



american libraries

June 2025

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL PREVIEW p. 38

**Banning
Book Bans**

p. 28

**Misinformation
Escape Rooms**

p. 20

PLUS: Grace Lin,
Culinary Literacy,
PowerPoint Parties

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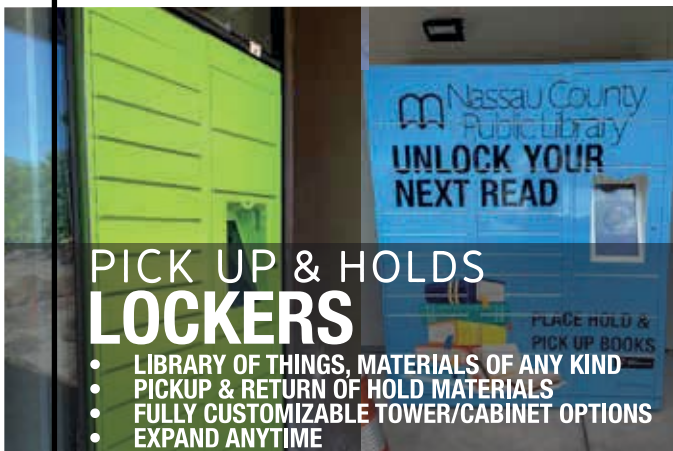
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Taking a Stand



Sanhita SinhaRoy

It's apt that ALA's 2025 Annual Conference will be held in Philadelphia, a city that has helped to shape our country's core values throughout its nearly 250-year history. As Alison Marcotte writes in our conference preview (cover story, p. 38), "As the Association—and the nation—approach monumental anniversaries, library workers will reaffirm and celebrate what it means to run institutions foundational to democracy, equity, and civic discourse."

Following that is our dining guide (p. 48), where you'll read how Philly has revolutionized its food scene—"all somehow without losing our street cred for comfort food," writes Reid Bramblett, author of *Frommer's Philadelphia Day by Day*.

If you're attending the conference, you may catch bestselling author and illustrator Grace Lin speak on June 30. She is our Newsmaker in this issue (p. 22) and talks with Julia Smith, *Booklist* senior editor of books for youth, about her new novel and the perils of book bans.

As censorship attempts continue to rise, many states are pushing back—and finding success. In "Banning the Book Bans" (p. 28), Jeremy Gantz looks at six states that have passed laws since 2023 to protect library workers and uphold the right to read. Our map on page 32 shows that more and more states are taking a stand.

On a lighter note, see how some libraries are hosting PowerPoint parties to engage with teens. In "Slide into the Library" (p. 18), Rosie Newmark reports on how this popular presentation tool is being used by kids to create "humorous, creative, and niche slideshows with friends on TikTok and other social media platforms."

Finally, in our Bookend ("Eat and Greet," p. 64), see what's cooking at Edible Alphabet, the flagship series of Free Library of Philadelphia's Culinary Literacy Center. The six-week course brings together new Americans to build community through food and learn about their city and library services. It's a welcoming space that embraces immigrants. These days, that seems to be a revolutionary act. See you in Philly.

Sanhita

Several states have passed laws to uphold the right to read, and more states are taking a stand—and finding success.

american libraries

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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Honoring Spirits

Recognizing wisdom, hope, and service



Cindy Hohl

Over the past year, I hope that I have brought encouragement to colleagues across this field as we work together for a bright future. I am grateful for this experience.

Wopida Tanka! (*Many thanks!*) As I reflect on my story wheel coming full circle, I am blessed to be surrounded by humble leaders who are the true helpers of society. In my final column as ALA president, I am taking this opportunity to recognize them, as it is always right to celebrate the human spirit by honoring good people.

These intellectual freedom warriors have been instrumental in helping me serve in this capacity. First, my heart goes out to my husband, Nathan, who gives his all to our family—and as a manager at Johnson County (Kans.) Library (JCL). I am grateful to Team JCL for all their support during this interesting and important time. What a whirlwind! I also acknowledge my sister, Cat, who takes such good care of our girls. We love you!

It has been the honor of a lifetime to serve during these times of change with the support of my presidential advisory committee. Each committee member has inspired me, and I thank them for their service to the field.

A shout-out to Carrie Cornelius, the fierce librarian at Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas. She runs an exemplary library model and truly cares about students. I also recognize George Gottschalk and his work with the Joint Council of Librarians of Color. He's another caring librarian who steps up to make things happen at Kansas State University in Manhattan. Elayne Silversmith, thank you for the late-night calls and for providing words of wisdom.

Anthony Chow, we did it! It was so heartwarming to see students of the Bridging Knowledge scholarship program graduate in May from San José (Calif.) State University's (SJSU) School of Information. I am forever grateful to the partners and mentors who supported them. May you all have rewarding careers in libraries. Speaking of SJSU, they have some amazing faculty, including Patty Wong. Thank you, Patty, for believing

in me and welcoming me to serve on your 2021–2022 ALA presidential advisory committee.

Representation is important. It has been challenging serving as an Indigenous president who has tried to lead calmly, using humility as a guide. Even though I did not serve on ALA Council, the late Roberto Delgadillo encouraged my leadership in this field, unapologetically. He would tell me, “We need your voice!” For that, I am grateful.

As we look at what belonging in ALA means, I encourage everyone to remember why the Spectrum Scholarship Program was created. Continuing with “the way things have always been done” will not take us where we need to go. In the early days of Spectrum, we often said, “The future is overdue.” This still rings true in 2025. We must focus on our core values if we are to truly elevate equity in this field. Breaking the mold requires support from leaders who see a vision for belonging, and I thank former ALA presidents Jim Neal and Betty Turock for their support.

It is always right to recognize our elders, and I thank former ALA Executive Director Elizabeth Martinez for her leadership. When I reflect on the giants who have supported me in my career, I am honored to say that Satia Marshall Orange and Binnie Tate Wilkin took me under their wings and inspired me to carry the torch forward. Their spirits will be with us whenever the Spectrum family gathers. We are forever grateful for their tenacity, grit, and perseverance. #WeAreSpectrum

Over the past year, I hope that I have brought encouragement to colleagues across this field as we work together for a bright future. I am not sure what's next, but I am grateful for this experience. Thank you to the staff and trustees of Kansas City (Mo.) Public Library for your support. **ALA**

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.



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The Next Chapter

Leading with courage amid change



Leslie Burger

As an
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we stand
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support of one
another and
the people
we serve
every day.

I don't know about you, but June always seems to mark the end of the year for me. It's a time when many of us come together at the American Library Association's (ALA) Annual Conference to celebrate accomplishments, reconnect with friends and colleagues, become energized by conference speakers, and learn or see something new. These yearly professional and social interactions leave us inspired and ready to tackle issues with new information and tactics.

If you haven't visited Philadelphia recently (or ever), you will be amazed by all it has to offer as a walkable conference city. Its huge convention center—at more than 2 million square feet—is adjacent to many of ALA's 35 conference hotels. And the historic Reading Terminal Market, just next door, is a bustling public market with a smorgasbord of delicious food. Of course, Philly is known for its cheesesteaks (try one, you'll like it!), as well as for its amazing dining scene, showcased on page 48.

In this issue, you can preview conference highlights and find a lineup of terrific speakers, including *New York Times* bestselling author Brené Brown, who studies and writes about courage, vulnerability, shame, and empathy. Brown spends most of her time working with organizations around the world, helping develop braver leaders and more courageous cultures, something we could all use a little bit of help with these days! Brown will be joined by other notable speakers who offer exemplary examples of leadership, including actor and civil rights activist George Takei, actor and women's rights advocate Geena Davis, and Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, a fierce advocate for voter and LGBTQ+ rights.

In June, we also celebrate Juneteenth and Pride Month, two events that align with ALA's mission and commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice, apparent targets in our current political environment. But I can assure you that ALA is not capitulating to those

whose efforts would turn back time. It's increasingly difficult to stand up for one's beliefs now, but as an association, we stand strong in support of one another and the people we serve every day. We remain committed to offering opportunities to explore and discuss challenging topics and protecting intellectual freedom and free expression.

The end of June will also mark the end of my time with ALA as we plan to welcome a new executive director to lead and guide the Association. ALA Forward, a future-facing initiative already underway, includes a new strategic plan, an organizational assessment, and the repositioning of the Association well beyond its 2026 sesquicentennial anniversary. To my successor, I wish nothing but the best.

My year and a half as ALA's interim executive director has been exciting, intellectually challenging, and marked by change. Working with ALA's extraordinarily talented staff has been a gift. They are always eager to help and to explore what we need to do differently—something I call the “start, stop, change” approach to thinking about the future. It marks a willingness to be open about how we do things and why, what we might be missing, and where the Association can have the most impact.

I'm proud of the work we've accomplished in combating censorship challenges, advocating for library funding, creating the postelection Show Up for Our Libraries campaign, and seeking legal action to protect the Institute of Museum and Library Services and its funding.

But mostly, I'm proud and humbled by all of you, the people who are working in libraries every day, who meet the needs of your customers with a smile, go out of your way to be of service, and continually demonstrate why libraries matter. It is you who inspire us all. **AL**

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

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.SOCIAL, in response to “The Wedding Dress Whisperer” (Mar./Apr., p. 48)

Legislation Misinformation

Recent mainstream media articles about the groundbreaking Illinois Public Act 103, also known as the anti-book banning law, have contained misleading information and elevated erroneous public perceptions, contributing to misinformation about libraries and censorship issues.




The law (bit.ly/IL103) helps libraries with book ban policies ensure local control and guards against censorship and malicious

actors seeking to ban books and erase BIPOC and LGBTQ+ identities. The extreme right has sought to turn the narrative on its head by framing the law as “giving up local control.” The conservative Freedom Caucus of the Illinois legislature reacted by using a tired dog whistle, calling ALA and such laws “woke.” At least some public school officials seem to have believed the propaganda and have turned down state grants rather than comply with the law.

The Illinois secretary of state put this law in place with the legislature’s support as a direct response to abusive, coordinated attacks on libraries. Public Act 103 codifies local control by requiring a library system or school to implement policies that prohibit book banning and clearly state procedures for challenging materials. It is important to refute misinformation spread by the book banners and their allies. Those who push this misinformation don’t really want

WRITE US: The editors welcome comments about recent content, online stories, and matters of professional interest. Submissions should be limited to 300 words and are subject to editing for clarity, style, and length. Send to *American Libraries*, From Our Readers, 225 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 1300, Chicago, IL 60601 or americanlibraries@ala.org.

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local control; they want the ability to ban books. We must correct biased news stories, inform local officials of the truth, and challenge leaders who support censorship. We must vocally support laws like Public Act 103 as welcome tools to help safeguard the freedom to read.

Tara Donnelly
Chicago


Stance on Statement

For several years, the American Library Association (ALA) has attached this statement to press releases: “For more than 140 years, the ALA has been the trusted voice for academic, public, school, government, and special libraries, advocating for the profession and the library’s role in enhancing learning and ensuring access to information for all.”

Based on research I’ve conducted in the past half-century, I can say with certainty that this statement is simply not true.

In World War I, many libraries pulled German books off their shelves; some even burned them. In the 1950s, the Librarian of Congress sought to purge his workforce of gay librarians. ALA said nothing about either. And my latest book, *In Silence or Indifference: Racism and Jim Crow Segregated Public School Libraries* (University Press of Mississippi, 2024), posits that before 1974, ALA ignored the racism experienced by Southern Black school librarians.

When I first saw the statement in 2021, I immediately wrote a letter to the editor

 **How wonderful to have two experienced former Executive Board members and outstanding human beings in these roles—the Association is in great hands!** 🎉❤️🎉

KAREN JOHNSON DOWNING, in response to ALA election results (The Scoop, Apr. 7)

(Nov./Dec. 2021, p. 6). Apparently, few people read my letter, because the statement now has a life of its own.

By continuing to use this statement, ALA insults the memory of librarians who in the past 140 years experienced racism, sexism, and homophobia, and to whom ALA offered no support, vocal or otherwise. It’s way past time for ALA to stop distorting its own history.

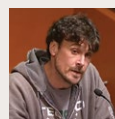
Wayne A. Wiegand
Walnut Creek, California

Editor’s note: In January, ALA changed the statement mentioned above to: “For almost 150 years, ALA has provided resources to inspire library and information professionals to transform their communities through essential programs and services. The ALA serves academic, public, school, government, and special libraries, advocating for the profession and the library’s role in enhancing learning and ensuring access to information for all.”

What You’re Reading

- 1 Sustaining for the Future** Leaders grapple with threats, from natural disasters to environmental racism. bit.ly/AL-Sustain
- 2 Censorship throughout the Centuries** A timeline of US book bans and the fight for intellectual freedom. bit.ly/AL-Centuries
- 3 No Questions Asked** Public libraries build no-return collections for addiction and mental health support. bit.ly/AL-NoQuestions

In Case You Missed It



Newsmaker: Chris Kluwe

Advocate, author, and former NFL athlete on protesting a MAGA plaque at his local library. bit.ly/AL-Kluwe



Newsmaker: Bob the Drag Queen

The comedian and reality TV personality discusses his new novel about Harriet Tubman. bit.ly/AL-Bob

Feds Curb Access to Border Library

US Department of Homeland Security issues new requirements for Canadians visiting the Haskell Free Library and Opera House. bit.ly/AL-Haskell

State of America’s Libraries 2025 Report

This year’s ALA report looks at censorship attempts, artificial intelligence, and sustainability in US libraries. bit.ly/SOAL-25

Coming Soon

Check The Scoop for our team coverage of ALA’s **2025 Annual Conference and Exhibition**, to be held June 26–30 in Philadelphia.

McCauley, Neal Win ALA Elections

Maria McCauley, director of libraries at Cambridge (Mass.) Public Library, has been elected 2026–2027 president of the American Library Association.

McCauley received 5,483 votes. Her opponent, Lindsay Cronk, dean of libraries at Tulane University in New Orleans, received 2,665 votes.

Upon learning the outcome of the election, McCauley said, “I am honored to be elected president of the Amer-



Maria McCauley

ican Library Association for 2026–2027 and grateful to everyone who voted. I look forward to working with library workers and advocates across every type of library in the United States and internationally.

“We can support, inspire, and learn from each other as we seek to improve the excellent library services that we provide for our

communities. We will also continue to advocate for and celebrate the power of libraries to transform lives.”

McCauley, who was an ALA Spectrum Scholar, is a current member of the Association of College and Research Libraries, Core, and the Public Library Association (PLA). She is also a member of the Rainbow Round Table, Sustainability Round Table, Intellectual Freedom Round Table, and International Relations Round Table. Additionally, she is a member of the Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association, the Chinese American Librarians Association, the Black Caucus of the ALA, Reforma: The National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish-Speaking, the American Indian Library Association, and the Freedom to Read Foundation, as well as the Massachusetts Library Association and New England Library Association.

McCauley has held several ALA leadership positions, including at-large councilor of ALA Council, ALA Executive Board member, and member of ALA’s Fiscal and Audit Committee.

She also served as 2022–2023 PLA president and as a PLA board member.

McCauley holds a PhD in managerial leadership in the information professions from Simmons University in Boston; an MLIS from University of Pittsburgh; a bachelor’s in theater from Ohio Wesleyan University in Delaware, Ohio; and a leadership certificate from Northeastern University in Boston.

Larry Neal, library director of Clinton-Macomb Public Library (CMPL) in Michigan, has been elected treasurer



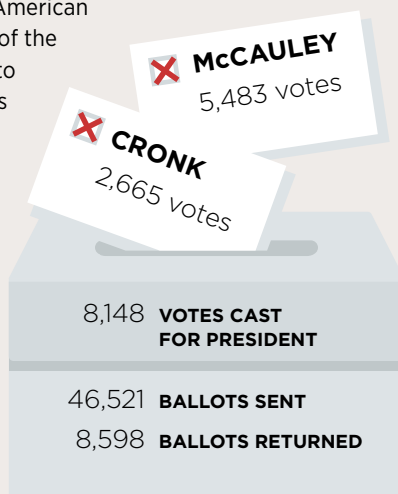
Larry Neal

of ALA for 2025–2028. Neal received 7,312 votes in an uncontested election. He will step into his role as treasurer at the close of ALA’s 2025 Annual Conference and Exhibition, to be held June 26–30 in Philadelphia. He provided the following statement upon learning the election outcome:

“It is an incredible honor to serve the profession in this capacity as we prepare to celebrate ALA’s sesquicentennial. I look forward to working with the ALA staff and member leaders to resolve the Association’s financial challenges and ensure it is well positioned to serve current and future generations of librarians and library workers.”

Neal is a member of PLA and served as 2014–2015 PLA president. He is currently on the PLA Budget and Finance Committee and is an ALA Policy Corps fellow. He is a member of the Rainbow Round Table and Intellectual Freedom Round Table. He served on the ALA Executive Board (2020–2023), ALA Council (2017–2023), ALA Budget and Review Committee, and ALA Finance and Audit Committee.

Neal holds an MSI-LIS from University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, an MBA from Oakland (Mich.) University, and a bachelor’s in Spanish and German from Honors College at Oakland University. ●



Judge Pauses IMLS Cuts

On May 1, the US District Court for the District of Columbia granted a temporary restraining order (TRO) to block a Trump administration executive order to dismantle the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The TRO was issued in response to a case filed April 7 by the American Library Association (ALA) and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

The complaint, filed by Democracy Forward and cocounsel Gair Gallo Eberhard LLP, argues that cutting programs at IMLS violates the law by eliminating programs Congress has provided funding for and directed IMLS to undertake. Read the full complaint at bit.ly/ALA-AFSCME-IMLS.

Several states received written notification on April 3 that their IMLS grants had been canceled. Nearly all IMLS employees were scheduled to be laid off on May 4. The TRO places the dismantling of IMLS on hold while the case is heard.

"The immediate halt to the gutting of IMLS is a win for America's libraries and the millions of Americans who rely on them," said ALA President Cindy Hohl in a May 1 statement. "Even with a temporary restraining order in place, Congress also must act to ensure our nation's libraries can continue to serve their communities, including by funding IMLS for next year," she added, encouraging ALA members to contact their representatives to advocate for federal library funding. ●

ALA Awards \$3.5 Million in Library Accessibility Funding

ALA announced the third round of recipients of its Libraries Transforming Communities (LTC): Accessible Small and Rural Communities grant on March 17.

The initiative—designed to help small and rural libraries better serve people with disabilities through upgraded facilities, services, and programs—funded 300 proposals in 44 states and the Northern Mariana Islands. Of the selected libraries, 73% serve communities with a population of 5,000 or less. See the full list of grantees at bit.ly/ALA-LTC-25. Fifty libraries will receive grants of \$20,000, and 250 libraries will receive grants of \$10,000.

Staff at selected libraries will conduct input-gathering sessions with key populations to discuss accessibility in the community and library and collaboratively

identify existing resources, needs or gaps, and priorities. The libraries will use the funds to create services or improve their facilities, services, or program offerings based on the needs identified by their audience.

Since 2014, ALA has distributed LTC funding to foster community engagement skills among library workers and support need-driven projects. Applications for the fourth and final round of grants will be accepted this fall.

September Is Library Card Sign-Up Month

The theme for this year's Library Card Sign-Up Month is "One Card, Endless Possibilities," representing the breadth of resources and experiences available through public libraries, ranging from collections that include museum passes and musical instruments to technology

CALENDAR

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

OCT. 8

Banned Websites Awareness Day

ala.org/aasl/bwad

OCT. 16–18

2025 AASL National Conference | St. Louis

bit.ly/AASL25

OCT. 19–25

National Friends of Libraries Week

bit.ly/ALA-NFLW

OCT. 20–26

International Open Access Week

openaccessweek.org

NOV.

International Games Month

bit.ly/ALA-igm

NOV. 12–14

Core Forum | Denver

coreforum.org

and career resources for patrons of all ages.

Themed posters and bookmarks are available at the ALA Store (ala.org/store), and additional items including T-shirts, totes, stickers, and buttons are available at the ALA Graphics Gift Shop (bit.ly/graphics-gift-shop). Free Library Card Sign-Up Month graphics, along with media tools such as a press release template and sample social media posts, are also available at bit.ly/ALA-LibSUM.

Banned Books Week Theme Announced

ALA and the Banned Books Week Coalition announced that “Censorship Is So 1984” will be the theme for Banned Books Week 2025. The decision to highlight George Orwell’s cautionary tale reflects the escalation in attempts to ban books in libraries, schools, and bookstores around the country and underscores the fundamental right to read.

“The 2025 theme of Banned Books Week serves as a reminder that censorship efforts persist to this day,” ALA President Cindy Hohl said in the April 16 announcement. “We must always come together to stand up for the right to read.”

This year’s Banned Books Week will take place October 5–11. Visit bannedbooksweek.org to learn more.

Recipients of Rural and Small Libraries Grants Announced

On April 8, Penguin Random House and United for Libraries (UFL) announced the 51 recipients of a new grant program serving rural and small libraries across the US.

The cash grants total \$25,000. They will be given to 31 libraries in increments of \$500 and \$1,000 each. Grants will assist Friends groups with priority

State of America’s Libraries 2025 Report Released

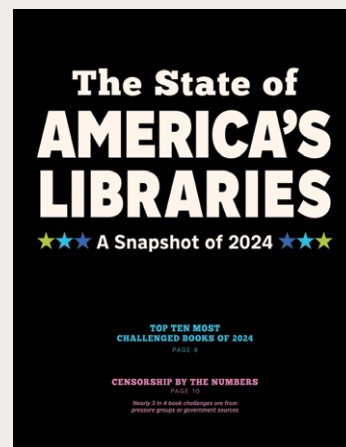
In 2024, ALA recorded the third-highest number of book challenges since it began tracking censorship attempts in 1990, according to the *State of America’s Libraries 2025* report. The report, an annual summary of library trends, indicates that while censorship attempts are down from 1,247 in 2023 to 821 in 2024, patterns continue to emerge.

ALA reports that the majority of book censorship attempts now originate from organized movements, including pressure groups and government entities, rather than parents or individual users. The 120 titles most frequently targeted during 2024 are all identified on partisan book rating sites, which provide tools for activists to demand the censorship of library books.

In response to the uptick in book challenges and other efforts to suppress access to information, ALA designated the Monday of National Library Week as Right to Read Day (held this year on April 7). The day of action encourages communities to fight back against censorship and to protect and celebrate the right to read freely.

The most common justifications for censorship by complainants were false claims of illegal obscenity for minors; inclusion of LGBTQIA+ characters or themes; and inclusion of topics of race, racism, equity, and social justice. Many of these themes are reflected in 2024’s Top 10 Most Challenged Books list, also released as part of the report (bit.ly/ALA-Top10).

Read the full report at bit.ly/SOALRep-25.



projects, such as summer reading programs for youth, outreach to seniors, bookmobile improvements, and technology upgrades. In addition to the cash grants, Penguin Random House has provided 20 libraries with in-kind book donations worth \$500.

Grant recipients receive complimentary e-learning resources from UFL, including a year of access to UFL’s Learning Live monthly webinars (in-depth training sessions for library trustees and board members, Friends, foundations, and advocates) and training on how to leverage the grant funds

to build support for the library and the Friends group.

View the full list of grantees at bit.ly/UFL-PRH-grants-25.

AASL Distinguished Service Award Nominations Open

Nominations for the American Association of School Librarians’ (AASL) Distinguished Service Award are open through May 31. The award recognizes an individual within the profession who has demonstrated exceptional national contributions to advancing school librarianship and school library

development. The recipient will receive \$1,000, complimentary registration to the AASL National Conference (to be held October 16–18 in St. Louis, where the recipient will be recognized), and a three-night stay at a nearby hotel.

The nominator and nominee must be AASL members; self-nominations are allowed. The nominee should exemplify outstanding achievements in visionary leadership and service within AASL and related organizations, scholarly contributions advancing school libraries, advocacy for exemplary library development, and the creation or sustenance of impactful school library practices.

Apply at bit.ly/AASL-Service.

Registration Opens for United for Libraries Virtual


Registration is now open for the 2025 United for Libraries Virtual, the division's sixth-annual virtual learning experience. The conference will feature speakers and topics relevant to library trustees and board members, Friends, foundations, advocates, and those who work with them. The event will be held July 29–31.

Programming will run daily from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Eastern time. Registrants may participate in live program sessions or watch recordings on demand.

Early-bird registration is available through July 11. Those who live or work for libraries in Massachusetts, Michigan, and Virginia receive free full conference registration.

Visit bit.ly/UFLvirtual25 for details.

C&RL News Seeks Cover Art

College and Research Libraries News (C&RL News), a monthly magazine published by the Association of College and Research Libraries, is looking for images from library collections to feature on its upcoming covers. To submit images (or image collections), send attachments or URLs and a brief description to Editor in Chief David Free at dfree@ala.org. Complete guidelines for the submission of cover illustrations are available at bit.ly/CRLNews-Submissions. 

IT'S A

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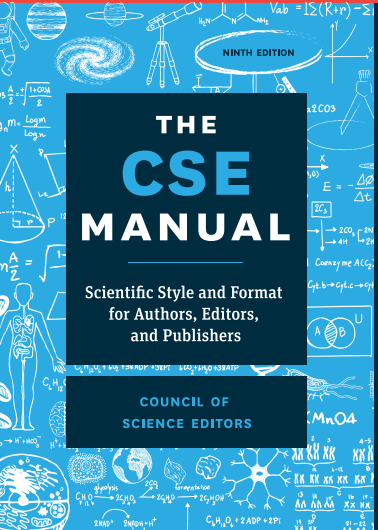
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TRENDS



Author Leanne Su holds up her sci-fi novel, *Peri Peri Paprika*, which was published in 2024 by Fifth Avenue Press, the imprint of Ann Arbor (Mich.) District Library.

“The goodwill toward the library for this, for helping people’s dreams come true, has turned out to be a lovely side benefit,” Helmrich adds.

A writers’ community

Fifth Avenue Press publishes the books it selects digitally as PDFs for AADL patrons. It also provides its authors with the files containing everything they need—from formatting to illustrations to cover art—to independently create a print book or ebook if they choose. Unlike traditional publishing, authors retain all rights to their work and keep any profits, a perk that intrigued recent Fifth Avenue author Michelle Yang.

In May, the press welcomed Yang, an Ann Arbor resident and established writer whose work has appeared in national outlets including *InStyle* magazine and NBC News. She published her memoir, *Phoenix Girl: How a Fat Asian with Bipolar Found Love*, with Fifth Avenue Press because of her lifelong love of libraries.

Yang says she immigrated to the US at age 9, not knowing any English. She found the library, which was in the same shopping center as her parents’ business, and soon befriended the librarians there. “The library became my sanctuary—a third parent,” she says.

Through working with the imprint, Yang says she also found an unexpected local writers’ community—something that “couldn’t have happened [with]

Going to Press

Public library publishers spotlight local authors and stories

BY Web
Behrens

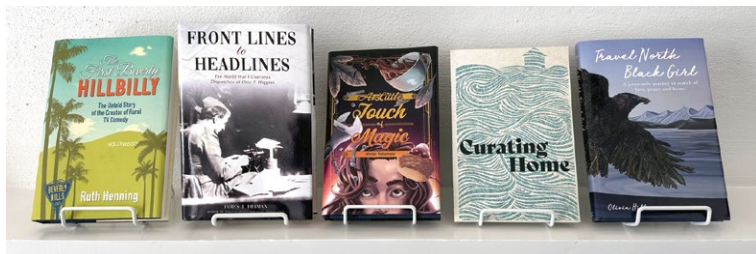
Libraries typically provide books—not publish them. But eight years ago, Ann Arbor (Mich.) District Library (AADL) had some voices it wanted the world to hear.

“We’ve always had a hardcore group of local writers,” says Erin Helmrich, librarian at AADL. The library first launched a program to provide support, learning, and advice for local emerging writers. That program, she says, “started the idea percolating of how else we could support the local writing community.”

And so emerged Fifth Avenue Press, AADL’s publishing imprint,

in 2017. Focused on the authors, history, and culture of Michigan’s Washtenaw County, the imprint—coordinated by Helmrich—includes 60 titles spanning literary genres. They range from *Light from a Cage* (2017), a chronicle of local educator Judy Patterson Wenzel’s experiences teaching in a prison classroom, to *Peri Peri Paprika* (2024), a sci-fi novel written by Leanne Su, a University of Michigan doctoral student.

In the last decade, several other libraries have started their own publishing operations. Their efforts are designed to expand the audience for local authors and stories that might otherwise go unnoticed.



other presses, whose authors are located all over.”

Across branches and bookstores

Like Fifth Avenue, Woodneath Press at Mid-Continent Public Library (MCPL) in Kansas City, Missouri, publishes local authors and grew out of the library writers’ program, the Story Center.

Established in 2014, Woodneath uses the self-publishing platform IngramSpark to produce physical books and ebooks. The imprint so far has 16 titles in its catalog. Its latest release—*Heart of America: Kansas City-Inspired Short Stories*—is a multigenre fiction anthology featuring eight writers, half of whom attended the Story Center. The stories take place throughout

A display of Woodneath Press titles at Woodneath Library Center, a branch of Mid-Continent Public Library, in Kansas City, Missouri.

Kansas City, from the 1950s to the present day. “Each one reveals something about Kansas City’s community,” says Kyndall Tiller, Story Center publication manager.

Tiller says building readership is a current Woodneath focus, with copies of *Heart of America* circulating across MCPL’s 30-plus branches and available in seven area bookstores. “In the past, if people wanted to purchase copies, they had to go through Amazon,” Tiller says. “We’re selling to local bookstores at production cost,” to make *Heart of America* available closer to home.

LA’s plot twist

A different path brought Los Angeles Public Library (LAPL) into publishing. In 2023, the owners of Angel City Press (ACP), a small publisher of nonfiction print books by regional authors writing about the area’s history, art, culture, and people, retired and donated the press and its 135-title catalog to LAPL.

John Szabo, city librarian and LAPL executive

“The goodwill toward the library for this, for helping people’s dreams come true, has turned out to be a lovely side benefit.”

ERIN HELMRICH, librarian and Fifth Avenue Press coordinator, Ann Arbor (Mich.) District Library

BY THE NUMBERS

Summer Reading

15–30

Range in minutes that experts recommend kids spend reading daily over the summer to prevent learning loss.

15.8 million

Number of minutes of reading time logged by 16,248 participants in Hawaii State Public Library System’s 2024 Summer Reading Challenge. The grand prize winner, selected at random from all participants, received four round-trip tickets to any destination on Alaska Airlines.

10

Number of hours that teen volunteers read with “little buddies” over the course of four weeks in Skokie (Ill.) Public Library’s Booking with a Buddy summer reading program. Participants in grades 1–3 read and do group activities with their “big buddies.”

800

Number of meals Montgomery County (Md.) Public Libraries (MCPL) provided to a local food distribution center as part of its 2023 summer reading program. As kids met reading goals,

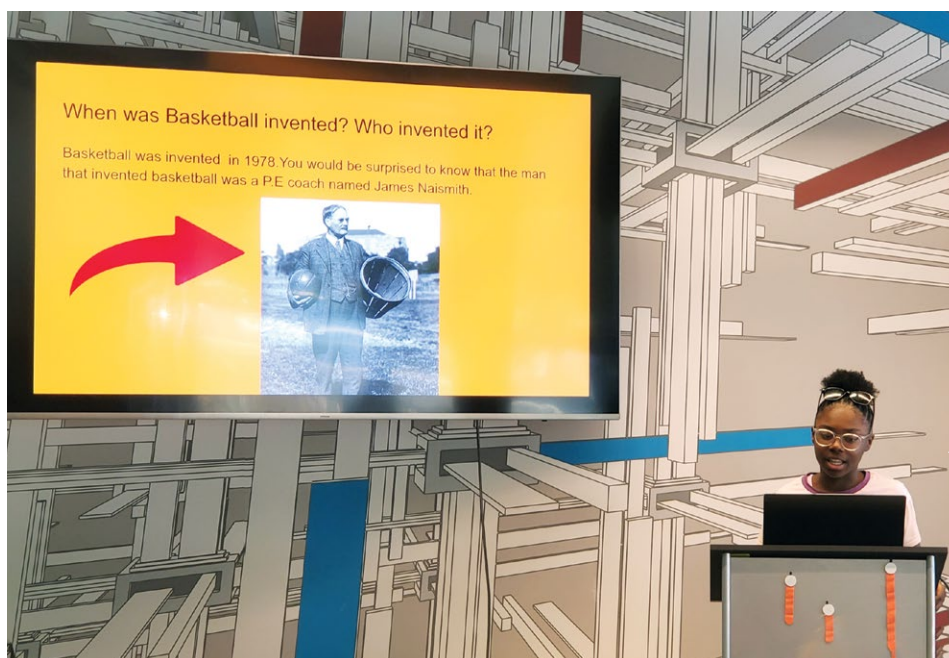
MCPL’s Friends group donated to local nonprofits. (See “A Greener Way to Read,” *AL*, June 2024, p. 18.)

40,000

Number of tote bags Los Angeles Public Library ordered to distribute to those who registered for its 2024 summer reading challenge. Local artist Noor Sofi designed the bag. ●



Continued on page 19 ►



A young presenter shares slides about the history of basketball at Vestavia Hills (Ala.) Library's summer 2024 PowerPoint Party. Above: A promotional image for the PowerPoint Party at Denver Public Library's Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library.

Slide into the Library

Turning PowerPoint into a community builder

BY Rosie Newmark

At Hewitt (Tex.) Public Library (HPL), teens enthusiastically shared slideshows on the history of roads and the comparative merits of doors and wheels. None of this was schoolwork.

PowerPoint is finding new life among young people as a tool to share humorous, creative, and niche slideshows with friends on TikTok and other social media platforms. Now libraries across the country are hosting their own PowerPoint parties, using the events to engage a younger crowd.

Eighth-graders at Vestavia Hills (Ala.) Library's (VHL) summer 2024 PowerPoint Party presented deep dives on folk-punk music (complete with embedded YouTube videos), a breakdown of the *Warrior Cats* books, and the history of basketball. One participant

focused on a very narrow audience: She presented a case for why her parents should buy her a Nintendo Switch gaming console.

At the start of the event, Lexie Rueve, VHL's teen services clerk, and a colleague set the tone by creating and delivering example presentations before letting group members craft their own on laptops from the library's makerspace.

"The teens were a little shy, as public speaking is always intimidating, but the smaller space and group helped them feel more comfortable," says Rueve, who threw the party. This is especially true, she adds, when giving teens space to speak about something they are passionate about.

Nerding out

At Denver Public Library's Blair-Caldwell African American

Research Library (BCAARL), PowerPoint Party attendees delivered presentations based on a *blerd*—or Black nerd—theme. The presenters, mostly ages 20–35, looked at anime characters that could pass in Black culture and which Black TV characters could survive in a horror movie.

One participant presented her theory on why many Black comic book characters have lightning-based superpowers, laying out how the powers are an homage to Black Lightning—the first African American DC superhero to have a standalone series—while also exploring other explanations, such as lightning's contrast with dark skin and the trope that Black people are closer to nature.

"[The presenter] had panels and panels of different comic book characters all using lightning, but then also panels of characters describing how their lightning feels warm instead of horrific," says Emanni Butler, library program associate at BCAARL. "It was an interesting perspective that I would have never considered."

Butler hosted the PowerPoint Party in January 2024 after hearing patrons express interest. Having attended a similar event a few months prior, Butler saw its potential to attract older members of Gen Z, a group that tends to be the least active in BCAARL's library programming. Only a few resources were needed for the event: a community room equipped with a TV and laptop and refreshments.

Butler plans to revamp the program with a focus on teens, seeing it as a chance for them to build public speaking and technology skills. They hope to use the events to promote the library as a fun, social space, especially for young people, where they can relax, unwind, and connect with others.

Bringing teens closer

Since January 2025, HPL has hosted monthly PowerPoint nights, encouraging young people ages 12–18 to create a 5- to 10-minute presentation on anything from favorite fun facts to fandoms to memes. Most of the attendees so far have been from the library's teen advisory board, says Youth Services Specialist Madelyn Treat.

"I really like to emphasize community building and relationship building, and I have noticed that this is a great opportunity for the kids to get more comfortable with each other," Treat says. "They're creating memories together and talking to each other, and I think that is super important for this age."

The attendees were apprehensive at the start, Treat notes, but relaxed after the first presenter playfully recounted their 14th birthday. Soon, participants started playing TikTok sounds on their phones as reactions to facts or memes.

"It created a really good atmosphere where they could be goofy together just for that hour."

MADelyn TREAT, youth services specialist at Hewitt (Tex.) Public Library

"It created a really good atmosphere where they could be goofy together just for that hour," Treat says. "I think that atmosphere has carried over into other events that they'll do. When they come to the advisory board meeting, I've noticed they are a lot more comfortable with each other."

Treat says the program's main challenges have been promotion and turnout, with only four to six attendees at each event. To address both issues, she's visited schools and community spaces, engaging people directly by asking if there's a particular anime or book series they'd be excited to discuss.

When promoting these events, VHL's Rueve also suggests including graphics from videogames and movies, or of actors. "The trick of creating and marketing a program like this is to make sure it doesn't seem like schoolwork; teens do enough of that," Rueve says.

Despite the challenges, Treat says the program is budget-friendly and that teens can grow by facing their fears of public speaking.

"The kids are really enthusiastic about it, especially if you emphasize [that] this is a night for you," says Treat. "You get to talk about whatever you want. You can be as serious or unserious as you want." **AL**

ROSIE NEWMARK is a freelance writer for *American Libraries*.

◀ Continued from page 17

director, says, "If you were involved in the arts, architecture, and all things quirky and special about Los Angeles, you knew and loved Angel City Press."

Over the years, ACP and LAPL had collaborated on several titles, beginning with *Songs in the Key of Los Angeles* (2013), a look at music in LA history using the library's sheet music collection.

Szabo says that when ACP's owners presented their unusual donation, they said: "We're thinking about retiring, and we've been thinking about the mission of the press. We trust you, and we had this idea that we would give our business to the library."

Now called Angel City Press at Los Angeles Public Library, ACP has an office at LAPL's main location, and the five-member library board reviews contracts with new writers before approval. Otherwise, Szabo says, ACP operates similarly to the way it did under its original owners. Longtime ACP staffer Terri Accomazzo remains as executive director, overseeing editorial guidelines, acquisition, production, and distribution.

For public libraries that publish, Fifth Avenue's Helmrich says, "Like many things libraries do, it's about creating community and providing a service."

Szabo agrees. "Among many things, the library is here to collect and preserve Los Angeles stories, to ensure that those stories represent the diversity of our amazing city," he says. "The press very much helps the library achieve its mission in a beautiful way." **AL**

WEB BEHRENS is arts editor at *Chicago* magazine. He also contributes to *Block Club Chicago*, *Crain's Chicago Business*, and *Louis Vuitton City Guides*.



Des Moines (Iowa) University students play *The Euphorigen Investigation*, an escape room designed to help people better understand misinformation, as part of MisinfoDay in October 2024.

Stopping the Spread

Escape rooms offer an immersive approach to misinformation

Misinformation: It seems to be everywhere, is getting increasingly sophisticated, and can have dangerous consequences. So how do librarians adapt their instruction to keep patrons from falling for false claims?

In 2022, researchers at University of Washington's (UW) Information School and Center for an Informed Public in Seattle released the first in a set of escape rooms and narrative-based games that teach media and information literacy to teens and adults. Since then, more than 100 academic, public, and school libraries have used UW's games to offer fun, hands-on experiences to help educate their communities.

BY Chris Coward and Jin Ha Lee

The government wants to introduce Euphorigen—a dietary supplement that the wealthiest echelon of society takes to boost brain activity and productivity—into the public water supply. But is the drug safe? And can the claims of Euphorigen's manufacturer be trusted?

That's the mystery at the center of *The Euphorigen Investigation*, the first of several escape rooms and play-based activities our research team at University of Washington (UW)'s Information School and Center for an Informed Public in Seattle has developed to address the growing threat of misinformation.

Euphorigen is an hourlong escape room that brings teams of four to six players together to solve puzzles involving social media bots, manipulated evidence, and deep-fakes. The game's interactive and immersive nature allows players to reflect on the challenges of identifying misinformation, their own information literacy blind spots, and the consequences of inadvertently spreading untruths.

Our escape rooms, which can be played online or in person, have the potential to change people's behaviors in ways that traditional media and information literacy instruction cannot. Whereas traditional

methods focus on expanding skills and knowledge, games allow people to learn by trial and error, see multiple perspectives, and make better connections to their own lives.

The project was inspired by the experiences of US librarians. In a 2020 study on the effectiveness of education programs aimed at stemming misinformation (bit.ly/JLIS-misinfo), public librarians mentioned the need to address the psychological aspects of misinformation (such as biases and emotions), respect and appeal to people with different worldviews, and—perhaps most importantly—foster conversation, peer learning, and collective sensemaking.

Our approach considers the reasons people believe and spread misinformation. It's not that people lack the skills to tell truth from fiction; research shows that other factors are at work. For instance, people may think they're immune to misinformation, or they may accept what matches their preexisting beliefs and reject what contradicts them, known as *confirmation bias*. Social circles are also influential, as people often align their beliefs to the groups with which they identify. *Euphorigen* addresses these drivers. Librarians who have offered the game to patrons say its social nature creates a safe space for personal stories and building trust.

Des Moines (Iowa) University (DMU) Medicine and Health Sciences Library used the *Euphorigen* game as part of its MisinfoDay last October. Thirty-five students played it in person and online. For the in-person component, small groups

were assigned to separate rooms with a timer projected on a screen. Jill Edgerton, assistant director and associate professor of the Center for Educational Enhancement–Library Services at DMU, says that putting students from different degree programs together allowed them to hear new ideas. And while gameplay started out as competitive, the cooperative aspects of the game took over.

Libraries looking to host an escape room can download materials for free at lokisloop.org. Each game comes with instructions for the facilitator, discussion questions, and real-world examples that mirror the games' fictional ones.

After a group finishes an escape room, the facilitator is encouraged to debrief with players and offer strategies for navigating today's fractured

information ecosystem. Some libraries add learning activities, such as having teens create their own misleading memes.

These games can also be customized. After developing *Euphorigen* for a general audience, our team co-designed new versions with oncologists and cancer patients, scholars of color, fans of the K-pop group BTS, and groups in several countries that wanted to tailor play for better cultural relevance. For example, in the Czech Republic, co-designers changed plot points so that the *Euphorigen* supplement was being added to beer rather than the water supply. We have also released the Misinformation Play Pack, a suite of activities for kids ages 8–15.

To combat misinformation, we must do more than just teach how to discern truth from fiction. We must

Games can create a safe space for personal stories and building trust.

address the sophisticated and varied ways misinformation enters our lives and the reasons people believe and spread it. We hope our games offer libraries a resource that can make a difference in their communities. **AL**

CHRIS COWARD is senior principal research scientist at University of Washington (UW) in Seattle, where he is cofounder of the Center for an Informed Public and affiliate associate professor at the Information School.

JIN HA LEE is professor and associate dean for faculty affairs at UW's Information School. She is founder and director of the UW Game Research Group.

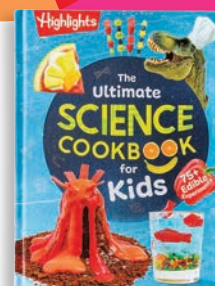
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Grace Lin

Bestselling author-illustrator on the magic of mythology and lore



In early May, bestselling author-illustrator Grace Lin published her first novel in nearly nine years. Based on Chinese folklore, *The Gate, the Girl, and the Dragon* (Little, Brown Books for Young Readers) tells the story of an irrepressible stone lion cub and a girl who must open a portal for the spirits.

Throughout her more than 25-year career, Lin has garnered many accolades, including a 2010 Newbery Honor, 2019 Caldecott Honor, and 2022 Children's Literature Legacy Award. In advance of her appearance at the American Library Association's upcoming 2025 Annual Conference and Exhibition in Philadelphia, she talked with *American Libraries* about being inspired by myths, the insidiousness of book bans, and finding comfort in the library as a child.

BY Julia Smith

The new book is set in the present, which is a departure from the folklore and historical fiction you typically write.

I am very inspired by myths and legends, so my way to incorporate this element into the story was to use real urban

legends, like the lore around the golden pillar holding up the Shanghai expressway [believed to be the resting place of the city's guardian dragon]. In a way, this shows kids that magic and legends and myths aren't from a million years ago—we're making them right now. That's how I approached this novel, thinking about how we are making our own mythology and how we're interplaying it with what has come before it.

What role have libraries played in your life? I love libraries! When I was a child, my parents didn't understand extracurricular activities, like soccer or anything like that, but they did understand the library. After dinner, we used to

go to the *big* public library [in New Hartford, New York] and just spend the evening there. The children's section was in the basement, and there were rows and rows and rows of books. I remember just walking through, trailing my hands over the spines, and feeling like all the characters in those

books were my good friends. My parents were immigrants. They weren't sure how to blend in, and we were the only Asian family in town at that time. But I felt that the books were always welcoming.

The act of storytelling is such an important part of your novels, yet the current surge in book bans seeks to silence so many voices. What are your thoughts on these bans? I have some wonderful friends who create beautiful books, but the way they're getting targeted is so scary and aggressively horrible that I feel like all the attention and protection should go toward authors and books like that. However, I don't want to say that it's been easy for authors like me either. It's the soft banning that's so insidious.

Is soft banning, in essence, quietly opting out? Yes. For my books, it's not so much that they're being banned—though *Dim Sum for Everyone!* was among those under review in Florida [in 2022 under House Bill 1467], which chills classroom discussions on race and racism. It shows how off-the-deep-end the banning has gotten. The

MORE ONLINE

For the extended interview, visit bit.ly/AL-Lin after June 2.

teachers and librarians I've spoken to are scared, and their jobs are already not easy. It's a lot

easier for them to just not choose my book, to not have me in as an author. It's easier for my books not to be shared. And I understand that, but that is also really, really heartbreaking. If they're scared to share books as noncontroversial as *Dim Sum for Everyone!*, where are we? And what does that say to the kids? We're in a hard place. **AL**





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“This is so exciting. You know, the national parks have something like this.”

LINDA GOECKE (pictured, with her husband, Glenn), patron who visited all 41 locations of Hennepin (Minn.) County Library, in “Minnetonka Couple Have Hennepin Libraries’ First Passport. You Can Get One, Too,” *The Minnesota Star Tribune*, April 7.

“I grew up across the street from a public library, and it was the only place my mom would let me go on my own. It was my second home, and I read everything that I could get. I especially loved poetry. People like Nikki Giovanni and Gwendolyn Brooks and Rudyard Kipling. I think I quoted Nikki Giovanni for my high school yearbook. My other quote is a little embarrassing: Father Guido Sarducci, because I loved *Saturday Night Live*.”

Grammy Award-winning musician **TRACY CHAPMAN**, in “Tracy Chapman Wants to Speak for Herself,” *The New York Times*, April 4.

“LIBRARIANS SHOULD NOT HAVE TO SAVE US, BUT QUITE OFTEN THEY DO.”

Comic book artist **RYAN ESTRADA**, @ryanestrada.com on Bluesky, April 7.

“Everything is at risk. My dad’s from Bosnia, and that’s informed my outlook on what can be irretrievably lost.”

Data specialist and digital historian **SEBASTIAN MAJSTOROVIC**, in “The Data Hoarders Resisting Trump’s Purge,” *The New Yorker*, March 14.

“*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* was removed, along with 380 other books, from the US Naval Academy’s Nimitz Library [in Annapolis, Maryland]. Why? Because impressionable midshipmen might follow in the footsteps of millions of other Americans, young and old, white and Black, and be ... what? Educated in aspects of American history and society they hadn’t personally experienced?”

WILLIAM KRISTOL, political editor and chief of staff to former Vice President Dan Quayle, “In a World of Pete Hegseths, Be a Maya Angelou,” *The Bulwark: Morning Shots*, April 8.



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Why “Stream Smarter” Is More Than a Tagline—It’s a Mission



By **Jason Tyrrell**,
EVP, Content

As the digital landscape evolves, so too must the role of libraries. At Kanopy, our north star has always been the library and its patrons. That’s why we’re evolving our tagline from “Films That Matter” to something more reflective of our broader vision: “Stream Smarter.” This isn’t just a marketing refresh—it’s a commitment to deepen our partnership with libraries and redefine how digital content can serve as a pillar of modern library engagement.

Our libraries—like many other once seemingly foundational institutions—are finding themselves at a crossroads. With funding under siege, libraries face an existential crisis. However, when that issue is resolved—and we believe it will be—libraries will still need to evolve. Patrons’ needs are changing. Library relationships with patrons are shifting from analog to digital. Libraries have a mandated role in their communities.

Through all these changes, one thing remains clear: the demand for intelligent, curated, and accessible content has never been greater. With supercomputers in our pockets, the library is no longer just the place you go to find information—it’s where you go to discover something meaningful.

That discovery is the niche Kanopy is uniquely positioned to fill.

Kanopy Stream Smarter stands for our commitment to delivering content that aligns with the values and aspirations of libraries and their patrons’ needs and interests—exclusive, high-quality films, TV series, documentaries, and now, Kanopy Originals. These are stories that aren’t just entertaining—they’re enriching. They are documentaries that challenge the status quo, series that amplify diverse voices, and book adaptations that bring literary gems to life.

Kanopy Originals represent our next big step—producing original content that resonates deeply with library audiences. Take *Banned Together*, our new documentary addressing America’s rising book bans, or *America’s Next Great Author*, a fresh, hopeful take on storytelling hosted by Kwame Alex-

ander. These projects don’t just stream—they spark conversation, inspire learning, and connect communities.

We’re also mining insights from Libby and Kanopy user data to identify book adaptation opportunities that mainstream media might overlook. Our goal is not to compete with major studios but to highlight smaller, personal stories that deserve to be told—and to share them with care, creativity, and context.

And we’re doing this with libraries at the forefront. Kanopy and our parent, OverDrive, understand that not every library has the same budget, resources, and bandwidth. That’s why we strive to keep Kanopy’s model deliberately flexible. Whether a rural public library, a major academic institution, or something in between, Kanopy wants to ensure that every patron has access to the kind of content that only libraries can uniquely deliver—content that is inclusive, intentional, and meaningful.

Let’s not forget: more than two-thirds of Americans have library cards—an audience of over 200 million, reaching levels comparable to the top commercial streaming services. However, what distinguishes libraries is not just their reach—it’s their purpose, mission, and focus on the community. It’s the personal connection between a librarian and a patron, the community event that transforms a life, and the quiet discovery of a film that shifts a worldview.

“Stream Smarter” is about honoring that purpose, and it’s not just about digital delivery; it’s about helping to build a future for libraries that is as rich, thoughtful, and dynamic as the people they serve.

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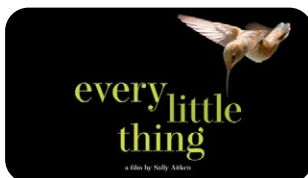
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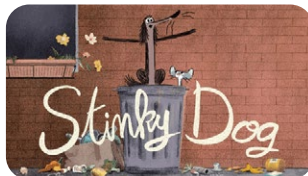
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BANNING THE BOOK BANS



Martha Hickson, a recently retired media specialist who fought censorship at North Hunterdon High School in Annandale, New Jersey, shakes hands with New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy (seated) after he signed into law last winter a measure to limit book bans and protect librarians from liability in the state.

Photo: Dana DiFilippo/New Jersey Monitor

State governments fight a rising tide of censorship

BY Jeremy Gantz

Last December, librarian Martha Hickson stood next to New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy as he signed into law the state's Freedom to Read Act. The legislation prevents schools and libraries from removing books based on viewpoint discrimination, requires clear policies for challenging library materials, and protects librarians from lawsuits and criminal charges that might be filed by people offended by library materials (bit.ly/Banning-1). "I was thrilled," Hickson says. "I felt like my work, my voice, had been heard."

That relief has been a long time coming for Hickson, who retired late last year from her job as media specialist at North Hunterdon High School in Annandale, New Jersey. Just three years earlier, she had been called a

pedophile and a pornographer at a public school-board meeting by a group of parents demanding to have a handful of books with LGBTQ+ themes removed from school library shelves. Hate mail and threats ensued.

With the new law in place, "I feel I'm leaving a legacy behind," Hickson says. "Librarians that I've spoken to are relieved to see action at the state level."

During the current extraordinary surge of book-banning efforts, committed advocacy by library workers and their allies is stemming the tide of censorship attempts in both school and public libraries, with more and more states enacting anti-book-ban laws.

Since 2023, nine states have passed such legislation: California, Colorado, Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, Vermont, and Washington. (While Connecticut passed library protections in a larger bill addressing youth wellness in 2023, the measure did not include mention of intellectual freedom, the right to read, diverse collections, or protecting library workers.)

This year, at least 19 more states—including Michigan, New Hampshire, and New Mexico, as well as more conservative states like Arkansas, South Carolina, and Tennessee—have already seen new anti-book-ban bills introduced.

Many of these laws—some of which are titled “the Freedom to Read Act”—include common features. They tie state-level funding to library agreements not to remove books for ideological, political, or discriminatory reasons; they require libraries to adopt formal policies governing collection development and challenge processes; they provide librarians with strengthened legal protections; or all three.

To Deborah Caldwell-Stone, director of the American Library Association’s (ALA) Office for Intellectual Freedom and executive director of the Freedom to Read Foundation, these growing efforts to counteract censorship mean something wonderful: “We have the power to push back.”

That said, library advocates aren’t relaxing just yet. In January, just days after President Trump returned to the White House, the US Department of Education declared book bans a “hoax.” In a press release, it dismissed all complaints and pending allegations related to school library book bans, adding that the department’s Office for Civil Rights “will no longer employ a ‘book ban coordinator’ to investigate local school districts and parents working to protect students from obscene content” (bit.ly/Banning-2).

The moves punctuate a national surge in book banning efforts that ALA and PEN America have called “unprecedented” (bit.ly/Banning-3). PEN America, a nonprofit that raises awareness for the protection of free expression, has counted more than 10,000 public school book bans in the 2023–2024 school year alone. About 8,000 of those bans were in just two states—Florida and Iowa. In 2023, both states enacted legislation creating processes for school districts to remove books with sexual content.

In other words, “we’re going to be grappling with a high number of challenges for a while,” says Caldwell-Stone. All the more heartening for anti-censorship advocates, then, that so many state-level fights are proving successful. Here’s a look at six of the states that have passed laws to help prevent book bans.

CALIFORNIA

DATES OF PASSAGE: September 25, 2023 (A.B. 1078) and September 29, 2024 (A.B. 1825)

VOTE COUNTS: A.B. 1078: Senate 31–9, Assembly 61–17; A.B. 1825: Senate 31–7, Assembly 64–9

EFFECTIVE DATES: A.B. 1078: September 25, 2023; A.B. 1825: January 1, 2026

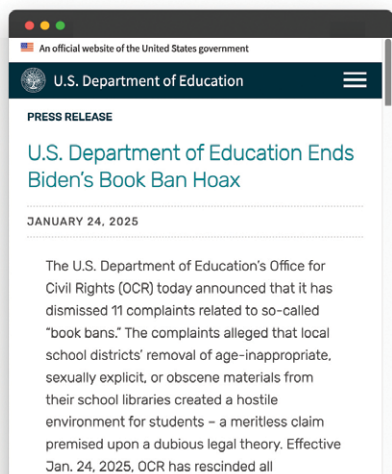
KEY FEATURES: Taken together, the laws prohibit school and public libraries from banning books for partisan and doctrinal reasons, tie public library funding to intellectual freedom policies, and strengthen protections for librarians.

When you have clear, transparent processes established, far less drama ensues, says California State Librarian Greg Lucas. As of January 1, 2026, California state law will require public libraries to establish, adopt, and maintain a collections development policy and process for addressing book challenges (bit.ly/Banning-7).

“The intent is not to inoculate local libraries against book challenges but to have a system in place to handle them,” Lucas says. The law, Assembly Bill 1825, requires libraries to submit collection development policies to the California state librarian for review. Simply having detailed policies can make librarians’ jobs easier when challenges occur, Lucas says: “It just becomes a thing that you deal with when it comes up.”

People have the right to express their views, and the reality is that challenges will come from both sides of the ideological spectrum, Lucas adds, noting that part of the value of the new law is its ability to help librarians sidestep arguments and potential stress.

The law prohibits libraries from banning books because of race, nationality, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other protected categories. (A separate law—Assembly Bill 1078, passed



A January press release from the US Department of Education dismissed all complaints and pending allegations related to school library book bans.

in 2023—similarly prohibits bans in school libraries. See bit.ly/Banning-8.) Librarians will have the ability to put an end to some challenges by simply saying, “Here’s what the law says, and you’re not obeying it,” Lucas says.

More broadly, the existence of neutral policies and processes governing collections and book challenges can help turn the temperature down. “You’re not trying to smother somebody’s freedom of speech,” Lucas says. “You’re just creating a process that’s published, placed on the library’s website that everyone can see, that [provides] certain parameters that the people making the decision have to follow.”

ILLINOIS

DATE OF PASSAGE: June 12, 2023

VOTE COUNT: House 69–39, Senate 39–19

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2024

KEY FEATURES: To be eligible for state grants, libraries must adopt ALA’s Library Bill of Rights or a policy that similarly upholds intellectual freedom principles.

When, on June 12, 2023, Illinois Gov. J. B. Pritzker signed into law Public Act 103-0100 in Chicago’s Harold Washington Library Center, the city’s central library, he said it would make the state the first in the nation to outlaw book bans. How the law works: Instead of directly prohibiting book bans in school and public libraries, it effectively cuts funding if a library removes material because of “partisan or doctrinal” disapproval. Libraries that do could lose eligibility for state grants (bit.ly/Banning-9).

To be eligible for those grants, libraries must either adopt ALA’s Library Bill of Rights or put in place a similar policy alternative. In a 2023 Associated Press article, Illinois Secretary of State and State Librarian Alexi Giannoulas said, “What this law does is, it says, ‘Let’s trust ... our librarians to decide what books should be in circulation.’”

Not everyone is a fan of Illinois’ law. The flaw in



connecting funding to intellectual freedom policies is that libraries can choose to opt out of funding and then proceed with book bans, argues Rosie Stewart, senior manager of public policy at Penguin Random House. The publisher is involved with anti-book-ban legislative advocacy campaigns in nine different states this year, working with state library associations and other groups.

“Tying these standards to funding is not [a strategy] we encourage,” Stewart says. “Book banners are actually for the defunding of libraries. We don’t want to do their job for them.” Since the Illinois law was implemented, multiple localities have eschewed state funding rather than comply, she adds.

MARYLAND

DATE OF PASSAGE: April 25, 2024

VOTE COUNT: House 100–36, Senate 34–11

DATE IN EFFECT: April 25, 2024

KEY FEATURES: Maryland’s Freedom to Read Act bans the removal of books for partisan or discriminatory reasons and requires school and public libraries to put in place policies governing both collection development and challenges. It also protects library staff from retaliation for following the law.

It takes a coalition. That’s what high-school librarian Brittany Tignor learned while advocating for her state’s Freedom to Read Act, which became law last year (bit.ly/Banning-4).

“Things like this don’t happen unless there is a coalition of people working in every capacity that they possibly can,” says Tignor, who is treasurer of the Maryland Association of School Librarians (MASL) and librarian at Stephen Decatur High School in Berlin, Maryland. “MASL was just a tiny piece of getting the law passed.” Key partners included the Maryland State Library Agency, Maryland

Library Association, and Maryland State Education Association.

Another important lesson for Tignor: Librarians need to be comfortable explaining what their jobs entail and how they're affected by book ban efforts, since "people don't know what school librarians do every day." (There's a misperception, she half-jokes, that they just go on Amazon and choose books that look cute.)

After surveying its members to understand the impact of book challenges in Maryland, MASL published a study and submitted it as written testimony to lawmakers as the legislative effort heated up. MASL members also submitted their own written and oral testimony for the record.

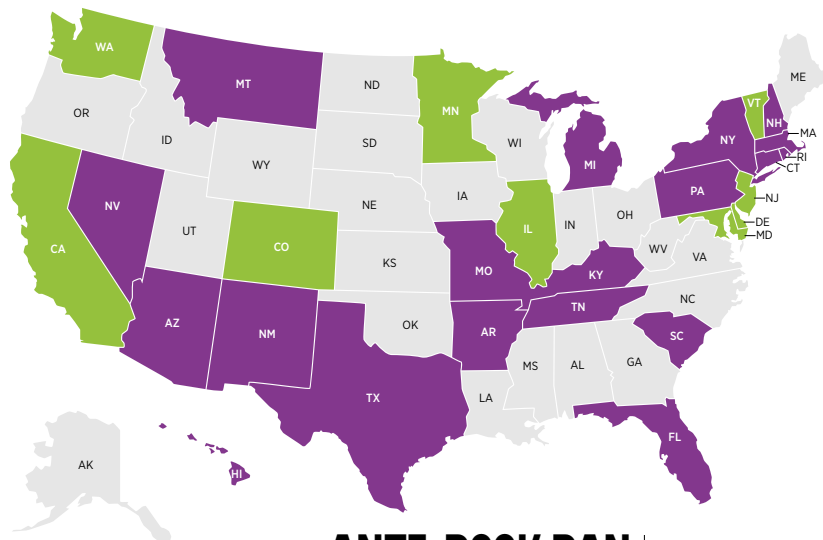
"These are things that school librarians don't generally do, right?" Tignor says. "But we did. And the legislators thanked us, because they really got a different perspective."

The new law stipulates that librarians within systems that receive money from the state cannot be fired, demoted, suspended, disciplined, reassigned, transferred, or otherwise retaliated against for doing their job. And part of that job is meeting state-backed standards, which includes following policies and procedures relative to book collections—such as challenges.

Tignor says this simple idea—that all libraries should operate under a certain set of standards, and librarians shouldn't be punished for upholding those standards—is part of the reason the law passed. "I think a lot of people could get behind that," she says.

"WE HAVE THE POWER TO PUSH BACK."

DEBORAH CALDWELL-STONE, director of ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom and executive director of the Freedom to Read Foundation



ANTI-BOOK BAN LEGISLATION

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MINNESOTA

DATE OF PASSAGE: May 17, 2024

VOTE COUNT: House 68–59, Senate 35–31

DATE IN EFFECT: August 1, 2024

KEY FEATURES: Prohibits school and public libraries (as well as public universities) from banning books for discriminatory reasons, protects librarians from being discriminated against or disciplined for complying with the law, and requires libraries to have formal policies governing both selection of and challenges to materials.

Minnesota's new law begins with a clear prohibition: "A public library must not ban, remove, or otherwise restrict access to a book or other material based solely on its viewpoint or the messages, ideas, or opinions it conveys" (bit.ly/Banning-5). Advocates of the statute, known as Access to Library Materials and Rights Protected, believe it strikes a balance between protecting intellectual freedom and allowing individuals to challenge books.

The law, which applies to school and public libraries as well as public institutions of higher education, requires all libraries to adopt policies and procedures that allow individuals to challenge books. (The policies are designed to allow parents or guardians to opt their children out of specific materials.)

One notable aspect of the law is its requirement that library professionals handle book challenges and report the results of challenges to the state's Department of Education.

Book Riot Editor Kelly Jensen has noted that this requirement will help track patterns in targeted content by leaving a “robust paper trail” that could help prevent “silent/quiet censorship,” meaning failure to acquire certain books due to fear (bit.ly/Banning-6).

Another important feature: the law forbids punishment of librarians for following policies related to book challenges. For Johannah Genett, deputy director for support services at Hennepin County Library, the explicit protections for library staff are the most important part of the law. “We have seen librarians in this country lose their jobs over this issue,” Genett told *The Minnesota Daily* last year. “So having this legislation here really makes it black-and-white.”

NEW JERSEY

DATE OF PASSAGE: December 9, 2024

VOTE COUNT: Assembly 53–20,
Senate 24–15

DATE IN EFFECT: December 9, 2025

KEY FEATURES: New Jersey’s Freedom to Read Act bans the removal of books for partisan or discriminatory reasons, protects librarians from civil and criminal liability, and requires school and public libraries to put in place policies governing both collection development and challenges.

The Freedom to Read Act’s origin in New Jersey begins with Martha Hickson’s decision to keep speaking out.

Despite being called a pedophile and groomer of children by name at a school board meeting, harassment that included calls for her firing and arrest, and vandalism of her car, Hickson—who won ALA’s 2022 Lemony Snicket Prize for Noble Librarians Faced with Adversity—has spoken publicly and passionately about her ordeal and the principles for which she was fighting.

One of the people who heard her was State Sen. Andrew Zwicker (D-Hillsborough), who, after asking how he could help, went on to introduce the state’s Freedom to Read Act. For Hickson, the lesson is clear: “Speak out and don’t stop, because you never know who is going to be listening.”

It would take another 20 months before the act became law. During that time, the draft bill evolved substantially. It began as a near-copy of the Illinois measure, Hickson says, but it turned into a law that offers librarians new protections, prohibits removal of books from school and public libraries for discriminatory reasons, and requires that libraries have formal policies governing collection acquisitions, evaluations, and challenges (bit.ly/Banning-10).

The new law also stipulates that only people with a “vested interest” can request removal of materials from a school library. (It defines those people as teaching staff members, students enrolled in the district at the time of the request, and those students’ parents or guardians.)

The legislative development process underscored another key lesson: “Know who your allies are,” Hickson says. “You cannot do this alone. And there is no shame in asking for help.”

Momentum built as local supporters of the bill contacted members of the progressive organizations Indivisible and SWEEP NJ, she says. The latter organization’s statewide reach



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and advocacy infrastructure proved particularly valuable. The New Jersey Library Association and the New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL) were also powerful and persistent advocates, she adds. Ultimately, the bill passed largely on party lines. (NJASL threw a Zoom dance party for librarians to celebrate.)

But the work is not over, Hickson says. Implementation and awareness matter as the measure is set to go into effect later this year. “Just because a law is on the books doesn’t mean people will necessarily follow it, or be aware of it,” she says. One of the people who led the book-banning effort in her school district back in 2021 is now vice president of the school board, she notes.

“I fully expect challenges to come back to the district,” she says. “So it’s important for people to be aware of the laws that are on the books, the policies that exist in their district, and make sure that those are followed.”

WASHINGTON

DATE OF PASSAGE: March 28, 2024

VOTE COUNT: House 57–38, Senate 29–20

DATE IN EFFECT: June 6, 2024

KEY FEATURES: Essentially prohibits schools from banning books (including textbooks) for discriminatory reasons and requires school boards to enact policies governing how books and other materials are reviewed and evaluated if challenged.

Washington state’s anti-ban law, which addresses public schools and went into effect in June 2024, does not include new protections for librarians. Otherwise, it largely mirrors laws recently passed in other states: House Bill 2331 prohibits schools and school boards from banning books (and other instructional material) because of content related to “a legally protected class,” which includes marginalized groups such as people of color and LGBTQ+ individuals (bit.ly/Banning-11).

Starting with the 2025–2026 school year, the law requires school boards to put in place policies governing how library books and classroom instructional materials will be reviewed and evaluated if challenged. The new law also blocks anyone who is not a parent or legal guardian in a school’s district from challenging books and other materials in that school.

The law, which explicitly affirms the value of diverse instructional materials, includes two notable features. School district instructional material committees are required to recruit diverse members, at least one of whom must be a parent of an enrolled student. And the law prevents individuals from appealing a

“KNOW WHO YOUR ALLIES ARE. YOU CANNOT DO THIS ALONE.”

MARTHA HICKSON, retired librarian

district superintendent’s decision about a book to the district’s school board.

As with some of the other recent state laws, Washington’s passed along strict partisan lines, with Republicans claiming the erosion of local school boards’ power. “The legislature is slowly moving school boards toward extinction,” then–State Sen. Ann Rivers (R-La Center) told radio station KIRO-FM. “When we take away local control, we are also taking away parental control to help define the way things happen in a school district.”

Democrats, however, argued that safeguarding students’ access to diverse, inclusive books is essential.

Young people need access to books that “will allow them to see themselves,” then–State Sen. Emily Randall (D-Bremerton) told radio station KUOW-FM in February 2024. It’s especially essential for LGBTQ+ youth given the higher rates of mental health challenges, bullying, and violence they experience, she added: “It is so important that we stand up and stand alongside young people who may not feel welcomed in their classrooms or their school districts or their communities, but find a welcoming space in a book that reflects them for who they are.” **AL**



JEREMY GANTZ is a free-lance writer whose work has appeared in national outlets including *Time* and *Fortune*. He loves helping his children

find new books to borrow from their local public library.

BANNED BOOKS WEEK OCT. 5-11, 2025

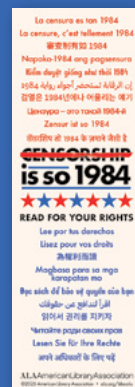
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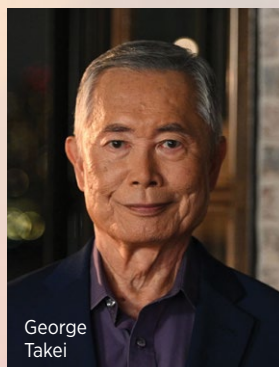
Philadelphia
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The City of Brotherly Love is also a city of firsts: The Library Company of Philadelphia, founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1731, is considered the country's first public library. Philadelphia was the original capital of the United States. And the American Library Association (ALA) held its inaugural Convention of Librarians there during the Centennial Exposition in 1876.

ALA returns to this historic and vibrant city for its 2025 Annual Conference and Exhibition, to be held at the Pennsylvania Convention Center June 26–30. As the Association—and the nation—approach monumental anniversaries, library workers will reaffirm and celebrate what it means to run institutions foundational to democracy, equity, and civic discourse. Many sessions in this year's program reflect the issues currently weighing on the profession, such as intellectual freedom, access, advocacy, and funding.

The conference will also include appearances from featured speakers and authors, hundreds of education programs, more than 500 exhibitors, and plenty of opportunities to network. This preview offers a small sample of what to expect. For registration information and a complete list of events, visit alaannual.org.



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Check the Annual Conference Scheduler (bit.ly/AC25-sched) for the latest information on dates, times, and locations.

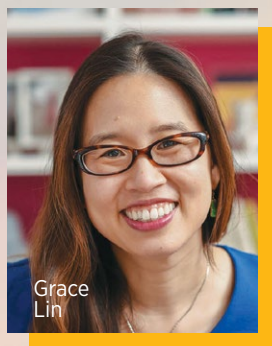
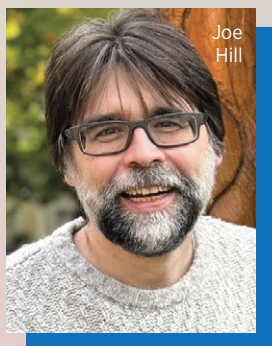
Michigan Gov. **GRETCHEN WHITMER** will open Annual, **4–5:30 p.m. Friday, June 27**. Whitmer will discuss the young adult edition of her memoir, *True Gretch: What I've Learned about Life, Leadership, and Everything in Between*. The book offers honest and humorous insights for young people wishing to make a difference in the world.

Author, actor, and activist **GEORGE TAKEI** will speak about his forthcoming graphic memoir, *It Rhymes with Takei*, **10:30–11:30 a.m. Saturday, June 28**. The memoir, illustrated by Harmony Becker, intertwines the personal with the political in sharing the story of Takei's decision to come out as gay at the age of 68.

ANGELINE BOULLEY, author of New York Times bestsellers *Firekeeper's Daughter* and *Warrior Girl Unearthed*, will discuss her upcoming novel, *Sisters in the Wind*, **4–5 p.m. Saturday, June 28**. The mystery book follows Lucy, an Ojibwe foster teen claiming her heritage on her own terms.



Gretchen Whitmer



Sacramento County (Calif.) District Attorney **THIEN HO** is most notable for his successful prosecution of murderer Joseph DeAngelo, also known as the Golden State Killer. Ho will talk about his forthcoming book, *The People vs. the Golden State Killer*, **1–2 p.m. Sunday, June 29**.

Bestselling author, researcher, and podcaster **BRENÉ BROWN** will appear as the featured speaker during the President's Program of **ALA President Cindy Hohl**, **3:30–5:30 p.m. Sunday, June 29**. Brown has spent the past two decades studying the concepts of courage, vulnerability, shame, and empathy. She will take the stage following an awards presentation that celebrates outstanding librarians, library programs, and authors.

Bestselling horror, fantasy, and sci-fi author **JOE HILL**, who wrote the Netflix-adapted comic book series *Locke and Key*, will appear **10:30–11:30 a.m. Monday, June 30**. Hill will discuss his upcoming novel, *King Sorrow*, which follows six friends who dabble in the occult and summon an evil entity that demands human sacrifice.

Award-winning author and illustrator **GRACE LIN** (see our Newsmaker on p. 22) will talk about her forthcoming middle-grade title, *The Gate, the Girl, and the Dragon*, **1–2 p.m. Monday, June 30**. The illustrated adventure story is based on Chinese folklore and explores themes of duty, love, and balance.

Author, women's rights advocate, and Academy Award–winning actor **GEENA DAVIS** will close the conference **4–5 p.m. Monday, June 30**. As author-illustrator of her debut picture book, *The Girl Who Was Too Big for the Page*, Davis encourages young readers to find the confidence to be who they are unapologetically.



EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Bookstagrammers Are People Too: Boosting Library Engagement with Influencer Marketing

9–10 a.m. Saturday, June 28

Influencer marketing draws on legacy tactics from traditional marketing and applies them to hyperlocal and community-specific audiences. In this program from ALA's Public Awareness Committee, learn how your library can boost its visibility and cultivate authentic engagement by leveraging the reach of Bookstagrammers and BookTok-ers. Panelists will recommend appropriate compensation and partnership guidelines for a sustainable and respected influencer program.

Is Your Library Ready? Strengthening Community Resiliency with Inclusive Public Library Disaster Planning

9–10 a.m. Saturday, June 28

When a natural disaster strikes, librarians provide their communities with critical information, technologies, aid, and a social lifeline. In this interactive session, presenters will guide participants through the essential elements of a disaster plan and identify strategies to enhance their institution's planning, response, and recovery.

Redesigning Success: Lessons in Multiphase Renovation and Student-Centered Spaces

11 a.m.–noon Saturday, June 28

Hear from library leaders and architects on how the renovation of John C. Hitt Library at University of Central Florida in Orlando has transformed the library experience for users. Panelists will share successes and challenges from the renovation, including how furniture and functionality choices have impacted student success.

Bringing a Multicultural Community Together through Food: How Culinary Programming Transformed a Public Library

1–2 p.m. Saturday, June 28

Unsure if your library has the space or capacity for a teaching kitchen or community garden? Jefferson Parish (La.) Library will provide the blueprints for its collection of cooking classes, culinary skills workshops, and vegetable gardening lessons. The session will discuss how to forge meaningful connections among all ages through the exchange of food traditions, cultural heritage, stories, and grocery lists.

Infant Programming Reimagined: Connecting Caregivers and Communities through Libraries

2:30–3:30 p.m. Saturday, June 28

Staffers from New York Public Library will share how to intentionally plan programming for infants and their caregivers—covering ideas such as board book bundles, infant play, and art—as well as effective outreach methods to bring new families into your library.

Continued Conversations: Libraries, Publishers, and the Future of Ebook Licensing

1–2 p.m. Monday, June 30

With the rising cost of ebooks and budgets threatened, libraries are struggling to maintain existing collections while meeting the demands of their communities. A panel of librarians and publishing experts will discuss alternative licensing solutions and how to advocate for fairer pricing.

Navigating the Transition: Retirement and Succession Planning from Diverse Perspectives in Libraries

2:30–3:30 p.m. Monday, June 30

In this session, a panel of retiring and retired librarians will share their personal experiences with the emotional and practical aspects of retirement, knowledge transfer, and staying connected to the profession. Then, a manager will discuss the administrative side of retirement, including continuity

of services, succession planning, and replacing staff members.

TIMELY TOPICS

The following is a selection of sessions representing the conference's Timely Topics: advancing accessibility, fostering mental health and well-being, navigating the rise of artificial intelligence (AI), promoting information literacy, serving immigrant communities, strengthening library funding and advocacy, and upholding intellectual freedom and information access. Visit bit.ly/AC25-TT for more information.

Free Expression in 2025: Challenges for Libraries

9–10 a.m. Saturday, June 28

This has been a watershed year for threats to free expression, including removal of government support for diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts; targeted attacks on marginalized communities; and the disruption of access

Library Marketplace

With live stages and more than 500 vendors, the Library Marketplace is a space to learn, network, and have fun. Registrants can explore the latest library services, attend book talks, meet notable authors, and grab advance reader copies and swag to take home. Other highlights in the exhibit hall include a podcasting booth, the Artist Alley, and pavilions dedicated to topics such as zines, technology, and small presses. **Hours:** 5:30–7 p.m. Friday, June 27; 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Saturday, June 28, and Sunday, June 29; 9 a.m.–2 p.m. Monday, June 30



ALA Store

The ALA Store will be located in the Pennsylvania Convention Center on the bridge across from the ALA Connect Lounge. **Hours:** 10 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Friday, June 27; 8:30 a.m.–5 p.m. Saturday, June 28, and Sunday, June 29; 8:30 a.m.–2 p.m. Monday, June 30

to longstanding information resources. Panelists will examine case studies from public and academic libraries and discuss how they've navigated threats to displays and programs and speech-related issues.

AI Ethics and the Library

2:30–3:30 p.m. Saturday, June 28

Panelists from the Library Freedom Project community of practice will present strategies for library workers who are curious about the use of AI at their institution, approaches to assessing the risks AI poses for vulnerable populations, and resources for continued learning.

Navigating Women's Reproductive Health and Access to Information Challenges

4–5 p.m. Saturday, June 28

This program will cover issues surrounding women's reproductive health, with a focus on the challenges posed by restricting access to information. Attendees will learn about reliable information resources, discuss strategies for overcoming barriers to access, and develop a

plan that aims to foster a dialogue about reproductive rights in their communities.

Building a Welcoming Initiative at Your Library

4–5 p.m. Saturday, June 28

What strategies can we undertake to enhance support for immigrants, refugees, and new Americans in our communities? Staffers from Charlotte (N.C.) Mecklenburg Library will discuss its WelcomeCLT initiative for welcoming international newcomers and how to forge partnerships, design programs, and tailor services to meet the unique needs of this group.

Something's Missing: The Need for Library Involvement in Prison Literacy Programs

9–10 a.m. Sunday, June 29

Libraries are often left out of the equation when implementing literacy programs in carceral environments. In this session, librarians from the Michigan Department of Corrections will offer ideas for how libraries can lead in improving literacy skills for patrons who are incarcerated and challenge participants to create or enhance prison literacy programs with library support.

Reversing Burnout and Attrition: How Group Coaching Creates a Common Language and Transforms Workplaces

9–10 a.m. Sunday, June 29

Libraries require sustainable solutions to retain staff members and maintain a thriving workplace culture. In this session, attendees will explore the impact of group coaching and how a case study from the hospital industry can be applied to improving library workers' well-being, engagement, and retention.

Adaptive Arcade at the Library: Videogames Are for Everyone

11 a.m.–noon Sunday, June 29

Learn how the Deerfield (Ill.) Public Library partnered with gaming accessibility organization AbleGamers to host an adaptive arcade event. Disability advocate Steve Spohn will talk about

Governance Meetings

■ **ALA Executive Board Meeting I** 9 a.m.–noon
Friday, June 27

■ **ALA Council Orientation**
8:30–9:30 a.m. Saturday,
June 28

■ **ALA-APA Council** 9:30–
10 a.m. Saturday, June 28

■ **ALA Council I** 10 a.m.–
noon Saturday, June 28

■ **ALA Council II** 9:30–
11:30 a.m. Sunday, June 29

■ **ALA Council III** 9:30–
11:30 a.m. Monday, June 30

■ **ALA Executive Board Meeting II** 12:30–2 p.m.
Monday, June 30 ●

why gaming accessibility is important, and participants will be introduced to the latest advancements in assistive technology, including adaptive videogame controllers and 3D printables.

Creating Third Places for Teens: Utilizing a Multifaceted Approach to Develop Teen-Friendly, Inclusive Social Environments

2:30–3:30 p.m. Sunday, June 29

As teens develop social-emotional skills, they need a *third place*, or a space outside home, work, or school that fosters engagement. Learn how Garden City (N.Y.) Public Library uses programming that emphasizes interaction, cooperation, and autonomy—including how its new Teen Calming Center reaches young adults and prioritizes their mental and emotional wellness.

Top Tech Trends

9–10 a.m. Monday, June 30

Panelists representing a wide range of libraries will share their insights on

the latest technological developments and their potential impact on services and staff. This session will explore key trends shaping the future of libraries and provide valuable perspectives on how to navigate innovations.

Build Your Brand, Build Your Community

1–2 p.m. Monday, June 30

Building your brand isn't just about fliers and logos. It's about embedding the library's story into every corner of your community. Presenters from Pioneer Library System in central Oklahoma share how libraries can increase loyalty and connection through eye-catching displays, a customer satisfaction survey, and a simple style guide for departments to follow.

Fraud: How to Stop the Scourge in Your Library

2:30–3:30 p.m. Monday, June 30

Losing money or possessions to scams, fraud, and exploitation can be harmful for anyone, but it can be especially devastating to older adults who may not be able to earn back what they've lost. Presenters from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the Federal Trade Commission will discuss resources that help people combat fraud, and librarians will share how they are empowering patrons to resist scams.

DIVISION, ROUND TABLE, AND AFFILIATE PRESIDENTS' PROGRAMS

Illustrating Diversity: Elevating BIPOC Voices in Graphic Novels and Comics

9–10 a.m. Saturday, June 28

In this program from the Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table (GNCRT), graphic novelists and comic creators who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color will explore the power of storytelling to foster inclusive narratives. Attendees will gain insight into the creators' processes and strategies to engage new

JobLIST Placement Center

ALA's JobLIST Placement and Career Development Center aims to help job seekers at any stage of their careers retool their skills, prepare for job searches, and connect with potential employers. Visit bit.ly/AC25-career for a complete list of services and to reserve appointments in advance.

Mentoring on the Fly 9 a.m.–noon
Saturday, June 28, and 1–4 p.m. Sunday, June 29. Seeking career-related advice? Attend short sessions with mentors from academic and public libraries. Walk-ins welcome, or sign up for an appointment time.

Photography Services 9 a.m.–5 p.m.
Saturday, June 28, and Sunday, June 29. Need a fresh headshot? For \$20, receive a set of digital images that can be used for job applications, social media, and networking opportunities. Walk-ins welcome, or sign up for an appointment time.

Résumé Reviews 9 a.m.–5 p.m.
Saturday, June 28, and Sunday, June 29. Creating the perfect CV can be a daunting task. These appointments provide guidance on how to create or revise a résumé, whether you're approaching graduation, searching for a new position, or just wanting to do some fine-tuning. Bring your laptop or a printed copy of your résumé. Walk-ins welcome, or sign up for an appointment.

Open House and Job Fair 10:30 a.m.–noon **Sunday, June 29.** Employers will be given the opportunity to talk with individuals about their institutions and available positions. Registration is required for employers (bit.ly/AC25-JobFair) but not for job seekers. ●

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and diverse members within the graphic novel and comics community.

Freedom to Read Foundation President's Program: Fighting for Your Right to Read Freely

9–10 a.m. Saturday, June 28

Freedom to Read Foundation (FTRF) President Sophia Sotilleo will be joined by a panel to discuss notable cases and activities that have shaped historic First Amendment rulings and continue to have a profound impact today. Learn about FTRF's history and work and how to join the organization in its advocacy.

Government Documents Round Table Chair's Program

2:30–3:30 p.m. Saturday, June 28

The US celebrates its 250th anniversary next year. This session from the Government Documents Round Table examines our country's foundational documents—the Declaration of

Independence and the Constitution—through a modern lens. Participants will consider whether the original documents meet the needs of today and will come away with a framework to promote civic literacy and engagement in their communities.

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Core Awards and President's Program

2:30–4 p.m. Saturday, June 28

The Core President's Program will feature scholar and artist Gwen Westerman, Minnesota's current poet laureate. Westerman is an enrolled member of the Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota Oyate, a citizen of the Cherokee Nation, and coauthor of *Mni Sota Makoce: The Land of the Dakota*, which won a 2013 Minnesota Book Award.

Advocate Smarter and Harder: Advocacy Tools for Rural and Small Libraries

9–10 a.m. Sunday, June 29

The best time to advocate for your library is before a problem arises. Join John Clextan, president of the Association for Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL), and ARSL Executive Director Kate Laughlin for a conversation about how engagement and connections can be used to withstand a crisis and



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Complicating the Past: Historic Sites Interpretation and the Challenges of a More Accurate History

10:30–11:30 a.m. Sunday, June 29

Historic sites are increasingly reimagining the narratives they tell. Using new archives, physical spaces, and objects, sites are questioning assumptions and reworking longstanding narratives. At this lecture from the Library History Round Table, historian George W. Bou-dreau will examine noteworthy work being carried out by public historians and challenge others to rethink what they are telling their visitors.

United for Libraries President's Program

2:30–3:30 p.m. Sunday, June 29

United for Libraries (UFL) President Deborah Doyle will host Michigan

Sen. Mallory McMorrow (D-Royal Oak), author of *Hate Won't Win: Find Your Power and Leave This Place Better Than You Found It*. McMorrow unseated an incumbent as a first-time candidate in 2018, after googling “how to run for office.” She currently serves as her state’s senate majority whip.

The Future of Library Services: Innovating with AI, User Experience, and Service Design

1–2 p.m. Sunday, June 29

Deepfakes and social media misinformation campaigns emphasize the need for critical and thoughtful digital citizenship. At the same time, libraries have an opportunity to use new technologies to create more inclusive and user-centered offerings. At this program from the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA), panelists will provide practical strategies for adapting services to meet the demands of today’s information environment.

Association for Library Service to Children President's Program: The Current Landscape of AI and Its Effects on Children

1–2:30 p.m. Monday, June 30

AI’s influence on children’s lives is growing. This session from the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) will explore the ethical use of AI tools for children and libraries, how these technologies impact society, and the role that companies have in shaping responsible AI tools that are free from bias.

BOOKS, AUTHORS, AND CELEBRATIONS

Attendees will have the opportunity to hear from—and celebrate—dozens of bestselling authors and illustrators at Annual. Visit bit.ly/AC25-ticketed for more information on ticketed events.

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Serving America's Library Community Since 1935

2025 Michael L. Printz Awards

8–10 p.m. Friday, June 27

This year's awards ceremony, sponsored by the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) and *Booklist*, will feature speeches from honor authors and the 2025 winners, **SAMUEL TEER** and **MAR JULIA** (for *Brownstone*). A dessert and cocktail reception will follow. Tickets are \$45 in advance and \$50 onsite for YALSA members, \$50 in advance and \$55 onsite for ALA members, and \$55 in advance and \$60 onsite for nonmembers.

GNCRT Magical Comics Tea

1–3 p.m. Saturday, June 28

Comics creators and enthusiasts will talk about upcoming titles and projects. Don your best teatime outfit or come as you are. Tickets are \$10 for student members, \$20 for GNCRT members, and \$35 for ALA members and nonmembers.

International Librarians Reception

6–8 p.m. Saturday, June 28

Join the International Relations Round Table in welcoming librarians from more than 70 countries. This reception, open to all attendees, offers networking opportunities with hundreds of information professionals. ALA President Hohl will announce the recipients of the ALA Presidential Citation for Innovative International Projects and other award winners. Tickets are \$40.

2025 Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence in Fiction and Nonfiction Ceremony and Reception

7–10 p.m. Saturday, June 28

This event, cosponsored by *Booklist* and RUSA, will celebrate the recipients of the 2025 Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence in Fiction and Nonfiction. Winning authors **PERCIVAL EVERETT** (for *James*) and **KEVIN FEDARKO** (for *A Walk in the Park: The True Story of a Spectacular Misadventure in the Grand Canyon*) will give speeches and sign books. Author **SARAH WEINMAN** will deliver the keynote address. Tickets are \$25.

Accessibility

Accessibility measures at Annual include captioning during main sessions, accessible shuttle buses, the welcoming of service animals, mobility assistance, American Sign Language interpreters, a private space in the convention center for nursing mothers, and accessible rooms in the hotel block. Visit bit.ly/AC25-access for more information.

Community of Care

ALA has implemented a Community of Care at Annual, with the goal of enhancing a sense of community and safety by upholding a Code of Conduct and providing attendees with tangible support. Among the resources available at Annual are the Community of Care Quiet Room for those looking for a calm space during the conference and onsite counseling sessions with mental health professionals. Visit bit.ly/AC25-care to read more about this initiative. ●

Coretta Scott King Book Awards Breakfast

7–9 a.m. Sunday, June 29

This awards breakfast recognizes leading African American authors and illustrators of exemplary children's books depicting the Black experience. Attendees will hear remarks from 2025 winners **JASON REYNOLDS** (author of *Twenty-Four Seconds from Now...*) and **C. G. ESPERANZA** (illustrator of *My Daddy Is a Cowboy*) and honorees. Tickets are \$65.

The Laugh's on Us

5:30–7:30 p.m. Sunday, June 29

Comedian **PAULA POUNDSTONE** will headline this wine-and-cheese event featuring author **JOHN KENNEY** and influencer and podcaster **ELYSE MYERS**. A book signing will follow, with free advance copies (subject to availability) for attendees. Tickets are \$60 in advance for UFL members, \$65 in advance for ALA members and nonmembers, and \$70 onsite.

Newbery-Caldecott-Legacy Awards Banquet

7–10 p.m. Sunday, June 29

Join ALSC in celebrating the authors

and illustrators of this year's most distinguished books for children. This event will recognize Newbery Medal winner **ERIN ENTRADA KELLY**, Caldecott Medal winner **REBECCA LEE KUNZ**, and Children's Literature Legacy Award winner **CAROLE BOSTON WEATHERFORD**, along with honorees. Tickets are \$110 and include dinner. Free, theater-style seating will be available on a first-come, first-served basis for those who wish to hear the speeches without dinner.

Gala Author Tea

2–3:30 p.m. Monday, June 30

Indulge in tea and treats while hearing from bestselling writers, including **LILY KING** and **MARY ROACH**, about their forthcoming titles. Attendees will receive advance copies (subject to availability) that they can have signed by the authors. Tickets are \$60 in advance for UFL members, \$65 in advance for ALA members and nonmembers, and \$70 onsite. **AL**

For an up-to-date list of dates and times, please see the Annual Conference Scheduler (bit.ly/AC25-sched).

ALA

eLearning



ALA ESSENTIALS for LIBRARY WORKERS

ALA Essentials: Training for library staff

If you work in a library—whether you're a library director, a volunteer, a facilities manager, or a reference desk staffer—having a solid grasp of the fundamental concepts, principles, and ethics of library services is essential. All library staff must understand what it means to work for a library.

ALA Essentials for Library Workers is a new type of training for libraries—an orientation for all library employees that offers the ability to ensure consistent training in the principles of library services. This series features instructional sessions from ALA staff and library experts that are clear, concise, and applicable to any staff in any position.

The series consists of eight sessions, which can be purchased as a bundle or bought separately in any combination. The materials can be accessed on ALA eLearning or exported to your library's learning management system.

Take advantage of these essentials to build a stronger library.

Topics included in this series:

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- Intellectual Freedom
- Engaging Diverse Library Communities
- Library Programming
- Reference
- Collection Development
- Sustainability
- Readers' Advisory



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Revolutionary

Eats

Philadelphia's food scene comes of age

Surfer sandwich
at Middle Child

BY Reid Bramblett

Photo: Michael Persico

No one was more surprised than Philadelphians when our restaurants and chefs started raking in James Beard Awards over the past half a dozen years. We knew we had good food, but we figured the rest of the country had long since written us off as the land of soft pretzels, cheesesteaks, and some mystery meat disturbingly known as scrapple.

Even COVID-19 couldn't slow our culinary roll, and while we lost many old favorites and promising new spots to the pandemic, we quickly bounced back—and back onto the lists of internationally acclaimed restaurants—all somehow without losing our street cred for comfort food.

As an Annual Conference attendee, you're doubly lucky to be stationed at the convention center. Across the street to the south is the 125-year-old Reading Terminal Market with its three-dozen food stands. And across the street to the east is Philly's Chinatown, home to loads of inexpensive eateries serving great dim sum and other Asian delectables.

Here are the best of Philadelphia's best, from old-school Italian joints to food hall cornucopias, whiskey bars to funky vegan eateries, and Pennsylvania Dutch smorgasbords to five(!) James Beard winners. And, yes, there will be cheesesteak.

PRICE GUIDE

Average price per person for a meal without drinks, tax, or tip:

\$ under \$18
\$\$ \$18–\$29
\$\$\$ \$30 and up

SOUTH OF THE CONVENTION CENTER (Midtown Village, Center City)

Caribou Café

1126 Walnut St.

267-951-2190

cariboucafe.com

This friendly French brasserie in the theater district is known for its delicious duck cassoulet, steak frites, goat

cheese salad with Honeycrisp apples and fig vinaigrette, and wine list. There's also outdoor seating, three-course prix-fixe menus at lunch and dinner, and happy hour food and drink specials 4–6 p.m. daily. Parfait. **L, D (Tue–Sun)** **\$\$–\$\$\$**

El Vez

121 S. 13th St.

215-928-9800

elvezrestaurant.com

Generous margaritas and five

types of made-to-order guac keep this colorful modern spot in Center City busy night after night for classic Mexican and Tex-Mex dishes in a Mexi-Vegas lounge-like atmosphere. **L, D daily \$\$**

Federal Donuts & Chicken

21 S. 12th St.

215-964-9810

federaldonuts.com

The name says it all: double-fried chicken and decadent donuts—"the combination you never knew you needed." Purists prefer hot-and-fresh donuts tossed in cinnamon sugar or spice blends, but fancy frosted versions beckon, too. Other locations of the franchise include 1909 Sansom St. (near Rittenhouse Square), 1776 Benjamin Franklin Pkwy. (near Logan Square), and 540 South St.

B, L, D daily \$

Goldie

1218 Sansom St.

267-239-0777

goldiefalafel.com

Finding it impossible to get into Zahav (see p. 53)? Get your hummus, falafel, and other kosher vegan goodies on the go—including amazing vegan shakes (who knew tahini was so versatile?)—from its younger sibling at any of five Philly locations, including 1911 Sansom St. (near Rittenhouse Square) and 2101 Pennsylvania Ave.

L, D daily \$

Dim Sum and Then Some

Fans of Philly's historic Chinatown breathed a sigh of relief in January, when the Sixers suddenly canceled a controversial plan to demolish much of the area east of the convention center for an arguably unnecessary new basketball stadium.

You'd think an urban ethnic neighborhood so classic it kicked off a national trend in 1984 by installing a decorative, 40-foot-high welcome gate (at the intersection of 10th and Arch streets) would be more beloved by city authorities. But city planners have a long tradition of trying to plant something—anything—else in the blocks between 11th and 8th streets and from Vine to Arch: the Vine Street Expressway in the 1970s and 1980s, the convention center in the 1990s (which also threatened Reading Terminal Market).

Despite partial displacements and a nibbling away at its edges, Chinatown has managed to avoid annihilation and persevere as a vibrant enclave of Asian communities and fabulous—and delightfully inexpensive—restaurants. Here are some faves:

Dim Sum Garden 1024 Race St.; 215-873-0258; dimsumgardenphilly.com. The undisputed king of Chinatown's dim sum parlors since

2013 is well known for its delicious dumplings and braised pork noodle dishes. Get the signature xiao long bao, steamed pork soup dumplings

with the broth inside the dumpling (put it on a spoon and bite off the top before eating). Don't despair at the likely long line to get in; fast and furious Shanghai-style service (no Cantonese pushcarts here; you order and your food is brought to you) helps get customers seated and satiated quickly. **L, D daily \$-\$\$**

EMei 915 Arch St.; 215-627-2500; emeiphilly.com. Szechuan classics in large portions at sensible prices: What more could you want? Don't miss the crisp Chongqing spicy chicken. **L, D daily \$\$**

Lee How Fook 219 N. 11th St.; 215-925-7266; leehowfookphiladelphia.com. Garlicky greens, hearty duck noodle soup, and salt-baked squid have kept this Chinatown BYO packed night after night for more than 35 years. **L, D daily \$-\$\$**

Good Dog

224 S. 15th St.
215-985-9600
gooddogbar.com

As the cheeky sign says: COME. SIT. STAY. at Center City's go-to spot for pub grub. Wooden booths, great microbrews, and an upstairs game room are just background noise to a Roquefort-stuffed burger that's da bomb. Happy hour food and drink specials weekdays 3-6 p.m. **L, D daily \$\$**

Mari Mari

105 S. 13th St.
267-639-2698
marimariphilly.com

At this Korean-owned sushi spot, find a minimalist interior

and powerful flavors (kimchi and bulgogi sneak into some Japanese dishes). Alongside ramen are their specialties: mari (sushi with cooked

ingredients) and inari—a fried tofu pocket overstuffed with rice and tasty toppings, kind of like a sushi empanada. **L, D daily \$-\$\$**

Mercato

1216 Spruce St.
215-985-2962
mercatoobyob.com

This glittering modern Italian bistro makes every meal feel like a dinner party—only with a better braised short-rib ravioli than you could ever pull off at home. BYO libations. **D (M-Sat) \$\$\$**

Vedge

1221 Locust St.
215-320-7500
vedgerestaurant.com

A vegan restaurant even carnivores will love, Vedge was once named one of the 40 most important restaurants of the last 40 years by *Food and Wine* magazine. James Beard



Falafel sandwich at Goldie

Sang Kee Peking Duck

House 238 N. 9th St.; 215-925-7532; sangkeechinatown.com.

Forty-five years after introducing what was then a largely provincial Philly palate to the delights of Peking duck, Sang Kee remains a favorite spot for classic, lightly Americanized Chinese favorites. **L, D daily** \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Spice C

131 N. 10th St.; 215-

923-2222; spicetogo.com. As if a goofy name, great hand-drawn noodles, and generous portions (so big they feel almost like a dare) weren't enough, the reigning king of Chinatown noodle shops also charges reasonable prices. **L, D daily** \$-\$\$

Terakawa Ramen

204 N. 9th St.;

267-687-1355; terakawaramen.com.

My kids insist we try ramen in every city we visit, so it's nice to have a great noodle shop at home, too. Terakawa's classic charshu (roast



Xiao long
bao at Dim
Sum Garden

pork) ramen is particularly lovable. Crosswire your cultures with their Korean-style bibim noodle—spicy egg noodles topped with chicken, kimchi, kikurage mushroom, corn, cucumber, sesame seed, and seasoned boiled egg. **L, D (Tue–Sun)** \$\$

Vietnam

221 N. 11th St.; 215-592-

1163; eatatvietnam.com. Lime-

sauced chicken, peanut-dusted rice

vermicelli, lemongrass grilled pork chops, and handsome surroundings make this Chinatown spot popular with the neighbors (as does the \$15 lunch special). In 2024—40 years after the restaurant was started by a refugee family that had fled Vietnam by boat in 1978—this local favorite made the big time with a James Beard America's Classics Award. **L, D (Tue–Sun)** \$\$ •

nominees (and married chefs) Rich Landau and Kate Jacoby turn out elevated seasonal dishes in a relaxed, elegant atmosphere. **D (Tue–Sat)** \$\$\$

Vetri Cucina

1312 Spruce St.

215-732-3478

vetricucina.com

Bon Appétit and *Esquire* have both christened chef Marc Vetri's intimate spot the best Italian restaurant in the US. It's chef's choice here—there's no à la carte, only tasting menus (\$165–\$215). However, they will solicitously craft a menu to fit your preferences. And, boy, what a menu: two dozen (mercifully) tapas-sized dishes, served over several

hours, along with a small but perfect wine list. **D daily** \$\$\$

**EAST OF THE
CONVENTION
CENTER (Chinatown,
Independence
Mall, Old City)**

Amada

217–219 Chestnut St.

215-625-2450

amadarestaurant.com

Chic and rustic contemporary tapas in the historic heart of town; don't miss the Spanish cheeses and meats, or the plantain empanadas—oh, and the fabulous sangria. **Brunch (Sat, Sun), D daily** \$\$

Buddakan

325 Chestnut St.

215-574-9440

buddakan.com

This eternally trendy Old City Asian fusion spot serves up lobster fried rice, edamame dumplings, five-spice duck breast, and chocolate pagodas at a communal table alongside a giant gold Buddha. **D daily** \$\$\$

Cafe Ole

147 N. 3rd St.

215-627-2140

facebook.com/phillycafeole

If you haven't yet clocked why Old City has earned its nickname—the Hipstoric District—check out this trendy, laid-back café. Line

up for all-day breakfasts, delicious pastries and sandwiches, and huge soup bowls filled with their signature shakshuka. **B, L daily** \$

Café Tolia

26 N. 3rd St.

267-687-2533

cafetolia.com

This cozy neighborhood coffee shop is run by a young couple from Turkey by way of Germany, which helps explain why the display-case croissants are joined by flaky burek (buttery filo layered with cheese and a bit of spinach) and plump Berliner donuts stuffed with homemade strawberry jam. Turkey sandwiches with

cheddar, pesto, and apple on sourdough are fantastic. B, L (Tue–Sun) \$

Dutch Eating Place

1136 Arch St.

215-922-0425

dutcheatingplace.com

Dig into the biggest, best breakfast in Philly—blueberry pancakes, apple toast, and oddly yummy scrapple (Pennsylvania’s meat-scrap specialty)—at this luncheonette of Amish favorites in the bustling Reading Terminal Market. Lunch is burgers, chicken pot pie, Reubens, and a hot apple dumpling or slice of shoo-fly pie. B, L (M–Sat) \$

Fork

306 Market St.

215-625-9425

forkrestaurant.com

Fresh, seasonal ingredients—Cape May fluke, house-made sausage, spring rhubarb—shine at this softly lit date-night favorite, a neighborhood brasserie run by Ellen Yin, James Beard’s 2023 Outstanding Restaurateur.

Brunch (Sat, Sun), L (Tue–F), D daily \$\$\$

High Street

101 S. 9th St.

215-625-0988

highstreetonmarket.com

A post-pandemic move from its original spot next to its sister, Fork, gave chef Christina McKeough a chance to reinvent the old High Street gourmet bakery and café as a proper restaurant—though its baked-good bona fides still shine in anything breadly, including the excellent sourdough pizzas. Flavors and ingredients are inventive, from lunch sandwiches and

salads to dinner pastas and brunch Dutch babies.

Brunch (Sat, Sun), L (Tue–F), D (Tue–Sun) \$\$–\$\$\$

Morimoto

723 Chestnut St.

215-413-9070

morimotorestaurant.com

Witness original Iron Chef Masaharu Morimoto’s signature flash in an aptly futuristic showplace—his first branded restaurant. Splurge on omakase (\$165 per person) or à la carte specialties including Wagyu beef, perfect sashimi, and Faroe Islands salmon. A sake martini goes well with just about anything.

D daily \$\$\$

Reading Terminal Market

1136 Arch St.

215-922-2317

readingterminalmarket.org

This 125-year-old farmers’ market and food hall in the old train station just south of the convention center has three-dozen food stalls, restaurants, and bakeries offering everything from Amish to Indian, soul food to kebabs, Cajun to cheese-steaks, plus Bassetts Ice Cream and Termini Brothers cannoli. Seating can get tight at lunchtime as Center City workers, tourists, and conventioners pack the place. Most stalls are open from

8 a.m. to 6 p.m.; some accept credit cards; a few are closed on Sunday. B, L daily \$–\$\$

Square Burger

200 N. 6th St.

215-629-4026

historicphiladelphia.org

Inexpensive hamburgers, salami-wrapped kosher hot dogs, hand-cut fries, and cake shakes made with Tastykake Butterscotch Krimpets (a local, er, delicacy) shine at this walk-up stand—named, alas, for the location (Franklin Square), not the shape of the burgers. L, D daily \$

SOCIETY HILL AND SOUTH STREET

Bon Kif Grill

627 South St.

267-319-1547

bonkifgrill.com

Quite possibly the friendliest spot on South Street serves up halal shawarma, grilled branzino, marinated lamb chops, fluffy couscous, and other Tunisian-inflected Mediterranean specialties with a complimentary mint tea at the end. B (M–Th), L, D daily \$\$

Brauhaus Schmitz

718 South St.

267-909-8814

brauhauschmitz.com

Schnitzel, wieners, brats, spätzle, strudel, and 122 hearty Belgian and German brews make this convivial bierhalle the best wurst place in town [pause for appreciative groans]. L (F–Sun), D daily \$\$

Famous Fourth Street Delicatessen

700 S. 4th St.

215-922-3274



Steak with onions at Pat's King of Steaks

famous4thstreet
delicatessen.com

Philly's most celebrated Jewish deli since 1923 offers pastrami sandwiches as thick as phone books, matzo balls as big as grapefruits, and marble cake that could double as a checkerboard. There's a reason everyone from Adam Sandler to Barack Obama has noshed here. **B, L, D daily \$\$**

Jim's South St.

400 South St.

215-928-1911

jimssouthstreet.com

If it's past 11 a.m., there's a line at this art deco pioneer in the field of cheesesteaks since 1939. It reopened in 2024 after a devastating fire and expanded into the amazing space next door, decorated with the mosaic art of Philly icon Isaiah Zagar. It's a friendlier cousin to South Philly's famous Pat's and Geno's (the latter of which was started by the son of the founder of Jim's). Bonus: Unlike its competitors, Jim's has indoor seating and sells beer. **L, D daily \$**

Pizzeria Stella

420 S. 2nd St.

215-320-8000

pizzeriastella.net

Philly restaurateur Stephen Starr's most affordable place offers cleverly topped thin-crust pizzas plus juice glasses of Prosecco, egg-topped asparagus, and, for the adventurous, olive oil gelato. **L, D daily \$\$**

Zahav

237 St. James Place

215-625-8800

zahavrestaurant.com

In 2019 the James Beard Foundation named Zahav, Philly's favorite Israeli/

Middle Eastern restaurant, the country's Outstanding Restaurant—the first time a Philly dining room snagged the top honors. Even before the accolades, fans were swearing by the rich hummus and savory kebabs (both of which you can order off the bar menu if you don't want to spring for the \$90 set-price meal). Their classic entrée: a pomegranate lamb shoulder with greens and crispy Persian rice. **D (Tue–Sat) \$\$\$**

**WEST OF THE
CONVENTION
CENTER**
(Logan Square,
Rittenhouse Square)

Devil's Alley

1907 Chestnut St.

215-751-0707

devilsalleybarandgrill.com

This is a casual, popular Rittenhouse spot for pulled-pork sliders, smoked chicken

Cobb salad, creative burgers, and cold beers. **Brunch (Sat, Sun), L, D daily \$\$**

**Friday Saturday
Sunday**

261 S. 21st St.

215-546-4232

fridaysaturdaysunday.com

I hesitate to include a second spot with a \$165 tasting menu, but considering the James Beard Foundation dubbed it the Outstanding Restaurant of 2023, it deserves kudos. It certainly leans into its fancy dining motif, with items like sweetbreads, caviar, duck, and roasted quail. Arrive early enough before your reservation to enjoy the bartender's exquisite concoctions. **D (W–Sun) \$\$\$**

HipCityVeg

121 S. Broad St.

267-296-9001

hipcityveg.com

This Asian-inflected vegan fast-food café just south of

City Hall serves plant-based burgers, wraps, soups, and salads—largely locally sourced. Try the sweet potato fries and a signature smoothie. The original location, over in Rittenhouse, is at 127 S. 18th St. **L, D daily \$**

Melograno

2012 Sansom St.

215-875-8116

melogranophiladelphia.com

With house-cured pancetta in the pasta amatriciana and black truffles on the house-made pappardelle, this ever-bustling BYOB bistro offers classic Italian fare in a modern setting. **D (Tue–Sun) \$\$\$**

Middle Child

248 S. 11th St.

267-930-8344

middlechildphilly.com

Gourmet sandwiches with roots in Italian and Jewish deli classics star in a menu set by owner Matt Cahn, a veteran of New York City kitchens. **B, L (Tue–Sun) \$**



Eggplant
braciola
at Vedge



Tolia Classic
at Café Tolia

The Oyster House

1516 Sansom St.
215-567-7683
oysterhousephilly.com

This is *the* Philly seafood restaurant. Enjoy just about

everything under the sea in classic preparations, including oysters opened by resident shuckers who've been at it for decades. **L, D (Tue–Sat)** \$\$\$–\$\$\$\$

Parc

227 S. 18th St.
215-545-2262
parc-restaurant.com

Come nighttime, this glittery Parisian bistro absolutely bursts with the see-and-be-seen crowd enjoying homemade bread, duck à l'orange, and steak au poivre. At breakfast, however, the light is natural, the oatmeal is brulée, and the vibe is delightfully low-key. **Brunch (Sat, Sun), B (M–F), L, D daily** \$\$\$

Sabrina's Café & Bruncherie

2101 South St.
445-223-1419
sabinascfe.com

Folks wait hours for a seat in this South Street joint, many of them pining for the

french toast decked out with caramelized bananas and salted caramel mascarpone. At lunchtime, burgers and sandwiches shine. There's another location near the Parkway Central Library at 1804 Callowhill St. **Brunch, B, L daily** \$\$

Skyhigh

1 N. 19th St.
215-419-5059
skyhighphiladelphia.com

The Four Seasons Hotel occupies the top floors of the tallest building in Philadelphia, and it is crowned with a glass conservatory bar with breathtaking views—and prices. Marginally more affordable than the in-house Jean-Georges restaurant, but using the same bespoke kitchen,

“Do our shelves match our catalog?”

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this is *the* perch to impress visitors to the city. Book ahead and be aware of the dress code. **B, L, D daily \$\$\$**

Vernick Food & Drink

2031 Walnut St.

267-639-6644

vernickphilly.com

Greg Vernick opened this nouveau American bistro—leaning seafood, but plenty of turf as well—in 2012. By 2017, the James Beard Foundation was calling him the Best Chef in the Mid-Atlantic. **D (Tue–Sat) \$\$\$–\$\$\$\$**

Village Whiskey

118 S. 20th St.

215-665-1088

villagewhiskey.com

Philly's longest whiskey list (and even longer barstool

wait) are the claim to fame at this popular Rittenhouse gastropub. Oh, and a burger that'll knock you off that hard-won seat. **Brunch (Sat, Sun), D daily \$\$**

SOUTH PHILLY
(Bella Vista, Queen Village, Little Saigon, Passyunk)

Angelo's Pizzeria

736 S. 9th St.

215-922-0000

angelospizzeriasouthphiladelphia.com

Long lines, no credit cards, no seats, closes early (7 p.m.) ... and still everyone flocks to this Bella Vista takeout for a South Philly hat trick: some of the best pizza *and*

cheesesteaks *and* hoagies in town. (Bonus: They bake their own rolls.) If you'd like to eat sitting down, there are benches in the playground at the end of the park around the corner. **L, D (W–Sun) \$–\$\$**

Cosmi's Deli

1501 S. 8th St.

215-468-6093

cosmideli.com

Looks like a bodega; delivers Philly steaks like a champion. This neighbor to Pat's and Geno's bests those more famous cheesesteakeries in taste tests time after time. (Opens at 10 a.m.) **L, D daily \$**

Geno's Steaks

1219 S. 9th St.

215-389-0659

genosteaks.com

This Passyunk street corner hosts a famous rivalry between two garish, outdoor-seating-only cheesesteak shacks: Geno's and Pat's. Taste-testing both in one visit is a gut-busting Philly rite of passage. Geno's is bigger, brighter, and more controversial because of its original owner's since-removed *THIS IS AMERICA*—WHEN ORDERING 'SPEAK ENGLISH' sign. Open 24 hours. No credit cards. **B, L, D daily \$**

Isgro Pastries

1009 Christian St.

215-923-3092

isgropastries.com

When you're ready to get your cannoli on, head to South Philly's cannoli king since 1904, run by Sicilian



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Conrrado Saldivar, '21, Tech Services Manager at Natrona County Library, Wyoming

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Tacos
al carbon
at El Vez

rabe and sharp provolone. Note: This location changed its name in 2022; son Tony Jr. still runs a local chain under the (more famous) original name, Tony Luke's. **B (M-Sat), L, D daily \$**

Triangle Tavern

**1338 S. 10th St.
215-800-1992
triangletavernphilly.com**
Closing in on a century of serving the locals of East Passyunk, this neighborhood bar has achieved what most thought impossible: a tasty vegan "cheesesteak" (the secret's in the seitan). Carnivore companions will enjoy the burgers and chicken parm. Both can agree on the sweet potato fries. Even better: The kitchen stays open until 1 a.m. **L, D daily \$-\$\$**

Victor Café

**1303 Dickinson St.
215-468-3040
victorcafe.com**
Giant veal chops and home-made pastas compete for fame with the classically trained, opera-singing servers at this 1933 trattoria. The Victor is such a splendid example of a South Philly Italian trattoria that it served as the set for Adrian's, the retired champ's restaurant in the 2006 film *Rocky Balboa*. **D daily \$\$\$ AL**



Philly native **REID BRAMBLETT** has written more than a dozen guidebooks,

including *Frommer's Philadelphia Day by Day*. He now lives with his sons and book editor wife in the suburbs, which is where you'll truly find the best cheesesteaks (at Pudge's).

immigrant Mario Isgro's grandson and his adult sons. **B, L (Tue-Sun) \$**

Le Viet

**1019 S. 11th St.
215-463-1570
levietrestaurant.com**
This Little Saigon standby is less expensive than it looks and does a mean bún bò Huế (a classic soup made with beef shank and flank, pig feet, and a steamed pork roll). Meat is more than ample in the stir-fry, noodle, and broken rice dishes. **L (Sat, Sun), D (W-M) \$\$**

Marra's

**1734 E. Passyunk Ave.
215-463-9249
marrasone.com**
One meal of sublimely simple pizza and homemade escarole soup at this no-nonsense eatery—opened by Nonno Salvatore in the 1920s—and you'll never eat at Pizza Hut again. The pastas are good, too. **L, D (Tue-Sun) \$\$**

Pat's King of Steaks

**1237 E. Passyunk Ave.
215-468-1546
patskingofsteaks.com**
Back in 1930, when it was just a hot dog cart, Pat's (arguably) invented the famous Philly cheesesteak. Now a roadside outdoor eatery, it has a slight edge over Geno's, its glitzier rival across the street, if only for being a nicer place—though the service is still famously South Philly brusque and impatient. Order one "Whiz wit" (with Cheez Whiz and onions). Open 24 hours. No credit cards. **B, L, D daily \$**

Ralph's Italian Restaurant

**760 S. 9th St.
215-627-6011
ralphsrestaurant.com**
Meatballs and "red gravy" (marinara), chicken Sorrento, and unpretentious service are staples at this fifth-generation family trattoria that's been serving American-style Italian

food since 1900. **L (Sat, Sun), D daily \$\$**

Royal Sushi and Izakaya

**780 S. Second St.
267-909-9002
royalsushiandizakaya.com**
A nondescript door opens into this classic sushi bar—no reservations, so get here early for a seat at the counter to watch chef-owner Jesse Ito and his crew craft exquisite rolls. Or splurge on the chirashi: sushi-grade tuna, king salmon, tamago, ikura, and other fish on a bed of seasoned sushi rice. (The super-splurgy \$300-per-person omakase requires prepaid reservations.) **D (Tue-Sat) \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$**

Tony and Nick's Steaks

**39 E. Oregon Ave.
215-551-5725
tonyandnickssteakspa.com**
This is neon-lit, no-nonsense, two-handed dining on cheesesteaks and classic Italian sandwiches. Try the roast pork with garlicky broccoli



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Inclusive and Affirming

Creating an age-appropriate gender and sexuality curriculum

BY Allison Frick and
Sara DeSabato



ALLISON FRICK

is the lower school STEAM librarian at Friends Select School in Philadelphia and teaches at University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education.



SARA DESABATO

is a 1st-grade teacher at Friends Select School.

It's vital for young people to see themselves in books and collections. Some books give children language to express what is in their hearts. For those who may not have strong family support, a library can offer a safe, private place to access thoughtfully curated, age-congruent information.

That's why, as a school librarian and a teacher, we felt strongly about helping our school, Friends Select School in Philadelphia, create a Lower School Gender and Sexuality Education committee in 2017. Prior to this, our school didn't have standardized lessons for gender and sexuality; teachers addressed these topics according to knowledge and comfort, and many students entered middle school without a lesson.

The committee comprised a cross-section of lower-school (pre-K to 4th-grade) teachers who created the curriculum, while the library's primary role was to ensure its collection included copies of all titles used in that curriculum. We began by creating a handful of lessons discussing gender identity for each lower-school grade. Lessons stuck to the basics: pronouns and gendered stereotypes around clothing, hairstyles, and toys. Our pilot year was moderately, though not consistently, successful.

The shutdown of in-person schooling during the pandemic gave us the opportunity to start over and devise a full curriculum on gender and sexuality. One of our biggest hurdles: No ready-made curriculum covered the content ours does, in the depth that it does, for the age range of our lower school. We leaned on resources from organizations including Advocates for Youth, Common Sense Media, Gender Inclusive Classrooms, Human Rights Campaign, and Learning for Justice, but many lessons had to be written by our committee.

Our curriculum covers body understanding, image, and development; gender identity, expression, and stereotypes; healthy relationships and consent; digital literacy; and puberty and adolescent sexual development. All grades receive lessons in each area—with the exception of puberty, for which the lessons occur only in 4th grade. Lessons require little preparation and easily fit into 30 minutes. The material taught in our lower grades lays the foundation for more nuanced conversations in later grades.

In pre-K, one of the first lessons uses the book *Yes! No!: A First Conversation about Consent* by Megan Madison and Jessica Ralli to teach students that consent means "I have to ask first." After completing a read-aloud, students practice greeting their friends, with each child choosing how they want to be greeted: high-five, hug, or wave. By 3rd grade, conversations include the intersection of race and body autonomy with

the help of the book *Don't Touch My Hair!* by Sharee Miller.

Our lower-school library offers book displays that celebrate and represent many different aspects of our curriculum's lessons.

Author and illustrator visits also play a vital role. For example, this spring, the library hosted illustrator Kah Yangni, who facilitated a mural with the students that read, "Trans People Exist in the Future."

There has been some community pushback. Some parents chose to keep their kids home the day a trans author came to speak or the day we were slated to read *This Day in June* by Gayle E. Pitman (about Pride celebrations). Some showed up in the school library unannounced, wanting to go through our collection and decide which books should be removed. For these issues, it has helped to have strong policies in place. For example, if parents need to speak to a school employee, they must make an appointment.

However, the feedback we've received has been overwhelmingly positive. In less welcoming environments, the fear of book bans can create a level of self-censorship. To quote author and historian Timothy Snyder, "Do not obey in advance." This work is essential. For every

The fear of book bans can create a level of self-censorship. To quote Timothy Snyder, "Do not obey in advance."

voice loudly complaining, we heard five or six thanking us for developing this curriculum, saying that this prompted them to have "the talk" with their child, or telling us their family felt seen. **AL**

Press 1 for Engagement

Building community through user-friendly technology

BY David Quick and Benjamin Stokes



DAVID QUICK is adult services coordinator at DC Public Library.



BENJAMIN STOKES is director of the Playful City Lab and an associate professor in the School of Communication at American University in Washington, D.C.

Public art that “talks” to passersby. Scavenger hunts that scamper through community landmarks. Through the power of play—and mobile media—programs like these can help public libraries connect with patrons and share local stories.

Over the past five years, DC Public Library (DCPL) has partnered with Playful City Lab, a game design initiative from American University (AU) in Washington, D.C. Together, we developed a project called Engaging Beyond Our Walls (bit.ly/AL-EBOW), which has yielded a budget-friendly platform and toolkit that facilitates storytelling through text messages and audio. Staffers at more than 50 public libraries across the US have used this platform and toolkit to create community games and interactive experiences, including historical walking tours, trivia contests, and other activities for patrons of all ages.

The project grew from a 2019 series of pop-up history exhibits in DCPL branches that focused on neighborhood change in four different areas of the city. Smithsonian’s Anacostia Community Museum created the exhibits, which featured photographs and text from the museum and DCPL’s archives, as well as *storytelling phones* developed with AU’s School of Communication. Visitors lifted the handset of an old-school phone to hear oral histories from residents about how the neighborhood had changed and in turn could record stories for others to hear. The DCPL and AU team later brought the project to a neighborhood festival and integrated it with a scavenger hunt.

Inspired by this mix of community history, public engagement, and playfulness, we started dreaming about a version of the project that dozens of cities could use, with libraries as the hub. We wanted to build on the success of public library programs such as tabletop gaming, StoryWalks, and neighborhood outreach but reimagine them for a mobile media platform. We focused on low-tech approaches like *voice trees*—commonly used by automated phone services that ask callers to press numbers for different services—and SMS messaging because they are more accessible and cost less than smartphone applications that require data plans. Most mobile phones can use text messaging to let people access interactive storytelling that features host audio and multimedia—no apps required.

In 2022, with nearly \$250,000 in funding from an Institute of Museum and Library Services grant, we launched a national training for libraries. After a pilot year, we created annual cohorts, each with tools, training, and templates for libraries of all sizes to design their own playful creations. We released a free authoring tool called Hive Mechanic

(hivemechanic.org), although libraries can also use other commercial tools like Twilio Studio.

Participating libraries have deployed the technology in three primary ways: activities at local landmarks, such as sculptures or murals; mobile activities, such as walking and biking tours or scavenger hunts; and kiosk-style installations that offer touch-screen storytelling. At Umatilla (Fla.) Public Library, for example, residents can hear a ghost story at a historic caboose that sits outside the library. As part of a StoryWalk hosted by Spooner (Wis.) Memorial Library, youth were prompted to send photos of local architecture and answer trivia questions via text. Other case studies are available in our Tasting Menu (bit.ly/EBOW-Taste), while our new Recipe Book offers models for using our platform (bit.ly/EBOW-Recipe-Book).

Fundamentally, Engaging Beyond Our Walls is about advancing

library goals for accessibility in programming. But along the way, it helps position libraries as community catalysts. Many participating libraries reported finding new partnerships and credibility with

local government, historical societies, and community businesses.

Compared with many innovation projects, this focus on low-tech accessibility was exciting for library partners—and reinforced the reputation of libraries as places that welcome all. **AL**

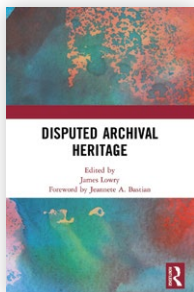
Most mobile phones can engage in interactive storytelling—no apps required.

Community Archives, Collective Power

Building robust, ethical archival collections



REANNA ESMAIL is lead librarian for instruction at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York.



Disputed Archival Heritage

Edited by James Lowry

Building on his 2017 edited volume *Displaced Archives*, Lowry continues to explore archival collections that are removed from the places and peoples from which they come as well as the relationships between displacement and power for communities. Contributors examine the contexts for not only displaced archives but also diasporic archives and community archives. This title offers salient and interesting overviews of laws and guidelines related to archival claims and the transfer and even repatriation of records. This is an important read for anyone interested in archives, the history of provenance, and the deep connections between archives and communities. Routledge, 2022. 356 p. \$54.99. PBK. 978-0-3675-2403-6.



Urgent Archives: Enacting Liberatory Memory Work

By Michelle Caswell

Drawing on a decade of work in ethnography archives like the South Asian American Digital Archive, Caswell puts feminist, postcolonial, and critical race theory in conversation with qualitative research data. This allows her to theorize the role that justice can and should play in archival practice. Touching on digital humanities, critical library studies, and ethnographic anthropology, *Urgent Archives* examines the liberatory potential of community archives. It also interrogates traditional archival strategies and theories while proposing new practices and approaches. It would be a welcome read for library and information science students, seasoned archivists, and other practitioners alike. Routledge, 2021. 142 p. \$54.99. PBK. 978-1-0320-0027-5.

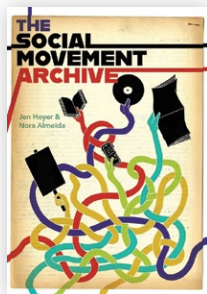


Import of the Archive: US Colonial Rule of the Philippines and the Making of American Archival History

By Cheryl Beredo

Despite being published over a decade ago, this book is still relevant and recommended to not only readers interested in history but also those interested in archival ethics and questions of neutrality, authority, and the ownership of history. It analyzes how archives have historically been used as a tool for colonialism and imperialism rather than community-building. While the focus of Beredo's study is the Philippines from 1898 to 1916, the short monograph reveals how record management can legitimize and strengthen political or bureaucratic power, tracing how archives were used by colonial powers in military conflicts, against revolutionaries and dissidents, and in land disputes. Litwin Books, 2013. 168 p. \$40. PBK. 978-1-9361-1772-7.

by Reanna Esmail



The Social Movement Archive

By Jen Hoyer and Nora Almeida

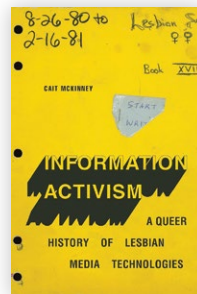
Understanding the role archives play in communities requires reconsidering assumptions about what an archive is and reimagining what an archive can be. *The Social Movement Archive* considers these questions through interviews with librarians, activists, and community organizers. While framed as an archive of social movements, Hoyer and Almeida's work illustrates how archival practices are shaped by their social and political contexts, connecting archival theory to media studies, philosophy, political science, and environmental humanities. It would be a useful read for anyone working in archives or libraries or anyone interested in community activism, social movements, and their ephemera. Litwin Books, 2021. 244 p. \$75. PBK. 978-1-6340-0089-5.



Becoming Palestine: Toward an Archival Imagination of the Future


By Gil Z. Hochberg

The archive is not only a matter of the past but also the future. Published in 2021, this contribution to visual studies presents close readings of potential archival materials to engage in current discussions in archive studies about archival materials and their relationships to cultural memory. With the historical loss of more than 30,000 manuscripts, documents, and other material during the Nakba—or displacement following the 1948 Arab-Israeli war—along with the recent destruction of schools, libraries, archives, and universities in Gaza, Hochberg's imagined archive is an incredibly timely read for understanding both Palestinian culture and the archive's role in shaping the future. Duke University Press, 2021. 208 p. \$25.95. PBK. 978-1-4780-1482-9. (Also available as an ebook.)



Information Activism: A Queer History of Lesbian Media Technologies

By Cait McKinney

Groups that are marginalized have the most to tell us about information, argues Cait McKinney in this deep dive into lesbian media history in the US and Canada from the 1970s to 2010s. McKinney's research involves an array of archival resources, including newsletters, indices, and community ephemera, while also contemplating archival best practices. Chapter 3, on descriptive practices, and chapter 4, on the Brooklyn, New York-based Lesbian Herstory Archives, are especially useful for readers interested in archival practices. Because of how it shows the roles that information plays in activism and, in turn, that activism plays in information, this work stands the test of time. Duke University Press, 2020. 304 p. \$28.95. PBK. 978-1-4780-0828-6. (Also available as an ebook.) 

PEOPLE

Announcements

ON THE MOVE

April 14 **Nancy Abashian** became dean of university libraries at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana.

Kristen Comeaux became director of Glen Rock (N.J.) Library January 27.

April 7 **Lindsey Cox** started as chief librarian of Jasper (Tex.) Public Library.

In December **Marianne Donley** joined the Department of Research and Scholarship at Syracuse (N.Y.) University Libraries as physical sciences librarian.

Sarah Eiseman became head of workforce development and digital inclusion at East Hartford (Conn.) Public Library in December.

Rachel Fewell joined Englewood (Colo.) Public Library as director February 24.

In November **Nora Hinton** became librarian at East Central Regional Library's Hinckley and Sandstone branches in Minnesota.

In January **Yage Huang** joined Syracuse (N.Y.) University College of Law Library as law reference librarian.



Bethany Huck became young adult librarian at Westlake (Ohio) Porter Public Library in November.

Rebecca G. Johnston joined the Department of Research and Scholarship at Syracuse (N.Y.) University Libraries as social sciences and humanities librarian in November.

March 17 **Beth McIntyre** was appointed executive director of Athens (Ga.) Regional Library System.

Lauren Rippy was named children's librarian at Portland (Tenn.) Public Library of Sumner County in February.

Kudos

In November, **Carrie Baldwin-SoRelle**, health sciences librarian and liaison to the School of Public Health at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, received the Award for Professional Excellence by a New Health Sciences Librarian from the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the Medical Library Association.

Amanda Blanco, librarian at Lafayette (La.) High School, was named 2025 Louisiana School Librarian of the Year by the Louisiana Library Association March 22. ●

In January **Jill Rothstein** became head librarian at JBI in New York City.

In July 2024 **Jessica "Jessie" Simpson** became director of the DeLaMare Science and Engineering Library at University of Nevada, Reno.



Broghan White joined University of Nebraska-Lincoln as cataloging and metadata librarian and assistant professor in September.

In January **Cherie Yanek** became librarian at Mid-Pacific Institute in Honolulu.

PROMOTIONS

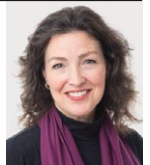
Melissa Bailey was promoted to city librarian at Paso Robles (Calif.) City Library in February.

March 31 **Lynne Campbell** was promoted to librarian and CEO of McKellar (Ont.) Public Library.

Brendan Honick was promoted to senior data curator and metadata librarian at the Pittsburgh Supercomputing Center in March.

December 29 **Drew Macaulay** was promoted to director of Ferndale (Mich.) Area District Library.

In March **Blynn Olivieri Parker** was promoted to dean of Ingram Library at University of West Georgia in Carrollton.



Laura Whaley was promoted to assistant director of Santa Cruz (Calif.) Public Libraries March 1.

RETIREMENTS

March 31 **Diane Bruxvoort** retired as dean of libraries at University of North Texas in Denton.

Gail Patterson-Gladney retired as youth librarian at South Haven (Mich.) Memorial Library March 29.

In December **Debbie Robitaille** retired as youth librarian at Citrus County (Fla.) Library System.

Terri Short retired as librarian and CEO of McKellar (Ont.) Public Library in March.

AT ALA

Tim Clifford, manager of Production Services, left ALA March 27.

May 2 **Alan S. Inouye**, senior director of public policy and government relations for the Public Policy and Advocacy Office, left ALA.

Grace Rosean was promoted to associate publisher of *Booklist* in March.

April 21 **Lisa Varga** became associate executive director of ALA's Public Policy and Advocacy Office. [AL](#)

In Memory

Charles A. “Charlie” Bolles, 84, former state librarian of Idaho, died January 9. During Bolles’s long career at the Idaho State Library (1980–2008), now the Idaho Commission for Libraries, he transformed the institution into a library development agency offering continuing education and consulting services. During his tenure, the state library established Let’s Talk about It, an adult reading and discussion program, and Read to Me, a childhood literacy program. Prior to serving as state librarian, Bolles worked as director and faculty member at Emporia (Kans.) State University’s School of Library and Information Management, director of the Library Development Division at the State Library of Kansas in Topeka, and catalog and serials librarian at University of Iowa in Iowa City.

Sheldon “Turner” Freeman, 64, who worked 39 years for DC Public Library (DCPL), died December 23. Freeman established a Black History Month film series and LGBTQ-inclusive programming at DCPL before retiring as adult services librarian in 2023.

Charlene Hurt, 84, retired academic librarian, died January 31. After starting her career as a reference librarian, she served as university librarian at Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas; university librarian at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia; and dean of libraries at Georgia State University in Atlanta from 1998 to 2008.

Christine “Kee” Malesky, 74, former NPR research librarian, died March 2. Often given on-air credit, Malesky became one of the best-known research librarians in the country. She is the author of *All Facts Considered: The Essential Library of Inessential Knowledge* (2010) and *Learn Something New Every Day: 365 Facts to Fulfill Your Life* (2012). She retired from NPR in 2014.

Dennis Martin, 74, retired school and public librarian, died November 17. Martin served as librarian for Fennville (Mich.) Middle School and director of Howard Miller Public Library and Community Center in Zeeland, Michigan. He was also interim director of Fennville District Library before his retirement. Since 2007, Martin had been a member of the Fennville District Library Board.

Sarah Meisels, 88, retired librarian, died February 1. Meisels worked at Wheaton (Ill.) Public Library from 1966 to 2013, serving the last 35 years as its director.

Steven Platteter, 63, photojournalist and librarian for three decades, died February 27. Platteter served as deputy director of Prairie Lakes Library System (PLLS) in Wisconsin since the system’s inception in January 2023. Prior to that, he served as director of Arrowhead Library System (one of the systems that merged to form PLLS), automation services librarian for Mid-Wisconsin Federated Library System, and automation services librarian for Southwest Wisconsin Library System. He was the photographer for the Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) for decades and a board member of WiLS (formerly Wisconsin Library Services) for 12 years. In 2023, Platteter was recognized with the WLA/Demco Librarian of the Year Award.

Maria Vanderhaar Porter, 89, retired librarian, died January 21. She worked for the Encyclopedia Britannica Library Research Service in Chicago and for libraries in St. Joseph County, Indiana. She joined the South Bend Public Library (now the St. Joe County Public Library) in 1961, eventually becoming the head librarian at the Roger B. Francis branch and personnel administrator at the county’s main library, where she served until her 1996 retirement.

Jean Takeshita, 85, retired school librarian, died December 22. Takeshita held librarian positions in Des Moines, Iowa, and at several schools in the Saint Paul (Minn.) Public Schools district.

Maryellen Trautman, 81, retired government librarian, died November 17. A government documents librarian at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) from 1978 to 2011, Trautman advised the US Government Printing Office (GPO) in transferring 1 million government publications to NARA, so that the American people would have permanent access to these documents. Prior to that, she was a regional depository librarian in Oklahoma and the first librarian to be appointed to GPO’s reactivated Depository Library Council in 1971. Trautman was one of the founders of the American Library Association’s Government Documents Round Table (GODORT). She received the District of Columbia Library Association’s Distinguished Service Award in 1999 and GODORT’s Bernadine Abbott Hoduski Founders Award in 2001. She worked with GODORT to establish the ALA GODORT Preservation Award in 2024. The Society for History in the Federal Government named the Maryellen Trautman Award in recognition of her work as its executive director. ●



Eat and Greet

It's Thursday morning, and the fourth floor of Parkway Central Library is alive with bubbling jollof rice, crisping empanadas, and stir-frying japchae.

Welcome to Edible Alphabet, the flagship series of Free Library of Philadelphia's (FLP) Culinary Literacy Center. Since 2015, the program has convened those learning English as a second language (ESL)—many from the Caribbean, Central America, the Middle East, North Africa, and Southeast Asia—to practice conversation and cook a recipe under the direction of an ESL teacher and chef instructor.

"This is the best way to teach language skills," says Lindsay Southworth (pictured, lower right), FLP senior program manager for adult education. "Cooking is community building—you have this real sense of togetherness." When learners are relaxed, she says, they use spontaneous English, a skill hard to grasp in a traditional classroom.

But the six-week course—also offered at FLP's branches and virtually—is not just for honing vocabulary and knife skills. It's meant to get new Americans comfortable in their city and familiar with FLP's other services, like its after-school programs and Library of Things collection.

"The English is important, but English is a vehicle," says Southworth. "Even in the easiest situation, immigration is challenging. We want people to feel welcome, included."



The class serves up some joyful stories, like the two women from Iran who didn't know each other but now live in the same building and have dinner together nearly every night. "They've really become each other's found family," Southworth says.

She wants to see Edible Alphabet in every community and says no commercial kitchen is required. "We do this in the basement of a 100-year-old library, and we bring some cutting boards and an electric skillet," she says. "It's a great carrot to get people in the door, right?" **AL**

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



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