

the Crab

The Digital Magazine of the Maryland Library Association
Volume 54, Number 4 • Summer, 2024



New Maryland State Librarian

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Editor's Note

This last quarter of activity reminds us all how dedicated, active, and very busy Maryland libraries and library workers are! As one of our outstanding copy editors—an academic librarian—commented to me after editing some of the pieces in this issue, “Wow, I can’t believe all the cool things happening in public libraries. . . thanks to support staff!”

There truly is so much good work to appreciate. The work of the Maryland Library Association isn’t carried out solely by support staff, or librarians, or public libraries, as the news and features in our current issue demonstrate. Our “Library People” feature focuses on two academic librarians active in MLA, Mike Kiel and incoming Vice President David Dahl; our new President, Teonja Jung, is a former Support Staff Division President and a Circulation Services Manager with Baltimore County Public Library. To quote Teonja’s column from our winter issue of *the Crab*, “MLA is for all who work in libraries” – be they support staff, librarians or library associates, retired staff, or volunteers; whether they work in public, school, academic or special libraries; and whether their work focuses on children, teens, students, emerging adults, adults or senior citizens. All of you have valuable experience, insight and contributions to share to the ongoing project of making Maryland libraries and MLA the best they can be.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue, particularly our MLA/DLA Conference recap and photos, as well as the accompanying features and columns related to all the presentations, programming and social activities that took place over three busy days in May. We’re excited for Chelsea Shockley’s tenure as 2025 MLA Conference Director and a new venue in Ocean City, so save the date: May 7-9, 2025. Finally, special congratulations to retirees Irene Padilla, John Venditta, Debby Bennett and Anita Vassallo,



with gratitude for years of library leadership and dedicated service, and to our incoming Maryland State Librarian Morgan Miller, whose advocacy and leadership for Maryland libraries makes her ideal for her new role.

*Julie Fitzpatrick, MLA Crab Editor
Howard County Library System*

President's Message

*Tiffany Sutherland, MLA President
Calvert Library*



IN MY PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE STATEMENT, I outlined a vision for the Maryland Library Association. MLA thrives when its membership is robust and feels that it provides the necessary space and resources to support the communities its libraries serve. This year, I aimed to collaborate with the Executive Board to ensure that the MLA units offered opportunities that enriched library workers' experiences and empowered them to provide thriving services for their communities. I also aimed to equip Maryland library advocates to combat censorship attempts and champion the protection and enhancement of Maryland libraries of all types. My goal was to attract potential members, eliminate barriers to membership, engage new members and support existing ones. Thanks to the exceptional work and support of the Executive Board, MLA was able to offer modern and progressive continuing education opportunities, support communities in their fight against censorship attempts, lead a successful state legislative session and continue to listen to the members about the association's future direction.

Hopefully, you were able to attend this year's outstanding annual Maryland and Delaware Library Association Conference in Cambridge. The success of this conference is a testament to our members' dedication and hard work. The Conference Committee—led by Anita Crawford and Chelsea Shockley—hosted several hundred local library workers from all levels of different types of libraries for three days of exceptional keynote speakers, engaging vendors, a vibrant silent auction, dynamic social events and a stellar program lineup. This team was truly outstanding. I cannot wait to see what Chelsea, her co-chair, Paula Mitchell (State Library Resource Center at Enoch Pratt Free Library) and next year's committee bring us.

Going into my year as MLA's immediate Past President, I want to continue developing more exciting and beneficial fundraisers for MLA. In this last quarter of FY 24, we sold a bunch of Very Radical t-shirts and hosted many of you at an Orioles game in early June. Fundraising is vital because it not only raises money but also increases awareness and



engagement. Visible fundraisers help MLA host more beneficial activities for members.

This transition is not easy for me. I have thoroughly loved my year as President of the Maryland Library Association. However, I am comforted by the fact that I know Teonja Jung is going to do a superb job as President. She has innovative ideas that will spark advances in the work MLA does. Thank you all for an unbelievable year, and I look forward to continuing to work for MLA. ■

Vice President's Message

Teonja Jung
MLA Vice President/President Elect
Baltimore County Public Library



Greetings MLA!

Happy summer! It is getting hot in here! Libraries around the state are gearing up for the Summer Reading Program: Adventure Begins at Your Library, and MLA is gearing up for a new exciting year in FY 25. As I wrap up my year as Vice President and transition to my year as President starting July 1, there are many exciting things on the horizon.

Leadership Orientation Day 2024 will be happening on June 17 from 10 am to 3 pm at the Miller Branch of Howard County Public Library. MLA leaders will come together to network and gain valuable information about legislative updates, budget highlights and learn group leaders' expectations. I hope I will see you there.

Thank you to everyone who worked in so many ways for MLA this past year. Have a great summer, enjoy Summer Reading, the weather and all the greenery. I look forward to bringing you more news from the President's Corner in the fall. ■

Report from MLA's ALA Chapter Councilor, Summer, 2024

*Joseph Thompson, Carroll County Public Library
Editor's note*

Joe's most recent round of three American Library Association (ALA) Council meetings took place at the ALA Annual Conference and Exhibition in San Diego from June 29 through July 1, after the submission deadline for this issue of the Crab. He has been actively advocating, planning and working with ALA on behalf of Maryland libraries and plans on updating us in his fall Councilor's Report. ■

THE BEST TOOLS FOR INCLUSION

Join us for an Inclusion Showcase, a collaborative Zoom presentation spearheaded by the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled (LBPD) and Maryland Accessible Telecommunications (MAT). The showcase informs the public about programs and services for Maryland citizens who are low-vision, blind, print disabled, or have other disability needs.



INCLUSION SHOWCASE

988 MENTAL HEALTH HOTLINE AMBASSADORS

DIVISION OF REHABILITATION SERVICES, INDEPENDENT LIVING OLDER BLIND

FOUNDATION FIGHTING BLINDNESS

MD ACCESSIBLE TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM

MD STATE LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND AND PRINT DISABLED

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND



WE CARE ABOUT YOUR PATRONS

- Learn about various foundations and organizations that support the blind and print disabled.
- Learn about tools and resources that are FREE
- The program will be recorded for playback

July 25, 2024 @ 10:30 AM <https://bit.ly/InclusionShowcase24>

If you need accommodations, please contact ashley.biggs1@maryland.gov or 410-230-2430

Maryland Announces 2024 Young Readers Program Funding Recipients

Tim Pratt, Maryland State Library Agency

The Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) announced that 16 public library systems and affiliate organizations will receive additional funding from the state budget passed by Governor Wes Moore to support early childhood literacy programs through the Young Readers Matching Grant Program.
















The Maryland Governor's Young Readers Program—the Baltimore City affiliate of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library—is a book gifting program that began in 2016, and has since provided thousands of children with free, high-quality books. The Young Readers Program Expansion Act of 2023, spearheaded by Delegate Marc Korman (D-Montgomery) and Senator Cory McCray (D-Baltimore City) and signed into law by Governor Moore, created a new grants program for MSLA that will help support the distribution of books through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to more than 39,000 additional Maryland children under age five.

As part of the program, children receive a free book every month to encourage a love of reading and learning and to prepare them for school. Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program affiliates have reported a better readiness for kindergarten, improved home literacy practices and increased student achievement, among other benefits.

“The Young Readers Program Expansion Act will help tens of thousands of additional children develop the skills they need to succeed in school and in life,” said State Librarian Irene Padilla. “I'm thrilled to see Maryland lawmakers and so many dedicated affiliates across the state laying the groundwork for the program to grow and support even more young readers in the future.”

The Young Readers Program Expansion Act of 2023 earmarked \$350,000 in state funding to support a matching grant initiative for programs across Maryland in addition to the Baltimore City program, which is managed by Enoch Pratt Free Library and receives nearly \$200,000. The goal of the program is to support access to books for children, especially those in high-poverty ZIP codes.

Funds are being distributed this spring to the following public library systems and organizations:

-  Allegany County United Way, Inc. (Allegany)
-  Annapolis Area Imagination Library (Anne Arundel)
-  Bright Minds Foundation (Howard)
-  Caroline County Public Library (Caroline)
-  Charles County Public Library (Charles)
-  Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Cecil County (Cecil)
-  Enoch Pratt Free Library (Baltimore City)
-  Frederick County Public Schools (Frederick)
-  Garrett Reading Council (Garrett)
-  Imagination Library of Montgomery County (Montgomery)
-  Imagination Library of Talbot County (Talbot)
-  Imagination Library of Wheaton Woods Elementary PTA (Montgomery)
-  Kent County Judy Center (Kent)
-  Prince George's County Memorial Library System (Prince George's)
-  Queen Anne's County Library (Queen Anne's)
-  United Way of the Lower Eastern Shore (Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico, Worcester)

The Maryland State Library Agency thanks Governor Wes Moore, Delegate Korman, Senator McCray and the General Assembly for leading the effort to expand access to resources for Maryland's youngest readers. Learn more about Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and consider donating to your local affiliate today. ■

Maryland Youth Services Librarian Receives National Recognition

Tim Pratt, Maryland State Library Agency

The Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) is pleased to announce that Youth Services Librarian LaShawn Myles was named a recipient of *Library Journal's* 2024 Movers & Shakers award. Myles has served since 2017 at the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled (LBPD), a division of MSLA that provides valuable resources to more than 6,000 active users throughout the state. A former teacher and librarian in the Baltimore City Public Schools system, Myles prioritizes diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion as part of a concerted effort to serve all members of the community.

"I am extremely honored to be recognized as a 2024 *LJ* Mover and Shaker," Myles said. "To be a 'Mover', you need force. Within my years at the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled, that force has come from conversations, shared knowledge, handshakes and partnerships from the community I serve. It is a privilege to work alongside others to remove barriers to access. Onward and upward!"

Library Journal is a national trade publication founded in 1876, that serves librarians and library workers with news and perspectives that shape the field including best practices, innovations, emerging leaders, guidance on purchasing decisions and advocacy. The 2024 class of Movers & Shakers, showcased in *Library Journal's* May 2024 edition, includes 50 leaders who have demonstrated 50 different ways to move libraries forward. They are



developing programs for patrons with disabilities, providing after-school options for teenagers, connecting libraries with federal funding, designing sustainable facilities and battling censorship attempts, among many other efforts.

"Our 2024 Movers represent a range of innovative, proactive and supportive work; they are imaginative and kind and brave in a world that needs those qualities—and the results they produce—very much," said *Library Journal* Executive Editor Lisa Peet.

Myles leads the Inclusion and Accessibility Community of Practice, a statewide group of public and school library staff who share resources, ideas and strategies to

increase inclusiveness and accessibility in their library services to youth and families. When Myles recognized an increasing number of Spanish-speaking students, she worked with a language service to ensure LBPD applications and fliers were available in Spanish. When she wanted to offer the American Red Cross' Babysitters Course to blind and print disabled youth, she worked with the Red Cross to obtain their materials and have them professionally embossed in hard copy and electronic braille.

Among Myles' other accomplishments, she has advised the NASA "@ My Library" program on adding accessible elements to kits distributed to public libraries and advised Cornerstones of Science on ways to make their "Test the Waters" kits accessible. Myles sends care packages in the fall to teachers of the visually impaired to inform them about LBPD resources and give them a boost to start the school year. In addition, Myles has collaborated with libraries in Baltimore County, Montgomery County and Worcester County to provide braille overlays for story walks, creating a more accessible experience for the blind.

To coincide with the nationwide Summer Reading Program theme "Oceans of Possibilities" in 2022, Myles brought *The Whalemobile* to Maryland's blind and print disabled youth, giving them and their families the opportunity to explore a 40-foot inflatable model of a humpback whale. Then in 2023, Myles brought "All Together Now," the Summer Reading Program theme, to LBPD for a question-and-answer session about the newest release of the accessible handheld media player Victor Reader Stream. During the session, the participants joined together for a drum circle with Katy Gaughan's Drumming for Wellness.

Demonstrating dedication and expertise, Myles and MSLA Youth Services Coordinator Carrie Sanders brought Project Ready (focusing on racism) and Project Enable (focusing on disabilities) to library staff across the state. Myles served as a facilitator of a Project Ready

small group during a statewide study. Her longtime commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility has been recognized nationally as she was invited to participate on the National Library Service’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee and the Service’s inaugural Summer Reading Program.

Myles’ recognition today comes three years after Nini Beegan—Organizational Learning and Innovation Coordinator at MSLA—was named a *Library Journal* Mover & Shaker in 2021. State Librarian Irene Padilla is proud to see MSLA represented on the national stage once again.

“LaShawn is an expert in her field and works hard to serve the blind and print disabled residents of Maryland,” Padilla said. “The State and our residents are lucky to have her, and I’m thrilled to see her receive the recognition she deserves.”

The Whalemobile!

A Whale of a Newsletter

March 2024 (Help us name our newsletter. Send suggestions to team@thewhalemobile.com)

35mm FILM

35mm FILM

WHERE IN THE WORLD

Amanda

Educator Amanda had a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to swim with humpback whales. She spent a week on Grand Turk, a calving ground for the North Atlantic humpback whales during the winter. She was able to swim in-water with these gentle giants and found herself eye to eye with humpback whales. Her most memorable encounters were with a mom and calf, mom being identified as a Gulf of Maine humpback named “Indiana”, as well as a male humpback singing his heart out. She sat and watched as he sang for over an hour! Check out her video [here](#).

Michaela

Michaela has spent the past few weeks working with ORCA. This group is based in the UK and works to help whales and dolphins by collecting sighting information from opportunistic platforms like expedition cruises that move through whale habitats. Michaela has been recording the species the ship sees traveling between the Falkland Islands, South Georgia, and Antarctica. It’s been an amazing experience. [Click here](#) to watch a short video of her trip!

LINKS TO ACTIVITIES

In 2020, Cynde helped create activities for the Year of the Right Whale. [Click here](#) to go to the activities page to find all the activities and links related to right whales—including a 20-minute introductory video you could share with your class. [Where do the females go](#) and [where do the males go](#) involve graphing and are great for middle school! If you use some, [email us](#) and let us know how it goes!

WHALES IN THE NEWS

Gray whale in the Atlantic?

Did you hear about the gray whale that was sighted off Massachusetts? This marks the 5th sighting of a gray whale in Atlantic and Mediterranean waters in the past 15 years. What makes this especially intriguing is that the species has been extinct in the Atlantic for over 200 years! Curious to delve deeper into this rare sighting? We’ve compiled a list of articles with many of the details we have. Just [click here](#) to find information you can share with your class!

WHAT IN THE WHALE WORLD?!
Gray Whales in the Atlantic

AMAZING KIDS

Aeon for Ocean

Aeon for Ocean was founded by Aeon, a 7-year-old from Minnesota, to empower his peers to protect the ocean and this beautiful planet. Aeon has been passionate about marine life since he was two years old, and he is an avid advocate for the ocean and its creatures. His love of the world’s oceans and his drive for conservation has inspired his parents and classmates alike.

New Maryland State Librarian

Irene Padilla, Maryland State Library Agency (retired)

It is my pleasure to inform the Maryland library community that Cecil County Public Library (CCPL) Executive Director Morgan Lehr Miller has accepted the position of Maryland State Librarian effective June 26, 2024. Morgan is a dedicated and accomplished professional with two decades of library experience. As I look forward to my retirement, I am confident that she will successfully lead the Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) and strengthen the state's 192 public libraries well into the future.

Morgan began her professional career in the publishing sector before joining CCPL as Adult Services Library Associate in 2005. She spent the following years working her way up through the library system, eventually becoming Executive Director in 2016. Morgan's vast experience gives her firsthand knowledge of the inner workings of public libraries, best practices and the challenges librarians face today.

Among her accomplishments, Morgan led a \$22 million capital project to design and construct a new 43,000-square-foot library branch and administrative headquarters for CCPL in North East. She oversaw the development and implementation of the library system's Strategic Plan, which focuses on advancing 21st-century library services, spaces, staff and support. She incorporated new technology and automation strategies including RFID, automated materials handlers, a redesigned website, enhanced self-check and user apps that allow the organization to devote staffing to high-value tasks and direct service to customers. Additionally, she chartered



Incoming Maryland State Librarian Morgan Miller with retiring Maryland State Librarian Irene Padilla and Delaware State Librarian Annie Norman at the MLA/DLA Conference. Photo courtesy of Tim Pratt, Maryland State Library Agency.

the Friends Foundation of CCPL, a 501(c)(3), to enhance library funding and advocacy support. All these accomplishments were on top of concerted efforts to develop partnerships within the community, increase staff diversity and grow outreach efforts.

Morgan has worked tirelessly on behalf of public libraries at the state level. She served as President of the Maryland Library Association in 2020-2021 and is well known in Annapolis thanks to her continued support of legislation that supports public libraries and librarians.

Morgan is a strong proponent of intellectual freedom and proud supporter of the Freedom to Read Act, an important protection for libraries and librarians passed this spring by the Maryland General Assembly. I was honored to work with Morgan on this critical piece of legislation and stand alongside her at the State House—along with many other supporters—as Governor Moore signed the bill into law on April 25, 2024.

I count the passage of the Freedom to Read Act as one of the proudest moments in my 22 years as

Maryland State Librarian. Also included on that list is the establishment of the MSLA as an independent agency in 2017, after many years of hard work by many different people. Dozens of other important bills have been passed over the years to support public libraries as well, but it would be impossible to recount them all in my brief update today.

However, I will say the tireless efforts of MSLA staff, librarians, library friends and elected officials have helped make Maryland libraries some of the best in the country. With Morgan at the helm, I am optimistic about the future of MSLA and libraries across the state. I look forward to watching the progress we've made so far continue in the years to come. ■

Statement from Maryland State Library Board Chair Kristen Pironis

“On behalf of the Maryland State Library Board, we extend our deepest gratitude to Irene for her unwavering commitment to advancing the vital role of libraries throughout our state. Her visionary leadership was instrumental in establishing the Maryland State Library Agency and fulfilling its vision of inspiring innovation. As we bid farewell to Irene and honor her legacy, we warmly welcome Morgan Miller as the next steward of library access and service.”



Statement from Morgan Lehr Miller

“Over the past two decades of my career, it's been clear that I work alongside the best people in the best libraries in the nation. I'm extremely honored and inspired by this opportunity to lead the State Library Agency into the future, and to build on our shared commitment to uplift the lives of all Marylanders through transformative library services.”



New Officers of the Black Caucus of the Maryland Library Association (BCMLA)

Melanie Townsend Diggs, Prince George's County Memorial Library System

Christine Iko – President



My name is Christine Iko. I hail from Prince George's County but have been in Baltimore working for Enoch Pratt Free Library for a little over a decade. Most of my time at Pratt has been spent serving in the African American Department. At Temple University I double-majored in African American Studies and English, and later received an MLIS from the University of Pittsburgh. I have been with BCMLA since 2015 and I am excited for my role as President as an opportunity to hone my leadership skills. My number one priority will be making the mentorship initiatives that we have had in mind come to fruition. My platform also includes offering more opportunities to gather socially, including doing community

service together and hopefully beginning an annual winter fundraiser. The annual winter fundraiser would be a social event with the chance to dress up and have some good eats, to raise money for a scholarship fund that would help us in our goals of recruitment to the library profession.

Genive Purchase – Vice President/President Elect



My name is Genive Purchase, and I am currently one of the Deputy Chiefs for Enoch Pratt Free Library's Central location. As the Deputy Chief I am responsible for Children's, Business Science & Technology, Special Collections, Teen and Best & Next. I am originally from New York, where I accrued most of my library experience. I have worked for several community libraries on Long Island, prior to getting my first full-time position with Queens Public Library (QPL). At QPL I worked at several branches and was promoted to a Principal Branch and finally to their Central Branch. In my various positions I have provided services and programs to children, adults and teens.

I am excited to serve the BCMLA as VP/President Elect. One of the initiatives that I plan to work on during my tenure is to expand our strategies to expose students of color to the field of librarianship, increasing the diversity of the profession. I believe that many students do not realize that librarianship is a viable career option that not only provides stability but is also rewarding on numerous levels. Furthermore, I believe that having diverse representation in the field of librarianship is a true reflection of the communities we serve.

Cecelia Thomas – Secretary



My name is Cecelia Thomas, and I am the branch manager of the P.D. Brown Memorial Branch of Charles County Public Library (CCPL). I have been working in libraries for almost 12 years, beginning my career with St. Mary's County Library in 2012 before transitioning to CCPL in 2019. I received my MLIS degree from San Jose State University in 2016, and I've continued to seek professional development since then by completing the Southern Maryland Training & Education in Library Leadership Advancement & Readiness (STELLAR) program and attending the Maryland Library Leadership Institute (MLLI). I believe one of the biggest benefits of being actively involved in MLA is the opportunity to further my professional development. I joined BCMLA last year and had the opportunity to present at the MLA Conference earlier this year. I was able to work with and learn from peers who have experience and knowledge that exceeds my own. As secretary of BCMLA, I would like to help create those connections and opportunities for others. We all have different experiences that we bring to the table, and when we work together, we can use those differences to strengthen each other and our communities.



Cecelia Thomas, Christine Iko and Genive Purchase at the MLA/DLA Conference.

Maryland Board of Public Works Approves Library Project Funding

Tim Pratt, Maryland State Library Agency

The Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) is pleased to announce the Maryland Board of Public Works recently approved more than \$15.1 million in grants to help fund seven public library capital improvement projects across the state. The grants were made possible by MSLA's County Library Capital Grant program, which was established in 2008 and has since provided annual, mandated State funding totaling more than \$101.8 million for projects in each of Maryland's 24 public library systems. The funding approved for Fiscal 2025 will support library construction, renovation and expansion projects in Anne Arundel, Garrett, Montgomery, Talbot, Wicomico and Worcester counties, as well as Baltimore City.

"We are grateful to Governor Wes Moore, the Board of Public Works and the Maryland General Assembly for their continued support of public libraries from Western Maryland to the Eastern Shore," said Maryland State Librarian Irene M. Padilla. "Public libraries play an important role in the success of our communities, so it's imperative we continue to provide them with the funding they need to help Marylanders thrive in the 21st century."

The State's annual funding mandate, increased from \$5 million to \$7.5 million in 2023, gives Maryland's public library systems critical support to address their capital improvement needs. Since its inception, the County Library Capital Grant program has supported the construction of 21 new public libraries and leveraged approximately \$375

million in local matching funds.

A November 2023 Statewide Facilities Assessment conducted by MSLA found that more than half of the state's 192 public libraries are more than 25 years old. Fifty-four facilities require general renovations while another 18 buildings have been identified for replacement.

The \$15.1 million in grants approved this month by the Board of Public Works includes \$7,954,000 in mandated and supplemental State funding along with funds from previous authorizations for projects that were canceled or delayed. Additional information on the latest round of projects can be found below.

Anne Arundel

\$1,398,000 to construct a new 40,838-square-foot facility to replace the 56-year-old Glen Burnie Library building. The project will provide a new, modern 33,068-square-foot Glen Burnie Library with meeting rooms and additional space to support more computers and Internet services. It also will include a 7,700-plus-square-foot Archeology and Cultural Resources facility. The county match totals \$1,398,000.

Baltimore City

\$3,218,000 to renovate and expand the 7,400-square-foot Forest Park Branch. The branch was constructed in 1910, expanded in 1964 and last renovated in 1987. The project will completely renovate and modernize the building with new mechanical, electrical and safety systems. It will address significant water intrusion issues and add a new ADA entry point, including the addition of an elevator providing access to the main library on the first floor and an existing public meeting room in the basement. The renovated and expanded branch will total 9,700 square feet. Baltimore City is contributing \$6,350,000 for the project.

Garrett

\$2,655,000 to construct a new 4,500-square-foot Friendsville Library to replace the existing 2,800-square-foot building, originally erected as a temporary metal structure in 1970. The current facility is inadequate in terms of insulation, ADA access, electrical infrastructure and size, and lacks a meeting room for community events. Previous funding was used for site acquisition and design. The funds approved by the Board of Public Works will be used to start construction and furnish the new library. Additional funds to complete the project will be requested next year. Garrett County will provide \$200,000 while the library system will provide \$95,000 in matching funds.

Montgomery

\$957,000 to renovate the 16,400-square-foot Damascus Library. The building opened in 1990 and is a shared county facility with the Damascus Senior Center. This project will include replacement of the library roof, windows, lighting, storefront doors, part of the HVAC system and waterproofing the foundation. ADA issues and the functionality of the library spaces also will be addressed. Adding collaboration spaces, a lactation room, a single service desk, a gender-neutral bathroom, electrical outlets and renovating existing bathrooms will make the Damascus Library more functional and responsive to community needs. Montgomery County will provide \$957,000 in matching funds.

Talbot

\$2,803,000 to renovate and expand the existing 7,716-square-foot St. Michaels Library, constructed in 1981. The project will add 3,071 square feet, a 40-percent increase in size, and result in a fully renovated 10,787-square-foot facility that will become the new hub of the community. Apart from an expansion completed 17 years ago,

much of the original facility's infrastructure is over 40 years old and includes a pre-engineered metal garage from which the library was first built. The project will provide sufficient space for large community meetings, children, teens, collections and study, and make the facility ADA-compliant. Previous funding was used for design and to begin construction. The Board of Public Works approval includes funds to complete the project. Talbot County is providing \$2,803,000 in matching funds.

Wicomico

\$131,000 to replace five outdated, inefficient and malfunctioning components of the heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) system at Wicomico Public Library's flagship Paul S. Sarbanes Branch in downtown Salisbury. These components were installed in 1979 and are at the end of their lifespan. With the proposed improvements, the HVAC system will serve the needs of the library for at least the next 15 years. Previous funds were used to replace a portion of the HVAC system. This project will complete the system upgrade. Wicomico County will provide \$16,520 for the project and the library will provide \$6,480 in matching funds.

Worcester

\$3,999,000 to construct a new 12,000-square-foot facility to replace the existing Pocomoke Branch Library. The current building is 6,700 square feet and opened in 1970. The library's facility plan identified many necessary infrastructure replacements including the need for a new roof, new HVAC equipment and increased electrical service. Additional space is needed to support current and future functions. A new library will support active learning and expand the library's ability to offer programming. Previous funding for construction was deferred to this year due to a change in location and environmental concerns

at the site. The funding approved by the Board of Public Works includes supplemental funds for construction. Additional funds will be requested next year to complete construction and furnish the facility. Worcester County is providing \$3,999,000 in matching funds. ■

About the Maryland State Library Agency

The Maryland State Library Agency is an independent agency providing strategic leadership and guidance to Maryland's public libraries. MSLA promotes the planning and implementation of library programs, supports staff and career development through education and training, and facilitates resource sharing among libraries. MSLA oversees the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled, Maryland's Public Libraries, the State Library Network, the Public Library Capital Grants Program and the Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library.



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2024 MLA/DLA Conference Update

*Chelsea Shockley, 2024 MLA Conference Co-Chair,
2025 MLA Conference Director, Enoch Pratt
Free Library*



THANK YOU TO OUR CONFERENCE COMMITTEE, presenters, volunteers, attendees, and sponsors for an excellent 2024 Conference! This year gave me the opportunity to see all of the work that happens behind-the-scenes. During the conference it almost felt like I wasn't doing anything (which I know isn't true), but that feeling of lightness was thanks to everyone offering their time and energy. Without our team, this conference wouldn't be possible.

- 🎁 I won't get too sappy (I am a Capricorn moon), but I was so happy to co-lead alongside my friend and colleague Anita Crawford. I will miss working with her as well as her support and guidance.
- 🎁 I'd like to acknowledge the MLA team: Josh Stone, Kate Monagan and Leah Sims. This trio kept everything running smoothly during our time in Cambridge.
- 🎁 Before (and yes, even updating and sending updates during dinner at the conference), Jennifer Jones and Melissa Lauber spent time working with Sched to make sure attendees had what they needed to find their sessions in our conference app.
- 🎁 Thank you to Amy Miller Meyers for all of the marketing support leading up to the conference. Amy and Leah were also giving real time updates on our social media accounts.
- 🎁 Social activities (like the return of dogs in the vendor hall!) wouldn't have been possible without the leadership of Catherine Wimberley and Jo Powers and the efforts of our Social Committee. Pam Taylor also contributed her time to supporting the Silent Auction which benefits both MLA and DLA.
- 🎁 Thank you to Catherine Hollerbach for her support with everything MLA Awards-related.
- 🎁 A special thanks to Eric Bodvin, our onsite audiovisual support - everything was seamless throughout each day thanks to him.
- 🎁 Many thanks also to Angelique Broussard, who was on-the-go for the whole conference, capturing our conference memories.
- 🎁 And last but not least: a big thank you to everyone on the conference committee this year for their ideas and feedback as well as our volunteers for the registration desk and silent auction.

Although conferences are great for many reasons, I most look forward to learning from others. I was sad to have missed out on our regular sessions due to conference responsibilities, but thankfully I was able to sit in on all of our keynotes. This year I had the

opportunity to moderate my first keynote with Baltimore's own Hilton Carter. I may have said I was nervous about a hundred times, but I was happy to hear the feedback afterwards about how conversational it was, and how even those without a green thumb really enjoyed it. I wasn't fa-

miliar with Ronald Malfi's work but was still amused during his luncheon. I was inspired by Jennie Pu and Sonia Alcántara-Antoine's conversation and hearing about their career journeys. The closing keynote with Rebekkah Smith Aldrich gave me a lot to think about; we are already seeing the effects of climate change on our communities, so our libraries must continue to be innovative to provide a better world for tomorrow. I hope everyone similarly found something that entertained, inspired and informed them.

MLA has always been one of my favorite conferences. I've been able to make genuine connections and friendships throughout the years, so I hope to continue making space for others to do the same at our social events. Wednesday evening, I was able to drop by all the meetups for a little bit (BCMLA, ACRL and DLA). I was missing my dog Taemin after being away from home, so I always appreciate the Pets on Wheels break! I spent my Thursday night karaoke-spectating and enjoying our wonderful hosts Levi Branson and Beth Heltebridle; the singers; and our tambourine participants in the audience. (If you have the bravery to sing in front of people you will see again in a professional setting, you can do anything.) Also, congratulations to my fellow colleagues from Pratt Library who also won the Pub Quiz. I am not a group fitness person, but I'm glad the weather held out for our morning yoga group instructed by Allison Jennings-Roche. We will be looking to keep up the social aspect next year, so stay tuned!

Although it's bittersweet to be moving on from the Hyatt next year (and away from Bay Country Bakery), I'm looking forward to next year's conference as we prepare to head back to Ocean City. I'd like to take the time to introduce our 2025 Conference Co-Chair, Paula Mitchell. She is the Operations Manager at the Enoch Pratt Free Library/Maryland State Library Resource Center (SLRC). While it won't just be the two of us coordinating the conference, her several years of SLRC conference planning plus her programming and events coordination experience at Wicomico Public Library will be a great asset as we move to a new venue.

I'll be back in the fall with more updates as we progress in our planning! We are looking forward to working with everyone for the next year. If you are interested in participating in the 2025 committee, please reach out to us at md.la.conference@gmail.com.



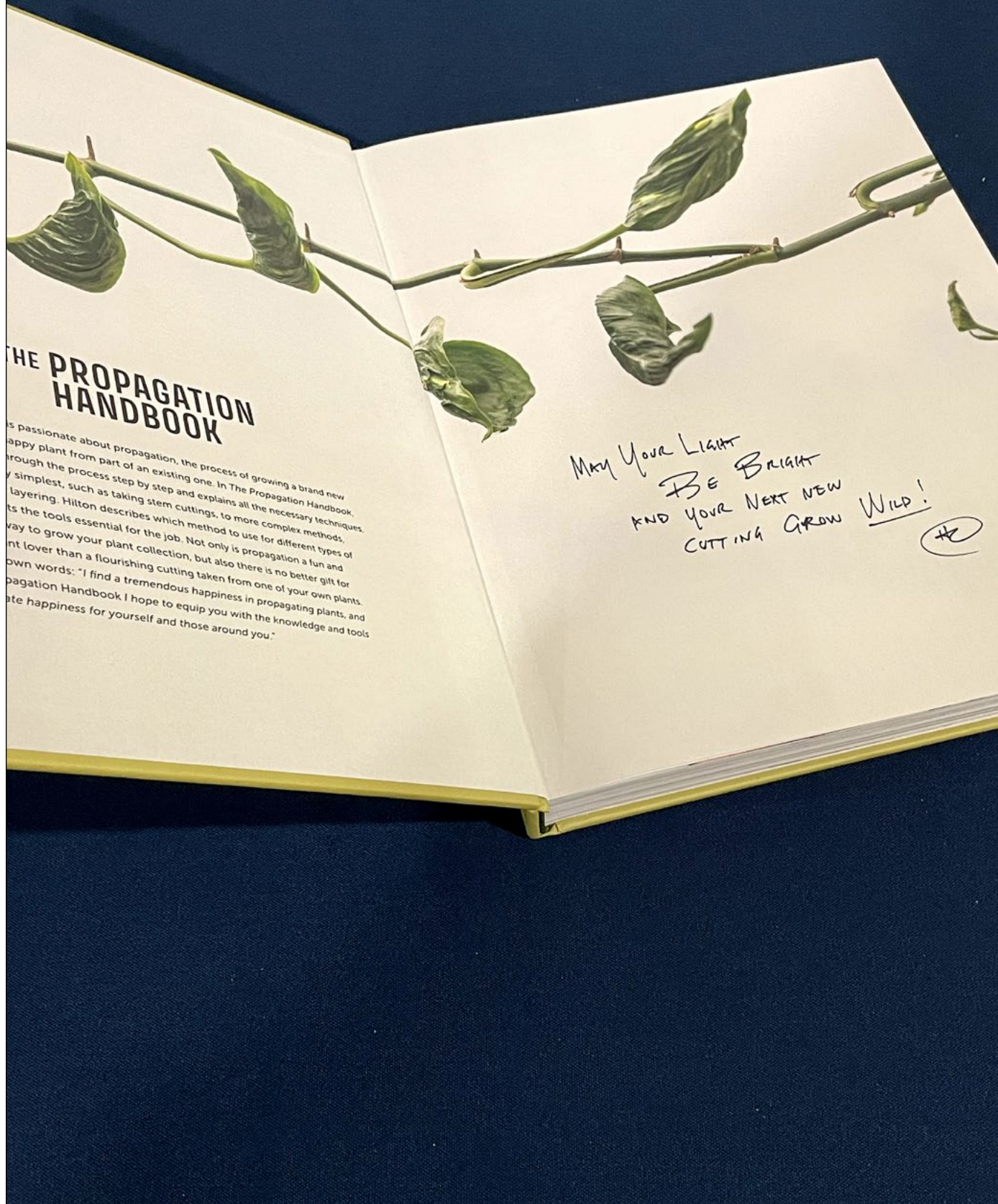
The registration desk was ready to go!

Photo courtesy of Chelsea Shockley.



Obligatory elevator fit check.

Photo courtesy of Chelsea Shockley.



May we all grow wild!

Photo courtesy of Chelsea Shockley.



*Anita Crawford and Chelsea Shockley
with keynote speaker Hilton Carter.*

Photo courtesy of Angelique Broussard.



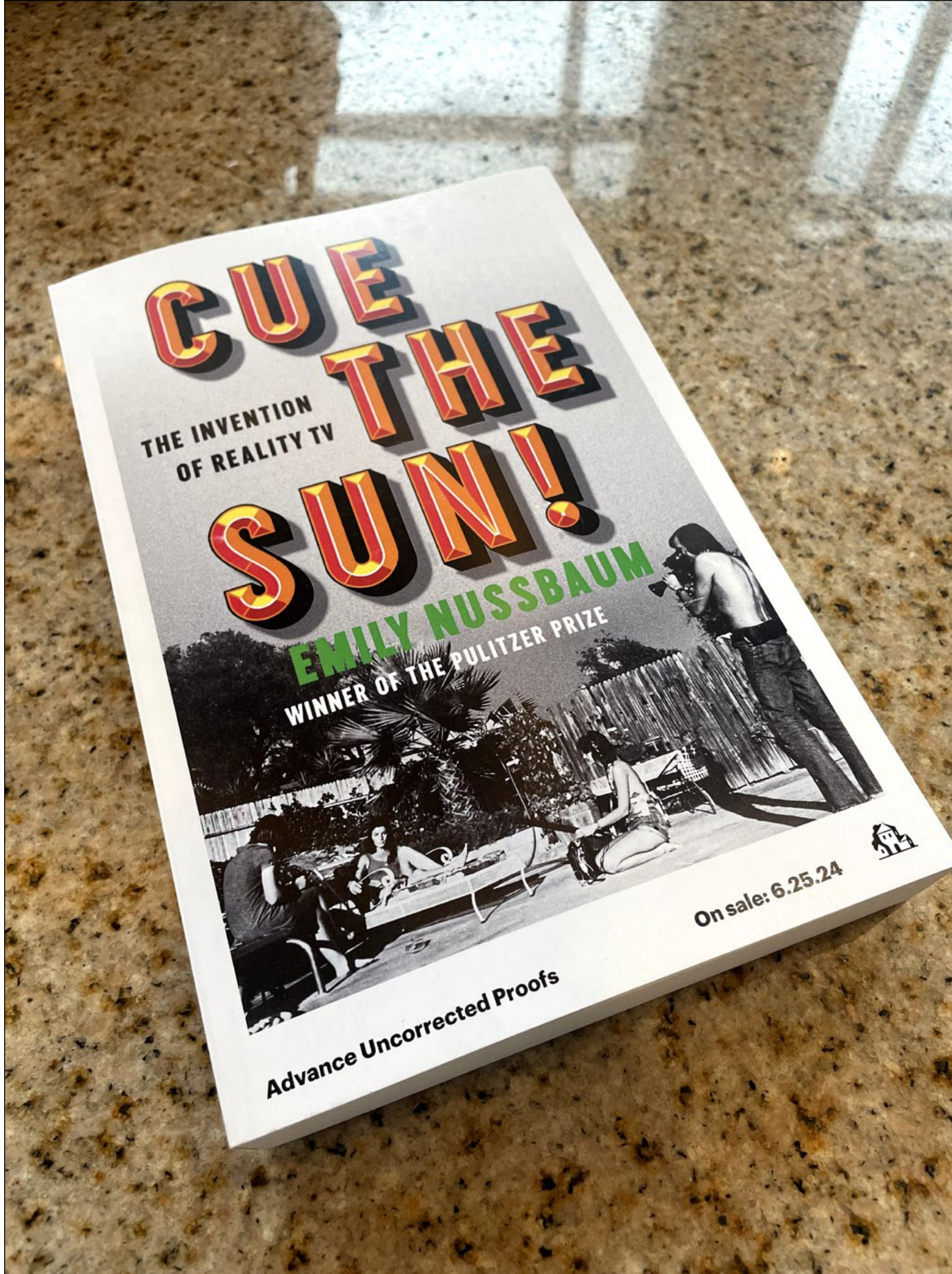
Doggo break courtesy of Pets on Wheels!

Photo courtesy of Chelsea Shockley.



Doggo break courtesy of Pets on Wheels!

Photo courtesy of Chelsea Shockley.



I usually don't take home ARCs, but of course I had to grab this one from the Random House booth.

Photo courtesy of Chelsea Shockley.

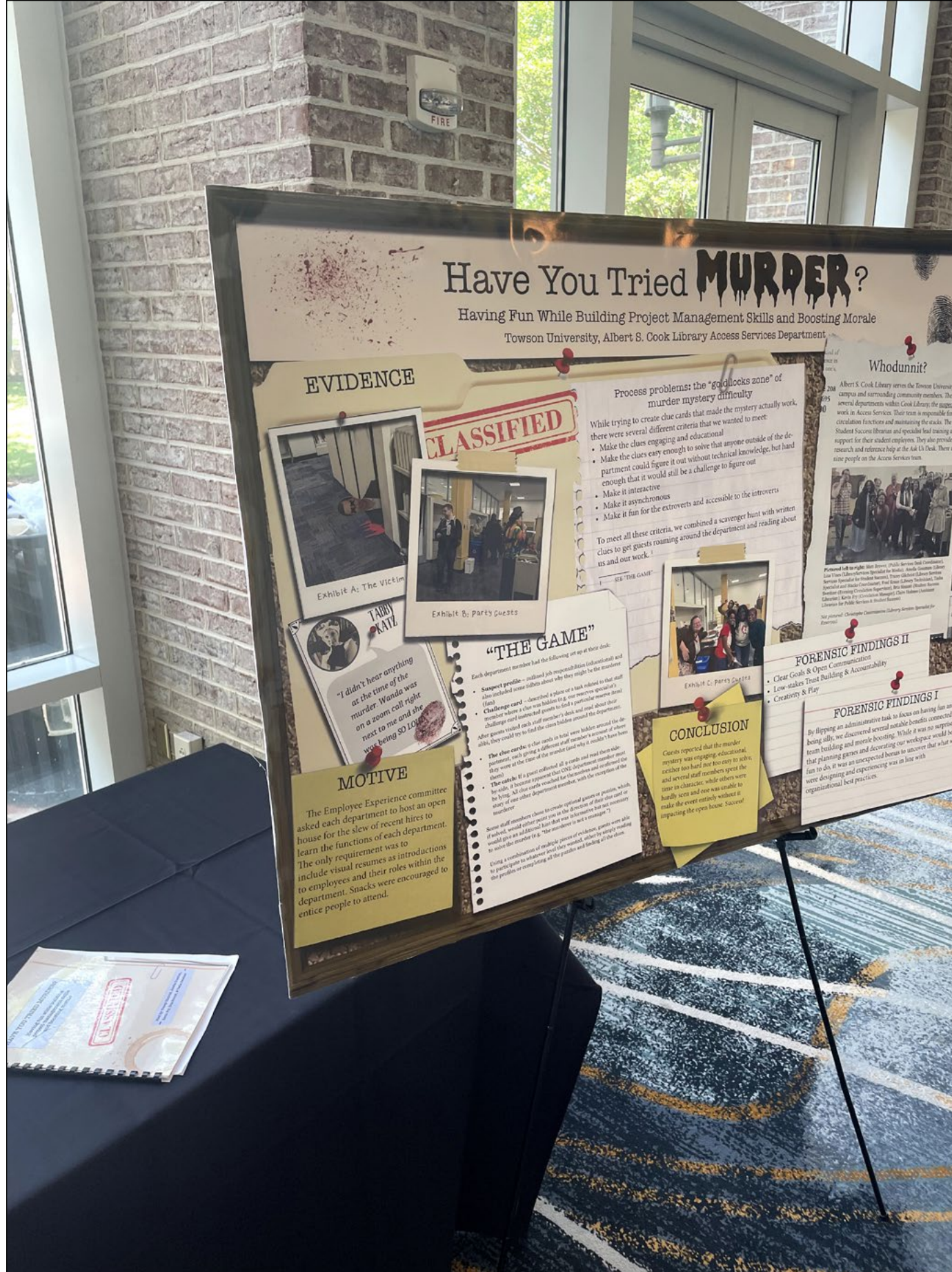


Yes, weeks later I am thinking about how much I still need this Delaware plushie.

Photo courtesy of Chelsea Shockley.

I'm so glad we were able to bring back poster sessions this year!

Photo courtesy of Chelsea Shockley.





Last day! Teonja Jung, Anita Crawford, and Chelsea Shockley.

Photo courtesy of Anita Crawford.

*And, on the following pages,
scenes from the conference...*

*MLA/DLA Conference photos courtesy of Angelique Broussard,
Carroll County Public Library.*

































































A collage of the Canva pieces the graduating Library Associates created as advertisements for their capstone programs.

The 2024 Spring LATI Graduates Put Their “Heart and Soul” into Their Work



“PUBLIC LIBRARIES ARE THE HEART AND SOUL OF OUR COMMUNITIES,” declared Anita Vassallo, Director of Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL), while delivering the keynote address at the most recent LATI graduation celebration and ceremony. There, each library associate spent a few minutes presenting a project, idea or program they have been working on in their culminating capstone presentation.

This most recent cohort of LATI graduates finished up in early June and had much to show for their dedication to the work they do every day in public libraries. Children’s services library associate Amy Corselius from Harford County Public Library kicked off capstone presentations by showing off glitter jars galore! Towards the middle of the program, Kimberly Borders from Charles County Public Library brought the house down, wowing everyone with a ditty on ukelele about playing chess, sung and strummed to the tune of Bruno Mars’ “Count on Me.” And if you think that’s a hard act to follow (it is!), library associates showed off all their other program ideas—from upcycling t-shirts into market bags, taxidermy stuffed animals, Spanish story time, a Five Nights at Freddy’s-themed escape room, celebrating Southern Maryland’s LGBTQ+ history and culture, to a traveling reptile show on Queen Anne’s County Library mobile library!

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 (MSLA). 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.

Spring 2024 LATI

LAs spent their time learning from expert trainers representing various Maryland Public Libraries. Highlights include when LAs had the chance to tour the teaching kitchen and makerspaces at the Exploration Commons in Carroll County and create custom-made coasters on the CNC machine there, 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 Enoch Pratt Free Library (EPFL) and State Library Resource Center’s (SLRC) Spring 2024 Conference—an annual conference for library workers throughout Maryland. This year the conference focused on the theme of Tools for Your Future.

Graduation Ceremony and Support for LATI

Thanks go to MSLA for its support of LATI through LSTA grant funds. Retiring State Librarian Irene Padilla proudly supports each LATI graduate. LATI awarded Irene a plaque in recognition and appreciation of her many years of outstanding work and service to LATI and Maryland libraries. Anita Vassallo, MCPL Director, delivered the keynote address, telling all the graduates that “this is a big day for you and for all the communities you serve—it’s your time to shine...go out and librarian all over the world!”



Props from the presentations of the Library Associates from their graduation ceremony in June.

Graduation Props!

LATI Oversight Committee (LOC)

LATI is further supported by the LOC, which is made up of Sheila McDuff, Frederick County Public Libraries, LOC Chair; Tamar Sarnoff, Maryland State Library Agency; as well as Natalie Edington, Baltimore County Public Library; Paul Chasen, EPFL/SLRC; and outgoing members Amy Ford, St. Mary's County Library; Katie George, Howard County Library System; and Lisa Kenyon, EPFL/SLRC. The LOC welcomes new members Jennifer Keysor from Washington County Free Library; Cheryl Nardiello from Wicomico Public Library; Ja-leen Walker from Prince George's County Memorial Library System; and Vivian Fisher from EPFL/SLRC.

As always, thanks from LATI to all the trainers and supervisors across the state of Maryland who ensure the success of each cohort of LAs. ■

The photographs on the following pages are courtesy of Doug Kapustin, Howard County Library System.



LA Justin Thompson with Supervisor Francisco Contento-Navarro, Queen Anne's County Library.



LA Denise Varela with Supervisor Nicole Bega and Branch Manager Amy Ford, St. Mary's County Library.



LA Sarah Weishampel with Supervisor Amy Moser and Director James Kelly, Frederick County Public Libraries.



LAs Kirsten Briscoe and Kimberly Borders with Supervisors Charley Hobbs and Bill Stea, Charles County Public Library.



LAs Katherine Kizzier and James Angle with Executive Director Carrie Willson and Supervisor Melissa Gray, Calvert Library.



LA Jennifer Rossiter, Cecil County Public Library, with LATI Coordinator Ryan O'Grady.



LAs Samary Ramirez, Tony Esho and Tracey Gelner, with Supervisor Carol Lundell and Professional Development Instructor Katie George, Howard County Library System.



Back row, left to right: Supervisors Deidrah Reeves and Tracy Miller, Senior Director of Public Services Beth LaPenotiere and Supervisor Theresa Stephens. Front row, left to right: LAs Mandi Coffeen, Amy Corselius and Jessica Miller, Harford County Public Library.



Back row, left to right: Training and Development Coordinator Erissa Mann; supervisors Nicole Wilson, Rachel Smith and Meghan Kalendek; Chief Customer Experience Officer Natalie Edington; LA Nicole Ball; supervisors Heather Mays, Mike Jackson and Kevin Jayce; Branch Manager Brian Wickman; and Regional Manager Zeke White. Front row, left to right: LAs Rosalyn Rivera, Danielle Haddaway, Lauren Flores, Anita Oncharoen, Whitney Cornwell and Kaitlyn Webster; and Regional Manager Laurie Carl, Baltimore County Public Library.



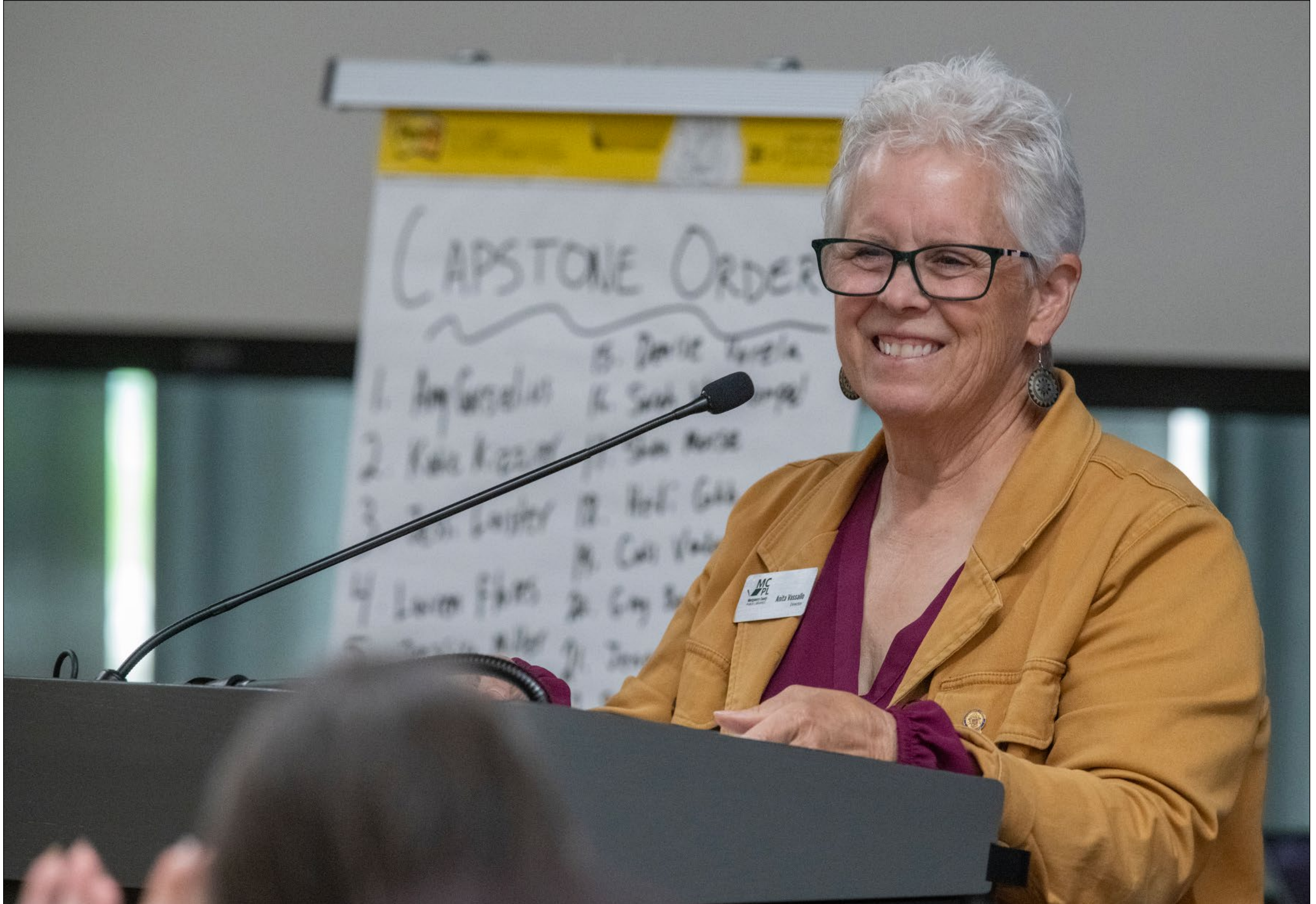
Chief of Neighborhood Library Services Jurée Hall; Supervisor Pamela Lauer; LAs Jessica Leister, Nathaniel Meseke and Cass Vandersyde; Neighborhood Library Services Assistant Shawn Myers; and Deputy Chief of Neighborhood Library Services Kalyn Au, Enoch Pratt Free Library.



Human Resources Manager Alana Robinson; Supervisor Ann Stillman; LAs Heidi Cobb and Greg Beaudoin; Regional Manager Eric Carzon; Director Anita Vassallo; Assistant Director Jaime Flores; LA Yoojin Lee; Assistant Director James Donaldson; Supervisor Gretchen Benson; Staff Development Coordinator Liz Bowen; and Supervisor Christine Freeman, Montgomery County Public Libraries.

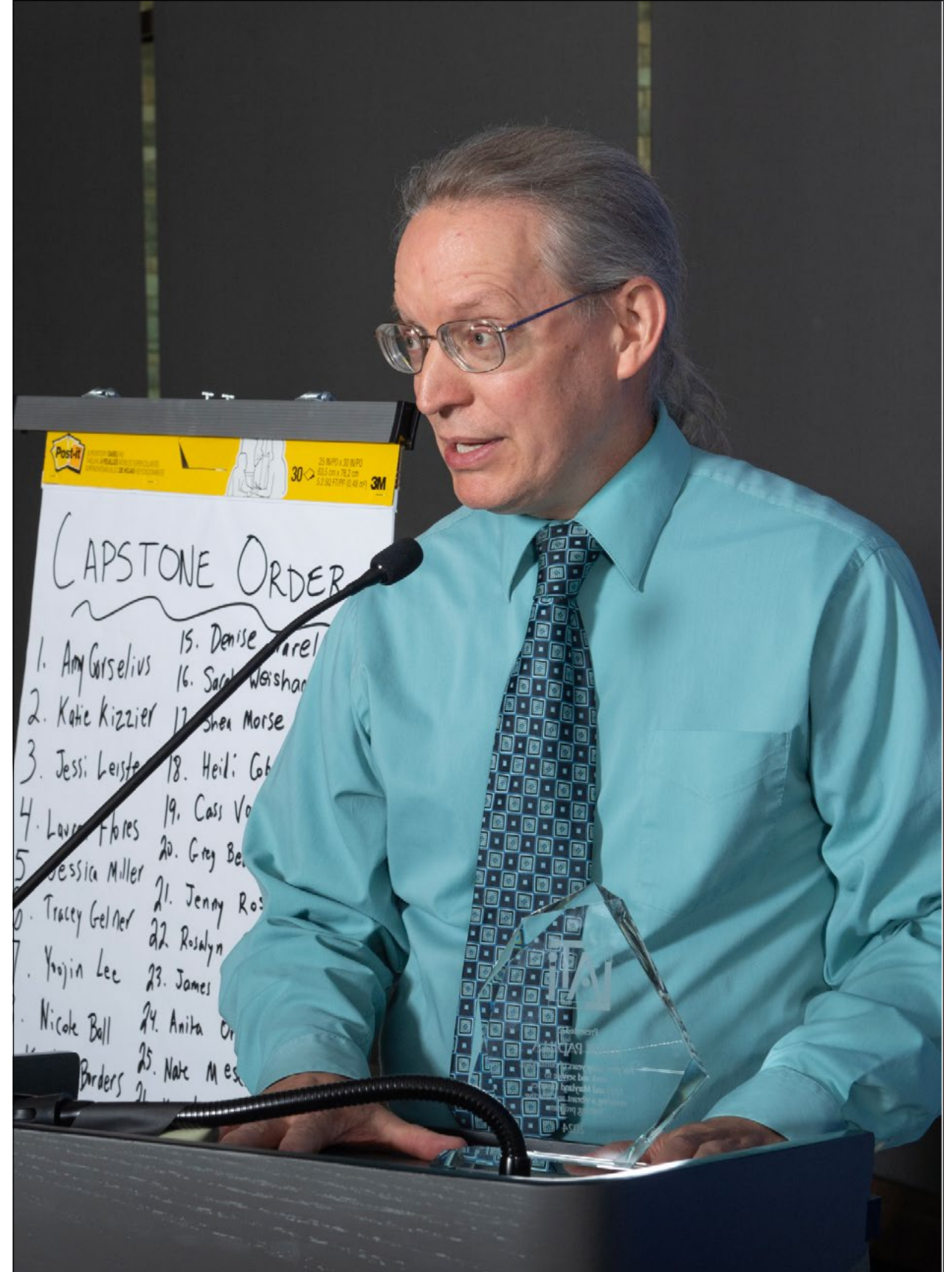


Kimberly Borders from Charles County Public Library brought down the house with a ditty on ukelele about playing chess, sung and strummed to the tune of Bruno Mars' "Count on Me."



Montgomery County Public Libraries Director Anita Vassallo praised public libraries as the heart and soul of their communities in her keynote address.

John Owen, Director of the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled, presented the graduates with their certificates on behalf of the Maryland State Library Agency.



Highlights from the Spring 2024 Maryland State Library Resource Center (SLRC) Conference

Tools for Your Future

Paul Chasen, Enoch Pratt Free Library/State Library Resource Center

TO PROFESSIONALLY AND PERSONALLY DEVELOP, or to not professionally and personally develop?" That is the question that we asked ourselves at the Spring 2024 SLRC Conference: Tools for Your Future.

On Tuesday, May 29 and Wednesday, May 30, 2024, the conference gave 150 attendees the opportunity to develop their own toolkits and gave our presenters opportunities to ensure that everyone in attendance had ample reasons to continue working in libraries and leave with information that could also be applied beyond the workplace.

Tuesday, May 29, 2024: The Virtual Day

The Zoom conference day started with our keynote, **Hadiya Nuriddin of Duets Learning**, providing a live how-to manual about how to tell stories using data. Hadiya helped us realize that data storytelling can be done beyond what we have in our annual reports. Next up was Doug Crane, Director of the Palm Beach County Library System in Florida and accredited Toastmaster, who gave the attendees strategies to become fearless public speakers. Some of the attendees were even brave and bold enough to attend the optional public speaking, Table Topics ® practice time. We wrapped things up with Sean Jensen, a library clerk at the Sherman and Ruth Weiss Community Library in Hayward, Wisconsin, who discussed his successes and failures in educating his library's customers and colleagues about GenAI tools. Sean also gave attendees suggestions on which free GenAI tools to use.

Wednesday, May 29, 2024: The In-Person Day

The **Central Library/SLRC** conference day was bustling with attendees representing most of the Maryland counties and DC. They fueled up with breakfast provided by Jay's Catering and Blondie's Donuts, which provided donuts the size of birthday cakes! Chris Wilson, founder of The Cuttlefish Collective and The Chris Wilson Foundation, provided an intriguing keynote session about how his experiences in prison led to finding his way as an artist and social justice advocate. Some attendees also made the most of the opportunity to receive a free signed copy of Wilson's memoir, *The Master Plan*.

While some of the sessions focused on what SLRC has to offer, the sessions also gave attendees opportunities to think ahead about their careers and lives. A panel made up of our MLA President Elect (Teonja Jung, Baltimore County Public Library), the 2024 MLA Conference Director (Anita Crawford, Baltimore County Public Library), a successful public



Chris Wilson, artist and founder of The Cuttlefish Collective and The Chris Wilson Foundation, delivering his inspiring keynote, "How Art Overrides System Failures," to a statewide audience.

librarian/educator who transitioned to the vendor world (Sam Eddington, Lyrisis), and an education leader who is now a library leader (Jurée Hall, Enoch Pratt Free Library), shared their inspiring career journeys with attendees.

Sessions also included ways to develop leadership and management skills from exceptional staff development coordinators (Katie George, Howard County Library System and Jaleen Walker, Prince George's County Memorial Library System) and career consultants (Mary Ellen Wehr and Wini Alexander, Community College of Baltimore County), embrace technology and serve the public well with it (Maurice Coleman, Harford County Public Library), and enhance our personal finances (JP Krahel, Loyola University of Maryland). Did we mention that attendees were also treated to a buffet lunch, ice cream from the Taharka Brothers, and the option to do some univerSOUL Line Dancing with Irma Mabry? Participants left the day with new skills, new collegial relationships and plenty of tools for their futures.

Please be on the lookout for more opportunities to attend SLRC conferences and webinars in the [staff development portion of our website](#). ■

Photos courtesy of Angelique Broussard,
Carroll County Public Library.



Distinguished Service Award winner Delegate Dana Jones with MLA President Tiffany Sutherland.



MLA President Tiffany Sutherland, Delegate Dana Jones and newly appointed Maryland State Librarian Morgan Miller.



Honorary Membership Award winner John Venditta, Chief Executive Officer (ret.), Eastern Shore Regional Library.



*Libraries Change Communities Award winners Coach G. Young and Carmen Jessop, Howard County Library System.
Not pictured: Branch Manager (ret.) Suki Lee.*



MLA President's Customer Service Award winner Miriam Amores, accepting on behalf of the Access Services staff at Anne Arundel Community College. Not pictured: Christine Vasica, Jennifer Doll, Theo Pitts and Corey Allender.



*Project of the Year Award winners Justin Thompson and Allison Wood, Queen Anne's County Library.
Not pictured: Francisco Contento-Navarro and Carolyn Pollard.*



*Outstanding Member Award winner Gloria Harberts,
Anne Arundel County Public Library
Regional Manager.*

Citizens for Maryland Libraries Award Winners 2024

Presentation of the Citizens for Maryland Libraries (CML) Awards at the MLA/DLA Conference.

Jim DeArmey, CML Executive Director; Liz Sundermann-Zinger, Enoch Pratt Free Library, State Library Resource Center (EPFL/SLRC), accepting on behalf of the EPFL/SLRC Events Team.

Alexandra Houff, Baltimore County Public Library, recipient of a Davis McCarn Technology Award; Jessica Seipel, Howard County Library System, recipient of a Davis McCarn Technology Award.

Bob Kuntz, Lisa Picker and Joseph Thompson, representing the Carroll County Public Library administrative team, recipients of an Outstanding Employee Award.

Photo courtesy of Angelique Broussard, Carroll County Public Library.



MLA Excellence in Marketing Award Winners 2024

The Harford County Public Library (HCPL) Team, winners for the promotional video *SpyBall: Secrets in the Stacks*. State Librarian (ret.) Irene Padilla; HCPL Chief Executive Officer Mary Hastler; HCPL Marketing and Communications Specialist Megan Baker; HCPL Project Lead and Graphic Designer Carrie Yocum; HCPL Director

of Philanthropy and Community Engagement Amber Shrodes; and HCPL Director of Marketing and Communications, Leslie Greenly Smith.

Photo courtesy of Angelique Broussard, Carroll County Public Library.



Maryland Author Award Winner: Ronald Malfi

Lisa Kenyon, Enoch Pratt Free Library

THE WINNER of the 2024 William G. Wilson Maryland Author Award is Ronald Malfi.

A bestselling, award-winning author of novels and novellas in many genres especially horror, mystery and thrillers, Malfi is the recipient of two Independent Publisher Book Awards, the Beverly Hills International Book Award, the Vincent Preis Horror Award and the Benjamin Franklin Award for Popular Fiction. He is also a Bram Stoker Award nominee. His work is known for its haunting and lyrical style, memorable characters, literary cadence and of course for his Maryland settings.

His four-novella collection *Ghostwritten*, (2022)—about haunted books and the power of the written word—was a committee favorite and is especially relevant for those of us who work with and love books, and was described by *Publishers Weekly* as a “terrifying delight.” From a novel that refuses to be adapted to a pop-up book that traps victims in the house of its creator, this collection brings perilous new meaning to the power of reading, and as one committee member said, “it was scary.”

Thanks to this year’s Maryland Author Award Committee for their dedication as we explored the humorous, the frightening, the mysterious and the magical work of Maryland’s adult fiction authors. ■



Unlocking the Secrets of Customer Service Basics

Insights from Somerset County Library

Jaime Bradshaw, Somerset County Library

WE WERE HONORED to have the opportunity to present Unlocking the Secrets of Customer Service Basics at this year's Seeds of Change Virtual Conference! In today's fast-paced world where technology often dominates our interactions, the art of genuine customer service can sometimes be overlooked. However, for institutions like libraries where community connection is at the core of their mission, exceptional customer service remains paramount.

We delved into the insights and experiences of the Somerset County Library System, a modest yet dynamic institution nestled in the heart of Maryland. From navigating communication challenges to fostering meaningful relationships with patrons, we discovered the secrets to unlocking customer service excellence in libraries.

Somerset County, Maryland, may not immediately spring to mind when thinking about cultural diversity, but within its borders thrives a varied community. With a population of approximately 24,000 residents, our county boasts a compact yet bustling three-branch library system. Each branch, whether nestled near the University of Maryland Eastern Shore or on the remote Smith Island accessible only by boat, serves as a vital hub for our patrons.

Our session aimed to explore the fundamental principles underpinning exceptional customer service. Regardless of county size or staff count, we believe in cultivating a culture of care, kindness and personalized service. Through discussions on communication, empathy and boundary-setting, our goal was to equip attendees with tools to elevate their customer service approach.

Effective communication lies at the heart of exceptional customer service. It involves active listening, providing specific feedback and offering solutions. In addition, tone of voice

Unlocking the Secrets of Customer Service Basics



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is often overlooked but can profoundly impact interactions. A friendly and empathetic tone can defuse tensions and foster positivity.

Navigating communication in a library setting requires finesse. Listening attentively, asking clarifying questions and speaking plainly are essential practices. Adapting communication styles to suit the diverse needs of our community ensures inclusivity and accessibility.

Difficult situations are inevitable, but how we handle them defines our customer service ethos. Respecting privacy, acknowledging concerns and maintaining composure are key. Moreover, building relationships based on trust and empathy lays the foundation for meaningful connections with patrons.

In conclusion, exceptional customer service transcends geographic boundaries and organizational size. It's about fostering genuine connections, understanding patrons' needs and upholding professionalism with grace. As library workers, let's continue our journey of customer service excellence together! ■

Music in Storytime!

Diversify Your Music to Get Families Moving!

Dwyn Griffin, Lauren Roots, Marsha Quarles and Shannon Young, Prince George's County Memorial Library System

MUSIC IS AN INTRICATE PART of having a successful storytime program. Incorporating songs into storytime and getting caregivers involved can be challenging. Oftentimes, the same songs are used without diversifying musical selections. Although repetition in music is encouraged, it is best to have more options when choosing music.

Music in Storytime: Diversify Your Music to Get Families Moving! is designed to get participants up and moving to interactive songs. Librarians Dwyn Griffin, Marsha Quarles, Lauren Roots and Shannon Young of Prince George's County Memorial Library System encouraged participants to get up and interact with a plethora of music. This music puts a new twist on traditional storytime music. They believe that children often model caregivers' behavior—if they are up and dancing, children will be too!

The presentation touched on a variety of topics, such as the benefits of music and problematic songs. They got the audience up and moving to a few "Song Upgrades," which showed them how traditional songs can be converted to contemporary versions of the same songs.

Marsha Quarles said "Choosing music that caregivers will enjoy as much as children is a must. I encourage caregivers to get up and dance by telling them not to let their children outdance them!"

They offered diverse song lists covering genres like Afrobeats, Caribbean Country, Disco, Hip-hop, Jazz, Latin, Punk, Reggae, Rock and Techno, as well as specific playlists for activities like Bubbles, Cleanup, Entry, Musical Instruments, Opening, Parachutes, Scarfs, Shaker Eggs and Transitional songs. Another list with a selection of books for storytelling accompanied by music was also provided.

"I have been doing storytime for over 10 years and it never gets old! It is imperative to make sure you continue to update and diversify your music to reach families from all different cultures and backgrounds," said Dwyn Griffin.

The feedback from those who participated in the workshop has been extremely positive. Many people commented that they were able to use the resources as soon as they returned to their branches. ■

*Clockwise from upper left: ■
Dwyn Griffin, Marsha Quarles, Lauren Roots, and Shannon Young.*



Empowerment Library

Encouraging Growth for Incarcerated Individuals

Nanna Bailey, Queen Anne's County Library

I DID NOT KNOW what to expect from my first time participating and presenting at MLA/DLA 2024, but I was pleasantly surprised by the relevant and informative presentations, the great opportunities for networking and the welcoming environment. I was honored to be one of the speakers. My presentation was on the Empowerment Library, which is a partnership between the Queen Anne's County Library and the Queen Anne's County Detention Center. With \$11,000 from a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant, we are expanding the detention center's library through book purchases and information sharing.

On average, the Queen Anne's County Detention Center holds 50 to 60 incarcerated individuals. Sixty percent of these individuals identify as white, 35 percent as African American and five percent as other. About five percent are Spanish-speaking and a couple more are Arabic- and Chinese-speaking individuals. Many have low literacy skills, live below the poverty line and are unemployed. The detention center has limited resources, and the incarcerated individuals do not have access to computers or the internet.

As of June 2024, we have delivered close to 600 books to the detention center and 1,212 books have circulated. A bookmark is included with the materials to get output stats. The bookmark highlights library services and encourages incarcerated individuals to use these services upon reentry.

Last November, we went to the Detention Center during library hours and talked to the incarcerated individuals as they were choosing and checking out their books for the week. Everyone was appreciative of the books and the work being done to improve the library. The employees at the detention center have expressed that the incarcerated individuals are enjoying the books and are recommending books to each other. They share books within the pods they live in between library days, as they can only have three books checked out at a time. We continually receive requests for new titles, making this project a great collaboration and showing everyone's interest and participation.

We learned there was a big need for more and new books at the detention center. When we submitted the last order, incarcerated individuals requested 95 percent of the books. Meanwhile, in our grant request we had included funding for 80 books as replacements, anticipating that many books would be damaged. However, to this date we have only had

two damaged and two lost books, so everyone has been taking exceptionally good care of them! From our survey we also learned that this work is making a difference in the incarcerated individuals' lives. As one of them shared: "I have found a new passion = reading, books are a great way to escape."

This project has been a great teambuilding exercise for me and my co-workers. Everyone at the library pitched in to make this project happen: suggesting we apply for the grant, proofreading the application, buying the books, processing them and celebrating as the number of circulated books comes in every week. It boosted overall system morale.

We are hoping this is the start of a lifelong relationship with the library for the users of the Empowerment Library after their reentry into the community. As the LSTA grant ends this summer, we are looking for more funds to expand the work to programming for incarcerated people and reentry services. For me, working on the Empowerment Library has led to both work and personal growth and the same is now true for participating in the conference. It was very inspiring to be exposed to all the great things going on in the libraries of Delaware and Maryland. ■



■ *Nanna Bailey, Queen Anne's County Library, presenting at the MLA/DLA Conference.*

Incarcerated individual checking out three books for the week. ◆



The Salon of No Haircuts

Tisha Jasmine Chakraborty, Wicomico Public Library

mANY OF US HAVE FUN MEMORIES of visiting the library for children’s programs but have, over the years, experienced “digital disconnect” separating our lives from library visits. Creating and sustaining adult programs at public libraries highlights the scope of library activities and services and opens community for younger generations of adults. Feeling a lack of physical connections and group activities while navigating post-grad life, I wanted to find a welcoming space to meet and engage with others. I ended up...back at the library!

To kick off Autumn 2023, I founded “The Salisbury Salon” at Wicomico Public Library’s Paul S. Sarbanes branch. Inspired by literary salons of days past, the Salon is a creative circle dedicated to sharing and promoting arts and culture in our community for time present and future. The interdisciplinary, twice-monthly meetings are immersive experiences in literature, visual arts, philosophy and film with special events such as December’s “Salisbury Soirée: a 1920s Holiday.” We shared harvest season folklore and myths across cultures at our first gathering, and I was thrilled to share a taste of the program at the 2024 MLA/DLA “Seeds of Change” Conference with the poster “Developing Creative and Novel Programming for Gen Z and Millennials at Public Libraries: An Adaptive Future of Library Engagement.”

The mind of the Salon is *novelty*—what spices up life; what can we share with each other in the garden of ideas? The beauty of novelty programming is seeing people embracing their curiosity and letting down communication barriers in an open, casual public



environment—the increasingly disappearing “third space.” It isn’t every day we get to practice dream interpretation, learn Norse runes, or dance the Charleston! Chatting with patrons and peers alike and seeing increasing online trends in formerly “niche” interests solidified the need for engaging and building community through the novel and creative—a twist and a turn, what parts of ourselves do we leave unsung? Most importantly, how can we learn from each other and create with fun?

Past meetings discussed mythology, surrealism and vintage/classic horror media, and our latest theme was Tarot 101! Tarot’s rising popularity is clear in the library space. This event attracted participants across generations and knowledge levels, which made for stimulating conversation and further connection with the subject and each other. The heart of the Salon is the *people*—everyone has a unique story that shapes perspectives; the only “requirement” to come is answering “yes” to T.S. Eliot’s words: “do I dare disturb the Universe?”

Attendees are encouraged to share personal creative projects at meetings, shifting conversation to a personal level. As hostess (or salonnière in this case), I initially lead and present on topics, naturally spring-

boarding into freeform discussion (tangents and anecdotes find happy homes here); this structure encourages a casual, relaxed group atmosphere (over some snacks, of course)! The Salon is a place to unplug, unwind and charge the mind—what better place to do that than in a community hub of the public library? The Salon has seen multiple generations of adults expressing their ideas, interests and hobbies, and it will continue to celebrate what makes us human—our passions. ■



Developing Creative and Novel Programming for Gen Z and Millennials at Public Libraries: an Adaptive Future of Library Engagement

TISHA CHAKRABORTY

WICOMICO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Why not unwind, unplug, and share our passions in a welcoming third space? Inspired to bring my peers to the library, I founded "The Salisbury Salon Creative Circle" at Wicomico County Public Library.



modern take on Enlightenment/early 20th century literary salons
some of the first spaces for open discussion transcending societal position and norms



CREATIVE INNOVATION STAGES



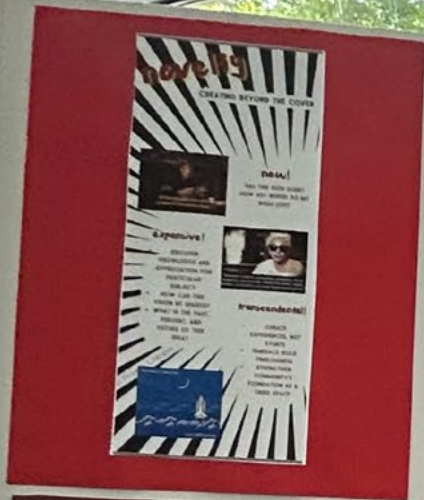
• library materials/resources

• local creative groups

• PATRON INTERACTIONS + YOUR PASSIONS!!!

• social media (ex. Pinterest; X; Instagram hashtags...avoid doomscrolling!)

• youtube video essays (seriously)



Flyers, library website/magazine, TV screen promo drew interest in programs (but life is busy & people forget about flyers!)



promo bookmarks--> more attendees (everyone loves a cool free bookmark, especially while checking out!)



Future: market programs by experimenting with "keepsake" promo materials--> also adds novelty!



Midway on our life's journey I found myself in a dark wood, For the right way was lost.

- Autumn Folklore & Mythology
- Classic/Vintage Horror Lit & Film
- Surrealism & Dream Interpretation
- Coffee & Chill: Frigid Fables
- Salisbury Soirée: 1920s Holiday
- Rock n Roll Romance Karaoke
- Now Showing: Léo from 5

Welcome to the Salisbury Salon... M&A 2024

Emily Dickinson Love Poems

REMEMBER THE NAME
 KLEIN NEURON
 GADA SPIRO
 TRUSSARDI
 LYON
 EVON
 KURT SCHMIDT
 BANALITATEN
 SIMONE DE BEAUVOIS
 TREMARLI
 VAN ETTEN

The air of ideas is the only air worth breathing.

Illustration of hot air balloons and a night sky with stars.

Illustration of a stylized face with a crown and text: "Je suis le roi de la nuit..."





Caucus

Black Caucus Of The Maryland Library Association

Divisions

Adult Services and Reference Division

Association Of College And Research Libraries, MD

Leadership Development Division

Support Staff Division

Youth Services Division

Committees and Panels

Intellectual Freedom Panel

Legislative Panel

Professional Development Panel

Marketing Committee

Maryland Author Award

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

Interest Groups

Emerging Adults Interest Group

Future Of Libraries Interest Group

LGBTQ+ Interest Group

Library Advocacy Interest Group

Maryland Adult Programming Interest Group

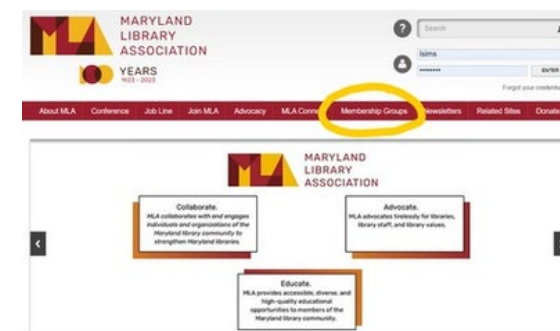
Materials Interest Group

Outreach Services Interest Group

Readers' Advisory Interest Group

Technical Services Interest Group

Teen Interest Group



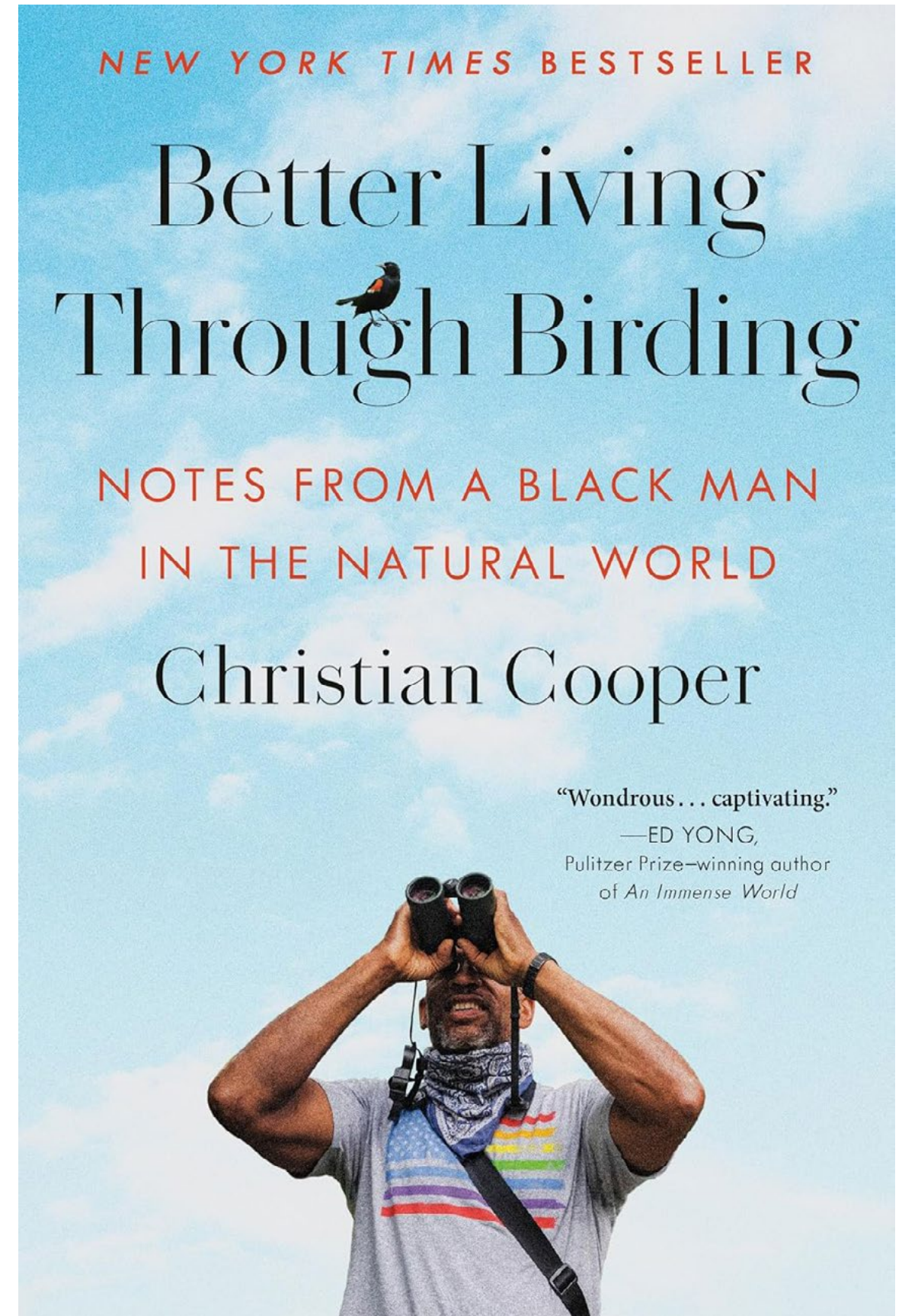
OutRAIGeous Reviews

*Books recommended by members of
the Reader's Advisory Interest Group*

Better Living through Birding: Notes from a Black Man in the Natural World by Christian Cooper (Random House, 2023)

Review by Monica McAbee

Christian Cooper gives a charming account of his life as a gay Black nerd slowly coming into his own as a birder, Harvard graduate, LGBTQ+ activist, writer for Marvel comics and science writer and editor. He describes his travels to observe birds around the world; ruminates on his relationships with family, friends, mentors, and lovers; and relates his encounter with racism in Central Park that went viral in 2020. As a (very casual) birder myself, I especially appreciated the many passages extolling the joys of nature and the helpful birding tips sprinkled throughout the book. I also loved the occasional Star Trek references — Cooper wears his nerdity proudly, and I am here for it!

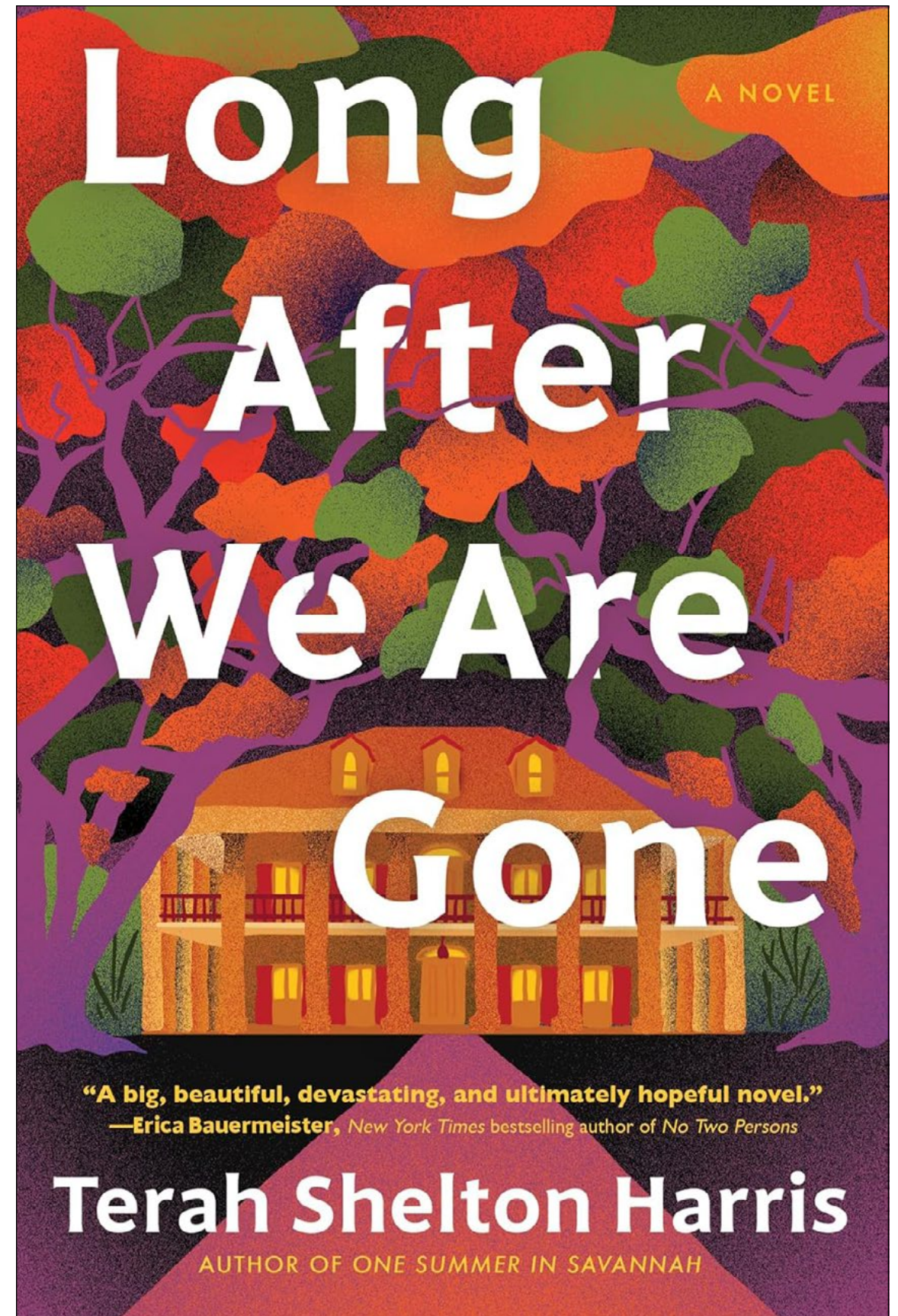


***Long After We Are Gone* by Terah Shelton Harris (Sourcebooks Landmark, 2024)**

Review by Monica McAbee

“Don’t let the white man take the house.” These are the last words King Solomon says to his son before he dies. Now all four Solomon siblings must return to North Carolina to save the Kingdom, their ancestral home. However, their rights to the property are in jeopardy thanks to a legal concept called heir property in which there is no will proving ownership of the land. In this moving story, secrets and dubious life choices threaten to break the family apart. Each sibling experiences a journey of despair followed by self-discovery and self-determination, seeking what truly matters while they face devastating loss. An engaging and satisfying read featuring believable and complex characters.

It so happens that another novel involving heir property came out on June 18. It’s a thriller by Wanda M. Morris, *What You Leave Behind*. Why not read both!



***The Light Eaters: How the Unseen World of Plant Intelligence Offers a New Understanding of Life on Earth* by Zoë Schlanger (Harper, 2024)**

Review by Monica McAbee

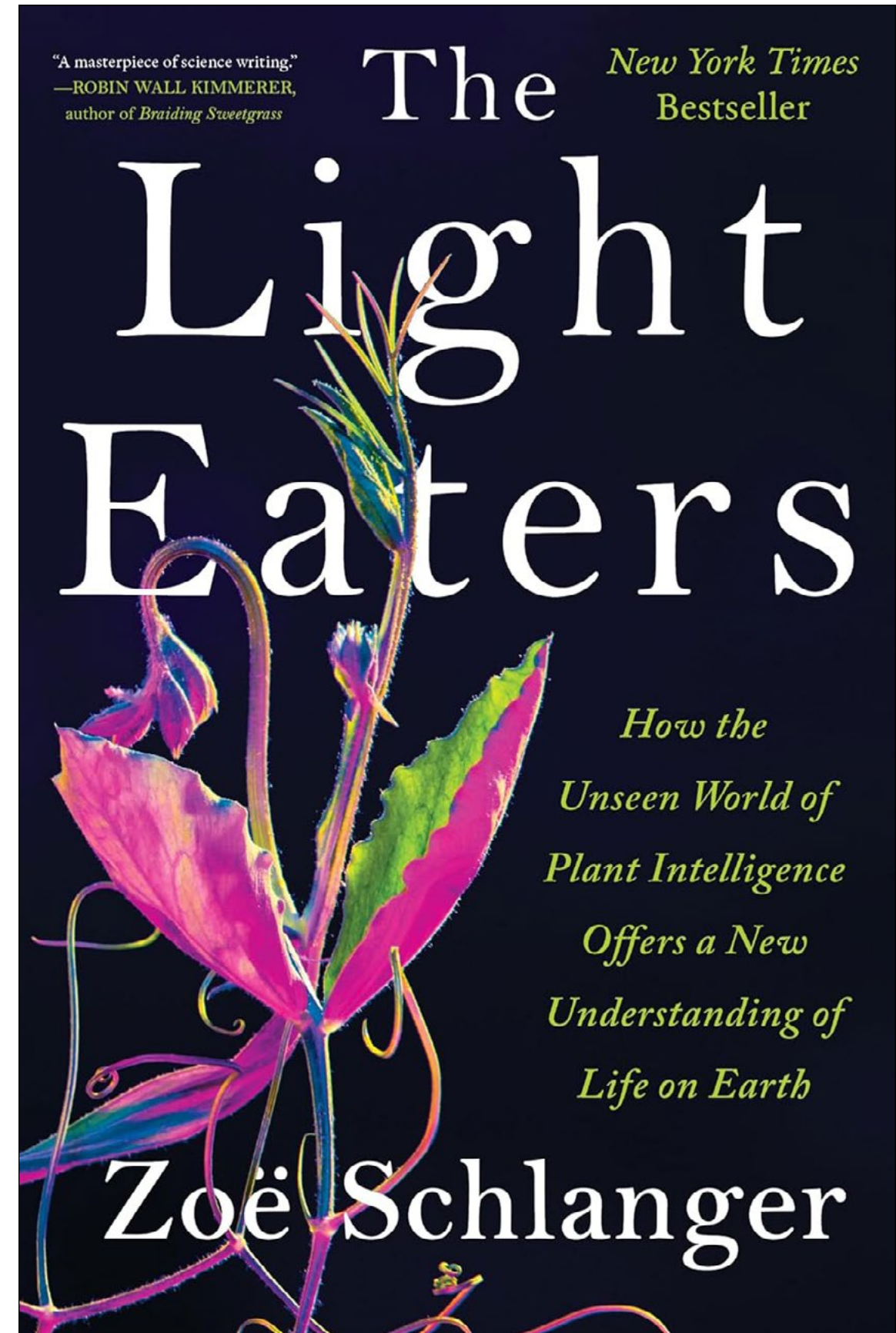
Do you ever think about why the plants around you do what they do? Or HOW they do it?

Scientists who study plant behavior have been coming around to the idea that plants are able to communicate, manipulate, remember things and perform other activities we thought were relegated to mobile creatures with some sort of brain stem.

Each chapter of this eye-opening book examines a different and surprising aspect of plant behavior, while introducing us to scientists willing to imagine — and then try to prove — that plants are more like us than we suspected!

For fans of Ed Yong (*An Immense World*) and Robin Wall Kimmerer (*Braiding Sweetgrass*).

Also, be sure to read *Semiosis* by Sue Burke - a science fiction novel in which an intelligent plant is a main character. Schlanger even mentions it in her book!





Maryland Library Association's Future of Libraries Interest Group

FOLIG @ MLA 2024

Tracy Miller, Harford County Public Library

The Future of Libraries Interest Group sponsored two preconferences and a regular session at the 2024 MLA/DLA Conference.

The first preconference was "Cultivating the Future for Staff and Customers," presented by staff members from Harford County Public Library. The team had a grant from the Maryland State Library Agency to present future thinking to staff and customers. They shared information about the programming they provided and gave attendees the opportunity to experience some of the activities they shared with staff.

As part of the programming funded by the grant, the team created a "Future Room" at the Abingdon Library. This was an interactive space for all ages that gave customers an opportunity to think and talk about the future. The presenters recreated a mini Future Room at the conference and part of the session included walking the attendees through the room.

The second preconference was "Empowering Libraries in the AI Era: A Hands-On Exploration." Dr. Brandy McNeil from New York Public Library gave an interactive presentation that was full of information about Artificial Intelligence, its uses and limitations, as well as the safety concerns with its use. Dr. McNeil talked about the need for every library to develop an AI policy. The slides from the presentation were uploaded to the [Sched app](#); they would be a great source of information for anyone who is interested but was not able to attend.

The regular conference session was also about AI. "Cultivating Equitable Information Literacy with Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technology" was presented by David Robinson and Kelsey Means from the Education Department at Towson University. They talked about AI in relation to Information Literacy and working with students around the technology. They also gave an overview of the current AI tools available and talked about best practices when your institution doesn't have a policy on AI. They facilitated an interesting discussion among attendees who were eager to talk about AI and how it will be part of our lives going forward. ■





Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Panel

Introducing the New Co-Chairs for MLA's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Panel

Cassandra Miller, Baltimore County Public Library

The Maryland Library Association (MLA) is pleased to announce the appointment of two new Co-Chairs for its Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Panel—Conni Strittmatter, Youth and Family Engagement Manager for Baltimore County Public Library, and William Wallace, Assistant Branch Manager, Pittsville and Centre Branches of the Wicomico Public Library. Together, they'll lead the EDI Panel, advancing MLA's commitment to fostering an inclusive environment for MLA members across the state. Keep reading to learn more about Conni and William!

About your job/MLA?

Can you tell us about your trajectory in libraries including your current job title and employer?

Conni: I am the Youth & Family Engagement Manager for Baltimore County Public Library. I've worked in libraries since 2010, starting in Baltimore County as a shelver. I jaunted on over to Harford County Public Library for eight years where I started as a shelver, then spent time in circulation, as a part-time librarian, as a Children's Librarian, Assistant Branch Manager, and then Children's & Teen Coordinator before heading back to Baltimore County in my current role. Before libraries, I was a high school English and Creative Writing teacher in Baltimore City and worked as a writing tutor in the library in college.



Banner art courtesy Vecteezy.com

William: I am the Assistant Branch Manager for the Pittsville and Centre Branches of the Wicomico Public Library (WPL). I've been with WPL for five years now in various positions and was promoted to my current position in the fall of last year.

How have you been involved with MLA and the EDI panel over the years? What do you see for it moving forward?

Conni: My time with MLA started with attending Children's Services Division (CSD) meetings. They were a fantastic opportunity to meet other staff doing similar work throughout the state, learn about what they're doing, and share what I was doing. I eventually took on a leadership role with CSD as the Vice-President, then President of the Division. In that role, I helped plan the Kids Are Customers, Too conference and served on the conference planning committee for MLA Annual. I moved on to helping start the Future of Libraries Interest Group and served as the first chair. I led a task force for MLA conducting a feedback survey of members to learn more about how MLA could improve internal operations and services. The last four years, I've served as secretary and bylaws chair, leading the efforts of two bylaws revisions.

William: I have been a member at large of the EDI panel since 2023. My hope is that the panel will be a driving force in meaningful, equitable and inclusive policy and best practices for MLA and our constituencies. Interest and engagement are the best support

that any EDI initiative can receive from those involved. The work is most effective when everyone is striving towards being more informed and empathic to create a welcoming environment for patrons and colleagues.

About You

What do you do outside of work?

Conni: Outside of my work in libraries, I'm a mother of two—a 14-year-old baseball playing son and a 12-year-old Glee-obsessed theater kid daughter. I love helping direct my daughter's rec shows (this year was *Wizard of Oz!*) and keeping score at my son's games.

William: I am currently a board member of the local chapter of PFLAG.

Do you have a favorite movie, TV show, or play? What is it?

Conni: Play, *Macbeth*. Show, *Twin Peaks*. Favorite Movie requires a few: *Lord of the Rings*, *Blade Runner*, *Brazil*, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, and the original Indiana Jones trilogy. And horror movies in general.

William: *The Mandalorian*.

Do you have pets? What kind?

Conni: Two cats—Lando Catrissian and Obi-Wan Catnobi. And my daughter has three rats—Juliet, Ophelia and Desdemona.

William: Two dogs (Battle and Boss) and two cats (Tilly and Milo).

What book(s) are currently on your nightstand? What is a book that changed how you think?

Conni: I currently have eight books on my "reading" list. Some that I'm zipping through, others that I read a few chapters of and put down in an illogical place in my house, only to find them months later when I read a few more chapters and find an entirely new illogical place to stow it away until I find it again.

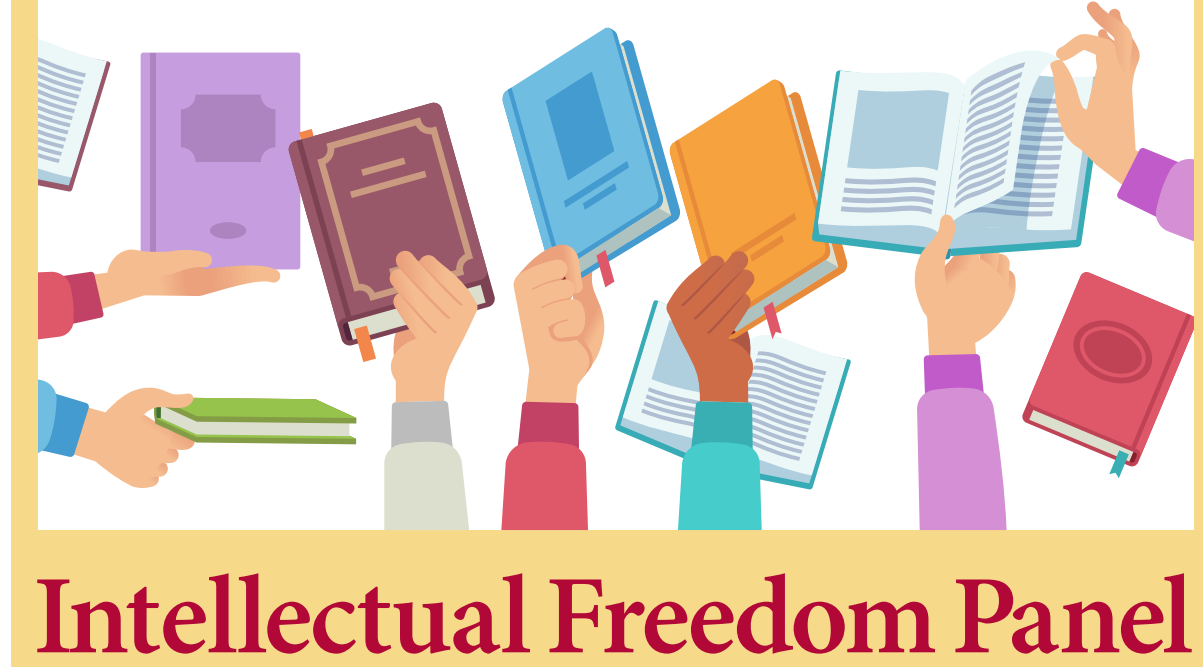
When I was 12, I read *The Scarlet Letter* and cried. A lot. In the gym locker room while I read instead of getting ready for gym (like a true librarian). I think it significantly shaped how I understand the concepts of empathy and forgiveness and the role society often plays in diminishing those values.

William: I like to read a heavier non-fiction book and "lighter" fiction. I'm currently reading *White Women: Everything You Already Know About Your Own Racism and How to Do Better* by Regina Jackson and Saira Rao and *The Yard* by Alex Grecian. A book that changed how I think is *I'm Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness* by Austin Channing Brown.

What's a fun fact about you?

Conni: I love baseball!!! I'm a lifelong Cubs fan, a genetic inheritance from my Chicago-land born parents. I grew up in Seattle during the time of Ken Griffey, Jr., Randy Johnson and Ichiro Suzuki, and despite moving to Baltimore in 2004, I cannot give up my love of the team that tied the record for most wins in a season. Tied with whom, you ask? Why, that's the 1906 Chicago Cubs (116 wins)! And, of course, my home team for the past 20 years—the Baltimore Orioles.

William: Depending on the shoe, I wear size 15-17.



Intellectual Freedom Panel: MLA/DLA Conference Recap

Lloyd Jansen, Charles County Public Library

The Intellectual Freedom Panel (IFP) sponsored three programs at the recent MLA/DLA Annual Conference in Cambridge, Maryland:

Thursday, May 9: Freedom to Read — Legislation and First Amendment

Discussion

Speakers: Andrea Berstler (Carroll County Public Library), Thomas Vose (Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County), Michael Blackwell (St. Mary's County Library).

This was a lively discussion about Maryland's own recently enacted Freedom to Read Act, as well as legislation involving the right to read, both positive and negative, in other states such as Pennsylvania, Indiana, Missouri, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Montana. Dr. Annie Norman, Delaware's State Librarian, was in the audience and gave an update on her state's own attempts to pass Freedom to Read legislation. John Chrastka, Executive Director of EveryLibrary, was also on hand to add his perspective on various bills across the country. One important takeaway from the session for Maryland libraries is the reminder to look at collection development and reconsideration policies to incorporate language from the Freedom to Read Act as needed.

Thursday, May 9: Banned Books Week: Why Now?

Program Coordinator and introductions: Mou Chakraborty (Salisbury University)

Moderator: Karen Earp (Wicomico Public Library)

Panelists: Dr. Erin Stutelberg (Salisbury University), Emma Cohn (Wicomico High School), Allison Jennings-Roche (PhD Candidate, College of Information Studies, University of Maryland)

The panelists discussed a variety of topics, including how discussions surrounding the purchase of books for high schools have turned from "What is the educational value?" to "What will the pushback be?" They also touched on book vendors bowing to the demands of censors by allowing diverse books and voices to be erased from book fairs with a check of a box when ordering titles, which makes librarians complicit in the practice. Finally, the panel emphasized the importance of not letting would-be censors set the tone for the terms of engagement.

Friday, May 10: Defending Our Collections: Table Talks

Moderators: Laura Bandoch (Harford County Public Library), Andrea Boothby-Rice (Washington College and Co-Chair, MLA Intellectual Freedom Panel), Lloyd Jansen (Charles County Public Library and Co-Chair, MLA Intellectual Freedom Panel), Arthur LaRue (Washington County Free Library)

Over the past year, the Intellectual Freedom Panel held a series of online discussions called "Defending Our Collections" focusing on a different aspect of intellectual freedom using a book, article or video as the jumping off point for the conversation. The discussion leaders for four of those sessions led table talks that revisited their respective topics. Laura Bandoch led a discussion of "review bombing", or the posting of multiple negative reviews

to social media to damage the sales of a book and/or reputation of an author, based on a New York Times article; Andrea Boothby-Rice used the book *Data Cartels* by Sarah Lamden to tackle the subject of how information is manipulated and monetized by data companies like Relx and Thomson Reuters; Lloyd Jansen used a Kelly Jensen article in the online Book Riot newsletter to speak about soft censorship, especially as a response to recent book banning attempts; and Arthur LaRue based his discussion of the first amendment on the Nat Hentoff book *Free Speech For Me, But Not For Thee*.

Resources:

["How Review-Bombing Can Tank a Book Before It's Published"](#) by Alexandra Alter and Elizabeth A. Harris, June 26, 2023 (New York Times)

[Data Cartels: The Companies That Control and Monopolize Our Information](#) by Sarah Lamdan (Stanford Univ. Press, 2022)

["Soft and Quiet: Self-Censorship in an Era of Book Challenges"](#) by Kelly Jensen (bookriot.com, Feb. 15, 2022)





[Free Speech for Me but Not for Thee: How the American Left and Right Relentlessly Censor Each Other](#) by Nat Hentoff (HarperCollins, 1992)

MLA's Association of College and Research Libraries division, not the IFP, sponsored the following program, but it was right in the IFP's wheelhouse:

Thursday, May 9: Proactive Not Reactive: Effective Intellectual Freedom Advocacy

Speakers: Andrea Boothby-Rice (Washington College and Co-Chair, MLA Intellectual Freedom Panel), Ashley Teagle (Southern Maryland Regional Library), Allison Jennings-Roche (PhD Candidate, College of Information Studies, University of Maryland)

Simply put, we are currently in the worst phase of censorship in libraries in United States history. Censorship is ever-present, but the challenged books are just a tool to push the removal of minority voices as part of an effort to advance white, male perspectives. Despite assertions to the contrary, censorship coordination is a top-down model, not grass roots. There is a large number of people who don't just want to remove books; they want to remove the public sphere, including public libraries and public schools. It is important for libraries to reach out to non-cardholders and proactively tell the library's story. Action steps for library management to take include:

-  Develop strong policies
-  Build relationships with allies
-  Identify and recruit strong potential board members
-  Be proactive about training and supporting front-line staff



Materials Interest Group

AI in Publishing and the Library

Laura Bandoch, Harford County Public Library

Large Language Models (LLMs) are the foundation upon which Generative AI products function. Creators of Generative AI products claim that LLMs use statistical relationships between various texts fed to the LLM, to generate completely new text as a result. Examples of these products are in the headlines constantly. ChatGPT from Open AI is probably the most well-known, but there is also Llama (released by Meta in 2023) and Copilot from Microsoft. You've probably even dipped your toes into using them—such as by using a Generative AI product to compose an email, draft a schedule or create a hashtag for you to use. There has been much fanfare written about how these products will create a more efficient workflow and will boost worker productivity.

However, there is a sinister side to these products. Many of these products are being used by content farms to create scam books that directly impact author book sales and reputation. Examples of these can be seen on Amazon most glaringly. Recently, author Marie Arana published *LatinoLand: A Portrait of America's Largest and Least Understood Minority*. Immediately, a book appeared directly under hers in the Amazon results that was titled *America's Largest and Least Understood Minority: A Summary of Latinoland*. A quick click on the author's bio showed that she had published multiple other summary books. These were seemingly published using a Generative AI product.

These types of content-farm titles are not new. Content farms have been targeting e-book sales for the last 15 years. However, the volume of these content-farm titles has

seemingly increased along with the advent of Generative AI products. Content farms appear to be heavily targeting bestsellers. These content farm titles are often low-quality AI hallucinations that lack a normal human cadence. Kindle Direct Publishing seems to be a popular place for these content-farm titles to land. Even though Amazon recently implemented a new policy where publishers need to provide information on whether content is AI generated, these content-farm titles are outpacing any human efforts to combat it, including Amazon's new policy to decrease the number of books that can be published on the platform in a day—but that limit is still three books per day per author.

Various court cases in the judicial system are trying to tackle this intellectual property and copyright infringement issue. But until those cases are decided or copyright legislation is passed on a national level, the law is woefully far behind. Even though summary and analysis books have been around for ages, these books (such as Sparknotes) provide analysis and additional material that is copyrighted intellectual property. These new content-farm titles frequently do not provide this and instead regurgitate the original book in a shorter format, thus taking money from authors. When sales are impacted, it may lead to authors not receiving another book deal or publishers deciding that the topic is not one that can sell.

So, what can we do as librarians? The first thing is to engage with customers who may come into the library curious about various products that are on Amazon but not on library shelves. Explain that they are poor quality materials with questionable copyright impacts. The next is to ensure that we do not purchase these materials ourselves—whether it be through our digital vendors or through a physical material customer request. The future of how Generative AI products will impact libraries is still playing out. It remains our job to provide high-quality content. This is more crucial than ever because Generative AI products are increasing the number of content-farm titles, requiring patrons to sift through them to find answers to their questions. ■

EA Library Worker Story, EA Spotlights and EA Book Recommendation



**Stephanie Wiant, Young Adults Workforce Services, Frederick County
Government**

Emerging adults (EAs) – individuals ranging in age from 18 to 29 – have been traditionally overlooked as potential library users. However, library workers across the state are eagerly taking on the challenge of meeting the needs of this unique customer base. Here are the thoughts of a library worker serving emerging adults and two current library customers.

Emerging Adult Library Worker Story

**Teonja Jung, MLA President;
Circulation Services Manager,
Cockeysville Branch, Baltimore
County Public Library**

What were your dreams in high school?

Up until 10th grade I wanted to be a doctor. Then I worked in a hospital that summer and realized that was not the path for me.

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

My path started out traditionally. After high school I went to college, but then had to stop and work. Then I was able to return to complete my AA Degree.



Did you go to the library during your EA years?

I started working in the library when I was 18, so yeah. I was there a lot, I think. Otherwise, I would not have gone there. I never thought of it as a place for me.

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

I enjoyed writing poetry and short stories when I was younger; I would have enjoyed very much the writers' clubs and poetry nights libraries are now offering in abundance.

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

Any program that helps them adult in a practical way would be super beneficial (ex. cooking meals for one or on a budget, interview coaching, job/trade school searching). Keeping in mind how they use technology and for career-related programs, host a career fair not just featuring companies, but trade industry people like trade schools, libraries, the fire department, and so on. I think we overlook that not everybody becomes doctors or lawyers or CEOs; sometimes they are retail employees, plumbers, office clerks, etcetera. We need to acknowledge non-college-path jobs and careers for those young adults who are still figuring out who they are.

Emerging Adult Spotlights

Peter Anadale, Frederick County Public Libraries customer

Author's note: Peter has been a member of the Tabletop Role Play Group at the Emmitsburg Branch since the group began playing at the library.

When did you start using the library?

I started using the library before I even remember. My first memory of the Emmitsburg Library was the mural featured in the children's area. It has princesses, Robin Hood, a wizard and so much more. I didn't notice the cloud castle in the background until a few years ago.

What do you enjoy most about the library?

There are nice librarians who tell me things when I ask, and I am able to check out books from anywhere—all across the state. I use Marina a lot for reading.

What genre do you enjoy the most?

I enjoy stories that explore the human psyche and attempt to make sense of the position of humanity in the world - the balance of good and evil. I also enjoy films, like *The Third Man*.



Emerging Adult Spotlights

Jenita Shrestha, Calvert Library customer

When did you start using the library?

I started using the Prince Frederick Branch of Calvert Library in 2019, my freshman year of high school. I was obsessed with young adult dystopian books, so I was a frequent visitor, scouting out new series to binge.

What do you enjoy most about the library?

As I continued to check out books, I got notifications from Calvert Library's email newsletter about upcoming events. A particular event, "Teen Book Boxes," caught my eye. They were my favorite part of the summer, discovering two new books, a fun activity, and a box that soon became a canvas for many talented and creative teens. There are many aspects of Calvert Library that I love, and frankly, wish I had been involved in sooner. The Teen Discord server gave me convenient information, community, and clubs I looked forward to.

What genre do you enjoy the most?

My favorite genre is thriller, with a little bit of romance in it. I love suspense and action sequences, intense situations and unexpected events. Any fiction novel with a side plot of romance is my guilty pleasure.

EA Book Recommendation

What You Are Looking for Is In the Library by Michiko Aoyama





LGBTQ+ Interest Group

Beyond June: How Libraries Can Support Pride All Year

By Shannon Carney, Baltimore County Public Library

With contributions from Jayne Walters, Anne Arundel County Public Library; Teresa Miller, Prince George's County Memorial Library System; and TJ Finecey, Carroll County Public Library

As pride month wraps up, it's important to reflect on why pride matters not just in June, but all year. It's become a common phrase that the original pride was a riot. Outdated laws against homosexuality and cross-dressing mixed with an increase in raids and police brutality in New York gay bars meant pressure built in the community until enough was enough. One night in June, in 1969, following a police raid on the Stonewall Inn, the community fought back, leading to several nights of uprisings.¹

While we have made incredible progress since then, including the nationwide legalization of gay marriage and some states, such as Maryland, codifying trans protections into state law, there is still work to do. In 2023, 47% of book challenges were against books written by and showcasing LGBTQ+ and BIPOC voices and experiences.² Anti-LGBTQ+ legislation leaves many in the community feeling uncertain about their safety and security in all aspects of life, including financially, physically, and mentally.

Despite the progress we've made, shame still lurks in the community. Especially for kids and teens who are still learning who they are and may grapple with acceptance from their peers and caregivers. This is especially true now with so many states introducing legislation that targets LGBTQ+ people, much of which disproportionately affects the transgender community. Legislators across the country are threatening LGBTQ+ youth's access to health-care, support systems, and affirming spaces at their schools.³

According to the Trevor Project's 2024 survey on the mental health of LGBTQ+ young people, 39% of LGBTQ+ youth seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year,

1. <https://www.american.edu/cas/news/the-first-pride-was-a-riot.cfm>

2. <https://www.ala.org/bbooks/censorship-numbers>

3. <https://journals.ala.org/index.php/cal/article/view/8004/11128>

with 12% making an attempt. The survey also shows that LGBTQ+ youth who live in very accepting communities attempted suicide at less than half the rate of those who live in unaccepting communities.⁴

Why does this matter to libraries? Teresa Miller, a librarian for Prince George's County Memorial Library System, asserts that "LGBTQ+ people belong to every one of our service areas: families, teens, older adults, students, job seekers, immigrants, low-income individuals, and more. Each of these groups' experiences intersect with LGBTQ+ identities to create specific information needs. Libraries cannot fulfill their commitment to effectively serve their communities unless the information needs of LGBTQ+ patrons are specifically addressed in their programs and services."

How can we, as library workers, help this vulnerable population? We are in a unique position here to show our LGBTQ+ patrons that they are welcome throughout the year, through small and large actions. From the books we purchase and display to the guests we invite to host programs, we can support pride all year. There are also days and months outside of June that are set to observe different LGBTQ+ identities and experiences. GLAAD has a calendar for many of these days throughout the year. These special days can be a great jumping-off point for a themed display, a special program, or even just to keep in mind and be aware of the broad spectrum of identities covered under LGBTQ+ labels.

Representation matters. Reading stories about people who are different from ourselves builds empathy and breaks down stereotypes. Seeing oneself represented in stories allows for greater self-acceptance and an easier path to live authentically. Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop famously wrote that books can be windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors. Windows to

4. <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2024/>

another culture or lifestyle, mirrors reflecting our own experiences, and sliding glass doors that allow us to step into other worlds and experiences.¹ While we engage in stories that act as windows and sliding glass doors, we are broadening our scope of the world and putting our own experiences into perspective. If we make the thoughtful effort to showcase LGBTQ+ voices, it makes a big difference. TJ Finecey, a Library Associate at Carroll County Public Library, maintains that “libraries should display materials that reflect all patrons, including queer patrons, year-round, not just in June. We want everyone to feel welcome in our libraries every month of the year, and representation contributes to that. That romance display you’re doing in February? You can have all sorts of sexualities and gender identities casually incorporated into it, for example, not just cis/straight led stories that may be easier to find. Being diverse in this way may take a little more research and effort, but it will be meaningful to those who see themselves reflected. It doesn’t have to be Pride Month for pride to be on display!”

One vital part of community work is to meet people where they are, at pride festivals and marches yes, but there are opportunities all year. One way to do this is for libraries to table-in queer spaces like a drag brunch or community health clinic. Showing up shows that we, as an organization, are welcoming to our whole community, including the LGBTQ+ community; a community often left to wonder if they will be welcome as they are in different spaces. Jayne Walters, a librarian for Anne Arundel County Public Library, proposes reaching out to local pride organizations. The people involved are all specialists in something, and their board of directors may be filled with all types of professionals such as lawyers or real estate agents. Reaching out to them to host a talk about their specialty or career is a great way to support the community. By representing LGBTQ+ people in their jobs we are showing queer youth that there is life for them beyond the trials they are facing right now. We are showing queer adults that they aren’t alone. We are also contributing to breaking down the “othering” that is often done to the LGBTQ+ community (either consciously or unconsciously). We are making members of our community feel seen in ways they don’t always have the chance to.

Let’s not forget, we’re in the business of information. One way we can impact the LGBTQ+ patrons we serve is to know our local organizations who serve them. Seek out resources and create a resource list to have on hand. ■

To get started, here are some of the resources both in Maryland and nationally that have services geared toward the LGBTQ+ Community:

[Baltimore Safe Haven](#)

[Chase Brexton Healthcare](#)

[The Family Acceptance Project](#)

[GLSEN Maryland](#)

[Hearts and Ears Wellness and Recovery Center](#)

[House of Ruth](#)

[Human Rights Campaign](#)

[National Center for Transgender Equality](#)

[PFLAG](#)

[Planned Parenthood](#)

[The Pride Center of Maryland](#)

[Reclaim and Rise Therapy](#)

[SAGE: Advocacy for LGBTQ+ Elders](#)

[Star Track Adolescent Health Program](#)

[Trans Youth Family Allies](#)

We are in a unique position here to show our LGBTQ+ patrons that they are welcome throughout the year, through small and large actions.

1. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_AAu58NSyc&t=3s

Support Staff Division

Support Staff Division: MLA/DLA Conference Programs

Kim Modeski, Baltimore County Public Library

The Support Staff Division was proud to sponsor three sessions at this year's MLA/DLA Conference. The first program, attended by over 50 people, was "Growing with Your Community" presented by Lisa Jones of Baltimore County Public Library (BCPL) and Erica Coady of Howard County Library System. They both shared their experiences in creating community gardens at their branches. Community gardens are a great way to engage and connect with your customers. Everything that is grown is shared with the customers and the community surrounding the branch.

The second program, "Let's Talk About Stuff," had three different presenters. This session was also well-attended. The Support Staff Division's own Robin Soma-Dudley of Anne Arundel County Public Library shared information about the new free gun safety-lock initiative. Working in partnership with the Department of Health, it was the first-of-its-kind partnership in Maryland aimed at saving lives. As part of the pilot program, adults 18 years and older received up to two gun safety-locks at participating branches. Laura Bandoch of Harford County Public Library shared her library's new initiative circulating Tonieboxes. Tonieboxes use audio stories and songs to spark curiosity and imagination in young children. The two most popular characters are Elsa and Curious George. Reshma Khan of Elsmere Library in Wilmington, DE, shared information on Team Programming. She stressed the importance of utilizing the strengths of your staff when creating programs. She and her staff have coordinated many branch programs through teamwork and creativity.

The final program was "Building a Public Library Digital Equity Strategy from the Ground Up" with over 20 attendees. Alex Houff of Baltimore County Public Library shared how BCPL combined outreach with emerging technology solutions to close the digital divide facing low-income community residents. By partnering with the Maryland State Department of Housing and Development, BCPL gave away over 1,000 Chromebooks to eligible county residents who otherwise could not afford one.

The Support Staff Division would like to thank our presenters who made each of these sessions a huge success!



*Alexandra Houff,
Baltimore County
Public Library, presents
"Building a Public Library
Digital Equity Strategy
from the Ground Up" at
the MLA/DLA Conference.*

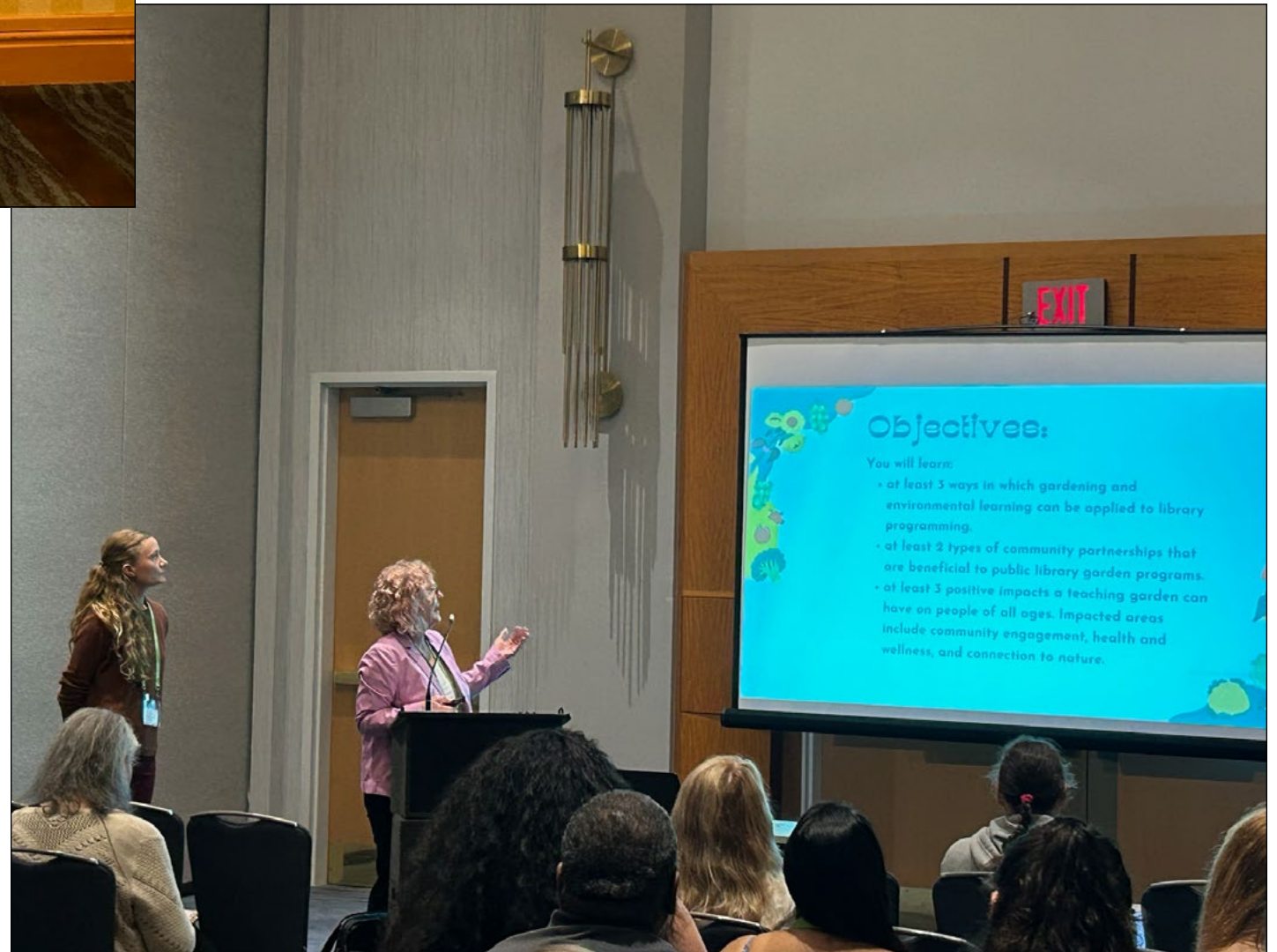




Robin Soma-Dudley, Anne Arundel County Public Library, Reshma Khan, New Castle County Libraries, and Laura Bandoch, Harford County Public Library, presented “Let’s Talk About Stuff” at the MLA/DLA Conference.



Erica Coady, Howard County Library System, and Lisa Jones, Baltimore County Public Library, present “Growing With Your Community” at the MLA/DLA Conference.





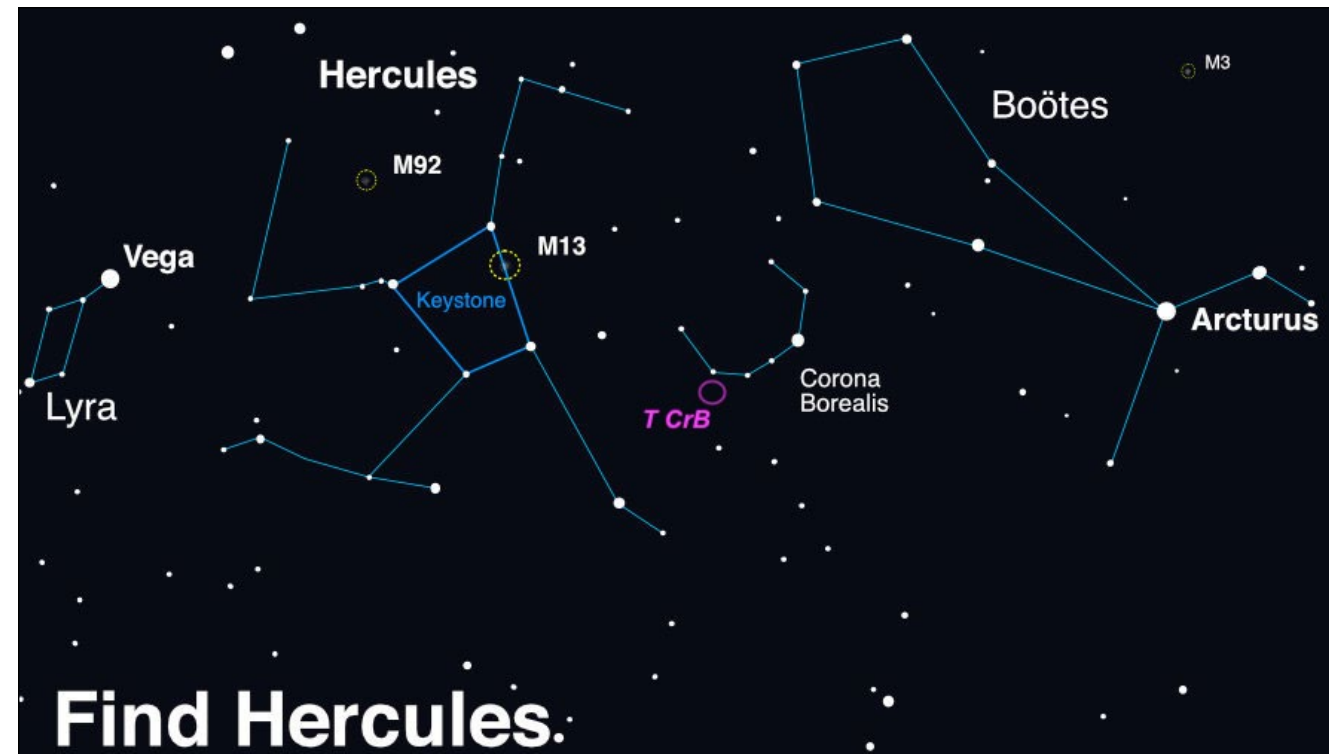
July's Night Sky Notes: A Hero, a Crown, and Possibly a Nova!


By Vivian White

High in the summer sky, the constellation Hercules acts as a centerpiece for late-night stargazers. At the center of Hercules is the “Keystone,” a near-perfect square shape between the bright stars Vega and Arcturus that is easy to recognize and can serve as a guidepost for some amazing sights. While not the brightest stars, the shape of the hero's torso, like a smaller Orion, is nearly directly overhead after sunset. Along the edge of this square, you can find a most magnificent jewel—the Great Globular Cluster of Hercules, also known as **Messier 13** (M13).

Globular clusters are a tight ball of very old stars, closer together than stars near us. These clusters orbit the center of our Milky Way like tight swarms of bees. One of the most famous short stories, **Nightfall** by Isaac Asimov, imagines a civilization living on a planet within one of these star clusters. They are surrounded by so many stars so near that it is always daytime except for once every millennium, when a special alignment (including a solar eclipse) occurs, plunging their planet into darkness momentarily. The sudden night reveals so many stars that it drives the inhabitants mad.

Back here on our home planet Earth, we are lucky enough to experience **skies full of stars**, a beautiful **Moon**, and regular **eclipses**. On a clear night this summer, take time to look up into the Keystone of Hercules and follow this sky chart to the Great Globular Cluster of Hercules. A pair of binoculars will show a faint, fuzzy patch, while a small telescope will resolve some of the stars in this globular cluster.



Find Hercules: Look up after sunset during summer months to find Hercules! Scan between Vega and Arcturus, near the distinct pattern of Corona Borealis. Once you find its stars, use binoculars or a telescope to hunt down the globular clusters M13  (and a smaller globular cluster M92). If you enjoy your views of these globular clusters, you're in luck - look for another great globular, M3, in the nearby constellation of Boötes. Image created with assistance from Stellarium: stellarium.org



Bonus!



Between Hercules and the ice-cream-cone-shaped Boötes constellation, you'll find the small constellation Corona Borealis, shaped like the letter "C." Astronomers around the world are watching T Coronae Borealis, also known as the "Blaze Star" in this constellation closely because it is **predicted to go nova** sometime this summer. There are only 5 known nova stars in the whole galaxy. It is a rare observable event and you can take part in the fun! The Astronomical League has issued a **Special Observing Challenge** that anyone can participate in. Just make a sketch of the constellation now (you won't be able to see the nova) and then make another sketch once it goes nova.



A red giant star and white dwarf orbit each other in this animation of a nova similar to T Coronae Borealis. The red giant is a large sphere in shades of red, orange, and white, with the side facing the white dwarf the lightest shades. The white dwarf is hidden in a bright glow of white and yellows, which represent an accretion disk around the star. A stream of material, shown as a diffuse cloud of red, flows from the red giant to the white dwarf. When the red giant moves behind the white dwarf, a nova explosion on the white dwarf ignites, creating a ball of ejected nova material shown in pale orange. After the fog of material clears, a small white spot remains, indicating that the white dwarf has survived the explosion.
NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center

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!

Mike Kiel, University of Baltimore

About Mike's job and MLA responsibilities

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

Right now, I'm the Interim Head of Reference and Instruction at the University of Baltimore's Robert L. Bogomolny Library. Though my responsibilities have changed over time, this is still my first "professional" job in some sense. Right now, we're kind of retooling our department after some staffing and technology changes, weeding the books for the first time in a while, and trying to focus on how to incorporate AI and diverse perspectives into information literacy.

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

I've been on the conference committee and its social committee for a long time now because I've written the pub quiz at the conference for about a decade (if you want to help, we're looking to make a subcommittee this year). I've also taken a turn as the ACRL-MD VP and President and been involved in that division in various ways, including planning events. I always hope for us to find more ways to work together; I really think there are lots of ways for academic and public libraries to collaborate that we don't take advantage of, but that MLA can sometimes facilitate. I'd love to



get a contingent of academic librarians to come to Library Legislative Day in Annapolis.

How are you involved in the wider community?

If you mean the library community, not as much as I could be or would like to be! But I'm a pretty consistent and passionate user of the public libraries in two or three jurisdictions. Maybe I should join a friends group.

What is it about libraries that inspires or motivates you?

I think there are a few things I find inspiring. We don't always do a perfect job of it, but libraries and librarians really want to help people and they want to do it for free.

About Mike

Favorite movie, TV show, or play?

I think it's so hard to pick favorites! How do you compare a romantic comedy to a thriller? But in another life, I'd probably be a film professor, so I'll give one example of a nearly perfect movie: *Alien*.

What was your first job?

If we don't count watching my neighbor's dog after school, I worked for BCPL for... 11 years, I think? It was my original part-time job in high school, and college, and grad school, and after that too. I didn't realize how weird that was at the time, but people would see my resume as a twenty-something and were shocked.

Do you read more than one book at a time?

Yeah... I'm always reading more than one book or playing more than one video game. It drives my partner a little crazy sometimes.

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

I really want to go skiing on another continent. I have a couple ideas in mind.

Do you speak other languages?

A strong intermediate Japanese. I like to say I could easily ask the policeman for directions when I got lost in the rural train system, but I can't make small talk. ■



Mike Kiel and Michael Gannon facilitating the perennially popular Pub Quiz at the MLA/DLA Conference.

Photo courtesy of Angelique Broussard, Carroll County Public Library.

David Dahl, University of Maryland, College Park

About David's job and MLA responsibilities

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

My current position is Associate Dean of Libraries for Digital Services & Technologies at University of Maryland, College Park (UMD). I have been in academic libraries in Maryland for my entire professional career, starting with six memorable years at Towson University and now almost a decade at UMD. My first job at Towson was as an Emerging Technologies Librarian, which gave me the opportunity to really pursue areas of interest to me that I thought could improve or enhance what we were doing. From there, I moved into library technology management positions. Currently I oversee UMD Libraries division that handles public computing, software development, system administration, and our digital collections.



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

I've been involved in MLA pretty much since day-one in Maryland, starting as Secretary of the Academic and Research Libraries Division (ARLD, now ACRL-MD) and followed by roles as the division's Vice President and President. I had the opportunity to serve as Conference Director in 2014, Program Development Officer from 2015-2019, and ALA Councilor from 2019-2023. That's a lot of years on the MLA Executive Board! After rotating off last year, I'm looking forward to coming back as President Elect and learning what aspirations our units and members have that can help inform goals for my year as President.

How are you involved in the wider community?

My first position at UMD was as director of a systems team for the University System of Maryland and Affiliated Institutions Library Consortium, which consists of all the public universities in the state, plus one library supporting two private institutions. It's a great showcase of how libraries can collaborate, and I try to support it in any way I can. Currently, that involves "moonlighting" as their Interim Executive Director.

Beyond the state, I've been involved with the Core division of ALA for the past couple of years, chairing their Technology Section's Leadership Team this past year and serving on the Bylaws & Organization Committee for the past two years. I'll be taking over as Chair of that committee this coming year – can't get enough bylaws!

What is it about libraries that inspires or motivates you?

Definitely the people. There are so many smart, inspiring people in the profession and our libraries. Each conversation with someone new leaves me with a new perspective on the work (and often some new factoids)!

About David

Favorite movie, TV show, or play?

Movie: *L.A. Story* with Steve Martin. Not the best movie, but my favorite.

Favorite sport and/or sports team?

Sport: Tennis. Team: Chicago Bulls.

What was your first job?

I'm not sure they would have wanted me to call it a job, but I worked in my junior high school's "snack bar" for 50 cents per day, free soda and half-price junk food. Every kid's dream!

Do you have pets? What kind?

Yes. One long-haired tuxedo cat named Charlie, short for Charlemagne because he looked like a little emperor as a kitten. And he pretty much is emperor of his domain. (Our house.)

What book is currently on your nightstand?

My Kindle. I know people gravitate to the tactile-ness of a physical book, but I prefer an ebook. Just checked out on Libby is *Pathogenesis: A History of the World in Eight Plagues*.

Do you read more than one book at a time?

More than one. I usually have one "print" book going (usually an ebook) and one audiobook.

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

I've lived in two cities named Bloomington. Not especially impressive, but I bet it's a limited set of people who can claim the honor. ■

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