



## For Immediate Release

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## 'Ask a Librarian', Florida's Free Online Reference Service, Celebrates First-Year Anniversary

### August 1, 2004 – Tallahassee, FL

'Ask a Librarian', a free online reference service for Florida's 17 million citizens, celebrated its one-year anniversary on July 28. Nearly 7,500 Floridians took advantage of the service during its first year, obtaining free online reference assistance from professional librarians across the state who staff the service. Eighty public, academic and special libraries – double the original 40 libraries that began the service – currently participate in Ask a Librarian, providing individuals with live chat reference sessions Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m., and on weekends from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Individuals may also e-mail their reference questions to 'Ask a Librarian' 24 hours a day, 7 days per week.

### Librarians Helping Individuals Untangle the Web

With so much information available on the Web, who knows where to begin searching or which information is reliable? Ask a Librarian's trained professionals have those answers, helping students, seniors, members of the business community and people from all walks of life quickly and effectively untangle the Web to find the information they need.

"The greatest strengths of Ask a Librarian are its expert staff, its convenience and value," said Vince Mariner, Ask a Librarian's Statewide Coordinator. "Because it's a collaborative service comprised of libraries statewide, it represents one the largest concentrations of library reference expertise in the state. Those professionals are conveniently available to every Floridian from any computer that has an Internet connection—no matter where the computer is located or which library that person normally uses. And best of all, it's free for anyone to use."

Added Mariner, "This service extends the reach of traditional library services and makes it easier than ever before to get questions answered quickly and reliably. Our first year was a tremendous success, and with new libraries joining and word-of-mouth about the excellent customer service that Ask a Librarian provides, next year should be even brighter!"

For more information about Ask a Librarian, or to use the service, visit your local library or log on to [www.askalibrarian.org](http://www.askalibrarian.org).

**About 'Ask a Librarian**

Ask a Librarian is a collaborative project of Tallahassee's College Center for Library Automation (CCLA) and the Tampa Bay Library Consortium. Ask a Librarian began service on July 28, 2003, and in December was added as a key component of the new Florida Electronic Library. Ask a Librarian is funded by a grant from the State Library of Florida through the federal Library Services and Technology Act.

**About CCLA and TBLC**

CCLA operates the statewide Library Information Network for Community Colleges (LINCC) and associated Web-based information portal, LINCCWeb, from its headquarters in Tallahassee, Florida. As an administered program of the Florida Department of Education's Division of Community Colleges, CCLA serves 28 community colleges and 73 campus libraries in 60 cities throughout Florida. Online at: [www.ccla.lib.fl.us](http://www.ccla.lib.fl.us) and [www.linccweb.org](http://www.linccweb.org).

TBLC is a nonprofit multi-type library cooperative comprising 93 member libraries serving twelve west central Florida counties. TBLC member libraries include 6 community colleges, 3 State University System libraries, 25 private academic colleges and universities, 4 public school systems, 41 public and 14 special libraries. TBLC's Anywhere—Anytime virtual library includes Alleycat, a virtual union catalog with interlibrary loan management capabilities serving 43 libraries through 103 outlets in southwest, west and central Florida. Online at: <http://www.anywhereanytimelibrary.org/>.