



american libraries

March/April 2021

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Pandemic-Era Accessibility

p. 26

Bookmobiles
Remain Driven p. 38

Catching Up
with Emerging
Leaders p. 34

PLUS: Kazuo Ishiguro,
Butterfly Gardens,
Crossword Constructor



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**Begins Monday,
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with Laura Solomon

**Wednesday,
March 31, 2021,
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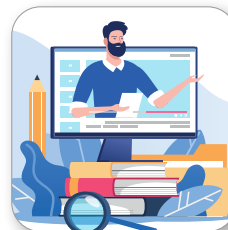


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with Catherine
Hakala Ausperk

Self-Paced

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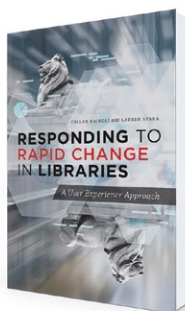
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Address: 225 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 1300
Chicago, IL 60601
Website: americanlibraries.org
Email: americanlibraries@ala.org
Phone: 800-545-2433 plus extension
Career Ads: JobLIST.ala.org

Favorite spring activity?

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

Sanhita SinhaRoy
ssinha@ala.org | x4219

→ Creating sidewalk chalk art

MANAGING EDITOR

Terra Dankowski
tdankowski@ala.org | x5282

→ Kayaking

SENIOR EDITORS

Amy Carlton
acarlton@ala.org | x5105

← Enjoying the lilac bush under my window

Phil Morehart
pmorehart@ala.org | x4218

→ Morning coffee on my back porch

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Sallyann Price
sprice@ala.org | x4213

← Spring cleaning

EDITOR-AT-LARGE

Anne Ford
aford@ala.org

→ Keeping an eye out for migrating birds

EDITORIAL AND ADVERTISING ASSOCIATE

Carrie Smith
casmith@ala.org | x4216

← Looking for the first flowers

ART DIRECTOR

Rebecca Lomax
rlomax@ala.org | x4217

← Baseball spring training

→ Planting tomato seeds

ADVERTISING

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

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PUBLISHING DEPARTMENT

Mary Mackay

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MEMBERSHIP

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from the
EDITOR

Spring into Action



Sanhita SinhaRoy

March marks the one-year anniversary of most states' ongoing COVID-19 lockdowns. While pandemic life has, of course, taken a drastic toll on virtually everyone over the past year, Emily Udell reports on some of the specific challenges this period presents to patrons with disabilities, as well as the library workers who provide accessible services and programs (cover story, p. 26).

At the same time, the pandemic has also provided opportunities to examine how we can innovate. In "How User-Friendly Is Your Website?" (p. 30), Greg Landgraf talks with library workers who offer practical tips for improving—and welcoming patrons into—your library's digital world.

Continuing the theme of user experience and design: "Users at the Center of Everything" (p. 44), an ALA Editions excerpt from coauthors Callan Bignoli and Lauren Stara, who discuss how "design thinking" can identify effective ways for reaching and retaining users.

What's it like to win the Nobel Prize? Or be knighted by royalty? Our Newsmaker Kazuo Ishiguro knows. The renowned author of *The Remains of the Day* talks with Alison Marcotte (p. 24) about his new novel, *Klara and the Sun*, which examines the ethics of technology and its effect on our humanity.

With spring around the corner, you'll find several timely articles in this issue, including one related to environmental awareness and activism ("A Movement Grows in Brooklyn," Spotlight, p. 22) as well as an uplifting story about the emergence of library butterfly gardens ("Where Monarchs Reign," p. 16).

And if you're looking for a new hobby to kick off the season, consider joining digital humanities librarian Laura Braunstein in constructing crossword puzzles (Bookend, p. 56).

What's a nine-letter word for an ALA conference that just celebrated its 107th—and final—meeting? Visit americanlibraries.org to read highlights from our coverage of the historic 2021 Midwinter Virtual—including recaps of talks by civil rights pioneer Ruby Bridges and First Lady Jill Biden. Our team put together almost 40 posts, and as always, we welcome your feedback.

Sanhita

After a year of living in a digital world, read how patrons, library workers, and communities are coming together to keep our humanity connected.

A Place within ALA

With increased engagement, let's be the change we need



Julius C. Jefferson Jr.

On January 6, we witnessed a violent insurrection at the US Capitol. Our nation's capital, my hometown of Washington, D.C., was occupied by troops in a way we have not seen since the Civil War. Our democracy was tested. Then, two weeks later, we witnessed a peaceful transfer of power with the inauguration of our 46th president and the historic swearing in of our 49th vice president, who is the first Black person, first Asian American, and first woman to hold the job, and who was sworn in by the first Latina Supreme Court Justice. Our democracy prevailed and our country has evolved.

What do these events mean for libraries and the Association?

Libraries and library workers had an important role leading up to the 2020 presidential election by encouraging and supporting voter registration, which led to more than 66% of eligible voters participating—making 2020 the most engaged election since 1900. No matter who you voted for, as an ALA member you understood the significance of engaging in our democracy and the democratic process.

Participation in the democratic process and the governance of our nation is important to the citizens we serve. The governance of ALA should be equally important to our members.

An essential part of being an ALA member is being engaged in our governance structure. On March 8, when the election opens, each member will have an opportunity to participate in shaping the governance structure of ALA.

This is the moment when all members have a part to play by voting to elect those who will lead ALA in 2022–2023, as well as the presiding officers of our divisions and round tables, and those on our governing body, Council. These elected members will have the responsibility of representing your interests. Our elected member leaders are vital to the current and future success of ALA. However,

only 20% of members participated in the last ALA election, compared with the 66% voter engagement in the presidential election. Participating in ALA elections is just one essential way your voice as a member can be heard.

Amid our nation's and Association's current challenges, I look to the fresh start that spring ushers in with a sense of hope, opportunity, and optimism.

There is no better time than now to be the Association that the library field and our public need. There is a way for every member to be engaged. Maximize the value of your membership by participating in ALA divisions and round tables that focus on the specific needs of our profession, or by serving on Council committees of ALA, divisions, or round tables. Other opportunities can be found in the work of the 28 ALA affiliates (bit.ly/ALAaffiliates) and in the work of ALA offices.

Join the Association's extensive advocacy network and partner with the Public Policy and Advocacy Office as well as state chapters to influence legislation and policies of importance to the library field. Work with ALA's Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services to navigate issues of diversity and literacy in the library field. Take a stand for privacy and the First Amendment using the resources and services of ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom.

I look to the hope of reenvisioning our collective identity as a member-driven Association, in which all members can see themselves as leaders, mentors, and partners. I hope that ALA will meet the needs of all members, and all members will have a place within ALA.

I hope for optimism, so that all ALA members understand we are one Association with many parts, and we are strongest when we are engaged, work together, and speak with one voice. **AL**

JULIUS C. JEFFERSON JR. is president of the American Library Association.

Only 20% of members participated in the 2020 ALA election, compared with 66% voter engagement during the recent national election.

Revolutions Where We Stand

We must connect the fights against library and community disinvestment



Tracie D. Hall

Audre Lorde, the late poet-activist and former school librarian, once wrote: “Sometimes we are blessed with being able to choose the time and the arena and the manner of our revolution, but more usually we must do battle wherever we are standing.”

Those words seem especially prescient now as we look across the country at the libraries that have struggled most during this period of widespread library defunding and service reductions. Though the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the issue, there has long been an unmistakable correlation between communities that navigate high rates of poverty and those that limit spending on libraries, a correlation antithetical to the baseline understanding of why libraries exist and what they can offer users, and one that over time cannot help but feel negligent—if not willful.

As I write this, I am compiling research notes on the role of libraries in interrupting the school-to-prison pipeline, as I am more than certain that if we were to identify the communities across the country with the highest per capita rates of incarceration, we would almost universally observe limited investment in school and public libraries in those same zip codes.

This investigation led me to an August 2019 broadcast of a WOSU Public Media story, “The Decline of School Libraries” (bit.ly/AL-WOSU), featuring Liz Deskins, former school librarian and adjunct professor at Kent (Ohio) State University; Koby Levin, reporter for Chalkbeat Detroit, a nonprofit that covers education news; and Mary Keeling, former president of the American Association of School Librarians. Noting that the disappearance of school libraries is happening in front of our eyes, the story cites research findings that “one in five school librarian posts was eliminated between 2000 and 2016 across the country.”

Each speaker reiterates the point that this policy of library disinvestment hurts low-income

students, and all students more generally. Then why have these decisions been made? Levin’s answer is straightforward: “It’s about money.”


In his 2005 Jean E. Coleman Library Outreach Lecture “Classism in the Stacks,” librarian Sanford Berman reflected on the responsibility libraries have to eliminate rules that further disenfranchise the poor. Berman roundly called out “the hostility—or at least lack of sympathy—toward low-income people [that] manifests in various barriers and kinds of discrimination” and can lead to a library services orientation that ultimately ends up “valuing middle and upper classes more highly than people at or below the poverty level.” To disrupt antipoverty policy, “everyone’s priority should be getting public libraries financed more generously and continuously,” Berman recommended.

Advocacy as disruption? Yes! What if we revolutionize the way we fund and equip our libraries in order to confront head-on the inequities that we often decry on our protest posters and in our institutional committees? What if our lowest-income neighborhoods become home to our most well-funded and well-staffed school libraries? What if universities that serve the highest percentage of first-generation college students shift a larger portion of their budgets to their libraries? What if library trustees become adamant that their mayor or city manager help them respond to rising high school dropout rates by establishing a standalone public library for young adults in a shopping center facing low tenancy? What if we connect the dots between library and community disinvestment and position our advocacy efforts to counter them both?

I believe we can. What’s more, I believe we must. **AL**

TRACIE D. HALL is executive director of the American Library Association. Reach her at thall@ala.org.

There has long been a correlation between communities that navigate high rates of poverty and those that limit spending on libraries.

 Sigh, another awesome-looking paper to read. Can my great colleagues take a break for a bit? The number of open tabs is getting hard to manage. /end sarcasm (about asking them to stop)

@METAGEEKY, in response to “Call to Action” (Jan./Feb., p. 54)

 I've been enjoying starting to catch up with @CallNumberPod episodes. Just listened to Ep. 52: Libraries and Sustainability. Great!

@BOOKPLUSCOFFEE, in response to *Call Number* podcast's Episode 52, “Libraries and Sustainability” (July 17, 2020)

Personal Is Political

“Tarnished Legacies” (Jan./Feb., p. 28) is a great reminder that all types of libraries are mired in politics and the history of politics, not just presidential ones. Every type of library—school, public, academic, and special—showcases its politics by how it develops collections, what metadata it uses to catalog items, what programs it does or does not allow, and how it creates a strategic plan to serve its community. The challenge is to identify politics so that equity, representation, and an honest interpretation of the past can be a proactive goal.

Libraries are imperfect institutions populated with imperfect people. This sentiment in no way excuses these imperfections; rather, these imperfections ought to be constant reminders that libraries still have a long way to go to be truly representative of the people and communities they serve and how history has shaped these institutions, places, and people. Through open and honest assessment, libraries can be leaders in recognizing how our institutions' culture needs to change. It is important to reflect on the past and be mindful of the present so we can recognize the opportunities of the future. I believe that libraries are up to the task of addressing these challenges.

Gavin J. Woltjer
Billings, Montana



Measuring the Virus

During these times of uncertainty, it is helpful to receive guidance on procedures that impact your workflow, and more importantly, your health. When I received my January/February issue of *American Libraries*, I was pleasantly surprised to see the REALM project chart as a pullout in the magazine (“REALM Test Results: How Long SARS-CoV-2 Lives on Common Library Materials,” p. 32).

The chart serves as a guide but also as a tool of leverage when entering discussions with your school and district administrators. For school librarians, the REALM chart helps back our position that we must have best practices to follow when receiving books back into our collections and quarantining and storing materials. These guidelines are to be adhered to and taken seriously.

To date, it is uncertain if my school district will or will not return to in-person learning, or when that might happen. Because of the forward thinking of OCLC, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and *American Libraries*, I have a

powerful resource in hand that I can use. Thank you.

K. C. Boyd
Washington, D.C.

Insufficient Condemnation



I am writing in response to the recent statement from the American Library Association's (ALA) Executive Board (“ALA Condemns Violence on Capitol Hill, Calls for Advocacy,” *The Scoop*, Jan. 7). The Board's statement falls short of upholding the Core Values of Librarianship, as outlined on ALA's website and reiterated in its Intellectual Freedom resources.

The Executive Board members forcefully condemned the violence, destruction, looting, and threats that occurred at the US Capitol on January 6, but they chose not to condemn the white supremacist and anti-Semitic symbols, language, and actions that framed that violence and gave it context. Library users who read the statement will gather that the Executive Board made a clear choice not to condemn the white supremacist and anti-Semitic nature of the violence and will make the logical assumption that white supremacist and anti-Semitic acts that are not violent and do not subvert the democratic process are accepted by ALA.

I stand with a growing number of library workers who believe it is possible to respect intellectual freedom without sacrificing our responsibilities to those who are threatened by or suffer from

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, 225 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 1300, Chicago, IL 60601.

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genocidal violence. As I read the Core Values of Librarianship, I see values that are being ignored because of an unreasonable fundamentalism and misguided dogma. I urge ALA's Executive Board and my fellow library workers to drop our feigned neutrality and actively commit to upholding our shared values of access, diversity, and the public good.

Nicholas Schiller
Vancouver, Washington

Welcoming Police

I appreciated "Rethinking Police Presence" (Sept./Oct. 2020, p. 46). I had an occasion in 1966 when police were called to help quell a disturbance at Huntington (N.Y.) Public Library on Long Island. I was director there from 1956 to 1974, a period marked by high tension in the community around the war in Vietnam and nuclear energy policy.

One of the organizations meeting at the library was SANE (the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy), a group dedicated to preventing the use of nuclear bombs. On the night of March 15, 1966, an invited speaker addressed alternatives to the war in Vietnam. I was at our regular library board meeting in another room. When our meeting was done, I stopped in to see how it was going, arriving during the Q&A period.

There were heckling and disruptions from the audience. The SANE officers asked if they could call the police to help keep order, and I assisted them in making the call. The police came, the heckling ceased, and the police left.

The meeting finally broke up at around 11 p.m., and SANE

members tried to get the crowd moving out of the library. One heckler reached for their camera and attempted to take photos of each person and get their names. The SANE group finally left the library singing "God Bless America." Then a man outside called the police because a bomb had detonated on the windshield of his car, blowing the glass to fragments.

The outcome was that the library reaffirmed the public's right to meet in the library and discuss current issues. From that time on we paid more attention to security, finally hiring a uniformed security guard for meetings that we thought might lead to trouble, though none occurred.

Stanley A. Ransom
Plattsburgh, New York

CORRECTIONS

In "Mitigating Implicit Bias" (Jan./Feb., p. 44), UCLA Libraries was erroneously referred to as the site of a patron experience involving racism at an academic archive. The institution in question is the Vietnam Center and Sam Johnson Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech University.

"Drawing the Line" (Nov./Dec. 2020, p. 18) incorrectly asserted that four murals at University of New Mexico's Zimmerman Library had been temporarily covered while the university awaited state permission to remove them. The murals had not been covered.

A Global Reach item (Nov./Dec. 2020, p. 19) mistakenly stated that *Of Mice and Men* was set in the American South. It takes place in California.

What You're Reading

1 Responsive and Responsible A growing number of libraries are promoting culturally responsive care of Indigenous materials. bit.ly/AL-Responsive

2 Call to Action Our new Academic Insights column envisions a future that centers BIPOC voices in academic libraries. bit.ly/AL-AcadInsights

3 REALM Project Infographic Results from the first five rounds of tests show how long SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, lives on common library materials. bit.ly/AL-REALMresults

In Case You Missed It



Can a Patron Who Gets Sick Sue the Library? Our ongoing legal issues column addresses remote learning, exculpatory agreements, and other topics. bit.ly/AL-LegalMail



COVID-19 Mitigation Measures Episode 58 of our *Call Number* podcast looks at library efforts to curb the virus's spread. bit.ly/AL-CallNumber58



ALA Midwinter Virtual Complete coverage of this year's speakers, sessions, award ceremonies, and on-demand events. bit.ly/AL-MWV21

Coming Soon

Our annual **Library Systems Report** looks at the latest moves from the library technology industry.

How is the **library job market** trending, and what are best practices for job hunting in a pandemic?

IMLS Receives FY2021 Budget Increase

The American Library Association (ALA) welcomed the eighth consecutive increase in federal fiscal year appropriations to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The regular FY2021 budget bill, passed December 21, 2020, alongside the \$900 billion Emergency Coronavirus Relief Act, features an additional \$5 million for IMLS, including \$2 million for the Library Services and Technology Act.

The FY2021 appropriations bill contains increases for other line items important to libraries:

- \$28 million for the Innovative Approaches to Literacy program, an increase of \$1 million
- \$167.5 million each in funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts, marking a \$5.25 million increase over last year
- \$462.8 million for the National Library of Medicine, an increase of \$5.9 million
- \$757.3 million for the Library of Congress, an increase of \$32 million
- \$117 million for the Government Publishing Office
- \$377 million for the National Archives and Records Administration, an \$18 million increase

"All these numbers add up to one truth: Library advocacy works. Year-round advocacy yields year-round results," said ALA President Julius C. Jefferson Jr. in a December 22, 2020, statement. "There is an increasing awareness among decision makers that libraries are an indispensable strand in a tattered digital safety net. Tens of thousands of advocates, including library workers, Friends, trustees, and state librarians, have contacted their federal leaders since March to urge support for library funding.

"Federal support for libraries is not only a wise investment in times of crisis; sustained funding can build capacity to meet community needs in the long run," Jefferson continued. "At the same time, I won't hide ALA's disappointment that there is no direct funding for America's libraries in the new emergency relief package. ALA stands firmly behind libraries' need for additional resources."

While the relief package did not include direct emergency funding through IMLS, the bill does provide library-eligible measures, including \$81.9 billion for K-12 schools and higher education. Congress also expanded the Paycheck Protection Program to include eligibility for 501(c)(6) organizations that are tax-exempt, such as library associations. ●

2021 Annual Conference Will Be Virtual

ALA's Executive Board announced in a January 28 statement that the 2021 Annual Conference and Exhibition, scheduled for June 24–29 in Chicago, will take place virtually.

"We hoped that by this summer, it would be safe to meet again in person," said ALA President Julius C. Jefferson Jr. in the statement. "However, that is clearly not the case. Despite the promise of vaccines, the pandemic continues to devastate our country. For the safety of everyone involved, we will be moving our Annual Conference to a virtual format. Given the success of our just-wrapped virtual Midwinter Meeting, I am confident that Annual will be just as dynamic, engaging, and inspiring."

"COVID-19 has profoundly changed the library world—and, of course, the wider world around us. But I'm buoyed by the incredible determination, resilience, and community-building I've seen in the past year," said ALA Executive Director Tracie D. Hall in the statement.

Announcing LibLearnX

After 107 occurrences, ALA retired its Midwinter Meeting & Exhibits with a virtual event in January. Moving forward, ALA members will have the opportunity to attend LibLearnX (LLX), the Association's new library learning experience, kicking off January 2022 in San Antonio.

A member-focused education event, LLX will emphasize active and applied learning, networking opportunities for

library professionals, and celebrations of the positive impact of libraries on society. The call for presentations opens in April. Additional information is available at alaliblearnx.org.

SustainRT Seeks Nominations for Wellness Citation

ALA's Sustainability Round Table (SustainRT) is seeking nominations for its Citation for Wellness in the Workplace, a way of recognizing libraries that go above and beyond in meeting the wellness needs of their staff.

ALA members are invited to nominate any library that has made efforts in continuing education, wellness, positive work environment, unions, salaries, gender equity, pay equity initiatives, and other activities designed to improve the

New Business Advisory Group

On January 15, ALA announced the formation of a Business Advisory Group representing libraries, civic life, technology, and academia. The 13 advisory group members have agreed to serve terms of 12–24 months and will explore strategies related to ALA's new business development.

The advisors are Charles Adler, Kickstarter cofounder; Adam Bush, cofounder and provost of College Unbound; Amy Eshleman, former director of the inaugural YOUmedia Center at Chicago Public Library; Mae Hong, vice president of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors; Sandee Kastrul, president and cofounder of i.c.stars; Eric Klinenberg, social sciences professor and director of the Institute for Public Knowledge at New York University; Jim Neal, university librarian emeritus at Columbia University in New York City; Marie Oestergaard, director of Dokk1: Aarhus (Denmark) Public Library; Veronda Pitchford, assistant director of Califa Group; Harper Reed, chief technology officer of Barack Obama's presidential campaign; Pam Sandlian Smith, director of Anythink Libraries; Joyce Valenza, associate teaching professor at Rutgers University School of Communication and Information; and Kelvin Watson, executive director of Las Vegas–Clark County (Nev.) Library District.

"This Business Advisory Group is no less than a dream team of thinkers who, each in their own way, have changed and are changing the course of library, business, and public practice," said ALA Executive Director Tracie D. Hall. "Each one of them brings a fresh way of thinking about libraries that will challenge and enrich ALA's business development strategies going forward." ●

salaries and status of librarians and other library workers, via the online form at bit.ly/SustainRTnomination. The deadline for nominations is March 15, and the winning library will be notified April 23. Additional information regarding award criteria and the selection process is available at bit.ly/SustainRTcitation.

New RDA Toolkit Available

In December 2020, Resource Description and Access (RDA) elevated the beta RDA Toolkit to official status. The redesigned toolkit—a subscription-based online platform that provides catalogers across the world with data elements, guidelines, and instructions for creating metadata—aims to bring the RDA standard into alignment with the International Federation of Library Associations and

Institutions Library Reference Model and compliance with accessibility standards. RDA and RDA Toolkit are now optimized for use in a linked data environment and for international exchange of bibliographic data. RDA Toolkit subscribers will have access to both versions of RDA Toolkit going forward. Visit rdatoolkit.org for subscriptions and more information.

Free educational resources are also available at rdatoolkit.org and via the RDA Toolkit YouTube channel at bit.ly/RDAYoutube.

Call for Mission Enhancement Proposals

ALA's International Relations Round Table (IRRT) is seeking proposals for its 2021 Mission Enhancement Grant,

CALENDAR

APR.

School Library Month

ala.org/aasl/advocacy/slm

APR. 4–10

National Library Week

ala.org/nlw

APR. 6

National Library Workers Day

ala.org/apn/nlwd

APR. 7

National Bookmobile Day

bit.ly/bookmobileday21

APR. 10–17

Money Smart Week

moneysmartweek.org

APR. 13–16

ACRL 2021 Virtual Conference

conference.acrl.org

APR. 25–MAY 1

Preservation Week

ala.org/preservationweek

APR. 30

Día: Children's Day/Book Day

dia.ala.org

JUNE

Rainbow Book Month

ala.org/rt/rrt

JUNE 24–29

2021 ALA Annual Conference and Exhibition

2021.alaannual.org

SEPT.

Library Card Sign-Up Month

ala.org/librarycardsignup

SEPT. 26–OCT. 2

Banned Books Week

bannedbooksweek.org

SEPT. 29

Banned Websites Awareness Day

ala.org/aasl/advocacy/bwad

OCT.

TeenTober

ala.org/yalsa/teentober

OCT. 21–23

AASL National Conference

Salt Lake City
national.aasl.org

established to fund member-initiated international activities that contribute to ALA's role in international librarianship. The grant's goals are to promote international projects or partnerships, promote global dialogue about librarianship, increase visibility of international librarianship, and increase international collaboration in librarianship. Grants vary, with a maximum of \$1,000.

Proposals must be submitted by current IRRT members of two or more years in good standing. Each member may submit only one proposal per year. Proposals are due by March 15, and submitters will be notified of decisions before May 15.

For examples of proposals and to apply, visit bit.ly/IRRTgrant.

AASL Conference Registration Opens

Registration is open for the 2021 American Association of School Librarians (AASL) National Conference, planned for October 21–23 in Salt Lake City. Registration rates and date-sensitive promo codes can be found at national.aasl.org.

The conference will feature keynotes, more than 140 sessions, author panels, research into practice sessions, more than 100 exhibitors, an ideas lab for sharing best practices, author signings, and networking opportunities. Conference content will be rooted in AASL's *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries*.

Full conference registration allows school librarian attendees to invite their administrator to attend at no extra cost. Through May 1, AASL is offering no-risk registration and full refunds.

PLA Initiative Prepares Workforce for In-Demand Jobs

The Public Library Association (PLA) and Microsoft are teaming up to promote tools that help libraries better support job seekers.

Since 2018, PLA and Microsoft have collaborated to help libraries secure

ALA Condemns Violence on Capitol Hill

In a January 7 statement, ALA's Executive Board condemned the violence that occurred in Washington, D.C., the previous day. It reads, in part:

"ALA forcefully condemns the violent attempts to undermine the integrity of our electoral process and our democracy. The threats, destruction of government buildings, and looting witnessed on January 6 do not constitute peaceful protest, but domestic terrorism.

"Libraries in America defend the constitutional rights of all individuals and are cornerstones of the communities they serve. We celebrate and preserve our democratic society so that all individuals have the opportunity to become lifelong learners and engaged residents—informed, literate, educated, and culturally enriched.

"A growing number of elected officials are awake to the value of their libraries; but many have yet to understand the role libraries play in the education and employment of their constituents and the economic empowerment of their communities. There is much more work to do. To preserve our democratic society and ensure that the health of America's libraries is a national priority, library advocates must engage decision makers at every level of government. ALA reaffirms our commitment to advocating for libraries, library workers, and the profession."

The statement calls on library workers and supporters to join ALA's advocacy network at bit.ly/AL-advocacy. ●

needed equipment, connect families to low-cost internet, and offer programs to teach community members tech skills.

With Microsoft's support, PLA's new initiative will focus on connecting community members to online training and certifications that can lead to new and improved employment in the post-coronavirus economy.

PLA encourages public library staffs to learn about, promote, and incorporate the new learning paths, low-cost certifications, and other tools offered by Microsoft, LinkedIn Learning, and GitHub. For more information, visit bit.ly/PLA-skilling.

Louisiana Libraries Reopen with ALA's Help

The record-setting 2020 hurricane season hit parts of Louisiana especially hard, damaging three of Calcasieu Parish Public Library's (CPPL) 13 branches beyond use.

CPPL's outreach department, branch staff, and IT quickly put together a plan to provide a once-a-week pop-up library service. But unpredictable weather conditions have made the pop-up service less than ideal for users who need to find work, do schoolwork, or file claims for insurance, unemployment, and FEMA funds.

Thanks to a \$20,000 donation from ALA's Disaster Relief Fund, those communities will now receive portable library buildings that will allow them to resume full service, plus new technology kits to enhance mobile printing, copying, faxing, scanning, and Wi-Fi services.

To contribute to the ALA Disaster Relief Fund, visit ec.ala.org/donate.

Community Engagement Grants Awarded

ALA's Public Programs Office (PPO) announced on January 5 the first

200 recipients of ALA's Libraries Transforming Communities: Focus on Small and Rural Libraries grants. The first 200 grant recipients—which represent public, academic, school, and tribal libraries in 43 states—will each receive \$3,000 to tackle issues that range from media literacy to COVID-19 safety to unemployment. Library workers will complete a free ALA e-course on basic facilitation skills and host at least one conversation with community members on a chosen topic. Grant funds may cover a range of expenses, including staff time and collections and technology purchases. For the full list of grant recipients, visit bit.ly/LTCgrants.

PPO also invites applications for a second funding round that will award an additional \$1.4 million to a maximum 450 grantees. Library workers may apply online for grant funding until March 4 at ala.org/LTC. **AL**

Executive Board Urges Libraries to 'Stand Strong'

The week before the 2020 US presidential election, ALA's Executive Board issued a statement of solidarity with the library community, acknowledging the unrest and uncertainty that led up to Election Day.

"Despite the unique difficulties faced in 2020, ALA and the more than 300,000 library workers across America continue to demonstrate the core values of librarianship, which have stood the test of time," the October 29, 2020, statement reads. "America's libraries have weathered seasons of turmoil and stability. Library professionals have proven their tenacity and emerged with renewed vigor from the most challenging times, economically, socially, and politically.

"Libraries are one of the few places where people of diverse backgrounds can gather.... ALA supports the right of every eligible individual to cast their ballot without the threat of intimidation or reprisal [and] remains a steadfast advocate for libraries and library workers. The Executive Board urges ALA members to stand strong. The core values of librarianship transcend the vicissitudes of politics and will remain our polestar as we advocate for ourselves and our communities from a position of strength and moral courage." ●

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Stacey A. Aldrich

State librarian, Hawaii State Public Library System,
Honolulu | bit.ly/ALAAldrich



CANDIDATE FOR ALA PRESIDENT

Aloha, ALA!
I am honored to be on the ballot for ALA president for the 2022–2023 term.

When I began my career in college as assistant to the Slavic cataloger at University of Pittsburgh, little did I know that libraries would afford me experiences unlike any other field. I have worked in academic, special, public, and state libraries, and each has provided unique opportunities to positively contribute to the communities we serve and our profession.

I have spent the majority of my professional career in state libraries and have been the state librarian of California, Pennsylvania, and now Hawaii, where I am also director of the 51-branch public library system. In between, I worked for a futuring think tank in Washington, D.C., and have continued to facilitate, train, and present on future-forward thinking. I have been president of the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies and served on various ALA and national advisory groups for projects like the Edge Initiative, Project Outcome, and Grow with Google. Most recently, I completed two years as president of the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies.

I believe there are two important responsibilities of an ALA president.

The first is stewardship, to ensure positive organizational continuity. This means listening and working with members, chapters, units, Council, the executive director, and the Executive Board to support the success of ALA and its members by focusing our energy on the most impactful decisions.

The second is to develop a program of ideas, conversations, and actions that help create the future of our profession.

I'd like us to have real conversations, debate, and futures-building sessions around four starting questions:

1. Do ALA members feel heard and feel as though they have a place in the organization? Do we understand one another's stories?
2. What is the future of collections in libraries? What will be physical? What is our place in the

It would be an
extreme privilege
to build a future
that will support
members, libraries,
and the places
we call home.

digital world? Let's not wait for publishers and content providers to decide for us.

3. What is the role of libraries in the future of digital equity? How do we ensure all people have the skills to thrive, be safe, and successfully participate in society and actively contribute to their communities?
4. What is the role of libraries in the future of communication, ideas, and the social dilemma? Have you seen the film *The Social Dilemma*? Creators of the digital age are questioning the humanity of social media and its impact on our society. Libraries have a role to play in engaging our communities and helping define the future.

I am curious about the big future questions that you think we should be talking about, and I want to start informal, deep-dive discussions or actions around them.

I would consider it an extreme privilege to represent and work with our community to build a future that will nourish and support our members, libraries, and the places we call home. Let's create a year of future-forward thinking and action together.

Want to learn more and start chatting? Check out my Instagram (bit.ly/ALAAldrich).

Mahalo for your consideration! **AL**

ALA ELECTION VOTE: March 8–April 7. More information at bit.ly/ALAElection21

Ed Garcia

Director, Cranston (R.I.) Public Library | edforala.com



CANDIDATE FOR ALA PRESIDENT

Before I was a librarian, I worked at Sony Music and the American Diabetes Association. Needing a change, I investigated graduate schools and subsequently received a library school diversity fellowship, which allowed me to attend conferences and become involved in ALA early in my career. This experience was invaluable for someone who changed careers to become a librarian. I accepted the nomination for ALA president in an effort to give back to our Association, which has had such a positive impact on my professional life.

Our Association is facing internal and external challenges that can only be overcome by strong leadership and collaborative effort. I bring proven leadership and experience in corporate, nonprofit, and library settings to help navigate these challenges. I was a 2010 Emerging Leader and have served three terms on Council. I was a member of key committees and boards such as the Committee on Diversity, Spectrum Scholar selection jury, Finance and Audit Committee, Reference and User Services Association board, and ALA Executive Board.

Under my leadership, our team at Cranston (R.I.) Public Library received the 2020 Jerry Kline Community Impact Prize of \$250,000

and the 2016 LibraryAware Community Award. While on the Executive Board, I helped guide our Association through important and difficult decisions, including hiring a new executive director, the sale of the ALA headquarters building, and moving our conferences to a virtual format. As your ALA president, I will bring more accountability and transparency to our finances and will continue our work of transforming ALA into a more responsive, sustainable, and modern association.

I have significant advocacy experience and have worked extensively with members of Congress. As legislative action chair for the Rhode Island Library Association, I have fought for increased state funding for libraries and statewide adoption of the AASL Standards for school

**As libraries reopen,
the safety, job
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advocacy efforts.**

librarians. With continued threats to federal funding for libraries and increased strain on local budgets because of the pandemic, our advocacy efforts need to be foremost in our work. As libraries reopen, the safety, job security, and mental wellness of library workers should be at the top of our advocacy efforts. With many struggling with the economic fallout of COVID-19, we should advocate for the elimination of student debt for library workers.

We should strive for a more inclusive library community, which means continuing to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion. But this should also include a strong commitment to accessibility. As president, I will focus on member engagement, effective governance, and sustainability.

I believe in bringing people together. I have a proven track record at ALA and in my community, working with varied groups to bring about positive change. The decision to run was less about personal ambition and more about a sense of commitment and belief that I can help address the challenges we all face. I have a passion for public service, which my work within our Association has nurtured. I will bring that passion and commitment as your ALA president. I respectfully ask for your vote. **AL**

ALA ELECTION VOTE: March 8–April 7. More information at bit.ly/ALAElection21

Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lozada

Adult services assistant manager, Palos Verdes Library District in Rolling Hills Estates, California | lessaforlibraries.com



CANDIDATE FOR ALA PRESIDENT

Now is the time for us to lead together for change. Over the past few years, I have listened in convention centers and on conference calls to thousands of members sharing ideas on how we can strengthen ALA for the future. These conversations—and the possibilities ALA and its members hold—inspired me to run for ALA president in the middle of a worldwide crisis.

As your president, I will lead with the Association's core values, centering equity, strengthening advocacy, and promoting organizational excellence through connection and collaboration. I have and will continue to seek out, listen to, and act on the varied perspectives and experiences of our members to move ALA forward.

As a 14-year member, past ALA Executive Board member, and chair of the Steering Committee on Organizational Effectiveness, I believe in our future. By leading together for change, ALA can live up to its full potential and be the Association we need it to be today.

I will lead together with our members for an Association and a profession that:

- are inclusive, racially equitable, and antiracist. I have been proud to help lead ALA's commitment to diversity,

including as chair of the Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services Advisory Committee and as a leader in the Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association. In our associations and in my own library, I have made real change, supported library workers of color, worked with allies, and broken down barriers.

- model organizational excellence and sustainability. Declining membership and fiscal shortfalls demonstrate the need for new revenue streams and membership models. I will continue the work to pivot ALA, leveraging the expertise and views of member leaders and working closely with staff to restore trust and be more transparent.
- commit to our core values through partnerships that amplify our ideals. Collaborations can help us leverage

By leading together for change, ALA can live up to its full potential and be the Association we need it to be today.

our strengths in areas like intellectual freedom and supporting library workers alongside organizations like the Freedom to Read Foundation and through shared governance with the ALA–Allied Professional Association.

ALA's strong advocacy base is essential to our future. The work of members and staff to position the Association at the forefront of the fight to provide broadband access and uphold democracy has allowed us room to reimagine our Association—as one that will support library workers facing challenges nationwide and give them a place to explore the profession, develop skills, and connect with other passionate members.

I am committed to listening to our members and nonmembers and will continually evaluate priorities, efforts, and initiatives. Our members seek an association that is responsive to their needs; as your next president, I will be responsive to our members.

By celebrating our successes, we can lead together for change. I am passionate about libraries, I am passionate about our Association, and I am honored to be a candidate for ALA president. I encourage you to make your voice heard as I ask for your vote and support—not just in this election, but in our Association every day. **AL**

ALA ELECTION VOTE: March 8–April 7. More information at bit.ly/ALAElection21



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TRENDS



Human visitors explore the butterfly garden at Kokomo-Howard County (Ind.) Public Library's South branch.

Where Monarchs Reign

Library butterfly gardens emphasize sustainability, community partnerships

BY Emily Udell

When members of the Howard County (Ind.) Master Gardener

Association became enchanted by the idea of creating a local butterfly habitat, their first stop was Kokomo-Howard County Public Library (KHCPL). Not for books and information but to get the project off—and into—the ground.

Drawing on their existing relationship with KHCPL, the gardeners discussed planting a community butterfly garden—a sanctuary designed to attract and support the colorful winged creatures at all stages of life—on the grounds of the system's South branch.

"What I love best is that when they wanted this for their community, they first thought of the library," says Lisa Fipps, KHCPL

marketing director. "That shows how important it is for libraries to be community partners and focus not just inside their walls but outside their walls."

KHCPL's garden came to fruition in September 2020. Fipps says the garden has been well received as a site for staff and the public to take a break and the library and local groups to host programming. It has also inspired other projects, such as a local scouting group that plans to install a rain garden. "It continues to grow and evolve because the community sees the potential and wants to be a part of it," she says. "That's a great sign of success when it comes to libraries."

Climate change and habitat destruction have caused a decline in the populations of butterfly species

such as monarchs, which play an important part in Earth's ecosystems. Libraries around the country have dedicated outdoor space to these gardens, which serve as programming and education venues as well as tranquil settings where patrons can enjoy a book or relax. Butterfly gardens not only attract their namesake insects but also can serve as havens for other pollinators such as moths, bees, birds, and bats; together, they pollinate nearly 80% of flowering and crop plants, according to the US Forest Service.

"People have trashed the planet," says Jeffrey Glassberg, president of the North American Butterfly Association (NABA), a nonprofit conservation organization. "If we can save butterflies, we can save ourselves."

NABA offers a program that allows individuals and institutions to certify their gardens of any size by including at least three plants that host butterflies and support caterpillars, as well as three plants that serve as nectar sources, which vary by region. In the northeast, for example, a host plant could be blue wild indigo and a nectar plant could be golden alexander. The advocacy group encourages the use of native plants, which require less water and maintenance, and discourages the use of pesticides.

"We try to set out conditions that are realistic and encourage people, and not be the plant police," Glassberg adds.

Certified gardens can display signage declaring their NABA affiliation. "By certifying your garden



In this time of pandemic, outdoor spaces become even more vital to patron engagement.

and having a sign out there, it's a way of starting that conversation with the public," he says.

Five libraries around the country feature NABA-certified gardens, including Fletcher Memorial Library in Hampton, Connecticut. Anne Christie, the library's program director, says NABA certification was a goal from the garden's inception.

"The sooner I got that, the more interest the community would have," says Christie, who used her background in landscape design to plan the project. "A lot of people were already interested in gardens, but I think having a NABA-certified garden got people more in the native plant and pollinator direction."

Monarchs, skippers, swallow-tails, and fritillaries are among the butterfly species that visit the garden, which debuted in 2013 with plants that are almost exclusively native. The garden has become a home for programming to educate visitors about its purpose, as well as a peaceful setting to host speakers and performers and a place where hors d'oeuvres can be served preceding concerts in an adjacent area.

"We view this as a valuable resource in keeping interest in the library alive," Christie says. "[The

garden] gets people interested in their town library who might not have been before."

In this time of pandemic—when many libraries are forced to limit their indoor services—outdoor spaces become even more vital to patron engagement. Minot-Sleeper Library (MSL) in Bristol, New Hampshire, allocated funding from its CARES Act award last summer to host a butterfly garden StoryWalk featuring the picture book *In a Garden* by Tim McCanna.

"We saw quite a few people walking through," says Brittany Overton, director of MSL. "It wasn't just children with young families, but older adults as well."

Staffers at libraries with butterfly gardens say establishing and maintaining these habitats require working hand in hand with local master gardener organizations and gardening clubs. The Comal Master Gardener Association planted the butterfly garden at Mammen Family Public Library (MFPL) in Bulverde, Texas, and its volunteers weed beds and check the irrigation.

Originally planted in 2009, MFPL's garden had to be replanted in 2019, when the library underwent an expansion to nearly double its size. Susan Herr, MFPL's director, says some members of the community found the disruption of the original plot "really painful."

"It was important to reestablish the garden," she says. "We worked hard to create a spot for it in the new space, and I think it's been successful. This summer we had so many butterflies again." **AL**

EMILY UDELL is a freelance writer based in Indianapolis.

BY THE NUMBERS

Deaf History and Culture

15

Number of years National Deaf History Month has been celebrated. In 2006, the American Library Association and National Association of the Deaf announced the month would be observed March 13–April 15.

466 million

Number of people worldwide with disabling hearing loss. Approximately 34 million are children.

1976

Year that Alice L. Hagemeyer became DC Public Library's first full-time librarian for the Deaf community. Hagemeyer went on to cofound the group Friends of Libraries for Deaf Action in 1986.

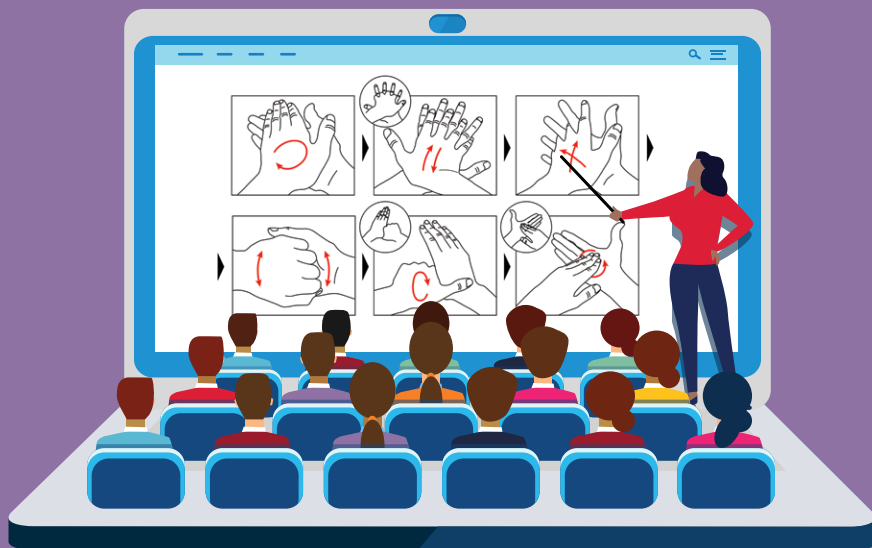
12,750

Number of books, media programs, and assistive communication devices in the Library Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing collection administered by Nashville (Tenn.) Public Library.



31

Number of years award-winning Deaf actor Linda Bove played Linda the Librarian on *Sesame Street*, the longest-running television role for a Deaf person. ●



Fighting the Spread

Health librarians quell pandemic panic with webinars

BY Timothy
Inklebarger

When the COVID-19 pandemic started spreading throughout the US in early 2020, Jessica Daly, consumer health librarian at hospital network Orlando (Fla.) Health, knew it was time for her—and other information specialists in the medical field—to step up.

“As medical professionals and librarians, we tell people what to do, but we don’t often explain why,” she says. “A lot of times people are like, ‘I don’t want people telling me what to do.’ But if they understand the science behind it, I think it really helps.”

In response to the unfolding crisis, Daly, as well as other consumer health librarians across the country, began offering free webinars in hopes of educating the public about the virus—and perhaps saving lives in the process. Topics ranged from establishing and maintaining basic cleanliness routines to more specific concerns, such as combating fake news about the pandemic.

Webinars proved to be an ideal method for reaching patients who had health questions or were afraid to travel to their physician’s office, Daly says.

“A lot of families reached out to me saying, ‘How can I keep us safe? What can I do?’ Having a trained medical librarian at their disposal free of charge was and continues to be a valuable resource for so many during this most difficult time,” Daly says. Her first COVID-19 webinar, *Germ Prevention: Protecting Your Family*, was presented in June 2020 on Orlando Health’s website in response to community queries like these.

In that webinar, Daly gave tips on home and personal hygiene, from proper handwashing techniques to the best cleaners for sanitizing household objects. Some of the information may have seemed basic, she says, but it was important to reiterate—especially since certain cleaning products or methods may be new to some people.

“You may have read some really scary things [that] people did because they were just so afraid,” Daly says. “A lot of people think they can mix cleaners, especially with bleach. But you never mix bleach and ammonia. A lot of people do not know that.” (Combining bleach and ammonia produces toxic, potentially fatal gases.)

Daly also hosted a webinar on things to consider before leaving the house during the pandemic, with advice on wearing proper face coverings, maintaining social distance, and getting tested after coming into contact with an infected person. The webinar’s goal was to inform and also to provide peace of mind for viewers.

“I never wanted people to be afraid to go out,” Daly says. “If they had to, I wanted them to feel confident when they did.”

Correcting misinformation

The COVID-19 pandemic has also prompted an increase in fake news, especially surrounding the virus’s origins and transmission. That has spurred some librarians to use webinars as a means of countering misinformation.

Antonio P. DeRosa, oncology consumer health librarian at Weill Cornell Medicine Sandra and Edward Meyer Cancer Center in New York City, produced a webinar last May titled *Fighting the “Infodemic” of Misinformation on COVID-19*. Webinars are nothing new for DeRosa, who typically focuses on oncology, but the World Health Organization’s decision in February 2020 to call the phenomenon of rampant misinformation an “infodemic” inspired him to highlight the topic, he says.

DeRosa says questions to his office have skyrocketed since the onset of the coronavirus. “I’ve received more questions about

things I know are misinformation,” he says, such as the efficacy of hydroxychloroquine to treat COVID-19 and whether face masks really prevent the virus’s spread.

Brenda Linares, health sciences librarian at University of Kansas Medical Center School of Nursing in Kansas City, says she has seen similar misinformation in the Latinx community. Linares hosted a webinar on the topic last August and has frequently discussed health literacy as it relates to the coronavirus in her bimonthly Spanish-language podcast *Juntos Radio*.

Linares says that since the onset of the pandemic, she had seen a number of English-language podcasts on COVID-19 but not many in Spanish—so she decided to launch *Juntos Radio* in March 2020. “I thought it would be great to share those resources,” she says. The podcast’s first episode provided COVID-19 prevention tips; subsequent pandemic-related episodes have dealt with social-distancing best practices and debunking vaccine myths. The podcast has also covered childhood obesity, Alzheimer’s disease, and other topics.

She notes that health literacy is one of the social determinants of health, which include factors such as socioeconomic status and education. Those who don’t understand their options for accessing health care will suffer as a result, she says.

Bringing webinars to your community

Daly hosted more than 40 webinars on topics related to the pandemic for Orlando Health in 2020. She recommends that health librarians hoping to offer similar programs—related to COVID-19 or not—start by sticking to the basics and turning to colleagues for assistance.

“The best thing to do is connect with others who are already doing

Those who don’t understand their options for accessing health care will be left behind.

it,” she says. In her view, asking health literacy professionals—as well as nurses, doctors, and others in your organization—for advice and best practices is crucial. They can offer guidance on content as well as on recording and promoting the webinar. Medical professionals can even be guests on your webinar, she says.

But it’s important to remember that librarians themselves cannot give medical advice: “The consumer health librarian’s responsibility is to provide credible and timely health information,” she says. “Once the patient receives [that] information, it is their responsibility to share it with their physician or medical professional team.”

Even more important, Daly says, is connecting with the community to assess its wants and needs. COVID-19 remains a huge concern, she says, but people are dealing with other medical issues as well. Daly keeps a list of health care questions that patients pose to her—a list that has led to webinars on cancer prevention, medication safety, planning for an effective doctor’s visit, preparing for surgery, and other topics.

“You don’t need to reinvent the wheel,” Daly says. “But you want to put your own spin on [your webinar] and make it personalized for your area and your participants.” **AL**

TIMOTHY INKLEBARGER is a writer living in Chicago. Additional reporting by *American Libraries* Senior Editor Phil Morehart.

“The instructors make sure the content they are teaching is relevant today, so we have a broad scope of where libraries are now and where they can be in the future.”

— April Shaw, Student
Library Science, BMS



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Think Inside the Box

Librarians turn to a Japanese form of storytelling during pandemic

BY Diana Panuncial

The performance begins like this: Erica Siskind, librarian at Oakland (Calif.) Public Library, rides her bike to the front of the room, parks it, and pulls from her basket two sticks and a small wooden box.

Clack, clack!

Siskind hits the sticks together, sets them down, and opens the flaps on the front of the box to create a small stage showing the illustrated cover of that day's *kamishibai* storytime.

Kamishibai, or “paper theater,” is a form of storytelling that originated in Japan in the late 1920s. Storytellers would ride into villages on bikes, bang wooden sticks together, and gather an audience around the kamishibai box, a small stage containing a sequence of cards that illustrate traditional folktales. One by one, the storyteller pulls each card from the top of the box—either slowly to build suspense or quickly to make the audience gasp. Text on the back of the cards can help the storyteller along.

“Once you have that little stage, when you put that in front of the kids, they think it’s like a puppet show, like something fabulous,” Siskind says.

The form has become popular in libraries for its flexibility and accessibility, says storyteller and artist Tara M. McGowan, author of *The Kamishibai Classroom: Engaging Multiple Literacies through the Art of Paper Theatre*. McGowan says library workers are particularly receptive to trying kamishibai storytimes because paper theater works well with existing programming. Some purchase the

theater sets and cards, while others make their own out of cardboard and paper. “It’s keeping the art form alive and [growing] it,” she adds.

During the pandemic, many librarians have uploaded and streamed videos of their storytimes online. Keiko Skow, youth services librarian at Racine (Wis.) Public Library (RPL), posted a new kamishibai storytime every Friday last fall. “Virtual storytelling is quite new to me,” she says. “But slowly, I got used to it.”

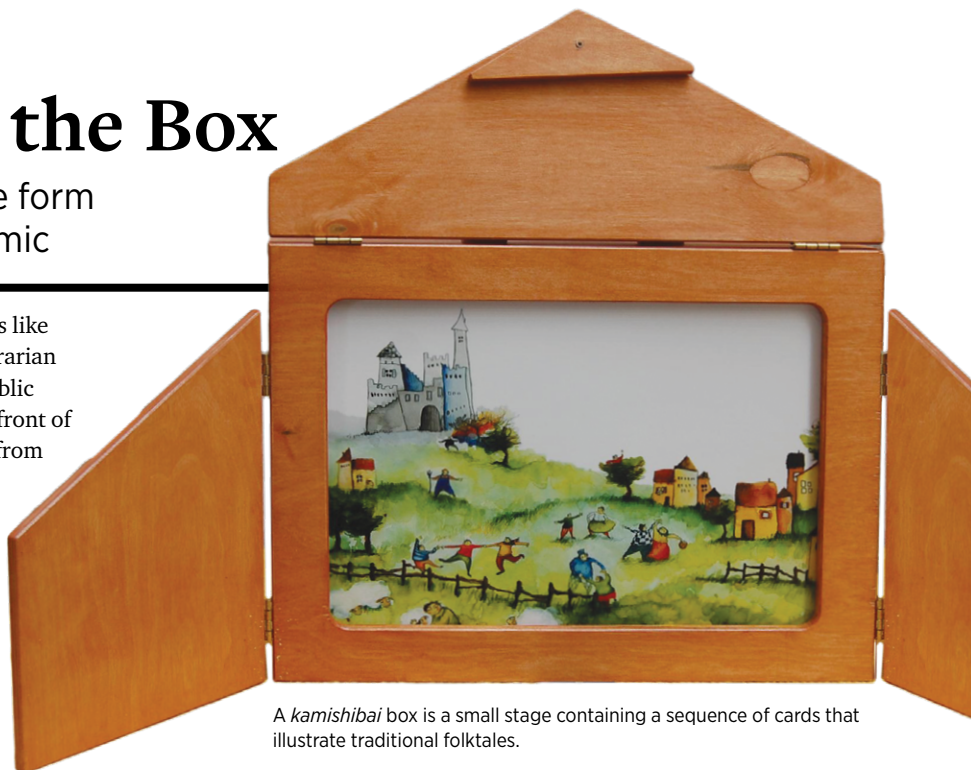
Kamishibai flourished in Japan in the 1930s and 1940s, offering storytellers and artists an easy way to make money during a period of economic depression, according to the website Kamishibai for Kids (kamishibai.com). During World War II, kamishibai storytellers traveled through neighborhoods and bomb shelters to offer entertainment to all ages. The rise of television in the 1950s pushed kamishibai aside, McGowan says, but historians, schools, librarians, publishers, and storytellers are working to keep it alive.

“I grew up in a kamishibai storytelling world,” says Skow, who was born in Japan. She wanted to bring the art form to RPL to teach patrons about other cultures.

‘Another world’

Siskind compares the audience’s experience of kamishibai with the entertainment they would get from watching television. “The difference here is that you can touch it,” she says. “There’s a live person talking to you. But it has the same capacity to take you to another place—a window into another world.”

Kamishibai creates a triangle of emotional connection between the storyteller, the audience, and the world of the story, McGowan says. Creating that connection virtually is a challenge, she adds, but when it works, it’s powerful. “Even if there’s text on the back of the card, the audience doesn’t see it,” she says. “The storyteller is bringing it to life. If you use the stage, that accentuates even more the way you can manipulate the cards in ways that aren’t possible with picture books.”



A *kamishibai* box is a small stage containing a sequence of cards that illustrate traditional folktales.

From bamboo sticks to tin canisters that imitate thunder, many instruments can convey atmosphere and tone in Japanese folktales. But Skow says the most effective tool is her voice. “Happy, sad, low, high,” she says. “I’m not just reading the stories. My voice is actually alive.”

Getting started

Lisa Leuck, director of Elgin (Iowa) Public Library, says kamishibai has helped broaden her town’s horizons. Leuck’s library serves a remote town of about 700 people. “We’re extremely rural and isolated here, not just during the pandemic, but all the time,” she says.

One of Leuck’s goals at the library is to offer patrons experiences they

can’t easily get in town. When she discovered kamishibai, she used grant money to purchase a theater and some cards from kamishibai publisher Leaf Moon Arts.

As libraries continue to experiment with virtual programming, McGowan recommends implementing kamishibai storytimes through the pandemic and beyond. “Libraries play a crucial role where children can create kamishibai themselves, and the art form can grow as a culture in the US,” she says.

Siskind, who has collected around 24 different story sets, calls the kamishibai box an investment with solid returns. “The stage is important because that’s what makes it different from a book,” she says. “It’s sturdy, [so] you can use it over and over, share it with a group of librarians, and make your own stories.”

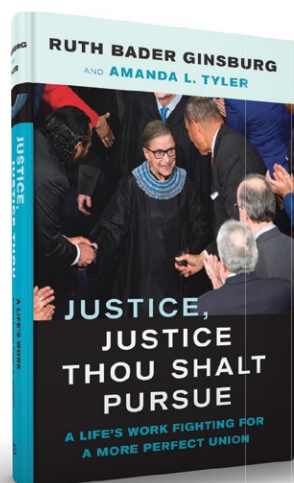
Kamishibai creates a triangle of emotional connection between the storyteller, the audience, and the world of the story.

When diving into a historic form of storytelling like kamishibai, librarians recommend an open mind, a respectful attitude, and a willingness to learn and teach others. “When you are choosing which stories to buy, use the same thoughtfulness in respecting the authentic representations of [Japanese] culture.” **AL**

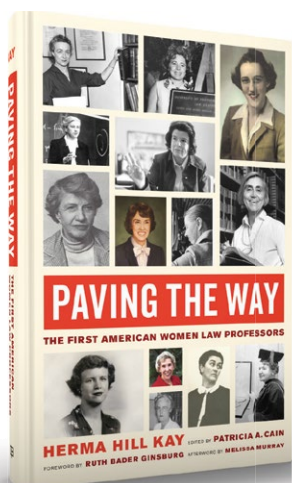
DIANA PANUNCIAL is a writer in Zion, Illinois.

AMERICAN LEGENDS AND LUMINARIES

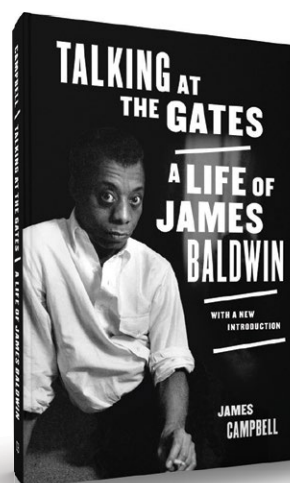
NEW SPRING BOOKS FROM UC PRESS



The late Justice’s last book is the curation of her own legacy, tracing her life’s work for gender equality and a “more perfect Union”



Celebrates the first wave of trailblazing female law professors and the stage they set for American democracy



This new edition features a fresh introduction along with a previously unpublished interview with Norman Mailer about Baldwin



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A Movement Grows in Brooklyn

Oral histories highlight one neighborhood's environmental issues and activism

Greenpoint, New York, a historically working-class Polish immigrant community, sits at the confluence of the East River and Newtown Creek, at the northwest edge of Brooklyn. This neighborhood of more than 34,000 has also been home to decades of industrial pollution.

The Greenpoint Library and Environmental Education Center, a branch of Brooklyn (N.Y.) Public Library (BPL), opened in fall 2020 to highlight and give testimony to Greenpoint's relationship with its natural surroundings and promote awareness of climate change and sustainability. Both a full-service library and a community hub for environmental awareness, activism, and education, it houses the Greenpoint Environmental History Project (bit.ly/BPLenvcollection), a collection of oral interviews and personal items chronicling the ecological past of a neighborhood contaminated by industry. The goal of the project is that future generations may better understand the history of the area, its struggles, and its grassroots advocacy.

BY ACACIA THOMPSON

In the Greenpoint neighborhood of northwestern Brooklyn, New York, Laura Hoffman's family and neighbors have experienced disturbingly high rates of rare cancers and other illnesses. School superintendent Alicja Winnicki, a Polish immigrant, says

children in her school have suffered unusually high levels of allergies and asthma. Other residents have complained of bad odors in their homes.

These stories are threads of a broader narrative—one BPL aims to document and preserve through oral histories as part of the Greenpoint Environmental History Project, which comprises 300 unique

digital items and 59 interviews with more than 100 local subjects.

While many of these stories show the impact of decades of industrial pollution in Greenpoint, others demonstrate the

community's long arc of environmental activism. Through the voices of community members, this project shares the environmental story of a neighborhood and how it fought against both the gross negligence of industry and the indifference of local and state authorities.

In the 19th century, the neighborhood became a hotbed of industrial oil refining. With few environmental laws or regulations created until the latter part of the 20th century, oil and other manufacturing concerns created one of the worst environmental disasters in US history. In 1978, authorities determined what locals long suspected: Greenpoint was sitting on a pool of oil leaked into the soil and groundwater. The spill consisted of 30 million gallons—more than twice the amount the *Exxon Valdez* leaked in Alaska in 1989.

In 2010, an activist-initiated lawsuit against ExxonMobil over the Brooklyn cleanup was settled with New York State. It included an award of \$19.5 million through the Greenpoint Community Environmental Fund (GCEF), created to support local sustainability projects including the construction of BPL's Greenpoint Library and Environmental Education Center and its history project under the supervision of BPL's Outreach Services.

As the library's outreach archivist, I began my research in BPL's Brooklyn Collection, where I found books, newspaper articles, photos, and ephemera that gave me an overview of Greenpoint's history. I created strategies to find oral history subjects and formulated a project narrative, aiming to encompass as many perspectives as possible. I announced the project and a call for oral history subjects through social media, press interviews, and fliers. I reached out to community boards, senior centers, religious institutions, and local environmental groups.



Items from the Greenpoint collection, including a newspaper, a photo of an implosion of natural gas storage tanks, and an award presented to Greenpoint Against Smell and Pollution.

GLOBAL REACH

Museum of Censorship

ESTONIA Banned Books—a museum dedicated to prohibited, destroyed, or otherwise censored books from around the world—has opened in the capital city of Tallinn. The museum is also researching the history of censorship in Estonia, particularly under Soviet rule (1944–1991). “With the museum, we want to raise people’s awareness of the long history of censorship and the importance of freedom of speech,” says founder Joseph Maximillian Dunnigan. “Freedom of thought and expression is not a universally accepted human right to this day.” —*Estonian World*, Dec. 8.



Joseph Maximillian Dunnigan, founder of Banned Books

SRI LANKA During his leisure time, government child protection officer Mahinda Dasanayaka packs his motorbike with books and rides across mostly muddy roads through the mountainous tea plantations northeast of Colombo to provide books to underprivileged children in rural areas. Having witnessed the hardships faced by children in villages without libraries, Dasanayaka started his program, called “Book and Me,” in 2017, and his collection includes about 3,000 books on a variety of subjects. So far, his program has benefited more than 1,500 children and 150 adults. —*AP News*, Nov. 26.

AUSTRALIA Staffers at the National Library of Australia were sorting through the recently acquired papers of author and journalist A. B. “Banjo” Paterson (1864–1941) when they discovered a 120-year-old tin of Cadbury chocolates, still in its straw and foil wrapping. The souvenir sweets were commissioned by Queen Victoria and sent to British troops in South Africa during the Boer War. Researchers believe that Paterson bought the chocolates from a soldier while serving as a war correspondent. —*National Library of Australia*, Dec. 22.

ITALY More than 300,000 books were donated to school libraries during the fifth annual “Why I Read” (#IoLeggoPerché) campaign, sponsored by the Association of Italian Publishers (*Associazione Italiana Editori*, AIE). “Despite the travel limitations, the gathering bans, the upper secondary schools and many of the lower secondary schools being in distance learning, and the shopping centers closed in many regions during the two weekends of our initiative [November 21–29], the act of donating a book at a school is now considered a civic duty by many citizens who see reading as an indispensable right for our children and teenagers,” said AIE President Ricardo Franco Levi. —*Publishing Perspectives*, Jan. 4. ●

Oral histories from Greenpointers highlighted several concerns spanning a century and a half of industrial pollution: vapor intrusion from the oil spill; bad odors from the waste treatment facility, waste transfer stations, and fat-rendering plants; fine-air particulate from a toxic waste incinerator; exhaust from trucks, especially from the adjacent Brooklyn–Queens Expressway; hazardous manufacturing facilities next to residential communities; and the many brownfields and state and federal Superfund sites peppered throughout the neighborhood.

Several oral history subjects saw the environmental state of the neighborhood as “just how it was,” with little to be done about it at the time. This thread weaves through the project: People were busy trying to feed their families and create new lives in the US and didn’t feel like they could fight what the city and local businesses were doing to the air and water quality.

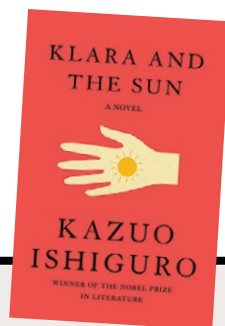
Many of the residents interviewed were relatively recent arrivals, having lived in Greenpoint less than 30 years but in that time having become ardent environmental activists. They fought against toxic incinerators, illegally operating waste transfer stations, and proposed power plants. For example, activists Kim and Scott Fraser speak of their time fighting against poor air quality. Other contributions included group interviews of local environmental organizations and their fights.

Unrecorded history often becomes forgotten history. With the fast pace of changes taking place in the Greenpoint community, we’ve worked to preserve its oral histories while living witnesses are still around to share it. Future residents, who will likely continue the fight against industrial harm, can look to this archive for education and inspiration. **AL**

ACACIA THOMPSON is outreach archivist for the Greenpoint branch of Brooklyn (N.Y.) Public Library.

Kazuo Ishiguro

Celebrated author on how technology may alter our humanity



Many may know Kazuo Ishiguro as author of *The Remains of the Day* (1989) and *Never Let Me Go* (2005). Now, with the March release of *Klara and the Sun* (Alfred A. Knopf)—his first novel since receiving the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2017—Ishiguro tells the story of Klara, an “Artificial Friend” for sale who hopes to be chosen by a customer. With the aid of its unforgettable narrator, the novel explores what it means to be human—to love, to feel loneliness, and everything in between. *American Libraries* spoke with Ishiguro about his new work, the parallels between Klara’s world and ours, and being knighted.

BY Alison Marcotte

***Klara and the Sun* is a powerful commentary on the ethics of technological advances and artificial intelligence. What inspired you to address those themes?**

It was an opportunity to have a narrator with an interesting perspective. The Artificial Friend is almost like a baby at the beginning: completely fresh, completely open, but taking things in at a phenomenal rate.

As [Klara] very rapidly absorbs the world around her, she starts to take on qualities of human beings, including their self-deceptions, hopes, dreams, and fears.

We increasingly think algorithms and data can define people—that somebody’s personality, somebody’s characteristics can be

predicted and mapped out by Big Data and algorithms. So that comes up in the novel: Can you replace somebody you love? If you could reproduce that personality algorithmically, would that work?

What similarities do you see between our world (particularly during the pandemic) and Klara’s?

The world of *Klara and the Sun* is just slightly in the future. This is one of the things that we’re going to face very rapidly. If you move to a model where you say, “Well, we only need a small percentage of human beings to actually work; machines can do a lot of it,” then we’re going to have to rethink our social values and how we value one another.

One of the positive things that might come out of [the pandemic] is that it highlights how important human contact is, not just emotionally but even in terms of the economy. I hope people realize that, along with what we can do, the pandemic is highlighting what we can’t do with technology.

Libraries being closed has presented a real problem. People depended on going to these places during their day. They’re important common areas. They

fill a need that’s deeper than just exchanging books, which is an important enough function.

What role have libraries played in your life? In the south of England, in Guildford, where I grew up, parents there thought it was good their children went to the library on the weekend. And at first I really resented this—bringing back books I thought my parents would approve of, about ancient Egypt or something. But that whole business about just hanging around browsing, it did actually work on me. You look at all these spines, and after a while, you get fascinated. The first time I got into reading was when I was about 9 years old, when I went through all the Sherlock Holmes short stories. A lot of my friends did as well.

You received a knighthood in 2019. What’s it like being a knight?

The person who gave me the knighthood was Prince Charles. I first met him when I was a grouse beater for his grandmother, the Queen Mother. I would bring up bloody bits of shot

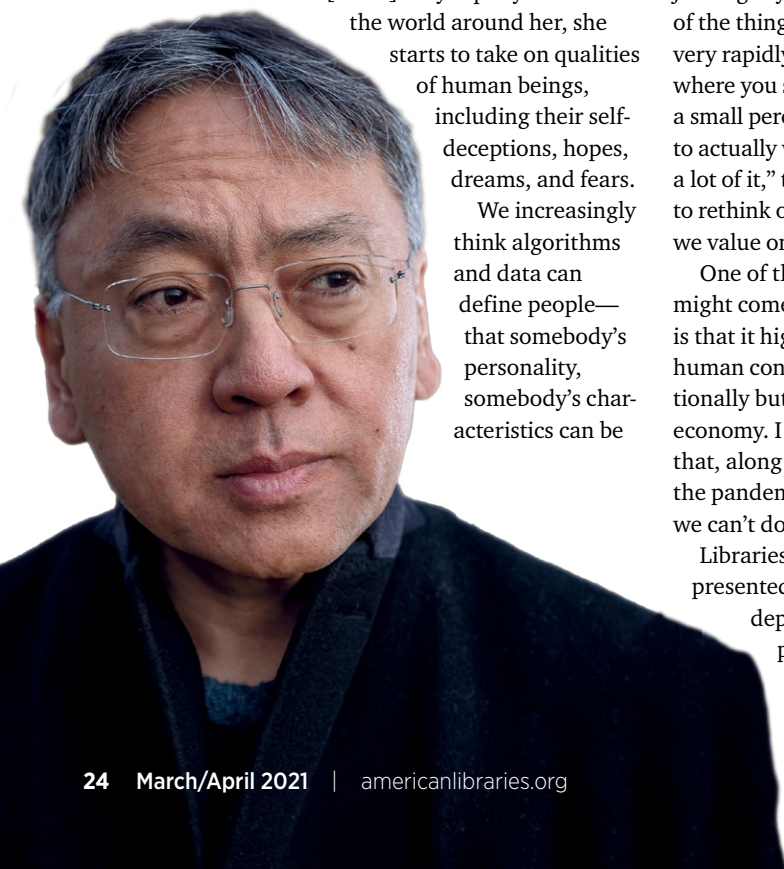
grouse, and he would say, “Oh, thank you so much, thank you.” He would

MORE ONLINE

For the extended interview, visit bit.ly/AL-Ishiguro

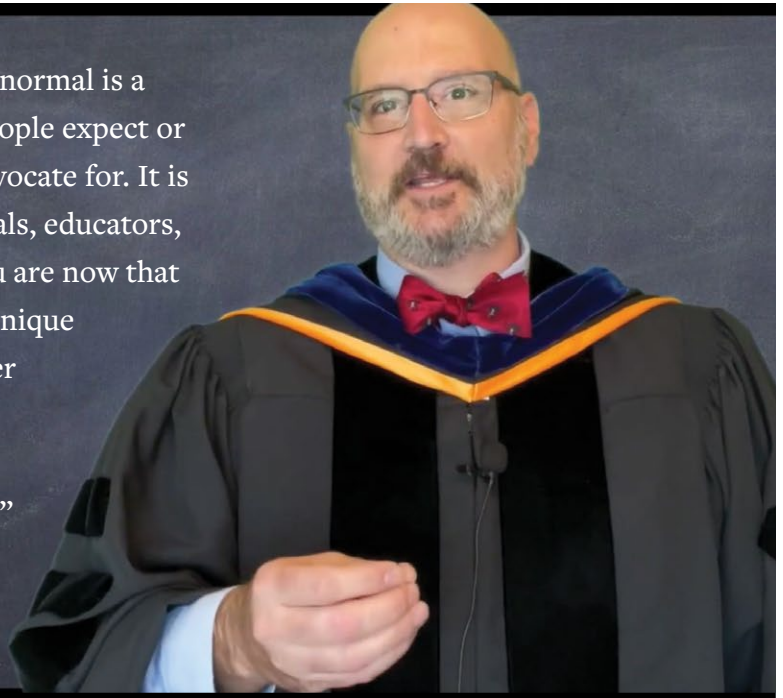
come and have a chat with us, because there were only 14 of us.

It’s like the Nobel; [being a knight] doesn’t make any difference in my day-to-day life. I don’t go around calling myself Sir Kazuo Ishiguro. It doesn’t encourage people to read your work in an intimate way. But on the other hand, I’m pleased to have been honored. It’s a recognition of my vocation and of what we all do. And that would include all the people involved with books—publishers, booksellers, librarians. It’s an affirmation of what we do. **AL**



“Make no mistake, what is and will be normal is a choice. Not just a choice as to what people expect or accept, but in what you will do and advocate for. It is the librarians, information professionals, educators, data analysts, and researchers that you are now that will shape the new normal. It is your unique combination of skills and ethical center that must fight disinformation and reweave the connective tissue of our communities and our very democracy.”

R. DAVID LANKES, director of the University of South Carolina's School of Information Science, “A Last Little Lecture,” DavidLankes.org, Dec. 11.



“Library-induced realism is a great thing, one that can do much to increase your happiness. Because the world in which you are perpetually under the impression that the next book purchase, the next apartment, the next significant other will be the one that finally delivers the goods is not a life of happiness. It is a life of perpetual dissatisfaction, a life of thin and sugary highs followed by long and unenlightening lows. The library is, with its careworn and temporary offerings, as lovely and as poignant a reminder of our actual human condition as the tides or a forest in fall.”

BEN DOLNICK, “Library Books: A Small Antidote to a Life of Perpetual Dissatisfaction,” *The New York Times*, Dec. 8.

“ELDERS ARE LIKE LIBRARIES. LOSING ONE IS LIKE A LIBRARY BURNING DOWN.”

LOREN RACINE, creator of a Facebook page offering help in Montana's Blackfeet community, in “Tribes Try to Shield Elders and Their Knowledge from Virus,” *Star Tribune*, Dec. 27.

“Research conducted by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy in Manchester [UK] found more than 80% of library users who experience feelings of loneliness or isolation felt the library helped combat these feelings.”

ROB WHITEMAN, chief executive of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, “Libraries Are Vital to Tackling Loneliness,” *The MJ*, Dec. 8.

“In an era of fake news, disinformation, alternative facts, politicized science, cookies, and spyware, has there ever been a greater need for a public library? A place to go for guidance to unbiased information? A secure haven for asking questions? Open and free to everyone?”

BETSY BERNFIELD, attorney and former director of Teton County (Wyo.) Library, “Community Needs to Protect Library Freedoms,” *Jackson Hole (Wyo.) News and Guide*, Dec. 16.



A DISPROPORTIONATE PANDEMIC

Library patrons
with disabilities face
compounded challenges

BY Emily Udell

Before COVID-19 came along, 18-year-old Jack Miller, who has autism, visited the main location of Gail Borden Public Library District (GBPLD) in Elgin, Illinois, three times a week. On two of those visits, he dusted books, alphabetized DVDs, and performed other tasks as part of his school's special-education vocational studies program; on the third, he came with his family to check out his favorite Impressionist art books and play games in the library's computer lab—even though he has access to the same games at home.

"He is so routine-driven that he never considers doing 'home' things at the computer lab or 'computer lab' things at home," says his mom, Rebecca Miller. "Being able to do these things at home is not the same to him at all."

In addition, using the computer lab gave Jack a taste of what his mom calls "sheltered independence."

"There are not very many places in the world you can go that are free, safe, and predictable, and a place to practice your independence skills as a young person with a disability," she says.

The COVID-19 pandemic and its shifting limitations on GBPLD's hours and services have taken a big toll on Jack and his family. So has the movement of his vocational studies program to an all-virtual model.

"I feel shocked about the changes at the library," Jack says. "I feel confused. I miss my job."

Since the pandemic began, GBPLD has at times reopened its buildings with social distancing measures and mask requirements, but Miller's routine has not resumed. Even in periods when the main location has been open, its computer lab has mostly remained closed—so his family has taken him to a branch location instead, to avoid the distress he might feel upon seeing his familiar computer lab without being able to use it.

"Mom and Dad make me go to the little library [branch] because of COVID-19," Jack says. "I like the little library, but I like the big one better."

Of course, it would be difficult to find a library-goer whose visits *haven't* been affected by COVID-19. But for Jack and many other people with disabilities, the effects are reaching even further. Losing independence, socialization, cognitive stimulation, and other library benefits is, in many cases, leading to emotional, intellectual, and other difficulties.

"Not being able to go to the library has made Jack very sad," his mother says. "It adds to his

confusion and

fear right now." She adds that even in non-pandemic times, "large parts of the world don't make sense" to him, so having one of his comfort zones removed is significant. "Not only does he miss that comfort zone, he begins to question all his other comfort zones," she says. "For example, every time his dad takes the dogs for a walk, Jack exclaims 'You came back!' when he returns. I see him losing confidence in what he thought were rules and predictable things in the world."

SERVICE SLOWDOWNS

Another thing rendered less predictable by the COVID-19 pandemic: the ease and speed with which people with low vision or blindness (or other physical disabilities that prevent them from reading or holding a printed page) can access braille and audio materials from the National Library Service (NLS) for the Blind and Print Disabled's free service by US mail.

For decades, NLS has made books and magazines in braille and audio formats available to patrons who qualify, along with devices needed to read or listen to them. NLS relies on a national network of about 100 partner libraries, as well as two warehouses stocked with talking-book machines and other resources, plus an app called Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD), to circulate materials to about 350,000 users. Parts of that service experienced slowdowns in 2020.



Jack Miller dusts shelves at the main location of Gail Borden Public Library District in Elgin, Illinois, pre-pandemic.



Elena Ozment and her brother Joey celebrate completing the Harry Potter series.

While the year saw much media coverage of mail delays caused by the US Postal Service, delays related to NLS materials came about primarily because of local, COVID-related restrictions affecting NLS's partner libraries, says

Kristen Fernekes,

NLS head of communications and outreach: "Starting in mid-March, it was hard to keep up."

Some libraries that closed to the public because of COVID-19 found that with staff members working from home, they couldn't receive or send out shipments of braille or talking-book materials. At one California library, staffers who would normally download audio files onto special cartridges for patrons to use with NLS-lent playback machines instead took the cartridges home with them and downloaded the files there for distribution.

In addition, one of NLS's two warehouses was forced to close for several months because of COVID-19. Fortunately, the other warehouse remained open, and NLS staffers were able to hastily rework processes so that patrons whose libraries had closed were able to receive materials directly from the warehouse instead. "Some of our libraries were able to work remotely and receive messages from their patrons, and then everybody worked together to get them stuff," Fernekes explains.

Even in non-pandemic times, many NLS users experience isolation because of age, ability, and health status. "We hear all the time that our materials are lifelines for our patrons," Fernekes says. "We take that very seriously." That's why, she says, as soon as the pandemic's ramifications for NLS services became clear, "the staff at NLS and the folks we were talking to from our network libraries immediately went into the mode of: 'We've got to figure out some way to get this to work.'"

For example, NLS asked partner libraries to train as many users as possible on BARD. NLS-registered patrons can, after contacting their local library to

receive login credentials, download BARD and use it to transfer NLS catalog items onto a smart device. In some cases that means downloading a braille file and syncing it to a device that features a refreshable braille display; in others, it means downloading an audio file onto a cartridge for use in a talking-book machine.

The push to increase BARD use did help, Fernekes says, though she's not sure by how much. She notes that people who would not have otherwise taken the leap to try BARD saw it as "a pretty good alternative" and that some partner libraries reported seeing "very significant increases" in the number of users.

But, she says, some patrons prefer to read hard-copy braille content instead of using BARD. "I'm afraid that those people were probably the ones who were the most impacted as far as getting materials," she says. The lengthy process of transcribing and maintaining quality of that content is done by outside vendors, she says, and many of those vendors shut down because of the pandemic.

Despite any service delays they may have encountered, NLS users have continued to send messages of gratitude to the service and its partner libraries, like this one from an anonymous patron: "I really wish to express my appreciation for what you and your colleagues have been doing for me these past years. I have been an avid reader all of my life, so when my vision dimmed, I was devastated. The Talking Book program has been a true blessing! In these perilous times I really appreciate your willingness to continue working."

THE VAGARIES OF GOING VIRTUAL

The pandemic has also pushed much in-person library programming online. For some patrons with disabilities, that change represents a mixed bag.

One of the groups that has gone all-digital as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic is the Next Chapter Book Club (NCBC) at Nevada County (Calif.) Community Library's Truckee branch. As part of the national NCBC program, the club gives people with developmental and intellectual disabilities the chance to gather, read, and discuss books. When the branch halted its in-person services in March 2020, the book club began meeting online with the assistance of staffers from local non-profit Tahoe Ability Program (TAP), who help promote and facilitate the club among TAP clients and distribute the chosen books to participants.

“We hear all the time that our materials are lifelines for our patrons. We take that very seriously.”

KRISTEN FERNEKES, head of communications and outreach, National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled

Bobbi Luster, Truckee branch manager, says the club still serves as a “bright spot” for the 10–15 members who continue to attend.

“Our patrons with special needs, who are unable to drive and depend on others to assist them, have been extremely isolated,” she says. “For example, some of our patrons who live in care facilities were in lockdown for extended periods of time, not allowed to leave the facility or have guests visit them. Virtual convenings, like book clubs, were some of their only outlets for social connections.”

Participant Erin Freeman agrees. While Zoom is “not the same as in person,” she says, she still calls it “a good way to do book club” and says that being able to virtually attend has helped ease the isolation of the pandemic for her: “I’m a social person. I miss all my friends.”

For others with disabilities, the new online format may make participation limited or even impossible, says TAP Program Manager Mariah O’Shaughnessy. She points out that some of the people her organization serves have limited verbal abilities and that “some clients struggle to comprehend what may be happening in the story or become lost on where they are within the book.” An in-person setting would permit her or another staffer to attend meetings “to explain on the side and help people feel involved,” she says. Whereas now, “I’m not there [in the room] with people. Overall, it’s a huge loss.”

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Before the COVID-19 pandemic shutdowns, Arlington (Tex.) Public Library (APL) hosted a weekly play group for children with disabilities, featuring stories, songs, and activity stations. Five-year-old Hannah Garcia, who was born with Down syndrome, attended regularly. “It was a safe environment for her to go, where she could be herself and play and interact, where she was accepted for who she is and for the attention span she has,” says her mother, Nora Garcia.

Once the pandemic made in-person programming impossible, the play group’s creator, librarian Ashley Faith Wyche, converted it to a virtual format. “I think that by going virtual, my disability programming has been able to reach a more widespread audience,” Wyche says. “Additionally, I think that even when we feel like [it might be safe] to do in-person programs,

this audience is so high-risk that they may still delay coming in. So for situations like that, I think that virtual programming is a lifeline.” Wyche has since left APL for a position at Grand Prairie (Tex.) Public Library System, where she plans to continue the virtual play group.

Despite the virtual group’s benefits, Wyche acknowledges, “I think all of us—families, children, and staff alike—are missing that in-person communication and sense of community.”

Garcia and her daughter certainly are. While they’ve given the virtual playtime a shot, Garcia says Hannah is missing out on the benefits of modeling the behavior and language of her peers in a group environment. “For somebody like Hannah, it’s not the same,” she says.

The disruption in their library routine, along with interruptions to Hannah’s schooling and therapy, has resulted in some regression of life skills, as well as an increase in anxiety. Even with some library access now allowed, Garcia doesn’t feel safe taking Hannah there, since her daughter won’t wear a mask for more than a minute.

Pre-pandemic, Erin Ozment frequented two branches of Orange County (Fla.) Library System (OCLS) in Orlando, with her 13-year-old daughter, Elena, who uses a wheelchair, has visual impairments, and is nonverbal.

There Elena enjoyed checking out books in her favorite genre—fantasy—and occasionally participating in arts and crafts programming. Her younger brother took advantage of the library’s free classes, which allowed Ozment to spend valuable one-on-one time with Elena in other parts of the building.

Since Elena’s medical issues put her at high risk for COVID-19, the family now relies on an OCLS service that allows patrons to receive materials by mail. While grateful for that, Ozment says not being able to visit the library has taken a toll on Elena’s state of mind. “I know she loves me, but she’s tired of not seeing other people. The library is part of that,” she says. “Having a welcoming place with other people is important. It’s just been a huge reminder of how integral libraries are—for my family in particular.” **AL**



EMILY UDELL is a freelance writer based in Indianapolis.

HOW USER-FRIENDLY IS YOUR WEBSITE?

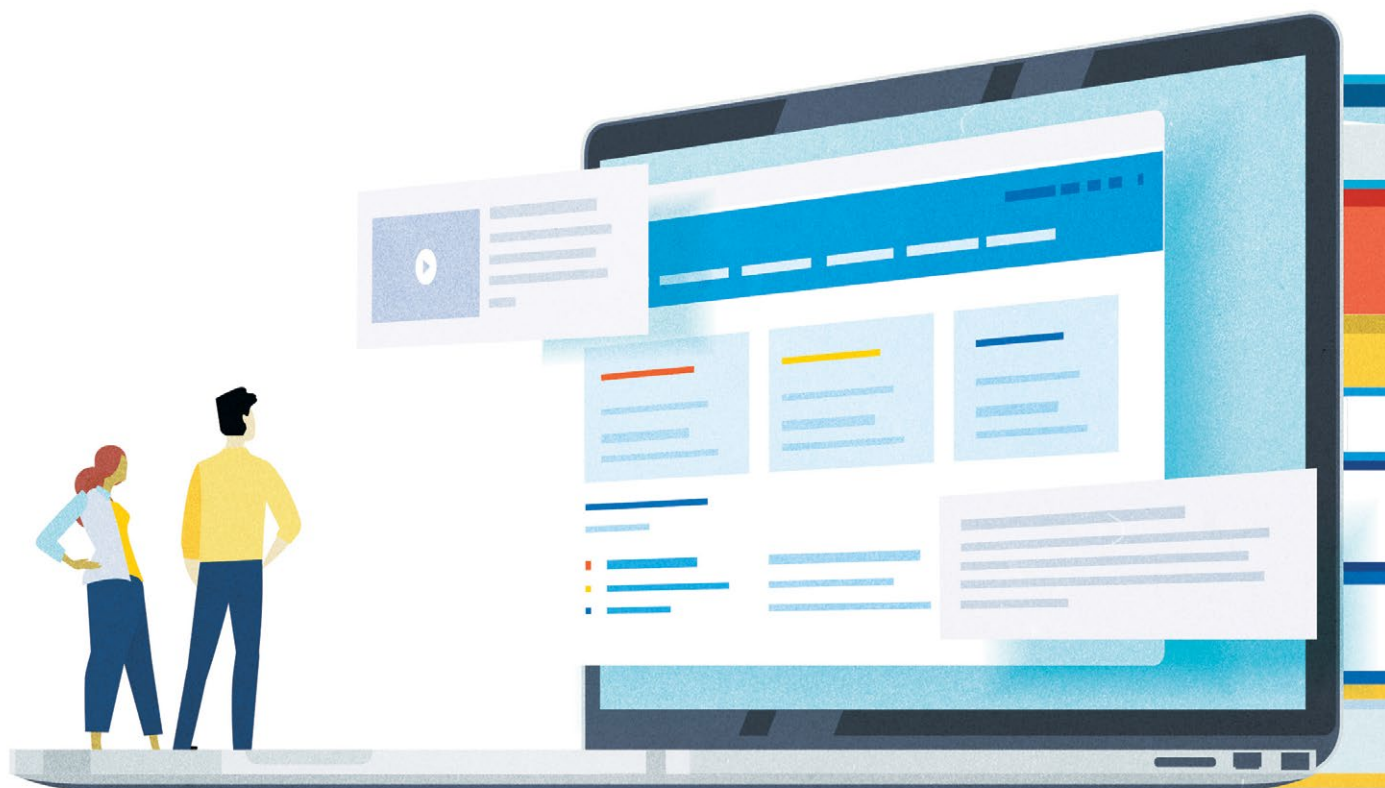
Usability lessons for libraries in a remote world

BY Greg Landgraf

As the pandemic has limited in-person library services this year, many libraries are relying on their websites more than ever to deliver the services their communities need and expect. But a website is useful only if it enables patrons to find and do what they need. The increased importance of library websites during the COVID-19 era has highlighted common usability shortcomings—and opportunities.

“I get the feeling that many people think usability comes second to utility,” says Christina Manzo, user experience librarian at Radford University Carilion in Roanoke, Virginia. “I think they’ve become one and the same. There’s a seemingly endless supply of interfaces competing for our attention, so users are less willing to put up with a website that doesn’t work well.”

Illustration: ©PureSolution/Adobe Stock



Manzo says the pandemic has not changed user needs, but amplified them. “Exhaustion and frustration are driving people today, because almost everything—even going to the grocery store—takes more time and energy,” she adds. As a result, users may be less patient if they are forced to, for example, refine searches several times in order to find the information they seek.

The pandemic has also affected the ways users look for information, says James Miller, discovery and sciences liaison librarian at Hollins University in Roanoke, Virginia, who notes that students are seeking online finding aids more often. Hits for a webpage housing the library’s videos doubled last fall, and online chat and ebook usage are also up. Meanwhile, he’s noticed that article downloads are down, possibly because burned-out researchers are looking elsewhere.

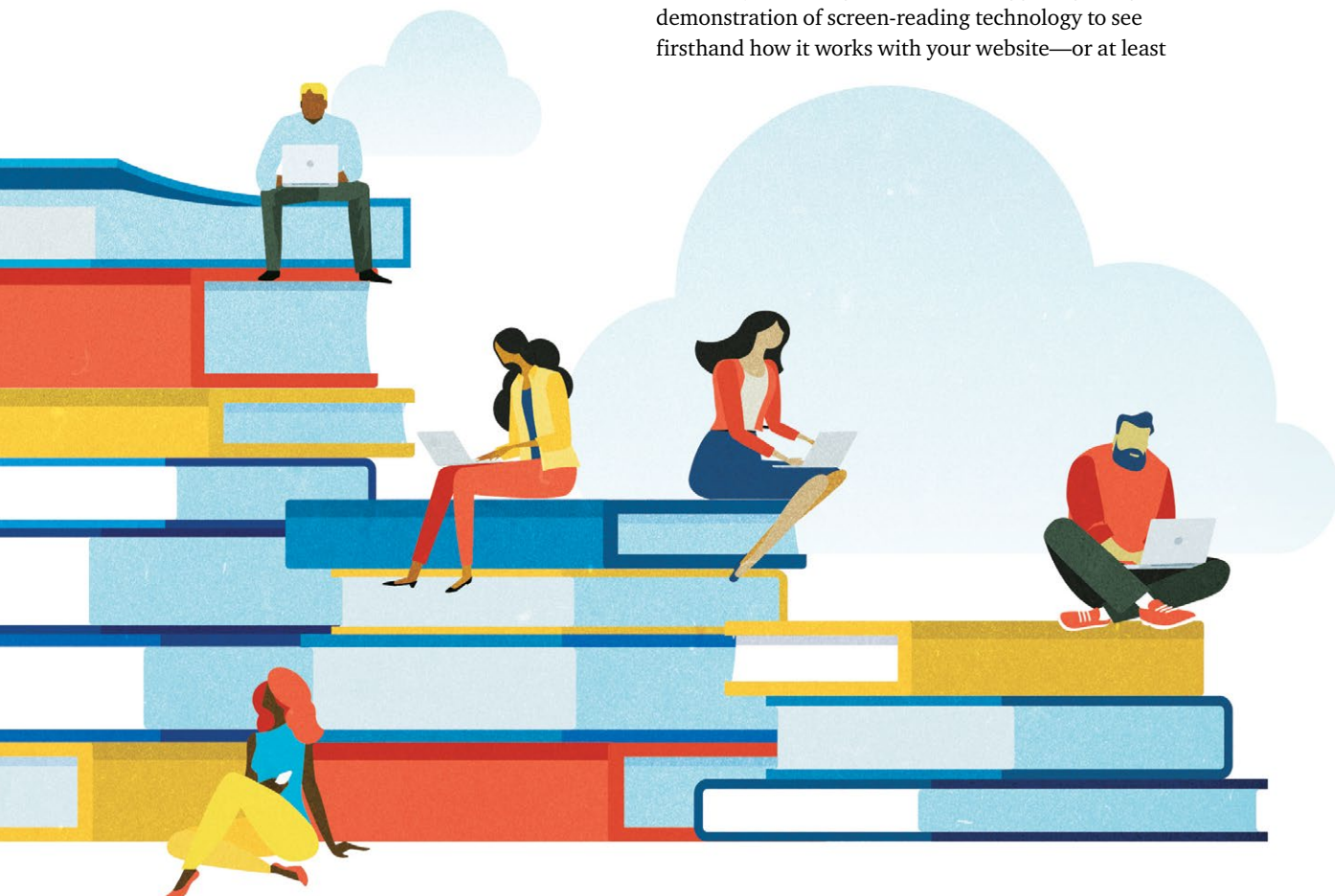
Maria Nuccilli, web developer at Wayne State University Library System in Detroit, reports increased website usage across the board. In the last week of the fall 2020 semester, the library’s LibGuides had 6,300 visits, up from 3,900 in the same period the year before. “Even now that the library is partially open, people are

still going online more than ever,” Nuccilli says, which demonstrates the importance of effective interfaces. She also notes that the share of users who access websites via mobile devices has increased, making responsive design—which allows for easy viewing on smaller screens—more important than ever.

ACCESSIBILITY AND READABILITY

One critical factor in user experience (UX) design for websites is accessibility for people with visual impairments and other disabilities. For example, moving, flashing, or blinking content can present obstacles to users with attention deficit disorder or visual processing disorders, while insufficient color contrast between text and background can make content illegible to low-vision users.

The World Wide Web Consortium’s Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (bit.ly/AL-WCAG) are impressively thorough; many institutions have distilled them into easy-to-implement directives and folded them into their own accessibility guidelines. To start, Jaci Wilkinson, head of discovery and user experience at Indiana University Bloomington Libraries, suggests getting a demonstration of screen-reading technology to see firsthand how it works with your website—or at least



LOW-OVERHEAD IMPROVEMENTS

Many of these approaches require a major investment of time and energy, and pandemic-necessitated safety measures may render some impossible, at least for now. But smaller steps can significantly boost a site's usability. Some possibilities include:

- **Prioritize your goals.** "Map out how you'll get the maximum impact with the smartest application of effort," Wilkinson says.
- **Evaluate chat questions, FAQ views, and searches for trends.** Miller says these will reveal user information needs that should receive more prominence on the website.
- **Communicate regularly with library staff who work directly with users.** "A lot of ideas come from colleagues and issues that bubble up when people are working the reference desk," Wilkinson says.
- **Make it easy for users to get help.** "When I was working at a small library, all of our error pages had my email address on them," Manzo says. While that may not be appropriate for all libraries, a prominently displayed forum or complaint box may be an effective alternative.
- **Apply technology creatively.** "We did a virtual study hall with two librarians and our students over Zoom," Miller says. Faculty also rotated in throughout the day to answer questions.
- **Use resources in new ways.** Wayne State uses LibAnswers for its FAQ, and librarians often reference it when helping students. "We realized that instead of putting COVID information on our website statically, we could use our LibAnswers account for a COVID FAQ, and make it visible when we need it and hide it when we don't," Nuccilli says. ●

reviewing YouTube tutorials to get a more concrete understanding of its capabilities.

Nuccilli recommends employing browser extensions that flag accessibility issues, like Axe or Siteimprove. "They often show small things that will make a big difference," she says. Other tools, like the Colour Contrast Check (bit.ly/AL-Contrast), can help evaluate whether a color combination will be readable by people with color vision deficiency or who are reading a site on a black-and-white screen.

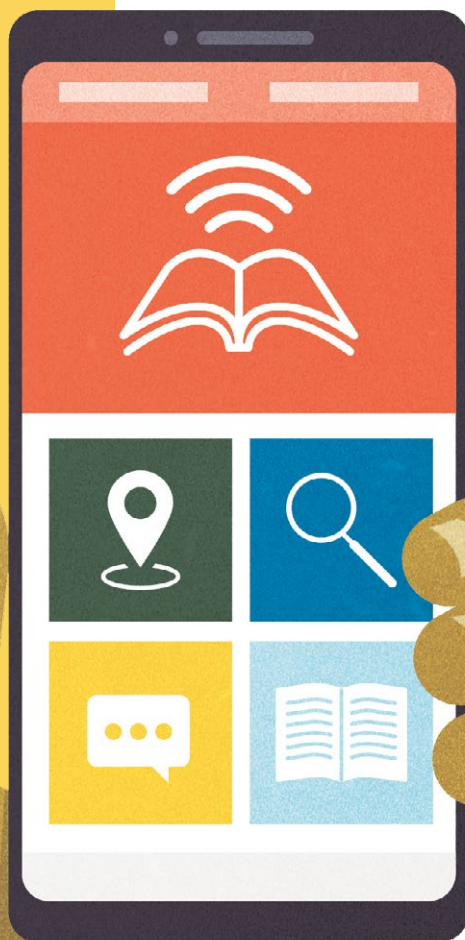
Manzo, who has conducted usability tests on a variety of library websites, says "many patron interviews specifically mention language" as a UX challenge. Some users find terms like "research" vague, for example, while nonlibrarians may not be familiar with terms like "inter-library loan."

Wilkinson says that writing specifically for the web—where people tend to scan copy rather than reading it word by word—enhances a site's readability.

And features like front-loaded information, bulleted lists, and clear subheads help readers find the information they're looking for, according to a report from the Nielsen Norman Group (bit.ly/AL-Nielsen).

"One guiding principle is to meet the user where they are, whether it's figuring out where to put a button or what kind of terminology to use," Nuccilli says. "I don't think there's any such thing as a perfect library website, and you can't make it once and have it stand indefinitely."

That means that constantly incorporating feedback from library staff and users is critical to keeping a website usable.



TESTING SOLUTIONS

“When everything shut down in March, our priorities immediately changed, and we needed to deliver information to users as quickly as possible,” Nuccilli recalls. Under normal circumstances, she would conduct brief, in-person usability tests weekly when introducing new services. During the pandemic, however, she relies more on feedback from librarians and analytics data in Google and Springshare (the digital platform behind LibGuides and LibAnswers) to evaluate how well new services are meeting user needs.

“Pre-pandemic, there were a lot of microtransactions in reference, instruction sessions, and circulation that could lead to ideas for usability improvements,” says Miller. Student circulation workers, for example, might note that students were having problems logging into their accounts. “Those interactions couldn’t happen this year, so it’s harder to define the problems that users are having.”

To counter this, the outreach librarian and other library staffers met with student groups and clubs over Zoom to ask how they use the library and whether they encounter any obstacles. The library used this feedback to prioritize information on the website. When a student mentioned that finding theses and dissertations was difficult, for example, the library created a finding aid for them.

“In some ways, the pandemic has made testing easier because users don’t need to be in the building,” Miller says. “There’s less setup, and students are comfortable online, because they’ve been doing that in their classes.”

Using multiple methods for testing and blending classic usability tests with guerrilla methods (wherein users are approached rather than recruited) may be appropriate in this landscape. Miller has applied and published research on a mixed-methods approach to usability testing, which combines techniques for assessing and improving usability (such as focus groups, analytics analysis, prototyping, and first-click testing) at all phases of a site’s development (bit.ly/AL-Hollins). This approach can provide a fuller picture of user needs and enhance resiliency in the face of events like the pandemic.

MAKING ENHANCEMENTS

An important first step: exploring perspectives beyond your own. “As a librarian, you know your system and its limitations,” Manzo says. “A new patron doesn’t have the benefit of that perspective—they just know if the website isn’t returning the information they need.”

Creating a handful of personas—descriptions of fictional people who represent your site’s major user groups—can

“AS A LIBRARIAN, YOU KNOW YOUR SYSTEM AND ITS LIMITATIONS. A NEW PATRON DOESN’T HAVE THE BENEFIT OF THAT PERSPECTIVE—THEY JUST KNOW IF THE WEBSITE ISN’T RETURNING THE INFORMATION THEY NEED.”

CHRISTINA MANZO, user experience librarian at Radford University Carilion in Roanoke, Virginia

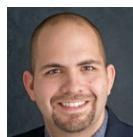
help librarians keep multiple perspectives in mind. Personas generally include a name, job title and responsibilities, and demographics, as well as goals for using the site and the environment in which it’s being used. “Being aware of what information is most useful to different groups can really allow librarians to meet many user needs without information dumping,” Manzo says.

Personas should be supported by user research and analytics data (bit.ly/AL-personas). Once created, they not only shape decisions about what information meets the broadest range of needs but also identify any information gaps.

Card-sorting exercises can also be a useful practice for organizing websites, Manzo says. Users sort physical cards with subjects or menu labels into groups that make sense to them. The evaluator can define categories for users to sort cards into, or let users come up with their own. In some cases, users are also given blank cards to include information they want on the website but don’t see represented.

Nuccilli has helped launch several initiatives at Wayne State, including a new iteration of the online archive space for the Walter P. Reuther Library, which holds the campus’s labor archives. “We’re super grateful that we had already spent a lot of time observing users because it gave us a framework to build on,” Nuccilli says. Because of the library’s specialized focus, doing so required careful recruiting of participants and coordination with Reuther’s reference staff. “But it was valuable because when they went remote,” she says, “we were able to provide a better research experience.”

One technique that will always serve you well: continually asking questions. As Manzo says, “The good news about usability is that curiosity doesn’t cost you anything.” [AL](#)



GREG LANDGRAF is communications and marketing coordinator at Georgetown University Libraries in Washington, D.C., and a regular contributor to *American Libraries*.

EMERGING LEADERS:

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Past participants on lessons learned, experience gained

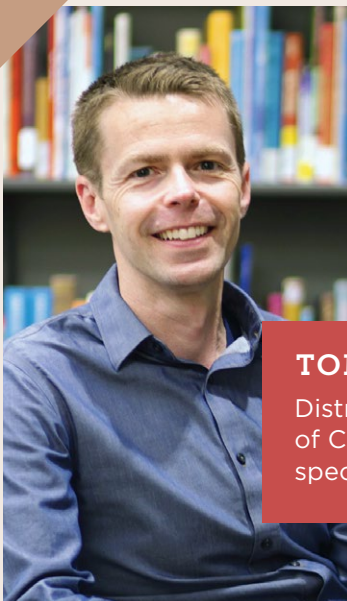
by Phil Morehart

The American Library Association's (ALA) annual Emerging Leaders (ELs) program recognizes the best and brightest new leaders in the library profession, allowing them to get on a fast track at the Association by participating in planning groups, networking, gaining an inside look at ALA structure, and serving in leadership capacities early in their careers.

At each ALA Midwinter Meeting, new ELs divide into groups to complete projects for their host units and affiliates. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the program has been postponed for the class of 2021. Instead, *American Libraries* asked several past ELs to share their thoughts on the program—and its influence on their accomplishments.

Read more about past Emerging Leaders at bit.ly/AL-EmergingLeaders.

CLASS OF 2015



TOM BOBER

District library coordinator at School District of Clayton in Missouri and library media specialist at R. M. Captain Elementary School

What did you learn during your time as an EL? There are two lessons I think back to, one more structural and the other philosophical. First, learning more about ALA as an organization—how it was organized and how I could be involved—was important to me. It helped me envision being an active member of ALA. The second was that I could be involved in big things. There was a place for me, and I had something to contribute.

You're an author, most recently of *Elementary Educator's Guide to Primary Sources: Strategies for Teaching* (Libraries Unlimited 2018). How did the EL program influence that experience? Being in the EL program encouraged me to

not be afraid of being part of bigger conversations, and it showed me that my voice had value. Sharing my work with students and advocating for the roles that all school librarians can take on led me to

opportunities to speak and write for a variety of audiences. Those experiences directly led to my opportunity to write my book, something I'm very proud of.

CLASS OF 2014

AARON LAFROMBOISE

Director of library services
at Medicine Spring Library,
Blackfeet Community College in
Browning, Montana

What did you learn during your time as an EL? First, I was able to meet people “at the top”: then-ALA President Barbara Stripling and other ALA staff. I would never have had the courage to walk up to any of these people and introduce myself before becoming an Emerging Leader. It was important to learn how to network! I also learned how to collaborate with librarians not in my region. The experience has really helped in other collaboration efforts over the past six years and helped me prepare for the work-at-home situation we are currently in.

How has your EL experience influenced your career? I became an EL before I entered library school, and at times it was intimidating. I learned how to advocate for myself, and I’m sure the scholarships I received were a result of the confidence I gained from being an EL. In my career, I have made many connections outside my community, making me an active member in the larger tribal, state, and national library communities. I am currently vice president/president-elect of the American Indian Library Association (AILA), and in my time on the board, I’ve had the ability to extend the experience of EL and AILA leadership to other tribal librarians.



CLASS OF 2016



RAEMONA LITTLE TAYLOR

Senior librarian and education
initiatives coordinator at Marin
County (Calif.) Free Library

What did you learn during your time as an EL?

I learned about the importance of investing in mentorship and support for early-career librarians, particularly with a focus on BIPOC librarians. I am eternally grateful to ALA and the Black Caucus of the American Library Association for believing in me and sponsoring my participation. I learned so much about how ALA functions as a professional organization, the difference between leadership and management, and how to lead from wherever you are regardless of your job classification or title.

You’ve been working with incarcerated teens for the last few years. How did your EL experience help guide you to this point? The project I worked on was the 2016 *Resource Guide for Underserved Student Populations*. This toolkit emerged out of a concern from the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) Affiliate Assembly that highlighted the need for additional resources to support school librarians who work with underserved and historically marginalized students, such as those with incarcerated parents. This project lit a fire deep in my soul, which inspired my passion to expand the focus of my partnerships and outreach efforts to engage and support incarcerated teens.

CLASS OF 2012



CANDICE WING-YEE MACK

Managing librarian of teen services
at Los Angeles Public Library

How has your EL experience influenced your career? It really helped me frame project management, particularly for volunteers, students, and interns. As a former coordinator of volunteer services at my library, I incorporated my experience into my system's volunteer handbook. It has also helped when mentoring a diversity and inclusion apprentice and in my current position as president of the Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association (APALA).

What have you been up to since graduating with your EL class? I can't believe it's been eight years since I participated in the program! Since then, I've managed system-wide volunteer services and currently manage system-wide teen services; applied for and managed several grant-funded initiatives totaling several million dollars; helped establish a yearly budget to recruit, retain, and recognize library volunteers; led the first

public library launch of Career Online High School; served as president of the Young Adult Library Services Association; joined the inaugural ALA Policy Corps; and was a juror for the 2018 Will Eisner

Comic Industry Award and the 2019 We Need Diverse Books' Walter Dean Myers Award for Outstanding Children's Literature.

CLASS OF 2018

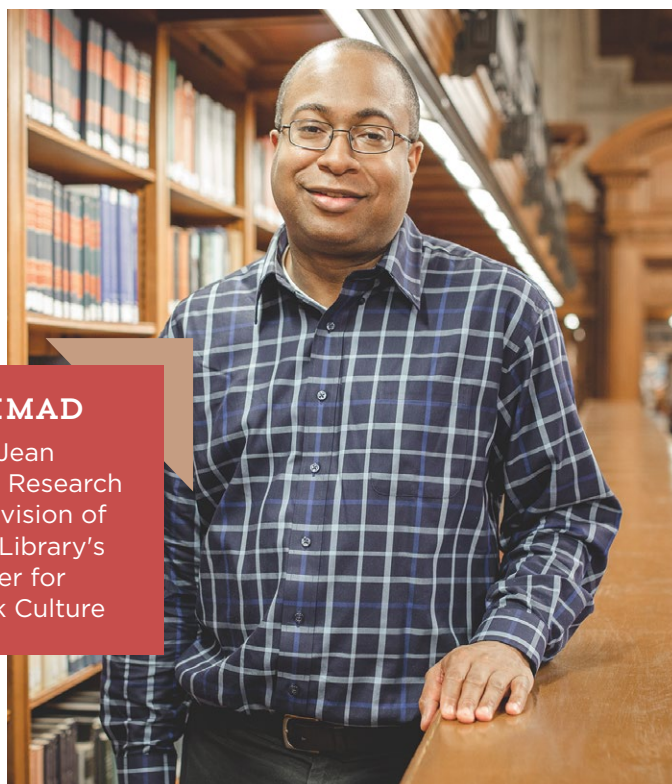
What did you learn during your time as an EL? The project that my team worked on was about helping public library staff identify resources for learning how to work with data, such as collecting, analyzing, curating, and using it for storytelling purposes for advocacy. It was a great experience to learn about these resources and to collaborate with some talented and brilliant librarians around the country.

You're actively involved in New York City's theater scene. How has your experience as an EL influenced that work?

When I did the EL program, it was in a pre-pandemic world. There were members of our group in Chicago, Colorado, Kansas, and New York, and our meetings were held via Google Meet. In a way, it helped prepare me for life during the pandemic, as all work-related meetings and meetings for my theater-related projects are remote. Of course, the program was another opportunity to develop collaborating skills, which are applicable to everything.

A. J. MUHAMMAD

Librarian for the Jean Blackwell Hutson Research and Reference Division of New York Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture



CLASS OF 2014

ANNIE PHO

Instruction coordinator and assessment librarian at University of San Francisco

How has your EL experience influenced your career? After participating in the program, I felt more empowered to get involved with ALA and solidify my professional “homes” with the Association of College and Research Libraries and APALA. I decided to run for a position on the APALA executive board as a member-at-large and serve on the executive board again as secretary. My EL experience helped encourage me to pursue those opportunities.

Was there any aspect of training or career development you wish had been better addressed in your Emerging Leader cohort? One thing that I think should have been better covered was equity, diversity, and inclusion within libraries. I don’t think it was addressed whatsoever, and leadership opportunities are not the same for BIPOC librarians. I hope that future ELs will have more training and discussion around equity, diversity, and inclusion and antiracism.

Since your time in the EL program, you’ve coedited *Pushing the Margins: Women of Color and Intersectionality in LIS* (Litwin Books/Library Juice Press, 2018)—a volume in the *Critical Race Studies and Multiculturalism in Library and Information Studies* book series, which you also coedit. Did your time as an EL help prepare you for projects like these? Yes, my

experience doing survey design and learning about the research process with my EL team helped prepare me for a project on intersectionality at the reference desk, which in turn led to the *Pushing the Margins* book. When I participated in the EL program, I didn’t have any experience with collecting data or research. The group project helped me get a better understanding of that process.



CLASS OF 2013



KATHLEEN RIOPELE ROBERTS

School librarian at Rivers Edge Elementary, Henrico County (Va.) Public Schools

How did your EL experience help lead you to your current position?

It brought me in contact with the leadership and administration at AASL. I realized that I enjoyed being involved at the professional organization’s national level, which fueled me to pursue further opportunities.

What have you been up to since graduating with your EL class?

I was selected as one of two building-level school librarians to serve on the National School Library Standards Guidelines Editorial Board. I also was selected for the 2018–2021 Fulbright Specialists Roster. I coauthored the book *Leadership: Strategic Thinking, Decision Making, Communication, and Relationship Building* (ALA Editions 2019), with Ann M. Martin. I was also voted James Region Librarian of the Year by the Virginia Association of School Librarians for the 2019–2020 school year. **AL**



The Road to Normal

Bookmobiles and outreach staffers
take on new roles in a year of COVID-19

by Mark Lawton

*W*hen Goochland County (Va.) Public Schools abruptly stopped in-person learning at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic last March, school librarians Zoe Parrish, Sarah Smith, and Susan Vaughn worried that their students would be left without access to books. Public libraries had also closed, and the county's inconsistent internet service meant ebooks were not a workable substitute, Vaughn says.



“Would it be crazy if we packed our cars with books and drove them around?” Parrish remembers proposing.

They put out word of their plan to give away books, and soon teachers, churches, school libraries, families, and even the local YMCA were donating books for the effort. Goochland County government loaned them a van. And so, every other week from June through August, the three volunteered to travel to six predetermined spots—parking lots of churches, schools, and fire departments—that covered the length of their district, from the outskirts of Richmond’s northwest suburbs up to the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Stops were advertised through the school’s website and social media, and fliers were created in English and Spanish.

In order to cover as much territory as possible, each stop lasted about 20 minutes. The librarians placed bins of books outside, setting the stations far apart from one another, and students were invited to select and keep three titles each. Books were given to all kids who wanted them—not just those enrolled in the school district. Eventually the team adjusted its route to coincide with Goochland County Public Schools’ Sunshine Food Bus program, so children could get free meals and books in a single visit. “You should [have seen] the joy on their faces after being in quarantine so long,” Vaughn says.

Despite the challenges—summer heat, heavy lifting, and coronavirus precautions such as wearing masks, social distancing, and using hand sanitizer—Parrish, Smith, and Vaughn distributed around 2,800 books to more than 700 children, ranging from newborns to middle school students.

“We felt strongly that our kids need to have books, both as a connection to us and to normalcy,” Parrish says.

Cathy Zimmerman, past president of the Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services (ABOS), agrees. “We have whole populations that have not left their homes since March,” she says. “Bookmobiles can bring a little continuity into everybody’s life.”

In the past year, ABOS, an American

Library Association affiliate organization that will celebrate its 15th year in 2021 (as well as Bookmobile Day on April 7), has seen libraries maintain that continuity amid the challenges of COVID-19. Outreach staffers and literacy stewards have watched their responsibilities change, sometimes dramatically, as they strive to keep up traditional offerings while covering service gaps and even assuming second-responder roles.

FILLING IN THE GAPS

In March 2020, Manchester (N.H.) City Library (MCL) shuttered its two locations. By July, the main library had reopened for curbside pickup, but its West Manchester branch has remained closed. With a city of 112,000 people relegated to reduced services at one location, staffers were concerned about patrons who would inevitably be left out.

“The main building is not on a bus route, and some people don’t have a car or are too far away,” says Karyn Isleb, MCL’s head of youth services. She and her colleagues began to consider if the library could use its bookmobile to provide outdoor services in a safe manner during the summer, as it had done in past years.



The Goochland County (Va.) Public Schools bookmobile makes a stop at a fire station in the village of Manakin to distribute books and ice pops. Fliers in English and Spanish announced stops in advance.



A Different Kind of Lending

From mid-March to mid-May 2020, perhaps the busiest man in Pima County, Arizona, was Brandon Milligan.

Milligan, delivery manager at Pima County Public Library (PCPL) for the last seven years, normally supervises employees who move materials between the system's 26 locations. But after PCPL closed on March 17 because of the pandemic, Milligan officially went on loan to the Pima County Health Department, where he oversaw distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE).

The county's 17 fire stations collected and donated PPE, which

Milligan picked up twice a week and brought to the health department. There, the health department examined and sorted the equipment, and Milligan then delivered it to nursing homes and other facilities.

His work didn't stop there. Pima County Jail, which had released some inmates in the early months of COVID-19 as a social-distancing measure, suddenly found itself with surplus food. Rather than dispose of it, inmates on kitchen duty prepared more than 600 lunches, which Milligan picked up around 6 or 7 a.m. every day and delivered to Casa Maria Soup Kitchen in Tucson.

On top of that, the National Guard brought pallets of produce from a local food bank to the main library once a week. Milligan and his drivers delivered the food to about 10 branch libraries. Though the buildings were closed, library staffers coordinated to redistribute the produce to area residents in their parking lots. Additionally, Amphitheater Public Schools, which had also closed, had a supply of extra food. Every week or two, Milligan and the handful of library drivers who had returned to work delivered that food to those same library branches.

Between other activities, Milligan regularly visited the branch libraries.



Isleb began by doing her research. She found a newspaper article about a bookmobile in Georgia operating during COVID-19 and called to get advice on safety measures.

Manchester School District, which partners with MCL on the bookmobile, secured a grant of more than \$10,000 to buy new books. A local Rotary club, Barnes & Noble, and an area grocery store also contributed funds. The books have always been free to students, Isleb says, "to help the kids build a library in their homes."

It was a labor-intensive process but a worthwhile one, Isleb says. She, a driver, two library staff members, and up to 10 volunteers facilitated six stops per week, including at two of the city's largest public housing buildings. Staffers and volunteers read a story or conducted a craft activity, distributed prepackaged bags of books, and, through a partnership with social service organization Southern New Hampshire Services, handed out lunches. Book bundles were matched to students based on grade level and interests.

Reading to Go Places volunteer Madison Cowart distributes books and meals at a stop in Bartow County, Georgia, in April 2020.

Photo: Reading to Go Places

"I would check for graffiti and damage to buildings and empty book drops so they wouldn't overflow," Milligan says.

PCPL reopened with limited service on May 18, and Milligan returned to his usual duties soon after. Looking back, he found coordinating between the various county departments and agencies highly challenging, Milligan says, as was the sheer number of tasks.

"I was slammed and running at full blast and loving every minute of it," Milligan says. "I was able to help the community in a way and at a capacity that I had not previously been able to do." ●



Brandon Milligan, delivery manager at Pima County (Ariz.) Public Library, used the library's vehicles to distribute personal protective equipment and meals during the lockdown portion of the pandemic.

The bookmobile engaged more than 100 children ranging from babies to high school students during each 60-to-90-minute stop. Among the patrons were refugees who are learning English.

"They don't know about the library system if they are new to the city," Isleb says. "Many are uneasy about anything that has to do with government. You have to put them at their ease" by coming to them, she says.

Between August 17 and September 4, the bookmobile gave away 1,100 books. (Before coronavirus, the bookmobile typically ran six to seven weeks from July through August.) "Kids needed something," Isleb says. "They need a sense of normalcy during the summer."

REMOTE CONNECTION

Before the pandemic, 50% of residents served by the five-county Southern Oklahoma Library System (SOLS) didn't have access to a library branch, and 36% of the system's rural residents lacked broadband internet at home. But with school and library closures brought on by COVID-19, SOLS Executive Director Gail Oehler believes access to digital devices and broadband internet has gotten even worse.

The 990-square-mile Otoka County, for example, has only one library branch. "The people who live in rural areas lack the ability to get Wi-Fi because there is no cellular service or because of their low economic status," says Oehler.

Like many libraries nationwide, SOLS has seen the digital divide exacerbated at a time when adults urgently need internet access to apply for jobs or government assistance and children require it for remote learning and homework.

In August 2020, SOLS received a \$12,100 grant from the federal CARES Act, which was distributed by the Oklahoma Department of Libraries. The library system used the money to convert a library van to a Wi-Fi hotspot. By November, two staff members began taking the van out every Friday and making three community stops lasting up to two hours each. The van also has computers and a small number of books, and it can issue library cards.

"By having access to [Wi-Fi] in these rural communities, we are living up to the American Library Association's [code of ethics]," says Oehler.

The number of residents who show up for the Wi-Fi van in rural locations might be small by city standards,



she acknowledges. “In a very rural community, having 11 people is a very big deal.”

BOOTSTRAPPING BOOKMOBILES

While the majority of the roughly 800 bookmobiles in the United States are affiliated with libraries, says Zimmerman of ABOS, there are exceptions. Among them is one in Cobb County, Georgia.

Kelli Wood, a literacy specialist at Fair Oaks Elementary School in Marietta, first considered starting a bookmobile in fall 2019. “We always saw a ‘summer slide’ in our students from not reading during the summer,” Wood says.

But when schools stopped in-person learning after March 14, 2020, and the public library closed, Wood realized it was time to take action. “When the pandemic hit, it made it even more important,” she says.

Wood’s father donated a cargo utility trailer that he had used on construction jobs. He and Wood’s husband installed shelves and flooring, her sister painted it, and local residents and teachers donated books. By May 27, Wood’s homemade bookmobile was ready.

Every Wednesday, she and her husband made four to six stops—usually at mobile home parks and apartment buildings—where a librarian from her school met them. Stops were advertised through text messages and fliers posted at the leasing offices of these communities, and each lasted about three hours. Volunteer organization MUST Ministries provided free lunches for students,

while Wood and her team read a story and handed out ice pops to enjoy in the summer heat. Students were invited to go into the bookmobile—a few kids or one

family at a time—to pick out one or two books to keep, with volunteer teachers on hand to assist with readers’ advisory.

During the visits, Wood’s adult volunteers wore masks, supplied hand sanitizer, disinfected the bookmobile, and quarantined any returned books.

“Georgia is hot and rainy during the summer,” Wood says. “Even with that, we had kids and families come

out in the rain to get books. We would pull into stops, and kids would be jumping up and down. I think this offered some hope and a time they could get out of their houses and have a socially distanced, safe activity.”

To the northwest, the nonprofit Reading to Go Places (RTGP) in Bartow County, Georgia, had to adapt its bookmobile operation to the pandemic.

Valerie Gilreath and her wife, Kim Dennis, started RTGP in 2017,

when an assessment by the regional health district found high rates of unemployment, low rates of education, and generational poverty in the southern part of the county. “Government and school efforts were not quite getting at the problem,” Gilreath says.

While RTGP is an independent nonprofit, the library is among its partners. Bartow County Library System Director Carmen Sims acts as an advisor, RTGP enrolls children in the library’s summer reading program, and Friends of the Bartow County Library System contributes books.

Reading to Go Places normally operates from March through December; in 2020, it started in April. “[By then] we realized [the pandemic] would go on for quite a while,” Gilreath says. “With children not being in school, the need for our services was greater than ever.”

Before starting up again, the nonprofit solicited advice from area food pantries on safety protocols. By late April, RTGP resumed driving its 2008 Freightliner vehicle (originally a bookmobile for the Denver Public Library). While most of its regular stops are made in the southern

“We have whole populations that have not left their homes since March. Bookmobiles can bring a little continuity into everybody’s life.”

CATHY ZIMMERMAN, past president of the Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services



Southern Oklahoma Library System uses signage to advertise its bookmobile services, including Wi-Fi funded by a federal CARES Act grant.

Photo: Southern Oklahoma Library System





Valerie Wagley, counselor at Fair Oaks Elementary School in Cobb County, Georgia, reads to kids at a bookmobile stop in summer 2020.

third of Bartow, the nonprofit also travels throughout the 470-square-mile county to give children up to age 18 two or three new books each.

Operations looked different from pre-pandemic times: Two adults rode in the vehicle, and another one to four adults, usually teachers, met the bookmobile at its stops. They set out prepackaged, age-sorted bags of books on a table and stepped away so that parents could get out of their cars and take the bags.

For the sake of social distancing, RTGP had to stop offering in-person programs and transporting lunches through its usual partnership with the USDA Summer Food Service Program.

Another obstacle has been cost. “Giving away books is a lot more expensive than a [lending] library,” Gilreath says. “We had to streamline other areas to supply three times the books we did [in 2019].”

RTGP put off buying supplies and reduced the hours of Dennis, its program director and single part-time staff person. In August, the nonprofit began an Adopt-a-Reader campaign to financially support its efforts; by mid-December, it had raised \$3,500, which it used

to buy discounted books from the nonprofit First Book National Book Bank.

Though children have fewer choices in what books they get, “we put a lot more time and energy into diversifying choices that go into the bags, so they don’t get tired of seeing similar books,” Gilreath says.

She admits the year has felt different. For one thing, she and the volunteers are largely seeing adults rather than children. “We don’t get that warm fuzzy feeling when you actually hand out books to kids,” Gilreath says.

Zimmerman at ABOS says that experience has been common during the pandemic. “We are a group of people who are used to being hands-on,” she says. “Now we are reinventing how we work with patrons.”

Still, Gilreath describes the modified program at RTGP as a success. “It’s more important than ever that families have books in the homes if they are not in school or going to library programs,” she says. “At the end of the day, you are still putting a smile on a child’s face, even if you don’t see the smile.” [AL](#)



MARK LAWTON is a writer in Chicago.



A CRASH COURSE IN UX FOR YOUR LIBRARY

Users at the Center of Everything

BY Callan Bignoli and Lauren Stara

In her professional life, coauthor Lauren Stara has worked for three architectural firms, one zoo, one multinational corporation, two museums, five universities, three public libraries, and one state library agency. She has also done freelance work or consulting in both architecture and librarianship. Over those 32 years, she has worked in 10 US states, three Canadian provinces, and one eastern European country. And all of those experiences have presented a lot of opportunity for failure.

For a long time, failure was unacceptable. Lauren is in her early 60s now and still remembers the crushing defeat when she received her first C, in 9th-grade algebra. She's done pretty well at pleasing most of her employers, but not all. And it's been only in the past several years that she's begun seeing and truly understanding the value of those failures.

Trial and error has been part of the scientific method for centuries, but for many years, Lauren focused on the right answer rather than the unexpected one. Opening her mind to other possibilities gave her the freedom to try new ways of thinking and achieve surprising results. Wrong answers can lead to breakthroughs in every part of life—if we embrace and then learn from them.

First, some jargon

User experience (UX) design is the philosophy of considering spaces, services, and processes from the end user's point of view. The term originated in the digital world in the field of human-machine interaction, was picked up by product designers, and from there has filtered into every aspect of life, including the library.

Design thinking means looking at a process or project with a fresh perspective, an approach that can change the outcome dramatically. If your process isn't getting results, a simple design-thinking exercise can get your creative juices flowing.

You can put these ideas into practice incrementally, starting with tiny changes and building up to larger, system-wide innovations. The concept at



the core of the UX movement is empathy. Learning to look at a situation with a beginner's mind—putting aside your years of education and experience in librarianship and seeing your library from a new user's point of view—is the key.

Realistically, most people who walk into your building aren't familiar with your procedures and policies, your cataloging and classification systems, the building layout, or the incredible range of services you offer. How can your physical space be changed, even slightly, to help them understand the library?

Get in their heads

Design thinking involves getting out of your own head and into those of your users. The idea is to employ techniques to help shift the human brain out of familiar ways of thinking and generate new solutions. The end goal is always to foster empathy and see things from a different perspective, usually that of the user or service consumer. In this way, design thinking is a great method to enhance your library's UX philosophy.

As an architect and a librarian, Lauren is surprised that many people don't consider themselves designers or creative people. In truth, we are all designers

simply by living our lives—what we choose to wear, how we arrange our homes and workspaces, and which books we read and TV shows we watch. These are all design decisions, conscious or not. Whether we're using spreadsheets, oil paints, or words, or singing in the shower, we are all inventive. The maker movement, for instance, is just the newest recognition of the human need to express ourselves.

Design thinking is a creative approach, or series of steps, that will help you envision meaningful solutions for your library. It's also a mindset, because you start to think like a designer, even if you don't consider yourself one.

Any kind of service can be transformed and made better. Let's take one example: the core service of identifying, finding, and checking out a book.

How do your users identify items they want to borrow?

- word of mouth
- school booklist
- social media post or ad
- browsing
- readers' advisory service
- online catalog search



This is an excerpt from *Responding to Rapid Change in Libraries: A User Experience Approach* (ALA Editions, 2021).

Design thinking involves getting out of your own head and into those of your users.

Imagine each of these possibilities from the patron's and the staff member's point of view. Think about what the customer wants. Are they a grab-it-and-go kind of person? Do they want to talk to a staffer to seek personalized service? Do they need an in-depth reference interview to determine what they're really looking for? Are they a digital native who likes chat-based reference? Or do they want to get up close and personal?

Once the item is located, what checkout options are available? Is your ebook and e-audio service user-friendly? Can a person in a hurry grab their DVD from the hold shelf, use the nearby self-checkout station, and be on their way? What happens when the material they want isn't on the shelf or isn't in the collection at all?

Responding to each of these scenarios requires a different approach and series of steps. In public libraries, we are blessed and cursed with the full gamut of personalities, ages, and skill levels. The ability to read a patron and tailor services to that patron's needs is not something most people are born with; it takes practice.

Here are a few simple places to start:

- Ask up front how much time the patron has. This can help set the tone of the interaction.
- Ask the patron if they would rather have you look up something for them or show them how to use search techniques themselves.
- If the patron wants a particular item or books on a specific subject, offer to walk them to the appropriate area in the shelves.
- If self-checkout is a new service at the library, make sure a staffer is nearby to help newbies through the process. Always offer at least one traditional staffed checkout station for those who prefer it.

Try to remember that most people using the library are not well versed in classification systems and don't keep detailed knowledge of your materials and

procedures in their heads. Things that you can do in your sleep are brand-new and confusing concepts to many. The point is to make collections and services accessible.

Describing in words how a design-thinking process or exercise works is tough. There's almost always a magic moment during the process when everyone looks around with that "eureka!" sparkle in their eyes. The process is experiential, iterative, and a lot of fun. It facilitates suspension of judgment, rampant brainstorming, and the generation of wild moonshot ideas. It requires stepping out of your comfort zone, though, and can feel chaotic and raw.

What's the problem?

Before creating solutions, you must know the problem. As in the reference interview, you have to dig into every situation and make sure you're asking the right questions—keep going until you find the nub. Assessing your needs comes first; coming up with a plan of attack follows.

Identifying the user. One of the critical steps in the UX process is identifying your users. Depending on the type of library you work in, these groups might include patrons, students, faculty, nonresidents, and staff.

Each group can be broken down further or combined, if necessary. For example, in an academic library, you might have undergraduate students and graduate students or students from different colleges or disciplines. Staff may encompass faculty and nonfaculty, such as professional and support staff.

Patrons in public libraries are wildly diverse: seniors and adults; young adults, teens, and tweens; children and preschoolers; new residents; early readers; people with disabilities; and more. Lauren worked for more than 20 years in public libraries in resort towns with special patron categories such as second homeowners and seasonal workers. Every one of these groups has differing and sometimes competing needs and preferences.

Assessing community needs. Before you can effect positive change, it's important to assess where you are and what you need. What services might you provide if you had more money, resources, or space?

As common sense suggests, the community you serve is the best starting point for developing any public amenity, including libraries. Wherever you are, there are people who can provide a historical perspective, valuable insights into how the area functions, and an understanding of the critical issues and what is meaningful to people in the community. Tapping this information at the beginning of the

process will help create a sense of communal ownership in the project that can be of great benefit to both the library and users.

As part of your library's strategic plan (yes, you really do need one of these), you should gather opinions and information from the public regarding its preferences and desires for services, as well as your local context. Don't limit yourself to just that, though; most library patrons—much less people who don't use the library at all—are not aware of forward-thinking ideas in the library field. Do some research to find out what's going on in other libraries, either in your area or far afield. If you're like us, every trip, whether for business or pleasure, is an opportunity to investigate new libraries and see what their facilities and services are like. Are they doing something successful that you might copy? Most librarians are eager to share their experiences and ideas, so feel free to ask questions.

Start small, think big

This way of working is not easy for many people. It requires a major mindset shift in which we embrace uncertainty, look at situations with a beginner's mind, accept a constant state of incompleteness, and allow ourselves (and others) to fail. Remember that we are all designers, whether we know it or not, and we can step outside of our comfort zones to make our libraries better.

Simple incremental steps go a long way toward effecting change. Start with a new voicemail message, or venture out from behind the desk to help patrons on the floor (or at the curb). Try something new. If it doesn't work, try something else. There are no mistakes.

Continuous gradual improvement

It's weird to think about the timelessness of libraries. They can exist in a way that other types of institutions and businesses can't because the library is a concept as well as a collection and a building. Libraries don't have to try to grow or change in any particular way to please their stakeholders—at least not in a way that is concretely governed by measures like profits in a given quarter. Similarly, the standards we use to evaluate the quality of our libraries are not universal. This is why we say you need a strategic plan: You have to define your own goals and standards of quality.

In the absence of such a plan, or if a plan is outdated or ignored, libraries tend to just ... stop. Best case, this means they're functioning well enough but aren't expanding their services or evaluating what they're missing. Worst case, it means they're not functioning

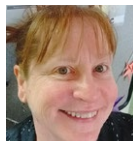
on one or more important levels. Strategic plans aren't a cure-all, but if they're done from a user-centered perspective, they can dig into both what's not working and what the community wants and needs. By asking the right questions, you'll find both big and small things that need attention. In turn, start by fixing the small problems, then contend with the medium-sized ones, and finally put the bigger ones on a schedule. As you go along, toss aside suggestions that don't fit, or save them to reevaluate later.

Make things intuitive and easy

Steve Krug's renowned web design book *Don't Make Me Think: A Common-Sense Approach to Web Usability* is about the importance of usability and findability in the digital world—qualities that are just as valid in physical environments. How many times have you seen patrons walk in the library entrance and then stop to gaze around with a lost look on their faces? Think about ways to help people navigate their world.

Remove clutter and work toward providing clear and consistent visual, auditory, and tactile cues. Meet people where they are, not where you think they should be. Listen to what people really need. Librarians are great at the reference interview, so shift that technique a bit and use it in every single interaction. Tweak your approach to accommodate the person in front of you, who is sure to appreciate the personal service.

Following traditional ways of operating, dictated by huge policy manuals and complicated procedures, serves only to reinforce the old-fashioned stereotype of librarians in buns. We're not advocating anarchy, but libraries are no longer the only game in town. We have to make our libraries comfortable and responsive—places where people want to spend time. **AL**



CALLAN BIGNOLI is director at Olin College of Engineering Library in Needham, Massachusetts. **LAUREN STARA** is library building specialist with the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.



RESOURCES

- Dokk1, the public library and cultural center in Aarhus, Denmark, and Chicago Public Library collaborated on the free Design Thinking for Libraries toolkit (designthinkingforlibraries.com), which introduces design thinking basics to librarians.
- The Association of College and Research Libraries offers a design thinking primer (bit.ly/design-thinking-AL) as a part of its Keeping Up With ... series.

Building Morale in a Pandemic

How to support library workers as whole people

BY Meredith Farkas



MEREDITH FARKAS is faculty librarian at Portland (Oreg.) Community College. Follow her on Twitter @librarianmer.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been traumatic for many library workers, especially those expected to continue coming to work as cases have risen in their communities. Even for those with the privilege of working from home, the experience has been stressful; many have had to add isolation, home-schooling children, and fearing for themselves and their loved ones to their regular job expectations.

I've heard countless stories of library workers who have gone above and beyond to support their communities during this time. But I've also wondered how many libraries surpassed expectations to meet their staffers' needs. I spoke with several librarians about what they've done to support their workers as whole people.

Early in the pandemic, administrators at University of Oklahoma in Norman began sending out a weekly anonymous survey to see how their staff members were doing. They followed up on the results with a weekly call to address concerns. One piece of feedback they received: "I wish my supervisor would check in with me as a person instead of just on my projects."

That comment stuck with Twila Smith, the library's chief technology officer. Since her staff would usually meet for an all-day annual retreat to plan for the coming academic year, she used it as an opportunity to support them, rather than just move the needle on their work. "I met with everyone weeks before [the retreat] to hear how they were doing as people, to listen, to identify patterns and group needs," she says. "Then everything about the retreat was tailored to address these." The theme of the retreat became "finding our why"—getting in touch with the things that motivate staffers and make them love their work.

Library workers at University of Arizona in Tucson have also found ways of turning existing structures into opportunities to connect and support staff during the pandemic. Members of the library's Diversity, Social Justice, and Equity Council (DSJEC) developed a program for connection and learning based on an intergroup dialogue training they had attended. People paired up to discuss a topic, such as whiteness theory in the workplace. The program became popular with staffers, who were enthusiastic about learning and sharing.

When COVID-19 hit, the council used its discussion model to create online *cafecitos*, where people met for an hour on Fridays in "a safe space to share and listen," according to Kari Quiballo, library information associate and DSJEC member. In pairs, facilitators planned topics to discuss—some related to diversity and inclusion, some focused on morale

and coping skills. They later added a monthly game hour with explicit support from administration. Quiballo says DSJEC's efforts worked because the group was flexible about altering its existing structures to meet emerging needs.

At University of Washington Tacoma, staffers began creating morale boosters such as weekly online teatimes to connect with and support each other, according to instruction and research help librarian Johanna Jacobsen Kiciman. Library administration even distributed gift cards so staffers could buy treats for an online ice cream social. The impact on morale was significant. "For a lot of people, this is a comfortable format," Jacobsen Kiciman says. "I want this to continue after COVID."

Of course, the pandemic isn't the only time library workers have struggled. From personal stresses

to collective traumas like layoffs or colleague deaths, many events take an emotional toll. So often, we are encouraged to separate our work and personal lives, but we can't pretend our feelings don't affect our jobs.

Supporting library workers as whole

people and giving them opportunities to connect beyond their daily work can have a significant impact on morale and productivity (bit.ly/AL-EmpMorale). The time it takes to create and maintain structures like these is worth the investment for its impact on organizational culture and library worker well-being. **AL**

Supporting library workers as whole people can have a significant impact on morale and productivity.

Visualize This

Graphic data opens up digital collections

BY Monika Glowacka-Musial



MONIKA GLOWACKA-MUSIAL is metadata librarian at New Mexico State University Library in Las Cruces.

Since the 1990s, cultural heritage institutions have been investing in digital technologies to address growing public demand for permanent open access to information resources. This trend continues to accelerate. Because of the pandemic, print collections have rapidly become more difficult to access, while research and learning activities have moved to an almost entirely virtual environment. Even the nature of digital content has shifted: Once it represented a preview of a physical collection; now it's the primary access point.

Digital collections, however, are not simply representations of physical collections but resources in their own right. Unlike physical collections, their digital counterparts feature detailed metadata. Often, they also feature full text, thanks to optical character recognition conversion of text images into machine-encoded data. Both metadata and data can be mined, analyzed, and visualized—not only opening digital collections for active exploration and discovery but also providing tools for content analysis and communication.

A growing body of literature highlights graphics' relevance for digital libraries in the context of our culture of ubiquitous screens. For example, graphic representations of digital collections are a great alternative to text-based interfaces and search boxes, especially for nonexperts and casual users. Unlike empty search fields, which rely on user input and background knowledge, graphs and diagrams provide a comprehensive collection overview easily understandable by all.

Along the same lines, interfaces designed to offer more generous choices than the traditional search prominently display graphs of digital collections on web portals in order to spark users' interest and inspire them to explore digitized material. In addition to providing a holistic overview of a collection's scope and content, these interfaces include the collection's context, display relationships among its items, and offer a quick close-up of selected images. These graphic overviews make natural starting points for browsing large sets of digital items, identifying relevant topics and patterns, selecting pertinent documents and images, and focusing on details. Graphics also foster serendipitous findings. Some interfaces let users navigate digital collections as virtual galleries.

Similarly, archivists and curators find graphics useful when analyzing large digital collections. Visualization lets curators examine a collection's structure, organization, content, provenance, scope, and size, as well as the number of files it contains and their formats,

plus its documents' text patterns and its images' visual patterns. In addition, graphs may reveal hidden patterns that provide insight into the process of collection development. Monitoring collection progress also means assessing its metadata for completeness and quality. Computing applications used for visualization reveal inconsistencies and missing values in metadata fields, meaning that visualization becomes an effective tool for metadata quality control. Finally, visualization may inform the creation of metadata. When we know what information produces useful charts, we can reevaluate the metadata elements that describe our collections.

Digital collections are not simply representations of physical collections, but resources in their own right.

At New Mexico State University Library, we use visualizations primarily to curate digital collections, especially legacy ones. We have just started experimenting with visualizations that provide fresh insights into collections' content and allow library users to explore it further. We've also added graphics to digital yearbooks. Creating visuals for digital collections has been a rewarding process, and we encourage readers to learn the tools and start experimenting with digital collections data themselves.

Adapted from "Data Visualization with R for Digital Collections," Library Technology Reports vol. 57, no. 1 (Jan. 2021). Read more at bit.ly/ALA-LTR. AL

It's Okay to Be Wrong

Analyzing our failures leads to better teen services

by Linda W. Braun



LINDA W. BRAUN is a California-based consultant and a past president of ALA's Young Adult Library Services Association.

Over the past two decades, I've trained many library staffers on how to work with teens and have written extensively on the topic. But I haven't always gotten it right.

With the pandemic prompting us to step back and think critically about our users and the programs we bring online, it's also a good time to reflect on past missteps. I'd like to share some of the wrong ideas I've had and why some of my original thinking was incorrect, as a reminder of the importance of regularly reassessing how we serve teens through libraries.

Wrong idea: Teen-only services are essential. Over the years, I've talked with library staff about the need to provide teen-only services—the logic being that teens do not want to participate in activities that include parents, caregivers, or siblings. While this might be true for some teens, it is not a universal sentiment. In some cultures, and for some teens, participating in activities with other family members is an important part of life. Working with parents or caregivers to learn a new skill, helping a younger sibling with a project, or simply enjoying time together working on an activity of mutual interest is valuable for many adolescents. If libraries do not provide programs and services for teens and their families, they are putting up barriers for many in the community who would be interested in what's available if family participation were encouraged.

Wrong idea: Off-the-shelf programming works. In my early days as a library consultant, I would fill workshops with examples of “programs that work”—programs that staffers from around the country had implemented. I'd say, “This is something you can do with your teens and be successful.” That was before I realized that the only way to serve teens is to get to know their specific interests and needs and then develop services with and for them that support both. It's not possible to take an entire program that worked in one community and expect to replicate it in another community. Customization for a local audience is a must. For example, the rural Cherokee (Iowa) Public Library realized it couldn't launch the type of middle school makerspace programs that worked at libraries in cities and high-tech corridors. Staffers factored in the specific interests of youth as well as the demographics, infrastructure, community assets, and available partners in their town.

Wrong idea: Learning the technology teens are using leads to better programs. For about 10 years I facilitated workshops that simply focused on how to use a particular application or tool. These included how-to sessions on video and audio software, Google apps, and Facebook and Twitter. While library staff should have proficiency with these

tools, just knowing the technology doesn't equate to high-quality teen services. Instead, I focus now on the outcomes that staffers want to achieve through their services. Once desired outcomes are known, work backward and think about the tools needed to reach those results.

Wrong idea: Library staffers have to be where teens are online. I also used to talk about setting up social media accounts as a way to get teens to engage with the

library. As I look back on that, I think, “Why would I ever suggest that?” Just as knowing how to use technology isn't the key to success, being on social media won't be effective if you don't know what services teens want or don't have a relationship in

place. Instead of being everywhere that teens are online, choose platforms thoughtfully and be where you can assist teens in the activities they care about. For example, if you learn through conversations that area teens have an interest in civic engagement, you could leverage Instagram to highlight the activism of other youth and help them connect with those who share their passions and pursuits.

I've been wrong many more times over the past couple decades—enough to fill multiple columns—but the point is that we should all be regularly evaluating our ideas and questioning our assumptions. If we're willing to talk through our mistakes and find ways to move forward, we can revise the way we do our jobs. Join me in being wrong—and then fixing it. **AL**

If we're willing to talk through mistakes, we can revise the way we do our jobs.

Bookmobiles for Justice

What outreach librarians can learn from community organizing

BY Lesley Garrett



LESLEY GARRETT is bookmobile coordinator at McCracken County (Ky.) Public Library. They are also a community organizer currently engaged in social movements around prison and policing abolition, disability justice, food sovereignty, and building a solidarity economy.

Before I was hired as bookmobile coordinator at McCracken County (Ky.) Public Library and tasked with leading outreach efforts for a service population of 65,000 people, I had been a community organizer in western Kentucky for four years, working in environmental, economic, gender, and racial justice.

During my time as an organizer apprentice with Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, our chapter led a successful campaign in partnership with the LGBTQ+ advocacy group Kentucky Fairness and ACLU of Kentucky to pass a 2018 civil rights ordinance in the city of Paducah that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

I've since found that applying principles of community organizing and social justice work to library outreach can make our services more inclusive and help us reach many more individuals. In adapting these principles, we prioritize improved access for the most marginalized people in our community.

In my experience, an emphasis on inclusion is more effective when it coincides with other principles, such as solidarity, mutuality, and commitment to transformation. (Read more about the 1996 Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing at bit.ly/AL-Jemez.) This process involves critically interrogating existing library structures and strategies—which have historically upheld oppressive systems such as white supremacy—and changing them as needed to move toward more equitable services and spaces.

One example of a supremacist system: the “white savior” complex. A tool of imperialism exemplified by Rudyard Kipling’s 1899 poem “The White Man’s Burden,” it can show up in many ways, such as when we determine services for marginalized communities based on our assumption of needs and without input from the people using the services. Outreach to underserved communities can easily become extractive and oppressive if not grounded in solidarity.

In my daily work, I also apply principles of the disability justice movement—which includes an emphasis on intersectionality and leadership representing those most directly affected. Sins Invalid (sinsinvalid.org), a performance project led by disabled people of color, offers a useful guide to these principles.

Foundational in Black queer feminist thought, intersectionality is a method of analysis for understanding the ways that various forms of oppression affect people holding multiple marginalized identities. For example, consider outreach to patrons who have experienced incarceration. How many overlapping systems may affect their lives, and

how might this impact the way they access our services? How can we augment our outreach to better serve this population?

Another principle of disability justice, leadership from the most directly impacted, complements the Jemez principles of bottom-up organizing and letting people speak for themselves. This principle has been key to designing our bookmobile program and outreach strategies, which focus on being accountable to our community and keeping open lines of communication.

I began my bookmobile program planning in late 2019 by holding meetings with local teachers and school administrators to get input on how bookmobile services could best support them and their students. What we learned was that the need from surrounding school systems could not be met with just one bookmobile. Our library responded by creating a school outreach

coordinator position. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, that staffer worked with schools to successfully troubleshoot access issues related to virtual learning and provide library services accordingly.

Public libraries aren’t here to define and win grassroots

campaigns, but we do have an active role to play in creating equitable, democratic communities. By applying social justice frameworks to our outreach efforts, we can build programs that truly transform lives and neighborhoods. **AL**

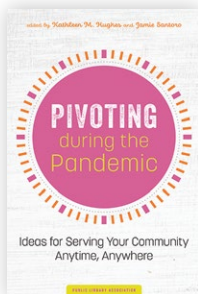
An emphasis on inclusion is more effective when it coincides with solidarity and mutuality.

Engagement at a Distance

Tools and tips for virtual programming and services



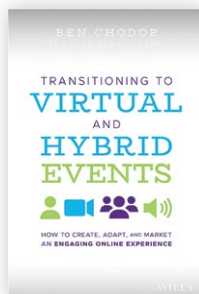
ARACELI MÉNDEZ HINTERMEISTER is knowledge manager at Uplift Education in Dallas.



Pivoting during the Pandemic: Ideas for Serving Your Community Anytime, Anywhere

Edited by Kathleen M. Hughes and Jamie Santoro

This collection includes 22 reflections from library staffers across the US on how public libraries have responded to challenges posed by COVID-19. Whether you seek to serve specific patron groups, address larger community needs, or reimagine programming, you will find innovative models and services that many libraries have used in their communities, including homebound delivery, virtual reference, remote readers' advisory, and setting up Wi-Fi hotspots. Pivoting during the health crisis requires far more than just putting programming online, and this collection will help readers develop new ideas and strengthen existing ones. Public Library Association, 2021. 112 p. \$29.99. PBK. 978-0-8389-4974-0. (Also available as an ebook.)



Transitioning to Virtual and Hybrid Events: How to Create, Adapt, and Market an Engaging Online Experience

By Ben Chodor with Gabriella Cyranski

Chodor has presented virtual programs in the digital media space for more than 20 years. Drawing on that experience, he digs deep into how to become a more efficient host, understand your audience, and use media beyond videoconferencing. His approach creates an intimacy that allows event attendees to feel directly engaged rather than just looking at their screens. This book includes comprehensive checklists, best practices, and tips for hosting events. Wiley, 2020. 208 p. \$25. PBK. 978-1-119-74717-8. (Also available as an ebook.)



The Collection All Around: Sharing Our Cities, Towns, and Natural Places

By Jeffrey T. Davis

One of the library's greatest strengths is its ability to connect patrons to resources, and this book shows how that skill goes beyond a building's walls. By focusing on what surrounds a library, Davis asks readers to consider nearby parks, nature, and places in their community as part of their collection. This is not to say libraries should embed in the community; rather, it is about making the places around their users more comprehensible, familiar, and accessible to everyone. The lessons will assist library workers as they guide patrons in discovering the treasures around them. ALA Editions, 2017. 152 p. \$57. PBK. 978-0-8389-1505-9. (Also available as an ebook.)

BY Araceli Méndez Hintermeister



Healthy Living at the Library: Programs for All Ages

By Noah Lenstra

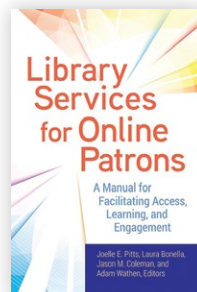
Lenstra provides resources to help integrate healthy living and wellness practices into library programming, whether through garden plots, StoryWalks, or fitness classes. *Healthy Living at the Library* outlines how to develop a program, engage in community partnerships, and eventually run a program, and it concludes with advice on how to make new initiatives permanent. Lenstra includes information about liability waivers, strategic plans, and assessment tools that will support these offerings every step of the way. Libraries Unlimited, 2020. 225 p. \$45. PBK. 978-1-4408-6314-1. (Also available as an ebook.)



Coronavirus: Leadership and Recovery


By *Harvard Business Review*, Martin Reeves, Nancy F. Koehn, Tsedal Neeley, and Scott Brinatto

It can be difficult for libraries to embrace changes instituted because of COVID-19, especially when they may be required to transition back to traditional services at any moment. Through the lens of business management, *Coronavirus: Leadership and Recovery* motivates readers to think through these unprecedented challenges while maintaining a foundation that will allow them to emerge stronger at the end of the pandemic. Broken into sections that address leadership, management, and strategic planning, the book presents case studies that explore how other businesses in multiple industries are addressing everything from workers calling in sick to communicating with customers. Harvard Business Review, 2020. 192 p. \$23. PBK. 978-1-6478-2049-7. (Also available as an ebook.)



Library Services for Online Patrons: A Manual for Facilitating Access, Learning, and Engagement

Edited by Joelle E. Pitts, Laura Bonella, Jason M. Coleman, and Adam Wathen

Access, learning, and engagement are at the core of this manual, which offers a holistic approach to initiating and enhancing library resources and services to online patrons. The book looks at reference, instruction, and marketing through the lens of online users and guides readers through the process of making intentional considerations. While this book focuses on academic libraries, its lessons on designing services will help readers navigate and address the needs of any online patron, even if those needs may not be entirely apparent at first. Libraries Unlimited, 2019. 200 p. \$55. PBK. 978-1-4408-5952-6. (Also available as an ebook.) 

PEOPLE

Announcements

ON THE MOVE

Elaine Bleisch joined Lied Scottsbluff (Nebr.) Public Library as teen librarian and children's assistant in November.

In January **Jonathan O. Cain** became associate university librarian for research and learning at Columbia University Libraries in New York City.



Kyle DeCicco-Carey joined Millicent Library in Fairhaven, Massachusetts, as director October 19.

Jessica Dorr became director of Boise (Idaho) Public Library November 30.

J. Eric Ensley was appointed curator of rare books and maps at University of Iowa Libraries' Special Collections and University Archives in December.

November 2 **Brian Herzog** joined Tuscarawas County (Ohio) Public Library as assistant director.

Worcester (Mass.) Public Library named **Jason L. Homer** executive director, effective in December.

Allan Kleiman became director of Edison Public Library in Fords, New Jersey, in January.

In October **Lacey Love** joined Peters Township (Pa.) Public Library as director.

Mid-America Library Alliance in Independence, Missouri, appointed **Jane Mulvihill-Jones** executive director, effective January 6.



In February **Jennifer R. Nelson** was selected as state librarian for the New Jersey State Library.



In Memory

Alan Cornish, 59, director of library technology services at University of Oregon in Eugene since 2018, died November 5. Prior to joining University of Oregon, he served as automation librarian at Texas A&M University Libraries in College Station; systems librarian at National Library of Medicine in Bethesda, Maryland; head of library systems at Washington State University Libraries in Pullman; and program manager for the Orbis Cascade Alliance consortium in Eugene.



Ben Emmett Grimm, 96, director of Jersey City (N.J.) Free Public Library until his 1985 retirement, died November 9. He served as 1968–1969 president of the New Jersey Library Association, and after retirement worked as a library consultant.

Frank P. Grisham, 92, died October 9. He served as director of Vanderbilt (Tenn.) University Library from 1968 until 1982, then as executive director of the Southeastern Library Network in Atlanta until his retirement in 1994. Grisham, who established the Vanderbilt Television News Archive in 1968, received many library awards, including the American Library Association's (ALA) Melvil Dewey Medal and the Southeastern Library Association's Rothrock Award.

Janet M. Hauser, 85, who retired from Glencoe (Ill.) Public Library as children's librarian in 2010, died December 7.

Marjorie Lewis, 91, a children's librarian in schools and public libraries in Montclair, New Jersey; Scarsdale, New York; and London, died December 7. Lewis also wrote three children's books and coedited *Waltzing on Water*, an anthology of poetry by women.

Stephen M. Roberts, 71, associate vice president for university libraries at University of Buffalo, New York, until his 2010 retirement, died September 21. During his 33 years at the university, he established UBdigit, which made the university's

Pongrácz Sennyey became associate dean for discovery, access, and technology at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia, in October.

Chris Siscoe became director of Hurt-Battelle Memorial Library in West Jefferson, Ohio, November 1.

Highland Park (Ill.) Public Library appointed **Heidi Smith** director, effective January 4.

Thomas Vitale started as director of Floyd Memorial Library in Greenport, New York, November 18.

December 14 **Angela Zimmermann** became executive director of Racine (Wis.) Public Library.

PROMOTIONS

Mansfield Public Library in Temple, New Hampshire, promoted **Beth Crooker** to director in November.

Columbus (Ohio) Metropolitan Library promoted **Anne Jubera** to manager of its Shepard branch.



digital collections available, and UB Wings, the first campus-wide information system. His efforts led UB Libraries to receive the New York State Library's Joseph F. Shubert Moving Toward Excellence Award in 1997.

Alexander Tscherny, 93, acquisitions librarian at Library of Congress (LC) until his retirement in 1993, died May 7, 2020. He had previously held several positions at LC, as well as the position of junior archivist at the National Archives' microfilm repository of captured Nazi records. He also worked internationally, including serving as chief of party of Bryant College's envoy to the Instituto de Estudios Superiores in the Dominican Republic (now known as Universidad APEC).



Luisa del Carmen Carolina Vigo Cepeda, past director and professor at Escuela Graduada de Ciencias y Tecnologías de la Información, the University of Puerto Rico's library school, died November 26. She cofounded the Association of University, Research, and Institutional Libraries of the Caribbean and served at various points as its president and its executive secretary. She also served as president of the Sociedad de Bibliotecarios de Puerto Rico.



Everett Wilkie, 73, head librarian of the Connecticut Historical Society until his 1997 retirement, died December 23. He previously served as bibliographer at Brown University's John Carter Brown Library in Providence, Rhode Island, and reference librarian at Indiana University's Lilly Library in Bloomington. Wilkie produced several descriptive bibliographies and research works on French Americana during his library career and in retirement as an independent scholar. He was active in the Association of College and Research Libraries' (ACRL) Rare Books and Manuscripts Section, chairing its Security Committee for almost 20 years and serving as section liaison to ACRL's Standards and Accreditation Committee for at least a decade. ●

Stacey Russell was promoted to executive director of Muskingum County (Ohio) Library System in November.

Sarah Smith was promoted to manager of Delta County (Colo.) Libraries' Cedaredge and Hotchkiss branches September 16.

Virginia Tech University Libraries in Blacksburg promoted **Patrick Tomlin** to assistant dean and director of learning environments.



RETIREMENTS

University of Oregon Law Reference Librarian **Jaye Barlous** retired September 30.

Mary L. Chute retired as state librarian for the New Jersey State Library in February.

Roxanna Deane retired October 28 as director of Tye Preston Memorial Library in Canyon Lake, Texas.

In December **Jill Hollingsworth** retired as science liaison and reference librarian

for Georgetown University's Blommer Science Library in Washington, D.C.

Sandra Hussey retired in December as coordinator of library instruction at Georgetown University Libraries in Washington, D.C.

Tim Kambitsch, director of Dayton (Ohio) Metro Library, retired in February.

In November **Melissa Kopecky** retired as director of South Orange (N.J.) Public Library.

Daniel LaRue retired October 31 after 31 years as a librarian at Hamburg (Pa.) Public Library.

Ann Miller, interim associate dean of libraries for collection services at University of Oregon Libraries in Eugene, retired November 30.

Gina Millsap retired as chief executive officer of Topeka and Shawnee County (Kans.) Public Library December 1.

Bill Olsen, School of Foreign Service and government liaison at Georgetown University Libraries in Washington, D.C., retired in December.

November 13 **Lisa Richland** retired as director of Floyd Memorial Library in Greenport, New York.

Ardmore (Okla.) Public Library Public Services Librarian **Lorena Smith** retired October 23.

Mike Taylor retired December 26 as director of Pender County (N.C.) Library.

October 30 **Les Valentine** retired as university archivist at University of Nebraska Omaha.

Michele Yellin, collection development librarian at Memphis (Tenn.) Public Library, retired October 2.

AT ALA

Briana Jarnagin left the Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services November 6. [AL](#)

Clues You Can Use

What's an eight-letter word for "information about information"? *Metadata*, and it's one of the library-themed answers Laura Braunstein has occasionally worked into a crossword puzzle since publishing her first in 2017.

Braunstein, digital humanities librarian at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, and co-lead of Digital by Dartmouth Library, wants to help both crossword puzzles and libraries shed their reputations for stuffy elitism and exclusion.

Braunstein started doing crosswords as a child with her grandfather, who emigrated from Moldova; the games were his way of learning new vocabulary. Crosswords became part of her daily life in college, and the switch to digital kicked her hobby into overdrive. "The iPad app for *The New York Times* crossword records your time," she notes. "Oh, I did that puzzle in five minutes. Could I do it in four next week?"

Through "crossword Twitter," she befriended other aficionados and found mentors. Ben Tausig, an editor for the indie American Values Club crosswords, asked her what she planned to do about the dearth of women in mainstream crosswords. (Women represent only about 27% of *New York Times* puzzle constructors, for example.)

So in 2018, she and fellow constructor Tracy Bennett started The Inkubator (inkubatorcrosswords.com), a puzzle subscription service edited exclusively by cis and trans women and nonbinary and gender-nonconforming people. It now has around 50 constructors and 1,500 subscribers.

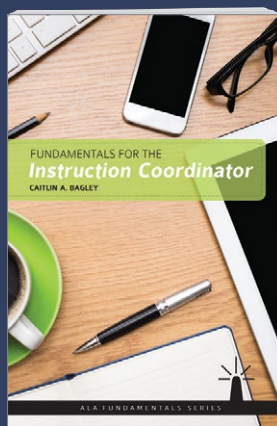
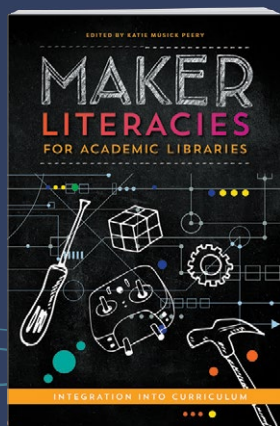
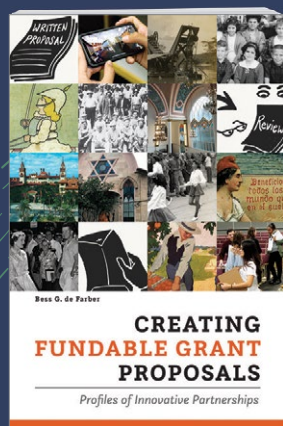
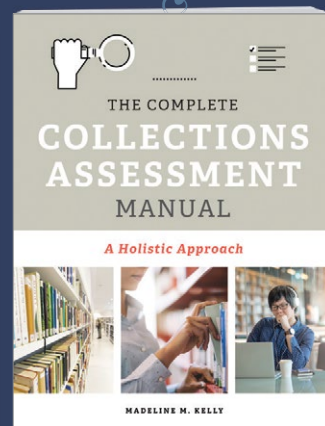
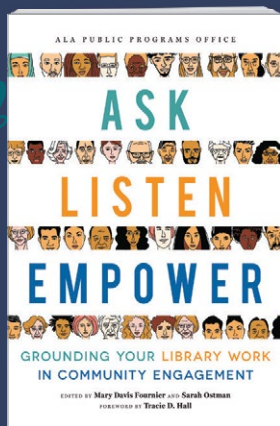
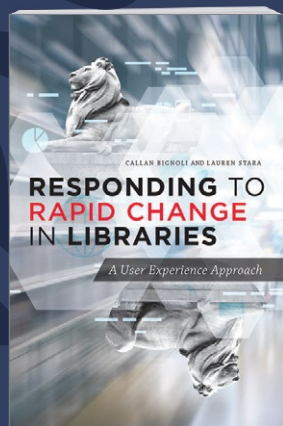
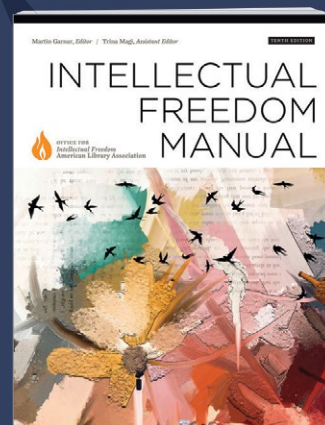
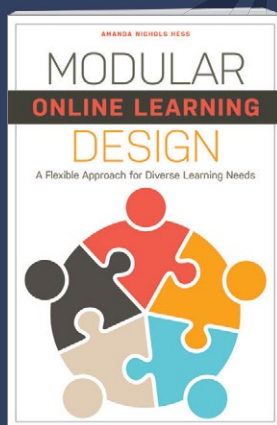
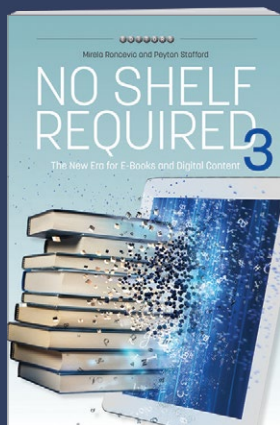
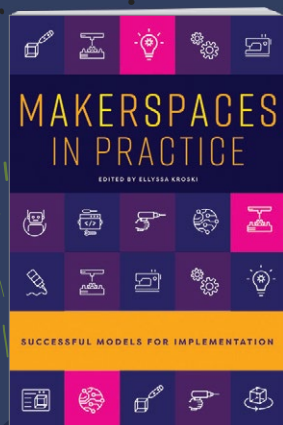
Braunstein says her digital humanities work is also about increasing access and representation: "I just want fewer gatekeepers in both areas of my professional life—in my vocation and my avocation." **AL**

THE BOOKEND showcases librarians, their work, and their work spaces. For consideration, email americanlibraries@ala.org.

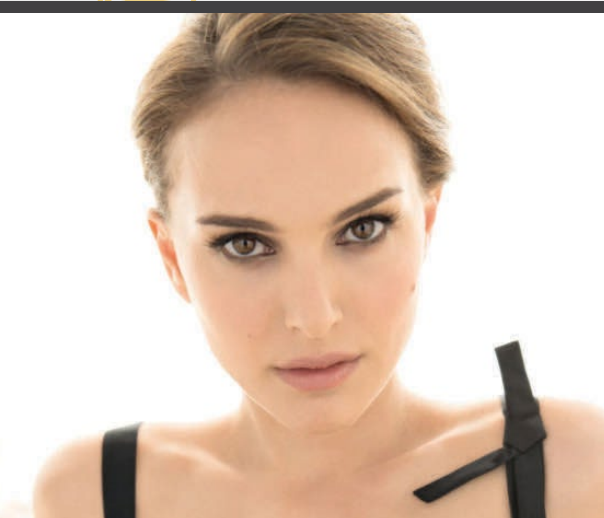
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