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**Breaking News! This just in…**

**Congratulations to MLA’s 2024/2025 Officers!**

- VP/Pres Elect – David Dahl
- Secretary – Laura Bandoch
- ACRL VP/Pres Elect – Katherine Strain
- ACRL Secretary – Shaune Pyle
- CSD VP/Pres Elect – Jessica Letizia
- CSD Secretary – Karen Earp
- LDD VP/Pres Elect – Ana Carroll
- LDD Secretary – Kalyn Au
- PSD VP/Pres Elect – Sara Szymanski
- PSD Secretary – Melissa Lauber
- SSD VP/Pres Elect – Maria Jacob
- SSD Secretary – Nicole McLain
- Black Caucus VP/Pres Elect – Genive Purchase
- Black Caucus Secretary – Cecilia Thomas
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**Meet Jo Powers** 61
Are you ready for spring? The cherry trees are stunning, blooming early outside my branch’s window, and I hear more and more songbirds on the library’s campus. The warmer weather and longer days also signal news, events and planning from MLA and our divisions, committees, and interest groups as the 2024 MLA/DLA Conference approaches.

Our spring and summer issues bookend the announcement and presentation of the MLA Awards. Catherine Hollerbach again shares a summary of the exceptional award winners who will receive their awards at Conference. Please look for photos of the presentations in the July issue and join me in congratulating all of the very deserving winners on their awards.

Speaking of awards, it was exciting to learn that BC-MLA secretary and EDI Panel member Shirley Mason received a special Support Service Award from Baker & Taylor and the Black Caucus of the American Library Association at LibLearnX 2024 in January. Shirley, who was recognized for her customer service, mentorship, trailblazing work, and many accomplishments within Baltimore County Public Library, BCPL’s Black Library Workers Affinity Association, and the Black Caucus of the Maryland Library Association, is profiled this month as one of our “Library People.” Read about her exceptional work there and in the EDI Panel’s column from Sharon Morris that highlights and celebrates her award.

The “Library People” feature is one of my favorite columns in the Crab, with profiles of our colleagues statewide. This quarter, we also highlight Jo Powers from Talbot County Free Library. Jo was suggested by Chelsea Shockley, MLA’s Assistant Conference Director, for her amazing work as co-chair of the Conference social committee this year. As we gear up for the Conference in May, aptly titled “Seeds of Change,” be sure to take advantage of all the resources shared in this issue. Conference Director Anita Crawford continues her informative quarterly updates, providing a “tasting menu” of just a few of the learning opportunities taking place. We also have an update from Brianna Hughes about ACRI. MD’s poster sessions, and information about sponsoring Silent Auction raffle baskets from Pam Taylor.

The Conference committee has done a lot of planning and groundwork to make this year’s Conference the best yet! We look forward to sharing the results of their hard work and preparation with you in the July issue of the Crab. If you’re attending, presenting and/or volunteering at Conference, we invite you to submit articles and features about what you see, share, experience and learn. Hope to see you there!

Julie Fitzpatrick, MLA Crab Editor
Howard County Library System

Editor’s Note
Hey there, library champions! It’s your friendly neighborhood President popping into your inbox for a quick chat in this latest edition of the Crab. Okay, ChatGPT obviously wrote that. I could never write something so catchy and cool. We are moving towards a new season, one filled with many library conferences and lots of library advocacy work to do, and I am so grateful for everyone’s work for the Association and Maryland libraries in general.

The past few months were filled with a lot of member-driven advocacy work in support of all Maryland libraries. MLA published letters and submitted written testimony in support of the Freedom To Read Act that is currently making its way through the state legislature. This act focuses on protecting library workers and library collections. We also made our voice heard against a new policy enacted by the Carroll County Board of Education. Articles in Maryland Matters and The Washington Post highlighted the work you all and our association do to bolster all Maryland libraries and library workers.

In mid-February, library supporters descended into Annapolis for our annual Maryland Libraries Legislative Day. I want to extend extraordinary gratitude to the people who planned and executed this event, including Andrea Berstler, Morgan Miller, Kate Morgan and Leah Sims. Your dedication, expertise and collaborative spirit were instrumental in making this event successful. Thanks to your meticulous planning and attention to detail, our legislative day was well-attended by people who work in and support Maryland libraries and our elected officials, and it was incredibly engaging and impactful. From crafting compelling agendas to coordinating logistics and outreach efforts, your contributions ensured our message resonated with legislators.

As we look ahead, I am excited about the opportunities and challenges that lie before us. Our profession is evolving rapidly, driven by technological advancements, shifting community needs and a renewed focus on information, access, equity and inclusion. As leaders in the field, it is incumbent upon us to embrace these changes, adapt to new realities and continue to champion the vital role of libraries in our society.

In my candidate statement, I said that MLA is strong when its membership is strong. I am in awe of the work you all do. Maryland libraries are as impactful and resilient as they are because of the work you do as members of the Maryland Library Association.
Greetings MLA!

Happy Spring! As goes Mother Nature so goes MLA, as we spring into a very active time of year. Soon, some of us will be attending the annual MLA/DLA Conference in Cambridge, aptly titled Seeds of Change. If you have not already registered, please do so soon. It is going to be a wonderful conference and our last at the Cambridge Hyatt.

Other things on the horizon include Leadership Orientation Day. This is a valuable experience for those who have been voted or appointed into leadership positions, providing opportunities to learn, network and plan for the year. Be on the lookout for that date to be announced.

As your Vice President/President Elect, I have been gearing up for the upcoming year by formulating goals and speaking with library staff, in addition to working hard with my team members on the MLA Audit Group subcommittee. We are creating a framework for MLA Interest Groups and Divisions that will increase engagement opportunities for all our members.

In March, I attended Voices for Libraries 2024 in Washington, DC as a member of the Maryland delegation of the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies. This was a wonderful opportunity to network with librarians and executive directors from across the country and to speak with our senators, thanking them for their support and advocating for library funding and legislative needs.

On a local advocacy note, I also attended Library Legislative Day in Annapolis in February. Again, we spoke to our local delegates and senators, advocating for funding and the Maryland Freedom to Read Bill. It was encouraging to see so many library staff from across the state arrive in great numbers to support what we stand for and how we support and meet the needs of our communities. Additionally, Library Day was proclaimed in the Maryland General Assembly, and many of us were there to watch our current MLA President, Tiffany Sutherland, receive the proclamation. At the ALA meeting our State Librarian, Irene Padilla, was recognized for her many years of service and dedication. Irene will be retiring this year, and she will be greatly missed.

Finally, I wish to congratulate all the newly elected MLA leaders for FY 25. I look forward to working with all of you in the upcoming year.
Report from MLA’s ALA Chapter Councilor, Spring 2024

Joseph Thompson, Carroll County Public Library

THIS IS MY SECOND REPORT as your new Chapter Councilor, serving as Maryland Library Association representative on the Council of the American Library Association (ALA). It’s also the first time that I get the chance to report back to you on meetings that took place in person, which were held during the ALA LibLearnX conference here in Baltimore from January 20 to 22.

It’s worth highlighting first that our own MLA President, Tif Sutherland, kicked off the conference at the opening session on Saturday morning. Tif offered thanks to all the local partners, including the Maryland Association of School Librarians, Maryland State Library Agency and the Delaware Library Association.

For Council, Saturday afternoon began with a short meeting of the ALA Allied Professional Association (ALA APA), a nonprofit companion organization to ALA that focuses on supporting the interests of library workers. After approving the hybrid council rules, agenda and minutes from the past ALA APA meeting, the ALA Council I meeting began and approved its own hybrid council rules, agenda and past minutes. The Nominations Committee presented a slate of candidates to serve on the ALA Executive Board. I voted “yes,” and the slate was approved.

The Membership Committee presented a simplification of the ALA personal dues (effective fiscal year 2025), which I voted in favor of. These were approved as follows: Individual Type I, $125; Individual Type II, $55; Supporter, $70; Student, $40. The Committee on Organization proposed expanding the ALA Committee on Appointments membership to include the four elected members of Committees of Council to assist with reviewing and advising on standing committee appointments. I voted in favor of the motion, and it was approved.

The Council II meeting began on Sunday afternoon with the adoption of Memorial and Tribute resolutions, which included a Tribute Resolution honoring Irene Padilla as Maryland State Librarian and recognizing her achievements and distinguished 50-year career as a respected library innovator, leader and mentor. The resolution adopted by Council can be accessed here. We are grateful that Irene was able to join us to receive this honor in person!

The International Relations Committee presented a report which included a resolution to condemn the damage and destruction of libraries and other cultural institutions in Gaza. This resolution was targeted and utilized language consistent with earlier resolutions approved by ALA during previous conflicts. I voted in favor of this resolution, and it did pass. Another resolution relating to the situation in Gaza was brought forward that would have resolved for ALA to...
call for an immediate ceasefire. I did not vote in favor of this resolution, and it did not pass.

The Bylaws Committee presented a resolution on Executive Board participation and observation. Following an approved amendment (which I did not think necessary and voted “no”), I voted yes on the resolution, and it was approved.

The Core Values Task Force presented a report on their work since 2021 and a motion to refine the existing statements by adopting more concise and memorable Core Values. Following a motion to extend the work of the task force for an additional six months, which did not pass, motions passed to amend the ALA Policy Manual by striking the current policy, inserting the Core Values of Librarianship as presented and to assign working groups, committees or round tables to write interpretations for each Core Value. I voted in favor of each of these two passing motions.

As of this writing, the next ALA Council meetings will take place during the ALA Annual Conference 2024 in San Diego, California this June. I’ll be providing a report after those meetings in a future issue of the Crab.

As always, if you have any questions about the work of ALA Council, please feel free to reach out!
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2024 MLA/DLA Conference Update: Seeds of Change

Anita Crawford, MLA Conference Director
Baltimore County Public Library

This year’s 2024 MLA/DLA Conference, Seeds of Change, is going to be informative, engaging and thought-provoking, and we’ll have plenty of fun splashed in as well. I look forward to seeing many of you during the conference!

For this issue’s feature, I decided to provide you all with a tasting menu of just a few of the amazing learning opportunities happening throughout the conference. Be sure to check out the full listing of programs and events here.

We kick off the conference on Wednesday with all our pre-conference sessions. All pre-conferences are purchased in addition to the registration fee and come with a boxed lunch of your choosing. All free events do not come with a boxed lunch.

If you see a pre-conference session that interests you, but you did not initially register for one, there is still time to register/pay and secure your spot. Reach out to the MLA office (mla@mdlib.org) and they will assist you!
Wednesday, May 8, 2024

Learning Opportunities

9 a.m.–4 p.m. (All Day)

The Secret Powers and Challenges of Introverted Leadership ($100)

Librarianship, a profession with a significant number of introverts, presents a unique opportunity to explore and embrace the strengths and abilities that introverted individuals bring to leadership roles. This workshop aims to provide insights into introversion and power structures, focusing on the four types of introversion, the superpowers of introverts, and what happens to some introverts in power during times of stress and trauma. This very interactive workshop will allow participants to spend time examining real-life library case studies that will provide unique insight into human behavior. Speaker: Elaina Norlin

9 a.m.–12 p.m.

Creating and Sustaining Meaningful Library Services for Incarcerated People and People in Reentry ($60)

People who are incarcerated need access to library services. Implementing these services takes thoughtful planning and a broad understanding of how jails, juvenile detention centers and prisons function. This session will provide background information and examples of existing library services for people negatively impacted by incarceration. It will cover a range of topics—from physical mail to digital access—and will highlight concerns and possible solutions along the way. Speaker: Jeanie Austin

9 a.m.–12 p.m.

Transforming Teen Services: Cultivating Positive Teen Relationships in the Library ($60)

Are you looking to revitalize your Teen Services departments? Or maybe you know that the teens are there, but don’t know how to connect with them? In this collaborative session, all kinds of library staff will learn skills for creating an equitable and engaging foundation for Teen Services. Based in connected learning and principles of youth development, this training offers balanced and actionable plans for staff to implement in their library programs and services right away. Speakers: Elizabeth Miller, Elizabeth Mayer

1 p.m.–4 p.m.

Coworker to Supervisor: How to Manage Previous Peers ($110)

Are you actively looking for or eagerly engaged in promotions? We examine the excitement, rewards, pitfalls and demands that come with the progression from co-worker to supervisor. This session is designed to support staff navigating career paths, and managers who want to inspire their staff to ensure that recognizing potential and promoting from within will maintain healthy dynamics. With an emphasis on the positive effect of strong network activities, we share tips and strategies to build empowered leadership. We help identify new networks, setting and maintaining a professional tone while managing the balance between old relationships with new responsibilities. Speaker: Resa Mai

1 p.m.–4 p.m.

Empowering Libraries in the AI Era: A Hands-On Exploration ($140)

In this session, join me for an exciting journey into the future of libraries with AI. I will provide an insightful exploration of the evolving world of Artificial Intelligence and its potential use in libraries. I will provide library staff with the essential skills to harness the power of AI while making the learning experience fun, engaging and informative. Speaker: Dr. Brandy McNeil

Social Event

1 p.m.–3 p.m.

Since this is our last year in Cambridge, you have one more opportunity to visit the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park and Visitor Center during the conference.

Join us for a cultural and historical event; tour the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park and Visitor Center to learn more and experience the world of Harriet Tubman, leader and liberator in the resistance movement known as the Underground Railway. A group will assemble in the hotel lobby and journey to the site for a ranger-led welcome and introduction. We will stay one hour for a self-guided tour. While we will not experience the fullness of the site—that takes hours—the introduction will be illuminating. Register to be transported to the site via a free van (holds 25) which will leave from the front of the hotel at 12:30 p.m. or drive the short distance to the site.

Learning Opportunities (free/included in your registration)

For those of you traveling to Cambridge later in the day, we have a few trainings we are hosting from right before our keynote event.

3 p.m.–4 p.m.

A Recipe for Student Engagement: Using Cookbooks to Create More Inclusive Special Collections

3 p.m.–4 p.m.

Farming Seeds of Information - Student/Librarian Projects in the Field

3 p.m.–4 p.m.

From Front Line to Back Office: Considerations for the New Admin Staff
After the keynote, we have one more learning opportunity from 5:30-6:45 p.m., right before several meet-ups and before you move on to your dinner plans.

**5:30–6:45 p.m.**

**Ignite Talks 1**

Four mini-presentations on mobile outreach services, professional development evaluations, library social work and youth services.

**Mobile Outreach Services Saved the Day! - Lana Montgomery**

**Can Your Evaluation Change Professional Development Programming? - Judine Slaughter**

**Library Social Work Services for Immigrant Communities - Mariel Sass**

**Youth Services Growing Creativity - Elizabeth Mayer**

There are two more Ignite Talks scheduled, one on Thursday (Ignite Talks 2) and one on Friday (Ignite Talks 3) with different topics and speakers. Check those out too!

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**Thursday, May 9, 2024**

Begin your morning with a yoga session, it’s included in your conference registration! Also during the morning, the Silent Auction will open. All proceeds benefit MLA and DLA!

**Learning Opportunities**

**Tending the Garden of Your Mind: Sensory Blankets, an Approach to Dementia**

Sensory blankets provide sensory and tactile stimulation for restless hands of someone with Alzheimer's, dementia, those on the spectrum, and those with other cognitive disabilities. Sensory blankets have been proven to calm stress and anxiety, prevent adverse behavior and have other benefits. Those in attendance will learn how to create a sensory blanket on a shoestring budget along with how to hold a Dementia 101 Series. Speaker: Wenona Phillips

**Reap What You Sow: Library Acquisitions and Open Access Transformation**

Dive into the evolving landscape of open access and transformative agreements in the realm of library acquisitions. This discussion group offers a platform for librarians and information professionals to exchange insights, strategies and experiences regarding the adoption of open access models and transformative agreements. Explore the latest trends, challenges and best practices in navigating the transition from traditional subscription-based models to more open and sustainable approaches. Join us in an engaging dialogue that delves into the potential benefits and hurdles associated with these transformative changes, fostering a deeper understanding of their impact on academic and research libraries. Speaker: Alex Dodd

**Shake It Off: Belly Dance for Stress-Relief and Wellness**

Belly Dance is an ancient art form, but it is timeless in its health and wellness benefits. I will introduce Belly Dance as a wellness modality and means of self-care. Conferences are rigorous, and a movement and/or wellness offering is essential for an optimal experience. Additionally, I will share movements that participants can take home with them to enhance their exercise routine and manage stress. Speaker: Kri Lalita Wiant

**Legislative Update**

Grow your knowledge of the legislation, successes and challenges during the Maryland legislative session and at the federal level. You will leave this session with the seeds needed to be an informed library advocate. Speaker: Andrea Berstler

**AI in Selection and Cataloging**

Artificial Intelligence is creeping into all aspects of library life, including behind the scenes. At this session, you’ll learn some background about AI, how it may impact copyright, current scams that may be seen while selecting/cataloging, as well as some things to keep in mind while talking with vendors. Speaker: Laura Bandoch

**Maryland State Library Agency/Delaware Division of Libraries State Update**

The Maryland State Library Agency and The Delaware Division of Libraries will share updates about state programming and initiatives. Hear what has been happening in Delaware and Maryland regarding STEM and Tech education programming, early childhood literacy and learning, staff development opportunities, capital projects, accessibility services and much more. Speakers: Irene Padilla, Dr. Annie Norman, Mary Ramos, Tamar Sarnoff, Renee Croft, John W. Owen III

**Cultivating Access Through Assistive Technology**

Learn about different types of assistive technology and how they are used by people with disabilities. Discover software for screen reading and screen enlargement, built-in accessibility features of computers, and other assistive devices, available at your library and beyond. Speaker: Erin Kelly

**Cultivating Romance Readers’ Advisory for Adults and Teens**

Romance is a genre that is in high demand by library users, but it still faces a lot of stigma. A lot of people, including library staff, do not want to admit that they read romance, and this can lead to incomplete readers’ advisory interactions between staff and patrons. We will break down some of this stigma and help staff have more meaningful and successful romance readers’ advisory. Our focus will be on both adult and teen readers, since both age groups have interest in the romance genre but have very different needs. Speakers: Katie Brown, Kris Buker
Are Kids Reading Less or Is It Just Me?

Spoiler Alert: it’s not just you. Maybe you’ve had a hunch that kids are reading less now, or at least reading fewer chapter books. Well, you’re not wrong. Through charts, graphs, and a few laughs, we’ll look at 10 years of circulation data to discover when students began reading less and why. We’ll also look at several attempts to change this trend and what has been successful and what hasn’t. This session is a must for anyone who worries about growing the next generation of readers and is ready to do something about it. Speaker: Marcus Zumwalt

Proactive, Not Reactive: Effective Intellectual Freedom Advocacy

Censorship is fueled by the desire of historically dominant social forces to reassert power over marginalized populations. As book challenges are on the upswing in the region, it is essential to understand both root causes and strategic responses to the growing reactionary movement attempting to seize control of our libraries and, ultimately, silence diverse voices. In this session, you will hear from an experienced public library CEO, a community-minded librarian, and an intellectual freedom scholar as they share the context for this culture war, emerging research, and practical strategies for protecting collections, library workers and our communities. Speakers: Andrea Boothby Rice, Allison Jennings-Roche, Ashley Teagle

Tending the Garden: Supporting Staff Who Live at the Intersection of Identities

Books, and by extension libraries, have become a flashpoint in the culture wars. The most frequently banned books are from Black and LGBTQ+ authors. Laws now ban DEI and CRT. Library leaders, managers and colleagues are invited to consider what it means for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) staff, living at the intersections of race, gender and sexual orientation, to bring their whole selves to work. What does it mean to truly foster a library culture of inclusion and belonging for all staff? Speakers: Dr. Kelly Clark, Kinshasa Vargas-Pile

Destination or Hangout: Intentional Teen Programming

Teen programming can be really tough. It isn’t uncommon for a program that took weeks of preparation to have few attendees or a program with limited space to be absolutely swamped. This program will guide participants in thinking about goals, target audiences and library resources to create programs best suited for our teen communities by posing a simple question: Are your teens looking for a destination or a hangout? Speaker: Jake Ciarapica

Getting Involved in an MLA Membership Group

Join us in exploring the pulse of the Maryland Library Association. Look back on the achievements and challenges of the past year, delve into the guiding principles of our strategic vision and get excited about the bold initiatives on the horizon. This session is not just a recap; it’s a call to action. Leave feeling empowered, informed and eager to play your part in building a vibrant future for the Maryland Library Association, all Maryland libraries and the communities they serve. Speakers: Tif Sutherland, Teonja Jung, Josh Stone

Journey Through and Beyond the Fence: Assisting Incarcerated Individuals in the Reentry and Workforce Development Process

Learn about current library programs that assist incarcerated individuals in overcoming barriers to parole, reentry and employment. This session will highlight library programs in the Maryland prison system that encourage, teach and cultivate the skills needed for successful transition to the community and the world of work. Correctional libraries plant the seeds of hope and success among this underserved population so that they can and will have a successful life outside the prison walls. We will also explore some ways that public libraries can partner with correctional libraries to assist the formerly incarcerated to succeed in the workforce and to reduce recidivism. Speakers: June Brittingham, Anne Bocchini Kirsch

Engaging Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students with Book Creator

How do you engage DHH students in the media center when historically DHH students have a much lower reading comprehension level in English? This program will highlight how to encourage an authentic writing experience to compete in a Write-a-Book competition and allow students to interpret their original works in ASL. The lesson would also be applicable to ESOL teachers and for world language teachers. Speakers: Tammi Tatro, Dianna Yamada

Friday, May 10, 2024

It’s the final day of the conference and we have events happening until 1 p.m.

Learning Opportunities

Public Library & Elementary School Open House: Sowing Seeds of Collaboration

This presentation will describe the partnership between Gaithersburg Library (Montgomery County Public Libraries) and Flower Hill Elementary School (Montgomery County Public Schools) to organize special Open House programs at the public library, introducing families to the public library’s space and resources. Attendees will leave with a practical framework and ideas to create their own Open House programs and partnerships with elementary schools or other community organizations. Speakers: Erika Walston, Melissa King
LGBTQ+ History in The Library: Cultivating Audiences Through Community Engagement

For the past five years, librarians from the Enoch Pratt Free Library have worked to provide programming related to local LGBTQ+ history to audiences across the state. By involving community elders, reaching out to local organizations and connecting with youth groups, we have both found and cultivated an audience interested in a deeply unexplored and what hasn't, and reflect on how this might be applied to libraries and those planning library programs across Maryland and Delaware. Speakers: Ben Egerman, Lisa Greenhouse

Party with a Purpose 2024 and Beyond!

Does fundraising give you heartburn? Have you been tasked with finding sponsors for programs and events? Is your local funding source beginning to drop hints that other libraries have sponsors and seek outside funding? During this session you will learn how to conquer the monsters of fundraising and seeking new funding sources in a world of constant change and challenges. You will walk away with the tools and tips to party with a purpose: sponsorships and new funding streams that nurture our vision for the future! Speakers: Mary Hastler, Amber Shrodes, Leslie Greenly Smith

Exploring Microaggressions: What Are They and Why Are They So Harmful

This presentation explores the phenomenon of microaggressions in the workplace, shedding light on subtle forms of discrimination and their impact on individuals and organizational culture. It examines how seemingly harmless comments or actions can perpetuate biases and marginalize certain groups, hindering productivity, engagement and overall well-being. Through real-life examples and research-backed insights, participants gain awareness of the different types of microaggressions. Speakers: Shirley Mason, Michael Jackson, Robert Mason

Defending Our Collections: Table Talks

Did you miss the “Defending Our Collections” discussion series during the past several months? Here is your chance to hear from the facilitators of the five sessions, who will lead table talks addressing each session. We’ll cover such topics as the limits of free speech in a society with an imbalance of power, the suppression of books via “review bombing,” and the manipulation of information by data cartels. Speakers: Monica McAbee, Laura Bandoch, Andrea Boothby Rice, Lloyd Jansen, Arthur LaRue

Why Management?

Join the discussion called Why Management? We will touch upon topics such as Emotional Intelligence, Having Difficult Conversations, Peer to Supervisor as well as Listening Tools. This discussion will be useful for a seasoned manager, a manager just starting on their management path or someone thinking about becoming a manager. This discussion will provide a chance to learn from others in the group who are willing to share things they have learned on their journey. Speaker: C. Denise Sconion

Basic Book Repair Essentials: Hinging, Tipping and Page Restoration

You’re invited to attend this presentation on essential book repair techniques for librarians and book enthusiasts. This session will cover hinging, tipping and page repair. The presenter will guide you through these processes, providing insight into maintaining and reviving your book collection to ensure its longevity. Whether you are a librarian, archivist or book lover, this session offers crucial skills for safeguarding literary treasures. Become a guardian of written heritage with this informative presentation. Speaker: Brittany Morris

Tarot in the Library: Cultivating Personal Growth and Community

Interest in tarot has been blossoming, and tarot programs have been popping up in libraries! Thought of growing your own tarot program at your library but not sure where to start? We’ve got some creative ways to bring tarot to your library. Hear about different types of tarot programming other libraries have provided, how to get and create materials for a tarot program, ways to market your program and ways to handle community concerns about a library having a tarot program. Speaker: Cathey Moffatt-Bush

Music in Storytime: Diversify Your Music to Get Families Moving!

Storytime music plays an integral part in having a successful Storytime program. Incorporating songs and getting caregivers to engage can be challenging. Oftentimes, we play the same songs without diversifying our musical selections. Although repetition is encouraged, it is best to have a greater diversity of music. Our presentation is designed to get participants up and moving to interactive songs. We will provide a plethora of music that will put a new twist on traditional Storytime songs. If caregivers are up and dancing, children will be too! This lively presentation will have everyone engaged and ready to try new music. Speakers: Marsha Quarles, Dwyn Griffin, Lauren Roots, Shannon Young.
Conference Poster Resources from ACRL-MD

Brianna Hughes, University of Maryland, Baltimore County

The conference poster session is back at the annual MLA/DLA Conference! The deadline to submit poster proposals has passed but be sure to check out the poster session either online (via the conference website) or at the conference.

To make creating conference posters more approachable and accessible, ACRL-MD hosted a free webinar in February titled “Poster Perfect: Designing Impactful Conference Posters for Librarians.” Jasmine Shumaker and Semhar Yohannes, reference and research librarians at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, shared tips on creating engaging posters. The workshop drew more than 40 librarians from across Maryland; the attendees watched a demonstration of using the free version of Canva to create a high-quality conference poster. You can view the recording of the workshop and access other poster resources at https://acrlmd.wordpress.com/about/poster-design-tips/.

MLA/DLA Conference: The Silent Auction Is Back!

Pamela Taylor, Harford County Public Library

Time is ticking! No time like today to plan your Silent Auction basket for the MLA/DLA Conference. Donation registration closes in just two weeks.

We need donations from you—individuals, association units, and libraries—to make this a success! Last year we raised nearly $4,500 that funded general professional development and conference programming. This year we are limiting the value of the basket to not exceed $200. If your big idea is larger than $200, please consider sponsoring two or more baskets at a lower price point.

Though it may be tempting to lean into the “Seeds of Change” theme, please be aware that we will limit these entries so that we can offer a wide variety of baskets. In other words, register early to claim your spot for a garden-themed basket. Some themes that have worked well in the past are travel, graduations, Mother’s Day, pets, spa day, tea/coffee, wine/beer, university or librarian swag, or pop culture! Please use this link to register your basket by April 24, 2024.

As a reminder, donors will be responsible for delivering their baskets to the Conference. We look forward to seeing your wonderful and creative baskets, so please register them as soon as possible.

If you have any questions, or need assistance, please email taylor@hcplonline.org.
Public Services Division
An Introduction

Melissa Lauber, Charles County Public Library

Hello, and welcome to the Public Services Division (PSD) of MLA! My name is Melissa Lauber, and I have had the honor and privilege of serving as the current PSD President. Currently I am a Public Services Librarian at the Waldorf West Branch of the Charles County Public Library. I joined MLA in 2012, and by 2014 I was an active member of the Public Services Division. I have also served as secretary for several years. As Division President, I have been a part of our Centennial Celebrations, particularly the Carnival in November, and I got to hang out at the MLA booth at LibLearnX in January.

We meet four times a year, in September, December, March and June, usually on the second Thursday of the month. Our meetings are all hybrid apart from June when we are all virtual. We discuss anything and everything public library-related, from the services we offer at our branches to programs and other ideas to better serve our communities. Please join us for our meetings; we have donuts…

Conference is where PSD really shines. Typically, we host at least four, and sometimes more, programs each year at the MLA/DLA Conference, as well as putting together some really great silent auction baskets. We hold a debrief on Thursday after the last program of the day to discuss how our programs went and how the conference is going in general. You can find us hanging out in Michener’s over near one of the fireplaces. Hope you will join us!
Want to get more involved with MLA? Check out some of Divisions, Committees, and Interest Groups!

**Caucus**

**Black Caucus Of The Maryland Library Association**
- Current focus:
  - Providing a safe space to discuss and decide upon a course of action on issues of concern to our members
  - Promoting equal job opportunities, professional development, provide mentorship opportunities
  - Promoting actions to improve the work environment of our members and to improve the quality of library service in Black communities

**Divisions**

**Association Of College And Research Libraries, MD**
- Current focus:
  - Connecting academic and research library workers
  - Providing a safe space for discussing current issues and topics related to academic and research libraries
  - Creating leadership and volunteer opportunities for academic and research library workers

**Children's Services Division**

**Leadership Development Division**
- Current Focus
  - Committed to providing development opportunities to leaders from any position
  - Career success of aspiring, new, and long-time leaders
  - Exploring creative learning opportunities to offer throughout the year

**Public Services Division**
- Current Focus
  - Providing quality programming for MLA year-round
  - Supporting two Interest Groups that fall under our Division GSIG (Outreach Services Interest Group) and MAPIG (Maryland Adult Programming Interest Group); Please consider joining one or both of these interest groups!

**Support Staff Division**

**Committees and Panels**

- Intellectual Freedom Panel
- Legislative Panel
- Professional Development Panel
- Marketing Committee
- Maryland Author Award

**Interest Groups**

- Future Of Libraries Interest Group
- Government Information Interest Group
- LGBTQ+ Interest Group
- Library Advocacy Interest Group
- Maryland Adult Programming Interest Group
- New Members Interest Group
- Outreach Services Interest Group
- Readers' Advisory Interest Group
- Technical Services Interest Group

**Teen Interest Group**

With your MLA membership, you can join new Divisions, Committees, and Interest Groups at any time on the MLA Website or by emailing mla@mdlib.org!
Congratulations to the 2024 MLA Award Winners!

**2024 MLA Award Winners**

**Distinguished Service Award**
Delegate Dana Jones
Sharan D. Marshall

**Honorary Membership**
John Venditta - Eastern Shore Regional Library CEO

**MLA President’s Customer Service Award**
Access Services staff at AACC
Christine Vasica
Jennifer Doll
Miriam Amores
Theo Pitts
Corey Allender

**Outstanding Member Award**
Abby Worden - Detention Center Services - Charles County, Programming Supervisor
Gloria Harberts - Gun Safety Lock program - Anne Arundel County Regional Manager

**Libraries Change Communities Award**
HCLS East Columbia Team for their teen programming
Coach G. Young
Carmen Jessop
Suki Lee

**Project of the Year**
Queen Anne’s County Library Family Fun Night Prom Dress Giveaway Team
Allison Wood
Francisco Contento-Navarro
Justin Thompson
Carolyn Pollard

*Catherine Hollerbach, MLA Awards Committee Chair, Anne Arundel County Public Library*

*With a big Thank You to the MLA Awards Committee:*  
*Debby Bennett, Mary Ann Bowman, Janet Salazar, Cindy Steinhoff.*
Maryland State Delegate Dana Jones

A lifelong lover of libraries, Delegate Jones has risen to become the champion of libraries within the Maryland legislature. She often tells the story of growing up in Allegany County’s public libraries and reading Roald Dahl’s “Matilda,” which not only cemented her passion for libraries, but also opened the doors of imagination and possibility for her as a young girl growing up in one of the state’s most rural and economically disadvantaged counties. As a member of the House Ways and Means Education committee, she sponsored legislation to increase critical funding for the State Library Resource Center in the 2023 and 2024 sessions. In 2023, she sponsored legislation to secure public library funding beyond the 2027 per capita cycle. This bill’s successful passage is foundational to the funding vitality of libraries. This session, she is working with the Maryland library community on several issues, most notably drafting and sponsoring the state’s first Freedom to Read Act. This monumental piece of legislation encompasses school, public and academic libraries and protects the rights of all readers, librarians and boards to uphold access to books and information without the threat of censorship. She has been exceptionally collaborative throughout this process to ensure the legislation is the best it can be for libraries and their communities. Within her district, she is a strong supporter and user of Anne Arundel County Public Library. She coordinated book drives for the Stanton Community Center, Annapolis Juneteenth Festival and the Lighthouse Shelter.

Maryland librarians know they can count on Delegate Jones to go to bat for them on the most challenging and critical issues. To quote Matilda, “Somewhere inside all of us is the power to change the world.” Delegate Jones lives up to this philosophy in every way and stands behind libraries and librarians to do the same.

Sharan D. Marshall

Sharan personifies the best characteristics of a library champion. These include a perspective crafted by diverse experience, maturity of decision-making, dedication to the positive contributions that libraries not only can but should strive to make, and a continued enthusiasm for learning and innovation.

Sharan began her library career in Maryland as the Assistant Director for Washington County Free Library in Hagerstown from 1986 to 1995. In 1995, she moved to Southern Maryland to become Chief Executive Officer of the Southern Maryland Regional Library Association, Inc., one of three regional libraries in the state. She retired from this position in 2020 after 24 years.

In 2014, Sharan was appointed by the Governor to the Maryland Advisory Council on Libraries (MACL) which represented the interests of Maryland citizens for better library services, advised all levels of government and promoted the improvement of services in all libraries. During her tenure on MACL, she supported the effort to move statewide library services out of the Department of Education into a separate agency. She testified at legislative hearings and spoke at meetings with library directors and staff, library trustees, elected officials and advocates working with the Citizens for Maryland Libraries.

In April 2017, the Maryland General Assembly unanimously passed historic legislation establishing the Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) and the Maryland State Library Board. These changes to the Maryland Code place the state library on equal footing with K – 12 and higher education. The legislation gave public libraries a distinct identity within the Education Article, parallel to the structure within counties where public schools and public libraries have separate governing boards, resulting in strong and successful education partnerships. Sharan and other MACL members transitioned to the Maryland State Library Board.

In July 2020, Sharan was appointed by the Governor to chair the Maryland State Library Board. She was instrumental in establishing the board and guiding efforts to gather information on the needs of libraries, overseeing the Maryland State Library Agency, and exercising general direction and control of library development in Maryland. Throughout her career, Sharan served on many statewide committees including divisions of the American Library Association and many library groups in Maryland. She was the President of MLA from 1997 to 1998.

Honorary Membership

John Venditta—Chief Executive Officer, Eastern Shore Regional Library (ESRL)

John is being honored for his outstanding leadership and commitment to libraries and library staff on Maryland’s Eastern Shore and to patrons who depend on public libraries to improve their lives.

John has been the CEO since April 2011. He has demonstrated a collaborative leadership style through the values of service, commitment, integrity and teamwork to support the goals and mission of ESRL. He has the largest regional library in the area, serving eight Eastern Shore public library systems.

John was the glue for these libraries through the COVID pandemic and still checks...
in almost weekly with the library directors. These weekly director meetings have kept the lines of communication open between ESRL and each library system and have worked to facilitate the sharing of ideas on how to adapt existing services and create new ones to better serve the community during the pandemic. Under his leadership, ESRL provided support to the libraries in the region by overseeing the distribution of CARES Act funding, managing the Polaris cataloging system to best offer the new “books to go” service at each library, restarting delivery service after a thorough review of safety practices and exploring making technology available to library systems.

John has overseen several large projects at ESRL including migrating to Polaris as an integrated library system (ILS) consortium, overseeing several joint Facilities Master Plan efforts for all Eastern Shore systems, obtaining a grant for a salary study and starting a project to expand ESRL’s building.

John was the president of the Maryland Association of Public Library Administrators in 2013 and MLA President from 2014 to 2015. He is a tireless library advocate. He was instrumental in helping forge strategic alliances between the Maryland Association of County Governments (MACo) and Maryland libraries. This has been very beneficial in gaining MACo’s support for library legislation over the last several years. John has been the liaison and point person between libraries and MACo for our participation. John also coordinated with State Librarian Irene Padilla to update the regional library statute in state law. As a mentor, John makes the time to guide new library directors along the way, including regional library counterparts. John freely shares his knowledge and best practices in the spirit of seeing every library succeed. His experience and advice have enabled many Maryland librarians to navigate all manner of challenges over the last several years.

Libraries Change Communities Award

Howard County Library System, East Columbia Branch Team for their teen programming - Coach G. Young, Carmen Jessop, Suki Lee and team

Staff at the East Columbia Branch have gone a long way to advocate for and support the teens of East Columbia, teens who are some of the most disadvantaged in the county and are often stereotyped. Programs like the annual Back to School Bash (this year a weekend event featuring haircuts, a local artist, a DJ and more), a major book talk with Nic Stone that involved busing students directly to the event, and the after-school teen programs which are two events that run concurrently to serve two different groups at the East Columbia Branch (one more structured program for more academically-minded students, one more hangout-type space with video games) go a long way to making these teens feel validated, seen and supported.

While Coach G. and Carmen have worked to build relationships with the teens and their community mentors, Suki has worked to further engage other members of the community to come together to support their programs and their teens.

MLA President’s Customer Service Award

Access Services staff at Anne Arundel Community College’s (AACC) Truxal Library - Christine Vasica, Jennifer Doll, Miriam Amores, Theo Pitts and Corey Allender

This team’s outstanding work resulted in providing students with laptop computers and other technology devices starting in late 2020 during the COVID closing. Administrators asked the library to oversee circulating laptops and other items to students because they could use their ILS to check out and track items just as they do with books and other library materials. Hotspots and webcams were also available for loan.

The Access Services staff developed an online application form for students to request technology items. The College Bookstore shipped devices on behalf of the library to students via UPS. During the second half of the spring semester in 2020, the library lent 108 laptops to students. The Access Services staff soon began asking students to share course schedules so they could determine the best devices for their needs. By December 2020, they added sidewalk pickup. The library reopened in August 2021, with students able to pick up their devices inside the library at the Arnold campus. By August 2022, laptops were also available at AACC’s Arundel Mills Center and Glen Burnie Town Center.

In 2023, the library lent 613 laptops to students. Laptops are lent to full-time and part-time students as well as those in non-credit courses. Once other academic departments learned about the laptop lending program, they were eager to participate with the library. Some academic programs had a supply of laptops for student use and the library lent them to students on behalf of the departments. The library staff developed processes for lending large totes of cookware for the college’s culinary arts students to use at home while cooking during their Zoom classes. The library also lent lab kits for AACC’s engineering department and course-specific materials for other departments. Refinements were made to the program when a need was recognized. For example, the library implemented renewal of laptops, so that students could keep them for more than a single semester.

The laptop lending program was clearly a success, and the library will keep lending laptops in the future!
Project of the Year

Queen Anne’s County Library Family Fun Night/Prom Dress Giveaway Team
- Allison Wood, Francisco Contento-Navarro, Justin Thompson, Carolyn Pollard.

Queen Anne’s County has a large Hispanic migrant work community located primarily in the northern part of the county with no physical library branch. In this underserved area of the county, Sudlersville Middle School allowed for a convenient venue and accounted for the transportation gaps in this community. The event featured activities for all ages and encouraged families to attend together. The children’s band Milkshake performed, engaging attendees with interactive play and musical goody bags handed out to all families which encouraged them to play at home. Dinner was provided by a locally-owned pizzeria. The Prom Dress giveaway, the only free event of its kind in Queen Anne’s County, allowed teens to browse the racks of over 100 dresses and accessories donated by the community. After the library advertised the call for dress donations and the upcoming giveaway, another local non-profit started advertising the same thing, but was charging $25 per dress. The library recognized that even a nominal fee like $25 can be a barrier for families with income constraints, which contributed to its program’s success. The dresses were well received, and the community was grateful to have access to a fun family night for free. The few dresses that were left over were made available in the branches for free to anyone who needed one. The mobile library was present to build community awareness of the programs and services available through the northern county routes.

Outstanding Member Awards

Abby Worden, Programming Supervisor, Charles County Public Library - Detention Center services

Abby is a tireless advocate for incarcerated library customers. She established the Charles County Detention Center Branch of the Charles County Public Library (CCPL) which opened on April 14, 2023. On the first day of operation, 152 library cards were issued to clients, and there were 564 circulations in the first month.

Abby brings a humanizing approach to her outreach, anticipating her clients’ eventual release and re-entry into society. She offers a storybook program where library staff record a client reading to their children at home. Once the book is recorded, library staff take the book and package it with a stuffed animal and coordinate delivery to the client’s family. One participant was a man with five children who he would not see for the holidays. He cried after every page he recorded but expressed his gratitude to be able to connect with his children during a challenging time in his life. Abby also provides SkillReady Workshops along with her CCPL colleagues. These monthly workshops cover topics such as resume writing, digital literacy and how to use the library’s online resources. Abby has hosted book discussions, including a One Maryland, One Book discussion at the detention center. Her vision to serve incarcerated individuals as she would any other library customer demonstrates her commitment to making CCPL a more inclusive library for all.

Gloria Harberts, Southern Area Regional Manager, Anne Arundel County Public Library - Gun Safety Lock program

Gloria spearheaded AACPL’s gun safety lock program with the Anne Arundel County Department of Health’s Gun Violence Intervention Team. From training staff on the distribution process, explaining the importance of this program and creating systems to gather critical data, AACPL became the first library in the state of Maryland to offer these devices for free to the public. Gloria’s leadership helped the library expand this program across all 16 branches and they have now distributed over 3,000 gun locks.
Library Legislative Day 2024

MLA Legislative Team: Andrea Berstler, Carroll County Public Library; Natalie Edington, Baltimore County Public Library; and Joseph Thompson, Carroll County Public Library

Photographs courtesy of Amy Miller Meyers, Carroll County Public Library; Tiffany Sutherland, Calvert Library; and Joseph Thompson, Carroll County Public Library

Library advocates from across the state made MLA’s 2024 Library Legislative Day a successful celebration of all that is good for libraries and the communities they serve. And while the snowy weather may have slowed a few folks down, nothing could diminish the spirit of this day.

The morning began with a breakfast reception in the Governor Calvert House for attendees, elected officials and their staff. The high energy and excitement were palpable in the engaging conversations about the state of libraries across Maryland, the status of different pieces of legislation, as well as frank discussions on the struggles that libraries across the country are facing.

Following uplifting comments on the impact of libraries from Delegate Dana Jones, the sponsor for Maryland’s 2024 Freedom to Read Act, attendees made their way over to the Capitol to cheer on representatives from MLA, Maryland Association of School Librarians and the Maryland State Library Agency as they received proclamations from both the House and Senate naming it Maryland Library Day.

From there, groups of library staff, board members and members of friends of the library groups made their way to the House and Senate office buildings to discuss with their delegations the importance of library bills, including the Freedom to Read Act, funding for the State Library Resource Center and what action the Senators and Delegates could take to show support. They highlighted various accomplishments and new initiatives of their libraries. Advocates also thanked legislators for their support of libraries, literacy and learning with signature MLA chocolate bars. Legislators and their staff frequently expressed appreciation for the impactful work that libraries and library workers are doing.

MLA is thankful to all who contributed to the success of Library Legislative Day, including the libraries that sponsored this event and the numerous individuals who dedicated their day to showing Annapolis how important libraries are to the Old Line State.

“Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.” - Frederick Douglass
Carroll County Public Library Executive Director and Maryland Library Association Legislative Officer Andrea Berstler; Maryland State Delegate Dana C. Jones; Cecil County Public Library Executive Director Morgan Miller; and Maryland Library Association President Tiffany Sutherland.
Maryland Library Association President Tiffany Sutherland with Maryland State Delegate Dana C. Jones.
Students from University of Maryland’s MLIS program participated in this year’s Maryland Library Legislative Day and met with legislators representing Prince George’s County and Talbot County.
Global Neighbors: Connections, Culture and Community

Piyali Callahan and Peter Nguyen, Howard County Library System
Photographs courtesy of Doug Kapustin, Howard County Library System

On February 3, we celebrated Lunar New Year along with over 300 members of the community at the Charles E. Miller Branch & Historical Center. Through cultural and musical performances, crafts and arts, and delicious Chinese treats graciously donated by the Great Wall Supermarket of Catonsville, we celebrated the culture and contributions of one of the biggest demographics in the Howard County community.

In our first two editions of this class, the Global Neighbors planning committee celebrated India and the Republic of Korea. The general formula is the same: we research the demography of the community that we serve, decide on the country to focus on, then reach out through community contacts to plan cultural, musical and/or dance performances, arrange artisans to demonstrate crafts related to the culture and solicit donations from local businesses for gift cards to be raffled off during the event. The overwhelming support from local Korean, Indian and Chinese businesses for our three classes so far has contributed to the tremendous success of these events. We have tried to reciprocate their generosity by advertising their sponsorship at each event, so community members continue to support our local businesses and be aware of their support for their public library.

Each iteration of the class has been a wild success with attendance reaching upwards of 200+ members of the community. When possible, we partner with local community organizations to make a truly inclusive program. In our last event, we partnered with the Chinese American Parent Association of Howard County, who provided contacts for performers as well as Chinese-owned businesses.

Planning begins months ahead, when we talk about event logistics, such as the order of performances, presentation format, craft placement, decorations and budget. We have found success in the following sequence of events:

- Introduction
- 10 fun facts about the country
- Six to seven performances ranging from five to 15 minutes maximum
- Gift certificate raffle after each performance
- Thanking of event sponsors

The original idea for Global Neighbors was the brainchild of Howard County Library System (HCLS) Instructor Piyali Callahan. She was in a town hall organized by HCLS where community members were invited to share what they would like to see in their library. One member said they would like to know more about their neighbors who come from diverse backgrounds and whose traditions and cultures seem to be different from theirs. This request and a similar concept that Piyali read about in an adult-programming forum inspired the idea for the Global Neighbors Series. A dedicated team of fellow HCLS instructors joined together to form a committee to plan the events. What better place is there to bring together community members from diverse backgrounds to highlight their culture through performances, crafts and food than the public library? We believe celebrating and learning about our neighbors’ cultures fosters understanding and creates a more cohesive community.

The success of Global Neighbors has been demonstrated through not only the sheer number of participants at each event, but also by the customers who attend. Among the attendees of these events, we see customers who come from the country we are featuring, and many customers of other ethnicities who are eager to learn about a culture sometimes much different from their own. After each event we have had so much feedback from the community about the quality of the program, how much they learned, and about the professionalism of the event and the staff, as well as sheer delight in the performances. Our Customer Service department also sees an influx of new library card signups and checkouts; this event brings in customers to the library who have never been to our buildings and are not aware of the services we offer to the community.

Planning for the next Global Neighbors will begin soon, so keep an eye out! Pictures from Global Neighbors Republic of Korea; India – the Land of Diversity; and China can be found on Howard County Library System’s Flickr page.

Dhak drumming, Neil Ghosh.
Melody of the Rain, Gina Ling Chinese Dance Chamber.
Pu Sa Man dance, Zoe Li.
Peking Opera, Jianying Tian, DC Beauty of Beijing Opera.
Indian Regional Dance, Utsav Cultural Group.
Bharatnatyam, a dance form originating in southern India, Archisha Saxena.
Korean Drum, Korean Culture and Art of Maryland.
Traditional Korean fan dance, Sang Hee Ju Dance Company.
Saea Oh, Republic of Korea emcee for Global Neighbors: India.
OutRAIGeous Reviews

Books recommended by members of the Reader’s Advisory Interest Group

The Blackened Blade by Isla Davon (Amazon Kindle, 2023)

Review by Amanda Crabill

The Blackened Blade is a paranormal/why choose/revenge/action/romance mash-up. The book is the first in a new series and I could not put it down. The heroine of the book is Micai, who when we first meet her is in The Facility, a paranormal prison. A fire breaks out and she dies, only to be reawakened 10 years prior in a different type of prison, Westridge Academy. She gets a second chance to change her future and she grabs it and takes charge of the life she was denied. Along the way she starts to learn more about the secrets and betrayals that led to her imprisonment and death.

Micai’s character growth from how she describes herself previously to who she is now is awe-inspiring. She also meets a group of boys who start to befriend and protect her (even when she doesn’t need protection) from the classmates who tortured her before. They have their own secrets from her as well. This book ends on a cliffhanger and the second in the series, A Blackened Bond, comes out later this year.
Late Bloomer by Mazey Eddings (St. Martin’s Griffin, 2024)

Review by Chloe Scully

You would think that winning the lottery would solve any and all problems you have, but in Opal Devlin’s case, the several hundred-thousand-dollar prize has only increased them. After a lifetime of struggling with her neurodivergence (written as potentially ADHD/autistic), Opal decides to do away with her current lifestyle and buy a flower farm in Asheville, North Carolina to jumpstart her painting business. However, her plans to stay away from other people are ruined when the flower farm is revealed to be inhabited by an angry Pepper Smith, who claims to be the rightful owner of Thistle and Bloom Farms. The two agree to live together while Pepper saves up to buy the farm back, and while they seem to be opposites, their love for each other can’t help but bloom.

Late Bloomer is a romance, but I’d argue that it is more a romance of the self. There is absolutely a focus on the burgeoning relationship between Opal and Pepper, but there is also a focus on self-care and making room for yourself. Opal and Pepper felt so personal to me as a self-diagnosed autistic individual, and Eddings treats them with the respect and love that the best authors do for their characters. If you enjoy forced-proximity romances, opposites-attract relationships, neurodivergent leads, and an incredible number of puns, then you will want to place your hold or order for Late Bloomer, out April 16th!
Assistant to the Villain by Hannah Nicole Maehrer (Entangled/Red Tower, 2023)

Review by Amanda Crabill

This is a hilarious, slow-burn, grumpy-sunshine romance. Evie is the heroine who falls into the job of Assistant to the Villain quite literally. She is the assistant who cannot be stopped or fazed. Floating heads in the entryway? Let’s put hats on them to decorate! Torture session running over? Sir, you have another meeting coming up. Neither Becky (the annoying head of HR) nor the Villain’s grouchy ways will diminish Evie’s positive attitude. All the other office workers add to the hilarity that ensues in the workplace.

Evie does have some sadness in her past and is the breadwinner for her father and younger sister, while the Villain’s past is murky. There is some trouble brewing at the office that Evie is determined to help her boss figure out. This slow burn is wonderful; along the way, you get to giggle as the Villain and Evie start to see each other in different ways. Book two in the series, Apprentice to the Villain, comes out later this year, and I am ready for the shenanigans to continue!
Building Urgent Optimism for the Future with Jane McGonigal

Tracy Miller, Harford County Public Library
Sponsored by the Enoch Pratt Free Library and Maryland Libraries Together
Thursday, April 27 at 12:00 pm

ROM THE ENOCH PRATT WEBSITE: How do we prepare ourselves for “unthinkable” change? How do we ready our teams and organizations for “unimaginable” future events? Find out in this interactive session with New York Times bestselling author and Institute for the Future research director, Jane McGonigal. You’ll learn a new framework for cultivating “urgent optimism” in the face of uncertainty. You’ll practice the art of mental time travel and learn how to take others to a better future with you! You’ll take away a practical tool to help others fight “normalcy bias,” and you’ll think more creatively and effectively in the face of dynamic global events.

This presentation is brought to you by the Enoch Pratt Free Library and Maryland Libraries Together, a collaboration of Maryland libraries to engage communities in enriching educational experiences that advance an understanding of the issues of our time. This project is supported in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services through the Library Services and Technology Act administered by the Maryland State Library.

I am thrilled that Pratt and Maryland Libraries Together are bringing Jane McGonigal to Maryland (via Zoom!). Her book, “Imaginable: How to See the Future Coming and Feel Ready for Anything - Even Things That Seem Impossible Today” has had a big impact on work that we are doing in Harford County to bring futures thinking to staff and customers. We first discovered Jane through her Ted Talk, “The future is dark (and that’s a good thing).” We shared the concepts and techniques she explained in that video, known as the “Triangle of What If,” at our system’s Staff Day. Jane wrote an article called “How to Think Like a Futurist” on the website 24 Hour fitness that explains the triangle.

We also did an activity she described in “Imaginable” called “One Hundred Ways Anything Can Be Different in the Future.” We asked our staff to list as many things as they could that they knew to be true about libraries; then we asked them to reverse those statements to make them untrue. Finally, staff took one or two of their flipped statements and imagined a future where those statements were true. Engaging in activities like this can free us from our preconceptions and allow us to imagine things outside of what we expect. We hope that stretching our thinking this way can help prepare us to think creatively as we head into a new strategic plan process.

After you attend Jane’s talk online, you might find yourself a big fan of her work as well. If you want to explore more of her ideas, I invite you to join us in a book discussion of “Imaginable” with other librarians across the state. The discussion will take place on Thursday, May 23 at 12:00 pm via Zoom; look for information about signing up from the Maryland State Library. And we will be sharing about our efforts in Harford County to bring future thinking to our system in a preconference session at the 2024 MLA/DLA Conference. We hope to see you there!
Shirley Mason honored with Baker & Taylor/BCALA Library Support Staff Award

Sharon Morris, Johns Hopkins Sheridan Libraries (retired)

SHIRLEY MASON, Circulation Manager at Baltimore County Public Library, Woodlawn Branch, was recently honored at the 2024 American Library Association (ALA) LibLearnX Conference in Baltimore, receiving the Baker & Taylor/BCALA Library Support Staff Award. The award was presented on January 21, during the well-attended Black Caucus American Library Association (BCALA) membership meeting. Dr. John Page, chair of the Awards Committee, made the presentation to the cheering crowd.

The Baker & Taylor/BCALA award has been in existence since 2019. The annual award, consisting of $500 and a commemorative plaque, recognizes dedicated and outstanding performance by a library support staff member. Shirley was nominated by Sharon Morris, Immediate Past President of the Black Caucus of the Maryland Library Association (BCMLA), who cited Shirley’s many accomplishments including always demonstrating excellent customer service, being an extraordinary mentor to her staff and her trailblazing role in helping to organize Baltimore County Public Library’s first Black Library Workers Affinity Group. The nomination cited the work and impact of that group and noted Shirley’s involvement with the Circulation Manager Group, Self-Development subgroup, where she has made presentations and worked with other managers to form best practices that have helped to foster better communication and allowed security and staff to better handle disruptive behaviors.

Shirley was also applauded for her role as Secretary for BCMLA, the Maryland Affiliate of BCALA. When the group launched in 2021, Shirley stepped up and volunteered to be the first secretary, bringing superb communication, leadership, planning and problem-solving skills to that role. Shirley has been the Secretary for two years, and her contributions to making the BCALA Affiliate robust, relevant and connected cannot be overstated.

Congratulations to Shirley Mason on this well-deserved award.
Shirley Mason receives the Baker & Taylor/BCALA Library Support Staff Award at LibLearnX 2024 in January.

Shirley with Dr. John Page, chair of the BCALA awards committee.
ACRL-MD Spring Program on Information and Intellectual Freedom

Brianna Hughes, University of Maryland, Baltimore County

BOOK CHALLENGES have surged across the U.S. since 2020; they have occurred in every state, including Maryland. Although they are often concentrated in public and school libraries, academic librarians also need to be concerned. On April 17, the Maryland Chapter of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL-MD) and the Information Freedom Project are co-hosting a virtual program titled “Intellectual Freedom in Academic Libraries and Beyond: Concrete Steps We Can Take to Fight Censorship,” with Shannon M. Oltmann as the keynote speaker. In this talk, Oltmann will discuss the current state of book challenges, how this trend pertains to academic libraries, and specific issues in academic libraries. In addition, we will review ways that all librarians can support one another during these challenging times. Following the keynote, attendees will have the opportunity to participate in small group discussions led by other library workers and information professionals with experience and an interest in information, intellectual and academic freedoms.

For more information about the program and registration, please visit ACRL-MD’s website or email Brianna Hughes (behughes@umbc.edu), ACRL-MD president.
Intellectual Freedom Panel (IFP) News

Lloyd Jansen, Charles County Public Library

Upcoming IFP Events

April 17, 2024, 12–2 p.m.

Intellectual Freedom in Academic Libraries and Beyond: Concrete Steps We Can Take to Fight Censorship.

Registration is now open for an upcoming program on intellectual and academic freedoms in libraries. Co-sponsored by the Maryland Chapter of ACRL and the MLA Intellectual Freedom Panel, this program features a keynote from Dr. Shannon Oltmann. Dr. Oltmann is a faculty member of the University of Kentucky’s School of Information Science and a scholar of intellectual freedom, censorship, privacy and information ethics. Following the keynote, attendees will participate in small group discussions led by library workers and other information professionals including members of the Library Freedom Project. For more information, please visit the ACRL-MD’s website at acrlmd.wordpress.com.

May 1, 2024, 1–2 p.m.

Defending Our Collections: Soft Censorship.

Our series of discussions on intellectual freedom issues continues with this look at what happens when censorship creeps up from the inside of libraries. Please read Kelly Jensen’s article, “Soft and Quiet: Self-Censorship in an Era of Book Challenges,” in advance of the meeting. Hosted by Lloyd Jansen, Deputy Director of Charles County Public Library and Co-Chair of the MLA Intellectual Freedom Panel, the meeting takes place via Tradewing available on MLA Connect where you can RSVP.

IFP at the MLA/DLA Conference

Here is a sneak preview of what the IFP will be presenting at the upcoming MLA/DLA conference from May 8–10.

Banned Book Week: Youth Voices

Salisbury University held their second annual Banned Books Week event this year in collaboration with Wicomico Public Library. This event brought together a range of perspectives, expertise and experiences to discuss the importance of diverse collections and how to address concerns of intellectual freedom in our schools and communities. Wicomico County High School students were invited to share their experiences, which led to insightful conversations. We will recreate this panel for the MLA/DLA Conference, offering the library workers of Maryland and Delaware a chance to participate in this important experience of bringing many voices to the IF discussion table. Presenters: Andrea Boothby Rice, Washington College; Mou Chakraborty, Salisbury University Libraries

Freedom to Read: Legislation and First Amendment Discussion

This open forum will be led by three panel members on the impact of Freedom to Read Legislation, the First Amendment and where libraries find themselves with the current status of banned books and censorship. Panelists: Andrea Berstler, Executive Director, Carroll County Public Library; Thomas Vose, Director, Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County; Michael Blackwell, Director, St. Mary’s County Library

Defending Our Collections: Table Talks

Did you miss the “Defending Our Collections” discussion series during the past several months? Here is your chance to hear from the facilitators of the five sessions who will lead table talks addressing each session. We will cover such topics as the limits of free speech in a society with an imbalance of power, the suppression of books via ‘review bombing,’ the manipulation of information by data cartels, and soft censorship. Presenters: Laura Bandoch (she/her), Materials Assistant Director, Harford County Public Library; Andrea Boothby Rice (she/her), Public Services Librarian, Washington College; MLA IFP Co-Chair Lloyd Jansen (he/him/his), Deputy Director, Charles County Public Library; MLA IFP Co-Chair Monica McBee (she/her), Selection Librarian, Prince George’s County Memorial Library System; Arthur LaRue (he/him/his), Reference Associate, Washington County Free Library.

Freedom to Read Act (HB 785/SB738) Talking Points

Here are talking points that all library staff can use if asked about the Freedom to Read Act currently making its way through the General Assembly, and hopefully to be sent soon to the Governor’s desk for his signature.
Summary

1. This bill establishes State standards for libraries that receive funding from the State. It is the goal of the state that each library operates in a manner that recognizes the following standards:

   (1) library materials, services and resources exist and should be provided for the interest, information and enlightenment of all persons that the library serves;
   
   (2) a library should not exclude material from its catalog because of the origin, background or views of a person who created the material; and
   
   (3) a library should not prohibit or remove material from its catalog because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

2. Requires the State Librarian to authorize the State Comptroller to withhold funding from libraries who do not have a policy for materials, whose policy is outside the standard, or who do not follow their policy.

3. Prohibits county boards of education and the governing bodies of libraries from retaliating against employees for acting in a manner consistent with the State standards for libraries.

4. Outlines actions in response to those who knowingly damage, steal, destroy or withhold the property of a library.

What this bill does.

Establishes principles for curating a responsible library collection.

Protects community collections from deliberate theft.

Protects libraries and library staff from being penalized for doing their work within the policies and procedures outlined by their organization.

Affirms constitutional librarianship.

Protects libraries as they continue to defend against unconstitutional censorship.

Codifies Maryland’s values of access for all people.

What this bill does not do

Dictate topics/titles that must be in a library.

Permit obscene or pornographic material in library collections.

Force people to borrow items they find objectionable.

Commit Maryland to a standard or set of principles outlined by ALA or any other outside groups.

Major talking points

For progressive or liberal audiences

The Freedom to Read Legislation…

Enshrines Maryland’s unwavering commitment to fostering open and inclusive access to library materials, in alignment with the principles of Intellectual Freedom and the First Amendment.

Defends libraries and library staff from punitive actions for doing their work within the policies of their library.

Mandates all libraries to establish and adhere to comprehensive collection policies, ensuring staff protection and adherence to state-defined library principles.

Protects library materials from intentional harm or restriction of access by individuals, acknowledging these items as communal property.

For more conservative audiences

The Freedom to Read Legislation…

Formally establishes Maryland’s commitment to universally accessible libraries through a set of professional standards.

Mandates all libraries to craft comprehensive policies covering collection selection, maintenance and procedures for reconsideration requests, emphasizing strict adherence to those policies.

Provides a flexible operational framework for libraries, empowering them to tailor collections to the unique needs of their communities without imposing specific title or topic mandates.

Protects library materials from intentional harm or restriction of access by individuals, acknowledging these items as communal property.

In response to “Do we need this legislation?”

We have seen a national movement to constrain and censor library materials according to the standards of only one section of a community. There have been efforts to penalize or criminalize the crucial work carried out by library staff. Some of these challenges have reached Maryland. This proposed bill delineates the broad scope of responsibilities for libraries, establishing a foundation for them to cultivate vibrant environments that effectively cater to the distinctive needs of their local community.

The Freedom to Read Act strongly reasserts the constitutional principle that library materials, services, and resources are essential for the interest, information and enlightenment of all individuals served by the library. The selection of these materials, services and resources is intended to be inclusive, representing the diversity of the community.
This legislation actively safeguards local control of the selection process empowering libraries to operate within the defined scope set by their board and the state library.

The overwhelming majority of the public stand firmly against censorship. (Stats: 75% of Americans oppose book banning. More than 90% of voters are against banning the hundreds of classic novels and children’s books that extremist groups have targeted for banning. Source: EveryLibrary Institute (https://www.everylibraryinstitute.org/bookbanpoll)

This bill mandates all library governing bodies to develop professional policies dictating the selection, maintenance and review processes of materials with a stipulation that they must adhere strictly to these policies in their operations.
Weeding, Part Two!

Natasha Finnegan, Salisbury University Libraries

LAST ISSUE, this segment talked about weeding, and we are here to talk about it again, but this time with more of a focus on our emotions concerning weeding. The final law of S. R. Ranganathan’s Five Laws of Library Science states that “A library is a growing organism.” No library has infinite space—either electronically or physically. Ranganathan’s law allows us to look at the collection as if it was an apple tree, a tomato plant, or a bonsai; they all require pruning for their best results. Take the dead branches off, remove suckers for more produce, pluck the ripe fruit and cull the diseased bottom leaves. Our more prevalent terminology ‘weeding,’ rather than ‘deselection,’ is a nod to these organic connections.

Libraries must work the same way. No user wants to come into a cramped, dusty, dark, smelly, hoarder’s den for their library materials. Think of bedbugs! The mold! That 1974 cookbook Microwave Miracles! Users (and library staff) want clean surfaces, open space for face-outs, ease of findability, and effortless removal and replacing of materials on the shelf.

Library staff utilize acronyms like CREW (Continuous Review Evaluation and Weeding) and MUSTIE (Misleading Ugly Superseded Trivial Irrelevant and material can be gotten Elsewhere) to aid us in our quest for the perfect library. But how to deal with the emotions?

First off, by doing it on a continuous basis rather than making it one gigantic task every few years, you allow your brain to get used to the idea of letting things go. You have to practice it.

Do not let the Sunk Cost fallacy take over your brain. Sunk Cost fallacy is where we hold onto something that is not good for us now, because of how expensive it was (i.e., time, money, resources) when we acquired it. This sort of thinking is not rational. If that award-winning book never got checked out in 15 years, it does not matter that it was an award-winner. It’s time to say goodbye to the cost of yesterday and get your new materials moving.

To help get over Sunk Cost fallacy, or the sadness of saying goodbye, here is Marie Kondo’s advice on decluttering, modified for libraries:

- Commit to deselection.
- Envision your ideal library and use that as your goal.
- Say thank you and goodbye to the materials that the library no longer needs.
- Tidy by category.
- Trust your feelings (does it spark joy—to the community?)

Showing appreciation (saying thank you) to old, worn books is very helpful in getting over the emotional reluctance of throwing something away.

It also helps if the discards end up in the book sale rather than the recycling. Different library systems have policies that determine where the materials end up. For libraries that are funded by the state of Maryland, materials that are deselected must be recycled/thrown away due to a law that is in place to prevent fraud with state funds.

Even if you must chuck the material, it’s nice to remember that the material is on your weeding list for various reasons. These reasons can include that the material was too well-loved, there were too many copies, it is outdated or factually incorrect, but, most critically, it is irrelevant to the present-day needs and interests of your community. It will likely not even be resold even if put in the book sale. Place the ownership of having to say goodbye on the needs and interests of the community, not on your shoulders.

A final note is to not forget the emotions of the community. The community could have a backlash when they hear that “Librarians are just throwing away books!” In order to nip that in the bud (yes, another gardening reference!), a clear and easily findable Collection Maintenance and Deselection policy is a must for your library. Do not make it a secret, because that implies that you have something to hide. Allow your community to feel the emotions too.

If you are ever in the mood to chat about collection maintenance and weeding, please join the Materials Interest Group meetings, every other month via Zoom. Reach out to Laura Bandoch (bandoch@hcplonline.org) for more information.
MERGING ADULTS (EAS)—individuals ranging in age from 18 to 29—have been traditionally overlooked as potential library users. However, librarians across the state are eagerly taking on the challenge of meeting the needs of this unique customer base. Here are the thoughts of a librarian serving emerging adults and a current library customer.

Emerging Adult Librarian Story

Rorie Cox-Steib, Branch Administrator for Myersville Community Library, Frederick County Public Libraries

What were your dreams in high school?

In high school I went through a few phases. I wanted to be a publisher or author. I also wanted to be a geneticist. I just knew I didn’t want to be a teacher (I have two professor parents and had two professor siblings at the time).

Did you take a traditional path to college or start working?

I took a traditional path to college. I went straight from high school to college and actually worked in my academic library for all four years of college.

Did you go to the library during your EA years?

I went to the library during my EA years because I worked in a library. I went from college, where I worked in an academic library, straight to grad school for Library Sciences, where I worked at a geology library. I then transitioned into public libraries. So, I was visiting the library bunches, but for work.

What is one program or service that the library offers now that you could have benefited from during your EA years?

I love to think that I would have attended all the maker programs available now during my EA years, but between work and establishing a personal life in a brand-new community, I didn’t have a lot of extra time. I have and would have really enjoyed the expanded collection that features more voices from the Emerging Adult perspective.

What is one library program or service you envision that could enhance the experience of EAs in the library?

Keeping an eye on good digital materials for EAs. That way, if they are unable to participate in the physical sphere of the library, we can meet them where they are.
Emerging Adult Spotlight
Tia Carpenter, Washington County Free Library 
customer
When did you start using the library?
I started to use the library in 2014, my eleventh-grade year in high school. At the time, I did not have a computer and needed a space where I could type my essays and do my research. Once I walked in, I realized that the possibilities were endless.
What do you enjoy most about the library?
I enjoy most that there is a book for everyone to enjoy! Even if you are not a reader, there is a topic in there for you to learn something about that you have never considered before. That, to me, speaks volumes as to what the library can provide.
What genre do you enjoy the most?
My favorite genre by far is the travel section in the nonfiction area. I love traveling and am saving up to travel around the world. Until then, I can take a sneak peek through the books and experience what other travelers have explored. The books explain the culture, food and adventures of different places and the experiences they can provide, and that’s amazing for me.

EA Book Recommendation
Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from the Late Teens Through the Twenties by Dr. Jeffrey Jensen Arnett
Trans Creatives

Shannon Carney, Baltimore County Public Library

In honor of Transgender Day of Visibility, March 31, we are highlighting notable trans* creatives. Help us celebrate the array of beautiful trans* identities and check out these creators.

Transmogrify!: 14 Fantastical Tales of Trans Magic
Recommended by Jayne Walters, Anne Arundel County Public Library

If you’re a fan of the “All Out” anthologies, you’ll love this! This anthology features fourteen fantasy stories by and about trans* and nonbinary people that celebrate the magic of being queer.

Find out more about this anthology at Harper Collins.

Andrea Jenkins
Recommended by AshLee Bass, Southern Maryland Regional Library

Andrea Jenkins is a transgender poet, performance artist and American politician. Known for being the first Black openly transgender woman to ever be elected to public office in the U.S., Jenkins has created several beautiful poetic pieces. “Tributaries: T is Not Silent” (ISBN: 978-0692578407) is a book that really creates awareness within and outside of the trans* community. It creates the visibility with the trans* community. Jenkins has done so much for trans* rights in the LGBTQ+ community. She truly stands out among the rest.

“If you can conceive it, and believe it, you can achieve it. But there must be a plan. We have to set goals. Review them constantly. Shift directions when necessary. But always stay focused.” -Andrea Jenkins

Learn more about Andrea’s career and accomplishments at her website.
Betty Who
Recommended by Shannon Carney, Baltimore County Public Library

Betty Who is a queer Australian who uses she/they pronouns. They are a singer-songwriter and musician who was a classically trained cellist before releasing their first pop single in 2012. They have also taught themselves piano and guitar. Who recently made their Broadway debut as Persephone in Hadestown.

You can check out their work at their website.

Brian Michael Smith
Recommended by Dr. Kelly Clark, Howard County Library System

Brian Michael Smith, a talented and groundbreaking actor, has made a real name for himself. From guest appearances on TV shows like Chicago P.D. and Blue Bloods, he secured recurring roles in The L Word: Generation Q and critically acclaimed Queen Sugar. Brian's decision to live authentically ultimately led to him becoming the first openly trans* black man in a series regular role, portraying Paul Strickland, an openly trans* firefighter, in the hit TV series 9-1-1: Lone Star.

Brian's versatility extends beyond acting, as he also directs and produces TV and film projects. Honored as one of People Magazine's Sexiest Men Alive in 2020 and again in 2021, he is surely reaching his goals for trans* visibility.

Find out more about Brian and his career at his website.

This is just a small snippet of the many trans* creatives and the art they create. The LGBTQ+ Interest Group is growing with lots of exciting work in our future. We’d love for you to join us! Please reach out to Co-Chairs Dr. Kelly Clark, Howard County Library System (kelly.clark@hclibrary.org) and Shannon Carney, Baltimore County Public Library (scarney@bcpl.net) to learn more or to join our group in MLA Connect. Thank you for taking the time to help us lift up trans* voices.
Support Staff Division: Upcoming Standalone and Conference Programs

Lou Sica, Baltimore County Public Library

Support Staff Division (SSD) has a busy spring! In addition to sponsoring three programs at the annual conference, we are also co-sponsoring a standalone program with the Teen Interest Group!

Our conference offerings are Growing With Your Community, Let’s Talk About Stuff and Building a Public Library Digital Equity Strategy From the Ground Up. Join Erica Coady from Howard County Library System and Lisa Jones from Baltimore County Public Library for Growing With Your Community on Thursday May 9 from 9:45-10:45 a.m. Our two presenters will each share their experience in creating community gardens. From the small to large, growing plants and veggies can be a great way to engage with your communities and give back what you grow to support them.

Join Laura Bandoch from Harford County Public Library, Reshma Khan from Elsmere Library and Robin Soma-Dudley from Anne Arundel County Public Library (AACPL) for Let’s Talk About Stuff on Thursday May 9 from 11 a.m.-noon. The panelists will each discuss a new or exciting service happening at their system (for example, the gun safety locks at AACPL). Afterwards there is time for an open discussion in which attendees can share what’s happening in their libraries related to any area - circulation, technology, programming, new services, post-COVID changes, supervising, etc.

Join Alexandra Houff and Andrea Lowman from Baltimore County Public Library for Building a Public Library Digital Equity Strategy from the Ground Up on Thursday May 9 from 1:30-3:30 p.m. Faced with the familiar chicken-egg conundrum of tackling digital equity and teaching digital literacy to those who are the least equipped for both, learn how our library combined old-fashioned outreach with emerging technology solutions to address the issues we are hearing about from our branches and our customers. Also learn how we leveraged relationships with local and national like-minded NGOs and government partners to increase capacity without over-burdening staff.

Our standalone program, Creating Engaging Teen Spaces & Programs, will be co-sponsored with the Teen Interest Group on Wednesday June 6 at the Arbutus Branch of Baltimore County Public Library from 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. The presenters are Laura Jones and Meghan Kalendek from Baltimore County Public Library. We all serve teens, as they are also library customers. Learn how to improve your service to teens, no matter your position in the library. This training will prepare public service staff to create engaging programming, develop outreach by connecting with community partners and create a welcoming space for teens. Participants will gain a better understanding of who teens are and how to connect with teens in the branch.

Visit the MLA Website to register and for more information on SSD!
Participate in Eclipse Science

By Kat Troche

April is NASA’s Citizen Science Month, and there is no shortage of projects available. Here are some citizen science projects that you can participate in on April 8, on and off the path of totality right from your smartphone!

Eclipse Soundscapes

Eclipse Soundscapes will compare data from a 1932 study on how eclipses affect wildlife – in this case, crickets. There are a number of ways you can participate, both on and off the path. NOTE: you must be 13 and older to submit data. Participants 18+ can apply to receive the free Data Collector kit. Learn more at: eclipsesoundscapes.org/. (Eclipse Soundscapes, ARISA Lab/NASA)

GLOBE Eclipse

Folks that participated in the GLOBE Eclipse 2017 will be glad to see that their eclipse data portal is now open! With the GLOBE Observer smartphone app, you can measure air temperature and clouds during the eclipse, contributing data to the GLOBE program from anywhere you are. Learn more at: observer.globe.gov.

HamSCI

HamSCI stands for Ham Radio Science Citizen Investigation. HamSCI has been actively engaged in scientific data collection for both the October 14, 2023, annular solar eclipse and the April 8, 2024, total eclipse. Two major activities that HamSCI will be involved in around the solar events will be the Solar Eclipse QSO Party (SEQP) and the Gladstone Signal Spotting Challenge (GSSC) which are part of the HamSCI Festivals of Eclipse Ionospheric Science. Learn more about these experiments and others at: hamsi.org/eclipse_.(HamSCI, The University of Scranton/NASA)

SunSketcher

If you’re traveling to totality, help the SunSketcher team measure the oblateness, or shape, of the Sun during the eclipse by timing the flashes of Baily’s Beads. You will need a smartphone with a working camera for this, along with something to hold the phone in place - don’t forget a spare battery! NOTE: The app will need to run from five minutes before the eclipse starts until the end of the eclipse. Any additional phone use will result in Sun Sketcher data loss. Learn more at: sun-sketcher.org/. (SunSketcher, Western Kentucky University/NASA)

Don’t stop at the eclipse - NASA has citizen science projects you can do all year long – from cloud spotting on Mars to hunting for distant planets! By contributing to these research efforts, you can help NASA make new discoveries and scientific breakthroughs, resulting in a better understanding of the world around us, from the critters on the ground, to the stars in our sky.

We’ll be highlighting other citizen science projects with our mid-month article on the Night Sky Network page, but we want to wish all you eclipse chasers out there a very happy and safe solar eclipse! For last minute activities, check out Night Sky Network’s Solar Eclipse Resources section!

This article is distributed by NASA’s Night Sky Network (NSN). The NSN program supports astronomy clubs across the USA dedicated to astronomy outreach. Visit nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov to find local clubs, events, and more!
Shirley Mason, Baltimore County Public Library

About Shirley’s Job and MLA Responsibilities

What is your job title/employer? Professional history in libraries and MLA? Work responsibilities/special projects/initiatives?

My job title is Circulation Manager at the Woodlawn Branch of Baltimore County Public Library. I have been with the system for 15 years. My work responsibilities are supervising the Circulation department, where I am responsible for staff development and performance reviews, as well as managing security in collaboration with the management team at the branch. I am a Steering Committee member of the Black Library Workers Affinity Group, the first affinity group in Baltimore County Public Library. I am also currently a member of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council in Baltimore County Public Library, and I am the secretary of the Black Caucus of the Maryland Library Association.

What is it about libraries that inspires or motivates you?

Libraries inspire me in the way they can impact lives: from birth through adulthood, no matter what the age. It is inspiring to see babies come in for story times and school visits from various schools in the community; to watch young children develop their love of reading; to enrich adults through support and through developing technology skills that they need in the workforce and in their personal lives. To know that you are a part of creating a long-lasting impact through the library experience is powerful!

About Shirley

Favorite movie, TV show, or play?

FBI, the television series.

What was your first job?

Working in a daycare center.

Favorite type of music?

Smooth jazz, R&B (mostly 70’s through 90’s), and gospel.

Favorite sound?

The ocean waves.

What book is currently on your nightstand?

“Stop Waiting for Perfect” by L’Oreal Thompson Payton.

What’s your favorite place to travel, or a dream destination?

The beach.

What is a book you’ve read that changed how you think about a topic or about your life?

“Professional Troublemaker” by Luvvie Ajayi Jones.
Jo Powers, Talbot County Free Library

About Jo's job and MLA responsibilities

What is your job title/employer? Professional history in libraries? Work responsibilities/special projects/initiatives?

Information Services Librarian/Talbot County Free Library (TCFL)

I’ve been with TCFL for 18.5 years after graduating from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I have a long history (though not “professionally”) in Maryland libraries, as my dad was the longtime Administrator of Queen Anne’s County Library, and my mom was an Elementary Level Media Specialist for all of Talbot County’s elementary schools. Currently, I am working on TCFL’s upcoming St. Michaels renovation (after gaining learning about the process during Easton’s renovation), our website team, and providing outreach about library services to community partners. I am also involved with the Eastern Shore Regional Library’s eGroup, both Regional and Statewide Branch Managers interest groups, and I am looking forward to the newly formed Statewide Safety and Security Community of Practice. I am also a member of the Maryland Public Electronic Resources Librarians and am looking forward to our next round of contract renewals, as it’s always exciting to learn about all the new things our vendors have in the works and to think about how our selections can help all our library patrons directly.

What work have you done within MLA and what are your hopes and goals for your committee in the upcoming year? What are you most excited about?

In the last few years, I’ve had the great privilege of joining the MLA/DLA Conference Committee and was named Co-Chair of the Conference Social Committee this year. My goal for this year (like every year) is to help put on the best Conference that we can! The Conference is such a fun and educational event and I absolutely love being a part of the awesome group that makes it happen.

What is it about libraries that inspires or motivates you?

I love that public libraries are a great equalizer, providing service to everyone and anyone, whether it be finding their next great read or view, sharing just the right resource to help them complete a homework assignment, or encouraging a coworker to investigate a new learning opportunity. Helping our patrons (external and internal) find what they need and supporting them in their pursuits is so rewarding and truly keeps me going!

About Jo

Favorite movie, TV show, or play?

I have too many to choose just one! My current favorites vary with my mood and what’s going on in my life at the time, but Mad Max: Fury Road and Gone in 60 Seconds are always top of the list!

Favorite sport and/or sports team?

I am a lifelong Pittsburgh Steelers fan.

What was your first job?

Barn Rat to help pay board for my horse.

Do you have pets? What kind?

Currently I have three dogs: Kid, a 15-year-old Cardigan Welsh Corgi; Hex, a three-year-old Cardigan Welsh Corgi; and Eek, a seven-month-old American Eskimo Dog. I also have a 33-year-old Appaloosa pony named Ritz.

Favorite type of music?

Turn of the century pop punk.

Do you read more than one book at a time?

Only if one is fiction and the other is something non-narrative like a cookbook.

What’s your favorite place to travel, or a dream destination?

Right now, I’m loving my visits to Southern California (see my side hustle below), but I love exploring new places and finding great restaurants wherever I go!

Do you speak other languages?

Very limited Spanish.

What is a book you’ve read that changed how you think about a topic or about your life?

10 Percent Happier and Meditation for Fidgety Skeptics by Dan Harris.

What is your hidden talent or an unusual fact about you?

I compete with my dogs in agility competitions and have a side hustle as a licensed agility judge for the American Kennel Club that allows me to travel the country and explore new places.
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