

# ARKANSAS LIBRARIES

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Arkansas Library Association

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# Arkansas Library Association, 2020



Arkansas Library Association

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**Cover Photo:** Rogers Public Library

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## FROM THE ARLA PRESIDENT: The End of 2020 ... Finally

*Crystal Gates*

*2020 ArLA President*

**H**appy end of 2020! I hope this last of my President's messages comes to you as you celebrate health and home with your loved ones and friends. It is hard to believe how quickly this year flew by, but I sure am glad to see the end of 2020. This year has certainly been filled with challenges for ourselves,

our libraries, our communities, and our association. While we have been forced to adjust to a new normal, ArLA has not been content to sit back and let life happen to it. Our leaders and our members persevered, and thanks to the hard work of many, our association has a bright future!

As I reflect on 2020 and my presidency, I feel proud that we have a long list of accomplishments despite our circumstances. Our Bylaws Committee worked tirelessly to update our bylaws and then our handbook to reflect the changes approved by membership. Our Pandemic Response Committee came together with volunteers from around the state to provide masks to Arkansas library workers in addition to hosting virtual forums to give us a safe space to communicate and share our worries, fears, and hopes. We had a wonderfully successful first



*Gates*

virtual conference. Our country and our profession have seen an increase in activism and a strong commitment to social justice while recognizing how much still needs to be done to create a world welcoming to all.

While there is much about 2020 that I am sure we would all love to forget, this difficult year has shown just how strong our libraries and communities are. It has shown us the strength we each have deep inside ourselves. When my children ran cross country a few years ago, their coach had a theme for them: Finish Strong. He would yell this out as he ran beside them at various points in a race, but loudest as they neared the finish line. This is my message to you now. We are so close to the finish line. Set aside how difficult this year has been. Set aside the trials, pivots, tears, and agony. Dig deep and finish this year strong. Thank someone for their support. Smile at the next person you see. Pay it forward by buying coffee for the person behind you in the sure-to-be long line. Get excited about the new year with its fresh start.

I want to take this opportunity to thank each of you for your continued dedication, commitment, and support. It has been an honor to serve as your president, and I look forward to a successful year ahead with renewed excitement for our profession and our association.

*Crystal Gates is executive director of the William F. Laman Public Library System in North Little Rock, Arkansas. She served as ArLA president in 2020, and will continue her service as past president in 2021.*



*Christmas tree at the Ralph D. Graf Public Library in Mulberry.*



*Lavoris Martin teaches technology (please see article on page 32).*

## FROM THE EDITOR: Ingenuity and Changes

by *Britt Anne Murphy*

*Library Director, Hendrix College*

**S**ome days it's difficult for me to remember that we're still in the same year – 2020. As I cast my mind back to June when our Spring/Summer issue was published, the time seems to stretch longer than six months. There is no “normal” for me – each day is still a mental effort to adjust to constantly fluctuating situations. This year has been the wildest in my lifetime, but I despair to think that for many Americans, these situations of poor health and health care, poverty, racial disparity, and fear of the other are not new, but are normal. Certain segments of our population have been experiencing violence, stress, and hunger for decades, but now many more of us are either witness to this suffering, or are in the position of suffering ourselves.

As librarians and library workers, we are perhaps the most informed in our society about fake news, critical thinking skills, and the power of information. And yet, at least in academic and school libraries, our roles as champions of information literacy have been diminished, as educational institutions look to make cuts in staffing and operations. We *should* be the heroes and heroines of this age of misinformation. Especially in these times where fear is funneled into social media to divert our best instincts into our worst, many of us feel we're in



*Murphy*

an exhausting fight not only against these negative forces, but also simply to justify our existence in our own institutions! We know that words used wrongly can be very powerful – false information about public health initiatives, elections, and our shared history as a nation can have dangerous consequences.

So what does this all have to do with the Fall/Winter issue of *Arkansas Libraries*? I'm hopeful that this issue will demonstrate that our efforts as information professionals and humanists are not in vain. This issue is bursting with ingenuity. We reflect on the success of our first virtual conference, our ingenious fellow library workers who were recognized with awards, and the tenacity of this year's scholarship winner. We hear from academic, special, and school librarians about their creative responses to the tightening of budgets and difficulties of remote learning and services. We get to know and are inspired by libraries and librarians who may have escaped our notice in Pine Bluff and Forrest City. We learn as well about organizational ingenuity – ALA and ArLA both are changing their structures, and in weird ways, the pandemic has made us better at repositioning our associations. We are as inclusive and nimble as we ever have been. Change opens up space for ingenuity.

We know our value, and we are witness to how information, when used as a force of good, can transform the lives of our patrons and the strength of our communities. Be a witness to the stories of your colleagues, and take heart in your own stories. No doubt 2021 will not be normal, but I know our ingenuity will help us through.

*Britt Anne Murphy, the managing editor of Arkansas Libraries, is the director of the Olin C. Bailey Library at Hendrix College.*

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## FACES OF ARKANSAS LIBRARIES: Arlisa Harris: Oh the Places You Will Go!

by Jennifer Wann, *Arkansas State Library*

**A**rlisa Harris loves the beautiful sunsets in the Arkansas Delta and her job as director of the Forrest City Library. Like many folks in the library profession, Ms. Harris came to library work accidentally. A love of books led Ms. Harris to a part time job as a library aide at the Villa Carson Library in Carson, California, in 1986. At the time, Ms. Harris didn't imagine that her journey in librarianship would eventually lead her on a professional trip half way around the world to the Netherlands. Thirty-four years after she took that part-time job as a library aide, Ms. Harris can't imagine not being in librarianship.

As Director of the Forrest City Public Library, Ms. Harris's duties involve both the public service tasks of front-line library staff and the administrative duties that fall to the leader of a complex and ever-changing organization. Ms. Harris can often be found at the circulation desk, helping patrons with questions, or leading the library's book club. She does all of this while monitoring compliance with COVID-19 safety policies, grant writing, managing a six-figure annual operating budget, and preparing for upcoming board meetings. Ms. Harris quips, "It seems at times I have more balls in the air than a circus juggler!"

As a champion of the underdog, Ms. Harris



*Arlisa Harris.*

enjoys librarianship because she is able to empower and enrich people's lives through her work. "My favorite thing about being in librarianship is that we are the champions of the right to access information, in all its forms." Ms. Harris believes strongly in the future of libraries and in the profession's ability to adapt to the changing needs of our communities.

This optimism is reflected in her approach to librarianship. "I have the opportunity every day that I come to work to help someone solve a problem or to address a need that brought them to our library. And every day presents an opportunity to find new ways to expand our reach." Patrons describe the Forrest City Library on social media as "wonderful" with an "outstanding" staff.

Like many small towns in rural Arkansas, Forrest City has lost businesses and industry over the last decade, and the community faces a shrinking tax base. Nevertheless, Ms. Harris expresses optimism for the future of Forrest City and describes a friendly, welcoming community. "People here work hard and are big on family gatherings and church is always well attended. People of this city often disagree on a wide range of issues whether they be social, political, or religious. Nevertheless, at the end of the day, 'One Forrest City, One Community, One Vision,' to borrow a phrase from our mayor."

In addition to the professional tasks of librarianship and the managerial tasks of administration, a public library director's job is inherently political, and requires knowledge of civics and political dynamics on a local and state level. Last year, Ms. Harris completed the two-year LeadAR leadership program through the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service. LeadAR is an intensive, hands-on program designed to broaden participants' understanding of issues and opportunities facing our state and to strengthen their



*Forrest City Library.*

ability to make a difference. The program is rigorous and demanding. It was through LeadAR that Ms. Harris found herself visiting the Netherlands and touring the Peace Palace at The Hague.

Ms. Harris' participation in the LeadAR program is an example of how she goes above and beyond the requirements of the practice of librarianship. The intensive work required by LeadAR may not bring personal remuneration or recognition to Ms. Harris, but makes a big difference in her ability to lead the Forrest City Library through changing economic, political, educational, and cultural landscapes. "This program not only expanded my knowledge of industries and issues in Arkansas but connected me to people and resources that not only benefit me



*Harris at the Peace Palace at The Hague in the Netherlands.*

professionally, but by extension my library. Meeting people and learning about different industries throughout Arkansas was/is invaluable!" One of the benefits of interacting with stakeholders and community leaders outside of the library community is the fresh perspective it provides, and Ms. Harris is committed to providing services and programs that meet the needs of her community.

An example of her innovative leadership is a hot-spot lending program that is being funded by a grant recently awarded to the Forrest City Library. In addition to loaning five hotspots to patrons at no charge, the library will also host four workshops for adults on financial literacy. This is a natural extension of the Forrest City Library's free tax return preparation and filing program provided every year during tax season.

While Ms. Harris may have more balls in the air than a circus juggler, she exhibits an easy-going personality. One of her favorite things about living in Arkansas is the connection to nature we have here. "I love the openness of the state. Coming from a big city, there never seemed to be very many open spaces, unless you traveled several hours from home." Ms. Harris particularly enjoys taking photos of rural landscapes, and most especially sunsets. Librarianship has already led Ms. Harris abroad once; who knows what other places she may go, or more importantly, what ideas she may innovate at the Forrest City Library. Indeed, the Forrest City Library and the library profession in the state of Arkansas are lucky to have Arlisa Harris.

*Jennifer Wann is manager of Library Development at the Arkansas State Library in Little Rock, Arkansas.*

## ASK THE STATE LIBRARIAN:

### Find Your Hygge

*by Jennifer Chilcoat, Arkansas State Librarian*

Every year Oxford Languages, the folks who are responsible for the *Oxford English Dictionary*, selects a Word of the Year, or WotY. Being selected as WotY doesn't mean that the word will automatically be added to the OED for its next edition, and there's no trophy or prize



*Chilcoat*



money. It's a fun thing to follow, however, and to discuss and argue about; turns out there's no shortage of opinions about what words have most dominated our linguistic landscape, kind of like arguing about the best books or most influential albums. The chosen word doesn't have to be a neologism, it just has to have become "prominent or notable" during the last twelve months. There does tend to be a

certain negative bent, however, to the words that are chosen. Recent selections have included words like vape, toxic, and climate emergency. If precedent holds, the WotY for 2020 will be announced sometime between my submission deadline and the time this journal is printed and distributed.\* I can hardly wait to hear their selection in this outrageous year.

But just like a political race, the race for Word of the Year has its also-rans. In 2016, when the WotY was “post-truth,” there was a nominated word that had a decidedly softer, kinder feel to it. It’s a word used in both Danish and Norwegian: “hygge,” pronounced HOO-guh. If you haven’t seen the word before, it may remind you a little bit of the English word “hug.” You might not be wrong; there is speculation that the words might be related, although the etymology is uncertain. Wikipedia’s entry for hygge says that it connotes a “mood of coziness and comfortable conviviality with feelings of wellness and contentment.” Not surprising that hygge came from that part of the world, then – remember that a *Forbes* magazine study determined that residents of Denmark and Norway are among the five who are supposed to be the happiest people in the world!

In this time when so much of what goes on around us seems negative, even toxic, I invite those of you reading this to concentrate a little effort on maximizing your hygge. Or perhaps it’s not so much putting in effort as it is giving in to a little self-indulgence. There’s no doubt that we all need it. I’ve been fortunate to participate in our online meetings with participants in the Arkansas State Library’s Arkansas Library Leadership Institute, or ALL-In. While much of our conversation centers around the day-to-day issues, there’s a deeper and more personal thread of the need for self-care that rises in each meeting. We share tips and tricks, normalize counseling and psychiatric care, and talk about the troubling voices that sometimes invade all of our thoughts. If there’s ever been a time when we need a little hygge, that time is definitely now.

Fall and winter also seem like perfect seasons for the types of activities associated with hygge in



popular culture. Tangible items most commonly associated with hygge include cozy socks, mugs of hot chocolate, fires in the fireplace, soft blankets or throws, and candles. Reading a book can contribute to hygge, of course, but so do watching TV, working a jigsaw or crossword puzzle, taking a hot bath, or eating a warm slice of spice cake. While doing any of these things, you’ll want to have a mug of hot coffee, tea, or cocoa at hand. If you prefer to have something to show for your hygge time, try spending some time with a favorite craft, like painting or knitting. Or you could go to the Arkansas State Library’s Traveler database webpage (<https://www.library.arkansas.gov/resources/traveler-statewide-resources-by-subject/>) and spend some time with Mango languages, learning a new language or brushing up on an old one. While there, you can also check out Public Video Online and let Sister Wendy guide you through an art museum, or watch the opera *Sweeney Todd* with Neil Patrick Harris and the San Francisco Symphony Chorus. Play with Legos. Haul out your old albums or CDs and reminisce. One of my favorite comforting things to do is opening old photo albums and boxes of letters and memorabilia from my family. They always make me feel warm and connected, and remind me that I’ve always been loved.

The world is a beautiful place, but it’s not been at its most hospitable here lately. What’s more, our society loves to tell you that you can’t take a break, there’s so much to do and so much you should be responding to. Turn it off for a while if you can. You deserve a break, you truly do. Whatever evokes your hygge, go find it and embrace it.

*\*For the first time in its history, the Oxford English Dictionary chose not to name a word of the year for 2020. As their website states, “As our Word of the Year process started and this data was opened up, it quickly became apparent that 2020 is not a year that could neatly be accommodated in one single “word of the year,” so we have decided to report more expansively on the phenomenal breadth of language change and development over the year in our Words of an Unprecedented Year report.”*

*From “bushfire” to “acquittal,” “Black Lives Matter” to “cancel culture,” “unmute” to “mail-in,” and “coronavirus” to “lockdown,” find the entire report at <https://pages.oup.com/ol/word-of-the-year-2020>.*

*Jennifer Chilcoat is director of the Arkansas State Library in Little Rock, Arkansas.*



## TWO-YEAR COLLEGE LIBRARIES: What's Up with NWACC Library? Pandemic Edition

by *Leslie Rewis and Shawna Thorup,*  
*Northwest Arkansas Community College*

**N**WACC Library has experienced many new changes over the last six months as we navigated to working remotely and then again to reopening physically in August. Some of these changes included implementing new programs such as LibCal Seats, onboarding multiple new employees virtually, converting library workshops and classes to online, activating holds for the first time in our ILS, and multiple other projects and ventures.

The librarians took advantage of the slower summer and wide range of free offerings to participate in trainings and online seminars, covering topics such as LIS pedagogy chats, managing online work, best practices in information literacy, affordable course materials, and assessment. The pandemic also gave the library many opportunities to be involved with ArLA. Three librarians presented as part of the Reference & Instruction Division's virtual Reference Exchange Day at the end of May. Nithin Lakshmana was elected to a position on ArLA as member-at-large on the Board of Directors.

Every summer since 2016, the librarians have held a summer-long learning circle. The instructional librarians choose a topic and then work together to help improve the instructional program, hone teaching skills, and revise and enhance lesson plans for the upcoming year. This year we did readings on hyflex learning and had a series of discussions on how to incorporate these best practices into our fall offerings. A list of potential courses, sections, and instructors was identified and targeted for library services.

As a result of the learning circles, one of the first big changes we made was creating materials and lesson plans for online teaching and workshops. We transformed the in-person Academic Literacy Workshops into asynchronous modules on Canvas (our Learning Management System) by building on existing lesson plans and creating new videos and digital learning objects to replicate what would usually be done live. In addition, we decided to provide a live-streaming interactive version on Fridays.

We also implemented many of these skills in the live synchronous one-shot classes that the library teaches when invited by faculty. Using Microsoft

Teams or the instructor's video conferencing method of choice, we have taught multiple classes virtually. Some of our community outreach over the last several months included leading workshops and/or teaching classes for Pea Ridge Library, Bentonville High School's International Baccalaureate students, Springdale High School, Farmington High School, and Don Tyson School of Innovation.

As we navigated towards reopening our physical spaces, we began using several new software systems and services to help the library function more smoothly and in a contactless manner whenever possible. A significant change the library made was implementing the new LibCal Seats software from Springshare. Because the library has three physical spaces, for ease of staffing and as a safety precaution, we decided to close the library proper and use a space booking system for our computer lab, the Information Commons, in Benton County. Our Washington County Information Commons had to be staffed by nonlibrary personnel. Closing the library meant moving a lot of furniture around and repurposing some of the other spaces. Using the Seats software, Systems Librarian Brittany Rodgers created a way for students to book their own time in the Information Commons to print, study at a workstation, or use a computer. The system allows the students to check themselves in or out, and it allows for contactless check out. In the event of a Covid-19 infection, it will also facilitate contact tracing. By choosing to operate out of a single location, staff rotate onto campus to minimize risk and potential exposure. They maintain online library hours seven days per week using chat technology, Springshare's LibChat.

In order to do contactless check out for books, we started a "Grab & Go" pick up service for books, DVDs, laptops, and wi-fi hotspots. Under this new system, we changed our practices for checking out computer equipment and wi-fi hotspots to meet the need for students who otherwise did not have access to the technology. Previously, laptops and wi-fi hotspots could only be checked out for seven days. Under 'pandemic operations' students may borrow laptops for the semester and other technology for three weeks. Students can place their "hold" on these items and pick them up in a paper bag from a designated location. In addition, we instituted "Grab & Go" printing in which a student may upload their documents to be printed. Staff notifies them when they are ready for contactless pickup.

In the midst of all these changes, the library also onboarded three new employees. In May, the

team onboarded our new Outreach Librarian, Leslie Rewis, remotely. This is the first-time the team has onboarded a new employee virtually. In September and October, we also onboarded two new staff members, a part-time circulation clerk and a full-time circulation specialist. Training needs were addressed by consolidating documentation on LibGuides, creating screencast videos, and screensharing via video conference.

Morale is kept up through weekly team meetings. While business is addressed, we have tried to maintain our friendly interactions by sharing recommended binge watch titles, good books reads, and pictures of delicious foods eaten. In general, the “new normal” has caused a flattening of the organizational structure. There has been much cross-

training and many small acts of collegial support. In some areas, such as adoption of technology and adaptations for online learning, it feels like we progressed two or three years in a few short months. However, in countless other ways, we feel stuck. Team structures have frayed despite best intentions. Relationships which depend on proximity and time to develop and flourish have gone soft. Enrollment is down 14% this semester, and that is reflected in our workload. It has been a challenging time with both setbacks and successes.

*Leslie Rewis is outreach librarian and Shana Thorup is head of reference and instruction at Northwest Arkansas Community College.*

## Pine Bluff/Jefferson County Opens New Main Library

by *Jana V. Mitchell, Public Relations*

*Pine Bluff/Jefferson County Library System*

The ground was broken on Thursday, October 11, 2018, at 10:00 a.m. for the 32,000-square-foot main library. This beautiful, new two-story facility houses books and periodical collections, multi-purpose meeting rooms, offices, archives, a genealogy department, maker spaces, a computer commons, an open lab tutoring area featuring the latest technology, recording studios, reading/study areas, a museum, a teen loft, and much more. There is even a teaching kitchen where classes will be held to teach children, teens, and adults how to prepare delicious and nutritious meals and snacks.

The Pine Bluff/Jefferson County new Main Library and newly remodeled branch libraries reopened to the public on November 30, 2020, with limited services due to COVID-19. This is

a historic moment for the city of Pine Bluff, as the Main Library, which opened in the downtown area, is the start of new development, which is currently ongoing. Nestled amid walking paths and green space with adequate parking for patrons, this new library is truly a local resource with modern amenities. PBJCL’s mission is to enrich lives, build community, and foster success by bringing people, information, and ideas together. The library will be offering programs designed for the people of the Jefferson County area, including story times, computer courses, education for teens and homeschoolers, and a variety of adult offerings which include cooking classes, to meet the needs of everyone. This will better serve both our residents and visitors from other areas.

The library system opened to the public with extra precautions and sanitation. To start, all library services for the general public are provided on a



limited basis to allow for enhanced cleaning and social distancing. Accommodations include moving public seating and computers six feet apart, limiting the number of people allowed at one time, and limiting access to the library and computer time to 30 minutes per person. To that end, properly worn masks are required to enter and remain in the library.

The library welcomes patrons back and invites you to visit the PBJC Libraries, and see the new

building and renovated branches. We are monitoring the Covid situation closely and plan to begin incrementally resuming additional services soon.

We are more than books. . . come check us out!

*Jana Mitchell is the public relations/genealogy manager at the Pine Bluff/Jefferson County Library System.*

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## LEADERSHIP & SUSTAINABILITY: Can We Keep it Up? A Challenge for All Librarians

by *David Johnson, Fayetteville Public Library*

**D**uring a recent trip to the grocery store I overheard a parent having the following phone conversation:

*"I don't think he can keep it up. I mean, his teacher said he hasn't gotten in trouble for two days in a row, but I don't know if he can sustain it."*

I immediately wondered how many similar conversations were held between my parents when I was in grade school. I also realized the conversation highlighted the various uses of the word "sustainability." In recent years it seems as if "sustainability" has been most frequently used when referring to the environmental and renewable fuel movements. The media and news outlets frequently cover all the many programs, initiatives, and actions designed with the expressed goal of preserving and restoring our environment and transitioning away from fossil fuels towards renewable fuel sources. In short, we have read and heard a lot about the need to implement practices that will "sustain" our environment.

Librarians, too, are familiar with the challenges of "sustaining." We work diligently to ensure that services, materials and programs in the community are "sustainable," and that we are able to "keep it up" when resources are scarce. What we have realized over the past year is that while "keeping it up" under normal circumstances is challenging, it is even more challenging under pandemic conditions. As we head into the winter season with the anticipation of the spread of the pandemic getting worse, there are some areas of our library business in which we need to push hard to ensure we sustain for the better of our patrons.

Clearly, the people in our communities are our priority. For librarians that includes both patrons

and fellow staff members. In order to ensure we can serve others to the best of our ability, we need to first focus on our own individual well-being. We need to follow the simple guidance of getting plenty of sleep, eating well-balanced, nutritious meals, getting some form of mental and physical exercise, and now more than ever, washing our hands, socially distancing, and making good choices in regards to exposing ourselves to high risk viral transmission areas. If we don't take the time to be good to ourselves, how are we going to be able to sustain being good to and for others? By setting positive examples there is also the hope that other staff members will be influenced and take up healthy habits in their own lives. All of which ensures we keep up being our very best when serving patrons.

Under normal circumstances we are continually reviewing our business processes to ensure not only that they are resulting in the best service, but also that they are sustainable economically. Due to COVID-19, many communities are seeing a drop in revenue as a result of delinquency or non-payment of personal property taxes and a shortfall of sales tax revenue. This revenue shortfall is guaranteed to flow through library budgets going into 2021. At the same time, we will have an increased cost in cleaning and sanitizing materials. We are seasoned veterans at making do with less budget than we need. Ensuring that we are maximizing our revenue through careful inspection of our processes will be exceedingly important if we are to keep up a high level of service. Everything should fall under the microscope and be reviewed for efficiency -- operating hours, staffing levels, acquisition choices, and beyond.

It is common to read the library literature and learn about all the creative programs and services that are occurring in library land. COVID-19 has brought us new ways of serving, such as curbside service, streaming story times, Zoom book clubs, grab-and-go book collections, and more. Libraries were quick to adopt these programs and adapt them to their communities. The initial enthusiasm and energy carried these programs, and they were

warmly received by our patrons. As we enter the 11<sup>th</sup> month of the pandemic it is vital that we continue to monitor and evaluate these services to ensure we can sustain the high quality of service our patrons expect. The first wave of excitement and passion that fueled the implementation needs to be fostered and encouraged as we head into the winter. In other words, we must keep it up!

Along the same lines, as we prepare for a holiday season unlike any we have had in our lifetimes, now is the time to continue thinking of new and innovative ways to serve and celebrate. We must be open to exploring fresh ideas, finding creative solutions and inventive ways of helping those in need. Innovation speaks to the heart and soul of

librarianship, and it is during stressful times like this pandemic that we are a bright light for others to follow.

Under the long shadow of COVID-19 our communities need us more than ever, and our city leaders are watching us more than ever. We have sustained service to our communities in a most stressful time. Yet we must keep up our passion and commitment to serving. Yes, sustainability is about doing less harm to the environment. It is also about doing “more good” in our communities, and that is what librarians do best.

*David Johnson is director of the Fayetteville Public Library in Fayetteville, Arkansas.*

## SCHOOL LIBRARIES: Exploring and Engaging in the Time of the COVID-19 Pandemic

*by Dr. Erin Shaw, University of Central Arkansas*

Reflecting over the past several months, I am encouraged by the resilience and perseverance of our school librarians across the state curating resources and collaborating to share resources. Building professional learning communities (PLCs) has remained at the forefront for many school librarians thanks to Paris Middle School Librarian Anne Canada’s leadership. Early last April, Anne coined the hashtag **#bettertogether** to encompass the idea that building collaborative relationships furthers the mission of school librarians to better support learners and learning across the state through weekly virtual PLC meetings. The meetings took place during April through the end of the 2019-2020 school year. Once the new school year began, school librarians found themselves needing information about various situations across the state: how to circulate materials safely; how to create and support virtual, face to face, and blended learning opportunities; various technology issues such as troubleshooting methods to manage devices; and how to include electronic books into resources offered, to name a few. To extend the curation of resources and opportunities for collaboration, the virtual PLC meetings resumed - this time entitled “Elephant Bites” and are now taking place monthly. September and October offered opportunities for school librarians across the state to troubleshoot and brainstorm multiple issues facing our school librarians such as: how to best sanitize and circulate materials; what are the best blended learning



technology tools; and ideas for stress management and self-care.

Circulation of materials has been one of the most complex issues facing our school libraries due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. School librarians are tasked with creating opportunities for students to browse and to have access to materials in the safest, most efficient manner. This has led to the exploration of options including offering instruction in how to find and access ebooks through various apps, such as Overdrive’s Sora <https://soraapp.com/> and Epic <https://www.getepic.com/>. Teaching students and parents to locate and access suitable resources has been a key focal point for many school librarians during the first quarter of the school year.

Turning to blended learning tools, the benefits of screencasting was one topic discussed. In the move to include both face-to-face and virtual instruction, screencasting is one of the best methods to help all learners. A major benefit of screencasting is that the learner is able to view the screencast at a time when it’s best for him/her because learning doesn’t always take place in a synchronous timeframe. Additionally, the learner has the ability to access the information at his/her own pace by pausing and rewatching portions

to ensure content is understood. The most used screencasting platforms include Screencastify <https://www.screencastify.com/>, Loom <https://www.loom.com/>, and Screencast-o-matic <https://screencast-o-matic.com/>. All three resources are free to use and easily learned, so really it is personal preference as to which is best suited to an individual's needs. In the discussions, several examples of screencasting uses surfaced, including virtual library orientations; sharing of new technology resources and tools; instruction in the area of digital citizenship; and story read alouds. Screencasting offers school librarians opportunities to model engaging uses of school library resources.

Stress management and self-care were the final focus topics for the October Elephant Bite meeting. Discussions centered on how to ensure we are taking care of ourselves. Just having a space to discuss the overwhelming issues facing our school librarians and realizing we are not alone has been a huge stress reliever. Self-care opportunities such as meditation and the benefits of yoga were also explored as ideas to alleviate stress. Learning what is best for ourselves shows us ways to cope with whatever the rest of the school year may have in store.

Not only have the virtual monthly PLC meetings continued to offer opportunities to curate and collaborate in spite of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the 2020-2021 school year has also opened new opportunities to explore and engage in learning. If interested in joining the monthly virtual meetings, please contact Anne Canada at [acanada@parisschools.org](mailto:acanada@parisschools.org) to sign up.

In addition to monthly PLC opportunities for our school librarians, the Arkansas Association of

School Librarians (ArASL) has also been active. ArASL Chair and ArLA President-Elect Rachel Shankles has been coordinating efforts to plan a Community of Interest (CI) which will replace ArASL within the new structure of ArLA. The plan is to create the Community of School Librarians and Librarian Educators (COSLLE) by Jan 1st. The new ArASL Chair Quanta Wyatt, Chair-Elect Dr. Kevin Powell along with Rachel, Dr. Jeff Whittingham, and Cassandra Barnett will be organizing a series of free book-related professional development sessions for school librarians that will earn Professional Development credit on a monthly basis. COSLLE's mission will be to organize school librarians and library educators to plan useful book-related programming focused on ways to promote a culture of reading and enhance life-long learning. Proposed sessions for these monthly PD opportunities will be announced soon and sign ups made available. COSLLE will also offer book clubs, book talks, and author events. Please contact Rachel Shankles for more information or to join the group at [shankles08@gmail.com](mailto:shankles08@gmail.com).

Arkansas school libraries are in good hands - school librarians are working to ensure all learners have opportunities to explore and engage in resources, and they are learning through collaborations with friends. To use Anne Canada's most recent hashtag **#dowhatyoulove**.

*Dr. Erin Shaw is assistant professor and Library Media & Information Technologies program coordinator at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway, Arkansas.*

## A Study of Arkansas School Libraries' Budgets

*by Stony Evans*

*Library Media Specialist*

I chose to do a study of Arkansas' school library budgets as a major research project for a two-semester seminar class to complete my Master of Library Science degree at the University of North Texas. Since 2009, I've read articles about how numerous library budgets and staff have experienced major cuts in all types of libraries. I want to share highlights from my final paper. I also want to



*Evans*

thank the 109 participants in my survey instrument from the membership of the Arkansas Association of Instructional Media (AAIM) for making this study possible! Below are the highlights from the original 28-page research paper.

### **Results and Data Analysis**

There were 109 survey participants covering four categories of public schools: elementary, middle school, junior high, and high school. Of the respondents, 43 (39.4%) were from elementary schools, 31 (28.4%) from middle schools, 22 (20.2%) from junior high schools, and 41 (37.6%) from high schools (Figure 1). The largest categories represented by participants were from elementary and high schools.

The responses for library budgets indicated that 54 (49.5%) respondents had experienced cuts

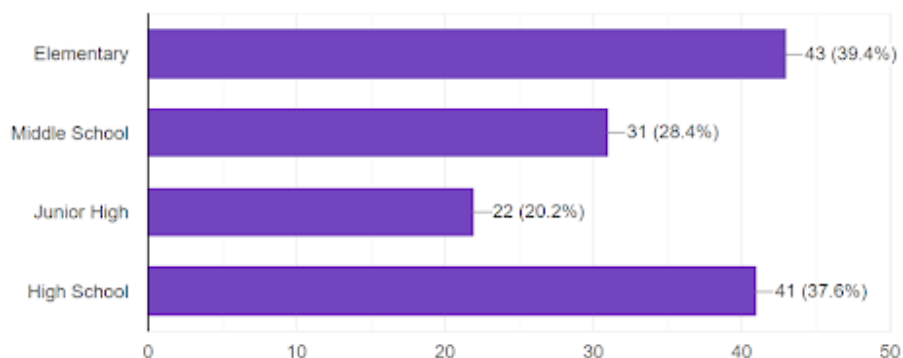
while 55 (50.5%) had not (Figure 2). Sixty-four participants indicated their budget either stayed the same or increased. Fifty-four (84.4%) responded that their budget had not increased and ten (15.6%) revealed their budget increased (Figure 3). According to this sample, it appeared that more schools did not experience budget cuts.

Fifty-seven participants indicated one of five common impacts to their program as a result of budget reductions (Figure 4). Fifty (45.9%) reported a reduced amount of book purchases, thirty-three (30.3%) shared they had to cut the amount of library supplies they buy, sixteen respondents (14.7%) indicated they have reduced the amount of library professional development they attend, seven (6.4%) reported other reductions in their library program, and thirteen (11.9%) reported the reduction of a library aide. According to this portion of the survey, the highest number of participants in the sample population that experienced budget reductions indicated they had to purchase fewer books.

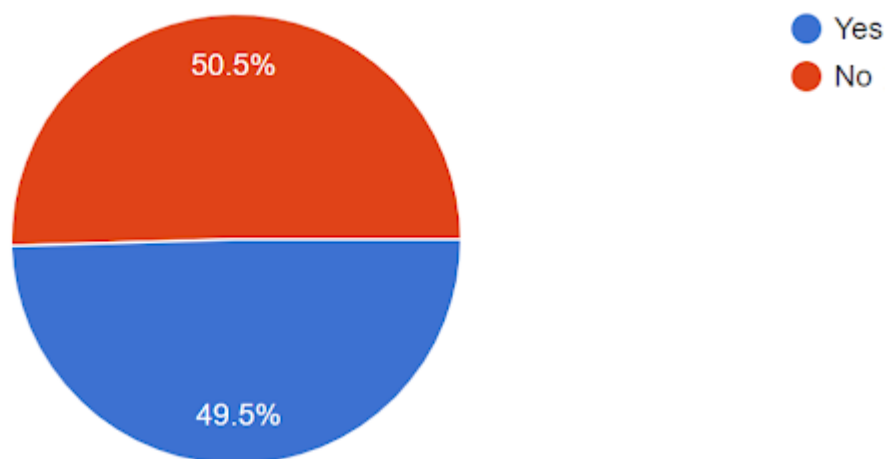
The optional open response question that asked participants to report any reasons they were given

for budget cuts had a variety of responses. Most reasons given by respondents for library budget cuts were due to a drop in student enrollment or a district being in financial distress. Others stated that they were given no reason for budget cuts by their administrators. An additional open response question asked participants to share any specific challenges they have experienced by budget cuts. The top responses provided by participants were that they must do fundraisers or write grants to have additional funding. Other challenges included not being able to purchase all current novels, and cutting periodical purchasing.

A few librarians shared that they use their own money to make purchases. Some librarians indicated that they lost their library aide positions, and the increased workload of not having assistance was a significant challenge. Another optional question asked respondents if they have had a library aide cut or reassigned. Forty-two of 64 participants (65%) on this question suggested that their library aide was pulled from the library frequently and/or that the position was lost altogether. Twenty-eight



**Figure 1:** Survey Participant Categories



**Figure 2:** Library Budget Reductions

respondents shared their email addresses to show interest in participating in an interview to provide additional information.

A five-question interview was sent to all 28 participants on March 1, 2020. Fifteen participants responded to the interview, which consisted of one multiple choice question and four open response questions. The participants were from seven elementary schools, four middle schools, one junior high, and three high schools (Figure 5). Librarians described their budgets in one of the responses. The results were from one extreme to another. One librarian indicated that there was no budget provided for the library program. Another participant shared the allocated budget was approximately \$20,000. Several other librarians shared their budget allocation breakdowns. The mean budget shared by the 13 school librarians who answered the open response question about their current allocated funds for 2019-2020 was \$7,908. In another question librarians shared how their budgets had changed over the years. Some experienced decreases while others stayed the same and/or increased. Most individuals

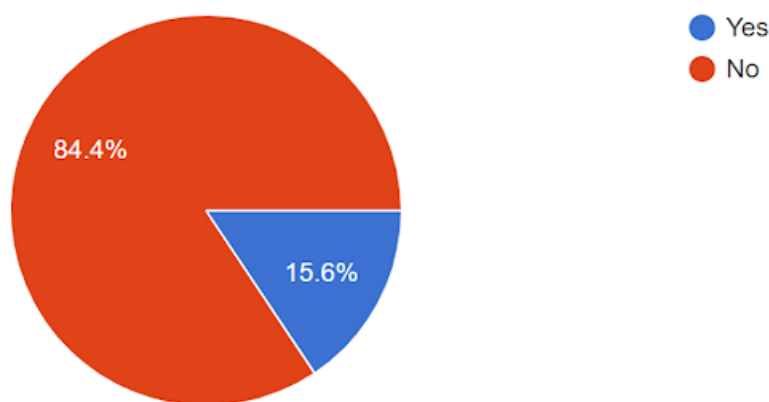
shared that their budget funding was based on the number of students enrolled in the school.

In another question, librarians reported how they have supplemented their budget money. Most participants indicated they either applied for grants or that they hosted school book fairs to supplement their library budgets. Some of the grants included organizations like PledgeCents, Donors Choose, and Wal-Mart community grants. Some librarians suggested they sell other items like candy, candy grams, and other similar items to raise needed funds. One librarian indicated they depended partially on donations from the community for fundraising. One participant shared that they spent their own personal funds when necessary to purchase needed items for the library.

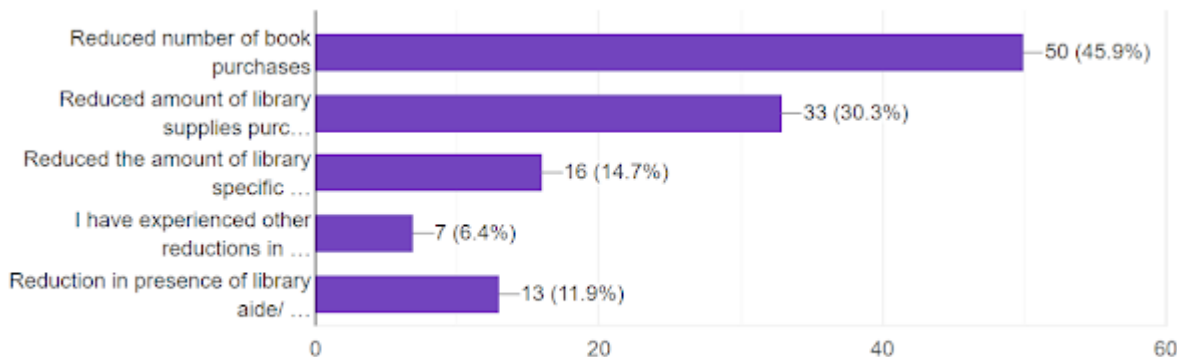
### Discussion/ Practical Implications

*Research Question 1: How have budget cuts impacted Arkansas' school libraries?*

Respondents indicated that 49.5% of the schools in the sample had experienced budget reductions (see Figure 2). I expected that this number would



**Figure 3:** Budget Increases



**Figure 4:** Budget Reduction Impact

have been higher based on the review of literature presented in this paper. I also assumed that the results of this sample reflected the entire state, in that just under 50% of public-school libraries have experienced cuts in their budgets. In terms of how these cuts have impacted the sample of schools that participated, participants indicated many effects. The most disturbing consequences indicated by school librarians were that they could not purchase as many books with reduced budget funds. This is a problem that directly impacts students of all ages. A few librarians suggested that they could not purchase the newest novels in a series because of less funding. In addition, school librarians shared that they had to hold book fairs as a means of compensating for reduced budget money. Librarians also shared that they have applied for grants for additional funding. A few respondents indicated that they had to use their own money to make purchases for students. The survey respondents revealed that budget cuts had made it more difficult to make purchases.

*Research Question 2: What do school librarians perceive the long-term results of budget reductions will be to their programs?*

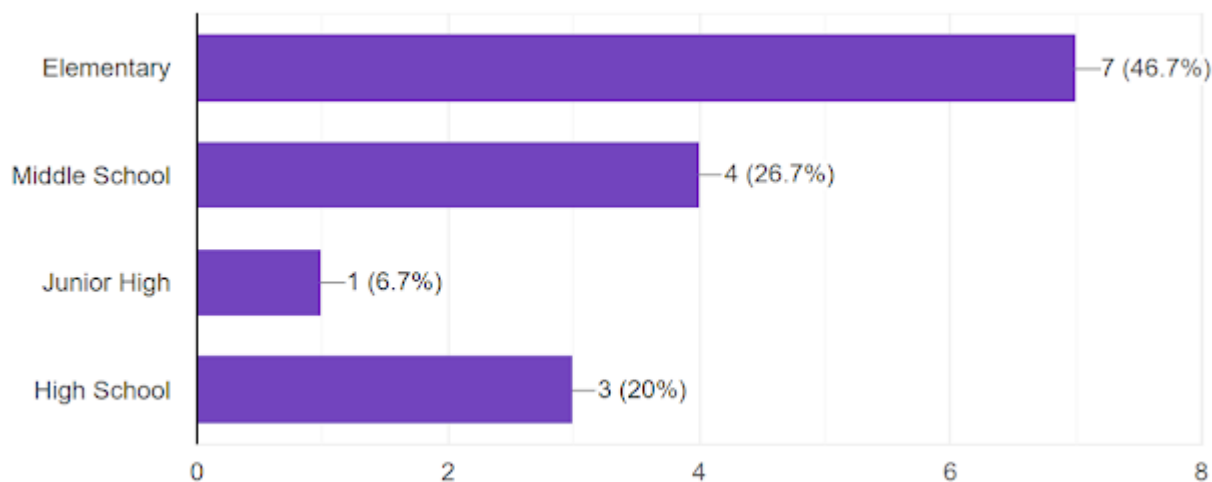
The personalized responses to this question came through in the open response spaces of the survey and interview. One participant stated that the current budget was not enough to purchase technology for the library in addition to books. This librarian stated: *I feel that there is no way to have both technology and books with our current budget. For a true 21<sup>st</sup> century library, I need to have both.* Another librarian stated: *Especially in the elementary, we touch and see EVERY student. We offer so many options beyond check-in/ out. Adequately or inadequately funding the library has reciprocal effects on the children.* One librarian discussed how

it was necessary to use personal money when library funds are exhausted: *I am sure every teacher says the same thing, but a lot of what I use comes out of my pocket. When a kid needs the 3<sup>rd</sup> book to a series and I am out of money, I just order it myself.*

While the question was not answered specifically for long-term impacts, the struggles of these few examples were evident. Budget reductions impacted school librarians directly since some used personal money to make purchases. Others have made hard decisions about balancing purchases between library books and to make essential technologies available to their learning communities. In addition, other questions in the study revealed that budget cuts were causing some librarians to fall behind in their library professional development.

*Research Question 3: Have Arkansas' school library support staff been reduced?*

Forty-two of 64 participants revealed that their library aides were either pulled from the library more than in the past or they lost their aides altogether. Some librarians indicated that the reduction of library aide support had made it more difficult to do their jobs. There were many responses to the reasons other than budget reductions. One librarian indicated that the aide was pulled for dyslexia support in the building. Another shared that the aide position was never filled when the previous aide retired. Several respondents shared that aides were pulled for hall/facility duty throughout the day while others stated the aide was frequently pulled to cover classes for absent teachers. One librarian wrote: *The loss of the library aide has had the largest impact. I spend more time doing secretarial duties and have less time to devote to activities that directly impact students - researching books, developing programming, book-talking, collaboration with teachers.* Another



**Figure 5:** Interview Participant Categories



participant reported: *I no longer have a para so I have cut back on the “extras” I would do (newsletter, free-flow times, reading incentives, etc.). I also have come to rely more on book fair funds.* Another librarian shared that it was difficult to collaborate with teachers since the library aide was only part-time. The results of this study indicated that a portion of the sample had experienced various reductions of support staff. It was uncertain if these reductions of support were a direct result of budget cuts since there were different reasons presented by survey participants.

*Research Question 4: Are Arkansas school librarians allocated budget funds to allow attendance at relevant professional development opportunities?*

This question was not clearly answered in the study. Sixteen school librarians indicated that they had to reduce the amount of their library specific professional development. In retrospect, this question should have been directly asked in either the survey or follow-up interview form. At least it was known that of the 54 librarians that indicated they had experienced budget reductions, 14.7% also had to reduce their school library professional learning. In the state of Arkansas, this would likely mean reducing their participation in the Arkansas Association of Instructional Media conference, the Arkansas Library Association conference, or local Arkansas education cooperative library specific trainings throughout the school year.

### **Conclusion/ Next Steps**

This study only answered a few questions after it was completed. It also created many more additional questions to be investigated. One thing is suggested

as a result of the study: school librarians must advocate for their programs and report their activities to add value to both their positions and programs. Clear communication with administrators and other stakeholders is key. The responses from participants revealed that many school librarians are innovative and have a “can do” attitude. These educators find ways to do more with less by spending additional time seeking grants, sponsoring book fair events, and even using their own personal funds to provide for those they serve. Perhaps if school library stories are told via social media and other outlets, perceptions can be changed. Such increased communication of library program impact and value may help solve some of the budget issues revealed by the participants of this study. There is much more to learn and investigated where school library budgets are concerned. This will be an even more relevant subject for study following the overall impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on school districts, economics, and how libraries will function in an uncertain future.

*Stony Evans worked as a library media specialist at Bethel Middle School in Bryant, Arkansas, and Lakeside High School in Hot Springs, Arkansas. His main focus was on making the Library Media Center (LMC) the hub of activity in the school. He enjoyed finding ways to team with teachers and students to present instruction in new ways using library media technology and services, and his goal was always to create lifelong learners through literacy and technology. Reach Stony at [stony12270@gmail.com](mailto:stony12270@gmail.com) or follow his blog at <https://librarymediatechtalk.blogspot.com>.*

## **TRAINING: TIPS, TOPICS AND TECHNIQUES**

### **Encouraging Staff and Supporting Learning During Lean, Busy Times**

*by Sarah Sewell, Central Arkansas Library System*

**W**e’ve all been there at some point or are there right now...budgets are tight; staffing is short; workloads and community needs are increasing. What are some ways directors, managers, and supervisors can recognize staff work that goes above and beyond, and encourage staffers interested in learning more, when



*Sewell*

it seems like everyone’s caught in “survival mode”?

### **Employee Recognition**

Nothing beats verbal or written recognition and a sincere “Thank You” from both one’s manager or one’s coworkers. Adopting a peer-nominated recognition/acknowledgement method is an easy, low-cost way of doing this. It may be called different things, such as “Cheers to My Peers,” “Caught Doing Good,” “Wow Awards,” etc., but having an easy way for staff to express thanks and to acknowledge when their coworkers tackle a big project, handle a stressful situation, or routinely have a great attitude at work, may have a positive effect on overall morale. This can be something simple such as including staff shout-outs in a staff newsletter, email, or in a central spot in your workroom, or it could be tied to monthly or quarterly small prize drawings. Handwritten notes of appreciation on their annual work anniversary dates or during a designated

Employee Appreciation Day or Week are other low-cost options to personally thank employees for their time, skills, and energies. Adding in fun contests or special treats can't hurt either!

### **Encouraging Professional Development**

Regularly sharing learning opportunities can go a long way in the betterment of the entire organization, as well as addressing needs of those staffers interested in advancement. Resources such as **WebJunction** ([www.webjunction.org](http://www.webjunction.org)) and **InfoPeople** ([www.infopeople.org/](http://www.infopeople.org/)) routinely offer free webinars on a host of library-related topics with recordings archived for later viewing. WebJunction also offers helpful topic guides on everything from organizational management to outreach and marketing. In addition, **GCFLearnFree** ([edu.gcfglobal.org](http://edu.gcfglobal.org)) is an excellent resource for anyone wanting to beef up their technology and workplace skills. And, for those in programming roles, **Programming Librarian**, a website of the American Library Association's Public Programs Office ([www.programminglibrarian.org](http://www.programminglibrarian.org)), is loaded with creative ideas, tips, and other resources, such as blogs and

links to past webinars.

Another professional development option, depending on the size of your organization, is offering some type of internal mentorship program for staff. This could be structured either formally or very informally. Either way, pairing a staffer eager to learn more, who is perhaps new to your organization or has recently taken on a new role within your agency, with a more experienced staffer could be a win-win. The learning staffer would be given an opportunity for additional support, and the mentor would have the opportunity to share their expertise and institutional knowledge.

I'm interested in hearing about ways in which you and your organizations recognize and encourage your staffers, as well as different approaches toward professional development. Feel free to share your ideas with me. Thank you!

*Sarah Sewell is staff development coordinator at the Central Arkansas Library System in Little Rock. You can reach her at [ssewell@cals.org](mailto:ssewell@cals.org) or (501)918-3026.*

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## **Open Educational Resources in the Time of COVID: Awareness Advocacy and Advancement**

### *Tips for OER Advocates*

*by Elaine Thornton and Stephanie Pierce  
University of Arkansas Libraries*

**R**esources (OER) by library professionals has increased in the last decade. The June 2018 issue of *College and Research Libraries News* named textbook affordability and open educational resources (OER) one of the top academic library trends of 2018 (Research Planning and Review Committee, ACRL, 2018). The global COVID-19 pandemic has fueled even more awareness of the need for greater access to openly licensed and freely available educational materials (Van Allen & Katz, 2020; Wetzler, 2020). Last spring, both students and instructors faced course materials access issues due to shuttered campus libraries and the inability to retrieve print course reserves.

What is happening on your campus with OER? Is your library supporting OER advocacy? Is your college or university considering an OER/affordability incentive program for faculty? These tips offer guidance for those just getting started and provide ideas that can be employed to help grow already established campus OER programs.

### **Build A Team: Find Campus Partners!**

Academic libraries and librarians are often at the forefront of OER advocacy on many campuses. It is essential to have an engaged and dedicated team. The library may begin as the foundation, but it is vital to acknowledge the need to expand OER advocacy beyond the purview of the library. OER initiatives should be a campus-wide effort. Partnering with other campus units can ensure input and support from a broad range of campus stakeholders. Accomplishing this goal is often easier said than done, but targeting stakeholders whose missions and goals align with your program is a great way to begin your outreach. Typically, departmental and unit goals relate to your institution's overarching goals, so offering a way to showcase how you can combine forces that support your institutional objectives is an excellent way to gather partners. In this section, we offer some tips for determining valuable partners, collaborating with them, and navigating these interdepartmental relationships.

Who would make a good partner? The answer to this question might be different on each campus. For example, at a "mid-sized public land grant university," the university libraries established

a partnership early on with the campus distance education unit. This academic unit houses most of the instructional designers on campus and has the financial means to help fund OER initiatives. Other academic libraries have had great success partnering with faculty development and centers for teaching. Once the initial partnership was established, the OER team began to explore other potential organizational partners. Successful, event-specific alliances were formed with the provost's office, the faculty development office, the teaching and faculty support unit, student government, and even individual academic departments. The critical tip is to cast a broad net in your search for campus partners.

### **Get Connected: Reach out to the Open Community**

Starting in a new role or building a new program from scratch can often feel overwhelming and intimidating, especially if you must do it on your own. Where does one start? How do you begin to learn about this new area of responsibility? As is the case with many areas of librarianship, in terms of professional development and networking, joining listservs provides accessible entry points. Many librarians taking on new duties that include open education, turn to listservs and newsletters because they offer an easy way to enter a community. Novice practitioners can use these resources to familiarize themselves with the hot topics, to learn about new developments and resources, and to find potential colleagues who can advise and with whom they can collaborate. Listservs or email discussion lists hosted by the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) and the Community Colleges Consortium for OER (CCOER), allow subscribers to weigh in on issues, seek advice on policies and program initiative plans, share useful ideas, and generally connect with other open education community members across the country and globe (Fiske, 2003). The SPARC listserv, *Libraries & OER Forum*, and the CCOER listserv, *CCOER Advisory*, are open to anyone interested in joining.

Listservs offer an easy way to connect and engage. They are accessible to most library professionals because all you need is an email address to sign up with them. However, some listservs may be limited to members of specific organizations. One example of this is the Open Education Network (OEN, formerly the Open Textbook Network (OTN)) members' listserv. While it provides a valuable forum for disseminating information and discussing OER related issues, only designated individuals from member institutions may participate in the forum. For those with access, this is a valuable resource. The downside of listserv participation is that if the listserv has many active participants, then a subscriber's email inbox can

quickly become inundated with email messages. Many listservs allow you to specify the frequency of which you receive messages to help combat this issue. For example, rather than getting every post and response as a single email message, a subscriber may select to receive conversations as a daily digest sent at a later time.

If subscribing to a listserv does not sound appealing, signing up for newsletters is another option to become keyed into community discussions. These arrive less frequently, typically weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly, and contain useful updates on campus and governmental policies, new resources, projects, community news, and additional professional development opportunities. Both SPARC and the Rebus Community disseminate newsletters to which both new and seasoned open education librarians should consider subscribing. Many leaders in the open education community contribute to these newsletters.

Utilizing social networking sites, like Twitter, is a third way to begin to connect with peers. Twitter was founded in 2006 and is a microblogging social network service where users send Tweets (messages containing a maximum of 280 characters). Librarians have already proved proficient Twitter adopters. Some utilize Twitter to communicate and network with colleagues with whom they share professional interests. For example, medical librarians (*#medlibs*), data librarians (*#datalibs*), and those interested in critical librarianship (*#critlib*), and information literacy (*#infolit*) regularly connect on Twitter. Open education professionals and practitioners have also taken to Twitter to engage with each other. They use the app to share ideas, seek guidance, promote projects and programs, and build a community of support and practice (Ford & Tolmie, 2016). Popular hashtags, labels assigned to conversations using the pound sign, used to communicate about open education and open pedagogy issues include *#opened*, *#oer*, *#digiped*, and *#openped*. These hashtags can be used to follow conversations surrounding a topic, event, or even be used as a call for assistance.

A final way to connect and grow professionally is to attend conferences, which many consider the most beneficial form of librarian professional development (Harrison, 2010). Conference attendance provides unique opportunities to network. It allows participants to learn about current trends, discover new resources, and to have face-to-face interactions with colleagues from other institutions. General conferences, such as the American Library Association's Annual Conference, bring together librarians from all areas of librarianship. This event provides attendees with opportunities to attend interest-specific sessions, including sessions focused on open education issues. Session topics

may be directed at new practitioners, or they may be more suited for more advanced professionals. Attending subject-specific conferences, like the Open Education Conference and Open Education Global Conference, provides an environment to interact with professionals and practitioners from across the realm of open education, from faculty and librarians to instructional designers and educational technologists. The programs at these conferences are created around and focus on a wide array of issues and trends surrounding open education. By attending an open education-focused conference, librarians are allowed to select sessions that might address their immediate developmental needs. These events provide attendees with the opportunity to interact with similar stakeholders and program collaborators to identify potential areas to build upon in local initiatives. Due to COVID-19, many of these conferences have moved online to continue to provide the open community with a venue to connect, learn, and share open education knowledge and resources.

### Acquire Knowledge: Learn More

Educate yourself so that you can share your knowledge with others. Smith and Lee (2017) stress the need for librarians venturing into OER roles to increase their understanding of teaching and learning, digital tools and technology, and especially “the language and culture of open education” (p. 110). Several formal and informal learning options are available.

Formal professional development programs explicitly aimed at librarians interested in open education and open licensing have recently emerged. SPARC offers an excellent [Open Education Leadership Program](#). Participants begin in the fall online, meet in person at the annual Open Education Conference, and work as a cohort completing online course work and projects. The program encourages participants to expand their knowledge and leadership skills by planning and implementing an OER project for the benefit of the open community and the participant’s institution. The OEN also offers a Certificate in OER Librarianship. The program, based at the University of Minnesota, was initially funded by a

Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the inaugural cohort launched in April of 2019. The program operates as a cohort model and includes online coursework, followed by an in-person three-day boot camp, and requires the completion of a campus action plan. The Library Juice Academy also offers an introductory OER course. The online asynchronous course exposes participants to the basics of OER, building support on campus, and culminates with a final project focused on creating an OER initiative. Finally, for those seeking to advance knowledge of open licensing, the Creative Commons Certificate program is another option. The ten-week online program includes instruction, cohort discussions, and assigned projects. There are fees associated with each of these programs. The SPARC program and the OEN certificate program both offer scholarships to help defray the cost of participation.

Several options also exist for self-directed informal learning. SPARC, the OEN, and Creative Commons all offer free access to openly licensed course contents. Anyone interested in the program curriculum can view and study the materials without formally enrolling in the course. The Affordable Learning Georgia website also offers self-study resources in the form of an online tutorial. Self-directed learning opportunities are beneficial to new OER librarians who might not have the financial or institutional support to participate in formal programs. It also allows individuals the flexibility to learn at their own pace. See **Table 1** for a list of additional self-directed OER learning resources.

Table 1: OER Self-Study Tutorials and Resources

Tutorial or Resource	Creator/ Institution	Web Location
OER Tutorial	Algonquin College	<a href="https://www.algonquincollege.com/oer/course/">https://www.algonquincollege.com/oer/course/</a>
Tutorial 1: Finding Free and Open Resources	Affordable Learning Georgia	<a href="https://www.affordablelearninggeorgia.org/help/finding-1">https://www.affordablelearninggeorgia.org/help/finding-1</a>
The OER Starter Kit	Abby Elder, Iowa State University	<a href="https://iastate.pressbooks.pub/oerstarterkit/">https://iastate.pressbooks.pub/oerstarterkit/</a>
The OER Toolkit	The Learning Portal, College Libraries Ontario	<a href="https://tlp-lpa.ca/oer-toolkit/home">https://tlp-lpa.ca/oer-toolkit/home</a>
Understanding OER	Mike Daly and Phylise Banner, SUNY OER Services	<a href="https://innovate.suny.edu/sunyoercommunitycourse/understanding-oer/">https://innovate.suny.edu/sunyoercommunitycourse/understanding-oer/</a>
Open Education Leadership Program	SPARC	<a href="https://sparcopen.org/our-work/open-education-leadership-program/curriculum/">https://sparcopen.org/our-work/open-education-leadership-program/curriculum/</a>
Certificate in OER Librarianship	OEN	<a href="https://canvas.umn.edu/courses/178527">https://canvas.umn.edu/courses/178527</a>
Creative Commons Certificate	Creative Commons	<a href="https://certificates.creativecommons.org/about/certificate-resources-cc-by/">https://certificates.creativecommons.org/about/certificate-resources-cc-by/</a>

Additionally, check out the *OER: A Field Guide for Academic Librarians*. This openly licensed resource offers foundational knowledge, case studies,

and advocacy strategies for college and university librarians. The book was written as a guide for aspiring OER champions.

### **Spread the Word on Campus: Outreach, Market, & Publicize!**

Be prepared to talk about OER at any time or place. As an advocate, your role includes educating the campus about OER. According to Colson, Scott, and Donaldson (2017), faculty often reject OER because they lack basic understanding and have limited information on the topic. Locating useable resources and distinguishing between open resources and free resources also proves frustrating for teaching faculty. Once you have started to build your knowledge of OER, devise strategies for disseminating information. If you lead OER initiatives on your campus, publicizing them is a must. Plan to use several means to spread the word. Approaches to this might include basic outreach strategies, publicity through partners, and social media campaigns.

First, capitalize on every opportunity presented. Always be prepared to offer a brief overview of OER, its value, and a quick synopsis of the programs underway on your campus. Creating and memorizing some basic elevator pitches or speeches will ensure readiness when unexpected opportunities emerge. A good elevator speech lasts no longer than sixty seconds and will contain the following elements:

- Introduction and attention statement
- Identification of your problem
- An explanation of your solution to fix your problem
- An example of the solution's impact or why your solution works
- A call to action

*Nursing Open* editor, Roger Watson (2017) contends that the elevator pitch is useful for extolling the value of publishing in open access journals. Similarly, this approach can help encourage faculty to consider exploring and adopting OER in the courses they teach. Use the pitch to share information at faculty luncheons, when chatting with student leaders, or when meeting with individual teaching faculty. Also, consider partnering with other librarians on your campus who meet regularly with the teaching faculty. Subject liaisons often attend department meetings in the colleges. These occasions provide excellent opportunities to make brief announcements about OER initiatives or to provide printed resources on the topic. Other venues might include new faculty orientations and faculty senate meetings.

Find ways to partner with established campus entities to spread the word about OER events and activities. Faculty development and faculty teaching support centers can provide valuable access to faculty email lists. Department chairs

and college deans who regularly communicate with their faculties also provide inroads to efficient dissemination of information. Your student government bodies can also be powerful campus allies. Student governments can interact with other students in unique ways. For example, they can run #TextbookBroke campaigns, talk to student clubs, and advise the campus OER team. Student government leaders also often meet regularly with campus administrators. They may have regular contact with the college or university's president or chancellor. As students, they sit in campus classrooms and interact directly with faculty, giving them direct access to the very people OER advocates target.

Additionally, campus news outlets provide a useful mechanism for publicizing OER programs, resources, and events. Finally, use social media to your advantage. Official library social media channels can share information with followers. Library tweets and posts are often retweeted or reposted by multiple campus feeds. Social media utilized in this manner offers an ideal mechanism for reaching stakeholders.

With many campuses limiting in-person gatherings, or even operating fully remote, in the interest of mitigating the spread of COVID-19, outreach efforts should be adapted to virtual settings. Holding regularly scheduled virtual open office hours via Zoom or Microsoft Teams for interested campus members to seek more information about OER, your campus' efforts, and ask questions is an easy to engage your stakeholders. If you normally hold in-person workshops, don't cancel! Adapt to host them via virtual meeting software. These can be geared towards the full campus if you are looking to spread general awareness or discipline specific sessions showcasing targeted resources. The most important thing to remember when designing a marketing and outreach plan for your OER initiatives is to create strategies that are adaptable to any circumstance or budget so that you do not lose momentum.



*Masked student working at computer.* Photo by Engin Akyurt on Unsplash.

### **Review, Revise, Re-Envision: Stay Agile**

Realize that reviewing, revising, and re-envisioning your OER initiatives, programs, processes, and procedures is an ongoing process. The following tips provide some concluding thoughts that can aid novice OER advocates in focusing their energy in positive directions. These strategies encourage OER leaders to overcome bumps and failures and to celebrate the victories, no matter how small.

**Review.** Regularly review OER goals, advocacy approaches, and program documentation. Set aside a few weeks every year to review the previous year's processes. Consider what worked and what did not work. Review progress made. Modest growth is good progress. Reviewing allows us the opportunity to take inventory so that we can revise when and where needed. Tracking adoption numbers and student savings provide documented support for the program. This process might include reviewing program participants' final reports, examining student surveys regarding their opinions of the OER used in their courses, or revisiting events such as student-led #textbookbroke campaigns. Reviewing is also a time to gather the "stories" that put human faces on the numbers.

**Revise.** Revising can strengthen advocacy initiatives, programs, and strategies. Consider OER advocacy a realm of ongoing learning. In the beginning, potential advocates learn the basics of OER. As confidence builds, knowledge moves on to encompass more advanced aspects of openness, such as open pedagogy. OER advocacy requires a commitment to lifelong learning. Much of that learning comes from doing. We try processes and launch initiatives. We review them and often revise them. One can never prepare for every situation that arises or changes that may occur on campus which might necessitate or encourage program changes or revisions. Often, these revisions allow us to re-envision or re-imagine our campus OER goals.

**Re-envision.** Review and implement changes, then re-envision program goals, strategies, and processes. Reviewing and revising lead to re-envisioning. This process can help advocates and campus OER leaders determine program impact, and adjust the course of the program as needed. Re-envisioning allows us to recommit to the principles of OER and keeps progress moving forward. After questioning, changing, and refocusing OER efforts, renewed pledges, strategies and practices help move programs forward. Re-envisioning provides a means for overcoming the failures and celebrating the successes.

**Agility.** Nothing has tested the agility of higher education like the COVID-19 world pandemic. Students and faculty were asked to shift their methods of teaching and learning from face-to-face to virtual essentially overnight this past spring.

Access to physical and print learning materials was not possible as libraries and campuses moved to remote work in order to protect their employees. Teaching faculty had to take a crash course on digital teaching pedagogy. At the same time, publishers jumped at the chance to provide "free access" to their materials in response to the crisis. Free access to textbooks through Redshelf or Vital Source has now disappeared, and faculty are again facing decisions about selecting learning resources that support their teaching. The pandemic has allowed librarians and other open education practitioners to showcase how classes utilizing OER can help faculty and students more easily navigate the transitions between face-to-face and digital learning. Open resources can also serve as a counter to the proliferation of inclusive access or automatic textbook billing programs that some institutions and faculty have turned to for educational materials available at some savings over new print resources (Vitez, 2020). These programs however, often jeopardize student privacy and limit opt-out abilities. Encouraging these initiatives also helps address textbook affordability issues, which have been exacerbated by the economic impacts of the global pandemic.

### **Conclusion**

The tips shared here are not meant to be prescriptive or rigid. They are shared simply as suggested ideas to help new OER advocates and leaders begin their journey or strengthen fledgling initiatives. Remember, you do not have to take the journey alone. Build teams in your library and on your campus, and get involved in the OER community through listservs and conferences. Increase your knowledge of OER either through participation in formal programs or through informal self-study. Communicate OER goals, programs, and initiatives to your campus community. Advocacy requires educating those (the students) who benefit from OER, as well as those (teaching faculty) who have the power to adopt or create OER for the benefit of these students, and campus administration who can show support for faculty engaged in these efforts. Openness is about sharing: sharing knowledge, sharing tools, and sharing ideas with other interested parties. Finally, do not be afraid to review, revise, and re-envision your efforts.

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*Stephanie Pierce is an assistant librarian and head of the Physics Library at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. At the University of Arkansas, Stephanie works to advocate and promote the use of open educational resources as a member of the OER Team in addition to organizing the regionally-based Open Education Southern Symposium. She is also involved in open education nationally through various committee work.*

## ADMINISTRATION AND

### MANAGEMENT:

#### Reopening at CALS During the Pandemic: Our Covid Response, Part 2

by Carol Coffey, Central Arkansas Library System

**D**uring the first three months of the pandemic, the Central Arkansas Library System offered limited curbside service at most of our branches, providing holds pickup and printing

along with phone and chat assistance and virtual programming. While the response from the public was positive, we knew we were not meeting the needs of many of our patrons, especially those who use the library for internet access and computer use. Rather than open up all at once, we began experimenting at a couple of locations with making socially distanced, low contact computer access available. It wasn't perfect because we were unable to provide the level of assistance many users need, but it did begin to fill the gap.

*Arkansas Libraries, Fall-Winter 2020 21*

While we experimented, we began making plans to reopen for limited services, including computer use and browsing the collection inside the branches. Beginning in June, we rolled out our plan over several weeks, opening a few new branches each week. The libraries opened three days per week for limited hours with a limited number of patrons at a time to allow for social distancing. Some locations opened Monday, Wednesday, and Friday while others opened Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. All locations provided one or two morning hours for at-risk populations, and afternoon hours from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm for everyone else. Patrons were encouraged to make an appointment, although walk-ins were welcomed as long as there was an open slot. Staff members greeted each person at the door, asking if they were experiencing symptoms of the virus and reminding them of the rules, which included a limit on the amount of time each person was allowed to stay. Everyone was (and still is) required to wear a mask or other face covering that covers the nose and mouth.

We anticipated complaints about the rules, including the time limits, and we received some, but we found that most people, especially those browsing the collection, were happy to grab their materials and leave the building in plenty of time. It wasn't long before we were able to relax the rules on the number of patrons that could be in some of the buildings because social distancing was easier in those locations due to the arrangement of the buildings. We removed a lot of the public seating options and either blocked off some of the computers or spaced them out in those locations where we created temporary computer labs.

While providing these limited services, each location continued to offer curbside pickup of holds and print jobs six days per week from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm. No meeting room or study room/carrel use was permitted, and we continued with virtual programming only. Each month saw an increase in circulation of physical items, although digital circulation continued to dominate our circulation statistics.

Once we reached September and the reopening of schools, we realized that we could no longer justify keeping the branches closed. We also heard from several patrons who were unable to use our services because our open hours did not coincide with their schedules. The next stage in our reopening process was to open most branches Monday through Saturday, 9:00 am to 6:00 pm, matching our curbside pickup hours. This presented a challenge for staffing

even after we brought furloughed and work-share staff members back, because most positions that had come open during the past few months had not been filled. We reassigned some staff, moving them to other locations where the need was greater than that at their previous work assignment. In a few cases where management positions were open, interim managers were assigned from among the staff. We stopped screening patrons at the door for symptoms, which also freed up staff to complete other tasks, such as quarantining and checking in returned materials. September also saw the first month in which our physical circulation reached 50% of our total circulation for the first time since the pandemic began.

From the time we began accepting returned materials, we had been quarantining those items for four days before checking them in, based on our interpretation of the results from the REALM study (<https://www.oclc.org/realm/home.html>). Once the quarantine period was completed, we checked in the items, backdating so no fines would accrue during the quarantine period. Despite our attempts to communicate that information to patrons, there was confusion about the fact that the returned items stayed on accounts for several days after being placed in the book drops. As more materials were checked out and returned, it became more challenging for staff to manage the quarantining and checking in process. We also found that other experts were recommending that library materials needed to be quarantined for only one day. As we thought about how we might address those issues, we knew that the frontline staff needed to have input on the process. A Main Library staff member was asked to assemble a staff advisory council to weigh in on this and other decisions. The council studied the issue and recommended reducing the quarantine period from four days to two. Their recommendation was accepted by administration. The council continues to meet and make recommendations on other issues.

As we were beginning to open for limited in-house library use, we developed what came to be known as the *Playbook for Safety*, inspired by similar documents created by other libraries. While we first took each major change before our Board, they have now given us permission to make changes to procedures without the necessity of gaining their direct approval. The *Playbook* is now our guidebook and manual for how we will continue to operate for as long as the pandemic continues. It is updated when we make changes to our procedures and the most recent edition is kept available for staff.



At the time of this writing (early November) virtual programming continues, although a few locations have begun presenting a small number of outside, socially distanced, in-person programming. We've also opened our meeting rooms for early voting, although other meeting room uses are still off limits. One of the challenges we've faced has been finding a way to gather statistics for both live, synchronous programming and recorded asynchronous programming in such a way as to allow us to report those numbers separately as required, while making the process as uncomplicated as possible. We've experimented with various forms and will probably continue to experiment as I expect that it will be an issue for some time to come. Now that we know how, we will most likely continue to do some form of virtual programming even once we're able to present our regular slate of in-person programming.

We are also seeing the results of pandemic fatigue. Many patrons are tired of wearing masks and are challenging staff members who remind

them to wear their masks properly. We will continue to enforce the mask-wearing policy until it is no longer necessary, to protect our staff and patrons. So far, our safety measures seem to be working well. A very small number of staff members have tested positive for COVID-19, but as far as we can tell, none of them contracted the virus at the library, and they have not transmitted the virus to any of their coworkers. As long as we follow our safety protocols, we expect that to continue.

None of this would be possible without the dedication and hard work of CALS staff members. I appreciate them all so much.

NOTE: if you would like to see a copy of our *Playbook for Safety*, please feel free to contact me at [ccoffey@cals.org](mailto:ccoffey@cals.org).

*Carol Coffey is the patron experience and library analytics coordinator at the Central Arkansas Library System in Little Rock, Arkansas.*

## PUBLIC AND REFERENCE

### SERVICES:

#### **Do This; Don't Do That. Do I have to Tell you Again?**

*by Elizabeth DiPrince and Jessica Riedmueller, University of Central Arkansas*

Our library has always prided itself on its openness and friendliness. Pre-COVID-19, the library buzzed with activity: students using our computers, textbooks, and numerous study rooms, groups using our library for meetings, classes learning about information literacy, and a constant stream of users walking through to access the Starbucks. We actively encouraged our users to come to the library and stay, make themselves comfortable, and enjoy the services and resources we have to offer. In previous semesters, it wasn't uncommon for food delivery



*DiPrince*



*Riedmueller*

people to show up in our lobby bringing anything from sandwiches to full pizzas. Study rooms were full of students collaborating on projects. We happily encouraged the rearrangement of our wheeled furniture, and we know that students enjoyed coming to the library.

Now COVID-19 has made the library a rather bleak space. Social distancing policies and procedures had to be developed to protect users and employees, but they have affected many aspects of our services. Face coverings are required for all users and employees. Where we used to provide gathering spaces, we now actively encourage people to remain six feet away from each other. We look at groups of more than two people with worry. To encourage compliance we transformed the library space by reducing seating and computers, installing plexiglass barriers around our service desks, and covering the library with signs reminding patrons of all the new social distancing guidelines. Remote offerings were added to several of our library services to reduce the number of users entering the building and to accommodate any users who preferred to avoid in-person contact.

Upon the reopening of the library in the fall semester, public services now had to navigate the delicate balance of preserving our previous openness and friendliness while effectively communicating and enforcing social distancing guidelines. Since we are an academic library, we are compelled to follow the policies established for the campus at

large, and campus administration also set specific guidelines for our library. We quickly recognized that active enforcement was important to the overall health of our library staff, faculty, and users, and we would need to monitor user behavior in all areas of the library. We faced several challenges to tracking enforcement and compliance in our library, including:

- Monitoring a large library with many hidden areas and study rooms
- Ensuring that enforcement is equitable
- Collecting data to track non-compliance issues
- Assigning extra monitoring duties fairly among employees

With these challenges in mind, we developed a formal monitoring program that would allow for consistent enforcement as well as data collection. The library was divided into zones which library employees could monitor on a set schedule. Our initial thought was to actively address non-compliant behavior among users and communicate the library's social distancing guidelines. While monitoring, employees would also count the number of users in their section as well as the number of non-compliant behaviors they witnessed and report those activities using a Google form. The form could also be used to record behaviors observed any time outside of the formal monitoring periods. However, we quickly realized we were asking for too much detail and the monitoring program as proposed would be exhausting to keep up with and would take too much time away from other library work. After a few adjustments, the final program included only monitoring and addressing activities in three categories: patrons with masks removed for any reason, patrons gathered in a group of three or more, and the presence of food and/or drink regardless of the mask status of the patron. Based on traffic patterns, we determined that formal monitoring should be done within the hours of 10 am, 1 pm, and 4 pm.

So how is it going? Is it worth it? Operationally, the program did take fine tuning to match what we wanted to do with what we were able to do with the amount of staff in the library. The program as well as our enforcement strategy drastically changed when campus administration made changes that allowed food and drink to be consumed in the library. Monitoring has helped us identify specific issues and allowed us to address quickly, often in ways that don't involve directly reproaching our users. For instance, we have removed a significant amount of furniture and have added signage in areas identified as hot spots for non-compliance.



Long term, the data we collect through the library monitoring allow us to clearly demonstrate how well users are following the social distancing guidelines. We have created a Library Monitoring Dashboard using Google Sheets which provides daily and long-term insight to activities and non-compliance activities occurring in the library. The live dashboard provides real-time updates regarding non-compliant behaviors in the library. It shows where those behaviors are occurring and the rates at which they occur, both monthly and since the start of the semester. The dashboard was originally conceived to highlight information for library employees and campus administration. UCA employees have access to backing data including tables, monthly summaries, and the raw data. Recently, we also added a link to the dashboard to the library website in order to provide library users a way to assess their risk when visiting the library.

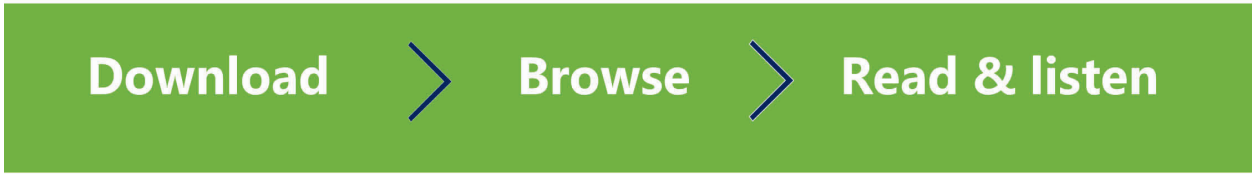
While operationally the program is working, there is no evidence so far that it is changing behaviors by our library patrons. While we have been lucky and haven't experienced confrontation or outright resistance to wearing a mask, there are still a large number of users who have to be reminded on a consistent basis. Though we try to keep our talking points friendly, we cannot control how our users receive them. What they know is that they can't move the furniture like they used to, they can't hang out with their friends like they used to, and library pizza parties are a thing of the past. Only time will tell if our monitoring efforts are worth the potential damage to our friendly reputation.

*Elizabeth DiPrince, systems librarian,  
and Jessica Riedmueller, user experience  
and assessment librarian, both work at the  
University of Central Arkansas' Torreyson  
Library in Conway, Arkansas.*



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**ARKANSAS LIBRARY ADVOCACY:  
Library Services During COVID-19 or  
A Lil' Ol' Pandemic Ain't Gonna Keep us Down!**  
*by David A. Eckert, Craighead County Public  
Library*

**W**e are now more than nine months into the COVID-19 pandemic, and I am happy to say that most every library across the state has figured out, in one way or another, how to offer some sort of library service or services to their patrons. Admittedly, I was worried how much a prolonged closure or reduction in services would affect libraries and their importance in our communities. As we all adapt and alter our methods of how we are delivering our materials and services, our patrons are as well. This can be a good thing for libraries as patrons discover some of our services they never used before.

On the flipside, they are also discovering new apps and services outside of the library realm to access books, music, etc. Granted, many of these have been around for some time, but with so many people working from home or in quarantine, everyone is spending more and more time surfing the internet. How many times can an ad for free books, or free music pop up before our customers succumb to the temptation? How can we compete with huge conglomerates that use sophisticated algorithms to analyze buying histories and “help” find things of interest easier and faster? We don’t have a huge workforce or seemingly limitless funding to get our material and services to our patrons. (Admittedly drones would be cool, but I don’t see that happening at our library any time soon.)

Fortunately, we do have a few things up our book sleeves that set us apart from our competitors and keep us relevant in our communities. Besides the obvious advantage we have with regards to the cost of items to our patrons, our biggest advantage that we have over retail entities is our intent. While the intent of these companies is to make money, our intent focuses on the best ways to serve all of our customers despite their economic standing.

We are not going to push one title over another just because we have an overstock and need to clear warehouse space. We are not going to stock our



*Eckert*

shelves indiscriminately just because we think it will make a profit. We spend hours poring over reviews and best of lists to pick out the best material for our patrons on all sides of any given topic. We try to represent all sides, all interests, all subjects, and for all ages with quality material.

The biggest advantage, however, that really sets us apart is our direct and personal interaction with our patrons. In non COVID times, it was more prevalent and easier to navigate, but it is still there, even if it is over the phone or six feet away through a Plexiglas barrier. Depending on your current situation and how “open” your library is, contact with patrons runs the gambit from virtual story times through the internet to helping someone find a book on the shelves.

We want that human interaction as much as our library users do. We want to be able to help someone send that fax or give them advice on what to read next. We want to provide a student with a quiet area for them to get their work done, or to help someone surf the internet, fill out a job application, or print off coupons. I think it is why most of us work in libraries, because we like to help people. It is refreshing not only to see that libraries have figured out a way to keep serving their constituents, but that the public has missed us as well. We did not lose them to fake five star reviews of products, or slick online ads for “free” material. Despite the pandemic, our public continues to support and patronize our services in whatever form that exists.

*David Eckert is director of the Craighead County Jonesboro Public Library in Jonesboro, Arkansas.*



*Faulkner County Library Children's Programmer Mary Spears Polk entertains children at a socially distanced storytime at the Conway library.*

## ALA COUNCILOR'S REPORT: Forward Together...Slowly

by *Lacy S. Wolfe, ALA Councilor*

**T**hroughout the fall, the Forward Together Working Group hosted six information and discussion sessions with ALA councilors on the proposed changes to ALA. The sessions covered Core Values, Board of Directors, ALA Committees, Round Tables, Governing Documents, and the work of Council.



*Wolfe*

The final session on November 20 focused on the makeup and functioning of Council in the proposed Forward Together model. While there was some support for keeping Council as is and some support for adopting the Forward Together recommendations completely, the majority voted (in informal polling) that some changes to the current Council structure are needed. Many councilors supported moving Council meetings online in order to save money on in-person Council meetings. Virtual meetings would also remove a barrier to participation on Council since travel to in-person meetings would no longer be required. Other suggestions included reducing the number of At-Large councilors, which currently stands at 100, and implementing term limits for councilors.

On December 3, a Virtual Council meeting was held to discuss and approve a new timeline for Forward Together. After much discussion, the new timeline was approved which pushes the implementation of the reorganization to March/April 2022. At the January 2021 Midwinter Council meeting, the Forward Together chairs will present a final report. A new working group will be formed to draft the final Forward Together resolution. The Working Group will update Council on their progress at a March 2021 virtual Council meeting. At ALA Annual, Council will vote on the various components of the Working Groups resolution. Following the Annual conference, the new ALA Bylaws will be drafted. The new Bylaws will be presented to Council at the "Midwinter" 2022 meeting. If all is approved, the membership will vote on the Bylaws during the annual election (March/April 2022). Once the Bylaws are approved the staff will begin implementation on the new structure.

The final ALA Midwinter meeting will be held virtually January 22-26, 2022. Please let me know if you have any questions or comments. For more information on the work of the Forward Together Working Group, please visit <https://forwardtogether.ala.org/>.

*Lacy Wolfe is the interim library director and information literacy and reference services librarian at Henderson State University's Huie Library in Arkadelphia, Arkansas.*

## TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION: Effective Communication for Technical Support

by *Nathan James, Central Arkansas Library System*

**W**orking with Technical Support can be frustrating. You contact them because something is going wrong, possibly something of critical importance to your day-to-day operations. And although you explain the problem, they don't seem to understand. When I was working as a Customer Relationship Manager at Innovative, I saw this situation play out



*James*

between customer and Support over and over. One task I would start with for customers assigned to me was to review any Support tickets that had been open for a long time. There were four problematic communication issues common in those tickets: not focusing on a single issue, not describing the issue in detail, asking to have an issue that occurred once fixed, and not asking for a status report or update. Correcting these communication problems often resulted in a relatively quick and satisfactory resolution.

### Focus on a Single Issue

There were many tickets which started by describing one issue, but then the person opening the ticket would keep adding new problems to what would end up being a long narrative that included several issues. More often than not Support would resolve the first issue but completely ignore the others. I can't say if this was intentional or if the

Support staff were just working as quickly as they could to close as many tickets as possible so they would end up reading the first problem, start tackling it, and just didn't read the rest of the narrative. Support staff should have noticed the extra issues and split them off into separate tickets, but generally that didn't happen. So, when opening a ticket, keep it to a single issue. If your description of the issue starts to get long in the tooth, ask yourself if you are still describing one issue or if you have added on a "plus one." Misery may love company, but issues in tickets do not; they like to be alone.

### **Describe the Issue in Detail**

It's OK to start with a summary of the problem, but at some point you need to add detail. And the best detail for Support is step-by-step instructions on how to see the problem. When I open a ticket, or when I would work on the tickets which had been open for far too long, I would start with a brief summary of the issue. Then I give very detailed instructions on exactly what to do to see the problem.

Here's an example. Say some of the notices being sent from my system are missing some important piece of data, data which had been there in the past. Start with a simple summary. "When printing overdue notices the patron address is missing. The address has always been there in the past and we haven't changed any settings."

Then show Support staff how to see the problem. "To see this: 1) login as user/pass, 2) go to notice production mode, 3) pick notice job "overdues," 4) produce the notices (note, we can save notices from one of our daily notice runs for you to look at if you need us to), 5) look at the notice data, the patron name is listed, and the address should appear immediately after, but it doesn't."

Include an example if you can. "I've attached an example of one of the recent notices which is missing the address, but this notice isn't unique; none of them include the address."

The more detail about exact steps to take to see the problem, and exact records and/or examples you can include, the better because Support staff won't have to interpret what you are saying; they can literally follow along with the steps you used to see the problem. Including step-by-step notes to allow the Support staff to see the problem has one other benefit: it will be easier to notice if you wander off into describing a second issue because often the steps needed to see the second issue will differ slightly or you will realize that the comments and steps you are using don't lead to the problem described in your summary. Providing detailed steps will help keep you focused.

### **Issues That Aren't Repeatable**

There are problems which occur once, and then never seem to happen again. I'm not suggesting you shouldn't open a ticket when you encounter something like this, but you should be realistic about the chances of getting any kind of resolution other than "we agree the issue occurred." Problems like this are notoriously difficult to resolve. It's often difficult to even develop a hypothesis as to what might have happened because there is so little evidence to work with. So why do they occur? Enterprise software is notoriously complex and often has developed over years and years. And while companies do a pretty good job of keeping it all working well there may be rare situations where some combination of conditions leads to the software behaving badly.

I do think it's worthwhile to report these one-off issues, but realize that the ticket will likely be closed without resolution. And in the end, if it happened once and you never see it happen again, don't over-worry about it. But do open the ticket because it could be that multiple customers have experienced a similar or identical situation, so while you may not be able to cause the issue to repeat on your system, the multiple customer reports are the equivalent of a repeatable issue. That said, to notice the issue is "repeating" requires Support staff to see the pattern of similar issues across multiple tickets for multiple customers who may describe the problem in very different ways, all of which can prevent the repeatable pattern from ever getting noticed.

### **Ask for an Update**

The final advice I'll give you is don't be afraid to ask for an update. Many customers I worked with had tickets that had been open for a long time, and the customers were very angry about the lack of resolution. But when I looked at the history in the ticket, there would be no requests for a status update. And while Support should have done a better job of not letting the ticket lapse, the customer should have asked for an update. You should know the Support escalation procedure for any important software you use. If the company doesn't publish it, ask. And remember it is OK to escalate if you haven't received timely responses. You can't justifiably be angry at Support if you haven't asked them for an update, or escalated the issue when necessary.

Communication with Technical Support, like communication in any relationship, should be an exchange, a dialog. As the customer your responsibility is to describe the issue clearly and to answer the questions Support may ask for follow-up. It is also your responsibility to be realistic about

which issues can be resolved, and which likely won't be resolved; repeatability is the best way to set your expectations appropriately. It is also the customer's responsibility to ask for updates if communication from Support has stopped, and to escalate if necessary when the response doesn't meet your expectations. Support is responsible for responding in a timely manner, asking appropriate follow-up questions, and being honest if the issue isn't likely to have a resolution. More importantly, Support needs to start from a position of trusting that you did experience the issue you experienced and that you are doing your best to describe it. For some of the more unusual issues it's too easy for Support staff to start by thinking "there's no way that can

happen." But a relationship based on distrust isn't going to go well. As the song goes "we can't go on together, with suspicious minds." The best way to avoid that situation is to treat each other with respect, and if Support and customer are doing their best to communicate in a timely and accurate manner, things will generally turn out well, even for those problems which can't be resolved.

*Nathan James is the deputy executive director for Technology and Collection Innovation at the Central Arkansas Library System in Little Rock. Reach him at [njames@cals.org](mailto:njames@cals.org).*

## ArLA Scholarship Winner

*by Chance Griebel*

*ArLA Scholarship Committee Chair*

This year we are excited to award Elizabeth Hurtado with the ArLA Scholarship. Elizabeth has enrolled in the MS-LS degree program in Youth Librarianship at the University of North Texas. We're happy to have Elizabeth introduce herself to you in her own words.



*Hurtado*

*My name is Doris Elizabeth Hurtado, and I'm Children's Multicultural Outreach Librarian in Springdale Public Library, AR. I'm from the Dominican Republic and I have 4 years living in this State.*

*Being a librarian wasn't in my plans. Inclusively,*

*I had not heard of this as a profession. But from my first day in Springdale Public Library (where I work) I fell in love with the job, my tasks and responsibilities. I enjoy planning, reaching out to the community and promoting Reading and Literacy. But I think the part that I am mostly enjoying is that I have found a way to help my community become more educated giving hope to those who have emigrated as I did.*

*Although we are living in uncertain times with a new virus around, I started my classes in the University this fall. My goal is acquiring a Library Science-M.S. degree and continue serve my community to the best of my abilities by being better prepared and adding new tools to my portfolio.*

*We wish Elizabeth the best as she pursues her degree!*

*Chance Griebel is the Teen Center manager at the William F. Laman Public Library in North Little Rock, Arkansas.*

## STRATEGIC PLANNING AND

### ASSESSMENT:

#### Welcome New Editors!

*by Rachel Whittingham, Central Baptist College*

*Gwen Dobbs, Northwest Arkansas Community College*

Rachel Whittingham, library director at Central Baptist College and Gwen Dobbs, library director at Northwest Arkansas Community College, will be co-editing the Strategic Planning

and Assessment Column this year and would like to introduce themselves.

#### Rachel Whittingham

Greetings Fellow ArLA Members,

Most of you probably know me as the Library Director at Central Baptist College (CBC) in Conway, Arkansas. I have been a librarian here since 2005 and became director in 2011. What you might not know is that I wear quite a few hats, including being in charge of assessment for my institution. When people ask me how a librarian got involved with assessment, I always provide two reasons:

1. I was really tired of hearing a million different versions of the phrase "libraries don't matter

anymore.”

## 2. Assessment and librarians are a MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN.

Assessment is logical and methodical, and it is a particular type of linear thinking that speaks to a librarian’s soul. At the core of assessment is a very simple equation –  $x + y = z$ . And though I am bad at math, even I can figure out that if you assess the effectiveness of library services, you can prove libraries matter way more than anyone imagined.

There is a document that changed all of this for me. I had already been a library director for three years when Rebecka Virden (former director of the UACCM library) directed my attention to the ACRL’s, *Value of Academic Libraries: A Comprehensive Research Review and Report*. If you are not familiar with the report or the ALA’s “Assessment in Action: Academic Libraries and Student Success” initiative, then you should be. It shifted everything while also solidifying the questions swirling around in my head. Three pages into the report and I was saying, “YES! This is exactly what I’ve been looking for.” I still quote from it when discussing the value of libraries, and once I started using phrases like “librarians can help contribute to student success and retention,” my school’s administration noticed.

A few years into designing meaningful assessments that structured our library services into something that collected data that drove improvements, and I was ready for the big time. My institution had a Director of Assessment, whom I knew would soon retire. A culture of assessment had been established, but I knew there was more that needed to be done. We were not fully closing the assessment cycle loop, for one, and the assessments being conducted never changed, for another. I tentatively approached my boss (the Vice President of Academic Affairs) who is a true supporter of the library. I stumbled through explaining my desire and ideas about doing more with assessment at CBC and before I knew it, he had created a new division – the Learning Resources Division – and made me the chair. The division encompasses Assessment, Disability Support Services, Tutoring Services, and the Testing Center. Oh, and also the Library.

Admittedly, it is a lot. But one of the advantages of working for a smaller institution is that you can easily do a great deal more without so much red tape to wade through. Another advantage is if you have ideas, it is easy to implement them. Even though CBC is small, there is room here to grow.

Soon after I was placed in charge of Assessment,

the director retired, and I was free to do things my way. I formed an Assessment Committee of faculty and staff, and we went to work. I totally stole the idea of having an assessment committee from another institution, but it was a great idea for us. Assessment on our campus needed “buy-in” from stakeholders. An easy way to do that was to make sure those groups, or silos, were represented on the committee.

Having this great committee has not fixed our assessment issues overnight, so please do not get the impression assessment is perfect at CBC. There is TONS of work to do. There has been a lack of education and training about the assessment process. Report gathering and producing is a problem. Incorporating co-curricular assessments is a huge challenge. But we have made slow progress. After a year of working, we realized it was difficult to convince people to focus on assessment without some sort of authority. We are an employee-led committee, and while our administration is supportive, we did not have the power to say, “Do this, or else.” So, we wrote a policy that basically says, “Everyone here has to appropriately assess their areas.” The policy (which was approved by the Board of Trustees in January 2020), also establishes our committee as the authority for directing assessment on campus.

Another issue we identified was a lack of integrated planning and alignment with CBC’s Strategic Plan. Most campus offices and departments do not have strategic plans, or action plans, or any idea how to use the data they collect. So, the approved policy renamed the committee to the Assessment & Planning Committee (APC) and gave us authorization to direct planning at CBC. Additionally, our Executive Leadership Team (ELT) (made up of the President and his cabinet) asked for the APC chair (that’s me) to attend a monthly ELT meeting. This means our committee reports directly to the administration.

This fall, we have begun the process of developing a new strategic plan. The APC was placed in charge of the whole process. We envision an employee-led plan and have begun holding open forums with faculty and staff. It is a monumental task. And I hope you won’t think I’m bragging, but what a great example of how librarians can make a difference at institutions of higher education!

**Gwen Dobbs**

Greetings all,

My professional career has evolved almost solely in academic libraries and took a slightly non-



traditional path. I started my career as a Reference and Instruction Librarian in a very busy instruction program at a regional university. I loved teaching and building a team with two other instruction librarians. But a few years later, I was offered additional duties in library fundraising. While I value that experience immensely, I learned some important things about myself. First, I absolutely love sharing the story of libraries and how we serve our users. Second, I love communicating with all of our users, faculty, students, and the community, about what a library does and why we do it. And third, I don't mind communicating our challenges either, because in those conversations you find your allies. However, there were other parts of development duties that were not a great fit for me. Luckily, I was able to pivot to a new job title, Director of Assessment and Development for the Library.

My duties then included the things I loved, and started me on my assessment journey. At first I primarily served as a guide-on-the-side for my colleagues in the library, as the entire campus made a commitment to assessment and the Oklahoma

Quality Award. The majority of campus leadership participated in Quality training and served as Oklahoma Quality Award Examiners. To be clear, this was a large time commitment and at times very challenging work. But I am incredibly grateful for that experience now.

In the library, we began by asking ourselves what we did and why we did it. We then identified "low hanging fruit." What I mean by that is some library processes lend themselves to assessment more readily than others; such as instruction and materials usage and student success and persistence. In other words, it's ok to start small, and it's ok to start with what you know best. Slowly, through cross-functional teams, you can build assessment activities into your organizations.

I am excited to be sharing the Strategic Planning and Assessment Column editor duties with Rachel this year, and to be learning about the assessment we are all doing across the state, and most importantly, learning from each other as we share our successes and our challenges. Remember, we often find our allies when we share our challenges.

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## In Memoriam: Charlotte Evans Mulford

by *Kathie Buckman*

*Emporia State University*

**C**harlotte Evans Mulford, age 76, of Conway, Arkansas, passed away September 9, 2020. She was a member of Grace United Methodist Church; was a librarian; and was a professor at UCA College and Henderson College for over 30 years. She loved cats, dogs, and other animals. Her friend Kathie Buckman gives this remembrance.



*Mulford*

I was hired at UCA's Torreyson Library in June of 1989. Within my first week on the job, Charlotte Evans showed up at my desk and asked me if I'd like to go to lunch. We walked over to the Union for lunch, and a friendship was born.

Charlotte was a wonderful colleague and friend. Those of you who didn't know her well, might have had the impression that she was rather reserved. Those of us who got to know her, knew the real story. Charlotte was hilarious! She had such a funny sense of humor, and anytime I was with her, it was the bright spot of the day.

In 1991, my then husband and I began planning a move to Austin. Doug was starting grad school at UT, and I was promised a job at the UT Law Library....but had to wait for two months. We sold our house, Doug moved to Texas, and I moved in with Charlotte and her cat Wendy. What fun we had! I was living with Charlotte when she went on her first date with Don, who would later become her husband.



*Charlotte knew Kathie was coming, so she baked a cake!*

Over the years, she and Don married, I moved back to Arkansas, and then home to Kansas...and Charlotte and I always kept in touch. Although we didn't see each other often, we had one of those rare friendships that was strong enough to withstand time and distance.

I received a nice letter from her this past April, and I'm sure she wrote this with a twinkle in her eye: "It's funny....we used to be about the same age, but now I'm much older...Okay, I'm just being silly."

She *was* silly. Good silly.

Charlotte Evans Mulford: you were a treasure. Rest in peace, Good Friend.

*Kathie Buckman is director of the central Kansas MLS Program for Emporia State University's School of Library and Information Management in Emporia, Kansas.*



*Charlotte and Don Mulford.*

## Profile of Lavoris Martin

*by Britt Anne Murphy*  
*Managing Editor*

*Lavoris Martin retired this year. What follows is a profile of her career in Arkansas libraries.*

Lavoris Martin began her career in the academic library field in 1988 at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock's Ottenheimer Library, as a student worker in the Media Center. She became an academic library technician in 1995 after graduation. After marriage in 1999, she soon relocated to Pine Bluff, AR, where she joined the staff of the John Brown Watson Memorial Library at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, from which she retired in September 2020.

Lavoris began her tenure with the university at the Bell Learning Resources Center (BLRC) during the time the university was developing online courses. This provided Lavoris an opportunity to assist with the planning, training, development, and implementation of the first online courses. Lavoris was also part of the selection and implementation of two library integrated library systems, Voyager and Alma. Lavoris took pride in implementing the Alma and Primo Discovery and Delivery systems, as she had the opportunity to work as the project



*Martin*

manager and setup and complete all configuration for the systems. At the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff's John Brown Watson Memorial Library, Lavoris advocated for wireless services for the library and a proxy server to provide 24/7 access to library databases and other online services. She also implemented laptop checkout, a self-checkout system, increased library computer capacity to over one hundred computers, and was instrumental in recommending and selecting equipment for video and sound recording, editing, and production labs.

She considers her greatest achievements to be the ability to think and plan for future technology innovations. She kept abreast of technology trends, anticipated future trends, and implemented them within the library before many universities had even heard of them. Some of the innovations included TvTabler, interactive smart tables, video conferencing systems, self-checkout system (meeScan), using mobile devices to calculate locations, and implementing the latest digital podiums and mobile smartboard and video conferencing combo system, which students can checkout and move anywhere in the library.

Lavoris also had the pleasure of collaborating as a team member with other librarians and paraprofessionals on guides for information literacy, academic integrity, and accreditation, as well as the library's webpage and grant funding to implement various library innovations. Lavoris maintained her love for teaching through a course she taught, Computers in Education, since 2008 at Southeast

Arkansas College.

Lavoris has a Bachelor of Arts in Art (1994) and a Master of Learning Systems Technology in Education from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (2006), a Master of Science in Library Science (2015), and a Master of Computer Science and Technology from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (2019). The degree from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff was a lifetime goal achievement, because she always desired to receive a degree from UAPB, an institution for which she provided a lifetime (20 years) of service. Future plans include taking up some past hobbies, such

as sewing, painting, and hopefully fishing. Her immediate plan for the next year is to relax!

Lavoris has served with multiple professional organizations including the American Library Association's Annual Conference Committee, the Arkansas Library Association, the Black Caucus of the American Library Association, the American Cancer Society Community Health Advisor Program, the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), and the University of North Texas Honor Society. She is proud to have served as the president of ARKLink in 2019-2020, and chaired the Arkansas Library Association's Legislative Committee.

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## SPECIAL LIBRARIES:

### **New Manager and the Pandemic: How We Coped at the Arkansas Library for the Blind and Print Disabled**

*by Kristina Waltermire, Arkansas State Library*

**N**ot many people outside of the library world know about the Library for the Blind and Print Disabled, but we have been serving the people of Arkansas since 1969. You could call it the "public library for the blind," but it's a special library in its nature. We serve our patrons via the United States Postal Service. We deliver, by mail, Talking Book Machines, Talking Books (more commonly known as audio books), Talking Magazines, and Braille to every corner of our state. Our patronage mainly consists of individuals who were born blind or have lost their eye sight later in life, but we do serve many that have an organic reading dysfunction like dyslexia, or are physically disabled and unable to hold a book.

I began serving as the manager for the library in January of 2020. Three months later, while in the process of learning how to create a new budget, write and submit board reports, and many other important duties, the Covid pandemic reached Arkansas. Public libraries began closing around the state during those first months, but under the governor's directive, state agencies had to stay open. Under the Phase 1 Directive, nonessential employees of the Library for the Blind were sent home, and their duties split up among a staff of five. I had been at the Library for the Blind since October of 2014 as a Senior Librarian, so I understood our basic circulation patterns and what was expected each day. However, quickly maneuvering my way through what I needed to do to keep my staff and patrons safe was an undertaking I wasn't quite expecting.

Before we could work safely, our administration

first had to procure PPE. This came down to our purchaser for the state library taking a trip to Lowes the Friday before we were to report back with our greatly reduced staff. I scheduled three employees each day, while two worked from home. Some days we would be down to two, but as many in the library world know; if you have to make it happen, you can make it happen. I created quarantine measures for our items according to various reports about the virus' longevity on materials. We started with a minimum of four days for our plastic cases, cartridges and braille. We upped the quarantine time as we learned new information. Currently, we are quarantining for up to six days. Because of the uncertainty after quarantine, we also began sanitizing every digital cartridge, every plastic case, every item that we could. Although I couldn't control the exposure of our items after they left our library, I knew that I had done what I could to keep us safe.

We were ordered back to work full time at the office in June, although our staff was still reduced due to most of our circulation department having preexisting conditions. We of course made it work, but in July, the politicization of the United States Postal Service was the next big hurdle. Months had gone by with slow turnaround for our patrons due to items being placed in quarantine, so this was not the best time for our only mode of circulation to slow to the levels that we were experiencing. Items that usually took a day or two to reach a patron were taking weeks. We were running low on our Talking Book Machines in July, and receiving repaired machines from our volunteer repair group in Mountain Home was taking so long that we were having to send out machines that did not have sufficient battery life. I am writing this article at the end of October, and we just received machines that we sent in for repair in July. I did, however, make sure to note all of these changes in our quarterly newsletter and also ensured that our patrons were

aware of our Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) app to counter the long wait times. Not being able to provide the level of service that we and our patrons are accustomed to was disappointing to say the least.

Recently, we saw the reversal of the changes to the USPS and then the complete halt of those politically motivated policies by a federal judge. Our patrons are now receiving their materials in a timely fashion (outside of those quarantine windows of course). We have settled into a new normal here at the Library for the Blind. Outreach has been halted since March, but we are still so committed to serving our patrons, and though our new patron applications aren't flowing in to us at their usual rate, the good word of our current patrons to their institutions, friends, and family has kept us pretty busy.

I had a lot of plans for the Library for the Blind this calendar year, but those plans have been put on the backburner to make sure my staff have the support they need. The personal and professional have intertwined in such a fascinating way during the pandemic. The stress we feel on a daily basis, which includes pandemic fatigue, and the concern

about being infected with a virus that has killed so many people in this country, is not something that can be pushed aside for better work productivity. Teamwork, the agility needed to change workflows very quickly, and of course, the ability to empathize with how each one of my staff is dealing day-to-day has created a stellar workforce in my little library. I know our work is more important than ever now, and I wish nothing but the best to all of my library colleagues out there making due with what they have to enrich the lives of our communities.

*Kristina Waltermire is the manager of the Arkansas Library for the Blind and Print Disabled located in the Arkansas State Library, and has over twelve years of experience in library work in central Arkansas. She received her undergraduate degree in Professional and Technical Writing from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and her Master in Library and Information Science from Wayne State University in 2015.*

## Building Community and Providing Support New Opportunities Coming in 2021

by *Philip Shackelford*  
*South Arkansas College*

Throughout the experiences of this past year, one thing that has been continually and vividly reinforced is the compelling value that comes from connecting with colleagues around the state, checking on each other, learning from each other, and sharing both common problems as well as celebrating successes among the Arkansas library community. Those who have participated in the wonderful regular sessions provided by ALL-In or sessions from other groups can readily attest to this. Add to that the desire on the part of ArLA as a whole to provide professional development content beyond the scope of the annual conference, to take place throughout the year, and we have a fantastic opportunity to leverage the virtual technology at our disposal and deliver some exciting and valuable



*Shackelford*

offerings for all Arkansas library folks around the state! Recently, President Crystal Gates mentioned that it would be nice to offer free monthly webinars on a variety of different topics, with something for everyone – and she also reflected on the positive feedback received after ArLA hosted several open forums throughout this past summer. To that end, I am excited to announce that we will be doing both – continuing the open forums as well as providing a schedule of compelling professional development sessions throughout 2021.

First, the webinars. Pending approval by the Board, the brand new “**Lunch, Learning, and Libraries**” series invites you to join your colleagues at **12:00 noon every third Wednesday, via Zoom**, for virtual brown bag lunchtime sessions covering topics relevant to each and every one of us, a different topic each month. These sessions are absolutely **FREE** to ArLA members and are available to non-members as well for \$15.00. Coming up soon, on **January 20**, Chelsey Turner from Washington Middle School in El Dorado will present on “Bitmoji Classrooms.” On **February 17** Crystal Gates from the Laman Public Library will explore “People Analytics” and library team culture.

**March 17**, Allie Stevens from the Calhoun County Public Library will speak on “Reading Reluctantly,” engaging middle and high school-aged students who are reluctant readers and suggesting some books to get them started. Grant writing, motivation and inspiration, embedded librarians, and student engagement are some additional topics on the horizon.

Next, Crystal Gates has also offered to host a series of open forums and networking hangouts, held virtually every other month. These sessions will be informal and free of any agenda so that anyone and everyone can visit with their colleagues from around the state, meet and network, and discuss any topics or challenges that are important to them and their libraries in a relaxed, supportive setting. The open forums will be provided every other month on the second Thursday afternoon at 2:00 pm, beginning **January 14**.

For details on all of these and other ArLA events, stay tuned to our Facebook page and the ArLA website. The days, times, and session details will be posted there, and instructions for registering and receiving access information will be made available on the ArLA website. Please plan to join us, support your colleagues who will be presenting, and please help us spread the word so that anyone who is interested can participate and benefit from these sessions. I’m looking forward to it, and hope to “see” you all throughout the year!

*Philip Shackelford is library director of the South Arkansas College Library in El Dorado, Arkansas. He serves as president-elect of ArLA, and chaired the Conference Committee and Pandemic Response Committee for 2020.*

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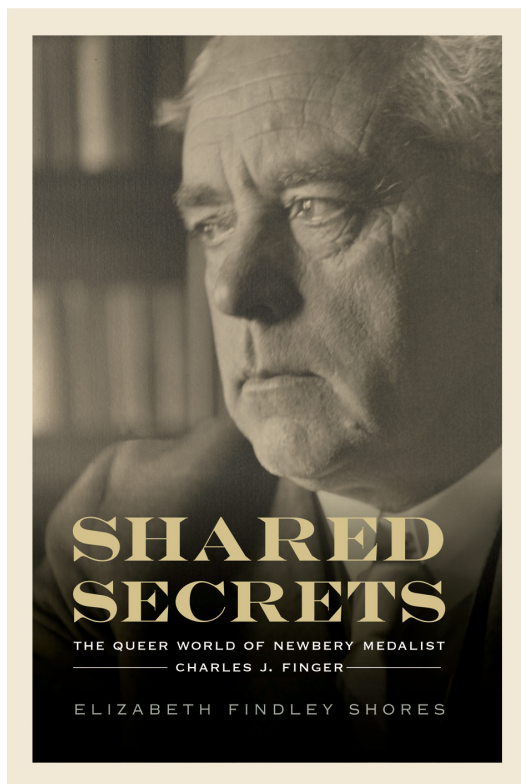
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- Carroll, Cynthia McRoy, *Arkansas Ozarks Legends and Lore*. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2020. 978-1540242082 \$32.00 cloth; 978-1467144698 \$24.00 paper 144 p.
- \*Christ, Mark K., ed. *The War at Home: Perspectives on the Arkansas Experience during World War I*. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2020. 9781682261262 \$24.95 266 p.
- \*Condran, Jeffrey. *Claire, Wading Into the Danube By Night*. Cape Girardeau, MO: Southeast Missouri State University Press, 2020. 9781732039940 \$18.00 192 p.
- \*Condray, Kathleen. *Das Arkansas Echo: A Year in the Life of Germans in the Nineteenth-Century South*. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2020. 9781682261453 \$39.95 360 p.
- D'Antonio, Michael. *The Hunting of Hillary: The Forty-Year Campaign to Destroy Hillary Clinton*. New York: Thomas Dunne, 2020. 978125015460x \$30.00 352 p.
- \*Fawkes, Jen. *Mannequin and Wife*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2020. 9780807173916 \$24.95 210 p.
- \*Ford, Richard. *Sorry For Your Trouble*. New York: Echo Press, 2020. 9780052969804 \$25.00 272 p.
- \*Ford, Virginia Walden. *School Choice: A Legacy to Keep*. New York: Beafort Books, 2019. 9780825309397 \$14.95 192 p.
- Garland, Frank. *Arky: The Baseball Life of Joseph Floyd "Arky" Vaughan*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2020. 9781476669809 \$35.00 264 p.
- Gifford, Justin. *Revolution or Death: The Life of Eldridge Cleaver*. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2020. 9781613739112

\$29.00 368 p.

- \*Goodman, Sarah. *Eventide*. New York: Macmillan, 2020. 9781250224736 \$18.00 336 p.
- \*Grisham, John. *Camino Winds*. New York: Doubleday, 2020. 9780385545932 \$28.95 304 p.
- \*\_\_\_\_\_. *A Time For Mercy*. New York: Doubleday, 2020. 9780385545969 \$29.95 464 p.
- \*Gutierrez, Sarah-Catherine. *But First, Save 10: The One Simple Money Move That Will Change Your Life*. Little Rock: Et Alia Press, 2020. 9781944528171 \$17.95 264 p.
- \*Hamilton, Laurell K. *Sucker Punch*. New York: Berkley, 2020. 9781984804433 \$28.00 624 p.
- \*Harington, Donald. Brian Walter, ed. *Double Toil and Trouble*. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2020. 9781682261422 \$29.95 176 p.
- \*Hawkins, Van. *Moaning Low: From Slavery to Peonage, Involuntary Servitude in the Arkansas Delta*. Writers Bloc, 2019. 9780986399220 \$29.50 260 p.
- \*Hendricks, Nancy. *Haunted Histories in America*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2020. 9781440868702 \$97.00 339 p.
- Hill, David. *The Vapors: A Southern Family, the New York Mob, and the Rise and Fall of Hot Springs, America's Forgotten Capital of Vice*. New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 2020. 9781250086112 \$28.00 400 p.
- Hinds, Michael. *Johnny Cash International*. Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 2020. 9781609387013 \$27.50 270 p.
- \*Jaeger, Tyrone. *Radio Eldorado*. Braddock, PA: Braddock Avenue Books, 2020. 9781732895676 \$19.95 429 p.
- Johnson, J. Chester. *Damaged Heritage: The Elaine Race Massacre and A Story of Reconciliation*. Berkley, CA: Pegasus Books, 2020 9781643134663 \$18.95
- \*Kirk, John A. *The Civil Rights Movement: A Documentary Reader*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2020. 9781118737163 \$54.95
- \*Lindsey, William D., \*William Russell, and \*Mary L. Ryan. *A Family Practice: The Russell Doctors and the Evolving Business of Medicine, 1799-1989*. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2020. 9781682261279 \$34.95 265 p.
- \*Moneyhon, Carl H. *George T. Ruby: Champion of Equal Rights in Reconstruction Texas*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 2020. 9780875657486 \$29.95 256 p.
- \*Neal, Olly, Jr. and Jan Wrede. *Outspoken: The Olly Neal Story*. Little Rock: Butler Center Books, 2020. 9781945624254 \$29.95 300 p.
- Nelson, Michael. *Clinton's Elections: 1992, 1996, and the Birth of a New Era of Governance*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2020. 9780700629173 \$34.95 312 p.
- \*O'Brien, Jennifer. *The Hospice Doctor's Widow*. Little Rock: Et Alia Press, 2020. 9781944528096 \$32.95 86 p.
- \*Parks-Spencer, Sarah. *At War and on the Home Front: Letters and Diaries of the Parks Family, 1942-1945*. Self published, 2020, available from Amazon. 9798606376322 \$10.00 410 p.
- \*Robinson, Kat. *102 More Things to Eat in Arkansas Before You Die*. Self published, 2019, available from Amazon. 9780999873489 \$18.00 122 p.
- \*Sanders, Sarah Huckabee. *Speaking for Myself*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2020. 9781250271334 \$30.00 288 p.
- \*Scribner, Vaughn. *Merpeople: A Human History*. London: Reaktion Books, 2020. 9781789143140 \$27.50 320 p.
- \*\_\_\_\_\_. *University of Central Arkansas*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2020. 9781467104272 \$22.00 128 p. Campus History series.
- \*Steward-Abernathy, Skip. *Wooden Boats and Curving Blue Lines*. Fayetteville: Arkansas Archeological Survey, 2020. 97815634911098 \$8.50 68 p.
- \*Stockley, Grif. *Hypogrif in Bubbaville: A Memoir of Race, Class, and Ego*. Self published, 2020, available from Amazon. 9781087892689 \$26.00 cloth; 9798634925561 \$13.00 paper 268 p.
- \*\_\_\_\_\_, \*Brian Mitchell, and \*Guy Lancaster. *Blood in Their Eyes: The Elaine Race Massacre of 1919*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2020. 9781682261361 \$27.95 \$27.95 330 p.
- \*Taylor, Michael Ray. *Hidden Nature: Wild Southern Caves*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2020. 139780826501028 \$19.95 340 p.
- Tooze, Sandra B. *Levon: From Down in the Delta to the Birth of the Band and Beyond*. New York: Diversion Books, 2020. 0781635767049 \$30.00 400 p.
- \*Trubitt, Mary Beth. *Ouachita Mountains Archeology*. Fayetteville: Arkansas Archeological Survey, 2019. 9781563491092 \$20.00 108 p.
- Vander Wel, Stephanie. *Hillbilly Maidens, Okies, and Cowgirls: Women's Country Music, 1930-1960*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2020. 9780252084959 \$25.95 256 p.
- \*Arkansas author

NEW BOOKS!



**SHARED SECRETS**

*The Queer World of Newbery Medalist*

*Charles J. Finger*

Elizabeth Findley Shores

“An engaging, well-written, and important biography of a figure largely neglected in literary studies, despite his stature, influence, and enormous collection of works.”

—Michael P. Bibler

**BLOOD IN THEIR EYES**

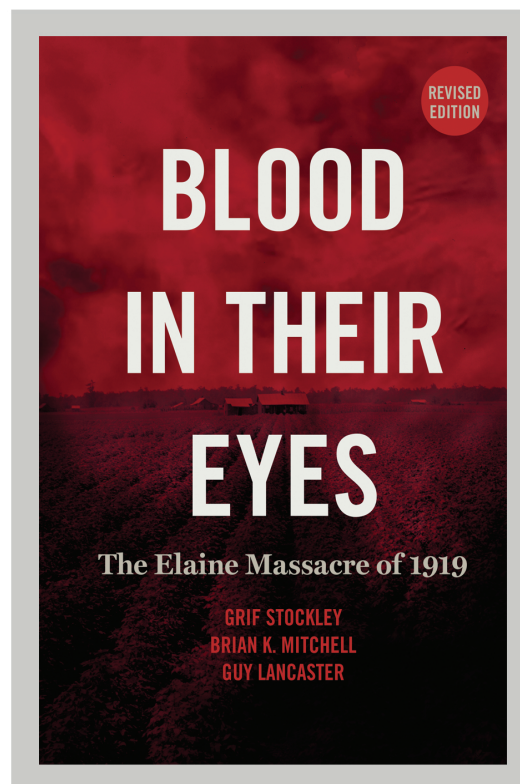
*The Elaine Massacre of 1919*

Revised edition

Grif Stockley, Brian K. Mitchell,  
and Guy Lancaster

“This expanded edition of *Blood in Their Eyes* is a valuable resource for coming to grips with one of the most significant episodes of racial violence in Arkansas and US history.”

—Michael J. Pfeifer



## ArLA 2020 Election Results

Thankfully, the ArLA 2020 elections went as well as could be expected – no claims of fraud or miscounted ballots! The membership approved revisions to bylaws that were approved in 2019, which will make several significant changes to ArLA when they take effect as scheduled in 2021. The themes of the proposed changes to the bylaws were simplification, improved efficiency, transparency, and maintaining accountability to the Association’s membership. Below is a summary of what the membership approved:

- Simplifying and clarifying Membership Types (V.1.A--E)
- Updating membership dues to reflect new Membership Types (V.1.A--E and Handbook)
- Clarifying language for Membership and Officer censure or expulsion and removing process details to Handbook (V.4 and VIII.5)
- Reinstate information about bonding, as found in previous Bylaws/Manual (Now, VI.7)
- Remove references to a Communities of Interest Council (VII.1-9)
- Set the term for elected officers, except for the ALA Councillor, to coincide with the calendar year (VIII.1)
- Reinstate petition by membership as a method for calling a special meeting of the full membership (X.4)
- “Nominating & Elections Committee” (multiple references)
- Consistency of days/timelines for action, with 30 days and/or 14 days as the most frequent selections (multiple references)

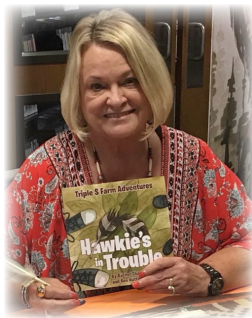
A copy of the Association’s revised bylaws can be found on the ArLA website at <https://arlib.org/about/bylaws>.

ArLA membership also voted on president-elect and secretary, SELA representative, as well as a new executive board position, treasurer-elect. These results, as well as the profiles of our new four at-large members of the board, are recounted below.

### ArLA President-Elect:

#### Rachel Shankles

Rachel Shankles is a retired secondary teacher who spent 42 years in Arkansas schools. She ended her public school career with 25 years of being a Library Media Specialist at Lakeside High School in Hot Springs. After retirement from public



Shankles

school, she went to work for UCA in the Leadership Studies Department, Master’s Program for Library Media, where she is the Coordinator of the Practicum Program and an adjunct faculty member. She goes into the schools all across Arkansas to observe her students – future librarians – doing their field supervision for their degree. This causes her to stay in contact with librarians who serve as the mentors and new librarians across our state. She has served as AAIM President twice and chair of Arkansas Association of School Librarians division of ArLA three times. She was one of the first members of Resource Arkansas and a delegate to the Governor’s Conference on Libraries. She was also an original member of the Teen Book Award Committee. In her spare time, she has published four books since retiring. She has written a series of children’s books called *The Triple S Farm Adventures* (about the woodland animals on our farm in Bismarck, AR, near Lake DeGray), and one book about growing up in Newport, AR, in the 1960s.

### ArLA Treasurer-Elect: Kristen Cooke



Cooke

As an academic librarian, Kristen has held the position of Assistant Professor and Library Director working in both a large public university and a rural community college library. In her most recent role as Director of the Academic Commons at the University of Arkansas Community College at Morrilton, Kristen oversaw

the E. Allen Gordon Academic Library, Tutoring Services, related faculty support services and training, the Science Study Center, and a computer lab. Kristen has recently taken the position of Deputy State Librarian at the State Library in Little Rock.

### ArLA Secretary: Janice Weddle

Janice Weddle has worked at Hendrix College’s Olin C. Bailey Library since 2017, where she oversees the library’s public services as the Assistant Librarian for Instruction and Outreach. Janice served ArLA in 2020 as Chair of the Bylaws & Manual Committee and Vice Chair of the Reference &



Weddle



Instruction Services Division (RISD), as well as a member of the Editorial Board for the Association’s publication, *Arkansas Libraries*. Janice participated in the Arkansas Library Leadership Institute’s 2015 cohort and remains an involved participant and advocate for ALL-In. She has worked in libraries throughout her life, including her days as a “Library Helper” in elementary school and her work as both a student worker and the full-time Government Documents Assistant at her alma mater, Truman State University. In her free time, she enjoys cooking, traveling, and daydreaming about both while watching PBS programs.

**At-Large Member: Carol Coffey**



Coffey

Carol Coffey is the Patron Experience & Library Analytics Coordinator at the Central Arkansas Library System. In the 23 years since she made Arkansas her home, she has served in a number of public service and administrative positions at CALS, including Head of Reference Services and Director of Library

Resources. In addition to her work at CALS, Carol has served at various times as Chair of the Digital Resources Round Table, the Scholarship Committee, and the Public Libraries and Trustees Division of the Arkansas Library Association. She writes a regular column on management issues for *Arkansas Libraries* and geeks out over all things library. When she’s not working, Carol loves to read history and British mysteries, garden, and travel.

**At-Large Member: Nithin Lakshmana**

Nithin Lakshmana moved to Arkansas from India and has been working in Northwest Arkansas Community College (NWACC) as an eLearning Librarian since October 2014. He has been involved in starting and steering the OER committee in NWACC. The NWACC OER committee has awarded four faculty incentive awards since its inception in 2018. In his spare time he likes to cycle and go hiking with his two daughters.



Lakshmana

**At-Large Member: Ron Russ**

Ron was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY. He is



Russ

a second-generation librarian, starting his career in 1993 after receiving his MLS from SUNY-Buffalo. He was married to the late Karen Russ, who was a documents librarian at UALR. His ArLA service includes his role as webmaster, but he has served ArLA in many capacities, including as ALA Councilor and Two Year Colleges

Round Table Chair. He is also a recipient of the 2007 Suzanne Spurrier Outstanding Academic Librarian Award and the 2016 and 2020 President’s Award.

**At-Large Member: Jennifer Wann**



Wann

As Manager of Library Development at the Arkansas State Library, Jennifer Wann is interested in developing statewide programs that assist libraries design services that meet their communities’ needs; foster best practices in library management and administration; and facilitate the professional development of library workers at all

levels of the organization. A Mississippi native and recent transplant to Arkansas, Jennifer was actively involved in the Mississippi Library Association and served on the Executive Board from 2016-2019. Jennifer received her MLIS from the University of Southern Mississippi in 2006. Her Myers-Briggs type is ISTP, she has two cats named Spooky and Bug, and her favorite novels of all time are the *Realm of the Elderlings* series by Robin Hobb.

**SELA Representative: Emily Rozario**

Emily Rozario has served as SELA Representative on the ArLA Board for the past two years. She received her MLIS from the University of Pittsburgh in 2016. She works at the William F. Laman Public Library as the tech service/catalog librarian and has worked there for three years. She loves being a librarian; she loves getting to see new books and getting the new books into patrons’ hands. In her free time she enjoys knitting, baking, reading, going on walks, and watching movies.



Rozario

# Arkansas Librarians' Achievement Recognized Virtually at the ArLA 2020 Awards Presentation

by *Mindy Farley*

*2020 ArLA Awards Chair*

The Arkansas Library Association recognizes the important work of Arkansas librarians by choosing recipients to receive awards who are nominated by co-workers and colleagues. These awards are usually presented at the Awards Ceremony at the annual conference. This year, however, because of the pandemic, the conference was presented virtually. Even though this year has been challenging, Arkansas librarians have risen to the occasion by revamping programs and making adjustments...which is just what librarians do!

The Awards Committee was fortunate to have so many wonderful nominations to choose from. Arkansas libraries are accomplishing great things and continue their dedicated work to our communities by helping our students, neighbors, colleagues, friends, cities, schools, and universities.

The following is a list of our 2020 award recipients and a summary of their work that the awards are given to recognize.

## Ann Lightsey Children's Librarian Award

Ann Lightsey was a librarian who dedicated her life to children and reading. The award recipient for this year is **Brittany Chavez**, Young Adult Librarian at Garland County Library, Hot Springs, AR. Brittany has collaborated with area schools to host book clubs, share book talks, and discuss summer reading. She



*Chavez*

encourages students to read, enjoy books, and hosts numerous library activities for area children. Each year, she signs students up for library eCards, which allows them to check out digital books. This proved to be a lifesaver when students transitioned to virtual school in March due to the pandemic.

## Arkansas Intellectual Freedom Award

The Arkansas Intellectual Freedom Award is given to a person or group for notable contribution that has furthered the cause of intellectual freedom on behalf of a library in the state of Arkansas. This year's recipient is the **Pridefest Committee** from William F. Laman Public Library System in North Little Rock, AR. Members of the committee



*Laman Library's Pridefest Committee.*

Richard Theilig, Chris Thompson, Adam Branscum, Robin Campbell, Chance Griebel, Lena Hill, Lilit MacFarlin, Shelbie Reed, Michael Thornton, Dominic Watada, and Jonathan Webb actively participated in the annual Arkansas Pride Festival by having a booth with outreach materials, books with an LGBTQ theme, and an entry in the parade. Their efforts reached nearly 8,000 festival-goers with the message, "You Belong at Laman Library – Knowledge + Pride is Power."

## Arkansas Library Association President's Award

The President's Award is presented by the ArLA President to a person who has provided extensive assistance to the President or the Association. The award recipient this year is **Ron Russ**, Electronic & Public Services Librarian, Abington Library, at Arkansas State University, Beebe, AR. Ron has volunteered many hours of his time to the Association and the current ArLA President. He is always willing to help, is responsive to all requests, and catches the little things that others sometimes miss. Ron is an invaluable ArLA member and deserves recognition for the amazing work he does behind the scenes.



*Russ*

## Bessie D. Moore Trustee Award

Awarded annually, this award is given to an individual trustee or board of trustees who has made a significant contribution to the development of a library at the local, regional or state level.

**William C. Horrell**, who serves on the Madison County Library Board, Carroll and Madison Library

System Board, and is a Director Emeritus of the Carroll and Madison Public Library Foundation is this year's recipient. He also serves as the President of the Kingston Friends of the Library. William has been instrumental in one of the six libraries in the system, Kingston Community Library, Kingston, AR, where he is considered a "gem" of the Carroll and Madison County Library System.



*Horrell*

### Distinguished Service Award



*Fontenette*

The Distinguished Service Award is awarded annually to recognize distinguished service in librarianship, continuing service to the Arkansas Library Association, outstanding achievement in librarianship, active participation in library affairs, or notable published professional writing. This

year's recipient is **Edward Fontenette**, Library Director for the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff for his over 40 years of academic service to the university and the state of Arkansas. He has willingly taken on difficult projects, such as the NCA/Higher Learning Commission Accreditation, and worked collaboratively to see it completed. As library director he has served on various Boards including the Pine Bluff Library Board as Chair, Arts & Sciences Center for Southeast Arkansas, and the Pine Bluff Convention Center. Mr. Fontenette is very supportive of the Pine Bluff community and the university, and he also serves as a mentor for new career librarians.

### Frances P. Neal Award



*Ashcraft*

Awarded annually, the Frances P. Neal Award is given to a recently retired librarian to recognize a career of notable service in librarianship with the State of Arkansas. This year's winner is **Carolyn Ashcraft**, former State Librarian of Arkansas at the Arkansas State Library. She worked for 28 years at

the Arkansas State Library, including serving as the State Librarian for 15 years. Under her leadership Carolyn helped facilitate the transition of Arkansas' 230 public libraries into the digital era. Another significant enhancement to library services under Carolyn's leadership was the 2018 establishment of the Arkansas Digital Library Consortium (ADLC). To join libraries pay a relatively small fee based on the size of their service population. In return those libraries' users have access to a collection of over 43,000 eBooks and nearly 13,000 streaming audio books. Carolyn also founded the ALL-In program, a leadership and development program for Arkansas librarians from all library types. She maintains a near-encyclopedic knowledge of libraries, librarians, and library history.

### LaNell Compton Award

This award is given to the author of a library literature contribution published in *Arkansas Libraries*, and the 2020 recipient is **A. Blake Denton**, Special Collections Librarian & Archivist at the Fred J. Taylor Library & Technology Center located in the University of Arkansas at Monticello. Denton's article, "Happy Hunting, Old Sport! Scavenger Hunts with Gatsby and Friends at UAM's Taylor Library," was published in the Fall/Winter 2019 issue of *Arkansas Libraries*.



*Denton*

### Lorrie Shuff Paraprofessional Award



*Fischer*

Awarded annually, the Lorrie Shuff Paraprofessional Award is given to an individual to recognize distinguished Paraprofessional library service in Arkansas libraries. This year's award recipient is **Rebecca Fischer**, User Experience Assistant Manager and Outreach Coordinator from the

Saline County Library, Bob Herzfeld Memorial Library Branch, Benton, AR. She has served for over 20 years and has modeled and promoted staff development, mentored staff, and helped train them for more challenging assignments. Rebecca is currently the ALPS Chair where she deals with issues of concern to paraprofessionals.

### Retta Patrick Award

The Retta Patrick Award recognizes an individual member of the Arkansas library profession who has made an outstanding state or national contribution to school librarianship and school library development. This year's recipient is

**Chelsey Turner**, Library Media Specialist at Washington Middle School, El Dorado, Arkansas. In Chelsey's six years at Washington Middle School she has renovated the library including painting, collecting furniture, providing flexible seating, adding technology, and adding to the book collection. Her mission is to make the library a safe place that is welcoming and available to all students. She also created "The Promise Podcast" for the El Dorado School District that hosts topics pertaining to educators all over the country. Chelsey was honored in March and recognized as one of the ITEEA (International Technology and Engineering Educators Association) Teacher Excellence Award recipients in Baltimore, MD.



*Turner*

### Rising Star Award

This award recognizes a library worker who has worked in libraries less than five years with outstanding service. The recipient this year is **Adam Branscum**, Digital Services Manager at William F. Laman Public Library, North Little Rock, AR. Adam's attention to detail and passion for the underserved population is exceptional. He teaches valuable computer skills, provides mentorship, educational, and community service opportunities for



*Branscum*

young library patrons. At the start of the pandemic, Adam pivoted services to digital format with ease and hard work, and just completed a new website (hand-coded) for the library that is more accessible and easier to use for the entire community. He is truly a rising star in the library profession and embodies the spirit of providing exceptional service to every part of the community he serves.

### Suzanne Spurrier Academic Librarian Award



*Wilson*

Awarded annually, this award is presented in memory of Suzanne Spurrier, former library director at Harding University, to a currently employed academic librarian who exemplifies a spirit of outstanding service and dedication professionalism to all library patrons and an attitude of devotion

to the library profession and fellow colleagues. This year's recipient is **Lauri Wilson**, Cataloging and Digital Content Librarian at South Arkansas Community College Library, El Dorado, AR. Lauri has exhibited dedicated and selfless service for 23 years, not only in support of the students, but also the faculty, staff, and community patrons. She is a true "MVP" at SouthArk, ready and willing to help others harness the power of the library for their personal, academic, or professional success. Throughout her time at SouthArk Library she has been involved with important developments including single-handedly constructing the library's first website and transitioning the catalog online, and she is known in the SouthArk campus community as the "go-to" person who is always ready to help.

*Mindy Farley recently retired from the South Arkansas College Library in El Dorado, Arkansas.*

## Reflections on the Voyage

### *Celebrating ArLA's First Virtual Conference*

*by Philip C. Shackelford*

*Conference Coordinator and President Elect*

**T**he choice of "Charting New Waters" for this year's conference theme remains particularly appropriate as I begin this

column, one month to the day since our very first virtual conference came to a close. When President Crystal Gates decided on this uncannily prescient theme, the world had little inkling of the upheaval and tragedy that would come to characterize this past year. Instead, she and the rest of us understood



“new waters” to represent the future of this association, the importance of decisions to be made, and the compelling task that remained ahead of us to continue building upon ArLA’s progress in the journey to become a more stable, responsible, and sustainable organization.

Now, coming to the end of the year 2020, we have all come to understand this theme as representing so much more. Yes – ArLA continues to grow and strengthen, and notable achievements such as important bylaws revisions and the overhaul of the ArLA handbook stand as examples of the crucial and valuable work being completed to make



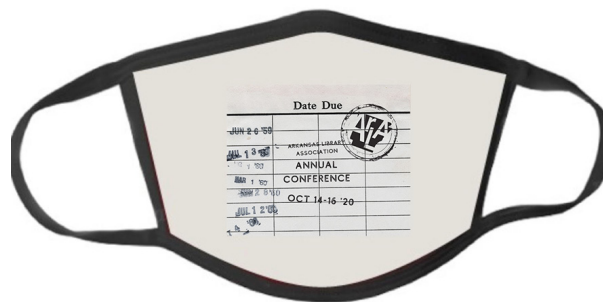
*Laman basket.*

sure we continue in our mission to serve the needs of all Arkansas library personnel. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, and all that accompanied it, “Charting New Waters” also came to mean navigating the unprecedented new challenges that Arkansas libraries faced as quarantines grew into lockdowns and so on. Back in April, the Board realized that our traditional in-person conference would not be possible, and accordingly, the Conference Committee “pivoted” to begin planning ArLA’s first ever virtual conference.

So much should and has been said in praise of the Conference Committee’s hard work and dedication to making #ArLA2020 a reality. Please join me in recognizing and celebrating the hard work and dedication that Amy McGohan, Becky Fisher, Britt Anne Murphy, Carol Coffey, David Eckert, Jessica Riedmueller, Lynn Valetutti, Mindy Farley, Nithin Lakshmana, Rebecka Virden, Richard Theilig, Ron Russ, and Susie Kirk brought to the table! Without them and their selfless work on all aspects of the conference, we would not have been able to bring you a conference this year, virtual or otherwise. Well done!

To kick things off, President Crystal Gates provided an inspirational presidential address. She spoke of the incredible job Arkansas library personnel have been doing for their communities this past year, and she encouraged us all to take this opportunity to truly notice – pay attention to our co-workers, change our perspectives, and find the purpose in the things we already do. Passion and joy were persistent refrains throughout as she encouraged us to notice what brings us joy in the work that we do, and to help those around us find their passions.

Two preconference sessions followed that afternoon – a session on professional service from Crystal Gates, Jil’Lana Heard, Jennifer



*ArLA Conference Mask.*

Wann, and Lacy Wolfe, as well as an overview of the new ALA Libraries Transform Communities Engagement Grant program (<http://www.ala.org/tools/programming/LTCEG>). These sessions, plus an informal networking hangout and ArLA's first ever virtual trivia night, wrapped up a fantastic first day of the conference!

The conference program over the next two days was filled with a variety of valuable sessions, led by fantastic library folks from all around the state and region! One of the great things about hosting a virtual conference this year is that the conference sessions were recorded, and remain available for those who registered for the conference to watch again or catch up on a session that they may have missed. Keynote speaker Margaret Verble, the author of *Maud's Line*, which was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 2016, spoke about her new novel, *Cherokee America*, praised in the *New York Times* as "an essential corrective to the racially tinged myths created to justify the annihilation of indigenous cultures and the theft of native lands." Our other keynote, Ted Quiballo, a Diversity Scholar from the ARL Kaleidoscope Program and ALA Spectrum Scholar recipient, addressed issues of diversity in the library



*Quiballo*



*Keynote speaker Margaret Verble.*

profession.

Some standout sessions for me included "Online and Ready to Help: Three Libraries, Three Realities" led by Shawna Thorup, Nithin Lakshmana, Tina Bradley, and Ron Russ; "Creating a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan for Your Library" by Leah Frieden; "Libraries Will Save the World! Implementing Sustainability at Your Library" from April Griffith, and "New Life for Old Books," by Susan Baxley and Lauri Wilson. You can find all these sessions and the rest via the conference portal from Amigos. In addition, it was fun to catch up with the excellent performers who contributed to the Performers' Showcase.

We also took care of business at conference, announcing the election results in changes to our new Bylaws, and our new slate of officers as well as the four at-large members who had been elected to our new Executive Board for 2021. The at-large members are Carol Coffey (CALs), Nithin Lakshmana (NWACC), Ron Russ (ASU-Beebe), and Jennifer Wann (ASL), and they will join the executive committee members on the newly structured board for 2021. Rachel Shankles (UCA) is our President-Elect, Janice Weddle (Hendrix College) will be secretary, and Kristen Cooke (ASL) will serve in the newly created office of Treasurer-Elect. Emily Rozario (Laman Public Library) will serve as SELA Representative. Look for their profiles in this issue.

Of course – one of my very favorite aspects of the conference each year is the awards ceremony – the special time that we set aside to recognize and celebrate the hard work that our dedicated and talented library personnel around the state do each and every day. We are privileged to have such talented and dedicated individuals working in our Arkansas libraries. The Awards Committee was blessed to have such a robust and illustrious slate of nominations to consider this year, and I would like to encourage everyone, always, to consider nominating your colleagues and co-workers to



*Book Woman of Troublesome Creek basket.*

receive these awards. These awards are a way that we have, as an association and as a profession, to recognize the achievements and dedication and leadership that our colleagues bring to their jobs every single day. Libraries in Arkansas are alive and well, dynamic institutions, and that is due to the singular commitment and selflessness displayed by our Arkansas library personnel. Be sure to check out the more detailed celebration of this year's award recipients here in the journal!

Finally, through the ArLA Virtual Scholarship Basket Auction (another first!) over a thousand dollars was raised for the ArLA scholarship! This year's scholarship recipient was Elizabeth Hurtado of the Springdale Public Library, and you can read more about her in this issue of *Arkansas Libraries*. Auction participants had the opportunity to view and bid on a wide variety of items and gift baskets submitted by both individuals and libraries around the state, place their bids in real time via Zoom, and have their prizes hand delivered by Britt Anne Murphy and Lynn Valetutti! The variety of baskets was as robust as usual, from quilts to an antique silver tea service to Pampered Chef to a basket themed around *The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek* (compliments of ASL)!

All told, this was a year of many firsts, and I believe that this experience was a valuable one for the association in preparing us for whatever the future may hold, as well as giving us a framework to consider how we might be able to offer additional professional development and support to our members beyond the annual conference itself. I could not be prouder of the Conference Committee and the work that they did, "charting new waters" along with every library staff member across the state this year.



*Field & Forest Quilt from Mountainburg.*

It was an unpredictable journey, but we made it, and I believe we are in good shape to continue learning and planning for the future.

Get ready, get set, and mark your calendars for October 15-17, 2021! Rachel Shankles of UCA will be serving as President-Elect and Conference Coordinator next year, and she and her team will have the honor of bringing us back to plans for an in-person conference\* in Fort Smith! Next year's theme will be "Towards New Horizons" – a timely and meaningful charge as we reflect on what we have learned, build upon the progress we have made, and commit to being ambitious on purpose for the benefit of our members and the communities that we serve.

See you at #ArLA2021!

\*Update: the ArLA Executive Board voted at its December meeting to move the 2021 ArLA Conference to a virtual setting with some events happening in-person at regional hubs. As a result, the dates of the virtual conference have shifted to October 12-15, 2021.

*Philip Shackelford is library director of the South Arkansas College Library in El Dorado, Arkansas.*



*Log cabin quilt benefits auction.*



*Silver tea service benefits ArLA auction.*



*ArLA Conference cocktail - Arkansan 75.*



*Fall at Rogers Public Library.*



## AROUND ARKANSAS

by Heather Hays, Associate Editor

**D**ena Kay Plaisted of Little Rock passed away on September 22, 2020 at her home. She was one of the early Arkansas AHEC librarians, worked at the National Network of Libraries of Medicine RML in Houston, and was head of Access Services for the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Library for many years. She was very active in SCC and she was the SCC/MLA Distinguished Service Award recipient in 1993. She retired from UAMS in 2011.

<https://www.dialanddudleyfuneralhome.com/obituary/dena-plaisted>



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I am sad to report the passing of Linda R. Pine, Archivist and Assistant Professor Emeritus, UA Little Rock Ottenheimer Library. Linda passed away this week after a lengthy illness.

Linda joined the university as a staff member in 1983, and became a member of the faculty in 1991, serving in a number of positions during her 30 year career. Positions included Head of Archives and Special Collections, and later Director of Archives at the Ottenheimer Library, as well as Senior Archivist at the Center of Arkansas History and Culture.

Linda led in the development of rich collections in Arkansas history, the preservation of the records and history of the university, and played a significant role in developing the collaboration between UA Little Rock and the Central Arkansas Library System to create a shared repository of Arkansas history and culture.

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I am sad to report the passing of Dr. Brent Nelson, Assistant Professor Emeritus, UA Little Rock Ottenheimer Library. Brent passed away unexpectedly on July 31, 2020.

Brent retired from UA Little Rock on December 31, 2016 after serving in a number of positions during his 37-year career in the University of Arkansas system. Brent joined the faculty of the University of Arkansas Graduate Institute of Technology in 1979 and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock in 1986. He oversaw the merger of the UA Graduate Institute of Technology Library with the Ottenheimer Library and served as Reference and Instruction Librarian, Undergraduate Research and Grants Librarian, and part-time Instructor for the English Department and Library/Information Science programs during his 30-year career at UA Little Rock.

<https://www.cremationservicesofarkansas.com/obituary/brent-nelson>

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Charlotte Evans Mulford, age 76, of Conway, Arkansas, passed away Wednesday, September 9, 2020, at Little Rock, Arkansas. She was born March 19, 1944, in Prescott, Arizona, the daughter of Charles and Laura (Christian) Evans.

She was a member of Grace United Methodist Church; was a librarian; and a professor at UCA College and Henderson College for over 30 years. She loved cats, dogs, and other animals.

<https://www.rollerfuneralhomes.com/services.asp?locid=52&page=odetail&id=56522>

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Arkansas Senator John Boozman supports the HOTSPOTS Act proposed by Senators Manchin and Collins. The HOTSPOTS Act would create a 2-year, \$160 million hotspot pilot program with a minimum allotment of \$1.6 million per State to allow States, Tribes, and Territories to purchase and distribute Internet-connected devices to libraries in low-income and rural areas.

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LDD2 public and academic libraries meet to share best practices and enjoy great networking. On October 30, LDD2 met at Jacksonport State Park Visitor Center near Newport. Mark Ballard, Park Interpreter, gave a presentation about the history of Jacksonport and its current outdoor recreation opportunities. He also provided us a private tour of the recently renovated historic Jacksonport Courthouse. The photo is outside of the Visitor Center overlooking the confluence of the White and Black Rivers.



*Pictured: David Eckert, Vanessa Adams, Pamela Meridith, Jennifer Ballard, Ashley Burris, April Shepherd, Tonya Ryals, Jennifer Chilcoat.*

Sarah Gowdy Herford began working July 1 as the Founding Librarian of Thaden School. Sarah previously worked at Bentonville Public Library as the Teen Services Librarian.

The State Library held a reception for Carolyn Ashcraft's retirement on June 23. Carolyn served 28 years with the Arkansas State Library and 15 years as the State Librarian. During the reception, she received written honors from Governor Hutchinson and Secretary of State John Thurston. She was also presented with the prestigious Arkansas Diamond Award. The photo shows the State Library board presentation of an inscribed silver platter in honor of her service.



*Pictured: Joan O'Neal, Deborah Knox, Jo Ann Campbell, Caroline Ashcraft, Jo Ann Cooper, Pamela Meridith, Donette Smith, Donna McDonald.*

Senator Boozman honored Carolyn Ashcraft with a special tribute to her career in libraries. Senator Boozman states: "Carolyn has a dedication to the State of Arkansas and a passion for books, and

her departure from a career that blended the two will leave a significant void in Arkansas' library community."

To read the full speech, please follow this link: <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2020/6/22/senate-section/article/s3125-3?loclr=cga-search>

Congratulations Carolyn!

Donna McDonald retired from her directorship of the Arkansas River Valley Regional Library System (ARVRLS) in April. Donna enjoyed a long and successful career, representing Arkansas libraries in regional, state and national leadership roles, including legislative advocacy and service to United for Libraries, a Division of the American Library Association. Donna currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Arkansas State Library. She is succeeded at ARVRLS by Misty Hawkins. Congratulations to both!

In May, David Johnson received the Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Tennessee, School of Information Sciences. Learn about David, Fayetteville Public Library and the much-deserved honor at <https://t.e2ma.net/click/p87q4c/dbm6v0/lpeoio>.

Anna Sharon was promoted to the Teen Services Librarian position at Bentonville Public Library in August. She is completing her master of library science degree at the University of Kentucky. BPL recently promoted Sarah Akers and Asele Mack to the full-time team as library specialists, and welcomed several new faces in part-time positions.

A reminder to Arkansas librarians: please submit news items to me for the next *Arkansas Libraries* issue! Births, deaths, new hires, retirements, funding, new buildings, and news that affects Arkansas libraries would be perfect fits for this column. Just jot me an email at [hhays@bentonvillear.com](mailto:hhays@bentonvillear.com), and you'll most likely see it published in our journal.

*Heather Hays is senior librarian at the Bentonville Public Library.*





## ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT SERVICES

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“ We are proud of the strong partnership we have with Amigos and we are appreciative of everything you and your team does for ABOS. This year we saw over five times as many conference registrations than last year and we could not have pulled off the conference if it were not for Amigos Library Services and their outstanding team. Thank you, Amigos, for all you do for ABOS, our ABOS membership, and our annual conference! ”

David Kelsey | President Elect  
Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services

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*Pine Bluff/Jefferson County new Main Library. To read more, see pg. 8.*