Alki

Imagine New Horizons

Inside this Issue:

WASHINGTON LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

You Had Me at Conference

by Ahniwa Ferrari

Ahniwa Ferrari

My love affair with WLA started with a conference.

Technically, it was a preconference. I had just moved back to Washington after a failed experiment called "living in Ohio" and was working as a paraprofessional in the library at Saint Martin's University. Since I was generally tech-savvy and interested in pushing libraries into the digital age (this was back in the early aughts), I became very excited when I saw that WLA was offering a preconference session with Jenny Levine and Michael Stephens talking about innovative ways that libraries could use some of the "fancy" tools of the day which, in that day, included blogs, wikis, and Flickr. I learned a ton, took copious notes, and returned to work with even more "good ideas" than I normally had. I did my best not to overwhelm the other library staff and contain my excitement. I doubt I succeeded.

We did implement a library blog and a wiki and photo sharing. Whether or not any of them could be considered a continuing success in terms of full and ongoing adoption, the seed was planted. Conferences were a place where ideas were shared. And not just ideas, but ideas with practical applications and best practices and tips and tricks to help ensure that the realization of the ideas were more likely to be both accepted and successful.

It's coming up on twenty years since I attended that preconference, and I've been to many, many conferences since then. I've attended a handful of national conferences including ALA and ACRL, and I've been to Internet Librarian down in Monterey, and various regional conferences near and far. I consider some of them more useful and interesting than others, but WLA's annual conference is the one that always feels like home.

After so, so many virtual events, getting to attend an in-person WLA conference again, and seeing people in three dimensions and, in many cases, meeting people that I had only seen on a screen, really did feel like a homecoming. If you were able to attend the conference this year in Bellevue, then you may already know that we kicked it off with a lovely meet-and-greet that included our first ever LIVE conference open mic event, and that the talent there was off the charts. And if you missed it, don't worry! This will be a new conference tradition moving forward.

Other highlights for me included all of the keynote speakers, but especially Rena Priest sharing her stories and poetry, and the amazing fandom panel that came together for all-too-short a time to talk about diversity and representation across an eclectic range of nerdery. I could go on and on gushing about sessions; heck, I could even gush about getting to chat with vendors in the exhibit hall. But really, the best part of any WLA conference is getting to see WLA members, some of whom are conference veterans and some who were attending for the first time. To talk to them and to see what projects and topics make their eyes light up when they talk about them, that's the best part, every time.

This is what makes WLA's annual conference feel like home. And if you missed this one, don't worry, there will be more! In the meantime, read on, and hear about some of the inspiring sessions, encounters, and takeaways in this issue that make this conference so special. 📖

Ahniwa is the Associate Dean of Library Operations at The Evergreen State College and the current WLA President.

Observations on Accessibility

by Ray Zill

Ray Zill

Dear Readers,

We did it. We had an in-person conference. This new horizon brought with it some awkwardness and last-minute planning, but all in all, the 2022 Washington Library Association (WLA) conference was a success. I greatly enjoyed spending time with those in attendance, learning from your successes and failures, celebrating ways we have adapted, and reaching for a more equitable future for our libraries.

This issue's theme is Imagine New Horizons, which focuses primarily on our most recent conference. July is also Disability Pride Month, a celebration of the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act which passed July 26, 1990. I want to use this space to talk about some observations I had on conference accessibility and offer some insight on how we can work together to make future conferences, presentations, and training more accessible to all.

At multiple presentations I attended, I heard both speakers and attendees ask, "Do I have to use the mic?" or stating plainly, "I don't need a mic; I can project." More than one attendee followed these remarks by admitting, "I have a hearing impairment." There were packed sessions where presenters needed to ask for more seating and ultimately encouraged attendees to pack the room, sitting closely, and not always leaving enough space to move around. I also heard presenters state that attendees could read their slides for themselves. They didn't need to read them aloud… or did they? These are examples of how presenters may not have been fully prepared to offer content to attendees with hearing, mobility, vision, or cognitive differences.

You might be asking at this point, didn't we ask for accessibility accommodations during the registration process? Yes, but the accommodations request approach to accessibility doesn't always capture the breadth of accessibility needs. According to the Center for Talent Innovation's "Disabilities and Inclusion" study, 3.2% of employees self-identify as having a disability to

their employers. In comparison, the report estimates that 30% of employees have a disability, leaving 26.8% of the workforce invisible to the accommodations process.[1] Although there are many benefits to disclosing a disability at work, there are also many reasons employees may choose not to disclose.[2] One main reason may be that their particular disability is invisible to the eye. In fact, the vast majority (62%) are invisible or (26%) sometimes invisible.[3] Many disabilities may even be temporary, i.e. needing a wheelchair or crutches after a surgery, or degenerative, i.e. eyesight or hearing that worsens over one's life. Disability is a spectrum, and it's not always easy to respond to a yes/no accommodations question unless you are made aware of how organizers plan to respond to requests and the considerations they've already made with regard to accessibility.

Creating an accessible conference experience is no easy task. The first step is to survey attendees and ask for accommodations, which I've already mentioned. There must also be a proactive approach by conference planners and presenters. Considerations need to be made in regard to technology, physical space, presentation materials, and signage used throughout the conference in advance, as many accessibility needs are not easy to mitigate on-the-spot. Conference planners and presenters need to be able to assess whether their program utilizes universal design. DO-IT outlines these considerations quite nicely in their web article entitled "Equal Access: Universal Design of Your Presentation."[4] Anyone presenting or speaking at a conference or training session must also ask at the start of their session if attendees' accessibility needs are being met and offer ways in which they can ask for accommodations on-the-spot. Lastly, WLA can take a stand by stating their commitment to accessibility and connecting presenters with resources up front. WLA can exemplify best practices by proactively considering accessibility when touring the conference location, making marketing materials, and choosing the conference app. Did you know that Whova, the app chosen for this and previous conferences, has multiple accessibility issues?[5]

I encourage you all to familiarize yourself with the resources I have presented here and be aware of the advantages to incorporating universal design in your future presentations. You are not alone in this endeavor to make WLA more accessible. *Alki* is working on some big changes, as we know our approach to publishing a PDF-only journal is not an accessible one. We will be submitting a proposal to the WLA Board in August after

Ray Zill works at The Evergreen State College as Electronic Resources Librarian and helps look after the James F. Holly Rare Books Room collection. Off-the-clock, Ray is a writer, letterpress printer, and book artist publishing works as Poet Ray Prints. This is her second issue as Alki *Editor.*

an in-depth examination of how our publishing practices can be more accessible, equitable, discoverable, and sustainable. As the Accessibility Standing Group of Orbis Cascade Alliance demonstrated at their most recent Accessibility Days presentation, it is far easier to create an accessible format than to fix an inaccessible one. WLA leadership is taking action by offering an Accessibility in Libraries Summit on October 21, 2022 (see ad on page 36). I look forward to attending and learning with you all. Our community is made better when we not only celebrate our differences but ensure there are no barriers to success.

Without further ado, please keep reading to discover how our community has imagined new horizons with a critical lens. 📖

In solidarity,
Ray Zill (she/her)

NOTES

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#WLA2023

2023 WLA CONFERENCE
WENATCHEE CONVENTION CENTER
MARCH 30-APRIL 1, 2023

Together Again

By Elena Maans-Lorincz

Elena Maans-Lorincz

It may seem like a mundane, simple thing, but a registration desk can be exciting. On Thursday May 5th, I arrived at the Bellevue Marriott to help with early registration for the WLA 2022 conference and was thrilled to see the orange and purple name tags organized in neat rows in alphabetical order. It was really happening—we were all going to be together, finally!

As one of the co-chairs of the WLA 2022 conference, I have a behind-the-scenes view of what conversations, thoughts, and ideas went into planning our first in-person conference since the start of the pandemic. When I signed on to be part of the WLA annual conference planning committee, I remember us all meeting in Spokane in fall of 2019 for what was to be WLA 2020. We had a full day of learning about the process of planning the WLA annual conference, eating food prepared by our venue to do a little taste test, and walking around the conference center. I remember standing outside the venue, looking out at Spokane Falls Boulevard and thinking how great the conference would be: it would be easy to walk to the cafés and shops from this center; Spokane in autumn is so colorful; it will be so fun to have "spooky" themed activities. Little did any of us know in November that we would have to wait until 2024 to be in Spokane together again.

Over the next couple of years, we all had conversations that we never thought we would have to have. Via Zoom, we talked about rising cases, falling cases; we talked about vaccinations and travel restrictions; we talked about anxiety around being in an enclosed space with others. As a committee, we had to make the tough call to do virtual conferences when many of us had never planned something like that. We all got used to the name "Whova" and sharing Zoom links with presenters. The goal in those two

years was to keep up the professional development opportunities for library staff in Washington, but also keep up the sense of community and support for each other. Throughout all of it, the WLA staff (huge shout out to them and their work!) and the Conference Planning Committee were positive, innovative, and worked hard to do what we could for those on the front lines of Washington's many diverse and unique libraries, all of whom were facing their own challenges and obstacles during the pandemic.

When we got to the point of realizing WLA 2022 would happen, it was exciting to plan but still nerve-wracking. What if cases escalated quickly? What if a new strain popped up? What if people weren't ready for an in-person conference? Luckily, it was able to happen and what a joy it was! While on my first shift at the registration desk, I looked down at the names before me, and realized some of these folks I saw as my colleagues but had never seen in person. So many of us had still reached out and collaborated with others during the past two years, all through a computer monitor, but now we can be in each other's actual presence!

On Friday, I had the honor of starting the conference at the opening breakfast with Rena Priest. Getting up to that podium and looking out, I could not believe it. It was really happening—we were together again! I saw people chatting with those at their table, laughing, and most of what I saw were smiles as people ate and chatted. There had been so much worry in the planning and leading up to this conference that people would not be ready for an event like this; but like us, they were. The conference was filled with amazing speakers, innovative programs across the state, and networking with old and new peers. So often as I walked through the halls to get to the next presentation, I saw the community in action.

- A wave and hello to that person sitting up against the wall with a laptop checking in on work, giving a smile behind their mask and a greeting back.

- Two library staff chatting in Bookstore Alley about the programming they did last summer with that book on the sale table.

- A group of folks stepping outside, taking off their masks in the slightly damp air saying "So, what are you in the mood to eat tonight? Who else should we text to see if they want to join us?"

Elena is Outreach Librarian at Bellevue College, where she has been since 2016, and the conference co-chair for WLA 2022. Before Bellevue, Elena's first librarian position in Washington was at Yakima Valley Libraries as Outreach Services Librarian. Originally hailing from the Midwest, Elena worked in Illinois as an adjunct librarian at Moraine Valley Community College. She earned both her undergraduate and graduate degrees from Dominican University (Go Stars!), and grew up in rural western Michigan. When Elena is not reading a graphic novel or zine in her spare time, she loves to garden and go on nature walks with her family. Another hobby includes cooking recipes from around the world, so shout out to public libraries! One of the best treasures in libraries is the amazing cookbook collections that can be found at your neighborhood branch!

Nine photos show highlights from the 2022 WLA Conference including photos of presenters, panelists, attendees, and ribbons for name tags.

- Someone running back under an umbrella mid-day Saturday from H Mart with a bag of pastries, ready to munch on something before that presentation they were just so excited to see that day.

When it comes down to it, WLA's annual conferences are very much about professional development and professional networking, but at its core, it is about creating a community of passionate professionals. There is a different feeling at an annual conference like this one. This is the time to reach out and get to know others who share your passion for libraries. I have built a network from attending WLA conferences. I have a list of names to follow up with, colleagues to meet virtually for support, and

even met someone to co-present at another WLA-sponsored conference. That is what these are about. Without having space to connect and meet others, our work and world in libraries would be a bit smaller and a bit more siloed. When I was up at the podium introducing some of the keynote speakers, I was very enthusiastic when I mentioned Wenatchee 2023. I found it amusing that someone came up to me later on Friday and said "Hey, you are the one that is stoked about Wenatchee!" My reply was "Yes, I REALLY AM!" I am excited because WLA 2022 was hopefully a restart of this fun annual tradition in Washington libraries of getting together, exploring our state, and being one again. I really can't wait to see you all in the Apple Capital of the World! 📖

Checking in with WLA's 2021 Scholarship Recipients

By WLA Professional Development Committee

Every year WLA awards nearly $10,000 to members through seven scholarships for graduate, undergraduate, and continuing education studies. The 2021 scholarship winners represented a range of WLA membership. Let's check in with them to see what they're up to!

The below are direct responses from scholarship recipients. Minor edits were made for clarity and brevity.

Christine Lu
John Stanford Continuing Education Scholarship, LISS COVID-19 Emergency Scholarship, WALE Continuing Education Scholarship

Earning the WLA scholarship has been a real honor and I am glad that I was able to have this opportunity. I am currently a student attending San Jose State University. Being in a pandemic and having ever-changing work policies and lifestyle changes is already an adjustment as is. I enjoy taking my classes online, where I can work at my own pace. Working towards my degree will eventually be able to further my career development and work towards the career path in librarianship.

Using this scholarship, I was able to worry less about finances for my tuition. One class alone is $1,422 for 3 credits. Using this scholarship, I can apply that directly towards my tuition. Any type of financial assistance is greatly appreciated in assisting to alleviate my financial burden in paying tuition fees. I will be able to continue to take more classes, and focus more in school with less stress and worry regarding finances with the opportunity this scholarship gave me.

Maina Gachugu
Maryan E. Reynolds Scholarship

I am so grateful for the Washington Library Association's Maryan E. Reynolds Scholarship. The scholarship was monumental in stabilizing my final year of expenses at the University of Washington. I have been so thrilled to be a part of this distinguished MLIS program, but it is very costly. Without the aid of scholarships, like those offered by WLA, I would not be graduating this year. Even working full-time as a public school teacher and now a school librarian, the educational expenses have also grown faster than I can manage myself.

After receiving the Maryan E. Reynolds Scholarship, I was able to focus my attention on my studies. While wrapping up my capstone, I helped develop instructional materials for Camp Read-a-Rama, a non-profit literacy engagement organization that helps underserved communities in Seattle and around the States. I also was able to dedicate more time as an officer of the Students of Color in Library and Information Science (SoCLIS), a student organization designed to help support and develop community among students of color in the MLIS program at the UW. Without the scholarship from WLA, this year would have looked a lot different, and I am happy that was not a reality.

Megan Rosenfeld
WALE Continuing Education Scholarship

This academic year has been a whirlwind! I was able to graduate with my MLIS, including my final capstone project, with the help of the WALE Continuing Education Scholarship. Rather than working an extra job, I took the winter quarter to complete

my courses and spend the remainder of my time working on the project. I was very grateful that the scholarship allowed me to have that time to commit to our research.

For our final project, my team researched Digital Books in Libraries: Moving Towards a Sustainable & Equitable System of Access to Information. Our focus was on digital book licensing practices as they relate to libraries. We were particularly interested in whether a law similar to Maryland's eBook Law should be considered in Washington State, but our interviews covered many additional topics. We interviewed 40 stakeholders in several countries, including industry professionals, political advisors, and bestselling authors. More information on our work can be found here: https://ischool.uw.edu/capstone/projects/2022/digital-books-libraries-moving-towards-sustainable-equitable-system-access.

Alex Grennan
Maryan E. Reynolds Scholarship

I am honored to be this year's recipient of the Maryan E. Reynolds Scholarship, which is allowing me to further my education at the school I grew up dreaming of attending, the University of Washington. These past two years in the Master of Library and Information Science program have been inspiring and empowering. I have cultivated an awareness of and solid foundation in youth development, storytelling, and literacy in a digital age.

I will be forever grateful for this scholarship with which I will be able to focus on my commitment to the community as I continue to find ways to redesign connections between early childhood education and library and information science. Through hard work and giving back to the community, I am helping to create a world where everyone has a place and a story. I will continue learning and increasing awareness and access to diverse media for preliterate children and beyond.

Cindy Garcia Rivas
Maryan E. Reynolds Scholarship

I moved to Washington State about a year ago and had been working on my MLIS at the University of South Carolina as a distance learner. Last Fall, I began working as a library assistant at the Sylvan Way branch of Kitsap Regional Library and have had a great time getting to know the community here. I hope to work with the public as a librarian, whether that be at a public library or community college. Winning this scholarship has greatly eased my financial burden for my last few semesters, as I was only two classes away from completing my degree at the time. As someone who is not originally from this area and did not go to library school here, I knew I needed to put effort into networking. WLA events and newsletters are most relevant to me because they are local. I attended several Career Lab sessions, during which I heard from employees at institutions I was interested in working in. The job listings and listserv updates have also given me insight into the inner workings of these places. 📖

Fighting the Rising Tide of Book Challenges in Our Country and State

by Eryn Duffee, MLIS

Eryn Duffee

Book bans and book challenges are happening all over the United States and we are not immune here in Washington. Case in point, *Jack of Hearts (and Other Parts)* by L.C. Rosen is (at the time of this writing) being challenged in Kent, WA.[1] While book challenges are perceived as something that is happening "over there," they are occurring in more than just deep-south, conservative states and we librarians need to push back.

Why should we care? **First and foremost, book banning cuts away student access, reduces intellectual discourse, and eventually contributes to the erosion of democracy. Yes, what we do as librarians is that important.** We cannot fix all that ails our society, but we have the power to fight for the right to free and unfettered access to information. We have the responsibility to make sure that our students and patrons can find themselves represented on the shelves of our libraries. For when certain identities are erased from public spaces such as libraries, it is an early step on the path to legally codified prejudice and marginalization and, if allowed to go to its extremes, genocide.

I will also argue that we are bound by our common professional ethics to care about this rise of censorship and bigotry occurring around the country. The American Library Association's Core Values of Librarianship[2] is a fantastic reminder of why we do what we do. We are not book slingers. We are information professionals. It is our job to support an informed public and reflect the diversity found in our world. The Core Values also state explicitly that we have a professional duty to uphold intellectual freedom. Intellectual freedom means creating a well-informed public by allowing access to all of the information they need to understand themselves and the world around them, including books that develop empathy and understanding for others.

Eryn Duffee is the librarian at Edmonds Heights K-12, a public school Alternative Learning Environment (ALE) offering classes to homeschooled students near Seattle. She was previously a school librarian in Tennessee, where she was heavily involved in state-wide library advocacy efforts, especially regarding intellectual freedom challenges.

Eryn is currently a member of the Washington Library Association Legislative Committee and co-chair of the WLA Advocacy Committee. Additionally, she is currently co-editing a book on the library ecosystem and advocacy with her mentors Dorcas Hand, Sara Kelly Johns, and Michelle Robertson.

Different library types are all interconnected. Public library policies and advocacy efforts can have a positive effect on school libraries, and vice versa. For example, when students have adequate library instruction in primary and secondary schools, they are more prepared to utilize the college library and perhaps more likely to frequent their public library as adults.

Libraries across the country can have an effect on each other as well. Because we are all connected, when we stand up for intellectual freedom here in Washington, it not only protects our students and patrons but also strengthens and emboldens those fighting tooth and nail for intellectual freedom in places like Texas, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee.

While our state government is not as antagonistic towards intellectual freedom as others, the fight has arrived on our doorsteps. Book challenges in Washington have been brought by administrators, school boards, and parents at an alarming rate in the past six months.

Many of these challenges across the country look like they are coming from concerned parents with genuine grievances and a less menacing purpose. However, it is a very well-coordinated national effort that has been funded and supported by The Heritage Foundation and far-right politicians. The Kochs have provided large sums of money to the Moms for Liberty groups at the forefront of the book challenges and infiltration of school boards, as detailed in a Media Matters article written by Olivia Little.[3] By recognizing the threat for what it is—a nationwide attempt to erase entire identities, entire swaths of American history, and entire groups of people from the public discourse—we can fight back with the vigor that is necessary to prevent our little cornerstones of democracy, our libraries, from becoming the first step on the path to cultural warfare.

That one copy of *All Boys Aren't Blue* that you fight to keep on the shelf could be the representation that your student or patron needs in order to know that they belong in this world, that they are wanted. *The Hate You Give* could be the book that inspires empathy in a student who later goes on to make policies of inclusion and equity in our state government. That battle you are willing to fight over *Jack of Hearts* could be the frontline that keeps bigotry at bay in Washington. So I ask you, are you ready to push back against censorship in all its forms? Yes? Great! Let's talk about how to do just that.

First, have and know your collection development and reconsideration policies. Find out if your district has them. If they don't, start asking them to create one. Write one yourself for your library if you need to. There are tools out there to help you and it can be as easy as copy-paste-attribute.

- Washington Library Association's School Library Division Sample Policies

- Washington State Library Public Library Policies

- ALA Selection and Reconsideration Policy Toolkit

I encourage you to take the time to look through these pages and make sure you have a plan in place. As John F. Kennedy famously said, "The time to repair the roof is when the sun is out."

Second, consider conducting a diversity audit of your collection. Are you ensuring that there is adequate representation of your community members within your books? Are your antiracist titles modern and culturally relevant or of the "*To Kill a Mockingbird*" era? Do you have LGBTQIA+ books that cover topics other than coming out? Are these books accessible to all or are they tucked away, labeled YA, and hidden from students who might need them? Kelsey Bogan gives an excellent step-by-step guide to completing a diversity audit with Destiny software.[4] Karen Jensen's School Library Journal article on diversity audits has valuable information as well.[5]

Third, consider the importance of privacy in the library setting. This core value is equally important and a sister tenet to intellectual freedom. A great way to take stock of your own library's privacy protections is the Privacy Checklist provided by ALA.[6] If a student cannot check out a book with the reasonable assurance of privacy, their access to that book is hindered. For some students, this could be a matter of personal safety. One simple way to protect privacy is to make sure your Integrated Library System (ILS) is not saving past checkout history. If the record does not exist, it can not be requested. This is the best way to protect student privacy (all patron privacy) without breaking any parental rights laws.

Additionally, librarians should be mindful of self-censorship. Do not let the aggressive cultural climate we face tempt you to shadow-ban books through hiding, checking out to the backroom, or simply not ordering controversial books. I implore you again to remember our professional ethics and duty to support intellectual freedom in our libraries.

Finally, if you do face a book challenge, what should you do? First, refer to your reconsideration policy for the next steps. Let your administrator or director know of the challenge immediately.

Inform WLA by emailing info@wla.org. Next, submit a challenge report to ALA's Office of Intellectual Freedom. When you submit a challenge report, this calls upon support from experienced library advocates who can help you navigate the challenge. This step also helps the Office of Intellectual Freedom keep track of challenges and see the larger trends affecting libraries across the country. Results from these reports and studies can be found in the State of American Libraries report published annually by ALA.[7] No challenge is too small to report. They want to hear from you. If you are concerned about backlash or safety, you can submit anonymously. This is a common occurrence and ALA is prepared to help in these situations as well.

For those of you who want to get involved in the larger advocacy effort around intellectual freedom and library support in general, I suggest reaching out to the Washington Library Association to volunteer your time. Look for advocacy news and calls to action in WLA Wednesday emails in the coming months.

The Washington Library Association will be making a push to strengthen the law requiring librarians in every Washington school starting this fall and your voice will be vital. We hope to have legislation proposed in the next session. WLA leadership, advocacy committee members, legislative committee members, and School Library Division board members are working closely with WLA lobbyist Carolyn Logue to this end. We encourage you to speak out to your local superintendents, school boards, administrators, and parent organizations about the importance of school librarians to student success and intellectual freedom. WLA leadership is in the process of writing language to help you share this message at the time of this writing.

Having certified teacher-librarians in all school libraries strengthens our ability to ensure diverse and inclusive collection development. It will also ensure that Washington students receive the benefits of a school librarian, such as information literacy instruction, in an equitable way regardless of where in Washington they attend school. Academic librarians rely on school libraries to have trained students on research and citation fundamentals. This is vital for student success in the college setting and the lack of school librarians in Washington negatively affects college success. What happens in one library setting has a waterfall effect on the community that reaches further than is often seen or acknowledged by policy makers.

I encourage you to attend school board meetings. Districts will have their meeting times and agendas posted on the district home page. Listen to what is being discussed in meetings and hearings. Speak up when libraries, books, and efforts at censorship crop up. If you are able, consider running for the school board so that you can be a voice for the students, teachers, and librarians who need and want diverse representation on our shelves, especially those of

you that are not school librarians. School librarians need you to speak on our behalf in these instances.

School library advocates in Texas have found success by educating school board candidates about the school library impact on student achievement. Example letters and advocacy guidance can be found at Students Need School Libraries in HISD.org, a successful campaign to get school librarians back in the schools in Houston that was led by Dorcas Hand. The successes that these advocates created in Texas can and should be replicated here in Washington.

Contact your local representatives proactively. Invite them to visit your library. Discuss with them the importance of school librarians and intellectual freedom. Offer them actions they can take to support librarians in Washington. And should they need reminding, inform them of how many voting constituents are library workers and library supporters.

School librarians, reach out to your unions. Ask them what they are doing to support school librarians in this era of job cuts, budget cuts, and challenges to intellectual freedom. The Library Slide Study[8] has compiled statistics on the state of school librarianship in Washington. Make sure that your union representatives know this data and understand the impact it has on students.

Public librarians, you can help by ensuring that your library allows young people to have their own library card that is not attached to their parent's account. Verify that there are no undue restrictions on such library cards and that, in the event that a student cannot get a book from their school library, they can access it through your library or e-lending service.

 Librarians are resourceful, driven, and passionate people. By coming together to speak with one voice and advocate on behalf of intellectual freedom we can turn this tide and preserve the right to read in Washington. The effort will take all of us. Some will participate in large and visible ways, others will quietly keep *that* book on the shelf, and others still can send emails that add to the collective voice fighting for intellectual freedom and the strength of libraries in our state. Each and every action, big and small, is important.

I leave you with a call to make good trouble and a favorite quote:

**"I really didn't realize the librarians were, you know, such a dangerous group. They are subversive. You think they're just sitting there at the desk, all quiet and everything. They're like plotting the revolution, man. I wouldn't mess with them."
-Michael Moore** 📖

NOTES

1 Kalie Greenberg. "Kent School District to vote on ban of book featuring LGBTQ+ content," *KING 5 News*, June 7, 2022, https://www.king5.com/article/news/education/kent-school-district-vote-book-lgbtq-content/281-a415d28e-be90-4a1c-adc2-5a2f5b9b93cc

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Conference Pie

by M. Linsey Kitchens

M. Linsey Kitchens
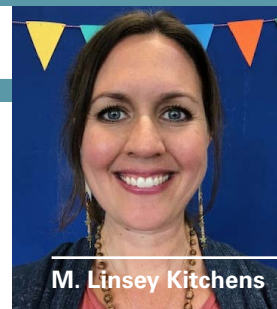
There is a distinct synergy that comes from attending a library conference. It's as alchemistic as taking a few sticks of butter, some flour, fresh PNW blueberries, and transforming them into your grandmother's famous pie. Various pieces are cobbled together into something transformative and delicious.
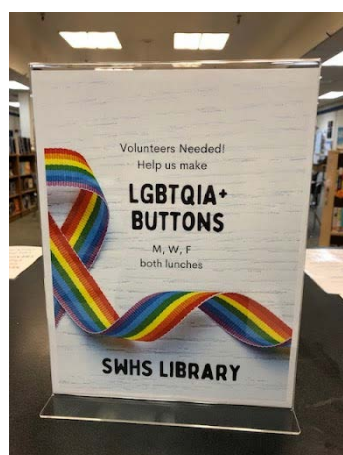
A paper sign in a plastic holder reads, "Volunteers needed! Help us make LGBTQIA+ buttons M, W, F, both lunches." Sign features rainbow ribbon and "SWHS Library" at bottom.

Attending the WLA 2022 conference this spring was very much like that culinary experience. It was the first conference I'd attended in nearly three years, and I walked away like a chef on a cooking show: flour across my face, station a mess, heart full, bursting with pride and new ideas.

Here's the synergy that emerged because of conference participation. Craig Seasholes impressed me with his clever engagement strategy for those who could not attend his session. He–dare I say sneakily–stuck a printed QR code sticker to the back of my conference badge, directing me to a Padlet. I bit, and added to the Padlet. Later, in another session, I heard TuesD Chambers remind me of the power of buttons.

So in May, I busted out my button maker and called the LGBTQIA+ affinity groups and allies in for a crafting session. Let's make pronoun and Pride buttons for June, I challenged. They came in droves. They made adorable, sentimental buttons reflecting themselves and their peers. They brought new students to the library who also wanted to participate. They taught

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M. Linsey Kitchens has the fortune of being both librarian and English teacher at Sedro-Woolley High School. Referred to by students as a "used-car salesperson for books," Linsey believes if we give students the time, space, and professional support, students will fall in love again with reading and writing, affording them a rich education, adulthood, and citizenship. And she believes it all starts in the library.

An array of LGBTQIA+ buttons with pronouns, rainbows, and other illustrations are neatly lined up in front of a carpeted background

me about all the flags. I had to reorder more button supplies. Meanwhile, I pulled my LGBTQIA+ titles and curated a digital book list on Genial.ly. I put Craig's brilliant strategy to use, and created a QR code to link to my LGBTQIA+ book list, printed them out on sticker sheets, and put them on the back of the buttons.

Social Justice Warriors Continued

by dindria barrow

dindria barrow

I am a Library Associate at the Tacoma Public Library and co-lead the new Community Archives Center. While doing my work with building community archives and collecting oral histories, I knew that I needed to attend my first in-person WLA conference. Yes, I went to the virtual WLA Conference in November 2021, but I had to attend the in-person conference in May 2022. I need to interact with other library staff from across the state. Why? Because I learn best through social interaction, diverse points of view, conversations, and listening to others sitting in the same room. My mind responds to multiple simultaneous interactions and engaging dialogue. In other words, I love to converse!

With that introduction, I'd like to share the session that I was privileged to co-facilitate called *Normalizing Conversations About Race: How A Public Library Started Anti-Racist Work Within Its Organization*. My team was excited to present the JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion) work that we have been doing in our library because we wanted to show the successes and road bumps that we encountered on our journey to having courageous conversations with all staff. However, we also wanted our context to be clear: we have administrative, city and union support for the work that we do. Most notably, our experience uncovered a desire amongst our staff to have a cross-cultural affinity group, as well as the organization's need to build in time for staff to attend and support this with scheduling around other library activities such as on-desk or programming time. As part of our presentation, we included our affinity group confidentiality statement, our first syllabus of conversation topics, and a "Guide to Respectful Conversations." What struck me most is the engagement of the participants in our session: the responses to our reflection questions, the projects and resources that were shared, and the practical questions about how to conduct conversations with various groups of people. The ideas shared were insightful and compelling, and the whole group seemed to be learning from each other: just the way I like it!

dindria, Laura, Jonii, and Karen posed five questions throughout their presentation. *Alki* Editorial Committee members recorded

some responses and shared these questions broadly for attendees to respond later (these direct quotations appear in the bulleted list under "From the survey.")

How can you fit antiracist work into your weekly schedule?

Comments during the session:

One attendee, a branch manager, lists resources in their weekly update to staff.

From the survey:

- Read books by authors of color that reflect their experiences, follow creators of color and listen to their experiences.

- Sharing information that I have learned or asking for others perspectives on social issues can be a place to start.

- Working with management, HR, and unions to curate a specific space for planned conversations about race is ideal.

How would you begin a discussion group about race?

Comments during the session:

One librarian shares that they started a discussion group around the podcast "Seeing White."

From the survey:

- I can discuss race with my core group of "regular" teens at the library and request that my district add a DEI/Social Justice committee.

- The presentation helped explain that there needs to be a specific space for these conversations. A space that is allowed to be candid yet outlined within work parameters but external from the regular workflow space so as to not be disruptive to all colleagues outside of that space.

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dindria is a Library Associate at the Tacoma Public Library and co-leader of the new Community Archives Center. Her first Alki *article, "Social Justice Warriors in the Library," can be found in volume 37, number 1 (March 2021).*

How can you build trust with your staff when forming discussion groups focused on race?

Comments during the session:

The presenters shared that it is important to make mistakes and be vulnerable in safe spaces. One idea was hosting a White affinity group in addition to a BIPOC affinity group, which may provide the space needed to say and ask questions White participants probably shouldn't ask BIPOC folks.

A suggestion was made by the presenters to take feedback from affinity group members. They noted that facilitators should be taking a backseat at times to allow participants to contribute. Guide, don't dictate, and let people in the group tell you what areas they want to discuss.

From the survey:

- By creating a safe, private space in which people's good-faith questions and comments are taken at face value.

- I think TPL's biggest factor in building strength is having consistency. It may have seemed overwhelming or very busy, but it is consistent, it is solidified work being done, not just lip service, and that I think is a great example for other systems, is following through and being consistent.

What is respect in a courageous conversation?

Comments during the session:

dindria shared that it is important not to have a strict definition of success. It is important to let people be silent in their participation.

From the survey:

- It is allowing others to make mistakes and say "wrong" things as part of their journey. It is also about leaning into comments by others which make us uncomfortable and asking ourselves honestly what work we should do because of that (this is part of letting go of my white fragility).

- Respect is not being dismissive of another's perspective or experience, yet also allowing space for those impacted by issues that involve race and prioritizing those voices is courageous and shows respect for the topic itself.

Why would you have guidelines and boundaries in an equity discussion?

Comments during the session:

Guidelines and boundaries help facilitators and participants to have a path of what to do when they feel uncomfortable.

From the survey:

- Because at the end of the day we all do need to be able to work with one another, and neutrality helps the oppressor in this case when a safe space for equity work turns into a safe space for white supremacy and white tears.

- To maintain respect in a conversation, to allow everyone the space to learn and absorb and be introspective, they need boundaries for that space. Guidelines also help keep the discussion on theme and where the focus does belong, like on those who are impacted by racial issues in our local community and from a systemic and societal point.

Additional insights shared at this conference session:

- Dr. Martin shared that there are affinity groups established at the UW iSchool.

- One attendee shared that they are proud of the affinity group they started in a rural community and are working on really unpacking what privilege means. They have a book discussion group started and shared some books they are reading, while audience members suggested others, including: *Waking Up White* by Debbie Irving, *Me and White Supremacy* by Layla Saad, *So You Want to Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo, *How to Be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi, and more.

- An attendee asked the group how they enabled part-time employees to participate. They responded by saying that managers worked with their staff to adjust work schedules to ensure all staff could participate. If part-time staff came in for an hour meeting, they were able to leave an hour early or come in an hour late for their next shift, for example.

- Presenters shared the importance of group facilitation and opening facilitation to people who are still in the middle of their journey with this topic. 📖

The Little Library That Could—And Did!

by Melody Sky Weaver (née Eisler)

Melody Sky Weaver

Ms. Weaver had the honor of presenting at the first in-person WLA conference in over two years. The session was *The Little Library that Could* and covered her small library's journey of overcoming adversity and reinventing their services during a pandemic with limited resources. All of the reinvention was done with a lens on access, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Highlights of new services included: Grab and Go Bags, Letters from Your Library, Take-and-Make Kits, and StoryWalks to the great joy and delight from patrons.

The City of Port Townsend Public Library (PTPL) is located in a Victorian seaport and arts community of just over 10,000 people. The library is a proud member of the Cooperative Libraries of the Eastern Olympics (CLEO) consortium. The consortium consists of the Jefferson County Library and many of the public schools throughout the county as well as the special maritime H.W. McCurdy Library. The Friends of the Port Townsend Library and the Port Townsend Library Foundation's tireless work made many programs and services possible. To learn more about the library and the services mentioned below checkout the library's website at https://ptpubliclibrary.org

The Port Townsend Public Library is pictured: a beautiful, white, art deco, 108-year-old Carnegie Library in Port Townsend, WA.

Melody Sky Weaver (née Eisler), is the library director for the Port Townsend Public Library and previously worked for Kitsap Regional Library. She has a Master of Library and Information Science from the University of Washington and a Bachelor of Fine Arts. She previously worked as a public arts professional in Boise, Idaho, where she was also a librarian. In Idaho, she was awarded the prestigious Idaho Woman Making History award for her activist artwork. She was honored as one of Kitsap Peninsula Business Journal's 40 Under Forty in 2012 for her work with community building in her position at the library, involvement with Leadership Kitsap as a 2013 graduate, and work as the chairwoman of the Kitsap County Arts Board. In 2019 she received the President's Distinguished Services Award from Pacific Northwest Library Association. On a fun personal note, in 2021 she traveled to Sweden and starred on a Swedish reality show to learn about her family's noble ancestry. She lives in Kitsap with her wonderful husband, puppies, and kitties.

Inspired by the presentation and the work of the great staff at PTPL here are ten tips and takeaways. The silver linings of COVID have been captured in an alliterative flurry of the very best words beginning with the letter "C".

Create:

Take-and-make kits for all ages have been an incredible creative hit with the community. Giving patrons an outlet for creativity has brought so many accolades and smiling faces.

The library's StoryWalk went from temporary to permanent in a local nature preserve during the pandemic. The walk features rotating picture books and started with a land acknowledgment that the City of Port Townsend created in collaboration with local tribes. StoryWalk is an incredible example of creative problem solving as a way to provide programs in the early days of the pandemic and beyond. Bonus, the company that makes the permanent signs is woman-owned.

Connect:

Weaving DEI in grab bags and displays has been a great way for library staff to connect our community to authors and lived experiences they might not have chosen. The staff took the initiative to do this after watching the TED Talk, "The danger of a single story" by novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

Collaborate:

East Hampton Public Library in Connecticut contacted and collaborated with PTPL in early 2022 for a library exchange. Their mission was to spread kindness throughout the world. They sent a package of things like a bell and a sample kindness kit they have passed out to patrons that make their community unique. In July, PTPL will put out their own kindness kits that contain a kindness bingo scorecard, chamomile tea, chalk, rocks to paint, and wildflower seeds to plant. The library wants to help inspire the Port Townsend community to spread kindness like glitter.

Community:

Sometimes building community is as simple as an annual gingerbread contest. The library took over the nearly three-decade contest when a local grocery store no longer had the capacity to coordinate it. Through the lens of making the contest more accessible, the staff put together 200 kits using graham crackers and tubs of frosting with assorted candy. In the past, the contest had strongly recommended entries be made from homemade gingerbread, and the library knew not everyone would have the time or budget to make homemade gingerbread. So, the kits brought many new families into the contest. Community members made houses inspired by books, visionary tiny house communities to inspire a dream of everyone having housing, and the local 4-H club even brought robotics into the mix by adding a STEAM component. The mayor judged the nearly 30 entries and local businesses donated prizes. The contest encouraged a lot of visitors of all ages, many of whom had not been to the library since the pandemic or had never been. Patrons were effusive in their praise for how much fun their children had creating gingerbread kits and how it brought family and neighbors together. The best part was that the library smelled like gingerbread for a month.

Curiosity:

Libraries at their very best spark curiosity and wonder, and PTPL was inspired by Walla Walla County Library's spice kits for adults. The kits celebrate recipes from around the world with a brief description of the history of the dish. Not everyone can afford expensive spices or wants to buy them when trying a new recipe. Fifty kits are put out once a month and the kits are usually gone in a day or two. The library has also partnered with the local food co-op to bring more kits to the community and tie in cooking classes. The kits pair well with our cookbook collection.

Communicate:

Letters from the Library is a communication service inspired by a library in the Midwest. Patrons fill out a web form asking for letters to be sent to themselves or someone they know. This is a way to make someone's day with some fun and thoughtful snail mail. The program also got a generous donation of postcards from around the world—the library used them to create "fakations" in the early days of the pandemic so people could feel like they were traveling.

> ❝ **The library wants to help inspire our community to spread kindness like glitter.** ❞

Conspire:

Create a work environment where staff are conspiring together to serve the community. This is the biggest key to PTPL's success. With a small team of 16 people, staff at all levels have been encouraged to suggest ideas to best serve the community through the lens of DEI. Staff try ideas and bring them forward to library leadership to help execute and secure funding. Library management promotes an environment of trying and communicating ideas. This growth mindset lets staff at all levels try new things free of fear or failure. That is how one teen page felt safe coming to work dressed as a pickle—she created the mascot "The Curbside Pickle" without ever asking for permission and her mascot idea was a huge hit and even featured in the local paper!

Library Page Erin Fenton, a.k.a. "The Curbside Pickle," is dressed in a pickle costume in front of the library stacks.

Courage:

It takes courage as a leader to step back and let your staff try new things. Again, this is key to the library's success and positive

workplace culture. The three library managers encourage staff to take initiative and try new things as long as good communication happens throughout the library and with the city. Anyone can lead when leaders show courage and inspire confidence to trust their teams to try new things to see if they work. When staff see an idea come to fruition, magic happens—staff have the confidence to suggest ideas to one another and their supervisors. Frontline staff have an incredible sense of what patrons will like because of their daily interactions and community knowledge.

Compassion:

Invest in your people—that means compassionately supporting wellness and watching for burnout. Remote and flexible schedules are here to stay and need to be available in some way for all staff. The more care staff are shown, the more positive the environment is for patrons. The library has encouraged staff at all levels to attend virtual conferences from home, helping to make continuing education more accessible. Over the last two years, PTPL has provided training on burnout, mindfulness, communication, and creativity for staff.

Cooperation:

PTPL is so fortunate to have an incredible partner in the CLEO consortium to cooperate and work with such as the Jefferson County Library and the Port Townsend School District libraries. The pandemic has also inspired CLEO to work with the North Olympic Library System to plan summer reading. Sharing program ideas and resources has helped these libraries to plan and promote programs on a bigger scale that hadn't happened prior to 2020. PTPL also worked closely with the City to better engage the community with city processes. One fun program was chalk art at the farmers market where people of all ages envisioned their hopes for the future as part of a strategic planning process. As they say in Port Townsend, "a rising tide lifts all boats." &


Student seated at a table and wearing a face mask poses with a thumbs up while making LGBTQIA+ buttons with QR codes on back that link to a reading list.

The buttons are finding their people. Today a student walked in, rummaged through the basket, and shouted, "They have MEEEEEE!!" While it is such a small (though tangible) sentiment of representation, the joy in her voice illustrated the importance of even such small moments of representation. The early button wearers and makers are now bringing their friends to find a button. And now they're asking for the books, understanding that the library sees them for who they are, and will honor their story, and stories about them.

I think how easy it would be to make this button/booklist for each of the heritage days, calling in groups of students who identify as such, giving them a voice to be seen, having them curate the book list themselves, and construct a bulletin board. The opportunities to apply this same strategy are endless, and the rewards are as piquant as that first blueberry pie. Thanks to WLA, Craig Seasholes, and TuesD Chambers for the ingredients to this alchemy. &

"Pin-a-Poem" Library Display Celebrates Poetry Month

by Cora Thomas and Hannah Mendro
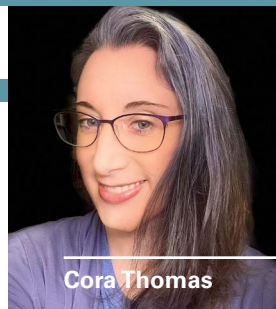
Cora Thomas
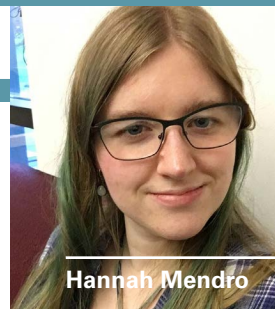
Hannah Mendro

On Pins and Paper ~

To celebrate National Poetry Month in April of this year, our library staff decided to display a "Pin-a-Poem" Poetry Board in the lobby at UW Bothell and Cascadia College Campus Library in Bothell, WA. In the spirit of magnetic poetry, this idea was brought to life by blank library check-out cards (yes, the ones you would find in the back of books ages ago). Each card had a word written on it (drawn from the original magnetic poetry word list), and we supplied the board with hundreds of these attached with push pins. The visual was stunning. The goal was to catch our campus community's attention in order to have them interact and participate with the board and pin a line or two of collaborative community poetry. A book display near the poetry board encouraged individuals to celebrate poets, and read and write poetry all month long in celebration of poetry month. The board turned out to be quite effective and provided an interactive element alongside the book display—and, perhaps, an opportunity for students to take a break

> ❝ I can't tell you how happy the poetry board has made me—it's fun to read, and it's such a fun thing to watch students, who often are so hurried or busy, pause for a moment of fun reading or creative wordplay. I think it's probably been a moment of solace for everybody who's stopped by there. ❞
>
> **– Library Staff Member**

during midterm season. A library staff member commented on how the display affected them, "I can't tell you how happy the poetry board has made me—it's fun to read, and it's such a fun thing to watch students, who often are so hurried or busy, pause for a moment of fun reading or creative wordplay. I think it's probably been a moment of solace for everybody who's stopped by there." It was heavily used, with new words and lines added to the community poetry board every day. Many voices and thoughts merged into one as more and more lines were added and new poems started. We offered and our campus responded.

It was gratifying and rewarding to look at the board and watch new creations appear like—well, like words on a page. When creating the display, our hopes were that our campus would think about and write poetry for the month of April—and the board provided that very opportunity. One student, moved by the invitation, even tacked on a short poem of their own, written on a slip of scratch paper. We were delighted that our library users were interested in this evolving and changing artwork that the community as a whole had a hand in creating—or should we say, had "a paper and pin" in creating. We hope to see this display return next year or even to have similar interactive displays like this one more often in the library lobby. The same library staff member quoted above told us, "I didn't even know we could do something like this in the library; I'm encouraged by this creativity!" Our library—a place for discovery—discovery of words, art, and self expression. Something we all need right now. Happy Poetry Month all year long and write on!

Some tongue-in-cheek tips for those looking to recreate this display:

- Do not underestimate how many words your chosen magnetic poetry list contains. Make sure you have both

Cora Thomas is about to celebrate her five year anniversary working for UW Bothell & Cascadia Campus Library. She strives to bring her love of writing poetry, creative expression, and mindfulness techniques to the workplace in order to enrich staff and the campus community's experience. Cora has the best job of leading extraordinary student employees who amaze her every day with their thoughtful creativity and mindful approach to library work.
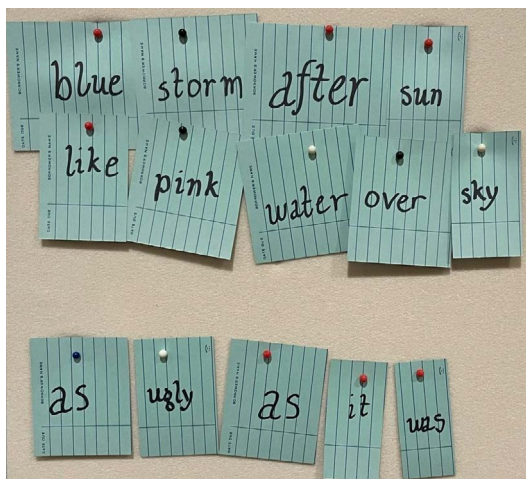
Hannah Mendro has worked at the UW Bothell & Cascadia College Campus Library for over three years, and currently works in the Materials Processing and Digital Scholarship units. As a master's student in cultural studies and a self-declared wordplay enthusiast, she strives to bring her passion for writing, scholarship, and theory into her work with library materials and communities.

Collaborative Poetry: "blue storm after sun / like pink water over sky / as ugly as it was"

enough cards and enough space on your chosen display board for both the "word bank" and free space for collaborative poetry...and enough time to devote to writing each one out! Maybe work in some breaks to shake out your hand.

- Do keep an eye on the display board from time to time. University students during midterm time may find it a useful outlet for expressing their feelings or making themselves laugh. While we did not want to dismantle any community submissions, the collaborative nature of the board did make it easy to add on to poems in case their content was not what we wanted to display.

- Do provide your community with a line or two to get started from—it both lessens the intimidation of starting from an empty space and allows you to participate in some pinned poetry yourself!

- Do take great delight in every new community contribution, and have fun! 📖
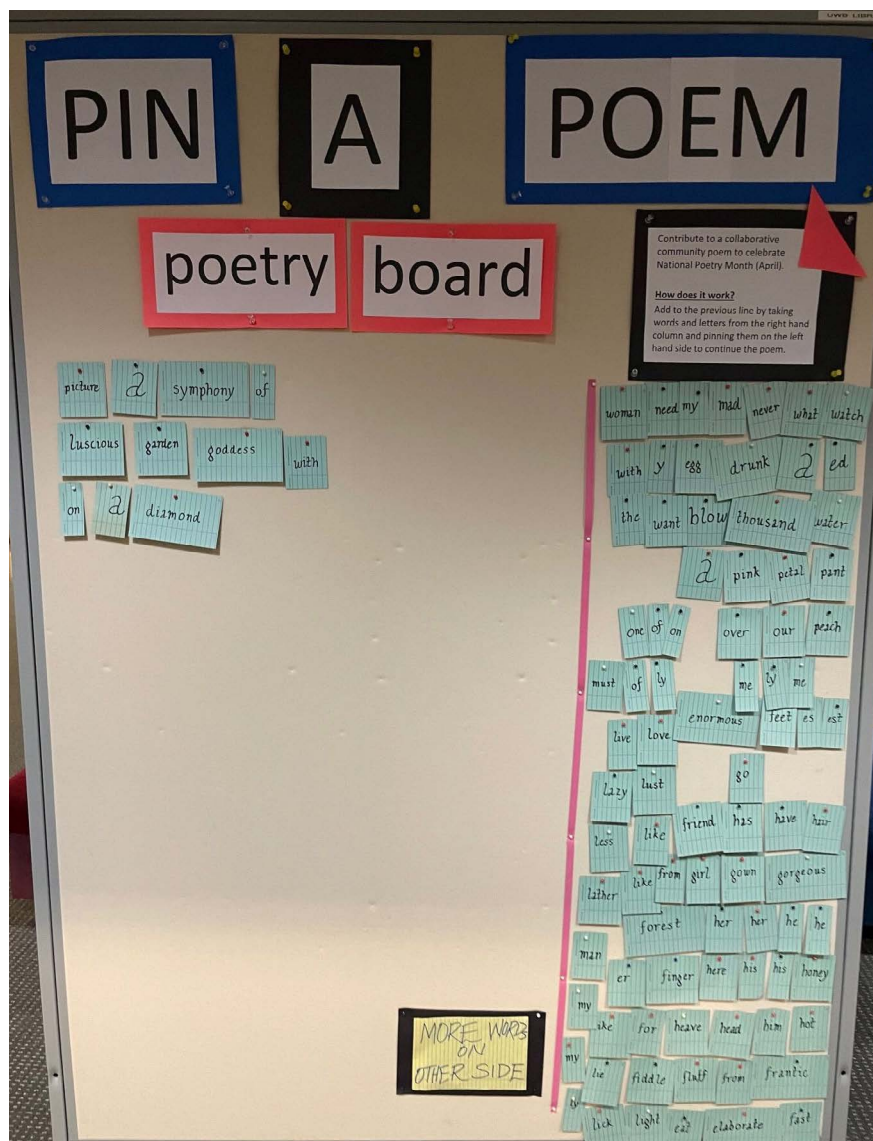
The Poetry Board included the right side filled with words and the left side with lots of space for collaborative community poetry. We also posted brief instructions at the top of the board. Here a poem has begun from the first line that we pinned up that read, "picture a symphony of..."

What's the Deal with Critical Race Theory?: A Brief Introduction, Part 2

by Kael Moffat

Kael Moffat

In part one of this article, I wrote about the development of critical race theory (CRT) and named the theory's central tenets. In this part, I will look closely at what I believe to be the core tenet of CRT, which is that race is socially constructed. Additionally, I will present this analysis by offering a brief historical analysis, a significant methodology of CRT. *Again, let me emphasize that I am a White traveler on this road of antiracism and travel clumsily at times. If anything in this piece causes harm to BIPOC sisters and brothers, please contact me about it. I am eager to learn how to become a better supporter.*

The social construction of race

Of all the tenets of Critical Race Theory (CRT), perhaps the most pivotal concept is that of race as a social construction. (Fair warning: this is such an enormous concept that trying to give a quick sense of it is somewhat like trying to pour the contents of the Salish Sea into a coffee mug.) A simple definition of social constructionism, the process through which racial and other social categories are created and maintained, was suggested by Kang, Lessard, Heston, and Nordmarken:

> Social constructionism is a theory of knowledge that holds that characteristics typically thought to be immutable and solely biological—such as gender, race, class, ability, and sexuality—are products of human definition and interpretation shaped by cultural and historical contexts... As such, social constructionism highlights the ways in which cultural categories—like "men," "women," "black," "white"—are concepts created, changed, and reproduced through historical processes within institutions and culture.[1]

When it comes to race, social construction refers to the ways that social groups have assigned meaning to observable differences in human populations—skin color, hair, facial features, etc.—which are biological adaptations to environmental conditions. The adaptations themselves are not socially constructed, but how we interpret them is. Racial stereotypes are not natural but were developed over time by people and continue to exist because

they have the weight of social power and momentum behind them. U.S. history and culture are marked by what could be called complementary and concurrent downward and upward patterns of social construction: the downward construction of BIPOC and their communities and the upward construction of non-English White persons and communities. The downward construction of BIPOC communities can easily be seen in the way Europeans regarded Indigenous peoples of North America and Africa and in the shifting definitions of citizenship.

Downward Construction of BIPOC

The idea of race is quite new when we think about the history of knowledge. There is some debate about when racism developed. Some claim it arose in the 1700s as part of the Enlightenment; others see its roots in the Age of Discovery, roughly 500 years from the 1400s to the 1800s when European countries actively colonized Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and the Western Hemisphere. Initially, prejudice was framed religiously through the Doctrine of Discovery. In 1452, Pope Nicolas V authorized the Portuguese king to "invade, search out, capture, vanquish, and subdue all [Muslims] and pagans whatsoever, and other enemies of Christ" on the African continent and to even "reduce their persons to perpetual slavery."[2] In 1493, Pope Alexander VI granted similar permission to the Spanish Crown in this hemisphere.[3] The doctrine, then, held that whenever European Christians "discovered" a land in which Christianity did not dominate religious, social, and political life, they were authorized by the Church to use violence in subduing both the people and the land.[4]

The Doctrine of Discovery essentially asserted that European Christian populations were inherently more "worthy" than Indigenous populations with regard to controlling the Earth's resources. Initially "worth" was expressed in religious terms, but once colonization, extraction, production, and trade really kicked in, colonizers and their governments began to reframe the concept in terms of law, economics, and cultural institutions to maintain their dominant position. Even a cursory look at American legal history shows that this pattern of dominance and submission is woven into our nation's origins. Margaret Ellen Newell noted that the English began capturing and enslaving Indigenous persons from the hemisphere before they had an actual colony as they searched for the Northwest Passage in the 1500s;[5] additionally, she reported that the Massachusetts Bay Colony created the first slave law in the English-speaking Atlantic world defining the status of Indigenous slaves.[6] Though we might be tempted to call these practices and

Kael Moffat is Information Literacy Librarian at Saint Martin's University in Lacey, WA. His interests include social responsibility in librarianship, IL instruction, OERs, and copyright/fair use. He likes to hike, play drums, take photographs, and is a newbie to kayaking.

laws "racist," the English described encounters with Indigenous peoples along the lines of their religious (non-Christian) beliefs, not their race. The consciousness was forming, but not fully realized.

Many scholars of race in the U.S. focus on the development of racialized laws in the Virginia Colony as a kind of pattern for the rest of the country because its leaders deliberately created an aphartheid system of laws and culture based on separation which became a model for other colonies and later for the U.S. itself. From the outset, the colonial charter (granted in 1606) specifically forbade any contact with Indigenous peoples without express legal authority on pain of death;[7] a different article in the charter stated "No man shall ravish or force any womā, maid or Indian, or other, vpon pain of death."[8] In an extraordinarily masculine society and circumstance like the colony, equating Indigenous persons with women and girls signified an assumed sense of inferiority.

Towards the middle of the 17th Century, more explicit, legally framed racial distinctions evolved in Virginia laws. In 1661, the colony passed a law that made it illegal for "any English servant" to "run away in the company of any negroes," thus making skin color explicitly part of the law.[9] This distinction was important in starting to associate slavery and social subordination with dark skin. In 1662, the colony reversed centuries of European inheritance law by declaring that children of "Negro" women would be slaves themselves, whereas such laws had previously depended on the status of the father; in 1667, the colony reversed centuries of Christian teaching and practice by declaring that being baptized no longer affected a person's status as a slave. In 1669, the colony declared that if a master killed a slave in the act of punishing them then it would not qualify as murder.[10] Virginia's 1705 Slave Act codified the second-class status of slaves and their life-long enslavement,[11] declaring that "Negro, mullato, and Indian slaves" were to "be held as real estate,"[12] to be treated as legal property. This series of laws from Virginia shows an unrelenting and dehumanizing march towards legally defining African and Indigenous bodies as products to be owned. Federal law reinforced this distinction when one of the first acts of Congress, the 1790 Naturalization Bill, declared that only "free white person[s]" who had lived in the new nation for two years would be eligible for naturalized citizenship.[13]

American law, then, from the 17th Century clearly differentiated between Europeans and Africans and Indigenous peoples in terms of physical traits, a distinction that had not existed beforehand.[14] Nell Irvin Painter, a prominent historian of race and author of The History of White People, observed that before the Enlightenment, Europeans classified each other and non-Europeans by tribe/clan, region, geography, religion, etc. but not by the physical features we associate with race; they noticed differences but assigned them no particular value. However, as the European world expanded and as "scientific" thinking began to compete with religion in shaping consciousness and worldviews, they began to start using more observable factors to define insiders and outsiders.[15] What

gave this developing consciousness such power, though, was that it paralleled the values that had been used by the church; in North America, the Indigenous were sometimes presented as actors in "a waste and howling wilderness, where none inhabited but hellish fiends, and brutish men" who worshiped "devils,"[16] while Africans had been labeled "pagans" and "other enemies of Christ" according to papal bulls. Enlightenment thinkers used the same structure: White/European/Christians were privileged over darker peoples (Indigenous, African, Muslim, Mediterranean, Asian). Joe R. Fegin called the ethic that underlies the colonial power dynamics and economic relationships a "predatory" one that was "from the first dressed up in religious language, as something God-ordained."[17]

Painter called particular attention to Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, a professor at the University of Göttingen in Germany, who contributed to the emerging science of race through synthesizing the work of other Europeans in his 1775 dissertation, On the Natural Variety of Mankind.[18] While others had used facial features to distinguish between races, Bluemenbach emphasized skin color and developed a ranking system based on aesthetics and beauty. The more "beautiful" (read "White") a people were, the more highly valued they were. Between the publication of the first edition of his book and the third edition in 1795, skin color came to play an even stronger part in the classification of human beings.[19] Somewhat depressingly, Painter also noted that European overvaluation of white skin was tied to sex slavery, with the most desirable sex slaves coming from the Caucus Mountains region; thus, the term Caucasian as a racialized identity was also born of violence and exploitation.[20]

In the U.S., definitions of citizenship have depended on race for hundreds of years. After the Civil War, African Americans were eventually awarded citizenship when the 14th Amendment to the constitution was adopted in 1868. It is important to note, though, that racial restrictions on citizenship continued into the 20th Century. Native Americans were not given citizenship until 1924, for example.[21] The Chinese Exclusion Act, passed to mollify West Coast White communities in 1882,[22] was not repealed until the 1943 Magnuson Act was passed as a gesture towards better relations with China in fighting Japan during WWII.[23] The Chinese Exclusion Act spawned similar bans against Muslims, Japanese, and peoples from South Central Asia. Race-based definitions of citizenship, then, have been part of American law and society for most of our country's existence and are still part of living memory. These definitions determined who could and could not have rights; furthermore the ideology behind them were not only codified in law, but also affected other significant cultural institutions like schools, universities, and (unfortunately) libraries.[24] CRT scholars point to this history to show that American law has always been shaped by race. Current voting rights, immigration, and tribal sovereignty debates show that this is *still* an unresolved crisis.

Systemic Racism and Housing Discrimination

Antiracist educators argue that systemic racism continues to exist because it is so deeply ingrained into the fabric of our lives, whether we're conscious of it or not. Systemic racism is "concerned with the functioning of institutions and structures and how racism becomes sedimented in the operations of society, with or without deliberate and bigoted intent…the process by which unequal opportunities, life chances, and outcomes [depend] on one's race."[1] To persist, systemic racism only needs people to *do things the way they've always been done*. In a Medium.com column, titled "Systemic Racism, Explained by Newton's First Law of Motion," he used patterns of housing discrimination to demonstrate how historical, legal, and cultural momentum drive systemic racism, pointing out that racial violence, economics, zoning laws, and real estate covenants restricted where African Americans could live for most of our country's existence. One of the most pernicious ways that people of color were shut out of housing were through cities' defining "high" and "low" risk housing areas and refusing to allow BIPOC to live in low-risk areas, a practice backed by federal housing insurance and laws. This practice, called redlining, is a major factor in continuing housing inequality. While redlining was outlawed with the Fair Housing Act (1968), below are links to sources that show how the practice persists through different means:

- Natasha M. Trifun. "Residental Segregation after the Fair Housing Act," *Human Rights Magzaine* (Fall 2009), https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/publications/human_rights_magazine_home/human_rights_vol36_2009/fall2009/residential_segregation_after_the_fair_housing_act/

- Kristopher J. Brooks. "Redlining's Legacy: The Maps Are Gone, but the Problem Hasn't Disappeared," *CBS News* (June 12, 2020), https://www.cbsnews.com/news/redlining-what-is-history-mike-bloomberg-comments/

- Atticus LeBlanc. "How Systematic Racism Exists in U.S. Housing Policies," Forbes, (July 9, 2020), https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesrealestatecouncil/2020/07/09/how-systemic-racism-exists-in-us-housing-policies/?sh=316b8ba66959; Brooks's CBS News piece above also points out ways that practical redlining continues.

- Andre Perry, Johnaton Rothwell, & David Harshbarger. *The Devaluation of Assets in Black Neighborhoods: The Case of Residential Property*. Brookings Institute, Metropolitan Policy Program. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/2018.11_Brookings-Metro_Devaluation-Assets-Black-Neighborhoods_final.pdf

Just last year, Doug Honig published a good short introduction to redlining in Seattle. Below is a commercial map of the city from 1936; the areas in red were considered "Hazardous" and correspond with areas with higher concentrations of BIPOC residents and the areas in yellow were "Definitely Declining," indicating more racially integrated neighborhoods. Such maps were used to calculate risk in business and housing loans, which meant that BIPOC communities remained isolated. University of Washington history professor, James Gregory, observed, "For most of its history, Seattle was a tightly segregated city, fully committed to white supremacy and the separation or exclusion of those considered not white."[2] Dismantling the redline system in Seattle took decades of focused community effort and, like other housing markets in the U.S., is still under attack through methods noted above.

NOTES

1 Tim Wise. "Systemic Racism, Explained by Newton's First Law of Motion," *Medium* (June 15, 2020), https://timjwise.medium.com/systemic-racism-explained-by-newtons-first-law-of-motion-ebca8f583d67

2 Doug Honig. "Redlining in Seattle," *History Link* (Oct. 29, 2021), https://www.historylink.org/File/21296; the housing map is taken from this article.
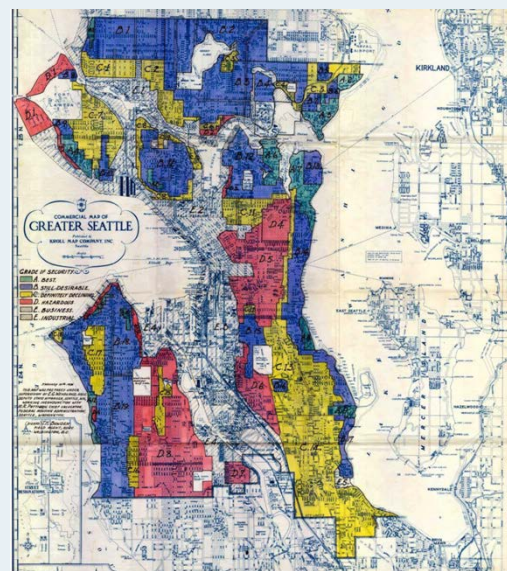
Greater Seattle Area map showing redlining, circa 1936.

Upward Construction of Non-English Whites

This downward construction of BIPOC persons and communities, of course, was paired with an upward construction of Whites that was also a rather jagged and strung-out process because during the Colonial and Early Republic eras, "white" had a very restricted meaning. David R. Roediger noted that for Early Americans, "white" referred only to Anglo-Saxons, to the English.[25] Nell Irvin Painter pointed out that for much of American history, "educated Americans firmly believed in the existence of more than one European race," referring to groups like Germans, Nordics, Celts, Slavs and others as separate races.[26]

We can see this dynamic at play in the anxiety Benjamin Franklin expressed about European immigration (of course, the irony of him complaining about that is rather rich). In a 1755 essay, he wrote:

> ...the Number of purely white People in the World is proportionably very small. All Africa is black or tawny. Asia chiefly tawny. America (exclusive of the new Comers) wholly so. And in Europe, the Spaniards, Italians, French, Russians and Swedes, are generally of what we call a swarthy Complexion; as are the Germans also...[27]

Swarthy, here, refers to dark complexioned skin.[28] Other comments from Franklin indicate that his use of white and tawny/swarthy was laden with value judgements. Regarding German immigrants, he feared they would overrun English colonists and turn Pennsylvania into a "Colony of Aliens," concluding that they would "never adopt our Language or Customs, any more than they can acquire our Complexion."[29] Two years earlier, in a letter, Franklin complained that only the "most ignorant Stupid Sort" of Germans were immigrating and that they were barbarous, violent, and disorderly.[30] Given that 49 million Americans (almost 17% of the population) claim German ancestry,[31] it seems absurd to consider that at one time they were not "white." Painter noted that Germans became accepted as White primarily by helping settle what we now call the Midwest, contributing to the frontier economy and "blending into Protestant white American life."[32] Note, however, that this blending involved the violent expulsion of Indigenous communities and occupation of their lands.

Many know that the Irish, Italians, and Eastern Europeans also struggled to be considered White in the U.S. For this paper, I'll briefly look at the Irish because Americans followed very distinctly English patterns of dehumanizing the Irish by comparing them to apes and monkeys, in much the same way that Africans were compared to primates. The following image was published by Thomas Nast in 1876, depicting complementary ways of portraying opposition to expanding voting rights; Southerners opposed the Black vote, while Northerners opposed the Irish vote. Nast's image played off long standing anti-Irish tropes[33] stretching back to the 1400s when Great Britain invaded and settled Ireland.[34]
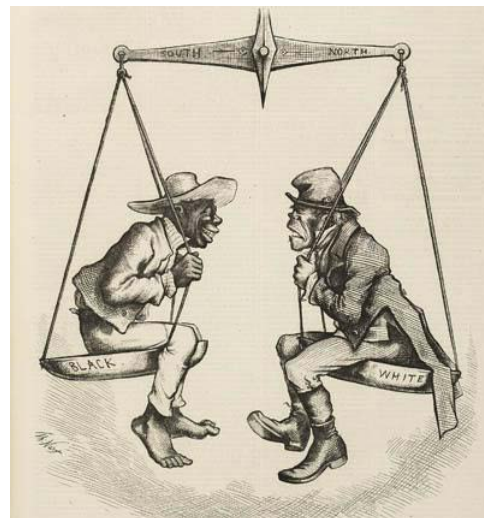
Another 1882 image (below) by Frederick Burr Opper made the supposed connection between Africans and Irish even more explicit. The image was entitled "The King of A-Shantee," playing on both the Irish word "shanty," the home of a poor person, and "Ashanti," a well-known African tribe, according to Michael O'Malley.[35]
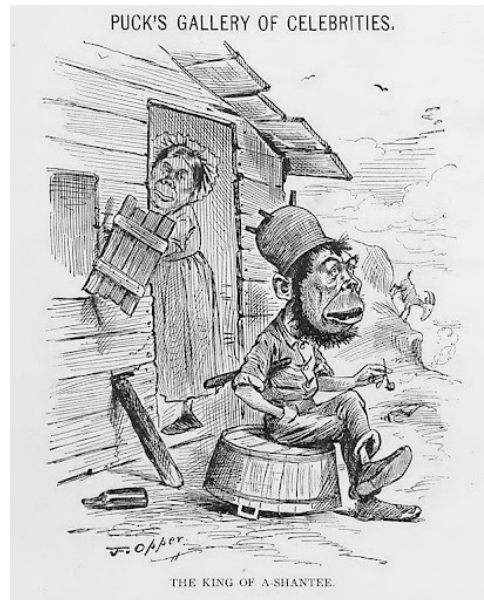
Painter observed that the Irish were irate over such comparisons and many responded by supporting the antebellum, pro-slavery Democratic Party and by the 1840s, "Irish American organizations actively opposed abolition with their votes and their fists... [attacking] African Americans with gusto in a bloody rejection of black-Irish commonality."[36] Christian Samito observed that in the Northeast, Irish immigrants were treated harshly, especially in Massachusetts, where, in 1855, Gov. Henry Gardener, a staunch

"nativist," began deporting Irish immigrants as threats to the American way of life.[37] In several Northeastern states, including Massachusetts, voting rights laws were amended to keep Irish immigrants disenfranchised for up to twenty-one years.[38] In the Midwest, where states and territories desperately needed larger labor pools, they actively recruited Irish workers; however, even in the best circumstances, Irish Americans were held to the lowest rungs of society.[39]

During the late 1800s and into the 1900s, Irish Americans became concentrated in greater and greater numbers in larger cities like Boston, New York, and Chicago where they became effective voting blocs that wielded a growing amount of political power. Christopher Klein, in a piece on History.com, pointed out that the rise in acceptance of Irish Americans into the mainstream coincided with anti-Chinese sentiments in the West, which eventually culminated in the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act.[40] So, while the wheels turned slowly in America's accepting Irish Americans as equally white, the process shows how flexible the category of "white" can be. Unfortunately, this story reinforces that the path to "whiteness" was tied to violence against BIPOC bodies and Indigenous lands as well as more abstract violence through the law, education, religion, and other institutions.

Another important group of "Irish" immigrants were the Ulster Scots, called Scotch-Irish on this continent. In pacifying Ireland, the English brought this group of mostly poor Scots to the island to serve as a settling army that would free up English military resources for other campaigns. They had a reputation of being fierce and brutal to the native Irish, driven by the opportunity to take land and by religious animosity; they were Protestants while the Irish remained Catholics. Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz argued that the Scots-Irish were instrumental in invading and settling North American Indigenous lands, playing a similar role to the one they had played in the British occupation of Ireland; when arriving in North America, she wrote, these settlers "had perfected scalping for bounty, using the indigenous Irish as their victims," thus when they settled in the colonies, "they came to predominate as soldier-settlers.[41] Again, this non-English population came to whiteness through violence against bodies of color.

Opponents of CRT like to complain about the framework's assertion that racism is "baked into" American political and cultural life. Ben Shapiro, a well-known right-wing writer, for example, wrote that CRT does not present "America's actual history," but is "a perverse worldview, unsupportable by the evidence, in which all of America's key institutions are inextricably rooted in white supremacy."[42] The problem with these kinds of claims, as I hope I have shown, is that it ignores the documentary history left behind by law makers and public figures of the past. It begs the question of what "actual history" is. Is history the cherry-picked assortment of facts and interpretations found in American history textbooks or peddled by interest groups like the Sons (and Daughters) of the

American Revolution, the Three Percenters, and (more locally) Northwest Front, etc.? It seems that critics of CRT, at least when it comes to history, do not seem to really be arguing about history, but about historical power relationships.

The language of White superiority is pervasive in documents from the past and even into living memory; for example, the overarching federal policy towards Indigenous peoples from the mid-1940s through the 1960s was called "termination,"[43] by which the federal government tried to erase Native tribes by getting Indigenous peoples to leave their reservations and even terminating/withdrawing recognition of previously recognized tribes. A Bureau of Indian Affairs official, Mel Bickle, once said, "Well, I've always felt that the only real solution for the Navajo was to cease to be a Navajo, to get off the reservation and become a citizen just like everybody else and make his living the same way as other people. Forget that he is a Navajo in other words."[44] Statements like this are rooted in notions of White superiority in which White ways of knowing and being in the world are superior to other ways of knowing and being, so much so that other ways should be stamped out. It can be tricky to determine when the Termination Era ended, with different accounts favoring different timelines, but one solid end date came in 1975 when the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act was passed, reversing Termination as a policy and stipulating that the federal government should assist (however imperfectly) tribes in becoming more independent and self-regulating. For context, I was born in 1969,when the official policy of the federal government was to liquidate Indigenous tribes. A complete reversal did not come until I was six years old. Challenges to Native ways of being still dominate everyday life for Indigenous peoples.

Knowing what CRT actually says and the evidence used by proponents to support it can go a long way when community voices challenge library policies and collections. Given American libraries' complicated and even adversarial historical relationship with BIPOC and their communities, we should be anxious to protect the stories of the nation's attempts to erase and subdue them, to do what we can to keep those stories accessible. This is not to say that we all need to become CRT advocates, but it is to say that we need to have at least a functional knowledge of what it is so that when critics invoke it, we can meet them, coming from a place of understanding. 📖

NOTES

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3 "Inter Caetera," *Doctrine of Discovery* (July 23, 2018), https://doctrineofdiscovery.org/inter-caetera/

4 For a very in-depth discussion of this, see Robert J. Miller's essay "The doctrine of discovery: The international law of colonialism" https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3cj6w4mj; see also chapter 3 of Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz and Dina Gilio-Whitacker's *"All the Real Indians Died Off"* and 20 Other Myths about Native Americans, (Boston: Beacon Press, 2016).

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6 Newell, p. 6

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8 "Articles, Lawes, and Orders," article 9

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12 "Virginia's Slave Codes." *Africans in America*, PBS (n.d.), https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part1/1p268.html

13 "H.R. 40, Naturalization Bill, March 4, 1790." *U.S. Capitol Visitor Center*, https://www.visitthecapitol.gov/exhibitions/artifact/h-r-40-naturalization-bill-march-4-1790

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16 "First Encounters: Native Americans and Christians," *The Pluralism Project*, Harvard University (n.d.), https://pluralism.org/first-encounters-native-americans-and-christians

17 Fegin, Joe R. *The White Racial Frame: Centuries or Racial Framing and Counter-Framing, 2ⁿᵈ edition*. (New York: Routledge, 2013), 26.

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19 Painter, 79

20 See chapters 3 & 4 of Painter.

21 "Voting Rights for Native Americans." *Library of Congress* (n.d.), https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/elections/right-to-vote/voting-rights-for-native-americans/#:~:text=The%20Snyder%20Act%20of%201924,rights%20granted%20by%20this%20amendment.

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26 Painter, p. ix.

27 Matthew Yglesias. "Swarthy Germans." *The Atlantic* (February 4, 2008), https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2008/02/swarthy-germans/48324/

28 According to the Oxford English Dictionary, this sense of the word entered the language in the early 1600s.

29 Yglesias.

30 Yglesias.

Surprising News About How to Weed Online Libraries

by Pamela Johnson

Pamela Johnson

The information in this article may surprise you, especially if you are experienced with weeding physical books in a library. It may also change how you manage your online library. You may find yourself keeping e-books in your collection that might have been weeded otherwise. You may also end up simplifying your weeding process for your online library, saving valuable employee time.
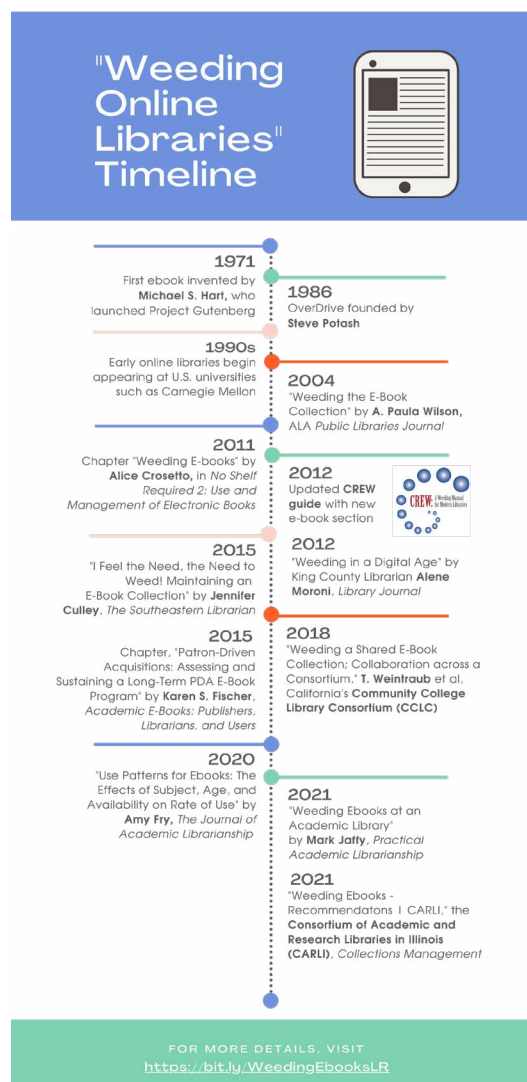
I love weeding libraries. My MLIS capstone project at the University of Washington iSchool was to help weed the Washington State Anytime Library. This online library provides more than 66,000 e-books and audiobooks to patrons of the Washington Digital Library Consortium (WDLC), a group of forty-five public libraries in Washington state, using the OverDrive Libby interface. It is managed on a day-to-day basis by Will Stuivenga, Library Development Cooperative Projects Manager at the Washington State Library, with guidance and direction from an elected six-member Executive Advisory Committee.

Why Libraries Weed

Most librarians know that a healthy library collection means actively bringing in new books while removing other books selected by specific guidelines. Libraries have collection policies that provide such weeding guidelines. Plus, other useful resources exist that provide direction, such as the CREW weeding manual from the Texas State Library.[1] This cycle of new resources coming in while weeded resources go out occurs for a number of reasons. Libraries weed because they want to ensure that their collections provide current, accurate, and relevant information to their patrons. They also weed because shelf space in a physical library is limited.

Weeding guidelines typically recommend finding and removing worn and damaged books, removing books with outdated content, removing books when a newer version exists, and removing books

that are no longer of interest to patrons (such as fad diet books). Libraries also weed books with low usage or older publication dates, unless there are reasons to keep them in the collection, as with classics and titles in a foreign language. You might consider these guidelines library standards, and they are typically taught as part of a library science curriculum for collection management.

Figure 1. "Weeding Online Libraries" timeline shows a vertical overview of the history of weeding e-books from 1971 (the invention of the e-book) to 2021. Click the image to see it fullscreen.

Pamela Johnson serves as librarian at a private high school in Bellevue, Washington. She has worked in school libraries since 2011, when she started as a parent volunteer at her daughter's elementary library. Johnson is a fourth-year MLIS student at the University of Washington iSchool and will complete her degree this coming year. This summer, she plans to catch up on reading the books in her to-be-read pile, find her garden under all the weeds, make handmade cards, and go on walks. She also plans to help with the Read-a-Rama summer program, which promotes reading and books by making them come alive to children.

The Search for Best Practice

Because I am a library student, I started the capstone project with a literature review: I wanted to understand best practices for weeding an online library. A literature review surveys the existing research on a specific topic, while best practice is a procedure or standard that ensures optimum results. I searched the wealth of databases at the University of Washington Libraries for relevant journal articles, papers, and books. I also searched the internet to find resources, focusing some of my time on professional organizations, such as the American Library Association (ALA), and library vendors, such as OverDrive and Follett. Relevant resources were scarce. So I broadened my search terms to include collection management of online libraries and academic libraries.

After a month of searching and reading, I identified twelve articles that were useful. You can see an overview of these articles in the timeline (fig.1); you can also read the full "Weeding an Online Library" Literature Review. Online libraries have been around significantly less time than physical libraries: about 50 years. The first e-book was created and shared by Michael S. Hart (fig. 2) in 1971.[2] Online libraries started appearing in the 1990s with possibly the first digital library starting at Carnegie Mellon University in 1992.[3]

The first article about weeding online libraries appears in 2004 in the ALA Public Libraries journal, written by A. Paula Wilson.[4] It frames weeding an online library using library standards such as currency of content, usage, and publication date. Most resources that follow give similar advice, including the 2011 article by Crosetto and the 2012 e-book section in the CREW manual.

A 2015 article by Karen S. Fischer offers new information about how e-books are used through her evaluation of purchases over five years in the patron-driven acquisitions (PDA) program at the University of Iowa Libraries. Fischer discovered that patrons found "older texts useful as evidenced by the purchase of more than 2,300 titles with publication dates of 2008 or earlier."[5] Patrons also valued access to seminal works as e-books, even though they were already available in the libraries as print books.

Even more interesting, a 2020 article by Amy Fry at the OhioLINK Academic Library Consortium challenges the standard of using usage counts and age as weeding guidelines.[6] Fry analyzed e-book use over ten years at the OhioLINK online library and found that e-book usage is both similar to and different from usage of print books. In addition, Fry found that e-books receive use for many years, although usage may decline over time, and that older e-books continue to have value to patrons. Fry's conclusion points at a key issue with the collection management of e-books: a decrease in use does not indicate a decrease in value to patrons,[7] "[and] steady use, however low, shows an item's continued value."[6] Fry goes on to suggest that libraries should consider e-books as one of the many ways they provide information (and reading pleasure) to their patrons, but this information can contain both newer and older content, including older titles that might only be offered to patrons through the online library.

The Problem with Current Weeding Guidelines

Up to now, librarians have been using the same weeding guidelines for both physical libraries and online libraries, with minor adjustments. For example, e-books do not get worn or damaged, so librarians would ignore that guideline when weeding an online collection. However, the literature review shows that standard guidelines should not be the same for online libraries.

Figure 2. Photograph of Michael Hart, inventor of the e-book, obtained from Wikimedia with Creative Commons licensing.

Librarians weed in a physical library because shelf space is limited. Some special digital collections may have limited server storage space, such as collections hosted by museums or universities. Generally, however, online libraries do not have limited storage space, but instead collections can grow as needed. Many public and school libraries use digital content providers, such as OverDrive (Libby and Sora) and Baker & Taylor (Axis 360), where the service provider "stores" the library's digital collection and patrons access it through a specific web address. Financially, the service providers gain when libraries can purchase as many e-books and audiobooks as they can afford without worrying about storage space. As a result, librarians do not need to follow standard weeding guidelines for online libraries because of concerns about overcrowded shelves or limited storage space.

Another reason librarians weed is that they believe keeping titles with low usage or older publication dates in the collection will hamper patrons' abilities to find the resources they want. However, Fry's usage analysis of the OhioLINK Academic Library collection shows that older titles are still used, and that older titles do not hamper people's ability to find the e-books they want. My own analysis of the Anytime Library collection supports Fry's findings. Using OverDrive's title status and usage report of the entire catalog of more than 66,000 titles, I found that 95% of the collection (63,581 titles) had been checked out at least once over roughly two years (January 2020 through February 2022) (fig. 3), with an average of 151 checkouts per title. About 3% of the collection (2,064 titles) had no checkouts, but 95% of these unread titles (1,961 titles) had been added in the past two years and had not found their readers yet. As shown by this analysis, the Anytime Library collection is used highly by its patrons.

One reason for the high usage of titles is the interface design of modern online libraries, which offers patrons an approachable, almost intuitive graphic interface. Other features, such as search functionality, filters, and subject headings, help patrons find information using simple terms. In addition, online libraries such as OverDrive Libby offer the ability to create custom collections based on a theme or subject, allowing libraries to promote titles to patrons that they might not find otherwise. Another reason for the high usage of titles is that online libraries can be accessed twenty-four hours a day from virtually anywhere: a computer web browser or an app on a smartphone or tablet. These libraries are not closed on weekends or holidays. All of these reasons suggest why the OhioLINK and Anytime Library collections show such high usage, and why older publication dates and low checkouts for some titles are not a hindrance for patrons.

Figure 3. Pie chart entitled "Usage of Collection" shows usage of the Anytime Library collection between January 2020 and February 2022. The biggest piece of the pie (shaded light blue) is "Titles checked out in 2020, 2021, 2022" and consists of 63,581 titles. The next piece (shaded green) is "Titles without checkouts" and contains 2,064 titles. Four smaller slices (darker blue, orange, gray, and yellow) represent titles with fewer checkouts, and have not been checked out by the years 2016 (174 titles), 2017 (244 titles), 2018 (408 titles), and 2019 (404 titles).

Recommended New Weeding Guidelines

As a result of the literature review and my analysis of the Anytime Library, I developed updated guidelines for weeding online libraries, as recommended below.

> Guideline 1: Weed nonfiction titles that are determined to contain outdated or inaccurate information. If the subject is still relevant to patrons, replace the title with a newer one.

> Guideline 2: Use low usage numbers and older publication dates to identify possible titles to evaluate. But do not weed titles using only these criteria.

> Guideline 3: Weed nonfiction titles that have been superseded—and then add the newer titles.

> Guideline 4: Include guidelines for weeding e-books and audiobooks in the collection policy. Outline the weeding process, including how often titles are reviewed, such as every three years.

Keep in mind that Dewey Decimal and Library of Congress (LC) classifications do not apply to online libraries such as Libby. In
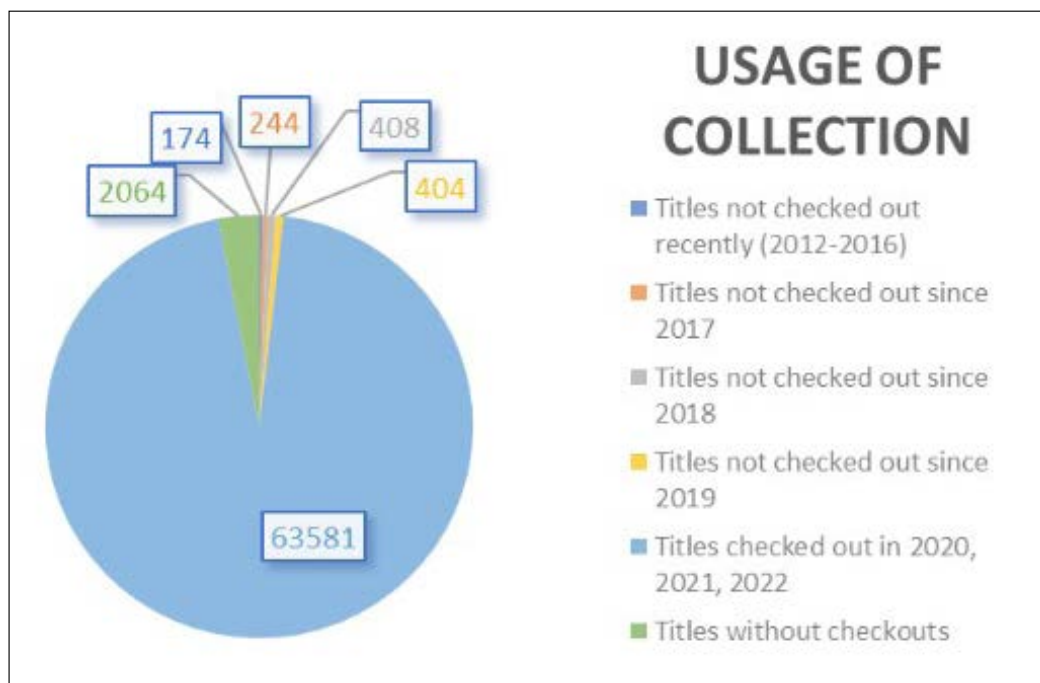
addition, a weeding project typically does not evaluate an entire collection at once, both fiction and nonfiction, or even all nonfiction titles at the same time. Instead, libraries typically focus on parts of the collection, choosing titles for evaluation based on content. For example, the collection policy might state that subjects where the information changes often, such as health and medicine, must be evaluated when publication dates are three years or older. Chemistry and other science titles might be evaluated when publication dates are five years or older. The collection policy should identify the content or subject areas that need to be evaluated and when they should be evaluated. You may need to reach out to the service provider for a list of the subject headings that the online platform uses.

Ultimately, these updated guidelines narrow and simplify the reasons librarians evaluate and weed online titles. By excluding titles with low usage or older publication dates from the weeding guidelines, library workers will spend less time evaluating titles for possible removal from the catalog. Plus, keeping more of your library's digital investments, which can be a significant cost, means your online library can continue to grow and offer rich resources to your patrons. Even better, you'll never have to weed titles to avoid overcrowded shelves in this library. 📖
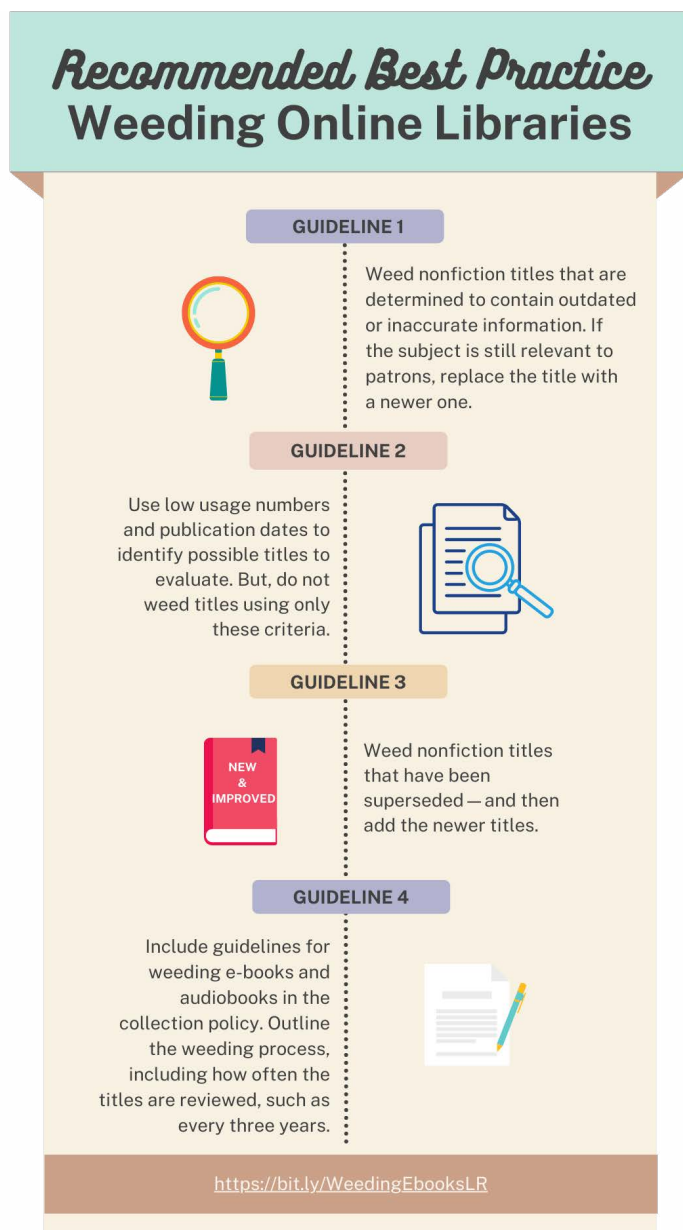
Recommended Best Practice
Weeding Online Libraries

GUIDELINE 1

Weed nonfiction titles that are determined to contain outdated or inaccurate information. If the subject is still relevant to patrons, replace the title with a newer one.

GUIDELINE 2

Use low usage numbers and publication dates to identify possible titles to evaluate. But, do not weed titles using only these criteria.

GUIDELINE 3

NEW & IMPROVED

Weed nonfiction titles that have been superseded—and then add the newer titles.

GUIDELINE 4

Include guidelines for weeding e-books and audiobooks in the collection policy. Outline the weeding process, including how often the titles are reviewed, such as every three years.

https://bit.ly/WeedingEbooksLR

Figure 4. "Recommended Best Practice" for "Weeding Online Librarries" graphic shows a list of four guidelines for weeding. Click the image to see it fullscreen.

NOTES

1 Jeanette Larson, CREW: *A Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries* (Austin: Texas State Library and Archives Commission, 2012), https://www.tsl.texas.gov/sites/default/files/public/tslac/ld/ld/pubs/crew/crewmethod12.pdf

2 Government Book Talk, "The History of eBooks from 1930's 'Readies' to Today's GPO eBook Services," GPO, last modified March 10th, 2014, https://govbooktalk.gpo.gov/2014/03/10/the-history-of-ebooks-from-1930s-readies-to-todays-gpo-ebook-services/#:~:text=Starting%20back%20in%201971%2C%20Michael,first%20eBook%20in%20the%20world

3 William Y. Arms, "The 1990s: The Formative Years of Digital Libraries," *Library Hi Tech* 30, no. 4 (2012): 1-15, https://www.cs.cornell.edu/wya/papers/LibHiTech-2012.pdf

4 A. Paula Wilson, "Weeding the E-Book Collection," *Public Libraries* 40, no.3 (2004): 158–159, https://www.ala.org/pla/sites/ala.org.pla/files/content/publications/publiclibraries/pastissues/43n3.pdf

5 Karen S. Fischer, "Patron-Driven Acquisitions: Assessing and Sustaining a Long-Term PDA E-Book program," in *Academic E-Books: Publishers, Librarians, and Users*, eds. Suzanne M. Ward, Robert S. Freeman, and Judith M. Nixon (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2015), 113.

6 Amy Fry, "Use Patterns for Ebooks: The Effects of Subject, Age and Availability on Rate of Use," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 46, no.3 (2020): 7, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2020.102150.

7 Maurice B. Line and A. Sandison, "'Obsolescence' and Changes in the Use of Literature with Time," *Journal of Documentation* 30, no.3 (1974): 283.

Brief History of the Anytime Library

The Washington Digital Library Consortium (WDLC) was founded in 2008 by the Whatcom County Library System (WCLS), the Bellingham Public Library, and five other northwest Washington libraries. Initially, the Anytime Library offered only downloadable audiobooks, but in 2010 e-books were added. The Washington State Library also took over the active management of the collection in 2010 at the request of the WDLC. Members support the collection through yearly membership fees and the purchase of titles by individual member libraries. Grants and federal funds also help to support the collection. Today, the consortium has grown to include forty-five public libraries across Washington state.

The Details of New Horizons

by Alex Byrne

Alex Byrne
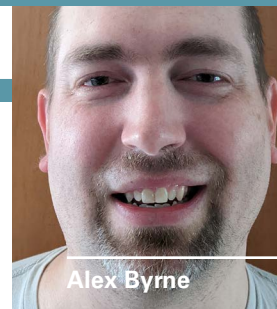
It is a lofty goal to imagine new horizons. The thought of new pathways, with their endless possibilities and temptations, stretching out beyond and into the distance, draws the mind toward contemplation and bigger ideas than the minutiae of daily library work. . What kinds of things could be possible if we lift our heads, peer into the distance, and contemplate what lies beyond?

Reality, on the other hand, is always swift to intrude upon future gazing, and for any lofty imagined future, there is often a lot of work that needs to be done on the ground, right now. Worse, that work is often detailed and those details are themselves often gateways to discovering still more and bigger problems that underlie those details.

My organization had one such problem come up recently. One of our users was dissatisfied by the organizational response to a question about a book purchased by the organization. The user found out about the purchase because it was promoted in an email newsletter sent out on behalf of the library highlighting new items in the collection. The work in question was by someone who we could charitably call a known racist with well-documented attempts to use pseudoscience and statistics based on discredited assessments, like IQ tests, to assert that white people were simply smarter than people of other races, and that government and others should take this discredited "science" into account. The user (and the staff person who took the complaint) wanted to know what we were doing buying and promoting those kinds of harmful books to people.

Alex Byrne (they/them/theirs) is Youth Services Librarian at Pierce County Library system in Washington state. When not connecting people with resources, they can often be found being silly in front of children and grownups alike as a feature of their programming and convincing recalcitrant machines to do what we want them to do, not what we told them to do. They would like to remind you that computer skills are learned, not innate, to call people by the names and pronouns they have chosen for themselves, that non-partisan is a better goal to aim for than neutral, and that vocational awe (as described by Fobazi Ettarh) is a trap designed to justify overworking and underpaying you by insisting you believe in the cause rather than in yourself. Their opinions are frequently not the official positions of their organization.

Wowbrary: an obscured algorithm with no human intervention

The detail problem, specifically, was that the promotional material came out with the organization's branding on it. Because of that, the person making the complaint assumed the organization had made an intentional selection to promote this racist book in their promotional material. This was not the case. What had happened, however, is that my organization placed too much trust in a partner organization. In doing so, they failed to think through all of the consequences of what the partnership meant.

The partner organization, Wowbrary, runs a service that automatically queries the catalogs of subscribing libraries for new acquisitions, compares them against–well, actually, here lies the first problem. We don't actually know what goes into the decision-making process that produces these partner newsletters. Wowbrary says:

> The Top Choices are the 20 highest-ranked items added by the library within approximately the last 7 days. However, to increase variety, we include at most two items from any category.[1]

A different part of the same FAQ suggests that Wowbrary uses Amazon rankings for the Top Choices:

> Amazon ranks their books according to how well each book sells. The lower the number, the more copies are selling. A book with rank #1 is the current best-selling book. You'll notice that ranks change over time based on how well the item sells.[2]

What categories does Wowbrary pull from to find its #1 titles? Wowbrary doesn't say, and a cursory glance at Amazon's categorizations for books makes it clear that any work can be #1 in a *very* specific niche, even if they would never approach a #1 in anything more general.[3] That hyper-specialization could be useful for pulling in hidden gems and other material that might otherwise be lost in a constant parade of Pattersons, perhaps. In our case, though, the algorithm selected something that I would feel comfortable saying most, if not all, of our library workers would not want to put in front of someone as a general recommendation, regardless of what list it was #1 on. Since Wowbrary doesn't publish their algorithm or a list of categories the algorithm is selecting from, each of these newsletters is essentially playing the Slots-O-Death

and hoping not to pull up three skulls.

To try to lessen the chances of a similar incident occurring, my organization chose to change which Wowbrary offering was sent out. We shifted to a more generic "New Arrivals" list, rather than one that used the #1 choices, added a disclaimer that the things in the Wowbrary list were not the hand-picked selections of the library staff (or that any library staff at all were involved in the creation of the list), and highlighted the ability of the recipient to select which categories they wanted to receive. The caveat of the recipient selection process is that if the recipient selected categories where there aren't enough new materials to fill a newsletter, Wowbrary would fill the available space with selections from their algorithm-generated top 20 list.

In essence, we tried to make it so that the algorithm wouldn't be rolling a 20-sided die to see if racist material was going out on the subscription list, but a 100-sided die. That doesn't fix any underlying problems, (e.g. how algorithms tend to reflect and amplify biases, rather than defeat them[4]) and it doesn't try to figure out how many *other* times the Wowbrary list has contained similarly harmful material. We're still using the service, but we've distanced ourselves sufficiently so that, in our opinion, people receiving the Wowbrary lists won't mistake them for something the library put time, thought, and effort into.

In most similar situations, if the automated tool is caught recommending something that no human would recommend to another person (except in very specific circumstances where the person is actively looking for these kinds of views), there exists a way for humans to intervene in the process and say "Mm, no, the algorithm rolled a natural 1 on that one, let's substitute something else." If Wowbrary published in any detail how their algorithm made selections, and what categories it was looking for those #1s in, subscribers and potential subscribers could make better decisions about whether they wanted to trust the algorithm to make good choices and give Wowbrary their subscription money. If publishing algorithmic details would be unacceptably transparent for Wowbrary, they could instead send a preview of what the next communication would be like to their partner institutions and allow them to make a decision about whether to allow the communication to go forward or to reject it for that communication cycle, without penalty for rejection. Humans making the final decision on the matter would provide necessary accountability for both Wowbrary and subscribing libraries, rather than passing the fault onto the machine that did as it was programmed to do.[5]

Wowbrary, instead, explicitly disclaims any human involvement and refuses to add any to their processes:

> Please note that we use an automatic process to select the Top Choices to avoid any political, religious, or other human bias.

We do not then review the list to remove items we think might be controversial because that too could introduce bias.

Public libraries and our non-profit organization are committed to serving all society and to the principle of free speech and expression of ideas. That means from time to time each of us sees books at a library that we don't agree with. It is our hope that encouraging everyone to read and explore ideas more fully will help us as individuals and together to improve society.[6]

Oh.

Selection, Deselection, Intellectual Freedom, Anti-Racism, and the Code of Ethics

Y'know, I've heard that argument before, usually expressed as "A good library has something in it to offend everyone," but there is also a qualitative difference between "books at a library we don't agree with" and "pseudoscience and biased statistics to try and justify a discredited and racist claim about intelligence." Furthermore, since this isn't the first time claims about the innate superior intelligence of white people have been made (and refuted), and the author has a decades-long history of publishing pseudoscience and biased statistics, is there really any fruitful reason for the ordinary public library reader, as compared to the academic with a specific interest, to "read and explore [these] ideas more fully?"

That is a much bigger question that cuts at the heart of library philosophy, ethics, and legal decisions. There's a position of library ethics that insists there will be few to no judgments made, ever, about whether the content in a work qualifies or disqualifies it from being in a library. The ALA Code of Ethics, along with documents like the Freedom to Read Statement,[7] the Freedom to View Statement,[8] and the Library Bill of Rights[9] are explicit that intellectual freedom, as these documents intend it to be practiced, means that libraries and library workers should not impose their personal views about the appropriateness of materials on their collections nor requests for information or entertainment from their users.

> Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation. [...] Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval. (Library Bill of Rights, I and II)

> It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority. [...] Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest

for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated. [...] It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one. (Freedom to Read Statement, 1, 2, 7.)

To be reductionist and manage to mangle one of Alfred, Lord Tennyson's poems in the process, this ethical position seems to be:

Theirs not to make reply, / Theirs not to reason why, / Theirs but to do and buy.[10]

Speaking of the practicalities of collection management, it is entirely well and good to operate on a philosophy of "defeat bad speech with more speech" if you are a library with infinite space and resources, but most libraries are bound by physical and budgetary requirements that prevent them from buying everything that gets published. There have to be criteria established that determines what is bought and what is not and, through those criteria, a collection takes shape and guidance.

The ALA Code of Ethics, the Library Bill of Rights, and the Freedom to Read Statement are usually some of the first documents cited when building criteria for collection development and the boundaries where library workers may or may not intercede. All of the quoted statements above, however, were last revised before July 2021, when a new ninth principle joined the ALA Code of Ethics:

We affirm the inherent dignity and rights of every person. We work to recognize and dismantle systemic and individual biases; to confront inequity and oppression; to enhance diversity and inclusion; and to advance racial and social justice in our libraries, communities, profession, and associations through awareness, advocacy, education, collaboration, services, and allocation of resources and spaces.[11]

The ninth principle's core has a distinctly different ethical stance than intellectual freedom, one that requires action and affirmative decisions toward a desired outcome. And, if I might be so bold, a requirement of something more than collecting all available viewpoints and arranging them in front of a library user to decide what they want to follow. Possibly even a requirement to exercise professional judgment about the reasons for requests and to deny ones that run contrary to this ethical principle. To uphold fully the newest ethical principle, a library might have to make decisions based on the content of materials, or even on the "origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation." The lines about where impermissible "censorship" and permissible ethical collection development will have to be redrawn in light

of the new principle, as much as they can be, anyway. Given how swiftly the agitators of moral panics are trying to close off the use of professional judgment in collection management and institute ruinous penalties for those who dare to acknowledge the existence of queer people or the existence of a more accurate history than the one presented in most textbooks, it behooves us all to both resist the encroachment of the unqualified on our professional space and to develop the necessary guidelines that transform our ethics and ideals into practical policies and procedures that account for all of our ethical principles. Sooner, preferably, than later.

Luckily, we do not have to start at nothing and build these principles and practices from the ground up. Scholars and library workers of color have already done a lot of the work. Black librarians and scholars such as Fobazi Ettarh[12] and Kaetrena Davis Kendrick[13] have given libraries and library workers concepts and frameworks to use to avoid pitfalls, clean house, and retain people who can build and strengthen necessary connections to our communities. Patricia Hill Collins' work with Black feminism also lays out a way for libraries and library workers to avoid making claims of having capital-o Objectivity (and thus, knowing what is best for everyone) or abdicating responsibility for our actions and collections into the abyss of relativism and declaring that all points of view are equally valid and worthy, as much of the current conception of intellectual freedom and library neutrality posits.[14] Rather than disappearing from the debate under threat of being "too political" if they advocate for themselves and their communities, library workers can leverage their knowledge and experiences, personal and professional, and the knowledge of their communities to fulfill the demands of the ninth principle.

Coming back to the detail problem pointed out in the beginning: in addition to exposing the shortcomings of the Wowbrary service and its algorithm, the initial complaint also contained a request for reconsidering whether the promoted material itself belonged in our library's collection. The review process took longer than it needed to (from start to finish, a total of seven months), for various reasons, but the response that came back was that since the organization had followed policy, process, and procedure in the selection of the book, there would not be any recalling of the book. This is a deeply disappointing answer because it sidesteps the actual issue (the same one that the unqualified are trying to take out of the hands of the professionals), and in doing so, it tells a lie about whether content is a factor in the selection of materials.

My organization's policies and criteria for selection are significantly older than the ninth principle of the Code of Ethics, but despite their age, they make a reasonably clear case for why materials should both be included and excluded from the collection based on their content. For example, from our Criteria for Selection:

- Accuracy.
- [...]

- Attention of media and public.
- [...]
- Best title available on the subject.
- [...]
- Diversity of viewpoint.
- Evaluation by professional reviews (including library professional publications).
- [...]
- Literary merit.
- [...]
- Relation to existing collection and other materials on the subject, subject popularity.
- Reputation and/or authority of author, illustrator, publisher, performer, etc.
- [...]
- Use of the material locally as assigned reading, viewing, or listening. [15]

These are all content judgments, even if some of them (such as professional reviews or required reading) are judgment of content by proxies rather than by organizational staff. Our Selection of Library Materials policy also reflects that our communities' desire for content has a hand in determining what's going into and out of the collection:

- Present collection composition
- Collection development objectives
- Interest
- Demand
- Timeliness
- Audience
- Significance of subject
- Diversity of viewpoint
- Effective expression[16]

The librarians charged with collection management in our system often use the acronym MUSTIE, derived from the CREW method for weeding a collection. [17] If a work is Misleading, Ugly, Superseded, Trivial, Irrelevant, or Elsewhere, that puts weight in favor of its removal from the collection at any given location. One of these six criteria (Ugly) has to do with the physical condition of the material. One (Elsewhere) is about the ease in which the material can be gathered from other locations. The other four are about the content of the material. Everywhere in our policy statements, there's a clear expectation that the professionals should use their professional skills and judgment to make decisions about both buying and weeding materials from their collection, and on criteria that have to do with the content of the material in question. There's an argument, based on the criteria from our official policies excerpted above, for the material in the reconsideration complaint to have never been bought. There's also an argument, based on the same criteria, that the material should have been bought, and then

aggressively targeted for removal as soon as the interest in it had faded. And then there's the response that happened to the request for reconsideration: there would be no removal of the material at all based on the content inside or the viewpoint of the author, because policy and procedure were appropriately followed in the selection of the material (even though content is part of the selection and deselection criteria).

It seems that the answers to questions above about selection and deselection are based mostly on whether or not the decision makers favor intellectual freedom or antiracism as the governing principle for their organization. That general position is complicated by the presence of law and legal precedent, such that some actions that appear clear and easy to implement may instead be complex and difficult to enact or prohibited entirely. I don't envy any of the people who have to navigate the liminal space between what best implements organizational commitments to antiracism, inclusion, accessibility, equity, and other social justice goals and what law and policy permit on a regular basis. But I do want every organization to be open and honest about where they stand on the conflict between the ethical principles of intellectual freedom and social justice and the reasoning behind their conclusions. That may mean some libraries decide to abandon any premise of being an antiracist organization, and proclaim the supremacy of intellectual freedom over principle nine. For good and ill, it is better for their users and staff to know the library holds such a stance publicly than for them to find out privately. We need our organizations, boards, and administrators to be honest about what they plan on doing, what they are doing, and what they will not do, whether for practical or ideological reasons. Transparency and honesty allows library users to make informed decisions about what biases are present in the collection, in policy, and in practice, and sets a base of expectations for what an encounter with the library entails. Library users can then more accurately determine whether the potential gain from interacting with the library outweighs the potential risk.

It also means being honest that, if a library chooses the path of antiracism, then they are saying out loud that an antiracist library is not for everyone. Antiracist libraries cannot give platform or legitimacy to those who would harm our communities in racist ways. In the cases where racist systems, policies, and individuals cannot be yeeted entirely, antiracist libraries should strive to minimize the harm done to marginalized communities. These positions and associated procedures should make the library unwelcoming to people with racist goals and methods as a consequence. Instead, many libraries' policies and practices (including my own) are more interested in disclaiming the harm posed by racist views or offering a milquetoast equivocation that these views are merely "opinions" without real-world effects.[18] If harm to some of a library's communities is inevitable from taking an antiracist position, the charge of an antiracist library is to place that harm in those communities the library doesn't want to welcome.

In all circumstances where a library is trying to live up to their organizational commitments, the details matter as the difference between experiencing the new horizon and having that experience always be just over the horizon.

There's a clear issue that needs resolving, then, between the declaration of a "conflict with the public interest for [librarians] to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated" and the call for "work to recognize and dismantle systemic and individual biases."

Unfortunately, on that topic, all I have are more questions and no answers. Is it inappropriately personal for the librarian charged with collection management to select or avoid specific materials if, in their professional judgment, such curation is in the service of antiracism and principle nine? What if their supervisors or managers direct them to select or deselect materials according to their own interpretation of the ethics, which prioritize intellectual freedom over antiracism? What about the Board of Trustees? They have policy-making power for the organization. What kind of ethics and experiences are they bringing to the table when they set or reset the policy of the organization? (Are they representative enough of the communities they serve to make effective policy that benefits those communities?) How much power does the community get in determining what materials are purchased and retained, and in what ways are they permitted to exercise any authority given to or shared with them? What is a reasonable limit to non-expert community power over a collection?

Perhaps the most important question in the minds of library workers is "What can we do *now*?" There are constraints of law and precedent, ethical principles that seem to contradict each other, and organizational practices and policies that may restrict further the scope of the possibilities, but even with this mire of ethics and bureaucracy, surely there is a better answer than "we can't do anything and we aren't responsible." Library workers are looking to see what new principles, policies, and practices they can bring into being that will make libraries less oppressive, less in the service of white supremacy, and more in accord with sweeping mission and vision statements about delivering high-quality service and materials to their communities. Enacting those visions will involve detailed work and likely many small changes to already-existing practices, with potentially big outcomes. Our time now is less about *imagining* the new horizon and waiting for it to get here, but instead about doing the hard work of bringing that new horizon into existence. 📖

NOTES

1 Wowbrary, "For Users," last modified 2022, https://wowbrary. org/recipients.aspx

2 Ibid.

3 So much so that entire tools, like Book Category Hunter exist to try and help authors find their perfect Amazon (Kindle) category matches so they can get that #1 in $CATEGORY attached to their work.

4 Press Books' College Research chapter on Algorithmic Bias has a good introductory overview of the problems of algorithmic biases from prominent scholars on the subject.

5 Adam Conover and Emily Bender (UW Professor of Computational Linguistics) discussed some consequences of misattributing human intelligence to algorithms on an episode of Factually!

6 Wowbrary, "About Us," last modified 2022, https://wowbrary. org/about.aspx

7 ALA Council, "The Freedom to Read Statement," *ALA: American Library Association*, last modified June 30, 2004, https:// www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement

8 American Film and Video Association Board of Directors, "Freedom to View Statement," *FMRT: a round table of the American Library Association*, last modified 1989, https://www.ala. org/rt/vrt/professionalresources/vrtresources/freedomtoview

9 ALA Council, "Library Bill of Rights," *ALA: American Library Association*, last modified January 29, 2019, https://www.ala.org/ advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill

10 The original of "The Charge Of The Light Brigade" by Alfred Lord Tennyson is available at https://poets.org/poem/charge-light-brigade

11 ALA Council, "Professional Ethics: Code of Ethics," *ALA: American Library Association*, last modified June 29, 2021, https:// www.ala.org/tools/ethics

12 Vocational Awe is a bedrock concept for understanding systems of library interaction, both internally and externally. Read more at WTF is a Radical Librarian, Anyway?

13 Kaetrena has several ongoing studies regarding low morale experiences in libraries and the systems in place that perpetuate those experiences. She reports data and changes in various scholarly publications and on the Renewers blog at https://renewalslis.com/ blog/

14 Patricia Hill Collins, Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment (Boston: Unwin

Hyman, 1990), excepted and retrieved from Black Feminist Thought in the Matrix of Domination, especially the sections titled "Situated Knowledge, Subjugated Knowledge, and Partial Perspectives" and "Dialogue and Empathy"

15 Pierce County Library System, "Criteria for Library Materials Selection," last modified November 19, 1992, https://www.piercecountylibrary.org/about-us/policies/criteria-library-materials.htm

16 Pierce County Library System, "Selection of Library Materials," last modified January 8, 2014, https://www.piercecountylibrary.org/about-us/policies/selection-library-materials.htm

17 LiLI.org, "Criteria for Weeding Materials," https://lili.org/forlibs/ce/able/course4/05criteria.htm (Has the acronym spelled out, does not contain the full CREW method.)

18 Tom Peach Twitter response to Nancy Pearl and Mike Jung Twitter response to Nancy Pearl—if you've thought of Nancy Pearl as your library icon, understand she's okay with letting Holocaust deniers exist on public library shelves.

SAVE THE DATE!

ACCESSIBILITY IN LIBRARIES SUMMIT

10.21.2022 • Online

wla.org/AccessSummit

31 "Famous German Americans." *Academy for Cultural Diplomacy* (n.d.), https://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/academy/index.php?en_tar_famous-german-americans#:~:text=German%2DAmericans%20make%20up%20the,have%20considerable%20German%2DAmerican%20populations.

32 Painter, p. 138

33 If you are unfamiliar with the concept of tropes, they refer to recurring bits of language or images in cultural life that become shorthand for very complex social and cultural beliefs.

34 For a quick piece on the trope of the "Irish ape/monkey," see Lisa Wade. *Irish Apes: Tactics of De-Humanization*. The Society Pages. (28 January, 2011) https://thesocietypages.org/socimages/2011/01/28/irish-apes-tactics-of-de-humanization/

35 Qtd. in Wade.

36 Painter, p. 143

37 Christian G. Samito. *Becoming American under Fire: Irish Americans, African Americans, and the Politics of Citizenship during the Civil War Era*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2009), p. 16.

38 Samito, p. 18

39 Samito, pp. 16-17

40 Christopher Klein. "When America Despised the Irish: The 19th Century's Refugee Crisis," *History* (n.d.), https://www.history.com/news/when-america-despised-the-irish-the-19th-centurys-refugee-crisis

41 Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz. *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States.* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2014), 52-53.
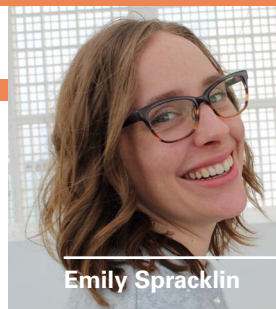
42 Ben Shapiro. "The Essential Pushback to CRT's Racial Essentialism," *CNS News* (June 23, 2021), https://cnsnews.com/commentary/ben-shapiro/ben-shapiro-essential-pushback-crts-racial-essentialism

43 For a good, quick overview of federal policy towards Indigenous peoples in the US, see this fact sheet posted by the University of Nevada, Reno: https://extension.unr.edu/publication.aspx?PubID=2207

44 Quoted in "Termination, Relocation, and Restoration." *American Archive of Public Broadcasting* (n.d.), https://americanarchive.org/exhibits/native-narratives/termination-relocation-restoration

Critical Digital Literacy (infographic)

Emily Spracklin

Christine Espina

by Emily Spracklin and Christine Espina

Click image for full pdf.

Emily Spracklin is a Teaching and Learning Librarian at Western Washington University. Her interests include information literacy instruction, critical librarianship, and digital literacy. In her free time, she enjoys beachcombing and watching reality television.

Christine Espina is an Assistant Professor at Western Washington University in the nursing program. As a community health nurse, she is interested in nursing workforce development for racial health equity. She enjoys family game nights and binging K dramas.

A Virtual Presentation You Might Have Missed at WLA

by Rhonda Kitchens

Rhonda Kitchens
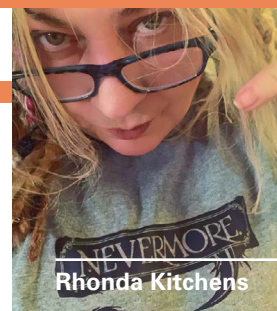
When I wrote the proposal for *Live Webinars As Life: Creating Content, Inspiring Collaboration, Demonstrating Resilience, & Shifting Goalposts*, what I submitted was more of a sad statement about my feeling of loss and failure while creating student engagement without the support of faculty. When it was accepted, I had this McSweeney's[1] moment of great and terrible irony.

However, as I wrote it–and I did write several versions–I came to understand that it had a point. As a working artist and a librarian, I wanted people working in libraries to see that event efforts are a continuum. At what point should you declare the event done? And what is the measure of success? What type of content and communication is created in the effort?

Program success may be better measured by a narrative than by the number of attendees. Narrative evaluations of programs are more personal and usually include the community involved in the program-planning process.

Gary Vaynerchuk put it like this:

> Every "overnight sensation" you know of today likely put in years of effort behind the scenes that nobody talks about.
>
> The game is long and most of you are babies. Remember, the bigger the ambition, the slower you need to go!
>
> Patience is the real key component to success[2]

In my presentation, I do not call you babies. I call you community. Go through my slightly quirky multimedia presentation. There are
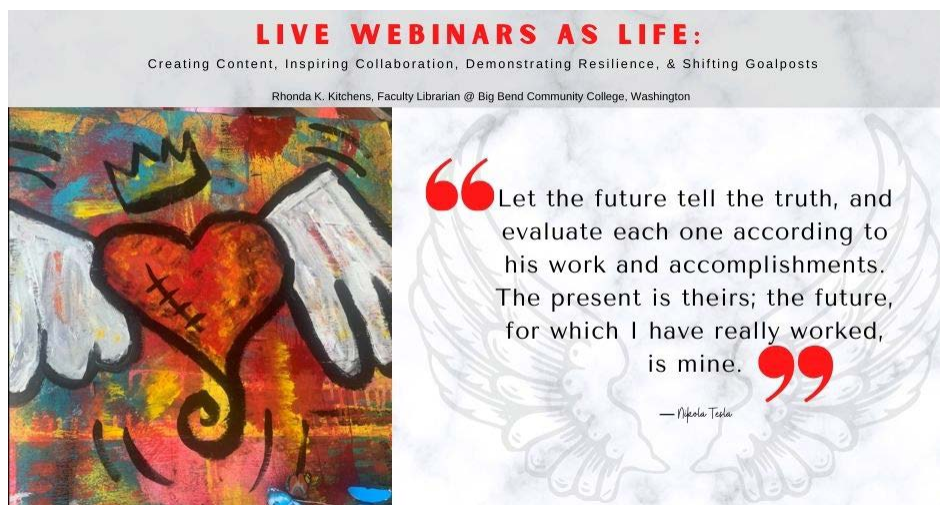
Screenshot of title slide for "Live Webinars As Life" virtual presentation features a painting of a crowned heart with wings at the left and a quote by Nikola Tesla at the right: "Let the future tell the truth, and evaluate each one according to his work and accomplishments. The person is theris; the future, for which I have really worked, is mine.

two places I distinctly stop to listen. What bothers did you face on the way to a successful program which might have really been a fruitful pre-event conversation? What happened around the event that was a success?

I invite you to view and contribute to my presentation at https://bigbend.libwizard.com/f/WLA2022 📖

NOTES

1 McSweeney's Internet Tendency is a satirical publication that can be read at https://www.mcsweeneys.net/

2 Gary Vaynerchuk, "Patience is a Key Component to Success," *Facebook*, May 10, 2022, https://www.facebook.com/gary/posts/561330845361288


Slightly displaced new-ish to Washington librarian with a background in public, specialized, and academic libraries, Rhonda is Faculty Librarian at Big Bend Community College, Communications Manager for ALD ACRL-WA Steering Committee, and an artist.

Conference Post-its: A Conversation with Attendees

by Alki *Editorial Committee*

The *Alki* Editorial Committee posed two questions to the attendees of the 2022 WLA conference. Replies were written on Post-it notes and attached to a board at the *Alki* exhibitor table.
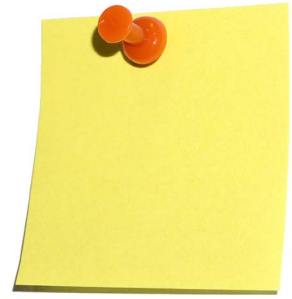
Day 1
Why do you conference?

The same reason we write ALKI articles, Pinky—some ideas need telling

100% community

I always learn interesting things!

To see you =)

Raise my excitement level so I can pass it on to kids

To explore the wider library landscape

Idea share

For the children!

Buy jewelry and scarves

Listen, learn

Learn stuff, see people, love library

It is a critical way I keep abreast of our profession

Day 2
What will you bring back to your library from WLA?

Ideas about forming affinity groups

More umph behind our urgent and continued antiracist work

Renewed energy— updated vision, on tables, increased GN!
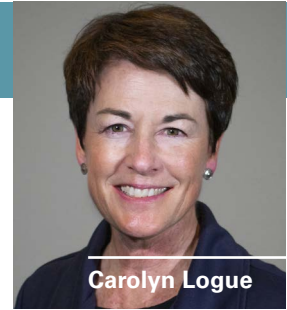
Brian McCleary's great STEM activities!

Energy

"Student centered library thinking"

A red Post-it

I shared out book lists and conference notes. I am also energized and renewed.

Legislative Update

by Carolyn Logue

Carolyn Logue

2022 SESSION A QUIET ONE FOR LIBRARIES– PERHAPS THE CALM BEFORE THE 2023 STORM?

The 2022 session ended up being the second virtual session due to the COVID-19 pandemic which, combined with the fact that it was also a short 60-day session and the second year in the budget cycle, meant that it was less intense than many of the previous years. Issues dominating this session included the supplemental budget–with a nearly $15 billion revenue surplus–and changes to larger issues passed the previous year, including revisions to significant police reform bills. Housing and mental health issues also dominated the session discussions along with continued resources needed for pandemic recovery. In the end, although 1,496 bills were introduced this year, only 297 were passed to Governor Inslee for his signature.

WLA chose this session to be more reactive than proactive because of these dynamics. In particular, since we were in data gathering mode, it was hard to put forward our school library funding proposal because, without good data, we were unable

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Carolyn Logue has been lobbying for over 30 years–first with the Washington Association of REALTORS and then as State Director for the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) from 1992 until 2007. Since 2007, Carolyn has been the owner of CA Logue Public Affairs, a legislative consulting firm based in Olympia, Washington. She has been advocating for libraries since 2009.

Carolyn works with several groups around the state helping them connect real people to legislators for more effective lobbying success. She emphasizes the need for not only a good lobbyist in Olympia, but for the real people impacted by the laws to think of themselves as lobbyists for their cause at home. Through blending effective grassroots with tenacious lobbying, Logue has led her clients to victory in several areas.

During her tenure at NFIB, Carolyn increased the organization's visibility and grassroots strength in the state, gaining successes on the health care, tax and regulatory fronts.

Carolyn has been quoted in most of the state's major newspapers as well as the Wall Street Journal. She has written op-eds for many local business journals and has made appearances on CNN, Town Hall, Up Front with Robert Mak, and most of the local networks in the Seattle/Tacoma media market.

Logue earned a bachelor's degree in communications from the University of Washington. She lives in Olympia with her husband and has two grown children.

to make a more convincing argument. However, this does not mean we were not busy. Over 80 bills were on WLA's tracking lists this session, many of which required testimony and input to ensure positive outcomes for our state's libraries. In addition, as always, WLA paid close attention to the supplemental budget discussions. Issues such as additional broadband funding, continued library grant proposals, and media literacy were all on the docket this session.

Broadband and Telecommunications

One of WLA's ongoing priorities is to expand access to broadband, digital access, and media literacy. We were excited to be supporters of E2SHB 1723, a bill providing additional expansions and funding to help bring broadband and digital access to more communities. This bill, sponsored by Rep. Mia Gregerson, was an extension of HB 1365 passed in 2021. Rep. Gregerson reached out to WLA prior to the start of the legislative session to obtain input on how libraries could benefit. WLA testified on this bill as it moved through the legislative session and was instrumental in helping to include Senator Marko Liias' additional media literacy grants (SB 5242) in the final language. E2SHB 1723 as it passed does the following:

- Requires the State Broadband Office to develop a state digital equity plan and provide a report to the governor and the legislature by December 1, 2023. The report will include the state digital equity plan and certain related information.

- Makes modifications to the Community Technology Opportunity Program, including renaming it the Digital Equity Opportunity Program and redefining its purpose to be the advancement of broadband adoption and digital equity.

- Establishes the Digital Equity Planning Grant Program to provide grants to local governments, institutions of higher education, workforce development councils, or other entities to fund the development of a digital equity plan for a discrete geographic region of the state.

- Codifies the Digital Equity Forum (Forum), which several libraries are a part of, and adds a provision allowing funds to be used to compensate for any work done in connection with the Forum and assist additional persons with lived experience navigating barriers to digital connectivity.

Another bill that WLA was excited to support in this arena was SB 5715, sponsored by Senator Lisa Wellman. This bill modifies the definition of broadband to mean any service providing advanced telecommunications capability and internet access with transmission speeds that, at a minimum, provide 100 megabits per second (Mbps) download and 20 Mbps upload instead of 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload. The bill also increases the broadband speed requirements in underserved communities thus aligning our state's definition with federal definitions.

Increasing FAFSA Enrollment in Washington State

WLA was also a key player in 2SHB 1835, a bill proposed by Rep. Drew Hansen to raise the level of Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) applications filed in Washington to increase the number of students able to attend secondary schools—but also to help beef up the state's ability to qualify for grants and other funding. Currently, Washington's FAFSA rate is very low compared to other states. Rep. Hansen contacted WLA and we had several meetings to figure out the best way to involve our public, school, and academic libraries. School libraries are often already involved in high schools, and public libraries in some areas around the state also have experience with FAFSA application assistance. 2SHB 1835 sets up a marketing campaign to do more public outreach and establishes grants through the State Library to help public libraries, along with a community partner, provide greater opportunities for students and parents to get information and assistance in filling out FAFSA forms.

Imagination Library

The star power of Dolly Parton arrived in the Washington State Legislature with the introduction of HB 2068, creating the Imagination Library in the state. The bill, sponsored by Representatives Monica Stonier and Peter Abarrno, requires the Department of Children, Youth, and Families to select a qualified nonprofit organization physically located in Washington to create and operate the Imagination Library of Washington Program. This nonprofit would then contract with a national nonprofit foundation to identify eligible children and mail each month age-appropriate, high quality books to those children at no cost to families.

WLA supported this bill after stories of success were shared by several libraries around the state that already participate with the Imagination Library. This continued our ongoing support for increasing and improving reading programs for children.

Budget Work

After fighting for the ongoing section of the Capital Budget for Library Capital Improvement grants, we were excited to see all of the grants funded continued for this year. In addition, the state operating budget included additional monies for the State Library, particularly $100,000 to help them develop a digital literacy assessment tool. In addition, the operating budget provided $1.168 million to help expand library services for incarcerated individuals. The operating budget also included an increase in school library material funding from $21.89 per student to $21.97 per FTE student in our schools.

2023 Will Be Busy

Much of WLA's legislative work needs to occur this interim as we regroup again to introduce legislation to ensure ALL students in ALL districts have access to a school library information technology program with a trained, certified teacher-librarian. We also need to strategize ways to protect intellectual freedom and give all librarians—public, school, academic, and institutional—the support they need to do this.

Other issues, such as e-book licensing and levy passage requirements are also expected to be on the agenda next year, and we will need to have our grassroots ready to act when these bills come before the legislature.

The hope is that the legislature will be back in person next session but hopefully will retain some elements that will allow greater participation from people who cannot make it to Olympia. There will be many opportunities for library advocacy—so become involved and help WLA push our goals over the finish line. 📖

ALA Councilor Update

by Steven Bailey
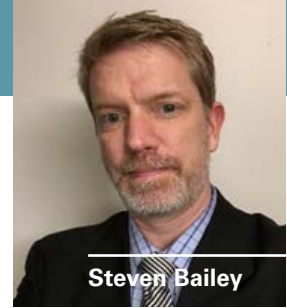
Steven Bailey

In late June 2022, the American Library Association held their first in-person conference since January 2020. Over 13,000 attendees traveled to Washington, D.C., to attend the six-day conference. In addition, 894 attended remotely, taking advantage of a broad array of virtual and hybrid sessions.

Notable speakers included actor John Cho, journalist Maria Hinojosa, comic book artist Kevin Eastman, actor/comedian Tiffany Haddish, author Celest Ng, and author R.L. Stine, among others. The full schedule of events included numerous awards ceremonies, educational opportunities, and celebratory events, as well as an exhibit hall packed with publishers and vendors.

ALA Council held governance meetings in a hybrid format as well, which required adoption of special rules to accommodate virtual attendees while remaining within the bounds of established parliamentary procedure. Council met in three separate sessions across three days of the conference. In addition, councilors were invited to attend the general membership meeting, several governance committee meetings such as the Planning and Budget Assembly, and two informal "Council Forum" sessions.

Several resolutions were introduced at Council I, including a resolution calling on President Biden to cancel student loan debt for all borrowers (VMD#2), which was adopted; a resolution deploring the damage and destruction of Ukrainian libraries, schools, and other cultural institutions (CD#57), which was adopted; a resolution in defense of the right to engage in political boycotts (CD#55), which was defeated; and a resolution on continuing virtual access to ALA membership meetings (CD#59), which was referred to the Budget Analysis and Review Committee (BARC) to determine potential fiscal impacts.

The most anticipated discussion among councilors was with respect to recommendations made by the Transforming ALA Governance (TAG) committee. TAG continues the work started

Steven Bailey is Librarian & Information Services Manager at the King County Library System, overseeing programs, services, outreach, and collections for three libraries. Steven earned his Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) degree in 2005 from the University of Washington. He is a graduate of the ALA Leadership Institute, and has been a member of the ALA Chapter Relations Committee and the ALA Business Reference Committee (BRASS). He has served on ALA Council since 2019.

by the Steering Committee on Organizational Effectiveness (SCOE), first convened in 2018; and the Forward Together Working Group, which formed in 2020 and picked up where SCOE left off. At issue are broad recommendations to reorganize the governance of ALA. The TAG recommendations brought before Council (CD#36) include:

- Reducing the size of Council, from its current 183 members to around 100 members, primarily through a reduction in Councilors-at-Large.

- Transitioning Council from a policy-making body to an advisory role and designating policy-making activities to the Executive Board.

- Expanding the membership of the Executive Board, and stipulating that the Board include representation from ALA Chapters, Divisions, Round Tables, the National Associations of Librarians of Color, and the American Association of School Librarians.

- Rewriting the ALA Constitution and Bylaws to reflect these governance changes.

- Establish a mechanism for hearing directly from ALA membership, tentatively referred to as Taking ALA's Pulse (TAP).

During Council I, these recommendations were discussed as a whole ("Action Item #1"), and two amendments were introduced. One amendment altered Action Item #1 to retain the Council as the policy-making body for the organization. The second stipulated that the Executive Board also include a representative from the Rainbow Round Table, in addition to another Round Table representative. Both amendments were adopted, and Action Item #1 passed as amended.

Council II brought a variety of committee reports, operational updates, and recommendations. A resolution was introduced (CD#56) to eliminate the informal Council Forums, which were originally convened to encourage discussion of issues and the formulation and refinement of resolutions to be brought before Council. The resolution addressed concerns of equity, inclusion, and transparency, as councilor attendance at the forums is not required. Additionally, several councilors felt that the discussions at forums should ideally be held during formal Council sessions, and that concerns about time allotments for discussion or the formality of Council sessions as a barrier to open discussion

should be addressed by rethinking Council sessions themselves, rather than continuing to support informal gatherings of a limited number of councilors. The resolution to eliminate Council Forums passed by only two votes, indicating a divided opinion on the topic.

At the next day's Council III session, the work of transforming ALA governance continued with a discussion of the necessary steps to amend the ALA Constitution and Bylaws to reflect the new governance structure. Amending the Constitution and Bylaws requires three separate Council votes, spread out over several months, followed by a vote of the ALA membership. The Constitution and Bylaws Committee presented a set of motions (CD#25.3) to rescind the ALA Constitution and replace the Constitution and Bylaws with a single set of bylaws, to be developed and adopted at LibLearnX, the midwinter meeting of ALA. Council approved the motions as presented.

An additional resolution on "Body Autonomy, Equity, and ALA Conference Sites" (CD#61) was introduced, calling on ALA to schedule future conferences "only in states and cities that recognize a right to abortion." After much thoughtful discussion, the measure was defeated, with councilors citing impacts to the ability of libraries in politically conservative areas to engage with local governments, as well as the need for library staff in these areas to have access to the networking and professional development opportunities that nearby conferences bring.

Following Council III, a reception was held to honor retiring ALA Parliamentarian Eli Mina for his twenty years of service. Eli will be succeeded by incoming parliamentarian Adrian Stratton.

Outside of the ALA Annual Conference, but indicative of the increasing reliance on online platforms to host meetings and discussions and conduct association business, ALA is adopting an updated Online Code of Conduct, effective August 1st, 2022. ALA has increasingly moved to ALA Connect as the preferred platform for shared online content, and ALA members logging into Connect after August 1st will be prompted to review and agree to the new Online Code of Conduct.

As your ALA Chapter Councilor, I would like to remind WLA that I am available during monthly online office hours on the third Wednesday of the month from 1:00-2:00pm. Use this Zoom link or log in to the WLA website to access meeting information on the Meetings & Events calendar.

Please feel free to submit questions, comments, and feedback regarding all things ALA as well, using the ALA Councilor - Feedback/Questions Google form.

WLA is a Chapter Affiliate Member of the American Library Association (ALA). ALA has affiliate relationships—a longtime partnership—with state library associations (chapters) in all fifty States, the District of Columbia, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and regional library associations in the Mountain Plains, New England, Pacific Northwest, and Southeastern regions.

Chapters promote general library service and librarianship within its geographic area, provide geographic representation to the Council of the American Library Association, and cooperate in the promotion of general and joint enterprises with the American Library Association and other library groups. 📖

Milestones

Celebrating Peter Mohn

After 41 years as a library media specialist, Peter Mohn retired from Glacier Peak High School (GPHS). Peter started his library career on the ground floor of the micro-computer revolution in education. His school library and university work in the 1980s and early 1990s was recognized by Marquis' Who's Who in Education in 1994.

In 1995, he led the installation of the first fully certified networked school in the Snohomish School District using donations of equipment from four private companies organized by Boeing, a grant from OSPI, building funds, and lots of hard volunteer work from parents and teachers. He has presented many times at WLMA, WLA and NCCE conferences. His presentations focused on integrating technology into school libraries, educational technology, and writing informal library proposals for local library projects. In addition, he was a WLMA Information Power trainer, helping school librarians integrate the 1998 AASL school library goals into their schools.

At the start of the 21st century, he designed school library web sites to expand information services to students and staff from their homes. Working with the architects designing GPHS he created a flexible school library design, so it would not only expand with its book collection but could be reconfigured with changes in library technology.

Lastly, he has been honored to work with dedicated teaching staffs at Lake Oswego Junior High School, a National School of Excellence, and at GPHS, a Washington State School of Distinction.   He will greatly miss working with GPHS students and staff.

Recognizing Representative Mia Gregerson

The Washington Library Association and the WLA Legislative Committee awarded Representative Mia Gregerson a WLA Honorary Membership. Unfortunately she was unable to attend the Awards Ceremony at the Conference to receive this recognition, but on June 22, 2022, she visited the Washington Talking Book & Braille Library for a presentation of the award by Danielle Miller, WLA Past President. The Honorary Award grants lifelong WLA membership and acknowledges an individual who demonstrates consistent support of library service and legislative action in Washington State. Representative Gregerson is respected statewide as a digital equity champion and her most recent legislative successes include the launch of the Washington State Digital Equity Forum and passage of a bill that increases the accessibility and affordability of telecommunications services, devices, and training.

Farewells and New Arrivals at The Evergreen State College Library and Media Services

Several library employees retired after decades of valued service to the Daniel J. Evans Library at The Evergreen State College, and several left the college for career advancement elsewhere. Retirees include Miko Francis (Interlibrary Loan), Jenny DeHaas (Library Administration), Jane Fisher (Circulation), and Sara Huntington (Research Services). Resignations include Joel Wippich (Circulation), Ariel Birks (Writing Center), and Ryan Richardson (Photo Services).

Two searches are active in summer 2022. We have already welcomed Gail Dillon-Hill (Photo Lab Manager) and Jacqueline Roque (Circulation). Leah Cover (Information Literacy and Assessment) will join us in July, and we expect two additional people to join our team before the summer is out.

Washington Library Association Gains 501(c)(3) Status

The Washington Library Association (WLA) has officially shifted from a 501(c)(4) to a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. It is exempt from federal income tax under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3).

Charitable contributions to WLA and the WLA Scholarship Fund are now tax deductible. As a public charity, WLA is qualified to receive tax deductible bequests, devises, transfers, or gifts under Section 2055, 2106, or 2522.

WLA will be awarding its annual scholarships later this year, for which donations are still being accepted at wla.org/giving.

WLA Executive Director Brianna Hoffman shares that the initial idea to switch from a 501(c)(4) to a 501(c)(3) was planted in 2016. However, WLA's official journey to become a 501(c)(3) organization did not begin until 2018, when that year's board was presented with the benefits of 501(c)(3) status. WLA worked with Apex Law Group on the transition, first on a pro bono basis, and then in a retained capacity at the direction of the board.

"This is such a wonderful change for our organization and I'm looking forward to the opportunities that it will bring," says Hoffman. "I'd like to recognize Jacob Ferrari and Judy Andrews of Apex Law Group for their help and guidance through this process. I also want to thank our current WLA Board—and WLA Boards of the past—who have worked so hard to make this happen."

WLA is a professional organization of over 1,200 members of librarians, library workers, and library advocates in Washington State. The organization was founded by the Washington State Library in 1905 and was merged in 1909 with the then newly-formed Pacific Northwest Library Association. It was briefly organized as the Puget Sound Library Association before being re-established in its current form in 1932.

A chapter of the American Library Association, the Washington Library Association leads, advocates, educates, and connects. Learn more at www.wla.org. 📖

WA Do I Read Next

by Jenna Zarzycki and Sara Peté


Jenna Zarzycki

Sara Peté

After some long, pandemic-filled years, we were all able to gather for an in-person conference in the beginning of May. I was particularly excited to be one of the presenters on the 'WA Do I Read Next' panel, featuring a group of folks talking up a variety of Washington state authors and their fantastic books. Although I'm sure more eloquent writers than I will speak to the joys of being in person, let me just say that there's nothing that compares to talking about books in front of a live, responsive audience. This year, the presenters were either judges or organizers for the Washington State Book Awards. For the uninitiated, the Washington State Book Awards honors a slew of authors every year for outstanding literary merit. For more information—and some excellent books—visit this Washington Center for the Book webpage. As a judge, I can tell you that for every author we bestow an award on, there are easily a dozen more we wish we could honor. The WA Do I Read Next panel gives us the chance to highlight a variety of books—winners and hidden gems. In this conference issue, fellow panelist Sara Peté and I would love to share a few of our favorites.

Nature Obscura by Kelly Brenner

How often do you equate downtown Seattle with abundant natural life? Seattle-based author and naturalist Kelly Brenner takes readers on an engaging journey around the city to discover the vast diversity of flora and fauna that thrives unseen right alongside city dwellers. Brenner works her way through all four seasons, showing readers that there are always busily working wonders to be found. From the raucous lives of crows above to the nearly invisible lives of tardigrades and slime molds on the ground, the author shows that nature is everywhere if you just take the time to look. Warning: this book may inspire a fervent wish for a microscope and a newfound mania for your friendly local moss
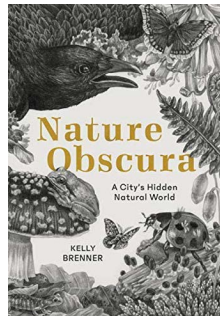
Jenna is an Adult Services Librarian at KCLS who lives and works in South King County. She adores talking about books to anyone who will listen and regularly contributes to KCLS' BookMatch and booklist services. Jenna's favorite reads tend towards fantasy, romance, and narrative nonfiction, although any book has the possibility to become a new favorite.

Sara Peté is a Community Outreach Librarian for the Washington State Library where her projects are the Washington Center for the Book, AskWA: The Statewide Virtual Reference Cooperative and WSL's social media. Sara lives in Olympia, where she plays music and frequents swimming holes.
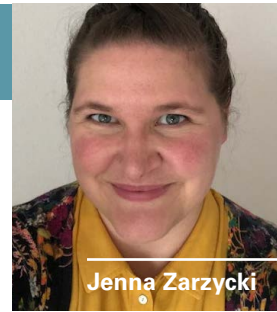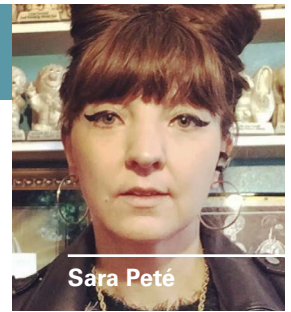
piglets. I myself was ready to poke at every patch of moss, convinced that I was going to find something amazing. Give this smart read to burgeoning naturalists and the naturally curious.

All Its Charms by Keetje Kuipers

Every April, National Poetry Month rolls around again. I know that there are some of you out there who, like me, stand in the midst of your poetry section with panic in your heart knowing that you are tasked with crafting the perfect poetry display. Fear not! There is a resource that I am able to offer you. Every year the Washington State Book Awards' judges nominate at least five books as finalists in the poetry category. Having judged a couple years in a row, I can assure you every honoree is a gem. These awards go all the way back to 2006, so there is wealth enough to fill the largest displays. I wanted to spotlight one of my personal favorite finalists, All Its Charms by Keetje Kuipers. This incandescent collection of poems spans the earth, motherhood, children, and all the rhythms of life. Kuipers polishes each word in her poems to such a gleaming shine that certain sentences can stop readers in their tracks, dazzled by the brightness. You can find this book and lots of other wonderful poetry on the Washington State Book Awards webpage.
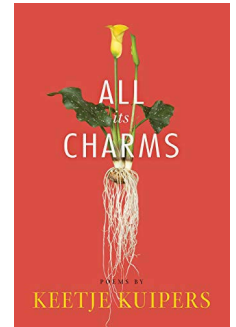
Red Paint: The Ancestral Autobiography of a Coast Salish Punk by Sasha taqʷšəblu LaPointe

I first read about this title via a great resource from another powerful Washington author, Elissa Washuta's Books by Native & Indigenous Writers list on Bookshop.org.

The contents of this book are as beautiful and striking as the cover and title. Sasha taqʷšəblu LaPointe, a poet, musician, writer, and all around creative force has gifted readers with a true coming of age story about a young artist's journey into being. LaPointe writes about both devastating relationships and the ones that keep you alive in dark times. She writes about pop culture, about stepping into punk, and about the joy and camaraderie in making art with your friends. She writes, too, about her ancestors, including her great grandmother Vi taqʷšəblu Hilbert, a storyteller, linguist, and co-author of
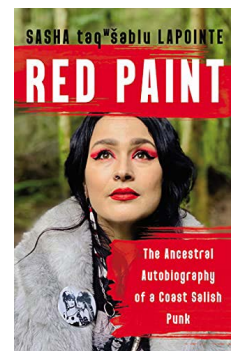
Eve Datisman

Seeing One's Future Self on the Page

by Eve Datisman

If you've read the Seattle Public Schools webpage, you may have stumbled across the fact that at least 153 languages, besides English, are spoken in the homes of the students served by the district.

Wow! What a rich gift that is.

However, speaking a different language at home hasn't always been seen as an advantage. In fact, it's often been seen as a detriment. And, in keeping with that narrower view, mainstream publishers haven't always seen the need to supply dual-language books. Nor did these publishers see the need to showcase authors of different ethnicities and experience, so children who learned to speak English in school didn't have much of a chance to see people who looked like them in books, limiting their ability to dream freely and expansively about their future. School teacher-librarians, like public librarians, had a difficult time finding small presses to fill the need.

Luckily for people searching for books in dual languages and/or books reflecting a rainbow of ethnicities, there has been a profound shift in the demographics of the US since the 2010 US Census.1 In reaction to that shift, in the last seven years or so, there has been a profound change of perspective in children's publishing.2 More stories by BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) authors and illustrators have entered mainstream publishing, which better reflects the student populations which teacher-librarians serve. In addition, publishers have added more stories about people with differing ability levels. There are more stories about LGBTQIA+ people; more stories about current and historical figures from African, Indian, Hispanic, Arabian, Chinese, Japanese, and other cultures; and, of local importance, more stories about Native Americans who have memories and experiences stretching back for thousands of years.

While it's always great to read and select new books, now is a particularly fruitful time to purchase books that ensure any child can see someone like themselves doing extraordinarily ordinary things. Books they can share with their friends and families. Books that encourage them to dream themselves into the future. Books that act as a catalyst, much like Nichelle Nichols acted as

Eve Datisman is a retired high school librarian who keeps her hand in as the Registrar/Cataloger/Soup Maker at the North Olympic History Center. When she's not sporting those hats, she is reading and reviewing for the Puget Sound Council for Review of Children's and Young Adult Literature. She thinks retired life is the best job she ever had.

a catalyst when she read the script for Star Trek and became the character Nyota Uhura in Star Trek: The Original Series. She thereby influenced Mae Jemison, the first Black astronaut, and countless other young Black women to live their dreams.

The teacher-librarian reviewers of Puget Sound Council for Review of Children's and Young Adult Literature invite you to READ (and share) THESE BOOKS from diverse authors and cultures, and to plant a seed as Fatima al-Fihri (c. 800-880 CE) did when she established the University of al-Qarawiyyin in Morocco and opened a school where all students, "especially the poor and the refugees, could live and study for free."[3]
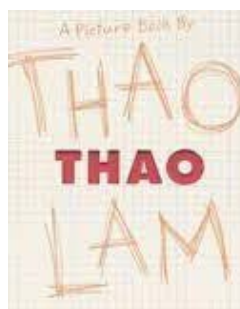
Thao by Lam, Thao
Grade level: PreK-1
Rating: Highly Recommended
ISBN: 9781771474320
Reviewer: Craig Seasholes, Sanislo Elementary Library, Retired

A short, common name like Thao shouldn't be a problem. But ever since she entered school, her common Vietnamese name has been mispronounced, misspelled, and made fun of and this little girl (who grew up to be a picture book artist) wants to set the record straight. Using cut-paper illustrations of a culturally diverse classroom and photos of the author as a young girl, this Vietnamese-Canadian author-illustrator has created a great springboard to encourage discussion and respect for correct pronunciation of students' names. Get it? "My name is Thao. It helps if you take out the H when you say it. But remember to put it back in when you spell it. Thao Hong Lam." Enough said? I think so.

Un lobo con mucha hambre by Borando, Silvia
Grade level: Pre-K-1
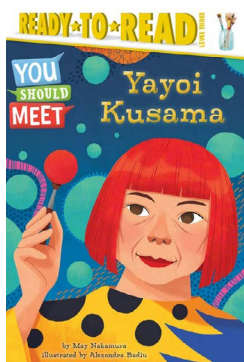Rating: Highly Recommended
ISBN: 9788417673499
Reviewer: Teresa Bateman, Author

Rumor has it that there is a hungry wolf in the woods. A rabbit believes it and runs for safety. Along the way he meets and warns a snail, but, darn it all, the snail isn't much good at running. Now the rabbit is running while carrying the snail on

his back. Next, he warns a sleeping dormouse, who won't wake up. Now he's hauling it along by its tail, as well as carrying the snail. When he meets a donkey, his warning is ignored again. Onward he goes until a mole offers a safe refuge . . . or is it? Luckily, the wolf encounters the donkey before it meets them. Whew! (Too bad about the donkey.) This cumulative tale is a Spanish translation of an Italian book with very simple text and big, BOLD illustrations that contain a lot of emotion. It is absolutely hilarious and would be sure to appeal to the same crowd who like the Elephant & Piggy books by Mo Willems. This would be perfect for a Spanish-language storytime with preschoolers.

Yayoi Kusama by Nakamura, May
Grade Level: 3-5
Rating: Highly Recommended
ISBN: 9781534495647
Reviewer: Craig Seasholes, Sanislo Elementary Library, Retired

This tidy little Ready-to-Read Level 3[4] biography of the "Princess of Polka-Dots" Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama might not match the iconoclastic artist's sensibilities, but it provides a serviceable biography for 2-3 grade readers. The now 92-year-old Kusama's dot-and-mirror installations remain remarkable affirmations of her artistic vision that has defied the gender and cultural expectations of what a Japanese woman might be. Her admiration of Georgia O'Keefe and rivalry with Andy Warhol are noted briefly. Even more briefly noted is her working relationship with mental illness; for many years, her obsessive and often hallucinatory vision has been managed by living in a mental institution while continuing her remarkable artistic production. I'll recommend this short and age-appropriate video from the Tate Museum to make this a creative addition to arts education in elementary schools.

Isla to Island by Castellanos, Alexis
Grade Level: 4-9
Rating: Highly Recommended
ISBN: 9781534469235
Reviewer: Anne Dame, Einstein Middle School

This is a beautifully illustrated graphic novel about a young girl living in Havana, Cuba, with her parents. When things get too dangerous during Castro's regime, they send her to the United States. Her world becomes colorless and gray as she lives with foster parents in New York City. Spots of color are slowly added back in as she and her foster family discover shared loves such as plants, books, and cooking Cuban-inspired meals together. It is amazing how much can be conveyed in this basically wordless graphic novel, with many of the words in Spanish.
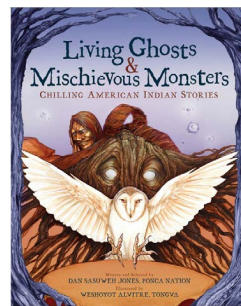
Living Ghosts and Mischievous Monsters: Chilling American Indian Stories by Jones, Dan SaSuWeh
Grade Level: 3+
Rating: Highly Recommended
ISBN: 9781338681628
Reviewer: Eve Datisman, Resourceress-at-Large

Dan SaSuWeh Jones (Ponca) says, "Ghost stories are always close to us because ghosts are part of our daily world," and he shares 32 ancient and contemporary eerie tales. The book is divided into five sections: Ghosts, Spirits (who have an agenda that ghosts don't), Witches, Monsters, and the Supernatural. Most tales are short and range in tone from the mild eeriness of hearing the movements of an elder who had just died to terrifying encounters with were-otters, a cannibal with an icy heart shaped like a human baby, Sasquatch, and La Llorona. The stories are wonderful, but the treasure is the context the Jones give for each. Every story in the book is credited to either an individual or tribe, usually both, and briefly prefaced by background on Native or specific tribal beliefs relevant to the story about to be told and omits anything that should not be shared with non-natives. The tales are enhanced by the intricate and creepy drawings of Alvitre (Tonva). Advisory: Indigenous students who follow these cultural traditions might still find some content to be taboo. Includes sources, lists for further reading, and websites which will spark independent investigation.
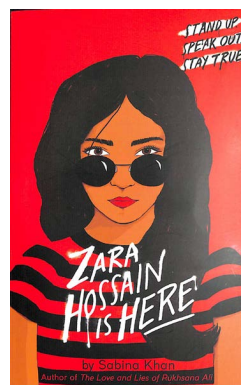
Zara Hossain is Here by Khan, Sabina
Grade Level: 6-12
Rating: Recommended
ISBN: 9781338580877
Reviewer: Anne Dame, Einstein Middle School

Zara is a bisexual Pakistani-American Muslim teen living in Texas. She is accepted by her parents, but at school she is bullied by a boy named Tyler. One day, he takes things too far, causing her dad to get involved and her entire family to feel unsafe. Zara wants to continue to fight for her beliefs, but her parents want to go back to Pakistan. Content warning for violence, racism, hate crimes, homophobia, and Islamophobia. A relevant and (as far as this white non-Muslim person can tell) authentic look at what Muslim immigrants are facing and the universal longing to be accepted, not just tolerated.
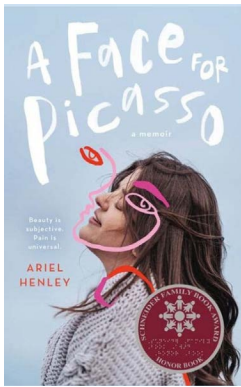
A Face for Picasso: Coming of Age with Crouzon Syndrome by Henley, Ariel
Grade Level: 8-12
Rating: Highly Recommended
ISBN: 9780374314071
Reviewer: Eve Datisman, Resourceress-at-Large

"Their faces resembled the work of Picasso" reads a line from a French magazine article about Ariel and her twin sister Zan, who were born with Crouzon syndrome, a rare "craniofacial condition where the bones in the head don't grow." Using Picasso and his art as a frame, the author explores the idea of "beauty through the lens of disfigurement." As she and her sister grow, they undergo a series of life-saving and aesthetic surgeries that drastically alter their appearances and leave Ariel feeling alienated from her body and society. Henley explores experiences with discrimination, emotional upheaval, and an eating disorder. Some events feel loosely related to the whole, but reading the book is like reading a series of uplifting essays where the narrative shows how Picasso's misogyny, fatphobia, and racism intersect and are mirrored in society. This is a well-done version of memoir as recovery—thoughtful and avoids tidy conclusions. A must-read on self-love, beauty, disability, visibility, and community. Includes: an author's note, bib., and recommended reading. 📖

NOTES

1 US Census Bureau, "Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the United States: 2010 Census and 2020 Census," Census.gov, last modified March 25, 2022, https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/racial-and-ethnic-diversity-in-the-united-states-2010-and-2020-census.html.

2 "Languages in the United States," The Demographic Statistical Atlas of the United States - Statistical Atlas, last modified September 4, 2018, https://statisticalatlas.com/United-States/Languages.

3 M. O. Yuksel, *One Wish: Fatima Al-Fihri and the World's Oldest University* (New York: HarperCollins, 2022).

4 Simon & Schuster, "Ready-to-Read: Ready-to-Read Levels," last modified 2021, https://readytoread.com/levels.html

Lushootseed grammars and dictionaries.

"Red Paint is a miraculous book. Sasha LaPointe walks us through the sites of her evisceration while rebuilding a home within her body using sturdy materials: rose quartz, cedar bark, red clay, and the words of her ancestors. With each potent sentence, she shows us what access to power looks like. She shows us how to become whole." –Elissa Washuta, author of *White Magic*

The Lines that Make Us by Nathan Vass

Nathan Vass is one of the nicest people in the world. Based on a blog that he's kept up for almost a decade, this book discusses the events, the people, and the times that Nathan witnesses as a night driver for one of Seattle's bus lines. While the bus route and some of the interactions can be very difficult, Nathan steadily maintains his belief of moments of positivity between him and the folks he encounters. Many of the people Nathan interacts with are those that are judged most harshly by the rest of us—the homeless, the mentally ill, the criminal. But, in the warmth of Nathan's goodness, we see these folks in a new light, one that is far and away more gentle and compassionate towards fellow humans. Public workers, Seattleites, and bus riders will enjoy this personal, thoughtful take on a life lived with relentless optimism and kindness in this 2019 Washington State Book Award finalist.
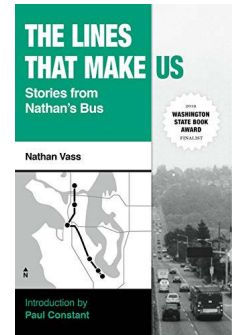
Mount Rainier National Park: An Artist's Tour by Molly Hashimoto

Molly Hashimoto is an artist that excels in showing off the treasures of nature through her art. This is most apparent in her latest book, wh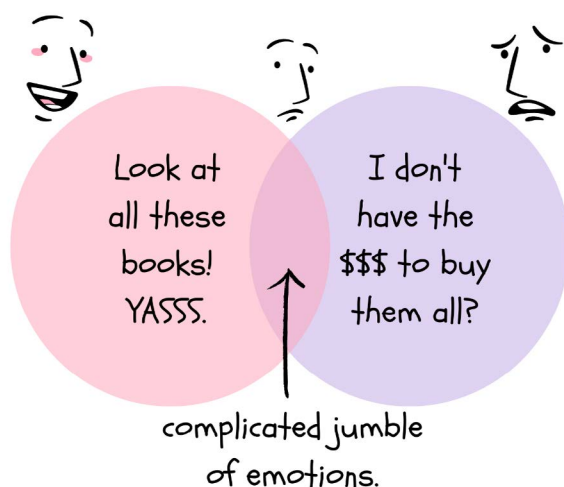ere she gives readers a personalized, intimate tour of Mount Rainier National Park as seen through her eyes. Luminous watercolor landscapes turn the often photographed sights of the park into a celebration of color. Hashimoto also showcases the abundant plant and animal life that can be found along the trails, entrances, and lodges. Each painting and sketch demonstrates Molly Hashimoto's advice that paying attention is one of the keys to making beautiful art. For burgeoning artists who are interested in creating their own memories, Molly Hashimoto has included the basic makeup of her on-the-go toolkit as well as some tips on observation and practice. All other readers will enjoy learning more about this gorgeous natural treasure. This book is a love letter to Mount Rainier National Park with the warm feel of an illustrated family scrapbook. 📖
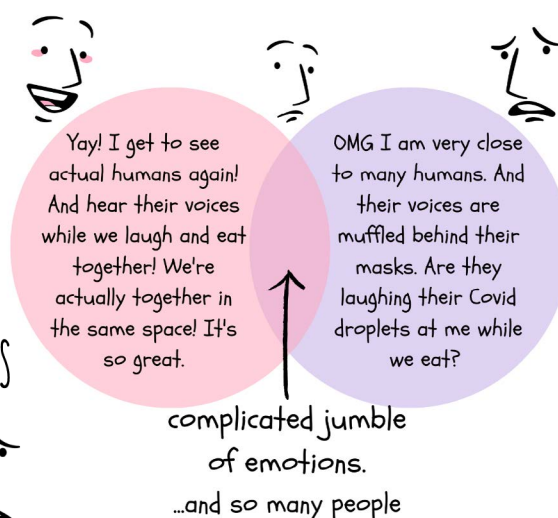
WLA 2022

AN EXPLORATION IN VENN DIAGRAMS

ON TABLES FULL OF BOOKS

Look at all these books! YASSS.

I don't have the $$$ to buy them all?

complicated jumble of emotions.

ON BEING IN-PERSON

Yay! I get to see actual humans again! And hear their voices while we laugh and eat together! We're actually together in the same space! It's so great.

OMG I am very close to many humans. And their voices are muffled behind their masks. Are they laughing their Covid droplets at me while we eat?

complicated jumble of emotions.

...and so many people

ON SOCIAL JUSTICE BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Libraries save lives! We have the passion and capability to bring about more equity and serve so many.

Libraries save lives! Why is there resistance to work that could bring about more equity and serve so many?

complicated jumble of emotions.

...this is so much harder than it should be.

Poppy Louthan is a teacher-librarian at Eton School and enjoyed attending both WLA and ALA annual conferences this year.

WLA Thanks Our Organizational Members

Organizational Members

Asotin County Library

Bellingham Public Library

Big Bend Community College Bonaudi Library

Community Colleges of Spokane

Ellensburg Public Library

Everett Public Library

The Evergreen State College

Foley Center Library - Gonzaga University

Fort Vancouver Regional Library District

Grandview Library

Green River College

Highline College Library

Holocaust Center for Humanity

Jefferson County Library

King County Library System

Kitsap Regional Library

Lake Washington Institute of Technology

Longview Public Library

Lopez Island Library

Lower Columbia College

NCW Libraries

Network of the National Library of Medicine, Region 5

North Olympic Library System

North Seattle College

Orcas Island Library District

Pierce College Library

Primary Source

San Juan Island Library

Seattle Central College Library

Seattle Public Library

Skagit Valley College/Norwood

Sno-Isle Libraries

South Seattle College

Spokane County Library District

Spokane Public Library

Stevens County Rural Library District

Tacoma Public Library

Walla Walla Community College Library

Washington State Library

Whatcom Community College

Whatcom County Library System

Whitman County Library

Yakima Valley College

Yakima Valley Libraries