A Carnival 100 Years in the Making
The Maryland Library Association turned 100 years old this year. The Centennial Carnival, held at the Michael E. Busch Annapolis Library, brought in over 100 MLA members and library supporters from across the state.

100 Years of MLA: An Archivist’s Perspective
From the beginning, the Maryland Library Association has advocated for libraries as a community across the state, with the goal of uniting every county in an effort to expand library access to those who needed it most.

Building Bridges with Technology: The Ninth Annual Maryland Tech Connect
The ninth annual Maryland Tech Connect conference brought library staff together to discuss how technology can intersect with library services to enhance diversity, equity and inclusion in library settings.

Celebrate the Fall 2023 LATI Graduates
Twenty-six library associates from twelve different Maryland counties presented their capstone projects and received their graduation certificates in November.

Let Freedom Read: Banned Books Week 2023
This year’s free event at the Dr. Ernie Bond Curriculum Resource Center at Salisbury University highlighted ways to engage positive responses to book challenges in our communities.

Citizens for Maryland Libraries Annual Conference Was a Hit!
The meeting was attended by 80 enthusiasts including library staff, library board members, trustees and supporters from throughout the state. The theme for the day was book banning.
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Books Recommended by the Members of the MLA Reader’s Advisory Interest Group (RAIG)

FUTURE OF LIBRARIES INTEREST GROUP (FOLIG)

Strangesight

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION (EDI) PANEL

EDI Panel and Leadership Development Division Book Discussion Series

ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGE AND RESEARCH LIBRARIES, MARYLAND DIVISION (ACRL-MD)

Fall 2023 in Review

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Defending Our Collections

MATERIALS INTEREST GROUP (MIG)

Collection Maintenance and Weeding

EMERGING ADULTS INTEREST GROUP (EAIG)

EA Librarian Story, EA Spotlight and EA Book Recommendation

NEW! LGBTQ+ INTEREST GROUP

We’re Here. We’re Queer. We’re READING!

NEW! SUPPORT STAFF DIVISION (SSD)

News and Upcoming Plans

NIGHT SKY NOTES

Meet Moneik Frazier 73
Meet Lou Sica 75
Winter is here, and with it my sincere hope that your holidays were joyful and peaceful. We concluded the old year with a festive Centennial Carnival celebrating all the work that the Maryland Library Association has done over the last century. Enjoy the photos and the recap from MLA Executive Josh Stone and reflect on the thoughts of our archivist, Michaela Boyle, who looks back over our accomplishments and points us towards the next 100 years. Now we can all look forward to a new year full of MLA activity and excitement!

Our 2024 MLA Conference Director, Anita Crawford, continues to share updates about what promises to be the most exciting MLA/DLA Conference yet. In addition, several of our interest groups share information about their conference planning in their columns. Follow Anita’s quarterly updates as the conference committee’s work progresses, and please – save the date! Mark your calendars for May 8-10, 2024.

New columns are continuing! One of our goals this year has been to make the Crab a recurring platform for interest groups, panels, caucuses, divisions, and committees to share their news, events, discussions and areas of interest, with quarterly columns written by group members about topics of their choosing. ALA Councilor Joseph Thompson shares his first column with our readers, letting us know about national issues that affect the Maryland library community. Our new Vice President/President Elect, Teonja Jung, shares the benefits of MLA and how you can get involved and active in her first message for the Crab.

In this issue, we’re delighted to debut columns from the LGBTQ+ Interest Group and from Support Staff Division. In celebration, the Library People feature this month focuses on the dynamic leaders of SSD, President Lou Sica and Vice President Moneik Frazier. Read about their professional and personal interests and the goals they have for SSD in the coming year. Both dedicated library leaders are very busy serving MLA and providing outreach to their communities.

Finally, please join me in congratulating one more dedicated library leader on her upcoming retirement. Maryland State Librarian Irene Padilla has provided 22 years of leadership and service to Maryland, working tirelessly for the benefit of libraries, library workers, and their communities. The positive impact of her work will continue to resonate throughout MLA and across the state.

As always, if you have something you’d like the MLA community to know about, please send your upcoming events or stories of success to share with readers of the Crab. We welcome your contributions!

Julie Fitzpatrick, MLA Crab Editor
Howard County Library System
President’s Message

Tiffany Sutherland, MLA President
Calvert Library

I love the Maryland Library Association. I love being a part of this organization, and I am in awe of the extraordinary work done by the leaders of this member-driven organization for the betterment of the entire Maryland library community.

This fall I had opportunities to speak to several affiliate member organizations at all-staff meetings or their staff days. I talked to them about how MLA can enhance their professional experiences by offering diverse, relevant professional development opportunities and multiple avenues to collaborate with library workers from different organizations. I have heard from many library professionals from these affiliate member organizations who are eager to explore what MLA has to offer and see where they can participate. I know the Association’s current active members will be ready to welcome them and assist them in becoming involved.

In early November, many current and past Maryland Library Association members gathered for an extraordinarily fun evening at the Michael E. Busch Annapolis Library for MLA’s Centennial Carnival Celebration. It was an incredible evening featuring carnival games hosted by libraries, MLA units and other library-supporting organizations. The camaraderie among Maryland library workers and supporters included elected officials: State Senator Sarah Elfreth, State Delegates Dana Jones and Eric Ebersole, and Charles County Commissioner Reuben Collins.

I want to express my extreme gratitude to the committee that planned this event: Nay Keppler, Lou Sica, Andrea Berstler, Pam Taylor and Josh Stone. I want to send the hugest thank you to Kate Monagan and Leah Sims at the MLA office; this organization would not be as outstanding as it is without all that you two do.

This winter and in the new year, I look forward to continuing to work with all MLA members to enhance what the Maryland Library Association can offer its members and to ensure support for all Maryland libraries.
HELLO, MLA!

My name is Teonja Jung, and I am happy to be of service as the MLA Vice President/President Elect. I have served in public libraries for over 30 years. As a circulation support staff member, I have served our customers and communities in many ways. One of the things I have always liked is the variety of ways that circulation staff interact with customers. And you know what they say…variety is the spice of life. And working in libraries can be very spicy!

On any given day you might see us working at the service desk, shelving material, processing materials behind the scenes, assisting with programs and outreach, or handling disruptive and not-so-positive behavior in the branch. But is that all we do? Not by a long shot. We talk to customers in the branch—helping them connect with materials and resources, navigate the internet and use technology. Depending on the library, there could be a wide range of services that circulation staff provide at any given time.

What can MLA do for you?

MLA has been an integral part of most of my career. Through my participation in MLA, I have gained valuable training, information, and insight into what it means to have a career in libraries. Working on the Annual Conference Committee offered me an opportunity to help plan programs and network with library staff around Maryland and Delaware. It has also allowed me to further my individual career through leadership opportunities. As President of the Support Staff Division, I led a team of support staff in delivering trainings with a wide range of appeal to many types of library staff. MLA has built my teamwork skills through collaboration with other library staff. I have presented as a panel member at the Annual Conference. Attending trainings like “Dealing with Difficult Customers” and “Creating Safe Spaces” has shaped my skills as a Circulation Services Manager. When I started out, I did not think MLA was for me. After all, I was not a librarian. But with encouragement from my supervisor at the time, I quickly realized, “Yes! MLA is for me!” MLA is for all who work in libraries.

How can you get involved?

Joining is easy. Through new initiatives like affiliate memberships, library systems can take advantage of discounts on MLA membership. Membership gives access to a wide variety of training at the member rate. Attending the MLA/DLA Conference allows you to connect with other library staff from around the state and from public and academic libraries. Want to become active and be a part of planning and delivering trainings? Join an Interest Group or Division to find your place. Help us continue our excellent work.

The challenges facing libraries are never-ending. Whether it is a legislature that limits funding or extremist groups looking to ban materials and limit access for citizens, your input and participation with MLA is needed. You can make a difference. MLA is built by you and for you.

I call on you, circulation and support staff, to become an active MLA member at whatever level is right for you.
This will be my first report as your new Chapter Councilor, serving as Maryland Library Association’s representative on the Council of the American Library Association. The ALA Council is the policymaking body of the national association, and I’ll be providing periodic updates on the activities taking place during ALA Council meetings and sometimes more broadly across all of ALA.

First, I want to express my sincere gratitude to David Dahl, who has been serving as MLA’s Chapter Councilor since 2018. He has been an active participant in the meetings taking place at both ALA Annual and ALA Midwinter (now LibLearnX) and has very ably represented our MLA member interests. He has offered me much practical advice as I transition into this role, and I am extremely grateful.

My term as Councilor officially began in July 2023, following the conclusion of the last ALA Annual Conference, and normally the first votes of a Councilor aren’t required until the following January. However, in this cycle, the ALA Council did hold a Special Council Session online on November 30, 2023. This is a summary of actions taken during that brief November meeting:

ALA’s Committee on Accreditation provided a report on the Standards for Accreditation of Master’s Programs in Library and Information Studies. Back in June 2023 the committee had presented a briefing on discussions underway with an ALA/ALISE Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Working Group to refine key elements of the revision of the standards. At this November meeting, the Council was asked to approve adopting the 2023 Revised Standards for Accreditation. The revisions were brought forward to reduce redundancy, provide clarity, and further incorporate EDI. The votes were 132 in favor, zero against, and one abstention. I voted with those in favor. The motion was approved.

An update was provided regarding the search for a new ALA Executive Director. The previous ALA Executive Director, Traci Hall, resigned from the position as of October 6, 2023. Leslie Burger was announced as ALA’s new interim Executive Director on November 15, 2023. A new permanent Executive Director is now needed. ALA’s Immediate Past-President, Lessa Pelayo-Lozada, will be leading the search committee and the plan is to have a new Executive Director in place by Summer 2024.

Executive Board Member Election Rules were presented. This will be the first year where Councilors will elect Executive Board members per the composition of the new ALA Bylaws. To ensure a common understanding and transparency, and to prevent unnecessary administrative complications, the ALA Executive Board recommended draft election policies for the ten Executive Board members elected by the Council. 131 voted yes, one voted no, and three abstained. I found all of the recommendations to be very reasonable and voted yes. The motion was approved.

The ALA Council will next meet during ALA LibLearnX in Baltimore, January 19-21, 2024. Meetings of ALA Council are open to conference attendees, so if you’d like to know a little more about the inner workings of ALA, I encourage you to sit in and be a guest for any of these meetings if you’ll be there in Baltimore. I’ll be reporting back in the next issue of the Crab on Council Actions taken at LibLearnX.

In addition to now serving as your chapter councilor, I am also serving in my fourth year as a member of ALA’s Committee on Legislation (those first two years as the committee chair). ALA COL is responsible for setting ALA’s Legislative Agenda each year. The Legislative Agenda is normally a brief two-page document that succinctly targets those priorities that are library-focused and that that have the best chance of advancing in Congress. Federal funding for libraries is a consistent priority, which includes efforts to increase and maintain funding for the Institute of Museum and Library Services, which administers the Library Services and Technology Act. Other priority areas often include Digital Inclusion and Skills (fast and affordable broadband as one example); Copyright, Licensing, and Competition; and Government Information and Services. The 2024 Legislative Agenda should soon be posted at https://www.ala.org/aboutala/committees/ala/ala-lg

If you have any questions about the work of ALA Council or ALA’s Committee on Legislation, please feel free to reach out!
MLA/DLA Conference Update

Anita Crawford, MLA Conference Director, Baltimore County Public Library

The Conference Planning Committee has been hard at work contacting presenters and taking next steps. I hope to share more about the programs we selected next season, but I have a few things I can share with you now!

Thank you to all the Conference Planning committee members for all of their hard work these last few months!

Reminders

Save the Date

May 8-10, 2024 at the beautiful Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay Golf Resort, Spa, and Marina in Cambridge, Maryland.

Theme

The Conference Planning team has selected a theme for this year. The theme draws inspiration from springtime and the innovation that is grown and cultivated in every library in Maryland and Delaware. The 2024 conference theme is Seeds of Change.

Keynote Speakers Announcement

MLA-Hosted

Hilton Carter

Hilton Carter is a plant & interior stylist, author, and artist. He has a loyal following on Instagram (@hilton-carter), where he shares his knowledge of plant care and interior styling with the design and green loving community. When not getting his hands dirty in a project, Hilton can be found cozying up in his Baltimore home with his wife Fiona, and daughter, Holland. (from his website)

Jennie Pu

Jennie Pu is the Director of Hoboken Public Library. According to the article “A Chat with Hoboken Public Library’s Director, Jennie Pu” by Lauren Alberti in “The Hoboken Girl,” “Jennie Pu has been a librarian for 17 years, but before that, she was working in the tech industry while living in Seattle.” Alberti goes on to state that “Jennie has worked in many different types of libraries, including..."
school libraries, medical libraries, and art libraries. She spent time at the Metropolitan Museum of Art Library in Manhattan – one of the finest art libraries in the world – and most recently was the Dead of Libraries at Hudson County Community College.” She notes that Jennie says of her library, “When you think of Hoboken, you think of the waterfront, Washington Street, and I want people to also think of the library. I want it to be a modern community hub, even a tourist destination, a place for people to go see. I think we can get there.”

In addition, Jennie has worked alongside the Hoboken City Council to uphold intellectual freedom in her community; a resolution was approved in November designating the city a “book sanctuary.”

**DLA-Hosted**

**Rebekkah Smith Aldrich**

Author of *Sustainable Thinking: Ensuring Your Library’s Future in an Uncertain World* and *Resilience*, Rebekkah has been a public library development consultant and advocate since 1998. Rebekkah is currently the Executive Director of the Mid-Hudson Library System in New York.

**Preconference Sessions:**

We are working on getting programs completed, but here are a few topics we plan to cover with preconference sessions this year, subject to changes:

- Expanding information access for incarcerated people, jail and reentry services
- Enhancing teen services
- Leadership training for managers who are leading their previous peers
- Puppet-related training
- Creating more inclusive and diverse programs
- Library work and AI/ChatGPT
- Library messaging
- Leading as an introvert
- Thinking about the future of libraries to increase resilience

**Social Events**

- Harriet Tubman Tour
- Pub Quiz
- Karaoke
- BCMLA Meet and Greet
- Pets on Wheels
- 50/50 raffle
- Morning Yoga
- Silent Auction
- Selfie Station
Maryland State Librarian Set to Retire After Distinguished Career

Timothy Pratt, Maryland State Library Agency

The Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) announces the retirement of State Librarian and Chief Operating Officer Irene Padilla, effective June 30, 2024.

Ms. Padilla’s retirement caps a long and distinguished career, including nearly 22 years of service to the State of Maryland. A committee will lead a nationwide search in the coming months to select Ms. Padilla’s replacement. The Maryland Senate must approve the search committee’s recommendation.

“As I look ahead to the next chapter of my life, I’m most proud of the tremendous positive impact MSLA has had on Maryland’s libraries and librarians,” Ms. Padilla said.

“Our libraries are changing, but at their core, they still serve the same essential purpose as when I started in this profession nearly 50 years ago. It has been an honor to serve the State of Maryland and do my part to ensure our libraries and communities have access to the resources they need to succeed.”

Ms. Padilla has led MSLA since 2002 and oversees the administration of State and federal programs to improve library services in the 24 public library systems in the State of Maryland, the State Library Resource Center, and the SAILOR broadband and Regional Resource Center programs. She also oversees the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled and the Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library. In addition, she provides leadership for library services in Maryland, coordinates development and implementation of Maryland’s Library Services and Technology Act five-year plan, and serves as an advocate for all types of libraries and their contributions to literacy, information acquisition and lifelong learning.

Ms. Padilla’s vision of providing leadership and guidance for the development of collaborations across multi-type libraries has helped develop dialogue and partnerships within the library community to sharpen and prioritize shared challenges, increase the potential for expanded resource sharing and to build the case for supporting Maryland libraries. She strongly supports libraries’ roles in promoting intellectual freedom through an impartial environment where individuals and their interests and inquiries are brought together with ideas and information spanning the spectrum of...
knowledge and opinions.

Over the past two decades, Ms. Padilla oversaw many changes in library service across the state as they moved to enhanced digital collections and became integral to providing digital equity through public access computers, lendable computers and Wi-Fi hotspots, as well as Wi-Fi extenders on building and mobile libraries, to ensure the provision of key library services beyond the library’s branches.

Ms. Padilla successfully established the Maryland State Library Agency as an independent unit of State government under the direction of the 12-member Maryland State Library Board following historic legislation passed unanimously in April 2017 by the Maryland General Assembly. This placed the State Library on an equal footing with K-12 and higher education and gave public libraries a distinct identity within the Education Article. She oversaw the transition of executive direction, policy development and organizational structure from the Maryland State Department of Education.

With the passage of SB 419, a minimum State funding amount was established for the Maryland Library for the Blind and Print Disabled, beginning in fiscal 2016, allowing for the reorganization of this service to include 10 additional state funded positions. The additional personnel enhanced the Maryland Accessible Textbook Program, Youth Services, the Adaptive Technology Education Program, the Digital Recording Studio, Facilities Maintenance and technical services.

Other accomplishments include the development of a statewide library card and, in order to meet customers’ needs where they live, work, and play, the award of American Rescue Plan Act funding to support the purchase of 14 mobile library vehicles for libraries across the state, including bookmobiles, specialized service vehicles for job seekers, and vans to provide neighborhood services.

Before arriving at MSLA, Ms. Padilla served as deputy director and director of the Harford County public library system from April 1990 through June 2002. In that capacity, she led the system through a period of rapid growth. She developed and managed an annual budget of $10.6 million, plus a capital improvement budget of $10.5 million. Prior to that, Ms. Padilla worked in libraries in Virginia and Michigan as a school librarian, corporate archivist, regional library projects manager and a public library administrator.

Ms. Padilla has a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature and Library Science and a Master of Library Science from Western Michigan University. She also holds a Master’s in Public Administration from George Mason University.

Maryland State Librarian Irene Padilla speaks to guests at the MLA Centennial Carnival about the history and impact of Maryland libraries.
MLA Children’s Services Division Presents Black-Eyed Susan Tapestry 2024: The Spring Edition

Joe Farmarco, Montgomery County Public Libraries

Thursday, March 7, 2024, 9:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.
Online Via Zoom (Zoom link will be sent on March 5, 2024)

Members: $25.00 Non-members: $37.50
Student/Retired/Unemployed/Friend: $12.50

Love talking about books? Join us for Black-Eyed Susan Tapestry (BEST) 2024—The Spring Edition, a celebration of Children’s and Teen Fiction. Learn about the Black-Eyed Susan Award and participate, via Zoom, in a half-day of small group discussions of some of the 2023-2024 Juvenile and Teen Fiction nominees. Wendy Shang, author of *The Secret Battle of Evan Pao*, will be our keynote speaker. Program check-in begins at 9:25 a.m., and the program will start at 9:30 a.m. There will be two discussion groups, meeting twice, so you can attend both sessions. Contact Joe Farmarco (joseph.farmarco@montgomerycountymd.gov) or Noel Knepper (nknepper@bcpl.net) for more information.

Group 1 - Grades 3-5
Collier, Nicole D, *Just Right Jillian*
Connor, Leslie, *Anybody Here Seen Frenchie?*
Magoon, Kekla, *Chester Keene Cracks the Code*
McDunn, Gillian, *Honestly Elliott*
Yee, Lisa, *Maizy Chen’s Last Chance*

Group 2 - Grades 6-12
Alexander, Kwame, *The Door of No Return*
Dee, Barbara, *Violets Are Blue*
Shang, Wendy Wan-Long, *The Secret Battle of Evan Pao*
Standish, Ali, *Yonder*
Sepetys, Ruta, *I Must Betray You*

Please read all the titles for each group! This program has been approved for 3.5 contact hours of continuing education.

Registration deadline is Thursday, Feb. 22, 2024.
Register here: https://www.mdlib.org/ev_calendar_day.asp?date=3%2F7%2F24&eventid=191
MLA Excellence in Marketing Award: Nominations Are Open!

Amy Miller Meyers, Carroll County Public Library

Celebrate the efforts of your creative staff with a nomination for the Maryland Library Association Excellence in Marketing Award!

This award— first presented in 2019— recognizes the talent of communications and marketing personnel within Maryland libraries for sharing ideas, learning from peers and validating the importance of library marketing. We know that marketing takes place throughout Maryland libraries, so we are encouraging submissions from all library types and levels of staff.

Nominations for campaigns and materials created during calendar year 2023 are currently being accepted through Jan. 24, 2024, by using this Google form: https://bit.ly/MLA-Market-24. Individuals are encouraged to upload samples or provide links to their work through the form. However, submissions may be mailed directly to the MLA office: 1401 Hollins Street, Baltimore, MD 21223.

Winners will receive an MLA organizational membership, a plaque, and recognition at the 2024 MLA/DLA Conference in May. In addition, all entries will be displayed at the conference.

Questions or concerns? Difficulty accessing the form? Please contact Amy L. Miller Meyers, Marketing Committee Chair at amymill@carr.org.

We look forward to seeing your work!

Maryland State Library Agency Launches New, Improved Website

Timothy Miller, Maryland State Library Agency

The Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) is pleased to announce the launch of its new website, msla.maryland.gov, which provides valuable information on resources, services, programs, and more.

The fully-accessible site was launched on December 1 and features a streamlined, user-friendly design, improved mobile browsing experience, and up-to-date information for users. The website was funded by the American Rescue Plan Act through the Institute of Museum and Library Services, which created opportunities for libraries to grow and modernize their services, reimagine library spaces and address digital equity.

“The needs of Maryland’s public libraries, leadership and staff continue to evolve,” said State Librarian Irene Padilla. “At MSLA, we recognize this evolution and continue to work hard to provide the resources and information that will help our libraries thrive. I’m proud of the work that went into this terrific new site and know our users will benefit from it greatly.”

MSLA worked extensively with the Maryland Department of Information Technology on the website’s design, accessibility and other components to determine the most effective ways to present information to users. This effort is reflected in the new, easy-to-navigate site, with sleeker navigation bars, larger text, brighter colors and other features. Information from the former MSLA website can still be found on the new site.

The launch comes as MSLA continues to grow and fulfill its mission to provide leadership and consultation in technology, training, marketing, funding, resource sharing, research and planning for Maryland libraries. MSLA also continues to lead on issues ranging from broadband access and e-book availability to equity, diversity and inclusion, with a focus on ensuring public libraries make computers and resources accessible to all.

About MSLA

As the state library agency for Maryland, MSLA administers state and federal funds to support Maryland public libraries in their mission to offer outstanding resources, programs, and excellent customer service. The State Library Resource Center, at the main branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, serves as the official state library. MSLA has oversight of the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled; Maryland’s Public Libraries; the State Library Network; the Library Capital Grants Programs; and the Deaf Culture Digital Library.
Career Success Month 2024: Future of Work

Rohini Gupta, Howard County Library System
January 22 through February 23, 2024

Maryland Public Libraries will launch a new year with a month of exceptional programs on entrepreneurship and job advancement, collectively titled Career Success Month (CSM) 2024: Future of Work. During this month, classes and programs will focus on financial skill-building and digital knowledge to navigate our rapidly changing work environment.

The keynote speaker for CSM 2024 is Adam Davidson who will present on “AI and The Future of Work and Business” from 7 to 8 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 24. Davidson is an expert at demystifying complex topics, and he applies these skills to one of the most crucial issues of our time: the rise of Artificial Intelligence. His talks are geared toward the curious—from college students to business decision-makers—who need a clear framework to understand this new technology.

Davidson is the author of The Passion Economy: The New Rules for Thriving in the Twenty-First Century. He co-founded and ran NPR’s Planet Money and was an economics writer for The New Yorker and The New York Times Magazine. He was a technical advisor on the movie The Big Short. He has won many of journalism’s most prestigious awards, including a Peabody for his financial crisis coverage. He lives in Vermont with his wife, the writer Jen Banbury, and their son.

These impactful, results-driven classes and programs will be available in a mixture of in-person, virtual, and hybrid formats.

Hosted at library branches throughout Maryland, these programs will provide information from subject-matter experts. Examples include:
- Design Thinking for Entrepreneurs
- How To Work the Gig Economy
- The Joy of Owning a Small Business in Retirement
- Learning Canva
- Mindfulness at Work
- Speed Mentoring
- Resume Building and Interview Preparation

For the complete schedule of Career Success Month 2024, click HERE or scan the QR code above.

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 Agency.

For additional information, contact:
Ashley Biggs, Marketing & Outreach Librarian
(667) 209-1563 or (410) 230-2430
ashley.biggs1@maryland.gov

About the Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA)

As the state library agency for Maryland, MSLA administers state and federal funds to support Maryland libraries in their mission to offer outstanding resources, programs, and excellent customer service. The State Library Resource Center, located in the central branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, serves as Maryland’s state library. MSLA has oversight of the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled; Maryland’s Public Libraries; the State Library Network including the three regional libraries; the Library Capital Grants Programs; and the Deaf Culture Digital Library.

Maryland Libraries: Inspiring Library Innovation!
JOIN THE CREDIT UNION

Proudly Serving America’s Library Community

YOUR NEW MEMBERSHIP COULD EARN YOU $300

OPEN A CHECKING ACCOUNT
Open a checking account with direct deposit* and you could earn:

$150

OPEN A 2-YEAR CERTIFICATE
Open a 2-year share certificate or IRA certificate with a $10,000 minimum deposit** and you could earn:

$150

EXTRA CASH FOR YOU
Do both, open a checking account with direct deposit* and a 2-year share certificate or IRA certificate with a $10,000 minimum deposit**, and you could earn a total of:

$300

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Learn More at ServingAmericasLibraryCommunity.org or call 800.325.2328.

Library of Congress FCU

*Not all applicants will qualify for membership. Member must be 18 years or older and open a savings account with a $10 deposit and open a checking account with a monthly direct deposit of at least $300 that remains open for at least 60 days to qualify for the new member incentive. This new member incentive will be paid into the member’s savings account after 90 days provided both the savings account and checking account remain open and meet the qualifications. The $150.00 new member incentive will be reported as interest income on the Form 1099-INT year-end. Other terms and conditions may apply. **New members must open a 2-year Share Certificate or IRA Certificate with a $10,000 minimum deposit and you could earn:

$150

Do both, open a checking account with direct deposit* and a 2-year share certificate or IRA certificate with a $10,000 minimum deposit**, and you could earn a total of:

$300

Library of Congress FCU retains the right to cancel these offers at any time without notice.
As I’m sure you are aware, the Maryland Library Association turned 100 years old this year. We’ve done a lot to celebrate, from creating a new logo to opening a new online store, releasing commemorative enamel pins, playing some duckpin bowling, and launching our new Affiliate Membership! However, we saved our biggest event for last. On Nov. 3 at the Michael E. Busch Annapolis Library, we hosted our Centennial Carnival!

The Centennial Carnival brought in over 100 MLA members and library supporters from across the state. There were some truly amazing game booths, Michael Gannon entertained everyone as the Carnival Ringmaster, the Orioles’ and Ravens’ mascots stopped by, and we were honored to receive citations celebrating our centennial from the Mayor of Annapolis, Anne Arundel County, the Maryland State Senate and the Governor’s Office! The fun didn’t stop there, though; several state officials also stopped by to help us celebrate, including State Senator Sarah Elfreth, State Delegates Eric Ebersole and Dana Jones, and Charles County Commission President Reuben Collins. Finally, we closed out the night with our friends from Penguin Random House winning the prize for most visited game booth and MLA President Tif Sutherland awarding Calvert County’s fortune-teller booth the President’s Choice Award.

The Centennial Carnival wouldn’t have happened without the amazing support of our sponsors from Quinn Evans, Maryland Relay, Baltimore County Public Library, Montgomery County Public Library, Becker Morgan Group, Cecil County Public Library, Overdrive, Carroll County Public Library, and our wonderful hosts at the Anne Arundel County Public Library. We also had a wonderful group of volunteers who helped plan and set up the event. A huge thank you goes out to Lou Sica, Andrea Berstler, Nay Keppler, Tif Sutherland, Teonja Jung, Amber Farran, Lisa Picker, Melissa Lauber, Amy Miller Meyers, Conni Strittmatter, Cathy Hollerbach, Diane Benner, and Christine Feldmann. MLA is incredibly lucky to have such dedicated and passionate members, and that was truly showcased at the Carnival - not just from our sponsors and volunteers, but from everyone who came out to celebrate, reminisce and look to the future of MLA.

To that end, as much as that night was about looking back and remembering all the wonderful things MLA has done, the sense of community that my predecessor Margaret Carty helped foster, and the amazing projects and events our organization has hosted, the Carnival was also about looking towards the next 100 years: what all of us can do to help ensure that not just MLA, but libraries in general, thrive for another century. When libraries thrive, so do the communities they serve. Over the last two years, I have been beyond honored to work with so many truly amazing library workers. Your ideas and your energy continue to inspire me, and even though there is some uncertainty and concern surrounding our profession these days, I don’t doubt for a second that our members are not just up for the challenge but will be an inspiration and guide for libraries everywhere.

Thank you again to everyone who came out, and to everyone who has helped shape MLA over the last 100 years! If you missed out on any of the excitement this year, don’t worry; we will be planning and hosting more events, programs and networking opportunities in 2024 and beyond. Also, as we close the book on our centennial year, don’t miss your opportunity to grab MLA Centennial gear from our new Redbubble shop (mlaexec.redbubble.com)! If you’d like to purchase one of the few remaining Centennial Enamel Pins, please email us at mla@mdlib.org.

Here’s to 100 more years!!
Left to right: Kate Monagan, MLA Office; Centennial Carnival Master of Ceremonies Michael Gannon, Prince George’s County Memorial Library System; and Skip Auld, Anne Arundel County Public Library.
Diane Benner and Catherine Hollerbach at the Anne Arundel County Public Library booth.
Carroll County Public Library mascot Corky the Penguin with Ashley Teagle, Southern Maryland Regional Library Association.
Corky at the welcome and registration table with Leah Sims from the MLA office.
Corky visits John Owen, Director, Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled.
MLA past presidents Glennor Shirley and Lynn Wheeler.
Sara Brown and MLA Executive Director Josh Stone with the Baltimore Oriole.

Anne Arundel County Public Library CEO Skip Auld and Corky welcome guests to the Michael E. Busch Annapolis Library.
Belinda Bauman, Carroll County Public Library, with Poe the Baltimore Raven.
Meg Faller at the Calvert Library booth.
Lana Montgomery at the Carroll County Public Library booth with Jim DeArmey, Executive Director, Citizens for Maryland Libraries.
Poe the Baltimore Raven visits with Kelsey Hughes, Howard County Library System; Lloyd Jansen, Charles County Public Library; and Meg Faller, Calvert Library, at the Intellectual Freedom Panel and Reader’s Advisory Interest Group booths.

Alicia Romero, Carroll Public Library; Kristina Romero, Baltimore County Public Library; and Nay Keppler, Baltimore County Public Library.
Washington County Free Library retired Executive Director and MLA Past President Mary Baykan speaks to assembled guests.
Corky with Sonia Alcántara-Antoine, CEO, Baltimore County Public Library.
Maryland State Senator Sarah Elfreth presents a congratulatory resolution from the Senate in recognition of MLA’s 100 years of providing and promoting library service in the state of Maryland. Left to right: MLA President Tif Sutherland, Senator Elfreth, and MLA Executive Director Josh Stone.
Charles County Commission President Reuben Collins speaks to attendees about the importance of libraries.
MLA receives an Executive Citation from Anne Arundel County in recognition of 100 years. Left to right: MLA President Tif Sutherland, Anne Arundel County Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Hannah Dier, MLA Executive Director Josh Stone.
Sarah Elfreth, State Senator; Reuben Collins, Charles County Commission President; Dana Jones, State Delegate; Hannah Dier, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Anne Arundel County; Josh Stone, MLA Executive; Tif Sutherland, MLA President; Eric Ebersole, State Delegate.
Joe Thompson and Belinda Bauman of Carroll County Public Library visit with the Baltimore Oriole and Corky.
Michaela Boyle, Washington County Free Library

Since MLA’s centennial has come and passed, I’d like to take a moment to reflect on the last one hundred years of our organization. I’ve spent some time looking through the archives, reading through Between Librarians, a predecessor of the Crab, and old paper copies of the Crab itself, and one thing has made itself abundantly clear: MLA has fought the same fight, advocated for the same rights, for a century, and we have no intention of slowing down.

From the beginning, the Maryland Library Association has advocated for libraries as a community across the state, with the goal of uniting every county in an effort to expand library access to those who needed it most. In the last one hundred years, MLA has helped establish systems for intercounty borrowing and helped integrate library services in public schools. We advocated for librarian education and saw the establishment of several library services courses and degree programs at colleges across the state. During times of war, we collected and provided books for service members, and we connected with library communities in Europe who had been affected by World War II. We have also been a very loud voice in the fight for intellectual freedom, advocating against the Ober Law (The Sedition and Subversive Activities Law) and for anti-censorship and anti-discriminatory legislation. MLA has been on the frontlines, defending the rights of Maryland citizens to access information.

Today, MLA fights the same fight, advocating against censorship and book bans, championing the rights of teachers to curate their own classroom libraries, of students to read books that provide accurate, healthy representation, and of every person to read the material they want, regardless of the “origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation,” per the Library Bill of Rights.

As we move into the next one hundred years of the
Maryland Library Association, we will continue to connect and unify libraries across the state and advocate for the rights of those who need them most. As several speakers at the Centennial Carnival stated, we are the next generation, and it’s our turn to carry the torch. Let’s make the next century as good as the last.

Left to right: MLA President Tif Sutherland with Past Presidents Nay Keppler, Denise Davis, Lynn Wheeler, Morgan Miller, Mary Anne Bowman, Glennor Shirley, Joseph Thompson, James Fish, Irene Padilla, Michael Gannon, and Mary Baykan at the MLA Centennial Carnival.
Building Bridges With Technology: Maryland Tech Connect

Kate Sweeney, Montgomery County Public Libraries

The Ninth Annual Maryland Tech Connect Conference brought together library staff from across the state and across the spectrum of libraries on December 5 to discuss the ways that technology can intersect with library services to enhance diversity, equity and inclusion in library settings. The conference was held at the Universities at Shady Grove (USG) in Rockville for the sixth year. Library staff from public, school, academic and special libraries heard engaging keynote speakers and attended sessions presented by library peers with concrete examples of how technology could be used to create library services and spaces that are diverse and equitable.

Keynote speakers Deshjuana Bagley, director of SCF Coding Academy and founder of TechPlayZone, and James Neal, Senior Program Officer with the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), bookended the conference. Bagley tied libraries to the early technology experiences of children in the opening keynote by recounting her childhood experience of learning to code from a magazine while using a library computer. She spoke about the role of libraries in introducing library patrons to new technologies, saying “That’s what [libraries] do; help get our kids and adults ahead of the curve.” Bagley highlighted the challenges inherent in bringing new communities into the library and offered suggestions for building confidence in children and in those serving as their mentors. Exposing young people from underserved communities to technology in the library can be the first step in a path to STEM-related careers.

“Digital literacy is a form of empowerment,” said Neal in his closing keynote. He spoke about the role of libraries in closing the digital divide, and the role of IMLS in funding the programs and services that libraries use to do so. Neal highlighted the many barriers that people from underserved communities can face without significant technology skills, including difficulty finding employment and accessing services. He highlighted projects funded by IMLS in Salt Lake City to provide technology instruction and assistance inside the library, and in New York City to provide Wi-Fi access outside the library to those who need it.

Breakout sessions and a technology expo offered opportunities for attendees to hear about programs and projects happening within the state of Maryland. Sessions included a presentation on making makerspaces inclusive for individuals with disabilities, presented by staff from Carroll County Public Library, and one on ways that school librarians in Baltimore City work with branches of the Enoch Pratt Free Library to meet the needs of their students in areas where the school system is unable to assist. Staff from the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled offered an overview of the services that are available to residents of the state. Many other sessions were also offered; session descriptions and presentation slides are available at mdtechconnect.org.

The next Maryland Tech Connect Conference will be held at USG in December 2024. In the interim, webinars are presented regularly through MD Tech Connect Extended and can be found at mdtechconnect.org.
At the Tech Expo, libraries from around the state showed off innovative ways they are using technology to connect with their communities.
Candace Birger of Carroll County Public Library describes the ways that makerspaces can meet the needs of adults with disabilities.

Opening keynote speaker Deshuana Bagley describes her childhood experiences in public libraries.
Library Associate Training Institute (LATI)
Photos courtesy of Doug Kapustin, Howard County Library System.

“EVERY ASPECT OF LIBRARY WORK has its reward. You just have to find what speaks to you and follow it. And in a public library, if you have a passion for something, chances are, there is an audience for it.” —Janet Salazar, Keynote Speaker for LATI, Fall 2023

In mid-November, the most recent cohort of LATI enrollees walked across the stage and right into the next exciting chapter of their library future! Twenty-six library associates from twelve different Maryland counties presented their capstone projects and received their graduation certificates at the Miller Branch of Howard County Library System. Capstone project program ideas varied widely: a library lock-in event for teens, a program to help military veterans and families connect, an improv workshop series for adults, a create your own custom cookie stencil maker program, a haunted library escape room, and an intercontinental sister city children’s storytime in English and Estonian over Zoom.

What is LATI?
LATI is short for the Library Associate Training Institute and serves Maryland public libraries through LSTA grant funds awarded by the Maryland State Library Agency. There has been a history of cooperative training for library associates in Maryland since the 1960s. In 1980, The Division of Library Development and Services (now known as the Maryland State Library Agency) began to offer an approved, statewide program to ensure consistent, quality customer service for all 24 public and three regional library systems. LATI’s vision is that Maryland customers receive exceptional service, and its mission is to provide tools, techniques, information, ideas, and practical opportunities for Library Associates (LAS) to enhance and develop their professional competencies.

Fall 2023 LATI
LAS spent their time learning from expert trainers representing various Maryland Public Libraries. Highlights included when LAS had the chance to tour the makerspaces and make homemade, nutritious energy bar balls in the teaching kitchen at the Exploration Commons in Carroll County, as well as visit the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled, learning about statewide services to shared patrons. The cohort also attended the Fall 2023 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Conference at Enoch Pratt Free Library and State Library Resource Center titled: This is What Democracy Looks Like!

Graduation Ceremony and Support for LATI
Thanks go to the Maryland State Library Agency for its support of LATI through LSTA grant funds. State Librarian Irene Padilla proudly supports each LATI graduate. Thanks also go to outgoing LATI Oversight Committee Chair Michael Gannon, Chief Operating Officer for Support Services at Prince George’s County Memorial Library System, who was awarded a plaque in recognition and appreciation of his many years of service to LATI and Maryland libraries, ensuring a vibrant and effective program. Tif Sutherland spoke on behalf of MLA, urging everyone to join if they have not already. Janet Salazar, Director of Queen Anne’s County Library, delivered the keynote address, sharing with the audience that what she has learned during her time in libraries is that “no matter what your undergraduate degree is, there is someone coming into the library who will need your expertise.”

LATI Oversight Committee (LOC)
LATI is further supported by the LOC which is made up of Michael Gannon, outgoing LOC Chair; Sheila McDuff, Frederick County Public Libraries, incoming LOC Chair; Tamar Sarnoff, Maryland State Library Agency; as well as Natalie Edington, Baltimore County Public Library; Amy Ford, St. Mary’s County Library; Katie George, Howard County Library System; Lisa Kenyon, Enoch Pratt Free Library and Maryland State Library Resource Center; Beth LaPenotiere, Harford County Public Library; and Paula Mitchell, Enoch Pratt Free Library and Maryland State Library Resource Center.

As always, thanks to all the trainers and supervisors across the state of Maryland who ensure the success of each cohort of LAS.
Anne Arundel County Public Library: CEO Skip Auld, LA supervisor Kate Boeree-Kline, COO Catherine Hollerbach, graduates Jessica Covington, Bailey Ray, Jordan Scheffler, Maddy Yost, Mallory Connaughton, and Jeannette Thayer, LA supervisors Karen Murk and Maureen Dominiski, and Learning and Development Manager Bethany Lambert.

Baltimore County Public Library: Back row (l-r): Regional Manager Zeke White, Branch Manager Sarah Jane Brunson, Regional Manager Tyler Wolfe, graduate Andrew Galbreath, supervisor Heather Mays, graduate Jake Cannington, Chief Customer Experience Officer Natalie Edington, and supervisor Bryon Wilkinson. Front row (l-r): Supervisor Cindy Swanson, Staff Development Coordinator Erissa Mann, graduate Shannon Carney, graduate Sarah Law, supervisor Nay Kepper, and Regional Manager Laurie Carl.
Carroll County Public Library: LA supervisor Sara Syzmanski, graduate Eliza Bruner, graduate Candace Birger, LA supervisor Bob Kuntz, and Branch Manager Patty Sundberg.

Calvert Library: MLA President Tiffany Sutherland, supervisor Shannon Storm, Executive Director Carrie Willson, graduates Tressa Dunn and Casey Ketcham, and supervisor Melissa DeCesaris.
Frederick County Public Libraries: LA supervisor Amy Whitney with graduates Lauren Tankut and Bethany Watts.

Cecil County Public Library: Graduate Deja Gomez and LA supervisor Catherine Zang.
Howard County Library System: Supervisor Teresa Rhoades, graduate Tasheena Harris, and Professional Development Instructor Katie George.

Harford County Public Library: LA supervisor Cindy Scarpola, graduates Karen Petr and Barbara Rahll, LA supervisor Julie Parsons, and LATI Oversight Committee member Beth LaPenotiere.
Prince George’s County Memorial Library System: Megan Sutherland, Interim COO for Public Services; Wayne Taylor, Public Services Specialist III and LA supervisor; Michael Gannon, COO for Support Services; Jordan Clay, graduate; Mark Ekeme, graduate; and Interim CEO Rick AmRhein.

Queen Anne’s County Library: Keynote speaker and Director Janet Salazar and graduate Francisco Contento-Navarro.
St. Mary’s County Library: Supervisor and Mobile Library Outreach Coordinator Sandy Kleist, Branch Manager Amy Ford, graduate Jake Parsons, graduate Rosa Nakamoto, and supervisor and Branch Manager AM Dillon and Lucky.

Wicomico Public Library: LATI Coordinator Ryan O’Grady and graduate Aurelio Giannitti.
Keynote speaker Janet Salazar addresses the new Library Associates.

MLA President Tif Sutherland talks to the graduates about the benefits of joining MLA.
Outgoing LATI Oversight Chair Michael Gannon was awarded a plaque in recognition and appreciation of his many years of service to LATI and Maryland libraries. Left to right: Ryan O’Grady, LATI Coordinator; Michael Gannon; and Tamar Sarnoff, Maryland State Library Agency.

New Library Associates and their supervisors participate in breakout sessions at LATI Graduation.
EFFORTS TO CHALLENGE OR BAN BOOKS are not new in American history. The last couple of years, however, have witnessed an unprecedented surge in book banning across the country. The alarming rate is obvious from the American Library Association’s recent data. Just between January and August 2023, ALA’s Office for Intellectual Freedom reported 695 attempts to censor library materials and services and documented challenges to 1,915 unique titles. The director of the ALA’s Office for Intellectual Freedom, Deborah Caldwell-Stone, noted, “This is a dangerous time for readers and the public servants who provide access to reading materials. Readers, particularly students, are losing access to critical information, and librarians and teachers are under attack for doing their jobs.”

Based on the 2023 theme, Let Freedom Read, Mou Chakraborty from Salisbury University Libraries and Stephanie Daisey from the Wicomico Public Library partnered with Eastern Shore Regional Library to host an event on Oct. 6, at the Dr. Ernie Bond Curriculum Resource Center (CRC) at Salisbury University. This free event was also available online for those unable to attend in person. The event began with a tour of Guerrieri Academic Commons for those interested, followed by the main event in CRC. This year’s event highlighted ways to engage positive responses to book challenges in our communities.

Keynote Speaker, and Book Riot editor, Kelly Jensen defined the rise of misinformation, disinformation and mal-information, as well as how the news environment has fueled book challenges across the country. She spoke about collaborative partnerships that can support groups who are working to support their local libraries and schools.

The panelists were experts from a diverse background: Dr. Erin Stutelberg (Associate Professor & MAT Program Director, Department of Secondary and Physical Education at Salisbury University), Ashley Teagle (CEO of the Southern Maryland Regional Library Association), Allison Jennings-Roche (Lead Teaching & Learning Librarian for Towson University and a PhD Candidate in Information Studies at the University of Maryland), and Emma Cohn (ELA teacher at Wicomico High School). They offered an engaging, thought-provoking, and stimulating discussion ably moderated by Aurelio Giannitti (Grants & Outreach Manager, Wicomico Public Library).

The panelist discussion began with the question “Why now?” and progressed to an inspirational series of discussions that offered hope and excitement for the future. Topics ranged from how librarians from academic, public and school libraries can support each other to how librarians need to speak to legislators to bring awareness not only in our local communities but to our larger communities as well. The discussion was enhanced by the active participation of students from a local high school. They shared their well-researched views of current book challenges and provided a glimpse of the next generation of adults who are paying attention to how current trends of book challenges are affecting the society into which they are growing. The event also included a display (physical and digital) of local school students’ artwork and a display on Top 13 banned books as well as Kelly Jensen’s book. Additional information about the panelists and the event is available at the Banned Books Week 2023 LibGuide: https://libraryguides.salisbury.edu/BBW2023/.

Like the previous year, this year’s event was very successful, receiving highly positive feedback. The organizers are thankful to the keynote speaker, the panelists, and the engaged audience – both in-person and online.

The discussion around censorship should not simply end with a weeklong awareness event. MLA’s Intellectual Freedom Panel continues the discussion with Defending Our Collections: An Intellectual Freedom Panel Discussion Series. While the January entry in this series took place before publication, here are the upcoming “Defending Our Collections” discussions. (Each discussion will be held from 1 - 2 p.m. on MLA Connect.)

January 3, 2024

Topic: Review Bombing


Facilitator: Laura Bandoch
March 6, 2024
Topic: Data and Privacy
Please read: Data Cartels: The Companies That Control and Monopolize Our Information
by Sarah Lamdan
Facilitator: Andrea Boothby Rice

May 1, 2024
Topic: Soft Censorship
Please read: “Soft and Quiet: Self-Censorship in an Era of Book Challenges” by Kelly Jensen
Facilitator: Lloyd Jansen

Register for this Discussion Series on MLA Connect.
Citizens for Maryland Libraries Annual Conference Was a Hit!

Jim DeArmey, Citizens for Maryland Libraries

The Citizens for Maryland Libraries (CML) Annual Conference for Friends, Trustees and Library Supporters was held on October 21, 2023, at the Bowie branch of the Prince George’s County Memorial Library System. The meeting was attended by 80 enthusiasts including library staff, library board members, trustees and supporters from throughout the state.

CML exists to promote awareness and support for libraries of all kinds, to support and encourage public and private funding for libraries, to promote legislation that is favorable to libraries, and to work cooperatively with the state library association and other library groups.

After initial welcoming remarks from CML Board President Susan Sherman, the group heard a presentation by Maryland State Librarian Irene Padilla. Ms. Padilla discussed the projects of the Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) including statewide training activities, activities to increase accessibility and improve facilities, administering state and federal funds, and advocating for legislation favorable to libraries. This report was particularly informative to attendees of library boards and friends group members who were not aware of MSLA’s scope of activities.

The theme for the day was book banning. Our keynote speaker was the 2023 Maryland Author Award winner Ellen Oh who spoke as eloquently as she did at the MLA/DLA Conference on the importance of diversity in children’s book characters and the importance of free access to information by today’s youth. Her talk was followed by a panel discussion entitled “Preparing for Library Book Challenges” which was moderated by Michèle Schlehofer, Professor of Psychology at Salisbury University and CML Board Member. Panelists were Sonia Alcántara-Antoine, Baltimore County Public Library CEO and current Public Library Association President, Morgan Miller, Cecil County Public Library Executive Director and Chair of the Maryland Association Public Library Administrators Inter-Governmental Task Force, and Tatanisha Love, Library Media Specialist and Past President of the Maryland Association of School Librarians.

These quotes capture the tone and impact of the day:

“What impressed me the most was the quality of presentations, beginning with Ellen Oh, who was so dynamic, interesting, informative and enjoyable to hear. Also, the panel discussion gave a real picture of what is happening in our libraries, what staff encounter on their jobs, and how they are managing. It is one thing to read about it in the news, but quite another to hear from the people who are directly involved. I think the conference demonstrated the activism and professionalism that CML brings to its advocacy efforts. It was rewarding to see many members from across the state. I heard only positive comments from those I spoke with.” – Susan Sherman, current CML President

“For over twenty years, as Executive Director of Washington County Free Library and currently as a member of the CML Board, I have attended CML’s annual meetings. I can say without hesitation that this year’s meeting, with keynote speaker Ellen Oh, was one of the most substantive and timely. Libraries across this country, including those in Maryland, are under attack from extremist groups who seek to ban and remove books from library shelves. Ms. Oh, a well-regarded and popular children’s author, spoke about the challenges currently facing authors who are seeing their books blacklisted and removed from shelves, thus denying children and young adults the freedom to choose what to read. Sometimes very funny with her acerbic wit and insight, Ms. Oh urged us all to become more engaged and involved in what is happening at every level of government from our local school boards and public libraries to the halls of our state houses and Congress. Literally bringing it home to those in the room was the amazing and dynamic panel that zeroed in on actual censorship challenges currently facing several of our school and public libraries here in Maryland. For those of us in the room, it was a wake-up call that the Freedom to Read, one of the most important cornerstones of our democracy, is under attack and that it is up to all of us to see that this most fundamental freedom is not lost.”

—Mary Baykan, incoming CML President.
Citizens for Maryland Libraries (CML) President Susan Sherman, Keynote Speaker Ellen Oh, and CML Executive Director Jim DeArney.

Panelist, Library Media Specialist, Past Maryland Association of School Librarians President, and CML board member Tatanisha Love; Panelist, Executive Director of the Cecil County Public Library, and Chair of the Maryland Association of Public Library Administrators Inter-Governmental Task Force Morgan Miller.

Panelist, Public Library Association President, and Baltimore County Public Library Chief Executive Officer Sonia Alcántara-Antoine; Panel moderator and Citizens for Maryland Libraries Board member Michèle Schlehofer, Ph.D., Salisbury University.
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@mdilib.org!
OutRAIGeous

Reviews

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

So Many Beginnings by Bethany C. Morrow (Feiwel & Friends, 2021)
Review by Crystal Tracy

So Many Beginnings is a solid retelling of Little Women—thoughtful, well-researched, and true to the original story in a way that a lot of retellings of this story aren’t, in my opinion. This isn’t just a story about four sisters living alone with their mom and having adventures and misadventures. It’s also the story of a family living in a limbo of uncertainty, as the American Civil War rages on elsewhere. It’s about making do with what they have and relying on each other for strength and comfort. So Many Beginnings is perhaps more explicit about those themes than the original Little Women, but it still captures the same dynamic, as well as the dynamic of the sisters—Meg, dutiful and kind but trying to find a life for herself; Jo, the brash and “unladylike” writer with ambitions beyond the life she leads; Beth/Bethlehem, the gentle and artistic sister struggling with grave health concerns; and Amy/Amethyst, the beautiful and charismatic youngest child, hungry for accolades and the finer things of life. The dynamics of their developing relationships with the men in their life, their generosity to those in their community, and their love and worry for their absent father all ring true to the original story. Jo’s asexual identity adds queer rep to a story already brimming with Black representation, Black history, and Black joy, and feels much more satisfying for her character than pinning her down to domestic bliss as in the original series.

This wasn’t necessarily a quick read for me, but I am glad I read it. I learned more Black history, such as the existence of freedmen’s colonies in the American South during the War, and enjoyed the story, in both its familiarity and its newness. Plus, that cover illustration is absolutely gorgeous!
A Woman of No Importance: The Untold True Story of the American Spy Who Helped Win World War II by Sonia Purnell (Viking, 2019)

Review by Bettina Wesloh

In a time when women were struggling to break out of the traditional roles that had been set for them, Virginia Hall took a sledgehammer to the glass ceiling. Her daring, courage and outright determination allowed her to build a spy network in Nazi-occupied France that became the driving force behind the French Resistance.

Born and raised in Baltimore, Maryland, Hall continually defied convention by wearing pants, riding bareback and hunting with a rifle. It was when she was on a hunting trip that she lost her leg. This never slowed her down but did earn her the nickname “The Limping Lady” from the Nazis as they launched a frenzied search for this devious spy who had such a devastating impact.

A Woman of No Importance is filled with details about Hall’s time during the war that have only recently become declassified. I am awed by the sheer audacity of Ms. Hall to make a difference in the war on her terms. She refused to allow the world to classify her as “merely” a woman or disabled. The battles she waged in Occupied France and professionally with her career have had an impact that resonates to this day. If you enjoy history, spy novels, or books about feminists who were ahead of their time, this book is for you.
The Spirit Bares Its Teeth by Andrew Joseph White (Peachtree Teen, 2023)

Review by Chloe Scully

In 1883 London, violet-eyed mediums commune with spirits under the watchful eye of the Royal Speaker Society, and sixteen-year-old Silas Bell would rather rip out his violet eyes than become an obedient Speaker wife.

According to Mother, he’ll be married by the end of the year. It doesn’t matter that he’s needed a decade of tutoring to hide his autism; that he practices surgery on slaughtered pigs; that he is a boy, not the girl the world insists on seeing. After a failed attempt to join the Speaker Society, Silas is diagnosed with Veil sickness—a mysterious disease sending violet-eyed women into madness—and shipped away to Braxton’s Sanitorium and Finishing School. The facility is cold, the instructors merciless, and the students either bloom into eligible wives or disappear. So, when the ghosts of missing students start begging Silas for help, he decides to reach into Braxton’s innards and expose its rotten guts to the world—as long as the school doesn’t break him first.

Andrew Joseph White became one of my top insta-buy authors with his debut, Hell Followed With Us, and has continued to be so with The Spirit Bares Its Teeth. It is a hurricane of a story with sweet pockets of plot (Daphne and Silas’ relationship) to counteract the sheer insanity of everything else (ghosts, girls going missing, and body horror, oh my).

Reading it felt like being broken open and having my inner thoughts/deepest fears examined by White, who then tells you what he saw in an eerily accurate manner. TSBIT is a story for anyone who has never felt comfortable in their body, regardless of gender identity, and for those who become monsters in society’s eyes. This book does contain intense body horror, medical gore, transphobia, sexual harassment, and death, so make sure you are in a good mindset before you start and take breaks as needed.
Strangesight

Tracy Miller, Harford County Public Library

I recently read the book Imaginable: How to See the Future Coming and Feel Ready for Anything – Even Things that Seem Impossible Today by Jane McGonigal. I really recommend this book; it has given me concrete strategies for how to think about the future and use future thinking in my life.

Jane McGonigal is the Director of Games Research & Development at the Institute for the Future, a non-profit research group in Palo Alto, California. She is also the lead instructor in a Coursera course based on her class at Stanford University, “Think Like a Futurist,” https://www.coursera.org/learn/introduction-to-futures-thinking. Dr. McGonigal’s extensive experience with game development and future scenario planning has led her to develop tools to support a practice of future-thinking. One of these practices is “Strangesighting.” Dr. McGonigal describes this as the habit of noticing signals of change—stories or news items that are strange because they challenge what you know to be true of the world. They are examples of ways in which the world could be different in the future that are happening today.

In the book, Dr. McGonigal shares an example of noticing a sign at her local park prohibiting the flying of drones. She started to wonder when drones got so ubiquitous that they required a sign, and what they were doing that the sign was trying to prevent. The drone sign was a signal of change—but what was it signaling? She started looking into drones and found lots of information about the implications of drones for a variety of issues, including privacy, noise pollution and even veterans’ experience of PTSD.

A signal of change can be weak—a single item or story—or it can be strong, like Dr. McGonigal discovered when she found many examples of the ways drones are being utilized. Finding these signals is an invitation to think further about the change that a signal represents. Try to imagine a world where the change that is being described is commonplace.

Is that a world where you want to live? While there is still uncertainty as to whether that world comes to pass, there is still opportunity to take action to prepare for it, or to work towards changing it.

I am trying to implement the practice of strangesighting in my life. In the book, Dr. McGonigal suggests spending a small amount of time each week looking for signals of change. To get started, she recommends finding a topic that interests you. Then you can google that topic along with phrases like “the future of ______” or “innovation in ________.” Rather than do that, I try to be attentive in my daily media consumption. If there is something that sparks my interest, I spend a few minutes thinking about it, researching it further, or talking about it. For example, I recently read an article about a new treatment for sickle cell anemia that uses CRISPR, a gene-editing technology. A cure for a devastating disease is an amazingly positive example of this technology, but what other implications could it have? I am trying to imagine what a world where we could change the basic building blocks of life would be like. What are the pitfalls?

Dr. McGonigal suggests having a group with which you share these signals and discuss their implications. The Future of Libraries Interest Group is a great place for those discussions! We hope that you will join us and share what signals of change you have spotted. Visit our group on MLA Connect and join the conversation!
EDI Panel and Leadership Development Division Book Discussion Series

Shirley Mason, Baltimore County Public Library

In the summer of 2023, the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Panel began a collaboration with the Leadership Development Division to facilitate a series of book discussions centered on the intersection of leadership and diversity. Prior to each meeting, discussion facilitators share information about the title selections and any supplemental media materials, such as articles and/or videos. This hybrid book/media model allows attendees to contribute to the discussion even if they have not had the opportunity to read the entirety of the selected book. Additionally, discussion questions are crafted and shared ahead of each meeting, giving attendees time to prepare for the meaningful discussion ahead. These joint book discussions are held at every other Leadership Development Division meeting and the titles have been pre-selected. These meetings are held virtually via Zoom and the link is shared ahead of the meeting.

Here are the titles that have been selected for the year:

July 2023: Professional Troublemaker, Luvvie Ajayi-Jones
November 2023: How To Be an Ally, Melinda Epler
March 2024: Subtle Acts of Exclusion, Tiffany Jana & Michael Baran

These helpful resources on the topic of How To Be an Ally were shared at the most recent EDI Panel/LDD meeting in November:

How to be an Ally in the Workplace (article)
How to be an Ally (video)
3 Ways to be a Better Ally in the Workplace (video)
Leading with Empathy & Allyship: How to be an Ally (video)

The Zoom link and discussion questions are sent out within two weeks of the discussion. Please contact Rachel Miller, Circulation Services, Baltimore County Public Library for the Zoom link.
ACRL Maryland: Fall 2023 in Review

Alex Dodd, University of Maryland Libraries

Association of College and Research Libraries, Maryland (ACRL MD) has had a busy and productive fall semester, and we wanted to share some highlights!

Monthly Discussion Club

Every ACRL MD meeting consists of half normal committee business, and half discussion club, where we come together as a group to talk about subjects that are of interest to academic libraries. This semester’s topics covered diverse issues including cultural humility in library work, student mobility and equity among transfer students, and open access publishing. And we’re always looking for more! If you’d like to suggest a podcast/article/book or anything else at one of our meetings, please reach out to Vice President Alex Dodd (adodd@umd.edu)

August Meeting

Podcast discussion: Hopeful Visions, Practical Actions from the Circulating Ideas podcast

September Meeting

Podcast discussion: The Key Podcast: Streamlining and Scaling Transfer for Equity’s Sake

October Meeting

ai4Libraries Conference

November Meeting


ai4Libraries Conference

This year marks the first ai4Libraries Virtual Conference, a conference that aims to bring together librarians, subject matter experts, practitioners, enthusiasts, and skeptics to exchange ideas, share experiences, and chart a path towards a future where AI plays a significant role in driving library services. To facilitate greater discussion and provide an opportunity for professional networking for Maryland librarians and library staff, ACRL MD held in-person viewing events at three libraries across the state: University of Maryland College Park, Loyola Notre Dame Library and Salisbury University. With almost 50 registrants and over 30 attendees, we think we can call this event a success! A recording of the conference can be found on our ACRL MD webpage. We’re hoping to hold more in-person events this Spring, so be on the lookout. If you haven’t yet, please sign up for our new Google group for general meeting updates and announcements of future events!

New email list: acrl-md@googlegroups.com

How to join: support.google.com/groups/answer/1067205

You can also email behughes@umbc.edu

Revamped MLA/DLA Conference Poster Session – Sponsored by ACRL MD

The MLA/DLA Conference Poster Session is back and will be better than ever! We’re excited to announce that the poster session will return to this year’s conference in a hybrid format, allowing us to share more of our librarians’ great work with an even larger audience. This year, presenters will be required to submit a digital version of their poster. Accepted presenters will not be obliged to attend the conference in person, thereby ensuring inclusivity and accessibility for a wider range of participants. To facilitate and guide this transition, ACRL MD is assembling a comprehensive toolkit focused on best practices for crafting conference posters. Additionally, we are in the process of organizing an online midwinter program dedicated to offering insights and strategies for developing digital posters from scratch, along with general best practices for academic poster creation. Further details regarding these resources, as well as specific poster submission requirements, will be sent later this year. The official call for poster submissions is anticipated to be launched in early 2024.

USMAI Affiliate Membership Reminder!

The University System of Maryland and Affiliated Institutions (USMAI) and MLA recently announced USMAI’s new MLA Affiliate Membership status. The Affiliate Membership means that every library worker at every USMAI institution automatically qualifies for MLA membership. This includes ACRL MD membership, discounts to professional development programs, discounts to the annual Maryland Library Association/Delaware Library Association Conference, access to MLA Connect, voting and office-holding eligibility in MLA and leadership opportunities for staff at all levels. Leadership nominations across all MLA divisions open soon; consider taking advantage of your new membership by getting involved. If you need access now, call 410.947.5090.
Defending Our Collections

Lloyd Jansen, Charles County Public Library, and Monica McAbee, Prince George’s County Memorial Library System

The Intellectual Freedom Panel has been busy conducting programs and planning future ones:

Intellectual Freedom Panel Discussion Series Continues

MLA’s Intellectual Freedom Panel continued our “Defending Our Collections” discussion series with a new twist. For this iteration, we are focusing on one work each time that explores aspects of freedom of access to information. Instead of Zoom, we are hosting the events on MLA Connect.

On Sept. 6, for the topic “The War against Black History,” Monica McAbee facilitated a discussion focusing on the 2023 Arthur Miller Freedom to Write Lecture, given by Ta-Nehisi Coates. We touched on Karl Popper’s “paradox of tolerance” - whether libraries are obligated to provide materials that advocate violence against marginalized groups, why we all need to prepare for challenges and attacks, and whether we think we live in a tolerant community or not. Above all, we agreed with Coates’s statement that the answer to hate speech must be more than just “more speech.” With the imbalance of power, justice, wealth and opportunity that exists in our divided nation, the best answer to hate speech is to fight for marginalized communities to have full access to all their rights, not just that of free speech.

On Nov. 1, Arthur LaRue led the discussion “Free Speech - Is It For Everyone” using the book “Free Speech For Me, But Not For Thee: How the American Left and Right Relentlessly Censor Each Other” by Nat Hentoff as its jumping-off point. The attendees talked about how adherence to political stances can get in the way of upholding principles of free speech.

January 3, 2024
Topic: Review Bombing
Please read: How Review-Bombing Can Tank a Book Before It’s Published by Alexandra Alter and Elizabeth A. Harris, June 26, 2023 (New York Times)
Facilitator: Laura Bandoch

March 6, 2024
Topic: Data and Privacy
Please read: Data Cartels: The Companies That Control and Monopolize Our Information by Sarah Lamdan
Facilitator: Andrea Boothby Rice

May 1, 2024
Topic: Soft Censorship
Please read: Soft and Quiet: Self-Censorship in an Era of Book Challenges by Kelly Jensen
Facilitator: Lloyd Jansen

Attending on MLA Connect
You do not need to belong to the Maryland Library Association to get an account.
At https://mla.tradewing.com/login, click the button that says “Sign Up” and fill in your name and email address.
You’ll receive an email for verification, followed by instructions to finish setting up your Tradewing account.
Once you have an account, click on Events and RSVP for the program you want to attend.

The day of the program, go to that same Events page and click to join the program.

“A Clear and Present Tension: Intellectual Freedom and Safe Spaces”

On Nov. 6, Andrea Boothby-Rice moderated a virtual panel discussion with frontline staff about the ability for libraries to be neutral entities and balancing intellectual freedom with making the library a safe space. The panel and audience members tackled such questions as, “Can libraries remain safe spaces for the entire community and still be a place where all viewpoints are welcome?” Many thanks to our panelists: Jennifer Gallagher, Youth Services Librarian, Queen Anne’s County Public Library; Kirstin Pondexter, Library Associate, DC Public Library; Laura Bandoch, Materials Assistant Director, Harford County Public Library; Jill Schorr, Assistant Librarian, Montgomery County Circuit Court Law Library.

Maryland Is Not Immune!

Maryland may be “Library Heaven,” but that does not mean Maryland libraries have not been subjected to some of the same censorship attempts that are plaguing other states. The following counties are either going through challenges as this is published, or have recently dealt with efforts to ban books and restrict access:

- Calvert County: Two individuals sympathetic to book banning were elected to the school board. Three of five seats are up for election in 2024.
- Carroll County: 58 books going through a review process in school libraries.
- Charles County: A formal request to remove the picture book “The Big Bath House” from the collection was made in September 2022. The book was retained after review.
- Frederick County: 35 books going through a review process in school libraries.
- Garrett County: The wife of a public library board member requested her husband check out titles from the library’s banned books display so others could not check the books out.
- Harford County: A school board member called out six books she claims are age-inappropriate. “We’re not trying to ban books!” she said.
- Montgomery County: The book “Jack of Hearts (and Other Parts)” was removed by a public-school administrator due to sexual content. A challenge against the title “Gender Queer” was still pending at the time of this writing.
- Talbot County: A Moms for Liberty group is becoming active, showing up at school board meetings and showing interest in running for school board seats.
- Wicomico County: The Delmarva Parent Teacher Coalition started a petition to remove “obscene and sexually explicit books.” In February 2022 the book “All Boys Aren’t Blue” by George M. Johnson was banned in Wicomico County schools by the Administration after an internal audit, which was outside of their normal process.

Worcester County: This past August, three books were challenged by a community member, but the challenge was rejected because the person does not have a child in the district.

If your library receives an intellectual freedom challenge, be sure to report it by filling out this form from the Maryland State Library Agency.
Collection Maintenance and Weeding

Laura Bandoch, Harford County Public Library

Does the word ‘weeding’ make you cringe with professional guilt because it’s been ages since you’ve done it? Does the phrase ‘collection maintenance’ make you roll your eyes because you feel like it’s a set of parameters that are too strict to follow and perhaps a bit silly? You probably aren’t alone in your feelings or thoughts. The way each librarian approaches weeding is different. The way each library approaches collection maintenance is different. There is a plethora of articles and webinars on the internet on how to accomplish both.

If you’re new to the library world, here are some regular talking points. Keep in mind that your specific library will have varying requirements you need to balance; for example, a school librarian will have different standards than a public librarian.

- Circulation Statistics—low or non-circulating items should be weeded out.
- Physical Condition—please, get rid of books that look like they have been through a fight and lost.
- Outdated Information—to quote Ferris Bueller “life moves pretty fast.” Technological information, even social concepts, can change even faster. Weed materials that don’t demonstrate current views/knowledge.
- Multiple Copies—yes, you probably needed all those James Patterson books when the book was released to meet the demand. But once that demand dies down, please feel free to find them a new home.

Other things to consider when performing collection maintenance include the importance of materials to community interest and needs, space constraints, inclusion of diverse perspectives, and the relevance to the library’s mission. It can be a lot to keep in mind! Sometimes analysis paralysis happens to even the best of librarians. Here are some tips if you’re in doubt:

- Go with your gut—if you feel like an item should be in the recycling bin, please put it there. You’ve probably put your hands on thousands of items. Your subconscious, and your hands, probably keep track of things better than your active mind.
- Don’t panic over an item being the last item—if you feel like it’s important, odds are it’s still being published and can be reordered. Work with your collection development librarian or selection and acquisition department to communicate the need. Don’t keep an ugly, old copy unnecessarily.
- Let your shelves breathe—you shouldn’t have books crammed together to fill the entire shelf. Libraries aren’t repositories (most of the time). This creates mental clutter as patrons browse. Having room on your shelves allows customers to find what they want/need faster. Face-out books circulate better, too.
- Schedule it—don’t rely on ‘remembering’ to perform collection maintenance. Don’t rely on slow desk shifts. All of those are good ways to fill downtime, but collection maintenance should be a priority. Schedule it just like your desk shifts or meetings. Aim for half an hour a week to start.

If you feel like it’s still not worth your time (after all, there are programs to plan, patrons to assist on the computer, and those mandatory trainings to complete), then consider these benefits of regular collections maintenance:

- Getting out into the collection makes you a better librarian. Putting your hands on more items lets you know what’s in your collection. It allows you to complete reference interviews more easily. It also allows you to know when there are obvious gaps in the collection before it becomes a problem.
- Most of the public thinks of ‘books’ first when they hear ‘library.’ Having a well-maintained collection is a source of professional pride as well as an easily accessible point for knowledge to the people in your community.
- It’s fun! Many of us got into the profession for the love of books and reading. Indulging that for a bit on a regular basis will keep you from burning out, remind you of why you got into the business, and bring a source of joy to your day.

If you’re ever in the mood to chat 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.
Emerging Adults and the Library

Stephanie Wiant, Frederick County Public Libraries

Emerging 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
Christina Der, Youth and Family Engagement Librarian, Baltimore County Public Library

What were your dreams in high school?
I never had lofty dreams in high school. There was little direction for me, and it wasn’t for lack of push from my parents. I was always very focused on a moment, that present moment.

Did you take a traditional path to college or start working?
My path has been far from traditional and this rings true through both my educational and career paths. I started working in high school and haven’t stopped since. I’ve worked everywhere from the service industry to an animal care shelter, most of the time having multiple odd jobs at once. When I graduated from high school, I went straight to college but dropped out in my very first year. I tried countless times to stay and attempted four different colleges. It took me over eight years to graduate and every bit of it was a challenge. The traditional educational environment never supported the way I was able to learn.

Did you go to the library during your EA years?
I never went to a public library during my EA years. If I went to a library during college, it was only to the library on campus to hastily finish up that essay that was due a week prior. I never knew the public library was available to me. The thought of a library never even occurred to me. What would I even need a library for? They only have books, and I didn’t have time to read. Who has time to read?

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

There are still too few programs and services for EAs in our libraries. I believe that the Library at Lunch program is a great start to getting the new EAs in. It’s an opportunity to start introducing library services in an environment that teens are comfortable in. Working with teens and learning their needs as librarians helps empower them as they start adulthood in libraries. If they have knowledge on all the programs and services that libraries offer, they are more likely to use us as a resource after high school.

What is one library program or service you envision that could enhance the experience of EAs in the library?
The Library at Lunch program has been a great opportunity that reaches teens in schools. There are so many different types of barriers to access to the library and its services. Library at Lunch brings the library to both middle and high school students during their lunch period. Over the past three years we’ve been working in high schools and building positive relationships with the students there. We visit the schools monthly with materials and information on library services both across the system and close to home. The teens get to know the librarians who attend these programs and trust that we value their time, show up, listen to them and encourage them to pursue their goals. We see the same
teens visiting us at our little tables every month, checking out books, asking about programs and sharing their lives with us without prompt. Our goal has been to create lifelong patrons, and with this service we’re showing them that we take interest in their goals and are always looking for ways to improve our programs for them. This is a great jumping point for EAs in the library. With these visits every month and maintaining these relationships, teens feel empowered to visit their local libraries, see friendly faces and know that there are resources there to help them succeed!

**Emerging Adult Spotlight**

**Josh Kebe, Washington County Free Library customer**

**When did you start using the library?**

I started going to the library, I think, around June of 2019. That’s when I met Awesome Ann! (Author’s note: Ann Shilling, at the time the Young Adult Library Associate at Washington County Free Library, and currently a Media Specialist for Washington County Public Schools. Ann had a remarkable impact on a lot of youth at WCFL.)

**What do you enjoy most about the library?**

My favorite part about the library is building the connections. The public library in Hagerstown used to do movie nights every third Wednesday and those were a lot of fun too!

**What genre do you enjoy reading?**

My favorite genre is action, ‘cause that’s really the only thing that draws my attention. I also love reading poetry!

**Emerging Adult Book of the Month: The Path Made Clear by Oprah Winfrey**

I highly, highly, highly recommend the audiobook or downloadable audio resource. The conversations that she has with guest speakers are transformative and I believe extremely relevant, as emerging adults are truly trying to navigate their path for the first time into adulthood. I believe it will give EAs comfort to know that there are people well into their adult years who are trying to stay true to themselves and also navigating the expectations of society.

I listened to this audiobook on repeat for a week in my car. Absolutely wonderful!
We’re here. We’re queer. We’re READING!

We, MLA’s LGBTQ+ INTEREST GROUP, are excited to debut our quarterly column in the Crab! The group wanted to begin by sharing some book recommendations. Not only will you find diverse stories here, but we hope you’ll get to know us, your queer librarians within MLA, by connecting with what we’re currently reading.

**The Darkness Outside Us** by Eliot Schrefer (YA Science Fiction)
Hayley Holloway, University of Baltimore
I got this recommendation from a TikTok video comment section—and it turned out to be one of my favorites that I read in 2023! This story took me on an emotional rollercoaster, but in the best way. This book is a beautiful and heartbreaking love story and deep look at humanity and our impact on the planet and the universe. There’s a mystery component as well that slowly reveals itself throughout the story. If you want to feel equal parts nervous, love, claustrophobic, existential, joyful and hopeful, it’s a great pick!

**Love is Love** by Marc Andreyko and more
(YA Graphic Novel)
AshLee Bass, Southern Maryland Regional Library Association
*Love is Love* is a comic book anthology based on the Orlando mass shooting. As the author Marc Andreyko teams up with IDW Publishing, with assistance from DC Entertainment, this comic gives truly moving pieces honoring those victims and survivors. The pages in this graphic novel are filled with rage, sadness, frustrated helplessness and sympathetic concern, as well as celebrating the LGBTQ community with loads of love, taking the time to actually examine how today’s love is given. Give this title a try if you’re a fan of Marc Andreyko’s graphic talents. This is truly an amazing read. For anyone.

**Stars in Your Eyes** by Kacen Callender (Adult Romance)
TJ Finecey, Carroll County Public Library
Stars in Your Eyes is the adult debut by National Book Award-winning author Kacen Callender. It has a tropey plot: two actors falling in love while fake dating to promote their new film. I was pleasantly surprised, though, at how layered and real the characters felt, dealing with the traumas that working in Hollywood can cause. The result is a story that’s cute, devastating and sexy all at once. Give this title a try if you’re a fan of Casey McQuiston or Alison Cochrun.

**Witch King** by Martha Wells (Adult Fantasy)
Liz Gabbitas, Library Leaders for Digital Equity
For sci-fi/fantasy fans, the latest from Martha Wells of *Murderbot Diaries* fame is unmissable. It’s full of strange and off-putting characters you can’t help loving, so much queerness, and complex twists and turns in the story. The setting feels familiar yet proves intensely challenging, a thesis in world building from a writer at her finest. Read *Witch King* to see a band of characters who have never had things worse be boldly determined to make things better.

**You Exist Too Much** by Zaina Arafat (Adult Fiction)
Shannon Carney, Baltimore County Public Library
When the unnamed protagonist of this book came out to her Palestinian mother as bisexual, her mother shouted the titular phrase “you exist too much.” The protagonist spends much of the book grappling with that feeling, that she is too much to be loved, which leads to a self-proclaimed “love addiction.” Told in a series of vignettes, this book had me captivated as the protagonist struggled with her inability to feel loved. The book is raw and real and reaches a heartwarming yet realistic conclusion.

What an excellent list, and that’s just the start! We have many other topics and ideas we can’t wait to share through this platform.

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-Chair Dr. Kelly Clark, Howard County Library System (kelly.clark@hclibrary.org) to learn more or to join our group in MLA Connect. Thank you for taking the time to listen to our voices.
Support Staff Division

People and Plans

Lou Sica, Baltimore County Public Library

The Support Staff Division (SSD) of the Maryland Library Association was created in 1986 as the Associates, Paraprofessionals, and Library Support Staff Division. The name was changed to SSD in Fiscal Year 2016 to better reflect the changing landscape of libraries. The purpose of SSD is to increase the awareness and understanding of the growing role of library support staff, to promote professional growth, and to provide a network of communication for our members. We have an active Steering Committee that currently meets six times per year in February, April, June, August, October, and December. The meetings are on the first Thursday of those months, typically starting at 1:30 pm. Most meetings have an in-person and a virtual option.

Our current Steering Committee consists of SSD Officers Lou Sica (President-BCPL), Moneik Frazier (Vice President-PGCMLS) and Traci Montgomery (Secretary-PGCMLS). In addition to the officers, the Steering Committee consists of Shelley Gilchrist (retiree-BCPL), Maria Jacob (BCPL), Gabriél Jones (PGCMLS), Teonja Jung (BCPL), Shirley Mason (BCPL), Nicole McLain (BCPL), Kim Modeski (BCPL), Chelsea Shockley (EPFL) and Robin Soma-Dudley (AACPL). With the implementation of the MLA Affiliate Memberships, SSD is hopeful that more support staff will become active in MLA and SSD in particular.

SSD sponsors several programs each year at the MLA/DLA Conference, and this year’s offerings are Growing with Your Community, Let’s Talk About Stuff, and Building a Public Library Digital Equity Strategy from the Ground Up. There is also a standalone program currently in the early planning stages for the spring about presenting teen programs. In November, SSD was also pleased to sponsor a booth at the MLA Centennial Carnival, staffed by Lou Sica, Moneik Frazier, Teonja Jung, Robin Soma-Dudley, and Gabriél Jones.

In addition to their work with SSD, several of our Steering Committee Members are active in other ways with MLA. Chelsea Shockley is currently the Assistant Conference Director, Lou Sica was recently on the Centennial Task Force, and Shirley Mason is currently Secretary of the Black Caucus of the Maryland Library Association! SSD is particularly proud that former SSD President Teonja Jung is the current Vice President-President Elect of the Maryland Library Association. Teonja is the first person from the support staff side to be elected to that office!

All MLA members are welcome to join our Steering Committee or attend one of our meetings. Please contact Lou Sica at lsica@bcpl.net for more information. Thanks!
Connecting the ‘Dots’ with Asterisms

Kat Troche

In our December Night Sky Notes, we mentioned that the Orion constellation has a distinct hourglass shape that makes it easy to spot in the night sky. But what if we told you that this is not the complete constellation, but rather, an asterism?

An asterism is a pattern of stars in the night sky, forming shapes that make picking out constellations easy. Cultures throughout history have created these patterns as part of storytelling, honoring ancestors, and timekeeping. Orion’s hourglass is just one of many examples of this, but did you know Orion’s brightest knee is part of another asterism that spans six constellations, weaving together the Winter night sky? Many asterisms feature bright stars that are easily visible to the naked eye. Identify these key stars, and then connect the dots to reveal the shape.

Asterisms Through the Seasons

Try looking for these asterisms this season and beyond:

- **Winter Circle.** This asterism, also known as the Winter Hexagon, makes up a large portion of the Winter sky using stars Rigel, Aldebaran, Capella, Pollux, Procyon, and Sirius as its points. Similarly, the Winter Triangle can be found using Procyon, Sirius, and Betelgeuse as points. Orion’s Belt is also considered an asterism.

- **Diamond of Virgo.** This springtime asterism consists of the following stars: Arcturus, in the constellation Boötes; Cor Caroli, in Canes Venatici; Denebola in Leo, and Spica in Virgo. Sparkling at the center of this diamond is the bright cluster Coma Berenices, or Bernice’s Hair—an ancient asterism turned constellation!

- **Summer Triangle.** As the nights warm up, the Summer Triangle dominates the heavens. Comprising the bright stars Vega in Lyra, Deneb in Cygnus, and Altair in Aquila, this prominent asterism is the inspiration behind the cultural festival Tanabata. Also found is Cygnus the Swan, which makes up the Northern Cross asterism.

- **Great Square of Pegasus.** By Autumn, the Great Square of Pegasus can be seen. This square-shaped asterism takes up a large portion of the sky, and consists of the stars Scheat, Alpheratz, Markab and Algenib.

Stars that make up the Winter Circle, as seen on January 1, 2024. Sky Safari
Tracing these outlines can guide you to objects like galaxies and star clusters. The Hyades, for example, is an open star cluster in the Taurus constellation with evidence of rocky planetary debris. In 2013, Hubble Space Telescope’s Cosmic Origins Spectrograph was responsible for breaking down light into individual components. This observation detected low levels of carbon and silicon—a major chemical for planetary bodies. The Hyades can be found just outside the Winter Circle and is a favorite of both amateur and professional astronomers alike.

How to Spot Asterisms

**Use Star Maps and Star Apps.** Using star maps or stargazing apps can help familiarize yourself with the constellations and asterisms of the night sky.

**Get Familiar with Constellations.** Learning the major constellations and their broader shapes visible each season will make spotting asterisms easier.

**Use Celestial Landmarks.** Orient yourself by using bright stars or recognizable constellations. This will help you navigate the night sky and pinpoint specific asterisms. Vega in the Lyra constellation is a great example of this.

Learn more about how to stay warm while observing this Winter with our upcoming mid-month article on the Night Sky Network page through NASA’s website!

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!

This image shows the region around the Hyades star cluster, the nearest open cluster to us. The Hyades cluster is very well-studied due to its location, but previous searches for planets have produced only one. A new study led by Jay Farihi of the University of Cambridge, UK, has now found the atmospheres of two burnt-out stars in this cluster — known as white dwarfs — to be “polluted” by rocky debris circling the star. Inset, the locations of these white dwarf stars are indicated — stars known as WD 0421+162, and WD 0431+126. NASA, ESA, STScI, and Z. Levay (STScI)
Moneik Frazier, Prince George’s County Memorial Library System

Hello, my name is Moneik Frazier. I’m the Circulation Services Specialist for Prince George’s County Memorial Library System and the current Vice President of Support Staff Division. I’ve been with the library system for more than 29 years and have had the opportunity to work in various roles. Currently, I serve as the Circulation Services Specialist, where my primary responsibilities include overseeing and developing circulation policies, procedures, and staff training. I also respond to customer concerns about borrowing policies and procedures. I developed a Chromebook training team where Circulation Supervisors train seniors to use our Chromebooks and WiFi Smartspots.

About Moneik’s job and MLA responsibilities

What is your job title/employer? Professional history in libraries?
Circulation Services Specialist for Prince George’s County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS).

Work responsibilities/special projects/initiatives?
- Oversees and develops circulation policies and procedures.
- Trains circulation staff.
- Responds to customer concerns on matters relating to borrowing policies and procedures.
- Introduced Chromebooks into the library system.
- Developed a PGCMLS Chromebooks training team.

What work have you done within MLA and what are your hopes and goals for your division in the upcoming year? What are you most excited about? How can the MLA community support you in achieving your goals?

- Presented at Annual MLA conference.
- Attended outreach events.
- I aim to foster increased collaboration and communication within the committee to ensure that diverse perspectives are considered in decision-making processes.
- My goal is to provide valuable opportunities for professional development to our members, offering workshops, training sessions, and networking events that enhance their skills and knowledge.
- I’m excited about being part of a team that makes a difference in the library world and the wider community.

How are you involved in the wider community?
- Outreach events.
- Training seniors at several locations in Prince George’s County on how to use Chromebooks.
What is it about libraries that inspires or motivates you?

Libraries serve as reservoirs of knowledge, offering access to many books, research materials, and resources. The idea of having a place where anyone can explore and gain knowledge is truly inspiring.

To wake up every day knowing I can make a difference in the lives of others is fulfilling.

About Moneik

Favorite movie, TV show, or play?

The Temptations movie.

Favorite sport and/or sports team?

Philadelphia Eagles.

What was your first job?

File clerk at the FBI building in Washington, DC.

Do you read more than one book at a time?

I love listening to ebooks. I can listen to three ebooks at one time.

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

Michelle Obama, Becoming

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

I love to cook; I’m the chef in my family!

Moneik is passionate about getting to know her community by participating in outreach events.
Lou Sica, Baltimore County Public Library

About Lou’s Job and MLA Responsibilities
What is your job title/employer? Professional history in libraries? Work responsibilities/special projects/initiatives?

Circulation Services Manager at BCPL White Marsh. I have worked for BCPL for over 31 years (25 full-time and 6 part-time). 26 of those years have been as a supervisor or manager.

What work have you done within MLA and what are your hopes and goals for your division in the upcoming year? What are you most excited about? How can the MLA community support you in achieving your goals?

I have been working with MLA for about 20 years. I have been President, Vice-President, and Secretary of the Support Staff Division (going back to when the division was called APLSS), numerous times each. I have served on the Conference Committee on numerous occasions and was a two-time co-chair of the Author Endowment Awards Committee. Most recently I served on the Centennial Task Force.

As the current SSD President I am most excited to work with Tif and the Executive Board and to coordinate both a standalone program and conference programs.

The MLA community can support me and SSD by encouraging more support staff from their libraries to get involved with MLA!

What is it about libraries that inspires or motivates you?

Customer service and developing staff.

About Lou
Favorite movie, TV show, or play?

My favorite current TV show is Abbott Elementary.

Favorite sports team?

Baltimore Ravens.

What was your first job?

Circulation Assistant at the Rosedale Branch of BCPL.

Favorite type of music?


What book is currently on your nightstand?

100 Things Ravens Fans Should Know & Do Before They Die.

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

Favorite places to travel: Deep Creek Lake and Nashville.
Keep up with MLA/ALA events…Share job openings…
Offer weeded items from your collection to others…Ask a question!

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