

# LIBRARY **HOTLINE**

BREAKING NEWS FOR LIBRARY AND INFORMATION DECISION MAKERS

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## CA Administrator Creates Digital Stopgap After Cuts

Jay Greenlinger knew there was little he could do to restore the school librarian positions that had been cut from his district, the Pleasant Valley School District (PVSD) in Camarillo, CA. "Most schools do not have a functioning library," said Greenlinger.

PVSD saw its budget drop from \$65 million in the 2007–08 school year to \$49 million for 2013–14, while the district gained about 600 additional children, Greenlinger said. Greenlinger, then principal of Camarillo's La Mariposa Elementary School, had a full-time media specialist. He had to split her time the second year and completely lost the position by 2011–12. In 2013, he transitioned to his current role, director of instructional technology.

Greenlinger began to look at what was available online that could dovetail with school curriculum and allow students to, at least, find books and other resources. For the 2013–14 school year, he launched a 1:1 iPad program in five elementary classrooms across the district at Title 1 schools, partnering with the public library and bringing 130 students to a local branch to learn how much they could get through OverDrive.

"The kids were hooked, reading books on their iPads that morning," he said.

That's when Greenlinger knew he had a solution. He drew from the funds the district allocated for Common Core implementation, budgeting \$65,000 each for the 2014–15 and 2015–16 school years to build a high-interest digital stopgap containing nonfiction, fiction, and professional reading for teachers.

Students at Las Colinas Middle School in Camarillo are already accessing the OverDrive library on the school's 106 Chromebooks and on their own mobile devices. The school is looking to add five more sets of 36 Chromebooks for the 2014–15 school year, and the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) is also raising funds for additional devices for the 1,000 sixth to eighth grade students, said the school's principal, Pam Gonzalez.

Greenlinger is also training two teachers to manage the new online library. This year, they worked one day a week growing the district's online subscriptions, video content, and digital materials. Next year, they'll be assigned full-time as teachers on special assignment on digital media integration.

"Most of my time will be looking at what's available to bring the

## Interview

### Sandra Ríos Balderrama

REFORMA (National Association to Promote Library & Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking) presented the first Elizabeth Martinez Lifetime



Achievement Award to Sandra Ríos Balderrama. She started in San Benito, CA, as a bookmobile assistant, before becoming a children's librarian at the Berkeley and Oakland Public libraries.

She cofounded the Pura Belpré Award in 1996, became the American Library Association's (ALA) first Latina Diversity Officer in 1998, and in 2002 started her own consulting firm.

#### Of what are you most proud?

The ALA Spectrum Leadership Institutes are a proud accomplishment. The curriculum was culturally infused with indigenous *danzantes* [dancers] from Mexico, Africa, and Taiwan; storytelling from library elders; [and] lessons from one of Sitting Bull's great-grandsons.

#### What advice do you have for new librarians considering outreach?

Feed your soul and take care of your health. The challenge will be within the library...to create organizational support.

Photo courtesy of REFORMA.

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## Is Yours the Best Small Library in America?



Cosponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Best Small Library in America award honors the U.S. public library that most profoundly demonstrates outstanding service to populations of 25,000 or less. The winning institution will receive a \$20,000 cash award; two finalists win \$10,000.

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best and most appropriate books into our library,” said Shirleen Oplustic, a sixth grade language arts and history teacher at Las Colinas. “I’ll also be promoting the library so students and teachers who aren’t aware now will know it’s there and know it’s able to be used.”

Already, every student in the district has an OverDrive account. Greenlinger, concerned about ensuring that youngsters have access from home (as 30 percent of the student body qualifies for free or reduced lunch), ran a technology survey in February 2014 within the community among grades three through eight. What he found reassured him. Ninety-five percent of students had wireless access from home. Now, his goal is to find a way to fill that five percent gap.

“We’re going to see if there are any municipal partnerships we can form to solve it,” he said.

## One-Button Studios Used 4,500 Times per Year

The two “one button” simplified video recording studios at Pennsylvania State University (PSU) Library’s Tombros and McWhirter Knowledge Commons, University Park, have proven exceptionally popular and are now used for about 4,500 recording sessions per year, according to Justin Miller, media commons project manager for Penn State Educational Technology Services.

“The student population at University Park [campus] is around 45,000 students. So we’re seeing, per year, a group the size of ten percent of our student body using two rooms on a campus that is probably a mile long,” Miller said. “It’s fantastic.”

The studios, which enable students to produce professional-quality presentations and green screen recordings by simply plugging a flash drive into a USB port and pressing a single button, were initially launched in February 2012. Usage has grown rapidly ever since, and Penn State’s media commons team has continued to refine the studio model while rolling it out to the university’s other locations statewide. In November 2013, the team released a free iOS app, enabling other libraries and universities to build their own one-button studios. This summer, the studios were recognized at the American Library Association’s annual conference in Las Vegas as a “Cutting Edge Technology” trend.

Traditional studios were once a staple at more than 20 Penn State campuses. Yet “it was increasingly difficult to get students to use that space,” Miller said. “The workflow was complex, it was time-consuming.”

A few years ago, the media commons department acquired several Flip Video recorders to loan, and the simple handheld units soon demonstrated that there was significant demand on campus for an easy-to-use recording solution.

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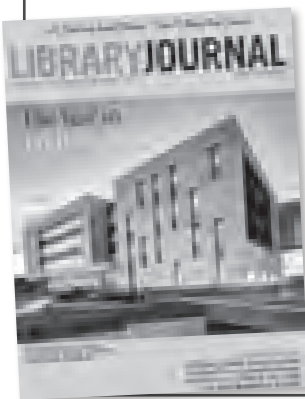
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## The Annual Architectural Issue

*Library Journal's* annual Year in Architecture roundup is in the November 15 issue. The 2014 compilation covers library building projects (public and academic; new builds, remodels, additions) completed from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014.

**Check at [ow.ly/zJZA](http://ow.ly/zJZA) for specifics on the online submission process.**

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The problem, however, was that the Flip Video recorders produced poor quality recordings.

“We thought, ‘What if we could achieve that same workflow but have the controlled environment of the studio?’” Miller said.

A proof of concept AppleScript was written in late 2010, and a new position was created to hire a developer, who then wrote the current iOS app.

The app is free, and a list of components needed to build a one-button studio is itemized with current

pricing in a guide published by PSU. A complete setup comparable to the studios at PSU costs about \$7,200.

## TX Superintendent Adopts Digitized Early Learning

A year ago, superintendent of the Weslaco Independent School District (WISD), TX, Ruben Alejandro signed his district up for a pilot program with digital learning company myON—which provides access to e-libraries for schools—to accelerate early learning across the community and empower every student with the necessary technological tools for a competitive 21st-century education.

For community outreach, Alejandro partnered with 21 day-care centers, three Head Start programs, the public library, and the community hospital.

“We wanted children to be exposed to the myON reading platform before birth,” said Alejandro, “so we told the [Welasco] community that expectant mothers should also be reading to their children.”

By providing access to books and reading before a child enters the school system, Alejandro hopes to reach to accelerate youngsters’ fluency, comprehension, and critical thinking skills.

The learning platform is free for students, parents, and community members to access via virtually any device with an Internet connection, and books, once downloaded (up to 20 at a time), can be read offline.

The platform includes approximately 7,000 titles with a focus on K–eight readers. Todd Brekhus, president of myON, said that what sets myON apart from other e-library platforms is that it “has a lot of built-in supports and built-in tracking. Teachers can go in there and create a playlist for their students’ assigned reading. [It also tracks] the [number] of books that are opened and how

## Chickens in the Stacks and Other Strange Tales

Tracking down doughnuts, contending with live chickens, and making medical diagnoses may not be the stuff of library school coursework, but perhaps they should be. In Gina Sheridan’s recent book *I Work at a Public Library: A Collection of Crazy Stories from the Stacks* (Adams Media, 2014), the Missouri-based librarian shares tales from her own experience and others’. Sheridan (pictured) began working as a librarian in Fresno, CA, in 2007. Becoming a librarian “was the best decision I’ve ever made,” she told *Hotline*. “I get to meet people from all walks of life, and helping people and problem-solving all day long is so gratifying.”



Sheridan began chronicling her daily adventures in 2010 on the Tumblr site *I Work at a Public Library*, and other librarians began to contribute. In true librarian form, she categorizes the book’s anecdotes and lists them by the appropriate Dewey number.

There are the queries that no reference course could prepare one for: “Can you tell me what babies were born in Cleveland in June 1965? I think I am one of them!” Another: “We want a biography of a dragon. No, an autobiography!”

Then there are the hilarious overheard patron exchanges: “I think we really should do the Facebook. Art and Frieda are doing it. We don’t want to be the only ones left.”

Librarians also find themselves providing general life advice and assistance—and, in some cases, lowering patrons’ expectations. One librarian described a man who brought in his résumé on a flash drive and said, “I’d like to apply for all the jobs on the Internet.”

A strong stomach may not be an official job requirement for librarians, but it can be an asset. One librarian told of a patron who came up to the desk, removed her shoe, and asked, “See how my foot is swollen? I need to Google it to see what’s wrong with it... Would you say it’s inflamed or irritated?” Another witnessed a man approach the desk and spit out a tooth, which he then pocketed before nonchalantly asking for computer help.

As for the chicken story, one librarian reported a patron saying she heard chickens clucking in the reference section. Skeptical, the librarian investigated, only to discover four backpacks, each containing a chicken. “We never found out why they were left or where they came from,” the librarian said, but “I promised myself I’d never doubt a patron again.”

Sheridan’s favorite tale? The story of an elderly man who requested her help tracking down the nearest Krispy Kreme store. It turned out the nearest shop was hundreds of miles away, but Sheridan had been planning a trip to Los Angeles, and she promised to bring the patron a box of the glazed doughnuts—in exchange for some information. What followed was an afternoon during which, over doughnuts, Sheridan became privy to the man’s incredible career as an editor, freelance photographer, and spy.

“The most valuable thing I’ve learned is how very important the public library is for people—for patrons who don’t have anyone else in their lives, for job seekers, parents, children, [and] students,” Sheridan said. “And for me...because I get paid to do what I love.”

much time students spend reading.” In addition, the system allows educators to track students’ reading comprehension. “There are quizzes and tests embedded at the end of chapters or the ends of the books.”

For English language learners (ELL), said Brekhus, “a lot of the books they have in myON are in English and Spanish...[there is also a] text-to-speech [function] that will translate from English to Spanish.”

One reason why WISD teamed up with myON was the high population of ELLs in the school’s district. Alejandro praised the platform’s tracking features, because “it checks the reading level [of the child logged in] and ties it to a Lexile score,” an easy tracking metric for teachers and administrators.

Javier Salinas, executive director for WISD’s elementary curriculum, noted that since the introduction

**Pat Brooks** retired as Children’s Librarian at Austin Memorial Library, Cleveland, TX. She had been with the library for six years.

**Rebecca Donnelly** was appointed Director of the Norwood Public Library, NY. She was previously its Interim Director.

**Ryan Gessner** is now Assistant Director, Middle Country Public Library, Centereach, NY. He was previously Coordinator for the library’s Computer and Technical Services Department.

**Beth Hoskin** was named Director of Publisher Relations and Services at WT Cox Information Services. She was previously Library Relations Coordinator of Duke University Press.


**Doug Reside** was appointed Curator of the Billy Rose Theatre Division at the New York

Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center. He was previously the library’s Digital Curator for the Performing Arts.

**Susan Swords Steffen**, Director of the A.C. Buehler Library at Elmhurst College, IL, received the 2014 Illinois Academic Librarian of the Year Award from the Illinois Library Association. It will be presented to her during the association’s annual conference, which is scheduled to be held October 14–16 at the Prairie Capital Convention Center in Springfield, IL.

**Melissa Yurechko** has been named Director of the Rowayton Library, Norwalk, CT. She was previously Head of Youth Services and Assistant Director at Connecticut’s Darien Library.

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of the myON pilot in 2013, students have not only “read half a million books this [school year and summer], but our Lexile levels have been growing up to about 70 to 90 points for kids at certain grade levels.”

The platform fits into the district’s Bring Your Own Device approach; for those who don’t have a device to bring, Alejandro said WISD will “usually allocate about a million dollars every year [for] computer replacement. We upgrade our system every few years, so we have [a limited number] of tablets available that kids can check out overnight or over the weekend for special projects.”

This year, WISD’s budget allowed the district to purchase myON on a districtwide basis for the cost of \$300,000 instead of buying the platform on a campus-by-campus basis. Seeing the potential to reach out to community members who already own smartphones and tablets, Ale-

jandro and myON came to an agreement, whereby myON would provide a pilot program for the entire Weslaco community to use as well.

The district is at the end of the first year of a three-year initiative, but it is already thinking of expanding the program to high school students.

## Darwin Online Digitizes Library of HMS *Beagle*

Charles Darwin’s voyage on the HMS *Beagle* is famous for having led to some of the most groundbreaking work in evolutionary biology. Almost every written work produced by Darwin on the ship—from his diary to his letters—has been made public.

Now they are joined by the materials that likely influenced Darwin’s thinking—the library on board the *Beagle*. John van Wyhe, a senior lecturer at the National University of Singapore, digitally reconstructed

the *Beagle* library. He said that this library, which has not existed as a collection for almost 180 years, is what he would have liked as a scholar when he was editing Darwin’s field notebooks in 2006.

“By putting it online this allows anyone to gain, in a very short time, a very different impression of Darwin’s voyage. One can almost instantly appreciate that he was not alone—he had the scientific work of many of his predecessors at his fingertips,” said van Wyhe.

The library, now accessible on the Darwin Online website, builds on a list created by the Darwin Correspondence Project, which initially listed 132 books aboard the *Beagle*. Additional research has been used to reconstruct the list so that van Whye’s ship’s library now has 404 searchable volumes, from geology to literary works, presumed to have been on the *Beagle* with Darwin. That comes to approximately 195,000 pages and more than 5,000 illustrations.

## White House Launches Library Maker Initiatives

On June 18, President Barack Obama hosted the first White House Maker Faire, at which people of all ages could showcase products they designed, created, and built using new technologies such as 3-D printers, design software, and cutting-edge laser technology. Obama declared it the “National Day of Making,” calling on “all Americans to observe this day with programs, ceremonies, and activities that encourage a new generation of Makers and manufacturers to share their talents and hone their skills.”

The event highlighted the administration’s commitment to “dramatically expanding the number of students that have the opportunity to become Makers” and investing

### News in Brief

The University of North Carolina (UNC), Chapel Hill, launched *North Carolina Scholarship Online*, a collection of 300 UNC Press titles, on Oxford University Press’s University Press Scholarship Online (UPSO) platform.

OCLC Research received the Presidential Citation from the Association for Library Collections & Technical Services. It was honored during the group’s awards ceremony in Las Vegas during the annual American Library Association conference.

Upper Hudson Library System (UHLS), Albany NY, selected Innovative Interface’s Sierra Library Services Platform. UHLS is a cooperative consortium consisting of 29 public libraries.

The San Jose Public Library Foundation (SJPLF), CA, was named the August Non-profit of the Month by online retailer therethere.com. For the month of August, ten

percent of all therethere online sales will be donated to SJPLF.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services awarded grants to libraries in the Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States: Feleti Barstow Public Library, Pago Pago, AS; Joeten-Kiyu Public Library, Saipan, MP; Northern Mariana Islands; and Alele Museum, Public Library, and National Archives, Majuro, MH, Marshall Islands.

Nine institutions in the UK have partnered to have their 19th-century book collections digitized and added to the online UK Medical Heritage Library: University of Bristol; University College of London; University of Glasgow; University of Leeds; King’s College London; London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine; Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh; Royal College of Physicians of London; and Royal College of Surgeons of England.

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in those who want to use science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) to create innovative products and solutions, according to the White House fact sheet.

This push for STEM initiatives to reach at-risk youths, who traditionally lack access to STEM education, will be carried out through federal grants administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), with free toolkits provided by LEGO Systems.

“We really want to see how a library will provide services and programming around the Maker space,” IMLS director Susan Hildreth told *Hotline*. “[The] White House truly understands the flexibility, trust, and adaptability that libraries bring into communities.”

At the White House Maker Faire, IMLS announced that of its \$25 million in discretionary library grants, \$1 million would be dedicated to applications focusing on STEM initiatives and Maker spaces in libraries.

Additionally, IMLS will be collaborating with partners such as the Pittsburgh Children’s Museum and the Chicago Public Library to create Maker space toolkits, which will be put together over the next year and a half and be accessible online through IMLS for free. The toolkits will contain information on available grants, advice on applications, and possible designs and examples of what other libraries and museums have done to further STEM education with their Maker spaces at various funding levels.

The White House also acknowledged the launch of informal Maker spaces in libraries supported by free toolkits created by LEGO Systems and the LEGO Foundation. LEGO is partnering with the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) on the “Junior Makers Program,” aimed at children between the ages of four and six. Beginning in August,



The San Antonio Public Library (SAPL) has applied a final coat of paint to the remodeled **Cortez Branch Library** (pictured), which reopened after several weeks of work. The 9,000 square foot, \$297,000 project includes new furniture, a camera-based security system, an updated circulation desk and workstations, a fresh public computing space, a rehabbed HVAC system, and improved irrigation and landscaping. Similarly, SAPL is renovating the 13,000 square foot **Tobin at Oakwell Branch**, which will reopen on September 2. Both projects are part of SAPL’s Extreme Library Makeover Initiative, which began in 2013.

The **Max Milam Library**, Perryville, AR, part of the Central Arkansas Library System (CALs), broke ground on Friday, August 15, for a 4,467 square foot addition, bringing the building’s total area to 9,900 square feet. Designed by Herron Horton Architects, with contracting services by Bell Construction

Co., the expanded space will encompass the new children’s wing, a new meeting room, and a bonus computer area. The \$1.3 million effort is being funded through a millage ballot approved in December 2013.

The **Central Library** of the Tyler Public Library, TX, is undergoing a face-lift. In early August, the 50,000 square foot structure began renovations that will last into mid-October;

the 30-plus-year-old library will remain open during construction. The upgrades include the children’s stacks and reading area, which will have a “cottage front” façade. New ceiling panels and an up-to-date sound system will be installed in the Taylor Auditorium, per the *Tyler Morning Telegraph*. Other upgrades will involve restrooms, signage, and the outdoor covered patio. Funding comes from a \$636,000 bequest from the estate of library patron Joyce Kathryn Findley, per the *Telegraph*.

The **George F. Johnson Memorial Library**, Endicott, NY, is looking to upgrade its nearly 50-year-old building through a \$37,000 New York State Construction Grant. Part of a major \$14 million statewide program, the money will help the library replace its outdated fluorescent lights with energy-efficient LED fixtures. The Johnson library is the second most active facility in the state’s Four County Library System, according to Pressconnect.com.

Send information on groundbreakings and ongoing and completed building projects to [blfox@mediasourceinc.com](mailto:blfox@mediasourceinc.com)





children’s librarians can access the online toolkit on the ALSC website to host LEGO-inspired Maker spaces. LEGO’s digital toolkit will include instructions for building structures and scenes that come with popular LEGO sets.

LEGO and ALSC also partnered to distribute physical LEGO Maker space toolkits to 750 libraries, 15 in each state capital, through a lottery process. Each includes 10,000 LEGO blocks and other resource materials for educators.






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