

american libraries

March/April 2025

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

The SUSTAIN ABILITY Issue

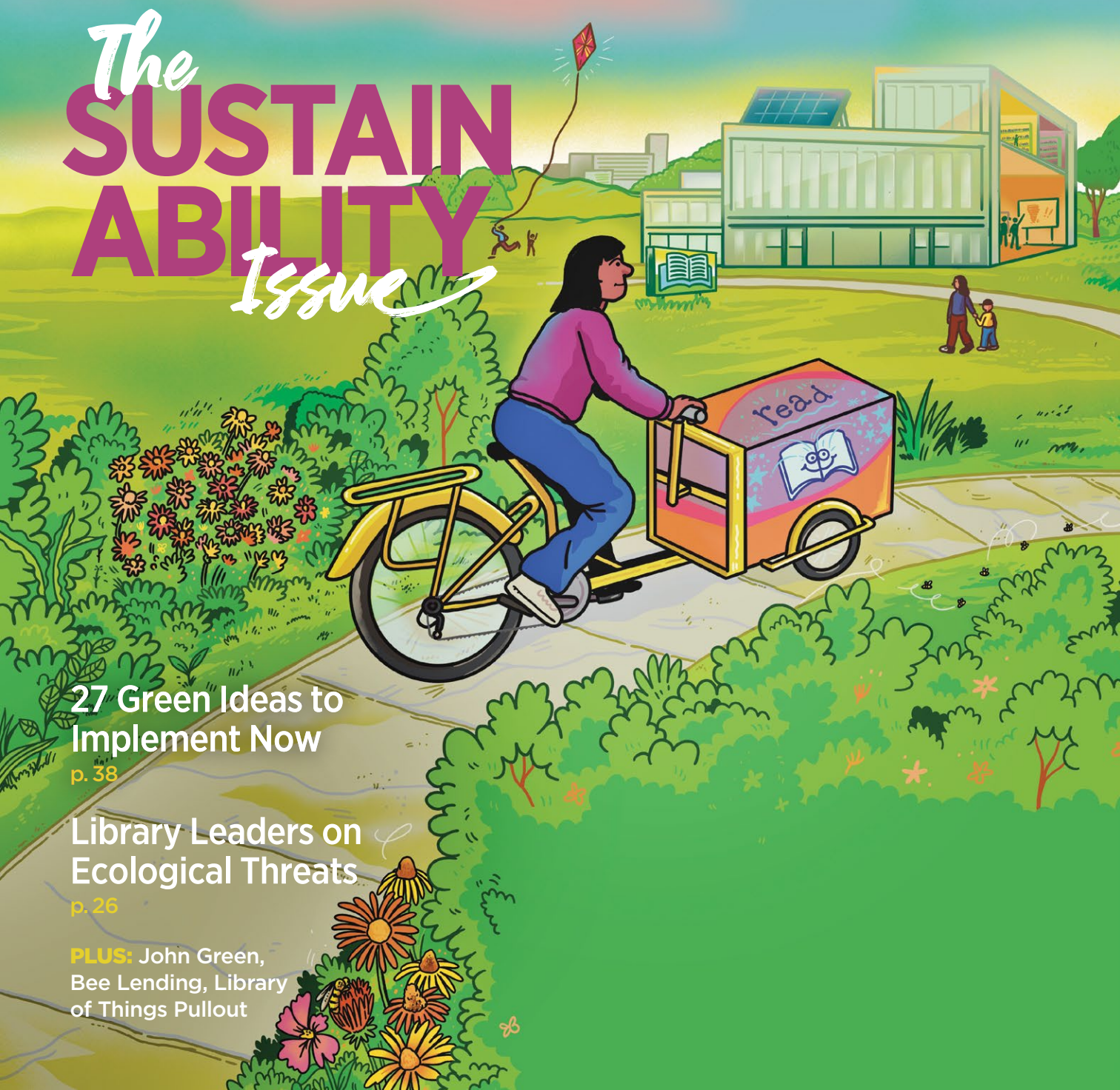
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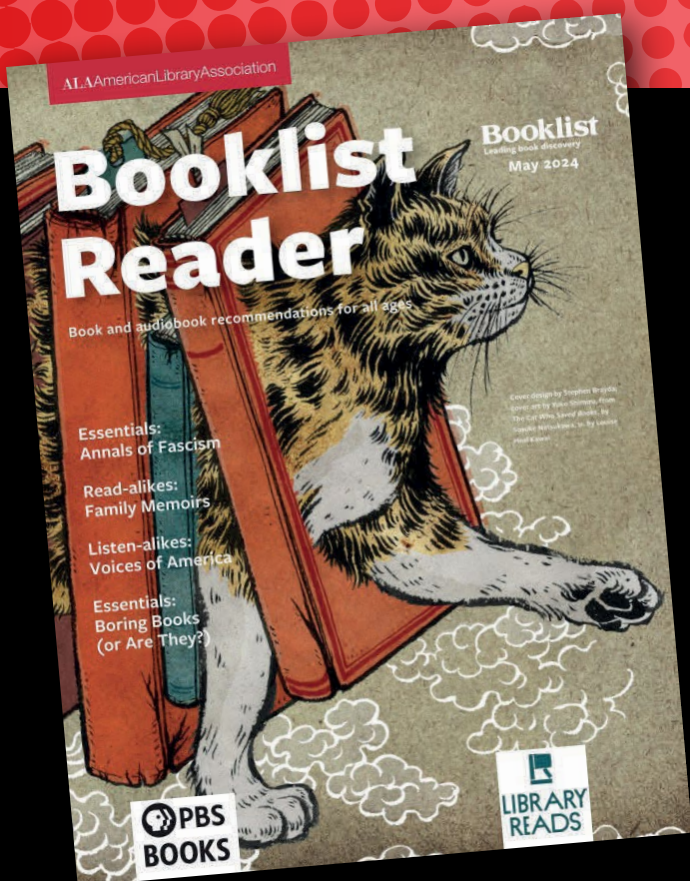
PLUS: John Green,
Bee Lending, Library
of Things Pullout



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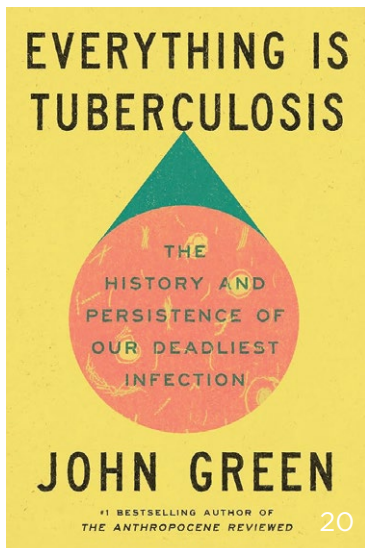
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from the
EDITOR

Ever Green



Sanhita SinhaRoy

Welcome to our special issue on sustainability in libraries.

We hope the stories in it will spur action and instill pride in what libraries are doing to advocate for a healthier, more equitable, and more resilient future. Feature stories, which begin on page 22, include a two-page pullout showcasing Library of Things items (“Green Lending,” p. 24). The pullout—illustrated by David Alvarado, whose art is also on the cover—lists popular tools and equipment that libraries are lending to help promote sustainability. We hope you’ll refer to it often and share it with others.

In “Sustaining for the Future” (p. 26), Emily Udell connects with five library leaders to discuss a range of environmental topics, including ideas on how to prepare communities for climate change and everyday ways libraries can be eco-friendly. As librarian Katherine Witzig says in the story, “There is no position too high or too low to contribute to the conversation around sustainability.”

One of my favorite stories in the issue is “Generating Buzz” (Spotlight, p. 18). It describes how West Vancouver (B.C.) Memorial Library has been lending out bees and information about beekeeping to patrons to help teach them about their local ecosystem, including how these pollinators affect the food supply. Elsewhere, we report on the emergence of libraries hosting climate cafés to help people process feelings of anxiety and grief (p. 16), offer tips for assessing the use of artificial intelligence from a sustainability perspective (On My Mind, p. 42), and look at a program that repurposes wedding dresses (Bookend, p. 48).

And if that’s not green enough, we bring you an interview with award-winning author John Green (Newsmaker, p. 20). Associate Editor Megan Bennett talks with him about his new nonfiction book, *Everything Is Tuberculosis*. In it, Green recounts making some surprising discoveries in the course of his research.

Whether you’re green when it comes to sustainability or firmly rooted, we hope you enjoy the issue.

Sanhita

Our special
issue on
sustainability
looks at how
libraries can—
and do—build
a healthier,
more equitable,
and more
resilient future.

Spectrum of Leadership

Finding ways to embrace change—for ourselves and others



Cindy Hohl

Leading during times of change can be daunting, even for the most seasoned leader, and it is important that we support those who are providing guidance.

The spring equinox is upon us—a time of renewal. This spring, let us greet new life and welcome the positive energies that surround us. And as with each season past, we have an opportunity to reflect on how best to create meaningful experiences for everyone using and working in libraries.

It is with this certainty that I choose to view the world around me: relying on cycles, recognizing the strength of the constants, and respecting the resilience we gain by how we respond to changes. Change is a constant, but it doesn't always result in upheaval. It can be comforting to create a personal plan to get ready, be ready, and stay ready as we prepare to respond to the varying opinions on the role of libraries in America.

April is National Autism Acceptance Month, and it's a time to remember that many people can find it alarming when the world moves too quickly around them. They may need more time to process information when faced with change. This is important for me to share because I have lived my entire life on the autism spectrum disorder (ASD) continuum, where I started my journey as a nonverbal child with stimming—or self-stimulatory—tendencies who also exhibited high intelligence but ended up as a high school dropout. I was not prepared to see my place in this world since I was focused on living in my own space and time, far from the societal pressures to be perfect. Turns out, I'm okay, and so are you.

Therapies and skills training can be helpful for those with ASD, but I found that it was the nurturing factor that helped me thrive into adulthood after I met a life partner who understood and accepted me for who I am with the brain that I have. Truly, the Creator places us all here with an individual purpose and for a glorious reason.

As a lifelong learner, I seek to observe and study human behavior, strive to understand the impacts of change to help manage my reactions, and carefully tailor responses. This is especially true when leading others because all eyes are on you. I use an abundance of empathy when interacting with others because I did not always have that support, and we are all dealing with something. I have found that it is always better to show grace and meet people where they are.

Sharing my unique leadership perspectives as a Native American woman with autism is my purpose in this life, and the reason is to hopefully help another person walk an easier path. Four decades of preparation has helped me respond better to change, but I am only one of the millions of people living with ASD, and no two people share the same journey.

While my journey is a daily commitment to self-discovery, one where I encourage myself to take the next step forward, my ultimate goal is to make sure we do not leave anyone behind.

Leadership is a passion of mine because I dream of a world where we all feel like we belong. I look to leaders for inspiration, those with great minds who lead with compassion and a selfless vision for the people. Leading during times of change can be daunting, even for the most seasoned leader, and it is important that we support those who are providing guidance as we manage the reactions to the world around us.

Remember, anyone can be a leader. Stepping into leadership at any time in your life can be challenging, but it will always be worth it as you grow with your service to the people. Look for the helpers and you will find me, a person who knows who they are, and I hope you do too. **AL**

CINDY HOHL is Dakota of the Santee Sioux Nation and works in Missouri on the ancestral homelands of the Kaw/Kansa, Kickapoo, Očeti Šakówin, Osage, Otoe-Missouria, Shawnee, and Wyandot.

Rising to the Occasion

New initiatives, support will help ensure ALA's continued growth



Leslie Burger

ALA, as an organization, has survived and thrived for nearly 150 years—through wars, economic downturns, changing political environments, and pandemics.

I'm an optimist by nature, a true believer that anything is possible and can be accomplished with ingenuity, creative problem solving, collaboration, and hard work. It was with that mindset that I accepted the ALA interim executive director position in November 2023. Serving as your interim executive director has been thrilling, if not exhausting!

ALA, as an organization, has survived and thrived for nearly 150 years—through wars, economic downturns, changing political environments, and pandemics. With each of these challenges, we rose to the occasion with strong leadership, consistent messaging, and a membership base that devoted its efforts to sharing stories about the important work of all libraries and how they support the communities they serve.

In 2026, ALA will celebrate its 150th anniversary—150 years of service to library workers, libraries, and the people who use them. Obviously much has changed since ALA's incorporation in 1876, but what has remained constant is our mission and commitment to our values.

As one of the Association's older members, I look back at the ALA I joined at the beginning of my career—an association that was responding to the social movements of the Sixties and Seventies; learning to let women lead; grappling with new (and now primitive) technologies; democratizing catalog subject headings; and expanding access to libraries of all types through outreach programs, community engagement, and inclusivity. Change was and continues to be critical to the delivery of library service.

The same applies to our Association. We are in the midst of a generational shift among our members and staff. Members come to us with different expectations about what they value about ALA and changing ideas about how

ALA should be organized for optimal member engagement, successful advocacy, and support for libraries and the profession.

To address those issues and ensure our financial stability, ALA is embarking concurrently on three important initiatives—an organizational assessment, strategic planning, and fundraising:

- An organizational assessment will ensure we are set up for success. Many of you will be involved in that process. This will help us best leverage our most valuable resource: You!
- Our strategic planning initiative will enable us to identify both short- and long-term goals for the Association, aligned with member and organizational needs.
- The soon-to-be-launched “For Our Libraries,” a 150th anniversary fundraising campaign and public supporter program, will help secure funding to grow our endowment and increase operating revenues.

In addition, if you haven't already heard, the Association is the recipient of a \$25 million bequest from James W. Lewis that will support needs-based scholarships for those who want to enroll in an MLS program. (See p. 6.) Lewis's extraordinary gift signals that those who love libraries and librarians are committed to ALA and our mission.

Throughout the world, the COVID-19 pandemic changed how we work and how we organize for success. ALA is no exception. As we approach the sesquicentennial, we must do all we can to ensure that our Association remains adaptable, flexible, and open to change, and that it offers new opportunities for member engagement. I hope all of you will join me on this journey. **AL**

LESLIE BURGER is interim executive director of the American Library Association.

ALA Receives Major Gift to Fund Scholarships

James W. Lewis of Washington, D.C., a former member of the board of trustees of the District of Columbia Public Library (DCPL), has made the largest individual bequest to the American Library Association (ALA) in the organization's history. The approximately \$25 million gift will help fund scholarships for aspiring librarians with demonstrated financial need. This gift will honor Lewis's parents, J. Vance and Blanche B. Lewis.

"Libraries are the most democratic institutions we have," said ALA Interim Executive Director Leslie Burger in a December 12 statement announcing the bequest. "With libraries, anyone can walk in and benefit, not only from the books but from the resources and full offerings libraries provide to their communities, including computers, technology training and assistance, career building, homework help, and literacies of all kinds, including health and financial literacy. Libraries are one of our last community spaces where people can go without economic barrier to entry and be welcome."

Throughout his career at Merrill Lynch, where he leads the Lewis Group as senior vice president and senior relationship

manager, Lewis has demonstrated his commitment to libraries and their communities by generously volunteering his time, including as a member of the board of visitors at the library of his alma mater, Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. A career librarian and longtime friend inspired him to get involved with DCPL, where his service spanned 10 years.

ALA provides more than \$300,000 in scholarships annually for studies toward master's degrees in library and information science at ALA-accredited library schools. Over time, this bequest has the potential to triple the funds available to support scholarships.

"Mr. Lewis's exceptionally generous bequest ensures the library profession will remain strong for years to come by funding scholarships," said Burger in the statement. "The gift will enable generations of library leaders to serve their communities by removing the financial restrictions for those without the economic means to afford their master's in library sciences." ●

Arkansas Book-Banning Law Declared Unconstitutional

On December 23, the US District Court for the Western District of Arkansas declared Arkansas Act 372 unconstitutional and permanently enjoined its enforcement. The ruling was in response to a suit filed by a coalition of plaintiffs that included the Freedom to Read Foundation.

The law would have subjected librarians and bookstore owners to criminal prosecution for making materials available that could be deemed harmful to younger minors. It mandated a book challenge procedure wherein individuals could have challenged books based on "appropriateness," an undefined term not based on constitutional standards. Review boards would have been allowed or, reportedly in some cases, invited to

engage in viewpoint discrimination and content discrimination.

"If the General Assembly's purpose in passing Section 1 was to protect younger minors from accessing inappropriate sexual content in libraries and bookstores, the law will only achieve that end at the expense of everyone else's First Amendment rights," the court's decision reads. "The law deputizes librarians and booksellers as the agents of censorship; when motivated by the fear of jail time, it is likely they will shelve only books fit for young children and segregate or discard the rest."

Thornton Withdraws Candidacy for ALA Treasurer

Joel Thornton, associate dean of collections and scholarly communication at

University of Utah in Salt Lake City, in December withdrew his candidacy for 2025–2028 treasurer of ALA.

Larry Neal, library director of Clinton-Macomb (Mich.) Public Library, is the remaining nominated candidate for ALA treasurer. Visit bit.ly/ALA-elections for more information.

Telgemeier, McCloud to Chair National Library Week

Award-winning author and illustrator Raina Telgemeier and cartoonist and comic theorist Scott McCloud have been selected as honorary chairs of the 67th annual National Library Week, April 6–12, celebrating the important role libraries and library professionals play in schools and communities. This year's theme is "Drawn to the Library."

PLA, AT&T Provide \$2.7 Million for Digital Literacy Workshops

The Public Library Association (PLA) has selected more than 130 public libraries across 42 states to host digital literacy workshops, powered by a \$2.7 million contribution from AT&T. The PLA Digital Literacy Workshop Incentive and the new PLA Digital Navigator Workshop Incentive support public libraries in their work to help families and communities improve basic digital skills.

The workshops, which will be offered through May, use training materials that are freely available to anyone through DigitalLearn.org and AT&T Screen-Ready. Topics include internet use, video conferencing, cybersecurity, and using mobile devices.

This cohort of libraries is the third to participate in the expanded national initiative and collaboration between PLA and AT&T. Since 2022, PLA's digital literacy programs have helped nearly 400 public libraries conduct more than 3,800 workshops, which have trained more than 19,000 learners across 45 states. This new cohort will increase the number of learners libraries can continue to reach.

"PLA is proud to support public libraries in being at the forefront of boosting digital literacy skills and bridging the digital divide in their communities," said PLA President Michael Lambert in a December 10 statement. "With another year of PLA's sustained collaboration with AT&T, more learners across the nation than ever before will get connected to vital digital literacy skills and technology resources at the library." ●

Telgemeier and McCloud have coauthored *The Cartoonists Club* (Graphix, April), which will feature a prominent school librarian character. They were also the opening speakers at ALA's 2025 LibLearnX conference in Phoenix. Telgemeier and McCloud have illustrated materials for National Library Week, including posters and a bookmark. (Read our Newsmaker interview with Telgemeier from 2019 at bit.ly/AL-Telgemeier.)

2025 I Love My Librarian Awards

In December, ALA announced the recipients of this year's I Love My Librarian Award, an annual celebration of librarians' impact in their communities. The Association selected 10 honorees from nearly 1,300 nominations

from across the country: four academic librarians, three public librarians, and three school librarians. (Read more in our May issue and at bit.ly/AL-ILML25.)

Since the award's inception in 2008, library users have shared more than 24,000 nominations. Honorees each receive a \$5,000 prize as well as complimentary registration and a \$750 travel stipend to attend LibLearnX, where they participated in an award ceremony. The program is supported by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and New York Public Library.

2024-2025 Spectrum Cohort Announced

In December, ALA's Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services (ODLOS) awarded Spectrum Scholarships to

CALENDAR

MAR. 16

Freedom of Information Day
bit.ly/FOI-Day

APR.

School Library Month
ala.org/aasl/advocacy/slm

APR. 2-5

ACRL 2025 Conference
Minneapolis
bit.ly/ACRL2025Con

APR. 6-12

National Library Week
bit.ly/ALA-NLW

APR. 8

National Library Workers Day
ala-apa.org/nlwd

APR. 9

National Library Outreach Day
bit.ly/ALA-NLOD

APR. 27-MAY 3

Preservation Week
preservationweek.org

APR. 30

Dia: Children's Day/Book Day
bit.ly/ALSC-Dia

JUNE

Rainbow Book Month
bit.ly/RBMonth

JUNE 24-27

Rare Books and Manuscripts Section 65th Annual Conference
New Haven, Connecticut
rbms.info/conferences

JUNE 26-30

2025 Annual Conference
Philadelphia
alaannual.org

AUG. 18-22

IFLA World Library and Information Congress
Astana, Kazakhstan
bit.ly/IFLA25

SEPT.

Library Card Sign-Up Month
bit.ly/LibCardSU

OCT.

TeenTober
ala.org/yalsa/teentober

OCT. 5-11

Banned Books Week
bannedbooksweek.org

UPDATE

70 students pursuing graduate degrees in library and information studies. The program supports library students who are American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Middle Eastern and North African, and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander.

The Spectrum program funds scholarships through its endowment and the contributions of individuals and organizations, some of which support students pursuing specific subject areas. ALA has awarded more than 1,600 Spectrum Scholarships since 1997.

See the full list of scholars at bit.ly/Spectrum25. To learn more about the Spectrum Scholarship Program, contact ODLOS at spectrum@ala.org or visit ala.org/spectrum.

2025 Class of Emerging Leaders Announced

In December, ALA announced the selection of 46 people to participate in the 2025 Emerging Leaders program, designed to enable early-career library and information workers to participate in projects and work groups, network with peers, gain an inside look into ALA structure, and serve the profession in a leadership capacity. This year's program, which kicked off with a daylong session during LibLearnX, culminates this June with a poster session at ALA's 2025 Annual Conference and Exhibition in Philadelphia.

Approximately 61% of this year's participants have received sponsorships—from ALA divisions, round tables, state chapters, and affiliates—to help defray the costs of attending LibLearnX and Annual. View the complete list of participants and sponsors at bit.ly/ALA-EL-25.

GameRT Launches New Award

At the conclusion of International Games Month in November, ALA's Games and Gaming Round Table (GameRT) announced the winners of the first annual Platinum Play Hall of Fame Awards (known as the "Platys").

The awards highlight games released in the last two to 10 years in



Brown County (Wis.) Library, East branch

Last Call for Library Design Showcase Submissions

American Libraries is accepting submissions for the 2025 Library Design Showcase, our annual feature celebrating new and newly renovated libraries of all types and sizes. The showcase will appear in the September/October issue.

We are looking for examples of innovative library architecture that address patrons' needs in unique and effective ways. We are especially interested in submissions from libraries that are approaching design with sustainability, accessibility, and smaller budgets in mind. Partial renovations, projects under \$1 million, and school libraries are encouraged to apply.

To be eligible, projects must have been completed between April 1, 2024, and March 31, 2025.

For consideration, send a completed submission form (bit.ly/DesignShowcaseForm25) and at least five high-resolution digital images with photographer credits to americanlibraries@ala.org via Dropbox or another file-sharing service. The deadline to apply is May 1, 2025. Unfortunately, not all submissions can be featured.

View last year's showcase at bit.ly/Design-Showcase-24. For more information, email americanlibraries@ala.org. ●

the categories of board or card games, tabletop role-playing games, and videogames, and honors gaming collections and programming across library types. Nominations were submitted by library workers and reviewed by a committee of GameRT members.

View the list of honorees at bit.ly/ALA-platys.

RUSA Relaunches Journal

The Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) announced in November that *RUSQ: A Journal of Reference and User Services*, the ALA division's quarterly scholarly journal since 1960, is

once again publishing after a hiatus that started in 2019. It is edited by Barry Trott, adult services consultant at the Library of Virginia in Richmond, who had previously served as editor from 2012 to 2018.

In 2021, the RUSA board commissioned a task force to explore the role of scholarly publishing in the division. The task force decided, based on surveys and interviews with RUSA members, sections, and the scholarly publishing world, that there was strong interest in a peer-reviewed journal that focused on reference and user services.

Read volume 60 at bit.ly/RUSQ60. **AL**

Candidates Announced for ALA Councilor-at-Large

ALA's Nominating Committee has accepted and announced the names of the 20 nominated candidates and nine petition candidates who are running for a total of 12 at-large seats on the ALA Council to serve the 2025–2028 term. They are:

Kate Alderete

Deputy State Librarian
New Mexico State Library
Santa Fe

Martha Anderson

Director of Organizational
Development and Head
of Digital Services
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville

Robbie Barber

Teacher-Librarian
DeKalb County (Ga.)
School District

Stacie Cannon

Postgraduate Student,
Library Media Information
Technology
Northeastern State
University
Tahlequah, Oklahoma

Sara Dallas

Director
Southern Adirondack (N.Y.)
Library System
Saratoga Springs, New York

Emily Drabinski

Associate Professor, Library
and Information Studies
Queens (N.Y.) College

Denelle Elaine Eads

Employee Relations and
Staff Development
Librarian
University of North Carolina
at Charlotte

Maggie Farrell

Dean of University Libraries
University of Nevada,
Las Vegas

Oscar Gittemeier

Program Manager, Division
of Innovation and
Community Engagement
San Diego Public Library

Andrew Harbison

Director, WebJunction
OCLC
Columbus, Ohio

Elaine M. Harger

Retired
Spokane, Washington

Sara Kelly Johns

Adjunct Instructor, School
of Information Studies
Syracuse (N.Y.) University

Qiana Johnson

Associate Dean of Libraries,
Collections and Content
Strategies
Dartmouth Libraries
Hanover, New Hampshire

Lesliediana Jones

Associate Director for
Public Services
Harvard Law School Library
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Robin Kear

Liaison Librarian
University of Pittsburgh

Kristin Lansdown

Librarian and Inclusion,
Diversity, Equity, and
Accessibility Coordinator
DePaul University Library
Chicago

Katherine Lester

Part-Time Faculty, School
Libraries
Wayne State University
Detroit

Annie Marcia Marie Miskewitch

Executive Director
Schaumburg Township (Ill.)
District Library

Ramin Naderi

Adult Librarian III
Los Angeles Public Library

James “Jim” Neal

University Librarian
Emeritus
Columbia University
New York City

Jerome Offord

Associate University Library
and Chief Diversity
Officer
Harvard University Library
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Anchalee Panigabutra- Roberts

Head of Cataloging
University of Tennessee,
Knoxville

Conrado Saldivar

Tech Services Manager
Natrona County (Wyo.)
Library

Amanda Sand

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Library Leverage
Dubuque, Iowa

Karen G. Schneider

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Santa Rosa, California

Brian E. C. Schottlaender

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re:work library consulting
San Diego

Evviva Weinraub Lajoie

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Janice Welburn

Dean Emerita
Marquette University
Libraries
Milwaukee

Aaron Wilson

Serials/Government
Information Cataloging
Librarian
University of Maryland,
College Park

2025 Election Dates

Ballot mailing for the ALA election begins March 10 and runs through April 2. Individuals must be members in good standing to vote in the 2025 ALA elections. For more information, visit bit.ly/ALA-elections.



Lindsay Cronk

Dean of libraries and academic information resources at Tulane University in New Orleans | cronkthevote.com



CANDIDATE FOR ALA PRESIDENT

Optimism is a discipline—a practice rooted in critical hope that empowers us to confront challenges and find or forge paths forward. Libraries exemplify this commitment to progress, and the American Library Association (ALA) is uniquely positioned to amplify our impact by supporting the expertise and creativity of library workers.

I seek the office of president to help us meet this moment and shape a future worthy of ALA's legacy, its promise, and above all, the library workers who make it all possible.

Libraries aren't just essential—they're transformational. Whether we're safeguarding intellectual freedom, ensuring equitable access, or improving financial sustainability, the challenges we face require collective effort. My leadership is rooted in bringing people together to create solutions grounded in collaboration and shared purpose.

Beyond leading a university library system, I have dedicated my career to advancing the mission of libraries through professional organizations. As Core's president, I helped unite library managers, technologists, and meta-data specialists into a thriving ALA division, fostering a shared sustainable future for these distinct communities.

With NorthEast Research Libraries, I co-developed the Elsevier Backflip model, making tens of thousands of articles freely accessible worldwide through collective action. As vice chair of the Association of Research Libraries' Advocacy and Public Policy Committee, I've worked to engage publishers and policymakers, addressing critical accessibility challenges and reinforcing libraries' role as champions of equitable information access. These experiences reflect my commitment to leveraging collaboration and strategic partnerships to advance libraries' transformative impact.

I also value the power of grassroots leadership to spark change across all library types. That's why I helped launch PeMento, a peer-mentoring group for mid-career library professionals navigating the complexities of life and career. My commitment to fostering healthier leadership practices underscores my dedication to building community within our profession.

The challenges we face are real, but so is our power to overcome them.

ALA is our collective voice, and its strength lies in all of us. My platform builds on the important work of past leaders and fosters the flexibility and capacity needed to tackle our priorities head-on. I seek to:

- **Champion library work:** Libraries are powered by people, and those people deserve respect and support. I will advocate for safer workplaces, equitable pay, and greater public recognition of library workers' expertise.
- **Increase public advocacy:** I will prioritize sharing impactful stories, mobilizing advocates, and demonstrating to policymakers the essential role libraries play in fostering knowledge, access, and growth.
- **Strengthen ALA-APA:** By expanding ALA-Allied Professional Association resources, we can better support library workers through higher wages, safer workplaces, and career development opportunities.

The challenges we face are real, but so is our power to overcome them. Libraries are where ideas spark, communities connect, and futures are imagined. We can ensure libraries lead so that communities succeed. Let's do this—together. I'm ready to serve and hope to earn your support. **AL**

ALA ELECTION: March 10–April 2. More information at bit.ly/ALA-elections

Andrea Jamison

Assistant professor of school
librarianship at Illinois State University
in Normal | andreajamison.com



CANDIDATE FOR ALA PRESIDENT

The current climate of censorship threatens to unravel the very fabric of librarianship. Librarians are under attack, facing threats to their safety and professional integrity, while at the same time library services are being stripped of their inclusivity. Misinformation has damaged librarians' reputation, labeling us anti-American and labeling libraries as spaces that attempt to indoctrinate communities by making obscene information available to youth. If these attacks continue unabated, librarianship can quickly become reminiscent of a time when segregation and censorship ruled library spaces.

Now more than ever, ALA needs radical leadership—a president who will engage in meaningful dialogue with allies and critics alike, to emphasize how equitable library services and social justice are not anti-American.

Andrew Carnegie once stated, "There is not such a cradle of democracy on earth as the free public library, this republic of letters, where neither rank, office, nor wealth receives the slightest consideration."

Libraries are America's sanctuaries of knowledge, spaces where freedom of thought and the dignity of every individual are preserved. To protect this status, ALA needs a president who

will not only talk about equity but also work to ensure that equitable services are codified and that library workers are protected and supported when providing equitable access to information.

Throughout my career, I have been a staunch advocate for intellectual freedom and inclusion, working tirelessly to make libraries welcoming spaces for all. Whether through my books, research, teaching, presentations, or committee work, I have been committed to intentionality and have taken active steps to make libraries more equitable.

As president, I will work with ALA's extraordinary members and leaders to build on the progress we've made as an organization. As the chief spokesperson, I will lead efforts to make it clear that we *cannot* afford to become indifferent in the face of social intolerance. We *cannot* afford to deprive communities of critical information

Every library
worker deserves to
feel secure in their
role as a defender
of intellectual
freedom.

literacy. And we *cannot* afford to let the preferences of a few dictate the access of many.

As ALA president, I will advocate for policies that create protections for library workers against physical threats, intimidation, and censorship-related attacks. Every library worker deserves to feel secure and valued in their role as a defender of intellectual freedom. I will lead efforts to change the narrative about libraries, using media platforms to highlight library professionals' essential, transformative work.

In response to increasing censorship, I will work with ALA leadership to continue building alliances with educators, organizations, and advocates to safeguard intellectual freedom and ensure diverse voices remain accessible. I will advocate for more resources for school and public librarians and library workers who currently bear the brunt of censorship challenges. I will work with academic, special, and international libraries to explore ways to strengthen our strategies in addressing censorship issues. I will also work to create greater transparency within the Association between leadership and members.

More importantly, as president of ALA, I will stand with all members as guardians of democracy. **AL**

ALA ELECTION: March 10–April 2. More information at bit.ly/ALA-elections

Maria McCauley

Director of libraries at Cambridge (Mass.)
Public Library | mariaforlibraries.com



CANDIDATE FOR ALA PRESIDENT

Our libraries are the hearts, hubs, and learning places of our communities. They are the places where ideas are hatched, knowledge is created, and dreams are realized. Through literature, storytimes, and special collections, libraries offer patrons opportunities to increase their understanding and open portals to other worlds and new knowledge landscapes.

We are living in a time of uncertainty: We have seen significant censorship attempts, librarians targeted, and adverse library legislation, while social and economic inequities persist. We have also seen remarkable services and programs created, curated, and offered by gifted library workers and partners across the US and internationally.

We are community connectors, teachers, guides, reading amplifiers, knowledge creators, history revealers, and dream makers. We have so many good stories to tell. I am excited for the opportunity to work with members to lead ALA in this challenging time, to share our stories and to build a skilled, connected, and supported network of library people, resilient libraries, and communities.

My priorities include:

1. Increasing equity and access, removing systematic barriers that inhibit

library staffers and the public, and improving services for everyone

2. Advocating for libraries and intellectual freedom, building coalitions and strategic partnerships, and raising awareness on key issues—including the right to read
3. Deepening the membership experience through learning, support, and connection
4. Promoting sustainability by investing in inclusive leadership; financially and ecologically sound practices; and a resilient, sustainable, and supported workforce

My background includes directing libraries in California and Massachusetts for 13 years; working in academic libraries for 10 years; and serving as Public Library Association (PLA) president (2022–2023), an ALA Executive

Board member (2018–2021), and an ALA councilor for two terms. I am a Spectrum Scholar and member of the Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association. Both experiences have been pivotal and have allowed me to grow in connection with other diverse library professionals and served as touchstones for future Association engagement.

I am a Korean American who was raised in Connecticut and frequented the Simsbury (Conn.) Public Library. I went to Ohio Wesleyan University in Delaware, Ohio, and attended graduate school at University of Pittsburgh, where I was a government documents intern at Hillman Library.

My first trip back to South Korea was when I attended IFLA Congress in 2006. It was there that I developed a great appreciation for international librarians. My respect for small and rural librarians—central figures in community life—deepened when visiting family in Ocracoke, North Carolina, and Mineral, Illinois, and during my PLA presidency. I pursued my PhD at Simmons University in Boston while I worked full time and started a family, which now includes my 7- and 9-year-olds, who are filled with library joy!

I am excited to get to work and respectfully ask for your vote!

Thank you! **AL**

I'm excited to
build a skilled,
connected, and
supported network
of library people,
resilient libraries,
and communities.

ALA ELECTION: March 10–April 2. More information at bit.ly/ALA-elections

Larry Neal

Library director of Clinton–Macomb (Mich.)
Public Library | larry4ala.org



CANDIDATE FOR ALA TREASURER

It is both an exciting and challenging time for the American Library Association (ALA). The Association is preparing to celebrate its sesquicentennial and seeks to ensure ALA is well-positioned to sustainably serve current and future generations of librarians and library workers.

The talent and hard work of our member leaders and the ALA staff of our 14 offices, eight divisions, and 19 round tables are critically important to delivering high-quality professional development, advocacy, publications, collaborations, accreditation, grants, and networking opportunities that our 48,000 members need and expect. Together our work is essential to protect the freedom to read, diversify the profession, uphold core values and standards, and maintain federal funding. A financially strong ALA is the foundation that makes so much of our work possible and is what prompted me to accept the Nominating Committee's invitation to stand for election as ALA treasurer.

Since the status quo and “paralysis by analysis” are not options for ALA's financial future, trust and communication will be critical as we break down silos, streamline operations, increase accountability, and better align ALA's resources with strategic priorities. Trust

will also be important as ALA implements a new overhead operating agreement with our revenue-generating units. These units must have sufficient resources to continue to innovate and respond to the changing needs of our members. To ensure trust as your next ALA treasurer, I will follow one basic leadership principle: No Surprises.

With an MBA and MSI-LIS, combined with 19 years of experience as director of Clinton–Macomb Public Library, an independent library district in Metro Detroit that has a governing board, I am very familiar with budgeting, forecasting, financial controls, and audits—from start to finish, during good and challenging financial times.

As an adjunct associate clinical professor at University of Michigan's School of Information, I created

Since “paralysis
by analysis” is
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massive open online courses on strategic planning and budgeting and finance, which helped sharpen my skills at explaining financial concepts and terms in a jargon-free manner.

The ALA treasurer's duties start on Day 1. There is no “elect” year to prepare for the position. Having recently served on the ALA Executive Board (2020–2023), ALA Council (2017–2023), ALA Finance and Audit Committee (2021–2023), and ALA Budget and Review Committee (2020–2021), I am well acquainted with ALA's operations, finance staff, and member leaders with whom I would be serving on the incoming Executive Board. I am also a former president of the Public Library Association (2014–2015).

As an engaged board member, I read, listen, ask questions—whether easy or difficult—and then respectfully share my opinion. Several recent past ALA presidents and treasurers with whom I have served have endorsed my candidacy (please visit larry4ala.org).

It would be an honor to give back through this service to ALA, an association that has greatly enriched my career and provided an amazing network of friends and colleagues who share my passion for libraries. I thank you for your consideration and respectfully request your vote. **AL**

ALA ELECTION: March 10–April 2. More information at bit.ly/ALA-elections

TRENDS



The 700 solar panels on the new Charlotte and William Bloomberg Medford (Mass.) Public Library generate enough electricity each year to power an electric car for 1 million miles.

Community-focused sustainability

Community involvement was key to the success of MPL's top-to-bottom redesign. When the library applied for a partial grant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners in 2018, which covered a portion of the \$34 million cost, the community rallied to secure additional funding. At a pivotal city council meeting, hundreds of residents—many sitting on the floor because of the overflow crowd—voiced their support.

The city collaborated with library staffers and enlisted Boston-based Schwartz/Silver Architects to envision a modern, sustainable space. The architects took advantage of the site's topography, building the library into a hillside for natural insulation that helps regulate indoor temperatures and reduce energy demands. Clerestory windows, positioned high on the walls, draw in daylight from above to reduce reliance on artificial lighting and enhance the building's energy efficiency. On the roof, the building's 700 solar panels produce around 340,000 kilowatts of energy a year—enough to power an electric vehicle for nearly 1 million miles.

Kerr says that the library's heating and electricity costs in MPL's old building were often \$60,000 per year, which is now realized as savings. In fact, "we're actually making money because we have all these

The Net-Zero Revolution

Libraries strive to generate as much energy as they consume

BY Cass Balzer

When the old Medford (Mass.) Public Library (MPL) opened in 1960, sustainability wasn't even part of the conversation. By the 1990s, the facility already felt outdated and inefficient, with an old heating system, a flat roof that turned into a shallow pond with every storm, and few features that would help conserve energy. "The lights were either on or off," MPL Director Barbara Kerr jokes.

Thanks to a municipal bond and strong local support, however, in 2017 the library had the opportunity to construct a

new building that was not only modern but also environmentally friendly. At the heart of the design is a rooftop with 700 solar panels, which elevated the project to *net-zero energy* status. That means the facility was now producing as much energy as it used.

MPL is one of the many libraries across the country on a mission to contribute to a greener future. The most ambitious of this group are committing to net-zero energy. Strategies often include installing solar panels, transitioning to all-electric systems, and integrating geothermal heating and cooling.

“The library itself is like this beacon of sustainability.”

MIKE DWYER, chief operations officer of Stevens Library (SL) at Sacred Heart Schools in Atherton, California

energy credit checks.” The checks, which average \$2,000 each in the summer months, are for surplus energy the library contributes back to the grid.

Small changes, big energy wins

While MPL demonstrates the impact of large-scale sustainable design, Salt Lake County (Utah) Library’s Daybreak branch highlights how smaller, incremental adjustments can help close the gap to net zero. When the building opened in 2022, it already met LEED Gold certification requirements, the second-highest available. “We were told that there wasn’t much we could do to make a huge impact, but we could do things to make a little impact,” says Branch Manager Leslie Schow. She and her team made practical changes, such as turning off unnecessary lights, powering down computer monitors when not in use, and reducing reliance on energy-consuming devices like space heaters.

These marginal changes, combined with existing energy-efficient technologies like solar tubes—which channel natural light from the roof into interior spaces—and a geothermal heating system

under the parking lot, contributed significantly to the library’s net-zero certification in 2024.

When buildings teach

By combining education with functionality, some libraries foster awareness and habits even beyond their walls. Mike Dwyer, chief operations officer of Stevens Library (SL) at Sacred Heart Schools in Atherton, California, describes the library as a “teacher,” noting that its building design actively promotes sustainable practices among students and staffers.

Signage throughout the library, which was built in 2012 and was certified as net-zero energy in 2015, highlights water-saving features, including a rainwater collection system, outdoor bioswales that capture and filter stormwater runoff, and low-flow planters. These elements educate students about water conservation and make sustainability an integral part of the school day.

When the lower school started a maker program that would be housed in SL, Dwyer was concerned that the power used by additional electronics, printers, and machines—including a woodshop—could negate the building’s net-zero status. The architects confirmed that the building’s solar panels had the capacity, and the makerspace has since brought sustainable projects into the library. For example, when supply chain issues meant that the school couldn’t source doorstops during the pandemic, students used the woodshop to create them. “The library itself is like this beacon of sustainability,” Dwyer says.

Continued on page 17 ▶

BY THE NUMBERS

Health and Wellness

2013

Year that Clemson (S.C.) University’s Cooper Library introduced FitDesks to one of its study rooms. The desks are attached to stationary bikes, helping students to release endorphins and reduce stress while doing their schoolwork. Several other academic libraries across the US have since added FitDesks.



3

Number of months patrons at St. Louis County (Mo.) Library can receive free access to Headspace, an app that offers meditation and mindfulness exercises.

\$10,000

Fundraising minimum for most runners representing Team Boston Public Library in the Boston Marathon, the world’s oldest annual marathon race.

11

Number of episodes of Nashville (Tenn.) Public Library’s (NPL) *Your Mind Matters* podcast released in 2024. Hosted by two NPL staffers, the show features interviews with local professionals and experts about mental health and its intersection with race, motherhood, disability, and more.



13

Number of CPR kits that Baltimore County (Md.) Public Library has available for checkout. The kits were donated by the Baltimore Ravens NFL team in 2023, and each includes a training video and practice mannequin.



Climate Connection

Libraries host climate cafés to help patrons process feelings about a changing world

BY Avani Kalra

When Jenny Garmon attended a disaster preparedness session for library workers in 2022, she noticed how emotional participants became. It was especially stirring when they discussed how their libraries hosted supply drives for flooded towns and their buildings had been used as warming centers during cold winters.

That's when Garmon, then a civic engagement specialist at Kansas City (Mo.) Public Library, first thought, "We need a space to talk about the feelings related to climate change."

Garmon researched ways patrons in her own community could share their emotions about the environment and discovered the work being done by Sami Aaron, founder of The Resilient Activist, a Kansas City-based nonprofit that offers community-building activities and programs for climate activists.

In 2022, Aaron started facilitating virtual *climate cafés*, forums where people could express their anxieties

about climate change and connect with like-minded individuals without the pressure to turn sessions into activism. After Garmon invited Aaron to present at the American Library Association's (ALA) 2023 Annual Conference in Chicago about climate resiliency and mental health, the two realized that libraries could be the perfect place for these conversations.

"If you want to talk about something, the library should be a space where you talk about it," Garmon says, "and not expect anybody to solve it for you but just to realize that you're not alone."

Aaron has so far facilitated 32 virtual climate cafés—including several alongside ALA's Sustainability Round Table (SustainRT)—and is in the early stages of developing in-person events for libraries. In recent years, dozens of other organizations, activists, and therapists have hosted similar cafés at libraries across the country.

"Libraries are full of resources," Garmon says, "and we can be a part of the solution."

Coping through conversation

The idea of the climate café is believed to have originated a decade ago in the UK and is modeled after the death café (bit.ly/AL-death), which brings people together to discuss the concepts of death and dying.

Climate cafés are often hosted by a trained facilitator. For The Resilient Activist, that means a climate-aware therapist comes to the conversation with a series of prompts. In the first session that The Resilient Activist cohosted with SustainRT, Aaron opened the discussion by asking participants to name one thing they do for the Earth. In a second round of conversation, attendees discussed what was most stressful for them about climate change.

Cafés are not therapy or meant to replace therapy, but Garmon says it helps to have a practicing counselor who can share ways for participants to cope with feelings.

Melody Sok, community engagement liaison at Skokie (Ill.) Public Library, says that connecting with an educator from The Talking Farm, a sustainability nonprofit in her city, allows her library to plan and execute events that unite people across different demographics.

Skokie's climate café intentionally brings teenagers and older adults together to discuss experiences with climate change in their region. These groups don't often share the same space and can misunderstand one another, Sok says, and opportunities like the café can help change that.

"[Participants] started comparing experiences about how we see more flooding, we see more insects and insect growth because they don't die off in the winter freeze, stuff like that," Sok says. "The adults really

see and feel so proud that people in our younger generation care.”

Katherine Umstot, director at Sunderland (Mass.) Public Library, stumbled into hosting a climate café a different way: She was approached by local artist Hannah Harvester in 2023.

Harvester and Sadie Forsythe, a licensed therapist, were collaborating on a free public event for people to process climate trauma and sought a location that could lower barriers to participation. The duo—climate café facilitators through Climate Psychology Alliance North America—has since hosted five events at public libraries in western Massachusetts.

About 20 people attended the event in Sunderland’s community room, where Umstot helped lay out books about climate change and grief, as well as collections of environmental poetry. While Umstot didn’t cofacilitate the session, she provided a literary and educational component for patrons who wanted more information.

“It’s not necessarily policy changes or coming up with a grand plan to fix everything,” Umstot says of the climate café concept. “It was more about just letting folks talk about the small things, the small changes they can do in their own home, in their community, to make themselves feel more at peace.”

Better together

For those interested in launching a climate café, Garmon recommends forming partnerships with organizations that can host sessions. This provides patrons with a credentialed facilitator or professional therapist, which is essential for dealing with complex emotions.

Sok says that hiring someone with expertise allowed her to listen and learn about what topics community members were interested in—something that could inform future climate café sessions.

“Our facilitator is really great at keeping things on track, but she also

“The adults really see and feel so proud that people in our younger generation care.”

MELODY SOK, community engagement liaison at Skokie (Ill.) Public Library

has knowledge,” Sok says. “She can provide context and facts and answer questions about either the environment or anxiety.”

Marketing your event is equally important, Sok says. Advertising the program in your library’s newsletter, putting information on your website, or connecting with the local newspaper—something that Umstot did—can bring a whole new community to the café.

Facilitators at The Resilient Activist are working to record videos of prompts and make them available to libraries for a fee. Sok says hiring a host is the primary expense for Skokie’s cafés, so virtual resources could help libraries with tight budgets.

Though patrons often prefer the in-person format, ultimately, climate cafés are about connection—however that happens.

“Our people are our greatest resource, and they can help you when you feel overwhelmed for any reason,” Garmon says. “You’re going to go to your library for information, for resources, and to help understand what’s going on. So we better be ready for emotions, right?” ^{AL}

AVANI KALRA is a student at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, and previously served as editor in chief of *The Daily Northwestern*. Her work has appeared in *The Atlanta-Journal Constitution*, *Bloomberg Law News*, and *Chicago Tribune*.

◀ Continued from page 15

Making incremental progress

For libraries that want to incorporate sustainability tactics, audits are a crucial first step, says Brooklyn (N.Y.) Public Library (BPL) Energy Manager Dillon Buchberg. Tracking energy use can help libraries identify immediate opportunities for improvement and lay the groundwork for broader changes. In systems with multiple buildings, it helps to triage and focus efforts on the least energy-efficient branches, he says. Its first net-zero energy building, a new Red Hook branch, is scheduled to open in 2025, but BPL’s goal is to reach net-zero emissions by 2050, part of a citywide energy efficiency mandate. The system has been replacing lighting and installing control systems and efficient heating and cooling units to reduce usage of gas and electricity in existing buildings. “Once we reduce that and make our buildings as efficient as possible, then we start exploring renewable technologies to offset that usage,” Buchberg says.

BPL’s energy efficiency efforts are also focused on disaster resilience. With disaster relief funding following Hurricane Sandy, four branches were retrofitted with solar panels in 2021. The panels charge a battery backup system that allows two of the branches to operate as resource and distribution centers during an emergency. At the other two branches, the batteries feed into outlets on the exterior of the building where people can charge devices. “[It’s] a resource for the community,” Buchberg says, “so they can help themselves during a disaster.”

By committing to net-zero energy, Schow adds, libraries can lower their environmental impact and inspire their communities to do the same: “When [a library] becomes an energy-efficient building, it becomes an example of what people can do in their own lives.” ^{AL}

CASS BALZER is a writer in Chicago.



West Vancouver (B.C.) Memorial Library's bee lending program sends patrons home with a bee bungalow, including 12 nesting tubes and 15 dormant cocoons. Through the program, participants care for their budding colony and support their local ecosystem.

Generating Buzz

Bee-lending program works to save local pollinator population



stingless and docile—perfect for curious kids and beekeeping newbies. They don't need a lot of room, either. In the wild, they nest in holes made by woodpeckers and other insects spread out in trees and stumps, or they crawl into rock crevasses.

Mason bee bungalows look like birdhouses

packed with a dozen narrow tubes, one mother bee per tube, that mimic natural nesting holes.

Each February, participants in WVML's program take home and monitor one of these bungalows for a full year, the average lifecycle of a mason bee. Each one contains 12 nesting tubes and 15 dormant cocoons (essentially baby bees) from among the 3,000 produced annually at the library. Before taking them home, all participants attend a 90-minute training session that goes over essential care, including how to monitor bees, maintain their housing, and help them flourish during the pollinating season, which runs from late March through early June. The session also explains the impact of pollinators on the local ecosystem, including on the food supply.

Over the past few decades, the decline in bee populations worldwide from human activity and climate change has led to efforts to mitigate the threat. West Vancouver (B.C.) Memorial Library is making a beeline toward innovation with its unique Mason Bee House Lending Program. Since 2022, patrons have been able to support the health of the local ecosystem by borrowing colonies to care for at home.

BY Marjorie Henderson and Taren Urquhart

Most people would be fired for bringing a box of bees to work. But not coauthor Taren Urquhart, West Vancouver (B.C.) Memorial Library's (WVML) arts and special events programmer and resident insect enthusiast.

Urquhart has been caring for bees in her backyard for more than 25 years and maintains a colony of Blue Orchard mason bees, which are efficient pollinators. In 2016, library administrators approved her request to put a bee hotel on a balcony outside the youth services department. The hotel, which contained bees from her own colony, would serve two purposes: It would

give kids the opportunity to learn about bees up close and help support the local ecosystem.

Nine years and thousands of bees later, what began as an idea for a small educational installation has grown into a thriving program that improves both local biodiversity and patrons' relationships with one another and the library. In 2022, WVML introduced the Mason Bee House Lending Program, which allows patrons to experience the wonders of beekeeping and support pollination efforts at home, for free.

Unlike honeybees, native Pacific Northwest mason bees are

Throughout the year, participants receive a monthly newsletter with care tips and seasonal reminders. After 12 months, everyone returns their bee house to the library. Participants can keep their bungalows' new cocoons for their own backyard colony or return them for the next group.

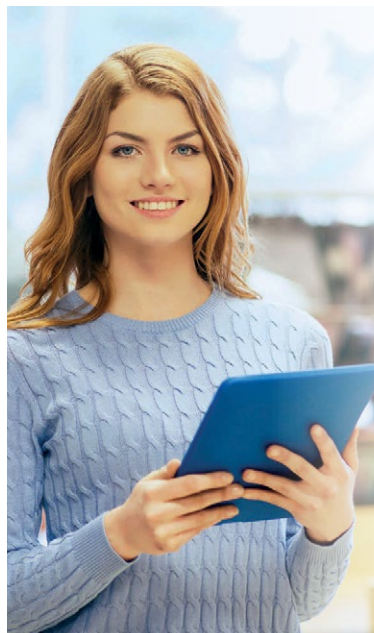
By the end of the 2025 season, the library will have supported more than 100 budding beekeepers. We've heard from gardeners who have harvested more apples, plums, and pears every fall since adding a bee hotel to their gardens. The program also fosters lifelong, inter-

Native Pacific Northwest mason bees are stingless and docile—perfect for curious kids and beekeeping newbies.

generational learning. We often see grandparents start the program and return the following year with their children and grandchildren.

The bee houses are more than just a feel-good project. As native pollinators face habitat loss, we are reminded that they represent the power of small actions. The power of community members working together allows us to responsibly care for nature and contribute to a healthier, more sustainable world. **AL**

MARJORIE HENDERSON is communications coordinator at the West Vancouver (B.C.) Memorial Library (WVML). **TAREN URQUHART** is WVML's arts and special events programmer. Readers with questions can contact Urquhart at turquhart@westvanlibrary.ca.



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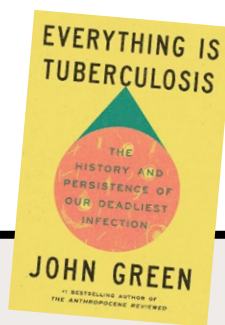
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ALA JobLIST is a service of the American Library Association and Association of College & Research Libraries.

John Green

Award-winning YA author's new title inspired by global health advocacy



Nearly 1.3 million people died from tuberculosis (TB) in 2023, according to the World Health Organization—despite a cure being developed decades ago. These deaths occur disproportionately in the world's most poverty-stricken countries.

John Green, the celebrated young adult author and vlogger, has been an advocate for TB treatment access since 2019, when he met Henry, a teenager with TB, during a trip to Sierra Leone. Henry gave Green “the view from below,” he says, quoting his late friend and global health pioneer Paul Farmer, who described the gaps in care for the marginalized as a systemic, ethical dilemma.

Green's new nonfiction title, *Everything Is Tuberculosis* (Crash Course Books, March), chronicles the disease's history from a biological and social standpoint, as well as Henry's story.

Green spoke with *American Libraries* about health equity and his connections to ALA.

BY Megan Bennett

What was it about meeting Henry that inspired your yearslong passion for tuberculosis health care reform?

You can hear abstract numbers like “1.3 million people die of TB every year” and be horrified by them. But in the end, what

moves us is human stories. Henry helped me understand what his particular experience was like, and through that, I was able to glimpse the larger story of tuberculosis.

For me, meeting Henry brought home the fact that

each of these 1.3 million people has a life that's individual to them, and a tremendously valuable life. It really underscored the horror of the systems we've built that exclude so many people from treatment.

How did you use libraries and archives while writing this book?

I could not have written this book without libraries, librarians, and archivists who helped me with everything from understanding 18th-century corsetry to where my great-uncle Stokes died. My great-uncle had tuberculosis and died in a sanatorium in Asheville, North Carolina, and I'd always known that [he died of TB], but I'd never known where he died, the circumstances of his death, or how long he was a patient there. An archivist helped me understand that. I did a lot of the writing here at the Indianapolis Public Library.

The book's title references how TB has played a significant role in our shared

history. In your research, was there one finding that stuck out to you? I was really surprised to learn that all three of the assassins of Archduke Franz Ferdinand [whose death sparked World War I] were dying of consumption [TB], knew they were dying of consumption, and knew they did not have long to live. I think that changes the way you behave when you're a teenager, if you know you don't have a long time to live. That really surprised me. I actually learned that from my son, who came home from school one day saying, “Did you know that [Ferdinand assassin] Gavrilo

Princip had tuberculosis and knew he was dying?” And I said, “No, he didn't.

If that were true, I would already know it.” And I was completely wrong.

In the early 2000s, you worked at Booklist as an editorial assistant and production editor. How did that time shape your career as an author?

My time at *Booklist* was hugely important to my life as a writer and a person. I reviewed hundreds and hundreds of books while I worked there, which is the best apprenticeship an author could ever ask for. To be asked to think critically about a huge diverse range of books is such a gift.

My mentors from the time when I worked there are still my mentors. [Former children's books editor] Ilene Cooper is still my mentor. [Longtime editor and publisher] Bill Ott was still my mentor until he passed away [in 2023]. It was the most important time of my life in terms of my development as a writer. And I love that place. I love ALA, so much. **AL**



“The West is not discovering us. We are discovering us and then telling our stories and then saying to the West, ‘Well, this is us.’”

South African writer **ZUKISWA WANNER**, in “In African Publishing, ‘There Is a Renaissance Going On,’” *The New York Times*, January 19.



“I spent the better part of the day crying because I just couldn’t believe it. Every time I watched that video, it was so heartbreaking to see that beautiful library reduced to just rubble. It was the hub of the community. We will do our best to try to get in with services when it’s safe to do so, but for right now, they’ve lost their anchor.”

JOYCE COOPER, director of branch library services for Los Angeles Public Library, in “Palisades Branch of Los Angeles Public Library Burns Down. What Was Lost in the Fire?” WBUR-FM (Boston), January 14.

“Should this book be required reading for every 2nd-grader? Of course not, but neither should it be forbidden fruit or available only to kids who are brave enough to ask the librarian to get it out of a locked case. Libraries—even elementary school libraries—are marketplaces of ideas.”

POST-BULLETIN EDITORIAL BOARD, on censorship of children’s book *The Rainbow Parade*, “Our View: Book’s Removal Sends a Chill across Library Shelves,” *Post-Bulletin* (Rochester, Minn.), January 18.

“I always have to laugh. I’m like, ‘Okay, well if you’re more worried about the sex, I understand, but there’s murder. There’s a lot of murder.’ I would hope that people who are 20–25, in that new-adult age range it’s written for, are having more sex than murders.”

Novelist **REBECCA YARROS**, in “Rebecca Yarros’s Fantasy Life,” *Elle*, January 15.

“BASICALLY, THIS MEANS THAT TEENAGERS IN POST FALLS [IDAHO] CAN’T GET ACCESS TO BOOKS THAT WERE MADE FOR THEM. SOMETIMES KIDS GO THROUGH TOUGH THINGS, AND THEY DESERVE TO RECKON THROUGH THAT IN FICTION.”

CHRIS CRUTCHER, YA author and family therapist, in “Kootenai County (Idaho) Library System Approves Adult-Only Room for Books with Mature Content as 140 Titles Pulled from Shelves for Review,” *The Spokesman-Review* (Spokane, Wash.), January 19.

The SUSTAINABILITY issue

Taking steps
toward resilience

When it comes to sustainability, “little things add up.” That’s what science librarian René Tanner—one of the dozens of librarians and experts whose actions *American Libraries* highlights in our Sustainability Issue—tells us on page 27. At a time when climate change seems impervious to the realities of workplace budgets and staff bandwidth, Tanner’s words ring as a salve and an appeal.

When our team began planning this issue, we wanted to show the many entry points for essential and overdue sustainability work—whether environmental, financial, or social justice-based—so that libraries can help their communities adapt to uncertain futures.

Our coverage spans from individual librarians to groups taking collective action, from institutions making small commitments to those shifting strategic priorities. We share how patrons are communing with nature and rallying around a larger cultural movement. And we show that libraries—from bootstrapped rural outposts to urban systems with big budgets, elementary schools to research universities, and every kind in between—are discovering new ways to act.

On the following pages you’ll find:

- an illustrated pullout of eco-friendly Library of Things items

popping up in collections across the US and Canada (p. 24)

- a panel discussion with five sustainability leaders on actions communities can take to create a cultural shift around climate change (p. 26)
- a timeline of milestones in the American Library Association’s—and library world’s—commitment to conservation (p. 34)
- a column from pioneering sustainability librarian Rebekkah Smith Aldrich on how libraries can stay relevant and responsive as devastating climate events persist (p. 36)
- a list of 27 low-lift green ideas that libraries of any size or type can implement (p. 38)

We hope these resources and conversations assist you in both creating systemic change and taking on the “little things.” **AL**

Illustration: David Alvarado





Green LENDING

ILLUSTRATION BY David Alvarado
EDITED BY Megan Bennett





In 1979, Berkeley (Calif.) Public Library became one of the first libraries to start a tool lending program. Today, library patrons can choose from dozens of household options, from lawn mowers to miter saws, cold-press juicers to knife sharpeners. Public libraries continue to adopt this model, with Brooklyn (N.Y.) Public Library launching its first tool library last year.

These Library of Things collections allow carbon footprint-conscious locals to buy less, monitor their usage of natural resources, appreciate nature, and create a more sustainable environment. Most items are returned in their entirety, while others—like seeds and weather stripping—are intended for borrowers to keep what they need and return the rest.

Here's a list of popular tools promoting sustainability that can be found in collections across the US and Canada.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 LED night lights | 7 Skateboards |
| 2 Water quality detectors | 8 Gardening tools |
| 3 Vacuum food sealers | 9 Power saws |
| 4 Canning equipment | 10 Lawn mowers |
| 5 Induction cooktops (<i>AL</i> , Jan./Feb. 2024, p. 18) | 11 Electric bikes |
| 6 Air quality monitors | 12 Bike repair kits |
| | 13 Roller skates |
| | 14 Soil blocks |
| | 15 Seeds |
| | 16 Litter cleanup kits (<i>AL</i> , Mar./Apr. 2023, p. 12) |
| | 17 Hiking and camping gear |
| | 18 Birdwatching packs |
| | 19 Metal detectors |
| | 20 Tree observation kits |
| | 21 Bees (see p. 18) |



Sustaining FOR THE Future

Library sustainability leaders grapple with threats, from natural disasters to environmental racism | **BY** Emily Udell

With the acceleration of human-driven climate change, libraries are playing an increased role in helping their communities navigate environmental calamities. The downtown public library in Asheville, North Carolina, for instance, was a beacon of connectivity after flooding from

Hurricane Helene disrupted the area's Wi-Fi service in September 2024. And during January's Southern California wildfires, residents found resources at Los Angeles-area libraries, where they could access the internet, charging stations, water, and bathrooms.

But providing access to technology, shelter, and information after extreme weather is only one way libraries are grappling with sustainability. Many are also guiding communities with information to address urgent and emerging ecological threats, such as air and water pollution, food insecurity, and diminishing natural resources, as well as economic, political, and social disruptions.

Libraries are also working to preserve collections in the face of disaster, protect community culture, and reduce the environmental impact of their buildings and operations. Many libraries are approaching these



**Matthew
Bollerman**

Chief executive officer of
Hauppauge (N.Y.) Public Library
and advisory board member of
the Sustainable Libraries Initiative



**Loida
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International library consultant
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**Beth Filar
Williams**

User experience research
librarian at Oregon State
University in Corvallis



**René
Tanner**

Science librarian and head of
research services at Rollins
College in Winter Park, Florida



**Katherine
Witzig**

Programs and partnership officer
at Oklahoma Department of
Libraries and chair of Oklahoma
Library Association's Committee
for Tribal Libraries, Archives, and
American Indian Collections

challenges in diverse ways, allowing for multiple points of entry.

“Little things add up,” says René Tanner, a science librarian and head of research services at Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida. “Some things will take time and a cultural shift, but you can start wherever you are and at whatever level makes sense for your library.”

In 2019, the American Library Association (ALA) adopted sustainability as one of the Core Values of Librarianship to help guide members seeking to develop more sustainable institutions. ALA’s Sustainability Round Table (SustainRT), the ALA and Sustainability LibGuide (bit.ly/ALA-SustainLibGuide), and a 2022 sustainability briefing (bit.ly/ALA-Sustain22) are among the ongoing actions to provide scaffolding for these efforts.

American Libraries reached out to five library workers leading sustainability initiatives and research within the profession. They discuss how staff members can implement sustainability efforts, what frameworks help drive this work, and what pitfalls may occur.

As **climate change** brings new threats to libraries and the communities they serve, what adaptations are necessary to help mitigate disaster?

GARCIA-FEBO: Libraries must strengthen their infrastructure to withstand extreme weather events, implement disaster recovery plans, digitize collections for preservation, and collaborate with local agencies for community **resilience**. Additionally, incorporating climate-conscious building designs and sustainable practices will help mitigate future risks. Partnerships with local government agencies can help with recovery plans.

TANNER: A recent national survey, slated to be published in UCLA Library's Electronic Green Journal in February, found roughly half of libraries have a disaster management plan. So there is an urgent need for libraries across the board to prepare. Geography plays a big role; plans need to be developed with the

most likely weather events for your area in mind. ALA has a resource guide dedicated to library preparedness and disaster response (bit.ly/ALA-DisasterPrep). If there is a plan in place at your library, discuss it with your colleagues to make everyone aware. These plans need to be reviewed and discussed annually. If your library does not have a disaster management plan, this is a good time to develop one.

How can libraries and library workers also prepare our communities?

WITZIG: For individuals, libraries can prioritize teaching and providing resources to learn life skills, creative arts, and sustainable practices, because natural disasters are often a consequence of the human impact on the planet. And an unfortunate reality is that disaster preparedness is one of those skills that is essential for everyone to have.

Libraries can continue to link individuals with community organizations that offer support in various areas and to different communities. They can share information so communities can collectively advocate for government policies and services that benefit everyone and the Earth.

Additionally, libraries can emphasize a relationship with the land we inhabit; this can be done by creating community gardens to model care of the land, providing—and purchasing—locally sourced food and goods, and being in good relations with communities that have knowledge of and relationship with the land since time immemorial.

How has your institution engaged in sustainable practices?

BOLLERMAN: Hauppauge (N.Y.) Public Library completed the certification program of the Sustainable

Libraries Initiative (SLI). We undertook a deep dive into the way we make decisions and try to center them on being more sustainable—environmentally sound, socially equitable, and economically feasible. SLI has been working for nearly 10 years on providing library leaders with a proven path forward to co-create libraries and communities that will thrive in the coming years. (See p. 36 for more about SLI.)

TANNER: We have many programs and library practices that foreground **sustainability**. One popular initiative is our bike lending program. Through the program, students can rent a bike for the semester for \$50 or 10 hours of volunteer work. We are also collaborating with the Freshwater Alliance at Rollins [a program at the college] to expand awareness of the value and importance of fresh water beyond the utility of it. When it comes to promoting sharing, we eliminated a disincentive to borrowing resources and no longer charge fines for late returns. We also have a touchless water-filling station in the library, which encourages people to use reusable water bottles.

When it comes to large capital improvements, the college has worked to get approval from the city to build 30 housing units close to campus to increase affordable housing for faculty and staff. This will also help reduce commute times for new faculty and staff and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by making it easier to walk or bike to work. There are also plans to install solar panels.

What are some everyday ways that libraries can be eco-friendly?

BOLLERMAN: Rethink, refuse, reduce, reuse, repair, regift, and recycle. Libraries are already



400,000

Gallons of rainwater saved and recycled annually at Hayward (Calif.) Library and Community Learning Center. Built in 2019, it is one of the largest net-zero energy public libraries in the US.

leaders in their communities in reducing consumption—we share. In addition, we are also excellent at reusing items—for crafts, especially. Expanding our thinking to ask basic questions like “Do we need this?” begins to open up conversations both personally and at work about how we consume. We try to lead by example. We have eliminated our single-use catering items, including table coverings, to nearly zero. We host events to promote reusing and repairing goods.

FILAR WILLIAMS: What we need to do is both adapt and mitigate. Libraries themselves can work on reducing their greenhouse gas emissions. The National Climate Action Strategy recommends a goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 43% from 2015 levels by 2030 and to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Ways to mitigate include conducting an energy audit and benchmarking your greenhouse gas emissions to find ways to cut back or shift energy use, including shifting to renewables. Look at your transportation costs, create passive designs in your building, do a water audit. Benchmarking these processes will articulate and communicate how sustainable the library is. And it will allow the library to understand its challenges and find opportunities to build upon. Reviewing policies and practices with a sustainability lens will help create more sustainable operational practices as well.

How can libraries approach sustainability in an intersectional and justice-minded way?

WITZIG: Libraries can and should diversify the perspectives in the information field. From a single vantage point, it is possible to see a fraction of the truth. If institutions

proactively invite and engage diverse lenses, they can see with a depth and breadth that was impossible before. There are beneficial initiatives that already exist to try and elevate marginalized voices, but creating a truly sustainable ecosystem requires a level of introspection that, in our current unsustainable system, has either been lost, ignored, or outright challenged.

Individuals have a responsibility to their communities to interrogate their own biases and understand what privileges they have been afforded. This inner work is a prerequisite to the creation of a community of practice where others can be invited into the conversation of sustainability. Institutions have a responsibility to make space for

Glossary

BREEAM (BUILDING RESEARCH ESTABLISHMENT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT METHOD) A certification program that evaluates a building’s sustainable features, including materials, energy and water use, and waste reduction.

CLIMATE CHANGE Long-term shifts in global temperatures and weather patterns that have been largely driven by human activities, especially the burning of fossil fuels, since the 1800s.

LEED (LEADERSHIP IN ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN) A global certification program that sets a standard for buildings that prioritize sustainability, health, energy efficiency, and cost savings.

LIVING BUILDING CHALLENGE A framework that aims to advance sustainability measures in building projects through design, construction, and relationships between people and environments.

NET-ZERO ENERGY A state in which the amount of greenhouse gas emissions generated by human activities and released into the atmosphere are balanced by their removal from the atmosphere.

PASSIVE HOUSE A framework for reducing the environmental impact and improving energy efficiency in built structures that originated in Germany.

RESILIENCE The ability of an entity—such as a person, organization, or environment—to adapt and develop in the face of adversity or change.

SUSTAINABILITY Being able to meet people’s needs today while not compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs by taking into account ecological, social, and economic factors.

TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE A business concept that libraries apply to sustainability practices, taking into account financial viability, environmental impact, and social equity. •

these conversations and materially support actions that result from them. Organizations have the responsibility to constantly assess the balance between the benefit to people, to profit, and to the planet. When the profession (and the communities we represent) can hold these conversations in high esteem, subsequent actions move us toward a more balanced future.

Environmental racism has for many years harmed communities composed of those who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and people from developing nations. How can libraries acknowledge and undo harm through their sustainability efforts?

GARCIA-FEBO: Libraries can connect environmental racism to sustainability by offering resources, programs, and discussions that raise awareness of its impacts. They can provide access to research,

"An unfortunate reality is that disaster preparedness is one of those skills that is essential for everyone to have."

KATHERINE WITZIG, programs and partnership officer
at Oklahoma Department of Libraries

host forums with experts, and collaborate with local organizations to address environmental justice issues. Libraries can highlight stories, policies, and initiatives that promote equitable access to clean resources, advocate for sustainable development, and ensure marginalized voices are part of sustainability efforts.

One example of a library addressing environmental racism is Detroit Public Library, which has collaborated with local environmental justice organizations like the nonprofit Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice to raise awareness about the impact of environmental racism on local BIPOC residents. The library has hosted programs, forums, and workshops that focus on industrial pollution and environmental hazards that disproportionately affect marginalized communities. It has also offered information on how residents can advocate for cleaner, more sustainable environments, and promoted local green initiatives, such as urban gardening and clean energy programs.

TANNER: Libraries can elevate collections that celebrate BIPOC communities and simultaneously raise awareness of the inequities experienced by these groups and individuals. Archives and special collections play a role in this work

by preserving artifacts and memorabilia by and about marginalized individuals and movements. We can examine our collections to see if BIPOC communities are represented across the collection, not just in designated collections.

Libraries can also work to include stories and authors who have not received the attention they deserve. While every library is different, you can look at just about anything—from policies to signage—and make changes that are more inclusive. Providing information, programming, and collections of interest to marginalized groups also advances efforts to create welcoming and healing spaces.

What partnerships, internal or external, should libraries form to achieve sustainability goals?

BOLLERMAN: It takes all of us—top down, bottom up, side to side. It really doesn't matter where it begins, but eventually having the whole institution on the same page will lead to real and lasting change. A library linking into already-existing municipal or county plans makes a lot of sense. Showing how the library is part of the resiliency of a community may lead to new respect for it, or even dollars to help bolster those efforts.

FILAR WILLIAMS: Partnerships and collaborations are key in general



14,000

Area in square feet of the rooftop garden at the William J. Clinton Presidential Library in Little Rock, Arkansas. It is the first federal building to receive LEED Platinum certification, the highest LEED rating.

for all we do in libraries. Nothing can be done in a silo. Libraries should seek partners on their campus or in their communities. Diversity in ideas brings better sustainable solutions. A library can be the gathering space, a multidisciplinary entity that can pull together groups or organizations that specialize in various areas to see the holistic picture of community needs.

Not only that, but partnering brings together more people and more resources, sharing the workload, the energy, and the impact. Building these relationships also strengthens your communication channels when disasters hit the community. Libraries with solid partnerships create the social infrastructure needed by individuals to develop social capital—fostering connections, resource sharing, mutual support, and collaboration among neighbors.

What are examples of successful collaborations and potential pitfalls?

GARCIA-FEBO: Green Stacks is a sustainability initiative by San Francisco Public Library that aims to incorporate green practices throughout the library system. It encompasses efforts to reduce energy consumption, waste, and the library system's carbon footprint, while promoting sustainability within the community. Libraries can replicate this approach by building partnerships with local environmental groups and government agencies, aligning library goals with community initiatives.

Libraries should also encourage internal collaboration between departments such as programming, facilities, and information technology to integrate green practices across all operations. Potential

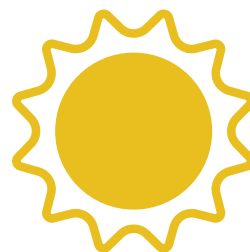
challenges or pitfalls can include funding and resources and ongoing maintenance. Libraries may need to seek external grants or partnerships to overcome financial limitations and ensure long-term commitment and resources to sustain these initial efforts.

Per the EPA, the burning of fossil fuels is the largest single source of global greenhouse gas emissions. What sustainability practices should libraries consider when undergoing building renovations and new construction?

BOLLERMAN: Burn less, and hopefully nothing at all. Explore [net-zero energy, passive house](#), and the [Living Building Challenge](#) framework for ideas on reducing the need to burn carbon to operate our facilities.

GARCIA-FEBO: Incorporate energy-efficient designs, renewable energy sources, and environmentally friendly materials like bamboo, cork, and reclaimed wood. Install energy-efficient lighting and HVAC systems, using locally sourced and recycled materials, and pursue green building certifications like [LEED \(Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design\)](#) or [BREEAM \(Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method\)](#) to ensure the building meets high environmental standards.

Water conservation practices, such as low-flow fixtures and rainwater harvesting systems, should also be integrated, alongside passive design strategies that maximize natural light and ventilation. Additionally, sustainable landscaping with native plants can reduce water consumption and support



\$100,000

Amount that Austin (Tex.) Public Library's Central Library saves annually by using solar energy, enough to power 130 households. The library installed more than 500 solar panels on its roof in 2017.

local ecosystems. By adopting these sustainable practices, libraries not only reduce their environmental footprint but also create resilient, energy-efficient spaces that serve as models for community engagement in sustainability.

Artificial intelligence (AI) uses vast amounts of water and other resources. How can libraries and their staffers balance the need for new technology with sustainability strategies?

BOLLERMAN: By educating our communities on all aspects of any issue. Once you adopt the [triple bottom line](#) way of thinking, you will ask yourself, "How does this choice, click, or purchase impact people, the planet, and my wallet?"

FILAR WILLIAMS: Resource extraction is a large part of AI and supercomputing. But so are issues of power, oppression, and justice. How can we educate people to

"There may be no stopping AI, but we can establish guardrails and slow the process to make time for the creation of sustainable solutions."

BETH FILAR WILLIAMS, user experience research librarian at Oregon State University in Corvallis

think critically about the surprising amount of water consumption of AI? Thirty students using ChatGPT for 10 minutes each, asking about 20 questions, consumes 80 gallons of water, or 50 minutes of faucet time. Across many classrooms, this cost cannot be ignored, particularly in the face of increasing droughts.

We know mineral mining has a devastating impact, yet we are

moving toward more extraction as AI grows. The profitability of mining does not account for its full costs, including environmental damage, the illness and death of miners, and the loss to the communities it displaces. Most often these costs are truly hidden to those enjoying the benefits of AI, and what is hidden can stay hidden to those with power or who

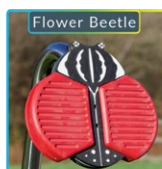
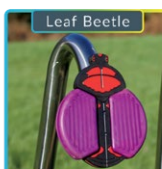
are otherwise motivated not to acknowledge or address these costs.

To produce the power to support AI, we use a constant drawdown of minerals, water, and fossil fuels, which indirectly create more violence and wars, climate refugees, pollution, extinction, and depletion, impacting the oceans, the air, the Earth, and the disadvantaged populations around the globe.

There may be no stopping AI, but we can establish guardrails and slow the process to make time for the creation of sustainable solutions. These are human-created tools, and subsequently the problems arising from them can be solved by humans. Moving too quickly in this area could be disastrous in many ways; we should move only at a pace that

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allows for the care of our planet and its inhabitants.

GARCIA-FEBO: Libraries can balance the need for new technologies like AI with sustainability by prioritizing energy-efficient and resource-conscious solutions. This includes using cloud services with green energy policies, optimizing AI tools for minimal resource use, and ensuring technology is integrated in ways that enhance long-term sustainability, such as supporting environmental education and promoting eco-friendly practices in library operations.

Additionally, libraries can focus on digital literacy programs that emphasize responsible technology use and resource conservation. This area continues to evolve, and

we must stay updated and monitor developments to diligently prioritize sustainability.

Is there anything else that librarians and library leaders should know about sustainability?

FILAR WILLIAMS: I'd like to share some takeaways from a keynote talk that [philosopher and environmental activist] Kathleen Dean Moore gave at the Washington Oregon Cascadia Higher Education Sustainability Conference in 2023: Scientists have come together for decades now to tell us how bad things are—and how things are getting worse—with facts. But we are missing from that message a moral imperative to do this work. It is wrong to wreck the planet. People

will not act on fact alone; they need that moral imperative. They also need stories they can relate to.

WITZIG: There is no position too high or too low to contribute to the conversation around sustainability. There is no institution that is exempt from the work of building a sustainable future. It is the collective responsibility of all those who inhabit this land to take care of it and all our plant, animal, and human relatives.

TANNER: Consider big and small ways to make a difference. Little things add up. Some things will take time and a cultural shift, but you can start wherever you are and at whatever level makes sense for your library. [AL](#)

EMILY UDELL is a freelance writer based in Indianapolis.

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COMMITMENTS TO *Conservation*

ALA creates the Task Force on the Environment, timed with Earth Day's 20th anniversary in 1990. The task force is now part of the Sustainability Round Table (SustainRT).



ALA and Global Learning Inc. partner on the two-year, grant-funded Libraries Build Sustainable Communities project, offering resources and workshops to members.

Anythink Brighton library in Colorado becomes the first carbon-negative library in the US. /// The National Endowment for the Humanities launches its Sustaining Cultural Heritage Collections grant program, providing funding for libraries, archives, and museums to implement energy-efficient preservation practices.



1989

1990

1999

2005

2009

2013

ALA introduces Environmental Issues to its Policy Manual, urging librarians and library governing boards to “collect and provide information [to patrons] on the condition of our Earth, its air, ground, water, and living organisms from all available sources.”

Los Angeles Public Library's Lake View Terrace branch is the first library to receive LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) platinum certification from the US Green Building Council (USGBC), per the council's database. Platinum is USGBC's highest LEED rating.



ALA establishes SustainRT, which offers libraries and library workers resources to implement environmentally focused initiatives.



ALA adopts the Resolution on the Importance of Sustainable Libraries during its Annual Conference in San Francisco. It calls for the Association to encourage library workers to “be proactive in their application of sustainable thinking in the areas of their facilities, operations, policy, technology, programming, partnerships, and library school curricula.”

2015

2019

ALA adds sustainability to the Core Values of Librarianship. It carries over to a new set of core values in 2024. “By supporting climate resiliency, library workers create thriving communities and care for our common good for a better tomorrow,” the value states. /// Three New York libraries become the first to be certified under the Sustainable Library Certification Program. The program is offered through the Sustainable Libraries Initiative (SLI), in which institutions receive mentorship and other resources to complete a robust list of action items that further their “environmental stewardship, economic feasibility, and social equity.”

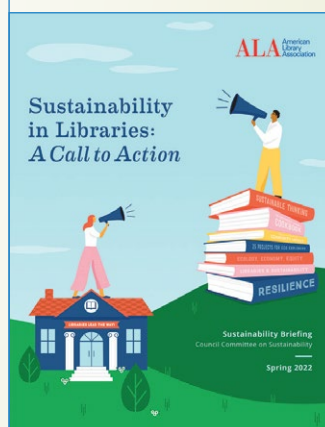


At ALA’s virtual Annual Conference, Council adopts a resolution to pursue carbon neutrality for all ALA conferences starting in 2025.

2021



2022



The ALA Council Committee on Sustainability releases *Sustainability in Libraries: A Call to Action* (bit.ly/ALA-Sustain22), a briefing that outlines the threat of climate change and what information professionals can do to offset the impact.

ALA and SLI announce plans to create a National Climate Action Strategy, a guide to help library workers advance toward climate change mitigation, adaptation, and climate justice efforts.

2023

2024

The Council on Library and Information Resources begins its six-part Climate Resiliency Action Series. The final two free workshops are March 13 and April 9. Learn more at climate-resiliency.clir.org.

Session 3

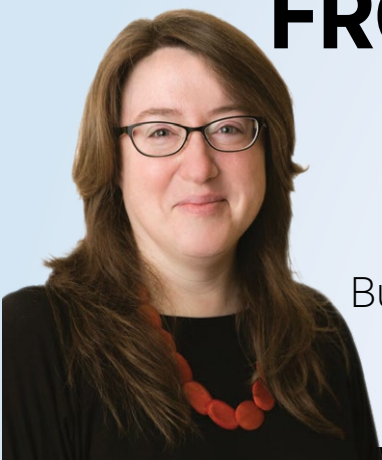
Combating Climate Anxiety Through Data

Learn how curating scientific data orients GLAMR institutions in the public conversation and can help combat climate anxiety through action.

[Learn More ↗](#)

FROM *Anxiety* TO *Action*

Building on a decade of sustainability progress | BY Rebekkah Smith Aldrich



At nearly every talk I've given on climate change and libraries over roughly a decade, someone in the audience asks how I remain hopeful in the face of climate scientists' predictions. I am not, I clarify, hopeful that we will turn the tide on the impacts of climate change—at least not in my lifetime. But I am hopeful that, given the reality of climate change, people will help one another to adapt, restore, and rethink the future.

This hope comes from the efforts to take action, both

large and small, that I have seen among my colleagues locally and nationally over the past decade: American Library Association (ALA) members who started ALA's Sustainability Round Table (SustainRT) in 2013; members of the Sustainable Libraries Initiative (SLI), which launched the same year and partners with ALA frequently; and

the 40-plus public, academic, and school libraries certified through SLI's Sustainable Library Certification Program and the 200 more working toward certification.

Take for instance the Chrisney branch of Lincoln (Ind.) Heritage Public Library, serving a population of less than 600, the first net-zero energy-certified public library in the US. Or New Canaan (Conn.) Library, the first US library to source building materials that ensured no forced or slave labor was used in their production.

Consider Curtis Memorial Library in Brunswick, Maine, which mapped its Library of Things to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Or Red Hook (N.Y.) Public Library, whose naturalist in residence provides eco-literacy programming for the community.

Embracing sustainability

What does it take for libraries to remain relevant and responsive?

RESOURCES

- Access SLI-ALA's one-page National Climate Action Strategy for Libraries, *The National Climate Action Strategy for Libraries Implementation Guide*, SLI's newsletter, and the Road Map to Sustainability app at bit.ly/SLI-Resources
- Learn about ALA's SustainRT and how to join at ala.org/SustainRT



This is the question I've centered on my entire career. As a consultant for more than 20 years, I helped libraries make the case locally for increased funding; designed and secured funding for new and expanded facilities; and helped library directors and boards carry out their mission.

My long-term sustainability focus and work with my peers, through the New York Library Association first, then through ALA, now through the growing SLI network, is driven by two things.

One is a grave concern for the lives and livelihoods of those who will be impacted by climate change. Which is, by the way, all of us.

The other is the belief that embracing the core value of sustainability that ALA adopted in 2019 inspires investment in libraries, further positions us as leaders, and helps us fulfill our mission to improve the lives of those we serve. We may even save lives.

The triple bottom line

Countering climate change is about more than green supplies and LED light bulbs. This work is entangled in our economic choices and heavily influenced by social equity issues. When you step back you can see almost every facet of modern life contributes to climate impacts that threaten human life, well-being, and the very economy that supercharges the climate crisis as we speak.

When ALA adopted sustainability as a core value of librarianship, a large-scale shift occurred. ALA defines sustainability using the triple bottom line—a balance of environmental stewardship, social equity and human health, and

economic feasibility. This is a lens through which to evaluate practices, products, constructs, organizations, and even communities.

Six years since sustainability became a core value, I see far more libraries living this value and leading the way on sustainability. I see energy and determination, new alliances, new funding, and new understanding of what libraries can mean to their communities.

The brutality of the climate events we've seen just in the past two years is a call to action.

Still, we have much more to do, and this work only becomes more urgent. The brutality of the climate events we've seen just in the past two years—of the wildfires in Lahaina on the Hawaiian island of Maui and in Southern California, of Hurricanes Helene and Milton in the Southeastern US—is a call to action. I urge all of us to join forces and work together to minimize the toll of the next event, which is sure to come. [AL](#)

REBEKKAH SMITH ALDRICH is executive director of Mid-Hudson (N.Y.) Library System, cofounder and president of the Sustainable Libraries Initiative, and principal author of the National Climate Action Strategy for Libraries. She is author of the books *Sustainable Thinking and Resilience* (both ALA Editions, 2018) and co-editor of *Libraries and Sustainability* (ALA Editions, 2021).

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June 28th
in Philadelphia



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the JCD awards program.



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27 Ideas TO IMPLEMENT Right Now



Organize a swap. Sul Ross State University Library in Alpine, Texas, hosted a clothing exchange for students, while Bring Your Own Plant is a popular, low-cost event at Lancaster (Wis.) Public Library.

Facilitate food security.

Charleston County (S.C.) Public Library installed community fridges stocked with fresh produce at three of its branches, while Summers County (W.Va.) Public Library loans wagons to assist rural patrons who walk to the supermarket.



Partner with your municipality on its climate action plan. Anchorage (Alaska) Public Library considers its city's emissions goals when making energy-efficient upgrades to its buildings.

Hold conversations on hyperlocal issues. In recent years, Igiugig (Alaska) Tribal Library has discussed sustainable solutions for its village's housing shortage, while Waimea (Hawaii) Public Library hosted a meeting to brainstorm how public land should be developed.

Bulk up your Library of Things collection (see p. 24).

Adopt the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a blueprint for addressing global challenges like poverty and climate change by 2030. Batesville (Ind.) Intermediate School started a book club for kids ages 6–12 using selections inspired by the SDGs.

Preserve oral histories on environmental milestones and activism.

Brooklyn (N.Y.) Public Library's Greenpoint Library and Environmental Education Center captured interviews with more than 100 subjects to show the effects of industrial pollution and give voice to grassroots advocates.

Start a seed library. Sixth-graders at Hall Middle School in Larkspur, California, added a seed library to their school library more than a decade ago, with students learning how to harvest, organize, and maintain seeds themselves.

Green your summer reading program. Instead of distributing disposable prizes, Montgomery County (Md.) Public Libraries donates to nonprofits that plant trees, clean up waterways, and deliver meals to those in need.

Add a sustainability position or department to your institution.

University of Utah in Salt Lake City embedded a librarian in its Sustainability Office to better integrate green practices into its operations, research, and education.

Incorporate open educational resources (OERs) into your courses and instruction. OERs have significantly reduced textbook costs for students at Tulsa (Okla.) Community College.

Start a farm-to-product program.

Hickory (N.C.) Public Library partnered with local businesses and artisans on Sheep to Sweater, a series that shows patrons where wool comes from, how it's made into yarn, and how it can be used to make clothing.



Photos: © Adobe Stock

Commit to hosting zero-waste children's programming. Favorites at Prince George (B.C.) Public Library include parachute parties, singing workshops, and nature storytimes.

Establish a one-page disaster plan. University of Virginia's Claude Moore Health Sciences Library in Charlottesville created a plan that includes contact information, operations procedures, and scenario-specific contingencies—such as for earthquakes, fires, and bomb threats.

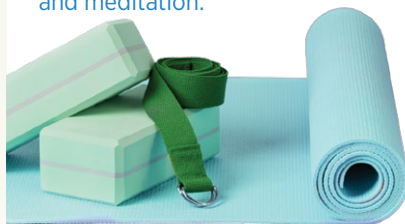
Forge partnerships that enable reuse. Slippery Rock (Pa.) University's Bailey Library uses spent coffee grounds from its campus café in its composting and donates shredded paper for local animal rescues and zoos to use as bedding.



Clean up your town. Thomas County (Ga.) Public Library System partnered with Keep Thomas County Beautiful to launch litter cleanup events and add cleanup kits to its collection.

Promote a healthy democracy. Vernon Area Public Library District in Lincolnshire, Illinois, retained a political scientist in residence to educate patrons on public services and infrastructure, the voting process, and presidential campaigns.

Give your wellness initiatives a boost. North Scituate (R.I.) Public Library used a grant to assemble take-home health kits that offer resources for a variety of issues and practices, including dementia, joint health, and meditation.



Invest in remote or loanable Wi-Fi. Beauregard Parish Library in DeRidder, Louisiana—where residents were among those devastated by Hurricane Laura in 2020—installed Wi-Fi hotspots in 11 solar-powered outdoor benches to prepare for future power disruptions.

Design outdoor programs for historically marginalized populations. Corvallis–Benton County (Ore.) Public Library partnered with its local NAACP chapter on a birdwatching series led by a birder of color.

Host a repair café. Visitors to Chicago Public Library's Sulzer branch can have clothes mended and household appliances and jewelry fixed by volunteers every second Saturday of the month.

Complete the Sustainable Library Certification Program through the Sustainable Libraries Initiative.

Host a financial literacy book club.

The book club at Penn State Harrisburg's Hanes Library promotes economic prosperity—an aspect of triple bottom line sustainability—with discussions on titles about investing, credit cards, and budgeting.

Contribute to tribal revitalization and land rehabilitation efforts. Blackfeet Community College's Medicine Spring Library in Browning, Montana, has started an experimental garden for plants used in medicinal and traditional practices and hosted organizations meeting to reintroduce bison to the area.

Dedicate a space for growing native plants and attracting pollinators.

Kokomo–Howard County (Ind.) Public Library collaborated with local gardeners on its butterfly garden.



Encourage art from upcycled materials. Teens at Cleveland Public Library's East 131st Street branch hosted a newspaper fashion show and cardboard arcade, while 8th-graders at Eisenhower Middle School in Wyckoff, New Jersey, created a 23-foot-long mural with donated books.

Educate patrons about specific ecological problems. Vassalboro (Maine) Community School partnered with Vassalboro Public Library on a history and conservation series to raise awareness of the local alewife fish and restoration of its migration path. [AL](#)

Growth Report

Sowing sustainability on campus

BY Jennifer Embree
and Neyda Gilman



JENNIFER EMBREE is subject librarian and Sustainability Hub coordinator at Binghamton (N.Y.) University Libraries (BUL).



NEYDA GILMAN is BUL's assistant head of sustainability and STEM engagement and health sciences/environmental sciences librarian.

In 2019, around the same time the American Library Association (ALA) formally added sustainability to the Core Values of Librarianship, we were laying the groundwork for what would become Binghamton (N.Y.) University Libraries' (BUL) Sustainability Hub.

At the time, we each were working independently on similar, smaller projects within BUL's Science Library, like using a small area to feature some of the library's sustainability resources and research happening on campus, as well as providing meeting spaces for sustainability-focused student clubs. But we recognized we could think bigger.

In 2020, we received a grant from ALA's Resilient Communities Pilot Program, aimed at helping libraries engage their communities in programs and conversations addressing the climate crisis. Thanks in part to that support, we established partnerships with community organizations, created new programs, and kickstarted eco-friendly services to cultivate a culture of sustainability campuswide.

Today the Sustainability Hub has an onsite and a virtual presence. We've hosted 50 events that have brought in a total of 1,700 attendees and worked with upwards of 20 local and campus-based organizations.

In the Science Library's main lobby, we offer curated books on sustainability topics, including practical skills such as mending, foraging, and gardening; posters on student and faculty research; information on preparing for severe weather emergencies; a drop-off point for hard-to-recycle materials; a seed library; and meters for measuring electricity use and air quality that patrons can check out. Students can borrow a *plant buddy*—a houseplant to keep on their desk while they study. We also have meeting rooms for presentations, workshops, and clubs.

In our virtual online space, we have a calendar of events, recordings of past events, reading lists, tip sheets, and information about sustainability-related activities and groups elsewhere on campus and in the community.

For academic librarians interested in promoting sustainability at their own library, we recommend these practices:

Identify and fill community gaps. In planning your projects, understand the gaps in sustainability services, resources, or programming within your community. Cross-referencing these gaps with local needs will help justify your efforts to stakeholders, ensure you are not directly competing with others, and help establish community partnerships. Open communication with groups doing similar work can reveal opportunities, build collaboration, and prevent duplication of efforts.

Start small and work with what you have. Starting small is crucial to avoid burnout, and may lead to something bigger. Explore easy ways to add to existing programs or services and create a small working team to share ideas and responsibilities. Consider partnering with an organization you met when surveying community needs. After we received our grant, we collaborated with a local community-garden nonprofit to create a virtual workshop series on seed-saving.

Center justice. True environmental advocacy centers social and racial justice. We've created an Equitable Sustainability Literacy Guide (bit.ly/AL-BULGuide). We also collaborate on programming with justice-oriented organizations, such as BUL's Multicultural Resource Center and Indigenous Studies working group, and have an environmental justice book collection on

topics that resonate with the community we serve.

When sustainability became a core value of the Association, then-ALA President Loida Garcia-Febo (see p. 26) said that "libraries of all types can act as

catalysts and inspire future generations to reach solutions that are not only sensible but essential to sustaining life on this planet."

All efforts your library undertakes to create a more sustainable world, no matter how small, are catalysts for change, and well worth pursuing. **AL**

Starting small is
crucial to avoid
burnout, and
may lead to
something bigger.

Nurturing Nature

Book award recognizes titles that help kids grow as climate citizens

BY Martha Meyer



MARTHA MEYER

is a library assistant in Evanston (Ill.) Public Library's Early Learning and Literacy Department and leads the Blueberry Awards Committee.

About three in five young adults worldwide report they are “worried” about climate change, but 55% of teachers don’t address the topic because they feel unprepared to do so (bit.ly/AL-NPRpoll). And when it comes to books that present climate information to preschool- and elementary-age kids, many titles end up exacerbating readers’ fears or engaging in greenwashing.

Our mid-size Midwestern public library thought: Why not develop an award to honor excellent titles that buck this trend?

In 2022, Evanston (Ill.) Public Library (EPL) announced the inaugural recipients of its Blueberry Awards. These awards, the first of their kind in the library world, recognize and elevate fiction and nonfiction books that teach children ages 3–10 about nature and climate—while taking care to not add to their anxiety.

Evanston is a climate-conscious city with an adopted resilience plan. But it was the early days of the pandemic—when we saw animals return to urban areas and birdwatching grow in popularity—that inspired us to start the awards. (Blueberry rhymes with “Newbery,” and “blue” to represent the planet.) This March, we will announce our fourth-annual list of winners.

To design the awards, EPL collaborated with biologists, city and school sustainability managers, personnel from nearby nature centers, and Indigenous activists. We laid out this criteria: Winning titles must display excellence in writing, art, and design; reflect the diversity of both people and the natural world; be scientifically accurate; and discuss climate peril in age-appropriate and truthful ways. Importantly, these books need to show that saving the planet isn’t solely up to kids. Adults are already working on solutions—and collective action means no one has to act alone.

From there, a committee of EPL staffers and community experts selects 35 children’s titles from hundreds about nature and climate published in the US that year. We choose one winner and 24 honor titles, along with 10 changemaker titles that clearly demonstrate actions children can take. The committee meets four times a year, with most collaboration taking place in a Google Doc. Our evaluators bring different expertise to the discussions; for instance, the biologist can spot the tiniest errors in ecosystem descriptions, while the school librarian brings a classroom perspective.

The first Blueberry winner was *How to Find a Fox* (2021) by Kate Gardner, selected for its gorgeous photography by Ossi Saarinen, simple language, and specific instructions for how to encounter foxes in the wild.

Because our awards don’t offer a monetary prize, we worried they might not be taken seriously. But we’re finding authors and illustrators

love them. Newbery Medal-winning author Katherine Applegate, who received a Blueberry honor for her middle-grade novel *Odder* (2022) about a fearless sea otter, told us these awards give kids hope.

Four years in, we’re seeing the awards’ reach. Publishers have started to send us submissions and include the award logo on the covers of reprinted titles. We have begun marketing titles to environmental educators at parks and nature centers. This awards cycle, we launched Blueberry Votes, a program for kindergartners and 1st-graders to select one title to include on our 2025 list.

Our goal is that the awards help libraries and schools with their sustainability efforts. Chil-

dren’s librarians can turn to our book lists for readers’ advisory, storytime selections, and displays. They can promote titles for Earth Day (and beyond), reach out to winning authors for visits, plan

book-based STEM programming, and use spine labels to highlight Blueberry titles.

Amid ecological crises, we have an opportunity to help children grow as climate citizens. Modeling sustainability by planting gardens and putting up solar panels is fantastic, but when we leverage our core strength—the evaluation and selection of books and information—we can have an even greater impact.

For a list of this year’s Blueberry Awards winners, visit epl.org/blueberry after March 21. **AL**

Books need to show that saving the planet isn’t solely up to kids.

Assessing AI

How libraries can lessen artificial intelligence's energy impact

BY Sarah Tribelhorn



SARAH TRIBELHORN is sciences and sustainability librarian at San Diego State University. She is also coordinator-elect of the American Library Association's Sustainability Round Table.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing entire industries, including libraries. Although this technology offers immense potential to enhance services, library workers and others must consider its environmental impact.

Training and operating AI tools like large language models, for instance, require substantial computational power. Generating one image could use as much energy as charging an average smartphone, according to a 2023 study by AI developer Hugging Face and Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, the first study of its kind to measure the carbon and energy impact of generative AI models. Data centers worldwide also use massive amounts of water to cool AI servers. A 2023 study from Cornell University estimates that by 2027, the water needed for AI could reach 1.7 trillion gallons—more than half of the water the UK uses in a year.

Libraries and their decision makers should consider the following strategies when possible.

First, libraries should prioritize energy-efficient hardware and cloud providers to reduce energy consumption. This includes choosing servers with high energy efficiency ratings, such as ENERGY STAR certification, and using sustainable features like power-saving modes. Additionally, more efficient large language models (bit.ly/LLM-Study) result in algorithms that can minimize the number of computations required, further reducing energy consumption. It is essential that libraries carefully consider the specific needs of their users and avoid unnecessary AI applications.

Second, libraries should select or advocate to upper management for data center locations that prioritize renewable energy. Some data centers are powered by sustainable sources such as solar or wind, which are crucial for reducing carbon emissions. What's more, using local data centers can minimize the distance that data travels, reducing the energy consumed to transfer data.

My library has developed a rubric for assessing AI use (libguides.sdsu.edu/AIAssessment). In addition to energy consumption and carbon emissions, here are some other environment-related takeaways.

Resource depletion. Consider the environmental impact of the increased demand for rare-earth elements used in computer chips, including for AI hardware.

Long-term sustainability. Assess the longevity of AI technologies and their potential for innovation to minimize energy and water consumption. Consider questions including: Is there a plan for recycling or repurposing the AI hardware you're using? Or, how is pollution

being mitigated from the use of these systems?

Ethical implications. Evaluate the potential for bias, discrimination, and job displacement that comes with automation.

Beyond the ecological impact, choosing AI tools that are trained on diverse and unbiased data is essential to avoid perpetuating stereotypes and harming groups that are most vulnerable to adverse environmental effects. By contracting with companies that use diverse data sets, libraries can implement AI systems that are fair and equitable. Promoting transparency in AI algorithms can build trust and accountability. By understanding how AI algorithms work, libraries can identify and address potential biases. Protecting user privacy and data security is also crucial to ethical AI implementation. By implementing strong data protection measures, libraries can safeguard sensitive information.

Librarians can play a crucial role in promoting sustainable AI practices. By raising awareness about these tools' environmental and social impacts, collaborating

with information technology professionals to identify energy-efficient solutions, educating users about ethical AI, and supporting research into sustainable AI,

librarians can help ensure it is used responsibly and minimize its negative consequences. This will contribute to a healthier and more equitable future. **AL**

Libraries should
select data centers
that prioritize
renewable energy.

ALA

eLearning



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Webinars

All Webinars begin at 2:30pm Eastern

Transforming Senior Services and Outreach

90-minute webinar
March 11, 2025

Collection Diversity Audits: 10 Steps to Success

90-minute webinar
March 12, 2025

Serving Deaf Patrons in the Library

2-part webinar series
March 17 and 19, 2025

Grant Writing for Cultural Heritage Organizations

3-part webinar series
March 25, 26 and 27, 2025

ECourses

Sustainable Librarianship: Core Competencies and Practices

Four-week eCourse
starting Monday, March 10, 2025

Tools and Techniques for Promoting Early Literacy in BIPOC Communities

Six-week eCourse
starting Monday, April 7, 2025

Finance and Budgeting for Library Staff

Six-week eCourse
starting Monday, April 7, 2025



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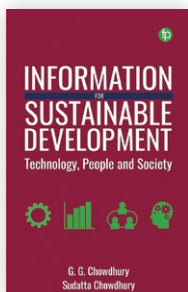
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Sustainable Efforts

Titles that support healthy environments of all kinds



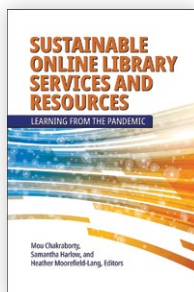
ALLISON ESCOTO
is head librarian
at the Center for
Fiction in Brook-
lyn, New York.



Information for Sustainable Development: Technology, People, and Society

By G. G. Chowdhury and
Sudatta Chowdhury

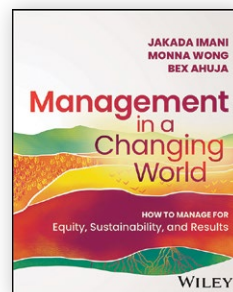
Sustainability is a worldwide endeavor, and the participation of information professionals in its achievement is front and center in this book. The authors parse out the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals and explain that the sharing of data and information for sustainable development is the main purview of library workers. This comprehensive study—complete with easy-to-follow explanations, research, and charts—shows academics, researchers, and librarians where they fit on the path to achieving these goals. Facet Publishing, 2024. 288 p. \$76.99. PBK. 978-1-78330-666-4.



Sustainable Online Library Services and Resources: Learning from the Pandemic

Edited by Mou Chakraborty,
Samantha Harlow, and Heather
Moorefield-Lang

During the COVID-19 pandemic, librarians and faculty found themselves adapting their services and resources for online use. Each chapter of this anthology focuses on a specific library's experiences navigating a range of issues, such as hiring, training, teaching, engaging with patrons, and ensuring staff well-being. Case studies are filled with lessons learned, helpful charts, and templates for information gathering. This is an educational and hands-on guide for understanding how the online migration of library services necessitated by the pandemic succeeded—and the many ways these services can remain sustainable going forward. Libraries Unlimited, 2022. 268 p. \$63. PBK. 978-1-4408-7925-8. (Also available as an ebook.)



Management in a Changing World: How to Manage for Equity, Sustainability, and Results

By Jakada Imani, Monna Wong,
and Bex Ahuja

Acknowledging the rapidly changing workplace, the evolving needs of a new generation of workers, and the necessity of healthy working environments, the authors take readers through the fundamentals of effective management, with an eye toward long-term sustainability. While the book was written with a nonprofit audience in mind, library leaders should also consider implementing these sustainability measures in their workplaces. Included are practices for hiring effectively, delegating efficiently, and defining clear roles and responsibilities. This extensive guide will be of interest to library administrators seeking to build (or maintain) a healthy, sustainable staff. Wiley, 2023. 256 p. \$32. PBK. 978-1-394-16579-7. (Also available as an ebook.)

BY Allison Escoto



Libraries and Sustainability: Programs and Practices for Community Impact

Edited by René Tanner, Adrian K. Ho, Monika Antonelli, and Rebekkah Smith Aldrich

Sustainability is not a new concept, but it is often overlooked. Organized into four main sections, the book covers a broad range of topics, from earning certification from the Sustainable Libraries Initiative to managing projects with a small staff to analyzing the social, economic, and cultural impact of sustainability efforts in libraries of all types and sizes. This resource is great for thinking about, talking about, and doing something about sustainability in libraries. (See our interview with Tanner on p. 26 and a column by Aldrich on p. 36.) ALA Editions, 2021. 176 p. \$49.99. PBK. 978-0-8389-3794-5.



New Libraries in Old Buildings: Creative Reuse

Edited by Petra Hauke, Karen Latimer, and Robert Niess

Through essays and case studies featuring both public and academic libraries across the globe, this detailed volume—published by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions—includes the architectural, cultural, theoretical, and practical aspects of adapting existing structures and repurposing them as libraries. The writers examine the compatibility of libraries with the creative reuse of buildings. This is a fascinating read for those who are researching restructuring their collection, preparing to embark on rehousing existing collections, or considering integrating sustainability into physical library structures. De Gruyter Saur, 2021. 388 p. \$114. 978-3-1106-7951-9. (Also available as an ebook.)



25 Ready-to-Use Sustainable Living Programs for Libraries

Edited by Ellyssa Valenti Kroski

Taking inspiration from her own life, Kroski has gathered a wealth of examples, advice, and resources that will suit libraries of various sizes and budgets. Grouped into four main categories (gardening, preservation, pioneer crafts, and homesteading), the chapters are rife with clever and inventive ways to implement and run programs with appeal and accessibility in mind. Each program includes estimated costs, step-by-step instructions, and information for possible follow-up programs. Whether new to programming or looking for a refresh, librarians can find plenty of ideas here for patrons to enjoy. (Read an excerpt from this book in *AL*, May 2023, p. 42.) ALA Editions, 2022. 208 p. \$59.99. PBK. 978-0-8389-3649-8. [AL](#)

PEOPLE

Announcements

ON THE MOVE

Gohar Ashoughian

became dean of libraries and university librarian at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, British Columbia, November 15.



Eric Carzon became director of Fairfax County (Va.) Public Library November 4.

October 21 **Nadia Clifton** became special collections instruction librarian at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

November 7 **Jacob Crofoot** became adult services librarian at Margaret E. Heggan Free Public Library in Sewell, New Jersey.

Whit Gaines became head of library systems and e-resources at Columbus (Ga.) State University's Simon Schwob Memorial Library in August.

Sandy Gaw became director of Houston Public Library August 28.



November 12 **Chris Kaufmann** became director of Truro (Mass.) Public Library.

October 15 **Nicole LaMoreaux** became director of library services at LIM College's Adrian G. Marcuse Library in New York City.

In October **Sarah Lutz** became director of Ralpho Township (Pa.) Public Library.

Jennifer Michalicek became children's librarian at Payson (Ariz.) Public Library October 1.

October 7 **Sherry Anderson Wichitchu** became executive director of the Metropolitan Library Service Agency in St. Paul, Minnesota.



Kudos

Amelia Anderson, assistant professor at University of South Florida's School of Information in Tampa, received the 2024 Association for Library and Information Science Education/Connie Van Fleet Award for Research Excellence in Public Library Services to Adults in October.

August 29 **John D. Brdecka** was named Citizen of the Year by the Hancock County (Miss.) Chamber of Commerce for his leadership as executive director of Hancock County Library System. ●



Lark Wilson became special collections librarian for instruction, reference, and engagement at Binghamton (N.Y.) University Libraries in October.

PROMOTIONS

Holly Anderton was promoted to library administrator for neighborhood libraries at Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh in October.

In September **Cheryl Capitani** was promoted to director of New Canaan (Conn.) Library.

Ellen Sullivan Crovatto was promoted to CEO of New Canaan (Conn.) Library in September.

November 1 **Nancy Howe** was promoted to director of Baldwinsville (N.Y.) Public Library.

October 1 **Sarah Tronkowski** was promoted to director of library services at SUNY Corning Community College's

Arthur A. Houghton Jr. Library and Learning Center.

RETIREMENTS

Karen Clark retired as director of Logan (Utah) Library in October.

October 31 **Wendy Congiardo** retired as managing librarian at Thomas B. Norton Public Library in Gulf Shores, Alabama.

Tricia Ford retired as director of Truro (Mass.) Public Library October 8.

October 30 **Arlene McMahon** retired as librarian at Highland (N.Y.) Public Library.

Patty Stringfellow retired as director of Jasper County (Ind.) Public Library in August.

Dorothy Swain retired as director of Greenville (R.I.) Public Library in December.

AT ALA

BeeBee Browne left ALA as program officer in the Public Programs Office October 18.

In November **Jennifer Ledesma** joined ALA's Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services as program coordinator for community engagement.

Kirk Peterson was promoted to office support and building services coordinator in ALA's Public Policy and Advocacy Office in December.

December 9 **Carrie Smith** was promoted to editorial and advertising specialist.

Jim Takeshita left ALA as policy associate for the Public Policy and Advocacy Office November 22.

November 11 **Anne Weglewski** left ALA as assistant for learning, membership, and governance at the American Association of School Librarians. [AL](#)

In Memory

Helen Amabile, 92, former deputy chief of library programs for the United States Information Agency (USIA), died November 25. Amabile started her library career at the US Department of Defense Dependents School in Stuttgart, Germany. At USIA, which merged with the State Department in 1999, she managed all American libraries associated with US embassies and was instrumental in establishing the Library Fellows program, facilitating short-term assignments for librarians worldwide.

Charles Lee Brunk, 85, who worked for 30 years as a foreign language cataloger at University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, died October 13. Brunk supervised the library of the United Methodist Church of Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin; cataloged the library at South Shore United Methodist Church in Riverview, Florida; and volunteered at Doby Elementary School in Apollo Beach, Florida.



Janet Crayne, 75, retired cataloging librarian, died November 21. Crayne started her career in librarianship in 1981 as a Slavic cataloging library assistant at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She later worked at University of Virginia's Alderman Library in Charlottesville as a Slavic cataloger, and then at University of Michigan (UM) Library in Ann Arbor as supervisor of Slavic cataloging and acquisition and South Slavic bibliography. At UM, Crayne helped drive the digitization of rare and ephemeral materials and became a leading US specialist on the Balkans. She led efforts to preserve civic records in the former Yugoslavia that allowed refugees to document their residency and claim their right to vote, while helping the National and University Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo, destroyed by bombing in 1992, to restore large portions of its collections.



Barbara Elleman, 89, retired librarian and author, died October 9. Elleman started as a school librarian in Port Washington, Wisconsin, and later lectured and promoted the use of children's books in the School of Education at Marquette University in Milwaukee, where she was

named Distinguished Scholar of Children's Literature. She was a reviewer and then an editor for *Booklist*, and founded *Book Links*, a quarterly supplement for educators. Elleman served as trustee, advisor, and curator at the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art in Amherst, Massachusetts. She donated her collection of more than 1,000 picture books to the museum, where they reside in the Barbara Elleman Research Library. She wrote *Tomie dePaola: His Art and His Stories* (1999) and *Virginia Lee Burton: A Life in Art* (2002), and coauthored (with Russell Freedman) *Holiday House: The First Sixty-Five Years* (2000).



Rebecca "Becky" Farwick, 55, young adult librarian at Newport (R.I.) Public Library, died September 14.

Herbert Foerstel, 90, retired librarian who worked for University of Maryland (UMD) in College Park for three decades, died September 20. Foerstel began his library career at Towson (Md.) University before joining UMD as head of the Engineering and Physical Sciences Library. He later served as UMD's head of branch libraries from 1967 to 1996. A critic of state surveillance, Foerstel instructed his staff to refuse FBI requests for patron data in the 1980s and helped institute a university policy protecting the privacy of library records. He collaborated with state lawmakers to pass legislation guaranteeing the privacy of all Maryland library records and testified before US Congress. Foerstel won the Hugh M. Hefner First Amendment Award in 1988, wrote *Surveillance in the Stacks: The FBI's Library Awareness Program* (1991), and went on to publish 10 more books.

Arthur Ketchersid, 91, retired academic librarian, died October 14. Ketchersid served as head of cataloging at University of Georgia in Athens, assistant director of libraries at Florida Technological University (now the University of Central Florida) in Orange County, and associate director of libraries at University of South Florida in Tampa. He played a pivotal role in automating the library catalog at University of Central Florida and was instrumental in integrating the State University System of Florida Libraries into the OCLC online cataloging system. ●



The Wedding Dress Whisperer

Adele Puccio, director of Maurice M. Pine Free Public Library in Fair Lawn, New Jersey, comes by her wedding dress obsession honestly.

“When I was a kid, my great-aunt was the buyer at [famous New York bridal boutique] Kleinfeld’s, so I used to go over and look at all the dresses,” she says. “Other people were buying *Seventeen*; I was buying *Brides*.”

Decades later, Puccio’s passion now manifests itself in a rotating collection of vintage and modern bridal gowns, which she stores in her library office and loans to any bride who asks. Community members have donated most of the 100-plus dresses on offer, though Puccio sometimes nabs gowns from Freecycle or Goodwill if she spots a good one. Nor is her own wedding dress spared from the collection. Married for 34 years, the widowed

Puccio has gladly loaned out the gown she wore at her 1985 nuptials.

While the program uses no library funds, Puccio does get help with the collection from staff members, especially when brides are trying on dresses in her office. “They walk out, and whatever staff member who’s available to comment usually does,” she says. “Even Art [in circulation], who’s in his 70s. He’ll come over and go, ‘I love that. You look so sweet.’”

Most of the brides who borrow dresses from the collection don’t return them. Puccio isn’t bothered. “I do tell them, if they don’t want to bring it back, pass it along,” she says. “Just keep it going.” **AL**

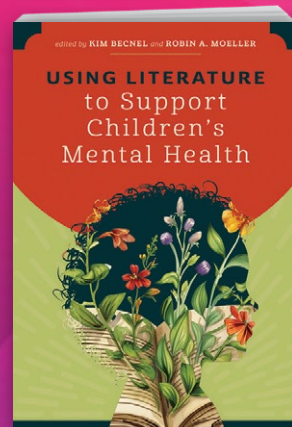
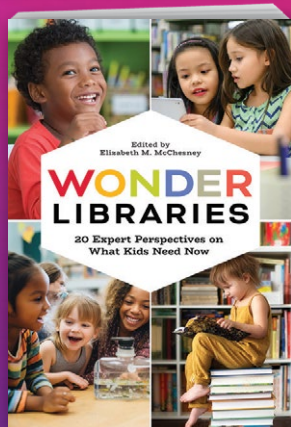
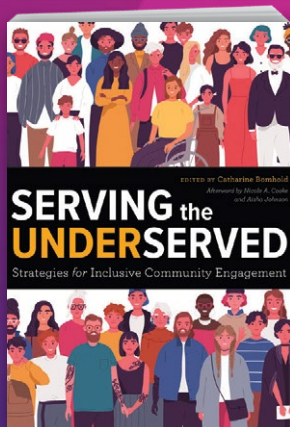
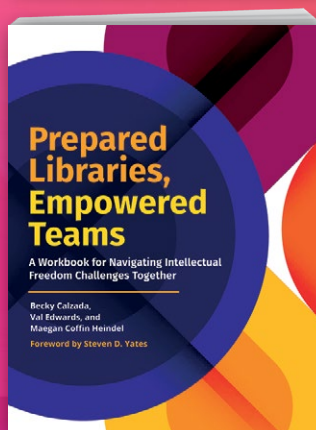
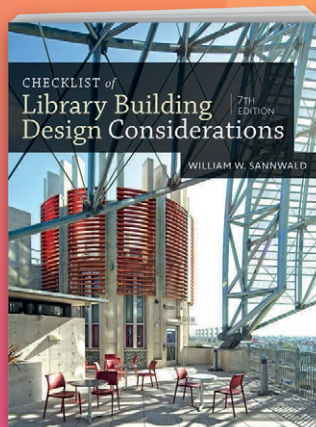
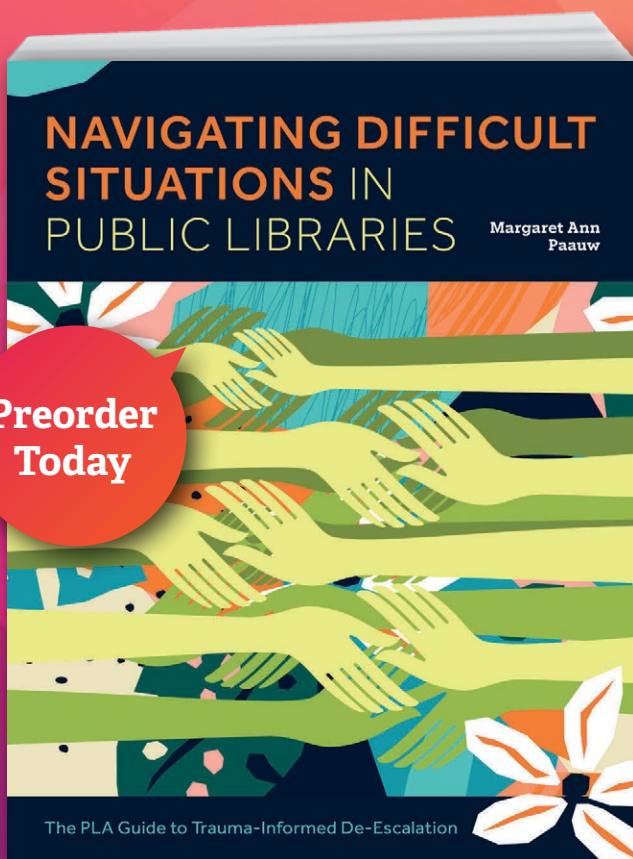
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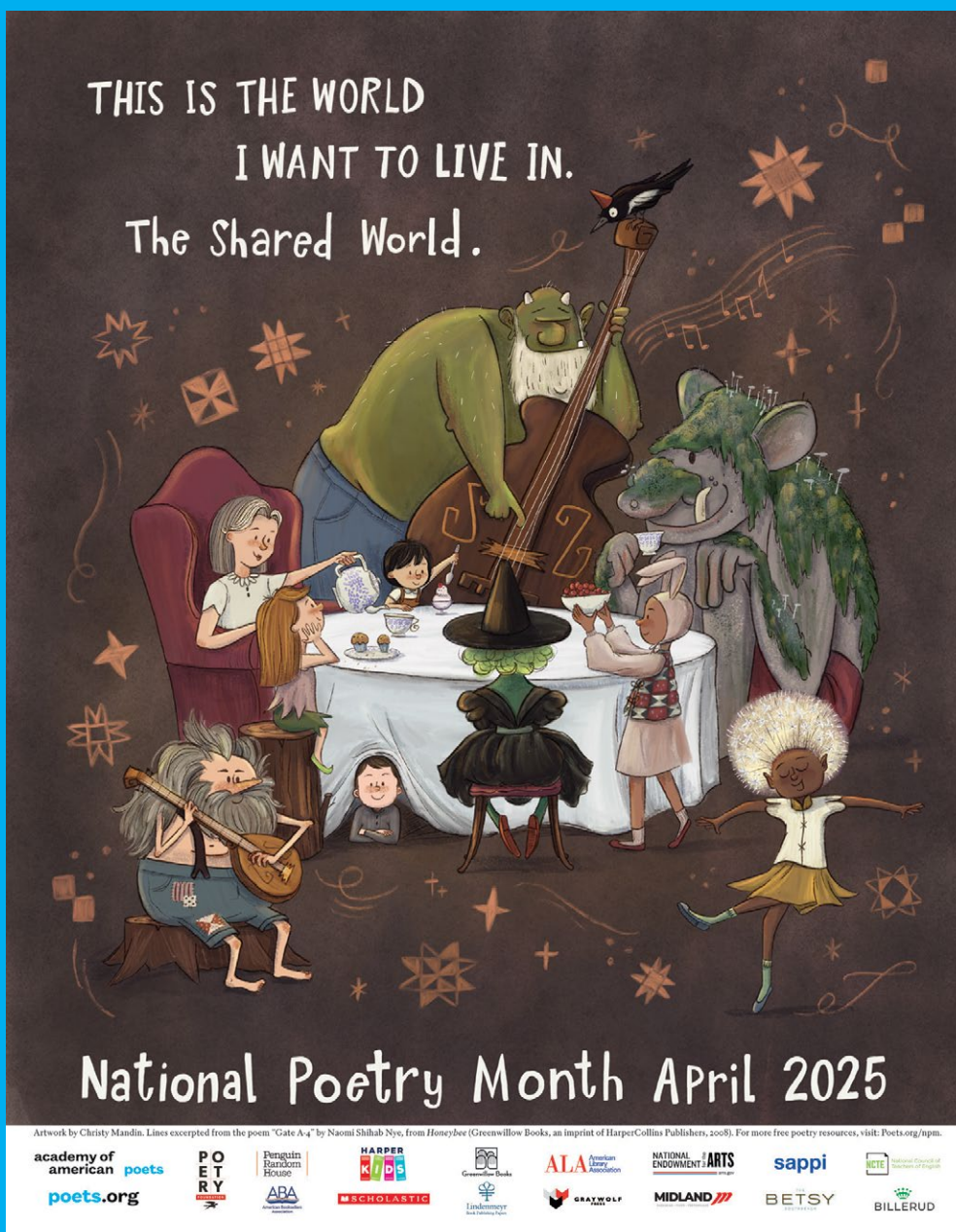
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