

# ARKANSAS LIBRARIES

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Arkansas Library Association

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# Arkansas Library Association, 2021

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*Arkansas Libraries* is the official journal of the Arkansas Library Association. It contains articles of current interest, historical significance or literary value, concerning all aspects of librarianship, particularly items pertinent to Arkansas. It also includes official statements of and information provided by the Arkansas Library Association.

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*Arkansas Libraries*, Spring-Summer 2021

## FROM THE ArLA PRESIDENT: Welcome to the Future!

*Philip Shackelford*  
2021 ArLA President

**H**appy June! It seems impossible that we can already be six months into the year, but my “Pets of ArLA” calendar doesn’t lie, and here we are, halfway through a year that has already seen more than its fair share of drama, tragedy, and chaos. Your Board took important steps to address these

developments, from the statement that ArLA issued in response to the January 6 unrest in our nation’s capital, to our continued efforts in supporting Arkansas library workers in navigating the strange world of pandemic librarianship. The ArLA Board is compassionate, professional, and supportive, and it is my privilege to call each member a colleague.

But we are not here to dwell on these challenges. Instead, as conditions improve, and we begin to look forward to a post-pandemic reality, our attention is rightly focused on how our libraries and institutions can readjust – again – in the service of our students, patrons, and communities. It is also an exciting time for those among us who are opening new facilities or working on major renovation projects – I look forward to traveling to Fayetteville to visit the terrific new expansion that recently opened at Fayetteville Public. Most importantly, Arkansas library personnel continue to be among the most innovative folks around, and a few of their fantastic achievements have been highlighted in the new “member spotlights” that have been shared. Everyone please continue to celebrate your awesome co-workers and colleagues!

Our association is focused on maintaining positive momentum. Many of you may be familiar with the list of presidential initiatives called “Towards New Horizons” that circulated at the beginning of the year. Darby Wallace, a former public library director and library media specialist, is leading the Presidential Initiatives Task Force in an effort to transform these initiatives into actionable outcomes our association can pursue in order to maintain and enhance our ability to serve each individual working in an Arkansas library. The Bylaws Committee, as well, following the Herculean



*Shackelford*



effort of revising our bylaws and handbook last year, is building on that success to tie up loose ends and keep ArLA in shipshape under the dedicated leadership of Janice Weddle. You can find a copy of the Presidential Initiatives at <https://tinyurl.com/4e73u938>. Finally, Rachel Shankles and the Conference Committee are doing a tremendous job preparing for the 2021 annual conference coming up in October! Stay tuned for more information about the conference in this issue.

All told, if 2020 was the year of the “pivot,” then my hope is that 2021 can be the year of community. Supporting each other is more important than ever. If we as a profession and an association cannot come together in support of our colleagues around the state, then we have failed in our central purpose. A number of new initiatives this year have been designed specifically with these things in mind, including the ArLA Open Forum events, envisioned as informal, “no rules no pressure” events for Arkansas library workers to visit and network, and the “Lunch, Learning, and Libraries” webinar series held monthly. Take advantage of these opportunities and support your staff, colleagues, and yourself.

I believe that the future of the Arkansas Library Association is a bright one. Over the past couple of years we have seen our organization look to the past for lessons and wisdom, move forward towards progress, and chart new waters as we have faced unprecedented challenges, but also worked hard to lay a solid foundation for future success. It is my belief that now the time has come for us to build on these valuable efforts and embark towards new horizons, to be ambitious on purpose, and to boldly go where our members – the hardworking librarians of Arkansas and the communities that we serve – need us most. We will continue to be faced with important questions and decisions related to how we and our libraries navigate significant challenges, but through it all our mission remains the same – to provide valuable resources and a supportive environment where our students, patrons, and communities can learn and grow.

Welcome to the future!

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



## FROM THE EDITOR: Coming Back from COVID-19

by *Britt Anne Murphy*

*Library Director, Hendrix College*

**W**elcome to the  
Spring/Summer  
issue of *Arkansas*

*Libraries!* This late spring and summer feel welcoming as we slowly see things return to a pre-pandemic state. Many of us have fully returned to an in-person work environment. The public libraries are seeing their hours and branches back to the busyness of a regular summer, perhaps with some tweaks to host programming outside when possible. The academics and schools are no doubt grateful to close the book on the 2020-2021 academic year. We at Hendrix are still wearing masks indoors, but with the rest of inside spaces around town quickly abandoning any mask requirement, it feels more like a vestige from some past nightmare.

This issue of *Arkansas Libraries* recounts many of the lessons and experiences from the past year. Our authors relate lessons they learned about “pandemic librarianship” in our many different library settings, as we process the bizarre and stressful past 15 months. We also learn some lessons about multicultural approaches from school librarians, dive into diversity standards as put forward by ALA, and discover public health programs the National Library of Medicine supports. We learn how to use data to advocate for our libraries, and how to teach text and data mining to



*Murphy*

college students. Stuttgart Public Library takes a retrospective look much deeper in the past as they celebrate their centennial – a reminder that libraries endure through the best and worst of times!

In this issue we also look to the future, with an ArLA 2021 conference preview, a plug for ArLA scholarship and award nominations, and profiles of a new Community of Interest and a new face at the Arkansas State Library. Many articles talk about change, including a review of the changes coming to the American Library Association, how to train staff when migrating online library systems, and accessibility enhancements to the ArLA website.

As we transition to a post-pandemic era, I hope you take these lessons from your colleagues to heart. One lesson I have learned this year is to cherish the interactions I have with my colleagues. The resiliency I found within my colleagues here in Arkansas and around the nation was almost as contagious as the virus, and every time I despaired alone at my desk, you all lifted me up. Over the past 15 months, I found myself being more intentional in our connections with each other. In our online gatherings, I listened more carefully, asked questions more freely, and made my invitations as broad as possible. I know it sounds silly, but ending each online meeting was almost bittersweet. While many of us have found new energy in online environments that are more inclusive and convenient, I hope those virtual interactions will also prepare us better for our in-person interactions. I know for me, the first time I can share a smile or laugh without a camera, it will be all the sweeter.

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

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# Towards New Horizons: *Arkansas Library Association Annual Conference 2021*

by Rachel Shankles

President-Elect & Conference Chair

The Executive Board of Arkansas Library Association made the decision in early 2021 to continue with a virtual conference for October, predicting that restrictions for gathering would just be beginning to be lifted around that time. The Conference Committee decided to work with the conference platform company Whova to host our October 12-15, 2021 ArLA Conference. This is an amazing platform with so many features that will help you network with your peers, attend sessions that are livestreamed or recorded, and mingle at our usual ARLA events such as Trivia Night and the Basket Auction. Breaks for yoga and other mindfulness moments will be scheduled within each day's list of sessions. The Exhibition will feature different types of advertising and promotions as well as the Passport Game for prizes.

The first 200 to register will receive a conference tee shirt that is heather gray with the ArLA logo and the logos of two Sponsors. These will be distributed through public libraries around the state, and you will be notified where to go to pick up your shirt.

Glancing at the schedule, you will notice that the Communities of Interest and some ArLA committees are meeting on Tuesday, October 12 online. Our keynotes will speak each day the rest of the week. We are happy to announce the keynote speakers for ARLA 2021 are Kieran Hixon, John Hornor Jacobs, Talya Tate Boerner, Kat Robinson, Joe David Rice, and Patty Wong, incoming ALA President.

**Kieran Hixon** will speak Wednesday on 'If it weren't so bad, it would be great: libraries, pandemics and service at the curb, to include curbside service, live streaming storytime, crafts and activities in a bag.... librarians came up with creative solutions to serve their community during the pandemic. How will this take us forward? He is the former Association for Rural & Small Libraries President, Outstanding in Their Field Leadership Institute Project Lead, and Technology and Digital Initiatives Consultant for the Colorado State Library. Kieran



has over 10 years of experience offering professional development, both in-person and online, for rural libraries throughout the United States. Hixon is passionate about rural libraries and is known for his high energy, humorous stories, and insightful examples when providing instruction.

**John Hornor Jacobs** is the award-winning author of *Southern Gods*, *This Dark Earth*, the young adult *Incarcerado* series, *The Incorruptibles* trilogy, and *A Lush and Seething Hell*. His fiction and essays have appeared in *Playboy* Magazine, Huffington Post, and CBSWeekly. His genres run from fantasy to juvenile fiction to horror and science fiction. He's been shortlisted for the Shirley Jackson Award, Bram Stoker Award, the Gemmell Award, the Morningstar, and World Fantasy Awards. Jacobs resides in Little Rock and spends his free time when not working on his next book thinking about working on his next book. John will speak on Thursday about his writing style 'Variations on a Theme.'



**Talya Tate Boerner** is called 'The daughter of the Delta.' As the daughter of an Arkansas farmer, she grew up playing in the cotton fields of Mississippi County while perfecting the art of making mudpies. After high school, she attended college at Baylor University, graduating with an economics degree primarily because her Daddy said, "If I'm paying for college, you'll get a business degree." For nearly thirty years, Talya lived in Dallas, built a successful banking career, married, raised two children and enjoyed life – all the while planning to someday return to Arkansas. In 2011, after an "aha" moment, (the topic of her newest memoir, *Gene, Everywhere*) she left banking to pursue her dream of writing. Now she lives in Fayetteville with her husband, John, and two miniature schnauzers. Her family still farms in the Arkansas Delta. Her debut novel, *The Accidental Salvation of Gracie Lee*,





was released in January 2016. Although the story is fiction, the characters and setting will be familiar and relatable, especially to those with southern roots, less than perfect families, and questions about life in general. Talya is also a contributor to Arkansas Farm Bureau's *Front Porch Magazine* where she writes a regular column, Delta Child. Her short stories, essays, and micro-fiction have been published in *Arkansas Review*, *Ponder Review*, and other print and on-line journals. She shares stories of farm, food, garden, and life on her personal blog, Grace Grits, and Gardening. You can follow her on Goodreads too! She will speak Tuesday on her writing inspiration and the importance of literary citizenship.

We welcome **Kat Robinson** back to an ArLA conference. Her humor and enthusiasm about this



state and its food leave the audiences asking for more. Kat is Arkansas's food historian and most enthusiastic road warrior. The Little Rock-based author is the host of the Emmy-nominated documentary *Make*

*Room For Pie*; *A Delicious Slice of The Natural State* and the Arkansas PBS show *Home Cooking with Kat and Friends*. She is a member of the Arkansas Food Hall of Fame committee, a co-chair of the Arkansas Pie Festival, and the Arkansas fellow to the National Food and Beverage Museum. She has written nine books on food, most notably *Arkansas Food: The A to Z of Eating in The Natural State*, an alphabetic guide to the dishes, delights, and food traditions that define her home state. Her two most recent travel guides, *101 Things to Eat in Arkansas Before You Die* and *102 More Things to Eat in Arkansas Before You Die* define the state's most iconic and trusted eateries. Robinson's *Another Slice of Arkansas Pie: A Guide to the Best Restaurants, Bakeries, Truck Stops and Food Trucks for Delectable Bites in The Natural State* outlines more than 400 places to find the dessert, an extraordinary accomplishment that took thousands of miles, hundreds of hours and so many bites to properly document and catalogue. Her most recent work is *A Bite of Arkansas: A Cookbook of Natural State Delights*, which offers 140 recipes and stories from her own experiences, presented with the dishes she prepared and photographed herself. While

she writes on food and travel subjects throughout the United States, she is best known for her ever-expanding knowledge of Arkansas food history and restaurant culture, all of which she explores on her 1200+ article website, *TieDyeTravels.com*. She is also the host of the podcast Kat Robinson's Arkansas. Robinson's journeys across Arkansas have earned her the title "road warrior," "traveling pie lady," and probably some other epithets. Few have spent as much time exploring The Natural State or researching its cuisine. "The Girl in the Hat" has been sighted in every one of Arkansas's 75 counties, oftentimes sliding behind a menu or peeking into a kitchen. Kat will speak Thursday before lunch.

**Patty Wong** will become the American Library Association President before October 2021 and the ARLA

Conference. She will speak on Friday before our board meeting and bring us up to date on the Association and any new initiatives during their



reordering of the organization. Patty is the city librarian at Santa Monica (Calif.) Public Library. She also serves as part-time faculty at the San José State University iSchool and is former director of library services at Yolo County Library (2008–2017). An active ALA member for 35 years, Wong has served several terms as at-large councilor (1996–2007, 2012–2014) and as California Chapter councilor (2015–2017). Wong is currently in her second term on the ALA Executive Board, previously serving from 2001–2005. In addition to her service to ALA, Wong currently serves as a board member for the Corporation for Education Network Initiatives in California (2014–present). She has served as a board member of the California Library Association (2015–2017), and as president of APALA (1999). Wong is often called to speak on several issues related to leadership, diversity, youth development, and grant writing. Patty also is the recipient of several awards, including the 2012 ALA Equality Award, CALA Distinguished Service Award (2014), and Member of the Year of the California Library Association (2012).

Last but not least is Arkansas author **Joe David Rice**, a well-known and respected resource on all



things Arkansas. An accomplished promoter of the state as a “must-see-and-experience” destination, Rice served as Arkansas’s tourism director for thirty years, working under five governors. He is the author of *Arkansas Backstories*, the



two-volume series of the quirky facts about the state. Rice was born in Paragould and raised in Jonesboro. *An Undercurrent of Murder*, a mystery thriller set in the Ozark Mountains, is his latest book. He enjoys exploring the Arkansas countryside by foot, canoe, or car, and unearthing those lesser-known tidbits that make the Natural State special. His session will be on Friday.

**A Glimpse at a Sampling of Concurrent Sessions**

**The Many Uses of Smore:** Ronda Hughes of Ft Lake Middle School, Hot Springs will present about this amazingly simple and quick newsletter program that has many other uses too!

**Encouraging Creatives:** Jasmine Jobe, editorial assistant of the Encyclopedia of Arkansas, will discuss book clubs, programs, and creating a book club online.

**The Copyright Conundrum:** Brittany Flemming of Bentonville Schools will help explain copyright for teacher and student purposes.

**Open Software for Researchers of All Ages and Applying Creative Commons Licensing** will be presented by Lora Lennertz from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville.

**How to Effectively Market Your Library when**

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**Your Budget is FREE!** Join Amanda Bashaw, Graphic Designer at Craighead County Library in Jonesboro.

**Online Tools and Apps for the Reference Desk** will be presented by Jodie Borgerding of Amigos Library Services.

**Press Releases for Your Library: How to Get Coverage in the Stacks** is hosted by Jordan Reynolds of Saline County Library.

**Helping from Home: A New Twist on Teen Volunteering at the Library, Teen Synergy Session, and The Diamond Award** will be presented by Ruth Hyatt, Youth Services Director at the Arkansas State Library.

**I Conducted a Survey. Now What?** Join David Eckert and Tonya Ryals of Craighead County Public Library in Jonesboro.

**Inspiration to Publication: Twenty-Two Libraries, Two Artists, and One Book** will be hosted by Allie Stevens, Calhoun County Library, Don House, photographer and author, and Sabine Schmidt, photographer and author.

Three Emotional Wellness Sessions we can all profit from after this pandemic --- One for each day by Amanda Moore, Graduate and Professional School Programs Dir at Hendrix College in Conway; **Danger Burnout, Using the Enneagram as a Tool for Resilience and Stress Reduction: Purpose, Relaxation, and Joy**

**Registration is open to individuals from May 10 to September 15 for \$75 (members) and \$100 (non-members).**

**Institutions can register up to 10 attendees for \$300.**

***The first 200 registrants get a free 2021 ARLA Conference Tee Shirt!***

**Rachel Shankles**, Conference Chair, has been chair of the school library division of ArLA three times over her 47-year library career. She has been awarded the Retta Patrick Award while working as a school librarian at Lakeside High in Hot Springs. Rachel retired from public school education in 2013 and now works as the Practicum Coordinator





for the Library Media Program in the Leadership Studies Department at UCA. She teaches online from her farmhouse near Lake DeGray and visits school libraries around the state to supervise her graduate students. Always active in the library community in Arkansas, she has served as AAIM President twice, a delegate to the Governor's Conference on Libraries, and an original member of Resource Arkansas and the Teen Book Award Committee. In her spare time she collects dishes to do tablescapes, works jigsaw puzzles, and has published four books for children.

As Conference Chair, Rachel has worked closely with the ArLA Standing Committees and CIs, as well as President Philip Shackelford, Treasurer Lynn Valetutti, and Web Services chair Ron Russ.

"I want to thank these officers for always answering my questions and pointing me in the right direction. My Conference Committee (listed below) has met every month to learn the ins and outs of Whova and to solicit presentations, vendor sponsors, and attendees in planning this conference. I offer my humble thanks for all the time and effort spent with me on this virtual conference to insure a successful event. They have been a wonderful team," says Rachel.

### **The 2021 ArLA Conference Committee**

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# 2021 ArLA Awards Committee Seeks Nominations

by Allie Stevens

ArLA Awards Chair 2021

**W**e can all agree that the past year has been unexpected and full of challenges and complications in our work lives.

Despite the uncertainty and changes created by the COVID-19 pandemic, Arkansas librarians have risen to the occasion in so many ways, and the ArLA Awards Committee is seeking nominations for our annual slate of awards to recognize those groups and individuals who have continued the tradition of excellence in the field of librarianship in Arkansas.

These awards are a way for us to recognize the best of what we have to offer our communities and each other, and in the past year, some of the most innovative and service-oriented library work I have seen has come from our very own Arkansas librarians. It has been incredibly inspiring to watch my colleagues around the state continue to create, engage, and serve our communities under these strange and unpredictable circumstances. The Awards Committee members and I very much hope you will consider nominating someone whose work you have admired, either over the past year or over an entire career, to be the recipient of an ArLA Award and be celebrated during the annual conference in October. This year we will be selecting winners for the following awards:

The **Ann Lightsey Children's Librarian Award** recognizes a current or recently retired children's librarian who has provided dedicated and exceptional service to Arkansas's young people through a public or school library.

The **Arkansiana Award** will be given to an author of a recent book that represents a significant contribution to Arkansas heritage and culture. One award may be given for each category: adult non-fiction, adult fiction, and juvenile (fiction or non-fiction).

The **Arkansas Intellectual Freedom Award** recognizes an individual or a group that have made significant contributions in support of intellectual freedom on behalf of a library in Arkansas.

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.

An annual **Distinguished Service Award** recognizes an outstanding achievement in a



specific area of librarianship by an Arkansas library employee.

The **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.

The **Lorrie Shuff Paraprofessional Award** is awarded to an individual for distinguished service as a paraprofessional library worker.

The **Retta Patrick Award** recognizes an individual Arkansas librarian who has made an outstanding state or national contribution to school librarianship and/or school library development.

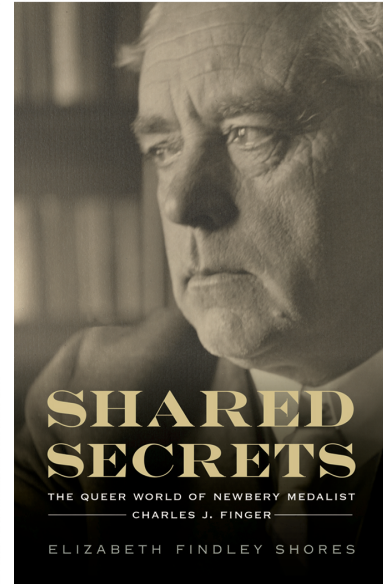
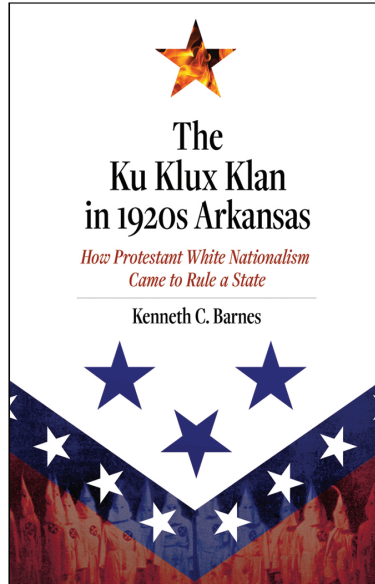
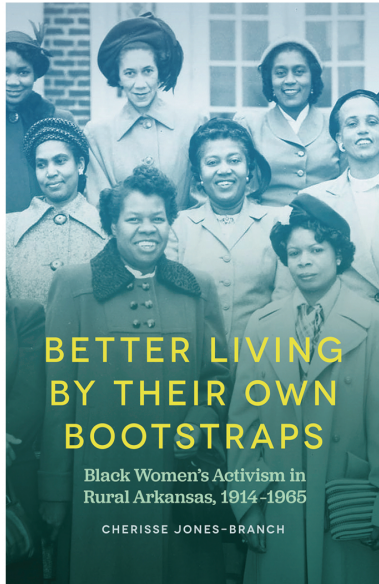
The **Rising Star Award** is given to an individual who has been a library worker for less than five years and who has provided exceptional service to their library community.

The **Suzanne Spurrier Academic Librarian Award** recognizes a currently employed academic librarian who exemplifies a spirit of outstanding service and dedicated professionalism.

Any Arkansas library employee or library-affiliated person such as a trustee can nominate a colleague for an ArLA Award. Full eligibility and awards criteria can be found at <https://www.arlib.org/membership/awards>. To nominate someone, please fill out the nomination form located at <http://bit.ly/arlaawards2021>. If you have any questions about eligibility, criteria, or the nominations process please contact Awards Committee Chair Allie Stevens at [allie@calcolibrary.com](mailto:allie@calcolibrary.com).

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





**BETTER LIVING BY THEIR OWN BOOTSTRAPS**

*Black Women's Activism in Rural Arkansas, 1914-1965*

Cherisse Jones-Branch

"In impressive detail and lovely, engaging prose, Cherisse Jones-Branch argues that African American women who remained in Arkansas during the years of widespread migration remade the countryside through their struggle to improve their communities' access to health care, food, political representation, and economic opportunity. With this book, Jones-Branch has established herself as a leading historian not only of rural Black women's twentieth-century activism but also of American rural history overall."

—Adrienne Monteith Petty

**THE KU KLUX KLAN IN 1920S ARKANSAS**

*How Protestant White Nationalism Came to Rule a State*

Kenneth C. Barnes

"Ken Barnes has skillfully produced a work that is accessible to a general audience and one that offers new insights for historians. An undeniable contribution to Arkansas and American history."

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**SHARED SECRETS**

*The Queer World of Newbery Medalist Charles J. Finger*

Elizabeth Findley Shores

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

—Michael P. Bibler

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# Yes, We Are Open: A Pandemic Retrospective

by *Lisa Underwood Fuller and  
Amelia Brister*

*Harding University*

In recent years, student workers in academic libraries have taken on roles with more responsibilities, often performing tasks librarians may have fulfilled in the past. Gremmels (2013) mentions that one current trend in staffing of academic libraries is to staff reference desks with non-librarians and student workers. At Harding University's Brackett Library, our Student Reference Assistants (SRAs) answer the telephone, monitor our chat service, assist patrons with technology issues, help patrons locate materials in our library, count usage and re-shelve reference books, and help keep the public workstation area straightened and ready for patrons.

Throughout the school year, student workers are often the first people our patrons interact with. During a typical semester, the front reference service point, called the Information Desk, is staffed for approximately 87 hours a week. At any given hour, one to two student workers provide assistance at the Information Desk, and one full-time staff member sits in a glass-walled office not far from the desk.

## Returning to Campus after the COVID-19 Closure

As we approached August 2020, our staff was preparing for the return of students to our campus while acknowledging the possibility that plans could change at any minute. In preparation for our students' return, we made signs, set up Plexiglas, and marked areas for restricted seating. Although we were excited to see our student workers for the first time since early March, our primary concern

was to ensure the health and safety of our fourteen student workers in the Reference Department. Unlike other departments in the library, these students were given the added responsibility of helping us monitor COVID compliance among patrons. We anticipated having some issues with patrons but didn't realize the impact this would have on the emotional well-being and morale of our student workers.

Many of our student workers were upperclassmen involved in clinicals and internships, so they had a lot at stake if they became ill or quarantined. To minimize the possibility of one SRA exposing a fellow worker to COVID, we developed a new model to accommodate social distancing guidelines. The full-time staff member still sat in the nearby office, but one student worker stayed at the Information Desk, and the second student worker was seated at a new station upstairs. This arrangement and our "new normal" of the pandemic brought some unanticipated challenges. To help reduce potential spread from patron to patron or from patrons to student workers, our library implemented several policies at the beginning of the year:

- Patrons were limited to one per table for small tables and two per table at larger tables.
- Patrons were to wear masks covering their mouth



*Student Worker Megan Moore assists a patron in the stacks.*



*Socially distanced students studying at Brackett Library.*



and nose when not eating or drinking.

- Patrons were to socially distance at least six feet apart.
- Conference and study room capacity was reduced depending on the size of the room.

### **Changing Work Environment**

Because our SRAs walk the floors of the library to count patrons every 30 minutes, they were asked to help monitor COVID compliance and remind our patrons of these policies. Once the semester got underway, we noticed that some of our most experienced student workers were feeling stressed and reluctant to come to work, especially at times when the student workers were the principal monitors of the COVID guidelines. We asked our student workers to describe some of their experiences and why their view of work had changed. Here are some of their comments:

*There are several patrons who continually disregard the rules. Some of them are rude. Some of them just do not seem to care what we say. Many will only pull up their masks when they see us walking by. This is not doing anything to protect against COVID and is also in a way disrespectful to the SRAs who continually have to ask them to put their masks on and follow other various rules. SRAs who are diligently enforcing the rules know these people by face and some by name. Many of these people are in the library on almost every single shift I work, and I have to approach them 3+ times during each shift. We need some kind of reinforcement on this.*

*It is exhausting to ask them to follow the rules. One of the biggest reasons is because it takes so much to ask them to follow the rules for them to not [sic] as soon as I walk away. It takes a lot of effort for no benefit, and there needs to be an actual form of consequence.*



*Creative use of space by a group of three students working together on a project.*

*It gets tiresome when you have to repeat yourself constantly, only to be laughed at or just ignored.*

Hearing our student workers' experiences broke our hearts. Prior to the pandemic, Harvard Medical School reported that 63% of university students experienced overwhelming anxiety during the 2017-2018 academic year (LeBlanc). The difficulties introduced by the pandemic created even higher levels of stress and anxiety for all of us, especially our already anxious student workers. We value our student workers and strive to create a positive work environment for them. We knew something had to change or many of our student workers might have chosen not to return to work the following semester. This urgency prompted discussions on our staffing model and ways that we could improve student morale to help us all make it through.

### **Listening and Adjusting: a Call to Action**

Our first step was to give our student workers an opportunity to voice their concerns and to give us suggestions on how we could support them better, which resulted in some quick changes in some library routines. In a typical semester, there are no full time staff members in the library between 5:00 and 7:00 PM, and the SRAs noticed that patron resistance was much higher during these hours. All librarians made small adjustments to their work schedules and either stayed an hour late or came an hour early for an evening shift. Doing this allowed our student workers to feel supported and also alleviated the need for them to address issues with uncooperative patrons. A second easy adjustment was to encourage librarians to come out from the Reference Librarians' office and walk around the library every half hour. Our SRAs were already doing this for head counts at :15 and :45, so adding a librarian walk at the top and bottom of each hour



*Keyboards were moved from center workstations to accommodate distancing.*

gave us the opportunity to experience what they had witnessed in the public area of the library. Throughout the semester, we encouraged students to take a shift off and arrange for a substitute if they felt it was needed. Although this only happened occasionally, we were thankful that other SRAs always picked up the extra shifts when their co-workers needed some time away. One particularly difficult time in the fall semester was a two-week period when four of our fourteen student workers were either in quarantine due to being exposed to COVID or in isolation from testing positive for the disease. Because of the public nature of working at the Information Desk, their missed work hours had to be filled by other SRAs who were already experiencing higher levels of work-related stress. During this time, we encouraged students who picked up the shifts to check in with themselves and step into the staff area, remove their masks, and take a few mask-free breaths when needed.

***“Gratitude is a vaccine, an antitoxin, and an antiseptic.” — John Henry Jowett***

Although Jowett spoke symbolically, we sought to implement the vaccine of gratitude throughout both semesters. In addition to giving verbal encouragement to our workers, every two to three weeks we gave each worker a handwritten thank you note or card of encouragement. We included small gifts, such as fun stickers or library related “merch” from previous semesters. Because evening hours were often the most difficult for our workers, homemade cookies or other treats were brought and shared on several occasions. Not only did this provide a treat, but also provided time for them to step away from the public desk to eat their treats while they were still warm since a librarian was able to watch the desk. We learned that these small gestures went a long way in letting our student



*Large tables with small numbers on the second floor of the library.*

workers know that their time was valued and their work was noticed.

### **Continuing Routine in the Midst of Change**

We also tried to maintain as many of our traditions as possible. Our library as a whole usually does soup or chili days for our student workers, but because of the COVID restrictions, we could not host these. One tradition that we were able to keep with minor modifications was the annual decoration of the stairwell above our information desk with snowflakes for the Christmas season. During slow times at the desk, our SRAs are invited to cut out paper snowflakes, and we display them above the desk. Some of our students really get creative with their designs, and it is fun to watch the collection grow during the weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas!

This year, Harding students were not scheduled to return to campus after Thanksgiving Break, so we did not know if we would be decorating the library for Christmas. To provide a sense of normalcy, we expanded this tradition and provided pumpkin and fall leaf cutouts for the fall. Our students had just returned back to campus for the first time since last March, so we suggested they write something (anonymously) on the cutouts that they appreciated about being back on campus. When the university announced that it would hold their annual Christmas lighting ceremony before the students went home for Thanksgiving, we also decided to include our traditional snowflakes. Several of the SRAs had asked to do this again, and we were happy to comply



*Health Sciences Librarian John Boone models the Brackett Library Mask.*







In the past, our group social gathering has been a Christmas brunch at the end of the fall semester; to maintain that tradition we will host Christmas in May on the Saturday morning between dead week and finals. We will gather to eat traditional Christmas brunch foods, exchange white elephant gifts of pandemic purchases that no longer “spark joy,” and celebrate the work of our SRAs that made it possible for Brackett Library to keep its doors open during a pandemic.

### Conclusion

Throughout the year, the library staff made a weekly practice of ending meetings by sharing one good thing that happened during the previous week. Although it was more challenging some weeks than others, choosing this focus helped interrupt the ongoing worries caused by being open during the COVID-19 pandemic. As this year comes to a close, our student workers are the one good thing that stands out. They continued to show up and work in unanticipated circumstances. Their presence made it possible for us to continue to serve our university community in a year when many libraries were not able to open their doors.

The 2020-2021 school year challenged us in ways we could not have anticipated. Every year, one of our primary goals with our student workers is to prepare them for their future and instill good work practices. This year, our goal was to model and encourage a level of self-care that can be taken into

their future places of employment. There may not be another pandemic in their lifetimes, but there will be stressful seasons of life, family emergencies, and budget cuts. By encouraging them to speak up for themselves, take breaks when they are needed, and focus on essential work rather than projects that can wait, we hope they will be more adequately prepared for the stresses of graduate school and their future careers.

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*All photos in this article taken by Amy McGohan, Jeff Montgomery, Amelia Brister, and Lisa Fuller.*

*Lisa Fuller works as student success librarian, and Amelia Brister is information services assistant at Harding University's Brackett Library in Searcy.*

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## Supporting Text and Data Mining Education in the Classroom

*by Austin Williams and  
Joel B. Thornton*

*University of Arkansas at Fayetteville Libraries*

In recent years, the library at the University of Arkansas has experimented with new methods of supporting our faculty and researchers in Text and Data Mining (TDM) projects.

The experiment is in response to a significant increase in the number of requests for access to large text datasets and research and teaching support for TDM projects. To address research and teaching requests, our library has been exploring new programs and services to understand our researchers'



*Thornton*

needs and find new ways to meet those needs.

One of our new projects has involved piloting a TDM service developed by a large data company that we've had a relationship with for many years. To showcase the service, our library faculty partnered with the vendor to set up campus wide workshops

on using the TDM technology to support research and teaching. The workshops have brought in many interested researchers and teaching faculty. After the presentation, a few teaching faculty approached us with a desire to utilize this new technology as a teaching tool with their students.

The following case study outlines our experiences collaborating with a professor to



*Williams*

provide an in-class learning exercise using this TDM service and the lessons we've learned in the process. Additionally, we outline a method for producing and performing in-class learning exercises utilizing modern TDM tools that have worked for us since we've started this journey and create an internal standard for hosting these teaching events.

### Background

After a TDM workshop, a history professor inquired about the new tools available to support large-scale text analysis. She was interested in introducing her students to new forms of analysis but lacked the expertise in teaching the methods. We saw this as an opportunity to provide direct support and offered to deliver a condensed workshop to her students consisting of an in-class presentation and exercise that would introduce her students to common forms of text analysis and allow them to engage with the tools directly.

### Approach

In assessing the professor's needs, we focused on understanding her learning goals for the students, the topics of interest to be presented in her class, and the capabilities of a single-day teaching event. The professor provided three goals for this workshop:

- Students should learn to examine relevant topics in historical articles.
- Increase student engagement by integrating text mining in her class.
- Teach students to use analytical tools to assist in the research discovery process.

Next, we developed an in-class presentation and exercises that would satisfy these requirements. We worked with the professor to create a large corpus of news articles directly related to the class's focus and used this corpus in both the presentation and the in-class exercises. The presentation focused on a guided walkthrough of the TDM tool, explaining the various methods to get the students exploring the tool quickly. During this phase, we focused heavily on using the tool as an extension of the discovery process, emphasizing that the visual data displayed is formed from basic processes. Additionally, we emphasized that it's up to our human storytelling ability to make sense of the data. We spent time crafting a clear (and hopefully engaging!) narrative throughout the guided walkthrough and invited the students to engage with understanding the narratives within our data.

The second half of the class focused on a small group exercise using the tool to explore our prepared dataset. We formed the students into small groups (group size ranged from 3 to 6 individuals over our different presentations) and provided each student

with a handout of open-ended questions to spur discussion. We found that an instructional strategy of directing a focus question, allowing a short time to work, and then leading a class discussion between the groups served to keep the students engaged, on track, and communicative. We went through this cycle for each main question on the handout and had the groups state their finding at each cycle. We found this process highly effective, allowing us to repeatedly encourage the groups, provide regular positive feedback, and keep the students actively engaged both within the small groups and between them.

### Outcomes

Overall, we found this method very effective at fulfilling the professor's learning requirements while providing the students with an enjoyable learning experience. The professor was delighted with the entire process and requested the presentation to be repeated for the following semesters. Similarly, we were approached by several students after the class about using the toolkit for other class projects. Students also inquired if additional resources were available to learn more about TDM. In future teaching events, we hope to formalize and fine-tune this process, the general procedure of which is outlined here:

- Introductory presentation (10%)
- Walkthrough (40%)
- Cyclical group work (50%)
  - Direct a focus question
  - Group work; engage each group privately; check for issues
  - Ask each group to state their findings; invite comment; provide positive feedback
  - Repeat

This experience was part of a larger effort to increase our capability to support researchers and students in technical areas, specifically in the field of TDM research. We achieved this goal by providing direct TDM education to both a faculty member and her students, while also providing a template for future presentations of library tools. As the requests for TDM support continue to increase, we hope to increase our capacity and become more responsive to our teaching faculty and researchers' needs.

*Austin Wilkins is the data services specialist and Joel B. Thornton is director for Research & Instruction Services at the University of Arkansas Libraries in Fayetteville, Arkansas.*

## FACE OF ARKANSAS LIBRARIES: Kristina Hancock: Adventurous, Fun Loving, Misfit Librarian

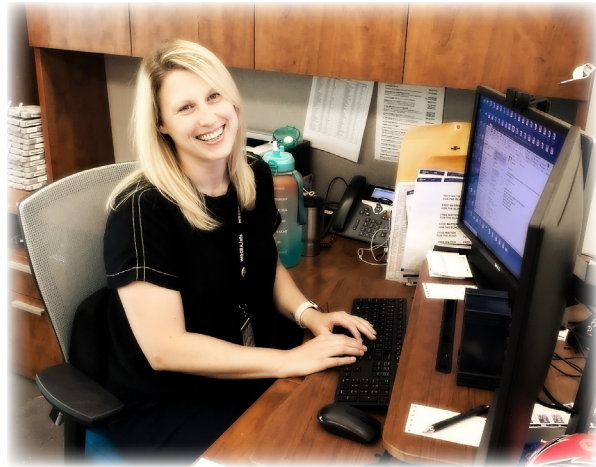
by Jennifer Wann, Arkansas State Library

**K**ristina Hancock grew up in the Central Valley of California and spent her childhood days riding dirt bikes, surrounded by oil derricks and tumbleweeds, and playing on the beach during the summer. In addition to her active outdoor adventures, animals and books were her favorite things as a child. It makes perfect sense that she grew up to be a librarian who lives with two doggos, Dobby and Harry, and a geriatric cockatiel, Sammy, in the Natural State.

Kristina manages the Arkansas Library for the Blind and Print Disabled (BPD) at the Arkansas State Library. BPD is a mail based library service provided to Arkansans with visual and reading disabilities. Kristina and her staff of seven circulate 26,000-65,000 items, including talking (audio) books and braille, each year. A typical day involves unloading the mail bins of returned items in the morning, then preparing the outgoing items to be picked up in the afternoon. "I always wanted to serve my community in some way, especially the underserved. The work I am doing now is extremely rewarding to me as the community I serve now is perpetually undercounted, underserved, and discriminated against."

Like many of us in Arkansas libraries, Kristina came to librarianship accidentally. Living in Maumelle in 2008 and attending UALR full-time, Kristina began shelving books as a page at the Maumelle Library, a branch of the Central Arkansas Library System. While Kristina was finishing up undergraduate school, she continued working at the Maumelle Library and moved up to a Library Assistant position. Although she was studying for the ASVAB to join the Navy, she was falling in love with library work and decided instead to pursue an MLIS, which she received in 2015.

After Kristina received her master's degree, her mother followed suit, pursuing and receiving both her bachelor's and master's degrees. "Knowing that my mother was inspired by me is something that I will carry with me forever," she said. If you don't know Kristina, reading this profile so far might lead you to believe that she is a sweet library lady, dedicated to serving the blind and print disabled community of Arkansas, who loves her family, pets, and the great outdoors. And none of this is wrong, but it is an incomplete picture of Kristina Hancock, who is also a player and President of the Little Rock



Women's Rugby Club.

This rough and tumble sport takes up a significant amount of Kristina's time outside of work and her coworkers have seen her limping in to work on many Monday mornings. "It is such a wonderful sport," she said. "The risk/reward ratio is too much for many people, but when I found this little group of misfits, who laughed very hard when they found out my profession, I knew I was where I belong... I am too old to be doing this, but I can still walk, so figured I'll give it a few more years."

Regardless of the longevity of Kristina's rugby career, she has an incredibly bright future ahead in librarianship. She assumed management of BPD at the beginning of 2020, and like all of us, soon found her world turned upside down by the global COVID-19 pandemic. Her team adapted quickly, put quarantine and sanitation measures in place, and never ceased circulating items during the pandemic.

Kristina is currently working with her team on the creation of early literacy kits to support and encourage public libraries' work with visually impaired members of their local communities. The early literacy kits will include braille board books, an audio book, tactile pages, and a 3D object. When talking about her work at BPD, Kristina says that she was "lucky enough to find this little slice of library heaven in my last semester of library school." Arkansas and the blind and print disabled community in Arkansas are lucky Kristina made her way to the Natural State and that she chose library school over the Navy. When asked about her favorite thing about Arkansas, Kristina says, "Arkansas provides a sort of comfort that I have not found anywhere else. It's also absolutely stunning."

For more information on the services provided by BPD, please call 501.682.1155 or toll-free 866.660.0885.



## LIBRARY PROFILES: *The Resilient Ross Pendergraft Library*

by *Angela Black*

*Arkansas Tech University*

It is 3:00 A.M., and the lights are on at the Ross Pendergraft Library. While this finals week is less crowded than usual, the coffee is still brewed, and the desks are still staffed with sleepy but sturdy librarians. The students – often cloaked with blankets and gripping coffee cups – sit determinedly in front of computer screens, finishing up the last sentences of their final papers. Grit, resilience, and perseverance are the unofficial creeds at Arkansas Tech University, and no place on campus exemplifies this better than its library.

Located in Russellville, Arkansas, the Ross Pendergraft Library and Technology Center packs a lot of services and collections in a small space. Between three floors, you can find nearly 6,000 DVDs, 157,000 books, 163 computers, as well as 11 study rooms, 6 classrooms, a media lab and an audio recording studio. While the River Valley and surrounding region is characterized by smaller, rural



*Slade Dupuy, daytime circulation manager, prepares a cart of web cameras ready for circulation in March of 2020.*

communities, the library brings the world to those communities by hosting an annual International Film Festival, a monthly local author series, an annual Human Library, and periodic guest lectures and panel discussions on everything from *Jonestown* to *Game of Thrones*.

Of course, all of those events suddenly came to a halt in March of 2020. As the world shut down, the library found itself wondering if it should close down, too. Through careful consideration of potential risks and potential needs, the Ross Pendergraft Library decided to remain open, even when most other libraries closed.

“By April, we were one of just three public universities in Arkansas that maintained student/faculty access to its library, and we remained open all summer,” recalls Brent Etzel, Director of the Ross Pendergraft Library.

A number of factors went into the decision to remain open, but it was based in part on continuing to provide uninterrupted online and computer access to the number of students lacking resources to continue their courses online. In describing those March 2020 discussions with the university’s administrators, Brent said, “Many of our students did not have their own computers or lived in locations that had spotty internet service. We also wanted to stay open for international students stranded on campus, as well as students who remained on campus due to housing insecurity.”

Additionally, the library employed many student workers who depended on that income—they wanted to continue to work. And there was plenty of work



*The Ross Pendergraft Library, keeping the lights on.*

to do.

As faculty scrambled overnight to put courses online, and university staff began the transition to work-from-home duties, they often lacked equipment and internet connectivity. The Office of Information Systems partnered with the Ross Pendergraft Library to immediately loan laptops, webcams, headphones, and other equipment to university staff and faculty who suddenly had to shift their work and classes online.

“My professional life had gone from books to electronics. Instead of checking out books to people, I was now checking out laptops, hotspots, webcams, headphones, etc.,” recalls Slade Dupuy, daytime Circulation Manager at Ross Pendergraft Library. “Our first patrons for these items were the university’s professors, and boy, did they need help!” It was often up to the library staff like Slade, Frances Ferris, the night Circulation Manager, and student employees to help demonstrate how the equipment worked, resolve printer issues, troubleshoot connection errors, and to be an in-person face whenever the students or staff needed one.

“The circulation staff at my library kept the lights on, and at times, it seemed we were the only light on campus,” Slade remembers.

Brent Etzel said, “When most other university staff began working entirely off campus, Slade and Fran continued to come to work every day. There were weeks when only Public Safety, Food Service, and the Library had any staff on campus.”

While the door counts stayed low compared to a ‘normal’ semester, many students remained on campus to take advantage of the reliable internet and computers.



*A special display went up this spring, encouraging students to post one good thing from 2020.*

For Slade, it was not always easy to provide the same level of service excellence. “My secret weapon in my job has always been my smile. A genuine friendly smile can diffuse almost any situation. My secret weapon was rendered useless by a medical mask.”

Like so many other circulation managers and public-facing staff this year and last, he and Frances Ferris had the additional challenges of enforcing mask mandates, keeping patrons socially distanced, and resolving technical issues for frustrated faculty and students. Adding to that workload were the constant sanitizing of surfaces, creating socially distanced spaces, and crafting quarantine policies for returned items.

“Much of our success can be attributed to the diligence and, frankly, *fearlessness*, of our circulation supervisors, Slade Dupuy and Frances Ferris,” said Brent.

Sherry Tinerella, Public Services Librarian, echoed those sentiments. “They deserve raises because they were totally dedicated to serving our students and faculty throughout this period, and they continue to do so.”



*The Ross Pendergraft Library began circulating web cameras, laptops, and headsets to help students attend virtual classes during the 2020/2021 academic year.*



Online, the work continued for the other librarians and staff who suddenly turned face-to-face research instruction into videos and web-conferencing instruction. Acquisitions and Electronic Resources librarians scrambled to either purchase or make available the flood of streaming video and ebooks now required to transition assignments to the virtual environment. Systems and Cataloging librarians kept the website updated with the latest COVID policies, and made sure the circulation loan policies were extended to the following fall. Technical services staff working from home dove into back-burner clean-up projects and professional training.

As the University re-opened for fall 2020, the library remained a hub for faculty and staff to check-out computer equipment. Though masks and social distance were required, the library expanded services and collections for this new hybrid semester. Each study room was upgraded and equipped with computer stations. The number of study rooms also increased as demand escalated for quiet spaces to join virtual classes. In addition to purchasing more ebooks for required general education courses, the library expanded its collection of circulating materials to students to include webcams, headsets, and laptops. New streaming film databases from

the library helped faculty use class-time for film discussions instead of film screening.

In this new hybrid academic year, the collection of short, instructional videos created by the librarians on how to use databases or look up materials in our catalog has ballooned into a large collection of its own, providing a valuable resource for busy students writing research papers for both online and in-person classes. Nearly every librarian and staff member has become an expert in navigating online web-conferencing tools and trouble-shooting most of the usual distance-education problems. Helping patrons, wherever they are, has never been easier.

With the return of finals week, with up to 65 consecutive open hours, the library begins to shift back to a new normal. The students who are sitting in this library at 3:00 a.m., masked but determined to finish strong, endured one of the strangest years in higher education. However, they should be proud to know that their resilience and determination will always be matched by the library's own.

*Angela Black is technical services librarian at the Ross Pendergraft Library and Technology Center at Arkansas Tech University in Russellville, Arkansas.*



*Library workers at Ross Pendergraft Library mask up for summer 2020 hours. **Top Row:** Circulation Student employees, Sarah Hammons, MacKenzie Roberts, Hannah Anderson, Jessica Allison. **Bottom Row:** Brent Etzel (Library Director) Hannah Wilkinson (Circulation Student Employee), Mariah Conley (Circulation Student Employee), Fran Ferris (Night Circulation Manager), Slade Dupuy (Day Circulation Manager).*



## Seeking ArLA Scholarship Applicants

*by Chance Griebel*

*ArLA Scholarships Chair*

The Arkansas Library Association invites applications for its annual scholarship for graduate study in librarianship. The Arkansas Library Association will select one scholarship recipient each year from a pool of eligible applicants. Criteria for selection include 1) applicant's interest in librarianship as a profession 2) academic record 3) compliance with application requirements. Awards are made without regard to race, sex, age, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnic background.

To be eligible to apply for the scholarship, applicants must meet the following conditions:

- Applicant must hold or be completing work toward a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and must not currently hold a master's degree in library science.
- Applicant must be currently accepted and enrolled in a program leading to a master's degree in library science. An official transcript of coursework toward the master's degree shall be submitted as proof. Applicants who have enrolled but not yet begun coursework shall submit proof of acceptance and enrollment in a program leading to a master's degree in library science.
- Applicant may be currently employed in a library in Arkansas provided all other conditions are met.

Recipients of the scholarship must meet the following requirements:

- Within one year of completing their graduate program, accept or maintain professional employment in a library or in a library-related position in Arkansas.
- After accepting or maintaining such employment, continue to work in a library or library-related position in Arkansas for at least one year.
- Maintain membership in the Arkansas Library Association during the one year of required employment in a library or library-related position in Arkansas.
- Upon graduation, provide to the Arkansas Library Association an official transcript showing the completion of their prescribed course of graduate studies and an official letter from their workplace verifying employment in a library or library-related position in Arkansas.
- Sign a promissory note agreeing to repay the Arkansas Library Association the full amount of the scholarship award should any of the above conditions be unmet.

To apply for the annual scholarship, applicants should submit the following items by September 1:

- Completed ArLA Scholarship application form (available on the website at <https://arlib.org/Scholarships-Page>, as is a list of past scholarship recipients)
- Letter of application from the applicant
- Resume
- Official transcript if applicant has already begun graduate studies OR proof of acceptance and enrollment in a graduate program of library science if applicant is just beginning graduate studies.
- Three letters of reference from individuals qualified to address the academic and professional potential of the candidate.

ArLA Scholarship applications should be mailed or emailed to:

Arkansas Library Association  
P.O. Box 3821  
Little Rock AR 72203  
Email: [info@arlib.org](mailto:info@arlib.org)

You may contact me directly if you have any questions, but please submit all application materials to ArLA's official address or email address at [info@arlib.org](mailto:info@arlib.org). Emailed applications are preferred.

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



*The "one per table" rule during the pandemic. Please see article on page 10.*



**Application Form  
Annual Scholarship  
For Graduate Study in Library Science**

Date:

Full Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

College (s) attended:

Degree(s) obtained:

Graduate school planning to attend:

Date of acceptance to graduate school:

**WORK EXPERIENCE**

Position, Street, City, State, Dates of Employment

1. \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for leaving \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for leaving \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for leaving \_\_\_\_\_

**REFERENCES**

Name, Street, City, State, Telephone

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

On a separate sheet, please add further pertinent information which should include a statement of career goals and what you feel you can give to the Arkansas library profession. List honors and awards, relevant committees on which you may have served, and send a transcript of your college hours. Please do not exceed two pages handwritten or typed double-spaced.

I have read the Statement of Policy concerning the granting of this scholarship, and I agree to abide by its stipulations.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

Please return to:

Arkansas Library Association, PO Box 3821 Little Rock, AR 72203 Phone: 501-313-1398 Email: info@arlib.org

**A completed ArLA Scholarship application form, a letter of application from the applicant, an official transcript, a resume and three letters of reference must be received by the ArLA Scholarship Committee postmarked no later than September 1 to be eligible for consideration.**

## ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT:

### Staff Performance Evaluations: What's the Point?

by Carol Coffey, Central Arkansas Library System

Most workplaces, including libraries, require some sort of performance evaluation for staff. I don't currently have any staff members who report directly to me, but in my career so far, I've spent more than 20 years in some supervisory position or another and have been responsible for writing performance evaluations each year (or more frequently). If I'm honest, I'll admit it was always one of my least favorite parts of my job, something I dreaded having to do each time. Many of the staff I supervised over the years had jobs and responsibilities that didn't always fit neatly into our standardized evaluation forms, making it even more challenging to give useful feedback.

There are a number of problems associated with performance evaluations, particularly in larger organizations where groups of staff members are evaluated by different managers. Even the best evaluation models and instruction in using them cannot ensure that staff are being evaluated equally and equitably across the organization. Different managers are going to evaluate performance differently, even if they are using the same form and format. And the human factor is always in play, which can lead to unfair evaluation practices by a single manager caused by the fact that they like some employees better than others or simply find some employees more challenging to manage. And unfortunately, sometimes the evaluation instrument being used is poorly designed or is the wrong type of form for the work being evaluated, so it will not solicit the information needed to truly determine how an employee is performing their work. So how do you work through those issues to evaluate your staff fairly, equitably, and profitably, ensuring continued good or improved performance?

Your first and biggest challenge in developing your performance evaluation process should be to decide what goals you want to achieve through performance evaluations. If you don't know what you're trying to accomplish by evaluating the work performance of your employees, the process becomes just another hoop to jump through, and a pain point for you and your staff. As you would do in any other process, you should keep your goals to a manageable number. Perhaps your organization

uses formal performance evaluations to determine which employees will receive merit pay increases each year, and even how much those increases will be. Or perhaps the evaluation process is meant to coach low performing employees to better performance and high-performing employees to the next level, readying them for promotion. Most likely, the process needs to accomplish both things, but you should determine that from the outset and design your process accordingly. Deciding on your goals will help you determine what your process and evaluation instrument will look like. Communicate with your staff about the process, telling them why you're doing it, what the end of the process should look like, and how this will help everyone contribute to the purpose of your organization.

Here are some things to consider when setting your goals and developing your evaluation instrument. First, what do your staff members do? Are they doing work that can be measured quantitatively? For example, catalogers or technical services staff might be tasked with processing accurately a certain number of items per day/week/month. That's a pretty easy metric to measure. On the other hand, public service staff may have only



*Lonoke Public Library's garden is a popular setting for outdoor programming. Photo submitted by Ashlee Minson.*



a small portion of their work that can be measured in such a way, perhaps processing holds or dealing with damaged materials. The rest of their work must be evaluated qualitatively, and that's where the difficulty comes in. As we've learned in evaluating programming, qualitative assessment is hard to do, much less do well. This is also where the differences between managers can be seen most clearly: one manager's "excellent" may be another manager's "good," which can lead to staff members who are performing at the same level being rewarded differently.

Second, how often do you need to do formal, written evaluations? We're often bound by the rules of a parent organization or governing body, but if you're not, do you have leeway to reduce the frequency or intensity of the formal evaluation process? Raises or other rewards may be dependent on written evaluations but finding a way to ease the process can be helpful to you and especially to your staff.

Third, how will your staff benefit from this process? Sure, they may get raises out of it, but what will they learn that will build their confidence and help them do their jobs better? Most evaluation processes include goal setting as a primary component. While sometimes it is necessary for a manager to set specific goals, particularly in a situation where an employee's performance needs improving, it's almost always best to include the employee in the goal-setting process. During the years when I had a large number of employees to

evaluate, it was even more important to solicit ideas from the employees themselves, and it gave them more of a stake in the process. I rarely set more than three or four goals for each employee, and at least one or two of those were fairly easy goals that I knew the employee could accomplish. Some goals were intended to challenge the employee and I knew they might need to be continued into another year or renegotiated. Sometimes unforeseen changes in the organization mean that previously set goals are no longer relevant and should be let go to avoid wasting the employee's time and effort. Be careful that you don't talk about and set the goals in the evaluation meeting and then never talk about them again. Follow up regularly with the employee to ensure that they are working toward their goals or renegotiate/adapt the goals as necessary.

Once you know what you want to accomplish, it's time to decide on your method and develop your evaluation form. There are a number of methods for evaluating employee performance, and all of them have their good and bad points. In my next column, we'll evaluate the evaluations, looking at the positive and negative aspects of each of several methods. I'll also share which method I prefer and why. Hope to see you back here then.

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



*Safety signs and a plexi-glass shield were added to the Information Desk before Harding University's Brackett Library reopened for students. Please see article on page 10.*

**WEBMASTER'S CORNER:**  
**Webmaster's Corner Redux**  
*by Ron Russ, ArLA Webmaster*

**F**eels like it has been a while since I've addressed you dear readers. Since we've been making many adjustments to the ArLA website, this is a good time as any. The reason behind all of this is that we wanted to make the website more readable and accessible. We increased the font size to 16 from 14, created more contrast in the buttons, as well as made sure that the graphics had alt-text tags. In addition, we created a "Get Involved" section where we put



*Russ*

the ArLA Committees and Communities of Interest. The ArLA Board was spun off into its own section. I tried to keep the navigation sub-menus between 4-6 items, since it is awkward for mobile devices and laptops once you have more than that. You'll also see a link to the ArLA Facebook page on the main page, links to register for the Annual Conference, and a link to the awards nomination form. I also altered the *Arkansas Libraries* page slightly to include the prior managing editors (that I could easily find). Anyway, we hope you find this helpful and more usable. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at [webmaster@arlib.org](mailto:webmaster@arlib.org).

*Ronald S. Russ is electronic and public services librarian at Arkansas State University Beebe's Abington Library.*



*The ArLA Awards Committee is seeking nominations. Do you work with or know someone who deserves recognition for a job well done? Read the article on page 8 to find out what categories are open for nominations and how to get a nominating form.*



*Library expansion at Stuttgart Public Library, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary. Please see article on page 42.*



# ALA COUNCILOR'S REPORT: Proposed Changes to ALA Governance Structure: A Reimagined ALA?

by *Lacy S. Wolfe, ALA Councilor*

The ALA Council continues work on the possible restructuring of ALA governance.

Following the work of the Steering Committee on Organizational Effectiveness (SCOE), Forward Together Group, and member feedback, the Forward Together Resolutions Group is in the process of developing resolutions to bring to ALA Council during the ALA Annual Conference in June 2021. The goal for the 2021 Annual Conference is for resolutions to be debated, amended, and voted on in preparation for the drafting of new bylaws that will be presented at the Midwinter Council meeting in January 2022.

Six subgroups (ALA Core Values, ALA Executive Board, ALA Committees, ALA Roundtables, ALA Leadership Assemblies, and ALA Council) have presented preliminary resolution recommendations.

The preliminary draft resolutions follow (keep in mind these are drafts, so the wording is inconsistent):

## 1. ALA Core Values

Be it resolved that a task force with a broad membership reflecting the diversity of the Association be established to review the ALA Core Values and make recommendations regarding any necessary revisions at ALA Annual 2022.

## 2. ALA Executive Board

Resolution 1: Be it resolved that the Executive Board of ALA will be dissolved.

Resolution 2: Be it resolved that ALA will establish a new Board of Directors.

Resolution 3: Be it resolved that the Board of Directors will be comprised of 22 members:

- 4 elected offices (incoming president, president, past president, treasurer; 3 year terms)
- 8 members elected by ALA membership (2 year terms)
- 6 from the Leadership Assemblies (1 from Round Tables, 1 from Affiliates, 2 from Chapters, 2 from Divisions; 2 year terms)
- 3 appointed by the board or representative



*Wolfe*

(for needed expertise and experience to address timely issues; 2 year terms)

- 1 staff member (preference - Executive Director; ex officio)

Resolution 4: Be it resolved that the new Board of Directors assumes responsibilities of the previous Executive Board.

Resolution 5: Be it resolved that the new Board of Directors assumes responsibilities of Council (depending on future of Council).

## 3. ALA Committees

Be it Resolved, that the American Library Association, on behalf of its members, creates six standing committees of the Board of Directors: Finance and Audit, Nominating, Leadership Development, Association Policy, Public Policy and Advocacy, and Professional Values.

Be it Resolved, that the American Library Association (ALA), on behalf of its members:

- Establishes the charge of the Finance and Audit Committee as reviewing ALA's proposed budget within the context of the association's strategic plan and strategic priorities, reviewing the financial impact of actions taken by the Board of Directors, and making budget recommendations to the Board of Directors. This committee will also work with the endowment trustees, review financial projections, and perform other fiscal duties as necessary. This committee will be chaired by the ALA treasurer;
- Reallocates the existing Committee of Council, Budget Analysis and Review Committee, to the Finance and Audit Committee; and
- Submits a reconstitution proposal to the Board of Directors for a change in reporting structure through the formally approved appeals process, within six months of the adoption of this resolution, if an initial review finds it necessary.

## 4. ALA Round Tables

Be it Resolved that:

Round Tables are affirmed as a vital part of the ALA structure

Round Tables maintain a minimum of 150 members

Round Tables have one representative on the Board of Directors to be elected by the Roundtable Leadership Assembly

Round Tables adhere to a common template of core By-Laws while maintaining the flexibility of their own operating principles

Round Tables align with nominal, annual membership dues to be set by the Round Table



Leadership Assembly

## 5. ALA Leadership Assemblies

Resolution 1

Resolved:

- create four leadership assemblies
- each assembly will elect representatives to fill 2-year terms on the Board of Directors (Chapter Assembly - 2 board members; Division Assembly - 2 board members; Affiliate Assembly - 1 board member; Round Table Assembly - 1 board member)

Resolution 2

Resolved:

- that the four leadership assemblies will adopt standard governing documents.
- each assembly will consist of elected representatives from each corresponding ALA unit members.
- each assembly will elect a leadership team (chair, vice chair, secretary) from its members.
- each assembly leadership team will include 1 non-voting representative from 3 other assemblies.

## 6. ALA Council

Options:

1. Leave Council intact, but make changes as to frequency, duration, and setting
2. Eliminate Council and move duties to Board of Directors and Leadership Assemblies per the SCOE recommendations
3. Re-envision Council with multiple representatives from each Leadership Assembly, Round Table, Committee, and Board of Directors

While this is a lot of information, I want ArLA members to have a chance to look at the totality of the issue. The dissolution of Council is the most contentious issue, as one might expect. There is certainly room for improvement within the Council structure, and the pandemic has addressed some of the issues that were most troublesome. For example, the cost to hold Council meetings is quite high due to the large space and A/V needs. With meetings being held online for 2020 Annual, 2021 Midwinter, and the upcoming 2021 Annual, the Council can now envision a future in which meetings can be held in an online environment effectively. This in turn lowers the barrier for serving on Council, if cost to attend conference is an issue. Council can work more nimbly with the ability to meet and vote multiple times throughout the year rather than twice a year at conferences.

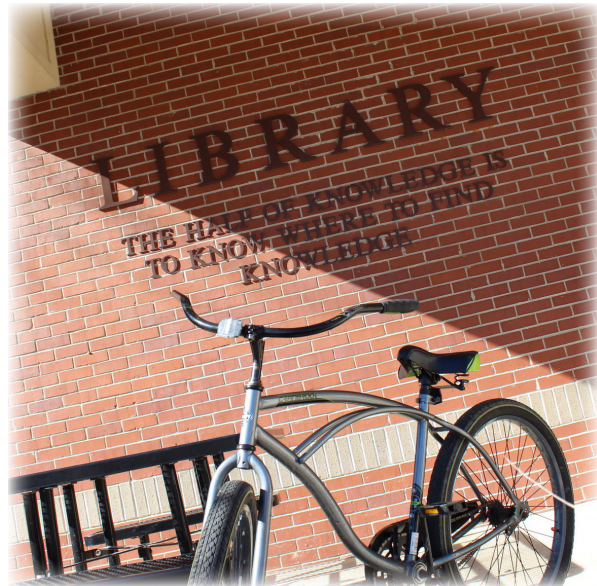
The Council of 180+ represents the 55,000+

strong ALA membership. Placing the leadership and governance burden on the shoulders of a 22 member Board of Directors does not equal fair representation. While I am cognizant of the member surveys that showed members unhappy with transparency and bureaucracy within ALA, I would encourage them to attend ALA membership meetings and Council meetings as well as reach out to Councilors. In order to be aware of the inner workings of the association, members can engage with the Council and structure. Without a doubt it's a complex structure as it stands, but the proposed Resolutions will not make the association simpler or easier to engage with.

Conversations and feedback sessions will continue until Council meets at ALA Annual, and I'm eager to see what changes we can bring to the structure that will, in fact, make ALA an association that all members can find their place in whether through Council, an Affiliate, or Division, in a leadership position or not.

I welcome your feedback; please email me at [wolfel@hsu.edu](mailto:wolfel@hsu.edu). For more information on the Forward Together process, visit <https://forwardtogether.ala.org/>.

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



*South Arkansas Community College in El Dorado.*

## ASK THE STATE LIBRARIAN: Paradigm of Possibility

by *Jennifer Chilcoat, Arkansas State Librarian*

I can be slow with a paradigm shift. It's true. When I play a sport that calls for the teams to switch sides of the field or court at halftime, I can plan to spend at least the next 10 minutes heading for the wrong goal. I have to remind myself that a fashionable pair of jeans no longer costs \$20 like it did in 1983. By the time I've gotten the hang of the "new normal," it's not new anymore.

In March of 2020, our paradigms changed perhaps more quickly than they ever have in our lifetimes. It was exhausting and heartbreaking, not just on a personal level, but on a professional one as well. We had to completely revamp what we knew and loved: how we connect with our communities. In some ways, however, there was certain simplicity to what was needed. We needed to take the things, all of the things, that we had always done in person and somehow deliver them safely in a virtual or socially distanced way. I'm not saying it was easy to do – far from it – but we had a basic understanding of what needed to be done.

Cut to today, and our mission is not so straightforward. We know we're leaving the pandemic paradigm behind, the one where gathering in the same place together would put our entire community at risk. It's pretty obvious, however, that



*Chilcoat*

our pre-pandemic paradigm isn't going to work, either. Some of the services we've been offering for the last year – online programs, curbside pick-up, remote printing, etc. – are now going to be expected by our patrons, pandemic or not. With our resources remaining the same, or even reduced, we face some difficult choices for which there is no instruction manual. We do know one thing, however: we won't be serving our communities if we try to force them back into the old paradigm. If a child's shoes don't fit anymore, we don't simply forge on and continue to force her back into her old shoes; we buy her a new pair of shoes that fit who she is today. In the same way, we can't try to jam our library users and our communities back into an old paradigm of service. We have to create something new.

Helpful tools for negotiating this new normal include asking a lot of questions, keeping a journal, monitoring your self-talk, reading positive or inspirational literature, and relaxing your mental "gaze" to see what you missed while you were searching for the answer. I encourage you to think about the tools that will help you negotiate these challenging and unusual times.

Coming back to a world where we can once again gather together is a grand thing. But we've been forever changed. While we are leaving our current paradigm, take this opportunity to let go of old and new paradigms, and embrace the paradigm of possibility. We're not through growing yet, and our communities aren't, either.

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

## IDEA: Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility

by *Shenise McGhee*

*University of Arkansas Pine Bluff*

According to the American Library Association, libraries are governed under shared standards as put forth in the document "Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion across ALA: Standards and Competencies." Equity, diversity, and inclusion are important values of the association, members, librarians, and community.



*McGhee*

Diversity is one area libraries should refer to under Article I of the Library Bill of Rights: Diverse Collections. "Books and other library resources 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." A diverse collection should contain content by and about a wide array of people and cultures to authentically reflect a variety of ideas, information, stories, and experiences (ALA Diversity in Collection Development, 2019). The Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services practices a social justice outline to make sure the inclusion of diverse visions within our profession and association will best position ALA as

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a trusted, prominent advocate for equitable access to library services for all (ala.org). To support academic librarians and to align ACRL's strategic plan with ALA's Strategic Directions, the ACRL Board of Directors accepted, in the fall 2018, a new Core Commitment to Equity, Diversity & Inclusion to be added to the ACRL Plan for Excellence. The goal of the Core Commitment is for Equity, Diversity & Inclusion to spread through all areas of the association, so that ACRL can improve support for equitable, inclusive, and diverse librarianship. Through this commitment, ACRL will acknowledge and address historical racial inequities; challenge unjust systems within academic libraries; value different methods of knowing; and identify and work to eradicate barriers to equitable services, spaces, resources, and scholarship (ACRL Diversity Alliance program, 2018).

### **Diversity Standards: Cultural Competency for Academic Libraries (2012)**

#### **Standard 4. Development of collections, programs, and services**

Librarians and library staff shall develop collections and provide programs and services that are inclusive of the needs of all persons in the community the library serves.

##### **Interpretation**

Widespread changes in the linguistic and cultural fabric of library populations, joined with the increasing complexity of information technology, equally require and create potential new methods to the development of library collections and the provision of inclusive community-wide services. Maintaining an obligation to cultural competence calls for ensuring equitable access to collections and library services that is mindful of these changes. Librarians and library staff need to learn how to prevent exclusion of diverse communities from service opportunities. They should try to find opportunities to enhance their cultural competencies, adapting services to better meet the culturally distinctive needs of citizens. Furthermore, they need to foster policies and procedures that help ensure access to collections that reflect varying cultural beliefs.

For those responsible for the development and management of library collections and/or the provision of library programs and services, this specifically involves:

- Providing an equitable basis for purchasing materials and providing programs and services.
- Ensuring that consideration of the needs of

historically oppressed, underrepresented, and underserved groups is integral to collection development and management and the provision of programs and services.

- Regularly assessing the adequacy of existing collections, programs, and services to ensure they are reflective of the diversity of the library's constituent populations.
- Regularly reviewing the current and emergent demographic trends for the library's constituent populations to inform collection development and management and the provision of programs and services.
- Providing increased accessibility through cataloging by allowing natural language words and advocating for changes in the LOC headings.
- Creating and advocating for the creation of programs and services that are reflective of the cultural heritage, cultural backgrounds, and social identities of the library's constituent populations.
- Including constituents as major stakeholders in decision-making and advisory entities and the planning, development, and evaluation of collections, programs, and services (Association College Research Libraries, 2020).

##### **Accessibility**

The American Library Association knows that people with disabilities are a huge and vital part of society. Libraries should be fully inclusive of all members of their community and strive to break down barriers to access. The library can play a reformation role in supporting more comprehensive participation in society by providing completely accessible resources and services. This intersectional group can experience both discrimination and barriers to access. Library staff should never presuppose a person's limits based on disability. Libraries are dedicated to facilitating the same access to collections, services, and facilities for all library users. When this is not conceivable, realistic accommodations and appropriate correction should be employed to provide a comparable experience to people with disabilities as to those who do not have disabilities. Libraries have a duty to meet the standards and requirements of ADA and state or local disability accessibility guidelines. Libraries must refer to legal counsel to govern their responsibilities under law (ALA Accessibility, 2020).

Listed below are Key Resources libraries should practice when organizing their collection for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility.

**Key Resources:** American Library Association,



(2020). Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/diversity>

- ALA Policy Manual - Diversity
- Continuing Education
- Diversity in the Workplace
- Diversity Research and Statistics
- Glossary of Terms
- Programming to Promote Diversity
- Outreach to Underserved Populations
- Workforce Development

#### **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion across ALA: Standards and Competencies**

- ALA Strategic Plan (2017 Update)
- ACRL: Diversity Standards: Cultural Competency for Academic Libraries (2012)
- ALSC: Competencies for Librarians Serving Children in Public Libraries
- EDI Strategic Direction Implementation Plan
- PLA: Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Social Justice Initiatives
- Strategic Directions: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- YALSA: Core Professional Values for the Teen Services Profession (see also Cultural Competence on the YALSA wiki)

#### **Major Initiatives**

- ALA Diversity Research Grant
- EDIcon: Foundations of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- Member-Leader Orientations
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at the American Library Association [Slides]
- Presidential Initiative - EDI in Our Libraries
- Spectrum Scholarship Program

#### **Partnerships**

- Cross-Cultural Communicators in Libraries
- Project Welcome: Libraries and Community Anchors Planning for Resettlement and Integration of Refugees and Asylum Seekers | Project Welcome Guides

#### **ALA Policies, Guidelines, and History**

- ALA Policy Manual B.3 - Diversity
- ALA Policy Manual B.4 - Equity and Access
- [Equity at Issue Library Services to the Nation's Four Major Minority Groups - Report to the President's Committee on](#)



Library Services to Minorities (1985-86 CD#30)

#### **Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Final Report and Recommendations**

- ALA Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Final Report

The ACRL Diversity Alliance program joins with academic libraries committed to growing the hiring pipeline of experienced and gifted individuals from underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds. By working together and thinking more broadly, ACRL Diversity Alliance institutions will support diversity, and in so doing, enrich the profession. The commitment of each library leader to create one or more residency positions will expand opportunities available to individuals from professionally underrepresented groups to gain the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to thrive in an academic context. Library leaders taking part in the ARCL Diversity Alliance are committed to involving, networking, and preparing participants for success in scholarship, professional service, and leadership. Participants and library leaders will each have access to a setup that allows them to share concepts, resources, and best practices (ARCL Diversity Alliance, 2020).

*Shenise McGhee is librarian at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff's John Brown Watson Memorial Library and chairs ArLA's Intellectual Freedom Committee.*

#### **References**

- American Library Association. (2020). Accessibility. Services to People with Disabilities: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights. <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/servicespeopledisabilities>
- Association College Research Libraries. (2018). ACRL Diversity Alliance. <http://www.ala.org/acrl/issues/diversityalliance>

American Library Association, (2020). Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/diversity>

American Library Association, (2020). Diverse Collections: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights. <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/diversecollections>

Adopted July 14, 1982, by the ALA Council; amended January 10, 1990; July 2, 2008; July 1, 2014 under previous name “Diversity in Collection Development”; and June 24, 2019.

Association College Research Libraries. (2020). Diversity Standards: Cultural Competency for Academic Libraries (2012). <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/diversity>

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## TRAINING: TIPS, TOPICS & TECHNIQUES: System Migration Training: Many Roads, One Destination

by *Joanna Warren and Chrissy Karafit*,  
*University of Central Arkansas*

**T**ransferring a library’s collections from one system to another is often a complicated process for library professionals. The University of Central Arkansas’ Torreyson Library began our migration from Innovative Interfaces’ Sierra ILS to OCLC’s Worldshare Management System in the fall of 2020. This was the first major system migration for several of us, and we would like to share our experiences and lessons learned to hopefully help other libraries who are preparing for the process.

### Team Approach

Before we even began soliciting proposals from vendors, we needed to decide who was going to oversee the migration process. Since our library is large enough to have distinct departments dedicated to systems, collection development/acquisitions, cataloging, and serials, we decided to take a team approach that enabled the head librarians of each of these departments to contribute their perspectives to the process. This four-person team would become the “experts” on WMS, passing along knowledge of system functions to other library personnel, based on how each member uses the system to perform unique job duties.

Choosing a vendor and timeline for our migration process was just the beginning of many other important decisions for our group. Early on, we



*Warren*



*Karafit*

discovered that we would need to develop a method of tracking any catalog record changes we made in Sierra between the time that our data was sent to OCLC and when we were actually able to start using WMS (about three months). Since cataloging of new materials and cleanup of older records could not stop during this time period, the Cataloging department printed out any records that were changed in Sierra and highlighted and/or made notes of the changes. Department personnel could then use the information on these print-outs to make the necessary updates once we gained access to the new system.

We also discovered that it would be difficult to train personnel without knowing exactly how records would look within the new system and having hands-on experience to learn how to adjust workflows. Although the migration team attended weekly training webinars and used the vendor’s support tutorials and videos, we found some webinar content was too technical, while other support content was too general for personnel trying to understand the changes in their specific workflows. Also, some vendor-provided training content may not be applicable, as workflows vary widely depending on library type and size. Therefore, we decided to hold off on starting much of the widespread training until we completed the data migration.

### New System Implementation

Due to the date of the final data migration near the end of the fall semester, the Systems Librarian trained the Circulation team to perform circulation services simultaneously in both systems for the last two weeks before winter break. This helped to identify availability of high-use library items, such as textbooks and laptops. We checked in materials in both systems and only checked out materials in WMS. The cataloging, acquisitions, and serials departments chose to begin developing new workflows once we all returned from winter break in early January 2021.

As migration team members oversee different departments and responsibilities, each member developed targeted training on workflows for their departments. For the four-member cataloging department, this meant setting up socially-distanced

laptops and a projector in the library's conference room and walking through how to perform common cataloging tasks in the new system. A group computer lab in the library offered a second location for socially distanced hands-on training. We added a second keyboard to a workstation equipped with a 43-inch monitor, so that two users could take turns working with records and view the same screen while sitting six feet apart. The Serials Librarian wrote step-by-step procedures for checking in, claiming, and binding issues, including screenshots of menu options and example records. The Serials Librarian and technician then used the dual keyboard workstation to work through the instructions together. All migration team members have encountered valuable teaching moments for staff when addressing other unforeseen system scenarios in the course of everyday work.

Circulation training required a different approach due to the size of the department, 12 staff members, as well as staff schedules. As our circulation workflows closely matched OCLC standard workflows, this department mostly utilized OCLC and inhouse documentation. After reviewing OCLC's circulation training videos, personnel logged in to the circulation module to gain familiarity with the appearance and structure of the new system. All Circulation personnel received instructions with screenshots demonstrating specific tasks, such as checking a book in and out and searching for a patron. The Systems Librarian created a test account to let personnel practice completing circulation workflows. Lastly, two Zoom meetings were offered to review the new workflows and respond to any questions.

The migration team provided a demonstration of the public interface for all personnel during the second week in January. The training was provided via Zoom and presented twice, in morning and afternoon sessions, in order to reach personnel across all shifts. Presenters included live searching of the discovery interface as well as screenshots of unique features. We purposefully demonstrated some problems encountered when searching the system, so that front line personnel would not be blind-sided by challenges. We also shared information about future enhancements that are expected to correct some of these issues. The training session was recorded so it could be shared with personnel who were unable to attend synchronously.

Luckily, we were able to provide access to our previous discovery service alongside the new discovery service for the spring semester. This

allowed patrons to continue using the familiar resource or test the new interface according to preference and did not disrupt the curricular plans of faculty using previously saved permalinks from the EBSCO discovery service. This also helped with testing the new system and training library personnel by allowing comparison between EBSCO and OCLC discovery functions.

While the migration team has demonstrated the new discovery features for all library faculty, more best practice training for Reference Desk personnel is needed. We need to identify and develop strategies for searching within specific collections in the new system, since WMS currently has no filter for collection location. As the spring semester is coming to a close, our instruction team is beginning to explore how previous teaching strategies can be mapped to the new system's functionality. Search strategies will eventually be documented in tutorials and videos. The WMS Discovery is scheduled to undergo an enhancement over the summer which will significantly change the appearance of search results and detailed records. This enhancement will impact the creation of training resources, which need to contain accurate, up-to-date visuals.

### **Final Reflections**

Despite some trepidation, going live with the new system at the beginning of the spring semester worked out. The reduced library traffic caused by the pandemic let us work through the learning curve with fewer distractions. Budget cuts reduced pressure on processing new items and allowed more time to clean up data migration errors and work through collection management projects. While the pandemic has created enumerable hardships, at least one silver lining has been more time for learning and training.

If your institution is either considering or in the midst of system migration, there are several points to keep in mind. Remember that system migration and even enhancements can require redesign and reworking of the library website, LibGuides, and any training materials you provide to guide research steps. Hyperlinks to specific resources in the catalog may need to be updated. System changes may require revising instructions for placing holds or interlibrary loan requests. If you have an FAQ application, you may wish to use this resource to help train patrons to use the new system. Lastly, bookmark your vendor's support documentation site and reach out to your local community and online message boards. Training is an ongoing process, but you don't have to reinvent the wheel. Often, if you are having difficulties, someone else has run



into the same problem and may have some solutions or workaround strategies. Libraries are known for helping others, so don't be afraid to contact other

institutions whose insights may ease your own migration journey.

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## AROUND ARKANSAS:

by *Heather Hays, Associate Editor*

**R**etired, long time Sevier County Library System Assistant Head Librarian Mrs. Annette Eastwood passed away at the age of 84 on August 20, 2020. She worked for the library system for almost 30 years.

A memorial bench was donated by the family and members of the community on December 29, 2020, which was her birthday.

Florence Metcalf, who was a member of the Horatio Library board, passed this fall as well.

Long-time employee Joan Moore is now serving as board member for Horatio Library.



*Eastwood*

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Congratulations to Lavis Martin! She was elected the ALA Council to serve a three-year term as a Councilor at Large. It's great to have more Arkansas representation on ALA Council!

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I am sorry to note the passing of one of our colleagues. Devona Pendergrass of Mountain Home passed away at her home on May 2nd. She worked for many years in school libraries, as well as with her colleagues through such organizations as the American Library Association, AAIM, the Arkansas Rural Educators Association, and many more. You can view her obituary and leave a tribute in the online guestbook at [rollerfuneralhomes.com](http://rollerfuneralhomes.com).

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Each year the UA Little Rock Ottenheimer Library awards the Karen M. Russ Memorial Award for Excellence in Research in recognition of Karen's contribution to the university and profession. The \$500 award is given each spring to the UA Little Rock student who best utilizes, applies, and/or visualizes government information in their research.

The winner of the award this year was Josiah Johnson for his research project examining the economic impact of the television show *Small Business Revolution* on the winning town. Additional information on Johnson's research can be found at the library website ([www.arlib.org](http://www.arlib.org)).

The Karen Russ Award was made possible by generous donations by members of the library community. Thanks to all who made this possible.

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Shenise McGhee has been promoted to Librarian/Professor and Tenure at the University of Arkansas Pine Bluff. Her research interests include intellectual freedom, open education resources, assessment, marketing, information literacy instruction and digital librarianship. Shenise's focus has been on how to utilize the various digital resources necessary to fulfill the informational, educational, diverse needs of the university. Shenise has been in academic librarianship for 13 years and enjoys working in reference and instruction. She has published articles in the Arkansas Library Journal, Texas Library Journal and Library Journal. Shenise is a reviewer for the Journal of New Librarianship. She has received UAPB Chancellor for Customer Service and Unsung Hero Award and numerous awards of recognition from the state and national library professional association.

She has earned a Master of Science in Library Science and two Graduate Academic Certificates in



*Annette Eastwood memorial bench at Sevier County Library.*

Advanced Management in Libraries and Information Agencies and Digital Content Management at the University of North Texas. She earned second Master of Science in Higher Education Walden University and is now completing courses towards a Doctorate in Higher Education with a specialization in Leadership and Management. Ms. McGhee actively serves on and chairs state and national committees.

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Brent Etzel has resigned his position as library director at ATU, effective in July. He has been selected to become the Dean of Library & Archives at Wheaton College in Illinois starting in August.

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Ron Russ won the ASU-Beebe January Strategic Spotlight Award for ASUBe Connected.

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Emilee Morrison has been hired as the new Full-Time Youth Services Librarian at the Mountainburg Public Library.

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The Arkansas State Library will soon begin taking applications for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Arkansas Library Leadership Institute (ALL-In)! ALL-In is an opportunity for up to 30 library workers in the state of Arkansas who want to grow as leaders, and is a year-long program that will be delivered in a combination of face-to-face and online events. ALL-In is for library workers at all types of libraries, and for library workers at all levels of the organization.

Applications will be available in August, and will be due on October 1, 2021 at 10 a.m. For more information please visit the ALL-In page on the

Arkansas State Library's website (<https://tinyurl.com/yffruabd>).

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Amber Gregory has been named a Mover & Shaker in Library Journal's (LJ) "Advocate" category.

Her nomination read: It would be tempting to say that Amber's unique ability is attributable to her passion. She has an all-in focus on reducing, even eliminating, the barriers that exist, particularly in small towns and rural areas, to information access because of inadequate connectivity. Her positions on the USAC Board, the ALA E-Rate Task Force, and the Toward Gigabit Libraries Advisory Board are all a testament to that. But her passion might be fruitless if she didn't have the ability to be a calming and encouraging voice in tackling a process that is so daunting, especially to the non-techie library staff in some of our communities.

You can read more about her at <https://tinyurl.com/4xakybs7>.

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

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

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## SPECIAL LIBRARIES:

### **Partnering with Academic Health Science Libraries to Increase Access to Authoritative Health Information**

*by Lisa Smith, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Library*

**A**cademic Health Science Libraries (AHSL) serve many audiences with the primary goal of increasing the health of the communities served. In addition to serving the clinical, research, and academic endeavors on our campus, we also extend the reach of both the library and the university by developing and offering robust health information outreach programming.

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Library has a strong commitment

to partnering with libraries throughout Arkansas and other agencies to offer health information programming. The UAMS Library connects with public libraries, hospital libraries, school, academic, and special libraries to build programs that fit the needs of communities. A resource that we heavily rely upon to craft these programs and build applicable services is the National Library of Medicine (NLM).

The NLM is the world's largest medical library that offers educational resources, training, and financial support to libraries throughout the nation. The NLM is located on the campus of the National Institutes of Health and is one of 27 institutes and centers at the NIH in Bethesda, MD. The NLM has developed over 240 freely available databases to aid researchers, clinicians, and the public in locating topical biomedical and consumer health information.

To ensure that the databases, research tools, clinical content, and consumer health services and resources that have been constructed by the NLM are readily available to all libraries throughout the nation, the NLM created the Network of the National Library of Medicine (NNLM). The Network builds awareness and provides educational programs, funding, and outreach nationwide. The UAMS Library is a member of the NNLM, and all libraries interested in offering health information programming, taking NNLM courses, seeking NNLM funding, or gaining general awareness of NNLM services may also join this free network.

Through our NNLM partnership we have been fortunate to offer educational programs and build new relationships throughout Arkansas. Examples of past UAMS Library outreach partnerships include:

#### **All of Us Program (Individualized Health Information Program)**

This program allowed the UAMS Library to partner with public libraries to offer health education programming integrated into public library systems within several counties in Arkansas. The goal was to raise awareness of the All of Us Program sponsored by the NIH. The All of Us program is a precision medicine research study designed to create therapies tailored to individual needs. [1] This project also provided training to library staff via in-service courses in locating and accessing consumer health resources produced by the National Library of Medicine. Training also included information on how to evaluate health information on the web.

#### **Outreach to the Marshallese Population**

The goal of this program was to raise awareness of authoritative health information resources within the Marshallese population in Arkansas. This service offered courses to demonstrate NLM resources for health workers whose primary audience are the Marshallese population. Additionally, computing equipment was provided to community centers to allow access to online health information. Health information handouts were made available to community center patrons describing health conditions of interest to the community served.

#### **Delta Region Health Information Program**

The goal of this project was to support public libraries in providing consumer health online information within the Delta region of Arkansas. In-service sessions were offered to provide training to public library staff in the use of NLM resources. Exhibits at health fairs and other community events were offered to create awareness of NLM databases and consumer health products. Computing technology (iPAD tablets) was provided to public

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libraries to utilize when accessing online health information.

#### **Nursing Continuing Education Program**

Train the trainer courses for nurses and patient educators were developed and offered throughout Arkansas. Courses focusing on the effective use of NLM databases and resources were offered, and nurses obtained nursing continuing education credit needed for annual licensure accreditation. Additionally, an online Arkansas Consumer Health Information Guide was created to serve as a teaching tool and resource for nurses engaged in patient education. This program focused on connecting with nurse educators, but programs similar to this are often offered in partnership with hospital libraries to provide instruction to staff nurses in locating authoritative clinical and patient education resources.

While the programs previously described are notable examples of past outreach projects and were funded by the NLM (via award #UG4LM012345), the potential for future collaborative programming is extensive, and many projects may be pursued that do not require external funding.

Future programs of interest to library partners may include (but are not limited to) projects similar to the overviews below.

#### **Community Health Information Programs**

Health information educational programs can be developed targeting specific communities of interest or topical diseases/conditions. These sessions may be hosted at a public, academic, or other library setting. These programs may target the general public or a specific audience. Additionally, the AHSL and partner library can develop a shared program to be offered within a community setting. Examples of programs developed by AHSLs include topics such as accessing health information via mobile devices; locating nutrition information resources; searching consumer health online databases.

- **Training Workshops**

Hosting 'train the trainer' workshops that feature quality health information resources and target health educators, social workers, others who use health information in a professional capacity.

- **Health Education Programs**

AHSLs can develop shared programming with health educators to offer a blended session that focuses upon topical health education and also health information seeking skills.

- **Health Fairs**

Developing exhibits to participate in regional health fairs to promote access to authoritative health information and library resources, services and programs.



- **Professional Development Sessions/Workshops**

Tailored courses can be developed to offer as an ‘in-service’ to train library staff in locating free National Library of Medicine clinical and consumer health information.

Each of the sessions described and many others may be offered on-site with the host library or community agency, or in virtual format.

As the state ranked 47th in the nation for health outcomes, we have much work to do in our effort to increase the health of Arkansans. [2] We know that strong partnerships are critical to reaching our audiences and communities. We are looking forward to making more connections with our colleagues, and building great collaborative programs with libraries throughout Arkansas. Please don’t hesitate to reach out to us if you would like to explore an outreach

program partnership!

*Lisa Smith is library director at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) in Little Rock, Arkansas.*

## References

[1] National Institutes of Health All of Us Research Program. (n.d.). The future of health begins with you. Retrieved April 2, 2021 from <https://allofus.nih.gov/>

[2] United Health Foundation. (n.d.). America’s health rankings. 2020 annual report. Arkansas. Retrieved April 2, 2021 from <https://www.americashealthrankings.org/learn/reports/2020-annual-report/state-summaries-arkansas>

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## RISci Business: Building a New Reference and Instruction Community

*by Jessica Riedmueller, University of Central  
Arkansas, Torreyson Library*

A week or two ago I received a notice in my email inbox that a student had scheduled a research appointment with me. The appointment, which came in at 5:28 p.m., was scheduled for the next day at 2 p.m. Less than 24 hours’ notice for a research appointment is not something I usually stress about. However, after reading the student’s question, I started to panic. The research topic was so far out of my depth that I doubted every skill I’ve built as a librarian. I was already preparing my speech for when the student left disappointed. Thankfully, my colleagues were able to help me, and the appointment was pretty successful. But what if I didn’t have colleagues at work to rely on? Where would I turn for help?



*Riedmueller*

In this column, I want to introduce you to the Reference and Instruction Services community of interest (RISci, pronounced “risky”). RISci, formerly known as RISD (Reference and Instruction Services Division), welcomes anyone doing reference and instruction in any type of library. Whether you’re at a public, academic, school, or special library, we are building a community that supports you. We aren’t

just talking about traditional reference questions or information literacy instruction. Have you ever helped someone use a computer? That’s definitely instruction. Helped someone find a tax form? Most certainly reference. Explained to someone why keeping a wild raccoon as a pet is not allowed according to city code? I think that falls into both reference and instruction.

RISci has already started to build this community with our Lunch and Learn series. During our first meeting, we invited library workers to tell us what is going on at their libraries. The number one thing we heard was that people are feeling the constraint of smaller budgets and fewer staff which translates to less time and money for professional development. We heard about pressure that people feel to know everything or to be able to answer any question with some immediacy, especially during this age of mis- and dis-information. We also heard that people who have been doing RIS for a while want to share their knowledge with those who may be navigating the information landscape for the first time.

Our participants additionally shared what they wish was being talked about. Overwhelmingly, we heard that people want guidance on how to create a question-friendly environment where the library can be positioned as a source of community information as well as traditional “reference” information. We heard that librarians who may not do information literacy instruction day-to-day want to increase their “one-shot” IL class skills. And we learned that people want to know how to disengage from or end a reference conversation in a way that satisfies the patron and makes us feel safe.

During this lunch and learn, we also

brainstormed ways that RISci can help the Arkansas library community. Here are some of the ideas:

- Sponsor a “train the trainers” day that one or two people from an institution could attend and take the training back to their libraries.
- Host a repository of best practices, tips, tricks, scenarios, etc. for people to consult when they have time.
- Create space for open, honest, and confidential conversations where people can share their struggles without fear of it reaching their patrons.
- Create a network for RIS people to ask for help.

RISci also engages with the “customer service” aspects of RIS work. By the time this article has been published, we will have hosted a second Lunch and Learn discussing how to disengage from reference interactions that are either too long or beginning to feel dangerous or confrontational.

Though reference and instruction has long been an ever-changing field, the pandemic has greatly impacted how and why we do this work. We had to balance patron needs with our own personal safety. Even the easiest questions, such as “when are you open” became fraught interactions. Add to that an avalanche of information so vast it becomes difficult to sort credible from untrustworthy sources, and it

becomes clear that reference and instruction is not simply helping someone find a source or explaining how to use a database. But the pandemic has also helped us learn to connect even when we have to be apart. What better time to build a network for reference and instruction than now?

If any of this sounds appealing to you, please join us! Check us out on the ArLA website ([www.arlib.org](http://www.arlib.org)) under Get Involved → Communities of Interest. From there, you can connect with our officers, who can help you join our email list. You can find other RISci members in the ArLA membership directory by searching our Community of Interest. We would also like to invite you all to our 2021 Reference Exchange Day, an annual half-day event where we dive deep into a particular topic important to RIS. On Friday, May 21, 2021, John T. F. Burgess, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, School of Library and Information Studies at The University of Alabama and author of *Foundations of Information Ethics*, will facilitate an exploration of how to provide our patrons with adequate answers to their questions without compromising our professional ethics. You can register for this free 2-hour workshop at <https://nwacc.libcal.com/event/7576371>.

We can't wait to see you at our events this year!

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## LIBRARY ADVOCACY: *Library Data and Telling our Stories*

by *Gwen Dobbs*

*Northwest Arkansas Community College*

I don't know about those of you who might be reading this column, but I like a good story, no surprise there. And libraries are full of stories every day, in the materials we provide, of course, and in the stories of the library itself and our users. At least once or twice a year we are called on to tell our stories, to our funders, governing boards, and various other stakeholders, and those stories often begin in the form of numbers. Those of us who work in libraries, however, know that numbers don't tell the whole story. It is often up to us to humanize, or translate, our numbers into stories. Nothing new, really, but here are a couple of stories from NWACC.

As a community college library director, I provide annual reports each year to our



*Dobbs*

administration and the college community about our activities and any trends we see in library services. Here is an example in our Study Room Bookings from FY2016 through FY2019 (Table 1).

	<i>FY 16</i>	<i>FY 17</i>	<i>FY 18</i>	<i>FY 19</i>
<b>Study Room Bookings</b>	1,006	1,936	2,987	3,071

*Table 1*

As you can see, our Study Room Bookings almost doubled in FY2017 and again FY2018. What's the story? The library was remodeled in the summer of 2016, and we went from 2 to 7 study rooms.

Subsequently, we saw our Study Room Booking data almost double two years in a row, and continue to increase into a third year. Based simply on student requests, we knew that students wanted more study rooms. And once the rooms opened, and we were able to collect use data, the numbers seemed to prove the point. Most importantly, these numbers allow me to tell a story to our stakeholders. Library as place

is important and the additional study rooms were a good investment, measured in student use.

Another data point that tells a story is our Circulation by Item Type report. Since approximately 2012, library Reserve materials have been our second most circulated collection, after our main print collection. Reserve materials are primarily required textbooks for college classes, some additional supplemental readings, and a few odds and ends such as a complete skeleton for anatomy courses that we named Lucy.

To illustrate, here are a couple of graphs from our FY2020 annual report (Table 2 and Table 3). While our overall circulation numbers vary year by year, the breakdown of which collections circulate the most does not. That information is made more powerful by the fact that the Reserve Collection is made up of around 400 volumes/items at most, and our print collection is made up of close to 25,000 volumes.

Most years we present our annual report to what we call the Expanded Cabinet, a body of college leadership personnel, and we started emphasizing this data point around 2016. What story does this data tell? Nothing we don't already know, but it here it is in actual numbers. Some students are not

buying textbooks, or other supplemental instructional materials, but instead relying on the library's reserve collection. This data, combined with the OER interest and support of NWACC Librarian Nithin Lakshmana, has helped us in a campus conversation around alternatives to high priced textbooks.

Library Advocacy can be a lot of different things, but I like to think of it primarily as storytelling. We all mine our data for trends and look to forecast areas of service growth. And we are very good at counting things. But I think we can really leverage our data to communicate our needs and advocate for ourselves and our users. We all know the pandemic brought more attention to the Digital Divide, and to the technology have's and have not's. Many of us invested or increased our investment in wifi hotspots to assist our users who could not afford, or simply don't have access to, high speed internet at home.

As challenging as this past year has been, I'm looking forward to our end of the year reports. I know we will most likely see some decreases, such as in our regular print circulation numbers. But we will most likely see some successes and some feel-good stories, too, about how we served our users in new ways in an incredibly challenging year. And let's make sure we tell that story.

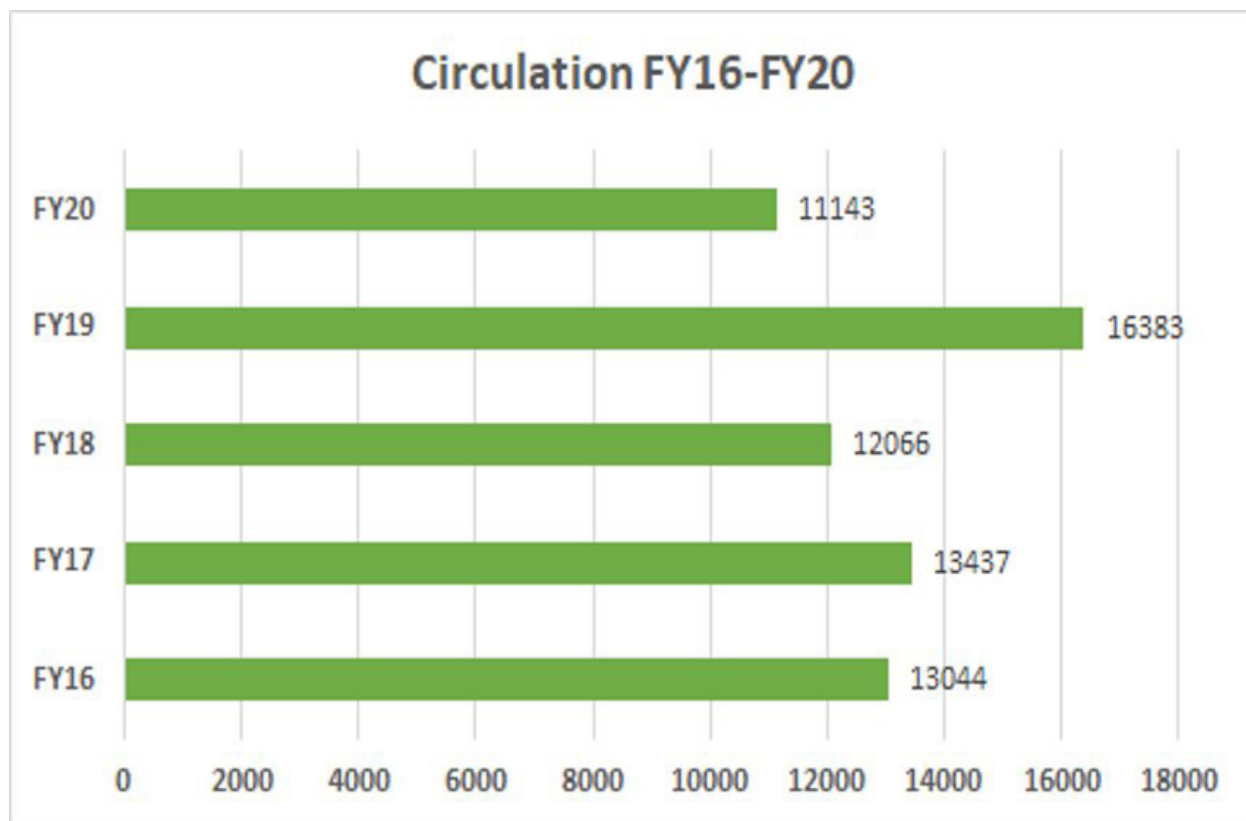


Table 2



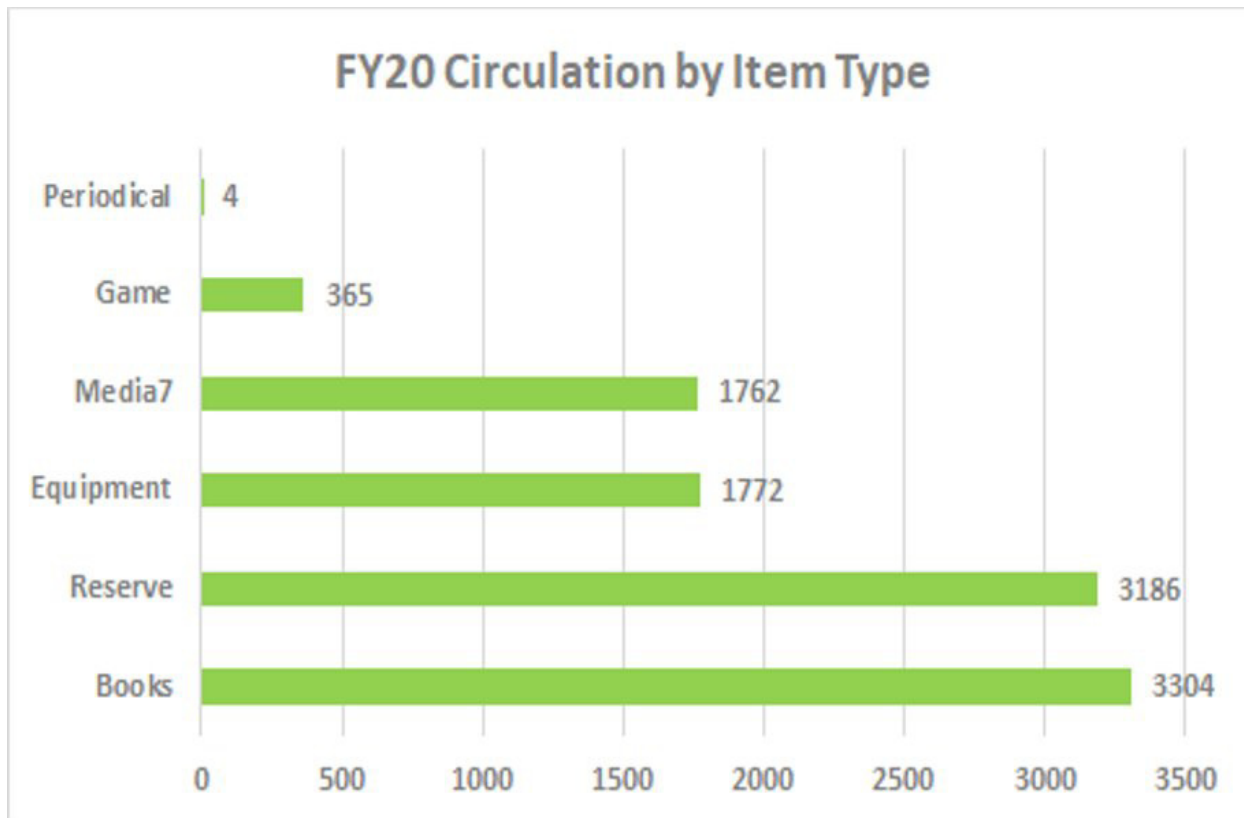


Table 3

**TWO YEAR COLLEGE LIBRARIES:  
Keeping the Library in the Picture: Using  
Zoom and Virtual Escape Rooms to Connect  
with Students**

*by Tina Bradley, Arkansas State University  
Mountain Home*

In a small library on a rural community college campus, it’s always been a challenge to find the methods and staffing that allow us to stay connected with our student body. With only three full time employees – one library director and two library technicians – it’s a balancing act to run the library and keep up with instructional goals, while also encouraging students to engage with and care about the resources the library has to offer them. Two new methods we are employing involve Zoom and virtual escape rooms.

As the sole instructional librarian, I visit classes to do one-shot instruction sessions in the classroom and also maintain an information literacy tutorial that is available to all students via Blackboard. Prior to 2020, I had never used Zoom or any other real-time streaming video for instruction. We had a few classes that utilized Zoom on our campus, but most of our



online classes didn’t have a real-time component. When learning moved digital in March 2020, it was a crash course for all of us in how to best utilize this tool. While I have been able to continue the one-shot instruction sessions via Zoom, learning about how to use the software opened up more ideas of how we could reach out to students.

The screen sharing aspect of Zoom was especially exciting to me. On our small campus, the library staff has traditionally been part of the “Tech Help Desk” for students. For basic needs, such as assistance using the portal, or with login credentials, or even how to get started with Blackboard, the library has been a connecting piece. Whether in person or over the phone, our goal has always been to either fix the problem or directly connect the student with someone who could. One frustration in helping students remotely has been trying to discern what students are seeing on their computer

when they call in for help. Some students have the knowledge level to be able to share exactly what they are doing but others are not quite there. Of course, software has existed for years that allowed tech departments to remotely login to a user's computer and see or fix problems. Our library staff has never had access to that type of software, so we worked using the old-fashioned way of having students describe what they saw on their screen. Learning about how well Zoom could help us "see" the problems students are having and be able to share our screen with them so they can understand how to perform specific tasks accurately was a game changer for us.

It was from this discovery that the idea of a more organized method of assisting students began. In Fall 2020, as we began the first full semester under COVID restrictions, we had many students starting without the information they need to be successful when navigating the college's online environment. Our school did not have a fully fleshed-out online orientation in place, and the search was on for ways to fill that gap. I suggested to the Provost that library staff could host Introduction Sessions via Zoom for any student who wanted to brush up on their basics: how to login to the portal; how to use Blackboard; how to contact their advisor and instructors; how to find textbooks. We could then provide time and space for students to ask any questions they have about school in general.

We scheduled sessions each day the week before classes began and during the first week of classes. We kept session attendance under 5 students at a time to allow for an experience where they felt more free to ask questions. This format helped us to customize each session to the students attending. An amazing side effect we were not anticipating was how much of a connection this allowed us to build with each student. In the majority of one-shot instruction sessions, they are many and I am one. Time does not allow me to ask each student how their day is going, and what they are planning on majoring in, and if they are experiencing any challenges getting started this semester. The new Introduction Sessions were the exact opposite of the one-shot instruction experience. I found myself answering questions I never anticipated getting, and learning much more about student needs, especially those needs at the beginning of a semester. It was helpful for the students and quite rewarding to me. The plan is to expand this even further in the coming fall and incorporate more students and more student services connections.

Another way we found to connect with students

in the past year was rather a more unconventional avenue: virtual escape rooms. How did we end up here? You know how libraries are – we love a good display! The struggle was real when the physical location shut down for months, and even when we opened back up, emphasis was on not touching items without sanitizing afterward. That makes the sort of interactive displays we favor next to impossible. Luckily for us one of our library technicians, Heather LaGoy, is a real escape room aficionado. She loves to visit escape rooms in person for fun, but she also opened my eyes to the world of digital escape rooms.

While virtual escape rooms have been around for a while, they are especially useful for overcoming the challenges of engaging students at a distance. By creatively using Google Sites and Forms, Heather built our first virtual escape room to take the place of the annual Banned Books Display in 2020, and we haven't looked back since. She continued with themed virtual escape rooms for Halloween, Happy Holidays, our library book club, and even Harry Potter. Heather also created individualized video trailers for each escape room using the iMovie app. These are all in good fun, something meant to draw in students while celebrating the specific theme. From this point grew the idea to make an escape room that could work even more closely with our information literacy goals.

Crafting a treasure hunting adventure story of the search for "The Golden Article," our newest virtual escape room takes students on a journey through some of the major databases provided by the library, and introduces them to the type of resources provided in those databases. Heather and I worked on this together, with me outlining the story and database facts that would be covered, and Heather translating this into a visual experience on the screen. While this escape room is not intended to replace the one-shot or more involved instruction sessions, it serves as an engaging way to let students know about the many different research options they have in the library, and hopefully provides a bit fun along the way.

Budget and staffing constraints can hamper finding new methods to reach out to students where they are. However, in our library, imagination and a willingness to give anything a try are really the key components to start bridging this gap.

*Tina Bradley is library director at Arkansas State University Mountain Home's Norma Wood Library.*

## SCHOOL LIBRARIES: Evolving Attitudes about Multicultural Programming

by Erin Shaw, University of Central Arkansas

Celebrating cultural diversity and including multicultural programming in our public schools is an essential part of teaching students about differences and assisting with building empathy and a knowledge of others. Learning about other cultures serves to create tolerance and mutual respect within the classroom, which in turn generates an atmosphere of equality that provides our students the tools to better serve as citizens in a global society.

My UCA Library Media and Information Technology (LIBM) students and I explore ideas about diversity in a programming course I teach. We hold multiple discussions on the types of programs offered in the school libraries in their schools and the populations served by their districts and within their communities. One of the best books I found to use with my UCA LIBM students for introducing ideas for a variety of library programs for celebrating cultures is an older text (2010) *Multicultural Programs for Tweens and Teens* by Linda B. Alexander and Nahyun Kwon. I use the course discussions and text with the hope that by the end of the semester my students are more aware of the lack of and the need to offer diverse programming in the school library and in our schools.

Responses in our discussion groups have offered insight into what is taking place (or not taking place) in our schools in the context of celebrating diversity and cultures. I am sharing some of the student responses for a **Visible Thinking Routine: Multicultural Programming - I used to think... but now I think...** to highlight how their thinking has changed this semester:

"I used to think Multicultural Programming was only done in schools where there was a diverse population. Now, I think **EVERY** school library should be creating diverse programs. Hopefully, the school librarian won't be creating them alone, but with the help of teachers! It is important for students to learn about other cultures. Why? Hopefully, so they can be more accepting of others. Understanding someone's background can go a long way in helping people understand each other. I used to think Multicultural Programming had to be done by someone **FROM** that background. Now, I think anyone can coordinate a multicultural program by tapping into community resources. Also, researching

a culture can go a long way in helping someone create a multicultural program."

"I used to think that Multicultural Programming would have to be a big overwhelming task...but now I realize that just because it is a Multicultural Program does not mean that it has to include everything about that culture and be a huge special program. It can be focused on one simple theme, a holiday, food, myth/story or a historical event. It could be a comparison program like the Cinderella around the world program- with each book you can talk about the different cultures around the world by comparing the books and places. I also learned that it is important to tie Multicultural Programs to the different cultures that are represented in your school. It is so powerful to have students learn and even teach others about their cultures. This also makes those students feel valued by those they are in school with."

"I used to think that Multicultural Programming began and ended in February with Black History Month. To be honest, I had never really thought of Multicultural Programming at all before this class. I now realize how important it is for the school to celebrate and learn about the cultures of the entire student body. After reading the text, I understand how it helps students of various cultures to have pride in themselves and build community among students of different cultural backgrounds. I loved how the text described the library as a community center within the school. I now look at the library as a great place for students to learn about the diversity within their own school and the world around them. I used to think that Multicultural Programming (or any programming) is just something that the library would do for fun. I now understand that Multicultural Programming can create educational opportunities and ways to collaborate with fellow educators. Students can have fun while participating in learning experiences that celebrate other cultures and are tied to the school curriculum and standards."

"I used to think Multicultural Programming in schools was only in large schools with a diverse population, but now I think Multicultural Programming is something that without a doubt should be and needs to be in every single school. I even thought our students don't really need all the different multicultural programs because our population isn't diverse in the slightest, but that was just as wrong! Since our population does not have any racial diversity, I feel that we need the multicultural programs even more! Our students need to know what the real world is like. They need to be



able to learn, relate, and see the importance of all cultures, and when you do only have a few students in your building that are a minority, it is important to make them feel loved, important, and valued. I am ashamed to say that before this class, I truly did not see the entire picture clearly. I did not understand how important Multicultural Programs really were, but now I do, and I am so grateful for that.”

“I used to think that Multicultural Programming only occurred during Black History Month because sadly that is the only time I had ever seen anything culturally diverse. Now I know that every day is a good day to hold a multicultural program. We went through so many different options for various cultures in our textbook. A library media specialist could easily have some kind of Multicultural Programming each month depending on what is celebrated that month. I have been given a multitude of ideas that I could incorporate into programming for various age ranges. Also, I used to think that Multicultural Programming was really just learning about specific people in a culture. Now I know that learning about specific people in a culture is only part of it. Yes, learning about the accomplishments of people is great, but students also need to know about the religion and beliefs of others, the hardships and struggles, and the cultural norms for someone other than themselves. I particularly enjoyed the idea of learning the mythology of different cultures.”

“I used to think Multicultural Programming in schools was largely about having books from multiple cultures and celebrating holidays and

celebrations throughout the school when possible. I now think that Multicultural Programming is about much more than the books that you make available to students and occasionally celebrating major holidays. The book *Multicultural Programs for Tweens and Teens* provided a good number of examples of multicultural units and lessons that a school library media specialist can integrate into the library and support classroom teachers integrating various cultures into their classrooms. Additionally, all the examples in the text and covered over the course about ways to engage students in the collections of the library show that simply having the books is not enough. Providing engaging book talks, book passes, and more intentional planning are critical for exposing students to the multicultural resources in the library, and granting students of all backgrounds access to a wider variety of resources than they may have in the past.”

Reflecting on this shift in thinking for a small number of graduate students gives me hope that they will begin their school library careers with an understanding of the importance of celebrating diversity and cultures. These enlightened librarians will help the next generation of students be more inclusive and learn how to celebrate differences in each other.

*Erin Shaw is assistant professor and LIBM & ITEC programs coordinator at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway, Arkansas.*

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

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

## Stuttgart Public Library Celebrates 100 Years

by *Clara Jane Timmerman*  
*Stuttgart Public Library*

The Stuttgart Public Library is celebrating its 100 years on the Grand Prairie. The length of this history is a tribute to the power of women, singly and collectively, to do what appears to be impossible in pursuing a dream.

Mrs. Paul Millar, secretary of the Library Board, wrote this story of the Stuttgart Public Library's first

50 years. Mrs. Millar compiled this information in commemoration of the library's 52<sup>nd</sup> birthday.

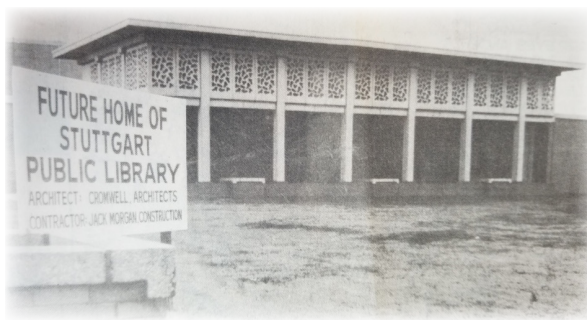
The idea of a city library was born in a meeting of the Stuttgart Woman's Club some six years after Mrs. Maude Bethell Lewis organized it in 1912 as a study club. Mrs. J. C. McCuskey, a charter member of the club, related this information.

### Search Begins for a Library Room

The first recording secretary's notebook that has been found gives the minutes of meetings from 1919 through 1923. Mrs. H. E. Williamson was secretary. The first entry pertaining to the library in this handwritten book indicates that this subject had been discussed before and is dated March 31, 1920. "Mrs. Bovay suggested that we ask for a room for a library in the new court house. Mrs. Bovay was appointed



*Story Time, 2018.*



*Future library site, January, 1994.*

chairman to see members to the council.” The committee wasted no time and they duly reported to the club on April 14. “Mrs. Bovay made a report for the library committee. The new court house is a county building and Judge Wilcox assured the ladies that they should have little trouble in obtaining a library room. There was liable to be a little delay in construction due to the present cost and scarcity of materials.”

### **First Fund Raising Project**

During the spring of 1921, the ladies presented a play, “How the Story Grew,” at the Opera House on Main. It was the first moneymaking project specifically for the purpose of funding the library, and according to Mrs. McCuskey, it raised over \$200.00, a very large sum at that time. It had a cast of eight, five scenes indicating a change of sets for each one, and other entertainment as well, both before the play and during intermission. Mrs. McCuskey, who was one of the actresses, has a perfectly preserved copy of the program.

### **Attempt to Secure Carnegie Grant**

On April 6, 1921, the Journal reports, “Mrs. Kenny, at the request of the president, told how the funds were secured for a Carnegie Library at Tuscola, Illinois. Also Mrs. Daniels gave a similar report of the library at Jennings, Louisiana.” Mrs. McCuskey noted that further inquiries were made into the possibility of obtaining a Carnegie grant but that it was necessary to have a specified number of books and an operating library before they could be

considered. By the time this qualification was met, the grants were no longer available.

### **Room Found for the Library**

On January 25, 1922, it was reported “Committee who were to secure a room for the library reported that a room which the M.E. Church South had fitted up as a S.S. room in the Court House had been offered to us for that purpose. A motion passed to accept with thanks.” On that same meeting day the project began in earnest: “Committee appointed to look for shelving which might be ready made for someone, or if none such were to be had inquire about prices of lumber, etc. Mrs. Drummond and Mrs. Robert Morehead were appointed. Mrs. Bovay asked to inquire about files and other helps we might need.”

### **A Shower of Books**

Having secured a room, and being in the process of obtaining shelves, files, and incidentals, what the library needed most was books. On February 22, “After some discussion as to the proper place to have the proposed book shower a motion prevailed that it be held in the room where the library was to be located. Also motion to have this shower Monday, March 6 and serve sandwiches, tea, and coffee, unanimously passed. Each club member to furnish 1 dozen sandwiches.” Mrs. McCuskey recalls that the book shower was a great success, many people arriving with armloads of books. She also noted with a smile that although not too many of the books were of great value to the library they did begin to fill up the shelves. When asked to describe this first library, Mrs. McCuskey said it was a small room on the second floor of the then new Court House building, which was torn down when the old Julia Shannon School was built. It was on the north end of the building, hot in summer and cold in winter.

### **More than Books Donated**

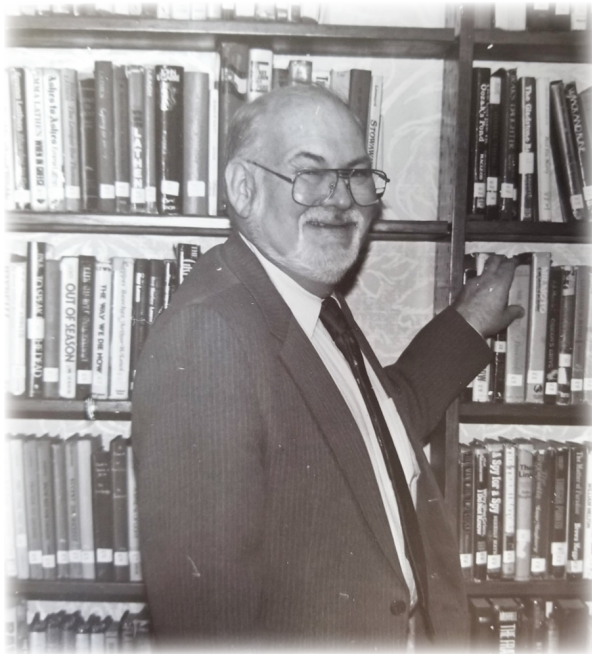
In the minutes of March 8, “Motion to give a vote of thanks to the Arkmo Lumber Co. and Mr. Sanger for the lumber donated for the shelves and Mr. Rhodes for making same.”

### **First Purchase of New Books**

On April 15, “Motion passed to allow book committee to spend \$100.00 for new copy-righted fiction and juvenile books.” On May 13, the ladies realized that they needed professional help. “Motion to write to Miss Praul, Librarian at Little Rock, asking her to send her assistant here for a day or so to help us catalogue the books. We are to pay car fare and furnish entertainment for her.”

### **First Library Board Appointed**

On June 13, “A motion carried asking the



*Librarian Ted Campbell, 1989.*



president to appoint a Library Board of seven members who shall have charge of the management of the library for the next year. The following were appointed. Mesdames M.M. Culpepper, J.P. Walz, H.E. Bovay, Sternberg, H.E. Meek. Earl Rhodes, and Robt. Morehead.”

### Library Opening Set

At a called meeting at the library on June 20, 1922, “It was decided to open the library to the public Tuesday afternoon June 27 with Mrs. P.B. Adams and Mrs. H. E. Bovay in charge. Mesdames J.A. Kenny, Drummond, M.M. Culpepper, and Bovay volunteered to distribute membership cards for the library at Crowe’s Drug Store Saturday afternoon and evening June 24.”

### Rules Set For Volunteer Librarians

After its first summer of operation, on September 13, 1922, “Mrs. Culpepper gave a very encouraging report of the Library Board and suggested several rules that should be adopted in the management of the library. A motion was carried making it necessary for members to serve as librarians in alphabetical order excepting the board members who are to fill in unavoidable vacancies. A fine of fifty cents for non-performance of duty to be levied and this money to be added to the library fund for the purchase of supplies.”

### Financial Strain Begins

On October 4, 1922, “A motion carried instructing the treasurer to sell the second Liberty Bond in order to meet the second payment of \$42 on the set of encyclopedias which we gave to the library.” And the next month on November

13, “After much discussion it was decided to hold a bake sale on November 29, the day before Thanksgiving. The proceeds to go to the Public Library which is badly in need of funds.”

### Funds Low and Winter Coming:

Also at the November meeting, “Mrs. M.C. Burns and Freudenberg were appointed to secure us a load of wood for the library by an honorable means at their command besides paying cash for it.” At the next meeting on November 29, “Mrs. Burns reported that Mr. Vint Holmes had donated a load of wood to the library.” These early club members seem to have had a real talent for securing donations when the situation became desperate. On December 13, it was noted, “A motion carried allowing a salary of \$1.50 per month to the janitor at the library for building fires twice a week.”

### Volunteers Urged to be More Careful:

After about six months of operation of the library, on January 24, 1923, “Mrs. Culpepper announced that the books at the library had been

### The Library

We help everyone who comes in the Library. We show everyone respect and kindness.  
The Library has books; we have many books and we can find you the perfect book for whatever mood you are in. We are very good at that.  
What you may not be aware of are the other things we do at the Library.  
We have newspapers, the Arkansas Gazette, and The DeWitt Era Enterprise.  
People come to the Library everyday just to read the paper.  
We have tax forms and information pertaining to tax questions.  
The Library is a community center.  
We seek to help people find answers to questions or problems they have. **We are a service.**  
We help people do online applications and resumes. We help people learn how to use a computer for whatever you need to do. That is not counting the regular help people need on the computer.  
Some children come to the Library during the summer and they will watch movies on the computer.  
We have the movies and they will pick one out and watch it.  
We can help, send a fax, copy or email documents.  
We help people register for college, and register to vote.  
In addition, people do use the Library to take online classes.  
We help find assistance programs and where you can get the help you need for whatever situation you find yourself.  
Some of the questions that we get are... difficult.  
The Doctor just told me my child has cancer. Here, he wrote the word down for me.  
I need to know what will happen to my children if they deport me.  
Can you fill out this paper? The Dr. sent it to me and my glasses broke.  
How do I send money to my son in prison?  
The patrons we serve trust us. We take this trust that we are given, very seriously.  
At the Library, we are surrounded by information. There is a lot of information we can access.  
We do not say the words “I don’t know” at the Library. We say, I’ll find out for you.

— Clara Jane Timmerman

placed in order and that there had been many mistakes in issuing and receiving books. Many books appeared to be overdue. She urged that the members be more careful.”

### **Library Obtains Sign:**

At the same meeting, “A motion carried to have an inexpensive sign made to be placed on the door of the library.” On March 7, 1923, “Mrs. Harper reported that the sign for the library had been furnished and was ready to place, the most interesting thing about it being that it cost nothing, the labor and material having been donated.”

### **Library Help Hired:**

On April 4, 1923, “A motion carried to hire a girl through the summer to care for the library, paying her \$5.00 a month.” At the next meeting on April 18, it was reported, “After investigating it was found that we would have to pay \$6.00 a month for a girl to care for the library during the summer. A motion carried allowing \$6.00 to a girl and an assessment to cover the amount.”

### **Last Library Note in Record Book:**

The last note in the yellowed and musty-smelling old record book regarding the library is dated May 28, 1923, and typically, it is in reference to funding. “Mrs. McCuskey, the president, presided, and during the business meeting it was decided to hold a bake sale June 9 for the benefit of the Public Library.”

### **First Receipt of Public Money:**

The first payment of public money was on April 17, 1924, when treasurer of the Library Board, Mrs.



*Summer Reading, 2019.*

C.J. Brain recorded as the first entry in her ledger the receipt of \$50.00 from the City Council. This generosity was repeated on August 5 and November 19, undoubtedly prompted by subtle suggestions by the ladies. Disbursements during 1924 include payment to Louise Buerkle, Librarian, a check for \$8.25.

### **Sookie McCoy Begins Her Long Service:**

On April 4, 1925, Sophia Vos was paid \$6.95, presumably for a month of work tending the library. This was not the beginning of Sookie’s association with the library, however, as she recalls taking “Aunt Stella’s (Mrs. C.J. Brain) place when it became her turn to be librarian and she couldn’t go. For this service, her aunt paid her 50 cents for an afternoon of work while she was still in high school. Thus, Mrs. Paul McCoy’s love affair with the library began in 1922 or 1923. She has served in every capacity as librarian, cataloger, janitor, book mender, custodian of overflow books, donor of books, Board member, and inspiration to all who have worked with her.

### **The First Move:**

The books were moved from the old Court House to the old Rhodes building on Main Street on May 5, 1925. Presumably, this was donated space as there is no rent entry in the ledger. Another library move took place in 1943 when the books were taken to a downstairs room in the American Legion building. This was to be the library’s home until 1962. Dr. H.S. Neel was Mayor at the time and also was the local commander of the American Legion. In these two official positions, he was able to provide the ladies with a room for their library, and probably encouraged the City Council to make its donations. Mrs. H.S. Neel was a member of the library board for many years, retiring in 1962 when the new library was opened. Her job was ordering all the books added to the library shelves.

Written by Mrs. Paul Millar

*(Some corrections/edits made by Clara Timmerman.)*

The next 50 years were just as exciting, thanks in part to the incredible people who loved and dedicated their lives to the betterment of the library and community as a whole. The library remained in the American Legion Building from 1943 until September of 1962 when it moved to the Fourth & Grand location where a library was built. Mrs. Sylvia Mills was the Librarian from 1962-1987, and she oversaw much growth and a tax for a stable revenue. She also set the stage for the library to receive aid through the Arkansas State Library, which continues to this day.

Mr. Ted Campbell, Librarian and Director

from 1987-2015, put the library on a path to new greatness and not only expanded the library but also its reach throughout the county. Mr. Campbell saw the library through much success and triumph. His 28 years of dedicated service not only kept him busy, but also his loving and brilliant wife, Audrey Campbell. In 1994 he saw the library move and grow from its previous home on 4th & Grand to its new home where it is currently at 2002 S. Buerkle St. It continued to grow and serve more and more patrons. He expanded training and was a valiant activist for literacy throughout the county. The tornado that brought enormous destruction to Stuttgart in May 2008 also brought it to the library. Mr. Campbell and his tireless staff brought it back and then some. A book mobile was used while the library was under reconstruction, and the library reopened to the public on February 10, 2009. He built a children's wing that was completed in May of 2014 which opened up more space and more opportunities for youth.

Librarian Anna Bates was Assistant Director under Mr. Campbell from 2007-2015 and was Director from 2015-2018. She devoted herself to

the library and helped with the reconstruction after the tornado. As Director, she brought enhancements to the children's wing and the last expansion, a new meeting room, into existence through grit and perseverance. She also implemented the library's automation system, website, and digital access during her tenure.

Donovan Mays was Director of the Library 2018-2020. He was instrumental in getting the library through the first part of the pandemic. Long before he came here to be Director, he was involved in helping to move the library into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. With his help, we were able to streamline finances and bring more technology to the library.

We are very grateful to all our wonderful leaders, founders, volunteers, and patrons who have brought us this wonderful library. We hope to make you proud for the next 100 years!

*Clara Jane Timmerman is the assistant director of the Arkansas County Library/ Stuttgart Public Library in Stuttgart, Arkansas.*

## ***Arkansas Libraries 2020 Index***

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**compiled by Joanna Warren,**

*Library Faculty & Cataloguer, Torreyson Library, University of Central Arkansas*

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