

LIBRARY **HOTLINE**

BREAKING NEWS FOR LIBRARY AND INFORMATION DECISION MAKERS

a media source
publication

February 17, 2014
Volume 43, No. 7
ISSN 0740-736X

New York Libraries Face Five Percent Cut

New York libraries are facing close to a five percent budget cut with just \$81.6 million allocated in Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo's executive budget—down from the \$85.62 million granted to libraries last year.

New York's final budget for the FY13/14 included \$4.07 million added at the last minute by the New York State legislature—that's still far from the \$102.4 million needed to fund the state libraries fully as required by law.

Library supporters said they're concerned that even if the legislature allocates the \$4 million again this year, funding essentially flatlines. Without the additional money, libraries will be forced to make cuts, they said, that would strip them of core necessities.

"What is so upsetting is the governor did not include the legislative add this year," said Jeremy Johannesen, executive director of the New York Library Association (NYLA). "Each year we had made incremental progress to full funding. Now we're down \$20 million from where we should be."

Johannesen said many had hoped Governor Cuomo would use the \$85.67 million as a new baseline and build from there. Instead, public libraries are forced to begin considering reductions, should Cuomo's budget pass and the legislature not step



library materials budget, and small cash grants for branches. Next would be decreases in core services, from classes to delivery of materials.

"This puts us in the position of having to fight for where we are instead of a restoration of where we used to be," he said.

With the passing of Chapter 917 of the Laws of New York in 1990, libraries were assigned funding formulas built on the resident population, meant to ensure they could continue to provide services statewide. Based on the most recent U.S. Census of 2010, New York libraries should have received \$102.4 million for the 2013–14 fiscal year. Governor Cuomo allocated \$81.6 million—a \$20.8 million chasm. Calculated with inflation, the bud-

get should actually be \$126.5 million, said Johannesen.

"It's hard not to have the legislature meet funding that is stipulated by legislative law," he said.

Cuomo had 21 days after releasing the budget to make changes; that ended in early February. And Johannesen, along with the New York library community, are rallying, with more than 1700 letters penned to

in to authorize additional funds.

"Last year was actually a slight restoration of the budget," Steve Bolton, director of the North County Library System, a cooperative of 65 public libraries close to the Canadian border, told *Hotline*. "It allowed us not to have a deficit budget, which we'd had for the past two to three years."

Bolton said that the library has already done away with some staff, its li-

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Library of the Year

All libraries are good, some are great. *LJ* is looking for role-model libraries to vie for the honor of being the 2014 *Library Journal*/Gale Cengage Library of the Year. To learn more and submit your nominations, visit ow.ly/swYmZ.

Postmark deadline: April 5

Interview

Ashley Eklof

Late last year, the Bexar County Library, which serves the area around San Antonio, set up BiblioTech, the first all-digital library in the United States. Without any



physical books at all, the branch raised a few eyebrows, but head librarian Ashley Eklof tells *Hotline* that after a few months, the ebook- and technology-centric project has been so successful it already has its own spin-off at the county courthouse.

What has the patron response to BiblioTech looked like?

We've had a positive response right off the bat, which was a surprise. We've had about 16,000 people through our doors. And in January, we opened a kiosk in the Bexar County courthouse to serve the jurors called to duty every day.

How is life different for staffers at BiblioTech than at a traditional library?

We get a lot of tech questions, and a lot of people bringing in devices, asking, "How do I use this?" We still have requests from people who want traditional services like help finding information, doing research on our databases, and writing résumés, but we spend a lot less time shelving and a lot more on our patrons.

What's the question you get most often at BiblioTech?

"You can really check out ereaders here?"

You've worked in traditional libraries prior to this—do you miss the stacks?

I thought I would, but I don't. The books are still here, they're just in a different format. There's a place for traditional bookshelves, especially in areas where people have rare books and manuscripts. In a public library, though, our mission is about access, programming, and getting patrons what they want.

Cuomo and a fresh call to send comments to the legislature as well.

Johannesen said the last week in February is when the budget renegotiation process really kicks in to play, with each division of the legislature putting out its own version of the budget and hashing out a final number. Traditionally, library additions have come from the Senate, he said, so NYLA will focus its energy there before April 1, when the budget is likely to be adopted. Johannesen told *Hotline* he'll be pushing right up until the last minute.

"Until it's signed, sealed, and delivered, there is always an opportunity for things to change," he said.

Cengage Comes to Terms with Creditors

Academic software and services company Cengage Learning filed for Chapter 11 Bankruptcy protection on July 2, 2013, to restructure its \$5.8 billion debt load. On February 3, the company announced a deal with its major creditors and stakeholders and a reorganization plan that executives say will mark the beginning of a path out of bankruptcy and back to financial health.

The plan stands to wipe away upward of \$4 billion of the company's outstanding debt while allowing it to continue serving its customers. The plan represents a modification of an earlier reorganization plan and has the support of a majority of Cengage's creditors and its primary owners, reflecting a settlement between creditors and stakeholders that was negotiated by U.S. Bankruptcy Court judge Robert D. Drain.

Details of the differences between the two deals were not available at press time, but Cengage senior vice president for corporate affairs Josef Blumenfeld said that the main difference between the two deals is that more creditors are in agreement on this one. "A lot of stakeholders have come into alignment," Blumenfeld

PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY
Library Journal & School Library Journal

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Phone: 800-588-1030

www.libraryhotline.com/sub

Outside U.S.

760-317-2332

LIBRARY HOTLINE (ISSN 0740-736X) (RPUSA 123397467) is published weekly (every Monday except on the two Mondays nearest to the year-end holidays) by Library Journals, LLC, 160 Varick Street, 11th floor, New York, NY 10013. Randy Asmo, Chief Executive Officer; Ian Singer, VP, Group Publisher. Library Hotline is a registered trademark of Library Journals, LLC. All rights reserved. Printed in the USA. SUBSCRIPTION: \$119.99 per year, Canada \$159.99, Other (incl Air) \$159.99, Single Copy (U.S.) \$5.95, and Single Copy (all other) \$10.00. POSTMASTER: Send change of address to Library Hotline, PO Box 460483, Escondido, CA 92046-9803 Telephone 800-588-1030 Outside US 1-760-317-2332.

Printed in the U.S.A.

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told *Hotline*. The five-year reorganization plan, he continued, offers a way for Cengage to stay profitable and creditors to share in those profits.

Under the agreement, Cengage will be freed up to raise as much as \$2 billion in exit financing. First lien, secured lenders will come out

of the deal with a majority stake in the restructured company, while unsecured creditors will be repaid from a \$225 million pool of cash and stock in the new company.

Originally called Thomson Learning, Cengage was spun off and purchased by private equity firm Apax Partners and Canadian pension fund OMERS during Thomson Corporation's 2007 merger with Reuters. The next few years saw the company take advantage of low interest rates to buy up a number of new businesses, including the college publishing arm of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt and news search engine HighBeam Research in 2008 and the school publishing arm of National Geographic in 2011.

In July 2013, Hansen attributed the bankruptcy to the initial 2007 purchase, saying, "The reason there was a problem is that our owner, Apax, significantly overpaid six years ago and therefore put too much debt on the business."

The U.S. Bankruptcy Court for New York's Eastern District, which is overseeing the bankruptcy filing, has yet to approve the reorganization plan. A confirmation hearing for the scheme is set for February 24.

Meanwhile, the company is continuing to pay staff and vendors on time, and subsidiaries such as Gale are going forward with new initiatives. For Cengage staff, Blumenfeld reported that there are "absolutely no plans for layoffs."

Unlue.it Crowdfunding Model for Ebooks Goes Beta

Unlue.it, the crowdfunding platform developed to encourage publishers to make ebooks DRM-free and open access (OA) under a Creative Commons license, in January launched a beta test of "Buy To Unlue," a new crowdfunding model that will offer ebook licenses in exchange for donations.

Sonoma Library To Host Minecraft Camp

Rebecca Forth doesn't want kids simply to play *Minecraft*, she wants them to design their own worlds in the virtual building game. They can do just that and learn the necessary coding skills in a program set to launch at the Healdsburg branch of the Sonoma County Library (SCL), CA, in March.

"We don't want them just to play the game," said Forth, the assistant to the director of SCL. "We want to teach them to feel empowered to generate their own content."

Fifteen students will be given the first opportunity to participate in the three-session, after-school program, where they'll be taught how to work mods: modifications that allow players to alter *Minecraft*, from making new blocks to creating new pieces.



The Mattituck-Laurel Library in New York as re-created in *Minecraft*.

Forth's son and a friend recently tackled their own mod by adjusting dynamite sticks readily available in the *Minecraft* toolkit, making them 100 times more powerful.

A professional coder in the community will be working with students during the first session using Eclipse, a coding application for Java that shows students the lines of code as they work. Students will use laptops already

in the library and connect to a server set up just for the program. While recoding explosives is far from users' only focus—although likely a popular one—the ability to personalize a video game is something most children don't feel equipped to undertake. And that's something Forth hopes to change.

"We want to take them from consumption to creation," she said. "We want to emphasize problem-solving and teamwork."

Libraries across the country have latched onto the game, using it to attract students to the library. From building a version of their own branch to launching *Minecraft* competitions, the game has emerged as a powerful tool for librarians to use to engage young patrons.

Forth launched her program with help from a \$6,000 grant from the California State Library and the Institute of Museum and Library Services to help cover costs, from the instructor's fee to game licenses, as well as extra memory to make *Minecraft* run faster, she said. (The library is donating staff time.)

As a pilot, the library will run assessments before, during, and after the first session to help inform two subsequent programs scheduled for Saturdays in April at the Rohnert Park branch and then the first week on June at the Sebastopol branch. Forth also plans to build a toolkit that she hopes other librarians will be able to employ to launch their own coding camps as well.

"One of the main goals is that this can be created at other libraries," Forth told *Hotline*. "The idea is to create a turnkey program so all the documents are there, as well as curriculum and resources, so they can have what they need."

Unglue.it launched in May 2012 with a traditional, pledge-based crowdfunding model. Rights holders can set a funding threshold that they feel would merit making their work OA, along with a deadline for the campaign. If pledges meet that funding threshold prior to the deadline, the title is released as an “unglued” ebook edition, free to share and copy.

By contrast, with the new Buy To Unglue model, ebook purchases and downloads—rather than pledges—will serve as the crowdfunding mechanism. Every Buy To Unglue title will come with a Creative Commons license set to go into effect at a future date, determined by the rights holder. Each purchase of the title will then shave time off of that deadline and move up the date. Unglue.it’s original pledge-based campaign model will continue to be an option for interested publishers and authors, as will “thanks for ungluing” campaigns, which offer Creative Commons–licensed ebooks under a pay-what-you-want model.

Pledge-based campaigns have Unglued several titles, including Ruth Finnegan’s *Oral Literature in Africa* and Lauren Pressley’s *So You Want To Be a Librarian*, but Eric Hellman, president of Unglue.it parent Gluejar, noted that the pledge model was designed, in part, to help solve a problem that is no longer prevalent.

“When we started out, we thought a lot of the campaigns would be for conversion projects—we’d take an old book that wasn’t in ebook form and fund the conversion,” Hellman told *Hotline*. “Since that time—it’s been three years—all of the books that are of value have been converted, or aren’t being converted for particular [rights-related] reasons. So the amount of conversion projects that were suitable for crowdfunding just weren’t large enough to sustain Unglue.it as an ongoing project.”

Elsevier won ten **PROSE Awards** for six of its books and one of its journals. This included the **R.R. Hawkins Award** for the book *Alan Turing: His Work and Impact*, edited by S. Barry Cooper and Jan van Leeuwen.

The **New York States Writers Hall of Fame** announced its **2014 Class of Inductees**: author and poet Russell Banks; author Mary Higgins Clark; author, journalist, and director Nora Ephron (1941–2012); author Alice Hoffman; poet Maurice Kenny; author Rex Stout (1886–1975); and author, journalist, and cartoonist James Thurber (1894–1961). The ceremony will take place in June.

ProQuest received the **2014 SIIA CODiE Content Award for Best General Reference Service** for its **Statistical Abstract of the United States**. It took on the publication after the U.S. Census Bureau ceased production.

The first class of the **Mississippi Library Leadership Institute** graduated this year.

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Twenty-six library professionals participated in the yearlong program.

The collection of **Dick Tracy creator Chester Gould** (1900–85) was donated to **Ohio State University’s Billy Ireland Cartoon Library & Museum**, Columbus. The archive includes more than 850 daily strips, 64 Sunday strips, and the drawing board on which Gould produced the comic.

Columbia University’s C.V. Starr East Asian Library, New York, received a **Council on Library and Information Resources Hidden Collections** grant. The money will fund the processing and cataloging of Columbia’s **Makino Mamoru Collection** on East Asian film.

The **Library of Congress** announced applications for its **2014 Literacy Awards**, which includes three prizes: the Rubenstein Prize, \$150,000; the American Prize, \$50,000; and the International Prize, \$50,000.

On a related note, when Unglue.it’s supporters launched campaigns for titles that were already available as ebooks, the pledge-based model was not designed to offer donors a copy of the title. The company hopes that this new model will prove attractive to both rights holders and consumers.

In addition, while the library community is generally supportive of OA projects, the pledge model did not offer anything tangible in exchange for pledges, making it difficult for institutions such as libraries to justify donations to these efforts. With Buy To Unglue, Unglue.it is providing a free distribution platform that will enable libraries that have purchased a Buy To Unglue ebook to loan that title to patrons under a one-ebook, one-user model, until the fundraising goal is reached and the ebook’s Creative Commons license activates.

“Libraries aren’t set up to do pledging, for a variety of reasons,” Hellman said. “When we act as a conventional distribution channel to librar[ies], it’s a lot easier for them to invoke their existing purchasing processes to participate, rather than having them try to participate in a pledge campaign. From both standpoints, we figured it would make sense to develop the capability to sell ebooks through our platform, and that’s what we’ve done.”

The first title available for download via the Buy To Unglue model is *Lagos_2060*, an sf anthology edited by Ayodele Arigbabu envisioning possible futures for Africa’s second-fastest growing city. It costs \$6 for an individual license, and \$10 for a one-user, one-ebook library license. At press time, it had \$29,802 more to go to become open access.

Book Challenges Slip Past Watchers at ALA

At the American Library Association (ALA) Midwinter Meeting in Philadelphia, the organization's Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) stated that the number of challenges to books in school and public li-

braries is on the rise. Some 464 challenges were reported to OIF officials in 2012, a steep increase over the 328 recorded in 2011 and 2010's total of 346 reported challenges.

Even more disheartening was the reminder that the challenges reported to OIF capture just a small portion of the number of actual challenges

made nationwide each year. A number of studies suggest that portion is even smaller than the OIF once thought.

ALA had previously estimated the challenges reported to them as capturing 20–25 percent of actual challenges. But according to studies presented by Barbara Jones, executive director of the OIF, and deputy director Deborah Caldwell-Stone, even that may be an overestimate. A 2011 study by the Oregon State Library showed that of the state's 28 recorded challenges, only five, or 18 percent, had been reported to the OIF. In Texas, the situation was even more grim—the Texas branch of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), which does an annual report on challenged and banned books in the state, found that 67 formal challenges had been filed in the Lone Star State in 2012, and only two had been reported to the OIF—a dismal reporting rate of just three percent.

A student exercise by the University of Missouri's Missouri School of Journalism in filing Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests with local governments showed that the underreporting wasn't just a one-year issue—between 2008 and 2012, just six of Missouri's 51 book challenges had made the OIF's radar, a reporting rate of 12 percent.

Another organization tracking book challenges, the National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC), reports that some of that growing wave of challenges may be coming from an unexpected source. "One trend that may account in part for the increase is many more challenges in AP classes," NCAC executive director Joan Bertin told *Hotline*. Perhaps because these classes are intended to grapple with college-level material, they're becoming a hotbed for challenged titles such as Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*.

Working with academic and non-profit institutions like the University of Missouri and ACLU could be the

Branching Out



The 1,250 square foot **Hutto Public Library**, TX, started its life in 2008 in the old fire station building purchased by the Board of Trustees in 2005. With a collection of 21,000 items, the library is now looking for upgrades to the tune of \$77,379, supported through a donation from the Friends group and the city's budget. With designs from Antenora Architects and 720 Design (pictured), the renovation is expected to begin this summer, per the *Hutto News*, now that an agreement has been reached with Walbridge Construction. The initial plans cover new furniture, materials, and upgrades to the structure per the library's 2012 master plan. The living quarters of the original firehouse were transformed for the library configuration. Subsequent projects would involve expanding usable space through remodeling the bay areas as well. Upgrades that would meet users' wish lists include a multipurpose meeting room, an outdoor plaza, an improved exterior presence, comfortable lounge seating, a story room, a children's reading area, and more computer workstations.

The 33,000 square foot **Pekin Public Library**, IL, is also looking forward to renovations, funded through a \$6 million bond that is still subject to city council approval. Final plans and costs are being readied for a March 24 city council meeting, according to the *Pekin Times*. The design was among five submitted by Dewberry, and it includes relocation of the entrance, a larger south parking lot, installation of a ramp, and the inclusion of a new elevator and stairs to the second floor. It also features additions to the children's space and to adult services that would expand the size of the building to 38,695 square feet.

An interior flood on January 4 caused by broken sprinklers led to a renovation of the children's section of the **C.H. Booth Library**, Newtown, CT. New ceiling tiles, carpeting, and paint are on tap, along with the removal of baseboards. Hundreds of crates of materials have been packed and stored in the process. The building is covered under the municipal insurance plan, but the library is responsible for the \$25,000 deductible, according to the *Newtown Bee*.

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future of challenge tracking for the OIF. The office simply doesn't have enough staff to be proactive in tracking challenges themselves, Jones told *Hotline*. "We see the trend rising, but we know we're not fully capturing it," said Jones. "We're trying to partner with academic institutions to do FOIA requests in their states to see how the situation really looks."

Jones also pointed out that the office is seeing some evidence of another type of censorship that is even harder to track: Internet filtering. While such filtering is difficult to quantify, anecdotal evidence suggests to Jones and her colleagues that filtering is on the rise in both public and school libraries. "There's stuff missing that [users] may never know they're missing," said Jones. "That puts them at a real disadvantage."

Recorded Books Sold to Private Equity Firm

Recorded Books, one of the industry leaders in the audiobook market and a major supplier of audiobooks, ebooks, and other electronic content to libraries, has been purchased by the private investment firm Wasserstein & Co., LP. The company was sold by Hights Cross Communications, which has owned it since 1999. Terms of the sale were not disclosed.

Recorded Books was founded in 1979 and has grown into one of the largest providers of audiobooks on the planet, boasting a catalog of more than 8,000 audiobook titles and serving both retail and library customers. In addition to its place in the U.S. market, the company also owns W.F. Howes Ltd., one of the leading audiobook publishers in the UK.

In recent years, Recorded Books expanded the suite of services it provides to its library customers. In 2011, the company partnered with digital magazine distributor Zinio to launch Zinio for Libraries, which offers patrons

Jon E. Cawthorne was appointed Dean of Libraries at West Virginia University, Morgantown, effective March 17. He is currently Associate Dean for Public Services and Assessment at Florida State University Libraries, Tallahassee.

Emily Ferren left her position as Director of the Charles County Public Library, MD. She had served in the role for 17 years.

Patrick S. Golden retired as Program Services Director of the Williamsburg Regional Library, VA. He had been with the library for more than 18 years.

Cassandra Hunsucker was named Head Librarian at the New Bern-Craven County Public Library, NC. She previously held the

same position at the Mint Hill Branch of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, NC.

Adam Gardner was named Commercial Director for Swets for the UK, Ireland, the Middle East, and Africa. He was previously Publishing Sales Director at CABI.

Ken LaZebnik left his position as Director for Library Advancement and Public Affairs at Pepperdine University's Payson Library, Malibu, CA. He has been with the university for three years.

Marie Lydon retired as a Librarian at the Morrill Memorial Library, Norwood, MA. She had been with the library for 45 years.

Dorene C. Miller resigned as Director of Palmer Public Library, MA, having been in the position since November 2012.

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cover-to-cover access to thousands of magazines, and was named Best New Database by *Library Journal* in 2012. Last year, the company formed a similar partnership with Indieflix, providing a library-ready platform for the independent feature, short film, and documentary streaming service.

In addition to streaming video and audio, Recorded Books has worked in recent years to step up as a distributor of ebooks to libraries via its One-Clickdigital platform. Earlier this year, the company brought titles from Random House into its distribution fold, raising the number of ebook titles it offers to more than 81,000. Despite these expansions, Matt Walker, former VP of Recorded Books, told *Hotline* last year, "our core business remains audiobooks." Recorded Books' importance to the library market is only increased because audiobook giant Audible, owned by Amazon.com, will not sell its wares to libraries. Brilliance Audio, which used to supply audiobooks to libraries via OverDrive and is also owned by Amazon, stopped selling

audiobooks to libraries in early 2012.

According to Troy Juliar, senior vice president of content for Recorded Books, the company's collegial relationship with libraries was something that made it an attractive purchase for the new owner and something the company intends to continue. "Wasserstein invested in us because of our great record with libraries," Juliar told *Hotline*.

Under the ownership of Wasserstein & Co., Recorded Books will join the firm's existing stable of publishing industry holdings, including Penton Media, ALM Media, and *New York Magazine*.

"With a proven management team... high-quality exclusive content, and proprietary technology, Recorded Books is well positioned to capitalize on the shift from physical audiobook formats to digital content," Wasserstein & Co. co-managing partner Anup Bagaria said in a statement. "We look forward to working closely with the Recorded Books team as it continues to build on its long-standing customer relationships and track record of strong growth."



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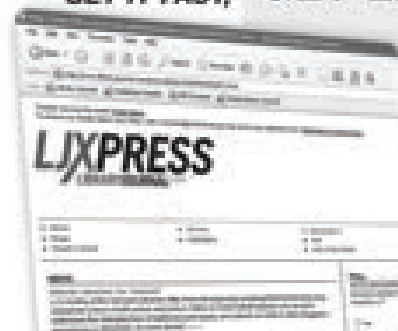
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