FOIA Improvement Act applauded.

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American Library Association • July 5, 2016

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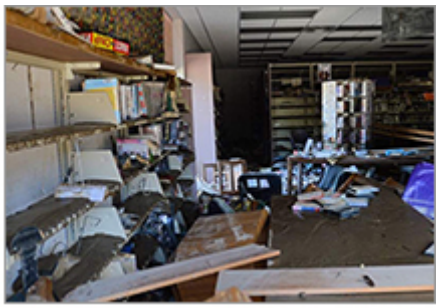
The FOIA Improvement Act

On July 1, ALA President Julie Todaro released a statement applauding Congress' passage on June 14 and President Barack Obama's signing on June 30 of the FOIA Improvement Act into law. The bill will improve public access to government documents by codifying the "presumption of openness" declared by President Obama in his Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) memo during his first week in office and will strengthen the US Office of Government Information Services....

Office of Government Relations, July 1; District Dispatch, July 1; White House

Kanawha considers the future of two flooded branches



Kanawha County (W.Va.) Public Library officials are considering how to temporarily serve Clendenin, where the library branch took on nine feet of water in the June 23–24 flooding, and the Elkview area, where patrons still can't access the Elk Valley branch because of a bridge that washed away. At a July 1 meeting, Associate Director Toni Blessing presented a

slideshow of the destruction in the Clendenin branch. “Everything is just covered with inches of mud,” Blessing said. “And it’s just so sad.”...

Charleston (W.Va.) Gazette-Mail, July 4; Kanawha County Library, June 30

Virginia senator wants to remove trashy titles from libraries

In response to a controversy surrounding Chesterfield County (Va.) Public Schools’ summer reading lists, state Sen. Amanda Chase (R-11th, right) and a handful of school librarians are jumping into the fray. After parents objected to books placed on summer reading lists for middle and high school students, the county school system revised the lists. The new lists removed the offending titles. Chase said the books on the original lists are “pornographic” and “trash.” “I would take them out of the libraries,” Chase said. “Absolutely.”...

Chesterfield (Va.) Observer, June 29

Dallas Public Library is closing its bookstore

By the end of July, BookEnds, the 30-year-old bookstore tucked inside the lobby of the J. Erik Jonsson Central Library in Dallas, will close its doors. On September 1, BookEnds’ space will be occupied by the Office of Vital Statistics, now stashed away on the first floor of Dallas City Hall. Library Director Jo Giudice is positively giddy about the library’s new tenant. “It brings us a whole new audience—some 300 people a day,” she said. “We’ll make sure they have library cards, get them registered to vote.”...

Dallas Morning News, July 2

Rare Superman items donated to Cleveland Public Library

A comic strip writer who is a Superman super-fan has donated his collection of about 17,000 pieces for a permanent exhibit dedicated to the Man of Steel at the Cleveland Public Library. Some 75 years’ worth of Superman memorabilia was boxed up by

Arkansas native Mike Curtis and sent by truck to the library. Amy Dawson, manager of the library's literature department, said every piece will be cataloged, and the library will apply for grants so they can preserve and restore the collectibles....

Associated Press, July 4

Libraries and the curse of knowledge

Lorcan Dempsey writes: "Libraries are now very aware of how they need to move beyond jargon in describing their services—in signage, in informational materials, or in user interfaces. The goal is to be clearly understood by those who do not already understand library structures or specialist terminology. To be clearly understood, one cannot presume that potential users already understand how the library works, or is structured, or what jargon is used to describe services. One example here is discovery."...

Lorcan Dempsey's Weblog, June 19

Ronni Abergel's Human Library concept

Georgia McCafferty writes: "'A Human Library is just like a real library but instead of paperbacks and hard covers, we have real people on our bookshelves,' said Ronni Abergel, cofounder of the Human Library Organization. 'You can borrow the bipolar or the Muslim or the transgender or the homeless, and in this way you get a chance to talk to this person and you may just realize what you have in common.' Abergel cofounded the Human Library in 2000 in Copenhagen, on the back of an event designed to prevent physical violence." The Human Library of the Fox Valley in Batavia, Illinois, carries on this concept....

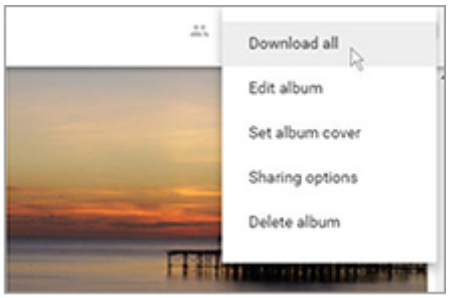
CNN Money, July 1; Arlington Heights (Ill.) Daily Herald, July 3

Browser the Texas library cat's job is saved

Why the city council of White Settlement, Texas, decided to fire Browser (right), cat mascot of the city public library, is not clear, but the vote two weeks ago was 2–1 to banish Browser. On July 1, under an avalanche of complaints, the council members decided unanimously that Browser could stay. Browser's supporters began a petition drive, and of course the internet got involved, and more than 1,000 messages from around the world later, the council voted again unanimously to keep Browser. News coverage does not mention whether any White Settlement patrons have cat allergies....

NPR: The Two-Way, July 2; LISNews, July 3

Retrieving your Google Photos



J. D. Biersdorfer writes: "Google added new features to the web version of its Google Photos service this spring to supplement the controls for cropping, color adjustments, and filters available through the toolbar's pencil icon. But if you want to play around with a photo or album in the desktop image editor of your choice, you can easily download copies from the web. Start by logging into your Google Photos page."...

New York Times: Personal Tech, June 30; Google Photos, Mar. 1

How non-designers can create engaging images

Roy Olende writes: "Images have never been more important in social media. They are the key to driving greater online engagement. The only issue here is that if, like me, you aren't über-skilled in graphic design, creating eye-catching engaging images can be difficult. So how can non-designers like me still create incredible images for social media? One way is by learning simple, repeatable design principles."...

The Next Web, June 24

Women in comics: Science

Carli Spina writes: "Science has always been a subject that I gravitate towards, so it is no surprise that I love science-related comics. Many of these books are biographies of famous scientists, but there are also wonderful comics about specific scientific subfields that offer a fun way to learn about a new topic and can help to inspire readers to continue reading about previously unknown topics. Here are just a few enjoyable comics for those with an interest in science."...

YALSA The Hub, July 5

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ISSN 1559-369X

ALA PUBLISHING | AmericanLibraryAssociation