

JANUARY 2026 ISSUE

THE HAPPENINGS



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LETTER FROM THE MLA OFFICE STAFF

As we step into 2026, we're looking forward to new opportunities for growth, connection, and renewal. We're excited to share what's ahead in the coming months and hope this year brings fresh inspiration to your work.

First, a time-sensitive reminder: the deadline for the **MLA Excellence in Marketing Awards** has been extended to **January 6th**. If you've been working on your submission or considering entering, you now have a few more days to showcase your outstanding marketing initiatives.

Mark your calendars for two **MLA Chats** on **January 14th** (*From Good Intentions to Impact*) and **February 17th** (*The Importance of Black Work Affinity Groups*). Then join us for **Library Legislative Day on February 10th**, an important opportunity to advocate for our libraries and communities at the state level.

We're also pleased to offer professional development through **Smarter, Not Harder: Goal Setting Made Easy on Thursday, February 26th**—perfect timing to refine your goals for the year ahead.

And finally, don't miss the **Black-Eyed Susan Tapestry—The Spring Edition on March 12th**, continuing our beloved tradition of celebrating Maryland's literary and cultural connections.

Whether you're joining us for professional development, advocacy, or connection with colleagues, we're grateful for your participation and engagement.

Happy New Year!

Warm regards,
The MLA Office

ANNOUNCING MLA AFFINITY NETWORKS

We are proud to introduce Affinity Networks to our organizational structure. These groups are an important presence that reflect our commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion by creating spaces where members with shared identities—particularly those identities that are marginalized or historically discriminated against—can gather for mutual support, information sharing, and collaboration.

Affinity Networks provide MLA members with opportunities to connect with others who share their identity, hear each other's stories and experiences, and gain powerful insights that can help one another.

Scope of Networks

- Affinity Networks can be formed around specific identity markers. Members of the group must hold that same identity.
- Affinity Networks will have a Facilitator to help guide discussions. Facilitators serve a minimum of one year and are not elected but voluntary. The EDI Panel will select the Facilitator from those who volunteer.
- There is no expectation for programming to be developed within Affinity Networks. If any Affinity Network wishes to host a program, it must be approved by the EDI Panel, who will be identified as the official sponsors of the program.
- Groups will develop a Mission, Goals, and Meeting Norms to guide their meetings.
- Groups will meet monthly to hold discussions, either in person or virtually. Meeting dates and times must be provided to the MLA Office.

- Affinity Network Facilitators will complete a brief training on facilitating discussions, conducted by the EDI Panel.
- Affinity Network Facilitators will attend EDI Panel meetings regularly.

How to Propose an Affinity Network

We invite you to [submit a proposal using this form](#) (you must be logged into the Info Hub to access the form). Proposals will be evaluated by the EDI Panel based on the following criteria:

- Alignment with [MLA's mission, vision, and values](#)
- Representation focus and identity
- Inclusivity and accessibility
- Purpose and goals
- Structure and sustainability
- Collaboration and impact
- Alignment with [MLA's Diversity Statement](#)

Important Dates

- **Submission Deadline:** January 23, 2026
- **Notification Date:** March 26, 2026

Please [complete the submission form](#) and **return it to William Wallace** (wwallace@wicomico.org) and **Teonja Jung** (tjung@bcpl.net) by the January 23 deadline.

If you have questions about Affinity Networks or the submission process, please don't hesitate to reach out to William or Teonja.

We look forward to seeing how these networks will enrich our MLA community.

Join us for MLA Chats

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

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

MLA Chats: From Good Intentions to Impact

Wednesday, January 14, 2026
4:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Come chat with us and three panelists about shifting from good intentions into real impact on authentic queer inclusion in libraries. We'll share real changes that have made a difference for their staff and for patrons. How do you identify if a place is inclusive vs. tolerant? How to overcome barriers and more.

[Register »](#)

MLA Chats: Importance of Black Work Affinity Groups

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

Save the date for February's session, a discussion with Shirley Mason from Baltimore County Public Library on the importance of Black work affinity groups. It will be facilitated by Precious Abujana from Prince George's County Memorial Library System.

Registration coming soon!



MLA • DLA Conference 2026

May 6-8, 2026

Cambridge, Maryland

Thank you to everyone who submitted program proposals for the 2026 MLA|DLA Annual Conference! The first round of presenter notifications have been sent out.

Selected presenters will receive additional details and next steps in the coming weeks.

Interested in joining the conference planning team?

Reach out to the 2026 Conference Chair, Paula Mitchell at:

md.la.conference@gmail.com

SAVE THE DATE!**LIBRARY LEGISLATIVE DAY****Tuesday, February 10, 2026**

Save the Date for Library Legislative Day on Tuesday, February 10, 2026! Join librarians, advocates, and supporters from across the state as we gather in Annapolis to champion the vital role libraries play in our communities. More details to come!

**LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT DIVISION PRESENTS:**
**SMARTER, Not Harder:
Goal Setting Made Easy**
**Thursday, February 26, 2026 |
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**

HCPL Miller Branch
9421 Frederick Road
Ellicott City, MD 21042

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Program Pricing:

Members: \$25

Non-members: \$37.50

Student, Retired, or Friend

Memberships: \$12.50

YOUTH SERVICES DIVISION PRESENTS:

**Black-Eyed Susan Tapestry (BEST)
2026—The Spring Edition****Thursday, March 12, 2026 |
9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.**

Online via Zoom.

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

The **registration deadline is February 3, 2026** to ensure participants have enough time to read all of the titles.

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

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

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



Please read all the titles for each group.

Group 1 - Grades 3-5

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

Group 2 - Grades 6-8

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

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

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

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

JANUARY 2026

- 2 Readers' Advisory Interest Group | 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.**
Online via MLA Connect.
Contact Meg Faller at meg.faller@calvertlibrary.info
- 5 Future of Libraries Interest Group | 10:00 a.m.**
Online via Zoom.
Contact Tracy Miller at millert@hcplonline.org
- 7 BCMLA | 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.**
Online via Zoom.
Contact Genive Purchase at gpurchase@prattlibrary.org
- Legislative Panel | 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.**
Online via Zoom.
Contact Liz Sundermann at lsundermann@prattlibrary.org
- 8 Leadership Development Division | 1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.**
Online via Zoom.
Contact Ana Carroll at agcarroll@bcpl.net
- 12 Youth Services Division | 11:30 - 2:30 p.m.**
Online via MLA Connect.
Contact Jessica Letizia at jletizia@bcpl.net
- 13 Conference Social Committee | 9:30 - 10:00 a.m.**
Online via Zoom.
Contact Catherine Wimberley at catherine.wimberley@newcastlede.gov
- 14 Materials Interest Group | 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.**
Online via MLA Connect.
Contact Laura Bandoch at bandoch@hcplonline.org
- 15 Marketing Committee | 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.**
Online via MLA Connect.
Contact Alyssia Gilmore at gilmore@hcplonline.org
- EDI Panel | 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**
Online via Zoom.
Contact William Wallace at wwallace@wicomico.org
- 21 Conference Committee | 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**
Online via Zoom.
Contact Paula Mitchell at pmitchell@prattlibrary.org
- Executive Advisory Board | 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.**
Miller Branch, Howard County Library System
Contact Joshua Stone at mlaexec@mdlib.org
- 26 ACRL-MD | 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.**
Online via Zoom.
Contact Gaby Messinger at gmessinger@ubalt.edu

Division, Caucus, Committee, Panel, and Interest Group Meetings**FEBRUARY 2026****2****Future of Libraries Interest Group |
10:00 a.m.***Online via Zoom.*Contact Tracy Miller at
millert@hcplonline.org.**4****BCMLA | 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.***Online via Zoom.*Contact Genive Purchase at
gpurchase@prattlibrary.org.**Intellectual Freedom Panel |
2:00 - 3:30 p.m.***Online via MLA Connect.*Contact Lloyd Jansen at
ljansen@ccplonline.org.**Legislative Panel | 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.***Online via Zoom.*Contact Liz Sundermann at
lsundermann@prattlibrary.org.**5****Library Advocacy Interest Group |
10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.***Online via MLA Connect.*Contact Tif Sutherland at
tiffany.sutherland@calvertlibrary.info.**9****Youth Services Division |
11:30 - 2:30 p.m.***Online via MLA Connect.*Contact Jessica Letizia at
jletizia@bcpl.net.**10****Conference Social Committee |
10:30 - 11:30 a.m.***Online via Zoom.*Contact Catherine Wimberley at
catherine.wimberley@newcastlede.gov.**18****Conference Committee Site Visit|
11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.***Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay*Contact Paula Mitchell at
pmitchell@prattlibrary.org.**Steering Committee Meeting |
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.***Online via Zoom.*Contact Joshua Stone at
mlaexec@mdlib.org.**19****Marketing Committee |
10:00 - 11:00 a.m.***Online via MLA Connect.*Contact Alyssia Gilmore at
gilmore@hcplonline.org.**EDI Panel | 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.***Online via Zoom.*Contact William Wallace at
wwallace@wicomico.org.**Sustainability Interest Group |
3:00 - 4:00 p.m.***Online via MLA Connect.*Contact Nicole Hance at
nhance@stmalib.org.**23****ACRL-MD | 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.***Online via Zoom.*Contact Gaby Messinger at
gmessinger@ubalt.edu.

ADVERTISE WITH THE MARYLAND LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

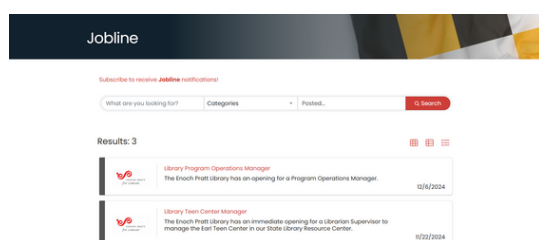
JOBLINE

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

\$500 Annual Jobline Subscription

\$100 One-Time 30-Day Jobline Posting

\$50 One-Time 2-Week Jobline Posting



VENDOR DIRECTORY

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

\$300 Corporate Membership

WEBSITE ADVERTISING

Reach a wide audience with banner ads on the Maryland Library Association website.

\$450 Large Banner Ad, 1 Year

\$300 Medium Banner Ad, 1 Year

\$120 Small Banner Ad, 1 Year

THE CRAB ADVERTISING

Advertise in our quarterly Crab newsletter that covers news, reports, articles, and events relevant to the library community.

\$400 Full Page, 1 Year (4 Issues)

\$225 Half-Page, 1 Year (4 Issues)

\$150 Full Page, Single Issue

\$70 Half-Page, Single Issue



THE HAPPENINGS ADVERTISING

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

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

\$95 Full Page, Single Issue

\$50 Half-Page, Single Issue



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