

2014 PLA Conference Takes Indianapolis

The Public Library Association (PLA) conference only comes around every other year, but that long wait may make it all the more special to attendees, many of whom described the semiannual event as their favorite library gathering. Held in Indianapolis, March 12–14, this year’s meet-up brought together librarians, publishers, authors, and vendors for three days of programming and exhibits.

BOOSTING CIRCULATION

Maximizing benefits and making the most of resources was on the minds of speakers at “ABC: Always Be Circulating,” a collection development panel that proved to be exceedingly popular. Panelists spoke out for a largely back-to-basics approach to putting books on shelves—and, more importantly, into the hands of readers.

“All of your staff need to be able to talk books,” said Bibliocommons’ Stephanie Chase, a sentiment echoed by fellow panelists Columbus Metro Libraries’ Robin Nesbitt, King County Library System’s Alene Moroni, and Wendy Bartlett from Cuyahoga County Public Libraries. The panel

also stressed the importance of taking merchandising lessons from retailers, from ensuring that endcaps and displays are always full of books to placing materials near checkout areas to encourage impulse checkouts

Of course, getting patrons in the door is just half the battle—users also need to be able to navigate the space intuitively. For librarians looking to make their buildings easier for everyone to use, there was “Crafting Excellence: Using Research to Build the Best User Experience,” a user experience (UX) panel moderated by *Library Journal* (LJ) editor in chief Rebecca Miller. The session kicked off with an analysis of data gathered through national research conducted for LJ’s online product *Patron Profiles* that pointed to gaps in user satisfaction with aspects of the library ranging from programming for adults to the size and accessibility of ebook collections and mobile services. Aaron Schmidt, author of LJ’s The User Experience column, framed those gaps as both missed opportunities and untapped potential.

REACHING DIVERSE AUDIENCES

Other PLA panels focused on bringing underserved communities, including immigrant and refugee

Interview

Huyen-Yen Hoang

When Nebraska’s La Vista Public Library (LVPL) board had an opening, 16-year-old volunteer Huyen-Yen Hoang threw her hat in the ring. Before she knew it, the board had appointed her its new president.



How did you first get involved with LVPL?

In the summer of 2005, my first grade teacher had given all of her stu-

dents calendars of things we should do so that we wouldn’t get bored. In 2010, I joined the teen advisory board.

Describe the process of the election.

Seeing that a spot had opened up and there was no teen representation, Lindsey Tomsu, our teen coordinator, had recommended me to the mayor [Douglas Kendig]. When it was time to fill positions, I was sitting at the table with the other board members.... I raised my hand and said, “I volunteer as tribute?” Next thing I know I am the president of the library board at 16 years old.

How much older is the next youngest member of the board?

She is about 30 years older than me.

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Call for Proposals

THE DIGITAL SHIFT: LIBRARIES @ THE CENTER

Library Journal and *School Library Journal* are looking for a wide variety of program proposals for this virtual event, to be held on October 1, 2014.

Visit www.thedigitalshift.com/tds/call-proposals-libraries-at-the-center

Deadline for submissions is May 2

populations, into the fold. At the “Serving Immigrants and Linguistically Diverse Communities” program, on March 14, presenters spoke to the importance of reaching out to these groups, which Mary Givins, Pima County Public Library (PCPL), AZ, said begins with researching the communities in your area.

Libraries looking to serve minority and immigrant communities more

People

Maria Taesil Hudson Carpenter was named City Librarian, Santa Monica Public Library System, CA. She was previously Director of Libraries for the City of Somerville, MA.

Kristi Chadwick was appointed Advisor for Small Libraries for the Massachusetts Library System. She was previously Director of the Emily Williston Memorial Library, Easthampton, MA. She is also a 2014 *Library Journal* Mover & Shaker.

Amanda DiFeterici was named Instructional Design and Assessment Consultant at Credo. She was previously a Librarian at South University, Savannah.

Janene Hill was appointed Director of the Jensen Memorial Library, Minden, NE. She was previously a Young Adult Librarian at Grant County Library in Ulysses, KS.

Judith Nadler announced her retirement as Library Director and University Librarian at the University of Chicago. She has been with the university for 48 years.

Catherine Steeves was named University Librarian at Western University, London, Ont., effective August 18. She is currently Associate Chief Librarian at the University of Guelph, Ont.

Deb Stodola has retired as Librarian at the Fisher Whiting Memorial Library, Mapleton, IA. She had been in the position for 30 years.

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effectively could take a cue from King County Library System (KCLS), WA, which presented on its long-standing Page Fellowship program in the “Diversifying Your Workforce” panel. The program focuses on recruiting individuals with diverse backgrounds who want to work in libraries but face barriers to employment such as a lack of English-language skills or a lack of work experience in the United States. While there are challenges to recruitment and training of these new pages, Nu’u Fuavai, Page Fellowship program director, said, “Within uncomfortable zones is where you find opportunities.”

MAKING A STATEMENT

The weekend following the conference also saw the Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA) announce its condemnation of ALA’s decision to hold the organization’s 2016 annual conference in Orlando, FL, as concerns over the state’s controversial “stand your ground” laws continue to ripple throughout the African American community.

ALA, FTRF File Brief in High Court Cases

The first weeks of March were busy for litigation in the library world as the American Library Association (ALA) and its affiliate the Freedom To Read Foundation (FTRF) weighed in on a pair of cases headed to the Supreme Court. While neither impacts libraries directly, both have the potential to be big decisions that shape precedent on freedom of speech and privacy rights.

On March 4, the FTRF was joined by ALA, as well as a wide variety of booksellers and nonprofits, in filing an amicus brief in the case of *Susan B. Anthony List v. Driehaus*, which will likely come before the court this

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fall. The brief was filed on behalf of the plaintiff, the Susan B. Anthony List (SBAL) a pro-life political advocacy group that had run ads in Ohio papers during the lead up to the 2010 election, accusing then Rep. Steven Driehaus (D-Cincinnati) of voting for taxpayer-funded abortions. Driehaus responded by filing a complaint with the Ohio Election Commission (OEC) against SBAL, claiming the group's ads violated an Ohio state law. In response, SBAL representatives filed for an injunction against OEC, claiming that the state law was unconstitutionally vague and restricted their free speech. Driehaus went on to lose his bid for reelection and see his complaints against SBAL dismissed. With those complaints no longer pending, the Ohio Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that SBAL had no standing to challenge the Ohio law, since there was no longer any imminent legal action against the organization.

According to Deborah Caldwell-Stone, deputy director of FTRF, that decision flies in the face of precedent and could have a chilling effect on people concerned that their free speech rights might be put at risk.

Until now, the fear that persons would face prosecution for speaking their mind has been grounds enough to challenge similar laws. The circuit court decision in this case, however, would essentially make potential challengers wait until someone is actually suing them under the law to challenge it. "That goes a step too far," said Caldwell-Stone.

On March 11, ALA joined the Internet Archive in filing an amicus brief in the cases of *David Leon Riley v. State of California* and *United States v. Brima Wurie*. Those cases ask whether police are entitled to search the cell phone of a person they have arrested without obtaining a warrant.

Both cases are expected to be heard by the high court this fall, and

ALA is already putting its two cents in on the side of privacy rights. "Libraries have always stood for the privacy for patrons to read without government interference. It's a basic right that libraries work to preserve,"

ALA president Barbara Stripling said. "That is also the right to think and to explore ideas without fear that a government entity will roam through your phone and look at what you're reading and thinking and saying."

Librarians Organize School Districtwide Comic Con

Darth Vader, Wonder Woman, author/illustrator Misako Rocks! (pictured), and a group of intrepid librarians stormed Floral Park Memorial High School (FPMHS) on New York's Long Island on Saturday, March 8, for the Sewanhaka Central High School District's first-ever comics convention. With over 100 students from the local high schools in attendance, Sewanha-Con offered teens in grades seven to 12 a wide variety of ways to indulge their pop culture sweet tooth, including a screening of anime films, video game free play sessions, trivia competitions, and panel discussions.

The event used the model developed by Comic-Con International, a nonprofit educational corporation whose mission is to raise awareness of and appreciation for the historic and ongoing contribution of comics to art and science. It was spearheaded by school librarians Justin Mirsky from Sewanhaka High School (SHS) and Nili Resnick of New Hyde Park Memorial High School, both longtime *Doctor Who* and Comic-Con fans. With the support of other district librarians—Donna Rosenblum from FPMHS, Karen Annunziata from H. Frank Carey High School, Joseph Nola, also of SHS, and Nadine Paduano from Elmont Memorial High School—the team hatched a plan last spring and made it a reality in March.

Invited speaker Rocks!, who moved from Japan to New York City in 2001, has published several manga-style books, including *Biker Girl* (Hyperion, 2006) and her latest, *Rock and Roll Love* (CreateSpace, 2014). The energetic and funny presenter spoke of her experiences as a writer and graphic artist. She also spent time teaching the students drawing techniques. A question-and-answer period and book signing followed her presentation.

Kids and community members were also an important part of the planning process. SHS student Wendy Kang designed a crest representing the five schools, and classmate Melanni Mora created the event's logo. Adult volunteers led some of the panel discussions, including one about book-to-film adaptations, and parents and teachers helped supervise the anime screening and gaming sessions. Mirsky hosted the trivia competition, and all students who dressed as a character received a door prize.

A comics day would not be complete without a visit from fan-favorite characters. Members of the 501st Legion: Empire City Garrison were also on hand. The world's definitive *Star Wars* costuming organization, the group not only promotes all things *Star Wars*, it supports charitable causes. Attendees dressed as Darth Vader, Emperor Palpatine, Stormtroopers, and Jawas graced the school's halls for photos and presentations.

Because of the program's turnout and postevent buzz, plans are already being made for next year's convention.



AASL Board Opens Amendments Voting

At the 2014 American Library Association (ALA) Midwinter Meeting this past January, the Board of Directors of the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) voted to propose two amendments to the current bylaws.

The first amendment (Article VI, Section 1, Meetings) involves a change in the way AASL presents its annual membership meeting.

Previously, the membership meeting was presented prior to the AASL President's Program during the ALA annual conference. This face-to-face presentation limited the access of AASL members who could attend to only those who could travel to the conference.

The board is proposing the follow-

ing change: "The Annual Membership Meeting of the AASL shall be held prior to the Annual Conference of ALA."

The change allows AASL to hold a virtual membership meeting so that more of the AASL membership is able to attend, participate, and stay up-to-date with the association's goings-on.

The second bylaw change (Article V. Nominations and Elections) on the ballot involves an alteration to the recently developed Leadership Development Committee charged with providing recommendations on furthering the leadership development of AASL members—within the division itself—and within ALA.

This amendment expands on the duties of the Nominating Committee, adding two members to it and directing it to focus on a wider range of

leadership issues, from initial recruitment to recognition.

Polls opened to AASL's approximately 7,000 members on March 19. Votes must be received by April 25.

The President's Budget and Libraries

President Barack Obama's \$3.9 trillion budget for FY15 proposes slight cuts in federal library spending, strongly promotes a variety of early education programs, and funds an ongoing mission to connect students to high-speed Internet in their schools and libraries.

The budget Obama sent to Congress serves largely as a blueprint for the direction he wants to take the administration over the remainder of his second term.

The Institute of Museum and Library Sciences (IMLS), which fared well in the 2014 federal budget process, largely keeps those gains: IMLS's overall FY15 budget request of \$226.4 million stayed almost flat from its 2014 enacted figure of \$226.8 million. But there was some bad news: about \$2.3 million has been trimmed from the Library Services & Technology Act (LSTA), the only federal program devoted exclusively to libraries. Almost all of that \$2.3 million came out of grants to states—\$152.5 million budgeted for FY15 as opposed to the \$154.8 funded by Congress for 2014.

"It's not a negligible amount at all," IMLS director Susan Hildreth told *Hotline*. But a year ago, she noted, IMLS budgeted \$150 million (a \$6.3 million cut) for LSTA grants to states, and Congress actually upped the enacted amount by \$4.8 million. With similar luck this time around, states won't have to make do with less federal library money. For 2015, Hildreth said IMLS will continue to foster partnerships with other federal agencies.

"We're feeling OK about where we

News in Brief

The **Central Library Consortium, OH**, has added three new libraries: **Bexley Public Library, London Public Library, and Upper Arlington Public Library**. This increases the number of items in the consortium to 680,000.

EBSCO Information Services and Electronic Resources & Libraries announced applications for the **Information to Inspiration Fellowship**. Winners will receive up to \$4,000 to fund research related to the management of electronic resources.

Columbia University's Rare Book & Manuscript Library, New York, acquired the papers of former **New York governor David A. Paterson (2008–10)**. The collection includes correspondence, speeches, budget submissions, press releases, and program files.

Publisher **Gale** opened up entry for its "**Libraries Are Beautiful—Inside and Out**" photo contest to celebrate **National Library Week, April 13–19, 2014**. Library staff and

patrons can submit photos for nomination in any of five award categories.

The **Institute of Museum and Library Services** announced that it will hold a public hearing, "**Libraries and Broadband: Urgency and Impact**." It will take place on **April 17** at the **Martin Luther King Memorial Library, Washington, DC**, and will be broadcast online.

The **Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information, Bratislava**, received the **2013 European Prize for Innovation in Public Administration** from the **European Commission**. It was honored for its creation of a centralized depository and implementation of an electronic plagiarism detection system.

North Carolina State University's James B. Hunt Jr. Library, Raleigh, was honored with the **2014 Stanford Prize for Innovation in Research Libraries**. The award was established in 2013 by Stanford University Libraries, CA.

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are,” Hildreth said of her 2015 budget proposal. “We knew there wasn’t going to be a lot of room for growth.”

EDUCATION AND RESEARCH PRIORITIES

Of the \$68.6 billion the president hopes to spend on education, about 77 percent will go to financial aid for college students, special education, and Title I grants for schools in high-poverty areas. Of the remaining 23 percent, Obama pushed for a Preschool for All program, giving every low- and moderate-income four-year-old in America access to quality prekindergarten education. This initiative would also provide incentives for states to establish full-day kindergarten. A Race to the Top Equity and Opportunity program was also introduced in Obama’s budget, which centers on increasing the performance of high-need students.

The administration also wants to spend \$2.9 billion on STEM (science,

technology, engineering, mathematics) education programs in 2015, an increase of 3.7 percent over the previous year. This would support the president’s “fresh” strategic plan for STEM, designed to reduce what the budget plan called “fragmentation” of the education strategy in 2014 among a host of separate government agencies.

According to *Scientific American*, the budget set federal spending on research and development at civilian science agencies at \$65.9 billion, an increase of less than one percent over FY14. “There’s not enough money to do anything interesting,” Kevin Wilson, director of public policy at the American Society for Cell Biology in Bethesda, MD, told the magazine.

In a statement, the nonprofit Association of American Universities said, “The President’s FY15 budget does disappointingly little to close the nation’s innovation deficit.”

The administration also plans to continue opening government data to the public, mainly as an avenue toward private sector innovation and job growth. Health care, energy, education, public safety, tourism, and agriculture are just some of the areas that can benefit from this “high priority on transparency,” the administration stated, adding that Obama’s open data emphasis has been in place since 2009 with encouraging results.

What the final budget adopted by Congress will look like, of course, is anyone’s guess, given today’s contentiously partisan political climate and emphasis on debt reduction.

Colorado Schools Try Digital Literacy Teachers

Faced with a budget cut that turned its full-time teacher-librarians into half-time positions, Adams

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12 Five Star Schools District (Adams 12) in Thornton, CO, created a new position—digital literacy teachers—to get media specialists into K-8 classrooms as much as possible.

“We were thinking of how to maximize instructional time for information literacy skills,” said Julie Bowline, director of instructional tech and library services for Adams 12, which now has half-time people, often referred to as a “.5 person,” instead of full-time staff.

Adams 12 lost \$50 million in budget cuts over a recent three-year period, resulting in teacher-librarian positions being sliced to half-time. The district rolled out the pilot digital literacy program with six teachers in nine schools in the 2012–13 school year.

This year, 23 percent—or 11 of the 41 elementary, middle and K–8 schools—have chosen digital literacy teachers over traditional teacher-librarians. (High schools in the Adams

12 school district kept their full-time teacher-librarian positions.) It’s a shift that made the best of what some in the district believe was a difficult situation.

Each school is given a choice—keep a teacher-librarian at half-time or try a digital literacy teacher at half-time who can teach technology, digital literacy, and digital citizenship skills in the classroom, said Bowline. The cost when choosing a digital literacy teacher, though, is less oversight in the media center.

“To go to [half-time] positions in K-8 was a huge loss for the community and for the talent in our district,” Bowline told *Hotline*. “Teacher-librarians can be such an integral part of the culture of literacy, and in some buildings that’s had to slide because instructional demands are so great.”

Plus, said Caroline Hughes, library services coordinator for Adams 12, “[Digital literacy teachers] can’t do it all in a part-time job.... So we take collection development off [the digital literacy teacher’s] plate.”

Digital literacy is a buzzword in the school library world with the rising trend of school districts, administrators, and media specialists all looking to incorporate digital skills into the work they do with students. Public libraries, too, are working these tools into the programming they offer students, even hiring volunteers to work with patrons on basic needs from understanding what a password is to setting up an email account.

While digital literacy is front and center in the Adams 12 school district, there is also hope the new positions will create a renewed sense of appreciation for the instructional ability of teacher-librarians as a whole. While Adams 12 has no plan to increase funding or staffing for school librarians in the upcoming 2014–15 school year, Bowline still has hope that one day the positions could be restored to full-time.

Branching Out



The **Summit Public Library**, NJ, is one step closer to a \$110,000 renovation project with common council approval of a contract with PAL Pro Builders LLC. Supported through the library’s endowment, the plan calls for the reconfiguring of office space to allow more room for programming.

A grand opening is in the works for the Queens Library’s **Arverne Library**, NY. Shut down since Superstorm Sandy in fall 2012, the facility has been fully refurbished with new computers, new furniture, and fresh décor, per the *Brownstoner*.

The makeover also includes an updated materials collection. The modular building that was the temporary home of library operations during the project will temporarily house an adult learning center. More from Queens, the 2,000 square foot **Court Square Library**, Long Island City, is growing per a donation of 1,200 square feet from the adjacent Citibank, according to the *Brownstoner*. The new space will likely become a dedicated children’s area, while the adult section will encompass the vacated current kids’ section. The library holds a special spot in the hearts of *Library Journal*, as it was the original makeover project in 2005 orchestrated by *LJ* with local architects and vendors.

February 1 marked the grand opening of the new 66,000 square foot **Billings Public Library** (BPL) (pictured), MT. The \$20 million, two-story building features a Digital Learning Lab, a 44-foot-tall story tower, an elliptical skylight, and an infinity pool. A \$5 million capital campaign conducted by the BPL Foundation and a 2011 bond issue provided funding for the project, which was designed by Phoenix-based architect Will Bruder. The former library structure, adjacent to the new facility, will be razed to make way for a 100-space, landscaped parking garden.

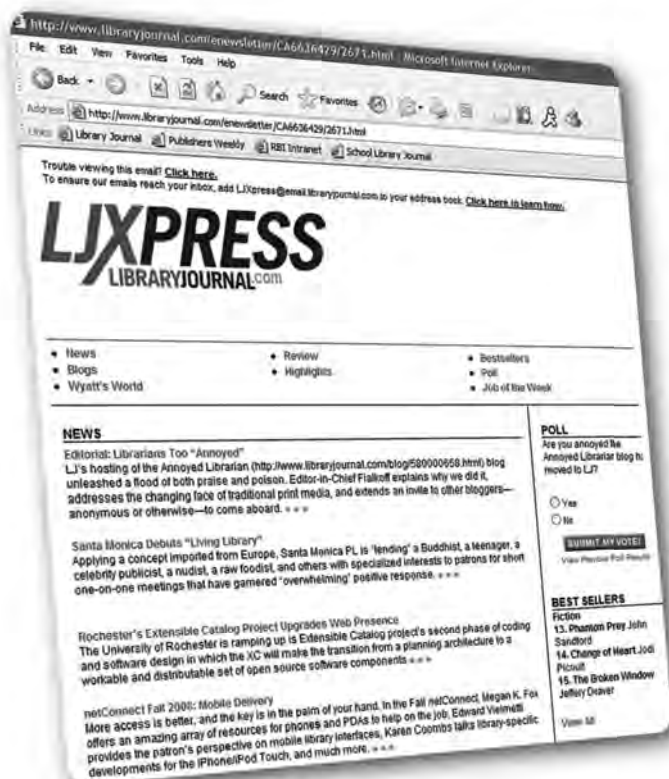
The **Lynchburg Public Library**, VA, broke ground on March 20 for a new story time room. The 750 square foot space will cost \$400,000, according to *News Advance*. Funded entirely through donations, the area will be designated specifically for children’s programming.

Send information on groundbreakings and ongoing and completed building projects to blfox@mediasourceinc.com

Photo courtesy of Billings Public Library.

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