Celebrating the 2016 Winners of the Andrew Carnegie Medals

Libraries are both safe and dangerous places. They let loose the imagination, but also store the most terrible secrets of what we have done,” said Viet Thanh Nguyen as he accepted the 2016 Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction for his novel The Sympathizer on Saturday evening. “My library is both the heaviest and the lightest thing I own.”

Enthusiastic book lovers, including authors, editors, publishers, ALA leaders, and conference attendees, filled a ballroom at the Orlando Hilton for the fifth Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence in Fiction and Nonfiction celebratory program and reception. The program included presentations of the 2016 medals and accompanying $5,000 checks. The winning titles – Nguyen’s The Sympathizer and Sally Mann’s memoir Hold Still: A Memoir with Photographs, which won for nonfiction – had been announced at the Midwinter Meeting in January.

ALA President Sari Feldman introduced the event, reminding the audience that reading is critical for fighting intolerance, and thanking her fellow librarians and book lovers for “all you do to generate enthusiasm around"

Quick Look

Registration
7:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Exhibits
9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Exhibit Halls
ALA Store
9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Post Office
9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Exhibit Halls

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Author Signings | Presentations & Demos | Giveaways | Cat Mascot Photos
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JOIN THE CELEBRATIONS AT ALA IN BOOTH #1539
Don’t Stop with Google – Go to the Library and Learn the Real Answer

By Deborah Hathaway, Texas Woman’s University, MLS

Is Google contributing to the marginalization and misrepresentation of minorities? Dr. Safiya Noble’s research clearly shows that it is. Noble, who spoke during the LITA President’s Program “Toward an Ethic of Social Justice in Information,” asked the audience to question the logic behind search engine algorithms. She suggested that librarians have become more trusting of search engine results over their own inventions; trusting and treating information as more valuable than their own judgment.

“What makes us think that artificial intelligence is better than what humans have to offer?” said Noble. “When you search for the word ‘beauty’ what shows up? Not a lovely ocean view, but hegemonic images of white beauty. If you search for three black teenagers, you get mug shots, but if you change the terms to three white teenagers, it returns images of white girls with soccer balls. It is results like these that continue to perpetuate old narratives for cultural representation.”

Noble offered the example of Dylan Roof’s manifesto in which he stated that the Trayvon Martin case was the beginning of his awakening. He used two different websites to search for the meaning of black on white crime. His search results led him to a white supremacy website and then to more inflammatory and inaccurate sites. “Libraries and librarians are crucial in developing the skills to teach and understand the context of important concepts. Using the internet for understanding complicated concepts only leads to a dangerous ideal,” she said. “Not everything can be answered in a three-second search.”

Noble asked attendees to imagine what the outcome might have been if Dylan Roof had used the body of literature offered by libraries and librarians to gain an understanding of why the country was divided over the Trayvon Martin case. “It’s the context that leads to understanding.”

For further reading on the important issue of social justice in an online environment, Noble suggested The Intersectional Internet: Race, Sex, Class, and Culture Online, written with coauthor Brendesha M. Tynes.

The Book Buzz Theater is one of several stages in the Exhibits offering diverse topics and speakers.

The Library of Congress Exhibit Booth Schedule
ALA Annual Conference – Orlando, FL
June 24 – 27, 2016

Monday, June 27

9:00 2015 Junior Fellows (webcast from the Library of Congress)

Engaging Students with the Library of Congress (webcast from the Library of Congress)

I Cannot Live without Books (webcast from the Library of Congress)

9:30 The National Book Festival: The Library of Congress Celebration of Books and Reading / Guy Lamolinara

10:00 Veterans History Project: Honoring Veterans, Engaging Patrons, Strengthening Communities / Candace Milburn & Rachel Telford

10:30 Growing the Next Generation of Digital Stewards through Experiential and Continuing Education Programs / George Coulbourne

11:00 Cataloger’s Desktop 101: A Brief Introduction / Colleen Cahill

11:30 Protecting Your Legacy: Keeping Materials Alive / Jeanne Drewes

12:00 Outreach Innovation at the Library of Congress / Blane Dessy

12:30 Modern Marvels: The Library of Congress (featured video from the History Channel)

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Promoting Language, Literacy and Culture in Native American Communities

Today from 8:30 – 10:00 a.m. in the Orange County Convention Center, room W106, the ALA Committee on Rural, Native, and Tribal Libraries of All Kinds (RNTLOAK), Committee on Literacy (COL), and the American Indian Library Association (AILA) are sponsoring a session spotlighting two innovative programs that promote language, literacy, and culture in Native American Communities.

Arlene V. Salazar will discuss the “Roving Exhibit PowWow” project, which provided outreach and marketing of their American Indian children’s and young adult literature collections. Erin Hollingsworth will present “Iñupiaq Edge: Iñupiaq History, Language, and Culture in the Community and Classroom,” a project that utilizes technology to promote language, history, and culture documentations and revitalization.

The Library of Congress Exhibit Booth Schedule

American Library Association

The Book Buzz Theater is one of several stages in the Exhibits offering diverse topics and speakers.

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Queens’ Andrew P. Jackson to Deliver 2016 Jean E. Coleman Library Outreach Lecture

Andrew P. Jackson (Sekou Molefi Baako), director emeritus of Queens Library’s Langston Hughes Community and Cultural Center, will deliver the 2016 Jean E. Coleman Library Outreach Lecture today from 8:30 – 10 a.m. in the Orange County Convention Center, room W206A. Jackson was selected by the ALA Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services Advisory Committee in recognition of more than 35 years of service, a long record of commitment to the Queens community, and his leadership in the library profession through many years of active participation in the American Library Association, the Black Caucus of the American Library Association, and as an adjunct lecturer at CUNY’s York College and Queens College Graduate School of Library and Information Science (GSLIS).

Jackson is a past president of the Black Caucus of the American Library Association and serves as cochair of ALA’s Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunrise Celebration and a member of the ALA Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. He serves as chair of the Queens Borough President’s African American Heritage Planning Committee and is a member of the Queens Poet Laureate Committee.

Known for his extensive outreach to schools, libraries, civic organizations, cultural institutions, correctional facilities, churches, and colleges, Jackson shares his knowledge and experience as a library consultant/advisor and mentors graduate students and new librarians across the country. He has received numerous awards and honors for community service, activism, outreach, librarianship, leadership, mentoring, professional achievement, and advocacy and is a “distinguished alumnus” of both of his alma maters, Queens College Graduate School of Library and Information Science, where he earned his Master of Library Science degree, and York College, where he received a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration.

In recognition of his commitment to black history and culture, Andrew was given five African names: Sekou – Warrior; Molefi – He keeps tradition; Baako – First born; Bhekizizwe – Take care of your people; and Orbai – Teacher. A U.S. Air Force veteran (1964-1968), Jackson received the Bronze Star Medal for his service with the 4th Air Commando Squadron in Vietnam and was honorably discharged as Staff Sergeant. He was inducted into the New York State Senate Veterans Hall of Fame.

The lecture series honors Dr. Jean E. Coleman, the first director of the ALA Office for Literacy and Outreach Services (now the Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services) for her leadership in focusing the Association’s attention on issues affecting traditionally underserved and underrepresented people in libraries.
When everyone has access to information, the truth will always be closer at hand. And when the collected wisdom of the world is within reach, everyone gets a seat at the table. Together as OCLC, libraries promote unique, local voices in ways that span the globe.

Because what is known must be shared.
“A Good Side Order of Stubbornness” – Brad Meltzer

By Caroline Gardner, Simmons College SLIS

What is your legacy? What will you be remembered for, and by whom? These questions were the crux of award-winning author Brad Meltzer’s talk as part of the Auditorium Speaker Series. Meltzer spoke at length about the importance of legacy, and how we can implement positivity and change into the world through the power of individual legacy.

The main thing, Meltzer said, is to consider what you do for yourself versus what you do for other people. It is what you do for others that is most special, most impactful. The world can be changed just by ideas, by getting a community to believe in the power of ideas, and making things happen from those small ideas. With “a good side order of stubbornness” and determination, Meltzer thinks that nothing is out of reach for us to create positive forces in our communities.

Leveraging these four types, Meltzer outlined many personal anecdotes of the ways these legacies can be made. The librarian who, in one brief afternoon, changed ways these legacies can be made. The librarian who never got, and who in fact may not remember the young boy she helped, is an example of the power of a stranger’s legacy (he is trying to track her down, if any librarians have ideas on finding her!) Meltzer firmly believes that ordinary people can change the world and that you can impact someone’s life just by being kind to them for even one moment. These small moments, added together, become the legacy you leave behind for people to remember you as the kind of person who made a positive impact and tried to make the world a better place.

Meltzer continued, “We all know what it’s like to feel boring and ordinary and want to do something amazing,” and the moments in which you lead with good examples, find everyday heroes to champion, and set goals that are both reachable and celebrate-able for the people we interact with can be the most important and most lasting. For every one of us here, no one can ever capture the very best parts of who we are – but you can live your best life and thank those people who’ve helped you, and they will remember your legacy.

An impassioned and inspiring speaker, Meltzer really wanted to impress upon us, the librarians and professionals of the audience, how important saying “thank you” can be to those who have left their legacy on us, as well. The teacher from ninth grade who may have no idea they helped a budding award-winning author on his way, or the information desk assistant who made you smile when you were at the end of your tether at the end of a long day – these people in fact may not remember the young boy who was aبير their families and friends are outward signs of an inward change. The blood drive, ribbons, and armbands in support of Orlando’s Pulse victims and their families and friends are also signs of an inward change.

Brad Meltzer delivers his Auditorium Speaker Series presentation.

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Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Launches Recommendations

By Sara Zettervall, Hennepin County Library

The ALA Executive Board accepted the recommendations made by the Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion during the first business meeting of this conference. This is an important step forward in rethinking and refreshing ALA’s total approach to fostering a more inclusive organization and profession.

Two years ago, the task force was charged to “develop a plan and strategic actions to build more equity, diversity, and inclusion among our members.” Representatives from divisions across ALA and its affiliates worked together to produce the 58 recommendations that the board accepted. Their charge also states that “the most important task force outcome is the public and honest conversation that will be generated by its plan and recommended actions.” This was accomplished when they shared the recommendations at the ALA Membership Meeting on Saturday and will continue as the recommendations are brought to Council and beyond.

The next phase will be taken by the ALA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Implementation Working Group, which launches for two years at the end of this year’s conference. The task force, several of whose members are continuing on the workgroup, has already demonstrated a commitment to action. With Librarians Build Communities, they planned this year’s volunteer efforts to collect school supplies for local children and help staff Summer BreakSpot at Orlando Public Library. They also recommended Michael Eric Dyson as this year’s Opening General Session speaker.

ALA’s commitment to equity in the organization and profession has never been stronger. The blood drive, ribbons, and armbands in support of Orlando’s Pulse victims and their families and friends are outward signs of an inward change.

Mackin
Guerrero Encourages People to use their Voices for Change

By Talea Anderson, Washington State University

Noted actor Diane Guerrero appeared as the featured speaker at the ALA President’s Program Sunday, discussing her recently published memoir, In a Country We Love: My Family Divided. Guerrero spoke about her experience as the daughter of undocumented immigrants who were later deported to Colombia. She described the book as a kind of coming out—an opportunity to share an experience that, for her, has been deeply scarring. Guerrero contrasted her recent successes in “Orange Is the New Black” and “Jane the Virgin” to her feeling of helplessness as a child. “I still have nightmares,” she admitted. “I wake up screaming.” Guerrero recalled that libraries were a safe haven for her when she was young—“like a church or a hospital.” Her parents often spoke worriedly about “documents” or “papeles” and when she begged her father for “papeles” of her own, he took her to the public library to get a library card. “I wanted to be legit,” she said, and her father always assured her that she would be safe at the library. Guerrero stayed behind in the United States when her family was deported to Colombia—and she ultimately found success—but she noted that few immigrant children are as fortunate as she was. When left behind, some take to the streets and some go into the penal system. She described her book as an effort to advocate on behalf of these children. “I want people to realize that they have a voice and to use it,” she said.

Guerrero encouraged the audience to act for political change or to support advocacy groups like the IRC and Women Step Forward. Speaking about the Orlando shootings, she said, “My heart goes out to the victims and the victims’ families, but this is a chance to stand up and make change.” In addition to Guerrero’s talk, the ALA President’s Program included presentations of awards to libraries and librarians for their outstanding achievements and contributions to the profession. Notable awards included the Melvil Dewey Medal, which went to Robert R. Newlen for his service as chief of staff for the Library of Congress, and the Excellence in Library Programming Award, which went to Skokie Public Library (Illinois) for its series on race and diversity. Daniel Handler (aka Lemony Snicket) also appeared to present Melanie Townsend Diggs with the Lemony Snicker Prize for Noble Librarians Faced with Adversity Award. Townsend Diggs received the award in recognition of her role in providing shelter to citizens of Baltimore during riots in 2015 instigated by the death of Freddie Gray in police custody. Handler praised Townsend Diggs’ bravery and encouraged the audience to follow her example. “Let’s all of us stay open,” he said, referring to the branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library that stayed open throughout the unrest in Baltimore, thanks to Townsend Diggs.

For more about ALA awards, see http://www.ala.org/awardsgrants.
Elizabeth (Lisa) Esposito (left), Huntington Station, New York, and Dee Ann Redman, Billings, Montana, take a closer look at a planet with their “telescopes” during at the Stellar Hands-on STEM Learning Resources session.

The scholars are in: Librarians Cynthia Symonds (from left), Diana Carr, and Catherine Nelson, all from South Carolina, take over the “Scholar” booth outside the Exhibits.

Peter Struzziero, Belmont Public Library (Massachusetts), goes nose-to-nose with Papa Bear from The Berenstain Bears in the HarperCollins booth in the Exhibits.

Jordan Kominsky (right), Thorpe, United Kingdom, shakes hands with author/illustrator Jon Klassen during his autograph session at Candlewick Press in the Exhibits.

Librarian Mary Garrett, Atlanta, Georgia, reads from a banned book at the Banned Books Read-Out Booth.

ALA attendees relax in the ALA Lounge.
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Registration Open for 2016 ALSC Virtual Institute

The Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) announced that registration for the 2016 ALSC Virtual Institute is now open. The Virtual Institute is one of the only virtual conferences devoted solely to children’s librarianship, literature, and technology.

This event will take place September 15-16, 2016 with all sessions held online. There is no special software needed to attend. Programming that was originally scheduled to be held at the canceled 2016 ALSC National Institute will now be offered via the Virtual Institute.

ALSC has dedicated itself to finding a great way to deliver the content originally proposed for Charlotte Institute. The Virtual Institute is not only a great opportunity for affordable in-house staff trainings; it’s also available without the hassle of additional travel fees.

“This is a new endeavor for us, but we are very excited for it. The 2016 ALSC National Institute Planning Task Force worked hard to put together a fantastic lineup of programs and speakers,” said Emily Nanney, chair of the task force. “We’re now pleased that they will have a venue to present their topics online and to a wider audience.”

Paper registrations must be submitted by August 26, 2016. Online registration will continue up to the day of the event. ALSC members receive a discount. Student and group discounts are also available. For more information and registration details for the 2016 ALSC Virtual Institute, please visit: www.ala.org/alsc/2016-alsc-virtual-institute.

Participating Schools:

- Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE)
- San José State University School of Information
- Simmons College School of Library and Information Science
- Syracuse University School of Information Studies
- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Graduate School of Library and Information Science
- University of North Texas College of Information
- University of Washington Information School
- University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee School of Information Studies
- Wayne State University School of Library and Information Science
“Without libraries what have we? We have no past and no future.”

– Ray Bradbury –

The American Library Association offers its deepest thanks to the National Endowment for the Humanities for 50 years of supporting libraries and communities through initiatives like “Latino Americans: 500 Years of History.”
American Library Association Black Caucus Unveils “Reading is Grand!”

During the ALA Annual Conference and Exhibition, Kevin Watson, president of the Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA), announced that three libraries will receive the 2016 Reading Is Grand! Celebrating Grand-Families Telling Our Stories @ Your Library grant. Reading Is Grand! is a celebration of the important role African American grandparents and older adults play in the lives of children. It is through their infinite wisdom and experiences that children learn the unique cultural and familial values that help them grow into valuable contributors to the community.

Sparta Public Library, Sparta, Illinois; Queens Public Library/Langston Hughes Community and Cultural Center, Corona, New York; and Zion-Benton Public Library, Zion, Illinois, were selected winners based on the level of creativity and originality of their programs. The winners were chosen by the BCALA’s committee, which includes Chair Dr. Claudette S. Zion-Huggins, assistant professor of education, College of Education, University of Illinois-Chicago, Inglewood, California; Kevin Watson, president, BCALA; Carolyn Garnes, library consultant, Atlanta, Georgia; and Dr. Sujin Huggins, assistant professor of education, Graduate School of Library Science, Dominican University, River Forest, Illinois.

The purpose of the Reading is Grand! program is to host a public program targeted toward multiple generations: grandparents, parents, children, and grandchildren, while sharing values handed down from one generation to the next. The program will embrace the past while encouraging the future in order to leave a legacy for children and grandchildren by inviting the community to attend the program, “Let’s Celebrate a Glimpse of Me: The African American Legacy.” This educational initiative will be led by African American grandparents who will share the goal of improving the quality of life among African American families and other nationalities. This event will be a hands-on and visual exercise focused on helping grandparents and their grandchildren share knowledge and experiences by telling their stories, which consists of three common themes: simple gardening, planning a healthy meal, and family etiquette.

The three winning library programs are as follows:

**Sparta Public Library**

The program of the Reading is Grand! program is to connect generations, primarily grandparents, with their grandchildren through verbal and written stories, utilizing books, and music. The program, titled “The Grandparent Connection: Tell Me a Story!” will be set up in a “fair” format and will be arranged in different stations around the library for the participants to visit. The décor and music will focus on African American artists and artworks from the Harlem Renaissance and music from jazz to funk to hip hop. Each station will have a different theme or purpose. They will include: stories which focus on oral storytelling and will offer read-aloud storybooks depicting African American culture. Other stations will include crafts, games, snacks, information about library resources, and information for grandparents on connecting with their grandchildren. Prior to the program, the library will capture photographs of grandparents reading to their grandchildren (with permission). These photos will be posted in the lobby as book covers to promote the upcoming Reading is Grand! program.

Each grant-winning library receives $500 used to supplement their Reading Is Grand! program. Funds may be used to purchase books, supplies, and/or activities for their program based upon their use of creativity and originality.

The Reading Is Grand! Project is supported by the Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA). It was developed as part of 2009 – 2010 American Library Association President Camila Alire’s Family Literacy Focus Initiative, an initiative to encourage families in ethnically diverse communities to read and learn together.

The 2016 Reading is Grand! Celebrating Grand-Families @ Your Library selection committee includes Chair Dr. Claudette S. McLinn, executive director, Center for the Study of Multicultural Children’s Literature, Inglewood, California; Kevin Watson, president, BCALA; Carolyn Garnes, library consultant, Atlanta, Georgia; and Dr. Sujin Huggins, assistant professor of education, Graduate School of Library Science, Dominican University, River Forest, Illinois.
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good literature, to encourage us to be a nation of readers, and for helping people find books that entertain, inform, and transform.

The program kicked off with what featured speaker and 2001-2003 U.S. Poet Laureate Billy Collins described as “some poems interspersed with a keynote.” Introduced by Booklist Adult Books Editor Donna Seaman, he commented that she might be the only person who ever read his books from start to finish. “Poetry is a bird, prose is a potato,” he said, adding, “Poetry is the displacement of silence. Prose is the continuation of noise.” Between the poems to which he treated the audience, including one exemplifying his non-rhyming poetry and humor called “The Rain in Portugal,” he talked about being a friend of the book and about writing (how do fiction writers manage to fill entire pages with words?), showing how he earned the title “most popular poet in America” from the New York Times.

Sally Mann’s longtime editor Michael Sand accepted the medal and offered moving remarks with “TYVMTFA:” Thank you very much for this award. “An award magnet” was how Seaman described The Sympathizer, which also won (among others) the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, reminding the audience that the Carnegie Medal had come first. Nguyen expressed deep appreciation for libraries and the right accent. Her hope had also been to talk about her mother’s triumph in getting out of their small community’s reading-averse authorities in the 1950s. Sand spoke about their relationship as editor and writer, communicating often in acronyms, and ended his remarks with “TYVMTFA.”

“The second step was making a home in the San José Public Library, where he came to understand that books offered both magic and menace, and that people like him were absent both as authors and within the pages of books. He discovered that there was a history of exclusion and that he was not alone, and hoped that, “if I could find a place on that shelf, I could find a place for my parents too.” For him, writing needed to be an act of justice, a journey into his own interior to engage with his own monsters, with no leaning on the “crutches of sentimentality.” He thanked librarians for all their labors in safeguarding a place for the imagination.

Afer the program, attendees had a chance to mingle over dessert and drinks and to chat with Collins and Nguyen for another hour. Novelist was welcomed as generous lead sponsor of the 2016 event. Duncan Smith, founder and general manager of Novelist, spoke of how reading supports individuals “from conception to resurrection,” and, like Feldman, alluded to the importance of reading in helping make us a more open-minded society. You can find Novelist at booth #1527 until 2:00 p.m. today, when the Exhibits close.

The Andrew Carnegie Medals were established in 2012 by ALA and Carnegie Corporation of New York, and are cosponsored and administered by Booklist and RUSA. They have rapidly gained widespread recognition in both library and mainstream media; last year, the ALA Public Awareness Office captured more than 451,000 web pickups in addition to other media related to the awards.

A Symposium on the FUTURE OF LIBRARIES

Three days of exploring the many futures for academic, public, school and special libraries—Saturday, Sunday, and Monday of Midwinter.

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AASL Announces 2016 Best Apps for Teaching & Learning

The American Association of School Librarians (AASL) announced its 2016 list of Best Apps for Teaching & Learning at the ALA Annual Conference in Orlando.

The selection committee developed evaluation criteria for vetting apps in five distinct categories connected to pedagogy: books; science, technology, engineering and math (STEM); organization and management; humanities and arts; and content creation.

Chosen for their embodiment of AASL’s learning standards and support of the school librarian’s role in implementing career and college readiness standards, the apps honored in 2016 include:

Books:
- Epic! Unlimited Books for Kids, Ryan North’s To Be or Not to Be, The Voyages of Aladdin and Sinbad, Metamorphabet, Professor Astro Cat’s Solar System

STEM:
- The Foos, The Everything Machine, Attributes by Math Doodles, Earth Primer, Map of Life

Organization and Management:
- OneNote, Three Ring, Post-It Plus, Google Classroom

Humanities and Arts:
- Newsela, StoryCorps, Homes, Spies of Mississippi: The Apptunary, MoMA Art Lab, MusiQuest

Content Creation:
- Canva, Plotagon, Adobe Spark, Office Sway, Comic Life 3

Descriptions and tips for the 2016 Best Apps can be found at www.ala.org/aasl/bestapps.

“The Best Apps for Teaching & Learning committee spent the past year evaluating, testing and discussing hundreds of apps. The committee selected 25 innovative and engaging apps that can be used with students in a range of content areas and grade levels,” said Cathy Potter, chair. “Our goal is to invite educators to bring apps into their classrooms and libraries that can be used to create content, share knowledge, connect with others, and inspire 21st Century learners.”

AASL President Leslie Preddy said, “We are proud of the work of the AASL 2016 Best Apps for Teaching and Learning committee. School librarians are experts at resource curation, and through their hard work we have an indispensable collection of practical apps for the busy teacher and librarian.”

The apps recognized as Best Apps for Teaching & Learning are of exceptional value to inquiry-based teaching and learning as embodied in AASL’s Standards for the 21st Century Learner. Recognized apps foster the qualities of innovation, creativity, active participation, and collaboration and are user-friendly to encourage a community of learners to explore and discover.

The Best Apps for Teaching & Learning list is based on feedback and nominations from school librarians, content teachers, students, and developers.
Be Our Guest: Create Your Own Pixie Dust at the Library

By Meredith Myers, American Libraries

Room W110B in the Orange County Convention Center was packed tighter than Disney’s Bibbidi Bobbidi Boutique on the first day of summer vacation. Instead of magical pixie dust, RUSA chose Dave Cobb to make every-day librarians into user experience designers, all with the click of his mouse.

“We tell stories in physical places,” he said, as photos of colorful museums and libraries splashed across the screen in perfectly timed clicks. As the vice president for creative development of Thinkwell Group in Los Angeles, Cobb has spent years designing roller coasters and attractions for theme parks. “People often say that I design roller coasters. No. I tell stories with roller coasters.”

He suggested asking, “What is unique about your location? What do you expect of your library? How are you unique about your location? Who is your audience?”

“In telling stories, librarians can create an emotional resonance with patrons, thus inspiring them to tell their own stories. To illustrate, Cobb filled the screen with swimming metaphors: ‘swimmers’ being the largest audience, ‘swimmers’ being most curious, and ‘divers’ being true fans — his message being that one should design library spaces for all three types of users. He added a new category of ‘mer-people,’ speaking of those who have been submerged too long. (Which is probably how most librarians feel after a long day of meetings and toting free books from the Exhibits.)”

Panel responders were John Blyberg, assistant director for innovation and UX, Darien Library, Darien, Connecticut, and Steven Bell, associate university librarian, Temple University. Bell spoke of being intentional and creating passionate users, and also asked if the patrons or librarians are emphasized.

“Pay attention to the employees,” Bell suggested. “Fix what is broken. Change can’t just be at the circulation desk. You are all user experience designers.”

“See? No pixie dust needed. Thanks, RUSA.”

Finding the “Big Picture” on Big Data

Every day, technology is making it possible to collect and analyze ever more data about students’ performance and behavior, including their use of library resources. The use of “big data” in the educational environment, however, raises thorny questions and deep concerns about individual privacy and data security.

A recently published report from the University of Colorado, Learning to be Watched: Surveillance Culture at School, highlights the particular privacy concerns arising from schools’ partnerships with commercial entities who frequently provide free technology to schools. According to the authors, these entities use this technology to track students online and collect massive amounts of data about them. The authors observe that such practices threaten to create a generation of students who are socialized as consumers who take for granted that others have a right to keep their behavior under constant surveillance.

States and Congress have responded to these concerns by considering a rising number of bills intended to regulate the use of student data and protect students’ privacy. Barnes is a frequent panelist, commentator, and writer on student data collection and has provided expert commentary to local and national media, including CBS This Morning, the New York Times, The Washington Post, NPR, Fox Business, CNN, Education Week, Politico, USA Today, and Time Magazine.
Libraries that Listen
How hearing from community members and acting on their ideas leads to success

By Terra Dankowski, American Libraries

Listening goes a long way in making a successful library. That was the key message from the United for Libraries presentation and panel discussion “Listening to Our Customers, or Listen, Digest, Respond: Trustees Becoming True Community Representatives” on Saturday.

Moderated by Dick Waters, principal consultant with Godfrey’s Associates, the program offered both the perspectives of Friends groups and library directors on how leveraging what your customers and advocates tell you can create change.

Kate Park, executive director of Friends of the Dallas Public Library, talked about how when she started in 2012, the 23 Friends groups serving Dallas were fractured – “a lot of passion, but a lot of misinformation” – and elected officials knew very little as to what programs and services were being offered in the library. In the face of extreme fiscal strain – 40 percent of the library’s overall budget had been eliminated after the recession – Park knew they needed fresh messaging and advocacy. The Friends group brought in Sally Gardner Reed, executive director of United for Libraries, and they started from the top, with listening.

“They have priorities and things close to their hearts.” Over the course of two days, Park and Reed were able to listen from hundreds of the who worried about their neighborhood library: “That’s not just the library director’s role; it’s really critical your frontline staff knows how important listening and responding to your customers is,” Gubbin also requires her staff members to attend community meetings.

“We have to attend those citizen meetings, those student advisory committees, that’s where you hear your customers.”

In the Skokie (Illinois) Public Library and its community engagement department, which was created in 2014, “We look at engagement a little differently,” said Deputy Director Richard Kong. The department is made up of full-time staff members who go out into the community and as liaisons to groups, such as entrepreneurs, schools, and child care centers. “It can’t happen without that investment of time and energy and staffing,” Kong said. Skokie Public Library also employs the Harwood Institute approach, which emphasizes “turning outward.”

Exploring Learning through Making

By Amy Custon, American Libraries

Having a functioning makerspace depends much on your people and your relationships in the community than on your technology. That’s the message a group of experienced makers gave to attendees during a packed session, “Exploring Learning through Making.”

Rebekah Willett, assistant professor of library and information studies at University of Wisconsin-Madison, moderated this session, in which participants rotated through three 30-minute brainstorming sessions led by experienced makerspace facilitators in six different specialties:

- Honore Bray, director, Missoula (Montana) Public Library: “STEM and Learning Styles”
- Michael Spelman, supervising librarian, Madison Public Library: “Advocacy for Making”
- Rebecca Millerjohn, Bubbler project assistant, “Madison Public Library: Making in the Community”
- Jesse Vieux, teen librarian, Madison Public Library: “Learning in Purposeful Programs”
- Trent Miller, Bubbler manager, Madison Public Library: “Artist-in-Residency Programs”
- Heather Moorefield Lang, assistant professor, School of Library and Information Science, University of South Carolina: “Makerspaces and Training”

The brainstorming breakout sessions were observed by three rowing “discussants,” who offered their summaries of the activity in the last 30 minutes of the session: Although the six breakout topics were unique, the discussants heard several themes pop up repeatedly:

- Invest in people over equipment. Madison’s makerspace invests in people in the community instead of equipment – they can run several workshops for the price of one 3D printer. Others echoed this sentiment. Creating a well-run makerspace was about creating a culture of problem-solving and trying new things, not in having the latest gadgets.
- Think creatively about resources. Librarians are concerned about financing, but also about resources generally – such as equipment, space, and people.

Reach out to groups that are already working with teenagers, such as social workers and youth groups, rather than trying to market programs to scratch.

The key to success is not about funding, but about relationships. All the money in the world won’t keep your program from failing if you have no community support.

Think about what resources you do have for a potential community partner. Offer your library as safe, free community space to groups, startups, clubs, or artists.

Find expertise outside the library. Accept that the expertise you need to run a maker program people want – anything from circuitry to cheese making – which might be outside the library.

Visible These First-time ALA Exhibitors in Orlando

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