Bilingual English and American Sign Language Storytime  
We are RAIG  
The Trailblazers of the MLA Intellectual Freedom Panel
FEATURE ARTICLES

The Harry Potter Escape Room (Right top)  
The Grantsville branch of the Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County opened its first ever immersive Harry Potter Escape Room to patrons during the last weekend of October.

Bilingual English & American Sign Language Storytime: Creating a Model (Right below)  
More and more children’s librarians are incorporating American Sign Language (ASL) into their storytimes. Sign language can be a great early literacy tool because it helps babies express themselves before they can use spoken words.

We are RAIG  
Are you passionate about books? Does telling others about what you’ve read give you a thrill? The MLA Readers’ Advisory Interest Group (RAIG) is the place for you! To give you an idea of what RAIG is all about and why its members love participating in RAIG, here are some brief introductions from some of RAIG’s current members.

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**Editor’s Note**

It looks like Maryland librarians and Maryland libraries were hard at work (but still having a lot of fun!) in the latter portion of 2019. This issue is jam packed with new programming efforts, such as Montgomery County Public Libraries’ bilingual English and American Sign Language storytimes (see page 20) and an awesome Harry Potter escape room at the Grantsville Branch of the Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County (see page 12).

In addition to this great programming, various MLA groups wanted to take the opportunity for you to get to know them a bit better in 2020, and what better time than the start of a new year! The MLA Readers’ Advisory Interest Group (RAIG) provided the Crab with some insight on what makes this group so wonderful and why its members love to participate. Check out their first-hand accounts on page 22. In addition, the MLA Intellectual Freedom Panel also wants to let readers know where they have been and where they are going, with a lookback at the history of the panel and its former and current leadership (see page 29).

I hope that this issue helps you to reflect on your own successes in 2019, both personal and professional, and that the stories that you read within inspire you to do great things in 2020!

*Annette Haldeman, MLA Crab Editor; Department of Legislative Services Library*
A cornerstone is the first stone set in the construction of a masonry foundation. All other stones are set in reference to this stone. This stone determines the position of the entire structure. If the community of Maryland’s libraries were a structure, the cornerstone would be our ability to collaborate, to work together in ways that benefit both the local and the statewide system of libraries.

We have an unbelievable library ecosystem.

It is one of the strongest and most effective systems in the country. Because we value collaboration, we have an effective system of communication. We create and conduct innovative programs with a multitude of partners across the state. Maryland celebrates the construction of new libraries, staffed by highly qualified and trained staff, and every year we host stellar state conferences. In all this success, no library is left behind.

The key to this ecosystem is not only the ability of individual library staff to reach out to each other and share, but the understanding that all those who work in libraries are of one community. Only by including all libraries in our discussions, informing all our peers across the state of emerging issues and utilizing the knowledge of the professional networks in our state do we continue to lead in the library industry. Maryland creates the path for the next generation of libraries rather than following in someone else’s footsteps.

In the brief time it has been my privilege to work in Maryland libraries, I have met amazing people, seen incredible events, and been honored to see lives transformed. It is this sense of collaboration, this sharing community, which creates the environment where libraries thrive and succeed beyond expectations. The saying “a rising tide lifts all the boats” is never more true that in a library. From the smallest of library systems to the entirety of our amazing statewide networks, working together is the cornerstone upon which libraries are built.

The other benefit of the cooperative mentality of our libraries is that we are not as focused on “success” as we are on continually making progress. Success assumes a start and finish. “We reached this point so we are successful.”

The work of libraries is never done; there is no finish line.

Henry Ford said, “If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself.” In all of Maryland’s libraries, we find everything we need to make sure we keep everyone “moving forward.”

Andrea Berstler, MLA President, 2019-2020
Executive Director, Carroll County Public Library

Monica McAbee, Prince George’s County Memorial Library System

Having good policies, procedures, and conflict resolution skills will help you defend intellectual freedom in your library. On Thursday, March 19, 2020 at the Urbana Regional Library in Frederick, members of the Intellectual Freedom Panel (IFP) will share the essential components of key policies and will teach you effective strategies for responding to in-person complaints about library collections, programs, or displays. The presenters are Sarah Jane Brunson, Branch Manager, Catonsville Branch, Baltimore County Public Library; Monica McAbee, Librarian III, Selection Department, Prince George’s County Memorial Library System; and Hannah Rosekrans, Branch Manager, Loch Raven Branch, Baltimore County Public Library.

As a pre-class assignment, please fill out a request for reconsideration form found at http://www.ala.org/tools/challengesupport/selectionpolicytoolkit/sampleforms using an example of your choice, and then write a response from the point of view of a librarian or administrator. Bring your work with you to the training.

Registration will open at 12:30 pm. Bring a lunch and enjoy networking before the program, which begins promptly at 1:00 pm and ends at 4:15 pm. Refreshments will be served as well!

This program has been approved for 3 contact hours of continuing education. The registration and refund deadline is March 12. To register online visit: https://www.mdlib.org/ev_calendar_day.asp?date=3%2F19%2F20&eventid=87.

Cost for MLA members is $25.00, and students are $12.50, while the cost is $37.50 for non-members. As a follow-up, IFP also suggests that you attend the MLA-DLA 2020 Conference program “Addressing Challenges in 21st-Century Libraries.” Panelists Skip Auld (Anne Arundel County Public Library), Cathy Hollerbach (Anne Arundel County Public Library), Michael Blackwell (St. Mary’s County Public Library), and Margie Cyr (DLA Intellectual Freedom Committee) have faced public challenges to books, meeting rooms, and programs. In this session, they will share these experiences and answer questions from attendees who want to learn about better preparing themselves to face challenges in their communities. Watch for details as the conference approaches.

(from left to right)
Hannah Rosekrans, Baltimore County Public Library

Monica McAbee, Prince George’s County Memorial Library System

Sarah Jane Brunson,
Baltimore County Public Library
LAIG Brown Bag Lunch Invites “Discoveries”: Anne Arundel County takes Audience to the Library at the Mall

*Lloyd Jansen, Charles County Public Library*

On October 15th the Odenton Branch Library of the Anne Arundel County Public Library (AACPL) hosted a Brown Bag Lunch program sponsored by the MLA Library Advocacy Interest Group (LAIG). AACPL’s Marketing and Communications Manager, Christine Feldmann, and Branch Manager Rachel Myers gave a presentation on the success of the Discoveries branch at the Westfield Mall in Annapolis. What started as a stopgap location for use during the construction of a new Annapolis library has turned into a favorite destination of library users from D.C. to the Eastern Shore.

In a 3,000 sq. ft. space formerly occupied by a Levi’s store, the Discovery branch features a large children’s area, Wi-Fi hotspots, newspapers and magazines, 3D printing, a world languages collection and a limited collection of 2018-19 bestsellers. Due to the limited space, staff made the decision not to offer photocopying or printing services.

The marketing team generated buzz for the mall location by creating graphics for the store windows, putting marquee ads in the mall and in library publications, and sending emails to customers. Other early promotions included participating in mall programs, TV ads, a homepage takeover of a local newspaper site and “geo-fencing” to target marketing to specific geographic areas. Once the buzz was built, ongoing promotions included radio and print ads, messaging in library presentations and advertising in other mall stores.

Since opening on April 30, 2018, the Discoveries branch has seen nearly 85,000 visits, has had almost 70,000 circulated materials, and has held hundreds of programs. With its success, library staff knew early on that they wanted to make this a permanent location. But how would they get the necessary funding from the county? Meetings with Anne Arundel Council members, the testimony from customers, staff and the library board at 10 county hearings, the urging of customers to contact their county representatives, and tailored emails to customers all contributed to the library receiving the requested funding. In January 2020, the Discoveries branch is moving to an 12,700 sq. ft. location that formerly held Charlotte Russe and American Eagle stores in the same Westfield Mall, with a 10-year lease and nine-and-a-half staff. The larger location will be cashless, have dedicated programming and teen spaces, a small conference room, a STEM makerspace, expanded collections and some printing/fax services. With the Annapolis library scheduled to open in early 2020, these are exciting times for AACPL and its customers.

Join LAIG for its next Brown Bag Lunch on January 22 at the Hereford branch of Baltimore County Public Library. The program is from 12:30-2:00 pm; registration starts at 12:15—bring a lunch to enjoy! MLA President and Executive Director of Carroll County Public Library Andrea Berstler and Joe Thompson, Director of Public Services at Carroll County Public Library, will share tips for Maryland Legislative Day attendees.
Prepare for Maryland Library Legislative Day at Southern Maryland Information Session

*Tiffany Sutherland, Calvert Library*

On February 5th, library advocates will descend upon the State House in Annapolis to explain the high efficacy of all types of Maryland libraries.

To prepare for this event, please join Carrie Willson (MLA Legislative Officer and Calvert Library Director) and Megan Sutherland (MLA’s Library Advocacy Interest Group’s Co-Chair and Prince George’s County Memorial Library System East Area Manager) for a Southern Maryland spin-off of the Library Advocacy Interest Group’s (LAIG) January Brown Bag Session on advocating for libraries at Maryland Library Legislative Day.

This informative session will take place on Thursday, January 30th, from 2:30-4:00 pm, at Calvert Library in Prince Frederick. Ms. Willson and Mrs. Sutherland will build attendees’ confidence related to the important library issues to be discussed with representatives this year in Annapolis, the best practices for effectively communicating these issues, and how to gain support from state representatives.

For more information, email Tiffany Sutherland at tsutherland@calvertlibrary.info. To RSVP, please send the names and email addresses of the people from your system who will attend to the same email address.
2019 Nettie B. Taylor Maryland Library Leadership Institute Announces 24 New Graduates

Bryan Hissong, Frederick County Public Libraries

On October 11th, 24 library staff members from around the state graduated from the Nettie B. Taylor Maryland Library Leadership Institute (MLLI). The Institute, sponsored by Maryland State Library and Maryland Library Association, serves to identify emerging leaders and provide them with a transformative educational leadership experience.

Attendees participated in three components: a summer intensive, an autumn overnight, and a follow-up project presented before senior library leadership. The initiative was facilitated by Maureen Sullivan, whose accomplishments include service as President of ALA (2012-2013) and two of its divisions, the Library Leadership and Management Association (1988-1989) and the Association of College and research Libraries (1998-1999). Both sessions of MLLI were hosted at the Donaldson Brown Center in Port Deposit, Maryland. MLLI is held every other year and involves a competitive application process.

Congratulations to this group of innovative, resilient and courageous library leaders!

Anne Arundel County Public Library
  Daniel Ramirez

Baltimore County Public Library
  Tom Malley,
  Brenda Johnson-Perkins
  Brian Wickman

Calvert Library
  Melissa DeCesaris,
  Tiffany Sutherland,

Carroll County Public Library
  Jennifer Bishop,
  Heather Owings

Cecil County Public Library
  Matthew Lowder

Eastern Shore Regional Library
  Amanda Watson,

Enoch Pratt Free Library
  Kalyn Shields,
  Gabrielle Miller

Frederick County Public Libraries
  Tara Lebherz,

Harford County Public Library
  Melissa Hepler,
  Carly Reighard
  Jamie Reilly

Harford Community College
  Gina Calia-Lotz,

Montgomery County Public Libraries
  Candace Hixon,
  Adrienne Miles Holderbaum

Prince George’s County Memorial Library System
  Giovanna Sandoval,

Queen Anne’s County Public Library
  Erin Neusbaum,

St. Mary’s County Library
  Kathy Faubion,
  Cecelia Thomas

Towson University
  Bria Sinnott, (at the time of MLLI, was employed by Stevenson University)
Maryland’s First Literary Landmark

Maryland Library Association

Citizens for Maryland Libraries, Maryland Humanities, the Maryland Library Association, and Poe Baltimore are thrilled to announce that The Edgar Allan Poe House & Museum in Baltimore has been accepted into the United for Libraries national registry of Literary Landmarks. The Poe House will be the first Literary Landmark in the state of Maryland.

A dedication ceremony will take place at Poe House, 203 N. Amity Street in Baltimore, on Sunday, January 19th, 2020, at 1 p.m. The date coincides with the celebration of Poe’s 211th birthday. The event is free and the public is invited to attend.

The Literary Landmarks Registry began in 1986 to encourage the dedication of historic literary sites in the United States. Over 30 states have designated Literary Landmarks, and the Registry is overseen by United for Libraries, a division of the American Library Association.

The Edgar Allan Poe House was established as a museum in 1949 and designated a National Historic Landmark in 1971. It is the last remaining home in Baltimore where the author lived (from 1833–1835), and it was here that Poe wrote some of his early stories. Poe, best known for his gothic tales and poetry, is also credited with inventing the detective story. Tales and poems written at 203 N. Amity Street include “MS. Found in a Bottle” (the author’s first paid work), “Berenice,” “Morella,” and “The Coliseum.”

A number of organizations showed interest in partnering on this project. Poe Baltimore drafted information needed for the nomination. Citizens for Maryland Libraries revised and submitted the nomination to United for Libraries. Two additional partners, the Maryland Library Association and Maryland Humanities, supported the application and will assist with upcoming festivities.
The Harry Potter Escape Room...
Laurel Baker  
Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County

The Grantsville Branch of the Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County opened its first ever immersive Harry Potter Escape Room to patrons during the last weekend of October. Over 60 people came to try their hand at escaping using different Harry Potter themed clues and props provided by the library. The experience was made extra special for fans of the beloved books and movies by all of the detail included throughout the space. There was also plenty of Hogwarts approved “moody” lighting, and some of the staff members even dressed up and passed out “Sorcerer’s Stones” to participants. The library hopes to make this an annual event that will follow a theme from each Harry Potter book in the series.

Photos by Laurel Baker, Public Relations, Ruth Enlow Library
POTION: TO MAKE THINGS GROW

Two Cups of Pond Water
Six Drops of Dragon’s Blood
A Few Snips of Werewolf Hair
Three Spiders
A Squirt of Bug Stings
A Sprinkle of Pixie Dust
A Half of a Cup of Bone Dust

Place the pond water into a tall glass vase. Add the dragon blood, werewolf hair, spiders, bug stings, and pixie dust. Stir until combined.

Chant, “Boo, hoo, hibbity hop. Grow, grow, Then add the bone dust, a little at a time, until the potion bubbles. Now, to chant the magic
and the potion fizzes over the vase top.
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FEATURES
MORE AND MORE CHILDREN’S LIBRARIANS are incorporating American Sign Language (ASL) into their storytimes. Sign language can be a great early literacy tool because it helps babies express themselves before they can use spoken words. And let’s face it, those early babbles and almost-words can be frustrating for everyone; anything we can do to ease that communication barrier makes for happier babies.

After an online course in ASL and several years of incorporating American Sign Language into my storytimes, I began to wonder how much further I could go. How could I create a storytime that would be accessible for both hearing and deaf families?

Investigating this further, I consulted with staff members from the Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library program, did some research and after several back and forth emails with a deaf mother and storyteller, we developed a plan. Three bilingual storytimes later, we felt like we’ve finally landed on a model for creating storytimes in both English and American Sign Language.

First and foremost, it takes two to make this program work—a children’s librarian with a passion for ASL and a native ASL storyteller who is deaf. The children’s librarian provides his or her knowledge and best practices for children’s programming, while an ASL storyteller contributes to the bilingual, cultural, and deaf awareness aspects of the program. By collaborating together, the pair can present an integrative storytime that meets the needs of all who may benefit.

The trick is to use rhymes, songs and stories that will be familiar to your patrons, but will also lend itself more easily to introducing signs. Having a common thread in the theme that lends itself to sign repetition (i.e. farm animals or colors) is very important. Pick stories and rhymes that will encourage the audience to use the same signs again and again. Introduce key signs before every story, song, or rhyme.

When selecting books to read, we’ve found that stories that include a “back and forth” dialogue work best. Brown Bear, Brown Bear What Do You See or I Went Walking are prime examples of picture books that can be read and signed as a conversation between the storyteller and the librarian. In both of these books, the librarian doesn’t have to learn to sign the whole book. Instead, they learn a single phrase, which is repeated throughout the story. For example, in “Brown Bear, Brown Bear What Do You See?” the audience can join in by signing along with the librarian. The audience and librarian ask the performer, “What did you see?” The ASL Storyteller will respond by giving the sign for the animal, color, or object.

Another strategy is to pick a fun song like “The More We Get Together” as an anchor for every bilingual storytime. We’ve found that bookending our storytimes with the same rhyme, gives the audience something familiar at the start and end of each storytime. Repeat the rhyme—starting out slow and get faster and faster each time to make it fun, while still reinforcing the signs.

A dress rehearsal an hour before the performance is extremely important, especially when using an ASL interpreter. During the rehearsal, the librarian, storyteller and interpreter will work on the timing and tune alignment and choreography to the songs to ensure that they each are in sync with one another. This can be achieved through cues from the interpreter and eye contact between the storyteller and the performer.

Make sure there is always signing on stage. If the librarian is speaking without signing, either the storyteller will mimic or integrate the verbal delivery via ASL or the interpreter can come up on stage.

Integrating these bilingual storytimes into your regular programming can be challenging and working this out, we’ve found that incorporating this program into an already established storytime slot, works best. Promote it ahead of time, so that your patrons won’t be surprised.
Ultimately, these storytimes should be fun and engaging. You want to give the crowd something familiar while seamlessly integrating American Sign Language into your rhymes, stories and songs. The more you get into it, the more they will get into it too!

Roberta Mather (left) and Maranda Schoppert (right), and previous page, signing The More We Get Together.

To watch a brief video from their storytime, please click the following link: BilingualASL.MOV
We are RAIG!

Crystal Tracy
Southern Maryland Regional Library Association

Are you passionate about books? Does telling others about what you’ve read give you a thrill? The MLA Readers’ Advisory Interest Group (RAIG) is the place for you! Surround yourself with the company of those who also understand the importance of storytelling. Improve your readers’ advisory skills and learn how to teach others to give great book talks. RAIG is where you will have opportunities to use your book reading talents for the betterment of mankind!! RAIG meets four times a year and develops programs for the annual MLA Conference, as well as standalone programs for librarians across Maryland. Join to see what the excitement is all about!

Participation in RAIG is fun as well as rewarding. To give you an idea of what RAIG is all about and why its members love participating in RAIG, here are some brief introductions from some of RAIG’s current members.

Amy Jenkins
I am Amy Jenkins [current co-leader of RAIG]. I am a Librarian III at the Upper Marlboro Library in Prince George’s County Memorial Library System. All I need is a good book, a comfy throw and a cup of coffee. I love mysteries and thrillers alike. My favorite mystery author is Agatha Christie, and my favorite thriller writer is David Baldacci. I highly recommend David Baldacci’s Camel Club series. I love being a member of RAIG because I get to discuss authors, books and genres with people who love to do the same.

Meg Faller
I am Meg Faller, from Calvert Library, Prince Frederick [current co-leader of RAIG]. I read mostly fiction with heavy emphasis on science fiction, fantasy, and mysteries. I LOVE fairy tale re-imaginings and super hero stories right now, but that will probably change because I’m fickle with my favorites. My number one book this year has been Bottle Grove by Daniel Handler. RAIG has been really wonderful for me; I can’t express how much it thrills me to be in a room with people who are as excited about what they’re reading as I am. It’s been great learning about genres I don’t normally read in, and my “to-be-read” list has really grown thanks to this wonderful group!

Monica McAbee
I am Monica McAbee, First of Her Name, Selector of books for the Prince George’s County Memorial Library System, Reader of Fantasy and Science Fiction along with myriad other genres and categories, Recommender of such wonderful books as Semiosis by Sue Burke, and Ardent Member of RAIG because geeking out about books with my fellow enthusiasts brings the books I’ve read to life all over again.

Lynn Harlan
I am Lynn Harlan, from Calvert Library, Twin Beaches Branch. I love a good, well-written story, and don’t care if it’s fiction, non-fiction, romance, psychological thriller, sci-fi, a kid’s chapter book, or any other genre. I recently read The Warehouse by Rob Hart and loved it. I enjoy RAIG because it’s a great way to meet other people who enjoy books as much as I do. Also, the MLA programs we plan throughout the year give me an opportunity to share my
book passion and knowledge and with others who may not find reader’s advisory as easy a subject as I do.

**Crystal Tracy**

I am Crystal Tracy, from the Southern Maryland Regional Library. I read genre fiction like fantasy, mystery, sci-fi, and romance, as well as nonfiction, mostly histories and biographies, with an especial focus on finding and promoting diverse books and own-voices authors. My favorite book so far this year was Madame Fourcade’s Secret War by Lynne Olsen. I love participating in RAIG because it gives me a chance to talk about books with colleagues as well as promote reading for patrons. I can never talk about books too much!

**Bina Pittman**

I am Bina Pittman, MLS student and a volunteer at the Odenton Regional Library, Reader of Memoirs, Non-fiction, Dystopias, and YA, including poetry, vignettes, and other genres. I am currently listening to Pachinko by Min Jin Lee. I am an excited new member of RAIG because reading is and has always been my greatest addiction, and I enjoy and look forward to talking about and discussing books of all genres.

**Hannah Erickson**

I am Hannah Erickson, from the Prince George’s County Memorial Library System. I enjoy historical mysteries, horror stories, science fiction and fantasy, and also esoteric non-fiction. I’m currently reading Circe by Madeline Miller and highly recommend it. I like participating in RAIG because it creates a space for us to make time for books for our personal and professional reading journeys.

**Allie Charles**

I am Allie Charles, from Cecil County Public Library. I read thrillers, literary fiction, graphic novels, and nonfiction, primarily memoirs. I also specifically adore audiobooks. My favorite book this year was Normal People, by Sally Rooney. I love RAIG because I get to meet other book lovers and learn about new books! Every meeting is fun and informative.

What is your reader story? Do you love to talk about books and recommend them to others, finding them that perfect book? RAIG would love to hear from you or see you at its next meeting. And if you aren’t as comfortable with readers’ advisory as you’d like to be, but want to learn more, we hope to see you at our MLA conference programs and/or our stand alone programs throughout the coming year. You may reach RAIG’s co-leaders for more information: Meg Faller at mfaller@calvertlibrary.info or Amy Jenkins at amy.jenkins@pgcmls.info. Welcome to RAIG! We look forward to discussing books and reading with you.
I WANT YOU TO CLOSE YOUR EYES and imagine seeing yourself, your friends, family members and school community in the pages of biographies, non-fictional accounts, novels, and other types of literature. Now, open your eyes; what do you see? Do you see a beautiful world that includes each aspect of your school’s population—students, educators and staff with varying hues, ethnicities and economic statuses, or, do you have to confront the reality that the narratives available are not those of black and brown students? Our collections should be representative of the hearts and minds of those that we serve. What are we teaching with our collection: justice, tolerance, peace, empathy? What are we sharing: historical victories (i.e. Voting Rights Act, Emancipation Proclamation, Brown v. Board of Education)?

The Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC) at the University of Wisconsin, Madison’s Education School revealed that in 2018, 607 books were written by or about Africans/African Americans, 93 books were written by or about Native Americans/First Nations, 665 books were written by or about Asian Pacifics/Asian Pacific Americans and 446 books were written by or about Latinx out of 3,653 books that were analyzed (CCBC, 2019).

“If I didn’t define myself for myself, I would be crunched into other people’s fantasies for me and eaten alive.” This quote is taken from Audre Lorde’s 1982 speech at Harvard University entitled “Learning from the 60s” (BlackPast, 2012), and it is as profound now as it was in 1982. When students do not see themselves in the narrative, they too often may not be able to visualize the better than greatness that is rooted in intelligence, bravery and strength. This narrative-lacking experience may also cause non-black and brown students and educators to conceptualize false ideas that can perpetuate stereotypes that result in a superiority complex. “Racial identification in the larger society plays a fundamental role in identity development, in how we see ourselves,” (DiAngelo, 2019, p.18), and I would add, how we see others. The identification tags that we assign and choose to wear cause rippling effects that penetrate our educational and personal selves.

In 2015, 37% of 12th grade students who took the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) according to the Nation’s Report Card, “performed at or above the Proficient achievement level in reading. When viewed by racial/ethnic group, the percentages of students performing at or above Proficient ranged from 17 percent for Black students to 49 percent for Asian students. Roughly one-half of Asian students, White students and students reporting two or more races performed at or above Proficient level and approximately one-quarter of Hispanic and American Indian/Alaska Native students reported performing at or above Proficient level” (The Nation’s Report Card, 2015). When black and brown students cannot relate to their school library collection, this dichotomy has numerous effects, with examination results being one. The examinations themselves are flawed, too often due to the exam creators’ own lack of diversity as it relates to the how these tests are used to measure knowledge.

If in your school library media collection, most of the black and brown characters are athletes and musicians, and the white characters are doctors and lawyers or have chosen careers that are socially considered the standard, there are biases present. We all have biases, and it is our responsibility to become knowledgeable and informed so we are able to change the narrative and create new narratives through honest and candid conversations. Creating a Cross-Curriculum Media Task Force with unique and diverse perspectives coming from students, parents, staff and educators helps create a robust and collaborative collection that represents every aspect of your school community. The richness that is born out of inclusivity provides our school communities with an abundance of knowledge and narratives. These narratives should never be pigeonholed into a one-size fits all mentality and neither should our students, for they are our present and future leaders.

**Works Cited**


Black & Brown Narratives...
FEATURES

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Brown grid: Text baseline ___
Blue guide: Page bottom ___
The Trailblazers of the MLA Intellectual Freedom Panel

Mou Chakraborty, Salisbury University

In 1947, THE DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION began a censorship campaign to keep libraries “free from false and insidious doctrines.” In response, Marion Hawes, Director of Central Adult Services at the Enoch Pratt Free Library, asked the American Library Association what action they could take against such “crusaders.” ALA’s response was to recommend the establishment of state committees on intellectual freedom to help ALA in its efforts to fight censorship. On April 7, 1948, Hawes was appointed chair of the new Maryland Library Association Committee on Intellectual Freedom.

Over the years, the name of the panel has changed, but its fight for intellectual freedom as a library core value remained the vision. The name has evolved from Committee on Intellectual Freedom, to the Intellectual Freedom Committee, to the Intellectual Freedom Advisory Panel, and on to the current Intellectual Freedom Panel (IFP). Panel chairs enthusiastically furthered the panel’s mission of providing an active “forum for librarians who are interested in issues concerning intellectual freedom, access to information and censorship.” This article traces the panel’s evolution by providing a snapshot of its fearless leaders.

How long have you been a member of IFP?

Monica McAbee (Librarian III, Prince George’s County Memorial Library System, Materials Management)
Since 1998, after attending the panel’s program, “Filters: Fact or Fiction?”

Mary Somers (Retired. Former Public Services Librarian, Harford Community College)
To the best of my recollection, I joined around 2005.

Mark de Jong (Associate Director for Collections and Resource Management, Nimitz Library, U.S. Naval Academy)
I was a member from 2010-2014.

Julie Ranelli (Branch Librarian, Kent Island Branch, Queen Anne’s County Library)
I joined IFP in 2017. I was chair in 2017-18 and co-chair with Sara Brown in 2018-19.

Sara Brown (Librarian III, Baltimore County Public Library)
I joined IFP at the start of the 2017-2018 year, so this will be my third year.

What does being an IFP chair mean to you?

Monica: Being IFP chair allowed me to channel my enthusiasm for fighting censorship into activities that kept IFP membership strong and active as we promoted intellectual freedom to library staff.

Mary: It is gratifying to educate people (library staff) on IF—early on, I was
shocked at staff attitudes (sometimes) toward challenges and privacy. It was a good feeling to give them tools to handle sticky situations.

**Mark:** It was one of the greatest experiences I had as a member of IFP and MLA. I truly felt a responsibility to defend intellectual freedom not just within Maryland but across the United States.

**Julie:** Being an IFP chair means advocating for the core values of libraries, among them access, privacy, democracy, diversity, intellectual freedom and the public good. While chairing IFP, I met people passionate about defending those principles and was energized by their commitment to our profession.

**Sara:** Being IFP chair is an opportunity to work with like-minded people to bring IF issues and ethics into the daily conversation in libraries. I appreciate it for the opportunity to make connections between the daily IF issues we face at work and larger conversations around things like privacy, access, digital literacy and free speech.

**What are two or three adjectives that best describe you?**

**Monica:** Cheerful, dependable, responsive.

**Mary:** Retired! (jk), curious, committed and always interested in IF matters.

**Mark:** Action-oriented, principled, assertive.

**Julie:** Focused, compassionate, logical.

**Sara:** Curious and adaptable.

**State a couple of accomplishments that the panel achieved under your leadership.**

**Monica:** We instituted virtual access to our meetings via Google Hangouts. We worked with the MLA Executive Board to endorse ALA’s January 2018 statement opposing policies of the new (U.S.) administration that contradicted library core values. And of course, we presented many programs related to IF.

**Mary:** Monica and I underwent training to be able to work with library staff on handling challenges. I believe that is the first time that was done (in Maryland). I don’t have exact numbers, but we offered the training at least eight to ten times, sometimes at the annual conference, and sometimes at the request of a specific library system. I like to think that by offering pre-conferences and programs at the annual conference, we raised awareness of the panel’s existence and of the issues we felt passionately about.

**Mark:** I arranged for the two Washington Post reporters who broke the story on the NSA’s PRISM Program (Internet data collection under virtually warrantless conditions) to speak on the topic at Enoch Pratt. Related to the speakers above, I was able to shepherd a letter through IFP, the Legislative Panel, and the MLA Executive Committee that was sent to all members of the Maryland Congressional delegation. It criticized the PRISM program on various grounds and asked for their investigation. The Washington State and Oregon Library Associations signed on to our letter as well.

**Julie:** We finished the IFP Manual and LibGuide that began under Monica’s leadership. We hosted a poster session and several programs at the MLA/DLA Annual Conference. We added new members and increased our social media presence. We also aligned our work with MLA’s strategic plan.

**Sara:** I’ve only been chair myself for a couple of months, but the panel has some things in the works that I’m really excited about, including multiple programs and an online safety/privacy resource. As co-chair last year with Julie Ranelli, IFP worked with TIG to create a privacy bookmark for teens, finished an intellectual freedom LibGuide (that had started under Monica’s watch, so lots of credit to her as well!) and successfully got new members involved in projects and planning.

**Additional comments:**

**Monica:** Intellectual Freedom in the form of equity, access and privacy is a critical part of library service. No library staff member should ever be left wondering why it is important!

**Mary:** None of the above would have been possible without the outstanding work done by a predecessor, Steve LaBash. Since he is not around to interview, I want to give him his due.
Mark: I hope that IFP remains active and vigorous in the defense of intellectual freedom!

Julie: I encourage everyone to attend at least one IFP meeting, in person or online, to learn more about what we do and the principles we defend. The restaurant meetings in June and December are a great opportunity to introduce yourself to the group.

Sara: We’re always happy to see new faces at our meetings (in person or virtually)!

This article would be incomplete without mentioning the contributions of the longtime, ardent IFP member Steve LaBash (Retired Director of Langsdale Library, University of Baltimore), who passed away in 2018. Steve served as the Intellectual Freedom Officer from 1996-1997 and again from 2002-2004. Steve was a particularly great facilitator at programs such as “Filtering—Facts or Fiction?” and “You Gotta Fight for Your Right to Read Banned Books.” A staunch defender of intellectual freedom, Steve was a guiding light of the panel and a joy to work with.

The members of the Intellectual Freedom Panel sincerely appreciate the hard work, dedication and passion that these leaders have demonstrated over the years. If you feel inspired to join the panel, please contact the current chair, Sara Brown, at sabrown@bcpl.net. IFP typically meets every other month; you can also join the panel virtually via Google Hangouts.

Mark de Jong with Mary Somers.
Spot the Young Stars of the Hyades and Pleiades

David Prosper

Orion is the last of a trio of striking star patterns to rise during the late fall and early winter months, preceded by the diminutive Pleiades and larger Hyades in Taurus. All three are easily spotted rising in the east in early January evenings, and are textbook examples of stars in different stages of development.

The famous Orion Nebula (M42), found in Orion’s “Sword,” is a celestial nursery full of newly-born “baby stars” and still-incubating “protostars,” surrounded by the gas from which they were born. Next to Orion we find the Hyades, in Taurus, with their distinctive “V” shape. The Hyades are young but mature stars, hundreds of millions of years old and widely dispersed. Imagine them as “young adult” stars venturing out from their hometown into their new galactic apartments. Bright orange Aldebaran stands out in this group, but is not actually a member; it just happens to be in between us and the Hyades. Traveling from Orion to the Hyades we then find the small, almost dipper-shaped Pleiades star cluster (M45). These are “teenage stars,” younger than the Hyades, but older than the newborn stars of the Orion Nebula. These bright young stars are still relatively close together, but have dispersed their birth cocoon of stellar gas, like teenagers venturing around the neighborhood with friends and wearing their own clothes, but still remaining close to home - for now. Astronomers have

Close-up of the Pleiades, with the field of view of Hubble’s Fine Guidance Sensors overlaid in the top left, which helped refine the distance to the cluster. The circumference of the field of view of these sensors is roughly the size of the full Moon. (Credit: NASA, ESA and AURA/Caltech)
studied this trio in great detail in order to learn more about stellar evolution.

Figuring the exact distance of the Pleiades from Earth is an interesting problem in astrometry, the study of the exact positions of stars in space. Knowing their exact distance away is a necessary step in determining many other facts about the Pleiades. The European Space Agency’s Hipparcos satellite determined their distance to about 392 light years away, around 43 light years closer than previous estimates. However, subsequent measurements by NASA’s Hubble Space Telescope indicated a distance of 440 light years, much closer to pre-Hipparcos estimates. Then, using a powerful technique called Very Long Baseline Interferometry (VLBI), which combines the power of radio telescopes from around the world, the distance of the Pleiades was calculated to 443 light years. The ESA’s Gaia satellite, a successor to Hipparcos, recently released its first two sets of data, which among other findings show the distance close to the values found by Hubble and VLBI, possibly settling the long-running “Pleiades Controversy” and helping firm up the foundation for follow-up studies about the nature of the stars of the Pleiades.

You can learn more about the Pleiades in the Universe Discovery Guide at bit.ly/UDG-March, and find out about missions helping to measure our universe at nasa.gov.

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Locate Orion rising in the east after sunset to find the Orion Nebula in the “Sword,” below the famous “Belt” of three bright stars. Then, look above Orion to find both the Hyades and the Pleiades. Binoculars will bring out lots of extra stars and details in all three objects, but you can even spot them with your unaided eye!
Keep up with MLA/ALA events…Share job openings…
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