

## ACRL 2015: A Breath of Fresh Air

The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) 2015 Conference, held in Portland, OR, March 25–28, was by all accounts an upbeat event. Some 3,390 registrants attended in person, plus more than 300 virtual conferencegoers, from all 50 states and 24 countries. A record-setting 1,250 of all registrants were first-time attendees. The conference offered some 500 panels, papers, poster sessions, workshops, roundtable discussions, keynotes, and events, and on the exhibit floor 245 vendors and companies showcased a variety of products and services.

The conference's inaugural keynote was given by writer and cartoonist G. Willow Wilson, who told the packed auditorium, "As librarians, we have the power to plant the seeds of dialog and understanding."

Jad Abumrad, founder and host of the public radio show *Radiolab*, gave the middle keynote. He recalled the early days of working on *Radiolab*, noting that his message applied to the uncertainties that every librarian

there faced: "You guys are in a thing right now, a transitional moment."

The final keynote was presented by Lawrence Lessig, Roy L. Furman Professor of Law and Leadership at Harvard Law School and director of



the Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics at Harvard University. Though perhaps best known for his work founding Creative Commons, Lessig has moved on to focus on net neutrality and campaign finance reform. The essence of his presentation was that these three fights, while seemingly disparate, are essentially connected.

Though not a keynote, executive director of the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) Heather Joseph's invited paper on Open Expansion: Connect-

ing the Open Access, Open Data and OER Dots similarly forged a common framework among open access publishing, open data, and open educational resources (textbooks).

Some overarching threads ran through the program, such as social media: in *Libraries Using Twitter Better: Insights on Engagement from Food Trucks*, Katie Emery, assistant librarian at Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis, and Todd Schifeling, PhD candidate from the University of Michigan, tracked reciprocal mentions among academic libraries and gourmet food trucks.

For their paper *Bypassing Interlibrary Loan via Twitter: An Exploration of #icanhazpdf Requests*, Carolyn Caffrey Gardner, information literacy and educational technology librarian at the University of Southern California, and Gabriel Gardner, librarian for romance, German, Russian languages and literatures at California State University, Long Beach, examined use of the hashtag #icanhazpdf to access paywalled articles.

Another recurring theme was tapping the resources of students to scale and support information goals. Ilana

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## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

### The Digital Shift: Libraries Connecting Communities

*Library Journal* and *School Library Journal* are looking for a wide variety of program proposals for this virtual event, to be held on October 14, 2015.

Visit [www.thedigitalshift.com/tds/call-for-proposals-the-digital-shift-2015/](http://www.thedigitalshift.com/tds/call-for-proposals-the-digital-shift-2015/)

**Deadline for submissions is May 12.**

Stonebraker, assistant professor and business information specialist, and Tao Zhang, digital user experience specialist/assistant professor of library science, both of Purdue University, pre-

## Interview

### Michelle Jeske

On March 2, Michelle Jeske stepped into her new role as Denver Public Library (DPL) city librarian. Physically, she did not have far to go: Jeske—a 2005 *Library Journal* Mover & Shaker—had been working at DPL since 2001, most recently as director of collections, technology, and innovation.



#### What are some new initiatives you're excited about?

We have one we're calling "Taking It to the Streets," about getting out of the buildings and

showing up in unexpected places. We have a DPL Connect bike that goes out to festivals, events, farmers markets. It's convenient for our current customers, showing up and letting them check out books, or showing them how to use ebooks, wherever they are—in the park, or at a festival—but really more focused on demonstrating that the library is relevant to potential new customers.

#### In your 2005 Movers & Shakers profile, so many of your innovations have become business as usual ten years later. What are you doing now that should become standard practice by 2025?

Something we started last year is Dev-Camp, a summer web development camp for teens. They work side by side with web developers and coders from the community to learn JavaScript, CSS, and HTML and work in teams to create their own websites. The kids get a chance to visit some of the fun tech start-up companies in town, see their cool spaces, and hear what it's like to work in that field.

sented **Crowdsourcing Reference Help: Using Technology To Help Users Help Each Other**. Their pilot web-based help system, "CrowdAsk," lets students ask and answer questions related to library resources and services in real time.

Meanwhile, three different poster sessions explored the effectiveness of peer teaching and research assistance models. One of them, **Out of the Library and into the Residence Halls: Providing Peer Research Assistance Where Students Live**, presented by Benjamin Oberdick of Michigan State University, is situated at the intersection of two trends—taking services out of the library and into residence halls.

Tailoring library service models to specific student needs was another visible theme. At **Developing Best Practices for Serving Transgender Patrons at Academic Library Service Points**, Rebecca Marrall, diversity and disability services librarian at Western Washington University Libraries, Bellingham, advised placing a preferred names and pronouns policy into library software, putting an inclusion statement on syllabi, and creating gender-neutral restrooms.

In **Beyond Service: New Outreach Strategies To Reach Student Veterans**, Sarah LeMire, first-year experience and outreach librarian at Texas A&M University Libraries, advised being conscious that modern library space design, with its open floor plans and busier, noisier atmosphere, may be a poor fit for students with post-traumatic stress disorder.

In **We Have Only Scratched the Surface: The Role of Student Research in Institutional Repositories [IR]**, Danielle Barandiaran, IR coordinator; Becky Thoms, scholarly communication and copyright librarian; and Betty Rozum, associate dean of technical services, all of Utah State University, looked at the practice of archiving undergraduate research.

As grant funders require more

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data preservation and sharing, the library role is expanding to help faculty manage those tasks as well. The University of Michigan's Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) offered an informative session titled **From Data Sharing to Data Stewardship: Meeting Federal Data Sharing Requirements**. ICPSR's assistant director of collection delivery Linda Detterman and director of curation services Jared Lyle outlined a series of best practices for making the results of federally funded scientific research publicly available and accessible for the long term.

In honor of its 75th Anniversary, ACRL commissioned a collection of essays from library leaders on **New Roles for the Road Ahead**. Contributors Steven Bell, associate university librarian at Temple University, Philadelphia; Lorcan Dempsey, VP of OCLC research and chief strategist; and Barbara Fister, professor and academic

librarian at Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, MN, joined Council on Library and Information Resources' Chuck Henry for a thought-provoking panel on the ideas behind the monograph—which Henry referred to as an “existential guidebook.”

## Missouri Library Funds Restored; FY16 in Flux

Missouri libraries last week celebrated the long-awaited—and surprising—news that Gov. Jay Nixon was releasing almost \$6 million in FY15 state aid that had previously been withheld since June, a resolution to a stalemate that spawned a growing statewide lobbying effort.

In all, Nixon released \$43 million in appropriations, covering some 20 programs across a wide spectrum of spending areas he termed “priorities.” About \$2.78 million of that is earmarked for general state aid to lo-

cal libraries, with another \$3.1 million covering an Internet resource service known as REAL (Remote Electronic Access for Libraries).

A total of \$6.6 million was budgeted for library state aid in the FY15 budget passed by the legislature and signed by Nixon, including \$3.5 million covering per capita aid to districts and “equalization aid,” a supplemental payout to libraries operating in low-income communities with the smallest tax bases.

But last June, the governor announced that the separate \$2.78 million and \$3.1 million appropriations would be withheld, owing to revenue shortfalls. Nixon did release about \$724,000 in per capita aid for libraries serving communities of fewer than 40,000 people, but that did not lessen the outcry from library officials.

But Missouri libraries may have resolved one budget crisis only to run headlong into another. News of the state aid's release came as library officials nervously awaited completion of the FY16 budget by state lawmakers.

Substantial rollbacks in library aid appear inevitable, according to conversations with several library leaders. A grim tone was set when Nixon's own FY16 budget recommendation included zero dollars for Internet services and the elimination of the \$2.78 million in state aid.

A spending bill passed by the state House of Representatives budgeted \$723,776 for state aid and \$3.1 million for the REAL program. But that was only a first step in a fluid budget process being closely monitored by leading Missouri library officials.

The Senate's budget bills include some money for REAL, but it was not immediately clear how much. If it's less (or more) than \$3.1 million, a House-Senate conference committee would be needed to resolve the disparity, and no one is sure how that could turn out for libraries.

## People

**Sonia Alcantara-Antoine** was appointed Public Services Manager at Virginia Beach Public Library. She was previously State Library Resource Center Manager at Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore.

**Laurie Gemmill Arp**, Director of Digital & Preservation Services at Lyasis, was appointed to the Ohio State Library Board, Columbus.

**Lawrence Giffin** was named Electronic Records Archivist at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He was previously Electronic Records Archivist at the Digital Services Section of the State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh.

**Julia Huprich** was named Director of Continuing Education at Georgia Public Library Service, Atlanta. She was previously Head of Digital Library Services and Communications at Cobb County Public Library System, Marietta, GA.

**Sophia Serlis-McPhillips**, Director, Middle Country Public Library, Centereach, NY, was honored with a 2015 Women's Recognition Award by Brookhaven town supervisor Ed Romaine.

**Lance Werner**, Director, Kent District Library, MI, was elected to serve on the Advisory Board for the School of Library and Information Science at Wayne State University, Detroit.

## In Memoriam

**John L. Shaloiko**, Executive Director of the Southeastern New York Library Resources Council, Highland, from 1993 to 2014, died on March 29. He was 63 years old.

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## Law Lets Schools Request Student Passwords

In January, an Illinois law known as Public Act 098-0129 went into effect, allowing school districts and colleges to request students' social media passwords. While the bill was designed to protect students from cyberbullying, parents and teachers alike expressed reservations that it was overly broad and violated students' right to privacy.

The bill stipulates that schools can only request passwords provided there is reasonable cause to believe an account contains evidence of a violated disciplinary rule or policy. However, what constitutes "reasonable cause" remains unclear, as do the actions schools may take if a student refuses to hand over a password.

A new bill has been introduced to amend the act, which would require schools to obtain a search warrant before requesting a student's password, but at press time there was no clear sense of when, or if, it will pass both of Illinois's legislative houses.

The act raises questions about a broader issue, namely, how educational systems are already monitoring students' social media activity. There have been reported cases of school districts and colleges across the country hiring private companies to track students' online activity, including their public posts on social media sites, for keywords and references to topics such as eating disorders, suicide, or drugs.

Besides a relatively new California state law that addresses social media observation in schools, there is little legislative oversight.

Monitoring students' social media for other purposes, including security during state testing, has come under scrutiny recently after Pearson State Assessment Services was outed for this practice in March. Pearson subcontracts Caveon Test Security, a private company, to check up on

kids' social media while administering tests, in this case, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) tests.

Pearson had notified the New Jersey Department of Education (DOE) of a "Priority 1 alert about an item breach within [a] school." The DOE suggested the student under investigation had tweeted a photo of a test question dur-

ing an exam. However, it was discovered the student had tweeted about one of the test items, with no image, well after the examination was over.

In defense of its practices, Pearson spokesman Jesse Comart said that the company has found more than 70 instances in six states of students posting testing materials on a public social media site.

## First Book, Unbound Concepts Match Readers and Books

On March 16, the Baltimore-based nonprofit First Book and technology company Unbound Concepts announced a partnership with the goal of matching new books with young readers from low-income families. The endeavor will pair Unbound Concepts' Artifact app with First Book's existing marketplace in order to match students with personalized reading recommendations.

First Book is a nonprofit that provides new books to children in need, primarily by offering material to educators at a 50–90 percent discount. Unbound Concepts is a reading-focused technology company, and its web and mobile app Artifact—often described as "Pandora for books"—harness data from readers, educators, publishers, and machine learning, which constructs algorithms that can make predictions from examples, to uncover the unique attributes of books and then turns those attributes into searchable criteria.

Each unique searchable attribute of the book, or "artifact" (likened to a tag or subject heading), might describe such things as topics, questions, literary elements, maturity warnings, and more. This enables users to identify books with similar characteristics.

What sets Artifact apart is its bottom-up ontological structure and emphasis on user-generated content and computational text analysis to create a web of content fitting the needs of its users. There are currently more than 700 artifacts arranged into categories such as Essential Questions, Literary Elements, Themes, and Topics. The artifacts range from very broad to extremely granular.

Ideally these überspecific artifacts will allow readers and educators to pick up on common threads, discovering multiple books dealing with nuanced concepts to meet their library and/or classroom needs. Search can also be limited to books within a particular Lexile range, with a particular accelerated reader score, or that have been reviewed by *Library Journal* or *School Library Journal*.

The two organizations offer a series of free sessions called QuickStarts for educators who are already qualified to use the First Book marketplace but want to combine it with the app. These sessions provide training on how to make personalized reading recommendations for students and tailor classroom collections to meet specific needs, as well as how to dig deeper into what's already on their library's shelves.

Beyond the QuickStart sessions, said Unbound Concepts' director of marketing Brad Schleicher, Artifact currently has more than 25,000 users. As that user base grows with this collaboration, the web of concepts will unfold for even more valuable and complex searching as users tag books to suit their needs, paving the way for more robust artifacts.



There have also been high-profile cases with regard to cyberbullying. The Glendale Unified School District, CA, hired the firm Geo Listening to look after its students' social media accounts for evidence of cyberbullying. In Alabama, Huntsville City Schools hired an outside security firm to investigate students' activity on social media, leading to the con-

troversial suspension of 14 students, 12 of whom were African American. (Only 40 percent of the student population is black.)

What it boils down to in Illinois—at the moment—is student privacy. Christopher Ball, parent of a Chicago sixth grader, said the Illinois act concerns him. “They should need a warrant,” he said, pointing to a recent

case in Minnesota in which school administrators forcibly obtained a student's Facebook password to investigate allegations that she had been sending sexually explicit content. Her parents sued, and the school district ended up paying \$70,000 in damages.

## Philadelphia Alliance Opens 18th Library

“Growing up as a kid in West Philly, libraries were my sanctuary,” said David Brown, the executive director of the West Philadelphia Alliance for Children (WePAC), a nonprofit organization that staffs and reopens elementary school libraries in West and Southwest Philadelphia.

On February 3, 2015, Brown was on site at West Philadelphia's Andrew Hamilton Public Elementary School to reopen the closed library. The organization has helped to open 18 school libraries overall in the School District of Philadelphia (SDP), which has faced widespread facility closures and staff reductions. Approximately 95 percent of SDP schools lack a library program, according to Deb Kachel, cochair of the legislation committee for the Pennsylvania School Librarians Association.

WePAC focuses on grades K–4 and partnered with the Philadelphia literacy coalition READ! by Fourth, a “citywide effort that aims to boost the share of students entering 4th grade, reading at grade level by 2020.” One of WePAC's initiatives has been to offer books, volunteer staff, literacy programs, read-alouds, and author visits.

In 1991, there were 176 certified librarians in SDP, according to the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Today, there are 11 licensed media specialists serving 218 schools in the entire district. Ten percent of all school library jobs have been lost in the last four years.

The eighth largest school district in the nation, SDP serves more than

## Branching Out



The **Norfolk Public Library**, NE, garnered support and funding for its proposed expansion project with voter approval in November 2014 of a .5¢ tax increase for a 36-month period, according to KTIV. The \$7.4 million effort will include adding 16,000 square feet to the 22,000 square foot building, enlarging the parking area and programming space, updating staff work areas, improving the

A miracle (comparatively) in the Nutmeg State. The 100,000 square foot **Charles E. Shain Library** (pictured), Connecticut College, New London, completed a roughly \$10 million renovation (see *Hotline*, 6/9/14) five months ahead of schedule, according to *The Day*. Under consideration for 15 years, the nine-month project, designed by Schwartz/Silver Architects, features large windows, group study areas, and technology upgrades. Among the latter is the Diane Y. Williams '59 Visualization Wall, a 24-panel interactive screen situated in the building's technology commons. The \$300,000 amenity can transmit information simultaneously from multiple devices, including iPhones. In addition, the popular Blue Camel Café is now on the first floor, in an enlarged 24-hour space. The facility is open to the public; a community user card, required for access to some materials, is available for purchase, per *The Day*.

children's section, expanding the teen zone, and extending room for the collection, among other features. The tax took effect on April 1, with design work expected to begin in June.

The new **Effingham Public Library**, IL, is on its way, with funding finalized through the attainment of \$2 million in general obligation promissory notes, according to the *Effingham Daily News*. The current 12,000 square foot Helen Matthes Public Library has been deemed too small for the community's needs. The 27,000 square foot, \$3.5 million bank building conversion project, designed by Johnson Roberts Associates, will include glass walls for visibility, a Wi-Fi accessible café overlooking a park, an upper-level expanded children's space with craft area, and upgraded interior finishes, described by library director Amanda McKay as “contemporary with a hint of modern style,” per the *Daily News*. The construction is looking at a late summer completion.

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206,000 students, according to data on its website, and has lost over 5,000 jobs in the last three years. Sixty percent of students in the district are unable to read at grade level.

When WePAC partners with a school to open a library, the whole process takes about six to eight months, Brown said. Schools are screened for participation in the program, and Brown looks for certain criteria to indicate that the facility is a good match, including the physical state of the space, whether there is good partnership between the school principal and the surrounding community, whether there is a critical mass of school library volunteers to keep the library staffed, and the school's book collection.

West Philadelphia has 37 school library facilities. For WePAC to reopen the library at Andrew Hamilton, the book collection had to be weeded—and much of it replaced—because it was “outdated to the point of being politically incorrect and racist,” said Brown. He wanted new books that contained characters resembling the largely African American kids who attend the school.

The nonprofit depends entirely on in-kind and cash donations; keeping a library open for one to two days a week costs between \$15,000 and \$20,000 over a ten-month period. Some reopened libraries only operate after school, while others serve students during school hours, depending on volunteer availability.

Brown emphasized that volunteer staff cannot replace full-time certified librarians. “We see ourselves as a stopgap, not as a solution.” However, he said, “Someone needs to take ownership and responsibility.”

## Hugo Nominations Stir Controversy

The April 4 announcement of this year's Hugo Awards short list, voted

**Andrew G. Truxal Library at Anne Arundel Community College**, Arnold, MD, received the 2015 Community and Junior College Libraries Section EBSCO Community College Learning Resources Award for its Virtual Writing Center program.

The **American Library Association** announced the shortlist for its 2015 Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence in Fiction: Anthony Doerr's *All the Light We Cannot See* (Scribner), Colm Tóibín's *Nora Webster* (Scribner), and Chang-rae Lee's *On Such a Full Sea* (Riverhead). And in Nonfiction: Bryan Stevenson's *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* (Spiegel & Grau), Elizabeth Kolbert's *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History* (Holt), and Lawrence Wright's *Thirteen Days in September: Carter, Begin, and Sadat at Camp David* (Knopf).

**The Rare Book & Manuscript Library and Department of Music at Columbia Univer-**

sity, New York, have partnered with the **Serge Prokofiev Foundation** to present a recital of works by composer Prokofiev (1891–1953) at Columbia's Italian Academy on April 24. The performance celebrates the university's acquisition of the Prokofiev Archive.

The **Black Country Libraries Partnership**, UK, selected **Innovative's Sierra Library Services Platform** and **Encore Discovery**.

**Elsevier** received awards in the College category from the **Text and Academic Authors Association** for four of its books: *Forensic Anthropology: Current Methods and Practice* by Angi M. Christensen, Nicholas V. Passalacqua, and Eric J. Bartelink; *Human Reproductive Biology*, 4th ed., by Richard E. Jones and Kristin H. Lopez; *Paleoclimatology: Reconstructing Climates of the Quaternary*, 3d ed., by Raymond S. Bradley; and *Chemical Fate and Transport in the Environment*, 3d ed., by Harold F. Hemond and Elizabeth J. Fechner.

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on by members of the annual World Science Fiction Convention (Worldcon), was met with bewildered and outraged responses on Twitter and various sf websites. At issue, Charlie Jane Anders noted in her post for the io9 blog, is the politicization of what should have been a selection process based on literary merit.

Beyond the Best Novel category, which includes Nebula nominees Ann Leckie (*Ancillary Sword*, Orbit: Hachette) and Katherine Addison (*The Goblin Emperor*, Tor), most choices in the other categories (Best Novella, Best Novelette, Best Short Stories, Best Related Work) came from two fan block-voting campaigns: Sad Puppies, organized by sf authors Brad R. Torgersen and Larry Correia, and the Rabid Puppies slate, headed by fantasy writer Vox Day (real name Theodore Beale).

The Urban Dictionary defines the

term *sad puppies* as “a male pushover type who bows down to females.” In this context, it's the chosen moniker of politically conservative sf writers upset by last year's Hugo winners, a mostly younger group of women and people of color. Torgersen and Correia criticized the current “fandom” as elitist and out of touch with pop culture.

While the Puppies' actions were within the nominating rules of the Hugos, many fans plan to vote “No Award” in every category except Best Novel. Some authors on the Puppies' slates are turning down their nominations, but there is no word yet whether Jim Butcher (*Skin Game*, ROC: NAL), Kevin J. Anderson (*The Dark Between the Stars*, Tor), and Marko Kloos (*Lines of Departure*, 47North) will follow suit.

The winners will be announced August 22 at the 2015 WorldCon in Spokane.

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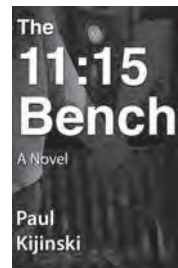
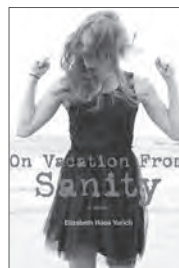


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