

american libraries

November/December 2019

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

SPECIAL REPORT

Democracy in Action

p. 24

Fear-Free
Public Speaking
p. 46

Videogame
Preservation
p. 42

PLUS: Lindy West, Sound
and Sight Screenings,
Dropping (Off) Drawers





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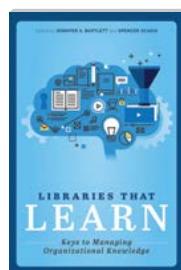
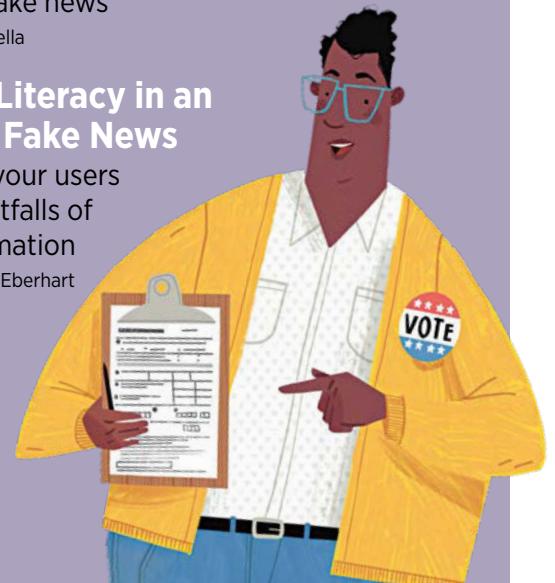
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Favorite vintage videogame?

Ms. Pac-Man

Tetris

SimCity 2000

Catalpa

Pac-Man

from the
EDITOR

Ready, Set, Engage!



Sanhita SinhaRoy

As election season swings into gear, libraries of all types are expanding their civic engagement efforts. Our special report “Democracy in Action” (cover story, p. 24) proffers creative ways to reach and register potential voters—and keep civic discourse civil. The report features many libraries, each unique, each with an outlook of optimism. We hope you’ll find ideas and inspiration—and in turn inspire the communities you serve.

Lighting a fire during this electoral journey, essayist and *New York Times* contributor Lindy West (Newsmaker, p. 22) says the way librarians “manage and access information and filter information critically” is a skill “that’s not just being lost, but deliberately suppressed.”

Librarians know that information is key to bridging apathy—and isolation. Valentine’s Day may be several months away, but some librarians across the country have been busy playing Cupid. That is, they’re helping older adults navigate the sometimes complicated culture of online dating via programming and workshops. In “From the Library with Love” (p. 16), Anne Ford reveals the secrets of the librarians who are helping patrons become happily paired.

If literal game-playing is more your thing, flip to “Librarians, Start New Game” (p. 42). Diana Panunial reports that academic librarians and archivists are racing to preserve and archive student-made and commercial videogames before they become lost or obsolete. A separate challenge: dealing with copyright protections as they pertain to digital rights management.

In *By the Numbers* (p. 17), we highlight fun facts for International Games Week, which starts November 3 this year. (Sample: *Candy Land* was created by a retired schoolteacher recovering from polio.)

And in our Bookend (p. 64) “Gaming the (Library) System,” we profile Jenn Bartlett, head of reference and adult services at Manchester (Conn.) Public Library, which has the largest library board game collection in the state (275 and counting). As Bartlett says, “Board games put us together at a table with people we care about. We’re having fun, and we’re learning.”

It’s a form of engagement we can all get behind.

Sanhita

At a time when nearly 54 million citizens of voting age did not vote in the last presidential election, librarians can bridge that apathy with information.

Welcoming New Americans

Helping immigrants and refugees thrive with inclusive programs and services



Wanda Kay Brown

American libraries have a long history of service to immigrants and boast a proud legacy of promoting inclusion and diversity.

Autumn brings with it many traditions. For some, the season is synonymous with holidays and hot chocolate. For others, it's about civic engagement: elections, politics, and democracy. Although the next major general election is still a year away, candidates are campaigning, new voters are registering, and pollsters are busy taking the temperature of a divided electorate.

Libraries have a role to play too. From hosting programs with local legislators and teaching patrons media literacy to offering support for online census questions and assistance with government e-forms, today's libraries are hot spots of civic engagement.

Newcomers to this country, especially, see libraries as trustworthy guides on their path to integrating into their new communities. In fact, more than 55% of new Americans use their public library at least once a week, according to the Institute of Museum and Library Services. They access English language classes and citizenship and civic educational programs and tap into vital support networks.

Addressing the needs of new Americans is consistent with our profession's commitment to treating all patrons with dignity and respect. It also intersects with my own interests and initiatives in understanding how libraries can address social and economic inequity. In the same way libraries have the power to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline that disproportionately affects young men of color, libraries serve as safe spaces for vulnerable populations of immigrants, refugees, and other marginalized groups.

But what are our profession's best practices when developing programs for new Americans? A recent initiative of the American Library Association's Public Programs Office explored the range of programs new Americans need to thrive. Its recent report, "Library Programs and New Americans" (bit.ly/NewAmsALA), aims to understand

what's needed to advance our field's work and establish criteria for libraries looking to expand services to this population.

Among other recommendations, researchers found that it's essential for libraries to build partnerships with community organizations, develop multilingual resources specific to a community's needs, create intergenerational programming, and forge connections between new Americans and longtime community members.

That's exactly what the Houston Public Library's "Living Room at Your Library" program aims to achieve. It brings communities together to discuss issues and share food from different cultures. At one recent event, participants compared empanadas from seven Spanish-speaking countries.

Sometimes responding to community needs means looking beyond what a patron might expect to find in a library. For example, Brooklyn (N.Y.) Public Library has added two full-time legal advisors to help patrons with citizenship applications and connect them to other free services.

The hope of involving longtime residents in the immigration discussion led the Saratoga Springs (N.Y.) Public Library to choose the novel *Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid for the annual "Saratoga Reads" community-wide literacy program, specifically to spark a discussion about refugees in a challenging and fraught political landscape.

American libraries have a long history of service to immigrants, and our nation's libraries boast a proud legacy of promoting inclusion and diversity. Civic engagement can't exist without an engaged citizenry, and I'm proud of the work of our association and its members—work that serves the needs of our patrons, no matter their immigration status. **AL**

WANDA KAY BROWN is director of library services at C. G. O'Kelly Library at Winston-Salem (N.C.) State University.

Listening to Your Community

How to create a “structure of belonging”



Mary Ghikas

What do we mean when we talk about community engagement, and how does it relate to the ongoing work of the Association?

At ALA’s 2012 Midwinter Meeting in Dallas, then–ALA President Molly Raphael sponsored a conversation about the evolving needs of communities and how libraries and librarianship could transform to meet them.

At the event, R. David Lankes, now director of University of South Carolina’s iSchool, facilitated discussions on the topic. Participants from all types of libraries were asked to take an imaginary walk around their community: observing, listening, seeking to understand the aspirations of the community for itself.

During the discussion that followed, participants talked about how their library might help the community achieve its goals. At my table, the initial response was about how to more effectively market existing services, such as literacy programs. We gleaned lessons about the difficulty of stepping back from our expertise and experiences to listen to our community.

Over the next few years, starting with ALA President Maureen Sullivan (2012–2013) and continuing through subsequent presidencies, the Association worked with many groups to develop resources for library staff (bit.ly/LTCTools) and apply those lessons to ALA as a community—of members, staff, exhibitors, and external allies. The results provided the groundwork for ALA’s current Steering Committee on Organizational Effectiveness (bit.ly/SCOEdoc).

This issue of *American Libraries* includes a special report on community engagement (p. 24), an area to which the Association and its members have committed significant resources, with thousands participating in trainings, discussions, and outreach. But what does community engagement mean, and how does it relate to ALA’s ongoing work?

In attempting to answer these questions, I turned to a concept promulgated by Rich Harwood of the Harwood Institute—a “turning

outward” mindset. As he writes in his book *Stepping Forward*: “To be turned outward is to make your community the reference point for all you do. To know that there is something larger that must inform and drive, even supersede, whatever programs, processes, initiatives, and data that consume our attention.”

Author Peter Block also addresses this mindset in his discussion of citizenship. He writes in *The Answer to How Is Yes*: “Citizenship means that I act as if this larger place were mine to create, while the conventional wisdom is that I cannot have responsibility without authority.... I am responsible for the health of the institution and the community, even though I do not control it. I can participate in creating something I do not control.”

But how? In a 2004 *College & Research Libraries News* article, “Civic Engagement in Academic Libraries,” authors Nancy Kranich, Michele Reid, and Taylor Willingham describe what happens when citizens deliberate together: “They surface assumptions, learn about the costs and consequences of public policy alternatives, move from ‘I’ to ‘we’ language, and define their shared interests and values.” They listen to each other. They uncover new possibilities.

As Block writes in another book, *Community*: “The challenge for every community is not so much to have a vision of what it wants to become, or a plan, or specific timetables. The real challenge is to discover and create the means for engaging citizens that brings a new possibility into being.... This is an organic and relational process. This is what creates a structure of belonging.”

I invite each one of you to join in the ongoing work of cocreation, the work essential to our shared and critical mission. **AL**

MARY GHIKAS is executive director of the American Library Association.

🐝 This is un-bee-lievable! Bees are so important to our world, and we love seeing them being taken care of by libraries!

@BOSSIERLIBRARY in response to “File under Bee” (Sept./Oct., p. 14)

🐝 Seriously nerding out. Got my first issue of *American Libraries*. #FutureLibrarian

@AWRITERSWAY in response to the September/October issue

🐝 Great stuff at @DeweyDecibel podcast on @torontolibrary and their award-winning Tor browser program for patron privacy.

@FUTBOLNICO in response to *Dewey Decibel* podcast’s “Beyond Our Borders” episode (Aug. 30)

Joining Together for Cursive

“Lending a Hand” (Sept./Oct., p. 18) was a very interesting article. I had never stopped to think about younger people these days not being able to sign their names. I am aware of my adult children coming to me from time to time to ask how to address an envelope. I am completely fascinated by the whole proposition that teaching cursive may assist students with dyslexia.

I was never a great fan of modern cursive, which is what I was taught at school. My mother’s writing looked so much more sophisticated and elegant. But it’s all about having an opportunity to develop a style, and maybe that’s what our overcrowded school curriculum lacks today.

We don’t have enough time these days, so we favor speed or assistive technology. No, I don’t want to go back to hand-washing my clothes in the river, but I am interested in discussing some of the suggested consequences of advances in technology and the way we do things now.

It’s an interesting thought that if we use a keyboard instead of our hands, some of us may have difficulty processing letters.

Alex Daw
Brisbane, Australia

Challenging the Narrative

I agree with most of what is said in “Up to the Challenge” (Sept./



Oct., p. 52) but must point out the practicalities associated with one of the author’s statements on how librarians can avoid challenges: “The school librarian will display preselected titles on the tables and insist the youngest learners select from those.... Maybe the school librarians’ intentions are good, but these practices are just plain wrong. Learners need to feel trusted to make wise decisions, and they need plenty of practice in independently selecting what they need.” This is a very negative statement and may cause concern among librarians who serve young students.

My “intentions” in preselecting high-interest books for 5-year-olds have to do with pedagogy, child development, skill-building, staffing, and best practice. As the librarian entrusted with collection development and a limited budget, I have already preselected the entire library.

Students just learning how to look at, select, and evaluate book choices have a lot of work to do to find the just-right book in a short period of time that also includes a lesson and checkout. If the child does not find the right book from the preselection, then of course they can have a reference interview with a librarian who can model how to find the right book.

Lisa Von Drasek
Minneapolis

Happy Anniversary

Thank you for your coverage of “50 Years of the Coretta Scott King Awards” (June, p. 28).

I was a middle school media specialist for several years and always counted on the award winners to be special books to recommend to my students. My personal favorites? *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred D. Taylor and the works of author Walter Dean Myers.

It’s nice to know that winning the award increases the chances that a book will be available to future generations; it keeps them on the shelves and in the stores. The books may even get to celebrate their own anniversaries, as *Roll of Thunder* did in 2016, when the 40th anniversary edition was published. Obviously, a perfect time to reread it!

Keep up the interesting coverage, *American Libraries*.

Mary Ellen Kubis
Roswell, Georgia

WRITE US: The editors welcome comments about recent content, online stories, and matters of professional interest. Submissions should be limited to 300 words and are subject to editing for clarity, style, and length. Send to americanlibraries@ala.org or *American Libraries*, From Our Readers, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611-2795.

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Don't Fear AI

As a visiting Fulbright scholar in the US who is currently conducting a project about artificial intelligence (AI) in libraries, I have been thrilled to see *American Libraries* covering the topic this year.

We do not yet know how exactly AI will transform the discovery of information, library workflows, or research processes. There are also many unsolved ethical questions in using AI. What we do know is that machine learning algorithms are being used in many tools and technologies libraries already employ. For example, AI can help determine metadata, speed up describing documents with the help of automated indexing or classification tools, distribute materials to different locations when floating a collection, or evolve new kinds of search algorithms to databases.

Our profession has always been keen to learn new things and keep up to date with technological and societal developments. I wish to encourage all librarians to take this approach to AI—read news about the topic, sign up for an online course, and follow what other libraries and the private sector are experimenting with. Whether or not AI will prove to transform the world, it never hurts to know more!

Pirjo Kangas
Turku, Finland

A+ for Biodiversity

Recently a librarian friend at LaGuardia Community College, where I teach biology, sent me your article about the Biodiversity Heritage Library ("Finding Flora and Fauna," June, p. 88).

The article features Martin R. Kalfatovic, program director of the Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL), who explained the significance of BHL's work, especially to researchers in biodiversity-related fields who often need to access old publications that are usually found only in large libraries specializing in natural history.

Member libraries in the US and overseas that partner with BHL digitize their out-of-copyright holdings and provide access to them through BHL's digital portal.

Before BHL came into existence, in order to consult old publications required for taxonomic studies on organisms, one had to physically visit a library that carried these publications. Thanks to the work of BHL and its partner libraries, many can now be viewed and downloaded over the internet.

I have been using BHL extensively for my own research on the fauna of Sri Lanka and the history of biodiversity exploration in South Asia, and find BHL to be an invaluable and essential (and free) resource.

Priyantha Wijesinghe
Brooklyn, New York

CORRECTIONS

In "Automatic for the People," (Sept./Oct., p. 48), the branches of Gwinnett County (Ga.) Public Library that use Open+ are Lawrenceville and Suwanee. Snellville does not.

In the People section (Sept./Oct., p. 62), the correct title for Scott Warren is librarian. In the May issue (p. 55), Arlene Luchsinger was an academic librarian for 30 years.

What You're Reading

- 1 Automatic for the People** Self-service libraries: threat to the profession or opportunity for better service? bit.ly/AL-SelfServe
- 2 File under Bee** Libraries across the country are discovering the benefits of beekeeping. bit.ly/AL-Bees
- 3 How to Build a Library** Three public library administrators explain what it takes to complete a new library construction project. bit.ly/AL-Build

In Case You Missed It

ALA Announces #eBooksForAll Campaign

ALA and its partners addressed publishers at Digital Book World 2019 and announced the Libraries Transform Book Pick. bit.ly/AL-eBooksForAll



Censorship Beyond Books

Librarians share experiences of challenges to displays, exhibits, and more. bit.ly/AL-BeyondBooks

PLA Inclusive Internship Initiative Concludes

This year's teen interns and mentors met at the Library of Congress for a wrap-up event. bit.ly/AL-III



Dewey Decibel Podcast: Libraries of All Shapes and Sizes

Episode 42 looks at new and renovated libraries featured in the 2019 Library Design Showcase. bit.ly/AL-LibDesign

Coming Soon

Our fifth annual "Holiday Gift Guide for Librarians and Book Lovers."

Check The Scoop for our full team coverage of **ALA's Midwinter Meeting & Exhibits** in Philadelphia, January 24–28, 2020.

Wong, Yates Seek ALA Presidency

Patricia M. “Patty” Wong, city librarian at Santa Monica (Calif.) Public Library, and Steven Yates, assistant director of the University of Alabama School of Library and Information Studies, are the candidates for the 2021–2022 presidency of the American Library Association (ALA).



Patricia M. “Patty” Wong

Wong, who is also part-time faculty at San José (Calif.) State University iSchool and former director of library services at Yolo County (Calif.) Library, has been an active ALA member for 35 years. She has served several terms as councilor-at-large and as California chapter councilor. She is in her second term on the ALA Executive Board and has held numerous committee positions, including chair of the Budget Analysis and Review Committee. She is a member of the American Indian Library Association, Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association, Black Caucus of the ALA, Chinese American Librarians Association (CALA), and *Reforma*: The National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking.

Wong is an active member of the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), Library Leadership and Management Association (LLAMA), Public Library Association (PLA), United for Libraries, and Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), as well as the Freedom to Read Foundation, Social Responsibilities Round Table, Ethnic and Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table, and Rainbow Round Table.

She was the recipient of the 2012 ALA Equality Award, the 2014 CALA Distinguished Service Award, and the California Library Association’s 2012 Member of the Year Award. She holds a bachelor’s in women’s studies and an MLIS, both from the University of California, Berkeley.

In a September 27 statement, Wong said: “There will be more change within the American Library Association in the next five years than in the past 50. We will face stressors that challenge us in publishing and digital access, intellectual freedom and legislation, and funding and innovation. Our success will come from managing that change and not allowing it to manage us.”



Steven Yates

Steven Yates earned a PhD in instructional leadership and technology, as well as an MLIS and bachelor’s, from University of Alabama. He has an EdS in library media from University of West Alabama.

He is former president of the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) and an active member of ALSC, LLAMA, YALSA, the Intellectual Freedom Round Table, and *Reforma*. He is a member of the second ALA Policy Corps cohort, the ALA Executive Director Search Committee, and the Steering Committee on Organizational Effectiveness, and was part of the 2010 class of ALA Emerging Leaders.

Yates has served as a member of many committees, including the Committee on Appointments and Diversity and the Emerging Leaders program subcommittee. With AASL he was chair of the leadership development committee, member-at-large of the board of directors, board-elected representative to the Executive Committee, and a member of the Professional Development Advisory Group and the *Knowledge Quest* editorial board. Yates was president of the Alabama Library Association, where he moderated its young adult services round table, and was treasurer of the Alabama School Library Association.

“Our profession has more work to do to ensure that our workforce reflects the communities we serve,” he said in a September 27 statement. “I look forward to working alongside my fellow members in leading the Association to harness the power of positive passion as we build cultural competence in our membership and maintain a strong national, state, and local policy and advocacy presence.”

Wong and Yates will engage in a candidates’ forum 4:30–5:30 p.m. on Saturday, January 25, during ALA’s 2020 Midwinter Meeting & Exhibits in Philadelphia. Each candidate will have an opportunity to make a statement and answer questions from the audience.

Ballot mailing for the 2020 ALA election will begin on March 9, 2020, and run through April 1. Individuals must be members in good standing as of January 31, 2020, in order to vote. ●

ALA Announces #eBooksForAll Campaign

The American Library Association (ALA) rallied library advocates at a September 11 press conference at Nashville (Tenn.) Public Library (NPL) to call attention to Macmillan Publishers' new library ebook lending model and urge library supporters to sign a petition opposing it. Starting November 1, Macmillan will limit libraries to purchasing one copy of each new ebook and impose an eight-week embargo on buying additional copies.

ALA Executive Director Mary Ghikas said at the press conference that Macmillan's new policy reveals a disturbing trend toward restricted or delayed access. ALA has "seen the pendulum shift from publishers not selling to libraries at all to a relatively symbiotic relationship between the two," she said.

ALA has developed a campaign to involve patrons in the fight for ebook access. The new initiative, #eBooksForAll, was introduced by Ramiro S. Salazar, president of the Public Library Association (PLA) and director of San Antonio Public Library. He urged attendees to sign the petition at ebooksforall.org.

NPL Director Kent Oliver said the restrictions placed by publishers on public libraries make it difficult to purchase ebooks. As a result, he said, patrons do not have access to bestselling titles when they are at peak demand. He pointed out that libraries pay roughly four times the retail price for ebook copies and must repurchase many of them every two years. ●

Libraries Transform Book Pick

During the September 11 press conference in Nashville, Tennessee, where



ALA announced the #eBooksForAll campaign, ALA Executive Director Mary Ghikas announced the Libraries Transform Book Pick, a collaboration between ALA and Rakuten OverDrive to

provide free, unrestricted ebook access through public libraries.

The first title was *After the Flood* by Cassandra Montag (William Morrow and Company, September). For two weeks in October the ebook was available for unlimited checkouts by those holding library cards at public libraries using Rakuten OverDrive readers, with no

waitlist or holds for the title. Book selections are made in consultation with *Booklist*, ALA's book review magazine and collection-building resource.

For more information about the program and upcoming titles, visit bit.ly/LTBookPick. Readers need only a public library card and the Libby app to download a copy to their device.

PLA Announces Workshops on Space Planning for Libraries

PLA is teaming up with public libraries in three cities to offer regional workshops on space planning for libraries. These full-day workshops will instruct attendees on best practices for planning library layouts, critically assessing the functionality of their spaces, and making their libraries more accessible and navigable. This program is intended for libraries planning

CALENDAR

NOV. 1-3

YALSA's Young Adult Services Symposium | Memphis, Tennessee
ala.org/yalsa/yasymposium

NOV. 3-9

International Games Week
games.ala.org

NOV. 14-16

AASL National Conference and Exhibition | Louisville, Kentucky
national.aasl.org

JAN. 24-28

ALA Midwinter Meeting & Exhibits | Philadelphia
alamidwinter.org

FEB. 25-29

Public Library Association Conference | Nashville, Tennessee
placonference.org

APR.

School Library Month
ala.org/aasl/slm

APR. 4-11

Money Smart Week
moneysmartweek.org

APR. 19-25

National Library Week
ala.org/nlw

APR. 21

National Library Workers Day
ala-apa.org/nlwd

APR. 22

National Bookmobile Day
ala.org/aboutala/bookmobileday

APR. 26-MAY 2

Preservation Week
ala.org/preservationweek

MAY 4-5

National Library Legislative Day | Washington, D.C.
ala.org/advocacy/NLLD

JUNE 25-30

ALA Annual Conference and Exhibition | Chicago
alaannual.org

UPDATE

a renovation, building a new space, looking to improve circulation, or hoping to enrich the use of their community spaces.

For more information about “Space Planning: Reinventing Your Library Space,” visit bit.ly/PLAspaceplanning. Registration is limited to 100 participants per session.

ALCTS Seeks Nominations for 2020 Awards

Nominations are being accepted for the 2020 Association for Library Collections and Technical Services Awards, which encompass innovation and collaboration, cataloging and metadata management, serials and continuing resources, publications, and preservation.

If you are interested in nominating a candidate for any of these awards, contact the chair of that award jury. The deadline for nominations and supporting materials is December 1. Nominations for

the Ross Atkinson Lifetime Achievement Award are due November 15. Visit ala.org/alcts/awards for more details and criteria for each award.

Carnegie-Whitney Awards for Guides to Library Resources

The ALA Publishing Committee provides a grant of up to \$5,000 for the preparation of print or electronic reading lists, indexes, or other guides to library resources that promote reading or the use of library resources at any type of library.

Funded projects have ranged from “A Resource Guide about Disabilities, Disability Theory, and Assistive Technologies” to “A Bibliography for Queer Teens,” and from “Graphic Novels and the Humanity of Mental Illness” to “Web Accessibility Resources for Libraries.”

Applications must be received by November 1. Recipients will be notified

by mid-February 2020. For more information and guidelines, visit bit.ly/CWGrant or contact grant administrator Mary Jo Bolduc at mbolduc@ala.org.

ACRL Seeks Nominations for 2020 Awards

Every year, the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) honors the achievements of academic and research librarians in the areas of distinguished service, publications, and research and grants. These honors are made possible by corporate support.

ACRL urges members to nominate colleagues whose work has influenced their thinking and growth as academic librarians and whose contributions merit recognition by the profession. Nominations for most awards must be submitted by December 6.

More information, including submission procedures, past winners, criteria, and contact information, is available at ala.org/acrl/awards or by contacting ACRL Program Officer Chase Ollis at collis@ala.org.

ALSC Receives Grant for Welcoming Spaces Forum

The Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) received a \$150,000 National Leadership Grant for Libraries from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. ALSC will partner with the Association of Children’s Museums (ACM) on this two-year project, which entails hosting the Welcoming Spaces National Forum in Chicago in June 2020 (adjacent but unrelated to Annual) and compiling a best practices resource for libraries and children’s museums serving recent immigrants and refugees to the United States.

Invitees to the Welcoming Spaces National Forum will be selected through an application process, and will include representatives from 12 libraries, 12 children’s museums, and 24 collaborating partners engaging with members of their communities who have recently immigrated or resettled.

National Library Legislative Day to be Held in May 2020

In September, ALA announced the dates for the 45th annual National Library Legislative Day (NLLD): May 4–5, 2020, dates that coincide with the 75th anniversary of ALA’s Washington office. Held this year at the Georgetown University Hotel and Conference Center in Washington, D.C., NLLD is a two-day event where library workers, trustees, supporters, leaders, users, and community stakeholders from across the country gather to learn from policy experts and exchange best practices. During face-to-face meetings with members of Congress, participants will share diverse library stories to raise awareness about the value of libraries among federal legislators from several congressional districts on the same day.

“As a pillar of ALA’s year-round approach to advocacy, NLLD focuses on supporting advocates to develop strong connections with elected officials and community leaders at every level of government,” said ALA Public Policy and Advocacy Office Associate Executive Director Kathi Kromer in a September 9 statement. “One of ALA’s biggest goals is to provide an inclusive setting that nurtures the novice and builds on the knowledge base of seasoned advocates.”

Added Kromer: “Advocacy is a different tactical and strategic challenge compared to when I first came to D.C. in the 1990s. The process today is far more dynamic, with social media, grassroots, and the influx of communications to the Hill. In this changing landscape, ALA advocates must pull all the levers we can.”

For more information, visit ala.org/nlld or email nlld@alawash.org. ●



ALA Leadership Institute

Participants in the seventh ALA Leadership Institute immersed themselves in the annual leadership development program, which covered topics such as interpersonal competence; power and influence; community engagement; and strategy, innovation, and change. The institute, held August 5–8 at the Hilton Chicago/Oak Brook Hills Resort and Conference Center in Oak Brook, Illinois, was led by former ALA President Maureen Sullivan (2012–2013) and leadership consultant Kathryn Deiss.

For more information about the institute, including a list of 2019 participants and eligibility requirements, visit ala.org/educationcareers/leadership. ●

ALSC and ACM will present findings from the forum in a webinar hosted by ALSC in August 2020, at ALSC's National Institute in Minneapolis (October 2020), and at ALA's Midwinter Meeting in Indianapolis (January 2021). External evaluation of the project will be conducted by Garibay Group.

AASL Selects Members of School Leader Collaborative

The American Association of School Librarians (AASL) has selected seven school administrators to serve on its two-year initiative, the AASL School Leader Collaborative: Administrators and School Librarians Transforming Teaching and Learning. This initiative aims to strengthen AASL's collaboration with

school administrators and champions the school librarian's role in teaching. Support is provided by OverDrive Education.

Members of the collaborative, nominated by members of their communities, include: Shawn Arnold, superintendent, Valdez (Alaska) City Schools; Sean Doherty, superintendent, School District of Clayton in St. Louis; April Grace, superintendent at Shawnee (Okla.) Public Schools; Kelly Gustafson, principal, Pine-Richland School District in Wexford, Pennsylvania; Joel Hoag, principal, Franklin (Tenn.) Special School District; Kim Patterson, principal at Grossmont Union High School District in El Cajon, California; and Melita Walker, principal at Columbia (Mo.) Public Schools.

As ambassadors of school libraries, the AASL School Leader Collaborative will convene with AASL leaders and K–12 administrators to garner advocacy for school librarians that can be implemented at building, district, state, and national levels. Administrators will provide feedback, messaging, and advice on strategies to be taken by AASL. This dialogue will deepen understanding of the school librarians' role in teaching.

Nominations Open for John Phillip Immroth Memorial Award

The Intellectual Freedom Round Table (IFRT) is accepting nominations for the 2020 John Phillip Immroth Memorial Award.

This award honors notable contributions to intellectual freedom and demonstrations of personal courage in defense of freedom of expression by a living individual, group, or organization. The award consists of a citation and \$500, which IFRT will present during the 2020 ALA Annual Conference and Exhibition in Chicago.

The deadline for nominations is December 1. Visit bit.ly/JPIMemorial for more information and to submit nominations.

Nominations Open for 2020 EMIERT Multicultural Award

The Ethnic and Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table (EMIERT) seeks nominations for the 2020 David Cohen/EMIERT Multicultural Award.

The award recognizes recent articles that include significant new research related to the understanding and promotion of multiculturalism in libraries in North America. Works published between January 1, 2018, and December 31, 2019, are eligible. The application deadline is January 3, 2020.

Award recipients will be selected based on the relationship of publication to the purpose of the award; extent to which publication bridges cultures, increases multicultural awareness in libraries, or provides appropriate cultural

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representation; significance of publication and its potential impact; and originality.

The award is presented biannually during even years and consists of a plaque and \$500. If no suitable candidate is judged to merit the award in a given year, it will not be presented. For more information, visit bit.ly/EMERTaward.

SRRT Seeks Applications for 2020 Herb Biblo Travel Grants

The Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) has announced the second annual Herb Biblo Conference Travel Grants to help finance up to two SRRT members' attendance at an ALA Annual Conference. The \$1,000 award covers limited fees related to airfare, lodging, and conference registration.

The travel grant is part of a three-year pilot and honors the legacy of past ALA councilor and SRRT member Herb Biblo.

The application deadline is December 15. All applicants will be notified of the committee's decision by January 15, 2020. Applicants must be ALA/SRRT personal members. Learn more and submit an application at bit.ly/HBtravelgrant. Recipients will be announced publicly in the spring.

Libraries to Participate in Great Stories Club

Thirty-five US libraries have been selected to participate in ALA's Great Stories Club series on Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation, a thematic reading and discussion program series that engages underserved teens through literature-based outreach programs and racial healing work.

The program is supported through the W. K. Kellogg Foundation's Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation effort, a national and community-based process to address the historic and contemporary effects of racism, as well as the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation

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	Total distribution	51,313	52,575
	Copies not distributed	3,643	2,373
	Total	54,956	54,948
	Percent paid	97.22%	94.76%
	Electronic copy circulation		
	Paid electronic copies	0	0
	Total paid print copies	49,886	49,819
	Total print distribution	51,313	52,575
	Percent paid	97.22%	94.76%

Grant Fund Honors Barber

Margaret “Peggy” Barber, 75, ALA associate executive director of communications 1970–2000, died August 25 (see p. 63). In that role, she established ALA’s Public Information Office, Public Programs Office, and the ALA Graphics department, which includes the Celebrity READ poster series. Barber also worked to establish the national library symbol that now appears on street signs nationwide. She coauthored *Getting Your Grant: A How-to-Do-It Manual for Librarians* with Linda D. Crowe and received ALA’s 1999 Joseph W. Lippincott Award for distinguished service to the library profession. After leaving ALA, she was a principal consultant with Library Communication Strategies and served as copresident of Friends of Libraries USA, now known as United for Libraries.



Peggy Barber

Barber once observed: “Librarians are stewards of all the world’s creativity... We run institutions that are open to all people and have the potential for serving all people. But we get to deal with folks as individuals—one at a time. In this work, I think it’s possible to make a difference in the world—one person at a time.”

Her friends have established a Peggy Barber Tribute Grant for Libraries fund within ALA’s Cultural Communities Fund, which Barber was instrumental in creating to support cultural programs in libraries. Donations may be made online at ala.org/ccf or by sending checks to the ALA Public Programs Office, Attn: Cultural Communities Fund, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. ●

The grantees represent 29 public libraries, two academic libraries, three K–12 libraries, and one library association. Additionally, 29 community partner organizations, including alternative schools, youth detention centers, after-school programs, and other organizations that serve youth, are participating in the project. View a list of the grantees at bit.ly/GSChaling.

The reading list includes *Ms. Marvel Volume 1: No Normal* by G. Willow Wilson and Adrian Alphona; *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas; *March: Book One* by John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell; *Shadowshaper* by Daniel José Older; *X: A Novel* by Ilyashah Shabazz and Kekla Magoon; and *The Sun Is Also a Star* by Nicola Yoon.

Participating libraries will receive 11 copies of up to four books on the reading list; a programming grant of

up to \$1,200; travel and accommodation expenses for a two-day orientation workshop in Chicago; and additional resources, training, and support.

New White Paper Offers Marketing Advice

Choice, a publishing unit of ACRL, will publish the fourth in a series of white papers on topics important to the academic library community.

“Implementing Marketing Plans in the Academic Library: Rules, Roles, and Definition” offers a practical definition of library marketing and examines why it’s integral to successful operations and strong fiscal support. Funding for this research was provided by the Taylor & Francis Group. The report is available at bit.ly/ChoiceWhitePaper.

Researched and produced by Choice and written by Emily L. Hauser, the paper

provides an outline of library marketing strategies and tactics for successful follow-through. The work describes specific, actionable steps that different types of libraries can take to build effective, sustainable marketing programs for promoting a library’s services, resources, and instruction.

ALSC Supports Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

ALSC has released a statement on equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) along with new resources that support the EDI-related work of the Association.

The statement is available on ALSC’s newly created equity, diversity, and inclusion webpage (bit.ly/ALSCEDI), which highlights ALSC’s efforts, opportunities for members to get involved with the division’s work, and links to resources, videos, and publications.

These efforts have been and will continue to be coordinated through ALSC leadership and members and with other ALA divisions and offices.

AASL Announces Research Grant Recipients

The Educators of School Librarians Section of AASL announced the recipients of the 2019 AASL Research Grant, which recognizes excellence in manuscripts that address a persistent and recurring challenge in the field of school librarianship. This year’s winners address the topics of censorship, ebooks, and makerspaces. Sponsored by School Library Connection, the grant consists of a \$350 award and the opportunity to present the paper at the 2019 AASL National Conference, November 14–16 in Louisville, Kentucky.

Recipients of the 2019 AASL Research Grant are: Sue C. Kimmel and Danielle E. Hartsfield for their article in *Library Quarterly*; April Dawkins and Karen Gavigan for their article in *School Library Research*; and Heather Moorefield-Lang for her article in *Reference Services Review*. The research grant session will take place November 16. [AL](#)

2020 ALA Nominating Committee Council Candidates Announced

The ALA Nominating Committee annually nominates candidates from among the general membership for members-at-large of Council. Individuals who are not selected by the Nominating Committee may run for office by petition. Individuals interested in running for ALA Council by petition have until 4:30 p.m. Central time on December 4 to file an electronic petition with the ALA executive director at bit.ly/CouncilPetition. The petition must have the signatures of no fewer than 25 ALA current personal members. An additional form containing biographical information and a statement of professional concerns must be submitted electronically with the petition. Instructions for filing petitions and additional voting information can be found at ala.org/aboutala/governance/alaelection.

Alexandria Abenshon

Library Manager
Webster Branch
New York Public Library

Thomas Adamich

President
Visiting Librarian Service
New Philadelphia, Ohio

Jennifer Addington

Director
Palos Verdes Library District
Rolling Hills Estates, California

Tina Baich

Associate Dean for Collections
Indiana University–Purdue
University Indianapolis
University Library

Regina M. Beard

Business Librarian
Florida Gulf Coast University
Fort Myers

Emily Bergman

Campus Librarian
Chicago School of
Professional Psychology
Los Angeles

Latrice Booker

Dean of the Library
Indiana University Northwest
Gary

Vivian Bordeaux

Librarian III, Customer Service
Bridgeport (Conn.)
Public Library

Peter D. Coyl

Director
Montclair (N.J.) Public Library

John DeSantis

Cataloging and Metadata
Services Librarian
Dartmouth College
Hanover, New Hampshire

Joslyn Bowling Dixon

Assistant Director
Prince William (Va.) Public
Library System

Yvonne Dooley

Business Librarian
University of North Texas
Denton

Cynthia Ellison Dottin

Adjunct Lecturer, FIU
Honors College
Florida International University
Miami

Emily Drabinski

Critical Pedagogy Librarian
The Graduate Center, City
University of New York
New York City

Nadine Ellero

Head of Technical Services
Auburn (Ala.) University
Libraries

Laura Evans

Head of Cataloging/Metadata
Amherst (Mass.) College

Susan F. Gregory

Director
Bozeman (Mont.)
Public Library

Monica Harris

Executive Director
Schaumburg Township
(Ill.) District Library

Vicky Hart

Director of Library Services
Northeast Lakeview College
Universal City, Texas

Rochelle Hartman

Director
Lincoln Library
Springfield, Illinois

Carl A. Harvey II

Assistant Professor
Longwood University
Farmville, Virginia

Christopher J. Hemingway

Circulation Librarian
Hagaman Memorial Library
East Haven, Connecticut

Peter Hepburn

Head Librarian
College of the Canyons
Santa Clarita, California

Dora T. Ho

Young Adult Librarian
Los Angeles Public Library

Shanna Hollich

Collections Management
Librarian
Wilson College
Chambersburg, Pennsylvania

Del R. Hornbuckle

Dean of Library Services
California State
University, Fresno

Matthew Hortt

Executive Director
High Plains Library District
Greeley, Colorado

Grace Jackson-Brown

Associate Professor
Duane G. Meyer Library
Missouri State University
Springfield

Liana Juliano

Manager, Information
Resources
Paul Hastings LLP
Los Angeles

Robin Kear

Liaison Librarian
University of Pittsburgh

Kimberly Bray Knight

Assistant Director
Chesapeake (Va.)
Public Library

Jeff Kosokoff

Assistant University Librarian
for Collection Strategy
Duke University Libraries
Durham, North Carolina

Oscar R. Lanza-Galindo

Library and Learning
Commons Director
Bristol Community College
Fall River, Massachusetts

Binh P. Le

Librarian
Penn State Abington

Sam Leif

Assistant Director
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Rodney Lippard

Director
Gregg-Graniteville Library
and the Center for
Student Achievement
University of South
Carolina Aiken

Lesley Looper

Team Lead, Shelf Preparation
Section, Resource
Description Department
Duke University Libraries
Durham, North Carolina

Kari Mitchell

Librarian
District of Columbia
Public Schools
Washington, D.C.

Joe Mocnik

Dean of Libraries
North Dakota State University
Fargo

Alanna Aiko Moore

Librarian for Sociology, Ethnic
Studies, Gender Studies
University of California,
San Diego
La Jolla

Leslie L. Morgan

Africana Studies and
Education Librarian
University of Notre Dame
Indiana

Larry Neal

Library Director
Clinton-Macomb (Mich.)
Public Library

Michelle P. Osborne

Manager
Stanley Branch
Gaston County (N.C.)
Public Library

Jennifer Pate

Scholarly Communications
and Instructional
Services Librarian
University of North Alabama
Florence

Liz Philippi

School Library Program
Coordinator
Texas State Library and
Archives Commission
Austin

Sarah M. K. Potwin

Executive Library Director
Niagara Falls (N.Y.)
Public Library

Raymond Pun

Instruction/Research Librarian
Alder Graduate School
of Education
Redwood City, California

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School District

Edward L. Sanchez

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University of Texas Rio
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Edinburg

Jules Shore

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Rockville, Maryland

Jahala D. Simuel

Medical Librarian and Head
of Access Services
Howard University
Washington, D.C.

Daniella Smith

Associate Professor
Department of
Information Science
University of North Texas
Denton

Pauline Stacchini

Managing Librarian
Austin (Tex.) Public Library

Amy Steinbauer

Interim Branch Manager
District of Columbia
Public Library
Washington, D.C.

Kaite Mediatore Stover

Director of Readers'
Services
Kansas City (Mo.)
Public Library

Bill Sudduth

Head, Government
Information and Maps
University of South
Carolina Libraries
Columbia

Jim Teliha

Dean of the Library and
Learning Commons
Utica (N.Y.) College

Tina Thomas

Executive Director, Strategy
and Innovation
Edmonton (Alberta)
Public Library

Gail Tobin

Branch Manager
Hanover Park Branch
Schaumburg Township
(Ill.) District Library

Scott Walter

University Librarian and
University Copyright Officer
Illinois Wesleyan University
Bloomington

Brad Warren

Associate Dean of
Library Services
University of Cincinnati

Sandy Wee

Library Services Manager
San Mateo County
(Calif.) Libraries

Angela A. Williams

Librarian
The Martin Luther King
Jr. Memorial Library
Syracuse (N.Y.) University

Derek Wilson

Executive Director
Florence-Lauderdale
Public Library
Florence, Alabama

Harriet Wintermute

Head, Metadata Services
Iowa State University Library
Ames ●

2020 Election Dates

Ballot emailing for the 2020 ALA election will begin on March 9. The election will close April 1. Individuals must have renewed their ALA membership by January 31, 2020, to be eligible to vote.





From the Library with Love

Information professionals help older adults parse the features and culture of online dating apps

BY Anne Ford

Finding love after 50 isn't always easy. Social norms change, life events like divorce and death leave emotional scars, and it sometimes feels as if the rest of the world has already paired off.

Fortunately, there's the library—not as a place to make romantic connections per se, but as a resource for older adults who want to learn how to navigate the world of online dating. Several public libraries have begun offering programs that help older patrons safely and effectively meet potential partners on the internet. Among these are Westport (Conn.) Public Library, Skokie (Ill.) Public Library, and Billings (Mont.) Public Library.

Darien (Conn.) Library has held online dating workshops for single older adults four times since 2015. “We were noticing older patrons using our computer lab and needing help with things such as uploading pictures and recognizing if dating sites were legitimate or not,” says Mallory Arents, who was then the library's associate director of programs and services. “I can think of one gentleman in particular who would write a message [to send on a dating site], print it out, and ask for help proof-reading it.”

That led her to create an educational presentation about online dating, which begins with an overview of dating sites and apps from the general-interest (Match.com, Tinder) to the niche (FarmersOnly).

“One of the things I want every participant to know is that no matter your interest, who you're looking to date, or what you're looking for in a relationship, there is something out there for you,” Arents says. She includes apps that are inclusive and target specific communities, such as HER, an app for lesbian, queer, bisexual, and bicurious women, and nonbinary people.

She also occasionally cautions participants about the quality and usability of certain dating sites and apps. “I did some research, and right off the bat I was seeing [sites and apps with] a lot of unfinished profiles, a lot of profiles with no pictures. That's not something I can recommend as an information professional.”

Strategies for successful swiping

For the next section of the workshop, which covers how online daters can describe themselves most effectively in their profiles, Arents draws on

something with which just about every public librarian will be familiar: résumé-building. “I use a lot of the same tips,” she says. “What's not successful are empty adjectives: ‘I'm smart.’ ‘I'm neat.’ That doesn't mean much.” Instead, she recommends, supply specifics such as “I enjoy spending Saturday mornings with the crossword.”

Many older online daters are concerned about privacy and security issues. “That's where a librarian's job is super helpful because we know how to navigate different types of information,” she points out. “We arm patrons with what to look out for, like messages from Americans living in other countries who ask you for money, or a message from someone who wants to leave the app and talk to you



Illustration: Tom Deja

“No matter your interest or who you’re looking to date, there is something out there for you.”

MALLORY ARENTS, former director of programs and services at Darien (Conn.) Library

elsewhere right away. We talk about not inviting someone to pick you up from your home the first time you meet, and always making sure you tell a friend where you’re going.”

Arents’s tips for other librarians who would like to offer their own online-dating workshops? First, bring a camera. Many participants don’t have good photographs of themselves to post in their dating profiles and will appreciate the chance to have some taken. Second, don’t post a sign-in sheet, and make sure signage directing people to the workshop is clear, so that no one needs to ask for directions. Some patrons might prefer not to broadcast the fact that they’re attending this event. “One patron came to the front desk and wrote on a piece of paper, ‘Where is the online dating workshop?’ so she didn’t have to say it out loud,” Arents recalls.

Checking the boxes

At White Oak Library District, which serves the Illinois communities of Crest Hill, Lockport, and Romeoville, Outreach Manager Tina M. Williams formed the Dating Over 50 program series

in 2017, as a response to patron interest. The first event in the series focused on online dating in particular; since then, subsequent monthly programs have added supporting topics, such as a recent one called “Oh, the Places You’ll Go,” which discussed the merits of several local date venues.

Williams has also created resources to help program participants consider their readiness to date. One of those is a bingo game in which players complete a square for each time they answer “yes” to a self-care question. “If they get five across, then it’s like, ‘Okay, you’re a candidate to start dating,’” she explains.

Other topics have included sex for senior citizens. “Sex is a huge topic all the time,” Williams says. “They all still feel like they’re in high school. I say, ‘If you can’t have a conversation about it, then you shouldn’t be doing it.’” Not to mention, “STDs are prolific in the older years, because [seniors] don’t typically use condoms, so AARP has donated condoms that we give out [at the program].”

Happily, Williams has seen several program participants pair off, either at the programs themselves or as a result of online dating. “Once they find success, off they go, and they don’t come back,” she says—with at least one exception. “We had one lady who met a gentleman, and they’re getting married. She brought him into the library to meet me.” **AL**

ANNE FORD is *American Libraries* editor-at-large.

BY THE NUMBERS

International Games Week

2017

Year that International Games Week was established. The week (this year November 3–9) grew out of National Games Day and aims to raise awareness among publishers and the public of games and gaming in libraries.

324

Number of murder scenarios possible in the classic mystery board game *Clue*. The game—which features nine rooms, six weapons, and six colorfully named suspects, including Colonel Mustard and Miss Scarlet—celebrates its 70th anniversary this year.

1948

Year that Eleanor Abbott—a retired school teacher who was recovering from polio—invented *Candy Land*. She wanted to create a fun fantasy world for young polio patients while they were in the hospital. A year later, Milton Bradley began publishing the board game.

176 million

Number of *Minecraft* copies sold since its debut 10 years ago. According to *PC Gamer*, some in the gaming industry speculate that *Minecraft* has overtaken *Tetris* as the bestselling videogame of all time.





A child undergoes a hearing test at a Sense-Screening Storytime at Omaha (Neb.) Public Library's Swanson branch.

Testing the Senses

Libraries host hearing and sight screenings for kids

BY Marty Stempniak

After being told by vision professionals that his 3-year-old daughter was too young for glasses, a father in Omaha, Nebraska, decided to get a second opinion—at the library. A vision screening at an Omaha Public Library (OPL) storytime led to an ophthalmologist referral to fit the girl for glasses, says Julie Humphrey, youth and family services manager for OPL.

Sight and sound are integral parts of storytime and early literacy, so it makes sense for libraries to take an active role in children's eye and ear health. Across the country, institutions are hosting free vision and hearing screenings tied to children's reading sessions.

OPL started hosting its Sense-Screening Storytime program last September and has already seen several successes.

"There is a definite need for this in our community," says Humphrey.

The idea for OPL's program stems from a gathering of Omaha-area child-services providers last year, part of an early learning initiative instituted by the state of Nebraska. At the meeting, OPL administrators learned about services provided by the Center for Childhood Deafness, Language, and Learning at Boys Town National Research Hospital in Omaha, as well as a local chapter of Lions Club International, both of which screen

kids for early signs of hearing impairment or language delay.

"A lot of people don't know you offer these screenings," Humphrey recalls telling leaders from the two institutions. "Why don't we work together? This could be something that we get out into the city."

The first Sense-Screening Storytime event was held in fall 2018. The agenda is fluid, but generally the sessions start with the reading of a couple of books and some sight and sound movement activities. These last about 20 minutes, depending on "how wiggly the kids are getting," says Humphrey. Afterwards, parents are asked if they want their child screened at the library.

Last year, OPL hosted 24 sessions at all 12 of its locations—one hearing and one vision screening at each. Participation has been sporadic, Humphrey says, with some sessions better attended than others, but OPL has been buoyed by success stories from the program's first year.

A boy was screened for hearing impairment at the suggestion of OPL staff after he didn't respond to prompts transmitted through his headphones. Several follow-up screenings confirmed his auditory struggles, and the boy was scheduled for surgery in January to relieve the pressure in his Eustachian tubes.

"Even if the numbers seem very small, you are making an impact if you can help just one child have a better chance for natural hearing or natural vision," Humphrey says.

Omaha's efforts have plenty of company: Public libraries in

California, Illinois, and Wisconsin also host sight and sound screenings.

Fountaindale Public Library (FPL) in Bolingbrook, Illinois, has hosted free vision and hearing screenings for several years in collaboration with the DuPage County Health Department. FPL Outreach Services Manager Marianne Thompson says it's a wonderful way to partner with the community, and it also bolsters foot traffic at the library.

Many Oregon public libraries have hosted vision screenings since the state legislature passed a bill in 2013 requiring all children to be checked for optical issues before entering kindergarten. Shortly after the law was enacted, the See to Read program was born as a partnership between the Oregon Library Association and the Elks

Children's Eye Clinic at Oregon Health and Science University in Portland. The program has the goal of addressing vision problems that cannot be treated after a child turns 7 years old. More than 8,000 kids are screened annually at Oregon libraries and Head Start programs thanks to the partnership.

At See to Read events, screeners from the clinic use handheld photo-screening devices with a smiley face on the front to test the children. Kids only have to look at the face to have their vision checked.

Jane Corry, former Oregon Library Association board president and a See to Read proponent, believes such programs dovetail perfectly with the library's mission, and she urges others to give them a try.

"It's a major piece of how the community sees us," Corry says.

"You are making an impact if you can help just one child have a better chance for natural hearing or natural vision."

JULIE HUMPHREY, youth and family services manager, Omaha (Neb.) Public Library

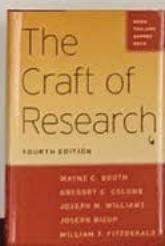
"It's one more tool to let them know we are focused on this issue and to make it possible for kids to have more success at school." **AL**

MARTY STEMPIAK is a freelance writer based in Chicago.

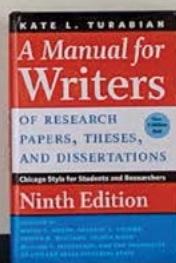
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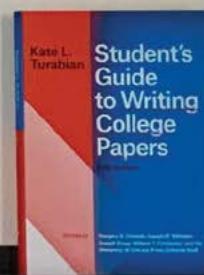
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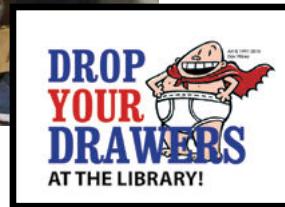
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Conte Flowers, Family Resource Center coordinator for Gallatin County (Ky.) Elementary Schools (one of the statewide participants), poses at a collection point. Below, CCPL's Drop Your Drawers logo, using Dav Pilkey's Captain Underpants character.

problems for kids. Too many of the kids we serve do not know where they will be sleeping at night. Kids often dress themselves or younger siblings because of problems in the home. Many kids—far more than we were aware of—have medical issues related to incontinence or menstruation that can be difficult to diagnose and embarrassing until corrected.

Campbell County has six school districts. Working with six superintendents and six school boards can be challenging, but “Drop Your Drawers” has opened doors to collaboration for us. We team up with the schools’ Family Resource Centers, which are tasked with



Collections in Briefs

Kentucky libraries encourage patrons to “Drop Your Drawers” for a good cause

Campbell County (Ky.) Public Library (CCPL) has four branches serving 92,000 residents, about 9% of whom are living below the poverty line. When an instructor at an early literacy skills workshop mentioned that something as basic as lacking clean underwear can keep some children from staying in the classroom, the library’s managers brainstormed a creative way to help. CCPL runs a campaign November 1–December 31 each year to collect new underwear for kids in sizes 4–16. The campaign has been so successful that it now gets help from Captain Underpants creator Dav Pilkey.

BY J. C. Morgan

Every child should have clean underwear that fits: That’s the founding premise of the Campbell County Public Library’s annual “Drop Your Drawers” campaign to collect new packs of children’s underwear at our public service desks for distribution to the county’s schools.

The name “Drop Your Drawers” is fun and catchy (and has drawn only two complaints from patrons over the years), but it also starts a conversation about some very real issues in our communities. Staffers at CCPL were surprised and saddened to learn that it’s not only accidents that cause underwear

eliminating barriers to learning and providing access to shelter, food, clothing, counseling, and financial aid. They have limited budgets to provide these services and keep children at school and learning, but their work helps break the cycle of poverty and poor education.

Another huge benefit to our library has been in community involvement and public support. Our library went through a difficult time in 2012, when we pursued a tax increase to build a new facility. We were sued by members of our local Tea Party (bit.ly/AL-TeaParty), and the lawsuit became a statewide issue and attracted national attention. “Drop Your Drawers” shows that libraries are still relevant community resources in very practical ways, even in the digital era.

GLOBAL REACH

First Library in Tonga

TONGA The Pacific Island state opened its first-ever public library in October. Thousands of books, as well as bikes and laptops, were donated by more than 50 council libraries in Auckland, New Zealand. The library is the brainchild of South Auckland couple Kahoa and Brendan Corbett, who since 2018 have been packing up donated goods almost every month to be shipped to Kolovai on the island of Tongatapu. The couple had visited the village shortly after Cyclone Gita devastated the islands in February 2018.—*Radio New Zealand*, Sept. 2.



Local children help shelve books for Tonga's first public library.

BENIN Ayaba Totin, a bibliophile who ran a book review blog in France for three years before moving to West Africa, understands that books featuring Africans and the African diaspora are an essential part of maintaining self-esteem. But in Benin, there are only three major public libraries. So Totin created Ayaba's Box of Books, a membership program in which people pay an annual fee to have a monthly selection of books written by black writers delivered to their homes.—*Medium: Zora*, Aug. 22.

INDIA Twelve-year-old Yashoda Shenoy, a student at Thirumala Devaswom High School in Kochi, has been running her own library since January 26. One day she realized that for many people, the prospect of having to pay a public library fine could discourage them from reading. Her solution was to start a library. With 3,000 fiction and nonfiction books and 140 members, the library has generated much publicity. She runs the library in the afternoon, and her parents play librarians in the morning when she goes to school. The library is on the first floor of their house, sharing space with her father's art gallery.—*The Hindu (Chennai)*, July 27.

SCOTLAND A prolific book thief has been jailed for 25 months after pleading guilty to stealing more than 7,000 books from three universities in Edinburgh. Darren Barr is said to have made more than £30,000 by selling the textbooks through three online book markets. During an 11-month crime spree starting in October 2017, Barr admitted to the theft of thousands of books from Edinburgh Napier University and hundreds more from Edinburgh and Heriot-Watt universities on the topics of nursing, business studies, human resources, criminology, and marketing.—*The Guardian (UK)*, Sept. 18. ●

In 2015, the first year of our campaign, our goal was to collect 3,000 pairs of underwear. We collected 5,300 pairs. In the four years we've been running "Drop Your Drawers," the county's 14 elementary schools have received nearly 30,000 pairs of underwear.

The campaign has now spread throughout Kentucky, with approximately 50 libraries in the state participating each year. Since they began, we've collected nearly 90,000 pairs of underwear. Our statewide effort has been greatly aided by the generosity of author and illustrator Dav Pilkey. He has allowed us to use his Captain Underpants image to create consistent publicity materials for Kentucky's libraries. He says he's grateful that "the Captain" can be a help for so many. Pilkey recently sent six pairs of enormous novelty underwear, which he autographed right across the butt, as raffle prizes for our 2019 campaign.

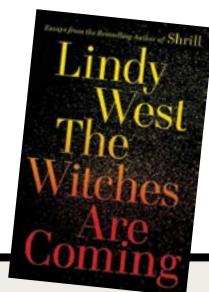
"Drop Your Drawers" shows that libraries are still relevant community resources in very practical ways, even in the digital era.

Libraries and other organizations in Florida, Indiana, Louisiana, and Ohio are now sponsoring their own drives. And Pilkey has given his blessing for any library to use our logo featuring Captain Underpants in conjunction with a "Drop Your Drawers" campaign. You can find materials to use for a campaign at your library and read more about our experience at bit.ly/AL-Drawers. **AL**

J. C. MORGAN is director of Campbell County (Ky.) Public Library.

Lindy West

The author talks about structures of oppression and life after Twitter



Essayist and *New York Times* contributor Lindy West, who writes about feminism and pop culture, moved into television this year with the premiere of *Shriill* on Hulu. Inspired by her memoir of the same name, the series—which follows a young, plus-sized journalist—has been renewed for a second season. Meanwhile, West's second book, *The Witches Are Coming* (Hachette Book Group, November), unleashes her lacerating wit on misogyny, patriarchy, and racism. *American Libraries* spoke with West about the book, body politics, and social media.

BY Anne Ford **Where does the title of your new book come from?** *The Witches Are Coming* grew out of this phenomenon where people try to deflect accountability by claiming that any accusation of wrongdoing is a witch hunt and not real. It's an obvious rhetorical maneuver to avoid looking at reality. I wrote a column in *The New York Times* where I said "You know what? Fine. This is a witch hunt. But *we're* the witches, and *we're* hunting you."

I formulated this book around that concept—telling the truth as a kind of witchcraft. This is America's defining sickness: We want to overwrite our own past and pretend that all of the painful, violent, evil things either weren't a big deal, or they're over and don't affect us anymore. I started to think about all the ways we indoctrinate ourselves into these lies and just how damaging that is for us as a society. We have to start living in the truth, whether it's about the legacy of racism or sexual predation or climate change.

You were very active on Twitter before quitting it in 2017. Why did you leave, and how is your life different now? Have the online troll attacks lessened? Twitter is not a public square. It's a private company, and it can make choices about

how its platform is used, and it has opted to allow Nazis to recruit and harass. That's why I left. I was tacitly endorsing this company's choices by being there. I felt dirty. I have so

MORE ONLINE

For the extended interview, visit bit.ly/AL-LWest after November 1.

much time back now. My brain feels cleaner. I don't feel anxious all the time. People still find ways to hate me, but I'm not as accessible. I get maybe one mean email a month, because it takes so many extra steps to contact me now.

What's your relationship with libraries like? I have such a fond attachment to them. Not just emotionally, but as keepers of knowledge and places that facilitate the sharing of stories. Storytelling is an engine of humanization, and humanization is a thing we need right now. On top of that, libraries enable research and help us figure out what we're getting right and getting wrong. All of that funnels through librarians, people who know how to manage and access

information and filter information critically. That's such an important skill right now and one that's not just being lost, but deliberately suppressed.

Which moment from the first season of *Shriill* have you gotten the most feedback about? The scene where the main character goes to a pool party, and there are around 100 fat women in their swimsuits, dancing and having a good time.

Normally, if you're a fat person at the pool, you feel like you need to apologize or hide. When we shot it, the crew was in tears. I hear from people who were extras there that they all stayed in touch and are friends and have their own pool parties now.

There's so much pressure to have the right kind of body, and it's so expensive and demoralizing and exhausting, and it never relents for your whole life. To present the idea that you can step out of that for a day and you don't have to fix yourself—you're not a broken thing, you're a person who deserves joy and pleasure and to be seen and to be a full participant in public life—is really huge for people. If I can pass some kernel of that along, then my life is fulfilled. **AL**



Photo: Jenny Jimenez

“My thoughts always turn to, ‘What can I do for Long Beach?’ I’m thinking about the librarians and what I can do for them.”

BILLIE JEAN KING, in “Billie Jean King, Reacting to Long Beach [Calif.] Main Library Being Named After Her, Compares Feeling to Receiving Medal of Freedom,” *Orange County Register*, August 6.



“You think—we think—Google Books has digitized a vast amount of written material. And certainly they have. I’m sure the stats on what they have done would be staggering. When you need access to books that are outside of the most obvious 1% of written work, though, it goes dry very quickly. Academic work, older mainstream press books, less successful nonfiction books, books published in non-US publishing houses ... it all becomes nearly impossible to find without having access to someone who can hand you a hard copy of it.... Don’t give up on libraries and hard copies just yet, folks.”

ED BURMILA, “The Sum of All Human Knowledge,” *Gin and Tacos*, September 6.

“IT WAS A PLEASANT SURPRISE WHEN THE FIRST COUPLE SHOWED UP. WE DIDN’T REALIZE THAT WHEN YOU NOTARIZE THE LICENSE, YOU ARE BASICALLY MARRYING PEOPLE.”

JEMIN FAN, circulation director of Birmingham (Ala.) Public Library’s Central location, in “A Match Made in ... Reference: Birmingham Public Library Getting Marriage License Traffic,” *AL.com*, August 30.

“Looking at the brain scans and data analysis, the researchers saw that the stories stimulated the same cognitive and emotional areas, regardless of their medium. It’s adding to our understanding of how our brains give semantic meaning to the squiggly letters and bursts of sound that make up our communication.”

JENNIFER WALTER, “Audiobooks or Reading? To Our Brains, It Doesn’t Matter,” *D-brief*, August 22.

“At The Standard Hotel in London, Carrie Maclennan has a singular job. She sources 1970s and 1980s books for its ground-floor library. Step inside her library, and within the stacks of books there’s a clearly signposted subversion at play, alongside the DJ booth, cocktails, and squashy Saporiti leather sofas. Entirely intentionally, Environmental Science is next to Despair while Politics shares a stack with Tragedy.”

SARAH TURNER, “The New Hotel Must-Have: A Library,” *Forbes*, July 31.



Democracy in Action

Prepping your library for the 2020 elections

As candidates debate, state and local elections approach, and all eyes turn to the Iowa Caucuses February 3, election season is rapidly ramping up. Next year's contests will be crucial for issues important to libraries, such as information literacy, net neutrality, and how the 2020 Census will shape future funding.

And libraries are especially well suited to be “democracy coaches,” in the words of Amanda Smithfield, a librarian at Hume-Fogg Academic Magnet High School in Nashville, Tennessee (p. 34). Open to everyone regardless of political leanings, they serve as voter registration hubs and polling places and provide meeting space for community groups and forums.

Our special report on libraries and democracy encourages libraries to lean into these strengths and expand their election-year offerings, including:

- tips on getting to know your elected officials through year-round advocacy
- creative ways to reach and register potential voters
- guidelines for keeping civic engagement civil, despite growing polarization
- a review of literature on media literacy and a roundup of tech tools to help your patrons spot fake news online
- expert advice from members of ALA's Policy Corps, who have been testing their library advocacy skills with policymakers

Whether your library is just getting started with election activities or you're looking for a fresh approach to civic engagement with your patrons, you'll find practical ideas in this special report. **AL**

HOW IS YOUR LIBRARY PREPARING FOR THE 2020 ELECTION?

Share your ideas with us on
Twitter @amlibraries or email
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Connecting with Congress

How libraries can build relationships with elected officials through year-round advocacy



BY Lara Ewen

The idea of speaking to members of Congress may evoke images of idealistic, Jimmy Stewart-style theatrics, long bus trips to Capitol Hill, and frustrating—even fruitless—time spent away from library work. Plus an annual trip to Washington, D.C., can be prohibitively expensive for many librarians and library advocates. But making sure representatives in Congress keep library issues, budgets, and legislation in mind through year-round advocacy—in particular, with your elected officials’

local and district offices—is vital.

“Building these relationships is one of the most important strategies for a successful advocacy program,” says Bradford Fitch, president and CEO of the Congressional Management Foundation, a non-partisan, nonprofit group that helps members of Congress and constituents

communicate effectively with each other. “There’s a general wall of cynicism that’s been built up around government. But the reality is that representatives are hardwired to say yes.”

Wendy Woodland, director of advocacy and communications for the Texas Library Association, says reaching out needn’t be discomfiting. “Too

often, people hear *advocacy* and they think it’s intimidating,” she says. “There’s a reluctance, as if legislators are a separate entity. But they’re just people, and they work for you. Regardless of what you see on 24-hour news cycles, they genuinely want to know what’s going on, and they want to support their communities.” She says the fact that libraries are so connected to their communities gives librarians authority with elected officials. “Librarians have a lot of knowledge to share,” she notes.

Deborah Doyle talks with California State Sen. Mark McGuire about funding, programming, and new technology at Healdsburg Regional Library.

“Regardless of what you see on 24-hour news cycles, [legislators] genuinely want to know what’s going on, and they want to support their communities.”

WENDY WOODLAND

Director of advocacy and communications for the Texas Library Association

Getting on the radar

The first step is knowing who to contact. “If you don’t know who your representative is, look it up right now,” says Deborah Doyle, vice chair of Sonoma County (Calif.) Library Commission, president of California Public Library Advocates, and United for Libraries Legislative Committee chair. And get to know the staffers in your member of Congress’s local office, too. They’re the ones who will get you on the legislator’s schedule.

“One big thing is just reaching out,” says Kathryn Roots Lewis, director of libraries and instructional technology for Norman (Okla.) Public Schools and immediate past president of the American Association of School Librarians. Lewis, whose district has 16,500 students and 1,200 teachers, says to save emails for follow-up, and that the initial contacts should be made by phone whenever possible.

Photo: Ray Holley/Sonoma County Library

Woodland notes that patience is key. “If you wait until it’s a crisis, and you need something and don’t have a relationship in place, your chances of success will go down,” she says. And when you establish a relationship, “make sure you’re not always asking for something,” she advises. Give them the opportunity to engage with their community, which Woodland says they appreciate.

Get to know as much about your elected officials as possible. “Take the time to learn about their committee assignments and sponsored and cosponsored bills,” says Missouri Library Association President Erin Gray, who is also manager of Springfield–Greene County Library District’s Republic branch. Then you can reach out to their office staffers and highlight the ways in which a bill will have a positive impact on a community partnership for your library, she notes.

Woodland advises learning some personal information about your legislators as well. “Are they ex-military? Are they a small business owner? Maybe they have really young kids and they want to read for storytime,” she says. “It’s a place to start.” For example, if your library is hosting a Veterans Day event and you know your legislator is



Missouri Rep. Steve Helms reads at Legislative Storytime at the Schweitzer Brentwood branch of Springfield–Greene County Library District.

Photo: Erin Gray/Springfield–Greene County (Mo.) Library District

retired military or has a family member on active duty, ask if they’d like to participate. “Then it’s not a total cold call. You’ve found something that makes a connection.”

A little help from your Friends

Another way to find those connections is through your board members, Friends groups, volunteers, and parents. Woodland recommends reaching out to your library’s support network for advocacy assistance. “Find out who knows who, and ask if they’d mind introducing you,” she says. If some of your board members have existing relationships with elected officials, make sure they leverage them on behalf of the library.

Recruiting nonlibrarian advocates to the cause also allows librarians to focus more on their primary library work. “The librarian is incredibly important, [but] the trustee can have 10 times the reach, and a Friend can have 100 times the reach,” says Doyle. “I don’t think librarians ask for help enough.” She says part of the reason is because many librarians think they can do it all themselves, it’s inconvenient, they don’t think they can control the message, or they don’t have the time. “But if we don’t use the people who say ‘I’m a Friend,’ then we’re just rearranging the deck chairs on the *Titanic* because the next recession is going to have a massive impact on libraries.”

Visits, events, and photo ops

Once the connection with a legislator—or the legislator’s staff members—has been made, get them involved. “Members of Congress love to have their pictures taken with kids, animals, and old people,” Fitch says. “Service dogs and children’s reading hours are gold to a politician, and it gets your library free publicity.”

Make sure that there are multiple options, too. “It may take a few weeks or a month to get on someone’s schedule, so plan ahead, and always have fall-back events if they can’t come to the event you have scheduled,” Lewis advises. If senators and representatives can’t visit, Lewis invites their staff. “It’s very hard with senator and representative schedules,” she says. “But their staff members talk to them, and when I’m in D.C., they know who I am.”

Also, keep everyone on your staff in the loop. “You need to make sure that the people in your



“Library issues are surprisingly easy to tie to bigger issues in Congress. Creating and maintaining 21st-century infrastructure and net neutrality, for example, are hot topics right now.”

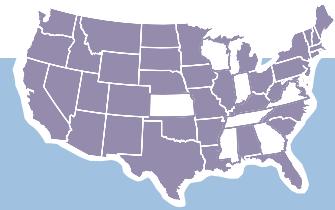
KATE A. ALDERETE

Director at Taos (N.Mex.) Public Library and 2019 ALA Policy Corps Member

Continued on page 29 ▶

Civic Involvement

BY THE NUMBERS



7 states

have strict, in-effect laws requiring a photo ID to vote: Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

Source: National Conference of State Legislatures (2019)

53.9 million citizens

of voting age reported not voting in the 2016 US presidential election.

Source: US Census Bureau (2018)

1 in 3 people

living in the US don't know the name of their governor.

Source: Johns Hopkins University (2018)



US voters average 8.6 visits a year

to public libraries.

Source: From Awareness to Funding, OCLC/ALA (2018)



58% of voters

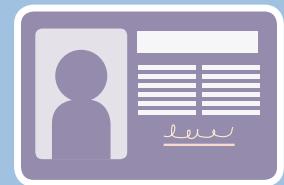
say they would vote favorably for library funding—down 15% from the last decade.

Source: From Awareness to Funding, OCLC/ALA (2018)

35 states

have laws requesting or requiring voters to show some form of identification at the polls.

Source: National Conference of State Legislatures (2019)



11% of US citizens

of voting age—more than 21 million people—don't have government-issued photo identification.

Source: ACLU (2017)



390,000 new voters

were added in the first 20 months of Oregon's automatic voter registration program—half of whom were under age 40.

Source: NPR (2019)



64% of the voting-eligible population

in Minnesota cast ballots in the 2018 US election—the highest turnout rate of any state.

Source: United States Election Project (2018)



“Informal, relationship-based advocacy is the most powerful tool in politics. It can beat money and partisanship. I strongly recommend that anyone advocating on behalf of libraries leaves their political bias at home.”

LANCE WERNER

Executive director at Kent District Library in Comstock Park, Michigan, and 2018 ALA Policy Corps Member

◀ Continued from page 27

[library] are aware you did the reach out so they're not surprised by someone coming in," says Lewis.

Telling your library's story

Once you've done the prep work, built the relationship, and gotten on the lawmaker's schedule, now it's time for the meeting.

Advocacy work is about relationship building, not dry business-speak. To that end, stay away from extensive PowerPoint presentations and stacks of statistics, and use storytelling techniques to help paint a picture of the library's needs and community benefits. For example, Lewis describes students who participated in a Norman Public School maker program, supported by an Institute of Museum and Library Services grant.

"I can talk about students who made products via the makerspace to show their learning," she says. "People are fascinated by what a 2nd-grade child can ask, and what a 10th-grade child can ask—the questions are profound, and building that excitement gets people excited." And don't forget to bring visual aids. "Remember that your cellphone is your best tool because of the pictures you can take and share," she adds.

Telling these stories can even be a regular event. "We have an annual Legislator Storytime series," says Gray. "It's a great opportunity for us to welcome our legislator to our branches." The event features a tour, staff introductions, and stories about specific branches.

One thing librarians should never do, Fitch warns, is get angry during an ask. "Yelling 'I pay your salary' at someone doesn't work," he says. "I'm only half joking. Passions are running high nowadays, but that's not a persuasive tool. Impatience is not a good idea."

Lewis agrees that it's never a good idea to be negative. "This is not the time or place," she says. "Bring your ask in a straightforward, confident, positive manner. We all want more money, but you have to be upbeat and positive."

Lastly, make sure your representatives feel appreciated. "Give them an award, and tweak the ceremony so it's in their neighborhood," says Doyle. "And thank them, thank them, thank them." AL



LARA EWEN is a freelance writer based in Brooklyn, New York.

Discourse for Democracy

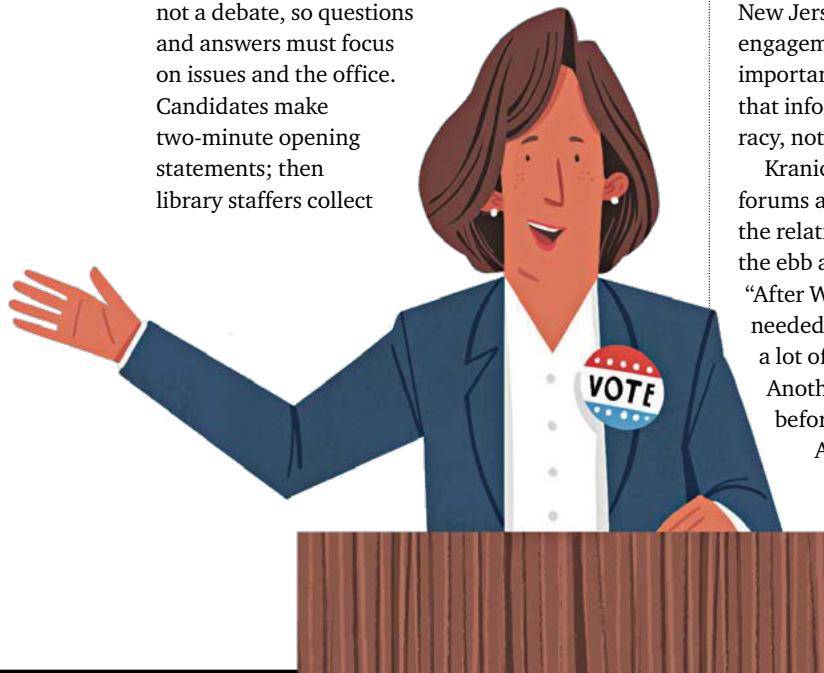
Promoting civic literacy with forums

BY Greg Landgraf

Every October since 1992, Wadsworth (Ohio) Public Library (WPL) has hosted forums at which patrons can pose questions to candidates for local offices, the state House and Senate, and even the US House of Representatives.

In a city of more than 23,000 residents, just 40 miles south of Cleveland, these forums have attracted dozens of attendees and receive significant local media coverage. They are recorded and later posted to the city's website.

Daniel Slife, the library's director, moderates the forums, which were initiated by former Director Pamela Hickson-Stevenson. Slife always begins by clarifying that the event is a forum, not a debate, so questions and answers must focus on issues and the office. Candidates make two-minute opening statements; then library staffers collect



questions from attendees, filtering out personal attacks against candidates.

Slife says it's rare that answers stray from the forum's guidelines. "We're so focused on disorder at the national level," he says, "but for the most part, local races are more humane and responsive."

The popularity of WPL's forums is evident. "If we forget to get the forum on our calendar by the middle of summer, [then] people will start calling to find out when it is," Slife says. "[They] know it's where they can get information."

While WPL has had a long tradition of civic engagement programming, Slife says that the key has been to set a respectful tone and to emphasize civility, especially in today's political climate. He concludes forums by reminding people that "these are difficult times to serve the public, and it takes great courage."

Citizen participation

Libraries have long prided themselves on their roles as both trustworthy sources of information and community gathering places. As politics attract more fake news, hostility, and conspiracy theories, it's hardly surprising that libraries are increasingly leveraging their roles to provide programs where patrons can hear from candidates or discuss major community issues.

"Democracy is about discourse," says Nancy Kranich, special projects research librarian at Rutgers University Libraries in New Brunswick, New Jersey, and a longtime researcher of civic engagement in libraries. "Access to information is important, but if we don't have engagement with that information, we have only a very thin democracy, not [one] that facilitates citizen participation."

Kranich has found evidence of libraries hosting forums as early as the late 19th century, although the relative frequency of such programs parallels the ebb and flow of the country's civic mindfulness. "After World War II, when people realized they needed to fight for democracy here, there was a lot of that kind of work in libraries," she says. Another wave followed in the 1980s and 1990s before attention diminished.

Activity is again on the upswing.

Hot-button issues

Earlier this year, Jacksonville (Fla.) Public Library (JPL) hosted city council candidate forums in partnership with

Nontraditional approaches to reaching local leaders

BY Carrie Smith

Think election season is the only time libraries can engage communities with elected officials? Think again. Not only have some libraries taken year-round approaches to civic engagement, but some also have broken with tradition to create informal and memorable opportunities for interaction.

At Manitowoc (Wis.) Public Library (MPL), which hosts a free carnival every August, local representatives such as the mayor and aldermen hop into a dunk tank or serve as targets for the water-balloon catapult.

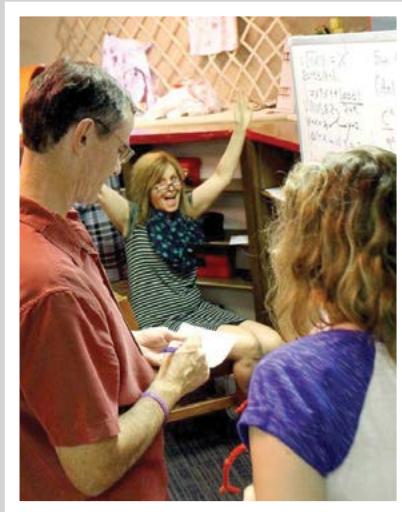
Julia Lee, youth services manager at MPL, says getting local celebrities in the dunk tank helps break down barriers between residents and officials. “I don’t know how many people would recognize their alderperson if they saw them walking down the street,” she says, “so it’s really nice to have them involved and have people see their representatives.”

In the months leading up to the event, library staffers solicit officials to participate, and some of these local leaders volunteer every year. But, Lee adds, “they tell us the dunk tank water is very cold.”

In 2016, Jamie Griffin, now children services coordinator at Memphis (Tenn.) Public Libraries, came up with the idea for “speed-repping” (see our Jan./Feb. 2019 article at bit.ly/ALspeedrep). Much like speed dating, residents have the chance to speak to local representatives—everyone from city and county officials to waste management officials—for three minutes at a time about anything on their mind.

“It’s almost the very epitome of civic engagement,” Griffin says. “Local leaders all enjoyed it and thought it was a great way to communicate with people they wouldn’t otherwise have an opportunity to communicate with,” he says, referring to the March 2017 event. Several officials have expressed interest in participating again, and the library plans to host another speed-repping event soon.

In 2016, when the Morton-James Public Library in Nebraska City, Nebraska, debuted an escape room that area children had built in a former storage room, library staff members saw an opportunity to engage the community and city officials.



Nebraska City (Neb.) Mayor Bryan Bequette (left) and his wife and daughter celebrate after solving a puzzle in the Morton-James Public Library’s escape room.

The library’s director at the time, Rasmus Thøgersen, extended the children’s invitation to the local police chief to costar in the video explaining the room’s zombie apocalypse premise (bit.ly/McBrainsVid). Mayor Bryan Bequette and his family were invited to be the first to take on the escape room challenge and save the town from zombies.

The two officials “certainly added to the publicity surrounding the event,” says Donna Kruse, the library’s current director. “And who doesn’t want more publicity?” ●

CARRIE SMITH is editorial and advertising associate for *American Libraries*.

the League of Women Voters. It has also held discussion forums on issues like medical marijuana, gun rights, and opioid addiction.

These forums have received positive feedback and helped JPL fulfill its strategic plan to improve community engagement. Chris Boivin, assistant director of community relations and marketing, notes these forums have been particularly well suited for remote participation through social media. The library’s

Facebook Live broadcast of the gun rights forum (bit.ly/JPLforum) has been viewed over 4,000 times.

“The forum on opioids was really interesting,” he says. “But if you’re looking for a topic that has more [discussion], it’s nice to have some measure of pro and con,” like there is with gun rights.

JPL found speakers with varying viewpoints for each forum, Boivin says. After a speaker delivers their point of view, the floor opens to questions from



Linda Neunzig, Snohomish County (Wash.) agriculture coordinator, takes a question from the audience during a discussion titled “Disappearing Farmland: Population Growth and Food Supply Sustainability” at Monroe Library. The event was part of the Issues That Matter series hosted by Sno-Isle Libraries.

attendees, both in person and those watching via Facebook Live. Community leaders and library staffers who have experience moderating these discussions lead the forum. The moderation component is critical, Boivin says, partly to disallow “loaded questions trying to push an agenda.”

Sno-Isle Libraries, serving Island and Snohomish counties in Washington, has hosted several forums per year in the Issues That Matter series for almost a decade. These forums, which can attract dozens to hundreds of attendees, typically receive enthusiastic feedback from participants. “Comments often thank the library for being willing to allow sometimes-controversial issues to be given an opportunity for civil discussion,” says Ken Harvey, communications director. He adds that establishing ground rules about civil conversation and honoring differences of opinion have helped to keep the forums constructive.

On a few occasions over the course of the series, however, the library has received complaints about a perceived lack of balance in the viewpoints reflected on a program’s panel. “When a library chooses to engage the community around a controversial issue, we have to be willing to reach out to voices we might disagree with,” Harvey says. That’s a point the library team regularly discusses as it looks for speakers.

The team has also increased its efforts to help speakers anticipate the experience. Some speakers

have canceled immediately before forums in the past, possibly because of social pressure related to speaking on a controversial topic. “That led to us doing more to look even more widely for speakers, but also spending some time preparing those speakers to help counteract last-minute jitters,” Harvey says.

Student engagement

At Grand Valley State University (GVSU) in Allendale, Michigan, the library has hosted many programs to promote civic engagement among students. Most of these programs were done in collaboration with the university’s Community Service Learning Center (CSLC) and Democracy 101 series.

“We see ourselves as a facilitator, a way to have out-of-class learning experiences,” says Sarah Beaubien, associate dean for curriculum, research, and user services.

Adds Emily Frigo, liaison librarian for liberal arts programs: “We want students to be engaged while on campus and after they depart.”

While these programs promote voting and discussion, Natalie Loewengruber, now a GVSU graduate student, says she saw a need to help students find unbiased information to inform these civic activities. In 2018, as an undergraduate senior, Loewengruber collaborated with the library on a workshop called “The Convergence of Libraries, Voter Education, and Civic Literacy” as her Honors College capstone project.

“The library made perfect sense to me,” Loewengruber says. “I knew there would be people who had resources and connections I didn’t even know about.” Frigo served as mentor, and the library’s Knowledge Market—a peer-to-peer service—helped Loewengruber forge connections with CSLC, as well as resources from Government Documents and Open Collections Librarian Elizabeth Psyck.

Loewengruber says the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. “A lot of people walked away feeling more confident in their ability to cast educated votes.” ^{AL}

Loewengruber says the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. “A lot of people walked away feeling more confident in their ability to cast educated votes.” ^{AL}



GREG LANDGRAF is web content specialist at Greene County (Ohio) Public Library and a regular contributor to *American Libraries*.

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Countdown to the Vote

Libraries ramp up engagement and outreach efforts for 2020

BY Emily Udell

Libraries have traditionally had voter registration forms on hand and served as polling places. But as the next election cycle approaches, many libraries are kicking up their voter engagement and outreach in creative and thoughtful ways. Efforts include educating citizens about the practicalities of registering to vote and casting a ballot, connecting with marginalized communities, and even getting people on opposite political sides to have civil conversations in this polarized environment.

National Voter Registration Day

In the run-up to the 2018 midterm elections, hundreds of libraries participated in National Voter Registration Day (NVRD). Since 2012, the nonpartisan, unofficial holiday has been held on the fourth Tuesday of September with the aim of extending the franchise to eligible voters. Last year, libraries made up 14% of NVRD's 4,087 partner groups, according to Caroline Mak, research coordinator of Non-profit VOTE, which organizes the event. This year, the American Library Association (ALA) became a premiere partner of NVRD to encourage even more libraries to participate.

Van Alstyne (Tex.) Public Library (VAPL) expanded NVRD into a weeklong celebration in 2018, putting 100 registration cards into the hands of patrons in a city of about 3,000 people.

"We live in a rural community in north Texas," says Judy Kimzey, director of VAPL. "I believe it's important in today's times of reactivity, [when] libraries are striving hard to battle fake news and help people understand what is reliable information and what isn't. We're on the front lines of that."

In Texas, patrons get asked if they are registered to vote when they sign up for a library card, Kimzey says, a practice other libraries can emulate even if their state doesn't require it. "Voter registration should be a part of library services," she says. "Make it a part of your lexicon in your primary contact."

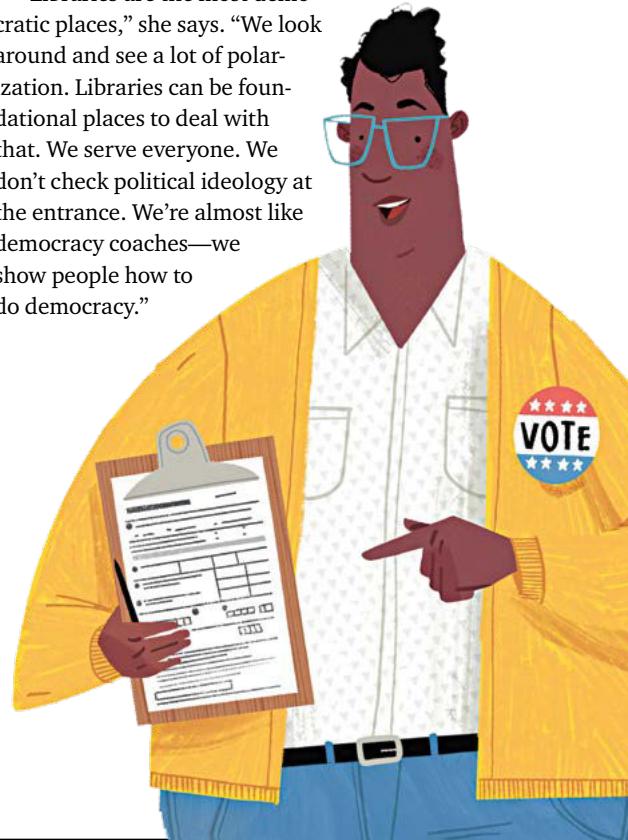
Santa Clara County (Calif.) Library District (SCCLD) registered 144 new voters during its NVRD event last year, according to Gail Mason, SCCLD's library services manager. "Besides the point of getting people to register, we also wanted to raise awareness of voting and the importance of registration."

She emphasized that SCCLD made sure its efforts would not fall into the category of electioneering, or appearing to advocate for a specific party or candidate. By handing out a basic fact sheet, staffers also aimed to dispel some commonly held myths, such as that registration means automatic jury duty or that a person can't register until after their 18th birthday.

Getting civil about civics

Busting myths was also the goal of Amanda Smithfield, a librarian at Hume-Fogg Academic Magnet High School in Nashville, Tennessee, when she sought to engage the entire Hume-Fogg student body in civics.

"Libraries are the most democratic places," she says. "We look around and see a lot of polarization. Libraries can be foundational places to deal with that. We serve everyone. We don't check political ideology at the entrance. We're almost like democracy coaches—we show people how to do democracy."



To that end, Smithfield started clubs for the school's Democrats and Republicans and created a program called ProjectCiv (projectcivamerica.com) to encourage students to become informed and participate in civil discourse. Through readings and structured monthly discussion groups, students debate subjects like marijuana legalization, the #MeToo movement, and affirmative action.

ProjectCiv participants also created a nonpartisan election guide on topics of interest to youth, such as college costs, immigration, LGBT issues, and school safety and conducted a mock election for all students. In order to make sure all 47 eligible students who would turn 18 before the 2018 midterm elections would be able to vote, Smithfield helped them preregister.

Besides hosting debates or a mock election, she recommends inviting local politicians—who love opportunities to take photos with local youth—to visit your library to help generate interest around voting.

As another way to help libraries reach teen patrons, ALA has partnered with Democracy Class, a project of the nonprofit Rock the Vote. Democracy Class is a free, nonpartisan curriculum for high-school-aged students about the importance and history of voting; participants can also register or preregister to vote. The curriculum includes a webinar for instructors and librarians implementing the program, “Voting and Voices: Engaging Students and Families in Democracy,” that covers state-specific guides for registration drives, strategies to reduce political polarization in the classroom, and tips for encouraging civil discourse.

Engagement in and out of the library

“Here in Sacramento we are very involved with voting efforts in our community and are a strong partner with the registrar,” says Cathy Crosthwaite, community engagement manager at Sacramento (Calif.) Public Library (SPL). “All of our libraries are open all day long for voting [on election day],” she says, adding that staff members depend on a legion of volunteers.

Sacramento County was one of the first to implement the California Voter’s Choice Act (bit.ly/AL-CAvoters) in which residents can vote by mail, vote as early as 28 days before the election, and turn in their ballots at any designated location in their county. All 28 SPL locations serve as ballot drop-off centers, and every staff member is certified to handle ballots.

Even with the vote-by-mail option available, residents still saw libraries as their election hub—libraries collected more than half the ballots of Sacramento



Students and teachers participate in Mock Election Campaign Day at Hume-Fogg Academic Magnet High School in Nashville, Tennessee, on October 26, 2018.

County’s polling places in 2018, Crosthwaite says. “This year we plan on being able to collect ballots on our bookmobile routes,” she adds. The bookmobile option will allow SPL to reach seniors, shelter residents, or affordable housing community residents who may not make it to the branch locations.

Reaching the hard-to-reach

Kansas City (Mo.) Public Library (KCPL) has voter registrars on its staff who can help patrons in each of its 10 locations throughout the year. Jenny Garmon, KCPL’s legal and government information specialist, made a focused effort to reach voters with disabilities last year. During National Disability Voter Registration Week (held the third week of July each year), KCPL partnered with the Kansas City Election Board, the League of Women Voters, and the local nonprofit Whole Person to host three events at different branches showcasing accessible voting equipment.

To test the equipment, patrons could cast a mock ballot that included lighthearted questions about dogs and leisure activities, and organizers provided information about the accommodations voters with disabilities can request on election day. The events attracted about 30 people, which was fewer than organizers hoped but represented a launching point for future collaborations between the two organizations. “That might be one of my favorite parts about it—creating these relationships,” Garmon says. The plan is to take efforts out into the community next year.

“Things don’t have to be at the library to engage with patrons,” she advises. “Work with the community where they are—don’t expect them to come to you.” **AL**



EMILY UDELL is a freelance writer based in Indianapolis.

Check Your Facts

Libraries use tech tools to fight fake news

BY Jessica Cilella

In June, Albuquerque and Bernalillo County (N.Mex.) Library System hosted its first-ever drag queen storytime. Dozens of children and their families gathered at the Main Library for a morning of literary entertainment designed to promote tolerance and mark Pride Month—even as a small group of protesters convened outside.

The *Albuquerque Journal's* coverage of the event was headlined “Drag Queens Dazzle at Library Storytime,” while enthusiastic parents voiced support on the library’s Facebook page. Other Facebook commenters voiced opposition, sharing links to conservative websites and articles with headlines like “Parents Beware—Registered Sex Offenders Are Performing for Small Children at Drag Queen Story Hours in Public Libraries” (American Pastors Network).

The library didn’t delete the Facebook comments, but it has taken steps to help patrons evaluate the quality of the information they see online and identify bias. Like many libraries, Albuquerque and Bernalillo County’s library system is turning to a new generation of tech tools and pooling digital resources to teach media literacy.

Flagging, not censoring

NewsGuard is a web browser extension designed to literally red-flag problematic articles and blog posts like the one published by American Pastors Network, a faith-based organization.

Launched in 2018 by a team of professional journalists, NewsGuard was created with libraries and schools in mind. Evaluators use a set of nine journalistic standards to examine the credibility and transparency of thousands of websites and issue a

rating and “nutrition label” for each one. For example, NewsGuard users who visit the website of the *Albuquerque Journal*, New Mexico’s largest daily newspaper, will notice a green icon with a checkmark in the corner of the browser window that indicates the website adheres to NewsGuard’s standards and has been deemed accurate and reliable. A red exclamation point icon indicates the opposite.

More than 200 libraries have installed NewsGuard on their public computers as a teaching device to promote media literacy. Richland Library in Columbia, South Carolina, was among the first, introducing the browser extension across its 14 branches this year.

“More and more people get their news online, with social media platforms being a go-to source for many users,” says Chantal Wilson, the library’s research and readers’ advisory manager. “We thought installing NewsGuard might be one way to help customers identify sources of balanced news.”

NewsGuard, with support from Microsoft as part of its Defending Democracy Program, is one of several browser extensions designed to combat misinformation. Such plug-ins offer both complementary and overlapping functionality. For instance, Trusted News, developed by start-up Factmata and available for Google Chrome, places stories on a spectrum ranging from “content looks good” to “content looks harmful.” Trusted News also scans content for what it calls “special states,” such as sexism and racism. FakerFact, available for Chrome and Firefox, analyzes articles based on six criteria—such as “journalism,” “sensational,” or “agenda-driven.” The Media Bias Fact Check extension, available on Chrome and Firefox, focuses specifically on an outlet’s relative



level of bias, assigning one of nine rankings ranging from “left bias” to “right bias” to “conspiracy-pseudoscience” and “satire.” And SurfSafe—available on Chrome, Firefox, and Opera—is designed to evaluate the authenticity of images.

Some patrons are skeptical of these services, questioning whether evaluators’ biases or institutional pressures—such as outside investors—sway ratings.

Andrew Lechlak, digital strategist at the Toledo Lucas County (Ohio) Public Library, says he faced similar pushback when his library first introduced the browser extension.

“The way we look at it, our materials are still going to be biased in some regard,” he says. “We do the best that we can to present both sides of an argument, and we feel that NewsGuard hits that mark.”

These types of browser extensions do not censor or filter content, Lechlak points out, but aim to connect users with high-quality information and context, “much like a librarian would with any reference question.”

“Media literacy is gaining traction in the world of education, but most efforts focus on teaching those skills to children and teens, neglecting adults and seniors, who are actually more susceptible to misinformation,” says Sarah Brandt, NewsGuard’s vice president of news literacy outreach. “Librarians, particularly public librarians, play a critical role in connecting people of all ages to technology and information.”

Where to verify

To help Albuquerque and Bernalillo County’s library patrons check facts and spot misinformation online, Digital Services Manager Ben Ridout maintains an extensive list of reliable websites and online resources, available to the public on the library’s website. Similar resource guides have popped up on other library websites in recent years, a response to the proliferation of misinformation since the 2016 presidential election.

“This started out as a small page that has slowly grown,” Ridout says, adding that schools and students frequent the page. “I’ve tried to keep it very neutral. I’ve just aggregated information.”

Frequent entries on librarians’ lists of preferred tools include:

- **Snopes.com** is a fact-checking website dating back to the 1990s. Members of the public can submit a claim, and researchers will investigate it for legitimacy and assign it one of several

rankings, ranging from “true” and “mostly true” to “false” and “legend.”

- **FactCheck.org** is a project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania that monitors the factual accuracy of politicians’ statements.
- **PolitiFact** is a fact-checking website, created by the *Tampa Bay Times* and acquired in 2018 by the Poynter Institute, a nonprofit education center for journalists. It features a “truth-o-meter,” which rates the accuracy of statements in the news and assigns it one of six ratings, ranging from “true” to “pants on fire.” (Read our 2015 profile of PolitiFact’s editor at bit.ly/AL-PolitiFact.)
- **AllSides** breaks trending topics down to three stories, written by sources identified as from the left, from the right, and from the center. The site also has bias ratings for more than 600 media outlets and individual writers.

Promoting media literacy on- and offline

Reference Librarian Bonnie Brzozowski covers these fact-checking sites and more in the “Misinformation and Fake News” workshops she hosts at Corvallis–Benton County (Oreg.) Public Library. She sees in-person discussion—among library workers and patrons who may disagree—as a critical part of the digital conversation, particularly among those less adept with technology.

“I can tell that there’s different views within the class, but everyone gets along,” she says. “People want better information, and they feel overwhelmed.”

Jeanette Jones, adult services librarian at Henderson (Nev.) Libraries, has led similar “Tackling Fake News” workshops in her community. Her curriculum focuses on the history of fake news and examines people’s motivations for making and sharing fake news. She also delivers a series of “real or fake?” exercises.

“I find that the class starts out slow but, boy, when we start looking at the examples, and they are actually trying to determine which Facebook post is real and which isn’t, it becomes extremely interesting,” Jones says. “It really hits them how hard it can be to decipher what’s fake and what’s not.” **AL**



JESSICA CILELLA is a freelance writer based in Chicago, managing editor at the Chicago Architecture Center, and a former newspaper reporter.



“Being an effective library advocate starts with realizing that anyone can—and should—advocate for libraries. You don’t need to be an expert, in charge, or even a library employee.”

DEBORAH RINIO

Assistant teaching professor at Montana State University in Bozeman, adjunct instructor at University of Alaska Fairbanks, and 2018 ALA Policy Corps Member

Media Literacy in an Age of Fake News

Prepare your users for the pitfalls of misinformation

BY George M. Eberhart

After several years of fake news and alternative facts, media literacy is still a challenge. The 2018 *Learning and Prototyping Report* (bit.ly/MediaStony) showed that news consumers think they are better at media literacy than they actually are. How can libraries help bridge that gap and help their communities get informed?

Librarians can ensure patrons can make informed decisions in local, state, and national elections by helping them think critically. Libraries of all

types can promote media literacy by providing handouts, LibGuides, training, and programs about separating fact from online fiction. The following resources can assist.

The National Association for Media Literacy Edu-

cation, a nonprofit organization based in New York City, defines media literacy as the “ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and act using all forms of communication” (bit.ly/MediaNAMLE), including “technologies that we haven’t even dreamed of yet.” It provides guides for educators and parents, lesson plans, and election resources. The California-based Center for Media Literacy (bit.ly/MediaCML) offers

Americans tend to label statements they agree with as factual and those they disagree with as opinion.

a MediaLit Kit (bit.ly/MediaLitKit) to help educators create media literacy instruction programs across disciplines and grade levels.

Between 2017 and 2018, the American Library Association (ALA) partnered with the Center for News Literacy (CNL) at Stony Brook (N.Y.) University School of Journalism on “Media Literacy at Your Library,” a pilot program that trained

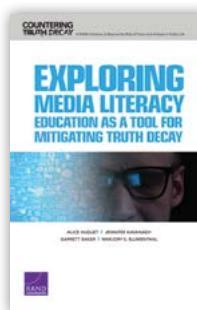


library workers to help adults become better news consumers. The previously mentioned *Learning and Prototyping Report* describes how five public libraries across the US used CNL’s media literacy curriculum to develop public programs tailored to their communities. Among those libraries’ discoveries: Young and marginalized audiences were the most difficult to reach, and future efforts could be more effective if programs were hosted in spaces more accessible to those audiences.

Although the program has ended, ALA’s Public Programs Office has received a \$249,378 National Leadership Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to convene a group of librarians, educators, and journalists that will design a practitioner’s guide for adult media literacy education. More details will emerge by the end of the year.

A cornucopia of courses

In July, the RAND Corporation released a survey on the effectiveness of media literacy training in



K–12 classrooms, *Exploring Media Literacy Education as a Tool for Mitigating Truth Decay* (bit.ly/MediaRand).

Researchers found that media literacy competencies are inconsistently defined and evaluated across disciplines, making it difficult to assess outcomes. However, the survey does

offer a separate appendix (bit.ly/MediaRandApp) in a ZIP file with a comprehensive list of courses, programs, and other resources, arranged by institution.



One open access course—developed by University of Washington biologist Carl Bergstrom and information scientist Jevin West—has received national attention. Titled “Calling Bullshit” (bit.ly/MediaCalling), the course offers a syllabus, videos, tools, case studies, and FAQ for educators who wish to adapt it. Bergstrom and West define “bullshit” as “language, statistical figures, data graphics, and other forms of presentation intended to persuade by impressing and overwhelming a reader or listener, with a blatant disregard for truth and logical coherence.”

At the heart of all media literacy education is the goal of helping children, teens, and adults recognize misleading claims online and in other media. Although often termed fake news, misinformation can take many forms. In 2016, Assistant Professor of Media Studies Melissa Zimdars of Merrimack College in North Andover, Massachusetts, and coauthor of *Fake News: Understanding Media and Misinformation in the Digital Age* (MIT Press, 2020), identified for her students numerous categories of websites containing suspicious information (bit.ly/MediaZimdars), among them sources that:

- purposely fabricate information or distort news
- present opinions as fact
- rely on disproven conspiracy theories
- traffic in unverified claims
- consist of state-sponsored propaganda
- promote racism, misogyny, or homophobia
- use exaggerated or misleading headlines or images as clickbait

A 2018 Pew Research Center survey (bit.ly/MediaFact), indicates that Americans tend to label statements they agree with as factual and those they disagree with as opinion. A 2019 study by Ohio State University psychologists (bit.ly/MediaBiased) suggests that people do draw a distinction between dishonest and biased sources. The researchers found that even accurate news, when reported by a source considered biased, tends to lose its credibility.

Misinformation detection

One widely used source for detecting bias, “How to Spot Fake News” by Eugene Kiely and Lori Robertson (bit.ly/MediaSpotFake), was published in November 2016 by FactCheck.org, a project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center. An infographic from the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (free in multiple languages at bit.ly/MediaIFLA) summarizes the eight techniques mentioned in the article for assessing news sources. In 2016, Finland became one of the first European countries to have its educational system formally emphasize critical thinking and the ability to recognize disinformation (bit.ly/MediaFinland).

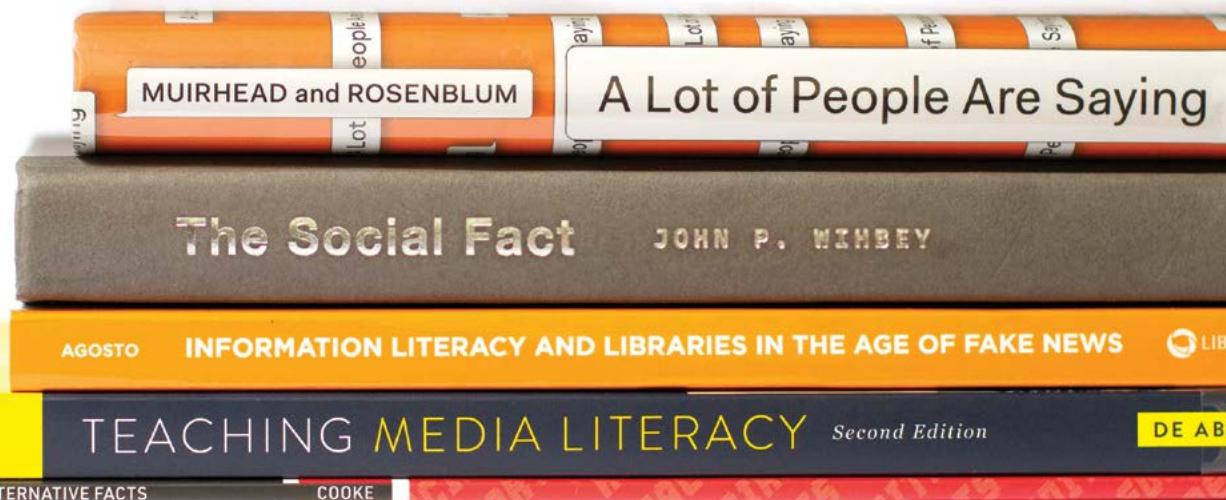
Misleading information is often difficult to counter because viral memes frequently get translated into other languages, cross national boundaries, and jump platforms, according to Daniel Funke, a writer for the journalism website Poynter (bit.ly/MediaPoynter). Information scientists at Indiana University Bloomington in 2017 verified that social



“When libraries advocate for a shared goal alongside other institutions—like schools and workforce agencies—we expand the reach of our library network and demonstrate the full breadth of what’s at stake with any issue.”

HANNAH BUCKLAND

State library program specialist at the Minnesota Department of Education and 2018 ALA Policy Corps Member





“Policy Corps training has helped to underscore for me just how much is at stake if we don’t advocate for libraries—access to opportunity, not just for the millions of people libraries impact every day, but also for the government agencies, nonprofits, churches, schools, and businesses that rely on libraries to achieve their own missions.”

NICOLE H. ROBINSON, deputy director at Houston Public Library and 2019 ALA Policy Corps Member

bots and algorithms were responsible for spreading viral stories—some fake, others real—through Twitter (bit.ly/MediaBots).

Complicating things further, allegations of conspiracy no longer rely on actual conspiracy theory. Russell Muirhead and Nancy L. Rosenblum write in *A Lot of People*

An infographic from the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions



Are Saying (Princeton University, April) that factual explanations have been replaced by innuendo:

“There is no punctilious demand for proofs, no exhaustive amassing of evidence, no dots revealed to form a pattern.” Instead, what passes for authority is the statement that “a lot of people are saying” something.

A good overview on fake news for librarians is Joanna M. Burkhardt’s

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“Combating Fake News in the Digital Age,” *Library Technology Reports* vol. 53, no. 8 (Nov./Dec. 2017). Burkhardt, who frequently lectures on media literacy (bit.ly/MediaBurkhardt), presents a short history of fake news starting with the Roman Empire, explains how misinformation spreads, and suggests proactive methods that librarians can use to help students navigate the information universe. Burkhardt is also author of *Teaching Information Literacy Reframed* (ALA Neal-Schuman, 2016), which uses the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* as a tool for designing classroom exercises in media and other literacies.

Nicole A. Cooke, in the ALA special report *Fake News and Alternative Facts* (ALA Editions, 2018), provides tips for creating a lesson plan to help college students and adult patrons evaluate media. Belinha S. De Abreu’s second edition of *Teaching Media Literacy* (ALA Neal-Schuman, 2019) brings together 15 librarians and teachers to comment on media and digital literacy issues. She also offers six ready-to-teach lessons, a glossary, and a timeline of media literacy milestones. *Information Literacy and Libraries in the Age of Fake News*, edited by Denise E. Agosto (Libraries Unlimited, 2018), is another

excellent roundup of media history and research on combating misinformation.

Finally, those interested in the historical roots of the current contentious political climate can read “The Lie Factory: How Politics Became a Business” by historian Jill Lepore in the September 24, 2012, issue of *The New Yorker* (bit.ly/MediaLepore). Lepore writes about Clem Whitaker, Leone Baxter, and their consulting group Campaigns Inc., which they launched in the 1930s. “Whitaker and Baxter weren’t just inventing new techniques; they were writing a rule book,” she argues. That rule book, outlined in Whitaker’s speech before the Los Angeles Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America on July 13, 1948, contains advice that has become commonplace in 21st-century political campaigns—including “make it personal,” “pretend that you are the Voice of the People,” “attack, attack, attack,” and “say the same thing over and over again.” ^{AL}



GEORGE M. EBERHART is a senior editor of *American Libraries*.

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LIBRARIANS,

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How academic librarians support videogame scholars
by Diana Panuncial

GAME

Photo: Lorenzo Herrera/Unsplash



F

or librarians at universities with videogame design programs, maintaining a large, accessible gaming collection isn't a *Final Fantasy*. It's a *Call of Duty*. Beginning a collection may be as easy as pressing start to play, but storing and preserving complex materials is a tough battle—and academic librarians want to level up.

The University of Michigan's (UM) Computer Video and Game Archive (CVGA) in Ann Arbor boasts more than 8,000 videogame and 60 consoles dating back to the 1970s. "Because we have such a large collection, there are many examples from which to pull and get inspiration, things [students] would never be able to afford on their own," says David Carter, videogame archivist at UM. "Almost nobody has a collection this big, especially a college student."

"[People] don't think of libraries as a destination for digital scholarship," says Anne Morrow, associate librarian and head of digital scholarship services at the University of Utah's J. Willard Marriott Library, which has more than 500 videogames and serves almost 400 game design students. "There's an incentive to see what the obstacles are for bringing these types of original work into the collection."

OBJECTIVE: PLAYABILITY

As the owner of more than 2,000 commercial games, 300 student games, and 40 consoles (some as old as the 1985 Nintendo Entertainment System), the University of California, Santa Cruz's (UCSC) Science and Engineering Library prioritizes authentic playability. Its goal is to provide students with not only a game but also the console it was made for, a compatible controller, and an era-appropriate TV to play it on.

With so many moving pieces, says Christy Caldwell, science and engineering librarian at UCSC, "providing usage of increasingly 'antique' [materials] is an ongoing challenge."

UM has the same goal. "We don't have to do a lot of tracking down, thankfully," says Valerie Waldron, UM computer and videogame archive manager. About half of its collection is donated, and as with other academic libraries that own game collections, staffers turn to eBay if they need to repair or buy a missing item. Or they get creative.

"Something broke on our Atari 7800, and we actually 3D-printed a replacement part," Carter says.

Why is maintaining playability of older games important? Students are mainly studying design and software. "What does the game look like, and what does the controller feel like?" Caldwell says. "Are you seeing something similar to what someone who played the game earlier would have seen and experienced?"

Students are also looking at artwork, game mechanics, subjects, and even source code as inspiration for their own games. "They're using [archives] for competitive intelligence, and looking at what's been done already," says Tallie Casucci, assistant librarian at Marriott Library.

Space is another issue. At Marriott Library, students must go to different floors to pick up a videogame, grab a console and matching controllers, and actually play, since the stations are separated and require checkouts for loss prevention. "It'd be nice to have everything all in one place," Casucci says.

In Ann Arbor, the CVGA houses both the collection and spaces to play the games on consoles, since the collection doesn't leave the library. "It's a very crammed room," Carter says.

SAVE GAME?

UM staffers say they have two missions: to serve the teaching and research needs of faculty and students in order to promote usage of the games, and to preserve those games. "There's an inherent tension. Usage is the enemy of preservation," Carter says. "Academic usage trumps preservation. We don't want to have something just to have it and not let people use it."



A student employee at University of Utah's J. Willard Marriott Library displays a Nintendo Switch that can be checked out and played at the library.



After students from the Entertainment Arts and Engineering program at Utah lost all the materials for *Erie*, a popular student-made game from 2012, Casucci and Morrow investigated their options. With help from an Institute of Museum and Library Services grant, they published an ebook this fall on how to best archive, preserve, and disseminate student videogames.

“People have been looking at digital preservation seriously, [but] we haven’t made progress with objects that are really complex, like videogames, that have many interactions between files,” Morrow says. “We thought about the existing services in a library and how games might be supported by those services.”

“In our case, it would be the sheer number of analog games to process and store that would be difficult, especially year after year,” Caldwell says. “You’re asking people in cataloging who have never even played a game to suddenly start cataloging media. You need to support them.” The best way to do that, she says, is to develop accurate metadata and consistent, detailed cataloging practices.

But academic libraries still need to strategize.

At Marriott Library, Casucci and Morrow created a tiered retention system for archiving student games, through which students can choose the process that best suits their needs. In earlier tiers, students can contribute visuals such as screenshots or game trailers. As they go further into the system, students can contribute their games in their entirety, allowing future students complete access to its features.

Commercial games have not been forgotten. Carter and Waldron are finding ways to preserve legacy formats of videogames like floppy disks and cartridges. “We’re trying to discover ways of taking the game off its original format and creating an image for it,” Waldron says. “There are still a lot of things to work out, like how to store it properly, retrieve it, or put it back in its original format.” As for regular discs, UM keeps multiple copies and stores them in archival-quality sleeves behind the circulation desk.

According to Heather Maxwell Chandler’s *Game Production Handbook*, after producing a videogame, developers organize the game’s source assets and archive them in a closing kit—a common practice in the industry to help developers install updates or patches to their games. UCSC would like to implement closing kits down the line.

“The faculty wants to have a record of what students have created,” Caldwell says. “They want students to be inspired by what other students have done and build on that work.”

Carter and Waldron say that videogame preserving and archiving has been underdeveloped in libraries because it is still an emerging format. “Until recently, the history of the videogame industry has been left in the hands of private collectors,” Carter says. “Not to discount the work that private collectors have done—that’s one portion of preservation, but you need academic libraries in the mix.”

“For a long time, [game companies] weren’t really interested in preserving their games, either,” Waldron says. According to videogame website Kotaku, this is due to legal gray areas, lack of industry support, and game turnover. “I think that’s slowly starting to change.”

CONQUERING COPYRIGHT ISSUES

Potential copyright problems exist in every layer of videogame collecting, especially regarding older materials with expired copyrights. In October 2018, a decision from the Library of Congress and US Copyright Office allowed institutions to lawfully own copies of older videogames if they were acquired from the original companies in order to make preservation copies—a separate challenge for librarians and archivists as many companies are no longer in business or have discontinued server support.

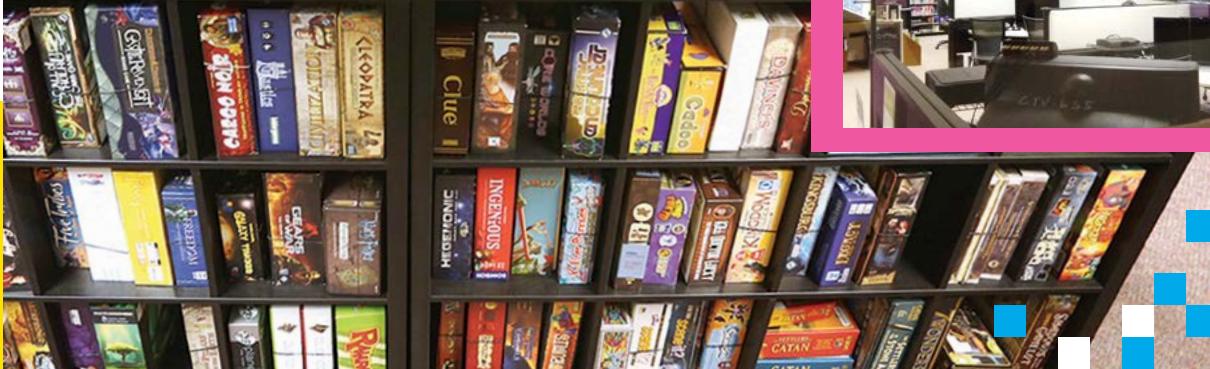
“Assuming that all videogames are governed by terms of use, it’s likely that any exceptions one would expect in the copyright law are not allowed,” says Carrie Russell, senior program officer and copyright specialist at the American Library Association. “If students are doing close analysis of the games or something similar, it’s likely that license terms don’t forbid just studying and researching the game unless the research involves the need to circumvent digital rights management (DRM) that may be employed by the rights holder.”



Photo: Chris Barnes

You’re asking people in cataloging who have never even played a game to suddenly start cataloging media. You need to support them.

CHRISTY CALDWELL, science and engineering librarian at University of California, Santa Cruz



DRM is a form of copyright protection licensing for digital media implemented by embedding code that prevents copying, specifying a time period in which content can be accessed, or limiting the number of devices content can be installed on. For example, games with expired or maxed-out licenses may not be library friendly.

Another consideration is that certain PC games come with keys—a string of unique characters—that a user must input in order to play. “But then that [game] is registered, and it’s only good for one use,” Carter says. “If someone donates a PC game to us, if they’ve used the key, we can’t use that game. We have to somehow get another key.”

Currently, libraries’ and archives’ rights to preserve videogames are allowed under the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. “That exemption, however, will expire in 2021 and need to be requested again,” Russell says.

Student-made videogames are easier to preserve since students get to decide what university libraries can keep. The student work that libraries archive mostly consists of digital files. They can either archive the entire game or different elements of it, like an abstract, artwork, or gameplay footage.

“We never make the students put up everything,” Caldwell says. “They could say, ‘I don’t want to upload my actual code. I’ll upload my abstract.’”

Students can claim complete copyright of their games or use a Creative Commons license, which allows others to share, use, and build on their work. They can even decide if they want their work to be available to university affiliates or the public.

Librarians, too, try to educate students about the importance of archiving their work at the library, studying other

The University of Michigan’s Computer and Video Game Archive

games, and how copyright plays into both. “You have to believe that [students] are going to use [the collection] responsibly,” Caldwell says.

NEXT-LEVEL LIBRARIES

Librarians agree they’re just beginning to assimilate game scholarship into academic libraries; progress will continue as the industry and programs evolve.

Caldwell says librarians should be working collaboratively to keep games accessible by lobbying for copyright law exceptions, partnering with game companies, and improving metadata and catalog descriptions.

“Games are to the 21st century what films were to the 20th,” she says. “How long did it take libraries to start collecting film? I think what we can do is start working together sooner, because we’ve already lost so many games.”

UM also wants to encourage students who may not be game design majors to help normalize videogames in the library. “In humanities or social science classes, instead of writing a paper, students are creating games,” Carter says. “We’ve been working with the design lab [at UM] to figure out ways to support the lighter-weight aspect of game creation.”

“[Games are] a part of society,” Waldron says. “It speaks to what our culture is in any given era, like any other format.” **AL**



DIANA PANUNCIAL is a writer in Zion, Illinois.

BOOST YOUR PUBLIC SPEAKING SKILLS

**Tips for librarians
on speaking
confidently and
effectively in
front of others**

BY Anne Ford



Photo: © THANANIT/Adobe Stock



As a college student, Tiffini Travis had to deliver a class presentation. So she stood up. She looked at the faces all around her. And she ran out of the room.

“I was just so petrified,” remembers Travis, who is advisor for information literacy and library instructional assessment at California State University, Long Beach. “I had actually prepared; I knew everything I should have said. It was just the idea of speaking in public that terrified me.”

Years later, Travis has more than conquered her stage fright, regularly delivering presentations as part of her job. “Now I could do it with my eyes closed,” she says.

So how does someone go from fleeing the room to completely losing their fear? In large part, the answer is practice, practice, practice. But while rehearsal is necessary, it’s not sufficient. Speaking confidently and effectively in front of others requires certain strategies. And Travis, along with several other librarians who regularly present in front of audiences, has many such tips to offer the tongue-tied.

THE MENTAL GAME

First, some good news: Most librarians have at least some public-speaking experience, whether they realize it or not. “If you can run a Harry Potter birthday party or do a storytime, you are speaking in public,” points out Mary H. Stein, assistant library director at East Baton Rouge Parish (La.) Library, who often talks to book clubs, classrooms, the media, and other audiences. Remembering that fact can help mitigate any nerves when it comes time to address a larger crowd.

It’s also vital to believe fully in the value of what you’re presenting. Char Booth, associate dean of the University Library at California State University San Marcos, sees many librarians succumb to imposter syndrome—that is, acting apologetic or overly self-deprecating while delivering their remarks.

“You have to understand that what you’re going to present on is meaningful,” says Booth, who has given talks on public speaking to the American Library

Association’s New Members Round Table and many other audiences. “You have to have conviction in your words and in your content. It’s not arrogance,



TIFFINI TRAVIS

Advisor for information literacy and library instructional assessment at California State University, Long Beach

it’s just simple conviction in the value of your contributions.”

But what if your topic is a well-worn one—something

that many people have spoken about before? No matter, they say: “Try to believe that what you’re saying has been said before, but not quite the way you’re going to say it. You want to make your content unique, but just by virtue of being who you are, it will be unique in some way.”

Manuel Urrizola, head of metadata and technical services at University of California, Riverside, is a



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longtime member of Toastmasters International, an organization of local clubs that develop public speaking and leadership skills. Urrizola delivers talks on public speaking nearly every week to area groups as well as to various state library associations. In his experience, librarians tend to adopt an apologetic style when giving presentations. Instead, “they need to adopt a credible style—the style of an expert,” he says. “People come to hear someone who knows what they’re talking about.”

GETTING READY

When creating slides for a talk, it may be tempting to immediately turn to PowerPoint. There’s nothing wrong with the software application itself, say experts; the problem comes when the presenter loads slides with text, then does nothing but read that text to the audience verbatim.

“Often with presentations by librarians, it’s a PowerPoint presentation, and they’re kind of a voiceover for



MARY H. STEIN
Assistant library
director at East
Baton Rouge Parish
(La.) Library

the PowerPoint,” Urrizola says. “That makes for a weak presentation, because then the audience members are reading the speech, so they

don’t really need the librarian.” He recommends instead to think of the slides as visual aids—opportunities to show visually what the rest of the presentation is conveying verbally.

While visual aids are important, agrees Stein, she prefers to avoid PowerPoint (“it’s too easy to make it a crutch instead of an aid”) and rely on three-dimensional objects instead. If she’s speaking about British literature, for example, she might bring source documents, a handkerchief that reminds her of the Regency era, and a few reference books. She arranges everything in the order in which her points will fall. Then, as she’s talking, she can glance at the next object to remind herself what to say.

Many librarians succumb to imposter syndrome—that is, acting apologetic or overly self-deprecating while delivering their remarks.

What about memorization? Should speakers write out their entire talks and commit them to memory? Usually, no. Instead, “I memorize the main points I want to say,” Travis says. “If you memorize it, it sounds rehearsed, and you lose some of your authenticity.”

That said, Urrizola does recommend that speakers memorize two parts of their talks: the beginning and the conclusion. “They should be very short, and those you can memorize,” he says, “because they need to be perfect” in order to grab the audience’s attention and leave them with a good impression.

As for written notes, Booth says they’re not always bad—if the speaker avoids reading from them robotically. “Sometimes when I have a really important presentation to give, say a reception or an unveiling, I will read from notes,” they say. “But I look up. I look people in the eye. I take it slow. I have engaging mannerisms. And half the time, the audience doesn’t even realize I’m reading from cards.”

Booth stresses that in the end, the method of delivering a presentation is less important than the speaker’s comfort with that method: “You want to be comfortable and confident, whether you’re reading from notes, using Prezi, Google Slides, Keynote, whatever. It’s all about being comfortable enough with that platform that you can switcheroo if something goes awry, which it will.” That’s why they recommend saving a presentation at least two different ways, maybe on a thumb drive and in the cloud, or saved as a PDF as well as a PowerPoint.

STEMMING THE STAGE FRIGHT

What has put some people off from public speaking are, of course, those pretalk jitters—the ones that make so many of us consider bolting from the room, just like Travis did back in the day. But, Urrizola says, it's actually a mistake to try to kill off those butterflies in the stomach.

"Being nervous is a good thing," he says. "It means we care. It means we want to do well. What we want to do is take that nervous energy and turn it into energy that makes our speech enthusiastic. And the ways of doing that are by preparing our speech and then practicing. Both of those will start to calm our body down."

Another calming maneuver he recommends: Getting to the venue early, "so the body can see the surround-



CHAR BOOTH
Associate dean
of the University
Library at California
State University
San Marcos

ings and feel them, and then when we get up to speak, it won't be the first time the body will be in that situation." Right before the speech,

he suggests, exercise the mouth by going through the vowels, or do something else to stretch and relax. "When we get nervous, our muscles get very tight. They want to start fighting, or they want to flee, so we need to calm the muscles down," Urrizola says.

Something he does not recommend: Having an alcoholic drink beforehand. "That will eliminate the nervousness—but then you won't care anymore," he says. "We don't want to eliminate it; we just want to harness it."

As for Travis, she's learned to transform her pretalk anxiety into excitement via an inspiring music playlist she has named "My Game Face."

"I find that if I listen to that on my way to the presentation, it relaxes me and gets me focused," she says (a few of her favorites: DJ Khaled's "All I Do Is Win," Jill Scott's "Golden," Christina Aguilera's "Beautiful," and Lizzo's "Good as Hell").

NOW YOU'RE TALKING

It doesn't matter how brilliant a speech is if it's inaudible. Audience members' abilities to hear can vary drastically. Fortunately, there's an easy solution: Use the microphone, even if you think you have a loud voice. And make sure you use it correctly, Stein says.

"Every mike is different," she points out. "With some mikes, you can be 18 inches away; with others, you have to almost kiss it. A common, totally avoidable error is not figuring out where your mouth needs to be relative to the mike." So is waving a handheld microphone around like a baton: "It's fun to talk with your hands, but not if that hand is holding the mike."

Speaking of hands, Urrizola recommends doing one of two things with them. "You can either use your hands to show what you're saying, or you can put them at your side," he says. "You don't want to hide your hands"—say, by holding them behind your back or concealing them behind a podium—"because then you lose some of your credibility." He adds that while most people find it unnatural to hold their hands at their side ("you really have to practice it"), doing so looks good to the audience: "You look comfortable and calm and confident."

As for confidence, one way to boost it while speaking is to do what Booth calls "finding your friendly."

"You want to look out and find two or three people who are paying attention and who have resting expressions you find pleasant," they say, and then focus on talking to them specifically. "The people who are frowning and rolling their eyes? Those people are not necessarily productive to focus on."

Booth recommends focusing on a friendly-looking person on the left, another in the middle, and another on the right: "If you keep returning to those people, it looks like you are looking people in the eye all around the room. It will appear that you are engaged with the entire audience."

That said, don't look too rapidly from person to person. "I've seen several speakers whose heads are constantly going back and forth, back and forth," Stein says. "It's distracting. Pick someone and speak to them for a minute, and then look in another direction and speak to someone else. But don't do the tennis-ball thing."

It's also wise to deliberately slow down the pace at which you speak. "A lot of rapid speech comes from plain old nervousness," says Booth. "Breathe. Honestly. You can pause between sentences. No one will mind."

"Librarians are like everybody else: They think they have to say something every second while they're speak-



MANUEL URRIZOLA
Head of metadata
and technical
services at
University of
California, Riverside

ing. Audiences don't mind if we pause; in fact, they like it," Urrizola says. "It gives them a chance to breathe. We don't have to fill it with

some utterance that expresses nothing"—filler words such as "um," "uh," or "actually."

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN ...

The good news is that some public-speaking nightmares—such as showing up in your underwear—are very unlikely to come true. The bad news is that others—such as encountering a hostile audience member or making an unfortunate slip of the tongue—just might.



“It’s all about being comfortable enough with [a presentation] platform that you can switcheroo if something goes awry, which it will.”

CHAR BOOTH, associate dean of the University Library at California State University San Marcos

Fortunately, there are ways to defuse even the most embarrassing or uncomfortable public-speaking situation. When Travis is faced with an aggressive audience member during question-and-answer time, for example, she uses the following strategy: “I repeat what they say so I have time to digest it. If it’s something I don’t know, I acknowledge that and say, ‘That sounds great. I want to research it. Is it okay if I find you afterwards to get the information?’”

Stein takes a similar tack when speaking to audiences that include members of the media, particularly during times of high-profile, potentially controversial library projects. In that case, “You need to be prepared for ‘Gotcha!’ questions, and you need to have a few quick answers ready that are calm and measured and get you back on track,” she says. “You can smile and say, ‘That’s not what I’m here to talk about today, but I’ll be happy to talk with you after the program.’ And then make sure you do it.”

Let’s say the very worst-case scenario happens: You open your mouth and promptly insert your foot—that is, you say something offensive.

In that case, do not attempt to ignore or gloss over the gaffe, says Booth: “Owning your mistake at the moment the mistake is made is essential. Humbly, and

with as much reflective prowess as you can muster, say: ‘What just came out of my mouth was offensive, and I apologize for that, and I’m happy to engage in dialogue with anyone after the presentation. I’m aware of my mistake, and I apologize to all it has offended.’ Not ‘if’ it has offended, because ‘if’ is the great escape.”

A less fraught possibility: Someone asks a question, and you simply don’t know the answer. “If I can’t even fake an answer, I turn it around to the audience,” Urrizola says. “I’ll say: ‘That’s a profound question. What do you guys think?’ The audience will offer answers, and that gives you a chance to collect your thoughts.”

Another common public-speaking fear is that one’s mind will suddenly go blank in the middle of a talk. If that happens, he advises, simply ask the audience: “Where should we go next?”

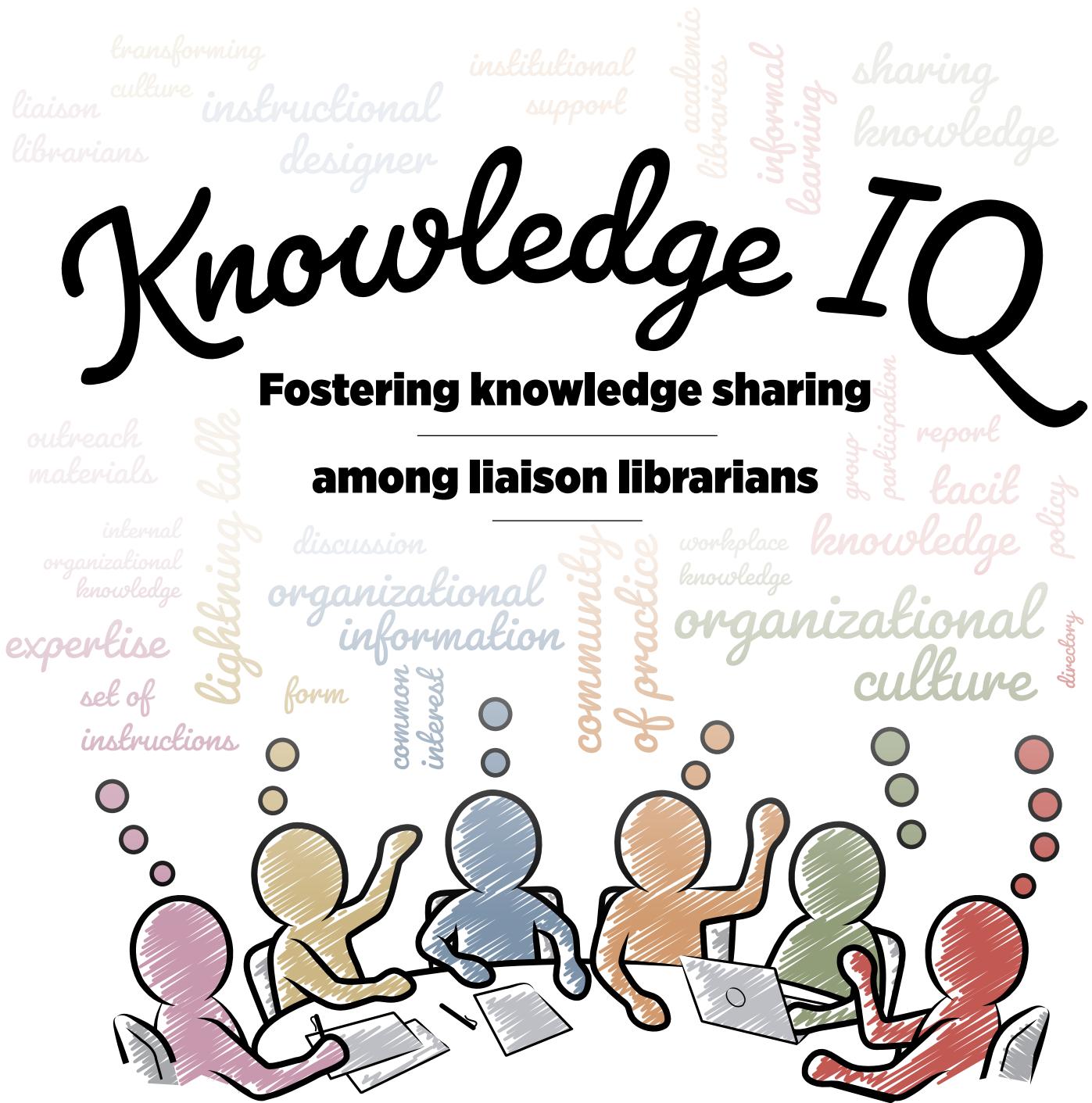
“Use the audience to help you when you need help,” Urrizola says. “The audience is on your side, and they love to be brought in. It shows that you’re not just a good speaker. You’re a good listener.” **AL**



ANNE FORD is *American Libraries* editor-at-large.

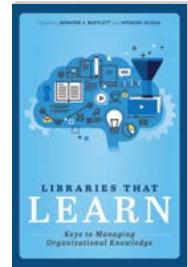
Knowledge IQ

Fostering knowledge sharing among liaison librarians



BY Diana Dill and Alice Kalinowski

Many academic libraries operate under an old-guard mentality and are notorious for resisting change. Some might say this is not true: Libraries are transforming from stockpiles of books to social spaces for collaboration, innovation, and creativity. They are becoming increasingly progressive in their approach to serving students, faculty, and the community. Yet by and large, libraries are not evolving with regard to their employees.



Fundamental tenets of knowledge management can help your library gradually move from humbug thoughts such as, “That’s just how we’ve always done it!” to more affirming ones like, “There are new, improved ways we can try with an open mind.” This transformation depends largely on creating an organizational culture that is open to sharing knowledge, strengthened with employee buy-in, and promoted by human resources. The overarching challenge for implementing knowledge management in libraries: transforming an existing, dysfunctional culture into a new, functional one.

Another reason knowledge management fails in libraries is that librarians are accustomed to warehousing information for its own sake. This behavior is best illustrated by traditional collection-building efforts, in which libraries feel compelled to routinely acquire books, journals, and other materials just in case someone wants them. However, this method does not work. Libraries must determine which knowledge is most important. Only the knowledge that best serves the purpose of the library’s strategic plan, mission, vision, goals, and objectives is relevant.

Lost in the shuffle

Everyone is familiar with the experience of not being able to easily locate a needed manual, directory, policy, procedure, report, form, or set of instructions. Files are deleted or misfiled; manuals and websites become outdated; longtime employees leave and take their experience with them. Why do many libraries find it so challenging to gather and use organizational information? Librarians and other information professionals spend their careers selecting, classifying, and disseminating knowledge—why should our own internal organizational knowledge be any different?

Organizational knowledge in libraries is not concerned with the information that librarians make available to external users; rather, it involves the processes and procedures implemented to effectively manage a library’s internal organizational knowledge—the stuff that library employees know and do within and for the institution. The irony is not lost on us that we, who are often championed as knowledge gatekeepers for others, are not ourselves trained to manage workplace knowledge.

Sharing knowledge and information in the workplace significantly affects an organization’s ability to operate effectively and efficiently. Among the various types of workplace learning, tacit knowledge is one of the most difficult to codify and share. Considering that most workers switch jobs and careers multiple times, organizations must think about how tacit knowledge is shared, particularly in cases of employee turnover. Building a community of practice (CoP) can help.

What is a CoP?

The CoP concept was first introduced by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger in *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* (Cambridge University Press, 1991). Wenger later described CoPs as informal clusters of people focused on a common interest who learn through participation in a group. They promote informal learning and especially excel at sharing tacit knowledge, the capture and coordination of which is notoriously difficult.

CoPs are a vital element of a successful knowledge management strategy and should be recognized and nurtured. These groups function most effectively when not bound by formal rules and procedures. Their focus is on day-to-day problem solving and idea generation. To maintain the group’s dynamics, appropriate institutional support should minimize disruption and formal oversight. The challenge is to acknowledge these groups’ loosely defined nature while leveraging their knowledge and expertise.

CoPs are not without risk. They should not devolve into groupthink, in which employees act in homogeneous, nonindividualistic patterns and suspend critical thinking and moral judgment. Groupthink may also lead to toxic and unproductive behaviors, such as habitual complaining, conflict, and the derailment of progress.

Forming a community

To help liaison librarians share knowledge with each other, the University of Pittsburgh’s University Library System (ULS) organized a CoP eight years ago at its Oakland campus. The

This is an excerpt from *Libraries that Learn: Keys to Managing Organizational Knowledge*, edited by Jennifer A. Bartlett and Spencer Acadia (ALA Editions, 2019).



Six Ways to Support a Community of Practice Environment

CoP comprised more than 25 liaisons—broadly defined as anyone responsible for working with a specific academic unit on campus. Liaisons were loosely organized across different library units, without a central chain of command or the formal coordination of reference or instruction services.

In spring 2016, a new staff position was created for an instructional designer to work with ULS liaisons. Three new liaisons were hired at the Oakland campus, all of whom were new to academic libraries. During the onboarding process, we observed the following.

First, predecessors' files were not always available to their replacements. While some outgoing employees left notes and files behind, others left nothing. In some cases, liaisons had to build their own instruction, reference, and outreach

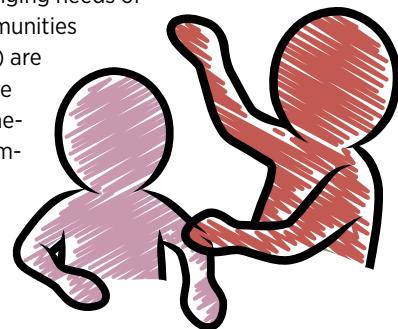
materials from scratch with little or no record of prior work. Second, ULS had no structure to encourage sharing or collaboration among liaisons. Liaisons would know if colleagues were receiving similar questions or implementing similar outreach strategies only through informal conversations or serendipity. Neither challenges nor successes were shared internally among liaisons or with the larger ULS community.

Although CoPs are meant to be informal, the ULS director issued approval to explore forming a CoP. About 50 librarians were invited to an exploratory meeting

to discuss CoPs and their possible benefits. Meeting attendees were eager to start a CoP in hopes of improving liaison communication and knowledge sharing. The newly formed CoP agreed to hold monthly meetings for discussion, reflection, and camaraderie in a safe, supportive environment. The meetings covered specific topics such as keeping up with library-related research and trends, writing learning objectives, planning orientations, sharing lesson plans and activities, and incorporating active learning in sessions—all focused with liaison roles in mind.

Librarians are not always adept at applying their valuable skills to their own libraries.

- 1 Encourage frequent informal socializing within and outside the library, preferably with snacks and beverages.
- 2 Host team-building meetings or retreats where the focus is explicitly coming together around discussion topics, problem solving, and other collaborative exercises.
- 3 Give everyone an opportunity to participate in the leadership experience by rotating the facilitator of meetings, retreats, and other gatherings.
- 4 Foster inclusion of employees; do not shut people out or deny them opportunities to become involved with topics they enjoy.
- 5 Adapt to the changing needs of employees. Communities of practice (CoPs) are not static; they are dynamic and sometimes require members to go with the flow.
- 6 Explore topics in sub-CoPs if needed. •



Between meetings, a Slack channel allowed participants to communicate with the entire CoP group or individual members. However, Slack—a cloud-based application used for collaborative project work, including real-time chat—was not successful. While instant messaging and chat tools are widely used for virtual reference with library users in many academic libraries, research by Ian Chan, Pearl Ly, and Yvonne Nalani Meulemans in “Extending IM Beyond the Reference Desk: A Case Study on the Integration of Chat Reference and a Library-Wide Instant Messaging Network” (*Information Technology and Libraries* vol. 31, no. 3, 2012) argues that librarians have little interest in using these types of tools outside of reference to share workplace knowledge. This was true with the ULS CoP, whose members preferred to communicate in person or via email or shared drives.

In addition to its meetings, the ULS CoP also hosted its first lightning talk event in 2017, in which liaisons spoke for five minutes each on something they had accomplished over the



past 12 months. Most of the talks focused on instruction and outreach efforts, such as using special collections in instruction or introducing PlumX analytics to academic departments. Informal feedback indicated that the talks were well received and will likely continue.

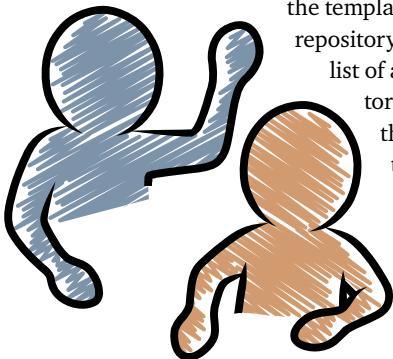
Building a repository

The CoP needed a place to share meeting notes, slides, and resources. Since all liaisons were familiar with Springshare LibGuides, one was created specifically to share materials. But as time progressed, it became increasingly difficult to navigate the guide because of the large number of files in it. Also, liaisons had a hard time finding materials they needed because of poor search functionality and a lack of tagging and metadata. The liaisons preferred not to use open repositories like Project CORA and Association of College and Research Libraries' Framework for Information Literacy Sandbox. An internal solution was needed.

ULS maintained a SharePoint server, but most liaisons found it to be nonintuitive. Box, an enterprise content management system offering cloud storage, became the preferred choice because most of the liaisons already used it for personal documents and other projects. Box was convenient for file-syncing, and files were accessible from any location or platform. Box also allowed for tagging and metadata.

To establish the Box repository, a generic, ULS-sponsored account not belonging to a specific individual was used. By choosing a sponsored account as the host, there was no worry about the repository depending on an individual's employment at ULS or the university. Liaisons in the CoP were invited to view, download, search, and upload content.

To enhance search and filter functionality within the repository, a custom-made metadata template was created with ULS's IT department. In creating the template, all files in the LibGuide repository were examined and a list of attributes and descriptors was developed. Careful thought went into creating the metadata, since it would determine how usable the repository would be. In fact, ULS's



metadata librarian was consulted as an expert on this part of the project.

The metadata template included attributes for ACRL's *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* and its *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education*. Doing so helped liaisons organize and locate files because specific lesson plans and activities could be mapped to individual frameworks or standards.

Challenges and benefits

Cultivating a group atmosphere in which liaisons took the initiative to lead and actively participate in the group was a significant challenge. The liaisons were eager to come together, but shy about sharing knowledge and concerned how that knowledge—or lack thereof—would be perceived by others in the group. To allay social discomfort, liaisons were encouraged to talk about their specific experiences. When possible, liaisons were asked to contribute these experiences beforehand to reduce feelings of being put on the spot.

Many participants expressed gratitude for having a space dedicated to discussion and collaboration. At ULS, as with other libraries, organizational communication can always improve, and liaisons enjoyed the opportunity to meet physically and virtually. Also, because of the CoP, liaisons have tried new methods and tools, such as using a *Jeopardy!*-inspired game with students for information literacy and creating stakeholder profiles for developing new potential services.

Librarians are not always adept at applying their valuable skills to their own libraries. Organizing and maintaining internal institutional processes, procedures, and knowledge remains a challenge, and dealing with it is paramount if libraries are to survive as useful organizations. Knowledge management practices and processes need to become as ingrained in library practice as cataloging and classification, reference service, and information literacy are. [AL](#)



DIANA DILL is instructional designer at University of Pittsburgh Library System. **ALICE KALINOWSKI** is business research librarian at Stanford University Graduate School of Business. **JENNIFER A. BARTLETT** and **SPENCER ACACIA** contributed to the introduction of this article.

A Job Well Done

Recognizing unsung heroes in our libraries

Nearly every year, I see at least one negative message on social media about individuals who have received some of our more visible professional awards or recognitions. Whether it's a blog post or a tweet, the gist of the message is that some of those recognized are overhyped, undeserving self-promoters. While I believe expressions of vitriol like those are not only unproductive but hurtful to the people who have won these awards, I can also understand the impulse behind them.

Professional awards embody a vocation's values. But what message is sent when the majority of awards recognize a single large innovative project or publication? When most recognition is for individual achievements, what does that say about how our profession views teamwork?

As much as we might wish to believe librarianship is unique, it is still influenced by the same social forces as other professions. Many fields provide the greatest recognition to the individual genius, the innovative leader, or the disruptor (bit.ly/AL-award1). While this is clearly a problem, I would suggest to those who seek to denigrate award winners that they should hate the game, not the player. How can we change the systems that recognize certain types of work over others?

Lionizing individual innovators and leaders over library workers who do great work every day can be tempting. But our libraries could not function without both types of individuals, and, in most cases, many different working styles are needed to make any project a reality. We should consider how we reward reliably strong performers in



a way that values both teamwork and individual accomplishments.

Managers should think about which employee and team qualities are truly important to their organization and develop ways to recognize staff and teams who exemplify those values (bit.ly/AL-award2). A team at Maastricht University in the Netherlands found that rewarding high performers can lead to improved work performance even from those employees who are not recognized, so acknowledging the right employees can provide broader benefits to the organization (bit.ly/AL-award3).

Unfortunately, research suggests that standouts are often rewarded with more work. One study found that high-performing employees were given larger workloads than their peers, something many of them came to resent (bit.ly/AL-award4). However, that resentment often centers on their less-productive

When recognition is for individual achievements, what does that say about how our profession views teamwork?

colleagues when the real problem is a lack of leadership from managers to address the issue of unequal workloads.

I don't think there's anything wrong with recognizing innovative projects, but it's also incumbent on each of us to consider how we reward consistently solid work that perhaps is neither flashy nor focused in areas that are currently trendy. The Pearl Award, given annually by Oregon Library Association's Public Library Division, recognizes a library worker who "agitates, makes change over time, and is highly valued" (bit.ly/AL-award5). It honors someone who has not done just one amazing thing but has made valuable contributions to their library or the profession throughout a longer career.

Everyone deserves to feel their work is valued, whether it's with a formal award or a more informal expression of appreciation. The chair of a committee I served on gave each member a personalized, handwritten thank-you card at the end of the year, and a supervisor once made me a certificate of appreciation for an assessment project I'd put a lot of work into. These small but meaningful efforts can provide validation and engender significant goodwill.

Recognition is not a zero-sum game but an infinitely renewable resource. Providing the validation a library worker needs to feel appreciated often takes little effort. We can easily honor many kinds of valuable contributions to our libraries and our profession. **AL**

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Personalization vs. Privacy

Keeping online visitors safe while meeting service needs

In ensuring user privacy, libraries that provide personalized online services often encounter tensions and contradictions. Tools and technologies that offer opportunities for better engagement do not always draw a clear boundary between privacy and personalization.

Commercial websites aim to capture as much personal data as possible. This data powers a global advertising ecosystem designed to strengthen retail sales through finely targeted ad placement. To manage websites and internet technologies in ways that reflect their values, libraries invariably must make difficult choices and compromises.

While they may not be able to entirely isolate their web-based services from commercial technologies, they can take measures to limit exposure and protect patron privacy.

HTTPS at a minimum

Libraries must ensure that their websites provide adequate privacy protection, particularly HTTPS protocol. Without this standard encryption, visitors are vulnerable to exposure. Even with HTTPS, tracking agents placed on the site for analytics or advertising—or added inadvertently as components of a desired feature—can circumvent basic protections.

Almost all libraries use Google Analytics to measure website usage, in which case their data is collected by Google's servers. To help protect patron privacy, libraries can anonymize IP addresses before they are recorded. This essentially truncates the address so that it retains only some information about the user's general location. IP address anonymization can be configured in the administrative console



of Google Tag Manager or specified in the JavaScript code. Because Google Analytics is based in the advertising ecosystem, it warrants careful handling to ensure that its use remains consistent with library privacy policies.

Web browsers now routinely flag unencrypted library websites as insecure and untrustworthy. A substantial portion of libraries continue to operate unencrypted websites, while others fail to implement basic HTTPS. The widespread use of tracking agents without an anonymization process means that some libraries are putting their patrons at greater risk.

Libraries often borrow scripts or widgets from other libraries or commercial sources to achieve the desired visual effects or functionality. These components may in turn include tracking agents

To manage websites and technologies in ways that reflect their values, libraries invariably must make difficult choices.

or other code that can have an impact on patron privacy. To mitigate these threats, library staff can use Ghostery (ghostery.com) to confirm which tracking agents have been installed. An audit allows libraries to identify all tracking agents deployed and review them against their privacy policies.

There is no fast or easy way to encourage the deployment of properly secured HTTPS. Many libraries have made a slow transition from obsolete technology to more modern alternatives. The libraries that remain represent a long tail with sparse resources and low awareness about the technical issues involved.

Patron opt-in

To support user services, recommendations, and social-sharing features, many libraries collect personalized data with patron consent. Users can opt in to allow data retention on borrowed items or other interactions in order to receive personalized services. A library's stated privacy policy can determine whether opt-in or opt-out options are set as default. As libraries enhance their personalized services, they must consider both the benefits and the privacy risks.

In the future, privacy must be a key consideration in library website design to be consistent with libraries' values and strategic objectives. [AL](#)

MARSHALL BREEDING is an independent consultant, speaker, and author. He is editor of *Smart Libraries Newsletter* and the website *Library Technology Guides*. Adapted from "Protecting Privacy on Library Websites: Critical Technologies and Implementation Trends," *Library Technology Reports* vol. 55, no. 7 (Oct. 2019).

Contract Concerns

Unions protect library workers, but are they keeping us from reaching teens?

Unions make it hard for library staffers to work effectively with youth of color.” That’s what a library colleague recently said to me over coffee. I sat silently for a few seconds, thinking about this statement and how it could be true.

The American Library Association–Allied Professional Association’s Library Worklife site states: “Union contracts often provide for fair and flexible working hours, better pay for overtime and work on evenings and weekends, more paid holidays, paid family and medical leave, and employer help with child care and elder care.” These conditions are undoubtedly important. But when talking with library staffers about the unintended consequences of union contracts on their work, I recognized the phrase “fair and flexible” was likely the root of the problem my colleague was thinking about—in part, because youth needs have changed over the last two decades.

What constitutes “fair and flexible” in library contracts does not readily align with the outreach-centered approaches today’s youth library workers must take to reach underserved and marginalized individuals and communities. As a library consultant in Georgia told me, “Job descriptions and contracts are written based on where the profession is at the moment, but how can they focus on the future?” I’d go even further: Many youth library workers are asked to comply with roles and rules based on where the profession was in the past.

Consider the library staffer in Washington who told me she’d been invited by a student to attend his high school play. The play took place after her regular



working hours, as outlined in the union contract. She knows that connecting with youth does not always fall into a 9-to-5, or library-as-retail-operation, framework. But she felt that if she mentioned to her coworkers or supervisor that attending an after-hours event could build stronger relationships with area teens, the reaction wouldn’t be positive. What did the staffer do? She went to the play but didn’t tell anyone she works with.

Work hours have come up again and again in my conversations with library workers, as have staffing models. “Union contracts can limit libraries from taking on volunteers—who may be youth of color—to help with library work,” a library director in Rhode Island told me. “These potential volunteers could eventually become future library staffers if they are permitted to take part in the core work.”

Contracts and staffing models are meant to preserve fairness. But narrowly

Library staff should work with unions to rewrite contracts and job descriptions that are flexible and mission-driven.

defining the work that librarians and paraprofessionals can do means needed flexibility and valuable talent can be lost. What if contracts allowed volunteers and nondegreed staffers to do tasks usually reserved for librarians? This could bring unique expertise and life experiences into the library. It would also allow librarians to spend more time in the community and to envision and plan the best youth services possible. Nonlibrarians might require training, but librarians could then do more tasks commensurate with a position held by someone with a master’s degree.

Embracing new roles and strategies to build services for youth does not need to be at odds with unions’ traditional approach to collective bargaining and contracts. In conversation with a union official, I was reminded of how, in 2016, library staffers in Rockford, Illinois, worked successfully with their union to bring back Sunday hours that had been cut. Library staffers should work with unions to rewrite contracts and job descriptions—that are flexible and mission-driven—to preserve what is vital to the community and serve those who are most difficult to reach.

As a teen services coordinator in Kansas told me, “I was thinking that I would love to ask unions to put teens first, as the Young Adult Library Services Association works to do. That doesn’t have to be antithetical to a union’s mission to protect its members.” The challenge, then, is to modernize contracts to strike a balance between the needs of underserved and marginalized youth and unionized library staff. **AL**

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

Beyond Fake News

Words matter when we talk about the nature and impact of misinformation

Every time I see a library program spotlighting fake news, I cringe. Don't get me wrong. These efforts are crucial, and we need even more. Librarians care deeply about information quality, and we know the value of media literacy. We're vigilant about the content of our feeds and can help others learn to filter theirs, separating fact from fiction. But we don't need to use the term *fake news* as our framework.

Questionable information can take many forms, and the language we use to talk about it matters. The expression fake news dates back to the 1890s, but its contemporary applications are problematic. At best, focusing on a label oversimplifies a complex problem; at worst, it supplies ammunition to a term that's become dangerously weaponized in a bitterly partisan political climate. There are better options.

The terms that define the dark side of information are evolving. For many, fake news has become a catchall phrase that describes everything from honest mistakes to intentional deceptions. Dictionary.com defines it as "false news stories, often of a sensational nature, created to be widely shared or distributed for the purpose of generating revenue or promoting or discrediting a public figure, political movement, company, etc."

Anyone who's stood in a grocery store line knows that sensationalizing false stories to generate revenue is not a rare business model. When employed to deliberately discredit someone, particularly during elections, these tactics become far more dangerous than tabloid fare.

When political leaders apply the fake news label to legitimate, accurate reporting, they undermine the journalism we



depend on to stay informed. It's a short walk from accusations of fake news to claims that journalists are "the enemy of the people"—verbal lobs that may affect careers and lives. In 2019, the nonprofit Reporters without Borders downgraded the US to 48th on its World Press Freedom Index, noting that reporters here are subject to death threats more frequently than ever before. Ranked just below Romania, the United States is now a "problematic" place for journalists to work.

"The words we choose to describe media manipulation can lead to assumptions about how information spreads, who spreads it, and who receives it," wrote Caroline Jack in Data and Society Research Institute's 2017 report *Lexicon of Lies: Terms for Problematic Information*. "These assumptions can shape what kinds of interventions or solutions seem desirable, appropriate, or even possible."

As information professionals, we can help shape solutions. We can learn more. Researchers have developed detailed taxonomies and glossaries to map and define

forms of falsity based on the content's characteristics and creator's intent. It's important to be clear, for example, about the difference between *misinformation*—inaccurate information that is not intended to harm—and *disinformation*, false information that is intentionally misleading. Jack's *Lexicon of Lies* and Claire Wardle's *Information Disorder: The Definitional Toolbox* are both solid vocabulary builders.

We can share what we learn, starting with our own teams. We can try activities in *Lexicon of Lies: Teaching Resources* and initiate conversations about the language of information disorder. We can make informed word choices, thinking twice before we headline fake news in a program or research guide, perhaps substituting a more specific title or introducing a broader term like *information pollution*.

When Skokie (Ill.) Public Library produced a series of media literacy workshops in 2018, Adult Program Coordinator Mimosa Shah thought carefully about wording. "I labeled the series 'Get a Grip' because I wanted to reduce the anxiety felt around current events," she explained. "I chose to focus on what we can do as consumers of news media and what choices we make based on the information we find."

We don't have to fear fake news. But with the term more or less fixed in the national discourse, we must explore its nuances. We must look for ways to create context, consider the term's impact, and examine its use and misuse. We as librarians can help bring sorely needed clarity to the national conversation. **AL**

LAURIE L. PUTNAM is a consultant and educator who works with librarians and journalists. She tweets at @NextLibraries.

We don't have to
fear fake news.
But we must
explore its nuances.

SOLUTIONS

Products and services



The MERGE Headset adapts smartphones into VR viewers with access to games, 360-degree video, and educational content.

Alternate Realities, Simplified

Augmented and virtual reality made easy

Virtual and augmented reality are two of the fastest-growing areas of technology. While popular games like *Pokémon Go* and *Harry Potter: Wizards Unite* have introduced augmented reality (AR) to pop culture, the immersive and interactive aspects of virtual and augmented reality can increase engagement with learning as well. Short of creating a full-service virtual reality (VR) lab, libraries can make these technologies available to learners through common devices.

MERGE

While specialized VR equipment can be expensive and difficult to loan, MERGE offers a suite of apps and accessories to make augmented and virtual reality more accessible and portable through common

technology including smartphones, tablets, and laptops.

The MERGE Cube is a small foam cube that, when used with its accompanying apps, allows users to hold and manipulate virtual objects in augmented or virtual reality. Free and paid apps for the cube can be downloaded through MERGE's Miniverse.io website, including games, 360-degree video, and educational content. The Object Viewer app, included with Cube purchases and as part of the MERGE EDU platform, converts 3D object files into virtual objects that can be viewed and manipulated with the Cube. Object Viewer includes a 3D object library, and users can also upload their own models, including 3D print files.

The MERGE Headset turns most smartphones (4.84–6.22 inches

in length) into a VR viewer. It's made with soft, antimicrobial foam padding for comfort and durability. The headset pairs with the MERGE Cube and related apps through Miniverse.io.

For school libraries and those with ongoing education programs, the MERGE EDU platform combines the Object Viewer app and Explorer, a suite of Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)-aligned AR learning apps created by educators and curated by MERGE.

MERGE's library program bundle includes licenses for 30 concurrent users on its EDU platform and 30 free cubes, along with training for library staff on using the platform and marketing it to students and patrons, as well as Q&A support as needed.

The MERGE library pack is \$2,495 per year, with custom licenses available. MERGE Cubes and Headsets can also be purchased individually, and libraries receive a 20% educational discount. For more information, visit mergevr.com.

Lifelique

Digital platform Lifelique provides access to interactive science lessons for K–12 learners. Its core app includes lesson plans, images, animations, and interactive 3D models. Content is organized into subject categories: human biology, animal biology, plant biology, paleontology, physics, chemistry, geology, astronomy, geometry, and culture, with lessons aligned to NGSS and Common Core.

SUBMISSIONS

To have a new product considered, contact Carrie Smith at casmith@ala.org.



The Lifeliqe core app is accessible on devices with common web browsers including Chrome, Firefox, and Internet Explorer and is compatible with Oculus Go, HTC Vive, Pico G2, and Neo VR headsets. Using a device's built-in camera, interactive models can be viewed in augmented reality. Users can rotate, zoom, and move models around in the virtual or augmented environment, with text and audio descriptions and introductions in English and Spanish. Lifeliqe's suite of apps also integrate into productivity tools such as G Suite and Google Classroom.

For libraries with dedicated VR equipment, Lifeliqe offers both virtual and mixed-reality extensions of its core platform. Lifeliqe VR Museum, an extension for the HTC Vive virtual reality headset, includes 20 virtual experiences and more than 1,000 interactive models. The Lifeliqe HoloLens extension provides 40 interactive, mixed-reality 3D models and 20 lesson plans for use with Microsoft's HoloLens.

Lifeliqe's license for libraries bundles the Lifeliqe core app with HTC Vive and Microsoft HoloLens extensions for 100 user accounts and devices and costs \$2,500 a year. Free 14-day trials are available, and a limited version of the app can be accessed for free. Individual licenses for the Lifeliqe app and extensions are also available. For more information, visit lifeliqe.com. **AL**

Lifeliqe's 3D digital science lessons are accessible through common web browsers.



Teachers at Wau-bonsie Valley High School try out zSpace's AR/VR laptops.

CASE STUDY

"A New Pathway for Learning"

How do you use zSpace?

Our library has eight zSpace computers that we use to support both the mission of the library and the goals of the school.

After a brief introduction to the technology from an adult, students can borrow the glasses from our desk and use the lab without supervision. Many students choose to use the zSpace lab during their lunch break to explore or create something new or study for an upcoming test.

USER: Kristen Mattson, library media center director, Wau-bonsie Valley High School in Aurora, Illinois



PRODUCT: zSpace

DETAILS: zSpace's AR/VR laptop and glasses provide access to educational apps, activities, and teaching resources for 3D learning.

How does zSpace serve your library's needs? Becoming the building's zSpace expert has allowed me to develop new partnerships with teachers in the math, science, and fine arts departments. Because diving into the content is hard without a device, many teachers struggle to find time during the school day to explore the various software packages and consider curricular ties. By trying out premade lessons and modules or creating customized learning experiences for my school, I have taken some of the workload off teachers' plates. In turn, they are more willing to incorporate the resource into their students' learning experiences.

What are the main benefits? The biggest benefit is that it provides a new pathway for learning. While some students are perfectly comfortable reading about the bones of the human body, others grasp the content in a whole new way when they can see and manipulate what they've been reading about in an augmented reality space. The zSpace applications invite student inquiry through their design: Students sit down and immediately want to click around and try something out just to see what happens next. They often return to explore content beyond the modules teachers assign to them.

What would you like to see improved or added to the platform?

One limitation is that it's difficult to create customized modules remotely. I have to sit in the zSpace lab; I cannot do the work from home or even from my office. Another critique I hear from some teachers is that the premade lessons and modules are too surface-level for the type of work they are doing in some high school courses. Fortunately, zSpace has heard this concern and has held several customer working groups in our area, allowing us to share our successes with one another while also providing feedback to the company. ●

PEOPLE

Announcements

ON THE MOVE

Brian Bannon became Merryl and James Tisch Director of New York Public Library, effective September 3.

In August **Jeffrey Bowen** became director for library programming and public affairs at Pepperdine University Libraries in Malibu, California.

Stephanie Buchanan became director of Bucyrus (Ohio) Public Library August 26.

University of Arkansas appointed **Dennis T. Clark** dean of libraries August 1.

Nicole A. Cooke joined University of South Carolina School of Library and Information Science as Augusta Baker Chair in Childhood Literacy in August.

July 15 **Andrea Falcone** became dean of the W. Frank Steely Library at Northern Kentucky University in Highland Heights.

August 19 **Daniel Greene** became president and librarian of the Newberry Library in Chicago.

Pamela Hackbart-Dean joined the University of Illinois at Chicago University Library as head of Special Collections and University Archives and a tenured full professor August 16.



Lincoln Library in Springfield, Illinois, named **Rochelle Hartman** director August 15.

David Heilbrun joined George Mason University Libraries in Fairfax, Virginia, as metadata librarian August 12.

August 26 **Katie Hildman** became assistant director of the Public Library of Steubenville and Jefferson County in Ohio.

Petersham (Mass.) Memorial Library named **Amber Johns** director in August.

Kudos

Gerald Holmes, associate professor and diversity coordinator at the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Greensboro Libraries, received the UNC Chapel Hill School of Information and Library Science Distinguished Alumni Award in recognition of his contributions to diversity and equity July 10.



The Colorado Association of Libraries named **Sarah Scobey**, nonprofit resources librarian at Poudre River Public Library District, as 2019 Colorado Librarian of the Year. ●



Jill Liebisch became library education advisor and recruiter at Northern Kentucky University's W. Frank Steely Library in Highland Heights August 26.

Adriene Lim became dean of libraries at University of Maryland in College Park August 19.

New York State Library in Albany appointed **Lauren Moore** state librarian, effective August 1.

Cuyahoga County (Ohio) Public Library named **Shayna Muckerheide** manager of its Brook Park branch August 26.

George Mason University Libraries in Fairfax, Virginia, appointed **Jasmine Spittler** as assessment librarian July 29.

Claire Stewart joined University of Nebraska-Lincoln as dean of university libraries August 1.

August 12 **Trevor Watkins** became teaching and outreach librarian at George Mason University Libraries in Fairfax, Virginia.

August 19 **Steven Wease** was appointed library specialist at W. Frank Steely Library at Northern Kentucky University in Highland Heights.

PROMOTIONS

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Wilson Special Collections Library promoted **Nadia Clifton** to special collections engagement librarian August 19.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Libraries promoted **Christina Cortland** to library software applications developer July 15.

July 25 Dauphin County (Pa.) Library System promoted **Karen Cullings** to executive director.



August 1 Alger (Ohio) Public Library promoted **Stacey Hensley** to director.

Norwalk (Conn.) Public Library promoted **Laurie Iffland** to director of library technology July 29.

August 1 **Jason Kucsma** was promoted to director of Toledo Lucas County (Ohio) Public Library.

Indiana University East in Richmond promoted **KT Lowe** to assistant librarian for instruction in July.

Pepperdine University Libraries in Malibu, California, promoted **Colleen Mullally** to associate university librarian for collections, technical services, and scholarly communications in August.

Beth South was promoted to assistant librarian for access and technical services at Indiana University East in Richmond in July.

In Memory

Margaret “Peggy” Barber, 75, American Library Association (ALA) associate executive director of communications 1970–2000, died August 25. In that role, she established ALA’s Public Information Office, Public Programs Office, and the ALA Graphics department, which includes the Celebrity READ poster series. Barber also worked to establish the national library symbol that now appears on street signs nationwide. She coauthored *Getting Your Grant: A How-to-Do-It Manual for Librarians* with Linda D. Crowe and received ALA’s 1999 Joseph W. Lippincott Award for distinguished service to the library profession. After leaving ALA, she was a principal consultant with Library Communication Strategies and served as copresident of Friends of Libraries USA (now United for Libraries).

Patricia Meyer Battin, 89, president of the Commission on Preservation and Access (now the Council on Library and Information Resources) 1987–1994, died April 22. She became the first woman appointed director of an Ivy League university library when she was named vice president for information services at Columbia University in 1978. She was a leader in convincing publishers to use alkaline-based paper to combat paper deterioration, and she secured funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities for a 20-year project to microfilm 3 million endangered volumes. The Association of College and Research Libraries recognized her as 1990 Academic/Research Librarian of the Year, and President Bill Clinton awarded her the National Humanities Medal in 1999.

Carol Ligon Bentley, 92, a professor of library sciences at Chicago State University until her retirement in 1999, died

May 29. Bentley was a member of Black Women in Higher Education and a chapter director of Phi Delta Kappa.

Donald B. Cleveland, 83, professor emeritus at the University of North Texas School of Library and Information Science in Denton, died April 17. He designed the school’s interdisciplinary PhD program in information science. The Association for Information Science and Technology recognized him with the Outstanding Information Science Teacher Award in 2004. Cleveland cowrote *Introduction to Indexing and Abstracting* and *Health Informatics for Medical Librarians* and served as a consultant to many national and international organizations.

Barbara J. Keller, 81, cataloging librarian at Indiana State University in Terre Haute 1967–1997, died February 22.

Judi Paradis, 60, coordinator of the Anne A. Russell Children’s Educational and Cultural Enrichment Fund at Robbins Library in Arlington, Massachusetts, for 10 years in the 1990s and early 2000s, died April 28. She had also been a librarian at Arlington’s Peirce and Stratton Elementary Schools.

C. Patricia Riesenman, 86, a leader in the Reference and User Services Association’s Machine-Assisted Reference Section (MARS, now the Emerging Technologies Section), died June 7. She chaired MARS’s Education and Training of Search Analysts Committee and the Planning Committee and was active on other committees. At Indiana University Libraries, she worked to establish the Computer-Aided Reference Service in the late 1970s and helped to found and develop the Indiana Online Users Group in 1982. She received the MARS Achievement Award in 1997 and the 2006 William Evans Jenkins Librarian Award. ●

Cuyahoga County (Ohio) Public Library promoted **Tracy Strobel** to executive director August 2.

RETIREMENTS

Bucyrus (Ohio) Public Library Director **Brenda Crider** retired September 20.

Sari Feldman retired as executive director of Cuyahoga County (Ohio) Public Library August 2.

AT ALA

October 10 **Kristen Figliulo**, Association for Library Service to Children program officer for continuing education, left ALA.

Rebecca Gerber, electronic resources librarian, left ALA September 5.

Jody Gray, director of the Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services, left ALA September 6.

Patrick Harrington joined the Information Technology department as training specialist July 23.

Alee Navarro, content and technology coordinator for Conference Services, left ALA August 1.

American Libraries promoted **Carrie Smith** to editorial and advertising associate August 21. [AL](#)



Gaming the (Library) System

Before Jenn Bartlett, head of reference and adult services at Manchester (Conn.) Public Library (MPL), traveled to Gen Con—the largest tabletop-gaming convention in North America—in 2014, her coworkers joked, “Oh, you’re just going to play *Monopoly* all day!”

Instead, that trip effectively kick-started the library’s board game collection. Bartlett came home with three free games; today MPL’s cache, mostly comprising publisher and public donations, is at 275 and counting. It’s the largest library board game collection in the state, she says.

Bartlett, current president of the American Library Association’s Games and Gaming Round Table, was introduced to modern board gaming in 2010, when she and her husband were given a copy of *Battle Cry*. Since then, her personal collection has grown to more than 350 board games. Her all-time favorite? *War of the Ring*, a dice-rolling strategy game based on J. R. R. Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* series. “What’s wonderful about it,” she says, “is that it’s based on books!”

Bartlett, who is @boardgame.librarian on Instagram, contributes reviews to BoardGameGeek, showcases products to an average of 16,000 viewers on the Dice Tower YouTube channel, and, naturally, hosts a board game group at MPL.

“Board games put us together at a table with people we care about. We’re having fun, and we’re learning,” Bartlett says. “People will go to their local game store, and they’re not always the most welcoming or inclusive places. That’s why libraries are wonderful—we are those things.” **AL**

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

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