

american libraries

May 2023

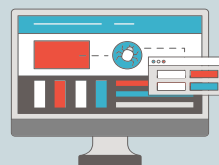
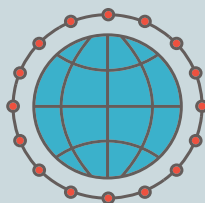
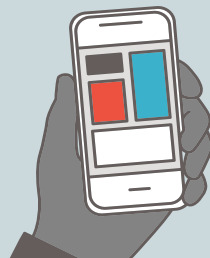
THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION



MARSHALL BREEDING'S

LIBRARY SYSTEMS

REPORT p.20



NEWSMAKER:

Angie Thomas p.18

**Teens Fight
Book Bans** p.32

PLUS: Cartoon Archive,
Wi-Fi Benches, Flower Power



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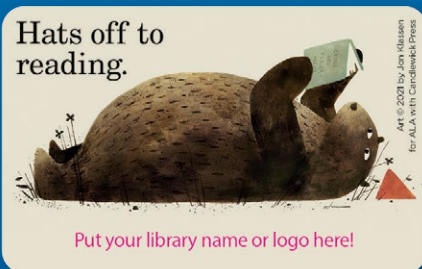
Front Desk
Library Card Art



READ Your Way
Library Card Art



Tattoo
Library Card Art



Hats Off to Reading
Library Card Art



posters
bookmarks
gifts
incentives

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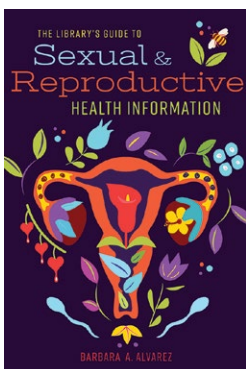
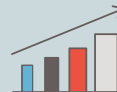
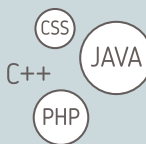
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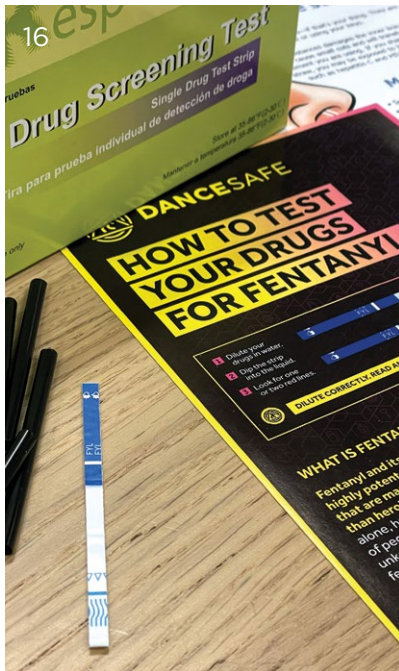
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Favorite comic strip or cartoon?

from the
EDITOR

Reclaiming Their Voice



Sanhita SinhaRoy

May means two things for the *American Libraries* team: warmer Chicago weather and our annual Library Systems Report (cover story, p. 20). This year, library technology consultant Marshall Breeding evaluates the advances in open source alternatives that are making the library technology market increasingly global and competitive. Always insightful, Breeding's analysis also urges us to watch for innovations in the coming year that include artificial intelligence and analytics solutions.

Something else many of us have been tracking: stories about book bans and challenges. In late March, the Association released new data (p. 9) documenting a record 1,269 demands to censor library books and resources in 2022, nearly double the number of challenges reported the previous year. This steep rise comes as no surprise, but as Emily Udell reports in "Meeting the Challenge" (p. 32), plenty of teens are "speaking up for intellectual freedom, and librarians are finding ways to support their activism." These students are reclaiming their voice through book clubs, teen councils, and focus groups. One teen even won a seat on his school district's board of trustees.

Acclaimed author Angie Thomas knows a thing or two about book challenges. Her bestselling debut novel, *The Hate U Give*, has frequently appeared on ALA's list of the Top 10 Most Challenged Books. Thomas spoke with Associate Editor Diana Panuncial about the damaging message book bans send to kids and how a librarian changed her life (Newsmaker, p. 18).

If news of book bans has you searching for calm, turn to page 12 to learn about libraries offering programming on Ikebana, the ancient Japanese art of flower arranging ("Flower Power"). Or discover how libraries' Wi-Fi-enabled benches are addressing community connectivity needs ("Sit and Surf," p. 14). Or, if you have fond memories of flipping through the Sunday comics as a kid, you may enjoy our Bookend ("A Library of Laughs," p. 48).

Wherever you find your power, we hope you also find inspiration and fun along the way.

Sanhita

After feeling silenced or ignored in the book challenge debate, many teens are reclaiming their voice through activism.

A Global Impact

Transforming shared professional values into collective action



**Lessa Kanani'opua
Pelayo-Lozada**

Although countries and regions may have different governments, values, and characteristics, we all have the same basic human needs and share many of the same challenges.

The interconnectedness of our world has been highlighted for many of us over the past few years. Although countries and regions may have different governments, values, and characteristics, we all have the same basic human needs and share many of the same challenges.

For me, this was on full view during my international travels representing ALA last year. When other library workers and I attended the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions' World Library and Information Congress (IFLA WLIC) in Dublin, Ireland, in July, we heard from Mary Robinson, the first female president of Ireland who now works as a climate activist. She outlined the following five injustices of climate change during her IFLA WLIC talk:

- **Racial.** Climate change disproportionately affects communities of color.
- **Gender.** Women disproportionately bear the extra burden.
- **Intergenerational.** The effects of climate change are inherited by the young.
- **Development.** Pathways to becoming “developed” countries are often built on fossil fuels.
- **Nature.** Climate change erodes biodiversity and increases the chance of extinction on our planet.

Setting the stage for a global conference within the context of climate injustice and its realities emphasized not only the moral imperative we have in tackling climate change but also a practical one. If we don't change our course and engage in collective action, we will not have a world in which to live freely. It would be a world devoid of libraries and library workers.

The topic of our interconnectedness came up again when I keynoted the Sharjah International Library Conference and Book Fair in the United Arab Emirates in November. There, I heard presentations and saw posters on the importance

of fighting misinformation around the pandemic and COVID-19 vaccinations, promoting literacy among middle schoolers in a hybrid school environment, and recruiting new voices into the library field, all topics I have heard addressed at recent ALA and chapter conferences.

Late last year, when I traveled to Mexico to attend the Guadalajara International Book Fair—the largest book fair in the Americas—the enthusiasm for representation and voices across Spanish-speaking countries and communities was incomparable. The connections made by librarians from the US, many sponsored by ALA to attend the event, were ones that will cultivate and affect communities far beyond what publishers could imagine. Presses and publishers, both big and small, were able to share stories and journeys from around the world.

It is often easy to forget that we are part of all these communities, regardless of where we live, work, and create. Although many of our international colleagues are halfway around the world, the issues we face are the same. Sharing on a global scale lets us know we are not alone and activates us toward collective action.

The measures we take on behalf of our local communities are also felt at the state, national, and international levels. For instance, consider the efforts of ALA's Committee on Sustainability and the International Relations Committee's UN Sustainable Development Goals Subcommittee, both of which help implement this core value through policies, procedures, and practices.

As library workers in the US, we are inspired by and inspiring to library workers and libraries across the world. Our professional values and standards set the model for work not just at ALA but also for libraries around the globe. **ALA**

LESSA KANANI'OPUA PELAYO-LOZADA is adult services assistant manager at Palos Verdes Library District in Rolling Hills Estates, California.

Reading for Our Lives

The rise in censorship is a litmus test of our democracy



Tracie D. Hall

It is no accident that attempts to discredit BIPOC and LGBTQIA people are accompanied by legislation to silence them.

In mid-March, I spoke on a panel at the South by Southwest EDU conference in Texas to discuss the alarming and increasingly weaponized attempts to ban and remove books from public and school libraries. Joining me on the panel were Carolyn Foote, retired school librarian and FReadom Fighters cofounder; Kelvin Watson, executive director of Las Vegas–Clark County (Nev.) Library District; and moderator John Bracken, executive director of the Digital Public Library of America.

I looked out at the crowd and—understanding both the weight of the moment and where the conversation was taking place—I commented on the connection between attempted book banning today and the McCarthy-era attempts at cultural disenfranchisement. The rationale behind these attempts is the same: silencing people who are errantly believed to be aberrations.

I said to the audience, “Those of you who would have imagined yourself being on the right side of history 70 or 80 years ago, now is your time. If we are silent and lose the right to read freely, it will be our own fault.”

That quote and the wisdom shared by my co-presenters were included in local media coverage. The next morning my email inbox included messages that suggested I be sent “back to Africa” and warned that espousing intellectual freedom might put me in harm’s way. Those are not the first threats that I and other ALA colleagues have received as we work toward ALA’s mission to “enhance learning and ensure access to information for all,” ideals that have become fighting words.

Similarly, the content of these specific threats reiterated the connection between race and the right to read. The fact that my belief in intellectual freedom was grounds for dispossession of my citizenship and being “sent back” to Africa (a continent that, to be sure, is home to some of my favorite places) emphasizes a point that

Toronto Public Library’s keenly insightful city librarian, Vickery Bowles, made at the recent Knight Foundation library conference: Racial equity and intellectual freedom operate as mutually reinforcing principles.

It is no accident that attempts to discredit BIPOC—and LGBTQIA—communities are accompanied by legislation to silence them. And attempts to silence these communities are redoubled by efforts to portray them as the “other.”

It is because we have seen this playbook before and cannot afford to be silent that I am grateful to NBC affiliate WMAQ-TV and its talk show *Chicago Today* for partnering with ALA to create the country’s first on-air banned books club, which launched in January.

To date, the show’s cohosts and I have profiled George M. Johnson’s *All Boys Aren’t Blue* and Sandra Cisneros’s *House on Mango Street*. Both authors have also appeared on the show to discuss their works in their own words to great response. The collaboration is a collective effort to combat silence and complicity around censorship and to champion libraries as institutions that uphold our right to encounter new and different ideas.

As then–US Sen. John F. Kennedy said at a literary gathering in 1959, “If this nation is to be wise as well as strong, if we are to live up to our national promise and live up to our national destiny, then we need more new ideas for more wise men reading more good books in more public libraries.... [We must] know all the facts and hear all the alternatives and listen to all the criticisms. Let us welcome controversial books and controversial authors. For the Bill of Rights is the guardian of our security as well as our liberty.”

Please join me and ALA in upholding this promise of democracy. **ALA**

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

🐦 Ever wonder how #bookbanning impacts #librarians and school administrators? Find out in this article by @zulkey, which highlights stories and defense efforts across five states. #libraries #censorship

@LWB_USA, in response to "When It Happens to You" (Nov./Dec. 2022, p. 20)

Extending Thanks

I so appreciate the magnificent job done in preparing the *AL Direct* e-newsletter. I read every issue with great joy and respect for all the hard work done by ALA and our public libraries.

It is my honor and privilege to be the executive director of San Juan Community Library. We are the only lending library open to the general public in the city of San Juan, Puerto Rico. Our community library has celebrated National Library Week for more than 15 years, and we loved this year's theme, "There's More to the Story."

As an administrator, I am grateful for everything I learn from our ALA.

Connie Estades
Guaynabo, Puerto Rico

Frontline Experiences

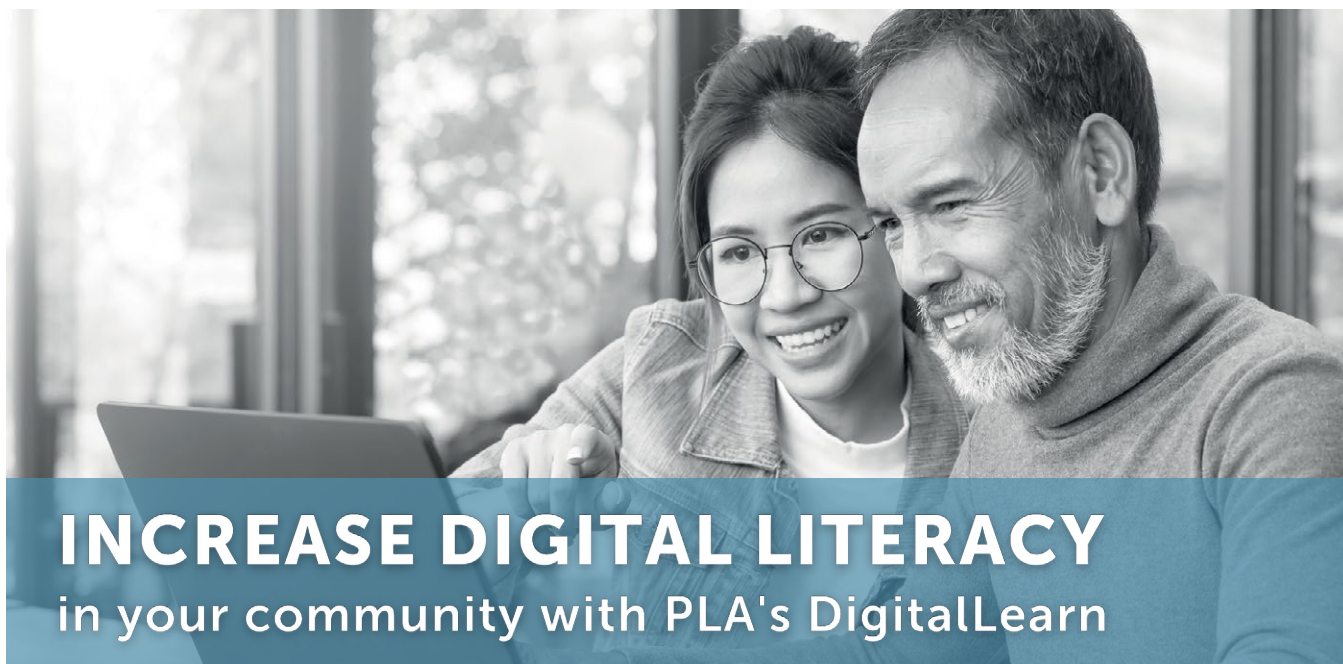
In the January/February issue, *American Libraries* featured an article on public library directors who have resigned for various reasons, such as constant attacks from conservative groups and pushes for book bans ("Under Pressure," p. 20). But no frontline employees were interviewed, when they seemingly are also under attack and have fewer protections than a director, are paid less, and are

more likely to remain working in the library where attacks are taking place. What happens to these employees who may not be able to quit? Would love a follow-up in a future issue since ALA cares about all workers.

Hélène Huet
Gainesville, Florida

International Support

I was gratified to see the recent article about helping Ukraine ("A Helping Hand," Nov./Dec. 2022, p. 30). I appreciated the information about contributing to ALA's Ukraine Library Relief Fund and the on-the-ground assistance for arriving Ukrainians.



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I was surprised that the first part of the article referencing the First Aid and Resilience for Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis (FAR) network had no specific information about the network's efforts, given that FAR's parent organization, the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), has been working to save cultural heritage for over 50 years. Providing the parent



organization's website would have been easy and helpful (bit.ly/ICCROM-FAR).

There may be members who are not familiar with some of the national and international organizations who work in all areas of the world to save

cultural heritage, ICCROM being one. There may be librarians who are members and others who may wish to become involved.

Jeanne Drewes
Washington, D.C.

We ❤️ our library and archive team! Check out this lovely story featuring them, hot off the electric press.

@WRITERSGUILD, in response to "Flipping the Script" (Mar./Apr., p. 48)

CORRECTION

In our 2023 LibLearnX Preview (Jan./Feb.), we mistakenly listed Emily Darowski as a copresenter of the "Organizing for Change" session (p. 38). The correct presenter was Emily Drabinski.

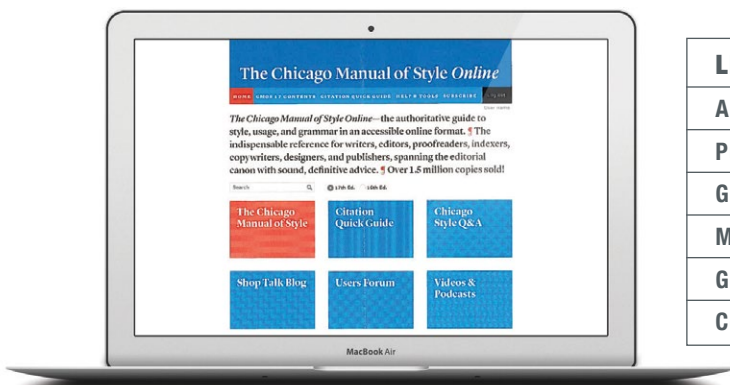
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ALA Condemns Ongoing Threats against Libraries

On March 27, the American Library Association (ALA) Executive Board issued a statement condemning violence, threats of violence, and other acts of intimidation that have been increasingly taking place in US libraries, including the bomb threats that first occurred at Hilton (N.Y.) Central School District on March 22.

The statement reads, in part: "ALA stands with New York, its library community, educators, and those across the country who courageously continue to face down threats to their personal and professional well-being because of their efforts to celebrate diversity and foster inclusion within their communities, while holding the belief that every human being deserves respect and dignity.

"The message of libraries is one of openness and the welcoming of people everywhere who believe in the peaceful exchange of ideas. Libraries are committed to upholding

and defending the core values of inclusion and free and equal access to ideas and information, which are essential to an informed democratic society. The freedom to read is a constitutionally protected right. Reading choices must be left to the reader, and in the case of children, their parents. Threats of physical harm and harassment are not, and never have been, protected speech."

ALA President Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lozada said in the statement, "Every day professional librarians sit down with parents to thoughtfully determine what reading material is best suited for their children's needs. Now, many library workers face threats to their employment, their personal safety, and in some cases, threats of prosecution for providing books to youth that they and their parents want to read."

For more information, visit bit.ly/ALA-0327statement. ●

Freedom to Read Foundation Receives Innovator's Award

On February 23, the Freedom to Read Foundation (FTRF) announced it had won the *Los Angeles Times* Festival of Books' 2022 Innovator's Award, to be received at an April 21 ceremony. The award recognizes efforts to advance books, publishing, and storytelling.

"We are grateful to the *Los Angeles Times* for recognizing the Freedom to Read Foundation's efforts to ensure everyone's right to read freely as guaranteed in the First Amendment," said FTRF President Peter Coyl in the announcement. "With unprecedented attacks on librarians and increasingly brazen efforts to take books away from schools and children, the mission of the foundation is more important now than ever. We hope this award will serve as a clarion call for others to join in the fight to preserve one of our most precious freedoms."

For more information, visit bit.ly/FTRF-LATAward.

Registration for ALA's 2023 Annual Conference Opens

Registration is now open for ALA's 2023 Annual Conference and Exhibition, to be held June 22–27 in Chicago.

The conference will include more than 160 educational programs and 500 exhibitors, a variety of professional development opportunities, a slate of more than a dozen speakers, and more than 300 established and new authors.

For additional information, visit alaannual.org.

ALA Council Elects Three Members to Executive Board

ALA Council has elected Stephanie Chase, Sophia Sotilleo, and Steven Yates to serve on ALA's Executive Board. The election took place February 2. The three elected board

members will begin a three-year term in July 2023.

Chase is executive director of Libraries of Eastern Oregon and founding principal of the Constructive Disruption consultancy. She currently serves on the Public Library Association's (PLA) board of directors and is a member of her state chapter's equity, diversity, inclusion, and antiracism committee.

Sotilleo is dean of Thurgood Marshall Library at Bowie State University in Prince George's County, Maryland. She is currently vice president of FTRF.

Yates is associate professor and assistant director at University of Alabama's School of Library and Information Studies in Tuscaloosa. He is a Policy Corps advisory group member, member of ALA President Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lozada's advisory group, and chair of the Committee on Library Advocacy.

For more information, visit bit.ly/ALAEB2023.

Book Challenges Nearly Doubled in 2022

On March 22, ALA announced that there were 1,269 demands to censor library books and resources in 2022. This is the highest number of attempted book bans since the Association began compiling this data more than 20 years ago, and is nearly double the record-breaking 729 challenges reported in 2021.

A record 2,571 unique titles were targeted for censorship last year, a 38% increase from the 1,858 titles targeted in 2021. The majority of challenged books were written by or about members of the LGBTQIA+ community and people of color. Of the reported book challenges, 58% took place within schools and 41% within public libraries. Additionally, 90% of these challenges were attempts to censor multiple titles at once; 40% of cases were attempts to censor 100 or more books.

“Overwhelmingly, we’re seeing these challenges come from organized censorship groups that target local library board meetings to demand removal of a long list of books they share on social media,” said Deborah Caldwell-Stone, director of ALA’s Office for Intellectual Freedom, in the announcement. “The choice of what to read must be left to the reader or, in the case of children, to parents. That choice does not belong to self-appointed book police.”

For more information on how to support ALA’s fight against censorship through its Unite Against Book Bans initiative, visit bit.ly/ALA-BookBans22. ●

Six Libraries to Host Traveling Exhibit

On January 30, in collaboration with the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History’s Human Origins Program, ALA announced that six public libraries have been selected to host the traveling exhibition “Exploring Human Origins: Promoting a National Conversation on Human Evolution.”

Libraries will host the exhibit for a six- to nine-week loan period from December 2023 to July 2026. They are expected to engage local audiences to explore how, when, and where human qualities emerged. The exhibit consists of panels, interactive kiosks, hands-on displays, and videos. It is also designed to encourage public conversation on what it means to be human—welcoming the experiences of all people and fostering

greater appreciation of the complexity of human evolution.

The exhibit is administered by ALA’s Public Programs Office (PPO). For more information and to view the list of selected sites, visit bit.ly/ALA-HOPEXhibit.

School Librarians Invited to Apply for Program Award

PPO announced on February 1 that school librarians are invited to apply for the 2023 Sara Jaffarian School Library Program Award, a \$5,000 prize recognizing outstanding K–8 humanities programming. Nominations will be accepted until May 5.

ALA’s Jaffarian Award—established in 2006 and named for late school librarian Sara Jaffarian, a longtime ALA member—aims to recognize school humanities programs that broaden

CALENDAR

APR. 30–MAY 6

Preservation Week
preservationweek.org

JUNE

Rainbow Book Month
ala.org/rt/rrt

JUNE 22–27

ALA’s 2023 Annual Conference
Chicago
alaannual.org

AUG. 21–25

IFLA World Library and Information Congress 2023
Rotterdam, Netherlands
2023.ifla.org

OCT.

TeenTober
ala.org/yalsa/teentober

OCT. 1–7

Banned Books Week
bannedbooksweek.org

OCT. 4

Banned Websites Awareness Day
ala.org/aasl/advocacy/bwad

OCT. 15–21

National Friends of Libraries Week
bit.ly/ALA-NFLW

OCT. 19–21

AASL National Conference
Tampa, Florida
bit.ly/AASL-23

OCT. 23–29

Open Access Week
openaccessweek.org

NOV.

International Games Month
bit.ly/ALA-igm

NOV. 10–12

YALSA’s Young Adult Services Symposium
St. Louis
ala.org/yalsa/yasymposium

JAN. 19–22, 2024

2024 LibLearnX
Baltimore
2024.alaliblearnx.org

UPDATE

perspectives and help students understand the wider world and their place in it. PPO presents the award annually in cooperation with the American Association of School Librarians.

Public and private school libraries in the US that serve any combination of grades K–8 and are staffed by a state-certified librarian are eligible to apply. Librarians are encouraged to self-nominate. Nominated programs must have taken place during the 2022–2023 school year. For more information, visit bit.ly/ALA-SJAward23.

Recipients of Jason Reynolds Travel Grant Announced

On February 13, ALA announced the inaugural recipients of the Jason Reynolds/Simon & Schuster Travel Grants. The annual grant will award five Black or African American librarians who work with youth in public or school libraries.

Recipients will receive \$1,500–\$3,000 to pay for expenses to attend ALA's 2023 Annual Conference, including a ticket to the June 25 Coretta Scott King Book Awards Round Table Breakfast, where they will be honored.

The grants were established in 2022 to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion within the library profession. Recipients were selected by ALA representatives.

For more information, including a list of this year's recipients, visit bit.ly/JRSSGrant-2023.

LiteracyNation Becomes New ALA Affiliate

On March 6, ALA Council announced it had approved LiteracyNation Inc. as an affiliate organization of the Association.

LiteracyNation's mission is to advance and advocate for diversity and inclusion in books and digital resources in libraries, specifically those written by authors in groups underrepresented by mainstream publishing houses and libraries. The organization has more than 2,100 members and is based in Philadelphia.

ALA Council approved the affiliation January 29 during the 2023 LibLearnX



Fulton County (Ga.) Library System's Central Library in Atlanta

Last Chance for 2023 Library Design Showcase Submissions

American Libraries is now accepting submissions for the 2023 Library Design Showcase, our annual feature celebrating new and newly renovated libraries of all types. The showcase will appear in the September/October 2023 issue.

We are looking for examples of innovative library architecture that address patrons' needs in unique, interesting, and effective ways. We are also interested in submissions from libraries that are approaching building design and renovation with sustainability in mind.

If your library is on the cutting edge, we want our readers to know. To be eligible, projects must have been completed between May 1, 2022, and April 30, 2023. The submission deadline is May 31, 2023. Unfortunately, not all submissions can be featured.

To have your library considered, send a completed submission form (bit.ly/23DesignShowcaseForm) and at least five high-resolution digital images with photographer credits to americanlibraries@ala.org via Dropbox or another file-sharing service.

View last year's showcase at bit.ly/2022DesignShowcase. For more information, email americanlibraries@ala.org. ●

conference in New Orleans. For more information, visit bit.ly/ALA-LiteracyNation.

Public Libraries Magazine Announces Contest Winners

Public Libraries, the magazine of the PLA, announced the 2023 recipients of

its Feature Article Contest. Members of the *Public Libraries Advisory Subcommittee* select two submissions from public librarians or library workers who authored articles in the magazine during the previous year.

The first prize of \$500 was awarded to Jennifer Brown, executive director,

and Nora Mulligan, head of adult services, from the Field Library in Peekskill, New York, for their feature article “When First Amendment Auditors Visit Your Library.”

The honorable mention prize of \$300 was awarded to Jenn McKague, outreach services librarian at Salt Lake County (Utah) Library, for the article “Strengthening Communities: Outreach Services to Persons Who Are Incarcerated and Those Reentering Society.”

For more information, visit bit.ly/PLA-Contest23.

Rainbow Round Table Releases Top 10 Book List

On February 13, the Over the Rainbow Book List committee of ALA’s Rainbow Round Table released its Top 10 Book List and annotated shortlist of the best queer literature for adults released in 2022. In light of recent book challenges, this year

the committee also released the complete list of 298 fiction, nonfiction, and poetry titles considered in order to increase visibility of LGBTQIA+ stories, authors, and publishers.

For more information, and to view the lists, visit bit.ly/OTRBookList2022.

2022 Best Graphic Novels Lists Announced

On February 9, ALA’s Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table (GNCRT) released its 2022 Best Graphic Novels lists for children and adults. The lists highlight titles published from late 2021 to 2022, with a goal of increasing awareness of the graphic novel medium, amplifying the voices of its diverse creators, and aiding library staff in developing graphic novel collections.

GNCRT is now accepting nominations for its 2023 Best Graphic Novel lists through its website. Fiction and

nonfiction graphic novels published between September 1, 2022, and December 31, 2023, are eligible for submission.

For more information, and to view the 2022 list for adults, visit bit.ly/GNCRTList-Adult22. To view the 2022 list for children, visit bit.ly/GNCRTList-Children22.

Joann Sweetland Lum Memorial Grant Recipient Named

On March 6, the Young Adult Library Services Association named Jessica Lorentz Smith, a teacher-librarian from Bend (Ore.) Senior High School, as the recipient of this year’s Joann Sweetland Lum Memorial Grant. The annual \$1,000 grant recognizes a librarian who has created an innovative project promoting literacy over the past year.

Applications must be received each year by December 1. For more information, visit bit.ly/YALSAgrants. ^{AL}

Join *American Libraries* Associate Editor Diana Panuncial as she hosts conversations with librarians, authors, thinkers, and scholars about topics from the library world and beyond. Listen now to these recent episodes:

- EPISODE 81**
Pandemic Pivots
- EPISODE 80**
Reading Romance
- EPISODE 79**
Back in the Big Easy
- EPISODE 78**
2022 Author Chats
- EPISODE 77**
Medical Librarianship
- EPISODE 76**
Oh, the Horror!



Find us at bit.ly/CallNumberPodcast or wherever you listen to podcasts.

TRENDS



Certified ikebana instructor Huimei Lai (seated) provides feedback to a student during a February class for older adults at Scripps Miramar Ranch Library in San Diego.

A display of community

At SMRL, certified ikebana instructor Huimei Lai teaches the art form in weekly classes to adults 55 and older. The program, which charges patrons a small fee for floral materials, is offered through the San Diego College of Continuing Education's Emeritus Program.

Lai has taught the course at the library for two semesters and consistently has a full house. The oldest student recently celebrated her 90th birthday. "We share happy things, as well as sadness," she says. For example, when one student received a cancer diagnosis and stopped coming, Lai encouraged them to return. Once back, she saw their emotional transformation as a result of being in a supportive and social environment. "The class has become like a community," she says.

For each workshop, Lai brings flowers, leaves, and branches that she divides among the class. Students bring their own *kenzan* (similar to a flower frog, or pin holder), vases, and floral clippers. Lai starts with a brief lecture, reviews materials, and does a demo. Then students make their arrangements and she provides feedback.

The art form helps students work on manual dexterity and express their creative side, says Beatty. "Because it's hands-on," he says, "it works well for people who may have problems hearing straight-forward lectures."

Another plus, Beatty notes, are the mental health benefits. "People

Flower Power

Japanese floral arranging helps library patrons go with the flow

BY Alison Marcotte

Ikebana—the ancient Japanese art of flower arranging—is finding new fans among library patrons. Through online and in-person workshops and exhibitions, many participants find that it brings them a welcome sense of relief and calm, as well as new skills.

"People who come are fully engaged in the process," says Matt Beatty, branch manager at

San Diego Public Library's Scripps Miramar Ranch Library (SMRL).

More than simply decorative, ikebana is about noticing and appreciating the beauty of nature and bringing the indoors and outdoors together. Using principles of minimalism, silence, shape, and line, practitioners select living branches, flowers, leaves, and other natural elements to create expressive arrangements.

“The kids slowed down.... It created thoughtfulness in the room. I think it was the calmest program I’ve ever done.”

ROXANNE RINGER, assistant branch manager at Kingstowne Library in Alexandria, Virginia

have a greater feeling of isolation than they did prepandemic,” he says. “There’s been a shift in outlook. People look at programming now as a way to meet up with others more than they did before.”

Slowing down

Roxanne Ringer, assistant branch manager at Kingstowne Library and former youth services manager at Great Falls Library (GFL)—both part of Fairfax County (Va.) Public Library—hosted an ikebana program for kids at GFL in 2019.

The program was done in collaboration with the Great Falls Garden Club. For the event, club members dressed up as flowers, did a demo, and provided worksheets on the rules of ikebana.

Ringer says that while a lot of children’s programs are fast paced, this was different. “The kids slowed down and listened and were very conscientious about how they placed their flowers,” she says.

The meditative atmosphere encouraged imaginative thinking skills, Ringer recalls. “It created thoughtfulness in the room,” she

says. “I think it was the calmest program I’ve ever done.”

‘A joyful effect’

For 15 years, Boulder (Colo.) Public Library (BPL) and the state chapter of the Ikenobo Ikebana Society of America (IISA) have partnered to host an annual, two-day ikebana exhibition, featuring work by practitioners from all over the Boulder area. Sponsored by the Boulder Arts Council, the juried show is one of the library’s most popular annual events, drawing more than 5,600 people last fall.

“Last year in particular, people enjoyed just being out—it felt like getting back to normal,” says Dan Dell’Agnese, president of IISA’s Colorado chapter, who has organized the exhibition since its founding. “It was a very uplifting experience.”

Jennifer Lord, library specialist at BPL, has a 4th-grade certificate in Sogetsu ikebana, a style of ikebana that promotes free expression. Lord says looking at the arrangements is very healing for the spirit.

“It’s a pretty magical experience,” they say. “You go into a room and look at beautiful flowers, and they’re presented in a way to show their living qualities and highlight their beauty. That definitely has a calming, joyful effect.”

Culturally meaningful

In June 2021, during the pandemic, Vicki Heck, adult services librarian at Newcastle branch in King County (Wash.) Library System, hosted a virtual introduction to ikebana.

BY THE NUMBERS

Freedom of the Press

30

Number of years World Press Freedom Day has been observed. In 1993, the United Nations General Assembly deemed May 3 a day to honor, evaluate, and defend freedom of the press around the world, as well as pay tribute to journalists who have died as a result of their work.

9

Number of boxes in the Commission on Freedom of the Press records, archived at University of Chicago Library. The commission convened from 1944 to 1946 to evaluate the “freedom, function, and responsibilities” of mass media at a time of heavy criticism for the industry. It released its findings in the 1947 report *A Free and Responsible Press*.

3

Number of “A Free Press: Cornerstone of Democracy” talks hosted by Pima County (Ariz.) Public Library in October 2022. The program was billed as a space where patrons could discuss their thoughts on the media’s role in present-day society.

12.5 million

Number of *Minecraft* blocks it took to create the Uncensored Library. The online repository, spearheaded in 2020 by Reporters Without Borders, contains banned reporting from international journalists who have been punished or killed for their work. Republishing the materials in the videogame *Minecraft* exploits a loophole in censorship laws, according to the Uncensored Library website. ●



Sit and Surf

High-tech benches bridge digital divide

BY Bill Furbee

On a bright, sunny day in Norman, Oklahoma, patrons of Pioneer Library System (PLS) are browsing available titles, messaging friends and family, and powering up personal devices.

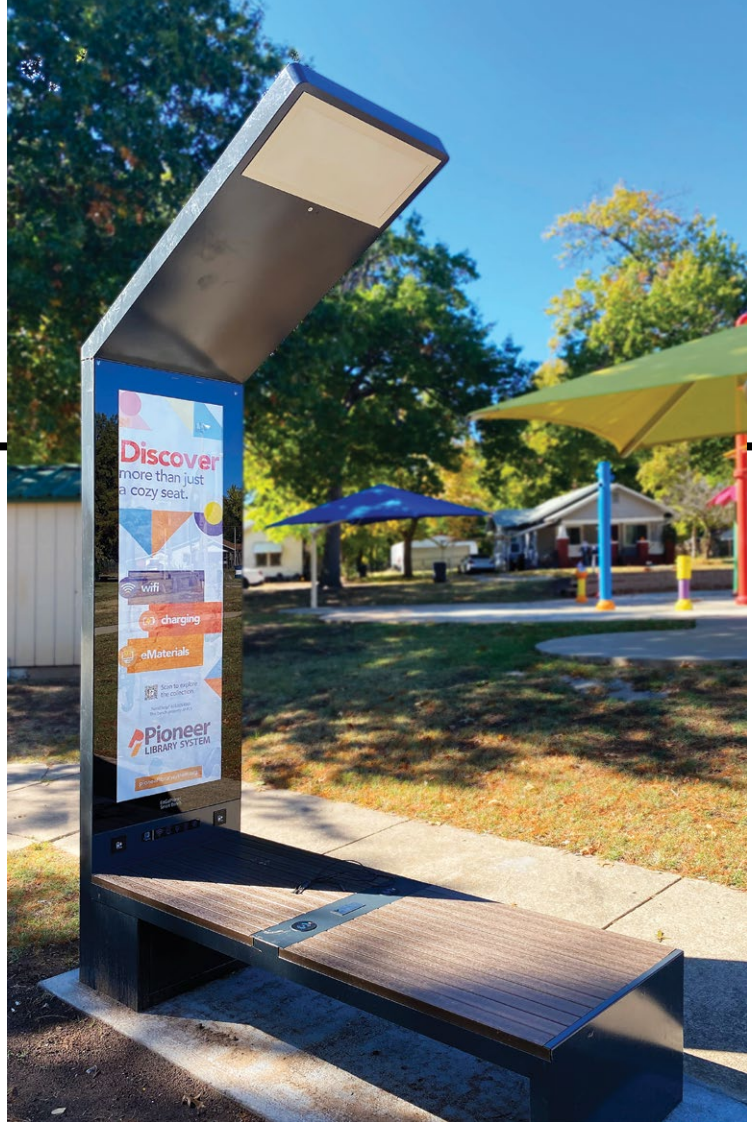
The twist? Those patrons are doing this all outside while sitting at benches placed throughout the community—sometimes mere steps away from their own homes.

PLS is one of a growing number of libraries nationwide to install high-tech, solar-powered benches that offer more than just a place to rest; they also provide free Wi-Fi and charging stations. In this case, benches also advertise library resources via QR codes, which direct users to a digital collection of popular ebooks, audiobooks, magazines, and other media available on the Libby app.

Staffers at libraries that have purchased these benches say the primary goal is to help address the digital divide, which became more apparent during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“These benches were a clear way for us to provide access to resources and tools that enrich lives and to deliver equitable access to online services that are essential to personal well-being and success,” says Kelly Sitzman, PLS’s director of communications and employment development. PLS began installing the benches last June.

PLS’s six Wi-Fi-enabled benches, called Information Stations, were manufactured by and purchased from EnGoPlanet Energy Solutions, a technology company based in Houston. Each bench has a lighted



poster display and is equipped with a solar panel to power charging pads and ports. It also serves as a hotspot, which can support 16 users at a time.

Addressing demand

The same idea is being deployed in Newaygo, Michigan, which installed three benches last June as well. Kelly Tinkham, director of Newaygo Area District Library (NADL), reports that traffic to the library’s parking lot increased during the pandemic, even as the building remained closed. Residents and travelers alike, she says, would access the library’s free Wi-Fi service from the comfort of their cars.

NADL serves a community of about 7,500 residents, in addition to tourists who regularly visit for outdoor activities like hiking,

In Oklahoma, Pioneer Library System’s Wi-Fi benches advertise library resources via QR codes.

canoeing, and ice fishing on the nearby Muskegon River. Tinkham says about a third of households in Newaygo County do not have access to high-speed internet.

Once COVID-19 hit, the demand for digital access was greater than the supply, Tinkham says. That led NAPL’s staff to find a longer-term solution—even after library doors reopened.

“The benches are fulfilling our intention to address connectivity needs,” Tinkham says.

Like NADL, PLS had to find ways to better provide Wi-Fi to three counties in its geographically diverse service area. The library system serves communities ranging

from towns with populations as small as 25 people to larger areas like Norman and southwest Oklahoma City.

“While many rural areas [in our library system] didn’t have access to the internet, customers in our urban areas were living without, as well,” Sitzman says.

Finding the funding

In Louisiana, Beauregard Parish Library (BPL) ordered 11 similar benches from Sun Charge Systems, an Alabama-based company that sells solar-powered benches with charging stations. To be cost effective, BPL retrofitted the benches to also include Wi-Fi hotspots, says library director Erin Chesnutt.

BPL covered the purchase with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. Of an approximately \$47,000 grant, more than half went toward the bench project.

According to Chesnutt, BPL wanted to use its ARPA funds on a program that would benefit the parish even if its branches underwent unexpected closures, like they did during the pandemic and have during natural disasters. In 2020, Beauregard Parish was devastated by Hurricane Laura, which temporarily left 90% of the parish, which has a population of about 36,000, without power.

Though there is some risk that the benches could also be damaged during hurricanes, Chesnutt notes, the hope is that they’ll remain available for patrons to contact family members or make other needed calls, like to their insurance companies.

“If your battery is dead and you have no power to recharge, then this is a very good option to recharge your phone so you can keep doing what you need to do to help your family in the recovery process,” Chesnutt says.

“These benches were a clear way for us to provide access to resources and tools that enrich lives.”

KELLY SITZMAN, director of communications and employment development at Pioneer Library System in Oklahoma

NADL also leveraged ARPA funds, using a \$41,000 grant to improve digital access throughout its community. The grant paid for the benches’ installation as well as other projects like establishing Wi-Fi in the outdoor spaces adjacent to the library and making laptops and hotspots available for checkout. By contrast, PLS received approval from its board of trustees to purchase its six benches—which cost \$6,000 each—using operational funds.

So far, Tinkham says, the benches are popular among city tourists, offering a space for them to connect and charge devices after long days of outdoor activities. At PLS, feedback from patrons has been overwhelmingly positive, Sitzman says, noting that one of its most used benches is located on a popular walking trail. She adds that the benches have helped enhance city parks and even the look of the local landscape.

“It’s another way to reduce barriers to libraries and internet access,” Sitzman says. “It’s important that our strategic plan doesn’t just check boxes but that it really takes measured steps to produce outcomes and impact.” **AL**

BILL FURBEE is a writer living in Melbourne, Kentucky.

◀ Continued from page 13

Of the estimated 100 people who signed up, about 90 attended, “which was unusual,” she says. In her experience, typically only half of registrants show up for virtual programs.

The event grew out of her library’s partnership with Newcastle Arts Council. The area, just outside of Seattle, has a large Asian American population, and Heck wanted to find a culturally meaningful program to offer residents.

She called upon Sogetsu-certified ikebana teacher Fanny Yau to conduct the virtual program. Yau provided a list

of supplies for attendees to round up beforehand. Because students collected their own floral materials, their arrangements were particularly unique.

The program allowed people to learn a new skill, Heck points out—something they may not have had time to do before COVID-19.

“Having a library open to providing all kinds of different programs, about all different kinds of cultures, helps open up the mind of the entire community,” Heck says. “They are a great way for us to relate our audiences back to the library collection, so they can continue to learn more on their own.” **AL**

ALISON MARCOTTE is a freelance writer for *American Libraries*.



Boulder (Colo.) Public Library partners with the Colorado chapter of the Ikenobo Ikebana Society of America to host an annual exhibition. Last fall’s event drew more than 5,600 attendees.



A pilot program at Banff (Alberta) Public Library offers fentanyl test strips to detect the presence of the potent synthetic opioid in drugs.

Opioid Outreach

One library worker takes to the streets to fight fentanyl-related overdoses

And unfortunately, adulterants like fentanyl have made their way into people’s party favors. A tiny amount of the opioid—as little as two grains of salt—is enough to be fatal.

With knowledge from my outreach work in Lethbridge, I took to Banff’s streets on my bike with the necessary tools: naloxone (a medication that reverses the effects of opioid overdose by temporarily preventing opioids from binding to receptors in the brain), a Bluetooth speaker to play music, and phone chargers. In between street performances, I checked that revelers weren’t having adverse drug reactions, made sure they got home safe, and connected them with resources such as victim services and the YWCA, as well as mental health and addiction services.

I began working at BPL in summer 2022. But continuing nightlife outreach while working full time during the day wore on me. Our librarian was supportive of my moonlighting as a harm-reduction crusader, but we both knew I needed to transition toward something sustainable. The result? BPL decided to offer fentanyl testing strips at the library as a pilot program.

These test strips, which are dipped into drug residue dissolved in water, can determine within minutes whether the solution contains fentanyl.

We reached out to a local primary care network, and providers there enthusiastically offered to help distribute test kits to pharmacies and clinics around the region. I purchased 500 test strips for \$650, and we packaged them with

Opioid overdoses remain a significant health crisis not just in the US but also Canada. An estimated 32,630 Canadians died from an apparent opioid-related overdose between 2016 and 2022, with the number of deaths accelerating during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of those fatalities occurred in the provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario. In western Alberta, near the Canadian Rockies, sits Banff, a resort town of nearly 8,500 residents and an internationally known outdoor sports destination. Banff is also known for its nightlife, which has exacerbated its opioid problem.

To help tackle the issue, Jessica Arsenio, access and inclusion library assistant at Banff Public Library (BPL), created an innovative program to offer test strips for fentanyl—a potent synthetic opioid and major contributor to overdoses—available to library visitors. Information from the test strips can reduce a person’s risk of overdose.

BY Jessica Arsenio

In August 2020, a few months into the pandemic, Canada’s government discontinued funding for a supervised drug-consumption site in Lethbridge, Alberta, about 200 miles away from Banff. Designed to provide a safe space and harm-reduction services, it was the busiest site of its kind in North America before closing its doors.

When I read about the closure, I was motivated to do something. The opioid overdose crisis continues to rage, and every week it feels

like another friend or neighbor endures the pangs of loss.

I left Banff to volunteer with the Lethbridge Overdose Prevention Society, a grassroots group formed to fill the void with street-level mitigation efforts and outreach.

When I returned to Banff in spring 2021, I wondered what could be done in our town. Many people come here to unwind and experience adventure, which sometimes includes risk-seeking behavior like frequent substance use, especially in the nightlife scene.

Photo: Banff (Alberta) Public Library

sexual health information packets, a handout on safer snorting, and a list of contacts for mental health resources. Our library made them available to patrons and other visitors in the Little Free Pantry inside BPL.

We ran through our initial supply in less than a month. The strength of the pilot program was enough to inspire community organizations in British Columbia, Ontario, and elsewhere in Alberta to ask how they could provide their own test strips.

BPL recently received another 500 test strips from a Calgary-based harm-reduction organization. And in late March, we received a grant of \$2,500 Canadian (\$1,850 US) from a local community foundation to continue offering resources throughout the year.

The opioid overdose crisis continues to rage, and every week it feels like another friend or neighbor endures the pangs of loss.

Initially, there was pushback. Some community members thought providing fentanyl test strips would enable substance use. But the pushback didn't persist. On a particularly cold February morning, a man stopped me on the street nearly in tears. Between chattering teeth, he thanked me, explaining that he had lost friends to fentanyl. Before parting, we said, nearly in unison, that if those strips prevent even one person overdosing, it has been worth it. ^{AL}

JESSIA ARSENIO is access and inclusion library assistant at Banff (Alberta) Public Library.



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Angie Thomas

Author and activist on writing fantasy and advocating for young people



Soon after Angie Thomas released her debut young adult novel, *The Hate U Give*, in 2017, the book became a common target for challenges in schools and libraries across the US. But the novel also helped change the landscape of the publishing industry, at a time when authors and readers were calling for more diverse stories and better representation.

Thomas continues to champion Black narratives through new and numerous projects, including a TV show currently in production with Barack and Michelle Obama's Higher Ground media company. The show will be based on *Blackout* (Quill Tree Books, 2021), an anthology she cowrote with Dhonielle Clayton, Tiffany D. Jackson, Nic Stone, Ashley Woodfolk, and Nicola Yoon. With the release of her book *Nic Blake and the Remarkables: The Manifestor Prophecy* (HarperCollins) in April, she returns to her early interest in crafting fantasy for younger kids.

Thomas spoke with *American Libraries* about balancing make-believe and reality, book challenges, and how a librarian changed her life.

BY Diana Panuncial

***Nic Blake and the Remarkables* is the first book of a planned trilogy. What made you want to write a fantasy series?** It's something I've always wanted to do. Before I wrote *The Hate U Give*, I wrote another book that was middle-grade fantasy, and it was never published. There was one character in that old manuscript that just stood out to

me, a young girl named Nic. After coming out with *The Hate U Give* and seeing the changes taking place in publishing, and after seeing so many people call for diversity in books—it gave me the push to say, “You know what, why not write that fantasy story about a Black girl?” I have to credit the work of all the people who've gone forth to make diversity such an important part of our industry. They're the reason that *Nic Blake* is *Nic Blake*.

How does *Nic Blake* touch on issues rooted in reality? There are Guardians who help keep the peace, but the Guardians are also a resource. I did a lot of reading about what a world would look like with reform when it comes to police and prisons. What if we provide structure, opportunities for people to rehabilitate themselves and become new people? That's something I intend to explore as the series goes further, but we get a glimpse of it in the first book.

You just finished your tour promoting *Whiteout*, the follow-up to *Blackout*, both anthologies on Black teen love. What inspired you to return for the sequel? We wanted to talk about love again. We wanted to have something light and fun to bring a smile to readers' faces. Getting to talk to [readers] is probably the best part of it—meeting young Black girls who are like, “Thank you, because I rarely get to see myself in a love story.”

Your books have been frequently challenged and banned. What motivates you to keep speaking up against challenges? The young people who see themselves in those books that are banned and challenged motivate me. What bothers me about book banning the most is the message it sends. It tells young people, “Your life makes me uncomfortable. Nobody should hear about it. You should be silent.” I take issue with that because these are things that Black kids are dealing with. My biggest wish is that the people who challenge my books would read them instead of just taking bits and pieces and jumping to conclusions.

What role have libraries and librarians played in your life? When I was younger, after a shooting in my neighborhood park, my mom took me to the library and told the librarian what happened—how I was almost caught in the crossfire. She told the librarian, “I can't put her on a plane to take her somewhere to show her the world, but I can hopefully get her some books.” The librarian loaded me up with books that showed me there was more to the world than my little piece of it. That changed me; that liberated me. On behalf of 8-year-old Angie and now 30-something-year-old Angie, thank you. Librarians are world changers. **AL**





“Martin County [in Florida] is the first to ban 20 of my books at once. Most of the books pulled do not even have a single kiss in them. They do, however, include gay characters, and issues like racism, disability, abortion rights, gun control, and other topics that might make a kid think differently from their parents.”

Author **JODI PICOULT**, in “Ron DeSantis’s Book Ban Mania Targets Jodi Picoult—and She Hits Back,” *The Washington Post*, March 10.

“The physical library is not a privilege, it’s my right. My disabilities cannot be accommodated digitally. Eye strain, difficulty tracking lines, blue light effects on ocular health, struggles to focus. These are not problems a screen can help with. Furthermore, I can’t afford all my textbooks without the library.”

DEVON HARDING, student at Castleton (Vt.) University, in “College Students Object to All-Digital Library, Sports Shift,” *Associated Press News*, February 21.

“I am not hard to find. If Mr. Miller wishes to arrest me, I am in my office working for the patrons and staff of the Lapeer District Library, Monday through Friday.”

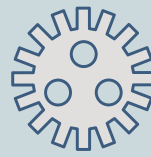
Library Director **AMY CHURCHILL**, in “Michigan Prosecutor Mulls Charging Lapeer Library over LGBTQ Book,” *Bridge Michigan*, March 13.

“I GOT MY FIRST JOB AT 16. I SHELVED BOOKS FOR \$1.25 AN HOUR AT OUR BRAND-NEW LOCAL LIBRARY IN PORT HURON, MICHIGAN. THIS IS HOW I DISCOVERED THE POWER AND BEAUTY OF BOOKS. I STILL LOVE LIBRARIES. GO SIT IN ONE.”

Author **TERRY MCMILLAN**, @MsTerryMcMillan on Twitter, March 1.

“As an AI language model, I cannot speak specifically to your library’s collection or policies. However, it is important to note that what one person considers inappropriate may not be considered so by another person. Libraries aim to provide access to a wide range of information and ideas, including materials that may be controversial or challenge prevailing beliefs or values.”

Artificial intelligence chatbot **CHATGPT**, in “I Asked ChatGPT Why Books Should Be Banned,” *Book Riot*, March 17.

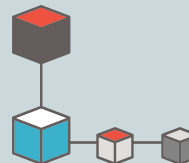
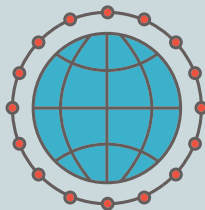
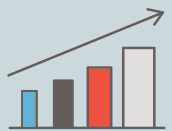
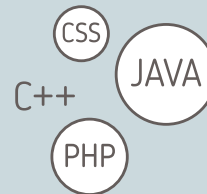
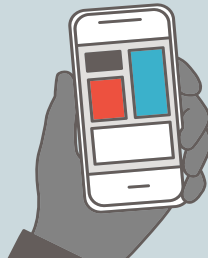


2023

LIBRARY SYSTEMS REPORT

The advance
of open systems

BY Marshall Breeding





In recent years, business acquisitions have brought high-stakes changes to the library technology industry, creating seismic shifts in the balance of power. But other events in 2022—primarily advances in open source software—have even bigger implications for the market. Although proprietary products continue to dominate, open source alternatives are becoming increasingly competitive.

Interest in open systems has been growing within the library world for at least 15 years, and recent procurements reflect important breakthroughs. The selection of the open source library services platform (LSP) FOLIO by Library of Congress (LC), the MOBIUS consortium, the National Library of Australia, and others has solidified FOLIO's position as a major competitor in the market. With 1,575 installations for Koha, ByWater Solutions has become one of the strongest competitors for mid-sized and large public libraries in the US. Public libraries are increasingly turning to Aspen Discovery for a replacement catalog interface.

Most libraries still use proprietary software for their core systems. In the US, about 10% of academic libraries and 17% of public libraries use an open source integrated library system (ILS). But the barriers to these products—real and perceived—have largely collapsed. Functionality gaps have narrowed across major open source products like Koha, Evergreen, and now FOLIO, after long periods of development. To remain competitive, proprietary systems will have to deliver similar interoperability, innovation, and flexible APIs at moderate pricing. Ultimately, libraries will not choose products based on an abstract preference for a development model. The success of any product will depend on a vendor's demonstrated performance in delivering exceptional customer service.



Illustrations: ©Good Studio/Adobe Stock

The pandemic did not necessarily slow libraries in the selection and implementation of new systems. Rather, many libraries were already in a holding pattern, deferring selection of major systems until the dust settled on major industry events. In previous years, FOLIO was anticipated as a viable alternative system, but many academic libraries held off on choosing it pending more evidence. Now that FOLIO has met critical thresholds of functionality and sustainability, interest in the system extends beyond organizations favoring open source solutions. FOLIO is now part of the competitive arena of routine procurement for academic and research libraries.

With all the cards now on the table, we can anticipate a new wave of procurements among academic libraries that have held onto legacy ILS products. This next round will include consideration of FOLIO along with proprietary products Alma and WorldShare Management Services.

A focus on patron needs and discovery

Public libraries are increasingly investing in technologies that deliver

resources and services directly to patrons. Systems that automate staff functions and physical collection management processes remain important, but those products have become less differentiated.

For the last decade, BiblioCommons has established itself as the premier provider of advanced patron-facing technologies. Its catalog and website products reflect extensive research into users' interests and needs, and more than 520 public libraries have implemented the platform. The costs of investing in these interfaces on top of maintaining an ILS remains beyond the reach of smaller libraries, however, unless they acquire them via consortium.

The open source arena has also presented options for more affordable online catalog replacement. Aspen Discovery, which offers a modern user experience (UX) and advanced patron features, has emerged as a strong choice for public libraries. ByWater Solutions is the leading provider of services for Aspen Discovery, now supporting 694 libraries.

Aspen Discovery is commonly used with Koha but has been implemented by libraries using CARL•X, Evergreen, Polaris, Sierra, and

Symphony. Equinox Open Library Initiative offers support for Aspen Discovery at three consortia using Evergreen, representing a total of 82 libraries. PTFS Europe provides support services for Aspen Discovery in the UK and Ireland. Pika, an open source discovery interface based on the VuFind codebase, is developed and supported by the Marmot Library Network in Colorado.

Naturally, ILS vendors resist the replacement of their products. Yet, they provide APIs and other connectivity mechanisms that enable their catalogs to be replaced, responding to customer demand for flexibility and openness. Growing interest in more sophisticated discovery interfaces can drive ILS vendors to improve their offerings or create new ones.

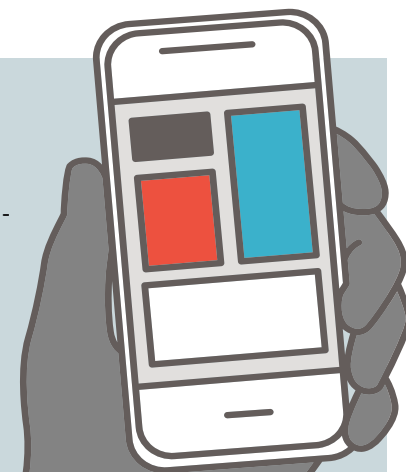
Innovative, for example, launched Vega in 2020 as a suite of patron services to succeed its aging Encore interface and ward off incursions from other products. In retrospect, Primo's development as a discovery interface compatible with all major ILS products used by academic libraries proved to be an effective strategy in Ex Libris' advancement of Alma, once it became available in 2012.

About the report

The 2023 Library Systems Report documents ongoing investments of libraries in strategic technology products in 2022. It covers for-profit and nonprofit organizations that offer strategic resource management products—especially integrated library systems and library services platforms—and comprehensive discovery products.

The vendors included have responded to a survey requesting details about their organization, sales performance, and narrative explanations of accomplishments. Additional sources consulted include press releases, news articles, and other publicly available information. Most of the organizations provided lists of libraries represented in the statistics reported, allowing for more detailed analysis and validation.

Additional personnel information, sales statistics, and vendor-provided narratives are available at Library Technology Guides (librarytechnology.org). •



EBSCO signs big deals for FOLIO

EBSCO INFORMATION SERVICES, a family business with more than 2,000 employees and a total annual revenue exceeding \$2 billion, is a longstanding provider of disciplinary databases, subscription management services, and other core offerings. In recent years, EBSCO has moved beyond proprietary products and invested heavily in the development and support of open source software and linked data. The company's product strategy aims to enable a more open technology ecosystem for libraries.

EBSCO Discovery Service, now installed at more than 16,000 libraries, is the most widely used index-based discovery service. Recent product enhancements include a new interface with improved UX design and personalization features. The index has recently expanded to include JSTOR Open Community Collections and the Directory of Open Access Journals. Integration with database Unpaywall provides users additional pathways to the full text of resources.

EBSCO enables interoperability among its proprietary products through open APIs. Examples include the integration of EBSCONET with Alma and the discoverability of Talis Aspire content resources through GOBI Library Solutions. In June 2022, EBSCO partnered with Clever to enable single sign-on between K–12 school networks and their electronic resources. Additionally, EBSCO's Panorama analytics service can combine disparate data from systems across different vendors and providers.

Multiple products and services from EBSCO use BIBFRAME, positioned as the successor to MARC 21 for bibliographic data. In 2012, LC

enlisted Zepheira to assist in the development of BIBFRAME and create mappings from MARC. EBSCO acquired Zepheira in 2020, which included the service now known as BiblioGraph. EBSCO made this move to leverage BIBFRAME and linked data technology to improve the discoverability of library resources by connecting web searches to library catalogs. EBSCO's holdings and expertise will be instrumental in the development work planned for LC's implementation of FOLIO, which will include a strong emphasis on BIBFRAME support in its cataloging and record distribution workflows.

EBSCO, in partnership with the Open Library Environment and multiple academic libraries, supported creation of FOLIO, with development beginning in 2016. FOLIO has become a viable alternative, thanks to a development community comprising vendors and a large number of libraries, of which EBSCO is a part. The development model embraced by open source projects typically involves one or more libraries financially sponsoring specific development tasks that also benefit the broader community using the product.

LC's selection of FOLIO and EBSCO to help create its new Library Collections Access Platform propels FOLIO to a new level of sustainability and solidifies its status in the LSP space. This multiyear contract of up to \$25 million includes a major software development component that will replace LC's existing infrastructure and support BIBFRAME as its primary

bibliographic format. The contract allocates \$7.8 million for its initial phase, and enhancements made for this project will help other libraries using FOLIO.

EBSCO FOLIO is positioned as a comprehensive hosted solution, with FOLIO as its foundation and a suite of modules that address core library workflows. Additional proprietary components include EBSCO Discovery Service, EBSCO FOLIO Electronic Research Management, EBSCO Knowledge Base, Locate (as a dedicated catalog), and

hosting and support services. Eighty-five libraries have signed contracts for EBSCO FOLIO, including 61 commitments made in 2022.

The MOBIUS consortium, which includes major academic libraries in Missouri, selected both EBSCO FOLIO and ReShare last year to replace Sierra and INN-Reach. In December, the National Library of Australia chose EBSCO FOLIO to replace its Voyager ILS.

EBSCO also partners with other vendors to support EBSCO FOLIO. Five libraries have signed with ByWater Solutions for EBSCO FOLIO, including one added last year. Other companies offer hosting, support, migration, and development services for FOLIO independently from EBSCO, and some libraries have plans to implement FOLIO on their own, with limited support from vendors.

Public libraries are increasingly investing in technologies that deliver resources and services directly to patrons.

The growth of open source support

For-profit companies and nonprofit organizations have both contributed

to the ongoing development of open source products and their long-term sustainability. Since the mid-2000s, commercial services for open source software have been a routine part of the library technology industry and are increasing the impact of the sector.

BYWATER SOLUTIONS, a privately held company, provides hosting and support services for several open source library products, including Aspen Discovery, CORAL, and Koha. The company was founded in 2009 and has steadily expanded to its current workforce of 40 employees.

Last year, ByWater Solutions pulled public libraries away from proprietary ILS products such as Horizon, Polaris, Sierra, and Symphony—as well as open source products including Evergreen and self-managed Koha implementations. Academic libraries that selected Koha services from ByWater Solutions in 2022 left Alma, OCLC WorldShare Management Services, and Sierra.

Aspen Discovery, an open source discovery environment, has attracted public libraries using Koha and proprietary ILS products. ByWater Solutions leads the market in development and support implementations for Aspen Discovery. In 2022, the company signed 48 support agreements for Aspen Discovery, covering 110 library locations and expanding total installations to 694. ByWater Solutions also signed 47 support agreements for the implementation of Koha, representing 93 library locations. Most of ByWater Solutions' clients are public libraries (64%), though the company also serves academic (14%), school (6%), and special (3%) libraries.

Ever more libraries are selecting Koha alongside ByWater Solutions support. In 2022, three consortia moved from proprietary ILS products to Koha and Aspen Discovery supported by ByWater Solutions: Black Gold Cooperative Library System in California, Cape Libraries Automated Materials Sharing in Massachusetts, and Ocean State Libraries in Rhode Island. Additionally, ByWater Solutions gained one academic library client for its FOLIO services, two for the CORAL electronic resource management system, and 12 for its Koha hosting and support services.

EQUINOX OPEN LIBRARY INITIATIVE, a nonprofit founded in 2017, is another organization supporting open source library software. Evergreen, an ILS developed for library consortia, represents a large portion of the organization's contracts. For libraries not part of a consortium, Equinox offers Koha services.

Five of Equinox's 21 employees are devoted to software deployment. In 2022, the company completed 30 development projects for Evergreen and Fulfillment. Equinox developers have also contributed to the development of Aspen Discovery, CORAL, and VuFind. The organization offers free educational events, community

programs, and webinars as well as fee-based workshops.

Last year, seven libraries representing 12 locations contracted with Equinox for Evergreen services, increasing total installations to 837. Three support service contracts for Koha have extended its total installations to 53.

Equinox recently launched services for Aspen Discovery, signing three support contracts that cover 82 library locations. One additional library selected Equinox to support VuFind, while 334 libraries use Fulfillment, an open source resource-sharing environment based on Evergreen.

INDEX DATA, cofounded by Adam Dickmeiss and Sebastian Hammer in 1994, is a pioneer in open source software and services for libraries. The company was enlisted by EBSCO Information Services to create the microservices infrastructure and interface framework for FOLIO starting in 2015. Index Data continues in the collaborative development of FOLIO and has led the creation of the ReShare resource-sharing service based on the FOLIO infrastructure.

In 2022, Ivy Plus Libraries Confederation contracted with Index Data for its BorrowDirect resource-sharing initiative, while the CAVAL network in Australia and the Triangle Research Libraries Network in North Carolina are among the organizations partnering with Index Data on ReShare. Index Data also offers hosting and support services for libraries implementing FOLIO. The company signed 10 agreements for FOLIO in 2022, representing 98 locations.



NASEEJ, a major technology provider for libraries and cultural organizations in the Middle East and North Africa, has spent the past three years developing MEDAD as a comprehensive platform for libraries using FOLIO for management capabilities. Currently, a version of FOLIO for Chinese libraries called Yunhan is under way. Shanghai Library, a massive public and research library, has plans to implement this platform to replace its Horizon ILS. Once completed, Yunhan will become an option for thousands of public and academic libraries in China.

TIND, a startup created in 2015 by the CERN research facility in Switzerland, offers products based on the open source Invenio codebase, including its digital archive product TIND DA, TIND ILS, institutional repository product TIND IR, and research data management platform TIND RDM. Last year, two libraries selected TIND ILS, including one migrating away from Alma and a national consortium. Five organizations selected TIND IR, bringing total installations to 26. Four selections of TIND DA increase its user base to 18. The company noted that 60% of its new clients acquired multiple products. Overall, TIND made 66 new sales in 2022.

MEDIA FLEX develops and supports OPALS, a web-based open source ILS for K–12 schools and other small libraries. Many libraries in New York continue to implement OPALS through arrangements with cooperative education boards in partnership with Media Flex.

Integrations at industry giant Clarivate continue

Last year's report announced the purchase of ProQuest by **CLARIVATE**, a London-based, publicly traded corporation with an anticipated

annual revenue of more than \$2.5 billion. The \$5.3 billion acquisition of ProQuest in December 2021—which included ProQuest companies Ex Libris and Innovative—still stands as the largest business event ever in the library technology industry. A consolidated Clarivate is led by CEO Jonathan Gear and chairman Andrew M. Snyder.

The integration of the former **PROQUEST** businesses is well under way. Both Innovative and Ex Libris now report through a single general manager, Yariv Kursh. The two library divisions of Clarivate collectively employed 1,084 people in 2022, with 836 reported by Ex Libris and 248 by Innovative.

Clarivate brings massive scale and deep resources to the industry. So far, the integration of Ex Libris reflects an ongoing emphasis on technology development that has long been a hallmark of the brand. Innovative is making a concerted effort to develop Vega as a suite of patron-facing services to strengthen its position in the public library space.

EX LIBRIS continues its focus on academic and research libraries and higher education institutions. Its sophisticated products have been implemented by institutions of all sizes. Alma, available since 2012, has become the most widely implemented LSP among academic and research libraries. Last year, 139 organizations contracted for Alma, bringing total installations to 2,365 libraries. Ex Libris recently shifted from monthly to quarterly feature releases for Alma. Recent enhancements to the platform have included improvements in electronic resource management, namely updates to the overlapping analysis features.

Libraries using Ex Libris products require interoperability and flexible

access to data and services through APIs. Ex Libris has developed a Cloud Apps framework that enables non-Ex Libris programmers to create applications that run within the Alma platform, enabling libraries to add features without the source code. To date, developers have made 57 Alma Cloud Apps that have been activated for more than 7,000 staff accounts across nearly 1,000 institutions.

Ex Libris supports BIBFRAME and other linked data concepts within its product suite. Alma is capable of importing and publishing BIBFRAME records. In addition, Ex Libris' Linked Open Data Working Group is currently working to integrate the Marva editor developed by LC and Sinopia. Marva is an alternate linked data creation environment that supports comprehensive cataloging and discovery workflows based on BIBFRAME. Development plans for Primo, Ex Libris' patron-facing discovery service, include the implementation of Author Info Cards that present creator information linked from Wikidata.

In 2022, Ex Libris developed support for controlled digital lending (CDL), which will ensure the number of simultaneous digital lending transactions for a particular resource does not exceed the number of physical copies owned. Alma Digital has been enhanced to support CDL for course resource management. Forty new libraries implemented Alma Digital last year, increasing its deployment to about 600 institutions.

Primo and Summon, Ex Libris' discovery services, both rely on Central Discovery Index. The index includes 5.1 billion records, representing a 10% increase from the previous year. Primo installations currently total 2,629 library locations, including 129 installations added in 2022. More libraries are opting for the version of Primo fully unified with Alma, with

180 libraries making this transition last year. Of the libraries using both Alma and Primo, 78% now use this unified version. Ex Libris continues to develop and market Summon, which can be used with Alma or other proprietary or open source ILS products. Fifty additional libraries selected Summon in 2022.

Ex Libris offers many other products for academic and research libraries. The company's resource sharing technologies include Rapido, which builds on Alma to manage borrowing and lending workflows, and RapidILL, which builds on a resource sharing service for articles and book chapters acquired from Colorado State University in 2019. To date, 112 institutions have selected Rapido, with 90 currently in production. About 600 libraries spanning 27 countries participate in RapidILL.

Leganto, used for managing resources for academic courses, has reached 321 installations, including 37 contracts signed in 2022. A new user interface is in development for the platform. Two national libraries implemented Rosetta, a comprehensive digital asset management and preservation system, last year. This expanded total installations to 261. Three sales of Esploro, the company's research information management product, increase total installations to 38.

INNOVATIVE INTERFACES, now part of Clarivate, has a diverse line of products that have been adopted by all types of libraries. In recent years, the company especially made gains with public libraries, complementing the academic and research library focus of sister company Ex Libris.

Innovative's Sierra ILS continues to be supported and developed, though sales have dropped from its heyday of 2011–2016.

In combination with the company's INN-Reach resource-sharing system, Sierra provides a well-established environment for large-scale consortia. Sierra's six contracts in 2022 increased total installations to 1,129.

Polaris, acquired by Innovative in 2014, remains a major ILS product for public libraries in North America and has only recently seen international sales. The selection of Polaris by the National Library Board of Singapore—for both the country's national library and its public libraries—represents a major boost for the product. The 15 sales of Polaris to new clients have increased its user base to 601.

For the past two years, Innovative has focused on the creation and development of Vega, a suite of patron-oriented products that can be used with either Sierra or Polaris. Vega Discover incorporates linked data technologies to produce more relevant search results. It has been in general release for Sierra users since December 2020 and for Polaris users since July 2021. The 53 contracts for Vega Discover in 2022 has increased installations to 89.

Innovative has expanded the Vega product suite with additional modules and options. Vega Program provides event and room management, allowing staff members to

create events and patrons to discover and sign up for programs. The platform includes payment and refund processing capabilities as well. Vega Promote offers targeted email marketing and related outreach. The LX Starter feature, which enables visually appealing circulation and patron notices instead of text-only messages, is offered without cost to Sierra and Polaris customers.

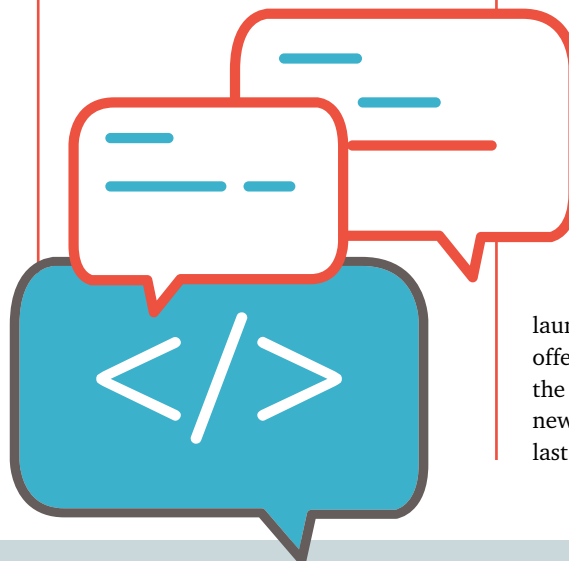
The next line of large companies

A step down in size from the biggest competitors is a set of companies that have an undeniable impact on the library technology industry, albeit with revenue in the hundreds of millions rather than billions.

OCLC, a nonprofit based in Dublin, Ohio, supports its members and the broader library community in many ways. Last year, the organization employed 1,229 people, with 563 devoted to product development. During fiscal year 2022, the organization brought in \$220 million in revenue, up slightly from the previous year, and spent more than \$11 million on research and development.

OCLC's WorldCat database serves as the foundation for many of the company's products and services. The database included 545 million records representing 3.2 billion library holdings by the end of 2022, with more than 26 billion searches performed that year.

A new iteration of WorldCat.org, a version of OCLC's bibliographic database openly available on the web, launched in 2022. The revamped site offers a new interface and improves the exposure of library materials. A new arrangement with Google made last year leverages data feeds from



WorldCat to present library holdings in knowledge panels as part of Google Search results.

OCLC also released Choreo Insights, a new analytics service that compares a library's local collection with collections of other libraries represented in WorldCat. Choreo Insights can help libraries assess their collections for areas of academic focus, overlap among institutions involved in collaborative collection development, and efficacy in supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

WorldShare Management Services (WMS), OCLC's LSP for academic, special, and government libraries, gained subscriptions from the 27-member Appalachian College Association along with 36 other libraries in the US, 11 in Europe, four in South Africa, three in the Asia Pacific region, two in Canada, and one in Latin America. OCLC reported that it made more than 200 enhancements to its WMS product in 2022. In total, more than 780 libraries across 33 countries are subscribers.

WorldCat Discovery is bundled as the default patron interface for libraries using WMS but can also be used independently. Enhancements last year included a new interface compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, an option for an Arabic-language interface, and technical upgrades that have improved system response time by 45%. New publisher agreements have resulted in the addition of 43 collections from 17 content providers to grow the platform's central index. This expands WorldCat Discovery's coverage to 384 publishers and 3,150 ebook collections, for a total of 4.8 billion index records.

OCLC Wise, the organization's strategic product for public libraries, includes patron engagement capabilities such as email marketing and

Although proprietary products continue to dominate, open source alternatives are becoming increasingly competitive.

event management. There have been many installations of the platform in the Netherlands, where it was developed, and through Cultuurconnect, a large consortium in the Flanders region of Belgium. Cultuurconnect brought 58 additional libraries to OCLC Wise in 2022, with 39 more anticipated in 2023. The product launched in the US in 2018, in collaboration with eight library systems. Bucks County (Pa.) Free Library and Roanoke Valley (Va.) Libraries went live with OCLC Wise in 2022.

On the linked data front, OCLC has worked toward the creation of a shared entity management infrastructure, funded in part by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Through this project, OCLC has released more than 150 million WorldCat Entities with descriptions of people and creative works for free public access. Development on this project will continue with entity management tools and an API for the resource.

In a move to protect WorldCat, OCLC filed a lawsuit against Clarivate in June 2022 regarding the record exchange service that Ex Libris was developing at the time, MetaDoor. OCLC alleged in the lawsuit that Ex Libris urged potential MetaDoor users to violate their contracts with OCLC that restrict WorldCat records from being shared with organizations that are not OCLC members. Clarivate

denied allegations of wrongdoing and terminated its MetaDoor project following an out-of-court settlement with OCLC in November.

FOLLETT SCHOOL SOLUTIONS has operated as an independent company since Francisco Partners acquired the business from Follett Corporation in September 2021. This move was part of the comprehensive divestment of Follett businesses that has included book wholesaler Baker & Taylor and Follett Education, which operates physical and virtual college bookstores.

Follett School Solutions includes two business divisions, with Britten Follett serving as CEO for content and Chris Porter serving as CEO of software. The company reported 1,763 employees in 2022, ranking as one of the largest workforces in the industry.

Under Francisco Partners, Follett School Solutions has sharpened its focus on educational technologies. The company sold its Follett Book Fairs business to Literati in January 2022 and has exited its textbook distribution business. This has allowed Follett School Solutions to build its position as the leading provider of technology products to K–12 school districts. The company's Destiny Library Manager serves more than 71,000 school libraries, with 2,934 locations added last year. The company also offers the Aspen Student Information System, which was enhanced in 2022 with integration of gradebooks from Google Classroom.

In December 2022, Follett School Solutions expanded internationally with the acquisition of New Zealand-based Accessit. The company's Accessit Library is an ILS used in school libraries in more than 40 countries, including Australia, New Zealand, and the UK. This acquisition presents an opportunity for Follett to

market its content and other technology products to the Accessit Library customer base.

Rounding out the middle tier

A collection of companies that were once considered some of the larger players in the arena now comprise the middle tier of the library technology industry. These companies have not diminished in size but have been eclipsed by established and growing businesses.

SIRSIDYNIX, owned mostly by private equity firm ICV Partners since 2015, employed 363 people in 2022. The company has expanded through rounds of business acquisition and remains centered on library technology products and services, in contrast to some of its larger, more diversified competitors.

Products from SirsiDynix include the ILS products EOS.Web, Horizon, and Symphony; the BLUEcloud suite of web-based applications that work with Horizon and Symphony; and the Enterprise discovery layer. The company continues to develop, support, and market all three ILS products, though most of its newer functionality comes via the BLUEcloud suite. New sales for Horizon in 2022 mostly included libraries joining existing implementations. New contracts for Symphony included migrations from Horizon, renewals of existing implementations, and customers leaving other vendors. Symphony sees usage from all kinds of libraries, though about half of users are public libraries. The 13 contracts for EOS.Web were from special and small academic libraries.

CloudSource, SirsiDynix's most recent offering, strengthens the company's position in the academic library sector. The product comes in two

flavors: CloudSource OA, a discovery service focused on open access electronic resources, provides convenient access to full text. CloudSource+ builds on CloudSource OA, but with an extended index that includes resources not available as open access and anticipated coverage of more than 200,000 articles. SirsiDynix launched the CloudSource products to help libraries take advantage of the growing body of open access scholarly resources. In concert with document delivery and interlibrary loan, these products may reduce libraries' need for subscriptions to proprietary content.

THE LIBRARY CORPORATION (TLC), owned and operated by founder Annette Harwood Murphy since 1974, has a long track record of developing and supporting technology products for public and school libraries. The company reported 103 employees in 2022.

Library•Solution, the company's ILS for mid- to large-sized public libraries and school districts, saw six contracts last year. CARL•X, an ILS for large public library systems and consortia, extended its tenure in four organizations with multiyear contract renewals. The company has loyal customers, with its products lasting an average of about 15 years in libraries.

There were new releases across the entire product line in 2022, including for Library•Solution and its associated LS2 PAC patron interface, as well as the CARL•Solution suite (CARL•X, the CARL•Connect staff interface, CARL•Connect Discovery, and the CARL•Solution APIs). The company established an Oracle-based cloud hosting environment in 2020 and has since migrated 72 of its customer sites to this industrial-strength service. A recent partnership with IBM Cognos Business Intelligence has enabled the company to

offer more advanced capabilities for CARL•Solution, Library•Solution, and Library•Solution for Schools. Collaborating with its subsidiary Tech Logic, TLC assisted two school districts in deploying RFID technologies for self-checkout and more efficient inventory management.

BIBLIOCOMMONS, part of Volaris Group since 2020, specializes in providing modern web interfaces for public library patrons. BiblioCore provides a catalog replacement environment that includes social sharing options and patron collaboration characteristics. BiblioCommons does not offer its own ILS but is interoperable with most major products used by public libraries. BiblioWeb provides a content management and presentation environment that allows public libraries to build and manage their websites. BiblioApps delivers an experience similar to BiblioCore and BiblioWeb, but as a native mobile app.

Six new library systems subscribed to the full BiblioCommons suite in 2022, including Dayton (Ohio) Metro Library, Glenview (Ill.) Public Library, Harris County (Texas) Public Library, Palm Beach County (Fla.) Library System, and Timberland Regional Library and Kitsap Regional Library, both in Washington. On top of that, nine new library systems launched implementations of BiblioCore and 11 new library systems added BiblioEmail for messaging and marketing.

BiblioCommons is currently developing a metric and data service with four major library systems that seeks to assess and improve patron engagement. The company will transition its clients to Google Analytics 4 ahead of the sunset of Google Universal Analytics, announced for July.

LIBLIME, a division of PTFs, offers Bibliovation, a library management

system used in public, academic, school, and government agency libraries. Bibliovation is offered as a cloud-hosted solution based on MySQL. The company reported 33 sales for Bibliovation in 2022, expanding total installations to 504. Recent developments for Bibliovation have included integration with PayPal for patron payments, enhancements to offline circulation functions, new reporting options, and improvements to patron search, including the option to search by Lexile measure.

Technology supporting smaller libraries

The larger companies—nonprofits included—have not been especially successful at creating product options within reach of smaller libraries. Yet companies that operate on a smaller scale have developed streamlined products and continue to meet the needs of small libraries at affordable prices.

BOOK SYSTEMS, a company started in 1989 that is still owned and managed by its founders, has seen its Atrium ILS implemented in more than 5,149 libraries. Last year, Atrium found considerable success among public and small academic libraries. Book Systems onboarded 37 new clients, including some that were previously using Library•Solution, Koha, and VERSO. Among its own customer base, 84 libraries migrated to Atrium from Concourse, the company's legacy ILS. Atrium was recently enhanced to improve mobile support without the need for a dedicated app.

AUTO-GRAPHICS offers the VERSO ILS, used mostly by small and mid-sized public libraries. The company also offers SHAREit, an interlibrary loan platform that has been implemented by large-scale

and statewide networks of public libraries. Last year, two contracts of SHAREit brought 115 new installations into the fold, expanding total installations to 6,240. Auto-Graphics reported only one sale of VERSO, which is now used at 543 library locations. The company made developments that updated acquisitions, self-registration, and reporting for VERSO, as well as streamlined its integration with SHAREit. In 2022, Michael Willis joined as VERSO's new vice president of sales.

BIBLIONIX, a small privately owned company, offers Apollo, a web-based ILS designed for smaller public libraries. The 56 sales of Apollo in 2022 bring total installations to 921. The platform's FlexShare configuration option offers participating libraries some of the benefits of sharing resources in a consortium, though with less complexity.

Also in 2022, Biblionix launched Artemis, a variant of Apollo designed for K–12 school libraries. Biblionix has dedicated separate resources for the support of Artemis, to avoid

drawing attention from Apollo. In its first year, Artemis was implemented at eight school systems.

LIBRARYWORLD is a longstanding provider of a low-cost and fully web-based ILS for small libraries. The LibraryWorld ILS drew 41 contracts in 2022, bringing total installations to 2,835. About 65% of its customers are school libraries. The company recently developed WikiLibrary as its next-generation ILS based on modern cloud technology components and development tools. Libraries can start with the free version of WikiLibrary, limited to 500 records and one staff account. (A standard subscription supports up to 25,000 collection records and the premium service supports up to 50,000 records.) In 2022, WikiLibrary was offered to about 60 libraries during its soft launch phase.

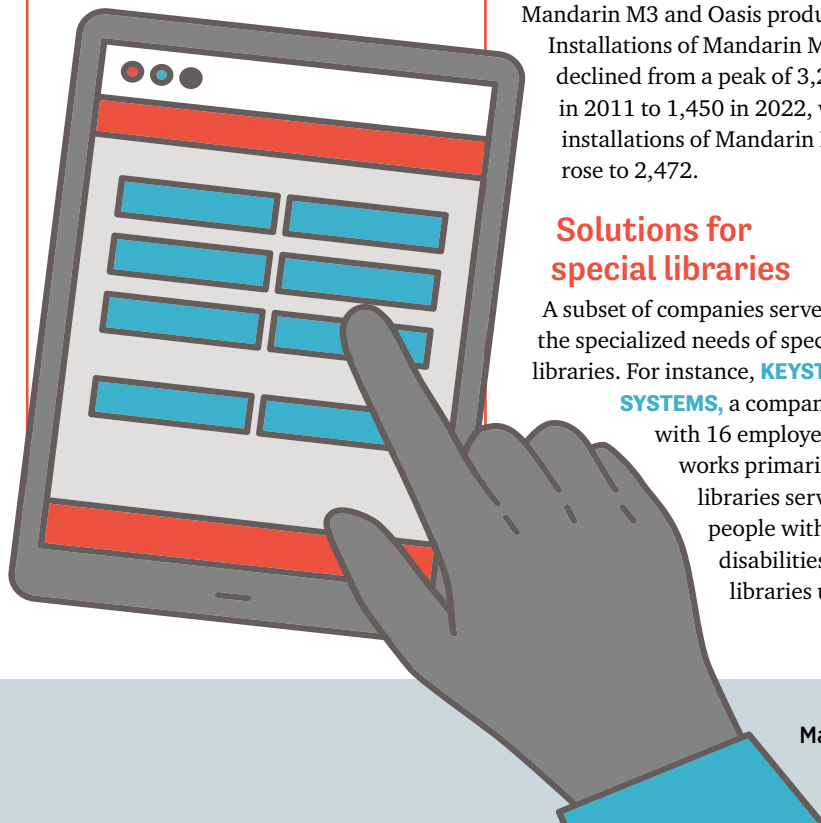
MANDARIN LIBRARY AUTOMATION, a relatively small company with 20 employees, offers the Mandarin M5 ILS used in K–12 public and private schools and other small libraries. The company offers free or low-cost upgrades from its legacy Mandarin M3 and Oasis products.

Installations of Mandarin M3 have declined from a peak of 3,273 in 2011 to 1,450 in 2022, while installations of Mandarin M5 rose to 2,472.

Solutions for special libraries

A subset of companies serve the specialized needs of special libraries. For instance, **KEYSTONE**

SYSTEMS, a company with 16 employees, works primarily with libraries serving people with visual disabilities. These libraries usually



provide materials to patrons through delivery rather than in-person. Keystone's KLAS ILS is designed for this type of distinctive service. A total of 118 libraries use KLAS, up one from 2021. Keystone Systems is established as the leading vendor in a niche market that has been too small to interest larger-scale companies.

SOUTRON GLOBAL, which offers the Soutron ILS primarily to corporate and other special libraries, continues to expand its customer base. Last year, Soutron signed 15 contracts, expanding total installations to 320. Soutron has enhanced its ILS to create more efficient workflows that better connect thesaurus terms to catalog records. A new API supports organization-wide taxonomies, enabling real-time access across a library's multiple divisions or departments. Soutron Global's Client Advisory Group has helped to shape the direction of the company's products.

SOFTLINK INFORMATION CENTERS, part of Volaris Group since 2013, develops and supports the Liberty ILS for corporate and special libraries and the illumina knowledge and research management system. Its customers include governmental libraries and those in law or consulting firms. Softlink Education offers the Oliver ILS widely used in Australian schools.

Watching the international scene

Library technology is becoming an increasingly global industry. As some products from outside North

America gain traction abroad, we can expect to see companies' increased efforts to expand into the US and Canada, perceived as the most lucrative markets.

CIVICA, with its Spydus ILS, is a strong competitor in Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Taiwan, and the UK. Spydus has seen development for 40 years and is now a fully web-based product for both its staff and patron interfaces. Spydus 11 includes a new discovery interface incorporating BIBFRAME linked data and a reworked UX. Last year, 17 libraries contracted with Spydus, spanning 189 locations. In 2021, Civica won the bid to serve Libraries Ireland and its 170 public library locations; the migration was completed last year. The Libraries and Education division of Civica employs nearly 500 people.

AXIELL has grown steadily through acquisitions and organic expansion. With 371 employees and several products for libraries, archives, and other cultural organizations, the Swedish company is a major competitor globally and throughout Europe. Last year's acquisition of Infor brought in customers from Canada and the US who use the V-smart ILS. Axiell continues to support and market V-smart, and reports sales made last year in The Hague, Netherlands, and to municipal library systems in France and Canada.

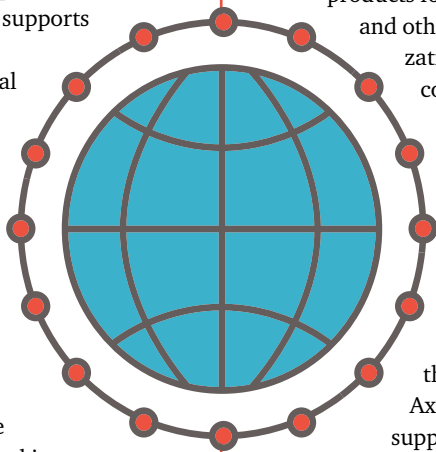
Northern Ireland's Libraries NI—the largest library authority in the UK with 96 locations and 26 mobile libraries—selected

Axiell's OpenGalaxy Spark and Arena discovery environment to replace its existing SirsiDynix Symphony environment. Meanwhile, Quria, an LSP launched by Axiell in 2016, continues to expand its reach in public libraries across Europe. New commitments include Viken County Library, a consortium of 22 municipalities in Norway, and Dala Libraries, a consortium of 15 municipalities in central Sweden's Dalarna County. Eighty-seven contracts were signed for Quria last year, expanding its reach to 166 installations.

Also in 2022, Axiell acquired Enisoft, a Finnish company that produces mobile apps for libraries. Other milestones reported by Axiell include the introduction of Quria Digital Agreements for registering patrons and plans to develop Quria School, a solution for school libraries based on Axiell's WeLib ILS.

SYSTEMATIC, previously specializing in enterprise software systems for government and military organizations, entered the library technology space in a big way with Cicero, an ILS initially developed to support all public and school libraries in Denmark. Created in 2018, Cicero has since been marketed to other library types, with a reported 2,414 total installations and 62 million collection items in 2022. Last year, 12 libraries representing 50 facilities selected Cicero. Recent product releases from Systematic have included Cicero Mobile, which provides functionality for staff entirely through web interfaces, and Cicero Explore, a new business intelligence module. The privately held company is based in Aarhus, Denmark, and employs 67 people in its library and learning division.

BARATZ, part of Volaris Group, develops the Absys library management



system, used widely throughout Spain and other Spanish-speaking countries. Absys can be installed locally (AbsysNet) or hosted by Baratz (AbsysCloud). Last year, 29 libraries representing 80 facilities signed contracts for Absys, expanding its presence to 3,006 locations. Baratz continues to enhance AbsysCloud's content enrichment services, such as cover images and platform SMS, along with the new ODA discovery interface.

PRIMA, a Brazil-based company that is also a part of Volaris Group, develops and supports the SophiA ILS used mostly by public and academic libraries, as well as the Philos ILS used by school libraries. Last year, Prima made

31 sales for Philos, expanding its customer base to 483; the 23 sales for its SophiA ILS bring total installations to 758. Additionally, 20 contracts were signed for SophiA Web, a web-based ILS, in 2022. New developments for the SophiA line have included enhancements to carousels for selected collections in the online catalog, PDF indexing capabilities, and new features to import bibliographic records for ebook collections and other digital content providers.

Looking ahead

Following a surge of aggressive business transactions, 2022 was calm on the mergers and acquisitions front. High interest rates may have made leveraged buyouts less attractive. And it may take time to see the results of the latest round of transitions. But private equity ownership arrangements mean that new business transitions will be inevitable, even

if timing and structural outcomes remain uncertain.

We can anticipate continued momentum on the open source front. FOLIO will become an even stronger contender for academic and research libraries, especially with the LC project injecting substantial new resources into its development. Nevertheless, Ex Libris Alma and

its associated product suite remain formidable, especially with a decade's head start and Clarivate's massive resources behind it.

Koha, especially when combined with Aspen Discovery, stands to continue making gains at the expense of established proprietary products that may have once hindered the develop-

ment and support of open source.

Technologies to watch in the coming year include artificial intelligence and analytics. AI-powered chatbots and text-generation services have enormous implications for educational institutions and libraries. Library search services enhanced with AI will likely improve discovery of library resources yet may also bring unintended biases and consequences.

Library companies consolidated under global corporations with highly developed analytics will face new opportunities and challenges. Though library customers may benefit from increased insights into their resources and services, they must vigorously defend user privacy. ^{AL}



MARSHALL BREEDING is an independent consultant, speaker, and author. He writes and edits the website Library Technology Guides.

Technologies to watch in the coming year include artificial intelligence and analytics.



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MEETING THE CHALLENGE

Teens take a stand in the intellectual freedom fight

BY Emily Udell



Ava Kirtley was a high school junior when she first learned about attempts to ban books at her school library in Walla Walla, Washington.

In summer 2021, several parents and community members challenged a handful of books at the school, including the memoir *Gender Queer* by Maia Kobabe. In response, Kirtley and about 40 of her peers met that fall at a student-run social justice club to discuss how to respond. They made plans to attend the next school board meeting in December to protest the proposed bans.

“One of the most infuriating things was that [the book ban supporters] were claiming they were speaking for us,” says the now 18-year-old. “We felt like our voices were not just being ignored but being taken away.”

Ava Kirtley raised money to purchase books from frequently banned lists and gave them away to teens in Walla Walla, Washington.



Youth want to join this fight in different ways.

Some might want to write a letter to the editor or make social media posts. Some may want to speak at a school board meeting or form banned book clubs.”

KAREN KEYS, coordinator of young adult services at Brooklyn Public Library (BPL), organizer for BPL’s Books Unbanned initiative and Intellectual Freedom Teen Council

Feeling exhilarated from speaking out at the board meeting alongside her peers, Kirtley was determined to address the issue further. She began planning a club for students focusing on banned books.

With more than \$3,500 raised from a GoFundMe campaign—with leftover funds donated to the local public library—she collaborated with a local independent bookseller to acquire 40 copies each of four titles: George M. Johnson’s *All Boys Aren’t Blue*, Kobabe’s *Gender Queer*, Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*, and Angie Thomas’s *The Hate U Give* (see our Newsmaker interview with Thomas on p. 18). Each title has appeared on frequently banned books lists. The copies were distributed to teens for free and discussed at the bookstore monthly between February and May 2022. Johnson even joined one of the meetings, which were attended by an average of 10–15 students, to discuss their young adult memoir.

“I like these books,” Kirtley says. “I think they talk about important things, are educational, and help build empathy. They are good literature.”

As book challenges, bans, and associated legislative efforts continue to accelerate around the country, teens are speaking up for intellectual freedom, and librarians are finding ways to

support their activism. This includes hosting banned book clubs like the one Kirtley organized at her school and sponsoring other initiatives to help teens address the issue and gain access to frequently challenged materials. Many of the recently challenged books include themes that address LGBTQ+ and racial justice issues.

The American Library Association’s (ALA) Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) documented 1,269 attempts to ban or restrict library resources in 2022, with 2,571 unique titles targeted—most of which were young adult and children’s literature. These figures significantly surpassed those recorded in 2021, itself a record-breaking year.

At Kirtley’s school, none of the book challenges ended up successful. School board members and the superintendent mentioned that student voices were impactful during the decision process, Kirtley recalls, adding that the school now has a committee to review book challenges and that it includes student representatives.

“When students started showing up, it was a breath of fresh air and [gave] a different perspective,” Kirtley says. But in many communities, censorship attempts have succeeded, and threats continue.

LIBRARIES LEAD

During Banned Books Week in fall 2022, Lexington (Ky.) Public Library (LPL) held its first banned book club meeting for

teens. Jennie Samons, teen librarian at LPL’s Northside branch, says she chose titles that had been the subject of national challenges within the previous three to four years and planned a few talking points to kickstart the conversation for each meeting.



Photo: Lexington (Ky.) Public Library (books)

“I wanted to keep the format really open and let the teens guide the conversation,” Samons says. “They come to the group having big feelings.”

The city’s Carnegie Center for Literacy and Learning community center provided copies of frequently banned titles to launch LPL’s program. The meetings were marketed through social media and word of mouth, including through some local teachers. Initially held monthly, the meetings are now bimonthly with the hope of attracting more participants. (They currently host about five students per session.)

One of LPL’s selections was *Cemetery Boys* by Aiden Thomas, which features a transgender protagonist and themes of identity, poverty, and homelessness. Another was the first book in the graphic novel series *Heartstopper* by Alice Oseman, which chronicles the budding romance between two teen boys and inspired a Netflix series.

“These are all issues that youths are dealing with on a daily basis,” Samons says. “They need to learn to find their voices—they will be adults in no time. The quicker they learn to stand up for themselves and their peers, the better.”

Samons says the meetings bring in different attendees depending on the subject matter. Although she braced herself for at least some negative feedback from community members, she has received only supportive comments about the club.

BEYOND BANNED BOOK CLUBS

“I have tremendous respect for the librarians who are out front with banned book clubs,” says Virginia Walter, professor emerita at University of California, Los Angeles, and author of

“Students have voices that need to be heard. We need to do everything we can to support students, who are the primary stakeholders in their education.”

CAMERON SAMUELS, 2022 Banned Books Week youth honorary chair

Young Activists and the Public Library: Facilitating Democracy. “It puts a light on what is otherwise a hidden thing [but] they need to be prepared for the heat as well as the light.”

Young adult books taking on increasingly diverse subject matters serve as a powerful tool for librarians today to meaningfully connect with youth, Walter says.

“The books have gotten much more

realistic,” she adds. “Authors are tackling more difficult topics, librarians are ordering [these titles], and kids are reading them.”

Walters suggests library staff get ahead of book challenges targeting young adult materials and foster activism by engaging and organizing youth ahead of any issues. For example, she says, libraries could start teen councils.

That’s exactly the route Brooklyn (N.Y.) Public Library (BPL) has taken. Although schools and libraries in the New York City borough haven’t faced challenges, staff members wanted to educate teens on the issue of intellectual freedom and connect them with youth activists dealing directly with book bans in other parts of the country.

“Even though teens in Brooklyn don’t experience it, it’s still a topic that they care about,” says Karen Keys, coordinator of young adult services at BPL. “I think they see it for what it is. It’s not about banning books; it’s about saying certain people don’t have a right to participate. It’s very much about trying to silence a marginalized part of the community, and they see that. Often, they are members of those communities themselves.”

BPL convened a teen focus group, and as a result, launched Books Unbanned in April 2022, an initiative that provides free electronic library cards to youth across the US who may wish



Flier for Books Unbanned, a Brooklyn (N.Y.) Public Library initiative that connects US teens to banned books.



Cameron Samuels (right, in yellow shirt), along with a group of high school students from Katy (Tex.) Independent School District, prepares to distribute books with LGBTQ+ themes to their classmates in afterschool clubs.

to access books banned in their school or public libraries. At the same time, BPL also formed an Intellectual Freedom Teen Council, which meets every month virtually to discuss book challenges in the news, have conversations about the members' favorite banned books, and strategize about how to support and engage with teen activists around the country. About 12 to 15 teens participate in each meeting.

Teen council members helped organize a program for 2022's Banned Books Week called Banned Camp—a summer initiative including events and programming around challenged titles—in collaboration with Austin (Tex.) Public Library, which continues to host programming under the moniker. The council also helped to plan the Freedom to Read Advocacy Institute that took place this past February. The institute, a four-part virtual program hosted in partnership with the nonprofit PEN America, was open to teens across the US and addressed various aspects of intellectual freedom as it pertains to banned books. BPL hopes to replicate and host similar live programs accessible to different time zones so that young people across the country can attend and build upon their advocacy efforts.

"Youth want to join this fight in different ways," Keys says. "Some might want to write a letter to the editor or make social media posts. Some may want to speak at a school board meeting or form banned book clubs with other youth."

SPEAKING 'TRUTH TO POWER'

In November 2021, then-17-year-old Cameron Samuels spoke out against censorship at a school board meeting for Katy (Tex.) Independent School District (KISD). Book bans had been escalating at their school, they said, and an internet filter

at schools prevented students from accessing websites advocating for LGBTQ+ causes. A virtual visit from Newbery Award-winning author Jerry Craft had also been canceled because of accusations that his work promoted critical race theory. Those events prompted Samuels to speak out.

"I was the only student there, and it was quite an empty room," they recalled about the board meeting. "There were many speakers there speaking against other books.... It was an awful experience to be the only person in the room who supported intellectual freedom and diversity."

Despite feeling isolated by the experience, Samuels was inspired to start organizing in the 90,000-student district. They connected with school groups likely to be interested in addressing intellectual freedom, such as book clubs and groups supporting LGBTQ+ youth.

"In February [2022], we packed the school board room," they said, estimating a majority of the 200-person capacity room was supporters, many of whom were students. "We outnumbered the opposition and we spoke truth to power."

Samuels and the other students successfully defended and helped reinstate several books to KISD's libraries, including Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, a graphic novel about the Holocaust. Later, Samuels worked with a local ACLU chapter to challenge the internet filter, which KISD dismantled at the high school level and in some middle schools. For their work, Samuels was appointed a youth honorary chair for Banned Books Week 2022. But some books remain banned at district schools.

Samuels says their organizing efforts at KISD had the support of librarians. They suggest libraries can continue supporting teens publicly when possible and creating intellectual

freedom initiatives geared toward youth. Cities can also declare themselves Book Sanctuaries, as Chicago Public Library (CPL) did in fall 2022. CPL describes a Book Sanctuary as a space committed to supporting the right to read and expanding access to commonly challenged and banned books.

“Students have voices that need to be heard,” says Samuels, who is now 19, attending college, and planning to major in political science. “We need to do everything we can to support students, who are the primary stakeholders in their education.”

MAKING SPACE FOR TEENS

Having access to stories that reflect the diversity of young people’s experiences is essential to youth, says Kelly Tyler, principal librarian of youth services at Los Angeles Public Library and coauthor of *Intellectual Freedom for Teens: A Practical Guide for Young Adults and School Librarians*. Librarians should be prepared to defend intellectual freedom and support teens who want to take action, she notes.

“It’s important to make these materials available for teens who want or need to read them,” Tyler says. “Teens need to see themselves, so they don’t feel so alone or different—whatever they are experiencing.”

In addition to promoting Banned Books Week (which takes place this year October 1–7), Tyler says librarians can support teens wanting to defend intellectual freedom by sharing with them how their libraries handle challenges to materials. Teens can use these materials, she says, as talking points when faced with pushback. Libraries can also connect budding teen activists to resources from ALA’s OIF, as well as help them understand how local government bodies work so that they can engage with them.

As a high school senior, Shiva Rajbandhari successfully ran for Boise (Idaho) School District’s board of trustees. He spoke out against book bans during his campaign.

“Teens need to see themselves so they don’t feel so alone or different—whatever they are experiencing.”

KELLY TYLER, principal librarian of youth services at Los Angeles Public Library

One student activist engaging with local government is 18-year-old Shiva Rajbandhari, who spoke about his opposition to book bans during a successful campaign for a two-year term on the Boise (Idaho) School District’s board of trustees.

In September 2022, Rajbandhari, a high school senior and activist, defeated an incumbent who was endorsed by a hardline conservative group called the

Idaho Liberty Dogs, which had campaigned for the removal of books in Boise-area libraries.

Rajbandhari says that reading Nepali American writers while he was growing up helped him find a sense of confidence in his interracial identity while living in the majority white community of Boise.

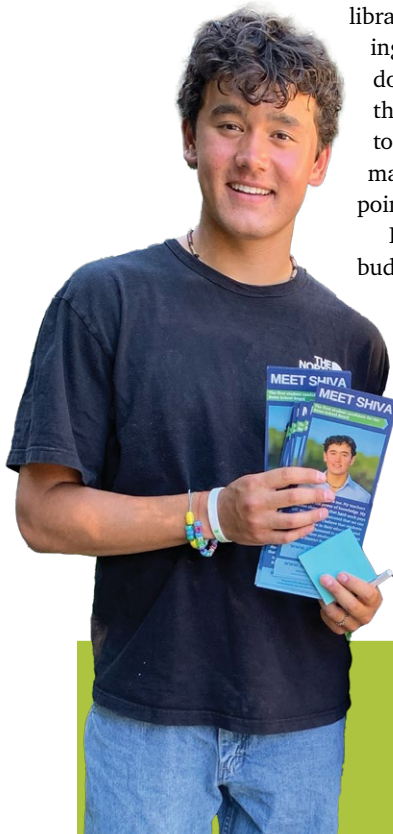
“It made me realize I’m valid just how I am,” he says of having access to that literature. “Books create a safe space in the lives of people who don’t have one otherwise.” That experience made him empathetic to LGBTQ+ and other marginalized youth and is part of what prompted him to speak out against bans and challenges.

Like Kirtley in Washington, Rajbandhari remains deeply concerned about the forces driving book bans and other policies affecting teens. He thinks librarians are natural allies in the fight against extremism.

“Libraries already are providing us the resources that we need to achieve our goals and to defend ourselves against hatred,” Rajbandhari says. “We have to stand strong, and we have to stand together.” **AL**



EMILY UDELL is a freelance writer based in Indianapolis.



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LET'S

TALK

ABOUT

IT



Providing sexual and reproductive health information // **BY** Barbara A. Alvarez

When I have connected with public librarians about sharing sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information, a common refrain has been that patrons do not come to the reference desk for this information. This isn't surprising. How comfortable would you be going up to a stranger and asking them a question about your health, much less your sexual health? Of course, it is a mistake to attribute a lack of questions to a lack of interest. Many people may be afraid to ask, or they may assume the library doesn't have this information.

FEARS AND BIASES

Let's first discuss library anxiety. I see this firsthand in my own work as a reference services instructor. One of the assignments I task students with is to ask a reference librarian a real reference question and reflect on their experience. Many students report back that they were worried their questions were silly or that they were needlessly disturbing the librarian.

Keep in mind that these are graduate students in library and information science who have, at minimum, a basic understanding of library services. If they feel anxiety approaching the reference desk, imagine how someone else must feel. Now add a layer of asking a personal, health-related question—one that is perhaps enveloped in stigma and shame. Is it any surprise people aren't approaching our desks and openly asking about contraception, pregnancy, and sexuality?

The lack of diversity in libraries undoubtedly also plays a role in patrons' fears of approaching the reference desk. According to the ALA membership survey from 2019, 87.9% of respondents identified as white; only 4.9% of members reported their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino; 4.2% said they are Black or African American; and 2.2% reported being multiracial.

Given the homogeneity of the library profession, biases are bound to proliferate. These biases certainly do not bode well for providing comprehensive SRH information to those who may belong to a different race or ethnicity, as biases can manifest as stereotypes held against groups of people and can be both conscious and unconscious.

While we may genuinely want to make our public libraries more reflective of the communities we serve and to make them welcoming and open spaces, our biases may prevent us from recognizing gaps in services, staffing, collections, and resources—including SRH information.

Therefore, providing adequate sexual and reproductive health information and services isn't just about buying more books or hosting more programs. To build an inclusive environment where people can receive comprehensive SRH information, we librarians must do inner identity work to approach these important topics thoughtfully.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

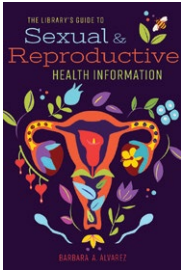
Another important concern for library users is privacy. When providing reference services for health information, we should ensure patron privacy and confidentiality.

As with any other reference desk question, librarians should adhere to the guidelines provided by the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA). These service guidelines (bit.ly/RUSAGuidelines) include visibility and approachability, showing interest in patrons' needs, active listening, asking clarifying questions, searching, and following up.

RUSA also outlines how to provide a quality reference interview. Notably, sections 3.1.9 and 3.1.10 of the service guidelines state that a library worker "maintains objectivity; does not interject value judgments about the subject matter or the nature of the question into the transaction; respects patron privacy; and maintains confidentiality after the transaction."

By providing SRH information, you are by no means expected to be an expert on this topic. However, as with the myriad other topical questions that patrons ask public librarians daily, we are expected to direct people to information and resources.

Special care should be taken with SRH reference questions. You may want to move the interaction to a more private space within the library and offer information in a variety of formats depending on the patron's information needs and abilities. In all cases, you should refrain from



This is an excerpt from *The Library's Guide to Sexual and Reproductive Health Information* by Barbara A. Alvarez (ALA Editions, February).

making assumptions and judgments about the question and check that the patron feels satisfied with the information received.

Librarians should never interpret medical information, make direct or indirect diagnoses, recommend health care procedures or practices, or refer patrons to specific health care providers. Libraries should consider posting both digital and printed disclaimers that explain how reference interactions are not a substitute for working with a health care provider or professional. And with the changing legal landscape surrounding topics like contraception, abortion, and LGBTQIA+ health issues, librarians should also ensure that they are not providing legal advice.

Libraries should also look into incorporating chat, text, and email platforms for people with accessibility or privacy concerns. Self-checkout machines and contactless pickups can offer a degree of confidentiality. Furthermore, remind patrons that public libraries do not keep records of materials checked out, nor will libraries disclose this information to others.

CURATING CONTENT

Perhaps one of the most useful skills you can take on for your library community—and for SRH issues in particular—is to get into the habit of curating content for your patrons. Content creation efforts like resource guides and tutorials can empower people to use the library's available resources.

Resource guides and LibGuides are two popular creation methods. A resource guide is a collection of resources on a specific topic. It can direct patrons to databases, books, and relevant library programs and events.

A resource guide can also include information about how people can search the catalog or databases using specific keywords, filters, and subject headings. Free design tools like Canva can help librarians create attractive resource guides that they can print and share at the reference desk and link to on the library's website.

LibGuides are content management systems that librarians use to curate content and information on specific topics. They use widgets and other electronic tools to make them accessible and shareable on library websites and are most commonly used at university libraries.

Whether you create a resource guide or use LibGuides, I recommend linking the resource in a place that is highly visible. For example, it may be helpful to have a link to different guides at the top of a database page.

VIDEO TUTORIALS

Video tutorials can provide guidance to people who may otherwise be too afraid to go to the reference desk and ask for information.

Where the resource guide provides a general overview about what information is available, a tutorial dives deeper into specific library resources. For example, a tutorial can be created to instruct people how to search for sensitive topics in the library catalog or databases. Another tutorial could include information about how people can access subject headings in databases or assess credibility of a resource.

You can also create tutorials in tandem with resource guides. Just include a QR code that leads to the accompanying tutorial on the resource guide and place it in the stacks.

When creating tutorials, I recommend following these basic practices:


- Do not choose a broad topic; keep it specific.
- Limit the tutorial to three to five minutes. As yours will be a niche topic, keeping it limited shouldn't be too difficult. If you do have additional information you'd like to include, create a quick part-two video.
- Add tutorials to a YouTube playlist for this specific topic or theme. This makes the content bingeable, and patrons can easily navigate to the video most relevant to them.
- Embed the tutorial on your library website or include a link in a visible location, like on the databases page.
- Be sure to promote any supplemental resource guides to your video description on YouTube. You can include direct links to those resources.
- Use closed captions or a transcript so the video is accessible to people with hearing impairments. You can enable automatic captions on YouTube or use a service like Happy Scribe for low-cost options for transcripts and subtitles.

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

Collections for SRH information should be regularly reviewed for accuracy, currency, and inclusivity. When weeding materials, be mindful that many people may use the resources only in the library, and circulation statistics may therefore be lower than actual use.

So how should a public librarian weed or update an SRH collection? I encourage you to view books on SRH as a staple of your collection. In my opinion, this means that you should never be without them.

For instance, books about abortion prior to the US Supreme Court's 2022 reversal of *Roe v. Wade* may now



A collection that contains **sexual and reproductive information** demonstrates to your community that you care about their access to these important topics.

be outdated. You should scan materials for the type of language and subject matter to make sure that they are current, inclusive, and up to date. I encourage setting up a Google Alert for SRH-related topics to stay current on legislation news.

Lastly, it is crucial to have strong policies regarding collection development, library materials, challenged materials, and code of conduct.

As most public librarians are aware, book challenges are at an all-time high. ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom tracked 1,269 challenges to library, school, and university materials in 2022. This resulted in 2,571 unique title challenges or removals, and many of the targeted books were by or about Black or LGBTQIA+ people.

Staff training on how to best respond to patrons who are upset about library materials can help librarians feel supported and unified. Above all, a collection that contains SRH information demonstrates to your community that you care about their access to these important topics. Learn more about policies (bit.ly/ALALibPols) and challenge support (bit.ly/ALACHallSupport) on ALA's website.

USEFUL PARTNERSHIPS

Community collaborations can provide an opportunity for public libraries to facilitate access to SRH and other health information on a local level. These may include collaborations with local health care organizations that can provide traditional presentations and informational partnerships.

When seeking an organization to partner with, it is important to choose one that provides credible, evidence-based information. Possibilities include health departments; local universities, including nursing colleges and medical schools; hospitals; health care community groups; health associations and coalitions; and YMCAs. Topics may include comprehensive sex education, violence prevention,

sexuality, pregnancy options, menstrual health, adoption, and pregnancy prevention.

An important note about partnering with hospitals: Although Catholic hospitals make up a significant percentage of hospitals throughout the United States, they rarely provide information about or services related to sterilization, abortion, contraception, or LGBTQIA+ issues. You should keep this in mind when considering which hospitals to collaborate with for educational programs.

When considering organizations your library can partner with or what topics you can present on, you may find it helpful to conduct a community needs assessment. A community needs assessment can help you better understand what the people who live in your area need and want from the library.

An assessment can inform you about the languages your patrons speak, technology access, barriers to information and library access, and socioeconomic levels, as well as about community organizations in your area.

You can get this information from both primary and secondary sources. For instance, you may look at census records or business reports. You may also get feedback through surveys, focus groups, or one-on-one conversations.

When soliciting information from your community, you should explain how you plan to integrate feedback into library services. This work may seem complex, but it is important to building trust in your community and creating patron-centered services. **AL**



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Business Librarianship for the Public Librarian, was published by ALA Editions in 2016.

Fix It Yourself

Repair events at the library promote sustainable living

BY Gabrielle Griffis



GABRIELLE GRIFFIS is assistant youth services librarian at Brewster (Mass.) Ladies' Library.

Are you sure it's time to throw out those pants with a broken zipper or that bike with the squeaky pedals? Sustainable living involves making changes in your everyday life to ensure that you leave the planet a better place after you're gone. These changes can include recycling and reducing waste, of course, but also repairing rather than replacing.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and supply chain shortages, interest in sustainability and self-reliance topics has risen considerably among library patrons. Libraries of all types are enhancing programming by embracing these timely subjects and providing much sought-after instruction.

Repair events, which can be hosted at libraries, help foster a culture of social and environmental stewardship by offering a space where people can preserve resources and consider the cost of manufacturing and the impact of waste. At these events, people bring their broken items, and repair coaches provide instruction on how to—hopefully—fix them. In this hands-on, intergenerational setting, participants learn new skills and connect with community members while keeping items out of landfills.

Budgets for repair events can vary widely, from costing nothing by relying on volunteers and donated resources to investing in tools and other resources. These events can be small or large, depending on the venue space and coordinating capacity, and can focus on specific items or a range of repairs. Programs are typically three hours long, with one hour before and after for setup and cleanup.

Recruiting repair coaches should be done at least two months in advance of the program. A meeting should be held with coaches to go over objectives and the tools that volunteers or the library will need to provide. At the repair event itself, coaches can guide participants on how to troubleshoot, disassemble, and hopefully fix their malfunctioning belongings.

Here are a few tips to prepare for repair events at your library:

Decide what type of event you want to host. This may affect what you call the event and how you market it. Organizers can title the program “Repair Event” or can use the names and free resources provided by organizations like Repair Cafe (repaircafe.org) and Fixit Clinic (bit.ly/AL-FixitClinic).

Assess your program space. Determine the size of your event by the size of the room you'll be using and the number of electrical outlets

available. Smaller libraries can host smaller pop-ups or host events outside if the weather permits.

Delegate responsibilities. Staffers should divide roles for a successful event. Figure out who will handle publicity, repair coach coordination, refreshments, setup and cleanup, greeting participants, tool inventory, and event documentation and social media.

Find partners. Local schools, conservation and recycling committees, and makerspaces can help with your event. Cosponsors are not necessary, but having a coordination team will make planning and execution easier.

Advertise the event. Start your marketing efforts at least one month in advance. Fliers, press releases, social media posts, and PSAs on local television and radio stations are great ways to get the word out. The types of repair services being

offered can also be advertised. Events focused on mending specific items can be a helpful way to teach concentrated fixing skills.

Consider creating a tool library. If your repair event generates a high amount of interest, a tool library

might be a good next step. These can be great resources for the community and for future repair events.

Adapted from 25 Ready-to-Use Sustainable Living Programs for Libraries, edited by Ellyssa Valenti Kroski (ALA Editions, 2022). **AL**

Repair events foster a culture of social and environmental stewardship.

Community over Comfort

Youth services staffers need to be outgoing for effective engagement

by Linda W. Braun



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

In recent months, I've worked as a cofacilitator on several projects that focus on codesigning teen services. As a part of each series—after our group of youth services staffers talks about connected learning, community engagement, outcomes, and assessments—we survey our participants and ask them to reflect on the assets and mindsets they bring to reimagining their work.

Usually, very few respondents say they have relationship-building skills. When participants are asked to reflect on what they want to get better at, most list skills related to connecting with community members. For example, respondents have said they want to get better at being outgoing, be okay with asking for help, eliminate social anxiety, and go out of their comfort zones.

I am always impressed by participants' self-awareness and honesty but also troubled by these reflections. Designing and implementing library services requires constant community engagement. I've asked my colleagues what these self-reflections mean for public library youth services: Can youth services staffers who don't have core relationship-building skills successfully work with their communities? If we are trying to serve traditionally marginalized users who are historically more difficult to reach, will staffers' social anxiety be a barrier to success? And when library workers self-identify as introverted or shy, do some of them simply mean they lack skills to build relationships?

My colleagues agree that answers to these questions don't come easy, and sometimes managers insulate introversion by not asking more of those doing outwardly focused jobs.

Introversion, whether going off a psychological definition or one's own self-perception, comes up a lot in our line of work. It is sometimes used as a stereotype for librarians by those outside the field, but in many cases, introversion is used as a badge of honor by those within the profession (bit.ly/AL-YM-introvert). However, if a staffer tells community members and stakeholders that they are introverted, they could be signaling self-defeat and sending a negative message. That admission could be interpreted as, "it's going to be really difficult to build a relationship with me," and could give stakeholders the impression that the partnership will be transactional.

Youth services work that is inwardly rather than outwardly focused affects our ability to serve our communities. Consider the pandemic: In many instances, when libraries prioritized adapting services, their efforts often missed marginalized populations (bit.ly/AL-YM-Covid). Many of the adaptations we saw in 2020—such as grab-and-go kits and curbside pickup—were services recast in a way that fit what the library already

offered. Imagine what could have been possible if staffers, by and large, had strong community relationships in place before the pandemic. Many of us could have been better equipped to meet the challenges faced by our marginalized users, such as virtual learning or managing family needs when schools and workplaces shuttered.

If you're a youth services staffer and want to serve your community successfully, you must ask yourself some tough questions: Are you able to engage traditionally marginalized populations if you

are unable to move outside your comfort zone? Can you build relationships with people who you don't know or have an easy affinity with? How can you be effective in meeting the needs of those who don't come to the library often or those who don't share your interests?

Luckily, there are resources to help address these questions. "An Introvert's Guide to Networking," a TEDx talk from Portland Incubator Experiment cofounder Rick Turoczy (bit.ly/AL-YM-Rick), provides ideas for getting started with relationship-building. And "Why Introverts Excel at Building Professional Relationships," a recent article from *Psychology Today* (bit.ly/AL-YM-psych), highlights skills linked to introversion that can be used to forge connections with others.

Remember that relationship skills can be developed over time. Going out of your comfort zone promises great rewards for you and those you serve. **AL**

In many cases, introversion is used as a badge of honor by those within the profession.

Sustainable Service Models

Tips for libraries
undergoing structural shifts

BY Jess Williams



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Academic libraries in the US have shifted service models over the years for several reasons. Rapid changes in technology play a large role, but other external factors—like budget cuts and institutional needs—also drive evolution. As new skillsets are identified and positions created, leaders can also introduce new frameworks.

Many academic libraries have pivoted away from subject-based or discipline-based liaison models, which have traditionally relied on designated staffers to build relationships with faculty and act as points of contact for specific services. They are now switching to team-based models that prioritize functions like teaching, learning, research support, outreach, and collection strategies. The idea is if librarians divide functional tasks and focus on fewer types of work, staffers can improve service and feel less overwhelmed.

Some libraries are also adopting hybrid models. My institution is an example of this. We reassigned librarians to liaise with specific colleges rather than individual departments, shifted collection development duties to the collections department, and brought in more support for outreach and communication. We are also developing new skills, expanding digital resources, and practicing open pedagogy.

These kinds of changes can be difficult. As a millennial librarian who has worked in various types of institutions, I have experienced a handful of library reorganizations. For academic libraries on the precipice of changing service models, here's some advice I can offer leaders.

Be strategic. Before onboarding staff or creating new positions, thoroughly review job descriptions and be clear with expectations once employees start. Make it obvious to candidates that creating the job is part of the job. Keep duties broad and annual goals specific to make evolution more organic.

Center labor equity. Revisit your pay and promotion structure. Is it applied equitably across the organization? Do you rely on soft money or temporary positions? Are you unintentionally cursing the hardest-working with more work than others? Are diversity and representation involved in decision making?

Protect learning time for employees. Library workers are generally curious folks who love to learn. Provide professional development opportunities, affinity groups, and time for self-directed learning to foster an energized, creative staff.

Cross-train core functions. Stories of employee burnout have been widely reported. Ensure service models are sustainable by equipping a larger number of staffers to perform essential duties. Rotate shifts so that

everyone receives time to engage in deep, uninterrupted work.

Build infrastructure. Setting a foundation for new services is essential for scaling up, succession planning, and sustainability. Dedicating time to creating transparent documentation and workflows will prevent frustration and bottlenecks later.

Resist vocational awe and toxic positivity. Librarian and scholar Fobazi Ettarh defined *vocational awe* as the mindset that an institution or career is inherently good, “therefore beyond critique.” Be authentic, hold team members accountable, and cultivate a culture of genuine encouragement. This also means recognizing invisible labor, particularly for those in public-facing roles who exert greater emotional energy.

Embrace saying “no.” Offering new services may mean cutting others. You may need to let old functions go, out-source processes, or move initiatives in a new direction.

Create opportunities for experimentation and failure. If a decision can be

easily reversed, make it fast and move forward. Remove punitive consequences for failure and add incentives for innovation.

These strategies will enable your organization not only to adapt and respond to the needs of the institution but also to grow into a proactive library that moves your university or college forward. **AL**

As new skillsets
are identified and
positions created,
leaders can also
introduce new
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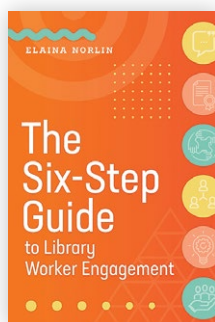
ALLISON ESCOTO is head librarian at the Center for Fiction in Brooklyn, New York.



Inspired Thinking: Big Ideas to Enrich Yourself and Your Community

By Dorothy Stoltz, with Morgan Miller, Lisa Picker, Joseph Thompson, and Carrie Willson

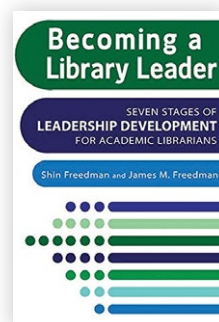
For libraries to remain relevant, the concept of inspired thinking is not only valuable but essential. Beginning with a hat tip to big thinkers like Plato and Shakespeare, this reflective volume outlines inspired thinking and how it works in libraries. Leaning toward the philosophical, the book centers the library as a source of grand notions, which can then be used to build community and culture. Offering insights on how leaders find and implement these thoughts practically in their work, the authors provide plenty of food for thought and make a strong case for going big on big ideas. ALA Editions, 2020. 144 p. \$54.99. PBK. 978-0-8389-4671-8.



The Six-Step Guide to Library Worker Engagement

By Elaina Norlin

A key factor in successful leadership is a happy, engaged, and appreciated staff. Norlin's guide seeks to open the conversation on how to engage library employees. Through extensive research and interesting interviews, this title delves into many aspects of why library worker engagement is so important. From understanding organizational culture to examining how to use recognition and encouragement to build a more cohesive and productive staff, to analyzing how it can all go wrong, this is a helpful read for library leaders at all levels. ALA Editions, 2021. 144 p. \$64.99. PBK. 978-0-8389-4798-2.

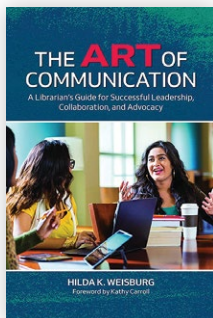


Becoming a Library Leader: Seven Stages of Leadership Development for Academic Librarians

By Shin Freedman and James M. Freedman

For academic librarians, the path to developing leadership skills can often feel like a well-kept secret. In three parts, *Becoming a Library Leader* examines various types of academic libraries and provides a holistic view of the abilities and insights needed to become an effective leader in those spaces. This title gives readers a better understanding of basic leadership skills and academic library culture, as well as provides accessible discussion of the titular seven stages. The case studies and exercises are also especially engaging. Association of College and Research Libraries, 2020. 268 p. \$61.20. PBK. 978-0-8389-4768-5. (Also available as an ebook.)

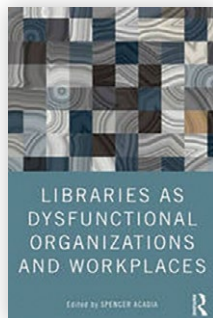
BY Allison Escoto



The Art of Communication: A Librarian's Guide for Successful Leadership, Collaboration, and Advocacy

By Hilda K. Weisburg

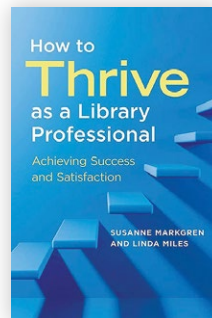
Weisburg dives deep into one of the most necessary skills for any library leader: communication. The book, arranged in three parts, addresses communication basics, how to level up existing abilities, and how to master communication to become an effective leader or advocate. The issues discussed are not limited to verbal communication; there is an insightful dissection of nonverbal cues and how they can help or hinder the delivery of necessary information. A useful and thought-provoking addition to any library. Libraries Unlimited, 2022. 205 p. \$50. PBK. 978-1-4408-7895-4. (Also available as an ebook.)



Libraries as Dysfunctional Organizations and Workplaces

Edited by Spencer Acadia

The discourse for library leaders on how to improve connections with the community is plentiful and varied. When it comes to work culture within the library, however, there are fewer conversations. Through many contributions from library professionals and scholars, this title examines the many ways dysfunction can manifest in a library, including employee turnover, discrimination, and precarious employment. But it is not all doom and gloom. Throughout the chapters, contributing authors suggest approaches for combatting dysfunction. Understanding the root of dysfunction is an essential skill for any current or aspiring library leader. Routledge, 2022. 316 p. \$44.95. PBK. 978-0-3677-4709-1. (Also available as an ebook).



How to Thrive as a Library Professional: Achieving Success and Satisfaction

By Susanne Markgren and Linda Miles

Written with an eye toward career planning, Markgren and Miles's title shares how to take stock of the possibilities and opportunities in library work. Opening with a helpful chapter on developing a career vision, the book takes the reader step by step through a "greater awareness of your current context," providing strategies for organizational structures, fostering professional relationships, and engaging in reflective practice. Libraries Unlimited, 2019. 134 p. \$50. PBK. 978-1-4408-6711-8. (Also available as an ebook.) **AL**



A Library of Laughs

Jenny Robb says we are living in the golden age of cartoons and comics.

“When I was growing up, we didn’t have graphic novels for a children’s audience,” says Robb, head curator of the Billy Ireland Cartoon Library and Museum (BICLM) at Ohio State University in Columbus. “But now we have all kinds of stories,” she says. “Autobiographical, fantasy, adventure, you name it. It’s incredible to see this explosion of quality comics.”

BICLM, named after an early 20th-century *Columbus Dispatch* cartoonist, opened in 1977 and now hosts the world’s largest collection of print cartoon art. Its millions of comic strips, books, and archives of cartoonists’ original art and papers are a treasure trove for serious scholars and fans.

Noteworthy holdings include most of the original art from comic strip *Calvin and Hobbes* and 75 tons of newspaper comic clippings donated by the San Francisco Academy of

Comic Art—nearly a century’s worth of newsprint recovered from libraries that were transitioning to microfilm. A rare scrapbook of British satirical cartoons (including one print lampooning Caroline Herschel, widely believed to be the first woman paid as a professional scientist) is thought to have been created between 1750 and 1830.

Cartoons can be valuable historical sources, Robb says, offering contemporary readers a look at another era’s socio-cultural climate.

“They tend to be the work of a single artist, but of course that person is influenced by what’s going on in the world around them,” she says. “In some ways they reflect that and some ways they actually influence it.” **AL**

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