

american libraries

May 2024

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION



MARSHALL
BREEDING'S

Library Systems REPORT

p. 18

PLUS: Spice Clubs, Robotic
Pets, Pickleball Librarian

Looking for digital literacy funding?



Did you know the Public Library Association, in partnership with AT&T Connected Learning, offers financial support to public libraries through digital literacy incentive programs? These programs provide the resources necessary for libraries to teach basic digital literacy skills using PLA's DigitalLearn training materials. Scan the QR code or [visit bit.ly/PLAincentives](https://bit.ly/PLAincentives) to sign up for notifications when incentive applications open this spring!



YogaPalooza™

Online Kids' Yoga & Mindfulness Training: Affordable, Engaging, & FUN!

The Public Library Association has teamed up with Bari Koral + Yogapalooza to offer a top-rated way for children's librarians to learn how to seamlessly integrate engaging kids' yoga and mindfulness content into their programming. Teach children how to "sleep" like a pony in the barn, practice yoga with a dancing bear, and go on a dragon hunt. Visit tinyurl.com/yogapaloozaminfulness to learn more about the self-guided certification course (only \$299!), which includes songs, teaching aids, and much more!

Bari Koral is a popular children's recording artist and a globally recognized kids' yoga educator. She has helped tens of thousands of educators calm their classroom (and their lives).

tinyurl.com/yogapaloozaminfulness

CONTENTS

May 2024

American Libraries | Volume 55 #5 | ISSN 0002-9769



FEATURES

18 **2024 Library Systems Report**

Companies focus on developing practical solutions

BY Marshall Breeding

30 **Show Yourself**

Building library credibility through brand identity

BY Susan D. Ballard and Sara Kelly Johns



UP FRONT

- 2 **From the Editor**
Future Directions
BY Sanhita SinhaRoy

ALA

- 3 **From the President**
At Our Core
BY Emily Drabinski
- 4 **Update**
What's happening at ALA

TRENDS

- 8 **The Spice of Life**
Culinary clubs bring new flavors to patrons
BY Diana Panuncial
- 10 **Librarian's Pet**
Public libraries add robotic animals to their collections
BY Rosie Newmark

SPOTLIGHT

- 12 **A Monumental Task**
Library hosts gravestone cleaning meetups
BY Charlee Evans and Whit Gillenwaters

NEWSMAKER

- 14 **Maia Kobabe and Sarah Peitzmeier**
Authors discuss new illustrated guide that presents chest-binding research
BY Sarah Hunter

PLUS

- 9 By the Numbers
15 Global Reach
16 Noted & Quoted

PERSPECTIVES

ACADEMIC INSIGHTS

- 34 **Scholarly Publishing for All**
BY Harrison W. Inefuku

ON MY MIND

- 35 **Culture of Care**
BY Brandy Sanchez

LIBRARIAN'S LIBRARY

- 36 **The Quest for Work-Life Balance**
BY Allison Escoto

PEOPLE

- 38 **Announcements**

THE BOOKEND

- 40 **Holding Court**

10



ON THE COVER: Illustration by Jacob Stead

ADVERTISER INDEX

LaptopsAnytime Cover 4 | NovelList 13 | American Library Association American Libraries 7 | Booklist 17 | Graphics Cover 3 | JobLIST 11 | Public Library Association Cover 2

Future Directions



Sanhita SinhaRoy

This issue marks 10 years since the debut of Marshall Breeding’s annual Library Systems Report. This feature (cover story, p. 18)—one of our most popular—examines the state of the library technology industry. While mergers and acquisitions have slowed, Breeding, a library consultant, observes that “the real unknown is AI,” as companies continue to explore how to integrate artificial intelligence into their offerings. “Libraries can anticipate more prominent use of this technology in products within the next year or so,” he writes.

On a different note, ALA released new data in mid-March that shows the number of books targeted for censorship in the US increased by 65% from 2022 to 2023, surging to a new record. At the top of the 2023 list of most challenged books is, yet again, Maia Kobabe’s *Gender Queer*. Now, with coauthor Sarah Peitzmeier, a University of Michigan researcher, Kobabe has published *Breathe*, an illustrated guide to chest binding. The two spoke with Sarah Hunter, *Booklist* editor of books for youth and graphic novels, about censorship attempts, their collaboration, and the importance of making evidence-based information about health care for transgender people widely available (Newsmaker, p. 14).

Anyone who has loved ones living with dementia might be especially interested in Rosie Newmark’s story about libraries that are adding robotic animals to their collections (“Librarian’s Pet,” p. 10). These low-maintenance, interactive fake Fidos and felines have brought companionship and health benefits to many older adults, a demographic that is growing exponentially throughout the country. As one librarian says, robotic pets offer those experiencing cognitive decline a chance to “still take care of something.”

Finally, with this issue we say good-bye to Senior Editor Greg Landgraf. Among other things, Greg curated and edited the weekly AL Direct e-newsletter, oversaw web content, and managed our social media channels. He also interviewed the Pickleball Librarian in this issue (Bookend, p. 40). We wish Greg all the best in his next endeavor.

Sanhita

Our annual Library Systems Report—celebrating its 10th year—examines the state of the library technology industry with insightful analysis.

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ALA American Library Association

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



EDITOR AND PUBLISHER
Sanhita SinhaRoy
ssinha@ala.org | x4219
cumin, or anything with heat!

MANAGING EDITOR
Terra Dankowski
tdankowski@ala.org | x5282
pimentón

SENIOR EDITOR
Greg Landgraf
glandgraf@ala.org | x5105
Old Bay

ASSOCIATE EDITORS
Megan Bennett
mbennett@ala.org | x4213
Diana Panuncial
dpanuncial@ala.org | x4218
Hatch Chile flakes
pandan

EDITORIAL AND ADVERTISING ASSOCIATE
Carrie Smith
casmith@ala.org | x4216
ginger
Cavender's All-Purpose Greek Seasoning

ART DIRECTOR
Rebecca Lomax
rlomax@ala.org | x4217
cardamom
pepper
smoked hot paprika

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Lucas McGranahan, Joanne Trestail
Melissa Carr
melcarr@ala.org | 704-491-7789
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PUBLISHING DEPARTMENT
George Kendall
Interim Director, ALA Publishing and Media
Milwaukee Avenue
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Mary Jo Bolduc
Salt
Smokehouse Rub

MEMBERSHIP
Melissa Kay Walling, Associate Executive Director, ALA Offices and Member Relations

ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Jason K. Alston (chair), Jaena Rae Cabrera, Bradley J. Kuykendall, Ben Leubsdorf, Elizabeth Nelson, Matthew Nicholas Noe, Lisa Anne Romano.
Committee associates: Lisa Bintrim, Anne M. Link
Editorial policy: ALA Policy Manual, section A.8.2

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At Our Core

Our collective belief in the power of libraries is what ties us together



Emily Drabinski

Libraries are for everyone, even people who are nothing like us. It is our professional responsibility to ensure that our readers can see themselves in our collections.

When you're president of the American Library Association (ALA), you get asked a lot of questions. "What are you reading right now?" (*Pure Life* by Eugene Marten.) "Aren't libraries obsolete?" (Nope.) "Will the organized censors win?" (No way.)

But here's one that's hard to answer: "What's your favorite library?"

When you've seen as many amazing libraries as I have, it's impossible to choose. For example, I've met with Jennifer DeCarlo, director of Easton Library in Greenwich, New York, who maintains an onsite fridge with fresh food for those in need.

And Chulin Meng, director of library technology at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, who works with large language models to integrate artificial intelligence in research.

Rayette Sterling, manager of the Mountain View branch of Anchorage (Alaska) Public Library, greets each of her patrons by name.

The public library in my hometown of Boise, Idaho, has **LIBRARY!** emblazoned on the front of its buildings, exclamation point included.

The Windsor Terrace branch of Brooklyn (N.Y.) Public Library, a short walk from my apartment, is my go-to for browsing on the weekends.

But my favorite library? It's always the most recent one I've visited.

As much as individual libraries are distinct, they also have a lot in common. Librarians select, acquire, describe, organize, and provide access to information. These fundamentals might look different in time and place, but they remain the core of our profession.

For a few months of my career, I weeded the CD-ROM collection at a small academic library. If information is circulated on a thin disc of polycarbonate plastic, librarians will circulate thin discs of polycarbonate plastic. Ensuring access regardless of medium or message is what we do.

We are in a painful chapter in the history of our profession and our country. I lean into what holds us together in times like these, when forces that exploit and profit from division seek to cut us off from one another. A time marked by external efforts to sow fear among library workers, including attempts to restrict participation in the Association in multiple states. In some parts of the country, standing next to me in a photo is deemed risky behavior that might endanger an upcoming millage.

At ALA's 2023 Annual Conference in Chicago, I sat next to Valdez (Alaska) High School librarian Pam Verfaillie at a Freedom to Read Foundation meeting. She passed me a note that read, "What are you doing February 17–21?" I passed it back. "Hanging out with you in Alaska?"

Eight months later, following the Alaska Society for Technology in Education Conference in Anchorage, I was sitting in the heated passenger seat of her car, visiting school, public, and academic libraries across the city. I live in Brooklyn, with a population of 2.6 million; Pam lives in a town of 4,000. I shop at a food co-op. Pam and her community hunt and fish for food, filling freezers and sharing with neighbors. But on the core stuff—the stuff that matters—we are aligned: Libraries are crucial public infrastructure. Early literacy matters. Libraries are for everyone, even people who are nothing like us. It is our professional responsibility to ensure that our readers can see themselves in our collections.

Even if we disagree about everything else, we know libraries are worth preserving and expanding. And as library workers, our capacity to make decisions that best respond to the demands of our communities must be protected. Figuring out how to do that is the task before us all. **AL**

EMILY DRABINSKI is associate professor at Queens (N.Y.) College Graduate School of Library and Information Studies.

ALA Cancels LibLearnX 2026

The American Library Association (ALA) announced March 11 that its Executive Board has decided not to hold LibLearnX: The Library Learning Experience in 2026, citing financial reasons and other factors. LibLearnX will be held January 24–27, 2025, in Phoenix as scheduled.

ALA's announcement reads, in part:

"After careful evaluation and analysis of financial and other critical factors, the ALA Executive Board has decided that LibLearnX will not be held in 2026.

"As ALA looks ahead, efforts are under way to determine how best to present some of the most beloved celebratory events traditionally held at the January conference, including the I Love My Librarian Awards; the Reference and User Services Association's Book and Media Awards, which features the Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence in Fiction and



Nonfiction; the Martin Luther King Jr. Sunrise Celebration; and the Youth Media Awards.

"In the process of transitioning, ALA will consult with the respective committees, round tables, and member leaders. Their valuable insights and perspectives will be integral in

shaping the direction of these events.

"This collaborative approach underscores ALA's commitment to inclusivity and responsiveness to the diverse voices within its membership and esteem for the history and impact of their work. The board is actively thinking about the experiences and value ALA provides to its members."

For more information, visit bit.ly/AL-LLX26.

Register for ALA's 2024 Annual Conference

Registration is now open for ALA's 2024 Annual Conference and Exhibition, to be held June 27–July 2 in San Diego. The conference will feature more than 175 education programs, 700 speakers and authors, and 650 exhibitors.

Poet, educator, author, and producer Kwame Alexander and actor and author Max Greenfield will appear as featured speakers at Annual.

Alexander will discuss his forthcoming children's book, *Black Star* (Little, Brown Books for Young Readers), set during the beginning of the Great Migration. Scheduled to publish in September, it is the second installment in Alexander's *Door of No Return* trilogy.

Greenfield, best known as a cast member of the TV series *New Girl*, will discuss his forthcoming children's book,



Kwame Alexander

Good Night Thoughts (Penguin Young Readers, September). The picture book aims to help kids better understand anxiety.

For more information on featured speakers, registration, or the conference schedule, visit alaannual.org.



Max Greenfield

Unite Against Book Bans Releases Book Résumés

On February 20, Unite Against Book Bans (UABB) released a free database of book résumés—a tool that summarizes a book's significance and educational value—to support librarians, students, and other library advocates in their efforts to uphold intellectual freedom. Book résumés include a synopsis, professional reviews, and awards received. Depending on the title, they may also include information about how a book was retained in school and public libraries after a challenge.

Individual book résumés are available to download. New book résumés will be added on an ongoing basis. Titles include books featured on ALA's most-challenged book lists, such as *All Boys Aren't Blue* by George M. Johnson and *The Fault in Our Stars* by John Green.

For more information, visit bit.ly/UABB-BookRes24.

LTC Initiative Receives Additional Funding

On February 27, ALA announced that its Libraries Transforming Communities (LTC) initiative received an additional \$10 million to continue providing libraries with tools and resources that support people with disabilities. Most of the funding will be distributed in grants of \$10,000 and \$20,000 to qualifying small and rural libraries. The next call for proposals will open this fall, and up to 300 libraries will receive grants in this round.

On March 4, ALA announced the second round of recipients of LTC

ALA Launches Campaign for 150th Anniversary

On February 23, ALA announced the launch of its campaign to celebrate its 150th anniversary in 2026.

The ALA Executive Board has created two member-led committees to plan for the anniversary: The 150th Commemoration Committee will develop and guide events, programs, products, and a public awareness campaign related to the anniversary. The 150th Fundraising Campaign Committee will establish a campaign goal, create strategies, and provide opportunities for donor engagement.

“Our Association has advocated for and protected the freedom to read and has battled censorship attempts that are on the rise throughout the country,” said ALA President Emily Drabinski in a February 23 statement. “Our anniversary in 2026 is the perfect opportunity to showcase the work of ALA to support librarians throughout the country and the increasingly important role they play in their communities, colleges, and schools.”

“We are excited about the campaign’s potential to draw on the initiative and enthusiasm for this work with partners within ALA, the broader library community, and the many friends and allies of libraries,” said Leslie Burger, ALA’s interim executive director, in the statement.

For more information, visit bit.ly/ALA-150AC. ●

grants—310 libraries that will receive a total of \$3.6 million. The first round of funding, announced in May 2023, was awarded to 240 proposals.

For more information, visit bit.ly/ALA-LTC2ndr.

New Field Guides Column Explores Policy Issues

In March, ALA’s Public Policy and Advocacy Office (PPAO) and *American Libraries* launched a new online column called Field Guides. Featuring experts in policy areas ranging from artificial intelligence and copyright to digital access and equity, the new column will provide ALA members, library advocates, and information professionals with insights into the issues facing the field.

The column debuted March 4 at americanlibraries.org with a post by

Lorcan Dempsey, professor of practice at University of Washington’s Information School in Seattle. The post explores the implications of artificial intelligence technologies in the library arena.

For more information, visit bit.ly/AL-FG0324.

Five Members Added to UABB Cadre

On February 9, ALA announced that five new members joined the UABB cadre: Kate Alderete, Carolyn Foote, Jamie M. Gregory, Tyler Hahn, and Jennie Pu.

Formed in March 2023 by ALA’s Policy Corps, the cadre has worked closely with the Office for Intellectual Freedom and PPAO to speak at more than 60 virtual and in-person presentations about intellectual freedom and the UABB campaign. The group has contributed

CALENDAR

APR. 28–MAY 4

Preservation Week

preservationweek.org

JUNE

Rainbow Book Month

bit.ly/RBMonth

JUNE 25–28

Rare Books and Manuscripts Section 2024 Conference

Costa Mesa, California

bit.ly/RBMS2024

JUNE 27–JULY 2

2024 Annual Conference

San Diego

alaannual.org

SEPT.

Library Card Sign-Up Month

bit.ly/LibCardSU

SEPT. 19–21

ALSC National Institute

Denver

ala.org/alsc/confscce/institute

SEPT. 22–28

Banned Books Week

bannedbooksweek.org

SEPT. 25

Banned Websites Awareness Day

ala.org/aasl/bwad

OCT.

TeenTober

ala.org/yalsa/teentober

OCT. 20–26

National Friends of Libraries Week

bit.ly/ALA-NFLW

OCT. 21–27

Open Access Week

openaccessweek.org

NOV.

International Games Month

bit.ly/ALA-igm

NOV. 14–16

Core Forum

Minneapolis

coreforum.org

JAN. 24–27, 2025

LibLearnX 2025

Phoenix

2025.alaliblearnx.org

UPDATE

to dozens of blogs and podcasts and collaborated with national and community organizations.

For more information, visit bit.ly/UABB-Cadre0224.

ALA Begins Search for New Executive Director

ALA began its national search for a new executive director in partnership with corporate search firm Isaacson, Miller.

A committee of ALA member leaders and staff will lead the search. The selected candidate will succeed Interim Executive Director Burger, who was appointed in November 2023.

For more information, visit bit.ly/ALA-ExD0124.

ALA Updates Core Values

On January 21, ALA Council approved five new Core Values during the 2024 LibLearnX conference in Baltimore. The values—access, equity, intellectual freedom and privacy, the public good, and sustainability—went into effect immediately.

The Core Values Task Force convened over a two-year period with the goal of creating a more concise and streamlined set of values. The previous 12 Core Values were merged into the new set.

For more information, visit bit.ly/ALA-5C24.

Three Members Elected to ALA Executive Board

On February 7, ALA Council elected Nick Buron, Peter Coyl, and Corinthia Price to serve on the Association's Executive Board. Their three-year terms begin in July and end in June 2027.



Nick Buron

Buron is chief librarian and a senior vice president at Queens (N.Y.) Public Library. He currently serves as an ALA

councilor-at-large and previously served on the Council Orientation and Constitution and Bylaws committees.

Coyl is library director and CEO of Sacramento (Calif.) Public Library. He currently serves as a councilor of the Intellectual Freedom Round Table and is a member of ALA's Intellectual Freedom Committee. He is former president of the Freedom to Read Foundation.



Peter Coyl

Price is a librarian at Green Vale School in Old Brookville, New York. She is a member of the Association for Library Service to Children, American Association of School Librarians (AASL), and the Ethnic and Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table.

For more information, visit bit.ly/ALA-EB0224.

Apply for Sara Jaffarian School Library Program Award

Applications are open for the Sara Jaffarian School Library Program Award, which recognizes outstanding humanities programming in school libraries. Previously, only school libraries serving grades K–8 could receive this award. This year, eligibility will be extended to high school libraries.

The \$5,000 award was established in 2006. Jaffarian was a school librarian and longtime ALA member.

The deadline to apply is May 1. For more information, visit bit.ly/ALA-SaJaf24.

2023 Best Graphic Novels Lists Announced

On February 12, ALA's Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table (GNCRT) released its 2023 Best Graphic Novels lists for children and adults. The lists highlight exemplary titles published from late 2022 through 2023 to help increase awareness of the graphic novel medium, amplify the voices of its diverse creators, and aid library staff in developing graphic novel collections.

GNCRT is now accepting submissions for its 2024 Best Graphic Novels lists on its website at bit.ly/BGN-Nom24. Fiction and nonfiction graphic novels published between September 1, 2023, and December 31, 2024, are eligible.

To view the 2023 list for adults, visit bit.ly/BGN-AList23. To view the 2023 list for children, visit bit.ly/BGN-CList23.

Top 10 Feminist Books for Young Readers Announced

On January 24, Rise: A Feminist Book Project for Ages 0–18 announced its top 10 list of feminist books for young readers. Rise is led by the Feminist Task Force, part of ALA's Social Responsibilities Round Table.

Titles featured on this year's list include *Spin* by Rebecca Caprara, *I Kick and I Fly* by Ruchira Gupta, and *The Moonlit Vine* by Elizabeth Santiago.

Books may be recommended by anyone through the field recommendation process, but official selections can only come from Rise committee members.

For more information, including the full list of books, visit bit.ly/SRRT-Rise24.

Rainbow Round Table Releases Top 10 Book List

On February 7, the Over the Rainbow Book List Committee of ALA's Rainbow Round Table released its Top 10 Book List of 2023's best queer literature for adults.

The committee considered more than 400 books across all genres. Selected titles include *Better Living through Birding: Notes from a Black Man in the Natural World* by Christian Cooper, *Pageboy* by Elliot Page, and *Tell Me I'm Worthless* by Alison Rumfitt.

For more information, and to view the list, visit bit.ly/OTR-BL24.

ALA Supports FCC's Proposed E-Rate Initiative

ALA is calling for improvements to the federal E-Rate program through the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Learn Without Limits initiative.

The initiative, proposed by FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel in June 2023, calls for E-Rate funding to be applied toward Wi-Fi hotspot lending and a cybersecurity pilot program.

ALA's formal comments, filed in January with the FCC, cited support for the initiative and highlighted examples of successful hotspot lending models throughout the US.

For more information, and to read ALA's comments in full, visit bit.ly/ALA-FCCCom24.

ALA, FINRA Foundation to Distribute Program Kits

On January 29, ALA and the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority's Investor Education Foundation announced that 300 public libraries will receive a Thinking Money for Kids program kit. The kit includes programming resources to help libraries offer financial education for children ages 3–12.

Nearly 600 libraries applied to receive the kit. Kits will be sent to public and tribal libraries in all 50 states and the Northern Mariana Islands by the end of summer. Of the 300 recipients, 35 will also receive Spanish-language versions of the kit.

Free digital games created as part of the Thinking Money for Kids program will be available for anyone to access at tm4k.ala.org.

For more information, visit bit.ly/ALA-FINRA0224.

ALA, I Love Libraries Launch Monthly Podcast

On February 15, ALA and I Love Libraries launched a new monthly podcast, *How I Library*. Hosted by ALA Communications Manager Phil Morehart, *How I Library* features discussions with authors, scholars, librarians, and others about the importance of libraries and issues facing the library profession.

The podcast is an extension of the #HowILibrary campaign ALA launched in fall 2023, which asked authors to share how libraries have made an impact

on them. The first podcast episode features author and 2024 National Library Week chair Meg Medina.

For more information, visit bit.ly/ALA-HILpod0224.

Spectrum Scholarship Program Celebrates 25th Anniversary

The Spectrum Scholarship Program, which provides new generations of racially and ethnically diverse librarians with a network of support, is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year.

The program will commemorate this anniversary and the graduation of its 2024 endowment scholars at Annual in San Diego. The 2024 cohort of Spectrum Scholars was announced on February 8.

For more information, visit bit.ly/ALA-SpeSc24.

STEM Special Event Grants Awarded


On January 16, AASL announced that it had awarded five \$3,000 STEM Special Event Grants. The grant program provides funding for middle and high school libraries organizing events and short-term projects meant to engage students in STEM education and further their interest in STEM careers. The grants are supported by the Danaher Foundation.

This year's recipients will use funds to develop STEM makerspaces, host daylong events, and take field trips.

For more information, visit bit.ly/AASL-STEMg24.

ALA Receives NBCC Achievement Award

ALA received the Toni Morrison Achievement Award from the National Book Critics Circle (NBCC) at a March 21 ceremony. NBCC presented the award to the Association at the New School in New York City.

The award, established in 2021, honors institutions that have made meaningful contributions to the literary world. For more information, visit bit.ly/ALA-NBCC24. 



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 93

Decoding AI

EPISODE 92

The Wide World of Librarians in Sports

EPISODE 91

Good Morning, Baltimore!

EPISODE 90

2023 Author Chats

EPISODE 89

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TRENDS



In February, Maynard (Mass.) Public Library featured fenugreek as its spice of the month. The library started its spice club in January 2022.

The format of RML's program is flexible enough to reach patrons with varying schedules, says Darlene McKenzie, adult services manager and spice club organizer at RML.

McKenzie says patrons still chat with staffers at the pick-up spot about their experiences in the kitchen. "People are very happy with it," she says of the program. "They send us pictures. We have regulars who, every month, they come in, and they're like, 'There's my spice!'"

Everett (Wash.) Public Library's (EPL) spice club program began in October 2022 and ran through February 2023. It was a hybrid program, offering at-home spice kits in tandem with some in-person events.

EPL chose sumac as its first featured spice. The library hosted author and California-based chef Reem Assil to discuss how these tangy dried berries are used in Middle Eastern cuisine and present her cookbook, *Arabiyya: Recipes from the Life of an Arab in Diaspora*. Assil shared her recipe for *fatayer sabaneekh* (spinach and onion turnovers).

"We've heard stories from families that had never tried these spices before," says Andrea Wallis, EPL librarian and organizer of the spice club. "People would tell us how their recipe turned out, or if they tried the spice for something else."

A melting pot of ideas

EPL's spice club was sponsored by the local Sno-Isle Food Co-op,

The Spice of Life

Culinary clubs bring new flavors to patrons

BY Diana Panuncial

Once a month, the aromas of unique herbs and spices waft through Maynard (Mass.) Public Library (MPL). These spices accent dishes like sweet and spicy tahini noodles, *mussakhan* (Palestinian roast chicken), and rosemary shortbread, to name a few.

"Staff will come down and say, 'What's going on? Everything smells so good,'" says Sally Thurston, MPL's adult programming coordinator and circulation assistant. Since January 2022, Thurston has run the library's spice club, which offers patrons kits filled with a featured spice, recipes, and other information based on the selection. Patrons then prepare a dish at home, which they can bring to MPL's monthly, in-person potluck highlighting the spice.

Spice clubs, which provide seasonings and recipes for patrons, are stirring up a new trend in public libraries. They're a budget-friendly way for libraries to bring the community together, encourage creativity, and educate patrons about world cuisine, says the librarians who organize them.

Cooking, your way

Spice clubs can be adapted to a variety of formats, with or without in-person components.

Reed Memorial Library (RML) in Ravenna, Ohio, runs a fully at-home spice club, distributing about 25 kits a month. The club has been ongoing since December 2021. Participants have tried recipes such as chicken thighs with roasted carrots using zaatar and Southwest-style turkey soup using chili powder.

“Staff will come down and say, ‘What’s going on? Everything smells so good.’”

SALLY THURSTON, adult programming coordinator and circulation assistant at Maynard (Mass.) Public Library

which provided enough spices to fill approximately 600 kits. Participants were given recipes for chewy gingerbread cookies, beef pho noodle bowls using star anise, and chicken paprikash.

The program coincided with the library’s Everett Reads literacy initiative, which donated 25 free copies of Assil’s cookbook for Sno-Isle to give away to their co-op customers.

“We were able to reach people who weren’t in the library,” Wallis says of the partnership.

MPL’s potluck events took some time to gain popularity, Thurston says, but they ultimately cultivated a core group of at least a dozen patrons who attend monthly. “Everyone mentions what they made, what they liked about it, what they didn’t like about it,” she explains. “Would they have it again? Would their husband eat it? Which is a big thing for some people.”

The opportunity to experiment with spices from all over the world is especially beneficial for the town of Maynard, which doesn’t have a large international population, says Thurston. She adds, “Having something from Morocco or Thailand or Uzbekistan is inherently interesting.”

Sage advice

Hosting a spice club is friendly on a library’s budget, according to organizers.

The spices themselves are the main cost, but they are distributed in sample sizes. Some spices are pricier than others, especially those facing supply shortages, like cardamom.

For patrons, spice clubs are a way to sample different flavors and styles of cooking without investing too much in ingredients they may not end up liking, says Thurston. She aims to include affordable recipes that cover different skill levels, courses, and dietary restrictions so that cooks can start with ease. “You’re jumping over that barrier,” Thurston says, “and someone has chosen some things for you to pick from.”

Having a variety of spices and herbs is important, but libraries should also highlight those that may already be familiar to patrons, so that participants may feel less intimidated, says McKenzie. “You can then move on to including more adventurous spices,” which for some patrons might mean a tandoori spice mix or Japanese curry powder, she adds.

Overall, librarians agree spice clubs help patrons discover a new passion for food that they can share with others.

“There’s no pressure. If you totally fail, everyone’s like, ‘Oh, yeah, that recipe was hard,’” Thurston says. “People can learn. Learn from mistakes, learn from failures. That’s always a good thing.” **AL**

DIANA PANUNCIAL is an associate editor at *American Libraries*.

BY THE NUMBERS

Inventors

135,850

Number of items in the Edison Sheet Music Collection, housed at University of Michigan Library in Ann Arbor. Thomas Edison, who invented the phonograph in 1877, spearheaded this collection as a way for his phonograph company to select vocal and instrumental scores to record.



44

Number of agricultural bulletins George Washington Carver authored from 1899 to 1936, all of which are held at Tuskegee (Ala.) University (TU) Archives. Carver was best known for boosting Southern farming with his inventions and discovering hundreds of new uses for crops like peanuts and soybeans. He taught and conducted research at Tuskegee Institute, now known as TU, for nearly 50 years.

2

Number of containers of hair care product created by Madam C. J. Walker that are held by Indianapolis Public Library (IPL). A collection of ephemera related to Walker—an early 20th-century Black beauty innovator who holds a Guinness world record for being the first self-made woman millionaire—is stored at IPL’s Center for Black Literature and Culture.



2023

Year that Kraemer Family Library (KFL) at University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS) debuted its Inventor-in-Residence program. The inaugural resident, entrepreneur and UCCS Innovation Director Benjamin Kwitek, will consult on the development of innovation-centric programs, services, and collections. ●



Sister Stella, a resident of Queen of Peace, a retirement community for nuns, plays with Henry. The robotic dog belongs to Ela Area Public Library in Lake Zurich, Illinois.

Librarian's Pet

Public libraries add robotic animals to their collections

BY Rosie Newmark

Liz Kristan wanted to bring four-legged friends to patrons who needed them the most.

Kristan, outreach services coordinator at Ela Area Public Library (EAPL) in Lake Zurich, Illinois, knew that the presence of pets has been associated with health benefits like reductions in stress and blood pressure. In 2022, she introduced robotic pets to the library's collection, taking them on visits to assisted living and memory care facilities to entertain older adult residents.

"We've seen people with advanced dementia in near catatonic states actually light up, smile, and begin speaking when we place a pet in their lap," Kristan says.

Libraries like EAPL have been adding these animatronics to their collections in recent years to bring companionship and health benefits to patrons, especially older adults. Compared with live animals, robotic pets require less upkeep and pose fewer allergy concerns. They are interactive and often lifelike, with some reacting to touch by purring, meowing, licking paws, barking, panting, and wagging tails.

Engaging older adults

EAPL staffers use real pet carriers to bring one or two of their four available pets—three cats and one dog—to facilities in the community. While carriers are used to create an experience that replicates having a pet, the team never pretends that the animals are real, Kristan says, to avoid fright or confusion.

"When [older adults] get moved into these kinds of facilities," she says, "many of them have to give up their pets."

Studies have shown that interactions with these robotic pets can also improve cognitive function and feelings of isolation, particularly for those with memory loss associated with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia.

In Lake Zurich, a community of nearly 20,000 people, the population of those age 65 and older has grown by about 162% over the past two decades. This aligns with the country's expanding older adult population. Census data shows that those 65 and older made up nearly 17% of the US population in 2020, or about 59 million people. Over the past century, this demographic grew

nearly five times faster than the total population.

A top manufacturer of lifelike robot pets is Joy for All, a subset of Rhode Island-based wellness company Ageless Innovation. Its cats and dogs range from \$125 to \$140, and EAPL is among the company's customers. The library's program has received overwhelmingly positive feedback, Kristan says.

She recalls one adult child of a patron with dementia who saw their mother interact with one of EAPL's cats. "[It] was the most animated and engaged her mother had been in weeks," Kristan says. "Some of our patrons with advanced dementia will see the robots and start referring to them by the names of their own childhood pets."

Available for checkout

Eugene (Ore.) Public Library (EPL) has received similar praise after adding three cats to its Library of Things collection in September 2023, says Katherine Berry, adult services supervisor. EPL's tuxedo cats—Bandit, Mr. Pickles, and Purrcival—are available for checkout for up to three weeks. Within the first six months of their arrival, Berry says the pets have received more than 20 checkouts and over 40 holds—mainly from older patrons but also some teens and those in their 30s and 40s.

"Our older adults are often forgotten," Berry says, "especially because they don't have the opportunity to come into the library as much." She adds that she wants EPL's Library of Things to not only include fun checkouts but also items that show

patrons and the community that “we’re thinking about how to help others.”

Berry says EPL chose to offer cats because their purring has been found to contribute to lower levels of stress. The purchase of the cats was funded by EPL’s Library Foundation, which funds the Library of Things collection.

At Reading (Mass.) Public Library (RPL), staffers purchased a robotic cat in early February 2022 with funds from the library’s equipment budget. RPL currently offers individual checkouts for patrons with dementia and their caregivers and has also brought the cat to a memory café event at the library.

“This gives them that opportunity to, in a way, still take care of something.”

MICHELLE FILLEUL, assistant director at Reading (Mass.) Public Library

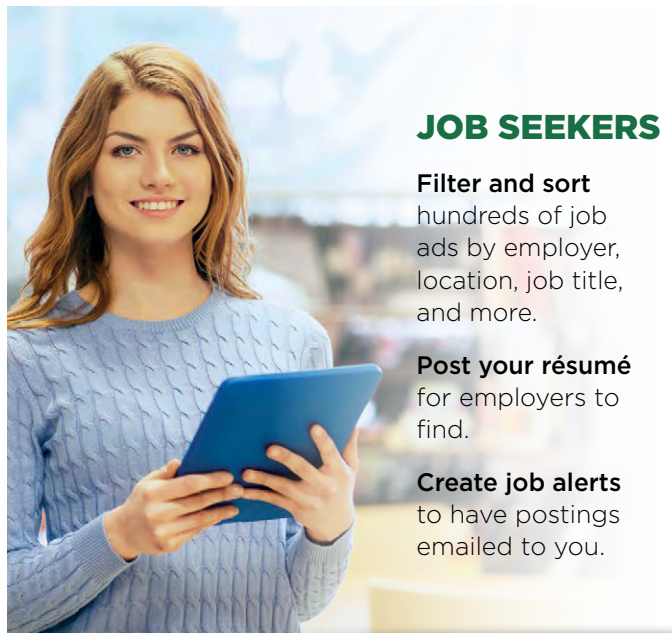
RPL’s cat has had only four checkouts in the two years it’s been available but staffers plan to promote it more, says Michelle Filleul, RPL assistant director. Going forward, Filleul says the goal is to take it to memory care facilities and the town’s senior center to help those with dementia.

“This gives them that opportunity to, in a way, still take care of something,” Filleul says.

While EPL’s Berry expected the pets to be one of the library’s more “goofy” items, she says it’s considering growing the collection because of its popularity among patrons.

“It kind of exploded into something I wasn’t anticipating,” Berry says. “We’re just really excited to see where it goes.” **AL**

ROSIE NEWMARK studies journalism at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois.



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A nearly 100-year-old headstone that was revived as part of Christian County (Mo.) Library's Uncovering History: Gravestone Cleaning program.

who could grant approval for our program. We looked for signs on cemetery gates and asked funeral homes for contact information for groundskeepers and caretakers. The enthusiastic responses we received reinforced the need for this kind of service. Many caretakers told us it is typical to have only a few people involved in the upkeep for an entire cemetery, most of whom are volunteers.

Our first headstone cleaning meetup was held in October 2021. After the last brush was dried and the final participant left, we knew we had created something special.

Over three summers, CCL has visited eight cemeteries and collectively revived more than 200 headstones, most of which were placed in the 1920s. Depending on the weather, the group's size ranges from two to 12 volunteers. The program has attracted children to seniors—some out of an interest in local history and genealogy and others who are simply looking for an open-air, community-oriented Saturday activity. Some have joined the program specifically to clean the headstones of loved ones and ancestors, but most are drawn to plots that appear neglected or overgrown. We have even had a few cemetery caretakers attend to learn more about our process.

Each session begins with a CCL staffer doing a cleaning demonstration and providing instructional handouts. We identify and choose stones with no physical damage, like wobbles or cracks, or signs of *sugaring*, erosion that leaves stones with granular-looking surfaces.

A Monumental Task

Library hosts gravestone cleaning meetups

During the pandemic, Christian County (Mo.) Library was looking to launch an ongoing service series that would bring staffers and patrons together outdoors. So it turned to some of the rural area's oldest and most scenic spaces: cemeteries. In 2021, the library started its Uncovering History: Gravestone Cleaning program series. Participants meet monthly from May to October and have brought new life to hundreds of headstones. Not only has the project succeeded in convening the community around a common goal, but it has also eased often-difficult conversations around death.

BY Charlee Evans and Whit Gillenwaters

After a year of virtual programming and social distancing, staffers at Christian County (Mo.) Library (CCL) were ready to return to in-person events. As videos of people cleaning headstones began popping up on Instagram and TikTok, we thought we could replicate the practice with our patrons.

To ensure our cleaning techniques would not be harmful, we consulted a local historian and archaeologist from a nearby university. With sponsorship from the Christian County Friends of the Library, we purchased the tools and cleaners needed to safely remove

debris: brushes, plastic scrapers, water sprayers, and D/2 Biological Solution, a biodegradable liquid cleaner designed to remove algae, moss, and similar organisms from architectural surfaces.

Graveyards are scattered throughout our largely rural county, ranging from small family plots to city-owned cemeteries with thousands of headstones. Official records indicate more than 60 unique cemeteries in CCL's service area, while other counts are closer to 100.

We quickly identified several sites that had older stones in need of cleaning. The challenge was identifying the right people

After selecting stones, teams get to work scraping off biological growth with plastic putty knives, scrubbing surfaces with solution, and spraying the headstones with water. We provide gloves and direct participants to spray the D/2 where they will not be breathing it in.

Throughout the project, we've uncovered some interesting stories. One gravestone we cleaned belonged to a local named Laony Carver. The stone claimed Carver was 114 when she died in 1922, but upon further research, we found her age was likely embellished. Even so, Carver survived the Civil War and outlived many. Her husband's death left her with three children under age 5, so she made money driving oxen to haul lumber to the courthouse when it was under construction.

Removing a century's worth of grime and growth, one scrape or scrub at a time, provides immediate gratification. However, the true magic has been the conversations among participants. They have discussed cultural differences surrounding death, last wishes, burial customs, and experiences losing loved ones. These topics seem somehow more comfortable in the context of being in a graveyard, doing this kind of work.

The feedback from cemetery officials and patrons has been overwhelmingly positive. One of the board members of a cemetery we visited expressed her surprise and delight about how many people showed up, particularly younger participants with no personal connections to the site.

This program is not just a restoration effort. It is a celebration of

Removing a century's worth of grime and growth, one scrape or scrub at a time, provides immediate gratification.

community, history, and the enduring spirit of those who came before us. Each visit is a step toward preserving legacies etched in stone, ensuring they will continue to endure for generations to come. **AL**

CHARLEE EVANS is adult services librarian at Christian County (Mo.) Library (CCL). **WHIT GILLENWATERS** is manager of CCL's Sparta branch.

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Maia Kobabe and Sarah Peitzmeier

Authors discuss new illustrated guide that presents chest-binding research



In early 2020, Maia Kobabe (e/em/eir) was wrapping up promotion for eir memoir *Gender Queer* when e received an email out of the blue from Sarah Peitzmeier, a social epidemiologist working in LGBTQ+ health at University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Peitzmeier, a fan of Kobabe's work, wanted to collaborate with em on an illustrated guide based on her research on current chest-binding practices. The resulting book became *Breathe: Journeys to Healthy Binding* (Dutton, May).

Since the two began working on the project, *Gender Queer* has become the most challenged book of 2021, 2022, and 2023, and the demand for reliable health care information for transgender people has grown. *American Libraries* spoke with Kobabe and Peitzmeier about their new title, their collaboration, and the importance of making evidence-based information about trans health care widely available.

BY Sarah Hunter

Sarah, what made you want to turn your academic research into a comic?

Peitzmeier: I do a lot of different types of research on topics like cancer prevention and gender-based violence prevention. But this work on binding has received the most public interest. I'm often getting emails from trans teens who, for example, want to show an article on the binding process to their parents but can't read the academic journal. The information is not published in a way that's accessible to people who could really use it. I came across this idea of using

comic books to explain scientific research and make it more accessible.

What was it like working together on the project?

Kobabe: This topic is very interesting and relevant to me. As we worked on it, the scope of the project expanded, giving us more space for character narratives and research data. For instance, we worked with a massage therapist and a physical therapist on stretching and breathing exercises, and it's been wonderful to include these different resources. It makes me hopeful that other scientists might think of comics as a way to bring their research to the public.

Why is it important to publish this book right now?

Peitzmeier: There were 300 anti-LGBTQ bills—many of them anti-trans bills—introduced in legislatures across the country in just the first month of 2024. So it's increasingly

Maia Kobabe (left) and Sarah Peitzmeier

clear this kind of work is really needed. And I was seeing some anti-trans groups twist my research and use it out of context as a reason why trans people shouldn't bind. That didn't sit right with me. I was really interested in a comic book and arts-based approach to resist that kind of manipulation, to be a resource in which one number can't be taken out of context and put into a tweet.

Kobabe: Any moment is an important moment to publish a book that presents accessible health care information. But the moment has also become more dire since we started working on the book. Book bans were not the same issue they are now when we started this in 2020. State-level bans on trans health care were not at the same level of severity as they are now.

It feels very timely to talk about binding as a way of affirming gender presentation that does not need to be prescribed by a doctor. At the same time, a person experiencing negative effects might feel uncomfortable

or unable to bring it up to a health care provider. We wanted to talk about ways to bind that

MORE ONLINE

For the extended interview, visit bit.ly/AL-Breathe after May 1.

are gentle to your body and will maximize mental health benefits and minimize any potential risks. We also tried to emphasize that, while chest binding is a very valuable tool, it should be one of many. Ideally it's not the only thing you're resting on to make you feel good in your body or in your gender or to get through your day.

Apart from advice about healthy chest-binding practices, what do you hope readers will take away from this book?

Peitzmeier: That it doesn't have to hurt to be you. In the absence



of evidence-based information on binding, some of our research participants assumed that binding has to hurt and that is just the price to pay to express their identity. And we want to come out clearly and say that's not true. If it's not working for your body, there are other options, and we want to help you get the information and support you need.

How can libraries be a safe and affirming resource for transgender and nonbinary people seeking information like this?

Kobabe: I am so grateful to librarians. Just stocking the books and defending them if they're challenged, as well as trying to make sure that these books are available in both the teen section and the adult section. Perhaps highlighting them with displays but also having them tucked in the shelves so browsers can come across them as obtrusively or unobtrusively as they need to.

Peitzmeier: I live in Michigan, two hours from a town that voted to defund their own library for stocking *Gender Queer* as well as several other books. I have so much respect and admiration for librarians who are standing up for these issues and believe young people deserve access to this information, and I hope they'll showcase our work as well.

Kobabe: It's hard for me to even think about how many human-effort hours have been put into fighting to keep *Gender Queer* on the shelves. I am deeply grateful for that work and also frustrated that it's contested that libraries would have books for every type of reader. I'm very, very grateful to librarians, and I hope they will keep stocking trans books but also not at the risk of their jobs. Do everything you can, but don't lose your job, and do what you have to do to keep the library open. **AL**

Photo: Municipality of Gaza



Gaza Municipal Library

GLOBAL REACH

Destruction of War

GAZA Gaza Municipal Library was among the civilian buildings destroyed in the war between Israel and the militant group Hamas. The municipality of Gaza released photos showing the library's destruction on November 27. At least 17 libraries and archives have been reported as destroyed or seriously damaged, as well as numerous museums and other cultural sites.—*The Washington Post*, Dec. 1; *Storyful*, Nov. 27; *Librarians and Archivists with Palestine*, Feb. 1.

ALGERIA The Algeria Cooperative Plan for the Digitization of Manuscripts is undertaking a project to preserve and digitize materials held by desert libraries in the country's Adrar region, which are threatened by climate change. The Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR)

announced in January that it received a grant from the US State Department to establish a digitization lab at Algeria's National Manuscript Center in Adrar, in collaboration with the Algerian Ministry of Culture and Arts and local representatives. —CLIR, Jan. 25.

INDONESIA Perpustakaan Nasional, the National Library of Indonesia in Central Jakarta, announced a plan to distribute books to 10,000 village libraries and *taman baca masyarakat*, local public collections also known as community reading parks. The project seeks to address a national shortage of reading materials and improve literacy levels. Each library will receive about 1,000 books in this preliminary phase.—Perpustakaan Nasional, Jan. 17.

SINGAPORE National University of Singapore's Department of Biological Sciences has digitized all known surviving pages of Charles Darwin's first draft of *On the Origin of Species*. The collection, freely available at Darwin Online (darwin-online.org.uk), contains 59 pages, including three recently rediscovered pages and seven pages not found in previous collections.—National University of Singapore, Nov. 24.

EL SALVADOR President Nayib Bukele opened the new National Library of El Salvador, located in the capital San Salvador, during a televised event November 14. The library includes a 1960 mural by artist Carlos Cañas, salvaged from the previous national library. China donated the seven-story, 250,000-square-foot structure as part of a 2019 infrastructure deal after El Salvador agreed to recognize mainland China's control over Taiwan.—*Latina Republic*, Nov. 16; *The Straits Times* (Singapore), Dec. 4, 2019. ●



“It’s okay, we forgive you. Just show us a picture of a cat. We take a lot of honorary cats. Any ungovernable animal.”

JASON HOMER, executive director of Worcester (Mass.) Public Library, in “Library Fees? No Problem. Just Show Us Your Cat Photos,” *The New York Times*, March 4.

“BookTok has been a kind of revolution. [Before,] you never would have seen romance so front and center in bookstores. It was usually shunned into some dusty corner in the back.”

Author **ANA HUANG**, in “Ana Huang Knows That Sloth Isn’t Sexy,” *Publishers Weekly*, February 9.

“Once you convince people that something evil is coming for their children, you can pretty much get away with whatever you want to do.”

ANGIE HAYDEN, cofounder of Read Freely Alabama, in “Inside the Blistering Battle over Alabama Libraries: ‘Burn the Freaking Books,’” *AL.com*, March 7.

“For 25 years, this was my dream job. The last two years, they have been pure hell. And I don’t need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows.”

TERRI LESLEY, former executive director of Campbell County (Wyo.) Public Library, in “Librarian Says She Was Fired for Pushing Back on Book Ban Attempts,” *KUSA-TV (Denver)*, March 7.

“Librarians in Georgia are pissed. This is clearly not rooted in good policy. This is more of a political attack. I got an email today from a library director who said that this is like trying to use a sledgehammer to smash a mosquito.”

Georgia Sen. **NABILAH ISLAM PARKES** (D-Duluth), in “In Georgia, a Bill to Cut All Ties with the American Library Association Is Advancing,” *NPR: Weekend Edition Saturday*, March 3.

“WITH BOOKS, I’M VERY MUCH A REREADER. I REREAD ALL THE TIME. BOOKS WAIT FOR YOU, AND THEY BLOSSOM IN THE TIME BETWEEN READINGS.”

Author **HELEN OYEYEMI**, in “Helen Oyeyemi Thinks We Should Read More and Stay in Touch Less,” *The New Yorker*, March 3.



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2024

Library Systems REPORT

Companies focus on
developing practical solutions

BY Marshall Breeding

The library technology industry had a quiet year in 2023. But in the absence of major business moves and acquisitions, companies set their sights on executing strategies to strengthen their market position.

Previous cycles of business consolidation have yielded a layered landscape with distinct levels of competition. At the top, a handful of large organizations with considerable resources—Clarivate, EBSCO Information Services, Follett School Solutions, and OCLC—continue to expand their portfolios, covering multiple business sectors and library types. Middle-tier companies, including Axiell, ByWater Solutions, The Library Corporation (TLC), and SirsiDynix, offer growing suites of products used by thousands of libraries. And finally, a group of smaller companies round out the industry, covering specialized libraries with niche products and services.

Illustration: Jacob Stead

Competition at each level remains vigorous. Libraries may have fewer product choices because of past acquisitions, but the options remaining are distinctive. Most libraries can choose between for-profit and nonprofit vendors, and between proprietary and open source products. For instance, academic libraries can pick from a short list of library services platforms (LSPs), including a proprietary solution from a for-profit company (Alma), an open source product supported by for-profit companies (FOLIO), or a proprietary product from a nonprofit organization (WorldShare Management Services).

Libraries see their technology vendors as strategic partners. They are increasingly purchasing core products from a single provider, rewarding companies' efforts to create suites of integrated applications that function more efficiently than mix-and-match offerings. These days, libraries expect third-party integration from their products—but they generally acquire new components from a single main vendor.

An industry of survivors, not startups

It's hard to endure in the library technology industry, and it may take a vendor many years to establish a competitive position. Several of the companies covered in this report have persisted for more than three decades. Longstanding vendors have evolved with their library customers, gaining insights from their needs, and leading them through new generations of technology.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of TLC, which delivered information products on CD-ROM before the World Wide Web. The company pioneered many platforms and innovations on the way to its current position as a provider of integrated library system (ILS)

What's the difference between an ILS and LSP?

This report mostly covers two types of products: the integrated library system (ILS) and the library services platform (LSP).

An ILS includes modules for broad areas of operations—such as cataloging, acquisitions, and circulation—and offers online catalog or patron search services. These products are usually based on legacy server architecture, though a single implementation may support dozens or hundreds of libraries, such as a multibranch system or a consortium. SirsiDynix's Symphony, Innovative's Polaris and Sierra, and the open source Koha, among others, fall into this category.

An LSP is designed to manage complex, multifformat library collections with built-in knowledge bases that can efficiently manage large-scale collections of electronic resources. LSP products are deployed on multitenant, web-native platforms that can serve thousands of library organizations. They have broader functionality than ILSes and use newer software architectures. Ex Libris' Alma, the open source FOLIO, and OCLC WorldShare Management Services are examples. Index-based discovery services are implemented alongside LSPs, usually from the same vendor. For example, libraries using Alma have Primo or Summon, and WorldShare Management Services subscribers use WorldCat Discovery.

ILS products continue to be favored by public and school libraries with smaller budgets and limited collections of electronic resources, while academic libraries have largely transitioned to LSPs. And while public libraries continue to find the ILS more appropriate for their needs, ILSes are increasingly supplemented by products for discovery or patron engagement. ●

products for public and school libraries. Over five decades, TLC has remained privately owned and managed by founder Annette Harwood Murphy.

LibraryWorld launched in 1985, going by the name CASPR and creating library automation software for the Apple Macintosh. The company's original product, MacCards, produced catalog cards and preceded LibraryWorld's 1988 release of a Mac-based ILS. The company also

developed the Library.Net application, one of the earliest web-based online catalogs and a precursor to the current LibraryWorld ILS.

SirsiDynix is built on several companies from the earlier eras of library computing, including Data Research Associates (founded in 1975), Sirsi Corporation (founded in 1979), and Dynix (founded in 1983).

Going back even further, AutoGraphics was established in 1950 as a

hot-lead typesetting company. It has been managed by three generations of the Cope family and cycled through many publishing and database technologies leading up to its current focus on ILS and resource sharing technologies.

Still, a newer class of startups is making strides in the industry. Since ByWater Solutions was launched in 2009, it has established itself as a mid-sized company, employing 50 individuals and supporting 1,619 total installations of the open source Koha ILS. TIND has seen slower growth since it launched in 2013, with 28 library systems currently using its institutional repository TIND IR and 16 using its TIND ILS.

Systematic is an outlier. Its ILS, now known as Cicero, hit the market only eight years ago and is currently used in 3,047 libraries. Though the product is new, the company isn't. Founded in 1985, Systematic is a global developer of enterprise software for multiple industries.

Notable business events

Civica announced in November 2023 that it would be acquired by Blackstone from Partners Group, a move that will take effect this year pending regulatory approvals. This takeover shouldn't change the complexion of the company, of which the Spydus ILS represents only a tiny sector.

In December 2023, Follett School Solutions acquired Livingtree, developers of Livingtree Give, a fundraising platform geared to schools and parent-teacher organizations. Follett has rebranded the product as Destiny Fundraising Manager.

Springshare announced in August 2023 its acquisition of Patron Point, an email marketing and patron engagement platform that has been widely adopted by public libraries in North America. The platform automates

and segments messages and delivers circulation notices in a modern presentation. Springshare is led by founder and CEO Slaven Zivkovic. In January, former Patron Point CEO Ian Downie became president of Springshare's new Public Library Division, which will sell Patron Point and support event management tool LibCal.

Top-tier companies lead the pack

» **CLARIVATE**, a publicly traded company based in the UK, holds a market capitalization of nearly \$5 billion. The company spans three business sectors: intellectual property, life sciences and health care, and academia and government. The library products—including those associated with Ex Libris and Innovative—fall within Clarivate Academia and Government, along with the Web of Science research platform, EndNote citation and reference tool, RefWorks reference manager, InCites research evaluation tool, Esploro research management system, and ScholarOne journal workflow management tool.

Clarivate Library Software Group ranks as the largest provider of library technology products to academic and public libraries. Nearly 5,000 library systems use a Clarivate-provided ILS.

In 2023, Clarivate appointed several former Ex Libris executives to strategic positions within the Clarivate Academia and Government division: Bar Veinstein, former president of Ex Libris Group, became president; Oren Beit-Arie, former chief strategy officer for Ex Libris and ProQuest, was appointed senior vice president of strategy and innovation; and Ofer Mosseri, former general manager for Ex Libris, returned as senior vice president of global sales. These appointments could enable the aggressive

product development that was characteristic of Ex Libris.

Yariv Kursh serves as general manager for Clarivate Library Software Group, including Ex Libris and Innovative. The brands have been organizationally integrated over the last two years but retain their distinctive products. Overall, Clarivate products hold a strong lead among Association of Research Libraries (ARL) member institutions: In 2023, 88 were using Alma, seven were using Sierra, four were using Voyager, and one was using Aleph. (Comparatively, 12 ARL member institutions have selected FOLIO.)

Ex Libris continues as the major provider of technology products to academic, national, and other large-scale libraries. Its Alma LSP has now been selected by more than 2,500 libraries. Despite recent competition from FOLIO, Alma continues to see strong sales, securing 83 contracts in 2023. These sales include Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, which will be transitioning away from its involvement with FOLIO development; New York University; OhioLINK, a statewide network of 117 academic libraries in Ohio; University of Wyoming in Laramie; and Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut.

Most sites implementing Alma also use Primo as their discovery service, with a small number opting for Summon. Both interfaces rely on the Ex Libris Central Discovery Index, which enables access to scholarly content from almost all publishers and aggregators. Both Primo and Summon are used with Ex Libris' ILS products, such as Aleph and Voyager, as well as with some from other vendors. Many new and existing Alma customers are implementing Primo VE, a model of Primo deployed directly through Alma rather



than a separate staff portal. In 2023, 94 contracts were signed for Primo, bringing total installations to 2,777. Forty-seven contracts were signed for Summon, bringing total installations to 1,680.

Ex Libris' other products continue to see traction. Leganto, the course list management tool launched in 2015, was purchased by 34 libraries in 2023, bringing implementations up to 360. Rapido, a resource sharing system that works with Alma and other ILS products, was selected by 28 libraries last year, increasing total installations to 277. RapidILL, acquired in 2019 from Colorado State University in Fort Collins, saw the addition of 53 new contracts, mostly from outside the US, to increase its customer base to 648. And CampusM, Ex Libris' mobile-friendly student engagement platform for academic campuses, gained 22 new institutions last year, increasing its total to 138.

The brand emphasizes the extensibility of its products and multiple channels of collaboration available to its subscribers. To that end, the Ex Libris Developer Network provides a forum and tools that allow customers to work with the APIs of its products, share code that integrates with external systems, and create new components and services.

Clarivate is currently working to develop artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities for its discovery and workflow solutions. Ex Libris has announced plans for its



Next Discovery Experience, which will incorporate AI technologies, linked data, analytics, and a new user interface.

» **INNOVATIVE**, also part of Clarivate, positions the Polaris ILS as its strategic product for public libraries. The brand's Sierra ILS, still used by many academic libraries, continues to be supported but is not actively marketed for new sales. Last year, Innovative completed versions 6.0 and 6.1 of Sierra, which includes Security Assertion Markup Language and multifactor authentication features. Many libraries using the Sierra ILS are opting to move to the Alma LSP—among them, OhioLINK, Middlebury (Vt.) College, and University of San Diego—reflecting a larger trend of academic libraries moving toward LSPs.

Under Clarivate, Innovative has expanded globally. Prior to 2022, Polaris was marketed exclusively in North America. That year, Newcastle Libraries in Australia selected Polaris, marking the company's first sale outside the continent. In 2023, the Central Coast Council Library Service, also in New South Wales, became the second Australian library to select Polaris. In a complex implementation, Singapore's National Library Board implemented Polaris and Vega Discover for its network of 28 libraries, including the flagship National Library of Singapore.

Innovative has strengthened its offerings for public libraries—and its competitive position—through the development of Vega, a suite of customer-facing applications interoperable with Sierra and Polaris. The company is also working to modernize its INN-Reach direct consortial borrowing environment, a longstanding product for resource sharing within and between large consortia.

» **EBSCO INFORMATION SERVICES** has, over the past decade, become a major provider of technologies for libraries—in addition to its longstanding role in delivering subscription services, subject databases, and discovery products. The privately owned business is one of the industry's largest, reporting more than 3,000 employees in 2023. Many of the company's products and services fall outside of the scope of this report. EBSCO Information Services, the largest subsidiary of EBSCO Industries, has been an exceptionally stable company. It has been led for the past 40 years by CEO Tim Collins, who announced that he will retire June 30.

In 2023, the company launched EBSCOlearning, a new division specializing in training and professional development for the educational and business sector. Michael Laddin will lead EBSCOlearning as senior vice president and general manager.

The company's bold move to enter the LSP space through development and support of open source product FOLIO is proving to be a successful strategy. But the growing popularity of Ex Libris' Alma, and therefore Primo and Summon, has cut into sales for EBSCO Discovery Service, one of the company's most critical products. While investing in FOLIO is a defensive move, it accelerates EBSCO's position as a strategic library technology provider.

Although FOLIO was already gathering steam as an open source alternative to Alma, the 2022 selection of the platform by the Library of Congress (LC) demonstrates that open source has reached a critical threshold in the LSP arena. This partnership between LC and EBSCO will significantly advance the capabilities, components, and functionality of FOLIO, including a new cataloging editor that will enable native representation of content items in BIBFRAME.

EBSCO FOLIO, a tailored product that includes the open source FOLIO LSP, comes with a suite of integrated applications that makes it a comprehensive choice for academic libraries. In addition to core modules and hosting services, EBSCO FOLIO includes proprietary components EBSCO Discovery Service, EBSCO Knowledge Base, EBSCO Electronic Resource Management, and a basic version of the Panorama analytics module, with an option to include the Locate discovery interface and BiblioGraph linked data service. By investing in FOLIO, EBSCO has created a new option in a landscape previously dominated by Clarivate products—primarily Alma.

In April 2023, GALILEO, a statewide consortium of universities in Georgia, announced that it would migrate its members from Alma to EBSCO FOLIO. This marks the second statewide consortium to choose EBSCO FOLIO. (MOBIUS, which includes most academic libraries in Missouri, selected the platform in 2022 to replace Sierra and INN-Reach.)

EBSCO reported 128 contracts for EBSCO FOLIO in 2023, bringing total selections up to 142, with more than 100 in production. This data does not include libraries implementing FOLIO independently or through another support provider. Other major organizations that selected EBSCO FOLIO recently include Notre Dame University—Louaize located abroad in Lebanon (migrating from OCLC's discontinued OLIB ILS); Nyenrode Business Universiteit in the Netherlands (from the Virtua ILS); Oklahoma State University in Stillwater (from Alma); Quinnipiac University in Hamden, Connecticut (from the Sierra ILS); University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand (from the Horizon ILS); and University of New Haven in West Haven, Connecticut (from the Voyager ILS).

In the absence of major business moves and acquisitions, companies set their sights on executing strategies to strengthen their market position.

EBSCO works with a variety of organizations to market FOLIO. It recently partnered with library software vendor MOL, which will provide hosting and support for EBSCO FOLIO in Poland.

Customers MOBIUS and GALILEO will also implement OpenRS, a new open source resource sharing platform aimed at consortia. EBSCO Information Services will develop this platform in partnership with the UK-based software company Knowledge Integration and library consortia including GALILEO, MOBIUS, Marmot Library Network in Colorado, and the Midwest Collaborative for Library Services. Like FOLIO, OpenRS is an open source project associated with the Open Library Foundation. (For more on OpenRS and Project ReShare's differing approaches to open source resource sharing, visit bit.ly/LSR24-OpenRS.)

EBSCO continues to enhance other strategic products, with development of new interfaces for EBSCO Discovery Service and EBSCOhost under way. In May 2023, the company launched EBSCOhost Passport, a browser extension that facilitates access to scholarly resources from general internet searches. EBSCO has also begun developing Mosaic, a new platform to modernize and streamline materials

acquisition using the GOBI Library Solutions service.

EBSCO reports it is exploring the use of generative AI in its products through pilot projects in specific environments. The company seeks to balance AI's new capabilities while maintaining high standards for accuracy.

» **OCLC**, a nonprofit based in Dublin, Ohio, offers a wide range of products and services for libraries globally. The organization competes in multiple product categories while offering other benefits to its customers and the general library community. Many of the company's activities are beyond the scope of this article.

For the fiscal year ending June 2023, OCLC revenue totaled nearly \$225 million, up from \$220 million in the previous fiscal year. Following the retirement of Bruce Crocco last June, Eric van Lubeek has been named vice president for global library services. Skip Prichard has served as CEO since 2013.

WorldShare Management Services, an LSP used primarily by academic libraries, gained new subscribers last year, including Lee College in Baytown, Texas; Shorter University in Rome, Georgia; and University of Arkansas—Fort Smith. International libraries also signed for the platform in 2023, including Auckland Institute of Studies in New Zealand; Buckinghamshire New University in the UK; Canberra Institute of Technology and the Parliamentary Library in Australia; and Comfenalco Antioquia in Medellín, Colombia. Last year, WorldShare Management Services rolled out more than 200 enhancements, 70% of which were the result of community input.

Designed for public libraries, OCLC Wise has been selected by most public libraries in the Netherlands, Biblioteka Público Boneiru in

the Caribbean Netherlands, and the expanding Cultuurconnect network in the Flanders region of Belgium, which completed its implementation in 2023. Despite its success in Europe, no US libraries selected OCLC Wise last year.

Additionally, 88 new institutions implemented OCLC's CapiraMobile app in 2023. The company's cataloging and interlibrary loan services continue to be mainstays for the library community.

Last year, OCLC announced an enhancement to global catalog WorldCat that will bring some linked data capabilities to MARC bibliographic records through the systematic addition of uniform resource identifiers to WorldCat Entities. OCLC has improved WorldCat through the enrichment, consolidation, or correction of 63.2 million records. In December 2023, the company launched its Arabic Discovery Catalog, based on 3.8 million resources.

Looking ahead, the Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA) has partnered with OCLC to advance development of OCLC Resource Sharing for Groups and support BTAA's UBBorrow service. Meanwhile, OCLC is currently testing AI-generated book recommendations in WorldCat, though the feature has not yet been deployed.

Mid-sized businesses stay competitive

» **SIRSIDYNIX**, based in Lehi, Utah, offers a wide range of technology solutions for libraries. Its two ILS products, Symphony and Horizon, are most popular with public libraries. SirsiDynix offers the BLUEcloud suite of web-based applications, which are interoperable with both of its ILSes and provide modern, efficient interfaces.

Both Symphony and Horizon continue to be supported and enhanced, though Symphony is the one positioned for market. Any new sales of Horizon

Competitive dynamics between big companies offering similar solutions have increased pressure for innovation and meaningful product development.

represent libraries joining an existing consortium or network. In 2023, Symphony sold contracts to Gold Coast Libraries in Australia (migrating from Sierra) and former members of the Consortium of Ohio Libraries that switched to the SEO Consortium (migrating from Evergreen).

Last year, SirsiDynix introduced Outsourced System Administration Services, a new support model for select operations related to ILS administration. This premium service enables library workers to offload many routine tasks, such as loading bibliographic records, producing reports, and updating loan rules.

SirsiDynix continues to expand its CloudSource content and discovery services platform and has integrated the CCC Get It Now service that allows patrons to acquire materials not available in their local library's electronic collections. In 2023, SirsiDynix entered a partnership that will integrate Gale's complete line of databases into CloudSource, incorporating the metadata of more than 1 billion items.

Work is under way on BLUEcloud Discovery Custom Services, a new product that will provide customizable

discovery and a component-based content management system that can be used to run a library's entire website. SirsiDynix's next-generation mobile app for Android and iOS, BLUEcloud Mobile2, is expected to go live in the first half of the year.

» **AXIELL**, one of the largest companies in the global library technology space, has grown over the last three decades through business acquisitions and organic product development. Based in Lund, Sweden, the company does business throughout Scandinavia and other parts of Europe and offers multiple ILS products. Axiell employs 415 people, an increase of 44 staffers from 2022.

Effective January 1, Maria Wasing was promoted to president and CEO of Axiell Group; Joel Sommerfeldt, former president and CEO, is now chairman of the board. Henrik Béen joined the company last October as chief product officer. In 2023, Axiell agreed to sell its media division—which provides ebooks and other digital content to libraries in Sweden and Finland—to Nordic distributor Publizon.

Axiell's LSP for public libraries, Quria, saw its first implementation in 2017 and continues to gain customers. Ninety-five libraries signed contracts for Quria last year, bringing total installations to 178. Libraries using Quria include Bibliotek Familjen Helsingborg, which spans 11 municipalities in Sweden, and the Bochum City Library, the first installation in Germany.

Axiell continues to expand in the UK. Libraries NI, which includes all public libraries in Northern Ireland, completed its migration to OpenGalaxy, another strategic ILS from Axiell. The East Midlands Libraries Consortium, which represents more than 200 library locations, also selected OpenGalaxy in 2023.

» **BIBLIOTHECA** is known for its products related to physical materials, such as self-service kiosks, security gates, automated materials handling equipment, smart lockers for patron pickup, and tools that support unstaffed locations. The company also offers other solutions, such as its digital lending platform, cloudLibrary.

Bibliotheca has undergone a major change in management, with the appointment of Joe Grillo as CEO following the July 2023 retirement of Ray Hood. Several former executives returned to the company last year, including Matt Bellamy as president of the Americas and Jim Hopwood as managing director of Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. Craig Holmes joined as the new chief financial officer. Bibliotheca is owned by One Equity Partners.

Last year, the company globally launched smartShelf borrow, which uses self-checkout technology to instantly prepare items for checkout once they are returned by patrons. Another new product, cloudCheck Tablet, provides full self-service features on small mobile devices, with the aim of providing more flexible self-service options for patrons.

» **THE LIBRARY CORPORATION (TLC)**, founded in 1974, has mostly steered clear of mergers, apart from its acquisitions of CARL Corporation in 2000 and Tech Logic in 2005. Tech Logic, specializing in RFID technologies, automated materials handling equipment, and self-service kiosks, is operated as an independent company in Oakdale, Minnesota. TLC continues to develop and market its CARL•Solution automation system, designed for larger public libraries and consortia. The company has 103 employees.

The Library•Solution platform was introduced in 1997 and is used

mostly by mid-sized public libraries. Library•Solution for Schools, a version configured for K–12 libraries, primarily serves centralized school districts. In 2023, six libraries and two school districts selected Library•Solution, increasing total installations to 656. Two new libraries signed contracts for the CARL•X ILS, which now has 18 installations across 500 library locations.

TLC has shifted many of its customers to its hosting services, branded as TLC•Cloud Services. The company currently provides hosting for 68% of Library•Solution and 94% of CARL•Solution customers. On the product development front, TLC released new reporting dashboards that provide real-time visualizations of key operational data.

Delivering services and support for open source

As development continues on open source products Evergreen, FOLIO, and Koha, these platforms gain functionality that matches or exceeds those of proprietary products. Moreover, commercially supported open source implementations generally do not require any more technical expertise than their proprietary counterparts. Many libraries are moving from proprietary to open source products to save costs, but now there are also examples of institutions moving away from open source products.

» **BYWATER SOLUTIONS** specializes in support services for open source library products, and the company has steadily grown since its establishment in 2009. Last year, ByWater Solutions added 10 employees, increasing its roster to 50 people. The company closed 47 contracts for its services

for Koha, which it now supports in 1,619 libraries.

In October 2023, ByWater Solutions expanded internationally through an investment in PTF Europe, a main provider of support services for Koha and other open source products in the UK, Ireland, and continental Europe. Jonathan Field will continue to lead PTF Europe as managing director, with ByWater Solutions founders Nathan Curulla and Brendan Gallagher now serving on PTF Europe's board of directors.

In 2023, libraries selecting support from ByWater Solutions for Koha migrated from multiple proprietary products, including 82 from Symphony, 20 from Polaris, 12 from Library•Solution, and two from OCLC Wise. Consortia selecting Koha included the Yavapai Library Network in Arizona and the Ramapo Catskill Library System in New York.

The company supports 735 installations of Aspen Discovery, an increase of 41 since 2022. Aspen Discovery can be used with Koha or with select proprietary ILS products, including CARL•X, Polaris, Sierra, and Symphony. ByWater Solutions offers support for FOLIO to six libraries in partnership with EBSCO Information Services.

ByWater Solutions collaborates with developers in the global Koha community and makes significant contributions to advancing the software's capabilities through code, documentation, and testing. Koha is the predominant ILS for libraries in Latin America, India, and lower-income countries opting for open source—and is thus believed to be the most widely used ILS in the world.

» **PTFS EUROPE** supports open source products that overlap with those



supported by ByWater Solutions. Some of its major contracts in 2023 include multiple consortia of UK's National Health Service libraries, the Armenian Institute in the UK, and Dalarna University in Sweden. Middlesbrough (UK) Libraries, a customer of PTFS Europe's services for Koha since 2019, contracted with the company for Aspen Discovery. PTFS Europe does not have a direct business relationship with the Maryland-based company PTFS, which owns LibLime.

» **INDEX DATA**, a consulting firm with offices in Boston and Denmark, is considered a pioneer in the development of open source technology infrastructure. The company provides hosting, support, and development services for 53 libraries implementing FOLIO, including 10 new projects initiated in 2023. New support agreements made in 2023 include Emerson College, Emmanuel College, Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, and Wentworth Institute of Technology, all associated with the Fenway Library Organization consortium and located in the Boston area.

Index Data has also been a major contributor to the ReShare open source resource sharing platform. Last year, the company partnered with Boston Library Consortium on an enhancement for ReShare that supports controlled digital lending. Minitex, a research-sharing network based in Minnesota, also joined ReShare with hosting and support from Index Data.

The company has also created the Library Data Platform, an open source analytics portal that pulls from multiple sources of internal and external usage data. Organizations adopting the Library Data Program in 2023 include Stanford (Calif.) University; Cornell University in Ithaca, New York;

Many libraries are moving from proprietary to open source products to save costs, but now there are also examples of institutions moving away from open source products.

and the GBV Common Library Network in Germany.

» **EQUINOX OPEN LIBRARY INITIATIVE** specializes in hosting and support services for open source library software. The organization, which converted from for-profit to nonprofit status in 2017, is led by Executive Director Lisa Carlucci.

Equinox is best known for its services related to Evergreen, an open source ILS designed for consortia of public libraries. Last year, 11 new libraries migrated to Equinox, primarily those joining existing consortia, including PaILS in Pennsylvania and the Missouri Evergreen consortium. Equinox currently supports 830 library locations using Evergreen.

In 2023, the company made one new support sale for Koha, to the Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries. Equinox also reported four contracts for Aspen Discovery, spanning 101 library locations.

Last year, Equinox made a major revision to the Evergreen MARC editor, reflecting the company's commitment

to projects that improve accessibility and usability. Equinox employees are involved in the development committees and interest groups for Evergreen and Koha, and the company's equinoxEDU program creates training materials, workshops, and tutorials that cover the full range of products it supports.

» **TIND** is a small company that launched in 2013 to commercialize applications based on the open source Invenio system. (Invenio was developed for the library at CERN, the nuclear research facility in Switzerland that created the Large Hadron Collider.) These applications include the TIND ILS, which last year saw 16 total installations and no new sales; the digital archive product TIND DA, with 21 total installations and three sales; and research data management platform TIND RDM, with seven total installations and two sales.

In 2023, TIND DA was selected by the Center for Research Libraries to back its digital collections of more than 40 million items. University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and Washington University in St. Louis implemented TIND RDM. And Warren-Trumbull County (Ohio) Public Library became the first public library to implement TIND DA, which it will use to support its Trumbull Memory Project, a local history archive.

Patron-facing solutions for public libraries

Public libraries continue to rely on ILSes for core automation, though many invest in additional layers of technology for patron-facing interfaces and services. These libraries appreciate enhanced patron services from their ILS vendor, but in the absence of compelling offerings, may shop with other providers. There continues to be a

modest churn of public libraries migrating to new ILS products.

» **BIBLIOCOMMONS** provides advanced discovery, patron engagement, and web content management services for public libraries. The company was founded in 2007 and acquired by Volaris Group (part of Constellation Software) in 2020. In July 2023, cofounder Marty Tarle was named general manager of BiblioCommons. The company does not offer its own ILS products; its BiblioCore of services complement a library's existing system.

BiblioCore provides a modern user experience for resource discovery and patron services, enabling users to search collections, place holds or requests, build lists of materials, and share those lists with others. In 2023, BiblioCore was selected by Toledo-Lucas County (Ohio) Public Library, Richmond (Calif.) Public Library, Naperville (Ill.) Public Library, Richmond Hill (Ontario) Public Library, Warren County (Ky.) Public Library, and the Valley Library Consortium in Michigan.

Combining BiblioCore with BiblioWeb—an application that enables libraries to build and update their website with customizable widgets and content blocks—creates a unified appearance and integration between a library's website and catalog. Last year, Stouffville Public Library and Thunder Bay Public Library, both in Ontario, were among the libraries implementing both products.

BiblioEvents allows libraries to manage programs and integrate and segment promotional content across their catalog, website, and marketing emails. The BiblioApps mobile app, picked up by 11 new libraries, enables patrons to search and interact with library resources on their digital devices.

BiblioCommons deployed new developments across its product line in 2023, with a focus on helping libraries leverage usage statistics. The company completed an extensive project that migrated users to Google Analytics 4 (GA4) from the discontinued Google Universal Analytics. The company also created its BiblioCommons Analytics Platform, backed by GA4, to provide in-depth insights for BiblioCommons applications.

In a similar vein, BiblioCommons has developed a metrics tool to help libraries assess and improve the impact of their virtual services. A new Personal Promotions feature in BiblioWeb pushes out library-created content to patrons as they search and browse related materials.

» **AUTO-GRAPHICS**, based in Rancho Cucamonga, California, has an interesting product profile: It offers the VERSO ILS for small and mid-sized public libraries, as well as the SHAREit interlibrary loan platform used by many statewide interlibrary loan services. The company is publicly traded, which is unusual for an organization of its size (29 employees).

Last year, the Texas State Library and Archives Commission selected SHAREit to support its statewide interlibrary loan service. Additionally, Auto-Graphics partnered with the Statewide California Electronic Library Consortium to create a shared print discovery catalog for academic libraries.

Auto-Graphics enhanced its VERSO ILS with new streamlined workflows for cataloging and reporting. For libraries using VERSO that are also part of SHAREit networks, improvements were made to the Circulation–Interlibrary Loan Link integration. The company is currently developing a reports module that will

emphasize visualizations that convey strategic insights.

» **SYSTEMATIC** is a large information technology company that operates across many sectors. Its Library and Learning division developed the Cicero ILS, originally created to provide a common automation system for all public and school libraries in Denmark. At 2,428 installations, this shared implementation is widely considered the largest single implementation of a library management system in the world.

In March 2023, the public library system of Oslo, Norway, completed its migration to Cicero, and another nearly 100 municipalities in Norway have signed contracts to implement the platform. Altogether, Systematic signed 160 contracts for Cicero in 2023, spanning 543 library locations. Systematic reported 3,047 total installations of Cicero, an impressive figure for a product that saw its first implementation only eight years ago. The platform seems well positioned for further global expansion.

» **BARATZ**, a mid-sized company in Madrid, Spain, employs 30 people and serves libraries and information centers in Spanish-speaking countries and regions. Baratz is part of Total Specific Solutions, an operating company of Constellation Software.

Baratz offers the AbsysNet ILS used by most public libraries in Spain, often through large networks serving municipalities, states, or entire autonomous regions. (Libraries can also opt for the hosted version, AbsysCloud.) In 2023, 37 libraries signed contracts for AbsysNet, increasing its reach to 3,039 installations.

Baratz recently introduced the ODA discovery interface, providing access to electronic resources not managed



within AbsysNet. In 2023, ODA was implemented to support the Catálogo Colectivo de la Red de Bibliotecas Universitarias, comprising 22 million bibliographic records. There are currently two implementations of ODA, representing 351 installations.

In February, Total Specific Solutions acquired the Madrid-based company DIGIBÍS, which specializes in digitization services for libraries and archives. The companies will initially operate independently, with DIGIBÍS gradually merging with Baratz.

Serving the needs of small libraries

» **BOOK SYSTEMS** is a mid-sized, privately owned company that has been in business since 1989. It develops and supports the Atrium ILS primarily used by school, public, and academic libraries. The company currently employs a workforce of 57.

In 2023, 108 libraries spanning 248 locations signed agreements for Atrium, bringing total installations up to 5,362. Of these sites, 3,854 are school libraries, 1,036 are public libraries, 73 are academic libraries, and 399 represent other library types. Migrations to Atrium include libraries moving from larger-scale products (such as Evergreen, Library•Solution, Polaris, and Sierra), as well as from other smaller systems (such as Follett's Destiny Library Manager, Mandarin's Oasis, VERSO, and Biblionix's Apollo). School districts implementing Atrium last year include Mobile County (Ala.) Public Schools, migrating from Destiny.

» **BIBLIONIX**, based in Austin, Texas, provides automation solutions for public libraries. Its web-based Apollo ILS provides streamlined functionality that is especially designed for small and mid-sized institutions. Libraries selecting Apollo include

About the report

The 2024 Library Systems Report documents ongoing investments of libraries in strategic technology products in 2023. 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). •

those leaving Destiny, Evergreen, Koha, and Polaris, as well as those exiting from a consortium to implement an independent automation system. Although most libraries using Apollo are single-building libraries with small to medium collections, it is used by a few multibranch libraries. Forty-one libraries signed contracts for Apollo in 2023, bringing total installations up to 950.

Biblionix offers a resource sharing configuration called FlexShare, which enables libraries using Apollo to form groups with other libraries, allowing patrons to search and borrow materials across all participating collections. FlexShare groups can decide whether to accept library cards from partner libraries, how book returns are handled, and whether cross-library holds or reserves are allowed. Biblionix has set up more than 20 FlexShare groups, representing 93 libraries.

The company is developing an event management option through a pilot

program with public library customers in Michigan. A new option is now available in the Apollo online catalog to limit search results to either children's or nonchildren's materials.

In 2022, Biblionix expanded its product line to include Artemis, a web-based system using similar technology as Apollo but with features designed for K–12 school libraries. Last year, four libraries selected Artemis, increasing total installations to nine school libraries.

» **LIBRARYWORLD** is a company with six employees that provides a web-based ILS by the same name for small and mid-sized libraries. Established in 1985, the company is owned and managed by founder and CEO Norman Kline. The company fills an important niche by offering affordable yet full-featured automation products for libraries with modest resources.

In 2023, 67 libraries signed contracts with LibraryWorld, increasing

total installations to 2,787 (of which 1,799 are school libraries, 110 are small academic libraries, 196 are public libraries, and 682 are special libraries). The company introduced WikiLibrary in 2021 as an even lower-cost ILS option. To date, 116 libraries have signed up for this service, including 68 subscribers in 2023.

Niche products for special libraries

Libraries serving government agencies, corporations, law firms, museums, archives, and other types of organizations have different technology needs from public, academic, and school libraries. Many special libraries do not have public-facing websites or catalogs, and issues of intellectual property make it difficult to collect data on some of the platforms used.

» **KEYSTONE SYSTEMS** develops technologies used primarily by libraries and associations serving individuals with visual disabilities, including many statewide services and multi-state networks. The company, based in Raleigh, North Carolina, introduced the initial version of the Keystone Library Automation System (KLAS) in 1983. It's privately owned by its founders and employs 16 people, five of whom are librarians.

KLAS is currently used by 117 library organizations. The company is an active participant in the community of specialized libraries, contributing to conferences and offering training on its products and services. Keystone fills a need by supporting a limited number of libraries that have unique requirements and workflows.

» **SOUTRON GLOBAL** is a mid-sized company based in San Diego with 22 employees. The company was founded in 2012 and later merged with

Soutron Limited in 2022. Tony Saadat serves as president and CEO.

Soutron Global offers the Soutron ILS designed for libraries in law firms, corporations, and other special libraries. These libraries may or may not have traditional print collections, and they often serve increasingly distributed and virtual organizations.

In 2023, the company signed 19 contracts for Soutron, increasing total installations to 339. Four new contracts were signed for archives management system Soutron Archive, bringing total installations to 47.

School libraries have a stake in the space

There are nearly 130,000 public and private K–12 schools in the US, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. The K–12 school library arena represents a large portion of the overall library technology industry. Notably, most school districts choose centralized systems to automate their libraries.

» **FOLLETT SCHOOL SOLUTIONS** is by far the largest provider of technology products for libraries serving pre-K through grade 12, supplying about three-quarters of school libraries in the US with its Destiny ILS.

Follett School Solutions separated from Follett Corporation in 2021, when it was acquired by Francisco Partners. In January 2023, Follett School Solutions acquired Access-It Software, which offers the Accessit automation system for schools that is primarily used in New Zealand. Follett did not respond to this year's vendor survey.

Other companies serving K–12 school libraries with ILS platforms include TLC (Library•Solution for Schools), Book Systems (Atrium), COMPANION (Alexandria), and Media Flex (OPALS).

Looking ahead

Mergers and acquisitions in the library technology industry have slowed but not halted. As the global economy sees projected growth, we can anticipate some movement involving the companies owned by private equity firms. This may mean lateral changes of ownership or mergers within or beyond the industry over the next few years.

Competitive dynamics between big companies offering similar solutions—such as the relationship between Clarivate and EBSCO—have increased pressure for innovation and meaningful product development. Organizations at the top are building platforms that address an increasing scope of functionality and have set ambitious roadmaps to further transform their offerings. Smaller and mid-sized companies will continue to create specialized solutions that meet customer needs appropriately and affordably.

At the behest of top-tier libraries, the race is on to create bibliographic and discovery environments supporting BIBFRAME and other linked data concepts. Companies will likely soon complete enhancements to support BIBFRAME, but the level of demand for these products remains to be seen.

The real unknown is AI. While many companies featured in this year's and last year's reports have announced ongoing plans to add generative AI to their offerings, this technology has not yet been integrated in any significant way. As the industry continues to work on harnessing AI in ways that limit bias and error, libraries can anticipate more prominent use of this technology in products within the next year or so. **AL**



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

Show Yourself

Building
library
credibility
through
brand
identity



BY Susan D. Ballard and Sara Kelly Johns

As school librarians, we are always rethinking how to convey who we are and what we do. To compete and remain viable, we need to work on our brand identity.

You might be thinking, “Our school library has a brand?” Most of us associate the word with a name, logo, tagline, and design elements that a corporation uses to distinguish itself from others. It also involves marketing and merchandising to promote the organization’s product or service. When all these components are combined, the result is referred to as *brand identity*.

The feelings and impressions that members of our school community have when they think of our library, and their memories of interactions they’ve had with us—positive or negative—are our school library’s brand. We need to provide quality products and services, not just say we do. The goal is not so much to transform the school library’s image as it is to build credibility through ongoing improvement and exemplary brand behavior.

Connect with the school community

Brand-building can help undo feelings of marginalization that are familiar to many school librarians. Sometimes it may seem

as though the school library exists only at the outer edge of the school or appears to be the victim of benign neglect. This type of disregard may manifest in being ignored by the powers that be, or in our own indifference to situations or things that need attention.

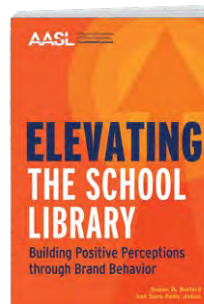
A school librarian may feel marginalized or isolated because of grade-level or department structures that do not provide representation, much less any input into school priorities, needs, and culture. Consider assessing your situation to identify factors that can lead to that kind of sidelining.

One such factor may be a simple lack of understanding of the role of school librarians. If a classroom educator or

principal has never viewed the school library as an integral element in developing the educational experience, it is imperative to demonstrate the value that school librarians bring to the table.

The American Association of School Librarians (AASL) provides position statements (bit.ly/AASL-stmnts) aimed at improving understanding of school library efficacy by summarizing the library’s role and purpose. Read and internalize the statements’ messages, which can serve as talking points while building your brand with stakeholders.

To educate others about the school library brand, it’s important to be present and become involved in the life of the



This is an excerpt from *Elevating the School Library: Building Positive Perceptions through Brand Behavior* by Susan D. Ballard and Sara Kelly Johns (ALA Editions, 2023).

school and its community. Don’t isolate yourself. Volunteer to serve on committees, participate in school organizations, and assist with school events where you can connect on a different level with learners, parents, and fellow educators.

Work to undo the residual effects of previous negative experiences. At times it may seem that you are dealing with legacy impressions left by the ghosts of school librarians past, or you yourself may have contributed to a situation that now requires some fence-mending.

Whatever the case, set aside your personal feelings and get busy with rebranding. A great place to start is by

examining policies and procedures that may be in place to make your life easier but could be onerous to everyone else. You can shift from feeling marginalized to being celebrated when you make others' lives easier with intention.

Every encounter and transaction should support brand expectations. Take advantage of every opportunity to create a positive memory.

Open up two-way communication channels. Communication involves sharing messaging and regular updates on program impact via reports, displays, newsletters, email, press releases, podcasts, a dynamic web presence, and social media. This could help engage stakeholders and build brand credibility. The best kind of sharing involves communication on a two-way street, with ongoing opportunities for stakeholders to provide input and assess their experiences.

Pondering policies

We should strive for positive interactions in every encounter with our target audiences. Circulation policies are a good place to start, since they affect the outward face of the library.

School librarians often hear that we are the stewards of the library collection and must teach students responsibility. But if we are asked about the most important part of our job, our predominant answer is to increase student literacy. We accomplish this goal by providing access to carefully curated resources in all formats to meet curricular and pleasure reading needs. Overly rigid policies about lost books, overdue fines, and limits on the number of items and length of time that items can be signed out work against that priority, and thus, against a positive school library brand.

Selection policies are also key to brand identity. Having the trust of your administration, colleagues, and

most importantly, learners is critical to brand strength. Establishing this trust will assist in building and maintaining a collection of resources that supports curricula, investigates personal interests, and develops lifelong readers.

To maintain an inclusive brand, ensure that learners will see themselves in the books they read. Books with diverse characters and stories must be available at all reading levels and in all genres to fully support learners' explorations of their physical and emotional development.

As these collection characteristics build, the need for school librarians to have the courage to do the right thing gets clearer. In the face of challenges to books and programs, doing the right thing takes a lot of preparation. School librarians are facing increased scrutiny as individuals and organized groups seek to prevent learners from being exposed to ideas that do not reflect those groups' beliefs. School librarians must be solid in their professionalism, know their responsibilities and rights, and be collaborative with their districts to prepare for these challenges—ideally before they occur.

A better digital front door

Not having an easy-to-find, user-friendly website that is as prominent as your school library's front door can be a barrier to cultivating a welcoming brand. First impressions matter, and you need to make a good one.

Your website needs to be discoverable. When a visitor goes to the district website or school landing page, can they immediately find information

about the library? Or is the school library page buried several clicks in? Even worse, do they have to use the site's search tool to find it? Obscurity is a result of neglect, so prioritize addressing this issue.

Next, evaluate the school library website for usability. Your website must be tailored to learners' interests and their cognitive development, both of which are instrumental to school librarians in their daily interactions with students. The site must be easy for users to navigate. They should be able to find books for schoolwork, personal inquiry, or pleasure reading.

When it comes to contact information, it's a good idea to include staffers' names and photos on the website to form welcoming connections. If you want to exclude your email address, consider posting a general library email address, the library's mailing or physical address, or a phone number.

Review the site's interactivity. Can students put a book on hold remotely? Can they navigate the website and resources in more than one language? Are their cultures visible, celebrated, and respected on the site?

Your learners—and their parents—need access to resources for research projects through your website. This includes literacy tips to locate, evaluate, and cite sources.

Collaborating with classroom educators to curate resource lists for projects also strengthens the school library brand and drives up user statistics, which can get the attention of IT staffers in your school. Better traffic could help prioritize and speed up site improvements, such as easier navigation to the school library site.



Given contemporary graphic design programs and free-to-use photos, it's not difficult for school library websites to have visual appeal and representation for all learners. Younger students have been shown to respond best to big, colorful icons and buttons, whereas high schoolers need the website to provide immediate access to high-quality information in all formats. Your website should reflect and share the vibrancy of your school library and its learning community as you build your brand both physically and virtually.

Evaluate physical spaces

What are some indicators that show the school library facility is either diminishing or elevating the brand experience for someone? Is the library a place where learners and educators want to be? What physical, intellectual, and time barriers need to be addressed?

A helpful guide to overcoming these barriers is AASL's *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries* (standards.aasl.org). The standards recommend focusing on aligning your school or district goals and objectives with your school library vision and mission, rather than ending up with a cookie-cutter version of what someone else thinks a school library should be.

One of the best quality-control checkpoints for any brand and its facilities is to place yourself in the shoes of the customers. Simulate their experience to better understand what they encounter during an interaction with your library.

Real-life user experience merits close attention. This is why homeowners are advised to spend a night in their guest room or try sleeping on the pull-out couch, futon, or air mattress they have provided for visitors. The same practice holds true for the school library. We want everyone to consider the library as the greatest place in the school. We don't ever want to hear that they'll never

The goal is to build credibility through ongoing improvement and exemplary brand behavior.

be back because the environment was unaccommodating.

While the primary purpose of signage is to help direct and inform visitors in a space, it can also indicate empathy and understanding of the end-user experience. For example, the school library often limits food or beverages in the facility. Instead of a sign that says NO EATING OR DRINKING, signage with messaging like this may be more effective: THE LIBRARY IS A NO-FOOD ZONE, BUT YOU ARE WELCOME TO HAVE WATER EXCEPT AROUND COMPUTER STATIONS AND OTHER ELECTRONICS TO PREVENT DAMAGE TO OUR EQUIPMENT.

Although we know that library layouts and furnishings need to be flexible and ADA compliant, an effective way to reimagine the space is to identify different learning zones and create a facility footprint. Such zones would include areas for the collection and technology as well as a variety of seating, workspace, and sound options. Focus on how people work, what environments they respond to, and how they interact in those environments to inform your layout.

Intellectual access is as critical as any other kind. How the school library collection is organized communicates something about your brand. Some questions to ask:

- Is it organized by Dewey Decimal Classification, genre, or a mix of both? For whose benefit?

- Are physical resources arranged in a way that is appealing and markets the collection? Or is there a reason to maintain a more traditional library look?
- Has a standard system and nomenclature been adopted throughout a school district or campus to ensure discoverability and a fluid transition from one school level to another? Or is this system left to individual or school preferences?
- Are the needs of non-native English speakers and readers and those who are differently abled considered in the mix?

Scheduling is another tricky issue in all schools. Administrators may need the space for nonlibrary use, such as testing, school pictures, study hall, or detention. This can impede access for others. Implications for your school library brand can also arise when schedules are designed solely for teacher preparation or limited to formal classes and instruction without accounting for individual use and needs.

AASL's Position Statement on School Library Scheduling (bit.ly/AASL-Sched19) clearly identifies what must be addressed to help eliminate scheduling barriers and improve facility access for all. [AL](#)



SUSAN D. BALLARD is former director of library media and technology of Londonderry (N.H.) School District. She is a past president of AASL, the New Hampshire School Library Media Association, and the New England School Library Association.



SARA KELLY JOHNS is an online instructor

at Syracuse (N.Y.) University's School of Information Studies and a longtime school librarian. She is a past president of AASL, the New York Library Association (NYLA), and NYLA's Section of School Librarians.

Scholarly Publishing for All

Using academic library expertise and resources to support marginalized authors

BY Harrison W. Inefuku



HARRISON W. INEFUKU is scholarly publishing services librarian at Iowa State University in Ames.

Last November, my home state of Iowa saw a flurry of activity relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), both positive and negative. A group of plaintiffs filed suit against the state over a law that would ban books in K–12 schools that purportedly depict sex acts. (A federal judge temporarily halted enforcement of the law on December 29. Read more at bit.ly/AL-IowaLaw.) On election night, many candidates endorsed by Moms for Liberty—a national organization of conservative parents—or its local chapters lost their bids to local school boards. And in mid-November, the Iowa Board of Regents, which governs the state’s public universities, passed recommendations to restrict DEI initiatives at University of Iowa in Iowa City, University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, and Iowa State University in Ames, where I work.

The current backlash against DEI is playing out in libraries and legislative buildings, on campuses, and at the ballot box, with many efforts targeting the works of authors of color and members of the LGBTQ community. Efforts to dismantle DEI initiatives on college campuses create a chilling effect that silences and erases the perspectives, experiences, and histories of marginalized communities. The fight has come to academic librarians’ front doors. With the recent targeting of education, it’s critical to amplify the voices of those most likely to be censored.

Libraries have conducted diversity audits of their holdings and begun acquiring more resources by and about marginalized communities. Here are three more ways academic librarians can support authors who hold marginalized identities.

Understand. Librarians should know how systemic racism is embedded in publishing and how we are complicit—something I’ve written about with my colleague Charlotte Roh, publications manager at California Digital Library (bit.ly/AL-ScholComm). Academia, publishing, and librarianship—the professions that influence what gets published and what libraries purchase—are overwhelmingly white. Authors of color must navigate a publishing system that has been constructed in whiteness. A starting point to learn how bias and racism manifests in publishing is to read how librarians of color have been harmed in their attempts to publish their work in professional literature (bit.ly/AL-Suspicion).

Educate. Include academic publishing in your library’s information literacy offerings. During her time at University of Massachusetts Amherst, Roh offered successful brown bag sessions for graduate students of color to teach them how to navigate the scholarly publishing process and

advocate for themselves if they encounter bias (bit.ly/AL-Roh).

Fund. Many small open access publishers, including publishing programs at libraries, rely on volunteers to take on copyediting, typesetting, and publication management responsibilities. Faculty members of color are often overburdened with expectations to provide these services, which take time and energy away from the intellectual labor of research and publication. Financially supporting publications by and about communities of color can help them procure professional services to manage this work. Lyrasis’s Open Access Community Investment Program (bit.ly/AL-OACIP) provides an opportunity to do so. The program included two journals dedicated to communities of color, *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* and *Liquid Blackness: Journal of Aesthetics and Black Studies*, in its third and most recent donor-supported funding round that concluded December 15.

Given the current socio-political climate, it is especially important for us

With the recent targeting of education, it’s critically important for librarians and libraries to amplify the voices of those most likely to be censored.

to double down on our support of authors who hold marginalized identities. This requires intentional action and the commitment of resources, or else we risk having the antiracism statements issued by many libraries and library associations stand as empty promises of action and change. **AL**

Culture of Care

Applying trauma-informed supervision in the library

BY Brandy Sanchez



BRANDY SANCHEZ is a librarian, certified leadership coach, and founder of SoulFire Collective, an organization dedicated to the inclusive, sustainable leadership of library directors and managers.

Public librarianship often resides at the intersection of public service, education, and social work. It allows us to support the unique needs of community members through innovative services, enriching programs, and responsive collections. Yet it is this very contact with the public that puts library workers at risk of experiencing primary or vicarious trauma.

According to the 2022 Urban Library Trauma Study from Urban Librarians Unite (bit.ly/ULTS22), nearly 70% of respondents shared that they had experienced violent or aggressive behavior from patrons, while 22% indicated that they experienced similar behavior from coworkers.

When working with patrons, many libraries employ *trauma-informed care*, a practice popular in health care and social work. It involves understanding common signs and symptoms of trauma to more effectively de-escalate conflict, deliver services with greater empathy, and reaffirm the library as a safe, inclusive space.

But it shouldn't stop there. Library directors and managers can better support staffers by practicing *trauma-informed supervision*. This is when leaders nurture a healthy workplace culture and connect staffers with needed support and resources after a distressing incident with patrons or coworkers. This type of supervision is a significant protective factor in preventing an upsetting interaction from turning into a traumatic event.

Last year, the Center for Trauma-Informed Innovation at University Health, a hospital in Kansas City, Missouri, developed training on trauma-informed supervision. I helped translate these principles to library work and have facilitated discussions with managers so they could brainstorm how to incorporate them into their leadership styles.

The following are concepts and questions to consider when assessing supervisory strengths and gaps.

Safety. Physical and emotional safety form the foundation of a trauma-responsive library. This should be reflected in your institution's code of conduct, security protocols, procedures for filing and following up on incident reports, and the way staffers interact. For example, can employees share ideas, experiences, and feedback without judgment, embarrassment, or punishment?

Trustworthiness. Library leaders foster trust when policies, procedures, and changes are communicated with transparency and implemented with consistency. Effective communication reduces confusion and frustration, making it easier to meet common goals. Consider these questions: What does accountability look like within your team and library? How are expectations communicated? How is conflict handled?

Choice. Having freedom of choice reminds employees that they have agency and some control over a given situation. Management can cultivate buy-in and ownership when they involve staffers in decision making, like goal setting, or integrate their solutions when problem solving.

Collaboration. Building cross-departmental partnerships can help generate awareness for important projects while equalizing the power differential between staffers and their managers. Collaboration also promotes the free flow of information and ideas. Ask yourself: How well do team members connect? What are the barriers to effective communication?

Empowerment. This can include delegating authority and asking for feedback. Managers can also support setting healthy workplace boundaries and offering opportunities for promotion or advanced training. Sharing power among team members can enhance performance and reduce employee turnover.

Incorporating trauma-informed supervision principles into library leadership can go a long way toward creating a thriving organizational culture. When staffers encounter potentially traumatic situations, they should have the social and emotional support to process and move past them. Ultimately, you can facilitate positive outcomes for all while fostering a safe, protective work environment. **AL**

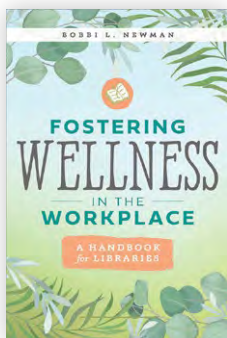
Physical and emotional safety form the foundation of a trauma-responsive library.

The Quest for Work-Life Balance

Finding a happy medium between personal and professional



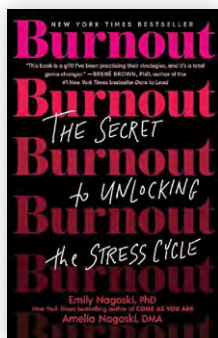
ALLISON ESCOTO is head librarian at the Center for Fiction in Brooklyn, New York.



Fostering Wellness in the Workplace: A Handbook for Libraries

By Bobbi L. Newman

Library work culture and wellness have not always gone hand in hand. However, in the post-pandemic landscape, attention to wellness in the workplace has become more prevalent. This informative handbook takes a holistic approach to understanding the concerns of library workers in the US, addressing an array of topics such as the effect of wellness on overall productivity, ways to respond to physical space issues in the workplace, and the correlation between diversity and inclusion initiatives and wellness. These topics come with practical management-level advice aimed at gradual improvements instead of overhauling all at once. (To read an excerpt, see *AL*, Sept./Oct. 2023, p. 41.) ALA Editions, 2022. 104 p. \$49.99. PBK. 978-0-8389-3791-4.



Burnout: The Secret to Unlocking the Stress Cycle

By Emily Nagoski and Amelia Nagoski

This excellent *New York Times*-bestselling self-help guide takes a scientific approach to understanding how stress manifests in women, providing evidence-based tools to help reduce that stress. The authors use two composite figures to illustrate the various aspects and ramifications of the seemingly unbreakable stress cycle. Through a narrative writing style, they engage readers with examples and practical advice for stress management. With more than 80% of librarians being women, this information will resonate with those balancing the demands of library work, family, self-care, and societal pressures of modern life. Random House, 2020. 304 p. \$17. PBK. 978-1-9848-1832-4. (Also available as an ebook.)

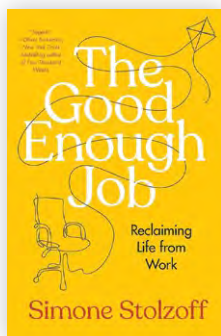


Thriving as a Mid-Career Librarian: Identity, Advocacy, and Pathways

Edited by Brandon K. West and Elizabeth Galoozis

In their introduction, the editors state their goal is to reach librarians who consider themselves mid-career in a variety of library settings and help them “find more comfort in a situation where guidance is often missing.” The standout chapter is “Being Your Own Advocate,” which not only explores methods of establishing peer relationships and exploring mid-career changes but also offers advice on maintaining peace of mind, avoiding burnout, and practicing self-care. This informative collection of perspectives provides tips on maintaining work-life balance that can be beneficial to library workers at all stages of their career. (To read an excerpt, see *AL*, Jan./Feb., p. 59.) ACRL, 2023. 358 p. \$92. PBK. 978-0-8389-3941-3.

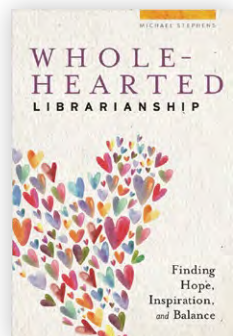
BY Allison Escoto



The Good Enough Job: Reclaiming Life from Work

By Simone Stolzoff

Librarianship is more than a job or a profession; it can be tied to identity. Though there are many positives to that notion—passion for the work, for example—there is always the danger that life can be subsumed by work. Through more than 100 captivating interviews with workers across the economic spectrum, from bankers to kayak guides, Stolzoff examines how work-life balance has become so skewed toward work that many Americans are losing valuable components of their lives. Each interview breaks down long-held myths about work defining a person's value and provides fascinating insights into how important it is to reclaim one's life and strike that seemingly elusive balance. These intriguing observations will resonate with librarians. Portfolio, 2023. 272 p. \$28. 978-0-5935-3896-8. (Also available as an ebook.)

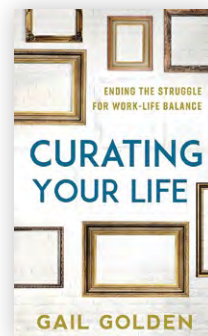


Wholehearted Librarianship: Finding Hope, Inspiration, and Balance

By Michael Stephens


This second collection of blog posts and essays by Stephens could easily be part of a librarian's personal self-care routine. *Wholehearted Librarianship* is imbued with positive insights on inspiration, camaraderie, and finding balance in library work, accumulated over the course of the author's several decades in the profession. Many sentiments shared in this collection are timeless gems. For example, "Libraries need to encourage the heart in the physical realm as well as online," written almost 20 years ago, could easily have been written today. The selections in this collection will inspire reflection and reinvigoration.

ALA Editions, 2019. 128 p. \$49.99. PBK. 978-0-8389-1906-4.



Curating Your Life: Ending the Struggle for Work-Life Balance

By Gail Golden

Curation is a familiar concept to many librarians; we curate collections, programs, and reading lists. According to Golden, it is also possible to curate one's life to achieve a happy work-life balance. Beginning with the directive to identify your values and proceeding through the clearly defined chapters that follow, the book guides readers through the process of life curation, with the end goal of shifting focus from managing time to managing energy. Populated with case studies and executable ideas, the format and style are accessible and appealing. The curation concept and framework that are explored and explained will appeal to librarians of all stripes. Rowman & Littlefield, 2022. 208 p. \$20. PBK. 978-1-5381-7631-3. (Also available as an ebook.) 

PEOPLE

Announcements

ON THE MOVE

February 27 **Marion Allan** became manager of Rockwell Falls Public Library in Lake Luzerne, New York.

Carolyn Caseñas became chief librarian at New Westminster (British Columbia) Public Library February 12.

The Library of Virginia in Richmond named **Dennis T. Clark** librarian of Virginia effective January 25.

Midori Clark became director of Fort Worth (Tex.) Public Library January 2.

December 18 **Samantha Conwell** started as children's librarian at Rumford (Maine) Public Library.

In January **Chelsea Fernandes** became librarian archivist for the Ferreira Mendes Portuguese American Archives and the Luso Afro Brazilian Archives Collections at University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.



December 31 **John Herron** left his role as director and chief executive of Kansas City (Mo.) Public Library.

Heather Johnson became youth services librarian at Reedsburg (Wis.) Public Library in February.

Aileen J. Judd became librarian for technical services at Herkimer (N.Y.) College in January.

Angela Kinney was named deputy director of the Acquisitions and Bibliographic Access Directorate at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., in November.



February 1 **Andrew K. Pace** became executive director of the Association of Research Libraries in Washington, D.C.

Kudos

Cynthia M. Parkhill, library technician II at Santa Rosa (Calif.) Charter School for the Arts, was named the school's classified employee of the year in September.

Jennifer Peters, division manager for programs and partnerships at Austin (Tex.) Public Library, was the only US librarian invited to an International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions train-the-trainer session on library measurement, evaluation, and impact, held November 2023 in The Hague, Netherlands.

January 25 the city of Las Vegas presented **Kelvin Watson**, executive director of Las Vegas–Clark County (Nev.) Library District, with its African American Trailblazer Service Award in the Community Activism and Politics category. ●

PROMOTIONS

In January **Abby Beaver** was promoted to Wyoming State Librarian.

Leigh Espey was promoted to director of Saline County (Ark.) Library effective January 1.

February 14 **Lupe Herrera** was promoted to director of Mount Pleasant (Tex.) Public Library.

In February **Tatum Honne** was promoted to librarian at Eufaula (Okla.) Memorial Library.

Juanita Pickett Hudson became branch manager and librarian at Taylor (Ark.) Public Library in December.

November 1 **Midoria Linster** was promoted to student success librarian at University of North Carolina School of the Arts in Winston-Salem.



Estephania Ortiz was promoted to literacy coordinator at Beaumont (Calif.) Library District January 11.

Cynthia M. Parkhill was promoted to library technician II at Santa Rosa (Calif.) Charter School for the Arts in July 2023.

February 1 **Erin Rooney** was promoted to director of Samuels Public Library in Front Royal, Virginia.

January 29 **Carrie Tyszka** was promoted to director of Berlin-Peck Memorial Library in Berlin, Connecticut.

Erin Weaver was promoted to director of Bridgeville (Pa.) Public Library in January.

RETIREMENTS

Betty Jackson retired as branch manager and librarian at Taylor (Ark.) Public Library December 29.

February 2 **Edward Rock** retired as associate librarian for communication, languages, and philosophy and religion at Clemson (S.C.) University.



Patricia O. Rutkowski retired as director of New Britain (Conn.) Public Library February 29.

AT ALA

Cheryl Malden retired as program officer in the Governance Office January 12.

Holly Robison was promoted to program officer in the Governance Office November 27. [AL](#)

In Memory

Linda Anne Dougherty, 76, retired branch manager of Chicago Public Library's Clearing branch for almost 30 years, died December 15. The Clearing branch's community room was named in her honor last year in recognition of her successful efforts to open an expanded branch in the neighborhood in 1994. She was an active member of ALA and served on several committees and round tables, including the Library Instruction Round Table during its formative years.



Donna Gilton, 73, professor emerita of library and information studies at University of Rhode Island (URI) in South Kingstown, died November 28. She had also held positions at Boston Public Library, Belize Teachers' College in Belize City, Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, and Pennsylvania State University in State College before joining URI in 1991. She retired as full professor in 2014. She served on numerous ALA committees and published two books, *Multicultural and Ethnic Children's Literature in the United States* and *Lifelong Learning in Public Libraries*.

Hwa-Wei Lee, 92, dean of libraries at Ohio University (OU) in Athens for 21 years and chief of the Library of Congress Asian Division from 2003 to 2008, died December 17. Lee had previously worked at University of Pittsburgh; Duquesne University in Pittsburgh; Edinboro (Pa.) University; as founding library director of the Asian Institute of Technology near Bangkok, Thailand; and as associate director of libraries and professor of library administration at Colorado State University in Fort Collins. Lee authored hundreds of academic articles and seven books. OU's Hwa-Wei Lee Center for International Collections and its Hwa-Wei Lee Library Annex are both named in his honor. Among his numerous awards was ALA's 2015 Melvil Dewey Medal, honoring creative leadership in the field.

Candy Morgan, 81, who retired in 2004 as associate director for community library services at Fort Vancouver (Wash.) Regional Library, died December 16. She had also held librarian positions at Los Angeles County Library, Michigan State University in East Lansing, the former Municipal Reference Library in Chicago, Illinois State University in Normal, and the State Library of Oregon in Salem. A devoted First Amendment advocate, Morgan served for

more than 15 years on ALA's Intellectual Freedom Committee, nearly 20 years on the board of ALA's Freedom to Read Foundation, and as president of the American Civil Liberties Union's Oregon chapter from 2011 to 2014. She was project director and a contributing author for the 7th and 8th editions of ALA's *Intellectual Freedom Manual* and wrote numerous other articles on intellectual freedom. Among Morgan's honors were being named 1997 Oregon Library Association (OLA) Intellectual Freedom Champion of the Year, the Freedom to Read Foundation's Roll of Honor Award in 2002, and honorary lifetime membership in OLA in 2004.

Anne Rose Pellowski, 89, children's librarian and storyteller at New York Public Library from 1956 to 1966, died June 14. Pellowski held a Council on Library Resources Fellowship with the Library of Congress from 1965 to 1966 and was founding director of the US Committee for UNICEF's Information Center on Children's Cultures from 1966 to 1981. She authored nearly two dozen books, including popular and scholarly works on storytelling and a series of novels. Pellowski also recorded nine spoken word albums featuring multicultural stories, rhymes, and riddles. She received the 1980 Constance Lindsay Skinner Award from the Women's National Book Association, a 2005 Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Storyteller Network, and the 2009 Alida Cutts Lifetime Membership Award from the United States Board on Books for Young People.

Melissa Dawn Stucky, 51, who had worked as librarian for Lawrence (Kans.) Public Schools and served as district director for the Kansas Association of School Librarians, died February 1.

Irene Wood, 80, a former medical librarian and ALA staff member, died December 16. Wood began her career with New York Public Library's film department. She worked for 29 years at ALA, overseeing the nonprint section of *Booklist*. In addition to authoring numerous reviews of both print publications and nonprint media, she was editor of *Culturally Diverse Videos, Audios, and CD-ROMs for Children and Young Adults* (1999). She left ALA in 2000 to become a medical librarian, later retiring as manager of Joseph Brennemann Library at the Lincoln Park campus of Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago. ●



Holding Court

Pickleball is the fastest-growing sport in the US, according to the Sports and Fitness Industry Association, with participation more than doubling to 9 million players between 2020 and 2022.

Drew Evans, a retired law librarian who has previously worked at Kansas State University in Manhattan and Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas, took up the sport about seven years ago. "I was hooked from the first hit," he says. "You're about 14 feet from your opponent, and that allows for a lot of social interaction and joking around."

But when Evans observed a lack of reliable information about the sport, he saw an opportunity to become the Pickleball Librarian.

"As a good librarian, I said, 'What resources are out there?'" Evans recalls. He found one book online, but accompanying reviews provided little information about it. Having previous experience writing reviews, he decided to rectify that situation.

Evans published his first review online, which was positively received. Reviews of other books followed, as well as evaluations of training camps and equipment, interviews with pickleball players who have interesting stories—including a series on couples who met through pickleball or who discovered pickleball together—and information to help players improve. He posts this content to Facebook and YouTube under the name Pickleball Librarian.

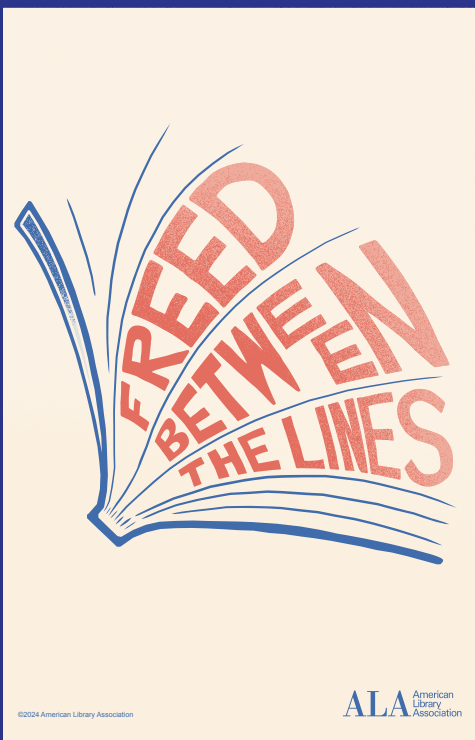
He also regularly uses his videos to champion reading and banned books, including *Thank You, Jackie Robinson* and *The Fault in Our Stars*. Says Evans: "One beauty of sharing books with people is that you will meet someone who says, 'I haven't read for a long time, but your review was so compelling I had to grab that book.'" **AL**

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

BANNED BOOKS WEEK

Sept. 22-28, 2024

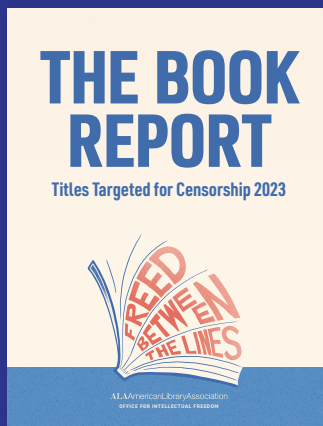
We can find freedom in the pages of a book. But censorship threatens that freedom, along with our libraries. Let's honor our freedom to read—let's be **Freed Between the Lines!**



Freed Between the Lines Poster



Freed Between the Lines Bookmark



The Book Report: Titles Targeted for Censorship 2023



Most Challenged Books of 2023 Bookmark



Freed Between the Lines Multilingual Bookmark



Freed Between the Lines Buttons



Freed Between the Lines Stickers



Freed Between the Lines Library Card Art



LAPTOPSANYTIME™
Automated Checkout Kiosks

- ✓ 100% Unattended
- ✓ Highly Configurable
- ✓ Designed for Libraries

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