American Library Association • November 20, 2015

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Solving the self-published puzzle

Greg Landgraf writes: “Traditional attitudes toward self-published books are changing. While long decried as the worst-written dregs at the bottom of the publishing barrel, self-publishing has started to attract reputable titles to its ranks, thanks to new technologies and business models. These titles, in turn, are attracting audiences, with some self-published books even becoming bona fide smash hits. Glen Ellyn (Ill.) Public Library is one of a growing number of libraries that are acquiring these books.”...

American Libraries feature, Nov./Dec.

Another Story: The fee library

Joseph Janes writes: “When we think of subscription libraries today, they evoke a sort of charming, sepia-toned reminder of days gone by. In many ways, these paved the way for the emergence of free, publicly supported libraries more than a century ago, and a few of them are left, as curiosities, harmless and unthreatening. But nobody starts them today, right?

Guess again. A new subscription library, rather grandly named Folio: The Seattle Athenaeum, will open in January."...

American Libraries column, Nov./Dec.

Youth Matters: Everything is messy

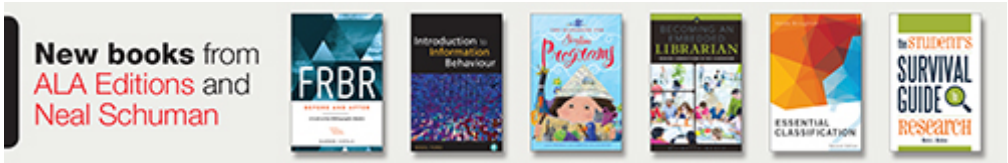
Linda W. Braun writes: "Until recently, if you had asked me how I would describe, in a word, working with and for youth and families, I'd have probably responded: awesome. But not too long ago I was talking with a colleague about our work and she offered a different word: messy. I realized that word was a fitting—and not necessarily negative—description. Many people serving youth and families in libraries may find it to be a 'messy' business."...

American Libraries column, Nov./Dec.

Dispatches from the Field: Embracing the future

Rebecca K. Miller, Heather Moorefield-Lang, and Carolyn Meier write: "In April 2015, the iPad turned five years old. For those of us in libraries, the tablet revolution sparked by the iPad ushered in a period of excitement and exploration. We wondered how tablets might change the way we engage with our users. If nothing else, we understood that tablets and mobile devices held great promise for enhancing teaching and learning opportunities, reference services, access to collections, and circulation services."...

American Libraries column, Nov./Dec.; Dispatches from the Field, Dec. 5, 2012



Reauthorized ESEA passes joint committee

The combined House and Senate versions of the new Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) rewrite, now called the Every Student Succeeds Act, passed the joint conference committee with a 39–1 vote on November 19. The new version alters accountability by making test scores, graduation rates, and proficiency in English at least

51% of a school's grade. Before the committee convened, a framework (PDF file) had already been agreed upon by the four legislators leading the negotiating committee....

Education Week: Politics K–12, Nov. 19; Education Dive, Nov. 20

Will libraries outlive books?

Nancy Gravatt writes: "Can you imagine only one universal library in the world by the next century? And what might a librarian's profile look like—more scientist or content manager? Those questions and more were examined by two panels of library experts mulling over what libraries might look like in our lifetimes and beyond in a November 11 program sponsored by Future Tense, a partnership of Arizona State University, the New America Foundation, and *Slate* magazine."...

AL: The Scoop, Nov. 17

Andre Dubus III and Nancy Pearl at Midwinter

2016 ALA Midwinter Meeting attendees in Boston will have the chance to join a lively conversation between bestselling authors Andre Dubus III and Nancy Pearl at an Auditorium Speaker session held on January 9. Dubus is the author of six books, including the bestsellers *House of Sand and Fog* and *The Garden of Last Days.* Pearl, a former librarian and author of several *Book Lust* and *Book Crush* titles, speaks frequently about the pleasures of reading to libraries, literacy organizations, and community groups....

Conference Services, Nov. 19

Missouri library to make cuts after student fee vote fails

Students and faculty will help University of Missouri Libraries decide what cuts to make to balance the department's budget after students rejected a library fee in mid-November. The staggered fee increase would have used $13 million from students to add new positions, renovate parts of Ellis Library, and increase the collections budget, but only 46% voted in favor of the fee. Lagging state funding and an emphasis on keeping tuition

costs down contribute to the library's budget not being in line with its peers....

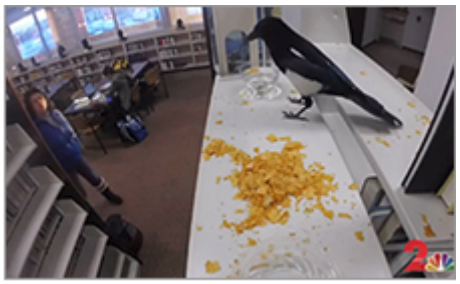
Columbia (Mo.) Daily Tribune, Nov. 19

Klondike Kate mystery laid to rest by librarian

Nate Pedersen, community librarian at the Deschutes (Oreg.) Public Library's downtown Bend branch by day and history detective by night, readily admits to being taken in by the charm and mystique of "Klondike Kate" Rockwell (right), famed dancer during the Yukon Gold Rush and vaudeville star, who spent the last 40 years of her life in Oregon. Pederson has now solved the mystery of who scattered Kate's ashes over the High Desert in 1960—it was David Duniway, the head archivist at the Oregon State Library....

Bend (Oreg.) Bulletin, Nov. 15

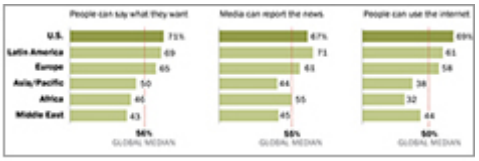
Magpies infest Anchorage library



For about a month, magpies have been infesting the stacks of the Z. J. Loussac Public Library in Anchorage, Alaska. Some suspect the birds got in because of recent construction, but that has not been confirmed. The library has tried multiple traps to catch the magpies but each failed. "We've called several agencies and really there is nobody in town that can handle this kind of thing as far as we can tell," said Doug McAllister, social sciences librarian....

KTUU-TV, Anchorage, Alaska, Nov. 16

Pew Research Center study on freedom of expression



Richard Wike and Katie Simmons write: "Although observers have documented a global decline in democratic rights in recent years, people around the world nonetheless embrace fundamental democratic values, including free expression. A new Pew Research Center survey finds that majorities in nearly all 38 nations polled say it is at least somewhat important to live in a country with free speech, a free press, and freedom on the internet. The US is especially likely to embrace individual liberties."...

Pew Research Center, Nov. 18; Freedom House

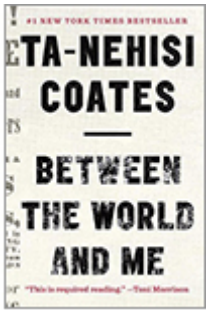
Games to play on International Games Day

Veronica Stark writes: "If you're like me, you look

Veronica Stork writes: "If you're like me, you look forward to International Games Day every November. Maybe you'll participate in this year's International Minecraft Hunger Games tournament or play the Global Gossip Game, provide a selection of awesome board games, or set up a LAN party and play *Halo 3*. Today we are going to talk about a few video games that really think outside of the box. On November 21, consider firing up one of these."...

Programming Librarian, Nov. 17

2015 National Book Award winners



Ta-Nehisi Coates's *Between the World and Me,* a brief, unflinching address to his teenage son on race and police violence that is well on its way to a lasting place in American letters, won the 2015 National Book Award for nonfiction on November 18. The fiction prize was given to Adam Johnson's *Fortune Smiles,* an eclectic and edgy story collection set everywhere from the former East Germany to a Louisiana community reeling from Hurricane Katrina....

Associated Press, Nov. 19

Sci-fi authors write stories based on Microsoft Labs

Amanda Connolly writes: "What happens when you invite a group of science-fiction writers into a research lab? They write a book of short stories. That's exactly what happened when Microsoft opened the doors of its Research Labs to nine prominent sci-fi authors this year. *Future Visions: Original Science Fiction Inspired by Microsoft* covers everything from quantum computing to AI and includes authors Elizabeth Bear, David Brin, and Nancy Kress, who all visited the labs over the course of the year."...

The Next Web, Nov. 17

Apps and services for learning to code

Jordan Minor writes: "Learning to code can be a lonely, confusing, and tedious process, but online learning programs have sprung up to make coding education accessible to everyone, even those with absolutely no coding experience or knowledge. Here's how to find the best online coding class for you. We've even reviewed some apps for kids, too, because it's never too early to start coding."...

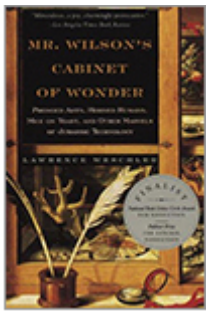
PC Magazine, Nov. 17

Microsoft uses Minecraft to teach coding

On November 16, Microsoft unveiled a Minecraft-themed coding tutorial to teach children (and adults) the basics of computer science as part of Code.org's third annual Hour of Code. The free tutorial available now walks students through 14 levels where they can navigate, mine, craft, and explore in the 2-D Minecraft world by plugging together blocks to complete actions and generate computer code. Microsoft bought the popular game when it acquired Mojang in 2014 for $2.4 billion....

Information Week, Nov. 17

50 super smart books for everyone on your list



Caitlin Schneider writes: "There's nothing quite as surefire as the gift of a good book, but weeding through the many titles on bookstore shelves and in online stores can be overwhelming. Fear not, holiday shopper. We've compiled a list of our favorite books in a mix of all-time bests and recent standouts. There's something for every reader, and we wouldn't blame you if you ended up with a few in the cart for yourself too."...

Mental Floss, Nov. 18

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AL Direct FAQ: americanlibrariesmagazine.org/aldirect

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