



The Digital Magazine of the Maryland Library Association
Volume 55, Number 4 • Summer, 2025

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MLA/DLA Conference Photos 15

MLA Award Winners 50

LATI Graduation 66





The Digital Magazine of the Maryland Library Association • Volume 55, Number 4 • Summer, 2025

FEATURE ARTICLES

MLA/DLA Conference 15

The 2025 beach edition of our conference was an exciting return to Ocean City full of professional and personal highlights for attendees. See if you can find yourself in a conference photo in the annual collection.

MLA Annual Awards and Marketing Awards 50

The Maryland Library Association was pleased to present the winners of the 2025 MLA Awards at the annual MLA/DLA Conference in May. The MLA Marketing Committee also presented two awards for Excellence in Marketing.

Maryland Author Award 65

Middle grade and young adult author Roseanne A. Brown was this year's recipient of the William G. Wilson Author Award, which was established in 1996 to honor Maryland authors.

LATI Graduation 66

The most recent cohort of thirty-three LATI students from ten different Maryland counties graduated in June, with much to show for their hard work and dedication at the beginning of their library journeys.

DIAL: The Spring SLRC Conference 81

The Enoch Pratt Free Library's Spring SLRC Conference focused on the topics of Disability, Inclusion, and Accessibility in Libraries (DIAL), with 185 virtual and 170 in-person attendees participating in informative and engaging sessions, tours, hands-on activities, and a vendor fair.

Celebrating a Partnership of Growth 88

The Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County recently enriched their ongoing partnership with the University of Maryland Extension office and their Master Gardeners by introducing a pilot how-to gardening program, Seed to Supper, and adding gardening tool checkouts to their Library of Things.

UMGC Library Celebrates National Library Week 92

The University of Maryland Global Campus Library found innovative ways to raise the library's visibility, teach information literacy skills, and highlight interesting library resources during National Library Week celebrations.

Goucher Celebrates Jane Austen 95

This summer and fall, Goucher College Library is participating in a number of events and presenting exhibits to show off their collection and celebrate Jane Austen's 250th birthday.

New Way to Paws and De-Stress at Towson University's Cook Library 96

◆ The finals week Pets on Wheels program is consistently the library's most popular program, so library staff decided to invest in three animatronic Joy for All Companion Cats to expand their support for community wellness and give students, faculty, and staff members additional purrfect opportunities to de-stress.

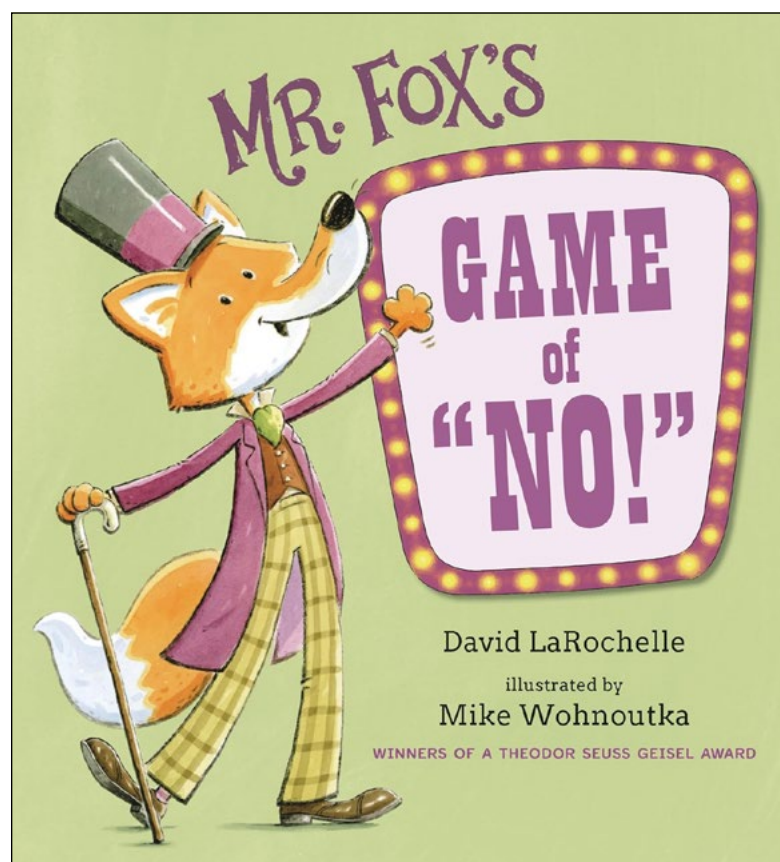


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Editor's Note

Greetings, *Crab* readers! It's always exciting to share another issue filled with news and features related to your work and activities throughout our great state. So much has taken place since our last issue was published, including the MLA/DLA Conference and the presentation of our annual awards. The conference photo spread is one of my favorite features every year, and I hope that you enjoy the candid photographs and possibly spot yourself in one if you were able to attend.

Another recurring feature that I look forward to is the recap of LATI Graduation. Each semi-annual cohort is full of new library staff with amazing talents, new insights, and innovative ideas to bring to our workplaces. Since I work at the library where graduation is held, it's fun to see the newly minted Library Associates tour our branch during their breaks in the day-long celebration. They are brimming with enthusiasm, excited about their new careers, and looking for ideas to take back to their libraries to share with colleagues and patrons. Congratulations to the graduates and their supervisors, and special thanks to LATI Coordinator Ryan O'Grady, Laura Allen, the LATI trainers, and the members of the LATI Oversight Committee who keep this important opportunity running smoothly year after year.

We're always looking for new content for *the Crab*, particularly from academic, school, and special libraries, in an effort to provide some balance with all the public library news and events that we publish. To that end, I'm delighted that Goucher College, Towson University, and the University of Maryland Global Campus libraries have all contributed to this issue. Read about cats at the Albert S. Cook Library in Towson, find out what the UMGC librarians did to celebrate and promote National Library Week, and plan on visiting some of the fun-filled exhibits and events that Goucher Library has planned for the 250th anniversary of Jane Austen's birth over the next few



months. A special shout-out to *Crab* copy editor Robert Miller for his first *Crab* submission (the UMGC feature). I'm grateful for all our copy editors and their stellar work and am excited that Robert has extended his contributions by writing for this issue.

This summary doesn't even begin to cover all the great things you've been doing, so please, read on! And please don't forget to share your news and ideas with us for future issues. We want to hear about your successes, of course—but your thoughts about things that might not have turned out as planned can also be beneficial. Constructively sharing what you would change, what could be improved, and what you might advise others to consider when they're replicating your program or event idea is a fundamental way of contributing your knowledge base to the Maryland library community.

Have a wonderful rest of the summer! *The Crab* will be back in November with more news and features about Maryland libraries and library workers.

Julie Fitzpatrick, MLA Crab Editor
Howard County Library System

President's Message

David Dahl, MLA President

University System of Maryland and Affiliated Institutions Library Consortium



TIME FLIES! This past year as President-Elect has been a whirlwind. What seemed a distant point in the future at this time last year has arrived. I'm excited for what the year ahead will bring as we work together to advance the mission of libraries and support our Maryland libraries and library workers.

I want to start this message by thanking Teonja Jung for her leadership as MLA President this past year. If you peruse Teonja's "President's Reports" in the minutes of the Board (<https://www.mdlib.org/meeting-minutes-2/>) from this past year, you'll see just how much she has done. It has been an honor to be able to work with the Board to support her presidential goals this past year. There are a few positive developments still in the works that I plan to carry forward this year, and I hope you'll be reading about those very soon. Once again, thank you, Teonja!

The past few months have brought opportunities to connect - in-person - with our incoming leaders, members, and wider Maryland library community, starting with May's 2025 MLA|DLA Annual Conference. It was energizing to convene with other attendees - both familiar and new faces - to learn from each other and share our experiences. (And, importantly, to peddle some raffle tickets to unsuspecting attendees!) Returning to Ocean City for the conference after many years was a welcome change of pace. As they say, it's good to try new things: it can reveal unexpected new delights and affirm your appreciation for the "normal." I really appreciate the conference committee's willingness to meet the challenge of planning a major event at a brand-new venue - not an easy feat! This year's conference committee, under the leadership of Conference Director Paula Mitchell, is already hard at work on planning the 2026 conference. Mark your calendars, and I hope you'll join us for that. We'll be back in Cambridge, May 6-8, 2026.

I also had the opportunity to meet with our incoming leaders for MLA's Leadership

Day in early June. I'm confident in MLA's future with so many dedicated individuals helping to chart our course. Leadership Day attendees devoted the better part of an entire day to learning about MLA, its role in the Maryland library ecosystem, and the responsibilities of their positions in MLA. Over the next year, this group of leaders of divisions, advisory panels, committees, interest groups, and other MLA functions will plan meetings, develop programs, and lead countless other activities that support the Maryland library community.

MLA exists because of our members and their dedication and engagement. If you've been thinking about getting more involved, there's no better time than now. Consider attending one of the meetings or programs that are regularly announced in MLA's The Happenings and other venues. If you're interested in taking on a leadership role in MLA, that's great! Even though the year has just started, we're already beginning to plan for next year's elections. Be on the lookout for calls for nominations in the coming months. And I know our current leaders (<https://www.mdlib.org/board-of-directors/>) would be happy to share their insights on what leadership in MLA entails.

With your support and engagement, I look forward to seeing what we accomplish this year! ■

Vice President's Message

Conni Strittmatter, Baltimore County Public Library

Happy Summer, all!

And what a summer it's been so far. The Chicago Cubs are in first place (we won't talk about the Orioles), the New York Times just released their top 100 films of the 21st Century so far (some snubs, some surprises, lots of great picks!), and you can't walk outside without being drenched (whether in sweat or rain).

It's been just a week or so since I've started my vice presidency with MLA. I'm excited to jump into attending meetings with you all, getting to know your work, and finding ways to support library workers throughout the state.

Working in libraries is a joy and a privilege. The services and resources we provide to our customers—whether they're families with young kids, college students, government workers, homebound seniors, or teens with nowhere else to hang out—are not just window dressings in our communities. They are vital components in making our communities and democracy run.

It's because of these vital services we provide that Maryland has long been known as "Library Heaven." I believe this is true. In my time working in Maryland libraries, I've felt nothing short of lucky (blessed, privileged, fortunate—pick a synonym!) to work in this profession in this state. I'm constantly inspired by the work you all do day to day and thankful for the professional comradery across counties and librarianships.

Maryland's status as Library Heaven is even more apparent as we observe current events related to libraries and First Amendment rights throughout the country. After all, while some states have faced significant challenges to the core and values of our



professional existence, Maryland passed the Freedom to Read Bill, cementing those very same values.

As I step into the role of Vice President, I want to challenge us as members of MLA not to rest on these laurels. Maryland is only and can only remain Library Heaven because of the amazing work we do every day to keep it that way.

MLA needs folks from all walks of librarianship and job role type—whatever time they can give, whatever skills they bring to the table—to get us through the coming years. So, I ask you—what will you do this year to help Maryland remain Library Heaven? If you're interested in taking up that challenge, in learning about more ways to get involved in MLA, to contribute to the networking, professional development, and advocacy that keeps our libraries strong, reach out to me! Let's keep Maryland Library Heaven together!

Report from MLA's ALA Chapter Councilor

Joseph Thompson, Carroll County Public Library

Photograph courtesy of Joseph Thompson.

As I write this column, the ALA Annual Conference 2025 in Philadelphia wrapped up just a few days ago. It was truly a fantastic conference and a great deal of important work was accomplished at these ALA Council meetings over June 28-30. I'm only providing a shorthand version of much more in-depth documents and discussions. If you are an ALA member, I would encourage you to visit the Council Documents page at <https://www.ala.org/virtual-llx-and-annual-conference-council-meetings>. You will find the reports from the various ALA committees.

I'd like to first reflect on a Virtual Special ALA Council Meeting that was held on May 29, 2025. At that May meeting, Council voted on a resolution brought forward by ALA's Intellectual Freedom Committee. It included draft revisions of the Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights. The Intellectual Freedom Committee has been preparing for the publication of the eleventh edition of the Intellectual Freedom Manual, where these revisions will appear. Twelve revisions were brought to vote and I voted yes. The motion carried. The remaining interpretations were brought to Council at the ALA Annual Conference—more on this in a moment.

As usual, Saturday began with a brief meeting of the ALA-APA (ALA Allied Professional Association). There was one significant vote, which was to amend the ALA-APA Bylaws to effect the dissolution of the ALA-APA Council. I voted yes and the motion carried. What this means is that ALA Council will no longer serve also as the ALA-APA Council. Going forward, ALA-APA will instead send recommendations to the ALA-APA Executive Board, which can be much more responsive than the Council, which generally only meets twice a year.

After ALA Council I was called to order by President Cindy Hohl, there were three requests for action from the Committee on Organization. The first was to discontinue the Committee Associate Program. I think these individuals can better serve as full members of committees, so I voted yes and the motion carried. The second was to discontinue the Planning & Budget Assembly (PBA). I happen to be a member of PBA, but voted yes on the motion. Its work had become duplicative and it was time to sunset the assembly.



The motion carried. The third action requested was to reunify the Association for Library Services to Children (ALSC) with the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA). This one deserves some attention, since I expect that some of you may be members of ALSC, YALSA, or both.

This proposal was written by the joint Executive Committees of the two divisions. The Young Adult Service Division (YASD) was formally established on June 24, 1957, and later became YALSA (its origins go back even further, with the splitting in 1941 of the Association of Young People's Librarians). YALSA did grow in the 1970s and 1980s and became a very well-established division within the association. However, over the past seven years YALSA has seen a significant decline in membership and financial instability. I voted yes and the motion carried.

Next up was a report from the ALA Conference Committee. The committee followed up on resolutions passed by Council at previous conferences. In 2021, Council had resolved to achieve carbon neutrality for ALA Conferences by the year 2025. The Conference Committee now requested an extension from the original deadline of 2025 to 2027. This will provide the time needed to evaluate the feasibility and financial impact of absorbing the cost of carbon offsets into the cost of doing business or investigate alternative options. I voted yes on the extension and the motion carried.

The Policy Manual Revision Working Group then brought forward draft General Revisions to the ALA Policy Manual to align it with current ALA Bylaws. Other issues were also identified by the working group for Council's future attention. I voted yes on both resolutions and both did pass.

Council II meeting began on Sunday morning with a second required vote to reunify ALSC and YALSA. I again voted yes, and the motion carried. This formalizes the reunification and means that ALSC and YALSA will use the 2025-2026 year to work out the details of the reunified division.

The Information Technology Advisory Committee brought forward a resolution to create a cross-divisional working group, charged with developing a unified,

critically informed ALA position on Artificial Intelligence (AI) in libraries for Council consideration no later than the Annual 2026 conference. After some minor amendments were accepted, I voted yes, and the motion carried.

The Committee on Legislation then presented its report, which included a motion to recognize Congressman Raúl Grijalva of Arizona, who recently passed away. Congressman Grijalva was a steadfast supporter of Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funding for libraries and was a regular sponsor of the LSTA Dear Appropriator letters. His support will be missed. I voted yes and the resolution carried.

In January 2024, Council created working groups to further expand on each revised ALA Core Values description. These interpretations will provide opportunities for further expansion and clarification of the values. After some debate and a request for six more months, the Core Values interpretations on Access, Intellectual Freedom & Privacy, and Sustainability were approved immediately. Extensions to complete the work on Equity & Public Good were approved. I had voted yes.

Following up on the Special Council meeting held in May (mentioned at the beginning of this article), the Intellectual Freedom Committee presented the remaining revised interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights. Separate votes were taken to approve “Economic Barriers to Library Access” and “Access to Resources and Services in the School Library.” I voted yes on both and both carried. “User-Generated Content in Library Discovery Layers” received some amendments, but in the end all other twelve revised interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights were approved. I had voted yes. This means that the publication of the eleventh edition of the Intellectual Freedom Manual can take place this fall on schedule.

The Council III meeting began on Monday morning with Memorial and Tribute resolutions. Among those honored included Dr. Carla Hayden for her visionary leadership, her unwavering dedication to equity and access, and her transformative contributions to librarianship at the local and national level. It also celebrated Dr. Hayden’s enduring legacy in making the Library of Congress a library truly for the people and affirming its commitment to upholding the values she championed. I appeared among a long list of endorsers on this resolution.

Peter Hepburn then presented the ALA Treasurer’s Report. Expenses continue to outpace revenues. To address this imbalance, ALA staff are working on a plan called ALA Forward that includes diversifying and growing revenue sources and reducing expenditures through consolidation and further efficiencies.

At the core of the new ALA Strategic Plan is an updated mission: “Empowering and advocating for libraries and library workers to ensure equitable access to information for all” and a bold vision: “Libraries thrive so everyone can succeed.”

Results were then presented by the Election Committee on the Committees election, which had taken place since yesterday’s meeting. I was among the nominees and was elected to serve on the Committee on Committees for a one-year term. In this capacity, I will work with soon-to-be President-elect Maria McCauley to nominate members of Council to serve as candidates on ALA Executive Board.

ALA’s Societal Statements Working Group provided an update on their work and a request for a short extension. I voted yes and the motion carried.

President-elect Sam Helmick then presented the new ALA Strategic Plan. Work to develop this plan began in fall 2024 by engaging expert consultants to lead a robust data analysis and conduct focus groups, interviews, and member surveys. I greatly admire this plan and believe it does meet the challenges faced by ALA and the profession. At the core of the plan is an updated mission: “Empowering and advocating for libraries and library workers to ensure equitable access to information for all” and a bold vision: “Libraries thrive so everyone can succeed.” A few minor amendments were offered and fewer accepted. The vote on the new strategic plan received 135 yes, one no, and zero abstains. I voted yes. The new plan has been approved!

ALA has received an application from the Independent Book Publishers Association (IBPA) to become an affiliate of the American Library Association. I voted yes and the motion carried. The next resolution called for increased awareness and support for the Merritt Fund. The Merritt Fund provides support for library workers who have been denied employment rights because of their defense of intellectual freedom. I voted yes and this resolution also carried. The next resolution was to recognize the Librarians We Have Lost initiative (1976–2026) as an integral part of ALA’s Sesquicentennial commemoration. I voted yes and the motion carried.

As this last Council meeting of the conference closed, it was announced that the conference had 14,229 attendees, which is 106% of the budget goal. Also, Melissa Walling, ALA’s Associate Executive Director, will serve as acting Executive Director until this November when new Executive Director, Dan Montgomery, officially starts work in this role.

As always, I invite you to reach out to me if you have any questions about the work of the ALA Council or ALA more broadly. Thank you again for allowing me to serve as your Maryland representative to ALA Council! ■



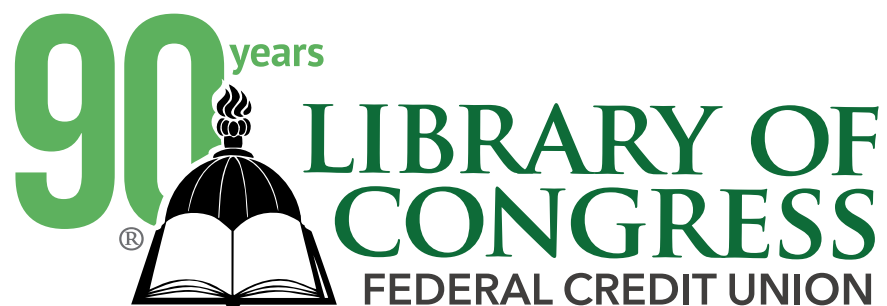
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Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled to Host Inaugural Dyslexia Summit

Virtual statewide event centers on accessibility, collaboration, and advancing dyslexia services in libraries and beyond

Ashley Biggs, Maryland State Library Agency

The Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled (LBPD), in collaboration with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and community partners, will host its first-ever **Dyslexia Summit** on Thursday, October 16, 2025. This free, statewide event is fully virtual—accessible via Zoom Webinar and live-streamed on the **Maryland State Library Agency's YouTube channel**—to ensure broad participation across the library, education, and advocacy sectors.

The Dyslexia Summit offers library professionals the opportunity to deepen their understanding of dyslexia, develop inclusive service strategies, and engage in a statewide dialogue on accessibility and literacy. With dyslexia affecting an estimated one in five individuals, libraries must play an active role in providing resources, technology, and support to this large and often underserved community.

The event is designed to address the real-world challenges that individuals with dyslexia face, particularly when paired with co-occurring conditions like ADHD or anxiety. Sessions will explore assistive technologies, evidence-based educational supports, and practical tools for advocacy — topics highly relevant to public, school,

and academic librarians who support patrons and learners with neurodiversity.

“The Dyslexia Summit is a vital step toward ensuring individuals with dyslexia have access to the resources, technology, and community support they need to thrive,” said Ashley Biggs, Marketing and Outreach Librarian for the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled. “Libraries are uniquely positioned to bridge gaps in access and empower families and learners through inclusive, welcoming services.”

Keynote presenters Dr. Brock Eide and Dr. Fernette Eide, founders of The Dyslexic Advantage, will highlight the cognitive and creative strengths that often accompany dyslexia. Their work redefines the conversation around learning differences, encouraging professionals to shift from deficit-based frameworks to strength-based approaches — an especially powerful lens for librarians developing inclusive collections, programs, and outreach.

“Our mission at LBPD is to provide equitable access to information and resources for all Marylanders with print disabilities,” said John Owen, Director of LBPD. “This summit is part of our broader effort to equip librarians, educators, and families with the tools they need to support lifelong learning and inclusive literacy.”

Librarians of all types are encouraged to attend, especially those working in youth services, outreach, accessibility, and literacy support. Registration opens soon.

To stay informed and reserve your spot, visit: <https://msla.maryland.gov/Pages/Dyslexia-Summit.aspx>.

Sailor Database Renewal

Meeting Marylanders' Educational and Research Needs for 2026–2029

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

The Sailor database project is Maryland's statewide electronic resource initiative, providing a collection of research databases to public libraries and K–12 public schools. Its mission is to ensure that all Maryland residents—regardless of location—have equitable access to a core collection of high-quality educational and research resources. Funding for the Sailor Research Databases is provided by the State of Maryland through the annual State Library Resource Center (SLRC) grant, administered by the Maryland State Library Agency.

In 2024–2025, SLRC led a thorough year-long Request for Proposals process to select the next cycle of databases for the 2026–2029 period. The process emphasized transparency, responsiveness, and collaboration, drawing on community input.

We gathered feedback from library and school stakeholders through surveys, meetings, and focus groups. The 2024 Sailor Symposium, held at the Central branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, served as a touchpoint, allowing participants to hear directly from vendors, ask questions, and discuss priorities with peers from across the state. This inclusive process helped us make data-informed decisions about how to best invest public funds to serve Marylanders' diverse needs.

The 2026–2029 SAILOR Database Package (*New)




Gale (Cengage Learning) Resources:

-  *Peterson's Test and Career Prep*
College prep, vocational exams, and career guidance tools
-  *Gale Academic OneFile Select*
Scholarly and peer-reviewed journals across disciplines
-  *OneFile: News*
Extensive newspaper and news magazine access
-  *Gale In Context: Elementary, Middle School, and High School*
Age-appropriate academic resources aligned with curriculum standards
-  *Gale Presents: National Geographic Kids*
Trusted, engaging content for younger learners
-  *Gale Legal Forms (State of Maryland)*
Legal templates and guidance tailored for Maryland residents
-  *Books and Authors*
Readers' advisory and literary exploration tools
-  *General OneFile + 29 OneFile Collections*
Multidisciplinary content across subjects
-  **Chilton's*
Authoritative automotive repair and maintenance guides

ProQuest:

- HeritageQuest Online*
Genealogical research tools with census data, local histories, and more

Mango Languages:

-  *Conversations Library Edition*
Comprehensive language learning resources for all ages and abilities
-  **ASL Inside Library Edition*
American Sign Language
-  **Little Pim*
Language learning for ages 0–6

This new database package—available July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2029—continues Sailor's legacy of providing free, equitable digital access to information statewide. Whether a student is researching for a school project, an adult is exploring legal resources, or a job seeker is preparing for a certification exam, these tools will be available to them through their local public library or school.

Thanks to the support of the State Library Resource Center, the Maryland State Library Agency and the thoughtful participation of stakeholders throughout the state, the Sailor databases will continue to serve as a vital public resource in Maryland's educational and informational infrastructure.

To learn more about the Sailor databases, visit <https://www.slrc.info/research/databases>. ■

YOUTH SERVICES DIVISION PRESENTS:
Black-Eyed Susan Tapestry (BEST)
2025—The Fall Edition

Thursday, October 16, 2025 |

9:30a.m. - 1:30p.m.

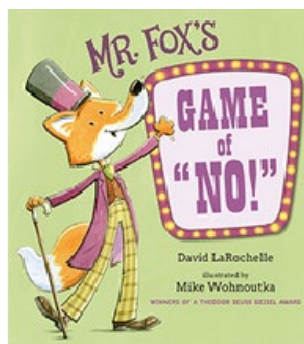
Online via Zoom.

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

Love talking about books? Join us for BEST 2025—The Fall Edition, a celebration of Picture Books and Children's Nonfiction. 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 Picture Book and Juvenile Nonfiction 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.

David LaRochelle, author of *Mr. Fox's Game of No!*, will be our keynote speaker.



Please read all the titles for each group.

Group 1 - Picture Books

- LaRochelle, David; Wohnoutka, Mike (illus.) —*Mr. Fox's Game of "No!"*
- Long, Loren—*The Yellow Bus*
- MacLean, Roz—*More Than Words: So Many Ways to Say What We Mean*
- Saltzberg, Barney—*A Delicious Story*
- Stead, Philip; Cordell, Matthew (illus.) —*Every Dog in the Neighborhood*

Group 2 - Grades 6-12

- Ævar Þór Benediktsson; Wilson, Anne (illus.)—*Stranded! A Mostly True Story from Iceland*
- Lanan, Jessica—*Jumper: A Day in the Life of a Backyard Jumping Spider*
- Larsen, Andrew; Vidal, Oriol (illus.)—*Gifts from the Garbage Truck: A True Story About the Things We (Don't) Throw Away*
- Savage, Chloe—*The Search for the Giant Arctic Jellyfish*
- Taylor, Helen; Lewis, Stevie (illus.)—*How to Eat in Space*

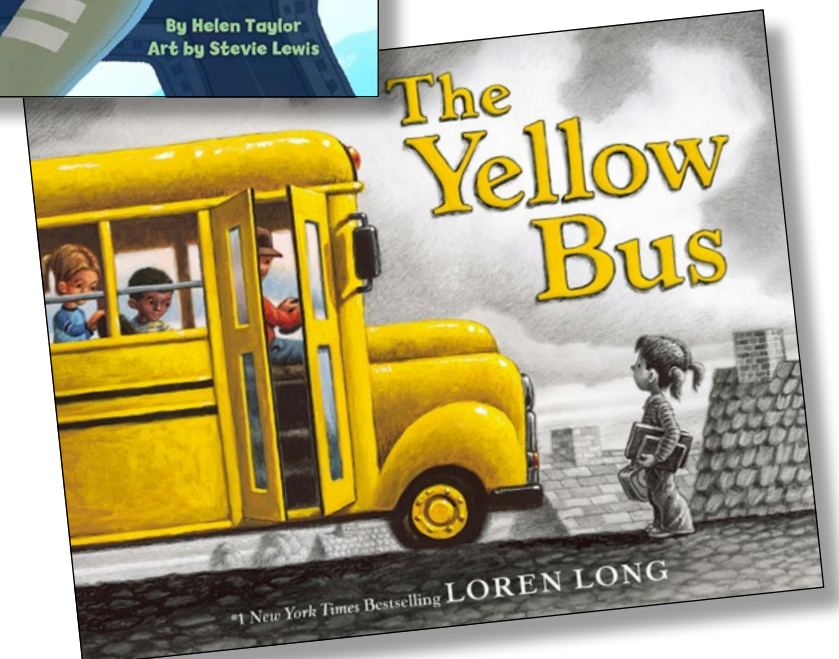
This program has been approved for **4 contact hours** of continuing education for attendees. Group discussion leaders will receive **7 contact hours!** If you would like to be a group discussion leader, or if you have any questions, contact [Joe Farmarco](#) or [Noel Knepper](#).

Program Pricing:

Members: \$30

Non-members: \$45

Student, Retired, Unemployed, or Friend: \$15



New Partnership Between MLA and the Sustainable Libraries Initiative

A new partnership between the Sustainable Libraries Initiative (SLI) and the Maryland Library Association (MLA) aims to equip MLA members with tools and resources to address the challenges and mitigate the impact of climate change in their communities.

“We are very excited to work more closely with the Maryland Library Association and enable all of their members to accelerate their adoption of practices that will help them live their values out loud while adapting in the face of climate change,” said Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, Board President of the Sustainable Libraries Initiative, who added, “Positioning the Maryland library community as leaders in this conversation will allow them to follow the lead of hundreds of other libraries in our program, a strong move to ensure libraries contribute to their community’s resilience and remain relevant and responsive institutions.”

Through this partnership, MLA members will join a nationwide community of practice who are using SLI-curated tools to uncover ways that their libraries and communities can understand, adapt to, and help lessen the effects of climate change. These tools include hundreds of best practices proven by peers, access to an archive of professional development focused on the core value of sustainability, program examples, a vetted vendor list, and a custom CO₂ calculator to help members estimate their current institutional greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and measure reductions, and custom publicity pieces to help libraries tell their sustainability story.

“We are thrilled to begin this partnership with the Sustainable Libraries Initiative, which will support Maryland libraries’ ability to advance the profession’s core value of sustainability,” remarked David Dahl, MLA president and Associate Dean of Libraries, Digital Services and Technologies, at the University of Maryland. “Our members will benefit from SLI’s corpus of resources and programs as we work to take tangible action toward a more sustainable future for our libraries and their communities.”

The Sustainable Libraries Initiative’s Sustainable Library Certification Program (SLCP)—available to public libraries, academic libraries, library systems, and school librarians—provides libraries with a reliable course of action to enhance library leadership and demonstrate commitment to environmental stewardship, economic feasibility, and social equity. The certification program guides participants to evaluate their decision-making



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philosophies, build stronger connections within their community, and consider the lasting impacts of their action for their service area.

A number of Marylanders are already blazing a trail in their state as early adopters of the Sustainable Library Certification Program, including School Librarian Melissa King and the soon-to-be certified University of Maryland Libraries.

Members of the Maryland Library Association who opt-in via the SLI website will receive one free year of annual membership to the Sustainable Libraries Initiative and a 20% discount on the award-winning Sustainable Library Certification Program. Cohorts of five or more libraries will receive a 25% discount on certification, supporting the principle that there is power in collective action.

Learn more with our [MLA Partnership Dashboard](#) or by reaching out to sladmin@suf-folknet.org.

Sustainable Libraries Initiative

The Sustainable Libraries Initiative (SLI) is a member-driven organization that empowers library professionals to be leaders using triple-bottom-line sustainability (environmental stewardship, social equity, and economic feasibility) throughout their organizations and in their communities. The Sustainable Library Certification Program is now enrolling public and academic libraries, library systems, and school librarians nationwide.

Maryland Library Association

The Maryland Library Association (MLA), founded in 1923, provides leadership for those who are committed to libraries by providing opportunities for professional development and communication and by advocating principles and issues related to librarianship and library service. Among members are library staff and trustees, library school students, libraries, and friends of libraries representing the full spectrum of librarianship in Maryland. ■

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

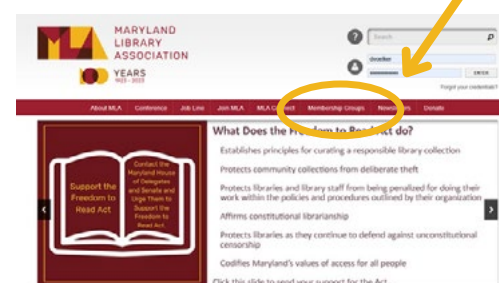
COMMITTEES & PANELS

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.



ATTENDEES WERE EXCITED to be back in Ocean City, Maryland for the 2025 MLA|DLA Annual Conference: The Beach Edition! With a dynamic lineup of sessions, workshops, and networking opportunities, this year's agenda equipped library workers from across two states with innovative strategies, practical tools, and fresh perspectives to navigate the evolving landscape of libraries and information services. MLA would like to thank our 17 conference sponsors, whose support makes much of this possible year after year.



610 attendees had the opportunity to explore the latest trends in library technology, discover best practices in information literacy, and engage with innovative ideas in community outreach and services. The conference also featured an exhibit hall showcasing library products and services from 42 exhibitors, offering participants the chance to learn about new tools and resources that can enhance their work.

Activities for early birds on Wednesday included six pre-conference sessions, a screening of the documentary *Free for All: The Public Library*, and an offsite BCMLA Cultural Tour. The tour was a standout event for immediate Past President Teonja Jung, who said, "One of the best highlights for me at the annual MLA conference was the BCMLA trip to Berlin, which really hammered home so much of the rich history of blacks in Maryland. Entering The Germantown School, built in 1922, was like stepping through time. That, coupled with hearing from someone who had actually attended it during the era of segregation, humbled me. Visiting the Calvin B. Taylor House Museum gave a glimpse into life from the early 18th century to the early 20th century. It was also very cool to learn that the movie *Runaway Bride* was filmed there. These social events at conference are not only informational

and educational for everyone, but they are fun and inspirational."

International spoken word artist, activist, and educator Lady Brion kicked off the conference with a dynamic opening keynote speech. Lady Brion is the current Poet Laureate of Maryland, and her remarks energized and galvanized listeners. As our new MLA President, David Dahl, said, "To me, Lady Brion's message of 'persist and resist' really set the tone for the conference. This is really what libraries do every day, and I witnessed so many examples of that this year - in the screening of the *Free for All* documentary, in conference sessions, and in conversations with colleagues." Additional keynote speakers throughout the conference included the Mary-

land Author Award winner, YA and children's novelist Roseanne A. Brown; queer Floridian author Kristen Arnett, a kindred spirit from the world of libraries who holds a master's degree in information and library science; and queer nonbinary anti-Zionist Jewish writer Temim Fruchter, the cohost of *Pete's Reading Series* in Brooklyn, whose Maryland connections include an MFA in fiction from the University of Maryland.

This year's participants had a choice of 76 conference programs, including poster sessions and Ignite sessions. Topics ranged from ethics and privacy issues to demystifying service dog access in libraries; from serving our LGBTQIA+ communities with name change clinics to making AI understandable for library workers and customers alike; from film clubs and Dungeons and Dragons clubs for teens to making our libraries accessible to neurodivergent families, homeschooling families, patrons with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, and so many more! Learning and sharing about a myriad of other topics took place; take a look at the [conference schedule](#) and be amazed at the sense of shared purpose and advocacy that all these sessions inspire, not just in the MLA/DLA library community but in our wider communities as well.

Now, on to the social events! The ever-popular Refresh with Pets was once again a hit with conference attendees; you can see some of the adorable, patient, good boys and girls in the following photo spread. The annual BCMLA Reception and late-afternoon happy hours in the Bayfront Ballroom provided opportunities for everyone to connect with friends old and new in a relaxed, informal setting. The annual pub quiz has become an MLA/DLA institution, with Michael Gannon and 2026 Assistant Conference Director Mike Kiel co-hosting again this year. A team of enthusiastic and knowledgeable participants from the MLA Reader's Advisory Interest Group took home this year's prize. Congratulations to the winners!

Planning has already started for the 2026 conference, which will take place May 6-8, 2026, at the Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay Golf Resort, Spa, and Marina in Cambridge, Maryland. 2026 Conference Chair Paula Mitchell says, "Mike Kiel and I are excited to serve in our roles as conference co-director and director, and we look forward to being back by the bay this year! Oh, and karaoke is back!"

Many hands make light work for our outstanding conference committee, and they can always use more input and help. At-large committee members help decide on the conference theme and keynote speakers, and they can serve on conference planning sub-committees that support social events, Ignite Talks, marketing, and volunteering during the event. If you're interested in joining or would like more information about the commitment, please send an email to md.la.conference@gmail.com.

Special thanks go out to Danielle Voelker and Kate Monagan from the MLA office for keeping everything at the conference running smoothly and efficiently each year, and congratulations to Kate for her well-deserved 2025 MLA Honorary Membership Award! Finally, congratulations to Paula and 2025 Conference Chair Chelsea Shockley on a wonderful conference this year. Mark your calendars now and plan on joining us back in Cambridge in May of 2026! ■

Conference photographs courtesy of Mou Chakraborty, Katie Kizzier, Amy Miller Meyers, and Allison Wood.





2025 MLA • DLA Annual Conference

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

PLATINUM SPONSORS

Eastern Shore Regional Library	Conference Tote Bags
Enoch Pratt Free Library	Black Caucus of MLA Meet & Greet
Southern Maryland Regional Library Association	Conference Tote Bags
Western Maryland Regional Library	Conference Tote Bags

GOLD SPONSORS

Caroline County Public Library	Conference Mobile App
Carroll County Public Library	Thursday Afternoon Coffee & Snack Break; Conference Signage
Prince George's County Memorial Library System	Conference Transportation & Moving Services

SILVER SPONSORS

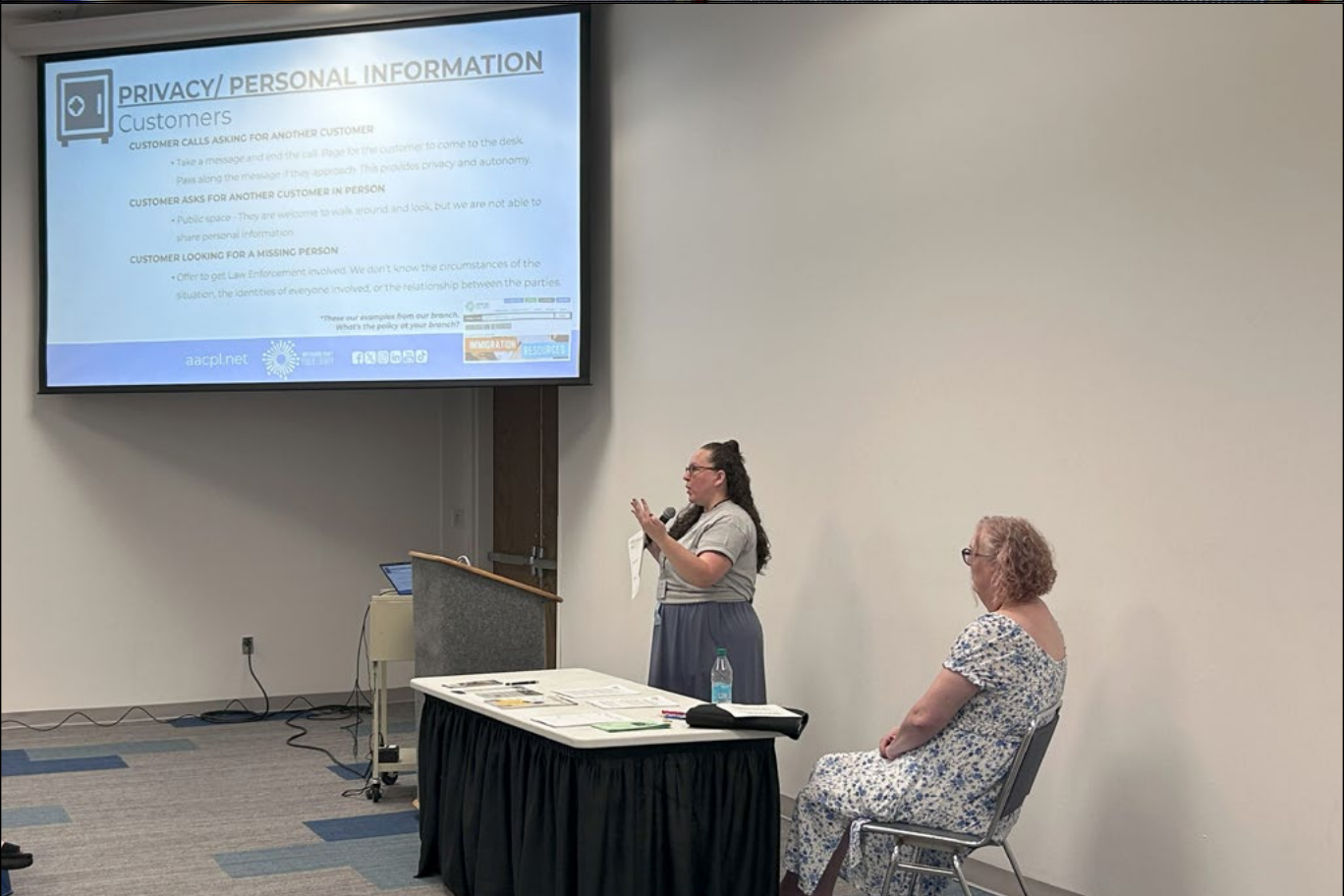
Cecil County Public Library	Thursday Morning Coffee & Danish Break
Frederick County Public Libraries	Wednesday Afternoon Coffee & Refreshments
Maryland's Coast - Worcester County Tourism & Economic Development	BCMLA Historic Site Visit
Telecommunications of Maryland/Maryland Department of Disabilities	Lanyards & Badges

BRONZE SPONSORS

Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore	BCMLA Historic Site Visit
EBSCO	BCMLA Historic Site Visit Tour Bus
Grimm + Parker Architects	Thursday Morning Coffee & Danish Break
Hosting Solutions and Library Consulting	Vendor Coffee Service
Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation	Wednesday Welcome Breakfast
Montgomery County Public Libraries	Buttons & Stickers

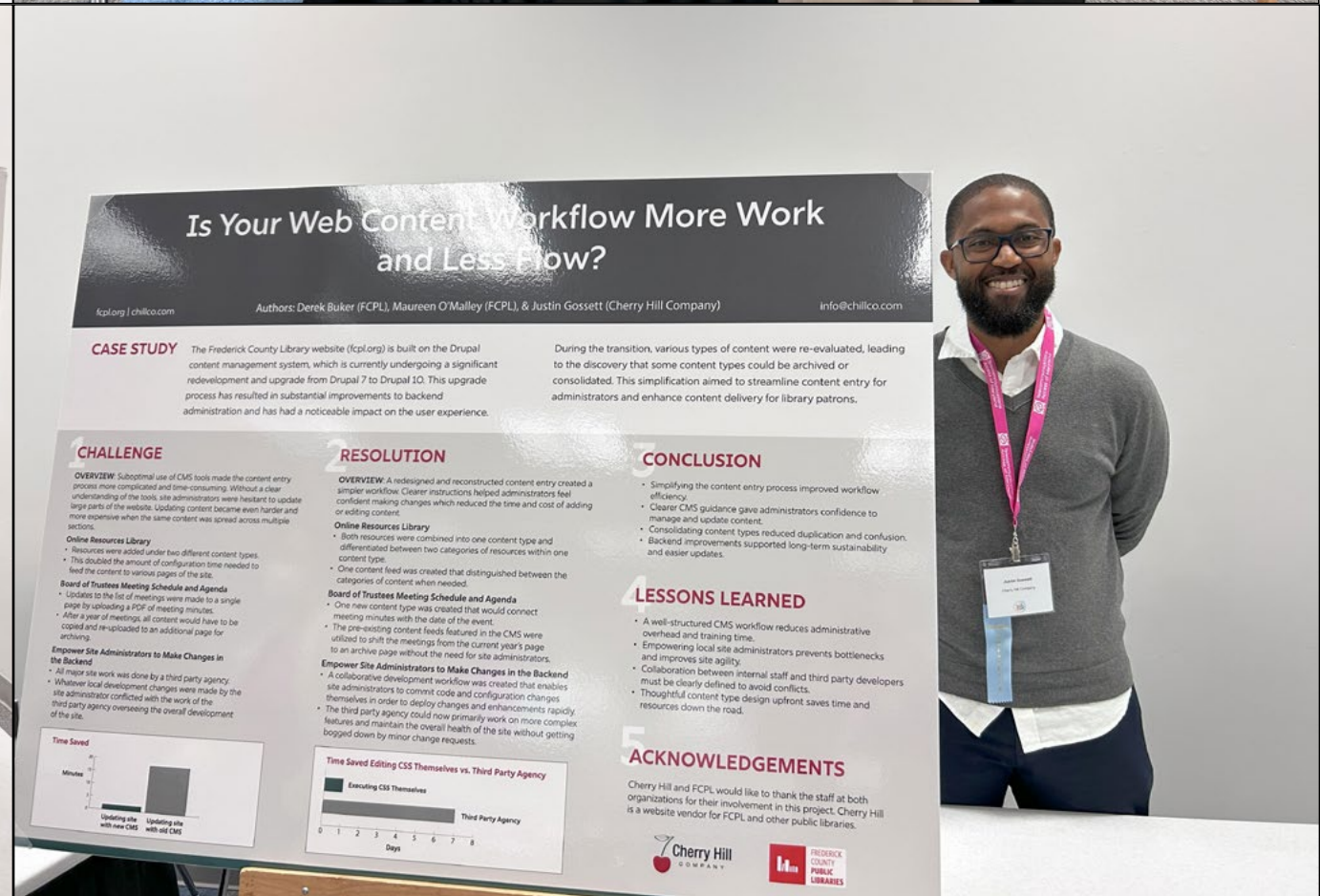


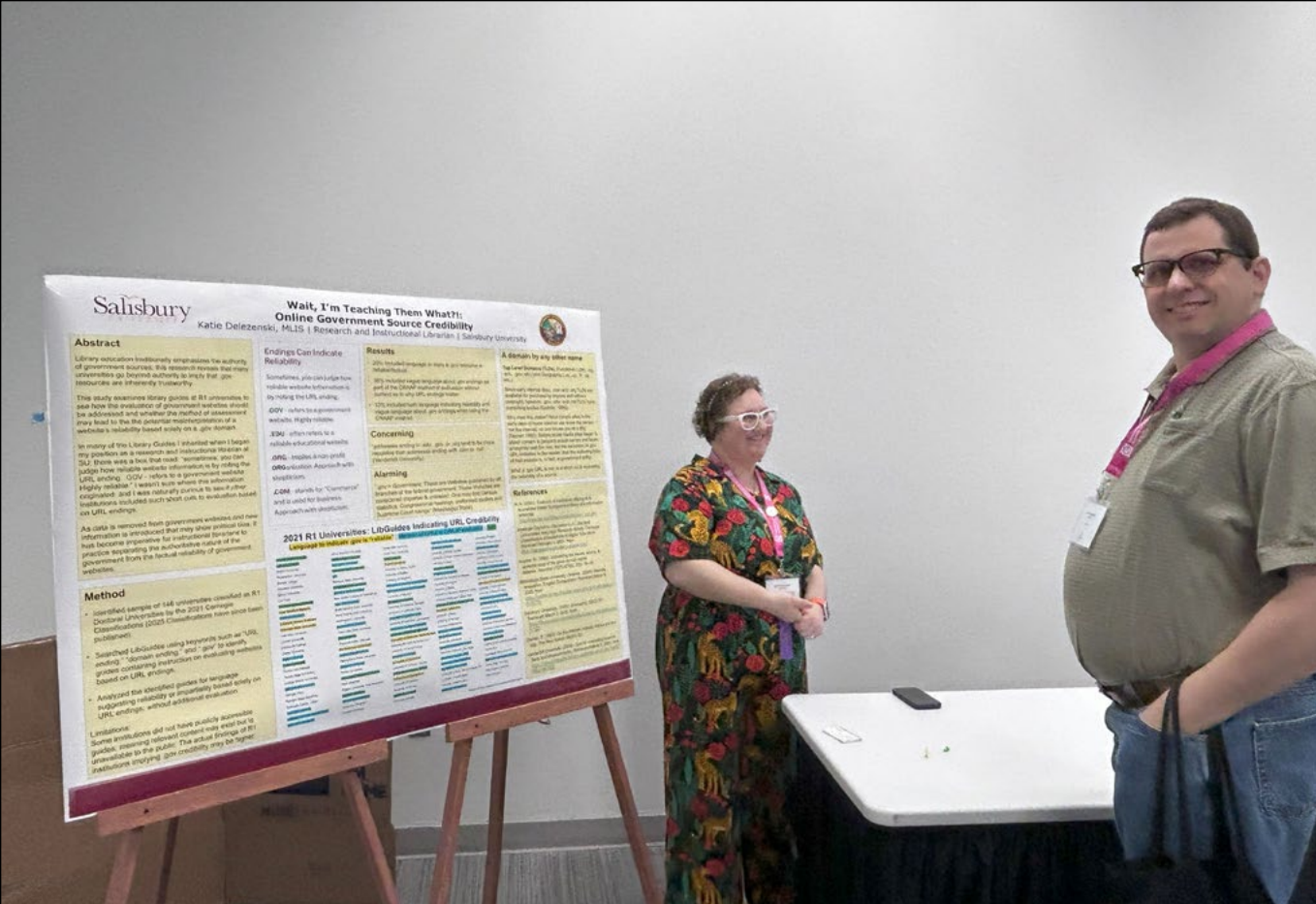






















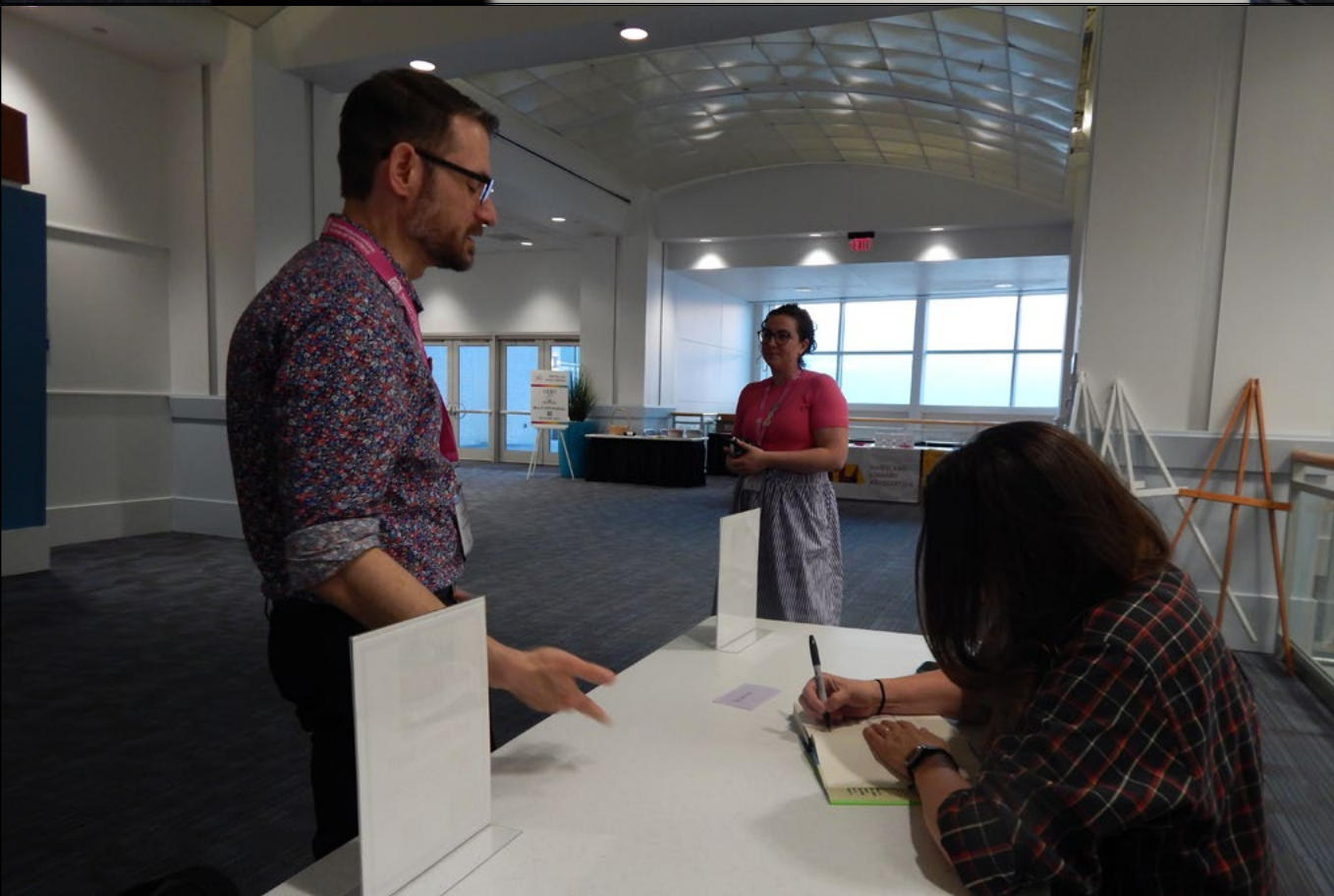
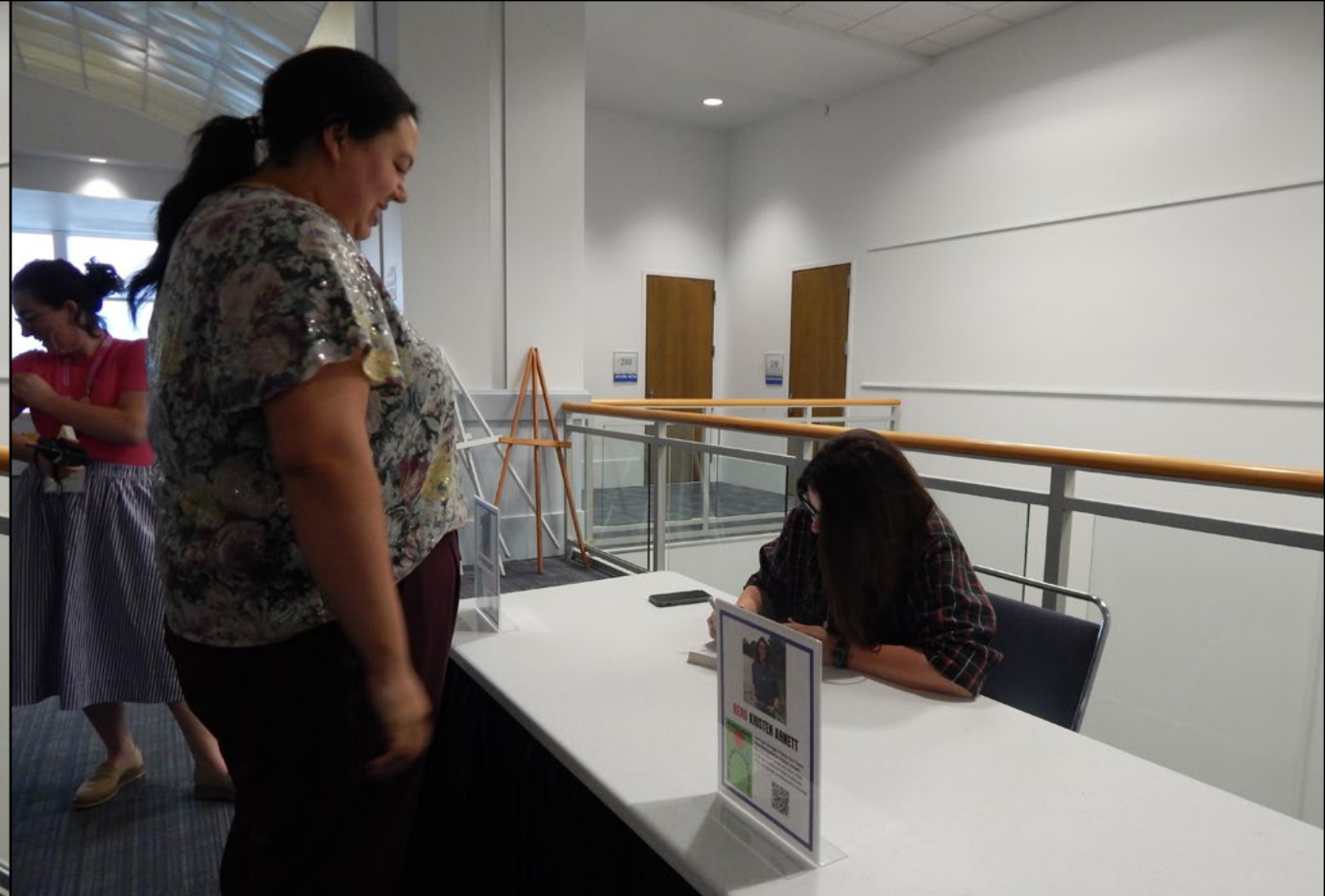






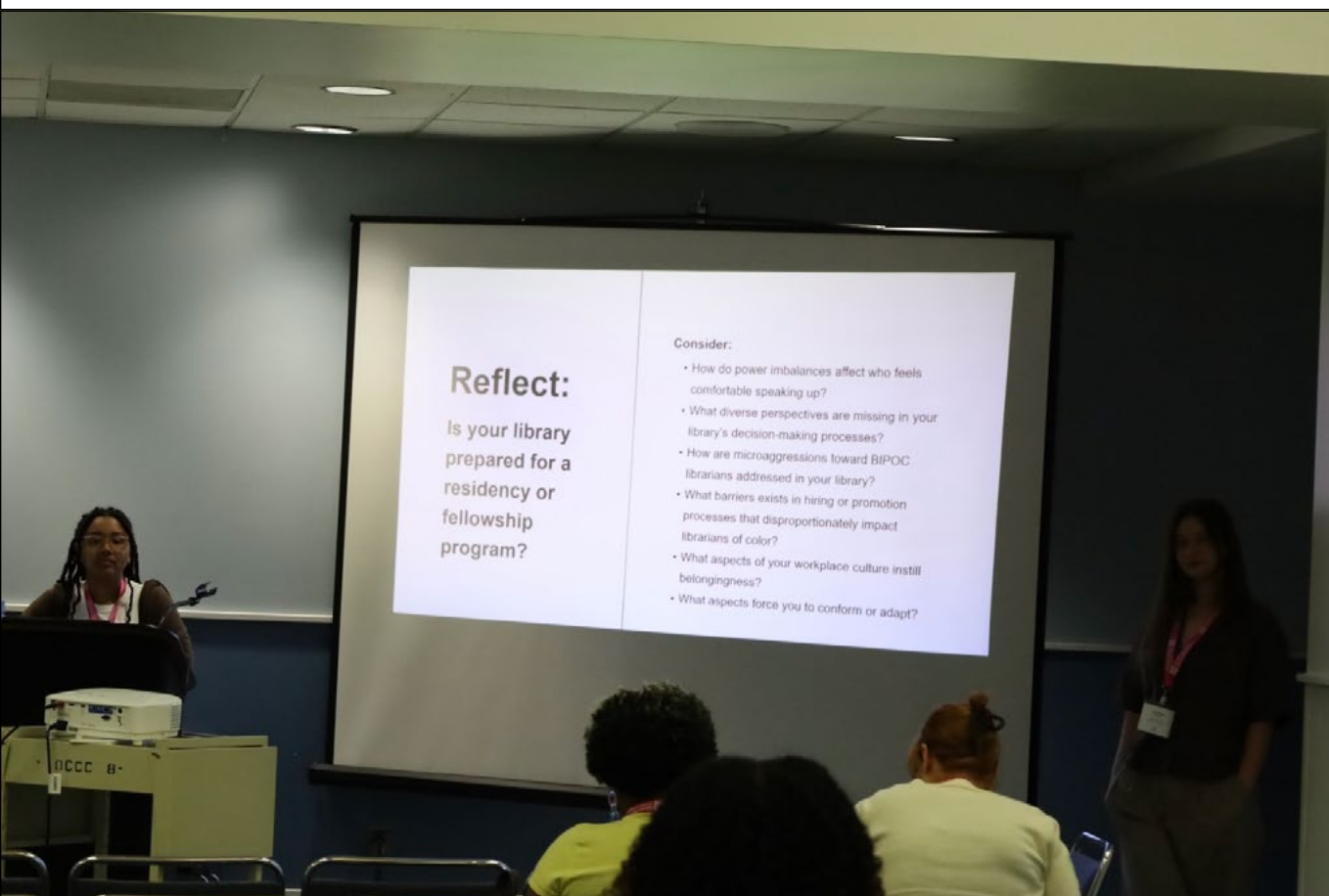


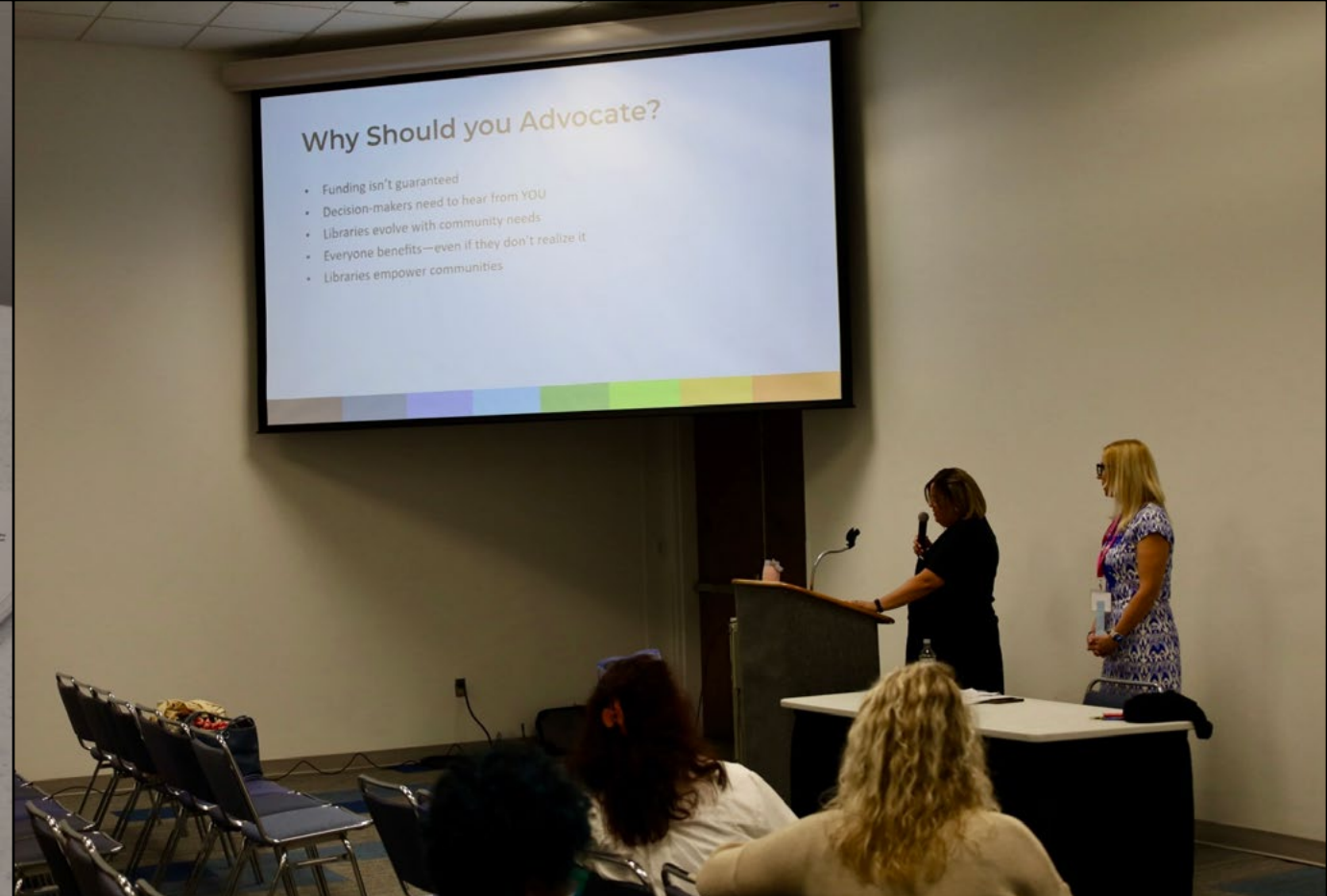
















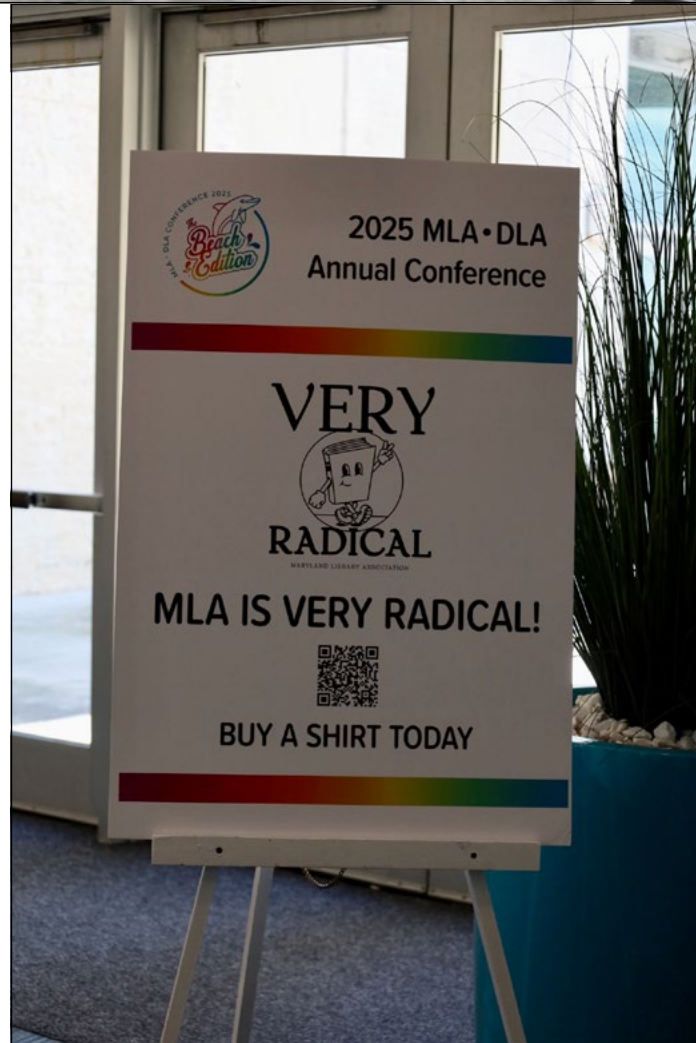




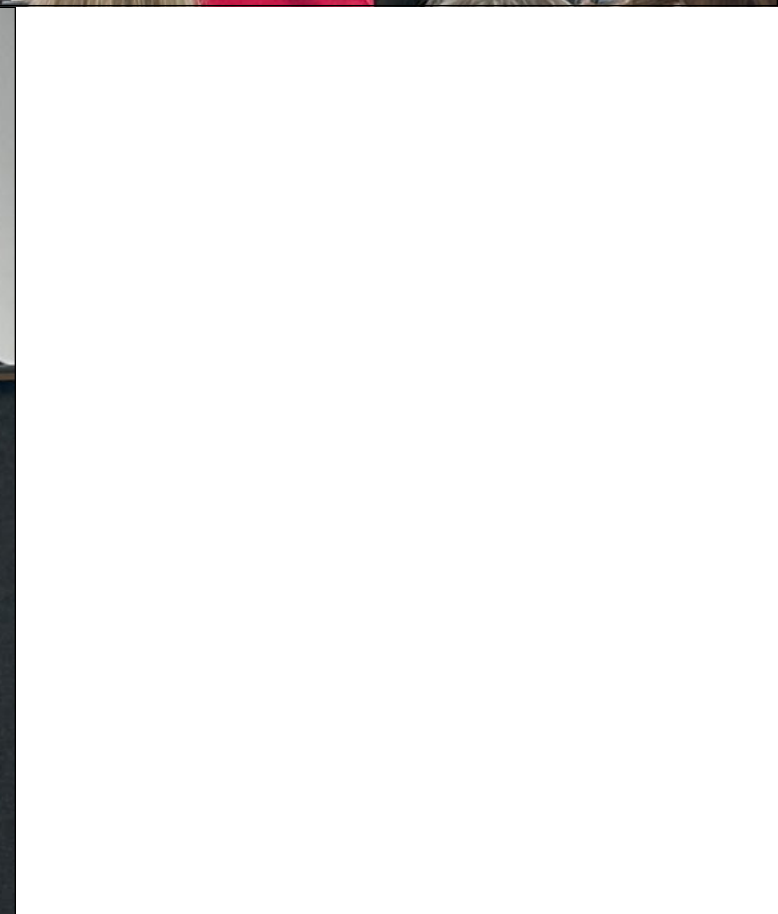
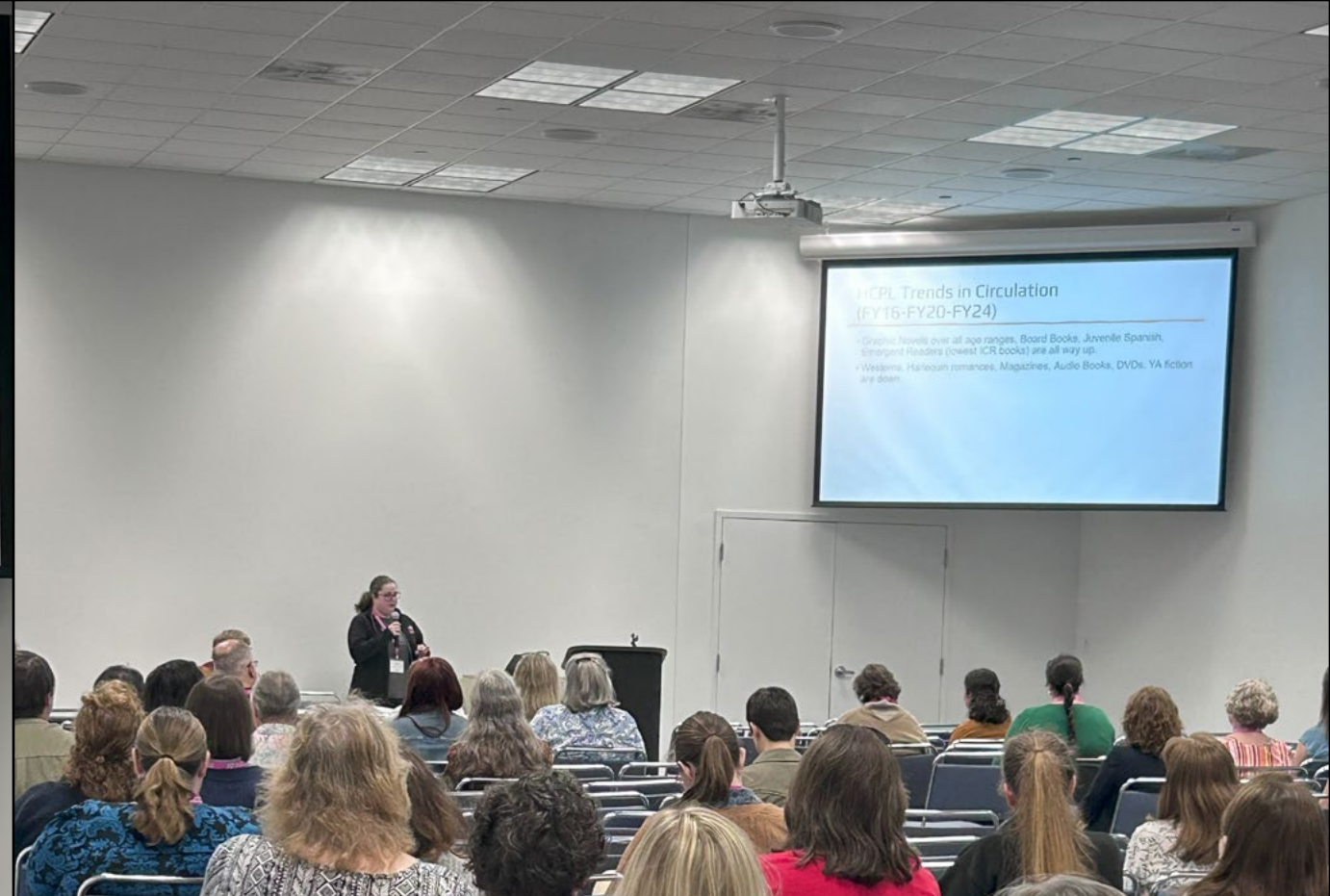














MLA Awards Committee Chair Catherine Hollerbach of Anne Arundel County Public Library with MLA President's Customer Service Award recipient Sierra Walker, Enoch Pratt Free Library.

Photographs courtesy of
Katie Kizzier & Amy Miller Meyers.



*Honorary Membership Award recipient Debby Bennett, retired, Caroline County Public Library, with
MLA Awards Committee Chair Catherine Hollerbach.*



Honorary Membership Award recipient Kerry O'Donnell, Wicomico Public Library, with MLA Awards Committee Chair Catherine Hollerbach.



*Outstanding Support Staff Award recipient Shirley Mason, Baltimore County Public Library, with
MLA Awards Committee Chair Catherine Hollerbach.*



Outstanding Member Award recipient Tif Sutherland, Calvert Library, with MLA Awards Committee Chair Catherine Hollerbach.

Photographs courtesy of
Katie Kizzier & Amy Miller Meyers.



Margaret Carty Emerging Leader Award recipient Alice Spencer-Knell, Anne Arundel County Public Library, with MLA immediate Past President Teonja Jung, Baltimore County Public Library.

Photographs courtesy of
Katie Kizzier & Amy Miller Meyers.



Libraries Change Communities Award recipient Michele Noble, Anne Arundel County Public Library, with MLA immediate Past President Teonja Jung, Baltimore County Public Library.



Libraries Change Communities Award recipient Nay Keppler, Baltimore County Public Library, with MLA immediate Past President Teonja Jung.

Photographs courtesy of
Katie Kizzier & Amy Miller Meyers.



Project of the Year Award recipients Andrew Miller and Thomas Vose, Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County, with MLA immediate Past President Teonja Jung.

Photographs courtesy of
Katie Kizzier & Amy Miller Meyers.



Project of the Year Award recipients Sara Syzmanski, Lisa Picker, and Andrea Berstler, Carroll County Public Library, with MLA immediate Past President Teonja Jung.

Photographs courtesy of
Katie Kizzier & Amy Miller Meyers.



Anne Arundel County Public Library Busch Annapolis Branch Manager Diane Benner, MLA Outstanding Volunteer Award recipient Lois Findlay, and Library Associate Martha Sykora.



*MLA immediate Past President Teonja Jung with
MLA Honorary Membership Award recipient
Kate Monagan, MLA Office.*



MLA immediate Past President Teonja Jung, Baltimore County Public Library, with award recipient Christine Feldmann, Anne Arundel County Public Library.

Photographs courtesy of
Katie Kizzier & Amy Miller Meyers.



Leah Perrin, Yesenia Garcia-Navarro, Jenny Bakos, Stephanie Weddle, and Jennifer Raab of Washington County Free Library (WCFL) with MLA immediate Past President Teonja Jung, accepting the award on behalf of Lauren Buechmann and Laura Tietz of the WCFL Marketing Team.

Photographs courtesy of
Katie Kizzier & Amy Miller Meyers.



Amy Miller Meyers, Carroll County Public Library, and Mou Chakraborty, Salisbury University Libraries, with a conference display featuring the Excellence in Marketing Awards.

The William G. Wilson Author Award 2025 Winner: Roseanne A. Brown

Lisa Kenyon, Enoch Pratt Free Library and Maryland State Library Resource Center

WHEN WE THINK ABOUT YA BOOKS, a broad category of fiction typically aimed at readers aged 12-18, we might think of angsty teen vampires, the unconventionally pretty girl who secretly yearns for the popular guy, and unfortunately, and incorrectly, a mostly white cast of characters.

However, this year's award committee found that YA fiction offers so much more than these stereotypes, exploring themes like self-discovery, and the experiences and challenges of adolescence in the transition to adulthood. YA novels tackle complex social issues such as identity, mental health, sexuality, and social injustice, thereby providing a safe environment for young readers—and increasing amounts of adult readers—to engage with these topics.

YA literature encompasses multiple genres, including romance, contemporary fiction, fantasy, and science fiction, and represents increasingly diverse voices. One of these voices sings out in Roseanne A. Brown's debut novel *A Song of Wraiths and Ruin*. In this North and West African folklore-inspired novel, injustice, magic, and romance collide, as a grieving crown princess and a desperate refugee find themselves on a course to murder each other as they journey through Brown's novel of culture, ancient magic, and intrigue.

Roseanne A. Brown was born in Kumasi, Ghana and immigrated to Maryland as a child. When she was growing up, Brown noticed a lack of Black representation in fantasy books for kids and knew that she wanted to use the power of writing to connect the different cultures she called home. *A Song of Wraiths and Ruin* (2020) was a New York Times bestseller, an Indie Bestseller, a Goodreads Choice Award Semifinalist, and a YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults Selection in 2021. Her sequel, *A Psalm of Storms and Silence*, was published in 2021.

Her debut middle grade novel *Serwa Boateng's Guide to Vampire Hunting* was a Publisher's Weekly Best Book of 2022, a Michigan YouPer Award 2023 Top 10 Title, and a Junior Library Guild Pick. In 2027, Brown will tackle adult romantic fantasy with *By Divine Rage*, and you can follow her at <https://www.roseanneabrown.com>. ■



Maryland Public Libraries Celebrate the Spring 2025 LATI Graduates

“The library is not just a place—it’s a promise. A promise that knowledge will be safeguarded, that learning will be shared, and that every person, regardless of their background, will be seen and served.”

—Elizabeth M. Hulett, Director of the Western Maryland Regional Library

THERE WAS A CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION in Maryland Public Libraries on Tuesday, June 10, 2025, when the most recent LATI cohort graduated. Thirty-three library associates from ten different Maryland counties presented their capstone projects and earned their graduation certificates at the Miller Branch of the Howard County Library System. Graduates were congratulated by Maryland State Librarian Morgan Lehr Miller who awarded each cohort member their certificate. Elizabeth M. Hulett, Director of the Western Maryland Regional Library, delivered a memorable keynote address, remarking that this was cohort members’ “beginning of your journey as stewards of knowledge, champions of lifelong learning, and defenders of access.”

What is LATI?

LATI is short for the Library Associate Training Institute and serves Maryland public libraries through Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant funds awarded by the Maryland State Library Agency. There has been a history of cooperative training for Library Associates (LA) 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 3 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.

Spring 2025 LATI

The cohort of LAs spent the spring engaged in instruction from expert trainers across all Maryland public libraries. One highlight included visiting the newly renovated Catonsville Branch of the Baltimore County Public Library as well as a stop at the Exploration Commons at Carroll County Public Library, participating in hands-on activities in the makerspace and teaching kitchen there. The cohort also visited the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled, learning about statewide services, and attended the Spring 2025 SLRC

Conference at the Enoch Pratt Free Central Library, Maryland State Library Resource Center in downtown Baltimore. This year’s annual spring conference focused on the theme of Disability, Inclusion, and Accessibility in Libraries (DIAL).

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, and Elizabeth M. Hulett, Director of the Western Maryland Regional Library, delivered the keynote, passionately explaining to graduates that “The world needs more library professionals like you. Thoughtful, skilled, compassionate individuals who understand that a library is more than just a building or a website, it is a cornerstone of community, and it is something the world needs, especially now.”

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 and Maryland State Library Resource Center; Vivian Fisher, Enoch Pratt Free Library and Maryland State Library Resource Center; Jennifer Keysor, 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.



Anne Arundel County Public Library cohort. Katrina Threat, Librarian; Rosa Ramirez, Library Associate; Genevieve Bushee, Library Associate; Maureen Dominiski, Assistant Branch Manager; Lillyvia Cottontail, Library Associate; Gina Post, Assistant Branch Manager; Emily Borger, Library Associate; Morgan Lehr Miller, Maryland State Librarian; Alexis deBorja, Library Associate; Abigail Williams, Assistant Branch Manager; Sara Catlin, Library Associate; Bethany Lambert, Learning and Development Manager; Allison Mayer, Library Associate; Rachel Myers, Branch Manager; Margery Bayne, Librarian; Kt Zawodny, Branch Manager; Heather Ravanbakhsh, Branch Manager.



Baltimore County Public Library cohort. Zeke White, Regional Manager; Rachel Smith, Assistant Library Manager; Jessica Rosenbaum, Library Associate; Morgan Lehr Miller, Maryland State Librarian; Alicia Romero, Library Associate; Lisa Swain, Assistant Library Manager; Tyler Wolfe, Regional Manager.



Enoch Pratt Free Library cohort. Lara Spahr, Manager of Technical Services; Morgan Lehr Miller, Maryland State Librarian; Damian Hughes, Library Associate.



Frederick County Public Libraries cohort. Becca Reeves, Branch Administrator; Bethany Watts, Staff Development Coordinator; Jessica O'Brien, Children's Services Supervisor II; Emmalee Miller, Library Associate; Lucas Moody, Library Associate; Morgan Lehr Miller, Maryland State Librarian; Anna Bennett, Library Associate; Gwen McQueeney, Library Associate; Emily Bomgardner, Assistant Branch Administrator; Kaitlyn McCray, Teen Services Supervisor; Sheila McDuff, Associate Director, Public Services.



Howard County Library System cohort. Katie George, Professional Development Instructor; Stacey Freedman, Children's Supervisor; Megan Bowen, Library Associate; Morgan Lehr Miller, Maryland State Librarian; Kandice Chibucos, Library Associate; Amber Wilson, Children's Supervisor; James Sanders, Library Associate.



Montgomery County Public Libraries cohort. Kirstra Otto, Branch Supervisor; Cristina Farfan, Library Associate; Nancy Sampson, Branch Supervisor; Yasmin Fuller, Library Associate; Klara Cachu-Hansgardh, Library Associate; Morgan Lehr Miller, Maryland State Librarian; Agnieszka Chomontowska, Library Associate; Laura Bechtel, Branch Supervisor; Nanyamkah Mars, Branch Supervisor; Christine Freeman, Branch Supervisor; Liz Bowen, Staff Development Coordinator.



Prince George's County Memorial Library System cohort. Ke'Yona Turpin-McCurtis, Public Services Specialist III; Dwyn Griffin, Public Services Specialist III; Tiffany Dickerson, Public Services Specialist II; Endia Pritchett, Library Associate; Morgan Lehr Miller, Maryland State Librarian; Aryana King, Library Associate; JD Weber, Library Associate; Melanie Townsend Diggs, Area Director; Jaleen Marbury-Walker, Staff Development Coordinator.



Queen Anne's County Library cohort. Michael Kovalcik, Makerspace Services Supervisor; Emma Hacker, Library Associate; John Rhodes, Library Associate; Morgan Lehr Miller, Maryland State Librarian; Rayne Willis, Library Associate; Michael Donoghue, Library Associate; Julie Ranelli, Branch Manager.



Washington County Free Library cohort. Kathleen O'Connell, Director of Public Services; Dakota Vaughn, Library Associate; Yesenia Garcia-Navarro, Library Associate; Morgan Lehr Miller, Maryland State Librarian; Stan Brown, Jr., Library Associate; Sarah Nadeau, Head of Information Services; Rachel Wolfe, Head of Bookmobile and Outreach Services; Tanya Smiley, Head of Youth Services.











"The library is not just a place—it's a promise. A promise that knowledge will be safeguarded, that learning will be shared, and that every person, regardless of their background, will be seen and served."

- Elizabeth M. Hulett, Director of the Western Maryland Regional Library



Highlights from the Spring Maryland State Library Resource Center (SLRC) Conference: Disability, Inclusion, and Accessibility in Libraries (DIAL)

Paul Chasen, Enoch Pratt Free Library and Maryland State Library Resource Center

All photos are courtesy of John Cassini, Enoch Pratt Free Library

On Tuesday, May 27, and Wednesday, May 28, 2025, the Enoch Pratt Free Library's Maryland State Library Resource Center (SLRC) hosted their Spring Conference, focused on the topics of Disability, Inclusion, and Accessibility in Libraries (DIAL). This year's Spring SLRC Conference was developed in collaboration with the Maryland State Library for the Blind & Print Disabled (LBPd) and the Maryland State Library Agency's (MSLA) Inclusion & Accessibility, Community of Practice.

Virtually, 185 attendees had opportunities to learn from the keynote speaker, renowned disability advocate Ryan Honick, and from library workers from in and out of Maryland. In-person, 170 attendees had opportunities to learn from the keynote speaker, Maryland Department of Disabilities' Assistant Secretary, Operations, John Brennan, and participate in informative and engaging sessions, tours, hands-on activities, and a vendor fair.

Here are some comments from our Virtual Day conference attendees:

[A]ll were very good, Ryan Honick was especially thought-provoking and helpful in thinking about how we continue to do this work together. I especially liked the continuum from "none of my business" to "not on my watch."

The Storytime for [A]dults offered excellent time for participants and speaker to interact through Q&A[.]

The Unintentional Accommodations session was full of helpful information and discussions.

Thank you for offering practical and understandable knowledge on this important and timely topic. The conference was very well organized, and every session was valuable.

I felt this conference was a wonderfully comprehensive presentation on the topics at hand and learn[ed] a lot about improving my skills and knowledge on these topics.

Here are even more comments from our In-Person Day conference attendees:

They were all good, and while I feel I know more about the topics, it helped me realize there is still much more information I need to learn.

I thoroughly enjoyed the day and found the sessions engaging, relevant, and inspiring, as I returned to my system ready to share ideas and set goals for how to better serve our community.

One of the best mini-conferences I've attended: starting with food, and also organization, logistics, informative and helpful presentations, and library staff engagement. Excellent job overall! Thank you!

The DCDL workshop was fantastic!!! As was the SLRC & Annex Tour. Eben in Special Collections was probably my favorite, other than DCDL.

All programs that I attended were led by knowledgeable and engaging speakers, but I would like to highlight the presenter of the [MDTAP] Assistive Technologies session (James Whitney...)[.] His presentation was outstanding.

RightHear was amazing!...And LBPd tour was fascinating as I had been to LBPd once many, many years ago and it was fascinating how much had changed! Especially in terms of technology!

The vendor fair was one of the most helpful parts for me. I made great connections and picked up helpful resources.

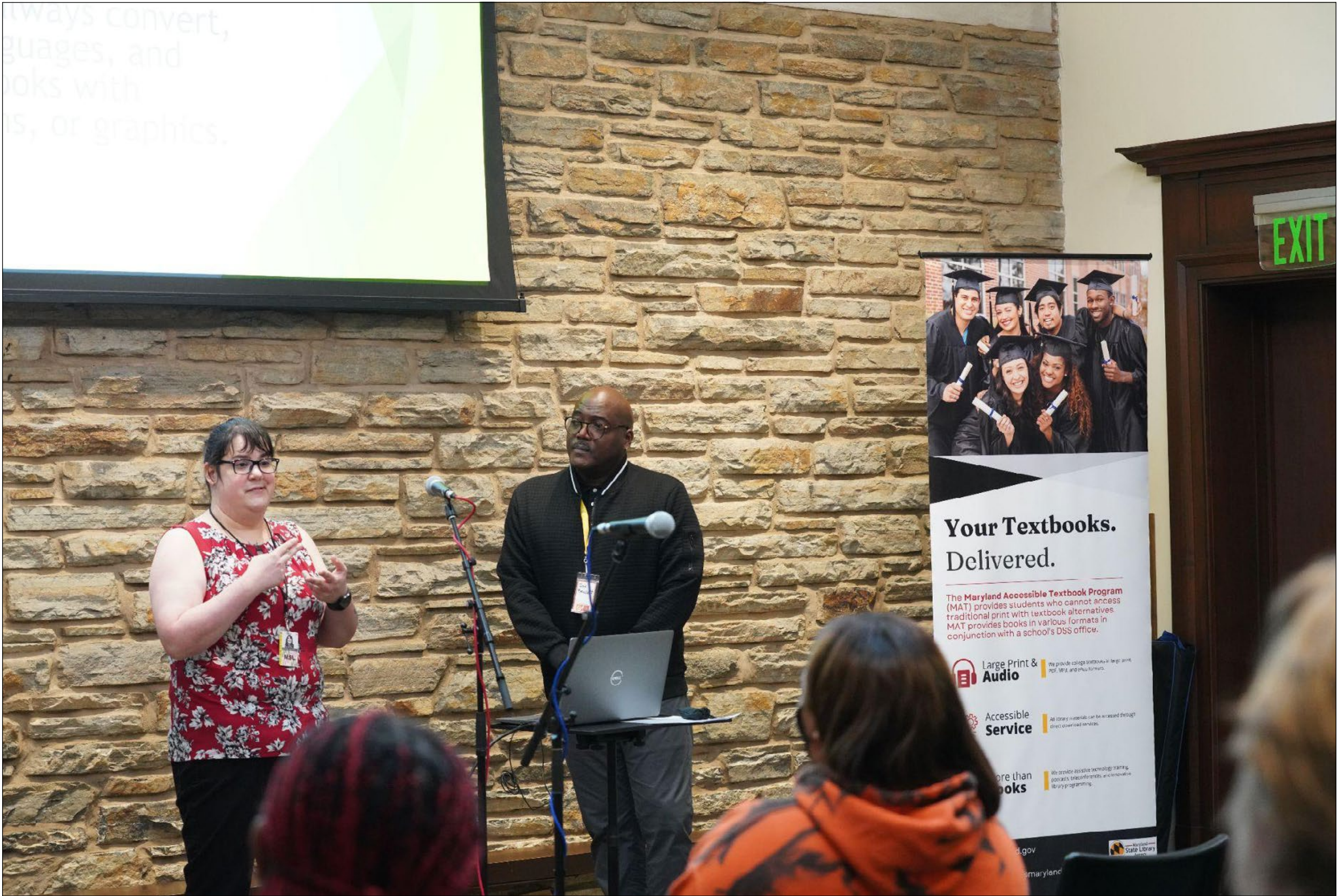
Please be on the lookout for more opportunities to attend SLRC conferences and webinars in the [Professional Development menu of our website](#).

Browse a gallery of photos of this event...

Here is a view from the mezzanine level of the Central Library/SLRC's Best & Next Department, as we see attendees on a SLRC tour.



Brittany Glaser and Joseph Beckett, Maryland State Library for the Blind & Print Disabled, presenting “The Little Program That Could,” teaching the audience about the Maryland Accessible Textbook (MAT) Program in the Children’s Department’s Day Room.



*Karla Dorsey and Maria Vilcek, Carroll County Public Library, presenting
“Adults Just Want to Have Fun” in the Poe Room.*



Danielle Navarro (pictured), Stacy Allen, and Missy DeCesaris, Calvert Library, presenting “Community First” in the Poe Room.



Heather Kerner, Enoch Pratt Free Library/SLRC, presenting “Empowering Creativity: Making the Arts Accessible for All” in the Wheeler Auditorium.



There were plenty of attendees enjoying lunch in the Central Library/SLRC's Creative Arts Center.



The Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County and University of Maryland Extension Celebrating a Partnership of Growth

Jenna Tenaglio, The Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County
Photos Courtesy of Jenna Tenaglio

SUMMER IS A SEASON OF GROWTH, gathering, and celebrating community. Here at the Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County, we have especially leaned into the spirit of the season by enriching our ongoing partnership with the University of Maryland Extension office and their Master Gardeners. In addition to introducing a pilot how-to gardening program series, we've added some really exciting items to our "Library of Things." So, let's take a bit of a deep dive and "dig" in.

Gardening at the Kitzmiller Branch!

Earlier this year, our Kitzmiller branch was selected to participate in Seed to Supper, a new pilot program offered through the University of Maryland Extension Home and Garden Information Center's Master Gardener program.

Seed to Supper is a series of free beginners' vegetable gardening courses designed to increase access to healthy foods. The courses highlight practical, low-cost techniques for building, planning, planting, maintaining, and celebrating the harvest of a successful vegetable garden. The program partners with non-profits, agencies, and religious organizations serving low-income and underserved residents to help those communities become stronger and more food secure through food gardening. It was started by the Oregon Food Bank and the Oregon State University Extension Service.

Fifteen families took part in Kitzmiller's five-week Seed to Supper program, presented by the Garrett County Master Gardeners. Participants learned the essentials through courses focused on garden planning, soil preparation, planting, garden care, and more. The experience finished with a bang as the families gathered for one final class to plant an array of vegetables in the Kitzmiller Community Garden.

In addition to gaining invaluable new knowledge, our participating families also received free gardening goodies at each session. These included gardening gloves, grow bags, a rain gauge, gardening trowel, floating row cover, and a variety of seeds to plant. Those who attended the complete series of Seed to Supper courses also received soil and an Earthbox® Original Gardening System.

Seed to Supper was also piloted in Allegany and Prince George's counties this spring. When asked about outcomes of the program so far, Jon Traunfeld, Program Director of the Home and Garden Information Center, stated, "Based on participant and educator comments, we think that the pilot was very successful! We'll be making decisions about expanding the program based on survey data, available resources, and interest expressed by potential partners."

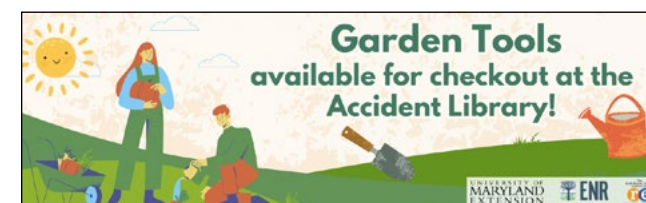
We are hopeful that all of our participants will enjoy a summer full of fresh veggies and herbs!

Introducing Gardening Tool Checkouts!

Thanks to generous funding provided by Extension Office's Environmental, Natural Resources, and Sea Grant (ENR) Program, we are excited to announce gardening tool checkouts from our Accident branch! From pitchforks and tillers to transplanting spades and soil blockers, we have something for everyone.

Working closely with the University of Maryland Extension Office and their Master Gardeners allows us to provide an array of extra enrichment opportunities to the communities we serve. We look forward to continuing this amazing partnership through even more programs and initiatives like Seed to Supper and gardening tool checkouts!

[Browse a gallery of photos...](#)





Jon Traunfeld, Program Director of the Home and Garden Information Center, teaches participants about container gardening.



Seed to Supper participants learn the basics of planting a garden.

Seed to Supper attendees team up to plant the Kitzmiller Community Garden.



Participants after planting the Kitzmiller Community Garden, joined by Ashley Bachtel-Bodkins, University of Maryland Extension Senior Agent Associate and Master Gardener Coordinator; Cambria Snyder, UMD Extension Program Assistant; and Master Gardeners Grace McKearin, Daniel Portwood, and Diane Scattergood.



UMGC Library Celebrates National Library Week

Renee Brown, Robert Miller, and Cynthia Thomes, University of Maryland Global Campus Library

At the University of Maryland Global Campus Library, we celebrated National Library Week (April 6-12) with a special interactive website and pizza!

UMGC is a distance learning school, and our library is entirely online. So, we brought NLW to our community with a special website. The website featured information on NLW and ways to get involved in library advocacy.

Also featured were Library Searching Superstar Challenges. For these, participants tested their information literacy skills and learned about interesting resources in UMGc library databases, such as:

- 📖 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dissertation
- 📖 a newspaper article from the Civil War
- 📖 a signed letter to UMGc from Dwight Eisenhower

Successful searchers could take a quiz to receive a Certificate of Superstardom (suitable for framing!).

Please check out [our NLW website](#) and try a challenge or two!

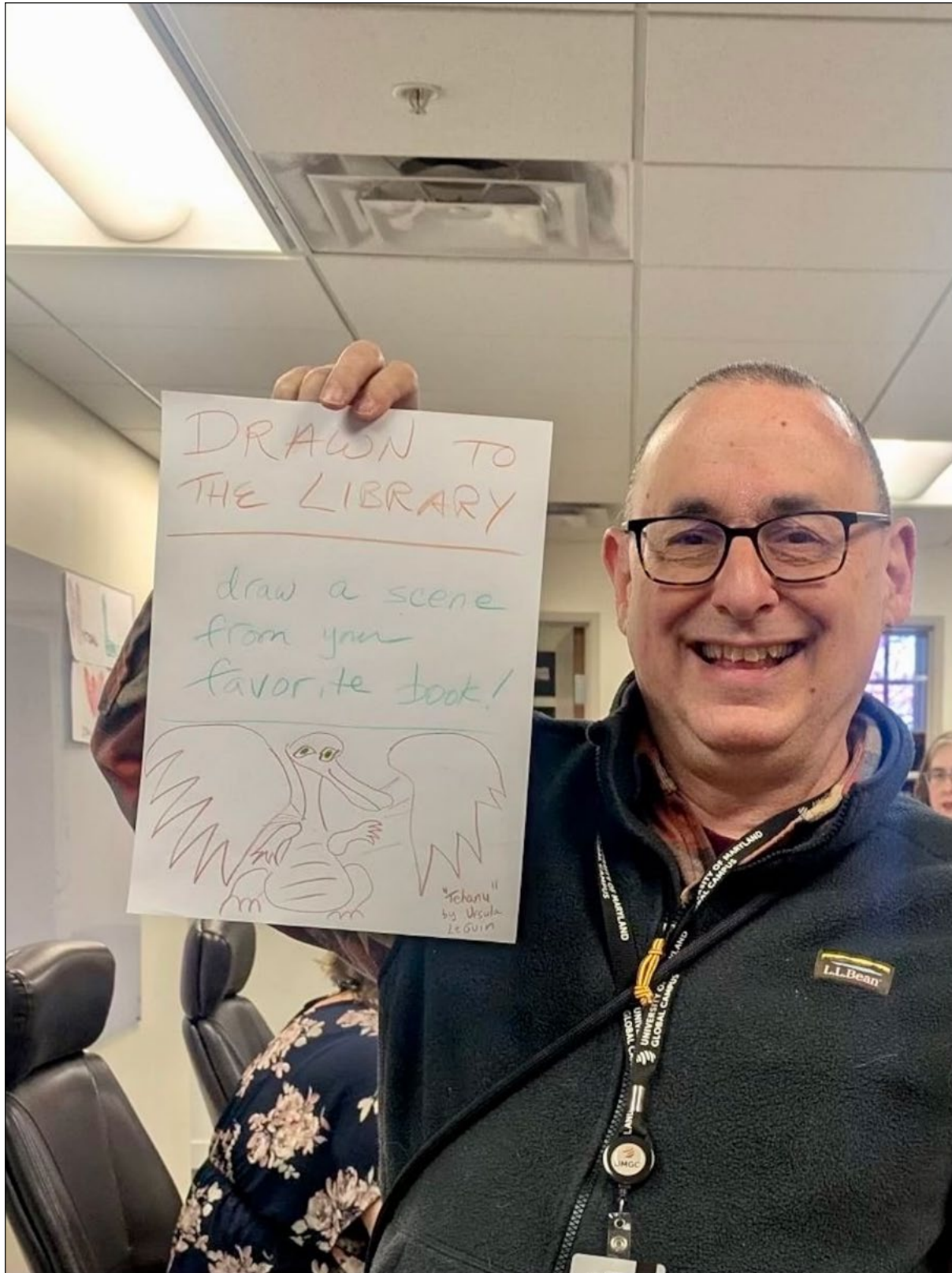
As an online school, we can't easily hold an in-person event for students. So instead, we celebrated NLW with UMGc colleagues from other departments, onsite at our headquarters in Adelphi. To throw a successful party, librarians ordered pizza, baked cookies, and gave out ALA bookmarks!

Because ALA's theme for this year's NLW was "Drawn to the Library," we also provided paper and colored pencils and asked party attendees to make a drawing about their favorite book. Most of the books chosen were sci-fi/fantasy, but one nostalgic librarian stuck with a lifetime favorite: Judy Blume.

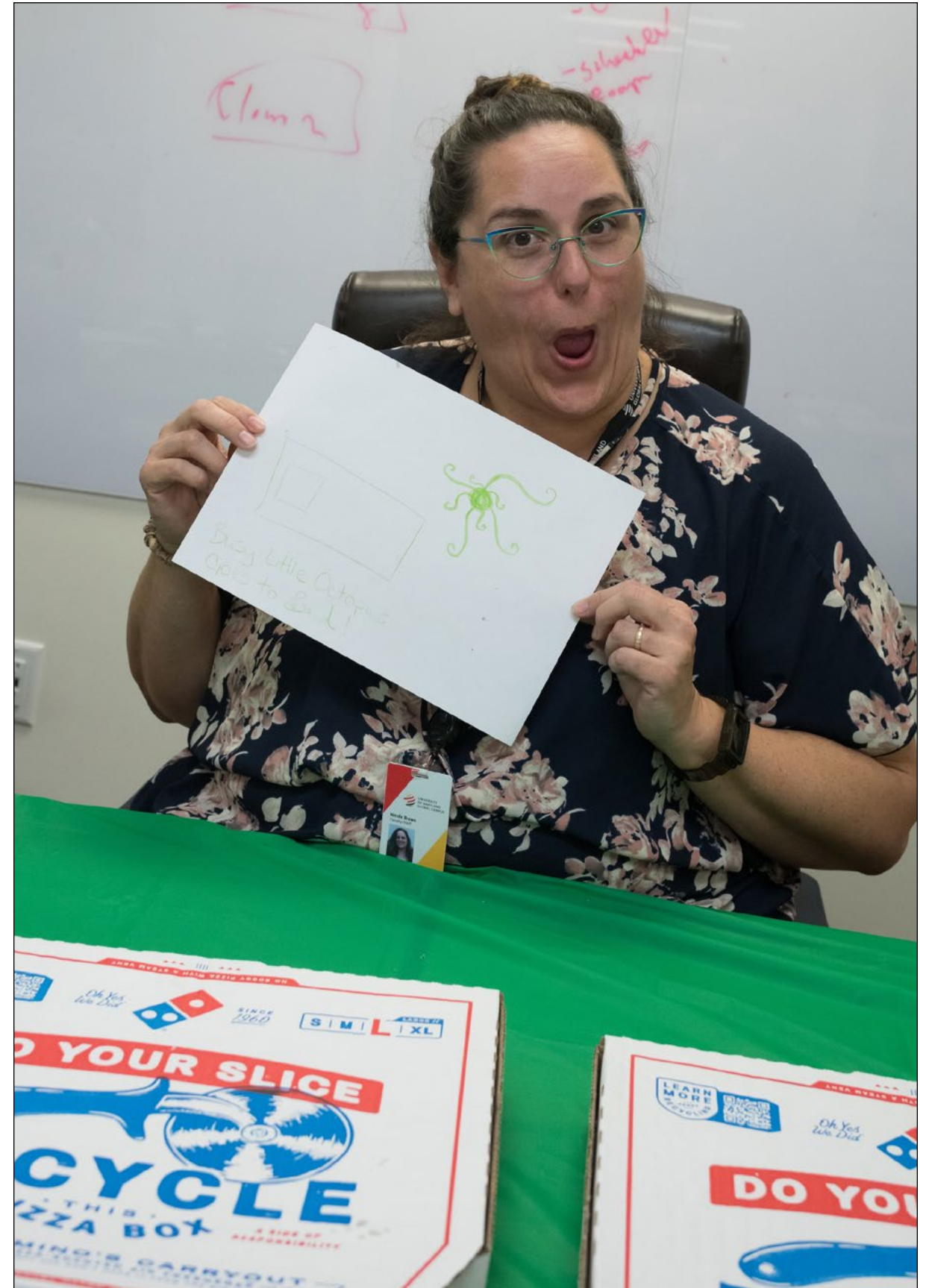
Our library benefited by participating in NLW. Throwing a pizza party always helps raise the library's visibility! The database-searching challenges on our NLW website highlighted interesting library resources and taught information literacy skills. And we enjoyed promoting the great work that ALA does in support of libraries during NLW and all year round. ■



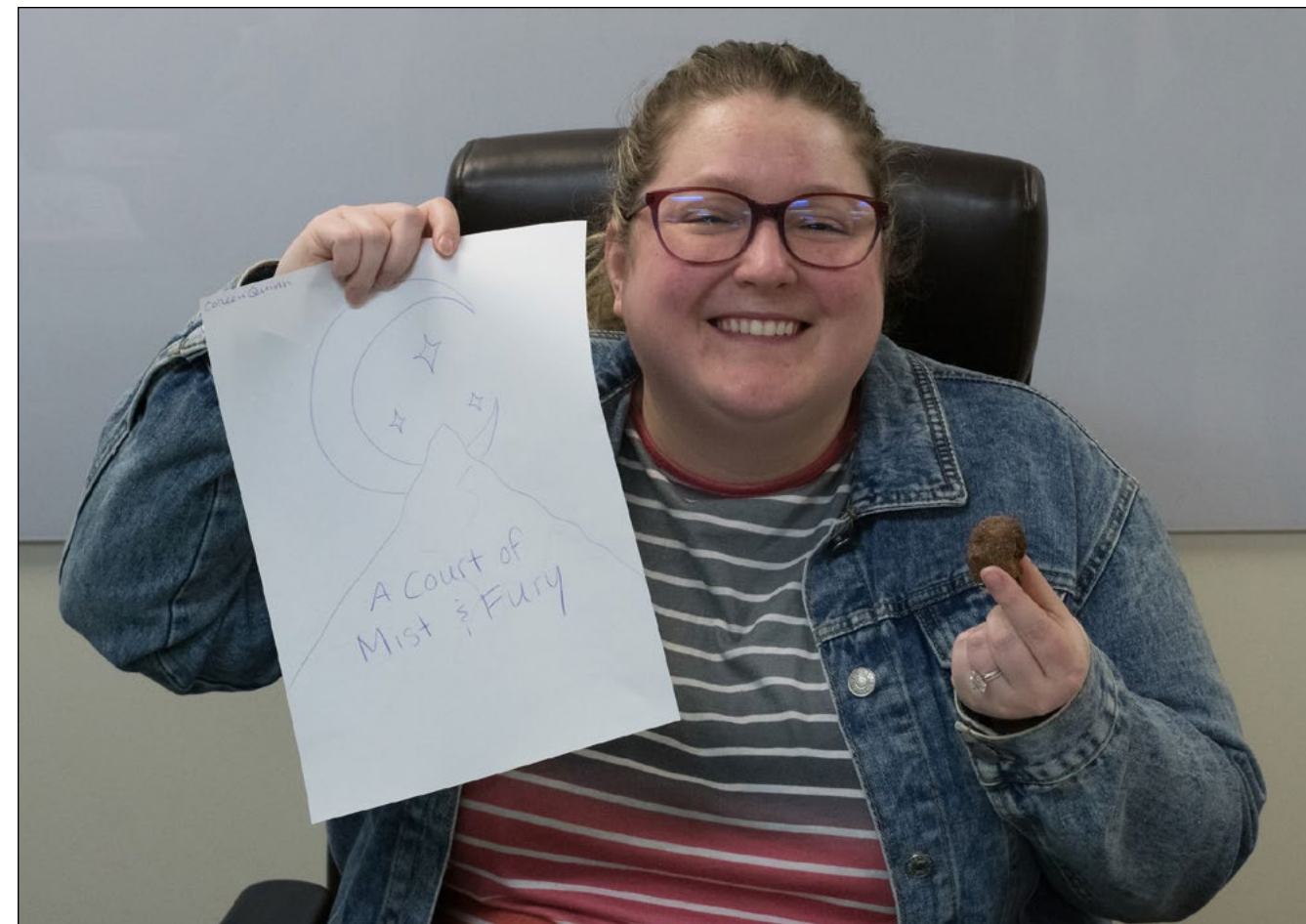
Browse a gallery of photos...



◆ Robert Miller



Renee Brown ◆



◆ Colleen Quinn

◆ Mariette Largess

Goucher Celebrates Jane Austen

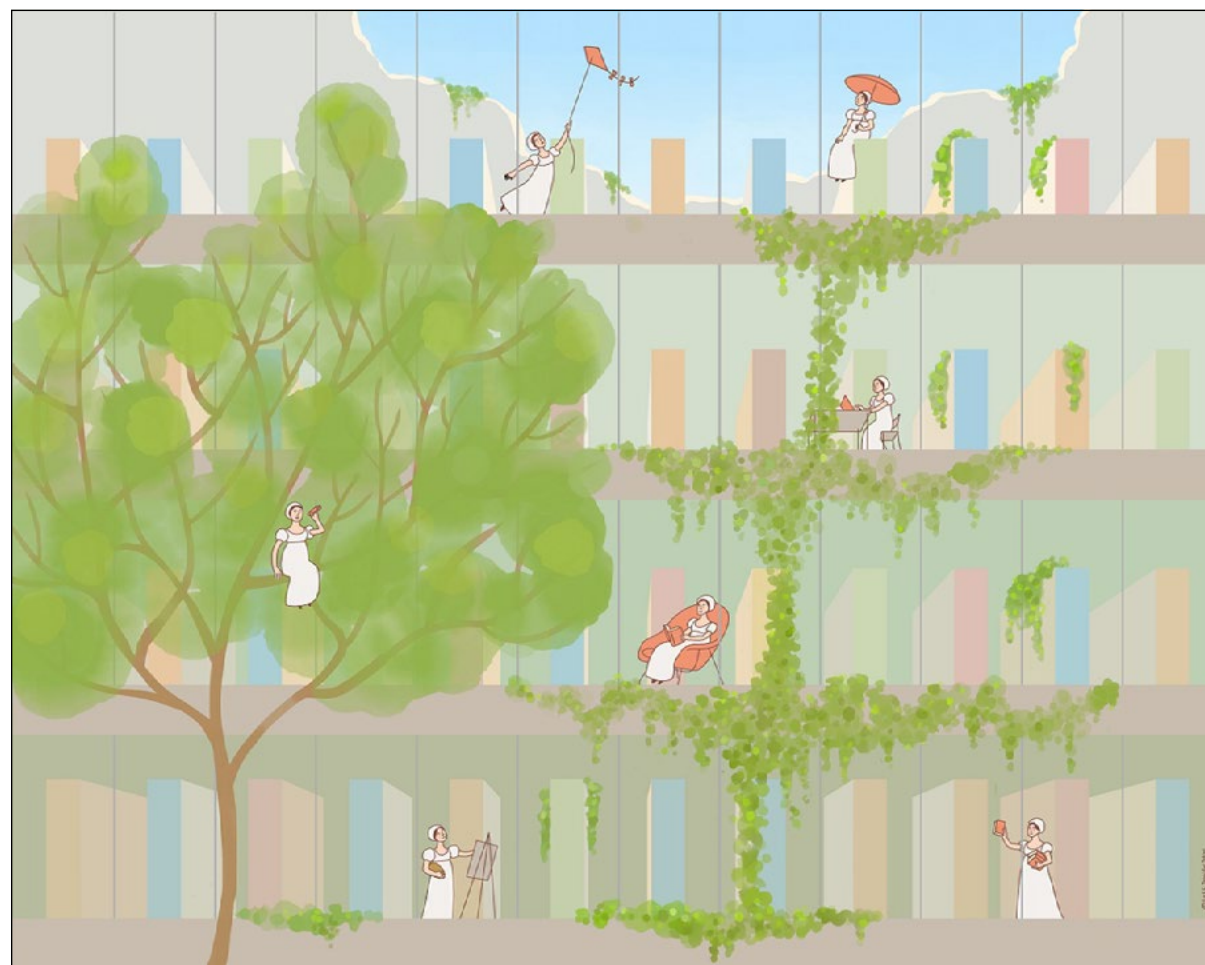
Bea Hardy, Goucher College Library
Illustration by Jennifer Tobias

DID YOU KNOW that Goucher College possesses one of the largest collections of Jane Austen books and materials in the world? Alberta Hirshheimer Burke '28 founded the collection, bequeathing it to the College in 1975, and it has kept growing ever since then. This summer and fall, in honor of the author's 250th birthday, we are participating in numerous events to show off our collection and celebrate this acclaimed female author. Here's what's happening:

Through September 14, 2025: *"A Lively Mind: Jane Austen at 250,"* exhibit at the Morgan Library and Museum in New York City. Co-curated by Goucher's Juliette Wells, Professor of Literary Studies and noted Austen scholar, the exhibit includes more than 40 items from the Goucher collections.

September 13, 2025: *"If I Loved You Less: Celebrating Jane Austen's 250th Birthday and the 50th Anniversary of the Goucher College Jane Austen Collection."* This fun-filled one-day event includes afternoon tea, a talk, a tour, workshops (including dance lessons), a Regency dinner, and an English country dance. Selling out fast, but if it does, you can join the wait-list by emailing specialevents@goucher.edu.

October 10-12, plus 13, 2025: *JASNA Annual Meeting: Austen at 250: "No check to my Genius from beginning to end."* The Jane Austen Society of North America will hold its annual meeting in Baltimore from October 10-12. Goucher professor Juliette Wells will present a plenary talk, and Goucher Special Collections will have a display at the conference hotel,



plus attendees will be able to visit campus on October 13 to tour the College's Jane Austen collection, see related exhibits, and view a play.

October 28, 2025, 5-7 p.m.: Jane Austen Open House in Special Collections, fourth floor of the Athenaeum at Goucher. See some of the treasures of our Jane Austen collection. Free, no registration required.

We also have several exhibits on view in the library, open whenever the library is open. Two student-curated exhibits, *"By a Lady: Alberta H. Burke, Jane Austen & The Art of Collecting"* and *"Celebrating 1995: The*

Year That Made Jane Austen a Star," will be on display in the library's fourth-floor reading room through December 19. Goucher Library's first-ever Library Artists-in-Residence will be creating a display based on their interactions with the Jane Austen collection. This is also on the fourth floor of the Athenaeum right outside the library. Free, no registration required.

Alberta Burke created amazing notebooks about Jane Austen, preserving correspondence, cartoons, newspaper articles, theater playbills, film stills, and radio scripts. We have now digitized those notebooks. They will be made available online in mid-September. Free.

For more information on our collections, information on any additional events as they are scheduled, and links to the digitized scrapbooks when they become available, see the [Jane Austen Collection at Goucher College website](#). ■

New Way to Paws and De-Stress at Towson University's Cook Library

Joyce Garczynski and Suzanna Yaukey,
Towson University



Tabby with Maryland Libraries. Photo courtesy of Joyce Garczynski.

THE START OF FINALS AT TOWSON UNIVERSITY (TU) is marked by a familiar ritual: Albert S. Cook Library partners with [Pets on Wheels](#) to bring therapy animals into the library for a few hours. Students sign up in droves for 15-minute slots to pet their stress away, making it consistently the library's most popular program. But students don't just get stressed during finals, and what about students with allergies?

Meet our mewest collection additions: Three animatronic [Joy for All Companion Cats](#). When switched on, they purr, meow, roll-over, and will respond to touch and brushing their life-like hair. Each is barcoded and comes with its own carrying case and brush. Any TU student, faculty, or staff member can currently borrow a cat for up to a week at a time.

"We decided to invest in these cats to expand our support for community wellness," said Cook Library Dean Suzanna Yaukey. "We've seen the magic that happens when our students get to interact with therapy animals during finals and we knew we needed to find a way to make it more accessible. These cats seemed like an inexpensive, effective, and fun way to do that."

When the cats arrived at Cook Library back in February, staff thought it would be the purrrfect opportunity to test out the cats before making them available for loan. Cats attended staff and leadership meetings, as well as weekly informal check-ins. Librarian Joyce Garczynski also took all three cats to an Office of Sponsored Programs and Research informal lunch meeting to give staff an opportunity to de-stress. "I hadn't considered that the

cats could be part of a wellness program we could run with campus and community groups," noted Garczynski. "But seeing how people's eyes lit up when they interacted with the cats and how they got a whole group talking about pets and happy, joyous topics helped me to see additional potential for the cats." Hopefully the cats can help the entire community from stressing meowt!

Before they could be borrowed, the cats needed names. After briefly considering a social media contest, library student employees and Access Services staff decided to name the cats after pioneering library workers. They named the tuxedo cat Sadie Pawterson Delaney after librarian and bibliotherapy pioneer, Sadie Peterson Delaney. The orange tabby became Dorothy B. Porterpaws (or Dottie for short) after Dorothy B. Porter, a librarian and radical cataloger. Finally, the group decided to name the silver and white cat

Purra Belpré after Pura Belpré, a librarian, author, and puppeteer. Staff also gave each cat a nametag that includes a QR code that takes borrowers to more information about that cat's namesake. Each tag also includes borrower instructions such as, "Please do not remove batteries from this cat, get it wet, or feed it after midnight (or feed it at all!). Return [the cat] to the AskUs Desk at Cook Library only, do not use the book drop."

We began publicizing the cats on our library's social media at the end of April, but after the university promoted the cats on their channels, interest swelled. The [video announcing the cats](#) received over 750 likes on the TU Instagram account and the cats have been borrowed (or whiskered away) 14 times since we began circulating them. With this popularity, the ability of the staff to use the cats in internal and external library programming became limited. We recently purchased two additional staff cats to use for these purposes. These cats have not yet been named; we are willing to accept fur-ocious donations if you would purrhaps like to have a cat named in your honor.

We are currently brainstorming how we can make the best use of our cats to meet the needs of our community. A top consideration is shortening the loan period, so more students can have an opportunity to unwind with Sadie, Dottie, and Purra. We're also looking at how we can accommodate requests to use the cats in research and classroom instruction. Regardless of the logistics, the future looks absolutely bright fur these three pretty kitties. ■

OutRAIGeous Reviews

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

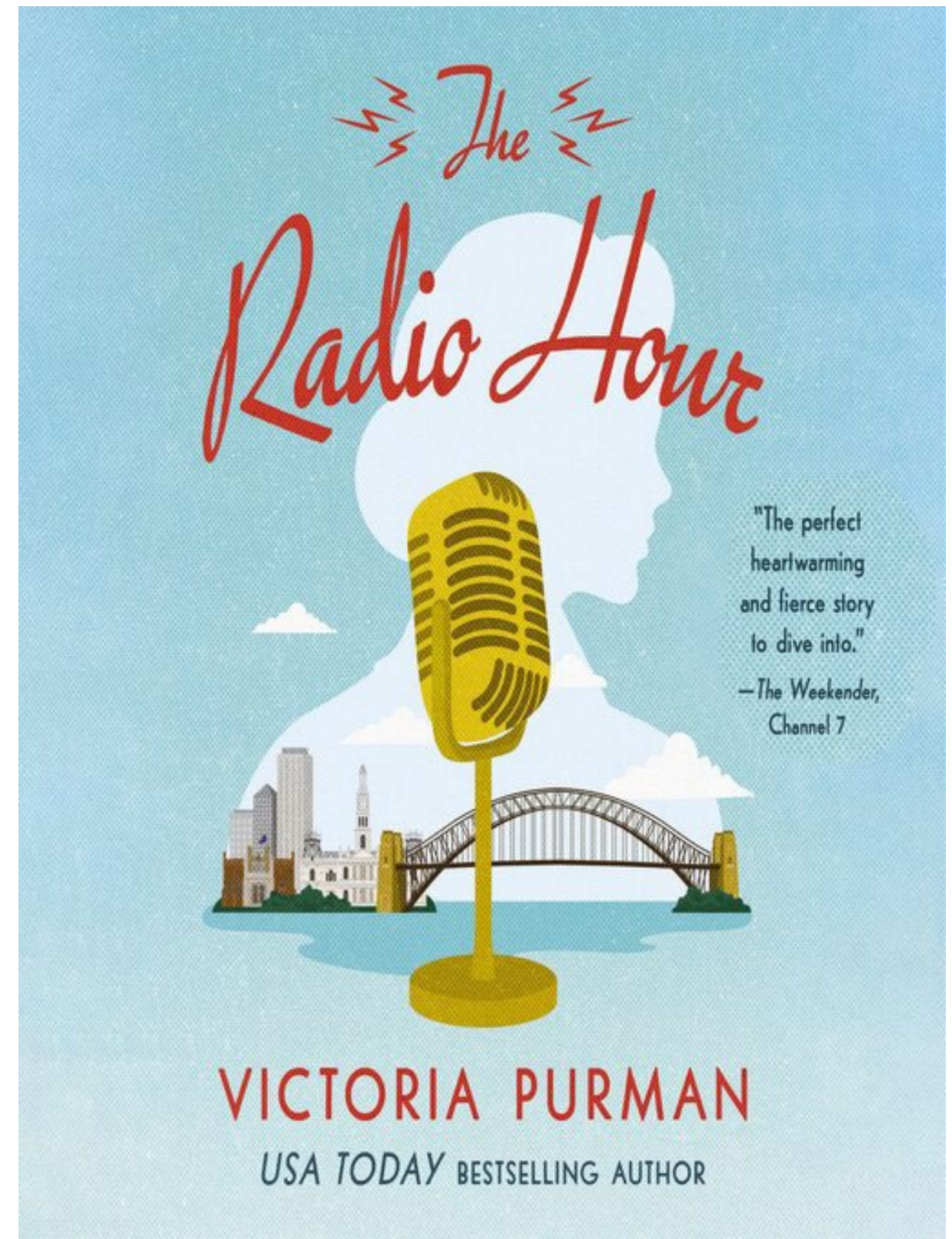
The Radio Hour, written by Victoria Purman and read by Jennifer Vuletic (Harper Muse, 2025)

Review by Carolyn Harnick

Set in 1956, in Australia, in the world of radio, this story might not strike you as one that would connect with a twenty-first century American audience. But, in the (translated) words of Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr, "The more things change, the more they stay the same."

In this story we follow one Martha Berry as she navigates a new position at a radio broadcaster in Sydney. Martha has worked with many producers and actors during her career and learned how to do almost every job at the station, including putting up with all of the male egos strutting around. The newest ego belongs to an untested but nonetheless promoted young man who is supposed to be developing and writing a new radio drama. Martha finds that she needs to "help" more and more each day until the radio drama becomes more hers than that of the man whose name is on the door. With her job ever-changing in every way but title and pay, with the demands of caring for her aging mother, with the mentoring of new young ladies coming to work at the broadcaster, and with the new experience of menopause, Martha's story morphs from a light read about a radio show into a riveting tale of female empowerment.

This title will appeal to fans of Jennifer Chiaverini, Beverly Jenkins' *Blessings* series, and Parini Shroff's *The Bandit Queens*. The audiobook is highly recommended.

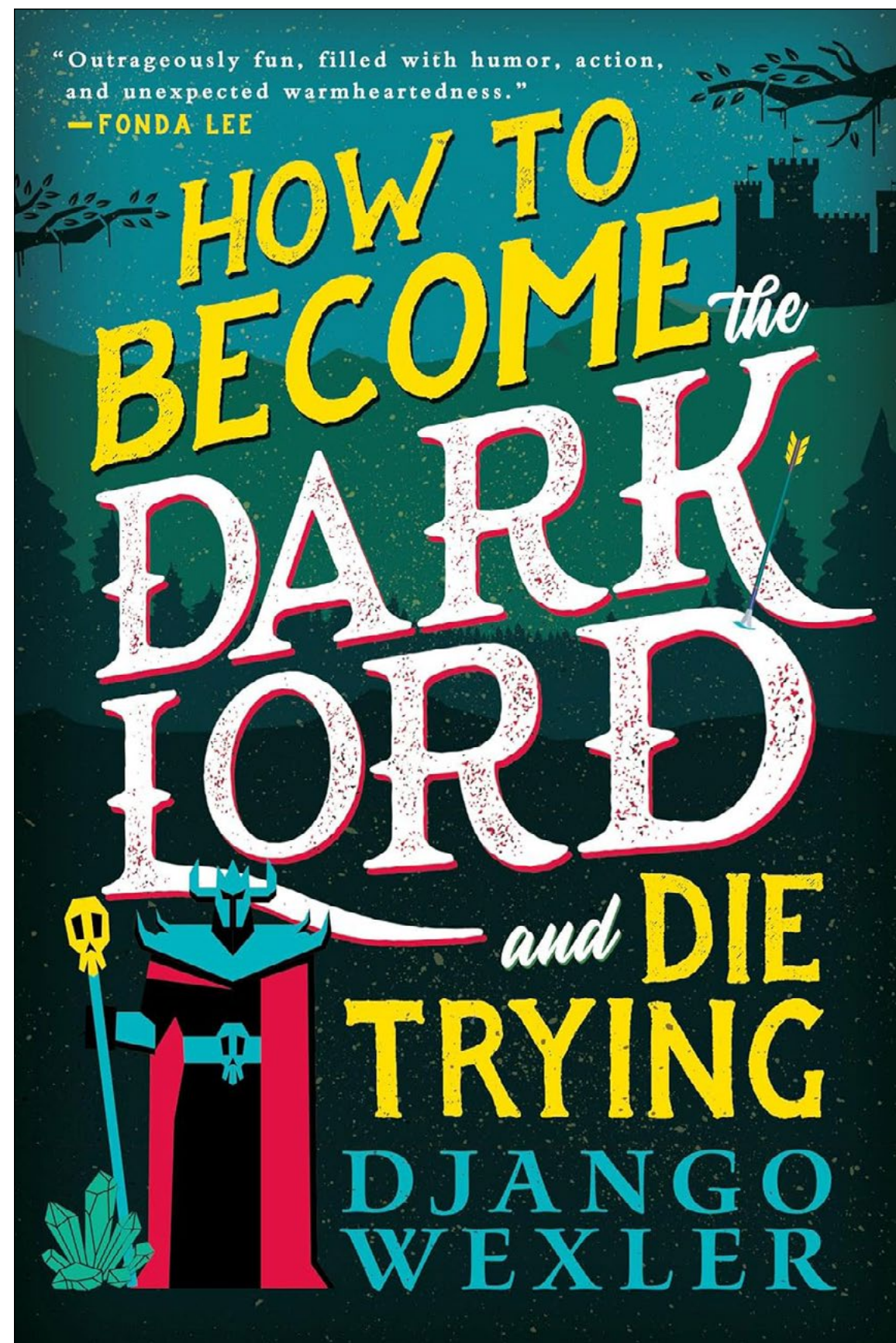


***How to Become the Dark Lord and Die Trying (Dark Lord Davi #1)* by Django Wexler (Orbit Books, 2024)**

Review by Theo Scully

Davi has been having the worst time lately - she keeps waking up in another world to a wizard telling her she is the Chosen One who will take down the Dark Lord and defend humanity from the wilders, a species of human-animal hybrids. But every time she tries to take them down, Davi ends up dying in new and horrific ways - and she has now been at this for a few thousand years. This time, Davi has had enough. If being the hero is getting her nowhere, maybe it's time she became the Dark Lord. Funnily enough, Davi's journey to becoming the Dark Lord is going much better than her previous heroic attempts; and as she learns more about the wilders in her horde, she begins to realize just how essential it is that this time, Davi doesn't die.

How to Become the Dark Lord and Die Trying is one of my favorite books of 2025 - this epic fantasy is hilarious, with pop culture references, irreverent jokes, and a quippy first-person POV. I have heard it described as *Lord of the Rings* meets *The Princess Bride*, and I agree wholeheartedly! I think this is a great bridge for readers who enjoy action-packed fantasy films, but don't have the attention span to necessarily enjoy the same narrative in a bookish format. I also really want to highlight the queernormative nature of *How to Become...*, that this fantasy world that Davi finds herself in features multiple queer characters and Davi herself is unapologetically bisexual. While there is a huge conflict due to the interspecies war between humans and wilders, none of that conflict ever comes from someone's sexuality and/or gender identity. In today's political climate, it is heartening to read Davi's story and know that being queer isn't the problem - it's being stuck in a time loop and having to refigure out just how to get past that pesky orc without dying this time. In addition, it's a great time to grab your copy of *How to Become...* as it is the first book in a duology ("Dark Lord Davi"), and the sequel *Everybody Wants to Rule the World Except For Me* just came out in late May!



Someone You Can Build A Nest In by John Wiswell (DAW, 2024)

Review by Shannon Carney

Someone You Can Build A Nest In is a romantic horror novel told from the perspective of the monster. Shesheshen is a shapeshifting monster who is attacked by monster hunters. After taking a human form, she is nursed back to health by a human named Homily. The problem is that Homily thinks Shesheshen is human. The bigger problem is that Homily and her influential family are hunting a shapeshifting monster who put a curse on her family. Amidst a budding romance, Shesheshen has to navigate being human in an upper-class society. She also must decide if she will come clean to Homily about her true identity. How would that affect her plan to lay eggs inside of Homily? Eggs that will devour her once they hatch. And does Shesheshen want that fate for the woman she loves?

Someone You Can Build A Nest In is a great read if you like a little gore with your romance. Wiswell does a wonderful job of letting a warm and loving dynamic bloom in a violent and cruel world. In addition to the class disparity, *Someone You Can Build A Nest In* is a coming-of-age novel that deals with themes of love, grief, and self-acceptance.





Maryland Library Association's Future of Libraries Interest Group

Demystifying AI Instruction: Making AI Understandable for the Uninitiated

Tracy Miller, Harford County Public Library

At the MLA/DLA Conference in May, the Future of Libraries Interest Group (FOLIG) sponsored the program, "Demystifying AI Instruction: A Byte-Sized Case Study." The program was presented by Jessica Seipel and Sahana Callahan from Howard County Library System (HCLS). They described providing AI instruction to the public, with a focus on describing things in "laymen's terms." Jessica and Sahana shared the type of information they provided in their sessions and how they evaluated the programs. They also told us about their successes, their setbacks, and the lessons they learned from the experience.

After ChatGPT 4 was released on March 14, 2023, Jessica and Sahana saw an opportunity: they wanted to make AI more understandable for the uninitiated. They also wanted to bring their perspective as librarians to the task of informing customers about AI's effect on several library core issues: privacy, intellectual freedom, copyright and mis/disinformation.

They started by creating an in-person class targeting folks who were not tech-savvy. They were excited to have 30 people sign up, but the initial interest did not translate into attendance. They switched to a virtual "lunch and learn" format and had a better response: 31 people signed up and 20 people attended. In addition, they tried an "AI Petting Zoo" in the Fall of 2024. This was an in-person event that allowed people to work hands-on with the AI programs. They also updated content to reflect recent developments. They had success with this format as well.

These programs were followed by surveys to measure changes in people's attitudes, experience, and knowledge. The surveys showed that the education had the intended effect: people's overall AI knowledge increased, and they indicated being more aware of the more problematic aspects of AI as well.

Jessica and Sahana shared some best practices for providing AI programming in a

responsible way. They created dummy accounts for customers to use to protect their privacy. They updated their content extensively for each session. They specifically mentioned that this is a challenge when presenting AI programs—the information changes so quickly, that the program that you presented recently can be quite outdated by the time you want to present it again.

In Winter 2025, Jessica and Sahana presented "AI Power Up: Navigating the Digital Age" for teens and adults connected with teens. They created staff trainings in the Spring of 2025 with the goal of ensuring that "staff system-wide have a factual understanding so they can use (or not use) this technology in an informed manner and explain it to curious library customers." These programs have proven to be successful as well.

At the time of the conference, the presenters were looking forward to an upcoming program at HCLS, "AI in Our Community: Exploring AI's Social Impact." Crystal Trice, an award-winning librarian and national presenter, was going to speak on "the profound impact of AI on education" and offer "insights into how AI is reshaping teaching, learning, and parental involvement, and strategies for navigating these changes." This would be followed by a panel discussion with more local AI experts.

Jessica and Sahana finished their presentation by sharing some of their favorite AI tools:

[Goblin.tools](#)

[Claude.ai](#)

[Pi.ai](#)

[Character.ai](#)

[Venice.ai](#)



Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Panel

Word on the Street: Cultural Competence and Cultural Humility

Baltimore County Public Library honored and celebrated the rich traditions of Día de los Muertos at a festival for all ages, held at the Reisterstown branch in November, 2024

Cassandra Miller, Baltimore County Public Library

Photographs courtesy of Baltimore County Public Library

When talking about working across lines of difference, you might hear two terms: cultural competence and cultural humility. While these concepts are related, they have distinct meanings and reflect different ways of thinking about how we engage with people whose identities and experiences differ from our own.

Cultural competence is the ability to understand, appreciate, and interact effectively with people with cultural and belief systems that are different from yours. The pursuit of cultural competence requires gaining knowledge about traditions, communication styles, values, and histories and applying that knowledge in meaningful and respectful ways.

For example, a culturally competent library staff member might ensure there are bilingual signs and handouts available in Spanish at a branch serving a large Latine population. They might plan programs providing information about cultural holidays like Lunar New



Year or Día de Muertos. With a high level of cultural competence, we are able to affirm and celebrate the identities and cultures of our customers.

Cultural humility, on the other hand, invites us to interrogate our own cultures and values through the practice of continuous self-reflection and self-critique. Rather than focusing on mastering “other” cultures, it asks us to examine our own assumptions and recognize that each person is the expert on their own experience. It means acknowledging that we won’t always get it right and being open to learning when we miss the mark.

In a library context, a culturally humble staff member might notice that a caregiver isn’t participating in a parent-child program in the way they expected. Instead of correcting the behavior or making assumptions, this staff member might ask themselves, “What cultural expectations am I bringing to this interaction?” and then seek to learn more before acting. They will ask questions with curiosity, not judgment, and they will invite feedback from community partners and act upon it.

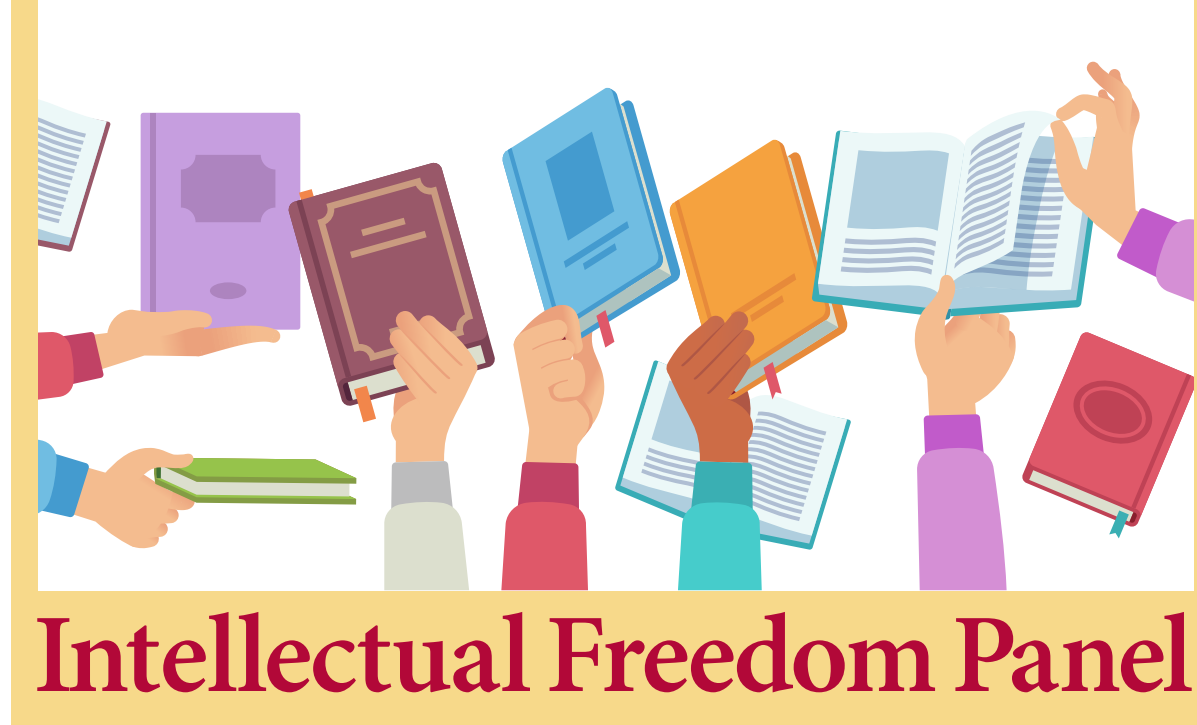
At the end of the day, library workers benefit from using both approaches to serve our communities effectively. Cultural competence helps us meet immediate needs with thoughtful programs and services while cultural humility helps us evolve, listen more deeply, and co-create spaces of belonging with our customers. One is about what we know. And the other is about how we show up. ■











Intellectual Freedom Panel News

Lloyd Jansen, Charles County Public Library

MLA/DLA Annual Conference Round-Up

The IFP was well represented at the MLA/DLA Annual Conference in Ocean City in May:

Wednesday, 5/7/25 Pre-Conferences

Prepared Libraries, Empowered Teams: Landing an All Hands on Deck Challenge-Ready Plan (presenter: Val Edwards, co-author *Prepared Libraries, Empowered Teams*, ALA Editions, 2024)

Val Edwards led the group of about thirty participants through the workbook that she co-authored with Becky Calzada and Maegan Coffin Heindel on preparing your institution and staff for potential material/program challenges. Attendees were given a copy of the book to keep, and there were opportunities to discuss preparations ideas during several small group breakout sessions. Evaluation comments included, "Very informative and left me feeling better prepared! Thank you" and "Great conversations were held between the larger systemwide libraries about how we address challenges and resource sharing amongst the group."

Intellectual Freedom in Crisis Times (presented by Tess Wilson, Library Freedom Project)

Tess Wilson, Deputy Director of the Library Freedom Project, gave a thorough overview of the landscape of intellectual freedom today, mis- and disinformation, and how to defend intellectual freedom in libraries. Tess presented these topics through the lens of the

work done by the [Library Freedom Project](#), who, according to their mission, is "rethinking the library professional organization by creating a network of values-driven librarians taking action together to build information democracy." One of the participants wrote, "Tess Wilson was outstanding. She kept things moving and structured, fluidly transitioning between lecture and group discussion, and then back again. She confidently and clearly presented a lot of essential information."

Thursday, 5/8/25

Intellectual Freedom Helpline (presenter: Tif Sutherland, Calvert Library)

Tif Sutherland gave an overview of the new [Maryland Library Association Intellectual Freedom Helpline](#) project – a resource for staff in all types of Maryland libraries to report and/or ask for assistance when faced with material, program, or display challenges. One satisfied attendee wrote, "Presentation was lively, relevant, [and] included good interaction with attendees." Several audience members volunteered to assist with the project.

Privacy Programming in Your Library: Using Library Freedom Project Resources (presenter: Tess Wilson, Library Freedom Project)

At this abridged edition of the three-hour pre-conference, Tess Wilson focused on the work and resources of the Library Freedom Project and discussed the hazards of ensuring reliable information in the age of artificial intelligence. "Very enlightening, particularly in a time of AI. Who do you trust? We owe it to ourselves to have many more programs and trainings in a world of constant information without the citing [of] where it comes from. Even as far as how information is gathered, who has it, and what your rights are. All critical to our patrons and safe navigation."

How to Establish a Book Sanctuary in Your Library and Community (presenters: Catherine Hollerbach & Rachel Myers, Anne Arundel County Public Library.)

Catherine Hollerbach and Rachel Myers explained how Anne Arundel County Public Library, with the support of County Executive Stuart Pittman, established the library, and indeed the entire county, as a book sanctuary. “It’s a lot to think on and I can[’t] wait to explore the resources to see if we can make it work too.”

SIFNet News

As a regular feature of the IFP column, we will begin including a sampling of intellectual freedom joys and concerns taken from the monthly State Intellectual Freedom Network virtual meetings, hosted by the American Library Association Office for Intellectual Freedom.

North Dakota

Governor Kelly Armstrong vetoed [SB2307](#), a library content bill, calling it, “a misguided attempt to legislate morality through overreach and censorship.”

Tennessee

The state is working on Right to Read legislation for its next session.

Texas

Governor Greg Abbott signed two pieces of legislation hostile to the freedom to read. [SB13](#) establishes “library advisory councils” and “parental rights” regarding public school library catalogs and access by the parent’s child to library materials.

[SB412](#) removes protections from prosecution for conduct that is “harmful to children” for a “bona fide educational” purpose.

Lamar Consolidated Independent School District students can no longer learn about the state of Virginia in their online database because of “[full frontal nudity](#)” on the state flag.

Pennsylvania

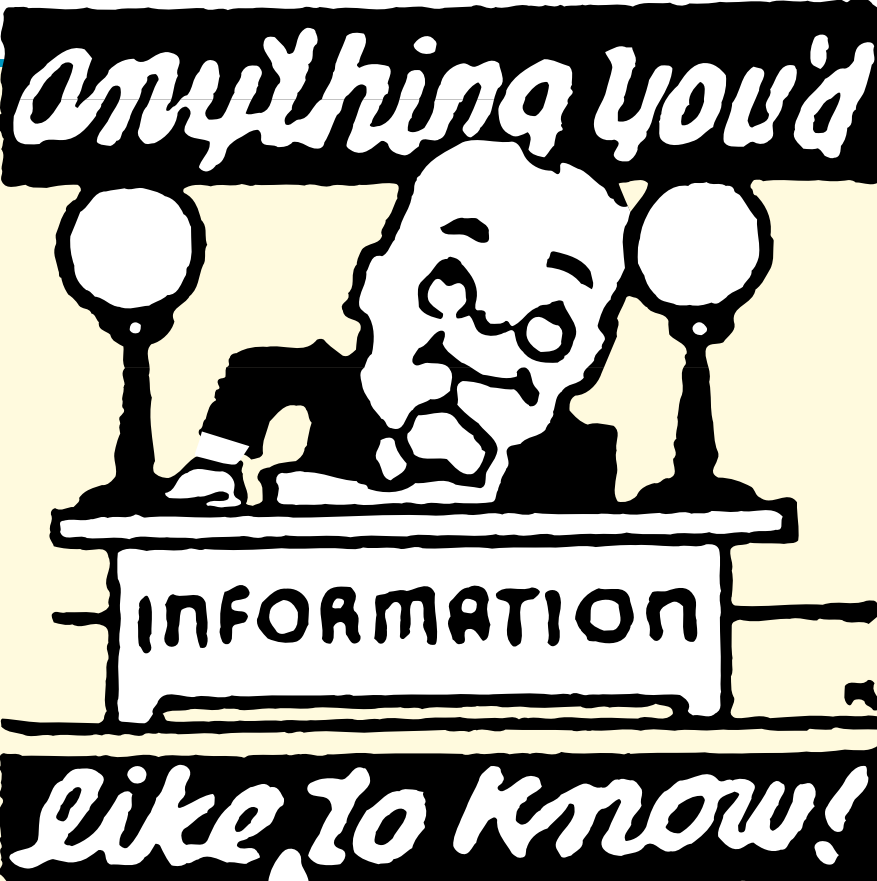
Like Maryland, Pennsylvania is also starting an Intellectual Freedom Helpline. The first training for volunteers took place on May 3.

Indiana

Governor Mike Braun signed a state budget that [cuts the Indiana State Library by 30%](#).

Florida

[HB1539](#), which stipulates that if a book is challenged for being “harmful to minors,” officials cannot consider its “potential literary, artistic, political, or scientific value” when deciding whether to keep it on shelves, passed the House but was withdrawn from the Senate. This law would have upended the [Miller Test](#) for determining obscenity. ■



anything you'd

INFORMATION

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Share the Knowledge!



Materials Interest Group

Trends in Library Collections

Laura Bandoch, Harford County Public Library

Did you miss the Materials Interest Group's presentation on trends in library collections at the MLA/DLA 2025 Conference? Here are the key highlights:

Publisher and Printer Trends

Many publishers are warehousing fewer books, resulting in smaller initial print runs. To meet demand after these runs, they're increasingly turning to print-on-demand services. However, this shift has led to a slight decline in quality—issues like weaker binding and pagination errors are more common. Publishers are also experimenting with fonts, page margins, and paper weight to reduce costs and, ideally, lessen environmental impact.

Dyslexia-Friendly Fonts

Two popular fonts—OpenDyslexic and Dyslexie—claim to support individuals with dyslexia by using bottom-heavy letterforms. Patrons may request books printed in these fonts or ask for “dyslexia-friendly” options. However, it's important to remember that dyslexia is a language processing issue, not a vision problem. According to the British Dyslexia Association, commonly used fonts like Arial, Tahoma, or Verdana in 12- or 14-point size can also be effective. Libraries should focus on existing resources such as large print and audiobooks when assisting patrons seeking accessible reading options.

Music Collection Trends

The growing popularity of country music and genre-crossing artists like Beyoncé and Post Malone is prompting libraries to reconsider how they organize music collections. Should an artist's work be shelved together, even if it spans multiple genres? There's no one-size-fits-all answer, but it's a question worth exploring.

Additionally, patrons may request streaming-exclusive albums or standalone singles, which are often unavailable in physical formats. Some may also be interested in borrowing vinyl records. While vinyl was the top-selling physical music format in 2024, streaming still accounted for 84% of music revenue. If your library is considering a vinyl collection, weigh the long-term costs and demand carefully.

What's the Deal with YA?

According to WordsRated (January 2023), 51% of YA book purchases are made by adults aged 30–44—and 78% of them intend to read the books themselves. In the UK, a 2024 Guardian report found that 74% of YA readers were adults, with 28% over the age of 28. Why the crossover? Titles like *The Hunger Games* have a broad appeal, prompting publishers to target both teen and adult audiences. This trend has created a gap in content for readers aged 13–15. Even YA and adult book covers are becoming visually similar. So where should these books be shelved? The answer depends on your community's needs.

Join the Conversation

Interested in discussing topics like these? Join the Materials Interest Group meetings on MLA Connect from 3:00–4:00 PM on the following dates:

September 10, 2025

November 12, 2025

January 14, 2026

March 11, 2026

May 13, 2026

LGBTQ+ Interest Group

Queer Summer Reads: What Has the LGBTQ+ Interest Group Been Reading Lately?

Shannon Carney, Baltimore County Public Library

Light From Uncommon Stars by Ryka Aoki

Recommended by Mike Kiel, The University of Baltimore, Robert L. Bogomolny Library

I really can't recommend enough *Light From Uncommon Stars*. It's such a wild book of speculative fiction with equal parts science-fiction plot and demonic pact storyline. Also, it's very reflective of the author's experience as an Asian transwoman, in ways that I found both painful and joyous to read about. It's also about music and donuts? It's just great, and totally unique.



The River Has Roots by Amal El-Mohtar

Recommended by Shannon Carney, Baltimore County Public Library

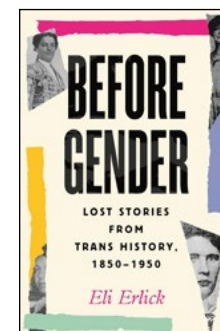
From the co-author of *This is How You Lose the Time War*, El-Mohtar's solo debut, *The River Has Roots*, is a stunning folk tale about two sisters, a suitor, and a murder. Reading this book was a short journey full of beautiful, heartbreaking prose. It's definitely one I will be reading again and again.



Before Gender: Lost Stories from Trans History, 1850-1950 by Eli Erlick

Recommended by Benjamin Egerman, Enoch Pratt Free Library and Maryland State Library Resource Center

I cannot recommend enough, *Before Gender: Lost Stories from Trans History, 1850-1950*. It is an accessible collection of tales taken from newspaper clippings showing the wide range of trans stories that have long been overlooked. It focuses on stories of trans youth,

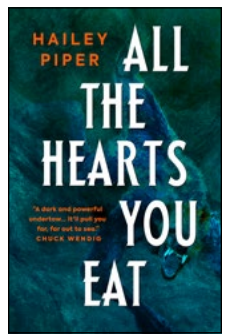


trans folks in the workplace and in athletics, and trans political activists, all long before trans people "started existing" according to today's politicians and press. From thrill-seeking horse thieves to gender-defying matadors, the stories in this book are fascinating, entertaining, and shed important light on how trans people lived before the word "transgender" had even been created.

All The Hearts You Eat by Hailey Piper

Recommended by Taryn Tranby, Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled

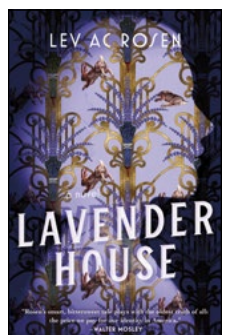
Written by a Maryland author, *All The Hearts You Eat* is a queer horror novel set in a small beachside town that features multiple trans main characters. It has vampirism, without the moody young adult paranormal themes you'd expect. There is body horror and discussions of dysphoria from multiple character perspectives. The narrative jumps between diary entries of a deceased trans teenager and each of the currently living characters trying to make sense of it all.



The Lavender House by Lev AC Rosen

Recommended by Benjamin Egerman, Enoch Pratt Free Library and Maryland State Library Resource Center

The Lavender House is a lot of fun. A locked-room mystery set in 1950s San Francisco, the author did his homework and crafted a historical novel that is both fun to read and accurately portrays the culture, lives, and world of LGBTQ+ people in the pre-Stonewall era.



Support Staff Division

News from the Support Staff Division

Lou Sica, Baltimore County Public Library

It's been a great few months for the Support Staff Division (SSD)! SSD was well represented at the Annual MLA/DLA Conference. SSD Steering Committee member and former SSD President Chelsea Shockley, Enoch Pratt Free Library, was Conference Chair and did a fantastic job. Way to go, Chelsea!

SSD Steering Committee Member Shirley Mason, Baltimore County Public Library (BCPL), was the highly deserving recipient of the MLA Outstanding Support Staff Award. Congrats, Shirley!

SSD sponsored two well-attended and successful programs at conference: Let's Talk About Stuff and The Library is For Everyone: Engaging Adults With Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities.

On June 17, we proudly sponsored the standalone program Building Up Fun: Engagement For Everyone at the BCPL Arbutus Branch. The presenter was the fabulous Kaneisha Matthews from Prince George's County Memorial Library System! 16 attendees enjoyed a fun, lively, interactive afternoon.

Last, and certainly not least, SSD would like to congratulate one of their own, Teonja Jung (BCPL), for the amazing job she did as MLA President. A multi-time SSD President and advocate for all library staff, Teonja was the first MLA President from the support staff side of library land. SSD is super proud of the work she did during her groundbreaking term! ■



Youth Services Division



Youth Services Division News

Jessica Letizia, Baltimore County Public Library

Happy Summer, Crab Readers!

I am honored to be stepping into the role of Youth Services Division (YSD) President this year. I have been in the library world for more than twenty years, starting as a shelver in my college library in upstate New York. I tried out the corporate world as a librarian in a large law firm. It wasn't until I began working at Baltimore County Public Library that I learned of my love for children's services. Planning story times reminds me of the too-brief span of time when my days were spent reading picture books to my own children and listening to Laurie Berkner songs on repeat.

I would like to acknowledge the leadership provided by Past President Summer Ross-wog. During Summer's tenure as President, YSD offered a full lineup of staff development opportunities! The Blue Crab Young Reader Award Committee, led by Mandy Davis and Luz Flores, worked diligently from July through March to select Beginning and Transitional Fiction and Non-Fiction titles worthy of an award. The Black Eyed-Susan Tapestry, coordinated by Joe Farmarco and Noel Knepper, took place in fall and spring. Attendees read award-winning books, listened to keynote addresses by authors Kerilynn Wilson and G.Z. Schmidt, and participated in book discussions. In late March, over 90 library staff from around the state attended the Kids are Customers, Too! Conference.

Due to the hard work of Editor Mina Pincus, with guidance from Summer, submissions to and readership of the Division's newsletter increased so greatly that we needed to recruit an Assistant Editor. I am delighted to announce that Anne Finn of Carroll County Public Library has joined Mina on the newsletter team.

Throughout the year, our monthly meetings offer a space to connect with other library staff throughout the state who also love youth services. All are welcome, whether you're

just curious about YSD or a long-time member!

As is typical for all of us these days, I wear many hats in the role I'm in at my branch. Sometimes, I'm not able to focus on developing my children's services skills as much as I would like. This is why I love being involved in MLA Youth Services Division! Along with Vice President Elect Dwyne Griffin of Prince George's County Memorial Library System and Secretary Karen Earp of Wicomico Public Libraries, I am fortunate to have the opportunity to lead such an active division!

NASA's Night Sky Network

August's Night Sky Notes: The Great Rift

By Dave Prosper, Updated by Kat Troche

Summer skies bring glorious views of our own Milky Way galaxy to observers blessed with dark skies. For many city dwellers, their first sight of the Milky Way comes during trips to rural areas - so if you are traveling away from city lights, do yourself a favor and look up!

To observe the Milky Way, you need clear, dark skies and enough time to adapt your eyes to the dark. Photos of the Milky Way are breathtaking, but they usually show far more detail and color than the human eye can see – that's the beauty and quietly deceptive nature of long-exposure photography. For Northern Hemisphere observers, the most prominent portion of the Milky Way rises in the southeast as marked by the constellations Scorpius and Sagittarius. Take note that, even in dark skies, the Milky Way isn't easily visible until it rises a bit above the horizon, and the thick, turbulent air obscures the view. The Milky Way is huge, but it is also rather faint, and our eyes need time to truly adjust to the dark and see it in any detail. Avoid bright lights, as they will ruin your night vision. It's best to attempt to view the Milky Way when the Moon is at a new or crescent phase; a full Moon will wash out any potential views.

Keeping your eyes dark-adapted is especially important if you want to not only see the haze of the Milky Way, but also the dark lane cutting into that haze, stretching from the Summer Triangle to Sagittarius. This dark detail is known as the Great Rift, and is seen more readily in very dark skies, especially dark, dry skies found in high desert regions. What exactly is the Great Rift? You are looking at massive clouds of galactic dust lying between Earth and the interior of the Milky Way.

Other "dark nebulae" of cosmic clouds pepper the Milky Way, including the famed **Coalsack**, found in the Southern Hemisphere constellation of Crux. Many cultures celebrate



The Vera C. Rubin Observatory, located at Cerro Pachón, Chile, under the Milky Way. The bright halo of gas and stars on the left side of the image highlights the very center of the Milky Way galaxy. The dark path that cuts through this center is known as the Great Rift, because it gives the appearance that the Milky Way has been split in half. Image Credit: RubinObs/NOIRLab/SLAC/NSF/DOE/AURA/B. Quint

these dark clouds in their traditional stories along with the constellations and the Milky Way. One such story tells of **Yacana the Llama** and her baby, wandering along a river that crossed the sky – the Milky Way. The bright stars Alpha and Beta Centauri serve as the llama's eyes, with the dark sections representing the bodies of mother and baby, with the baby below the mother, nursing.

Where exactly is our solar system within the Milky Way? Is there a way to **get a sense of scale**? The "**Our Place in Our Galaxy**" activity can help you do just that, with only

birdseed, a coin, and your imagination. You can also discover the amazing science NASA is doing to understand our galaxy – and our place in it - in the [Galaxies](#) section of [NASA's Universe](#) page. ■



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!

In the activity, “Our Place In Our Galaxy”, if the Milky Way were shrunk down to the size of North America, our solar system would be about the size of a quarter. At that scale, Polaris, which is about 433 light years distant from us, would be 11 miles away.

Image Credit: Astronomical Society of the Pacific.

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