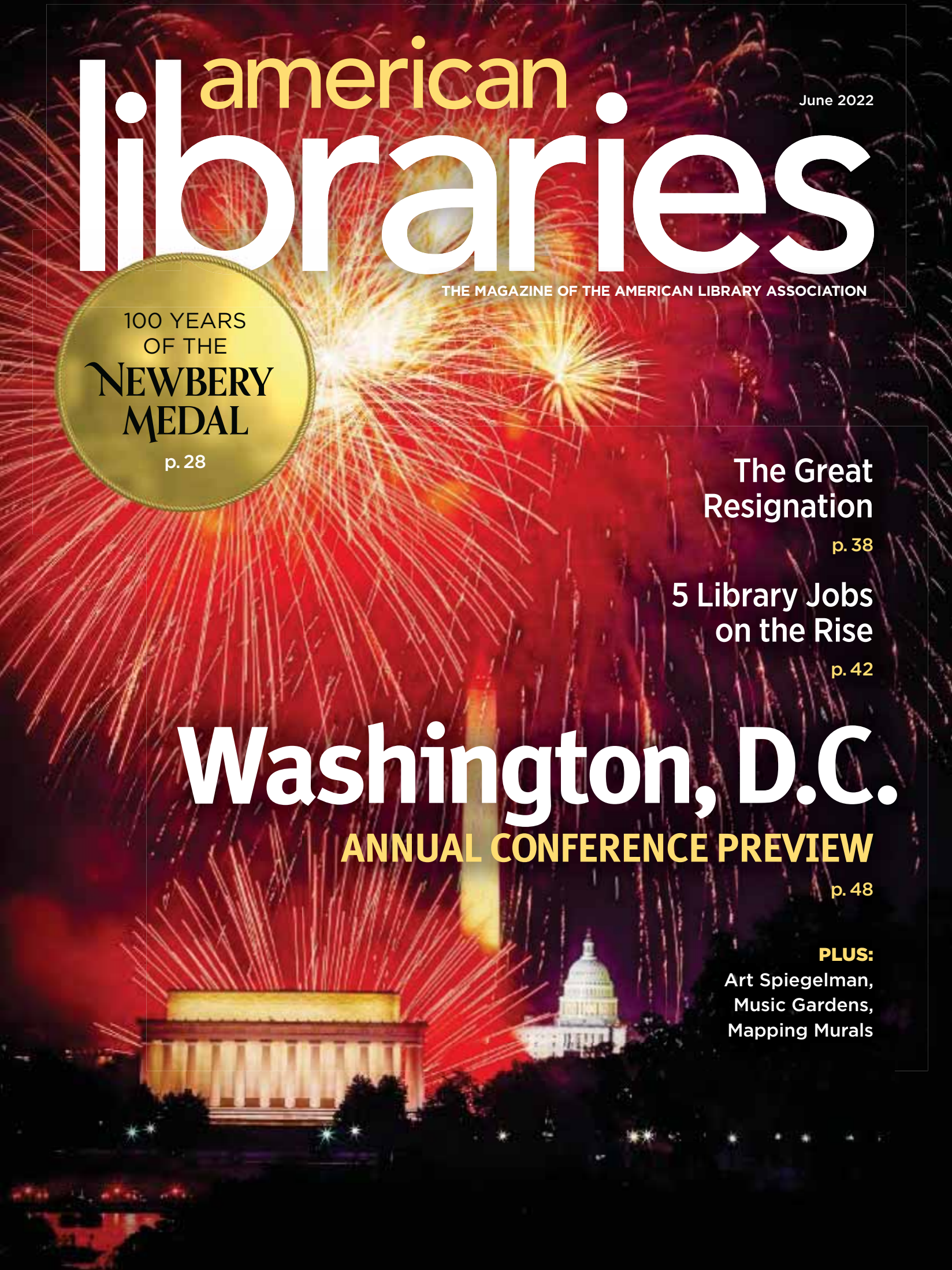

american libraries

June 2022

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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p. 28

The Great Resignation
p. 38

5 Library Jobs on the Rise
p. 42

Washington, D.C.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE PREVIEW
p. 48

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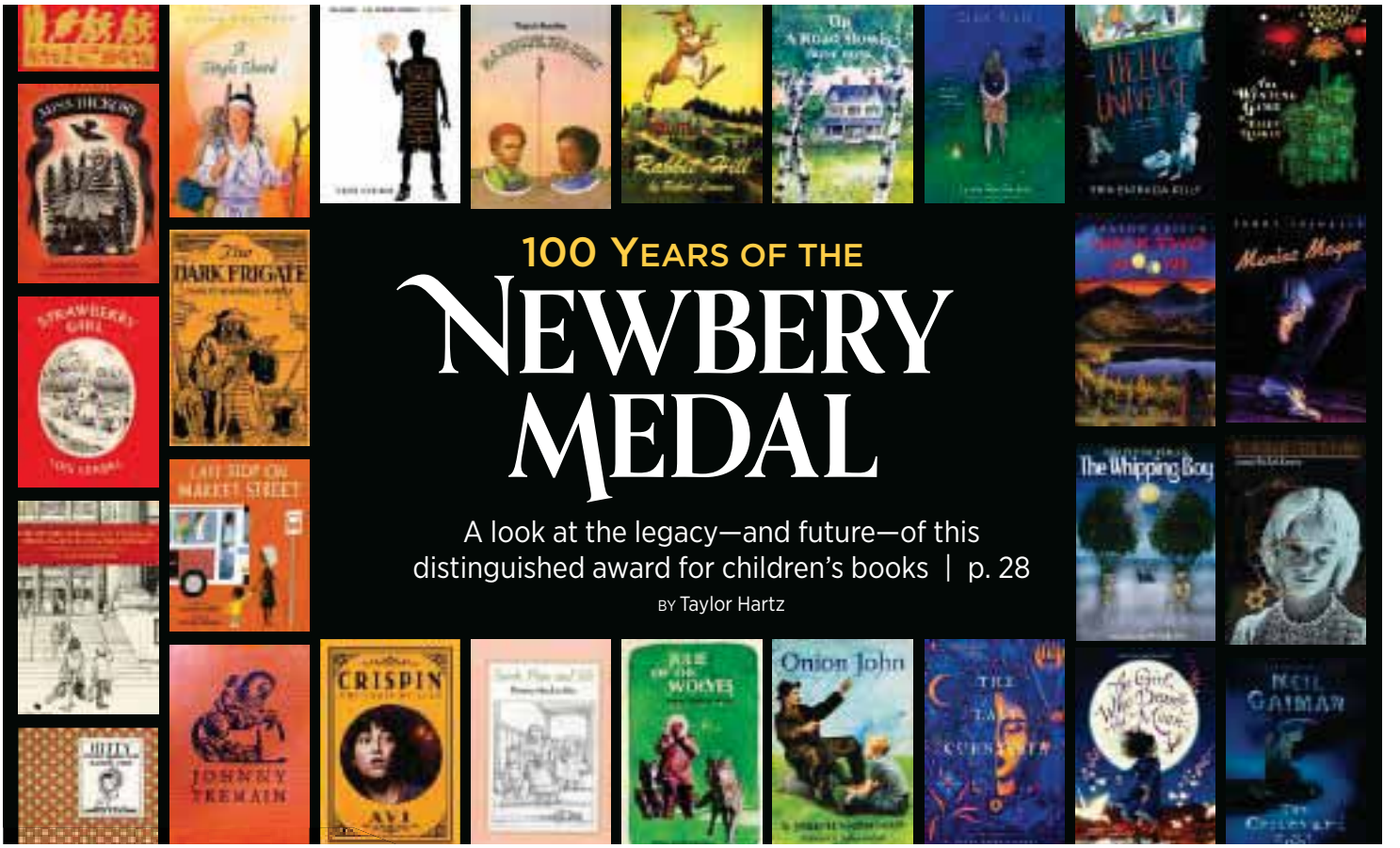

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from the **EDITOR**

Together Again



Sanhita SinhaRoy

Holding the ALA Annual Conference and Exhibition in Washington, D.C., later this June feels apt. The last nonvirtual Annual was held there, in June 2019, making the event's return a fitting bookend to nearly three years of pandemic-altered life. To check out the plentiful in-person offerings, use our conference preview (p. 48) as a guide. (For coverage, read our *Daily Scoop* conference e-newsletter starting June 24.)

The nature of employment itself has changed over these past few years. In "Quitting Time" (p. 38), Lara Ewen interviews almost a dozen people, including the management professor who coined the term the Great Resignation. Find out how people in the profession are responding to workplace challenges that the pandemic brought to light or exacerbated.

Another difficulty for many librarians: paying off student debt. In "Recognition and Relief" (p. 46), Bill Furbee talks with some of the lucky individuals who qualified for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program and asks about its impact on their lives.

The outlook is hopeful for many library workers who are entering in-demand jobs within the field. In "5 Library Jobs on the Rise" (p. 42), Managing Editor Terra Dankowski highlights several positions that are emerging more often in academic, public, school, and special libraries.

For many young patrons of Johnson City (Tenn.) Public Library, working in a library is a dream come true. In "In Training" (p. 58), Jennifer Johnson describes how a program for youth at her library is inspiring kids to become library advocates—and maybe even library workers—someday.

Finally, this year marks the centennial anniversary of the John Newbery Medal, the world's first children's book award. Taylor Hartz looks at the award's legacy and future ("100 Years of the Newbery," p. 28). Associate Editor Diana Panuncial also interviews a few past winners—including Jerry Craft and Lois Lowry—about what the award has meant to them. (Spoiler: It meant a lot.)

Hope to see you in D.C.

Sanhita

While the nature of employment continues to evolve through the pandemic, some library workers are leaving the profession or taking on new roles in the field.

from the **PRESIDENT**

Leading the Fight

For decades, ALA has been advocating for the freedom to read



Patricia "Patty" M. Wong

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label 'controversial' views, to distribute lists of 'objectionable' books or authors, and to purge libraries."

Those words were not written about the current spate of book bans, although they certainly apply. They were written nearly 70 years ago, as the ravages of McCarthyism, censorship, and persecution made it necessary to codify a defense of the reading choices of individuals. The 1953 Freedom to Read Statement (bit.ly/ALAFtR) remains a rallying cry for all information professionals, and it's just as apt and prescient today as it was when it was released.

It is foundational text that I find myself returning to as I consider the state of the Association and the profession, and as I prepare to close my term as president. I'm struck by how much (and how little) has changed since the statement was adopted. Through it all, ALA has been the leading voice in the fight against censorship—from that first statement to the founding of the Office for Intellectual Freedom in 1967, the establishment of the Freedom to Read Foundation in 1969, to this present time—and will continue to be that voice as we enter a new era of attacks.

This is a moment of significant social change. Individuals who are LGBTQ+, Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) are seeking more social inclusion and political power. Asian American leaders like myself are addressing historic erasures of our experience as well as confronting the legacy of bigoted acts perpetrated against our ancestors. It is these moments of intense and rapid transformation that compel some to try to suppress that change.

That's not new. What is new: Data shows that librarians and libraries are the subject of a coordinated, well-funded national censorship campaign by partisan advocacy groups targeting our public schools and public libraries. These groups are encouraging local chapters and their members to attend school and library board meetings and demand the removal of books that give voice to LGBTQ+ and BIPOC individuals and their experiences, which often do not match the moral or political beliefs of these partisan groups.

In 2021, ALA reported that 39% of challenges came from parents, 24% from library users, and 10% from organized groups. Censorship requests from organized groups are much greater than in past years. But we must keep in mind: Though they are loud, they are few.

This spring, ALA commissioned a national opinion poll (bit.ly/BookBanPoll) that marked the first attempt to approach the issue of book bans through the lenses of public and school libraries. The findings are remarkable: near-universal high regard for librarians and recognition of the critical role that public and school libraries play in their communities; bipartisan opposition to removing books from libraries; and large majorities voicing confidence in local public libraries' abilities to make good decisions about their collections.

The findings demonstrate that far from being a partisan issue, book bans are opposed by large majorities of voters of all parties. That's why ALA recently launched Unite Against Book Bans, a national advocacy campaign to mobilize public opposition to the banning and removal of reading materials from libraries and schools.

As I prepare to pass the gavel, this work is not done. ALA has been at the vanguard of this fight for almost 70 years. And we'll keep fighting for as long as it takes. AL

Findings from ALA's recent national poll demonstrate that far from being a partisan issue, book bans are opposed by large majorities of voters of all parties.

PATRICIA "PATTY" M. WONG is city librarian at Santa Clara (Calif.) City Library.

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from the **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Fugitive Literacies

Confronting histories of reading as contraband activity



Tracie D. Hall

When the younger son of a family I had grown up with was incarcerated, I sent him three books. I had picked out each carefully: autobiographies written by Black men who'd similarly gone to prison in their youth and used that experience to turn their lives around. I was shocked when prison officials returned all three, saying the titles were not allowed. As a young librarian then, I was unsettled that they had labeled the books and themes as contraband. Shouldn't a prison, of all places, welcome opportunities for learning—especially given the connection between low literacy and incarceration, and conversely, the role of reading as a deterrent of recidivism?

There is a long history of denying reading skills or access to particular groups, including incarcerated people, unpaid and low-wage workers, enslaved and colonized communities, and women.

Ken Bigger, a new senior fellow in ALA's Center for the Future of Libraries, connects literacy to civic fluency in his research. Bigger raises this point: The prison industrial complex actually gains from low literacy.

The same is true of any exploitative system whose propagation depends on its subjects having as little information as possible. In these systems, reading is considered a distraction at best or an infraction at worst. Those who gain reading ability and access earn a "fugitive" or transient literacy in which they cannot be "caught" reading and in which full literacy is seen as aberrant, or reading material is policed or confiscated.

In exploitative systems, reading is considered a distraction at best or an infraction at worst. Those who gain reading ability and access earn a "fugitive" literacy.

Too many institutions that could help instead routinely normalize low literacy and inadequate information access: school systems that fail to ensure all students reach grade-level literacy; social services institutions that ignore needs for adult literacy support despite cyclical underemployment, poverty, and homelessness; and employers that ignore the connection between full literacy and productivity.

Approximately 32 million adults in this country can't read. The last two years have seen a rise in lawsuits in places like California, Michigan, and New York asserting literacy as integral to the 14th Amendment, which provides equal protection under the law. Studies also show that literacy is a multigenerational issue. The National Bureau of Economic Research estimates that 72% of the children of parents with low literacy skills will experience low literacy themselves.

Calls for library intervention and support are not new. In 1979, literacy rose to the fore of the concerns of the more than 3,600 participants convened for the first White House Conference on Library and Information Services. At that meeting, literacy was determined to be foundational to democracy and productivity, and the low rate of literacy at that time was declared a crisis that libraries could not ignore.

Today, as the number of adults—one in five—who are not functionally literate increases, the crisis intensifies. This has been especially true during the pandemic. As John Agada, ALA's second Center for the Future of Libraries senior fellow and inaugural researcher in its new Institute for the Study of Race in Libraries and Information Technologies, notes: In times of crisis, people marginalized because of race, income, and literacy face the "harshest outcomes." Those with limited literacy are particularly vulnerable, as they have to rely on others to direct them on where to find help.

My next column will close this series on libraries and literacy with a focus on how ALA and libraries nationwide are responding to the profound literacy needs in our communities. AL

TRACIE D. HALL is executive director of the American Library Association. Reach her at thall@ala.org.



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Drabinski, Hepburn Win ALA Elections

Emily Drabinski, interim chief librarian at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, was elected 2022–2023 president-elect of the American Library Association (ALA). Drabinski received 5,410 votes while her opponent, Kelvin Watson, executive director of the Las Vegas–Clark County (Nev.) Library District, received 4,622 votes.


Emily Drabinski

Upon learning the outcome of the election, Drabinski provided the following statement:

"Thank you to everyone who participated in this election. I am humbled and excited to serve as your 2022–2023 president-elect. I am ready to get to work with all of you to strengthen our Association and our field to support library workers and the communities we serve. Thank you for your confidence and support of my vision for ALA and your role in that vision. We have a lot of work ahead to build collective power for the public good. I can't wait to get started with all of you."

Previously, Drabinski served as chair of the ALA International Relations Committee (2020–2021), ALA councilor-at-large (2018–2020), and chair of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Information Literacy Frameworks and Standards Committee (2019–2020).

Drabinski is an active member of ACRL and Core: Leadership, Infrastructure, Futures. She was cochair of the ACRL President's Program Planning Committee (2020–2021) and serves as a reviews editor for *College and Research Libraries*. She is also a member of several ALA round tables: the Ethnic and Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table (EMIERT), the International Relations Round Table, the Library Support Staff Interests Round Table, the Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT), and the Sustainability Round Table (SustainRT).

Drabinski holds an MLIS from Syracuse (N.Y.) University, a master's in composition and rhetoric from Long Island University Brooklyn, and a bachelor's in political science from Columbia University in New York City.


Peter Hepburn

Peter Hepburn, head librarian at College of the Canyons in Santa Clarita, California, was elected treasurer of ALA for 2022–2025. Hepburn received 8,947 votes in an uncontested race.

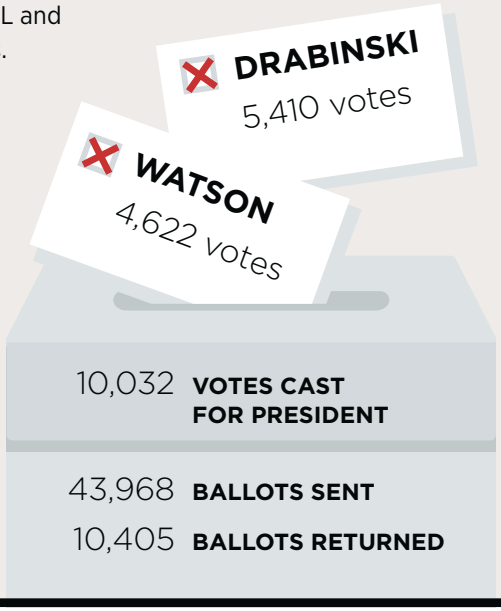
Hepburn will step into his role as treasurer at the close of ALA's 2022 Annual Conference and Exhibition in Washington, D.C. "What an incredible honor to be able to serve our Association in this capacity and to collaborate with such remarkable member leaders and the dedicated ALA staff. I greatly look forward to the work ahead," Hepburn said in a statement.

Hepburn has chaired ALA's Budget Analysis and Review Committee (2019–2021), was a member of the ALA Executive Board (2014–2017) and the Finance and Audit Committee (2015–2017, 2019–2021), was an ALA councilor-at-large (2017–2020), and has served as the Rainbow Round Table (RainbowRT) councilor (2010–2016). He is currently a member of the Committee on Organization (2021–2023).

Hepburn is also a member of ACRL, the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), and the Public Library Association (PLA). He is involved with the Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table, the Intellectual Freedom Round Table, the New Members Round Table, RainbowRT, SRRT, and SustainRT.

Hepburn holds a doctorate in education from Arizona State University in Tempe, an MLIS from McGill University in Montréal, and a bachelor's degree from University of Victoria in British Columbia.

For more election results, visit bit.ly/ALA-elections. ●



New ALA Poll Shows Voters Oppose Book Bans

A new national poll commissioned by ALA and released on March 24 shows that seven in 10 voters oppose removing books from public libraries, including majorities of voters across party lines.

Majorities of Democrats (75%), independents (58%), and Republicans (70%) are against efforts to remove books from their local public library. Additionally, 74% of parents of public school children expressed confidence in school libraries and librarians to choose which books are available to children and said books that have been contested should be available on an age-appropriate basis. Overall, 90% of voters have a favorable opinion of librarians who work in local public libraries and school libraries.

The poll, conducted March 1–6, surveyed 1,000 voters and 472 parents of children in public schools. It is the first to view the issue of book bans through the lens of public and school libraries. The poll's results show that voters have a high regard for librarians and recognize the critical role libraries play in their communities. Additional survey findings and methodology can be found at bit.ly/ALA-bookbanpoll22.

ALA Joins 'We Can Do This' Campaign to Share Vaccine Info

On April 12, ALA announced it is partnering with the US Department of Health and Human Services' "We Can Do This" campaign to share trusted information about COVID-19 vaccines with parents and families.

The partnership will focus on providing vaccine information for parents and caregivers of children younger than 12 years old. COVID-19 vaccines for children ages 5–11 are recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. As of April, vaccination rates for ages 5–11 are significantly lower than for older age groups: Just 35% of people ages 5–11 have received at least one dose, compared with 87% of those 12 and older.

The "We Can Do This" campaign provides a range of outreach tools and shareable resources that libraries can use to educate their communities. For more information, visit bit.ly/ALA-WeCanDoThis.

2022 YALSA Teens' Top Ten Nominees Announced

The Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) announced the 2022 Teens' Top Ten Nominees on April 8. This year's list of nominees features 25 titles that were published between January 1 and December 31, 2021.

An annotated list of the nominees is available at bit.ly/ALA-YALSA1022.

Teens are encouraged to read the nominees over the summer to prepare for the national Teens' Top Ten vote, which will take place August 15–October 12. The nominees that receive the highest number of votes will be named the official 2022 Teens' Top Ten.

Nominators are members of teen book groups from 16 school and public libraries across the country. Teens anywhere in the US can fill out the public nomination

CALENDAR

JUNE
Rainbow Book Month
ala.org/rt/rrt

JUNE 21–24
ACRL Rare Books and Manuscripts Conference
Virtual
rbms.info/conferences

JUNE 23–28
ALA Annual Conference and Exhibition
Washington, D.C.
alaannual.org

JULY 26–29
IFLA World Library and Information Congress
Dublin, Ireland
2022.ifla.org

SEPT.
Library Card Sign-Up Month
ala.org/librarycardsignup

SEPT. 18–24
Banned Books Week
bannedbooksweek.org

SEPT. 21
Banned Websites Awareness Day
ala.org/aasl/advocacy/bwad

SEPT. 29–OCT. 1
ALSC National Institute
Kansas City, Missouri
ala.org/alsc/confsce/institute

OCT.
TeenTober
ala.org/yalsa/teentober

OCT. 16–22
National Friends of Libraries Week
bit.ly/alafolweek

OCT. 24–30
International Open Access Week
openaccessweek.org

NOV.
International Games Month
bit.ly/ALA-igm

NOV. 4–6
YALSA's Young Adult Services Symposium | Baltimore
ala.org/yalsa/yasymposium

form (bit.ly/YALSA-PublicForm) to have a book considered.

Resource Promotes Inclusive Financial Literacy for Youth

On April 1, ALA, in collaboration with the FINRA Investor Education Foundation, released *Thinking Money for All Kids: Diverse and Inclusive Reads to Teach Young People about Money,* a free resource for library workers.

The guide highlights 40 recommended titles selected by a team of librarian advisors. It was developed to eschew stereotypes and embrace diversity in telling stories and sharing skills related to personal finance and financial capability for children. The guide also includes sections on how to build a diverse financial education collection, program ideas, resources, and tips.

Thinking Money for All Kids introduces books and resources to help young people explore personal values about money, treat people from all socioeconomic backgrounds with dignity and respect, and address the foundational concepts that lead to financial capability. The booklet is available as a PDF at bit.ly/ThinkingMoneyALA.



Proposals Open for ACRL 2023 Conference

The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) seeks proposals for ACRL 2023, which will be held March 15–18 in Pittsburgh.

With an increased emphasis on remote learning, rising calls for social justice, and an acknowledgment of the need for flexibility and work-life balance, academic libraries are navigating many challenges. ACRL 2023 will explore these issues through the theme "Forging the Future."

ACRL 2023 has seven session formats. Contributed paper, panel session, and workshop proposals are due June 3. Lightning talk, poster session, round table discussion, and virtual conference presentation proposals are due October 13.

ACRL seeks participants from all types of libraries, positions, and experiences, including nonlibrary faculty, staff, and administrators, and those from underrepresented and marginalized groups.

For complete details about ACRL 2023, visit bit.ly/ACRL2023.

Library Broadband Services during COVID-19 Highlighted

A new report by ALA, released on March 22, shows the impact of broadband access provided through the nation's nearly 17,000 public libraries during the pandemic. The report also shows the need for continued long-term investments in broadband infrastructure and digital inclusion programming. *Keeping Communities Connected: Library Broadband Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic* (bit.ly/ALA-KCC), part of the ALA Policy Perspectives series, is coauthored by Amelia Bryne, codirector of DeepTech.org, and Marijke Visser, library section supervisor and continuing education coordinator at the Maine State Library.

When the global COVID-19 pandemic forced work, school, and other daily tasks online, libraries provided internet connections and devices to those who otherwise would lack access. The report documents both widespread practices and one-off strategies employed by US public libraries to keep patrons connected.

Investments made in library broadband, Wi-Fi, and devices during the pandemic not only helped to address immediate needs, the report concludes, but also laid the groundwork for economic recovery. Connectivity, end-user devices, and new library services will help support those experiencing economic hardship as they look for jobs, learn new workplace skills, or transition to new careers.

ALA Webinars to Discuss Neutrality

The ALA Working Group on Intellectual Freedom and Social Justice will host webinars for members and library workers that will provide opportunities to learn more about potential alternatives to neutrality. The alternatives to neutrality to be discussed include radical empathy, trauma-informed response, and cultural humility.

The first two webinars, on public and school libraries, were held April 25 and May 17. A third webinar, on academic libraries, is scheduled for June 8 at 2 p.m. Central. To register for the June webinar, visit bit.ly/ALA-June8webinar.

Sessions are open to all, but registration is limited. For more information about the working group, visit bit.ly/ALA-IFwebinars2022.

AASL Announces New Member Benefit

On April 12, AASL launched new Communities of Practice (CoPs), an exclusive benefit to members. These online communities are designed to provide a

ALA Speaks against Book Bans at House Hearing

The Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Subcommittee of the House Committee on Oversight and Reform held a hearing on April 7, "Free Speech Under Attack: Book Bans and Academic Censorship." OIF Director Deborah Caldwell-Stone submitted a letter to the subcommittee chair and ranking member. The letter reads, in part:

"Every day, more than 360,000 library professionals in every community across America work to promote literacy, provide access to information, and introduce children to the joy of reading. The Constitution prohibits public bodies, such as libraries, from discriminating on the basis of viewpoint or censoring materials based on their message. Libraries uphold these Constitutional principles by enabling readers to choose materials representing a variety of ideas, opinions, and views.

"ALA is alarmed by an increasing trend of censorship campaigns directed at libraries around the country. These proposals would strip readers of their freedom to choose and could make it impossible for libraries and librarians to fulfill their legal and professional responsibilities."

In response to these threats, ALA launched "Unite Against Book Bans," a national initiative designed to educate and mobilize readers across demographic groups and the political spectrum. For more information on the initiative, visit uniteagainstbookbans.org.

gathering space for like-minded school library professionals to discuss, share, and learn around a central topic. The five newly launched communities focus on digital tools; diversity, equity, and inclusion; information literacy instruction; promotion of literature and reading; and teacher collaboration.

Through the communities, AASL members can collaborate and create best practices, curate resources, or develop new tools. Each CoP will develop its own organization and structure and assign volunteer roles as needed. Possible roles include discussion monitor, meeting



coordinator, and special event and project coordinators. CoPs may opt to hold regular meetings, form book clubs, or present webinar or conference programs.

The initial CoPs were identified through a member survey conducted by the AASL Member Engagement Committee and approved by the AASL Board of Directors. To remain timely, the number of available communities and topics of focus will shift to meet the changing needs of AASL's membership. CoPs will be reviewed annually for changes or additions.

Endowment Established to Honor ALA Retiree

On April 17, ALA announced a new endowment honoring Satia Marshall Orange, who guided what is now ALA's Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services (ODLOS) for 12 years, would be established to benefit the Spectrum Scholarship Program.


Satia Marshall Orange

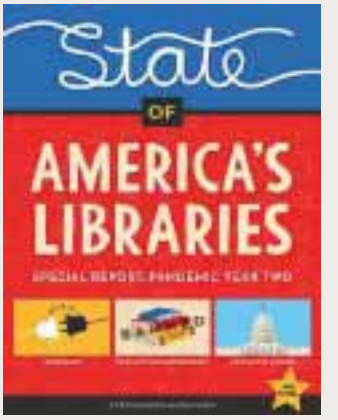
Dollars raised through the fund will benefit ALA's Spectrum Scholarship program, which recruits and provides scholarships to American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian American, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Middle Eastern and North African, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students to assist them with obtaining graduate degrees and leadership positions within the profession and ALA.

Gifts will go toward a goal of $67,000 to establish an endowment and two scholarships to be given this year. Donations can be made at bit.ly/ALA-SatiaOrangeFund by selecting the "Satia Marshall Orange Fund."

Orange, who retired from ALA in 2009, served as the ALA staff liaison to SRRT, the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Round Table (now RainbowRT), and EMIERT for over a decade.

Prior to her tenure at ALA, she was director of the Arthur Ashe Jr. Foreign Policy Library's TransAfrica Forum, coordinating lectures, special events, and receptions highlighting Africa and the diaspora, and head of children's services at Forsyth County (N.C.) Public Library.

State of America's Libraries 2022 Report Released



The number of reported book challenges topped 700 in 2021—the most since 2000, according to ALA's annual *State of America's Libraries* report, released April 4. The 2022 report summarizes library trends and outlines statistics and issues affecting libraries during the previous calendar year. It comes out annually during National Library Week, this year April 3–9.

Library staff in every state faced an unprecedented number of attempts to ban books. OIF tracked 729 challenges to library, school, and university materials and services in 2021, resulting in more than 1,597 individual book challenges or removals. Most targeted books were by or about Black or LGBTQIA+ individuals. The 729 challenges represent the highest number of attempted book bans in one year since ALA began compiling the list 20 years ago.

In addition, the SOAL report focused on ways that libraries and librarians can center ideas of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) by prioritizing EDI-related programs, hiring more diverse library staff, and joining together against acts of hate against marginalized groups, such as Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

SOAL 2022 also investigated the landscape of libraries in the second year of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. To read the full report, visit bit.ly/ALA-libraryreport2022. ●

New Federated Authentication Resources from Core

In March, Core published two free guides to help librarians and library workers better understand federated authentication, which lets library users access remote sites by logging onto a campus sign-on service.

The first resource, *Federated Authentication Acronyms and Terminology*, is a guide to the area's specialized language and helps define terms for those working in libraries. The second resource—*The Elevator Talk: Explaining Seamless Access, Federated Authentication, and Related Privacy Issues to Your Boss, in 60 Seconds, in Very Simple Language*—explains the benefits and issues around federated authentication and the related SeamlessAccess project.

These resources were created by the Core Technology Section's Authentication Project Team, which is transitioning into a standing Federated Authentication Committee in Core.

The new committee will establish a road map for skills development for librarians, provide a venue for the library community to be partners in the evolving federated authentication landscape, and share regular updates with Core members on SeamlessAccess developments

regarding topics such as patron privacy and equity of access.

Batchelder Award Revised to Recognize Book Translators

The Association for Library Service to Children's (ALSC) board of directors voted in January to revise the submission criteria for the Mildred L. Batchelder Award to add requirements regarding credit to translators. The new language approved by the board requires that the translator or translators must, at a minimum, be credited on the title page along with the author or authors. Ideally, the translator or translators should be credited on the cover alongside the author or authors.

The award, established in 1966, is given to a US publisher for a children's book considered to be the most outstanding of those books originating in a country other than the United States and in a language other than English and subsequently translated into English for publication in the US.

In addition to the criteria change, effective with the 2023 Batchelder Award conferral, certificates will be presented to translators of Batchelder Award–winning and honor books. The member-driven recommendation for the criteria change was developed through consultation with publishers of translated titles, ALSC members, and others in the translation community.

PLA Conference Sees 6,000 in Attendance

More than 6,000 people gathered in person and virtually to attend sessions on shaping the future of public library service in a post-pandemic world at the PLA 2022 Conference, held March 23–25 in Portland, Oregon.

The conference opened with best-selling author and podcast host Luvvie Ajayi Jones challenging attendees to get comfortable with being uncomfortable.

The conference's Big Ideas sessions—led by author and lawyer Brittany K. Barnett and *Jeopardy!* champion Amy Schneider—focused on equity, diversity, and inclusion. Additional authors and audiobook narrators featured included Clothilde Ewing, Alex Gino, Jordan Ifueko, Sonia Manzano, Brian Selznick, and Willy Vlautin.

Closing speaker Kal Penn talked about his appreciation for the library community. The actor, writer, producer, and former associate director of the White House Office of Public Engagement shared stories about the early impact of libraries in his life as a reader, and their support of his memoir, *You Can't Be Serious* (February 2020).

The division's next national conference, PLA 2024, will be held in Columbus, Ohio. AL

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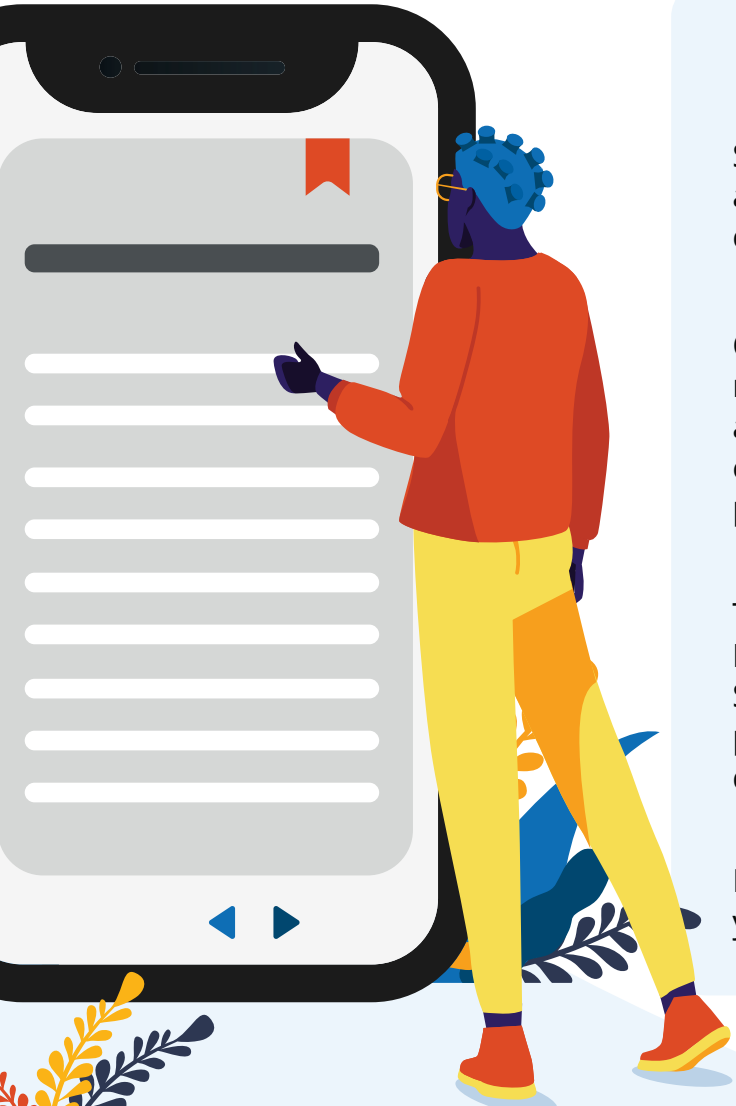

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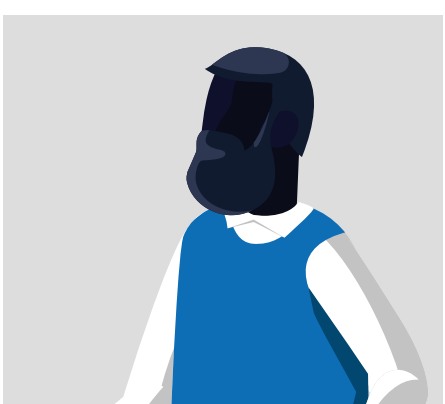

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The modules of Vega LX

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Young patrons play in the music garden at Pickerington (Ohio) Public Library. The garden was installed in November 2019, and continues to see regular use during the pandemic.

The Beat Goes On

Music gardens anchor communities through pandemic

BY Bailey Brewer

As Tony Howard explored the exhibit hall at the American Library Association's (ALA) 2019 Annual Conference and Exhibition in Washington, D.C., his head was still in his home state of Ohio. Howard, director of Pickerington (Ohio) Public Library (PPL), was wrestling with how to make use of a neglected outdoor area on his library's property. That's when he came across a display for a company that manufactures and installs musical instruments in outdoor spaces at schools, libraries, and city parks, creating music gardens. The vendor, UK-based Percussion Play, had actual instruments—drums, chimes, bells—that individuals could test out, Howard recalls. "And I was like, 'This is it! This is what we're putting in that space!'"

The concept of music gardens isn't new, but it has gained traction since early 2020 as libraries shifted programming and services online and sought ways to safely engage patrons outdoors and spark joy during the pandemic's darkest days. Library green space outfitted with full-size, playable instruments allowed for both sensory engagement and social distancing. Percussion Play reported a 200% increase in sales to libraries from 2019 to 2020. A year later, between 2020 and 2021, the company saw a 122% jump.

In 2021, Bethlehem (N.H.) Public Library (BPL) incorporated an outdoor StoryWalk and a music garden in direct response to pandemic restrictions and anxieties, says BPL Director Laura Clerkin (read our coverage of StoryWalks at bit.ly/AL-StoryWalks). "Many people were hesitant to enter the building even with masks," she says, "so we were looking for ways to make use of our backyard and have a space to read and enjoy music." These projects involved support from the library's Friends group and funding through the American Rescue Plan Act.

Howard didn't foresee the pandemic when PPL's musical garden was completed in November 2019, but the timing was serendipitous. Patrons who were rightly fearful of crowds and indoor spaces made quick use of the garden. "We thought, if people are coming to play in the music garden but not necessarily coming into the library, how do we serve them where they want to be?" Howard says. "They want to be outside."

Rain or shine

After this epiphany, Howard and his team fed off the initial momentum from the garden's popularity and introduced more outdoor activities. During the region's hottest months, the city provided permits for temporary tents where patrons could seek shade on the library's lawn and enjoy live music, magicians, food trucks, and a petting zoo—more than 400 people turned out for a big, end-of-summer event in 2021. Recognizing the ongoing appeal of outdoor engagement, PPL has budgeted to install a permanent open-air pavilion on its property later this year.

"We had more people coming to outdoor programming than we ever had coming to our indoor programming," Howard says. Attendance to early literacy classes tripled, which he attributes to the appeal of the children's music garden during

Photo: Pickerington (Ohio) Public Library

> "Everyone feels that they can engage with [a music garden], without an invitation."
>
> **KATIE HEINTZ,** director of North Mankato (Minn.) Taylor Library

the pandemic. "[It] gave us a lot of potential and helped us change the way we're serving the community."

North Mankato (Minn.) Taylor Library (NMTL) already had plans for a music garden before the pandemic; it was installed in June 2020, with some municipal funding and a grant from the state's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

Since then, neither the pandemic nor bitterly cold weather has deterred residents from visiting the colorful drums and xylophone keys that are part of the library's music garden, says NMTL Director Katie Heintz.

"It really promotes the fun that we have here," Heintz says. "It's a fun addition to all the things the library community provides. Everyone feels that they can engage with it, without an invitation."

When the library placed protective tarps over the instruments for winter, patrons requested they be removed so that the show could go on. Later, during outdoor events like storytime, Heintz says, it became common to see children interact with instruments before or after such programming.

Meditative moments

Mesa Verde (Calif.) Library in Costa Mesa, part of Orange County Public Libraries (OCPL), installed a music garden in October 2019. The instruments, supplied by Chattanooga, Tennessee–based Freenotes Harmony Park, have helped draw people into the library, says David Lopez, OCPL marketing and communications librarian. "The greatest use of the music garden since the various stages of reopening has been for unplanned free play," Lopez says. "Patrons enjoy taking a pause and playing the instruments on their way in or out of the branch."

Adult patrons were invited to roll out their yoga mats and enjoy a meditation and sound bath that incorporated the garden's instruments. For younger patrons, Mesa Verde staffers have read music-themed books near the garden and have hosted a workshop where kids could upcycle empty cans to make their own drums. And as pandemic restrictions ease up, the branch is planning summer programming around the music garden, including musical storytimes, music performances, and a summer reading challenge. The project sponsors, Costa Mesa Friends of the Library, have purchased a second set of instruments for OCPL's Donald Dungan Library.

"Instead of being a place where children are told to be quiet, our library offers outdoor activities where sound, discovery, and creativity are encouraged," Lopez says. "The music garden has given the Costa Mesa community a gathering place to simply stop what they are doing, take a moment to produce some meditative notes, and hopefully enjoy the healing powers of music." AL

BAILEY BREWER is a freelance writer based in Los Angeles.

Photo: notesinthemargin.org (tape)

BY THE NUMBERS

Audiobook Appreciation Month

1998

Year the Audio Publishers Association—which represents the audiobook industry—established June as Audiobook Appreciation Month.

71,000

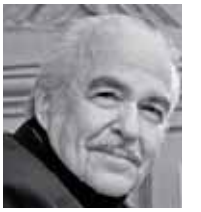
Number of audiobooks published in the United States in 2020.



1975

Year that the company Books on Tape was founded by Duvall Hecht, an Olympic gold medalist in rowing and a former Marine Corps pilot. Hecht was a pioneer in harnessing the then-new technology of cassette tapes to create audiobooks, later selling his business to Penguin Random House.

1,300+



Number of audiobooks to which actor George Guidall has lent his voice. Named the "heavyweight champion" of narration by *The Guardian,* he has read such classics as *Crime and Punishment, Frankenstein,* and *Don Quixote.*

4

Average hours per day people spend listening to audio, including one hour per day dedicated to spoken word audio, according to the Spoken Word Audio Report from 2019.

57%

Percentage of people who listen to audiobooks who say that they help them finish more books.



In 2020, Bloomington (Ill.) Public Library began holding plant swap programs, designed to be held outdoors during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Photo: Clare Báez

Branching Out

Setting the ground rules for plant swap programs

BY Bill Furbee

A solitary plant sat on a table after a plant swap at Bloomington (Ill.) Public Library (BPL). It was a large spider plant marked free for anyone to take after a 2020 program, recalls Mimi Davis, BPL's adult services librarian. Although no one took the greenery that day, its abundant plantlets were distributed the following year as part of a kids' program—and the spider plant's original owner happened to be there to see it.

"Oh look, there's Fred!" Davis recounts the plant's original owner calling out, revealing the donated spider plant's name. "And his babies are getting new homes."

These special reunions between plant owners and their beloved sprouts are the culmination of plant swap programs, where gardeners exchange their plant cuttings and share knowledge on how to grow or care for them with their new keepers. In the age of COVID-19, as librarians have looked for ways to engage patrons outdoors, plant swap programs have naturally blossomed.

"It was a perfect pandemic program," says Davis. "We've hosted it three times, and each time is bigger and better than the one before."

Lancaster (Wis.) Public Library's (LPL) Bring Your Own Plant (BYOP) program kicked off last year, and Manager of Library Services Jennifer Wolfe reports her staff has been thrilled with its popularity. "We were looking for adult programs that would do well outdoors, because we were still very much in COVID times," she says. "It was low cost; we bought some soil and plastic cups, and it was easy to put together, which was ideal since we were also short-staffed."

It soon became apparent that a follow-up program would be needed after the initial program's popularity. LPL scheduled a second BYOP just a few weeks later. "We got so many requests to do it again," Wolfe says.

Cultivating community

Swapping plants can cultivate a community of garden-loving patrons at the library, while also inviting beginning gardeners—or patrons who have never gardened before—to join in.

"It's wonderful to provide a place for people to connect over something they love," says Bette McDowell, adult services librarian at Pflugerville (Tex.) Public Library (PPL), where plant swap programs began a couple of years ago and are projected to run every quarter. "Newer gardeners can learn from those with experience, and gardeners who have been at it for years can share their knowledge," McDowell says. "Growing and raising plants is a fantastic skill to have, and these events help gardening seem less intimidating."

At Bexley (Ohio) Public Library, Adult Services Manager Whitney Carr found her plant swap program to be a valuable conversation starter. "It got people talking and sharing their love for, and knowledge of, plants," she says.

To ensure a plant swap at the library flourishes, Carr recommends taking timing into consideration. "We host them [when]

people would be starting new items in the garden," Carr says, adding that the library also recently installed a "plant-sharing station" to accommodate year-round swaps. Her library also tied a plant swap to National Houseplant Appreciation Day on January 10.

To complement the swaps, PPL invites groups like the local Master Gardeners Association chapter to conduct plant clinics and answer questions about gardening.

BPL's Davis says promoting a collection of gardening and houseplant books and including other library departments, such as teen or children's services, for a collaborative experience—strategies her library has implemented—may also work.

McDowell stresses the importance of having plenty of boxes, garden tools, labels, and old nursery pots on hand. She also points out that librarians should anticipate guests who might be interested but won't have plants of their own to trade. To accommodate those guests, she suggests, the library can have a few extra plants prepared as additional cuttings.

As far as where to host the swap, outdoors may be a convenient option. But if you're hosting indoors, Carr advises leaving ample space for patrons to gather and "geek out about plants." The program at Bexley was set up in the lobby, but she points out that next time, they'll choose a space where people can linger and chat.

"Plants form beneficial relationships with each other, and I think we as humans can learn a lot from that," Davis says. The plant swaps have been "a bright spot of community and togetherness in a time where we've been separated and isolated from each other." AL

> "Newer gardeners can learn from those with experience, and gardeners who have been at it for years can share their knowledge."
>
> **BETTE MCDOWELL,** adult services librarian at Pflugerville (Tex.) Public Library

BILL FURBEE is a writer living in Melbourne, Kentucky.

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Information School
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Cameron Socha, who graduates this year from Wayne State University's School of Information Sciences, collaborated with his professor Joan Beaudoin to catalog murals (inset).

Mapping the Murals

Library school professor and student catalog public art in Detroit

Before she became a librarian and library school educator, Joan Beaudoin studied art history in Philadelphia. She was inspired by the city's thousands of murals and the work of organizations like Mural Arts Philadelphia to bring attention to public art. When she moved to Detroit more than a decade ago and began teaching at Wayne State University (WSU), Beaudoin envisioned an idea for a student project to document the eclectic public art scene—a project to promote positive narratives of self-expression in a city that has seen its share of economic adversity and racial inequality. During the fall 2021 semester, she worked with WSU library school student Cameron Socha to catalog and create an interactive online map of more than 100 murals in Detroit's Eastern Market neighborhood.

BY Joan Beaudoin

Detroit's murals are incredible cultural resources that speak to the vibrant artistic spirit of the city and its people. When I was first driving around the city as a newcomer, I'd see murals and public art installations and look for information about them online. Some websites and apps included notes about the murals, but they often lacked key information like artist names and street addresses. I would sometimes try to revisit a mural online later, only to find what little information had been available no longer existed. This fragmented and inconsistent coverage of murals stood out to me, and I felt like my community of students at WSU's School of Information Sciences should be leading efforts to document these artworks through photography and cataloging.

I teach a digital libraries class in which students are asked to create their own collections consisting of 20–25 personal items. It is often the students' first time creating a collection, so I work closely with them, teaching the process of digitally capturing items and cataloging them using Dublin Core, a metadata schema used to describe various kinds of physical and digital resources. Although it is labor intensive, it's a highly rewarding project. I enjoy connecting personally with each student to help them understand the steps involved.

I'd had the idea of cataloging and mapping Detroit's murals for some time, but I knew I needed the assistance of the right person

to get the project off the ground. I met Cameron Socha when he was a student in my digital libraries and metadata classes, where I noticed his knack for cataloging; for a class project, he had produced richly descriptive records for a collection of beer steins using Dublin Core and several controlled vocabularies. As his academic advisor, I suggested the project as an individual study course—a way to showcase what he had learned while working toward his MLIS.

The sheer volume of Detroit's murals and other works of public art meant we had to narrow our focus to one area of the city. I selected a five-by-five-block area of the city known as Eastern Market, home to a sprawling outdoor market and more than 100 murals. These murals are diverse in their depictions: Some highlight certain market vendors' wares, while others promote messages of social inclusion and belonging or relate to elements of Detroit's history, such as the automotive industry and Motown music.

Together we began recording murals and determined how the descriptions would fit within the Dublin Core schema. Then Cameron began photographing, researching, and cataloging these murals within Omeka, an open source publishing platform for sharing digital collections and online exhibits. This research typically involved contacting artists and tracking down their social media handles. We have since created an interactive map (bit.ly/WSU-murals) that helps users discover local artwork.

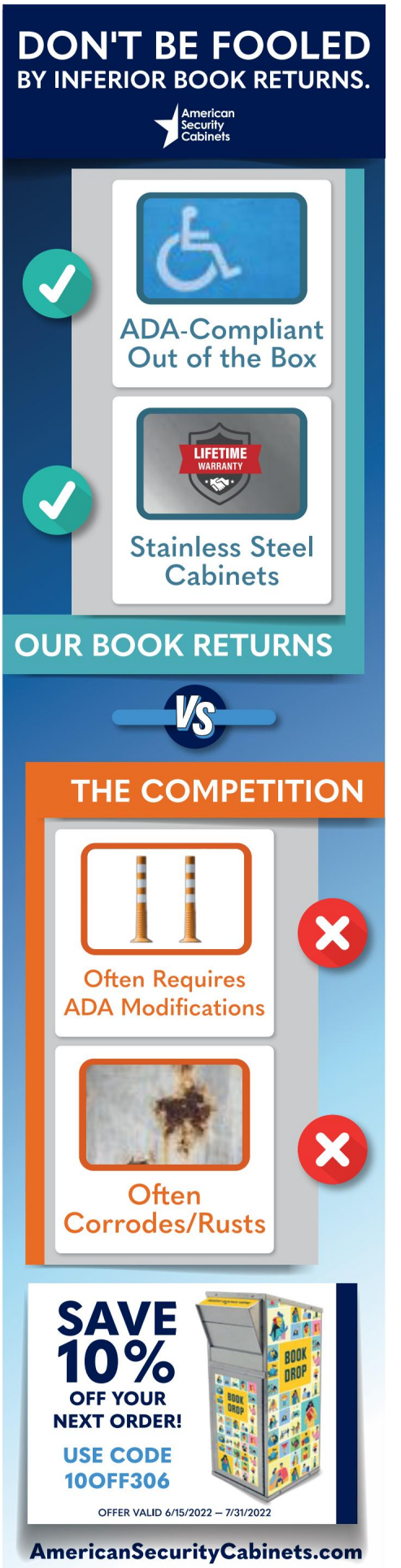
Although Cameron is set to graduate this year, he plans to continue contributing to the collection and has created tutorials to guide students in how to use the mapping and exhibit features in Omeka. In this way, he is creating a foundation for other students to continue this work. Owing to the wealth of public art in Detroit, plans are underway to have future MLIS students and a university-supported intern add to the map, expanding it to other neighborhoods, including the Detroit Riverwalk and Southwest Detroit, an area where many Mexican American families live.

> Anything we can do to showcase how resilient and inventive our city is is a good thing.

There is a lot of interest nationally and internationally in Detroit's public art scene, and it's essential to capture the richness of these contemporary works while also recognizing the talent of the artists. Neighborhoods that boast beautiful works of art can boost pride and change people's perspectives on a place. Anything we can do to showcase how resilient and inventive our city is—especially as it recovers from bankruptcy and other challenges of the last decade—is a good thing.

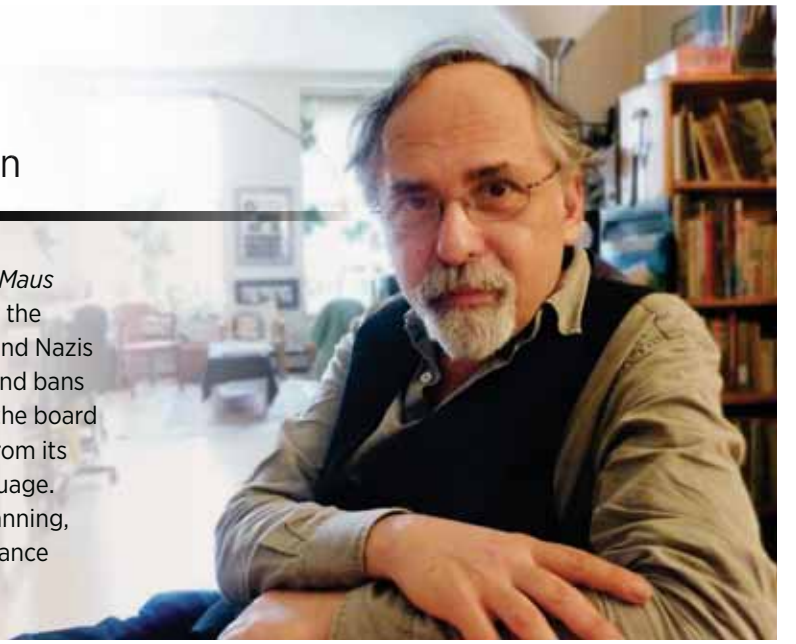
Creativity is part of the fabric of Detroit, and historical narratives are woven into the imagery we see on the streets and in neighborhoods. I look forward to working with other students on this project in the future and seeing the collection grow to include other works of public art, including sculptures and art installations. AL

JOAN BEAUDOIN is associate professor for Wayne State University's School of Information Sciences in Detroit.



Art Spiegelman

Maus creator discusses book banning and how libraries have been his salvation

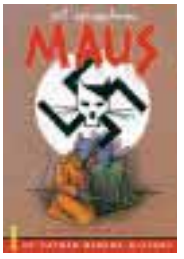


Art Spiegelman's Pulitzer Prize–winning graphic novel *Maus* details the experiences of Spiegelman's father during the Holocaust, with Jewish characters depicted as mice and Nazis as cats. It has been the subject of multiple book challenges and bans since its publication in 1991—most recently in January when the board of McMinn County (Tenn.) School District removed the title from its 8th-grade curriculum for depictions of nudity and adult language.

Spiegelman spoke with *American Libraries* about book banning, how comic books are used as teaching tools, and the importance of libraries in his life.

BY Phil Morehart

The recent ban of *Maus* in Tennessee isn't its first challenge. What did you think when you heard the news? Well, this was the most prominent. [And] this was much more, in some ways, ideologically driven, although not in the obvious way. It seems it has a lot to do with the fact that people who join school boards like to have authority, and it's because they have a tendency toward authoritarianism. It has more to do with buying into this current right-wing wave of wanting to control all literature that isn't biblically or socially sanctioned in certain pockets of the country.



Are these challenges—of *Maus* and other books—part of a larger culture war? Absolutely. I do feel like I've become cannon fodder in a culture war, because I'm not the logical target right now. The real challenges have to do with [books about] people who aren't gender normative and race books that indicate that everything isn't a Garden of Eden for Blacks in America. That kind of book gets challenged more, so I had to figure out why this was happening. *Maus* is not especially lurid. What I think made it an issue is that the idea of challenging one's parents is threatening to an authoritarian, and there's a lot of that going on in my book.

You have said that you didn't intend for *Maus* to be used as a teaching tool, but it has become one. What are your thoughts on comic books in the classroom? It depends on the book. On one hand, I'm a First Amendment fundamentalist, so I have that in common with the McMinn County School Board—my fundamentalism. Even if they wanted to teach *The Turner Diaries* or *Mein Kampf,* I would much rather a kid read them with teachers and a curriculum that tries to put the books in context. A kid can absorb anything if framed properly. I wouldn't ban any of these books, but I would want them taught in context when necessary. The Holocaust is disturbing material and enormous for many reasons. It can happen again. We're seeing it happen right now in Ukraine. It's not just in the realm of fantasy.

What role have libraries had in your life, both as a child and now? Libraries were my salvation as a kid. I would go religiously—which isn't an adjective I use for most of my other encounters with the world. I'd look forward to going there, taking a stack of books, bringing them back. Very soon the librarian at the small library between my home and school got used to me and let me wander the adult sections, which is how I discovered Kafka before he would have otherwise entered my life.

I have one functioning eye, which made me terrible at baseball when I was a kid. After school I would flee immediately to the library so I wouldn't be put on the team where they would scream at me for not being able to hit a ball or catch it. I read a lot and found things at random by pulling books off shelves, taking them home, seeing which ones worked for me. It was just a matter of reading without any filter. AL

Photo: Nadja Spiegelman

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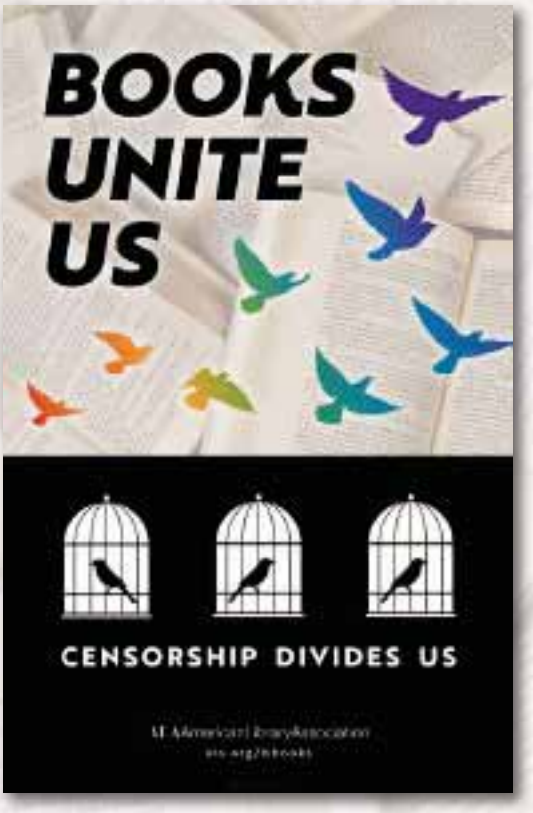


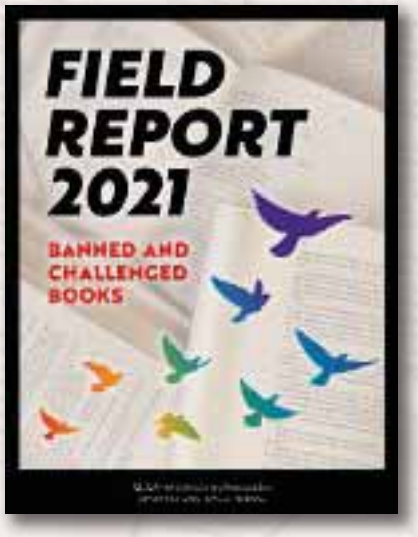
Books Unite Us 2022 Poster



Books Unite Us 2022 Bookmark



Most Challenged Books of 2021 Bookmark



Field Report 2021

An excellent handout, with descriptions of public challenges and the unprecedented movement toward censorship in school libraries.



Books Unite Us Bracelets



I Read Banned Books Rainbow Sticker Roll



I Read Banned Books Purple Sticker Roll

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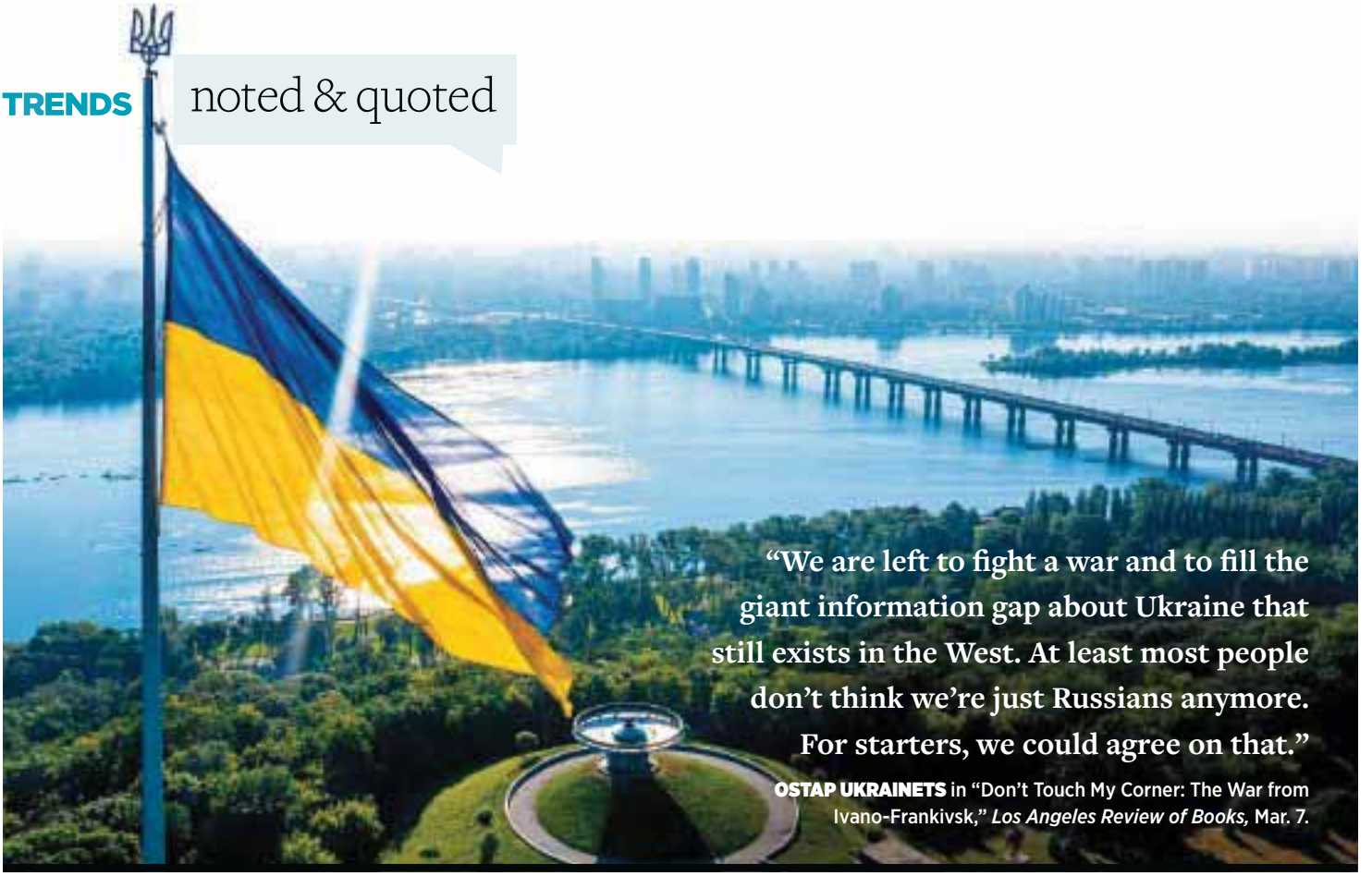

"We are left to fight a war and to fill the giant information gap about Ukraine that still exists in the West. At least most people don't think we're just Russians anymore. For starters, we could agree on that."

OSTAP UKRAINETS in "Don't Touch My Corner: The War from Ivano-Frankivsk," *Los Angeles Review of Books,* Mar. 7.

"Done well, an index—that list in the back of a book containing its concepts and references—is either hugely helpful, sending you directly to the mentions of, say, Theodore Roosevelt's dog Pete attacking the French ambassador, when you don't want to read the whole biography. Or it is eclectic and opinionated, clever and winking.... Indexes offer the reader multiple ways in and through the text, freeing them from the confines of an ineluctable narrative."

ALEXANDRA HOROWITZ in "The Pleasures That Lurk in the Back of the Book," *The Atlantic,* Mar. 16.

"PERHAPS ANXIETY ABOUT THE PURPOSE OF FICTION IS JUST A DISPLACED ANXIETY ABOUT THE PURPOSE OF LIFE.... BUT, FOR MY OWN PART, ANXIETY ABOUT THE PURPOSE OF LIFE IS ONE OF MANY EXCELLENT REASONS FOR READING FICTION."

MORTEN HØI JENSEN in "Why Read Fiction in a Bad World?," Gawker, Mar. 21.

"One of the things that I'm learning is that a book being challenged or banned does not hurt the book and does not hurt the author.... What I'm learning is that a book challenge is like a community attacking itself. The people who are hurt in a challenge are the marginalized readers in the community where the challenge takes place."

MAIA KOBABE in "What to Do When Your Kid Is Reading a Book That Makes You Uncomfortable," Slate, Mar. 22.

"All of these organizations that appear to be 'grassroots parent organizations' that are outraged about what their [children] are learning, they all have ties to exactly the same donors that have been behind the campus free speech crisis. It's the same network of people, the same funders that are kind of manufacturing this false narrative and then using this dense network ... to demand that society and the public take it seriously."

ISAAC KAMOLA in "Book Bans and the Threat of Censorship Rev Up Political Activism in the Suburbs," NPR, Mar. 21.

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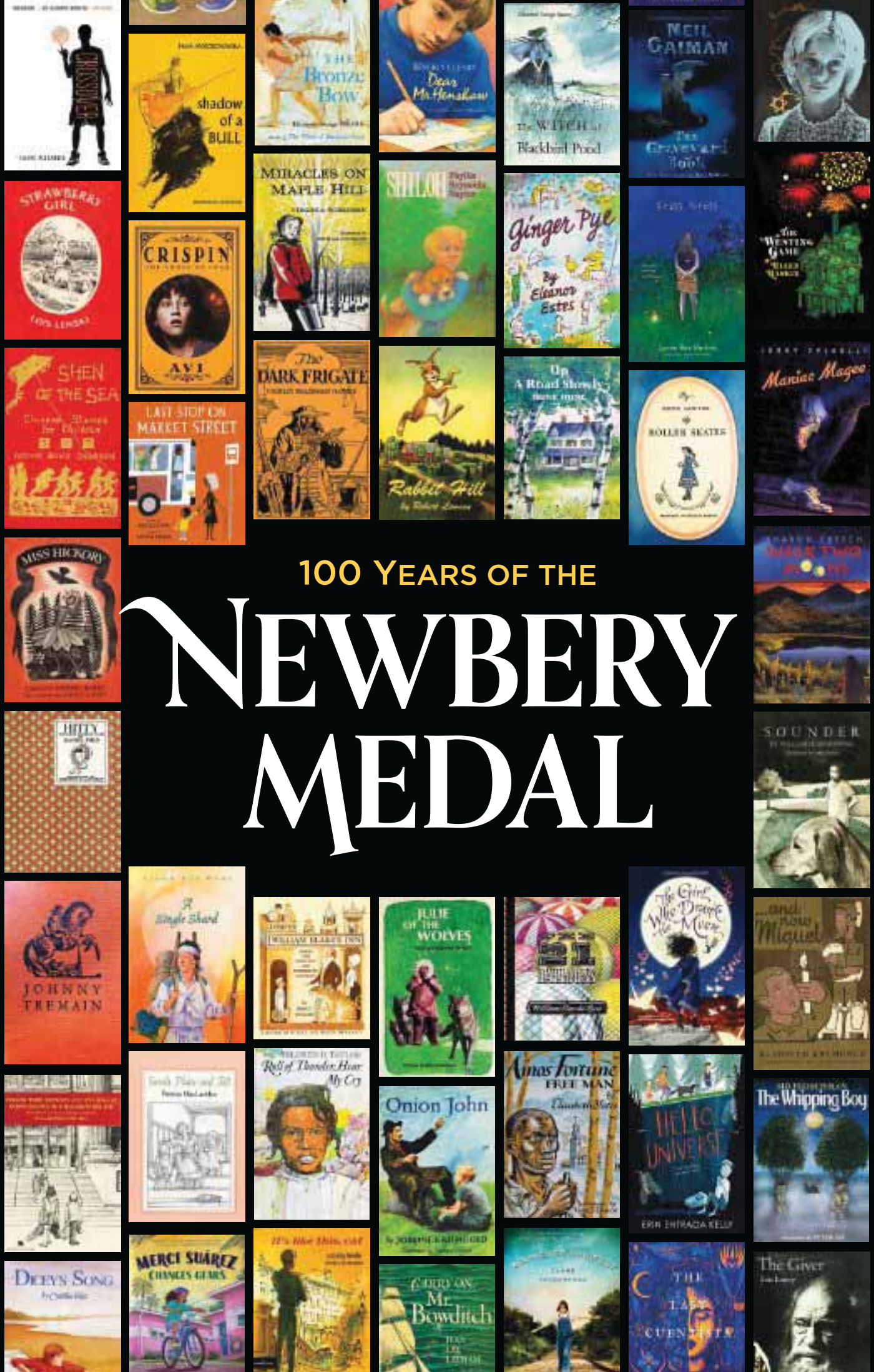

100 YEARS OF THE
NEWBERY MEDAL

For 100 years, the shiny John Newbery Medal seal that appears on the covers of children's books has moved those titles to the top of to-be-read piles. It has parked them prominently on shelves in schools, libraries, and stores. A badge of distinction, the medal labels books as pieces of distinguished literature meant to entertain, motivate, educate, and engage children. The award's centennial celebration this year is the perfect time to reflect on this first century—and look ahead to the next one.

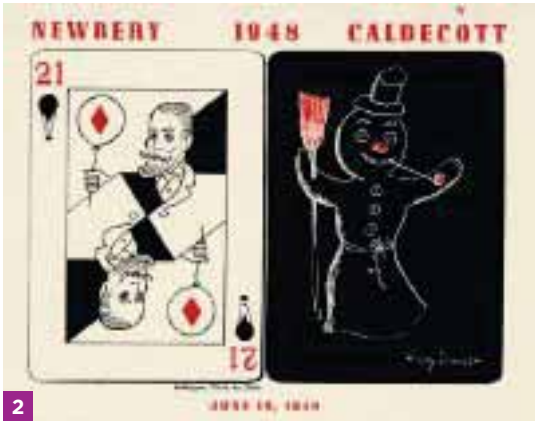
Appropriately, the Newbery Medal, the world's first children's book award, is named for the man credited with publishing the first children's book. In 1744, John Newbery, a British bookseller, published *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book,* a book of simple rhymes for each letter of the alphabet. The book often came with a gift—a ball or a pin cushion—for its young readers. The Newbery Medal remains the best-known and most widely coveted award of its kind.

A look at the legacy—and future—of this distinguished award for children's books

BY Taylor Hartz

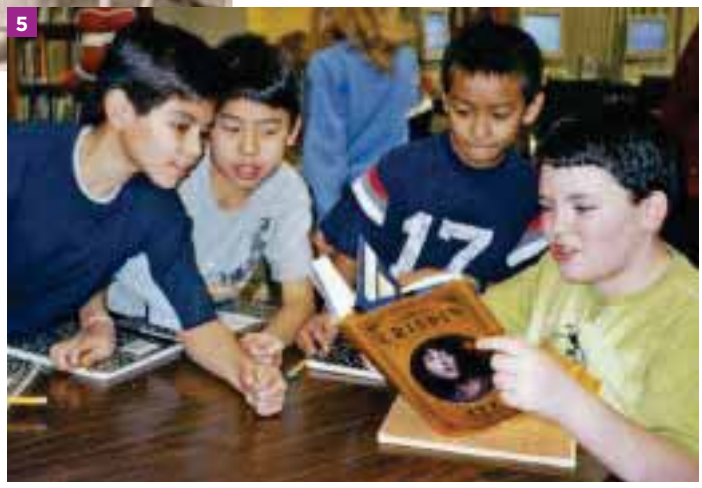
Given annually by the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), a division of the American Library Association (ALA), the Newbery Medal was instituted in 1922 by Frederic G. Melcher, a bookstore manager and editor of *Publisher's Weekly.* Per Melcher's agreement with the ALA Executive Board, the award was to have three goals: "To encourage original creative work in the field of books for children. To emphasize to the public that contributions to the literature for children deserve similar recognition to poetry, plays, or novels. To give those librarians, who make it their life work to serve children's reading interests, an opportunity to encourage good writing in this field." (Melcher later proposed to ALA a second award for children's books that honored illustrators, the Caldecott Medal, in 1937.)











(1) Fenton T. Newbery (left), a direct descendent of John Newbery, watches Arthur Bowie Chrisman receive the 1926 Newbery Medal for *Shen of the Sea* from Nina C. Brotherton, chair of ALA's Children's Librarians Section, as Frederic G. Melcher (right) looks on. (2) A card for the 1948 Newbery-Caldecott Awards Banquet, with illustrations from *The Twenty-One Balloons* and *White Snow, Bright Snow*. (3) Images of the Newbery Medal awarded to Monica Shannon in 1935 for *Dobry.* (4) Thaddeus Andracki, chair of the 2022 Newbery Medal Selection Committee, displays via Zoom the 2022 Newbery winner *The Last Cuentista* and puts a sticker on the cover of 2022 Newbery honoree *Watercress.* (5) Students hold a mock Newbery discussion at Lincoln Elementary School in Madison, Wisconsin, in 2003.

The Newbery Award Selection Committee consists of 15 members who look at original works released in the United States in the preceding year and written for children 14 years and under. Books must be published in English and authors must be US citizens or residents. Members cast their votes after a confidential vetting process and, in the end, pick one winner. In January, the committee selected the dystopian middle-grade novel *The Last Cuentista* by Donna Barba Higuera as the 2022 winner.

"Putting that sticker on the winning book together after voting is such a meaningful moment. I get goosebumps every time," says Thaddeus Andracki, chair of the 2022 Newbery Award Selection Committee and a middle school librarian at University of Chicago Laboratory Schools.

"There's something special about knowing what the award means and what it's going to do for an author's career," he says. "Many children across the United States, and even the world, are going to see that sticker on that book or have that book added to their library when it might not have been added before. You know that you really have made a difference, and it's because all 15 of us really love this book."

For many who have served on selection committees, the centennial is a chance to recognize how Melcher's vision endures today.

"We are celebrating 100 years of honoring Melcher's intent to encourage and elevate creative writing for children and to center children as an audience for distinguished writing," says Susan Polos, current chair of the Newbery 100th Anniversary Task Force, middle school librarian at Greenwich (Conn.) Country Day School, and a past member of the selection committee.

Photos: ALA Archives (Chrisman, medals, card, Lowry); Ginny Moore Kruse (mock Newbery)

For Jonda McNair, professor in the College of Education and Human Ecology at Ohio State University in Columbus, it was this legacy that prompted her to serve as Newbery Medal Selection Committee chair last year. "I understand the significance and longevity of this prominent award that uplifts and promotes excellence in writing for young people," she says.

Sara L. Schwebel, professor and director of the Center for Children's Books at University of Illinois Urbana–Champaign and coeditor of the book *Dust Off the Gold Medal: Rediscovering Children's Literature at the Newbery Centennial,* says the medal has achieved its goal of stimulating the production of quality children's literature and attracting authors to write for young people by generating prestige. (Winning a Newbery almost invariably boosts sales, report media outlets like *Forbes, Los Angeles Times,* and *The Hollywood Reporter*.)

"The most exciting development of this moment is the conversations unfolding among librarians at all levels," Schwebel says. "The centennial events can facilitate the process of librarians thinking about the Newbery and what they want the medal as an institution to do, moving forward into the next century."

Inside the process

The selection committee includes six ALSC members picked by an appointing officer, eight members elected by ALSC membership, and one chair appointed by the ALSC president. Committee members technically serve a two-year term, though they actively read selections and meet only in the calendar year leading up to their vote on the medal. (Starting with the 2025 Newbery Award Selection Committee, all members will be appointed.)

How the committee selects titles is twofold: Members find books to nominate, and publishers send books for consideration. Narrowing down the selections is a time-consuming task that requires a lot of reading and organization. Committee members will read 150–300 books in those 12 months, Andracki says. Polos says she has heard of members reading upward of 350 books.

The committee makes its first nominations in October but does not vote or deliberate until the following January, the month the medal is awarded. Preliminary winners are discussed at selection meetings, where committee members then vote for their top three titles.

Discussions are confidential, Andracki says, and these conversations are known for being passionate. "The discussion itself is much deeper and more thoughtful than most book discussions are, simply because everyone is so invested," he says. But committee members do listen to one another, and discussions can sway opinion.

Continued on page 34

WINNER'S CIRCLE

Lois Lowry

Recipient of the 1990 Newbery Medal for *Number the Stars* and the 1994 Newbery Medal for *The Giver*



Where were you when you learned you had won for *The Giver*? I was on a ship in Antarctica. My book, *The Giver,* apparently had been widely talked about as a top contender for that award, and I had realized I did not want to be sitting at my desk, hoping the phone would ring. At the same time, my husband was retiring from his profession, and we had decided to take a trip. We planned it for the very time when the Newbery would be announced. Because we were on a ship, they couldn't reach me with the news. Eventually, by radio, they reached the ship, and I got a little pink slip of paper saying the radio operator had a message for me, and it said *The Giver* has been awarded the 1994 Newbery Medal.

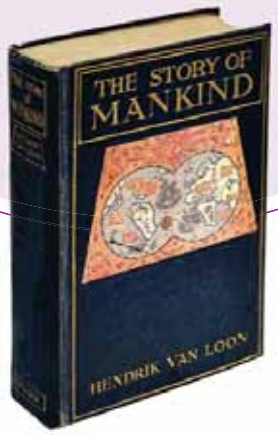
The Giver has faced many challenges. What is it like to see your books challenged after all these years? It's very disheartening to see the challenging not only continue but get worse and worse. I'm speaking to you from my winter home in Florida, and the Florida Legislature has just passed a bill that is going to affect books like *The Giver* and many others. I'm hoping that it's a pendulum that has gone way too far in the wrong direction and will find its way back eventually.



Lois Lowry speaking at the 1990 Newbery-Caldecott Banquet in Chicago.

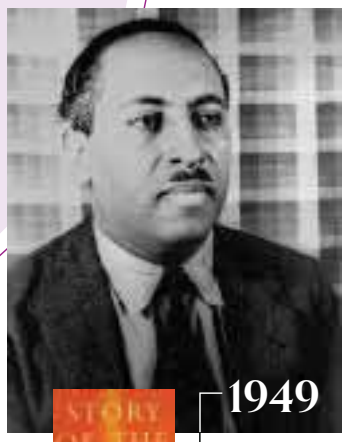
You write a lot about different worlds and time periods. How do you tap into diverse themes and characters so seamlessly? I have a book that's coming out next fall, not published yet, that's set in the 1st century, 2,000 years ago. But with adolescents as main characters, wherever they are, and whatever century it is, or decade, I go back into my own self at that age, into the kinds of things that I cared about, worried about, wondered about. I have to do research to get the time period right and the setting, but the interior of an adolescent I don't think has changed in over 2,000 years. ●

NEWBERY FIRSTS



1922

The first Newbery Medal is awarded to *The Story of Mankind,* written and illustrated by Dutch American historian and journalist Hendrik Willem van Loon.





1949

Librarian and Harlem Renaissance poet Arna Bontemps becomes the first Black person to win a Newbery Honor. His book *Story of the Negro* examines Black history before and after enslavement in America.



1975

Virginia Hamilton (third from left) becomes the first Black person to win the Newbery Medal. Hamilton's book *M. C. Higgins, the Great* is a coming-of-age novel set in the Appalachian Mountains.



1930 1940 1950 1960 1970 1980



1928



Dhan Gopal Mukerji becomes the first person of color and the first Asian American author to win the Newbery. *Gay-Neck: The Story of a Pigeon* is set in his homeland of India.

1960



Joseph Krumgold becomes the first person to win two Newbery Medals, for *... And Now Miguel* (1954) and *Onion John* (1960). Here, librarian Virginia Haviland presents him with a medal at ALA's 1954 Annual Conference.

1930



With *Hitty, Her First Hundred Years,* Rachel Field becomes the first woman to win the medal. The novel is told from the point of view of a doll (pictured, in Field's lap) that has traveled the world.

1982

A volume of poetry—*A Visit to William Blake's Inn: Poems for Innocent and Experienced Travelers* by Nancy Willard—wins the Newbery Medal for the first time.



Photos: ALA Archives (Mukerji, Field, Hamilton, Krumgold, Curtis); Library of Congress (Bontemps)



2000

Christopher Paul Curtis's book *Bud, Not Buddy* becomes the first book to win both a Newbery Medal and a Coretta Scott King Award.

2002

Linda Sue Park becomes the first Asian American since Mukerji to win the Newbery Medal. Her historical novel, *A Single Shard,* takes place in 12th-century Korea.



1990 2000 2010



1989

Paul Fleischman wins for *Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices,* making him and his father, Sid Fleischman (author of 1987 awardee *The Whipping Boy*), the only parent and child to win Newbery Medals.

2020

New Kid by Jerry Craft becomes the first graphic novel to win the Newbery Medal.

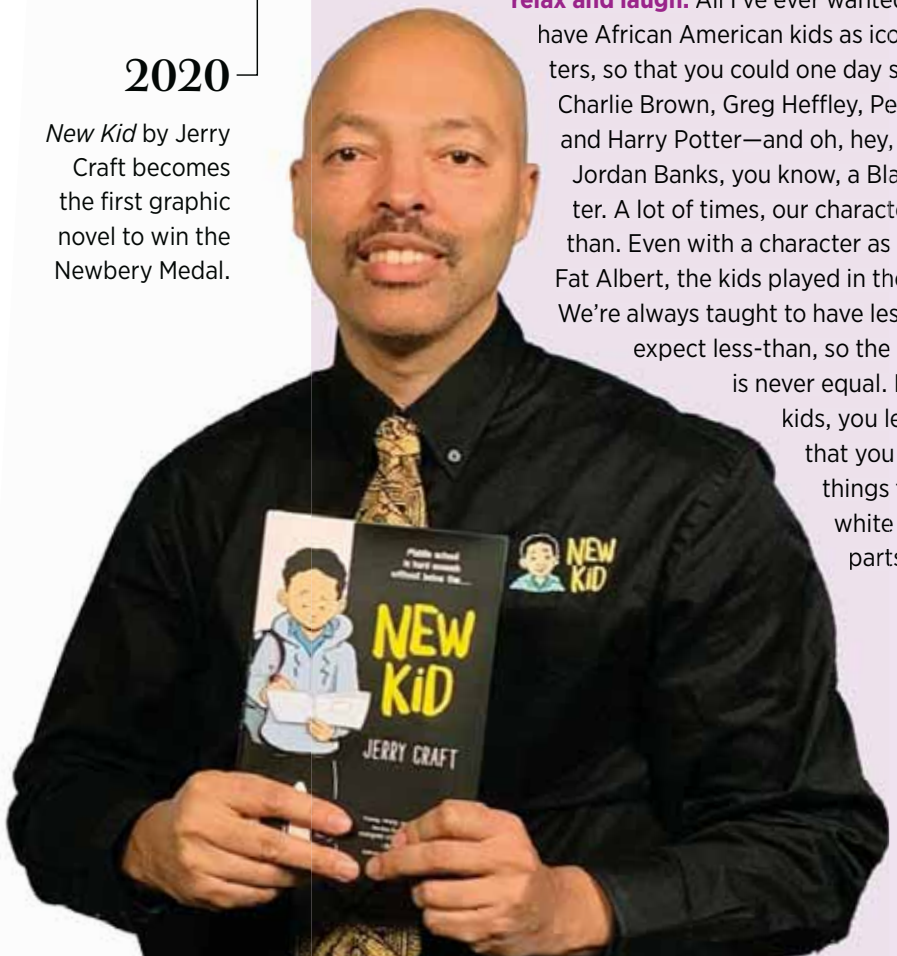


Photo: Sonya Sones (Park)

WINNER'S CIRCLE

JERRY CRAFT

Recipient of the 2020 Newbery Medal for *New Kid*

How did you react when you learned you had won the Newbery Medal? At 6:42 a.m., the phone rang. I was like, please don't let it be "Hi, we'd like to lower your insurance rates" or a spam call. I picked up and there was a very excited person on the phone who said, "We'd like to inform you that your book *New Kid* has been chosen for the 2020 John Newbery Medal," and everyone [on the committee] screamed in the background. I was stunned. Then, about half an hour after that, I got a call telling me I had also won the Coretta Scott King Author Award. So that was quite the morning.

How has it been seeing your books challenged? Were you expecting backlash when you set out to tell Jordan's story in *New Kid*? It's disappointing. When kids think, "I'm going to sit with my favorite book, because I really relate to this kid not fitting in," and then adults come and physically take the book out of their hands? Especially at a time like this? We should be making kids as comfortable as humanly possible. So, these people—they're not really concerned about the kids. They want their agenda.

You've said *New Kid* is something you never had growing up—a book about a person of color where the reader can relax and laugh. All I've ever wanted to do was have African American kids as iconic characters, so that you could one day say, there's Charlie Brown, Greg Heffley, Percy Jackson, and Harry Potter—and oh, hey, there's Jordan Banks, you know, a Black character. A lot of times, our characters are less-than. Even with a character as iconic as Fat Albert, the kids played in the junkyard. We're always taught to have less-than and expect less-than, so the playing field is never equal. I think, as kids, you learn early on that you can't expect things that your white counterparts expect. ●

Cynthia Kadohata

Recipient of the 2005 Newbery Medal for *Kira-Kira*



Where were you when you learned you had won the 2005 Newbery Medal? How did you react? I was in bed with my baby and my dog, and the phone rang, and my boyfriend, who was already awake, came and woke me up. I said, "Really? It's 4:30 in the morning," and he said, "I think you're going to want to take this call." I screamed a lot, and they recorded part of it. Later, when I heard it, I said I remembered screaming more, and one of them said, "Yeah, you did—we used only part of it." People say they cried. I didn't cry; it was more of a screaming fit.

What did winning the award for *Kira-Kira* mean for you with regard to Asian American visibility and representation? I thought it was kind of amazing because when I was first writing, everybody told me, "Nobody wants to read about Asian people." But you have to have this doggedness and not worry about what anybody is saying. I worked at Sears, and at one point during college, as a salesclerk, I was telling the ladies there that I wanted to be a writer, and they said, "What are you going to write about, working at Sears?"



I love that your dog Wilson has his own page on your website. I also saw that you have rescued dogs—specifically Dobermans—since 2002. How does your feeling for animals work its way into your books, like *Saucy* and *Checked*? For the rest of my life, I'm going to throw dogs into every book because they're a big part of my life and I feel so connected to them. They're so open. And I enjoy writing about their incredible loyalty. When you're sick, they lie there next to you, and they don't bug you at all. It's amazing the way they do that, how they know that you don't feel well. ●

Continued from page 31

Because of how balloting is done, the committee must work toward consensus.

By long-established practice, a winning book must receive at least eight first-place votes and lead any other book by at least eight points. After settling on a winner, the committee decides whether to name honor books (runners-up for the award) and how many (three to five is custom). Winners receive a bronze medal, and honorees receive a plaque.

Polos says the Newbery Medal selection manual makes clear to committee members that their work is both a responsibility and an honor. It encourages them to recognize their individual strengths, gaps in knowledge, and biases; to listen before speaking; and to consider books that represent unfamiliar experiences rather than defaulting to materials that represent their own experiences.

> "Putting that sticker on the winning book together after voting is such a meaningful moment. I get goosebumps every time."
>
> **THADDEUS ANDRACKI,** chair of the 2022 Newbery Award Selection Committee and middle school librarian at University of Chicago Laboratory Schools

As chair, Andracki says he has seen firsthand how the selection process works and admires it more than ever. He views a winning piece of children's literature as one that's going to stick around. It's a book that, "when you close it, there's a sigh or an exhale," he says.

The legacy of the Newbery Medal and the question of what makes a book a winner has led to thoughtful discussions in classrooms and libraries over the years, some of them in the form of mock Newbery selections. During those events, young readers, librarians, and educators tenaciously defend their selections, vote, and host their own version of the much-anticipated annual announcement.

Kathleen T. "K. T." Horning, director of the Cooperative Children's Book Center at University of Wisconsin–Madison and former president of ALSC, has led many mock Newbery selection events. She says the experience is valuable for children and adults and gives librarians a chance to see which books people gravitate to on their own; it expands the horizons of what participants read and provides them with an opportunity to articulate their opinions. And it gives them an audience that listens as they say how they arrived at their opinions and why they choose to defend them.

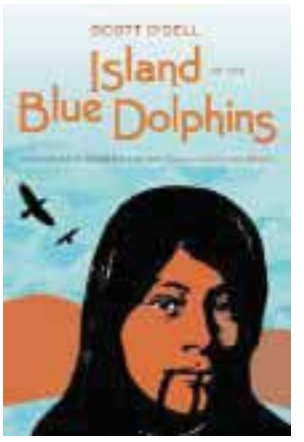
These mock Newbery events can build communities of readers, Horning says: "From my experience, kids especially form opinions and get really invested."

Ever evolving

Like most things that have survived long enough to see multiple wars, cultural shifts, and social movements ripple across the globe, the Newbery Medal has not been without its criticisms and challenges.

In an article for Slate published in January (bit.ly/AL-Newbery-duds), Schwebel and her *Dust Off the Gold Medal* coeditor Jocelyn Van Tuyl wrote that the Newbery Medal has "smuggled some real duds onto library shelves" and kept some books in stock and circulation that may have otherwise faded away over time. The authors ask in their article: Should publishers put some of the older winners—which may be outdated, problematic, or blatantly racist—out to pasture?

In 100 years, only one Newbery book has gone out of print—the 1940 winner *Daniel Boone* by James Daugherty. The book was pulled from print for its racism and perpetuation of stereotypes, according to a 2021 ASLC webinar (bit.ly/AL-NMwebinar), but it is far from being the only problematic title. And Newbery titles stay in print, in curricula, and on shelves in disproportionate numbers, Schwebel and Van Tuyl report. The award provides not only recognition but also endurance, which raises the question of whether the books always deserve their long lives.



A 2016 edition of *Island of the Blue Dolphins,* edited by Sara L. Schwebel, includes two excised chapters, a critical introduction, and essays that offer background on the histories of Native peoples in California.

One way to address this issue, Schwebel and Van Tuyl posit in their article, is to contextualize these questionable classics with critical scholarship. Schwebel herself has produced an edition of Scott O'Dell's 1961 Newbery winner *Island of the Blue Dolphins* that critically examines how the book has contributed to settler colonialism and national mythmaking.

Representation is also an issue. "You have a legacy of overwhelming whiteness," Schwebel notes of the 100 authors who have been recognized and the characters they have created. For instance, it wasn't until 1975 that the Newbery Medal was awarded to a Black author—Virginia Hamilton, for *M. C. Higgins, the Great*.

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WINNER'S CIRCLE

TAE KELLER

Recipient of the 2021 Newbery Medal for *When You Trap a Tiger*



How did you learn you had won the 2021 Newbery Medal? My publisher set up a Zoom, and they told me it would be with the Asian/Pacific Committee, because I had just found out that I won the [Asian/Pacific American Award for Children's Literature], which is so exciting. Then I logged on to the Zoom call, and there were a bunch of faces, and they said it was the Newbery Committee. I had a moment of panic—"Oh my God, is this the wrong link?" Not until they all held up my book with the sticker on it did I realize that this was actually happening. I'm not sure what I said because I was in full shock.

What made you decide to include Korean folk tales in *When You Trap a Tiger?* I grew up with folk tales. My *halmoni* [grandmother] lived with my family for a few years when I was young, and I would ask her to tell me stories. I remember specifically this tiger story that W*hen You Trap a Tiger* is built around, about two little girls who ran away from a tiger and ran into the sky and became the sun and the moon. There was magic in that story, and that feeling never left me. Whenever I thought about my family stories and my relationship with my *halmoni* and my relationship with storytelling as a writer, I would come back to that specific fairytale.



You grew up in Honolulu. How do your childhood experiences there resonate with you as a storyteller? There's a big Asian and biracial population, so I always grew up feeling like part of a bigger community. I never felt I had to justify being biracial or explain it. When I went to the mainland, I realized that's not the case everywhere. Around that time, I had published my first book, which has a biracial main character. I was visiting schools and talking to students, and often they would come up to me and say, "Natalie, the main character, is like me." I wanted to keep writing from that point of view and sharing that perspective and showing kids who aren't lucky enough to grow up surrounded by people who look like them that they're not alone. ●

But the award is evolving, and the list of winning authors has grown more diverse over time. "I think we've turned a corner, and I am cautiously optimistic that we're going to see prizing from the Newbery Medal that reflects a vision of inclusivity," Schwebel says.

In the early years of the Newbery, winners were mostly white men. Yet over the award's 100-year history, a majority of winners—more than 60—have been women. Increasingly, Newbery medalists are becoming more reflective of underrepresented groups.

Seeing authors of color recognized more frequently, rather than "one winner of color every 10 years or so," has been a welcome change, says McNair, whose research covers access and equity in children's literature. "I hope this trend continues," she says.

> "I think we've turned a corner, and I am cautiously optimistic that we're going to see prizing from the Newbery Medal that reflects a vision of inclusivity."
>
> **SARA L. SCHWEBEL,** professor and director of the Center for Children's Books at University of Illinois Urbana–Champaign

"In the last seven years, we've seen so much more diversity in both authorship and writing styles," Horning says. "There has been an expansion of the interpretation of 'distinguished literature.' We're looking at all types of writing and not just at novels, which most Newbery books in the past were." A case in point, *New Kid* by Jerry Craft (see interview on p. 33) became the first graphic novel to win the Newbery, in 2020.

"There is always room for growth," Polos says. "We are clear that many older Newbery titles would not be considered today." She adds that celebrations of the medal's 100th anniversary both acknowledge the importance of children's literature and the gains made in representation, inclusion, and diversity.

Andracki agrees there has been a shift, and the selection committees now see that when they choose a winner, they are selecting a book for all children in the United States. This means recognizing that children are many and varied, he says, and looking beyond white, cisgender, heterosexual authors and characters.

"The Newbery has evolved, and it has been a great evolution," Andracki says. "I think that at the heart of the Newbery experience is good books for kids." AL



TAYLOR HARTZ is a multimedia storyteller in New London, Connecticut.

Photo: Saavedra Photography

Diplomas at the Public Library



Some public libraries are implementing Gale Presents: Excel Adult High School, a 21.5-credit online high school completion program. Michelle Mears, director of Rolling Hills Library in St. Joseph, Missouri, and Brittany Smullin, a 30-year-old single mom who was the first public library graduate of this program, share their experiences about the value of this online high school diploma program and the impact it's having in their community.


Brittany Smullin

What prompted you to continue your high school education?

BRITTANY SMULLIN: I wanted to better myself, not only for me but for [my child]. And I would like to have a better career down the line.

Why did Rolling Hills Library decide to offer Excel Adult High School? How did you get the word out?

MICHELLE MEARS: We were one of the first libraries in Missouri asked to begin Excel Adult High School. We were excited about it because we had been helping people use our laptop-lending program to study for their high school equivalency test, the HiSET exam [an alternative to the GED]. The test is much harder than high school was, from what I hear. We were excited to try something different to help people get a true high school diploma. We signed up for the program with the state library, purchased subscription seats, posted to social media, and put out a press release, which got in the newspaper.


Michelle Mears

What did you like most about the program?

SMULLIN: It was convenient. I did all my classes at home on my personal computer. Like Michelle said, I was interested in HiSET for a long time, but I heard it was really hard. I was afraid I'd fail because I had been out of school for 12 years. But going through the [Excel] program, it was so much easier. I felt like I knew what I was doing.

What are the benefits of offering this education through the library?

MEARS: We were interested because it would appeal to nontraditional adult learners pursuing their high school diplomas. There are alternative schools where you have 18-to-22-year-olds attending or doing a high school equivalency program. Once they're older, there's really no support network for those above that age group. We were excited as a library to step in and help. Especially because with Excel Adult High School, they receive a recognized, accredited high school diploma as opposed to passing an equivalency test.

What makes the library a great partner for the program?

MEARS: Many students and potential students have had negative experiences with schooling, which is one of the reasons they didn't finish high school in the first place. We are less intimidating than a formal educational institution, and we can be more flexible and understanding. We can dedicate staff time to providing support and following up as needed while at the same time letting students be independent and encouraging success. They can feel like, "Hey, look, I really did it, I finished the class. Now I can go on to the next one."

What's next for you, Brittany?

SMULLIN: These days you need a high school diploma to get hired anywhere, so it has opened a lot of career doors for me. I'm considering picking up a trade in the medical field. Joining the program has honestly been the best decision I ever made.

Learn more at gale.com/public/excel. ■

Listen to the full interview on *Call Number with American Libraries* | **bit.ly/CallNumberPodcast**

Quitting Time



The pandemic is exacerbating attrition among library workers

BY Lara Ewen

Alex* can pinpoint the day she knew she was done with library work. "I was doing a lot of extra emotional support for people who didn't have anybody else," says the public librarian, who is disabled and has been working near a large Midwestern city for almost 20 years. She says the last two years have been particularly difficult. "There was a day when I realized nothing was ever enough," says Alex, who is in the process of leaving the field. "They always asked for more. I was so worn down by it all."

The burnout began earlier for Chris. "Even before the pandemic started, I'd been feeling increasingly ambivalent," says the Midwest-based academic librarian who left her associate director position in fall 2021. "Then we had the pandemic, which required libraries to make a ton of changes. I wanted to work with my community, and I didn't have any energy for that."

The Great Resignation, a term coined by organizational psychologist and management professor Anthony Klotz in a May 2021 *Bloomberg Businessweek* interview, describes the millions of people in the US who have quit their jobs at near-record levels since the start of the pandemic. It's a phenomenon that has hit the library community hard, and COVID-19 is only part of the equation.

The pandemic "brought to light a bunch of problems that were there before," says Klotz, who will be affiliated with the School of Management at University College London beginning June 1. "The pandemic just sort of turbocharged them."

Common reasons for resignations include burnout, frustration, low pay, and low morale. Those factors are notably pervasive in the library world, says Beatrice Calvin, manager of professional development and editor of the *Library Worklife* e-newsletter at ALA's Office for Human Resource Development

*All librarian names have been changed to protect their privacy.

Illustrations: ©Nuthawut/Adobe Stock



and Recruitment and ALA–Allied Professional Association. "So many people have left," she says. "They've either quit their jobs and gone to another one, or just totally quit the profession. Employers are having trouble replacing a lot of staff, so the ones who are left are overwhelmed and overworked. They're having to pick up the slack and they're not being compensated, so they get burned out."

Reevaluating priorities

The pandemic compelled many people to reevaluate their priorities, says Tyler Dzuba, vice president for learning and development at DeEtta Jones and Associates, a management consulting and training firm that works with libraries. "For some people, [the pandemic] has reinforced their enthusiasm for libraries and the work that they do," he says. "For other people, it led them to realize that this isn't where they want to spend their time." Dzuba, himself a former academic librarian, left libraries in 2017 to work in the health care sector and later took his current library-adjacent role.

COVID-19 certainly played a part in the overall sense of unease, says Rorie, a rural public librarian in the Northeast, who graduated from library school in 1996. But it wasn't the only problem she had to process.

"I could see a lot of dissatisfaction that wasn't the usual dissatisfaction," she says of working during the pandemic. And it wasn't just COVID-19: Public criticisms of critical race theory,

LGBTQ books, and gender-affirming therapy contributed to "a lot of the terribleness," she says. "It can be really hard when the community turns on you."

Those feelings of career ambivalence were complicated, Rorie says, by *vocational awe,* a term coined in 2017 by academic librarian Fobazi Ettarh to describe the notion that librarians, the library profession, and the institution of libraries as a whole is inherently good and therefore above reproach. For Rorie, the idealized standard only made her feel worse. "I feel like I let down the community," she says. "I feel like I should have tried harder. It's hard to have to come face-to-face with that."

Yet even librarians who spoke out say they were largely ignored. "I told my boss, my director, my team, the whole library on multiple occasions that I was really burned out and not doing okay," says Jules, a queer, neurodivergent academic librarian at a Mountain-state community college who decided in late 2021 to leave libraries. "And it never changed." Jules is currently looking for nonlibrarian jobs.

Similar experiences have led to low morale across the profession, according to Kaetrena Davis Kendrick, a researcher and library leader whose work on morale has been widely cited.



"Low morale is a traumatic experience for librarians that was happening before the pandemic," she says. For the purposes of her research, Kendrick defines low morale as the result of "repeated, protracted exposure to workplace abuse and neglect" and says that the issue strikes at the heart of librarians' identities.

> "Low morale is a traumatic experience for librarians that was happening before the pandemic."
>
> **KAETRENA DAVIS KENDRICK,** researcher and library leader whose work on morale has been widely cited

"We feel comfortable in libraries," she says. "But we're realizing that libraries are not places of comfort or refuge for librarians anymore. So how do we reconcile those feelings of nostalgia, those feelings of having a calling, when we go to work and we're being abused and neglected?"

Some libraries have tried to assuage employee unhappiness by implementing programs aimed at reducing stress, but Alex says they fall short. "They don't seem to understand that wellness programs are placing the problem with the individual library worker," she says. "You can't meditate your way out of systemic issues or terrible pay or horrible levels of stress."

Cost of living, price of complacency

Poor compensation is a big problem, says Calvin, especially in library jobs that require advanced degrees. "The cost of everything has skyrocketed, and salaries within libraries are just not keeping up," she says. "It's kind of frustrating." She adds that degree requirements are part of the issue. "We're requiring folks to have a master's to get their foot in the door," Calvin says, "but the pay is not adequate."

Yet it's not just about money, says Elaina Norlin, professional development and diversity, equity, and inclusion program coordinator for the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries. "One of the mistakes most organizations—not just libraries—make is, they assume pay will resolve everything," says Norlin, author of *The Six-Step Guide to Library Worker Engagement* (ALA Editions, 2021). "When you look at pay, it's essential, but it's not a guarantee of [being] engaged, excited, or interested. I'm not saying money isn't important. But you can't just say, 'Here's the money' and expect all of this [other] stuff to go away."

Norlin says that a library system with a diverse workforce will cultivate diversity of thought and different approaches. "We need libraries to invest internally as much as we invest externally," she says. "And we need to take a really critical look at hierarchy. There is always a small percentage of people who are benefiting from status quo. They're the gatekeepers, and that needs to be challenged for the [field] to turn around."

Dylan, a former academic librarian at a public community college in the Northeast, says that even when librarians move up in the ranks, it can be challenging to make meaningful changes. "I became a library director because I was going to fix [things]," they say. But the problems ran deeper than expected. Dylan says the promotion and low morale were ultimately part of their reasons for leaving. "You can't talk to your colleagues in the library because you're the boss," they say. "I couldn't complain about my concerns."

That's because the issues are systemic, Kendrick explains. "There are systems at play that are engaged in hegemonic power structures," she says. "The only way we get rid of low morale or

reduce it significantly is to look at and destroy the enabling systems which are predicated by these power structures."

She also says those systems affect marginalized library workers the most. "The people who don't have degrees, or people who are working part time, or people who are marginalized in any way you can think of—but especially [those who are] Black, Indigenous, and people of color—they experience exacerbated forms of trauma," says Kendrick. "And they are most likely the people who cannot leave."

The grand question

While there are no easy solutions to the attrition problem, librarians who have left or who are on the brink of leaving say it's critical to create workplace boundaries and establish a healthy work-life balance. "Use all your vacation days," Jules says. "Use all your benefits. Take advantage of the institution that you're a part of."

Using the tools of self-care and self-preservation can also help offset the emotional burdens, at least temporarily, Kendrick says. "Things like wellness programs and yoga are tools you can access in a moment of abuse or neglect at work," she says. "Self-preservation includes assertive communication, which librarians often have trouble with. We often don't have the words to tell people what we need them to hear."

Kendrick says another tool of self-preservation is cultivating moral courage. "A lot of times we tell ourselves stories about what someone might do to us," she says. "And we err on the side of the story that diminishes our power, so we never know our power, because we never did the thing that showed the power."

Dzuba says it's also important to remember that not everyone who is critical of libraries wants to leave. "The question for organizations more than individuals is: 'What makes people want to stay?'" he says. "What's going to help people find fulfillment in the work we do? I think that's really the grand question here."

For some, it's a question of perspective. "Somebody said that it was the American Library Association, not the American Librarian Association," Dylan says. "That tells you a lot about the focus. That focus needs to change."

In the end, some experts point out that there may be an upside to this period of upheaval. Says Klotz: "A lot of people, including me, are viewing [the Great Resignation] as an opportunity to improve the world of work, as opposed to saying it's a giant indictment of the world of work." AL



LARA EWEN is a freelance writer based in Brooklyn, New York.

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5 Library Jobs on the Rise

Emerging roles and titles reflect libraries' core values

BY Terra Dankowski



Last year, career prospects for library workers weren't looking so rosy. The pandemic had thrust many industries into uncertainty, and library schools, job boards, and recruiters reported a contraction of library jobs not seen since the Great Recession (bit.ly/AL-jobs-May21).

Luckily for job seekers, that trend seems to have receded. CNBC reported in late March that there were a record 5 million more job openings than available workers. That tendency bears out across the library industry.

"The number of library jobs advertised nationally since late 2021 has hit unprecedented levels," says David Connolly, recruitment ad sales manager for the American Library Association's (ALA) JobLIST website. He notes that the number of positions posted to JobLIST between January and March alone has been more than 20% greater than any year in the site's 15-year history.

In this environment, job boards are seeing some unique roles and non-traditional titles—reflective of larger trends and problems libraries wish to solve—being advertised. Connolly says this is thanks to the ambiguity and attrition of the early days of the pandemic. "Many libraries took that opportunity to evaluate whether their existing positions fulfilled current needs and to redefine some of them to meet emerging needs, including new roles focused on core values," he says.

American Libraries takes a closer look at five positions popping up in greater frequency across academic, public, school, and special libraries, and the people who do this work.

1

SUSTAINABILITY LIBRARIAN

In October 2018, the United Nations released a landmark scientific report that warned the world had only 12 years to take drastic action if it hoped to avert climate catastrophe. Three months later, the ALA Council adopted sustainability as a strategic direction for the organization at the 2019 Midwinter Meeting in Seattle, signaling to libraries it was time to increase capacity in this area.

Practitioners of sustainability in libraries, however, know the problems communities are facing aren't merely environmental.

"Sustainability, in the most basic sense, is the ability to continue doing what you're doing," says Casey Conlin, library sustainability coordinator at Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) in Poughkeepsie, New York. "[Libraries] have to be able to stay around to continue the work that they do for the people that they serve."

Illustrations: ©Nuthawut/Adobe Stock

Like ALA, MHLS subscribes to the triple bottom line model of sustainability, which prioritizes environmentally sound, economically feasible, and socially equitable practices. For Conlin, it's not just about helping the 66 autonomous member libraries in his system make responsible decisions about building projects—although advising on capital improvements that can lower a library's heating and cooling expenses, for instance, is part of the job.

In fact, sustainability is connected to a host of issues, such as racial justice, accessibility, ethical investments, and voting, Conlin says. "We're trying to look at inclusivity from a lot of different angles."

In his role, Conlin directs professional development that supports MHLS libraries in discovering trends, innovating services, and staying relevant for their users. For libraries just starting out with sustainability, he recommends pursuing the certification program from the Sustainable Libraries Initiative (sustainablelibrariesinitiative.org).

"We have to make sure that we're … providing services that really are for everyone," Conlin says.

2

USER EXPERIENCE LIBRARIAN

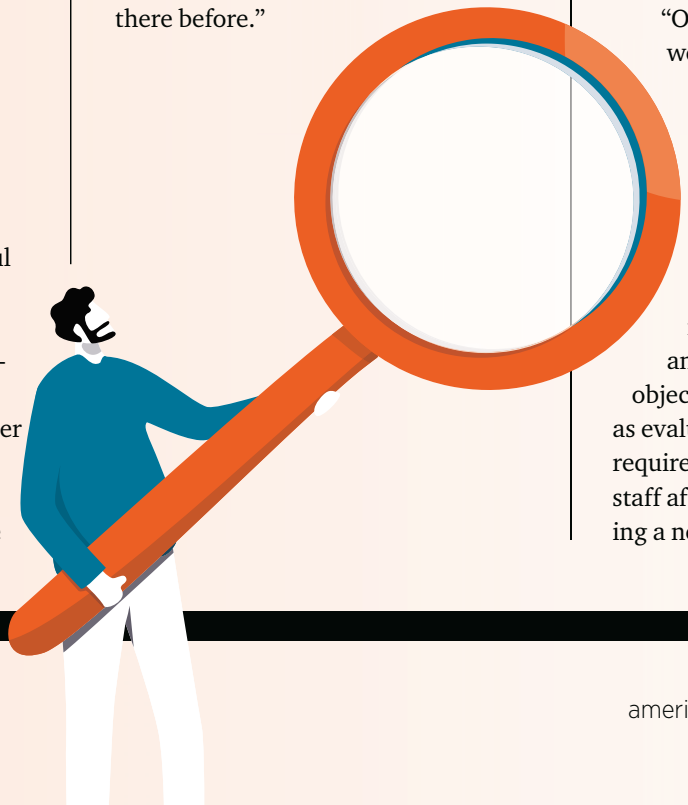
User experience (UX) in a library setting could mean anything from having a navigable website to useful signage to good customer service.

"There are so many definitions," says Sharesly Rodriguez, user experience librarian at San José (Calif.) State University (SJSU). She says her job is about making sure products, services, information, and spaces are usable, findable, and accessible to people with different needs. "It's also about removing as many barriers as needed for the user to accomplish their goal," she adds.

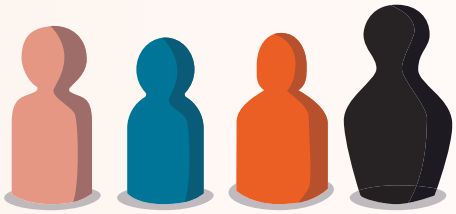
In her role at SJSU, Rodriguez conducts research as a basis for problem solving and creating positive experiences for students and faculty. "Needs must not be assumed," she says. Rodriguez often relies on surveys, interviews, usability tests, and website analytics to help her understand how the library is being used both on campus and online. "It could also be as easy as using whiteboards and sticky notes to ask students how they feel," she says.

Her duties span both the physical and digital and have led her to develop an after-hours reference chatbot for the SJSU Library website, improve the library's intranet, and work on assessing the library's use of space. Rodriguez also convenes a UX working group that facilitates exercises and shares design thinking methods with other staffers.

Her own introduction to the term *user experience* was in library school, at a time when she says the phrase hadn't fully caught on yet. "A lot of circulation departments are now being renamed user experience [departments], and that was something that wasn't there before."



The concept is not only growing in libraries; Rodriguez believes UX is for anybody, anywhere. "Even if you don't work in a library, you can always pick up a project that focuses on improving a service or a product … and volunteer to do that work."



3

DIRECTOR OF EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

With protests in support of Black Lives Matter and social justice movements coming to a head in 2020, many libraries across the country have committed to breaking with traditional neutral stances and doing better on the front of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). Oak Park (Ill.) Public Library (OPPL) has gone a step further by codifying an Antiracism Strategic Plan and hiring the library's first director of equity and antiracism.

"Our community informs what we do," says Stephen Jackson, who took on the role in October 2021. "What I really love about our journey is that it's been institutionalized."

The strategic plan focuses on dismantling institutional, internalized, interpersonal, and structural racism, and lists objectives for each category—such as evaluating the need for MLIS requirements in hiring, developing staff affinity groups, and implementing a new patron code of conduct.

Jackson, who has a master's in clinical mental health, started with OPPL as a social services specialist at a time when the library was moving toward a community outreach model. "I'm a restorative justice practitioner. [It's] where my heart is," he says. "I think that the mitigation of harm is the best way to be."

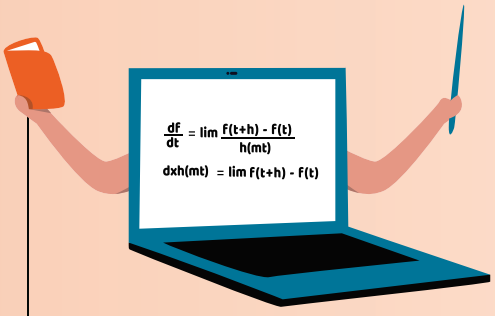
He sees a correlation between EDI work and restorative justice—an approach that emphasizes the importance of every voice being heard. In his first few months on the job, he has focused on building relationships and onboarding new staff members.

Jackson acknowledges OPPL can do this work, in part, because its board of trustees is diverse, engaged, and supportive. For those libraries experiencing opposition to antiracism work, he suggests asking questions of community members.

"When I get pushback from people about my title or about the work we're doing," he says, "I get really curious about what in particular about being antiracist [people] have an issue with."

"Our community informs what we do. What I really love about our journey is that it's been institutionalized."

STEPHEN JACKSON, director of equity and antiracism at Oak Park (Ill.) Public Library



4

OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES LIBRARIAN

"Sometimes students are trying to decide if they're going to buy the textbook or buy groceries," says Amy Lagers, reference and instruction librarian at Tulsa (Okla.) Community College (TCC). "That's reality for a lot of our students."

Lagers, who leads the open educational resources (OER) team across TCC's four main campuses, says the cost savings these free materials present is a primary reason her school has engaged in work to increase OER adoption. TCC is an urban commuter college with a large percentage of nontraditional students for whom OERs represent huge relief, she points out.

"Our role is to locate, evaluate, and curate OER resources and make sure that [faculty are] aware of resources that match course objectives and provide low- or no-cost textbook alternatives to students," Lagers says.

Sometimes faculty members push back on switching to OERs because they don't have the "bells and whistles"—such as online platforms and test banks—that the major textbooks might have, Lagers says. TCC tries to support this transition by getting librarians, instructors, subject area experts, and course designers to work together on developing classes.

"Be patient, because it's something that definitely takes a mind shift," she advises those who might want to do this work at their institutions.

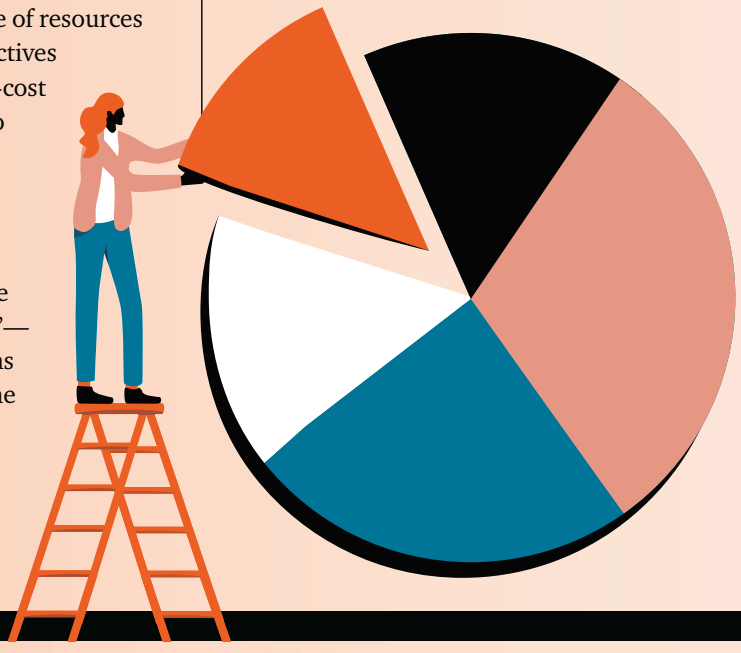
OERs aren't confined to higher education. In fact, the American Association of School Libraries published its own OER toolkit for K–12 librarians in 2019 (bit.ly/OER-toolkit), and open materials became a lifeline for many schools teaching virtual classes in the early days of the pandemic.

Lagers recommends that anybody interested in OERs take the Creative Commons Certificate program (certificates.creativecommons.org) to orient themselves with the many types of open licensing.

5

DATA VISUALIZATION LIBRARIAN

Increasingly, data visualization services are being added to libraries' offerings—especially in higher education. The authors of "Supporting Data Visualization Services in



Academic Libraries" (*The Journal of Interactive Technology and Pedagogy,* vol. 18, Dec. 10, 2020) argue this is because the academic library is seen as a natural hub for services that can be used by many departments and fields. The authors also stress that people with expertise in data visualization are needed to make these services successful.

Jo Klein, GIS and data visualization librarian and assistant professor at University of North Carolina at Greensboro, is one of those people. A typical day for Klein might include assisting students and faculty with data visualization software, conducting consultations with researchers, hosting workshops on free tools, and doing their own research.

For Klein, who has a natural sciences background and experience creating charts and graphs for the US Environmental Protection Agency, data visualization librarianship is the "perfect intersection" of their interests. The work requires proficiency with data science tools and programming languages, such as Python, R, and Tableau. "Part of where it's a little bit difficult is finding out which [resource] will work for you and your specific background," they say.

Those looking to develop data visualization skills should take a free online course from the Research Data Management Library Academy (rdmla.github.io) or try the step-by-step tool Datawrapper, Klein advises. They also recommend being familiar with all that Microsoft Excel or Google Sheets can do.

For their part, Klein would like to see data literacy education in places outside the university: "Having opportunity for instruction or learning for folks who are patrons of public libraries would be really cool." AL

TERRA DANKOWSKI is managing editor of *American Libraries.*



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Recognition and Relief

Librarians discuss the life-changing effects of federal loan forgiveness

BY Bill Furbee



Illustration: ©Nuthawut/Adobe Stock

Many things stick with you long after you graduate from college—the education you received, the friends you made, and, too often, the expenses incurred. For thousands of Americans saddled with debilitating college debt, the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program, established by the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007, has helped cut down on those repayment bills.

Created to facilitate the forgiveness of remaining balances on federal Direct Loans (student loans made directly by the US Department of Education), PSLF made headlines as a way to free up financial futures for many people. To be eligible for forgiveness, individuals had to have made 120 monthly payments under a qualifying repayment plan while also working full-time for a US federal, state, local, or tribal government or not-for-profit organization.

Red tape and bureaucratic headaches were soon reported, however. To date, significantly more people have been turned down than accepted into the program. For perspective, we spoke with several librarians about their paths toward acceptance.

KYRA HAHN

Public service librarian and founder of the Facebook group Librarian 4 PSLF; many see her as a leader and advocate for the program.

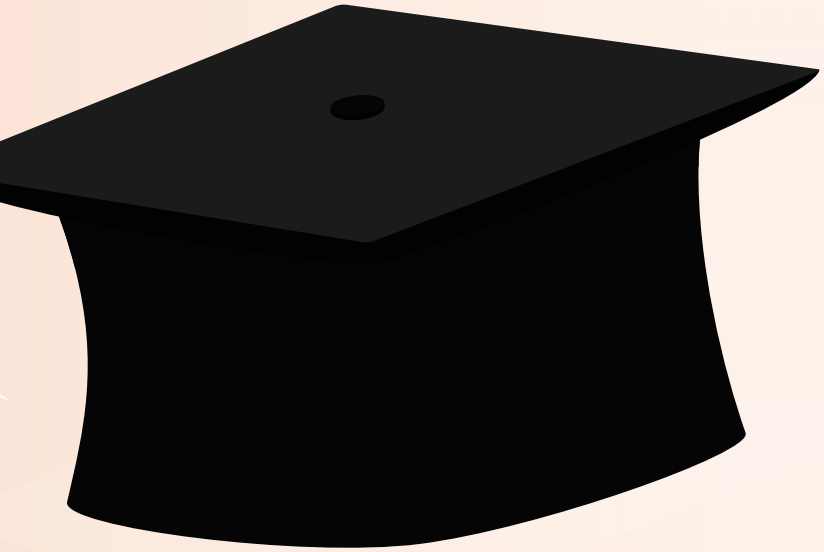
AMOUNT FORGIVEN: Approximately $50,000



"I never imagined that getting a college degree would equal debt for life," says Hahn, whose loan encompasses multiple degrees. Before learning about the forgiveness program, she says, "It felt like I'd be paying until retirement."

Now, Hahn says, she feels a weight has been lifted from her shoulders, allowing her to "assist with family, look for new opportunities … and continue advocacy work for improvements to the PSLF program."

Hahn also appreciates the work of American Library Association President Patricia "Patty" M. Wong, who produced a series of webinars on PSLF. "Her action has made my professional dream come true, raising awareness of this resource to … everyone within our profession," she says.



JANET O'KEEFE

Librarian at Flint (Mich.) Public Library

AMOUNT (POTENTIALLY) FORGIVEN: Approximately $29,000



Although she has yet to be accepted into the forgiveness program, O'Keefe is optimistic about her finances for the first time. "It's no exaggeration to say this would be life-changing," she says.

"I graduated in December 1998, and I still owe nearly half of my original principal amount. That's ridiculous," she says. If she qualifies for the PSLF, O'Keefe says, her future would be in her hands.

JULIA WARGA

Director for research and instruction at Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio

AMOUNT FORGIVEN: Approximately $9,500



Warga had been making payments toward her graduate school loans since late 2003, but she still struggled for acceptance into the PSLF program. "I eventually gave up hope of my loan forgiveness ever happening," she says.

Then, in January 2022, after receiving yet another rejection notice earlier that same month, Warga was accepted.

Having the debt forgiven, she says, "means I can focus on saving money for my retirement, and for my child's college tuition. I feel a huge sense of relief."

HEATHER JAMES

Associate dean of scholarly resources at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington

AMOUNT FORGIVEN: Approximately $89,000



Like so many others, James found that her debt made it difficult to buy a house or plan for the cost of daycare and other necessities, and it severely limited the funds she could contribute to charitable organizations close to her heart. She turned to PSLF for help but found the process frustrating.

Since first completing paperwork for the program 10 years ago, James has had to "sit on hold, write letters, and go over my repayment statements multiple times to get qualifying payment counts corrected," she says. "I feel relieved that the system was finally reviewed critically, and I'm grateful that it's worked for me, but I also feel vindicated."

For James, the time has come to take a closer look at the costs of higher education. "If education is a human right, which I think it is, then we can't set it up as a system where a person has to sign away their future in order to access it," she says. "It's like an undergraduate degree is being offered by Rumpelstiltskin."

SONYA DURNEY

Scholarly communication, research, and teaching librarian at University of New England in Biddeford, Maine; vice president of the Maine Library Association

AMOUNT FORGIVEN: Approximately $80,000



Durney was accepted into the PSLF program in 2011 and had two batches of loans forgiven. Before receiving relief, she read about applicants who had been denied and wondered if her own loans would ever be forgiven. "A huge burden was the uncertainty," she says.

"Having these loans forgiven signals that society appreciates the libraries and librarians working hard to help our communities meet goals by providing equitable access to information," she says. "Communities need librarians. Public service forgiveness feels like a 'thank you.'"

The PSLF program has allowed Durney to start thinking more about her future, she says, without the burden of overwhelming debt.

A version of this story first appeared on americanlibraries.org on March 15. AL

BILL FURBEE is a writer living in Melbourne, Kentucky.

Washington, D.C. | June 23–28

2022 Annual Conference Preview



EDITED BY Greg Landgraf

After two years of pandemic-imposed social distancing and virtual meetings, librarians will once again gather in person at the profession's largest event. The American Library Association's (ALA) 2022 Annual Conference and Exhibition returns to Washington, D.C., June 23–28.

In addition to the face-to-face networking opportunities that so many have missed, Annual will offer a full slate of programs, including educational sessions, author talks, exhibit hall attractions, and new ideas to shape the future of libraries. Also available is the Digital Experience, a virtual option for those who cannot attend the celebration in the nation's capital.

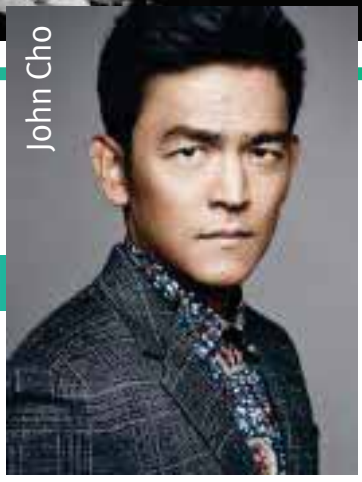
For registration information and a list of events, visit the Annual Conference website at alaannual.org.











Photos: Kieran Kesner (Ng); Kevin Abosch (Hinojosa); Keith Major (Haddish); Benjo Arwas (Cho)

FEATURED SPEAKERS

Check the Annual Conference Scheduler (bit.ly/ALA-annual22-sched) for event dates and times and the Annual Conference website for the latest announcements about speakers.

JOHN CHO has been acting for more than two decades, with notable roles in *Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle*, *American Pie*, the rebooted Star Trek film series, *Searching*, and *Cowboy Bebop*. In summer 2020—in response to George Floyd's murder, protests against police, and the increase in anti-Asian violence—Cho wrote *Troublemaker*, a book about a 12-year-old Korean American student navigating school and family in the wake of the 1992 Los Angeles riots. Cho was enrolled at University of California, Berkeley, in 1992, and he saw a connection between these events and the 2020 uprising that he wanted to capture for future generations.

Emmy Award–winning journalist **MARIA HINOJOSA** has reported for CBS, CNN, NPR, PBS, WGBH, and WNBC during her nearly 30-year career. She anchors and produces the Peabody Award–winning *Latino USA*, and in 2010 founded Futuro Media Group, a nonprofit organization that produces multimedia content highlighting the perspectives of people of color. Hinojosa will discuss her memoir, *Once I Was You* (2020), an account of growing up Mexican American on the South Side of Chicago, and will talk about the rhetoric around immigration, which she says shapes American attitudes toward outsiders and enables willful negligence and profiteering at the expense of the nation's most vulnerable populations.

Comic book artist **KEVIN EASTMAN** began drawing as soon as he was able to hold a crayon. Inspired by artists like Jack Kirby and Frank Miller, Eastman self-published his work in the early 1980s, creating *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles #1* with Peter Laird. The comic's success led to an animated TV series, toys, and movies. His newest work, *The Last Ronin* (July), is a collaboration with Laird and Tom Waltz. It continues the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles storyline, following a lone surviving turtle in a dystopian New York City.

TIFFANY HADDISH is a Grammy Award–winning comedian, actor, and producer. In November 2017, she made history as the first Black female stand-up comedian to host *Saturday Night Live*. That year also marked her breakout performance in the comedy *Girls Trip*.

Haddish's first picture book—*Layla, the Last Black Unicorn* (May), coauthored with Jerdine Nolen and illustrated by Jessica Gibson—was inspired by Haddish's life. The book tells the story of a lovable but awkward unicorn who doesn't realize that what makes her different is also what makes her special.

CELESTE NG is the *New York Times*–bestselling author of *Everything I Never Told You* and *Little Fires Everywhere*, the latter of which has been adapted as a limited series on Hulu. Her third novel, *Our Missing Hearts* (October), is a suspenseful and heartrending story of the love between a mother and child in a society consumed by racism, authoritarianism, and fear. Ng is a recipient of the Pushcart Prize and a Guggenheim Fellowship. Her fiction and essays have appeared in *The New York Times* and *The Guardian*.

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BOOKS AND AWARDS

Attendees will have the opportunity to hear from—and celebrate—dozens of bestselling authors and illustrators. For more information on ticketed events, visit bit.ly/ALA-ticketedevents22.

2022 Michael L. Printz Awards

Friday, June 24, 8–10 p.m.

Hear 2022 Michael L. Printz Award–winning and honor book authors speak about their writing in this session cosponsored by *Booklist* and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA). A reception follows the awards ceremony. Tickets are $39 for YALSA members, $45 for nonmembers.

First Author, First Book

Saturday, June 25, 11 a.m.–noon

Preview the season's most anticipated debut novels during this conference favorite. A book signing will follow the event.

Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence in Fiction and Nonfiction Ceremony and Reception

Saturday, June 25, 8–10 p.m.

Mingle with authors of the winning adult fiction and nonfiction books at a reception that will feature a keynote speaker. The awards are cosponsored by *Booklist* and the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) and supported by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Tickets are $25.

53rd Annual Coretta Scott King Book Awards Breakfast

Sunday, June 26, 7–10 a.m.

Celebrate the winners of this year's Coretta Scott King Book Awards, representing the best children's books depicting the African American experience. Tickets are $65 in advance, $75 onsite.

Literary Tastes: Celebrating the Best Reading of the Year

Sunday, June 26, 8–10 a.m.

Winners of the RUSA Book and Media Awards and best-of list authors will discuss their works and the craft of writing at this breakfast event. Book signings will immediately follow the program. Tickets are $15 for RUSA members, $25 in advance for non-RUSA members, and $30 onsite for non-RUSA members.

YA Author Coffee Klatch

Sunday, June 26, 9–10 a.m.

Enjoy coffee and meet with authors who have won YALSA awards or appeared on YALSA book lists. Attendees will sit at a table, and every few minutes a new author will arrive to talk about their upcoming book. Tickets are $25 in advance for ALA members and $30 onsite or for nonmembers.

2022 Newbery-Caldecott-Legacy Banquet

Sunday, June 26, 6–11 p.m.

Celebrate the authors and illustrators who have won this year's Newbery, Caldecott, and Children's Literature Legacy medals and honors. The reception includes dinner and a cash bar. Tickets are $99, with a limited number of tickets available onsite until noon on Friday, June 24.

Gala Author Tea

Monday, June 27, 2–4 p.m.

Enjoy tea and treats while hearing from bestselling writers about their forthcoming titles. Attendees will receive advance copies of the books and can have them signed by authors, subject to availability. Tickets are $55 in advance for United for

Libraries (UFL) members, $60 in advance for non-UFL members, and $65 onsite.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

A Technology Library of Things: Robots, Drones, 3D Worlds, and Virtual Reality

Saturday, June 25, 9–10 a.m.

This hands-on and interactive presentation will share the results of experiments with an array of gadgets from a research lab at San José (Calif.) State University's School of Information. The session will include discussion about the types of technologies on the horizon and how they fit with the Library of Things movement, as well as demonstrations of these tech tools and discussions about how they are currently used.

Conducting a Large-Scale Diversity Audit for Urban Public Library Systems

Saturday, June 25, 1–2 p.m.

Collection audits are a gold-standard tool for measuring diversity in collections, but the limited research available and scale involved in performing one can be daunting. Staff from St. Louis Public Library will share how they conducted a full-scale diversity audit and created a sustainable plan of continued assessment and future growth.

Addressing Critical Race Theory Challenges in Your Library

Saturday, June 25, 2:30–3:30 p.m.

Libraries have recently experienced a significant increase in challenges to materials, programs, and other activities that address racial injustice, Black history, and diversity education. This session will discuss the role critical race theory has played in recent library challenges and censorship legislation, including what it is and how the term is being coopted by different groups.

Marketing Your Small Library: A Little Investment Can Go a Long Way

Saturday, June 25, 4–5 p.m.

Many small and rural libraries need more patrons, and many of their community members would greatly benefit from their services. But these libraries rarely have communications professionals on staff or a marketing budget. Panelists will talk about why Georgia Public Library Service began offering marketing mini-grants to Georgia's public libraries in 2018 and how this has helped libraries build local marketing capacity and expertise.

Libraries Build Business: Delivering Impactful Programs to Empower Underrepresented Entrepreneurs

Saturday, June 25, 4–5 p.m.

Libraries from ALA's Libraries Build Business cohort will share promising practices and lessons they learned designing and implementing diverse programming for entrepreneurs and aspiring small business owners. Presenters will provide tips for making resources more inclusive, scaling your library's offerings, and engaging partners and stakeholders in this work.

Transformational Capital Campaigns: Maverick Approaches that Lead to Organization-Changing Projects

Sunday, June 26, 9–10 a.m.

Even in contentious times, public libraries are conducting successful capital campaigns. A panel will share how libraries

The Digital Experience

For the first time, the Digital Experience will allow library workers who can't attend the 2022 Annual Conference to livestream a selection of mainstage speakers and specially curated sessions. Registration includes access to four mainstage sessions, 42 education sessions, and 14 News You Can Use sessions. This content will be available through August 31.



Sessions included in the Digital Experience are "Help Build a Community's Financial Well-Being," "TikTok and Libraries: A Powerful Partnership," "Youth Justice Court: Getting Teens Involved with Justice," and "Communities in Crisis: Legal Reference Skills to the Rescue." A full list of sessions will be announced before Annual.

Digital Experience registration is $250 for ALA members; $175 for other members, including retired, student, or nonsalaried members; and $350 for nonmembers. Visit alaannual.org/registration for more information.

JobLIST Placement Center

ALA's JobLIST Placement and Career Development Center will offer information and activities related to jobs and career development.

Employers will be on hand to talk with conference attendees at the free **Open House and Job Fair** at 10:30 a.m.–noon Sunday, June 26. Participating employers will be listed at bit.ly/ALP-jobfair22. Registration is not required.

Other activities include mentoring sessions at 9 a.m.–noon Saturday, June 25 and 1–4 p.m. Sunday, June 26; headshot photography services at 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Saturday, June 25 and Sunday, June 26; résumé reviews; and several career guidance workshops throughout the conference. For more information, visit bit.ly/ALA-jobsatannual.

have developed successful capital campaigns to spark community interest in building and expansion projects and turned residents and businesses into library investors.

Actions Speak Louder than Words: A Step-by-Step Guide to Becoming an Inclusive Workplace

Sunday, June 26, 9–10 a.m.


Deanna Singh

Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) consultant **DEANNA SINGH** will share Actions Speak Louder, a blueprint for leaders and teams to look at their surroundings with new eyes, get out of their own way, and turn their energy into a concrete plan. The session will cover how to design inclusive policies, from writing job ads to conducting performance reviews.

Deaf Culture: A Library Strategy for Inclusive Deaf Community Engagement

Sunday, June 26, 11 a.m.–noon

Underserved and unserved Deaf communities frequently don't have access to a public library or aren't aware of existing services that would meet their information needs. This panel will share how libraries and other organizations can leverage programming to break down barriers of misunderstanding and open up opportunities for organizations and patrons.

The Value of Manga in School Libraries

Sunday, June 26, 1–2 p.m.

A panel of school librarians with expertise curating manga will discuss the value of the genre in school libraries. Presenters will cover the titles librarians should buy, collection development resources, and the literacy impact of manga collections.

The First Statewide, Library-Led Telehealth Initiative in the First State

Sunday, June 26, 1–2 p.m.

Delaware is facing both a health care and an internet access crisis. Delaware libraries are trying to solve both by setting up telehealth booths statewide, leveraging their reputation as a safe space in the community and their high-speed internet infrastructure. Currently installed in three public libraries, the telehealth kiosk program is expected to expand to nine additional sites in 2022, and patrons may eventually use the soundproof booths for other social services, such as legal matters, immigration help, or job interviews.

Mentorship for All: Creating a Statewide Mentoring Program

Monday, June 27, 9–10 a.m.

Panelists will share a pilot project in Colorado that has created a statewide mentorship project for library staffers. The project was founded with a commitment to increasing diversity in library leadership and empowering library workers, administrators, and information professionals from underserved groups to connect with one another and share knowledge and experience for career growth.

Conversational AI, Curbside, and Chatbots: How Listening to Patrons Set KCLS Up for Success

Monday, June 27, 2:30–3:30 p.m.

In 2019, King County (Wash.) Library System won a grant to explore conversational artificial intelligence. Patron feedback was used to launch the myLIBRO app. Library representatives will share what they learned about account integration, pivoting to curbside service, and continued AI exploration with voice assistants and chatbots.

DIVISION PRESIDENTS' PROGRAMS

ALA's division presidents, round table chairs, and affiliate leaders will host interesting speakers and examine important topics. Check the Annual Conference Schedule (bit.ly/ALA-annual22-sched) for dates, times, and additional listings.

NMRT President's Program: Finding Your Way in Library Land

Saturday, June 25, 11 a.m.–noon

Finding your professional path and people can be a challenging—and even lonely—experience. New Members

ALA Governance

Friday, June 24

- ALA Executive Board Meeting I, 9 a.m.–noon
- ALA Joint Budget Analysis Review/Finance and Audit Committee, 12:30–3:30 p.m.

Saturday, June 25

- ALA Council Orientation, 9–10 a.m.
- Joint ALA Information Session and Membership Meeting, 10–11:30 a.m.
- ALA Council I, 2:30–5 p.m.

Sunday, June 26

- ALA Council II, 9–11:30 a.m.
- Planning and Budget Assembly/ Division Leadership Meeting, 1–3 p.m.

Monday, June 27

- ALA Council III, 9–11:30 a.m.
- ALA Executive Board II, 1–4 p.m.
- ALA-APA Board of Directors Meeting, 4–4:30 p.m.

Tuesday, June 28

- ALA Executive Board III, 8–10:30 a.m.

Round Table President **DANI COOK** will lead a panel that will discuss journeys to professional belonging.

ACRL President's Program: Connect, Collaborate, Cooperate, Commit

Saturday, June 25, 1:30–3 p.m.

This session, hosted by the Association of College and Research Libraries, will teach attendees how to become better leaders in their institutions and how to better prepare students to become informed citizens through digital literacy programs. Presenters will show how the 21st-century skills framework helps create socially mobile, civically responsible innovators.

GameRT President's Program: Gamers of the Library World, Unite!

Saturday, June 25, 2–3:30 p.m.

The Games and Gaming Round Table will mark its 10th anniversary with current and former board members looking at the round table's history and its future. The session will include a discussion on games collection development, a hands-on collection-processing challenge, and resources on developing games programming. Attendees will have a chance to win a door prize.

Diversity in Adult Books: What Steps Are Libraries Taking to Provide a Wider Variety of Material?

Saturday, June 25, 2:30–3:30 p.m.

The Ethnic and Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table (EMIERT) asks the question: What procedures are libraries implementing to make sure that diverse books are provided to users? In this chair's program, EMIERT will look into partnerships with diverse publishers, selection team qualifications, and programming supporting diverse books.

IRRT Chair's Program: Global Libraries as Agents of Leadership in Our Post-Pandemic World

Sunday, June 26, 1–2:30 p.m.

The past year has demonstrated the essential role of libraries in leading change and building on innovation to respond to needs within their communities. At this International Relations Round Table program, panelists representing libraries from around the world will share their experiences advocating for policy changes and acting as agents of social justice.

UFL President's Program

Sunday, June 26, 2–3 p.m.

Some public libraries have recently faced trustee candidates who oppose tenets of librarianship such as intellectual freedom or community service. This session from United for Libraries will focus on preparedness strategies, community building, and creating strong policies related to



The Library Marketplace

Meet with more than 550 exhibitors offering exciting new products, tools, and titles to help serve your organization in the Library Marketplace. Plus, take home armloads of advance reading copies of upcoming books.

The official opening ceremony and ribbon cutting immediately follows the Opening General Session at 5:30 p.m. Friday, June 24, and features a brief welcome by ALA leadership and local dignitaries. The reception includes food, drink, and entertainment.

Nine live stages—including the PopTop Stage, TechTalk Stage, Diversity in Publishing Stage, Book Buzz Theater, and Graphic Novel and Gaming Stage—will host more than 80 presentations. The Library Marketplace will also feature the Diversity in Publishing Pavilion, Sound Garden Pavilion, Author Autograph Area, and more.

Bonus Showcases offer attendees an opportunity to check out multimedia resources. The Festival of Shorts features curated short films and trailers of upcoming movie and book launches; the Live from the 25 Podcast Showcase highlights technology, publishing, and emerging authors; and the Diversity in Publishing Showcase offers hundreds of diverse titles from across the publishing landscape.

Exhibit Hall Hours

Friday, June 24
5:30–7 p.m.

Saturday, June 25
9 a.m.–5 p.m.

Sunday, June 26
9 a.m.–5 p.m.

Monday, June 27
9 a.m.–2 p.m.

ALA Store

Located in the exhibit hall at booth #1833, the ALA Store will offer a wide range of promotional, continuing education, professional development, and gift items. Shoppers will get free shipping on all book orders.

A pop-up mini-store will also operate near the registration area 9:30 a.m–2:30 p.m. Friday, June 24. The pop-up will have sample conference T-shirts in a variety of sizes that can be ordered at bit.ly/GraphicsGiftShop. •

Conference Health Protocols

ALA is actively tracking news regarding COVID-19 and its variants, and will follow applicable federal, state, and local laws. See the latest updates at bit.ly/AL-annual22-covid.

Conference registrants will be required to show proof of COVID-19 vaccination prior to traveling to Washington, D.C., and masks will be required at all ALA events and ALA-contracted venues. This includes but is not limited to: meetings in hotels, the convention center, the exhibit floor, and shuttle buses, regardless of whether it is required by law at the time of the conference.

Attendees are asked to minimize person-to-person contact and socially distance, wear a face mask even when not at official ALA events, wash hands frequently, and use hand sanitizer. Registrants should not attend the conference if they have been exposed to, have tested positive for, or have experienced symptoms of COVID-19 within 14 days prior to the event. Those who experience symptoms or test positive for COVID-19 during the conference or in the 14 days following should contact confs@ala.org. This information will be used to inform other attendees of the possibility of exposure (personal information will be kept strictly confidential).

As of press time, the District of Columbia requires masks in public libraries.

Accessibility

ALA strives to ensure the conference experience is pleasant and accessible for all. All sessions will be captioned, and American Sign Language interpretation will be available for all mainstage sessions and other programs at the request of attendees.

Sustainability

ALA is committed to fighting climate change by offsetting carbon emissions caused by the increased use of technology. Annual Conference registrants may donate to this effort, supporting our preferred provider Native Energy, an organization helping to build farmer-owned and community-based projects in Native American communities. ●

programming, budgeting, and services that can help protect a library and board from finding itself in a position where a board member's ideologies oppose core library values.

GNCRT President's Program: Introducing New Voices

Sunday, June 26, 2–3 p.m.

While comics and graphic novels are now generally accepted in libraries, the work of librarians to promote this medium is far from complete. This year's Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table president's program will spotlight diverse voices in comics advocacy and offer viewpoints from various areas of expertise to explore how collaboration can continue the current momentum.

LRRT Chair's Program: Research Forum and Awards Presentation

Sunday, June 26, 2:30–4 p.m.

The Library Research Round Table will present a forum featuring three presentations exploring the topics of bilingual public librarian discourse, librarians' work with families experiencing homelessness, and archivists' need for a new national finding aid platform. Winners of the Jesse H. Shera Awards for Dissertation and Published Research will also be recognized.

YALSA President's Program

Monday, June 27, 10:30–11:30 a.m.

YALSA President **KELLY CZARNECKI** will share the highlights of her presidential theme: giving library workers tools to rebuild youth social capital and honoring collective care. Czarnecki will highlight how these themes support the new YALSA strategic plan. Members of the YALSA Presidential Task Force will participate in a panel discussion, during which attendees will be invited to crowdsource ideas on programming for teens that build social capital.

ALSC President's Program: Boundaries Be Gone! Using Stories to Intersect and Connect

Monday, June 27, 1–2:30 p.m.

Authors, illustrators, and librarians create and maintain a strong bond between the literary experience and children's lives. The universality of storytelling connects children with each other. But sometimes we must break the barriers that divide us and reach out to connect. Speakers at this Association for Library Service to Children program will address how they dismantle boundaries and use specific skills to promote connection.


Debby Applegate

RMRT Chair's Program with Pulitzer Prize Winner Debby Applegate

Monday, June 27, 4–5 p.m.

The Retired Members Round Table will welcome historian **DEBBY APPLEGATE,** who will speak about her new book, *Madam: The Biography of Polly Adler, Icon of the Jazz Age*.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

ALA Trivia Championship

Saturday, June 25, 5–7 p.m.

Compete for the title of Reference Champions of America in a team-based trivia challenge sponsored by GameRT, RUSA, and NMRT. Tickets are $10.

The Laugh's On Us

Saturday, June 25, 5:30–7:30 p.m.

UFL spokesperson **PAULA POUNDSTONE** and several humor writers and comedians will entertain at this annual wine-and-cheese event. A book signing will follow, with free copies for attendees, subject to availability. Tickets are $55 in advance for UFL members, $60 in advance for non-UFL members, and $65 onsite.



Paula Poundstone

Government Documents Round Table 50th Anniversary Celebration

Sunday, June 26, 6–8 p.m.

Celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Government Documents Round Table at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial in Alexandria, Virginia. Space is limited and registration is required at bit.ly/ALA-GODORT2022.

International Librarians Reception

Monday, June 27, 5–7 p.m.

Welcome and connect with librarians from around the world. ALA President **PATRICIA "PATTY" M. WONG** will announce recipients of the ALA Presidential Citation for Innovative International Projects at this event. International librarians registered for the full conference will receive one complimentary ticket. Tickets are $40 and will be sold in the convention center but not at the reception site.

ALA President Inaugural Luncheon

Tuesday, June 28, 12:30–3 p.m.

Outgoing ALA President Wong will honor incoming ALA President **LESSA KANANI'OPUA PELAYO-LOZADA** and the new division presidents. The inaugural luncheon immediately follows the Closing General Session and includes food and entertainment. Tickets are $50.

For an up-to-date list of dates and times, please see the Annual Conference Scheduler (bit.ly/ALA-annual22-sched). AL

GREG LANDGRAF is communications and marketing coordinator at Georgetown University Libraries in Washington, D.C., and a regular contributor to *American Libraries*.



Accessing Justice

Supporting patrons with legal information needs

BY Latia Ward



LATIA WARD is research librarian in the Arthur J. Morris Law Library at University of Virginia School of Law in Charlottesville.

Imagine this scenario: A patron shows a reference librarian a letter from an attorney representing the county and asks, "What law authorizes the county to take a person's land?" The patron says she has read statutes that might apply, but the attorney does not cite any law and she cannot afford to hire a lawyer. The librarian suggests that the patron check out websites for legal aid organizations and LawHelp.org.

This scenario is an example of both a reference transaction and an access-to-justice issue. Many people do not have easy access to an attorney and will come to the library seeking legal information. Librarians are not authorized to give legal advice, but they can direct patrons to useful organizations and resources.

According to Jessica Steinberg, associate professor of clinical law at George Washington University Law School in Washington, D.C., 70–98% of state cases dealing with areas of civil law such as family law, domestic violence, landlord–tenant, and small claims issues involve at least one unrepresented litigant (bit.ly/CivilLawGWU). Money is often an issue. According to the National Legal Aid and Defender Association, 80% of criminal defendants cannot afford to hire a lawyer (bit.ly/NLADA-law).

Such people experience what the Legal Services Corporation has called the *justice gap,* or "the difference between the civil legal needs of low-income Americans and the resources available to meet those needs."

Librarians may provide access to legal information, but they may not give legal advice. The difference is important. Legal information is general knowledge, facts, or aids regarding the law and the legal system. A statutory code, the official website of a state legislature, and a research guide are all examples of legal information.

Legal advice, on the other hand, is the application of law to facts; it is part of the practice of law. For example, tenants who want to know whether they may deduct from their monthly rent the cost of repairing a window that their landlord refused to fix are asking a legal question. While librarians may not answer legal questions, they may direct the patron to resources of interest.

Some of those resources might be subscription databases that are cost-prohibitive for individuals; libraries, however, may offer patrons access to these databases onsite. In addition, legal self-help websites and open-access databases that provide the full text of laws are useful. Other helpful resources include:

- Nolo.com's Legal Topics
- American Bar Association's Find Legal Help
- Cornell Law School's Legal Information Institute

Librarians may create lists of self-help legal resources for distribution with a disclaimer that inclusion in the list does not imply endorsement by the library.

Patron privacy is always important, but it's especially key when it comes to legal questions. While technically there is no librarian-patron privilege, the American Library Association's Code of Ethics mentions a librarian's duty to respect a patron's right to confidentiality and privacy (bit.ly/ALAProfEthics). The Association's Privacy and Confidentiality Q&A provides practical suggestions for keeping personally identifiable information (PII) confidential. Maintaining confidential computer sign-up sheets, registrations, and research notes, as well as limiting the PII collected, are all good strategies.

> Libraries should be sensitive to the needs of patrons who are experiencing the justice gap.

Libraries, especially those open to the public, should be sensitive to the needs of patrons who are experiencing the justice gap; mindful of keeping PII confidential; and knowledgeable about freely available resources that patrons may access.

This article was adapted from "What Can Librarians Do to Facilitate Access to Justice?" (bit.ly/Ward-Justice), a presentation that Ward gave at the 2019 Computer-Assisted Legal Instruction conference. AL

Crunching the Numbers

What to do with the release of the 2020 Census data

BY Frank Donnelly



FRANK DONNELLY is GIS and data librarian at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island.

Census data is invaluable for understanding our communities and our nation. After a longer wait than usual, detailed data from the 2020 Census will be released over the course of this year. Let's look at what's in the data, what's been released so far, what's coming up, and where you can find it.

Total population counts for the states and the nation were released in March 2021 and launched the apportionment process to redistribute seats in Congress. Public redistricting files followed, released in August 2021. This dataset consists of tables that include population by race, ethnicity, age above 18, group quarters (the population living in college dorms, military barracks, and penitentiaries), and counts of occupied and vacant housing units. This data is intended for redrawing congressional and voting districts but was also our first detailed glimpse of the nation's population at the census block level.

Demographic profile tables will be released throughout 2022. Each table provides a broad cross section of data for a given place. The full range of census tables will follow, as part of the Demographic and Housing Characteristics file and the Detailed Demographic and Housing Characteristics file. Formerly known as Summary Files 1 and 2, these tables will provide counts and cross tabulations of the population by age, sex, race, ethnicity, family relations, households and group quarters, and housing occupancy and tenure. Data will be published for all census geographies, including legal areas like states, counties, and municipalities, as well as for statistical areas like census tracts and block groups.

Since census data is free and in the public domain, there are several access points. Some sites provide a limited number of profiles that make accessing data easy, while others offer more advanced search capabilities and a fuller selection of tables. Librarians should consider the nature of each researcher's request and the researcher's technical skills when suggesting a tool or website. They should then present users with a few options to help choose what works best.

You can visit the program page for the 2020 Census (bit.ly/ALA-2020census) to view the release schedule, consult technical documentation, and access widgets and media for data exploration. In some cases, you can access data from the program page, but the ultimate source for all current census data comes from the US Census Bureau (data.census.gov). Users can type in the name of a place, pull up the profile for an area, and follow links to discover individual tables.

Beyond the US Census Bureau, the Missouri Census Data Center has long provided many excellent tools (mcdc.missouri.edu). Its profile applications make it easy to obtain demographic profile tables for the decennial census and the American Community Service (ACS) for the entire US and make comparisons between a maximum of four different geographies. The Census Reporter project (censusreporter.org) was designed to provide a direct way to discover and explore the latest ACS estimates. The National Historical Geographic Information System (nhgis.org), part of the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, serves as the archive for all historic census summary data and includes the latest releases. There are several subscription-based databases, like PolicyMap and the Social Explorer, that add value to the data by providing users with map-based interfaces for data exploration, thematic mapping, and basic analysis.

> Librarians should consider each researcher's request when suggesting a tool or website.

Lastly, many local and state governments recompile census data for their jurisdictions and post them on their websites in easily downloadable spreadsheets. Some governments may aggregate the data into neighborhoods or districts that are meaningful to local residents. Local and state planning agencies, economic development offices, and open data portals are all good places to look.

Adapted from "US Census Data: Concepts and Applications for Supporting Research," Library Technology Reports vol. 58, no. 4 (May/June 2022). Read more at bit.ly/ALA-LTR. AL

In Training

Youth program prepares the library workers and advocates of tomorrow

BY Jennifer Johnson



JENNIFER JOHNSON is school-age program coordinator at Johnson City (Tenn.) Public Library.

While I was working the youth services desk one evening in 2018, a girl shyly told me she wanted to be a librarian when she grew up. When I asked why, she credited a library class at school.

That short exchange planted a seed in my mind: Could public libraries find ways to give kids hands-on library experience in a real-life work environment? If we are to foster learning in innovative ways, shouldn't we offer opportunities for children who have an interest in libraries? Is this feasible on a library-wide scale?

It turned out the answer to each of these questions was yes. At Johnson City (Tenn.) Public Library, we recently finished the third year of our 14-week Librarian-in-Training (LIT) program. Every year, we accept up to a dozen kids ages 9–12 and rotate them through our library departments—including adult services, circulation, maintenance, teen services, and technical services.

In technical services, for example, trainees might find themselves placing RFID tags on DVDs. In maintenance, they might set up tables and chairs for a book club. In adult and teen services, they might create a book display or make buttons for an event. Participants are required to attend a board meeting to see how the library's governing body functions. The program culminates with a celebration that includes families, school administrators, and the librarians who recommended the kids.

In my experience, three components have been crucial to the program's success:

Staff buy-in. With my supervisor's approval, I called a meeting of department managers before the LIT program began. They offered valuable ideas for structuring and scheduling the project and suggested an application process. For many staffers, this was their first time working with children. As the program facilitator, it was important for me to lay out expectations for those interactions and provide guidelines akin to classroom management strategies.

Intentional marketing. To promote the LIT program, I reached out to those who know children and their library habits best: school librarians. In a letter to all city, county, and private school librarians in the area, I asked for recommendations of kids who have shown the most interest in the library, either by volunteering their time or through a deep love of literature. This ensured children were vetted before we invited them to apply. Application forms ask kids why they want to be in the program, which books are their favorites, and what their special skills or hobbies are. We also ask parents to sign media release forms for photos and videos.

Adaptability. The beauty of the program is that it can be as large or as small, as involved or as basic, as you need it to be. When the pandemic began, our program was put on hold for nearly two years. The break gave us a chance to evaluate and restructure the LIT curriculum for 2022. Based on staff and participant input, we made adjustments that allowed trainees to spend more time in the departments they are most interested in and allowed staffers to go deeper into projects with them.

The favorite department of participants, by far, has been circulation. Children love the many manual tasks and working with our automated materials handler.

> Kids come away with an appreciation for how hard we work to provide the best possible services.

The LIT program continues to grow each year, with more applications than we can accommodate. Our relationship with school librarians continues to grow too. Feedback from children and families has been overwhelmingly positive, and some staff members have enjoyed the program so much that they have asked that we host it more than once a year.

We can't know, of course, if any of the trainees will go on to become librarians themselves, but it's clear that many come away with an appreciation for how hard we work to provide the best possible collections and services to our users. By providing a greater understanding of the roles that library workers play in our community, we strengthen our support and create future library advocates. AL

Collections under Fire

When the culture war comes for the school library

BY Nancy Jo Lambert



NANCY JO LAMBERT is librarian at a public high school in north Texas. A #FReadom movement organizer, she has worked in school libraries since 2010.

School librarians across the country are waiting anxiously to find out when their school or school system will get hit with the culture war's latest favorite weapon: the book ban. Since late 2021, prominent book challenges have appeared in Florida, Missouri, Virginia, Washington, and my home state of Texas, among others—and each week seems to bring more. My own school district has had at least three formal reconsiderations and a smattering of informal complaints.

From my perspective as an educator and a school librarian who has worked across age levels, the reconsiderations themselves don't bother me as much as the precedent: We're normalizing the use of school libraries as a battleground in political conflicts that have no place in the classroom.

Book challenges and the reconsideration process are a natural part of how libraries function in a democratic society; we want our patrons and stakeholders to be invested in our libraries and provide feedback. Criticism and discourse are necessary to ensure the viability of a collection.

This wave of book challenges is different, in part because it often comes from the top down. In October 2021, a Texas state representative sent a letter to school districts with a list of 850 titles with the purpose of finding out which schools had copies and how much money districts had spent on them. Then, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott issued a letter to the Texas Association of School Boards stating, "Texas public schools should not provide or promote pornographic or obscene material to students." When politicians circulate book lists or conflate age-relevant, identity-affirming materials with pornography, we are no longer talking about healthy discourse.

Another hallmark of the current wave of challenges is the framing of books by creators of color, books about race and racism, and books about queer identities as harmful to children and youth. For several years, educators have engaged in the work of equity, diversity, and inclusion with students to ensure all students can bring their full and authentic selves to school. This work—informed by decades of scholarship—has been twisted by politicians, media outlets, and groups of parents on social media. These actors claim to be concerned that by making space for all student identities in schools, we will cause some students discomfort.

The homophobia that inflames many of these challenges is thinly veiled. As an openly queer bisexual woman, I have personally been the target of harassment, discrimination, and bigotry (I also acknowledge my privilege as a white, cisgender person). During public comments at a recent school board meeting, I was openly and verbally attacked in an act of political theater, and I have been attacked repeatedly on social media by people in my community.

It doesn't feel coincidental that two of the three formal reconsiderations in my school district involved queer content. Queer students are aware of these attacks and challenges, and they know that our humanity is being questioned. Turning school libraries—meant to be not merely safe but actively affirming spaces—into political battlegrounds is harmful to students and to student achievement.

> Queer students are aware of these challenges, and they know that our humanity is being questioned.

School librarians have long engaged in diversity audits, and we've observed a deficiency in representing the viewpoints of historically marginalized groups. We aim to build collections that represent a wide range of topics and perspectives reflective of the students and families we serve. This must include books, stories, resources, and information about gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.

It's easy for librarians to engage in soft censorship practices by quietly removing books from their collections or opting not to purchase certain materials for fear of blowback or controversy. As a profession, we must guard against this and continue to use our expertise and fulfill our responsibility to provide equitable access to rich information for all. A school library is a democratic institution and, at its best, helps students become informed citizens of a global world. AL

Standing Up for Intellectual Freedom

Managing all stages of the book challenge process



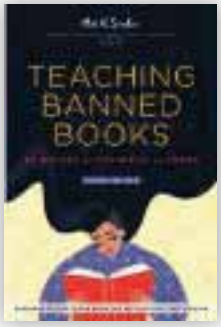
ANDY GOODING-CALL is librarian for the Merrimack Valley Library Consortium in North Andover, Massachusetts. His work focuses on sustainable librarianship and ending the digital divide.



The Library's Legal Answers for Meeting Rooms and Displays

By Mary Minow, Tomas A. Lipinski, and Gretchen McCord

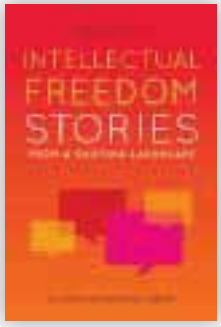
Intellectual freedom in public libraries encompasses more than books. This handy guide, written by a trio of lawyer-librarians, covers these concerns in a direct, plainspoken manner. Using a Q&A format, the authors present succinct legal information for libraries facing issues such as hate groups requesting meeting rooms or religious organizations protesting displays with queer themes. It was published years before First Amendment audits and anti-masking, but its recommendations remain relevant. Positions are also fully backed up by court decisions, neatly cited by the authors. Every director should have a copy in their professional library. ALA Editions, 2016. 32 p. $25. 978-0-8389-1440-3. (Ebook only.)



Teaching Banned Books: 32 Guides for Children and Teens, 2nd edition

By Pat R. Scales

This go-to list of banned books is ideal for the classroom. Designed for teachers but also ideal for school librarians, the title benefits greatly from its author's experience in countering censorship. The foreword to the first edition, by children's author Judy Blume, is included here but there are changes in this update: The revised edition more than doubles the number of books profiled, each with a synopsis, list of discussion questions, activities, and read-alikes. Many books listed are children's classics but the second edition includes books published as recently as 2018. Themes of bullying, racism, and otherness abound in this selection, though it also touches on LGBTQ identity, body image, and cultural differences. ALA Editions, 2019. 200 p. $44.99. PBK. 978-0-8389-4638-1. (Also available as an ebook.)



Intellectual Freedom Stories from a Shifting Landscape

Edited by Valerie Nye, ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom

Focused on real-life stories from the field, these essays run the gamut from traditional book censorship to programming challenges. The book is organized into sections, each with a set of discussion questions. It's an ideal book for library students, as it lends itself to small group work and discussion. It's also good mental preparation for new professionals coming into the library field. A few stories are truly terrifying. While some essays offer practical tips and advice, others simply relate the circumstances of the particular intellectual freedom story as it happened and describe the justifications for the actions and reactions of the library and librarians involved. ALA Editions, 2020. 208 p. $49.99. PBK. 978-0-8389-4726-5. (Also available as an ebook.)

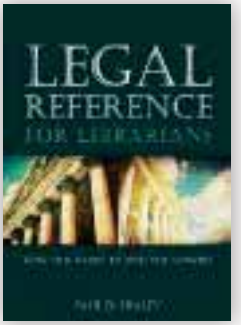
BY Andy Gooding-Call



True Stories of Censorship Battles in America's Public Libraries

Edited by Valerie Nye and Kathy Barco

This nuanced collection provides variations on the standard censorship narrative. Most significant here are situations where a library staff member takes on the unlikely role of self-censor. Two essays about Native collections are also critical reads for anyone dealing with culturally sensitive material. Several essays discuss confrontations so intense they could be traumatic for some readers. As with many other recent books, there are stories of patrons who become so incensed by library material that they target and harass specific librarians in public forums and online. The main takeaway is that strong, established policies and support from upper management are key to overcoming a censorship experience. ALA Editions, 2012. 200 p. $58. PBK. 978-0-8389-1130-3. (Also available as an ebook.)



Legal Reference for Librarians: How and Where to Find the Answers

By Paul D. Healey

In legal reference situations, libraries may decline to answer questions that are out of their depth. This title provides clear, concise definitions of common legal terms and describes the types of library patrons who seek legal information. The problem of liability dominates the first section of the book, a veritable wealth of information about legal questions that many public librarians likely have never encountered. Above all, this guide encourages libraries to lean on the role of information provider rather than subject expert. The book's pointers are concrete and granular, down to sample scripts for patron interactions. It is a must-have title for law libraries, and public reference desks should strongly consider having a copy available as well. ALA Editions, 2014. 232 p. $72. PBK. 978-0-8389-1117-4. (Also available as an ebook.)



Beyond Banned Books: Defending Intellectual Freedom throughout Your Library

By Kristin Pekoll, ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom

While focused on the need for policies to protect free expression, this book also discusses the philosophical impetus behind resisting censorship efforts affecting nonbook materials. Pekoll, assistant director of ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom, does valuable work in applying these documents to emerging challenges in the library landscape. This context makes the book a necessary teaching tool for established library staffers facing new questions. Aside from its recommendation that staff should be trained prior to a censorship event, the book reminds readers to inform ALA when a censorship attempt is made, even if that attempt isn't against a book. ALA Editions, 2019. 144 p. $54.99. PBK. 978-0-8389-1901-9. (Also available as an ebook.) AL

PEOPLE

Announcements

ON THE MOVE



Jessica Aylor joined University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill April 4 as director of development and interim executive director of library development.

April 1 **Christopher Bruhn** became music librarian at University of North Carolina School of the Arts in Winston-Salem.



Floyd Council started as executive director at Jackson (Miss.)–Hinds Library System March 15.



Indiana University Bloomington appointed **Diane Dallis-Comentale** Ruth Lilly Dean of University Libraries effective April 15.



March 28 **L. Blue Dean** joined Duke University Libraries in Durham, North Carolina, as associate university librarian for development.



November 8 **Jennifer Donner** started as district director of Iosco–Arenac District Library in East Tawas, Michigan.

Amanda DuBose started as music and performing arts librarian at Syracuse (N.Y.) University Libraries March 15.

Tamar Evangelestia-Dougherty joined the Smithsonian Libraries and Archives in Washington, D.C., as director in November.

May 23 **Emily B. Gore** became associate university librarian at University of Georgia Libraries in Athens.

Indianapolis Public Library appointed **Nichelle Hayes** interim CEO in March.

Carteret County (N.C.) Public Library System named **Jeanne Holmgren** library director March 25.



Ashley R. Jester joined Boston University Libraries as associate university librarian for research and learning June 1.

Hannah Lindis joined Galva (Ill.) Public Library District as children's librarian April 1.

Rachel Linn became library manager of Villa Rica (Ga.) Public Library February 22.

Dylan Mohr joined Syracuse (N.Y.) University Libraries March 15 as open scholarship librarian.



March 28 **Michelle Fernández Montoya** became supervising librarian for adult materials selection for New York Public Library and Brooklyn (N.Y.) Public Library's BookOps.

May 2 **Ann Moser** started as director of K. O. Lee Aberdeen (S. Dak.) Public Library.

In January Grey Highlands Public Library in Flesherton, Ontario, appointed **Jennifer Murley** CEO.

April 1 **Risë Nelson** became director of diversity, equity, and inclusion at Yale University Library in New Haven, Connecticut.

Boyden Library in Foxborough, Massachusetts, hired **Elisabeth "Libby" O'Neill** as director March 28.

Emily Rapoza joined the Great American Songbook Foundation's Library and Archives in Carmel, Indiana, as director March 14.

In March **Kelsey Solberg** became manager of the Breckenridge (Minn.) branch of Lake Agassiz Regional Library.



Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, appointed **Elaine L. Westbrooks** Carl A. Kroch University Librarian effective July 1.

March 11 **David Whelan** became director of San Diego Law Library.

Lisa Marie Williams started as chief librarian of Oxford County (Ont.) Library April 25.

The New Mexico Supreme Court appointed **Stephanie Wilson** state law librarian March 29.

May 16 **Amy Wisehart** started as director at Northeast Harbor (Maine) Library.

PROMOTIONS



January 12 **Sarah Allis** became content coordinator at Syracuse (N.Y.) University Libraries' Department of Digital Stewardship.

University of Maryland Libraries in College Park promoted **David Dahl** to associate dean for digital services and technologies in March.

In February **Holly Johnson** was promoted to children's librarian at Tilton Library in South Deerfield, Massachusetts.



Kiley Jolicoeur started as metadata strategies librarian for Syracuse (N.Y.) University Libraries' Department of Digital Stewardship February 2.

In Memory



LeMoyne "Lee" W. Anderson, 98, director of libraries at Colorado State University (CSU) in Fort Collins from 1957 to 1985, died February 18. During his tenure at CSU, Anderson led the construction of Morgan Library in the 1960s, expanded the collection from 200,000 books to 1.3 million books, and quadrupled the library staff. He was also responsible for librarians' faculty status at the university. Anderson served as president of the Association of Research Libraries in 1979. Prior to joining CSU, he held positions at Iowa State University in Ames and University of Illinois Chicago.

Suzanne Sherwood Cane, 75, lower school librarian at the Lincoln School in Providence, Rhode Island, for 25 years until her 2000 retirement, died March 29. She previously served as librarian at the Inter-Community School outside of Zurich, Switzerland.

Janice B. Cronkhite, 87, head librarian at Weller Public Library in Waitsburg, Washington, until her 2012 retirement, died March 26. She also served as a librarian at Walla Walla (Wash.) Public Library and Lewiston (Idaho) City Library.

Jeanette Merkl, 96, former medical librarian at Winifred B. Baldwin School of Nursing at Orange (N.J.) Memorial Hospital, died March 23.

Thomas F. Staley, 86, director of the Harry Ransom Center at University of Texas at Austin for 25 years until retiring in 2013, died March 29. As director, he pursued the acquisition of notable archives, including the papers of Norman Mailer, Doris Lessing, Tom Stoppard, James Joyce's translator Stuart Gilbert, and the Watergate papers of Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein. Prior to joining the Harry Ransom Center, Staley acquired literary collections for University of Tulsa's McFarlin Library.



Ross J. Todd, 70, associate professor of library and information science at Rutgers University's School of Communication and Information in New Brunswick, New Jersey, died March 30. A faculty member for more than 21 years, he was research director for the Center for International Scholarship in School Libraries and served as chair of the Department of Library and Information Science from 2014 to 2018. Todd published regularly in numerous journals, particularly on information literacy and information-seeking behavior, school libraries as pedagogical centers, the impact of school libraries on student learning, and evidence-based practice for information professionals. He previously taught library and information science at University of Technology Sydney in Australia.

RETIREMENTS

Wilda Allen retired as CEO of Grey Highlands Public Library in Flesherton, Ontario, in December.

In April **Shirley Arment** retired as director of K. O. Lee Aberdeen (S.Dak.) Public Library after 47 years with the library.

David S. Ferriero, archivist of the United States, retired from the National Archives and Records Administration in April.

Giselle Stevens, head librarian at Newburyport (Mass.) Public Library, will retire in July.

AT ALA

John Agada started as senior fellow in the Center for the Future of Libraries in April.

In March **Ken Bigger** joined the Center for the Future of Libraries as senior fellow.

Mia Blixt-Shehan joined Core as continuing education assistant February 28.

Mark Cummings, editor and publisher of *Choice,* retired April 2.

March 18 **Alisha Dixon,** project coordinator for the Public Policy and Advocacy Office, left ALA.

Emily Gallaugher joined the Public Programs Office as program coordinator February 28.

April 22 **Stephanie Hlywak,** director of the Communications and Marketing Office, left ALA.

Kaileen McGourty joined the Public Programs Office as program coordinator March 14.

The Public Library Association appointed **Mahogany Meeks** program coordinator effective March 14.

April 8 **Macey Morales,** deputy director of the Communications and Marketing Office, left ALA. AL

The Man with a Van

If you find yourself in Portland, Maine, between May and October, Derek Meader will drive you around. In 2018, he started The Real Portland Tour, a sightseeing experience as authentic as they come.

"You're gonna get on a tour with a real local, born and raised," says Meader, who is also reference librarian at Southern Maine Community College in South Portland. "The route literally goes by where I work [and] my high school."

During the two-hour excursion, the tour van stops at three lighthouses, including Spring Point Ledge (pictured). The jocular Meader spouts trivia (for instance, Portland was the birthplace of Prohibition, had the first commercial chewing gum factory, and has burned down four times), poetry (his own spoken word and bars from admired local Henry Wadsworth Longfellow), and even some family history (Meader's sixth great-grandfather was the first colonial officer to die in the Revolutionary War).

Over the years, Meader has had customers from all 50 states and as far away as the North Pole. Memorably, one July, the New England Santa Society boarded his van in red suits and beards. "That was the jolliest group I ever had," he says.

Meader says he's lucky that his jobs complement each other; academic librarianship gives him flexibility to run a summer business and the know-how to verify facts. Still, he never predicted he'd take this path. "My whole life was baseball," says the former Division I collegiate player, who got an MLIS after injuries dashed his big-league dreams. "But I knew that I liked researching … and helping people find things," he says. "It's funny how it all worked out." AL

THE BOOKEND showcases librarians, their work, and their work spaces. For consideration, email americanlibraries@ala.org.

Photo: Michael D. Wilson

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