



# american libraries

Summer 2026

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE *preview* p. 20 + DINING GUIDE p. 30

5 Questions to Ask  
Vendors about AI p. 40

Library Systems  
Briefing p. 44

**PLUS:** Encountering ICE,  
Fairy Houses, Megha Majumdar

# Power to the platform ~~platform~~ LIBRARY.

**Hoopla Instant. Hoopla Flex.  
Hoopla Instant Bundles.**

**Three** license types. **Three** different ways to control your library's digital collection. **One** platform designed to empower libraries to do what they do best: connect communities with stories, right when they want them.

**Hoopla helps you choose the digital story  
your library wants to tell.**



Read more about how  
Hoopla puts the power  
in your hands.

**hoopla**<sup>®</sup>

Your Library. Everywhere.

# CONTENTS

Summer 2026

American Libraries | Volume 57 #6-8 | ISSN 0002-9769



## COVER STORY

### 20 **2026 Annual Conference Preview**

Chicago  
June 25–29

EDITED BY Sallyann Price

### 30 **City of Big Appetites**

Celebrate ALA's big year with this robust list of Chicago eateries

BY Jennifer Billock



40



36

## FEATURES

### 36 **Encountering ICE**

Public library directors share tips for dealing with federal immigration activity

### 40 **5 Questions to Ask Your Vendors about AI**

Cut through the hype and get real answers about artificial intelligence products

BY Elizabeth Szkirpan

### 44 **2026 Library Systems Briefing**

Tech companies stay competitive with emerging platforms

BY Marshall Breeding

**ON THE COVER:** Photo by Ionel/Adobe Stock

## CONTENTS

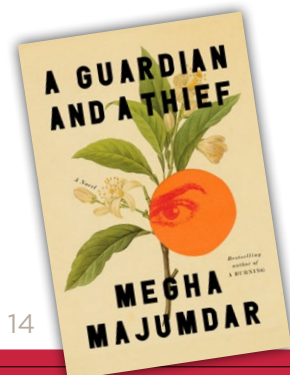


### UP FRONT

- 3 **From the Editor**  
A Homecoming in Chicago  
by Sanhita SinhaRoy

### ALA

- 4 **From the President**  
Sparking a New Era  
by Sam Helmick
- 5 **From the Executive Director**  
Summer Connections  
by Dan Montgomery
- 6 **Update**  
What's happening  
at ALA



### TRENDS

- 12 **The Gnome Depot**  
Fairy house workshops  
combine nature, enchantment  
... and a bit of moss  
by Karen Lindell

### NEWSMAKER

- 14 **Megha Majumdar**  
Award-winning author on  
how libraries and reading  
affirm humanity  
by Donna Seaman

### LIBRARIAN'S LIBRARY

- 15 **Confident Readers' Advisory**  
by Rachel Rosenberg

### PERSPECTIVES

- 16 **Fighting Words**  
Coping with the abusive  
language of library critics  
by Darcy Lipp-Acord

### PLUS

- 13 **By the Numbers**

### PEOPLE

- 46 **Announcements**
- 48 **NOTED & QUOTED**



## ADVERTISER INDEX

American Psychological Association 17 | Craft & Hobby 43 | Emporia State University Cover 4 | Highlights 9 | Hoopla Cover 2 | Library of Congress Federal Credit Union 38 | Luddy School of Informatics, Computing, and Engineering at Indiana University Indianapolis 42 | MakeMake 32 | Mobile Citizen 34 | Old Dominion University 26 | Percussion Play Cover 3 | University of Washington 24 | American Library Association Development Office 11, 18-19, 29 | JobLIST 28

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

A Chicago must-do?

**EDITOR AND PUBLISHER**

**Sanhita SinhaRoy**

ssinharoy@ala.org | x4219

Cubs game

**MANAGING EDITOR**

**Terra Dankowski**

tdankowski@ala.org | x5282

Kayak the Chicago River

**SENIOR EDITOR**

**Greg Landgraf**

glandgraf@ala.org | x4218

Art on the Mart

**CONTRIBUTING EDITORS**

**Lori McCue, Phoebe Mogharei, Sallyann Price**

Malört

**CONTRIBUTING DESIGNER**

**Rachel K. Dooley**

rdooley@ala.org | x4218

Garfield Park Conservatory

**ADVERTISING**

**Melissa Carr** melcarr@ala.org | 704-491-7789

**Ryan King** rking@rkmediaadv.com | 773-414-9292

Acceptance of advertising does not constitute endorsement.

ALA reserves the right to refuse advertising.

**PUBLISHING DEPARTMENT**

**Rachel Hendrick**

Senior Director, ALA Publishing and Media

Window shopping on the Mag Mile

**Mary Jo Bolduc**

Rights, Permissions, Reprints | x5416

Deep-dish pizza

**MEMBERSHIP**

**Melissa Kay Walling**, Deputy Executive Director

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Ben Leubsdorf (Chair), Kim E. Bechel, Eileen K. Bosch,

Kathy Carroll, Emily Drabinski, Pat Hawthorne,

Sarah Maximiek, Katie Rothley, Brita Kate Zitin

Editorial policy: ALA Policy Manual, section A.8.2

**INDEXED**

Available full text from ProQuest, EBSCO Publishing, H. W. Wilson, LexisNexis, Information Access, JSTOR.

**SUBSCRIBE**

Libraries and other institutions: \$80/year, 6 issues, US, Canada, and Mexico; international: \$90. Subscription price for individuals included in ALA membership dues. Email membership@ala.org, call 800-545-2433, or visit ala.org. Claim missing issues: ALA Member Relations and Services. Allow six weeks. Single issues: \$13.50, with a 30% discount for five or more copies. (Discount applies only to multiple copies of the same issue.) Contact ALA Member Relations and Services, 800-545-2433 or membership@ala.org.

**PUBLISHED**

*American Libraries* (ISSN 0002-9769) is published 6 times yearly. Printed in USA. Periodicals postage paid at Chicago, Illinois, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Personal members: Send address changes to American Libraries, c/o Membership Records, American Library Association, 225 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 1300, Chicago, IL 60601. ©2026 American Library Association. All rights reserved. No portion of this magazine may be reproduced or republished without written permission from the publisher.

from the  
**EDITOR**

## A Homecoming in Chicago



**Sanhita SinhaRoy**

A small group of 103 people attended the 1876 conference for librarians in Philadelphia. Now, 150 years later, more than 15,000 library workers are expected to descend on Chicago—ALA’s hometown—at the end of June for the Association’s sesquicentennial year. As Sallyann Price writes in the conference preview (cover story, p. 20), the tone and content will “strike a balance between the retrospective and the speculative.” As for speakers, check out the impressive lineup that includes Jill Biden, Rachel Maddow, and Billy Porter.

Also attending is author Megha Majumdar, our Newsmaker this issue (p. 14). Majumdar is a recipient of this year’s Carnegie Medal for her novel *A Guardian and a Thief*. In an interview with *Booklist* editor Donna Seaman, Majumdar discusses the craft of writing and how fiction “has always been a way of engaging with the world.”

Another way to engage with the world? Through Chicago’s world-class cuisine. Flip to our dining guide (p. 30), where author and *Frommer’s* contributor Jennifer Billock takes you on a culinary tour of some of the city’s best international dining and off-the-beaten-path gems.

One hot topic at the conference will be artificial intelligence (AI). Before you go to a session, read this issue’s two articles about the technology. The first is by Elizabeth Szkirpan, a collections and discovery specialist. In “5 Questions to Ask Your Vendors about AI” (p. 40), originally published on *Choice* 360, Szkirpan advises measuring AI platforms “against our library’s tried-and-true resources to gauge which ones truly bring a new perspective to our collections.” Our “2026 Library Systems Briefing” (p. 44) by library technology consultant Marshall Breeding is a snapshot of how vendors are investing in AI and other tech products.

Lastly, with this issue we say a very fond farewell to Carrie Smith, editorial and advertising specialist, who left *American Libraries* in March after 10 years on our team. We already miss Carrie’s precision, sharp wit, and collaborative spirit, but we know she’ll always be just a bike ride away. We wish her all the best.

*Sanhita*

On this anniversary year, Annual Conference programming will strike a balance between the retrospective and the speculative.

# Sparking a New Era

ALA's Annual Conference promises to be electric



**Sam Helmick**

Decades from now, library workers will look back at the 2026 conference in Chicago as the point where the next century of service began.

A unique electricity fills the air when the American Library Association (ALA) Annual Conference and Exhibition returns to Chicago, the city that holds our history and anchors our future. As we gather this June, we aren't just attending a professional meeting, we are stepping into a historical slipstream 150 years in the making. This is the moment we have been building toward: the sesquicentennial celebration of our collective impact.

This milestone is about more than looking back; it is about the momentum we carry into the next era.

When we talk about shaping what's next, we are acknowledging that the radical act of keeping library doors open for everyone requires constant, courageous innovation. In the hallways of McCormick Place, you will feel a renewed energy. We are coming together to ignite a new era of access, fueled by future-focused learning and the kind of transformative resources that only the world's largest library event can provide.

After years of navigating shifting landscapes, there is no substitute for the hand-to-hand knowledge exchanged among colleagues. Whether you are a change maker, an idea builder, or a library leader, you are part of a global tapestry of advocates.

In Chicago, we will find shared understanding and deep mentorship when we step away from our screens and into a community of peers who join our unwavering commitment to intellectual freedom, reminding us that we never do this work alone.

Every session and every conversation is a practical idea you can bring back to your own community.

From the vibrant Library Marketplace (featuring more than 500 exhibitors) to the presidents' and chairs' programs, we are highlighting the

professional acumen and relevant skill-stacking that prove our libraries are adaptive, inclusive, and essential. This conference is where you find the tools to build the community-driven world we all want to live in. (See a sampling of some of these programs and events in the conference preview on p. 20. For a complete list of events, visit [alaannual.org](http://alaannual.org).)

Amid this historic moment, there will be no shortage of ways to celebrate together, including "ALA150: A Celebration for Our Libraries," taking place the night of Saturday, June 27 ([bit.ly/ALA150-Celebrate](http://bit.ly/ALA150-Celebrate)). Hosted by the Association, this signature event invites attendees into a vibrant evening of connection and creativity, with live music, immersive experiences, and moments to reflect on our shared legacy. Library workers, trustees, authors, vendors, and publishers are invited to ring in this anniversary and to engage across the conference in conversations on advocacy, intellectual freedom, the library's role in civil society, and how we will navigate artificial intelligence with our students and patrons in the years ahead.

You will want to be part of this historical moment to say you were there when we turned the page.

Decades from now, library workers will look back at the 2026 conference in Chicago as the point where the next century of service began. Don't miss the chance to stand with your colleagues as we mark this momentous anniversary and look boldly toward what is yet to come.

Be part of the celebration and be part of the future. I invite you to bring your energy and your insight to Chicago June 25–29. Let's toast to 150 years of resilience and, more importantly, let's begin the next chapter together. I'll see you at the turning of the page. **AL**

---

**SAM HELMICK** is community and access services coordinator at Iowa City Public Library.

# Summer Connections

Annual Conference brings an opportunity to network and celebrate



**Dan Montgomery**

The impressive participation rate at Annual is a sign that members are expressing their solidarity and belief in the importance of ALA and their role in it.

June brings a burst of anticipation to the American Library Association (ALA). Colleagues and members put the finishing touches on our most important event of the year, our Annual Conference and Exhibition, which will be held June 25–29 in Chicago. I'm eager to meet many of you and make the most of those exciting, jam-packed days.

While this is my first Annual as executive director, I attended the conference last summer in Philadelphia. There, I was blown away by the sheer number of participants, the depth of quality programming, and the infectious enthusiasm and energy from morning to night.

This year, we expect approximately 15,000 conference attendees. As in previous years, we anticipate that about 20% of our membership will attend, devoting several days of their summer to advancing their profession and connecting with peers from around the country.

That's an impressive participation rate that other organizations would envy. I see this as members expressing their solidarity and belief in the importance of ALA and their role in it, especially in today's culture and climate.

At any given moment during the conference, there will be opportunities to hear from notable authors and speakers, attend panel discussions that tackle tough issues, celebrate accomplishments that demonstrate our impact, and meet or reconnect with colleagues who share our passion for equitable access to information. The Annual Conference resembles the library itself—and both give you the world.

I'm happy that my first official Annual will be held in my hometown. There's nothing better than early summer in Chicago, as we shake off the tough winter. I encourage attendees to make the most of our beautiful city—the dining guide in this issue (p. 30) is a great place to start. Chicago is a city of neighborhoods with fantastic food everywhere, not just downtown.

In addition to the conference, June is Pride Month, always a significant and memorable celebration in Chicago. There's also the grand opening of one very famous library just a few miles down the road from our gathering space. I'm, of course, referring to the Obama Presidential Center, which will be home to a new Chicago Public Library branch, opening on Juneteenth. We were thrilled to work with the center to include it in a tour of several Chicago libraries (which sold out quickly!).

It is truly an honor to lead ALA. As a former English teacher and a father of three, I am a lifelong patron and lover of libraries—especially in summertime. Libraries fulfill an essential role during these months when kids are out of school. I know public libraries are seeing increased traffic, and I salute you for your creativity and hard work in designing summer reading programs that limit learning loss, enhance skills, and bring the fun, all while instilling a lifelong love of books.

I have my own fond family memories of taking my young kids to a beautiful old building on St. Joseph Island, Ontario, the Richards Landing Children's Library. I cherish the memory of reading books together in the warm, wood-paneled room, the kids curled up or doing crafts.

I know you, too, have stories of libraries and their impact on your life. It seems everyone does, and that's one reason I am so energized by this role.

There have been many changes and hard decisions in ALA's recent past, but our vision of ensuring libraries can thrive is clear as ever, especially as we celebrate the monumental achievement of 150 years of impact. I am honored to partner with you as we work to unite and strengthen ALA and our nation's libraries. **ALA**

---

**DAN MONTGOMERY** is executive director of the American Library Association. Reach him at [dmontgomery@ala.org](mailto:dmontgomery@ala.org).

### Barnes Wins 2027–2028 ALA Presidency

Tamika Barnes, associate dean of Perimeter College Library Services at Georgia State University in Atlanta, has been elected 2026–2027 president-elect of the American Library Association (ALA).

Barnes received 3,827 votes, while her opponent, Becky Calzada, district library coordinator at Leander (Tex.) Independent School District, received 2,742 votes.

“I am deeply honored by the trust ALA members have placed in me,” Barnes said in a statement following the Association’s April 6 announcement of the election outcome. “Throughout this campaign, I have listened to members across library types and career stages, and I will continue to lead with that same commitment to connection, transparency, and responsiveness. Together, we will foster an ALA that is bold in its advocacy, clear in its purpose, and prepared to meet the challenges and opportunities ahead.”

Barnes is currently Georgia Library Association (GLA) president. She served on the GLA executive board from 2013 to 2021, the ALA Executive Board from 2018 to 2021, and ALA Council from 2015 to 2018 and 2019 to 2021. Barnes is a member of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) and the Black Caucus of ALA (BCALA). She has served on numerous ALA committees and groups, including the ALA Budget Analysis and Review Committee, two



Tamika Barnes

ALA presidential advisory committees, and the ACRL Conference Experience and Inclusion Committee. She is a Spectrum Scholar.

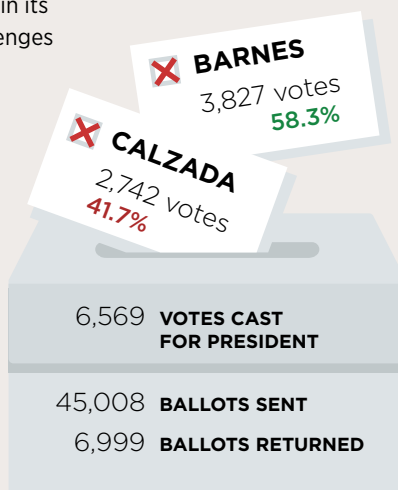
Barnes has received several honors, including the 2021 GLA Bob Richardson Memorial Award and the 2017 BCALA Library Advocacy Award. She is also recognized as a 2024 Library Senior Fellow at University of California, Los Angeles, and a 2019 fellow at Leading Change Institute.

Barnes holds a BA in biology from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and an MLS from North Carolina Central University in Durham.

In her candidate statement published in *American Libraries* (Mar./Apr., p. 6), Barnes pledged that her presidency would focus on four pillars: unified advocacy; inclusive leadership and professional growth; equity, access, and intellectual freedom; and transparency and stewardship.

“I have seen firsthand how ALA’s values of equity, diversity, inclusion, intellectual freedom, and social responsibility are lived out every day by library workers across the country,” Barnes wrote. “These values have shaped my own leadership, which is collaborative, grounded in integrity, and centered on community impact.”

She will assume the presidency of ALA at the conclusion of the 2027 Annual Conference and Exhibition in New Orleans, following the presidency of Maria McCauley, which will begin in June. ●



### State of America’s Libraries 2026 Report Released

On April 20, ALA released the *State of America’s Libraries 2026* report, its annual survey of library trends. The report was published during National Library Week, held April 19–25.

Censorship attempts were at the forefront in this year’s report. ALA’s Office for Intellectual Freedom recorded attempts

to censor 4,235 unique titles in 2025, nearly 2,000 more titles than in 2024 and only five fewer than 2023’s record. Of the 4,235 titles targeted, 1,671 feature or are written by LGBTQ+ individuals and those who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color.

The report also found that approximately 91.7% of the titles challenged in 2025 were targeted by pressure groups (20.8%) and government decision

makers (70.9%). By comparison, only 2.7% of challenges came from parents, and 1.4% came from individual library users.

The report also includes a list of the Top 10 Most Frequently Challenged Books of 2025, including *Sold* by Patricia McCormick and *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky.

To read the full 2026 report, visit [bit.ly/SOALRep-26](http://bit.ly/SOALRep-26).

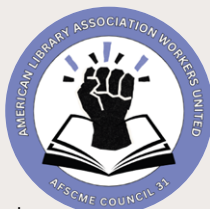
# ALA Staff Move to Form Union

In a March 2 open letter signed by 40 employees, ALA staff announced the start of efforts to unionize with the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), which represents more than 35,000 library workers nationwide. Unionized ALA members would join Council 31 of AFSCME, which represents approximately 3,000 members in Illinois, where ALA's headquarters is located. If certified, ALA Workers United/AFSCME will represent more than 100 workers in ALA's offices and divisions.

The letter cited "multi-round layoffs, increased workloads, benefits reductions, financial crises, ingrained salary disparities, and lack of transparent decision-making" as contributing factors in their move to unionize. Since spring 2025, ALA has reduced its workforce from 198 staffers to 161.

"ALA's mission has always been rooted in the belief that people deserve a voice in their communities, in their institutions, and in the decisions that affect their lives," said ALA Executive Director Dan Montgomery, former president of the Illinois Federation of Teachers, in a statement the day after the announcement. "That belief extends to our own workplace. We respect our employees' legal right to organize and will engage in this process thoughtfully and in good faith."

A representation petition with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) was filed on April 1, initiating the formal process for an NLRB-administered vote for union representation. In-person voting took place April 24; mail-in ballots were due May 22. Read more at [bit.ly/AL-union](https://bit.ly/AL-union). ●



## New Virtual Career Fair Announced

ALA JobLIST, the online career center provided by ALA and ACRL, is offering a virtual career fair June 17 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Central. Accessible from any device, the event is designed to help job seekers learn about participating employers and positions they're hiring for. Job seekers can connect with representatives from these organizations for one-on-one chats to share their background and experience and ask questions. Both job seekers and employers can register at [ala.org/career-fair](https://ala.org/career-fair).

ALA's Office for Human Resource Development and Recruitment will also

host the ALA JobLIST Placement and Career Development Center June 27–28 at ALA's 2026 Annual Conference and Exhibition in Chicago (see p. 20). The center will offer an open-house job fair, mentoring, headshot photography, résumé review, and career guidance workshops. Learn more at [bit.ly/AC26-career](https://bit.ly/AC26-career).

## Laufey Named Library Card Sign-Up Month Honorary Chair

Icelandic Chinese composer, singer, producer, and multi-instrumentalist Laufey has been named honorary chair of Library Card Sign-Up Month. The celebration is observed each September, with libraries across the country reminding parents

## CALENDAR

2026

**ALA's 150th Anniversary**

JUNE

**Rainbow Book Month**

[bit.ly/RBMonth](https://bit.ly/RBMonth)

JUNE 25–29

**ALA's Annual Conference and Exhibition** | Chicago

[alaannual.org](https://alaannual.org)

JULY 28–30

**United for Libraries Virtual**

[bit.ly/United-Virtual](https://bit.ly/United-Virtual)

SEPT.

**Library Card Sign-Up Month**

[bit.ly/LibCardSU](https://bit.ly/LibCardSU)

OCT. 1–3

**ALSC National Institute**

Buffalo, New York

[bit.ly/-Inst](https://bit.ly/-Inst)

OCT. 4–10

**Banned Books Week**

[bannedbooksweek.org](https://bannedbooksweek.org)

OCT. 18–24

**National Friends of Libraries Week**

[bit.ly/ALA-NFLW](https://bit.ly/ALA-NFLW)

NOV.

**International Games Month**

[bit.ly/ALA-igm](https://bit.ly/ALA-igm)

NOV. 18–20

**Core Forum** | Louisville, Kentucky

[coreforum.org](https://coreforum.org)

APR. 2027

**National School Library Month**

[ala.org/aasl/advocacy/slm](https://ala.org/aasl/advocacy/slm)

APR. 7–10, 2027

**ACRL 2027** | Portland, Oregon

[ala.org/acrl](https://ala.org/acrl)

APR. 11–17, 2027

**National Library Week**

[ala.org/nlw](https://ala.org/nlw)

JUNE 24–28, 2027

**ALA's Annual Conference and Exhibition** | New Orleans

[bit.ly/Annual-future](https://bit.ly/Annual-future)

## UPDATE

that the most important school supply of all is a library card. The 2026 theme is “A Library Card Hits All the Right Notes!” In addition to her honorary chair role, Laufey is featured on a new READ poster, available in the ALA Store alongside official Library Card Sign-Up Month posters and bookmarks.

### ALA Awards \$3.5 Million in Accessibility Grants

ALA announced in April the fourth and final round of recipients of its Libraries Transforming Communities (LTC): Accessible Small and Rural Communities grant, an initiative to help increase the accessibility of libraries to better serve people with disabilities.

Fifty libraries will receive grants of \$20,000 and 250 libraries will receive grants of \$10,000 to create services or improve their facilities, services, or programs based on needs identified by the primary audience they wish to serve, such as people with physical disabilities, learning disabilities, or intellectual disabilities.

Recipients include Morgan (Utah) High School, which will fund a new calming space with adaptive furniture for students with disabilities, and Cambridge Springs (Pa.) Public Library, which will increase accessibility in its library building with high-contrast signs, page magnifiers, and assistive technology.

Previously funded LTC projects have included installing chair lifts and hearing loops, hosting arts and crafts programs for community members living with dementia and memory loss, creating accessible outdoor spaces such as community gardens and playgrounds, and offering mental health programs for high school students.

View the full list of grantees at [bit.ly/LTC-access-4](https://bit.ly/LTC-access-4).

### Carnegie Medals on Hiatus

The 2026 Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence in Fiction and Nonfiction, to be presented at ALA's Annual Conference and Exhibition in June, will mark the conclusion of the Carnegie Corporation's

## Trump Administration Withdraws Appeal, Securing Historic Victory for IMLS

Two lawsuits challenging the Trump administration's efforts to dismantle the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) ended in early April, allowing IMLS to continue carrying out its congressionally mandated work. On April 6, the administration withdrew its appeal of a federal judge's ruling that struck down its efforts to shutter IMLS in a suit brought by 21 state attorneys general. Three days later, ALA and AFSCME announced a settlement with the US Department of Justice to resolve a similar but separate lawsuit.

The agreement ensures that IMLS will continue to award grants, conduct research, and operate programs nationwide. It also reinstates previously terminated grants, reverses staff reductions, and bars further efforts to implement the executive order targeting the agency. A November 2025 decision had already nullified the administration's actions and permanently barred further attempts to eliminate the agency.

“Today's action finally lays to rest President Trump's executive order that threatened countless library services available to anyone who walks into one of our nation's 115,000 public, school, academic, and other libraries,” said ALA President Sam Helmick in an April 7 statement regarding the Trump administration's withdrawal. “This is a triumph for everyone who values access to information, education, and opportunity. Libraries can move forward with confidence that IMLS funding will be available to sustain the vital services communities rely on.”

Still, the White House's proposed federal budget for FY2027 eliminates funding for IMLS and the Innovative Approaches to Literacy program supporting school libraries, and proposes steep cuts to library-eligible federal programs, including the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts. As Congress moves forward with the annual appropriations process, ALA urges advocates to contact their members of Congress in support of continued federal funding for libraries. ●

support for the medals, ALA announced on March 30. ALA is seeking a new sponsor to continue this recognition of outstanding writing for adult titles.

The 2026 Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction will be presented to Megha Majumdar (see Newsmaker, p. 14) for *A Guardian and a Thief* (Knopf), and the Medal for Excellence in Nonfiction will be presented to Yiyun Li for *Things in Nature Merely Grow* (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux).

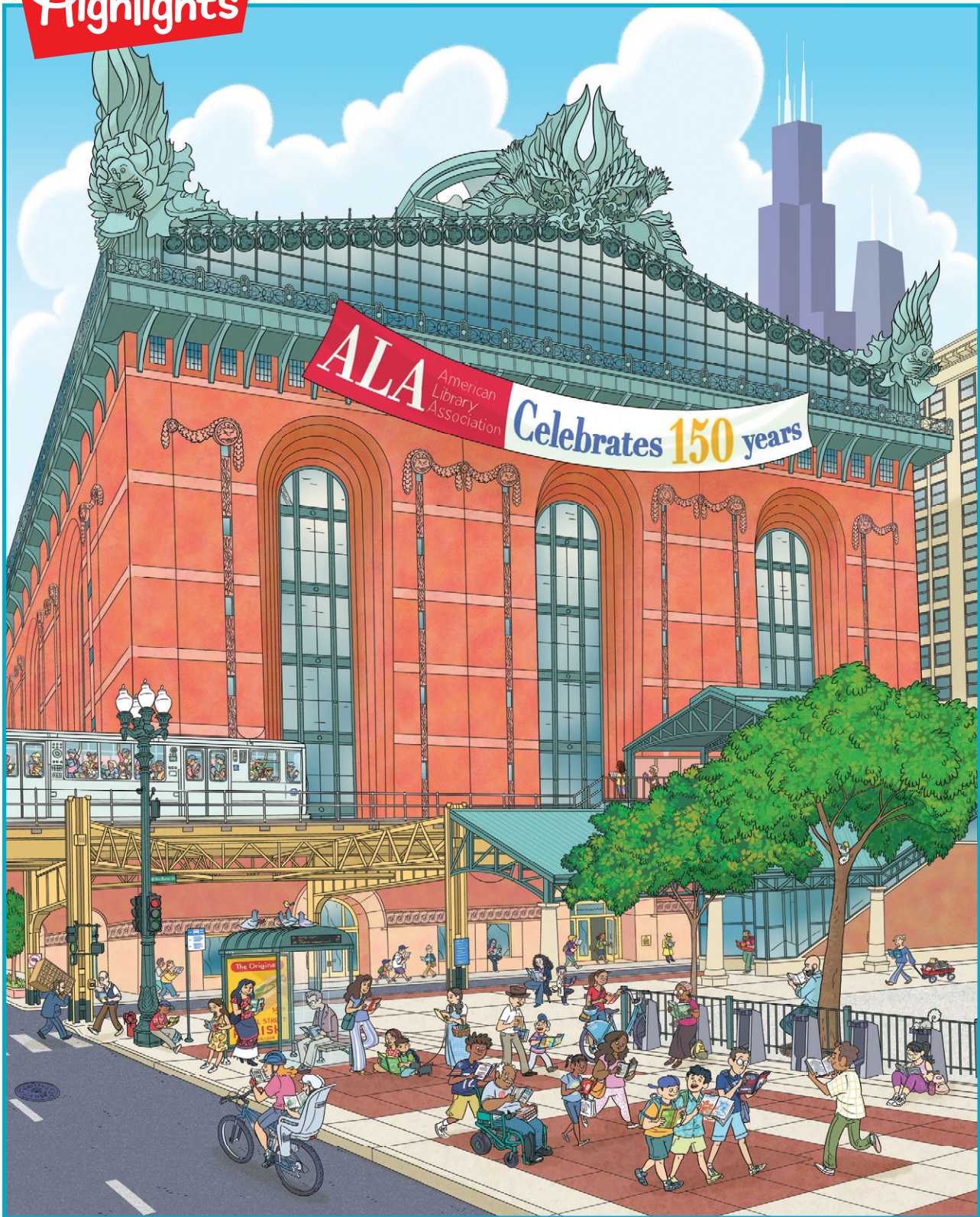
The Andrew Carnegie Medals were established in 2012 with a grant from

Carnegie Corporation of New York and have been cosponsored by ALA's *Booklist* and the Reference and User Services Association. The medals, ALA's first single-book awards for adult books, have been chosen by a committee of library professionals and booksellers.

### New Toolkit Supports Health Literacy

Twelve libraries have been selected for the Digital Pathways: Online Health Literacy Programming for Adults initiative, a pilot program that supports libraries'

# Highlights



water taxi



bear



penny



white sock



bottle



carrot



funnel



traffic cone



deep-dish pizza slice



flowerpot



baseball bat



ladder



briefcase

## ALA 150: A Hidden Pictures Puzzle

- |                |             |                               |            |               |                       |                |              |          |            |                           |
|----------------|-------------|-------------------------------|------------|---------------|-----------------------|----------------|--------------|----------|------------|---------------------------|
|                |             |                               |            |               |                       |                |              |          |            |                           |
| remote control | winter boot | Sue the T. rex                | toothbrush | slice of cake | mug                   | button         | spatula      | hot dog  | flashlight | Abraham Lincoln's top hat |
|                |             |                               |            |               |                       |                |              |          |            |                           |
| sledgehammer   | spray paint | Wrigley's gum stick (wrapped) | golf club  | lantern       | Cloud Gate (The Bean) | vacuum cleaner | mobile phone | bear cub |            |                           |

# ALA Files Amicus Brief in Support of Broadband Funding

On March 20, in response to a legal challenge in the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, ALA filed a friend-of-the-court brief affirming the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Universal Service Fund and its E-Rate program, which helps power broadband-enabled services and access through public libraries and schools. The brief notes that rural and low-income communities would suffer most from the loss of E-Rate discounts.

"There is no substitute for E-Rate," said ALA President Sam Helmick in a March 20 statement. "Without it, communities lose access to the tools that make modern life possible—homework, job applications, telehealth, tax filing. This isn't theoretical. It's immediate, and it's personal. Eliminating E-Rate is choosing to disconnect people at the exact moment our connection matters most. ALA affirms that E-Rate works as intended to serve Americans. Access to information is not a luxury, it's infrastructure."

The current legal challenge by Consumers' Research comes on the heels of its three consecutive losses since 2022 in the 5th, 6th, and 11th circuit courts, culminating in a June 2025 Supreme Court decision to uphold the Universal Service Fund. ●

online health literacy programming, ALA announced on March 20. Developed with a team of national advisors in collaboration with UnitedHealthcare, the free guide aims to help library workers reduce disparities in health care access and foster active engagement in personal health management for adults.

The selected libraries will receive \$8,000 stipends to cover costs associated with implementing programs from the guide, along with personal development resources and access to a community of practice for peer sharing and learning.

Visit [bit.ly/ALA-Pathways](https://bit.ly/ALA-Pathways) to access the guide and learn more.

---

## New E-Course Supports Libraries as Leaders in Bridging Divides

ALA has released a new free guide and e-course, developed in collaboration with the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD) and supported by the Ford Foundation, to equip library

workers with tools to facilitate challenging conversations on divisive issues and promote understanding and empathy.

The Libraries as Leaders in Bridging Divides project builds on the success of Libraries Transforming Communities, an initiative launched in 2014 that has provided millions in funding to support community-focused projects nationwide.

The Leading Polarizing Conversations facilitation guide ([bit.ly/LTC-Divide](https://bit.ly/LTC-Divide)) provides tools to help library workers plan for and design conversations with best practices. The five-module, asynchronous e-course, free with an ALA account, incorporates NCDD tools and resources, including prompts, templates, and a conversation-planning tool.

---

## Report Released on Programs for Older Adults

ALA in March released a new landscape report under the Aging Together: An Evaluation of Library Programming for Older

Adults initiative to better understand the current state of library programming for an aging population.

The report, based on high-level review of existing literature by ALA and Knology with support from the John A. Hartford Foundation, finds that libraries generally concentrate their efforts in four areas: leisure, lifelong learning, health, and digital technologies. Existing data on program effectiveness is severely limited, though the available evidence suggests that libraries are positively impacting older adults' lives by improving knowledge, attitudes, and skills; advancing physical, mental, and emotional well-being; and strengthening social connectedness and feelings of community belonging.

Read the full report at [bit.ly/Aging-landscape](https://bit.ly/Aging-landscape). A final report with recommendations and best practices for programming is expected in February 2027.

---

## Two Members Join ALA Executive Board

ALA Council announced on February 3 that it has elected Lesliediana Jones and Shauntee Burns-Simpson to serve on the ALA Executive Board. Elected board members will begin a three-year term in July 2026 and conclude in June 2029.

Jones is director of Arthur Neef Law Library at Wayne State University Library System and assistant professor at Wayne State University Law School in Detroit. She is also a councilor-at-large on ALA Council, president of the Freedom to Read Foundation, and a member of ALA's Committee on Legislation.

Burns-Simpson is director of youth and family services at DC Public Library. She is also an ALA councilor representing the Black Caucus of ALA and president of the Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table. She serves on the Freedom to Read Foundation board and the Public Library Association board of directors until her term ends at Annual.

Learn more about ALA's Executive Board at [bit.ly/ALA-EB](https://bit.ly/ALA-EB). [ALA](#)

# TRANSFORM THE FUTURE

## LEAVE A LEGACY

Would you like to leave a legacy of your values and vision? Contact the American Library Association's Development Office to learn more about joining the Legacy Society or our planned giving circle for people under 50, the 1876 Club. We are happy to work with you to design the right planned gift for you, whether you are interested in an estate gift or in naming ALA as a beneficiary of your life insurance or retirement plan. Email us at [development@ala.org](mailto:development@ala.org) or call 312-280-5049 and start your legacy today.



## ALA LEGACY SOCIETY HONOR ROLL OF DONORS

Anonymous (3)  
Susan D. and  
Roger Ballard\*\*  
Robert E. Banks\*\*  
Cassandra Barnett  
Anne K. Beaubien\*\*  
John W. and Alice M. Berry\*\*  
Katharina Blackstead\*\*  
Irene L. Briggs\*\*  
Francis J. Buckley, Jr.  
Dr. Rachel Ivy Clarke  
Michele V. Cloonan &  
Sidney E. Berger\*\*  
Trevor A. Dawes\*\*  
Carol Pitts Diedrichs\*\*  
Lenore England  
Ellen Fader\*\*  
Janice Feye-Stukas\*\*  
Carole & Stan Fiore\*  
Shirley Fitzgibbons  
Barbara J. Ford\*  
Charles Garris  
Julia Gelfand &  
David Lang\*\*  
Carolyn Giambra\*\*

Lori Goetsch &  
Martin Courtois  
Tracie D. Hall  
Carl Harvey II  
Dr. Ken Haycock\*\*  
Anne Heanue  
Rodney M. &  
Susan C. Hersberger  
Nann Blaine Hilyard\*  
Pam Spencer Holley  
Suellen Hoy  
Alexia Hudson-Ward\*\*  
Richard L. Huffine\*\*  
Robin Kear  
Dr. Em Claire Knowles\*\*  
Nancy Kranich  
Charles E. Kratz, Jr. &  
William Varady, Jr.  
John A. Lehner  
James W. Lewis  
Dale Lipschultz  
Sarah Ann Long\*\*  
Shirley Loo\*  
Geri Hansen Mann\*\*  
Mike Marlin

Stephen L. Matthews  
Maria McCauley  
John N. Mitchell\*  
Sally Moen  
Mike Morgan  
David Mowery\*\*  
Jim & Fran Neal\*\*  
Robert Newlen  
Sylvia K. Norton  
David Nutty  
Joyce L. Ogburn &  
Steven A. Eichner\*\*  
Kimberly Patton\*\*  
Molly & Ted Raphael\*\*  
Monica Rettig  
Larry Romans &  
Mike Morgan\*\*  
Frances R. Roscello  
Robert F. Rose  
April Roy  
Patricia Glass Schuman  
Helen H. Spalding &  
Karl F. Johnson\*\*

David & Cindy Steinhoff  
Roberta & George Stevens\*\*  
Karin Suni  
Teri Switzer  
Ann Symons\*  
Jay Toor\*  
William L. Turner, Jr.\*\*  
Betty Turock\*  
Beatriz Pascual Wallace\*\*  
Marina Welmers\*\*  
J. Linda Williams\*\*  
Patricia "Patty" Wong  
Gail Wrona

### IN GRATEFUL MEMORY Friends whose bequests have been realized since the 1990s

Leo Albert  
William G. Asp\*\*  
Peggy Barber\*  
Emily Cloyd  
Arthur Curley

Mary Ruth Y. Duncan  
Ruth Frame  
Eleanore Futas  
Florence Gambino  
Reiza Gaunt  
Dr. Joan R. Giesecke  
Ruth I. Gordon\*  
Ellin Greene\*  
Helga Herz  
Gerald Hodges\*  
Carse McDaniel\*  
Regina Minudri  
Sara Elizabeth Mitchell  
Virginia B. Moore\*\*  
William C. Morris  
Jeraline N. Nerney  
Margaret "Peg" Oettinger\*  
Mildred Othmer Peterson  
Jim Rettig  
Peggy Sullivan\*  
John Symons\*  
Ruth Toor\*  
Patricia A. Wand\*\*  
Lee Wheeler

## 1876 CLUB CHARTER MEMBERS

Anonymous (2)  
Peter Daniel Coyl  
Emily Drabinski  
Ann Dutton Ewbank  
Maryanne Flynn  
John "Mack" Freeman  
Edward Andrew Garcia  
Loida Garcia-Febo  
Peter Hepburn  
Andrew M. Medlar  
Sheila O'Donnell  
Andrew K. Pace  
Lessa Kanani'opua  
Pelayo-Lozada  
Gina Persichini  
Jo Phillips  
Nicole L. Powell  
Mark D. Robison  
Christopher S. Warren  
Steven D. Yates  
Courtney L. Young

\* Charter Member \*\* ALA Legacy Member/15x15 planned giving campaign

Development Office, American Library Association  
225 N Michigan Ave Suite 1300, Chicago, IL 60601  
312-280-5049 • [development@ala.org](mailto:development@ala.org) • [www.ala.org/plannedgiving](http://www.ala.org/plannedgiving)

Learn more about estate planning  
and leave a gift to ALA in your will.

# TRENDS



A fairy house on display at Port Townsend (Wash.) Public Library. The library uses items from nearby beaches and trails for its workshops.

topics ranging from folklore and architecture to environmental awareness, all sprinkled with the fairy-dust joy of imagining where an enchanted creature might make a home.

"I was astounded by the architecture," Bunker says. One child created a porch using one of the milk carton flaps. Another framed a balsa wood door with shells in a symmetrical pattern. "We need whimsy in our world right now," she adds.

## The Gnome Depot

Fairy house workshops combine nature, enchantment ... and a bit of moss

By Karen Lindell

It wasn't her usual workplace attire, but Katherine Bunker was really looking forward to donning a pair of glittery green fairy wings.

Bunker, children's librarian at Centennial Park Library (CPL) in Greeley, Colorado, had that opportunity as she prepared for one of her most popular summer programs last year. She also set out twigs, moss, leaves, pine cones, acorns, rocks, grass, berries, and other items gathered from her own home and around the library grounds.

Her workshop, part of the "Color Your World"—themed summer reading program, invited children to create fairy houses: tiny, whimsical structures made mostly out of natural materials. The event reached the program's capacity of 20, with a waitlist.

"We were trying to think outside of paint and canvas" for a hands-on craft, says Mallory Pillard, CPL manager, describing how the event came to life. "The project opened

discussion about fantasies, fairy tales, and recycling, and trickled into curiosity for new topics."

Workshops where participants create fairy or gnome houses, offered at public libraries across the country, are gaining traction for their lighthearted appeal, suitability for all ages, and low-tech implementation, as supplies are cheap or free, often gathered from nature or recycled.

Funding for Bunker's workshop came from the annual summer reading program budget. The only purchases she made were twine, additional dried grass and moss (about \$20), and six-inch terracotta flowerpot saucers for the house foundations (\$45 for 20 saucers). The library offers a summer lunch program that includes individual cartons of milk, so Bunker recycled them into house structures. Participants glued natural materials onto the cartons.

These workshop, while encouraging creativity, have tied into learning

### Building up to code

Lacey Alexis is assistant library technician at Juneau (Alaska) Public Library (JPL), which is surrounded by natural beauty, but much of it is wet and muddy, even in summer. Children at her first fairy workshop in 2023—inspired by the cardboard dollhouses she made with her sister as a child—were instructed to bring leaves, stones, and sticks, but she needed to find less soggy supplies.

Alexis hit thrift stores and found plastic foliage and flowers, beads, buttons, glitter, and other items, all for about \$75. To make sure everyone had the same house frame, she cut up cardboard boxes into uniform shapes that could be formed into houses. She made 30 boxes, figuring on the average attendance for a program at her library. Dressed in gossamer white fairy wings and wearing a crown of flowers atop her long braids, Alexis nearly panicked on the day of the workshop when 130 people arrived. A tip she learned that day: Ask people to register, because these fairy workshops fill to capacity.

With only 30 house bases available, the kids had to form teams. "We ended up with a bunch of fairy

“We ended up with a bunch of fairy apartments and condominiums. It turned into a lesson on shared housing.”

**LACEY ALEXIS**, assistant library technician at Juneau (Alaska) Public Library

apartments and condominiums,” Alexis says. “It turned into a lesson on shared housing.”

As word of the workshops has spread, community members have started donating materials, including cardstock and corks.

The program was originally envisioned for children, but when older patrons in 2025 asked for their own event, it expanded to two workshops: one for kids and another for adults. The two-day workshop attracted 136 kids and 67 adults.

Alexis was impressed with one adult who used the remains of a wreath from a craft store. Some other participants plucked the wreath’s foliage for their houses. The underlying wire circle was laying discarded, “but someone took it and made a beautiful fairy door, a portal into her fairy world.”

### Nurturing nature

Emily Rucker, youth and outreach manager at Port Townsend (Wash.) Public Library (PTPL), also uses fairy house workshops to connect participants to the environment. She was inspired by a nearby library that had run a similar workshop with a local gardening author. “We liked that she talked about the

importance of using natural materials,” Rucker says.

PTPL has offered fairy house workshops as part of its summer reading program since 2024 and is planning another for 2026. “It’s one of our most popular summer programs,” Rucker says.

For its first workshop, the library partnered with a local children’s book author to offer a combined author talk and interactive fairy house workshop for kids ages 4–12, which drew 100 participants. In 2026, Rucker plans to read *Fairy Walk* by Gaia Cornwall.

She uses the workshops to lead discussions on the importance of using organic materials and respecting nature and wildlife. “We talk about camouflage, how both animals and fairies stay hidden.”

To prepare for each workshop, Rucker collects shells, feathers, leaves, and flowers on nearby beaches or trails—“things that wouldn’t be disruptive to natural habitats” if removed, she says.

PTPL had kids build a little fairy neighborhood around the library, on trails, pathways, and in trees and gardens. Some of these houses were triangular, lean-to structures made of sticks; others resembled moss-covered stone hobbit homes. The library’s Friends group cleared the houses at the end of the summer. The only cost was an honorarium for the author at the first workshop.

“A lot of kids have been exposed to fairy tales or stories about fairies,” Rucker says. The fairy house project “gives them an opportunity to make it their own and gets them thinking about how to reuse material items for another purpose.” **AL**

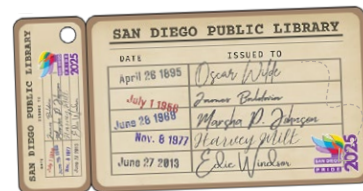
**KAREN LINDELL** is a writer and editor from Palm Springs, California.

## BY THE NUMBERS

### Pride Month

**200**

Approximate number of entries San Diego Public Library received for



its 2025 Pride library card contest. The winning design, made by Annie Alwine, resembles a vintage date-due slip filled with names of LGBTQ+ icons, including Marsha P. Johnson, Harvey Milk, and Edie Windsor.

**2015**

Year that author and activist Michelle Tea launched Drag Story Hour (DSH), in which drag performers read books to children. DSH, first hosted at San Francisco Public Library’s Eureka Valley/Harvey Milk Memorial branch, has since become a non-profit with 30 international chapters and inspired countless spin-offs.

**50,000**

Approximate number of panels stitched into the AIDS Memorial Quilt. The Library of Congress, in collaboration with the National AIDS Memorial, offers a digitized version of the quilt and a collection of print materials, including photos, letters, and news clippings, that correspond to the lives of the approximately 110,000 people represented in the panels.

**2**

Number of LGBTQ+ book clubs hosted by Gerber/Hart LGBTQ+ Library and Archives in Chicago. The 45-year-old circulating library hosts



the quarterly Yearning and Learning Book Club (open to those who like to read “in a gay way”) and the monthly Ace Book Club (which explores asexuality through literature) both in person and virtually.

# Megha Majumdar

Award-winning author on how libraries and reading affirm humanity



**Your descriptions of a near-future Kolkata are so vivid. Did you return there while writing this novel?** My parents still live in Kolkata, and I used to visit them regularly, but now that I have two small children, I haven't been back in a while. The longer I live in the United States, the more I feel that this country provides a lens through which I can glimpse aspects of Kolkata. The humor of its street life, for instance, has grown more apparent to me.

**Moral dilemmas in desperate situations worsened by the climate crisis abound in your novel. What are the challenges of addressing these matters in such a concise novel that is set over the course of seven fatal days?** Compression is exciting to me. I love putting pressure on my words and sentences to prove themselves. A novel is a claim on a reader's time, and I take that claim seriously. In this novel, I wanted enough time so that the characters would have room to undergo profound changes, and at the same time, I also wanted a menacing sense of them approaching something dangerous.

**Isn't love what compels us to be a guardian and a thief?** You're right. I am interested in how intricate, how murky, how vicious love can be. **AL**

**M**egha Majumdar lit up the book world in 2020 with her first novel, *A Burning*, a galvanizing tale of social media and tyranny. It became a bestseller, was named best book of the year by many publications, and was a finalist for ALA's Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction.

Born and raised in Kolkata, India, Majumdar studied social anthropology at Harvard, then earned a master's in anthropology at Johns Hopkins. Her gripping second novel, *A Guardian and a Thief*, is set in a near-future Kolkata besieged by the ever-worsening climate crisis. It received this year's Carnegie Medal for fiction, which will be presented to Majumdar on June 27 at ALA's Annual Conference and Exhibition in Chicago.

BY  
Donna  
Seaman

**How important has reading been to your writing?** Reading is absolutely essential, not only to my writing life but to my sense of peace and well-being as a person. Being borne along by a book—living with its characters, encountering moments of surprise or exhilaration when it teaches me something—makes me feel closer to my own life. Reading is a form of living with attention, just as writing is.

**What role have libraries played in your life?** Libraries are among the few remaining places in society where we don't have to be consumers. We can be people. It's extraordinary in our society to feel welcomed into a place to read—or to look up information on a computer, prepare a résumé, study for an exam, do a jigsaw puzzle, borrow a telescope—without something being extracted from us. It's an affirmation of our humanity. As a child, I scoured libraries for Nancy Drew, and as an adult, libraries are often where I write. I have my favorite desks at New York Public Library and Brooklyn Public Library branches, and the atmosphere of everyone working away at their own project

changes the quality of time. There's more of it at the library.

**Both of your novels were finalists for the Carnegie Medal. For each, *Booklist* asked you to create reading lists. The first is "Politically Engaged Contemporary Fiction" ([bit.ly/BL-M1](https://bit.ly/BL-M1)); the second is "For the Pleasure of Plot" ([bit.ly/BL-M2](https://bit.ly/BL-M2)). Why are these aspects of fiction central for you?** How does a reader have fun with a book and move through the world of the book exactly as the book intends? Those are craft questions I take seriously. And fiction for me has always been a way of engaging with the world, of attending to its baffling questions, of approaching its vast systems and networks. The scale of the novel seems particularly suited to this task.

#### MORE ONLINE

For the extended interview, visit [bit.ly/AL-Megha](https://bit.ly/AL-Megha) after June 1.



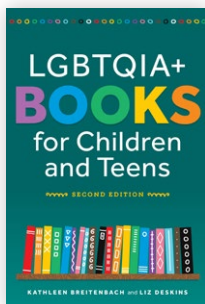
Photo: Marco Giugliarelli

# Confident Readers' Advisory

Reach for the right recommendations with these resources



**RACHEL ROSENBERG** is a children's librarian in Vancouver, British Columbia.



## LGBTQIA+ Books for Children and Teens, 2nd edition

BY Kathleen Breitenbach and Liz Deskins

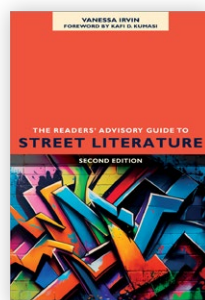
This resource text provides suggestions for librarians wanting to choose a variety of titles across the LGBTQIA+ spectrum, while contextualizing the significance of these collections. It includes an overview of the history of LGBTQIA+ children's and YA literature with perspectives from authors and intellectuals. This new edition focuses on titles published since 2020, including many that feature both queer and multicultural representation, and provides updated information on recent book challenges and how librarians can respond. ALA Editions, 2023. 224 p. \$49.99. PBK. 978-0-8389-3857-7.



## Librarian Tales: Funny, Strange, and Inspiring Dispatches from the Stacks

BY William Ottens

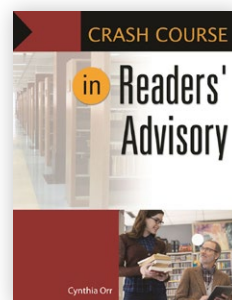
William Ottens, who runs the popular blog Librarian Problems, has worked across many library departments and amassed many tales from the field. This collection of essays offers realistic snapshots of public library work, including readers' advisory (RA) and reference services. Though the section on RA is a small part of the text, it has clear examples of what a librarian in public service deals with daily. Stories include muddling through confusing reference interviews involving misheard titles, locating books based purely on a cover image, and weathering prank phone calls, which readers may find validating as well as enlightening. Skyhorse Publishing, 2020. 240 p. \$16.99. PBK. 978-1-5107-5588-8. (Also available as an ebook.)



## The Readers' Advisory Guide to Street Literature, 2nd edition

BY Vanessa Irvin

This guide focuses on street literature (also known as urban fiction) and offers fantastic recommendations. It also serves as an example of how to provide strong, succinct readers' advisory overall. Irvin writes that "readers' advisory for street lit requires the librarian to care about the genre, but more importantly, to care about the patron." Starting with a brief history of Black art forms and how street lit became popular, Irvin examines the topic in depth, exploring motifs, characteristics, tropes, and setting. This new edition updates the 2011 original with more recent recommendations and research. ALA Editions, 2024. 176 p. \$54.99. PBK. 979-8-89255-569-2.



## Crash Course in Readers' Advisory

BY Cynthia Orr

This masterclass helps library staffers by digging into the fundamentals. There are sections on understanding readers and what makes reading enjoyable, and explanations of concepts like appeal and doorways. Orr has specific tips that will stick with readers, like important keywords in reviews that can offer information about a book's pacing or style, or how a page's formatting can tell readers what to expect. Though *Crash Course* was published more than a decade ago, many of the insights are evergreen. Bloomsbury, 2014. 190 p. \$51.95. PBK. 978-1-61069-825-2. (Also available as an ebook.) AL

# Fighting Words

Coping with the abusive language of library critics



**DARCY LIPP-ACORD**  
is collection development manager at Laramie County (Wyo.) Library System.

When I was youth services librarian at Campbell County (Wyo.) Public Library, I hired a magician as a summer reading performer. They happened to be transgender. That scheduled performance—and, as we found out later, the presence of materials at the library by and featuring LGBTQ+ authors and themes—led a group of residents to protest the library starting in 2021. They took out a billboard accusing the library of indoctrinating children, and Executive Director Terri Lesley was ultimately fired in 2023. (After Lesley sued, the county denied the removal was related to library materials but paid her \$700,000 in a settlement.)

Policy issues and legalities aside, what I find concerning are the abusive communication and behavior patterns I see being used by many who attempt to challenge books, ban books, and “protect children.” Here are the patterns I have pointed out to my staff:

**Character assassination.** This includes smear campaigns designed to intimidate and destroy the credibility of library workers and dissuade their supporters. Labeling or name-calling are two tactics. The issue

The people who are attacking us often hope for an emotional response.

becomes irrelevant; the focus shifts to the person behind it, labeling them in a defamatory or negative way.

**Disinformation.** Librarians are used to dealing with misinformation, but disinformation is the intentional use of misinformation to mislead, promote a false narrative, and influence public opinion or policy decisions.

**Gaslighting.** We typically hear about this technique in the personal arena. In this context, however, it involves the use of dishonest statements to lead a victim to question their own reality or feel like they are overreacting. This technique from anti-intellectual freedom protesters can really take a toll on frontline employees.

**Minimizing.** This is the use of statements to diffuse or reduce the perceived impact of the proposed actions or problematic behaviors. This includes characterizing moving books to the adult section as “just common sense” rather than censorship, or denying the impact of legislation restricting library books.

**Volatility.** Some individuals engage in erratic or unpredictable behavior to intimidate or influence what’s going on. At Campbell, the magician and our staff received threats, prompting the performer to cancel for safety reasons. We also started to see large crowds of mostly unknown residents show up at library board meetings, and they tended to resort to verbal outbursts you wouldn’t typically see at a public meeting.

How do we prepare ourselves for these interactions?

First, we need clear policies, including library mission statements that reflect the populations we serve and collection development policies that stem from those missions, and we need to know those policies well.

We also need to know our resources. Local support groups like the library Friends group and some parent groups might be good resources. State library associations, the American Library Association’s Office for Intellectual Freedom, and other state and national resources are also available.

Think about your emotional readiness as well. When I was training my staff, we would talk about safety in steps. I told them that in difficult interactions, their personal safety comes first. Then the safety of other staff members, then the safety of other patrons, and finally the problematic patron. It’s a shift in thinking about our public service model and our perspective.

I recommend formulating and rehearsing talking points to use in tough situations.

Not everybody has the luxury of having other staffers at the desk, but when possible, it’s good to have multiple employees to be a presence and have each other’s backs.

The gray rock technique—answering questions with facts but no emotion—can be valuable. People who attack us often hope for an emotional response, possibly to record and upload to social media.

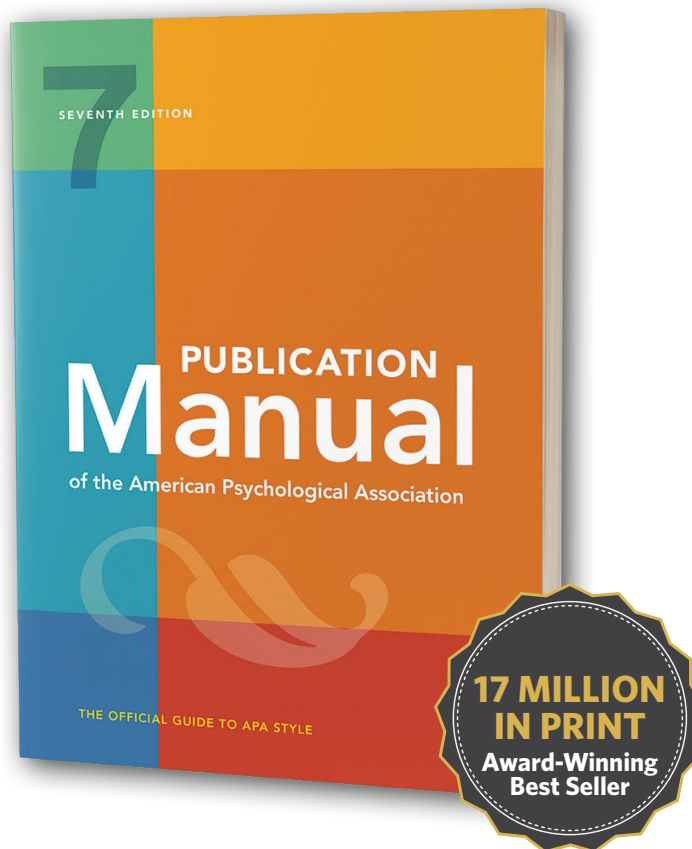
There are many breathing and physical grounding techniques online. One I use is shifting my weight between the balls of my feet as I’m standing at the desk.

Finally, refer to management accordingly. Knowing these procedures is the responsibility of all library workers, but managers should develop guidance for difficult situations. For instance, policies should advise on when manager intervention is needed in an interaction. <sup>AL</sup>

*This column was adapted from a presentation made by the author at Recharging in Challenging Times: An ALA Virtual Event on February 10.*

# APA STYLE

Do you have enough copies of the *Publication Manual* in your library? Stock up now so your students are ready for the fall semester.



## ORDER NOW

Available from major distributors and directly from APA.

### **Publication Manual**

Paperback: 978-1-4338-3216-1  
Hardcover: 978-1-4338-3215-4  
Spiral-bound: 978-1-4338-3217-8

### **Concise Guide to APA Style**

Spiral-bound: 978-1-4338-3273-4

[apastyle.org](http://apastyle.org)



AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

# LIBRARY CHAMPIONS MAKE IT POSSIBLE.



Library  
Champions  
American  
Library  
Association  
Investing in America's Libraries

## LEAD SPONSOR \$50,000 AND ABOVE



Libby.



kanopy



Sora

OverDrive®

overdrive.com

## INVESTORS \$10,000 AND ABOVE



finra.org

MIDWEST TAPE | hoopla

mwt-public-pages.midwesttape.com/hoopla

The New York Times

nytimes.com



norarobertsfoundation.org

Through their generous support, Library Champions increase awareness and advocate for the importance of libraries across the country and around the world.

**PATRON**  
\$7,500 AND ABOVE



**Bound to Stay Bound**  
Linking Libraries to Children's Books

btsb.com

**MEMBERS**  
\$5,000



amazon.com



bibliotheca.com



brodart.com



candlewick.com



clarivate.com



data-axle.com



ebsco.com



follett.com



gale.com



ingramcontent.com/libraries



morningstar.com



oclc.org



sagepub.com



taylorandfrancis.com



**Library Champions**  
American Library Association  
Investing in America's Libraries

An aerial photograph of the Chicago skyline, featuring numerous skyscrapers and buildings. A vibrant rainbow is visible in the sky, arching over the city. The Lake Michigan shoreline is visible in the lower left, with a sandy beach and a road with traffic. The overall scene is bright and colorful, with a mix of blue, green, and yellow tones.

**2026**  
**ANNUAL**  
**CONFERENCE**  
**preview**

**CHICAGO | JUNE 25-29**

**EDITED BY**  
Sallyann Price

The American Library Association (ALA) was founded in Philadelphia in 1876 amid the patriotic spectacle of our nation's centennial celebrations. But it's Chicago, the Association's home for more than a century, that will welcome the library community for a milestone 150th anniversary celebration at the 2026 Annual Conference and Exhibition, to be held June 25–29 at the McCormick Place Convention Center.

The tone and content of this year's slate of speakers, programs, and gatherings strike a balance between the retrospective and the speculative, as library workers and advocates stake out a brighter, stronger, and more inclusive and accessible future for libraries of all types. Other sessions will study the present moment, as technological advancements and cultural upheaval continue to shape the profession.

The conference will 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](http://alaannual.org).

## FEATURED SPEAKERS

Check the Annual Conference scheduler ([bit.ly/AC26-sched](http://bit.ly/AC26-sched)) for the latest information on dates, times, and locations.

Emmy Award–winning journalist, political analyst, and author **RACHEL MADDOW** will open Annual, **4–5:30 p.m. Friday, June 26**. Her latest project is the narrative podcast series *Burn Order*, released in December 2025, which investigates the US government's decision to incarcerate Japanese Americans at the start of World War II.

Two-time Newbery Medal winner **LOIS LOWRY** will preview her forthcoming book for middle-grade readers, *Building 903*, a dystopian novel about a girl's search for her missing brother, **10:30–11:30 a.m. Saturday, June 27**.

**MIN JIN LEE**, bestselling author of the National Book Award finalist *Pachinko*, will talk about her forthcoming contemporary epic, *American Hagwon*, **3:30–4:30 p.m. Saturday, June 27**. The book traces a once comfortably middle-class family in South Korea whose lives are upended by forces that set them on a new path in Southern California.

**GEORGE M. JOHNSON**, author of *All Boys Aren't Blue*, a YA memoir about growing up as a queer Black youth, will speak **9:30–10:30 a.m. Sunday, June 28**. Their next title, out this fall, is *If I Die Before I Wake*, a memoir that addresses the book bans *All Boys* has faced since its 2020 release.

Scholar and author **KIMBERLÉ W. CRENSHAW**, credited with introducing the sociological concepts of critical race theory and intersectionality, will speak **10–11 a.m. Monday, June 29**. Crenshaw will talk about her new memoir, *Backtalker*, which traces how seminal moments in contemporary civil rights discourse have shaped her thinking.



Rachel Maddow

Lois Lowry

Min Jin Lee

George M. Johnson

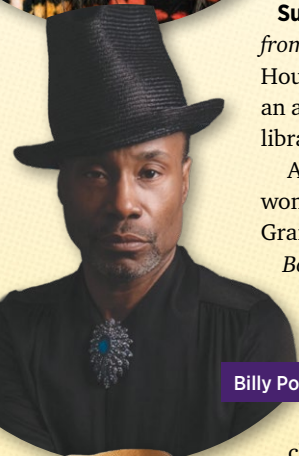
Kimberlé W. Crenshaw

Photos: Ione/Adobe Stock (Chicago); MS NOW (Maddow); Howard Corwin (Lowry); Hae Ran/Channel Yes (Lee); Vincent Marc (Johnson); Anabel Clark (Crenshaw)



Melissa Villaseñor

Actress and comedian **MELISSA VILLASEÑOR**, the first-ever Latina repertory cast member of *Saturday Night Live*, will talk about her forthcoming debut children’s book **1–2 p.m. Sunday, June 28**. *Cat and Lola: School Picture Day* is illustrated by artist Jimena Sánchez Sarquiz.



Billy Porter

**JILL BIDEN**, former First Lady of the United States, will take the stage at the President’s Program of ALA President Sam Helmick, **4–5:30 p.m. Sunday, June 28**. Biden will discuss *View from the East Wing*, a memoir about her White House experiences. The program also includes an awards ceremony recognizing outstanding librarians, authors, and library programs.

Actor and singer **BILLY PORTER**, who won an Emmy for his role in *Pose* and Tony and Grammy awards for his performance in *Kinky Boots*, will speak **1–2 p.m. Monday, June 29**.

Porter will discuss his picture book, *Songbird in the Light*, coauthored by Chris Clarkson with illustrations by Charly Palmer.



Wayne Brady

**WAYNE BRADY**—actor, singer, podcaster, and TV personality—will close Annual, **4–5 p.m. Monday, June 29**.

Brady will discuss his debut novel, *Hard Times*, a time-travel thriller about a father searching for his estranged son, in conversation with his coauthor, librarian and community organizer **MAURICE BROADDUS**.



Jill Biden

## ANNIVERSARY PROGRAMS

### An ALA Legacy Going Strong over 100 Years: The American Library in Paris

11 a.m.–noon Saturday, June 27

Discover the history of the American Library in Paris, founded with ALA support in 1920 (see *AL*, May 2020, p. 30) and later a lifeline for readers in the Nazi-occupied city during World War II. This session will highlight the library’s legacy as a hub for democracy and modern library service, along with its current programs, fundraising efforts, and fellowship opportunities for librarians, authors, and researchers.

### Celebrating 24 Years of the Rise: Feminist Book Project List

1–2 p.m. Saturday, June 27

Celebrate the nearly quarter-century of Rise: A Feminist Book Project, an initiative from the Feminist Task Force of the Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) that promotes feminist literature for young readers. The session will give insight into selection criteria and practical ways to integrate titles into programming and readers’ advisory.

### Resource Sharing (R)evolution: Where Will the Next 150 Years Take Us?

4–5 p.m. Saturday, June 27

This session will explain how resource sharing has evolved from print catalogs and mail delivery to digitization and automated systems. The panel will highlight current innovations in interlibrary loan, legal frameworks, and workflow integration, while looking toward the next 150 years of sharing.

### ALA 150: A Celebration for Our Libraries

5:30–7:30 p.m. Saturday, June 27

Celebrate the Association’s anniversary at this special reception honoring ALA’s legacy while looking ahead to the future of the profession. Enjoy light bites, beverages, a live band and dance floor, a photo booth, special guests, and an exclusive look at rare ALA artifacts. Tickets are \$50.

### Black Presidents of ALA: A Storied History

1–2 p.m. Sunday, June 28

This session will draw on historical research to honor the groundbreaking Black leaders who have led the Association. It will trace their tenures, achievements, and challenges while examining how they shaped equity-focused policies that continue to inform ALA’s future.

### **From Global to Local: How ALA's UN Engagement Strengthens Libraries and Communities**

2:30–3:30 p.m. Sunday, June 28

How has ALA's longstanding global engagement shaped local library impact? Learn how members have connected advocacy at the United Nations and other international networks to programs that advance equity, sustainability, and access in their own communities.

### **Spectrum Scholar Alumni Share Leadership Stories**

2:30–3:30 p.m. Sunday, June 28

A panel of alumni will highlight how investment in underrepresented library workers through ALA's Spectrum Scholarship Program has shaped a new generation of leaders and discuss broader leadership development across the Association.

### **Protecting Our Right to Read: Historic and Current Court Cases**

2:30–3:30 p.m. Monday, June 29

As book bans continue to surge nationwide, legal decisions on censorship from the past and present are shaping the future of free expression. This session, led by former Office for Intellectual Freedom Director Deborah Caldwell Stone, will cover key legal challenges, current high-profile cases, and ALA's history of intellectual freedom advocacy.

## **EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

### **Top Tech Trends**

1–2 p.m. Saturday, June 27

A panel of experts from a range of library settings will share insights on emerging technologies shaping the field. Attendees will learn about key developments, consider their effect on services and staff, and gain practical perspectives on how to adapt as innovation continues to transform library work.

### **Partnering for Democracy: Strategic Collaboration to Deliver Civic Information and Facilitate Voter Participation**

2:30–3:30 p.m. Saturday, June 27

Ahead of the midterm elections this fall, libraries will play a vital role in supporting informed civic participation. This session, moderated by ALA Committee on Legislation Chair Susan Braukus Hempstead, will explore how libraries are partnering to share trusted information, support voters, and strengthen community infrastructure.

### **Beyond the Book: How Libraries Can Fundraise with Author Events**

4–5 p.m. Saturday, June 27

Moderated by publishing executive and former United for Libraries (UFL) President Skip Dye, this panel will discuss

## **JOBLIST PLACEMENT CENTER**

**A**LA's JobLIST Placement and Career Development Center will be onsite at Annual with career workshops and services to help job seekers at any stage of their careers. Visit [bit.ly/AC26-career](http://bit.ly/AC26-career) for a complete list of offerings and to reserve appointments in advance.

### **\* Mentoring on the Fly**

9 a.m.–noon Saturday, June 27

1–4 p.m. Sunday, June 28

Attend brief advice sessions with mentors from academic and public libraries. Walk-ins are welcome, or sign up for an appointment time.

### **\* Photography Services**

9 a.m.–4 p.m. Saturday, June 27

9 a.m.–4 p.m. Sunday, June 28

Need a fresh headshot? For \$20, receive a set of digital images that can be used for job applications, social media, and networking opportunities. Advance sign-up not required.

### **\* Résumé Reviews**

9 a.m.–5 p.m. Saturday, June 27

9 a.m.–5 p.m. Sunday, June 28

Receive guidance on how to create or revise a résumé, whether you're approaching graduation, searching for a new position, or just wanting to fine-tune. 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 28

Employers will have the opportunity to talk about their institutions and available positions. Registration is required for employers but not for job seekers. (JobLIST will also hold a virtual career fair before Annual on June 17. See p. 7 for details.)

how author events can double as fundraising opportunities for libraries. Hear from a speakers bureau representative, a library professional, and an author on booking strategies, event formats, and best practices.

## LIBRARY MARKETPLACE

With multiple 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 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, gaming, and STEAM programming. **Hours:** 5:30–7 p.m. Friday, June 26; 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Saturday, June 27, and Sunday, June 28; and 9 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Monday, June 29.

## ALA STORE

The ALA Store will be located in the Exhibit Hall Concourse (Level 3). **Hours:** 10 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Friday, June 26; 8:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Saturday, June 27; 8:30 a.m.–5 p.m. Sunday, June 28; 8:30 a.m.–2 p.m. Monday, June 29. ●

### Elders Deserve Social Justice Too: Challenging Ageism Toward Older Adults through Libraries, Communities, and ALA 9–10 a.m. Sunday, June 28

As populations age worldwide, libraries must rethink how they serve and engage older adults. This multigenerational panel examines the effect of ageism in library programs, workplaces, and the library profession, and offers practical, data-informed strategies to address issues and design more inclusive services.

### Relationship-Centered Teen Outreach That Makes a Difference: Period Products, Juvenile Detention, and School Partnerships 11 a.m.–noon Monday, June 29

Emily Williams, teen services manager at Metropolitan Library System in Oklahoma, will highlight approaches to teen services that center relationships, access, and real-world needs, particularly for underserved youth.

### Living Archives: Immersive Virtual Reality Discovery Spaces for Libraries and Special Collections 1–2 p.m. Monday, June 29

Browser-based virtual reality (VR) spaces allow users to experience archives as immersive, interactive environments.



## "THE MLIS PROGRAM AT THE iSCHOOL OPENS DOORS FOR YOU,

whether you're an academic, public or school librarian or archivist. It allows you to explore before you settle into a career."

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



**Learn about our #1-ranked program:**  
[ischool.uw.edu/mlis](https://ischool.uw.edu/mlis)

 **Information School**  
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

Review research on VR user engagement and learning, examine accessibility and ethics considerations, and learn how to build a cross-device virtual space for your library.

## TIMELY TOPICS

The following is a selection of sessions representing the conference's Timely Topics series: artificial intelligence (AI), health and safety, intellectual freedom and library advocacy, and library services for targeted communities, such as immigrant, refugee, and LGBTQ+ patrons.

### **Ethical AI in Libraries: A Critical Look at the Promise and Potential**

11 a.m.–noon Sunday, June 28

Rather than focusing on hype, this panel discussion will provide a critical look at generative AI and its implications for libraries. Speakers will address ethical concerns, from bias to environmental ramifications, and offer ways to help library workers navigate this evolving landscape with clarity and care.

### **United to Read Freely: How a State-Level Coalition Won Big by Sticking Together**

1–2 p.m. Sunday, June 28

Last summer, Rhode Island's governor signed one of the nation's strongest anti-censorship laws, safeguarding libraries and schools from book challenges. This panel unpacks how a coalition of librarians, authors, educators, publishers, and parents turned grassroots organizing into legislative success.

### **Strategic Planning Reimagined: AI and Gamification in Public Libraries**

2:30–3:30 p.m. Sunday, June 28

Staffers from Pueblo City–County (Colo.) Library District will share how they used gamification, roleplay, and AI tools to rethink their strategic planning. Attendees will learn how AI can be leveraged to reduce bias, engage staff, and align decision making with data.

### **Beyond Bookmobiles: Mobile Branches for Equity, Access, and Disaster Readiness**

9–10 a.m. Monday, June 29

The mobile library model—branches that rely on electric vans to deliver Wi-Fi, technology, materials, and programming—helps communities facing transportation barriers or disaster aftermath. This session will provide a practical toolkit for designing and branding mobile services as an equity- and resilience-focused investment.

### **Making the Most of Milestones: Golden Opportunities in Library Fundraising**

11 a.m.–noon Monday, June 29

Learn how library milestones, including anniversaries and new buildings, can become powerful fundraising opportunities. This panel will convene experienced fundraisers and advocates to share real-world examples and strategies for identifying milestone moments, engaging donors, and creating resonant outreach.

### **Our America, Our Stories: Collecting and Preserving Immigrant Histories**

2:30–3:30 p.m. Monday, June 29

In an era of extreme nativism and hostility toward immigrants and refugees, libraries have a vital role to play in documenting the histories of new Americans. This session will use Chicago as a case study, highlighting oral history projects, archival partnerships, and community-driven exhibitions at local museums and libraries that are shaping a rich, representative historical record of the city.

## DIVISION, ROUND TABLE, AND AFFILIATE PRESIDENTS' PROGRAMS

### **The Invisible Labor of Library Work: Data, Metrics, and Storytelling for Advocacy**

8:30–10 a.m. Saturday, June 27

Library workers provide vital invisible labor—emotional support, crisis response, relationship-building, and tech help—that often goes unrecognized. This program from the Learning Round Table will dig into how that work appears on the front lines, how to measure it responsibly, and how data and storytelling can support stronger advocacy and funding.

### **Living Stories: Centering Contemporary Native Voices**

10:30–11:30 a.m. Saturday, June 27

Presented by the American Indian Library Association, this session will discuss how to more accurately represent the diversity of Native peoples in library collections and programming. Attendees will learn key distinctions among tribal groups and common misrepresentations and leave with practical tools, curated reading lists, and promotion strategies.

### **Social-Emotional Growth and Resilience through Manga**

10:30 a.m.–noon Saturday, June 27

Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table (GNCR) President-Elect Jillian E. Rudes will lead a panel of librarians, educators, and industry experts to discuss how manga helps teens understand empathy and their own identities.

## GOVERNANCE MEETINGS

- ➔ **ALA-APA Executive Board Meeting**  
8:30–9 a.m. Friday, June 26
- ➔ **ALA Executive Board Meeting I**  
9 a.m.–noon Friday, June 26
- ➔ **ALA Council Orientation**  
8:30–9:30 a.m. Saturday, June 27
- ➔ **ALA Council I**  
10 a.m.–noon Saturday, June 27
- ➔ **ALA Council II**  
9–11 a.m. Sunday, June 28
- ➔ **ALA Council III**  
9–11:30 a.m. Monday, June 29
- ➔ **ALA Executive Board Meeting II**  
Noon–1:30 p.m. Monday, June 29

## 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, and accessible rooms in the hotel block. Visit [bit.ly/AC26-access](https://bit.ly/AC26-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 a quiet room for those looking for a calm space during the conference and onsite counseling sessions with mental health professionals. Visit [bit.ly/AC26-care](https://bit.ly/AC26-care) to read more about the Community of Care initiative. ●

# BUILD YOUR FUTURE IN *information*

ODU's online Master of Library and Information Studies prepares the next generation of librarians, media specialists, and information professionals. This flexible, asynchronous program equips students for careers in a complex, information-driven society. A required internship provides hands-on experience, helping graduates succeed in a technology-driven future.

- Affordable tuition
- Flexible schedules
- 100% online
- Any bachelor's major



SCAN TO  
LEARN MORE



The Master of Library and Information Studies Program at Old Dominion University is accredited by the American Library Association Committee on Accreditation, with the status of Initial accreditation. The next comprehensive review visit is scheduled for Fall 2028.



ODU Global



Paula Poundstone

## 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/AC26-ticket](https://bit.ly/AC26-ticket) for more information on ticketed events.

### GNCRT Magical Comics Tea

1–3 p.m. Saturday, June 27

Comics creators and enthusiasts will talk about upcoming titles and projects. Don your best teatime outfit or come as you are. Tickets are \$10–\$35, based on membership level.

### 2026 Michael L. Printz Awards

8–10 p.m. Saturday, June 27

Sponsored by the Young Adult Library Services Association, this ceremony will feature speeches from honor book authors and the 2026 Printz winner, **CYNTHIA LEITCH SMITH**, editor of *Legendary Frybread Drive-In: Intertribal Stories*. A dessert and cocktail reception will follow. Early and advance tickets are \$40–\$55 and onsite tickets are \$50–\$60, based on membership status.

### 2026 Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence in Fiction and Nonfiction Award Ceremony and Reception

8–10 p.m. Saturday, June 27

Winning authors of the 2026 Carnegie Medals **MEGHA MAJUMDAR** (for *A Guardian and a Thief*, see Newsmaker, p. 14) and **YIYUN LI** (for *Things in Nature Merely Grow*) will give speeches and sign books. Tickets are \$25.

### Coretta Scott King Book Awards Breakfast

7–9:30 a.m. Sunday, June 28

This awards breakfast honors authors of exemplary children's books depicting the Black experience. The 2026 winners, **JEWELL PARKER RHODES** (author of *Will's Race for Home*) and **R. GREGORY CHRISTIE** (illustrator of *The Library in the Woods*), will deliver remarks. Tickets are \$70.

### International Librarians Reception

6–8 p.m. Sunday, June 28

Join the International Relations Round Table in welcoming librarians from more than 50 countries. This reception, open to all attendees, offers networking opportunities with hundreds of information professionals. Incoming ALA President **MARIA MCCAULEY** will announce the recipients of the ALA Presidential Citation for Innovative International Projects and other award winners. Tickets are \$40, and complimentary for attendees from outside the US.

### Borrow, Don't Buy: Meet Your Needs with a Library of Things

1–2 p.m. Saturday, June 27

Discover how a Library of Things can advance sustainability and community impact. This session from the Sustainability Round Table will cover models for lending tools, equipment, and other nontraditional resources, and show how even modest setups can connect your work to the growing sharing economy.

### Intellectual Freedom: Navigating the Tension between Beliefs and Principles

2:30–3:30 p.m. Saturday, June 27

When a library's values collide with the viewpoints of its patrons—or even its staffers—how can a community find common ground? This program from the Intellectual Freedom Round Table will explore real-world ethical dilemmas, with a focus on strategies for navigating conflicts and practical approaches for handling challenges.

### AI in Reference: For Better and Worse, Till Tech Do Us Part

1–2 p.m. Sunday, June 28

Presented by the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA), this session will assess the opportunities and challenges of using AI in reference interactions. Learn how emerging recommendations can guide responsible use, connect AI practices to the RUSA behavioral guidelines, and identify strategies for integrating AI into patron interactions.

### Health Equity and Diversity

10:30 a.m.–noon Monday, June 29

This program from SRRT will use clips from the PBS documentary *The Calling* to examine health equity issues and the lack of diversity in the medical field. Panelists, including the film's director and medical doctors, will address the barriers facing students of color and the impact of underrepresentation on patients.

### The Laugh's on Us

6–8 p.m. Sunday, June 28

Comedian and UFL spokesperson **PAULA POUNDSTONE** will headline this wine-and-cheese event featuring humor writers and comedians. A book signing will follow, with free advance copies (subject to availability) for attendees. Early and advance tickets are \$60–\$73, and onsite tickets are \$70–\$75, based on UFL membership level.

### Newbery-Caldecott-Legacy Awards Banquet

6–10:30 p.m. Sunday, June 28

Join the Association for Library Service to Children in celebrating the authors and illustrators of this year's most distinguished children's books. Newbery Medal winner **RENÉE WATSON** (*All the Blues in the Sky*), Caldecott Medal winner **CÁTIA CHIEN** (*Fireworks*), and Children's Literature Legacy Award winner **CANDACE FLEMING** (whose titles include *The Enigma Girls: How Ten Teenagers Broke Ciphers, Kept Secrets, and Helped Win World War II*) will deliver speeches. 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. **AL**

For an up-to-date list of dates and times, please see the Annual Conference scheduler ([bit.ly/AC26-sched](https://bit.ly/AC26-sched)).

## STAY CONNECTED

Visit [alaannual.org](https://alaannual.org) and keep up with #alaac26 on social media.

- \* [@amlibraryassoc.bsky.social](https://www.bsky.app/profile/amlibraryassoc.bsky.social) on Bluesky
- \* [facebook.com/AmericanLibraryAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/AmericanLibraryAssociation)
- \* [linkedin.com/company/American-Library-Association](https://www.linkedin.com/company/American-Library-Association)
- \* [@americanlibraryassociation](https://www.instagram.com/americanlibraryassociation) on Instagram

## ALA JobLIST

A SERVICE OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION  
AND THE ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGE & RESEARCH LIBRARIES

### 2026 Virtual Career Fair

June 17, 2026  
11 a.m. – 2 p.m. CDT

Connecting job seekers and recruiting libraries from across the country!



Register today at  
[ala.org/career-fair](https://ala.org/career-fair)

## ALA JobLIST → Placement Center

Where job seekers and employers meet.

Visit the ALA Annual Conference placement center!

- Employer open house
- Résumé reviews
- Mentoring
- Career development sessions

For details, visit  
[ala.org/placement](https://ala.org/placement)



# FOR OUR LIBRARIES. FOR 150 YEARS MORE.

With our sincere thanks and deep appreciation, we recognize our corporate and foundation community donors and sponsors for their generous contributions.

## 150th Anniversary Campaign Donors

### FOUNDER

\$50,000 and above

*Penguin Random House  
The Steve and Loree  
Potash Family Foundation*

### VISIONARY

\$10,000 to \$19,999

*Cambridge Public Library Foundation  
Dwight D. Opperman Foundation  
Ingram Content Group  
OCLC  
Smith System*

### TRAILBLAZER

\$5,000 to \$9,999

*Clarivate  
Lockton  
Macmillan  
Midwest Tape/Hoopla  
Simon & Schuster*

### STORYTELLER

\$2,500 to \$4,999

*EBSCO*

## ALA 150th Anniversary Celebration Event Sponsors

Saturday, June 27  
Chicago  
Marriott Marquis



### HOSTING SPONSOR \$10,000



### CHILL LOUNGE SPONSOR \$10,000



**Smith System**

### 360 VIDEO PHOTOBOOTH SPONSOR \$7,500



### THEMED HYDRATION STATIONS \$5,000



### COLLECTIVE CANVAS SPONSOR \$5,000





# CITY OF BIG APPETITES

Celebrate ALA's big year with this robust list of Chicago eateries

BY Jennifer Billock

**W**ELCOME BACK TO Chicago! It's the perfect place to host the American Library Association's (ALA) 150th anniversary, and we've compiled a master list of restaurants and cafés where you can celebrate while attending the 2026 Annual Conference and Exhibition. From healthy breakfasts to decadent splurges and feasts, these establishments will provide whatever you need to keep your energy up for a long day of learning or feed your soul afterward. No matter what you decide to try, you'll learn that Chicago's reputation as one of the world's great food cities is well deserved for its diversity and quality. This year, replace the standard tourist-trap meals with big and bold flavors from around the world. All the spots mentioned, organized by neighborhood, are easily accessible by public transit, a leisurely walk, or a quick ride share from McCormick Place.

## PRICE GUIDE

Average price per person for entrée without appetizers, drinks, tax, or tip.

- \$ under \$14
- \$\$ \$15-\$24
- \$\$\$ \$25-\$50
- \$\$\$\$ \$51 and up



Brunch items at Bronzeville Winery

**SOUTH LOOP,  
HYDE PARK, AND  
NEAR SOUTH SIDE**

**APOLONIA**

105 E. Cermak Rd.  
312-363-2431  
apoloniachicago.com

Chef Stephen Gillanders helms Apolonia, a modern Mediterranean spot with seasonal plates and fresh flavors. The blue crab bucatini is a standout, or if you're there for dinner, throw caution to the wind and order the five-course chef's tasting menu. Brunch (Sat-Sun), L (M-F), D daily \$\$\$

**CHICAGO CURRY HOUSE**

Multiple locations, including  
899 S. Plymouth Ct.  
312-362-9999  
curryhouseonline.com

Tucked into the first floor of a condo building near Printers Row, Chicago Curry House is a longstanding Indian and Nepalese restaurant. The portions are large and the meals are affordable. Don't miss the garlic naan and bone-in goat dish. The restaurant also has a sister location, Nepal House (1301 S. Michigan Ave.), in the South Loop. L, D daily \$\$

**ELEVEN CITY DINER**

1112 S. Wabash Ave.  
312-212-1112  
elevencitydiner.com

Stepping into Eleven City Diner, with its lunch counter and booth seats, you'll be transported back in time to the 1950s. Breakfast is served all day, like at any diner worth its salt, and the onsite deli prepares all your favorite sandwiches. B, L, D daily \$\$

**MANNY'S CAFETERIA  
AND DELICATESSEN**

1141 S. Jefferson St.  
312-939-2855  
mannysdeli.com

Fan of Chicago's long history of storied, strange, and sometimes unscrupulous politics? Head to Manny's, where you're likely to run into any number of Chicago politicians. (Even former President Obama has been spotted there.) Try the chopped liver sandwich or the massive corned beef—you won't be hungry again for a week. B, L (Tue-Sun), D (Tue-Sat) \$\$

**MERCAT A LA PLANXA**

638 S. Michigan Ave.  
312-765-0524  
mercatchicago.com/  
mercat-a-la-planxa

Be prepared to share at this Spanish restaurant with a twist on traditional cuisine. You can order tapas or flatbreads to split, or splurge on a grilled plate just for yourself; we love the Wagyu burger and the steak frites. B, L (Sun), D daily \$\$\$

**REGGIES**

2105 S. State St.  
312-949-0120  
reggieslive.com

Still feeling all the adrenaline from a great day of learning? Head down to local dive Reggies for live music and a full menu of burgers, chicken sandwiches, and more than 70 beers. You can hang out at the bar and grill, get some fresh air on the roof deck, or take in a show. L, D daily \$\$

**THE SPOKE & BIRD**

Multiple locations, including  
205 E. 18th St.  
929-263-2473  
spokeandbird.com

The Spoke & Bird sources

Photo: Bronzeville Winery



Top: Modern Vietnamese cuisine and cocktails at HaiSous. Bottom: Whole dorade with red and green adobo and herb salad at Mariscos San Pedro.

ingredients for their café-style menu almost entirely from local farms; you'll find more than 30 of them listed on the back of the menu. Whether it's a sandwich, quiche, pastry, or coffee or tea, you can be sure you're getting something fresh and delicious. **B, L daily \$**

**WAGYU HOUSE CHICAGO**  
1147 S. Delano Ct. East  
464-768-8224  
wagyuhouse.group

Wagyu House offers an all-you-can-eat experience of either hot pot or Japanese barbecue, with the best cuts of meat in the world. Parties of six or more can book the Spectrum dining room in advance, where dazzling immersive projections accompany the meal. **L (Th-M), D daily \$\$\$\$**

**PILSEN**

**CAFÉ JUMPING BEAN**  
1439 W. 18th St.  
312-455-0019  
cafejumpingbean.twupro.com

Coffee and pastries are served with a side of community at Café Jumping Bean, where

you can spot local artists and musicians on nearly every visit. All the coffee beans are ethically sourced, and the economically priced sandwiches are crafted with health in mind. **B, L daily \$**

**LAS CARNITAS URUAPAN**  
1725 W. 18th St.  
312-226-2654  
carnitasuruapanchi.com

Father and son team Inocencio and Marcos Carbajal run Las Carnitas Uruapan with one main goal: providing authentic Michoacán carnitas that haven't been tamed for American palates. That strategy has served them well for more than 50 years at this tasty takeout spot. You can order the carnitas on tacos or by the pound; either way, more than two hours of slow cooking shine through in every bite. **L daily \$**

**HAI SOUS VIETNAMESE KITCHEN**

1800 S. Carpenter St.  
312-702-1303  
haisous.com

Prepare yourself for James Beard-nominated Vietnamese cuisine from powerhouse Chef

Visit us at Booth 3827  
ALA Annual Conference Chicago

**make make** Digital library  
**en español**

Unlimited access to a premier eBook collection for children, bringing authentic stories from Latin America to your digital shelves.

contacto@makemake.com.co    www.makemake.com.co

GET A FREE DEMO

**Thai Dang.** The menu changes seasonally, but the house fried rice, complete with garlic and actual puffed rice, is a mainstay for a reason. Do yourself a favor and order the Chef's Grand Tasting Tour, a whirlwind meal through Chef Dang's delicious whims. **Brunch (Sun), D (W-Sun) \$\$\$**

### MARISCOS SAN PEDRO

**1227 W. 18th St.  
312-508-4700  
marissosanpedro.com**

A trio of chefs from some of the most acclaimed restaurants in Chicago came together to open this seafood-focused Mexican restaurant in 2024—and they snagged a James Beard honor in 2025. The inventive menu features items like octopus hot dogs, crab Rangoon empanadas, and hamachi aguachile made with carrot, pistachio, and mint. **D (Th-Tue) \$\$**

### PLEASANT HOUSE PUB

**2119 S. Halsted St.  
773-523-7437  
pleasanthousepub.com**

With roots in Yorkshire, England, the owners of Pleasant House serve up royal pies, which are savory meat-and-vegetable, tall-sided pastries filled with British favorites like steak and ale and more unique combinations like North African-spiced zucchini and squash. **L, D (Tue-Sun) \$\$**

### QUESABIRRIA JALISCO TACOS

**1314 W. 18th St.  
773-771-2123  
facebook.com/  
quesabirriajalisco**

What started as a quesabirria taco shop operated out of owner Ventura Orozco's apartment has turned into

an under-the-radar taco sensation. These tacos—all halal—are sold by the pack and custom made. **L, D (Tue-Sat) \$\$**

### BRIDGEPORT AND ARMOUR SQUARE

#### 3LP

**964 W. 31st St.  
eat3lp.com**

Chinese fast-food joint 3LP started as a project during COVID-19, with owner Henry Cai taking orders on Instagram for his hungry friends. Soon enough, the waitlist for Cai's food was seven months long. The bestseller is a combo box of breaded chicken and BBQ pork, paired with garlic butter rice or jasmine rice. But don't sleep on the Chicago-Chinese fusion Hot Pot Beef sandwich. **L (F-Sun), D daily \$**

### COWABUNGA! PIZZA PIES

**1117 W. 31st St.  
773-234-4819  
cowabungapizzapias.com**

Let's be fair, some people just don't like Chicago-style deep-dish. Opt for a New York slice at Cowabunga, a 1990s-themed slice shop paying homage to every millennial's hero squad, the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. **L, D (W-Sun) \$**

### THE DUCK INN

**2701 S. Eleanor St.  
312-724-8811  
theduckinnchicago.com**

It's in the name: Delectable rotisserie duck, served with a host of upscale yet comforting sides, is the signature dish here. Be sure you preorder if you want to try it, because the crew makes a fresh batch daily in limited amounts. **Brunch (Sat-Sun), D daily \$\$\$**

Crispy rice appetizer at Planta Queen Chicago



## PLANT-BASED PLATES

Chicago may be known for Italian beef and hot dogs, but plant-based visitors have plenty of food options to choose from as well. Hop on the northbound Red Line to Lakeview for the last remaining location of local vegan stalwart **THE CHICAGO DINER** (3411 N. Halsted St.; **L, D, daily; \$\$**). The restaurant's been serving veg-only dishes since 1983. **PENELOPE'S VEGAN TAQUERIA** (1165 W. 18th St. and 230 W. Chicago Ave.; **L, D, daily; \$\$**) offers pretty much any taco you can think of—al pastor, carnitas, barbacoa—all without meat, plus its Pilsen location is only three miles away from the convention center. If you're heading to River North, **PLANTA QUEEN CHICAGO** (413 N. Clark St.; **L, D, daily; \$\$**) is a must-visit Asian-inspired dinner spot, sporting an all-vegan menu with items like ahi watermelon, kimchi bao, and avocado-beetroot tartare. •



Tacos at Penelope's Vegan Taqueria

### KIMSKI

**960 W. 31st St.  
773-823-7336  
kimskichicago.net**

Korean-Polish fusion takes center stage at this counter-service restaurant. The small but intentional menu is inspired by the food the owners' mother made for them when they were kids, combining their ethnic heritage into one unique meal. Kimchi Polish sausage or rice cake poutine, anyone? **D (W-Sun) \$\$**

### MAXWELL STREET DEPOT

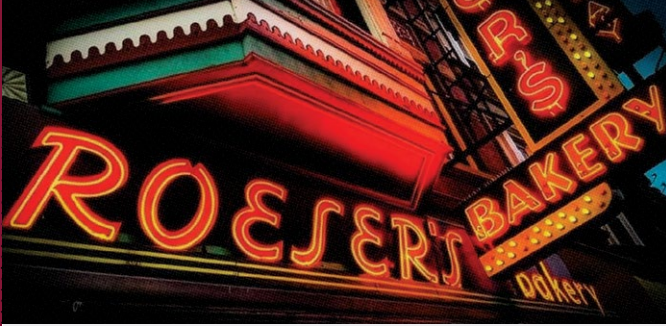
**411 W. 31st St.  
312-326-3514  
facebook.com/  
maxwellstreetdepot**

Maxwell Street Depot is a quintessential Chicago hot dog stand: small, cash only, counter or window service, and serving some of the best local food at the cheapest prices. Definitely try the namesake Maxwell Street Polish, but the pork chop sandwich is a delight, as well. If you can't eat both in one go, come back later—the stand is open 24 hours. **B, L, D daily \$**

### RICOBENE'S

**252 W. 26th St.  
312-225-5555  
ricobenespizza.com**

An often-overlooked king of Chicago cuisine, Ricobene's is famous for its breaded steak sandwich. The steak is



## HISTORIC SWEETS

Since it's ALA's 150th anniversary, why not take a bite out of some Chicago history at one of our many historic bakeries? The gold standard is **WEBER'S BAKERY** (7055 W. Archer Ave.; Tue-Sun; \$) on the Southwest Side; an excellent stop if you're flying into Midway Airport. Weber's opened in 1930 and specializes in a banana split torte, their version of Chicago's iconic three-layer atomic cake. On the Northwest Side, head to **ROESER'S BAKERY** (3216 W. North Ave.; Tue-Sun; \$) in the Humboldt Park neighborhood, a spot that opened in 1911 and is known for coffee cake, assorted cookies, and homemade ice cream. For a more conference-convenient option, visit **CHIU QUON BAKERY** (2253 S. Wentworth Ave.; daily; \$), the oldest bakery in Chinatown. The #21 bus will pick you up right at the convention center and drop you a four-minute walk to delicious pastries. Chiu Quon opened in 1986 and offers a variety of sweet or savory buns, dim sum, and pastries like egg tarts, mochi balls, and mooncakes. •



Pastries from Chiu Quon Bakery

pounded thin, fried, stuffed into a sub roll, and slathered with red sauce and melted cheese. It's messy and it's unmissable. L, D daily \$

### WEST LOOP

#### CREEPIES

1360 W. Randolph St.  
312-579-2727  
creepieschicago.com

This newcomer to Chicago's dining scene has already garnered attention from big names like Michelin and *Chicago* magazine. The Midwestern French fusion bistro sits right next to big-sister restaurant *Elsie* and isn't remotely creepy, just delicious. Start with warm brie gougères, dine on sunchoke croquettes and roasted chicken with a liver-and-wine sauce, and wrap up with baguette soft-serve. L, D (Th-M) \$\$\$

#### DUCK DUCK GOAT

857 W. Fulton Market  
312-902-3825  
duckduckgoatchicago.com

This is one of celebrity Chef Stephanie Izard's restaurants, offering Chinese American fare in a beautifully decorated space.

Try the soup dumplings and the duck and goat spring rolls, or order some hand-pulled noodles from the takeout window, where you can order off the entire menu to take back to your hotel and nosh on your own. L (Sat-Sun), D daily \$\$

#### J. P. GRAZIANO

901 W. Randolph St.  
312-666-4587  
jpgraziano.com

J. P. Graziano is more than just an Italian specialty grocery store. It's also a sandwich shop with fresh-cut meats and a late-night window handing out subs until 11 p.m. or midnight. The house specialty is the Mr. G., a sandwich with provolone, hot sopresatta, prosciutto di Parma, and Genoa salami, topped with marinated Roman-style artichokes, truffle mustard balsamic vinaigrette, and more. L, D (Tue-Sat) \$

#### MONTEVERDE RESTAURANT AND PASTIFICIO

1020 W. Madison St.  
312-888-3041  
monteverdechicago.com

The Monteverde team has earned accolades from Michelin and James Beard throughout their

### Affordable internet:

**We help libraries deliver reliable internet to the people who need it most – students, jobseekers, families, and more.**

- Budget-friendly pricing (\$10/month/device)
- Portable hotspots, SIM cards, tablets, and Chromebooks
- Easy to launch, easy to manage





Spring menu items at Bronzeville Winery

careers, and that skill level is reflected in the homestyle Italian cuisine served here. Diners can watch all the restaurant's pasta being made by hand and try balsamic vinegar that is barrel-aged onsite. Make sure to order their take on traditional *cacio e pepe*, made with lemon ricotta whey. **L, D (Tue-Sat) \$\$\$**

### ORIOLE

661 W. Walnut St.  
312-877-5899  
oriolechicago.com

One of the West Loop's many fine-dining establishments, Oriole stands out for its casual come-as-you-are vibe and eclectic menu—both in culinary terms and in presentation. One of the mainstays on the ever-changing tasting menu is the Buddha's hand scallop dish. Tables are in high demand; make a reservation early or call the day before or day-of for any cancellations. **D (Tue-Sat) \$\$\$\$**

### ROSE MARY

932 W. Fulton St.  
872-260-3921  
rosemarychicago.com

Chef Joe Flamm owns and operates Rose Mary, an Italian and Croatian eatery serving up seasonal dishes in a space with a warm industrial loft feel. Flamm named the restaurant after his grandmothers, who inspired the rustic dishes. Menu items feature compelling combinations, like chestnut honey in a mushroom risotto or fennel pollen served with a straciatella appetizer. **D daily \$\$\$**

### BRONZEVILLE

#### AIN'T SHE SWEET CAFÉ

526 E. 43rd St.  
773-373-3530  
aintshesweetcafe.com

Run by mother-and-daughter team Margot and Ayisha Strotter, Ain't She Sweet Café specializes in sandwiches and wraps where nothing is fried and everything is fresh and delicious. Favorites include the jerk chicken wrap, the jerk chicken bowl, the jerk salmon wrap ... pretty much anything jerk. Pair it with a smoothie to cool your mouth. **L (M-F) \$**

### BRONZEVILLE WINERY

4420 S. Cottage Grove Ave.  
872-244-7065  
bronzevillewinery.com

Bronzeville Winery is woman-owned and Black-owned, celebrating the history of this neighborhood's deep roots. Join the celebration by ordering the Women in Wine Flight, or the Black on Black Wine Flight featuring wines by Black vintners. The elevated food menu features shrimp and stone-ground grits, Creole salmon tagliatelle, and more, all with recommended wine pairings, of course. **Brunch (Sun), D (W-Sun) \$\$\$**

### CLEO'S SOUTHERN CUISINE

Multiple locations, including  
4248 S. Cottage Grove Ave.  
773-575-7120  
cleos.com

Cleo's perfects classic soul food in a cozy flagship location that seats only 12. Menu standouts include the Eddie Mac, a mac-and-cheese-topped chicken thigh on a brioche bun, and the Sizzling Swamp, a platter of buttered grits topped with Creole fried catfish, lump crab, and house-made comeback sauce—and don't sleep on the fried chicken wings. **L (F-Sun), D (F-Sat) \$\$**

### PEACH'S RESTAURANT

4652 S. King Dr.  
773-966-5801  
peachson47th.com

At Peach's, Southern comfort food is served in a classic diner setting, attracting Illinois politicians who come for the cuisine and the community that gathers at the counter and tables. Looking for an adventurous meal to begin your day? Try the Bayou Breakfast Bowl, which includes alligator sausage and

shrimp. And don't skip the classics of Southern cuisine: catfish, greens, and grits. **B, L (W-Sun) \$\$**

### TWO FISH CRAB SHACK

641 E. 47th St.  
773-855-8845  
twofishcrabshack.com

Did you ever expect to encounter an authentic seafood boil this far away from the Gulf Coast? Two Fish Crab Shack does it right, with five seasoning styles and six types of seafood. Want a custom boil? Two Fish can make a boil bag specific to your tastes. Just don't expect plates or utensils. This is a meal to get messy with. **L (Sat-Sun), D (Tue-Sat) \$\$\$**

### YASSA AFRICAN RESTAURANT

3511 S. King Dr.  
773-488-5599  
yassafricanrestaurant.com

This family-owned restaurant brings Senegalese flavors to the South Side. The menu shines in its stew offerings, fish, and traditional Senegalese drinks like bouye, made from the fruit of the baobab tree and mixed with milk for a creamy and tropical taste. Be sure you also order dessert, particularly the thiakry—it's similar to rice pudding but made with semolina. **L, D daily \$\$\$ AL**



**JENNIFER BILLOCK** is a traveler, writer, author, and the world's only professional

cheese fortune teller. She has written for *The New York Times*, *Smithsonian*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, *Travel + Leisure*, *National Geographic*, and more. Billock is author of eight books (two cookbooks, five history, one astrology) and is also a certified tea specialist.



Whole grilled tilapia at Yassa African Restaurant

# ENCOUNTERING ICE

Public library directors share tips for dealing with federal immigration activity

**I**t's a nightmare situation: A swarm of masked US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents walk through your library's doors looking for people or demanding information that you're not prepared to hand over.

*As ICE has raided homes, businesses, and public facilities in communities across the country, public libraries are grappling with how to ready their staffers, protect patrons, respond to incidents, and develop resources for in-the-moment de-escalation and long-term recovery.*

In February, the Public Library Association (PLA) convened a webinar called “Responding to ICE at the Library: Real World Approaches” ([bit.ly/PLA-ICE](https://bit.ly/PLA-ICE)) to address these timely concerns. Speakers included **Scott Duimstra**, director of Hennepin County (Minn.) Library; **Kimberly B. Knight**, director of Virginia Beach (Va.) Public Library; and **Jocelyne Sansing**, director of Middleton (Wis.) Public Library. The following comments are paraphrased from their presentation.

## INITIAL CONVERSATIONS

**KNIGHT:** We have a quarterly all-staff event called Let's Talk where people can send us anonymous questions, and someone asked, “What is the library's policy regarding ICE agents working inside the building and potentially investigating patrons and staff?”

They asked that question a year ago, before all of this hit the news. At the time, we were like, well, what are the chances of that? But I think we're all here today because it has come to fruition.

When they asked again last fall, we brought in a local police officer who spent an hour answering staff questions. I commend our staff for having the forethought to ask these questions and help us think about it so that we can be prepared for the moment.

**SANSING:** I'm not an expert in this area, but I have had experience working with law enforcement. What makes it different now and at this moment in history is the real disregard for due process, and what was once a procedure with rules could easily now escalate into a possible emergency. This is immediately confusing and very scary.

Approaching it thoughtfully and proactively has really helped us dismantle some of that fear by practicing what we would actually say and do in a given situation.

**DUIMSTRA:** This is an area where I wish I were not a subject matter expert. But as I tell my children, you don't get to choose what events happen to you—you only get to choose how you respond. We had early staff discussions in 2025, and our response at the time was simple: You don't interfere and you



An ICE protest march that took place outside of Minneapolis Central Library on January 23. The library worked with its union members to have enough staff members available to keep the library open as a warming center (in sub-zero temperatures) and community space while allowing staffers who wanted to participate in the protest to attend.

don't assist. That guidance became more detailed as we responded to activity around our libraries.

The first incident was at the building that houses Ridgedale Library on its second floor, as well as the county court system on the third, on December 29. We got a call early in the day that there were two plainclothes ICE officers waiting outside the courts to apprehend individuals as they were being released from court. When they were released that afternoon, more than a dozen agents came rushing into the space and brought them down the stairs while community members filmed.

On January 7, Renee Good was shot and killed by ICE agents while she was in her car. That happened blocks away from our Hosmer Library and heavily affected our library staff and community there. Later that same day, ICE agents showed up at Roosevelt High School as it was letting out. Many students fled across the street to our Roosevelt Library. It became their sanctuary in that situation.

We've also had numerous incidents of parking lot activity—ICE agents getting ready for a mission or maybe just waiting there as an intimidation tactic. Imagine showing up for work and the first thing you see is a federal agent parked in your lot. You are not going to feel safe coming into work that day.

These are things we have never had to consider before. None of our past experiences fit the situation we were in.

**"The situation in our communities is changing rapidly from day to day, sometimes from hour to hour. We've been living in a world of misinformation, changing response times, and constant questions about how to ensure not just public safety but staff safety."**

**SCOTT DUIMSTRA**, director of Hennepin County (Minn.) Library

## PRACTICAL PREPARATIONS

**KNIGHT:** We started by considering our acceptable behavior policy. We asked our law enforcement partners if they would give us some guidance, and they told us to treat it like any other law enforcement matter, where we would ensure the safety of ourselves and our customers, we would behave professionally and legally, and that we would help to restore order after the situation happened.

**SANSING:** The first thing we did was designate the person who's authorized to handle these things. This is obviously the library director. But what happens if the library director is on vacation? Is this information and contact information easily accessible?

In our spaces, we asked: Do we have signage posted in our public versus nonpublic areas? Where are there doors that we might be able to lock or close? Maybe we could have a colleague do a walk-through with fresh eyes and help us point out areas where things may be unclear.

These are easy, tangible things that are within our control, that we can do.

**DUIMSTRA:** The situation in our communities is changing rapidly from day to day, sometimes from hour to hour. We've

been living in a world of misinformation, changing response times, and constant questions about how to ensure not just public safety but staff safety.

The library's original guidance was not to film or record, because any recording could essentially be part of a Freedom of Information Act request, but that changed, especially as we had staff who were targeted by ICE for potential arrest.

Our guidance is also to refer matters to our security staff, and then to local law enforcement. That relationship with local law enforcement is key. I'd start building it right now, because you're going to rely on them if ICE becomes active in your community.

## TRAINING AND POLICIES

**SANSING:** Public libraries are public spaces, and law enforcement, including ICE, may enter into those areas.

They might ask for records that would require some sort of court order or warrant. It's important in those situations that we don't accidentally give information or hurry to help, which we're so used to doing. As library workers we're very well trained to answer questions and want to do it immediately. But in a high-stakes situation, it's important to stay calm and take it slow rather than respond immediately, and utilize the chain of command and practice scenarios.

**STOP OVERPAYING FOR  
YOUR VEHICLE LOAN,  
REFINANCE IT!**

**WE MAKE IT EASY TO SAVE CA\$H MONTHLY**

- 100% refinancing\*
- Competitive, low rates
- Flexible terms up to 144 months
- No prepayment penalties
- Rate discounts\*

READ MORE [LCFCU.ORG/REFINANCE](https://www.lcfcu.org/refinance)



**I SAVED \$205 PER MONTH REFINANCING  
MY CAR LOAN FROM ANOTHER LENDER.  
AND IT WAS EASY & FAST!**



PROUDLY SERVING AMERICA'S LIBRARY COMMUNITY

**NOT A MEMBER? JOIN, VISIT [LCFCU.ORG/JOIN](https://www.lcfcu.org/join)**

[CULINE@LCFCU.ORG](mailto:CULINE@LCFCU.ORG) | 202.707.5852 | 800.32.LCFCU (325-2328)

MADISON BRANCH 101 Independence Ave, SE Room LM 634, Washington, DC 20540-9997



\*Existing LCFCU vehicle loans not eligible. Loan discounts up to .50% APR OFF eligible vehicle loans with no rate discounted below designated minimum rate. For details visit [LCFCU.org/discounts](https://www.lcfcu.org/discounts). Other restrictions apply.

**“We are never alone in libraries; we can lean into our relationships and resources and get prepared, keep it fresh for each other, and then set it down until it comes to our doorstep.”**

**JOCELYNE SANSING**, director of Middleton (Wis.) Public Library

Practice the words, things like “I’m not authorized to answer questions or provide access to patron records. Please speak directly with the library director.” Repeat these things over and over again. It may feel awkward, but you are absolutely within your rights to repeat yourself and stick to the library process and policy.

**DUIMSTRA:** Our guidance was: Do not attempt to argue with, physically block, or interfere with a federal agent. If you do, it is a federal crime, and your staff needs to understand how serious that is. We have tried our best to communicate that, while reminding staffers to remain calm and keep themselves safe.

We developed a reporting form where staff could report ICE or federal agents’ behavior to the county in case we needed to file a criminal complaint afterward. It’s simple to fill out, and anyone can use it, not just a manager or supervisor. It simply records what happened, and then the county attorney can decide whether to follow through with a complaint. If you don’t document it, it is very hard to follow up.

## LASTING IMPACTS

**DUIMSTRA:** The operation in Minneapolis has shifted and there are fewer ICE officers here now. But even when they leave, the trauma remains, along with the economic and educational effects.

There has been a significant impact on the library as a gathering space. We had a tutoring program at a location that primarily serves Somali American families, which went from full attendance to no students showing up almost overnight. You understand why parents made that choice, but it still has a definite impact on students and our spaces.

**SANSING:** While we have not had an incident here in Middleton, we have had groups like our ESL classes bow out of hosting them at the library because adult learners are limiting the number of places that they go outside of the home. When I shared this with my library and Friends boards, they were devastated.

But it was important to remind them that they will be back. It won’t always be like this, and we will be stronger because we’ve gone through this. We are never alone in libraries; we can lean into our relationships and resources and get prepared, keep it fresh for each other, and then set it down until it comes to our doorstep. **AL**

## Preparation checklist for public libraries

- ❑ Identify the staff member authorized to respond to agents.
- ❑ Give frontline staff a script and de-escalation procedure.
- ❑ Mark all nonpublic areas clearly.
- ❑ Review privacy rules and local legal guidance.
- ❑ Build or refresh relationships with local law enforcement.
- ❑ Set up a simple incident-reporting form.
- ❑ Prepare communication protocols for off-site staffers and outreach workers.
- ❑ Keep staff guidance updated through regular communication.
- ❑ Offer flexibility and support for staff members who feel unsafe.
- ❑ Plan for community recovery after an incident.
- ❑ See the guidance provided by ALA’s Office for Intellectual Freedom ([bit.ly/OIF-ICE](https://bit.ly/OIF-ICE)).





# 5 Questions to Ask Your Vendors about AI

Cut through the hype and get real answers about artificial intelligence products

BY Elizabeth Szkirpan

G

enerative artificial intelligence (AI) is quickly becoming ubiquitous. Its integration is not just limited to our personal technology but now also includes library resources (see examples in “2026 Library Systems Briefing” on p. 44). Meanwhile, vendors are constantly introducing new tools or integrations into existing products, and we must measure emerging AI platforms against our library’s tried-and-true resources to gauge which ones truly bring a new perspective or added value to our collections.

It’s an overwhelming time to vet and license library resources. To cut through the noise, I’ve narrowed down my queries for vendors to five questions to better understand how a new AI tool might enhance my library’s user experience.

## 1. What content is your tool trained on?

The future of generative AI models will heavily depend on whether the use of copyrighted content to train models violates copyright or falls under fair use. It will take years for the copyright-and-AI question to be decided, but if the courts ultimately rule that all content used to train models must be licensed, many existing models could become unusable.

While this unfolds in court, I am interested in ethical data acquisition by my vendors. AI tools typically follow one of three training approaches: training a full model, supplying a full model with a specific knowledge base, or training a small language model. Each approach to an AI model has its pros and cons. Large language models respond more predictably but aren't trained as well for specific purposes, whereas small language models can focus on specific purposes but potentially sacrifice accuracy.

The vendor's response to this question also provides insight into the ethics of their model. Ideally, all content should be properly licensed and clearly attributed. If user inputs or uploads are used for training, vendors should clearly notify users and warn them of the potential for copyright infringement. A vendor that is unwilling or unable to address how their model is trained and how they source model content is cause for concern.

## 2. What sets your tool apart from other vendors' or from freely available models like ChatGPT?

While there are many capable generative AI tools on the market, there is a limit to the uniqueness and value that they can offer library users. This is especially true in a world of constantly shrinking budgets where content redundancy no longer makes sense for many libraries.

Whether you love or hate AI, there is an undeniable appeal in a general-purpose tool that can help with a range of everyday tasks. Kickstarting your research in ChatGPT is questionable from a copyright lens, but I guarantee that library users are already doing so. Well-trained models with sufficiently sized corpuses can already help users navigate research tasks, such as literature reviews. These tools may not have direct access to our licensed content, but they can help construct meaningful keyword searches, identify relevant databases, and summarize seminal research without specific content. When evaluating newly available AI resources, libraries must carefully consider the incremental benefits of a licensed tool and whether they outweigh the free functionality users can access elsewhere.

Fundamentally, a library-licensed model needs to bring true novelty to justify adoption. Resources that operate in limited environments, such as a model that can only return information about a single database, risk frustrating users when they are unable to answer their questions completely. Moreover, limited tools may devalue the library's resources by conveying to patrons that library resources are less useful than free tools.

**Patron privacy is a core value of librarianship. Users trust that resources provided by the library protect their best interests and that their data is safeguarded. Any adopted AI models or tools must reflect this trust.**

## 3. How does your AI tool or platform protect the privacy of users and the intellectual property of other vendors?

Users are already overly comfortable sharing their personal information with AI models—regardless of whether or not those models are diligent about protecting it. Data privacy is rapidly evolving in a post-AI world, but users assume that most of their conversations will never see the light of day and will stay locked behind logins that they set themselves.

Patron privacy is a core value of librarianship. Users trust that resources provided by the library protect their best interests and that their data is safeguarded. Any adopted AI models or tools must reflect this trust. Our vendors must provide transparent guidelines on how user data is captured and used, especially if it is being used to retrain their tool. In a perfect world, user data is not captured by a model, remains anonymous, and cannot be used for training (i.e., a closed model). Otherwise, resources should clearly inform users of any saved data and its intended future use.

## 4. What do librarians and users need to know before engaging with your AI tool or platform?

There is always some level of onboarding for new library resources. Some teams will have the bandwidth to dive deep into each new tool, while some libraries may only have a few minutes to review it before they debut it for patrons. If you cannot arrange a trial for an AI platform, your conversation with the vendor is the best measurement of how painless adoption will be for your library.

AI should streamline or automate something, so platforms that are difficult to navigate, require unintuitive engagement, use unusual jargon, or return unreliable results may be deal



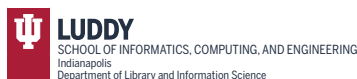
# FROM INFORMATION STEWARD TO COMMUNITY LEADER.

Do you want to advance your career without putting your life on hold? Earn the online Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) degree from Indiana University's Luddy School of Informatics, Computing, and Engineering in Indianapolis.



This ALA-accredited MLIS degree blends core library and information science principles with areas such as digital curation, archives, and public libraries. Join the highly regarded, passionate professionals who provide creative, data-driven ideas that empower our communities. Your experience in the field matters—we offer prior learning credit.

**Apply today and make an impact.**  
[go.iu.edu/mlis](https://go.iu.edu/mlis)



## Fundamentally, a library-licensed model needs to bring true novelty to justify adoption.

breakers. I am wary of new resources that purport to return excellent results but are difficult to use, because they not only require a time investment from library staff to learn but also result in frustrated users. Platforms don't have to be perfect out of the box, but I am cautious of a tool that may add minimal value and maximum stress and workload on library teams.

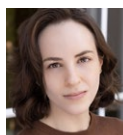
### 5. What is the vendor's long-term AI strategy?

In my experience, few vendors have an iterative multiyear plan for releasing, updating, and expanding their AI tools. The proliferation of AI is unsustainable in more ways than one, with continuous model growth and year-over-year costs of particular concern to libraries. For example, it is estimated that AI will run out of training data sooner rather than later, hindering continuous model improvement. Models may not drastically improve with time or improvement may be slow. If a platform doesn't meet your expectations now, it may not be able to meet them later, either.

Moreover, if each library vendor platform rolls out an AI tool at an introductory rate or begins to build in AI components that can't be separated from overall platform costs, these resource costs will quickly outpace library budgeting. Many of my library's current resources have incorporated AI components at no additional cost. However, these integrations sit inside of the preexisting platform, and few vendors have been able to speak to whether those integrations will continue freely in the coming years. It is not a stretch to imagine that some library vendors will pivot to a platform with a non-optional AI component and then charge a premium for their AI-powered resources.

Ultimately, vendors may not have the perfect answers, but asking the right questions positions librarians to dig deep and advocate for their communities. AI will continue to evolve at a pace that libraries cannot always match. Approaching these tools with informed curiosity allows us to separate genuine innovation from fleeting hype and ensure that the resources we license continue to serve users ethically, responsibly, and well. <sup>AL</sup>

*A version of this article was originally published on Choice 360 LibTech Insights on October 20, 2025.*



**ELIZABETH SZKIRPAN** is collections and discovery specialist at Harvard Business School's Baker Library in Boston.

# CRAFT & HOBBY

Treat your patrons to over **4,000+ hours** of DIY tutorials and How-To videos in over **20 creative categories!**



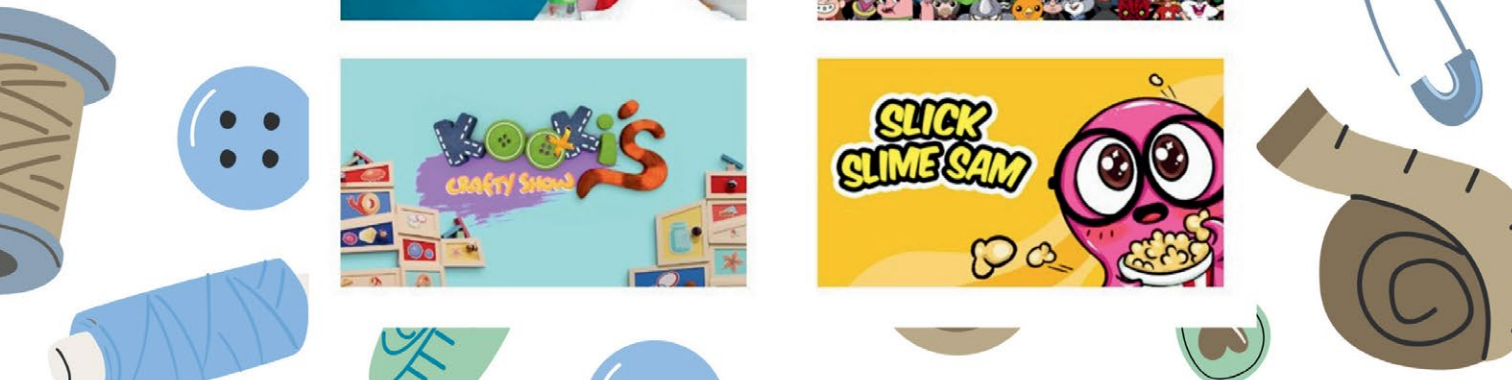
Scan the QR code to EXPLORE!

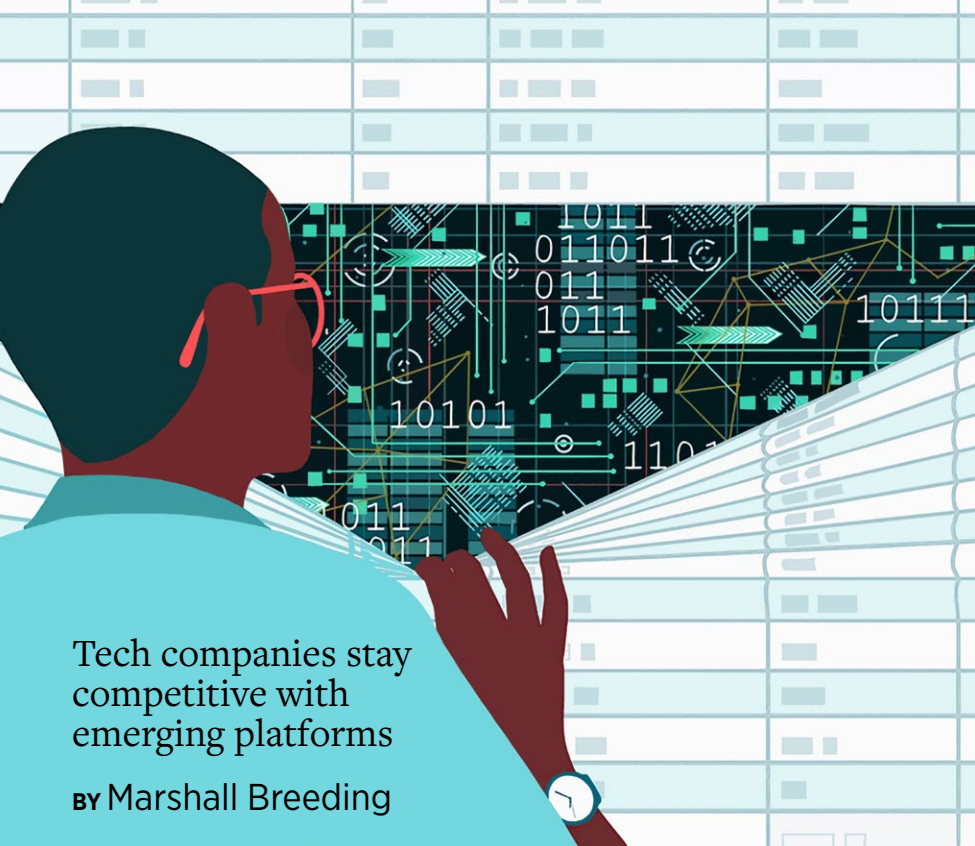


**WATCH.  
LEARN.  
CREATE.**

Get ready for a summer full of creativity! Craft & Hobby now features even more kids content from Cricket Media. Packed with activities and inspiration to keep young minds engaged all season long. Perfect for summer reading and hands-on fun.

VISIT US AT  
BOOTH 4639  
AT ALA





Tech companies stay competitive with emerging platforms

BY Marshall Breeding

# 2026 Library Systems Briefing

The library technology industry is at a critical juncture, driven by uncertainties in funding and disruptions in technology, particularly around artificial intelligence (AI). Business transitions have included changes in executive leadership, acquisitions, and new ownership. Despite these shakeups, most vendors advanced along their development road maps, with some launching new or improved products.

## State of the industry

**Clarivate**, which in recent years has subsumed the technology products of **Ex Libris** and **Innovative**, further strengthened its place as the industry leader. Clarivate has embraced AI across its businesses, including with the 2024 release of its Academic AI Platform, supporting a strategy to harness these technologies while delivering reliable content.

The Ex Libris suite of products, including Primo and the library services platform (LSP) Alma, have become the primary platforms used by academic and national libraries over the last decade. New Alma selections include the National Library of Thailand, University of London, and Ghent University in Belgium. Many libraries opted to deepen their involvement with follow-on products, including 23 new contracts for Leganto for course list management and 116 new contracts for Rapido and RapidILL for resource sharing. This year, Ex Libris launched Alma Specto, an AI-powered platform for managing and promoting digital collections. It also created Library Open Workflows to allow non-programmers to enable integrations in the Ex Libris platform through a user-friendly interface.

Innovative's products mostly serve public libraries. Innovative has focused considerable development energy on

its patron-oriented product suite Vega, since it is interoperable with the company's integrated library systems (ILSes) Sierra and Polaris. The company has made progress on each of the components, including Vega Discover, Vega Interact, Vega Promote, Vega Starter, and Vega WebBuilder. Polaris has expanded beyond its well-established North American presence into multiple international markets, including Australia and Singapore.

When it comes to academic libraries, Ex Libris has significant competition from **EBSCO Information Services**. More than 300 libraries worldwide use EBSCO FOLIO, a comprehensive resource management and discovery package. Recent libraries selecting EBSCO FOLIO include University of Notre Dame in Indiana and University of Kansas, while the Library of Congress and Columbia University Libraries in New York City completed implementations of FOLIO to replace many legacy systems last year. EBSCO has amplified its suite of products in the last year, launching AI-enhanced search and natural language search for EBSCO Discovery Service and its full-text databases, as well as a new linked data framework for its products, the EBSCO Scholarly Graph.

EBSCO saw a major leadership change with the departure of Annie Callanan in 2025; Allen Powell has been named interim CEO.

Open source library management systems and discovery tools have expanded their presence. **ByWater Solutions**, the largest company supporting the Koha ILS and discovery interface Aspen Discovery, attracted 55 new support contracts for Koha and 30 for Aspen. **Grove for Libraries**, established in 2024, focuses on Aspen Discovery and the LiDA mobile app. **Equinox Open Library Initiative** supports Evergreen, Koha, Aspen Discovery, and other open source products. **Index Data**, the company that developed the internal infrastructure for FOLIO, provides support, development, and hosting services for FOLIO, the ReShare resource sharing environment, and other open source software and open data projects.

OCLC saw 39 new contracts for WorldShare Management Services LSP and WorldCat Discovery Service. OCLC has also employed AI to enhance the quality of WorldCat records and to add new features to its tools for resource sharing services, analytics, and collection development.

A default judgment brought an end to OCLC's litigation against the shadow library search engine Anna's Archive for unauthorized harvesting of WorldCat data. OCLC has also pursued litigation against Baker & Taylor for its BTCat cataloging utility; that lawsuit largely ended with Baker & Taylor's bankruptcy, although the Bridgeall Libraries component of the suit remains active.

**Constellation Software** (CSI) maintained its status as one of the largest library technology industry investors, with ownership of companies including Baratz, BiblioCommons, EnvisionWare, Softlink, and Sophia. CSI's most recent acquisition, SirsiDynix, last year launched BLUEcloud Accelerate, an initiative to advance the completion of its BLUEcloud suite. Following the acquisition, longtime SirsiDynix CEO Bill Davison left that role and was replaced by former CFO Mike Nehren.

**BiblioCommons** made significant enhancements to its BiblioCore discovery interface, including AI-powered search and review summaries.

**Soutron Global**, backed by Bloom Equity Partners, acquired Vancouver-based **MINISIS** in late 2024 and picked up **Auto-Graphics**, which offers the VERSO ILS and SHAREit interlibrary loan platform, in March 2025. Brad Frasher was named CEO of Soutron in October 2025, replacing founder Tony Saadat.

**Civica**, well established in Australia, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand, recently renewed efforts to market its Spydus library management system in North America.

**The Library Corporation** continues to be owned and managed by its founder, Annette H. Murphy, after more than 50 years. Its Library.Solution ILS saw seven new selections in major school districts as well as in mid-sized public libraries.

## In other business sectors, the use of AI has driven workforce reduction; we can expect similar dynamics in the library industry.

Of companies serving niche sectors, **Biblionix** targets small public libraries with its Apollo ILS while **Keystone Systems** specializes in libraries for the blind and print disabled. **Book Systems** had an exceptional year of sales of the Atrium ILS to smaller public libraries and school districts.

**Systematic** deployed a new version of Cicero in major European libraries, including the Helmet online library in Finland, Stockholm Public Library in Sweden, and Hamburg Public Library in Germany. **Axiell** won new contracts in Europe for its public library LSP, **Quiria**, including Neuilly-sur-Seine Media Library in France.

Funding reductions for libraries and other economic headwinds have led to industry belt-tightening, with EBSCO, OCLC, and SirsiDynix reducing their overall workforce. Ex Libris, Innovative, and most of the mid-sized companies held steady or expanded slightly.

### Library technology forecast

Despite current economic challenges, vendors providing technology products and services can expect good opportunities ahead. Many libraries that have been deferring system replacements may move to replace their outdated products with modern services. Vendors with international reach will naturally benefit the most. Expect at least modest growth in product sales for the next year or two.

In times of ever more constrained economic resources, companies will reap rewards from the development of broad product suites targeting current expectations. The trend of libraries acquiring bundled products addressing diverse service areas will strengthen as fewer libraries follow a mix-and-match strategy.

For libraries, concerns regarding proprietary products remain, driving incremental growth in the adoption of open source solutions, though with high

expectations for comprehensive commercial support services. Many libraries remain skeptical about AI, especially related to patron-facing services.

Regardless, vendors will continue to explore new AI features, both in patron-facing interfaces and for staff workflows. They will increasingly employ AI to accelerate software development and deliver support services—even if they don't disclose it publicly. In other business sectors, these uses of AI have driven workforce reduction; we can expect similar dynamics in the library industry. AI will continue to present both challenges and opportunities for years to come.

### About the report

This briefing excerpts the 2026 Library Systems Report, which documents ongoing investments of libraries in strategic technology products in 2025. It covers for-profit and nonprofit organizations that offer resource management products—especially integrated library systems and library services platforms—and comprehensive discovery products.

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

*The full report, as well as additional personnel information, sales statistics, and vendor-provided narratives, is available at [Library Technology Guides \(librarytechnology.org\)](https://www.librarytechnology.org).*



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

# PEOPLE

## Announcements

### ON THE MOVE

In October **Dawn Behrend** became associate dean of administrative services at University of North Florida's Thomas G. Carpenter Library in Jacksonville.

December 1 **Rachel Fuller** started as director of Fond du Lac (Wis.) Public Library.

**Meghan Ryan Guthorn** became deputy state librarian and chief of collections and archives at Library of Virginia in Richmond April 10.



**Eric D. Harris** was confirmed as director of Memphis (Tenn.) Public Libraries February 24.



January 1 **Eric Hellman** became executive director of the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.

January 5 **Angela Marshall** started as director of Lepper Library in Lisbon, Ohio.

**Jo Phillips** became deputy director of Warren-Trumbull County (Ohio) Public Library in November.

In February **Heather Potter** started as assistant director of University of South Carolina's South Caroliniana Library in Columbia.

**Diana Price** became chief of library development at Library of Virginia in Richmond in February.

**Kristina Vér Foley** became executive director of the American Library in Paris April 1.



November 1 **Jenny Desmond Walters** became public services librarian at Shepherd University's Scarborough Library in Shepherdstown, West Virginia.

### Kudos

October 15

**David Alberto Fernández**, foreign language librarian at the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled at the Library of Congress, was appointed poet laureate of Takoma Park, Maryland. ●



### PROMOTIONS

January 5 **Star Baughman** became director of library services and academic success at Western Piedmont Community College in Morganton, North Carolina.

In February **Marna Hostetler** was promoted to dean of University of Southern Indiana's David L. Rice Library in Evansville.

**Roy Kinsey** was appointed manager of Chicago Public Library's Austin branch in December.

In July **Mary Beth Weber** became coordinator for training and mentorship at Rutgers University Libraries in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

### RETIREMENTS

December 31 **Nancy Daniel** retired as director of library services and academic success at Western Piedmont Community College in Morganton, North Carolina.

**Karen Diaz** retired as dean of West Virginia University Libraries in Morgantown May 1.

In January **Barbara Hathaway** retired as director of Bee Cave (Tex.) Public Library.

**Marcy Kaiser** retired January 30 as director of Lepper Library in Lisbon, Ohio.

**Keenon McCloy** retired as director of Memphis (Tenn.) Public Libraries in January.

November 1 **Mike Rogalla** retired as children's services manager at Champaign (Ill.) Public Library.

**Sheila Umberger** retired as director of Roanoke (Va.) Public Libraries January 1.

### AT ALA

February 13 **Ulysses Henry** left his role as senior accountant.

**Kim Hudgins**, web content strategy manager, left ALA March 13.

March 6 **George Kendall** left his position as senior director of ALA Publishing and Media and publisher of *Booklist*.

January 21 **Sarah Lamdan** was promoted to executive director of ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF), now part of the Public Policy and Advocacy Office (PPAO).

January 21 **Erin Nevius** became senior acquisitions editor at ALA Editions, where she continues to oversee the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) books imprint.

**Sarah Polen** was promoted to deputy director of content strategy for Conference Services March 2, leaving her position at the Association for Library Service to Children.

**Carrie Smith**, *American Libraries'* editorial and advertising specialist, left ALA March 6 (see p. 3).



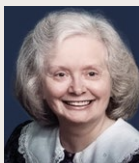
**Eric Stroshane** was promoted to associate director of OIF January 21.

February 6 **Katherine Varela** left her position as information manager at PPAO. AL

## In Memory

**Gordon Newton Baker**, 70, died June 7, 2025. Baker most recently served United for Libraries as president (2022–2024) and Friend-at-large and immediate past president (2024–2025). He started his career in elementary and high school libraries and later became director and dean of Clayton State University Library in Morrow, Georgia, until his 2019 retirement. Baker is the only person to have served as president of the Georgia Library Media Association (GLMA), Georgia Association for Instructional Technology (GAIT), and Georgia Library Association (GLA). He was recognized by each of these organizations with their highest honors, including GAIT's distinguished service awards, GLMA's William E. Patterson Award, and GLA's Nix-Jones and Bob Richardson awards. In 2016, he received the Southeastern Library Association's Hal Mendelsohn Award. He was named 2019 Georgia Public Library Champion of the Year by the Georgia Public Library Service. Baker also previously served as chair of Henry County (Ga.) Library System's board of trustees, chair of Live Oak Public Library's board of trustees, and president of the Southeastern Library Association.

**Diane J. Biesel**, 91, died December 17. Before her retirement, Biesel worked as a teacher, librarian, and media specialist for River Edge (N.J.) School District. She also worked as a library consultant for Pro Libra Associates; an adjunct professor for Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey; and an editor for Scarecrow Press, where she developed the School Library Media series. She was a member of the Bergen County Association of School Librarians, the awards committee for Rutgers University Graduate School of Library Service in New Brunswick, and the Educational Media Association of New Jersey.



**Brenda Langstraat Bui**, 52, died January 31. Langstraat Bui had been president and CEO of the Chicago Public Library Foundation since 2019. She also served as a board member of United for Libraries.

**Fobazi Ettarh**, 36, died January 28. Ettarh worked as an academic librarian at Temple University Libraries in Philadelphia; California State University, Dominguez Hills in Carson; and Rutgers University–Newark in New Jersey. She also worked as a school library media specialist at Hawthorne (N.J.) Public Schools and was pursuing a



doctorate at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Ettarh was best known for introducing the concept of vocational awe in a 2018 article in the online journal *In the Library with the Lead Pipe*. She was a regular speaker at scholarly conferences and a contributor to *Critical Library Pedagogy Handbook* (ACRL, 2016) and *Knowledge Justice: Disrupting Library and Information Studies through Critical Race Theory* (MIT Press, 2021).

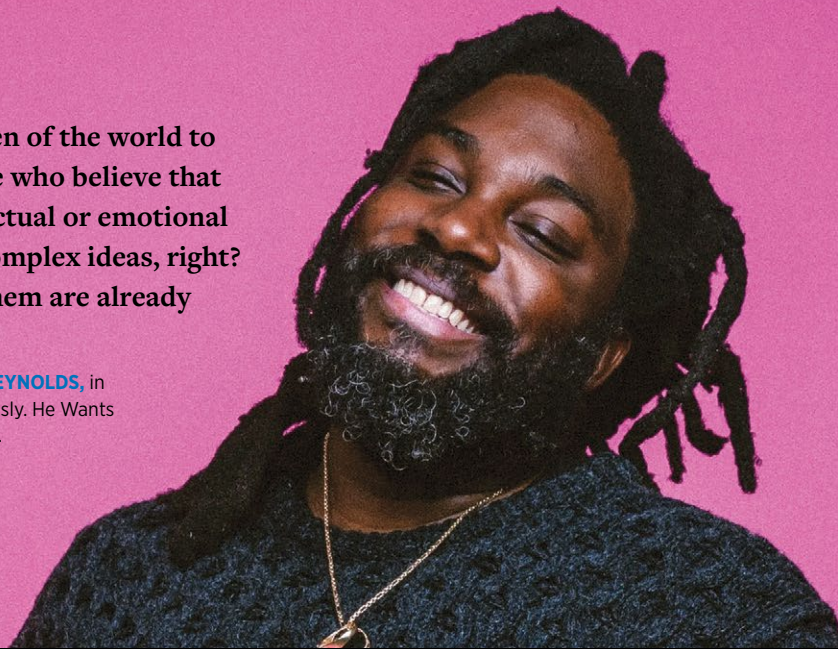
**Maurice J. "Mitch" Freedman**, 86, died March 5. Freedman served as 2002–2003 ALA president and led the Westchester Library System in New York as executive director from 1982 until his 2005 retirement. During his ALA presidency, he fought to improve library workers' salaries and increase equitable compensation through the Campaign for America's Librarians. Freedman helped found the ALA–Allied Professional Association (ALA-APA), the Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT), and the Progressive Librarians Guild. He previously worked for the Library of Congress, Hennepin County (Minn.) Library, New York Public Library, and Columbia University School of Library Service in New York. He also served as 1977–1978 president of ALA's Information Science and Automation Division. Freedman received ALA's Achievement in Library and Information Technology Award (1981) and the Joseph W. Lippincott Award (2014).

**Charles E. Kratz Jr.**, 74, died February 7. Kratz served 28 years as dean of Weinberg Memorial Library at University of Scranton in Pennsylvania, until his 2019 retirement. He also held roles at University of Notre Dame in Indiana; Hofstra University in Hempstead, New York; Rider University in Lawrenceville, New Jersey; and University of Missouri–Kansas City. Kratz served on committees within ACRL and the Library Leadership and Management Association. He was chair of SRRT, an ALA councilor for 12 years, and a member of the ALA Executive Board (2007–2010). Kratz was also active in the Pennsylvania Library Association and the Pennsylvania Area Library Network.

**Randy Riley**, 63, died January 3. Riley had served as Michigan State Librarian since 2014 and worked for the Library of Michigan since 1989. During his library career, he served as reference librarian, head of special collections, and Michigan eLibrary coordinator. He was a leader in statewide and national library organizations, including the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies. ●

**“It’s an insult to the children of the world to know that there are people who believe that they don’t have the intellectual or emotional capacity to wrestle with complex ideas, right? But we know so many of them are already living complex lives.”**

Printz Award-winning author **JASON REYNOLDS**, in “Jason Reynolds Takes Kids Books Seriously. He Wants Adults to Do the Same,” *People*, April 16.



“I know I will experience a deep sense of accomplishment and fulfillment when my readers tell me they enjoyed these words that I agonized over—when they feel a connection to my characters that I crafted from the deep parts of my soul. AI could never. Why would I ever give up this incredible feeling to a machine?”

**SHIFA SALTAGI SAFADI**, winner of the 2024 National Book Award for Young People’s Literature, “Author Shifa Saltagi Safadi on the Things AI Could Never Do,” *Publishers Weekly*, April 2.

“I don’t want the Bible banned, but I sure don’t want classic books like *The Handmaid’s Tale* to be banned either. I just want them to consistently apply rules and not take away works of great literature.”

**PAT MOLNAR**, teacher at Redlands (Calif.) High School, in “Southern California School District Decides to Keep King James Version after Bible Ban Vote,” CBS News Los Angeles, April 14.

**“I DON’T THINK WE OUTGROW HOW IMPORTANT OUR LIBRARIANS CAN BE.”**

Rhode Island Rep. **REBECCA KISLAK** (D-Providence), in “Bill Would Mandate More School Librarians in Rhode Island. But How to Pay for It?,” *Rhode Island Current*, April 14.

“Maybe it’s okay to have a presidential library that’s just an unassuming building with shelves full of official documents and some mementos and artifacts from the president’s term. Inflation has been bad everywhere, including in monuments to egomania in our national leaders. Let’s halt this, lest the next president look at Dollywood in envy and plan the first combination Presidential Library and Amusement Park.”

**JIM GERAGHTY**, political correspondent for the *National Review*, “One Decent Thing Joe Biden Can Still Do for the Nation,” *The Washington Post*, April 14.

**“There are actually three things in this world that are certain: death, taxes, and TurboTax shaking me down in the eleventh hour after I swore I’d learn how to file them at the library.”**

**MOLLY CRANE-NEWMAN**, reporter at *New York Daily News*, @mollycranenewman.bsky.social on Bluesky, April 14.

# PercussionPlay

Outdoor Musical Instruments



Toadstool



Butterfly



Ladybug



Sylvan Bell Trees

## Bring Your Library to Life with Music and Nature

Our new instruments turn library gardens, courtyards, and pollinator areas into creative hubs where visitors of all ages can explore rhythm and melody in nature.

- **Enhance Green Spaces:** Pair instruments with pollinator gardens for a multi-sensory experience.
- **Support Learning:** Perfect for outdoor storytime, STEAM activities, and community programs.
- **Inclusive & Durable:** Accessible for everyone, built to withstand all weather.



*What's New!*

**Come See Us at the ALA 2026 Conference Booth #3934**



866 882 9170



[www.percussionplay.com](http://www.percussionplay.com)

EMPORIA STATE  
UNIVERSITY

School of LIBRARY & INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

# Grow Your Career



## Earn your Master of Library Science

Grow your career in the School of Library and Information Management at Emporia State University — the only university in Kansas with an ALA accredited program!

Earn your MLS, PhD or a variety of certificates fully online.

Learn more at [emporia.edu/slim](https://emporia.edu/slim).

