

TEXAS LIBRARY JOURNAL

Volume 98, Number 2, Summer 2022

TENURE,

CRITICAL RACE THEORY

+ ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

**Protect Yourself from
Job-Related Legal Action**

**Finding the Right Service
Model for Your Academic
Library**

TLA 2022 Wrapup



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ALA President Patricia "Patty" Wong &
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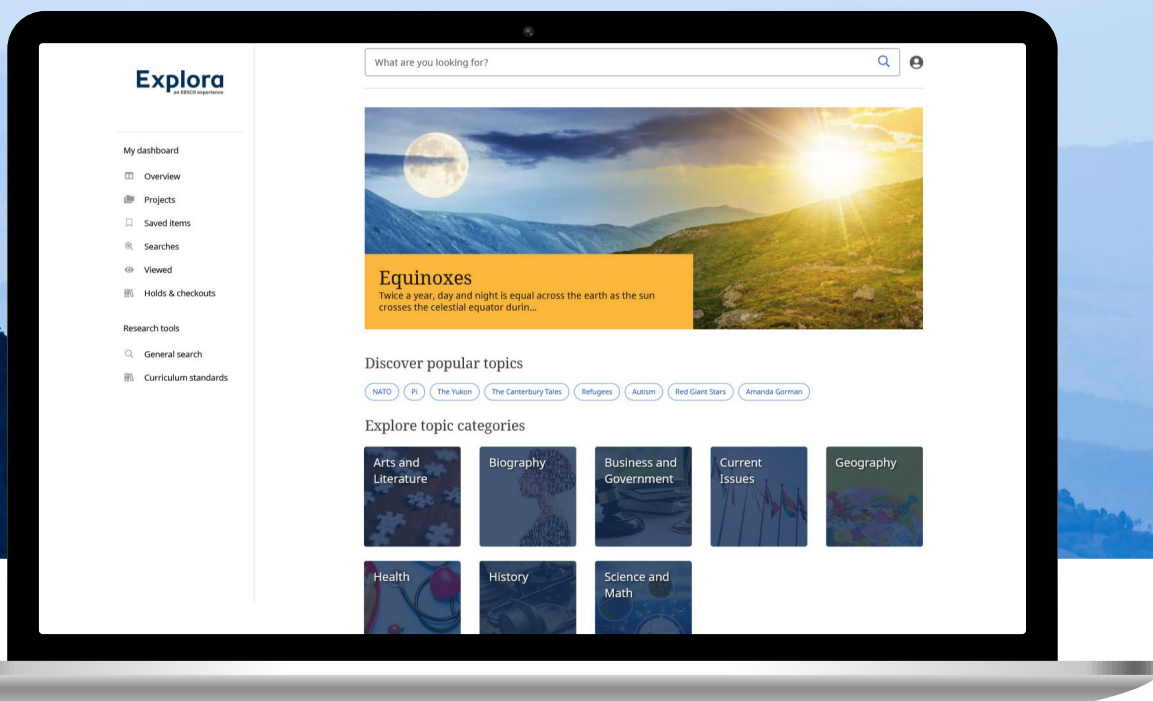
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Embracing New Opportunities

By Mary Woodard

I'VE HEARD IT SAID THAT THE ONLY PERSON WHO LIKES CHANGE IS A WET BABY,

and I can fully relate to this sentiment. After 35 years in education and 20 years as Director of Library Services in Mesquite ISD, I am retiring. Big life changes like that can be painful and scary, but they can also be exciting. In my case, I know that stepping into this phase of life will give me new opportunities to learn, adapt, improve, be courageous, and develop new relationships. It will also give me the chance to fully focus on serving as TLA president.

Last fall, the TLA Executive Board began the process of updating the TLA strategic plan for 2022-2025. Using feedback from members, unit chairs and other key stakeholders, we spent an inspiring and challenging two days envisioning the future of TLA, crafting new vision and mission statements, and identifying strategic values and priorities to guide our work.

VISION: The Texas Library Association is an **integral partner, innovative leader** and **passionate advocate** for Texas libraries and librarians.

MISSION: The Texas Library Association's mission is to **unite and amplify voices of the library community** through advocacy, education, access and intentional equity, diversity, inclusion.

The vision speaks to the conversations the Board had around the importance of partnership, leadership and advocacy for libraries and librarians in this time of overwhelming social change. (There's that word again!) The mission tells how the organization will get to that desired future state.

To accomplish the mission, the Board endorsed three strategic priorities:

1. **Communicate the value of libraries.**
2. **Lead a learning culture.**
3. **Cultivate a thriving organization.**

The Board also identified a defining value that will be the lens through which we view all work of the association: **Foster intentional equity, diversity, and inclusion.** As we work on the priorities we have identified, we will do so with an equity mindset that honors each individual's dignity. Considerations around equity, diversity, and inclusion will be at the forefront of all efforts to improve our policies, practices, and programs.

While goals around these priorities are still in development, I can share some of the changes you may notice in your interactions with TLA in the coming months.



Communicate the value of libraries:

- TLA will continue the effort to organize and leverage the support of library users through our grassroots coalition, Texans for the Right to Read. (If you haven't joined yet, stop reading this and [join online today!](#)) Coming soon you will see the formation of regional steering committees that will lead the effort to keep individuals in their local communities informed and engaged in fighting those who would infringe on the right to read and access information freely.

- The Intellectual Freedom

Committee will continue and expand its work supporting librarians facing censorship through the Intellectual Freedom Helpline.

- The Legislative Committee will work with TLA staff to provide advocacy tools and resources for members to employ during the upcoming legislative session that address policy and regulatory outcomes related to libraries.

Lead a learning culture:

- To streamline the conference program development process and better honor the time constraints of our member volunteers, we have combined the traditional Program Committee (lovingly known as ProCo) and the Local Arrangements Committee (LAC) into one group - the Conference Planning Committee (CPC).
- We have also moved to a single Call for Proposals, which is currently open and accepting submissions. [Submit your proposals by June 20.](#)

Cultivate a thriving organization

- Much work will be done in this area, evaluating and reorganizing TLA's governance structure to reflect the changing needs of the organization and align with the best practices of the association industry.

So even though change will be hard, especially for those of us who have been involved in TLA for a long time (me!), without it there can be no growth. I hope you will join me in embracing the changes and welcoming new opportunities!

Mary Woodard

Mary Woodard
2022-2023 TLA President



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Protect Yourself from Threats of Job-Related Legal Actions

By Wendy Woodland

TODAY'S REALITY FOR MANY LIBRARIANS IS STRESSFUL, UNCERTAIN, DISHEARTENING, AND FRIGHTENING.

Individuals promoting a narrow agenda are fanning the flames of fear and creating a climate of distrust in many Texas communities. Librarians, who have historically been among the most trusted public servants in the country, are now facing harassment and threats of legal action just for doing their jobs.

How can you protect yourself? One way is through professional liability insurance. For many years, the Texas Library Association has partnered with Barclay Insurance to offer professional liability insurance at a discounted premium rate to TLA members.

This policy guards against financial devastation in the event you are named in a serious lawsuit or legal action arising in the course and scope of your responsibilities as an educator. Here are responses to some of the most frequently asked questions. For more information, review the [Educators Professional Liability Insurance brochure](#).

My employer (school district, city/county, university, etc.) has liability insurance. Won't that cover me?

Your employer's policy covers that institution and may not cover you or your legal fees. Additionally, your employer's policy limits may be exhausted quickly in a lawsuit. It is wise to have insurance coverage that names you as the insured party.

Who is eligible for this policy?

You must be a current TLA member, work in Texas, and be employed by a public, school, academic or special library.

Are Texas certified librarians who do not work in a library space, but provide library services and support and training to school districts, public libraries, etc. eligible to receive this insurance?

In most cases, a certified librarian not working in a physical library space, but who provides training and support to Texas librarians is eligible for the insurance. For example, a certified librarian working in an ESC providing training and support to school districts and school librarians would be able to purchase the insurance. To confirm eligibility, contact [Barclay Insurance](#).

What is covered under the policy?

- Negligent supervision
- Bodily injury and property damage
- Violation of a student's civil rights
- Failure to educate
- Improper methods of instruction
- Hiring unqualified persons
- Corporal Punishment-related injury to a student
- Allegations of sexual misconduct with a student
- Criminal investigations and proceeding

As a policy holder, can I receive legal advice if I am concerned about situations at my library that may expose me to liability?

Yes, any policy holder that has questions about their legal exposure can contact [Barclay Insurance](#) for assistance. They can connect you with an attorney as appropriate.

If I am facing administrative suspension or leave, can this policy assist in anyway?

Yes, policy holders threatened with or placed on administrative leave, or suspension, can contact [Barclay Insurance](#) for assistance. They can connect you with an attorney as appropriate.

When does my insurance policy respond?

It is occurrence-based, which means if the occurrence that resulted in the litigation or legal action took place while the policy was in effect, the policy will respond.

If you are a current TLA member and would like to add the professional liability insurance to your membership, you may add it by updating your membership selections in [TLA Members Only](#).

Please note this is provided for reference only. All coverage provided under the terms of the policy in the event of a loss or occurrence is subject to the exclusions and conditions contained in the master policy on file with the policyholder, including all amendments, endorsements and additions.



TENURE,

CRITICAL RACE THEORY

+ ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

By David Baca and LaMoya Burks

The unprecedented challenges to books and teaching in the Texas K-12 system by Texas politicians and government officials are not stopping there. Academic faculty and librarians at Texas universities and colleges are now feeling the same pressures on their ability to educate and prepare students to go into the world. The dissolution of tenure and the elimination of protections faculty status provide have long been on conservative political agendas. Recent [rhetoric](#) by Texas Lieutenant Governor

Dan Patrick is a [direct assault](#) on tenure and threatens those faculty that teach Critical Race Theory. These threats are also aimed at academic librarians.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) examines race as a social construct and racism as embedded in our legal systems, government, and institutions. CRT looks at racism through a different lens than the widely accepted history. While it is not taught at the K-12 level, it is a scholarly subject at many Texas universities. Lt. Governor Patrick has asserted that CRT “poisons the minds of young students” and has vowed to ban teaching of CRT at publicly funded

higher education institutions. The ban, and consequences of violating the ban, could stretch to librarians that collect CRT educational materials or create resources, such as exhibits or displays, that use CRT to educate students. The irony of the drive to eliminate CRT in universities is that CRT examines just such actions as furthering systemic racism.

Are these efforts dog whistles and electioneering or real threats? Emily Drabinski, American Library Association President-Elect, and a veteran of collective bargaining battles, says that “censorship and attacks on tenure are about power.” While Lt. Governor Patrick’s statements have not become law yet, there have been bills developed by Texas legislators in

past Legislative sessions that would increase the number of reviews of tenured faculty and expand the reasons universities can fire faculty. Those bills have not made it out of committee but many see it as just a matter of time before similar bills do advance, especially given the passing of [Senate Bill 3](#) that abolishes teaching of CRT in K-12 schools. In his list of interim charges, Lt. Governor Patrick directed the Texas Senate's Higher Education Committee to ensure that CRT is not taught in higher education courses. In another ironic twist he has asked the committee to "consider and recommend methods to ensure students receive accurate historical information related to the founding and establishment of the United States."

How will these attacks affect academic librarians? We have found ourselves caught up in the current culture wars. One of the largest universities in the nation, Texas A&M University, is [stripping faculty status](#) from librarians beginning in September, 2022. This follows on recent moves by other large universities across the nation to remove librarians from the faculty.

Only about half of academic libraries have faculty librarians and this number is declining. While librarians with staff-status provide the same important services and resources, faculty status has always been closely tied to the concept of academic freedom. Academic freedom, the freedom to collect, loan and exhibit books and materials that might not be politically popular, is a critical protection for librarians. Donald Downs, of the Academic Freedom Alliance, says that academic freedom and tenure is critical for librarians. "Why do we have tenure? To ensure impartiality and freedom from internal and external pressures. To protect every idea possible. Tenure is a very important part of a vibrant university system. It is there not because one deserves it, it is needed to protect academic freedom. It is an obligation of those that have tenure to defend academic freedom from internal or external pressures."

While wholesale bans on books that we have seen in K-12 are rare at the university level they could easily follow from pressure on university administration. Vera Eidleman, Staff Attorney for the [ACLU Speech, Privacy and Technology Project](#), says that while the average citizen has full First Amendment rights and protections, these protections are not as strong in the workplace. "Academic librarians would not be able to disobey ban orders from their administration based on these rights."

What can academic librarians do? Eidelman says, "This story isn't new. We've made it through and back to a place of progress from our history. These attempts to control knowledge

“Tenure is a very important part of a vibrant university system... It is an obligation of those that have tenure to defend academic freedom from internal or external pressures.”

are going to keep happening and we have to keep pushing back against it."

To start, academic librarians can follow the lead of our colleagues in school and public libraries. Groups such as the [Freedom Fighters](#) have been leading the fight in K-12. The Texas Library Association has been on the forefront of addressing censorship in Texas. The [TLA Intellectual Freedom Helpline](#) and the [Texans For the Right to Read](#) are just two of the many resources developed.

For attacks on collections educate yourself on the issues of censorship and CRT. Remain aware of upcoming legislation and existing state laws. Your university legal counsel or government affairs departments may also be helpful in understanding the current environment and developing useful resources. Revisit your collection development policies, update them with university administration if needed and be prepared to defend them. Create a narrative as to the importance of both the collections and the policies.

More importantly, academic librarians need to band together. We can't rely on legal challenges or lobbying or elections to sustain us. While advocacy groups, such as faculty senates or protests organized by students, are important they are not enough. Drabinski understands the power balance and believes that librarians are often seen as the weakest combatant. "Our expertise is questioned. We are easy to attack and are often the canary in the coal mine. We are in an all-hands-on deck moment." Compile a list of every librarian and staff in the library and understand the risk they are willing to take to advocate on these issues. Have organizing conversations and learn to organize large campaigns. Shift from legal advocacy to collective actions. Drabinski implores us to "get ready and stay ready."

There are numerous resources available for academic libraries. The [ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom](#) is another library-specific resource. For wider perspectives on faculty status, academic freedom and tenure you can access information from the [Academic Freedom Alliance](#) and [FIRE](#), the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education.

David Baca is the chair of the Texas Council of Academic Libraries and the chair-elect of the Texas Library Association's College and University Libraries Division.

LaMoya Burks is the immediate past-chair of the Texas Library Association's College and University Libraries Division and the interim executive director of the Young Adult Library Services Association, a division of the American Library Association.



Subject Liaison, Hybrid, or Functional?

Finding the Right Service Model for Your Library

By Kerry Creelman and Jess Williams

TRADITIONALLY, ACADEMIC LIBRARIES HAVE BEEN ORGANIZED TO SUPPORT THEIR PATRONS THROUGH SUBJECT OR DISCIPLINE-BASED LIAISON MODELS. In the past ten years, rapid changes in technology, budget cuts, and increasing demand for research expertise have caused many academic libraries to transition to team-based organizational models organized around functions like teaching and learning, research support, and collection strategies. Other libraries adopt hybrid models that utilize components from both the liaison and functional models to adapt to local needs and realities like staff size and budget. If your library has been curious about shifting your organizational model, this article may help identify both when and why you should consider making a change.

The University of Houston Libraries (UHL) supports a large, public, research one university with more than 46,000 students. UHL consists of a main library and four embedded locations supporting architecture and art, music, health sciences, and law. The main library had a liaison services department, comprised of subject librarians supporting academic departments or colleges and functional specialists providing multi-disciplinary services. Liaisons and functional specialists were organized into functional area teams to provide instruction, research, collections, and outreach services.

Recently, we moved to a fully functional specialist model. The liaison services department no longer exists; department members were reclassified as functional specialists in one of two new departments: teaching and learning or collections

strategies and services. A pre-existing research services department also absorbed new functional specialists. The four embedded locations retained their subject librarian models.

Texas State University is a public, Hispanic-Serving Institution with an emerging research designation. The University Libraries' three facilities and two distinct collections provide services and resources for ten colleges and 38,000 students. As a recent addition to the Association of Research Libraries, Texas State University Libraries is in the process of scaling up research support and student success services by shifting from a departmental liaison-based model to a hybrid functional model. In the first phase of this process, we are focusing on four organizational changes: new collection development models; adjusting liaison assignments from the department to the college level and developing functional research expertise; a teaching and learning team that will focus on creating digital learning objects and co-curricular programming; and updating our service model through consolidation and improved student employment experience.

SIGNS IT MAY BE TIME TO SHIFT YOUR SERVICE MODEL

At each of our institutions, there were some common considerations for shifting to a new staff model to deliver these library services to our communities. These needs may apply to your institution as well, regardless of type or size.

- **The needs of your institution are evolving, and your library is struggling to meet those needs with your current structure.** Emerging campus priorities result in new library services and expectations that subject

librarians develop expertise in new areas. Growing campus demands for data management, research metrics, digital humanities, open educational resources, information and data literacy, and other services prompted us to evaluate how consistently we were delivering these new services through our existing models. Deeply entrenched staffing models, like liaison programs at many institutions, are less flexible than necessary to respond to evolving campus needs and unplanned staffing changes. Providing new services will often require an inventory of current work and the commitment to eliminating or outsourcing those services that no longer respond to user needs.

- **Your library staff deserves equitable workloads.** Asking subject liaisons to develop and maintain expertise across a variety of functional service areas, while continuing to provide legacy services, can become untenable. Individual liaisons prefer or are better at different types of work. Subject areas require different services or similar services delivered differently. This can lead to workload imbalance across department members as well as inequitable service provision across academic departments and colleges. With staff attrition and turnover exacerbating workload imbalances (a condition many of our libraries face as a result of the pandemic and economy in higher education), this can be an impetus to evaluate your liaison model.
- **You recognize that progress needs to be sustainable and programmatic.** In traditional liaison models, expertise can be siloed and uneven, with programs, services, or relationships depending on individuals in those roles, resulting in unsustainable services. It also makes programmatic endeavors more challenging to accomplish without buy-in and collaboration from subject liaisons who may not have interest or expertise in alignment with program priorities. The decentralized work model can also lead to replication of work and variable approaches to service delivery. If your institution is pursuing programmatic goals, this may prompt a reconsidering of your staffing model.
- **It's time to reevaluate librarian job satisfaction.** A final consideration is whether librarians are happy with your current service model or are ready for a change. The subject liaison model expects individuals to be good at many things and to take on increasing responsibilities and skillsets. Very few liaisons enjoy ALL of their responsibilities and may be eager to consider a new model.

WHY SHIFT YOUR SERVICE MODEL?

Some of the advantages of the hybrid or functional specialist model:

- **Fresh decision-making and service-delivery models.** A benefit to a new model is enabling a more programmatic approach to service delivery and decision-making. Getting a department of liaisons to agree on what to stop doing

or de-emphasize in order to prioritize a new initiative can be incredibly challenging. Functional models enable programmatic decision-making, resulting in more systems thinking and scalable services. For example, a teaching and learning department may have more success in discontinuing one-shot instruction sessions than a liaison department.

- **Strong staff and sustainable services.** This programmatic approach can also facilitate cross-training and shared knowledge resulting in more sustainable services that are less susceptible to staff turnover. This approach is also more flexible and responsive to evolving campus needs. A functional or hybrid model encourages more interdisciplinary initiatives and a deeper, shared understanding of the curriculum and research priorities across campus. This enables setting manageable priorities and distributing workload in meaningful, equitable, and achievable ways.
- **Healthier organizations and happier staff.** The opportunity to revise job duties can reinvigorate work life. Defining clear expectations and roles is more easily achieved with a move to hybrid or functional roles. This increases morale and employee engagement. When people are excited about their work, it also results in better service and organizational efficiencies.

A major restructuring is an opportunity to engage librarians in the decision-making and priority setting for new models. Librarians can collaborate to identify essential services and work to be done and can engage in professional development together as they learn new skills and share knowledge.

The right model for your library depends on local institutional needs, current staffing structure, and your ability to implement change (restructuring can require provost support, budget, etc.). A traditional liaison structure can have its advantages and might work best for your library. Considering a hybrid or functional specialist model might create the organizational paths necessary for your library's staff to do their current work better and engage in new services. If a new model is for you, please recognize the significant amount of change management work that lies ahead. Professional identities are often closely tied to roles and departments, and not everyone will be excited about a new service model or changes to their roles. This process can be democratic, or it can be administration driven. In either case, providing staff the opportunity to engage as much as possible in the decision-making and in the type of work they enjoy most is essential to a successful transition. It is also a chance to provide growth opportunities for people in your organization and to energize your group around positive change.

Kerry Creelman is Head of Collections Strategies and Services at the University of Houston Libraries.

Jess Williams is Head of Information and Undergraduate Services at Texas State University Libraries.

Ensuring Accuracy

COMBINING JOURNALISM AND LIBRARY SCIENCE FOR A UNIQUE CAREER

By Michele Chan Santos and Misty Harris

Not everyone with a master's degree in library and information science ends up working as a librarian in a traditional library setting. The *Texas Library Journal* interviewed Misty Harris, the San Antonio Express-News Op-Ed and Letters Editor, about her career and her volunteer work with the Texas Library Association's Special Libraries Division (SLD).

TLJ: Misty, you have a journalism degree from the University of Texas at Austin and a background as a newspaper journalist. What led you to pursuing a master's degree in information science at the University of North Texas?

MH: After I graduated from UT Austin, I was a reporter for several years. When I came back to San Antonio, I was kind of burnt out. At a community newspaper you have so many roles, you're interviewing people, taking pictures, writing, and editing, it takes a lot out of you. I saw this advertisement for a library position. I had always loved libraries and I started working as a staff member in a library (at Trinity University). And I enjoyed it so much, I decided to get my master's degree (in library science). I completed UNT's online program while still working at the library.

TLJ: Tell us about your library staff position at Trinity.

MH: At Trinity, I was hired to be the supervisor of the student circulation workers. Most of them worked in the evenings. I worked 3pm to midnight and I did this for four years. I really loved it! If the pay was better, I would have stayed in that job for a long time. I loved the students and I loved interacting with people.



After completing my master's degree, I honestly thought I was going to be an academic librarian at Trinity. At academic libraries, benefits are good, and people love it, I was waiting and waiting for someone to retire. But I was also looking at other positions. While I was waiting, a job opening came across my desk for a news researcher at the San Antonio Express-News. They were looking for someone with a library background and a news background. The person I was replacing at the Express-News was a librarian. She'd been there forever, and a lot of their previous news researchers had library backgrounds. It was amazing how my skill set fit in such a niche area. I had these two degrees — journalism and library science — which you would think were very different from one another, but really, they have a lot to do with each other. I worked as the director of news research for five and a half years.

TLJ: Let's talk about the overlap there, between journalism and library science. How are these fields similar, how is the work similar?

MH: A lot of the work I was doing was finding information about people — going through archives, and databases like Lexis Nexis. Using law librarianship to find federal court cases so reporters could read the full court document. Finding marriage certificates, the history of land ownership. It was a lot of different things. For a while there (the Express News did not have a reporter doing computer assisted reporting and data analysis), I was the newspaper's data person. I learned a lot about how to analyze data, how to build charts and maps and graphs. I was very happy when they hired new reporters to do this; it's a full-time job on its own. Also, I did a little bit of archiving, putting our stories and photographs into our own archival system. I did this until just recently when I became the op-ed editor.

TLJ: How did you become the Op-Ed editor?

MH: They approached me. Someone on the editorial board said, “I really think your skill set is something we could use in editorial.” The position is to solicit guest op-eds (guest editorials for the newspaper), edit guest op-eds and edit the Letters to the Editor section. I was kind of hesitant about it because I didn’t want to leave my research job which I absolutely loved. They weren’t going to replace me (as the news researcher). I have my new job, but I still do a lot of research. We are teaching the reporters to do their own research. Ideally, they’d hire a news researcher to take on those responsibilities, but it is hard to make that case now — a lot of smaller papers are getting away from having a research team.

TLJ: It’s a pretty divisive time to be the Op-Ed editor. Is it hard?

MH: I do find it difficult sometimes. Mainly, I get the pushback from the Letters to the Editor section. We have an email address dedicated to people that just write in, how they feel about our coverage. I pick daily a selection of these emails and prepare them to be printed in the paper.

You’ve got to make sure people are being civil and respectful of the other readers and letter writers. It can be difficult. People’s emotions get the best of them when they are writing about sensitive topics — abortion, the January 6 insurrection, for example, but we can’t have people getting too emotional or calling people ugly names. We can’t have people posting things that aren’t based in fact. Even though it’s the editorial section, it’s still in the newspaper and we don’t want to spread misinformation. That’s where my background in library science comes in. I fact-check all the letters and the op-eds and make sure everything is factual and accurate. That’s the difficult part of my job, making sure people are adhering to those basic principles of not being disrespectful and not spreading misinformation.

TLJ: Librarians, libraries and the freedom to read have been under attack in Texas, especially in the past year. How have you been able to advocate for libraries and librarians in your role with the newspaper?

MH: I was reached out to TLA and asked them to [write an op-ed for us](#) in support of school librarians. (regarding the controversy over North East Independent School District’s decision to remove 414 books from school libraries’ shelves while they were being reviewed). I reached out to TLA so they could write about how it’s important to trust librarians to make the right decisions. So parents know what is going on, know the purpose of the book reviews — librarians are trained professionals, people shouldn’t be attacking them.

TLJ: What is the most challenging aspect of your position right now? What is the most rewarding aspect?

MH: Most challenging is fighting that misinformation and fighting it in a way that is interesting to our readers as well. Trying to get information from both sides of the political spectrum. Sometimes it’s people that lean liberal that are not being civil; on a different issue, it could be conservatives who are not being civil. Finding a balance and being civil and truthful, it can be very difficult. I try because I want everyone in the community to have a voice, whether I agree with it or not. We need everyone. The most rewarding aspect of my job is getting those voices in the paper that don’t normally get in the paper. I love it. People will send me notes, “I sent my op ed to my mom and she clipped it out” — this is from a grown person! It’s heartwarming to see that. As a journalist, you get used to seeing your name in the paper. People who have never written anything for the paper before, seeing their name in print for the first time, it’s something for them to be proud of and in turn that makes me feel good.

TLJ: Which of your library skills do you use most often in your position with the Express-News?

MH: A lot of my critical thinking skills, knowing how to do research, knowing how to tackle an issue, where I need to delve into it, where I need to find the facts, how to connect different facts to different opinions. A lot of critical research skills.

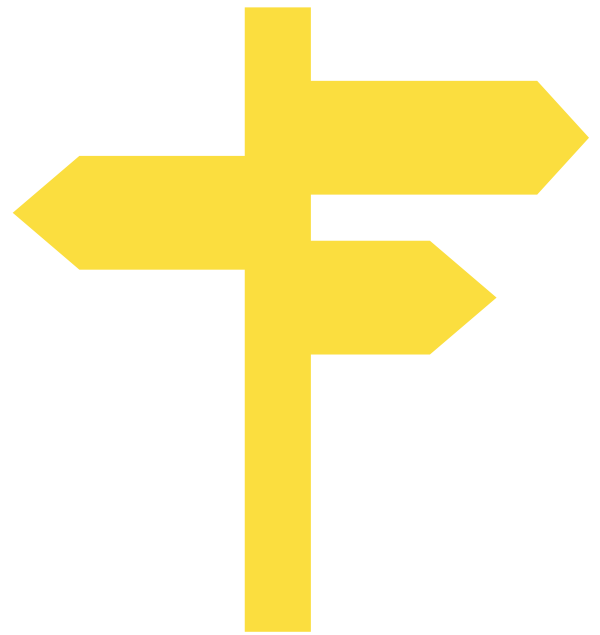
TLJ: Tell me about your experience chairing SLD (Special Libraries Division). What did you learn from this volunteer position and what would you like to see in upcoming TLA programming, regarding special libraries?

MH: I really have enjoyed chairing SLD (she was chair in 2021-2022). I have met so many different people. I love meeting the medical and law librarians. They have these very interesting jobs, the people who go on rounds with the doctors, it’s so fascinating, the people working in law offices, corporations or museums. At (the TLA 2022) conference we did two panels — one on unusual library roles (“Cool Jobs”), and one about people transitioning from traditional library jobs to special librarians (“Switching Gears: Making the Move to Special Librarianship.”) We had so many people coming up to us afterwards, saying, I want to become a medical librarian, or a law librarian. Maybe TLA could have a webinar about how to become a law librarian, or a medical librarian. We received so many questions (after the ‘Switching Gears’ presentation).

TLJ: What do most people in TLA not realize about SLD? What makes this group unique?

MH: I think a lot of people don’t realize that even if you’re not in special libraries, you can come to our events and learn more. It’s a learning experience. The more you interact with people from special libraries, the more likely you are to possibly find a job through SLD. If you are interested in working in special libraries, come hang out with us!

MY CAREER CROSSROADS



By Lisa Katzenstein

This is a story of my journey from public librarian to academic librarian, with a number of positions in between.

I had an interesting career as a public reference librarian, having lived and worked in public libraries in Louisiana, Arizona, and Texas. Because I speak Spanish, my niche was serving Hispanic library users. I ordered Spanish language materials, traveling to Mexico twice to Spanish language book fairs to purchase items. I planned library programs for Hispanic Heritage Month, and provided Spanish language translations for library signage and documents.

The highlight of my public librarian career was receiving a grant from the Texas Library Association's Texas-Mexico Relations Committee in 1998

to travel to Guadalajara, Mexico for two weeks to visit libraries. I toured Mexican public, academic, and special libraries, as well as presented in Spanish about library services offered at Fort Worth Public Library. The experience was a wonderful opportunity to learn Spanish library lingo, as well as to understand the state of libraries in Mexico, so I would know the expectations of Mexican library users when they entered an American public library.

I dedicated 25 years of my life to public librarianship, but in need of a change, I left the field in 2013 to teach middle school Spanish. This was a very challenging and difficult career reentry as the last time I had taught Spanish (and French) as a full-time classroom teacher was in 1986. So much had changed. I lasted one year spending 12 hours a day at school on weekdays and

long days and evenings on the weekend grading and doing lesson plans for 156 students.

I finished (or perhaps survived) the academic year and regrouped. I volunteered to teach bilingual citizenship classes, which led to teaching ESL to French and Korean speakers. I was then hired as an instructional specialist for Spanish and French students in a language lab of a community college for a one-year, temporary position. And my last non-librarian job was as a tutor coordinator in the American English and Culture Institute at the same community college, one of my favorite jobs ever. However, it was a grant-funded position which ended after three years.

Which brings me to my current position as a part time reference librarian at the Wylie Campus of Collin College. For the first time in my career,

I was interviewed virtually via Zoom. I was delighted when the position was offered to me, and I accepted it without having ever set foot in the library.

I am pleased to say that my return to librarianship has not been as difficult as my reentry into classroom teaching was. I did, however, need to do a number of things to help me reacclimate. I took copious notes during my library orientation with my library director, explored the dozens of library databases that Collin College offers, and acquainted myself with the library catalog, which is Polaris, the same one that I used at Dallas Public Library. I perused the new books on carts that were brought to the reference desk, and refamiliarized myself with the Library of Congress Classification System.

Each day, I look over the chat and email questions so I can be better prepared to answer questions from the public. I even have compiled a list of FAQs from the chats and emails for my personal use.

I have some public librarian work habits that have been helpful to me as an academic librarian. I always walk with the library user to wherever they need me to be to help them. I leave my computer at the reference desk signed on up until the door is locked at closing for the remotest of possibilities of a last-minute reference question. At the start of my new position, I was working alone at night. Hence, I left the chat up on my screen, so I would be able to contact another librarian at a different campus library if I had any questions. I read the monthly minutes of the full-time librarian meetings to be up to speed with what is going on in my library. And I always sit in the reference desk seat that faces the front entrance as I like to see who is coming into the building.

Navigating the new normal in my

library due to the coronavirus was interesting. Collin College required everyone on campus to wear masks until May 19, 2021. During this mask mandate, we librarians had to walk the floor and ask library users who were not in compliance to wear a mask and offer masks if they did not have one. Library patrons could move furniture to face the windows, but could not move chairs to sit closer to each other. Our study tables, capable of housing four chairs, each only had one chair per table. All library materials taken off the shelves by library customers had to be placed on a black cart for later reshelving. Returned library materials were checked in three days later. There were no reserves and no print magazine collection. Study rooms open for use were limited to five, with only one person allowed per room. We librarians had to sanitize our

“I am optimistic that with the continued library programs, activities, and events at our library, we will see more attendance and overcome the consequences that the coronavirus has had on the use of our library.”

workstations after use.

After the governor signed an executive order banning mask mandates, a number of the above restrictions were lifted, most notably the campus mask mandate. However, due to the spike in COVID cases caused by the Delta variant last fall, the All Library Day for campus librarians was canceled, and the All College Day for Collin College employees was done virtually.

When I first started, I thought it would be a challenge to keep track of statistics on each type of question we received at the reference desk. There are at least six categories of data for each reference transaction that we must input into the computer.

I simply could not imagine how I could keep up with all of this data entry in a bustling reference desk environment. I even made worksheets, so I could check off the categories and input the data later, particularly if I were on the floor assisting a library user. However, COVID slowed down the traffic at the reference desk so I could easily manage to enter this data.

When the fall semester of 2021 started, there was a new vibe in the library. There were simply more people on campus. The parking lot, once half empty, was now quite full. There were more library users in our library. Library circulation statistics have increased to 70.25% when comparing the fall of 2021 to the fall of 2020. Library hours were expanded this past fall to 9:00 pm on Mondays through Thursdays, and to 5:00 pm on Saturdays. It is still not quite as busy as my local public library, but there has been an uptick in library patrons. I am optimistic that with the continued library programs, activities, and events at our library, we will see more attendance

and overcome the consequences that the coronavirus has had on the use of our library.

And I am glad that I have made the transition to being an academic librarian.

Lisa Katzenstein is a part-time reference librarian at Wylie Campus Library, Collin College

Award-Winning Assistant Principal and Librarian Partner to Make a Difference

By Michele Chan Santos

At Jaime Escalante Middle School (JEMS) in Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD, about seven miles from the US-Mexico border, a vibrant school library and its programs help students face the challenges in their lives, thanks to a strong partnership between Library Media Specialist Karina Quilantán-Garza and Assistant Principal Isaac Leal.

Their inspiring work is part of the reason Quilantán-Garza received the Texas Library Association 2022 Librarian of the Year Award and Leal was honored with the 2022 Distinguished Library Service Award for School Administrators, presented by the Texas Association of School Librarians.

JEMS begins each year with about 500 students, including about 15 to 20 students who recently emigrated from Mexico or Central and South America. Then, in October and November, the children of migrant workers enroll, bringing total enrollment to 550 students.

Seventy percent of the student body is emergent bilingual, and 95 percent are considered at-risk, from families that have a low socioeconomic status, Leal said.

The library and its programs are vital to the students “because so many of our students struggle with English. Primarily, their first language is Spanish. Literacy is a major concern,” Quilantán-Garza said.

JEMS has both Spanish and English books in the library, but not as many as other schools in the area. Their middle school was originally in the same building as the local high school; when the schools were separated into two buildings several years ago, most of the library books went to the high school.



Quilantán-Garza has been working on building the JEMS collection, mostly through grants.

“We have to look for grants, deals, we have to be very strategic,” she said. “To make sure we have not just books, but eBooks and audiobooks. All of those help the students read along with the pages, they can read the book while listening to the audiobook – it’s an interactive literacy approach.”

BUILDING COMPUTER LITERACY

Some of the middle school students, especially recent immigrants, are not able to use a computer, Leal said. They grew up working on a ranch and didn't have a chance to learn computer literacy. "If you ask them to break a horse, take care of chickens, they're experts," he said. "If you ask them to fix a truck, they're experts. But ask them to use a computer and it's like rocket science for them."

"I applaud Karina's patience," Leal said. "The only computers they have access to are in the school library, that's why it's so important."

Quilantán-Garza works with the Spanish teachers to make sure students understand her computer instruction.

"It takes a lot of collaboration," she said. "It's a network of people working together to make sure the kids have what they need."

EARLY MORNING LIBRARY ACCESS AND CLUBS

In 2017, Leal and Quilantán-Garza realized there was a group of students "who really wanted more access to the library," Leal said. The school bus drops many of the students off at 6:45am, and then they wait in the gym until class begins at 7:35am. Some students would try to read but would be bothered by classmates and not able to have the quiet time they wanted.

Leal and Quilantán-Garza worked with one of the school's paraprofessionals, who has an early shift, to open the library for the students who wanted to come there before school started.

"These are kids who take the library very seriously," Leal said. "They can read, research and use technology."

Many of these students shared with Quilantán-Garza that this early morning hour is the only time they have to read quietly. "They'll say, 'my little brothers and sisters are always bothering me at home,' and if they're the oldest, they babysit a lot."

The library is constantly in use, whether it is "Makerspace Mondays" the last Monday of every month, students visiting during lunchtime (there's often up to 50 kids in the library during lunch) or after school for the gaming club, Magic the Gathering club, manga club and more. "We get huge crowds in here."

The JEMS Ambassadors are student volunteers who help with circulation, as well as planning monthly activities; "I want them to see themselves in the program," Quilantán-Garza said. "Everybody wants to be an Ambassador, they have to fill out an application, get recommendations."

ADMINISTRATOR-LIBRARIAN PARTNERSHIP

Leal is a strong supporter of the library and its programs, and the reason for his support is simple, he said.

"I put myself in the position of the students," Leal said.

When he was in middle school and high school, "the library, for me, was a safe place. The secondary school I went to had a courtyard, we were corralled in there; times were different, there was a lot of fighting." Leal and his friends made a beeline for the library each day, it served as a haven for them. "The library is where I wanted to be. That's why I want to make sure I support Karina's mission and vision. It makes it very easy because I know what I want these kids to have."

In her nomination form for the Distinguished Library Service Award for School Administrators, Quilantán-Garza wrote of her assistant principal, "Mr. Leal is a lifelong reader and instills the love of reading by sharing his personal or professional reads with students, staff, and administrators. He will always be seen asking a student what they are reading, their favorite books, and their reading goals. He always makes an effort to ask what new reading programs or ideas the library has planned every week. Knowing that reading and writing are the key to any student's success, he supports our library in helping the library

make final decisions on book selections, book club initiatives, reading incentive programs, or by entrusting the library to help make decisions regarding relevant literature that support campus curriculum."

Their work together "boils down to trust. Our partnership didn't evolve overnight," Quilantán-Garza said. "What helped was the constant communication: this is what the library wants to do, what do you think? This is what we want to do, when is feasible to host it? This is what happens when you have a positive culture in your campus. The library is a core area."

She continued,

"Administrators need to be willing to let go of the reins a little bit and trust their librarians. We are credentialed, we have gone to school for this, and our profession is constantly evolving." And on the librarian's side, "You have to be willing to communicate or you can't find solutions to these problems. You have to be willing to compromise."

Leal knows what they're doing is working, partly because he is a JEMS parent too – his son is in sixth grade and is a library ambassador.

Quilantán-Garza and her library "was and still is a safe haven for my son, and he loves her," Leal said. "She is Tyson's favorite teacher."

Michele Chan Santos is the Texas Library Association marketing specialist.





TLA 2022 Keynote Speakers Make a Case for Truth

By Michele Chan Santos

EACH OF THE KEYNOTE SPEAKERS AT THE TLA 2022 ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN FORT WORTH hit upon a similar theme: the importance of showing our true selves to the world, and standing up for others who are facing bigotry, discrimination, and hate.

The speakers – Dr. Ibram X. Kendi, Nadine Strossen, Melissa Gilbert, and Alyssa Edwards (Justin Johnson), each addressed this topic in their own, unique ways.

Dr. Ibram X. Kendi

KENDI, THE ANDREW W. MELLON PROFESSOR IN THE HUMANITIES AT BOSTON UNIVERSITY and

author of five straight #1 *New York Times* bestsellers, including *How to Be an Antiracist*, *Antiracist Baby*, and *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You*, co-authored by Jason Reynolds, was in conversation with Roosevelt Weeks, the director of the Austin Public Library.

“You clapped for us, but I really should be clapping for you,” Kendi told a packed auditorium. “Those of us who are writing about people of color or queer people or trans kids, we are quietly applauding you for sharing these stories.”

It’s not helpful, Kendi said, for people to say “I don’t see color” when raising their children. “Children have an amazing amount of clarity,” he said. “There is such a thing as the human rainbow and the human rainbow is beautiful.”

Even young children can internalize racist ideas about “outgroups,” Kendi explained. “We think race is a complicated idea, but it’s a very simple one, that dark is ugly, and that light is



beautiful. This is not a sophisticated idea. When you are taught to think critically –the idea that both light and dark colors are beautiful is more complex. It’s so continuously important for teachers to be able to do their jobs, and to teach children to critically think.”

He talked about raising his daughter and consciously introducing her to people of many different backgrounds. “The more you understand and appreciate other cultures, the more you understand and appreciate your own.”



Alyssa Edwards

JUSTIN DWAYNE LEE JOHNSON, KNOWN BY HIS STAGE NAME ALYSSA EDWARDS, is an American entertainer, choreographer, drag performer and television personality who rose to international prominence on the fifth season of *RuPaul’s Drag Race*. Johnson currently owns and runs an award-winning dance studio, Beyond Belief Dance Company.

Alyssa arrived in a sky-high platinum wig, towering heels and a fantastic silver gown. “You’re so fabulous and so wonderful,” Alyssa told the enthusiastic crowd. “Our world is *quite interesting* right now.”

“It’s our job to make sure we stand up,” Alyssa said. “We need these books;

we need these places where kids like little Justin can go learn. (With greater tolerance) it would be less uncomfortable for people like me to grow up.”

Removing books by LGBTQ+ authors from libraries “is like me going to Wal-Mart and saying I don’t eat steak, so you should take it off the shelves so no one else can eat it.”

The presentation concluded with praise for all the librarians and teachers in the room: “Thank you guys for not only believing in the role of education, thank you for showing up for people who aren’t necessarily like you. From the bottom of my Texas heart, I say thank you. I have so much love and respect for you and for the work you do.”

Nadine Strossen

NADINE STROSSEN SERVED AS PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION FROM 1991 – 2008, and has written, taught, and advocated extensively in the areas of constitutional law and civil liberties. She was interviewed by David Baca, Director of Library Services at Texas A&M Galveston.

Strossen spoke about the pervasive efforts to ban books by and about LGBTQ+ people and people of color: “These are the operationalized parts of nation-wide campaigns. Organizers file complaints and attend school board meetings and superintendents are caving much too quickly.”

“These attacks are so dangerous to equality,” Strossen said. “The line has already been crossed.” The efforts to ban books “have an abridging or chilling impact, if it makes people afraid to assign a certain book.”

She praised librarians for their strength. “In the land of the free and the home of the brave, it should not take courage to do your job – but it does.”

Strossen said she was impressed with Texas initiatives including #FReedom Fighters and Texans for the Right to Read. “We counter censorship and bad ideas with good ideas,” she said. “It’s our right not to remain silent.”



Melissa Gilbert

ACTRESS AND AUTHOR MELISSA GILBERT DREW A STANDING-ROOM-ONLY CROWD on the last day of TLA 2022 when she joined librarian Brandi Dawson to discuss her new book, *Back to the Prairie: A Home Remade, A Life Rediscovered*, a heartfelt memoir chronicling her journey from Hollywood to a ramshackle house in the Catskills.

Known best for her role as Laura Ingalls Wilder on the long-running TV series *Little House in the Prairie*, Gilbert – a *New York Times* bestselling author whose previous books include *Prairie Tale: A Memoir and My Prairie Cookbook* – delighted the audience with her dry wit, funny anecdotes, and approachable, friendly demeanor.

She discussed her farming adventures at the 14-acre farm she and her husband, actor Timothy Busfield, have in the mountains which they began renovating during the pandemic.

“We wanted to raise chickens, but chicks were really hard to find,” she said. “They were the toilet paper of the spring.”

More seriously, she added, “I rediscovered a way to live my life. I’m up there in dirt and overalls, we have a puppy, we’re surrounded by animals.”

Writing about the outdoors, farming and nature, Gilbert said “I was inspired by the writing of Laura Ingalls Wilder. She definitely was a huge inspiration.”

The book gave her a way to share her experiences with fans, after the stresses of the pandemic. “The one thing that always lifts me up is knowing that I am not the only one going through this. I find such strength in that knowledge.”

Gilbert was frank about escaping the pressures of Hollywood with her new life at their farm. “I just wanted to age without feeling bad about it, and it’s so hard to do that in Los Angeles,” Gilbert said.

In closing, Gilbert stood up to thank all the librarians in the audience. “I am so grateful for what you do and I know how hard it can be,” she said. “We appreciate you, I appreciate you, and I thank you for everything you’ve done for my kids, and now for their kids, and eventually for their kids too. God bless all of you.”





Impressions and Confessions from my First TLA Conference

By Shannon Whitely

HAVE YOU EVER EXPERIENCED THE FULL RANGE OF HUMAN EMOTION IN ONE DAY? Well, I have quite recently. On April 25, 2022, my friend and fellow librarian, Deborah Zieman, and I arrived at the Fort Worth Convention Center ready to tackle my first ever Texas Library Association (TLA) Conference. You see, I've been a Texas high school librarian for about five minutes- actually two years which feels like five minutes- and until this conference, my entire librarianship had been conducted in the COVID-19 bubble. I'd met fellow librarians through online meetings or by emailing and instant messaging with them, but not in person. I had not been face-to-face in a room, much less a convention center, with others who shared my new profession. As soon as I walked into the lobby, saw the line of librarians waiting to register, the groups of people laughing together and hugging, and heard all of the wisdom coming from these beautifully experienced librarians, all kinds of emotions began rolling through me.

When I reflect on that day, I realize that my feelings ranged from extreme excitement to utter boredom (did I mention there was an incredibly long line to register?), from energetic to tired and drained, from validated to intimidated, curious to outraged, hopeful to hopeless, optimistic to discouraged.

Until April 25th, I was fairly confident in my new job as school librarian, and I felt like my first two years had been transformative for me as a professional and for my school. I thought TLA 2022 was going to be a fun way to connect with other people, but I wasn't sure I would have much more to learn- I mean, I had my Master's degree, and I had two years of trial and error on the job training. I was a seasoned pro- right? Wrong.

Every session I attended on the first afternoon was eye opening, and I started to feel, in Wayne's World terms, "not worthy" of my new title. Monday taught me I still had everything to learn, and my two years of librarian experience were a mere drop in the bucket.

That night back at the hotel, I started to journal about my day, and I admit that my outlook was anything but positive at that moment. I wrote about "being a rookie in a building filled with



veterans” and “being in over my head;” I was a tiny fish in an enormous lake, and I felt like I was drowning.

However, before I went to sleep, I texted with my campus principal and one of my closest friends who taught English alongside me for years, and to their credit, they reminded me that I am good at my job. I am passionate about my students and my school, and I’ve spent years encouraging students to read and be curious and learn new things, and those two ladies helped me regain some of the confidence I felt prior to walking in the conference doors.

By the time Tuesday dawned, I had a rested body and refreshed soul. In the lobby of the hotel, I met up with Deb and my new friend Amanda Hunt, and the three of us walked to the convention center together. Walking the halls of the convention center on day two felt different. I felt different. Even though I arrived on Monday knowing hardly anyone, Deb knew seemingly everyone. She had immediately introduced me to Amanda (who knew everyone Deb didn’t know), and all day on Monday the two of them graciously let me follow them around; including me and introducing me to what felt like a million people.

On day two, multiple people greeted me by name; I realized they remembered me from the day before, and one by one librarians happily welcomed me into the family. I now knew multiple Amandas, three Jessicas, and Stephanie and Karina and Christine. I also realized I knew more people than I first thought because my friends Kristi and Brandi and Angie arrived Tuesday morning as welcome familiar faces. Suddenly, I felt like somebody again, and it was time for me to roll up my sleeves and really get to work learning how to be a more effective, modern, and engaging librarian.

Attending a professional conference means seizing opportunities to learn from the best in your field, and all day, every day, there were incredible sessions to choose from. When I planned out my schedule, I crossed my fingers and hoped I was choosing the right sessions; I’m happy to say I chose well. On Tuesday I learned how to bring that “Lovin’ Feeling” into the library by creating library programs and initiatives that show my students they are seen as people. The library is a place for all students, so this session reminded us of the importance of making sure all students feel valued and embraced.

From there, I moved into a session encouraging me to “Lean into Library Leadership,” and I was reminded that being a leader means being a communicator. I was encouraged to be bold in reaching out to my community and my stakeholders to transparently tell my library story. In this time of political unrest, it is important that I am the one driving the narrative about the programming my library offers and the way I am cultivating my library collection to showcase and value

the students I serve. One of my library mentors has always encouraged me to be “brave before perfect,” and this session reminded me that if I can show my community that I am passionate about the kids I serve and that my intentions are to always support each of them the best I can, I will earn the grace and space amongst my stakeholders.

Wednesday morning, day three, started off with a full house as the TLA Tayshas Reading List Committee (did I mention I was serving on Tayshas for the next three years?) hosted a panel session highlighting some of the authors who had books on the 2022 list. It was a fantastic, fun, standing room only session, and that hour put a smile on my face for most of the day. Next, I learned how to “SIFT Through the CRAP” and how to “Fight Challenges and Protect the Right to Read.” Social media and politics today are spreading doubt in society about librarians’ motives and intentions, so it was really empowering to be in sessions where we were reminded that we are not librarians by accident. We are librarians because we love reading, and we love stories, and most of all we love kids; we are called to challenge, grow, and encourage students through reading, and we need not apologize for that.

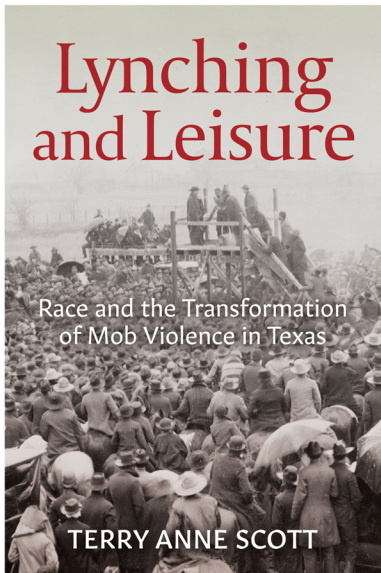
On Thursday, the closing day of conference, I attended a panel presentation that included library system directors from a public, university, and school district and a State’s Attorney. This session was brilliant, and I am so thankful that these leaders took the time to talk to us openly and honestly. They made practical suggestions for ways we can successfully navigate the oceans of social media and public opinion to positively promote our library programs, but also cautioned us to be careful and reminded us that librarians across the country are being relentlessly scrutinized. Tell the truth about the amazing things you are doing but be cautious about publicly challenging another person’s claim or accusation. The beauty of words is that there are so many to choose from, but the danger of words is how easily they can be manipulated. This was an important session, but also a very sobering note to end this conference experience.

So... after all of this, what were my takeaway impressions from my first TLA conference? I emerged from hopelessness to find hope; I left validated and encouraged; I felt a new sense of energy and excitement for new possibilities in my library; and most of all, I left with a sense of community. I have friends now that also happen to be librarians. I have people that I can call on when I need encouragement and people I can share with when I see amazing things happening with my students. I am a Texas librarian, and I am very proud to be a part of this family.

Shannon Whitely is a library media specialist in Lewisville ISD.



Lynching and Leisure



Race and the Transformation of Mob Violence in Texas

TERRY ANNE SCOTT

Lynching and Leisure

Race and the Transformation of Mob Violence in Texas

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Top-Quality Opportunity for Growth with SCALEUP

By Maria Freed

Naturally, libraries are part of the public workforce system, and libraries can strengthen and further the progress and the prosperity of their communities by supporting local business owners and encouraging the growth of local and small business. Simply put, the success of local businesses creates a positive ripple effect in that it boosts local economies and leads to more local job opportunities, among many other benefits.

One easy way libraries can help local business owners today is by raising awareness and informing their communities about [SCALEUP](#), which is a high-value business development program created by Texas State University (TSU). SCALEUP is dedicated to assisting and advancing the success of entrepreneurs and small businesses, particularly minority-owned businesses. [Check out SCALEUP's webpage](#) for more information about the importance and the far-reaching results of backing the prosperity of these businesses, and see a presentation from two members of the SCALEUP team (Daniel Roy and Josh Daspit, Ph.D.):

- Governor's Small Business Webinar Series: [Scaling Your Business – YouTube](#)
- Presentation slides and transcripts ([Office of the Governor Website](#))

As with libraries, local and small business owners care about and invest in their communities, and in partnership with TSU's SCALEUP program, you, as is customary, can make a powerful impact in your community by telling people, including colleagues, partners, and neighbors, about this tremendous opportunity for business owners through as many channels as possible. Moreover, the advantage of having experts and research-based solutions to make one's business thrive is not a chance to be missed.

Luckily for us, TSU has graciously created a [webpage for libraries](#) with the following materials:

- [Links to details about the SCALEUP program](#)
- [Ready-made graphics](#)
- [Ready-to-go text for easy copy and paste](#)

Please [download and post the text and the graphics](#) on your websites, newsletters, social media, email blasts, and any other dissemination tools you have. Also, if you would like to get in contact with the [SCALEUP Team](#), they can be reached at scaleup@txstate.edu.

Help spread the word, and as always, stay in touch, and may your communities always be prosperous!

Maria Freed is the workforce development consultant at the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

This article was first published as post in the TSLAC Library Developments blog on May 3, 2022. Reprinted with permission.

CONGRATULATIONS! TLA 2023 MEMBERSHIP GRAND PRIZE WINNER

Jena Wayt from Spring Hill ISD was the winner of the custom-made GeoMetrix Arc Shelving donated by Brodart.



I-r, Jena Wayt, Spring Hill ISD and Michael Chefalo, Brodart

TLA 2023 CALL FOR PROPOSALS IS OPEN: DEADLINE JUNE 20

The Conference Planning Committee (CPC) is seeking proposals for the TLA Annual Conference being held in Austin, Texas on April 19-22! The 2023 conference theme is Libraries Unite and the conference goal is to unite all library workers in the common purpose of providing knowledge, information, and services that will enhance individual growth and benefit the community the library serves.

Anyone interested in sharing their experiences, ideas, or the latest technologies that can benefit the greater Texas library community is encouraged to submit a presentation proposal by June 20. [Learn more and submit your proposal.](#)

LIBRARIES UNITE
TLA 2023

★ AUSTIN ★

APRIL 19 – 22

TLA Annual Assembly

JULY 6 – 8
AUSTIN, TEXAS

This year, the Annual Assembly is in-person, and it will follow a slightly modified format from prior years, offering in-depth training for officers over one and a half days. Participants include members of TLA 2023 Conference Planning Committee, TLA Council, and TLA Executive Board, and Unit Officers and Standing Committee Chairs. All unit and committee business meetings will be held virtually before June 30. [Register and book your hotel now!](#)

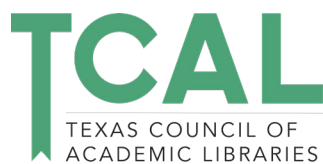


Texas Council of Academic Libraries Annual Conference

SEPTEMBER 19 – 20
GALVESTON, TEXAS

The Texas Council of Academic Libraries (TCAL) exists to advance the interests of independent and state-supported college and university libraries in Texas, and to promote cooperation, communication, and resource sharing among its members.

TCAL is hosting its Annual Conference September 19 -20 at the Tremont Hotel in Galveston. Join head librarians from universities and colleges from around the state at this interactive and informative event. Visit www.txla.org/TCAL for more information, the link to register and book your hotel.



TLA 2022 – 2025 Strategic Plan

The TLA Council approved the association's 2022-2025 Strategic Plan, including new mission and vision statements, at its meeting in April.

Mission: The Texas Library Association's mission is to unite and amplify voices of the library community through advocacy, education, and intentional equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Vision: The Texas library Association is an integral partner, innovative leader, and passionate advocate for Texas libraries and librarians.

The plan also clearly communicates the organization's defining value of fostering intentional equity, diversity and inclusion, as well as establishes three strategic priorities to guide the work of the association over the next three years.



RECOVER, REBALANCE,
RECONNECT

TLA  2022

★ FORT WORTH ★

APRIL 25 – 28



TLA 2022 Annual Conference Wrap-up

After two long and challenging pandemic years, the Texas Library Association community was able to reunite for a wonderful, in-person conference in Fort Worth from April 25-28, 2022. Everyone was inspired by the conference theme to recover, rebalance and reconnect.

More than 4,900 attendees filled the Fort Worth Convention Center for education sessions, keynote addresses, author events and networking opportunities. You could feel the buzz of excitement, and everywhere you looked, librarians were connecting with friends and colleagues, smiling, posing for selfies at the #TLATogetherAgain wall and sharing about what they were learning at conference

“Walking through the hallways of the Fort Worth Convention Center at our recent conference, I was struck by the shouts of happiness that prefaced so many hugs and the pure joy expressed in the faces of members at long last reunited with long-term TLA friends, committee members with whom they had only meet on a screen and new TLA friends made online,” wrote Lucy Podmore, the new TASL chair, of

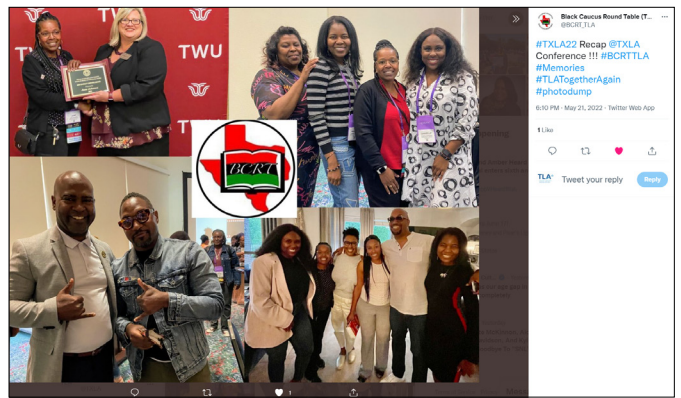
attending TLA 2022. “It was beautiful to witness and a bit emotional. Even though our jobs on campus may be solitary, we are indeed social creatures and some of our best work happens when we gather together.”

TLA 2022 featured more than 350 speakers addressing a wide variety of topics at over 200 education sessions across four days. More than 200 authors and illustrators signed books in the Authors Area. The bustling Exhibit Hall featured 374 companies at 228 booths, including 30 first-time exhibitors.

Thanks to the hard work of the TLA executive board, conference program committee, local arrangements committee, TLA staff and many, many volunteers, the conference was a tremendous success!



#TLATogetherAgain



My TLA 2022 Conference Experience

Nearly 5,000 people attended TLA 2022. With so many different sessions and events to choose from, every attendee had a unique experience. We asked some of our members to share highlights of their time at conference.

LATASHA PATTERSON

Assistant Manager, Houston Public Library, Smith Neighborhood Library

Why did you decide to attend TLA 2022? As the New Members Round Table Newsletter Coordinator, I knew attending TLA 2022 would provide an opportunity to meet other NMRT members and officers. During our year of service, there were many meetings, online socials, and other preparations to make NMRT conference sessions successful. The annual conference was the culmination and celebration of our hard work. I also wanted to learn more about librarianship and network with other library professionals.

What session did you find the most useful for your job and why? The “Surprise! You’re in Charge” session was impactful. The panelists shared their experiences, which mirrored some of my own. They also offered practical advice for anyone who might unexpectedly find themselves in a leadership role. My biggest takeaway from the session was to give myself grace during such situations and to learn from my mistakes. It’s okay not to know everything. And ask questions; getting answers will make the transition less stressful.

What was the most enjoyable event or session you attended, and why? The Black Caucus Round Table Reception at Fort Worth’s Central Library was the most enjoyable and engaging event for me. BCRT officers extended a warm welcome to everyone. I appreciated the lively, peaceful environment. It was inspiring to hear other library professionals’ experiences, challenges, and solutions to those challenges.

Anything else you’d like to add? I’m looking forward to TLA 2023!



ELIZABETH (LIZ) NEBEKER

Instruction Librarian, Lone Star College CyFair

Why did you decide to attend TLA 2022?

Because the TLA annual conference is always a dynamic, thought-provoking, and invigorating event. The education sessions are always informative, and the networking is priceless. While I learned a lot from the two previous years’ virtual conferences, I was excited to be able to attend TLA 2022 in person. There is no better feeling than attending live sessions, browsing the exhibit hall, and networking with colleagues face-to-face.

What session did you find the most useful for your job and why?

The session that I found most useful to my job was the Great Ideas Lightning Talks. My library is a joint use library, and this session had such a variety of ideas, that I walked away with great program ideas for both the academic and public sides of my library.



My TLA 2022 Conference Experience

What was the most enjoyable event or session you attended and why?

I think the most enjoyable event was the TLA After Hours Keynote Speaker Alyssa Edwards. She was personable and funny. She represented the inclusion and importance of representation that we should all strive for as library professionals.

Anything else you'd like to add?

I was hesitant about being back in-person but was so glad I went. Safety protocols were in place, and it was very comforting. I can't wait until TLA 2023!



ROBERTO ZAPATA

*Assistant Director of Central and Neighborhood Libraries,
Houston Public Library*

Why did you decide to attend TLA 2022?

I was very excited to hear that TLA was resuming in-person conferences. The theme, Recover, Rebalance, Reconnect, resonated with me because that is exactly what we are all trying to do in our professional and personal lives. The conference has always been the best way to hear about exciting new ideas and programs that librarians are implementing across the state. This year more than ever, it reconnected us in ways we didn't know possible. I was able to see colleagues that I've worked with in San Antonio and McAllen and talk about things that we're doing and trying. In this sense, the conference provides a great collaborative space for all of us to continue to grow as we move past the pandemic.

What session did you find the most useful for your job and why?

The most useful session I attended was "First Amendment Rights in Public Libraries." The attorney that presented gave detailed examples of First Amendment rights issues that public libraries deal with and the strategies used to resolve them. One of the issues that she covered was one that we had recently dealt with at the library, so it was very interesting and helpful to hear her perspective on the matter.

What was the most enjoyable event or session you attended and why?

The most enjoyable event I attended was the Public Libraries Division Membership Party. It was great to see colleagues and catch up with them outside of the conference. I was also able to make new connections with librarians from across the state!

Anything else you'd like to add?

The TLA Conference was a great way for me to not only reconnect with colleagues from across the state, but to also reconnect with our purpose as librarians. I attended many great sessions throughout the conference that sparked new ideas.

TLA 2022 Awards



Lifetime Achievement Award:

Mary Jo Humphreys

Mary Jo enjoyed a long and distinguished career as first a teacher, then for many years an elementary school librarian, and eventually retired after serving as Director of Instructional Technology at Round Rock Independent School District. She has been an exemplary leader at TLA for decades, serving as the Texas Bluebonnet Award Coordinator, Texas Bluebonnet Award Luncheon Coordinator, Reading List Committee co-chair, TLA Annual Conference Program Committee co-chair, and chair of the Texas Association of School Librarians, a TLA division.

She is an outstanding library professional who exemplifies initiative, innovation, enthusiasm, continuous improvement, and creativity.



Librarian of the Year Award:

Karina Quilantán-Garza

During the early months of the pandemic, Karina, the library media specialist at Jaime Escalante Middle School in Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD, launched into action to

help her middle school students. As a longtime digital expert whose buoyant creativity is matched by her strong technical skills, Karina developed educational apps, websites, gaming, ambassadorships, badging, and other tools to take her library 100 percent digital very quickly. Known as @cuethelibrarian on social media, Karina set up a virtual library hub for her students and was available to assist them in a multitude of ways: offering online help, ebooks/audiobooks, gaming clubs, even loteria events.

When the winter storm of 2021 hit, her social media sites became sources of information and help for her school community, since Karina's voice and online presence was one that was familiar and trusted by so many students and families.



Distinguished Service Award:

Marty Rossi

Marty is the project manager, digital resources, and library services at ESC Region 20, and for many years, she has provided excellent library services and supported and encouraged other librarians as a devoted mentor to many.

She has also been extremely active in leadership positions at TLA, serving on the executive board, as chair of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee, and on the Legislative Committee. Additionally, she is the co-founder of Teacher Day @ TLA, and chaired the School Administrator Conference. Marty's dedication to the library profession, her strong leadership and her positive demeanor are celebrated by the many members who have worked with her.

TLA 2022 Awards



Libraries Change Communities Award: Harris County Public Library

Harris County Public Library's innovative Growing Readers project is a county-wide initiative designed to prepare children from birth to age 5 for success in school. The comprehensive program gives parents and caregivers the tools, know-how, and resources to make everyday activities into fun, enriching learning experiences for young children.

Growing Readers was designed by HCPL staff experts in early literacy and childhood development with the goal of increasing school-readiness for children across the county, with the specific hope of serving families with limited access to educational resources. By helping parents with the skills and resources needed to get their child kindergarten-ready with the Growing Readers program, HCPL is helping build the children's capacity for ongoing literacy success.



Outstanding Services to Libraries: #FReadom Fighters

The #FReadom Fighters movement was started by TLA

members Carolyn Foote, Becky Calzada and Nancy Jo Lambert (along with a fourth librarian who has chosen to remain anonymous). They are committed to highlighting the positive work of librarians, to speak up in support of authors and students, and to provide professional resources for librarians, teachers or authors facing book challenges.

The #FReadom Fighters launched a strong grassroots social media campaign, which has raised awareness and generated support for librarians and libraries at a time when censorship is on the rise and intellectual freedom in libraries is under attack.

They have launched a [website](#), as well as the Twitter account [@FReadomFighters](#); and there's now #FReadom Fridays to keep the momentum of this movement going.



Sam G. Whitten Intellectual Freedom Award:

Dorcas Hand

A retired school librarian with over 30 years of experience, Dorcas is now a full-time library advocate who is passionate about the importance of libraries, especially in our schools, and the essential role that they play in protecting intellectual freedom.

As TLA began to plan how best to respond to the flood of challenges to books in school libraries, we focused on how best to support librarians. The TLA Intellectual Freedom Helpline moved from concept to fully functioning program in less than two months thanks to her energy and leadership. Dorcas developed the onboarding training process for volunteers, manages the case assignment process, and continues to bring new resources and ideas forward to help support Texas librarians.

TLA 2022 Awards



Benefactor Award:

Wanda Conlin & Don Boren

Wanda Conlin and Don Boren were recognized for their support of the new Reby Cary Youth Library, which part of the Fort Worth Public Library system.

In addition to their own financial support, Conlin and Boren spearheaded efforts to raise funds in support of the new library. The \$5.49 million Reby Cary Youth Library officially opened on Aug. 14, 2021 and is the first Fort Worth Public Library location designed specifically for children, teens and their caregivers.



Benefactor Award:

The Glaser Family Foundation

For 18 years, the Robert J. & Helen H. Glaser Family Foundation has donated annually to the Colleyville Public Library Foundation to support the library's summer reading programs. In 2003, the Foundation provided a \$5,000 grant for purchase of children's books for the Library Opening Day Collection, and since 2004 has annually provided a grant of \$10,000, totaling \$185,000 overall.

The foundation's annual grant is vital to the success of the library's summer reading program, which enrolls more than 1,000 children, teens, and adults every year. It allows the library to purchase books, host a variety of educational entertainment programs throughout the summer, give children prizes for reading 10 books or for five hours of logged time, and supports the Summer Reading Program Grand Finale, a popular community event.



Wayne Williams Project of the Year Award:

Bee Cave Public Library

Bee Cave Public Library's innovative Candyland program was a community-wide, life-size version of the Candyland game that children and families could play at four locations throughout the city of Bee Cave from January 23 to February 14, 2021, during the height of the pandemic.

The four Candyland locations were located at the library, the sculpture park, the city's Central Park and on Bayton Drive. Each location included different activities as well as a riddle for participants.

The Candyland kickoff event, where staff members dressed up as the Candyland characters (Grandma Nutt, Lord Licorice, Queen Frostine, and Mr. Mint) drew 500+ attendees. The program brought the community together during a difficult time and reminded them of the joy that the library brings into people's lives.

TLA 2022 Awards

OTHER ASSOCIATION AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Christina B. Woll Memorial Fund Grant

Howard County Library

Demco Upstart Innovative Programming Awards

Plano Public Library
Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Collegiate High School

Escue Paraprofessionals Annual Conference Stipend

Kaitlyn Waller

Jeanette and Jim Larson Mystery Grant

Tyler Public Library

Junior Library Guild Diversity & Inclusion Conference Stipend

Sarah Camacho
Catyan Chang

Ray C. Janeway Scholarship

Jarelle Jones

Siddie Joe Johnson Award

Melanie Scales, Waller ISD

Texas Youth Creators Award Bob Bennet Best in Show Winner

Pointless, Video entry, grade 9 - 12, by Jesus Martinez, Salomon Garriaga, Sebastian Longoria, Daniel DuCharme, Emiliano Benavides, Sharyland High School, Sharyland ISD

TLA Summer School Scholarship

Jarelle Jones

VanDusen-Kaiser– LaBoon Scholarship

Zhaira Navarro

Vivian Greenfield Education Award

Wendy Pray

Walter H. Escue Memorial Scholarship

Lani Ford

DIVISIONS

Public Libraries Division Biblionix Stipend

Loretta Zhang

TASL MVP Award

Jessica Fitzpatrick, Katy ISD

TASL Scholarship

Jeannie Kroynovich

TASL Distinguished Library Service Award - School Administrator

Issac Leal, Assistant Principal, Jaime Escalante Middle School, Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD

TASL/Texas PTA Shirley Igo Award

Brenda Coffman, librarian; Marissa Galaviz, PTA president, Mary Martin Elementary School, Weatherford ISD

ROUND TABLES

Library Instruction Round Table Project of the Year

Jessica Fitzpatrick, Katy ISD

New Member Round Table Professional Development Grant

Sarah Camacho
Caytan Chang
Melissa Deuber
Jennifer Jacobs
Erin Jewell

TALL Texans Round Table Jack Alton Strawn Standing TALL Award

Audrey Wilson Youngblood, Keller ISD

Small Community Libraries Round Table Biblionix Stipend

Caytan Chang

Small Community Libraries Round Table Librarian of the Year

Dianne Connery, Pottsville Area Library

Small Community Libraries Round Table Library Advocate Award

Chico Chamber of Commerce

Young Adult Round Table Reading Incentive Award

Morgan Green-Griffin, Cozby Library & Community Commons

AFFILIATED AWARDS

J. Frank Dobie Awards

Alpine Public Library
Coleman Public Library
Jennie Trent Dew Library (Goldthwaite)
Round Top Family Library
Schulenberg Public Library

2022 Branding Iron Awards

Across Texas, librarians plan and execute inventive and inspired marketing plans to promote their services, programs, and events. The Texas Library Association's Branding Iron Awards honor their creative and memorable work with awards presented in several categories, and one overall Best of Show winner.



BEST IN SHOW

McAllen Public Library, Wild West Casino Night

A bustling night filled with laughter, hors d'oeuvres, drinks, and some old-fashioned gambling (for chips only) packed in patrons of the McAllen Public Library, who gathered to raise money for the 2021 South Texas Book Festival. Organizers had hoped to raise \$10,000 and instead pulled in more than \$23,000! "Not only did the fundraiser raise money for the South Texas Book Festival, but it also built awareness about what our organization does, deepening relationships with our donors and educating the attendees about our festival's impact in the community," shared Priscilla Suarez, marketing and social media specialist for McAllen PL.



CATEGORY WINNERS

Reading Programs — School Library

Mayde High School, Librarian in the Huddle

This educational program is a collaboration between the Mayde High School athletic department and the school library. The librarian and athletic director select the books; meetings are held bi-weekly with students to discuss the books, which often have a sports theme. Students also participate in community service projects. It's been so successful that library circulation has risen 30 percent since the book club started, due to many student-athletes who are reading more for pleasure. The number of library visitors has also risen, by an impressive 28 percent.



2022 Branding Iron Awards



Reading Programs — Public Library

Colleyville Public Library, Glow Crazy with Reading

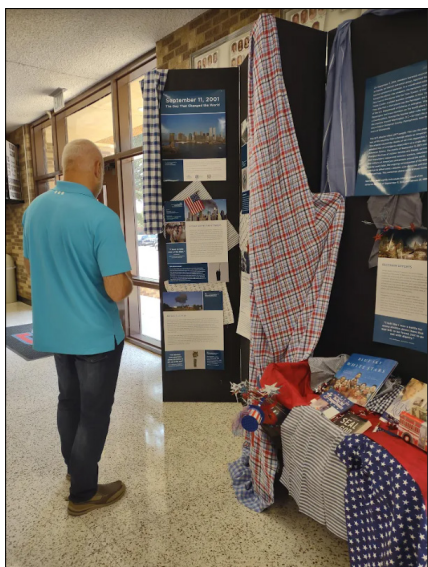
Colleyville’s “Glow Crazy with Reading” summer program culminated in a spectacular event that included neon hoop competitions hosted by a DJ, a hot air balloon, and the opportunity to create an artistic lantern in the Colleyville City Plaza. The lanterns represented each person who participated in the program and were on display through the end of the event. Child-friendly entertainment included game tents with carnival games, face painters, a balloon artist and a roving juggler. Crafts, activities, and a prize store were hosted by the library’s youth services staff. The highlight of the event was a laser show choreographed to music, presented by a local company, Laser Spectacles, which concluded with an interactive laser display. The event was free to the public. Glow Crazy with Reading was successful both as a summer reading program and in bringing the community together for the grand finale.



Special Events/Exhibits — School Library

Carroll Elementary School, Book Breakfasts

Carroll Elementary, in Houston’s Sheldon ISD, hosts regular “Book Breakfasts” in conjunction with the local public library. The purpose is to invite families into the school, have them learn about the resources from the school and public libraries, understand the importance of childhood literacy, and sign up for library cards at the event. At the breakfast, all students receive a free book of their choosing to take home to begin building their home collection.



Special Events/Exhibits — Public Library

City of Sundown Library, History & Heroes Veterans Collection

“With approximately 1,100 veterans in the county, the goal of this project was to recognize how Sundown has contributed to the freedoms of our nation through our service members. With each book purchased, we designed a bookplate with the veteran’s name, year of graduation if known, and special military title,” said A’ndrea McAdams, librarian at the City of Sundown Library. “There are veterans who are recognized from conflicts dating back to World War II, as well as a multiple Bronze Star and Purple Heart recipients up to a current U.S. Naval Academy student. Each time a patron opens one of these titles, they can know someone local served for their freedoms.” The library also added new books to its collection of September 11 titles in honor of the 20th anniversary of 9/11. In addition, library staff created a mobile museum to commemorate the anniversary.

2022 Branding Iron Awards



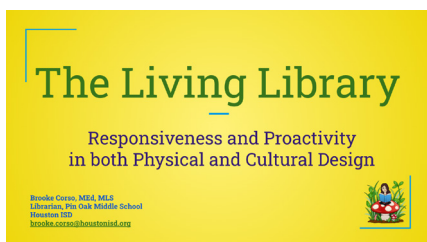
Special Events/Exhibits — Academic Library South Texas College, Bethel Garden Mural Project

The Bethel Garden Mural Project sought to involve students and community members in the preservation of a historic landmark in honor of local African American heritage through the design and painting of a series of art murals. This project combined both virtual and real-world elements resulting in the opportunity for students to gain practical skills along with participating in important dialogue about history, art, and community preservation. Four murals were painted representing the themes of hope, faith, love, and unity at the Historic Bethel Garden. South Texas College art students assisted community members in painting the murals on October 6 and 7.



External Communications — Public Library Midland County Public Library, One Card, One Community Campaign

In the “One Card, One Community” campaign, Midland County Public Library partnered with businesses and other organizations in their city to offer library patrons discounts on a service or product during library card sign-up month in 2021, both to encourage new patrons to sign up for library cards, and to give an additional value to existing library patrons. In total, MCPL partnered with 12 organizations and businesses, including Marble Slab Creamery, Tall City Brewing Co., Cpl. Ray’s Coffee, Wagner Noel Performing Arts Center, and more. Some companies offered discounts and others donated prizes for a drawing. The program raised awareness of the library and the benefits of having a library card.

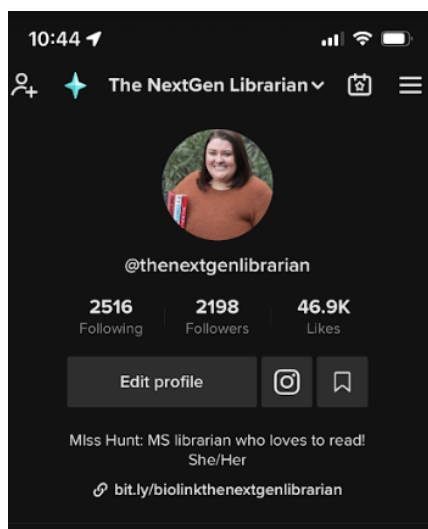


External Communications — School Library Pin Oak Middle School, Library Lookouts

The Library Lookouts project was a virtual makeover of how the school library was marketed to the students at Pin Oak Middle School. Brooke Corso, the librarian, hoped to give students a sense of ownership in the library space, and increase engagement. She created more than 26 “Library Lookout” videos; each showcasing a different section of the library. These virtual tours make it possible for teachers and students to view a video and then place a book on hold for curbside checkout, which was especially helpful during the pandemic.

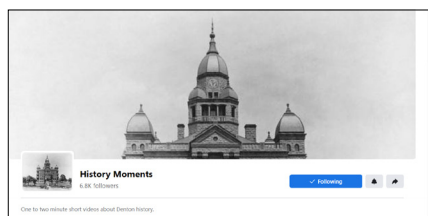
Corso also reworked how her library was organized and made a Thinglink of the new and improved library layout. (Thinglink is a tech tool that lets you tag different parts of an image.) In the [library Thinglink](#) each section is labeled so students can familiarize themselves with where different types of books are located before visiting in person.

2022 Branding Iron Awards



Digital Only Communications — School Library Oak Run Middle School, TikTok Program

At Oak Run Middle School, librarian Amanda Hunt has a successful, long-running TikTok social media account (@thenextgenlibrarian) for her library where she's engaged more than 2,000 followers, including students, teachers, librarians, and authors. Always creative and fun, her TikTok includes dances, skits, book recommendations and more. "If it's a popular dance, a trending sound—I decided to go all in and make videos pertinent to the library and also create a connection between my students and myself," Hunt said. "So many of my students have smart phones and internet access so they were able to follow me to get book recommendations, see my fun side, and learn about library content."



Digital Only Communications — Public Library Denton Public Library, History Moment

The History Moment program was started in November 2020 by the Special Collections Department at Denton Public Library to connect to community members during the pandemic. The goal was to connect with patrons and Denton residents through social media with short, easily digestible video segments focusing on an aspect of local history. So far, 23 video subjects have been researched, filmed, edited, and uploaded to Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Topics include the local Coca-Cola bottling plant, Steve's BBQ, and the Santa Fe Railroad train station. Response has been very positive with each video receiving a few hundred to over five thousand views, multiple "shares" across those platforms, and many positive comments both online and in person.



Digital Only Communications — Academic Library University of North Texas, Interactive Wayfinding Maps

At the University of North Texas, an innovative idea allows online users to explore the UNT Willis Library. The Willis Library Internal Wayfinding Maps were created by Kristina Armitage, a student graphic designer. Kristina shared that her inspiration for the project came from "Giving some power and imagination back to the new and casual library user... No longer will visitors need to stand in line at the Service Desk for answers to simple questions like, "Where are the printers?" and "what floor are the Music collections available on?" Joshua Sylve, Director of Marketing at UNT Libraries, said "Paired with the immersive experience of our virtual library tours and the detail of our exterior campus map, the Internal Wayfinding Maps allow users to explore the UNT Willis Library from anywhere in the world."

2022 Branding Iron Awards



Fundraising/Strategic Plan/Annual Report — Public Library

Plano Public Library, Annual Report 2020-2021

Plano Public Library prepared and published its annual report for the 2020-2021 year to provide their community and stakeholders with a succinct overview of their accomplishments. The 2020-2021 annual report is the first version featuring notable achievements, innovative programs, new services, and examples of community engagement. Selected collection and service statistics were also shared. To improve access, a printable digital version of the annual report was created and published on the library's website. In addition, an accompanying video summary of the annual report was created for those who prefer or require access to an audio/visual presentation.



A grassroots coalition of concerned Texans organized by the Texas Library Association to oppose the current movement to ban books from Texas libraries.

Join Us!

#RightToReadTX

RightToReadTexas.com



SAVE THE DATE

LIBRARIES UNITE

TLA★2023

★ AUSTIN ★

APRIL 19 – 22