

american libraries

March/April 2018

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

IN A VIRTUAL WORLD

p. 26

NEWSMAKER:
Emilio Estevez p. 20

**National Library
Week Turns 60** p. 34

PLUS: Tattoo RA, Data Literacy
and Teens, Degree or Not Degree



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 AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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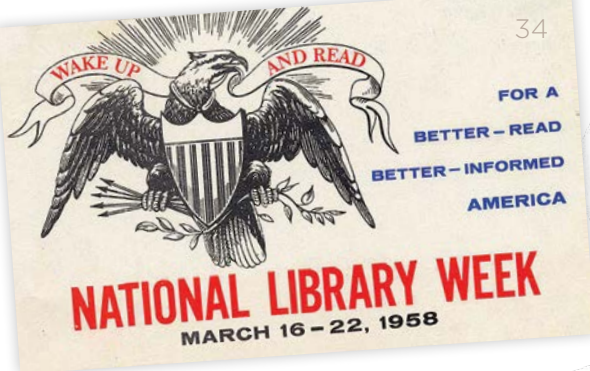


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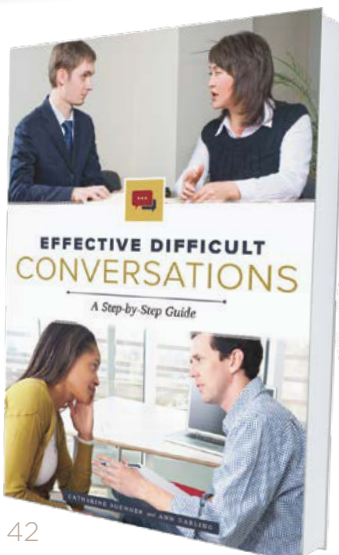
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Website: americanlibrariesmagazine.org
Email: americanlibraries@ala.org
Phone: 800-545-2433 plus extension
Career Ads: JobLIST.ala.org

Where
would you go
in a virtual
world?

INTERIM EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

Sanhita SinhaRoy → *Hogwarts*
ssinha@ala.org | x4219

SENIOR EDITORS

Amy Carlton → *David Bowie's closet, circa 1972*
acarlton@ala.org | x5105
George M. Eberhart → *The Museum of Human Misery gift shop*
geberhart@ala.org | x4212

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Terra Dankowski → *Boston Tea Party*
tdankowski@ala.org | x5282

Phil Morehart → *Mos Eisley cantina*
pmorehart@ala.org | x4218

EDITORIAL AND ADVERTISING ASSISTANT

Carrie Smith
casmith@ala.org | x4216

EDITOR-AT-LARGE
Anne Ford → *To India, in hopes of petting tigers*
aford@ala.org | x2157

ART DIRECTOR

Rebecca Lomax → *Skydiving*
rlomax@ala.org | x4217

ADVERTISING

Michael Stack mstack@ala.org | 847-367-7120
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PUBLISHING DEPARTMENT

Mary Mackay, Associate Executive Director
Mary Jo Bolduc, Rights, Permissions, Reprints | x5416

MEMBERSHIP

Ron Jankowski, Director

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Joseph M. Eagan (Chair), Lee A. Cummings, Christine Korytnyk Dulaney, Mary L. Hastler, Ben Allen Hunter, Jasmina Jusic, Susan H. Polos, Intern: Lisa Anne Romano
Editorial policy: ALA Policy Manual, section A.8.2

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from the
EDITOR

Looking Ahead

Our cover story on virtual reality (p. 26) has me looking to the future. And it has me wondering: What will my kids think of this growing technology, and how will they make use of it as they get older? Fortunately, librarians are already exploring similar questions for their patrons. As Miguel Figueroa, director of ALA's Center for the Future of Libraries, writes in his intro to the story, whether through classroom use, lending programs, or a commitment to equitable access, libraries are once again thinking ahead and adapting to new innovations and user needs.

And speaking of the future, this column is an introduction of sorts. Many of you may know that I'm not a new face to *American Libraries* or the Association; I've worked at ALA for nearly seven years, recently hanging up my hat as managing editor to assume the role of interim editor and publisher following Laurie D. Borman's retirement. For the past 17 years, I've been a professional editor and journalist at several publications, including magazines like *In These Times* that are committed to social justice.

That's why the topic of Emilio Estevez's new movie *The Public* intrigued me. Filmed in the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, the movie puts a spotlight on homelessness. Estevez spoke with Associate Editor Phil Morehart about the moral imperative to help those in need (p. 20). Read the full interview at americanlibrariesmagazine.org.

Also online is our Midwinter Meeting Wrap-Up, highlighting speakers and sessions from the conference.

With Preservation Week at the end of April, there are two commentaries on the topic that are well worth a read: school librarian Amy Harpe's guest column on preserving endangered cultures and traditions through story (p. 48) and Nicole Umayam of the Arizona State Library, Archives, and Public Records, who writes about digital preservation of endangered languages (p. 25).

American Libraries has been gathering your feedback through online surveys this year, with one more arriving later this spring. We'll delve into the results in the coming months to see how we're doing and what we can do better. But no need to wait for a survey; we invite feedback anytime, anywhere. Just not via virtual reality—yet.

Sanhita



Sanhita SinhaRoy

Libraries
and
librarians
are again
thinking
ahead and
adapting
to new
innovations
and user
needs.

Fight for School Libraries

Student success depends on them



Jim Neal

The success of all libraries will depend on the essential work of school libraries.

Libraries constitute an ecology of educational, research, and community services. In this environment of interdependency, we, as a family of libraries, must embrace advocacy for school libraries as foundational to the success of our collective work for students who love to read, as we prepare them for college, career, and life.

We must all fight the closing of school libraries, the reductions in professional staffing, the erosion of budgets for resources and technology, and the consequent weakening of the librarian–teacher partnership in the classroom. We must advocate for the federal funding that supports network access in schools. We must continue to document and demonstrate the powerful link between student success, educational enrichment, and well-supported school libraries.

We all want students who know how to look for information, evaluate sources, organize research results, present ideas and conclusions, and document their work. These are lifelong skills. They strengthen communities and promote civic engagement. They enrich lives. They transform learning. They enable public libraries and academic libraries to be more effective.

School libraries are about reading and understanding, about critical thinking and problem solving. They are about research and writing, the ability to evaluate sources, and the exploration of diverse perspectives and experiences.

School libraries are about active learning, the ability to analyze, synthesize, and work collaboratively. They are about information skills in context and about a shared information vocabulary. They are about working online, using technology appropriately, and making good choices.

School libraries are about innovative technologies and creative spaces. Through school libraries, students understand issues like privacy, confidentiality, intellectual freedom, open access, fair use, and how these relate to their work as

learners. Students view libraries as a positive and essential part of their lives.

The American Library Association's American Association of School Librarians (AASL) *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries* provides integrated frameworks essential to these and other core competencies. The Common Beliefs are:

1. The school library is a unique and essential part of a learning community.
2. Qualified school librarians lead effective school libraries.
3. Learners should be prepared for college, career, and life.
4. Reading is the core of personal and academic competency.
5. Intellectual freedom is every learner's right.
6. Information technologies must be appropriately integrated and equitably available.

Steven Yates, 2017–2018 AASL president, in his January/February column for AASL's journal *Knowledge Quest*, calls for expanded and robust collaboration to advance and enrich the work of school libraries, including strengthening relationships with other ALA divisions that work with children and youth, as well as working more closely with the ALA Washington Office. As Yates writes, "these partnerships are built on the belief that we can change the world every day."

I propose to convene a meeting in Chicago of representatives from across the school, public, and academic library communities, as well as teachers, school administrators, and students. The focus will be on the state of school libraries, the work to demonstrate value and impact, and an outline to expand strategy that builds community-wide articulation, investment, and advocacy.

I am interested in your comments. Contact me at jneal0@columbia.edu. **AL**

JIM NEAL is university librarian emeritus at Columbia University in New York.

Our Cover Story for \$500, Alex

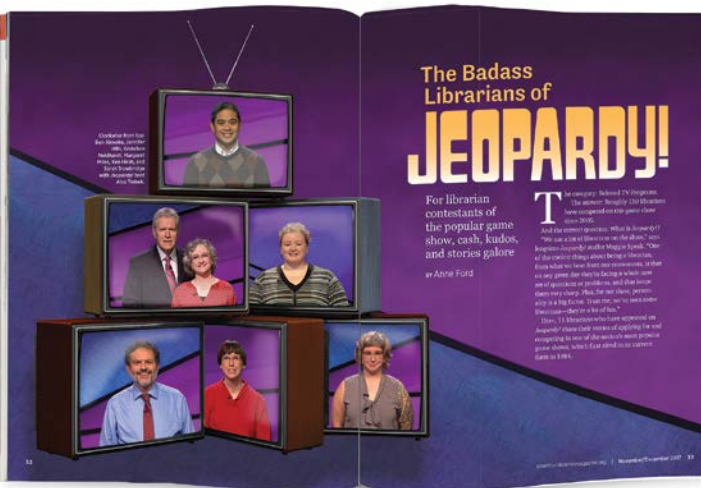
I'm guessing I'm not the only person perturbed by the word on the cover ("The Badass Librarians of *Jeopardy!*," Nov./Dec., p. 32). While in the context of a book title, say about Timbuktu [*The Bad-Ass Librarians of Timbuktu: And Their Race to Save the World's Most Precious Manuscripts*], it is a bit less in your face.

I'm showing my age, I know, but I'm not comfortable having a word which, in the days of the Alexandrian library, was looked on with disfavor. In the magazine, sure. In a book title, if it works the best. Not trumpeted out on the front cover.

Arthur LaRue
Boonsboro, Maryland

My wife, a retired school librarian of 39 years' service, and I, a retired salesman of books to colleges and libraries for 35 years, were watching *Jeopardy!* when Margaret Miles appeared. I nearly went through the screen when Alex Trebek remarked that she had the demeanor of a librarian. Canadians used to be considered genteel. It begs the question, what does a librarian "look like"?

I wish that [the writer] Ms. Ford had addressed that sexist and stereotypical moment with Ms. Miles. It would have been a golden opportunity for your magazine to cry "Job



profiling!" or "Who does Alex Trebek think he is?"

David K. Phillips
McDade, Texas

I was on *Jeopardy!* My episode aired May 24, 2007. It was so much fun, but it was also a little disconcerting that the show actively recruits librarians.

After I'd forgotten about taking the test and being one of the finalists, I got a call seven months later letting me know I had made the cut. One month after that, I found myself at Sony Pictures Studios in Culver City, California, spending the day with 20 really nice people from all over the country. Anyhow, what a trip to see your cover story!

Let me add: My goals for being on the show were to tell a good personal story (check!) and make it to "Final Jeopardy!" (check!).

Pauline Harris
San Francisco

Necessary Self-Care

Great observations, Meredith ("Less Is Not More," Nov./Dec., p. 56). Compassion for oneself is foundational in order to have compassion for others. Self-care is a political act—and easier to do if you are in a union.

A book chapter on this same topic that might be of interest to the profession is "Avoiding Autoethnography: Writing Toward Burnout" by Benjamin Harris (from a book that I coedited, *The Self as Subject: Autoethnographic Research into Identity, Culture, and Academic Librarianship*). One of the reasons for writing this book was to show that the autoethnographic method is one that can uncover problems that seem to be hidden in most LIS curricula, and to inspire others to use it. We need to learn about the real and lived experiences of librarians, and this

🐦 I might have gasped when I saw this cover in my mailbox yesterday.
#librarylife
#jeopardy
#myfavoritethings

@LEANN_NR in response to "The Badass Librarians of *Jeopardy!*" (Nov./Dec., p. 32)

🐦 Two of my passions, art and libraries, in one article! Love this so much.

@LIBCLARIAN in response to "Saving Our Murals" (Nov./Dec., p. 18)

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WRITE US: The editors welcome comments about recent content, online stories, and matters of professional interest. Submissions should be limited to 300 words and are subject to editing for clarity, style, and length. Send to americanlibraries@ala.org or *American Libraries*, From Our Readers, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611-2795.

🐦 Boon. Love seeing people exchange books informally.

@EINTERVIEW in response to “The Question of Little Free Libraries” (Jan./Feb., p. 32), and whether the boxes are a boon or bane to communities

method seems to surface a lot of these issues.

Bob Schroeder
Portland, Oregon

A Step Backward

Thank you for writing this, Michael (“UNESCO Withdrawal Will Slow Progress on Global Library Initiatives,” *The Scoop*, Oct. 18, 2017). The administration’s decision to pull the US out of UNESCO is certainly a step backward and another disappointing move toward isolationism.

Sam Boss
Lyndonville, Vermont

Empower Employees

While I found the article on stopping sexual harassment (“Stop Sexual Harassment in Your Library,” Nov./Dec., p. 16) to

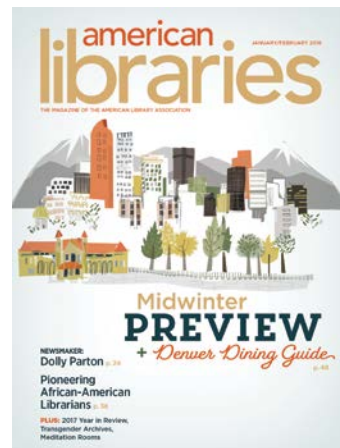
be informative on a basic level, I have to comment on the use of the word *please* when responding to sexual harassment.

Employees should feel empowered to claim their right to be spoken to with respect. Using the word *please* gives back some of this power to the harasser and implies that there is a choice. No one should be penalized for appearing “rude” in the face of harassment.

Brooke Boyst
Ypsilanti, Michigan

Angry Twitter Rant

The recent “bout of Twitter fame” for the self-proclaimed Angriest Librarian, Alex Halpern, raises a number of serious issues (“Noted & Quoted,” Jan./Feb., p. 25). Sometimes angry,



profanity-laced rants on Twitter are not a sign of a healthy, vibrant profession.

While calling Andre Walker a “jackalope” or a “neanderthal” on Twitter may be cathartic, the emphasis librarians place on social media hasn’t exactly created a wellspring of new library

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work. To that end, there may be a grain of truth to Walker's musings about the future of libraries. Halpern can quickly amass thousands of followers who crave ad hominem attacks, while a true Twitter maestro like Donald Trump has gathered millions of followers. That being said, there are certain challenges facing our country and profession that calling a columnist a neanderthal simply cannot fix.

Curt Friehs
Oyster Bay, New York

A Variety of Viewpoints

I want to thank Joseph Janes for his column "Using Our Words" (Sept./Oct., p. 24). It is so refreshing to hear someone acknowledge the collision between professional neutrality

and partisanship. As someone who is more "right of center" than the average vocal librarian, I have experienced some of that unwillingness "to listen to, respect, and encourage a wide range of viewpoints." Janes succinctly articulated one of the root conflicts facing our profession, and my colleagues and I have lots of questions to consider.

In the November/December issue of *American Libraries*, I noticed a negative response to his column, so I thought I'd reach out and applaud him. I look forward to the next one!

Sharon Bolger
Belmont, North Carolina

CORRECTIONS

A photo of Prince George's County (Md.) Library System's

Laurel branch was mistakenly captioned as the Ringling College of Art and Design ("Show Us Your Beautiful New Library," Jan./Feb., p. 16). The photo should have been credited to Sam Kittner.

In "The Question of Little Free Libraries" (Jan./Feb., p. 32), Kim Kozlowski was misidentified as a reporter for the *Detroit Free Press* and *Detroit News*. She reports only for the *Detroit News*.

The place of employment listed for Danielle D. Valenzano was incorrect ("People," Jan./Feb., p. 70). She serves as a library assistant in the children's department at the Milford (Conn.) Public Library.

 This is totally a real thing and a great article.

@CZROSTLIK in response to "Stop Sexual Harassment in Your Library" (Nov./Dec., p. 16)



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ALA Appoints Mary Ghikas as Executive Director through January 2020

The American Library Association (ALA) Executive Board has appointed Mary Ghikas as executive director through January 2020, effective January 25. Ghikas has been serving as interim executive director since August 1, 2017, after the retirement of Keith Michael Fiels. She was most recently senior associate executive director of member programs and services.



Mary Ghikas

"Mary has done an excellent job as interim executive director, and we are pleased to officially name her executive director through January 2020," said ALA President Jim Neal in a January 25 statement. "Mary provides knowledge, experience, and stability to the Association during this important

period of transition as she leads critical work in infrastructure, organizational development, and technology for ALA."

The search process for the executive director will resume in spring 2019 after the position description requirements have been finalized pursuant to the spring 2018 membership vote. The ALA Executive Board plans to name a new executive director after the fall board meeting in October 2019. The new executive director will officially start at the 2020 Midwinter Meeting & Exhibits in Philadelphia, and Ghikas will support the orientation and transition process through the 2020 Annual Conference and Exhibition in Chicago.

Ghikas, who started with ALA in 1995, has her MLS and BA from UCLA and is a certified association executive recognized by the American Society of Association Executives. Throughout her career, she has served in numerous library systems including Chicago Public Library, Los Angeles Public Library, Western New York Library Resources Council, and the US Book Exchange in Washington, D.C. ●

First ALA Policy Corps Members Named

Twelve library and information professionals have been selected to participate in the inaugural ALA Policy Corps, which aims to develop a cadre of experts with deep and sustained knowledge of national public policies in areas key to ALA's strategic goals. In addition to cultivating issue expertise, the cohort will receive training in public speaking, media engagement, and other skills needed to be effective library advocates.

ALA President Jim Neal launched the program in October 2017 as an extension of the Libraries Transform/Libraries Lead campaign. The corps is grounded in the National Policy Agenda for Libraries that emerged out of the Policy Revolution Initiative (bit.ly/ALAPolicyRev) and is designed to build on other ALA professional development programs.

"The past year has brought sweeping changes and challenges to policies that ALA has advocated for, from net neutrality to federal library funding to privacy protections," said Neal in a January 4 statement. "It is imperative that information professionals have a voice, not only in defending, but in shaping national policies that impact our patrons, our profession, and our nation. This first cohort exemplifies diversity from across library types and geography, as well as a breadth of policy expertise and passion that represents our profession."

Read more about the inaugural cohort at bit.ly/2018PolicyCorps. More information on ALA Policy Corps is available at bit.ly/ALAPolicyCorps.

ORE and ALA Library Merge

The ALA Library and the Office for Research and Evaluation (ORE) were

merged into a new unit in December: the Library and Research Center (LARC). Kathy Rosa, former ORE director, will serve as director of LARC.

LARC will combine the services of ORE and the Library, eliminating overlaps. Research center staff will continue to do original research about the status of libraries and librarians and continue to partner with federal agencies and other research groups to improve access to data about libraries and librarians. The library will continue to assist staff, librarians, and others in locating a variety of needed information. During the transition, both ORE and ALA Library general email inboxes will remain active.

OIF Expands Selection Policy Toolkit

The Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) has expanded and updated its selection

ALA Members to Vote on Executive Director Qualifications

Association members will decide on a resolution—to be included in the 2018 general election ballot, opening March 12 and closing April 4—to determine whether the Association’s executive director should be required to hold an ALA-accredited master’s degree or a Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)-accredited master’s degree with a specialty in school library media.

The resolution will be added to the ballot as a result of a successful member-led petition, which seeks to overturn a November Council vote of 115 to 34 (with two abstaining) to make an ALA- or CAEP-accredited master’s degree preferred rather than required for the position. This vote reversed a January 2017 Council resolution.

To overturn a Council action, 25% of ALA’s voting membership must cast a vote, and a simple majority will determine the outcome. Members in good standing as of January 31 will be eligible to vote. Results will be announced on Wednesday, April 11.

The November Council vote was undertaken on the recommendation of the ALA Executive Director Search Committee and Executive Board after the initial search concluded unsuccessfully, with no viable candidate among the 17 qualified applicants. The change was endorsed by 10 of the 11 ALA divisions.

Documents and discussion related to the previous council votes are available at connect.ala.org/council. •

policy toolkit, which helps libraries ensure that they have essential policies in place to protect against censorship when materials are challenged.

“Selection and Reconsideration Policy Toolkit for Public, School, and Academic Libraries” is designed for libraries of all types and sizes and offers practical guidance and resources on responsibility for selection, selecting controversial materials, and reconsideration requests.

The toolkit is available online at bit.ly/OIFselectiontoolkit.

AASL Introduces Standards Implementation Grants

The American Association of School Librarians (AASL) has launched the AASL Past-Presidents Planning Grant for

National School Library Standards. Three grants of \$2,500 each will be awarded annually to AASL affiliate organizations for the planning and execution of an event, initiative, or activity focused on the implementation of the new AASL *National School Library Standards*.

Two 2018 grants, sponsored by Roger and Susan D. Ballard, will be awarded to affiliates in honor of AASL Past Presidents Judy King and Ruth Toor, and the third grant, sponsored by Cassandra Barnett, will be awarded to an affiliate in honor of AASL Past President Barbara Stripling.

Applications for the inaugural grants will open March 5 with a deadline of April 18. Recipients will be notified by May 1. More information will be posted at ala.org/aasl/awards.

CALENDAR

MAR. 4–10

Teen Tech Week

teentechweek.ning.com

MAR. 11–17

Sunshine Week

sunshineweek.org

MAR. 20–24

Public Library Association Conference | Philadelphia

placonference.org

APR.

School Library Month

ala.org/aasl/slm

APR. 8–14

National Library Week

bit.ly/ALANatlibweek

APR. 10

National Library Workers Day

ala-apa.org/nlwd

APR. 11

National Bookmobile Day

bit.ly/ALABookmobileDay

APR. 21–28

Money Smart Week

bit.ly/ALAmoneysmartweek

APR. 22–28

Preservation Week

ala.org/preservationweek

APR. 30

**El día de los niños/
El día de los libros**

dia.ala.org

MAY 1–7

Choose Privacy Week

chooseprivacyweek.org

MAY 7–8

National Library Legislative Day

ala.org/advocacy/advleg/nlld

JUNE

GLBT Book Month

ala.org/glbttbookmonth

JUNE 21–26

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Misty Copeland Chairs 60th National Library Week

Author and American Ballet Theatre Principal Dancer Misty Copeland is this year's National Library Week honorary chair. She is the author of two bestselling adult books, and coauthor, with Christopher Meyers, of *Firebird*, the 2015 Coretta Scott King Illustrator Book Award winner. (Read her February 1 interview with *American Libraries* at bit.ly/ALCopeland.)

National Library Week (April 8–14) will mark its 60th anniversary this year with the theme “Libraries Transform: Libraries Lead,” reminding the public that libraries of all types serve as community compasses that lead users to endless opportunities for community engagement, enrichment, and development (see our feature on page 34).

Celebrate the week with Copeland's new READ poster (right), as well as a limited edition poster honoring the themes of all 60 National Library Weeks so far, available from the ALA Store (alastore.ala.org). •



2018 Leadership Institute Applications Close Soon

Applications for the 2018 ALA Leadership Institute (August 6–9 in Itasca, Illinois) are open through March 9. The four-day immersive leadership development program for midcareer librarians will be led by ALA Past-President Maureen Sullivan and library and leadership consultant Kathryn Deiss.

Now in its sixth year, the institute helps future library leaders develop and practice their leadership skills in areas critical to the future of the libraries they serve. It offers participants an opportunity to delve into leadership practices, concepts, and frameworks, and to shape their own sustainable vision while building a learning community and network.

Details, guidelines, and the application are at bit.ly/ALALeadershipInst. Participation includes a free one-year membership in the Library Leadership and Management Association (LLAMA).

New Online Privacy E-Course

ALA Publishing eLearning Solutions will offer a new, five-week facilitated e-course, “Online Privacy and Security:

Best Practices for Librarians,” starting on Monday, March 12. Library consultant and mobile technology expert Nicole Hennig will highlight some of the best technologies to protect your security and privacy, and guide participants through the process of creating a security and privacy plan. The course will cover:

- protecting your data
- authentication
- breaches and identity theft
- privacy
- looking to the future and making a security plan

Register through the ALA Store (alastore.ala.org). Participants will need regular access to a computer with an internet connection.

Apply for a Diversity Research Grant

The Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services is seeking proposals for the Diversity Research Grant program. Applications should focus on research projects that address critical gaps in the knowledge of diversity, equity, and outreach issues within library and information science and that will be

undertaken between July 1, 2018, and June 30, 2019.

The Diversity Research Grant consists of a one-time, \$2,500 award for original research. A jury of ALA members will evaluate proposals and select up to three awards, and grant recipients will be announced ahead of the 2018 Annual Conference and Exhibition in New Orleans. Researchers are invited to present interim findings at the News You Can Use Diversity Research Grant Update held at each Midwinter Meeting & Exhibits and are asked to publish findings in a publication of their choosing within one year of completing their project.

Proposals are due by midnight Central time on April 15. For a complete list of criteria and proposal instructions, visit ala.org/research/larks/diversity.

Dawn Abron to Head YALSA's Teen Programming HQ

The Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) has selected Dawn Abron, creative space/teen services coordinator at the Zion-Benton (Ill.) Public Library, as the new member manager for its teen programming database, Teen

Programming HQ. Abron will serve a one-year term through January 2019.

The mission of Teen Programming HQ is to provide a one-stop shop for finding and sharing information about library programs of all kinds for and with teens. It also promotes best practices by featuring user-submitted programs and enables members and the library community to connect with one another to support and display their efforts to continuously improve teen programs.

To learn more about Teen Programming HQ and how to contribute content, visit hq.yalsa.net.

Sally Yates to Open PLA Conference

Former US Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates will headline the Public Library Association (PLA) 2018 Conference's Opening Session on March 21.



Sally Yates

Yates served as Deputy Attorney General in the US Department of Justice (DOJ) under President Obama from 2015 through 2017, and then briefly as Acting Attorney General under President Trump. As Deputy Attorney General, Yates was responsible for overseeing all facets of the DOJ's work, including prosecution, litigation, and national security components. During her tenure Yates spearheaded changes at the DOJ focused on reforming the criminal justice system.

The PLA Conference, held biennially, will take place March 20–24 in Philadelphia. Actor and comedian Hasan Minhaj, best known as a correspondent on *The Daily Show*, and Elizabeth Gilbert, author of *Eat Pray Love*, will also speak at the event.

Submissions Open for PR Xchange Awards

The call for submissions for the 2018 PR Xchange Awards competition, sponsored by the LLAMA Marketing and Communications Community of Practice, is open through March 20. The competition will

Petition Candidates for Council

The following individuals have filed petitions for positions on the ALA Council for the 2018 ALA Election:

Shannon DeSantis
School Library Media Specialist
Peoples Academy
Middle Level and High School
Morrisville, Vermont

Selina Gomez-Beloz
Library Director
Crown Point (Ind.)
Community Library

Rhonda K. Gould
Executive Director
Walla Walla (Wash.)
County Rural
Library District

Eboni M. Henry
Branch Manager
District of Columbia
Public Library

Julius C. Jefferson Jr.
Section Head
Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.

Sam A. Leif
Assistant Director of Operations
University of Nevada,
Las Vegas

Johana Orellana
Adult Services Librarian
North Richland Hills (Tex.)
Public Library

Lisa Richland
Director
Floyd Memorial Library
Greenport, New York

Alexandra P. Rivera
Student Success and Community Engagement Librarian
University of Michigan
Library, Ann Arbor

Donald Welch
Manager, Learning Resource Center
Fortis College
Grand Prairie, Texas

The period for filing petitions ran from October 4–December 6, 2017. A complete list of candidates for ALA Council can be found at ala.org/aboutala/governance/alaelection.

Ballot mailing for the 2018 ALA election will begin on March 12 and will run through April 4, with the results being announced on April 11. Individuals must be members in good standing as of January 31, 2018, in order to vote in the ALA election. ●

recognize the best promotional materials produced by libraries in 2017.

Entries will be evaluated based on content, originality, and design by a team of experts in marketing, public relations, graphic design, and communications. Each library may submit a maximum of five entries. Winning entries will be displayed during the PR Xchange Event at the 2018 ALA Annual Conference and Exhibition in New Orleans.

Submission forms, guidelines, and answers to frequently asked questions are available at bit.ly/PRXchangeAwards.

Conversation Workshops for Small Libraries

ALA, PLA, and the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation invite public

library staffers serving small, midsized, or rural communities to attend a free learning series to learn to lead productive conversations in their communities.

Through Libraries Transforming Communities: Models for Change, library professionals may participate in three online learning sessions and one in-person workshop, all free of charge, between February and June.

Registration for the three webinars is open at bit.ly/LTCsmall. Each session will be archived for free on-demand viewing at programminglibrarian.org. Individuals who view all three webinars, live or recorded, will be invited to attend a free preconference workshop at the 2018 ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans on June 22. [AL](#)

Wanda Brown

Director of library services, O'Kelly Library, Winston-Salem (N.C.) State University | wandaforala2019.com



CANDIDATE FOR **ALA PRESIDENT**

The American Library Association's (ALA) presidential election comes at a challenging time for libraries, librarians, and library workers. Our libraries are under fire.

Many of our funders and constituents do not understand the role of the modern library and the tremendous impact we have on the communities we serve. As members of a profession that has so much influence and shares in the dissemination of information, librarians and library workers need to demonstrate the value and relevance of libraries to our stakeholders. We can do this by leaning on our member associations on the national, state, and local levels.

Our ability to demonstrate value is essential to our survival. Educating and teaching others how to advocate for our patrons, our communities, and our profession is critical for future success. As a candidate for ALA president, I am passionate about working to bring about that change. I recognize that our strength is our willingness to work together and to partner in building a stronger future.

Here's where I will concentrate my efforts to ensure this future:

Education. Libraries are built around the desire to enable the

success of others and to support lifelong learning. We must take responsibility for our role in educating and defining what teaching looks like—including mentoring and coaching new professionals on our values and ideals—for all different learners.

Inclusiveness. When we truly welcome and value all the voices we bring to the table, we practice what should be at the very heart of our profession. Inclusion should be seen to broadly encompass multiple characteristics from different perspectives to ensure that social justice prevails.

Intellectual freedom and information literacy. A well-informed community of critical thinkers who are free to express their opinions is at the core of what we value in our

profession and our citizenship. We should fight to eliminate producers of fake news, to educate consumers about the veracity of various news outlets, and to exhibit a strong ethical approach to providing our stakeholders with useful and accurate information.

Professional development. I value professionals who invest in their personal growth and the institutions that support continual learning opportunities. I appreciate a strong collaborative approach to working with our patrons, our community, and each other. This is especially important for our membership. Our associations are only as strong as those who serve and give to them. It's the real joy of belonging. It's the sense of pride that we get when we give.

If elected ALA's 2019–2020 president, I will bring leadership experience, a voice to represent our profession in addressing current issues, and the determination to promote the importance of libraries as successful contributors to our society. As the professional organization representing America's libraries, it is vital for ALA to demonstrate the importance of our role in a complex and dynamic world of information. Our strength lies in numbers. Let's be a partner in a stronger future. **AL**

Our libraries are under fire. It is vital for ALA to demonstrate the importance of our role in a complex world of information.

ALA ELECTION VOTE: March 12–April 4. More information at bit.ly/ALAElection18

Peter Hepburn

Head librarian, College of the Canyons,
Santa Clarita, California | peterforala.org



CANDIDATE FOR ALA PRESIDENT

We know from ALA's successful Libraries Transform campaign the ways in which libraries make a difference in our lives. Libraries also sustain individuals, communities, and institutions. We are champions of fact at a time when false information is readily communicated. We are critical to bridging equity gaps in order to provide information to all users. Even through political and social turmoil, libraries endure, and in so doing, enable our diverse communities to do the same.

To thrive, libraries and library workers need a strong and healthy professional association that advocates for us and for those who come to our facilities or who use our online resources, enabling them to benefit from the wide range of services we offer. Within our library community, we must have an association that is itself sustainable. The very sustainability of ALA forms the center of my candidacy for the ALA presidency.

ALA is at a crossroads. Membership is down, conference attendance has fallen off in recent years, and Publishing has struggled to set and reach budget targets. Most crucially, the search for a new executive director will begin again in 2019.

ALA remains a large, complex association, and the next executive director will need an able partner in the role of president—one who understands the organization and what will be needed for it to maintain stability and even achieve growth.

As your ALA president, my goals are to:

1. support efforts to maintain and grow ALA's membership base and finances
2. facilitate the smooth transition of the next executive director
3. ensure that valuable ongoing initiatives—particularly the work of the Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and the Task Force on Sustainability—continue toward completion
4. continue work started by current ALA leadership to examine and change the organizational structure of ALA

A healthy
association
is one that
promotes the
core values of
our profession.

A strong association is one that fights for the needs of our users, our communities, our institutions, and ourselves. A healthy association is one that promotes the core values of our profession. A sustainable association is one that has the financial and organizational stability in place to allow it to do its important work in the service of its members, on behalf of libraries.

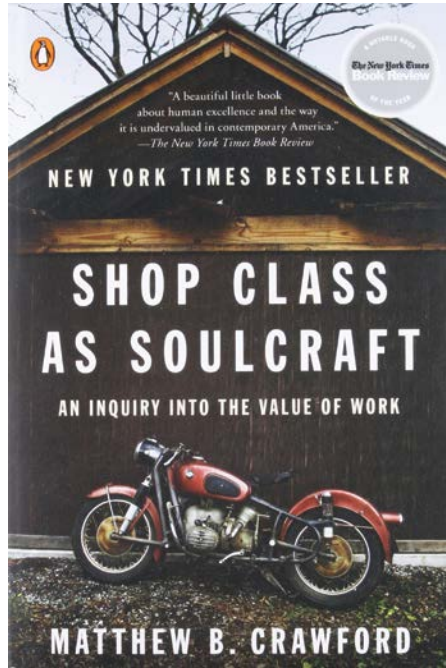
In my time as a member of ALA, I have been active at all levels, from the ALA Executive Board and Council to the divisions and round tables. I have demonstrated a steady, sustained commitment to our Association through my participation on numerous committees and task forces. For more than 30 years I have worked in various roles in academic and public libraries, from shelving books to chairing a library board to managing a college library.

My experience gives me the foundation to lead ALA as we work together to cement our shared legacy, ensure the Association's sustainability, and magnify its impact on our libraries, our communities and institutions, our patrons, and our colleagues working in libraries.

I am keen to do this work on behalf of the profession. I ask for your vote. **AL**

ALA ELECTION VOTE: March 12–April 4. More information at bit.ly/ALAElection18

TRENDS



Librarians at Multnomah County (Oreg.) Library (MCL) recommended *Shop Class as Soulcraft: An Inquiry into the Value of Work* by Matthew B. Crawford for the owner of an anvil-and-flames tattoo.

brainstormed possible book matches, and logged the results in a shared document. The recommendations were then posted on social media by a point person.

“It was a matter of looking at the tattoo, weighing its significance and what the requester has said about the design, and then using those themes to find something that seems right without spending an inordinate amount of time fretting over the answer,” says Kastner.

The submissions and recommended books ranged from a stylish witch-head tattoo, which the staff paired with *Young Woman in a Garden*, a collection of supernatural tales by Delia Sherman, to an iron anvil enveloped in flames, which staff paired with *Shop Class as Soulcraft: An Inquiry into the Value of Work* by Matthew B. Crawford.

Some of the submissions were heartfelt. One patron submitted a photo of a tattoo of a butterfly with the phrase, “A Heart Never Forgotten,” which she said represents loved ones who have died. The staff recommended *My Grandfather's Blessings: Stories of Strength, Refuge, and Belonging* by Rachel Naomi Remen.

Hana Zittel, a librarian at Denver Public Library (DPL), found a similar trend among the tattoo submissions when her library conducted a tattoo readers' advisory campaign in July 2017 after being inspired by MCL's program.

“We had an influx of ones that had someone reflecting on

Inked RA

Libraries recommend books based on patron tattoos

BY Phil Morehart

Readers' advisory is incredibly personal. Finding books a patron may enjoy requires librarians to mine a plethora of factors: patron reading habits; tastes in literature, pop culture, and politics; family history; work schedule. Some libraries, however, have taken readers' advisory to even deeper levels by recommending books based on a patron's tattoos.

“Good readers' advisory relies on creating a personal connection, and what's more personal than a tattoo?” says Alison Kastner, reader services librarian at Multnomah County (Oreg.) Library (MCL).

MCL began a tattoo readers' advisory program as an offshoot of a successful 2011 social media

campaign, in which it asked Facebook users to tell the library things about themselves that could be used for book recommendations. The willingness of patrons to share personal stories online—and the enthusiasm with which they did so—led Kastner and library assistant Steve Roskoski to search for new ways to conduct specialized readers' advisory on social media.

In summer 2016, the library launched its tattoo readers' advisory campaign, soliciting images of tattoos and the stories behind them from Twitter and Facebook followers. The recommendation process was subjective but methodical. When it received a tattoo photo and story from a patron, a group of five staffers reviewed the submission,

someone they lost in their life, so we were recommending materials based on working through grief, moving on, and connecting with that person,” she says.

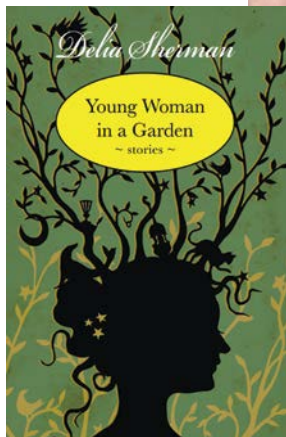
Like MCL, DPL conducted its tattoo readers’ advisory exclusively on social media and used a team of librarians who reviewed the tattoos, made suggestions, and logged them into a shared file that could be accessed by librarians working at multiple branches. The imagery was important to the recommendation process, Zittel says, but the stories behind the tattoos had a greater impact.

“We can certainly go with just an image,” she says. “But what we found to be helpful and meaningful to help create connections between us and the customers was hearing the stories.”

Durango (Colo.) Public Library took an altogether different approach for a tattoo readers’ advisory program it conducted in October 2016. Instead of using social media to gather photos and stories,

“It was a nice way to reach other populations and let them know the library is cool.”

TARA BANNON WILLIAMSON, senior librarian at Durango (Colo.) Public Library



MCL paired a witch tattoo with *Young Woman in a Garden*, a collection of supernatural short stories by Delia Sherman.

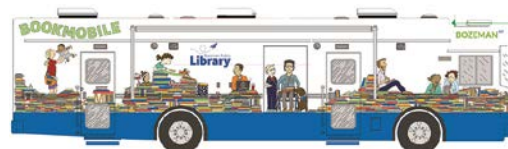
the library invited patrons to come into the building and show staffers their tattoos to get recommendations in person. To help staffers do readers’ advisory on the spot, the library created cheat sheets for books on love, music, mythology, relationships, and coming-of-age themed topics.

“We had about 20 people come in throughout the month,” says Library Director Sandy Irwin. The program garnered notice, locally and across the country.

“We got a lot of national attention from this,” Irwin says. “That was the strangest thing.” After the Associated Press picked up a local newspaper article on the campaign, the library soon found itself featured in *USA Today*, and Irwin was invited to discuss the program on the *Jay Thomas Show* on Sirius XM radio.

Patrons and press also embraced MCL’s and DPL’s tattoo programs. More than 400 people submitted tattoos to MCL, with requests coming in from as far away as Brazil. The program was featured in local newspapers, Portland television news, and a segment on Minnesota Public Radio. DPL received

BY THE NUMBERS



Bookmobiles

11

Date in April that National Bookmobile Day—part of National Library Week—will be celebrated.

40

Length in feet of the bus that Bozeman (Mont.) Public Library uses for its bookmobile.

1905

Year that the first bookmobile in the US was introduced. The “library wagon” in Washington County, Maryland, was designed by librarian Mary Titcomb, had exterior shelves for books, and was drawn by two horses.

75

Number of bookmobiles operating in Kentucky, the state with the highest number.

55,000

Number of miles that Lee County (Miss.) Library’s bookmobile driver, librarian Barbara Carouthers, estimates she has logged since 2006. ●



Continued on page 17 ▶

Tales, travels, sewing

“One of the strengths of a public library is making community relationships.”

Community Fabric

Libraries partner with clubs to create “fidget quilts” for patrons with dementia

You've heard of fidget spinners. But what about fidget quilts? In 2015, David Kelsey, outreach services librarian at St. Charles (Ill.) Public Library (SCPL), attended a Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS) program where he heard a presenter mention fidget quilts. These small lap quilts, which also sometimes come in the form of a wearable apron, are affixed with zippers, buttons, and other items that people can manipulate to help reduce nervous tension. The presenter was Glenna Godinsky, life enrichment liaison at Gail Borden Public Library in Elgin, Illinois.

Godinsky says her library partnered with an area quilting club to

Hadi Finerty, senior manager of education and outreach at the Joliet, Illinois, chapter of the Alzheimer's Association, says fidget quilts and aprons provide needed distraction, especially during "sundowning." Finerty explains: "A lot of times when the sun goes down, [people with dementia will] get more anxious and start to ask, 'When am I going home? When am I going home?'" When this happens, she says, "Fidget quilts redirect them to something different."

to create and stitch, about 50 fidget quilts have been donated to the library since summer 2017 to pass along to those in need.

"You may not realize you have made an impact with someone with Alzheimer's or dementia, but you definitely have," Kelsey says. "They might not engage, but you're definitely reaching them."

Using makerspaces

Another library producing fidget quilts is Lafayette (La.) Public Library. This past fall, several sessions were held in one of its makerspaces, where visitors could assemble their own fidget quilts. As a result, a dozen original quilts were donated to area assisted-living facilities. Additionally, the makerspace's 3D printers helped create items such as keys and rings that could be sewn onto quilts.

Cara Chance, assistant manager of Lafayette's South Regional branch, says the events were so popular that the library is doubling its number of sewing machines available for use from six to 12.

"It's really interesting," says Chance, "because a lot of people come in and they're impressed by the laser cutter, impressed by the 3D printer, but it surprised me how many people came in and said, 'Oh look, they have sewing machines.'"

Chance and her 13-year-old daughter Aria participated in a quilt-making session, practicing what Chance considers a long-lost skill. The two had an excellent experience, so much so that Aria has gone on to work on additional quilts.

"Quilting is like many forms of art," Aria says. "If you just take the time to learn, plan, and deal with bumps in the road, you can make something great."

Godinsky says of her district, "The key thing is that we saw the need to meet our patrons where they are. We need to pop up in the community and be the library there."

This kind of community engagement streams in multiple directions, explains Finerty of the Alzheimer's Association. She says that connecting with library leaders has boosted and deepened her organization's memory health education efforts.

"This relationship has opened doors to libraries we've never thought of going to," she says.

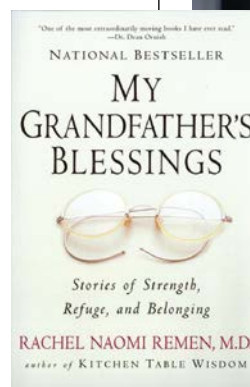
Kelsey says he feels very lucky that senior patrons welcome the library into their lives. He says he believes wholeheartedly that stitching quilt blocks makes a tremendous difference to the people around us.

"One of the strengths of a public library is making community relationships," Kelsey says. "It just makes me feel so blessed and honored to do this." **AL**

BAILEY BREWER is a freelance writer based in California.



Aria Chance, 13, participated in a quilt-making session with her mother, who is a librarian.



MCL paired a tattoo memorializing lost loved ones with the book *My Grandfather's Blessings: Stories of Strength, Refuge, and Belonging*.

◀ Continued from page 15

more than 260 submissions and extensive press, which proved taxing to DPL staff. The strain was worth it, according to DPL Senior Librarian Tara Bannon Williamson.

"The news came in to do a segment on the program, and then it went viral," she says. "We started to receive submissions from around the world. We then committed to get them all done. We wouldn't close the building with people still needing help. We did take breaks to sleep and eat, but that was about it."

All three libraries have plans to conduct more tattoo readers' advisory in the future. The programs were fun for both staffers and patrons, but they also served a higher purpose.

"Sometimes people with tattoos can feel excluded or maybe feel like they aren't welcome," says Williamson. "It was a nice way to reach other populations and let them know the library is cool. It's not the same place you got kicked out of as a teenager." **AL**

PHIL MOREHART is an associate editor at *American Libraries*.



Members of an African drum and dance ensemble lead patrons in a performance routine as part of Richland Library's day-long Black History Month Fair on January 28, 2017.

Every Month Is Black History Month

Richland Library uses programming and dialogue to engage the African-American community year-round

Richland Library in Columbia, South Carolina, needed a better way to reach its African-American community. Quincy Pugh, film and sound manager, explains how the decision to celebrate black history year-round and start “I Have a Problem with That”—a series of panel discussions that address challenging social issues—has boosted program attendance and engagement among its target audience.

BY Quincy Pugh

When I was hired by Richland Library in 1989 as its first film and sound librarian, I set to work expanding a nonprint collection for a growing system. The library was seeing an increase in visits and user requests. During this time our service area was becoming more racially diverse, and our library was attempting to reach more African Americans with materials and programming.

When our new main library opened in February 1993, grand

opening and anniversary events seemed to overshadow much of what was planned for Black History Month. People noticed and expressed concern. We heard them: We should have been expanding upon, rather than diminishing, efforts to reach the African-American community.

Our deputy director asked me to lead a committee to plan adult programs for African-American patrons—with a focus on increasing the attendance and equity of our

efforts—particularly during Black History Month. Although Richland Library had always offered quality programs, they had not always been a good fit for the audiences we were trying to reach.

The African-American History and Cultural Events (AAHCE) committee, composed of four librarians and paraprofessionals of color, was formed. Our goal was to implement at least one program per quarter targeted to the black community. We also planned to supplement and enhance the cultural programming already in place at the main library and branch locations.

We began observing Black History Month in January, sometimes in conjunction with the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. This shows that we are proactive. We always put together a brochure of programs so our efforts aren't lost on customers.

In spring we use National Poetry Month and Jazz Appreciation Month as foundational themes. We recruited a local poet and jazz vocalist from Richland Library's literary residency program to help us develop poetry slams, jazz workshops, and live performances. We also host performances with related discussions in summer to mark Black Music Month in June.

Perhaps our most participatory program has been our fall forums. We wanted to address social issues relating to our community, so we premiered “I Have a Problem with That: A Roundtable of African-American Concerns” in 2004. Under this umbrella, we have presented discussions on such topics as gang violence, voting rights, the cradle-to-prison pipeline, the Affordable

GLOBAL REACH

Care Act, state and federal budget cuts, racial profiling, and wrongful convictions. We have invited local media personalities, politicians, and scholars to sit on these panels.

Our forums have been successful beginning with the very first one, which brought in 120 people and was aired on a local radio station. The question posed to us after most presentations is “When is your next one?” or “Where can we go from here?”

We depend heavily on the professionalism of our moderators to keep discussions on track, but it’s important to allow ample time for audience members to express opinions and ask questions of our experts. Our topics can be emotional, but giving people an opportunity to speak furthers a sense of healing. We may not have the answers to complicated social problems, but the library sees a need to give voice to them.

These programs are the core of AAHCE’s efforts. We also present targeted events in conjunction with area filmmakers, artists, and storytellers as opportunities arise. Essentially, we celebrate black history year-round. The committee is able to accomplish big things on a small budget because we are passionate about our mission. In return, our community has shown its love through its attendance and support.

As I prepare to leave Richland Library in June after 14 years as the chair of AAHCE, our diverse 14-member committee has a waiting list for interested staff members. Though the focus of our inclusivity efforts may evolve, I am confident our library will continue to meet the programming needs of all we serve. **AL**

QUINCY PUGH is film and sound manager at Richland Library in Columbia, South Carolina.



Game of Thrones Goes Postal

UNITED KINGDOM Fantasy drama *Game of Thrones* is being celebrated in a new set of Royal Mail stamps designed by studio GBH. The set of 15 first-class stamps, one of the biggest ever commissioned by the Royal Mail, comprises 10 main stamps and a mini-sheet of five. Key characters from all seven seasons are captured in the stamps, each as part of an image that depicts their story arc from the show.—*Design Week*, Jan. 3.

GAZA STRIP The girls of the Sokaina School in Deir al-Balah city decided they wanted a library. Most schools in Gaza don’t have one, and those that do usually have a limited range of books. The students built shelves from wooden boxes and seats from old tires. UNICEF gave them seed funding of \$300 US, but it was enough for only 30 books. Then they sought help from nonprofit organizations, which donated another 500 books. Their library opened in early 2017.—*UNICEF*, Dec. 18.

TURKEY Garbage collectors in Ankara have opened a public library made up entirely of books once destined for landfills. The library, located in the Çankaya district, was founded after sanitation workers started collecting discarded books. As word of the collection spread, residents also began donating books directly. Initially, the books were only for employees and their families to borrow. As the collection grew and interest rose, the library opened to the public in September.—*CNN*, Jan. 15.

COLOMBIA A smartphone game seeks to educate children about their country’s endangered indigenous cultures. Some 3.4% of Colombia’s population belongs to 87 different indigenous groups that speak 71 languages. The games, known collectively as *Ancient Wisdom* and available for iOS and Android devices, challenge players to learn the languages and cultures of the country’s indigenous groups, which vary from farming communities in the northern Darién jungle to nomadic hunter-gatherers in the Amazon.—*The Guardian* (UK), Jan. 5.

AFGHANISTAN An initiative by the ministries of higher education and telecommunication will establish the country’s first electronic library to help university students easily access materials. Its first hub will be at Kabul University, with additional locations in rural provinces.—*Afghanistan Times*, Jan. 16. ●

Emilio Estevez

Actor and filmmaker tackles the library response to homelessness

Emilio Estevez is no stranger to the library world. Thirty-three years after portraying one of five teens sentenced to Saturday detention in a school library in the 1985 teen classic *The Breakfast Club*, Estevez steps behind the camera to write, direct, and star in *The Public*, about a group of homeless people who seek refuge in Cincinnati's downtown public library during a bitterly cold Midwestern winter evening. A staunch library advocate, Estevez spoke with *American Libraries* about the film, its origin, and his connection to libraries.

What was the inspiration behind *The Public*? I was inspired by a moving 2007 essay called "Written Off" by Chip Ward, now-retired assistant director of the Salt Lake City Public Library System, published in part in the *Los Angeles Times* (and in full at tomdispatch.com under the title, "What They Didn't Teach Us in Library School: The Public Library as an Asylum for the Homeless"). Ward's essay was not hyperbole. We are in the midst of an epidemic. I knew the world Ward described: I completed the bulk of the research for my film *Bobby* at Los Angeles Public Library's Central Library downtown, and Salt Lake City Public Library was identical to what I witnessed there. I have carried that section of the *Los Angeles Times* in a folder in my backpack for the past 11 years, and I show it to anyone who asks where the inspiration for this story originally came from.

What obligations do libraries and other public spaces have to help the homeless and other populations in need? The word *obligation* makes some people uncomfortable. There are many in this country who look at the homeless and consider their situation "regrettable but inevitable since some people are bound to fail," as Ward writes in his piece.

And that it's the fault or shortcoming of that individual; that he or she did not possess the desire to "pull themselves up by their bootstraps." Well, first off, you've got to have boots to begin with. I understand this is a figure of speech, but let's talk about shoes.

You and I have shoes. Multiple pairs. As do probably most of the people we associate with. We also have computers, some of us more than one. A laptop, iPad, and mobile phone, maybe? Now imagine that you don't have any of those communication devices. You depend on the local library to access a computer where you can sign on, usually with a time limit of two hours depending on the waiting list. You have two hours to write emails to your friends, let your relatives know you're still alive and surviving the latest cold snap, look for job openings, maybe catch up on your Facebook feed, and read the news of the day. Two hours.

So, in the context of this question I would substitute the word *obligation* with *moral imperative*. It is a moral imperative for libraries and other public spaces to help the homeless and other populations in need. If you possess a beating heart, that is as close to an inarguable statement as you are likely to hear. Unfortunately, there are many along



political divides who are seemingly heartless. They view public commons like libraries and issues like net neutrality with contempt. Explain the end of net neutrality to the homeless person sitting in front of that library computer who watches his two-hour time limit get eaten up by slow internet service because the underfunded institution could not afford the premium service and extend it to patrons.

What was it like filming in a working library? As we began to prep the film and meet with Kim Fender, director of the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County (PLCHC), library administrators, and personnel at PLCHC, it became apparent to them that the library building itself was going to be a main character in the film. Quite rightly, they worried that giving us access could negatively impact the

Photo: David Alexanian

mission of the public library. I made it very clear that my intention was not to impinge the public right to freely access the library, its information, and its resources. It was important to convey how seriously I take the work of librarians and how important I believe libraries are as a crucial and essential public commons. Fortunately, in the film, there are few daylight scenes, as the bulk of our story takes place at night after the library has closed. As the director, writer, and producer of a crew of more than 100 people, my challenge was properly wrapping after a night of shooting and making sure that we left no discernible footprint.

How did you prepare for the film with regard to learning the intricacies of the library world? Quite simply, I would visit libraries and quietly sit and observe behavior. There is perhaps no better place on the planet to observe human behavior than inside a public library. Of course, as I made my intentions known that I would be making a film set inside a library, I was met with both suspicion and encouragement by library staff and administrators. But ultimately, I was given access to the inner workings and a librarian's day-to-day routine. I learned quickly that what most librarians went to school to study and earn a degree in has very little practical application on the floor. A modern-day librarian is now a de facto social worker and first responder. It's not unusual for librarians to be trained in the use of Narcan, a nasal application used to treat opiate overdoses.

What role did the library play in your life as a youth? What role does it play today? As a boy, the library always felt like a safe place for me. I could disappear for hours and be surrounded by infinite possibilities. It's impossible for me to visit

the library now as an adult and not be transported back to my youth. I remember discovering the work of Edgar Allan Poe when I was 11 or 12 and digging into everything Poe had written that was available at my local library. Only now as an adult do I look back and think Poe was an odd choice for a young boy. But then again, it was the Seventies.

One dream I have for the film and how we can support our local libraries and encourage people to "occupy the library" again is to have a percentage of the proceeds of every movie ticket sold go toward the public good in the community where the tickets are purchased. If this were to be successfully implemented, woefully underfunded branches as well as homelessness advocacy groups could benefit from the success of the picture.

It is a moral imperative for libraries and other public spaces to help the homeless and other populations in need.

To do this will be no small feat. It will require the help of outside organizations to create and manage a thoughtful strategy to make sure institutions with the greatest need get the necessary support. And, well, I'm open to ideas and suggestions.

Oh, I almost forgot: I just renewed my passport thanks to the passport services provided by PLCHC. Most folks I told about this did not know about this service. That alone makes the library one very cool place, right? **AL**



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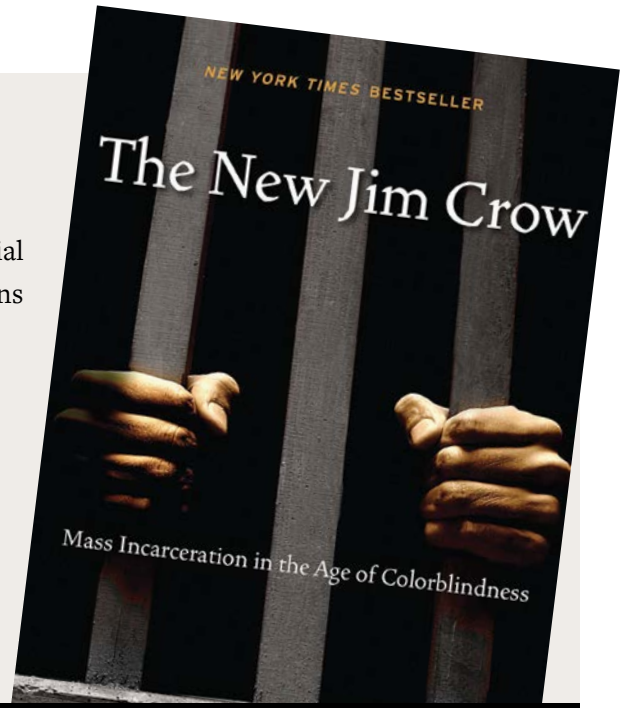
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“The controversy isn’t that we allow censorship but that a book like *The New Jim Crow* that does not pose a threat to prison security can land on the restricted list. But the list is not permanent. Public pressure that comes from controversial restrictions will only encourage the refinement of how prisons choose what materials to keep from inmates.

“Prison librarians are still librarians. They have the responsibility to respectfully raise their concerns when it appears that an item has been wrongfully restricted. While keeping an open mind and being willing to hear the reasons why a material was restricted, librarians can be a helpful countercheck on the process.”

ANDREW HART, “Librarians Despise Censorship. How Can Prison Librarians Handle That? It’s Complicated,” *The Washington Post*, January 16.



“Libraries literally aren’t just a place to obtain books for free. They’re one of the few public spaces left in our society where you’re allowed to exist without the expectation of spending money.”

AMANDA KILLIAN, @_Amanda_Killian, on Twitter, December 21.

“I understand there are some who will balk at this experiment, wondering if the elimination of fines poses a ‘moral hazard’? To be clear, I’m not advocating a system with zero accountability. Patrons would need to return their items before checking out new ones, and still pay for lost items. I’m advocating a system in which a family does not need to choose between dinner and using the public library.

“And so I must ask—what is truly the greater moral hazard? Having fines or not having fines? In my view, teaching kids that the library is not an option for the poorest among them is absolutely unacceptable.”

ANTHONY W. MARX, “The Case against Library Fines—According to the Head of the New York Public Library,” *Quartz*, December 18.

“The public library in our neighborhood was just across the street, and our father, for whom cultural education was essential, took us there after meals. Each time we borrowed a stack of books and comics for the week. I believe it was at this time that I understood, even unconsciously, that there are at least two distinct forms of poverty in our societies. The first one, of course, is financial poverty: It is the one preventing us from meeting our basic needs, such as housing, food, or clothing. The other one is more insidious because it undermines children’s development at the base. It is also a cause of our high rates of school dropouts or functional illiteracy: cultural poverty. Fortunately for my brother and me, our parents understood that the library is precisely countering this kind of poverty.”

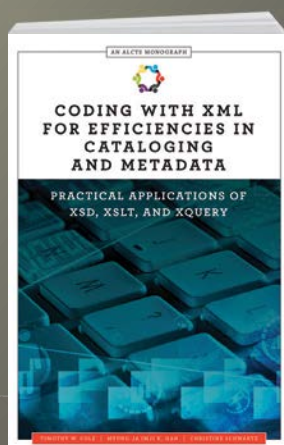
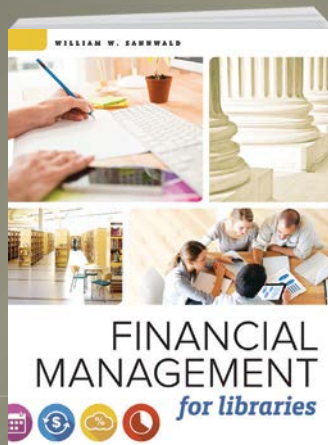
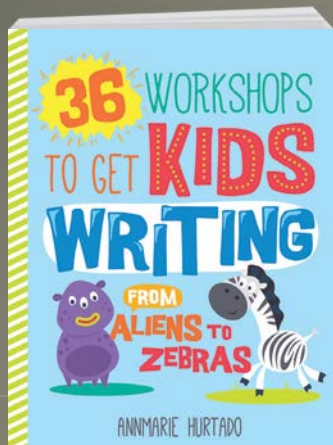
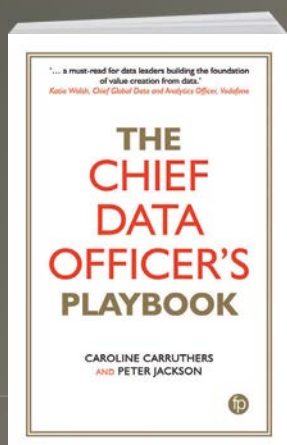
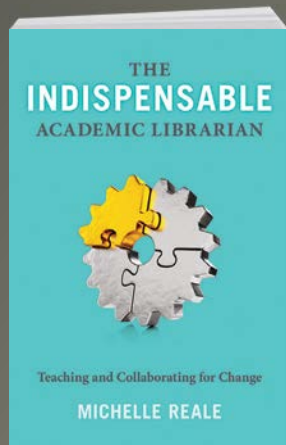
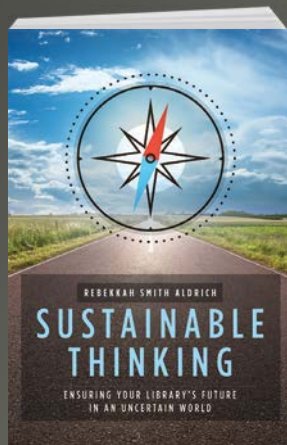
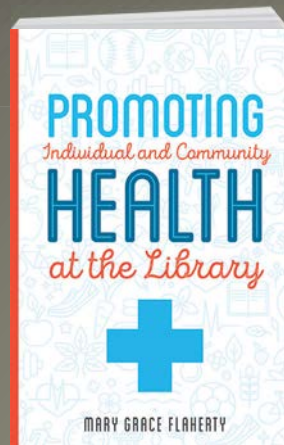
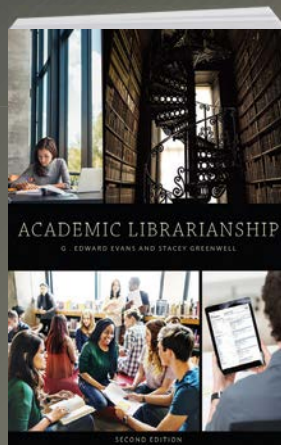
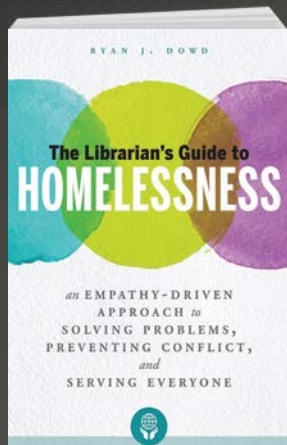
BOBBY A. AUBÉ, “I Am Proof Libraries Are Critical to Solving Cultural Poverty,” *Guelph (Ont.) Mercury-Tribune*, January 16.

“MY MOTHER HAS GIVEN ME MANY GIFTS. THE BEST? A LIBRARY CARD.”

MEGAN STIELSTRA, *The Wrong Way to Save Your Life* (Harper Perennial, 2017), page 26.

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Degree or Not Degree

The question of the MLIS

Unless you've been hiding under a rock in a cave on Mars with your fingers in your ears, you've heard a lot of discussion and angst about the search for the American Library Association's (ALA) new executive director. Having just been part of two major leadership searches, I know how difficult and tricky these can be; timing is important, as are the nature of the candidate pool, the composition of the committee, the shoes you're trying to fill, and 100 random factors you might not even have known existed when you started.

Let me start then by expressing profound gratitude to the members of the search committee. I know several of them—fine, clearheaded, and experienced people all—and I also know they must have done yeoman's work. These tasks are important, time-consuming, and often with little reward other than self-satisfaction because you can't tell anybody what's going on. It's particularly no fun when the search doesn't yield a viable result.

And because it didn't yield a viable result, we are now faced squarely with the question of the professional credential. Much ink and many pixels were spilled back in January 2017 debating whether to make the MLIS a requirement for the ALA job; the discussion has now been reopened. Council took up the issue in November and voted by a wide majority to relax the requirement to a preference. Predictably, noses were put out of joint by that, and a membership petition has placed the issue before us all and, in the process, put the search on hold. So here we are again—what do we do?



Organizationally, I'm actually quite pleased that those apparatuses were put into operation; I don't remember the last time Council voted on a matter of this importance other than at a regular meeting, let alone a grassroots effort to overturn it. It's good to take these mechanisms out for a spin now and then, and it's also nice to see a functioning democracy.

Operationally, though, this is now a mess. This discussion has come at a time of much anxiety about the degree itself, as libraries increasingly seek people with other backgrounds and credentials, or reposition previously degreed professional work in other roles, not to mention quite justifiable student concerns about the return-on-investment value of their degrees.

Much ink and many pixels were spilled debating whether to make the MLIS a requirement for the ALA job; the discussion has now been reopened.

In teaching a history and foundations of librarianship course earlier this year, I asked students to write a paper that suggested replacing one of ALA's existing core values with a new one. I was struck by the number who nominated "professionalism"—not objecting to the idea per se but rather to the need to require the degree, which some of them depicted as exclusionary. It led to a stimulating discussion about the evolution of our master's degree (*pace* Charles Williamson, author of the 1921 Carnegie Foundation report, *Training for Library Service*) and even whether it was worth considering a return to the good old baccalaureate days. Mercy.

Of course our master's degree is important. I've spent my entire adult life helping people get one, which has rewarded me beyond measure. Seeing the myriad and marvelous places my former students have gone in libraries and elsewhere, and things they've done with those degrees, is a constant joy.

It is not, however, a golden ticket. It would have been (will be?) lovely if the next ALA executive director held the MLIS as yet another example and expression of the breadth and reach of that degree. If not, it will demonstrate our respect for the professional experience and credentials of those from other fields, as we rightly demand for ourselves in turn. Assuming, that is, that we can find anybody still willing to take the damn job given all that's happened ... but that's another story. **AL**

JOSEPH JANES is associate professor at the Information School of the University of Washington in Seattle and author of *Documents That Changed the Way We Live* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2017).

What Is Access without Equity?

Addressing the digital divide in communities with endangered languages

Functionally, access involves the preservation, management, and discoverability of records. But information professionals know that access does not necessarily mean accessibility.

For community-based or other participatory archive models, digital technologies offer a way to meaningfully engage with materials. Yet what good is a digital archive if the community does not have internet available? How can an individual fully participate in using or shaping digital heritage resources if they do not have the computer skills, or even the computers? If the end goal of accessibility is to support community-facing, culturally responsive, and diverse collections, we must first address digital inequity.

Many of the tribal libraries that I visit in Arizona serve as “culture keepers” of language and records. This role is crucial, as most of the 194 indigenous languages in North America today, including many in the Southwest, are categorized as severely or critically endangered. There is urgent need for a community-wide, multipronged approach to language revitalization—including linguistic documentation, language learning, expanding domains of use, and increasing access through archiving and dissemination—and resources must be made accessible for a wide variety of user types and outputs.

The abundance of digital technologies makes this an exciting time for user-centered and participatory action. In the endangered language context, collections are not merely materials but spaces for cultural reclamation through engagement with the records. For languages to endure



in today's increasingly online world, they must exist digitally, and preservation and access are critical first steps. But to create a space where all stakeholders can participate, libraries must take a comprehensive approach to digital inclusion. This means access to robust broadband service, internet-capable devices, and digital literacy skills.

A few years ago I worked as a consultant for a tribe that was starting a digital community language archive. With accessibility as a priority, we collaborated on a metadata schema that would meet the informational needs of users. I was taken aback, however, when I realized that many of the elders were not comfortable using spreadsheets because of limited experience with computers. I didn't realize that we needed to start by making sure individuals had the skills necessary to enter and review data. Engagement

Collections are not merely materials but spaces for cultural reclamation through engagement with the records.

in language revitalization can look like a lot of things, and to achieve accessibility we need to think through the skills development trajectories necessary to do the work—such as how to use a flatbed scanner, post a video of a conversation between two speakers to YouTube, or make language data machine readable.

The same tribal populations facing rapid language loss are disproportionately affected by the broadband divide. About 10% of Americans lack access to the FCC's service standard of 25 Mbps/3 Mbps, and this disparity increases to 41% for those living on tribal lands. Tribal libraries often pick up the slack in providing broadband access for the community, but they are less equipped than mainstream public libraries to deliver quality internet service. National efforts to remove barriers and increase E-Rate participation for tribal schools and libraries, such as the Tribal Connect Act (bit.ly/2Dsd2ia), are a welcome start.

It's no surprise that resource and financial capacity are major stressors for tribal libraries, and many librarians on the ground face the same barriers as their patrons, such as limited technical skills. If libraries are to be the spaces for digital preservation and community-based language work, we need strategic solutions to increase both the literal and figurative bandwidth needed for true digital inclusion. **AL**

NICOLE UMayAM is technology outreach specialist at the Arizona State Library, Archives, and Public Records in Phoenix. In 2017, she was a member of the Digital Inclusion Corps at the National Digital Inclusion Alliance.

IN A VIRTUAL WORLD

How school, academic, and public libraries are testing virtual reality in their communities /// BY Miguel Figueroa

In the past several years, virtual reality (VR) technology has finally begun to fulfill what had long been promised. Traditional VR, which creates environments that allow people to be “present” in an alternative environment, has been advanced by offerings from Oculus, Sony, Google, and Samsung. At the same time, products like Google Cardboard have led the growth of 360-degree video that captures an entire scene in which the viewer can look up, down, and around. Instead of just games and entertainment, VR is exploding with news, information, and educational content.

Throughout this period of growth and expansion, libraries and librarians have once again demonstrated their adaptability to new information formats and user needs with projects that reflect the various directions VR has moved. Whether it is classroom use of Google Expeditions, new educational spaces and lending programs on academic campuses, or a demonstrated commitment to equitable access to this new technology in public libraries, librarians have taken on VR as a new way to engage their users.

In the months and years ahead, library professionals will likely need to consider how VR and 360-degree video fit into their commitments to acquire and organize information, make the informational content of this technology available for reference and citation, and empower users to be both media consumers and creators. For now, through the examples shared by the participants in this interview and examples from across our profession, libraries and librarians are showing how they can innovate using this latest trend in media and information.



American Libraries talked with six librarians and the director of a VR business to hear about their experiences.

TANIA BARDYN

Associate dean and director, Health Sciences Library, University of Washington



JANET COLES

Assistant bureau chief, Library Development Services Bureau, California State Library



KRISTINA A. HOLZWEISS

School library media specialist, Bay Shore (N.Y.) Middle School



SARA JONES

Director of county library services, Marin County (Calif.) Free Library



JOHN MACLEOD

Executive director, XRlibraries (formerly VARlibraries)



EMILY PATRIDGE

Assistant director of clinical research and data services, Health Sciences Library, University of Washington



ANTHONY SANCHEZ

Assistant librarian, research and learning department, University of Arizona





Ryan James from Pear Medical demonstrates how to perform heart surgery in the Translational Research and Information Lab in the University of Washington Health Sciences Library.

What was the tipping point for getting your library involved with virtual reality? Did you see signs on your campus or in your community that helped you think more intentionally about bringing VR into the library?

HOLZWEISS: When I first saw Google Cardboard, I was intrigued by the simple yet powerful technology. When I experienced Google Expeditions at an International Society for Technology in Education Conference, I knew that this opportunity could transform education. As a connected educator interested in technology, STEM, and the maker movement, I thought that Google Expeditions would be a wonderful complement to further develop student critical thinking, problem solving, and leadership skills. It could also enhance Skype sessions and Flipgrid videos.

BARDYN: In spring 2017, a research scientist booked the Translational Research and Information Lab—located in the University of Washington (UW) Health Sciences Library—to use the data wall in conjunction with Pear Medical software. He used VR to demonstrate to a medical team how to perform upcoming heart surgery. Our growth rate has been rapid, given that at least 32 researchers have been introduced to VR in roughly six months and we’ve begun a VR user group on campus. Via the user group, the library hosts quarterly meetings to demo VR technology from local upstarts and PhD candidates and faculty involved in VR research and development.

SANCHEZ: The biggest indication that the library could embark on providing VR services and equipment came from the work that Bryan Carter in the University of Arizona Africana studies department was doing with “The Virtual Harlem Project.” The project (which has gone through several iterations with Second Life and CAVE game structures) studies the Harlem Renaissance period through digital representations of Harlem, New York, in the 1920s–1930s.

The latest version, which uses the Unity game development platform, allowed the library to demonstrate his project using Oculus Developer Kit 2 headsets and get people excited about the possibilities of VR.

JONES: We first became interested in VR in 2016. The technology was new, but we could see how it would expand our reach in a variety of ways, such as changing the perception of public libraries as staid book warehouses. We have great income and educational disparity in our county. Our goal was to offer VR to our underserved communities, where digital devices are not common and opportunities to use a new technology like VR would simply not be possible.

COLES: We got involved in virtual reality because California State Librarian Greg Lucas visited the Marin County (Calif.) Free Library and heard about its plans for a VR project targeting underserved communities. He offered funding, which the library used to pilot the statewide project that we have now.

VR equipment varies by cost and manufacturer. What was your approach to investing in specific equipment? What factored most significantly in your decision, and did you or your users test various systems before settling on a particular one?

HOLZWEISS: “Bring your own device” is often a cost-effective alternative to schools purchasing hardware, but some students don’t own smartphones. Since our library was able to acquire a number of iPad Minis through DonorsChoose, I explored ways of using them for VR. Google Expeditions works very well on iPads, but Google Cardboard and other viewers offer a more immersive virtual experience that I wanted for my students. I could not see purchasing or fundraising for iPods to use with the viewers because the cost was comparable to the iPad Minis that we already had. But recently we have been able to acquire a number of iPod Touches. After researching I ultimately found a company that 3D prints VR viewers for iPad Minis (yay3d.myshopify.com). I was able to fund these viewers, as well as a Ricoh Theta 360-degree camera, through DonorsChoose. These viewers have worked very nicely but they are large.

BARDYN: We wanted to provide VR equipment equal to or better than what our users would likely procure independently or already have, which really narrowed down the selection to the best in class or near to it. Since the best in performance comes at an exponential increase in price, our IT experts chose the next-to-the-top-level products. Two manufacturers of high-end headsets currently exist—Oculus Rift and HTC Vive—and the software ecosystems are not wholly cross-compatible, so for the sake of flexibility we purchased one of each. A dedicated laptop is the brains behind the VR headset with a high-end video card. The faster the video card is, the more complicated the models it can display fast enough to work convincingly in VR, and the models derived from medical imaging are pretty complex.

SANCHEZ: Students working on VR projects in the library had been using the Oculus developer kits for a few years by 2016. Those particular headsets were purchased

through shared funding with outside departments and housed in the library makerspace. My library colleague Jennifer Nichols and I built on that funding model by continuously getting small institutional grants to buy a couple headsets and computers. We definitely knew we had to start off small, not knowing the exact demand from the students and faculty, so we could easily track usage and potential for further investment. Another key feature of seeking out local grant funding was that we were able to secure buy-in from other campus entities, such as our university IT services and student engagement offices, and not have the perception of a boondoggle.

Unfortunately we didn’t know anyone who could lend us a headset, and we didn’t have the ability to travel to demonstration stations, so we were unable to test equipment before we purchased it. After a few months of offering the HTC Vive in our makerspace, we decided to dedicate a small room to VR activities and dubbed it our VR Studio. This provided a secure place for the equipment, where people could safely use it without bumping into furniture or other people. We also purchased an Oculus Rift and set up another VR station in the room so that users could compare the different headsets.

COLES: Through the efforts of the state librarian and also John MacLeod at VARLibraries, we were able to obtain donations of computers and Oculus headgear from Facebook 360 and Vive headgear from HTC. Both systems are used at Marin County. Each has its advantages, but both offer a robust virtual reality experience, and more educational VR “experiences” have been developed using one or the other of these systems.



Did you and your team set up any specific or assumed goals for introducing VR into your library? How are you evaluating the benefits of having this technology among the library's offerings?

HOLZWEISS: We are still very much in the exploration stage in our library using VR. Social studies classes have visited ancient historical landmarks, and students have coded virtual worlds through CoSpaces. As teachers learn more about how to integrate VR into their activities, I anticipate more formulated goals and assessments.

BARDYN: An important component of health sciences work is to connect the information and technology needs of National Institutes of Health-funded researchers, but the only way to accomplish this big-picture goal is to focus on smaller areas of innovation that need growth support.

Our goal in the health sciences library is to adopt a growth mindset, testing and adopting tools

and technologies based on what researchers are bringing into the library to use in our Translational Research and Information Lab. Although we make some equipment available—like a data wall, Amazon Echo, 360-degree camera—we also encourage users to bring in their own technology and devices. This 800-square-foot room acts like a collaboration and innovation lab that helps researchers—who work with other professionals—solve problems by using technology and expertise to improve health care.

In the UW Health Sciences Library we are working closely with campus partners to design, build, and evaluate spaces and

services that accelerate healthcare. These

new spaces are frequently needed for access to technology and other expertise, not to mention learning about local startups and how to obtain funding dollars. We've never been afraid to sit at the table with those who are different from us, even when commonality seems elusive.

SANCHEZ: One of our early partners in exploring VR was Matt Cook, head of emerging technologies at the University of Oklahoma Libraries. His team of student developers and



Students at Bay Shore (N.Y.) Middle School participating in a CoSpaces Hour of Code activity are able to drag and drop blocks to write their code and see it performed in VR.

"Sessions with special-needs students saw dramatic increases in focus and retention."

JOHN MACLEOD

Executive director, XRlibraries

staff had created a platform called the Oklahoma Virtual Academic Laboratory (OVAL), which allowed networked users to view and annotate 3D assets. This was really exciting because our library could market this as a teaching and collaboration tool to students and faculty, which is how we framed it when we went for local grants. Early on, our primary goal was to have some kind of impact on course curriculum and teaching through VR offerings, and OVAL was an early demonstrator of that. Another goal was to stress the utility of VR as a creativity tool for things like painting, drawing, animation, or games, but not the end-all, be-all of technology.

Our ability to provide curricular outreach grew along with exposure: through tying assignments to VR software, supporting class projects, and teaching various VR development skills through workshops. Assessment has been tricky so far, particularly since we've been so focused on getting the word out and developing our own skill sets. I've been working with another librarian colleague of mine, Niamh Wallace, on getting qualitative feedback from students and faculty on their experiences with using VR in the classroom.

JONES: A specific goal was for our community to get experiences it would not get on its own. The equipment and content is expensive and is mainly purchased by tech-savvy consumers. Our project made it accessible to multiple ages and in multiple venues. We have done it in libraries; in outreach at schools, fairs, and with our bookmobile; and even in a fire evacuation center this fall.

We need to look at formal evaluations, but it absolutely cannot be discounted that VR users are amazed, delighted,

and awed with the technology, so that in itself is a better outcome than many services we put significantly more effort and funding into providing.

COLES: The goal for the statewide project was to offer public libraries representing a range of types and geographies a chance to test this relatively new technology with their patrons. We are issuing another grant to fund continuance of this project and will require participating libraries to collect and submit statistics, which we will use to evaluate demand for these technologies and how they are being used. This data will help determine possible future directions and support for VR projects and programs in public libraries.

How did you test or introduce VR to your users? Was a specific group the test group? Was any special outreach extended to community members?

HOLZWEISS: I began testing with the 6th-grade teachers since I have a good collaborative relationship with them. They have an extra class period during the day

where they can explore enrichment activities with their students. I also tested with our students during the Hour of Code event, as well as my student Techsperts and other students who visit the library during their free periods.

PATRIDGE: The test groups brought in their equipment and gave us feedback on the space they were using. Once we had an established group using the library space, we then added VR as an interest on our online reservation form. VR is our second-most-requested reason for using the space, so our test group is spreading the news by word of mouth. Here at UW, word of mouth and bulletin boards are the most effective ways of advertising.

SANCHEZ: The library hosted a VR symposium in 2017, bringing together faculty, students, and local industry people to demonstrate their VR projects and participate in discussion forums for two days. There wasn't a particular test group we were targeting, but our goal was to establish a learning community of enthusiasts, artists, developers, or anyone curious to learn about VR.

MACLEOD: First up to test in most libraries were the youth, while adults and seniors sat on the sidelines. As their

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curiosity grew, adults edged out the youth. Youth favored more interactive content, and adults steered toward experiences of being underwater with whales, soaring through space, or visiting Venice. Special screening sessions for adults in the morning, visits to retirement homes, or sessions with special-needs students saw dramatic increases in focus and retention.

It's easy to think about VR as just a technology, but what about space considerations (room to set up the equipment, space for users to move around and react to the technology)? How did you and your colleagues think about creating a VR space in your library?

HOLZWEISS: Over the summer, bookcases and furniture were removed from our library to install new carpeting. It was a large undertaking to pack up, label, and organize the books as well as reshelve them. I learned, however, that sometimes “breaking down” offers an opportunity to build up even better. Our library has a makerspace, a computing space, a classroom teaching area, and a reading lounge. We have wide-open spaces and movable furniture to accommodate students walking around enjoying VR technology. Because of our technology's portability, it can be easily stored.



BARDYN: You can increase the effectiveness of your data wall by having good room-darkening shades or investing in new shades to minimize sun glare. We heard that a table would be helpful in simulating surgery and that the temperature in the room needs to be adjustable in order to make it cooler for group use.

SANCHEZ: We came to the conclusion that we needed a dedicated space through trial and error. The original installation of our first HTC Vive headset was awkward and didn't allow enough space or privacy for users. Moving the headsets and computers into a studio space opened up many possibilities, like hosting small classes, managing group work activities, and having fixed demos ready to go. We were fortunate enough to have an underutilized study room next to the makerspace that we could convert into a space with chroma key green walls for mixed reality or multimedia effects, VR headsets, and computers. It also indicated to our users that the technology was here to stay, and that the library was serious about supporting the services and technology surrounding VR.

MACLEOD: Space is a consideration. Libraries had to find five-by-five-foot clear areas for display and provide a dedicated staff person to monitor usage. Teens have stepped up in many libraries to become the VR support team. Being able to project two-dimensional images of the experience enhanced audience appreciation. There was almost always a line and audience for VR screenings. Putting the VR system on a cart provided mobility and adaptability.

How have you trained library colleagues to support users' interest in VR? Have staff responded in surprising or unexpected ways to this new offering?

HOLZWEISS: Unfortunately, I have only one part-time paraprofessional to assist with the managerial aspects of maintaining a school library. I have a crew of student Techsperts who assist with the makerspace and technology resources in the library. They are adept at teaching others about Google Expeditions and CoSpaces. Teachers appreciate that I have extra hands to assist during lessons, and students are more open to learning because they see what their peers can do.

Students, faculty, and community members experience VR at the University of Arizona iSpace during the Tucson Festival of Books.

A teen collaborates with others using Facebook Spaces in a virtual design studio at San José (Calif.) Public Library's TeenHQ.

PATRIDGE: Even though we are in our beginning phase, it seems several staffers are quite comfortable with VR and know how to use it. By asking these staff members and our test group to help, we can offer training sessions so other librarians will learn what it is like in the goggles. Right now, with the way our space is set up, we do require one of our tech people to set up the goggles to make sure they display on our six-panel data wall correctly.

BARDYN: Library systems staff have introduced library colleagues to the headsets and their features and limitations. User interest in VR seems to be high. According to our IT staff, hands-on interaction with the Rift and Oculus headsets commonly generates a lot of enthusiasm and leads to brainstorming sessions about how this technology can be used in medicine. It is a pleasant contrast, in what can sometimes be a high-stress profession, to have an offering generate such spontaneous excitement.

SANCHEZ: All of our staff and student employees who work in the makerspace get basic training on the hardware and software for setting up, using, and troubleshooting VR applications. We also host workshops that are open to anyone in the local and university community, staff included.

It's been difficult at times to get everyone on board with the technology, and that's understandable. The technology is still a little too niche for some groups, and it's cumbersome to set up and wear on your head for long periods of time. I'm hoping that with more mobile headsets coming, you'll see people acclimate to the devices at a faster pace, much like smartphones. Some people have become total enthusiasts though, given the cool applications and tools that are out there right now. I just hope that we inspire people to create something thoughtful and creative with VR tools, and not confine the VR industry to mindless entertainment or escapism.

JONES: We have had success with using paid students in a technology program called WEBstars, but I have been

pleasantly surprised at the various ages and technology backgrounds of staff willing to learn. The online community in California supports everyone very effectively. Ultimately it's crowdsourcing VR in libraries so all can participate and contribute that makes it better for all libraries. We were very lucky that our experience took down nearly all the barriers that would have made this a tough adoption to do all by ourselves.

COLES: VARLibraries held a series of webinars, and we have worked to publicize the community of practice. Most people, including library staff, find VR an amazing experience and have been eager to incorporate it into their libraries' programming. We also had an amazing response to our application process—much more than we expected. **AL**



MIGUEL FIGUEROA is director of ALA's Center for the Future of Libraries.

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Artwork from the 1958 National Library Week campaign.

“Wake Up and Read” to “Libraries Lead”

The 60-year history of
National Library Week

BY Greg Landgraf

While it's never been particularly difficult to lament the decline of reading in American society, the 1950s were a time when literary pessimists found plenty to be concerned about. A Gallup poll in 1955 found that almost two-thirds of adults had not read any book apart from the Bible in the previous year. A 1957 survey found that only 17% of Americans were currently reading a book. And spending on books was decreasing, as more of the country's entertainment dollars went to televisions, radios, and even musical instruments.

The American Library Association (ALA) and the American Book Publishers Council formed the National Book Committee (NBC) in 1954 to fight these trends. One of their ideas: a National Library Week (NLW).

The concept wasn't new. As Larry T. Nix's Library History Buff blog notes (libraryhistorybuff.com/libraryweek.htm), at the 1922 ALA Annual Conference ALA's Publicity Committee had proposed a weeklong celebration of libraries. "We should lose no opportunity to spread the gospel of library service in the fight against ignorance, indifference, illiteracy, and inefficiency," ALA Publicity Committee Chair Willis H. Kerr argued that year. Several librarians also testified about the success of state or local library weeks, dating back at least as far as Toledo, Ohio's Library Week in March 1916.

It took more than 35 years for the idea to go national, however. The NBC drew up plans for the first NLW to be held March 16–22, 1958.

To build support, NLW Director John S. Robling promised that the event "offers an outstanding opportunity to reach nonreaders and make present readers more active readers," but warned that librarians had to work to make the week meaningful to their communities.

The nation responded. The first NLW, with its "Wake Up and Read" theme, attracted more than 11,000 newspaper stories that celebrated libraries, articles in 22 national magazines, 14 national TV and radio stories, and at least 1,500 local TV and radio shows. More than 5,000 communities participated, and the US Post Office even included the NLW theme on its metered postage.

Robling's roundup of results in the June 1958 *ALA Bulletin* reported reactions big and small. For example:

- The "favorable climate" created by NLW helped New Jersey's State Senate to pass a \$1.6 million library appropriation, and New York's legislature approved a \$700,000 increase in library aid.

- Dozens of cities formed Friends of the Library groups.
- Local libraries in Brooklyn, New York; North Providence, Rhode Island; Omaha, Nebraska; and Portage, Ohio, used NLW to start fundraising campaigns to purchase materials or restore bookmobile service.
- The library in Bladensburg, Maryland, presented a program with a US Navy rocket expert the day NASA launched its Vanguard rocket.
- Headquarters received "enthusiastic wires from state committee heads," such as "in Mississippi, enlisting enthusiastic participation from many outstanding leaders formerly passive theoretical supporters of library."

Robling also highlighted unusual NLW efforts, such as the election of library queens in Arizona and Arkansas or leaflets delivered by milkmen making the rounds in South Carolina. And, he noted, "One tiny library in Kentucky is going to get a telephone."

NLW's early years also spawned efforts that went beyond publicity. The Knapp School Libraries Demonstration Project provided a \$1.13 million grant to advertise the importance of reading and offer a toolkit to advise parents on how to ensure their children had good school libraries. An estimated 200,000 of these kits were distributed.

Libraries enthusiastically reported their activities as the program continued to spread in the early years. Brooklyn College Library's celebration of the first NLW included a Freedom to



The state committee executive directors for National Library Week at a workshop in Chicago.



Read display featuring a Bible recovered from a book-burning in Brazil. Westport (Conn.) Library opened a temporary branch for commuters at the train station in 1959. New Bedford (Mass.) Free Public Library, which served a town with a strong whaling history, created the Melville Whaling Room and held a grand opening for it on the last day of NLW in 1962.

Challenges and reinvention

However, NLW's success attracted detractors. The always irascible Jesse Shera, then dean of Western Reserve University's School of Library Science in Cleveland, argued in a 1966 *Wilson Library Bulletin* article that NLW emphasized reading at the expense of libraries. "We wish that the ALA would strip NLW of its pseudocultural veneer, examine it critically and without emotional overtones, and either scrub it up or scrub it. Either way, this sacrifice of the vestals on the altar of intellectual barbarism will follow infanticide into a long-forgotten past."

It wasn't librarians who nearly took down NLW, however. NBC found itself on shaky ground after the American Book Publishers Council merged with the American Educational Publishers Institute in 1970 to create the Association of American Publishers (AAP). John C. Frantz, a former executive chairman of NBC, asserted in *American Libraries* in April 1975 that textbook publishers in the new AAP saw less value in NBC's goals, and "support for NBC within the AAP board of directors was substantially diluted."

Frantz also blamed a rash of mergers in the publishing world that added pressure to increase profitability and reduce costs. *American Libraries* reported in January 1975



that NBC's financial problems had been building for several years and that the staff had been severely cut in 1971.

AAP withdrew its support of NBC in December 1973, and the committee folded late the following year.

NLW powers on

Of course, NLW survived the loss of NBC, as ALA decided to bring it in house.

Then-ALA Executive Director Robert Wedgeworth told *American Libraries* that ALA needed a more robust PR program to face challenges to library funding from the Nixon administration. "I knew we could make [NLW] profitable" and finance ALA's new Public Information Office in the process, he said.

NBC's closure left little time for planning 1975's NLW, however. A report on ALA's Fall 1974 Executive Board meeting warned that "for 1975 primary emphasis will be on national exposure for libraries," with a limited variety of promotional materials available and a program that would fall within the "constraints of the present budget."

In many ways, 1975's NLW was like any other, including activities such as:

- Douglas County (Oreg.) Library displayed book recommendations that it had been soliciting for two years from celebrities like film critic Gene Shalit and golfer Arnold Palmer.



- Arizona State Library Association used paintings by Hopi artists on its NLW poster and bookmark.
- The New Jersey Library Association coordinated a statewide competition to select the New Jersey Library Family.
- Wartburg College Library and Waverly Public Library in Iowa hosted the delightfully named (though difficult to put on a poster) “The First in Some Time, Last in a Long Time, Once in a Lifetime Fine-Free Overdue Wartburg Waverly NLW Amnesty Days.”
- Thirty-seven librarians descended on Washington to speak to their congressional representatives, which helped to gain support for increased library funding in the 1976 education appropriations bill.

Producing a normal NLW under the circumstances was no easy feat, however. ALA mailed a “clip sheet” of library stories to more than 3,500 newspapers, produced radio spots featuring TV stars Valerie Harper (*Rhoda*) and Carroll O’Connor (*All in the Family*), and placed features in national media. ALA also sold promotional materials like posters and buttons with an “Information Power!” theme.

Acting Librarian of Congress and Executive Board member John Lorenz called Public Information Office Director Peggy Barber’s efforts a “bloody miracle,” with more than 9,000 orders for NLW materials. A survey of 550 members found that a majority of respondents considered the “Information Power!” program to be the best NLW ever produced.

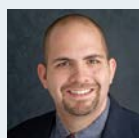
Libraries lead the way

Since then, NLW has grown into an annual institution. Former MTV VJ Adam Curry helped bring it into the information age in the 1990s, designing an interactive website

to help libraries introduce the public to the internet during a special “Log-on @ the Library Day.” (The website is sadly no longer available, although you can still see it thanks to the Internet Archive Wayback Machine: bit.ly/nlwcurry.) ALA recruited top-flight luminaries to lend their support—with more than 50, including journalist David Brinkley, author Beverly Cleary, actor Alfre Woodard, singer Melissa Etheridge, and Vice President Al Gore sharing their stories to support the “Libraries Change Lives” theme in effect from 1993 to 1996.

In the 21st century the week expanded to encompass National Library Workers Day (introduced in 2003), National Bookmobile Day (introduced in 2010), and Take Action for Libraries Day (introduced in 2017). Celebrities formalized their support by serving as honorary chairs starting in 2008, led by actor Julie Andrews and followed by the likes of Neil Gaiman, John Grisham, and Judy Blume.

In 2018, NLW celebrates its 60th anniversary April 8–14, with American Ballet Theatre principal dancer and best-selling author Misty Copeland serving as honorary chair. This year’s theme is “Libraries Lead,” which emphasizes the leadership of libraries and library workers in their communities and the role of libraries in helping patrons develop their own leadership skills. Although the milkmen and metered postage designs have been replaced by famous spokespeople and social media campaigns, the core reasons for NLW—improving literacy, supporting intellectual freedom, increasing library funding—remain. **AL**



GREG LANDGRAF is a regular contributor to *American Libraries*.

Engaging Civic-Minded Teens

Data literacy fosters YA
participation and innovation

By Terra Dankowski



Fake news. Alternative facts. Information literacy. To be a library professional in 2017 meant you were never far from these terms. Many institutions addressed them head-on with awareness campaigns, continuing education, and programming.

But what about data literacy? Did librarians tackle charts and graphs as much as headlines? And what about teens, who are often overlooked in the context of civic and voter preparedness?

Increasingly, librarians are addressing these questions by bringing statistical education and opportunities to young adults—and they're using massive collections of open civic datasets to teach these lessons. *American Libraries* highlights a few libraries improving students' comfort with infographics, supporting instructors, and encouraging teens to become more engaged citizens.

Teaching the basics

"We didn't start with a premise. We left the topic up to them," says Tess Wilson, civic information services intern in the digital strategies department at Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (CLP).

Students enrolled in the week-long Civic Data Zine Camp at CLP's Squirrel Hill branch last summer produced narratives about UFO sightings, shark attacks, and US homicide rates. "We had one teen investigate her neighborhood in Pittsburgh," Wilson says, "so it was a wide range [of topics]."

The program, which grew out of a project that Wilson developed while getting her MLIS at University of Pittsburgh, was an effort of CLP and the city's Beyond Data Initiative to get young adults ages 12–18 to tell stories with data. The course was part of The Labs @ CLP curriculum (carnegielibrary.org/



At Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh's Civic Data Zine Camp, young adults learned data literacy concepts by presenting statistical narratives and visualizations in a handmade zine format.

kids-teens/the-labs-clp)—funded by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)—and gave attendees a chance to investigate civic matters through research projects presented as zines.

"We were really interested in the handmade aspect of [zines]. I think it



allowed for more intimacy with the data," says Wilson. "And they're a great way to disseminate information."

To familiarize students with different types of qualitative and quantitative data, each zine was required to have a visualization, map, and survey or interview. CLP partnered with local journalism organization PublicSource to teach students data literacy concepts and develop what Wilson calls "a more critical mind-set."

"The reporters came in and did some demonstrations [and] talked to the kids about using databases," Wilson says, noting that the Western Pennsylvania Regional Data Center was a favorite local resource among project authors. PublicSource also helped students understand the importance of consulting multiple reliable sources and the concept of bias in seemingly straightforward datasets.

"I think [data] gives teens another avenue for engagement within their communities," says Wilson. "I think it prepares them to make change within systems that rely on data, and that's a really important thing."

Though it's not clear if the Civic Data Zine Camp will return as a lab, feedback from attendees was positive. "A couple of them said they loved everything about the week," Wilson says. "Having the reporters there also helped to validate that journey."

Tips for Teaching Teens Data Literacy

1

Don't harp on technology. Data literacy isn't about flashy tools. "We found that learning concepts separate from the technology is really helpful," says Tess Wilson, civic information services intern in the digital strategies department at Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. The analog nature of her zine camp meant students drew maps and graphs themselves—a powerful route to skill building.

2

Use relevant or localized data. "One thing that I think is really useful to do is an environmental scan," says Kristin Fontichiaro, clinical associate professor at University of Michigan's School of Information. "Where are your students encountering data? What kind of data is in the local newspaper? What kind of data is shown in the textbooks that they use?" she asks. She then suggested meeting local needs by using the types of datasets or visualizations that they encounter regularly.

3

Form community partnerships. "We relied on our community partners to bring in the technical knowledge and help us develop a plan," says Christie Lassen, director of communications and partnership at Howard County (Md.) Library System. Organizations that helped with the library's hackathons include the Howard Tech Council, Howard County Public School System, and the local chapter of Girls Who Code. The tech community provided mentors and judges, allowing the library to focus on infrastructure, such as providing the venue and pre-programmed laptops.

4

Present the results. It's important to share your teens' research. "One cool thing about this particular intensive was that we were able to highlight these zines at Data Day, and they now live permanently in the zine collection at the main branch," says Wilson. She notes that this can be done on a small scale, too. "We had a mini zine swap on the last day [of the program] that was just internal." ●

Building professional capacity

Teacher-librarians are well positioned to impart data literacy to teens, but who's giving instructors the resources and support that they need to do so?

Kristin Fontichiaro, clinical associate professor at University of Michigan's School of Information, and Jo Angela Oehrli, learning librarian at University of Michigan Library, were up for the task. As principal investigators of the two-year IMLS-funded project "Supporting Librarians in Adding Data Literacy Skills to Information Literacy Instruction" (datalit.sites.uofmhosting.net), they set out to design materials for high school librarians looking to foster data and statistical literacy skills in their students.

"We were seeing on our own campus that data was becoming a powerful mode of expression and wasn't working in ways that information literacy always works," says

Fontichiaro. With help from data and curriculum experts at the University of Michigan, Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, and colleges across the country, she and Oehrli developed virtual conferences, handbooks, webinars, and discussion questions.

Materials cover strategies for introducing teens to data and its usage, visualizations, and privacy topics, such as the implications of data collection by always-on devices like Fitbit or Amazon Echo. Though the initiative formally wrapped in September 2017, all deliverables—including the two books, *Creating Data Literate Students* and *Data Literacy in the Real World: Case Studies and Conversations*—are available for free on the project website.

"It's not enough to have open data. You have to have people navigate that data, know it's there, and know how to use it," Fontichiaro says. "Our real goal was for librarians to be



empowered, and our workshops show that when

librarians and educators know more, they do more." Materials were designed to be high impact for the school librarian who might not have time to teach a full lesson.

The virtual conferences provided insight into who is interested in these resources. "The first year we had over 80 different job titles sign up, from folks who work at state departments of education or government agencies to classroom teachers," says Fontichiaro. About one-third of the audience consisted of high school librarians.

The information climate also affected people's motivation for

attending. “In 2016, we asked a registration question: ‘Why is it important for students to be data literate?’ And many people said, ‘Well, they need to make infographics.’ In 2017, the big answer was ‘to participate in elections.’” By demand, a third virtual conference is planned for July.

“I believe that an informed democracy makes better decisions, so I think this is a critical life skill,” Fontichiaro says, “especially in the era of artificial intelligence and algorithms.”

Inviting innovation

How can we innovate with open data? Libraries and librarians have a simple answer: Encourage people to use it.

Hackathons, well known in the academic library community, have been cropping up more frequently at public libraries—and participation is skewing younger. In 2016, Howard County (Md.) Library System (HCLS) decided to include the Civility Hackathon as part of its community’s Choose Civility program, where teams of students in grades 6–12 and college were assigned different civic problems to solve with technology.

“We appealed to our community—private offices, private businesses, nonprofits—and said, ‘What are challenges that you’re facing that could possibly have a technical solution?’” says Alli Jessing, events and seminars manager for HCLS. Organizations



Middle school students competing as the team “Website Trekkies” were challenged to create a centralized community calendar at the 2017 Civility Hackathon at Howard County (Md.) Library System.

conveyed their ideas in a Google Form, and some suggestions were packaged as prompts asking students to build resources that could, for instance, aggregate the needs of food banks and pantries in the area or connect someone unable to shovel snow with a neighbor willing to lend a hand.

Challenges were then scaled to specific age groups. “At every level we had someone who was new to it,” says Jessing. “The high schoolers and the college students created a more in-depth project where they actually used databases and APIs to create more functional websites.” Some data sources used were APIs from Google, Twitter, and YouTube, as well as datasets from Howard County Open Data and calendars from the school district and HCLS.

“Whatever the outcome is, they own that product,” says Jessing, who notes that at least one team decided to continue working on its project after the hackathon had ended.

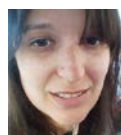
Not too far from Howard County, the Library of Congress is getting in on the act with its Congressional Data Challenge (labs.loc.gov/experiments/congressionalchallenge), a competition inviting participants to develop digital projects that analyze, interpret, or share legislative data from Congress.gov in user-friendly ways. The challenge is accepting applications through April 2, and a \$1,000

prize will be awarded to the best high school project.

“The data challenge is an established method of reaching software and app developers who can bring data analysis and visualization skills to create new experiences with our collections,” says Abbey Potter, acting chief of LC’s National Digital Initiatives. “Computer programming skills are being taught at an early age, and we want to give these young people an opportunity to show what they can do while learning more about legislative data and the legislative process.”

Drawing its inspiration from the successful Congressional App and Chronicling America challenges, LC expects to see submissions of visualizations, mobile and desktop applications, websites, and other digital widgets or tools, and hopes to feature projects at labs.loc.gov to inspire others to use the data.

“High schoolers, like everyone living in the United States, are affected by the legislation of our country every day, and giving them an inside and detailed look at lawmaking will only make them more informed,” says Potter. “That is the bedrock of a democracy.” **AL**



TERRA DANKOWSKI is an associate editor at *American Libraries*.

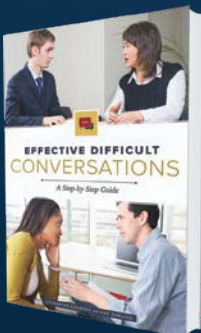
“It’s not enough to have open data. You have to have people navigate that data, know it’s there, and know how to use it.”

KRISTIN FONTICHIARO, clinical associate professor at University of Michigan’s School of Information

We've All Been There

*Conducting
effective difficult
conversations*

BY CATHERINE SOEHNER and ANN DARLING



This is an excerpt from
*Effective Difficult
Conversations: A
Step-by-Step Guide*
by Catherine Soehner
and Ann Darling
(ALA Editions, 2017).



Photo: © deagreetz/Adobe Stock

At some point in our work life, we all must confront that most dreaded situation: the difficult conversation. There are numerous examples from all rungs of the organizational ladder. We might find people who are not fulfilling the requirements of their positions, who are regularly negative, who bully people, or who are frequently late for their shift. As a leader, you must have difficult conversations with these people to address, and hopefully remedy, these behaviors.

The situation can be managed in a compassionate and direct manner to create an effective conversation and a working solution. To begin, we must define the difficult conversation.

What is a difficult conversation? For a conflict-avoidant person, it is any conversation that produces anxiety, that worries you, or that you have put off, and in which you are certain the other person will not like what you are saying. For a straight shooter who is not afraid of confrontation, a difficult conversation may become one in which, after “telling it like it is,” the other person becomes hostile, combative, or worse.

Different kinds of difficult conversations

A difficult conversation entered without reflection can become a difficult situation, and it may only go downhill from there. But what is difficult is in the eye of the beholder—or rather, the mouth of the speaker. However, some generalizations and common examples are:

Telling people they will not be retained or did not get a promotion. Hiring and promoting can be rewarding and even pleasurable conversations to have, and firing or denying promotions can be among the most difficult. Unfortunately, our jobs

are filled with the give-and-take of this cycle, and thinking about how to manage the less pleasurable conversations that arise throughout the workday is important.

A leader might have to let someone go for many reasons, such as when grant funding for a position ends and there are no other funds to continue the position. Sometimes we have to let people go because they are not performing their job adequately. Often the decision happens after a long series of difficult conversations. If you have not been consistent about having frequent conversations and creating documentation, letting someone go can be a difficult process.

Similarly, telling people that they did not get a promotion or a position they applied for can also be difficult. Often people who have applied for a promotion have worked with you for some time. The employee may have become a friend and trusted colleague. In these instances, difficult conversations have an added layer of personal complication that must be considered.

Telling people they are not performing adequately. In many libraries and other academic units, we are expected to conduct performance reviews on an annual basis. We would like to report that their regularity makes them easier, but that would not be true. For most of us, these conversations are especially difficult precisely because of their regularity and because we conduct them with people we may know well.

Negative performance reviews are tricky because the task is to clearly identify behavior that needs to be changed while also motivating the employee to stay engaged and be willing to improve. Hiring new employees is almost always more expensive and time consuming than training and supporting current employees. Finding a way to conduct this conversation effectively is critical to success as a leader.

These conversations can be especially difficult if the other person believes he or she is doing an excellent job. However, avoiding telling people that they are not meeting expectations is unproductive. How can anyone improve his or her performance unless he or she knows that expectations are not being met? You can put off having the difficult conversation, wait until the yearly review, and then surprise the employee with a poor performance review, but that would be discouraged by any human resources department. It is unfair and unkind not to help the employee improve simply because you want to avoid a difficult conversation. Furthermore, ignoring poor performance can affect the morale of those performing well. It can be demoralizing to work hard every day only to see others making a minimal effort with no consequences.

Telling people you need them to do something they don't want to do, or telling people you need them to stop doing something that they like to do or feel entitled to do. These types of conversations may be less formal in terms of institutional norms, but they are no less difficult. In academic settings like libraries, most of us have benefited from the opportunity to "own" our jobs. This privilege can make work rewarding, but sometimes we forget that the opportunity to create our own work is a privilege and not a right. All working situations change; new tasks get assigned and new technologies demand that old tasks be done in new ways. Redirecting people's work is a common aspect of a leader's job. This conversation is not likely to go well if not handled with some level of reflection and planning.

Components of a difficult conversation

There are many reasons we might hesitate to have a difficult conversation.

The other person might react badly. People, being human, react to information they don't want to hear with a wide range of emotions. We've heard stories of managers who were loudly cursed at by a colleague after the latter had learned that a

tenure case received a negative vote. And we've heard stories of colleagues attempting to build coalitions against a supervisor when a merit review didn't result in the raise they'd hoped for. It is true that difficult conversations can result in heated emotions expressed without restraint, but fears are often worse than realities. These reactions are awkward at best and frightening at worst.

You might be rejected. Let's be honest: No one likes to be rejected. Risking rejection is something most of us avoid at all costs. It is also true, however, that being a leader means that occasionally you will have to risk rejection. One of the most important things to learn as a leader is that you must regard your friendships differently. As a supervisor or as a coworker, you still need to work with people with

whom you will have to have difficult conversations. You may need something from them in the future, or you may just not want them to shun you in day-to-day interactions. These are natural fears, and they must be managed. You will be called to treat your friends as employees, even when that is very difficult.

You might do it badly and make things worse. Even for someone who is ready to enter conflict, this is a very real concern. High stakes are involved in hosting a difficult conversation, and the consequences and impact of an ineffective difficult conversation are very real, ranging from a lawsuit to

It is unfair and unkind not to help the employee improve simply because you want to avoid a difficult conversation.



lost trust and maybe some banged-up furniture. Having a plan to address a difficult conversation will reduce this particular concern whether you are conflict-avoidant or not.

The good news and the bad news

No matter what you do to prepare, difficult conversations are never easy. There is a lot at stake in these types of conversations.

Telling people that grant funds have expired and they will not be rehired is tantamount to telling them that they will not be able to pay their rent or feed their children. Telling people that they are not performing tasks adequately is often interpreted as telling them they are inadequate human beings. You should go into each difficult conversation assuming that the stakes are even higher than evident on the surface.

Practical steps and learnable skills can be used to make difficult conversations go smoothly. Adequate preparation is important, and careful follow-up can ensure that such conversations result in desirable behavioral change and accountability for both the employee and yourself. Communication skills like listening, nonverbal immediacy, and clear messaging can go a long way toward making difficult conversations effective.

The good news is that these conversations can be productive and yield important change. People we supervise, armed with clear expectations and supported by compassionate messages, can transform into model employees. Through difficult conversations, we might learn what is keeping an employee from performing adequately and might be able to

create supportive structures so that performance can meet expectations. There is much to be learned through a carefully navigated difficult conversation.

And the news gets even better. By having these conversations, you will gain confidence, strength, and integrity. A great irony of life as a manager is that avoiding difficult conversations makes work more difficult. Tasks don't get completed on time and at the right level of quality. People can be confused and unhappy, which can make for low morale.

The difference between a minimally successful manager and a truly successful one is the capacity for having effective difficult conversations. You will be remembered and promoted not because you manage your budget well and meet deadlines, although these are very important, but because you help the people around you reach—and maybe exceed—their professional potential. Having these conversations may never be easy, but if you follow key steps and develop needed communication skills, you will become confident in your abilities and feel satisfied that there is integrity in the way that you interact with those under your supervision. **AL**



CATHERINE SOEHNER is associate dean for research and user services at the J. Willard Marriott Library at the University of Utah. Coauthor

ANN DARLING is assistant vice president of undergraduate studies and associate professor in the communication department at the University of Utah.

We Can, but Should We?

When trends challenge our professional values

Libraries work hard to help the underserved in their communities. However, identifying and reaching out to nonusers of our services is often difficult. Imagine having access to information about every one of your community members and whether and how they use the library. You could tailor your communications and target those who might need services the most.

In K–12 and academic libraries, this is becoming increasingly possible with learning analytics systems that aggregate student data to make trends visible. The systems also allow advisors, instructors, and other stakeholders to use the trend data to identify a student at risk based on specific characteristics or behaviors. They allow educators to intervene, often before a student exhibits any difficulties.

Some libraries have jumped on the learning analytics bandwagon, inspired by early work like the Association of College and Research Libraries' *Value of Academic Libraries* report (bit.ly/allibvalue) and the Jisc Library Impact Data Project (bit.ly/alimpactdata). To demonstrate the value of libraries, some institutions are integrating library data—such as circulation data, building visits, database usage, and workshop attendance—into institutional learning analytics platforms.

While the possibilities of library data in learning analytics might be intriguing, the privacy implications are immense. If these systems can identify students who don't use the library, this means that individual and transaction-level data is being kept and put into other institutional platforms. It's possible that a library collecting this data could end up responsible for a major breach of patron privacy.



I wonder if students know what data their library is or isn't collecting. How many libraries require students to explicitly opt into data collection? Or do students tacitly agree to be tracked by using the library's resources? Some claim that millennials don't care about privacy, but preliminary research (bit.ly/aljrprivacy) by Jenica Rogers, director of libraries at SUNY Potsdam, suggests that many students are concerned, especially when their information is not fully anonymized and aggregated.

It's not hard to imagine this data being used in ways we didn't intend and can't control. Instructors can already see student activity in the learning management system (LMS). What if they could also see how much time students are spending doing library research? It wouldn't be a leap to imagine instructors

While the possibilities of library data in learning analytics might be intriguing, the privacy implications are immense.

grading students based on their use of library resources.

Although some libraries collect user data to demonstrate library value, so far the relationship between library use and student success has been shown to be only correlational. It is not clear that library use causes better grades. Correlates of student success include going to the gym (bit.ly/algotogym), holding a part-time job (bit.ly/alptjob), and living on campus (bit.ly/aldormlife). When it's not clear whether the association is causal, there's no guarantee that changing one behavior will improve a student's grade.

At the 2016 Colorado Academic Library Association Conference, Megan Oakleaf, an associate professor at Syracuse (N.Y.) University School of Information Studies who favors using library data in learning analytics, stated, "We won't know what difference the library makes until we collect data on individual library users." However, in her presentation at that conference (bit.ly/alzoeprivacy), Zoe Fisher, assistant professor and pedagogy and assessment librarian at University of Colorado Denver, described methods, such as ethnography and phenomenography, that libraries can use to investigate their value and better understand patrons without invading their privacy.

Compromising our professional values to chase a controversial education trend is definitely not our only option to understanding our impact on students. **AL**

MEREDITH FARKAS is a faculty librarian at Portland (Oreg.) Community College and a lecturer at San José (Calif.) State University School of Information. She blogs at InformationWantsToBeFree.com. Email: librarysuccess@gmail.com

Social Media Bots

How they spread misinformation

Bots are automatic software programs that perform repetitive tasks to gather data from the internet. Bots can automate tedious and time-consuming processes efficiently, but they can also be deployed to mine users' data or manipulate public opinion. The Imperva Incapsula security company's Bot Traffic Report 2016 (bit.ly/2kzZ6Nn) estimates that approximately 30% of internet traffic is produced by malicious bots.

In social media, bots collect information by crawling the internet for specific keywords and hashtags and sharing them on sites like Facebook and Twitter. Some social bots were developed to behave like a human—using emojis in their posts, only posting at reasonable hours of the day, or limiting the amount of information they share. They have become increasingly sophisticated, making it difficult to distinguish a bot-generated internet persona from a live human. In 2014, Twitter revealed in a Securities and Exchange Commission filing that approximately 8.5% of all its users were bots, and that number may have increased to as much as 15% in 2017.

People who are unaware that they are interacting with a bot can easily be supplied with false information. According to research published in the *Communications of the Association for Computing Machinery* in 2016, more than 20% of authentic Facebook users accept friend requests indiscriminately. People with a large network of friends are more likely to accept requests from people they don't know. This can make it relatively easy for bots to infiltrate a network of social media users.



Technology to detect bots is in its infancy, and digital security experts are working on approaches to recognize them automatically. Indiana University launched the Observatory on Social Media project (previously known as Truthy), which compares suspected Twitter accounts with the characteristics of known bots collected in its database.

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, an arm of the US Defense Department, sponsored a competition in 2015 to identify bots that simulate human behavior and attempt to influence opinions. The project discovered that a semiautomated process combining inconsistency detection, behavioral modeling, text analysis, network analysis, and machine learning is the most effective means of identifying malicious bots.

A main difficulty in identifying some bots is their short lifespan. Bots often are created for a specific task; once that task

is complete, their accounts are eliminated. Detecting bots before they can do any harm is critical to shutting them down.

It is possible to watch for bots on social networks. To protect ourselves from bots that spread misinformation, we can use the following methods:

1. Do not accept friend requests from accounts that lack a profile picture, have confused or misspelled handles, have low numbers of tweets or shares, and follow more accounts than they have followers.
2. Report any bots that you've identified. Social media sites provide links for reporting misuse.
3. Rather than relying on a single hashtag, use a wide variety and change them on a regular basis.
4. Check the number of followers for new friends. If accounts you follow gain large numbers of followers overnight, bots are probably involved.
5. Read before sharing. Many people share articles without reading anything but the headline, which may be misleading or unrelated to the story it is attached to.
6. Be skeptical. Verify sources, and use such fact-checking sites as Snopes or PolitiFact.

If our students and patrons are taught to be skeptical about information sources, they are more likely to discern the truth. Helping individuals learn information literacy is one of the most important skills we can offer. **AL**

JOANNA M. BURKHARDT is director of the University of Rhode Island branch libraries in Providence and Narragansett. Adapted from "Combating Fake News in the Digital Age," *Library Technology Reports* vol. 53, no. 8 (November/December 2017).

Do not accept
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accounts that lack
a profile picture or
have confused or
misspelled handles.

To Preserve and Protect

Students learn stewardship by examining endangered cultural traditions

Many schools teach about endangered species and humans' effect on the environment, but they don't always look at other threatened

aspects of our world. Culture and history are disappearing every day, whether it is a language on the verge of extinction, a musical instrument that no one plays anymore, or town history that no one remembers.

As we observe Preservation Week (April 22–26), keep in mind that even our youngest students are eager to hear about cultural and historic preservation from the people most invested in it. Our learners realize that everybody has a story and that these stories make a difference.

My own preservation journey with 3rd graders at Pilot Mountain (N.C.) Elementary School begins with Marie Wilcox. She is the last known fluent speaker of the Wukchumni language, which is spoken by a Native American tribe in California, and she has dedicated the past decade to preserving it by creating a dictionary. My students are captivated by Wilcox and her mission.

We begin our discussion by talking about the importance of documenting language. We also examine endangered traditions such as forms of dance, musical instruments, and arts and crafts. The students are engaged not only by stories of people who endeavor to maintain cultural traditions, but by interacting with the tradition themselves—for instance, a quick lesson on Irish step dancing or finger knitting. When I pull out a bag of spoons and tell students we are going to learn to play them, their expressions are joyful.

By exploring cultural traditions and how individuals are protecting them, students learn empathy and stewardship.



They begin to think about the world around them and how they can contribute. I love to use vivid storytelling—whether I'm explaining how the Gullah people from the Georgia and South Carolina Lowcountry region used sweet grass to make baskets, or describing fires that destroyed our town and led to the creation of the local fire department—to galvanize students' compassion and understanding.

Thinking about bringing cultural and history preservation lessons to your library or classroom? Here are some ideas for successful programming.

- 1. Contact local history groups.** Members of our county's African American Historical and Genealogical Society have spoken to students, and a historian visits our school each year to present the town's history.
- 2. Use your resources.** Is there a tradition your area is known for? Could someone come in and share it? For a lesson

on seed preservation, we contacted a nearby farm with a heritage apple orchard. I contacted master gardeners through our cooperative extension and asked them to come by and show the students how to graft trees.

- 3. Line up primary sources.** Partner with a public or academic library for primary-source photographs or ephemera that could enhance your students' study of local history. Consult the resources of the Global Oneness Project, Library of Congress, Smithsonian Folkways, and UNESCO to enhance lessons.
- 4. Make it engaging.** Plan activities or other strategies to get students moving or interacting with the cultural traditions or primary sources being studied.
- 5. Take a field trip.** We are lucky that our school is within walking distance of our small downtown area. I take students on a historic walking tour every year to talk about how the community has changed over time.

There are so many compelling stories that can teach our students about the wonderful diversity in our world and about why a variety of histories and cultural traditions need to be preserved. If you are excited about the Svalbard Global Seed Vault in Norway, chances are they will be too. Excited students share information with their families and communities, and they look at people for their stories, not their stereotypes. **AL**

Even our youngest students are eager to hear about preservation from the people most invested in it.

AMY HARPE is media coordinator at Pilot Mountain (N.C.) Elementary School. Her "Everybody Has a Story" initiative was awarded the 2017 Sara Jaffarian School Library Program Award for Exemplary Humanities Programming by the American Library Association.



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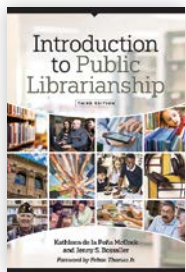
HRDR

ACRL

Serving the Community

New books on public librarianship

The public library is the face of librarianship for many outside the profession. It's a ubiquitous space that serves not only as an information repository but also as a community resource. New titles on public librarianship address its many facets and spheres of influence.



The afterword in *Introduction to Public Librarianship*, 3rd edition, by Kathleen de la Peña McCook and Jenny S. Bossaller, captures the essence of public librarianship. In it, Katharine Phenix, adult services librarian at Anythink Libraries in Adams County, Colorado, describes how her work makes a difference: "Libraries will be there, collecting, organizing, and making [materials] available to anyone who comes in the door, or portal, or hologram," she writes. Chapters address how



to administer public libraries to make a difference in people's lives. The first chapters examine public library history, the push toward equity of access, finance, accountability, staffing, facilities, and services to youth and adults. But libraries do not work alone. The final chapters provide an overview of numerous networks for local and international collaboration. Some are longstanding, such as sharing catalog records; others are newer. Some are greatly enhanced by technology, others less so. Intended as a textbook, its detailed research and exhaustive references make this a valuable volume for new and seasoned librarians.

ALA Neal-Schuman, 2018. 416 P. \$72. PBK. 978-0-8389-1506-6.

A solid overview can provide a road map to establishing services, but sometimes detailed directions are needed. *Creating and Managing the Full-Service Homework Center*, by Cindy Mediavilla, walks through the steps of creating such a center. She starts by pointing out the advantages of homework centers—libraries are a safe place, working in a homework center does not connote remedial assistance, and evidence points to positive outcomes—then moves to community assessment, policies needed, and ways to evaluate success.

Establishing a center involves the com-



munity, whether for funding partners, volunteer resources, or school collaboration. Decisions must also be made about space, locations, supplies, hours, and policies

on security and behavioral expectations. Mediavilla provides talking points and examples throughout the book. ALA Editions, 2018. 184 P. \$54. PBK. 978-0-8389-1618-6.

THE BESTSELLERS LIST

TOP 3 IN PRINT

1 | National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries by American Association of School Librarians



The new *Standards* enables school librarians to influence and lead in their schools, districts, and states and to better plan for today's educational landscape.

2 | The Complete Guide to Personal Digital Archiving by Brianna H. Marshall

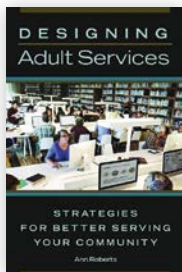


Featuring expert contributors working in a variety of contexts, this resource will help you help your patrons take charge of their personal materials.

3 | Introduction to Public Librarianship, 3rd edition by Kathleen de la Peña McCook and Jenny S. Bossaller, foreword by Felton Thomas Jr.



De la Peña McCook teams up with Bossaller to update and expand her work, incorporating the field's renewed emphasis on outcomes and transformation.



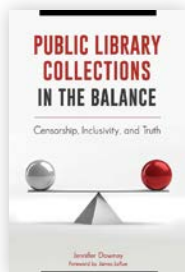
Similarly, Ann Roberts in *Designing Adult Services: Strategies for Better Serving Your Community* starts with the need for community assessment and evaluation of services. She walks

through possible services for different community demographics, including the emerging adult population ages 18–24 in one chapter and ages 25–30 in the next, recognizing the granularity of services that should be considered to be responsive to every demographic need. Chapters on older adults address these patrons and their caregivers. Stressing inclusivity, Roberts offers tips for serving new immigrants, disabled patrons, and the incarcerated. She also includes forms, specific collection development suggestions, and a competencies checklist.

Libraries Unlimited, 2017. 177 P. \$45. PBK. 978-1-4408-5254-1. (Also available as an ebook.)

Intellectual freedom is a core value of librarianship. In *Public Library Collections in the Balance: Censorship, Inclusivity, and Truth*, Jennifer Downey reviews the history of censorship in US public libraries, charting an evolution from the provision of “worthy” reading to the Library Bill of

Rights in 1939 to today’s broad definition of the “freedom to read.” Downey reviews the types of materials that are challenged, either for content or format; issues

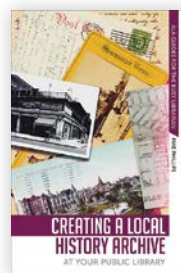


surrounding internet access; and tips on how to respond to complaints. Also useful are discussions on the importance of understanding one’s community, overcoming personal biases in selection, and balancing demand for popular and quality material. Libraries Unlimited, 2017. 203 P. \$55. PBK. 978-1-4408-4964-0. (Also available as an ebook.)



There are many reasons someone might turn to the library for genealogical assistance, a specialized reference skill. With *Helping Patrons Find Their Roots: A Genealogy Handbook for Librarians*, Janice Lindgren Schultz, former manager of the Midwest Genealogical Center in Independence, Missouri, provides a guide for the nonspecialists among us. She discusses how to develop a family tree while also

evaluating its “leaves” to understand more about the times and places in which our ancestors lived. She covers the basics of record types and their contents, along with advanced topics like military and church records, international resources, and reconciling conflicting information. The final chapter provides tips on collection development and training. ALA Editions, 2018. 240 P. \$59. PBK. 978-0-8389-1644-5.



Local history is closely related to genealogy. Part of the American Library Association Guides for the Busy Librarian series, Faye Phillips’s *Creating a Local History Archive at Your Public Library*

begins with a brief review of local history in public library collections, followed by a discussion of strategic decisions to ponder when considering one. The meat of the book progresses through the steps of collection management: acquisition; processing, accessioning, and description; providing access; and care. ALA Editions, 2018. 176 P. \$57. PBK. 978-0-8389-1566-0. **AL**

KAREN MULLER was librarian and knowledge management specialist for the ALA Library until her retirement in December 2017.

The Top-Selling Books from ALA Publishing (Since January 1, 2018)

TOP 3 IN EBOOKS

1 | Foundations of Library and Information Science, 4th edition

by Richard E. Rubin,
foreword by Joseph Janes



This book illuminates the major facets of library and information science for aspiring professionals as well as those already practicing in the field.

2 | Teaching Information Literacy Reframed: 50+ Framework-Based Exercises for Creating Information-Literate Learners

by Joanna M. Burkhardt

Burkhardt offers instructors guidance in teaching the six threshold concepts in the *Framework*, helping them create their own local information literacy programs.



3 | New on the Job: A School Librarian's Guide to Success, 2nd edition

by Hilda K. Weisburg and Ruth Toor



New school librarians as well as those already in the profession can set the tone for a rewarding career with this one-stop, hands-on guide.

SOLUTIONS

Products and services



Living Language for Libraries provides access to online courses in more than 20 languages.

Embracing Diverse Narratives

Improving your services to minority populations

Libraries strive to create a welcoming space for all members of the public. Part of that process involves engaging with diverse communities and building understanding. The following services will help you guide readers toward materials that reflect their experiences and explore the experiences of others, and help you—and others—learn new languages and incorporate multicultural concepts into storytime.

Living Language for Libraries

Living Language for Libraries, from Books on Tape, provides access to online courses for more than 20 languages, teaching grammar, vocabulary, and culture from beginner to advanced levels. Courses include traditional tools such as

flashcards and audio recordings as well as games designed by native speakers and other learning tools that allow learners to tailor lessons to their individual learning style.

In addition to its in-depth language courses, Living Language offers overview courses designed for travelers, businesspeople, law enforcement, health care workers, and librarians. These courses cover specialized vocabulary and specific cultural notes as well as grammar and pronunciation.

Librarian-specific language courses in Spanish and American Sign Language are free with Living Language for Libraries subscriptions. The courses teach library-related vocabulary and provide guides to common library interactions like accessing digital resources and providing information to

newcomers to the area. Libraries can also supplement their English-language learner programs with Living Language ESL courses tailored to a number of first languages, including Arabic, Chinese, and Spanish.

Patrons access the courses online or through an iOS app, with no limit on the number of concurrent logins. Built-in reporting features provide information on how often patrons use the program and for how long, so libraries can assess which courses are being used. Books on Tape provides customer support services and marketing materials to help libraries promote their courses.

Pricing is based on the population that a library serves and the languages it chooses to offer—for a quote and free trial code, visit bibliotheca.com. For more information, visit booksontape.com/living-language.

OurStory Pro

We Need Diverse Books, a nonprofit organization founded in 2014 to address a lack of representation in children's literature, launched OurStory in mid-2016. This book discovery app matches young readers with books that examine a range of experiences—including LGBTQIA people, people of color, people with disabilities, and other minorities.

While kid and teen versions of the app are free to the public, OurStory Pro is designed specifically to aid librarians and educators in readers' advisory and to supplement diversity-oriented programs and

CASE STUDY

Bilingual Birdies

How do you use Bilingual Birdies' professional development courses? The Bilingual Birdies professional development course covered ways to add movement, singing, musical instruments, and wordplay into storytimes. I enjoyed it immensely because it was very theatrical and dramatic. My International Fairy-Tale Hour incorporates much of what Bilingual Birdies emphasizes.

I often open my program by finding on a wall map where the fairy tale is based. We also stop every now and then to discuss vocabulary words, and children ask questions about culture, food, and dress. Children get a geographic, linguistic, musical, cultural, and moral lesson while having fun. They also learn how to express their ideas and become more eloquent in the process.

How does Bilingual Birdies serve your library needs? Bilingual Birdies is a wonderful way to introduce our little (and big) ones to rhythm, music, and a new or familiar language. Multilingual and multicultural storytelling is an excellent approach to early literacy as it invites people from all cultures to participate in the program through music (a universal language) and the languages of the world. Spanish is often a first language in our community, so we use it as a fun and effective icebreaker and a warm, familiar, and welcoming way to invite Spanish-speaking parents in.

What are the main benefits? Bilingual Birdies' music and multicultural language play is yet another tool to add to our early literacy arsenal, and cultural diversity should be on the map of children's awareness.

Besides introducing little ones to music and language, it provides early exposure to different cultures and promotes a heightened awareness, openness, and tolerance of those differences. This

awareness boosts an appreciation for the beauty of variety while embracing the common bond of humanity.

What would you like to see improved or added to the program?

An expansion of the same kind of programming would be the main improvement. More programs that emphasize multicultural songs, stories, language, and music can reach a much wider audience, and with them bring a strong and joyful message of inclusion and unity. ●

USER: Eve Simone Doganges, senior children's librarian, New York Public Library Mott Haven branch



PRODUCT: Bilingual Birdies

DETAILS: Bilingual Birdies teaches language and cultural awareness through live music and movement and offers professional development courses to help educators incorporate these elements into their own programs.



curricula. This paid version of the app includes booktalking kits, reading guides, and printable graphics. Three pricing tiers grant access to a range of We Need Diverse Books materials, including exclusive author and illustrator content.

At the center of the OurStory discovery process is an interactive quiz that guides users as they seek recommendations in various categories, from genre and reading level to character types and experiences. The app then generates a list of books that meet the criteria. Search results include book summaries, links to reviews, and a list of categories that each book falls into, with searched terms highlighted. A "more like this" link directs readers to similar books. OurStory also offers book purchases directly through the app. Volunteer readers, including librarians, teachers, and educators, read these books before they are selected for inclusion in the app's recommendation database.

OurStory Pro is accessible through any web browser and, while a mobile app is available only for Android, more versions are currently in development, including an expanded version of OurStory Pro designed for public libraries.

Subscriptions start at \$5 per month, paid annually. For more information, visit diversebooks.org/ourstory. **AL**

The OurStory app guides readers to diverse reading recommendations.



A Bilingual Birdies professional development workshop.

PEOPLE

Announcements

ON THE MOVE

December 4 **John S. Bracken** became executive director of the Digital Public Library of America in Boston.

In November **DeeAnna Culbertson** became director of Madison (Ohio) Public Library.

Jeannie Dilger became executive director of Palatine (Ill.) Public Library January 8.



The Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County, Ohio, appointed **Aimee Fifarek** as director in January.

The Illinois Library Association named **Diane Foote** as executive director, effective November 14.

Ian Fowler joined New York Public Library as geospatial librarian and map curator at the Stephen A. Schwarzman Building January 8.

December 4 **Sarah Hoover** joined the University of North Carolina's Wilson Special Collections Library in Chapel Hill as special collections cataloger.



Sonya Huser became director of Archbold (Ohio) Community Library November 13.

Regina Koury joined the Paul Robeson Library at Rutgers University-Camden (N.J.) as director January 16.

January 2 **Kate Larsen** joined Tacoma (Wash.) Public Library as library director.

In January **Stefanie Ramsay** joined Temple University in Philadelphia as digital projects librarian.

Lisa G. Rosenblum joined King County (Wash.) Library System as director January 16.



Kudos

Sue Polanka, associate university librarian for public services at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio, received the Jay Ladd Distinguished Service Award from the Academic Library Association of Ohio October 27.

Jean Weihs, retired director of the Library Techniques Program at Seneca College of Applied Arts and Technology in Toronto, was appointed to the Order of Canada for her contributions to library science, particularly the standardization of nonbook cataloging.

Linda Zellmer, government information and data services librarian at Western Illinois University in Macomb, received the Geoscience Information Society's 2017 Mary B. Ansari Distinguished Service Award. ●

Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland appointed **Julia Teran** as project archivist, effective November 13.

The University of Oregon Libraries in Eugene appointed **Kate Thornhill** as digital projects librarian in January.

Holly Tomren was named head of cataloging and metadata strategy at Temple University Libraries in Philadelphia in December.

PROMOTIONS

The Mount Vernon (Va.) Ladies' Association promoted Library Director **Doug Bradburn** to president and chief executive officer of George Washington's Mount Vernon estate, effective January 1.

Henderson Memorial Public Library in Jefferson, Ohio, promoted **Beverly Follin** to director in November.

In December, **Kristy Sutorius Kilfoyle** was promoted to director of libraries at Canterbury School in Fort Myers, Florida.

Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts, promoted **Matthew Sheehy** to university librarian in November.

Alexandria (Ohio) Public Library promoted **Carrie Strong** to director in December.

RETIREMENTS

Michael A. Christian retired in December as director of the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution Genealogical Research Library in Louisville, Kentucky.

In December, **Bee Gallegos** retired as education and history librarian at Arizona State University's Fletcher Library in Glendale.

John Halliday retired as director of Jefferson-Madison Regional Library in Charlottesville, Virginia, in December.

Joyce Klingelsmith retired as director of Archbold (Ohio) Community Library in November.

Waukegan (Ill.) Public Library Executive Director **Richard Lee** retired in January.

Susan Odencrantz retired in January as director of Tacoma (Wash.) Public Library.

Tim Robson retired November 11 as associate director of academic engagement services at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland.

Betty Waznis retired as director of Chula Vista (Calif.) Public Library January 4.

Ellenjoy Weber retired in December after 30 years as director of the Coronado (Calif.) Children's Library.

In Memory

Eugene Dickerson, 59, cataloging team leader at the US Department of State's Ralph J. Bunche Library in Washington, D.C., died December 16. Dickerson was a longtime member of the Association for Library Collections and Technical Services (ALCTS) who served on numerous Continuing Resources Section and ALCTS division committees. He also taught serials cataloging for the Serials Cataloging Cooperative Training Program.

Wyman Jones, 87, Los Angeles city librarian from 1970–1990, died October 9. As director, he oversaw the recovery after arson fires at the Central Library in 1986. Prior to joining Los Angeles Public Library, he served as director of Fort Worth (Tex.) Library.

Lora Landers, 90, who retired as deputy director of Hennepin County (Minn.) Library in 1987, died November 29. Landers began her career at New York Public Library in 1949, worked for the Department of the Army 1954–1956, and for Minneapolis Public Library 1957–1965. In 1987, she received the Minnesota Library Association's President's Award and the American Library Association's (ALA) Margaret E. Monroe Library Adult Services Award.

Mary Ann Mongan, 88, founding director of Kenton County (Ky.) Public Library, died November 12. Mongan served as director of the library from 1967–1999. In 1958 she was hired as director of the Covington (Ky.) Library, which became part of the Kenton County system when it was formed. During her tenure, the library introduced bookmobile service to the county and constructed two library branches. The Kenton County Public Library Foundation created a literary award in her honor in 2009.

Christine Moulen, 44, library systems manager at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Libraries in Cambridge, died

November 11. Moulen had worked at the library for more than 20 years, starting as a student employee and becoming monograph acquisitions assistant after graduating in 1994. She was promoted to monograph acquisitions section head in 1996 and library systems manager in 1997. Moulen received Ex Libris's Azriel Morag Award for Innovation in 2016 for her contributions to the Aleph library system, and she won MIT's Infinite Mile Award for significant accomplishments three times.

Eloise Pettus, 91, a life member of ALA and teacher of library science, died April 20. Pettus taught at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas; the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg; the University of Arizona in Tucson; and the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, at the request of ALA and the United States Information Agency. She had previously served as a librarian at Norton Park and Kenwood Elementary Schools in Cobb County, Georgia. She was author of *The Master Index to Summaries of Children's Books* and its follow-up, *The Master Index to More Summaries of Children's Books*.

Lorraine Summers, 70, assistant state librarian of Florida until her 2001 retirement, died November 14. Summers served on ALA Council, as president of the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies and the Southeastern Library Association, and on the board of the Florida Library Association. She started her career as extension director at Gainesville (Fla.) Public Library before joining the State Library of Florida as federal projects coordinator.

Diana Vogel song, 66, reference librarian and acting university librarian at American University Library in Washington, D.C., until her retirement in 2011, died June 23. Vogel song was a volunteer at Sandy Spring Museum, cataloging and scanning pictures for its collections, and was an active recorder of family genealogy. ●

AT ALA

Ligia Barac became senior administrative assistant for ALA Finance and Accounting December 18.

ALA Director of Staff Support **Ron Bruzan** left ALA November 6.

Brian Franklin joined the Public Library Association as program manager in December.

Kristin Lahurd became assistant director for literacy and continuing education in the Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services in November.

Karen Muller, director of the ALA Library and knowledge management specialist, retired in December.

Kathy Rosa has been promoted to director of the Library and Research Center, which merges the Office for Research and Evaluation and the ALA Library. **AL**

A Friend to the Fishes

Chicago's Shedd Aquarium is one of the city's most popular cultural attractions. In her role as the Shedd's librarian and archivist, Alisun DeKock keeps track of a multitude of fishy facts displayed on the iPads located in each exhibit for visitors to peruse. When new species are added to one of the habitats, DeKock and a team of Shedd curators do the research to keep the information accurate, current, and consistent.

The Shedd's library of some 7,000 books is primarily for aquarium staff, interns, and volunteers and is not open to the public. The most popular materials in the collection are the field guides to various fish, plants, insects, aquatic invertebrates, and marine mammals. DeKock says that "staff members take them out on field trips because these printed guidebooks are better organized than most online materials, and Wi-Fi might not be available in some places they are visiting."

The aquarium's archive includes many photographic records. DeKock says it has an "interesting variety of underwater cameras and waterproof casings used on dive trips from the 1960s through the 1980s, along with films made on those trips. We have digitized some, and nearly all have been transferred to cold storage for preservation."

DeKock also helps out with a wide range of research requests, "such as how LED lights affect coral growth, details on wetlands restoration, methods for giving a fish an electrocardiogram, and how to design raptor perches. Each request is a surprise," she says. "I never get the same question twice." **AL**

THE BOOKEND showcases librarians, their work, and their work spaces. For consideration, please send press material to americanlibraries@ala.org.

Alisun DeKock stands beside the species identification iPad in the Shedd Aquarium's Amazon Rising habitat, as two South American tambaqui fish swim by.



RDA

TODAY AND TOMORROW

We are excited to introduce the initial rollout of **3R Project** this June at the **ALA Annual Conference**. Don't miss our pre-conference day-long event discussing all the new developments and updates!

**RDA
TOOLKIT
REDESIGN UPDATE
AND PREVIEW**

Friday | June 22nd

**ALA ANNUAL
CONFERENCE**

THIS DAY-LONG EVENT WILL INCLUDE:

- introduce the new RDA Toolkit
- examine how the RDA Steering Committee (RSC) has addressed key cataloguing issues
- hear about the latest developments including the implementation of the Library Reference Model
- test out the new RDA Toolkit alongside experts

REGISTER AT
<http://2018.alaannual.org/registration/ticketed-events#ALA>

R | D | A TOOLKIT

Progress and patience: Increasing female participation in technical conferences



by Karen Coombs

The Code4Lib Conference is an informal group of library technologists that attracts international participation. While it's an awesome learning and professional community, it also has had the same gender diversity challenges and opportunities as many other technology events and groups. When the Code4Lib Conference first started in 2006,

Going from roughly 6% to 40% in terms of both attendance and speakers represents real progress.

I was one of five women out of 80 attendees, and of the 17 presenters that year, only one was female.

Now the nearly 450 attendees at the event are much more equally divided by gender.



Around 40% of our community identifies as female, and at the 2017 conference, 43% of the speakers were female.

I'm proud of the improvements we've made, and I think if we continue to focus on a few key activities, we'll see even more progress. What do my female co-workers at OCLC say is helping them do so?

They offer four key suggestions to increase gender diversity at your events:

- Support caregivers of all types.
- Prepare and train women now for future success.
- Make sure credit is given to women's efforts.
- Spotlight diverse voices.

More details and a description of the Women in Technology Scholarship award are available at oclc.org/female-tech.

Next

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Learn more at oclc.org



Excerpted from a post on the OCLC Next blog from 20 December 2017.