

The Alexandria Newsletter

GROWTH • TIPS • PROMOS • ANNOUNCEMENTS • MORE

MONTHLY

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

It's hard to believe that summer is over. Welcome back and may this year be the best yet!



Alexandria version 5.5.3 was released in June and I believe that you will find that it includes some wonderful features for you and your patrons. For instance, the Homeroom window has been refined to show both the teacher list and the student list. Tracking student reading skills using Lexile levels is becoming more widely used and we have added some Lexile functionality to the basic Alexandria software. We have also expanded the capabilities of our Lexile module to allow tracking of Lexile scores for multiple years and the ability to print a graph of the student's Lexile scores.

If you are able to obtain your local library's z39.50 information, you are able to flag titles in your library collection that are also available at the public library. Also, now it is possible to add See and See Also references to your item records and this should be a great help to your patrons.

Have a good year!
Bill Schjelderup ∞

KAAREN'S CORNER

BY KAAREN LINTON
LIBRARIAN/ALEXANDRIA TRAINER

BEGINNING OF THE YEAR PROCEDURES

The beginning of the school year is a hectic time, isn't it? Among the hundreds of things demanding your attention at the beginning of school, it is important to remember that there are some things that you will want to do to have Alexandria ready for the new school year. While some of these tasks could have been done at the same time as the end-of-year procedures, many are best done right before the students return.

1) **Use a new set of disks or tapes for backup.** – Store your last year's end-of-year backup in a safe place, preferably somewhere other than your library such as the district office or at home, and start with a fresh set for this year.

2) **Back up your data every day you use Alexandria.** – Make sure to have multiple sets of disks to rotate backups. **DO NOT** use the same set of disks each time you back up. Store at least one backup off-site in case of fire, theft, etc. Know how to restore from your backup and **TEST IT** from time to time.

3) **Promote students and remove graduated students.** – Alexandria will calculate a grade based on a graduation year or grade depending upon the version that you are using. This calculation is based on the date in your preferences. If you are on 5.5.2 or higher, Alexandria has an Advance Grade. When using this button, **ONLY CLICK ONCE**. Clicking twice will advance the students two grades, so be warned! Students who have advanced beyond the grade levels of your school or district will have Graduated in the grade field. These patrons can be removed using the Remove Patrons utility.

4) **Update, add, or import patron records.** – The most time-efficient method to update patron records is to download a tab-delimited file of patron information obtained from your student information system and that will overlay the new information for students in your Alexandria database and add the new students. If such a file is not available, then you will need to update and/or add the patron records manually. **NOTE:** Patrons with outstanding fines, loans or overdue books will not be deleted from your system when you delete graduated or outdated patrons unless you select Always Remove when you run the utility.

5) **Review patron policies.** – If you have a different patron policy for each grade level, you will need to move each grade to its new policy. This is easily done using Patron Utilities, but remember to work from the highest grade level and work down to the lowest grade level.

6) **Change patron location.** – You will want to change the homeroom for current students. Hopefully, you will be able to have this as one of the fields included in the patron download file, but, if not, you can easily accomplish this task using Patron Utilities or the NC command.

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7) **Update expired patron cards or change everyone's expiration dates.** – NOTE: With 5.5.3, you may choose to disable expiration dates and never have to deal with them again!

8) **Print patron lists for use at the Circulation Desk, if you desire.** – For an elementary school using the Barcode Labels report under Patron Reports and Sort by Homeroom with page breaks between sorts.

9) **Update item records.** – Review your lost and discarded items. Delete any records you want to delete; however, you should make a hard copy report of these items for reordering purposes, file keeping and reports before you delete them.

10) **Subscriptions, Orders and Budgets.** – If you are using the Subscriptions, Orders, and Budgets modules, you want to make sure all of your magazine subscription dates are appropriate for the coming year in the Subscriptions module, review individual orders in the Orders module for outstanding materials and reconcile them if possible, and, if your fiscal year runs summer to summer, you should reset your budgets in your Budgets module.

11) **Update calendar** to show closed days and Period Due Date(s) for the new year. ∞

ALEXANDRIA ANSWERS

WE ARE A SCHOOL LIBRARY AND WE DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO RENEW PATRON CARDS EVERY YEAR. WHAT CAN WE DO?

Alexandria now has a way to disable the expiration dates.

- On the menu bar, click on **Edit** and select **Preferences**.
- From the first drop-down menu in the upper-left corner, select **Patron Management**.
- Select **Global** from the second drop-down menu in the upper-left corner, the **Local/Default Local/Global** drop-down menu, of the **Preferences** window.
- On the **Patron Management** tab, check the **Disable Expiration Dates** check box.
- Click on **Save** in the upper-right corner of the **Preferences** window.

IS THERE ANY WAY TO SIMPLIFY CHECKOUT IN AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SETTING?

Yes, there are ways to simplify the process in an elementary school.

First, Alexandria has a **Homeroom Selection** window which has been improved in version 5.5.3. This method works best if Alexandria is not used in the full-screen mode since you will need to see two windows at the same time.

- In the upper-right corner of the **Circulation** window is a "house" icon. Click on this icon to open the **Homeroom Selection** window.
- There are two panes on this window. From the list of homerooms in the left pane, click on the desired homeroom.
- Double click on the desired patron in the list in the pane on the right to make that student the **Current Patron**.
- To go to the next patron, go back to the student list on the **Homeroom Selection** window and double-click on the name of the patron.

The second method utilizes the **Patron Barcode Labels** report. You will be printing these reports one at a time for each homeroom instead of all at once, but the benefits of taking the extra time will be evident.

- On the menu bar, click on **Reports**, then click on **Patron Reports** on the drop-down menu.
- Set each drop-down menu on the green **Patron Reports** window.
- Enter your first homeroom name in the **Starting With** and **Ending With** fields. Click on **Print**.
- When the **Custom Text** window appears, in uppercase, type the homeroom name (or teacher's name) in the field provided and press <enter>.
- Repeat the process by changing the **Starting With** and **Ending With** fields to the next desired homeroom and continue the process.
- Take the reports generated, put in plastic protector pages and keep them in a notebook. When a class comes in, turn to the page of barcodes for that class and simply scan the patron barcodes as needed. If a new student is added to a class, just reprint the barcode page for that class. ∞