

June 2021

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

The Reader's Road Trip

Annual Preview

35 YEARS OF LITERARY LANDMARKS

p. 24

p. 46

p. 32

PLUS: StoryWalks,
Legal Issues,
Natural Hair Group



To all public library visionaries and changemakers

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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 roadside attraction?

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

Sanhita SinhaRoy → Dr. Evermor's Foreverttron
ssinhahoy@ala.org | x4219

MANAGING EDITOR

Terra Dankowski → The Big Duck
tdankowski@ala.org | x5282

SENIOR EDITORS

Amy Carlton
acarlton@ala.org | x5105

Phil Morehart
pmorehart@ala.org | x4218

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Sallyann Price → Mars Cheese Castle
sprice@ala.org | x4213

EDITORIAL AND ADVERTISING ASSOCIATE

Carrie Smith
casmith@ala.org | x4216

ART DIRECTOR

Rebecca Lomax
rlomax@ala.org | x4217

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Anne Ford, Lucas McGranahan

ADVERTISING

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

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PUBLISHING DEPARTMENT

Mary Mackay
Associate Executive Director

Mary Jo Bolduc

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MEMBERSHIP

Melissa Kay Walling, Director

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Susan H. Polos (Chair), Helen Ruth Adams, Jason K. Alston, Crystal Chen, Janie L. Hermann, Jasmina Jusic, and Shelley O'Rourke. Committee associates: Rachel Beth Wykle and Lori Bryan. Editorial policy: ALA Policy Manual, section A.8.2

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from the
EDITOR

Mapping Your Route



Sanhita SinhaRoy

Planning a socially distanced road trip this summer? Managing Editor Terra Dankowski has your route mapped out. In “The Reader’s Road Trip” (cover story, p. 24), she guides you through 14 of the 187 ALA-designated Literary Landmarks spanning the country, from the “childhood homes to ... seedy watering holes” of America’s greatest writers. The Literary Landmarks program, run by United for Libraries, is celebrating 35 years. Pack our June issue and some snacks for the ride.

Also looking back to better understand our future are those documenting marginalized histories. In “Chronicling the Black Experience” (p. 32), Mark Lawton talks with several library workers and archivists who are eschewing large institutional archives in favor of creating smaller, independent ones. Many of these collections highlight the intersection between the Black experience and other groups, such as LGBTQ+ people. Their goals include filling historical gaps and moving away from “respectability politics,” says archivist Erin Glasco, who works with the Blackivists, one of the organizations featured.

Reconnecting with roots of a different kind is Adult Services and Reference Librarian Nicolle M. Davis, who started the Natural Hair Support Group a few years ago at her Louisiana library. In “Embracing Natural Hair” (Spotlight, p. 20), Davis writes how the group’s importance has grown over time within the local Black community, especially as a parallel national movement gains traction to prohibit discrimination based on the hair texture or style of many communities of color.

And be sure to check out the preview of Annual Conference (p. 46), where speakers such as sociologist Eve L. Ewing, tennis great Billie Jean King, TV host Padma Lakshmi, and actor Stanley Tucci are likely to inspire and entertain. Join the festivities virtually June 23–29, and catch our coverage in the *Daily Scoop* newsletter.

Finally, with this issue we say farewell to longtime *American Libraries* columnist Meredith Farkas, who retires her column after 14 years (“All Good Things ...,” p. 54). We are grateful to her for her passion and commitment all these years and wish her the best.

Sanhita

From Literary Landmarks to new archives on the Black experience, our stories present another view of American history and culture.

Moving Forward

Reflecting on an eventful year of progress



Julius C. Jefferson Jr.

Past ALA members have paved the way for my presidency. These trailblazers provided a blueprint for me to lead ALA with honesty, compassion, and integrity.

With my final column as ALA president, I'd like to look back over the past year and offer thanks. I must first pay homage to ALA members who have paved the way for my journey as president, such as Alma Jacobs, the first African American to be elected to the ALA Executive Board (1964); Clara Stanton Jones, the first person of color and African American to be elected ALA president (1976); and E. J. Josey, the first African American man to be elected ALA president (1984). These trailblazers provided a blueprint for me to lead ALA with honesty, compassion, and integrity.

Thanks to all who joined me last summer on the virtual "Holding Space" tour, a conversation series with libraries. I will forever remember you as faithful partners and travel companions as we faced seemingly insurmountable difficulties. Thanks in part to our advocacy, libraries secured federal relief funding of historic proportions.

ALA staff and leadership managed major challenges—all while having our governance and membership meetings in a virtual environment. ALA developed a plan to address our finances and continued with the work of reenvisioning the operating agreement with our divisions. We heard from ALA's Forward Together Working Group and are considering possibilities for a new, more responsive governance model. We increased member engagement, with so many answering the call to serve as committee chairs and members, and division and round table leaders.

Through a global pandemic we remained engaged with ALA Connect Live, monthly live events that brought together the library community to discuss issues and challenges. Thanks to the speakers for sharing their knowledge and insights, and thanks to all who connected with us.

Fueled by a passion that comes from personal experience, I focused on confronting the racism and white supremacy that has plagued the US for

too long. I coached colleagues who have faced racism and white supremacy in their professional lives, including supporting those who have filed discrimination lawsuits against their employers. I have listened, empathized, and encouraged.

The positions supporting the rights of LGBTQ+ people and those who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color would not have been possible without an ALA Executive Board that believes in equity, diversity, and inclusion and the changes needed within ALA and in our communities.

I would not have survived this year without our valuable and dedicated ALA staffers, who assisted in making me comfortable and confident to represent ALA and advocate for libraries and library workers.

Thanks to my family, my wonderful presidential advisory committee, my social media director, my colleagues at the Library of Congress, and so many valued mentors who prepared and guided me for the unknown as a leader.

Finally, thank you for being an ALA member. I hope we have demonstrated the value of membership.

Even with a year of ups and downs, we have been resilient. As the great Bill Withers wrote on the cover art of his 1974 album *+Justments*, "We will make some mistakes both in judgment and in fact. We will help some situations and hurt some situations. We will help some people and hurt some people and be left to live with it either way. We must then make some adjustments, or as the old people back home would call them, *+JUSTMENTS*."

As I pass the gavel to Patty Wong, there is so much work to be done in advocating for libraries, managing organizational challenges, and addressing racism. Let us continue to hold space for one another as we move forward. **AL**

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

To Survive, We Must Transform

In a “post-pandemic” America, change requires accountability



Tracie D. Hall

Four days before I became ALA executive director, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirmed the first case of coronavirus in the US. By my third week, we were in a worldwide pandemic. Less than a month later, one of my closest friends called to say she was having trouble breathing and was considering a visit to the emergency room. Later that evening, she was intubated, placed on a ventilator in an induced coma for seven weeks, and hospitalized for another five months of recovery. Today, a year after her brush with death, she is alive but utterly changed.

My friend is a well-respected educational consultant and author of half a dozen books. In a phone call shortly after she returned home, I was delighted to learn that, though she was still weak and had limited mobility, she was finishing a book she had been working on before her illness. “I’m writing for a different reason now,” she said. “I used to think of my books as a complement to my teaching and consulting. Now they may be the primary way I reach people.”

Ginni Rometty, IBM’s first female CEO, once memorably said, “The only way you survive is you continuously transform into something else.”

I’ve thought about that a lot lately—as I watch my friend struggle with neuropathy to complete her book on deadline, as I watch many libraries reopen, and as I watch ALA members and staff work toward increasing funding for libraries. For example, with the American Rescue Plan Act, ALA’s Public Policy and Advocacy Office successfully helped secure billions for libraries. And now the fight is under way for the Build America’s Libraries Act, which would provide \$5 billion for long-term improvements to library facilities.

Whether on a personal, institutional, or policy level, the pandemic has repeatedly shown us that a return to normal is neither possible nor a worthy goal. The normal that some may long for was not just, equitable, or inclusive. Yet it is

clear that any real national recovery is dependent on these tenets. If survival necessitates transformation, transformation requires accountability. There must be a means of identifying not just that we’ve changed, but what we have changed into and what that change will mean or do for others.

This past year, ALA has committed to its own evolution. We stood up against racism and racialized violence, redoubled our pledge for sustainability, and declared broadband access a human right. These change-management efforts are visible at every level of ALA: in the self-governance practices of the Forward Together initiative; in reevaluating the operating agreement for organizational alignment and excellence; and in developing a strategic plan to create the membership and revenue growth necessary to protect the right to read, ensure information access and equity, and effectively advocate for libraries of every type.

Make no mistake, ALA’s transformation will require greater accountability: as the single-largest driver of racial diversity in the field through its Spectrum Scholarship Program; in its library-based human rights activism through and beyond the Social Responsibilities Round Table and Rainbow Round Table; and through member groups advocating for services to the poor, people with disabilities, unhoused individuals, and those incarcerated, detained, or reentering. A true transformation for ALA will require that it consider itself as much a movement as an association.

In a speech delivered almost 20 years ago, Vartan Gregorian, former New York Public Library chief and president of the Carnegie Corporation when he died in April, said, “Libraries have shown remarkable resilience ... and a remarkable ability to transform themselves to meet changing needs.... Libraries are the mirror held up to the face of humankind.” And we are changed. **AL**

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

A true transformation for ALA will require that it consider itself as much a movement as an association.

From my time in the Los Angeles City Council to now, supporting the libraries that serve our communities is very personal to me. That's why I'm proud to cosponsor the Build America's Libraries Act to help our nation's libraries navigate COVID-19, accessibility barriers, and broadband capacity.

@SENALEXPADILLA
in response to "What the American Rescue Plan Act Means for Libraries"
(The Scoop, Mar. 12)

Thanks for Erring

I read Linda W. Braun's Youth Matters column ("It's Okay to Be Wrong," Mar./Apr., p. 50) and wanted to thank the author for her forward thinking and insight.

As an MLIS student in my final semester and someone working in a public library as an associate librarian, I find her words both anchoring and inspiring.

When it comes to programming, especially programming for teens, much of what she said resonated with me. Perhaps most impactful was the final sentence: "Join me in being wrong—and then fixing it." Braun said what few are willing to admit, let alone process and reflect upon, when it comes to programming.

I think reflection is paramount to any good programming, whether it's teen services or otherwise. Thank you for having the courage to remind us of what we all need to hear.

Mark A. Zimmerman
Milwaukee

The Drive to Serve

I'm writing in response to the "The Road to Normal" (Mar./Apr., p. 38), about bookmobiles.

As an MLIS grad student, English teacher, and reference assistant, I have seen from many angles how life-supporting library outreach and services have been to our students and their families during the pandemic. It really lifted my heart to read about school and public



librarians alongside other community members "bootstrapping bookmobiles" and partnering with food and social service organizations to get vital supplies where they are needed most.

These stories give us hope that we will get through this together and that libraries are about so much more than buildings or collections—they are the hearts and hands of the people who work in and with them.

Lori Misaka
Mānoa, Hawaii

Selective Censorship?

Amazon is a private corporation, whereas libraries are (often) public goods and government-run institutions. Most of us don't believe the two need to play by the same rule book. Amazon can censor whatever they want, and we are not always obligated to hold them to the same standards we would a public library.

Some would say ALA declining to take a public stance on Amazon's decision to pull Ryan T. Anderson's book *When Harry Became Sally: Responding to the Transgender Moment* (widely considered outdated and offensive) is hypocritical, all things

being equal. The thing is, all things are not equal.

We as a profession also must remember that we have publicly stated professional values—so many that they can become hard to prioritize and, in many cases, compete with one another. ALA has long espoused other values that intersect with and, in this case, outweigh the value of anticensorship (which I'll pretend is value-neutral here, though I would vehemently argue it is generally not).

As an ALA member and librarian who highly regards intellectual freedom and anticensorship, I not only don't disagree with Amazon's decision to not carry this title, but I actually applaud it. I think it's one of the least trash decisions Amazon has ever made, even if it is, at its core, just capitalist theatrics so it can potentially sell more stuff or lose fewer customers. I have no hesitation around supporting ALA in its passive response to this nonevent event.

Nick Demske
Racine, Wisconsin

It has been pointed out that Amazon decided to pull Anderson's book but continues to sell

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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Mein Kampf, which often gets used in conversations about censorship as an example of indefensible content that is still collected by libraries and available for sale. But I think that's a false equivalency: I'd argue that *Mein Kampf* is, above all else, a historical document and that is the reason it is held. The fact that its author was the architect of some of the worst atrocities on record makes his words historically significant and part of the study of that historical period. But if you imagine the whole catalog of historical racist, anti-Semitic, white supremacist tracts ever published, how many of them are still held and sold? Not many, I'd wager, and especially not at your neighborhood public library or bookstore.

As we all know, limited resources mean each library or bookseller has to make decisions on what they carry and prioritize. Whatever the choice, *Mein Kampf* is a problematic example.

Emily Fleischer
Mooreville, Indiana

COVID-19 Concerns

While we are all trying to navigate the best path forward with the ever-changing pandemic-related restrictions, it is important to assess what safety means for us as individuals. Pandemic or not, whether one works in health, emergency services, retail, food service, education, or any other field that serves the public, one has to accept the reality and risk of being exposed to individuals who could be carrying a cold, the flu, or other illnesses. Certainly, the pandemic has highlighted just how much contact we have

with the public in libraries and schools, but it is up to each one of us—not necessarily our employers or organizations—to decide if working with the public is worth the health risk.

Librarians are amazingly creative problem solvers. The pandemic challenged but did not defeat our efforts in continuing to offer access to information and materials to our communities while achieving a greater level of safety through the disinfection of materials and surfaces, as well as creating new ways to safely distribute and collect materials.

Michelle Gardner

Indian Rocks Beach, Florida

As a solo librarian in a small-town library, the most difficult thing for me about the pandemic is that library use here has plummeted. I suspect that some people are staying home because they're stressed or self-isolating, or perhaps they're waiting until they can browse mask-free again.

Like so many people, I've found that general pandemic stress is eating at my mental health. I'm struggling to come up with virtual programs that will suit my community and trying to keep busy. But I have had plenty of great moments where I helped someone or received a compliment for what the library is doing. That keeps me going.

I remind myself that even though these times are depressing and lonely, I'm fortunate that my job is secure and flexible, and my risk of exposure to COVID-19 is very low. It's likely that we'll bounce back when things improve.

Vivian Sloane
Norman, Oklahoma

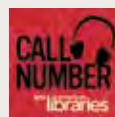
What You're Reading

1 Users at the Center of Everything This ALA Editions excerpt offers a crash course in UX for your library. bit.ly/AL-UXEditions

2 Where Monarchs Reign Library butterfly gardens emphasize sustainability and community partnerships. bit.ly/AL-Butterflies

3 Building Morale in a Pandemic How can libraries support their workers as whole people? bit.ly/AL-BuildMorale

In Case You Missed It



School Librarians Adapt to the Pandemic

In Episode 61 of our *Call Number* podcast, we talk with school librarians about how they changed their work and services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

bit.ly/AL-CallNumber61



ACRL 2021 Virtual Highlights from the Association of College and Research Libraries' biennial conference. bit.ly/AL-ACRL2021



State of America's Libraries Special Report: COVID-19

This year's report focuses on the impact of the novel coronavirus on all types of libraries. bit.ly/SOAL-COVID19

Coming Soon

Check The Scoop for our team coverage of the **2021 Annual Conference and Exhibition Virtual**, June 23–29.

ALA's **Presidential Citations** honor innovative international libraries.

Pelayo-Lozada Wins 2022–2023 ALA Presidency

Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lozada, adult services assistant manager at Palos Verdes Library District in Rolling Hills Estates, California, has been elected 2022–2023 president of the American Library Association (ALA).

Pelayo-Lozada received 4,056 votes, while her opponents, Ed Garcia, director of Cranston (R.I.) Public Library, and Stacey A. Aldrich, state librarian of the Hawaii State Public Library System in Honolulu, received 2,598 votes and 2,186 votes respectively.

Upon learning the outcome of the election, Pelayo-Lozada provided the following statement:

"I want to thank each and every member who voted, who made their voice heard in our Association, and helped make ALA stronger. I am honored and grateful for the opportunity to lead together for change with all of you as 2022–2023 ALA president. *Mahalo nui loa* to my colleagues Ed Garcia and Stacey Aldrich for standing for election with me during this unprecedented time.

"The commitment, passion, and vision of ALA's members bring light and hope to our collective future. Together, we will continue strengthening this organization, the profession, and all of its members, making it a model of organizational excellence and sustainability. We will work to transform ALA into a more inclusive and antiracist organization while committing to our core values. We will create our future together, celebrating the joys that make libraries meaningful to all of us while making space for difficult but honest conversations. I cannot wait to get started on this work, and I cannot wait to work with all of you. Thank you for your confidence and hope in me, in libraries, and in ALA."

Pelayo-Lozada recently completed a term as an ALA executive board member (2017–2020) and is currently a councilor-at-large (2012–2015, 2015–2018, 2020–2023). She is an active member of the 1876 Club; the



Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lozada

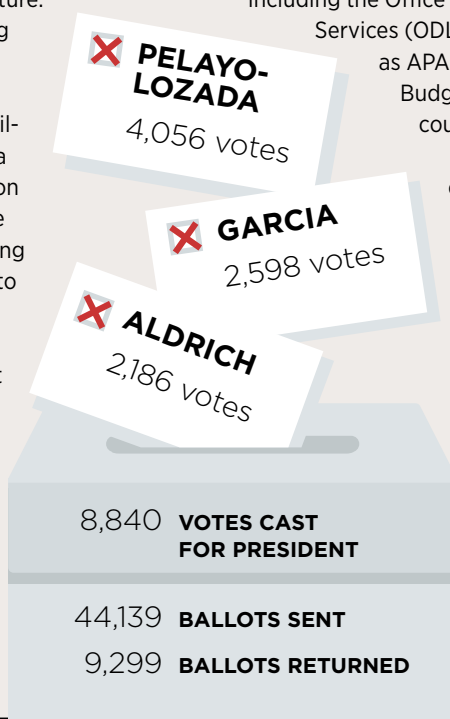
Association of Library Services to Children (ALSC); Core: Leadership, Infrastructure, Futures; the Public Library Association; and various round tables. She is also a member of several ALA professional affiliates, including the Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association (APALA), of which she is executive director and a past president; the Black Caucus of the American Library Association; the Chinese American Librarians Association;

American Indian Library Association; and Reforma, the National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish-Speaking. She has held an ALA membership for more than 14 years.

Pelayo-Lozada has served and continues to serve on various ALA committees at both the ALA and division levels, including the Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services (ODLOS) Advisory Committee (2016–2018) as APALA representative and the Planning and Budget Assembly (2016–2018) as elected council representative.

Additional leadership roles include chair of the Steering Committee on Organizational Effectiveness (2018–2020) and the ODLOS Advisory Committee (2016–2017). She is chair of the Palos Verdes Library District's BUILD Team, focusing on diversity and racial equity, and a board member of the Center for the Study of Multicultural Children's Literature (2012–present). She is also a 2011 ALA Emerging Leader.

Pelayo-Lozada holds an MLIS and a bachelor's degree in sociology from UCLA and an associate's degree in philosophy from El Camino College in Torrance, California. ●



Libraries Left Out of Infrastructure Proposal

In a March 31 statement, ALA welcomed the release of President Biden's American Jobs Plan, an outline for modernizing the nation's infrastructure. The plan includes investments in educational infrastructure, workforce development, broadband, and energy efficiency.

However, unlike the bipartisan Build America's Libraries Act, the plan omits funding for library facilities. ALA President Julius C. Jefferson Jr. commented, in the statement:

"ALA welcomes President Biden's focus on modernizing our nation's infrastructure, including educational facilities. However, we are deeply concerned that the administration's infrastructure plan fails to include funding for library facilities and would provide only half the level of grants for school facilities that was approved by the House last year. Shortchanging library facilities in this plan is a missed opportunity to build back better."

The Build America's Libraries Act would provide \$5 billion to support long-term improvements to public and tribal library facilities in underserved areas, such as communities of color and rural areas, while also creating jobs. It currently has 85 bipartisan House sponsors and 12 Senate sponsors and is supported by 30 organizations, including ALA. The Reopen and Rebuild America's Schools Act would provide \$100 billion in grants to modernize K-12 school facilities, including school libraries.

To write to your legislators and advocate for the inclusion of library facilities in future funding, visit bit.ly/AL-infr-advocacy. ●

Candidates Sought for 2022 ALA Election

The Nominating Committee for the 2022 ALA election is soliciting nominees to run on the spring 2022 ballot for the offices of ALA president-elect, treasurer, and councilor-at-large. The committee will select candidates to run for president-elect and treasurer and no fewer than 51 candidates for 34 at-large council seats.

Members who wish to make nominations should submit the nominee's name, present position, institution, address, and contact information. Self-nominations are encouraged. All nominees must complete the candidate biographical form found at officers.directnominations.net.

Nominations and biographical forms must be received no later than July 14.

Census Data Literacy Training

The Public Library Association (PLA) is launching a new project on census data literacy, in partnership with ALA's Public Policy and Advocacy Office. The project promotes awareness and use of community-level census data and builds the data literacy skills of library staffers, enhancing their services and programs through a series of webinars and complementary resources. Topics will include starting, growing, and sustaining local businesses and economic development; nonprofit and government planning; and student and community research.

CALENDAR

JUNE

Rainbow Book Month

ala.org/rt/rrt

JUNE 24-29

2021 ALA Annual Conference and Exhibition Virtual

alaannual.org

SEPT.

National 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. 17-23

National Friends of Libraries Week

bit.ly/alafolweek

OCT. 21-23

AASL National Conference

Salt Lake City

national.aasl.org

OCT. 25-31

Open Access Week

openaccessweek.org

The first webinar in the series, "Data That Counts: An Introduction to Census Data for Public Libraries" (recorded April 6) is available for free at bit.ly/PLA-census. It introduces viewers to the role that public libraries can play in assisting with finding, accessing, and using census data for planning and decision making.

Learn more about the Census Data Literacy project at ala.org/pla/data/census.

Endowment Trustees Welcome Fund Manager

In March, ALA's 12-member endowment trustee board announced the acquisition of minority-owned GQG Partners LLC as the newest fund manager in

ALA's \$62 million portfolio. Founded in 2016 by Rajiv Jain, chairman and chief investment officer, GQG Partners LLC joins ALA's portfolio via its International Opportunities Fund, a considerable cap growth mutual fund that offers international portfolio diversification.

Based in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, GQG Partners LLC manages \$30 billion in regulatory assets for 800 institutional clients in 28 countries.

The firm will help diversify and manage \$1.2 million of the ALA portfolio held by Merrill Lynch.

The endowment trustees manage the ALA Endowment Fund on behalf of the Executive Board, guided by the established policies, procedures, and guidelines of the ALA investment policy statement. Additionally, they have the authority to hold, invest, reinvest, recommend disbursements, and otherwise deal with endowment funds under the direction of the Executive Board of the Association.

Racial Justice Content at *Choice*

Choice in March announced the launch of a new content project, Toward Inclusive

Excellence, focusing on discourse around racial justice, with Alexia Hudson-Ward, associate director of research and learning at MIT Libraries, as its editor in chief.

Toward Inclusive Excellence explores issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion, particularly as they affect the library community. The online channel is anchored by a weekly blog (bit.ly/Choice-CIE) and incorporates podcasts, webinars, and research reports. Contributors and participants represent administrators at every level, faculty, and other members of the library community.

The project's goal is to develop a pool of knowledge and resources for information professionals, administrators, undergraduates, and faculty seeking to understand racism from new perspectives and promote diversity on their campuses.

Free IFRT Memberships for Students

In March the Intellectual Freedom Round Table (IFRT) began offering free memberships for students as a way to boost short- and long-term engagement. Up to 200 current ALA student members and up to 25 students who were not ALA

members were awarded a free membership on a first-come, first-served basis, paid by IFRT. (Student nonmembers received a free ALA student or joint membership.) For additional student resources, visit bit.ly/AL-StudentPortal.

AASL Position Statement

With its new position statement, released March 12, the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) upholds its view that a learner has the right to access resources freely and without restriction. The statement covers issues relating to labeling practices including classification and shelving, reading levels, and learners' privacy. It is available for download at bit.ly/AASL-position.

Maintaining the belief that school library collections are places where learners can explore interests safely and without limitations, AASL's Position Statement on Labeling Practices clarifies the following:

- School librarians' classification and shelving practices should support learners' ability to meet their information needs while avoiding reductive

Library Card Sign-Up Month

Marley Dias, author, executive producer, and founder of #1000BlackGirlBooks, is taking on a new role in September: honorary chair of National Library Card Sign-Up Month.

"A library card is the ticket you need to travel across the globe," Dias said in a March 30 statement. "It allows you to experience stories that can connect you to diverse and empowering experiences."

"We are thrilled Marley Dias has agreed to serve as Library Card Sign-Up Month honorary chair," said ALA President Julius C. Jefferson Jr. in the statement. "Marley's ongoing work as an advocate for literacy and diversity mirrors the efforts of libraries to ensure their communities have access to inclusive books and collections that inspire cultural understanding."

#1000BlackGirlBooks is an international movement to collect and donate children's books that feature Black girls as lead characters. As an elementary schooler, Dias launched the #1000BlackGirlBooks drive in November 2015 with the help of GrassROOTS Community Foundation and the goal of collecting 1,000 books by February 2016; to date, Dias has collected more than 13,000.

ALA's READ poster featuring Dias is available at the ALA Store. In the coming months, free graphics and tools (including a template press release, proclamation, and sample social media posts) will be provided at ala.org/librarycardsignup. ●



classification choices that narrowly define readers and/or books.

- School librarians should avoid using prejudicial and identity-based labeling practices.
- School librarians should resist labeling or arranging books by any readability scale and should instead advocate for the development of policies that do not require library staff to restrict access to books based on reading or age levels.
- School librarians have a responsibility to protect learner privacy and confidentiality when considering any practice that places a label on the outside of a book or on library shelving.

The statement also contains questions school librarians can use to guide their practice, references, and recommended reading. It replaces and expands on AASL's earlier position statement, "Labeling Books with Reading Levels," and incorporates AASL's *National School Library Standards*.

ALSC Membership Funding for BIPOC Students and Workers

The Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) has announced two membership funding opportunities for students and library workers who identify as Black, Indigenous, or people of color (BIPOC). Prioritizing BIPOC students and library workers supports ALSC's strategic objective of increasing the intentional recruitment and retention of a diverse membership, while reducing barriers to participation.

The first funding opportunity, Relief Renewals for BIPOC Members, will support ALA and ALSC membership renewals of BIPOC ALSC members who are experiencing any form of financial hardship because of COVID-19 and who have been engaged within the Association over the past two years. Friends of ALSC will fund up to 50 one-year renewals, and the ALSC Membership Committee will review applications on a rolling basis through June. For more information, visit bit.ly/ALSC-BIPOC.

ALA Announces COVID Library Relief Fund

ALA announced April 9 it will make available \$1.25 million in emergency relief grants to libraries that have experienced substantial economic hardship caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Public, school, academic, and tribal libraries across the US and its territories were invited to apply for grants of \$30,000–\$50,000 from the ALA COVID Library Relief Fund to bolster library operations and services, including technology access, collections, digital instruction, staffing, and outreach. Libraries serving low-income and rural communities, or communities that are predominately Black, Indigenous, and people of color, were encouraged to apply. Awards will be announced at the end of June.

"Libraries have demonstrated extraordinary innovation over the past year in creating new materials, programs, and service delivery models, but they are being asked to do more with less," ALA Executive Director Tracie D. Hall said in an April 9 statement. "This new grant program recognizes those efforts and seeks to strengthen them, especially in communities where the need is greatest." Hall added that this fund is the first part of a larger fundraising effort to support libraries, with more announcements planned in the coming months.

The ALA COVID Library Relief Fund, administered by ALA's Chapter Relations Office, is supported by Acton Family Giving. Initial seed funding was provided by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. ●

The second funding option, ALSC's New Membership Funding Opportunity, welcomes 20 new BIPOC library students and paraprofessionals/library support staffers who seek to become more involved with ALSC. Recipients, identified in April, will receive a one-year ALA/ALSC membership along with access to engagement opportunities.

ALSC Launches Awards Site

In March ALSC launched the Book and Media Awards Shelf (alsc-awards-shelf.org), a database-driven website presenting a collection of books, recordings, apps, websites, and other media for children up to 14. The Awards Shelf brings together almost 2,000 ALSC-award-winning titles representing 100 years of ALSC awards history. Users can search titles by genre, format, creator, award recognition, and more.

The site will be updated each year following the announcements of the ALA

Youth Media Awards and Notable lists to support library workers, educators, parents, and caregivers in their search for the best books and media for children.

With the Awards Shelf becoming the official home for ALSC award titles, the awards section of the existing ALSC website will be streamlined to focus on the award submission and committee processes.

100 Years of the Newbery Medal

Beginning this summer and continuing through 2022, ALSC is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Newbery Medal with special events and activities. An updated outline of activities can be found at bit.ly/Newbery100.

ALSC will bring back the popular "The Newbery Medal: Past, Present, and Future" online course this summer, with additional continuing education opportunities to be offered through ALA's 2022 Annual Conference. There will also be

New Position Paper on Digital Content Assesses E-Lending Ecosystem

The American Library Association's (ALA) Joint Digital Content Working Group is tasked with advising ALA regarding opportunities and issues within its purview, including the provision of equitable access to digital content for all. In December 2020 the group issued a position paper on e-lending, which assesses the digital lending ecosystem in public, academic, and school libraries. A summary of the report follows, and the full text is available at bit.ly/AL-JDCWG:

"While acknowledging that improvements in content access and the reading experience have occurred in the last decade, the paper notes that serious issues complicate acquisition of, user access to, and preservation of information. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a catalyst, increasing digital demand—demand that promises to be long-term—while threatening budget restrictions that may further impede patron access since digital material is costlier per use than print.

"License terms from publishers for ebooks and digital audiobooks are problematic in all types of libraries. In public libraries and school libraries, ebook content from many major publishers has increasingly been available only on time-bound, exploding terms. Relicensing is required frequently, driving up long-term costs and complicating the maintenance of intact series and preservation. Academic libraries sometimes have more long-term license options, but not in every case, jeopardizing their mission as stewards of cultural memory. Price complicates access: individual titles can be priced unsustainably, especially in school libraries, many of which are desperately underfunded. Lower costs—perhaps approximating hardcover—for perpetual access may be the only option for making rich digital collections sustainable over time. Lacking that

option, libraries should advocate for multiple models from publishers: a premium-priced, perpetual, less-costly circulation and metered license that is not time-bound, perhaps with a subscription (and not pay-per-use) on backlists. For academic and school libraries, textbooks and institutional licenses allowing many students simultaneous access to titles are currently cost-prohibitive and would need to be made affordable. While better than a decade ago, access to titles remains troublesome, with important titles (like some past Pulitzer winners) unavailable. Wealthy companies publishing exclusive content that is not licensed to libraries compound the problem.

"Other formats, such as streaming video and music, are even more vexing, especially for academic and school libraries. Institutional licenses are often either unavailable or so cost-prohibitive as to make student access impossible. Increasing amounts of film and television content, developed for streaming to individual subscribers, are not available to libraries in any format as disc release becomes rarer.

"Publishers are not, however, the only entity inhibiting efficient content access. Publishers note that many library content provider platforms could not offer multiple license models simultaneously even if the models were offered. Library digital content providers need to invest to make their platforms more robust and enhance accessibility features.

"Libraries should remain steadfast in doing what benefits their patrons. An increasing preference for digital content will continue even after stay-at-home, shelter-in-place, and physical distancing restrictions are lifted. If we cannot find ways to make our digital collections robust and lasting, including a return to perpetual access in some form as an option, libraries will never be able to meet an ever-increasing demand and provide equity to the communities we serve." ●

an online gallery highlighting Newbery history and a special issue of *Children and Libraries*.

The celebration will culminate in special events devoted to the Newbery's milestone anniversary at Annual next year. Follow #Newbery100 on social media. Exclusive Newbery merchandise is now available at the ALA Graphics Gift Shop.

New ALA Member Benefits

On April 13 ALA's Member Relations and Services Office announced new member benefits designed to boost professional development. They consist of two benefits each for organizational members and personal members.

For organizational members, ALA unveiled ALA Essentials, a series of training courses that can be shared with an

entire staff. It focuses on some of the key pillars of librarianship, such as creating a welcoming environment, customer service, intellectual freedom, and equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Organizational members will also receive a 15% discount on the Cataloging with RDA Toolkit, a subscription-based online platform that allows catalogers to access RDA's data elements, guidelines,

and instructions for creating metadata. It is currently in use in more than 60 countries across six continents. This offer is valid through the end of August.

For personal student members and those seeking their next career opportunity, the Salary Survey Database (ala-apa.org/salary-survey) is now available. The ALA-APA Salary Survey summarizes library workers' salaries across six position categories and includes current and historical data from both librarian and non-MLS workers in public and academic libraries.

In addition, personal members will have continued access to two four-week e-learning courses on timely topics: "Fighting Fake News with Information Literacy" and "Mindfulness for Librarians: Handling Stress and Thriving Under Pressure."

Learn more about member benefits at ala.org/membership/mvp. [AL](#)

New Fund to Help Members Mitigate Financial Insecurity

ALA announced in an April 6 statement the launch of a new fund intended to help library workers facing financial challenges. Through the ReMember Fund, established with initial funding from ALA, unemployed library workers can apply to receive sponsorship to cover ALA basic membership for one year.

"The ReMember Fund aims to ensure that ALA's library worker members can maintain relationships with each other, no matter their circumstances," said ALA President Julius C. Jefferson Jr. in the statement. "By staying current in their membership and connected to the field, library workers will remain tied to the library community and to valuable ALA resources."

Seed funding will sponsor at least 100 regular memberships beginning in May. Recipients will be limited to members who hold current regular, international, library support staff, or nonsalaried memberships and those whose memberships have lapsed within the last three years. Applicants must be furloughed or unemployed at the time of application and intend to continue working in the library field. Other members are encouraged to donate to the fund at bit.ly/AL-ReMember. ●

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TRENDS



Claudia Haines, youth services librarian at Homer (Alaska) Public Library, at KBBI-AM 890 in Homer.

Old-School Outreach

Libraries find new value in offline engagement amid COVID-19

BY Bill Furbee

Early last year when Americans were advised to stay home to prevent the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, libraries had to consider new ways to connect with the communities they serve. Most libraries already had an online presence pre-pandemic, and many offered virtual programming, providing a vital lifeline to the library for patrons sheltering in place. With such attention devoted to digital engagement, however, a new problem emerged: how to reach and support those who don't have access to Wi-Fi, the internet, or even a device that can connect online.

"The pandemic has highlighted the barriers to access that many people have regarding technology and reliable internet," says Kathleen Montgomery, outreach manager

at Charleston County (Ga.) Public Library (CCPL). "It's our mission to address these inequities."

To do so, libraries across the US have implemented creative concepts and partnerships that embrace analog technologies and platforms.

Outreach over the airwaves

Partnerships with radio and television outlets have helped some libraries reach their communities. Houston Public Library (HPL) connected with local station KHOU-TV Channel 11 in June 2020 to launch a summer educational program for children called HPL Liftoff to Learning, a series of five-minute-long, library-themed episodes that included storytimes, game suggestions, educational crafts, and family activities.

"Liftoff to Learning serves as a model approach for partnerships with libraries, one that can be replicated in other communities across the country," says HPL Deputy Director Nicole H. Robinson.

The partnership has certainly elevated the library's profile: Robinson reports an audience of more than 24 million television viewers over the course of the program's 12-week run, and that number jumps to 89 million when social media is factored in. That figure is 61 times the number of registered card users the library has, according to Robinson.

Up north, Homer (Alaska) Public Library has found a similar solution. In collaboration with KBBI-AM 890, the library presents an hourlong radio storytime every Thursday. It has presented an opportunity to both support early literacy and keep families connected, says Youth Services Librarian Claudia Haines, adding that the "combination of old and new technology" allows the library to reach families who weren't able to visit the library pre-pandemic. That's especially important in communities like hers, where geographical challenges such as difficult terrain and limited roads already kept many from accessing the library before the pandemic.

Stories by phone

Back at CCPL, Montgomery and other staffers are connecting with patrons through the library's Dial-a-Story program, which was implemented in September 2020

to share short stories, poems, and book excerpts for kids and adults by phone. “Listening to a story helps to engage everyone in literacy,” Montgomery says. “Even if it’s passive listening, it engages your brain and has great benefits in your reading and vocabulary.”

A phone-based storytime program is easy to implement and maintain, says Montgomery. CCPL staff members call in to the library each Monday and record new stories on a voicemail system, which can be accessed from a number listed on the library’s website, social media channels, and fliers posted in CCPL branches. The voicemail system also allows listeners to leave feedback for readers or suggestions for future storytimes.

Storytime over the phone isn’t a new concept—the program is in use in libraries across the US—but it has proved to be a success during its short life so far at CCPL. “Since its inception, we’ve had almost 1,000 calls to our Dial-a-Story line,” Montgomery reports. “It’s here to stay.”

Pocket-sized support

When advocacy groups and social service organizations in Kansas City, Missouri, were no longer able to use the library for in-person outreach during the pandemic, Kansas City Public Library’s (KCPL) role in supporting the community’s most vulnerable also had to be reimaged.

Enter the Community Street Sheet—a printed reference guide listing community services for people experiencing homelessness, such as shelters, meal providers, and medical assistance. The handout is updated weekly and distributed by more than 200

organizations, including social service providers, community agencies, and police.

During the pandemic, KCPL’s Street Sheet has included information on how to keep healthy, where to find medical attention if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, and the locations of restrooms and hand-washing facilities. Street sheets are in use in other cities across the US as well.

“We wanted to make sure we could still provide information to those on the street,” says KCPL Outreach Community Engagement Specialist Kelly J. Berry.

KCPL started its Street Sheet in collaboration with the Kansas City Coalition to End Homelessness and other social service agencies, and the project was selected for the Urban Libraries Council’s Top Innovator award in its inaugural year.

“For our population experiencing homelessness to be recognized as patrons, to see a resource created for them, and for it to be recognized as such a valuable resource, that was really something,” Berry says. “We’re proud to be part of it.”

While it’s still unclear when in-person library services across the country will fully return, one thing is clear: nondigital technologies and old-school methods are proving their worth under remarkable circumstances. And more important may be the lessons learned in creating this content.

“It’s a good thing for kids to see adults overcoming hurdles,” Haines says. “And that’s what we’ve all been doing all year.” **AL**

BILL FURBEE is a writer living in Newport, Kentucky.

BY THE NUMBERS



19

Date in June when Juneteenth, the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the US, is observed. The holiday is also sometimes called Freedom Day or Emancipation Day.

A band celebrates Juneteenth in Austin, Texas, in 1900.

250,000

Number of enslaved Black people in Texas who gained their freedom in 1865 with US General Gordon Granger’s delivery of *General Order No. 3*. The first Juneteenth celebration was held the following year.

30

Number of writers, artists, and publishing professionals—including Mikki Kendall, Jason Reynolds, and Angie Thomas—who participated in the inaugural (and virtual) Juneteenth Book Fest last year. Author L. L. McKinney and book publicist Saraciea Fennell started the festival with the goals of sharing the breadth of Black American literature and honoring the legacy of Black American storytelling.

2,000

Number of pages of Ralph Ellison’s writing that were condensed to create his 368-page posthumous novel *Juneteenth* (1999). Ellison’s literary executor John Callahan took on the arduous job of assembling scenes and characters that had been developed over the course of 40 years. ●





Prior to the pandemic, Amy DelPo (center), administrator of older adult services at Denver Public Library, led in-person programs for seniors.

Aging Masterfully

Libraries support older adults with senior-specific wellness programming

BY Joy
Choquette

More than one in five people in the United States—or 73 million—is a baby boomer, according to the Census Bureau. By 2030, all boomers—those born between 1946 and 1964—will be at least 65 years old, joining a growing pool of senior library patrons with shifting needs.

Before the coronavirus pandemic, Liberty Lake (Wash.) Municipal Library (LLML) offered many programs and services for older adults, including a book club, board game events, take-home watercolor art kits, and a “right-sizing” class geared toward helping them transition to smaller homes. The library’s programs and clubs gave “older adults and seniors a place to socialize” where they may not have had opportunities otherwise, says LLML Adult and Teen Services Librarian Joanne Percy. LLML would partner with local residential senior care

facilities to offer activities onsite as well as at the library.

When COVID-19 hit, Percy says the library sought new ideas for virtual engagement, especially knowing that the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has linked social isolation—further exacerbated by the pandemic—with serious health conditions, such as a higher risk for dementia.

“In the beginning we were looking at ways to reach and engage our seniors and general community that did not require physical items,” Percy says. As restrictions eased, LLML began providing supplies, assembling them days in advance, and sealing them, when possible, for safety.

During the pandemic, LLML also partnered with the National Council on Aging (NCOA) to offer senior care kits that can be checked out by an individual or by groups

or organizations. The kits offer education and resources on health and wellness, mindfulness, financial health, and creative outlets like writing and journaling.

While libraries are adept at tailoring services to different groups under 18—such as infants, toddlers, early readers, and teens—adult services and senior services are often lumped together, says Amy DelPo, administrator of older adult services at Denver Public Library (DPL).

“We have classes on parenting and job search and all sorts of things, but there are not a lot of places to get classes on how to get older and how to do it well,” she says. “Let’s say you’re 60 and you’re starting to think about retirement and your children have left home and maybe you’re a caregiver for sick parents ... those needs are as profound as the needs of a parent raising a young child.”

In 2020 and 2021, DPL offered a two-week virtual preview of NCOA’s Aging Mastery program, a 10-session course designed to familiarize participants with key wellness areas for older adults, such as finances, relationships, and health considerations. The library later offered the full course, which was free to both the participants and DPL, says DelPo, who worked with a local NCOA representative. “There are a lot of organizations that want to serve older adults and they’re not aware the library is a fantastic place to do it,” she says, noting the library’s ample space and community access.

Many older adults feel out of place in society because of their

inexperience with technology, observes Johnson Flanagan, public services manager at Danville (Ill.) Public Library (DPL), which has led programs related to aging since 2015. He says some of their jobs have become obsolete over time, which “can cause many seniors to feel frustrated and lost once they retire.”

Aging-well programs are essential in libraries, Flanagan says: “Our seniors need to find a place where they can belong, exist, and have value that is independent from their career and family lives.” He says that prior to the pandemic, the three most successful types of senior programs at DPL were exercise classes, one-time volunteer events, and card games like rummy. “I know [rummy] was popular because I still get a phone call at

least every other week [asking] when it is going to start again, even though [in-person programming] has not happened for almost a year,” Flanagan says.

DPL has based many of its older adult programs on ones originally developed for teens. “Thinking about programming from a teen perspective,” Flanagan says, “seems to help keep seniors young at heart and age better.” For example, the library, when it was open, dedicated a senior hangout area where older adults could go to socialize, relax, and talk with others their age. It also set up a Wii Sports bowling league, an interactive video-game sports competition.

Flanagan says aging-well programs are “a necessary aspect of the library because of the vast demographics” served. “The library

“Our seniors need to find a place where they can belong, exist, and have value that is independent from their career and family lives.”

JOHNSON FLANAGAN, public services manager at Danville (Ill.) Public Library

functions as this beautiful space where the programming can be free and everyone who attends is on the same level, regardless of their background.” **AL**

JOY CHOQUETTE is a writer and business strategist in Vermont. Additional reporting by *American Libraries* Associate Editor Sallyann Price.

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Henderson County (Ky.) Public Library's StoryWalk participants read a page from picture book *Jonathan and His Mommy* last summer.

Skip to the Next Page

StoryWalks bring young readers outdoors during the pandemic

BY Elizabeth Bellizzi

Last year, Danielle Anguish, children's services manager at Henderson County (Ky.) Public Library (HCPL), was tasked with coordinating a summer literacy activity for kids from seven elementary schools and four public housing developments. A daunting assignment in normal times, the program also had to adhere to the county's COVID-19 lockdown protocols. Her solution? StoryWalks.

"It's important that [kids] move, it's important that they read, it's important that they get outside," says Anguish, "especially in a pandemic when nothing is the norm anymore."

StoryWalks—outdoor paths that feature children's book pages posted at a young reader's height and take families on self-guided storytimes—are gaining traction in communities across the US and Canada. Noah Lenstra, founder and director of the Let's Move in

Libraries initiative, estimates that 825 online news articles on StoryWalk installations at public libraries were published between March 15 and December 18, 2020—a more than 400% increase from the same period a year before.

Anne Ferguson, the former Vermont Department of Health specialist who established the StoryWalk program 14 years ago in partnership with Kellogg-Hubbard Library in Montpelier, is not surprised by the surge.

"There's gobs of research about the importance of getting out in nature, in terms of our own mental, physical, and spiritual health," says Ferguson. During the pandemic, StoryWalks have allowed families to escape technology and just be playful, she says.

Creating a path

Ruth Fenchak, teen and outreach services leader at Sierra Vista (Ariz.)

Public Library (SVPL), first learned about StoryWalks from a 2019 webinar hosted by the American Library Association's Public Programs Office. It wasn't until she was looking for a way to reach patrons amid pandemic protocols that she decided to start one at her own library.

"I didn't want to leave the younger children behind," says Fenchak, whose library was offering grab-and-go kits at the time but hadn't developed much in the way of literacy activities for early readers.

For SVPL's debut StoryWalk last September, Fenchak chose the picture book *Bella's Fall Coat* by Lynn Plourde. She laminated the book pages, stuck them to plastic yard signs with heavy-duty Velcro, and inserted the signs into metal frames, like ones used by real estate companies to advertise houses. Frames were installed along the path of the library's botanical garden. Fenchak continues to post new books on the path about every two months.

At the bottom of each StoryWalk frame, Fenchak includes discussion questions—for example, *What are three things you see in this picture?*—to provide caregivers with prompts to engage children in the material.

Engaging readers was HCPL's goal as well. Anguish had previous experience starting a StoryWalk in a city park and thought the program's portability would be ideal for reaching the county's students. "Since we couldn't have gatherings or in-house programming, this was a way to still bring summer reading to the community," she says.

She selected three books (*Jonathan and His Mommy* by Irene Smalls, *The Very Impatient*

Caterpillar by Ross Burach, and *I Went Walking* by Sue Williams) for her StoryWalks. Book pages were affixed to yard signs and rotated every few weeks among seven elementary schools and four public housing developments. HCPL used a hashtag to build awareness with caregivers on social media, and the schools held drive-thru literacy nights with food and school supply giveaways, where they encouraged families to try the StoryWalks. At the housing developments, the Housing Authority of Henderson distributed snacks to children who showed up for the StoryWalk unveilings.

Watauga County (N.C.) Public Library (WCPL) in Boone, a branch of Appalachian Regional Library, had done StoryWalks in previous years but last summer wanted to bring its presence to the center of town. The library selected *A Isn't for Fox* by Wendy Ulmer, an alphabet book, to help early readers with letter recognition. The book's 26 letters were posted in the windows and doors of businesses in downtown Boone. Readers who shared photos of themselves on social media—or emailed them to the library—posing near a storefront's letter received a free children's book.

"For this particular StoryWalk, we wanted it to function more like a scavenger hunt," says Lisa Flanigan, WCPL youth services librarian. "Families could enjoy [it] even if they did not participate in the entire StoryWalk," she says. "We heard from [one] participant that their child made the connection that the page for letter F was on the door of the fire station."

Partnership and payoff

While the StoryWalks at SVPL and HCPL were mainly funded through their libraries' programming budgets, partners still played a role in their projects. The Kiwanis

Club of Sierra Vista–San Pedro, for instance, covered costs for an outer space-themed StoryWalk at SVPL in November to coincide with a local museum's planetary exhibit.

Partnering with the housing authority on a StoryWalk made sense for HCPL; the county's housing developments have a high concentration of early readers, and the library works with the organization's after-school and technology programs to offer homework help, literacy activities, and STEM projects.

"This was a way to still bring summer reading to the community."

DANIELLE ANGUISH, children's services manager at Henderson County (Ky.) Public Library

Though WCPL's StoryWalks have been partially funded by the Library Services and Technology Act's Grants to States program—a 2014 systemwide award of \$41,000 has helped finance at least 36 installations—the library continues to rely on collaborators. The Downtown Boone Development Association, for example, provided card stock and laminating supplies for WCPL's alphabet hunt.

StoryWalks can be attractive for their low costs and reusable materials, but library workers say they especially value the joy these walks have provided during turbulent times. Fenchak witnesses this excitement in real time, from a floor-to-ceiling window that faces SVPL's garden. "It is wonderful to see children enjoying something," she says, "even if they can't be in the building." **AL**

ELIZABETH BELLIZZI is a freelance journalist in Arizona.

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Embracing Natural Hair

Louisiana library group supports movement to reconnect with roots

Nicollette M. Davis got her first hair relaxer when she was 5 years old. In her early 20s, she decided to cut off her chemically treated hair and return it to its natural state—a journey, she says, with many emotional and physical ups and downs.

The movement to embrace natural hair has been growing in recent years, with advocacy organizations and lawmakers pushing for the passage of the CROWN (Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair) Act, which prohibits discrimination in employment and educational opportunities based on hair texture or the hairstyles worn by some communities of color, including braids, Afros, and dreadlocks. As of early May, nine states have passed the legislation into law: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Virginia, and Washington.

To help support others going through similar transitions, Davis started the Natural Hair Support Group in 2016 at East Baton Rouge Parish (La.) Library's Greenwell Springs Road Regional branch. Before the pandemic, these monthly meetings drew dozens of women, men, and children from the area to share tips and concerns about going natural.

BY Nicollette M. Davis

In a 1972 interview with *The Boston Globe*, award-winning actor Cicely Tyson discussed the backlash she received for wearing her natural hair on screen. She said some of the criticism came from other Black women because they didn't perceive natural hair as beautiful based on Eurocentric beauty standards.

Since then—and especially over the past 10 years—the popularity of natural hair in the Black community has led many to give up chemically straightening their

hair. Many Black women—myself included—had never felt our hair in its natural state. In 2013, after seeing other Black women prominently rocking their natural hair, I decided to embrace mine.

I spent hours researching styles and products and watching YouTube videos. I grew out my hair for almost two years and cut off the chemically straightened portion in 2015. I thought I was well prepared to deal with this new and beautiful texture, but I wasn't. Week after week, hairstyles failed, and products didn't work.

Around the same time, I started a job as a library technician at East Baton Rouge Parish Library, where I currently work, and was tasked with creating monthly programming for adults. As I was leaving work one evening, it hit me. Based on blog posts and videos—and my own physical and emotional struggles—I knew there was a need for a supportive, in-person community for those interested in natural hair.

The very first meeting of the Natural Hair Support Group (NHSG), in April 2016, had almost 40 participants, creating the foundation for one of our library's most consistently attended programs. Today, the NHSG's email list contains nearly 200 people. While these numbers are wonderful, the mark of a successful program is impact.

One story I'll never forget: In early 2020, a teen and her father came to a meeting, and the teen shyly introduced herself, barely making eye contact with other attendees. Her father introduced himself and said, "I'm here today because my daughter doesn't like her hair, and she doesn't believe her hair's texture is just as beautiful as loose curls or coils." She appeared embarrassed but agreed with the comment. Her words and her father's deep concern moved other attendees of all ages to offer stories of their growing confidence in themselves and their hair. After

In November 2017, more than 120 people attended a poetry event hosted by the Natural Hair Support Group at East Baton Rouge Parish (La.) Library's Greenwell Springs Road Regional branch. The group was founded by Adult Services and Reference Librarian Nicollette M. Davis (holding program book).

the meeting, the teen visibly held her head higher. Witnessing a community lift someone during their formative years was one of the best moments of my career and life.

Because of the pandemic, meetings are now virtual. Zoom burnout is prevalent, so over the past year, we have had only a handful of formal get-togethers. Despite those barriers, many attendees are now friends and stay in touch outside the library. In 2021, the goal is to have quarterly meetings, at minimum, to help make the support group accessible to those with busy schedules.

After seeing other Black women rocking their natural hair, I decided to embrace mine.

To start a similar program at your library, you have to have someone on staff with a deep, personal passion for and understanding of natural hair. Invite and pay speakers and cosmetologists who are experts on natural hair. While it's important to share resources and information, the key is to build community. **AL**

NICOLLETTE M. DAVIS is adult services and reference librarian at East Baton Rouge Parish (La.) Library's Greenwell Springs Road Regional branch. For more information about the Natural Hair Support Group, contact her at ndavis@ebrpl.com.



A 14th-century Latin book of hours, part of Trinity College's medieval manuscripts collection

GLOBAL REACH

Virtual Trinity Library

IRELAND The Library of Trinity College Dublin, the largest library in Ireland, is undertaking a multiyear initiative to digitize its collections across nine representative categories—ranging from ancient history to children's literature—and make them accessible to a global audience. A centerpiece of Virtual Trinity Library will be the conservation and digitization of its medieval manuscripts. The initiative complements the Old Library Redevelopment Project, which addresses the building's physical renovation.—*IrishCentral*, Apr. 2.

INDIA In the Patuli township of South Kolkata, English teacher Kalidas Haldar, his wife, and a local grocer converted an old refrigerator into a lending library that holds up to 100 books at a time, with the goal of creating better reading habits in their community during the pandemic. Books are available in English and Bengali, and users can borrow one book and return it within a month. Between Haldar's own collection and donations from others, the library now has nearly 900 books stockpiled. A Facebook post about the project went viral, and Haldar is exploring options for creating similar libraries in other locations.—*Indian Express*, Apr. 3.

SPAIN The Ministry of Culture is investigating why the National Library took more than four years to report the theft of one of the most important works in its collection: *Sidereus Nuncius*, an astronomy treatise published by Galileo Galilei in 1610. The library's technical department discovered by chance, during a book preservation program in May 2014, that the original had been replaced by a copy. The theft was reported to police in September 2018. According to Director Ana Santos Aramburo, no one in the library told her that the work had been stolen—she only found out through an email from a British researcher. But Mar Hernández, who was head of the technical team at the time, refutes this version of events.—*El País*, Mar. 15.

SOUTH AFRICA Cape Town's mobile library service, which provided materials and programming to approximately 3,000 people in areas of the city with no permanent libraries, ended in April after 60 years. The buses stopped at nearly 30 sites around central Cape Town and its southern suburbs, but no new sites had been added in 21 years. Maintenance, security, and staff expenses were high, and the service had not been operating at all since March 2020 because of the pandemic. The city has built several new library branches in the area, including a 42 million rand (\$2.9 million) branch in Dunoon in 2019, and more are planned.—*GroundUp*, Jan. 29. ●



Alicia Serratos

Young activist sows seed libraries across the US

Gardening has become more popular during the COVID-19 pandemic, with seed companies seeing unprecedented demand and some popular seed varieties selling out. Seed libraries have been popping up across the US since the early 2000s, and one Girl Scout, Alicia Serratos, has helped start more than 100 such libraries in the past year. Serratos, 14, is an environmental activist and founder of Three Sisters Seed Box, a program that mails free seed library starter kits with instructions, organic vegetable seed packets, label sticks, and envelopes to return new seeds at the end of the season.

Serratos started her first seed library in 2014 at her elementary school in Mission Viejo, California, after learning about healthy eating, gardening, and sustainability. Through Three Sisters Seed Box, she has now helped place seed libraries in all 50 states and has filled requests from as far away as India. *American Libraries* talked with Serratos about her activism, environmental stewardship, and why libraries are a great place to share seeds.

BY Carrie Smith

Why did you start Three Sisters Seed Box? How has it grown? I originally started seed libraries in schools, but I was trying to come up with an idea for how to get them all over the country. I made the Three Sisters Seed Box so that communities could also get involved. I sent them on to each state, and people were able to set them up at home or in schools.

Some of your seed libraries have been set up at public libraries. What makes libraries good collaborators for this project? They're pretty much the same concept, and

when you have two things that are the same concept in the same environment, it makes it easier for people to realize how they work. A seed library is just like a regular library, but instead of checking out books, you're checking out seeds. People go in [to the regular library] and understand you can also get seeds and go home and plant them in your backyard.

Your projects are local, in that they get seeds into the ground, as well as national, in that you're sending seed libraries to every state. How

do you balance the big picture with small actions? Every small action I take motivates me to take more small actions. Then, when the big picture does come [into focus], I can see everything I did that made that big difference. When you look at the whole community, it's not just you making all those changes—you get to help others make a change, and all the changes a community can make together make a bigger impact on the world.

You've been an activist since you were very young. Have your ideas about environmental activism changed as you've gotten older?

I'm not just focusing on seeds and healthy eating now. Fast fashion has been one of my passions lately. People are sacrificing so much just so you can have a \$5 T-shirt versus a \$20 T-shirt. You don't know what you're doing to others by buying that piece of clothing. I'm working on Repurpose, my small business, where I take secondhand clothing and give it a new life by customizing it so we're not wasting as much clothing and damaging the planet.

What role have libraries played in your life? Libraries have not just educated me for school, they have also taught me that there are ways to be responsible with things. They've shown me that you can learn so much, not just from reading books but from planting a seed.

Do you have a favorite plant you like to grow in the garden? My favorite is passion fruit. When I was in elementary school, we had a passion fruit vine across one of our fences, and we got to watch it grow and produce fruit. There were always caterpillars on the vine. Passion fruit is my favorite food, so it was cool. **AL**



“Then her mom said to me, ‘We have one more thing,’ and then [Zoe] raised up her little jar and just melted my heart. It was just so, so sweet and it was so uplifting.... She said she’d been missing the library, and this is the money she’d found. She’d been walking around, looking down at the ground, and thinking about the library over the past year.”

LIZ STEIMLE, in “A 9-Year-Old Missed the Evanston Library So Much That She Collected Pennies For a Year—Then Finally Donated Them Last Week,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, Mar. 10.

“We stopped by the Multnomah County [Oreg.] Central Library, a stately brick structure downtown where [Cleary] did summer ‘practice work’ as a student librarian (and where the children’s section also bears her name). We ate doughnuts and pizza. We visited Grant Park, where the local artist Lee Hunt created a trio of bronze sculptures depicting three of Ms. Cleary’s cherished characters: Henry Huggins, his dog, Ribsy, and Ramona, posed, as if in motion.”

ANN MAH, in “Imagining the Timeless Childhood of Beverly Cleary’s Portland,” *The New York Times*, Apr. 6.

“THERE WERE THINGS THAT I WANTED GROWING UP, BUT BOOKS WERE NEVER ONE OF THEM; INSTEAD, THEY WERE EVERYWHERE, AND I WAS FREE TO READ THEM WHENEVER I CHOSE TO. BOOKS TAUGHT ME ABOUT RACE AND SEX AND HELPED ME REALIZE I WAS QUEER. READING WAS THE BIGGEST FREEDOM I HAD.”

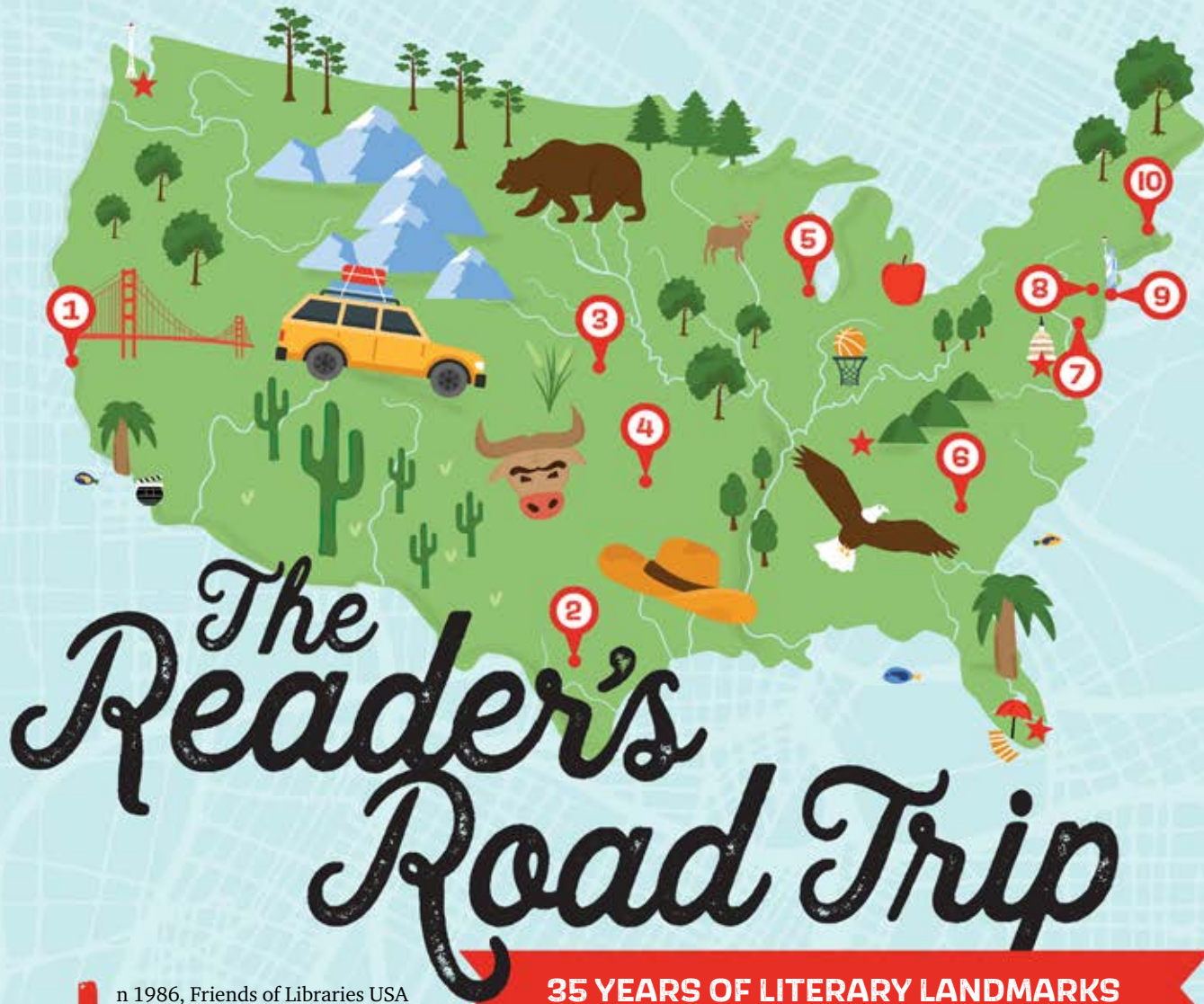
RACHEL CHARLENE LEWIS, in “Turns Out It’s Pretty Good: Reading First Thing in the Morning,” *The Cut*, Apr. 8.

“It doesn’t cost money to take a few volumes out of the classroom. But to provide schools with real libraries, with professional librarians and adequate budgets—let alone school nurses, counselors, art teachers, music teachers, and all the other things children need—will require billions we collectively decided some decades ago to spend on tax cuts for the rich, unnecessary war planes, and ourselves.”

KATHA POLLITT, in “Dr. Seuss’s Mistakes Are the Least of Our Troubles,” *The Nation*, Apr. 1.

“The more absurd—and invulnerable—the target of right-wing culture war hysteria, the better for all involved. The cancellation of Dr. Seuss is almost the perfect example of this phenomenon, because its target cannot even be said to exist: The villain of the story was a sort of cultural atmosphere that prompted a dead author’s estate to make a publishing decision.”

ALEX PAREENE, in “The Case for More Canceling,” *The New Republic*, Apr. 9.



In 1986, Friends of Libraries USA President Frederick G. Ruffner Jr. had the ambitious idea to start the Literary Landmarks Association, an organization

that would encourage the development of historic literary sites across the US. Thirty-five years later, his vision has been realized: 187 Literary Landmarks spanning California to Maine, from childhood homes to writerly salons, public parks to opulent hotels, stately courthouses to seedy watering holes.

“A Literary Landmark is a source of pride for the community,” says Beth Nawalinski, director of United for Libraries, the American Library Association division that now oversees the program. Often the collaboration of Friends groups, community leaders, and literary organizations, these landmarks (bit.ly/AL-LLs) “demonstrate the power and synergy of those who

support the library and literacy at a local level,” she says.

Rocco Staino, chair of the Literary Landmarks Task Force, United for Libraries board member, and director of the Empire State Center for the Book, has personally been involved with 27 Literary Landmark dedication ceremonies (in which plaques are typically unveiled). He believes these

sites serve a dual purpose—to celebrate a community’s literary heritage while bringing the people of that place together for a common purpose. “I have attended both small and large dedications, and both have a spirit of excitement,” he says.

For those hitting the open road this summer, *American Libraries* has curated glimpses of some of these inspiring attractions—many of them outdoors and conducive to social distancing. Read on, mask up, and follow our route to literary greatness. **AL**

Interested in designating a Literary Landmark? Friends groups, trustees, and libraries can submit an online application at bit.ly/AL-LLapp.

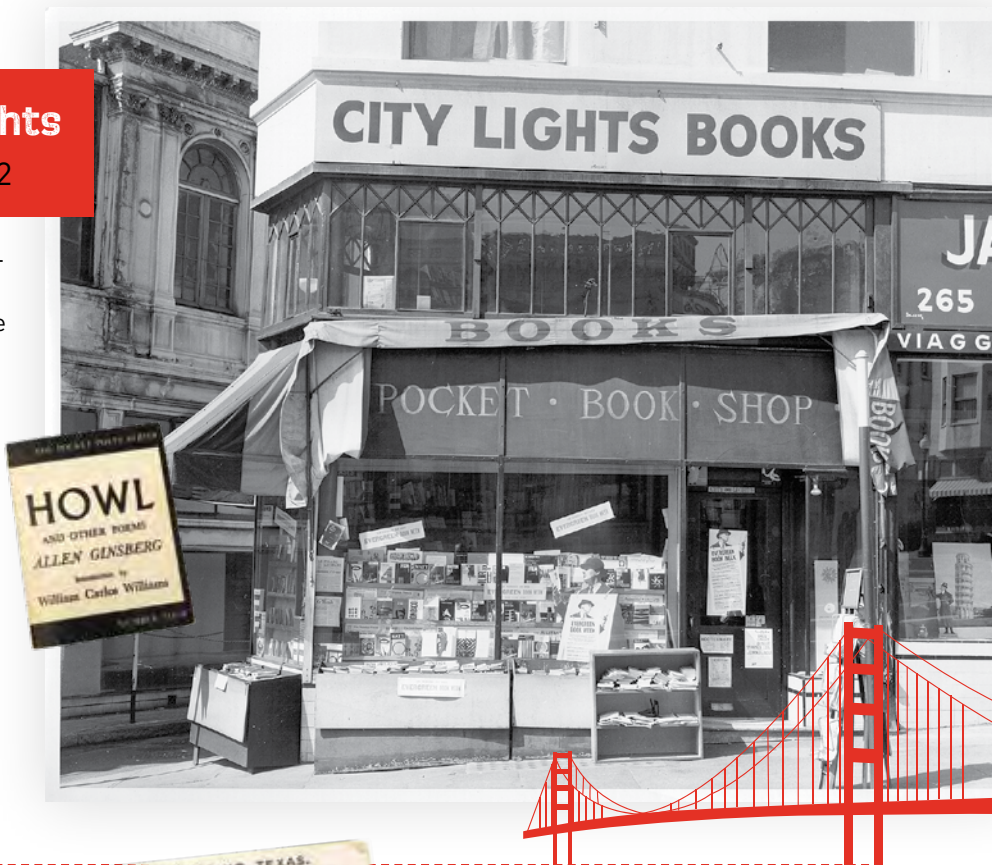
TERRA DANKOWSKI is managing editor of *American Libraries*.

1

Beat Poets of City Lights

San Francisco | Dedicated 1992

City Lights was founded in 1953 as an all-paperback bookstore—and later publishing house—by poet and activist Lawrence Ferlinghetti (1919–2021) and sociology professor Peter D. Martin (1923–1988). The shop is credited with democratizing literature and serving as a meeting place for writers and readers of the Beat Movement. After the City Lights imprint published Allen Ginsberg's *Howl and Other Poems* (1956), Ferlinghetti and store manager Shigeyoshi Murao became defendants in a landmark obscenity trial that set First Amendment precedent for controversial work. **Bay Area Birthday Party:** Since 2019, the city of San Francisco has recognized March 24 as Lawrence Ferlinghetti Day.



Thirty-six states—and Washington, D.C.—have at least one Literary Landmark.

★ Seattle's **Hugo House**, the first Literary Landmark in the state of Washington, honors poet and English professor Richard Hugo (1923–1982) and serves as a community center for emerging and established writers.

2

Menger Hotel

San Antonio | Dedicated 2000

Established in 1859 only a few steps away from the Alamo, the luxurious Menger Hotel is the oldest continually operating hotel west of the Mississippi River. It has hosted notable guests such as writers O. Henry, Frances Parkinson Keyes, and Oscar Wilde. Adding to the lodging's lore, President Theodore Roosevelt enlisted his volunteer cavalry Rough Riders in the hotel bar. **But the Lobby Doesn't Look a Day over 112:** The building's marble floor and Renaissance-style details were added in 1909 by British architect Alfred Giles, who greatly influenced San Antonio architecture.



O. Henry



Frances Parkinson Keyes



Oscar Wilde

3

Willa Cather Memorial Prairie

Red Cloud, Nebraska | Dedicated 1999



These 600 acres of pristine prairie along US Route 281 evoke the settings of Willa Cather's (1873–1947) pastoral and feminist novels, including *O Pioneers!* (1913)

and *My Ántonia* (1918). Red Cloud is home to the author's foundation and childhood house, where she lived before attending University of Nebraska in Lincoln and working as a journalist and teacher in Pittsburgh and New York City.

What Another Literary Landmark Honoree Said about Her: "Miss

Cather is Nebraska's foremost citizen," once wrote Nobel

Prize-winning author Sin-

clair Lewis (whose boyhood home in Sauk Centre, Minnesota, was dedicated in 2013).



4

Robert J. Conley at Cushing Public Library

Cushing, Oklahoma | Dedicated 2020

A member of the Cherokee Nation, professor and scholar of Native American studies, and author of more than 80 books, Robert J. Conley (1940–2014) is honored with a Literary Landmark in the town where he was born. He is highly regarded for his contributions to Western and Indigenous writing, including novels *The Witch of Goingsnake* (1988) and *Mountain Windsong* (1992), often taught in literature classes. **How to Be Prolific:** Asked by the *Appalachian Journal* in 2001 if he ever got writers' block, Conley replied, "No, I don't believe in it. That would be like having a job in a hardware store and waking up one morning and saying 'I have hardware store block and can't go to work.'"

Playwright Tennessee Williams has the most Literary Landmarks of any honoree—seven designations scattered across Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and New York.



The Robert Penn Warren Center

collection at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, honoring the Pulitzer Prize winner (for *All the King's Men* in 1946) and former US poet laureate (1986), was a gift of Warren's family. Included is his personal library, poetry and prose volumes, office furnishings, and awards.



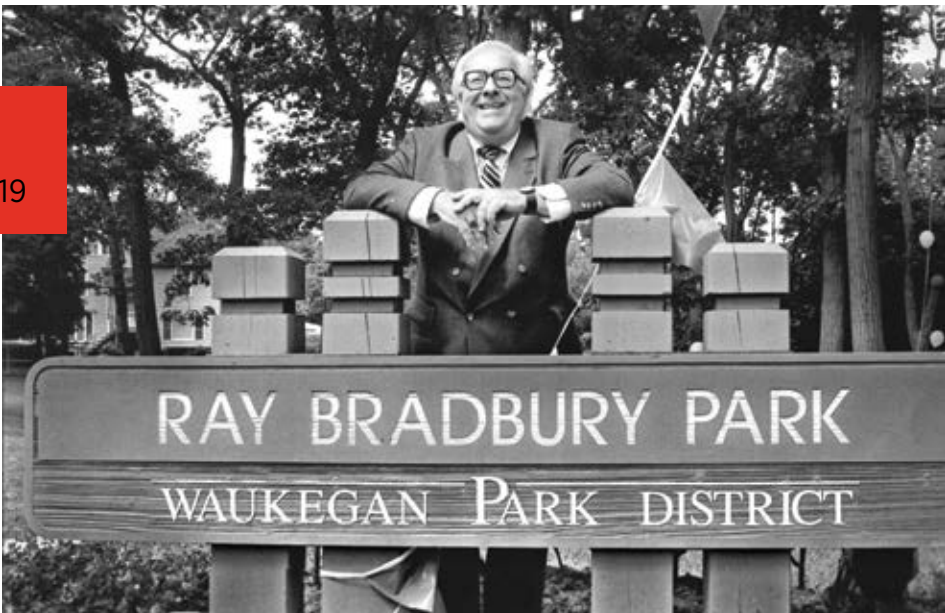
5

Ray Bradbury Park

Waukegan, Illinois | Dedicated 2019

This 1.6-acre plot left an indelible impression on Ray Bradbury (1920–2012), who featured the park—renamed for him in 1990—in *Dandelion Wine* (1957), *Something Wicked This Way Comes* (1962), and *Farewell Summer* (2006). When he wasn't climbing trees in the park's ravine, the novelist, essayist, and screenwriter of fantasy, science fiction, mystery, and horror spent his early years at the library. "I got a better education [there] than most people get from universities," he told Public Libraries Online in 2002.

Dramatic Reveal: The dedication ceremony for this Literary Landmark started at 4:51 p.m., in honor of *Fahrenheit 451*, Bradbury's famous dystopic work confronting censorship.



The very first Literary Landmark, dedicated in 1987, was Slip F18 of the **Bahia Mar Marina** in Fort Lauderdale, Florida—where salvage consultant Travis McGee, a series character of mystery novelist John D. MacDonald, docked his houseboat *Busted Flush*.



6

Benjamin E. Mays Historical Preservation Site

Greenwood, South Carolina | Dedicated 2018

In 35 years, there have been 188 Literary Landmark dedications, along with one rescindment—Beauvoir, the Biloxi, Mississippi, home and library of Confederate leader Jefferson Davis.

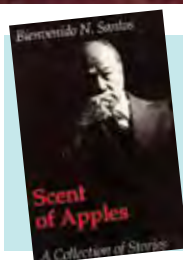
This site features the birth home of Benjamin E. Mays, who was a son of formerly enslaved parents and overcame poverty to become a civil rights leader, Baptist minister, educator, and author. Mays is perhaps best known for serving for three decades as president of Morehouse College, initiating the desegregation of Atlanta Public Schools, and mentoring Black activists, including former students Martin Luther King Jr. and Southern Poverty Law Center cofounder Julian Bond. **A Voice in the Struggle:** Mays delivered the closing benediction at the 1963 March on Washington as well as the eulogy for King, who once called Mays his "spiritual mentor and intellectual father."



Edgar Allan Poe House

Philadelphia | Dedicated 1988

Of the four Philadelphia homes gothic author and poet Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849) lived in, this red-brick house at the corner of 7th and Spring Garden streets is the only one left standing today. It's here that Poe penned his eeriest stories, including "The Tell-Tale Heart" and "The Black Cat" (both 1843). Guests to the house, maintained by the National Park Service, can tour its stark, unfurnished rooms; it's likely that Poe sold the furniture to finance his family's move to New York City. **If You're Heading South:** Poe devotees should also stop by the Edgar Allan Poe House and Museum in Baltimore, designated a Literary Landmark in 2020.



Manila House, a gathering place for Washington, D.C.'s Filipino community from the 1930s to 1950s, was mentioned in *Scent of Apples* (1979), a short story collection by pioneering Asian-American writer Bienvenido Santos (1911–1996).



8

William Carlos Williams Home

Rutherford, New Jersey | Dedicated 2005

Though William Carlos Williams (1883–1963) was known as an experimental poet, novelist, essayist, and playwright, this home on 9 Ridge Road where he lived for 50 years is evidence of his—as the Poetry Foundation observes—"remarkably conventional life." Williams was born and died in Rutherford, and for 40 years he served its residents as a practicing physician. A leading figure of the Imagist and Modernist poetry movements, Williams was inspired by New Jersey's working class and felt contemporaries Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot were too enamored of European traditions. **Green Thumb:** Williams was a passionate gardener who tended flowers on the property—and wrote about daisies, primroses, Queen Anne's lace, and tulips in his poems.



Photos: Gary Tarleton/National Park Service (Poe house); Steve Fretz (Williams house)

9

Louise Fitzhugh at Carl Schurz Park

New York City | Dedicated 2014



Nestled between the mayor's mansion and East River on Manhattan's Upper East Side, this park is regarded by NYC Parks as "one of the city's best concealed secrets"—though children's book author Louise Fitzhugh (1928–1974) surely knew about it. In *Harriet the Spy* (1964), Fitzhugh's titular protagonist—a brash, 11-year-old aspiring writer who resists gender norms and relishes tomato sandwiches—takes to the park to play tag with classmates, follow Ole Golly on her date with Mr. Waldenstein, and scribble in her notebook.

Adults, Watch What You Say: Though *Harriet the Spy* was controversial when it was published, young readers devoured it—and, according to NPR, started clubs in the 1960s and 1970s to spy on their parents.

New York has the most Literary Landmarks of any state (33), followed by Florida (21).



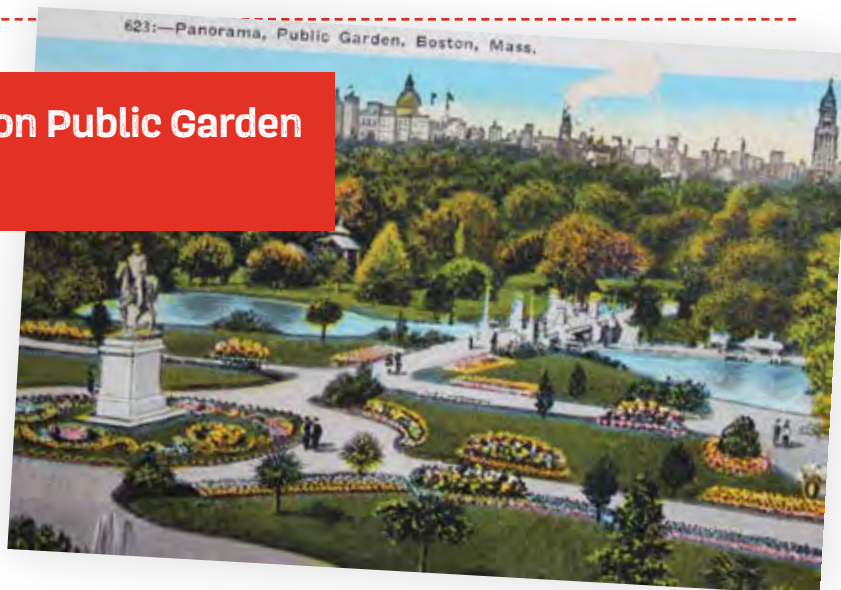
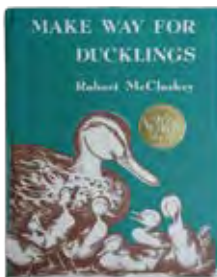
10

Robert McCloskey at Boston Public Garden

Boston | Dedicated 2005

With its pond, recognizable Swan Boats, and bustling foot traffic, Boston Public Garden was the setting for Robert McCloskey's (1914–2003) picture book *Make Way for Ducklings*, winner of the 1942 Caldecott Medal. Visitors to this urban oasis—the first botanical garden in the US—can view an earlier duck dedication: bronze sculptures by artist Nancy Schön of the book's Mrs. Mallard leading

her brood down a cobblestone path, gifted to the city in 1987 by Friends of the Boston Public Garden. **Illustrious Illustrator:** McCloskey was the first person to earn a second Caldecott Medal (in 1958, for *Time of Wonder*, a story set on Maine's Penobscot Bay).



Sherwin-Williams became a Literary Landmark partner of the Spalding Gray House in Sag Harbor, New York, because the paint company named a color after the writer.



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Chronicling the Black Experience

Librarians and archivists collect and tell their own stories

by Mark Lawton

In September 2018, Rodney E. Freeman Jr. was at home lying on his couch when he heard about Botham Jean. Jean, a 26-year-old Black accountant in Dallas, had been shot and killed by his neighbor, a white Dallas police officer, when she entered his apartment thinking it was her own. The incident compelled Freeman to consider how Black men are perceived in the US.



"I felt there weren't enough stories portraying positive Black men," says Freeman, director of Riviera Beach (Fla.) Public Library. "If people, mainly white people, saw us in a more holistic light, as fathers, husbands, and leaders, they wouldn't automatically assume we are criminals, monsters, and demons."

To fill this need, Freeman created the Black Male Archives, an online repository to "capture, curate, and promote positive stories about Black men around the world while inspiring and informing younger generations," according to its website.

Freeman is one of a number of archivists who have chosen to create their own archives around the Black experience in America rather than participate in an institutional archive, such as those maintained by universities or other large library systems. These archivists cite a variety of concerns about institutional archives, including gaps in what information is included, inconsistency in documenting Black history and events, and not enough community-level content.

Archiving without barriers

Prior to joining Riviera Beach Public Library, Freeman managed the Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature at Woodson Regional Library in Chicago. He also helped assemble a digital archive for the African American History Committee at Indianapolis Public Library and archived and digitized the history of Bethel A.M.E. Church in Indianapolis. This experience prepared Freeman to create his own archive to fill what he says is a glaring void.

"I didn't find anything in archives that focuses solely on the Black male experience," Freeman says. The Black Male Archives responds to this gap by collecting articles, photos, podcasts, and YouTube videos specifically detailing the experiences of Black men in the US.

"We're more of an aggregator," Freeman says. "There is some content we create, but for the most part we try to amplify what's already out there." A sampling includes photos of Black fraternities in America, a map of Negro National League (1920–1931) baseball teams, and information about Black entrepreneurs and Black male writers.

This same desire to curate stories not being told elsewhere is what compelled six Black archivists in Chicago to create the Blackivists in 2018. The group provides professional expertise on cultural heritage archiving and preservation practices as they apply to historically under-documented communities. The group specializes in collection development and care, oral history development, establishing archival collections, community engagement, and digital collections sustainability, with an eye toward



The Black Male Archives has an interactive map of Negro National League baseball teams (above) as well as historical photos of Black men participating in civic life (left) on its website.

the Black experience. They also pay attention to other marginalized communities, including "LGBTQ people [and] folks who are sex workers or criminalized for the work they do," says Erin Glasco, an independent archivist who works with the Blackivists. "We have a pretty broad and radical scope."

The Blackivists have worked on projects that include the Chicago Torture Justice Memorials Oral History website, the Oscar Brown Jr. Archive Project, and the Chicago Black Social Change Culture Map (with Afro-diasporic feminist collaborative Honey Pot Performance). They also archived the history of the Black Panther Party of Illinois, interviewing former party members. "For a long time that history was very tainted and inaccurate," says Raquel Flores-Clemons, a Blackivists founder and director of university archives, records management, and special collections at Chicago State University. "What people knew about the Black Panther Party was a negative history gotten from the police and FBI."

The Blackivists aim to document marginalized histories but keep those histories in the community. "There are barriers between established institutions and the community," says Flores-Clemons. A university, for example, might push people out of their neighborhood to expand—and then want to preserve the history of the people it pushed out, Glasco says.

And while archiving always involves selection, Flores-Clemons suggests the selection criteria may sometimes serve the institution more than they serve a fair telling of the history.

"There can be a colonialist mentality in creating archives," she says. "Items might get into institutions and never see the light of day. Or the collection exists but the unsavory part of the story never gets told. There are collections in many institutions in the Chicago area about



Photos: Black Male Archives

Using the 1619 Project

In August 1619, a ship carrying 20–30 enslaved Africans landed on the coast of the English colony of Virginia, marking the beginning of the Black experience in America. *The New York Times Magazine's* 1619 Project “aims to reframe the country’s history by



Nikole
Hannah-Jones

placing the consequences of slavery and the contributions of Black Americans at the very center of the United States’ national narrative.”

Conceived by journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones, this year’s honorary chair of the American Library Association’s Preservation Week

(April 25–May 1), the 1619 Project uses research, reporting, and primary sources to relay the history of Black America via a podcast and an interactive web presence.

Material from the 1619 Project is being used as a teaching tool in schools across the US. This includes Brooklyn (N.Y.) College, where the Pulitzer Prize-winning introductory essay by Hannah-Jones is being read and discussed as part of the school’s Common Reader project, which aims to build community and foster dialogue.

Brooklyn College Library supported the annual Common Reader project by creating a LibGuide with essays about the 1619 Project, arguments for and against it (some historians have alleged it falsifies history), and a list of online events and ways to register for them.

Brooklyn College Reference Librarian and Professor Helen Georgas has been on the organizing committee for two of those events, one of which was a talk by philosopher, activist, and social critic Cornel West.

“I am always trying to make connections between the library and learning,” Georgas says. “There is an urgency around antiracism.... I want the library to be part of that conversation.”

North of Brooklyn in Chestnut Ridge, New York, librarian Patrick Peltier of Eldorado Elementary School uses the 1619 Project to teach history and social justice issues to 4th-, 5th-, and 6th-grade classes.

“To teach American history only from the point of view of white men seems like a disservice to everyone,” Peltier says.

The education portion of the 1619 Project includes lesson plans, an archive of stories and photos, and podcasts. Peltier has incorporated the material into an assignment for 6th-graders where they document their lives during the pandemic and protests.

“I want the library to be a place where students feel included and can find their own history,” Peltier says. “The 1619 Project will definitely inform how I do things.” ●



Listen to the April bonus episode of our *Call Number* podcast for a conversation with Nikole Hannah-Jones.

Tune in at bit.ly/CallNumber1619

somebody of note, and maybe the family doesn’t want part of the story to be told.”

Glasco agrees: “Institutions often play into ‘respectability politics.’ They don’t want to tell certain stories.”

Respectability politics particularly tends to arise from dynamics of gender and class, Glasco says. Archives of the civil rights movement, for example, mostly focus on heterosexual Black men, but other marginalized communities were also vital to the cause and their stories must be told, too. “I’m not saying those collections are not important to keep,” Glasco says, but it should also be recognized that the movement included queer and gender-fluid people, for instance.

“Bayard Rustin, the architect of the 1963 March on Washington, was an openly gay man,” Flores-Clemons says. “Black trans women and Latinx trans women threw the first bottles at the Stonewall riot, and they only got highlighted in recent years.”

There is a slight trend toward improvement among institutions, Flores-Clemons says. Some want to “look into the organization and see where there were missteps and where

white supremacy lives,” Flores-Clemons says. “Are they going to direct money from their budget to really do this work so it can be sustainable?”

Creating joy

Glasco thinks the stories of Black people are getting more attention since the uprisings of summer 2020, but wonders why those stories—Black Lives Matter, health disparities for people of color, police violence against Black people—were largely not being collected before 2020.

Makiba Foster, regional manager of the African American Research Library and Cultural Center at Broward County (Fla.) Library, shares this thought. With archivist and scholar Bergis Jules, she formed Archiving the Black Web, a project that aims to organize efforts to collect and contextualize social media and other internet content that focuses on the Black experience.

Foster describes the unique ways in which Black people use the internet: “Creating joy from pain,” she says. “And from pain, figuring out ways of celebration.” She adds that “social

media has allowed us to memorialize lives when normal structures and systems deny us that kind of formal recognition and acknowledgement,” citing the online remembrances of Trayvon Martin and Breonna Taylor as examples. More broadly, social media helps communities chronicle “the fatigue of being Black in America.”

“Archiving this is important for future research,” Foster says. “Our project is to evaluate the landscape and create some kind of infrastructure to move forward. There is so much content.”

Prior to her work at Broward County Library, Foster worked at New York Public Library’s Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. There she created collections focused on content related to Harlem, including materials on businesses and organizations in the neighborhood. Before that, while at Washington University in St. Louis, Foster led a team documenting the protest movement in Ferguson, Missouri, after Michael Brown was fatally shot by a white police officer in August 2014.

Like the Blackivists, Foster sees a problem in leaving archiving exclusively to well-funded universities and institutions,

which do not focus on those who aren’t “white and moneyed.” She says that race and socioeconomic factors come into play when those institutions decide whose stories to collect. “We are trying to create space for Black content creators to be part of a digital archive,” Foster says.

Passion projects

The archivists, curators, and librarians collecting Black stories have encountered shared challenges doing their work: There are more stories than archivists to collect them. Building an archive and sustaining it can be expensive. People often don’t see themselves as important enough to document.

“[The Blackivists] is a passion project for the most part,” Flores-Clemons says. “We’re not making gobs of money.”

The Black Male Archives is essentially a one-person operation, and Freeman says he spends at least \$500 a month maintaining its website and security certificate. He uses his weekends and weeknights searching for content and promoting the archive on social media.

His work is paying off. The archive’s podcast, which features Freeman telling the stories of Black men from across the world, attracts listeners from as far away as France, Jamaica, Kenya, Lesotho, and South Africa. The archive is also finding use as a teaching tool: Freeman reports that a former librarian



Blackivists members Stacie Williams (left) and Steven Booth scanning Chicago house music ephemera at the first Chicago Black Social Culture Map Community Archiving Day.

friend who is now an educator uses the Black Male Archives in his classroom; a doctoral student at University of California, Berkeley, is incorporating some of the stories from the archive into his dissertation; and in summer 2019, the Black Male Archives was selected for inclusion in the Library of Congress’s Web Archive.

Archiving the Black Web received a \$150,000 grant in 2020 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services’ Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program to help facilitate its work, and has partnered with several entities including the Schomburg Center, the African American Museum and Library at Oakland in California, and the Spelman College Archives and Auburn Avenue Research Library in Atlanta. Archiving the Black Web also held a national forum in April that focused on strategies for collecting and preserving Black history and culture online as well as developing a community of practice for Black cultural memory organizations and practitioners interested in web archiving.

There is an urgency to archiving the Black experience, says Foster. “The average lifespan of something online is 90 days,” she explains. It can disappear, for example, “if someone didn’t pay a domain fee or declined to upgrade their web page.”

The ephemeral nature of this content makes capturing it both difficult and important. And ensuring it is documented correctly is crucial.

“I don’t want to see stories bastardized and diluted,” Glasco says. “I want to see ourselves in the historical record—not as an afterthought.” **AL**



MARK LAWTON is a writer in Chicago.



LIBRARIES AND THE LAW

Legal column addresses timely concerns

by Tomas A. Lipinski and Mary Minow

Legal issues arise in libraries. Which is why, over the past year and a half, our Letters of the Law column at americanlibraries.org has explored a wide range of legal topics, led by two authorities: Mary Minow, a librarian who became a lawyer, and Tomas A. Lipinski, a lawyer who became a librarian. Together they have authored four books on the subject, including *The Library's Legal Answer Book* (ALA Editions, 2003, with a new edition forthcoming in 2022), and led forums at American Library Association (ALA) conferences in collaboration with the Public Library Association (PLA).

We've assembled some of their most topical entries, touching on copyright issues for remote learning, face-mask exceptions, and liability waivers, among other things. For more legal columns from Minow and Lipinski, visit bit.ly/AL-LettersLaw.

The information in this column does not constitute legal advice, nor does it necessarily reflect the views of ALA or PLA. It is meant to serve as a starting point for librarians and library lawyers who wish to research the law and consider its applications. Different jurisdictions will have different laws and may even apply the same laws differently. If you require legal advice or expert assistance, we urge you to seek the services of a competent legal professional.

If a library has a policy requiring users to wear face masks, how do patrons who have a disability that directly conflicts with mask-wearing then use the library?

As library workers navigate the complicated process of reopening while providing a safe environment within the confines of the law, they would do well to read Theresa Chmara's recommended guidelines, approved by ALA's Intellectual Freedom Committee, for common questions and concerns. (Chmara is general counsel of the Freedom to Read Foundation. Read the guidelines at bit.ly/IFCguidance.)

First, know that there are fake exemption cards circulating on social media, some bearing the seal of the US Department of Justice (DOJ), claiming the holder has a disability that prevents them from wearing a mask. The cards say that it's illegal for any business to ask bearers to disclose their condition. These cards are not issued or endorsed by DOJ. (Read more about the phenomenon at bit.ly/ADAmask.)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that a person who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the face mask without assistance should not wear a face mask or cloth face covering. Other examples may include individuals with respiratory conditions such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or cystic fibrosis. Additionally, people with autism, cerebral palsy, claustrophobia, post-traumatic stress disorder, or severe anxiety may have difficulty wearing a face mask.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) does not specifically address face masks, but the Atlanta-based Southeast ADA Center and Burton Blatt Institute at Syracuse (N.Y.) University offer a useful fact sheet on the topic (bit.ly/ADAFactsheet). Under the ADA, a library must consider reasonable modifications—changing policies, practices, or procedures—for individuals with disabilities so they can participate in or benefit from library programs and services.

Reasonable modifications to mask requirements may include:

- allowing a person to wear a scarf, loose face covering, or full-face shield
- allowing curbside pickup or no-contact delivery in a timely manner
- offering phone or video appointments

There are three reasons a state or local government agency or private library may not have to provide a reasonable modification under the ADA:

1. **Fundamental alteration.** A library may not have to provide a reasonable modification if the

modification would change the nature of the service, program, activity, goods, services, or facilities. A fundamental alteration is a change to such a degree that the original program, service, or activity is no longer the same. An example would be a request for home delivery when the library does not already offer that service.

2. **Undue burden**, such as a significant difficulty or expense. This could include a request to visit the library before or after its regular hours, as it would place an undue burden on limited staff.
3. **Direct threat**, or a significant risk of substantial harm to the health or safety of the individual or other people that cannot be eliminated or reduced by reasonable accommodation of the individual. If an individual with a disability poses a direct threat despite reasonable accommodation, they are not protected by the ADA.

In order to limit a direct threat around COVID-19, state and local government agencies and businesses may:

- develop policies and procedures to promptly identify and isolate patrons with symptoms of COVID-19
- offer face masks to patrons (public libraries should include a free option)
- inform library users about symptoms of COVID-19
- limit in-person access to buildings as appropriate

For guidance on the decision-making process for reasonable accommodations, see discussion of two DOJ settlement agreements—one involving a YMCA (bit.ly/ADA-YMCA), one involving the District of Columbia (bit.ly/ADA-DCshelter)—from the Southeast ADA Center. For more on reasonable accommodation for employees, along with other pandemic-related employment issues, consult the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's guidance at bit.ly/EEOC-pandemic.—*Mary Minow*



I've heard in the news about liability waivers; can they apply in a library setting? Could a patron who gets sick sue the library?

An exculpatory agreement, sometimes known as a liability release or injury waiver, is an agreement that a business or other entity can use when there is risk of harm to a person for an activity or event that the entity offers or sponsors. In signing the document, a participant agrees to release the sponsor from any fault or liability for injuries resulting from ordinary negligence. Libraries that employ liability waivers usually require them for patrons who use makerspaces and crafting centers, since those activities are directly sponsored by the library and carry a high risk of injury.

Recently these agreements have been invoked in the context of large political gatherings where participants chose not to wear masks or facial coverings and signed away their right to sue in the event of contracting COVID-19. The effectiveness of such agreements is an open question, as no court has yet ruled on their enforceability, and some states do not permit their use at all.

Can a government entity like a public library use such an agreement? That complex question depends on an analysis of a state or locality's treatment of government sovereign immunity, public policy, and tort law. That kind of analysis should be undertaken only in consultation with legal counsel who are familiar with these issues.

Some schools and libraries ask if a minor can sign an exculpatory agreement, or if a parent can sign a waiver on behalf of a minor child. In general, if a minor patron enters a contract such as an exculpatory agreement, it may be voidable, and in many states, parents cannot sign on behalf of a minor child. However, as has been noted, many states recognize an exception to this rule in the context of nonprofit activities sponsored by, for example, schools, volunteers, or community organizations. It would appear logical to conclude that the voluntary use of a library makerspace or other services would fall under this same rule and that the parental signature executing the waiver on behalf of a minor child would be valid.

—Tomas A. Lipinski



With everything going on in the world, why should I bother looking at provisions in old contracts the library has signed in the past?

A boilerplate clause in most types of library contracts known as *force majeure* (French for “superior force”) has suddenly become important amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Sometimes known as “acts of God” clauses, they refer to natural catastrophes and can allow one or both parties to get out of or change its obligations.

The clauses are not uniform, and whether they apply to the library or vendor and what they affect (payment, timing, nonperformance) depends entirely on their wording. I recommend looking at your library's most important contracts

now rather than later because invoking *force majeure* generally requires timely notice.

Sample *force majeure* clauses and checklists abound (one good example: bit.ly/AL-FMchecklist). Especially useful with respect to electronic licenses are the samples provided by the Liblicense project (bit.ly/LibLicense-FM) hosted by the Center for Research Libraries. Liblicense, a rich resource for libraries negotiating vendor contracts for many years, evaluates two sample *force majeure* clauses from a library's point of view, primarily making the point that libraries should ensure that the clause applies equally to the library as well as the vendor.

A court in Illinois recently excused a restaurant from paying 75% of its rent because the governor had ordered the restaurant to shut down most of its operations. A typical *force majeure* clause says that it does not excuse an obligation to pay money, but this particular one did not carve out monetary obligations (bit.ly/IL-FMcase). *Forbes* reported that although probably only a minority of clauses may allow a party to reduce rent, this shows how important it is to closely read even boilerplate language.—M. M.



With classes now online, how can school districts create meaningful programming to support teaching and learning? What about copyright?

Three provisions in copyright law can help teachers, students, and school librarians construct learning objects (such as lessons or modules) and deliver instruction.

The first allows teachers and students—and librarians when performing instructional functions—in accredited educational entities to stream works protected by copyright when doing so is “an integral part of a class session.” This section allows them to perform a nondramatic literary or musical work, such as reading a portion of an article; perform reasonable and limited portions of any other work, such as a movie; or display or transmit a work in an amount comparable to that which is typically displayed in a live classroom session. For example, if you were to discuss a chart and a table from a textbook in class, you may display those items online as well.

Some things to keep in mind:

- The work used must be lawfully made under the copyright law, constitute an integral part of the class session, and be offered as a regular part of instructional activities—in other words, represent part of the class itself rather than something ancillary to it.
- The performance or display must be directly related and of material assistance to the teaching content—not for students’ entertainment or unrelated background.
- Participants should be limited to students of the institution who are officially enrolled in the course via password protection.
- The work may not be recorded for use outside class instruction.

The educational entity must also institute policies regarding copyright; provide informational materials to faculty, students, and relevant staff members that accurately describe and promote compliance with laws relating to copyright; and alert students that materials used in connection with the course may be subject to copyright protection.

The second provision is a companion provision that allows the educational entity to reproduce a work in order to make an authorized performance or display. If the work is in analog form, such as an article in a print magazine, the law allows for the digitization of the work—but only for that portion of the work allowed in the sanctioned performance or display. The work must be either

unavailable in digital form or only available in digital form in a way that prevents reproduction.

Also relevant are the provisions of fair use. There are many scenarios, unrelated to the current pandemic, wherein fair use can support the use of images, photos, sound, and video clips when used for a specific purpose—to make an example, illustrate a point, or serve as a historical anchor, for instance. *NXIVM Corp. v. Ross Institute* (2004), *Bill Graham Archives v. Dorling Kindersley Ltd.* (2006), and *SOFA Entertainment Inc. v. Dodger Productions Inc.* (2013) are all excellent examples.—T. L. **AL**



TOMAS A. LIPINSKI is professor and former dean at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee School of Information Studies. He has worked in legal settings across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors and publishes and speaks widely on issues relating to information and internet law and policy, especially copyright in schools and libraries. **MARY MINOW** is a consultant with LibraryLaw.com. She has worked as an attorney, public library branch manager, and



online database consultant. She has taught as adjunct professor of library law at San José (Calif.) State University’s School of Information.



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ASK, LISTEN, EMPOWER

ETHICAL AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

by Ellen Knutson and Quanetta Batts

Until we live in a truly egalitarian society, we need to actively work toward making society more equitable.

Put another way, it is not enough to simply be not racist; we must work to be antiracist. Psychologist Beverly Daniel Tatum, president emerita of Spelman College, uses the analogy of a moving walkway. The history and structures of racism are the walkway. It is not enough to simply stop walking, because you're still moving in a racist direction, just more slowly. It is also not enough to turn around; then you are still moving in a racist direction, just backward! In order to be antiracist, you must actively walk in the opposite direction.

UNDERSTANDING POWER AND PRIVILEGE

In her 1989 seminal work, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," activist Peggy McIntosh outlines 50 conditions that illustrate the daily effects of white privilege, including "I can easily buy posters, postcards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys, and children's magazines featuring people of my race" and "I can be late to a meeting without having the lateness reflect on my race."

The concept was applied to libraries by retired University of California, Berkeley, librarian John Berry, who adapted some of McIntosh's statements in his 2004 paper "White Privilege in Library Land." For example, "When conducting collection development, I can easily find materials featuring people of my race" and "I can criticize my library or my profession and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as an outsider."

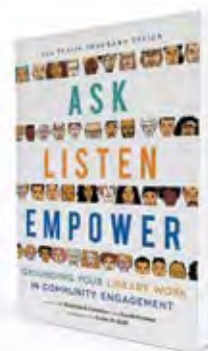
As you plan engagement programs, look at McIntosh's and Berry's work and identify your privilege. Although their papers focus on white privilege, the questions and statements can be easily modified for other kinds of privilege as well (such as age, ability, sexual orientation, and gender). By identifying your privilege, you will start to recognize the blinders that limit our understanding of the world. These blinders may put up barriers to some community members. For example, working only in English will exclude those who do not speak it. Multnomah

County (Ore.) Library (MCL) has instituted a project, We Speak Your Language, to overcome this barrier by providing services in six languages: Chinese, English, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

In the 1991 journal article "Mapping the Margins," Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term intersectionality, which challenges us to understand the ways race, gender, age, economic status, and other identity markers make up different levels of oppression. In a 2017 interview celebrating 20 years of racial justice work at the African American Policy Forum think tank she founded, Crenshaw discussed the ways oppression can overlap: "It's not simply that there's a race problem here, a gender problem here, and a class or LGBTQ+ problem there. Many times that framework erases what happens to people who are subject to all these things."

Understanding privilege and intersectionality will help you promote openness and learning, hear voices in a deeper way, and help participants be more open to learning from people who may be different from them. Madison (Wis.) Public Library used an equity framework to design Tell Us, a community conversation process. The library

partnered with agencies that brought together racially diverse community members to discuss challenges they faced. Importantly, these



This is an excerpt from *Ask, Listen, Empower: Grounding Your Library Work in Community Engagement*, edited by Mary Davis Fournier and Sarah Ostman (ALA Editions, 2021).



Madison (Wis.) Public Library used an equity framework to design Tell Us, a community conversation process.

conversations were not held at the library—they took place in homes, schools, and community spaces—and community partners drove the topics.

CORE PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Ethics and inclusion should be at the center of all your community engagement programs. Putting these ideas into practice can be challenging because of organizational inertia and a lack of appetite for risk. By carefully considering the potential impacts of your actions and plans, you will be on your way to providing truly ethical and inclusive engagement programs.

The nonprofit National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation convened a group of public participation leaders to outline the seven core principles of public engagement:

1. **Careful planning and preparation:** Through adequate and inclusive planning, ensure that the design, organization, and convening process serve both a clearly defined purpose and the needs of participants.
2. **Inclusion and demographic diversity:** Equitably incorporate diverse people, voices, ideas, and information to lay the groundwork for quality outcomes and democratic legitimacy.

TO CREATE A CULTURE OF AUTHENTIC AND EQUITABLE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, YOU'LL HAVE TO ACTIVELY WORK FOR INCLUSION AND ANTI-OPPRESSION.

3. **Collaboration and shared purpose:** Support and encourage participants, government and community institutions, and others to work together for the common good.
4. **Openness and learning:** Help all involved listen to one another, explore new ideas, learn and apply information to generate new options, and rigorously evaluate public engagement activities.
5. **Transparency and trust:** Be clear and open about the process, and provide a public record of the organizers, sponsors, outcomes, and the range of views and ideas expressed.
6. **Impact and action:** Ensure each participatory effort has real potential to make a difference and that participants are aware of it.
7. **Sustained engagement and participatory culture:** Promote a culture of participation with programs and institutions that support ongoing, quality public engagement.

To these principles we add the lens of equity and inclusion, encouraging you to both deepen your engagement and increase the equitability of your community engagement work. We think it is important to center inclusion at each point, weighing which actions open opportunities for all people in your community, and to ask questions that start to peel back layers of privilege.

AN INTENTIONAL PRACTICE

To create a culture of authentic and equitable community engagement, you'll have to actively work for inclusion and anti-oppression. The Government Alliance on Race and Equity breaks this strategy into three broad action categories:

Normalize

- What steps could you take to increase a shared understanding of bias, racism, and racial equity?
- How does white cultural dominance impact people of color in your institution? What kind of culture shift is needed?
- How could you develop a clear vision for racial equity?

Organize

- Who are the groups in your community working toward racial equity?
- How could you support community groups working to reduce disparities?
- How could you develop deep relationships with communities that have not been included in decision making?

Operationalize

- What topics or decisions call for a racial equity assessment?
- What action steps and measures will you take to achieve results?

Keep in mind that equity is not the same as equality. Treating everyone the same does not make a level playing field. The Center for Story-Based Strategy has designed an exercise to imagine a more equitable and inclusive future. You may be familiar with the two images that illustrate the difference between equity and equality: Three individuals of various heights are trying to watch a baseball game over a fence. Only one is tall enough to see over the fence. In the equality image, each person is given the same size box to stand on; however, the shortest person still cannot see over the fence. In the equity image, the tallest person doesn't get a box, the middle person gets one box, and the shortest person gets two. Now all three can see the game. A third image, labeled LIBERATION, has no fence at all.

Sometimes, when working toward greater inclusion, the library does not have to be the main partner. Beauregard Parish (La.) Library focused on inclusion by recognizing invisible or intangible barriers to participation. For

example, staffers observed that senior adults in the community were not coming to technology classes at the library. Rather than dismissing the lack of attendance as lack of interest, the library partnered with the Beauregard Council on Aging to create All Hands on Tech, a program series that meets at the Council on Aging's space, which seniors already visit regularly.

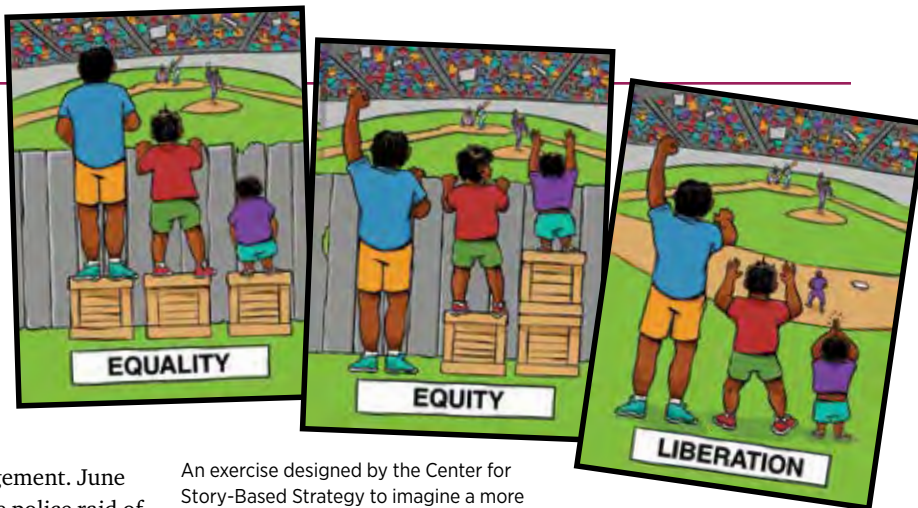
Honoring dates important to members of your community is also a way to frame engagement. June 28, 2019, marked the 50th anniversary of the police raid of the Stonewall Inn; the rebellion following the raid marked a turning point in LGBTQ+ liberation and is honored and celebrated through Pride parades around the world. Cincinnati and Hamilton County (Ohio) Public Library hosted a series of events and exhibits to honor the milestones of Cincinnati Pride and Stonewall 50, including community conversations and a series of videos and podcasts. Through projects and programs like these, the library shows that it is a welcoming and safe space for the LGBTQ+ community and keeps an ongoing focus on inclusion and demographic diversity.

RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING IS KEY

"You need to build the relationship before you need the relationship." This is a mantra that Larry Payne, director of strategic partnerships, civic engagement, and critical conversations at Houston Public Library, often reminds us to focus on. Building strong relationships that are reciprocal and mutually beneficial will help you not only better understand your community but also develop deeper insights into how to equitably and authentically engage with even its most marginalized members.

The focus on relationships helps move your engagement strategies from an informing stance to a more collaborative stance. For example, two librarians from MCL, Amy Honisett and Kate Schwab, connected library staffers with patrons experiencing homelessness for coffee and conversation. These informal gatherings, held in 2018, led to changes in how these two groups relate to each other. The experiment garnered interest from management and librarians in other branches who also wanted to shift the way they relate to this group of patrons.

Moreover, the shift to working with the community will help create a more sustainable and participatory library culture. At Topeka and Shawnee County (Kans.) Public Library, the team responsible for the library's new learn-and-play bus adapted the standard decision-making procedures to include conversations with children's caregivers about their concerns. Earlier efforts to get community input had focused on conversations with educational experts



An exercise designed by the Center for Story-Based Strategy to imagine a more equitable and inclusive future.

and other professionals that did not necessarily reveal what mattered most to the people who would use the bus. Including children and their caregivers in the discussions significantly changed how the bus is used. The goals now include children's social and emotional readiness for kindergarten in addition to academic success. The bus also provided the space for a caregivers' learning community to develop. Additionally, staff training now includes active listening and how to become a learning facilitator who can guide learning in a group dynamic rather than a teacher who relies on a curriculum.

AN ONGOING PROCESS

Building a culture of ethical and inclusive community engagement takes time and patience. Start by listening to your stakeholders—students, faculty, staff, community members, and others. Have discussions about their perceptions of the library as a community partner and find out how they would like to engage with you. Begin building partnerships with individuals and organizations who share your values and goals. Host a program sponsored by one of your partners, and provide volunteers to assist. Think about joining forces with organizations whose programs align with your work. This approach will help staff and faculty feel more comfortable and engaged, and it will enable you to use your current resources to make the program even better. **AL**



ELLEN KNUTSON is a Portland, Oregon-based research associate at the Kettering Foundation. She is adjunct assistant professor at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's School of Information Sciences. Knutson also serves on the advisory committee for the American Library Association's Center for Civic Life. **QUANETTA BATTS** is director for outreach and engagement at Ohio State University Libraries. She manages the library's Mary P. Key Diversity Residency Program and Expanding Visions Foundation internship program, and is a project mentor with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Ohio.

2021 ANNUAL.

CONFERENCE PREVIEW

ALA members gather online for a week of learning, networking

This year's Annual Conference—the third American Library Association (ALA) conference to go virtual during the coronavirus pandemic—brings together an exciting lineup of speakers and educational sessions designed to engage members in a week of collaboration and connection. Tune in to hear from leading authors, thinkers, and activists, and explore programs and panel discussions devoted to the library workplace, issues relating to equity, diversity, and inclusion, and more.

FEATURED SPEAKERS

Check the *Annual Conference Scheduler* (bit.ly/AC21scheduler) for dates and times.

Melissa de la Cruz is the bestselling author of many critically acclaimed and award-winning novels for readers of all ages. Her 2015 novel *The Isle of the Lost*, part of the *Descendants* series, spent more than 50 weeks on *The New York Times* bestseller list, including 15 weeks at number one. De la Cruz is also known for the *Blue Bloods* series and the *Beauchamp Family* series. Her recent book releases include bestsellers *The Queen's Secret* and the *Alex and Eliza* trilogy, as well as the graphic novel *Gotham High*.

Eve L. Ewing is a Chicago-based author, poet, and visual artist, as well as a sociologist and professor at University of Chicago's Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and



Melissa de la Cruz



Photo: Mercedes Zapata (Ewing)



JUNE 23–29 | VIRTUAL



Padma Lakshmi



Juana Martinez-Neal

Practice, whose work focuses on how racism affects the lives and education of young people.

A former editor of *Harvard Educational Review*, Ewing has been published in *The Atlantic*, *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, *The New Yorker*, *Poetry*, *Vanity Fair*, and *The Washington Post*. *Maya and the Robot* (July) is her first title for young readers. She's also working on a nonfiction book about the education of Black and Brown youth.

Regarded as one of the greatest tennis players of all time, **Billie Jean King** won 39 grand slam titles in her 32-year career. She also became an activist for gender equality in athletics—an effort she detailed in her 2008 memoir *Pressure Is a Privilege: Lessons I've Learned from Life and the Battle of the Sexes*—and is an LGBTQ+ icon. Her new book, *All In: An Autobiography*, arrives in August.

Padma Lakshmi is an Indian-American model and actor, creator and host of Hulu's *Taste the Nation*, and host and executive producer of the Emmy-winning Bravo series *Top Chef*. She is the bestselling author of two cookbooks, *The Encyclopedia of Spices and Herbs*, and the memoir *Love, Loss, and What We Ate*.

Tomatoes for Neela (August), Lakshmi's debut picture book for young readers, with illustrations by Peruvian-born author and illustrator **Juana Martinez-Neal**, explores how we connect to our own cultures and others through food.

Areli Morales describes herself as a child of two worlds: She was born in Puebla, Mexico, and moved to New York City at age 6. With time, the US became her home, and she saw it as a land of opportunity, where millions of immigrants who came before had built their lives. When her application for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) was approved, she started living her American dream without fear of deportation.



Areli Morales

Areli Is a Dreamer (June), illustrated by Luisa Uribe, is the first picture book written by a DACA recipient.

Writer, speaker, and lawyer **Savala**

Nolan Trepczynski is executive director of the Thelton E. Henderson Center for Social Justice at the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law, where she leads lectures and workshops for law students, scholars, and activists studying the intersections of race, gender, and law.



Savala Nolan Trepczynski

In the 12 essays contained in *Don't Let It Get You Down: Essays on Race, Gender, and the Body* (July), Trepczynski explores what it means to live in the liminal spaces of race, class, and body type: too rich or poor, too fat or thin, too white or Black. She has been featured in *Vogue*, *Time*, and *Forbes*, and on NPR.



Stanley Tucci



Charles Person

At 19, civil rights activist **Charles Person** was the youngest of the 13 original Freedom Riders to travel from Washington, D.C., through the American South in 1961. During that time he witnessed and endured intense racial violence at the hands of Klansmen. His new book *Buses Are a Comin': Memoir of a Freedom Rider* (April) traces his momentous journey through a defining point in US history, drawing parallels to contemporary social justice movements.

Stanley Tucci is an acclaimed actor, writer, director, and producer. He has directed five films and appeared in more than 70, including *The Devil Wears Prada*, *Prizzi's Honor*, *Spotlight*, *The Terminal*, and the *Hunger Games* series. He has also worked on countless television shows and a dozen plays, both on and off Broadway.

In addition, Tucci is a respected foodie and author of three culinary books, most recently *Taste: My Life Through Food* (October), drawing on his Italian-American roots, family life, and travels. He often demonstrates his cooking and mixology skills for his Instagram followers, and he is the host of the CNN travelogue show *Stanley Tucci: Searching for Italy*.



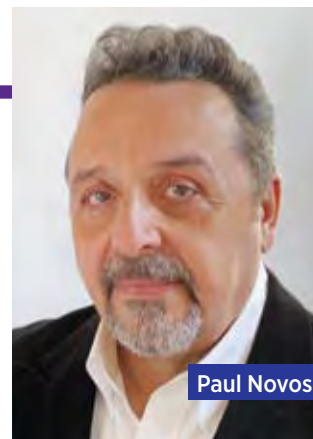
Leana Wen



Trisha Yearwood



Judy Tyrus



Paul Novosel

Classical ballet dancer **Judy Tyrus** and musician and writer **Paul Novosel** are authors of *Dance Theatre of Harlem: A History, a Movement, a Celebration* (October) and cofounders of ChromaDiverse Inc., a nonprofit that promotes cultural diversity in the performing arts. The book chronicles the history of the first African-American classical ballet company, from its origins in a Harlem basement at the height of the civil rights movement in 1969 to its activism and innovations in virtual performances through the present.

Tyrus danced for the company for 22 years, exposing audiences on six continents to the art of ballet and the importance of cultural diversity in the performing arts. Novosel has worked as the staff pianist and assistant archivist for Dance Theatre of Harlem and has enjoyed a 40-year career as a pianist, organist, playwright, and composer.

Leana Wen is an emergency physician and public health professor at George Washington University, as well as a CNN health analyst and contributing columnist for *The Washington Post*, where she writes about health policy.

Wen's memoir, *Lifelines: A Doctor's Journey in the Fight for Public Health* (July), explores the role of public health in approaching social ills, as well as her own story of immigrating to the US at age 7 and eventually becoming a Rhodes Scholar. She is also coauthor of *When Doctors Don't Listen: How to Avoid Misdiagnoses and Unnecessary Tests*.

Grammy-winning country musician **Trisha Yearwood**, host of *Trisha's Southern Kitchen* on the Food Network, has written three cookbooks since 2008. Her latest, *Trisha's Kitchen: Easy Comfort Food for Friends and Family* (September), is a compilation of 125 recipes designed to bring people together.

PRESIDENTS' PROGRAMS

ALA's division presidents, round table chairs, and affiliate leaders will host interesting speakers and examine important topics. Check the *Annual Conference Scheduler* (bit.ly/AC21scheduler) for dates, times, and additional listings.

Making Change: Organizing for Action While Caring for Each Other. Dismantling racism requires organized efforts that are bigger than individual people and institutions. Community organizers know how to make change through collective action. In this session, activists, organizers, and

ACCESSIBILITY

ALA continues to strive to ensure the conference experience is pleasant and accessible for all. All sessions will be captioned, and American Sign Language interpretation will be available for all main stage sessions and other sessions at the request of attendees.

SUSTAINABILITY

Annual is committed to fighting climate change by offsetting carbon emissions caused by the increased use of technology. Registrants can make a \$4 donation to this effort, supporting our preferred provider Native Energy, an organization helping to build farmer-owned and community-based projects in Native American communities.

LIBRARY MARKETPLACE

The Library Marketplace will kick off the conference with a full day of activities. There will be 250 interactive exhibitor booths, more than 100 presentations from leading authors and illustrators (and two new presentation stages, including one focused on art, illustration, and photography), multimedia resources, networking opportunities, and more.

REGISTRATION

ALA members who have been recently furloughed, laid off, or are experiencing a reduction of paid work hours are invited to register at no cost. ●

intellectuals Dean Spade and Mariame Kaba will join the Association of College and Research Libraries in conversation about how library workers can use organizing principles to fight against white supremacy and widening inequality through community action and mutual aid.

Community-Driven Justice in Our Work: Library and Archival Workers of Color Advocating for Self-Preservation, Solidarity, Change, and Justice in Communities, Workplaces, and in the Profession at Large.

What are library workers and archivists doing to foster community advocacy and antiracism, particularly as it relates to COVID-19 and anti-Asian bias? How are they partnering with organizations in combating racial injustice and xenophobia, and how are they documenting this moment to bear witness to the converging crises? This president's program of the Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association will address these issues in a panel discussion.

Smooth Transitions: Developing Information Literacy in the In-Between Places.

Times of transition can be full of excitement but also anxiety. Librarians of all types help alleviate that anxiety by teaching information literacy concepts that reach beyond the classroom and into the real world. While most conversations focus on the transition between high school and college, there are many other types of transitions that a learner can experience. This panel, convened by the Library Instruction Round Table, will discuss how libraries support the development of information literacy skills during different stages of life.

Volunteering during a Pandemic: Celebrating Success and Identifying Growth Areas within YALSA.

Tune in to hear Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) members share their volunteer experiences during the pandemic. Presenters will discuss project successes and behind-the-scenes challenges, including the barriers that remain in place. Through these stories, YALSA members will receive updates on new projects and gain a better understanding of where YALSA is heading.

Confronting Inequalities across the Globe: Libraries Working toward Justice and Change.

The past year was marked by constant change, from the global health crisis to social justice movements, all reflected in libraries. The International Relations Round Table chair's program brings together a panel of library innovators who identified a problem within their community, addressed it through outreach, services, programming, or other actions, and are able to talk about the impact of the response.

EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

All sessions are on-demand unless otherwise specified. All times listed are Central.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

Intellectual Freedom Is Meaningless without Social Justice. Thursday, June 24, 3:30–4:30 p.m.

Conversations about intellectual freedom often start with the idea that libraries must be neutral on issues of speech. But protecting free speech without relating it to social justice issues harms the marginalized and protects the powerful. Join Alison Macrina of the Library Freedom Project for a conversation about how to reframe conversations about intellectual freedom to always include justice and power, including what steps librarians can take to reflect this view in our libraries.

Online Instruction for All: Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity in Online Instruction.

The explosion of online learning and the current trend toward inclusive teaching

MEET THE FIRST REGISTRANT

Grace Wechman is an MLIS student at University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee School of Information Studies, graduating in December, and patron services associate at Niles–Maine (Ill.) District Library. She’s a new ALA member and first-time conference attendee. We asked her what motivated her to register for the conference:

“First, as a student used to classroom fundamentals, the idea of being able to connect those concepts and ideas to real-world practice and learn from others within the field is exciting. Second, the ability to connect with others who appreciate the field, especially since we are still navigating



Grace Wechman

through COVID-19. I also am close to graduating, and being able to network while thinking ahead to the job-hunting process may come in handy.

“I think it’s important to attend conferences like this because it gives people a chance to connect with one another, share new ideas, learn new things.... My biggest hope is that I can use whatever I learn through this conference and apply it to being the best librarian I can be for wherever I end up in the future.” •

practices underscore the need for accessibility in virtual instruction in order to effectively reach all learners. This panel will address steps libraries have taken to make online teaching and design practices more inclusive and discuss specific pedagogies and strategies, such as Universal Design for Learning.

Diverse Children’s Literature in K–12 Schools: Making Mirrors, Windows, and Glass Doors Visible. This panel discussion explores the role of the school librarian in cultivating diverse collections in K–12 schools, allowing children to

see others, see themselves, and imagine a world full of ideas and opportunities. How do we get diverse books into the hands of students and teachers? There are multiple steps along the way including selection and acquisition, promotion and making the resources accessible, and working with teachers to incorporate diverse materials into their classrooms.

Beyond Picture-Perfect Diversity: How to Create a Sense of Inclusion.

Many organizations view diversity as a statistical goal, but a diverse team without ties of inclusion and accep-

ance fails to fully harness the true advantages of diversity. Author Dima Ghawi will share information gleaned from interviews and surveys to teach leaders and business professionals how to create a welcoming and inclusive workplace

through a bottom-up approach, a courageous office culture, and affinity groups.

THE LIBRARY WORKPLACE

Measuring the Intercultural Effectiveness of Library

Leaders. Moving the needle on cultural competence starts in the administrative wing, which sets the tone and culture of the entire organization. Speakers will present research that aims to measure the cultural competence of a sample of administrators, specifically those who hire and train, and select library holdings, using the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale, which measures six competencies: self-awareness, exploration, world orientation, relationship development, positive regard, and emotional resilience.

Adapting Library Spaces ... for Whatever Comes Next.

How do today’s libraries translate changing needs and services into functional, inspiring, and flexible spaces that will evolve into the future, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic? This session will explore how to rethink physical spaces to meet the needs of today’s users in a time of transition and adapt to meet future needs.

Seamless Library Services: Invisible Labor as the

Thread. Invisible labor refers to work that frequently receives little or no recognition or monetary rewards but is crucial to obtaining or retaining a job or furthering one’s career. Of all the labor requiring core library competencies performed daily, most remains invisible, especially to library users and other potential library supporters like legislators and policymakers. A panel of practicing librarians and LIS researchers and educators will discuss how invisible labor manifests in library work.

Advancing Mental Health within the Profession: Techniques and Narratives for Increased Understanding. Mental illness is a subject that is often met with silence

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and misunderstanding in librarianship. This session will explore mental health in a way that is comfortable, safe, and thoughtful through a panel discussion and small group/paired role-play activities. The panel, which includes a mental health professional, two disability advocates, and two librarians, will provide resources, guidance, and honest discussion regarding mental health within the LIS community.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

PR Forum 2021: Social Media Masterclass with Oprah's Book Club. Get an inside look into how Oprah's Book Club uses social media to engage and build a community around reading. Oprah's Book Club Creative Director Jill Adams and Director of Content Development Liz Lenkinski will join Stephanie Hlywak, director of ALA's Communications and Marketing Office, to talk about how they create immersive experiences online and share best practices.

Small and Rural Libraries Navigating Post-COVID Times: A Candid Discussion. Join active members of the Association for Small and Rural Libraries in a facilitated discussion of what libraries are facing now and are likely to face in the future as a result of the pandemic. Learn how other library professionals and advocates are coping, triaging, innovating, and otherwise serving their communities, and share your own challenges and successes.

Sustainable Choices in Library Prizes and Promotional Materials. Join SustainRT for a conversation on social, economic, and environmental sustainability in reimagining the role and utility of library swag. The materials our libraries provide as prizes and incentives to our patrons send a message to the people we serve and have an effect on our local and global communities. These exchanges can be an opportunity to build connections and support local economies.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

All events are on-demand unless otherwise indicated. All times listed are Central. Check the Annual Conference Scheduler (bit.ly/AC21scheduler) to see if the event requires registration.

2021 Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence. Thursday, June 24, 3 p.m. Celebrate the 2021 Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence at a virtual gala hosted by *Booklist* and the Reference and User Services Association, featuring acceptance speeches from fiction winner James McBride (*Deacon King Kong*) and nonfiction winner Rebecca Giggs (*Fathoms: The World in the Whale*). The keynote speaker is novelist and journalist Thrity Umrigar, bestselling author of *Everybody's Son*, *The Secrets Between Us*, *The Story Hour*, *The Weight of Heaven*, and *The World We Found*.

GOVERNANCE MEETINGS

Wednesday, June 23

- 10 a.m.–2 p.m.
ALA Executive Board I

Friday, June 25

- 11 a.m.–2 p.m. Joint Budget Analysis and Review/Finance and Audit Committee

Sunday, June 27

- 9:30–11:30 a.m.
Planning and Budget Assembly/Division Leadership
- 1:30–3 p.m. Membership Information Session

- 3:15–4:15 p.m.
Membership Meeting

Monday, June 28

- Noon–2 p.m. Council I
- 3–5 p.m. Council II

Tuesday, June 29

- 9 a.m.–noon Council III

Wednesday, June 30

- 10 a.m.–2 p.m.
ALA Executive Board II

Thursday, July 1

- 10 a.m.–2 p.m.
ALA Executive Board III ●

2021 Michael L. Printz Celebration. View a recording of the virtual celebration that took place on Michael L. Printz's birthday, May 27, featuring acceptance speeches from winner Daniel Nayeri, author of *Everything Sad Is Untrue: (a true story)*, and finalists. This annual award is administered by YALSA and sponsored by *Booklist*.

2021 Virtual Odyssey Award Celebration. Hear from the producers, authors, and narrators behind the 2021 Odyssey honorees and award recipients. These recorded Zoom calls offer insight into the production process and feature some exclusive readings. The 2021 winner is Scholastic Audio for *Kent State*, written in verse by Deborah Wiles.

Booklist's Read 'N Rave. Monday, June 28, 10 a.m.

Collection development specialists from across the country gather virtually to dish on their favorite forthcoming titles in a conversation moderated by Donna Seaman, *Booklist's* adult editor.

Celebrating 50 Years of Stonewall Book Awards.

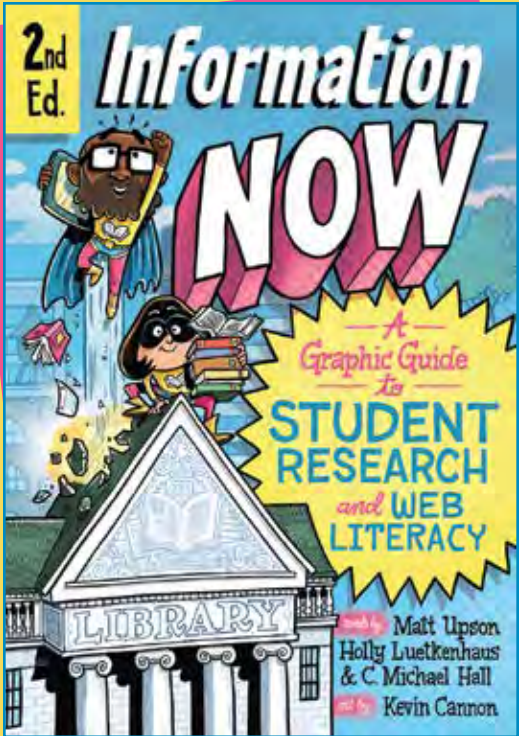
Rae-Anne Montague, assistant professor at Chicago State University's Department of Information Studies and president of ALA's Rainbow Round Table, leads a panel discussion honoring half a century of ALA's premier book awards recognizing LGBTQ+ reading material. [AL](#)

For an up-to-date list of dates and times, see the Annual Conference Scheduler at bit.ly/AC21scheduler.

FEATURED EXHIBITORS


As you gear up for ALA's 2021 Annual Conference and Exhibition Virtual, be sure to support the exhibitors who help make the show possible.

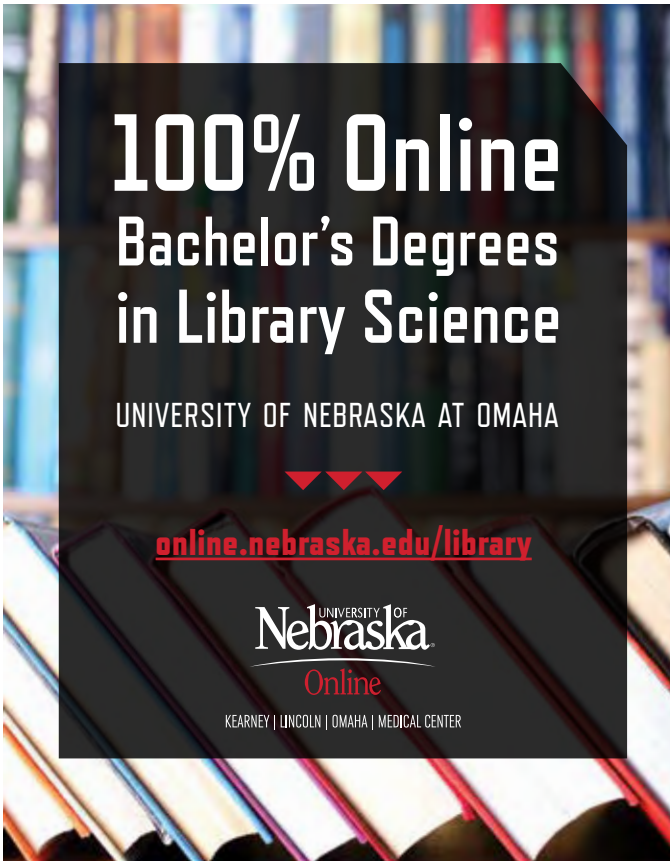
Among the hundreds who exhibit, here are a few we'd like to thank for their continued support of the Association and *American Libraries*. Visit these library vendors, and others, at this year's virtual exhibits, part of the Library Marketplace. Offerings include speakers, event stages, networking opportunities, and ways to connect with vendors. Exhibitor booths are open June 23–26. The below advertisers' special offers include new products, discounts, and more.



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All Good Things ...

Looking back on 14 years
of In Practice

BY Meredith Farkas



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

When I started writing for *American Libraries* in 2007, my column was part of a newly redesigned magazine that had a goal of increasing its technology coverage. I worked in a small rural library in Vermont at the time, and my Technology in Practice column would focus on sharing simple, low-cost technology success stories that most libraries could replicate. I wrote a lot about using social media in libraries when these platforms were in their infancies, long before they became tools of polarization and disinformation. So much has changed since then.

What's striking to me in hindsight is how homogeneous the magazine's contributors and staff were back in 2007. It has been encouraging to see the efforts *AL* staffers have made to include writers of diverse backgrounds and points of view, and with that in mind, I've decided to end this column. There are so many voices in our profession who deserve this platform and whom you deserve to read.

When thinking about how librarianship has changed over the course of my tenure writing this column, it's hard not to consider my own perspective shifts. The fact that I didn't initially notice the lack of diversity of *AL* writers speaks to my awareness gaps at the time. A lot of us were in the grip of vocational awe and technosaviorism in 2007 (bit.ly/AL-SacredStacks). I remember reading articles where librarians were portrayed as selfish for not spending their personal savings to attend library conferences. There was ample rhetoric suggesting that if we didn't adopt the latest technologies, our libraries would become irrelevant (bit.ly/AL-Lib2point0). And most of the writing about diversity and inclusion in our profession was authored by library workers who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color (bit.ly/AL-Kaleidoscopic), as if it were something we didn't *all* need to focus on.

A profession driven by fear of obsolescence can't look inward and meaningfully improve. It has been encouraging to see discussions about labor, collective organizing, mental health, self-care and community care, critical librarianship, and dismantling white supremacy becoming mainstream in our profession. Many conferences now focus specifically on these subjects. Not until we can see ourselves and our work clearly can we create the inclusive libraries all library workers and patrons deserve. We still have a long way to go, but I'm encouraged by the progress.

Former *AL* columnist Andrew Pace (currently of OCLC) championed me for this gig, and his belief in me still means so much almost 15 years on. I can't begin to express my gratitude for the late Leonard Kniffel,

former *AL* editor in chief, who gave an incredible opportunity to a librarian in her 20s who had more chutzpah than experience. He made the columnists feel like part of a family, and I'd never felt so seen and valued as I did with him. I owe a tremendous debt to my editors, Amy Carlton and the late Beverly Goldberg, who supported my work as this column evolved from being focused solely on technology to reflecting on how we work and how we build a better, more values-driven profession. If I look back at my columns over the past few years, they advocate for a slower and more reflective, humane, diverse, and inclusive librarianship. I'm grateful that the *AL* staff allowed my column to grow with me.

Looking at my own learning over these years reminds me of the importance of always being open to change and rethinking—never assuming we already have all the answers. It's through communicating with others,

really listening, and reflecting on our work that we can progress. I'm grateful to the many library workers who generously shared their ideas with me over the years.

I believe we can

deeply connect with our communities, foster antiracist spaces and policies, embrace values-driven work, and develop environments in which every library worker feels supported as a whole person. I can't wait to see what we all do next. **AL**

A profession
driven by fear of
obsolescence can't
look inward and
meaningfully improve.

Recipe for Success

Giving the gift of a documented workflow

BY Erin Baucom



ERIN BAUCOM is associate professor and digital archivist at University of Montana in Missoula.

During a recent digital preservation committee meeting with my regional consortium, it occurred to me that many librarians are performing this type of preservation without even realizing it.

Digital preservation is a relatively young field. And as a result, it lacks established pathways and processes. What's more, guidance for practitioners has been purposefully written from a high-level perspective to allow for flexibility by different types and sizes of institutions. But to translate lofty digital preservation theory into on-the-ground practice, we need workflow documents to break down the necessary steps required to complete a task.

A recipe is a great example. My mother makes an amazing chocolate mousse without written instructions. When I asked for the recipe, it took her four attempts to translate it from brain to paper. The next time I wanted to document one of her recipes, I watched as she cooked and wrote out exactly what she did.

Professional workflows operate the same way. Documenting those tasks that normally go undocumented creates evidence of past and present practices, provides an audit history of processes and tools, and prevents institutional memory from accruing in one person alone.

Workflows can be high-level and theoretical or they can be granular and concrete. High-level workflows are extremely useful when describing interrelated processes that are integral to a task. They are also useful when sharing documentation with fellow institutions, advocating to administrators for resources, or teaching broad concepts. OCLC has published great examples of high-level workflows in digital preservation. (Here's a useful one from 2014: bit.ly/OCLC-workflow.)

Low-level workflows, meanwhile, are more like a recipe. They consist of a series of steps, most often written as instructions, that are followed the same way every time so that tasks are completed efficiently and consistently. These workflows are not necessarily simple; the documentation merely describes the process in such a way that implementors need to make few, if any, independent decisions when following it.

There are many ways to document a workflow, such as visual diagrams, instructional outlines, narrative paragraphs, and spreadsheet-style checklists. With existing processes, I start with an empty surface and a pile of sticky notes. After you and your team think you have written all your steps on individual sticky notes, place them on a surface in the order that you perform the tasks, drawing arrows to indicate the direction of the steps. Getting the documentation correct on the first

pass is rare, so stick and restick as needed, keeping the focus on the bigger picture. The Educopia Institute provides a process map and detailed guidance to help you produce your own born-digital workflow documentation in both visual and descriptive formats (bit.ly/Educopia).

These workflow documents can be useful beyond their original purpose. For instance, sharing your workflows with partner institutions that are beginning or ramping up a program increases your ties to those institutions and saves them time and resources.

Examining your workflow documents allows you to take a critical

look at your processes for gaps, outdated practices, or institutional biases in need of remediation. Examples of institutional biases in archives include how processing priorities are assigned, which donors are

approached for potential collection materials, and how open the archive is to community input on arrangement, description, and access decisions.

Finally, share your workflow documents—or your analysis of your workflows—with administrators and funders. They can provide evidence to support arguments for new resources or potential policy changes and can increase the likelihood that these advocacy efforts will succeed.

Adapted from "Creating Adaptable Digital Preservation Workflows," Library Technology Reports vol. 57, no. 4 (May/June 2021). Read more at bit.ly/ALA-LTR. **AL**

Workflow documents can be useful beyond their original purpose.

What Does It Take?

Examining the skills needed to reach nondominant youth and families

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 15 months, it's likely that your library life has changed. You may have found yourself taking on new tasks or virtualizing storytimes and teen advisory board meetings. Maybe you've been trying to connect with youth and families in your community while your building was closed. Or you found you're working harder to get technology into the hands of those who don't have access to digital resources. And frankly, you may have thought, "I'm not prepared for working in this type of environment."

The pandemic has only reinforced questions youth services staffers have asked themselves before: What skills, knowledge, and mindsets are needed to serve young people and their caregivers in the modern age? And in particular, what does it take to reach nondominant youth and families? (That is, those who belong to historically marginalized groups and may have diminished social or political power.)

Two recent projects are working to address these questions. The first is the Institute of Museum and Library Services-funded Future of Youth Public Librarian Education initiative (bit.ly/AL-fyple), launched in fall 2020 and facilitated by University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill's School of Library and Information Science. The project is a study asking library practitioners, before- and after-school providers, and other stakeholders what qualities youth services staffers in public libraries need in order to serve their communities. Project researchers will investigate competencies such as big-picture and creative thinking, as well as skills such as leadership, change management, mentoring, and facilitation. The UNC team will use its findings to reenvision LIS curricula for youth services librarians.

The second initiative, *Library Staff as Public Servants* (bit.ly/AL-UMDfg), is a field guide I wrote with Mega Subramaniam, associate professor at University of Maryland's College of Information Studies. Last summer, we set out to investigate the mindsets and skills needed to reach nondominant youth and families during crises. We used a codesign process for this study in which 137 library staffers from across the US participated.

The framework that emerged focuses on a set of essential tasks—learning about community, cocreating with community, iterating and assessing with community, and building structures for community—that staff need to embrace. To fulfill these tasks, library staffers need to:

Spend time in the community. Don't talk about what the library can do for community members. Instead, focus on learning about community assets and building relationships with youth, families, and other

stakeholders whose goals align with the library.

Design services cooperatively. Library staffers can no longer come up with a program or service in isolation, or based on a few survey responses by traditional library users. They must design and implement services alongside youth, families, organizations, and other community members based on mutually desired outcomes.

Use outcome-based assessments. We should not expect the library's value to be measured by the number of participants at a storytime. Impact has to be demonstrated by services that are created, implemented, and assessed in partnership with others. In this way, staffers must show how a focus on common goals builds vibrant and sustainable communities.

Create new structures and systems. Staffing models, on-desk time, and user policies must work for the community and not simply for the library. Staffers must truly

Staffing models, on-desk time, and user policies must work for the community and not simply for the library.

take on the role of public servants. The goal is to make sure the public has what it needs to succeed, and formalized systems must be put in place to make that possible.

The pandemic has surely challenged youth services staffers, but it has also provided a unique opportunity

to consider what it takes to better serve communities. If you haven't started thinking about what it takes to do this work, take the leap—it's not too late. **AL**



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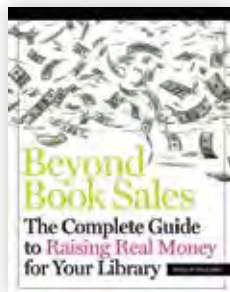
ANNA GOODING-CALL is reference and technology librarian at Nevins Memorial Library in Methuen, Massachusetts.



Crash Course in Library Budgeting and Finance

By Glen E. Holt and Leslie E. Holt

Budgeting and finance can be daunting for people whose previous library experience has focused more on reference or circulation work. But this title delivers a concentrated overview of everything a neophyte library administrator may need, breaking down information about revenue (from grants to loans) and examining legal and practical caveats. A key point in the book is that good money management often rewards itself. Most of its advice is for public libraries, but school, academic, and special libraries do get their moments in the spotlight. It is fair to say that no professional entering a library role with budgetary or fundraising responsibilities should be without this title. Libraries Unlimited, 2016, 207 p. \$45. PBK. 978-1-4408-3474-5. (Also available as an ebook.)



Beyond Book Sales: The Complete Guide to Raising Real Money for Your Library

Edited by Susan Dowd

This book can be read as a step-by-step guide to getting money for libraries—albeit with a heavy emphasis on individual donors. About a quarter of it is devoted to a detailed toolkit designed to guide experts and novices through the intricacies of individual, foundation, and corporate fundraising. While there is a chapter on writing grant proposals, and even lobbying gets some attention, it's important to note that this book advocates for a focus on philanthropy by individual donors. The theory most fervently espoused: 80% of a library's money will come from 20% of its donors, so find those big donors and make your requests count. ALA Neal-Schuman, 2013, 304 p. \$77. PBK. 978-1-55570-912-9. (Also available as an ebook.)



Financial Management for Libraries

By William W. Sannwald

Although focused on budgeting, this book provides helpful perspectives on issues related to library finance, including revenue procurement. Chapters 6 and 7—which place special emphasis on taxes, bonds, and parent-organization funding, along with meticulous budget strategy tips—are essential if you're seeking advice on funding sources. The importance of funding sources perhaps more common to libraries, such as grants and overdue fines, is somewhat diminished in this text. Yet the advice remains valuable, as many librarians will be happy for an extra shoestring or two with which to run programming. Equipped with clear chapter outlines, exercises, and examples, this book should be required reading in any library management course. ALA Neal-Schuman, 2018, 216 p. \$41. PBK. 978-0-8389-1560-8.

by Anna Gooding-Call



40+ New Revenue Sources for Libraries and Nonprofits

By Edmund A. Rossman III

This book is likely to cause a bit of controversy with its emphasis on corporate sponsorships, but it's a worthwhile read for any library professional looking hard at fund-raising options. Getting money from businesses doesn't have to be a deal with the devil, Rossman argues, if proper policies and parameters are established. The first section walks readers through that process, presenting exercises, tips, and vocabulary to guide them through sponsorships without inadvertently becoming an advertising vehicle. The author's background is in public broadcasting, which provides a fresh and interesting perspective on funding cultural endeavors. Don't skip the legal section.

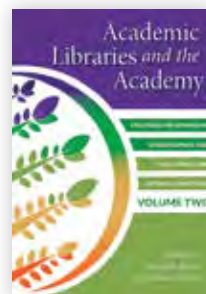
ALA Editions, 2016, 231 p. \$65. PBK.
978-08389-1438-0.



Financial Management in Academic Libraries: Data-Driven Planning and Budgeting


By Robert E. Dugan and Peter Hernon

This short, dense work covers a lot of ground in the realm of library finance, including core values, budgeting, planning, and leadership. Understanding basic concepts like SWOT analysis (which evaluates an organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) is helpful, since the book does not slow for the basics. Much of it concerns budgeting and budget management, but it also dedicates space to library financial duress. This includes a discussion of fraud, which is rare in books like this. While this isn't a book for beginners, it may function as a useful summary of academic library financial management for leaders who find themselves in need of a refresher. Association of College and Research Libraries, 2017, 200 p. \$56. PBK. 978-0-8389-8943-2. (Also available as an ebook.)



Academic Libraries and the Academy: Strategies and Approaches to Demonstrate Your Value, Impact, and Return on Investment, Vol. 2

Edited by Marwin Britto and Kirsten Kinsley

This volume of assessment-focused case studies could be a valuable tool for an academic library seeking ways to prove its worth. It's particularly suitable for digital use, since each chapter begins with a summary that includes keywords, budget size, and details about the case's school. Finding a particular attribute with a text search is easy and can be a significant timesaver. These studies are high-quality, well chosen, and licensed under Creative Commons. The assessment strategies are likely to be most useful to academic libraries, but public and school libraries may want to review them as well. Association of College and Research Libraries, 2018, 320 p. \$70. PBK. 978-0-8389-4870-5. (Also available as an ebook.) 

Low-Vision Accessibility

Products for outreach to those with visual disabilities

BY Carrie Smith

Library users with visual impairments face a number of barriers to access. Adaptive technology has leapt forward in recent years, with artificial intelligence (AI) opening up new possibilities, but more basic technologies are also important in creating a welcoming library experience for users of all ages with visual disabilities. Here we talk with three library workers about their accessibility and outreach efforts, which span multiple levels of technology, from magnifiers to AI-equipped reading devices to art.

Everbright

What is Everbright? Everbright is an interactive light wall. It has knobs all over, and each knob changes color as you turn it. You can create images or patterns by setting the dials to various color shades, and you can program it with different designs and animations, too, for different settings and light shows. It's very sturdy and made to last.

How do you use it? It's a passive programming element in our early childhood play area. It's great for children with low vision because they're able to have tactile control and spin the knobs to make their own art piece. We value how it gives children of all abilities the freedom to create and express themselves in a casual, unstructured way.



USER: KATE SIMPSON, Central Library children's department manager at San Antonio Public Library



Everbright is an interactive light wall with knobs that change color when turned.

What are the main benefits? Kids can just walk right up and touch it and instantly realize what it does and how to manipulate it. This isn't something that requires instructions, and it's something that everyone's partaking in. We have a dedicated space for low-vision resources—our Low Vision Reading Room in the children's area—which contains tactile art. The Everbright wall extends that type of art experience and really draws people in.

What would you like to see improved or changed? The company recommends that you wire Everbright into a light switch so it can be

turned on and off. For our facilities team, that wasn't really an option, so they plugged it into the wall with a timer.

OrCam MyEye 2

What is OrCam? OrCam is a wearable assistive technology device for people who are blind or visually impaired, or have a reading impairment. It is a tiny camera that attaches to eyeglasses with magnets and uses AI to read aloud text, recognize faces, identify products, and more. The natural speaking voice can be slowed down or sped up, and you can change languages and volume to suit your needs. It can read from any surface or digital screen, so it's a natural fit for public library use.

How do you use OrCam? We make the devices available for in-library use on a first-come, first-served basis. We had been splitting usage between our 11 branches and outreach events, but that has changed during the COVID-19 pandemic. OrCam has been tricky to use while observing social distancing, but our staff has



OrCam is a tiny camera that attaches to eyeglasses using magnets.

been providing remote training. Our patrons use the device to read books, do taxes, or go over emails.

What are the main benefits? The portability of the device and clarity of the audio are the main features that attract users. The small size also makes it easy to store at any of our sites. OrCam is suitable for all ages and abilities. It does not have to be connected to Wi-Fi. The company has a responsive and helpful customer service staff.

What would you like to see improved or added to the product? I would like to see this product covered by insurance or made more affordable. Financial assistance is available depending on where the intended user lives and other factors, and veterans may qualify for an OrCam device through Veterans Affairs, but these benefits don't extend to the library.



USER: MARY HOWARD, reference librarian at St. Clair County (Mich.) Library System

Illini Pocket Magnifiers

What are these magnifiers? We worked with ePromos to add our Dakota County Library logo to pocket-size magnifiers from Illini—approximately the size of a library card—that magnify text while you're reading.

How do you use them? We first purchased these as a swag item to give away at events geared toward customers with disabilities. Having our branding on them is a way of saying "The library recognizes and supports you, whatever your abilities or reading needs." Lately, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we've also been keeping them at the service desk. We used to have big magnifiers to lend, so the pocket magnifiers have become a useful way to keep staff safe and give something to a customer that they can keep.

What are the main benefits? The magnifiers are compact and easy to carry. They were relatively cost-effective, and making them available helps encourage people to read. We chose dark blue so when they are up against white paper, it provides a high color contrast, which supports those with any low-vision or learning disability. Magnification can help young children too: Kids who are learning to read sometimes need to look at larger letters to differentiate between them.

What would you like to see improved or changed?

There are pluses and minuses to them being as lightweight as they are, but if the magnifiers had twice the thickness, that would be even better. They're so thin that they can be hard to pick up off a flat surface, and manipulating them can be difficult. **AL**



USER: RENEE GRASSI, youth services manager at Dakota County (Minn.) Library



Dakota County (Minn.) Library added their logo to pocket-size magnifiers.

PEOPLE

Announcements

ON THE MOVE

Tony Benningfield became director of Jefferson County (Mo.) Library April 1.

Charles Diede became executive director of Community Library of DeWitt and Jamesville in New York in December.

Emily Dumas started as director of Troy (Mich.) Public Library February 22.

April 5 **Jina DuVernay** became coordinator of African American studies and primary resource literacy at Atlanta University Center Library.



Katherine Heilman joined University of North Carolina at Greensboro Libraries February 8 as electronic resources librarian and assistant professor in the Department of Technical Services.



On February 25, **Athena N. Jackson** became dean of University of Houston Libraries and Elizabeth D. Rockwell chair.

Sara Jones started as Washington State Librarian February 16.

Jean Maguire became director of Maynard (Mass.) Public Library in January.

Georgetown (Tex.) Public Library named **Sally Miculek** director March 10.

Seth Porter became dean of Kraemer Family Library at University of Colorado in Colorado Springs April 26.

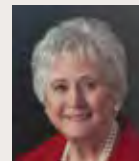


Amber Potts was named associate director of Henderson County (Ky.) Public Library in March.

March 1 **Raymond Pun** joined Stanford (Calif.) University's Hoover Institution Library and Archives as education and outreach manager.

In Memory

Margaret Carty, 82, executive director of the Maryland Library Association (MLA) since 1999, died February 4. During her tenure, she revitalized MLA, building a sustainable conference and forging partnerships with NASA and the Delaware Library Association. Carty was recognized as one of Maryland's Top 100 Women in 2013 by the *Maryland Daily Record*.



Loretta "Lolly" Eggers, 91, died February 26. She worked at Iowa City (Iowa) Public Library from 1969–1994, including 20 years as director. During her tenure, Eggers helped to modernize the library, and in 1980 it became one of the first in the country to have computerized checkout and catalog systems. She wrote the books *A Century of Stories: The History of the Iowa City Public Library, 1896–1997* and *Iowa City's Irving Weber: A Biography*.

Jack Ellenberger, 90, former president of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL), died November 21. He started his career as law librarian at the US Department of Health before working at several law firms. He received AALL's Marian Gould Gallagher Distinguished Service Award in 1994 and is a member of the AALL hall of fame.

Mena Hedin, 83, librarian at Marlborough (Mass.) Public Library until retiring in 2012, died January 14. She started as a page and worked for the library for 58 years.

Margaret Howard, 96, retired librarian at Cherokee Lane and Seabrook elementary schools in Prince George's County, Maryland, died January 10.

Leonard Kniffel, 73, editor in chief of *American Libraries* (AL) from 1996 until his 2011 retirement, died March 19. He started his library career as a page at Detroit Public Library in 1970 and joined AL in 1988. Kniffel wrote several books, including *A Polish Son in the Motherland* and *Busia: School Days on the Farm with My Polish*



Shannon Sandefur was named director of Henderson County (Ky.) Public Library in March.

Juanita Thacker became information literacy lecturer in the Department of Research, Outreach, and Instruction at University of North Carolina at Greensboro Libraries January 11.



Dayton (Ohio) Metro Library appointed **Jeffrey Trzeciak** executive director, effective in April.

Marcellus Turner became CEO and chief librarian of Charlotte Mecklenburg (N.C.) Library April 1.

PROMOTIONS

Schlow Centre Region Library in State College, Pennsylvania, promoted **Lisa Rives Collens** to library director, effective April 3.

Erica Hout was promoted to director of Boylston (Mass.) Public Library in March.

Grandmother. After retirement, he dedicated much of his attention to Polish librarians and the Polish diaspora, becoming executive director of the Polish American Librarians Association in 2014.

Sydelle Fay “Sydie” Freidlin Marcus, 78, a retired school librarian, died February 27. She worked most recently at Yorktown (Va.) Elementary School but previously served as librarian at Mount Vernon High School in Alexandria and as head research librarian for Arlington Public Schools.

Paula Montgomery, 74, a school librarian, educator, publisher, and speaker, died March 3. She began her library career at Montgomery County (Md.) Public Schools before serving as chief of school library media services at the Maryland State Department of Education from 1979 to 1988. In 1989 she became assistant professor at Western Maryland College. She also published *School Library Media Activities Monthly*, a magazine of activities for school librarians to use in their lessons, and *Crinkles*, a children’s magazine with activities to help develop curiosity and research skills.

Margaret Shaffer, 80, a librarian for 35 years and director of Terrebonne Parish (La.) Library from 1973 to 1995, died January 30.

Regina Slezak, 76, former director of Newport (R.I.) Public Library, died December 11. Slezak had also served as children’s librarian at Ridgewood (N.J.) Public Library, coordinator of East Providence (R.I.) Public Library, and director of Fall River (Mass.) Public Library. In the 1970s, she taught library science at the Western Australian Institute of Technology in Perth and helped to develop Sydney’s public library system.

Marie Louise Sorensen, 86, a longtime librarian at DeKalb (Ill.) Community School District, died December 16. ●



Pat Gwyn retired as branch librarian at Mount Airy (N.C.) Public Library January 31.

Joann Hohensee retired as librarian at Harwinton (Conn.) Public Library in February.

Pam Klipsch retired as director of Jefferson County (Mo.) Library March 31.

Faith R. Lee, reference librarian at Falmouth (Mass.) Public Library, retired in February.

Janet W. Loveless, assistant director of Nassau County (Fla.) Public Library, retired March 10.



March 12 **Anne Mackereth** retired as director of library services and assistant professor at Northwestern Health Sciences University in Bloomington, Minnesota.

March 4 **Tom Moak** retired as manager of Mid-Columbia Libraries’ West Richland (Wash.) branch, after 41 years with the system.

Westbrook (Conn.) Public Library Children’s Librarian **Mary Nyman** retired April 30.

Maggie Kinney was promoted to manager of the Coventry Village branch of Heights Libraries in Cleveland Heights, Ohio, in March.

On March 22 New York Public Library promoted **Emily Nichols** to associate director of children’s services.

Hillary Ostlund was promoted to director of Hillsboro (Ore.) Public Library April 1.



RETIREMENTS

Cathi Alloway retired as director of Schlow Centre Region Library in State College, Pennsylvania, April 2.

Pam Frazier, head of children’s services at Crandall Public Library in Glens Falls, New York, retired February 4.

March 1 **Patricia Gray** retired as manager of the Coventry Village branch of Heights Libraries in Cleveland Heights, Ohio.

AT ALA

Lainie Castle, deputy director of the Public Programs Office, left March 8.

Ni’Shele Jackson, program assistant for the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), left April 8.

YALSA Communications Specialist **Anna Lam** left March 12.

Nichole O’Connor, YALSA program officer for conferences and events, left April 2. AL



Archiving the Aftermath

Nearly 150 years after it leveled 18,000 buildings and killed 300 people, the Great Chicago Fire (October 8–10, 1871) lives on—in the city’s tourist attractions, sports team names, and soon in a Chicago History Museum exhibit commemorating its anniversary this fall.

“It’s just amazing how much the aftermath was documented,” says Ellen Keith, director of the museum library. The library’s holdings include period maps and stereographs (an early form of three-dimensional photographs popular in the 19th century) depicting the burned areas of the city, transcripts of the 1871 fire department hearings, a 1997 mayoral resolution exonerating Mrs. O’Leary and her cow of blame for setting the blaze, and even sheet music for songs about the fire. But it’s the hundreds of personal narratives that are most powerful, says Keith. “What makes [these accounts] both interesting and special is that they’re everyday people.”

Materials related to the fire represent only a fraction of the collection’s 23,000 linear feet; on any given day, Keith and her staff field requests from students, historians, media, documentary filmmakers, authors, and Chicago enthusiasts on a slew of subjects. “World’s Columbian Exposition popularity will never diminish,” she says, nor will queries on house history—a tricky topic, considering Chicago streets were renumbered in 1909 and renamed continuously.

As for Keith’s favorite item? The library’s Sanborn fire insurance maps, hefty volumes that outlined city structures and color-coded building materials to assess risk. “They’re sort of a snapshot of how a neighborhood would change over time. They were expensive to reprint, so when they updated one, they would paste over [the old maps],” says Keith, “which I really find archaeological.” **AL**

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

Celebrate Banned Books Week

SEPTEMBER 26 – OCTOBER 2, 2021

Books unite us. Censorship divides us. During Banned Books Week, build connections, ignite discussions, and bring readers together to support the freedom to read.

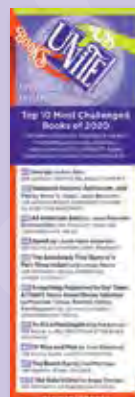
Banned Books Week is an annual event that highlights the benefits of unrestricted reading and draws attention to censorship attempts. Find program and display ideas at ala.org/bbooks.



Books Unite Us Poster



Books Unite Us Bookmark



Most Challenged Books of 2020 Bookmark



Field Report 2020 50-Pack

An excellent handout, with descriptions of public challenges and the list of the Top 10 Most Challenged Books!



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