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Celebrate the Fall 2024 Cohort of LATI Graduates 25

In November, 29 library associates from seven different Maryland counties presented their capstone projects and received graduation certificates at the Miller Branch of Howard County Library System. The cohort and their guests were also treated to a keynote by Prince George’s County Memorial Library System CEO Dr. Mark Winston.

Maryland Tech Connect 36

Library staff from around the state gathered in Rockville at the Universities at Shady Grove on December 12, 2024, for the tenth annual Maryland Tech Connect Conference. This year’s conference addressed a pressing issue in library technology—the rise and adoption of artificial intelligence and large language models in libraries and throughout society.

Preserving the Legacy of Maryland Artist Alice Webb: A New Collection on Digital Maryland 40

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on Digital Maryland showcases her vibrant watercolors, intricate etchings, and the deeply personal elements of her creative journey.

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On April 4, 2024, the Maryland State Library Agency unveiled the Statewide Futures Blueprint, a comprehensive initiative aimed at shaping the future priorities of libraries across the state. The project identified six key priority areas for libraries, one of which is public trust.

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Editor's Note

Hello, *Crab* readers! I hope you all had peaceful, joyful winter holidays. Another year welcomes the newest edition of our quarterly newsletter, as we acclimate to colder days and plan for the year ahead. It's exciting to read about all the news from around the state, including several award-winning achievements.

Congratulations to Queen Anne's County Library on their 2024 Golden Anchor Readers' Choice Award, to Carroll County Public Library on their County Innovation Award, and to Harford Community College Library on being named the 2024 Federal Depository Library of the Year! 

It is wonderful to see colleagues from around the state getting the recognition they deserve for their initiative, innovation, and hard work. Congratulations also go out to the recent LATI graduates, with thanks to their supervisors, the LATI Oversight Committee, and all those who support and advise them as they begin the next phase of their careers in the library community.

Don't forget to save the date: the 2025 MLA/DLA Annual Conference will take place from May 7-9, 2025, in Ocean City, MD. I hope you'll be able to join us for what is sure to be another engaging and informative learning opportunity. The committee is finalizing presenters and programs, so watch this space in the spring issue. Chelsea Shockley, our MLA Conference Director, will have news and information to share about presentations and planning.

As always, please consider contributing your own success stories to *the Crab*. We welcome your submissions and want to be a forum for you to share news about your programming, outreach, plans, and special recognition with our readers. Wishing all of you a Happy New Year and a memorable 2025.

Julie Fitzpatrick, MLA Crab Editor
Howard County Library System ■



President's Message

*Teonja Jung, MLA President
Baltimore County Public Library*



MLA President Teonja Jung speaks to graduates and guests at LATI Graduation on November 6, 2024.



SEASON'S GREETINGS, EVERYONE! The winter season has arrived and, although it's getting cold outside, it's perfect for cozying up with a good book or watching a good movie. To avoid the winter slump, I have been trying to stay on task by continuing to make MLA visible around the state.

I attended the Fall LATI cohort graduation at the Miller Branch of Howard County Library System. It was wonderful to see all the great projects and programs the participants are working on in their respective systems. I spoke briefly to the graduates about MLA and all the benefits of membership and the ways they could engage. I also spoke to St. Mary's County Library staff in early December, highlighting MLA benefits and groups. And after the holidays in January, I will be speaking with the staff of Charles County Public Library. I am thrilled about all these opportunities to talk about our association and share the exciting things we are doing.

Speaking of exciting things, on February 4 to 6, MLA will be participating in the Reframing Libraries Organizations futures cohort through TFSX in partnership with the Connecticut State Library. This three-day-long professional development virtual workshop will inform attendees on "foresight tools to lead their libraries into the future." If you are interested in taking part, follow this link: <https://my.tfsx.com/events/transformation-of-libraries/>. Participation is open to all levels of staff.

Another thing on the horizon is the launch of the next Nettie B. Taylor Maryland Library Leadership Institute (MLLI) cohort training in March. It has been five years since the last one, and I am privileged to be on the planning committee working to get this up and running. Also, MLA's new Association Management System will be launching in January 2025 (It has been a long time coming!). Finally, our next MLA Executive Board Meeting will be in person on January 15, 2025, at the Busch Annapolis Branch of Anne Arundel

County Public Library. We haven't had an in-person meeting for quite a while, and I can't wait to see folks there.

There are many new things, but I want to take this opportunity to remind you that one thing about MLA never changes: MLA as library advocate. As we move into the Legislative Session for 2025, MLA, library staff, and community supporters—as we usually do—are preparing to show up in Annapolis to talk with legislators about what libraries do for our communities, and to let them know the funding and resources that we need from them to continue our services. Each of you are advocates, too. Every day you promote libraries to your customers who come into the building and to your community when you do outreach and programming. If you want to do more and have a deeper understanding of what advocacy is, then check out the MLA Library Advocacy Interest Group led by Tif Sutherland. They are happy to help you learn more.

On a personal note, I hope you had a wonderful holiday season however you celebrate. I know I will be doing a lot of cozy baking all winter. Stay warm, stay safe, and stay positive. Happy New Year! ■

Vice President's Message

David Dahl

*MLA Vice President/President Elect
University of Maryland Libraries*



HAPPY NEW YEAR, Maryland library community! In these early days of the new year, I hope you'll take some time to reflect on your accomplishments this past year. Within MLA, there is much to be proud of, thanks to the dedication and hard work of our members, leaders, and staff. Just to remind you of a few accomplishments, we participated in a successful legislative session that culminated in the signing of Maryland's Freedom to Read Act, we held a(nother) vibrant and engaging annual conference, and we were awarded an ALA grant to develop an Intellectual Freedom Helpline. We have made significant strides in advancing our mission and supporting our community.

Like many of you, I anticipate that 2025 will bring challenges that may try to impede our ability to act on our values. The best way to meet these challenges is by building community, staying engaged, strengthening relationships, and developing advocates.

I am looking forward to several efforts in 2025 that will help us do just that. As you'll read elsewhere in this issue, the Maryland library ecosystem – under the guidance of the Maryland State Library Agency and the Public Trust Committee - will be embarking on a statewide campaign to celebrate Maryland libraries. This campaign will amplify the positive impact that libraries have on individuals and communities. I hope you'll join in collecting testimonials from your community.

In the world of technology, I know the MLA staff have been working hard to implement a new association management system. The new system promises to rejuvenate our web presence, enhance communications, and provide new pathways for members to engage with the association and each other.

For myself, I'll be working to operationalize the efforts started last year by the Audit Group, connecting the units our members call "home" to association leadership to find areas for growth and evolution. I look forward to gaining a better understanding of the successes and struggles of each unit, which will inform the continued evolution of MLA.

Our professional associations are a pathway for hope and opportunity. They are a platform that enables us the chance to collectively make a meaningful impact. As I've met with MLA colleagues and discussed what the future will bring, I've heard the emergence of mindsets, ideas, and strategies that will define where we go.

As you set your resolutions for 2025, I would ask you to consider how MLA can be a venue for you to engage in community. Working together, we can make 2025 a year of growth, resilience, and positive impact for the Maryland library community and those we serve. ■

Report from MLA's ALA Chapter Councilor

Joseph Thompson, Carroll County Public Library

Editor's note: The next American Library Association Council meetings will take place January 23-27, 2025, at LibLearnX in Phoenix, Arizona. Joe has been actively advocating, planning, and working with ALA on behalf of Maryland libraries and plans on updating us with the ALA Council's news in his spring Councilor's Report.



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News from the MLA Office

Joshua Stone, Kate Monagan, and Danielle Voelker

As we begin a new year, we wanted to take a moment to reflect on the incredible achievements we've accomplished together and express our heartfelt gratitude for your ongoing support of the Maryland Library Association.

We began 2024 with a powerful Legislative Day, where MLA members came together in Annapolis to advocate for our libraries and the vital role they play in our communities. In May, we gathered for the MLA | DLA Annual Conference in Cambridge, Maryland which brought together nearly 600 library professionals from across Delaware and Maryland. Throughout the year, we hosted 13 professional development events, providing valuable opportunities to share resources, best practices, and innovations in the library profession.

Looking ahead, we're excited to unveil a new website, designed to make it easier to find professional development opportunities and resources, manage your membership, and connect with your fellow MLA members.

We hope you found rest and joy in the company of friends, family, and colleagues this holiday season. We are so fortunate to have such a dedicated and passionate community of library professionals here in Maryland. Thank you for all you do for our libraries, our profession, and the people we serve. We look forward to all we will accomplish together in 2025. Warm regards and best wishes for the year ahead. ■

Harford Community College Library Celebrates 2024 Federal Depository Library of the Year

Andie Craley, Harford Community College Library

On Monday, October 21, 2024, during the opening kickoff of the virtual Fall 2024 Federal Depository Library Conference, Harford Community College (HCC) Library was named the 2024 Federal Depository Library of the Year by the U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO).

It is a great honor for HCC Library to receive this award from the GPO, and to be added to the list of the now [27 amazing institutions who have received this award](#). This was not possible without the wonderful and continuous support and enthusiasm of the college administration, with thanks to HCC President Dr. Theresa Felder, Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Diane Ryan, and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Oliva Rines, and to Director for the Library Lois Entner, who joined with many members of library staff at the live presentation of the library's award during the conference's opening session. Dr. Felder remarked that "this recognition is not just a reflection of the hard work of our staff but also a testament to HCC's shared commitment to fostering access to government information and empowering our community with knowledge." Director Entner remarked that "this award is a testament to the dedication and passion of not only our current library staff, but also those who have worked throughout the past 57 years that the library has been a part of the Federal Depository Library Program."



In GPO's Press Release from October 21, 2024, it was noted that "Harford Community College Library promotes the FDLP through engaging campus activities and library displays. It works to generate awareness and usage of FDLP resources through events for National Library Week, Constitution Day, and much more. The library boasts a well-curated collection of federal depository resources to meet the needs of its campus. Its staff is known for being well-trained with processing government documents." GPO Superintendent of Documents Scott Matheson remarked that "we in the library community have watched the staff at Harford Community College Library elevate the FDLP, generate awareness of government information for students, and engage in FDLP events. Harford Community College serves as a leader amongst FDLP libraries at community colleges." See GPO's [Maryland Library Named Library of the Year Press Release](#).

HCC Library became an FDLP library on June 1, 1967, just ten years after then-Harford Junior College (HJC) was established. In 1967, the letters between former Congressman Clarence D. Long of Maryland, who nominated the library, former HJC President Joseph N. Hankin, former HJC Head Librarian Frances E. Brown, former



Regional Librarian Virginia Phillips at McKeldin Library, and former Superintendent of Documents Carper W. Buckley, described the need for closer access to government information due to the rapid growth in population because of U.S. Government installations at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Bainbridge Naval Training Center, and Edgewood Arsenal, and to growing industries and agriculture in Harford County, and with an expanding Division of Continuing Education at HJC. Fifty-seven years later, that need remains relevant for these very reasons and has only grown as workforce development programs have expanded with a Workforce Training Center at Water's Edge, NorthStar partnership with Harford County Public Schools, continued partnership with Aberdeen Proving Ground, partnership with Towson University in northeastern Maryland, and expanded partnerships with other

serves the First Congressional District along with one other depository library at Salisbury University, making HCC Library the closest depository library for Harford, Cecil, and northern Baltimore counties.

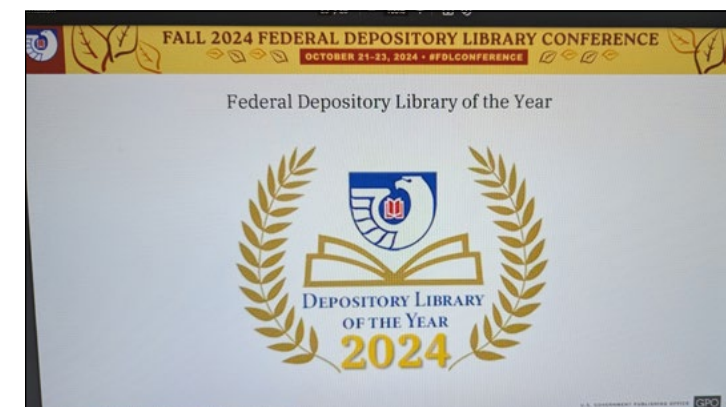
HCC Library is one of 53 federal depository libraries in the region of Maryland, Delaware, and Washington, D.C., all covered by the regional depository library at McKeldin Library at University of Maryland College Park. HCC Library is one of only two community college depository libraries in this region; the other is in Delaware. The library is also one of seven community college depository libraries in the newly created [Northeast National Collection Service Area \(NCSA\) by the GPO](#). The four geographical National Collection Service Areas in the FDLP were “established to ensure geographically dispersed permanent public access to Federal Government information products, to receive

academic institutions. See [Harford Community College Library Named FDLP Depository Library of the Year Press Release](#).

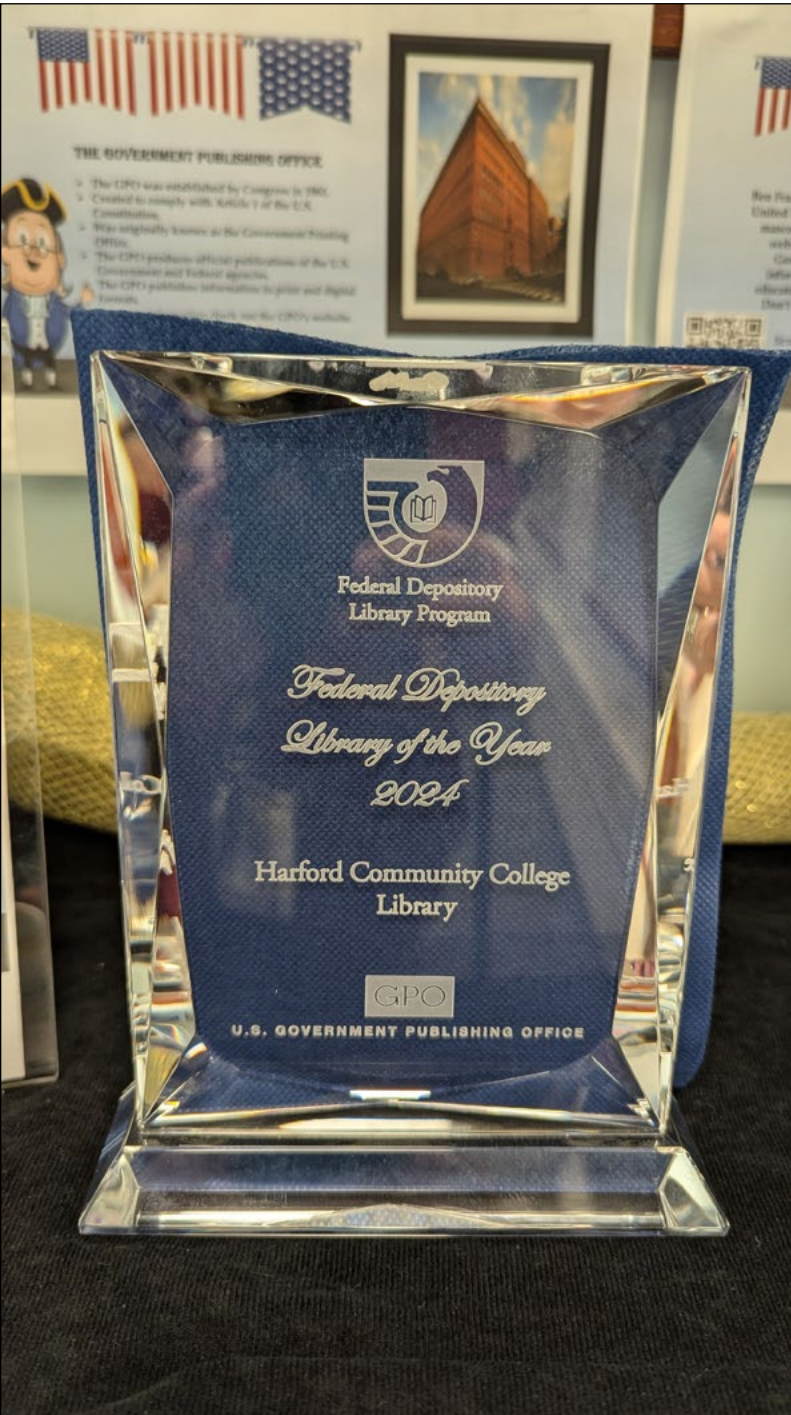
In 2017, HCC Library celebrated its 50th year in the FDLP; former GPO Director Davita Vance-Cooks participated in the anniversary program to present the library with its award for its 50-year commitment to providing the public with access to federal government information. Due to several Maryland redistricting events, HCC Library now

services from the Government Publishing Office, and to facilitate collaboration between and among federal depository libraries” as the FDLP moves to a digital-first program.

For more information about HCC Library’s involvement in the FDLP, see our [Federal Depository Library Program webpage](#) and our [Government Information at HCC Library LibGuide](#). ■



Harford Community College Library Celebrates 2024 Federal Depository Library of the Year



Carroll County Public Library Wins Prestigious County Innovation Award from Maryland Association of Counties

*Lisa Picker, Carroll County Public Library
Photographs courtesy of Carroll County Public Library.*

Carroll County Public Library's Exploration Commons at 50 East, a first-of-its-kind space for libraries, has won the prestigious County Innovation Award from the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) and the Academy for Excellence in Local Governance.

Exploration Commons at 50 East is a community and innovation center, located in the same building as the downtown Westminster Branch of Carroll County Public Library. The space provides access to a high-tech maker-space, commercial teaching kitchen, and meeting rooms, designed to foster collaboration and innovation. Following the free public library model, Exploration Commons has no membership fees, and class costs are minimal, based only on materials used. This accessible approach allows trained, dedicated staff to provide classes tailored to various skill levels, meeting individuals where they are and enabling them to successfully turn their ideas into reality.

Exploration Commons is designed to bring the Carroll County community together. Through events, programs,

classes, and services, Exploration Commons promotes innovation, fosters social connections, encourages community involvement, and provides a space for collaboration and lifelong learning. It is where community members can work together and learn from each other. As a free and accessible space in Westminster, Exploration Commons enriches the library's role as a community resource, supporting creativity, education, and collaboration for all.

The County Innovation Award was established to recognize superb and leading-edge county programs that improve the overall quality of life and service delivery for a county's residents. The Honorable Ingrid Turner, Prince George's County Circuit Court Associate Judge, MACo Past President, and former member of Prince George's County Council, instituted this award during her term as MACo President in 2012. The award is now a collaboration of the Academy for Excellence in Local Governance and MACo, with support from the Local Government Insurance Trust.

The award is issued to one urban county and one rural county each year. According to MACo, all nominees were impressive, addressing issues in their communities and serving the needs of residents in ways that were indeed "outside the box." To view all nominees, visit <https://conduitstreet.mdcounties.org>.



Carroll County Public Library Executive Director Andrea Berstler, Governor Wes Moore, and Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller view items created at Exploration Commons.



Andrea Krumrine with Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller in the virtual reality lab at Exploration Commons.



Exploration Commons at the Westminster branch of Carroll County Public Library.



Governor Wes Moore preparing salmon in The Teaching Kitchen at Exploration Commons, January 2024.



Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller, Governor Wes Moore, and Andrea Berstler with staff and guests, viewing the laser cutter at Exploration Commons.





Quilt-inspired tea sandwiches program in the teaching kitchen at Exploration Commons.



Participant making impostor desserts in the teaching kitchen at Exploration Commons.

Sewing class at Exploration Commons.



Freedom to Read Foundation Announces 2024 Conable Conference Scholarship Recipients from Maryland Libraries

Joyce McIntosh, Freedom to Read Foundation

The Conable Conference Scholarship honors the memory of Gordon Conable, a past president of the Freedom to Read Foundation (FTRF). Conable, who was also an American Library Association (ALA) Councilor, was a tireless champion of intellectual freedom and dedicated to mentoring future leaders of the library profession. Mentoring those new to the profession was an important undertaking for Gordon, and the FTRF Board of Trustees is pleased to be able to honor his memory by creating mentoring opportunities for students and new librarians. The Conable Scholarship does this by providing financial assistance to a new librarian or library student who shows a particular interest in intellectual freedom and wishes to attend the ALA Annual Conference.

In 2024, the Freedom to Read Foundation Conable Conference Committee members named two scholarship recipients, who received full scholarships to attend the American Library Association's Annual Conference in San Diego, California. Each recipient, Etana Laing and Tif Sutherland, was chosen from the largest class of applicants in the history of the scholarship.

Etana Laing is an MLIS student at the University of

Maryland, College Park and a Library Associate at Bowie State University. She also has a book club for Black women and people with lived experience of misogynoir called Revolutionary Reads.

Upon receiving news of the scholarship, Laing said, "The rising number of book challenges and bans in the United States reflects the times we are living in, where our rights are being stripped away before our eyes, DEI initiatives are walked back, anti-LGBTQIA+ and Islamophobic rhetoric is on the rise, and the list continues. Intellectual freedom is a critical tool to fight these issues and is the root of my passion for this work."

Tif Sutherland, the second recipient, is Reference Supervisor at Calvert Library in Maryland and immediate past President of the Maryland Library Association. Sutherland leads a team of seven librarians focused on instruction, access, and equity for a community of 100,000. They are committed to advocating for library support and training library supporters, leadership focused on soft skills, developing customer service-focused library workers, and delivering community and data-driven services, with a strong focus on advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion within the library landscape.

Sutherland also attended a weekend-long training as part of the 2024 Law for Librarians cohort and is available to share presentations or trainings for library workers in Maryland.

Sutherland stated, "Intellectual freedom is the foundation of an engaged and informed community. My staunch dedication to this principle has been strengthened during my time as the President of the Maryland Library Association. I've seen library workers so dedicated to their vital positions as resources and support for their communities balance their roles with external forces bent on making the work they do more challenging. Diverse perspectives and stories provide information and ideas that encourage

literacy, learning, idea-sharing, and democracy."

The Freedom to Read Foundation is an independent, 501(c)(3) non-profit legal and educational organization affiliated with the American Library Association that is dedicated to protecting and defending each person's First Amendment right to read and the right of library workers to serve the information needs of their community. Since 1969, Freedom to Read Foundation trustees, staff, and members have worked to protect First Amendment rights through education, litigation, and advocacy. To learn more about the Gordon Conable Scholarship and the Freedom to Read Foundation, please visit <https://www.ftrf.org>. ■

Queen Anne's County Wins Golden Anchor Readers' Choice Award

Allison Wood, Queen Anne's County Library

The Queen Anne's County Library was recently awarded a "Best Of" award for their community. The Shore Update presented the library with its 2024 Golden Anchor Readers' Choice Award for "Favorite After School Activity/An Organization That Makes Our Community a Better Place."

The Shore Update is direct mailed to more than 20,000 homes in Queen Anne's County. The September 26 issue announcing all of the 2024 Golden Anchor Awards can be accessed [here](#).



Youth Services Division Presents: Black- Eyed Susan Tapestry (BEST) 2025: The Spring Edition

Joe Farmaco, Montgomery County Public
Libraries

Thursday, March 6, 2025, 9:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.

Online via Zoom: [Register on mdlb.org](https://register.mdlb.org).

Love talking about books? Join us for BEST 2025—The Spring Edition, a celebration of Children’s and Teen Fiction. Learn about the Black-Eyed Susan Award and participate, via Zoom, in a half day of small group discussions of some of the 2023-2024 Juvenile and Teen Fiction nominees.

Program check-in begins at 9:25 a.m., and the program will start at 9:30 a.m. There will be two discussion groups, meeting twice, so you can attend both sessions. Please read all the titles for each group.

G. Z. Schmidt, author of *The Curious Vanishing of Beatrice Willoughby*, will be our keynote speaker.

Please read all the titles for each group.

Group 1: Grades 3-5

Tracy Ocomy Crowder: *Montgomery and the Case of the Golden Key*

Ellen Oh: *You Are Here: Connecting Flights*

G.Z. Schmidt: *The Curious Vanishing of Beatrice Willoughby*

Rebecca Stead and Wendy Mass: *The Lost Library*

Nancy Tandon: *The Way I Say It*

Group 2: Grades 6-12

Maria E. Andreu: *Love in English*

Erin Bow: *Simon Sort of Says*

Dan Gemeinhart: *The Midnight Children*

Jas Hammonds: *We Deserve Monuments*

Claire Swinarski: *What Happened to Rachel Riley?*

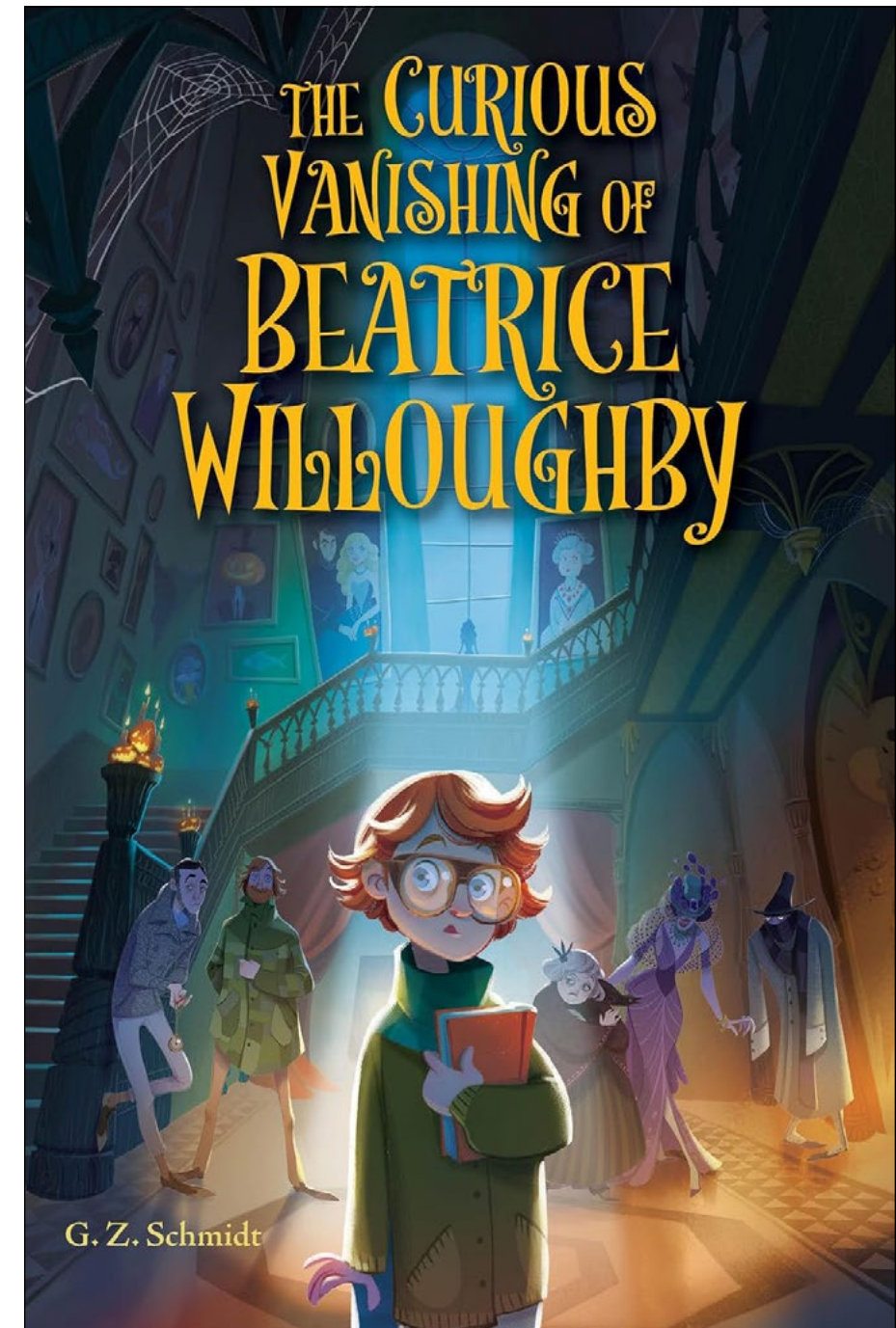
This program has been approved for 8.5 contact hours of continuing education for attendees. Facilitators will receive 12 contact hours! If you would like to be a facilitator, or if you have any questions, contact [Joe Farmarco](#) or [Noel Knepper](#).

Program Pricing:

Members: \$30

Non-members: \$45

Student, Retired, Unemployed, or Friend: \$30



◆ G. Z. Schmidt, author of *The Curious Vanishing of Beatrice Willoughby*.

Maryland Public Libraries to Launch Third Annual Career Success Month

Tim Pratt, Maryland State Library Agency

Maryland public libraries are set to launch a series of programs that will provide the communities they serve with the skills employees need to succeed in today's workplace. The third annual [Career Success Month](#), developed by the [Maryland State Library Agency](#) and supported in part by the federal [Institute of Museum and Library Services](#), features a range of virtual and in-person professional training opportunities hosted by library systems across the state. The events begin in January and continue through February.

"Maryland's libraries are a critical part of the state's workforce ecosystem, providing access to training, technology and expertise for job seekers, businesses and entrepreneurs," said Maryland State Librarian Morgan Lehr Miller. "I'm thrilled our library systems are working on such important programs, and that the Institute of Museum and Library Services continues to support these efforts to help Marylanders thrive."

The theme of this year's programs is Upskill and Uplift the Future Workforce. Programs include resume building, job search help, mock interviews, computer program training, career workshops, adult learning, entrepreneurship information and other opportunities. A list of the programs can be found on the [Career Success Month](#) website.

In addition, Career Success Month will feature two keynote speakers. [Walter Simmons](#), President and Chief Executive Officer of [Employ Prince George's](#), will speak from



6:30 to 7:30 pm. on January 21, 2025. [Michael V. Morgan](#), an [author and speaker](#) known for his inspirational talks about career development, will speak from 6:30 to 7:30 pm on February 3, 2025. Both events will be held virtually. Registration information will be posted on the Career Success Month website as the events draw nearer.

While Career Success Month helps job seekers and current employees improve their skills to keep up with changing industry demands, it also affirms the value of library resources, programs and partnerships. These resources, programs and partnerships help Marylanders stay competitive within the modern job market and workforce, whether they are looking to advance their careers or pivot into new industries.

For additional information, contact:

Tim Pratt/Communications Manager
(667) 219-4787 | (443) 695-6772
timothy.pratt@maryland.gov

About the Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA)

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

MLA Chats

Nay Keppler, Baltimore County Public Library

Registration is now open for our second quarterly MLA Chats program, taking place on Monday, January 27, 2025, from 2 – 3:30 p.m. MLA Chats is a new, virtual forum where MLA members can participate in a facilitated discussion on topics impacting their work and librarianship in general. January's session will focus on censorship and intellectual freedom, diverse collection development, and readers' advisory.

The January session of MLA Chats will be facilitated by Intellectual Freedom Panel members Arthur LaRue (Information Services Associate, Washington County Free Library), and Mike Kiel (Interim Head of Reference and Instruction, University of Baltimore).

MLA Chats: Censorship and Intellectual Freedom, Diverse Collection Development, and Readers Advisory

Monday, January 27, 2025, 2 - 3:30 p.m.

Facilitated by Arthur LaRue and Mike Kiel

Register [here](#). ■

MLA Marketing Award Nominations

Amy L. Miller Meyers, Carroll County Public Library

Show your creative staff how much you appreciate them with a nomination for the Maryland Library Association Excellence in Marketing Award!

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

Nominations for campaigns and materials created during calendar year 2024 are currently being accepted through **January 20, 2025** by using this Google form: <https://forms.gle/s5Ysq2ekwoMe6wBZ9>. Individuals are encouraged to upload samples or provide links to their work through the form. However, submissions may be mailed to the MLA office if necessary. ■

Winners will receive an MLA plaque and recognition at the 2025 MLA/DLA Conference in May. In addition, all entries will be displayed at the conference.

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

We look forward to seeing your work! ■

Save the Dates... May 7-9, 2025!





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

Empowering Education: Overcoming Barriers and Building Bridges

Paul Chasen, Enoch Pratt Free Library/State Library Resource Center
All photographs courtesy of John Cassini, Enoch Pratt Free Library

"GREAT TO HAVE A VIRTUAL OPTION for a state-wide discussion," Important, outstanding, well organized! Thank you," and similar comments were made throughout the Fall 2024 SLRC DEI Conference, Empowering Education: Overcoming Barriers and Building Bridges.

On Tuesday, October 29 and Wednesday, October 30, 2024, the conference gave the 160 attendees ample opportunities to learn about DEI topics that focused on programs and services targeting K-12, higher education, and lifelong learning user populations; and more specifically on indigenous user populations and ELS user populations (just to name a few). Attendees also had opportunities to consider while learning: does my library need a DEI Officer, a DEI Council, both, or none of the above?

Tuesday, October 29, 2024: The Virtual Day

The virtual conference day, held entirely on Zoom, started with our keynote speaker. Dr. Kelly Clark, Chief Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging Officer, Howard County Library System, gave us five points to strongly consider when deciding on adding a DEI Officer to our libraries. Brenda Johnson-Perkins and Lori Hench, representing the Baltimore County Public Library's Adult and Community Engagement Department, gave us pragmatic strategies and steps to take to incorporate DEI in adult programming and services. What is necessary to make incorporation possible? Data and anecdotes that let us know that specific locations within our counties need DEI in place. Ajanta Chakraborty gave us an inspiring presentation about why she left a high-paying tech profession to start a business that helps libraries and organizations add multiculturalism to their collections. Finally, Jessica Russell and Lois Mayo-Dickey of the Enoch Pratt Free Library helped us conclude our virtual day by giving attendees a plan to help their libraries determine if a DEI Council is needed, or if it's more important than hiring a DEI Officer.

The attendees reacted positively to the entire day:

Great! And loving the fact that this is online. So convenient! Thanks for offering these trainings.

Well-organized as always.

Talking about DEI in the workplace and outside of the workplace are needed conversations in today's world. This increases awareness, safe spaces and difference in office culture.



In "8:46: Collective Breath for Calm and Restoration," conference attendees are immersed in the Pratt Artist-In-Residence, Phylicia Ghee's, reclamation and restorative practice.

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

The Central Library/SLRC conference day was bustling with attendees representing most of the Maryland counties and DC. We were fortunate to have John F. Szabo, City Librarian, Los Angeles Public Library; Tania Otero Martinez, Policy Analyst, K-12 Education Policy, Center for American Progress; and Lu Bangura, Chief of Equity and Fair Practices, Enoch Pratt Free Library, for a fireside chat about how public libraries and policy advocacy are breaking barriers and driving educational equity.

Our speakers ranged from Enoch Pratt Free Library, University of Baltimore, Baltimore City Public Schools, and City of Baltimore governmental staff; to library staff representing different Maryland regions, the Maryland Library Association, and state agencies. “The Dynamics of Latinos and Language Access in Baltimore City” featured speakers Mireya Parada-Madrid, Family Literacy Outreach Coordinator, Enoch Pratt Free Library, and Agatha So, Language Access Project Manager, Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs (MIMA). They provided attendees with practical tips and instructions about working with customers who speak English as a second language; they also discussed how the collaboration between the Enoch Pratt Free Library and MIMA can be done in more Maryland counties.

“The Land We Are On: Land Acknowledgements, Limits, and Possibilities,” presented by Ryan Koons, Folklife Specialist, Maryland State Arts Council, gave attendees a history of Maryland tribes and how Marylanders have worked with them. One thing that was made certain is that our libraries are not too late to add Land Acknowledgement statements to our events that are made available to the public.

The attendees reacted positively to the entire day:

It is a great annual conference. I am proud and happy that it occurs in MD. Keep the great topics and presenters coming. A top-tier conference!

It was an amazing experience, and I was able to network with like-minded peers and I enjoyed the classroom topics.

The conference was fantastic, the super friendly and knowledgeable hosts and speakers, the setup, the food, the workshops, and the tour were well worth my day and I’m looking forward to next year’s conference.

Please be on the lookout for more opportunities to attend SLRC conferences and webinars in the Professional Development menu of our website. ■

Conference attendees having a much-needed lunch break in the Central Library’s Creative Arts Center.



In “The Dynamics of Latinos and Language Access in Baltimore City,” Mireya Parada-Madrid, Family Literacy Outreach Coordinator, Enoch Pratt Free Library & Agatha So, Language Access Project Manager, Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs (MIMA), educate the attendees about how they bridge language gaps between city agencies and Latino communities, and give our attendees reasons to find out if their counties have similar services or could adapt and apply the city’s model.



Celebrate the Fall 2024 Cohort of LATI Graduates



ON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2024, public libraries in Maryland celebrated the latest LATI cohort graduation. Twenty-nine library associates from seven different Maryland counties presented their capstone projects and received graduation certificates at the Miller Branch of Howard County Library System. Graduates were joined by Maryland State Librarian Morgan Lehr Miller, who congratulated each Library Associate, handing them their certificates. The cohort was also treated to a keynote by Prince George's County Memorial Library System Chief Executive Officer Dr. Mark Winston, who presented his thoughts on the field of librarianship and its future.

What is LATI?

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

Fall 2024 LATI

The cohort of LAs spent the fall engaged in instruction from expert trainers across all Maryland public libraries. One highlight included when LAs had the chance to learn about and perform hands-on experimentation with AI at the Exploration Commons in Carroll County, as well as touring the makerspaces and the teaching kitchen there. The cohort also visited the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled, learning about statewide services, and attended the Fall 2024 SLRC DEI Conference on the topic of "Empowering Education" at the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Central Branch/State Library Resource Center in downtown Baltimore.

Support for LATI

Thanks go to the Maryland State Library Agency for their support of LATI through LSTA grant funds. State Librarian Morgan Lehr Miller proudly supports each LATI graduate. Sheila McDuff, LOC Chair and Associate Director at Frederick County Public Libraries, gave the introductory remarks; Prince George's County Memorial Library System Chief Executive Officer Dr. Mark Winston delivered the keynote address; and Teonja Jung, Maryland Library Association President and Baltimore County Public Library Circulation Services Manager, shared a variety of opportunities for LAs to continue their professional development journey through the Association.

LATI Oversight Committee (LOC)

LATI is further supported by the LOC, comprised of Sheila McDuff, LOC Chair, Frederick County Public Libraries; Tamar Sarnoff, Maryland State Library Agency; Paul Chasen, Enoch Pratt Free Library/State Library Resource Center; Natalie Edington, Baltimore County Public Library; Vivian Fisher, Enoch Pratt Free Library/State Library Resource Center; Jennifer Keyser, Washington County Free Library; Cheryl Nardiello, Wicomico Public Library; and Jaleen Walker, Prince George's County Memorial Library System.

Thanks go out especially to all the trainers and supervisors across the state of Maryland who help LATI run so smoothly.



Washington County Free Library cohort. Supervisor Tanya Smiley, Director of Public Services Kathleen O'Connell, State Librarian Morgan Lehr Miller, Library Associate Rich Beverungen, and Library Associate Cari Purin.



Prince George's County Memorial Library System cohort. Front row, left to right: Library Associate Efi Asaha, Interim Chief Operating Officer for Public Services Megan Sutherland, Supervisor Michelle Cavanaugh, and Area Director Heather Jackson.

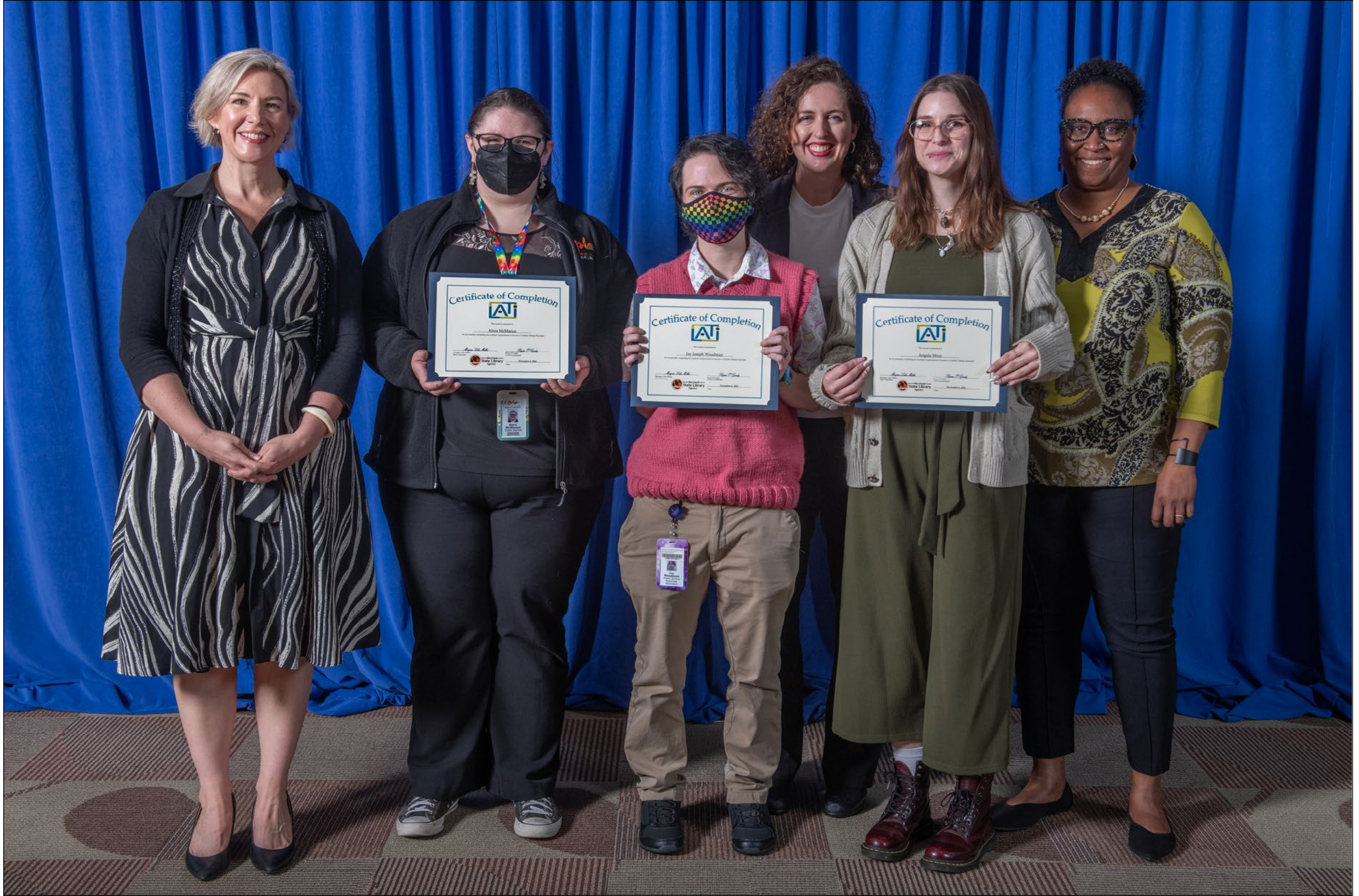
Second row, left to right: Supervisor Gidae Campbell, Chief Executive Officer Mark Winston, Ph.D., State Librarian Morgan Lehr Miller, Library Associate Thibault Raoult, Supervisor Joe Vincent, Library Associate Matt Hartman, and Library Associate Gavin Howard.



Howard County Library System cohort. Front row, left to right: Library Associate Eben McCullough, Library Associate Alishia Chandler, Library Associate Caitlin Felder, Library Associate Jen Lechner, and Professional Development Instructor Katie George. Second row, left to right: Chief Operating Officer for Public Services Marcy Leonard, Library Associate Erin Lukas, Library Associate Shannon Chilcoat, Library Associate Marluy Torres, Library Associate Julia Marks, and Manager of Virtual Instruction Elana Dandeneau. Third row, left to right: President and CEO Tonya Aikens, Supervisor Cari Gast, Library Associate Peg Prentice, Library Associate Erica Coady, Supervisor Kelly Cooper. Fourth row, left to right: State Librarian Morgan Lehr Miller, Supervisor Irma Fernandez, Supervisor Debbie Bellamy, Supervisor Lauren McCloskey, Supervisor Mary Brosenne, Supervisor Amber Wilson, and Library Associate Fraser Shaw.



Frederick County Public Libraries cohort. Left to right: Supervisor Carrie Fitz, Staff Development Coordinator Bethany Watts, State Librarian Morgan Lehr Miller, Library Associate Andrea Parker, Supervisor Amy Moser, Library Associate Alana Fink, Library Associate Sarah Daley, Associate Director for Public Services and LATI Oversight Committee Chair Sheila McDuff, and Supervisor Beth Heltebridle.



Charles County Public Library cohort. Front row, left to right: State Librarian Morgan Lehr Miller with Library Associates Alora McManus, Jay Woodman, and Angela Mroz. Back row, left to right: Supervisors Annie Adams and Tomika Evans.



Baltimore County Public Library cohort. MLA President Teonja Jung, Staff Training and Development Coordinator Erissa Mann, Supervisor Kevin Jayce, State Librarian Morgan Lehr Miller, Library Associate Joanna Casas, and Regional Manager Laurie Carl.



Enoch Pratt Free Library cohort. Front row, left to right: Library Associates Zshekinah Collier, Kate Kilner-Pontone, Ray Byers, and Matthew Akras with LATI Trainer Eben Dennis. Back row, left to right: Supervisor Anjanette Wiggins, State Librarian Morgan Lehr Miller, Library Associate Donaven Bunting, Deputy Chief at Central/SLRC Vivian Fisher, and SLRC Training and Reference Services Coordinator and LATI Oversight Committee member Paul Chasen.



Maryland State Librarian Morgan Lehr Miller speaks to the graduates and guests.



Chief Executive Officer Mark Winston, Ph.D., of Prince George's County Memorial Library System, delivered the keynote address on the topic of the future of librarianship.



MLA President Teonja Jung, Baltimore County Public Library, spoke to graduates and guests about opportunities for Library Associates to continue their professional development journey through the Association.

Tenth Annual Maryland Tech Connect Conference Delves Into Artificial Intelligence in Libraries

Kate Sweeney, Montgomery County Public Libraries

LIBRARY STAFF FROM AROUND THE STATE gathered in Rockville at the Universities at Shady Grove on December 12, 2024, for the 10th Annual Maryland Tech Connect Conference. This year's conference addressed a pressing issue in library technology—the rise and adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) and large language models in libraries and throughout society. The theme was chosen to explore how these tools are already being used in libraries, the vast potential that exists in the years to come, and how the use of these tools is already impacting library work and workers.

Lee Rainie, Director of the Imagining the Digital Future Center at Elon University, kicked off the morning with an opening keynote that elicited lively discussion from the audience. Rainie discussed how ChatGPT broke through to the public in a way that previous iterations of artificial intelligence technology had not. Rainie pointed out that digital divides are already becoming apparent in the area of AI.

The keynote also discussed the fact that, while adoption of AI technologies among the general public mirrors the rate of adoption of other technologies, since artificial intelligence tools are now being built into applications that people are already using, the potential for an increase in the rate of adoption is high. Rainie pointed out that people may already be using AI tools that they do not realize are AI. These and other themes prompted questions from attendees about potential applications and risks associated with the use of artificial intelligence tools.

Conference attendees had their choice of several breakout sessions. Sessions included a case study of a biannual AI class held at the Howard County Library System, detailing how instructors make generative AI tools accessible; a session on the difficulties that AI-generated print and digital materials present for selectors and catalogers, including how AI may impact copyright; a look at how AI tools can be used to meet the learning needs of students with learning challenges; a discussion on how teaching information literacy needs to change to account for generative AI; and many more.

A tech expo and poster session gave attendees the opportunity to get hands-on experience with a variety of tech tools and learn about how libraries across the state are integrating artificial intelligence into their work and instruction.

The closing keynote was provided by Dr. Mila Gasco-Hernandez, Research Director for the Center for Technology in Government at SUNY Albany, and Brooks Rainwater, President and CEO of the Urban Libraries Council. Their talk discussed a three-year, IMLS grant-funded project that they have undertaken to understand the role of public libraries in the adoption of AI in their communities. Their project focuses on libraries in four communities: Frisco, TX; Queens, NY; Schaumburg, IL; and Palo Alto, CA. These libraries are serving as case studies to explore the role that public libraries will play as AI technology becomes more prevalent in society. Gasco-Hernandez and Rainwater noted that marginalized communities are likely to be heavily impacted by AI technologies, and that public libraries will be vital sources of information about the ethical use of AI.

The Maryland Tech Connect Conference also served as a testing ground for an innovative conference tool from the Evolve Project. Sessions were recorded and used to create an AI conference assistant, which can answer questions about the sessions. This Tech Connect Conference Assistant is available to conference attendees who may want to explore sessions they were not able to attend in person.

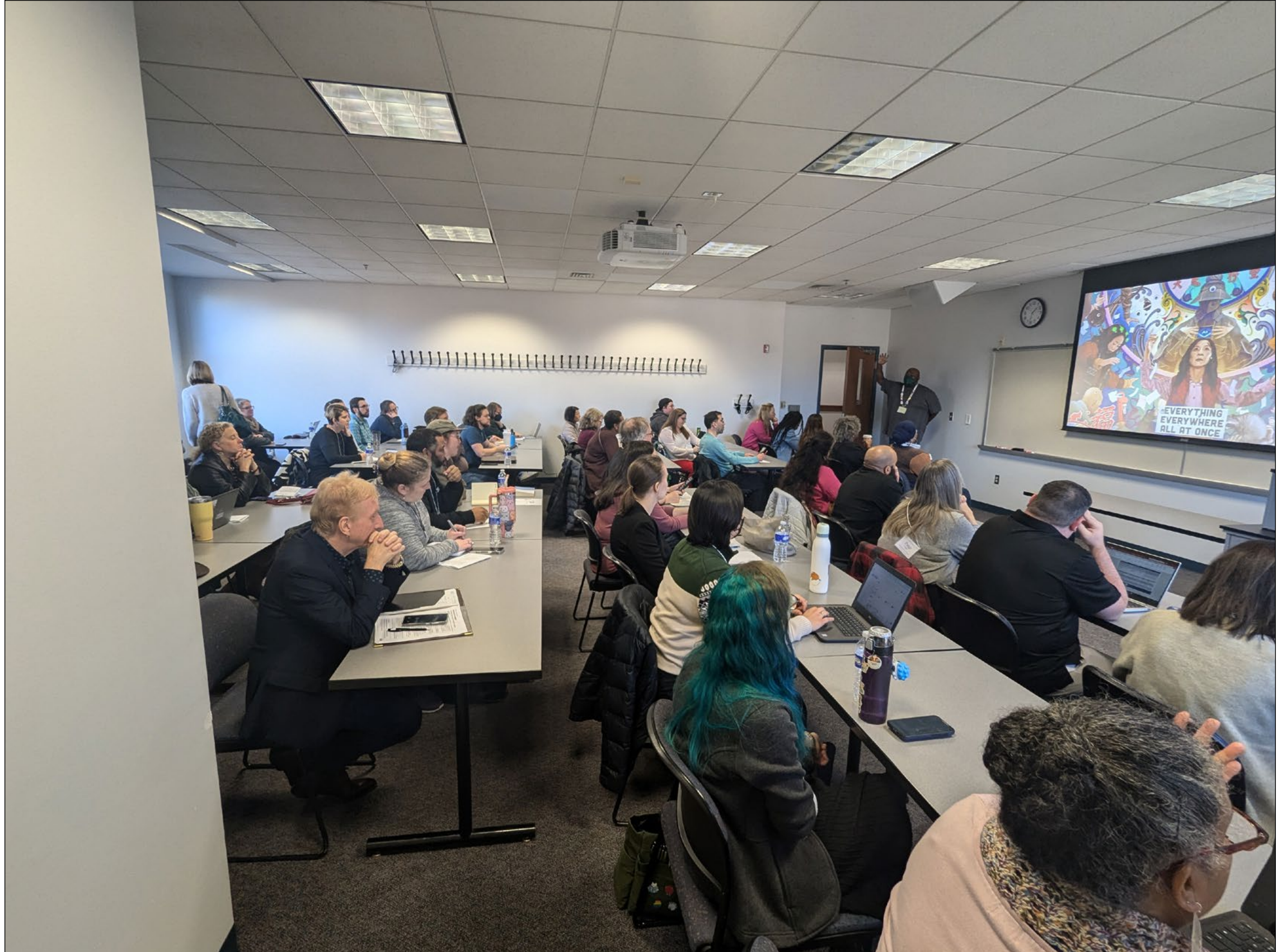
Two upcoming sessions of Tech Connect Extended, a virtual program series that is open to any library staff local to Maryland, are related to the 2024 Tech Connect Conference: on January 15, 2025, Brian Pichman of the Evolve Project will discuss his AI Conference Assistant, and on January 16, 2025, the session AI: Assistive Intelligence for Libraries – Enhancing Digital Literacy Services and Capacity, originally scheduled for the conference, will be presented through **Tech Connect Extended**. (Link: <https://mdtechconnect.org/md-tech-connect-extended/>) Information about the 2025 conference and registration for Tech Connect Extended sessions are available at the **Tech Connect website**.(Link: <https://mdtechconnect.org>)



A poster session gave presenters an opportunity to speak with conference attendees in depth about innovations and research happening in their institutions. Photo courtesy of Kate Sweeney, Montgomery County Public Libraries.



The Tech Expo gave conference attendees a chance to get hands-on experience with technology tools, including these Sphero indi robots. Photo courtesy of Kate Sweeney, Montgomery County Public Libraries.



In the session “What the \$#! Is AI?: Practical Applications for Modern Librarians,” attendees got a crash course on the basics of Artificial Intelligence. Photo courtesy of Liz Jones, Carroll County Public Library.

Preserving the Legacy of Maryland Artist Alice Webb

A New Collection on Digital Maryland

Tracy Thompson, Enoch Pratt Free Library/
State Library Resource Center



THE LIFE AND ARTISTRY OF ALICE WEBB (1945–2022), a celebrated Maryland watercolorist and teacher, are now digitally preserved thanks to a heartfelt collaboration between Digital Maryland, the Howard County Historical Society, and Alice’s husband Glen Webb. The newly launched collection on Digital Maryland showcases her vibrant watercolors, intricate etchings, and the deeply personal elements of her creative journey. This initiative honors Alice’s contributions to the artistic community while ensuring her legacy lives on for future generations.

Digital Maryland is a statewide digital preservation program managed by the Enoch Pratt Free Library/Maryland State Library Resource Center. It serves as a collaborative platform that brings together institutions across Maryland to preserve and share the state’s rich historical and cultural heritage. The program offers users access to a wide array of primary source materials including documents, images, audio and videos, covering Maryland’s history from its inception to the present day.

Through partnerships with libraries, historical societies, and other organizations, Digital Maryland ensures unique and important materials are accessible for personal research and educational purposes. Users can search, browse, and explore these collections online, making the program a vital resource for students, researchers and history enthusiasts alike.

Alice Webb’s artistic career was a testament to her passion for capturing the beauty around her. A largely self-taught watercolorist with a bachelor’s degree in Graphic Design from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Alice painted landscapes inspired by her garden, local landmarks, and travels. Her talent earned her recognition from prestigious art societies and features in publications like *American Artist* magazine. Alice also shared her knowledge by teaching classes at her Ellicott City studio, Sunburst Studio.

Her collection on Digital Maryland—launched just before the winter holidays—offers an intimate look at her creative process and includes over 75 etchings, paintings, and other memorabilia such as exhibition pamphlets and studio notes. This digital archive not only

celebrates her accomplishments but also provides a resource for artists, historians, and enthusiasts to study and appreciate her work.

The project began when Lauren Cramer of the Howard County Historical Society introduced Digital

Maryland’s project manager Megan Kean to Alice’s work. Kean reached out to Glen Webb, Alice’s husband, to explore the possibility of digitizing her vast collection. Deeply committed to preserving Alice’s legacy, Glen eagerly embraced the idea, expressing his wish for her work to be remembered and celebrated.

Through careful coordination, Kean arranged virtual and in-person meetings to plan the digitization process. Glen offered insights into Alice’s art from her vibrant watercolors to the etchings stored in her studio. The team’s dedication to capturing the essence of Alice’s work led them to set up a photography space in her studio, ensuring high-quality images without disrupting the integrity of her framed paintings.

The collection’s release just before Thanksgiving added a special touch, allowing Alice’s family and friends to gather and reflect on her contributions during the holiday season. The featured image, a snow-dusted bridge, perfectly captured the serene beauty of Alice’s art and the spirit of the season. Glen’s heartfelt gratitude emphasized the significance of this tribute: “I had so wanted Alice and her work not to be lost or forgotten. You have made one of my wishes come true.”

The Alice Webb Memorial Collection on Digital Maryland is more than an archive; it’s a testament to the power of art to connect and inspire. Visitors can explore her works and gain insight into her life and creative process, ensuring that Alice’s artistry continues to enrich lives far beyond her time.

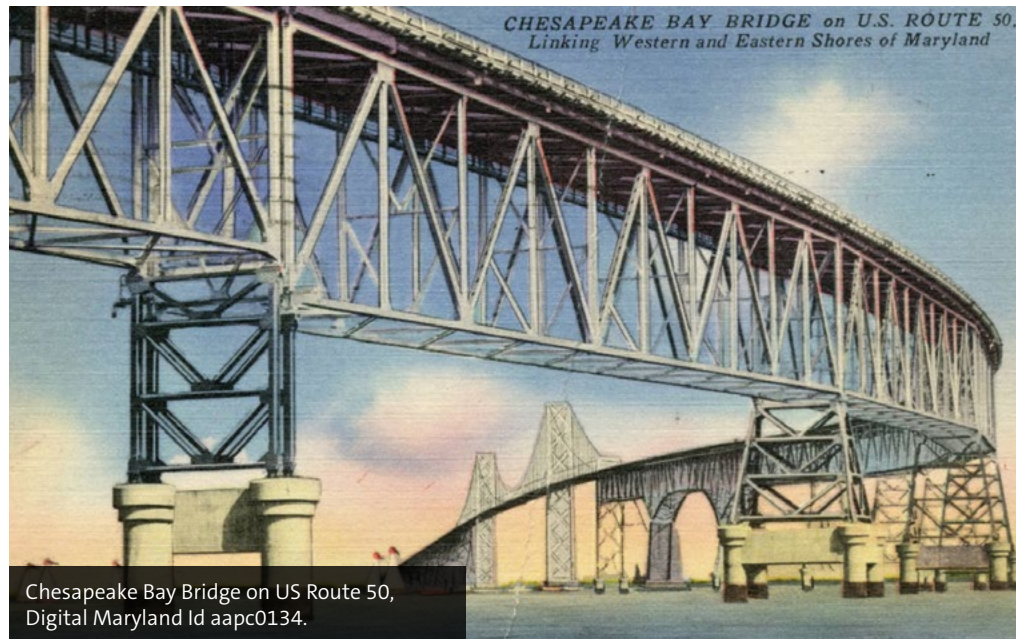
To view the collection, visit [Digital Maryland’s website](#). ■



"Bay Works" by Alice Webb, 1945-2022.



Alice Webb's art ready to be scanned on the Wide Tek Art Scanner in the SLRC Digitization Lab at the Enoch Pratt Free Library.



Chesapeake Bay Bridge on US Route 50,
Digital Maryland Id aapc0134.

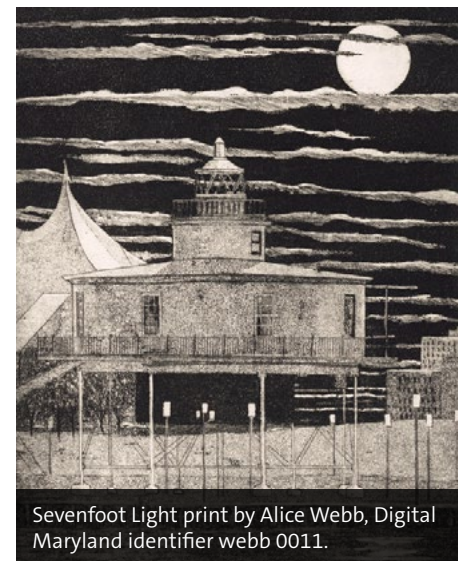
Explore Maryland's History and Culture with Digital Maryland

What is Digital Maryland?

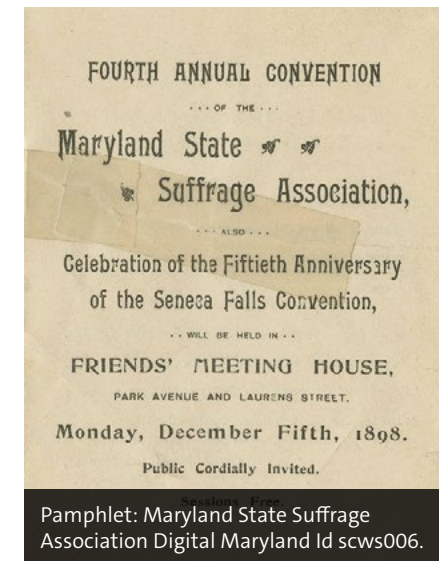
Digital Maryland is a collaborative, statewide digital preservation program of the Enoch Pratt Free Library/Maryland State Library Resource Center. Search and explore historical and cultural documents, images, audio, and videos that chronicle Maryland's rich history.

Partnering with institutions throughout the state, Digital Maryland brings unique and essential primary sources from the state's past to your fingertips.

Our collections are also available via WorldCat and the Digital Public Library of America.



Sevenfoot Light print by Alice Webb, Digital Maryland identifier webb 0011.



Pamphlet: Maryland State Suffrage Association Digital Maryland Id scws006.



MARYLAND STATE
LIBRARY RESOURCE CENTER
ENOCH PRATT *free* LIBRARY

Strengthening Public Trust

A Statewide Campaign to Celebrate Maryland Libraries



Kerry O'Donnell, Wicomico Public Library

ON APRIL 4, 2024, the Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) unveiled the Statewide Futures Blueprint, a comprehensive initiative aimed at shaping the future priorities of libraries across the state.

The project identified six key priority areas for libraries, one of which is public trust. Recognizing the importance of maintaining a positive image of libraries and library workers, the Blueprint highlighted two essential goals for fostering public trust:

- 📖 Stand firmly against the villainization of libraries and library workers.
- 📖 Understand and monitor evolving levels of trust in libraries, their programs, and their services.

In pursuit of these goals, the Public Trust Committee, a group established and led by Ashley Teagle, Chief Executive Officer of the Southern Maryland Regional Library Association, met in July to discuss strategies for engaging stakeholders in promoting the value and importance of libraries. One idea that garnered significant support was the 101 Reasons Why I Love My Library campaign, a statewide initiative that invites people to share why they value their local libraries. The campaign aims to create a powerful multimedia narrative celebrating the essential role libraries play in the community.

A Collaborative Effort

Public Trust Committee members represent public, special, academic, and public school libraries across the state of Maryland. The proposed campaign would encourage community members, library patrons, and staff to answer the question, "Why do you love the library?" The result would be a series of compelling, authentic stories about the profound impact libraries have on individuals' lives. These stories would be conveyed through videos, print, and social media marketing. This collaboration is a key element of the project's success, as

it leverages the collective expertise of libraries across Maryland to amplify the message of public trust.

Engaging Stakeholders and Gathering Support

In preparation for the campaign, the Public Trust Committee surveyed members of the Maryland Association of Public Library Administrators (MAPLA) in July 2024 to

gauge support for the project and determine the resources available. The survey addressed three main areas:

- 📖 Whether organizations were willing to lend support, such as coordinating video interviews or helping promote the campaign through communication channels.
- 📖 The possibility of offering financial support to cover costs related to production, print materials and potentially a commercial.
- 📖 Suggestions for a timeline to ensure the campaign's successful launch.

The survey garnered 16 responses, with the overwhelming majority indicating strong support for the initiative. Many respondents requested a timeline adjustment to kick off the project in 2025, which the committee has incorporated into its revised project schedule. The campaign will unfold over several stages, with major milestones aligned with key events throughout the year including Library Legislative Day, National Library Week, Library Card Signup Month, and Summer Reading.

Building a Stronger Future for Libraries

This campaign not only seeks to amplify the voices of library patrons but also to proactively counter the misinformation and misunderstandings that have plagued libraries in recent years. By harnessing the power of community stories and partnerships, the 101 Reasons Why I Love My Library initiative aims to rebuild trust in libraries and remind the public of the critical services and resources they provide.

As Maryland libraries prepare for this exciting statewide campaign, we are united in the shared goal of showcasing the vital, ongoing role libraries play in fostering education, community engagement, and democracy. This initiative is an important step toward securing a stronger, more trusted future for libraries in Maryland and beyond.

Get Involved

Libraries and stakeholders across Maryland are encouraged to participate in the campaign by sharing their stories and using their platforms to promote the positive message of why they love their library.

Please follow this link to our 101 Reasons Why I Love My Library campaign toolkit, which currently includes a release form for media recording and logos for marketing.

101 Reasons Why I Love My Library campaign toolkit

Additional resources will be incorporated into the toolkit as the committee finalizes and approves them. We expect these new materials to be available by January 2025. For any questions, feedback, or to learn how you and your library can actively participate in this campaign, please contact Ashley Teagle at ateagle@smrla.org.

With collaborative efforts from library staff, patrons, and community partners, this initiative will help ensure that libraries continue to be trusted, vital institutions for all. ■



mdlib.org
mla@mdlib.org

Want to get more involved with MLA? Check out some of our Caucuses, Divisions, Committees, and Interest Groups!

CAUCUS

Black Caucus of the Maryland Library Association (BCMLA)

DIVISIONS

Adult Services and Reference Division
Association of College and Research Libraries, MD
Leadership Development Division
Support Staff Division
Youth Services Division

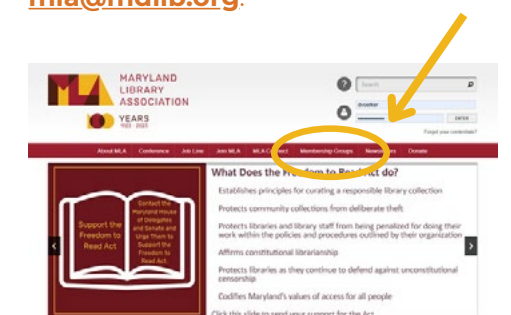
COMMITTEES & PANELS

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

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
Sustainability Interest Group
Technical Services Interest Group
Teen Interest Group

With your MLA membership, you can join our groups at any time on the MLA website or by emailing mla@mdlib.org.



Dork Diaries Author Talk and Book Signing

Maranda Schoppert and Tyler Chadwell-English, Montgomery County Public Libraries
Photographs courtesy of Jason C. Turner, Montgomery County Public Libraries

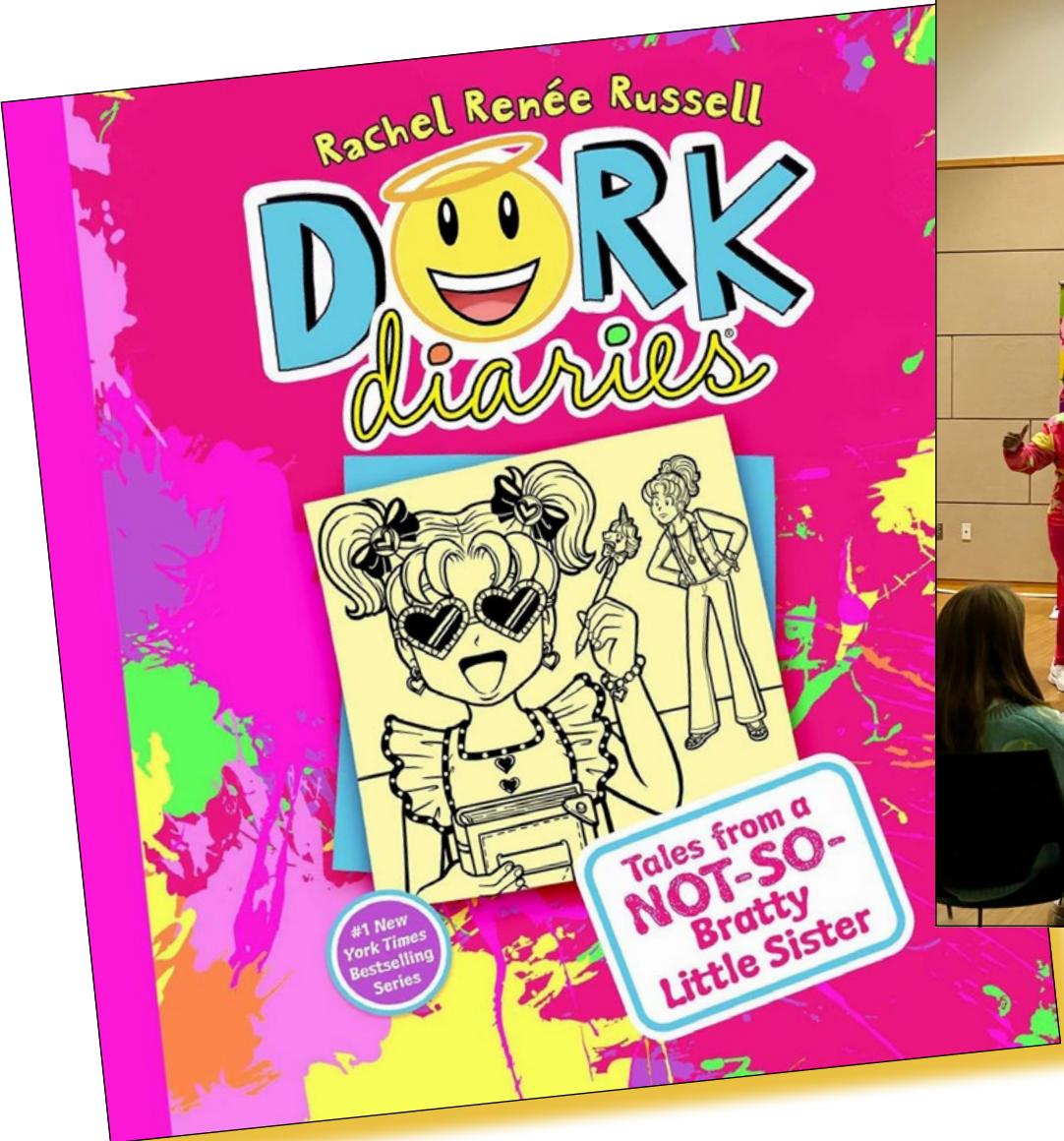
ON NOVEMBER 2, 2024, Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL) collaborated with the Gaithersburg Library Branch, the City of Gaithersburg, the Friends of the Library, Montgomery County, and the Gaithersburg Book Festival to bring the creators of the Dork Diaries series to the Gaithersburg community. To celebrate the release of their newest Dork Diaries book, *Tales from a Not-So-Bratty Little Sister*, mother-daughter duo Rachel Renée Russell and Nikki Russell joined more than 200 fans at the Gaithersburg Library for an author talk and book signing.

The whole Dork Diaries team brought the book to life and “Dorkified” a few audience members along the way. The audience was engaged and excited for a chance to meet their favorite authors. The event was well received, and the attendees were brimming with excitement, proving once again that author talks for elementary-age students are the types of programs that libraries should continue to pursue.

For more information about the Dork Diaries authors, please view “This Is My Library Story: Rachel Renée and Nikki Russell” [here](#) and be sure to visit the MCPL YouTube channel, [@MCPLmd](#), for additional episodes in the series. ■



Audience members pose with drawings of themselves created by illustrator Nikki Russell.





Contemporary Conversations: High School Visits

Maranda Schoppert and Tyler Chadwell-English, Montgomery County Public Libraries

Photographs courtesy of Jason C. Turner, Montgomery County Public Libraries

On November 14, 2024, Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL) collaborated with Montgomery County Public Schools, MCPS Media Specialists Division, the Friends of the Library, and the Springbrook High School to bring our Contemporary Conversations author to a local high school.

Contemporary Conversations is a forum about culturally current issues featuring knowledgeable and well-known authors and artists who engage community members in enriching and meaningful conversations. In 2023, a new component was added to this series which brought these speakers to local high schools, allowing for a unique opportunity for students to personally engage with distinguished speakers. This collaboration fosters

intellectual growth and promotes meaningful conversations while learning about MCPL services and resources.


To celebrate Native American Heritage Month, we invited Mwalim “DaPhunkee Professor” to share a storytelling presentation that explores the cross-pollinations of African and First Nations people that are at the core of American culture. He performed for 75 students at Springbrook High School in Silver Spring, MD, sharing music, poetry, and oral histories with them.







View a reel from the performance [here](#) and follow MCPL on Instagram at [mcpl_libraries](#).





Our Guest
Mwalim “DaPhunkee Professor”
 Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe
 Educator/Lecturer,
 Artist, and Scholar





Want to get more involved with MLA? Check out some of our Caucuses, Divisions, Committees, and Interest Groups!

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Black Caucus of the Maryland Library Association (BCMLA)

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Materials Interest Group
Outreach Services Interest Group
Readers' Advisory Interest Group
Sustainability Interest Group
Technical Services Interest Group
Teen Interest Group

With your MLA membership, you can join our groups at any time on the MLA website or by emailing mla@mdlib.org.



OutRAIgeous Reviews

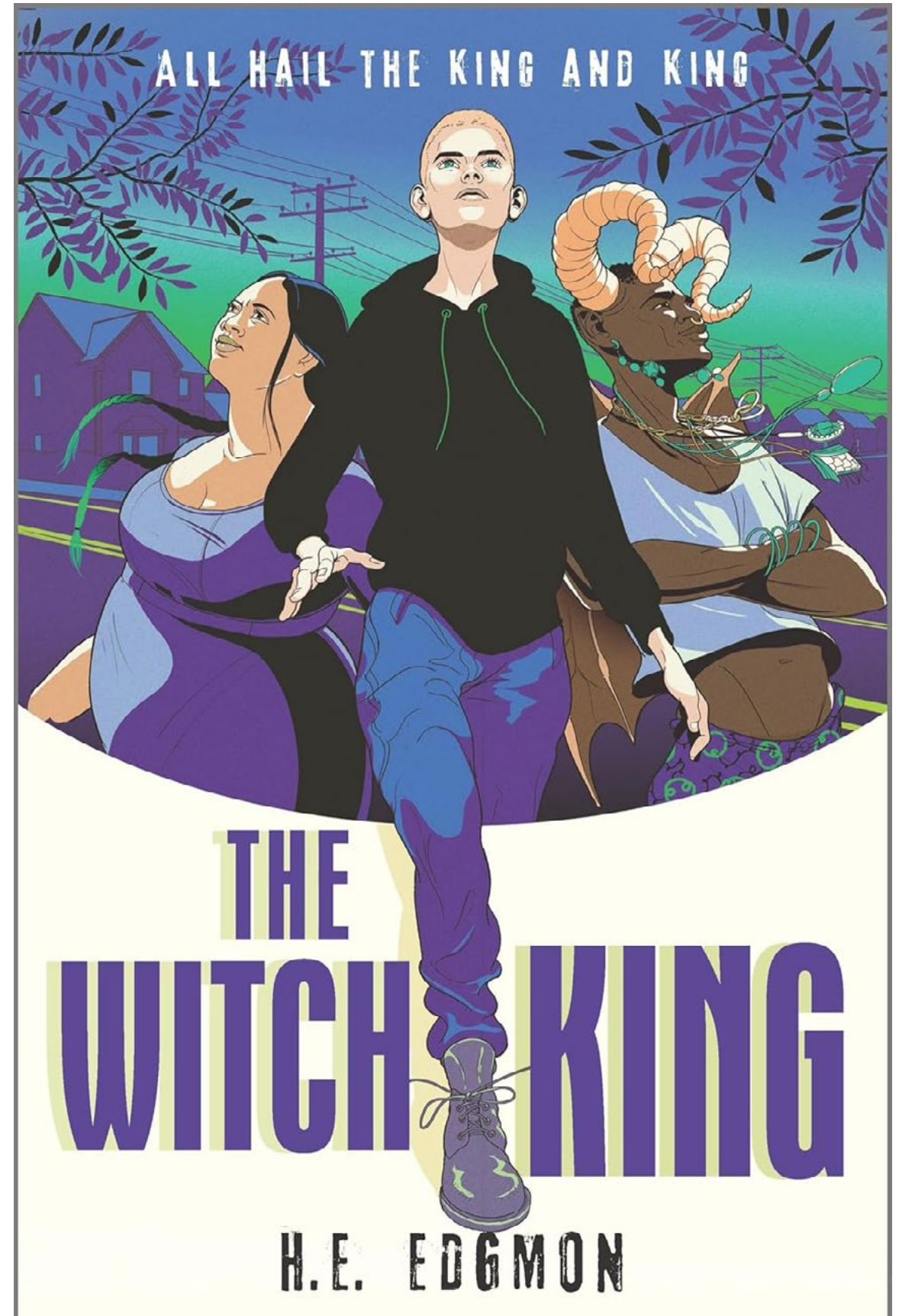
*Books recommended by members of
the Reader's Advisory Interest Group*

***The Witch King* by H.E. Edgmon (Inkyard Press, 2021)**

Review by Amanda Crabill

This is the first book in the Witch King duology. It is a young adult fantasy, and it was amazing! In this story there are classes of Fae (first class) and Witches (second class). They live in secret in the human world because theirs was destroyed by the overuse of magical balance. Wyatt is our main character. He is seventeen years old, transgender, and a Witch who was born from a Fae family. Emyr is Fae, the next king of Faery and Wyatt's bonded mate. Oppressive expectations, discrimination, and trauma culminate in Wyatt losing control of his powers and escaping into human society. There he finds a new family and discovers answers about himself.

Emyr, however, is unrelenting about taking Wyatt back to Faery. Once back with the Fae, Wyatt continues to try to get the boy he used to love to understand why he had to leave and why he doesn't want to marry him. Much more will happen to Wyatt, both good and bad. This story deals with multiple issues, and delivers a serious yet witty commentary from a main character who doesn't want to lead a revolution but recognizes that things cannot stay as they are. It is a creative and boldly witty story and leaves you ready to read the next book.

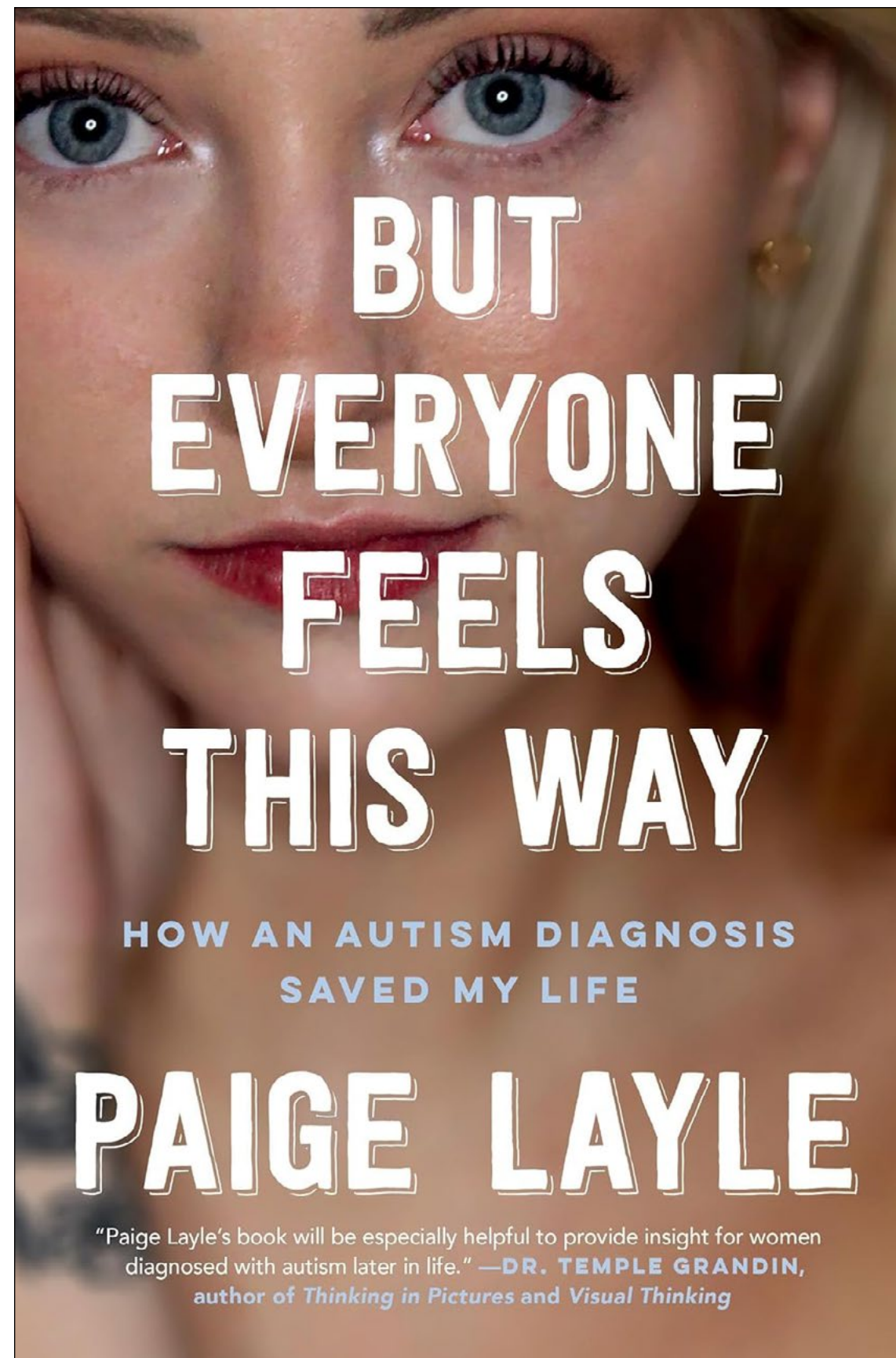


***But Everyone Feels This Way* by Paige Layle (Hachette Go, 2024)**

Review by Theo Scully

As a young female-presenting autistic person who was constantly unconsciously masking, I would justify my actions and thoughts with the phrase “but this is normal— everyone feels this way.” Years later, after I broke down the mask and became more open with my autism, I was sent a link to Paige Layle’s *But Everyone Feels This Way* and found a book filled with an acceptance and sense of belonging that is rare. In *BEFTW*, Paige shares the story of her life—as a young girl, she lived in the countryside of Canada with her parents and younger brother and went to school. Sure, school was rough; it was hard making friends, and she had panic attacks every day. But her mother assured her that that was normal, and that this must be a Paige problem. Paige tries to fake it until she makes it, but she ends up having a mental breakdown in her high school years, resulting in her late diagnosis of autism.

Throughout the telling of her story, Paige educates the reader about stigmas, taboos, and stereotypes surrounding autistic people. As an autistic reader, I heavily appreciated her candid views on autistic living, and how she had to readjust to accommodate herself. Seeing another autistic person be so honest and vulnerable is heartwarming and emotional. *BEFTW* has become one of my go-to autistic resources, especially if the reader is autistic or knows someone who is autistic. It is a great next read for fans of memoirs, *Disability Visibility* (edited by Alice Wong), and OwnVoices narratives.



***The Rage of Dragons* by Evan Winter (Orbit, 2019)**

Review by Meg Faller

TikTok told me that *The Rage of Dragons* by Evan Winter was fantastic, but because I don't believe everything I hear on TikTok, I had to read it myself. Turns out they weren't wrong this time! Class struggles rooted in physical differences, as well as goddess-gifted abilities that can draw dragons to end a conflict, are at the base of this underdog story. Our hero Tau, whose father is killed in front of him when he's a young man, is fueled by revenge to push past societal limits (as well as physical ones) to carry out his justice.

The world-building is exquisite: African-inspired fantasy, with rich and complex characters. We start the story with Tau at thirteen years old. We grow with him into the warrior he becomes—but when he's thirteen, he feels thirteen. As he ages, the trauma of his youth keeps him fixated on his single-minded revenge. His relationships with friends and loved ones help him mature, but will he be mature enough to help change societal norms, or will he be just a hammer that sees every problem as a nail that needs whacking? Spoilers! It doesn't get solved in book one!

I couldn't stop listening to this! Great book, excellent audiobook!





Maryland Library Association's Future of Libraries Interest Group

Rebekkah Smith Aldritch and the Future of Sustainable Libraries

Tracy Miller, Harford County Public Library

This year the Future of Libraries Interest Group (FOLIG) has been organizing our meetings around discussing chapters in *Library 2035: Imagining the Next Generation of Libraries*. In October, we had a guest speaker, Rebekkah Smith Aldritch, who wrote the chapter entitled "Sustainable Libraries in 2035: Refuge. Resistance. Resilience. Regeneration."

Rebekkah is the executive director of the Mid-Hudson Library system and is a founder of the Sustainable Libraries Initiative (<https://www.sustainablelibrariesinitiative.org/>), which offers members a community of practice in becoming more environmentally sustainable. The organization has a triple bottom line definition of sustainability: being environmentally sound, socially equitable, and economically feasible. The organization offers a certification program with clearly defined steps that libraries can complete.

In her book chapter, Rebekkah focuses on hope. Although the impact of climate change looks inevitable, there is still time to mitigate the effects, and libraries definitely have a role to play in that effort. In the chapter, Rebekkah outlines the four attributes of sustainable libraries of the future:

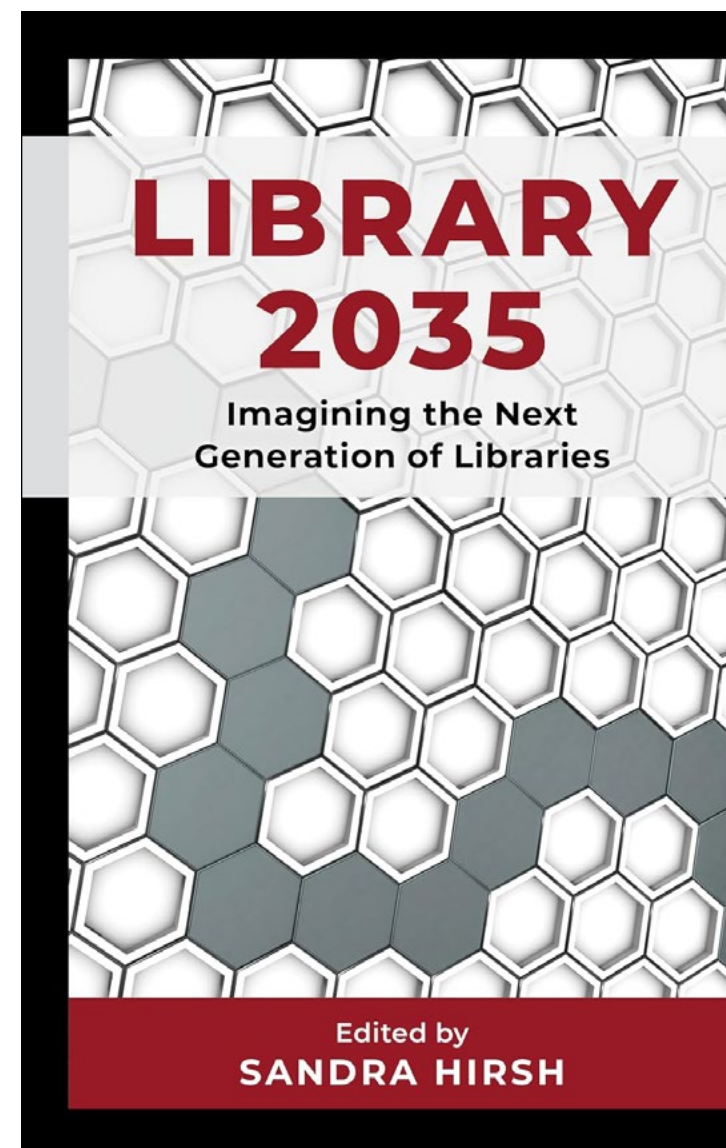
- Strong and authentic institutions that live their values out loud.
 - Catalysts for civic participation and social cohesion in communities.
 - Deliberate climate mitigation action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
 - Active participation in climate adaptation action to strengthen community resilience.
- (pp. 23-24).

FOLIG member Ann McIntire facilitated the conversation with Rebekkah and FOLIG members. We also had people from the new Sustainability Interest Group join the conversation. We talked about the climate dangers specific to Maryland, such as increased flooding and heat. We discussed the environmental footprint of cloud computing and AI.

We also talked about how sustainability and equity are inextricably linked. Rebekkah emphasized that sustainability means constantly balancing environmental, economic, and social factors. Rebekkah shared the example of the Canaan Public Library in Connecticut and their recent building project (<https://www.libraryjournal.com/story/Living-Our-Values-Out-Loud-Sustainability>). The library partnered with a local organization to make sure that their materials were ethically sourced and created a database for other libraries to consult in their building projects as well.

Our conversation also turned to community engagement and the role of libraries in civic participation. Rebekkah shared some of what her system has been doing with the community utilizing the "Turning Outward" process from ALA (<https://www.ala.org/tools/librariestransform/libraries-transforming-communities/resources-for-library-professionals>). Finally, Rebekkah emphasized that the goal in increasing sustainability should be progress, not perfection.

If you are interested in learning more about Rebekkah and her work, check out this interview with her on YouTube with the editor of the *Libraries 2035* publication: <https://youtu.be/ozLk8GGK5IE?si=QscJ1jxvrDs4QjnN>. If you are interested in learning more about FOLIG, attend a meeting! We meet on the first Monday of the month at 10 a.m. via Zoom. Look for our meeting announcements on MLA Connect or through the Marylib listserv. ■





Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Panel

Help Us Shine a Light on Maryland's Diverse Communities

William Wallace, Wicomico Public Library

The Maryland Library Association's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Panel is calling on library professionals across the state to share their knowledge and resources as we embark on an exciting initiative. Our goal is to develop a comprehensive guide to celebrating and acknowledging cultural and heritage observances which reflect the unique diversity of Maryland's communities. While the American Library Association provides general guidelines, we seek to create something that speaks directly to Maryland's people, laws, and traditions.

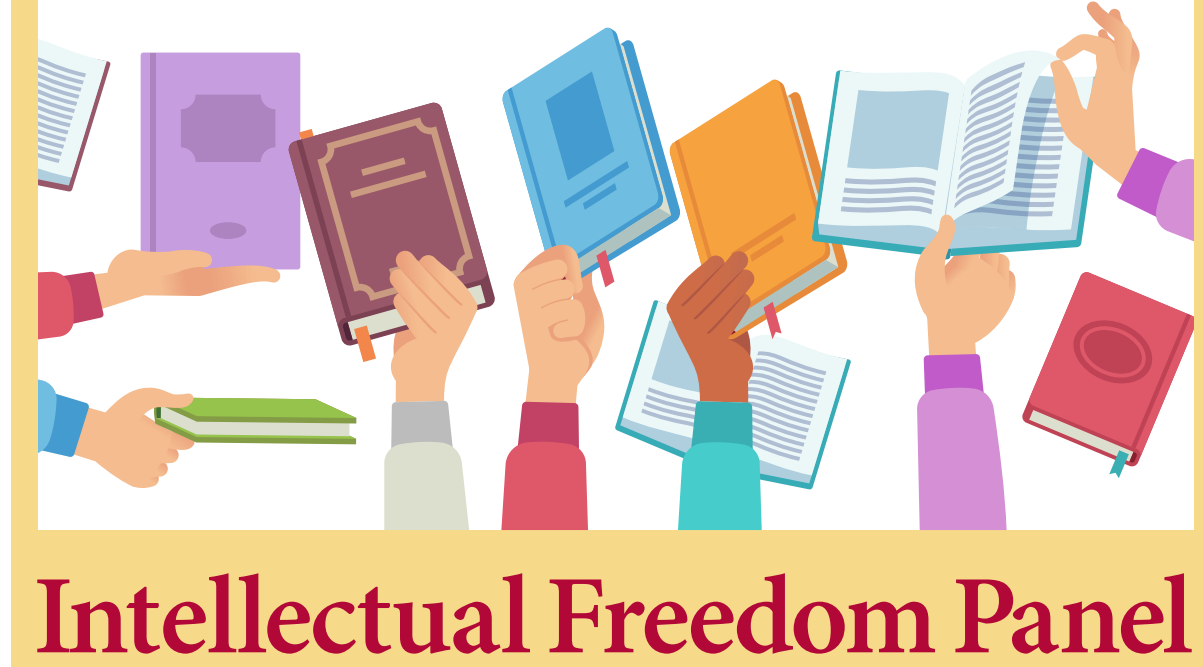
This initiative is not just about monthly observances or heritage celebrations. It is about building a statewide resource that equips libraries—public, academic, and school alike—with insights and practical tools for developing inclusive programming and services. Whether you are crafting events for the whole community or tailoring resources for a specific group, our aim is to provide guidance that fosters empathy and understanding. Knowledge is the sunlight that grows the seed of empathy into a mighty oak of compassion, and we hope this guide will help libraries across the state plant those seeds.

If your library system has sample policies, best practices, or other resources that support inclusive programming and observances, we would love to hear from you. Additionally, if you can connect us with local systems that have relevant expertise, it would greatly enrich this work. Please send contributions or inquiries to William Wallace, Co-Chair of MLA's EDI Panel, at wwallace@wicomico.org. Together, let's create something that not only supports our libraries but also uplifts our communities. ■



Intellectual Freedom Panel News

Lloyd Jansen, Charles County Public Library



Upcoming Activities






The IFP has an exciting slate of intellectual freedom-themed MLA/DLA Annual Conference programs being finalized. Look for more details soon!

The IFP looks forward to working closely with MLA and our academic and school colleagues on the Intellectual Freedom Helpline project, which will be launched sometime in the new year.

Maryland Ranks Ninth in the U.S. for School Book Bans

On November 1, 2024, PEN America released data about public school book bans for the full 2023-2024 school year. Overall, they counted 10,046 instances of books banned nationwide, a 200% increase over the 2022-2023 school year. Florida (over 4,500 bans) and Iowa (over 3,600 bans) led all states by a wide margin. Maryland had the dubious distinction of finishing in the top ten, tied with South Carolina with 64 book bans. Maryland's number was skewed by the Carroll County Public School District, which accounted for 59 of the bans all by itself. Frederick County Public Schools had four bans and Montgomery County Public Schools had one.

The top five titles in the U.S. to be banned in schools in 2023–2024 were:

-  *Nineteen Minutes* by Jodi Picoult
-  *Looking for Alaska* by John Green
-  *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky
-  *Sold* by Patricia McCormick
-  *Thirteen Reasons Why* by Jay Asher

“Extremist” School Board Candidates Successful on Election Day

In October, the Maryland Democratic Party published a [list](#) of 24 school board candidates that it considered “extremist” and was working to defeat on November 5. Fifteen of those 24 won their races:

Anne Arundel: Dawn Pulliam

Allegany: Crystal Bender

Carroll: Greg Malveaux, Kristen E. Zihmer

Calvert: Joseph Marchio, Paul Harrison, Melissa Goshorn

Frederick: Colt Morningstar Black, Jaime Kiersten Brennan

Talbot: Ann O’Connor, Karla Wieland-Cherry

Washington: Charles Burkett, Victoria Beachley, Ashley McCusker, April Zentmeyer

It is possible that Maryland’s Freedom to Read Act will be put to the test. Stay tuned!

Thank you, Maryland library community, for your continuing efforts to support the freedom to read. ■



LGBTQ+ Interest Group

Found Family

Shannon Carney, Baltimore County Public Library

The fall and winter holiday season often evokes images of family and togetherness. This can be a warm comfort to many. But for a large portion of the queer community, the thought of one's family of origin can come with additional baggage. According to the Trevor Project, "family conflict around youths' LGBTQ+ identities is a driving factor in LGBTQ youth homelessness." The season of family and togetherness can feel isolating for people who have experienced that type of rejection from their families of origin.

As a result of feeling the sting of rejection, many members of the queer community build strong bonds amongst their friends. Many consider their friend groups to be more of a family than their own family. The idea of "found family," or the family you choose, is a popular one in the queer community. As Jayne Walters, an Annapolis Pride Board Member, said: "Blood is thicker than water, is a saying that is far too often misused. The original quote is, 'The blood of the covenant is thicker than the water of the womb.' Meaning, our chosen bonds, our chosen family, is far more significant than that of family we're born into. For many of us in the LGBTQ+ community, it's always been our chosen family that was more supportive and affirming. I've been fortunate enough to have quite a few people that care for me far more than even my own birth parents and most of my biological family."

For individuals who feel rejected not only by their families of origin, but also by a large part of the population, the world can be frightening. This past October, GLAAD reported that hate-fueled incidents against members of the LGBTQ+ community have spiked 112%. With hate on the rise and our identities becoming more and more politicized, many queer individuals feel they have to mask who they are at work and at home. Queer activist Alexander Leon tweeted: "Queer people don't grow up as ourselves, we grow up playing a version of ourselves that sacrifices authenticity to minimize humiliation & prejudice. The massive task of our adult lives is to unpick which parts of ourselves are truly us & which parts we've created to protect us." With the constant need to put up a facade, the threat of hate, danger, and misunderstanding all around, it is crucial to one's mental health to find those who they can truly be themselves around.

Isn't that so fundamental to humanity? The desire to be known is such a strong force within us that it makes sense we would choose to surround ourselves with those who truly see and accept us for who we are. ■

“The blood of the covenant is thicker than the water of the womb.”



Materials Interest Group

2025's Book-to-Screen Adaptations

Laura Bandoch, Harford County Public Library

Love them or hate them, movie and television adaptations of books are always ripe for conversation. New adaptations generate buzz, leading to an increase in circulation of backlist titles, as well as generating holds for on-order DVDs or an influx of customer requests. Here is a list of adaptations that your patrons will be clamoring for in 2025.

Movies

The Amateur, based on *The Amateur* by Robert Littell. Directed by James Hawes and starring Rami Malek, Holt McCallany, and Caitríona Balfe. Expected April 11, 2025, by 20th Century Studios.

Animal Farm, based on *Animal Farm* by George Orwell. Directed by and starring Andy Serkis. Expected July 11, 2025, by Aniventure.

Bridget Jones: Mad About the Boy, based on *Mad About the Boy* by Helen Fielding. Directed by Michael Morris and starring Hugh Grant, Renée Zellweger, and Leo Woodall. Expected February 14, 2025, by Universal Pictures.

Cold Storage, based on *Cold Storage* by David Koepp. Directed by Jonny Campbell and starring Liam Neeson, Lesley Manville, and Sosie Bacon. Expected September 18, 2025, by StudioCanal.

Dog Man, based on the Dog Man series by Dav Pilkey. Directed by Peter Hastings and starring Isla Fisher, Pete Davidson, and Stephen Root. Expected January 31, 2025, by

DreamWorks Animation.

The Electric State, based on *The Electric State* by Simon Stålenhag. Directed by Anthony Russo and Joe Russo and starring Chris Pratt, Millie Bobby Brown, and Woody Harrelson. Expected March 14, 2025, by AGBO on Netflix.

Five Nights at Freddy's 2, based on *The Twisted Ones* by Scott Cawthon. Directed by Emma Tammi and starring Josh Hutcherson, Matthew Lillard, and Elizabeth Lail. Expected December 5, 2025, by Universal Pictures.

Frankenstein, based on *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley. Directed by Guillermo del Toro and starring Mia Goth, Christopher Waltz, and Jacob Elordi. Expected sometime in 2025 by Double Dare You (DDY).

How to Train Your Dragon, based on *How to Train your Dragon* by Cressida Cowell. Directed by Dean DeBlois and starring Mason Thames, Nico Parker, and Gerard Butler. Expected June 13, 2025, by Dreamworks Pictures.

I Know What You Did Last Summer, based on *I Know What You Did Last Summer* by Lois Duncan. Directed by Jennifer Kaytin Robinson and Elisha Christian. Starring Madelyn Cline, Nicholas Alexander Chavez, and Jennifer Love Hewitt. Expected July 18, 2025, by Columbia Pictures.

In the Lost Lands, based on *In the Lost Lands* by George R. R. Martin. Directed by Paul W. S. Anderson and starring Milla Jovovich, Dave Bautista, and Arly Jover. Expected February 28, 2025, by Constantin Film.

Klara and the Sun, based on *Klara and the Sun* by Kazuo Ishiguro. Directed by Taika Waititi and starring Jenna Ortega, Amy Adams, and Natasha Lyonne. Expected sometime in 2025, by 3000 Pictures.

Marked Men: Rule + Shaw, based on the Marked Men series by Jay Crownover. Directed by Nick Cassavetes and starring Chase Stokes, Alexander Ludwig, and Natalie Alyn Lind. Expected February 6, 2025, by Voltage Pictures.

Mickey 17, based on *Mickey7* by Edward Ashton. Directed by Bong Joon Ho and starring Robert Pattinson, Mark Ruffalo, and Toni Collette. Expected April 18, 2025, by Warner Bros.

Not Without Hope, based on *Not Without Hope* by Nick Schuyler and Jere Longman. Directed by Joe Carnahan and starring Zachary Levi, Josh Duhamel, and Quentin Plair. Expected February 20, 2025, by Volition Media Partners.

Paddington in Peru, based on *A Bear Called Paddington* by Michael Bond. Directed by Dougal Wilson and starring Hugh Bonneville, Emily Mortimer, and Ben Whishaw. Expected January 17, 2025, by StudioCanal.

The Running Man, based on *The Running Man* by Stephen King. Directed by Edgar

Wright and starring Glen Powell, Katy O'Brian, and Josh Brolin. Expected November 21, 2025, by Complete Fiction.

Snow White, based on "Snow White" by the Brothers Grimm. Directed by Marc Webb and starring Rachel Zegler, Gal Gadot, and Andrew Burnap. Expected March 21, 2025, by Marc Platt Productions.

The Twits, based on *The Twits* by Roald Dahl. Directed by Phil Johnston, Todd Demong, and Katie Shanahan and starring Natalie Portman, Emilia Clarke, and Margo Martindale. Expected June 13, 2025, by Jellyfish Pictures.

Wildwood, based on the *Wildwood* series by Colin Meloy. Directed by Travis Knight and starring Peyton Elizabeth Lee, Jacob Tremblay, and Carey Mulligan. Expected April 11, 2025, by Laika Entertainment.

The Witcher: Sirens of the Deep, based on *The Sword of Destiny* by Andrzej Sapkowski. Directed by Kang Hei Chul and starring Anya Chalotra, Christina Wren, and Doug Cockle. Expected February 11, 2025, by Hivemind on Netflix.

Television Series

It: Welcome to Derry, based on *It* by Stephen King. Starring Bill Skarsgård, Grant Nickalls, and James Remar. Expected sometime in 2025 on HBO Max.

A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms: The Hedge Knight, based on *A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms* by George R. R. Martin. Starring Daniel Ings, Sam Spruell, and Bertie Carvel. Expected sometime in 2025 on HBO.

Long Bright River, based on *Long Bright River* by Liz Moore. Starring Amanda Seyfried, Nicholas Pinnock, and Patch Darragh. Expected sometime in 2025 on Peacock.

Percy Jackson and the Olympians Season 2, based on *The Sea of Monsters* by Rick Riordan. Starring Walker Scobell, Leah Jeffries, and Aryan Simhadri. Expected sometime in 2025 on Disney+.

The Summer I Turned Pretty Season 3, based on *We'll Always Have Summer* by Jenny Han. Starring Lola Tung, Christopher Briney, and Gavin Casalegno. Expected in Summer 2025 on Amazon Prime Video.

Washington Black, based on *Washington Black* by Esi Edugyan. Starring Tom Ellis, Rupert Graves, and Iola Evans. Expected January 28, 2025, on Hulu.

Watson, based on *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Starring Tommy O'Brien, Eve Harlow, and Morris Chestnut. Expected January 26, 2025, on CBS.

XO, Kitty Season 2, based on *To All the Boys I've Loved Before* by Jenny Han. Starring Anna Cathcart, Minyeong Choi, and Gia Kim. Expected January 16, 2025, on Netflix. ■

anything you'd

INFORMATION

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"All the news that's fit to format." And we mean *all*. The more you contribute, the more you help the community innovate and serve. Check the masthead on the last page for our address, and tell us what you and your colleagues have been up to.

You're making news. Now, let us all read it.

USMAI Consortium Goes Live with Alma/Primo

Celebrating USMAI's Migration to a New Library System

*Katia Fowler, University System of Maryland and
Affiliated Institutions*

On May 23, 2024, the University System of Maryland and Affiliated Institutions (USMAI) Library Consortium and our seventeen member libraries successfully completed our migration to the Alma Library Management System and the Primo Library Discovery Service.

This migration signifies a new era for USMAI as our new systems help advance research, provide better services, and better support student success. Our shared discovery platform provides faster searching, a more user-friendly search interface, and allows customizations so we can respond to the needs of our communities.

After being on the Aleph system for over 20 years, the transition to a new system had its difficulties. For most staff members, it required learning a new vocabulary as well as new workflows. And the time commitment was intense, with dozens of hours per month spent in Zoom meetings—not to mention all the time reviewing documents, trying to figure out which Excel tab to fill out, collaborating with colleagues, and puzzling out documentation.

But the migration also made for truly satisfying moments like reaching milestones or listening to your coworker in a meeting and realizing, “Hey, they get this!” Navigating all the bumps in the road and adapting to so much change, our resolve strengthened! We still have plenty to complete, but with trust in our new abilities it doesn’t seem as overwhelming.

Thanks to all the colleagues who did their part to make this ILS migration a success at Bowie State University Library, Coppin State University Library, Frostburg State University Library, Loyola Notre Dame Library, Morgan State University Library, Salisbury University Library, St. Mary’s College of Maryland Library, Towson University Library, University of Baltimore Library, University of Baltimore Law Library, University of Maryland Baltimore



ASSOCIATION of COLLEGE and RESEARCH LIBRARIES, MD

County Library, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science Library, University of Maryland College Park Libraries, University of Maryland Eastern Shore Library, University of Maryland Global Campus Library, University of Maryland Health Sciences and Human Services Library, and University of Maryland Law Library.

Celebrating USMAI's Migration to a New Library System

In July, USMAI hosted an in-person gathering to celebrate our successful migration and all our accomplishments along the way. In advance, volunteers made custom buttons and identified low-key activities for partygoers. They also pulled together a very long list of project team members and shout-outs recognizing individuals who made notable contributions (including laughter!) to the multi-year endeavor. The acknowledgements and shout-outs went into a slide show that played throughout the event.

The celebration included brief opening and closing remarks but, most importantly, a good chunk of non-work free time in between. The group’s favorite party activities were cornhole, puzzles, and eating! Team Puzzle put together three or four puzzles, if I remember correctly. Cornhole players were competitive but good-natured. Seconds, and possibly thirds, of the delicious food were consumed. Plus, all the leftover food went home with attendees, thanks to carryout containers provided by Glenmore Catering, volunteers, and the party guests themselves.

The event was a success thanks to a combination of awesome people; a celebratory, relaxed atmosphere; group games; and good food. Several people volunteered to take photos during the event. I hope this small selection captures the good mood! ■



The “Commencement Day” theme highlighted USMAI’s graduation to a new ILS and marked the beginning of a new chapter for the Consortium. Photo by Kenita Childress, Bowie State University.



Volunteers Cynthia Thomes (University of Maryland Global Campus) and Sean Hogan (University of Baltimore) work the sign-in and swag swap table. Sean poses with a photo prop reading, “Finally.” Art by Ruby Cruz, Loyola Notre Dame Library. Photo by Kenita Childress, Bowie State Library.



◆ *Yetunde Akinkunle (Bowie State University), LaTrice Curtis-Istance (Coppin State University), and MD Galvin (USMAI) smile over lunch while Kyle Breneman (University of Baltimore) and Bill Helman (Towson University) chat behind them. Photo by Erik Jones, USMAI.*

◆ *Heidi Hanson, USMAI, at the button-making station. Heidi designed the team buttons and was instrumental to the success of the event. Photo by Erik Jones, USMAI.*



Ruby Cruz (Loyola Notre Dame Library) faces off with Danielle McKnight (Morgan State University) in a game of cornhole. Photo by Erik Jones, USMAI.



Danielle McKnight (Morgan State University) looks pleased as the bean bag flies toward its mark. Photo by Erik Jones, USMAI.

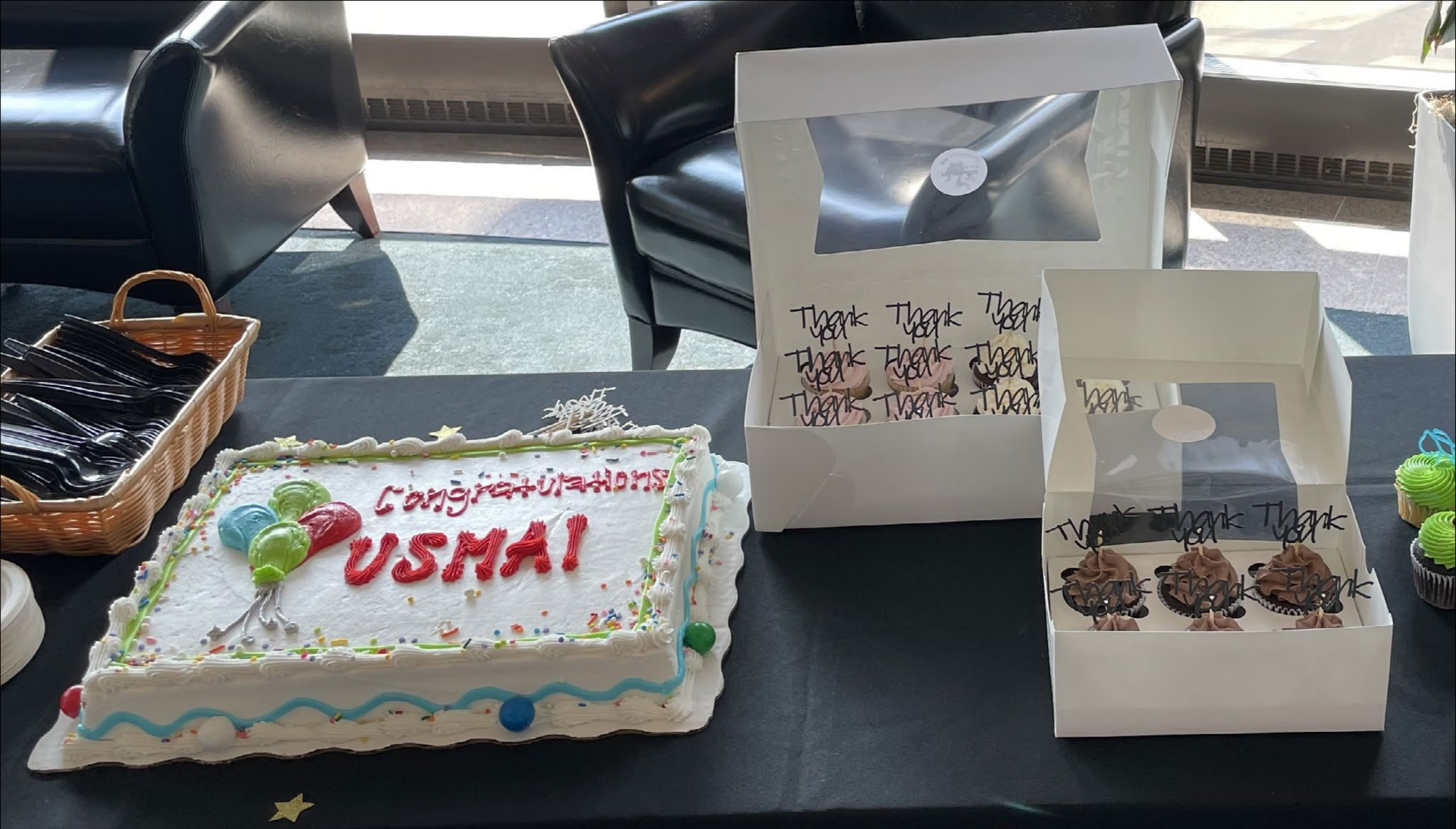


*Undaunted, the puzzlers begin work on a new puzzle.
Photo by Kenitra Childress, Bowie State University.*



◆ USMAI's ILS Migration Project Manager MD Galvin shows off her coloring of Croc (not a Gator). Photo by Erik Jones, USMAI.

◆ Attendees enjoy some (non-work!) chit-chat after lunch. Photo by Erik Jones, USMAI.



Make sure everyone has good food to eat! A classic party sheet cake made by Glenmore Catering. Vegan & gluten-free cupcakes from Baltimore's Plant Baked By Sarah. Photo by Kenitra Childress, Bowie State University.

EA Librarian Story 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 librarian serving emerging adults.

Emerging Adult Librarian Story

LaShawn Myles, Youth Services Librarian at the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled

What were your dreams in high school?

The only definite dream I had in high school was to attend college. No one in my immediate family had graduated from college, but I knew that college was an avenue to advance my life professionally. I had no real examples of people attending college, so navigating this aspect of my life was uncharted. However, watching TV shows like “It’s a Different World” and “The Cosby Show” provided the catalyst to dream bigger than my circumstances.

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

I took the traditional path to college, but I am not sure it should be called the traditional path. It was more like a rocky path that included lots of scrapes, bruises, and cuts along the way. At 18, I wanted to be independent, so I left home and jumped head-on into the real world. I wasn’t living on campus with a student meal plan. Reality hit when I had to provide all my necessities such as food, rent, and transportation. Working two part-time jobs while carrying a full semester load isn’t the path I would recommend, but it was the choice I made.

Did you go to the library during your EA years?

Did I go to the library? I lived in the library! When I wasn’t studying, I slept there between classes or relaxed with a good book or magazine. Those study carrels owe me nothing. I



didn’t have a car and commuted daily to school. The campus library was my haven. My university was also close to the public library. It was easy to walk from one to the other, which allowed me the time to explore both often.

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

When I used the library as an EA, I didn’t see programs or services geared toward my age group. A lot has changed since then. Back then, the library was about its collection.

I am in awe of what is now being offered. Today, libraries have a multitude of makerspaces, gaming events, volunteer opportunities, EA book clubs, community partnerships, etc... I can’t name just one.

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

Libraries already do so much but I would like to see more programs or services concerning self-care (physical, mental, and emotional) and financial literacy for EAs. The ages between 18 and 24 can be some of the most challenging times for someone, no matter what their background. It is also the time when a person is most susceptible to making erroneous

decisions that can have lasting effects on their life. We know libraries provide books, but the ability to connect with others in programs is also important. As the library was a haven for me, I wish that for everyone. As the proverb says, “It takes a village...”

emerging adult book of the month



Make the Season Bright
by Ashley Herring Blake

Two exes find themselves stuck at the same house for Christmas in this holiday romance from the bestselling author of *Iris Kelly Doesn't Date*.



January's Night Sky Notes... The Red Planet

Kat Troche

Have you looked up at the night sky this season and noticed a bright object sporting a reddish hue to the left of Orion? This is none other than the planet Mars! January will be an excellent opportunity to spot this planet and some of its details with a medium-sized telescope. Be sure to catch these three events this month.

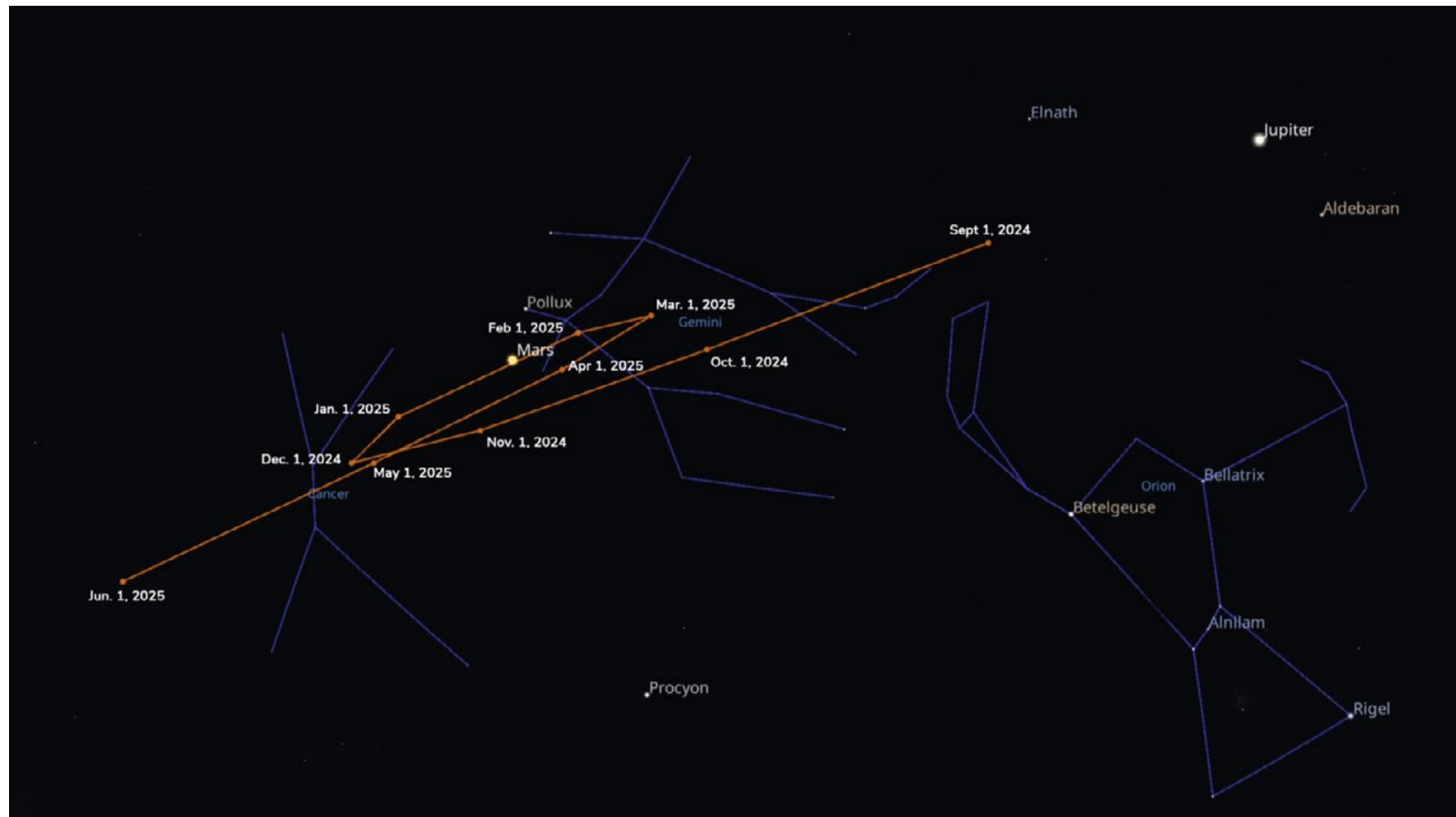
Martian Retrograde

Mars entered retrograde (or backward movement relative to its usual direction) on December 7, 2024, and will continue throughout January into February 23, 2025. You can track the planet's progress by sketching or photographing Mars' position relative to nearby stars. Be consistent with your observations, taking them every few nights or so as the weather permits. You can use free software like Stellarium or [Stellarium Web](#) (the browser version) to help you navigate the night as Mars treks around the sky. You can find Mars above the eastern horizon after 8:00 PM local time.

Hide and Seek

On the night of January 13, you can watch Mars 'disappear' behind the Moon during an occultation. An occultation is when one celestial object passes directly in front of another, hiding the background object from view. This can happen with planets and stars in our night sky, depending on the orbit of an object and where you are on Earth, similar to eclipses.

Depending on where you are within the contiguous United States, you can watch this event with the naked eye, binoculars, or a small telescope. The occultation will happen for over an hour in some parts of the US. You can use websites like [Stellarium Web](#) or the



This mid-January chart shows the path of Mars from September 2024 to June 2025 as it enters and then exits in retrograde motion. Mars appears to change its direction of motion in the sky because Earth is passing the slower-moving Mars in its orbit. Credit: Stellarium.

Astronomical League's ['Moon Occults Mars'](#) chart to calculate the best time to see this event.

Closer and Closer

As you observe Mars this month to track its retrograde movement, you will notice that it will increase in brightness. This is because Mars will reach "opposition" by the evening of January 18. Opposition happens when a planet is directly opposite the Sun, as seen from Earth. You don't need to be in any specific city to observe this event; you only need clear skies to observe that it gets brighter. It's also when Mars is closest to Earth, so you'll see more details in a telescope.

Want a quick and easy way to illustrate what opposition is for Jupiter, Saturn, Mars, or other outer worlds? Follow the instructions on our [Toolkit Hack: Illustrating Opposition with Exploring the Solar System](#) page using our [Exploring Our Solar System](#) activity!

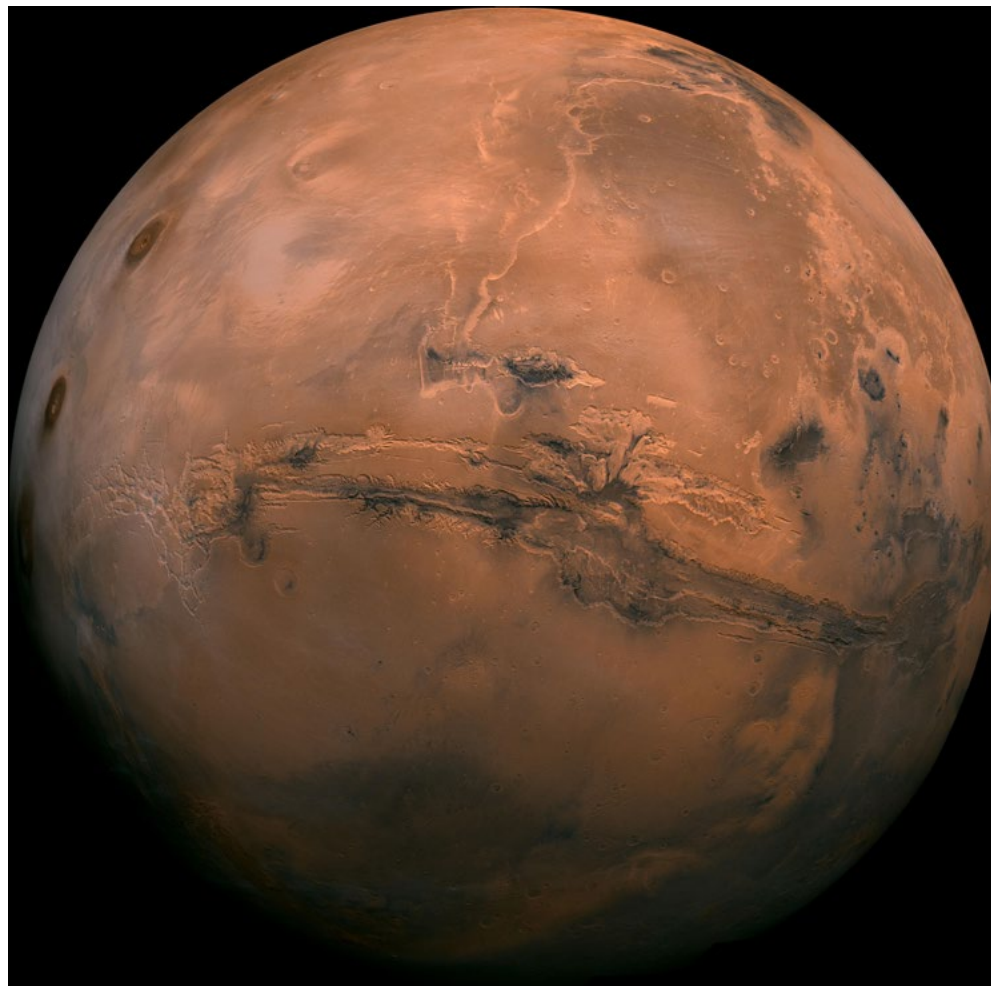
Mars has fascinated humanity for centuries, with its earliest recorded observations dating back to the Bronze Age. By the 17th century, astronomers were able to identify features of the Martian surface, such as its [ice caps and darker regions](#). Since the 1960s, exploration of the Red Planet has intensified with robotic missions from various space organizations. Currently, NASA has [five active missions](#), including rovers and orbiters, with the future focused on human exploration and habitation. Mars will always fill us with a sense of wonder and adventure as we reach for its soil through initiatives such as the [Moon to Mars Architecture](#) and the [Mars Sample Return](#) campaign.

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 <https://science.nasa.gov/skywatching/night-sky-network/> to find local clubs, events, and more!



A simulated view of the Moon as Mars begins its occultation on January 13, 2025. Credit: Stellarium.



A mosaic of the Valles Marineris hemisphere of Mars projected into point perspective, a view similar to that which one would see from a spacecraft. The mosaic is composed of 102 Viking Orbiter images of Mars. Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech.

Danielle Voelker, Maryland Library Association Office



About Danielle's job and MLA responsibilities

What is your job title/employer? Professional history in libraries?

Work responsibilities/special projects/initiatives?

I am the Member Engagement Specialist with the Maryland Library Association. This is my first time working within the library system, though I'm honestly shocked I never thought to pursue library science as a career! I started my career in digital advertising, but quickly realized I needed a more mission-driven path. For the past 15 years, I worked in marketing and communications with university admissions offices to help broaden access for students who were traditionally underrepresented in higher education. I'm excited to bring my experience in branding, communications, and resource development to the MLA.

At the MLA, I'm responsible for new member onboarding, member communications, marketing, and broadly supporting the Executive Director and needs of the association.

What work have you done within MLA and what are your hopes

and goals for MLA in the upcoming year? What are you most excited about?

How can the MLA community support you in achieving your goals?

I'm currently working on the launch of our new website and database! One of my biggest goals is to increase membership engagement. I'm hopeful our new systems will provide a better (and more easily navigable) experience for our members so it's easier to get involved.

I also want to find new and more digestible ways to share what's going on across the MLA. There are so many great opportunities and conversations happening across the association that are broadly valuable! I want to make sure as many people find out about them as possible.

If you have information that you think would be good to highlight on our website, or if you're working on something you think others should know about, let me know!

How are you involved in the wider community (organizations, community service, etc.)?

I'm a newbie who would love to get more involved! I'm always happy to take recommendations, especially for opportunities in Baltimore County.

What is it about libraries that inspires or motivates you?

I grew up in (what was at the time) a very small town on Florida's Gulf Coast. We didn't have much, but nestled against a lake at the end of our street was a library called "The Little Red Schoolhouse." It still exists today but is now a volunteer-run bookstore.

The library was my safe space where I spent my Saturdays, exploring the world through books. The world felt so much bigger from that little library—it instilled in me a curiosity and a deep thirst for learning. My parents didn't have the money to buy us books at the rate that I could read them. Without access to that free community, I don't think I would have developed the love for reading and exploration I have today. And now I get to see that sense of awe and possibility in my kids.

I know how important my local library was to me growing up, and I want to do what I can to make sure our libraries remain a safe and welcoming place for our communities.

About Danielle

What was your first job?

I worked as a "Royal Tax Collector" at Medieval Times in Orlando, FL.

Do you have pets? What kind?

I have cat named Tater Tot. He adopted us on Christmas 12 years ago when he hopped on my sister's lap and started purring while she was sitting in the backyard at our parents' house. He was tiny and covered in ticks. Two days later, he took a plane ride with me

to my apartment in New York City. He's been my little sidekick ever since.

What book is currently on your nightstand?

I Cheerfully Refuse by Leif Enger and *My Brilliant Friend* by Elena Ferrante.

Do you read more than one book at a time?

Yes! It's officially a problem. I usually juggle four at a time—two for different book clubs, one personal interest book, and one audio book.

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



I love traveling in the Middle East! You can't beat the landscape, history, and food. There's no experience like happening across a lush clear-blue wadi in the middle of a desert and having it all to yourself. That's paradise.

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

Collaborative Intelligence: Thinking with People Who Think Differently by Dawna Markova and Angie McArthur. It taught me a lot about myself, but it also made me a much more patient and understanding communicator.



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

When I was 12 years old, I was the number two national champion in a very specialized quiz bowl. I'll leave the topic a mystery, but I might share if you ask me in person.



In Memoriam Herbert Foerstel

Herbert Foerstel, librarian with the University of Maryland, College Park for three decades who became a national spokesperson against a secret FBI surveillance program of college libraries across the country, died on September 20, 2024, at the Harbor Medical Center in Baltimore.

The former *Crab* editor and longtime resident of Columbia, Md., was 90.

Foerstel first became aware of the FBI's surveillance of college libraries in 1986, after agents visited libraries he oversaw at the University of Maryland requesting the book-lending records and reading materials of anyone with "foreign-sounding names." Foerstel instructed his staff not to comply with the requests and worked with university officials to institute a policy protecting the privacy of all the school's library records.

Foerstel then worked with state lawmakers and testified before the Maryland House and Senate to push for legislation guaranteeing the privacy of all Maryland library records. Upon passage of the legislation in 1988, he was invited to the bill's signing ceremony with then-Gov. William Donald Schaefer.

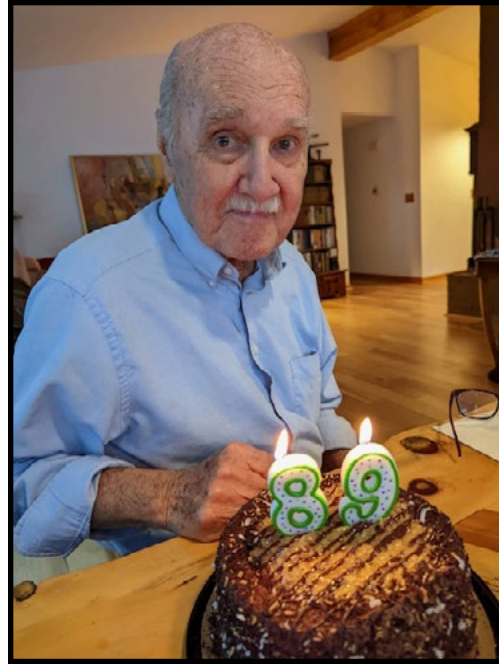
He later testified before the U.S. House of Representatives and worked with the late Rep. Don Edwards (D-CA) to reign in what was called the FBI's "Library Awareness Program," a Cold War effort in which agents visited college libraries across the country, demanding details about library use by people from countries deemed "hostile to the United States," such as the Soviet Union.

"It is our obligation to maintain what has traditionally been a relationship of trust and confidence between library users and librarians," Foerstel told the MacNeil/Lehrer News-hour program in 1988, appearing alongside Assistant FBI Director for Intelligence, James Geer, who led the Library Awareness Program.

"Any hint that a person's reading habits—whether they have a foreign sounding name or not—a person's reading habits, the matters that they request in a library would somehow be used to embarrass or judge them, is contrary to our ethics."

After Foerstel and other advocates of freedom of information brought public attention to the FBI's program, the Baltimore Sun reported that the FBI ran checks on 266 people—including Foerstel—"to determine whether a Soviet active measures campaign had been initiated to discredit the Library Awareness program."

"It's a little disquieting," Foerstel told the Sun in 1989. "What we had here was clearly



a home-grown movement in the library profession, the academic community, and the public at large to prevent intrusions into reading habits. To connect this to the Soviet Union or some other foreign power is absurd."

For his work on behalf of libraries and freedom of information, Foerstel won the Hugh Hefner First Amendment Award in 1988 for his "vigilant efforts to maintain the basic rights of privacy and access to public information of library patrons." He received the award during a ceremony in the famed Playboy Mansion in Los Angeles.

"He was incredibly humble, and thought it was a joke when he first heard about the Hugh Hefner award," said his daughter, Karen

Foerstel. "He wasn't always comfortable with public attention, but he taught me to always speak up for what you believe in."

His daughter added, "He said the best part of winning the award was the prize money that allowed him to buy a word processor on which he wrote his first book."

Surveillance in the Stacks: The FBI's Library Awareness Program was published in 1991 and traced the history of the FBI's surveillance of libraries and legislative moves to safeguard library confidentiality.

Foerstel went on to publish 10 more books about freedom of information, book banning, the Patriot Act, and government censorship of scientific information.

Born in St. Louis, Mo., Foerstel received his bachelor's degree from Hamilton College in New York, and his master's degree in library sciences from Rutgers University. He began his library career at Towson State University before joining the University of Maryland, College Park where he became head of the Engineering and Physical Sciences Library and, later, head of branch libraries.

He served as a board member of the National Security Archives and the Freedom to Read Foundation.

Foerstel was on *the Crab* committee of the Maryland Library Association from 1985 to 1990, serving as co-editor in 1987-88 with Ruth Kifer.

In addition to his daughter, Karen, of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, he is survived by son Jonathon Foerstel, of Los Angeles; daughter Helen Cooke, of Columbia, Md.; three grandchildren; and four great grandchildren.

His wife of 56 years, Lenore Foerstel, a faculty member of the Maryland Institute College of Art for three decades who once served as a field assistant to the legendary anthropologist Margaret Mead, died in 2018. ■

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the Crab is published online at the MLA web site:

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Questions about MLA membership should be directed to the MLA office at mla@mdlib.org. Please address all other *Crabby* correspondence to: julie.fitzpatrick@hclibrary.org.

Deadlines for submissions

Fall Issue: September 5

Winter Issue: December 5

Spring Issue: March 5

Summer Issue: June 5

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