

FEBRUARY 2026 ISSUE

THE HAPPENINGS



This Issue

- Letter from MLA
- MLA Elections
- Upcoming Programs
- February & March Meetings
- Advertising Opportunities

LETTER FROM THE MLA OFFICE STAFF

As we settle into a cold and snowy year, we have an exciting lineup of opportunities for professional growth, advocacy, and community connection.

But first: **MLA Elections are now live!** Take a moment to vote for new board members who will help shape the future of our organization. Voting is open through **March 13th**, so please make your voice heard.

We also hope you'll join us for **Library Legislative Day** on **February 10th**—an important opportunity to advocate together for libraries and the communities we serve at the state level.

Our **MLA Chat** on **February 17th** will explore **The Importance of Black Work Affinity Groups**, continuing our series of meaningful conversations with colleagues across the state.

We're also offering professional development with **Smarter, Not Harder: Goal Setting Made Easy** on **Thursday, February 26th**. Whether you're refining your 2026 goals or looking for practical strategies to work more efficiently, this session is designed to help.

Don't miss the **Black-Eyed Susan Tapestry—The Spring Edition** on **March 12th**, celebrating Maryland's rich literary tradition. And mark your calendars for the **Kids Are Customers, Too! Conference** on **April 7th**—a wonderful opportunity to explore best practices in serving our youngest library users.

We look forward to seeing you at these events!

Warm regards,
The MLA Office

MLA Elections

It's election time again! The 2026-2027 ballot for MLA office is now open. Voting will take place from **January 28 through March 13** and is open to all active MLA members.

To vote, simply [complete the online ballot](#) for the Executive Offices, as well as Divisions you are affiliated with, then hit submit. Remember, only vote for one candidate per office.

Join us for MLA Chats

MLA Chats is a virtual forum where MLA members can participate in a facilitated discussion on topics impacting their work and librarianship in general.

These events are free to MLA members. You must be logged into your MLA Account to register.

MLA Chats: Importance of Black Work Affinity Groups

**Tuesday, February 17, 2026
2:00 - 3:00 p.m.**

Join us for an open, chat-style discussion on the importance of Black Work Affinity Groups in Maryland libraries.

Featuring Shirley Mason, an experienced affinity group leader, this session will include honest conversation, practical tips, and a live Q&A. This program is ideal for library staff, leaders, and allies interested in building supportive, inclusive workplace communities.

[Register on mdlib.org](#)



MLA • DLA Conference 2026

May 6-8, 2026

Cambridge, Maryland

Early bird registration is open for the 2026 MLA|DLA Conference: Our Stories, Our Shelves!

This year's theme, "Our Stories, Our Shelves," celebrates the power of stories in our communities and the library collections that reflect them.

Learn more and register at [**mdlib.org/conference**](https://mdlib.org/conference).

LIBRARY LEGISLATIVE DAY BREAKFAST RECEPTION

Tuesday, February 10, 2026
7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

Governor Calvert House
58 State Circle, Annapolis, MD

Join librarians, advocates, and supporters from across the state as we gather in Annapolis to champion the vital role libraries play in our communities.

RSVP at mdlib.org/events by Friday, February 6 if you plan to attend.



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT DIVISION PRESENTS:

SMARTER, Not Harder: **Goal Setting Made Easy**

Thursday, February 26, 2026 |
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

HCPL Miller Branch
9421 Frederick Road
Ellicott City, MD 21042

[Register on mdlib.org](https://mdlib.org).

The registration deadline for this program is February 12, 2026.

Goal setting got you down? Think SMARTER! The 'who', 'what', 'why', 'when', and 'how' of creating dynamic goals that amp you up, recharge your productivity, and motivate you to succeed.

Come with ideas for one or two professional goals that you want to achieve. Learn the tools for success, and work both individually and within a group to transform your current goals into SMARTER goals. You'll have time to reflect on what you've learned, share insights that work for you, and ask any clarifying questions.

As library professionals, we are constantly evolving and resetting our priorities. But, are we always setting relevant and achievable goals? This program is aimed at employees at all levels and will enable attendees to rethink the goal setting process and make it less stressful, thereby turning it into a positive, invigorating experience.

Goal setting has been around for a while. SMART goals began to make the process easier. But, now the evolution to SMARTER goals gives us the chance to appreciate being able to evaluate the goals and take time to reward ourselves for our accomplishments.

This program has been approved for 2 contact hours of continuing education for attendees.

Program Pricing:

Members: \$25

Non-members: \$37.50

Student, Retired, or Friend

Memberships: \$12.50

SUSTAINABLE LIBRARIES INITIATIVE PRESENTS:

**Digital Decluttering:
For Your Mind and the Planet****Thursday, February 26, 2026 |
2:00 PM ET***Online via Zoom.***[Register on Zoom](#)**

Join the Sustainable Libraries Initiative for a timely and practical webinar led by Sarah Tribelhorn, Sciences and Sustainability Librarian at San Diego State University. This session explores how everyday digital habits—such as storing emails, files, and photos—impact energy use, e-waste, and our own mental well-being.

Participants will learn simple, actionable steps to reduce digital clutter, lower their carbon footprint, and create a more focused, manageable digital environment. This webinar offers benefits for both personal productivity and environmental sustainability.

WEBINAR

**Digital Decluttering:
For Your Mind and the Planet**

February 26, 2026 | 2:00 PM Eastern Time

Presented by Sarah Tribelhorn, Sciences and
Sustainability Librarian, San Diego State University

Building on our January webinar regarding AI and the environment, this webinar will explore how personal digital habits directly impact the world around us. Storing vast amounts of data requires significant energy; by deleting unnecessary files and emails, you can reduce energy consumption and lower your carbon footprint. By the end of this session, you will have the tools to foster sustainable digital habits that benefit both your productivity and the planet.

Registration Link: www.sustainablelibrariesinitiative.org/event/digital-decluttering-your-mind-and-planet-18706

REGISTER NOW!

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YOUTH SERVICES DIVISION PRESENTS:

**Black-Eyed Susan Tapestry (BEST)
2026—The Spring Edition****Thursday, March 12, 2026 |
9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.***Online via Zoom.***[Register on mdlib.org](https://mdlib.org)**.

The **registration deadline is February 12, 2026** to ensure participants have enough time to read all of the titles.

Love talking about books? Join us for BEST 2026—The Spring Edition, a celebration of Juvenile Fiction for upper elementary and middle school grades. Learn about the Black-Eyed Susan Award and participate, via Zoom, in a half day of small group discussions of some of the 2025-2026 Juvenile Fiction nominees.

Program check-in begins at 9:25am, and the program will start at 9:30am. There will be two discussion groups, meeting twice, so you can attend both sessions.

Ally Russell, author of It Came from the Trees, will be our keynote speaker.



Please read all the titles for each group.

Group 1 - Grades 3-5

- Gidwitz, Adam—Max in the House of Spies (Operation Kinderspion, Book 1)
- Miller, Chanel—Magnolia Wu Unfolds It All
- Millington, Allie—Olivetti
- Pla, Sally J. (Illustrated by De Regil, Tania)—Invisible Isabel
- Warga, Jasmine—A Strange Thing Happened in Cherry Hall

Group 2 - Grades 6-8

- Choldenko, Gennifer—The Tenth Mistake of Hank Hooperman
- Day, Nicholas (Illustrated by Helquist, Brett)—The Mona Lisa Vanishes: A Legendary Painter, A Shocking Heist, and the Birth of a Global Celebrity
- Mendez, Jasminne—Aniana Del Mar Jumps In
- Pla, Sally J.—The Fire, the Water, and Maudie McGinn
- Russell, Ally—It Came from the Trees

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

Program Pricing:**Members:** \$30**Non-members:** \$45**Student, Retired, or Friend****Memberships:** \$15

YOUTH SERVICES DIVISION PRESENTS:

**Kids Are Customers, Too!
Conference****Tuesday, April 7, 2026 |
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.***Online via Zoom.****[Register on mdlib.org](https://mdlib.org)******The registration deadline for this
program is March 24, 2026.***

The 2026 Kids are Customers Too Conference is an opportunity for library staff working with children, tweens and teens in public libraries and school media centers throughout the state to meet new people, renew contacts and learn the latest information affecting the diverse field in which they work. Join us at the Miller Branch of the Howard County Library System on Tuesday, April 7th, 2026 from 10:00-4:00 p.m.

Presenters will be sharing big ideas and practical tips that will inform and uplift your work with youth. The annual Maryland Blue Crab Young Reader Award for beginning and transitional literature will also be announced at the conference.

**Ellen Oh, Middle Grade and Young
Adult Author, is keynote speaker!**

Ellen Oh is an award-winning author and editor of numerous middle grade and young adult novels including *The House Next Door*, *On The Block: Stories of Home*, *The Colliding Worlds of Mina Lee*, *You Are Here: Connecting Flights*, *Finding Junie Kim*, and the *Spirit Hunters* trilogy. A former adjunct college instructor and lawyer, Ellen is also a founding member of We Need Diverse Books, a non-profit organization dedicated to increasing diversity in children's literature. Originally from New York City, Ellen lives in Rockville, Maryland, with her husband, three human children, and two dog children and has yet to satisfy her quest for a decent bagel. (Professional Bio from ellenoh.com).

This program has been approved for **4 contact hours** of continuing education for attendees. Attendees must stay for the entire conference to receive all 4 contact hours.

Program Pricing:***Members:*** \$65***Non-members:*** \$90***Student, Retired, or Friend******Memberships:*** \$35

Division, Caucus, Committee, Panel, and Interest Group Meetings

FEBRUARY 2026

- 2 Future of Libraries Interest Group | 10:00 a.m.**
Online via Zoom.
Contact Tracy Miller at millert@hcplonline.org.
- 4 BCMLA | 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.**
Online via Zoom.
Contact Genive Purchase at gpurchase@prattlibrary.org.
- Intellectual Freedom Panel | 2:00 - 3:30 p.m.**
Online via MLA Connect.
Contact Lloyd Jansen at ljansen@ccplonline.org.
- Legislative Panel | 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.**
Online via Zoom.
Contact Liz Sundermann at lsundermann@prattlibrary.org.
- 5 Library Advocacy Interest Group | 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.**
Online via MLA Connect.
Contact Tif Sutherland at tiffany.sutherland@calvertlibrary.info.
- 9 Youth Services Division | 11:30 - 2:30 p.m.**
Online via MLA Connect.
Contact Jessica Letizia at jletizia@bcpl.net.
- 10 Conference Social Committee | 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.**
Online via Zoom.
Contact Catherine Wimberley at catherine.wimberley@newcastlede.gov.
- 18 Conference Committee Site Visit | 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**
Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay
Contact Paula Mitchell at pmitchell@prattlibrary.org.
- Steering Committee Meeting | 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.**
Online via Zoom.
Contact Joshua Stone at mlaexec@mdlib.org.
- 19 Marketing Committee | 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.**
Online via MLA Connect.
Contact Alyssia Gilmore at gilmore@hcplonline.org.
- EDI Panel | 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**
Online via Zoom.
Contact William Wallace at wwallace@wicomico.org.
- Sustainability Interest Group | 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.**
Online via MLA Connect.
Contact Nicole Hance at nhance@stmalib.org.
- 23 ACRL-MD | 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.**
Online via Zoom.
Contact Gaby Messinger at gmessinger@ubalt.edu.

Division, Caucus, Committee, Panel, and Interest Group Meetings

MARCH 2026

2**Future of Libraries Interest Group | 10:00 a.m.***Online via Zoom.*

Contact Tracy Miller at
millert@hcplonline.org.

4**BCMLA | 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.***Online via Zoom.*

Contact Genive Purchase at
gpurchase@prattlibrary.org.

Legislative Panel | 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.*Online via Zoom.*

Contact Liz Sundermann at
lsundermann@prattlibrary.org.

5**Library Advocacy Interest Group | 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.***Online via MLA Connect.*

Contact Tif Sutherland at
tiffany.sutherland@calvertlibrary.info

9**Youth Services Division | 11:30 - 2:30 p.m.***Online via MLA Connect.*

Contact Jessica Letizia at
jletizia@bcpl.net.

10**Conference Social Committee | 9:30 - 10:00 a.m.***Online via Zoom.*

Contact Catherine Wimberley at
catherine.wimberley@newcastlede.gov

11**Materials Interest Group | 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.***Online via MLA Connect.*

Contact Laura Bandoch at
bandoch@hcplonline.org.

12**Adult Services and Reference Division | 9:30 a.m. - 12 noon***MLA Connect*

Contact Melissa Lauber at
mlauber@ccplonline.org.

Leadership Development Division | 1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.*Online via Zoom.*

Contact Ana Carroll at
agcarroll@bcpl.net

18**Conference Committee | 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.***Online via Zoom.*

Contact Paula Mitchell at
pmitchell@prattlibrary.org.

Executive Advisory Board | 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.*Miller Branch, Howard County Library System*

Contact Joshua Stone at
mlaexec@mdlib.org.

19**Marketing Committee | 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.***Online via MLA Connect.*

Contact Alyssia Gilmore at
gilmore@hcplonline.org.

EDI Panel | 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.*Online via Zoom.*

Contact William Wallace at
wwallace@wicomico.org.

23**ACRL-MD | 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.***Online via Zoom.*

Contact Gaby Messinger at
gmessinger@ubalt.edu

ADVERTISE WITH THE MARYLAND LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

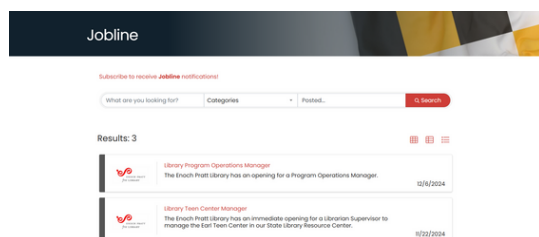
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Post job listings on this trusted source for library employers and job seekers, available publicly on mdlib.org.

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Showcase your company in this exclusive directory, accessible to the public at mdlib.org and to members in the Info Hub.

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THE HAPPENINGS ADVERTISING

\$600 Full Page, 1 Year (12 Issues)

\$350 Half-Page, 1 Year (12 Issues)

\$95 Full Page, Single Issue

\$50 Half-Page, Single Issue



If you are interested in advertising with the Maryland Library Association, contact Joshua Stone at mlaexec@mdlib.org.