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American Library Association • November 8, 2019

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How the Chicago strike affected school librarians

Timothy Inklebarger writes: “There was much to celebrate in the historic five-year contract deal between Chicago Public School teachers and the city that ended an 11-day Chicago Teachers Union strike on October 31. Among the wins: teacher pay raises, smaller class sizes, and a social worker and nurse in every school. But missing from those successes was the effort to stem the continuing and rapid reduction of librarians at public schools across the city. Roughly 80% of the [514 district-run schools in the CPS system](#) are without a librarian, and Nora Wiltse, the only CPS librarian at the bargaining table, says she believes the situation is likely to get worse.”...



American Libraries feature, Nov. 8

Media literacy in an age of fake news

George M. Eberhart writes: “After several years of fake news and alternative facts, media literacy is still a challenge. The 2018 [Learning and Prototyping Report](#) showed that news consumers think they are better at media literacy than they actually are. How can libraries help bridge that gap and help their communities get informed? Librarians can ensure patrons make informed decisions in local, state, and national elections by helping them think critically. Libraries of all types can promote media literacy by providing handouts, LibGuides, training, and programs about separating fact from online fiction. Here are some resources that can assist.” Jamie Gregory also offers tips on [teaching disinformation literacy](#),...



American Libraries feature, Nov./Dec.; *Intellectual Freedom Blog*, Nov. 6

Tech tools for fighting fake news

Jessica Cilella writes: “Like many libraries, Albuquerque and Bernalillo County’s library system is turning to a new generation of tech tools and digital resources to teach media literacy.

[NewsGuard](#) is a web browser extension designed to literally red-flag problematic articles and blog posts like the [one published](#) by American Pastors Network, a faith-based organization, on drag queen storytime performers. More than 200 libraries have installed NewsGuard on their public computers as a teaching device to promote media literacy. Richland Library in Columbia, South Carolina, was among the first, introducing the browser extension across its 14 branches.”...



American Libraries feature, Nov./Dec.; American Pastors Network, Mar. 27

Promoting civic literacy with library forums

Greg Landgraf writes: “Every October since 1992, Wadsworth (Ohio) Public Library has hosted forums at which patrons can pose questions to candidates for local offices, the state House and Senate, and even the US House of Representatives. These forums have attracted dozens of attendees and receive significant local media coverage. Library Director Daniel Slife always begins by clarifying that the event is a forum, not a debate, so questions and answers must focus on issues and the office. Candidates make two-minute opening statements; then library staffers collect questions from attendees, filtering out personal attacks against candidates.”...



American Libraries feature, Nov./Dec.



FLA, ALA statements on Citrus County’s decision

Heather Snapp and Robin Shader write: “On behalf of the Florida Library Association, representing more than 1,050 members and 60 institutions, we oppose the recent position taken by the Citrus County Board of County Commissioners in its [denial of the library’s electronic subscription](#) to the *New York Times*. We firmly believe that all residents and library visitors should be allowed access to varying viewpoints as promised by their First Amendment rights. ALA maintains the [Library Bill of Rights](#) and [ALA Code of Ethics](#) to guide libraries in providing access to a diverse set of materials that do not discriminate on the basis of background or beliefs.” ALA also [issued a statement](#) in response to the decision on November 5. Zachary T. Sampson and Josh Fiallo described how the [culture war](#) suddenly erupted....



Tallahassee (Fla.) Democrat, Nov. 5–6; AL: The Scoop, Nov. 5; Tampa Bay (Fla.) Times, Nov. 5

Personalization vs. privacy

Marshall Breeding writes: “In ensuring user privacy, libraries that provide personalized online services often encounter tensions and contradictions. Tools and technologies that offer opportunities for better engagement do not always draw a clear boundary between privacy and personalization. Commercial websites aim to capture as much personal data as possible. This data powers a global advertising ecosystem designed to strengthen retail sales through finely targeted ad placement. To manage websites and internet technologies in ways that reflect their values, libraries invariably must make difficult choices and compromises.”...



American Libraries column, Nov./Dec.

Unauthorized practice of law in the library

Anthony Aycock writes: “Librarians are accustomed to dealing with all manner of patron queries. The drive to help patrons find useful information and understand its applications is deeply rooted in the profession; if we know the answer to a question or the solution to a problem, we’re inclined to offer it up without hesitation. This practice can get sticky when research topics involve the law. In my role as legislative librarian with the North Carolina Legislative Library, I have been asked to summarize statutes, fill out forms, advise someone what to ask for in court, explain case law, proofread legal documents, and interpret the US Constitution.”...



American Libraries column, Nov. 6



Literacy promotion in laundromats

Kari Kurjiaka writes: “Families spend an average of 2.5 hours during each visit to the laundromat—a place where they routinely visit about once a week. Over the past five years, [Too Small to Fail](#), the early childhood initiative of the Clinton Foundation, has been leading a partnership with the LaundryCares Foundation to [transform laundromats](#) across the country into playful, literacy-rich environments for children and families. These ‘[Family Read, Play, and Learn](#)’ spaces are designed to meet families where they are and encourage parents to engage in language-rich activities like talking, reading, and singing during laundry time.”...



ALSC Blog, Nov. 7; American Libraries Trend, May

Public library responses to the opioid crisis

PLA and OCLC have released two new publications that demonstrate how public libraries

are responding to the opioid crisis in their communities. In September 2018, the two organizations [launched](#) a collaborative [project](#) to collect and share knowledge and resources to support public libraries and their community partners in addressing this national health crisis. A [summary report](#) highlights the findings from [eight case study sites](#), highlights emerging practices of how libraries are responding to the crisis in collaboration with their partners, and identifies both the opportunities and barriers that libraries should consider....



PLA, Nov. 6; Oct. 8, 2018

Union contracts and staffing models

Linda W. Braun writes: “Unions make it hard for library staffers to work effectively with youth of color.’ That’s what a library colleague recently said to me over coffee. I sat silently for a few seconds, thinking about this statement and how it could be true. I recognized that the contractual phrase ‘fair and flexible working hours’ was likely the root of the problem. What constitutes ‘fair and flexible’ in library contracts does not readily align with the outreach-centered approaches today’s youth library workers must take to reach underserved and marginalized individuals and communities.”...



American Libraries column, Nov./Dec.



How libraries make us feel

Laura Long writes: “On a memorable day a few years ago, a precious 5th grader named Joseph visited the library. I heard him breathe deeply and say, ‘I just love the smell of the library on a Monday morning!’ I will never forget it. He captured how I feel about our school library in one sentence. Now, I am at Highland School of Technology in Gastonia, North Carolina. Students from across the county choose to come to our school, making up our diverse student body. Each day, I hope my high school students feel that our library is indeed a special place, a community, a place that feels like home.” Laura Raicovich argues that [public libraries do a better job](#) than museums in making the public feel welcome....



Knowledge Quest blog, Nov. 6; Hyperallergic, Nov. 7

Women’s writing began much earlier than supposed

There is the 8th-century abbess who wrote the first surviving example of poetry known to have been authored by an Englishwoman. Or her contemporary, a nun who was the first woman to write a full-length prose work in English and hid her name in the text. To be published in December, Diane Watt’s [Women, Writing, and Religion in England and](#)

[Beyond, 650–1100](#) argues that there was a thriving female literature far earlier than previously believed, and that earlier histories have deliberately excluded or marginalized the contributions of early medieval women....



The Guardian (UK), Nov. 7

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Editor, *AL Direct*: George M. Eberhart, geberhart@ala.org

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[American Libraries](#)

50 E. Huron St.
Chicago, IL 60611
800-545-2433, ext. 4216

ISSN 1559-369X

ALA PUBLISHING | AmericanLibraryAssociation