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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Libraries are engines of learning, literacy, and economic development

Libraries of all kinds continue to play an expanding role in American communities, serving the needs of patrons of all ages and reaching out to those who have been underserved. In this Report on the State of America’s Libraries 2008, the American Library Association finds that:

- School library media centers were in the public eye, but even as their value was ever more widely acknowledged, funding for them continued to lag — and people organized to win support for them.

- Americans acknowledged the proven connection between school library media centers and the kind of education that is essential to success in a global society. Studies in 19 states have shown that a strong school library media program helps students learn more and score higher on standardized tests than peers in schools without such programs.¹ And it’s clear that students themselves understand this: They make 1.5 billion visits to school library media centers each year, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

- For the first time ever, funding for school libraries and the school library media specialists who staff them is declining. Nationally, library expenditures per pupil decreased to $13.67 in 2003-2004 from $19.14 in 1999-2000, a drop of almost 30 percent, according to the NCES. They have since dropped to $11.24, according to a 2007 survey.

- In Washington state, where only about half the school library media centers have a full-time paid teacher librarian,² three determined Spokane mothers led a year-long grassroots campaign to secure state funding for school libraries, which currently are funded locally. As the nation’s library officials and legislators watched, the campaign held an all-day summit conference and rally on Feb. 1, 2008, in the state capital. Due in part to their efforts, the state legislature has passed a bill that would institute state funding for school libraries.

- Libraries and their supporters rallied behind the Strengthening Kids’ Interest in Learning and Libraries (SKILLs) Act, introduced in both houses of Congress as a part of the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind. The SKILLs Act stipulates that every school must have a school library staffed by a state-certified school library media specialist.

The library community also sharpened its focus in 2007 on outreach to underserved and/or isolated populations. A study conducted for the ALA Office for Research & Statistics showed, among other things, that:

- Spanish is far and away the most supported non-English language in U.S. public libraries.
- The majority of libraries serving non-English speakers are in communities with fewer than 100,000 residents.
- Literacy and lack of knowledge of library services are significant barriers for non-English speakers.

Seventy-eight percent of the survey respondents said Spanish was the top-priority non-English language to which they devote services and programs, followed by Asian languages at 29 percent. The ALA Office for Literacy and Outreach Services, Office for Diversity, Public Programs Office, and Public Information Office will use the study data to develop advocacy and training tools for librarians.
Other noteworthy trends in 2007 included:

- Americans continue to check out more than 2 billion items each year from their public libraries, and more and more people make use of libraries’ educational and social resources. The average user takes out seven-plus books a year, but patrons also go to their libraries to borrow DVDs, learn new computer skills, conduct job searches, and participate in the activities of local community organizations. Average bill to the taxpayer for this remarkable range of public services: $31 a year, about the cost of one hardcover book.

- New studies also offered more detailed data on public libraries as engines of economic growth, highlighting ways in which library programming in early literacy, employment services, and small-business development contributes to local economic development in urban areas. Other studies show that libraries provide an excellent return on investment, have a measurable positive impact on the local economy, and contribute to the stability, safety, and quality of life of their neighborhoods.

- Teenagers — far from confining themselves to their school library media centers — are also regular users of public library services. Almost all the nation’s public libraries now offer programs tailored to the needs and interests of young adults, and more than half employ at least one full-time staff equivalent in this area, a sharp increase in the past decade.

- Computer and online games have become part of the mix at many public libraries, and some use gaming to attract new patrons. “Libraries’ response to gaming is just another indication that the profession is alert to the needs and desires of its patrons and is aware of the ways in which this interest interconnects with more traditional services, now and in the future,” said ALA President Loriene Roy.

- Going to the library is more and more often a virtual outing rather than an actual visit, and growing patron enthusiasm for the computer and Internet services offered by public libraries has stretched existing Internet bandwidth, computer availability, and building infrastructure to capacity. Budgets have not kept up with demand, and many libraries cannot provide enough computers or fast- enough connection speeds to meet patron needs.

- E-books continued to emerge as a regular feature of libraries of all types, and the world tried to figure out ways to read them on something handier than a PC or a notebook. Amazon’s pricey Kindle, launched in November, had mixed reviews — and strong sales.

- Construction and renovation of libraries not only kept pace with their evolving and expanding needs but provided many structures that are both functional and beautiful.

Library supporters won an important victory in 2007 when the president signed a bill ordering the Environmental Protection Agency to re-open many of the libraries it had closed in the past year. EPA administrators had said that online functions met the information needs of agency staff, researchers, and the public, but scientists, librarians, EPA staff, and, ultimately, Congress did not agree.

In another important victory, librarians were instrumental in seeing the National Institutes of Health Public Access Policy become mandatory through Congressional action in late December. Taxpayers invest $28 billion annually in the NIH to fund a wide variety of research in health, scientific, and other fields, resulting in more than 60,000 peer-
reviewed articles per year. Now, wide, rapid, and easy access to the results of this research will help everyone in community college, college, and university libraries who wishes to apply it or build on it, advancing research and serving the public good.

College and research libraries continue to play a central role in the life of their institutions and to find innovative new ways to meet the rapidly evolving needs of the academy. Academic librarians see an opportunity to serve the emerging and unmet needs of students and faculty that arise in the changing environment of higher education. All types and sizes of academic libraries are major players in the design of economic and efficient business models in support of new educational initiatives such as hybrid classes, community-based partnerships, support for distributed learning, and creation of digital destinations in support of using social networking in the academy.

Finally, libraries and librarians of all stripes continue to stand up for the First Amendment rights of all Americans, responding in public discourse and in court to unconstitutional snooping and aspiring book-banners. The right to read — freely and in private — remains a core value of the profession.

This report presents some of the highlights of 2007 and a summary of where we stand in 2008 as stewards of a venerable and vital American institution — the library.

NOTES:
2. According to NCES data.

A full list of sources appears at the end of this Report.
School library media programs have been revolutionized by technology in the past decade, according to a 2007 survey conducted by the American Association of School Librarians. Internet-capable computers, both in the library media center (LMC) and throughout the school, are now often networked to provide access to library catalogs, licensed databases, and the vast information resources on the Web.

The AASL’s “School Libraries Count!” longitudinal survey is being conducted annually to gather data on changes in the field and gain understanding of the state of school library media programs nationally. Almost 4,000 regular public schools and more than 200 independent schools completed the first survey. The AASL is a division of the ALA.

Half of responding schools report at least 16 computers in the LMC and at least another 100 elsewhere in the school, and the top 5 percent have at least 64 LMC computers and another 450 elsewhere in the school. The numbers of computers of both types tend to rise dramatically with grade level, the survey showed, and with the size of the school. LMCs in the Midwest average the largest number of LMC computers (27), but the South outpaced other regions in terms of networked computers elsewhere in the school (150).

About two-thirds of survey respondents reported offering remote access, with the highest proportion among the upper grades and larger schools. Still, in-person visits to LMCs by individuals and groups remain an important indicator of a library media program’s activity. Half of responding schools reported that at least 20 classes or other groups and 150 individuals visited their LMCs during a typical week, and some schools with 2,000 or more pupils reported as many as 1,000 individual visits per week.

The survey also showed that significant teaching takes place in the LMC, where staff at all types of schools spend more time delivering instruction to pupils than on its two other principal activities, overseeing budget and planning with teachers.

Half the responding schools reported spending on information resources (e.g., books, audio and video formats, and periodical and database subscriptions, but not salaries or benefits) and operating costs of at least $11.24 per student, with the top 5 percent reporting $44.49 per student. The per-student median, $11.24, is about half the cost of a single work of fiction and about one-third the cost of a single non-fiction title.

School LMCs had an average of 12,000 books (18 books per student) in their collections, 22 periodical subscriptions, and 15 computers. They had 150 visits from individuals and 20 visits from groups per week and spent an average of $10.76 per student each year, according to the survey.

Half of responding LMCs had almost one full-time equivalent certified school library media specialist (LMS) — 37 hours per typical week — and total library media center (LMC) staff hours reflecting full-time coverage of 40 hours per week. This suggests that, while a full-time LMS was present about half the time, they typically had only three hours a week of staff support, making that the only time they were free to meet with their principals, attend faculty or committee meetings, deliver in-service professional development opportunities to teachers, or work with...
teachers and students in their classrooms.

The top five percent of responding LMCs had more than one full-time LMS — 50 hours per typical week — and almost three FTEs of total staff — 115 hours per typical week. The staffing tended to be more complete at the high school level than in elementary and middle schools and in larger schools than in schools with fewer than 1,000 pupils. LMC staffing was lower in the West and in schools serving lower-income populations.

**Educational networking and online homework become more accepted**

While most schools have strict rules about online social networking activities, many sanction educationally packaged social networking such as student Web site programs (69 percent of school districts), online collaborative projects with other schools (49 percent), and online pen pal or other international programs (46 percent), according to a study by the National School Boards Association. Thirty-five percent say their schools and/or students run blogs, either officially or in the context of instruction, and 22 percent says their classrooms are involved in creating or maintaining wikis, according to the study, “Creating & Connecting // Research and Guidelines on Online Social — and Educational — Networking.”

**“Standards for the 21st-Century Learner”**

The AASL in October released its “Standards for the 21st-Century Learner,” intended both to shape school library programs and to serve as a tool for library media specialists to use in shaping the learning of students in the school.

One of the nine “foundational common beliefs” defined in the document is that school libraries are essential to the development of learning skills. The others are that:

- Reading is a window to the world.
- Inquiry provides a framework for learning.
- Ethical behavior in the use of information must be taught.
- Technology skills are crucial for future employment needs.
- Equitable access is a key component for education.
- The definition of information literacy has become more complex as resources and technologies have changed.
- The expansion of information demands that all individuals acquire the thinking skills that will enable them to learn on their own.
- Learning has a social context.

The Standards, the AASL said, “offer vision for teaching and learning to both guide and beckon our profession as education leaders.”
Students and others continued to flock to public libraries in 2007 seeking greater access to computers and the Internet. Meanwhile, financial support lagged.

In a 2007 study, 73 percent of public libraries reported that they were the only source of free public access to computers and the Internet in their communities. Surveyed libraries said the three Internet services most critical to their community were online educational resources and databases for K-12 students (67.7 percent), services for job-seekers (44 percent), and computer and Internet skills training (29.8 percent).

The Community Resource Center of the Washoe County (Nevada) Library System, for example, helped Stephanie D’Arcy, who hadn’t had full-time employment for several months, land a job with the local parks and recreation department. “I needed guidance,” D’Arcy said. “The library staff offered me encouragement and assistance filling out the application, including pointing out transferable skills I could list, plus some tips for interviewing. If it were not for the library’s help, I wouldn’t be where I am today.”

Library staff interviewed as part of the study, “Libraries Connect Communities: Public Library Funding & Technology Access Study 2006-2007,” reported a dramatic increase in the number of job applicants required to apply online for employment. Seventy of the top 100 U.S. retailers accept online applications for hourly positions, 71 percent more than in 2004, and 16 accept only online applications, according to a 2006 study from Taleo Research. But libraries are there to help long before the application is filed. They offer job-seekers technology training, workshops on writing résumés and cover letters and on filling out online job applications, and tips on establishing email accounts to monitor the status of applications. The study also showed that growing patron demand for these services has stretched existing Internet bandwidth, computer availability, and building infrastructure to capacity.

All but a tiny fraction of public libraries offer free public access to the Internet, but because budgets have not kept up with patron demand, many libraries are challenged to provide enough computers or fast-enough connection speeds to meet community need. In fact, 58 percent of public libraries reported that they have no plans to add computers in 2008, fewer than half plan to replace old computers, and 52 percent said Internet access speeds were inadequate.

Thousands of libraries across the country also have reached, or are nearing, their maximum capacity for space. Seventy-six percent of public libraries reported that space limitations are the top factor affecting their ability to add computers, while 31 percent reported that lack of space for electrical outlets and cabling limited their capacity for technology infrastructure.

“Millions of Americans rely on their public library to find jobs, further their education, learn English, get e-
government information, and more,” Allan Golston, president of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation’s U.S. Program, said in a press release. “Our nation must continue to support public libraries and ensure they are able to provide information and opportunities for all people.”

The study, conducted by the ALA and the Information Use Management and Policy Institute at Florida State University and funded by the Gates Foundation and the ALA, collected data through surveys from more than 4,000 public libraries, more than 40 chief officers of state library agencies, and focus groups and site visits in Delaware, Maryland, Nevada, and Utah. The final report is available at http://www.ala.org/ala/ors/plftas/0607report.cfm.

**Hoosiers recognize the value of their public libraries**

A report issued late in 2007 by Indiana University’s Kelley School of Business concludes that public libraries are a good value, serving as “an important channel for literacy, education and information.” The report estimated the total market value of goods and services delivered by the state’s public libraries to be $629.9 million, a return of $2.38 on each dollar of investment.

This represents “a very conservative and defendable estimate of the value Hoosiers derive from their libraries,” said Timothy Slaper, director of economic analysis at the Indiana Business Research Center and co-author of the report.

The study was based on an economic-impact analysis, a benefit-cost analysis of library services, and surveys of public library patrons and staff, according to the *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette* (Jan. 8, 2008). The researchers also conducted case studies of 12 local libraries, which included interviews with business leaders, public school officials, and local development officials. Identified benefits of public libraries included information and support to businesses, job-search assistance, introduction of new technology, and enhanced attractiveness of the community because of its cultural and educational assets.

**Youth use school and public libraries regularly, study shows**

More than 90 percent of youths age 8-18 nationwide have both a public library and a school library in their community, and 78 percent of them have a library card. (Girls age 10-15 are the head of the class in this regard — more than 80 percent have a card.) Regionally, youngsters who live in the East are more likely to have a library card than those who live in the South (82 percent vs. 73 percent), according to a Harris Youth Poll survey conducted in June 2007. The study was conducted by the Young Adult Library Services Association, an ALA division, and underwritten by the ALA Office for Research & Statistics.

Nor do the cards go unused. More than 80 percent of youth age 8-18 say they have been to the library in the past year, and 18 percent say they have been more than 20 times. Visits were about evenly divided between the public library or its Web site and the school library or its Web site. Among youth who visited a public library, 57 percent did so at least monthly. School libraries were used more often: 78 percent of the youth interviewed said they visited at least monthly.
And why do they visit? Borrowing books for both personal and school assignments are the top two reasons. More than three-fourths (78 percent) visit public libraries for personal use and two-thirds for school assignments; with school libraries, the proportions are reversed, with three-fourths visiting in connection with school assignments and three in five for personal use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of library visits by youth 8-18 years old</th>
<th>Public Library</th>
<th>School Library</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than once a day</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A couple of times a week</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A couple of times a month</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few times a year</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a year or not sure</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Going to the library without going to the library

More and more frequently, patrons access public-library services from remote locations. More than half of American adults said they had visited a local public library in the past 12 months, according to a study by the Pew Internet & American Life Project, and a survey conducted in 2006 by KRC Research and Consulting reported that 12 percent of the 1,000 people interviewed “visited” their local public library by phone and 12 percent by computer. Among those who visited by phone or computer, 41 percent did so to renew borrowed items, 48 percent to consult a librarian for help, 45 percent to check the library’s computerized catalogue, and 42 percent to use other resources on the library’s Web page.
Growing problem: Replacing Baby Boomer retirees

Despite the fact that U.S. News & World Report (Dec. 19, 2007) lists the library profession as one of the top 31 careers with bright futures, recruitment and retention is a growing issue for public libraries, Jan Sanders, president of the Public Library Association, said in an interview. “We are facing a huge bubble of Baby Boomer retirees,” Sanders said, “and we are now asking, ‘Where are the new librarians going to come from?’” A number of people are joining the profession as a second career, she said, and while they bring with them a refreshing range of backgrounds, they do little to alleviate the long-term shortage. (See the ORS report, “Library Retirements — What We Can Expect,” which is available on line.)

The PLA is also urging its members to become better at advocacy, Sanders said. “This means going to the Capitol and walking the halls, but it also means much more than that.” The PLA is a division of the ALA.

Survey shows that 70-plus percent of public libraries support gaming

In an era in which sales of games have outpaced box office sales, some libraries have been turning to gaming activities as a way of attracting new patrons. In one of the first studies that attempts to track this trend (The Role of Gaming in Libraries: Taking the Pulse), Scott Nicholson of Syracuse University found that at least 70 percent of libraries support gaming and that about 80 percent allow patrons to play games on library computers; that only about 20 percent of libraries circulate games, but that about 40 percent of libraries run in-house gaming programs — with all categories showing substantial variations according to library size.

Nicholson’s spring 2007 phone survey of 400 randomly selected U.S. public libraries defined gaming broadly and included games of all types from board and card to Web-based and video games. Nicholson posits that online “games are just an extension of gaming activities already supported in libraries.

“Libraries that support the recreational needs of patrons through fiction or movies are simply extending these services to . . . a growing sector of the population,” he says.

Or as Jenny Levine observed in her 2006 Gaming and Libraries: Intersection of Services, published by the ALA: “Gaming provides a wealth of service intersections for libraries today and for the libraries of the future. And that future is all about opportunities and weaving together threads, both old and new.”

Libraries are working hard to keep up . . . with teens

Teens’ use of non-print resources has increased dramatically in recent years, and more teens are accessing them from home than in the library. According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project, 71 percent of teens say the Internet is their primary source for completing school projects. However, other studies have shown that most teens lack the critical thinking skills and technical expertise to use the Internet and other electronic resources effectively. The library community responded

Gamers get their due

Libraries — including the august Library of Congress — made it clear in 2007 that video games are no longer the exclusive province of nerdy teenage boys with an aversion to natural light. As the ranks of gamers diversified across age and gender boundaries, ALA TechSource hosted 325 attendees at its first Gaming, Learning, and Libraries Symposium, held July 22-24 in Chicago. The Library of Congress took notice, announcing Aug. 3 that it was funding a partnership of four universities and Linden Lab, the creator of Second Life, in the Preserving Virtual Worlds project to explore methods to preserve digital games and interactive fiction.

— American Libraries
by continuing and expanding its educational efforts in this area in 2007.

For example, Teen Read Week celebrated its 10th anniversary Oct. 14–20, urging teens to “laugh out loud” at their libraries — and participate in a range of activities centered around the theme “LOL @ your library.” Some 4,680 librarians and educators participated, and more than 6,000 online votes were cast for the Teens’ Top Ten list of most popular young-adult books. On Top of the Top Ten: *New Moon*, by Stephenie Meyer (Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2006).

**Gaming @ our library? It might be good for business**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How youth 8-18 use the library</th>
<th>Supports gaming</th>
<th>Runs gaming programs</th>
<th>Circulates games*</th>
<th>Lets patrons play on computers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 3,001</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,001 - 10,000</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,001 - 50,000</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 50,000</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 69 percent of these consisted of board/card games and PC games. **Source:** Scott Nicholson, *The Role of Gaming in Libraries: Taking the Pulse*, 2007.

Expanding its efforts, the Young Adult Library Services Association sponsored the first Teen Tech Week March 4-10, with the theme Get Connected @ your library. Teen Tech Week targets not only teens but parents, educators, and other concerned adults and is designed to ensure that teens are competent and ethical users of new and developing technologies, especially those that are offered through libraries. The general theme of Teen Tech Week is Get Connected @ your library; more than 1,500 librarians and educators participated.

Surveys in 2007 also documented progress in staffing and use of library services for young adults. The Public Library Association’s 2007 Public Library Data Service Statistical Report, which tracks young-adult service trends in public libraries, found that nearly 90 percent of the public libraries surveyed offer young adult programs; 52 percent employ at least one full-time equivalent dedicated to fostering young adult programs and services — a dramatic increase from 24 percent in 1994.

Still, the road to progress can be a bit bumpy at times. Maplewood (N.J.) Memorial Library officials announced plans early in 2007 to close their two buildings on weekdays from 2:45 to 5 p.m. to avoid having to deal with unruly middle school students who were flocking to the library after school. Library officials (later) revealed that they had simply wanted to force the hand of their local governing board. They succeeded. The resulting uproar was so intense that the mayor of Maplewood (population 23,000) stepped in. The upshot was that in addition to the town’s providing security guards at the library’s two buildings, community groups decided to extend the hours of after-school programs and expand their offerings.
E-books continue to gain ground

Library users continued to embrace e-books in 2007, especially those connected to the library e-collection and accessible via the PC or laptop they typically use. According to American Libraries (Stephen Sottong, “The Elusive E-book,” May 2008), the entrance of a major electronics manufacturer, Sony, and a publisher, Amazon, into the e-book market has once again brought them to the fore. Amazon launched Kindle in November, and while initial reviews were mixed, the pricey e-book reader had become such a hot seller early in the year that Amazon had trouble keeping up with demand. E-reference books such as encyclopedias and handbooks gained on their conventionally published counterparts.

Patterns of e-book use are still emerging, but libraries and trade and consumer book markets were still waiting for a user-friendly — and affordable — reader.

Public-library design adapts to evolving needs

Library design kept pace with the rapidly evolving needs of children, teenagers, adults, and senior citizens and provided concrete recognition that libraries must be prepared to serve people with disabilities as well as the able-bodied and low-income people as well as the well off. A few examples from among many outstanding new public-library buildings, expansions, or renovations:

• Minneapolis’s new Central Library, which offers more than 300 computers for public use and has spaces designed for children, teens, and the city’s rapidly growing immigrant population.

• The Cleveland Heights–University Heights (Ohio) Public Library’s 21,000-square foot addition, which physically links traditional library services with after-school entertainment and education with a 102-foot walkway to a YMCA across the street.

• The El Paso (Texas) Main library, whose 45,000-square foot addition includes a 250-seat auditorium and a 50 computer Literacy and Technology Center.

• The new Homer (Alaska) Public Library, which connects to the local landscape through the building’s placement and shape.

• The new Rancho Mirage (Calif.) Public Library, designed to serve a community with significant numbers of both children and senior citizens.

• The Watertown (Mass.) Free Public Library, whose renovation maintained the original building while making room for an additional 38,000 square feet of space.
Survey belies belief that Internet reduces library use

More than half (53 percent) of Americans said in a 2007 survey that they had visited a public library in the past year, and one in eight went there for help solving problems. Of those who visited a library:

68% used the computer to look up information on the Internet or check on library materials
58% used library reference materials
42% read newspapers and magazines
70% received help from library staff. Of these, 88% said they found a lot or some of what they were seeking.
53% of those who did not seek help said they found a lot or some of what they were seeking.
79% of visitors said they were very satisfied with the assistance they received.
19% of visitors said they were satisfied with the assistance they received.

“The reports of public libraries’ death due to the rise of the Internet have been greatly exaggerated.”

— Anne-Imelda Radice
Director, Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)

Who goes there?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic group</th>
<th>% who used library in past 12 months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation Y (18-30)</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X (31-42)</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than $40,000</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $40,000</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College degree</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College, no degree</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents with children at home</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults without children at home</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Come again?

Which visitors are very likely or somewhat likely to visit a library in the future when faced with a problem?

40% of Generation Y (18-30)
25% of Generation X (31-41)
50% of African Americans
42% of Latinos
24% of white non-Hispanics

Source: Information Searches That Solve Problems: How People Use the Internet, Government Agencies, and Libraries When They Need Help, a survey of 2,796 Americans by the Pew Internet & American Life Project and University of Illinois, funded by the IMLS.
ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

Tight budgets and competition spur increased creativity

Transitions in the way information is produced, disseminated, and accessed provide valuable opportunities for academic libraries to emerge as even more central and vibrant resources for the academy. Libraries have long helped their colleges and universities adopt digital technologies, but the information explosion has changed expectations about the creation and use of knowledge. As libraries increasingly provide seamless access to content through licensing agreements for databases, journal articles, and other e-resources, they have become increasingly transparent to users. Academic librarians seek to redefine and reaffirm their roles by asserting themselves more actively and seeking out new partnerships.

According to the “Power of Personal Persuasion Toolkit,” written in 2006 by Julie Todaro, president of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), a division of the ALA, academic libraries play a major role in the new higher education environment. They are extending their reach through strategic partnerships, collaborative relationships, and creative alliances. These activities update the image of libraries, share their expertise, and promote their services. Twenty-first century changes in higher education environments are prompting librarians to rethink their vision, mission, and institutional role, restructure their image, reposition themselves within the higher education environment, and redistribute some expertise and energy.

The toolkit, available online, reports that academic and research libraries are:

- Expanding their roles of support for students, faculty, and staff and assuming a role of assistance and support in partnerships and collaborations and in internal and external institutional enterprise activities.

- Expanding their role, and the marketing of their role, in providing critical general education, specialized instruction, and workforce education, their service and expertise in research support, and their role as discipline department liaisons.

- Becoming increasingly involved in campus-wide interdisciplinary programming and cross-departmental partnerships such as college orientation and career counseling.

- Seeking techniques for expanding assessment and evaluation.

- Trying to balance the traditional and the cutting edge.

Another essay, published in February 2007 from a roundtable convened by the ACRL in Chicago in November 2006 (also available online), explains the need for libraries and librarians to reposition themselves to meet the rapidly evolving needs of the academy “in visionary ways. . . . A defining element of this moment is the capacity for academic and research libraries to accelerate their

### Library size: A matter of degree

Public and academic libraries have been getting larger, multiplying in square footage in both new buildings and renovations, but size ranking is based mainly on number of volumes held. Here, in those terms, are the 10 largest U.S. libraries — eight of which are academic libraries:

| 1. Library of Congress | 32,124,001 |
| 2. Harvard University | 15,826,570 |
| 3. Boston Public Library | 15,686,902 |
| 4. Yale University | 12,368,757 |
| 5. U. of Illinois/Urbana-Champaign | 10,524,935 |
| 6. Univ. of California/Berkeley | 10,094,417 |
| 7. Columbia University | 9,455,312 |
| 8. Univ. of Texas/Austin | 9,022,363 |
| 9. Univ. of Michigan | 8,273,050 |
| 10. Stanford University | 8,200,000 |
own transformation through collaborative action.” To meet the challenges identified in the essay, academic and research libraries will have to adopt a “reconfigured portfolio” that will aim to:

- Broaden the catalog of resources they provide in support of academic inquiry and discovery.
- Foster the creation of new academic communities on campus.
- Support and manage the institution’s intellectual capital.
- Become more assertive in helping their institutions define strategic purposes.

Creating student-centered learning environments

The face of the academic library is evolving to accommodate the new ways in which students learn and conduct research. Many academic libraries are dramatically renovating space to include leisure study space, restaurant and refreshment spaces, active learning, low- and high-tech centers, and learning commons, such as the one created by McMaster University, in Hamilton, Ontario, a 2008 winner of the ACRL Excellence in Academic Libraries Award.

McMaster took a drab and outdated reading room with none of the hi-tech functionality required by library users today and transformed it into the Mills Learning Commons, an active, student-centered learning space. About 7,000 square feet of library space was renovated, resulting in open ergonomic computing spaces, lounge spaces with soft seating (chosen by students via a “vote with your seat” contest), collaborative study rooms, bookable consultation rooms, and new spaces for academic skills counseling, services to students with disabilities, and expert IT help. Also added were 170 state-of-the-art computers, full wireless access, new printers and scanners, productivity software, and special software for students with disabilities. (Resources for building academic and research libraries and renovating spaces can be found on line at http://wikis.ala.org/acrl/index.php/ACRL/LAMA_Guide_for_Architects.)

The ACRL, through its dynamic strategic plan, is committed to assessment opportunities that include the need to recruit people into the profession and retain them. Resources to help with this are available at http://wikis.ala.org/acrl/index.php/RandR. The ACRL also conducted an “environmental scan” in the spring of 2006 to identify the major assumptions shaping the practice of academic librarianship and to identify emergent issues of concern to the profession. Based on the results of that survey, the ACRL Research Committee identified the “Top Ten Assumptions for the Future of Academic Libraries and Librarians” and a number of emergent issues of concern to the profession; these included digitization, the evolving skill sets needed by librarians, increased access to library resources and services, questions concerning intellectual property, and issues related to the evolution of information technology. The full report is available on the ACRL Web site.

Academic libraries support institutional outcomes and positively impact learning

Elizabeth M. Mezick, an accounting professor at Long Island University, finds in “Return on Investment: Libraries
and Student Retention” (The Journal of Academic Librarianship, September 2007) that library expenditures and professional staff have a significant positive effect on student retention. Mezick also finds that the relationship between expenditures on resources and retention is greatest at baccalaureate colleges, while the relationship between expenditures on staff and retention is greatest at doctoral-granting institutions.

Emerging issues for academic libraries

- The profession must foster broader collaboration among academic, public, special, and school librarians on topics such as public engagement and media literacy.
- Pressure to make library facilities environmentally friendly will increase.
- Library facilities and services will become increasingly integrated with research, teaching, and learning programs across campus.
- Print materials will be moved off-site; library space will be redesigned to support collaborative learning, new modes of research support, and interactive learning areas.
- Budget tensions grow regarding when to buy standardized digital collections and when to preserve and provide access to unique collections held by the library.
- Library patrons will use semantic Web search techniques to find information resources.
- Need to support e-science and e-scholarship in the social sciences and the humanities will increase and require new approaches to the design and delivery of library services.
- Collaboration between academic libraries and university publication programs will increase as their roles become increasingly complementary.
- Interdisciplinary studies, new models of undergraduate and graduate education, and newly developed areas of inquiry will stretch library resources and service models.
- The tools and techniques of social computing will provide new opportunities for the design and delivery of library resources and services, but will also make increasing demands on library staff and systems.

BOOKMOBILES AND RURAL LIBRARIES

Small and rural libraries form an organization of their own

Small libraries occasionally feel left out, even though libraries serving populations of fewer than 25,000 people comprise almost 80 percent of all public libraries (see table, below). In 2007, the Association for Rural and Small
Libraries (ARSL) began its work, under the leadership of Donald B. Reynolds Jr., director of the Nolichucky Regional Library in Morristown, Tenn., who serves as its president.

The association elected a board of directors and adopted a mission of providing “a network of people and materials to support rural- and small-library staff, volunteers, and trustees to integrate the library thoroughly with the life and work of the community it serves.” The names of the directors and documents of interest are available on the ARSL wiki.

The ARSL’s objectives are to advocate for rural and small libraries at the local, state, and national levels; to provide opportunities for continuing education and communication; to serve as a source of information about trends, issues, and strategies; and to partner with other library and non-library organizations serving rural and small library communities.

The ALA, through its Committee on Rural, Native, and Tribal Libraries of All Kinds, its Office for Literacy and Outreach Services, and the Campaign for America’s Libraries, also continued its efforts in this area, distributing more than 10,000 rural library advocacy toolkits in 2007. (These are also available on line.)

Even in a world of libraries that can be very high-tech, or low-tech, or even no-tech, the number of bookmobiles continues to increase (there were more than 825 nationwide in 2005, according to the National Center for Education Statistics). Visits to schools are still common, but bookmobiles now circulate a wider variety of materials and have more varied destinations — program sites for very young children, senior citizen homes, shopping centers, adult education centers, sheltered workshops, drug and alcohol rehabilitation facilities, and even community events and parades (for a little PR exposure).

Many bookmobiles have low floors for easy entry, and many also provide Internet access. Manufacturers of bookmobiles have also begun to respond, designing vehicles that are more user-friendly in specific ways. And there remain many places in the United States where “your father’s bookmobile” is still the best way to serve people, traveling out to a rural setting.

Membership in the three-year-old Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services, begun under the auspices of Clarion University of Pennsylvania, also continued to increase in 2007, reaching 286 by year’s end. The ABOS annual conference, the first that the organization ran independently, drew about 275 people to St. Louis, with participants coming from as far away as Australia (where bookmobiles sometimes trade in wheels for wings).
Recruitment of underrepresented ethnic and racial groups to the profession continued in 2007, with heightened emphasis on increasing the ranks of minority doctoral students to train the next generation.

The ALA’s principal minority recruitment tool is its Spectrum Scholarship Program, which is designed to address the specific issue of underrepresentation of critically needed ethnic librarians within the profession while serving as a model for ways to bring attention to larger diversity issues in the future.

Since its establishment in 1997, the Spectrum Scholarship Program has awarded 495 scholarships to help graduate students from racially and ethnically underrepresented groups become librarians. Spectrum’s professional development and leadership components draw together diversity advocacy efforts across most library organizations, providing a mechanism by which these organizations can diversify their membership and involve proven new leaders with diverse perspectives in their programs and initiatives. The 80 Spectrum Scholarships awarded in 2007 marked the largest cohort to date.

The program received a boost during the year from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), an independent federal grant-making agency dedicated to creating and sustaining a nation of learners by helping libraries and museums serve their communities. Through its three-year “New Voices, New Visions” grant, the IMLS funded more than 35 Spectrum scholarships a year in 2005, 2006, and 2007.

The ALA Office for Diversity will be able to extend these efforts thanks to a new IMLS grant, received in response to a proposal titled “Reach21: Preparing the Next Generation of Librarians for 21st Century Library Leadership.” The IMLS award was for $872,920 to double the number of annual Spectrum Scholarship awards for the next three years and to expand Spectrum’s reach and leverage its impact by providing support to other diversity recruitment initiatives and LIS institutions.

The IMLS is also providing nearly $1 million to fund the Spectrum Doctoral Fellowship, which is intended to prepare all librarians to work in a global economy characterized by multi-nationalism, multi-culturalism, and layered identities. The ALA and the University of Pittsburgh School of Information Sciences announced the first six recipients of doctoral fellowships in June 2007. At least four doctoral fellowships also will be available for the fall of 2008; for details, visit the Spectrum Doctoral Fellowship Web site.

Still, the profession has its work cut out for it in terms of diversifying its ranks. “There is growing evidence of higher-than-average attrition among ethnic minorities in the profession due to limited opportunities for professional mobility and access to positions of leadership, according to the ALA Office for Research & Statistics: “Rather than tangibly multiplying the numbers of librarians of color, existing minority recruitment programs have simply provided for the replacement of retirees and those leaving the profession prematurely.” (ORS 2007 slide presentation, citing Reese, Gregory L., and Hawkins, Ernestine L., Stop Talking Start Doing! Attracting People of Color to the Library Profession, ALA, 1999; and DeEtta Jones, 2003.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>African American</th>
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<td>89%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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</table>

* Includes native American, Alaskan, Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, and two or more races.

Sources: Diversity Counts, slide presentation by the ALA Office for Research & Statistics, June 2007; U.S. Census Bureau data.

Librarians see Spanish as top-priority non-English language

A 2007 study of U.S. public library programs and services for non-English speakers, “Serving Non-English Speakers in U.S. Public Libraries,” showed that Spanish is by far the most common non-English language supported by public libraries and that smaller communities are serving a larger proportion of non-English speakers than anticipated. The study’s goal was to gather baseline data concerning linguistically isolated areas relative to public library location. The survey of 1,840 libraries yielded responses from 586 outlets; of these, 480 (82 percent) agreed they served a linguistically isolated market.

The key findings of the study:

- Seventy-eight percent of the respondents reported Spanish as the top-priority non-English language to which they devote services and programs. Asian languages ranked second at 29 percent.

- The majority of libraries serving non-English speakers are in communities with fewer than 100,000 residents (484 of all responding libraries). The majority (53.6 percent) of residents in these communities travel one to three miles to reach a library, and another 21 percent travel four to six miles.

- Literacy is both a barrier for non-English speakers and is what most libraries support in specially designed services and programs for these patrons. Three-fourths of the respondents identified reading and library habits and lack of knowledge of library services as the most frequent barriers to participation by non-English speakers.

Libraries reported the most successful library programs and services developed for non-English speakers were: English as a second language, language-specific materials and collections, computer use and computer classes, story time, and special programs. The study was conducted by Dr. Christie Koontz and Dean Jue for the ALA Office for Research & Statistics and supported by a 2006 World Book Goal Award, the ORS, and the ALA’s Office for Literacy and Outreach Services, Office for Diversity, and Public Programs Office.
The library community, with bipartisan support in Congress, worked hard in 2007 to ensure that the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, better known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) for its 2001 iteration, would include provisions that would guarantee that schoolchildren have the library resources and support they need for a 21st Century education.

The Strengthening Kids’ Interest in Learning and Libraries or SKILLs Act, introduced in both houses of Congress in June as a part of the NCLB reauthorization, stipulates that library funds will be available to serve students in elementary, middle, and high schools nationwide; that appropriate books and materials will be available for students, including those with special learning needs and those learning English as a second language, at all grade levels; and that state-certified school library media specialists will be available to assist and support all students with their learning needs.

The SKILLs Act, which strengthens the Improving Literacy through School Library Program of NCLB, is sponsored by Sens. Jack Reed (D–R.I.) and Thad Cochran (R-Miss.) and Reps. Raúl M. Grijalva (D-Ariz.) and Vernon Ehlers (R-Mich.).

“Study after study proves that students in schools with well-stocked libraries and highly qualified, state-certified school librarians learn more, get better grades, and score higher on standardized tests than students who do not have the same benefits,” said Leslie Burger, 2006-2007 ALA president. “Today, only 60 percent of school libraries have full-time, state-certified school library media specialists on staff. With limited resources, school administrators are struggling to stretch dollars, and library resource budgets are increasingly being used to make up for shortfalls in other areas.”

Specifically, the SKILLs Act:

- Requires school districts, to the extent feasible, to ensure that every school in the district employs at least one state-certified school library media specialist in each school library.
- Establishes as a state goal that there be at least one highly qualified school library media specialist in every public school.
- Broadens the focus of training, professional development, and recruitment activities to include school library media specialists.
- Ensures that funds will serve elementary, middle, and high school students.
- Requires books and materials to be appropriate for and engage the interest of students in all grade levels and students with special learning needs, including those learning English.

“We know that school libraries are a critical component in improving student literacy skills and academic

Page 16
achievement,” said Sen. Reed. “This legislation recognizes what makes this success possible: highly-trained librarians.”

While prospects for NCLB reauthorization remained unclear in an election year, the SKILLs Act spawned at least two state-level counterparts: the Washington Library Media Association and Massachusetts School Library Association have set their sights on getting lawmakers to guarantee professional school library staffing by adding it to education laws in those states.

**EPA ordered to re-open libraries**

The fiscal year 2008 omnibus appropriations bill signed by President Bush in December ordered the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to re-open many of its libraries that had been closed in the past year. The EPA must “restore the network of EPA libraries recently closed or consolidated by the Administration” and report on its plans to “restore publicly available libraries to provide environmental information and data to each EPA region.” In 2006, the EPA had closed its Headquarters Library in Washington to visitors and walk-in patrons; the agency also closed several regional libraries, the toxics and pesticides library, and the Ft. Meade (Md.) Environmental Science Center. EPA administrators had asserted that the closings did not affect access to environmental and scientific collections and data sets since online functions meet the needs of the EPA staff, researchers, and the public — a contention disputed by scientists, librarians, and even EPA staff. According to the EPA National Library Network Report to Congress, released in the spring of 2008, the EPA will re-open its libraries by Sept. 31, 2008.

**Other successes: Public libraries fare well in Head Start reauthorization**

The ALA and one of its divisions, the Association for Library Service to Children, waged a successful campaign to include in the Head Start reauthorization bill language that provides opportunities for libraries to play a greater role in Head Start programs. The Improving Head Start Act thus assures that public libraries can continue to develop innovative programs to provide young children in low-income families with the tools they need to succeed in school and life. Several pieces of legislation dealing with federal student loan forgiveness emerged from the Congress. The College Cost Reduction Act of 2007, for example, creates a new student loan forgiveness plan through the Direct Loan program for public service employees, including librarians. The President signed this bill, and several others library-related provisions were making their way through the legislative process at year’s end. Under a mandatory policy included in the fiscal 2008 omnibus appropriations bill signed by President Bush, researchers funded by the National Institutes of Health are required to deposit copies of eligible manuscripts into the National Library of Medicine’s online database, PubMed Central. Articles will be made publicly available no later than 12 months after publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

**A campaign against misleading copyright warnings**

The ALA’s Office for Information Technology Policy (OITP) collected data in 2007 in support of the Computer & Communications Industry Association (CCIA) complaint to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) regarding false and misleading copyright warnings issued by publishers and motion picture distributors — for example, the “home use only” warning on videos or DVDs that may in fact be used in classrooms and, to a lesser extent, in distance
education because of exemptions provided to non-profit educational institutions. False copyright warnings confuse library patrons and can lead to schools and colleges mistakenly buying additional rights to use a work that are not required by law.

**Internet education vs. blocking and filtering**

Fall 2007 saw clear recognition by some members of Congress who were previously proponents of blocking and filtering that Internet education is more effective than such restrictions. This major shift in the approach to children’s Internet safety issues was reflected in several new bills. Rep. Melissa Bean (D-Ill.), for example, introduced legislation that would establish a public awareness campaign on Internet safety, including activities relating to best practices, a national outreach and education campaign, and information access and exchange and would establish an Office of Internet Safety and Public Awareness within the Federal Trade Commission.

**FIRST AMENDMENT ISSUES**

*Challenges to the freedom to read — or go to the movies*

Libraries around the country celebrated the 26th annual Banned Books Week Sept. 29–Oct. 6, the highlight of a year that saw an unusual crop of challenges to the freedom to read — or go to the movies, for that matter. Libraries and bookstores nationwide marked BBW by erecting exhibits (many of which played on the year’s Pirate Ship theme) and staging special events. They also joined the ALA in using new technologies: Facebook, MySpace, Second Life, Teen Second Life, a Google map that showed where BBW events were happening, and even groups on Flickr to share photos.

The annual observance of BBW is sponsored by the ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF), the American Booksellers Association, the American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression, the Association of American Publishers, the American Society of Journalists and Authors, and the National Association of College Stores. It is endorsed by the Library of Congress’s Center for the Book.

**The debate over NSLs drags on**

The civil rights and library communities — including the ALA — continued their opposition in 2007 to the use of National Security Letters (NSLs) to obtain personal records without some level of court review. Separate bills introduced in the House in July and in the Senate in September sought to restore limits to NSL powers granted to the Department of Justice under the USA PATRIOT Act and restore rights to NSL recipients, such as the right to challenge compliance. While Congress pondered how to balance protecting individuals’ privacy with the information-gathering needs of national security, the ALA asked that Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act legislation specify that since libraries are not Internet service providers, they must receive a court order before sharing records about anyone’s online interactions with someone on U.S. soil; and the ALA Council, at the 2007 Annual Conference, unanimously passed and sent to all members of Congress a resolution condemning the use of NSLs to obtain library records. Debate on the legislation bogged down in Congress and continued into 2008.
Book challenges and controversies continue

In specific First Amendment cases, the Miami Dade County Public Schools continued to try to remove *Vamos a Cuba*, a K-3 travel-series title, and its English-language counterpart, *A Visit to Cuba*, from district shelves because they “are rife with factual omissions, misrepresentations, and inaccuracies” such as failing to state that Cuba is a dictatorship. In 2006, a U.S. district judge upheld the ACLU of Florida’s request for an injunction against the school board’s action, but the board appealed the case to the Federal Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit. The ALA’s Freedom to Read Foundation and the ALA affiliate REFORMA, the National Association to Promote Library & Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking, were among the organizations that filed amicus briefs in the case.

Controversy surrounded *Higher Power of Lucky* author Susan Patron, who barely had time to savor receiving a Newbery Medal before a national debate ensued about whether her use of the word “scrotum” on page one would corrupt America’s youth. News services picked up the rumor that library media specialists had vowed to ban the book from elementary schools, but the ALA’s youth divisions quickly put the rumor to rest.

Philip Pullman’s *The Golden Compass* caused an outcry shortly before a film version was released in the United States and elsewhere. In Canada, several Toronto area Catholic school boards removed the fantasy novel from library shelves for review. The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights in the United States published a 26-page pamphlet that claimed the books were “written to promote atheism and denigrate Christianity,” and Canada’s Catholic Civil Rights League and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints chimed in with similar warnings.

“Removing a book from a school or library because the author is an atheist or because a religious group disagrees with the book’s viewpoint is censorship that runs counter to our most cherished freedoms and our history as a nation that celebrates and protects religious diversity,” ALA President Roy said in a statement on the issue. *The Golden Compass* is on the ALA’s Top Ten Banned or Challenged Books List for 2007; the film version was also the target of protestors.

A high school English teacher in Tuscola, Texas, was charged with distributing harmful material to a minor after the student chose and read *Child of God*, by the Pulitzer Prize–winning novelist Cormac McCarthy, which had been approved for an Advanced Placement reading list. The student’s parents, who objected to the novel’s mature themes, including a serial killer who has sex with his victim’s bodies, filed the charges after the school administration backed the teacher. The ALA’s OIF cited this case as one in a series of recent incidents in which would-be censors use “harmful to minors” laws to intimidate teachers and librarians and chill access to literature.

In a challenge from abroad, Cambridge University Press requested that American libraries that own the 2006 book *Alms for Jihad: Charity and Terrorism in the Islamic World*, by J. Millard Burr and Robert O. Collins, either remove it from their shelves or attach inside its front cover an errata sheet with 11 corrections. The publisher had agreed to pulp its remaining copies in response to a libel claim filed in Britain by Khalid bin Mahfouz, a Saudi banker whom the book claims financed terrorism in Sudan and elsewhere during the 1990s. The OIF demurred. “Unless there is an order from a U.S. court, the British settlement is unenforceable in the United States, and libraries are under no legal obligation to return or destroy the book,” the OIF said.

The federal Bureau of Prisons initiated the Standardized Chapel Library Project in response to concerns that
prisons might become recruiting grounds for radical religious groups. Under the initiative, the bureau ordered its chaplains to remove and dispose of any book in the chapel library that did not appear on a list of up to 150 approved texts for each of 20 categories of religious practice. Hundreds of thousands of books were removed, which in some cases meant the chapel libraries were emptied. ALA President Roy expressed outrage at the initiative in a statement in September in which she said, “A government agency should not have the right to determine what religious texts are ‘appropriate’ when our Constitution promises not only freedom of speech, but also freedom of religion.” Two prisoners filed a lawsuit challenging the policy, and the bureau backed off, saying that it would return the materials to the libraries and focus on “material that could be radicalizing or incite violence.” The review continued into 2008.

Would-be book-banner thwarted

JoAn Karkos checked out It’s Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex and Sexual Health, by Robie H. Harris, from the public libraries in Lewiston and Auburn, Maine, in September and refused to return them because she thought the book was obscene. She also filed an obscenity complaint against Lewiston Public Library for carrying the sex-education book. Karkos did not impress the local police, who found that the book’s educational aims put it outside the reach of Lewiston’s obscenity ordinance; but she still has a chance to impress a judge: She has a trial date of May 28, 2008, on a civil charge of failing to return library property.

The right to read? Read on!

Libraries certainly support the right to read — but in whose language? The question became tangled in a larger national debate in June 2007 as Congress failed to pass the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act and Prince William and Loudoun counties in Virginia took steps to limit undocumented immigrants’ access to public services. Resolutions they passed in July affect library circulation policies, although agencies in both counties — not just libraries, but schools, parks, hospitals, housing, sheriffs’ offices, and employment agencies — scrambled to find out whether the new directives conflicted with federal and state laws and regulations.

The debate continues over the effect of linguistic diversity on American identity, with library associations such as the ALA and REFORMA enthusiastically supporting the right to read in one’s own language.

FUNDING AND SALARIES
Library programs take a hit at the federal level

Federal funding for library programs had a roller-coaster ride in Washington in 2007 and wound up in a valley. Congress passed a fiscal year 2008 appropriations bill for Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies that would have funded the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) at $277 million, an increase of 12 percent from the previous year; the Library Services and Technology Act was funded at $224 million, with $172 million for the State Grant program.

President Bush vetoed the bill, and the House was unable to override the veto. Congress combined the 11
remaining appropriations bills into an omnibus bill and, in order to avoid another veto, lowered the funding levels for many programs. The compromise bill gave the IMLS the authority and resources to carry out the mission of the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science and called for the National Center for Education Statistics survey on libraries to be moved from the Department of Education to IMLS. The President signed the omnibus appropriations bill in December.

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<th>FY 2007</th>
<th>FY 2008</th>
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Budget struggles continue at the local level

State and local/regional budget cuts continued to bedevil school library media centers in 2007. Nationally, school library expenditures per pupil decreased to $13.67 in 2003-2004 from $19.14 in 1999-2000, a drop of almost 30 percent, according to data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), a division of the U.S. Department of Education. The percentage of public schools with school library media centers has risen slightly in the past four years, but the vast majority of states have decreased their spending on books and other materials and staff, the NCES said.

If this trend continues, according to Keith Curry Lance, an independent researcher and consultant, the national per-pupil expenditure in the 2007-2008 school year will be down to $9.76 — a drop of more than 50 percent from 1999-2000. Lance was formerly director of the Library Research Service at the Colorado State Library.

The national funding picture for public libraries improved in fiscal 2005, the most recent year for which complete data are available. Public libraries nationwide received a total of $9.7 billion dollars in funding, 81.4 percent of which came from local sources and 9.9 percent from state sources (the federal government accounted for 0.5 percent of revenue, and “other” sources for 8.4 percent.) The fiscal 2005 funding total represented an increase of 6.3 percent from the previous fiscal year. A complete report on funding for and usage of U.S. public libraries in fiscal 2005 is available on the IMLS Web site.

At the local level in 2007, the funding situation for public libraries was mixed; some narrowly escaped sinking, others sailed on successfully with expansion and renovations — and some had to sail and bail at the same time.

The controversial closing of the 15-branch Jackson County, Oregon, library system was reversed in October, thanks to a responsive county commission. In Minneapolis residents hailed the opening of a splendid new high-tech Central Library — while cuts in state and local funding forced the system to close three branches and reduce
hours. In Chicago, library champion Mayor Richard M. Daley linked his budget proposal to library services, banking on public affection for the thriving Chicago Public Library system to soften the blow of an $83.4 million property tax increase. In New York City, a $59 billion budget agreement announced in June funded the city’s public libraries for six-day-a-week service for the first time in six years. On the other hand, some libraries in Florida and Massachusetts struggled to keep their operations afloat as tax caps and rollbacks took their toll.

**Mean salaries edge up at public, academic libraries in 2007 surveys . . .**

Analysis of 2007 data from more than 800 public and academic libraries showed the mean salary for librarians with ALA-accredited master’s degrees increased 2.8 percent from 2006, up $1,550 to $57,809. The median ALA MLS salary was $53,000. Salaries ranged from $22,048 to $225,000, according to the 2007 edition of the *ALA-APA Salary Survey: Librarian — Public and Academic*. Salaries for 62 positions not requiring the MLS ranged from $10,707 (federal minimum wage) to $143,700, according to the 2007 *ALA-APA Salary Survey: Non-MLS Salary Survey*.

Published by the American Library Association-Allied Professional Association (ALA-APA), the surveys show aggregated data from more than 7,500 ALA MLS librarians and almost 20,000 non-MLS individual salaries at the state and regional levels.

**. . . and professionals at research libraries do even better**

The salaries of professional staff at member libraries of the Association of Research Libraries fared even better, outperforming inflation. The combined median professional salary in U.S. and Canadian ARL university libraries was $59,648 — a 4.5 percent increase from the previous year. Over the same period, inflation was 4.1 percent in the United States and 2.4 percent in Canada.

The ARL *Annual Salary Survey 2006–07* analyzed salary data for all professional staff working in the 123 ARL member libraries in 2006–07 (9,824 in the 113 university ARL libraries and 3,832 in 10 non-university libraries).

**Feedback and contact information**

The American Library Association’s Public Information Office coordinated the preparation of this report with contributions from the following ALA units:

- ALA Library
- American Association of School Librarians
- *American Libraries* magazine
- Association of College and Research Libraries
- Campaign for America’s Libraries
• Chapter Relations Office
• Office for Diversity
• Office for Government Relations
• Office for Information Technology Policy
• Office for Intellectual Freedom
• Office for Literacy and Outreach Services
• Office of Research and Statistics
• Public Information Office
• Public Library Association
• Washington Office
• Young Adult Library Services Association

Please direct any comments regarding this report to Mark Gould, Director, Public Information Office, mgould@ala.org.
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