

## Atlanta-Fulton Library Faces Budget, Hours Cuts

As the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System (AFPLS) (Central library pictured) deals with fallout from a \$6 million budget cut for 2014—most notably a 36 percent reduction in public service hours and scores of layoffs—it continues to gear up for the opening of new branches.

On January 27, the Fulton County Board of Commissioners, by a 5–2 vote, adopted a \$625.4 million general operating budget that included the county’s first property tax hike in 23 years. However, the hike wasn’t sufficient to keep library funding stable: the AFPLS budget for 2014 was set at \$25,028,143, which Interim Library Director Anne Haimés told *Hotline* was down from about \$31 million the previous year (a 19 percent reduction). “It is a significant cut,” Haimés said.

Starting on February 12, only two of the system’s 33 branches—the Central Avenue Library and Auburn Avenue Research Library—will remain open seven days a week. Every other branch will now be closed Fridays, and 20 of those 31 buildings will be shut at least two days per week. Those 33 branches in metro Atlanta and the surrounding community serve a pop-

ulation of about one million with a collection of more than 2.5 million items and recorded more than four million patron visits last year. In all, the system’s 1,562 public service hours will be trimmed to 996.

Meanwhile, AFPLS will have three new branches up and running by the end of 2014—part of its \$275 million building program, which was funded by a 2008 referendum, though ground was not broken on the first new library until 2013.

The ribbon cutting on Atlanta’s Wolf Creek Branch is planned for the end of summer or early fall, Haimés said. The East Roswell and Palmetto branches are also scheduled to open their doors in 2014, followed by two more libraries early in 2015. When completed, the building project will not add to the overall number of branches; the new sites will replace aging and inadequate facilities currently in use.

Adequate funding for the building projects has been a deep concern in the local library community. Haimés said about \$1 million of the 2014 AFPLS budget has been earmarked specifically for staff and operation of

the facilities opening this year.

Staffing levels will also be hit hard by the cuts. AFPLS must downsize by 70 part-time staff members and 50



full-time positions this year, Haimés told *Hotline*, although some existing vacancies will now go unfilled, though some new staff must be hired for the three new branches, Haimés said.

In a statement posted on his website, Fulton County chairman John Eaves said, “During this budget process economic sacrifices had to be balanced with the need to provide services to our residents. The funding is in place to solve many of our current needs.”

Added Marsha Holcomb, who heads the Sandy Springs Library Friends organization, “It was not unexpected.... [T]he hours cut were fairly severe. I

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## **Library of the Year**

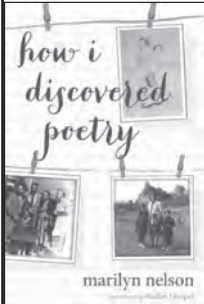
All libraries are good, some are great. *LJ* is looking for role-model libraries to vie for the honor of being the 2014 *Library Journal*/Gale Cengage Library of the Year. To learn more and submit your nominations, visit [ow.ly/swYmZ](http://ow.ly/swYmZ).

Postmark deadline: April 5

## Interview

### Marilyn Nelson

Marilyn Nelson, the acclaimed author of many poetry titles and winner of prestigious awards, wanted to write a book on the 1950s. She sent some poems to her editor and to a long-time mentor, whose advice launched Nelson on a journey to reexamine the decade through the lens of her childhood. The



50 poems in *How I Discovered Poetry* (Dial, 2014) trace Nelson's life from age four to 14, from 1950 to 1959.

**In your author's note, you write that "each of the poems is built around a 'hole' in the "Speaker's" understanding."**

My friend Inge Pedersen published a memoir of her girlhood in the 1930s, when Denmark was occupied by the Nazis. She told me that each of [her] stories [evidences] a gap in a child's understanding of the world around her. I address the same sort of "gaps" in these poems.

**Tell us about the experience that you capture in *How I Discovered Poetry*.**

I wrote that poem years ago. When I decided to start working on this book, it seemed like that was a central experience. It should be the heart of this book. What the poem is trying to express is that first awareness of the power of the word. The power of the word is creative, but it also can be really destructive.

**At the end of the book, when young Marilyn feels a calling as a poet, did that revelation come to you at about that age, 13?**

Oh, yes. That prediction that my teacher Mrs. Gray made on the last day of class, when she said I would be a poet when I grew up, that really did happen. The earliest poems I wrote, which my mother kept, must have been from about sixth grade.

understand Fulton County had some hard decisions to make.... It's just a sad situation. There will be some people we're leaving behind."

### Academic Torrents Helps Store Research Data

By putting distribution and storage of papers and data sets into the hands of their authors, Academic Torrents brings even more DIY ethos to the world of academic publishing and may help to solve a few problems in the field in the bargain. While libraries and colleges disintermediate scholarly publishing by hosting their own institutional repositories and backing up to off-site services like LOCKSS and Portico, Academic Torrents goes a step further, offering researchers the opportunity to distribute the hosting of their papers and data sets to authors and readers, providing easy access to scholarly works and simultaneously backing them up on computers worldwide.

The brainchild of Joseph Paul Cohen and Henry Lo, graduate students in the computer science department at the University of Massachusetts-Boston (UMB), Academic Torrents puts "torrenting" technology—long employed by users of sites like the Pirate Bay to download music and movies—to work making scholarly content more easily available while also giving authors, libraries, and other common hosts a new way to store their work that doesn't take up server space.

Torrents differ from direct downloads in that they use "seeds" of a file drawn from computers around the Internet, each of which is hosting an identical copy of the file in question. Rather than directly downloading a file from one host computer, torrent services let interested parties download bits from each copy, or "mirror," of the file before reassembling it on the downloading computer courtesy of torrent tracking programs like

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**VP, Group Publisher** Ian Singer  
**Editorial Director** Rebecca T. Miller  
**Editor** Ian Chant

#### Contributing Editors

Lauren Barack, Sarah Bayliss,  
Kate DiGirolomo, Bette-Lee Fox,  
Michelle Lee, Meredith Schwartz,  
Carolyn Sun, Bob Warburton

**Art Production** Josephine Marc-Anthony  
**Director of Art & Production** Mark Tuchman

#### TO CONTACT HOTLINE:

##### Editorial

Phone: (646) 380-0700  
Fax: (646) 380-0756/0757  
E-mail: LJHotline@mediasourceinc.com  
160 Varick Street, 11th floor  
New York, NY 10013

##### Advertising

Roy Futterman or your LJ rep  
Phone: (646) 380-0718  
rfutterman@mediasourceinc.com

##### Classified

Howard Katz, Classified Manager  
Phone: (646) 380-0730

##### Production

JoAnn Powell, Production Manager  
Phone: (646) 380-0741

##### Subscriptions

Phone: 800-588-1030  
www.libraryhotline.com/sub

##### Outside U.S.

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uTorrent. “People become mirrors for the file while they’re downloading it,” Cohen told *Hotline*. “The more people [who] are downloading something, the faster the...speed will be.”

To host material on Academic Torrents, study authors each host a copy of their paper or data on a desktop. People interested in reading the paper or studying the data set could then download the torrent, pulling data from each copy. For large data sets, which can be a problem for information hosting services, torrents offer an opportunity for distributing the load, as a team of people could each host a portion of the data as a seed, allowing users to download parts from each host and then assemble them into a whole.

That kind of distributed hosting makes Academic Torrents a good place for libraries to participate by hosting data, without having to worry that they’re the sole source. “Libraries

can...host papers from their own campus without becoming the only source of the data,” said a statement on the Academic Torrents website. “So even if a library’s system is broken, other universities can participate in getting that data into the hands of researchers.”

The site is careful to note that uploaders must have the legal right to share and distribute files they make available over the service. A warning to that effect is emblazoned on the upload page, and users must note under what use license—General Public License, Creative Commons, etc.—the files are uploaded.

To date, Academic Torrents is hosting 1.68 terrabytes (TB) of material from researchers and organizations around the globe, ranging from the official offline edition of Wikipedia to 2011 weather data collected by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

## If Net Neutrality Goes, What Impact on Service to Kids?

Like most people, I’d never hear of the term [*net neutrality*] before a few weeks ago,” American Association of School Libraries president Gail Dickinson told *Hotline*. “It’s a protection we enjoyed.”

Without net neutrality, also known as the open Internet, kids’ access to online resources could be negatively impacted, with commercial sites and services eclipsing other content online, Dickinson and others said.

Uninitiated librarians gained a better understanding of net neutrality [last month, after a court ruled that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) did not have the authority to impose net neutrality rules on Internet service providers (ISPs) such as Verizon, opening the door to an Internet where companies could pay ISPs for faster broadband delivery of their content, as reported in *Library Journal* and elsewhere.

Defenders of net neutrality, including librarians, fear that this decision will privilege material from organizations that can afford to pay ISPs and also thwart innovation.

“We don’t want Disney over library services,” said Lynne Bradley, director of the American Library Association’s (ALA) Office of Government Relations. “We don’t want entertainment to be coming up first.”

Without the principles of net neutrality in place, “Kids will get different access depending on what school district they’re in,” said Frances Jacobsen Harris, librarian at University Laboratory High School in Urbana, IL, and the author of *I Found It on the Internet: Coming of Age Online* (ALA Editions, 2011). “It will hurt kids in the have-not districts.”

Rather than looking ahead to what she thinks would only be “Band-Aid” solutions, Jacobsen Harris supports

### News in Brief

The **Library of Congress** received a \$250,000 gift from **Jones International University**, Centennial, CO, for its **World Digital Library**. The money will fund the expansion of its scientific holdings.

**Forsyth County Public Library**, NC, joined **NC Cardinal**, a statewide consortium of public libraries. This gives Forsyth access to more than 4.2 million items from 17 other libraries.

Scientific journal publisher **ACS Publications** received two 2014 PROSE awards: **ACS Synthetic Biology** won Best New Journal in Science, Technology & Medicine, and **ACS ChemWorx** won Best New App or e-Product.

The **American Library Association** and the **University of Maryland’s Information Policy & Access Center**, College Park, launched the redesigned **Lib2Gov**, an online e-government resource for librarians. Month-

ly webinars will be held in connection with the site.

**RCN Publishing** joined **Portico’s E-Journal Preservation Service**. Users of the service now have access to more than 18,000 articles from RCN’s ten journals.

The **University of Pennsylvania Libraries**, Philadelphia, joined the **Japan-US Global ILL Framework Project**, facilitated by the **North American Coordinating Council on Japanese Library Resources**. The program creates an interlibrary loan system between North American and Japanese academic libraries.

The **San Antonio Public Library** launched its new **Valero Roaming Online Outreach Mobile Van** for children and teen outreach. The van will transport library programming and materials to the Eastside Promise neighborhood.

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those who insist that the FCC must act to redefine the Internet as a common carrier or public utility in order to preserve equal content delivery. The *common carrier* term in U.S. communications law says that public networks like the telephone must be open to everyone at the same cost and without discrimination.

“The FCC continues to treat ISPs as information providers rather than as telecommunications providers, which are subject to common carrier rules,” Jacobsen Harris told *Hotline*. “The only way the FCC is going to get around this is to go back and say the Internet is a public utility.”

Dickinson said that “another parallel is the filtering law,” whereby the end result is unequal content delivery to students. “What we’re really doing here is taking a backhoe and a bulldozer to the digital divide,” she told *Hotline*. “We’re making it bigger and wider and deeper.”

The Open Internet Preservation Act, introduced on February 3 by U.S. Representatives Henry Waxman and Anna Eshoo (both D-CA), would “protect consumers and innovation online,” according to a press release on Representative Waxman’s site.

The bill was announced the same day that the FCC pledged an additional \$2 billion for high-speed Internet access for schools and libraries over the next two years and President Obama announced a \$750 million private sector commitment to support tech in schools.

## Libraries Expand Support for World Book Night

Library participation in World Book Night US is increasing, with libraries hosting launch events around the country for the fourth iteration of the annual April 23 program, which encourages public reading by distributing about a half million free books

## Library Maker Space Builds New Hand for Kansas Boy

Nine-year-old Matthew is the owner of a brightly colored prosthetic Robohand that was created several months ago in the Maker space of the Johnson County Library in Overland Park, KS. Matthew, who is adopted, was born with partial fingers on his right hand owing to a birth condition called limb difference.

He’d always been a self-confident kid, according to his mother, Jennifer. But after the two moved to Miami County, KS, two years ago, Matthew endured the spotlight of being the new kid as well as questions from classmates about his hand. “Social stigma was starting to creep in on him,” Jennifer told *Hotline*.

The genesis of Matthew’s prosthetic hand came from one of Matthew’s teachers, who had sent Jennifer a link to Robohand, a cost-effective model of a prosthetic hand cocreated in November 2012 by South African Richard Van As, who’d lost his own fingers in a workshop accident, and theatrical artist Ivan Owen. When Matthew first saw photos of the Robohand, “He was immediately excited,” said his mom. “I think it was the fact it was colored and looked like something that could be made from LEGOs.”

The Johnson County’s Central Resource Library (CRL) boasts a 3-D MakerBot Replicator in its Maker space, which opened last March. When Matthew’s mom went to work studying the prosthetic hand design, she soon realized it was beyond her skills. She reached out to 16-year-old Mason Wilde, a family friend who had helped her eldest son with computer programs in the past and had, last year, built a computer from scratch.

“I’ve always been fascinated by machines and engineering feats,” Wilde said, “so when I was given the opportunity to work with a 3-D printer and build a hand, all while helping a friend, I jumped on it.”

Meredith Nelson, a reference librarian at CRL, has been teaching introductory MakerBot classes since the space opened. Nelson, a self-proclaimed “Maker-Librarian,” had no prior experience with 3-D printing before the MakerBot’s arrival and mastered the machine through trial and error. “I took [the printer] apart about 75,961 times,” she told *Hotline*. “The first time it jams, you freak out and don’t know how or where to open everything. After that, you just roll your eyes and do it.”

Nelson said the Maker space and its advanced equipment have attracted new patrons to the library who previously thought they had little use for it. “Many people who only saw the library as a place for books or quiet study have realized we can be more,” Nelson said.

At present, Matthew is able to pick up a pencil and is working on writing legibly. He refers to his hand as “the future.”

“The main thing that Matthew can do with the hand is be a center of attention for a cool thing,” said his mom, “not a what-happened-to-your hand thing.”



Meredith Nelson (right), reference librarian at Johnson County Central Resource Library, teaches classes on the Maker space tools including how to use the MakerBot printer.

and this year honors Williams Shakespeare's 450th birthday.

The 30–35 titles are chosen by an independent panel of librarians and booksellers. The authors waive their royalties, and publishers pay the costs of producing the specially printed editions. The books that volunteers pass out are sent to libraries and bookstores because they act as community centers and have cheaper shipping rates, said Carl Lennertz, executive director for World Book Night US. Here's a look at what some libraries have in store this year.

The New York Public Library's (NYPL) main building on Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street will host a public talk April 22 with several authors whose books have been selected for distribution, including Victoria Bond, Malcolm Gladwell, Garrison Keillor, Walter Dean Myers, Esmeralda Santiago, T.R. Simon, and Tobias Wolff. The talk will take place at 6 p.m. in the 250-seat Edna Barnes Salomon Room; it will also be live-streamed on the Internet.

NYPL will also hold World Book Night adult and youth poetry workshops at 7 p.m. on April 23 in 20 local branches in the Bronx, Manhat-

tan, and Staten Island. Local poets will guide audience members in creating their own poems, and the works written that night will be read aloud, NYPL adult programming specialist Kelly Yim told *Hotline*.

Other World Book Night author talks are slated at the Sulzer Regional Library in Chicago, with writer Scott Turow, and at the Gum Spring Library in Stone Ridge, VA, with writer Alethea Kontis.

Linda Holtlander, programming manager for the Loudoun County Public Library, Leesburg, VA, said this will be the library's second year celebrating World Book Night. This year, in addition to hosting the Gum Spring Library author talk with Kontis, volunteers from the Ashburn Library plan to distribute books.

The Chicago Public Library (CPL), which is participating for the first time, called World Book Night "an innovative and exciting new initiative in [the] celebration of literacy," the library's director of marketing and communications Ruth Lednicer said. The library is thrilled to have author Turow—"a friend of CPL for many years"—return.

The Hayward Public Library (HPL), CA, has an interesting spin on World Book Night. HPL, which has celebrated the event every year since its inception, has expanded the program to encourage library patrons to read the World Book Night book and volunteer to do a community service project, said librarian Sally Thomas. The program is called Book-to-Action, a collaboration between the California State Library and the California Center for the Book.

This year, Thomas said the library requested copies of Carl Hiaasen's environmental-themed novel *Hoot* and Cheryl Strayed's memoir *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail* as its 2014 World Book Night selections.

"Not only will we give the book out and spread the love of reading, we're going to encourage others to volunteer at the Hayward Regional Shoreline—part of the regional parks system—to participate in its Weed Warrior program to get volunteers to weed out invasive nonnative plants [harmful to the shoreline] and, in the process, learn about and appreciate one of our natural treasures in the park system," Thomas said.

In addition to the special print editions that World Book Night volunteers hand out, this year Ingram and Livrada are working with World Book Night to create a proprietary ebook that will contain six short essays and two short stories by librarians, booksellers, and authors who are also World Book Night volunteers, said Lennertz.

## Library Reading Improves Student Performance

The results of a pilot study of Missouri's Mid-Continent Public Library (MCPL), Independence, suggest that summer reading programs actually raise the reading levels of students by their return to school in the fall—particularly among at-risk kids.

## People

**Peter Bromberg** was named Associate Director for Public Services at Salt Lake County Library. He was previously Associate Director, Princeton Public Library, NJ.

**Michael Devine** announced his retirement as Director of the Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, MO, effective in May. He has been with the library since 2001.

**Rishara Finsel** was appointed Director of Polk County Public Library, NC. She was previously Senior Librarian for Public Services at the Flathead County Library System, MO.

**Patrick Golden** has retired as Program Services Director, Williamsburg Regional Li-

brary, VA. He had been in the position for 18 years.

**William Minter** is now Senior Book Conservator, Pennsylvania State University Libraries, University Park. He previously owned his own bookbinding and conservation business.

**Bob Pasicznyuk** was appointed Director of Douglas County Libraries, CO. He previously held the same position at Cedar Rapids Public Library, IA.

**Stephanie T. Young** was named Acting Director, Ogdensburg Public Library, NJ, following the resignation of **Wayne L. Miller**. She is currently a Reference and Adult Librarian.

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“Intuitively, most people understand that if children read in the summer, they don’t slide back in the fall,” Steven V. Potter, director and CEO of MCPL, told *Hotline*. “What we discovered is that not only does summer reading guard against summer slide, it increases achievement.”

MCPL partnered with the Kansas City Area Education Research Consortium (KC-AERC) to gather assessment data from students in three school districts in spring 2012 and again that following fall. While the summer reading program is open to children of all ages, the partners focused on K–12 students as data from their school assessments was crucial for the study. KC-AERC and MCPL shared the results of the three pilot with the school districts in fall 2013.

While students experienced a bump-up in reading levels, at-risk students at Title I schools had a “higher bump,” said Potter. In addition, young boys who were in an at-risk category showed more improvement on their assessments than young girls who were not at risk, he said. Potter said that MCPL had not placed any extra emphasis on that target group, but now it will.

A decline in reading over the summer is all too common. Summer vacation can have an effect on standardized reading and math assessments, with students losing about one month of learning, according to a 1996 study conducted by social psychologist Harris Cooper.

The effort to assess MCPL’s four summer reading programs stemmed from Potter’s curiosity to see whether the program or incentives of free books made the difference.

There are five different reading programs offered at each of MCPL’s 31 branches, which service 776,000 people in the area. From preschoolers and teens to readers with learning disabilities, participants have increased at MCPL’s summer reading program, which



Closed in 2011 after significant damage from a tomado, the **Pratt City Branch** (pictured) of the Birmingham Public Library, AL, reopened on February 10. Originally founded in 1993, the library underwent a \$2.5 million reconstruction effort that includes the installation of a poured-concrete storm shelter. The facility also features a new terrazzo tile floor, new study rooms, a business center, and a brightly decorated youth area. Built on top of a former mine, the structure pays tribute to that legacy with elements such as windows at the entrance working in concert with the roof line to replicate a miner’s lamp. The project was helmed by local firm Herrington Architects. Many local organizations supported the rebuild, while Congresswoman Terri Sewell helped to secure a \$10 million federal grant for street improvements in the library’s vicinity.

More from Birmingham: The dual structures that comprise the central downtown branch of the **Birmingham Public Library** are set

for a renovation, according to *Birmingham Business Journal*. The East Building and the Linn Henley Research Library are in line to become “a state-of-the-art center for all Birminghamians,” per the library’s website. Residents were being asked to submit suggestions for the project.

Accolades from Duke Energy were showered on the **Public Library of Cincinnati & Hamilton County** with the bestowal of the 2013 Power Partner award for energy-efficient upgrades to the library’s Main facility in downtown Cincinnati. The work is taking place incrementally over time but is expected to save the library \$430,000 annually and reduce energy usage by 37 percent. The library has received more than \$300,000 in Smart \$aver incentives from Duke Energy for the first two phases of the rehab. As part of ongoing construction, the Clifton, St. Bernard, and Reading branches will be similarly upgraded through the Smart \$aver program.

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has experienced an uptick in sign-ups, growing by ten percent annually.

Potter and KC-AERC’s executive director Leigh Anne Taylor Knight hope that the study will further increase library program participation. And it is hoped school districts and other library systems will be inspired to initiate their own programs or put existing ones to their best use in pro-

moting student literacy and learning.

“[Summer reading programs] are doing a lot of great things,” said Knight. “But there hasn’t necessarily been in-depth conversations around analytics, data with the school districts about what kind of impact this is making, and what...the districts need to make happen in order to increase student achievement when they return the next year.”

Photo by Janelisha Young Tucker

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