american libraries DIRECT
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Islamic State militants bulldoze ancient Nimrud site

The Islamic State militant group attacked the ancient archaeological site of Nimrud in northern Iraq this week and damaged it with heavy vehicles, according to Iraq's Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. It was the latest in a series of attacks on ancient structures and artifacts in Syria and Iraq that the group has destroyed in the name of its harsh interpretation of Islamic law. Nimrud is the sprawling site of a city founded by the Assyrian King Shalmanesar I, who died in 1245 B.C. The University of Chicago's Oriental Institute in a March 4 statement called the depredations a "moral and cultural outrage."...

New York Times, Feb. 26, Mar. 5; Oriental Institute, Mar. 4

Welcome to the future, at your library

ALA Executive Director Keith Michael Fiels (right) writes: "Last spring, a group of librarians and non-librarians gathered at the Library of Congress for a Summit on the Future of Libraries. The summit helped launch the new Center for the Future of Libraries and focused on some of the trends that may shape the world in which libraries will operate. But it also focused on how libraries can shape the future or, better still, offer it to our communities."....

American Libraries column, Mar./Apr.

10 libraries will hold “StoryCorps @ your library”

The ALA Public Programs Office, in partnership with StoryCorps, has announced that 10 public libraries will participate in the “StoryCorps @ your library” program. Funded by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the program will bring StoryCorps’ popular interview methods to libraries while developing a replicable model of oral history programming. The selected sites will receive grant funding, training and equipment to collect oral histories....

Public Programs Office, Mar. 4

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Outlander returns to the small screen

Libraries can expect a boost in readership with the return of the TV series *Outlander* to Starz on April 4. Based on Diana Gabaldon’s bestselling book series, season one continues as Claire, now Mrs. Jamie Fraser, is captured by Black Jack Randall’s men.

Outlander won a 2015 People’s Choice Award for Favorite Cable Sci-fi/Fantasy TV Show, and the newest title in the book series, *Written in My Own Heart’s Blood,* received 2015 Audie Award nominations for both Fiction and Solo Narration (Female).

Library Larry’s Big Day

The Denton, Texas, children’s educational program *Library Larry’s Big Day* recently ended its five-year run with its final episode. The show, produced by Denton Television and the Denton Public Library, follows three puppets—Library Larry, a Texas bull; Emmy Lou Dickenson, a word-loving pig; and Mr. Chompers, a fun-loving hippo—who live in the library, read books, learn new words, sing songs, and visit local places related to what they read about. The show has also gone on the road, giving an inside look at the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum in Dallas. Mayor Chris Watts has declared March 3 as Library Larry’s Big Day in Denton....

Denton (Tex.) Record-Chronicle, Mar. 3

Utah library feeds hungry youth

Located within walking distance of several schools, the

Kearns branch of the Salt Lake County (Utah) Library System harbors 50–100 youth after school every day, most of them hungry. Monday through Thursday at 3–3:30 p.m., and Friday at 1–1:30 p.m., anyone under 18 may receive a free snack of grains, usually crackers, and fruit, like applesauce or raisins. In Utah, one in five children is unsure where his or her next meal will come from. To help, the Utah Food Bank partnered with the library system in November 2014 to ensure that some of the children who rely on the safe haven of the library have something to eat....

KSL-FM, Salt Lake City, Mar. 4

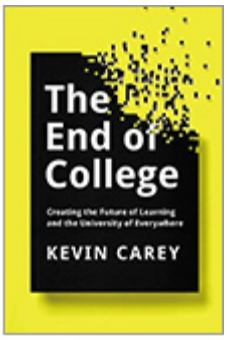
George R. R. Martin gifts a *Hobbit*

On February 27, Texas A&M University Libraries acquired its five millionth volume, a rare first edition of J. R. R. Tolkien's 1937 classic *The Hobbit*—a gift from award-winning *Game of Thrones* author George R. R. Martin. Martin read from the book during a presentation ceremony in the university auditorium. Only 1,500 published first editions of *The Hobbit* exist. The volume features a striking dust jacket, complete with the publisher's hand-corrected spelling error on the inside flap....

Texas A&M Today, Feb. 27

ALA san FRANCISCO
ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION June 25-30, 2015

MOOCs did not change higher ed, but digital credentials will



Kevin Carey writes: "Free online courses won't revolutionize education until there is a parallel system of free or low-fee credentials, not controlled by traditional colleges, that leads to jobs. Now technological innovators are working on that, too. The Mozilla Foundation, which brought the world the Firefox web browser, has spent the last few years creating what it calls the Open Badges project. Badges are electronic credentials that any organization, collegiate or otherwise, can issue. Badges indicate specific skills and knowledge, backed by links to electronic evidence of how and why, exactly, the badge was earned. The new digital credentials provide exponentially more information than a college diploma."...

New York Times: The Upshot, Mar. 5

European court: Ebooks are services, not books

Ebooks must be subject to the full rate of value-added tax (VAT), and European Union countries may not extend tax exemptions for books to include ebooks, the Court of Justice of the European Union ruled March 5, adding that it considers downloadable ebooks to be services. Most EU member states, with the exception of Bulgaria and Denmark, impose a lower rate of VAT on physical books than on other products and services. The lower rate for books is one of a limited number of exemptions (PDF file) allowed under the EU's VAT Directive....

PC World, Mar. 5

Five tools for creating audio recordings

Richard Byrne writes: "An audio recording doesn't have to go through the full-fledged production process of creating a podcast in order for it to be a valuable activity for students. Creating short, unedited audio recordings is a good way for students to record and share their reflections on things that they have learned and observed in your classroom. The following five tools can all be used for creating and sharing short audio recordings."...

Free Technology for Teachers, Feb. 21

16 resources for teaching a foreign language

Joy Nelson writes: "As globalization barrels forward, learning a foreign language becomes ever more important and beneficial for students. But learning another language is difficult; if you are a foreign language teacher (or a librarian supporting one), how can you make the process easier and more enjoyable for your students? These resources may help."...

Edudemic, Mar. 4

MLS required

Barbara Fister writes: "On Twitter the other day, a question bubbled up that is a perennial in my field. What is the purpose and value of a library degree? This conversation started with a provocation (right) from a library school professor (R. David Lankes) who likes to make us think. Indeed, it did make us think about many things. I thought 'most of the faculty I work with who value my work would strongly disagree with that statement.' Jacob Berg came back with some skepticism, and I joined."...

Inside Higher Ed: Library Babel Fish, Mar. 5

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AL Direct FAQ: americanlibrariesmagazine.org/aldirect

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