

## More Essential than Ever

A conversation with Newark Public Library's Leslie Kahn on expanding our concept of reference in the 21st century

Plenty of obsolete stereotypes about libraries and librarians persist in popular culture, but good reference librarians can't afford to take them seriously. They're too busy working in the present, paying close attention to the characteristics, behaviors, and needs of their service populations as these change over time.

Among New Jersey libraries, the Newark Public Library (NPL) holds a special place for reference services. While its main library and seven branches serve the state's largest city, its impressive collections and expert staff have long made it a resource for the entire state. The New Jersey State Library contracts with NPL to provide specialized supplemental reference services to other libraries in New Jersey, and the library receives many additional direct inquiries.

To get a sense of the current state and possible futures of reference service, I recently spoke with NPL's head of reference, Leslie Kahn. A major figure



Newark Public Library's Alisha Grant (left) and Beth Zak-Cohen in the Charles F. Cummings New Jersey Information Center



### SPOTLIGHT

By **Richard Kearney**  
Electronic Resources  
Librarian, William  
Paterson University

among New Jersey librarians, Kahn, who has worked at NPL for more than 36 years, was honored as the NJLA Librarian of the Year in 2013. She has offered numerous programs and instruction courses to public and academic learners for many years, and her frequent social media posts about libraries typically feature fascinating accounts of unusual questions or problems resolved in creative ways.

One of Kahn's key observations about changes in reference is that shifting question patterns and user needs have tended to

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## Message

# from the (past) PRESIDENT

### Telling Fact from Fiction

Great news everyone! Governor Chris Christie has signed the Library Construction Bond Act into law. Soon every public library in the state will become a palace for the mind, body, and inquisitive spirit. We'll have water features for ambiance and ballrooms for events, IMAX theatres for films and the fastest broadband on the planet. Don't forget the golden cat statues and valet parking.

This must be true because you are reading it right here on the internet. In the *New Jersey Libraries NEWSletter*, no less. And after all, I am the president. Or was.

A little fact checking, however, may cause some to question the above statements as fake news. The governor really did sign bills A222/S2171 into law on July 21, just two weeks after the legislature overwhelmingly passed them. However, this must be approved by voters as a public question on New Jersey's November 7 general election ballot. If approved, \$125 million will be available through matching grants for construction and renovation projects. Not enough for ballrooms or golden statues, but enough to help New Jersey libraries become ADA compliant, address leaking roofs, and update their facilities for the 21st century.

The NJLA Task Force on Library Construction has begun sharing information about the referendum with the library community and will be launching a public campaign in mid-September. The official source for information, updates, and campaign resources will be the [www.NJLibrariesBuildCommunities.org](http://www.NJLibrariesBuildCommunities.org) website. I hope you will join me in voting yes on this historic statewide public question.

In terms of the "information situation" that the country finds itself in, with so much focus on fake news, how can the library community—and NJLA—help?

Libraries have always had a role in developing an educated and informed citizenry. The foundation for this is built through our public school system, and this is why access to school libraries and certified school media specialists is more critical than ever.

Through the efforts of the Unlock Student Potential initiative, two bills have been introduced into the legislature to work toward this. Assembly bill A4858 requires instruction on information literacy in K–12 curriculum. Information literacy is defined in the bill as a set of skills that enables an individual to recognize when information is needed and to locate, evaluate, and effectively use the needed information.

The information literacy bill goes hand in hand with bills A4500/S3258, which will require specific ratios of school library media specialists in public schools. These professionals are absent from some districts and schools and are sorely needed to develop information literacy proficiency. NJLA and NJASL are working to achieve passage of these bills.

New Jerseyans already beyond their school years also need refreshers and new technology training to evaluate information in its many modern formats and sources. Many public libraries are doing exciting work in helping people become better information consumers, through formal workshops and programs and regular one-on-one encounters at the information desk.

Literacy and information have always been mainstays of public library service. Today the need for both has become entwined as never before!

On a personal note, I want to thank you all for allowing me the opportunity to serve as your president—it has been an honor. I look forward to continuing to be involved and I hope you also will continue on as active and involved members of our great association!

**Chris Carbone**

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### Editorial Statement of the New Jersey Libraries NEWSletter

The *New Jersey Libraries NEWSletter* shall provide news of NJLA and information about statewide, regional, and local library activities.

News shall be as current as possible within the constraints of the publication schedule and the publication will serve as an archival record of significant and lasting library issues and topics.

The *New Jersey Libraries NEWSletter* shall provide reports from officers, committees, roundtables, sections, and other units of the NJLA.

It shall also publish reports on trends and practices in the library profession and articles on topics of interest to the New Jersey library community. Ephemeral issues and time-sensitive topics will be covered in the Listserv or the association website.

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## Letter from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### To Combat Fake News, We Need Real Librarians

Fake news—it is a term we now hear constantly. But what does it mean? I googled “fake news” and got 162,000,000 results. Now what do I do? Which one of these links is accurate? How do I tell? Should I ask Siri what she thinks?

The challenge of locating accurate information is becoming more complicated. What sources can we trust—and how many people believe that Google is the only answer?

The future will belong to those who know how to use and evaluate information. Virtually every career will demand that individuals understand how to interact with the world of information.

We know students are the future. So the question is how well are New Jersey students being prepared to compete with their counterparts. Research on the value of reading and information literacy programs developed by a school library media specialist is extensive and clear.

Unfortunately, New Jersey schools have been dismantling these programs at an alarming rate. A survey done by NJLA and NJASL revealed how serious the problem is.

- There are 20% fewer school library media specialists (SLMS) in New Jersey than there were in 2007–2008
- 20% of high schools have no certified SLMS available to students
- Less than 50% of schools in former Abbott districts have the benefits of SLMS

NJLA created the Unlock Student Potential task force to advocate for a strong information literacy future for all students in New Jersey public schools. The task force has been instrumental in drafting two critical pieces of legislation, designed to provide a strong foundation for school

media programs staffed by certified personnel in all New Jersey schools and the development of an information literacy curriculum for students in grades K–12.

Bill A4858, sponsored by Assemblyman Wayne DeAngelo, requires instruction on information literacy in the curriculum of students in grades K–12. Bill A4500, sponsored by Assemblypersons Shavonda Sumter, Benjie Wimberly, and Daniel Benson (its companion bill, S3258, is sponsored by Senator James Beach), requires certain ratios of SLMS to students in public schools.

Why is NJLA so involved with the plight of school libraries? The need in the academic environment is obvious. Many academic librarians have expressed frustration in seeing college freshman arrive ill-prepared to do college-level research. Information literacy skills need to be taught in a continuum that begins with a strong foundation in primary and secondary school, before the student enters an institution of higher education.

The lack of strong information literacy skills is apparent in public libraries, as well. We spend millions of dollars providing excellent online resources for all residents of the state. Unfortunately, many don't know how to use them. This is particularly frustrating to youth services librarians in public libraries assisting students with school assignments. Trying to teach information literacy skills while helping a student with an assignment is an impossible job. The foundations of information literacy skills belong in a school library environment.

As a library community, we cannot simply decry the proliferation of fake news; we have the obligation to see that all students have the skills to meet the future with confidence. We can overcome fake news with real school librarians.

**Patricia Tumulty**



### Note from the EDITOR

As one of our contributors wisely points out, “information literacy” isn't exactly music to most people's ears. But think for a moment how the concept impacts our daily lives, and that of those around us, and it is hard to ignore.

Those of us in the library world, perhaps more uniquely desensitized to jargon than others, can tackle this issue head-on. We went in-depth for this issue of the *New Jersey Libraries NEWSletter* to see how some of our colleagues are framing this idea.

School Library Media Specialist Krista Welz details how school librarians can use technology and leadership skills to showcase their vital role in schools. We know the importance of having trained, certified school library media specialists, and the more chances to illustrate that to a wider network, the better.

Academic librarians Joan Serpico and Diane Allen share the process and planning behind a successful symposium on the rise of fake news.

Richard Kearney profiles reference services at the Newark Public Library, steadfastly doing the good work that makes them our state-wide go-to reference resource.

Reference—information literacy—information—it goes by many different names, but we are all responsible in some way for how our libraries connect our students and patrons with access to reliable information, along with the skills that one needs to be an informed human.

I hope you enjoy this issue and will consider submitting an idea for the fall issue. Email any and all ideas to [newsletter\\_editor@njlamembers.org](mailto:newsletter_editor@njlamembers.org). There is certainly a lot to speak freely about.

**Jill D'Amico**



# Information Literacy Outside of the Classroom

Rider University symposium provides lessons in collaboration

By **Joan M. Serpico**, *Instruction and Outreach Librarian, Rider University*, and **Diane K. Campbell**, *Business Librarian, Rider University*

There were reports, accusations, and rumors about fake news in the run-up to the November 2016 election, but most of America was not fully aware until after the election of President Trump. When the *New York Times* ran a story about a Macedonian fake news factory on November 25, 2016 (see <https://nyti.ms/2jAGJH3>), it slowly became obvious that something new had happened.

This was not politics as usual but a scenario in which misinformation was being fed to society on a grand scale with significant consequences, resulting in drama, public accusations, confusion, and even violence. More and more people found it hard to decide whom to believe for even the most basic facts, and they needed those facts to make an important decision that was crucial to their future, as well as to their country and the world. People were learning about the source of some of this information but only after their decisions had been made.

With the spreading realization of the “business” of fake news and the difficulty in sorting it from accusations of fake news, many in the Rider University campus community had the following questions: What is happening? Is this new? Why is it successful? What should I do about it?

We knew this was an opportunity to demonstrate the importance of information literacy, a message that had been the focus of many years of efforts. However, a wealth of experience led to the question: How could we get students, faculty, and staff to come to a discussion on information literacy?

The answer (besides to carefully not call it information literacy) was to partner with faculty from other departments to create a symposium

to answer these questions for the campus community. Rider University has a wealth of experts in politics and journalism, and making those experts the focus of the symposium meant that the event would be embedded in at least two departments and that support would be widespread.

The event turned out to be a tremendous success. Over 135 people attended a 90-minute presentation and due to the size of the venue, others were turned away. Most of the audience stayed for the Q&A, and we had to end with a few questioning hands still in the air. The audience was primarily students but included faculty, administrators, staff, and members of the local community.

The audience was attentive and asked over thirty minutes’ worth of constructive questions aimed at understanding the current situation and how to be vigilant about it. It was an achievement in terms of attendance and feedback, but also because of the valuable relationships we formed with faculty and increased visibility for the library on campus.

We learned a lot along the way and want to share our experience, as we expect this kind of event would be well received on a variety of topics at a number of different institutions.

## **Partnering and Planning Content**

We knew the program would benefit from experts from the Department of Political Science and the Department of Communication and Journalism. We reached out to Olivia Newman, a dynamic assistant professor in the Department of Political Science, to explore the idea. We met in mid-December and asked Frank Rusciano from the Department of Political Science to get involved, as well as two faculty members from the Communication and Journalism Department, Pamela Brown and Jackie Incollingo. Our new, larger group met in January. Because this could be a very



*Rider University's Diane Campbell speaking at spring symposium, aimed at examining the spread of fake news [Photo from The Rider News]*

broad topic, we thought about what our audience would want to know and divided up the presentation based on interest, passion, and expertise. It was decided that the librarians would perform the introduction, including an overview of what the presentation would provide, and the faculty from the Department of Communication and Journalism would provide a historical perspective on fake news—is it new and how is it different?—as well as an overview of journalistic ethics. Faculty from the Department of Political Science would show examples of fake news, differentiate fake from biased news, describe why it is so successful, and what the consequences are. The librarians would wrap up with techniques for recognizing fake news and monitor the question and answer session.

We planned for a 2-hour timeframe and decided to hold the symposium in the evening, making sure it did not conflict with any other major events, settling on March 1. For good attendance, the issue had to still be in the mainstream news. Fortunately (or unfortunately), it was.

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# School Librarians as Leaders

## Encouraging a vibrant school library program

By **Krista Welz**, Librarian/Media Specialist, North Bergen High School

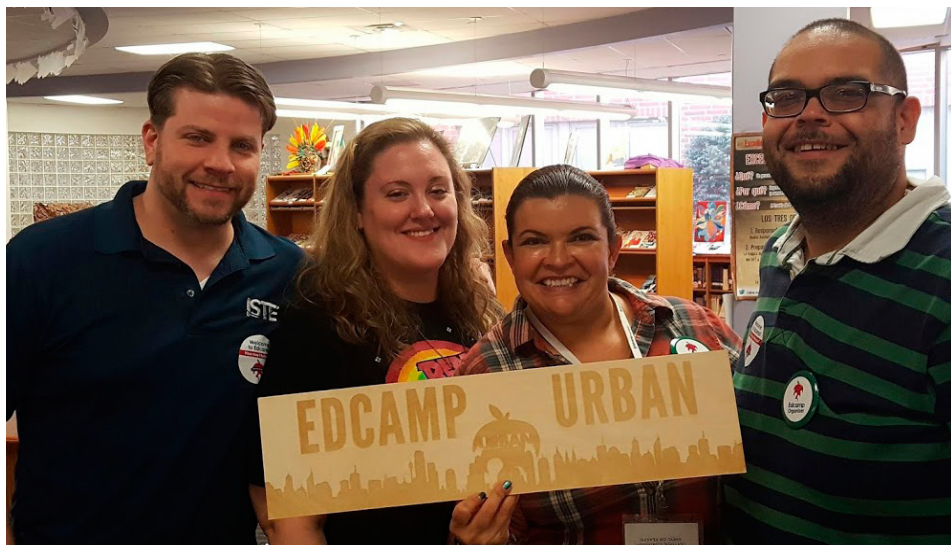
School librarians strive for excellence, enable transformation, and become leaders in their school library profession. They also realize that leadership is an essential characteristic and how encouraging it can be on their professional success. I started working in North Bergen High School's Library Media Center in 2013. I quickly became adapted to my surroundings because I knew I wanted to help both students and teachers.

I knew leadership wasn't just a choice. In order to remain relevant in my position, it was my only option. From my perspective, leadership can be viewed as an intricate model because of its nontraditional role on the school librarian. Many distinctions and circumstances need to be intact within the school environment in order for a school librarian to embrace the leadership role. Bearing a trustworthy reputation among colleagues and having a clear vision of both the school library and school's strategic goals helped me promote inner leadership and the desire to produce change.

Find out what's upcoming to the new school year and see if you can help in implementing the change, whether it's new technology (i.e., Chromebooks), learning platform (software or web-based), a transition to G Suite (formerly Google Apps for Education), or enhancing curriculum with open educational resources. Take the initiative to learn these new tools and products so that you can help teachers, administrators, and students in the implementation process.

### Personal Networks and Growth

In order to thrive in schools, school librarians must focus on their own



Krista Welz (second from left) with fellow Hudson County educators at the first Edcamp Urban, held in Union City last October

personal and professional growth through continuous subjection to professional conferences and journals, participation in webinars, and membership in library associations, such as NJLA. Our expectations of being lifelong learners must be demonstrated and modeled to the school's stakeholders. Becoming acquainted with library-related and educational research-based literature can help further personal development.

Participating in online communities of practice, such as Twitter, helped me strengthen my confidence and leadership skills. Twitter makes librarians matter by making engagement a priority. We are not on an island by

ourselves—make your online presence known on social media. It's always great to promote libraries and educational technology uses and in-

tegration in learning and instruction through various postings, downloadable material and video tutorials, and design library infographics and sketchnotes promoting libraries and educational technology through the use of Twitter.

Last year, I created a New Jersey Twitter chat called #NJLibChat (view my tweets at <https://twitter.com/kristawelz>), which meets bi-monthly and discusses important library issues such as transforming school libraries and the evolving role of librarians. By moderating these Twitter chats with numerous library leaders such as Elissa Malespina, Laura Fleming, and Shannon Miller, you connect with leaders from the field. Build your own global personal learning network of passionate educators on Twitter, and these friends are a tweet away 24/7. Most of these librarians and educators are willing to collaborate on projects! Twitter won't change your life, but the people you meet there will absolutely change your life!

### Opportunities in Technology

In addition, the importance of embracing technological leadership responsibilities can provide further leadership opportunities for school librarians in an age of digital information. Knowledge on specific issues can help in decision-making leadership opportunities within the school and prevail in the leading edge of new educational strategies. An extensive and applied understanding of information and educational technologies can help assist in developing learning outcomes for both students and teachers.

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***Collaborative associations with individual stakeholders, such as the principal or vital curriculum leaders within the building, can also further cultivate the leadership value of school librarians.***

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## More Essential than Ever

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follow a broadening of the concept of what libraries are. "In the past people thought of a library as having the highest knowledge, the great thinkers, artists, poets, and so forth, and of course, libraries do have that. Some visitors would ask about more practical, day-to-day things, maybe how to fix a television or cook French food. But now people come to us more often with life problems: 'My child is failing school, where can I find a tutor?' 'I'm an immigrant and I have no money.' Sometimes it's simple enough for us to say every school has a child-study team, and some people will say, 'Oh really? Fine,' and others will say, 'No, I don't want my child labeled.' So we try to help them with information and referrals according to their needs."

Users have also shown a greater willingness to seek help in becoming better researchers. Kahn notes, "The biggest change I've experienced in my career is that I do a lot more to help users with the process. In the past, if someone wanted to fix a car, I'd show them the books, while now they want me to sit with them and go through the different resources. We do a lot of hand-holding, and this is not a problem, that's just how it is."

This more interactive use of reference service can be attributed to several factors, many of which are related to the diverse backgrounds of users. Kahn comments that "a lot depends on a person's education, so some people want ready reference,

but they don't know how to use a computer and neither do they intend to learn how. I do a lot to boost a person's self-confidence because maybe they think it's harder than it is, and I always remind people that it gets easier as you learn more—everything builds on everything else."

And technological changes have affected people in different ways, also rooted in social circumstances. A lot of people, Kahn observes, "have mobile devices nicer than mine, but they don't have connectivity." Even when users have mobile devices, certain important tasks can be difficult to carry out on them: "You need a lot of patience to do a FAFSA application on a phone, so we do encourage people to use our computers."

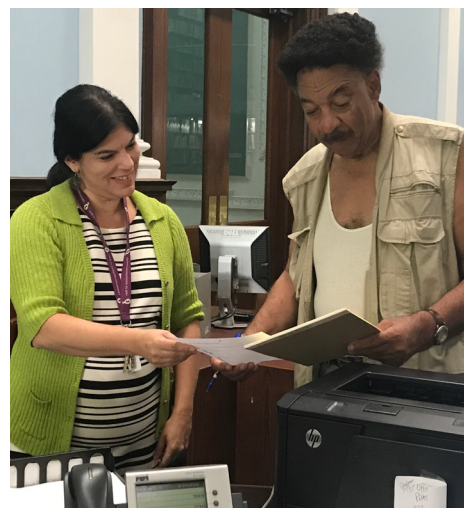
Much has been written about young people as digital natives, but despite libraries being among the first institutions to embrace networked technologies—as Kahn observed, "We preceded

***In upcoming issues, Richard will be profiling the faces and places in New Jersey libraries. Got a tip? Let us know at [newsletter\\_editor@njlamembers.org](mailto:newsletter_editor@njlamembers.org)***

movie theaters and beauty salons in being online"—this has not translated into greater youth awareness of libraries. Nor has broader access to digital technology in itself fostered research skills, especially in an online environment dominated by consumer-oriented companies and applications. Nevertheless, young people are among the key populations who use NPL today, thanks in part to outreach programs, referrals, and on-site programs, including SAT exam preparation and summer youth training.

Reference exchanges always provide opportunities for the library to build trust with service populations. Kahn has distilled her approach into a simple but powerful motto—You matter/We care—and this has proven effective in a variety of circumstances. "If you happen to be undocumented or come from a country where a public library isn't quite so prevalent, especially if you're a poor person, you still regard the librarian as a government worker, so we have to earn that respect."

At its best, these positive reference exchanges result in library users becoming goodwill ambassadors for the



Ana Herrera (left) working with patron Wes Mullings, D.D., who has been visiting the Reference Division for 40 years

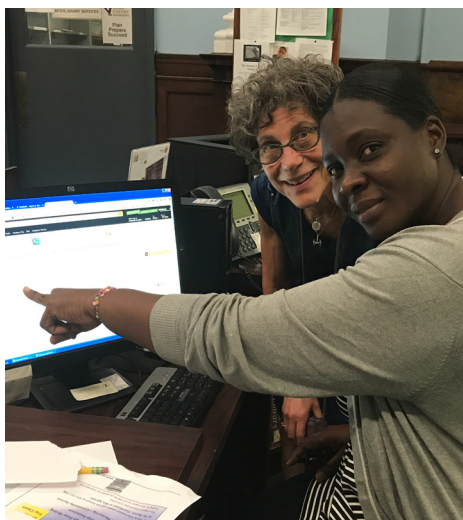


Dale Colston is pictured in the Charles F. Cummings New Jersey Information Center.

library in their neighborhoods. Kahn recounted the story of an ex-offender who "used to bring people in here all the time." One day while assisting two people with more traditional reference questions, a third person arrived and asked, "How can I expunge my record?" and before Kahn could reply, the other two people began advising him (explaining "This is how I did it," etc.).

A broadening and more inclusive concept of library services brings with it additional complexity, but Kahn believes libraries should embrace the challenge. "It used to be we were scrambling to learn technology, and now we're scrambling to learn everything." This doesn't mean librarians need to be experts beyond their training. At NPL, for example, a cooperative agreement with the neighboring Rutgers School of Social Work provides a graduate-level social work student in the library for 20 hours each week who offers

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Leslie Kahn (left) working with Maureen Stuart, author of *A Royal Runt: A Little Girl Teaches a Prince How to Treat People*, a Kindle book for children.

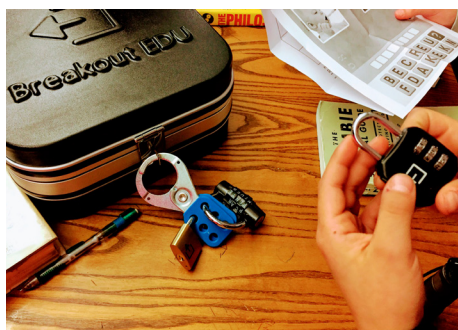


School librarians should be up-to-date on the latest research and educational technology trends in order to demonstrate confidence and proficiency when discussing and/or providing technological professional development to colleagues.

### **Learning and Leading for the School Organization**

An important aspect of leadership is the ability to effectively collaborate with others. By forming positive connections with chief stakeholders within a school, school librarians provide constant connections in regards to learning and demonstrate to others just how hands-on they are in adding value to learning. This type of awareness and pro-active role in forming connections helps put aside any type of indifference they may find in their colleagues when working collaboratively with them. School librarians can incorporate collaboration into their daily routine by participating in school committees (i.e., technology, SciP [school improvement panel], professional development), working with grade level/departamental colleagues, and collaborating with school programs, such as the Gifted and Talented and STEM programs.

By volunteering and participating on school committees, school librarians can become involved in school-wide decisions and offer their services/resources to help colleagues and students meet their goals. Collaborative associations with individual stakeholders, such as the principal or vital curriculum leaders within the building, can also further cultivate the leadership value of school librarians. In many cases, school librarians are often sent as representatives from their schools to attend professional conferences, including leadership and technology-based sessions. With these valuable opportunities to rep-



*Students take part in a school library orientation, designed with BreakoutEDU's "escape room" strategies.*

resent their schools, they can share newly acquired information, including instructional and technological methods, practices, and theories. Make sure to stay in contact with your school's principal and superintendent and let them know that you are interested in attending these types of professional conferences. You could also volunteer on local or county consortiums, such as the Hudson County Curriculum Consortium and Technology Coordinators. Stay visible!

School districts often implement either a fixed or flexible schedule in their school library programs. In fixed schedules, school librarians must instruct daily classes in order to serve as a preparation period for classroom teachers. With flexible schedules, school librarians have the freedom to collaborate with students and teachers on an as-needed basis. Individuals and small student groups can openly enter the school library when they need access to information, selecting reading material, using technology, or merely working in collaborative group work.

Collaborating with grade level/departamental colleagues can help support student-learning goals, such as implementing project-based learning and designing lessons that are instructive and appealing for all students. When a school library program is set on a flexible schedule, school librarians can better promote research and literacy skills with students, while offering professional development and fully utilizing technology with colleagues.

Because the North Bergen High School allows the Library Media Center to operate on a flexible schedule, teachers are free to bring in their classes when they need extra help in research, to check out books for

sustained silent reading, or to participate in activities such as Breakout EDU ("escape room" strategies and teamwork). Try implementing a makerspace program that helps students interact with online coding, MakeyMakey ([www.makeymakey.com](http://www.makeymakey.com)), LittleBits (<https://littlebits.cc>), and STEM activities.

I also plan and deliver educational technology workshops for teachers in the school district. Because of the flexible schedule, these workshops can be given in the Library Media Center on an ongoing basis. School librarians can also offer one-on-one professional development with their colleagues throughout the school year. Their use of informational and educational technology can help transform learning in all types of subject areas taught by teachers.

### **Transformational Leadership**

There is a continuing discussion about whether leadership is extrinsic or intrinsic. Extrinsically learning new views, in any type of subject, is a survival technique that enables the development of new purposes and facilitates school librarians to adapt to change.

Transformational leadership requires commitment, innovation, and valor from school librarians in order to progress in the change process. Transformational leaders are representatives of change who benefit from their potentials to tackle their own biased perceptions of their school conditions. As a result, transformational leadership has proven to be a valuable type of leadership among school librarians due to the demand for educational reform. Conforming to educational reform helps school librarians remain relevant, but only if they are inclined to support new ideas and methods.

Consider forming or volunteering on educational organizations, such as edcamps. In 2016, I helped establish and co-found the Edcamp Urban non-profit organization ([www.edcampurban.org](http://www.edcampurban.org)) for Hudson County, New Jersey (on a side note, I met my co-founders through Twitter!). Organized by K-12 educators and participant-driven, Edcamp Urban is open to all educators and created and facilitated by participants on the day of the event.



*Welz (center) presenting at the Tri-State Project Based Learning Summit at Rutgers in May 2017*

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## School Librarians as Leaders

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Along with my co-founders, we held our first Edcamp Urban in a public high school located in Union City. The day was both professional and engaging where we connected with like-minded individuals, collaborated on ideas, brainstormed solutions to common education problems, and had group discussions.

Through the practice of leadership in schools, school librarians take part in the shared vision and strategic goals of their district. Through collaborative relationships, they work daily with students, teachers, and administrators—selecting and organizing digital resources, enabling professional learning for self and others, assisting in the improvement of curriculum, and implementing literacy and technology in schools.

Considered an active member of the school community, school librarians intentionally engage in all types of collaborative discussions and partnerships within the school organization, understanding the needs and perspectives of students and colleagues.

School librarians must keep in mind that their successful leadership transforms their everyday practices into a significant future for their schools. In order for the school librarians to thrive, administrators must fully understand how both the school librarian and school library can help lead and support the school's strategic vision and goals.

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## More Essential than Ever (continued from page 7)

services and referrals. Another agreement with Berkeley College enabled the library to offer blood pressure screenings on site, and the program was very popular.

In Kahn's estimate, a lot of contemporary reference work has moved to the domain of social justice, as engaged libraries cannot help but be confronted with other changes going on inside their communities: "So we see problems and we just try to find solutions, even if we can't find the total solution. I'm not going for the low-hanging fruit. I'm looking to ameliorate the situation somehow. So whether it's that we don't have the right signage people need, which is more structural, or choosing the right language, or a service. We try to figure out what are the priorities for a very diverse community and see what support we can get from that analysis." Regardless of whether traditional forms of reference are retained or not—the desk, roaming librarians, chat service, and so forth—the continuous exchanges and engagement are essential to the vitality of the library-community relationship and why Kahn still regards reference as the "heart of the library."

The circulatory metaphor has further implications. Like many librarians, Kahn is a fan of maker-

spaces and sees them as embodying an ideal she holds for libraries in general: "We need to make this a place of learning, of adventure, and of self-empowerment. The makerspaces are important not only psychologically but also for our society. Instead of the library being a place where we are consumers, the makerspace and indeed the classes we have and the kind of reference we do, the way we answer questions now in a much more holistic way, our visitors are no longer consumers, they are producers."

Kahn points to her colleagues in the schools as having acquired this insight in their work with children. "School librarians know the library wants the student to create new knowledge, and we think, 'What? A 12-year-old creating new knowledge?' And if it's not new under the sun, it's probably new to the classroom, so that kind of exchange of energy, it comes in and it goes out, and it circulates in the city of Newark to make it a better place. That's the revolution."

*Richard Kearney is electronic resources librarian at William Paterson University in Wayne. He holds an M.L.S. from Rutgers University in New Brunswick. His email address is [kearneyr@wpunj.edu](mailto:kearneyr@wpunj.edu).*

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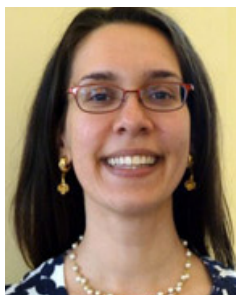
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# PEOPLE & PLACES

## Around the State

### Honors, Awards, and Recognition

The NJLA Rising Star Award was given to **Jonathan Amey**, Gloucester County Library System; **Kate Bellody**, Hudson County Community College; **Anna Coats**, Livingston PL; and **Marina Maffia**, Morris Automated Information Network.



*Anna Coats*

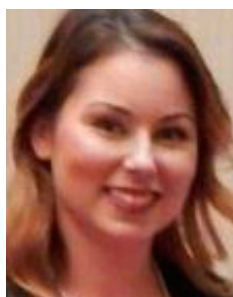
**Jayne Beline**, Parsippany PL; **Janet Torsney**, Bradley Beach PL; and **Meredith Baubles** and **Ellie Moorer**, Gloucester County Library System, were awarded NJLA's 2017 Library Service Awards for Individuals.

**Leslie Berger**, of Library Development Solutions and former director of Princeton PL, was named NJLA's 2017 Librarian of the Year.

**Camden County Library, Bellmawr Branch**, was one of 75 libraries in the nation to receive a NASA@My Library Partner grant.

**Maureen Donohue**, Piscataway PL, was the recipient of the 2017 NJLA President's Award.

Montclair State University's **Harry Sprague Library** was awarded a \$20,000 grant from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities to offer a series of free public programming that examines Japanese and Western perspectives on artificial intelligence and robotics.



*Maureen Donohue*

**Aubrey Hiers**, Otto Bruyns PL of Northfield, won the 2017 NJLA Intellectual Freedom Award.



*Aubrey Hiers*

**Sarah Hull**, Plainfield PL, received the 2017 Susan G. Swartzburg Preservation Award.

**Karen Mahar**, director of the Ocean City Public Library, was honored with the 2017 Salute to Working Women award by the Ocean City Chamber of Commerce.

**Amy Ojserkis** of Atlantic County Institutes of Technology was a recipient of an ALA Teen Read Week Activity Grant from the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA).

**Nancy Weiner**, assistant director, Access & Information Services of the David and Lorraine Cheng Library at

William Paterson University, was granted the 2017 NJLA CUS/ACRL-NJ Distinguished Service Award.

**Amanda Winter**, Livingston PL, was winner of the 2017 New Jersey Center for the Book Miss Rumphius Award.

### Celebrations

**Cresskill PL** won a Talk Story Grant from APALA & AILA. The library will be partnering with a local organization to host programming related to Korean culture.

The **Gloucester County Library System** won an Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties for TheGarden@GCLS, a 600-square-foot plot of land that was converted from an unproductive stretch of grass to a garden.

**Hasbrouck Heights PL** celebrated its 100th Anniversary with a gala on June 19.

**Jersey City PL** reopened on May 1 after renovations.

**Paramus PL** celebrated the completion of a major renovation project on April 19.

**Red Bank PL** celebrated the grand reopening of its Local History Room on May 20.

The **Sussex County Library** celebrated its 75th birthday on May 13.

**Trenton Free PL** celebrated its 115th Anniversary on June 9.

**Verona PL** held a groundbreaking ceremony for its library renovation project on June 19.

**West Milford PL** opened its new facility on Saturday, June 17.

### Appointments and Elections

**Sharlene Edwards** is the new head of children's services at Piscataway PL. She was previously at Hoboken PL.

**Ann Hoang** was appointed university librarian at New Jersey Institute of Technology. She had been serving as interim university librarian.

**Leah Kloc** is the new director of Sayreville PL. She had previously been the children's librarian.

**Megan Kociolek** is the new director at Clark PL. She had previously been at Nutley PL.



*Ann Hoang*

*(continued on page 12)*



We booked a room that would work if the crowd was modest and set about coordinating with University Communications and Marketing about the promotion that they would provide for the event. We had originally planned for 75 chairs, but the week before the event, we had received enough emails of interest to change our request to 100 chairs with enough extra to bring seating up to the room's capacity of 125. At the end of January, Joan worked with a graphic artist student intern to create a poster and a slide for the TV monitors. These would be reviewed at an early February meeting of the presenters.

The six presenters met and decided on a title: *Who Says So? Fake News and Responsible Citizenship*. We agreed on the order of the presentations and what would be included in each and planned to share our presentations via email by mid-February to check for any overlap.

The group agreed that a LibGuide on fake news with resources and exercises that can be done in class would be a good addition to the symposium to encourage further exploration after the event. We also agreed that creating an extra credit assignment that would be available at the symposium could encourage student attendance and provide a way for professors to verify attendance.

Diane sent an email to faculty asking them to RSVP if they planned to send their classes to the event in order to further gauge attendance. A number of faculty responded saying they were bringing a class, or recommending/requiring attendance. These included history, journalism, and business classes, as well as disciplines that did not necessarily relate to politics but certainly were affected by fake news, such as environmental science classes.

Posters and promotional slides designed by a student intern were approved by the group. Over the next several days, Diane and Joan explored fake news LibGuides created by other academic libraries, and sample exercises were sent from other members of the group to be included in the guide.

In mid-February, we learned that due to staffing shortages and an unusually heavy workload, the promotional plan via University Communications and Marketing was cancelled, so we turned to the materials created by the library's student intern. We printed the posters and hung them around campus in mid-February. Joan created and sent a press release for the event to University Communications and Marketing, and they sent it to the public news outlets.

Diane used the presentation slides to create an assignment sheet that asked one question per presentation, and we included the assignment on the reverse of the agenda to be handed to all comers. This allowed students to take easy notes to hand in to their professors and prompted them to listen during each presentation rather than recalling only portions of the program.

We completed the LibGuide, posted it on the library's website, and printed 100 copies of the agenda with the extra credit assignment. Social media was used as well. In the days preceding the event, University Communications and Marketing sent tweets about the event, and Joan promoted the event using the student's graphic work on the library's Facebook page.

The final list of presentations were as follows: an introduction by Rider University Libraries; "News Flash – Fake News Is Not New" by the Department of Communication & Journalism; "What Is Fake News?" by the Department of Political Science; "Journalists and the Battle Against 'Fake News'" by the Department of Communication and Journalism; "Fake News: Why Are We So Vulnerable Now?" by the Department of Political Science; and "How to Spot Fake News" by Rider University Libraries.

You cannot plan for everything—one of the presenters had a family medical emergency on the day of the symposium, but her colleague from our planning team stepped up to present her slides.

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***It was an achievement in terms of attendance and feedback, but also because of the valuable relationships we formed with faculty and increased visibility for the library on campus.***

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On the night of the symposium, attendees started arriving 45 minutes early—a sign that a big crowd was likely. We set up the extra folding chairs, and by the time we began, the room was standing-room only.

The presentations stretched to an hour and a half, rather than the 50 minutes we had planned for, but audience attention remained high throughout. The question-and-answer session was lively but courteous, which was notable given the political nature of the topic. We ended questioning after a half hour, and several attendees stayed behind to talk with each other or the presenters.

Positive feedback was swift. Supportive emails came flooding in from faculty who attended or whose students attended. A man who belonged to a group of producers in New York City asked if the group would want to take the show on the road!

Librarians love to instruct, collaborate, and provide tools for patrons to better access and understand information. The event was able to achieve all of those things, and perhaps, provide a template for future effective campus partnerships.

*Joan M. Serpico is instruction and outreach librarian at Rider University in Lawrenceville. She holds an M.L.S. from the University of Maryland in College Park. In September, she will become the reference/outreach librarian for Franklin Township Public Library in Somerset. She can be reached at [serpicojm@gmail.com](mailto:serpicojm@gmail.com).*

*Diane K. Campbell is the business librarian at Rider University in Lawrenceville, where she also co-leads the information literacy instruction program. She holds an M.L.I.S. from Rutgers and an MBA from Rider. She can be reached at [dcampbell@rider.edu](mailto:dcampbell@rider.edu).*

**James Lonergan** is the new state librarian of Massachusetts. He was previously deputy state librarian for library support services at NJSL.

**Jen Overton** was announced as the acting director of Roseland PL.

**Will Porter** was named director of Sussex County Library. He was previously the director of Roxbury PL.

**Susanne Sacchetti** is the new director of Cumberland County Library. She had previously been director of Deptford PL.

**Ian Sloat** is now the director at Mountainside PL. He was previously at Trenton PL.

**Justine Tomczak** is the new director of Clifton PL.

**Janet Torsney** was announced as

the assistant director of Montclair PL. She was previously director of Bradley Beach PL.

**John Wallace** was named community engagement librarian at Piscataway PL.

#### **Deaths & Remembrances**

Bogota PL dedicated a reading tree in the children's room in memory of **Nikki Speigel**, longtime children's librarian who died last November.

#### **Resignations/Retirements**

**Candice Brown** will retire as director of Clifton PL in September.

**Susan Kaplan** retired as director of Sayreville PL.

**Patricia Simmonds** announced her retirement after 35 years with Piscataway PL.



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