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American Library Association • December 13, 2019

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FCC adopts ALA E-Rate recommendations

Marijke Visser writes: "On December 3, the FCC released its long-awaited [E-Rate order](#), making permanent the Category 2 budget system that was piloted in the 2014 modernization of the federal program. On balance, the new order reflects the FCC's ongoing efforts to make the application process less burdensome, which ALA has advocated many times. Since 2014, ALA has filed numerous rounds of comments and secured meetings with FCC staff and commissioners on behalf of the nation's libraries, focusing on how the nascent Category 2 budget system is working."...



AL: The Scoop, Dec. 12; FCC, Dec. 3

Is my library liable for fake news?

Tomas A. Lipinski writes: "Legal regulation of *fake news* in public spaces is difficult, if not impossible. As long as the speech is not defamatory, 'the right to lie' is constitutionally protected as free speech. Official filings are an exception: You cannot lie on your tax return, on a mortgage loan application, under oath, or otherwise on legal declarations subject to penalty of perjury. In theory, the proper response to false claims is more speech—that is, more open exchange in a free marketplace. Libraries can take a cue from this by offering programming and materials that help patrons discern [truthful news](#) from [fake news](#)."...



American Libraries column, Dec. 13; American Libraries features, Nov./Dec.

Attack in Auburn raises concerns about library safety

It happened in an instant. A witness to the knife attack on December 10 at the Auburn (Calif.) Library described how a man, identified by Auburn police as [Opada Joseph Opada](#), suddenly wrapped his arms around a patron before stabbing him multiple times. As the assailant ran away, he assaulted another patron in the head with the knife and slashed a third who tried to stop his escape. The first victim remains in critical condition. The attack put a community on edge one day short of the [one-year anniversary](#) of a similarly jarring attack on [Amber Clark](#), branch manager of a library in North Natomas. “The nature of libraries and their being so open for everyone makes them a little more vulnerable to people who may be violence prone,” said [Kelly Clark](#), Amber’s husband....



Sacramento (Calif.) Bee, Dec. 11; KCRA-TV, Sacramento, Dec. 11; KTXL-TV, Dec. 11; ALA Communications and Marketing Office, Dec. 21, 2018; American Libraries column, Apr. 23



Philadelphia ditches late fees

After two years of debate, the board of trustees of the Free Library of Philadelphia voted on December 11 to eliminate fines on overdue materials. The vote now kicks off an internal process “of amending the policies that go into [this decision] and implementing staff training and public relations around it,” Free Library President and Director Siobhan Reardon said, adding that she expects patrons will see late fees disappear by the end of 2020. Since 2013, the library has offered fine-free library cards to children 12 years old and younger....



Philadelphia Magazine, Dec. 11

Chicago’s Chinatown branch adapts to its seniors

Michael Lee writes: “Since opening in 2015, the Chinatown branch of the Chicago Public Library has become a hub for seniors in the community to socialize, play board games, and participate in other activities. Like other public libraries nationwide, it is adapting to the changing needs of community residents in addition to its traditional role as a resource for books, periodicals, and DVDs. Libraries nationwide are looking for ways to support seniors, but not because they are changing their roles, said Maria Bonn, director of the library and information science master’s program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.”...



Medill Reports Chicago, Dec. 12

OCLC survey on discovery and fulfillment

Lynn Silipigni Connaway writes: “How do library users navigate their paths from an initial point-of-need to the final moment of getting the resources they require? That process can be as fast as a single search and one click, or it can encompass many stops and starts, false trails, frustrations, and wrong turns. Understanding and improving those journeys is among the most important work we do, so I was thrilled when the OCLC Global Council chose ‘Discovery and Fulfillment’ as its focus area for 2020. Watch this [presentation](#) (7:07) I recently gave on the topic, then complete and submit this [Global Council survey](#) on discovery and fulfillment.”...



OCLC Next, Dec. 11; OCLCVideo YouTube channel, Dec. 11



Women rule the 2019 National Film Registry

Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden announced December 11 the selection of 25 of America’s most influential motion pictures to the National Film Registry. Selected because of their cultural, historic, and aesthetic importance to the nation’s film heritage, the films in the class of 2019 range from Prince’s 1984 autobiographical hit *Purple Rain* and Spike Lee’s 1986 breakout movie *She’s Gotta Have It* to Kevin Smith’s 1994 *Clerks*. An unprecedented seven motion pictures directed by women are on this year’s list, the most in a single year ever, among them *Before Stonewall*, directed by Greta Schiller, and Elaine May’s *A New Leaf*....



Library of Congress, Dec. 11

Not just Greta

Howard LaFranchi writes: “When teenage Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg arrived by solar-powered boat in New York in September to speak before the United Nations General Assembly, she garnered so much attention one might think her youthful climate activism was unusual. Actually it’s not. All over the world, in big cities and small villages, in global powers and tiny island nations, young people are mobilizing and marching, as seen in the Black Friday global climate strike. Beyond that, young people are starting their own organizations and innovating greener everyday-living practices, all in the name of addressing climate change.”...

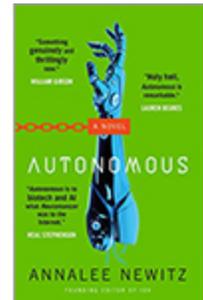


Christian Science Monitor, Dec. 6

Nine climate crisis novels

Amy Brady writes: “’Tis the season for good food, lots of travel, and—if your family is anything like mine—difficult conversations with loved ones who still think climate change is a made-up liberal plot. This year, I decided to give them the books that might help them to think differently—specifically, works of climate fiction (cli-fi) novels and short stories that give narrative shape to the climate emergency. These nine books aren’t just great stories; they might also help to broach the subject of climate change in a non-threatening way.”...

Chicago Review of Books, Dec. 12



The uncomfortable limits of human knowledge

James C. Zimring writes: “Science seems under assault. Attacks come from many directions, ranging from the political realm to groups and individuals masquerading as scientific entities. There is even a real risk that scientific fact will eventually be reduced to just another opinion, even when those facts describe natural phenomena—the very purpose for which science was developed. Hastening this erosion are hyperbolic claims of ‘truth’ that science is often perceived to make and that practicing researchers may themselves project, whether intentionally or not.”...

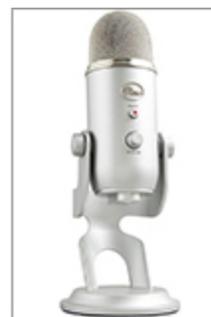
The Scientist, Dec. 1



The best USB microphone

Melanie Pinola and Kevin Purdy write: “The built-in microphones on most computers don’t do your voice justice—they’re likely to pick up too much room tone, add too much fuzz, and miss out on the warm tones of being in the same room as someone. Whether you’re on a conference call or recording a podcast, a standalone mic connected over USB will help you sound your best. After testing more than 25 different USB microphones over the past six years with the help of audio professionals, we’ve found that the Blue Yeti is still the best microphone for most people.”...

Wirecutter, Dec. 9



Tracking down the history of the Library Cake

Corin Balkovek writes: “Chances are, if you work in a library or have a bookish lifestyle and spend any time on social media, you’ve seen it: The Library Cake. With shelves packed to the brim, a table and chairs beset with reading materials and lamps, even miniature potted plants sitting outside the ‘front door,’ the intricate edible decorations take baked goods to the next level. But where did the



Library Cake come from? Why was it created? ‘This cake was made for my daughter’s 21st birthday,’ wrote the Library Cake’s creator, Kathy Klaus, in our communications.”...

Book Riot, Dec. 13

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