL*; and Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell, authors of *And Tango Makes Three*, the most challenged book of 2008. The event received coverage from WBEZ (NPR Affiliate) and WBBM (CBS) Radio.



National Banned Books Week coverage included PBS NOW, *Huffington Post*, *Seattle Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, *New York Times* and more than 600 other mentions in the media. Banned Books Week did generate a few negative articles, including a *Wall Street Journal* opinion piece entitled, “Finding Censorship Where There Is None.” The article claimed that there isn’t a need for Banned Books Week since librarians self-censor. Many conservative groups used the observance as an opportunity to encourage the public to donate anti-gay and anti-abortion materials to public libraries.

Throughout the quarter the surge in library use during the economic downturn continued to generate coverage and tended to focus more on how libraries are assisting job seekers. Library funding cuts also continued to make headlines.

Findings at a glance:

	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Total Clips	2,855	163	14
Total Circulation	486,409,566	78,680,502	610,584
Total Impressions	1,216,023,915	196,701,255	1,526,460
Publicity Value	\$7,955,276	\$1,750,350	\$1,796

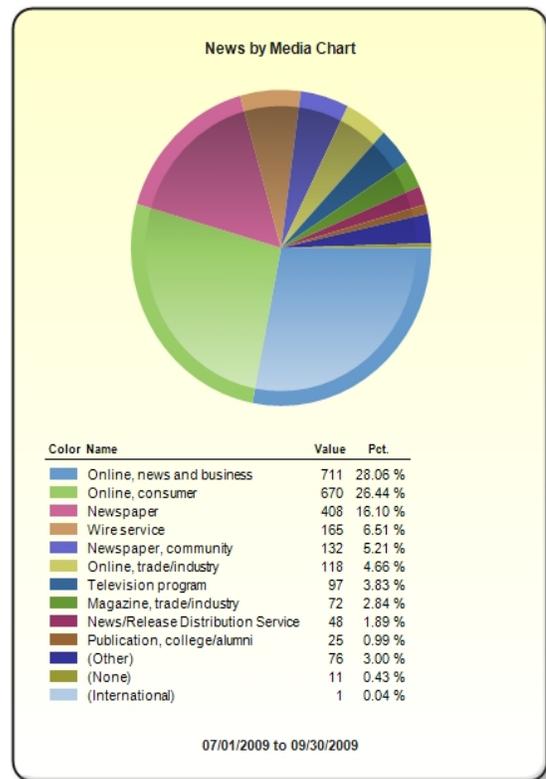
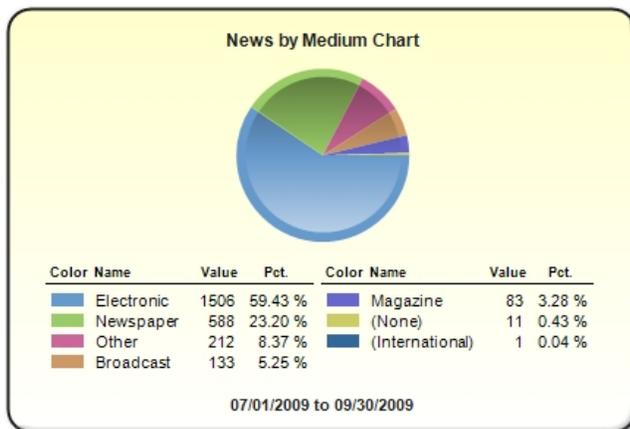
Total Clips: 3,032

Total Circulation: 565,700,652

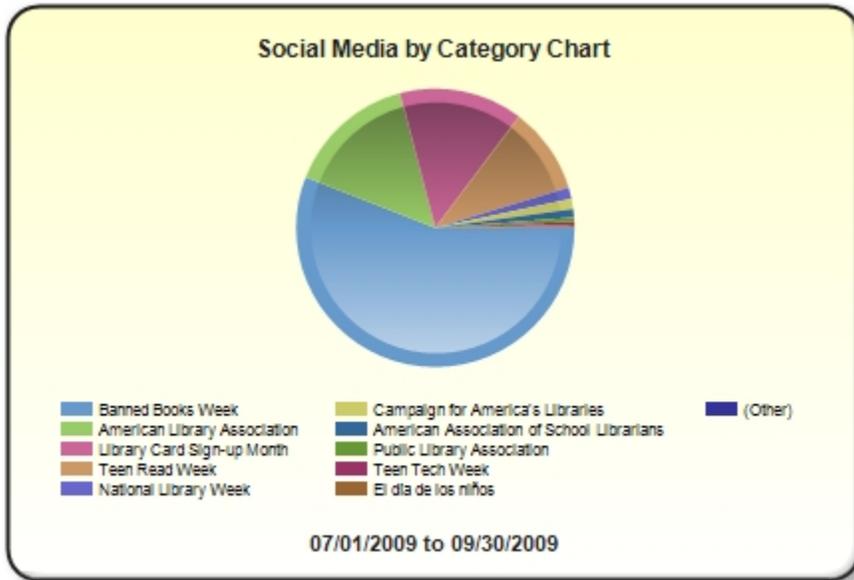
Total Impressions: 1,414,251,630

(* Impression rate is factored by multiplying the circulation by a pass-along rate of 2.5 - the estimated number of people who see each article.)

Total Publicity Value: \$9,707,422

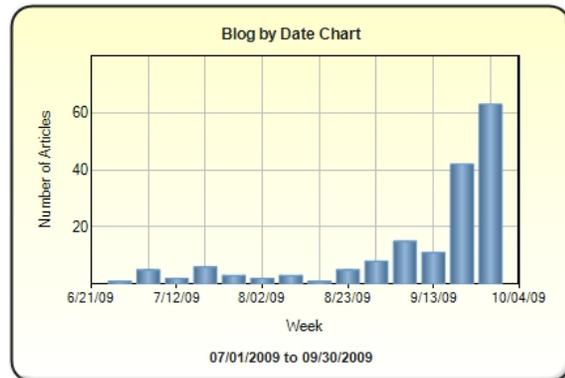
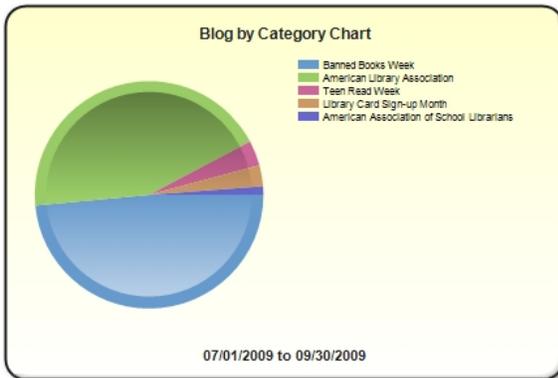


Social Media Impact:



The majority of social media coverage received in the third quarter focused on Banned Books Week followed by the American Library Association and Library Card Sign-up Month.

Blogs



Most Blog coverage from the third quarter focused on Banned Books Week, followed by mentions of the ALA and Teen Read Week. Most Blog activity took place during Banned Books Week (Sept. 26 – Oct. 3).

###