

Queens Scandal Expands into Construction Query

The FBI and New York City’s Department of Investigation (DOI) have launched a joint investigation into Queens Library (QL) president and CEO Thomas Galante. The *New York Daily News* reported that on February 28, federal investigators arrived at the Central Library in Jamaica, NY. There they served subpoenas to Galante and Frank Marino, a construction consultant whose firm has managed 15 projects for QL since 2008—and who works at the Elmont Union Free School District, the same Long Island, NY, school system where Galante holds a part-time consulting position netting him compensation in the six figures annually.

In recent months, questions were raised about the appropriateness of Galante’s contract with the library, which saw him paid nearly \$392,000 in salary in 2013. Critics have also taken aim at renovations to QL’s Central branch, which houses Galante’s office, including an outside deck that the CEO uses on cigarette breaks. While Galante retained the support of the QL Board of Trustees, the controversy resulted in State Senator Tony Avella (D-Bayside) calling on Galante to step down and

prompted New York City comptroller Scott Stringer to call for an audit of QL, the Brooklyn Public Library, and the New York Public Library.

In February, after urging from Queens borough president Melinda Katz, the QL Board of Trustees voted to renegotiate Galante’s contract in order to remove a so-called “golden parachute” clause that would have guaranteed the embattled library director a severance package worth \$2 million. The board has approved a study of executive compensation and made moves toward the formation of an audit committee, as well.

In recent weeks, though, the focus has shifted from Galante’s salary to his relationship with Marino, president of Advanced Construction Group (ACG), a Long Island-based construction company. Marino could not be reached for this story but told the *News* in an interview that while he did know Galante from their work at the school district, his firm was awarded contracts with QL on the basis of the lowest bid.

Citing the ongoing investigation, QL spokesperson Joanne King declined to disclose how many QL construction projects ACG had overseen prior to 2008, citing the ongoing investigation. “Every aspect of our capital budget has been appropriately ex-

Interview

Elizabeth Stewart

Librarians Elizabeth Stewart and Susan Palm, at the Beale Memorial Library in Bakersfield, CA, have taken up a challenge to read the 9,000 books in the public library’s children’s collection by February 1, 2015. We spoke with Stewart, who is reading authors with last names beginning with letters A–L, while her colleague Palm covers the M–Z writers.

Tell us about your experience so far.

I love books, but now I read books I normally wouldn’t have. Plus, so many people are coming in to the library to see how many books we’ve read.

How has this challenge changed your librarianship?

We’re able to give a better readers’ advisory, and on our Facebook page, people suggest books for us to read.

What will you do when you complete this challenge?

I can see us taking on another, like trying to read all our picture books, or bringing kids into the challenge and seeing how many books they can read in a year.

Are patrons borrowing more books?

Yes, and it gives us a chance to tell them about our services and get to know them better.

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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

pending,” read a statement from QL provided to *Hotline*. “The library will comply with lawful requests for information by oversight or enforcement entities. We are confident that con-

News in Brief

The West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine, Lewisburg, has selected **Innovative Interfaces’ Sierra Services Platform**. It previously used Follett Software Company’s Athena system.

Indiana University, Bloomington, received an \$882,000 grant from the **Andrew W. Mellon Foundation**. The money will support its **Kuali Open Library Environment** library management system.

Several public libraries have partnered with OCLC and entertainment rental company **Redbox** to host “**Outside the Box**” activities. The program produces free public events for the community, including arts festivals, concerts, and outdoor movies.

Cooperating Libraries in Consortium, St. Paul, subscribed to **Intota**, ProQuest’s cloud-based library services platform. It is the first academic library consortium to do so.

OCLC and **FamilySearch International** have partnered to share data between **WorldCat** and the **FamilySearch Catalog**. More than one million genealogical records are now discoverable in WorldCat.

Brentwood Public Library, NY, received the **Outstanding Community Organization Award** from the **American Red Cross** for its work with the organization. The library has provided a space for meetings, events, and training sessions for the Red Cross.

SAGE has acquired **Goodwin Group International, LLC**, publisher of the peer-reviewed journal **MD Conference Express**. SAGE’s current portfolio contains more than 150 medical journals.

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cerns will be addressed satisfactorily and any concerns will be put to rest.”

Neither the DOI nor the FBI responded to requests for comment, but while their investigation is ongoing, QL can expect to see more local oversight on its spending practices. Borough President Katz has asked the office of Mayor Bill DeBlasio to halt so-called “pass through” project funding at QL, which allows five percent of the funds the library receives from the city to be spent as the library determines, without the usual bidding process to which the other 95 percent of construction funds are subject.

Katz also called on the QL board to appoint an independent third-party auditor to take a look at the capital process at QL—one that would report to the board, not to library staff.

John Hyslop, president of the Queens Library Guild union, said the guild welcomes the prospect of more oversight on spending at QL. “In my conversations with some funders and elected officials, they’re becoming wary of funding the library,” Hyslop told *Hotline*. “These oversight measures are going to provide more transparency on how the money is spent, giving funders more confidence that it will be spent wisely.”

Katz told *Hotline* that the oversight requests that have been made of the board are not out of the ordinary. “We need systems in place that send a clear message to constituents and taxpayers that the money going into the library is being spent well,” Katz said.

SC Plans College Cuts over Reading Assignments

Controversy over reading selections at a pair of colleges in South Carolina last year has reared its head again, and this time it may result in budget cuts for the College of Charleston and the University of

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South Carolina (USC) Upstate. The budget committee in the state House of Representatives recommended budget cuts totaling \$70,000 for the two schools, which assigned incoming students and others to read literature about LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) issues last year.

The College of Charleston would take the brunt of the cuts, seeing its budget shorted by \$52,000 in 2014. Though that's just a fraction of the roughly \$19 million in state funding the college receives annually, it's a symbolic number, as it is the same amount of money the college spends to administer the College Reads! program. Last year, the assigned reading was *Fun Home*, a graphic novel memoir by award-winning cartoonist Alison Bechdel that discusses her life with her closeted gay father, as well as the author's own coming out.

Representative Garry Smith (R-Simpsonville), who proposed the cuts in the house budget writing committee, told *Hotline* that publicly funded universities need to be more beholden to taxpayer concerns. "The universities, when they're asking someone to pay for something, should be respectful of concerns over what they're using those funds for," he said.

The controversy has left the program in limbo, said associate provost Lynne Ford, who sits on the committee of administrators, faculty, librarians, and students who choose the book for College Reads! every year.

The choosing of books may look different going forward, though. Ordinarily, Ford and other committee members would already be distributing copies of next year's book, journalist David Finkel's *The Good Soldiers*, to faculty. But someone has pressed pause on that process. "This year, we ordered the books, and it's not clear who [made it], but a stop payment order was put on the check," said Ford. Now, those books

With GeniusCon, Students Connect and Problem Solve

If you could change one thing about your school, what would it be and how would you do it? Teacher librarians Sherry Gick and 2013 *Library Journal* Mover & Shaker Matthew Winner asked students this very question with a student-driven project they're calling GeniusCon.

The virtual event, described on both Winner's blog, *The Busy Librarian*, and Gick's, *The Library Fanatic*, asks students to research and report on solutions to problems that they see around them. Any schools and students may participate. As the organizers describe in joint posts on their respective blogs, they hope GeniusCon will foster "a learning environment where students feel empowered and learning feels authentic."

Gick, a school librarian at Rossville Consolidated Schools, IN, and Winner, a library media specialist at the Ducketts Lane Elementary School in Elkridge, MD, have a previous model for the project. GeniusCon is structured similarly to an earlier collaboration called Earth Pals, in which Gick's and Winner's third-grade classes brainstormed solutions to environmental issues, communicated via Skype, and shared data-filled presentations with each other online.

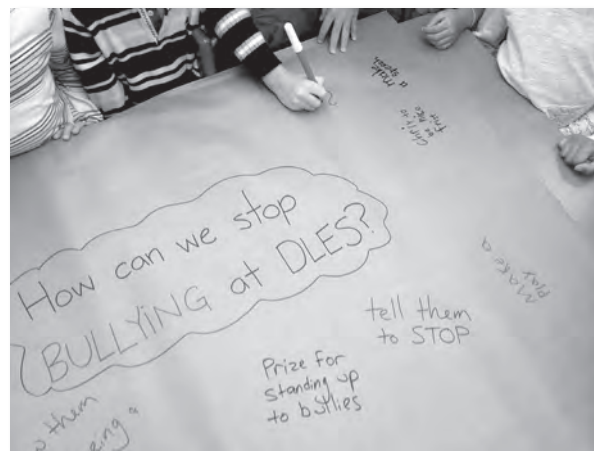
Some of the issues that Gick's current eighth graders are looking to improve include lack of recess, school lunch choices, use of bathroom passes, and extended periods for study hall. Winner's first graders are looking into ways to approach and address bullying. GeniusCon will culminate in a Google Hangouts-hosted virtual conference in May at which attendees from elementary, middle, high school, and college will share their experiences.

At present, students and teachers can share GeniusCon plans and tips on an open Google Doc (tinyurl.com/geniuscon); an affiliated website will go live at the end of March. The two librarians landed on the GeniusCon idea during the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) conference this past November, where they were giving a presentation on Earth Pals.

For that initiative, students in Gick's and Rossville teacher Gretchen Welk's class were interested in researching recycled paper use in the classroom. They determined the most effective way to measure the amount of paper collected and then calculated how much paper could be recycled over time and how to share that information.

Over the eight-week project, the students collected 42 pounds of paper and estimated that in nine months, the elementary school could recycle close to 4,000 pounds of paper. "We taught kids how to create maps and charts in the computer lab, and Skyped and connected with kids in Matthew's classes," Gick said. Each class then shared its work with each other via Skype, projecting presentations they created with and via Today's Meet as a back channel for discussion.

As Winner's first grade GeniusCon participants find ways to tackle bullying in schools, "the solutions they come up with might be a play or songs or signs or behavior incentives," he told *Hotline*. "This project is all about letting the children tell us what's important."



are sitting in a warehouse instead of making their way to readers.

What's more, the way the college selects books for the program saw a new level of approval added this year. Members of the Board of Trustees have been given copies of Finkel's work and invited to offer their thoughts to

university president George Benson, who will have the final approval over this year's assignment.

Ultimately, it may be too early to tell what changes will appease board members—who, committee members noted, are already invited to offer book recommendations—or how

the selection process will be changed by the threat of budget cuts.

A funding cut of nearly \$18,000 was also proposed for USC Upstate, which assigned the book *Out Loud: The Best of Rainbow Radio*, a history of South Carolina's first radio program devoted to LGBT concerns, as reading for freshman. Despite the cuts, there will be no changes in the school's selection process, said department chair Peter Caster. "It's not going to color the way we select books at all," Caster told *Hotline*. "We're not looking for controversy. We're looking for books that invite critical thinking."

Report Shows Librarians Drive Digital Transitions

The Alliance for Excellent Education (All4Ed) published the report "Leading in and Beyond the Library" this past January, showing the importance of school and public libraries in both state and districtwide efforts to digital learning and the effective use of technology in teaching.

"There is a critical role for both school and community librarians in the transition to digital," said Sara Hall, director of the Center for Digital Learning at All4Ed.

Digital materials from ebooks to online databases—and tools from tablets to 3-D printers—have quickly found their way into school libraries, classrooms, and public library branches. Having a core leader who can help stitch these tools into an educational experience can make the difference between merely a fun moment and one that incorporates learning.

"Where we are seeing academic achievement and progress [in students], there has been a very strong librarian," Hall told *Hotline*.

As schools adopt more digital tools and services, library spaces are changing to accommodate the transition. In the Klein Independent School Dis-

Branching Out



The Columbus Metropolitan Library (CML), OH, is on the move—building-wise. In December, CML completed a renovation of its regional **Hilltop Branch**. The 20,065 square foot library, originally opened in 1996, now has an enlarged homework center, additional public computers, a dedicated reading area, fresh furnishings and floor coverings, and a new teen zone. A new children's space was being completed this year. Designed by Schooley Caldwell Associates, the building features an "information marketplace" that encompasses the circ desk, a periodicals room, a job center, and an information center. The interior plan made use of salvaged stained glass panels, corbels, and light fixtures from the nearby demolished state hospital. Also, the CML board has approved unanimously the choice of NBBJ as the architect for the new **Dublin Branch**. The project, expected to begin in 2015, will double the size of the existing facility.

The renovation and addition project at the **Claire T. Carney Library** (see *Hotline*, 2/4/13) at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, North Dartmouth, has netted sev-

eral industry awards for architects designLAB. The firm got a top nod in the education category at the 34th annual Interior Awards, hosted by *Contract Magazine*, according to *South Coast Today*. The company grabbed double honors at the BSA Design awards: a Citation for Transformative Addition to an Existing Building and, with Austin Architects, the highest honor, the Hobson Award, named for Boston architect Henry Hobson Richardson.

An alumna of **Wilson College**, Chambersburg, PA, has displayed a vivid imagination with regard to the school's "reimagining the John Stewart Memorial Library" campaign. Philanthropist Sue Davison Cooley's \$2.3 million donation will net \$4.6 million per the terms of a matching gift in 2013 from alumna Marguerite Lenfest, according to PennLive. The \$12 million project will refurbish the original 1924 structure and replace a 1961 addition with a modern learning commons. The campaign has reached 80 percent of its goal.

A 1905 **Carnegie library** building in Syracuse, NY, could see new life as Onondaga County government offices upon approval of a \$3.4 million transformation. Serving as a library for 83 years, the building was renovated in 1996 for classroom space for the Syracuse City School District. The 53,000 square foot structure has been vacant since 2011. The project could ultimately save the county \$600,000 annually in rent.

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trict (KISD), TX, students are using convertible tablet PCs as part of the school's One-to-One program, according to All4Ed's report. As a result of the their prolific tablet use, students—who primarily frequented school libraries to use the computers—visited less often. So the school libraries adapted, changing the way the space looks as well as the services offered.

"The library has become a learning commons, with flexible seating and shelving and areas for collaborative learning for students," Ann McMullan, the former executive director for educational technology for KISD, said in the report. "Students taking online courses during the day utilize the library as a place to work, with the support of the school librarian."

Public libraries also play a central role in this transition by transitioning new tools and materials to support school environments. For example, students in the Sheridan County

School District, WY, are given access to the public library's personalized web-based reading environment.

Vital to all these examples of schools and libraries maximizing the digital shift is planning. And All4Ed believes that having some forethought is especially crucial today when integrating digital tools. As part of the alliance's Project 24, the organization pushes educators to put a plan in place first, long before they outfit a classroom with new tablets or a school library with laptops.

UND Library Looking at Service Cuts

In recent years, the Chester Fritz Library at the University of North Dakota (UND), Grand Forks, has been in a funding situation that may sound familiar to many academic librarians. While the budget for the library has been flat since 2008, annual largess from the university's discretionary funds has

kept the library from having to eliminate services. This year, though, those supplemental funds are unavailable, so that even without a cut, the library faces a gaping hole in its support.

The library has received \$300,000 in supplemental dollars each of the last three years, library director Wilbur Stolt told *Hotline*, in an attempt to keep up with the rising cost of scholarly resources without actually raising the library's base budget. Yet this year, there was less discretionary money to move around, and the library's supplemental funding is a casualty.

It's a particularly bad time for the library to be denied that \$300,000, as it comes during a year when the library is changing money managers for its endowment. That means that \$200,000 in library funds that come from the endowment annually will also be unavailable.

"We are looking at the resources we license and subscribe to and...

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at cost per use on those,” Stolt told *Hotline*. “We will also be talking to the faculty and students about possible targets for reductions.”

Staff cuts are not on the table for now, however Stolt did confirm that vacant positions at the library are not being filled in the hopes that those salary savings will make a dent in the budget shortfall. Going forward, nothing is off the table for cuts. “We have not lost staff this year, and that’s not a priority to solve this problem,” said Stolt. “But we’ll have to wait and see.”

Speaking to local TV station WDAZ, UND provost Tom Dilorenzo said that the library would not eliminate any resources that students are using regularly, but any lost subscriptions are likely to be noticed by at least some students and faculty, said UND history professor Gordon Iseminger. “As far as the impact is concerned, in the history department, we don’t have labs or flight simulators. We use the library, and we expect our students to use the li-

brary,” Iseminger told *Hotline*. “Any reduction in funding has to have a deleterious effect.”

Discovery Education Summit: Digital Planning

At Discovery Education’s Future@Now: Roadmap to the Digital Transition on February 26, educators voiced urgency in the need to build a well-thought-out strategy before making a digital transformation in schools.

“I think planning is the hugest thing you can do,” said S. Dallas Dance, superintendent of Baltimore County Public Schools, at the event. “You can’t just focus on the device. What do you want to do through the device?”

Dance was just one of several educators who took part in Discovery Education’s second annual education summit, a full-day event held at Discovery Education’s headquarters in Silver Spring, MD, and broadcast online worldwide.

The theme of this year’s event was implementing a digital strategy in school systems. Topics ranged from how to develop teachers as leaders to specifics on how to integrate digital resources into the classroom.

Dance described in detail his district’s path to digital transformation from the school system’s budget reprioritization to its creation of a “brand” around the change. He also explained the effort Baltimore County has made toward integrating technology successfully into the curriculum and the time, as well as the resources, that has been invested into carrying out the integration.

“It’s not taking a textbook and putting it into PDF format,” said Dance.

Panelists during a mid-morning session on “Planning Your Transition” agreed, even admitting that professional development may have been an afterthought when districts first began rolling out digital tools. The panelists admitted that that attitude is not effective today.

“It’s imperative that we rethink professional development,” said Linda Clark, superintendent for the Meridian Joint School District No. 2 in Idaho. “Many of us were guilty of drive-by training, and we know it doesn’t work.”

Another push around professional development is engaging with teaching programs at the university and college level, particularly those programs where school districts hire teaching graduates. The goal is to have students who are studying to be teachers be ready before they receive their degrees. And Dance added that he has worked with Towson University—a school from which he recruits many of his teachers—to prepare them to be digitally fluent before they graduate.

“We also need to train student teachers...before [they come] to us,” Dance said. “We want to make sure we’re not doing triage every year with professional development.”

People

Stephen Abram was appointed to the Board of Directors at nonprofit Librarians Without Borders. He is currently CEO of the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries.

Seangill Peter Bae was named Circulation Services Director at Princeton University Library, NJ. He was previously Head of Delivery Services in the Butler Library at Columbia University, New York.

Christopher J. Korenowsky was appointed Director of Worcester Public Library, MA. He was previously Executive Director of the New Haven Free Public Library, CT.

Rachel Lee was named Director of Waverly Free Library, NY. She had been serving as Interim Director since November of last year.

Debra Stombres was named Director of Morton Grove Public Library, IL. She was previously Coordinator at the Aurora Public Library’s Eola Road Branch, IL.

Wei Zheng was named Chinese Cataloger at Columbia University’s C.V. Starr East Asian Library, New York. She was previously a Senior Librarian in the Cataloging Department at the New York Public Library.

In Memoriam

Paula Morgan, former Music Librarian at Princeton University’s Mendel Music Library, NJ, died on January 22. She was 79 years old.

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