

american libraries

March/April 2020

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

2020 CENSUS

*Your
community
counts*

SPECIAL REPORT | p.22



50 Years of the
Black Caucus p.36

Family-Friendly
Academic Libraries p.18

PLUS: Robot Battles,
Samantha Irby,
Vaping Dangers



Space Planning

Reinventing Your Library Space

Whether you're interested in rearranging existing furniture to increase circulation, making it easier for patrons to find programs or services, or designing a new library, this one-day training provides the concrete set of tools you need. Walk away with best practices in planning library space in the 21st century; methods for improving circulation using retail techniques; and tools for assessing and utilizing your library's current space.

2020 Training Schedule

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- June 12, Portland, ME
- July 9, Bloomfield Township, MI

Cost: \$170 for PLA Members; \$225 for Nonmembers
Register at www.ala.org/pla/education/inperson/space



PLA Regional Training



David Vinjamuri
Facilitator



Social Justice and Public Libraries

Equity Starts with Us

Libraries across the country are making stronger commitments to equitable library services for all. Be a part of this movement by attending this one-and-a-half-day symposium, where you'll build shared understanding of equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice (EDISJ) concepts; increase self-awareness; learn to address biases; gain regional connections; and utilize case studies and equity tools to create an action plan for strengthening EDISJ in your organization and community.

2020 Symposia Schedule

- May 18–19, Austin, TX
- May 20–21, Austin, TX
- August 24–25, Seattle, WA
- More locations being added soon!

Cost: \$250 for PLA Members; \$325 for Nonmembers
Register at www.ala.org/pla/education/inperson/equity



PLA Regional Training



Mia Henry
Facilitator



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from the
EDITOR

The Mission of Inclusion



Sanhita SinhaRoy

The decennial census formally kicks off April 1, marking the culmination of much civic effort toward a fair, accurate, and inclusive count.

Our special report “2020 Census: Your Community Counts” (cover story, p. 22) looks at how libraries are investing time, resources, and expertise to reach hard-to-count communities and help dispel anxiety and misinformation—especially since the census could determine up to \$1.5 trillion in federal funding for communities as well as each state’s number of seats in the electoral college. The report also offers ideas on how to use census data after the count.

Also looking to the future: the Black Caucus of the American Library Association. To mark the ALA affiliate’s 50th anniversary, Anne Ford spoke with five black librarians who are advancing inclusion within the profession (“Living the Dream,” p. 36). Representation matters, as library media specialist Cicely Lewis says in the story, adding: “That’s one barrier that can be broken down.”

Helping break down other barriers to access is University of Maryland (UMD) Libraries, which has made it easier for parents, caregivers, and children to visit (Spotlight, p. 18). It’s not just faculty and staff who have children to look after; many students do, too. In response, UMD Libraries has created a family study room as well as “family kits” to ease the sometimes unavoidable challenges of bringing young ones to the library. As the authors write, welcoming families “demonstrates compassion for the lived experiences of users.”

With Earth Day around the corner, library workers have been striving to keep sustainability at the forefront of year-round action. In our Youth Matters column (p. 48), library assistant Larissa Clotildes shares ideas for environmentally friendly children’s programming, writing: “As educators, we are in a position to help families understand that they don’t have to choose between fun, learning, and sustainability.”

In the coming months, keep an eye out for our second online Sustainability in Libraries series, a multipart look at the library profession’s relationship to sustainability. We hope it will engage—and sustain—your interest.

Sanhita

Libraries are investing time, resources, and expertise to reach hard-to-count communities and dispel anxiety and misinformation.

Don't Be Counted Out

Libraries, ALA mobilize for the 2020 Census



Wanda Kay Brown

As library workers, we know the vital importance of accurate and complete data. That's why our community is so invested in achieving a complete count in this year's US census (cover story, p. 22).

Quite simply, representation matters. If people aren't counted in, they will most likely be counted out.

That's because the census informs everything from districting for federal, state, and local offices to the allocation of as much as \$1.5 trillion in federal funding to states and localities.

The census intersects with the work of libraries in several ways.

First, on a practical level, people are likely to head to their local public libraries to get accurate information and guidance. This year, the census will be conducted primarily online for the first time. This means that many people who don't have reliable access to a computer or internet connection will turn to libraries to complete their census forms online—although options to respond by phone and mail remain. The online form and phone assistance will be available in 13 languages.

Second, the census is an enormous logistical challenge, and it needs hundreds of thousands of people working to ensure its success. In that way, libraries are prime locations for people seeking to apply for one of the approximately 500,000 temporary census jobs open across the country. Libraries are playing an important role connecting job seekers to census employment.

Lastly, and perhaps most crucially, approximately \$1 billion in federal funding for libraries will be allocated in the coming decade based on the 2020 data. If our counts are accurate, we can make sure that money is distributed fairly and equitably; if some communities are undercounted, their local libraries could lose out on available funding.

It's important to view this civic duty through the lens of social justice. Hard-to-count groups

include recent immigrants, people of color, young children, and renters.

As we know, these populations are among the most vulnerable members of our society. Therefore, it's our responsibility as practitioners who embed the values of equity, diversity, and inclusion into our professional practice to mobilize our communities and make sure everyone is counted. As library advocates, too, the census is a great opportunity to showcase our impact. Make sure your elected officials know what your library is doing to help achieve a complete count.

To support our members in this work, ALA has updated the *Libraries' Guide to the 2020 Census* (bit.ly/LibCensus20). It includes the most current information available, including Census Bureau contact information, downloadable resources, and updated FAQs so you have ready answers to the questions we know are coming. Find updated information and resources at ala.org/census.

On another note, I want to take this opportunity to welcome Tracie D. Hall, ALA's new executive director. Tracie begins work at ALA on February 24, and she will work diligently beside Mary Ghikas, who is supporting the leadership transition through ALA Annual Conference this June.

We've been heartened to hear your cheers of congratulations to Tracie on her new role. On Facebook, ALA member Dale McNeill celebrated Tracie's appointment by paying it forward and offering to purchase three new ALA memberships for interested librarians. Thanks, Dale!

It's clear that there is a lot of goodwill and optimism around Tracie's new role, and we're thrilled to have her on board. You will begin hearing from her directly in the next issue when she takes over the executive director's column from Mary. **AL**

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

The most vulnerable members of our society will be the most reliant on the funds the census helps allocate.

A Time for Change and Thanks

As executive director role ends, fondness for ALA, members will persist



Mary Ghikas

From the executive director perch, I was privileged to see the whole Association. That view has been a unique—and precious—vantage point.

On February 24, Tracie D. Hall will step into the position of ALA executive director. I will step back and work at her direction to assist during the initial months of her tenure as executive director. We have worked together before when she was director of what is now known as the Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services, and I look forward to the opportunity to work with her again. At the end of the 2020 ALA Annual Conference, I will retire.

It has been an honor to serve in this role. It has been a time of necessary change and disruption. Both staff and member leaders have accomplished work that has shifted the trajectory of the Association. In thinking back over the past few years, the hard, collaborative work of many has created the possibility of—and the potential for—ongoing growth and development.

What have I learned? My capacity to see nuances and detail has warred with the necessity to visualize simplicity in a complex environment. For me, the process of draft and redraft, of talking it through with others, has been ongoing. An introvert by nature, I have learned to pull vital energy from the intensity of meetings and conferences. I have learned that when I call for help, colleagues all across this Association—and beyond—will respond. I have learned that even when we differ on strategies, we may share intent and objectives.

What will I miss? Too many things to count.

After 20-plus years of watching Council from the gallery, it was a pleasure to serve as the Secretary of Council and watch the action from the front—to see your faces rather than your backs. From the executive director spot, I was privileged to see the entire Association, each piece of a complex whole. No matter how much anyone is able to observe in other capacities, this is a unique perspective, a vantage point that has been precious.

The scope is astounding—from the broad range of public policy and advocacy, to books and

literacy for all ages, to the work of organizing and managing libraries of all types, to collaborations across multiple external organizations in the US and around the globe.

From the executive director perch you see the amazing impact of libraries and the people who give them life. It crosses your screen, your desk every day—from the people who reach out to the Association and its members, from the stories passed along by staff and members, from more invitations and opportunities than you can manage. The story told by the daily flow of contacts and conversations is the story of libraries and of all library people. Seeing it from this viewpoint has been an incredible gift.

This story has been about the importance of persistence. I see it in our staff members who answer the inquiries, edit another book, prepare another set of minutes, craft another event or conference—over and over, with continuing thought and creativity.

I see it in our members who patiently move an idea or program through the successive stages, through committees, through the processes of a complex organization.

There will be time yet for many good-byes. I will see many of you over the coming months: at the office, at various events, and finally at Annual Conference.

Still, it's hard not to think about what I'll miss. Mostly, I will miss the people—the countless quick greetings, the informal conversations (sometimes in odd places), the cat stories, the knitting progress. It will be the moment when you realize the baby you remember has graduated from college and has a full adult life. It will be the countless “remember when” stories.


At the end of the day, it isn't about me. It's you, it's us. Thank you—and Tracie, welcome. **AL**

MARY GHIKAS is executive director of the American Library Association.

 BRAVO to these great librarians and their stories about how they reach out to make connections with their library patrons. I am inspired by each of their stories ❤️

@LINDA_LIBRARIAN

in response to “Meet the I Love My Librarian Award Winners” (The Scoop, Dec. 10)

 *American Libraries* magazine has a nice succinct roundup of how states performed on library measures. Lots of successes in Colorado, as well as some work left to do!

@COSTATELIBRARY

in response to “Referenda Roundup” (Jan./Feb., p. 32)

Zines Fuel Outreach

As a zine maker and writer, I was very excited to read about partnerships between libraries and zine festivals in “On the Zine Scene” (Jan./Feb., p. 22). I vended at the San Anto Zine Festival at San Antonio Public Library (SAPL) last fall. The experience introduced me to SAPL’s vast resources, including its Latino Collection and Resource Center. SAPL Program Manager Emma Hernández was delightfully organized and contributed greatly to the success of the festival.

Libraries are crucial resources for their communities and, in my experience as a writer and zine maker, literary sanctuaries. Libraries that introduce zines into their collections have developed a new level of outreach, which provides opportunities for creators to share their work with new audiences. I have been fortunate to have my zines in various libraries, such as the Edendale branch of Los Angeles Public Library and multiple university libraries. Through these partnerships, visitors are introduced to new worlds outside of the publishing industry, where art, DIY ethics, and the written word meld. I wish to share my deepest gratitude to the librarians who listen to their communities and respond by supporting local creators and emerging writers through zine collections.

Yeiry Guevara
Houston

Rolling with the Punches

Thanks for Marshall Breeding’s article on the acquisition of OverDrive by investment firm KKR (The Scoop, Dec. 31, 2019). The author laid out the financial possibilities and implications of this important development, and I concur that there is no perfect vendor or arrangement in a fluctuating market adapting to rapidly changing consumer habits. The streaming and e-media universe will continue to revamp, change, and bend. So will budgets for public library collections.

At our public library in a Big Ten college town, checkouts of audiobooks on CD declined 10.2% in 2019, while e-audio use soared by 20.7%. The collection budget allocations seem clear but, meanwhile, readers cling stubbornly to their favorite formats, including nearly 87,000 checkouts of DVDs from people who are “cutting the cable cord.”

I will sigh as we adjust our collection-building strategies, and hope that [OverDrive CEO] Steve Potash will continue to advocate for libraries as publishing partners who facilitate author awareness and sales and deserve competitive pricing.

Catherine Alloway
Port Matilda, Pennsylvania

The Risks of Engagement

The special report on “Democracy in Action” (Nov./Dec. 2019,



p. 24) devoted much space to civic engagement but failed to acknowledge the challenges faced by certain

members of the community in voting and engaging in political issues.

Too often, survivors of domestic violence and stalking are excluded from discussions of civic engagement because of public record laws, which the library community tends to be ignorant of.

When voter registration information is considered public, survivors of domestic violence and stalking may risk their safety by casting a vote.

The article mentions a library in Texas that routinely asks if patrons are registered to vote when they sign up for a library card. Is the library’s staff made aware of the complications survivors face when voting and registering to vote? If not, they could be encouraging someone to put themselves in danger.

Failure to educate our patrons about the public nature of voting records is unacceptable, especially when the results are so grave. If libraries are unaware of how domestic violence and stalking can affect voting in your state, contact your local crisis center, which can educate you and your staff on state-specific laws and programs available for survivors to help them participate

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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in voting without risking their safety. You can learn more at librariansforsurvivors.com.

Miranda Dube
New Hampshire

Staying Organized

I'm at a loss for words after reading Linda W. Braun's column "Contract Concerns" (Nov./Dec. 2019, p. 58). It's disappointing to hear another librarian suggest that union contracts prevent us from reaching young people.

In my years as a high school librarian and later as children's librarian in a public library, I've worked beyond the hours stipulated in my contract and attended after-school programs and outside events to do outreach, all with the knowledge and approval of my supervisors.

At a time when libraries are facing cuts—to budgets, hours, and more—unions protect more than librarians, paraprofessionals, guards, and other employees. Unions also serve to protect patrons' interests. Without unions, who would fight for better budgets? Who would fight to make sure we're open on weekends and evenings? Who would make sure that we're open at all?

Unions play a key role in keeping libraries strong, and they deserve our loyalty.

Allegra D'Ambruoso
Philadelphia

Libraries Need Humans

Multiple readers responded to "Automated for the People" (Sept./Oct. 2019, p. 48) with concerns around security and loss of paraprofessional jobs ("From Our Readers," Jan./Feb.,

p. 9). These concerns need to be addressed, but the needs of the patron should be addressed as well.

How does a library protect a patron's privacy and the integrity of their data when there is nobody present to protect physical records? What happens when a patron forgets their library card? What about more complex transactions, like a block for damaged or overdue materials? Even corporate big-box stores have people available at all open hours to assist people.

Another concern that wasn't even mentioned in the article: A library is (or should be) part of what forms a community, a space to discuss common concerns. Who are our patrons going to turn to if there are no librarians present? An unstaffed library may be great for administrators and budget-cutters, but it's not good for patrons. The concept needs to be thought through very carefully before it is implemented on a large scale.

Kathleen Stipek
Gainesville, Florida

CORRECTIONS

In "Referenda Roundup" (Jan./Feb., p. 32), the Union Gap measure should have been included in the tally for Washington, not Oregon.

In "Know Your Rights—and Theirs" (Jan./Feb., p. 46), a link to a presentation by members of the Association for Library Service to Children was included in error.

The feature "2020 Midwinter Preview" (Jan./Feb., p. 50) misidentified the protagonists of the novel by Maia and Alex Shibutani as ice dancers instead of fans.

What You're Reading

1 Free Speech—or Free-for-All? "First Amendment audits" can pit patrons' rights to film against the privacy of other library users. bit.ly/AL-1A-Audits

2 Know Your Rights—and Theirs Librarians are preparing for possible US Immigration and Customs Enforcement activity. bit.ly/AL-KnowRights

3 Your Library's Story Take control of the narrative when documenting your library's impact on the community. bit.ly/AL-LibStory

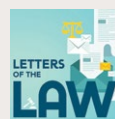
In Case You Missed It



Meet ALA's Next Executive Director Our Q&A with Tracie D. Hall, who assumes her role February 24. bit.ly/AL-TracieDHall

OverDrive's New Owners: What It Means

Library technology expert Marshall Breeding explains the recent acquisition. bit.ly/AL-KKR-OverDrive



Is My Library Liable for Fake News? Our Letters of the Law column returns with questions about politics and free speech. bit.ly/AL-LetterLaw2

FCC Adopts ALA E-Rate Recommendations

New federal order streamlines budget and application process. bit.ly/AL-ERate

Coming Soon

Check The Scoop for our coverage of the **Public Library Association 2020 Conference** in Nashville, Tennessee, February 25–29, and **National Library Week**, April 19–25.

Tracie D. Hall Is ALA's Executive Director

On January 15, the American Library Association (ALA) announced the appointment of Chicago civic and cultural leader Tracie D. Hall as its new executive director, effective February 24. Following a nationwide search, Hall was selected to succeed Mary Ghikas, who has worked for ALA since 1995 and held the office since January 2018. Hall, ALA's 10th executive director, is the first female African-American executive director in the 143-year-old association's history.

"We are thrilled to be welcoming Tracie back to the ALA family," said ALA President Wanda Kay Brown. "Her unique combination of philanthropy and library know-how position her to be the leader ALA needs today. She is optimistic, energizing, and innovative, qualities that will serve the Association well as it continues its investments in advocacy, development, and information technology."

In 1998 Hall was among the first cohort of ALA's Spectrum Scholars, a grant program intended to diversify librarianship, and she earned her MLIS from the Information School at University of Washington. She has worked at Seattle Public



Tracie D. Hall

Library, New Haven (Conn.) Free Public Library, Queens (N.Y.) Public Library, and Hartford (Conn.) Public Library. She served as the director of ALA's Office for Diversity from 2003 to 2006.

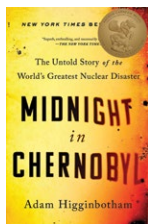
Most recently, Hall directed the culture portfolio at the Chicago-based Joyce Foundation, developing new grant programs designed to catalyze and scale neighborhood-based arts venues, cultural programming, and creative entrepreneurship. She was appointed to the City of Chicago's Cultural Advisory Council this year. Hall has also served in multiple roles in academia, including as assistant dean of Dominican University's Graduate School of Library and Information Science in River Forest, Illinois. ●

Carnegie Medalists Announced

On January 26, at the Reference and User Services Association's (RUSA) Book and Media Awards during the Midwinter Meeting & Exhibits in Philadelphia,



ALA announced the selections for the 2020 Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence in Fiction and Nonfiction: *Lost Children Archive* by Valeria Luiselli won for fiction, and *Midnight in Chernobyl* by Adam Higginbotham for nonfiction.



Luiselli's novel tracks a husband-and-wife team of audio documentarians as they explore both the painful history of the Apache people and the present immigration

crisis on the Southwest US border. Higginbotham's account of the 1986 explosion at Chernobyl focuses on the people involved.

Carnegie Medal winners each receive \$5,000. All the finalists will be honored during ALA's 2020 Annual Conference in Chicago. The awards, established in 2012, are made possible by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and are cosponsored by *Booklist* and RUSA.

ALSC Names Children's Literature Lecturer

Literary scholar Rudine Sims Bishop will deliver the 2021 ALSC Children's Literature Lecture, formerly known as the May Hill Arbuthnot Honor Lecture, the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) announced at the Midwinter Meeting in Philadelphia on January 27.

Bishop, professor emerita at Ohio State University, has served on numerous book awards committees for ALA and other organizations, and has been recognized with prestigious awards for her work. Her research, writing, and teaching have informed and expanded conversations about representation of African Americans in children's literature and provided a critical framework for research and pedagogy.

The lecturer, announced annually at Midwinter, may be an author, illustrator, editor, critic, librarian, historian, or teacher of children's literature, of any country, who will prepare a paper considered to be a significant contribution to the field of children's literature. The paper is delivered as a lecture each April or May, and is subsequently published in *Children and Libraries*, the journal of ALSC. Applications to host the lecture

Sale of ALA Headquarters Buildings Announced

ALA President Wanda Kay Brown and then-Executive Director Mary Ghikas announced on December 6 that ALA has sold its headquarters buildings at 40 and 50 E. Huron Street in Chicago's River North neighborhood.

Dedicated in 1963, the building at 50 E. Huron Street served ALA for nearly two decades before the Association built an extension in the parking lot it owned next door. Together, the connected buildings have housed ALA staff since 1981.

"We are thrilled that, after many years of study, research, and discussion, the transfer of a valuable real estate to ALA's endowment fund is at last complete," Brown said in the December 6 statement. "Of course, it is bittersweet to be leaving our home of so many decades. But ALA is focused on the future and is optimistic about all that it holds."

ALA will move its Chicago-based office functions to a suite at Michigan Plaza at 225 N. Michigan Avenue on April 27. Architecture firm Nelson is handling the buildout, with a focus on modernized workspaces and enhanced meeting space.

"It's a historic moment for ALA, and we look forward to celebrating with our members, partners, and friends when we welcome more than 20,000 library workers to Chicago for ALA's Annual Conference and Exhibition in June," Brown said. ●

will be available online at ala.org/alsc this spring.

Proposals Sought for Diversity Grants

ALA's Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services (ODLOS) seeks proposals for its annual Diversity Research Grant program, a one-time award of \$2,500 to fund original, one-year research projects on diversity-related topics addressing critical gaps in the knowledge of diversity, equity, and outreach issues within library and information science.

A jury of ALA members will evaluate proposals and select up to three recipients. Those recipients, to be announced before Annual, are invited to present interim findings at the 2021 Midwinter

Meeting, and are asked to publish findings within one year of completion.

Proposals are due by midnight Pacific time on April 15. Visit bit.ly/DivResearch2020 for examples of past projects and a complete list of criteria and proposal instructions.

Leadership Institute Applications Open

Applications for the 2020 ALA Leadership Institute, a four-day immersive program for midcareer librarians, are now open. The eighth annual institute will be held August 2–6 at the Hilton Chicago/Oak Brook Hills Resort and Conference Center, with former ALA president Maureen Sullivan (2012–2013) and library and leadership consultant Kathryn Deiss facilitating. Selected participants will

CALENDAR

MAR. 16

Freedom of Information Day

ala.org/advocacy/foi-day

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

APR. 30

El día de los niños/

El día de los libros

dia.ala.org

MAY 1–7

Choose Privacy Week

chooseprivacyeveryday.org

MAY 4–5

National Library Legislative

Day | Washington, D.C.

ala.org/advocacy/nlld

JUNE

GLBT Book Month

ala.org/glbttbookmonth

JUNE 25–30

ALA Annual Conference

and Exhibition | Chicago

alaannual.org

AUG. 15–21

IFLA World Library and

Information Congress | Dublin

2020.ifla.org

OCT. 1–3

ALSC National Institute

Minneapolis

ala.org/alsc/institute

gather to develop and implement leadership skills in areas critical to advancing libraries, exploring the theme “Leading to the Future.”

Apply at bit.ly/ALALeadership2020 by March 9. Applicants may nominate themselves or be nominated by their employer. Participation includes a free one-year membership with the Library Leadership and Management Association.

ACRL Calls for Submissions

The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) seeks proposal submissions for its 2021 conference, “Ascending into an Open Future,” to be held April 14–17, 2021, in Seattle. Presenters from all types of libraries and backgrounds are encouraged to apply.

ACRL 2021 will feature more than 500 conference programs selected and presented by leaders in the profession, formal and informal networking opportunities, and exhibits from more than 200 companies. The conference offers a variety of options for participation and features nine session formats. Contributed paper, panel session, preconference, and workshop proposals are due May 8. Lightning talk, digital poster session, roundtable discussion, TechConnect, and virtual conference webcast proposals are due October 9. Submit proposals online at bit.ly/ACRLcall20.

Funding Awarded for Census Activities

ALA awarded Library Census Equity Fund mini-grants of \$2,000 to 59 libraries in 34 states to bolster their service to hard-to-count communities and help achieve a complete count in the 2020 Census. More than 500 libraries of all types submitted applications, which were reviewed by a selection committee established by ALA’s 2020 Census Library Outreach and Education Task Force.

In response to the large number of applicants, ALA provided funding for 34 additional grants. Proposals included purchasing additional portable

Final FY2020 Library Budget Includes Increases for LSTA

In late December, Congress passed the largest increase for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funding in 12 years. The final House- and Senate-approved spending bills included \$252 million for IMLS, a \$10 million increase.

Of the overall increase, \$6.2 million was dedicated to the LSTA program, which includes \$166.8 million for LSTA Grants to States, \$5.3 million for LSTA Native American Library Services, \$10 million for LSTA Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Grants, and \$13.4 million for LSTA National Leadership for Libraries.

In addition to IMLS increases, overall funding for the Department of Education was increased by \$1.3 billion, affecting library-eligible programs such as Innovative Approaches to Literacy (initially proposed for elimination) and Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grants. Other programs receiving increases include the Library of Congress, National Library of Medicine, Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, National Endowment for the Arts, and National Endowment for the Humanities.

“ALA advocates’ tireless work to make the case for library funding has resulted in the highest increase for IMLS in the last decade,” said ALA President Wanda Kay Brown in a December 20 statement. “I am so proud of everyone who called, emailed, tweeted, and met with their members of Congress in D.C. and at home—this is your win!” ●

computers and mobile hotspots to expand access to the online response option; educating children and their parents and guardians on the historical undercount of young children in the census; and equipping bookmobiles in geographically isolated communities to facilitate educational events on the census and offer access to the online response option.

Libraries Transforming Communities Initiative

ALA’s Public Programs Office (PPO) announced a new learning series and suite of facilitation resources to be released throughout the year, designed to help small and rural libraries ramp up community engagement efforts.

“Libraries Transforming Communities: Facilitation Skills for Small and Rural Libraries” includes a free five-part online course open to all library

workers; in-person training at the 2020 Annual Conference with follow-up coaching; and a step-by-step facilitation guide.

This initiative is a collaboration among PPO, the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation, the Association for Small and Rural Libraries, and the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies, with support from an Institute of Museum and Library Services grant.

Edgar Allan Poe House Is Latest Literary Landmark

United for Libraries designated the Edgar Allan Poe House and Museum in Baltimore a Literary Landmark in honor of the poet’s 211th birthday on January 19. The Poe House is the first Literary Landmark in the state of Maryland.

The Edgar Allan Poe House was established as a museum in 1949 and designated a National Historic Landmark

2020 Census to Shape Library Funding

An analysis released November 18, 2019, shows that more than \$1 billion in federal funding for libraries will be allocated to states based on the 2020 Census. Authored by Andrew Reamer of the George Washington Institute of Public Policy at George Washington University, the study (available at bit.ly/CensusLibFunding) pinpoints the financial impact the census will have on libraries.

“This study demonstrates why a complete count in the 2020 Census is so important to libraries,” said ALA President Wanda Kay Brown in a November 19 statement. “A fair, inclusive, and complete count in the 2020 Census means that libraries in each state will receive their fair share of federal funding.”

The population count in the decennial census determines the level of funding allotted to each state through LSTA. The legislation’s Grants to States program provides federal funding to state library agencies to support libraries in their state. The program is one of more than 300 federal programs that allocate funding to local communities based on data derived from the census.

For more information on ALA efforts to support a fair, inclusive, and complete count in the 2020 Census, visit ala.org/census. The site includes links to resources, webinars, and tip sheets on specific topics related to libraries’ role in the census. To connect on Twitter, follow @ALALibrary, #CountOnLibraries, and #2020Census. ●

in 1971. It is the last remaining home in Baltimore where the author lived (1833–1835), and where he wrote some early stories.

The designation was the result of a collaboration with Poe Baltimore, Citizens for Maryland Librarians, the Maryland Library Association, and Maryland Humanities.

AASL Adopts New Bylaws

Through a special election, the membership of the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) voted in December to adopt new bylaws for the division, with the goal of streamlining governance and deepening member engagement.

The adoption allows AASL to move forward with structural changes to its leadership. The new bylaws reduce the size of the AASL board of directors from 19 elected members to nine. Elected

positions under the new bylaws include president, president-elect, immediate past president, secretary/treasurer, division councilor, affiliate assembly representative, and three directors-at-large. The AASL executive director will serve as a 10th, ex officio, member.

View the new bylaws on the AASL website at ala.org/aasl/bylaws.

New Standards Approved for School Librarians

At its August 2019 meeting, the Specialized Professional Associations Standards committee of the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) approved the *ALA/AASL School Librarian Preparation Standards* (bit.ly/CAEPstandards19).

Prepared by AASL’s CAEP coordinating committee, the new standards fully align with AASL’s *National School Library Standards* (standards.aasl.org).

The adoption begins a two-year transition period during which programs may choose to use the 2010 standards or the 2019 standards in developing key assessments.

Nominations Open for Best Graphic Novels for Adults

ALA’s Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table (GNCRT) has opened nominations for the new Best Graphic Novels for Adults Reading List. The inaugural year of the list will highlight the best graphic novels for adults published in late 2019 and all of 2020, with the goal of increasing awareness of the medium and aiding library staff in collection development. The first list will be announced at the Midwinter Meeting in January 2021.

All fiction and nonfiction titles published or slated for publication September 1, 2019–December 31, 2020, that appeal to adults age 19 or older are eligible. Nominations can be made by committee members, members of the wider library and education community, and members of the public. Publishers and creators may not submit their own titles.

Visit bit.ly/GNCRTnoms to access the nomination form, open until September 15.

Game On! Grants Announced

A new grant program announced by GNCRT will help libraries bolster their gaming programs and collections.

The Game On! Grants will be awarded as one grant of \$500 or two grants of \$250 each. ALA members in good standing in the United States or Canada are eligible to apply. Libraries will need to illustrate a plan for a sustainable gaming program created with the funds as well as financial need and institutional support for the proposed program.

The application period is currently open and will end March 1. The winner will be announced at GNCRT’s “ALA Play” event at this year’s Annual Conference in Chicago. For information and application, visit bit.ly/GameOnGrants. AL

Patricia “Patty” Wong

City librarian, Santa Monica (Calif.) Public Library | votepattywong.com



CANDIDATE FOR ALA PRESIDENT

Colleagues: I am proud to be a librarian, where I make a difference to my community every day. I accepted the nomination for president of the American Library Association (ALA) because I can make a difference at this critical time, and because ALA impacts communities throughout this country.

America’s libraries are the cornerstones of social democracy. We face many challenges as a nation:

- changing demographics and how to provide equitable access and service to all
- differing views about public support for public services
- privatization
- challenges to the freedom to read, write, and speak
- barriers to access
- shifting landscapes for publishing and digital access

We also face challenges and opportunities internally. ALA will experience more change over the next five years than it has in the past 50: a new headquarters, a new executive director, a new model for conferences, the need for new or enhanced revenue streams, and perhaps a new governance structure.

Together, ALA members are more than 57,000 voices strong. The Association needs a president with

the know-how and commitment to ensure we accomplish our goals—and manage change—for the benefit of libraries, librarians, library workers, and library users. We must not let change simply happen to us.

I know how ALA works. With more than three decades in leadership, I have developed relationships throughout the organization and among staff. I have chaired or served on key ALA committees: the Budget Analysis and Review Committee, Conference Committee, Council, and Executive Board. I understand ALA finances and governance. I am a champion for state chapters; equity, diversity, and inclusion; and school and youth services. I foster advocacy for all, especially our rural communities and the underserved. I value the network of divisions, round tables, committees, and offices that

Together, ALA members are more than 57,000 voices strong. We must not let change simply happen to us.

make ALA strong. Above all, I am proud of my work in activating collective impact and collaboration up, down, and across ALA.

I believe everyone makes a difference and everyone counts. I believe in the value of volunteerism, in developing young member leaders, and contributing to the profession through activism and engagement. I actuate this philosophy in my daily work, through my roles as Santa Monica (Calif.) Public Library director, adjunct faculty at San José State University iSchool, and my work with the California Library Association and all ethnic professional librarian associations.

As president, my commitment will be to steer ALA successfully through this time of change; help grow our membership and resources; amplify our voice in defense of the freedom to read; fight for increased funding for libraries and policies that strengthen access; and become a more sustainable and resilient organization.

We face many exciting challenges ahead. Together, let us renew our commitments and leverage our influence and power for the public good. I thank you for your consideration and I ask for your support and your vote.

Together you and I can—and will—make a difference. **AL**

ALA ELECTION VOTE: March 9–April 1. More information at bit.ly/ALAElection20

Steven Yates

Assistant director, University of Alabama School of Library and Information Studies | voteyatesala.com



CANDIDATE FOR ALA PRESIDENT

Members of the library community—it is our time to ACTT! Let's harness the power of positive passion to meet our profession's current needs while making sure that libraries and library workers sustain a daily commitment to our shared core values.

This year has already been historic for ALA. We have a new executive director and soon a new home in Chicago. These changes, along with the organizational review process, call for all of us to lend a hand. As a dedicated volunteer with leadership experience, I would like to work alongside you as your 2021–2022 ALA president.

My vision for the Association is that we remain a world leader in libraries while transforming the way we conduct business internally to match the level of innovation we provide every day in our communities. Library workers of all types should have meaningful paths to ALA involvement. While we continue to do the work needed, I look forward to our chance to ACTT:

A: Advocacy. Our presence in Washington, D.C., must remain robust. Developing and maintaining bipartisan coalitions on issues affecting our profession is critical. Library workers interact with city and county elected officials, board of education members,

state representatives, and local and D.C. congressional offices. Let's log each interaction with our elected officials to capture the resounding, daily impact of these relationships and see where to best focus future efforts.


C: Cultural competency. While our Association has a longstanding commitment to social justice, we continue to struggle with equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within our membership, at our conferences, and in our communities. Cultural competence must be integrated into how we onboard and develop volunteers across all ALA units. Library workers should rely on ALA for leadership, guidance, and learning in this area. Meaningful evidence of building competence in EDI must also be more explicitly integrated into ALA's accreditation standards.

Let's harness the power of positive passion to meet our profession's needs and ensure we stay committed to our core values.

T: Training. Enhancing support to develop our future leaders through the Spectrum Scholarship and Emerging Leaders programs is also extremely important. Let's strengthen these platforms and provide additional development opportunities that are not contingent on a member's, or their employer's, ability to fund travel to conferences.

T: Transparency. The ALA Executive Board works through hundreds, sometimes thousands, of pages of documents at each meeting. While these are posted online, we can all benefit from leadership–membership interactions outside of conferences and documents. As your ALA president, I will host quarterly Zoom sessions to answer member questions and provide updates on Association business.

To see what these updates may look like, please join me for a meet-and-greet March 10 at 4 p.m. Eastern time at bit.ly/ZoomYates. To join by phone, visit voteyatesala.com for info.

ALA has defined the profession that unites us for nearly 144 years. Let's make sure we remain committed to the brightest future of our Association for the next 144 years by working together to harness the power of positive passion. I humbly ask for your vote to serve as ALA president. #VoteYatesALA 

ALA ELECTION VOTE: March 9–April 1. More information at bit.ly/ALAElection20

TRENDS



Fourth graders at Greensview Elementary in Upper Arlington, Ohio, battle their custom Sphero robots.

by TV shows like *BattleBots*, these programs aim to cultivate a hands-on understanding of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) skills—one robot showdown at a time.

Choose your bots

Merkle received a grant in 2017 through the school district's Upper Arlington Education Foundation to purchase 12 Sphero SPRK+ robots—small, spherical robots that resemble the Star Wars droid BB-8. Using Spheros as a base, students built armored robot bodies using classroom supplies like cardboard, paper plates, pipe cleaners, and popsicle sticks to hold their balloons and pop their opponents'.

When librarians at Anythink Libraries in Colorado hosted a robot battle royale series at their Brighton (ABL) and Perl Mack (APML) branches last year, they used programmable DC motor kits available on Amazon.

"We've had some punching robots, one that could sweep the legs off another robot," says Jonah Vallez, teen services librarian at

"It was fun to see the students rally and root for one another."

JILL MERKLE, library media specialist at Greensview Elementary in Upper Arlington, Ohio

Robots: Activate

How robotics programs can pack a punch for STEM skills

BY Diana Panuncial

All's quiet on the gymnasium floor as students sit around a five-foot-long octagon made of PVC pipes. A robot, festooned with a bright pink balloon bearing a menacing monster face and the word *ROAR*, stands off against another balloon-bedecked robot across the battleground. With firm grips on iPad controllers, the students rev the robots toward each other until one balloon pops. The crowd cheers.

"As soon as you popped a balloon, it got everyone's attention," Jill Merkle, library media specialist at Greensview Elementary in Upper Arlington, Ohio, says. "It was fun to

see the students rally and root for one another."

Merkle and Kristen Pavlasek, who now teaches 3rd grade at Greensview Elementary, teamed up in 2018 to create a year-end battle bot competition for all 4th graders at the school. The weeklong program included design, troubleshooting, and testing processes. "We wanted to implement design thinking with this project just to emphasize critical skills that students will need for the future," Merkle says.

Greensview Elementary library is just one of many across the country hosting similar clashes. Inspired

ABL. “We pushed the kids to think of what they could do with the motor kits.”

Brittany Jacobs, youth services librarian at APML, says beyond the kits, most of the materials used for the programs were already in-house. Kids also brought in supplies from home they would have otherwise recycled. “It not only encourages creativity and innovation, but it also asks, ‘What does it mean to upcycle?’” she says.

Team up

At ABL, Vallez partnered with local artist John Kelly, and the two met monthly to plan improvements and twists on the program. Kelly even has his own robot, Catbot, which he tinkers with to help work with kids. “The end result is usually a learning experience and an improved design,” Vallez says.

MaryAnn Burden, youth librarian at Chester (N.J.) Library, sought help from a local teacher, Dan Weissman, who runs STEM programs through his business, Super Science Programs for Kids. While Burden had experience running robotics programs, she says she wasn’t an expert, and Weissman was able to offer a helping hand as well as access to leftover parts like motors and controllers from his own programs.

Says Burden: “Finding somebody in your area who has that equipment and is good at doing these types of programs is half the battle.”

Enter the ring

So, what’s the rest of the battle? Competing with the other bots in the main event, of course. Robots can duke it out in many ways: some as simple as popping balloons or knocking other bots off tables,

and some as complex as ABL and APML’s *Fortnite*-inspired battle royale, which featured a shrinking battlefield like the popular online game.

The battlefield was a distinctly low-tech invention: Jacobs made three concentric rectangles with different colors of duct tape. The robots were bound by the outermost rectangle and, as players knocked each other out, Jacobs removed the duct tape to shrink the boundaries.

Still, “it feels like *Wrestlemania*,” Vallez says.

Sometimes, an overall win isn’t the only goal. Vallez says librarians build side by side with kids to challenge them. “There’s this kid whose one goal in life was to beat me,” he jokes. “Just to see him turn it around on his own and figure [it] out with the goal of, ‘I will beat Jonah and come out on top,’ was exciting.”

And although the competition is fierce, each contestant gets to exercise STEM skills that they may not have exposure to at school. A 16-year-old girl who attends the program at APML regularly “went from not knowing any of the language to being my right-hand lady,” Jacobs says. “She’s been able to showcase her skills and hone them while teaching other kids, which is a cool full circle.”

Vallez says the first step to starting a battle bots program is to try it yourself. “If you’re curious, build a robot,” he says. “It shows you how simple it can be.” **AL**

DIANA PANUNCIAL is a writer in Zion, Illinois.

BY THE NUMBERS

Libraries and Sustainability

50

Number of years Earth Day—widely recognized as launching the modern environmental movement—has been observed. ALA’s Sustainability Round Table will promote 50 actions libraries can take to celebrate the Earth Day 2020 milestone.

11.2 million tons

Amount of textiles sent to landfills in 2017, according to the US Environmental Protection Agency.

1,200

Number of items exchanged at Burlington (Iowa) Public Library’s 2018 clothing swap.

92.5%

Percentage of cleaning products used at the Clinton Presidential Library that are environmentally friendly. The Little Rock, Arkansas, library has platinum-level LEED certification. When it opened in 2004, it became both the first LEED-certified US presidential library and the first LEED-certified building in the state.

470

Number of solar panels on the roof of McMillan Memorial Library in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin. The panels produce enough electricity annually to power 25 homes.





How did a “smoking cessation aid” become so popular with teens?

- Easy availability
- Alluring advertisements
- Sleek-looking devices
- Various e-liquid flavors
- Belief that they are safer
- Family and friends use them
- Nicotine is addictive



Speaking at Trexler Library, Chrysan Cronin, assistant professor and director of public health at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania, discusses the dangers of vaping.

lead, volatile organic compounds, and cancer-causing agents, according to the CDC. In January, the Trump administration announced plans to ban sales of flavored e-cigarette cartridges, except tobacco and menthol flavors.

NHML hosts STEM-themed programs once a month, usually in cooperation with nearby Yale University, so a vaping program already fit into the curriculum, says Library Director Susan Griffiths. The library booked a speaker from the Tobacco Research in Youth team at Yale School of Medicine soon after the 2018 incident and made a point to reach out to the high school as part of its promotional efforts.

A single e-cigarette comprises a battery, a reservoir for holding an (often flavored) solution that contains nicotine and other chemicals, a heating element, and a mouthpiece, but those elements can be housed in seemingly ordinary containers. Teaching parents to identify e-cigarettes is a component of some libraries’ antivaping programs.

Darien (Conn.) Library offered a multidisciplinary presentation for patrons and parents in October 2019, featuring a pulmonologist and a pediatrician from Stamford Health Medical Group and a detective with the Darien Police Department. Mia Orobona, teen services librarian at Darien Library, says the detective brought several types of e-cigarettes with him for the presentation.

“Sometimes these [e-cigarettes] can look pretty innocuous, like flash drives or pens,” Orobona says. “The parents were appreciative of the visuals.” As a follow-up to the

Where There’s Smoke, There’s Fire

Libraries respond to the vaping health crisis

BY Mark Lawton

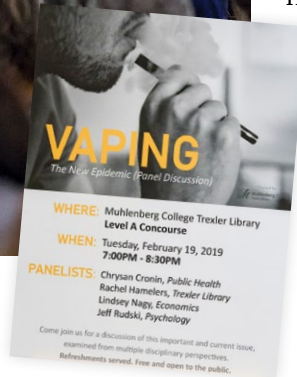
North Haven (Conn.) Memorial Library (NHML) hosted a program in October 2019 about health issues associated with e-cigarette use, but the library and community had become aware of the dangers much earlier. In fall 2018, e-cigarettes almost took the life of a local student.

“A friend of mine is a [high school] teacher,” says NHML Library Technical Assistant Melinda Landino. “One of her students vaped in the bathroom, [then] flatlined in class. They had to bring in EMTs.”

NHML is one of many libraries across the US addressing the vaping scare that gained momentum in summer 2019. As of December 27, 2,561 confirmed and probable lung-injury cases have been linked with the use of e-cigarettes—called vaping—as well as 55 deaths, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta.

Introduced in 2003 as a purportedly safer, cleaner method of nicotine inhalation, e-cigarettes have not been approved by the Food and Drug Administration as a smoking cessation aid. E-cigarettes are the most commonly used tobacco product among youth, having surpassed conventional cigarettes in 2014, according to a 2016 study from the Office of the US Surgeon General. In 2018, more than 3.6 million US middle and high school students used e-cigarettes, the CDC found.

E-cigarette manufacturers market their products by promoting different flavors—a 2018 report estimated there are 7,764 varieties—and employ the same marketing tactics that have been used in the past to sell cigarettes to young people. While vapor from e-cigarettes generally contains fewer toxic chemicals than tobacco smoke, it is not harmless. It can contain nicotine, heavy metals like



presentation, the library is considering creating a display of e-cigarettes.

E-cigarette use has become a problem in higher education as well.

“It is a pressing issue,” says Rachel Hamelers, teaching and learning librarian at Trexler Library at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania. “We had noticed, anecdotally, an increase in vaping on campus. And the library was a great place to discuss it.”

Trexler Library, which takes an interdisciplinary approach to its public health presentations, hosted instructors in public health, psychology, and economics to discuss vaping in February 2019. The library was packed for the presentation, Hamelers recalls: “We had to bring in extra chairs.”

Involving the community in vaping education is a key component of many libraries’ efforts. Ardis Missaukee District Library in Lake City, Michigan, decided to host its antivaping program in October 2019 after an area resident, who is a retired respiratory therapist and certified tobacco treatment specialist offered to speak. “It was Vaping 101,” says Library Director Laura Marion. The program offered information on the health effects of vaping and how to handle a vaping habit (whether your own or someone else’s).

Shawnee (Okla.) Public Library hosted its antivaping presentation in November 2019 in advance of the Great American Smokeout, an annual American Cancer Society event held the third Thursday of November that encourages people to stop smoking.

“Oklahoma ranks very low in some key health markers,” says Lisa Lempges, information services manager at Shawnee Public Library. “In our community, the vape shops have increased. It’s a real crisis in our schools. We wanted a way to educate people about the dangers of this and let them distinguish myth from fact.” **AL**

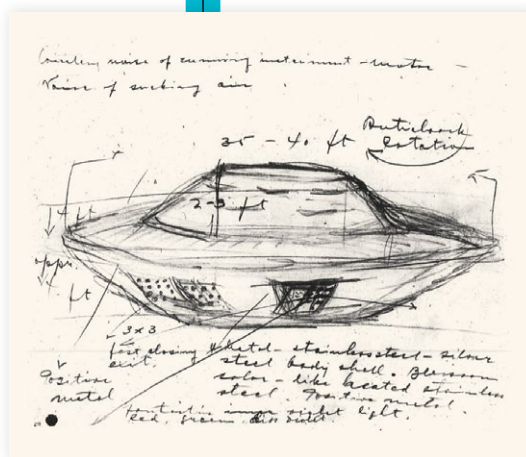
MARK LAWTON is a writer in Chicago.

GLOBAL REACH

Out-of-This-World Archive

CANADA Chris Rutkowski, a private collector and ufologist, donated an astronomical number of UFO reports and documents to the University of Manitoba’s Archives and Special Collections in November. The donation includes more than 20,000 UFO reports

(including the Falcon Lake, Manitoba, incident of 1967 in which prospector Stefan Michalak claims to have suffered burns on his abdomen from a landed UFO) logged and filed over the past few decades, in addition to more than 10,000 UFO-related letters, memoranda, and other materials from the US and Canadian governments, and 1,000 books from Rutkowski’s personal collection. Rutkowski began investigating UFO sightings and collecting materials in 1975, and has since written 10 books on his research into Canadian cases.—*UM Today*, Oct. 31.



The sketch drawn by Stefan Michalak of the UFO that he claims he encountered near Falcon Lake, Manitoba, in 1967.

ENGLAND A darker side to Peter Pan has been revealed with the publication in December of J. M. Barrie’s original manuscript of his 1911 novel, *Peter Pan and Wendy*. Fans can read the previously unpublished version of the story in Barrie’s own handwriting and see the amendments he made to his manuscript as he was writing it. The new edition, printed in a limited run of 1,000 copies by publisher SP Books, demonstrates how Barrie toned down Peter Pan’s character by making him more likeable and less egotistical, defiant, and callous.—*The Guardian (UK)*, Dec. 15.

NORWAY Leaders of a delegation of skiers from China wanted controversial Chinese books at the library in Meråker removed, but the library has rejected the request. More than 40 Chinese cross-country skiers were in town in December to train for the Beijing Olympics in 2022. Among the books the delegation wanted removed is one about the Falun Gong movement that has been banned in China since 1999. Library Manager Anne Marken said, “We have freedom of speech in Norway, so that was completely out of the question.”

—*Norway Today*, Dec. 29.

NEW ZEALAND A 59-year-old dog owner named Andrew Taylor of Kaiapoi has created a “stick library” and placed it in a park so dogs can borrow a stick to play with. Taylor collected many sticks by trimming trees at the side of his house, sanded them to make them smooth and clean for the dogs, then made a box to put the twigs in. He encourages people to return them once their dog is done playing. Local dog owners love the idea.—*Bored Panda*, Dec. 16. ●



“Family kits”—children’s backpacks filled with age-appropriate activities—are available for checkout at University of Maryland Libraries.

the removal of blinds on interior windows. However, other renovation projects elsewhere in the library edged us out for funding.

In 2018, we proposed the project again, this time with a multilevel service model. In addition to the development of a family study space, we also suggested creating “family kits”—children’s backpacks filled with age-appropriate activities and made available for checkout. These kits would be affordable for us to assemble, easily integrated into current services, and functional with or without a family study room.

We were delighted when the UMD Student Facilities Fund financed the entire project, including the development of the family study space and family kits, as well as the creation of a separate reflection space for meditation and prayer, at \$10,340. That funding also covered the relocation of the existing lactation room to the same floor as the family study space for the convenience of caregivers; in addition, changing tables were installed in all restrooms on that floor, as well as in a gender-neutral restroom on another floor.

Family kits are a creative, affordable way for academic libraries to support caregivers and their families. Our kits—targeted at age groups newborn–4, 4–8, and 8–12—feature developmentally appropriate materials such as books, crayons, puzzles, small toys, coloring books, and games. The kits are available for checkout at our tech desk, which manages the loan of other nontraditional items such as laptops, chargers, yoga balls, whiteboards, and hammocks. Each

Helping Parents in a Pinch

An academic library becomes more family friendly

Children are present in many types of libraries—not just the public variety. The expense and difficulties of arranging childcare means that even academic library patrons often need to bring young ones along when studying or browsing the stacks. Now, through the creation of a family study space and other amenities, University of Maryland Libraries has made it easier for parents, caregivers, and children to visit.

BY Rachel Gammons and Kelsey Corlett-Rivera

The University of Maryland’s (UMD) diverse campus community includes parents and others who provide care to children. It’s not just faculty and staff who have kids to look after; many of our students do too. In 2018, 12% of our graduate students reported having children under 10, while in 2019, 1.7% of our undergraduates indicated that they were parents or primary caregivers. That number is much higher for our undergraduates who are military veterans: 24%.

Here in the Washington, D.C., metro area, finding childcare often means navigating waitlists that are months—or even years—long.

Once obtained, that care can easily cost \$2,000 per month, per child, with very few part-time options. These barriers mean that students are increasingly studying alongside their children in community spaces—such as UMD Libraries.

While you may not consider academic libraries child friendly, creating a welcoming space for families is easier and more cost-effective than you might think. That said, it took us more than one attempt. In 2016, we proposed the creation of a family study room—a private room with two computer workstations and desks, plus child-sized furniture, children’s books, toys, and safety measures such as

kit can be checked out for up to four hours and is marked with a luggage tag featuring a barcode and itemized list of contents. The patterns on the backpacks correspond to the age groups: the youngest features dinosaurs, 4–8 zoo animals, and 8–12 rockets, which help staff quickly identify the appropriate kit for each child.

While we were fortunate to have the resources to create a family study room, the kits mean that families can make use of the entire library. For example, parents may need to use specialized equipment, such as book scanners or 3D printers, that is available only in certain areas or attend meetings in group study rooms. For libraries without the financial resources or space to create a dedicated family room, the family kits offer an alternative way to support patrons with children.

For us, the family inclusion effort also presented an opportunity to partner with internal stakeholders. For instance, while developing the proposal for the family study room, we involved access services staff members, who would be the ones responsible for enforcing policies and checking out the kits; public services librarians with small children, who were able to provide input on the kits' contents; and outreach and communications staff, who helped develop promotional campaigns and create signage.

Staff and system resources were necessary to enter the kits into our ILS so they were available for lending. We ensured that lending policies matched policies for equipment loan and included standard replacement values to reduce the burden on frontline staff.

We also recruited partners outside the library. The UMD iSchool's iDiversity student group gathered and donated most of the materials in the kits. The UMD Infant and

Students are increasingly studying alongside their children in community spaces.

Child Studies Consortium donated a portable play yard, diapers, and baby wipes. Every item an external group donates is marked with a sticker to acknowledge the group's support.

The family study room and family kits launched in fall 2019, and initial response has been positive. One graduate student, spotted trying to study in a general area with her two small children, was visibly relieved when told about the family study room (to which she and the kids immediately relocated). So far, the family study room—which can be reserved for two hours, with immediate renewal if no other patrons are waiting—has been booked about 150 times, and dozens of families have emailed grateful messages.

If you see someone studying in the library with children, there is generally a reason. Whether it is a childcare issue, finances, or a partner who is ill, that patron is often facing some challenge. In that moment, the last thing you want is for the library to present another barrier. Having a family study room, family kits, or both demonstrates compassion for the lived experiences of users and, hopefully, makes their day a little easier. **AL**

RACHEL GAMMONS is head of teaching and learning services and **KELSEY CORLETT-RIVERA** is head of research commons at University of Maryland Libraries.

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Samantha Irby

Essayist returns with characteristically candid look at life

Writer and comedian Samantha Irby is author of the essay collections *Meaty* (2013) and *We Are Never Meeting in Real Life* (2017) as well as the long-running blog *Bitches Gotta Eat*. In 2019 she wrote the “Pool” episode of Hulu’s *Shrill*, which was so well received by critics and viewers alike that it has already spawned at least two oral-history articles and inspired more “fat babe pool party” events. As her new book, *Wow, No Thank You* (March, Vintage) reveals, Irby continues her filter-free, all-caps approach to the world, but now with a wife and two kids in Kalamazoo, Michigan, instead of Chicago.



it’s not an overnight thing. You don’t just wake up one day, see a girl in a bikini, and go, “Yep, me too.” And also, selfishly, I was like, “I don’t know another time when someone is going to give me hundreds of

thousands of dollars to have fat girls in bikinis on TV.”

I had no idea it was going to be as beautiful as it was. I think in the script, I put that I wanted it to look like *Candy Land*, and they really did get it to this vibrant, beautiful thing. That was super cool.

BY Amy Carlton **Tell us about your new book, *Wow, No Thank You*.** It’s pretty much in the same vein as my other two books, but I have exhausted writing about my mom and dad, and all my pets are still alive, so there are no sad essays. It’s mostly about dealing with this aging body and still not feeling comfortable as a person on earth.

Your work is known for its disarming frankness about serious topics like race, sex, weight, poverty,

chronic illness—is it easy for you to write so honestly? Do you get any backlash? You can’t say “good morning” without someone being like, “uh no, it’s a bad morning,” so I’m sure that it exists, but I don’t look for it. I think my audience knows what they’re getting.

I feel like my work is kind of provocative because, like, here’s my uterine lining and I’m going to talk about it in lurid detail. So it’s provocative, but it’s not confrontational. It’s never an attack on anyone other than myself, and so I think people read it in a way that’s less like starting an argument and more like, “Here’s a gross thing you might not otherwise read. I hope it makes you laugh.”

The *New York Times* called the “Pool” episode of *Shrill* one of the best episodes of TV of 2019. How did you get involved in writing for that series, and what was the inspiration for that episode? Lindy [West] and I are friends; we share a TV agent. We were looking for a way to have [Annie, the main character] go through a transformation that felt realistic.

I think, especially when you’re talking about a very specific type of fat acceptance or positivity,

What are you reading right now?

When I’m writing my own thing, I don’t read essays at all because they just make me feel like a fraud. But I just started *Long Bright River* by Liz Moore. And *Queenie* by Candice Carty-Williams, *Your House Will Pay* by Steph Cha, and *Uncanny Valley* by Anna Wiener—those are my most recent. Those are my next-to-the-bed books.

What has been the role of libraries in your life? I was a library kid because I grew up extremely poor. The library was the only way I read all the Sweet Valley High and Sweet Valley Twins that I wanted to read.

MORE ONLINE

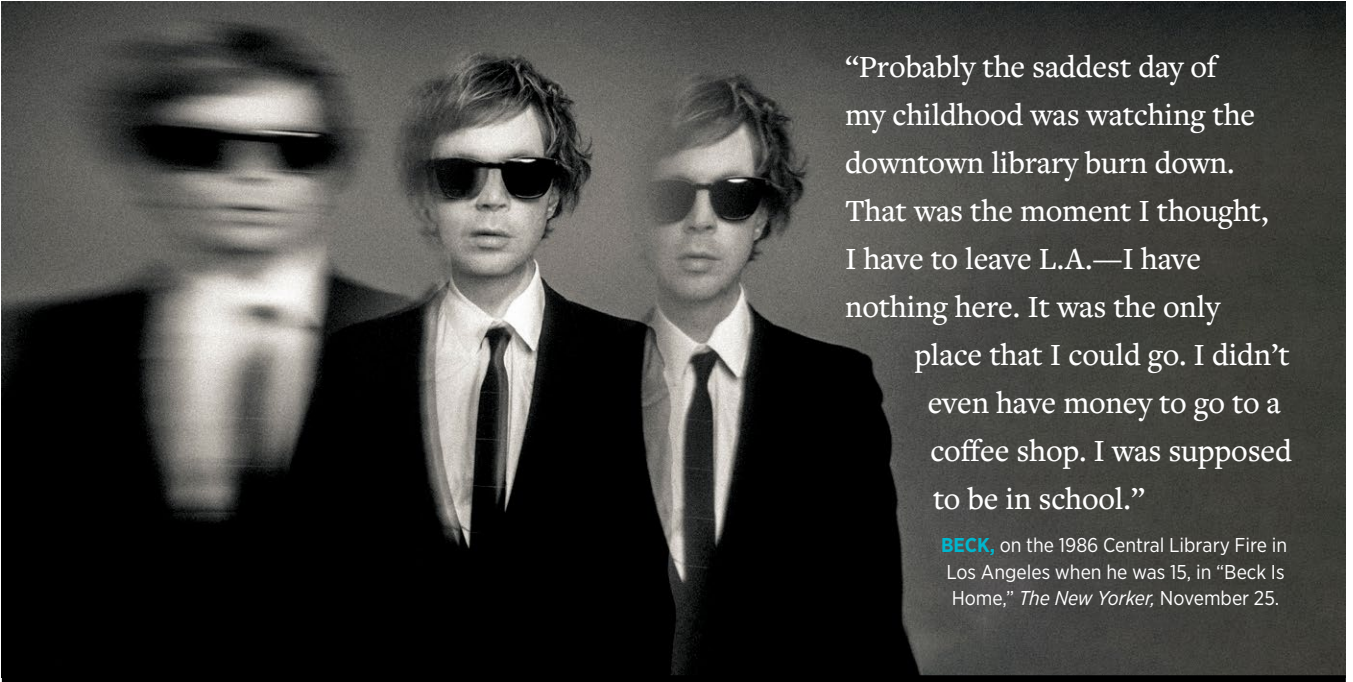
For the extended interview, visit bit.ly/AL-Irby.

I wanted to read all the Christopher Pike and Stephen King books. I was

always in the library as a kid, the Evanston (Ill.) Public Library.

My wife is a big reader, and she belongs to the library. We get sent so many books that she’s just going to put me out because there’s not enough bookshelves at home. I need a way to read what I want and also not get divorced. So the library has come in handy for getting me the books that I want and giving me a place to take them back to. **AL**





“Probably the saddest day of my childhood was watching the downtown library burn down. That was the moment I thought, I have to leave L.A.—I have nothing here. It was the only place that I could go. I didn’t even have money to go to a coffee shop. I was supposed to be in school.”

BECK, on the 1986 Central Library Fire in Los Angeles when he was 15, in “Beck Is Home,” *The New Yorker*, November 25.

“I’M A MEMBER OF EVERY LIBRARY IN CALIFORNIA THAT ALLOWS ME TO BE A MEMBER AS A RESIDENT OF THE STATE.”

SARAH JACOBSSON PUREWAL, in “Ebooks at Libraries Are a Huge Hit, Leading to Long Waits, Reader Hacks, and Worried Publishers,” *Washington Post*, November 26.

“[Prime Minister Boris] Johnson appears to suggest that the country can only afford libraries when there has been an economic recovery. As we have commented time and again, this is a fundamentally misguided policy. By investing in libraries, you create opportunities for education and skills across the country, which in turn creates the conditions for future economic growth.”

NICK POOLE, chief executive of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, in “Britain Has Closed Almost 800 Libraries Since 2010, Figures Show,” *The Guardian* (UK), December 5.

“Our kids feel invisible and erased, and in order to keep them safe, and [make] them feel loved and included, these books need to be part of these classroom libraries. I’m not personally asking teachers to teach them but to have them on the shelf.”

SARAH DAVIS, parent, in “LGBTQ Issues Complicate Kalamazoo [Mich.] Elementary Book Program,” WMUK-FM, December 17.

“If they have a late fee, they think they can never go back. And these are kids that are sucking up books but aren’t using our library because they can’t pay some piddly fine. I think we can take a 1% hit if it gives us more users.”

CORBY VARNES, member of the Timberland Regional Library Board of Trustees, in “Timberland Libraries to End Late Fees Starting in 2020,” *The Daily Chronicle* (Centralia, Wash.), December 23.

2020 CENSUS

*Your
community
counts*





MORE INFORMATION

Check out ALA's clearinghouse of 2020 Census resources at ala.org/census.

Illustration: Kristen Solecki

There's a lot riding on the 2020 US Census: States stand to lose or gain US representatives, congressional districts may be redrawn, and up to \$1.5 trillion in federal funds for local programs—everything from Medicaid to student loans to SNAP benefits—will be distributed.

What's more, there may be confusion about this year's count, which formally kicks off April 1. For the first time, the form can now be filled out online (as well as via mail and phone), and a hotly contested addition to the form—a citizenship question—was struck down by the US Supreme Court last summer (though misinformation lingers).

So how do library workers go about creating awareness, combating falsehoods, and assuaging fears around the count? How do they convince members of their community that everyone's response matters?

Our special report on the 2020 Census offers tips and tactics for library professionals supporting a complete count, including:

- an overview of libraries hiring census engagement personnel to improve response rates, particularly among hard-to-count populations
- a roundup of the technology tools and networks libraries are using to conduct outreach
- a cross-section of state-level funding, awareness, and partnership initiatives
- advice on alleviating anxieties around census form questions—especially when respondents don't see themselves in the answers
- guidelines for libraries looking to run a census campaign
- ideas for using census data once the count is finished

Whether your staff has already been trained by the US Census Bureau or you're simply anticipating an influx of computer users looking to fill out the form in the library, this report has something for you. [AL](#)

APRIL 1
Census Day,
or the date by
which every
home will receive
an invitation to
participate in the
2020 Census.

Reaching the Hard to Count

Libraries contract census specialists with the goal of improving self-response rates

by Terra Dankowski

Toledo, Ohio—once a manufacturing hub, now losing population for lack of jobs—does not want to be undercounted in the 2020 Census and miss out on critical resources. So in May 2019, the mayor and Lucas County commissioners sent area businesses and organizations a letter asking them to join a Complete Count Committee (CCC).

“I was sent one of those letters,” says Rhonda Sewell, manager of external and governmental affairs for Toledo-Lucas County Public Library (TLCPL). “What’s at stake [in Ohio] is over \$1,800 per person.”

Sewell and others who joined the CCC decided that, to not lose federal funds, Toledo and Lucas County needed to hire a census coordinator. Initially the CCC imagined the one-year, community stakeholder-funded position would be managed by United Way of Greater

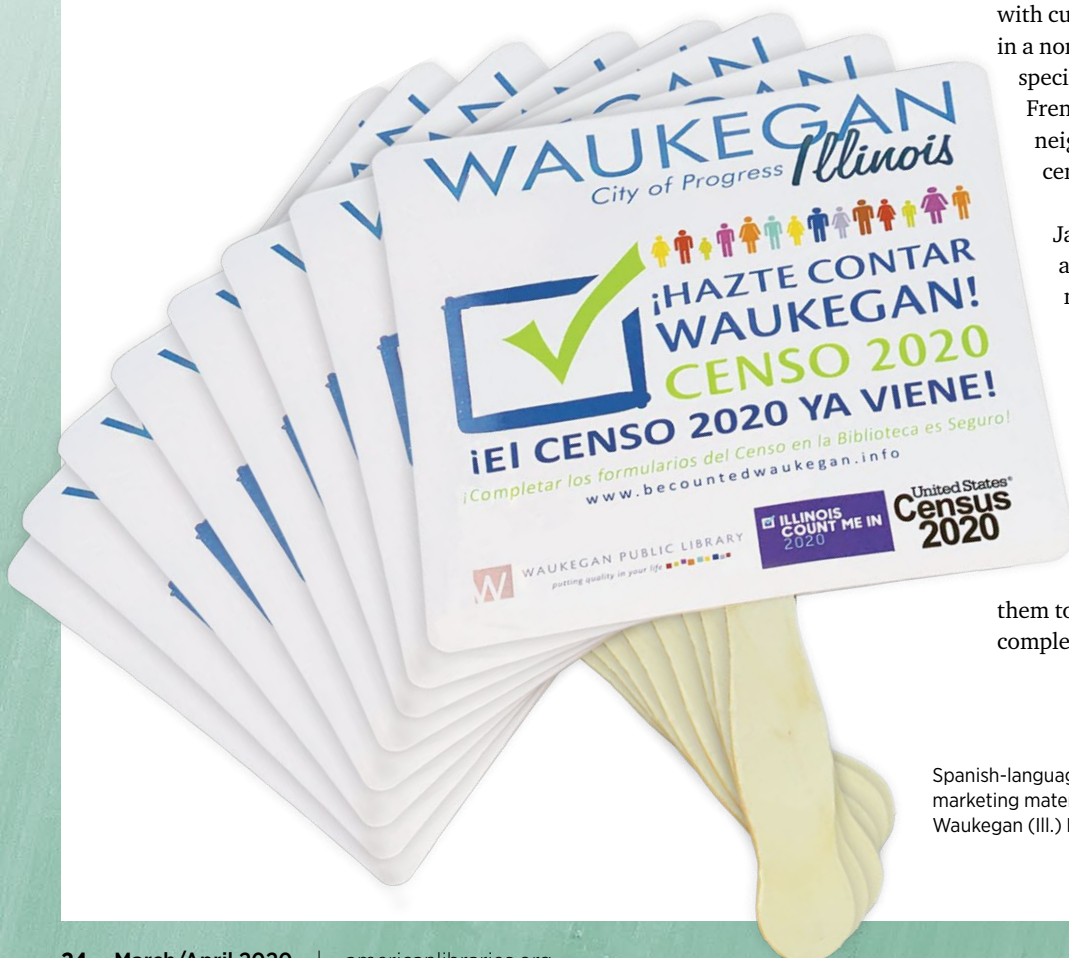
Toledo. “But there’s so much goodwill with the public library that the conversation sort of shifted,” she says. “We take stances on things, we believe in our mission ... but we’re kind of nonpolitical.”

Not to mention, Sewell points out, the library had the workspace, technology, meeting rooms, and information resources for an outreach position to thrive. So TLCPL, through its foundation, made the hire.

TLCPL is one of a handful of libraries that have brought on contractors to help with census engagement.

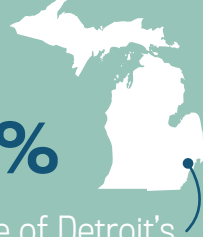
In New York City, where the 2010 Census self-response rate was below 62% (the national average is 76%), Brooklyn Public Library, New York Public Library (NYPL), and Queens Public Library are putting some of the city’s \$1.4 million investment in library census efforts toward the Census Navigators program. At NYPL, this 20-week effort brings six part-time employees with customer service skills and fluency in a non-English language—the job ad specifically recruited Bengali, Chinese, French, and Spanish speakers—to neighborhoods most in need of census education.

“We have a wide reach,” says Jay Brandon, civic engagement and community partnerships manager at NYPL, who oversees the system’s Census Navigators. The library has 92 locations across the Bronx, Manhattan, and Staten Island, and “based on that footprint, it allows us to serve in a capacity that not only supports other community organizations but allows us to work in tandem with them to ensure that New York has a complete count.”



Spanish-language census marketing materials used by Waukegan (Ill.) Public Library

86%



Percentage of Detroit's population that lives in hard-to-count neighborhoods, the largest proportion of any major US city.

Building trust

These census specialists aren't librarians—and that's mostly by design. In a city where 55% of residents identify as Hispanic/Latinx—one of the hardest-to-count census demographics—it was vital for Waukegan (Ill.) Public Library (WPL) to hire a native Spanish speaker to handle outreach and build trust with target groups.

"I talked to a woman who was upset with the government, and she said she thought [the census] would be something to harm immigrants," says Elizabeth Santana Andujar, census engagement specialist at WPL, whose one-year contract started in June 2019. "She was so upset, but I had the opportunity to explain what the benefits are to being counted. She changed her mind a little bit, and she said, 'I'm going to talk with my husband and my family to explain how this is beneficial for us,' so I see that my work works."

Toledo–Lucas County 2020 Census Coordinator Deborah Barnett was hired in part for her community connections and customer service experience as a consultant and former bank vice president. "It's about the messenger, and I must say, I'm a good messenger," says Barnett. "I've been involved in this community for over 30 years."

Though these roles require much allaying of misconceptions—for example, Barnett says she regularly needs to assure senior citizens and those lacking internet access that the census can also be completed by mail or phone, not just online—much of it involves crafting a broader message and cultivating partnerships. Barnett meets with eight subcommittees to coordinate activities (such as creating branded fliers in four different languages or planning a census presence at Toledo's MLK Unity Day celebration in

January) as well as county leaders, faith-based communities, labor organizations, disability advocates, homeless shelters, and other partners that may have access to the 24% of the population in Lucas County deemed hard to count. "I have recruited six to eight churches that have committed to having Census Sundays" during which talking points will be read, she says, "and some of the churches ... will have computers there for individuals to complete their census online."

Andujar's work at WPL has been similar: reaching out to religious groups, tabling and marketing at city events, taking her message to the radio and social media, planning a Census Kickoff Day, contacting potential collaborators, and creating a census toolkit in English and Spanish for other civic organizations to use (bit.ly/WaukeganToolkit).

To that end, she—as well as her counterparts at TLCPL and NYPL—expects that census specialists will have a hand in helping patrons who want to fill out census forms on library computers. WPL is designating classrooms for census response, and Selina Gomez-Beloz, WPL director and chair of Waukegan's CCC, estimates that the library could end up hosting more than 5,000 people during the enumeration stage. NYPL anticipates its Census Navigators will shift from external outreach to more in-branch

activities, such as answering questions and assisting with programming, once self-response kicks off in mid-March.

Why libraries?

The census coordinator position is one every library should consider, says Sewell. "It was essential for our system to take on this role and to house Deborah here and manage her contract. Because our community partners funded her role, [it's] a model that can be duplicated," she says.

WPL received grants from the government agency Reaching Across Illinois Library System and the nonprofit organization Forefront to aid its census awareness efforts, but Gomez-Beloz says those monies weren't enough to fully fund Andujar's position—so she made the decision to tap into operational funds. "I felt it was an important part of [the library's] work," she says. She is benchmarking the program's success by "focusing on standard library metrics," that is, the numbers of people the library talks to, events it hosts, and people it motivates to act.

At the end of Barnett's tenure, she will create a report for Toledo–Lucas County's CCC that details her outreach activities, best practices, and recommendations for the next count in 2030. "We're looking at this being an ongoing thing," says Sewell.

"If the library has the capacity for it, I think this is a great place for this kind of work to sit because we see so many different types of people every day," says Gomez-Beloz. "I would say that libraries have the benefit of being planners and trusted persons within a community." **AL**



TERRA DANKOWSKI is managing editor of *American Libraries*.

13 Number of languages that online and phone responses can be completed in, including Arabic, Haitian Creole, Russian, and Vietnamese.



Plug into the Census

Leveraging tech tools and networks to support an inclusive count

by Taylor Hartz

This year, as the census questionnaire moves online for the first time in American history, public libraries across the country are incorporating technology into outreach efforts in innovative ways. Here we look at both urban and rural libraries facing challenges counting certain sectors of the population and the ways they are using tech to capture demographic and economic data.

Citywide collaboration in Baltimore

Baltimore received a \$250,000 grant from the state of Maryland to support census outreach efforts, led by the Baltimore Complete Count Committee (BCCC). The committee has worked closely with local libraries to implement a plan for “bringing the census to the people,” says Austin C. Davis, census project manager for the city’s planning department.

In Baltimore, where more than 30% of residents lack reliable (or any) internet access, “we have the unique

challenge of ensuring these digital deserts are addressed, and that tech is brought into communities, hopefully permanently,” Davis says. The state grant will help procure technology that can be used to complete the census, including tablets, laptop and desktop computers, and cellphones. The city has also focused on marketing and outreach at local events and meetings, where BCCC members demonstrate how to use the online portal the committee has created to house resources for residents and job seekers.

“To ensure libraries are equipped for the increased demand, we will be placing volunteers in library branches to assist community members in accessing online or over-the-phone census materials,” Davis says. They will have dedicated computers, tablets, and meeting rooms for locals. During the enumeration phase of the census, Baltimore will also rely heavily on the city’s fleet of mobile libraries to provide pop-up census response stations.

Los Angeles goes mobile

City officials in Los Angeles have implemented plans to offer Census Action Kiosks—mobile stations that



Illustration: Kristen Solecki

will provide access to computers and the internet. The kiosks will not be freestanding but will be established in locations with preexisting infrastructure, like libraries.

According to the office of Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, the city aims to mobilize 197 public facilities to provide census resources to historically undercounted populations. Uniform signage will identify computers citywide that can be used for the census and that will feature a direct, easily accessed link to the online census form.

The Census Goodwill Ambassadors volunteer coalition is working to establish the kiosks and provide residents with information about where to fill out their forms. The majority of the kiosks, the mayor says, will be at public library branches.

“Poor access to technology or a bad internet connection should never be a barrier to participation in this vital exercise in our democracy,” Garcetti said in a December 12 statement. “With our nation’s first-ever digital census around the corner, public libraries will offer reliable and trusted places for Angelenos to get information, fill out their forms, and ensure a full and accurate count in 2020.”

Alabama fights broadband poverty

In more rural areas like Cullman County, Alabama, libraries are investing in technology upgrades that will help them reach families in the broad territories they serve. Cullman County Public Library System (CCPLS) this year invested about \$32,000 in grant funds, made available through the Library Services and Technology Act, to update 30 public-access computers at libraries throughout the county, which were until

\$1.5 TRILLION

Estimated amount in federal funds to support state and local programs that is determined by US census data.

2019 running on the outdated Windows 7 operating system.

“Much of our area suffers from broadband poverty, making our public-access computers necessary and in great demand,” says CCPLS Director Sharon Townson.

Broadband poverty in the county, says Townson, means that either folks cannot afford to pay for internet service or that the service is not available in their area. This lack of access poses a distinct hardship for adults seeking employment, children completing homework assignments, and families who may be on the fence about participating in the census.

In 2020, CCPLS branches will house designated computers for completing the census, while a bookmobile will bring Wi-Fi hotspots and laptops to hard-to-reach areas. The bookmobile will travel to community centers, senior centers, industrial parks, schools, sports fields, and churches.

Where there's trust, New York adds tech

Newburgh, New York, a community on the Hudson River about two hours north of New York City, had a response rate of just 57% in the 2010 census, according to Mary Lou Carolan, assistant director

of Newburgh Free Library (NFL). Nearly half of the city lacks internet access at home, she says, but the door-to-door count has its limitations as well—namely, immigrant communities’ misgivings about interacting with the government.

To encourage goodwill between immigrant communities and census workers, the library is partnering with the US Census Bureau to host job fairs encouraging local citizens to apply to work as enumerators. The idea is to recruit “so the faces knocking at the door look like the faces opening the door: neighbors, familiar faces, trusted people,” Carolan says.


NFL is part of a complete count committee that comprises 26 local organizations. “The primary goal of our committee is to be fully representative of our culturally and economically diverse community and sensitive to the needs, fears, and concerns of our large immigrant population in order to get a complete count,” Carolan says.

The library is one of several designated “communication hubs” established in familiar locations across the city to help residents access and take the census. Each hub will provide laptops and tablets, private spaces to complete the survey, and staffers to help residents navigate the website.

“The library is not only a trusted, welcoming place, but it is also the sole source for internet access for many people in our hard-to-count community,” says Carolan. “Setting up visible, dedicated space to complete the survey is critical to success.” **AL**



TAYLOR HARTZ is a multimedia storyteller in New London, Connecticut.

 **74%** Percentage of US households that mailed back the 2010 Census questionnaire.

State- By-State Snapshots

State libraries and library associations are offering vital resources like online toolkits, training, fliers, research, and reading lists to help raise awareness of the 2020 Census—both with and without financial support from the state. *American Libraries* offers a glimpse at efforts in states that have and have not received funding as of press time. **AL**



California

Funding from state: \$26.5 million earmarked for counties for outreach, some of which may go to libraries

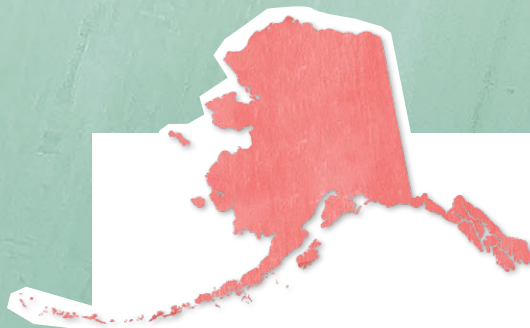
A cohort of California librarians, in conjunction with the California State Library and the California Library Association (CLA), created an online toolkit for libraries to help prepare for the census. CLA also established an online portal of census-related information from the American Library Association (ALA), the California Complete Count Committee, and the US Census Bureau.



Illinois

Funding from state: \$29 million earmarked for regional outreach grants, \$750,000 of which was awarded to the Reaching Across Illinois Library System

Illinois Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White is chair of the state's Complete Count Commission. The State Library conducted a poster contest for students and is encouraging libraries to make public access computers available to all to fill out the census, regardless of their library card status. The Illinois Library Association has devoted a section of its website to census information, from a US Census Bureau page that debunks rumors to ALA-created resources.



Alaska

No state funding pledged

State Librarian Patience Frederiksen and Alaska State Library Consultant Daniel Cornwall are members of Alaska Counts, a group run by the nonprofit Alaska Census Working Group. Alaska State Library has facilitated training webinars in conjunction with the US Census to provide tips to libraries conducting census-taker recruitment events.



Arizona

No state funding pledged

The Arizona State Library sponsored "Going Online with Census 2020," a program that provided 21 public library systems with laptops or tablets to help their communities complete the census online. Libraries were preselected based on their proximity to hard-to-count tracts. The project was financed using \$47,110 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.



Montana

Funding from state: \$2,000 used from Montana State Library's budget for marketing and promotion

State Librarian Jennie Stapp serves on ALA's 2020 Census Library Outreach and Education Task Force and the state's Complete Count Committee. The state library created a census toolkit and conducted training programs in late 2019 and early 2020 to introduce the toolkit and prepare local libraries for the census.



New York

Funding from state: \$20 million earmarked for outreach, some of which may go to libraries

State Librarian Lauren Moore serves on the state's Complete Count Commission. The New York State Library, New York Library Association, and Southeastern NY Library Resources Council have created online portals with information about census jobs, downloadable resources, and news. The state's Library Complete Count Committee received an \$88,000 grant from the Charles H. Revson Foundation to fund training for librarians and library IT staff in the Empire State Library Network.



Rhode Island

Funding from state: \$700,000 allocated to support the Complete Count Committee

Chief Library Officer Karen Mellor serves on the state's Complete Count Committee. The State of Rhode Island Office of Library and Information Services hosted two census workshops for library staffers to develop outreach plans. The RI Foundation is offering two rounds of RI Census 2020 Outreach Fund grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$25,000 that libraries are eligible to apply for.



Florida

No state funding pledged

The Panhandle Library Access Network (PLAN) offered two training programs at the PLAN Florida Mini Conference in August 2019: one on the importance of the census and how library staff members can assist patrons in completing it, and one to raise awareness of the types of products, tools, and apps available to access census data.



Ohio

No state funding pledged

Ohio Library Council Executive Director Michelle Francis sits on the Governor's Census 2020 Complete Count Commission. The state created the Ohio Library 2020 Census Committee, a group of library staffers that will help public, school, academic, and special libraries prepare for the census. The state also offers resources on its website, including marketing and promotion materials, a census timeline, myths, and partnership information.



Texas

No state funding pledged

The Texas State Library and Archives, in conjunction with the US Census Bureau, sent letters to each Texas library director informing them of the importance of the census, with links to fliers and other resources, and produced training webinars in September 2019 and February 2020. The Texas Library Association presented a program on libraries and the census at its Annual Assembly in July 2019.

Fact Versus Fear

Libraries help
assuage census
anxieties

by Meghan
Murphy-Gill

Government attempts to gather citizen data are often met with hostility—and this year’s census is no exception.

The flames of any mistrust that might have already surrounded this census have been fanned at least twice: First, by the new option to complete the form online, which may be met with diffidence by the 52% of American adults whom the Pew Research Center calls “relatively hesitant” about using digital tools, and which may also raise concerns around cybersecurity.

And second, by the Trump administration’s controversial and ultimately failed attempt to add a citizenship question. As Liz Vagani, who manages the El Cajon branch of San Diego County (Calif.) Library (SDCL), says simply: “There’s a lot of fear [around] providing information to the government.” For example, a person married to an

undocumented immigrant may worry that participating in the census will lead to the spouse’s deportation. By law, however, census data cannot be shared with the Department of Homeland Security, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or any other government agency or court.

Where mistrust isn’t an issue, simple confusion may be. For the more than 15% of US adults who speak a language other than English at home, the prospect of completing a lengthy census form may be daunting. (The Census Bureau does supply video and print guides in 60 languages as well as Braille and large print; questionnaire assistance and internet self-response in 12 non-English languages including Cantonese, Mandarin, Spanish, and Tagalog; and a paper census form in Spanish.)

Then, too, “there’s a real misunderstanding of the nature of the census,” says Vagani, whose branch lies in a neighborhood considered “hard to count,” thanks to its large populations of refugees, immigrants, people experiencing homelessness, racial and ethnic minorities, and people with low proficiency in English. “People think that voting is their civic duty, and they feel obligated to do it,” she says. “But they don’t realize that the census has just as much impact on their world as voting does.”



DISPELLING MYTHS

For example, census data directly impacts congressional redistricting efforts, as well the number of representatives a state sends to Congress. “The census is one way the people of this country become more visible,” says Larra Clark, deputy director of the Public Library Association (PLA).

Nonetheless, the Census Bureau’s 2020 Census Barriers, Attitudes, and Motivators Study found that only two-thirds of respondents marked themselves “extremely likely” or “very likely” to complete a census form—the main barriers being concerns about data privacy and confidentiality, fear of repercussions, distrust in all levels of government, feeling that being counted doesn’t matter, and the belief that completing the census might not benefit someone personally.

The good news: Libraries are well placed to mitigate misconceptions around the census and encourage participation in it, says San Antonio Public Library Director and PLA President Ramiro S. Salazar.

“Libraries tend to be environments that are nonthreatening and more friendly,” he says. “Folks feel more comfortable visiting libraries than a school or some other government agency.”

Here, librarians share their strategies and tactics for encouraging census participation—and allaying citizen concerns around it.

‘A safe and secure pathway’

Vagani feels so strongly about the importance of the census that she helped San Diego County receive \$125,000 in state funds, of which SDCL was allotted \$55,000 to increase census participation. Some of those funds will be used for dedicated computer terminals, so that patrons without home internet access can complete the census form at the library.

On the other side of the country, Jeffrey Lambert, assistant director of digital

inclusion and workforce readiness for Queens (N.Y.) Public Library, is making similar efforts. “We’re working on staff training and development of public-facing programs,” he says.

That staff training will address complicated questions. For example: “Here in Queens, we’ve got a number of households that might have been included in the master address file of the Census Bureau, but the relationships of folks within those households might be pretty dynamic or nontraditional,” Lambert says, referring to off-lease and illegally sublet rooms. “A single household may be on the file, but will a landlord complete the census form for the four folks living in a unit in his basement or not?”

According to the Census Bureau, they should: “If someone is staying in your home on April 1, and has no usual home elsewhere, you should count them in your response to the 2020 Census,” says the official census website. In addition, the census form offers options for marking a household member as a “roommate or housemate” or “other nonrelative.”

Lambert stresses that “the most important thing that libraries can do is come up with a safe and secure pathway to be a census response site for self-response.” To that end, his library and many others are turning to the best IT infrastructure practices recommended by The New School’s Digital Equity Laboratory in its free online “Preparing for the Digital Decennial Census” report (bit.ly/digitalequitylab).

Those recommendations include establishing a census kiosk or dedicated terminal that can access only the official census website. “That way, if someone has a spoof or scam link from a [fake census] mailer that they received at their house, they’re not going to be able to access it,” Lambert says.

Continued on page 33 ▶

“My information will be shared or used against me.”

FACT: By law, the US Census Bureau cannot share personal data with any other government or law enforcement agency.

“I can’t fill out the census because I’m not a citizen.”

FACT: The census counts everyone living in the US.

“I can’t complete the census because I don’t have internet access.”

FACT: The 2020 Census will be available online, by mail, and by phone.

“I have to answer every single question on the census.”

FACT: Incomplete census questionnaires are still considered legal.

Tips for Your 2020 Census Team

How the work pays off for your community

by Denise Raleigh

In 2010, Gail Borden Public Library District in Elgin, Illinois, led an effort to raise the local US Census self-reporting rate from 70% in 2000 to 79%. We had much to learn. But the more we found out about how the census count is closely tied to millions of dollars in federal funding for our community, the more we realized that this was one of the most important campaigns the library had ever taken on.

According to Dionne Roberts-Emegha, US Census Bureau community partnership coordinator for the Chicago region, March 12–20 the bureau will mail to most households an invitation to complete the 2020 Census online or by phone, with mailed reminders sent through April. The invitation will include a code to identify the residence and help minimize duplicate responses. Areas that are considered less likely to respond online will receive a paper questionnaire along with the invitation. The online census portal and telephone center will open on March 26, according to Roberts-Emegha.

Our census partnership specialist, Theresa Le, is spot-on when she says the census is simple, safe, and significant for people in your community. If your library is participating in a census campaign this year, here are some tips.

- Realize how trusted your library staffers are. It is exactly that trust that makes libraries a fundamental component in getting people counted.
- Refer to the American Library Association's resources on the 2020 Census: *Libraries' Guide to the 2020 Census* (bit.ly/LibCensus20), the tip sheet *Preparing My Library for the 2020 Census* (bit.ly/CensusSideTipSheet), and *How Can Libraries Help Count All Kids in the 2020 Census?* (bit.ly/CensusSideKids).
- Use the Response Outreach Area Mapper (bit.ly/CensusSideROAM) to help you recruit volunteers. This excellent tool uses data related to poverty, language barriers, lack of broadband access, and frequent residential moves to identify groups that could prove challenging to count.
- Let library visitors know that they can complete the census online using their home addresses even if they have not brought in the invitation to respond that was sent to their residence in March.
- Make sure your volunteers are trained on how to assist people with filling out the census form. Our staffers and volunteers were trained by census personnel in February.
- Your volunteers may assist individuals by typing their responses in the online portal or filling out the paper form, as long as they do not reinterpret or modify the response.
- Even if you do not have a lot of funding, you can make a difference through your staff and computer access. The Census Bureau website (bit.ly/CensusSideFacts) offers fact



The 2020 "Get Counted" team for Gail Borden Public Library District in Elgin, Illinois

1 MILLION

Approximate number of children 5 years old and younger who were undercounted in the 2010 Census.



◀ Continued from page 31

sheets, infographics, photos, videos, and other free resources.

- Test your messaging. We shortened and simplified our print materials after trying them out on a test group. They wound up much more reader friendly.
- Use attention-grabbing graphics. This is especially important when language barriers are a challenge.
- Everyone living in a household must be included on the same form. Make sure your volunteers and users know that if someone is accidentally left off, the form must be filled out again in its entirety.
- Don't think you need to know everything about the census. When a question gets too complicated, turn it over to Census Bureau personnel, either through a hotline or through your library contact.

The relationships that you make or strengthen during the census count will benefit your library's efforts for years to come. This was one of our most important takeaways from 2010. Our collaboration with many of our 2010 Census partners has continued with ongoing immigrant services, community literacy, and many other projects over the past decade.

Even though a requirement to include a question on citizenship in the 2020 Census was overturned, we will still be working in a challenging environment. Many people will be suspicious about how the government will use the census data. This makes working on behalf of our community more important than ever. **AL**



DENISE RALEIGH is division chief for public relations and development at Gail Borden Public Library District in Elgin, Illinois.

The report also suggests that libraries make these dedicated computers available to all members of the public who wish to complete a census form—not just those who hold library cards. In addition, it recommends that these computers have their USB drives or other physical ports made inaccessible to prevent the installation of malware, and that session management software be configured to remove any user-created data.

'Where's my box?'

Say someone knows how important the census is and has no issues with completing it—yet doesn't see themselves represented in the census's racial, gender, or other categories.

The good news is that for the first time, the census will allow respondents in same-sex relationships to indicate that fact. The bad news is that many other potential aspects of respondents' identities will not be reflected. For example, the census asks respondents to indicate their sex by checking either "male" or "female," with no other option such as "nonbinary" or "intersex." (The National LGBTQ Task Force's Guide to the 2020 Census suggests that respondents "answer this question in whichever way feels best to you" [bit.ly/LGBTQtaskforce].)

As in years past, the census does not include "Hispanic" or "Latinx" as options to the question of race. Instead, respondents are asked in a separate question to indicate whether they have "Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origins." So what is someone who checks yes to that question supposed to answer to the race question—bearing in mind that respondents are instructed to answer every question? In addition, the race question does not provide an option for indicating Middle Eastern identity.

"People are like, 'Where's my box?'" says Julie Dowling, associate

professor in the department of Latina/Latino studies at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, chair of the Census Bureau's National Advisory Committee, and author of *Mexican Americans and the Question of Race* (University of Texas Press, 2014).

She suggests that librarians advise people who don't see themselves represented in the options to the race question to check the box for "some other race" and then fill in their answer by hand in the space provided. "Not everyone feels empowered to do that," she says, so some reassurance may be necessary.

What if someone decides not to complete the census because they do not see themselves represented in the options?

"I would still encourage them to fill it out," Dowling says. "The more people check 'other,' the more the need for other options will be seen. I would also encourage people to fill out the census because of what it means politically in terms of representation. When people are like, 'I'm not going to participate,' I'm like, 'That's what the forces working against you would like!' You're not getting back at them." **AL**



MEGHAN MURPHY-GILL is a writer in Chicago. **ANNE FORD**, *American Libraries'* editor-at-large, provided additional reporting.

After the Census

How to use the “mother of open data sets” more than once a decade

BY Emily Udell

Libraries are long-trusted partners in helping the government collect an accurate count every 10 years. But a librarian’s role doesn’t have to end once all the forms are submitted. Around the country, libraries are using census data to augment their programming, train staff members, connect with patrons, and collaborate with local organizations. These unique experiments and projects offer opportunities to teach skills and engage people with the larger community and the issues that affect it.

“Census data is the mother of all open data sets,” says Jeffrey Lambert, assistant director of digital inclusion and workforce readiness at Queens (N.Y.) Public Library (QPL). “It’s a huge resource about people who live in the United States, and it’s accessible to anyone.”

Libraries have an important part to play in accessing that data, according to Bob Gradeck, project manager of the Western Pennsylvania Regional Data Center at the University of Pittsburgh

Center for Urban and Social Research. He is a member of the Civic Switchboard project team, a collaborative effort supported by the Institute of Museum and Library Services that aims to empower libraries to engage with civic data and establish partnerships with other civic data entities in their communities.

As part of its efforts, Civic Switchboard created a guide for libraries and in 2017 began offering grants for libraries to develop programming around open civic data, including the census. “A lot of the work that’s happening in civic data is happening outside of the library,” Gradeck says. “If people can find themselves or their communities in the data, that’s a way to really engage them.”

Adult and teen data education

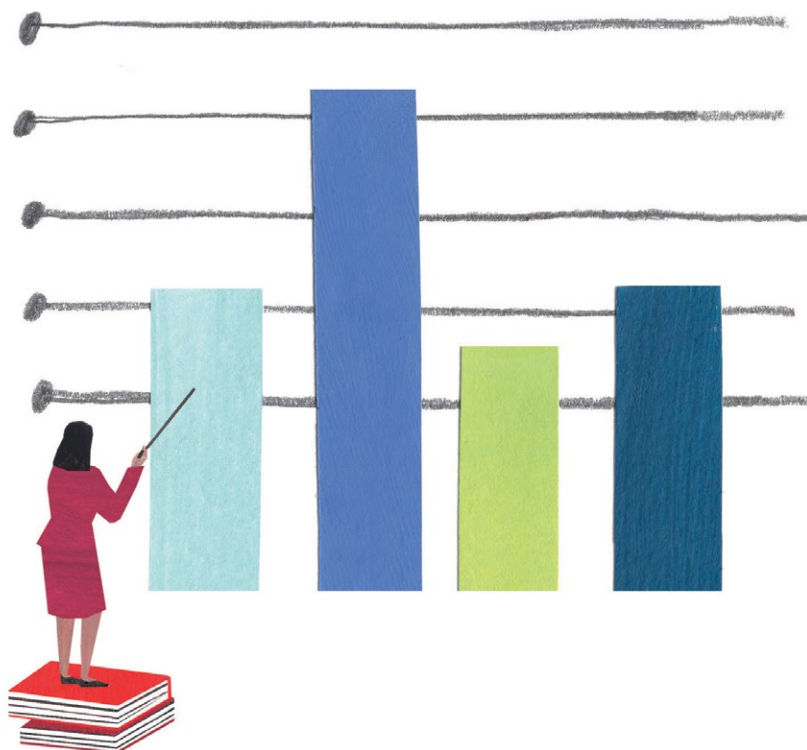
Before applying for a Civic Switchboard grant, Providence (R.I.) Public Library (PPL) had already been offering two data literacy programs focusing on data analytics and visualization for adults and teens.

“Oh my gosh, they are so popular,” says Karisa Tashjian, PPL’s education director, of the programs. “It’s a consistent and huge waitlist without us even promoting it.”

Data literacy allows people to understand and analyze information and use it to learn about their communities, tell stories, and make arguments in professional and public contexts for services and funding. It can be an important tool for professional development and civic engagement.

Word of mouth attracts students to PPL’s courses, which are meant to approximate a community college offering, where students develop projects to tell local stories.

“The topics are so diverse but mostly around social community issues,”



1790

Year the first decennial census was taken, as mandated by the US Constitution.

Tashjian says. “It runs the entire gamut, from crime to health.”

As part of the programs, students do in-class exercises using census data and learn how to create graphic representations using the interactive data visualization software Tableau, a program Tashjian says is becoming increasingly in demand with employers.

“It’s like magic that happens in these classes,” she says. “It’s a learning community—they take risks, they laugh, they cry. They are [looking at] sensitive topics. They are very energized.”

Using a grant from Civic Switchboard, PPL partnered with the nonprofit arts organization NEXMAP; Chibitronics, which makes electronic stickers; and STEM design studio Wonderful Idea Company to add a paper circuitry component to its teen workshop. This three-dimensional visualization method connected participants’ data work to library makerspace resources, including a 3D printer, laser cutters, and sewing machines.

PPL also hosts a Data for Good project in which members of a regular Tableau support group consult with local nonprofit organizations. The group answers questions that involve delving into data in order to help the nonprofits develop programming, get grant funding, or solve other problems.

Connecting with the past

At Robert L. Bogomolny Library at University of Baltimore, students participated in a multiweek research project in which they learned how to sift through census and other local data and link their findings to archival and special collections materials.

As part of a larger introductory information literacy class, students used data from the *Vital Signs* data reports

(compiled by the Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance and the Jacob France Institute), which include Community Statistical Areas—neighborhood clusters organized around census tract boundaries. Students connected these statistics to archival materials like photos from an image gallery from the Model Urban Neighborhood Demonstration, which documented city neighborhoods in the 1960s.

“Students synthesized information to create a narrative about the neighborhood,” says Kristin Conlin, reference and instruction librarian. “What happened [in the past], and how did that impact the community?” One student linked employment data to historic photos of a job fair, for example. Others explored issues surrounding water bills and abandoned city lots.

“It helps create a greater connection to the communities they live in, just by knowing more about it,” she says. “It can [then] be used to help form the creation of solutions to problems in their communities.”

Public engagement in data

QPL used Civic Switchboard funding for a three-pronged data program that involved training staffers, training the public, and connecting with local nonprofits serving immigrant communities in the diverse borough of Queens.

“Data literacy is civic literacy,” says Lambert.

In February 2019, staff members from QPL branches that had been identified as serving hard-to-count census tracts in Queens completed a three-part training that introduced them to the NYC OpenData portal and the census. Some of the topics that the staffers explored included educational attainment, commute time to work, and employment statistics, Lambert says.

Survey feedback was positive, he adds. “Lots of people were interested in what the data had to say about the communities they serve in terms of linguistic demographics and how they might adapt. I saw lots of light bulbs going off—‘we can do a program on X topic or Y topic.’” He says the training gave participants ways to explore their communities that they didn’t have before.

QPL did versions of the same workshop with the public and local nonprofit organizations that wanted to learn how to serve their constituents better. The library partnered with the Mayor’s Office of Data Analytics, New York Immigration Coalition, Center for the Integration and Advancement of New Americans, Cidadão Global, DSI International Inc., Haitian Americans United for Progress, and Polonians Organized to Minister to Our Community.

In total, QPL offered 40 workshops with 200 participants at 30 of its 66 locations. Lambert’s advice to other libraries aiming to get into data literacy and using open data like the census: “Figure out what your role in the ecosystem is, what your assets are, and who you can partner with to make this data accessible to your patrons.” **AL**



EMILY UDELL is a freelance writer based in Indianapolis.



248 Number of area census offices the US Census Bureau opened in 2019 to support a complete count.

Living the Dream

At 50, the
Black Caucus
of the
American
Library
Association
looks toward
the future



by Anne Ford

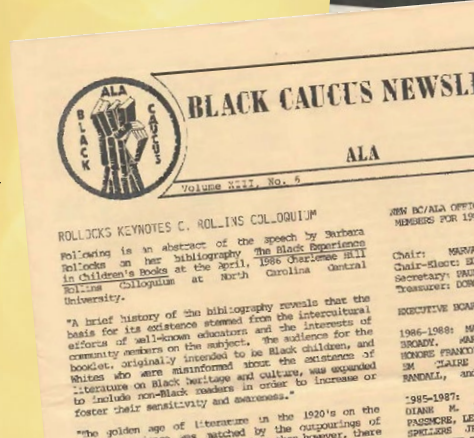
At the American Library Association's (ALA) Midwinter Meeting in 1970, then-councilor E. J. Josey challenged the Association to better serve the needs of black library professionals. This spurred the formation of the Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA), which has worked for 50 years to advocate for the recruitment and professional development of African-American librarians and promote library services and resources in the African-American community.

How has the situation of African Americans in the profession changed since BCALA's founding?

Well, "it hasn't gotten any worse," says Trevor Dawes, vice provost for libraries and museums and May Morris University Librarian at University of Delaware, as well as past BCALA executive board member and BCALA liaison to ALA until last year. "We still have a lot of systemic oppression of people of color and certainly black people in the profession, and so an organization like BCALA is still necessary to advance the mission of inclusion."

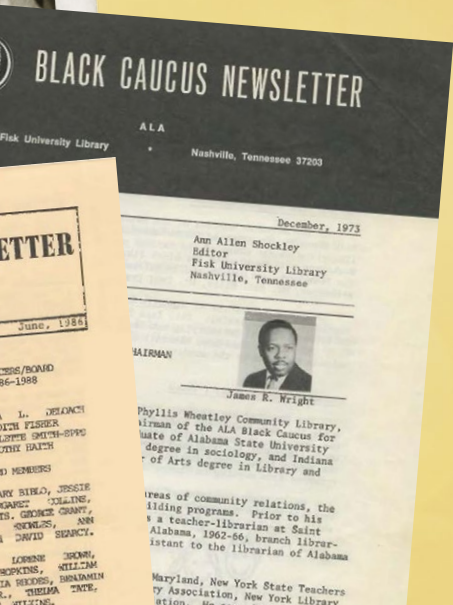
Meet five black librarians doing just that. **AL**

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





Left, E. J. Josey speaks at the ALA Midwinter Meeting in 1970. Above, members of BCALA at ALA's Annual Conference in 1977.



Photos: ALA Archives; Busy Beaver Button Museum (top button); Arthur Plotnik (Annual); Kristin Beadle (McCurtis)

‘This is what a librarian can look like.’

Kirby McCurtis draws black people to the library

The first time Multnomah County (Oreg.) Library Branch Manager Kirby McCurtis went on an outreach visit to a Head Start classroom—which happened to consist of all African-American students—even the teacher was surprised.

“He was like, ‘You’re the librarian? All right!’” remembers McCurtis, who is president-elect of the Association for Library Service to Children. “Yes, this is what a librarian can look like. The kids were like, ‘This is awesome!’”

Changing the perception of libraries as white spaces is a major goal of McCurtis, who started a Black Storytime group at the library in 2012 to affirm the experiences of African and African-American children and to help the black community feel welcome. “The community was really responsive, really excited,” she remembers. “It was a nice way to have conversations with people about their experiences and to make sure that people felt like the library was their space.”

After a white mother asked whether she could bring her child to that storytime to learn about race (answer: yes), McCurtis also realized the need to develop a curriculum to help parents from all backgrounds talk about the subject with preschool-age children. Because if you don’t? Then “your kid’s going to say something horrible because they don’t have the language, they don’t have the tools.”

She now frequently presents “Talking about Race with Preschool-Age Children” at conferences, and it’s also delivered as a four-week course at the library. Other programs and webinars of hers include “We Speak Your Language: Strengthening Early Literacy for Diversity” and “Cuddle Up and Read: Storytimes for Pregnant and Parenting Teens.”

“I always say the BCALA has become my family,” McCurtis adds. “Every conference, every Midwinter, I’ve got cousins and aunts and uncles looking out for me. There’s a shared language and a shared experience; there’s solidarity in numbers. Not everyone is on the mission to change the world for black kids, but this group—that’s our path.”



Kirby McCurtis



Jessica Bratt

‘It shouldn’t be something scary.’

Jessica Bratt talks to kids about race

Though kids at storytime may look like they’re busy enjoying the book (and wiggling around), they’re also absorbing societal norms. That’s why Grand Rapids (Mich.) Public Library Youth Services Manager Jessica Bratt works to make it a place that celebrates differences—like race.

“Society tells children that they need to be able to live alongside others, but we never give kids tools to do that,” Bratt says. “If we can get comfortable disrupting biases in an age-appropriate way, then when we transition into conversations around consent or police brutality, they already have the tools to lean into discomfort to help them process the world around them.”

To that end, she developed a toolkit for storytime leaders called *Let’s Talk about Race*. Best practices include selecting books that depict a diverse range of

‘They want to challenge everything now.’

Cicely Lewis raises students’ social consciousness

I’m up here talking about magical wizards, and my students are suffering.”

That’s what Cicely Lewis, educator and library media specialist at Meadowcreek High School in Norcross, Georgia, remembers thinking in 2017. Though her Harry Potter–focused reading program had been successful, she wanted to address topics like police violence, immigration restrictions, and other injustices, particularly since her school has a large population of students of color. Thus, Read Woke was born.

Lewis curated a list of books that challenge a social norm, provide information about a disenfranchised group,

or feature a protagonist from an underrepresented or oppressed group: *The Hate U Give*, *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter*, *The Librarian of Auschwitz*, *Girl Mans Up*, and many more. Students who read at least four books from the list win a T-shirt, but even students who don’t win prizes are excited “just to have these conversations,” she says. “And I feel like my students are little social justice warriors because they want to challenge everything now.”

The Young Adult Library Services Association awarded Lewis the 2019 Margaret A. Edwards Award for Best Literature Program for Teens for Read Woke, and the program has spread to other schools and libraries. Meanwhile, at Meadowcreek, Read Woke has expanded: There are plans for a social justice–oriented field trip in the works—perhaps to Selma, Alabama, to visit the historic civil rights sites there—as well as a potential initiative to distribute books from the Read Woke list to local foster children.

Being a librarian of color, Lewis adds, has helped her show students that libraries are for them. “Not to say that a white librarian can’t be welcoming, but we do need more representation,” she says. “That’s one barrier that can be broken down.” ●

characters and actively pointing out characters' varying skin tones and hair textures. "Having different skin colors is a normal thing. It shouldn't be something scary," she points out.

Her goal: "Getting librarians to not just say, 'We have these books,' but really supporting social-emotional intelligence around race and belonging." Tips from the toolkit include choosing books that refrain from stereotyping African Americans as entertainers or civil rights activists; emphasizing to parents and other caretakers that it's okay to talk about race; and adopting a tone that indicates comfort with the material.

Bratt is also creator of the library's Social Justice Book Club and cofounder of Librarians 4 Black Lives, a group of library-based advocates who support Black Lives Matter (the latter group has since merged into the Public Library Association's Task Force on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Social Justice).

For her, BCALA membership has been a major source of support in an overwhelmingly white field. "I hope we can continue being a voice for change within ALA," she says. "You can find support and networking around a large conglomerate of other black librarians. And it's intergenerational, so you don't lose the history of how the profession was made and shaped." •

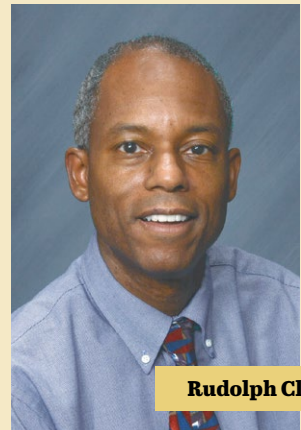


Cicely Lewis

'It's a great outcome for everyone.'

Rudolph Clay makes libraries more diverse

In a field that's more than 85% white, Rudolph Clay, senior lecturer in African-American studies at Washington University in St. Louis and head of diversity initiatives and outreach services at the university's libraries, is making his library and librarianship in general more inclusive. "We're dealing with a more diverse student population, and we want to have a welcoming environment," he says, "so that when students enter the library, they see librarians and staff members that resemble their own background, and they feel comfortable asking questions and are more interested in exploring. When you have a diverse staff, it's a great outcome for everyone."



Rudolph Clay

Not only do he and his team make sure that library staff are equipped to address the needs of students of color, but they also invite those students to consider academic librarianship as a career via paid summer internships. "What we're hoping to do is help them see many facets of librarianship that they might not have seen before, and help them see what the role of the academic library is in the larger community," he says.

A few years ago, for example, after police fatally shot Michael Brown in Ferguson,

Continued on page 41



Ana Ndumu

‘What does it mean to be Black Diasporic?’

Ana Ndumu broadens perceptions

Nicaragua native Ana Ndumu, assistant professor of information studies at University of Maryland, College Park, has spoken Spanish since birth—but that doesn’t stop people from asking where she learned the language. “There’s always been a lot of explaining,” says Ndumu. “I’ve always had to toggle between my *Latinidad* and my blackness.” Add to that her marriage to an African immigrant who grew up in London, and the scope of her insight into multiple facets of black identity becomes clear.

Breaking down what she calls the US “homogenization of blackness” is a passion for Ndumu, who researches the obstacles black immigrants to the US face when accessing information. “There’s a specific template of an immigrant—non-English speaker, forcefully displaced,” she says. “Black immigrants don’t always come from that background. You may have refugees, but you may also have highly skilled

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immigrants. Seventy-five percent of black immigrants [to the US] speak English, and about 40% of them arrive degraded. Within libraries, they are grossly ignored.”

In contrast to the perception that all immigrants suffer from an information gap, Ndumu finds that black immigrants tend to instead be *overwhelmed* by the volume of information. Those and other findings are reflected in the free online resource she has created, *Toolkit for Library Services to Black Immigrants* (blackimmigrantsinlibraries.com).

In addition, her book *Borders and Belonging: Critical Examinations of Library Approaches toward Immigrants* is forthcoming (Library Juice Press, May). “I am trying to expand awareness of blackness,” she says. “What does it mean to be pan-African or Black Diasporic? Then there’s the hope to strengthen LIS curricula so we can have more tools and teaching tactics that amplify the value of black librarians.”

Ndumu, a member of BCALA’s executive board and chair of its professional development committee, says that the caucus’s 50th anniversary presents the perfect opportunity to broaden its priorities. “What are we missing?” she asks. “We haven’t had the best coverage of immigrants. How about LGBT issues? Anyone who has ideas on how to expand issues of identity and social inclusion—this would be helpful. For people who want to disrupt norms and really get into the work of addressing why there’s a lack of representation, it’s a good time to get involved.” ●

Continued from page 39

Missouri—a town only a few miles from campus—Clay helped create an online archive of digital media captured by community members around the incident. “The idea was to ask people who participated in marches or protests if they would not mind uploading to our archive,” he recalls. “We thought this would be a useful resource, and it’s freely available.”

A BCALA member for more than 30 years, Clay currently sits on its executive board and serves as exhibit chair for its conference. He lauds the caucus for its mentoring opportunities, which help encourage young African Americans to think about becoming librarians. “Many times, they don’t really know what librarians do, and I think they don’t know the breadth of what we do,” he says. “We want people to think about the role of librarians in their communities, especially communities that are struggling.” ●

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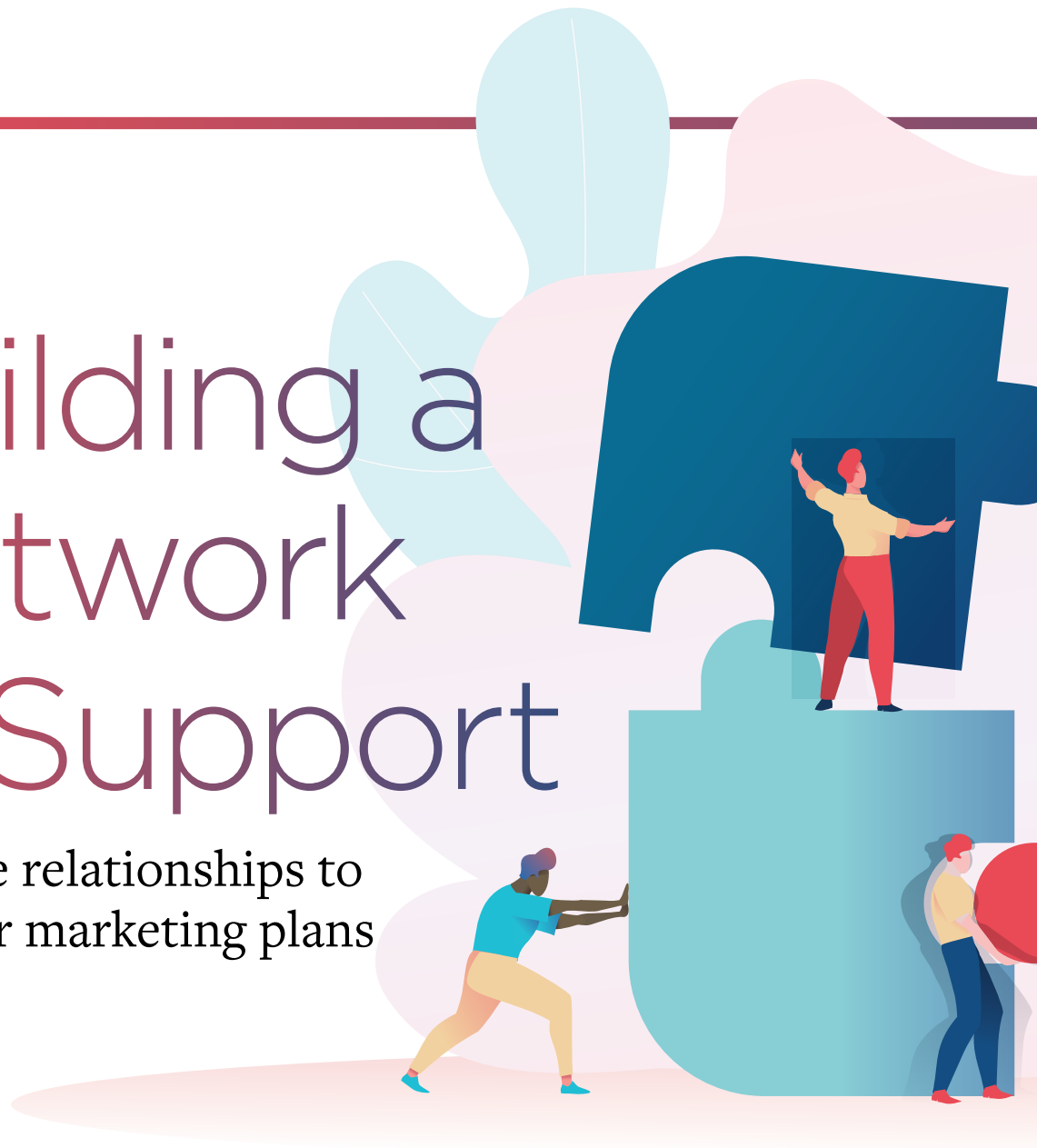
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April Shaw, Student
Library Science, BMS

Building a Network of Support

Maximize relationships to push your marketing plans



BY Amanda L. Goodman

When I was charged with managing my public library's marketing needs, I balked at first. I was a librarian, not a marketer. I had no idea where to start. I didn't understand the size of the task. It was hidden by its scattered nature: When it came to marketing, each department in my library did its own thing. Fortunately, I knew who could help get the job done: my coworkers, whose different skills and knowledge sets lightened my load and provided fresh ideas and perspectives.

If you're in a similar situation and feel overwhelmed by unexpected marketing work, don't be afraid to turn to colleagues. They'll prove invaluable as you transition to your new role. But before reaching out, get up to speed on who does what at the library and how coworkers can best help. You may already know exactly who to turn to: It may be department heads or most likely those already doing marketing tasks. Look for creative types who compose event notices for the library's website, design bookmarks, and post on social media. They have a wealth of knowledge to share. They can also support your initiatives.

Illustration: ©Andrey Apeev/Adobe Stock



TOUCHING BASE

To get acquainted with the disparate marketing ideas and collateral at work in your library, meet face-to-face with coworkers to learn what they're doing, how you can support them, and how they can support you.

Working with individuals. Schedule informal meetings with creative coworkers to ask about their projects. Offer ways to assist. If possible, meet on a semiregular basis to stay aware of events throughout the organization. As you would with any relationship, try to pick up tidbits about them and be friendly. You want them to perceive you as an understanding person to work with who appreciates their skills.

If you have the time and budget, take key department heads out for coffee and ask how they work. You may uncover someone with a background in marketing or a related field. If so, lucky you. This person is now your best friend.

You should empower as many colleagues as possible to create their own marketing materials and designs. If they are competent, they can take a great burden off you. The best people to encourage are those willing to listen to feedback. In an ideal situation, you will need only to spot-check their work and provide input on how to improve.

Let go of having full control. Recognize that others will not do things exactly the way you would. If your library has established branding guidelines, those will define the creative canvas. For example, if your organization has decided against using 1990s clip art, that will help eliminate the worst designs from the outset.

Working with groups. Periodically schedule meetings with other departments to educate each other on publicity needs. Likewise, if there are big, organization-wide status update meetings, try to attend one. Use it as an opportunity to refresh everyone on the major marketing pushes coming up, and ask if there's anything you need to know. After group meetings, go over your notes, digest them, and take steps toward enacting them.

Much can be learned by simply talking with coworkers. Email, instant messaging, and other faceless means of communication can often stifle the serendipitous discovery of ideas that happen only in a group dynamic. Meeting face-to-face lets you brainstorm without boundaries.

Pace yourself. Attending to these relationships can take up a lot of time, but they are beneficial. They will be your first line of support and backup if needed. Limit your meetings to 30 to 60 minutes. If you are part of a larger organization-wide meeting, your speaking portion may be less than five minutes. Stick to highlights and need-to-know information.

KEEP STAFFERS INVOLVED

Part of the art of marketing is making sure the right people know the right thing at the right time—including colleagues. They're busy people, so do the legwork to keep them informed and involved.



This is an excerpt from *Marketing Plans in Action: A Step-by-Step Guide for Libraries, Archives, and Cultural Organizations* by Amanda L. Goodman (ALA Editions, 2019).

Share information. First thing, create opportunities for staff to learn new marketing trends, what other departments are doing, and how they can be more collaborative in the organization's outreach. Remind them to share information not only with you but also with one another.


Encourage photos. Have staffers take photos and save them in a shared location. You can use these for annual reports, social media posts, and email marketing. If a photo policy isn't in place, push for one, and make sure everyone is aware of the rules. You may also need to arrange training to teach staffers how to take usable photos with proper lighting, a clear focus, and engaging subject matter. If your library has a semiformal staffer-education process, use it to train multiple people at once.

Cross departments. When reviewing publicity requests and upcoming programs and events, look for complementary programs and services being offered in different departments at the same time that can be promoted together. Summer reading provides perfect examples of events whose marketing can be coordinated.

In public libraries, summer reading may be a library-wide effort with programs for children, teens, and adults. Because it's such a busy time, the departments may not be aware of every program scheduled across the organization. You can help by doing the following:

- Before the start of the development process for next summer's programs, contact each department. Ask about their plans. What are their themes?
- Look for opportunities to promote similar programming themes together.
- Establish deadlines that allow plenty of time for everyone to publicize their events.
- If the library contracts an outside designer, be the point person to keep everything streamlined. To prevent confusion, you want the designer hearing only from you.
- Create publicity plans for each department, and use them for planning purposes. When scheduling a publicity timeline for a cross-departmental program like summer reading, give each department time to be the solo star. This helps prevent perceptions that one program is being promoted more than another.

Attend staff meetings. You're a busy person. As such, you may not get much face time with colleagues who don't send publicity requests. One way to connect with entire



If you feel overwhelmed by unexpected marketing work, don't be afraid to ask colleagues for help.

departments: Attend their staff meetings. It'll give you an opportunity to learn about problems that might not come up in conversation otherwise, and you'll hear about projects they forgot to mention earlier. Go to quarterly meetings at which several months of future programming will be planned. Note: If you're first on their agenda, it may prevent you from hearing valuable, off-the-cuff ideas that are shared as upcoming work is discussed—especially if you are pushed out of the room after saying your piece. If this happens, get a rundown of the agenda ahead of time so you can ask specifically about items of interest.

TRAINING NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

To maximize your marketing impact, you need procedures to train staffers now and in the future.

Establish point people. To help meet some of the demands and expectations placed on you, find a point person in each department. This is ideally a colleague who has a vested or personal interest in the organization's marketing and branding. These colleagues truly care about how the community sees and interacts with the library. If they have marketing chops, all the better. If not, work with them to ensure they know branding guidelines, basic design concepts, and information about the community that their department serves.

The point person's job is to take pressure off you and hold their immediate colleagues accountable. Whenever new publicity items (photos, fliers, emails, social media posts) are created for public viewing, the point person should give them a quick review. For non-point people who are confident in their medium—excellent writers, for example—the point person may not need to carefully scrutinize everything they produce. But the point person is the one to look for typos and give feedback. A point person will also ensure colleagues deliver items to you on a timely basis.

Help the point person by providing templates and examples of what good publicity items look like, and encourage them to contact you if another pair of eyes is needed. Don't forget: Without them, you will be responsible for reviewing every item created. You don't have that kind of time. So always show gratitude for the point person's help. Send them thank-you cards or give them a bar of their favorite chocolate every now and then. They are doing you an enormous favor and should feel appreciated.

Quick feedback. Be available for quick review and feedback sessions. Your designers and writers may get stuck on how to convey something, or they may run out of ideas. Create a communication channel that lets them get a quick response from you between scheduled meetings. Most of the time, these reviews will take only a couple minutes.

Remove obstacles. As a manager, part of your job is to eliminate obstacles to your work. Keep in mind that a communication gap may exist because someone who is responsible for giving you information doesn't know they are the point person: Their supervisor may have forgotten to tell them. Likewise, colleagues may be away from the workplace unexpectedly.

Keep your tone cheerful but firm, and remind them that you can't share their work with the public if you don't know what that work is.

SMOOTH SAILING

The late Carla Gray, former executive director of marketing for adult books at Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, would use a ship metaphor to describe her role in the workplace: "I've always thought of the marketing role as the cruise director, involved in the whole book's life and responsible for coordinating with all departments to ensure smooth sailing."

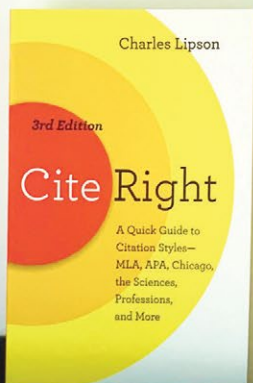
In that spirit, as cruise director of the library's marketing efforts, you're responsible for setting the course and reading the map as your library and its crew navigate the high seas of marketing and publicity. With luck, it'll be a successful trip you'll enjoy taking together over and over. Bon voyage. **AL**



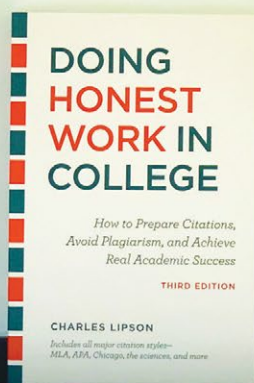
AMANDA L. GOODMAN is publicity manager at Darien (Conn.) Library.

MUST-HAVE GUIDES to Success in College

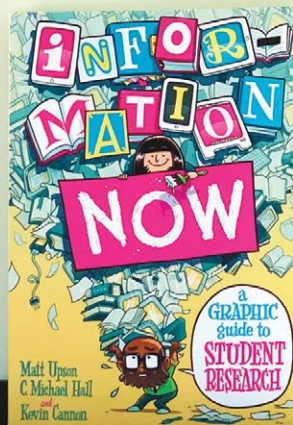
for Higher Ed, High School, and Public Libraries



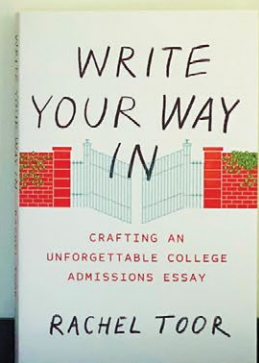
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The University of Chicago Press www.press.uchicago.edu

Representation Beyond Books

Welcoming everyone with inclusive programming, displays, and images

BY Meredith Farkas



MEREDITH FARKAS is faculty librarian at Portland (Oreg.) Community College. Follow her on Twitter @librarianmer.

I recently read *All You Can Ever Know* by Nicole Chung, in which she recounts growing up a Korean-American adoptee in a white community. She describes how reading books was an escape but, she writes, “as much as I loved these spunky literary heroines, they too were all white, and I couldn’t see how I would ever find my way into lives like theirs.”

There are countless stories about the harm done when people grow up not seeing themselves reflected in books and media. This is the impact whiteness can have on those outside of the dominant group. Whiteness centers white faces, values, and experiences and is frequently invisible to those in the dominant culture. Whiteness isn’t the only dominant paradigm—patriarchy, heteronormativity, ableism, and many other -isms also serve to erase or other the lives and experiences of people from nondominant groups and make them feel unwelcome in many institutions.

One powerful antidote to this exclusion is representation. When kids see their identities reflected in media it can help to affirm their identity, make them feel less alone, and discover role models who look like them (bit.ly/AL-kidsbooks). When people see their identities represented and celebrated by their library, they are more likely to see the library as a space for them.

And although buying diverse books is critical, representation in libraries means much more. Diversity in staffing can also help create a library that is truly for all. In my city (Portland, Oregon), more than 72% of the population identifies solely as white, but Multnomah County Library has committed to recruiting and retaining staffers who represent the diverse neighborhoods in which they work. Approximately 30% of its staff are people of color (bit.ly/AL-Multnomah).

Employing staff members who look like and speak the languages of their minority community members makes the library and staff more approachable. Having Somali-speaking staffers at one Multnomah County Library branch led to the creation of The Sewing Project, an innovative mobile sewing lab created in response to an expressed need from members of that community (bit.ly/AL-SewingProject).

Libraries with a less diverse workforce can develop culturally relevant programming that meets community needs and increases representation by collaborating with organizations that serve immigrants and refugees, racial minorities, people with disabilities, the queer community, and other groups.

Culturally relevant programming may meet unique community needs, like The Sewing Project, or celebrate a group’s culture and traditions.

Libraries can invite organizations and guest speakers to deliver programming that celebrates culture through storytelling, discussions, food, arts and crafts, and more. Culturally relevant programming is not only valuable for members of a particular culture—it also provides cultural literacy education for people outside

that group (bit.ly/AL-CulturalLit).

The images libraries use on their websites and promotional materials can affect how included patrons from nondominant groups feel. Stock photo collections that include images

of people of color in professional settings (bit.ly/AL-Stock1), trans and nonbinary individuals (bit.ly/AL-Stock2), plus-sized people (bit.ly/AL-Stock3), and people with disabilities (bit.ly/AL-Stock4) have been specifically created to increase diversity in online and print media. Displays are another way to promote diverse materials and foster an inclusive atmosphere. Visibly featuring books by and about black, indigenous, and other people of color beyond a specific history month helps to normalize their everyday inclusion.

Every library is designed to be a space where all members of their community are welcome, but not every library achieves that goal. Libraries that focus on representation are creating spaces where everyone can feel included and valued. **AL**

Diversity in staffing can help create a library truly for all.

Digital Rights Management

How libraries deal with publisher restrictions

BY Mirela Roncevic



MIRELA RONCEVIC is a writer, editor, journalist, content developer, and publishing and library consultant. She is the coauthor of *No Shelf Required 3*, released in January by ALA Editions.

Since the beginning of digital rights management (DRM) for ebooks, library users have expressed frustration with reading and navigating digital files. Many have been vocal about how DRM has challenged their ability to access information online, pointing to the:

- lack of interoperability and standards among dedicated ebook vendors (because of proprietary DRM technologies)
- confusion as to what users can and cannot do with digital files
- inability to use ebooks effectively for research, as limits are placed on activities such as copying and printing
- absence of any guarantee of access to content in perpetuity

For these and other reasons, users are dissatisfied with how publishers and content providers are making ebooks available.

Public and academic librarians are also vocal in their concerns. Because of their challenging roles as go-betweens, librarians must figure out how to meet patron demands while complying with publisher restrictions. Some key concerns:

- DRM systems are not always affordable.
- Control often remains in the hands of content suppliers, who track activities to ensure the library regularly renews its license.
- The contract process is complex, as libraries sometimes need to negotiate rights for each publisher, in some cases on a title-by-title basis.
- User experience is cumbersome—as more ebooks are coded with DRM, the more difficult they are to use.

Led in part by the open access movement and libraries' willingness to fund it, academic publishers are starting to pay attention to end-user feedback by embracing the idea of DRM-free content. Although most scholarly ebooks continue to be distributed to libraries with DRM encryption, publishers such as Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, SAGE, Springer Nature/Palgrave Macmillan, Elsevier, and Wiley offer DRM-free titles. Even aggregators like EBSCO, ProQuest, JSTOR, and Project MUSE now provide DRM-free titles on their platforms, which offer access to large amounts of content by many publishers.

In public libraries, mainstream publishers have gone the opposite direction, imposing more restrictions. Major trade publishers such as Penguin Random House, HarperCollins, and Macmillan use DRM to enforce loan caps: After a library has loaned a title 52 times within a two-year period, it cannot loan that title until it renews its license with the publisher.

Some publishers are placing ebook embargoes on libraries, which gets in the way of equitable access to information. Effective November 1, 2019, Macmillan imposed a restriction on library lending across all its imprints. Libraries offering digital access to new Macmillan titles can buy perpetual access to only a single copy within the first eight weeks of its release. After that, libraries can buy as many copies of the title as they want, but those copies are subject to the two-year, 52-loan cap.

Although faced with these challenges, libraries can exert significant influence on the future of DRM. Some recommendations:

- Protect privacy vehemently.
- Educate users on how to discover freely available research materials in open access repositories.
- Support open access actively. By providing financial support for open access initiatives,

libraries can make more open content available and accelerate the sharing and advancement of knowledge and science.

Perhaps the most logical way to proceed is to take cues from lessons learned thus far—lessons that point to less

DRM and more user flexibility as desired outcomes.

Adapted from "Digital Rights Management and Books," Library Technology Reports vol. 56, no. 1 (Jan. 2020). AL

Educate users on how to discover freely available research materials in open access repositories.

Waste Not, Want Not

Ideas for environmentally friendly children’s programming

BY Larissa Clotildes



LARISSA CLOTILDES is library assistant at Prince George (B.C.) Public Library.

Crafts: the backbone of children’s events everywhere. There’s nothing quite like gluing pipe cleaners and pompoms, cutting paper and coloring, wrapping and taping, painstakingly creating . . . and then throwing these masterpieces in the trash.

I am not denying the educational value of crafts. They stimulate creativity, develop fine motor skills, and engage multiple senses in a learning experience. But I challenge myself to find activities that do not produce single-use waste, without sacrificing everything that makes crafts so great. I use the five Rs as my baseline:

Refuse. Reject programs and activities that produce waste as often as you can. I don’t recommend this for every program, but I try to do one zero-waste event per season. In the past I have organized a parachute party, a singing workshop with a local voice teacher, and a nature-walk storytime. The storytime was a great way to immerse ourselves in the natural world and appreciate the point of “going green” in the first place.

Reuse. Find programming materials that can be reused. Dig through the storage room before you buy anything new. I think this is the best option for making long-term programming sustainable and interesting because it’s easiest on the organizer.

Set out chalkboards or whiteboards instead of coloring sheets. Pool noodles can be turned into a game of “the floor is lava” by scattering them across the floor. Stock up on reusable decorations that suit a variety of programs—such as colored tablecloths, twinkle lights, and disco balls—instead of single-use streamers and balloons.

Beanbags, Hula-Hoops, and jump ropes are reliable offerings and tend to engage the more athletic kids, who sometimes don’t think the library is for them.

Repurpose. This is my favorite R. I love finding new uses for old things, and Pinterest is a wonderful source of inspiration.

While cleaning, we found boxes of popsicle-stick and paper puppets from former programs that we doubted would get reused. Since it was the beginning of camping season, we handed them out as kindling instead of trashing them.

Another idea is to check with staffers who receive and process deliveries of new books to see if they have leftover bubble wrap. We lay it on the floor, crank up some tunes, and throw a dance party for the kids.

Reduce. This is my final preferred option. Don’t feel guilty if you really want to do crafts—they are important and sometimes the most fitting activity. Just take steps to reduce waste, such as conducting activities with two or three materials (rather than dozens) or limiting the number

of visible materials and refilling the box as needed.

Activities that use bubbles or baking soda and vinegar leave behind containers that become recyclable waste. If materials are biodegradable, all the better; my favorite summer reading program activity was making binary-coded bird feeders out of cereal.

Recycle. This is my last resort. Recycling is still waste, even if it enjoys a reputation as “good” waste. Consider designating a recycling station where people can leave their creations if they do not want to bring them home. That way, pieces can be reused or repurposed before being discarded.

Avoid creating nonrecyclable waste. The biggie for me is slime, essentially a lump of plastic. Substitute play dough or oobleck, both of which are biodegradable.

Finally, talk about waste when you run a program. Confer with coworkers about what you can do as a group to produce less.

Consult with supervisors about getting reusable replacements for single-use supplies and adequate recycling bins. And be sure to explain to kids and their caretakers why you chose certain activities, especially if they

Recycling is still waste, even if it enjoys a reputation as “good” waste.

ask. As educators, we are in a position to help families understand that they don’t have to choose between fun, learning, and sustainability.

Adapted from “Reducing Waste in Children’s Programming” (Jbrary, Dec. 4, 2019). AL

What Does Green Mean?

Support holistic sustainability through thoughtful programming

BY Kayla Kuni



KAYLA KUNI is librarian and instructor at Pasco-Hernando State College in New Port Richey, Florida, and an MBA candidate at University of South Florida. ALA's Social Responsibilities Round Table has named her an Emerging Leader for 2020.

As a librarian pursuing an MBA at the University of South Florida, I've been learning about approaches to organizational sustainability that have shaped my library work. In business school, we're taught that sustainability is like a stool with three legs representing its environmental, financial, and social aspects. Without any one of these legs, the stool collapses.

Sustainability initiatives often focus primarily on environmentalism, that is, the importance of reducing the footprint we leave on our physical spaces and habitats in order to preserve them over time. Social and financial measures are just as important to the longevity of our work, and by incorporating these principles into our programming, we can help different sectors of our communities embrace a holistic approach to sustainable living.

Social sustainability refers to an organization's culture and context. Libraries serve diverse communities; socially sustainable libraries reflect this diversity in their collections, programming, and staff. Financial sustainability requires us to consider the ongoing affordability of our work.

With the American Library Association (ALA) Council's 2019 decision to adopt sustainability as a professional core value, libraries across the country may be taking a closer look at their green initiatives. In my experience as a public librarian, programming is one of the most effective avenues for educating communities, sharing our values, and getting new patrons in the door. As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day this April, I challenge librarians to incorporate multiple facets of sustainability into their programming. These activities do not have to be expensive or complex. In fact, they may present opportunities to partner with external organizations and enhance community bonds.

For children and teens, the idea of a recycling-themed craft is appealing and easy to pull off but somewhat narrowly focused on the environmental aspect of sustainability. Challenge yourself to think creatively. How might financial sustainability be relevant to this audience? One idea: Invite a representative from a local college to discuss financial aid opportunities, giving students (and perhaps their families and caregivers) an idea of future options. Having a plan to fund one's education is one of the most significant ways young people can pursue a financially sustainable future.

For adult audiences, consider incorporating discussion-based activities to promote social sustainability and cohesion. For example,

you could host a documentary screening on a topic related to sustainability and invite viewers to share ideas and meet neighbors afterward. First steps: Investigate your library's licensing rights and consider what topics and formats are appropriate for your community.

Alternatively, take the program outdoors with a visit from a professional gardener, who can teach patrons of all ages about sustainable gardening—a topic that hits all three pillars of sustainability.

Small-business owners are another great audience for sustainability-centric programming, as they seek to build companies that will last.

Library staffers may not have the resources to host workshops on collecting rain-water or the know-

how to audit a business plan for sustainability measures, but local community organizations can help bring these skill sets into the library.

Ultimately, the capacity of a community to thrive in the long term—environmentally, financially, and socially—depends on everyone: librarians and library workers, the patrons we serve, and the neighbors and community organizations we have yet to meet.

Librarians have a tremendous opportunity to lead the way in teaching these concepts and building stronger, more sustainable communities. **AL**

Sustainability is like a stool with three legs representing its environmental, financial, and social aspects.

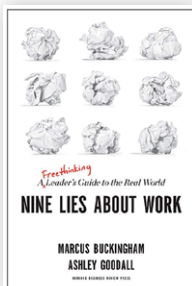
Reenvisioning Work

Connect yourself with your career



ARACELI MÉNDEZ HINTERMEISTER

is knowledge manager at Uplift Education in Dallas.

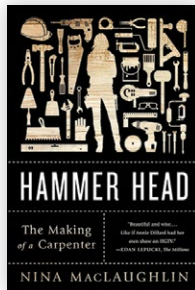


Nine Lies About Work: A Freethinking Leader's Guide to the Real World

By Marcus Buckingham and Ashley Goodall

Culture, goals, leadership, feedback: These ideas are ingrained in our work lives. They shape the organizations we work for and our experiences within them. But Buckingham and Goodall argue that they are, in fact, lies that distort our time and engagement at work. The authors reveal nine workplace myths and urge readers to focus instead on core truths, like the value of interpersonal relationships and individuality, to help make time at work more productive and meaningful.

Harvard Business Review Press, 2019. 304 p. \$30. 978-1-63369-630-3. (Also available as an ebook.)



Hammer Head: The Making of a Carpenter

By Nina MacLaughlin

After years of working for a Boston newspaper, MacLaughlin quit her job and replied to a Craigslist employment ad that read, “Carpenter’s Assistant: Women strongly encouraged to apply.” In *Hammer Head*, MacLaughlin describes the experience of working outside her comfort zone as a novice carpenter, as well as the struggles she faced as a woman in a predominantly male industry. It’s an inspiring story that challenges you to find your strengths and use them, even if you’re not planning a dramatic career change. W. W. Norton and Company, 2015. 240 p. \$24.95. 978-0-393-23913-3. (Also available as an ebook.)

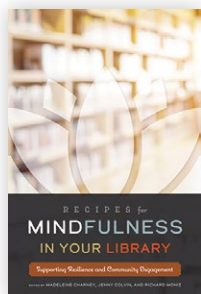


Library Leadership Your Way

By Jason Martin

What does a great leader look like? Instead of focusing on what others think about leadership, Jason Martin takes a DIY approach and challenges readers to create new definitions based on their own strengths and practices. Think of this book as a road map, filled with tools and activities that pave the way toward discovering and understanding how one’s identity and vision can fit into future leadership practice. By knowing which models, habits, and traits best showcase your abilities, you will be equipped to add more value as a leader in your library. ALA Editions, 2019. 88 p. \$44.99. PBK. 978-0-8389-1905-7.

by Araceli Méndez Hintermeister



Recipes for Mindfulness in Your Library: Supporting Resilience and Community Engagement

Edited by Madeleine Charney, Jenny Colvin, and Richard Moniz

This title looks at how to implement mindfulness into individual and patron-facing work at the library. The editors focus on mindfulness in four areas: as a library foundation, through services, through personal practice, and in teaching and research. The essays not only provide opportunities for healthy and reflective habits at work but also suggestions for extending those practices into the community. Topics include using work journals for reflective writing, starting yoga and meditation groups at the library, creating Zen zones for students, and using mindfulness-based strategies for leading library teams.

ALA Editions, 2019. 144 p. \$49.99. PBK. 978-0-8389-1783-1.



Renew Yourself: A Six-Step Plan for More Meaningful Work

By Catherine Hakala-Ausperk


Looking to find new meaning in the workplace? Hakala-Ausperk provides a plan to identify connections and gaps between you and your organization, allowing you to strategically reach goals that are fulfilling. She writes that successful libraries are powered by successful people, and a reexamination of one's interests, desires, and goals is often necessary to achieve success. Being engaged in your professional and personal development allows you to find meaning for yourself and the work you create.

ALA Editions, 2017. 152 p. \$50. PBK. 978-0-8389-1499-1. (Also available as an ebook.)



Inspired Thinking: Big Ideas to Enrich Yourself and Your Community

By Dorothy Stoltz with Morgan Miller, Lisa Picker, Joseph Thompson, and Carrie Wilson

Philosophers, leaders, and great thinkers often use “big ideas” to cultivate inspiration, harness innovation, and promote critical thinking. In *Inspired Thinking*, the authors reveal how big ideas such as helpfulness and awareness can serve as at-the-ready resources to help librarians implement initiatives. They explore these ideas through four viewpoints: individual, team, leader, and organization. Readers will learn how to empower themselves through inspired thinking, bridge the gap between themselves and big ideas, turn ideas into resources, and bring awareness and action to all staff members. ALA Editions, 2020. 144 p. \$54.99. PBK. 978-0-8389-4671-8. 

SOLUTIONS

Products and services



DeskMAX's two stand-mounted panels absorb sound and prevent reverberations during recording.

for temporary studio use. The EditMAX and ProducerMAX kits include large, freestanding acoustic panels intended to line walls; stand-mounted bass traps (which control low-frequency sounds in a room); and monitor pads. The pieces in these discounted bundles can also be purchased individually.

In addition to podcast recording, portable treatments are also useful for managing acoustics during presentations, webinars, or other recordings. Portable treatments can be disassembled for storage after use.

Auralex acoustic treatments are available for purchase directly from Auralex or through its network of online and physical dealers. DeskMAX is \$339.99, and MAX Kits start at \$1,405.99 for EditMAX. For more information, visit bit.ly/Sol-Auralex.

Cast and Release

Adding resources for podcasters

BY Carrie Smith

Podcasts have grown from a niche medium into an industry that reaches millions of listeners, while retaining its do-it-yourself ethos. The easy point of entry means that libraries don't have to invest in a full recording studio to assist podcasters, whether they are beginners or seasoned producers. From all-in-one mixing boards and editing and hosting apps to portable acoustic treatments, there are many ways libraries can contribute to the podcast ecosystem.

Auralex Portable Acoustic Treatments

Room acoustics are easy to overlook, but the layout and shape of spaces noticeably affect the quality of audio recordings. Auralex offers a range of portable, lightweight, freestanding acoustic dampeners so

you can create a temporary recording space for vocal work in an existing room without committing to permanent modifications.

The DeskMAX is a simple, stand-alone solution for vocal recording. Two 24-inch, stand-mounted panels can be positioned on a desk or other flat surface to absorb sound and prevent reverberations from solid surfaces behind the recording area. The panels are made of acoustic foam with a hard backing and come in three colors: charcoal, burgundy, and purple.

Launched in 2018, Auralex's MAX Kits bundle portable acoustic treatments in order to more thoroughly adapt spaces, such as meeting and conference rooms,

RØDECaster Pro is a fully integrated podcast production console.

RØDECaster Pro

RØDE Microphones launched RØDECaster Pro, its fully integrated podcast production console, in late 2018. Users can record, mix, and save their podcast directly without a computer. A combination mixer



CASE STUDY

Norman Weighs Anchor

How do you use Anchor?

In our library we use Anchor to show learners how easy it is to record their own podcasts. We feature it as a creation tool on our library website and include it in lessons where students are creating final projects for research units, learning about digital storytelling, or creating personal passion projects.

USER: Molly Dettmann, teacher librarian, Norman (Okla.) North High School Library



PRODUCT: Anchor

DETAILS: Anchor offers free podcast hosting and a suite of editing and creation tools to simplify podcast creation.

How does Anchor serve your library's needs? We won a Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) Digital Equipment Grant this summer for new podcasting equipment. Our grant project

had students record podcasts about some of the YALSA Teens' Top Ten books they had read. For that, we needed a hosting platform, and Anchor was the obvious choice because of its functionality and ease of use.

What are the main benefits? While some students use the mobile app, we mostly use the web version because each student has a MacBook and can plug in our audio recording equipment. Everything about the site is easy to use and understand. The design is simple, and Anchor's editing options are front and center once you log in. Anchor's single sign-on option—which allows users to log in with a Google account instead of creating a new user-

name and password—made it easy to get started, since our learners all have school accounts. As for the editing capabilities, the background music option is one of my favorites because learners can pick audio to fit the mood of their podcast and preview several sound clips before deciding. Then, with a click, the music is added. It automatically starts off loud but then quiets when the actual podcast begins, giving it a professional feel. There are also transition noises and sounds that can be added, and recordings can be split up. Anchor publishes podcasts to multiple platforms, including Spotify. For our "North's Teens' Top Ten" podcast, almost half of our listeners are on Spotify.

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

I would like to see an option allowing users to make multiple podcasts. At this point you can make one podcast with multiple episodes and even break it up by season, but you cannot have multiple podcasts. It would be nice to see this option so learners could have a podcast relating to projects within school as well as personal podcasts. ●

and beat pad, the console lets users control eight audio sources. Its four XLR microphone inputs and four headphone outputs allow simultaneous recording by multiple guests. For phone interviews—often difficult for podcasters to record without specialized equipment or software—RØDECaster offers three different phone inputs: a 3.5-millimeter TRRS jack, a USB port, and Bluetooth connectivity. Finally, eight touch-activated beat pads, which come with preinstalled sound effects, allow users to add effects, pre-recorded interviews, or commercials in real time. Users can also record directly to the pads or drag and drop other audio using a companion app (which requires Windows 10 or macOS 10.11). The pads store up to eight separate banks of sounds, for a total of 64 sound menus.

RØDECaster saves recordings to a micro SD card or records directly to a computer via USB port. Beginners can record their podcast as a single stereo file, ready for upload to any podcasting platform. Those who do more advanced editing can export recordings to their preferred digital audio workstation (DAW) as multitrack files, with each audio source on its own track. RØDE offers downloadable walkthroughs for common DAWs, including GarageBand and Pro Tools.

Using the console for multiple podcasts is simplified by the "show" function, which saves a copy of all settings, including recordings on the pads. Settings can later be restored to any RØDECaster Pro.

The RØDECaster Pro is available from online and physical dealers for \$599. Library discounts may be available through some retailers. For more information, visit bit.ly/Sol-RODECaster. **AL**



A student at Norman (Okla.) North High School uses Anchor to record a podcast.

PEOPLE

Announcements

ON THE MOVE

October 7 **Spencer Bevis** was appointed project librarian for North Carolina Historic Newspapers at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill appointed **Joanneke Elliott** African studies and West European studies librarian, effective November 4.



Michelle J. Fernandez became senior librarian (bookmobile) at New York Public Library, Bronx Network, December 23.



Reaching Across Illinois Library System in Burr Ridge named **Monica Harris** associate executive director in January.



Scott Kinney joined Evansville (Ind.) Vanderburgh Public Library as CEO-director in January.

Kate Laughlin became executive director for the Association for Rural and Small Libraries in Whitehall, Michigan, in January.

New Orleans Public Library appointed **Gabriel Morley** executive director and city librarian November 12.

Lauren Read became business, science, and technology librarian at Enoch Pratt Free Library's Central Library in Baltimore in September.

Suzanne Roberts became director of Highland County (Ohio) District Library December 4.

Jose Rodriguez joined Georgia State University in Atlanta as outreach librarian and library liaison to the Honors College in November.



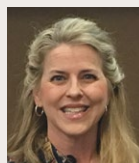
Kudos

Activist librarian **Sanford Berman** received the Edina (Minn.)

Human Rights and Relations Commission's Tom Oye Award, which honors residents' socially minded pursuits, in recognition of his work to eliminate language that perpetuates bias from library catalogs.

East Baton Rouge (La.) Parish Library's Children's Services presented its Spaht Scholar

Award to **Pamela Cambre Lakvold**, librarian at Westdale Heights Academic Magnet School in Baton Rouge.



October 22 **Simone Richardson**, a librarian at Akron-Summit County (Ohio) Public Library's business and government division, received the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction's Impact Award for her work providing services to formerly incarcerated individuals.

Cleveland Magazine named Cleveland Public Library Executive Director **Felton Thomas Jr.** its 2019 Community Leader of the Year. ●

November 4 **Christine Schonhart** joined King County (Wash.) Library System as deputy director for public services.

The City of Torrance, California, named **Yolande Wilburn** city librarian December 5.

Onondaga County (N.Y.) Public Libraries named **Christian Zabriskie** executive director, effective January 6.

PROMOTIONS

Sarah Clevidence was promoted to director of Findlay-Hancock County (Ohio) Public Library January 11.

Kaley Costello was promoted to manager of the Lakewood/Smokey Point Library in Arlington, Washington, in October.

Lindsay Hanson was promoted to manager of Lake Stevens (Wash.) Library in October.

Washington Library Association promoted **Brianna Hoffman** to executive director, effective January 1.

In December, **Monica Jackson** was promoted to manager of Arlington (Wash.) Library.

New Haven (Conn.) Free Public Library promoted **John Jessen** to city librarian December 23.

January 1 Fairfield (Conn.) University promoted **Christina S. McGowan** to dean of the library and university librarian.

East Central Regional Library in Minnesota promoted **Kirsten Vaughan** to branch librarian at Cambridge Public Library in December.

RETIREMENTS

Tom Adkins retired as director of Garnet A. Wilson Public Library in Waverly, Ohio, November 22.

Cynthia Carter, librarian for Wiscasset (Maine) Elementary School and Wiscasset Middle High School, retired December 20.

October 11 **Jeanne Drewes** retired as chief of the Binding and Collections Care Division of the Library of Congress.

Carole Kowell, director of Medina County (Ohio) District Library, retired in December.

November 15 **Jane Plass** retired as associate executive director of Reaching Across Illinois Library System in Burr Ridge.

Barbara J. Stites, interim dean of Wilson G. Bradshaw Library at Florida Gulf Coast University in Fort Myers, retired December 24.

Sandra Tauler retired as director of Camarena Memorial Library in Calexico, California, September 26.

Jennifer West retired as director of Highland County (Ohio) District Library in December.

Jeff Winkle retired as director of Findlay-Hancock County (Ohio) Public Library January 10.

AT ALA

Katie Bane, marketing and sales manager for ALA Digital Reference, left ALA November 22.

Colleen Barbus became ALA's librarian and archivist December 2.

Erik Cameron, director for data applications in the Public Programs Office, left ALA November 15.

The Communications and Marketing Office (CMO) promoted **Jan Carmichael** to web content manager November 4.

Jazzy Celindro joined the Public Policy and Advocacy Office as program assistant in December.

November 4 **Emily Day** joined Conference Services as conference content manager.

Larry Deutsch, communications manager for the Public Library Association, left ALA January 15

October 30 Conference Services promoted **Donna Hunter** to conference marketing specialist.

In Memory

Nancy "Nan" Ellen Chase, 72, a librarian at West Bend (Wis.) Public Library from 1997 until her 2012 retirement, died November 5. She had previously worked at Lake Superior State University in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan.

Evelyn Daniel, 86, dean and professor emerita at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Information and Library Science (SILS), died November 24. During her five-year tenure as dean, the school added two degrees and increased the amount of funded research. She received the SILS Award for Teaching Excellence in 1999 and 2009, the Edward G. Holley for the Good of the Order Award in 2010, and the Association for Library and Information Science Education Service Award in 2000.

Gayatri Singh, 42, communication research librarian at University of California San Diego (UCSD), died October 31. She had worked at UCSD since 2007 after working at several libraries in Southern California. Singh held leadership roles on the library's Diversity and Inclusion and Sustainability committees and served on committees in the Reference and User Services Association, the Asian Pacific American Librarians Association, the California Academic and Research Libraries Association, and the Librarians Association of the University of California.

Harry R. Skallerup, 92, director of libraries at Florida Atlantic University (FAU) in Boca Raton for 15 years until retiring in 1992, died June 18. As director, he played a key role in the planning and construction of FAU's S. E. Wimberly Library. Skallerup wrote many articles and papers as well as *Books Afloat and Ashore: A History of Books, Libraries, and Reading Among Seamen During the Age of Sail* (Archon Books, 1974). He had previously worked as librarian at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, and the University of Iowa in Iowa City, and as associate director at the US Naval Academy Library in Annapolis.



Michael E. Sullivan, 52, director of Weare (N.H.) Public Library, died December 10. During his tenure, the library filled the void left when the town's only newspaper went out of business, creating *Weare in the World*, a weekly newsletter of local events and information. Sullivan was the author of the ALA Editions books *Fundamentals of Children's Services*, second edition (2013), *Connecting Boys with Books 2* (2009), and *Serving Boys through Readers' Advisory* (2010). ●

Megan Kaiko was promoted to conference planner in Conference Services October 30.

ALA Editions/Neal-Schuman Publisher

Chris Murphy retired January 3.

CMO promoted **Lindsey Simon** to content strategy manager November 4.

Susana Stoll became associate director of the Office for Accreditation in December. AL



The Science of the Census

In many ways, the US Census Bureau's Census Library in Suitland, Maryland, is similar to any other research library. It has a circulation desk, reference activities, programming, and archives and special collections which hold maps, artifacts, and more than 5,000 research papers generated by the bureau's scientists over the years.

"The census is a living document," says David Thibodeau, head librarian and project manager, of the survey that has been conducted every 10 years since 1790. "People find something in the 1980 Census and they want to find the exact same data going back decades, but it doesn't really work like that. In every manifestation, every decennial census, there are differences."

The Census Library collects, preserves, and provides access to information related to the Census Bureau—whose motto is "measuring America's people, places, and economy"—and the surveys it administers (including the American Community Survey, among others) in the core subject areas of statistics, survey methodology and sampling, population studies,

demography, geography, computer technology, census histories, and international census data.

Every week Thibodeau fields requests for census data and reports from internal and external researchers: publications like *The Economist* and *The Washington Post*, corporations looking for neighborhood demographic data, and all manner of libraries tracing reference requests to the source.

While other bureau employees focus on the 2020 count, Thibodeau is looking ahead to the interpretation stage, when researchers convert raw numbers into trends and insights.

"The census is about community, taking big government and translating it for communities," he says. "That's a wonderful place for libraries to play a role." **AL**

David Thibodeau with a *Statistical Atlas of the United States* from the 9th Decennial Census (1870), published in 1874.

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