



## The Social Justice Issue

### *Inside this Issue:*

- What is it Like to Be a Muslim Librarian in Seattle?.....p. 6
- Naming It: Social Justice in the Institution.....p. 8
- Libraries on Trend: Fake News, Information Literacy, and Demonstrating Relevance...p. 15



**Alki**  
The Washington Library  
Association Journal

PO Box 33808  
Seattle, WA 98133  
(206) 486-4367

EMAIL: [info@wla.org](mailto:info@wla.org)  
WEB: [www.wla.org](http://www.wla.org)

**ALKI Editorial Committee**

Frank Brasile, Alki Editor  
Sheri Boggs, Committee Chair  
Chanteal Craft  
Karen R. Diller  
Kris Becker  
Dusty Waltner  
Mindy van Wingen  
Suzanne Carlson-Prandini  
Kelsey Smith

**WLA Executive Director**  
Kate Laughlin

**WLA Assistant Director**  
Emily Jones

“Alki,” a Native American word meaning “by and by,” was suggested by Nancy Pryor, Special Collections at Washington State Library, as the title for the Washington Library Association’s journal. “Alki” is also the state motto, signifying a focus on the future.

Alki (ISSN: 8756-4173) is published online three times per year in March, July, and November.

Alki’s purpose is to communicate philosophical and substantive analyses of current and enduring issues for and about Washington libraries, personnel, and advocates, and to facilitate the exchange of research, opinion, and information.

Direct your submission queries to:  
Frank Brasile  
EMAIL: [alkieditor@wla.org](mailto:alkieditor@wla.org)

Cover attribution: Roberuto, iStock  
Design: Sonya Kopetz, KB design



<b>Up Front</b>	
Taking Care of Each Other and Ourselves.....	3
<i>By Brianna Hoffman</i>	
<b>From the Editor</b>	
So Long, Farewell .....	4
<i>By Frank Brasile</i>	
<b>Legislative Update</b>	
The Latest From Both Washingtons.....	5
<i>By John Sheller</i>	
<b>Feature: The Social Justice Issue</b>	
What is it Like to Be a Muslim Librarian in Seattle? .....	6
<i>By Tina Mat and Ayan Adem</i>	
Naming It: Social Justice in the Institution .....	8
<i>By Reed Garber-Pearson</i>	
Social Justice & Equity at Seattle Central College: Non-Neutrality through Visual Cues ...	10
<i>By Johanna Jacobsen Kiciman, Kelle Rose, Samantha Sermeño, and M. Wynn Tranfield</i>	
Empowering the People: A Conference on the Importance of News Literacy .....	12
<i>By Kian Flynn</i>	
No Time for News: Evaluating Information on Smartphones .....	14
<i>By Lauren Bryant</i>	
Libraries on Trend: Fake News, Information Literacy, and Demonstrating Relevance .....	15
<i>By Marisa Petrich</i>	
Being There: The Physicality of a Space in a Community College Library .....	17
<i>By Mia Klaus</i>	
Things are (not) Gonna Get Easier: Teaching Online Information Evaluation with Tupac.....	20
<i>By Jenifer Rene Becker</i>	
Serving Unhoused Patrons: Library Services in a State of Emergency .....	21
<i>By Hayden Bass and Hallie Cranos</i>	
Washington Talking Book and Braille Library: Connecting with Underserved Communities through Outreach and Programming.....	22
<i>By Danielle Miller and Marian Mays</i>	
Prison Librarianship: Creating Safer Communities .....	24
<i>By Anna Nash and Adrienne Breznau</i>	
Higher Education in the Washington State Prison System.....	26
<i>By Samantha Hines</i>	
On Reading Diversely .....	30
<i>By Andrea Gough</i>	
<b>Articles</b>	
Library Snapshot Day.....	31
<i>By Nono Burling and Craig Seasholes</i>	
At Your Service: Clarifying Service Animal Rules .....	33
<i>By Joan McBride and Toby Olson</i>	
<b>Milestones</b>	
New Hires, Transitions, Expansions, Retirements and Remembrances .....	34
<b>Read This Book! News and Opinions by Teacher-Librarians</b>	
Picture This: An Introduction to Social Justice in Picture Book & Graphic Novel Formats ...	36
<i>By Puget Sound Council for Review of Children’s and Young Adult Literature</i>	
<b>I’d Rather Be Reading</b>	
Taking the Long View .....	38
<i>By David Wright</i>	
<b>Dispatches from Swellville</b>	
A Dissatisfied Patron .....	39
<i>By Darcy McMurtery</i>	



Brianna Hoffman

## Taking Care of Each Other and Ourselves

by Brianna Hoffman

In response to the current Presidential proposed elimination of the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), WLA has been working with the Washington State Library and [EveryLibrary](#) to help educate Washington residents of the services IMLS helps provide, and what they would be losing if it gets eliminated. There have been many meetings, many calls made and many letters written to assist in this campaign.

In one of our last meetings, John Chrastka from EveryLibrary mentioned “activism fatigue.” People are tired. For the last six to eight months, it seems like people have been asked to sign petitions, call their representatives and participate in marches like never before. It is exciting and invigorating to see so many people becoming politically active but it is understandable that they would be exhausted.

These exhausted activists are our library patrons. They may be coming into our libraries for help in finding out who their representatives are and how to contact them. They may be coming in for an escape. In either case, we are there to meet their needs. Libraries across the state and country have risen to the occasion to provide programming to educate on the issues and space for patrons to explore their activism options.

While our patrons are exhausted, it’s not surprising that we are too. Library work comes with a degree of emotional labor (check out this great post, “[The Emotional Labor of Librarianship](#)” by Hi, Miss Julie for more). The question is, what can we do about it? We have to take the time to take care of ourselves. I know — believe me, I KNOW — this is so much easier said than done, but it is worth making the effort to practice self-care. For the sake of our communities, patrons and ourselves, if we do not take care of ourselves, how will we take care of anyone else?

“For the sake of our communities, patrons and ourselves, if we do not take care of ourselves, how will we take care of anyone else?”

A few self-care strategies I can recommend either from experience or because they were recommended to me are:

- **Use your support system**  
When the people in your life offer to listen if you want to or need to vent, take them up on it. You are not burdening them, you are sharing your feelings and they are there to support you.
- **Fuel your mind**  
Read a book for pleasure and not one that you have to review for work. Take time in the evening to knit or cross-stitch. Start a journal. Take up yoga or meditation. Go for a run, or walk. Try karate or ice skating. Take an adult ballet class. All of these things will help you fuel your mind — and body! — in other ways and ultimately recharge you.
- **Unplug**  
Speaking of recharging... UNPLUG. This is my greatest weakness. Having “Breaking News” in the palm of my hand can

be a good thing, but also a very bad one. There have been days I have found myself overwhelmed by the news, and left feeling helpless and exasperated. I am working on my own strategies for unplugging because I know it will make a world of difference for me. It may make a world of difference for you, too.

If you have any strategies for unplugging, or have other methods of self-care that have helped you, please feel free to share. Also, if you are curious about the work WLA has been doing with EveryLibrary, check out the [EveryLibrary WA Save IMLS](#) website. Let’s all continue to take stock of our emotional labor and please, take care of yourself, and each other. 📖

---

Brianna Hoffman is a Project Coordinator for OCLC/WebJunction and serving as the current WLA President, 2016/2017.



# So Long, Farewell...

by Frank Brasile

As employees of the City of Seattle, all Seattle Public Library (SPL) staff were required to take a two-day Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) training through Seattle's Office for Civil Rights. RSJI's goal is to "eliminate racial disparities and achieve racial equity in Seattle." I must admit I was initially less than thrilled at the prospect. As library workers, aren't we all committed to social justice already? Aren't we preaching to the choir? What's left to learn that we don't already know?

The answer is, a lot. My initial reluctance gave way to an acknowledgement of my own biases and heightened my awareness of others who have different experiences than me. Through two days of challenging but enlightening conversation, I developed new perspectives on the impact of my work as a selection librarian and how staff and patrons interact with the books I select. Within a few months, I proposed and received funding for a two-year project that has diversified SPL's collection by focusing on the experiences and contributions of authors from communities of color, the LGBTQ community and other marginalized groups. These different perspectives continue to inform my work and make for a collection that is representative of the community it serves.

Welcome to the Social Justice Issue. Judging by the number of contributions to this article, social justice is at the forefront of libraries as our patrons (and ourselves) struggle with a political climate that many of us find at odds with our values. Discover what it's like to be the only two Muslim librarians at SPL (p. 6) and see how SPL serves Seattle's rapidly growing unhoused population (p. 21). Libraries have taken up arms against "fake news," and see how it's being done at the UW Seattle (p. 12), UW Tacoma (p. 15), Shoreline Community College (p. 14) and WSU Vancouver (p. 20). Librarians at the UW (p. 8), Seattle Central College (p. 10) and Shoreline (p. 17) challenge us to reconsider the role of libraries as neutral spaces. We learn about providing access to education in the state prison system (p. 26) and hear from a current and former prison librarian about their experiences (p. 24). And see what the Washington Talking Book and Braille Library is doing to reach

underserved communities (p. 22) and what SPL is doing to read (and recommend) books from diverse authors (p. 30).

Library Snapshot Day was a success, and see a sampling of photos from all corners of the state (p. 31). If you've been looking for clarity around animal service rules, be sure to check out the latest information (including a downloadable poster) from the state (p. 33). For the most recent developments from Olympia, check out the Legislative Update (p. 5).

We've introduced a new column, "Milestones" (p. 34), which replaces "Communiqué" as the source for news about hires, transitions, and remembrances of beloved members of the library community who have passed. In "Read This Book!" (p. 36) reviewers discuss social justice through picture books and graphic novels for children and teens, and David Wright returns to "I'd Rather Be Reading" (p. 38) to talk about disruptive reading as a remedy to the challenges we face. WLA President Brianna Hoffman wisely urges library staff to be sure to take care of ourselves (p. 3). And don't forget to close out the issue with another funny and relatable Dispatch from Swellville (p. 39).

Finally, this will be my last issue as editor of *Alki*. It has been my privilege to work with so many people dedicated to the mission of libraries and serving communities who rely on and trust us, and it's been particularly rewarding to close out my tenure with this issue. It's heartening to be part of a profession that strengthens its resolve and articulates a clearer vision when we are under threat. I'm happy to announce that Sheri Boggs will take over as editor with the fall 2017 issue. Sheri is currently the chair of the *Alki* editorial committee, and she and I will trade places for the next two years.

Thank you, Washington State libraries, for an invigorating two years. 📖

Frank

---

*Frank Brasile is a selection services librarian with The Seattle Public Library and editor of Alki.*



## The Latest from Both Washingtons

by John Sheller

WLA leaders and members are actively engaged at the federal, state and local levels in policy and spending conversations. 2017 has provided many opportunities for library professionals and supporters to impress upon our electeds the importance of uninterrupted library service to our communities. Even so, as of the mid-June press time for the summer issue of *Alki*, both our state and federal governments are flirting with shutting down over lack of legislative budget compromise & agreement. Our school librarians are particularly impacted since the budget negotiations and discussions around fully funding education include money for teacher-librarians and library materials.

### Federal Policy & Washington Libraries

Washington State Librarian & WLA Federal Relations Coordinator Cindy Aden guided our National Library Legislative Day delegation through meaningful dialog with our state's congressional delegation in May. We spoke with staff of two of the most powerful members of the U.S. Congress — Senator Patty Murray and Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers — on the importance of **Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA)** funding through federal grants to states. Cindy's office provided informative fact sheets of LSTA benefits to library constituents in each congressional district.

Susan Hildreth, former head of the **Institute of Museum & Library Services** in the Obama administration, helped refine our talking points to make the most of our visits. We conversed with members or staff from the offices of Senator Maria Cantwell, as well as Representatives Adam Smith, Dave Reichert, Suzan DelBene, Dan Newhouse, Pramila Jayapal, Derek Kilmer and Jaime Hererra Butler.

ALA provided informative materials on the following priority issues for us to share with our members of Congress:

- **LSTA** funding to, among other things, allow our state library to continue providing service to inmates in state correctional facilities;
- **Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL)**, a federal program that allows school libraries to purchase books and supplies for our state's neediest children;
- Including **High Speed Broadband** internet access in proposed federal support for infrastructure upgrades;
- Modernizing the **E-Rate** process to provide and enhance Wi-Fi service to tribal and rural libraries;
- Support strong **Net Neutrality** protections to preserve the core principles of net neutrality.

We also had the opportunity to bid fond farewell to Emily Sheketoff, longtime director of the ALA Washington Office who retired after the event.

### Enacted Washington State Legislative Issues Impacting Our Public, School, and State Libraries.

Startup funding for the **new State Library Archives building** was included in all of the proposed budgets to date this session. Actual dollar amounts won't be known until a final budget is adopted and approved, but it is reassuring to note that even in times of difficult budgetary disagreements our governor and the House and Senate budget writers acknowledge and agree to this as priority spending.

**HB 1719:** WLA members who came to Library Day in Olympia may recall this bill. It recognizes the importance of community libraries for access to early learning resources by **adding a representative of the Washington Library Association** to the state Early Learning Advisory Council.

**SB 5449:** Also a priority from Library Day in Olympia, this measure directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to utilize teacher-librarians and school administrators to provide standards for **digital citizenship and media literacy education** in our public school curriculum.

**HB 1595:** Amends the state **Public Records Act** to allow public agencies like cities, schools and libraries to charge a small fee for providing copies of electronic records requests. Libraries are all about free and open access to public information, but complex or excessive requests for materials are sometimes costly to fulfill.

**HB 1281:** Expands the **King County Library System** board of trustees from 5 to 7 members, in recognition of the growing size and complexity of the KCLS service area. 📖

---

*John Sheller is Government Relations Manager with the King County Library System.*

## What is it like to be a Muslim Librarian in Seattle?

by Tina Mat & Ayan Adem

As you can imagine, being the only Muslim librarians of color in a profession largely dominated by white women comes with some weight. Both our families are from war torn countries where public libraries do not exist. Every day as we start our shifts, we have to remind ourselves that we belong and that we should walk through the library with a sense of pride and warmth as we know we can break down stereotypes and misconceptions just by existing.

As public service employees we've experienced a fair share of racists and discriminative remarks. This can be anything from denying our credibility as librarians with comments like, "Oh, where's the librarian at? Or "Are you a real librarian?" to being more focused on our physical appearances, "How long have you been in the states?" "Your English is good." "What happened to your accent?" Yes, people have really these questions and it can be very emotionally draining. Tina recalls an incident which happened one month into the job. She was sitting at the information desk at the Central branch of the Seattle Public Library when a woman walked by. She noticed the woman was holding a brown paper bag. Tina smiled at the woman, and at that moment the lady rushed to her and said "I can't believe the library lets you wear that \*explicit\* on your head!" while crushing her paper bag in her hand. Needless to say,

---

*Ayan Adem is a Teen Services Librarian at the Seattle Public Library and focuses her energy on serving patrons both inside and outside of library walls. She is dedicated to providing young adults who visit her branch with real life learning opportunities and experiences through programming and skill development. As a first generation Somali American, Ayan is very passionate about serving underserved communities in Seattle through an equity and empowerment lens. Most recently, in partnership with a local nonprofit, Somali Family Safety Task Force, Ayan taught a Digital Literacy Series to 41 low income East African Mothers with a focus on inclusion, parent engagement and library awareness.*

*Tina Mat is an Adult Services Librarian at the Seattle Public Library and been with the library since she was teenager. As a child of immigrant parents from Cambodia, she relied heavily on free resources and organizations growing up in Seattle. Neighborhood libraries was instrumental for Tina and her family, as it served as an after school space, as well as a place where she could pick up books for free and receive homework help. It was this and ultimately the library's student assistant program, that Tina shifted her focus to get her degree in librarianship. She focuses her work on engaging the community through listening, outreach, and programs and instructions. She also serves patrons in the build physically and virtually through the library's chat reference service. Tina also serves on the library's Race and Social Justice Change team.*



*Tina & Ayan.*

this incident shook Tina up. Ayan, on the other hand dealt with an experience where one of her teen services volunteer reported being harassed, verbally and physically while walking from a bus stop nearby with her family. They were told "You don't belong here." "Go back to your country you terrorist." Personally, Ayan has also dealt with her own discriminating ordeal. One afternoon, Ayan noticed a male patron looking at her with piercing stare, he then shook his head with utter disgust and crossed himself for protection before slowly approaching for assistance on the computer. Overcome with confusion and so much emotion, Ayan served the patron while tears welled up her eyes. As progressive and diverse as Seattle is, this was happening here in our city. It became evident to us that Islamophobia was very real and on the rise.

It is from these personal experiences and the unprecedented spike in Muslim targeted hate crimes across the country, that Tina and Ayan felt a sense of urgency for action. As a large public library system with branches tucked in almost every neighborhood in the city, we play an important role ensuring all patrons feel welcome and safe at library. Our city librarian Marcellus Turner said it the best, "While the world around us changes every day, there is one constant that is here for you — The Seattle Public Library. Our doors are always open — no visa, membership or identification is required. Never question, never doubt. Our libraries are open to everyone. Nothing

*continued on next page*

required. Nothing to prove. You are welcome.”

We often wonder how vulnerable the Immigrant and Refugee communities in Seattle were feeling or what they were experiencing as we — educated Muslim American women, who speak English fluently, who navigate the systems fairly easy — were experiencing fear of traveling via public transportation, or worried while working in the public area. Ayan recalls one evening during her Somali Digital Literacy Program, where she had to halt instruction and provide space for students wanting to speak about all that was going on regarding the Muslim travel ban. It started when students expressed concern about rumors of 90 Somali who were deported from America to Somalia without notice. One mother, worried that she wasn't going to be able to visit her family back home in Somalia anymore. Another expressed concern that her husband who was waiting for his flight to Seattle would never reunite because the new Muslim travel ban. Another student expressed her fear that she would not be able to travel outside the country with her green card. After realizing the severity of what was happening and how many lives it was touching, Ayan went home and cried herself to sleep that night.

\*\*\*

Putting aside our personal reservations and anxiety of sharing our vulnerabilities to largely white audiences, we determined it was much more important to build awareness amongst our colleagues. We developed a training for library staff on what it means to be Muslim American today. The workshop featured a panel discussion where Tina, Ayan and several community members shared their personal stories and experiences in hopes to build awareness and equip staff with resources and tools on being effective allies. Seattle Public Library's Work Place Environment committee member helped us with logistics, while we focused on material and content. We invited CAIR (Council on American Muslim Relations WA Chapter), Arsalan Bukhari to come and speak on hate crimes against Muslims in Washington State. We hosted the first training session in a branch to a room full of library staff. We didn't expect a great turnout as it was our first session; however, staff came ready to listen to our stories and engage with our panel. We turned the session into a very informative, fun and engaging session. Our session focused on awareness building, breaking down misconceptions and allyship amongst staff. We eventually reached more than 200 staff members, creating dialogue amongst staff, sharing resources, encouraging public engagement programming and a number of library book displays.

\*\*\*

Due to popular demand, we repeated the session on January 26th, 2017 at the Central Library, post inauguration and in the midst of spotlight on Muslims due to a potential Muslim ban, which occurred that very week. It was a terrifying time. We were scared. Ayan's cousin had just been sent back to Somalia with no notice to

the family one day prior to our training. Tina's sister-in-law would be arriving at the airport that weekend. Emotions were high and the panelists were all very tense. This session attracted nearly sixty people which filled the fourth-floor meeting room. Any anxiety we had in the beginning was outweighed by the overwhelming support and positive comments.

As the only two Muslim librarians in Seattle and King County, we take pride in being the first Somali and Cham Muslim American Librarians. We love our careers and are proud to represent the stories and diversity that makes this country so great—and hopefully we can encourage a few future librarians to join us along the way. With this, we also want to leave you with a few tips for becoming a good Muslim ally:

- Educate and seek out knowledge, take the time to learn about your Muslim neighbors, friends, and colleagues. Consider your biases, what stories you have heard about Muslims and what have you internalized. Did you know Muslims are a diverse group? We are definitely not a homogenous group, as much as we are portrayed as such.
- Listen to your Muslim communities and have dialogue. It's important to have difficult conversations, but it is through these conversations that we can change the global narrative of Muslims.
- Be inclusive of your Muslim communities, include us in your conversations around equity and inclusion. Utilize your own privilege to ensure that there are platforms for Muslim voices are heard.

اقرأ “Iqra” is said to be the first word revealed in the Quran, the Muslim Holy Book. Not only does iqra mean “to read” in the literal sense but also to educate, learn and inform. What better way to do this than to be part of a valued learning institution such as the library. 📖

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**2017 WLA**  
**Fall Conference**

The Hotel Murano, Tacoma, WA

Wednesday, November 1 through  
Saturday, November 4, 2017

# Naming It: Social Justice in the Institution

by Reed Garber-Pearson

Resist is a verb and it takes action. So, too, should social justice be verbed. My short time as a librarian has taught me that we have much work to do, collectively, in naming the justice we seek. To provide a continued platform to engage in social justice work at the University of Washington (UW) Libraries, I started a critical reading group. The main goals of this group are to acknowledge the dimensions of power that inform our institutional work, examine how the language we use as institutions affects performance, and identify actions for changing cultural habits and norms.

In “On ‘Diversity’ as Anti-Racism in Library and Information Studies,” David James Hudson offers a critique of diversity as the dominant conceptual framework that seeks to address power and difference. This paradigm of using diversity broadly to signify justice has infused nearly every committee conversation, hiring and post-elections discourse I’ve engaged within libraries. Diversity is the major device currently used to describe power and difference within the profession — a

fixation on the politics of demographic representation and cultural awareness. It is our main avenue for discussing race — yet race and racism remain largely free from criticism or discussion. Similarly, the rhetoric of inclusion suppresses ideas of racialized power, distancing individuals and the institution from any accountability for racism. These modalities lack the full and critical exploration of libraries as institutions that maintain structural inequities and more specifically, racism. In this common imaginary, diversity justice is the inclusion of people of color represented in white-controlled spaces. Through continued reading and conversation, our group has begun to unpack the pernicious equation of diversity and inclusion language to social justice. This effort started with conversation,

but it’s not meant to stay there. By making it part of our jobs to interrogate institutional practices, we are actively identifying areas and existing spaces where meaningful change can be negotiated and established. Below are questions we are continually exploring together through our readings.

**“ A vision of equity that was shared with me recently is one that is inseparable from the ability to dream and envision new ways of being, to make choices without harm, and to see oneself represented in major institutional values. Without imagination, we have nowhere to go and no ability to change. ”**

## **How does whiteness take shape and play a role in our library?**

In the group we talk a lot about whiteness — how to locate it, name it and dismantle it. For those unfamiliar with the term, whiteness is not just a broad racial designation, but more specifically refers to systemic structures that normalize and privilege white, straight, cis and male social identities. Reading the entirety of Sara Ahmed’s *On Being Included*, we identified four primary ways that whiteness is reinforced in the LIS profession: through hiring processes; in the lack of explicitly naming racism (or even just saying the word out loud); in the centering of white women feelings and experiences; and through the documentation of diversity initiatives. One of Ahmed’s

primary critiques is that, although important and necessary, diversity initiatives may actually counterintuitively uphold a culture of whiteness rather than dismantle it.

Because whiteness is largely an unnamed category from which otherness is established, it is rarely cited or held accountable for its functional center in creating and maintaining racism and power. It becomes then not just about naming current legacies of whiteness, but about acknowledging how libraries as institutions have helped to shape ideas of racialized power and whiteness through continued affirmations of diversity.

---

Reed Garber-Pearson is the Integrated Social Sciences Librarian at the University of Washington.

*continued on next page*

### **In what ways do race and racism get talked about?**

With the help of reading Ahmed, we identified several ways in which implications of racism get deflected in libraries. First is through institutional defensiveness and pride. When claims of racism are made, the idea of the institution protecting its workers is questioned, and its pride damaged. Another way of diverting talk about racism is by naming it as a controversy — a hindrance to the profession's goals of universal service and democracy. Interpersonally, talk of racism gets blocked by critiques of racism being heard as personal attack, thereby harming workplace culture and connection. This is an important implication for those individuals who point out institutional racism, as they may be turned into the source of the problem just by naming it. In all of these instances, the language of diversity within libraries can be used as a defense of institutional whiteness and as a tool of regulation and control.

As a group we reflected that racism, outside of critical librarianship communities like #critlib, is still talked about as something exterior from our library systems — in presidential politics, in rural Washington state, and in cities like Ferguson that have had very public shootings. Yet there are many local examples of racism to elucidate — Milo Yiannopoulos' campus talk and the accompanied shooting on red square, the uptick in harassment and swastika graffiti on campus, and the lack of robust or active response from campus administration. In the libraries, there was discussion about the rise in concern that conservative students and faculty feel outnumbered on a majority-liberal campus, and this being a subtle tactic to center whiteness instead of talking specifically about racist politics or agendas. Inclusion remains the primary response strategy, and when we choose to serve everybody “equally,” we are choosing to serve primarily white patrons.

Race and racism aren't getting talked about enough.

### **What do we actually mean when we talk about safety and inclusion?**

It's been hugely transformative for me to avoid using words like diversity, inclusion and safety when signaling social justice and anti-racism work. Not that these words can't be effective, but as these terms have been institutionalized, they have become less active and more surface performative. Ahmed points out that as words get comfortable, they are easier to hide behind in order to soften the edges of institutional critique. Diversity and inclusion may be important starting points to breaking down defenses, but must eventually move to more specific language. Ahmed describes the “happy diversity” model as providing positive images of the institution, obscuring and recreating racism. Changing language as it becomes camouflaged is one necessary step in making sure social justice stays relevant and active.

From this reading group I have been able to spend more time thinking through what I actually mean when I talk about justice and inclusion, and practicing using more specific language. I was recently at a gathering of trans and non-binary organizers, each of us introducing ourselves with a vision of freedom. I keep returning to this model, and the importance of articulating a vision of equity — and possibly more important — of listening to the visions of others around us, particularly from immigrants, people of color and non-binary folks. Especially in predominantly white spaces, it's critical that we are collectively discussing and learning to understand histories of violence and control.

A vision of equity that was shared with me recently is one that is inseparable from the ability to dream and envision new ways of being, to make choices without harm, and to see oneself represented in major institutional values. Without imagination, we have nowhere to go and no ability to change. My vision of social justice and equity is intertwined with structural critique and dreaming. It necessarily involves institutions using energy, money and time to support efforts to unpack racism and make difficult reflections. While I can't argue these reading conversations have changed our organizational culture as of yet, the naming has been a powerful step forward in identifying changes and envisioning a different mode of operations. It's not uncommon we come away from the reading group frustrated or unsure of what steps to take next. Institutional change is painfully slow. But the changes must start with our own abilities to critique our practices and institutions. 📖

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY & READINGS**

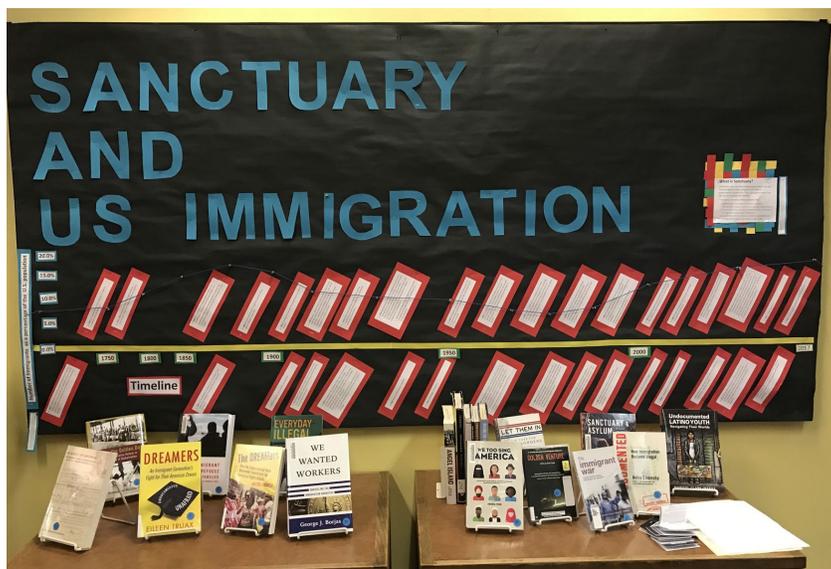
- Ahmed, Sarah. *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*. London: Duke University Press, 2012.
- Hathcock, April. Recommended Reading. *At the Intersection* (blog), <https://aprilhathcock.wordpress.com/recommended-reading/>.
- Hudson, David James. “On ‘Diversity’ as Anti-Racism in Library and Information Studies: A Critique.” *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* 1 (2017).
- In The Library With The Lead Pipe*, Spring Reading List, April 5, 2017, <http://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2017/spring-reading/>.
- Knott, Cheryl. *Not Free, Not For All: Public Libraries in the Age of Jim Crow*. Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2015.
- Lipsitz, George. *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998.

# Social Justice and Equity at Seattle Central College: Non-Neutrality through Visual Cues

by Johanna Jacobsen Kiciman, Kelle Rose, Samantha Sermeño, and M. Wynn Tranfield

This article reflects the views of the authors ("Reference Assistant team" or "team") and does not represent any official position or policy of the Seattle Central College Library. The terms "we" or "our," whenever unspecified, refer to the authors of this article and their opinions.

The issue of whether or not libraries should be—or even can be—neutral has come to a head over the past few years following public outcry against and media attention on racialized police brutality and heightened civic unrest. Perhaps even more so in the months following the U.S.'s 2016 presidential election, libraries have faced questions of how to continue providing programs and services to communities that may feel marginalized or even targeted for violence. Should libraries acknowledge this political climate affecting our patrons? On one hand, the American Library Association Code of Ethics (article VII) states that "we distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources." On the other hand, many libraries and librarians feel that libraries can no longer be spaces of neutrality because the very idea of neutrality disregards biases, injustices, and



Bulletin board display on U.S. Sanctuary Cities & Immigration

safety threats. When patrons — especially the most vulnerable members of our community — are concerned about ongoing efforts to chip away at their civil rights, how should libraries and librarians respond?

In the aftermath of the election and a new presidency, libraries have responded swiftly and vocally on behalf of their communities. Indeed, politicized library engagement is surging even at the highest levels of library infrastructure, with ALA resolutions, statements, advocacy web resources, and calls to action (for example, the "[What is Sanctuary?](#)" document). ALA also sponsors a robust variety of multicultural affiliates, such as the Black Caucus of ALA; American Indian Library Association; Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association; REFORMA; Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Round Table (GLBTRT), and more. Members of those groups engage in discussions and share resources so that local libraries can implement their own community-based approaches to supporting their patrons. Additionally, social media campaigns emphasizing social justice have flourished, including the [#LibrariesRespond](#) effort to encourage local libraries to discuss their practices and programming relative to movements such as Black Lives Matter, [#NoDAPL](#), supporting transgender students, and challenging xenophobic anti-Arab/anti-Muslim travel bans and ICE raids.

---

*Johanna Jacobse Kiciman (MLIS 2017, UW) is a trained reference and instruction librarian with a strong academic background (PhD in Folklore and Folklife, University of Pennsylvania, 2007), and a commitment to critical and culturally relevant information literacy.*

*Kelle Rose (MLIS 2017, UW) is a newly minted reference and instruction librarian with more than a decade of experience in nonprofit social justice and policy advocacy, community organizing, and community development work in diverse communities. Rose has an MSW from Saint Louis University, 2003.*

*Samantha Sermeño is a first-generation multiracial librarian. recently graduated from the UW, where her studies focused on library advocacy, community partnerships, ELL and LGBTQ outreach.*

*M. Wynn Tranfield (MLIS candidate, UW, 2018), is a versatile scholar of information and reference instruction, and an advocate for equitable resource access with a background in Agriculture and Environmental Science (McGill University, 2014).*

This socio-political context is particularly relevant to library practices at Seattle Central College ("Central"). Students at Central hail from over 80 different countries, and nearly half of Central's 15,500 enrolled students identify as people of color. The students bring distinct multicultural and multilingual perspectives, needs, and experiences to the campus. Furthermore, 14 percent of students identify as LGBTQ+. Following November 2016's election results, a combination of bigoted presidential messaging, anti-immigrant backlash, and proposed travel bans have compromised Central students' sense of interpersonal safety, civil liberties, and value. This is significant within the wider climate of Seattle, the Pacific Northwest, and the U.S. at large, especially as violations of civil rights and interpersonal violence have escalated significantly, targeting disenfranchised communities.

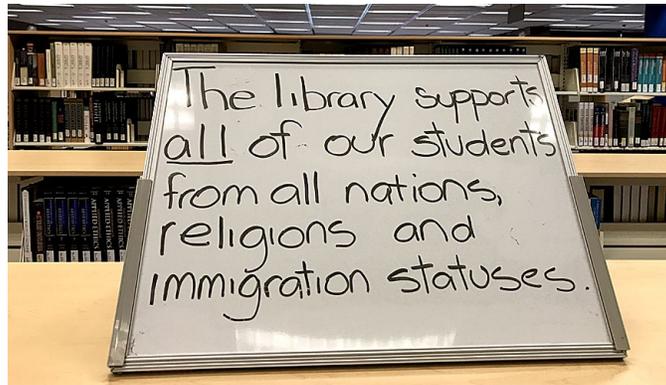
Over the past twelve months, an organic process unfolded at Central: staff began creating visual cues of inclusion and solidarity

to signal their personal values and to work towards making the library a safe space. These cues expressed an actively non-neutral stance in support of Central's patrons who are marginalized in the current socio-political climate. As individuals, we explicitly acknowledge the current discordant national rhetoric and explicitly wanted to state our support and welcome to visitors and students deeply impacted by it. Both physical and virtual library spaces thus became canvases for visual solidarity and external expressions of internally held values. Bulletin board displays, book displays, Black Lives Matter name tag pins, handmade signs of welcome, and a new multicultural/grassroots community organization LibGuide all acknowledge this climate and the importance of civic activism and critical thinking. Our team believes that this work promotes and reinforces Central's values of equity and social justice while simultaneously welcoming and amplifying the stature of students from all races, sexualities, genders, nations, religions, and immigration statuses. These practices did not represent library policy; value-rich cues were created by individuals, particularly the reference staff, but found support and alliance within the library's space.

The most perceptible visual cues are clustered around the circulation and reference desks near the entrance. A large, quarterly crafted book display is prominent immediately upon entering the space, nestled between comfortable seating. Grounded in Critical Theory, recent themes have been global Voices of Protest, Black Lives Matter, and U.S. Sanctuary and U.S. Immigration, all with conscious emphasis on non-colonial voices. The large book displays

do less to stimulate interaction, but interactive maps, activist biographies, and informational graphic timelines draw passerby attention and reference inquiries. Further, circulation has noted an uptick in the use of featured resources.

The most simplistic piece of signage has had the most impact. A librarian stationed a rectangular whiteboard at the center of the reference desk with a message stating that "the library supports all of our students from all nations, religions, and immigration statuses." The scratchy handwriting makes it look out of place in an environment with such angular precision. There is not a single other handwritten sign in the library, and in the five months since it first made an appearance there has been little push for modification; in fact, students often comment on the whiteboard, expressing relief or shared interest or fatigued appreciation for being able to talk about these political times at the library. As



*Whiteboard sign at reference desk.*

an outlier, this handwritten, erasable-at-any-moment sign has power, foregrounding the library's current, active values in a rapidly moving society. It lets students know what matters to us right now—that they matter to us. Anecdotal response data regarding the whiteboard sign was resoundingly positive, and in the weeks following the travel ban it was an important tool to emphasize that students are safe and welcome to engage us in finding resources or respectful ally-ship. One student told us that he would not have come to the library to ask questions about course registration without the sign, because he feared ramifications based on his status as an undocumented student.

Our team also created a [multicultural resources LibGuide](#) in response to a lack of coordinated accessible, multicultural services on campus and in the wider county, even though community resources are often outside the scope of academic libraries. However, as embedded members of our community, we approached the LibGuide as a way to utilize our reference and evaluative skills, both from LIS and our individual backgrounds, to reduce barriers and to amplify community work/organizing that is relevant to our students' lives. The LibGuide is a dynamic, evolving resource intended to highlight local organizations that may be of service to students and community members; further, it may encourage students to participate, volunteer, learn from, or intern in distinctly political or justice-oriented organizations serving the public good. By including a resource catering to diverse identities on the library website, our team communicates that members of these groups are important to us.

*continued on page 19*

# Empowering the People: A Conference on the Importance of News Literacy

by Kian Flynn

In Seattle, the morning after the norm-shattering 2016 U.S. presidential election looked and felt much like a typical Pacific Northwest late fall morning — gray and gloomy. There was, however, a pointed quiet that hung in the campus air on November 9th as UW students, staff, and faculty shuffled to classes only hours after an election result few anticipated. Ensnared in a city and state that went dramatically for Hillary Clinton (by 80 and 16 points, respectively)<sup>1</sup>, many on campus were still processing and grappling with the previous night's outcome.

Within hours, the campus community began to respond and campus inboxes started to fill with advice and guidance on how to reach out and help those struggling to understand the election results. By that afternoon, University President Ana Mari Cauce sent a message to campus (“Our Shared Ideals”)<sup>2</sup> that reaffirmed “our ongoing and unwavering support toward creating and nurturing an inclusive, diverse, and welcoming community.” Later that evening, the Samuel E. Kelly Ethnic Cultural Center (ECC) hosted an impromptu gathering that provided a forum for the community to come together and share their thoughts.

In the days and weeks that followed, it was common to see both formal and spontaneous demonstrations taking place on the front steps to the Suzzallo Library. Some of the most resonant displays of protest were simple: students from diverse backgrounds passing a megaphone from one student to the next, each one taking their turn to express their feelings in the aftermath of the election. Listening and then speaking, and then listening again. The gothic columns of Suzzallo loomed as a backdrop, and a powerful symbol of intellectual freedom.

After an election cycle that often featured politicians, news outlets, and social media feeds playing quick and loose with facts, the library was back on center stage. A number of news organizations, including PBS<sup>3</sup>, *The Chicago Tribune*<sup>4</sup>, and *The Seattle Times*<sup>5</sup>, have documented efforts libraries have made in 2017 in response



“Making Sense of the News” display at the Suzzallo library. Photo by Cathy You.

to worrisome trends in American discourse. The UW Libraries have been active this year, as well, in reaching out to our campus community to help provide resources in this tumultuous time.

A month after the election, the Center for Teaching and Learning hosted a discussion, facilitated by Teaching & Learning Program Librarian Amanda Hornby, on teaching post-election. Nearly forty educators from across campus took part in the discussion, which touched on topics such as

creating safer spaces in classrooms and facilitating inclusive dialogue amongst students. On the collections front, the Libraries added the American Civil Liberties Union Papers, 1912-1990 database to our collection this spring to provide students and scholars access to ACLU documents related to major civil rights cases of the 20th century. And, this past term, the Libraries curated three “featured topic” libguides — [immigration resources](#), [health & wellness](#), and [privacy & security](#) — spotlighting campus resources available for the UW community.

The UW Libraries have also been proactive in providing resources and promoting skills necessary to combat the “fake news” phenomena. In winter term, Jessica Albano, Media Studies & News Librarian, and Theresa Mudrock, History Librarian, created a display titled “Making Sense of the News” in the Suzzallo Library to encourage students and the public to think critically about how they evaluate news sources.

The display is inspired by the [SMART Check](#), an acronym for the steps in one popular information evaluation method (Source, Motive, Authority, Review, and Two-Source Test). Other evaluative strategies are available on the UW Libraries’ [Evaluating Information research guide](#), and educators interested in incorporating these strategies in their own curricula are encouraged to use materials from the research guide. The display showcases how different outlets—*The New York Times*, MSNBC, President Trump’s Twitter account, *The Daily Show*, RedState.com—covered the controversy stemming from Representative John Lewis saying in a *Meet the Press* interview that Donald Trump is not a “legitimate president.” For each outlet, the SMART Check is applied to their coverage of the news story to

---

Kian Flynn is the Geography & Global Studies Librarian at the University of Washington.

*continued on next page*

determine the reliability of the content and what bias might exist in the coverage.

To accompany the display, the UW Libraries partnered with the UW Department of Communications for a half-day conference titled “Why Journalism Matters: News Literacy in a Democracy.” The conference, held on April Fool’s Day, stressed the importance of news literacy skills in today’s information environment.

From the outset, the planning committee for the conference agreed on the importance of including participatory “break-out” sessions that would give the audience an opportunity to put skills and strategies from the conference into action. In light of recent research<sup>6</sup> showing that students have difficulty judging the credibility of information, a primary goal of the conference was to leave participants feeling empowered to evaluate information and share their newly-acquired skills with others.

The event kicked off with an appearance from Washington State Attorney General Bob Ferguson, who recently led the State of Washington’s legal challenges<sup>7</sup> against President Trump’s executive orders restricting travel to the United States.

Ferguson answered questions from Andrea Otanez, UW Journalism Program Coordinator, on the role of the free press in a democracy. In the interview<sup>8</sup>, Ferguson addressed his own news consumption habits—both in his personal life and on the job—as well as the role that he thinks the news media plays in American democracy. Ferguson self-identified as a “complete news junkie” who checks the news on his phone as soon as he wakes up and right before he goes to bed. He balances this by stressing the importance of taking in a range of viewpoints and seeking out news sources from across the political spectrum. “It’s good to have another perspective before you make up your mind (and) to know what the other person’s thinking,” Ferguson told the audience.

In this vein, the “Making Sense of the News” display also offers students the opportunity to reflect on whether the news they consume represent a diverse range of viewpoints across the political spectrum. The interactive display, which includes fifty small magnets with different news organizations’ logos, lets students place different news sources—from the BBC to Breitbart—along a political continuum with seven ideological categories ranging from “liberal conspiracy theories” on the far left to “mainstream” in the middle to “conservative conspiracy theories” on the far right. The ever-changing composition of where news organizations are placed in the display reflects the fact that in today’s hyper-partisan political climate, often two people can view the reliability and impartiality of the same source very differently.

After Ferguson’s interview, conference attendees had the opportunity to attend two “break-out” sessions on topics that included evaluating

government information, visual literacy, transparency in government, being a citizen journalist, and underrepresented voices in the media. The sessions were led by a diverse group of professionals, including investigative reporters, librarians, bloggers, and photojournalists. In the sessions, conference attendees practiced writing letters to the editors and navigated their way through government websites to locate official, authoritative documents.

Approximately sixty people including students, staff, and community members took part in the conference and audience feedback from the event was overwhelming positive. Many were grateful for the timely programming, and said they were likely to attend future events on the topic. Participants were also thankful for the hands-on opportunities that the sessions afforded and appreciated having the opportunity to try out tools and strategies on their own.

In their feedback, a few attendees expressed disappointment that a greater diversity of viewpoints were not represented at the conference and noted that the speakers and audience members functioned too much like an “echo chamber” for each other. Going forward, it will be important to make sure a diversity of political views and opinions are represented in discussions on news literacy and that we don’t retreat further into our own political silos.

Certainly, the response to “fake news” is just beginning to take shape, and librarians at UW and across the country are still grappling with how to best address an information landscape where news is easier than ever to access, but harder to verify.

The stakes are undoubtedly high, and that point was driven home by Ferguson when he summed up the concerns of many in the audience and across campus: “I worry about a future where our people are not news literate.” 

## NOTES

1 Anderstone, Ben. “Trump couldn’t woo Washington’s working class.” Crosscut.com. Nov. 15, 2016. <http://crosscut.com/2016/11/donald-trump-washington-working-class-election-2016/>

2 Cauce, Ana Mari. “Our Shared Ideals.” President’s Blog. Nov. 9, 2016. <http://www.washington.edu/president/2016/11/09/our-shared-ideals/>

3 Barclay, Donald. “Can Librarians Help Solve the Fake News Problem?” PBS. Jan. 6, 2017. <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/column-can-librarians-help-solve-the-fake-news-problem/>

4 Gaines, Lee. “Local libraries look to combat ‘fake news’ with media literacy programs.” *Chicago Tribune*. Mar. 6, 2017. <http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/highland-park/news/ct-hpn-librarians-fake-news-education-tl-0309-20170306-story.html>

*continued on page 29*

# No Time for News: Evaluating Information on Smartphones

by Lauren Bryant

Students sometimes approach the reference desk, phone in hand, to inquire whether we have the source they found through the search tools available to them on their mobile device. The availability of research on a mobile device makes it more convenient and integrates it into daily life. Yet the evaluation of a source's reliability and quality on a mobile device becomes more difficult. Beyond the inherent difficulties with the internet, mobile sources often obscure their origins and make evaluating for reliability more difficult. With the help of our own mobile friendly sources, librarians can provide guidance about news literacy and contribute to the conversation about fake news.

There is a false expectation that a smartphone operates like a portable computer, retrieving the same results on a smaller screen, but the experience of using the internet on a mobile device is not identical to searching on a desktop PC. News articles in particular will appear in a much different way on a smartphone. Search engines will display a different set of results on a smartphone, depending on whether the website was designed to be responsive. In response, newsfeed apps such as Flipboard and Apple News are coming preloaded on smartphones. These feeds produce scrollable blocks of text stacked in between large, colorful images. Journalists know that users are more likely to click and read the entire article if they write a flashy, often misleading headline because articles in this format focus on headlines rather than content. Another issue is that newsfeeds present articles in the same font with the same size picture whether the article is from the *Washington Post* or *E! News*.

Experiences with students finding news articles on their smartphones prompted me to update our online learning guide about newspapers. The fact that newspapers are a serial publication is no longer the most important part of the conversation. Of course, it is a serial; the online world of information is moving so rapidly for some users that they barely have time for 140 character updates on their Twitter feeds. We live in a world where the president's Twitter feed is often our first notification of major political changes in our government. With notable individuals using social media and blogs as a major means of communication, we must

acknowledge that even these are valid sources.

The answer to problems like these in the past has been to suggest subscription databases. These paid services vet their sources, ensuring that reliable articles show up in the results. But there are some surprising similarities between newsfeed apps and the periodical databases. Indeed, the databases scrape their articles from reliable publications, making it difficult for users to stumble across a poorly researched article. However, the database results list presents all the articles in the same font, removing many of the identifying

characteristics that point to quality or tone. While most of the articles in the results page are reliable, presenting them in such a list suggests that they are equivalent. *The New York Times* is in the results list alongside the *Daily News* blogs. Both newsfeeds and periodical databases discourage a crucial research step by listing these sources all together on the same page: evaluation.

While newsfeeds operate seamlessly on mobile devices and are an easy choice when looking for news content, Springshare's

LibGuides are also designed to be responsive. The [online learning guide about newspapers](#) at Shoreline Community College has been updated to help users evaluate news resources. The Newspapers LibGuide focuses on news literacy, the ability to evaluate the tone, veracity, and journalistic quality of a news article. Popular periodicals have their applications; the publication's website can help identify tone and intention; digital articles have citations in the form of hyperlinks are sometimes scrubbed by news aggregates. By asking evaluation questions, we can prompt users to build a system of internal checks and balances that adjusts to their unique information needs.

As a concerned third party with nothing to gain, librarians are ideal ambassadors for news literacy. The public has become more aware that all news is not equal. The increasing awareness of fake news makes it easier to broach the topic of news literacy at the reference desk. In addition, online learning guides can illustrate the nuts and bolts of news literacy and evaluation. By providing something users can reference outside of our conversation, the tools are in their hands to make informed decisions about the news they consume. 📖



---

Lauren Bryant is a reference librarian with Shoreline Community College. You can read her blog at [www.laurenelibrarian.com](http://www.laurenelibrarian.com).

# Libraries on Trend: Fake News, Information Literacy, and Demonstrating Relevance

by Marisa Petrich

A few months ago, I had an interaction with a friend that will feel familiar to many librarians.

“But... what exactly do you do?” he asked me after a brief conversation about our mutual frustrations with doing a job the public doesn’t completely understand. It turned out even my library-using, free-time-researching, dear old friend wasn’t sure how I spend my workdays. The biggest difference between him and the others who wonder is that he asked.

When it comes to updating people’s frame of reference not only for library services but their public value, odds are most people won’t come to us. Instead, responding to trends and events that capture public interest — most notably, the recent “fake news” phenomenon — gives librarians an “in” with prospective users as we work to establish information literacy’s place in daily life.

In a recent series of projects at the University of Washington Tacoma Library and Holman Library at Green River College, I used the nexus of fake news and information literacy to engage users and reintroduce the library. By appropriately selecting themes, using several modalities, and positioning the relevance of the library, I was able to increase outreach efforts and interact with users in new ways — and learned the value of occasionally following the crowd along the way.

## Keeping current: Selecting themes of interest

The connection between information literacy and our recent, collective fascination with “fake news” was clear to librarians from the start — and that same relationship caught the attention of popular media outlets. Publications including *The Seattle Times*<sup>1</sup>, *MTV News*<sup>2</sup>, and *Vice*<sup>3</sup> wrote articles about the role of libraries in news literacy and combatting misinformation. It’s easy to dismiss our response to news literacy and media coverage of it as a fad, but it also brought the everyday value of libraries into mainstream



Poster for a news literacy workshop at the University of Washington Tacoma.

---

Marisa Petrich is a Reference and Instruction Librarian with the University of Washington Tacoma and Adjunct Faculty Librarian with Green River College.

conversation. Positioning libraries where people’s attention is already makes the work of getting users to take notice significantly easier, particularly when it comes to explaining how we can be of service in ways that go beyond print media and computer access.

When it comes to making the case for what we do, diversifying the public’s frame of reference couldn’t be a bad thing. In a recent scan of the *The New York Times*’ “Libraries and Librarians” topic page<sup>4</sup>, only three out of 10 stories on the first page were about libraries in the United States — a report on drag queen-hosted story hours, a story about the closure of an entire library system in Oregon, and a piece about efforts to eliminate fines

that may deprive kids of books. The others included travel pieces, reports and editorials on the sentencing of librarian Natalia Sharina in Russia, and a few similar pieces about librarians in Timbuktu smuggling archives out of their occupied city in 2013. A Google News search on the same day netted mostly trade publications, hiring announcements, and a few articles about summer reading programs kicking into gear on the first page of results.

Taken as a whole, the message is clear — libraries are interesting when they’re part of a romantic vacation or considered in the context of some a far-away government in conflict, but when it comes to the libraries around us they’re mostly places for kids or places that close. The surest way to change the narrative is to position ourselves within conversations that are already of interest to users.

## Testing the waters: Engaging users in a variety of ways

Working at two different institutions, efforts to incorporate fake news into the libraries took a few different forms. First, a series of three news literacy workshops (each on a different theme) was planned and implemented at UW Tacoma. Second, a news literacy poster with an interactive feature was put on display at Green River College. Each of these efforts included an element explaining how the library could help or why this was a library topic. They also created an opportunity for students, faculty, and staff to build a relationship with the library in a new context.

*continued on next page*

The workshop series was designed to cover different topics so participants could drop in and out according to their needs and interests. Session topics were also selected to appeal to public interest, and included defining fake news, practicing basic fact-checking skills, and addressing bias. This final workshop included discussions about evaluating media bias, personal bias, and representations of marginalized groups in search results. These topics are very much at the heart of library work and I enjoyed exploring the often complicated world of evaluating online information with an especially engaged group of users.

The poster was a static display that encouraged students to think critically about the term “fake news,” provided information about American news habits and public opinion about the recent trend, and tips for spotting an unreliable news source. The display also featured a “Talk Back” section where students were invited to share their thoughts on this issue. A whiteboard with three sections labeled “Fake news is ... a big problem,” “... a small problem,” and “... not a problem.” The prompt asked that students vote with a hash-mark and optionally explain their reasoning.

#### **So what? Building long-term relationships from short-term interests**

Though not without challenges, the primary gain from each of these attempts was to reach new and different users in new and different ways—and hopefully create ongoing relationships.

While workshop attendance was relatively low, they attracted faculty and staff looking for resources to incorporate into their own work and share as needed. They also allowed me to develop new partnerships, including with members of the campus communications team who used the series as the basis of a campus news story, Facebook Live interview, and podcast. These opportunities in particular provided a platform to explain how libraries can be useful for evaluating web sources to people who might never have stumbled into our building or across our website. My greatest mark of success was hearing from the staff I had worked with that they had learned as much about libraries as they had about fake news.

Another positive interaction facilitated by the workshops was the chance to build a module in Canvas, a learning management system, about news literacy at faculty request. The 45-minute online lesson was used in two sections of an upper-division course. As a result, the library was able to reach 70 students and encourage them to think critically about sources they would use not only for an upcoming assignment but in their daily lives. Other faculty members referred students to me not only for information about fake news, but for ideas on digital tools to help them analyze and present their work.

The poster also facilitated interaction, albeit in a quieter way. The “Talk Back” section got much more engagement than expected.

Not only did students share their points of view in each available category, nearly every respondent chose to explain their thoughts (jokingly or otherwise) in addition to casting a vote. Seeing humor, critical thinking, and students taking the time to stop and learn a little all in the same space made me happy to be a librarian and hopeful students would be back for more.

It comes down to this: A bit of a gimmick isn’t always a bad thing, particularly when your intended audience isn’t sure it needs what you have. Initially I worried that jumping on the fake news bandwagon was pandering. I found was that there is still plenty of space to do meaningful, complicated, and important work while incorporating elements of popular culture. After all, in order to hold users’ interest, we first have to capture it. 📖

#### **NOTES**

1 Large, Jerry. “Librarians Take up Arms against Fake News.” *The Seattle Times*, February 6, 2017. <http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/librarians-take-up-arms-against-fake-news/>.

2 Fuller, Jaime. “Meet The Librarians Fighting Fake News, One Dewey Decimal At A Time.” *MTV News*, January 19, 2017. <http://www.mtv.com/news/2973842/in-trumps-america-activist-librarians-who-wont-be-shushed/>.

3 Dollinger, Arielle. “Can Librarians Save Us from Fake News?” *Vice*, March 21, 2017. [https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/can-librarians-save-us-from-fake-news](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/can-librarians-save-us-from-fake-news).

4 “Libraries and Librarians.” *The New York Times*. Accessed June 14, 2017. <http://www.nytimes.com/topic/subject/libraries-and-librarians>.

## **Join WLA**

The Washington Library Association includes some of the best and brightest members of the Washington library community.

We are united by our care for the well-being of Washington libraries. For more information, visit our website at [wla.org](http://wla.org). Explore the site and make our business your business.

Membership information is at [wla.org/membership](http://wla.org/membership).

# Being There: The Physicality of a Space in a Community College Library

by *Chloe Horning & Amelia Klaus*

The Ray Howard Library at Shoreline Community College (SCC) went through a small renovation in 2016-2017, which involved a redesign of our service points, and enhanced student study spaces. The completion of this redesign roughly coincided with the 2016 presidential election, subsequent to which there was uncertainty expressed by students, faculty, and staff as to the existence of safe spaces on campus. This article explores the Library's attempts to create a welcoming, inclusive, and safe environment. It examines the way in which seemingly-small, intentional changes to our practice as librarians can have a large impact in the campus community. These include: 1. The revision of physical spaces, 2. An increased emphasis on buying and displaying print resources which support diverse literacies and learning modalities, 3. A renewed focus on how we 'show up' physically at work to support students. Also discussed are the limitations that come with trying to design a student-owned, inclusive space while also being a community commons where perspectives often clash.

## Revision of Physical Space

As part of the remodel design iteration process, library staff were vocal about our ideas to improve accessibility in our spaces. One major victory is evident in our improved signage. Prior to the remodel, the library was home to a constellation of outdated, mismatched, and confusing signage. In our new iteration, we attempted to keep signage as consistent and jargon-free as possible. Additionally, we sought to keep the signage accessible for those with visual impairments, by following ADA standards for visual displays.<sup>1</sup> Librarians also advocated for dual reference workstations at the Service Desk. One station is at standing height, and the second one is at a seated height, so as to be accessible to individuals with mobility issues.

Beginning in 2016, a group of SCC student leaders initiated the All-Gender Restroom Project, which seeks to limit discrimination based on gender on campus through the conversion of "some of Shoreline Community College's existing multiple-stall restrooms into all-gender restrooms, for the purpose of ensuring that everyone — regardless of their identity — has a safe place to... use the restroom."<sup>2</sup> This conversion was officially implemented in the 2017 Winter Quarter. As this change was implemented, Library staff noticed that students were unaware of the existence of the two single-stalled all-gendered restrooms located within the building and were having

difficulties locating them. In an effort to address these issues, two employees (Amelia Klaus and Saint-Jean Devereux) worked with Student Life to utilize already created signage and to create clearer library-specific signage that would help students locate the all-gendered restrooms. This signage was recently placed in the Library, and employees will be observing student, faculty, and staff reactions to the new signage, as well as noting any questions, concerns, or possible adjustments that may need to be addressed in the future.

## Buying & Displaying Print Resources

The library remodel necessitated that some weeding of the collection take place during the 2015-2016 academic year. Additionally, our collection development librarian, Claire Murata, observed persistent student requests for print materials. Therefore, we determined that during the 2016-2017 academic year, librarians should focus on bolstering our print collection. Librarians worked as a team to develop new micro-collections in print (Graphic Novels, "Good Reads," and "First Year Experience"), which met the recreational reading and developmental needs of our students, while also reflecting the diversity of the campus. For example, we have done a good deal of work developing our Graphic Novels collection. The visual nature of comics and graphic novels mean that they are inherently more browsable and discoverable than other print materials. Our collection is highly visible in the library, and reflects and supports the rich diversity of our community while providing a way for students to connect to multicultural issues.

As part of the Library's effort to highlight resources in the library that reflect the diverse community that makes up SCC, Library staff created a variety of displays throughout the 2016-2017 academic year. Examples include, books written by refugee authors, an Asian American and Pacific Islander heritage display, a #BlackLivesMatter display, and a display highlighting the Japanese Internment and its effects on the Pacific Northwest.

The Japanese Internment display and the #BlackLivesMatter display are examples of the Library responding to student feedback and the events that were occurring on campus. The Japanese Internment display developed out of the combined desire to honor the 75th Anniversary of Executive Order 9066 (which authorized the Japanese Internment Camps) and to support a campus talk given by Tom Ikeda of Densho ([www.densho.org](http://www.densho.org)), examining Executive Order 9066 and its impact on the community.

The #BlackLivesMatter (BLM) display received enthusiastic student

---

*Chloe Horning and Amelia Klaus are Associate Faculty Librarians at Shoreline Community College.*

*continued on next page*

approval, including a request (which was approved) to keep the display up an additional month so that it doesn't "seem like Black lives only matter during February."<sup>3</sup> While the majority of feedback for the BLM display was positive, the Library did receive a complaint from a faculty member who had seen the display highlighted in our campus newsletter and had found the subject matter surprising. Library staff responded to the complaint by thanking the patron for voicing their concern, and explaining that "libraries... look for ideas and concepts that are trending in our society and then create displays of works that enable readers to deepen their understanding of the topic."<sup>4</sup> We invited the patron to physically visit the library and explore the items displayed, and to "feel free to talk with... any of our librarians, about free speech, censorship, and/or critical librarianship in the context of the BLM movement."<sup>5</sup>

### "Showing Up"

In the days following the 2016 Presidential Election, the climate on campus became noticeably depressed, with students, faculty, and staff expressing fear and anxiety over their place on campus as well as within the larger American landscape. In the following weeks, there was an uptick in hate crimes around the country,<sup>6</sup> and before the end of the Fall quarter community members wearing clothing with symbols of white supremacy began appearing on campus.<sup>7</sup> After observing these incidents, Information Literacy Librarian Caroline Conley approached fellow staff members from all library departments and asked if they would be interested in creating shirts that would be a symbolic suggestion of inclusion. The ability to wear the message created a feeling of proactive support. In addition, the t-shirts wouldn't be able to be defaced by graffiti (as signs would) and the low price (\$6/shirt) would allow student employees as well as faculty and staff to participate. The staff enthusiastically embraced the idea, and as a group decided that the shirts would say "You Are Safe Here," and that they would be worn every Thursday.

As interest in the t-shirts grew, Conley participated in a larger discussion among faculty who wanted find a way to, as a group, build a culture of visual solidarity with groups on campus who felt targeted. They decided to create signs welcoming students that would be held up during the first week of the quarter (known as "Welcome Week"). The faculty members then organized to create the signs, and mobilized other faculty and staff to volunteer for sign-holding shifts throughout Welcome Week. Subsequently, the College Administration launched participation in the national #youarewelcomere campaign, and as a result further events and signs have appeared across campus expressing solidarity and support with targeted and vulnerable groups.

The t-shirt and sign holding campaigns sparked a renewed interest amongst librarians in discussing cultural competency in the library. In a way, the t-shirts have been a visual reminder that we must 'practice what we preach.' This quarter, librarians have set aside meeting time for readings and discussion about cultural competency in the classroom and at the reference desk, creating group solidarity around these important issues.

### Limitations

Limiting our ability to promise or deliver truly safe space is the historical role of libraries as sites that were complicit in and perpetrators of oppression. As Honma points out, "libraries have always held a distinctively racial motive, intentional or not... libraries have historically served the interests of a white racial project by aiding in the construction and maintenance of a white American citizenry as well as the perpetuation of white privilege in the structures of the field itself."<sup>8</sup> This history is compounded within academic libraries by the higher education system that puts "faculty and students of color at a disadvantage."<sup>9</sup>



*Shoreline Community College library staff promote inclusion with "You Are Safe Here" t-shirts.*

Another limitation is the cultural perception of libraries, which can be especially complicated for international students who may come from countries where the role of librarians and libraries differs greatly from

the way academic libraries operate in the United States. While the cultural competency training discussed earlier in this article is part of the Ray Howard Library's attempt to integrate the needs of our international students into our practice, we need to continue to be mindful that cultural and communication barriers, loneliness, financial difficulties, performance anxieties, differences in learning styles/expectations, and variations in perceptions of libraries/librarians are all barriers frequently faced by international student populations.<sup>10</sup>

It must be said that the writers of this article are only able to view the relative success or failure of our efforts to create safer spaces in the library through the lens of our situational privilege. In particular, the perspective afforded to the authors of this paper, via our White, cis-hetero, and able privilege, including our relatively easy access to higher education and educational attainment, and that we reflect the overall demographics of the field,<sup>11</sup> pose limitations to our ability to create spaces in the library that could truly be called "safe." However, we hope that this article has demonstrated how an acknowledgement of limitations, an openness to listening to the variety of voices in the community, and a willingness to make seemingly small yet potentially destabilizing changes to our practice, can result in a more inclusive climate within our libraries.

*continued on next page*

## NOTES

- 1 Accent Signage Systems Inc. "Quick reference guide to ADA signage," accessed June 8, 2017, <http://www.accentssignage.com/wp-content/uploads/ADA-Quick-Reference.pdf>;
- Department of Justice, "2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design," September 15, 2010, <https://www.ada.gov/regs2010/2010ADAStandards/2010ADAstandards.htm>
- 2 Associated Student Government, "Shoreline Community College All Gender Restroom Project," *Student Life: All-Gender Restrooms*, accessed June 4, 2017. <http://sba.shoreline.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/All-Gender-Restroom-Report.pdf>
- 3 Claire Murata, email communication to patron and Library staff, February 16, 2017.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Southern Poverty Law Center, "Ten Days After: Harassment and Intimidation in the Aftermath of the Election," *Southern Poverty Law Center*, November 29, 2016, <https://www.splcenter.org/20161129/ten-days-after-harassment-and-intimidation-aftermath-election>;
- Jack Jenkins, "ThinkProgress has been tracking hate since Trump's election. Here's what we found." *ThinkProgress*, February 19, 2017, <https://thinkprogress.org/thinkprogress-has-been-tracking-hate-since-trumps-election-here-s-what-we-found-e0288ed69869>
- 7 Cheryl Roberts, "Creating Context for Understanding the First Amendment and our Community Standard," *Shoreline Community College Day at a Glance*, February 28, 2017, <https://daag.shoreline.edu/2017/02/28/first-amendment-and-our-community-standard/>;
- Nellie Ferguson, "Free Speech vs. Hate Speech: Where Do We Draw the Line?" *EbbTide*, June 1, 2017, <http://theebbtide.com/2017/06/free-speech-vs-hate-speech-where-do-we-draw-the-line/>
- 8 Todd Honma, "Trippin' Over the Color Line: The Invisibility of Race in Library and Information Studies," *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies*, 1, no. 2 (2005), <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/4nj0w1mp>
- 9 Freeda Brook, Dave Ellenwood, & Althea Eannance Lazzaro, "In Pursuit of Antiracist Social Justice: Denaturalizing Whiteness in the Academic Library," *Library Trends*, 64, no. 2 (2015): 246-284,
- 10 Jian Wang and Donald G. Frank, "Cross-cultural communication: implications for effective information services in academic libraries," *Portal: Libraries & The Academy* 2, 2 (2002): 207-216, [http://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1063&context=ulib\\_fac](http://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1063&context=ulib_fac); Lorrie Knight, Maryann Hight,

and Lisa Polfer, "Rethinking the library for the international student community," *Reference Services Review*, 38, 4 (2010): 581-605, <https://doi.org/10.1108/00907321011090746>

11 ALA Office for Diversity, "Diversity Counts," *American Library Association Diversity Counts*, accessed June 4, 2017. <http://www.ala.org/offices/diversity/diversitycounts/divcounts>

Social Justice and Equity-3 *continued from page 11*

One longer-term library program also visibly reflects social justice values that affect students in the current climate. Arising out of the campus's past involvement and ongoing political public teach-back conversational programming during the Seattle OCCUPY movement in 2011, the library at Seattle Central College facilitates a weekly and open to the public "Conversations on Social Issues" (COSI) program that looks at the intersections of past and ongoing social and political issues through guest speakers, performances, participant Q&A's, book displays, [coordinated video recordings and LibGuides](#). Although COSI is designed to be an intellectual freedom program, the topics each quarter are submitted by members of the community and reflect the immediate realities of their lives. This effectively means that, much of the time, the topics speak to social justice issues that are part of the current lived experiences of the Central community.

Our team felt that maintaining a guise of neutrality within a community so focused on social justice initiatives and equity would have made us passively complicit with harmful presidential messaging and unscrupulous media. The library as a space, and especially the Reference staff, is not neutral because we acknowledge the historic and ongoing nature of institutional racism, anti-blackness, xenophobia, Islamophobia, transphobia, homophobia, anti-Semitism, and other forms of discrimination. As Archbishop Desmond Tutu reminds us, "If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality." Libraries are rarely neutral, as our actions always reflect our conscious or unconscious biases. We do not choose the side of the oppressor, and so the visual cues at Central are one way of expressing a conscious bias in favor of letting students know the library is for them. 📖

# Things are (not) Gonna Get Easier: Teaching Online Information Evaluation with Tupac

by Jenifer Becker

Following 2016 when “Post-Truth” was the word of the year, the Washington State University (WSU) library, along with many libraries across the nation, sought to give our users tools to fact check claims on the internet.<sup>1</sup> Many of the traditional library outreach methods were employed, including the creation of a library guide, a bookmark repurposing IFLA’s creative “How to Spot Fake News” infographic, and a display.<sup>2</sup> The display, however, broke away from the norm; it dissected an article following the Tupac-is-alive urban legend.



*Is Tupac Living it Up in Cuba? Display at the WSU Vancouver Library*

Under the sensationalized title “Is Tupac Living It Up in Cuba?” students were asked to consider an article’s headline, authority, and claims, along with the posting website’s contact information, domain name history, and excessive advertisement. The article in question, Celebtricity’s “2Pac is Living in Cuba, Leaks 2016 Diss Track (Audio),” is one of countless stories to suggest the rap icon Tupac Shakur, who was killed in 1996, faked his death – the millennial equivalent, if you will, of the Elvis Presley is alive urban legend.<sup>3</sup> The article – URL, scandalous advertisements, and all – took center stage of the display with lines extending from various segments of the screen shot to advice on how to evaluate that specific information.

Advice was faceted in a way that hopefully allowed our entire community to find an evaluation method to take away and use. The simple tools required nothing more than observation of the article’s page, such as finding a byline and the credited author or examining the advertisements and recommended articles surrounding the article. Though not much more involved, the next step was to venture around the website, including checking out the host’s contact us or about us information. In the case of Celebtricity, the Contact Us page was the only location they disclosed they were a satirical site. The more complex evaluation methods required hunting down additional information. Here, viewers saw the outcomes of visiting the fact-checking website Snopes and were encouraged to check the history of the domain name through the Internet Archives’ Wayback Machine.<sup>4</sup>

The display concluded with a suggestion to visit the Evaluating

---

*Jenifer Becker is a Reference Librarian with Washington State University Vancouver.*

Online Information LibGuide for additional help and, of course, encouragement to talk to a reference librarian if they ran into any trouble.<sup>5</sup> No real evaluation method was used to see how well the display went over – assuming that getting a chuckle out of double takes cannot be considered empirical. During the near month the display was up, the Evaluating Online Information Library Guide received 26 views, more than 40% of its current total views since its creation in February.

As with many libraries’ efforts to tackle fake news, the 2016 Presidential Election was the

impetus for the display. By addressing this serious issue with a long standing urban legend, however, we found a way to engage students in a city where 316 votes separated Hillary Clinton supporters from Donald Trump supporters.<sup>6</sup> As Tupac, Elvis, Sasquatch and all the other urban legends circulating suggest, false information on the internet long predates this election. Though we may collectively cross our fingers and hope for updated Google and Facebook algorithms to help sift the accurate from the erroneous, false information will likely outlive contemporary post-election fervor in the United States and abroad. Sadly, things are not going to get easier, but perhaps with the current applied focus on improving online information literacy, our users will be able to keep their head up in the onslaught of erroneous information. \* 📖

\*As with the title, this sentence is derived from Shakur, Tupac, *Keep Ya Head Up*, Atlantic Records, 1993.

## NOTES

1 “*Oxford Dictionaries* Word of the Year 2016 is...” Oxford Dictionaries, accessed 7 June 2017. <https://www.oxforddictionaries.com/press/news/2016/12/11/WOTY-16>

2 “How to Spot Fake News,” *International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions*, last modified 29 May 2017. <https://www.ifla.org/publications/node/11174>

3 “2pac Shakur is Living in Cuba, Leaks 2016 Diss Track (AUDIO),” *Celebtricity*, accessed 10 February 2017. <http://www.celebtricity.com/2pac-shakur-is-living-in-cuba-leaks-2015-diss-track-audio/>

*continued on page 29*

# Serving Unhoused Patrons: Library Services in a State of Emergency

by Hayden Bass and Hallie Cranos

Seattle is in a state of homelessness emergency. In January 2017, All Home's Count Us In effort revealed 11,643 unhoused people in King County. Staggering rent increases have led to a 55% increase in people living outside from 2012 to 2016.<sup>1</sup> What is the library's role in responding to this crisis?

In 2015 and 2016, Seattle Public Library (SPL) staff engaged in listening sessions with Seattleites experiencing homelessness. Staff heard a general consensus that libraries can be a refuge and a connector for people living in transition. At the same time, some unhoused people face barriers in accessing library services, so it is critical to bring our services and resources to where people are.

## The Community Resource Specialist project

The library has many partners who help us connect low income and unhoused patrons with community resources. Our newest effort in this area is the Community Resource Specialist (CRS) project, a two-year social service information and referral position funded by the Seattle Public Library Foundation and hired through a contract with the Downtown Emergency Service Center (DESC). Hallie Cranos began in the CRS position in March 2016, providing drop-in hours and appointments at Central Library, and later adding a weekly shift at the Ballard branch. Hallie provides information and referrals to housing, job assistance, transportation, and much more.

This is a new model for us, and we weren't sure whether or not it would work. But we have been astonished by the project's success. We hoped the CRS would make at least 50 referrals each month; the average is actually 106. Ninety percent of patrons who offer feedback rate the service as either helpful or very helpful in moving them towards their goal. Perhaps surprisingly, the mere existence of the service has had a positive effect on how insecurely housed patrons experience the library. In response to the question, "Does knowing this service exists make you feel more welcome in the library?" 71% answered "yes" — including those who said they were not interested in using the service themselves.

Although it's not often possible to know the long-term outcomes associated with the service, there have been many success stories. Multiple patrons have let Hallie know that she connected them with crucial resources, including permanent housing, which changed their lives for the better.

---

*Hayden Bass is Outreach Program Manager and Hallie Cranos is a Community Resource Specialist. Both are with the Seattle Public Library.*

## Outreach to Unhoused Patrons

To better serve patrons who have difficulty accessing our buildings, the library provides monthly outreach to eight sanctioned encampments currently within the city limits. Nickelsville Othello and Tent City 3 (Interbay) receive monthly Bookmobile service, and all camps have regular opportunities for residents to sign up for library cards, learn about services, check out books, and be considered for fine and fee waivers.

Thanks to Seattle Mayor Ed Murray's Youth Voice/Youth Choice program, we have a collection of 50 WiFi hotspots specifically for unhoused patrons. These have a longer checkout period than the hotspots in our catalog, and come with waterproof bags and lock boxes to accommodate life in a tent. While 50 hotspots are not enough to fully meet the needs of these communities, participants in the program describe it as a lifeline. They use hotspots to research and apply for jobs, make medical appointments, and attend school online. Participants especially appreciate connecting to friends, family, and entertainment. As one man said, "When you're homeless, all day is a struggle. Being able to just relax and watch TV shows at night is such a relief."

The library serves families and young adults experiencing homelessness through rich partnerships with service providers. For example, last summer the library hosted a series of successful summer science activities at Sacred Heart Shelter. By working closely with the shelter and families to design the program, being consistent, and continually gathering feedback, librarians reached the outcome the partner had identified: building relationships among the children staying at the shelter. Similarly, youth drop-ins at the Central and University branches create community and prioritize the interested and needs of unhoused young adults. Librarians work with partners to connect young people with case workers, health care, educational opportunities, and more.

While the library's role in responding to the housing crisis continues to evolve, we remain focused on doing what libraries do best: being a connector, building community, and working to make sure everyone is included. 📖

## NOTES

1 2017 Seattle/King County Count Us In Executive Summary Report. All Home. King County, Seattle WA. Retrieved from <http://allhomekc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/2017-King-PIT-Count-EXEC-SUMMARY-ONLY-FINAL-DRAFT-5.31.17.pdf>.

# Washington Talking Book & Braille Library: Connecting with Underserved Communities Through Outreach and Programming

by Danielle Miller & Marian Mays

People with disabilities often face a multitude of obstacles to library services. Locating information resources in accessible formats and navigating the limited availability of these collections can be a challenge. Library programming can also present as a barrier to library services when programs are not accessible or adapted to individual patron needs.

The Washington Talking Book & Braille Library (WTBBL) provides comprehensive library services for Washington residents unable to read standard print due to a visual impairment, a physical disability (unable to hold a book or turn a page), or a reading disability. Our goal is to reduce barriers to library service for these underserved populations by building community and providing equal access to information and reading materials. A statewide service, WTBBL is a program of the Washington State Library and a regional library in the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped/Library of Congress network of libraries.

We often hear that we are one of the best kept secrets in Washington. We don't want to be a secret, and our vision, "That all may read," is a driving force behind our outreach efforts and our spirit of service. Our top priority is to reach people who are unable to read standard print, who are unable to fully utilize resources or libraries within their communities, or who are unable to obtain accessible materials. During 2016, WTBBL increased our efforts to market our services to potential patrons and focused resources on three particularly underserved user groups; older adults, the Latino community, and youth with differing abilities.

## Older Adults.

WTBBL's largest group of patrons are seniors, and as the population ages, the risk of low vision and blindness increases significantly with age, particularly in those over age 65, according to a 2004 National Eye Institute study<sup>1</sup>. Findings from the 2015 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) data release estimated 23.7 million adult Americans (or 10% of all adult Americans) reported they either "have trouble" seeing, even when wearing glasses or contact lenses, or that they are blind or unable to see at all.<sup>2</sup> Experts predict that by

2030, rates of severe vision loss will double along with the country's aging population. The first wave of the 78 million baby boomer generation turns 65 in 2011, jumpstarting a two-decade period of growth in America's 65 and older population<sup>3</sup>. By 2030, the number of people over the age of 65 will double to 71.5 million, or 20% of the population.<sup>4</sup>



*WTBBL teen patrons playing giant "Jenga" at a library accessible gaming event.*

In light of these trends, we put together a team of three staff members in an outreach effort targeted toward older adults, primarily through visiting care facilities and retirement homes. This statewide effort allowed us to visit and assess existing locations with organizational library accounts, created opportunities to register individual patrons, raised public awareness of our services, and created an opportunity for our Patron Advisory Council members to team with staff on site visits. We found that the combination of a

staff member and a current patron established the greatest rapport with residents and confidence in our service. Two staff members focused on visiting retirement homes in the greater Seattle area and conducted presentations, and tabled various events, while the third staff member did the bulk of the traveling and presentations statewide. This past year alone, WTBBL visited 204 retirement homes and care facilities in 53 cities. We feel that our visits had an impact because 21% of facilities visited began service with new accounts and our overall borrowship increased by 5 percent.

## Latino Community.

According to the Washington State Office of Financial Management 2015 data, the Hispanic Community ranked 12th highest among the United States in total Hispanic/Latino population and 15th in percent share of Hispanic/Latino population.<sup>5</sup> Over the years, we have had challenges providing outreach to the Latino community, and with no frontline staff members fluent in Spanish, our readers advisory team could not present any refinement or tailoring of service to our Spanish speaking patrons. Furthermore, our collection is fairly limited in foreign language titles. We were concerned that individuals who have difficulty reading standard print and face a language barrier could become a heavily underserved population.

As a result of these challenges, we knew our Spanish speaking patrons hadn't received the same level of service as our English language patrons. Our first step was to make it possible for a native Spanish-speaking staff member to become active in direct library services. Our staff member began with readers advisory, building relationships

---

*Danielle Miller is Director & Marian Mays is Youth Services Librarian. Both are with the Washington Talking Book & Braille Library.*

*continued on next page*

with existing patrons, and translating our brochure, library service application, and other materials. We used grassroots efforts through Spanish radio stations, including the Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs radio program, to begin making connections with the community. Through these stations we participated in interviews that gave us the opportunity to talk about our service and recruit potential volunteers. Serendipitously, we developed relationships that led to tabling opportunities, community events, and overall, in 2016, we saw an increase of 33% in Spanish speaking patrons registered for service.

Here at WTBBL, we have used our recording studios to supplement our collection by producing locally-recorded English audio books. Over the past year, our goal has been to add locally produced books in Spanish as well. Committed to the quality of our books, we knew we needed multiple volunteers who were native Spanish speakers, who could pass our narrator audition, and had great attention to detail. We recruited these narrators via Spanish language radio interviews and community outreach. We surveyed our patrons who are actively receiving Spanish language materials for collection development input. With the help of four exceptional volunteers, committed staff members, and support from the Hispanic and Latino community, many popular Spanish books including *Hoyos* by Louis Sachar will soon be available for our patrons.

#### **Youth with Differing Abilities.**

Over the past year, we've also increased our efforts to provide services and programming for youth with differing abilities who are eligible for our service. Through creativity and innovation, we engaged youth and families and revitalized WTBBL services for youth. We accomplished this goal by increasing youth programming efforts, outreaching to multiple schools, organizations, and conferences across the state of Washington, collaborating with Teachers of the Visually Impaired, building partnerships with birth to three providers, and promoting braille literacy through our collections and programs.

Though our youth patrons are spread throughout the state, promoting a love of literacy is our main priority. Whether virtually or in-house, WTBBL's youth services program rises to the challenge. Hundreds of children and families were served in the library through our weekly multisensory storytimes that incorporated accessible sensory play and early literacy skills. We grew our storytime through a new partnership with the Washington State School for the Blind Birth-Three Coordinator and King County Birth-3 Vision Services to bring families and associated educators to sing, read, play, dance, and make new connections while exploring the senses. We were awarded a 2016 Teen Tech Week grant from the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) and an accessible gaming lab for our youth patrons was created. One of the most popular games was "giant Jenga," reaching almost five feet tall. The gaming lab has given us even more opportunities to travel around the state, perform outreach, meet new teachers and students, and help our youth patrons feel welcome.

Our annual, by-mail summer reading program in Braille, large print, and/or Spanish through the Collaborative Summer Reading Program engaged youth patrons with recommended reads and suggested activities to maintain literacy skills throughout the summer. Encouraging literacy and peer engagement, we continued our popular pen pal program that connects blind and visually impaired youth across the state. Students of all ages and writing levels are matched with another student of similar grade or age and in braille or large print categories. Throughout a three-month period, students improve their reading and writing skills. The minimum writing requirement is three letters each, but students often exceed this number and create lifelong friendships.

Beyond providing exceptional service to our existing patrons, WTBBL's aim is to continue to expand our reach and effectiveness with innovative outreach initiatives to increase our overall user population, establish and strengthen borrower relationships, and promote high quality, accessible library and information resources. Data from the U.S. Census Bureau 2011-2015 American Community Survey estimates 12.6% of the noninstitutionalized Washington population, or roughly 869,865 individuals, identify as having a disability,<sup>6</sup> yet WTBBL is currently serving approximately 9,000 active patrons. While not all disabilities included in the Community Survey meet eligibility criteria for WTBBL services, more Washingtonians could be benefiting from WTBBL. As librarians and library staff, you can help spread the word about the Washington Talking Book & Braille Library and help us ensure, "that all may read." 📖

#### **NOTES**

1 "National Eye Institute (4/12/04). Vision Loss from Eye Diseases Will Increase as Americans Age. Retrieved from <https://nei.nih.gov/news/pressreleases/041204>

2 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2015). Summary Health Statistics: National Health Interview Survey. Retrieved from [https://ftp.cdc.gov/pub/Health\\_Statistics/NCHS/NHIS/SHS/2015\\_SHS\\_Table\\_A-6.pdf](https://ftp.cdc.gov/pub/Health_Statistics/NCHS/NHIS/SHS/2015_SHS_Table_A-6.pdf)

3 Prevent Blindness America (2012). Vision Problems in the U.S. Retrieved from <http://www.visionproblemsus.org/>

4 Administration on Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2011). A Profile of Older Americans: 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/livable-communities/learn/demographics/a-profile-of-older-americans-2011-aarp.pdf>

5 Office of Financial Management, "Population of Hispanic/Latino Origin" Access Washington, Retrieved from <http://www.ofm.wa.gov/trends/population/fig307.asp>

6 United States Census Bureau, "American Community Survey" U.S. Department of Commerce, Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/acs/www/data/data-tables-and-tools/data-profiles/2015/>

# Prison Librarianship: Creating Safer Communities

by Anna Nash & Adrienne Breznau

## Anna, Prison Librarian

There are more than 19,000<sup>1</sup> people incarcerated in Washington Department of Corrections (DOC) facilities. That number doesn't include jails, federal prisons, and juvenile facilities or incarceration in the form of commitment or hospitalization.

To thoughtfully contemplate the issues surrounding incarceration is overwhelming. For individuals interested in learning more about incarceration in America I recommend the books *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander and *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson, the documentary *13th* by Ava DuVernay, and the website for [The Sentencing Project](#). This article, though, is not about how we got here or how bad it is; this article is about allies and the importance of libraries on the inside and out.

The average rate of registered users in the prison branches of the Institutional Library Services (ILS) is about 80%. Our branches are used — a lot. This is also the only state where library services are provided by the State Library, which makes me proud to work for the Secretary of State (OSOS). They, and the leadership at the Washington State Library (WSL), recognize the importance of serving incarcerated and hospitalized people, populations that are all too frequently underserved or not served at all. The quality and scope of the library services we provide is a direct result of being a WSL program and the dedicated individuals who are part of ILS. A library is not simply a room full of books. In the absence of library services books alone can be a lifeline, but they don't come close to the value of a library with a well-trained, dedicated staff person who is part of an established program with well-thought out, tested policies and procedures. It is easy to undervalue libraries or completely overlook their importance, but their absence is always felt. When I ask about the library facilities in places that aren't staffed by WSL the response I usually get is that it's just not the same.

Until recently we had an opening at our branch in the Clallam Bay Corrections Center, which is way up by Neah Bay. It is beautiful but it is the end of the world. For two years the library associate position there was unfilled. For two years we have been shuffling coverage in

“It is easy to undervalue libraries or completely overlook their importance, but their absence is always felt.”

the Western Washington branches in order to provide part time access to the library. The staff who cover the branch get tired and dejected. The constant travel, seemingly endless issues with the schedule, and lack of support from the facility can wear a person down.

Over and over, though, their spirits

are rallied by the people incarcerated there. The patrons know how difficult it is to cover the branch, it is their acknowledgement and thanks that keeps us going.

I have worked in five different prisons over the past eight years, providing library services to the men and women incarcerated in DOC facilities. During this time, I've met many people and heard many stories and histories from staff and people who are incarcerated. The more I learn and the longer I am here, the more motivated I become to do what I can to help. The more I learn about reentry the more convinced I believe that libraries are one of the most natural allies for people reentering their community. One of the biggest issues for people leaving incarceration, particularly those who don't have strong family and financial support, is locating information about housing, jobs, and assistance in the community. Institutional Library Services has been making collective efforts to organize and provide reliable up-to-date reentry information for more than 10 years. What better group to locate, vet, and collect information than information professionals trained in the fine art of assessing information authority?

Libraries outside of prison are natural allies too — and not just public libraries. In 2013 the Rand Corporation published a study<sup>2</sup> that found that, “Inmates who participate in correctional education programs had a 43 percent lower odds of recidivating than those who did not. This translates to a reduction in the risk of recidivating of 13 percentage points.” While there is some access to higher education in a few facilities, and access to correspondence courses for those who can afford it, it is not available to the majority of the people who are incarcerated. There is a strong emphasis on seeking higher education or vocational training upon release, so my patrons will soon be patrons in your public and academic libraries.

---

Anna Nash is the Institutional Librarian with Institutional Library Services at the Washington State Library. Adrienne Breznau is a Public Services Supervisor with Kitsap Regional Library.

*continued on next page*

**Adrienne, Public Librarian, former Prison Librarian**

Being a prison librarian is one of the most impactful library jobs because you see your patrons sometimes on a daily basis and the help you provide can be life-changing. It is, however, *the most difficult job I have ever had*. Even so, I had mixed feelings about getting out of prison librarianship. Six years in, I could certainly understand where my patrons were coming from when they expressed anxiety over their impending release, even with a great support system. Oftentimes the prison library was the first library contact for people in prison, and I encouraged them to utilize their public libraries on the outside without really knowing what reception they would get but relying on the “Open to All” mantra of libraries. I knew there had been one prison library/public library collaboration with Free to Learn and Denver Public Library<sup>3</sup>, and that inspired me to want to keep helping and advocating for recently released people on the outside.

Having both a prison and public library perspective gives me unique insight into helping patrons and connecting people with resources. Occasionally I will have patrons self-identify as having just gotten out of prison. However, from a library perspective, it does not matter whether people are ex-offenders because you strive to offer the same level of service to all. Help doesn't always come in the form of giving someone the information for housing or benefits, sometimes it comes in the form of being mindful of people's needs and acting quickly when you see something wrong. For example, one of my staff alerted me to the fact that a patron reported her abusive ex-boyfriend (with whom she had just broken up) was hanging around the library and making her uncomfortable. A little while later, we noticed them having a heated discussion by the computers. I called 911 and police arrested the man. When the woman approached me later and asked if I was the one to call for help, I said yes. She thanked me and said she didn't have the heart to turn him in herself.

Sometimes, helping justice-involved people doesn't go exactly the way you want it to at first because of institutionalized responses people learn while incarcerated. My most memorable situation happened when a young, homeless, self-identified juvenile sex offender started spraying his shoes with aerosol deodorant inside the library. My brain clicked into prison librarian mode and I approached him in a very authoritarian manner, asked him what he was doing and instructed him to stop. He responded by arguing with me and denying that he was doing anything wrong and making excuses as to why he should be allowed to spray his shoes indoors. Ultimately, our Teen Librarian who had previously built a great rapport with him helped facilitate a discussion where I explained I was a former prison librarian, he explained that he has really been working on his responses because in prison he would just black out and explode at anyone in a position of authority. We were able to come to an understanding that when we needed to communicate with him, it was to ensure that the library was a safe and welcoming place for everyone and not because we were picking on him. Because libraries are pro-social institutions, it

is our responsibility to ensure that we are giving everyone a chance to succeed as we hold patrons accountable for their actions.

**Stronger Together**

It behooves us to welcome our returning citizens without prejudice. With that in mind we created Washington Libraries for Successful Reentry (WALSUR), a group of institution and community library staff who believe that the men and women who are leaving incarceration, in all its many forms, deserve another chance at becoming happy, healthy, productive member of our community. Our vision for WALSUR is to connect people who are about to be or have been recently released from prison with library staff in all libraries who can help them succeed by being that familiar, safe, and reliable information provider in a rapidly changing world. Even something as simple as attending one of the WADOC Reentry Fairs and introducing yourself as someone who is willing to help in a nonjudgmental environment can start someone on the path to a successful reentry. When we make everyone's success a priority our communities become more connected and safer which is a win for all. If you are interested in joining please go to <https://www.sos.wa.gov/library/libraries/lists.aspx> and sign up for the listserv or email us.

As a final note, the Institutional Library Services will have some openings in the near future. Correctional librarianship is not easy but it is incredibly rewarding. If you have any questions about the positions and if they are a right fit for you please reach out to [laura.sherbo@sos.wa.gov](mailto:laura.sherbo@sos.wa.gov). 

**NOTES**

1 Department of Corrections Fact Card (March 31, 2017) <http://www.doc.wa.gov/docs/publications/reports/100-QA001.pdf>

2 Davis, Lois M., Robert Bozick, Jennifer L. Steele, Jessica Saunders, Jeremy N. V. Miles, Evaluating the Effectiveness of Correctional Education: A Meta-Analysis of Programs That Provide Education to Incarcerated Adults. RAND Corporation, 2013. Online [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR266.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR266.html)

3 Free to Learn: your life, your community, your library, Denver Public Library FY 10-11 <http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/cdelib/lsta/download/pdf/freetolearn.pdf>

# Higher Education in the Washington State Prison System

by *Samantha Hines*

As the new Associate Dean of Instructional Resources at Peninsula College (which includes being the library director), I've been spending some time since my arrival in September 2016 learning about how things work here in Washington. While I grew up in Spokane, I've had various other state's license plates on my car since 1999. Having just spent 12 years living in Missoula, Montana, the longest time I've spent in one place, it's been an adventure to find out why things happen the way they do in a very different environment.

In my new town of Port Angeles, I've been trying to find some ways to get involved in the community. One of the groups I've started working with, the Port Angeles Racial Justice Collective (RJC), was invited to the Clallam Bay Corrections Center in March 2017 to participate in a racial justice forum put together by the prisoners. Prior to this visit the most contact I've had with prisoners was working with a few students in Missoula who had some restrictions on internet access as part of their conditions for pre-release. All I had ever seen of a prison came from movies or television. However, I was eager to attend this event to find out more about this group of people particularly since I knew my college provided some adult basic education programs there.

I tried to rid myself of my pre-conceived notions as we drove the 90 minutes to the center, particularly since my five-year-old spent the morning worried that I was going to where the 'bad guys' were. The RJC members in the car with me had visited the prison many times and let me know what to expect logistically. It ended up being a wonderful experience. The forum was an outgrowth of the T.E.A.C.H. (Taking Education and Creating History) program at Clallam Bay that had been organized by the Black Prisoners' Caucus. The love and desire for education that these men of all races and ages had was absolutely inspiring to me as an educator. The way education can build community and peace was evident throughout

**“If education can potentially lift one out of a cycle of poverty, inequality, and crime, doesn't it make sense to make education available to those who are caught in the cycle, to the benefit of all in society?”**

the day, and it reminded me why my work was important.

However, my warm and fuzzy feelings were tempered by my learning that in 1995, Washington State followed federal example and began prohibiting the use of public funds to support higher education for incarcerated people, and that only adult basic education and vocational programs were available to prisoners<sup>1</sup>. This has been

addressed in the most recent legislative session with the Providing Associate Degree Education to Enhance Education Opportunities and Public Safety Act of 2017, and in the future associates' degrees will be offered through partnerships with the state's community and technical colleges, but as of this writing the only college level classes available in Washington prisons are offered via private partnerships like T.E.A.C.H.<sup>2</sup>, Freedom Education Project<sup>3</sup>, or University Beyond Bars<sup>4</sup> and depend on volunteer efforts and donations.

Perhaps it goes without saying that there are huge racial discrepancies between the prison population and the total population. In Washington state, Black or African-American persons make up 3.6% of the population<sup>5</sup>; however, the Black/African American population in Washington State Prisons is 18.7%<sup>6</sup>. Nationwide, almost one in twelve Black men between the ages of 25 and 54 is incarcerated, compared with 1 in 60 non-Black men, 1 in 200 Black women and 1 in 500 non-Black women. Around 30% of Black men without a high school diploma are incarcerated, while only 19% are employed<sup>7</sup>. There is much dispute as to the reasons behind the high incarceration rate for persons of color, but particularly when looking at the case of Black men without a high school diploma, it's hard to argue that race as well as education doesn't play a role.

Although I knew race was clearly an issue, it surprised me to learn that no educational services are available to undocumented prisoners. Honestly, it was surprising to me to learn there were undocumented prisoners. I had always assumed that undocumented individuals that caught the attention of law enforcement were deported, particularly if they were convicted of committing a

---

*Samantha Hines is the Associate Dean for Instructional Resources/Library Director for Peninsula College.*

*continued on next page*

crime in the United States. I have since learned that there is a lot of disparity as to how undocumented persons who have committed crimes are treated, and that there are an estimated 820,000 in the U.S. who have been convicted of crimes. 300,000 of these have been convicted of felonies. This is less than three percent of the 11 million estimated undocumented persons in the United States. The percentage of felons in the overall U.S. population is around 6%<sup>8</sup>. Recent political action and opinion around this population demonstrates that undocumented individuals don't have much support for social services in general, much less in prison.

When looking at socioeconomic status, U.S. Census data from 2011 highlights the radical disparity that race brings in our country—while white households had a median net worth of \$91,405, Black households had one of \$6,446, about 7 percent that of white households. This gap has grown since the mid-1980s<sup>9</sup>. This shocking level of income disparity can help explain a lack of access to educational support and funding for higher education. High school completion rates among Black people are at 89% in 2012, compared to 92% for white people. College completion rates in 2012 were at 34% for white people and 21% for Black people<sup>10</sup>. Workers who have completed education beyond high school receive a huge salary boost of anywhere from \$12,000 to \$35,000 per year, and more and more jobs are demanding education beyond high school<sup>11</sup>.

Education, particularly higher education, can be said to be a prerequisite to living-wage employment. Several economists and sociologists have studied the connections of unemployment and crime, notably Robert Crutchfield, Professor of Sociology at UW, in his recent book *Get a Job: Labor Markets, Economic Opportunity and Crime* (2014), who examined the factors of social inequality and disadvantage in finding employment. If education can potentially lift one out of a cycle of poverty, inequality, and crime, doesn't it make sense to make education available to those who are caught in the cycle, to the benefit of all in society?

The barriers to higher education in general are probably well known to most library workers: education takes time, costs money, and may not be available locally. We are probably also familiar with some ways around these barriers, such as student financial aid and online educational opportunities. Autor, in his research on the benefits of higher education, found that individuals' educational attainment is predicted by parental education and parental earnings, which contributes to social stratification and reinforces barriers to education<sup>12</sup>.

Within the prison system, these barriers are exacerbated. In Washington State, up until recently, higher education opportunities were not generally available, and were not supported with state funds. This is not unusual, as discussed previously. Most states followed the federal example of the mid-1990s in cutting these

programs. Obviously, there is no student financial aid available. Online courses are also not an option as prisoners are not allowed access to the open web. A further barrier to higher education is lack of readiness—in Washington, about 59% of prisoners are under the 12th grade level of education<sup>13</sup>.

Other barriers to receiving education in prison are the environment—it's a noisy place and not well set up for studying—as well as the denial of privileges as punishment, which can make schedules unpredictable. Educational opportunities are often classed with recreation in prison environments, which is one of the first privileges denied<sup>14</sup>. In addition, any costs associated with education have to be borne by prisoners themselves, who earn very low wages. Interestingly, Washington State Correctional Industries' prison labor force produces many products for state colleges and universities<sup>15</sup>.

A further barrier to education in prison which we ought to be familiar with as a profession is the restrictions placed upon library services in this setting. Resources are almost always limited to print materials due to computer and internet access restrictions, and budgets as well as staffing are scant. Despite these challenges, librarians working with the incarcerated and recently released strive to provide innovative programs and services focused on developing employment skills and supporting educational opportunities<sup>16</sup>.

Once these barriers are worked past, there's a preponderance of evidence that shows educational programs help prisoners find employment and reduce recidivism. A study tracking participants in academic degree programs from Walla Walla Community College showed that their employment rates were 25.5% one year after release versus 15.7% of similar populations who hadn't received these educational opportunities. Further, the recidivism rate for the program participants was 19.6% versus 36% for similar populations<sup>17</sup>. The benefit-to-cost ratio for these programs is very high, demonstrating the returns on the spending outweigh the initial financial burden<sup>18</sup>.

Beyond the economic and criminological motives, most of us in librarianship can relate to the concept of education as transformative. One of our profession's core values, as enumerated by the American Library Association, is education and lifelong learning. Alongside other such values as democracy, access, public good, and social responsibility, as a profession we support learning and access to opportunities to learn as beneficial to our democratic society. While inmates and volunteers are working together to fill in gaps and address barriers, the educational challenges faced those in the prison system is a societal problem that librarians should know about, particularly as our laws and programs in Washington state are set to broaden access.

As library workers, given the lack of diversity in our profession,

most of us probably fall into the category of ‘good white person’ who by virtue of our class and race have not had much to do with prisoners nor have thought much about why they’re there or how their societal struggles could be bettered. Before this forum I attended I certainly hadn’t thought much about prison beyond, as my five-year-old said, “that’s where the bad guys go.” However, 95% of the time, prisoners will leave the prison, and it’s vital to think beyond this perspective to how we can support those who have served time in becoming part of our democratic society<sup>9</sup>. Education is a demonstrated way to open hearts and minds and improve outcomes, and I’m excited to see what my college will contribute in the coming years thanks to this legislative change and how I can support their endeavors both as a library professional and as a citizen of the Olympic Peninsula where several prisons are located.

## NOTES

1 Long, Katherine. “Behind Bars, College is Back in Session in Some Washington Prisons.” *Seattle Times*. January 16, 2015. <http://www.seattletimes.com/news/behind-bars-college-is-back-in-session-in-some-washington-prisons/>

2 Black Prisoners’ Caucus. “Current Programs.” *T.E.A.C.H.* 2007. <http://www.blackprisonerscaucus.org/currentprogramsofbpc/t-e-a-c-h>

3 Freedom Education Project Puget Sound. *Why College in Prison*. 2017. <http://www.fepps.org/why-college-in-prison/>

4 University Beyond Bars. Academics. 2017. <http://www.universitybeyondbars.org/programs/>

5 Office of Financial Management. “Executive Summary: Population by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2010-2016.” *Access Washington: Official State Government Website*. 2017. [http://www.ofm.wa.gov/pop/asr/race/ofm\\_pop\\_race\\_2010\\_and\\_2016\\_summary.pdf](http://www.ofm.wa.gov/pop/asr/race/ofm_pop_race_2010_and_2016_summary.pdf)

6 University Beyond Bars.

7 Gao, George. “Chart of the Week: The Black-White Gap in Incarceration Rates.” *Fact Tank: News in the Numbers*. July 18, 2014. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/07/18/chart-of-the-week-the-black-white-gap-in-incarceration-rates/>

8 Yee, Vivian, Kenan Davis, and Jugal K. Patel. “Here’s the Reality About Illegal Immigrants in the United States.” *New York Times*. March 6, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/03/06/us/politics/undocumented-illegal-immigrants.html>

9 Pew Research Center. “King’s Dream Remains an Elusive Goal; Many Americans See Racial Disparities: Chapter 3: Demographic and Economic Data by Race.” *Social and Demographic Trends*. Aug. 22, 2013. <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2013/08/22/chapter-3-demographic-economic-data-by-race/>

10 *ibid*

11 Autor, David H. “Skills, Education and the Rise of Earnings Inequality Among the ‘Other 99 Percent.’” *Science* 344, no. 6186 (2014): 843-851. DOI: 10.1126/science.1251868

12 Evans, Michael. Tracking Washington State Offenders Pilot Study: Do Educational Programs Affect Employment Outcomes? Olympia, Wash.: Washington State Department of Corrections. March 2011. <http://www.doc.wa.gov/docs/publications/reports/200-SR005.pdf>

13 Autor, David H. “Skills, Education and the Rise of Earnings Inequality Among the ‘Other 99 Percent.’” *Science* 344, no. 6186 (2014): 843-851. DOI: 10.1126/science.1251868

14 Lewen, Jody. “The Barriers to Education for a Prisoner.” *Aspen Ideas Festival Blog*. May 12, 2016. <https://www.aspenideas.org/blog/barriers-education-prisoner>

15 Washington State Correctional Industries. *Higher Education Products and Services*. 2016. <http://www.washingtonci.com/products-services/your-markets/higher-education.html>

16 Lilienthal, Stephen M. “Prison and Libraries: Public Service Inside and Out.” *Library Journal*. Feb. 4, 2013. [http://lj.libraryjournal.com/2013/02/library-services/prison-and-public-libraries/#\\_](http://lj.libraryjournal.com/2013/02/library-services/prison-and-public-libraries/#_)

17 Evans.

18 Aos, Steve and Elizabeth Drake. *Prison, Police, and Programs: Evidence-based Options that Reduce Crime and Save Money* (Doc. No. 13-11-1901). Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy. November 2013. [http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/ReportFile/1396/Wsipp\\_Prison-Police-and-Programs-Evidence-Based-Options-that-Reduce-Crime-and-Save-Money\\_Full-Report.pdf](http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/ReportFile/1396/Wsipp_Prison-Police-and-Programs-Evidence-Based-Options-that-Reduce-Crime-and-Save-Money_Full-Report.pdf)

19 Roose-Church, Lisa. “Education Behind Bars Works, But It Can Be Hard to Come By.” *Livingston Daily*. April 6, 2017. <http://www.livingstondaily.com/story/news/local/community/livingstoncounty/2017/04/06/education-in-prison/99999514/>

5 Large, Jerry. "Librarians take up arms against fake news." *Seattle Times*. Feb. 6, 2017. <http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/librarians-take-up-arms-against-fake-news>

6 Stanford History Education Group. "Evaluating Information: The Cornerstone of Civic Online Reasoning." Nov. 22, 2016. <https://sheg.stanford.edu/upload/V3LessonPlans/Executive%20Summary%2011.21.16.pdf>

7 Washington State Office of the Attorney General. "AG Ferguson Seeks Travel Ban Hearing Tuesday; New Court Filings." Mar. 13, 2017. <http://www.atg.wa.gov/news/news-releases/ag-ferguson-seeks-travel-ban-hearing-tuesday-new-court-filings>

8 City of Seattle. "American Podium: WA State Attorney General Bob Ferguson." *Seattle Channel*. Apr. 1, 2017. <http://www.seattlechannel.org/americanPodium?videoid=x72075>

4 "FALSE: After Nearly 18 years, Tupac Shakur Now 43, Comes Out of Hiding!" *Snopes*, accessed 7 June 2017. <http://www.snopes.com/media/notnews/tupac.asp>; "Summary of Celebrity.com," Internet Archive Wayback Machine, accessed 7 June 2017. [https://web.archive.org/web/\\*/http://celebricity.com](https://web.archive.org/web/*/http://celebricity.com); please note Celebrity.com has since been placed for sale.

5 Becker, Jenifer, "Evaluating Online Information," *WSU Vancouver Library LibGuides*, accessed 7 June 2017. <http://libguides.vancouver.wsu.edu/eoi>

6 "November 8, 2016 General Election," *Clark County Election Results and Archives*, accessed 7 June 2017. <http://results.vote.wa.gov/results/20161108/clark/>

## 39<sup>th</sup> Annual **National Media Market & Conference**

Portland, OR, October 22-26, 2017

At the intersection of librarianship, educational film, streaming and distribution . . .



National Media Market & Conference highlights the best media content, and provides professional development to address constantly evolving issues for content acquisition, access, and promotion. NMM is dedicated to boosting your knowledge and resources in a collegial atmosphere unlike any conference you've ever attended.

\$185 Early registration through August 13<sup>th</sup> includes professional development, meals, social events, one-on-one meetings with distributor reps ... all in a relaxed and informal environment.

Working with media at public, K12, or academic libraries? This is YOUR conference!

**Learn more at [www.nmm.net](http://www.nmm.net)**

**Use discount code NMM10 at [nmm.net/register](http://nmm.net/register) for 10% off the early rate!**



# On Reading Diversely

by Andrea Gough

Let's begin with an exercise. Look back at the books you've read in the past year, and take a tally: How many were written by men, and how many by women? How many were by white writers, and how many by writers of color? White writers dominate the publishing industry, and it can be easy to end up with a reading list consisting largely of white, often male, authors. However, when library staff primarily read white male authors, we are doing a disservice to our patrons and to our fellow staff members.

Here's what we know: reading fiction builds empathy<sup>1</sup>. In an oft-cited study by The New School, researchers found that reading fiction improves a reader's capacity to understand what others are thinking and feeling. We live in a society that is tremendously divided; politically, for sure, as well as racially, economically, ideologically. In our libraries, one of the few places people from every background mingle, let's make sure that we aren't suggesting and displaying books that only reflect

one perspective, thereby reinforcing societal divisions. Library staff are often trusted gatekeepers. Patrons trust our opinions of what to read next, and if we are suggesting books from a narrow swath of the population then we are doing them a disservice.

Taking a step back, what does it mean to read diversely? I like to use the definition created by the #WeNeedDiverseBooks campaign, a grassroots organization mostly focused on advocating for changes in the publishing industry to publish more diverse children and YA books, but I find their definition of diversity very useful when thinking of adult fiction, too. In their definition, reading diversity includes "all diverse experiences, including (but not limited to) LGBTQIA, people of color, gender diversity, people with disabilities, and ethnic, cultural, and religious minorities."

I've spoken with colleagues about the need to read diversely, and I've done some lurking on social media as librarians discuss this topic, and resistance usually comes from two directions. First, the argument that a particular library mostly serves white people. Implicit here is the

idea that those white patrons won't want to read a book by someone who isn't white, or who otherwise isn't like them. Let's be clear here: we're not reading diversely in order to only suggest those books to members of that author's community; we're reading to suggest them to any patron, to help everyone find excellent new authors and titles outside of what they already know. The second resistance, as excruciatingly evidenced in the Twitter conversation rounded up by Book Riot<sup>2</sup>, consists of the idea that "I don't want to read books I

don't like." Trust me, and then go do your own research – for every genre that you love, there are non-white, non-male authors writing great stuff.

I hope you're on board with me thus far, but perhaps you're thinking – how do I start? Or – how do I dig deeper? I'm happy to be a librarian in the age of the internet, as a Google search of something as broad as "Asian-American fiction writers" will return you many titles to add to your to-read list. If your library subscribes to NovelList,

when you go into the Advanced Search you can specify "author cultural identity," as well as any other facets such as age and appeal factors. And people – librarians and staff and public – are creating a tremendous number of lists that can be found in Bibliocommons catalogs. If your library does not use the Bibliocommons interface, hop onto the [Seattle Public Library catalog](#) – try searching "List" for "LGBTQ" and see the [wealth of lists](#) that pop up for you to peruse. And, of course, there are awards lists, with everything from the Pura Belpré Award to the Lambda Literary Awards.

As you find yourself creating displays or booklists, writing blog posts, and talking with patrons about books, this is a nudge to think about always striving to reflect a range of voices in those endeavors. 📖

## NOTES

1 Evans, Chiaet, Julianne. "Novel Finding: Reading Literary Fiction Improves Empathy." *Scientific American*. Springer Nature, 4 Oct. 2013. Web. 23 June 2017.

2 Wetta, Molly. "I Can't Even with Librarians Who Don't Read Diversely." *BOOK RIOT*. N.p., 12 Aug. 2016. Web. 23 June 2017.

---

*Andrea Gough is a Reader Services Librarian at the Seattle Public Library. She is reading The Changeling by Victor LaValle, and recently finished The Shark Club by Ann Taylor Kidd.*

# Library Snapshot Day

by Nono Burling and Craig Seasholes

It all began with an idea. In past years WLA's president-elect, Craig Seasholes, worked with former WLA president Tim Mallory to promote Library Snapshot week. "That was fun, let's do it again!" Somehow the idea reached the desk and mind of Nono Burling, the Social Media coordinator for the Washington State Library and she jumped immediately on board. You see, during her time working at the State Library she'd always secretly harbored the idea of adding a Tumblr page to the Library's offerings. Tumblr is her personal favorite but she knew that there really wasn't time to add another platform. But what about a short term project, two weeks... that's doable right?

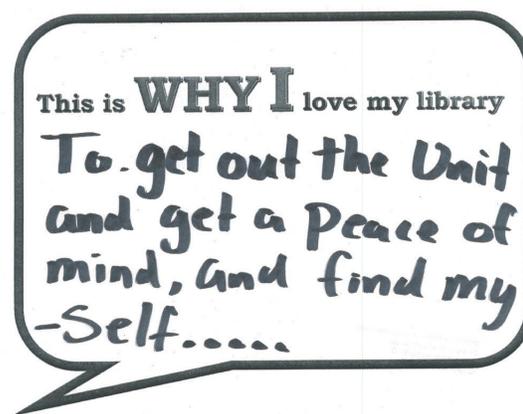
Thus began the partnership that captured two weeks' worth of library love from around our state. We agreed on a hashtag (#WALibrarySnapshot) all important as Facebook and Twitter were our chosen platforms for snapshot collection, Craig designed an image to promote the project and we forged forward. Little did we know what we were in for!

The next two weeks were a wild but wonderful combination of promoting, pestering, searching, discovering and marveling at the variety of things happening in Washington libraries. As pictures turned up on Facebook and Twitter they were downloaded and then uploaded to Tumblr. We're librarians right, we can't just upload without adding metadata, so each image was tagged with its library type, public, academic, school and special, its library system and its branch name thus making it sortable. [The result of all this work](#) is a true homage to libraries in 21st Century America. In the two weeks along with the traditional library programs like Storytime we saw pictures of Comicons, Gala Balls, Outdoor birding, Small Appliance repair workshops, incredibly messy art projects and on and on. Take THAT to anyone who thinks librarians are all about shushing and protecting books!

Lessons learned...

1. Facebook is a lousy way to find pictures via hashtag
2. Facebook is however a great place to find wonderful pictures (and then beg for permission)
3. Twitter is easier to find the pictures but they download as an odd file type.
4. School libraries have a hard time taking pictures because of their protection rules
5. It took a long time and a lot of work.
6. All that time was worth it because Yowza! We have incredible libraries in our state.

After all was said and done those pictures needed another venue. So, we gathered up a few of them and turned them into a video "[This is what a Library Looks Like](#)". We'd like to thank all the libraries that participated and hope that we can find a way do this or something similar next year. 📖



Comment from inmate at Stafford Creek Corrections Center.

---

Nono Burling is the Social Media Coordinator with the Washington State Library. Craig Seasholes is a teacher-librarian with the Seattle Public Schools, WLMA division chair, WLA president-elect.



*Whitman County Library's Thursday Yoga Classes*



*Messy Art Day at Longview Public Library*



*Fore-edge painting from Chrysmela: a selection from the lyrical poems of Robert Herrick. Western Washington University Library Special Collections*



*Columbia County Rural Library District's "Back By Noon" outdoor program, a partnership with Blue Mountain Audubon-Walla Walla.*



*Poetry reading at Lake Washington Technical College*



*Airplane Reading at John Campbell Primary, Selah School District*

# At Your Service: Clarifying Service Animal Rules

by Joan McBride and Toby Olson

Service animals provide critical services to hundreds of people living with disabilities in Washington. These highly-trained animals perform tasks ranging from guiding people with visual impairments to going for help when someone with a seizure disorder has a seizure. However, there is often confusion about what the rules are around service animals, conflicts between federal and state law, and abuse by individuals misrepresenting pets as service animals.

In order to better understand common issues around service animals and to explore possible solutions, the Legislature asked the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment and the Human Rights Commission to convene a work group to study and report on service animal issues, which they have agreed to do. The Legislature often considers bills regarding service animals and the service animal work group will provide valuable insights and information for legislators to make informed and helpful decisions.

Some of the issues the work group may explore include:

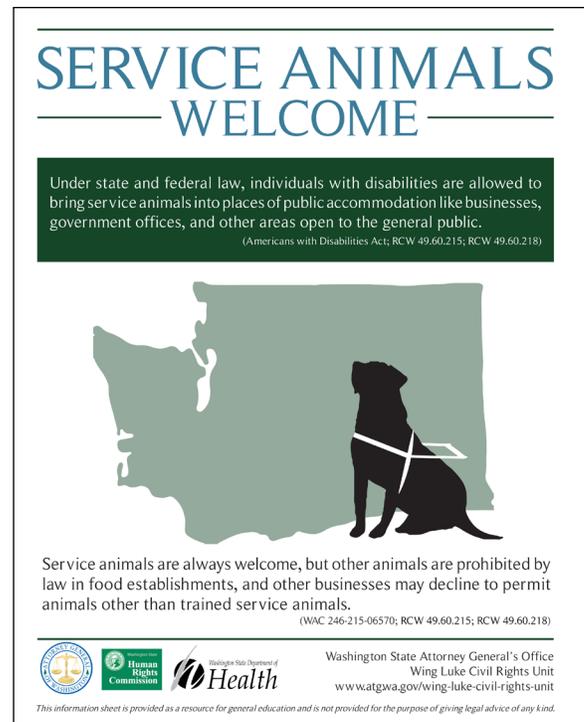
- providing ample opportunities for service dogs-in-training to experience a wide variety of socialization environments
- addressing confusion regarding comfort and therapy animals, which are protected in housing but not in public accommodations
- addressing intentional misrepresentation of pets as service animals
- addressing websites that promote and enable fraud by selling vests, ID cards and other props to support misrepresentation of pets as service animals
- resolving the conflict between the Washington Law Against Discrimination and the Federal Fair Housing Act regarding service animals in housing settings

The House Judiciary Committee, where bills regarding service animals are often heard, plans to hold a work session on the work group's recommendations.

Many people struggle with knowing what the law is around service animals, what rights the service animal handler has, and how to deal

---

*Joan McBride represents the 48th Legislative District, which includes Kirkland, Redmond, Bellevue and the Point Cities. She formerly served as the Kirkland Mayor and on the City Council. Toby Olson is Executive Secretary with the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment.*



with potential misrepresentation of pets as service animals. There has been an increase in complaints about people claiming their pets are service animals in order to take them to places of public accommodation where pets are not allowed, such as restaurants and grocery stores. While this is a violation of the laws protecting service animals, there is often confusion around what to do if misrepresentation is suspected.

Libraries often have a "no pets" policy and staff may experience people misrepresenting their pets. Library staff might not know what they can and cannot do when they believe that an animal is not a service animal. For example, it is commonly believed that it is illegal to ask if an animal is a service animal. While staff cannot ask about the handler's disability, they are allowed to ask if an animal is a pet and what tasks the animal is trained to do. If the handler cannot answer with the specific tasks the animal performs for them, then staff can ask for the animal to leave.

The Attorney General's Office recently released a poster relating to service animals in public places. This poster aims to help places of public accommodation, including public libraries, and their patrons understand their respective legal rights and responsibilities when it comes to service animals. The poster is available for download at <http://agportal-s3bucket.s3.amazonaws.com/uploadedfiles/Another/service%20animal%20poster.pdf>.

# Milestones

**Milestones is a new column that focuses on significant moments for libraries statewide - recognizing notable new hires, transitions, expansions and retirements, as well as remembrances of those who have passed. We're looking for submissions, of approximately 250 words, that highlight notable accomplishments in the careers of those profiled. Photographs are encouraged. Please send information to [alkieditor@wla.org](mailto:alkieditor@wla.org).**

## RETIREMENTS

**Rand Simmons** has retired from the Washington State Library, where he has been since 2001. Since September 2015 he served as the Federal Executive Collection Manager, where he worked with several projects involving legacy federal publications stored in an off-site building commonly referred to as the Annex and promoting federal publications as well as other State Library collections. He previously served as the acting State Librarian.

A native of Oregon, Simmons has worked in private colleges in Oregon, Illinois and Idaho, and state libraries in Idaho and Washington. He held various positions in the Idaho Library Association including President. He has been active in the Washington Library Association.

Simmons holds a Bachelor of Arts in Pre-Seminary Studies from Northwest Nazarene University, a Master's of Library Science from the University of Oregon, and a Doctorate of Philosophy in Library and Information Science from the University of Illinois.

Rand lives in Lacey, Washington with his husband of (nearly) nineteen years, David Lane. He has two adult sons as well as two of Dave's adult children who also call him Dad. Together Rand and Dave have 14 grandchildren. His passions are gardening, cooking, writing, music and art as well as spending quality time with Jake, his 9-pound junkyard dog.

\*\*\*

**Patricia Cutright**, Dean of Libraries at Central Washington University, will retire this summer. Since 2010, Cutright has been with the Brooks Library and overseen numerous grants, exhibitions and awards, including a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) grant for "Civil War 150: Exploring the War and Its Meaning Through the Words of Those Who Lived It." CWU was a finalist for the IMLS's 2016 National Medal of Honor and the recipient of Big Read grant from the NEA.

Cutright oversaw the implementation of ScholarWorks, CWU's electronic depository, helped "Evening at the Brooks" gala fundraiser and launched Jimmy B.'s coffee shop in the library.

In 2015 Cutright was elected to the executive board of the American Indian Library Association and serves as chair of the Library Council of Washington. She previously served as director of libraries at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, NY and as library director at Eastern Oregon University.

Spokane County Library District Executive Director **Nancy Ledebor** will be retiring, after five years with the District, on September 1, 2017. Prior to her work with SCLD, Ledebor was the Library Director for the Pima County Public Library in Tucson, AZ for seven years. She has worked in public libraries for most of her career spanning over 30 years, including libraries in California, Nevada, Arizona, and Washington.

During Ledebor's time, she opened the District's eleventh library, The BookEnd, a boutique library at the Spokane Valley Mall, increased open hours at two of the other libraries, increased overall programming by 60% resulting in a 54% increase in attendance, and strengthened the library's community partnerships.

Ledebor also focused on increasing volunteerism in the library resulting in a 282% increase in volunteers who help staff with everything from tutoring to administrative tasks. She also united the ten Friends of the Library groups under one umbrella, strengthening their support of the District.

Ledebor's plans for retirement include walking the Camino De Santaigo in Spain and spending time with her four grandchildren. She believes in the power of public libraries to engage minds, enrich lives and build strong communities, and looks forward to coming to the library to borrow books and attend programs as a patron.

## PROMOTIONS

Spokane County Library District's new Executive Director is **Patrick Roewe**. Roewe has been with SCLD for nearly 10 years, first as a Branch Services Manager and then as Deputy Director.

Roewe led the District team that participated in the American Library Association's Libraries Transforming Communities initiative, one of only ten libraries selected nationwide to participate in the program. He led development and implementation of the Community Engagement Plan, a new strategic planning model that solicited and incorporated public input regarding community needs and aspirations and led project team for The BookEnd, a 2500 sq. ft. boutique library located in the Spokane Valley Mall that is using an innovative service model. Roewe co-led the restructuring of the Public Services Department that eliminated redundancy, improved efficiency, and freed-up staff to work at their highest levels and advocated for and oversaw the re-launch of the Volunteer Program that provides the public with meaningful ways to directly support the District's mission.

*continued on next page*

Roewe is a board member with Partners Advancing Character Education (PACE), a grassroots Spokane Valley initiative to promote the importance of good character through partnerships with schools, businesses, public agencies and community service groups.

\*\*\*

**Sheri Boggs** will replace Frank Brasile as editor of *Alki* beginning with the fall 2017 issue. Boggs graduated from the UW's iSchool with MLIS in 2005 and was previously a Youth Services Librarian at the Centralia Timberland Library (where she met her librarian husband). She has been with Spokane County Library District for 5 years as the Youth Collection Development Librarian. Prior to becoming a librarian, Boggs was the Arts and Culture Editor for the *Pacific Northwest Inlander* (Spokane's weekly) and worked as a bookseller for ten years before that. She has also served on various awards committees, including the Geisel in 2011 and the Towner in 2016 and 2017. Her hobbies include knitting and posting too many pics of her Chipooos to social media.

Brasile will replace Boggs as the Chair of the *Alki* Editorial Committee and will continue to write for the journal.

## EXPANSIONS

**Orcas Island Library** celebrated the expansion of the library with a Grand Reopening on June 23rd. New and improved features include a dedicated space for teens and more room for children, more quiet reading and working spaces, two small-group study/meeting rooms, a dedicated computer area, 30% more collection space and outdoor patios for reading and WiFi access. The \$4.2 million was funded by private donations, a state capital grant, Friends of the Library and approval of a library levy (which passed overwhelmingly by nearly 2 to 1). Per capita, Orcas Island Library has one of the highest rates of items checked out, items in the collection and library visits in the state, and leads the state in volunteer hours per capita.

## IN MEMORIAM

Eastmont Junior High School librarian **Kristen Scott** passed away on May 30 after a long battle with cancer. Scott was born in Aberdeen and moved to Spokane, graduating from University High School in 1982. She met her husband Brian Scott while attending Spokane Falls Community College, married and earned a degree in Elementary Education from Central Washington University in 1991. Scott taught at Lincoln Elementary in Wenatchee for 11 years and eventually became a part-time librarian at Cascade Elementary. She became the full-time librarian at Grant Elementary in 2005 and most recently was the librarian at Eastmont Junior High School. Scott was known for fostering a love of reading in all

of her students and for living positively, tirelessly and fearlessly. She is survived by her husband and son.

\*\*\*

Long time librarian and iSchool professor, **Mae Benne**, passed away on March 26 at the age of 93. She taught children's literature, storytelling and children's library service to future school and public librarians as the University of Washington Professor of Library Science from 1965 to 1988.

Benne was born on the family farm in Washington County, Kansas and attended a one-room schoolhouse. She received a B.S. in Education from the University of Nebraska in 1950, but unable to find a teaching position she took a job in a library. Benne worked as a librarian at the Yakima Valley Regional Library, Southfield Library in Wayne County, Michigan and as the coordinator of children's services in the newly formed five-county library district, North Central Regional Library, in Wenatchee. In 1965, she became the children's specialist at the library school in Washington. Benne retired in 1988 leaving a legacy of developing a deep passion in her students for serving young people in libraries. It continues today through her Mae Benne Scholarship Fund at the University of Washington Information School.

\*\*\*

**Tamara Turner** passed away on March 27 after a long battle with leukemia. Turner grew up in Seattle, graduated from Roosevelt High School and earned a BA in History and a masters degree in Library and Information Science from the University of Washington. Turner worked as a librarian for a number of organizations, including Rainier School in Buckley, and as a medical librarian at Northwest Biotherapeutics in Bothell and Pacific Northwest Cancer Foundation. From 1977 to 1994 she served as the Director of Medical Learning Services at Children's Regional Hospital and Medical Center in Seattle, and was instrumental in SAHLC, Seattle Area Hospital Libraries Consortium.

Turner was known as a "gay rights hell-raiser" and revolutionary feminism and joined the Freedom Socialist Party and Radical Women in the early '70s. She co-authored the book *Gay Resistance: The Hidden History*, was on the staff of the *Freedom Socialist* newspaper, and performed in the play "Hidden History" which told the story gay and lesbian life before liberation. Turner is survived by her longtime friend and companion Raya Fidel. 📖

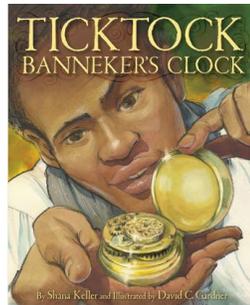
# Read This Book

## Picture This: An Introduction to Social Justice in Picture Book and Graphic Novel Formats

by the Puget Sound Council for the Review of Children's and Young Adult Literature

One of the great joys of being a teacher-librarian is that we have a mandate through the RCW (Revised Code of Washington) to provide information in a balanced way. That is pretty easy to do in math, linguistics, or cooking but a bit more challenging in social history and current events. Here elementary and middle school libraries often have the edge because of picture book biographies (PBBs). These are wondrous resources that straddle the K-12 spectrum and they help introduce, clarify, and illuminate issues that are currently in the headlines.

At the primary level PBBs tell a story simply, often about a single incident or influence in life of the person. In *Ticktock Banneker's Clock* by Shana Keller, she chooses to focus on the wooden strike clock that Banneker built at the age of 22 based on his own drawings and using his knife



But she doesn't stop there. The illustrations in this (and in all in PBBs) invite questions from students and provide an opportunity to make connections through discussion during the reading of the book. The illustrations convey time and place and subtly provide details that the author cannot include because of the restrictions of the genre. In *Ticktock Banneker's Clock*, illustrations show a free African American man living in Baltimore County, Maryland in 1731. He's borrowing books, providing land surveys, writing and sharing his observations on the natural world and science, publishing an almanac and farming, and is an integrated, valuable member of the whole community.

On average PBBs are 32 - 48 pages and at the primary grades there may only be 15 words per page in short sentences. With the advent of the common core and state standards, PBBs will usually include as broader biography that covers the subject's whole life and other backmatter which may have questions for further thinking and inquiry, websites, timelines, a bibliography, and for recommendations further reading, as does *TickTock*. These allow teacher-librarians to work with classroom teachers in co-teaching research skills, close reading skills, and evaluating information. In the context of maker spaces, these titles may also provide an entrée to art instruction, writing activities, scientific experimentation, or other connections to hands-on learning experiences. Best of all, young readers whose curiosity is piqued have references that allow them to

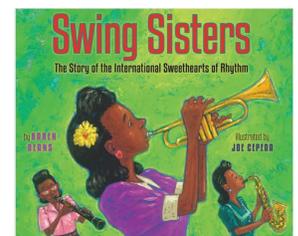
go on with their own exploration.

As students gain more skill and sophistication, PBBs provide an introduction to more complex ideas. At the upper elementary and middle school, the stories can address difficult ideas directly, and while there can be more text and a few more pages, accessibility and simplicity are still key. Students want to know more and their questions become more intricate and analytical, the backmatter becomes beefier and the need for students to evaluate information becomes more pressing. At these higher grades, there can also be a blurring of conventional art techniques and photographic images in illustration choices in order to match the tone, to place the story within the time it occurred, and to bolster the authenticity of the event.

At high school the limited number of pages for the elementary picture book biographies becomes more difficult. But that has been remedied by the introduction of graphic novel biographies, a notable pioneer: *Maus*. A multifaceted life is more easily presented without the 48-page restriction. However the graphic novel presents its own challenges. Graphic novels require a great deal of participation and interpretation from the reader because the amount of text is limited, losing some of the precision that text brings. Story and emphasis are more at the mercy of the will of the reader. Graphic novels must engage the reader with the information and make sure that they stay engaged in the direction the author is pointing out, especially in interpreting what is occurring in the gutters,\* in order to compensate for that loss of written precision. This does not mean that graphic novels cannot communicate complex themes and stories, but that we as teacher-librarians must make sure that students build those skills as we use these resources K-12.

With that in mind the reader-reviewers of Puget Sound Council say, "Let's tackle the issues of social justice in pictures." **PICTURE THIS IN YOUR LIBRARY!**

**Primary**  
*Swing Sisters: The Story of the International Sweethearts of Rhythm*,  
Deans, Karen, Holiday House ©2105  
ISBN: 9780823419708 Grades 2-6.  
Reviewed by Lona Sepesy, Teacher-Librarian Arrowhead Elementary, Northshore School District



World renowned in the 1940s, the International Sweethearts of Rhythm, a talented group of African American women toured the country and internationally playing swing jazz and drawing huge crowds. But their inauspicious beginnings were in the Piney

*continued on next page*

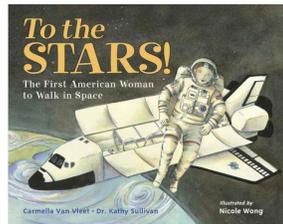
---

Reviewers are members of the Puget Sound Council for Review of Children's and Young Adult Literature.

Woods Country Life School as orphans under the tutelage of the music-loving founder, Dr. Laurence Clifton Jones. The orphans practiced hard and performed in churches, schools, and raising money for the school and after graduating lived in Washington DC and toured the country in their Big Bertha bus. Lush colorful oil and acrylic paintings celebrate the love of music and hopefulness of this pioneering band despite discrimination they faced as African Americans in Jim Crow south and as an all women band in the era of Count Basie and Louis Armstrong. This is a wonderful edition to your picture book biography section and introduces a little-known part of American history. A brief Author's note and Selected Bibliography conclude this vibrant biography.

**Elementary**

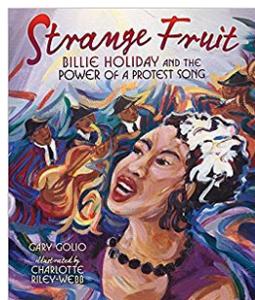
***To the Stars! The First American Woman to Walk in Space,***  
 Van Vleet, Carmella Charlesbridge Publishing © 2016 ISBN:  
 9781580896443 Grades K-6.  
 Reviewed by Teresa Bateman, Teacher-Librarian Brigadoon and Olympic View Elementaries, Federal Way Public Schools.



Kathy Sullivan loved to explore. As a girl she studied blueprints, daydreamed about airplane travel, and wanted to be a spy or a diplomat. Others laughed at her dreams, but she chose to do the things she loved and that eventually led to her becoming an astronaut. The organization of the book is quite interesting. A double-page spread introduces something from Kathy's youth. Turn the page and you see how this was expressed in, or impacted, her adult life. This creates a lovely opportunity to see how the past influences the future. Especially for young readers, this shows how things you do today impact what you might become tomorrow. Nicole Wong's watercolor and ink illustrations are clear and detailed, nicely capturing the feel of the text. The book is written in an optimistic, positive manner, encouraging others to follow their dreams. It would be a terrific book any time of the year, but merits a special place on the shelf during Women's History Month.

**Middle School**

***Strange Fruit: Billie Holiday and the Power Of a Protest Song,***  
 Golio, Gary, Millbrook Press, © 2017. ISBN: 9781467751230  
 Grades 5-12. Reviewed by Eve Datisman, Retired Teacher-Librarian Port Angeles High School, Port Angeles School District



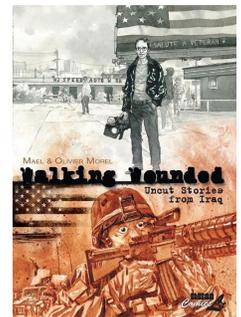
Lynchings are a tough choice for a song let alone for a picture book biography directed toward upper elementary and middle schoolers. Golio crafts a straightforward story of racism in the

U.S. using Billie Holiday and what would become her signature for social justice. The text is heavy and lengthy but balanced by the stylized abstraction of the composition and the bold, swirling, sweeping colors of Charlotte Riley-Webb's acrylic paintings which convey depth of feeling. They are provocative as they follow the challenges of Holiday in the racially charged 1920s-50s where African Americans could perform for white audiences in but couldn't patronize the establishments as equals. When Jewish songwriter Abel Meeropol wrote "Strange Fruit," about the lynching of blacks, for Billie to perform, his rendition of it failed to move her. However, when she made it her own, she stunned audiences with her performance. This picture book emphasizes that the arts not only entertain, but are powerful change agents. The backmatter expands upon Holiday's biographical details and offers narrative explanations of source quotes. Includes full text of the song, a "what happened next..." short bio of Billie Holiday, source notes, and selected bibliography. A must-read, must-discuss that speaks to children and lingers with adults.

**High School**

***Walking Wounded: Uncut Stories from Iraq,*** Morel, Olivier & illus. Mael Nantier, Beall, Minoustchine Publishing Inc. ISBN: 9781561639823 Gr. Level 9+. Reviewed by Eve Datisman.

There is a human cost to war and we forget that at our peril. Beginning in 2007 Morel began a project to film a documentary – *On the Bridge* (2010) -- about the lives of vets returning from the Iraq War. In this graphic approach to documenting his work, Morel reveals his thoughts and feelings about the project and how it changed him. As well as the stories of seven veterans, men and women, who served in the war in Iraq and were traumatized by events in Ar Ramadi, Baghdad, and Abu Ghraib. Mael and Morel use a graphic novel format with the limited palette of grey for the scenes about filming and splotches of Sienna red that looks like various colors of drying blood for flashbacks and visions. While not explicitly gory, the visuals convey creeping dread and a filter of terror clouding reality. The greatest strength of this story is best expressed by the author in his *Library Journal* interview, "I am presenting a graphic novel that deals with issues that rarely make the headline news, when at the same time, there are millions of individuals, families, and communities affected. This is social realism: [the book] generates, I hope, both an informative and a transformative reading experience. Most important, it is about resilience, survival, about how it is possible to overcome the greatest challenges in life." 



\* If you are interested in learning more about the basic elements of graphic novels, you may want to consult <https://prezi.com/hwzollmg9id-/analyzing-elements-of-graphic-novels/> posted by Jessie Crandall on 26 November 2013. Well-done entrée for teaching about the format.

# I'd Rather Be Reading

by David Wright



David Wright

## Taking the Long View

It has been much remarked in recent writing about literature, including in this column, how reading promotes understanding and tolerance that are so crucial to democratic institutions and ideals. Recent studies lend credence to our belief that those who read literature are more empathetic, with a greater awareness of the feelings and varied experiences of others.

We book pushers steal comfort from the thought that in addition to all the other social benefits that libraries bestow, readers advisory makes some small contribution towards building a just and tolerant society. At the same time, many of us now seek to discomfort ourselves through reading, opening our eyes and ears, hearts and minds to the lives and stories of the disenfranchised, outcast, and struggling in our own communities and around the world. We do so with an implicit faith that this reading might alter us for the better, and that giving witness is a crucial step towards acknowledging and addressing societal problems.

It occurred to me recently that one added consolation we can derive from even this kind of anti-escapist reading is the gift of perspective. As we struggle to process what seem to be a daily onslaught of fresh alarms and seemingly unprecedented events, our ability to communicate with others across the centuries recalls to us that others have seen days like these, and have found ways to persevere and overcome.

A century or so ago during an earlier Gilded Age, many writers saw how the promised paradise of industrialization had been distorted into extremes of obscene wealth and abject misery. A century after he wrote the prophetic words, William Blake's "dark satanic mills" were busily chewing up workers and churning out profits with ever more grim efficiency. Fed up with this state of affairs and fired with outraged idealism, a new generation of muckraking writers unleashed potent indictments of this rampant corruption, shining a light on the injustices and inequities of their day. You can feel the heat of righteous anger rise off every page of Jacob Riis's searing photographic expose *How the Other Half Lives*, or Upton Sinclair's epochal *The Jungle*, as well as his lesser known but hauntingly timely exploration of yellow journalism (think fake news), *The Brass Check: A Study of American Journalism*.

Writers and readers of the day fully engaged each other in the struggle. Pioneering investigative journalists such as Nellie Bly, Ida Tarbell, and Ida Wells faced off against corporate greed, hate crime, and institutional racism and sexism with uncompromising zeal. Emile Zola, Frank Norris, Theodore Dreiser and other respected novelists of the day brought social justice to the fore in bestselling titles such as *Germinal*, *Sister Carrie*, *The Octopus* and *The Pit*. Jack London reframed the struggle in a new way with his early dystopian novel *The Iron Heel*, laying out the basic outlines of a genre that has since gone mainstream. For readers, learning about the ills of society and what they could do to remedy them felt not only imperative, but fashionable.

Reading these works from the original Progressive Era, we are struck by how familiar and persistent are the problems they sought to cure, and we are touched by the earnest conviction of many of these authors that a better day was surely at hand, or just around the corner. Truly, many things have improved from that day to this. Others haven't. Some things are even worse. You may be either reassured or depressed by the cyclical nature of these issues, and how incremental or illusory our progress seems. Yet one doesn't need to believe in progress to agree that there is a right and a wrong side to history, regardless of who wins or loses. How we live and what we value tell our story, whether it be triumphant or tragic. These past examples help us to see ourselves as future generations will, and strive to act in a way that vindicates our lives and times to future generations. They also remind us just how slowly change can come, and the persistent pressure that brings about that slow change, despite defeats and despair.

Great good can spring forth at the darkest of times and from the unlikeliest of places. Amongst the stunningly corrupt robber barons of that Gilded Age, the richest of them all felt that there had to be a better way, and that great wealth was pointless unless put to use for the public good. His answer? He built libraries - lots and lots of libraries. 📖

---

David Wright is a reader services librarian at the Central Branch of The Seattle Public Library, a frequent speaker and trainer at library conferences, and a regular contributor to *Booklist*, *The Seattle Times*, and other publications.

# Dispatches from Swellville

by Darcy McMurtery



July 7, 2017

Dear Mr. Bibblebottom,

I received your complaint letter and the follow up phone call as well as the follow up emails, texts, tweets and postcards. I understand you are frustrated with the new display in the children's area.

Your letter (and phone call and text and tweet and email and postcards) said you were disgusted and furious that the children's librarian would romanticize violence, thievery, and rum drinking with his book display about pirates. While I can understand your feelings about the romanticizing of violence, I must share with you the purpose of the display.

The youth department put forward several themed booklists and displays to encourage reading this summer. Kids and teens love pirates and they are often characters in popular culture such as movies, games and books. Our point as library staff is to encourage reading. Placing a number of items on a shelf or creating booklists by subject often help our books circulate.

I recall your last letter (and phone call and text and tweet and email and postcards) about your frustration with the zombie book display in the teen area that you claimed encouraged eating of brains, glamorization of monsters, and poor fashion choices. I want to point out that it was a very popular display with teens and book circulation went up 25% the month those titles were on display.

Our community is comprised of a vast and diverse group of people and we try to rotate our book displays to reflect this. I'd like to point out that when you created your own display on bass fishing (unbeknownst to staff) we had three complaints from vegetarian groups. Still, there was a 15% increase in the hunting and fishing collection, which is the ultimate goal of any display.

In my many years of our correspondence, you've proven that you are concerned with what our children are reading. While I admire your tenacity, I must make it clear that it is the job of the parent to control the materials that children borrow from the library. I thank you for taking the time to write (and call and text and tweet and email).

Most Sincerely,

*Agnes T. Gollywhopper*

Agnes T. Gollywhopper

Manager, Swellville Public Library

# WLA Thanks Our Institutional & Business Members

## Business & Sales Members

BERK Consulting  
Capstone  
Bound to Stay Bound Books  
Follett  
Gale, A Cengage Company

Mackin  
Primary Source  
Scholastic  
Seattle Times: Newspapers in Education  
Winking Kat Books

## Friends, Foundations, & Non-Profit

Denise Gudwin Consulting,  
Seattle Reading Council, Washington State Literacy  
Association  
Holocaust Center for Humanity  
Humanities Washington  
Lake Stevens School District

Laurie Ann Thompson  
Mount Vernon School District  
Orbis Cascade Alliance  
Puyallup School District  
Sally Hagen  
Spokane Public Library Foundation

## Institutional Members

Asotin County Library  
Bellingham Public Library  
Clark College Library  
Clover Park Technical College Library  
Eastern Washington University Libraries  
Ellensburg Public Library  
Everett Public Library  
Foley Center Library, Gonzaga University  
Fort Vancouver Regional Library District  
Grandview Library  
Green River Community College  
Jefferson County Library  
King County Library System  
Kitsap Regional Library  
La Conner Regional Library District  
Liberty Lake Municipal Library  
Libraries of Stevens County  
Longview Public Library  
Lopez Island Library  
Neill Public Library

Orcas Island Library District  
Ritzville Library District #2  
San Juan Island Library  
Seattle Public Library  
Sedro-Woolley City Library  
Skagit Valley College/Norwood  
Sno-Isle Libraries  
Spokane County Library District  
Spokane Public Library  
Stevens County Rural Library District  
Timberland Regional Library  
University of Washington Libraries  
Upper Skagit Library  
Walla Walla Community College Library  
Washington State Library  
Whatcom County Library System  
Whitman County Library  
Yakima Valley Community College  
Yakima Valley Libraries



**Alki**

The Washington Library Association Journal

EMAIL: [info@wla.org](mailto:info@wla.org) WEB: [www.wla.org](http://www.wla.org)