

Virtual Snacks with Council – Audio transcript

[Please standby for realtime captions]

Hello everyone, welcome to snacks with counsel, civic engagement literacy opportunities in your communities. Before I get started, I have some housekeeping reminders. Please use the chat box for questions, comments, and technical issues. We will be keeping track of all the questions and make sure that they are addressed by the end of the presentation. Also, we are recording the conference and all registrants will receive a link to it after the event. I will hand it over to Aimee Quinn to start the session.

Aimee ?

I am here.

Okay, first of all, thank you everybody for joining us this morning for snacks with counsel. I am so sorry that we don't actually have snacks, we will just have to pretend. Thank you very much for joining us. Aimee and I talked about it and just decided to go with the slides, the questions that we have got there on the screen. I will just to read them and give you a general impression of some ideas that I had, I would love to hear from people that are attending, maybe you have some experiences that we can all learn from. What kind of activities are you aware of in your community that gets young people involved with government information. Aimee comedy want to introduce yourself ?

Sure, I am Aimee Quinn. I am in between positions right now, taking the summer off. My contract ended at Central Washington University in Ellensburg. Most people know me as one of the moderators, I have been involved in depository library since 1984, I have worked all over the country.

Thank you. So, one of the things that came to mind when I ask this question, of a lot of people don't know about or are aware of, a program called we the people. Every state has a state organization of we the people. They have local competitions in the state competition where high school students debate issues about the Constitution and civil rights and it gets into a lot of really interesting issues. I volunteered and have been a judge for our state competition now for about 15 years and found it extremely rewarding. It has been a wonderful opportunity to connect to high school teachers. Work with them and get ideas from them and offer my services to help the students learn about the structure for government and the sources of government.

Let me add my two bits here. We the people is the center for civic education just to add that . I have worked with them off and on, and I work also mostly with this civic renewal network . I mention this in my presentation yesterday where you can get information as well as the Constitution Center. I teach civic engagement as a class. I have taught at Central Washington University. I also taught in libraries, this is to help future librarians understand how important civic engagement is and how important it is in libraries. To answer the first question, what I think gets young people involved, in Ellensburg, there were several issues that really got young people, I am talking from elementary school all the way up to our students at BW you. There are several ice raids against immigrants, that got a lot of people really riled up in polluting the faculty. I.C.E. raids. They wanted to understand what was going on around that. Because I got here in 2015. There are a lot of issues. There are issues around tuition, that got the college

students really involved in wanting to know more. Why was tuition just going skyrocket. Think of what your community is really involved in and what the history of your community, and they wanted government information about that. We have had a plethora of interest this last five, six years of what is going on because of what is happening in society. Sometimes when society seems to be more stable, there are other issues, there's always stuff with climate change, there is always stuff going on in the social world. This morning on the news, there was a sword that was found a part of the crusade and in my email, there was a question about that. And what kind of government information is there about the accuracy of that story. It is just like oh, well, I don't know, let me just research on this. That was from a student . So, please put in the chat, what your thoughts are about getting involved.

One thing that is sort of a pet peeve of mine and has been for years, I think schools are pretty good at teaching students about government, they all have civics classes and U.S. government or U.S. history classes, the one thing that they fail to teach or it is often overlooked is where to find the documents of the government. They will talk about how something comes to law, but they forget the part, if you want to look at a bill or if you want to look at a public law, where can you go to find it? I have always been looking for opportunities to get involved in undergraduate or in high school programs where we can teach about how to find law. There is a comment from Katie, involved in national history Day , contest or for grades 6 through 12. They need primary documents. Debate and diplomacy was really details into government documents. That is really interesting. I have not heard of national history Day or a contest like that. That is something that sounds really interesting.

Cindy put in that GPO is a civics renewal network contributing partner.

What is civics renewal network? Do you know?

Yeah, they are partners they have less than plans Cindy put in the link. It is a really good resource.

I'm just looking to the page now.

Sarah says participating in Constitution Day. Absolutely.

One of the things that we can get from the GPO is the pocket constitutions to give away, it is really useful to give students a pocket constitution that they can read.

Cindy also puts in that nonprofit organizations are strengthening to civics by increasing the quality of education in our nation and by improving accessibility to high quality no-cost learning materials. On the civic renewal network net side, network site, teachers can find the best resources of these organizations, searchable by subject, grade, resource type, standards and teaching strategy. Well that sounds better than what I just said in a few words. Thank you, Cindy for putting that in there. It is a fabulous site. Kathy has added the link for national history Day. I have been a judge for I forget how many years both region in Washington state, I think that is a fabulous thing to participate in. We also offer voting and elections workshops where we talk about being a poll worker and getting involved in campaigns among all the other info related to voting elections. Alicia, do you work with the legal women voters? That would be interesting. Marina adds, is civics stills taught as a class or just as a subject under history middle school these days?

That is a great question. I know in Washington state they passed a law that requires civics being included. I was a junior in high school I believe. I think it is as a junior, it might be is a senior in the social studies course. Do you want to read some of these, Rich?

I have somehow got disconnected from the visual, can you still hear me?

Yes, we can see you, I mean here you.

That is interesting. My WebEx just went out. I am connected audio via the phone. I can't see the questions. I'll try to reconnect.

Sarah says, I often get pulled in to teach the kids about the pipeline program. They have to do a project on the civil rights topic in the library show some government information as well as our library databases. I like to show them the I stats and census stats as well. And she gives a link to the Cleveland police foundation summer pipeline program. I want to make sure I am not missing anybody. That is in Cleveland. That is fabulous. Patricia rights, for Earth Day, our campus Jose community tabling event. We highlight government photos and sources in our exhibit and brochure. Katie says before COVID, our division, the Alaska -- programs they have for kids. Fabulous. Robbie says UMT works with our league on voter education and registration events. Alicia says yes, we do work with the League of Women Voters as well as other groups on campus including student groups. Wonderful. Kathy Hale says we also have a maker use materials from NASA and CDC. Well, that is exciting. And Andrea says, we do the same as Alicia, we have a library table at the welcome back our fast for students in the quad. We partnership with our County Board of elections during Constitution Day events to help register new voters and share voting information. We didn't do this, we didn't this year, but we also normally have a two day library Expo in September. These are all such great ideas. Thank you so much for sharing.

These are really excellent excellent ideas. There are a lot of opportunities that we can take advantage of. Yes, Marina rights, glad to hear that Washington made it official for the state curriculum requirements. We really need to have more states take this step too because it really needs to be taught young students to be engaged. Yeah, knowledgeable government documents. Absolutely. Our government is passionate about civic engagement. He pushed that through as a legislator, he worked very close to make that happen in Washington state . Do we want to go to the next question?

Yes I think so. I'm having to restart my computer. My Internet connection is totally messed up.

How can libraries participate in teaching about government and our legal system?

County library also helps students doing research for their national history Day projects. We aren't able to host large in-person events this year due to the pandemic but will be helping smaller class visits. That is from and draft. I can't say your last name. So, how can libraries participate in teaching about government, I think libraries are critical to teaching about government not only through government documents, but also because typically we know so much about not just because the government depository information but many of us are also for political science or for law, or for criminology or for some other area around the government.

If I can jump in here to help answer that, one of the things that is interesting about what we do with the government, when it comes down to it, whether it is traditional laws or the laws that are passed by Congress or, the executive branch, their all ideas, they are just invisible as laws. Until they are captured

and written down need to be as them but they don't actually exist anywhere physically until we publish them. The role that libraries and suppository libraries play in teaching people about the government is really essential. We help people identify our sources of the law, the foot prints if you will or the fingerprints of government, that is not always easy to figure out. I hope that made sense.

It made sense to me. Thank you. I know that wall librarians, and you can correct me here, rich, frequently teach the research, legal research courses. He used to teach that.

We teach first-year students , legal research as well as, I teach an upper divisional elect which is advanced research as well. It is a lot of fun. I start out my class by telling the students that legal research is a lot like hunting Bigfoot. We are looking for evidence of what the laws are that is what we are studying.

That is fun. Sarah says, one my favorite things to do is pull the books. Let the kids see the big cases and legislation they are researching. When they hold a Supreme Court reported that says Brown versus Board of Education in their hands, it makes an impact. The same with the U.S. code and title IX. I think it helps them to see just how meaningful these parts of our history are and not just phrases we hear all the time. How true.

Legislative history is one of the funnest part of advanced legal research. I am a fan of the Federal Register.

That is quite challenging. I think we are ready for the next slide. Thank you so, this can be taken as one big question to think about. What kind of civic engagement literacy efforts have you tried in your library. What worked and didn't work, and what would you like to try? Chris Brown, I knew you would have something to say, Chris. I have been asked more than ever to teach regular history, yeah. Yeah. I have failed at many civic engagement literacy efforts. I was asked once to see if I could teach how to teach future teachers. To teach for immigrant everything they need using the civic flashcards so how to teach the flashcards. I said well, I don't know how to make a course out of teaching the flashcards. You just to use them, the flashcards. I couldn't come up with a lesson plan on how to teach the flashcards. I would love it if anybody here knows how to make a lesson plan. They wanted just the flashcards. They wanted to give you 60 minutes just on that. That was a failure. I don't know how to teach that. I can show them the flashcards in both English and Spanish, but I did not know how to teach someone. That is a great idea.

I don't think you can see me, but you can still hear me, can't you?

Fabulous.

Does anybody have any ideas and things that they would like to try? Do they have ideas that they would work out? All right. What was the electoral college? That makes me think of election, there was a lot of interests these days in election law. They are not very clear. That would be something that would be really good. Subject to peak people's interest. This is funny, Kathy Hill has just put in that they've would like to do a human library this is something we have been tossing around here at the University of Nebraska as well.

That is a great question. I don't know the answer to that. I think you would have to ask your high school counselor.

The human library, people are just designated as specialists and it can be applied in a lot of different situations. We have talked about a human library here at the University of Nebraska to. We have been talking about groups and people would agree to be a book on that particular, their either ethnicity, race, religion, something like that. It would be open to being a resource where people come and ask questions. I think in this context, you could have people who would be specialists in either administrative law or legislative law. Things like that. I see that we are, how is our timing?

We have about -- I don't know.

You are good on time, you have until 12:50.

I don't know what a human library Murray that. Anyway. Let's see, to finish but Sarah said about the electoral college, she also wrote, how can the president get elected without winning the popular vote? I think that is a big question. We use comic book style presentation but to second graders want us to have a full-blown lesson. I would say that goes for any grade. Including all through college. I was a human book in many human library sessions. It was a very neat thing. Sometime I want to organize one in my library, maybe during our national library week. That is on your to do list, that is fabulous. I think this is a fabulous idea. Would you do a human book about a specific topic quick the ones I see that you set up a time for people to be available so that the patrons could talk about their topic.

That is a very interesting idea.

Such great ideas here.

I have always looked for opportunities to talk to local high schools or any kind of schools to try to get in there and just do a one session about the sources documents. I like the ideas, talking about the electoral college or even the election law or, immigration is a good topic to run students through the sources for looking up the actual documents for government policies. Can be really useful. It is helpful for the students but it also gets the students to understand where they can go to look up what they read about in the newspapers. A lot of times when people come to the wall library looking for documents they have read about or heard about on the news, they are always surprised when they look different than what they have expected. News sources tend to summarize and give you a different impression. That is a good way of getting the students involved and engaged in government.

Cindy writes, human library is one of the options in the 2021 survey questions. My library is actively working to increase diversity, equity and inclusion through -- select all that apply.

That is the context that the human library has come up. The context.

Has anyone ever had, another thing that I thought might be useful would be to reach out to private organizations, youth organizations, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, a lot of times there are badges on civic responsibility and things like that that you can reach out and do presentations for constitution day or for any of these other things. Explained to the students where they can look up the laws, the actual laws that are being talked about in the media. They might be good opportunities .

That was on my to do list but I never had the chance to do that.

When my daughters were in Girl Scout, they did that a couple of times. I have to say I haven't done it since the Girl Scouts. It is possible. One of the things I think that libraries, part of our responsibility to get out is the government publishing office in the depository library program are two of the part of the federal government that were better than almost any other parts of the government. They work like clock work getting the information and the resources out. It kind of stems back to our government's presumption of an informed citizenry. I think it is a neat system that we have come up with to get the information into the hands of a citizen. That is why I keep looking for opportunities like that. And I see Andrea mentioned Boy Scouts has three merit badges that would work. She is a merit badge counselor for her troop, they have used government document resources with their scouts.

Does anybody have anything else? These are all of our questions, does anybody else have any questions? About civic engagement literacy or anything else they would like us to talk about?

This is the time where perhaps the virtual meetings make it difficult.

Halloween is coming. The CDC zombie comic, yes.

They have a zombie comic, really?

Yes they do, it's fabulous.

Okay, for the best civic engagement document of all time , what would you choose?

That is a hard one, will.

The Federal Register and the CFR is one of my favorite things to talk about. Because, it is so expensive and it involves so much of the government and there is so much information. The Federal Register is one of those documents that gives citizens probably the most direct opportunity to participate in government. These every proposed regulation in every fine regulation. They always have the bureaucrat that is responsible for the proposed roll. I have done this several times in my career, but when we needed more information, you can call those that are listed, they answer the phone. You can give them your ideas and feedback on proposed regulations. It is a really excellent way of participating. The other people have got a lot of good ideas. Congressional debates.

Yeah. Suzanne picked my favorite one probably. There are a couple of other good ones. She also put out the zombie comic URL for it. Robbie put down the pocket constitution. I pushed a lot of the Native American youth and adult books that came out. They came out in the early 2000's to show what we have. It is a whole series of young adult books. What are the books called? Each one has an individual title. I will have to look them up. I will email them to you. I can put them out.

That is new about the cutting off of the ears. Did that actually occur in the debate?

Yes. Oh, if you have not read the early debate, it is something to read. One of my all-time favorites is when John, this is later, this is not the early Congress because this is around -- he was so mad, I can't believe who he was so mad at, he always chewed tobacco, he spat upon his colleagues feet with his chewing tobacco and picked up his chair and threw it down and wanted to start a fight in the congressional chamber. It was a very intense. He was going to pull a knife as well, it is great, it is just a really interesting. Suzanne writes, we have been working on a faculty series with the focus on EDI. What

we add is dependent on the topic like immigration. Sarah says give me a minute, they are on the shelf next to me. Wonderful, thank you, Sarah. Will writes, we have our Buchanan library fellows were doing a semester project which includes creating an exhibit about presidential speech relating to civil rights. How cool is that. Suzanne writes, it was cruel and unusual punishment. Someone was arguing, what if we want to cut off ears. There is that.

I'm going to have to look that up.

Here are the titles of those books. Tricky treats, plateful of color, knees lifted high, hummingbirds? Squash which is my absolute favorite, through the eyes of the eagle, also very good. Coyote in the turtle stream. Those are some of them, there are a couple of others I believe are the ones that she has. These are really good books to pull out. There is another series of young adult literature. They came in regular and oversized. Yes. A lot of people don't realize, there is a government publication for all purposes. Laura just added, hummingbirds squash. This is what I teach in my civic engagement class, there really is a government publication for all purposes.

Are there any final questions or comments for Aimee or Rich? I will give you a few more minutes.

I want to plug this guide for weird and wonderful docs. I'm going to click on this. Okay. Well, thank you very much, Sarah for that. Wait, that was Suzanne.

While you are pushing stuff, I should push free government information. The best titles ever if you just want to look at some fun government documents. You can always add to it. Or suggest titles. Of course, James.

I love this, on the weird tab , Bigfoot. There is a U.S. forest service has a Bigfoot poster. The habitat of one of America's greatest -- may be at risk. More evidence that he is real.

Are there depository libraries that partner with high schools to share the national debate topic for high schools? Yes. I definitely partnered with the high school, we worked on the national debate topic. I'm sure others did too. Absolutely, I encourage you all to do that. It is certainly much easier in a town with one high school then it was in Chicago.

Okay everyone, we are out of time. Thank you for such a great conversation --

I was just apologizing for my technical difficulties.

No worries. Up next in this room, we have no more paper, no more books. A practical overview to a digital depository. In our other virtual meeting room, the next program is the library technical services update. If you want to join that program, you will need to close out of this virtual room first and then use the other URL to enter the other meeting room. Access URLs are found on the event page. For now, we will take a short break and pick up again at 1:00 Eastern. [The event is on a recess. The session will reconvene at 1:00 Eastern.