

# american libraries DIRECT

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## The American Library in Paris

Leonard Kniffel writes: “In the 7th arrondissement on rue du Général Camou, less than a 10-minute walk from the Eiffel Tower, sits the American Library in Paris, which is celebrating its centennial this year. Before COVID-19, more than 320 visitors would arrive daily, approaching the distinctly Parisian façade from the elegant residential Avenue Rapp. Inside, the bright, modern interior opens into what Ernest Hemingway—one of the library’s early supporters—would have surely described as ‘a clean, well-lighted place.’ According to Audrey Chapuis, the library’s director since 2018, activity at the American Library in Paris before the pandemic had been ‘booming.’” ...



*American Libraries* feature, May

## Meet the 2020 class of Emerging Leaders

Librarianship is ever changing, and some of the people leading that change are newer members of the profession. They’re the fresh faces greeting patrons at reference desks, helping students with research, and experimenting with new ideas behind the scenes. These are ALA’s Emerging Leaders. At the 2020 Midwinter Meeting in Philadelphia, the new Emerging Leaders were divided into eight groups to complete projects for their host ALA units and affiliates. We joined them in Philadelphia to ask what the future holds for the profession....



*American Libraries* feature, May

## Rediscovering the role of women in early American history



US Revolutionary War history is often presented as a version of events by and about men. But what role did women play in early American society? What insights and observations did they have about government and politics, and what were their experiences during the war?

Discover a [new collection of documents](#) such as written correspondence and household records to reveal the voices of women from this critical era in American history. Read a [case study](#) for examples of how primary sources can inform fresh perspectives in research and learning.

## Summer reading during a pandemic

Cass Balzer writes: “As social distancing measures continue, libraries anticipate big changes to summer reading. With chances for face-to-face contact limited or absent, many seek alternative strategies for hosting events and recording reading goals. The answer for most: online programming, such as virtual storytimes, science experiments, and small-scale cooking demonstrations. ‘Our plan is to do a pretty strong and regular slate of virtual programming put out on Facebook,’ said Luke Bentley, assistant director at Guernsey County (Ohio) Public Library.” ...



*AL: The Scoop, May 4*

## Julia Alvarez appreciates nuance amid chaos

Like many Dominican-American writers of her generation, Julia Alvarez (right) has drawn inspiration from the Dominican Republic’s history (such as the legacy of dictator Rafael Trujillo, in her novel *In the Time of the Butterflies*) and her experience as a newcomer in the US (*How the García Girls Lost Their Accents*). *Afterlife* (Algonquin Books, April), her first adult novel since 2006, is anchored firmly in the present, as a retired professor deals with the loss of her husband, the disappearance of her mercurial sister, and a confusing entanglement with a pair of undocumented immigrants....



*American Libraries Newsmaker, May*

## For Wi-Fi, go to the parking lot

Cecilia Kang writes: “For many across the country, parking lots are a digital lifeline during the pandemic. Instead of spending hours in restaurants, libraries, and cafés, people without fast internet access at home are sitting in lots near schools, libraries, and stores that have kept their signals on.



In Ohio, Jon Husted, the lieutenant governor, has directed people to connect to hundreds of nonprofits, libraries, and schools across the state. School leaders in Philadelphia and Sacramento have encouraged families to use free hot spots in library and school parking lots, and more than 100 people logged on to the Wi-Fi of one of Omaha's libraries over three days recently.”...

*New York Times, May 5*



## Library installs porta-potty and hand-washing station

When South Pasadena (Calif.) Public Library Director Cathy Billings and staff knew that the library would be closed to the public starting March 16, they immediately recognized that the lack of access to the restrooms would be problematic for some patrons—especially those experiencing homelessness. This concern was shared by members of the city council and the South Pasadena community. Once the need was identified, library staff worked with Public Works to arrange for an ADA-accessible porta-potty and hand-washing station to be installed in the Library Park that same week....



*ColoradoBoulevard.net, Pasadena, Calif., May 4*

## Parks and recreation and libraries working together

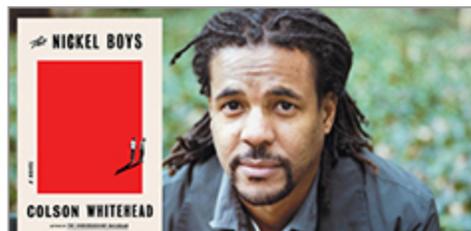
Noah Lenstra writes: “As the COVID-19 pandemic has spread throughout the US, I have been actively tracking how public libraries have responded. Right out of the gate, I found park and recreation agencies collaborating with public libraries for a unified response. In Oak Park, Illinois, on March 11, the village’s two school districts [joined forces](#) with public library and the park district to make the joint decision to close and suspend all programming. Rather than a scattered response emanating from different agencies, the schools, libraries, and parks came together to have one unified message.”...



*Open Space, May 1; OakPark.com, Mar. 18*

## 2020 Pulitzer Prize winners

Author Colson Whitehead (right) won his second Pulitzer for his novel, *The Nickel Boys*, based on a real-life Florida reform school where students were physically and sexually abused. A new twist was the inaugural award for audio reporting, which went to the staff of the public radio show and podcast, *This American Life*, along with *Los Angeles Times* reporter Molly O’Toole and *Vice News* freelance reporter Emily Green. The board also awarded a special citation to Ida B. Wells, the journalist and suffragist who spent the 1890s documenting lynching in the US. The



NPR, May 4



## Programming by telephone

Hannah Arata writes: “With COVID-19, library programming has gone digital. But what about patrons without internet access, or with very limited access? To combat the digital divide, libraries and humanities councils across the country are finding the old-fashioned telephone to be a strong programming tool. I spoke with some librarians and humanities professionals on how they transform the simple act of dialing a phone into an educational and entertaining experience and how COVID-19 could bring along a resurgence of these programs. They offered some tips on how your library can start similar programming.”...



*Programming Librarian, May 4*

## So you've been furloughed

Jacqueline Kociubuk writes: “I got the news midway through a meeting by a pop-up email notification in the corner of my screen: I was being furloughed. In a way I knew it was coming. Like many libraries across the country, mine is facing a budget crisis with an urgent need to cut costs substantially.



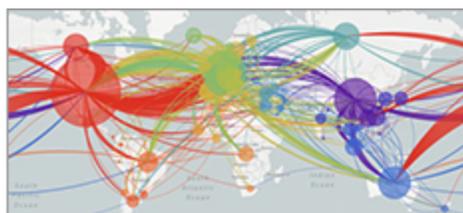
Simply reducing the ordering expenses won't fix it. That said, it still hurt to get the official word, and it's scary to have to make real plans about what life may look like until the furlough ends. For my position, furlough looks like an unpaid leave of absence with some benefits retained. It's not ideal, but in many ways it could be worse. In order to cope I found these reminders to be helpful.”...

*ALSC Blog, May 4*



## Collecting the maps that define the pandemic

Laura Bliss writes: “John Hessler, a specialist in modern cartography and GIS at the Library of Congress, is collecting the maps of the coronavirus pandemic. In a public health crisis where the interpretation of data, maps and other visualizations



has been critical, Hessler's job (at least part of it) is to ensure that future historians and lawmakers can access that data, and see how mapmaking itself advanced, as they try and grasp this moment in time.”...

*CityLab, May 4*

## A plan for resisting Zoombombing

Carlton E. Green writes: “Recently, [Zoombombing](#) attempted to rob me of a learning opportunity and peace of mind. I was watching a webinar featuring a panel of four women of color leaders discussing COVID-19 and diversity in higher education. Without warning, pornographic images and offensive



language erupted onto the screen. Even as the hosts blocked an inappropriate adult-film image, the Zoom whiteboard suddenly appeared. Someone then tried to slowly scrawl a message on it. As [Zoombombing](#) proliferates, we must be able to respond to the incident and care for the people who have been impacted. Here are some things to consider.”...

*Inside Higher Ed, Apr. 3, May 5; AL: The Scoop, Apr. 23*

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