

## Budget Would Return Philly to Six-Day Service

At the height of the recession in 2008, Philadelphia found itself facing plummeting revenues that forced deep cuts to city budgets. In his proposal for a 2015 city budget, though, Mayor Michael Nutter aims to return moneys to the libraries that were cut so deeply in the hopes of returning Saturday service to the city's 39 branches.

The 2009 city budget saw libraries take a nearly 20 percent hit in funding, from \$41 million annually to just \$32 million. While the administration avoided a doomsday scenario that could have seen the closure of branches, all of Philadelphia's libraries were forced to cut back to five-day-a-week service, save for the Central Branch, which retained seven-day-a-week operations.

Since those cuts, the Free Library of Philadelphia (FLP) facilities have been adding service hours as small budget increases made it possible. In 2012, the system's three regional libraries returned to service six days every week, while a small infusion of cash in 2013 helped ten city branches restore service Tuesday through Sunday. The new budget proposal,

which earmarks nearly \$38 million in city funding for FLP, will return all branches overseen by the system to six-day-a-week service, with the exception of the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. (Pennsylvania governor Tom Corbett's proposed budget also contains a bit of good news for libraries throughout the state. If passed, it would increase state library funding from \$61.1 million to \$61.3 million. This marks the first increase since 2007, when libraries absorbed a 20 percent cut.)

The return to six days of service is a welcome one that will let the system better serve its patrons, FLP director and president Siobhan Reardon told *Hotline*. "It's just better for the community to have six-day service," Reardon said. "If you're closed on Saturday, it's hard for people who work to get to the library." Those extra hours, and the increased access they give people to Philadelphia's libraries, will allow FLP to expand its programs in workforce assessment and training and early childhood literacy. The latter is a particularly important service for FLP as school libraries in the city have fared poorly during the recession.

To help cover those expanded hours, Reardon told *Hotline* that FLP will be hiring 43 new full-time library

## Interview

### Brent Hecht

At last week's ER&L Conference in Austin, TX, University of Minnesota computer science professor Brent Hecht discussed his work helping Internet users make the



most of user-generated content (UGC)—material from tweets to maps to restaurant reviews.

**You have an MA in geography and a PhD in computer science.**

#### How do those fields intersect?

I believe I was the first computer science/geography double major at my college. Now, all you have to say is "Google Maps."

#### What role does UGC play in the average Internet experience?

It's all over the place. Wikipedia is the sixth most popular website in the world. There's also Amazon customer reviews, Twitter for news and social connections, Facebook, obviously, YouTube...I could go on forever.

#### Are there topics or areas where Wikipedia is better than others?

We're starting a research project [at the University of Minnesota] looking at articles according to a quadrant defined by a popularity axis and a quality axis.

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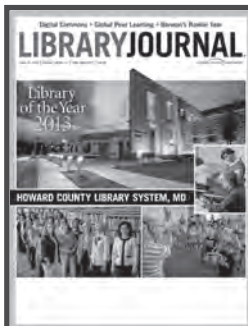
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## Library of the Year

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

assistants, as well as some new part-time help to cover sick leave and vacations. However, the expansion of hours won't mean the hiring of any new full-time librarians.

## News in Brief

**Wareham Public Library**, MA, was decertified for a second time by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. It was first decertified in 2009.

The **New York Public Library** received a \$6 million bequest from the estate of patron the late Lotte Fields.

The **Metropolitan Library System** (MLS), OK, migrated to the **CARL-X integrated library system**. MLS serves more than 600,000 patrons among its 19 branches in Oklahoma County.

**Columbia University's Rare Book & Manuscript Library**, New York, acquired the archive of Puerto Rican author **Manuel Ramos Oter** (1948–90). The collection includes correspondence, unpublished works, manuscripts, photos, and audio and video recordings.

**Ohio University Libraries**, Athens, switched to **Innovative Interfaces' Sierra Library Services Platform**. It was previously using **Innovative's Millennium ILS**.

The **Institute of Museum and Library Services** (IMLS) has awarded grants to three institutions: **Chief Officers of State Library Agencies** for its CE Connector Function for State Library Administrative Agencies for continuing education; the **University of Washington Information School**, Seattle, for a forum on digital youth; and the **American Library Association** for its Center for the Future of Libraries.

**SAGE** and **Paratext** have partnered to make SAGE reference titles accessible through Paratext's *Reference Universe* service.

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Asked about his decision to cut back library hours at the height of the recession in 2008, an uncharacteristically emotional Nutter (conamed *Library Journal* Politician of the Year in 2005 when he was a Philadelphia City Council member) told reporters at a press conference that the cut had been a particularly hard one to make. "It is the absolute worst decision that I've made in the time I've been in public office," Nutter said, pausing to regain his composure. "I have a very deep and personal appreciation for library services. I know what the library did for me, as a kid."

Nutter's budget isn't a done deal yet. To fund the infusion of cash into libraries, as well as the city parks and recreation centers that also see a spending increase under the proposal, Nutter will need to push through the controversial sale of city-owned utility Philadelphia Gas Works, a plan that has met with criticism from protesters as well as members of the city council who could put the kibosh on the deal.

Still, Reardon is sanguine that the budget increase will pass, with money to restore library hours intact. After the strain put on libraries by budget cuts, she feels stakeholders have come to appreciate the worth of libraries in a new light, both in Philadelphia and nationwide. "It doesn't matter where you live, libraries are being highly used right now," she said. "It's a moment for us that I think we need to appreciate and grab hold of."

## Cleveland PL Pushes Out 54 New Literacy Stations

Before time is up on the Dora the Explorer game that four-year-old Isabel loves, she'll jump to something else, excited to play and completely unaware that she's part of a literacy experiment at the Cleveland Public Library (CPL).

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“She has fun with the keys,” said Isabel’s father, Pedro Anaya, who accompanies his only daughter to the library every other week. “On certain games it asks for her name, and she wants to put it in.”

Isabel is just one of the thousands of Cleveland children (ages two to eight) whom CPL is trying to entice with a mixture of games and educational lesson plans through the 54 new early literacy stations the library is installing across its 27 branches, said CPL’s chief technology officer (CTO) Rod Houpe. “It’s the whole gamification idea,” said Houpe. “The children can embrace that.”

Public libraries are increasingly looking for ways such as gamification to support early learners from preschool age through third grade. Through reading clubs and other educational programming, libraries can support student learning outside of school, and CPL is just one library of many actively looking to increase its partnerships with local schools.

“We have been trying to strengthen our relationship with Cleveland Public Schools,” said Cindy Lombardo, CPL deputy director.

According to a March 10 article on Cleveland.com, the Cleveland school district confirmed that “it considers 1,000 students—about 40 percent of the third grade—unlikely to meet standards [to move on to fourth grade] without help and is planning to send them to summer reading school to catch up.”

“There is a huge concern [for] what will happen to these kids and the ones coming up behind them,” said Lombardo.

The early literacy stations are one part of CPL’s push in closing the education gap. The touch screen computers come preloaded with games that span multiple curricula—from reading to graphic arts to STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) to music.

## Librarians Celebrate World Read Aloud Day

From Belarus to Brooklyn, the world’s students, teachers, and librarians marked the fourth annual World Read Aloud Day (WRAD) on Wednesday, March 5, with a wide variety of special events. The day was created by Pam Allyn and Lit World, a nonprofit organization she founded that encourages a global celebration of reading aloud.

Allyn kicked off the international party in a blustery New York City atop a double-decker GrayLine bus that visited an elementary and a middle school in Harlem. She was joined on the road by Kwame Alexander, author of the *Acoustic Rooster* (Sleeping Bear, 2011); the Story Pirates, an educational theater group; and Clifford, the Big Red Dog. Later in the day, author Tim Federle appeared to talk about his debut book, *Better Nate Than Ever* (S. & S., 2013), about a teen trying to break into the world of New York theater.

Technology played an important role for WRAD for Matthew C. Winner, media specialist at Longfellow Elementary School in Columbia, MD, and a 2013 *Library Journal* Mover & Shaker. He along with others established connections for WRAD via a Google Document that hosted more than 70 educators coordinating their WRAD schedules via Skype.

John Schumacher, librarian at Brook Forest Elementary School, Oak Brook, IL, and a 2011 *LJ* Mover & Shaker, hosted Skype sessions with several authors including Newbery Award winner Katherine Applegate. Both Schumacher and Ernie Cox, media specialist at the Prairie Creek Intermediate School in Cedar Rapids, IA, and a 2010 *LJ* Mover & Shaker, hosted Joanne Levy, author of *Small Medium at Large* (Bloomsbury, 2012).

“Reading aloud brings character voices to life,” Cox told *Hotline*, noting that having an author visit, even virtually, brings character voices out in a way no one else can.

In Georgia, Kathy Schmidt, media specialist at Rock Springs Elementary in Lawrenceville, GA, connected her students with peers in Falmouth, ME; Truro, MA; and Van Meter, IA. They read aloud to one another from their favorite books. In a similar student-to-student reading, Winner linked his classes with kids in 11 different states using ebooks available on WeGiveBooks.org, a project funded by Penguin Young Readers in which schools in need receive books from the publisher based on the number of times the ebooks are accessed, using WRAD activities to provide others with reading materials.

Meanwhile, in Brooklyn, Melanie Hope Greenburg was Skyping with a school in Belarus, talking about that universal mythical creature, the mermaid. Greenburg’s 2008 book, *Mermaids on Parade* (Putnam), tells about the annual mermaid parade held at New York’s Coney Island. She made the connection to Belarus through Facebook and said she was happy to do so because some of her ancestors came from the region.

Authors also allied with readers face-to-face. Roxie Munro, who was recently nominated for the first Cook Prize for her book *Busy Builders* (Marshall Cavendish, 2012), visited the children at New York’s Bellevue Hospital to read aloud to patients.

The national WRAD festivities ended with a stop at the Books of Wonder bookstore to hear the guest readers, children’s authors Brett Helquist, Greg Foley, and John Kloefer.



Although Isabel prefers games with Dora the Explorer, students can choose from among 60 gaming options.

Houpe said the interface is very simple to understand, so librarians

aren't handed the burden of walking students through the how-to process. Having the literacy consoles preloaded with age-appropriate content also saves the library from having to create

its own material or vet each program.

Instead, the programs are developed by the educational content company AWE, which began designing software for early learners originally when one of its clients, the Free Library of Philadelphia, expressed its frustration with "managing its education software for its youngest clients," according to AWE's website.

Getting feedback on how students perform on literacy programs is essential to documenting any improvement—or lack thereof. That's one reason why CPL invested more than \$137,000 in the stations; it now has the ability to record and report data on each user. While that feature is currently turned off, CPL hopes that this data will be available to both the library and schools by this fall.

To Isabel's father, spending time on the stations is a way to help his daughter get an early start using digital tools, a skill he believes will be core to her success as she grows.

"Everything is about computers," he said. "In the future, everyone will have a tablet instead of writing out their homework."

Houpe sees this technology as one way to close the achievement gap.

"The technology is not going to be the end all," said Houpe. "But, if we can start building metrics, we can start to see an outcome and extend students' educational day without their thinking they're extending their day."

## EdTech Group Releases E-Rate Guidelines

In the same week that Texas hosted the South by Southwest (SXSW) education conference, Washington, DC-based advocacy group the Consortium for School Networking (CoSN) released new guidelines for schools and libraries to help education technology (edtech) decision

## Branching Out



The **Madison College Truax Campus, WI**, upgraded in 2013 with the completion of its 93,000 square foot, three-story Gateway building, which serves as the "front entrance" to the campus. It houses a Student Achievement Center, coffee shop, café, and on the third floor the campus library (pictured), with its own commons area. The \$21 million structure, designed by Plunkett Rysich Architects, LLP, is targeting the equivalent of Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) Silver certification and to that end includes a geothermal heating and cooling system, heat recovery HVAC, electric vehicle charging stations, high-performance low-e glass, exterior sunshading, and waterless plumbing fixtures. The library features comfortable seating, computer tables, a teaching lab, group study rooms, new shelving, and custom-designed end panels from DEMCO Interiors.

A joint public-school library project is in the works for Athabasca, Alta. The board of the **Allice B. Donahue Library & Archives** has okayed a plan to work with the Aspen View Public School Division on a library set within a new secondary school; the town of Athabasca

must approve the plan before it moves forward. The Donahue library board built in a condition to its decision, according to the *Athabasca Advocate*, that the library, despite the situation, will remain a public facility and will eventually include the archives as well. The expenses for the library will be covered

by the funding for the new school.

The 7,280 square foot **Gray Public Library, ME**, founded in 1907, reopened on March 11 following a renovation and addition project that increased the size of the library by 3,000 square feet. The \$1.5 million effort, which was funded through general obligation bonds approved in 2012, was designed by Richard Reed & Co. of Portland, with construction by Zachau Construction. The six-month rehab involved the removal of a cupola, the installation of four new bathrooms, and the construction of a new entrance, per Keep Me Current. There is also new paint, floor coverings, and circulation and interlibrary loan space.

The University of Northern Iowa's (UNI) **Rod Library, Cedar Falls**, is looking toward a renovation, according to *WCF Courier.com*. The 1964 four-story, 238,000 square foot building has undergone several rehabs and an expansion but few upgrades to the first three floors. Conceptual drawings for the latest project were commissioned from OPN Architects; a feasibility study will address the development of a learning commons, among other space alterations, and the merging of UNI Museums into the facility.

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makers navigate the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) \$2.4 billion E-Rate program, which will shift spending from antiquated technologies—like dial-up Internet access—and devote money to broadband and other priorities.

CoSN is a member-based association for technology decision-makers in K–12 education.

The guidelines are part of CoSN's ongoing Smart Education Networks by Design (SEND) initiative, which not only provides resources and guidance for technology decision-makers in education but helps teachers and librarians understand how their system networks function and improve connectivity.

Broadband connectivity—in both schools and school libraries—has been a focus of the Obama administration, as was covered on February 1 in the *New York Times*: “the FCC announced that over the next two

years, it would double its spending toward adding high-speed Internet to schools and libraries as part of President Obama's promise, issued during this year's State of the Union address, to provide broadband service for an estimated 20 million American students in 15,000 schools.”

As the changes to E-Rate become more evident, CoSN's guidelines can be a useful resource for edtech decision-makers.

### **Ithaka Study: Academic Librarians' Priorities Shift**

On March 12, academic research nonprofit Ithaka S+R released its latest survey of academic library leaders. Gathering input from 499 library deans and directors from institutions large and small, the new Library Survey—the first of its kind since 2010—paints a picture of the shifting priorities of modern academic libraries, the

challenges they face, and the resources and leadership techniques they're using to meet those challenges.

According to study author Roger Schonfeld, Ithaka's program director for libraries, users, and scholarly practices, the latest survey found many university libraries changing their priorities from research assistance for faculty to information literacy training for students. Ninety-seven percent of directors and deans responding ranked helping undergraduates “develop research, critical analysis, and information literacy skills” as “very important” this year, while just 68 percent assigned the same level of importance to the support for faculty research and scholarship, down from 85 percent in 2010.

While helping students learn to navigate the rapidly evolving research environment is a priority, the study also found that not many library directors feel they have a well-devel-

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oped strategy for serving fluctuating user needs, with less than 40 percent of library directors at undergraduate institutions strongly agreeing with the statement. While that is more than twice the rate of agreement seen in the 2010 survey, Schonfeld said it was still a worrisome figure.

While those numbers may be less than heartening, the data also suggested one way to improve confidence in planning for change. "Those institutions satisfied with their data collection and analysis positively correlate with those who think they have a well-developed strategy to suit user needs," Schonfeld told *Hotline*. "That may suggest that libraries that are invested in gathering info about users and needs for new services are more likely to be able to develop strategies to serve those needs."

One finding that will surprise few academic librarians showed that most academic library directors feel constrained by their budgets. Nearly 90 percent of respondents told Ithaka that a lack of financial resources was

the primary constraint in their ability to move with the times. Those financial constraints were felt especially keenly on the staffing front. If they had more money to work with, most directors who responded to the survey said they would put that extra money toward hiring more staff. Raising the salaries of existing staff was also a popular priority for a hypothetical funding increase. "What we're seeing is library directors who would like to be able to invest more than has thus far been possible in their staff," said Schonfeld.

From a collections standpoint, librarians reported a drop in spending on print journal subscriptions, while spending on subscriptions to online journals and databases rose steadily. Asked for their predictions, respondents expected both trends to continue. "Library directors are ready for the print to electronic transition in journals," said Schonfeld.

In the transition from print books to ebooks, though, researchers found evidence that professors, not librar-

ians, were taking point. The NGO's 2012 Faculty Survey found that more than half of faculty members reported that ebooks played an important role in research and teaching, while just over 20 percent of librarians at undergrad institutions said the same in this survey. According to Schonfeld, that gap is just one of several trends Ithaka S+R intends to track carefully between now and its next Library Survey, scheduled for 2016.

## NC School Board Will Keep *House of the Spirits*

On February 27, North Carolina's Watauga County School Board voted 3-2 to keep Isabel Allende's *The House of the Spirits* (Knopf, 1982) in the sophomore honors English curriculum. The board met at the Watauga County Court House, with 200 citizens in attendance, after teachers at the high school reported receiving threatening letters for having expressed their desire to keep the book.

Parent Chastity Lesesne led the charge for the book's removal from the curriculum but not from the school's library. "This book is saturated with sexually explicit material that is confirmed to create images in our students' minds and is intentionally distributed to students without review," said Lesesne in a February 27 article published on wfdd.org.

Lesesne first challenged the book in October 2013, setting off a heated debate that included an impassioned appeal from author Allende herself.

Mary Kent Whitaker, a 30-year veteran English teacher at Watauga High School, said *The House of the Spirits* teaches students how to engage in critical thinking about difficult issues.

"This book has been vetted extensively," she was quoted as saying in a February 27 article. "It passes the test for appropriateness."

## People

**Megan Ishler Anderson** was promoted to Manager of Youth Centers at San Francisco Public Library. She was previously the manager of the library's Presidio Branch.

**Robin A. Crumrin** was appointed Dean of Indiana State University's Cunningham Memorial Library, Terre Haute, effective July 1. She is currently Associate Dean of the Collections and Information Access Group, Indiana University-Purdue University Library, Indianapolis.

**Justin de la Cruz** is now Manager of the Martin County Library System's Blake Library, Stuart, FL. He was previously Digital Literacy Librarian, Peter & Julie Cummings Library, Palm City, FL.

**Mary Jo Parker** was promoted to Head Librarian at Lake Andes Carnegie Public

Library, SD. She had been working part-time for the library for the past three years.

**Fred Stielow** has retired as Vice President and Dean of Libraries at American Public University System, CharlesTown, WV. He has been with the library since 2005.

**Gail Stokes** was named Youth Services Librarian at Cranston Public Library's Auburn Branch, RI. She previously held the same title at Providence Community Library's Mount Pleasant Branch.

**Charles P. Wapner** was named Information Policy Analyst for the American Library Association. He was previously employed in the Office of Representative Ron Barber (AZ-2).

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