

ARKANSAS LIBRARIES

FALL-WINTER 2021

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BRACKETT LIBRARY

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ARLA'S SECOND VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

○

2022 ARLA OFFICERS ELECTED

○

NEW STRATEGIC PLAN FOR ARLA

Arkansas Library Association, 2021

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Intellectual Freedom - Shenise McGhee

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Arkansas Libraries

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Arkansas Libraries, Fall-Winter 2021

FROM THE ARLA PRESIDENT: Giving Thanks for the Future!

Philip Shackelford
2021 ArLA President

Not long ago, as I led an informal tour around our library, someone wondered aloud about the possibility that libraries of the future would essentially be server farms – cold, impersonal spaces where books and study rooms had been replaced by thousands of blind, blinking lights transferring data back and forth between digital storage and end users. (You may insert an involuntary shudder here as needed – I certainly did.) Truthfully, this is not the first time such sentiments have been shared with me, but I do feel that the past few years have been instrumental in shaping my strategy for answering these folks. My response was casual but firm.

“No, I don’t think so.”

To me, libraries are not really in the *materials* business, even though I’m sure some might disagree. We’re really not even in the *information* business, which challenges future visions of dystopian, server farm libraries. November’s *Lunch, Learning, and Libraries* webinar was provided by April Griffith, from the Carnegie Public Library in Eureka Springs. She explored ways to enhance sustainability in libraries – bringing the concepts of permaculture into the library world so that our buildings, initiatives, and even partnerships can be optimized through careful attention to detail and long-term vision. Early on in her presentation April offered her thoughts on the enduring relevance of libraries, and I thought it was a fantastic encapsulation of what libraries are all about.

“Libraries remain relevant because of the ability to gracefully pivot in the way we provide access to materials and services to best suit our community.”

At this point we are all VERY familiar with the word *pivot*. It is the phrase, however, to *gracefully pivot*, that I think deserves special attention, together with the important reminder that our decisions should be made in support of opportunities that *best suit* our communities. We have seen numerous examples of this throughout the shared experience that the COVID-19 pandemic has created, and Arkansas libraries are performing wonderfully in the



Shackelford



face of significant challenges.

In this, perhaps, the pressures brought on by the pandemic are not all that unprecedented. At the very least, the response of libraries across the country certainly fits into a pattern that we have come to know well in this profession – one of dedication, persistence, creativity, adaptability, and yes – graceful pivots when and where required. If nothing else, this professional ethos, if you will, should give us all hope for the future, as libraries and the people who work in them will find increasing opportunities to deploy their talents, skills, and resources in the service of our communities.

And there it is – I believe that libraries today are about *people* – promoting opportunity for individuals and progress for communities. We should continue to place people at the center of what we do and understand that everything else is secondary by comparison – yes, even books. But to me this is encouraging – people will ALWAYS need help navigating challenges that come their way or taking advantage of resources and opportunities to learn, grow, and thrive – and to me this means that libraries and the people who work in them will ALWAYS have a role to play, serving, innovating, and providing. We have a future – a future purpose, future responsibilities, and future opportunities – and for this I am thankful.

By now some of you may have realized that I’m an optimist. I am inspired by potential, and I believe that working together, we can accomplish great things. I believe that the future of the Arkansas Library Association is a bright one. As a librarian and lifelong library lover, I am constantly advocating for libraries and librarians – hoping to inspire more and more students and patrons to take advantage of the resources their library has to offer as well as supporting library staff in the incredible work that they do. Sometimes, though, it can be easy to focus on the trees rather than taking a moment to appreciate the entire forest. Libraries are alive and well, and library staff continue to bring selfless dedication to their work, as recent events have uniquely demonstrated. Ultimately, I am thankful to work in a field that I am passionate about, a profession that is active, creative, and dedicated, and in an environment that affords great opportunity for

learning, for variety, and for helping others succeed.

Personally, I would like to thank you all for your continued dedication, selflessness, and hard work this year. It has been an honor to serve as your president, and it has been exciting to see all of the wonderful things that library folks around our state are doing to serve each other and their communities. Libraries are dynamic and powerful places – *a powerful force for good in a world that needs all the forces for good it can possibly get*. Our job as librarians is to help those who come to us harness this power for themselves

and their personal, educational, or professional goals. Please join me in celebrating these wonderful places and the people who have made it their mission to serve in them. Let's give thanks for this wonderful future that we have.

Philip Shackelford is library director at South Arkansas Community College and serves as the 2021 President of ArLA.

FROM THE EDITOR: Intellectual Freedom

by *Britt Anne Murphy*

Library Director, Hendrix College

A prominent topic that arose from our submissions and that has been in the news over the last six months is one familiar to all librarians: censorship. In my almost 25-year career in libraries, I personally have never been confronted with challenges to any resource or program. Mostly this is due to the environment where I've spent most of my career – a small, private Methodist college that is known for its openness and liberal leanings. It is a place where no tax payer has entered vocalizing their displeasure with a book or display.

The tenets of intellectual freedom were drummed into my formational librarian brain in library school, and I remember learning how important it is to have policies in place when materials are challenged, and that ALA would support librarians who faced challenges. From my secure standing at Hendrix, the Harry Potter challenges of the early 2000s in Arkansas sparked interest, but were swiftly dealt with by smart lawyers and strong legal precedent. The social construct and political temperature has shifted in 20 years. When it comes to libraries, there seems to be less interest in protecting individual rights or speech, and more interest in protecting entire communities from ideas and information certain individuals find offensive. Many librarians are forced to censor materials before they even arrive in our libraries because we are expected to keep the peace in our communities, even though in



Murphy

doing so, we neglect or subvert important voices and perspectives of the people we serve.

April Frost from ASU Beebe explores censorship as an academic subject, and then John McGraw from the Faulkner-Van Buren Library System takes us through an incident at his library. We also included a written response to a challenge at the Craighead County Public Library in Jonesboro. Taken together we can see how censorship erupts during times when emotions run high, and how social media can turn strong feelings into hysteria, only to be calmed by people, well, like us. Yes, having policies help, and yes, the support of our colleagues across the state and nation are essential in returning some in our communities back to reason. We are in the information business, but as John reminds us, we are also in the business of supporting our communities – every part of our communities, “We never want to buy a book no one will read, and we never want to put on a program that is for no one.” So, if you're doing a good job with collection development and programming, someone will always be offended.

In this issue you'll also find out what happened at conference, celebrate our award winners and scholarship recipient, read up on who the Emerging Leaders and board members will be in 2022, and find out the Association's strategic plan for the next several years. Our favorite columns return for information, advice, and encouragement. And you'll see a swath of pictures representing just how beautiful our libraries are in fall and winter. I hope this issue will leave you with a degree of optimism about your profession and colleagues. We are in this together, but so are the communities we serve.

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

Hooray for New Horizons!

Reflecting on ArLA's Second Virtual Conference

by Rachel Shankles

Conference Chair and President-Elect

Our journey this year, so aptly named by President Philip Shackelford as “Towards New Horizons,” began by implementing new Arkansas Library Association bylaws that the membership voted on and passed at the Annual Business Meeting in October of 2020. These new bylaws changed the structure of the Association, and our activities this year have shown the positive effects of the major reorganization. As ArLA undertook establishing Communities of Interest, broad support for these groups unfolded. Each was founded around common interests, and



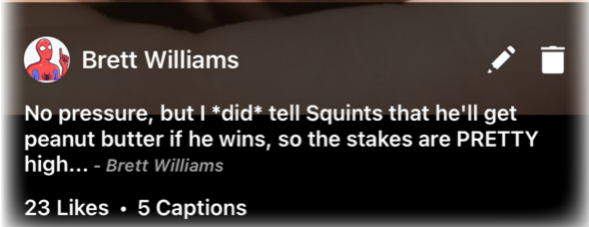
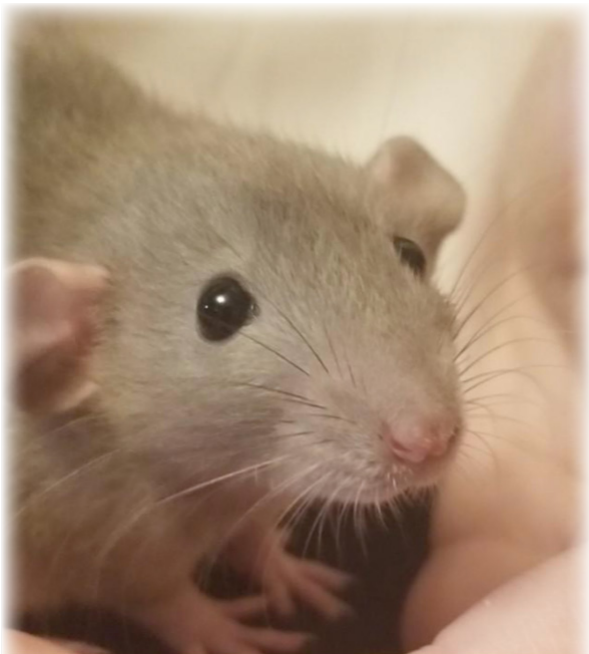
Shankles



each was actively participating in getting information to its members – from free PD for school librarians through COSLLE (Community of School Librarians and Library Educators) to many offerings via Zoom for all types of librarians and library workers. It is amazing how well they have done, and without the bylaws change, they would not have existed. Our organization now reflects its members in a more equitable and inclusive way. From MELLW (Mental & Emotional Lives of Library Workers) to MArLA (Making Arkansas Libraries Accessible) and RISci (Reference & Instruction Services Community of Interest), there are groups for everyone – currently 13 in all to choose from.

Just as we thought things were getting back to normal and as the 2021 Annual Conference was being planned in person for Ft. Smith, the Delta Variant of the COVID-19 virus disrupted our lives and library services once more. Soon the ArLA board voted to postpone the in-person conference another year. Then the conference committee got busy examining and comparing platforms for a totally virtual conference. Meanwhile, thanks to Past President Crystal Gates, who successfully negotiated another extension on our contract with the Ft. Smith Convention Center, no ArLA money was lost. In January, the committee adopted Whova as the online platform to host the October conference. There was a learning curve but with Ron Russ's expertise and my IT background, tech support wasn't needed that many times as we built the conference agenda from the ground up. The Conference Committee began learning its capabilities to insure an interactive and cost-effective conference experience for the Association. The 2021 ArLA Virtual Conference could not have led us closer to Philip's envisioned new horizon.

Thanks to the hard work of our PR and social

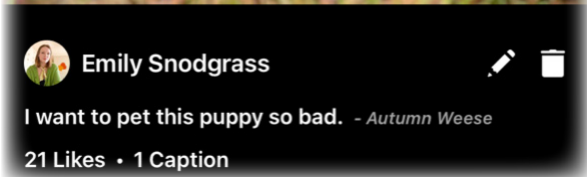


Brett Williams won first place for his caption in the Pet Photo Contest.

media representatives on the conference committee, the word got out on Facebook, Twitter, and via postcards using the amazing graphics of Mandy Bashaw. Attendance numbers racked up as a result of these, and the journal article and program publications too.

The registration fee for the conference, approved by the board, was very accessible, and as a result a record number of 39 institutions signed up academic and public library teams. All of our projections to determine the budget were exceeded in the final attendance count except for having only one sponsor, Emporia University, who benefitted by being publicized on the back of the conference tee shirt given free to the first 200 to register. I really thought 200 attendees would be the max, but we ended up with 416 attendees, with 85 of those being speakers. Fourteen vendors and one sponsor were represented with virtual booths in the exhibition area of Whova, and many wonderful comments came in post conference about the traffic and interactions using this platform.

Over 150 photos were entered in the Pet Photo Contest which garnered 925 likes that helped select the winners of the Most Liked Pet and the Favorite



Emily Snodgrass won first place in the Pet Photo Contest.

Caption Contests. The Leaderboard lit up like a pinball machine until the final evening cutoff. Thanks to Becky Fischer for helping with the contests. These facts prove the interaction rate using Whova was satisfactory for attendees.

I owe many thanks to 2021 ArLA Conference Committee members Ron Russ, Philip Shackelford, Jessica Riedmueller, Susie Kirk, John McGraw, Jeff Whittingham, Jil'lana Heard, Darby Wallace, Britt Murphy, Mandy Bashaw, Tonya Ryals, Becky Fischer, Tina Murdock, and Crystal Gates. They jumped in to learn the app and find great sessions. Knowing that the mental health of library workers was very critical at this point in the pandemic, it was decided to address it as a track of sessions at this conference. I thank the MELLW Community of Interest and Amanda Moore for helping provide great breaks and sessions. We looked for sessions about curbside services and new titles, plus anything that would make a hard job easier with budgets getting cut. ArLA 21 attendees had over 80 sessions from which to choose.

The meetings of the Communities of Interest on the first morning of the conference were lively and had a lot of interest. The Presidential Address was one of most attended sessions overall. These sessions were the most popular based on being put on attendee's personal schedules:

- Danger Zone: Burnout – Understanding Stress and Harnessing the Power of Mindset (87 personal agenda adds)
- Opening Session: Presidential Address (89 personal agenda adds)
- Keynote: If It Weren't So Bad, It Would Be Great! Libraries, Pandemics, and the Future of Patrons on the Curb (100 personal agenda adds)



American Library Association President Patty Wong was a keynote speaker.

- Seeing Your Library Through Your Patrons' Eyes (70 personal agenda adds)
- You are Better Than You Think: Overcoming Impostor Syndrome in the Workplace (66 personal agenda adds)

The keynote sessions were well attended with Kieran Hixon's session most attended. Patty Wong, President of American Library Association, spent most of her session bragging on Arkansas libraries and our Arkansas State Library for initiatives and funding. We traveled Arkansas with Joe David Rice and drooled as Kat Robinson led us to all the best hamburgers at drive-ins throughout the state. And we learned a lot about creativity and the art of writing by two distinctively different authors – John Horner Jacobs, novelist of horror and murder themes, and Talya Tate Boerner, daughter of the Delta.

Wednesday highlights were the Basket Auction (there was a tie on the highest bids – two baskets sold for \$170 each) orchestrated by the amazing Britt Murphy. Among the eighteen basket entries was everything from a travel suitcase filled with travel accessories getting us ready for “new horizons,” to the Arkansas State Library's “If All Arkansas Read the Same Book” basket centered around *The Lions of Fifth Avenue* book, to seasonal baskets filled with Halloween and fall goodies. The Trivia Contest that evening was emceed by the musically inclined, multitalented Amber Wilson who led the contest to its thrilling conclusion with the team “The Quizzards of Oz” winning bragging rights for the year. Between both these fundraising events, ArLA raised almost \$1,600 which will go towards the LEAF account for library education and assistance.

Other popular sessions were *Harry Potter and the Law*, *Crystal Queen: Creating Clearly Supportive and Inclusive Libraries for All Communities*, and



The Halloween for Grown Ups basket was one of the seasonal entries in the Basket Auction.

110 Years of ArLA. The conference ended with the Annual ArLA Business Meeting, during which the new 2022 officers were announced. Carol Coffey of CALS will be at the reigns of the 2022 Annual Conference scheduled for October as an in-person conference in Ft. Smith. Other important events included the presentation of our annual scholarship winner, Heather Reinold of UCA, and the recognition of our many award winners during the Awards Ceremony on Thursday. You can read about them in this issue of *Arkansas Libraries*.

The library community came together online October 12-15 not in an Arkansas city, but on a new platform called Whova. And all the surveys and polls indicated a good experience for all. I am very proud to have been a part of this virtual conference as your president elect and conference chair for 2021. I am so glad I had such a supportive Executive Board and helpful committee to get the job done in a way that promoted libraries and librarianship in Arkansas in a time of uncertainty and change. These times leave us all searching and waiting so my theme for ArLA 2022 will be *Finding the New Normal*. I feel this is appropriate as we are still hoping to drop the masks and return to normal operations. As the pandemic unfolds in wave after wave of infections, and with the tweaking of vaccines and medical treatments, and adjustment of safety protocols, the working world is still not normal. But we are seeking what we think will be included in the new normal and evaluating what we will keep from where we have been. This was what Keynote Kieran Hixon spoke about at the conference. In closing, I share this quote that reassures me Arkansas libraries will share information on what worked and what didn't, and we will all feel good about where we are heading, although that path is not clear, “It feels good to be lost in the right direction.”



The Lions of Fifth Avenue Scholarship Basket.

REMOTE ACCESS Small Public Libraries in Arkansas



Sabine Schmidt AND Don House Introduction by Robert Cochran

“*Remote Access* was a delight to read. There were times when I smiled, when I shed a tear, and when I thought, ‘Yes, they got it.’ The rich story of public libraries and their value to a community.”
—Carolyn Ashcraft, former Arkansas State Librarian



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2022 ArLA Officers Elected

by Crystal Gates

Nominating Committee Chair

Our 2022 ArLA Officers were recently elected, and we have a wonderful group of leaders ready to lead us into the new year. Our 2022 Board consists of new and seasoned members who bring a wide variety of experiences and skill sets together for ArLA's benefit. Here's a bit about each. While each officer is responsible for various aspects of governing our association, you may call upon any if you have a need or concern. We are here for YOU.

Rachel Shankles is our president. Rachel retired in 2013 after more than 40 years in public school education with over 25 of those years in libraries. She took a short break before beginning a new career as the program coordinator for the Library Media Masters at UCA. She taught online while living near Lake DeGray at Bismarck on a farm in a farmhouse that is 100+ years old. She says teaching is in her blood and has no desire to slow down although she retired from UCA this past summer to have more time for her volunteer work with organizations. Rachel has served in various positions within ArLA and AAIM, and won many awards from both organizations over the years. Most recently, Rachel was awarded the Frances P. Neal Award from ArLA. And, last but certainly not least, Rachel writes children's books with the help of her young grandchildren, including the *Triple S Farm Adventures* and the *McLain Street Gang* about growing up in small town Arkansas.

Carol Coffey is our President-Elect. Carol is the patron experience and library analytics coordinator at the Central Arkansas Library System in Little Rock. In the 24 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



Shankles



Coffey

Committee, and the Public Libraries and Trustees Division of ArLA, as well as member-at-large on the 2021 ArLA Executive Board. 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.

Philip Shackelford is our past president. Philip is the library director at the South Arkansas Community College in El Dorado. He has served in various roles on the ArLA Executive Board since 2017, and serves the Arkansas library community in a variety of other capacities, including as secretary of ARKLink and as associate editor for the *Arkansas Libraries* journal. Philip holds a Master's degree in History and a Master's degree in Library and Information Science, both



Shackelford

from Kent State University in Kent, Ohio. His academic research focuses on the Cold War history of the U.S. Air Force, the Air Force Security Service, and the history of intelligence and national security during the early Cold War. He is an avid vegetable gardener and dog dad to a 100-pound Great Pyrenees named Buddy.

Janice Weddle is our secretary. Janice is the assistant librarian for instruction and outreach at Hendrix College's Olin C. Bailey Library in Conway. She wears many hats in our organization, including chair of the ArLA Bylaws & Handbook Committee as well as serving as a member of the editorial board for *Arkansas Libraries*. Janice 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. She believes in the power of education, especially the liberal arts and sciences, to help people reach their full potential, and she appreciates that her role as a librarian lets her encourage that growth. In her free time, she enjoys cooking, traveling, and daydreaming about both while watching PBS programs.



Weddle

Kathleen Ashmore is our treasurer. Kathleen is the director of the Lonoke County Library System in Cabot, and has worked in public libraries in Arkansas, Missouri, Nevada, and Montana for over 15 years. She lives in Cabot with her husband and 9-year-old son and enjoys regular family visits with her two adult girls. If she's not at work, she is probably at home hanging with family, reading, or finding more projects to do.



Ashmore

Crystal Gates is our ALA Councilor. Crystal is the executive director at the William F. Laman Public Library System in North Little Rock. Crystal has served in various roles for professional associations including ArLA, SELA, AAAL, and ALA. She was recently appointed to the ALA Membership Committee and ALA Chapter Relations Committee for 2021-2023. According to her family, because she made them check out her books using a file card box system as a child, she was always meant to work in a library. Her passions include staff development, strategic planning, and creating inclusive library environments and services. During her downtime, you can find her reading, cooking, spending time with family, and traveling.



Gates

Emily Rozario is our SELA state representative. Emily is a youth services librarian at the William F. Laman Public Library System in North Little Rock. Emily moved to Arkansas from Iowa with her husband and has been working at the William F. Laman Library since August 2017. Emily works at the Argenta Branch of the Laman Library system and enjoys working with the patrons. She's been serving as the SELA representative for the ArLA Board since 2018. Emily received her MLIS from the University of Pittsburgh in 2016. In her free time, she likes to read, knit, bake, and spend time with her husband and their new daughter.



Rozario

We have four members-

at-large. These individuals represent the entire ArLA membership. In addition to attending board meetings, they serve in liaison roles between the Board and Communities of Interest.

John McGraw is the regional director of the Faulkner-Van Buren Regional Library System in Conway. He has worked in various positions for both academic and public libraries. John previously served as the Public Libraries chair for ArLA and is currently the AAAL vice-president. John lives in the woods with his wife, his beasts, and two children.



McGraw



Jamison-Miller

Janine Jamison-Miller is library coordinator for the Arkansas State Library in Little Rock. She has worked in public libraries for more than thirteen years. Janine loves meeting new people, helping them to reach their goals within their career, and inspires lifelong learning. Janine is always challenging herself to continue to learn and grow.

Ron Russ is the longtime electronic and public services librarian at ASU-Beebe. He has served in leadership positions in ArLA, ALA, ARKLink, and is currently a member of the Shared Governance Council at ASU-Beebe. He is also a recipient of the 2007 Suzanne Spurrier Outstanding Academic Librarian Award and the 2016 and 2020 President's Award. His interests outside of libraries are jazz music, photography, and gardening.



Russ

Jennifer Wann is the manager of library development at the Arkansas State Library in Little Rock. She is interested in developing statewide programs that assist libraries



Wann

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. Jennifer serves as the project director for the Arkansas Library Leadership Institute (ALL-In) and recently served on the ARSL *Outstanding*

in their Field Leadership Advisory Committee. She also writes the "Face of AR Libraries" column for *Arkansas Libraries*. She is a certified practitioner of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Jennifer's MBTI 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.

Fayetteville Public Library Wins 2021 ALA Design Showcase Award

by *Maylon Rice*

Fayetteville Public Library

The American Library Association has honored the Fayetteville Public Library with the 2021 Library Design Showcase recently in the September/October 2021 issue of *American Libraries*. The American Library Association's annual print and visual showcase celebrates new and renovated libraries that address user needs in unique, interesting, and effective ways.

That this year's slate featured building projects completed during the pandemic makes them even more noteworthy. The bulk of the 100,000 square foot expansion and renovation of the current 88,000 square foot Fayetteville Public Library took place as the library had limited patrons inside the building. During the pandemic, library staff delivered book and material pick-ups masked at the curbside. An expanded virtual presence also allowed many library services offered online in a Zoom or virtual format. Most of the book clubs, for instance, met on Zoom in 2020-2021. The *American Libraries* article notes that despite libraries being temporarily closed or operating at reduced hours because of COVID-19 restrictions, beautiful new facilities and innovatively renovated spaces continued to open to the public over the past year and a half.



Photo by Kerri McMahon.

This was the second time Fayetteville Public Library has been awarded the American Library Association's Library Design Showcase award. The first time was when the original Blair Library opened in 2004. The following year, 2005, the new Fayetteville Public Library was named the "Library of the Year" by the Library Journal. In the *American Libraries* articles by Phil Morehart, a senior editor at *American Libraries*, profiled the expansion by MSR Design of Minneapolis especially for the expansion's "new spaces for the community to create, learn and connect." Those new and expanded spaces for the community were the results of patron meetings, beginning as far back as 2012, where the Fayetteville community listed the needs and wants in the design of this new 100,000 square foot addition.

From the *American Libraries*, Morehart wrote: "The renovation of Fayetteville Public Library has produced new spaces for the community to create, learn, and connect. Large windows in the elongated horizontal expansion provide ample natural light for the stacks and reading and congregating areas. Additional spaces for learning and other experiences include a 700-seat event center with a stage and retractable seating, a teaching kitchen and café, an art and movement room, and an innovation center with audio and visual production studios, a simulation lab, a fabrication and robotics studio, photography and virtual reality studios, a podcast booth, and collaboration space."

This project style and project type profiled by the magazine was as "Renovation and expansion":

- Architect: MSR Design
- Size: 168,000 square feet
- Cost: \$49 million
- Photo: Crossland Construction.

The \$50 million project was funded by an increased library millage to pay for \$27 million of the costs with the private \$23 million fundraising portion of the project still underway in 2021.

Other libraries included in the ALA 2021 Library Design Showcase were: The D. H. Hill Jr. Library at North Carolina State University in Raleigh;

Neilson Library at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts; John and Claudia Belk Upper School Learning Center at Charlotte (N.C.) Country Day School; Baldwin Public Library in Birmingham, Michigan; Cincinnati and Hamilton County (Ohio) Public Library, Price Hill branch; the Salt Lake City Public Library, Sprague branch; the Meridian (Idaho) Library District; the Homestead (Fla.) Cybrarium; the Stanley A. Milner Public Library in Edmonton (Alberta) Canada; and the East Baton Rouge (La.) Parish Library, River Center branch.

During the pandemic, Fayetteville Public Library has not held a formal grand opening, but rather featured several donors and patrons in privately held receptions. FPL predicts with the declining COVID-19 infections, an expansion celebration will

be held in early 2022. Most recently, the project was featured in the Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce’s regional awards ceremony for Construction and Development in 2021. It won the “Generational Award” for its projected impact on generations to come. The Fayetteville Public Library and its general contractor Crossland Construction Co. of Northwest Arkansas were among several notable construction projects ongoing in the region.

Maylon Rice is an emeritus Board of Trustee member and friend of the Fayetteville Public Library in Fayetteville, Arkansas.



Upper photo by Patrick Weldon, lower photo by Kerri McMahon.



Arkansas Librarians' Achievements Recognized Virtually at the ArLA 2021 Awards Presentation

by Allie Stevens

2021 ArLA Awards Chair

The annual ArLA Awards are always one of the highlights of the conference for me, but this year's awards were particularly special. It is a difficult time to be in our field for so many reasons, and I'm continually amazed at how well Arkansas librarians rise to the challenges (literally and figuratively, lately) in the interest of supporting their communities, whether those communities are comprised of the general public, college students and professors, school age children and their teachers, or other groups. Everyone who was nominated for an award this year was so deserving, and the committee was in the unenviable position of having to make some really hard decisions. We were thrilled, though, to be able to give these awards to such an incredible group of people who are making a big difference for all the citizens of our state.

The **Ann Lightsey Children's Librarian Award** recognizes a current or recently retired children's librarian who, like the award's namesake, has provided dedicated and exceptional service to young people in Arkansas. As YA/Adult Services Librarian at Cabot Public Library, **Kirsten Seidel** has welcomed an increasing number of teens to the library for a wide variety of programs, reached homebound teens who were previously unable to utilize library services, and implemented a thriving social media presence for the library. She is currently working toward her MLIS.

The biennial **Arkansiana Award** is presented to the author(s) of a book published within the previous two calendar years that represents a significant contribution to Arkansas heritage



Seidel



and culture. This year, the committee has chosen a winner for all three categories of the award.

The **Arkansiana Award for Adult Fiction** has been given to **Marla Cantrell** for her book of Arkansas-based short stories, *Early Morning in the Land of Dreams*. A native of Alma, Arkansas, Marla's non-fiction work has been published in the *Huffington Post* and *Woman's World*, as well as many regional and state publications. She earned an Arkansas Arts Council Fellowship Award in Fiction. *Early Morning in the Land of Dreams* collects stories set clearly in one of the four seasons in a real or imagined version of Arkansas.

The Vapors: A Southern Family, the New York Mob, and the Rise and Fall of Hot Springs, America's Forgotten Capital of Vice by **David Hill** is the winner of the 2021 **Arkansiana Award for Adult Nonfiction**.

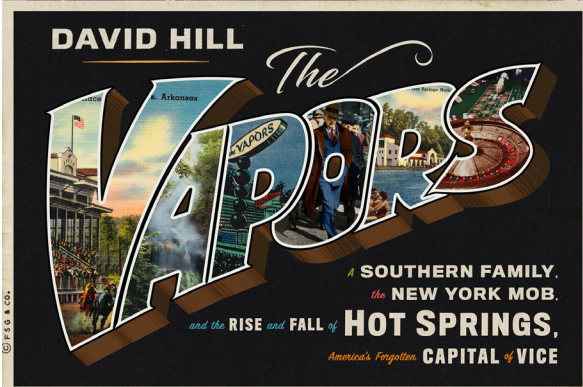
The Vapors traces the extraordinary history of three people in the lavish world of gangsters and gamblers in Hot Springs between the 1930s and the 1960s in a riveting nonfiction narrative. David, a Hot Springs native, currently lives in New York and is a regular contributor to *The Ringer* and the host of the Spotify original podcast "Gamblers." His work has been featured on "This American Life," in *Esquire*, *GQ*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *The*



Cantrell



Hill



New Yorker, and in various other publications in print and across the internet.

Sisters **Darcy Pattison** and **Eileen Hutcheson**



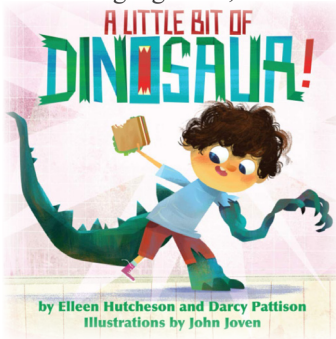
Pattison



Hutcheson

are the recipients of this year's **Arkansiana Award for Juvenile Literature** for *A Little Bit of Dinosaur*. This environmentally conscious picture book traces a single calcium atom on its journey from the bones of a T-Rex all the way to the cheese sandwich on a child's plate with humor, empathy, and scientific accuracy. Darcy Pattison's works have received starred reviews in *Publisher's Weekly*, *Kirkus*, and the *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, and her awards include the Irma Black Honor award, five NSTA Outstanding Science Trade Books, Eureka! Nonfiction Honor book, two Junior Library Guild selections, two NCTE

Notable Children's Books in Language Arts, and a 2021 Notable Social Studies Trade Books. She's the 2007 recipient of the Arkansas Governor's Arts Award for Individual Artist for her work in children's literature. Eileen Hutcheson was a Biology and Anatomy/Physiology instructor for thirty years. She has her National Board Certification in Science. Hutcheson has taught elementary science students for museum programs and Audubon camps. She has received many grants and was awarded the Christa McAuliffe Fellowship for Arkansas, and a Fulbright Memorial Fund Fellowship for a three-week program in Japan.



This year's **Arkansas Intellectual Freedom Award** has been awarded



McGraw

to children's services librarian **Mary Spears Polk** and director **John McGraw** along with the entire **Faulkner County Library staff**. This award recognizes an individual or a group that have made significant contributions in support of intellectual freedom on behalf of a library in Arkansas, exemplified by the Faulkner County Library's commitment to providing story time programming for all parts of their community. Despite pushback from some lawmakers and community members, the library went forward with an LGBTQ-themed storytime program and provided a forum for community input at a public board meeting.



Polk

The **Bessie B. Moore Trustee Award** is given

annually to an individual trustee or a board of trustees that have made a substantial contribution to the development of a library at the local, regional, or state level. This year's recipient is **Dr. Jeff Whittingham**, a long-time member of the Faulkner County Library Board of Trustees and professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning at the University of Central Arkansas. Dr. Whittingham's current research interests focus on the teaching habits and use of graphic novels by teachers and school librarians.



Whittingham

Ruth Hyatt is the recipient of this year's **Distinguished Service Award** for the tireless enthusiasm, motivation, and encouragement she has provided to Arkansas's youth-serving librarians during the COVID-19 pandemic from her position as



Hyatt

Youth Services Coordinator at the Arkansas State Library. From transitioning the Youth Services Workshop to a virtual format to her weekly Programming Librarian Zoom sessions, Ruth has had a significant, positive effect on library services for young people as librarians pivoted to virtual and digital

programming and services.

The annual **Frances P. Neal Award** recognizes a career of notable service in Arkansas librarianship by a library worker who is retired or no longer

working in libraries. **Rachel Shankles** is the recipient of this year's Frances P. Neal Award, recently retiring from the UCA Department of Leadership Studies where she has worked since she retired from her 1988 to 2013 school library career. Over her career, Rachel was a delegate to the Governor's Conference on Libraries, was in the first cohort of Resource Arkansas, helped establish the Arkansas Teen Book Award, started the WeDewey group in Garland County, served as President of AAIM twice, was the ArLA school library division's chair three times, and is currently serving as Vice President/President-Elect for the Arkansas Library Association. Rachel's dedication to library services in Arkansas will leave a long-lasting impact.



Shankles

Katherine Blake, CALS Teen Programmer, is the recipient of the 2021 **Lorrie Shuff Paraprofessional Award**, which is awarded for distinguished service by a paraprofessional library worker.

Katherine's early adoption of the TikTok platform has been instrumental in digital and virtual communications during the pandemic, and her outreach to young people who are incarcerated, in treatment programs, and in the foster care system has created opportunities for many previously underserved young people to access library services.



Blake

The **Retta Patrick Award**, given annually, recognizes an individual Arkansas librarian who has made an outstanding state or national contribution to school librarianship and/or school library development. This year's recipient is **Sloan Powell** of Simon Middle School in Conway, Arkansas.



Powell

Sloan's contributions to a partnership between public and school libraries in Faulkner County have led to over 3,900 students receiving library cards, and the program continues to expand to more school districts in Faulkner and Van Buren counties. Sloan also serves on the editorial board of *Arkansas Libraries* and is a past chair of the Arkansas Association of School Libraries division.

The ArLA annual **Rising Star Award** is given to an individual who has been a library worker for less than five years and who has provided exceptional service to their library community.

This year's Rising Star is **Amanda "Mandy" Bashaw**, Graphic Designer for the Craighead County Jonesboro Public Library. In her short two years in the library world, Mandy has expanded the scope of her position and taken on new responsibilities both within her library system and in ArLA, managing not just the graphic design for print and virtual library materials but also handling all eight Facebook pages for the library branches and serving on ArLA committees.



Bashaw

Lacy Wolfe, Interim Library Director and Information Literacy & Reference Services Librarian at Henderson State University, is the recipient of this year's **Suzanne Spurrier Academic Librarian Award**.

This award recognizes a currently employed academic librarian who exemplifies a spirit of outstanding service and dedicated professionalism. Lacy has been an ALA Councilor for six years, received numerous grants including a Carnegie-Whitney Grant, and was an ALA Emerging Leader. Lacy's tireless support of the Arkansas Library Association and its membership along with her dedication to her leadership role at the Henderson State Library during the transition to the Arkansas State University umbrella are evident to all who have worked with her in any capacity.



Wolfe

Given at the discretion of the sitting president of the Association, the ArLA **President's Award** recognizes someone who has provided significant assistance to the president or the Association over

the past year. ArLA President Philip Shackelford has selected **Janice Weddle**, ArLA Secretary and Assistant Librarian for Instruction and Outreach at Hendrix College's Bailey Library, to receive this award for her diligent work and considerable contributions to the organization during the unprecedented and unpredictable past year.



Weddle

thank you to the members of the committee for the time and energy they volunteered: Vanessa Adams, Kathleen Ashmore, Susie Kirk, Shawna Thorup, and Quanta Wyatt.



Ryals

I am very much looking forward to the return of the in-person Awards Luncheon at the 2022 ArLA Conference next year!

Tonya Ryals was recognized as the 2020-2021 American Library Association Emerging Leader who was sponsored by the Arkansas Library Association.

Thank you to everyone who submitted a nomination for the 2021 ArLA Awards, and a HUGE

Allie Stevens is director of the Calhoun County Library & Museum in Hampton, Arkansas.

Three Arkansas Emerging Leaders Chosen for 2022 Class

by *Rebecka Virden*

ArLA Emerging Leader Committee

The American Library Association (ALA) has selected 49 people to participate in its 2022 class of Emerging Leaders (EL). Three participants from Arkansas were chosen: Marikit Fain, the Archives Coordinator at John Brown University – sponsored by ArLA; Katherine Blake, Teen Programmer at CALS; and Jessica Kirk, Senior Reference Librarian at the Arkansas State Library – sponsored by ALA's Social Responsibilities Round Table.



Fain



during the ALA LibLearnX virtual conference January 21-24. Participants will continue in an online learning and networking environment working towards the culmination of their projects: poster sessions showcasing their project planning during the ALA 2022 Annual Conference in Washington, D.C. in June.



Blake

As stated on ALA's website, "The EL program is designed to enable library staff and information workers to participate



Kirk

in project planning work groups, network with peers, gain an inside look into ALA structure, and have an opportunity to serve the profession in a leadership capacity early in their careers."

The Emerging Leaders program will begin with a virtual day-long session

One of the advantages of the EL program is that all participants may have an opportunity to serve on an ALA, division, chapter, round table, or affiliate committee or workgroup upon completion.

Rebecka Virden is chair of ArLA's Emerging Leader Committee.



**ASK THE STATE LIBRARIAN:
The Case for Together**

by Jennifer Chilcoat, Arkansas State Librarian

As State Librarian, I would normally get to travel quite a bit. It's one of the great parts of the job, especially when considering that many of the trips involve getting together with librarians from all fifty states, plus the District of Columbia, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands. With often just one representative from each of those places, it's a terrifically diverse and egalitarian group. When I became State Librarian in July of 2020, I was hopeful that travel would be able to resume soon, and that I would be on my way to connecting with my new colleagues and benefitting from their advice and experience. After being on the job for over fifteen months, however, I only recently got to take my first trip out of the state of Arkansas.

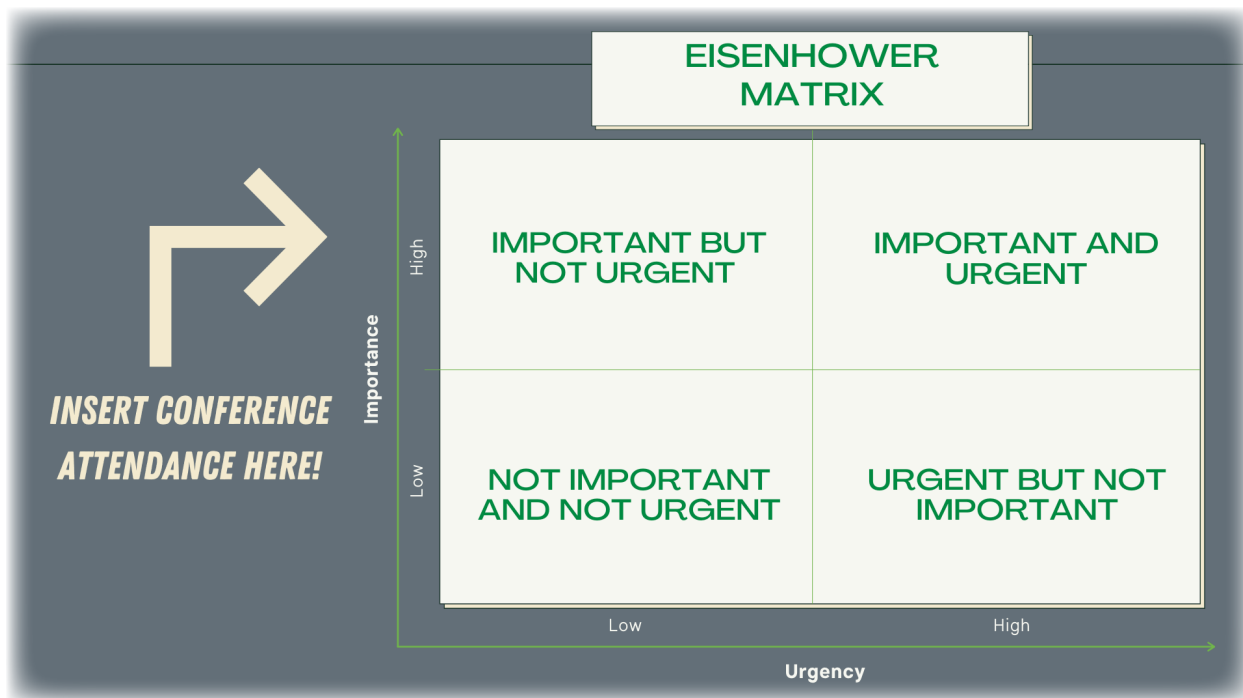
My first trip wasn't to see my state library colleagues, but rather to attend the annual conference of the Association of Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL). It was my second time attending the conference, and it's one of my favorites. It doesn't have the enormous exhibits hall or the superstar



Chilcoat

keynotes, although I did get to hear Sandra Boynton at the 2019 ARSL conference, and I definitely felt like I was in the presence of greatness! What ARSL does have is amazing support, a complete lack of self-consciousness, and great ideas that got their start in the tiniest hamlets, but can be scaled up to the biggest libraries around the country. I got to do a couple of extracurricular activities there, including riding a go-cart; even at my age, that's a giddy experience, and one that I obviously don't do in my day-to-day life back home. More's the pity.

But there were a number of truly meaningful things I did at the conference that I couldn't have done on Zoom. I saw a favorite Arkansas colleague who has moved to another state, and I got to share a meal with her and talk about how our work was going. Even though I'm by far the older of the two of us, the mentoring is always a mutual affair. I got to meet Noah Lenstra, a rockstar in the cause of enabling libraries to promote healthy physical and emotional lifestyles in their communities; he and I are now email buddies. I got to finally share a few words, one on one, with another new State Librarian whom I'd "met" on Zoom many times, but never really met. I got to re-immense myself in the cares and concerns of the public libraries we serve at ASL. Perhaps best of all, I introduced Old Friend A to New Friend B. New Friend B said, "You know, I'm getting ready to apply for this job in your state..." and proceeded to name the job. Old Friend A said, "I know exactly who you need to talk to!" and made



that crucial connection. With any luck, they'll soon be close colleagues.

When budgets are tight, it's understandable that conference travel is often treated as a luxury. We can nearly all perform the basic functions of our jobs without traveling beyond the county line, so why spend all of that extra money? Part of the challenge is that it's so hard to put a price tag on those interactions and the fruit they bear. But I challenge those of you who hold the purse strings to look at conference attendance another way. Look at it as a way to reward and inspire your most valuable asset: your staff. Most of us have seen the Urgency-Importance Matrix, also referred to as the "Eisenhower Decision Matrix." It's the one that encourages you to look at the endless parade of tasks and goals you encounter every day and decide whether each one is urgent and important, urgent but not important, not urgent but important, or not

urgent and not important. If you have the tendency to look at in-person conference attendance as not urgent and not important, I simply suggest and urge that you look at it as not urgent but very important. Be especially sure that those employees who visibly thrive on their interactions with others, who always come back from each new experience with a new idea, are rewarded and nourished by being supported in their conference ambitions.

As the world opens back up, I hope each of you has a chance at the exhilaration of meeting your library idols, reconnecting with old friends, and establishing new connections that will affirm and sustain you, all while bolstering the important work that you do every day. Best wishes.

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

SPECIAL LIBRARIES: SLA Core Competencies Turn Five (and not Twenty-Five-ish)

by *Karen O'Connell, Arkansas State Library*

More than two decades ago, competencies for special libraries were considered in terms of an imagined future in which "cybrarians" would work within the virtual space of a "cybrary." Codified in 1997, core skills at that time involved the overall technical mastery of specialized reference resources as well as an expertise in library services; soft skills related to effective communication; and generalized proficiencies in management. All fun aside in terms of the "cybrary," navigating resources and services within the realm of the virtual is actually the norm today, no matter the library type. In 2016, the Special Libraries Association (SLA) updated their Core Competencies, taking a fresh look at the knowledge and skills needed for maximum organizational benefit. Just as the seminal 1990 *Harvard Business Review* article, "The Core Competence of the Corporation," considered singularity in the company context, SLA's 2016 approach differed from the first attempt by moving from the general to the specific. This may have sparked—or responded to—an overhauling trend within the library profession as a whole in defining and understanding what we contribute *specifically* as information professionals.

The 2016 Core Competencies also explicated what are termed "Enabling Competencies," representing skills shared with professionals in



multiple fields such as: critical thinking; creativity; leadership and management skills; communication; instructional design; commitment to lifelong learning; and overall business ethics. Note that these "Enabling Competencies" were actually a large part of the "Professional Competencies" as expounded in SLA's *Competencies for Special Librarians of the 21st Century* (1997). The primary difference between what was core to librarians then and what is now reflects a much deeper dive into brokering and balancing our expertise with information. In other words, all library professionals need to adapt in varying degrees to the cultures and expectations of their organizations. What the 2016 Core Competencies recognize are professionally-specific skills that hiring organizations should expect and require from their hires; that these specific skills are not commonly shared with other professionals in other fields; and that they will be of benefit to them and their clientele.

This author officially became a special librarian in 1997 when hired to work for an Information Resource Center within a trade association. A year later, an opportunity arose to work as a special librarian in an art museum. Thus, the SLA Core Competencies have informed many aspects of my career. As an exercise in determining whether

the 2016 Core Competencies still pertain to what information/library professionals can bring to organizations, the SLA competencies in **bold** are compared to 2017 competencies put forward by ARLIS/NA, the Art Libraries Society of North America; which are represented parenthetically and in *italics*.

1. Information and Knowledge Services

From the perspective of special libraries in general, this competency addresses the level of expertise needed to analyze information as well as being able to teach information literacy skills to organizational stakeholders.

(ARLIS/NA: *1. Subject Knowledge and Expertise; and, 2. Teaching, Instruction, Reference, and Public Service*)

2. Information and Knowledge Systems and Technology

For special libraries in general, this competency requires an openness to learning appropriate architectures and deploying information systems, which includes designing interfaces for an intuitive user experience.

(There is no real ARLIS/NA comparator for this SLA competency; however, ARLIS/NA: *4: Professional Practice* could broadly apply.)

3. Information and Knowledge Resources

In this collection development competency, managing and continually assessing a strategy for acquiring resources that meet the needs of the organization are key as well as a deep knowledge of the content area of the organizational community.

(ARLIS/NA: *1. Subject Knowledge and Expertise; and 3. Collection Management, Development, and Organization*)

4. Information and Data Retrieval and Analysis

Beyond the skill sets needed for effective information discovery and retrieval, this competency requires the ability to perform and teach data analysis, text analysis, visualization, etc. using appropriate tools as they exist now and as they become available in the future.

(ARLIS/NA: *1. Subject Knowledge and Expertise*)

5. Organization of Data, Information, and Knowledge Assets

Informational professionals are adept in adapting industry standards toward developing custom metadata schemas and taxonomies for effective categorization, preservation, and access inclusive of connectivity for properly managed assets.

(ARLIS/NA: *3. Collection Management, Development, and Organization*)

6. Information Ethics

More specific than being aware of and adept at business ethics, this competency includes modeling ethical information behavior and recognizing ethical issues relative to information handling, such as privacy, security, intellectual property, intellectual freedom, etc.

(Again, there is no real ARLIS/NA comparator for this SLA competency; however, ARLIS/NA: *4: Professional Practice* could broadly apply.)

By moving from the general (circa 1993-1997) competencies to the specifics as expounded in the 2016 Core Competencies, SLA spotlights the value that library and information professionals can bring to the organizations that employ them. Five years in, these competencies remain professionally relevant and future-focused. Although other special library organizations may continue to create and update their own competencies as a useful exercise within a more specific sphere, the SLA Core Competencies serve as an effective benchmark for delineating professional relevance as well as excellence now and likely into the future.

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Karen O'Connell is coordinator of the Arkansas Center for the Book at the Arkansas State Library in Little Rock, Arkansas.

TWO YEAR COLLEGE LIBRARIES: Giving Tuesday and Course Reserve Collections

by *Gwen Dobbs*, Northwest Arkansas
Community College

Like many things in higher education, what areas are included in fundraising activities can be political and competitive. Certainly, all areas of a college or university are valuable and would benefit from philanthropic support and additional resources. Making things harder, of course, is the fact that community or two-year colleges often don't have the large development/ advancement staff that are typical of four-year and larger schools, where each college, athletics department, and support services entities, such as libraries, can be assigned dedicated fundraising staff. And ironically, community and two-year colleges often serve student populations with greater financial need.

So how do libraries at community and two-year colleges communicate areas of need and work with college leadership and foundation staff to include that need in fundraising activities? I'm sure there is no single answer, but what follows is how we built the story of our libraries' textbook reserve collection and how that collection was included in this year's Giving Tuesday campaign.

I've mentioned before that the course reserve collection at the NWACC Library has been our highest circulating collection for a number of years. And when you consider that the collection consists of under 200 titles, though we do have multiple copies of some titles, it makes the circulation numbers for this small collection even more impressive. Due to the exorbitant cost of college textbooks, I know our library is not the only one with high use of course reserves. In 2014 we began presenting our annual report, including our circulation statistics, to our Expanded Cabinet, which is comprised of most leadership positions on campus. There are representatives from each academic division, all areas of Student Services, and Administrative Services. Consistently, since 2014, we have pointed out this collection, its high use, and why it is so high use – the cost of these materials.

This year we had a new opportunity. At most institutions the large fundraising priorities are set by the institution's leadership, as it should be. But we recently welcomed a new Advancement Director who was seeking smaller fundraising goals for Giving Tuesday, the Tuesday after Thanksgiving

that has become a day of philanthropic giving. Areas of the college were asked to submit ideas for small fundraising projects to our respective vice presidents. They would then prioritize these projects at the leadership level to be considered for one of the Giving Tuesday projects.

Though we are certainly not seeing the same level of traffic during the pandemic that we saw previously, our course reserve collection is still our highest circulating collection. So, we requested a fund to help us purchase more course textbooks, and were thrilled to have it chosen as the first area of giving on the College's Giving Tuesday website. The goal for the fund is \$2000, which we hope will allow us to add anywhere from 10 to 20 new course reserve titles to the collection. Cross your fingers we meet our \$2000 goal. But what is most important is we know we will be helping our students with any new additions to our course reserves collection, and we have established library collections as a giving area at the college.

Gwen Dobbs is library director at Northwest Arkansas Community College's Pauline Whitaker Library in Bentonville, Arkansas.



Tiffany Fowler won 2nd place for her caption in the Pet Photo Contest at the ArLA's Virtual Conference (please see article on pg. 4).

Photo Essay: *Fall Comes to the Rogers Public Library*

Photos by Evan Day and Samantha Smith, Rogers Public Library





STRATEGIC PLANNING & ASSESSMENT: Quantify Your Impact Using Project Outcome for Assessment

by *Jessica Riedmueller, University of Central
Arkansas*

I'm sure everyone reading this column knows that measuring and communicating the true value of library services and programs has always been a difficult task, and barriers to meaningful assessment are endless. How many of us were taught how to write survey questions (it's definitely a science)? What about using data analytics to measure outcomes? Also, what outcomes we should be measuring? And how do we compare ourselves to similar institutions? Oh, and how do we get our patrons to take surveys at all? See what I mean, endless.

While I can't say that assessment will ever be easy, I'd like to introduce a tool that can make it easier. Project Outcome, an initiative of both PLA and ACRL, provides free tools for quantitative and qualitative analysis that help libraries collect data about their services and programs. The toolkit also formats the data into easy-to-understand visuals and provides comparison benchmarks. And did I mention (I did, but I'll say it again)...they are completely free!

What is Project Outcome?

Before I get into Project Outcome, let's talk a little bit about "typical" assessment measures for libraries. How do we determine if a program or service is successful? My first measure is attendance or use statistics. How many people in the door? How many people sitting in a room, clicking on a link, showing up to a Zoom? Maybe we get a little feedback from patrons. Did they enjoy the program? Did they learn something? Maybe we even get them to take a survey. But what happens with the one-off surveys or the qualitative feedback? How does that one program fit into the larger story of our libraries?

The essential question driving Project Outcome is, "what good did we do?" It provides a systematic way to harness data from our patrons that measures our direct impact on the community. Project Outcome is not just a survey generator. It's a suite of survey instruments that organizes data into topic areas (listed below) and key outcomes: knowledge,



Riedmueller

confidence, application, and awareness.

As mentioned earlier, there are two versions for public libraries/state libraries and academic libraries. Both versions supply two different types of surveys: immediate and follow-up. The surveys – typically issued 4-8 weeks apart – consist of standardized questions asking patrons to evaluate a program or service using a Likert scale (1-5 rating) and open-ended questions. You can customize the surveys. However, using the standardized surveys allows libraries to easily visualize the collected data and compare their outcomes against peer data from sources such as your state/province, Carnegie class, or nationwide benchmarks.

The public library surveys cover the topic areas of

- Civic/Community Engagement
- Digital Learning
- Early Childhood Literacy
- Economic Development
- Education/Lifelong Learning
- Health
- Job Skills
- Summer Reading

The academic library surveys cover

- Digital/Special Collections
- Events/Programs
- Instruction
- Library Technology
- Research
- Space
- Teaching Support

How would I use Project Outcome?

At UCA, we've used Project Outcome to evaluate our one-on-one research services as well as our instruction program. When I first started using Project Outcome in 2019, there weren't very many academic libraries involved, and there were even fewer libraries in our Carnegie classification. At the time, therefore, the benchmarking data didn't mean a lot to me. However, even just having our institution's data visualization has given me some insight into our services.

For instance, our aggregate scores in the four key outcome areas for research appointments are (on a 1-5 scale):

- Knowledge - 4.6
- Confidence - 4.5
- Application - 4.7
- Awareness - 4.6

These are great scores. However, student confidence in their ability to conduct research

following the appointment is a little low. As I dug into the results of the survey over time, I found that confidence fell during COVID. We could probably attribute this slight decrease to the stress and anxiety of the pandemic. But I also know that since COVID started, we have only offered online research appointments. Previously most of our appointments were face-to-face. It's too early to draw any strong conclusions, but it might be fair to say that students may feel less confident due to our virtual appointment teaching strategy. In a face-to-face scenario, the student typically uses their own computer to research while the librarian guides them. In the online environment, however, I know that I tend to show the student how I would conduct the research, while they watch what I am doing. Perhaps I may want to consider conducting my online research appointments more like I would a face-to-face appointment.

This is only one example of how I am using Project Outcome to help me evaluate our services, and I hope to do much more in the future. More academic libraries have joined the program, which makes the benchmark data much more reliable. Now that we are settling back into something like a new normal, I'd like to expand our use of Project Outcome into a few more service areas, as well.

Learn More

There is so much more to Project Outcome than I've addressed in this column. They offer webinars, resource documents, and peer discussion boards to support you along your assessment journey. Do the words "sample size" and "descriptive analysis" terrify you (like they do me)? Not sure how to communicate the data once you have it? Project Outcome has help for you.

As a special note to public libraries and the state library, Project Outcome has been in use since 2015 and is a well-proven tool used by over 2,000 public libraries. So, there is a deep well of experience and benchmark data. They have also created new resources to help you evaluate virtual and "grab-and-go" services. For state library participants, you get access to all of the Project Outcome tools as well as data from all the participating public libraries in the state.

Explore more about Project Outcome at <https://www.projectoutcome.org> for public libraries, or <https://acrl.projectoutcome.org> for academic libraries.

Jessica Riedmueller is the user experience librarian at the University of Arkansas' Torreyson Library in Conway, Arkansas.

ArLA Scholarship Winner

by *Chance Griebel*

ArLA Scholarship Committee Chair

This year we are excited to award Heather Reinold with the ArLA Scholarship. Heather is currently working towards an MLIS degree in Academic Librarianship from San Jose State University. We're happy to have Heather introduce herself to you in her own words.



Reinold

My name is Heather Reinold, and I am a twice-over alumni from the University of Central Arkansas. I have a B.A. in Art (Graphic Design) and an M.A. in History which have assisted me in my journey to work in archives and libraries. Additionally, I am a Certified Archivist through the Academy of Certified Archivist and I have two archival certificates from the Society of American Archivists. I am currently working



towards my MLIS degree in Academic Librarianship from San Jose State University and I work as a Library Technician in the Education and Outreach Department at UCA's Torreyson Library. I am eager to learn how archives and libraries can better engage and assist our users, as well as how we can educate students in information and data literacy through in-person and virtual instruction.

We wish Heather the best as she pursues her degree!

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

ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT: Staff Performance Evaluations: Methods

by Carol Coffey, Central Arkansas Library System

In my previous column, I talked about the whys of staff performance evaluations. Now it's time to talk about the method. There are a number of different evaluation and review formats. Some may be more useful than others, depending on the organization or the position of the staff members being evaluated. Smaller libraries tend to have a smaller number of different types of positions, meaning a single evaluation instrument will work just fine. Larger libraries, on the other hand, have a more varied list of positions, and what works for staff members who do only public service may not work for staff members who work only in Tech Services or Facilities Maintenance. In that case, no matter what type of evaluation instrument is selected, you will need to allow for the possibility of some customization for different positions.

So, what kind of evaluation format will work best for you? Here are some of the options, with references if you want to learn more.

Self-Evaluation

A self-evaluation can give employees a chance to reflect on what they've achieved and how their performance has improved within the evaluation period. You hope they will also recognize the areas in which they need to improve. It takes practice and time to learn how to evaluate your own performance, so expect a learning curve if you decide to implement a self-evaluation process in your library. It can be harder to recognize and admit our own weaknesses, so there should also be a manager's component in the evaluation process. (*Self Evaluation Examples and Tips*, 2020)

360-Evaluation

A 360 performance review is a process by which staff members provide input on their coworkers' performance. The 360 review can point out strengths as well as areas for improvement. (*What Is a 360 Review?*, 2020) Often, a 360 review evaluates how the employee's work affected the work of their coworkers or of the organization in general, but may

not be a strong tool for evaluating the overall quality of job performance by any one individual. In an organization where there is trust and transparency, a 360 review can improve the overall performance of the organization and team. The danger comes when the instrument is not used appropriately by staff members who may not get along well.

Ratings/Checklist Evaluation

The checklist type of evaluation is generally used to quantify performance in an attempt to add objectivity to the review process. Problems can arise when multiple managers are using the same instrument to evaluate the performance of their employees, since each manager has a different definition of what constitutes good performance. Checklists do not allow for nuanced evaluation and may not reflect, for example, the fact that an employee's performance in a certain area is not excellent, but has improved in the time since the previous evaluation. It's vital for reviews that use checklists to also allow room for narratives that will address the nuances. Checklists may be most useful for employees whose work involves tasks that can easily be quantified, such as the number of items cataloged or processed within a certain amount of time. (Reinhart, 2016)

The Danger of Once-a-Year Evaluations

If the yearly evaluation conference is the only time you meet with your staff members to give feedback on their performance, hear what they're thinking about how things are going, and discuss and set goals, you're not providing good management or leadership for your staff. It's not enough to tell your staff how they're doing and what they need to do going forward once. Expectations need to be reinforced and staff need to know that you're paying attention and are ready to discuss issues when they come up.

A Better Way?

In the previous column, I promised to share my personal preference. Please bear in mind that I do not currently have any direct-report staff, so it's been a few years since I wrote performance evaluations. But one thing I know: If the point of evaluating staff performance is to coach them to better performance and help them to grow, doing so only once a year will not work. However, in many cases annual pay increases are tied to good performance evaluations, and therefore some sort of formal annual process is required.

When I became a manager, the one rule I learned early on is that nothing discussed in a written, formal evaluation should come as a surprise to the person



Coffey

being evaluated. If there are problems, they should be addressed face-to-face and relatively informally at first. Even if there are no problems, managers should expect to meet with their staff at least quarterly. From the date of hire, those meetings are intended to note progress on training and other goals and should be documented by the manager.

The quarterly meetings lead to the big annual review, which is a more formal process. In my opinion, the best format for an evaluation is a combination of a ratings system based on previously defined categories, with plenty of room for narrative within each category. Written goals should always have a place in a formal evaluation. I always found it helpful to ask staff members what goals they wanted to pursue each review period. It was a way to encourage them to take ownership of the process, even if I ended up adding a goal or two to the list. Before the review meeting, I would also ask them to make notes of the progress, if any, they had made on their goals. All of those notes went into the final document, and were used by my administration to determine what, if any, merit increase would be

given. While performance evaluations are never fun, they are an important part of managing and coaching staff to higher performance, if done well.

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

FACE OF ARKANSAS LIBRARIES:

Rachel Smith: Sunshine Lessons

by Jennifer Wann, Arkansas State Library

Interview by Jennifer Wann

What is your name and professional job title?

Rachel Smith, Head Librarian

Where do you work and what is your library like?

I work at the Arkansas School for Mathematics, Science, and the Arts in Hot Springs. We are a public residential high school serving just over 200 students. Our library is in the residence life building where the students live, so they have easy access to resources.

Please describe a typical day in your job:

I started serving at ASMSA at the beginning of September, and I am still learning the ins and outs of my position. On most days I get to enjoy helping students find resources for research, planning enrichment programs, and putting new books into the hands of avid readers; in general, I build connections between our students and their library.

How did you get into library work?

The library was always a magical place for me, and I attribute that to my mother, Kari Eaton, and my librarian, Lolly Greenwood. My mother is the one who taught me to read and made sure I always had access to good books. Lolly is something of a



legend in Fayetteville, certainly for those who went to Storytime at the Fayetteville Public Library during the 90s, or anytime up until her retirement a few years ago. Lolly and my mother both instilled in me a true love for reading. They helped me to discover

the pure joy of learning. I became a librarian because I wanted to help others find that joy, too.

What's your favorite thing about being in librarianship?

My favorite thing about being in librarianship is creating connections. Not only connections for those seeking information, but also the human connections we build. I appreciate the opportunities we have as librarians to create community. I think that the greatest books are those that further the empathy of the reader, and, in that same vein, I think the best part of librarianship is being able to help further the empathy of the people we serve. We do not just provide access to information, we help our patrons grow their understanding of themselves and the world.

Please describe your town/community/county in Arkansas:

My husband and I just moved to Hot Springs this summer, and we love living here! The town is full of friendly neighbors, great places to eat, and there is always something fun to do.

What's your favorite book and why? How would you book talk it to someone?

One of my favorite books is *The Tale of Despereaux* by Kate DiCamillo. It's about a tiny mouse with a huge heart who goes on an incredible adventure. I love this book because Despereaux's voice shares honest feelings that we all share but may not know how to express. Though he is a mouse, his character shows real, human emotion, and I think that his story is one that can help children (and adults) better understand their own heart.

What are your hobbies outside of work, or what do you enjoy doing during your free time?

I love to decorate, for holidays, and simply as part of being in a new home. I collect split oak baskets and love to shop for them at flea markets. I also enjoy cooking and trying new recipes, and I spend every moment I can with my busy husband.

What is your favorite thing about Arkansas?

Arkansas is Home.

Please tell us about your family / pets / home / church / volunteer service / anything personal that's important to you that you don't mind sharing with the AR library community.

My husband is a 3rd year medical student and is rotating at the hospitals here in Hot Springs. I am incredibly proud of him and the strength he shows every day. He is exceptionally talented and intelligent, but what really inspires me about him is his ability to help others become, not just healthier, but *happier*. The genuine care he shows for his patients motivates me; it makes me want to do more

for the people I serve in my own profession.

What is your first / earliest childhood memory of a library?

One of my earliest memories of the library is of checking out books with Ms. Shawn Walker. When I was little, the librarians would put a "date due" sticker inside the back cover of the book, over the RFID tag. I remember one time when she was checking out my huge stack of picture books, Ms. Shawn let *me* put the stickers on. I loved it, and I thought it must be so much fun to get to be a librarian.

As a child what did you want to be when you grew up? Is there anything about that childhood dream that you connect to in librarianship?

I wanted to be a librarian! When I visited the library, I would check out as many books as I was allowed (the limit on our cards was 55). I was fascinated by the scanner that the librarians got to use when they checked out my books. I had a toy cash register that had a scanner (it had a red light and beeped and everything!), and I spent many happy hours pretending to be a librarian, scanning my books over and over.

What one word would you use to describe yourself?

Kind

What one word would your friends use to describe you?

Sunshine

What is something about you that few people know?

I have a 35-pound Sulcata tortoise named Caesar.

Where and when did you grow up and what was your childhood like?

We lived in a small community called Wesley, up in NWA. Wesley is on Highway 74 between Elkins and Huntsville, and I like to joke about it being so small that we don't even have a population sign. I grew up on a little farm and spent most of my childhood roaming around on the mountain. My great-grandmother lived next door to us, and she owned lots of land, so I pretty much got to go wherever I wanted. The mountain was a friendly place; most of our neighbors were related to us and everyone knew everybody - it was a safe place for a kid to roam. Our mom homeschooled my brother and me, and we were involved in all kinds of extracurriculars. I played roller hockey, took gymnastics and dance classes, and was highly active in 4-H. And, we went to the library a lot!

Did you have a relationship with books as a young child? And if not, how did you develop that relationship?

I was very lucky little girl - although we lived 45 minutes away from the library, my mother took me and my older brother, Jared, *at least* once a week. We could check out whatever we wanted, and my favorites were always Hank the Cowdog and Junie B. Jones. Mom read to us often, and I have fond memories of my G-mar (my grandmother on my father's side) reading to me as well. Books were a wonderful part of my childhood.

If your career in librarianship was a book, what would the title be?

Smile Hunting

Please describe your vision of the future of libraries.

I think that, for libraries to continue being impactful, we have to be adaptable. Though I hope we will always call them "libraries," I think the successful library is the one which continues to evolve into a center for community engagement. More and more people, though they are still reading, are finding their books digitally. What our communities need is not more bookshelves, but more space and support for developing skills and connections. The library should be the hub of the community, where people go not only to find the information and entertainment they need, but to find the *experiences* that develop their understanding of each other and their connectivity to their community.

Anything else you would like to add about

yourself or libraries?

My role in libraries has changed a lot over the course of my short career. I started off as a page, loved working as a children's librarian for several years, served as a branch manager in a low-income neighborhood, and now get to serve at a school full of bright and talented young people. I share this because I think it is important for all of us to know that it is okay not to have your whole life figured out. This has probably been my hardest learned lesson; I am goal-oriented list maker, and I have always had a planned path for myself. I thought I would live in one place and work in one library for the entirety of my career. But I didn't, and because I didn't, I have grown more professionally and personally than I ever could have. I have had the opportunity to help more people and make a greater impact.

In my library, I am constantly interacting with students who are stressed about figuring out where to go to college and what they want to do for their career. I want to tell them, and everyone trying to keep their chin up during this weird and crazy time of COVID, that it is **okay** not to know what happens next.

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

The Pot and the Kettle at the End of the Rainbow

by John McGraw

Faulkner-Van Buren Regional Library System

I caught a trustee as they came in the staff door. "Welcome to the circus," I said, and redirected them from my office to the stage at the north end of the building. We had recently had over a hundred people in this space for Freddy Fossil's Dino Show, but things would be far more congested this evening for the monthly library board meeting. Normally we gather around the table that seats six. We had seating ready for 150, a podium, and microphones.

Many weeks before, there had been a quick conversation in my office. My storytime programmer, Mary Polk Spears, asked what I thought about a storytime reflecting Pride month. Patrons have asked for it for years. Tax-payers who regularly attend programs had recognized and highlighted an area where we had never gone. I said I supported the idea on that basis, because patrons shape the things we add to the collection and the programs we offer.

There is a high volume of programming at

every location, every day. In 2018 the Faulkner-Van Buren Regional system offered 1,400 programs for children and in 2019, we offered 1,250. This June alone Conway kids could choose from 67 offerings. We have limited funds, limited staff, and limited time. Given our high volume of programming, we rely on the community to give us feedback on what we should offer. Mostly they vote by putting butts into seats. Successful programs expand and branch out; unsuccessful ones are pruned or disappear. Saturdays are slower days for programs and not a day you expect to find a storytime. Grown-ups bring kids to the storytimes, participate with the kids in songs or crafts, and take kids home after. It is 100% dependent upon caregivers' involvement.

We had been asked several times to do something for Pride month, and this year we felt like we had heard the drumbeat for some time and needed to do something, even if tiny in scale and very safe in subject matter. A book was selected: *Pride: The Story of Harvey Milk and the Rainbow Flag* by Rob Sanders and Steven Salerno. It talks about Harvey

Milk not seeing people who looked like him or felt like him making decisions for a city that had a lot of people who looked like Harvey and felt like Harvey. Harvey runs for office and commissions the rainbow flag to gather a community around him as he campaigns. The book was positively reviewed by sources we go to all the time, including *School Library Journal*, *Kirkus Reviews*, and *Publishers Weekly*. All those reviews emphasized that this was an age-appropriate book, which is the only kind we would ever use.

We scheduled it for a Saturday, June 26, which is not a usual storytime day, so our regulars would not wander in habitually and get a topic that might make them uncomfortable. If you came, it was because you wanted to attend this program on this topic. There was a post about it in early June and a reminder the day before, reading “Join us to learn a little of Pride history through picture books.” As it happens, one mom brought her one child – and that was it for attendance. Given the size of the crowd, Mary asked if they wanted to go through the book, and the kid declined. So, storytime instead consisted of simply singing generic songs and playing generic games such as we do in any storytime to break things up and get kids moving. Nothing related to Pride at all. Mary and the mom had a brief conversation about the book planned, and the mom said maybe she would order herself a copy.

Mid-day on the 26th a Justice of the Peace messaged the Youth Services Facebook page asking who was the admin for the page. I responded that a lot of people have admin privileges, mostly the programmers but including others up to me, the director. He asked who had approved the Pride storytime that morning and I said that I had. There was another message to that page from a woman asking why we were teaching 4-year-olds about sexuality, and we explained that we had not and would not. That afternoon an email to the county judge and all the quorum court was forwarded to me which said this was immoral, and that I should be brought before the quorum court to answer for it. The library board meeting was already scheduled for Monday. Usually it is the third Monday, but we could not get a quorum together for that day. The published notices listed surveyors, a tree service, and the securing of the staff door as the agenda items.

Email was already a torrent Sunday morning. A lot of people were demanding particulars about the complaint, which I did not want to address as the complaint had not been sent to me, so I began replying that neither I nor the board had received the complaint which had gone to elected officials. A

lot of these emails were alleging that some sort of punitive action was the topic of the board meeting, and a lot of those emails were sent to me as well as the board. A staff member messaged me Sunday night to say several Facebook pages with lots of members had posts saying “email John and tell him not to fire Mary” or words to that effect. I told the staff member I had not received a complaint, but I believed elected officials might have.

I frankly have no idea how all this blew up and did not really begin in earnest to respond to emails until Monday, and that was simply to ask permission to include their email to me in the board packet. By 5:00 p.m. that pile of emails was 306 in favor, 2 against. More against the topic would come in later, but it was a very lopsided hysteria. KTHV arrived mid-morning, uncertain that there was a story here. I waved a few hundred sheets of correspondence at the gentleman and said I was about to call the police about security because staff fielding phone calls were getting nervous.

The meeting was extraordinary because most every board meeting is the six of us sitting around a tiny table in my office. Our official count for the night was 178 in attendance. Freddy Fossil would kill for that kind of turnout. There were a few members of the quorum court present, and I wished I had time to talk to them. I started the meeting with a quick civics lesson. Do not complain to the quorum court about the programs, complain to the board. Do not complain to the board that we do not have adequate facilities to host 200 people, complain to the quorum court. We suspended regular order and invited the public to speak for up to two minutes. This went on for some 40 minutes, with speaker after speaker getting up to say that they wished something like this had been possible for them when they were growing up and feeling invisible. No one got up to say we were immoral or had no right to do whatever horrible thing they imagined we had done. A couple gentlemen followed a board member to her vehicle afterward and privately expressed their displeasure. “We are not done with the board,” they said out there in the dark. If that was meant to intimidate, it backfired badly. She spent a month reading all those emails, responding personally when she saw a name she recognized, or when the writer identified themselves professionally as a clergyman, doctor, or educator. She also spent a lot of time listening to her friends, family, and acquaintances on Team Rainbow. These are qualities you hope for in a trustee, and how you screen candidates for that kind of backbone is a question I leave unanswered.

One problem with libraries is we know what we

are doing well because people show up, but we don't know what will get the 50% of the county with no library card to come in and use our services. A lot of the extremely angry people had never been in the building before, and probably will not be back any time soon. But it was extraordinary hearing people say that this was a thing that would have been for them.

This all puts me in a very bad place, as I knew it would. Libraries have limited staff, limited time and limited money. We cannot do programs for two people. It is great that 180 people attended a board meeting, but my decisions are moved more by the fact that only two attended the actual program. I feel like next year there will be a lot of assumptions if we don't do a Pride Month storytime, but the reason assumed will not be based on the attendance, but what they suspect is my preference. My preference does not and should not enter into it. The library has an obligation to use its limited resources to assist the people who live here – all of the people who live here. We have to prioritize based on the expected return on investment, to some degree.

It used to be that Justices of the Peace married folks quite often. That changed for a lot of people six years ago, because now if you are in the marrying business, you have to be very equitable about marrying people who need you to perform a service. You start picking and choosing who deserves to get married, and the county attorney starts working longer hours. The public library doesn't have that luxury. We have to have a balanced collection that has something for every reader, and we have to have programs that are for the people we have here in Faulkner county. Mostly we just repeat our successes and learn from our failures. We never want to buy a book no one will read, and we never want to put on a program that is for no one. A blogger told the judge that this program was for no one, and 180 people showed up to say that that is not the case.

The next day we were hit with a FOIA request for all emails or documents containing a couple dozen widely used keywords, and staff spent the three working days we had by law generating over 23,000 pages in response. Will that mountain of paper determine that we have some gay agenda or political bent? I sincerely doubt it. We have a staff that is politically diverse, and all of that is none of our business. We have books that offend me, we have books that offend other people, but we don't have a book that offends everyone. The same goes for programs. We simply try to offer Faulkner County what it asks for, and we wonder periodically what we could offer people who don't know to ask us for

help. Tax-payers asked us to do this program, and we advertised it to the best of our very meager ability. If we were masters of viral hysteria we would have figured a way to get more than two people to show up. As to the policy, we recognize that we are here for all the residents of the county. We aim to provide, in our collection, our programming and our services, that which serves the needs (often spoken) of the library users. It is hard to know what new thing will draw in people who do not take advantage of what we offer but when a new need comes along libraries usually just roll up their sleeves and say "so I guess this is our job now?"

When the county judge and I got to talk about it, he asked how this had blown up on both sides with little bearing on what happened. What I have seen over and over, particularly where Facebook is concerned, is an argument that completely loses context on both sides. You imagine a guy, then you get mad at that guy. One side imagined a program that didn't exist and got mad about that program rather than the intentionally tame one we prepared or the completely theme-less one that actually happened. The other side heard from somewhere that someone was mad, saw there was a board meeting scheduled *right away*, and imagined an agenda that didn't exist and got mad about that meeting, rather than the one the agenda laid out. Tomorrow the hate machine will find a new target. In June it was aimed at me, but it's been leveled at many other libraries – academic, school, and public– in the state in the last year. I hope we can share lessons and perspectives, return to how libraries serve their populations, and find reason amidst the next social media storm directed at your library. Here's hoping there's calm at the end of the rainbow.

John McGraw is the regional director of the Faulkner-Van Buren Regional Library System headquartered in Conway, Arkansas.



Fall at Lyon College Student Union.

Censorship and the Public Library

by April Frost

Arkansas State University - Beebe

Censorship is an issue that is very familiar to the public library environment. Public libraries around the world fight some form of censorship every day, whether it is removal of a book for questionable content, or standing up for the intellectual freedom of library patrons. The relationship between librarians and censorship has been and will continue to be a battle for who is right in these circumstances. This has become a highly debated issue because the act of censoring materials infringes on the right of intellectual freedom in the First Amendment. This article will discuss what censorship is, how it effects the public library, and how librarians have dealt with this issue.



Frost

Censorship is, at the very least, the act of withholding access of something from another person (Oppenheim, 160). A more concise definition of the word as it pertains to libraries would be that it is “the rejection by a library authority of a book or other material which the librarian, the library board or some person bringing pressure on them hold to be obscene, dangerously radical, subversive or too critical of the existing mores” (Evans, 545). There has been some type of censorship of materials since the beginning of the written word. In earlier times, most censorship was based on religious and political beliefs. There have been untold numbers of books and manuscripts damaged or destroyed around the world for these reasons. In more recent years, censorship has also taken on racial, sexual, and cultural beliefs as well (Connelly, 83).

There are three types of censorship found in any library setting. The first one is governmental censorship. It usually censors material based on the laws, regulations, or political views of state or federal institutions. The next one is individual censorship, in which one person or small group of individuals want material removed based on religious, racial or cultural beliefs. The last one is self-censorship, when the librarian either refuses to purchase certain materials or might even pull existing material from the shelf for fear that

these materials will start an uproar with the local library community (Evans, 548). “Because there is considerable pressure on public librarians to censor materials in their collections, some staff will go to almost any lengths to avoid challenges, criticism, and controversy over which titles and which kinds of materials should be made available to their communities” (Schrader). This is because some communities can potentially become bitterly divided over a censorship issue in the local public and school libraries, and some of these issues have even gone all the way to the Supreme Court (Schrader). “Censorship studies show that every year at least 1 in 5 public libraries in a given geographical area is requested to withdraw or restrict materials, while over a 3 to 5 year period the proportion may be as high as one half of all public libraries” (Schrader).

With this said, public librarians are under enormous pressure to self-censor their collections to reduce turmoil in the community. Some people may think that this process is a wasted effort because the act of censorship is inevitable. Someone, somewhere, will always have an issue with a particular piece of library material no matter how careful the librarian is. Oftentimes, the person that tries to censor materials is a genuinely concerned person who believes that removing questionable materials from library circulation can improve society and protect children’s best interests. In the public library, the librarian must decide whether to provide access to the free flow of information from all mediums, or to take it upon themselves to protect library patrons from materials that might be considered harmful or inappropriate. Librarians typically feel obligated to provide access to information regardless of content or their personal point of view (Oppenheim, 159).

When a person raises an issue with a particular book because of their morals and beliefs, this book becomes a challenged book. If this same book is removed from the library’s collection, then it becomes known as a banned book. The majority of books that are challenged or banned in the United States are children’s books. These books are usually requested to be banned by the parent or guardian. The most common reasons for banning children’s books are that either they are not considered age-appropriate material, they are sexually explicit, or they have offensive language in them. “While parents may want the librarians to monitor their children’s reading materials, the Library Bill of Rights advocates free access to information for all age



levels, and librarians expect parents to be responsible for monitoring their children's book choices at the library" (Burke, 370).

Some of the books that were banned from the library in earlier years but have now become known as classics are: *Chaucer's Canterbury Tales* for being sexually explicit, *The Arabian Nights* for offensive language, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and the *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, both for racial issues. In recent years, some of the books that have been challenged are *Forever* by Judy Blume for age-appropriateness, *Harry Potter* by J.K. Rowling for witchcraft, and *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cromier for bullying and being sexually explicit (Kipp, et al., 280-281). One way that public librarians advocate against censorship is by participating in the American Library Association's (ALA) Banned Book Week. During this week, held annually in the last week of September, the public library promotes the reading of a banned or challenged book to remind library patrons that books and libraries are an important part of this country's democratic society (Petrelli, 5).

Censorship issues deal with more than just books and movies. In this digital age, the internet is used to access just about anything by all kinds of people. "The internet is a technological marvel that has altered the nature and practices of libraries around the world" (Duthie, 88). At one time, people would only come to the public library to check out materials; now people come more frequently to use the library's computers to gain access to information and entertainment on the internet. When internet access first became available in public libraries, people were more passive users of the internet by just searching for information. With the invention of social media, people are currently becoming more active in the digital community. This raises questions on just what should be accessed through the public library and other safety concerns. Also, the

public library "is usually subject to privacy laws and regulations at the countries' national, local, and state levels" (Jones, 9).

While the public library promotes free access to the digital world, they also have a moral and legal obligation to censor certain things on the internet. For instance, the library should not let a person come in and look at pornography or something illegal in a public place, especially if they are underage. They can prevent this situation by enforcing library policies for the internet use. "Written policies can emphasize the library's support for the principles of intellectual freedom and its respect for the diversity of its community while at the same time establishing that the library does not condone the use of its computers to access materials that are obscene or otherwise illegal" (Maycock, 6). Most public libraries can also control this issue by installing internet filtering software. The problem with this kind of internet software is that it can potentially block sites with good content that could be useful to the public. Therefore, there is currently a big debate on the subject of internet filtering in the public library system. For some public libraries, internet filtering is not an option because it is mandated by local, state or federal government offices.

"The Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) brought new levels of Internet censorship to libraries across the country. CIPA was signed into law in 2000 and found constitutional by the Supreme Court in 2003" (Reitman). This law encourages public libraries and schools to filter harmful and obscene images from the library and school internet connection in exchange for federal funding. CIPA does not censor texts or entire websites, just the images that are associated with the websites. Libraries do not have to filter content that is sexual in nature because a patron might need to look up information on breast cancer. They are also not required to filter social networking sites, LGBTQ issues, or any other deemed controversial sites. Unfortunately, what often happens is that public libraries routinely over-block internet content because of self-censoring and the fact that most filters are not very accurate on detecting certain types of content. This prohibits the patrons from accessing several good websites on the internet, and this, in turn, hinders their quest for knowledge.

On the opposite side of the censorship issue is the right to intellectual freedom. The meaning of intellectual freedom "is the freedom, or ability and the right, of individuals to allow their minds to take them where ever they may lead in search

for understanding. Those who believe in the essential nature of intellectual freedom believe that all individuals should have access to all formats of information without restrictions based on their content” (Cooper, 218). A person’s right to intellectual freedom is, first and foremost, protected by the First Amendment. The First Amendment ensures our right to freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, and freedom of assembly, regardless of race or gender. ALA actively defended our right to intellectual freedom by establishing their Bill of Rights in 1939. “The Library Bill of Rights” outlines the basic freedom-of-access concepts that ALA hopes will guide library public service. It states that persons should be able to read what they wish without intervention from groups or individuals, including libraries. It is also an important guide to professional conduct in the terms of intellectual freedom” (Evans, 546).

Since the beginning of the public library system, the library’s professional community has stood to advocate for intellectual freedom by continuing to provide their communities access to all kinds of library materials and information, regardless of content. They reason that by allowing individuals to have their intellectual freedom, the libraries actually help their patrons to develop their information access skills instead of forcing them into other people’s morals and beliefs. With this said, the library is usually the first to be targeted for censorship (Cooper, 219). The Chicago Public Library was the first public library in the United States to adopt the first formal intellectual freedom policy in 1936. This policy states “The Public Library asserts its right and duty to keep on its shelves a representative selection of books on all subjects of interest to its readers and not prohibited by law, including books on all sides of controversial questions (Latham, 295).

Intellectual freedom is also the central theme in the ALA Library Bill of Rights document. In this document, there are six basic policies that serve as the backbone for any library system.

1. Books and other library material should be provided for the interest, information and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
2. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the

fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
5. A person’s right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
6. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use. (Library Bill of Rights)

The ALA created another important document called “The Freedom to Read” to help with intellectual freedom and anti-censorship issues. This is a very important document for anyone who is interested in becoming a librarian. It provides seven propositions that address publishers, librarians, and book sellers alike, for it is the obligation of these entities to protect our intellectual freedom. The first proposition states that the public community should have access to various viewpoints on any issue. By looking at different points of view, the public can get a better understanding of the issue to form a concise opinion of the issue on their own, without being held to someone else’s beliefs. The second proposition states that publishers and librarians are not obligated to endorse the materials that they provide access to; they just have to provide the public access to them and let the public make their own judgements. The third proposition states that publishers and librarians should not censor any material based on the author’s past or affiliation. The fourth proposition states that materials should not be banned or considered unacceptable if they are graphic or shocking. This ensures the writer’s freedom of expression. The fifth proposition states that it is unethical for books to be labeled to warn readers of questionable content because this implies that one person’s view of what is suitable is better than everyone else’s view. The sixth proposition states that librarians and publishers should stand up against any form of censorship or other type of suppression. The seventh proposition gives librarians and publishers the right to provide books from differing viewpoints so that the public can decide for themselves the best materials to read or use (Cooper, 220).



ALA also helped to establish a non-profit legal and educational organization called the Freedom to Read Foundation. This foundation protects and defends the rights of the First Amendment and supports the libraries' rights to collect and provide access to all information for the public to freely use. It was first established in 1969 and soon became known as the legal arm of the ALA (About FTRF). The main purpose of the foundation is to protect intellectual freedom rights and to protect the librarians who stand up against censorship without the fear of losing their jobs. In the past, if a librarian resisted the use of censorship in their library because they believed in unlimited access to all, they risked getting fired because the local residents found some of the material inappropriate for circulation and demanded that the "offending" librarian be reprimanded for not removing the inappropriate material. The formation of the FTRF was an important step in the field of librarianship because it provides a safeguard for individual librarians faced with censorship issues. "Librarians face many political and intellectual threats, such as organized censorship, library filtering issues, and government intrusion into individual privacy. These actions challenge librarians' professional ethics and one of their core philosophical stands - safeguarding freedom to read and fundamental tenets concerning personal freedom" (Asato, 287). The main role of any librarian is to provide access to all information, whether it is controversial or not, to the public and not hinder this access in any shape or form.

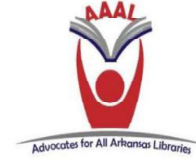
Censorship issues in libraries will always remain a subject of controversy because our society as a whole has vastly different ideas and morals to define what appropriate literature is and what it is not. "In the debate over censorship and intellectual freedom, what is at stake is nothing less than the political power to decide which voices will be made available to the community, which voices will be privileged at the expense of others" (Schrader). While censorship is understandable in some instances, it still inhibits a person's intellectual freedom and goes against the rights of the First Amendment. Librarians play a critical role in the advancement of knowledge by providing access to unlimited information to everyone, no matter how controversial it may be. To limit this by censorship would be like telling one person that their thirst for knowledge is not as important as another person's morals and opinions. Librarians need to continue to stand against censorship by promoting intellectual freedom for the public community.

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April Frost is library technician at Arkansas State University – Beebe where she has worked since 2006. She obtained her MLS from Texas Women's University in 2018.

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Members of the Board of Trustees
Craighead County Jonesboro Public Library
315 West Oak Avenue,
Jonesboro, AR 72401

To the Trustees of the Craighead County Jonesboro Public Library:

The robust exchange of ideas and opinions is fundamental to a healthy democracy. Providing free, unfettered access to those ideas and opinions is an essential characteristic of public libraries in the United States. Libraries celebrate and preserve our democracy and our civil society by making available the widest possible range of viewpoints, opinions, and ideas, so that all individuals, young and old, have the opportunity to learn about and engage with a broad range of diverse topics and ideas.

Because public libraries are welcoming and inclusive institutions that serve everyone in the community, libraries have a particular responsibility to avoid bias and ensure that their materials and programs represent diverse views and encompass all topics of interest. There should be no limiting qualifiers on resources or programming based on perceived controversy.

For this reason, we write to express our deep concern about two policy proposals that appear to limit the community's access to materials and programming based on objections to those materials raised by individuals in your community. Both propose requirements that mandate three months' notice and board review of any program or reading material, based on perceived "sensitivity" because the materials or programming address LGBTQIA topics or themes.

We encourage you to reject these policy proposals in favor of retaining your current collection development policy. As written, both proposed policies require board members to directly manage the operations of the library. Best practices recommended by the Arkansas State Library state that library trustees should delegate the actual management of the library to the library director by adopting policies that provide the library's staff with the flexibility and means to acquire materials and create programs that represent a full range of viewpoints and serve the interests and information needs of all members of Jonesboro's community. The director and the library staff can best accomplish this task if policies adopted by the Craighead County Jonesboro Public Library serve as broad guidelines that empower the library staff to independently exercise their professional judgment and skills when acquiring materials or creating programming for the library.

In addition, by designating a broad range of LGBTQIA and reproductive health materials and programming as "sensitive," the board would stigmatize the interests and concerns of many of the families and individuals who utilize those resources, based solely on other library users' preferences and values. Those who object to certain materials as "sensitive," should not be given the power to deny access to materials and programming that serves the information needs of other members of your community.

We believe that parents know their children best. We fully support the right of every parent to guide their children's reading, and always encourage parents and children to talk together about the materials that they are reading. We do not believe, however, that a parent's right to guide their child's reading includes a right to restrict what other children read or limit the materials and programs available to other families in the community.

Librarians and library staff take their responsibilities to their communities seriously. They are dedicated to developing collections and resources for young persons that allow a child to see themselves and their families reflected in the library's materials and provide a means to understand themselves and the world around them.

An additional concern is the library's responsibility to uphold the First Amendment's promise of freedom of speech, freedom of belief, and the freedom to read. Library policies and procedures that effectively deny families, children and youth equal and equitable access to library resources intended for their use can raise significant First Amendment concerns.

This is not an abstract statement of principle. In *Sund v. City of Wichita Falls, Texas*, 121 F. Supp. 2d 530 (N.D. Texas, 2000), a federal district court held that a city council's decision to place two LGBTQ-themed children's books, *Heather Has Two Mommies* and *Daddy's Roommate*, on a restricted shelf in the adult area of the city's library violated both adults' and minors' First Amendment right to receive information in the library. It further ruled that removing books from the children's area of the library to the adult section because of a citizen group's disapproval of the ideas and themes contained in the books was both content and viewpoint discrimination that violated all library users' First Amendment rights.

In your current collection development policy, you express your appreciation for each patron of the library and affirm your patrons' freedom and responsibility to choose materials and programs according to their own needs and values:

The library provides materials to support each patron's individual pursuits and does not place a value on one customer's needs or preferences over another's. The library upholds the right of the individual to access information, even though the content may be controversial, unorthodox, or unacceptable to others.

We encourage you to reject the two policy proposals and retain your current collection development policy without amendment, which ensures that your director and staff have the flexibility and means to obtain materials and create programs that represent a full range of viewpoints and serve the interests and information needs of all members of Jonesboro's community, without regard to complaints, public pressure, or fear of criticism.

We want to extend our full support to Mr. Eckert and his staff, who have worked to provide a diverse range of materials and programming to meet the information needs of everyone in your community without shying away from potentially controversial topics or views. By empowering your director and staff to acquire, plan, and provide diverse materials and programs, you send a powerful message: in the United States, everyone has a place at the library.

Sincerely and Respectfully,



Melanie Huggins, President
Public Library Association



Charity Tyler, President
United for Libraries



Philip Shackelford, President
Arkansas Library Association



Adam Webb, President
Advocates for All Arkansas Libraries

TRAINING: TIPS, TOPICS & TECHNIQUES: Adapting to Change: Our Continued “Normal”

by Sarah Sewell, Central Arkansas Library System

In looking back, my last column for *Arkansas Libraries* was written in Spring 2020. We’ve certainly covered a lot of territory since then! At this point, in Fall 2021, we’re all still dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic in various ways, but it’s amazing to look back over the past year and a half and to reflect on the challenges we’ve met and continue to meet as a profession, the problems we’ve worked on solving, and the changes and adaptations we’ve made to continue offering excellent service to our communities and to respond to our communities’ needs.

Both professionally and personally I have learned a great deal about the importance of adaptability and flexibility during this sustained time period. In both big and small ways, we in libraries have had to rethink how we manage innumerable facets of our workplaces, including the methods in which we conduct meetings, how we onboard new staff, and how we maintain staff professional development and continuing education.

To cite a specific example, our system-wide Staff Day at my library system was implemented virtually in 2020, and most recently again this fall. Virtual programming has been the go-to since the beginning of the pandemic, so we’d already learned a lot of valuable lessons about pivoting a traditionally in-person experience to online. Still, the logistics to hash out in offering a virtual Staff Day versus an in-person one were definitely a learning curve. This day is traditionally set aside for director updates to our staff; general and break-out informational sessions; networking opportunities; and staff prizes, activities, and awards. We were able to pivot much of this content to an online platform with staff participating remotely or in small, safely distanced groups at their locations, and were also able to easily record some of the content for staff unable to attend. Indeed, there are pros and cons to offering a Staff Development Day like this online, and we’re currently looking at staff feedback to see what pieces we can and



Sewell

should replicate in the future. The end goals of sharing important information, engaging staff, and recognizing the important work that they do on a daily basis remain the same.

Like all of you, we’ve had to be creative in finding safe ways to conduct our staff department and committee meetings, as well as staff informational / training sessions. Offering online and sometimes hybrid meetings (an option with both safe, in-person and virtual methods of participation) have been our answer in many cases. I am curious, going forward, how much going through a pandemic has changed us. Of the adaptations we’ve implemented over the past year and a half, what will we retain?

I’m interested in hearing about how your organizations have adapted your staff professional development and continuing education methods, and what your “new normal” is looking like. Together we’re stronger! Feel free to share your ideas with me. Thank you!

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



Alyssa Eller

So, that's who bought the Rodger's house. -
Fran Fisher

Alyssa Eller won 2nd place in the Pet Photo Contest at the ArLA's Virtual Conference (please see article on pg. 4).

Retirement Profiles of Three Academic Librarians

by **Britt Anne Murphy**

Managing Editor

During summer of 2021, several Arkansas academic librarians announced plans for retirement. The following are profiles written by three retiring librarians in response to queries about their careers in Arkansas. With a collective work life of over 100 years, these librarians have transformed their institutions and paved the way for generations of Arkansas library leaders. We are grateful for their service to the profession, but also for the humor, intelligence, kindness, and leadership they've provided for Arkansas academic libraries, their workers, and their institutions.

Camille Beary, Assistant Director of Lyon College's Mabec-Simpson Library

BA in Music, Arkansas College; MME, Henderson State University; MLS, Texas Woman's University

Who becomes a librarian? It was second nature to me. I really enjoyed libraries and found myself working in them between

jobs as a music teacher. My mother worked at the public library in Batesville, Arkansas, when I was little. I would walk from Westside Elementary after school to the library to meet Mom. She always gave me money for a Cherry Coke at the local DQ on my walk to the library. It was an adventure; I loved the staff, and they loved on me.



Beary

I grew up in Batesville and after graduating from Lyon College, I eventually left the state and landed in Massachusetts. I taught public school music and decided to switch over to library land. Fortunately, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst hired me and later when my marriage broke up, I decided to move back to Arkansas to be near family. And even more fortunately I was trained in the conversion of library catalogs from paper to computer and was hired at Lyon College to help with their conversion.

What are my proudest accomplishments? The biggest is having guided our library into the online environment. It's been a pleasure attending national conferences to find out the very best products for our campus research needs and a challenge to implement them! The art collection in the library is also my

pride and joy. All the works have been inventoried, and I created an online gallery because of COVID. My goal was to fill the library with original works by our campus and regional artists. The "Library Purchase Prize" and the "President's Prize" juried winners are still finding their way to the library. I'm also proud of establishing the "Libris" award, which recognizes our student assistants. Every year one of our students is nominated for the Libris award for being the best at what they do for the library. Their name goes on a plaque, they get a cash stipend, and several have told me their award goes on their resume.

What will I miss? Honestly, I'll miss the students most. They have kept me young at heart, but I will never ever, ever, miss having to get up early to be at work at 8 am! Think of me sitting on my deck drinking coffee late into the mornings.

Spending time with my family and the new grandbaby are tops on my happy list. I also plan to teach music, create a few paintings, and write a bit. Readers are writers! The last third of my life is going to be intense. Got to make it count!

Dean Covington, Director of Torreyson Library

BA in History; MLS, University of Tennessee, Knoxville; MBA, University of North Texas

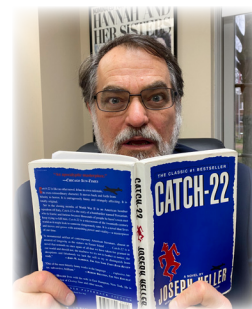
I became a librarian at the suggestion of a friend who was the Agriculture Library Director at the University of Tennessee.

As a recent graduate with a degree in History, I considered different graduate school options and chose Library Science since I could complete the MLS in one year and get a job.

After working at Texas Woman's University, the University of North Texas, and the University of Nevada

Las Vegas, I moved to Lyon College in Batesville in order to be near my aging parents who lived in Kentucky. After my children left home, I decided to leave Lyon College and eventually was fortunate enough to become library director at the University of Central Arkansas.

My accomplishments at North Texas included serving on a Study Team and chairing two task forces that analyzed the library organizational structure and implemented improvements in various



Covington

areas. At UNLV, I led projects that reorganized all Public Service areas and library collections, helped implement UNLV's first ILS, and initiated the library's first formal instruction program. At Lyon College, I led the implementation of their first ILS, raised significant endowments to build library resources, guided a major library renovation and addition, chaired and served on a variety of self-study committees, and served as staff representative on the Lyon Board of Trustees. At UCA, I have been able to help establish a new vision for library services, addressed significant budgetary challenges, supported the development of a new governance structure, planned physical renovations to the library facility, expanded professional development opportunities for library faculty and staff, and helped guide the library faculty and staff through the stressful days of the current pandemic. I also served as President of ArLA and helped implement the latest strategic plan and reorganization.

I will miss most the interaction with colleagues in the library and elsewhere on campus. Academia has been a great place to work. I will also miss interactions with colleagues through my service on national and state library associations. I will miss least the challenges represented by those in our society who do not understand the value of what libraries can bring to their various communities.

In retirement, I am looking forward to spending time with my children and grandchildren, traveling occasionally, watching movies, reading, watching baseball, and visiting with friends.

Ray Granade, Director of Library Services at Ouachita Baptist University

BA, Samford University; MA, PhD in History, Florida State University; MLS, Texas Women's University

I came to Arkadelphia to work at Ouachita Baptist University in 1971, ABD from Florida State University in History. After a dozen years teaching history (having completed my PhD in a semester, and having implemented a remedial academic program under a Title III grant during two of those years), I became what a library colleague called "a retread." My library predecessor, Mrs. Juanita Barnett, abruptly retired, and our then-President Dr. Dan Grant asked me to act as interim. My being "tenured in" as Library Committee Chair probably nudged him



Granade

in that direction. After a year, the administration dropped the "Acting," and I became (rather than University Librarian) Director of Library Services. Although our President believed my History PhD sufficient, we agreed at my insistence that I get the degree appropriate for what I would be doing, and over three summers I completed an MLS from Texas Woman's University. Thirty-eight years after starting, and fifty years after beginning at the University, I retired from the Directorship.

Arkansas was terra incognita to this Alabaman "born and bred." I'd set foot in it once (as a child) before coming for an interview. When I started grad school, one could pick up the phone and get a job teaching history in a college or junior college reasonably nearby. When I returned from military service, that was no longer true. My final year, two places advertised positions: Idaho and Guam! Stories told by my Korean War-veteran profs resonated. A former pastor contacted a former congregant (now OBU President) and proffered my vita; the former congregant sent it to his Academic Vice-President for filing. When two people in succession turned down their offer of a chance to work under a Title III grant, one of the administrators remembered the "over the transom" vita. We were all desperate—OBU to keep the grant, and me to find "any port in a storm," as an FSU prof put it. They offered; I accepted. It obviously proved a good fit.

Becoming a librarian required my departure from full-time teaching – a truly wrenching experience. Yet I retained my standing (and status) as History Professor and faculty member (serving sixteen years as Faculty Secretary), and I always viewed (and continue to do so) librarianship as teaching. Education is a do-it-yourself project, with teachers and librarians serving as guides to better and easier ways for students to educate themselves. I changed disciplines, but not function. For me, librarianship was not something I sought, but something that seemed to seek me. That step seemed an appropriate one when the opportunity appeared.

When President Grant talked with me about assuming the University Librarian position permanently, he agreed to my vision of what OBU's Library should become. As a result, we professionalized the staff (including me) over the course of five years (and the faculty approved faculty status for professional librarians); we planned and constructed an enlarged and refurbished facility with a programmed twenty-year life expectancy; and we partnered with Henderson State University to move our union catalog online in one of the state's

first Integrated Library Systems. In my second year, I coalesced ad hoc, unofficial collections of Baptist historical materials (in conjunction with the Arkansas Baptist State Convention), local historical materials (in conjunction with the Clark County Historical Association), University materials (in various offices), and the political papers of Senator John L. McClellan into a Library Special Collections department. Everything accomplished after that half-decade flowed from those initial decisions and actions as we sought to be early adopters (but never first to the tech market) and listened to our patrons about their needs.

It's been a blessing to teach and work alongside people who believe in serving God with their minds and in helping others develop their facility

in that endeavor. I've enjoyed this time in a place where people matter more than buildings, where relationships with colleagues and with students demonstrate the best that this world has to offer. An experience in a setting where everyone recognizes that we're all learners, whatever our different store of facts, is always invigorating beyond measure. Each morning I think, "I get to go to work today!" I can conceive of no other undertaking for which I would have that same joy and anticipation.

Britt Anne Murphy is director of Bailey Library at Hendrix College in Conway, Arkansas.

AROUND ARKANSAS:

by *Heather Hays, Associate Editor*

Bentonville Public Library (BPL) Children's Librarian, Sue Ann Pekel, retired September 30, 2021. Pekel began working at Bentonville Public Library in July 2007 as the first professional children's librarian. Prior to joining the Bentonville Public Library team, Sue Ann worked as the Director of Children's Services at the Rogers Public Library.

Sue Ann is a member of the Arkansas Library Association and the American Library Association. Pekel graduated from Northwest Arkansas Community College with an Associate of Arts degree and John Brown University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Organizational Management. She has a master's degree in Library Science from Texas Woman's University. Pekel has been recognized with the library-specific awards: Peggy Sullivan Award for Public Library Administrators Supporting Services to Children by the American Library Association (2019); LaNell Compton Prize for best article in Arkansas Libraries by the Arkansas Library Association (2016); Ann Lightsey Children's Librarian Award by the Arkansas Library Association (2012).

Christina Clark was hired as Pekel's successor at BPL on September 7, 2021. Christina grew up in Rogers and earned a bachelor's degree in marketing from the University of Arkansas and a master's degree in Library and Information Science from Florida State University. She spent nine years as a children's librarian in south Louisiana before moving back home to Northwest Arkansas. Clark is a member of the American Library Association, the Arkansas Library Association and the Junior League

of Northwest Arkansas. In 2015, she was honored as the St. Tammany Parish Librarian of the Year for her energy, innovation, hard work and collaboration in the library system.

ALA has announced their 2022 Emerging Leaders! Please congratulate ArLA sponsored Marikit Fain of Siloam Springs, Katherine Blake of Little Rock, and Jessica Kirk of Little Rock on their appointments to this prestigious group. The Emerging Leaders program is designed to help library staff early in their careers to actively participate and serve the profession in a leadership capacity. We know that these appointees will make Arkansas proud. See more about our Arkansas Emerging Leaders in this issue.

Congratulations to Anna Sharon, BPL's Teen Services Librarian, for being selected to participate in the 2022 Arkansas Library Leadership Institute (ALL-In).

Anna joined the BPL team in May 2018 as a part-time clerk; was promoted to a full-time specialist in January 2019; and again promoted to the Teen Services Librarian position in August 2020. Anna earned her Library and Information Sciences graduate program at the University of Kentucky.

ALL-In is a professional development opportunity for library workers in the state of Arkansas designed to develop leadership skills in participants and enhance the delivery of library services for all Arkansans. The program is a year-long, intensive program. BPL Librarians Courtney Fitzgerald and Sarah Herford participated in the inaugural ALL-In program in 2015.

Central Arkansas Library System (CALs) is the winner of the third annual Jerry Kline Community Impact Prize. This award recognizes libraries who work closely with their local governments and communities in order to strengthen partnerships and reduce barriers to services. Congratulations to all the CALs staff for their achievement!

We are saddened by the passing of Gay Moore of Conway on June 19, 2021. She enjoyed a long and varied career in librarianship after receiving her Master's in Library Science from the University of North Carolina. She was a librarian at the University of Central Arkansas for twenty-five years. While there, she served as Head of Technical Services and later as Coordinator of Library Development. She oversaw the transition from print catalogs to computer catalogs and established the Torreyson Library Newsletter and the Friends of Torreyson Library and the Torreyson Book Club, as well as Mystery Dinners and many Christmas Holiday theatre trips to New York. As a member of the American Library Association and the Arkansas Library Association, she was recognized in 1991 with the Distinguished Service Award and she was

twice chair of the Charlie May Simon Book Award Committee.

Laren P. Anderson was recently hired as the new Resource Sharing Librarian at the Mabee-Simpson library of Lyon College in Batesville. We welcome her to her new role and are sure that she will be a great asset to the library team

Melissa Freiley was hired as the Assistant Librarian for Technical Services at Hendrix College's Bailey Library. Melissa was previously at UA Fort Smith and will start at Hendrix in January.

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 lhays@bentonvillear.com, and you'll most likely see it published in our journal.

Heather Hays is senior librarian at the Bentonville Public Library.

Arkansas Books & Authors Bibliography

Compiled by Timothy G. Nutt, Historical Research Center, UAMS

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***Indicates Arkansas author; inclusion does not indicate recommendation.**

LIBRARY ADVOCACY:

Library Advocacy for All of Us

by *Gwen Dobbs*, Northwest Arkansas
Community College

Here are a couple of questions I think we all should ponder. What is library advocacy, and if we had to do it today, would we know what to do? Truthfully, I don't know all that goes into library advocacy, and if I had to do it today, I'd probably stumble without a pre-written script or detailed directions. And chances are, I'm not the only one. If anyone else feels the way I do, I have some good news. We don't have to reinvent the wheel! Many of our peers, in Arkansas and outside of Arkansas, are already doing it, and many are kind enough to share their knowledge with the rest of us. Today, I'd like to focus on some great tools provided by other state library associations and ALA that we can all learn from. We may know some of this content, but chances are we can all learn some new things, too. I hope you enjoy a few of my picks for learning more about library advocacy.



Dobbs

Illinois Library Association: Ready, Set, Advocate

<https://www.ila.org/advocacy/ready-set-advocate>

This publication is available online and is relevant for all types of libraries and potential advocates, from library staff members and trustees, to any member of the general public. It starts with some simple definitions and good advice to get to

know your library and community. Next, it gives pointers on messaging, locally and nationally, what library statistics can do for us, and how to tell our stories with impact. It covers developing an Advocacy Plan and putting that plan into action. The advice that made the biggest impact on me was that advocacy, and relationships outside of the local level, are built via networks, interactions, and targeted messaging to state and federal legislatures and partners. Though parts of this publication are targeted to libraries in Illinois, much of its content is relevant in any state.

American Library Association: Front Line Advocacy Toolkit

<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/frontline-advocacy-toolkit>

With content tailored to public, school, college and university and special libraries, the Front Line Advocacy Toolkit provides information on the importance of advocacy for all library employees, suggestions for getting started and advice on evaluating your efforts.

ALA Past President Julie Todaro: On the Value of Libraries

<https://researchguides.austincc.edu/value>

Linked from the Texas Library Association Advocacy web pages, this LibGuide from Julie Todaro, past-president of ALA and ACRL, and Dean of Library Services at Austin Community College, shares articles and data on the value of libraries.

Ohio Library Council: Advocacy for Libraries

<https://olc.org/resources/advocacy-tools-libraries/>

My favorite materials from the Ohio Library Council are their templates and sample statistics and letters, such as the How Our Library is Funded template, Library Statistics Template and the Letter

from the Director template.

California Library Association Advocacy Tools

<https://www.cla-net.org/page/140>

For a plethora of readings and videos on library advocacy from any angle, the California Library Association hosts a long list of links on their Advocacy Tools webpage. For me, the highlights here are “How Teamwork Busts the Three Biggest Myths about Library Advocacy” and the Library Advocacy Stories section.

If nothing else, give these sites a quick look and see if any content appeals to you and your situation. Whether you are a library administrator or front desk staff in any type of library – public, school, academic or special – we can all play a role in library advocacy.

Gwen Dobbs is library director at Northwest Arkansas Community College in Bentonville, Arkansas.

PUBLIC & REFERENCE SERVICES: From the Public to the State Library: What Changed and What Didn't

by *Jessica Kirk, Arkansas State Library*

I am crossing the one-year mark as the senior reference librarian at the Arkansas State Library. I wanted to share my reflections as I looked back on my library experiences.

With five years of fast-paced public library service behind me, I knew working as a reference librarian at the State Library would be different. Before, reference work in my position was always mixed in with a magic bag of services that I would be on the ready to dispense at any moment. It never felt on the forefront of what I was doing every day. Patrons' goals always felt tangible and urgent. They were varied and had range, but mostly felt like slight problems to solve or quick answers to give. My assistance always felt concluded with a solid answer provided. Very few times did I feel I had the opportunity to say, “Let me check on that and follow up with you.”

I transitioned out of public library work during the pandemic but was able to witness the changes we were all making to continue to meet needs. Contrasting to my social life, I started to see more opportunities to follow up and connect with people. I saw how what we were doing was making things more accessible for people. I hoped I would continue having that experience.

Because the Arkansas State Library offers services throughout the state, we communicate mostly by phone, email, or outreach. It is the first quiet library I have worked in. I thought I would miss the urgent interactions driving my day. Now I



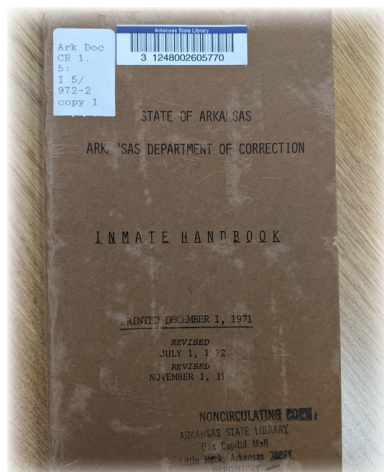
Kirk

have several back and forth emails with researchers. I have repeat callers and letter writers. We always invite them to share with us about their continued progress and are often thanked for our support even if we are only referring them to other appropriate resources. I find I still have that connection with my patrons, and I've learned to sit in the silence.

One of my first reference questions at the State Library was from a researcher in Singapore. They needed help with tracing the full history of dental services for adults in Arkansas Medicaid regulations. I read an Arkansas inmate handbook from the 1970s for personal interest after someone emailed asking for one missing page from their scanned copy. As Arkansas' only designated Patent and Trademark Resource Center, I've had several conversations about intellectual property rights, something I barely knew anything about before working here.

Even after a year of service, I need to follow our step-by-step guide to create a library card. I've made less than five accounts, as they're mostly handled by another library worker. In comparison, I bet I could make one with my eyes closed in my old ILS from public library days. With any new role, you question if you know what you need to know to do

the job well. After a year, I don't know if we're ever meant to stop asking ourselves, “Am I supposed to know this?” stop saying, “I don't know, but let me try to find out” or stop feeling amazed at all there is to discover. If I did, it wouldn't be as fun.



Inmate handbook from the 1970s.

People's relationships with information is so strange and interesting at times. I feel privileged to witness the exchange. I feel accountable as an agent of information in an age of misinformation.

Another sentiment that has held true over the transition, and one I hope you also experience, is the feeling of community, not only the community we reside in, but our community of library folks. We should never forget we can ask for help and find partnerships to enhance what we can offer. While technically my team is smaller here than it was before, I now feel motivated to connect to Arkansas' larger community of libraries.

The RISci group (ArLA's Reference & Instruction Services community of interest) has its own discussion list that I look to if I feel stuck on a difficult reference or research question. There's a link to sign up on the group's page: <https://www.arlib.org/Reference-&-Instruction-Services>

I've had help from the Arkansas History Discussion Group Listserv hosted by University of Arkansas Libraries Special Collections. More information on how to subscribe is here: <https://libraries.uark.edu/specialcollections/research/arhist-1.asp>



I also have received some calls from librarians across the state asking for help on a particular patron question and welcome more of them. I find that having someone acknowledge that you've exhausted the search and included quality resources is just as valuable sometimes.

Overall, I recognize that moving from a public library to the State Library was a big change for me, but you know what didn't change? Having interesting interactions with people, feeling a part of a larger community and continuing on a journey of life-long learning.

Jessica Kirk worked for the Central Arkansas Library System before joining the Arkansas State library in 2020, where they work as the senior reference librarian. Contact them at jessica.kirk@ade.arkansas.gov

A New Strategic Plan for the Association

by Crystal Gates

Laman Library, North Little Rock

Dan Boice

University of Arkansas at Monticello

Winston Churchill had a knack for putting ideas into words, and famously said that "he who fails to plan is planning to fail." We in ArLA have been very fortunate that the Association has come far over the past several years, despite some difficult times in the past, and despite the COVID pandemic. And part of ArLA's success has been the result of establishing plans with goals, and then moving resolutely toward those goals. For example, the recent restructuring of ArLA has been accomplished through much hard work, as leaders gathered information, proposed and debated ideas, then moved ahead. Always these individuals kept in their sight the future and the fortunes of ArLA, using as a guide the 2018-21 Strategic Plan. That plan helped direct energy and thought, and helped us get to our new structure.

In 2019, the Strategic Planning Committee began preliminary work toward a new plan for ArLA. The

Committee began with an exercise in Appreciative Inquiry, which seeks to build on an organization's strengths. So in early 2020, the Executive Board members responded to a questionnaire asking about aspects of ArLA that they especially valued and ideas that they thought might be useful moving forward. Not surprisingly, the one benefit that was most valued was the networking that goes on in ArLA, at conferences and in meetings large and small. Friendships, professional contacts, comparing experiences, picking up ideas – all are rich rewards of working and conferencing, and all are highly valued.

In 2021, as the three-year plan was coming to its conclusion, ArLA President Philip Shackelford directed the Strategic Planning Committee to draft a new plan, one to help move the Association to the next level in its growth. The Committee reorganized, with membership from around the state and from a variety of libraries. Members are: Nikki Aitken (Lake Hamilton Schools), Dean Covington (UCA), Crystal Gates (North Little Rock PL), Sarah Jefferson (Flippin Schools), Jasmine Jobe (CALS), Clara Timmerman (Stuttgart PL), Kristina Waltermire (State Library), and Dan Boice (UAM).

The Committee met virtually to discuss how best to proceed, and – as we did in 2018 – developed and sent out an online survey, designed to gather opinions and ideas to inform a new three-year plan.

Responses to the survey were in many ways very similar to those received in 2018: 312 responses this year, compared to 315 three years ago. Once again, 51% of the respondents were not members of ArLA, and half were from public libraries. And like three years ago, respondents rated very highly the annual conference, *Arkansas Libraries*, and the opportunities provided by ArLA for professional service, education, and networking. This year, perhaps in response to recent legislative action, respondents expressed more interest in advocacy for Arkansas libraries.

The Committee also noted increased interest in regional activities, and more interest in knowing what ArLA committees are up to, and how individuals can get involved in ArLA work. While respondents again rated the annual conference very highly, many members expressed wanting more programs of interest to them. Also, members noted how cost and time constraints limit their ability to attend conferences, suggesting that virtual opportunities could offer benefits, and recordings could be useful for individuals with full personal schedules.

Comments were numerous and frank, and the Committee spent much time reading them and discussing how we can continue to build on ArLA's many strengths, while addressing the changing needs, opportunities, and challenges of the state's library community. In a series of meetings and spirited conversations, the Committee drafted and, over the spring and summer, revised a three-year plan that, we hope, addresses many of these challenges and opportunities.

At its August meeting, the ArLA Executive Board studied and, after minor editorial corrections, approved for study by the ArLA membership the draft plan. This draft was then adopted during the Membership Business meeting during the October 2021 ArLA Conference. We hope that this new plan will, like the previous one, be useful in helping direct the immense energy and the activities of ArLA as we move into more challenges and new opportunities.

Arkansas Library Association (ArLA) 2021-24 Strategic Plan

*The Purpose of the Arkansas Library Association
is to promote library service and the profession of
librarianship in the State of Arkansas.*

The Mission of the Arkansas Library Association

*is to further the professional development of all
library staff members; to foster communication and
cooperation among librarians, trustees and friends
of libraries; to increase the visibility of libraries
among the general public and funding agencies; and
to serve as an advocate for librarians and libraries.*

Goal 1: Improve provision of and access to professional development.

Strategy 1.A. We will continue to enhance offerings of professional development.

1.A.1. We will study offering workshops in person and online, recording when possible, assuring wider access.

1.A.2. We will seek to schedule events at times that accommodate as many members as possible, including all types of libraries and all personnel.

1.A.3. We will seek to increase offerings of regional workshops.

Responsible: New Members Committee

Date: 2022 and ongoing

Strategy 1.B. We will strengthen program offerings at the Conference.

1.B.1 We will encourage all Communities of Interest to develop programs for the Annual Conference.

1.B.2. We will seek programs from and for all library types and roles within libraries.

1.B.3. We will consider other venues for conferences, such as public or academic facilities, in order to increase accessibility and affordability.

Responsible: Conference Committee

Date: 2022

Goal 2: Increase ArLA membership numbers and encourage participation.

Strategy 2.A. The Membership Committee will study and make recommendations on the following concerns:

2.A.1. We will find ways to better communicate to the Library community the value of membership and active participation in ArLA.

2.A.2. We will find ways to communicate to Trustees and Administrators the value of membership and participation in ArLA.

2.A.3. We will seek out and work with other library organizations, including ARKLink, AAAL, and AIIM, in order to encourage cooperation with and membership in ArLA as appropriate.

Responsible: New Members Committee

Date: 2024

Strategy 2.B. We will strengthen our advocacy for librarians and libraries.

2.B.1. We will work to increase participation in advocacy at all levels.

2.B.2. We will gather advice and ideas from other states to find ways to enhance our advocacy work.

Responsible: Library Advocacy Community of Interest

Date: 2023

Strategy 2.C. We will strengthen networking opportunities.

2.C.1. The Conference Committee will seek ways to build in more networking opportunities at the conference.

2.C.2. We will seek to offer regional in-person gatherings, especially as part of Annual Conference activities.

Responsible: Conference Committee

Date: 2023

Goal 3: Strengthen the organization of the Association.

Strategy 3.A. We will study and refine ArLA's structure.

3.A.1 We will monitor the success of the Communities of Interest model, noting membership, activity, leadership transitions, and continuity, and will recommend changes as

needed.

Responsible: New Members Committee

Date: 2024

Strategy 3.B. We will review and modify the dues structure of ArLA to meet the changing needs of the state and the profession.

3.B.1. We will study the dues structure, using input from all parts of ArLA, and make clear the dues structure.

3.B.2. We will seek ways to modify the structure, especially for new members or individuals who struggle with cost, avoiding stigma however possible.

Responsible: Ad Hoc Dues Task Force

Date: 2023

Strategy 3.C. We will find ways to develop leaders and ensure ongoing leadership.

3.C.1 We will offer our assistance and support to the State Library for the ALL-In program.

3.C.2. We will study leadership development models from other states and organizations.

Responsible: Emerging Leaders Committee

Date: 2024

Approved: ArLA Executive Board, August 13, 2021
ArLA Membership, October 15, 2021



Dean B. Ellis Library at Arkansas State University enshrouded with snow. Photo submitted by April Sheppard.

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A snowy day at Rogers Public Library. Photo submitted by Samantha Smith.

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