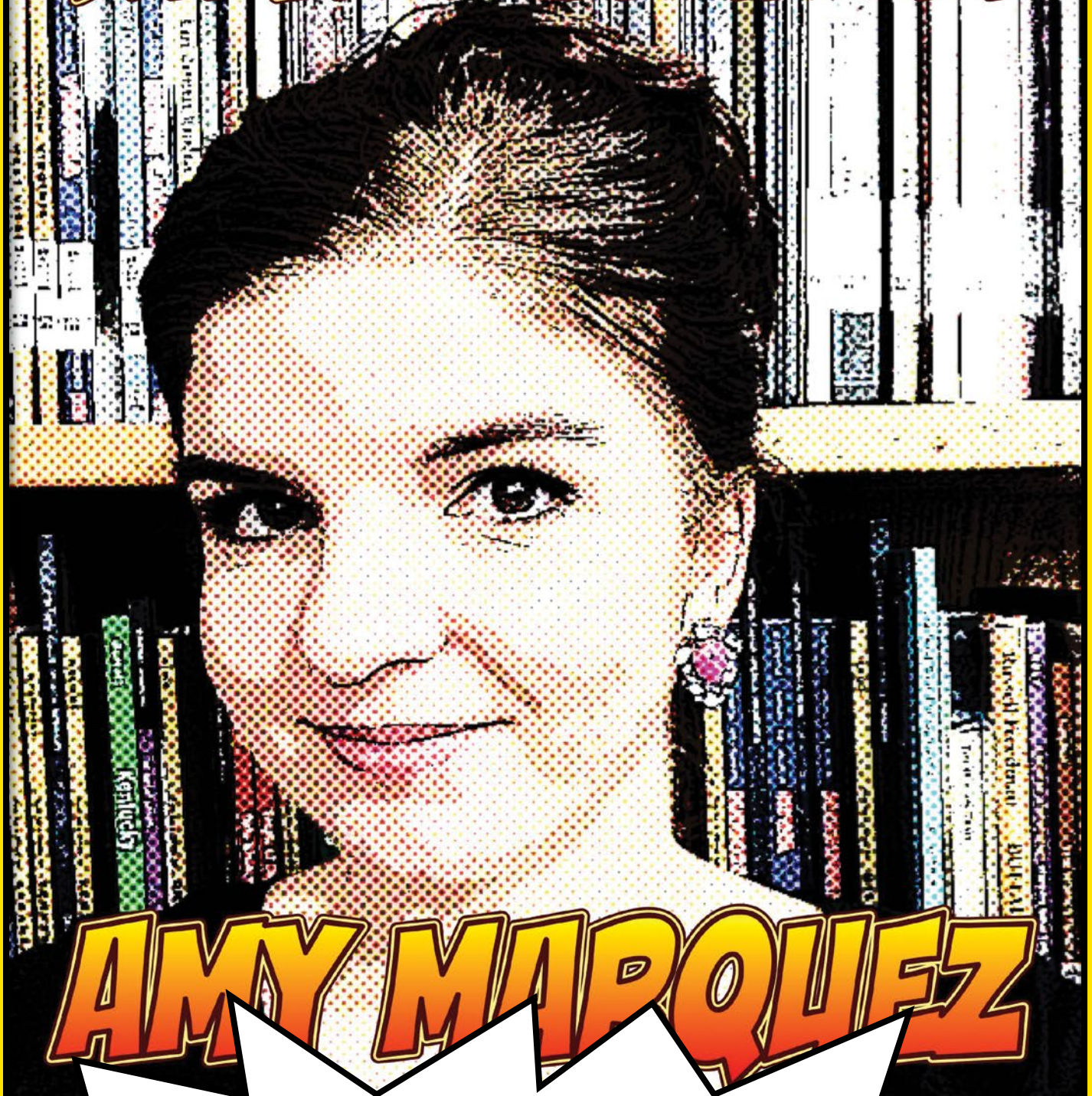


# Texas **LIBRARY** Journal

VOLUME 91, NUMBER 3 • FALL 2015

## **SUPER LIBRARIAN**



## **AMY MAPQUEZ**

**IN THIS ISSUE:** FRONTLINE LIBRARY SUPERHEROES, DIY SKILLS,  
PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE, A CONVERSATION WITH STEPHANIE ANDERSON,  
BANNED BOOKS, & MORE!



*a loss*  
**beyond words.**

Your school library, your community.

School libraries are much more than literacy centers. They serve as a safe environment to explore and learn, access new information technologies, and collaborate with peers. When a school library program is destroyed by a natural disaster, the students and the community feel the immediate loss of a valuable resource that reaches far beyond books. Since 2006, the American Association of School Librarians, with funding from the Dollar General Literacy Foundation, has given more than 1.5 million dollars in grants to over 150 school libraries across the country affected by natural disasters.

**APPLY TODAY FOR A BEYOND WORDS GRANT:  
[WWW.ALA.ORG/AASL/DISASTERRELIEF](http://WWW.ALA.ORG/AASL/DISASTERRELIEF)**

**Beyond Words**<sup>SM</sup>

the Dollar General school library relief fund

A collaboration among



An ALA, AASL, NEA program  
funded by Dollar General  
Literacy Foundation

Published by the  
TEXAS LIBRARY  
ASSOCIATION

Membership in TLA is open to any individual or institution interested in Texas libraries.

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A directory of TLA membership is available in the "Members Only" section of the website.

Opinions expressed in Texas Library Journal are those of the authors and are not necessarily endorsed by TLA.

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**COVER:** Amy Marquez, librarian at Marcia R. Garza Elementary (Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD), reveals her superhero persona in a comic-style image she often uses in her library publications.

You'll find her in "street clothes" on page 82 in the article showcasing a sampling of TLA frontline superhero librarians.

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**As TLA president,** I have been extremely fortunate to meet many new people. Some are new to TLA, and some just new to me. One thing I have come away with is how excited and reassured I am for the future success of libraries in Texas and the world!

Recently, I attended the TALL Texans Leadership Institute, and during those few days, it became very clear to me that Texas libraries are in great hands. TALL Texans is the TLA leadership development program for emerging young leaders in Texas. Wow, what a group! I expect some truly great things from these individuals.

I was so excited to see that my last article started an interesting discussion on the PLD (Public Libraries Division) list serve. Some librarians were embracing my statement that the core of all issues is funding – and that to receive adequate and consistent funding is essential. The libraries recognized as essential by their administrators will receive funding. It goes hand in hand. Some felt my comments did not go far enough and expressed the belief that libraries have to be more than just valued in a general sense: they must be interwoven in the community fabric to be truly essential.

It is wonderful to see these discussions. These conversations are exactly what the TLA networking system has been created to provide. This is, and can continue to be (if we will use it), an extremely valuable tool to all librarians. School librarians are way ahead of the rest of us. They have embraced using the TLC and TASL list serves (both administered by TLA), and many praise the assistance they receive by participating.

TLA is a member-driven organization. It is only as good as our participation in the association. There are so many great things going on within TLA: our strategic planning process, committee work, reading lists, leadership development, and much more. I hope you will jump in and join these groups or the many other

group discussions popping up all over our association.

I am so excited to share that the TLA Public Relations Committee is hard at work creating a marketing campaign that will include a tool kit. Every library of any type or size will be able to use these tools to market its library. We will offer a tagline that we can all share and make our own by using it in our libraries.

Our TLA Strategic Planning Task Force is also hard at work. Members are creating a new plan that will lead TLA in the next three to five years. This plan will guide programing, the association's structure, and continuing education. It will have an impact on every aspect of TLA. Everyone will have opportunities to provide input, and I hope you will embrace this chance to help strengthen services to librarians and libraries. This group is being led by Sherilyn Bird and Eddy Smith, and they want your participation.

The 2016 Conference Program Planning Committee and TLA units are creating powerful and diverse programs that will be spectacular. Houston 2016 will be an outstanding conference with robust content and wonderful authors and speakers. A goal of the 2016 Program Committee is that every librarian in the state will find programs of interest and benefit throughout the conference week. We believe everyone will go home with new knowledge and skills that energize



and empower them for many months into the future.

Before I close, I hope everyone will continue to find ways to bring positive attention to their library.

There are risks and costs to action.

But they are far less than the long range risks of comfortable inaction.

– John F. Kennedy

Don't forget: now is the perfect time to be contacting your local elected officials. Sponsor events and make sure they are invited to participate. Or, send out information to parents and faculty about the events, activities, and learning outcomes in your library. *Step out of your box and be bold for your library!*

**Share your vision!** ✪

An advertisement for 'GIGANTIC picture books' illustrated by Roxie Munro. The ad features a vibrant, multi-panel illustration of an underwater scene with a research ship, coral, and various sea creatures. Two children are shown sitting on the floor, looking at the book. A red banner at the top right says '9 themes'. A red box on the left contains the text 'GIGANTIC picture books illustrated by Roxie Munro'. Below the illustration, text describes the book as a two-sided backdrop, engaging Reader's Theater curriculum, and an interactive app set the stage for imaginative role-play as kids become characters in their own story. The website 'kiwistorybooks.com' is listed at the bottom right. A small caption 'Side 2: Research Ship' is visible at the bottom left of the illustration.

# Remembering a True Library Champion: Dr. Robert Tocker

BY PAT TUOHY

This past spring, the Texas library community lost a staunch supporter and a true philanthropist. Dr. Robert Tocker, longtime chairman of the Tocker Foundation, passed from this world with the same grace and dignity that he demonstrated each day of his long and well-spent life.

The youngest child of Russian immigrant parents, Robert embraced the values of honesty, hard work, a love of learning, and respect for all people. After graduating from high school in Galveston, Bob followed his three older siblings to Austin to attend The University of Texas. He worked his way through college driving an ambulance for a local funeral home. Combat experiences in Korea lead him to a career in the health sciences caring for people as a dentist. During his 60 plus years in Austin, he raised a family of four boys and earned the love and respect of all who knew him.

A driving principle of his character was his sense of fairness. This trait manifested itself in a request to his Austin Lions Club chapter that the group admit an African American member into its ranks. This was a radical notion in the early 1960's and one that was quickly rejected by his club. Not one to be deterred, Bob became the sponsor of the first integrated Lions Club chapter in the U.S., which brought together African American and white members.

The Tocker Foundation is perhaps the most familiar connection that many Texas librarians have had with Bob over the years. Established by his brother Philip Tocker and fully endowed after his death, the Tocker Foundation has had a tremendous impact on small community libraries in Texas. The success of the

Foundation is due in great part to the stewardship and guidance Bob exercised over the years. His genuine interest in the struggles of librarians serving the smallest, and often, poorest communities in Texas inspired and gratified his heart. "What can we do to help?" was a frequent question to librarians across the state.

Robert "Bob" Tocker was a philanthropist in the truest sense. His altruistic

concern for human welfare and advancement was lived out each day of his life. The library community in Texas was extremely fortunate to have Robert Tocker as a friend and lover of libraries. He has made countless lives better, and our communities are all the stronger for his generosity, vision, and grace. ✪

## MEMORIAL RESOLUTION HONORING

### *Dr. Robert Tocker*

*Whereas*, Texas libraries lost a valued friend and extraordinary champion with the death of Dr. Robert Tocker on Monday, June 8, 2015; and

*Whereas*, Dr. Tocker generously gave of his time and talent through decades of service to his community as a volunteer and philanthropist; and

*Whereas*, Dr. Tocker served as chairman of the Tocker Foundation, an organization that has supported rural Texas public libraries and librarians with grants and travel stipends for more than 20 years; and

*Whereas*, Dr. Tocker and the Tocker Foundation further support rural libraries by underwriting the Small Community Libraries Round Table Librarian of the Year Award presented at the Texas Library Association's annual conference; and

*Whereas*, Dr. Tocker and the Tocker Foundation support historical preservation of newspapers through their partnership with the Digital Archives at the University of North Texas; and

*Whereas*, Dr. Tocker and the Tocker Foundation are founding supporters of the Texas Book Festival; and

*Whereas*, Dr. Tocker's life serves as a testament to leadership, vision, and true kindness to his fellow men and women; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Texas Library Association honors Dr. Tocker for cherishing education, promoting free and unfettered access to information, and advancing the cause of Texas public libraries and the social benefit they create in communities they serve; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Texas Library Association, on behalf of its members, extends its sincerest condolences to his wife Barbara Tocker, his family, and the Tocker Foundation.

*Adopted by the Texas Library Association Council, July 10, 2015*



I have found over the last two years that when you work in this job, you learn a lot about history. Not only have I taken a crash course in Texas history (which is good since it has been a long time since seventh grade), I have also learned a lot about the history of libraries in Texas and of the state library. The Texas State Library and Archives Commission was founded as a modern agency in 1909, then known as the Texas Library and Historical Commission. At that time, an overriding concern of the agency and its supporters – including the Texas Library Association, which had been formed in 1902 thanks to many of the same social forces – was the creation of public libraries. The Public Library Movement in Texas, which sought to establish public library service in every county in the state, was motivated by a belief that access to books and reading for persons of all ages was an essential tool for self-improvement and a driver of civic engagement, workforce development, and economic advancement (though they might not have put it in exactly those words).

Later in 1909, State Librarian Ernest William Winkler established a journal called *Texas Libraries* to promote the Library Movement. He wrote in the first issue,

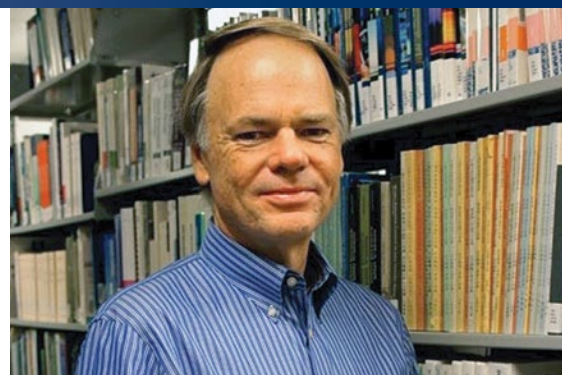
Among the duties of the Commission is that of aiding in the establishment of public libraries and in their improvement. The chief significance of this measure lies in the fact that it carries with it the endorsement of the State; it puts the people of the State behind a movement supported hitherto by such associations of individuals as the Texas Library Association, the State Teachers' Association, and the State Federation of Women's Clubs.

Ten years later, in 1919, Texas finally passed the County Library Law. Some things have changed in the years since. In 1915, the State Library documented

50 free public libraries, 36 subscription public libraries, and 34 college and university libraries. One hundred years later, we have approximately 560 public libraries, over 200 academic libraries, and thousands of school libraries. As we progress through this new century, we have created networks and connections to resources and between all types of library and archival institutions that would have astonished and delighted Winkler and his colleagues.

But in other ways, our concerns are still the same. We are still working closely with the Texas Library Association to put libraries of all types at the center of community engagement, technology access, lifelong literacy, and workforce development. Our task has grown more complex as the state's population has grown many times larger, as our communities have grown more diverse, as information has exploded through a proliferation of media, and as societal and economic pressures force ever faster rates of change. At the core, however, our work in all types of libraries is facilitating connections between the public and the information resources they need to live productive and fulfilled lives.

That libraries are in an information business in an information age is a message that we took to the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislature with some success. With outstanding support from TLA members led by the Legislative Committee chaired by Jennifer Laboon and Rebecca Sullivan, and coordinated by TLA Director of Communications Gloria Meraz, we gained \$7.6 million new dollars for TSLAC programs for 2016-2017 in support of libraries and archives statewide. Of that amount, \$6 million will be spent for resources to expand TexShare and TexQuest database access for virtually every person in the state through academic, public, and K-12 libraries. We also secured (after asking for over a decade) funds to establish the Texas Digital Archive to collect, preserve, and make available state archives in electronic



format. And we even managed to secure an additional appropriation for market salary adjustments to help us recruit and retain qualified staff for a variety of positions, including librarians and archivists.

These resources, combined with our full allotment of federal funds, mean that we have reached a point where we have recovered most of our losses of 2011 and are able to move ahead in some critical areas. Over the past few months, we have rolled out a number of new initiatives, including the following:

- Expansion of the TexQuest program for access to digital content for K-12 students to nearly 700 districts representing approximately 90% of all public school students in Texas.
- In May, we hosted three three-day Harwood Innovation Labs for about 300 public and academic librarians to explore the “turning outward” model of community engagement of the Harwood Institute, a national partner of the American Library Association.
- This year and next, as a complement to the Harwood Labs, we will send a number of Texas librarians to learn about the Family Place model for children's services as practiced in several hundred libraries in the United States.
- We launched Edge, a community engagement initiative to help libraries assess and improve their technology to meet local needs.
- This spring, we introduced a new technology training program called “You can do I.T.” to help libraries understand and manage their computers and networks.

- In our Archives and Information Services division, we received the records of former Governor Rick Perry, including over six terabytes of data in digital format.
- We have made plans with the Dallas Public Library to transition the Texas Center for the Book from its longtime home at DPL to TSLAC to promote books, reading, and libraries statewide.

And we look forward to the work that remains before us. In the coming months, we will be visiting with librarians and library supporters across the state to help shape our next Agency Strategic Plan and Legislative Appropriations Request, due less than

a year from now. Among many other topics, we will consider how we can:

- Address the need for greater broadband capacity,
- Continue to meet the significant training needs of libraries across the state,
- Ensure services meet the needs of diverse communities,
- Meet the needs for specific types of digital resources for library users,
- Create more effective resource sharing and discovery tools, including ways to lead users more seamlessly to digital resources managed by different institutions, and

- Leverage new standards for Texas' K-12 libraries to underscore their importance to academic excellence and student achievement.

I propose we tap into the same urgency and passion that motivated Texas library leaders of a hundred years ago to build a new Library Movement. I'm excited to work with TLA and the statewide library community to revive that sense of missionary zeal to achieve our collective aspiration for today's libraries as anchor institutions for sustainable communities through lifelong learning, digital inclusion, personal enrichment, and economic development.

**Onward!** ★

## TLA Road Trips: Part I The Rio Grande Valley

**What do UFOs, book battles, and technology in the classroom have in common?**

Rio Grande Valley librarians that's what! TLA staff is taking to the highways, byways, and airways to take in the richness of the Texas library community. We want to visit all types of libraries, hear from

BY GLORIA MERAZ



librarians and library staff members, and learn about the challenges, successes, and opportunities in the library community.

Earlier this month, I visited the Rio Grande Valley, including Harlingen, McAllen, Edinburg, and Brownsville. I heard from librarians across the region about collaboration, the importance of TLA in bringing together librarians, the challenges of recruiting for open positions, the collective need for more local CE opportunities, and much more.

Librarians shared the many diverse programs and services they are providing the public. From Edinburg's exciting (and extremely popular) UFO conference and Brownsville PL's dynamic library remodel to Battle of Book for students and Harlingen ISD's dynamic training for school librarians, Rio Grande libraries

offer an oasis of learning, opportunity, literacy, and FUN!

TLA thanks the following: *Mabel Hockaday* (Harlingen Public Library), *Mireya Galvan* (Harlingen CISD), *Rhonda Amstutz* (LaFeria ISD), *Linda Villarreal* (San Benito ISD), ESC 1's *Laura Sheneman* and *Fabi Fuentes*, *Juan Guerra* (Brownsville Pubic Library), *Jose Tamez* (Edinburg Pubic Library), *Nora Galvan* (Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD), *Nicole Cruz* (Sharyland ISD), *Cody Gregg* (South Texas College), *Norma Fultz* (Rio Grande City Public Library), and *Arnoldo Becho* (Weslaco Public Library).

*Check out the Road Trip photo album on TLA's Facebook, and stay tuned for our next adventure. We may be coming to your library!*

# At the Frontlines: *Making Library Magic*

BY GLORIA MERAZ

A few weeks ago, I asked members of our library community – particularly those new to the field – to tell me about the great and innovative work they were conducting in their libraries. I was absolutely floored by the responses. People from all types of libraries submitted their stories and shared their successes.

Not only do we have amazing librarians, library workers, and library services in Texas, we have library professionals eager to share what they do. More than anything, I am so proud of the wonderful people who take such pride in their work and who believe so strongly in the power of libraries.

Read for yourself. In their words, this is **WHAT WE DO!**



academic

Le Yang

Texas Tech  
University  
Libraries

Libraries are exciting places because...  
***smart information professionals are devoted to contributing to academia.***

I have been working with a group of programmers to develop an authenticated streaming audio/video system to handle music-related theses and dissertations, as well as other multimedia materials at Texas Tech University. Along with the Institutional Repository DSpace, the system addresses the essential conflicts between copyrighted art works and open access electronic theses and dissertations. In addition, as part of the Libraries Data Management Team, I have also been working with my colleagues, Ryan Litsey and Matt McEniry, to provide data management consultations and planning services to faculty and researchers who are applying for federal grants.



public

Jonathan  
David  
Torres

Dustin Michael  
Sekula Memorial  
Library

Libraries are exciting places because...  
***the whole world is just a library card away!***

We host the South Texas International Film Festival. Through this event, the community experiences award-winning international films, learns skills to build a career in the television and film industries, and hears inspiring stories from members of our community who have gone on to great things. All films, workshops, and panels are free of charge, and anyone with an entertainment-related project is welcome to share their talents at our tech expo. By introducing our community to stories from around the world, we hope to inspire patrons to reach beyond their neighborhoods and set their sights on world class goals.



school

Amy Lynn Marquez

Marcia R. Garza Elementary,  
Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD

Libraries are exciting places because...  
***learning comes to life when students are inspired to explore.***

Our Living History Museum project makes learning about historical figures exciting for our students. During library classes, students researched a historical figure of their choice. Working together with their families at home, students completed their research and designed a costume for their chosen historical figure. On the day of the event, students excitedly presented information they learned to their peers. History truly came to life as students interviewed each other. For the 2015-2016 school year, I received a Laura Bush Grant for \$7,000 and am eager to enhance this project with the purchase of additional biographies for the library.

*Libraries are exciting places because. . .*





## special

### Bethany Ross

*Woman's Collection,  
Texas Woman's University*

Libraries are exciting places because...  
**people find in them knowledge,  
community, access, and innovation.**

I am the digital curator for the Woman's Collection at Texas Woman's University. In the past year, I worked on digitization projects that celebrated a number of TWU milestones: centennials of the Music Department and the student newspaper, *The Lasso*, as well as the 75th anniversary of The Little Chapel-in-the-Woods. Unique photographs documenting our University's history were digitized and uploaded to The Gateway to Women's History, TWU's online digital archive, enabling people from around the world to access these moments in in TWU's history.

### Amanda Albright

*South Regional Branch  
Library, Montgomery  
County Memorial  
Library System*



Libraries are exciting places because...  
**as cultural community epicenters,  
they provide education, leisure, and  
entertainment.**

During the TLA Annual Conference this year, I attended Nancy Goebel's Check Out a Human Book! presentation and loved the concept. I tweaked the

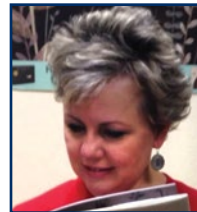
program into a hero library program, to support the Summer Reading theme of "superheroes." We invited a variety of community heroes (military veterans, SPCA volunteers, firemen, even the library director) to participate by manning a table in one or two hour shifts and answering patron questions about the work they do. We had a HUGE turnout... over 230 patrons! Currently, I'm working on a different program proposal inspired by TLA speaker Eric Lashley – a bike-sharing program!

### Cynthia Alaniz

*Cottonwood Creek Elementary,  
Coppell ISD, Coppell, TX*

Libraries are exciting places because...  
**they foster readers and support  
learning!**

Every Friday, our library is a hub for all grade levels (K-5) as they take part in Genius Hour. During that time, the CCE Library offers support in a myriad of ways: research resources, production space for projects, gathering place for across grade-level collaboration, reading spots, and technology. Our Mobile #Makerspace is also available. Operating from a repurposed library cart lovingly designed by one of our awesome parent library volunteers, students have access to supplies of varying types to create as they wish. The materials can be taken off the cart and returned when finished. Origami, scrapbooking, bookmaking, and marble runs have all been the products. Our CCE Library is a definitely a center of active learning!



### Magdiel Alfonso

*Dustin Michael Sekula Memorial Library*

Libraries are exciting places because...  
**it is a place where culture thrives!**

Through the Library Arts Department, we offer artistic and cultural events for the entire city and our South Texas Region. We provide culturally enriching festivals and events that serve as a platform for local artists, musicians, actors, dancers, and all involved in the visual arts. We provide a forum for artists and entrepreneurs alike while at the same time ensuring a fun environment filled with exciting activities designed with the whole

family in mind, such as Cinco de Mayo Celebration, Frida Fest, Out of this World UFO Festival and Conference, Festival of International Books and Arts (FESTIBA), and more!

### Carrie Bresnehen

*Jim Plain Elementary Librarian,  
Leander Independent School District*

Libraries are exciting places because...  
**... students are actively engaged in  
reading, creating, exploring, and  
discovering.**

Our summer book check-out program is an innovative service I provided this past summer. Students in kindergarten through fifth grade were encouraged to check out up to 10 books to read over the summer. Information about the checkout procedures were sent home via an online newsletter, and students learned about this unique service during a library lesson in May. Teachers, parents, and students were excited about the chance to select their books and have all summer to read. This action helped to put 456 books into the hands of more than 50 students this past summer!

### LaMoya Burks

*Palmer Memorial Library (Academic  
Learning Commons) at Texarkana College*

Libraries are exciting places because...  
**they present no limitations.**

As a library instructor, I enjoy visiting classes of students specific to their discipline. I enjoy showing them virtually what the library offers, study tips to use within the library, LibGuides, and I even invite them to relax and enjoy our leisure offerings such as the coffee bar and magazines. Within the library, students often refer to me for advice in referencing, advising on approaching research information, and advice on leisure reading. I also serve as a motivational speaker at student orientations, which also gives me an opportunity to highlight the library.

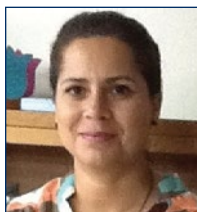
### Adrienne Cain

*Houston Metropolitan Research Center  
(Houston Public Library)*

Libraries are exciting places because...  
**they are places that link our past to  
our future.**

I am the oral history and media librarian for the Houston Metropolitan Research

Center – a special collection library and archive in Houston. My position gives me the privilege to interview Houstonians who have made significant contributions to the history of the city and/or are able to provide a first-hand account of the history of the city. I solicit, schedule, record, interview, transcribe, digitize, and preserve our oral histories. Furthermore, I teach students and patrons about the importance of oral histories to history. I am also responsible for inventorying and discovering proper preservation methods for various media in our archive.



### Carolina Castillo

*Elvis Ballew ECHS, Buell Central DAEP, and Sonia Sotomayor ECHS in the PSJA ISD*

Libraries are exciting places because... **they open our minds to many new places and ideas.**

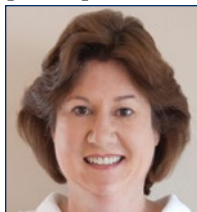
I am new to high school libraries and alternative high schools. I was at an elementary for six years. Connecting high school students to books again is hard, since most of these students have not been in school for a while. Nevertheless, I start a lesson with a story (usually an e-book connected to what they are learning in ELA), discuss it, and get them to connect with it or point out something that stands out for them. I'm careful in asking questions – not too many to turn them off; just enough to let them share. I show book trailers or prepare book talks. Through an awards system of points (and a lot of encouragement), we ended up with 11 millionaire readers, with one of them being a multi-millionaire reader.

### Dianne Connery

*Pottsboro Area Public Library*

Libraries are exciting places because... **we have an opportunity to reimagine how we serve the community.**

In a rural area, the media gap is a niche the library can fill. Digital signage in public places offers nonprofits a free



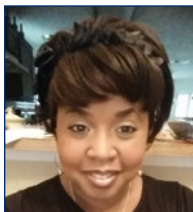
format to promote their activities. The library serves as a clearinghouse for information about local events, elections,

city council agendas, library programs, area nonprofit news, sports schedules, and school information with curated content. One monitor is in the library, and additional monitors are in local convenience stores, health clubs, and restaurants. The library provides one-on-one training and classes in the creation of effective digital flyers using free online resources and Adobe Illustrator for more advanced users.

### (Eboni) Jean Darnell

*Lula Belle Goodman Library, Fort Bend ISD*

Libraries are exciting places because... **they encourage curiosity through valuable research, technology, and literacy skills.**

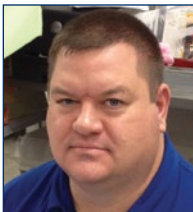


Our campus provides an engaging and interactive library. We focus on 21st century standards with more emphasis on technology apps and student-led discovery. This year our two main programs are maker-space/creation stations called the “Goodman Imagineers” and our #GrowthMindset “Thought-Literacy” initiative (<http://bit.ly/1JWmoUS>), where we turn negative thoughts into positive affirmations. We want the most out of the books we read and our everyday interactions! Thought literacy turns insecurity into innovation. We are imaginative, equipped, and innovative! Let our kids amaze you with their tech-savvy literacy skills. *Goodman Owls, where “teamwork makes the DREAM work!”*

### Patrick Ferrell

*Clear Lake City-County Freeman Branch Library*

Libraries are exciting places because... **you get to share “aha!” moments with patrons.**



I manage the Jocelyn H. Lee Innovation Lab, which provides access to 3D printers, a laser cutter, microcontrollers, and other equipment and supplies. We offer classes and programs to teach our patrons to use these tools and get them started on their own independent paths to discovery. Most importantly, we foster a community of tinkerers, artists, and makers of all ages

and abilities who share their passions and learn together. This resource cannot be downloaded on a Kindle or replaced by the Internet. Instead, it is available for free at our local public library.

### Lisa Hernandez

*Pharr-San Juan-Alamo College, Career and Technology Academy/Career and Technical Education and Early College High School Library in Partnership with South Texas College (STC) Library*

Libraries are exciting places because... **lives link via literacy.**

PSJA CCTA/CTE-ECHS Library is in a unique partnership with South Texas College (STC) Library. As of fall 2014 at CCTA campus library, both library systems have been providing services to high school and college students. Many PSJA ISD students are concurrently



enrolled with STC. These students are earning a high school diploma while also working towards earning a college certificate and/or

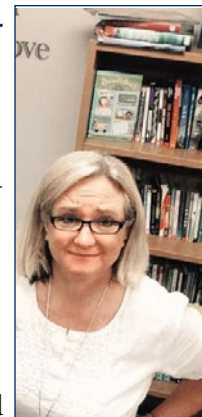
associate's degree. As partners in library science, students are provided services by two certified librarians representing each library system: STC Librarian Mari Sanchez and CCTA/CTE-ECHS Librarian Lisa Hernandez.

### Donna D. Kistner

*Baxter Jr. High Library*

Libraries are exciting places because... **everything you want to learn is inside.**

My library is a bridge for classroom teachers to hook their TEKS to YA novels. As I read, I find areas teachers could use an excerpt to teach a TEK in class. This helps the students see a skill described in a book and helps teachers be more successful. Plus, it encourages students to want to know more about the novel. The process of helping teachers reach their goals helps me reach the goals for the library. I have built a spreadsheet of TEKS and novels. Teachers can get a novel and take a page or two to use in class.





### Amelia Koford

*Texas Lutheran University, Blumberg Memorial Library*

Libraries are exciting places because...

***they help students decipher scholarly conversations and add their voices.***

At Texas Lutheran University, faculty and staff have the opportunity to lead “activity modules,” which are structured learning experiences outside the classroom.

Students choose four modules to complete during their TLU careers. I have created two modules so far. One was a series of films and discussions about Islam, based on ALA’s Muslim Journeys Bookshelf. Several students reported that our guest speakers were the first Muslims they had ever met. In the second module, students helped plan and publicize TLU’s first Long Night against Procrastination, which launched important campus conversations about the stress, fear, and satisfaction associated with research.

### Karen Krueger

*Hamilton ISD*

Libraries are exciting places because... ***libraries entice our brains to learn more, expanding our possibilities!***



Our district has three campus libraries, and I travel between these libraries and manage all library resources with the help of two full-time aides. I have been a professional educator for 28 years, serving in the capacity of school librarian in two Texas districts for 22 of those years. I began my career as an elementary librarian; however, in Hamilton, I quickly discovered the joys that come with variety and interaction with PK-12th grade students. Each campus library’s print and online resources are top notch! Texas Bluebonnet, Lone Star, and Tayshas lists excite and entertain our students on each campus!

### Dianna Landes

*Lakehills Area Library*

Libraries are exciting places because... ***we provide the information needed to make wishes become reality.***



downloadable book consortium with 20,000 plus more materials. Some of our programming includes:

- Free computer classes quarterly
- Summer reading programming for children and teens
- Halloween Trick or Treat for safe fun
- Open 6 days per week, and open late two nights per week
- 14 public use computers and 14 lap tops for people to use for study, group classes, or genealogy
- Drug and alcohol counseling weekly meetings
- Square dancers on Friday night
- Community art displays
- Databases, research assistance

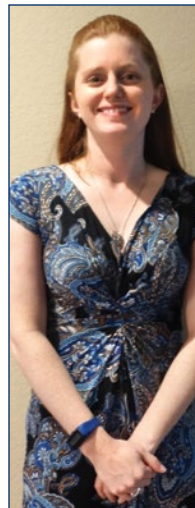
And all of this and more is done on less than \$100,000 for a service population of 8,000 people. That is what makes us, and most small libraries, true innovators.

### Erica Leu

*Pflugerville Elementary, Pflugerville ISD*

Libraries are exciting places because... ***they allow you to dream and explore the world in limitless ways.***

I love to create a world of fun, imagination, and originality in my library’s programs and services. The most unique program I offer is the chance for students to play miniature golf inside the library. Last year, I created a nine-hole golf course themed around dinosaurs from movies and literature. Students earn this reward by making their reading goal for the entire year. I think promoting innovative programming like this gives people a feeling that the library is a fresh and fun place to be!



What makes us innovative in Bandera County? We offer 20,000 materials, books, dvds, video games, audiobooks, and an online



### Sol Maria Lopez

*Serials and Electronic Resources, University of Texas at El Paso Library*

Libraries are exciting places because... ***it is***

***where users can find the means to get ahead in life!***

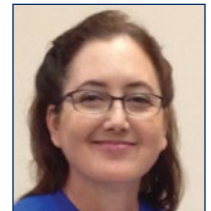
I’m chair of the staff development committee for our library, and this summer our committee implemented a digital badging system to encourage staff to participate while keeping track of professional opportunities to advance in their careers. The website is called LibraryPros, and there are a total of 15 digital badges that can be awarded. There are badges for attending conferences, speaking at conferences, being an outstanding committee member, attending webinars or campus-wide events, etc. Since we’ve implemented it, staff asks for digital badges for any event they’ve recently attended. In the end, staff members are able to quantify how much they’ve accomplished in a given year and use this information for annual performance evaluations.

### Karyn McGinley

*Best Elementary, Alief ISD (Houston)*

Libraries are exciting places because... ***they offer a myriad of opportunities to connect and grow.***

Brain research shows that exercise grows brain cells. My school is piloting a program called action-based learning. Students utilize exercise equipment desks in the classrooms and a lab. My amazing principal, Renee Canales, has been so supportive. My grant’s title is Library Transformed! Through this grant, I now have five exercise pieces in the library equipped with iPad holders to support our school endeavor. Students can come to the library and read e-books or print books while exercising! What does this mean for the library? A lot! While all students enjoy using the equipment, the reluctant readers are especially motivated. It is also affirming to see disgruntled students calm down as they read and move.



## Myriam Martinez-Banuelos

*Gibson D. Lewis Health Science Library,  
University of North Texas Health Science  
Center*

Libraries are exciting places because...  
***they create invaluable opportunities  
for diverse communities!***

While I coordinate an outreach program with the National Library of Medicine that allows us to serve 24 counties in Texas, I am also fortunate to have opportunities to expand our program internationally by providing online education describing medical librarianship and community outreach to library school students and medical librarians from Costa Rica and Colombia. I am looking forward to our next project where Lewis Library will be hosting a medical librarian from the National Autonomous University of Mexico to share best practices in health information outreach. We are excited to collaborate and learn from fellow librarians in Latin America!



## Bryant Moore

*Texas A&M University-San Antonio Library*

Libraries are exciting places because...  
***they are creative and help patrons  
think outside the box.***

As part of the Welcome Week for the fall 2015 semester, our public services manager and I came up with the idea of Lemonade and Little Debbie with the Library. Students, faculty, and staff members were able to stop by a table outside the library that was staffed by another librarian and myself. Students were able to spin a prize wheel or drop the discs for a Plinko board which both consisted of library services in place of prize spaces. The librarian provided the individuals with information about the service that was selected, and the individual received a Little Debbie treat and lemonade.

## Kori Parkinson

*Cavazos Middle School Library, Lubbock ISD*

Libraries are exciting places because...  
***they house the past, celebrate the  
present, prepare our future.***

Morning Library: Before school each morning, students play, create, and mingle. Students play computer games, board games, card games, and assemble puzzles. They can create something at the Creation Station, chat with friends, take selfies, or catch up on social media. Special morning events happen throughout the year. Makerspace Mondays can be anything from making crafts to catapults. Technology Tuesdays show off new apps or web tools. On What's New Wednesdays book talks, displays, and/or book trailers show off new library books. Fun Fridays feature teachers and students competing to create the best paper airplanes or triumph at "Minute to Win It" type games.



## Elizabeth Ponder

*Jarrett Library at East  
Texas Baptist University*

Libraries are exciting  
places because...  
***they change lives!***



During each fall semester, we meet individually with each of our 300 plus freshmen at the reference desk to help them with their first research project. This gives us a chance to get to know our students and gives our students a chance to try out the process of asking a librarian for assistance. Our hope is that this: a) lets them know that we are here to help them and b) decreases their anxiety level the next time they need to ask us for help with their research assignments.

## Sunny Purdin

*Rowlett Public Library*

Libraries are exciting places because...  
***many things happen here: education,  
entertainment, and self-improvement.***

I am a publicity librarian. I advertise all of the programs, collections, and resources and act as an ambassador for the library. Since starting my position, many of the programs have seen an increase in participants (some even ten-fold). Recently, RPL has moved to a temporary location, moving into an old health center,



which required a complete redesign of the building and signage. I love my job, and I love getting to help many different types of people while promoting my favorite institution – the Rowlett Public Library.

## Michelle Rosaes

*John McKeever Elementary in Alamo*

Libraries are exciting places because...  
***the world is at your fingertips when  
you are here.***

Since I came on board, I am changing the common misconception of what a librarian does. Aside from engaging reluctant readers and bringing in the community, my main goal is exposing all our students to technology. Most of them don't have access to technology at home. I expose them to PowerPoint, cameras, digital citizenship, iPads, etc. This past year, two students placed 1st in the Texas Media Awards in Austin with a multimedia presentation in grades 3rd-5th.



## Allison Salgado

*Reed Middle School Library*

Libraries are exciting places because...  
***you can be who you really are  
without fear.***



We started book club last year. Each week students and teachers read 50 pages, and everyone brought breakfast that related to the part of the book we were reading (apples for *The Giver*, blue foods for the Erudite in *Divergent*). At the end of the year, we had a book club party where the students had to dress up like the faction they were "born" into (they picked out of a hat the week before). After a while, the students went through a choosing ceremony where they could transfer factions. At the end, we crowned a *Divergent* by deciding who was good at multiple stations.



## Jasmin Alejandra Salinas

*San Antonio Public Library – Central Branch, Children’s Department*

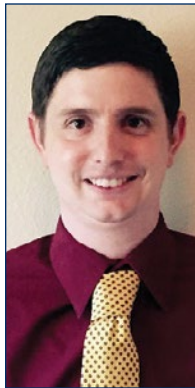
Libraries are exciting places because... ***we reach out to communities with new ideas and diverse resources.***

My innovative spin on our weekly Toddler Time is a 25 minute free play session with zones designed on the principles of Every Child Ready to Read: talking, singing, playing, reading, and writing. Free play comes after 25 minutes of stories, songs, and rhymes, and always includes blocks, sensory bins, and a baby area. The activities vary each week to offer a fresh learning environment, but my favorite station is always the dramatic play area. The big hits have been a make-believe vet’s office with animal puppet patients and a pizza parlor with play dough pizzas made to order!

## Carl J. Smith

*Montgomery County Memorial Library System*

Libraries are exciting places because... ***they are where people can have the interactions that matter!***



The Genealogy & Local History Room provides a free online obituary request service for our patrons and for anyone who has ancestors who passed away in Montgomery County whose obituary is recorded in our local newspaper microfilm. The online request allows our service to be quick and efficient, with 99% of requestors receiving a same-day response.

## Linda Thiebaud

*Christa McAuliffe Elementary School*

Libraries are exciting places because... ***patrons will encounter ideas they will embrace all their lives.***

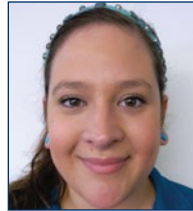
We provide and teach the use of technological tools that allow learners to collaborate with other learners throughout the world! We have skyped worldwide, had pen pals in England and

Sweden, exchanged bookmarks globally, collaborated with British authors and students worldwide in story writing, and written poetry and stories in ebook format. All this happens because a little girl grew up to be a librarian. I had global pen pals and, as I starting shaping my career, dreamed my students could connect globally, too!

## Alexa Helene Tressler

*Dustin Michael Sekula Memorial Library*

Libraries are exciting places because... ***you can discover worlds at the turn of a page!***



We host an international book discussion between the Oxford School of Reynosa, Tamaulipas, Mexico, and St. Matthew’s of Edinburg, Texas. Students in fourth through sixth grade are provided with a copy of a preselected story. Thanks to the South Texas Literacy Coalition, educators and participating students receive the selected book in January. Each school conducts a series of online mini-book discussions directed by their teachers, which culminate during the month of March. Students and educators meet face-to-face for a final discussion. The discussion includes literacy activities, Skype Q & A with the authors when possible, and meaningful literary and cultural exchange experiences.

## Lauralee Tucker

*Pleasant Hill Elementary, Leander ISD*

Libraries are exciting places because... ***they allow exploration, collaboration, creativity with technology, print and makerspace.***

Pleasant Hill Elementary Paws on Print Mobile Library began as a vision on a napkin. It went from a flatbed trailer to what is now a 6 x 12 enclosed trailer fully outfitted with bookshelves containing chapter and nonfiction books. The



mobile library travels to neighborhood parks during the summer months to give out free books. Eliminating the “summer slide” is the hope of this endeavor, as well as promoting literacy to our families. Many times people show up with books to donate to the cause. During the school year, the mobile library makes appearances at other schools in the district.

## Debbie VanZandt

*Tuloso-Midway High School Library in Corpus Christi*

Libraries are exciting places because... ***reading opens up worlds for teens who have no dreams.***

I am the president of a group of AMAZING public, school, and university librarians who are busy organizing our second annual Teen Bookfest by the Bay. We’ve invited all area teens to come meet authors and listen to them talk about their books. We have eight school systems, three public library systems, and one university library represented on our planning committee. In our first year, we hosted 16 young adult authors and about 350 kids. This year we’re shooting for 20 authors and 500 kids. It’s awe-inspiring to see teens so star-struck when talking to the authors!

## Alana Wilkin

*Duryea Elementary Library*

Libraries are exciting places because... ***extraordinary books await to take readers on an exciting escapade.***

As an elementary librarian, first and foremost I am a teacher. Helping children choose a book that fits their personality, interests, and developmental level is my number one goal. Students and teachers love to visit my library to listen to stories and learn innovative ways to use technology in the classroom. My library is the center of school activities. You can see research projects atop library shelves, children reading at the “dolphin pod” in beanbags, objects created at the maker space, and teachers collaborating with me about a specific lesson. I am the human resource that teachers, students, and administrators tap every day. 🌟

# DIY SKILLS:

## *Upgrading for the Teaching Librarian*

BY ASHLEY R. LIERMAN

A surprising majority of librarians will find themselves responsible for teaching at one point or another. This seems to happen regardless of library type or the individual's job title. In academic libraries, most librarians who interact with students and faculty will teach regularly whether at a service desk, in consultation, or in the classroom. In public libraries, librarians may wind up teaching both children and adults everything from how to find a book to how to format a résumé. School librarians are providers and partners in all manner of instructional activities. And in all libraries, technical services staff members may find themselves with internal training responsibilities or supplementing the work of teaching librarians who have been spread too thin.

For as much teaching as we do, however, librarians' training in instructional skills tends to vary widely. Many library science degree programs cover instruction, but not all require coursework in the subject, and those of us who had instruction thrust upon us unexpectedly may not have thought to take advantage of those opportunities when they were available. Effective teaching is a complex and challenging art, requiring extensive preparation and dedicated practice to master. The majority of teaching librarians, however, are largely self-taught instructors for whom teaching is only one of an overwhelming number of responsibilities. Given our busy schedules and multiple demands, we often feel we have to be content with instruction that is "good enough."

So what do we do if assessing our students' progress reveals that we need to bring more to the teaching arena? Programs like ACRL's Immersion may be available for academic librarians, but not every academic library can afford the investment of time and money required for attendance. In some public and academic libraries, furthermore, it can be difficult to even find the resources to attend smaller

conferences and workshops, especially when the quality and applicability of the content are sometimes too unpredictable to justify the expense.

In this essay, I present a flexible process of self-improvement with regard to teaching skills, based on my own experiences and lessons learned from working to improve my own instructional abilities. I arrived at my current library early in 2014 as instructional design librarian with a strong background in instructional technology and online education. However, classroom teaching was also one of my responsibilities, and it soon became apparent that my instructional skills were not sufficient to the demands of my new student population and the information literacy program in place. In response, I set a professional goal for myself for the 2014-15 year of building my skills in face-to-face teaching, specifically focused on increasing student engagement. The following principles are those I found most effective in making this change.

### Take the Time

For some of us, this can be the most challenging step in the entire process, but it is also the most important. We balance so many daily responsibilities that setting aside time for work that doesn't directly complete one of our job tasks seems nearly impossible. In order to actually effect change to our skills and practice, however, the first essential step is to commit to devoting time to improvement and recognizing the need to find a way to set aside that time from the daily routine. In my case, setting an annual goal to improve my teaching helped me give myself permission to devote sufficient time to the process, and I would recommend doing the same in a workplace with an annual goals process. If that option is not available, it might be worth setting another accountability structure in place. You can try discussing your plan with your supervisor or writing up a contract with yourself. The key is to make the commitment and to be intentional about beginning the process, which brings us to the next step.

### Make a Plan

Planning out your goals for your instruction and how you intend to achieve these goals will make the process both easier and more likely to be achieved. Start by identifying the specific areas you

want to focus on, and then map out the steps you'll need to take over time. Include deadlines and the tasks that should be accomplished by those dates. Be realistic about how much time and effort you can devote to the process, but make sure that the process is continuous over a set period. For me, this involved first identifying what I wanted to improve: my ability to engage students in the classroom. To accomplish this end, I researched learning opportunities available to me and then created a month-by-month schedule for the academic year of workshops, online courses, readings, and peer review of my teaching. Many of these were made possible by institutional funding, but if you don't have access to financial support, you can still set a program of study for yourself using readings, MOOCs (*see page 90*), and other freely available resources. More experienced instructors who are willing to be mentors can also direct you to quality resources and serve as invaluable resources themselves.

### Theory and Practice: Better Together

Those of us who are self-taught instructors may never have had any significant exposure to educational theory - and some of us may even believe we don't need it. We are librarians teaching largely one-shot sessions, after all, not aspiring Ed.Ds. No matter what or how you teach, however, a theoretical basis is extremely valuable. It provides a foundation of structure, evidence, and values to help you see outside your own perceptions of the classroom. You will learn to design your instruction in a more deliberate and meaningful way. This is why I recommend readings and formal training as a way to help bolster your teaching skills.

On the other hand, the main purpose of educational theory is to improve educational practice, and just reading a book is unlikely to make you a better teacher on its own. Try to intersperse reading and training with as much in-class practice as possible. When you're teaching, try to actively incorporate some of the theories and techniques that you've come across in your training, making one small change per class will probably work best to keep from overwhelming or confusing you. When you are reading and studying, meanwhile, you'll have a wealth of recent practical experience to which to refer. It

is also worth noting that others' teaching practice can be just as informative as your own. Seek out opportunities to team-teach with other librarians and faculty, or to observe other instructors. Take note of techniques and strategies they use and why – these experiences can sometimes be the most fruitful!

## Record and Reflect

Speaking of note-taking, to really get the most out of this process, you will also need to be writing things down. Take notes on your readings, on any coursework you may complete, on your experiences in the classroom, on your observations of others, and on any other activities you undertake. As important as it is that you combine enrichment

activities with actual classroom practice, it is equally important that you take the time to reflect and record your thoughts on both. These reflections will serve two purposes. First, they serve as a historical record, so that you can recall past experiences and observe patterns even when you may not remember the original class or book clearly. Second, your notes will help you organize your thoughts and arrive at conclusions and insights you might not otherwise have reached. I developed a note-taking system for all of my personal, class, and workshop readings to keep my thoughts on the material organized. I started keeping a teaching diary for each class session, which I still keep up to this day. Your reflections don't have to be complicated. A simple table of

the appropriate details, what you learned, what could be improved, and what questions you still have is enough to get you started.

## Assess

With teaching, as with any other service or skill, assessment is an indispensable step toward improvement. Built into my teaching plan from the very beginning was an instruction session near the end of the year, in which a more experienced colleague would observe my teaching and provide me with a peer review of my skills. This was an incredibly valuable experience for me, adding to my own reflections a set of outside observations, especially at times when I might have been too focused on what I was doing in the classroom to be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of my technique. I was fortunate in that I work in an academic library where a system for peer review of teaching was already in place, but some quick research online can uncover a number of potential tools and strategies you could use at an institution without this benefit.

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## Some of the RESOURCES I've found most valuable are:

### Courses & Sites

ACRL ([www.ala.org/onlinelearning/unit/acrl](http://www.ala.org/onlinelearning/unit/acrl)), AASL ([www.ala.org/onlinelearning/unit/aasl](http://www.ala.org/onlinelearning/unit/aasl)), and RUSA ([www.ala.org/onlinelearning/unit/rusa](http://www.ala.org/onlinelearning/unit/rusa)) Online Learning

Depending on library type and instructor role, multiple ALA units may have valuable courses and webinars to offer. Price can occasionally be a barrier, but varies – AASL in particular has a number of instruction-related offerings available on-demand for free.

**Library Juice Academy** (<http://libraryjuiceacademy.com/>)

While the prices can be a bit steep for some institutions, LJA's trainings are generally high-quality and cover a range of instruction topics.

**Coursera** ([www.coursera.org/](http://www.coursera.org/))

A number of instruction-related MOOCs are available for free through Coursera, particularly regarding instructional technology. Also of interest may be the Gamification course offered by the University of Pennsylvania.

**Lynda.com** ([www.lynda.com/](http://www.lynda.com/))

Though Lynda.com does carry a subscription fee, the pricing is reasonable for short periods of time, and some institutions may have subscriptions or be willing to start. A number of courses and

video tutorials are available in the Teacher Professional Development and Teacher Tools categories.

### Books

Kaplowitz, Joan R. 2012. *Transforming Information Literacy Instruction Using Learner-Centered Teaching*. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, Inc.

Kaplowitz's book is a great starting point for learning more about learner-centered teaching and for putting its principles into practice in library instruction specifically. The text is clear, practical, and persuasive, and I found it invaluable in reimagining my teaching style.

Miller, Michelle D. 2014. *Minds Online: Teaching Effectively with Technology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

While Miller is primarily concerned with online instruction, her insightful and practical discussion of cognitive principles and of the teaching methods that address them most effectively will aid construction of face-to-face instruction as well.

Palmer, Parker J. 2007. *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Teaching is an affective discipline as much as a technical one, which is the primary issue that Palmer addresses. This book affords an excellent opportunity for personal reflection on why we teach and how the most important connections can be made in the classroom.

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Even more important than evaluating the improvement in your own skills, evaluating your students' learning progress is central to your efforts. Your teaching and their learning - the one hardly means much without the other, after all. I was fortunate to be in a workplace with a strong assessment program already, which made it easy for me to add quick standardized assessments to my class sessions and compare my results against those of other instructors using the same system. If you don't happen to have that advantage, however, do not be intimidated or deterred. There is a wealth of formal and informal methods for assessing that you can implement relatively quickly and easily to get started evaluating student learning. In fact, I would recommend determining how you intend to approach this component first, from the initial planning stages. Pedagogy built around assessment is arguably the strongest kind, and you may find that developing a sound assessment method is the one thing you do in this process that improves your teaching the most.

## Repeat

Of course, having finished a single year's project to improve my teaching, I can hardly say I'm finished learning about teaching and never need to work on my skills again. This process should be an iterative one, repeated periodically (if not constantly) as you become aware of new areas that you want to improve. Continual reflection and assessment will be instrumental in revealing those areas to you as you continue to teach. The best part, however, is that once you've built an enrichment program for yourself once, you then have a template that will make creating new ones in the future much easier and faster.

In any case, one thing most teachers would probably say about teaching is that it takes a lifetime to fully master. You may always feel that you have more to learn, and that isn't a bad thing. If you commit to improvement and work toward it in an intentional way, however, you may find you can learn a great deal - and if you do, you should find your students do, too. ★

Ashley R. Lierman is an instructional design librarian at the University of Houston Libraries.

# Building Learning Communities for Librarians Engaging in MOOCs

BY BILLY HOYA

## What are MOOC's?

Many academic institutions are now offering select courses online with enrollment available to anyone with a computer. These courses - called Massive, Open, Online Courses, or MOOCs (/mu:k/) - are a great way for librarians to brush up on old skills or learn new ones.

There are several providers offering MOOCs. Two of the largest and most well know are Coursera (<https://www.coursera.org/>) and edX (<https://www.edx.org/>). Both offer a mix of scheduled and self-paced courses. Most courses are accessible free of charge, though you will have to pay for a certificate.

## Building Learning Communities

While edX and Coursera both provide you ways to interact with your fellow classmates, it's always good to have a group of peers to work with, and TLA wants to help you build learning communities with your fellow librarians.

To let others know the classes you're interested in, join the TLA Learning

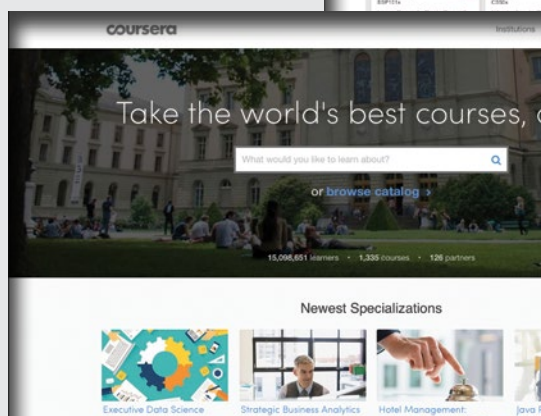
Communities for Librarians by sending an email to [lcl+subscribe@list.txla.org](mailto:lcl+subscribe@list.txla.org). You can then post to the group by sending email to [lcl@list.txla.org](mailto:lcl@list.txla.org). You can also see past post by going to <http://goo.gl/jhD1Lo>. If you have a Google Account, you can login to post to the Web. Once you've found a group, let Billy Hoya ([billyh@txla.org](mailto:billyh@txla.org)) know and he will create a private group that you can use to communicate with your group.

If you have a large group and would like to have your group meet periodically using video conferencing, contact Hoya, and he can schedule a session for your group on one of TLA's video conferencing platforms.

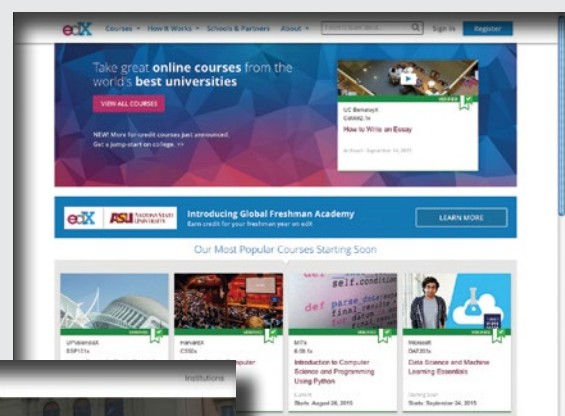
*Have any other question?*

*Post to [lcl@list.txla.org](mailto:lcl@list.txla.org) to get answers!*

Coursera



edX





# Planning for THE FUTURE

BY SHERILYN BIRD AND EDWARD SMITH

The library community is an evolving community. Looking at the rate of change in libraries in recent years, it is clear we are in a profession that changes and evolves to serve our communities. Strategic planning is one way in which we clarify the purpose of our organizations, determine where we want to be in the future, and figure out how to get there (from *A Field Guide to Nonprofit Strategic Planning and Facilitation* by Carter McNamara).

Strategic planning is the map-making process that creates a path to the future direction of an organization. The end-goal of the planning is not the creation of a “plan” but rather the creation of an organization that thinks and acts strategically, with great clarity around the organization’s mission (what we do), vision (who we want to become), and values (how we do what we do). From these, more tactical initiatives can be extracted that give the organization its direction. The plan becomes a filter through which all activities can be sifted to see if they help achieve the end-goal (thinking and acting strategically).

Over the past several years, the Texas Library Association developed a planning model that has guided our dynamic and strategic association through technological, economic, and political changes. The TLA model is based on

1. Committing to a strategic planning process every three years.
2. Using tested and respected strategic planning methodologies.
3. Adhering to a culture of assessment which TLA has developed during past strategic planning cycles.

This model has kept TLA strong: able to reach consensus on key issues; committed to strategies that address political, technological, and economic challenges that face libraries; and inspiring library support and facilitating library cooperation.

## *The Planners: Advancing the Legacy*

Seeking broad representation, President Susan Mann appointed a Strategic Planning Task Force (STPF) comprised of Executive Board members and the four divisional councilors, co-chaired by Sherilyn Bird and Eddy Smith. The Task Force is committed to a robust, member-centered strategic planning process that will serve as a guide for a thriving Texas Library Association. The Task Force appointed two important member-comprised working groups: the Mission, Vision, and Values (MVV) working group is reviewing the Association’s fundamental purpose and exploring whether the vision and values continue to align with the mission. The second working group is conducting an environmental scan. They will conduct a SWOT analysis, a review of TLA’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats or challenges. Between August and December, the SWOT working group will identify and examine the technological, political, economic, and social changes impacting libraries and the Association. The working group’s role is to discover opportunities, identify risks, and gather information that will solve problems and guide TLA’s strategic efforts to promote, support, and improve library services in Texas. The information yielded at Annual Assembly, the Hot Topics conversations, aspiration boards, and member surveys will inform the work of the MVV review and revision as well as that of the environmental scan working group.

## *The Process*

Our goal is to reach out to our members in more meaningful ways. Ultimately, these member-driven efforts will culminate in a series of strategic goals and initiatives. In this process, member input is a critical component and the process is designed to give every member an opportunity to participate. The plan the Association delivers depends on

you. As members you are important stakeholders in the TLA community and your involvement is one of the most critically important aspects of planning for a positive future. Gathering information about what keeps you involved and how the Association can meet your needs is the most important aspect of TLA’s strategic planning cycle.

## *The 2015-16 Planning Cycle.*

Planning is a time to start a conversation about additional ways in which TLA can serve its members. Our process is systematic, comprehensive, and inclusive. It offers a time for creativity and imagination. Throughout the planning cycle, there will be many opportunities to review progress on the current plan, contribute ideas, share perspectives, and consider possible futures.

- June 2015: In order to achieve a vibrant member driven future for the Association, one of the first steps in the process was to create a stakeholder survey that invited TLA members and staff to contribute to the conversation by answering a survey about aspirations for the Association. The survey, which yielded important information about member aspirations for TLA, was only the first among many opportunities for members to contribute to the strategic planning conversation.
- July 2015: Annual Assembly activities included facilitated opportunities for attendees to offer their thoughts on priorities for the new three year plan. Thought provoking questions inspired deep thinking about TLA’s future after which members affirmed their commitment to diversity, wrote their visions for TLA’s future on aspiration boards.
- Late Summer 2015: The Mission, Vision, and Value Working Group undertook their review of core values.
- Fall 2015: The Environmental Scan Working Group will actively assess the

environment and the state of libraries. The SPTF will continue to ask for member input as they assess potential futures for the Association.

- Fall 2015: Focus groups will be held with recent library school graduates and new members (via Hangouts), TLA staff, and members of the Program Committees.
- October 15, 2015: The draft environmental scan will be submitted for member feedback.
- November 20, 2015: Comments will be due from the membership on the Environmental Scan.
- December 31, 2015: The Final Environmental Scan will be due.
- January 15-16, 2016: The Task Force will meet (via conference call) to plan the strategic plan report.
- January 2016: Task Force will complete a draft of the strategic plan.
- February 2016: The Task Force will conduct a survey to solicit member feedback/comments on the strategic plan draft - Is it the right plan?
- March 2016: Adjustments to the plan will be made based on member feedback.
- April 2016: The Final Strategic Plan will be submitted to Council for discussion and approval during Annual Conference.

When it comes to the future, everyone has the opportunity to become a mover and shaker by participating in the planning process. Working together, we have an opportunity to substantially contribute to the future of TLA and Texas Libraries.

## Sources

*A Dream With a Deadline: Turning Strategy Into Action First Edition* by Jacques Horowitz

### *Please take our survey.*

Go to [www.txla.org/stratplanupdate](http://www.txla.org/stratplanupdate).

- **Question 1:** *Why does TLA exist and what difference does it make in the world?*
- **Question 2:** *What do you believe is impossible to do in TLA...but if it could be done would change everything?*
- **Question 3:** *What excites you about the future of libraries?*
- **Question 4:** *What can TLA do to facilitate the future you envisioned in question 3?*

## CURRENT WORDING

### *A Statement of Vision, Mission, Values, and Major Initiatives*

(Strategic Plan 2012-2015; Adopted by TLA Council April 20, 2012)

#### FOUNDING PURPOSE

The objective of this Association shall be to promote and improve library service in Texas (TLA Bylaws, Article II)

#### MISSION

The mission of the Texas Library Association is to empower library personnel and supporters to develop library excellence for the people of Texas.

#### CORE ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

- Diversity and Inclusiveness
- Equity of Access to Information
- Ethical Responsibility and Integrity
- Excellence in Libraries and Librarianship
- Intellectual Freedom
- Literacy and Lifelong Learning
- Social Responsibility and the Public Good

#### ENVISIONED FUTURE

Each and every Texan recognizes the value that libraries bring to their lives

#### VIVID DESCRIPTION OF OUR FUTURE

Texans are proud to have the best libraries in the world. The people of Texas and the governments and organizations that represent them enthusiastically work with libraries to make each one a model of excellence. The people who work for and support Texas libraries add significant value to the information seeking needs of all Texans.

TLA is a positive role model and valued leader, partner, resource, and advocate for Texas libraries. TLA reaches Texas communities, expanding access both physically and virtually, to bring literacy and lifelong learning to the forefront. TLA seeks innovation and sustainability of resources to connect and inspire all Texans to grow, learn, and reach for excellence.

## *A Sample of Responses to Survey Questions*

### QUESTION 1: WHY DOES TLA EXIST?

TLA exists to help in planning the strategies and govern the rules for the coming years within the Texas library systems.

The Texas Library Association exists to promote libraries and LIBRARIANS in Texas, to protect the integrity of the educational, recreational, and inspirational mission of libraries.

To allow professional networking and development and to promote libraries and services and make awareness of issues involving libraries to the public and elected officials.

TLA exists to form a cohesive network of librarians working to better the environment for libraries and library services across the state.

Libraries provide to anyone and everyone free, open access to information and educational resources. Education makes a huge difference in communities.

### QUESTION 2: WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE IS IMPOSSIBLE TO DO IN TLA...BUT IF IT COULD BE DONE WOULD CHANGE EVERYTHING?

Promote LIBRARIANS as advanced-degree professionals deserving of better pay and better hours.

To convince the legislature that libraries – public, school, and academic – are one of THEIR highest priorities for funding.

Provide an analysis of each individual library on what is being done right and what needs improvement regarding programs, PR/marketing/advertising, and training of staff.

Train and have ongoing (Skype?) support for the staffs and also obtain new high quality materials for all of the underfunded rural libraries.

Bring back the TSLAC regions with in-person training classes within region.

Teach every librarian the importance of becoming an advocate both within your organization and to the outside world.

Provide opportunities and programming for small libraries, where there may be a director and one paid staff member (the rest are volunteers).

Uniting school librarians! If we all had the same vision, expectations, leadership, and hope, we could change education in Texas.

**QUESTION 3: WHAT EXCITES YOU ABOUT THE FUTURE OF LIBRARIES?**

What excites me most is the policy of offering anything a patron wants... This has created an inviting environment within the systems for anyone and everyone.

The idea that libraries can include more community meetings, educational opportunities for all ages, a sandbox for new technologies that are out of reach for individuals, and provide educational opportunities and resources needed for their community.

That we are no longer limited to reading/literacy programs - that we are becoming a community center.

We can offer digital curation and production of content within the library.

What excites me is the role libraries could play in this information age. I believe we as a society will eventually come to realize that all this digital information must be organized, and librarians are just the ones to take on this task.

Embracing the new roles and direction libraries are moving towards. It's the ideas of Makerspace, project-based learning, being facilitators, leaders on the campuses and in the districts, providing digital resources for all including devices, multiple learning areas in libraries, providing the most fun and best place for our students to go.

That so many retired librarians are still an active part of TLA. This wealth of knowledge and time mentors, volunteers, and can positively affect our field.

**QUESTION 4: WHAT CAN TLA DO TO FACILITATE THE FUTURE YOU ENVISIONED IN QUESTION 3?**

Allow for unusual planning by members. They will have to look beyond the usual crew of member "leaders."

A marketing campaign that would explain why we are no longer just a reading central destination.

Help librarians stay current with technological trends and how they impact

our work, while also helping us with the human piece.

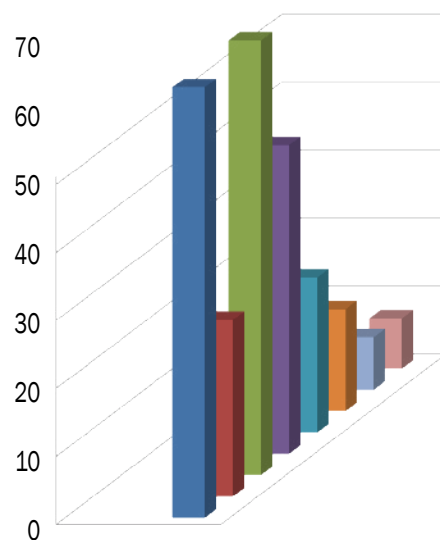
Find grants that will help us rebuild aging infrastructure. The brick and mortar library is still necessary, but we cannot win out over city's need to pour money into street repairs.

Continue to provide the leadership needed to move us forward as a profession.

Help us with navigation of the governmental waters to make our buildings user friendly.

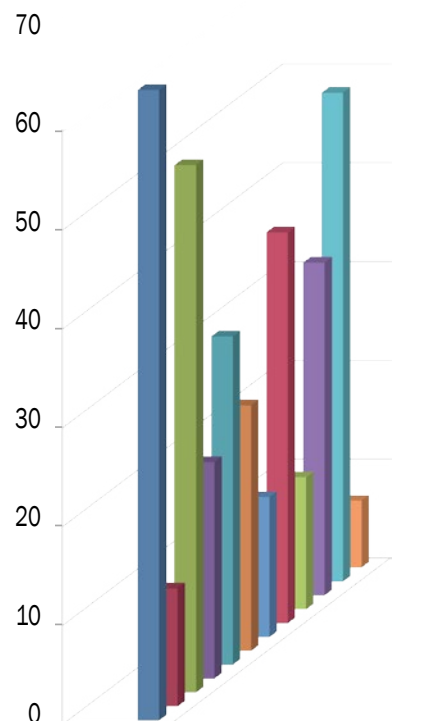
Increase connectivity and communication between members and committees. Continue the excellent TLA Annual Conference. 🌟

1,122 respondents answered: What keeps you involved in TLA and makes you renew your membership?



|                                    | %     |
|------------------------------------|-------|
| Annual Conference                  | 63.34 |
| Exhibits at Annual Assembly        | 25.97 |
| Commitment to the profession       | 63.96 |
| Continuing education opportunities | 45.41 |
| Involvement as a leader            | 22.79 |
| Legislative issues                 | 15.02 |
| Tenure and promotion               | 7.77  |
| Other                              | 7.41  |

1,127 respondents answered: What are the primary areas in your work life where you can use more assistance? Mark all that apply.



|                                          | %     |
|------------------------------------------|-------|
| Changing technology                      | 63.81 |
| Customer issues                          | 11.94 |
| Demonstrating value                      | 53.39 |
| Change management                        | 21.93 |
| Resource constraints                     | 33.24 |
| Time & project management                | 24.87 |
| Engaging administrators                  | 14.17 |
| Engaging support decision makers         | 39.57 |
| Career and job planning/placement        | 13.37 |
| Meeting communities' diverse needs       | 33.69 |
| Transforming library for more engagement | 49.47 |

[Other = 6.77%]

# In-Conversation

with **STEPHANIE ANDERSON**

BY SARA ORTIZ

## Acknowledged voracious reader

Stephanie Anderson joins a growing group of booksellers turned librarian. Anderson now serves as assistant director of public services at Darien Library (CT). While her broad literary experiences offer great areas for discussion, it is important to note that she regards herself as a reader before a librarian and frames her views accordingly.

*“I’m a reader before anything else. I have always said that I only have one true skill, and that is I can comprehend and read pretty quickly.”*

Anderson, 30, is the daughter of critically-acclaimed young adult author, Laurie Halse Anderson, who has written the award-winning books *Wintergirls* and *Speak*, among many others. Reading as a first love comes naturally to her.

When I contacted Anderson a few months ago asking if she would consider talking to me for the *Texas Library Journal*, she replied within hours: “If you think Texas librarians would like to hear about a Yankee librarian, then I am game!” I needed to think about that for only a short second. Anderson thrives on her passion to remove all types of borders – geographic, cultural, library types – in librarianship. *TLJ* readers look for exactly those qualities.

During our extended phone conversation on July 29, 2015 (just weeks before her wedding), she covered topics ranging from funding at Darien Library to transitioning from bookselling to librarianship. She also addressed the issues of banned books and social media in the library and beyond. She is vocal about loving her workplace, while fully cognizant that Darien Library is fortunate to have users serve as the frontline of fundraising efforts, which allows the library a relative amount of freedom compared to other libraries. It’s a model that works well for their library and facilitates the ability to experiment or innovate.



Photo used with permission

**SARA ORTIZ:** *You and I have briefly talked about Darien Library; describe the institution and its patrons.*

**STEPHANIE ANDERSON:** Darien Library is a town library in Darien, CT, and a town library to a town of 21,000. What might be unusual to some folks in Texas is that pretty much every library, especially in southern Connecticut, is a town library. The state library, for about 40 years, has run a reciprocal borrowing program that’s for the entire state, so anyone who lives in Connecticut with a valid library card can use our library. The other unusual thing about our library, which is a sort of a double-edged sword, and a reason why we can do a lot of innovative things, is that we have a public-private partnership with our town, which means our library is a 501c3, and our director reports to our Board. The town pays out about two-thirds of our funding and our Friends provide the other third. The town provides the operational budget: staff salaries, staff benefits, facility costs, keeping the building running. Friends pay for everything else: all materials, all programming, and all technology and staff development. It’s a bit of an odd set up.

**SO:** *Are the “Friends” a membership-based operation or something similar to the New York Public Library’s circle?*

**SA:** It’s very similar. We do a lot of fundraising and that is something that

our board is responsible for. The librarians don’t do any fundraising. You don’t need to be a Friend of the Library to use the library, obviously. We do a Gala fundraiser. We have roughly a thousand Friends whose donations range from \$10 a year to thousands a year. It’s a matter of public record, so I can share that our Friends fundraise about \$700,000 dollars a year.

**SO:** *Oh, wow.*

**SA:** Exactly. We have an endowment that we take from every year, and the Friends fund is also where we incorporate the state funding that we get. It also means that our fundraising call to action is done a little bit differently. What can be helpful it is that people know that every dollar they give us will go to something they will immediately use, whether it’s a program or a book or a tech class or a new computer, and that’s something that allows the Friends to continue doing the fundraising every year. This is an agreement that the library has had with the town since 1963, so it’s something that everyone who lives in town knows about. It’s definitely a bit odd.

**SO:** *If it’s been around since 1963, it sounds like an institution on its own.*

**SA:** I think this is a funding model that might not work for everybody, but it works really well for us. The people who support the library financially, in addition to their taxes, really feel as though they are

supporting an institution in a meaningful way. It's a very lucky thing for Darien.

*SO: It's exceptional; you guys are very fortunate.*

*SA:* We are. And I will say since you asked me to describe the institution, on an institutional level in regards to the people who work here: what I say to people all the time (I don't know that they believe me) is that part of what makes us very lucky is having two solid sources of funding. But the thing that I think is best about our library, and the thing that I am proudest of is our staff, the people. And what our staff does well are all things that don't cost any money. The people we work with are so thoughtful; they are so devoted to the community and the profession. I know this sounds cheesy, but I work with a lot of really, really great people who work extremely hard. There's a great culture of support there. There are not a lot of silos, people who work in different departments know each other, and people don't just come in at 8:59 am and leave at 5:01 pm. People really care about what they're doing at their job and so I feel very lucky for the funding, and understand frustration for libraries that aren't in that position, but I feel even luckier that I work with so many unique people.

*SO: How did you go from a bookseller to assistant director for public services at Darien Library in three years?*

*SA:* I always did want to become a librarian, and I went back to bookselling, in part, because I wasn't ready go back to graduate school. I wanted a little break from school, so I thought "oh, I'll just work for a year or so," and then I got pulled into and caught up in the world of indie books, and I really loved it so that was my direction for a while. The reason I got back to libraries, which had always been in the back of my head, is that Heather McCormack who used to be at *Library Journal* lived right around the corner from WORD and was friends with a lot of librarians, including then assistant director of Darien, Gretchen Caserotti. Gretchen asked Heather if she knew any independent booksellers who could come

to Darien, because she wanted to have someone examine their space. Heather recommended me, because I was her local bookseller – she lived a block and a half away – so I did a consulting job for them and did six or seven visits, wrote up a report, and provided resources and training. I had a great time, and at the end, Gretchen said it'd be great if I could work there someday, and because I had wanted to be a librarian, I knew enough to say "well, that's really nice of you, but I don't have a degree, so you probably can't hire me." And she said, "yeah, I guess, but I may reach out to you."

**But part of our professional obligation, I believe, is to be a window.**

Six months later she contacted me and said she had a position for me. Because it was a new position, they wrote the job description to say MLIS or relevant experience, and so they hired me on the strength of having years of bookstore management experience. And so I became head of readers' advisory which was about three years ago in 2012, and I had no idea what I'm getting into at all. But I just threw myself into it, and like I said, I work with a lot of really great people. I put myself in the first year through a tough course of reading and independent research about reader's advisory, popular materials in collection development, and public libraries so that I had a base knowledge.

The gap of knowledge about books between both sides is really astonishing. The things that one side knows and the other side doesn't, and vice versa, never ceases to amaze me. There were a lot of things that I was more knowledgeable about just by having been on the bookseller side for so long, and a lot I had to learn. In July 2013, I started going to go online for my degree, and I started studying at Syracuse University, and then around that time Gretchen took her job in Idaho, and we did a little reorganization. I became head of reader services and brought adult collections under me, and then a couple months ago I was promoted. We had not had an assistant director on the public services side after Gretchen left, so there was no one in the role the whole time until I filled the position just recently.

*SO: How has the transition been?*

*SA:* It's a really unusual time to make the transition, I think even five or 10 years ago it would have been really different. Publishers have become really interested, and the book industry in a larger way has become really interested in libraries in a way that they weren't a decade ago.

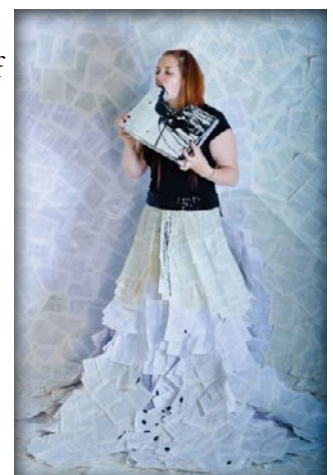
*SO: Yes. Speaking as a former publisher rep, I agree.*

*SA:* In large part, I think libraries are one of the only places in a lot of American communities where you can see physical books and touch them and pick them up. Actually, that has always been true, because there are way way way more libraries than there have ever been bookstores.

It's been a good transition. There are things that are better in one than the other. For example, I do miss how when you really love a book in a bookstore you can just keep handing it to people; granted, they pay you for it, but you've the option of not running out. When you really love a book, it's horrible to run out of it. You want to keep talking to people about it. On the other hand, something I love about libraries is that we don't return books for money, which means that we can give books more time and space, which in readers' advisory can give you a big advantage.

There is definitely this idea in the library world of a "bookstore model" library, which some librarians understand as to buy lots of copies of a new book and pile them on a table, which is a part – a fraction – of how you run a bookstore; but as someone who used to order books for a bookstore, [I can tell you] that is not the bookstore model. And there a lot of similarities too. There are such smart readers on both sides, people who love books so much. Something I think about a lot, like

Photo credit: Emily Raw



when we go to the Youth Media Awards, people are so excited for a book to win, and they have nothing riding on that except that they like it. They're not going to make any money. They just love the book and want it to win an award. That kind of love for a book, there are so many people on both sides who have it, and that's one of the best things.

*SO: Despite your current social media hiatus...*

SA: (laughs)

*SO: Wait, how long is your hiatus?*

SA: I'm just taking July off. I haven't quite figured out how to find a balance just yet. Facebook not so much, because it's mostly pictures of babies; but I felt like I was so frequently walking away from Twitter in particular angry mood or frustrated.

*SO: Those are familiar symptoms.*

SA: And I don't want to say tenor, because I don't want to make it a discussion about tone on the Internet, but there are so many interesting conversations that I have off-line about important issues, like diversity in books, about female authors and how they're treated in the media, about genre fiction. All big important things that, for whatever reason, whenever the conversation was happening on the Internet, I wanted to throw my phone across the room, where the same conversations in person were productive and interesting even when there was a lot of disagreement. You're probably familiar with the journalism phrase that says never pick a fight with someone who buys ink by the barrel.

*SO: Right.*

SA: Well, I feel like the Internet corollary is: never pick a fight with someone whose job is to be online all day. And that's not my job. Many of those jobs seem really cool, but they're not my current job. The bulk of my job is away from the computer. I could probably spend the bulk of my day at the computer, but it's not that kind of job, if you want to do it well. I have a job where I need to be out in public and out of my office. Or if I'm in my office, I'm meeting with people, not at the computer. I started feeling like I was at a disadvantage in keeping up, let alone participating. I don't have a solution



DARIEN LIBRARY (CT)  
Photo credit: Robert Mintzes

for striking a balance. I feel better; I don't miss it at all.

*SO: How should libraries or librarians try to find that balance?*

SA: I'm the chair of our Readers Advisory (RA) Roundtable in southern Connecticut, and the last meeting before our summer hiatus was about social media and RA, and one of the things we talked about is striking that balance. As a library, it's not just a part of your job to be a part of your community, kind of like the mirror-window thing we talk about when we talk about diverse books. It's not just your job to be a mirror. It's also your job to be a window. As a library, you can't say "oh, your librarian can't be on Twitter, they can't talk to librarians elsewhere in the world, we can't pay people to hang out on Twitter." But part of our professional obligation, I believe, is to be a window. Twitter is a really good way to get the information you need to do that, but it's really hard to balance that time with the high demands that public service makes on your time at a busy library.

*SO: Here in Texas, Hood County Library's advisory board recently voted unanimously to keep two LGBT books on the shelves.*

SA: Yeah! I'm a member of the ALA's GLBT Round Table, and the listserv has had a lot of emails about it.

*SO: How do issues like social justice, community inclusion, intellectual freedom, banned books, and advocacy affect Darien Library?*

SA: When we get challenges, which are not frequent in comparison to probably some rural parts of Texas, they come to

me. I'm the one who handles them. The objections to reading material run the gamut. My experience with this material makes me feel that librarians aren't talking about this as effectively as they could be. Just as an example, without violating any patron privacy, one of the challenges I've faced in the past couple years is to a dog-training book. A woman felt like a dog-training book shared a method that was not an appropriate way to train dogs. Another time, two young Muslim women felt that a book by a TV talking head was untruthful about Islam and was inflammatory. I do think that part of the problem is that librarians are making a mistake in solely framing this discussion as "we are guardians of this type of thought," and we only publicly give examples of these really conservative challenges, when there are lots of reasons that people challenge information. These are both examples where, as a private citizen, I probably agreed with the patrons' assessment of these books (though would not challenge them, of course). And I don't think you can understand the problem unless you see all of it.

I actually really enjoy these conversations, sometimes. I thank people for reaching out; I know it's not easy. It's hard for most people to say something like this to a public institution, and we have to honor that when people are engaging with you in that way, even if you don't like the request. And then I explain to them why I won't be removing the book per their request, and I tell them about our ethical beliefs and collection development policy, and explain that I think our role is to show a bunch of viewpoints, and so on. And sometimes

people are mad, they don't like the answer. They get mad and say they aren't going to give us money anymore, or stop using us. But just as frequently, I've had experiences where people end up saying: "oh, that's a good point!" They had never thought about it that way before – that rather than just keep certain viewpoints, we keep all of them – which is fine, because it's my job to think about that, not theirs.

I have found that people are very reasonable when you openly face a challenge and you tell them no and why. They say: oh, okay, I still don't like that book, but I see why you have it. And I also offer, "I'm happy to add another viewpoint to the collection if you feel like there's a viewpoint that hasn't been represented." You know, again, I'm very lucky where we have *Heather Has Two Mommies* and *And Tango Makes Three*, and no one says anything about it.

The other issue I have is that I don't like talking about books that used to be censored, because it takes away from the books that are currently being censored. A lot of the books that we talk about being challenged are because they have GLBT issues which are a real problem, but I think we really dilute that message when we also always feature *Catcher in the Rye* during Banned Books Week, when no one's trying to ban that book anymore, nobody cares. Yes, it's a historical artifact, but it's not a part of the current conversation. And it takes away from the fact that there are thousands of school librarians in this country not buying

certain books at all, because they're scared that somebody is going to challenge them, and that they'll lose their job. There are certain times when someone wants to ban a book that they'll mention that they are a donor or that they know someone on the representative town meeting, but this is a bedrock issue for our library. We don't take books out of our library because somebody doesn't like what they think.

*SO: I like the solutions you propose, moreover that your community will engage with you.*

*SA: I think sometimes that is possible, and we need to be open to it. I don't mean to make light of what other libraries are going through, because I think there are a lot of terrifying people out there who try to intimidate libraries and go after them on purpose and really use funding or PR ... and I think that is a scary threat for many libraries. Especially if you're in a smaller library or are the only library in your town. That's really hard, and we need to support each other when it happens. But as a result, I think the profession should be having a bigger conversation about how to deal with challenges because right now the way we deal with it is antagonistic. Or the way we counsel people to deal with it. Sometimes that's appropriate – people come at you, and you have to go back at them. Sometimes it's just a matter of people not understanding. I've had people on more than one occasion come up to me and ask, "Well, do you like this book? Do you think this is a book that is appropriate?"*

Very accusatory. And what I usually say is: I'm going to be honest with you, there are hundreds of books in this library that ... if it were up to me, if this were Stephanie Anderson's personal library, wouldn't be here. I disagree with their content or I think they're terribly written ... But it's not my library. It's everybody's library. And I think for a lot of people – as you know, we aren't always great at seeing ourselves the way patrons see us – I wouldn't be surprised if some patrons assume that we only buy the books we personally like for the library.

*SO: It's a pretty fair assumption.*

*SA: Yea. I think honesty can work too sometimes ... but it's not my library; it's not my money. It's everybody's library and everybody's budget, and that's why we have a little bit of everything. Darien faces it like everyone in America does. I'm not necessarily going to change people's minds about immigrants, I'm not necessarily going to change people's mind about gay marriage, but that's not my job. My job is to make sure many viewpoints are represented, respectfully, and to connect people with information. ✪*

Stephanie Anderson, assistant director for public services at the Darien Library (CT), is on the Steering Committee of LibraryReads and chairs the Connecticut Library Consortium's Readers' Advisory Roundtable South. She is a reviewer for *Shelf Awareness* and *Kirkus*. (@bookavore)



## A Day in the Life of Your Library

How many people do you help in a day?

What is the impact of your library on the lives of students, faculty, your community, and the people who rely on your library, its resources, and its serves?

Texas Library Snapshot Day is a great opportunity to showcase what happens in your library in a single day. The annual Texas Library Snapshot Day is officially scheduled for October 31, but libraries can

select any day in October as their Snapshot Day. This event offers libraries a framework for promoting services, inviting the public and media to the library, and capturing important information to use in advocacy and promotional materials.

This year, TLA wants to focus the Snapshot Day survey on programs and services. How did people use the library? What needs were met? How did you help people work towards their goals? We want you to capture information that will help you tell your

library's story and create a picture of what you do. In addition to submitting responses to the TLA Snapshot Day Survey, be sure to upload photos to our Flickr page.

TLA's official Snapshot Day website has resources (e.g., a sample press release, customer/student input forms, instructions for submitting final data and uploading photographs, video/photo permissions form, tips for using the information, and much more!).

Don't forget TLA's Facebook page for posting activities and contacting your social media groups to help support libraries.

# BANNED BOOKS

## & the Fight against Censorship

### *Letter from TLA to Hood County Commissioners*

The Intellectual Freedom Committee (IFC) of the Texas Library Association (TLA) holds that the freedom to read is an embedded component of our constitutional rights to free speech and freedom on the press. To that end, we hold that the people of Texas deserve to be protected against attempts by self-appointed censors to define what others can and should read.

Current attempts to ban information, such as removing books that some find offensive, or even burning books, are destructive actions that weaken a community. We support the Hood County Library and its governing authority in following the library's policy, which was designed and approved to serve the learning and informational needs of all of the people of Hood County. As a true educational institution, the library offers diverse viewpoints to provide a balanced and current collection – the hallmark of a responsive and civil society.

The people of Hood County have the right of free inquiry. Democracy itself rests on an open dialogue and demands that freedom of the press in all forms of public communication be defended and preserved.

The members of the IFC urge the members of the Hood County Commission and the people of Hood County to support everyone's shared right to read and stand for intellectual freedom.

*Respectfully Submitted,*

*Susan Mann, President,  
Texas Library Association*

*Alexandra Simons, Chair,  
Intellectual Freedom Committee,  
Texas Library Association*

### **BANNED BOOKS WEEK**

is an annual event celebrating the freedom to read. This year, it was celebrated September 27 – October 3, 2015. Banned Books Week brings together the entire book community – librarians, booksellers, publishers, journalists, teachers, and readers of all types – in shared support of the freedom to seek and to express ideas, even those some consider unorthodox or unpopular. By focusing on efforts across the country to remove or restrict access to books, Banned Books Week draws national attention to the harms of censorship.

This year seemed especially fraught with challenges. One very public debate in Texas over the last few months occurred in Hood County. A parent challenged materials in the children's section dealing with LGBT materials. The challenge took on a very public fight, and the library was at the center of a firestorm.

Hood County Commissioners heard from many stakeholders on the matter. While the commissioners decided to support the library's policies, they did take public testimony on the matter at an open meeting in mid July. Several representatives from the library community attended. TLA president-elect Walter Betts spoke on behalf of the Association.

Good morning \_\_\_\_\_

*My name is Walter Betts, and I am the President-elect of the Texas Library Association. I am a resident of Dallas County, and a librarian at Texas Christian University. I am here today to represent the 6500 librarians and library supporters who are members of the Texas Library Association.*

*Our founding fathers, including John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, wrote extensively about the link between democracy and the right to access information. This right was so important that it was embedded in the 1<sup>st</sup>*

*Amendment to our Constitution. Libraries exist to ensure that citizens have unfettered access to information. In order to fulfill this mandate, library collections must reflect the needs and values of the entire community, not just one segment of the community.*

*This is why libraries have collection policies that explain how items are selected, and reconsideration policies that allow items to be challenged. A librarian does not select items because he or she likes them, or because they are in line with their own particular moral or ethical beliefs. Selection is based on the needs of the entire community: adults and children, business owners and students, those who are religious and those who are not, those who are single and those who are a part of a family – regardless of what type of family it is.*

*That's the library's responsibility. But what about parents? Parents have the right and responsibility to monitor the books their children read, the music they listen to, and the movies and television programs that they view. They ensure that the items their children borrow are in line with their beliefs and moral values. But I have that same right. No one else gets to make those decisions for me and my children. You don't get to impede my access – or my children's access – to ideas that you don't like.*

*So what do you do about items in the library that you don't like? Don't remove or restrict them. Rejoice that they are there – because that means the items you cherish have the same right to be included in the library's collection. Teach your children your beliefs, but also teach them to respect the library materials that belong to everyone in the community.*

*These two books, This Day in June and My Princess Boy, were selected by your librarians using the Hood County Selection Policy. Your Library Advisory Board has listened to concerns raised by*



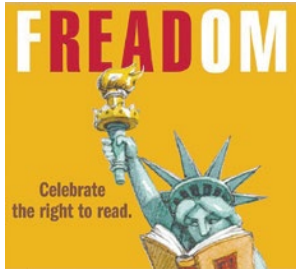
*citizens, but it has decided that these books do meet a need in Hood County.*

*I urge you to allow your board's decision to stand, and to affirm that your library serves everyone.*

\_\_\_\_\_ Thank you.

As President-elect of TLA, Walter Betts represented not only the position of the Association but of library supporters everywhere. While many people spoke before the county commissioners, the majority of the public spoke in support of intellectual freedom.

## **BANNED BOOKS TEXAS REPORT**



An important way of combatting such censorship issues is to first know of instances when attempts to limit intellectual freedom take place. In Texas, we are very lucky. The community of library supporters and champions for reading have the ACLU of Texas.

For almost 20 years, the American Civil Liberties Union of Texas (ACLU of Texas) has drafted its annual Banned Books Report. From its opening comment, “we believe

in an educated citizenry,” the ACLUTX banned books project has brought attention to censorship. The 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Texas Banned Books Report (published after printing of this issue of the *Texas Library Journal*) will be available on the ACLUTX’s website, which offers access also to past years’ reports as well as many resources: [www.aclutx.org/resources/banned-books/](http://www.aclutx.org/resources/banned-books/)

Compiled each year, the report chronicles book challenges occurring in Texas public schools over the preceding school year. Each summer, the ACLUTX files an Open Records Request from every school district in Texas asking for information on any book challenges.

The report chronicles books that are challenged and documents the action resulting from each challenge: 1) retained – the item is left within the collection without limitation; 2) restricted – the book is made available on a limited basis; and 3) banned – a book is completely removed from a library’s shelves.

The ACLU of Texas Banned Books Project exists:

- To raise awareness about book challenges and the banning of books in public school libraries across the state;
- To encourage school officials to use professional librarian standards when confronted with a challenge, and;

- To encourage ACLU affiliates, library associations, and public interest groups to conduct surveys in their states.

### *Due Process before Pulling a Book*

Books are almost always challenged by a parent or, every so often, by a teacher. Often, a parent or teacher will note that a book is simply not “age appropriate,” without providing details as to what exactly is offensive. When a book is challenged, a school might ban it, sometimes permanently.

These often emotionally-charged situations can be fraught with tension, compounded by a lack specific information and knowledge of the process used to first select then use reading materials in school. For these reasons, it is critical to rely on a vetted policy. Fortunately, most ISDs report they have retained the challenged books or have restricted the book’s use to a certain age or class level or restricted it only for the child whose parents complained.

Of course, any due process begins with the library having a strong and approved collections policy. Throughout its work on the Banned Books Project, the ACLUTX has found that, most often, the process schools use to respond to parental or community complaints usually determines the outcome of a challenge more than the contents of the book (2011 Report).

## **TLA'S 2015 CORPORATE SPONSORS**

### **DIAMOND**

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**Little, Brown**

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**Estey**

**Gumdrop Books**

**Infobase Learning**

**Innové**

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**Perma-Bound**

**ProQuest**

**Rosen Digital**

**Scholastic**

**Texserve**

**Tutor.com**

**UNT DLIS**

There are generally three ways for school districts to evaluate books:

- By the librarian or principal
- By the school board
- By a review committee

When a book is reviewed by “administration only” or “librarian only,” the decision to ban a book can be made by a single person. As the ACLUTX notes, “those who believe that parents have the right to decide what their children read but shouldn’t be able to dictate what other people’s children may or may not read, should be alarmed by this.” The salient point is that the decision to ban or not ban a book should not be left one individual acting on a case-by-case basis.

The Texas Library Association and the ACLUTX promote a policy created to deal with any challenges. This policy should include the procedure for handling a challenge and determining which educators and knowledgeable stakeholders should be involved in the decision.

Most districts have a process in place which allows a school board review or review by a committee, generally including the principal or superintendent, school librarian, teachers, parents, and, hopefully, students. The goal of all ISDs should be a process that involves all of these players, not a single parent, superintendent, teacher, or librarian speaking for all.

## RESOURCES

### **TLA’s Intellectual Freedom Page:**

[www.txla.org/intellectual-freedom](http://www.txla.org/intellectual-freedom)  
(Includes Intellectual Freedom Manual and sample reconsideration forms)

**ACLUTX:** [www.aclutx.org/resources/banned-books/](http://www.aclutx.org/resources/banned-books/)

**ALA’s Banned Books Page:** [www.ala.org/bbooks/challengedmaterials](http://www.ala.org/bbooks/challengedmaterials)

**ALA YouTube Video for librarians on reporting a challenge:** [www.ala.org/bbooks/challengedmaterials/reporting](http://www.ala.org/bbooks/challengedmaterials/reporting)

## DEALING WITH CONCERNS ABOUT LIBRARY RESOURCES

(American Library Association)

[www.ala.org/bbooks/challengedmaterials/preparation/dealing-concerns](http://www.ala.org/bbooks/challengedmaterials/preparation/dealing-concerns)

As with any public service, libraries receive complaints and expressions of concern. One of the librarian’s responsibilities is to handle these complaints in a respectful and fair manner. The complaints that librarians often worry about most are those dealing with library resources or free access policies. The key to successfully handling these complaints is to be sure the library staff and the governing authorities are all knowledgeable about the complaint procedures and their implementation. As normal operating procedure each library should:

1. *Maintain a materials selection policy.* It should be in written form and approved by the appropriate governing authority. It should apply to all library materials equally.
2. *Maintain a library service policy.* This should cover registration policies, programming and services in the library that involve access issues.
3. *Maintain a clearly defined method for handling complaints.* The complaint must be filed in writing and the complainant must be properly identified before action is taken. A decision should be deferred until fully considered by appropriate administrative authority. The process should be followed, whether the complaint originates internally or externally.
4. *Maintain in-service training.* Conduct periodic in-service training to acquaint staff, administration, and the governing authority with the materials selection policy and library service policy and procedures for handling complaints.
5. *Maintain lines of communication with civic, religious, educational, and political bodies of the community.* Library board and staff participation in local civic organizations and presentations to these organizations should emphasize the library’s selection process and intellectual freedom principles.
6. *Maintain a vigorous public information program on behalf of intellectual freedom.* Newspapers, radio, and television should be informed of policies governing resource selection and use, and of any special activities pertaining to intellectual freedom.
7. *Maintain familiarity with any local municipal and state legislation pertaining to intellectual freedom and First Amendment rights.* Following these practices will not preclude receiving complaints from pressure groups or individuals but should provide a base from which to operate when these concerns are expressed. When a complaint is made, follow one or more of the steps listed below:
  - a. Listen calmly and courteously to the complaint. Remember the person has a right to express a concern. Use of good communication skills helps many people understand the need for diversity in library collections and the use of library resources. In the event the person is not satisfied, advise the complainant of the library policy and procedures for handling library resource statements of concern. If a person does fill out a form about their concern, make sure a prompt written reply related to the concern is sent.
  - b. It is essential to notify the administration and/or the governing authority (library board, etc.) of the complaint and assure them that the library’s procedures are being followed. Present full, written information giving the nature of the complaint and identifying the source.
  - c. When appropriate, seek the support of the local media. Freedom to read and freedom of the press go hand in hand.
  - d. When appropriate, inform local civic organizations of the facts and enlist their support. Meet negative pressure with positive pressure.
  - e. Assert the principles of the *Library Bill of Rights* as a

professional responsibility. Laws governing obscenity, subversive material and other questionable matter are subject to interpretation by courts. Library resources found to meet the standards set in the materials selection or collection development policy should not be removed or restricted from public access until after an adversary hearing resulting in a final judicial determination.

- f. Contact the ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom and your state intellectual freedom committee to inform them of the complaint and to enlist their support and the assistance of other agencies.

The principles and procedures discussed above apply to all kinds of resource related complaints or attempts to censor and are supported by groups such as the National Education Association, the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Council of Teachers of English, as well as the American Library Association. While the practices provide positive means for preparing for and meeting pressure group complaints, they serve the more general purpose of supporting the *Library Bill of Rights*, particularly Article 3, which states that “Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of the responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.” 🌟

## TLA Corporate Members

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# Pinterest *Isn't* Pedagogy

BY DONALYN MILLER

The summer before my second year of teaching, I spent four hours outside my classroom door, building a three-dimensional butcher paper tree for a “Fall Into A Good Book” display. I burned my fingers with the glue gun multiple times and developed back pain from crouching so long. I wanted to quit the job, but I couldn’t leave it half done, so I persevered.

I spent an additional six hours looking up books on Goodreads, compiling a list of recommendations, and printing book jackets to hang on the display. I thought the tree looked bright and inviting. I couldn’t wait for my new students to see all the wonderful books I recommended and kick off a year of reading in my class.

On Meet the Teacher Night, some families noticed my book tree and complimented me.

On the first day of school, a few students looked at my tree as they walked into class. By the end of the first week, my book display became hallway wallpaper until I took it down. Invisible. Reflecting on my efforts, I wondered how many students selected a book to read because of that tree. Probably not enough in proportion to the work I invested in making it.

That tree showed off my book knowledge and creativity, but how did it benefit my students? Whose reading preferences and recommendations were valued? Whose book evaluation and critique skills improved? Did my tree increase students’ learning and reading engagement? If not, why did I invest so much time into it?

Pressure to create cute classrooms and library displays worthy of Pinterest boards sets unreasonable expectations for teachers and librarians and diverts resources from developing meaningful teaching practices. Pinterest is not pedagogy. I believe librarians and teachers work hard to engage students with reading. We want our students to enjoy reading more. Although our influence matters, we must be mindful

that we cannot remain our students’ sole source of book recommendations forever. Our students must learn how to evaluate and promote books on their own.

We are more likely to successfully encourage our students to read if we allocate our limited time to the activities that foster long-term professional growth and long-term learning for our students. Devote a few hours a week toward reading children’s and young adult literature. Pass these books into students’ hands and encourage them to share. Model and teach students how to give a book talk, write about what they read, create book trailers or podcasts. I guarantee you will foster higher reading engagement and competence in your students. No Harry Potter room theme or paper tree can.

Over the years, my students showed me what really engages them with reading. Frequent opportunities to preview, share, and talk about books; access to diverse reading materials; encouragement to choose their own books – these research-proven principles foster students’ reading motivation and interest. If we want reading to belong to our students, their voices should be louder than ours. Book recommendation prowess and decoration skills don’t matter if our students aren’t empowered to expand and share their own reading experiences. An engaged reader – engrossed in a book – makes for a boring photo, I suppose, but it’s the only legacy worth capturing. 🌟



Donalyn Miller taught 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> grades in Northeast Texas and is the author of two books about engaging children with reading, *The Book Whisperer* (Jossey-Bass, 2009) and *Reading in the Wild* (Jossey-Bass, 2013). Donalyn is the co-founder of the community blog, *The Nerdy Book Club*, and co-hosts the monthly Twitter chat, #titletalk.

## AWARDS: Nominate a Worthy Candidate!

Chances are you have someone in your library system or in your life that you always say deserves an award for the work that they're doing, the projects or programs they're leading, or the support that they're giving in their community. Each year, TLA honors individuals, libraries, supporters, and projects with the TLA Awards.

The recipients range from small community projects and programs led by front-line staff, to lifetime library advocates and major donors. One thing is a constant: all of these awards started first as an idea in the mind of someone like you that this project or individual deserves some recognition and support. When you take the time to put that idea to writing, you're contributing to the further success and recognition of that person or project.

When you nominate someone, you are asked to include some information for a press release. A TLA award is an honor, and TLA wants to help recognize this hard work with some great publicity for the winning individuals, programs, and projects. In 2011, the Bell Whittington Public Library in Portland won the "Libraries Change Communities" Award for its computer class programs for seniors in the retiree-heavy community. Through off-site service, individualized assistance, and taking the class wherever it's needed (even to the local Dairy Queen), Bell Whittington was able to make a difference in the community. Ledezma Rodriguez recalled that even though the community had always been happy with the library, winning the "Libraries Change Communities Award" gave the community a new sense of pride in its local library.

Who do you know that is setting a standard that others are following? Maybe it's you. Do you have a career, a project, or an accomplishment you're particularly proud of, but think perhaps no one else would think so? Nominate yourself! These awards are for real people and real projects just like yours.

Nominations are open from September 15th through January 15th. For more information on all of the awards, previous winners, and to preview the nomination forms head to [www.tsla.org/tla-awards](http://www.tsla.org/tla-awards). Nominate someone today.

## Open Libraries, Open Opportunities: Conference 2016

Open and thriving libraries are essential in creating avenues for people of all ages to learn new skills, overcome obstacles, and accomplish their goals. When libraries are open, opportunities are endless and limited only by imagination. The 2016 TLA Annual Conference will be held in Houston, April 19–22, 2016.

The programming goals for conference include sessions, events, and learning experiences that focus on the following:

**Strengthen Our Numbers:** Reach out to unique populations in innovative ways in order to strengthen TLA membership which in turn strengthens our libraries financially, physically, and virtually.

**Network:** Create formal and informal opportunities for networking, mentoring, and fellowship among librarians during and after conference in order to foster lasting professional relationships.

**Open Minds:** Open our minds to changing society, changing needs of patrons, and new ideas in order to empower our profession and our customers.

**Immediate Impact:** Provide tools and inspiration that encourage program attendees to easily apply learned skills in order to measure impact and advocate through "telling our story" and sharing our passion for libraries with our stakeholders (i.e., library staff, community leaders, legislators, etc.).

## 2016 Exhibits

The TLA 2016 exhibitors are now live on the TLA website. Shop the mobile friendly Buyers Guide to TLA 2016 exhibitors.

Do you know a great company who should promote its services to TLA

members by advertising in the *Texas Library Journal* or participating in the TLA Exhibit Hall? Send your lead to Kasey Hyde ([kaseyh@txla.org](mailto:kaseyh@txla.org)), TLA advertising manager.

## TLA Elections

The 2015-2016 Nominating Committee has announced the names of the Executive Board candidates for the spring 2016 election. Members can vote for candidates for the TLA Executive Board and candidates in any units with contested slates that are participating in the TLA online voting process.

The President-Elect candidates, who represent the special library, exhibitor, and other communities, are the following:

### TLA President-Elect

Deborah Halsted, Stat!Ref  
April Kessler, Bizologie, LLC

The candidates for Representative-at-Large (school) are the following:

### Representative-at-Large

Nora Galvan, Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD  
Janice Newsum, Houston ISD

In accordance with TLA Bylaws and Standing Rules, the Nominating Committee will accept any written petition signed by twenty-five (25) members as nomination for any office. The petition must be accompanied by written acceptance from the nominee no later than December 1, 2015.

Serving on the Nominating Committee are Chair Dede Rios and committee members Evelyn Curry, Maria Elena Ovalle, Sheila Ross Henderson, and Jerilynn Williams.

*In order for members to vote in the 2016 election, they must be current 2016 members as of February 1.*

## LEAF Contributions for 2014-2015

Grow the Library Endowment & Advancement Fund (LEAF), a restricted fund that provides money for special projects benefiting Texas libraries and librarians. Visit the TLA website to make an online donation or print a PDF to mail or fax to the TLA Office.

**DREAM MAKER** (\$10,000+)

Jeanette & Jim Larson: Jim and Jeanette Larson Mystery Fund  
 Tocker Foundation: Small Communities RT, Tocker Stipends, Annual Conference

**CHAMPION** (\$2000-\$1999)

Roberta Janeway: Scholarship & Research Fund for Janeway Grant

**PILLAR** (\$1000-\$1999)

Adam & Ashlynn Kogut: Area of Greatest Need  
 Exxon Mobil: Jeanette & Jim Larson Mystery Fund (Matching & Volunteer Grants on behalf of Carol Bartz)  
 Danielle Plumer: Special Libraries Division  
 Rosetta Resources: Area of Greatest Need (Matching Grant on Behalf of Adam Kogut)  
 Samuels Foundation: Vivian Greenfield Educational Award

**PARTNER** (\$750-\$999)**GUARDIAN** (\$500-\$749)**PROMOTER** (\$250-\$499)

Carol Bartz: Jeanette & Jim Larson Mystery Fund & Pat Smith Endowment for Excellence Award  
 Stephanie McLain: Jeanette & Jim Larson Mystery Fund  
 Dale McNeill: Automation & Technology RT, Electronic Resources & Serials Management RT, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender RT  
 Patricia Smith: Automation & Technology RT, Electronic Resources & Serials Management RT & Jeanette & Jim Larson Mystery Fund

**MENTOR** (\$100-\$249)

Suzanne Byron: New Members RT Endowment Fund  
 Charlotte Harrell: Public Library Division  
 Jeanette Larson: Jeanette & Jim Larson Mystery Fund  
 Greg Kaiser: Van Dusen Scholarship  
 Patricia Ogea: Electronic Resources & Serials Management RT  
 Thomas Rohrig: Gov't. Documents RT  
 Mark Smith: Elizabeth Crabb Fund  
 William Tobin: Van Dusen Scholarship  
 Milton Van Dusen: Van Dusen Scholarship  
 Demetria Williams: Black Caucus RT  
 ZAX Restaurant & Bar: Reference RT

**PATRON** (\$50-\$99)

Stephanie Barko: Jeanette & Jim Larson Mystery Fund  
 Mary Jo Humphreys: Texas Bluebonnet Award  
 Students at Live Oak Elementary: (In honor of teacher's mom, Doreen McMinn)

**DONOR** (\$15-\$49)

Kimberly Gay: Black Caucus RT  
 Gloria Gray: Small Community Libraries RT  
 Angelia Hall: Black Caucus RT  
 Connie Matheny: Black Caucus RT  
 Mobile Giving Foundation (on behalf of anonymous donors): Area of Greatest Need  
 Janice Newsum: Black Caucus RT  
 Nicole Robinson: Annual Conference  
 Jack Siggins & Maureen Sullivan: June Kahler Berry Fund  
 Tracy Timmons: Reference & Information Services RT



TLA's CE Office has coordinated several programs on collaboration and partnerships to offer over the coming months. The 2015 AZ series for library support staff will conclude. Popular events like the TALL Texans Leadership Institute and the Texas Bluebonnet Award will also be covered.

All webinars are free except for the AZ series. TLA webinars are recorded, and CE credit is available for watching the live webinar or for viewing a recording and taking a short quiz. TLA is accredited by both TSLAC and the State Board of Educator Certification (#500383).

**OCTOBER 2, 10 AM-11 AM (CST)**

***How to Apply to the TALL Texans Leadership Institute*** – Roosevelt Weeks,

Walter Betts, and Ted Wanner  
 The TALL Texans program is one of the oldest library leadership programs in the nation. Attendees study topics from strategic planning and advocacy to coaching and conflict negotiation under instructors who also teach at Harvard, Princeton, Simmons, and ALA trainings. But the key to this transformational seminar (to be held June 12-15, 2016, at the Montserrat Retreat Center in Lake Dallas) is a successful application. Learn the critical tips for gaining admission.

**OCTOBER 6, 2 PM-3:30 PM (CST)**

***Texas Libraries Unite to Create Career Centers*** – L.G. Swift

Texas libraries have played a major role in ensuring the success of job seekers by extending job readiness resources to the community at large. Learn how libraries across the state provide career and readiness programs and how to create programs in large and small libraries. The webinar will be taught by an ALA-certified Career Development Facilitator.

**OCTOBER 21, 11:00AM-12:00PM (CST)**

***Children's and Youth Services for Support Staff*** – Julie Todaro

This webinar covers issues for serving juvenile patrons, including basic teaching techniques, coping with disruptive behavior, and legal issues of patron access and "latchkey kids." This webinar is an elective program in the AZ series for support staff. For more information, please visit [www.txla.org/CE-AZ](http://www.txla.org/CE-AZ).

## Bequests & Planned Giving

We want to acknowledge the many wonderful library supporters who, through the years, have made TLA part of their lives. We have been enriched by the participation of thousands of librarians and library supporters, and the full library community has benefited from the financial contributions of many of their colleagues.

Planned giving and bequests to TLA have allowed many programs and initiatives to flourish at TLA. They offer individuals a chance to dedicate posthumously a portion of their assets to the library community or to settle on gifts to the Association over an extended period of time. These legacy donations express the generosity and deep commitment to library services of the donors. TLA and the library community stand in ongoing gratitude for this philanthropy.

Contributions may be undesignated and left to the area of greatest need or may be designated for a particular cause or interest. If you would like to learn more about planned giving, please contact Pat Smith, executive director of TLA.

**NOVEMBER 3, 2 PM-3:30 PM (CST)**  
*Texas Libraries Unite to Create Career Centers* – L.G. Swift

This encore presentation of the October 6 webinar covers the same material on career centers. Learn how libraries across the state are providing career and job readiness programs and how to create programs in large and small libraries. The program will be taught by an ALA-certified Career Development Facilitator.

**NOVEMBER 10, 2 PM-3:30 PM (CST)**  
*Free Online Legal Resources from Texas Law Help* – Elliot Fontenette

TexasLawHelp.org is a website providing FREE and RELIABLE legal information, forms, and more to low income Texans. Administered by the Texas Legal Services Center with funding from the Texas Access to Justice Foundation, it relies on the contributions of legal aid throughout

the state of Texas. In 2014, it had over 1.1 million unique visitors and 6.8 million page views.

**NOVEMBER 18, 11:00AM-12:00PM (CST)**  
*Working with Volunteers* – Julie Todaro

Many support staff work side by side with library volunteers, or may even supervise them. This program provides “best practices” for library support staff interacting with unpaid library workers and some fundamentals of volunteer supervision. This webinar is an elective program in the AZ series for support staff. AZ webinars have a registration fee. For more information: [www.txla.org/CE-AZ](http://www.txla.org/CE-AZ).

**DECEMBER 3, 10-11 AM (CST)**  
*School Administrator Toolkit: A Guide to Hiring School Librarians*  
 – Maria Elena Ovalle and Terry Roper

Learn about this new resource designed to help busy school administrators as

they recruit and hire school librarians. The website (<https://sites.google.com/site/hiringlib/>) contains sample interview questions, offers examples of evaluations, and suggests places to post openings. The site will also be helpful to librarians seeking positions and preparing for interviews.

**DECEMBER 9, 11 AM-12 PM (CST)**  
*Introduction to Managing Projects*  
 – Julie Todaro

Libraries, like other nonprofits and government agencies, need to make the most of their staff. Everyone needs to juggle multiple responsibilities. Learn how to better coordinate your projects and tasks to save time and effort while increasing productivity. This webinar is an elective program in the AZ series for support staff. AZ webinars have a registration fee. *For more information, please visit [www.txla.org/CE-AZ](http://www.txla.org/CE-AZ)* 📍

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**Volume 91, 2015**

COMPILED BY MITZIE STEWART

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## Texas Book Festival



## Teen Book Festival

The 2015 Texas Book Festival will be held October 17–18 and is free and open to the public. The event takes place in Austin at the State Capitol and surrounding grounds.

One of the largest and most prestigious literary festivals in the country, the annual Texas Book Festival features 250+ nationally and critically recognized authors, 20+ venues including the State Capitol, 80+ exhibitors, live music, local food trucks, family activities, and countless opportunities to meet authors and fellow book lovers. Authors are announced in September.

Also, the Texas Book Festival, in a close partnership with BookPeople and with generous support from Humanities Texas and venue sponsor St. Edward's University, presented the Texas Teen Book Festival on September 26 in Austin.

The Texas Book Festival is a non-profit organization organized to promote literacy, celebrate literature, and support Texas public libraries.

Learn more about attending the Texas Book Festival at [www.texasbookfestival.org](http://www.texasbookfestival.org).



The 20th Anniversary Texas Book Festival poster features the work of artist Fatima Ronquillo.