

**ASERL, DLPA Launch
 Agriculture History Portal**

The Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (ASERL) and the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) are teaming up to launch a new collection of agricultural research and resources from ASERL's 38 member libraries. From photographs to field notes, the "Deeply Rooted" collection will mark the first time many of these items have been made available outside of the walls of their host library.

According to ASERL executive director John Burger, the new program, which is scheduled to launch before the end of 2014, is a natural fit for ASERL member libraries, many of which are housed at land-grant universities. With a mandate to perform agricultural research as part of their educational mission, libraries at land grant universities often have significant bodies of research deep in their archives. Since much of it has gone unpublished, though, understanding how best to present that information to be useful to future generations presents a challenge for many libraries.

"ASERL member libraries have long and deep histories in the com-

munities they serve, some of which are still in rural and heavy agricultural areas," Burger told *Hotline*. Based on that, we thought we could create a unique collection from across our communities by bringing together items that otherwise wouldn't be connected because they're held in different institutions."

To make the most of the work they have available, which includes years of handwritten field research notes on crops and livestock that may never have seen the light of day, details about common agricultural practice from farmers' diaries, and photographs of the region throughout the years, ASERL libraries are taking a cue from one of their own. The backbone of the Deeply Rooted collection will be based on the Consortium for the History of Agriculture and Rural Mississippi (CHARM) project, which is overseen by the libraries of Mississippi State University (MSU).

Deeply Rooted will be the second digital collection of historical resources that the association has released this decade. In 2011, the member libraries joined to create American-south.org, a digital portal putting their shared deep well of Civil War-era resources at researchers' fingertips. While that effort has made

Interview

Arfon Smith

Arfon Smith, the resident "science guy" at Github, wanted to find out what makes a



journal article, in the most basic sense, and how can that process be simplified? As an answer, he and his colleagues built the Open Journal, a software prototype that lets researchers and peer reviewers discuss edits inside a browser-based system and publish the results.

What inspired the Open Journal?

We wanted to ask, "What does it look like to have a lightweight service that just facilitates review, that doesn't try to manage the editorial process but recognizes that content lives wherever it needs to live?"

Could readers see how papers changed from draft to publication?

Making that process open to the public is not what we set out to achieve, but it could be done easily using this platform.

Have you found potential partners for this model?

That would be my dream scenario, that some kind of value comes out of this that lets us collaborate on taking it forward with people whose job it is to do this stuff.

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10,000 items from ASERL library collections including letters, diaries, photographs and sheet music available online, it was a bootstrap effort that the organization developed from scratch. This time around, ASERL has decided to partner with DPLA, which Burger compared to “the Amazon or eBay of library services,” to drive more information seekers to Deeply Rooted.

“DPLA has its own gravitational pull. People go there because it’s a key source for accessing library content from across the country, and we want to leverage that,” said Burger. “There’s no sense in creating our own portal when people are going to DPLA for these resources.”

While Deeply Rooted will initially cover only libraries in the Southeastern part of the United States, ASERL is open to partnering with other organizations serving similar purposes once the project has taken root, said Burger, pointing out that organizations like the National Agricultural Library and U.S. Agricultural Information Network are both engaged in their own digitization projects that could pair well with ASERL’s initiative down the line.

DC Schools To Hire 30 New Media Specialists

In early April 2014, American Association of School Librarians (AASL) president Gail Dickinson said she received the news that District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)—in Washington, DC—was heavily recruiting school library media specialists (SLMS), with as many as 30 openings. According to Dickinson, the recruiting likely stems from a combination of postponed retirements and added positions.

“As the economy is improving, we are seeing waves of retirements, and the field will have to begin recruiting

heavily to ensure that we have great people stepping in to prove the value of the job,” Dickinson told *Hotline*, adding her predictions for a “brisk” summer hiring season.

Capitol Hill Public School Parents Organization (CHPSPO) activist Peter MacPherson explained that while advocacy efforts are ongoing to address an inconsistent commitment to collection development in school libraries, including a 300,000-volume deficit, DCPS has budgeted additional positions in FY15 proposal to aid in improving the libraries.

“DCPS is making some effort to recruit librarians, because the system has a large number of empty positions,” said MacPherson.

Based on his observations on how FY15 funding measures have been carried out—including omissions for collection development—MacPherson described DCPS’s efforts as appearing “more aligned [toward] mollifying the public than a true embrace of the power and success of school library programs.”

In contrast, Jennifer Boudrye, the director of library programs at DCPS, said it’s a very exciting time for media specialists to be in the nation’s capital.

“There is support from a budget and a philosophical perspective to have a certified [SLMS] in every DC public school,” said Boudrye. “We have many school administrators who understand our role, and they are spreading the word to their colleagues.”

DC schools have been no stranger to budget cuts in the past several years, with its districts undergoing changes from funding reductions for dozens of school librarian positions to school closure announcements.

Some advocacy efforts to combat the spending cut proposals have included a petition started in 2012, “Restore Librarians to D.C. Schools,” which currently has more than 5,000

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supporters and continues to gain traction with new signatures still coming in weekly. The petition was part of a growing response during a time when DC librarians in schools with fewer than 300 students were being let go as

a result of budget decreases. Schools with more than 300 students had the option to opt out of hiring a librarian.

The DCPS FY14 budget reflected an increase in budgeted staffing of full-time librarians and media

specialists, up eight percent from the previous year.

“We are seeing great inequity in how library services are delivered in schools. There still are many schools in which the school library program is fully staffed,” explained Dickinson. “The other extreme is a closed and shuttered library, but we are also seeing situations in which library staff have been reduced, hours [have been] cut, or one librarian [is] attempting [to] serve multiple schools.”

Creator of the “Restore Librarians to DC Schools,” Bella Dinh-Zarr, who spoke last month at a DC Council Education Budget Oversight Hearing, said to *Hotline*, “DCPS now has made a commitment to funding librarians for most schools, but unfortunately many positions are still vacant or filled by noncredentialed aides. DCPS has no additional resources for its librarian recruiting efforts.”

According to Dinh-Zarr, DC schools need an additional \$3 million in FY15 for libraries, after spending \$3.4 million last fall just for library materials alone.

“[T]he ability to have a sustained campaign [has] made it possible to improve the situation vis-à-vis the libraries,” explained activist MacPherson of ongoing advocacy efforts that have drawn a constant stream of media attention. “Fortunately, the residents of the city do care very much about them and are committed to their success.”

In a similar manner, Boudrye recalled the “tremendous” response to recruitment efforts as part of her reasoning for signing on as director earlier this year.

“I came to DCPS because the support for strong school library programs, from the chancellor down, is extraordinary,” said Boudrye. “The vision of what [an] SLMS can do to have a significant impact on student learning is spreading.”

Blending Touch and Tech in Early Childhood Play

Azadeh Jamalian has spent the past four years studying how three- and four-year-olds learn math—using adults as her lab rats. Videotaping adults as part of her PhD work at Columbia University, New York, she found that as these adults worked through problems, hand gestures were key. The harder the problems, the more they moved their hands. And the more they moved their hands, the more accurate their problem solving.

Using our hands, Jamalian realized, is crucial to learning and often missing in the 2-D world of flat screens. As the cofounder and chief learning officer of interactive toy and app maker Tiggly, Jamalian is working to weave more physical components into the digital world of early childhood apps. The company recently launched Tiggly Shapes & Apps, on which children ages 18 months to four years play with a circle, square, star, and triangle in conjunction with an app. The goal is to have children play with the physical shapes in ways that are hard to show on a screen, such as rolling them along the ground.

“The whole premise of manipulating and playing with real objects is a big part of a child’s learning process,” Jamalian told *Hotline*. “There is a lot of learning in this interaction that is missing from play on digital devices. At the same time, digital play can be beneficial for [children] by giving them feedback and scaffolding. So we’re trying to combine them for the best experience possible.”

Touching is how babies learn their mother’s face and how they understand the difference between hot and cold, as well as how many young children learn to count. Studies even show that this touch interaction is mapped in our brain. The rise of digital devices, from tablets to laptops and phones to game consoles, has quickly spread to the early childhood arena, potentially limiting the opportunities children have to learn about objects and the world around them through touch. But app designers are now exploring ways to use apps and games in support of developmental steps that 2-D tech doesn’t address.

Mindy Brooks, director of education and research at Sesame Workshop, for example, has been assessing how digital screens used with blocks can both educate a child while also supporting a more organic, physical style of play. The company already has games that children can play through Microsoft’s Kinect. But a new research project, Grover’s Block Party, asks parents to videotape their children playing with blocks while a digital Grover talks about the object, knowing which one the child has picked.

“It’s tricky about designing for motor movement with an app on a screen,” said Brooks. “We don’t allow a child to shake or tilt a tablet, because we don’t want [the devices] shattering. We’re also cognizant of the weight of tablets.”



Lending Library Lets Users Borrow Fine Art

What if libraries could be known for checking out not just books and research materials but works of fine art? Zoe Walker and Neil Bromwich, a pair of UK-based artists, decided to find out.

The Art Lending Library, originally commissioned by Market Gallery of Glasgow, Scotland, and created by Walker and Bromwich, is a series of crates fitted together, filled with donated works of art from living contemporary artists around the world. Anyone who enters the libraries where the project is housed can sign out a work of art of their choosing, and the piece is crated up and shipped to their home for up to a week.

“The initial idea was to allow people to appreciate art and experience art in a different way,” Bromwich said. “Most people experience art by seeing it in galleries and exhibition spaces. We wanted to give the chance to experience art on a one-to-one basis in your home.”

The project was first shown out of Mitchell Library, one of Europe’s largest public reference libraries, as part of the Glasgow International Art Festival in 2012. In early May of this year, the library finished its second run, this time in the English town of Darlington. The artists involved told *Hotline* they wanted to break through some barriers to give more people access to art.

“There have been a lot of cuts to the arts and to libraries right now. So it’s actually kind of symbolic,” Walker told *Hotline*. The project kicks off with a parade, where volunteers dressed as movers wheel the crates through town, gathering steam and interested attendees as they roll along on the way to the library. Their aim is to attract the widest range of people possible to see the art. At the heart of the project is the aim of bringing fine

Homewood Library, AL, received the 2014 Gold Level Standard Award for Public Libraries from the Alabama Library Association. It was presented during the organization’s annual convention in April.

The Library of Congress announced nominations for its **Rebekah Johnson Bobbitt National Prize for Poetry**, which will be awarded in the fall. Publishers can submit entries for poetry books until **July 31**.

The **Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary**, New York, received a grant from the **National Endowment for the Humanities**. The money will fund a project to conserve and digitize materials from its Cairo Genizah collection.

RCN Publishing has added 2013 content to its **Nursing Journals Archive**. It currently includes more than 15,000 articles from ten journals, starting from 1996.

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art into the lives of all who want to experience it and a belief that libraries make an excellent tool for doing just that.

“One of the things that’s really inspired the project is the original idea of libraries as this egalitarian place,” Bromwich said. “In the past, only rich people had libraries with books in them. In a way, contemporary art is like that now; it’s kind of an elitist thing.”

The project features over 60 works, many of which were crafted by artists from around the UK, but also introduces patrons to international artists, featuring works from Colombia, Thailand, and Australia to name a few. The participating artists were paid just £50 (about \$84 US) to provide their works for loan, and because the art is valued so highly, obtaining insurance was an issue. Artists who want to participate must be willing to put their work in

Greenville County Library System, SC, received the **Association of Specialized and Cooperative Agencies/Keystone Library Automation System & National Organization on Disability Award**. It was honored for creating International Strides, which serves patrons with disabilities.

EBSCO Information Services launched three new **Medical Featured Collections** on its EBSCO eBooks and Audiobooks platform: Doody’s Core Titles 2014 Frontlist; Doody’s 4- and 5-Star Reviewed Titles 2014; and *American Journal of Nursing* 2013 Books of the Year.

Brooklyn College Library received a **Library of the Year** award from the U.S. **Government Printing Office**. It was recognized for its leadership activities for library staff and for providing the public with access to electronic resources.

the hands of borrowers, with a certain amount of risk.

“Artworks are insured while they’re in the gallery and while in transit, but we couldn’t afford to cover to take it into people’s homes, so it’s a goodwill, trusting gesture,” Bromwich said.

So far, though, they’ve had no incidents of damage to the artworks, although one artist’s work, which was a jar filled with foreign currency, “mysteriously disappeared.”

“I think he was kind of asking for it with that one,” Bromwich laughed.

While the project has its roots in the UK, the artists and organizers involved are working to ensure that it branches out. Walker and Bromwich said a gallery in Italy has expressed interest in bringing the Art Lending Library to that country, and they hope to see the project continue beyond that. Similar efforts are already under way in a number of cities across

the United States, including efforts in Minneapolis and through Chicago's Hull-House Museum.

No Love for School Librarians in Allentown

Hobbled by cuts to its school librarians over the past several years, Allentown School District (ASD), PA, has seen attention to school libraries drop in priority, with the effect trickling to circulation as well as the amount of time students can spend in their libraries.

Once staffed with 13 elementary school librarians and four middle school librarians, today ASD has one district elementary school librarian serving all 15 elementary schools and two middle school librarians split among four middle schools, according to Donna Forsythe, an ASD middle school librarian at both Trexler and Francis D. Raub middle school. Both ASD high schools still have a school librarian on staff.

Forsythe, a former ASD elementary school librarian, transferred to

Trexler in the 2010–11 school year when ASD reduced elementary school positions from 13 to four. Forsythe is now predominantly a teacher, working with a class from each grade every nine weeks, teaching them library skills, which closes the library for three periods a day. Paralibrarians now serve to check out books. The effect? A heavy drop in circulation.



The library during more prosperous times at Trexler Middle School. Now it has bare walls.

During the first four months of the current 2013–14 school year, circulation at Trexler Middle School was at 1,030 books—a 77 percent drop from the 4,664 books checked out during the first four months of the 2012–03

school year and an 84 percent drop from the 6,441 books checked out during the first four months of the 2011–12 school year, according to figures provided by ASD staff. Deb Tretter, president of the Allentown Education Association, claimed that part of the reason school librarians are in this predicament is because of school board members' unwillingness to restore positions.

“Our board members are very limited in their understanding of what librarians do,” Tretter told *Hotline*. “They’re not librarians like when we were in school, but that’s what [the board members] think, no matter how many times they were told [otherwise] by these articulate women. If we’re pushing STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), then [librarians] are the ‘T’ in STEM.”

Technology is not high in Shawn Kerbein’s job description right now. As a former ASD early childhood librarian and high school librarian, Kerbein is now the district elementary librarian for the district. In her first year in this new position, Kerbein is responsible for 15 elementary school libraries—most of which are supported by a half-time paralibrarian, she said. She does not have an office and spends days at different schools each week working on a variety of responsibilities from persuading principals to spend money on books for their school libraries to developing a storytelling curriculum.

Kerbein said she’d like to find ways to be more integrated into the classroom, but told *Hotline* that when she approaches most of the elementary school principals, they don’t pass her information along to teachers. She has been asked to some staff meetings to show staff how to use databases or the Destiny search tool to find books in their own library.

“I have met a lot of roadblocks,” she said. “I hear teachers tell students

People

Caitlin Augusta, Children’s Librarian at Stratford Library, CT, received the Faith Hektoen Outstanding Program Award from the Connecticut Library Association. She was honored for creating the TakeYour Child to the Library Day program.

Laura-Ellen Ayres was promoted to Director, Rapides Parish Library, Alexandria, LA, following the retirement of **Steve Rogge**. Ayres was previously Assistant Director for Direct Services.

Donna Corbeil announced her retirement as Director of Berkeley Public Library, CA, effective this September. She has been in the position for more than seven years.

Sheba Marcus-Bey was appointed Executive Director of East Cleveland Public Library.

She was previously Business, Economic, and Labor Manager at Cleveland Public Library.

Mary Rose Muccie was named Executive Director, Temple University Press, Philadelphia. She was previously Director of the JSTOR Current Journals Program.

Marie Myers, Art Educator and Library Associate at Jacksonville Public Library, FL, was awarded a 2014 Ezra Jack Keats Minigrant. She will use the money to fund her ART of Books youth program.

Timothy Thompson was named Metadata Librarian at Princeton University Library, NJ. He previously held the same title at the University of Miami, FL.

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to Google. And I say, 'No! Use these databases! We pay for them.'

Trexler's Forsythe said she often hears administrators downplay the need for school libraries, noting that teachers have classroom libraries. But she said a classroom library can never really compete with the resources available in a school library collection, particularly around nonfiction books needed for meeting Common Core standards.

"Typically teachers would coordinate with me for assessments," she said. "And now, there's no one there. An empty library is a sad thing."

Modesto Schools To Nix Library Teaching

Modesto City Schools (MCS), CA, is set to end all library instruction for its elementary schools for the 2014–15 school year, while keeping the school libraries open with library assistants. Nine certified school libraries have already received notices from MCS warning that their jobs are likely to disappear for the coming school year as a proposal made by the district to end school library skills instruction passed through the Board of Education (BOE) earlier this spring and is now set for adoption at the June 16 BOE meeting, according to Virginia "Ginger" Johnson, MCS associate superintendent.

The decision stemmed from the district's and the board's belief that students needed more computer training, including keyboarding and how to use search engines, said Johnson, particularly with online testing related to Common Core. The only time they felt could be substituted was the 30 minutes a week each first through sixth grade student spent with school librarians learning skills including research.

Modesto, a town located about 91 miles due east of San Francisco, has a population of about 208,107, with



The Lodi Library, part of the Medina County Library, OH, opened in May following a 30-month renovation. Underpinning (or should it be over-pinning?) the project, which began in November 2011, was the discovery of unsound roof beams in the facility. The damaged rafters were replaced with steel supports encased in wood to maintain the original appearance. Additionally, the project incorporated the purchase of laptops for patron rental and the inclusion of self-check stations, new seating areas, a dedicated teen zone with a recording studio, free lockers, and study rooms, according to the *Medina Gazette*. In consideration of the structural faults, the district library filed a lawsuit in county common pleas court against the architect of the original 2005 structure and various other entities. It is hoped that the suit will cover the \$1.8 million cost of the work.

More busy times in Ohio. The 54,000 square foot **Avon Lake Public Library** is getting

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approximately 30,000 K–12 students served by 22 elementary schools, four junior high schools, and seven comprehensive high schools, according to the MCS website. Certified school librarians will remain on staff at the junior and high schools for now. But Modesto is hardly the first city in California to

set for a \$700,000 makeover, per the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*. A contract was signed with architect Duane Van Dyke for the project, which will then be put out to bid in September, with work likely beginning in November. Financial support will come from the library's general fund. Among the upgrades to the building, which originally opened in 1930 and was most recently expanded in 1994, will be new shelving, furnishings equipped with electrical outlets for patron use, a renovated story time space, and a reconfiguring of the public areas.

Connecticut College's **Charles E. Shain Library**, New London, will undergo a \$9 million expansion and remodel. The 100,000 square foot library will see 600 square feet added to its front entrance and front façade. Other improvements will include the addition of a student café, an outdoor patio, and refurbished collaborative spaces. Along with Schwartz/Silver Architects, Inc., and KBE Building Corporation, the project team includes consulting firm Diversified Project Management.

The 108-year-old **Merrill Memorial Library**, Yarmouth, ME, has now amassed \$1 million through a fundraising campaign in addition to \$1.5 million in bond funds to shore up its renovation and expansion project, per the *Portland Press Herald*. The work will include a new entryway, public programming space, a quiet reading room, a new sprinkler system and bathrooms, and the replacement of antiquated knob and tube wiring. The library is looking to an October completion date.

cut school librarians from its staff.

According to the most recent statistics from the California Department of Education, just 804 teacher librarians had positions across the state in the 2012–13 school year, with numbers dropping every year since the 2007–08 school year.

Photo by Nick Gurny/Gazette



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