

Fall/Winter 2018-2019

Engage & Inspire

Volume 16, no. 2-3

## New Life for a Classic Format

A Conversation with Nutley Public Library's

**Nick Van Dorn**  
on the Return of  
**Vinyl Records to**  
**the Collection**

Librarians work to stay attuned to their communities' information needs and behaviors while also keeping abreast of changes in technology. Sometimes this will take them in unexpected directions.

For Nick Van Dorn, senior librarian at the Nutley Public Library, part-time Sunday librarian at the Woodbridge Public Library, and music aficionado, the behavior he observed in recent years was the unexpected but consistent uptick in sales of recorded music in vinyl format. In response to this, he proposed that Nutley PL do something it hadn't done in more than 25 years: purchase new vinyl records for the circulating collection.

Many librarians might find Van Dorn's proposal somewhat curious. The vinyl format for recorded music had a long heyday during the twentieth century, and by 1978, sales peaked with revenues of some \$2.7 billion. What followed, however, was a staggering collapse as cassettes, compact discs, and digital format music displaced vinyl. By 2006, vinyl sales in the United States fell to \$25.6 million, a 99% decline over 29 years.

For their part, libraries responded to these format shifts by withdrawing vinyl records from their collections, replacing them with compact discs requiring far



*Nutley librarian Nick Van Dorn with the library's new vinyl collection on display near the main entrance doors*

less storage space per unit and promising, at least initially, greater longevity as a physical medium for recorded music.

*(continued on page 3)*

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# Changes at the NJLA Newsletter

This double-number issue of the *Newsletter* comes with some important changes, which we want to communicate to members.

We wish to thank Jill D'Amico for her two years of service as editor of the *Newsletter*. Jill began as editor with the spring 2016 issue and supervised production of all issues through summer 2018, after which she decided to step down as editor. The Editorial Board is grateful to Jill for her work and dedication to NJLA.

We also want to thank Editorial Board member Jennifer Heise for supervising production of this issue during the transition period.

Starting with the next issue, the *Newsletter* will be produced using electronic format templates provided by our new association management software, a transition that promises to make the production and layout of issues easier while also delivering high-quality content directly to your email.

Finally, the Editorial Board is seeking a new editor for the *Newsletter*. If you have a passion for organizational communication with a desire to spread news about what's happening in libraries around the state, and have great writing and editing skills, we want to speak with you! Please contact NJLA President Leah Wagner at [lwagner@monroetwplibrary.org](mailto:lwagner@monroetwplibrary.org).

*Richard Kearney, Chair, NJLA Member Communications Subcommittee*

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Proposals will be due on or around February 15 (Spring issue); May 15 (Summer); August 15 (Fall); and November 15 (Winter).

### Mission Statement of the New Jersey Libraries NEWSletter

The New Jersey Libraries NEWSletter is one of the official publications of the New Jersey Library Association and serves as a vehicle for communication of library issues and activities among the members of NJLA.

### 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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## ***New Life for a Classic Format (continued from p. 1)***

By the time a teenage Van Dorn started working at Nutley PL in the late 1990s as a page, the remnants of the library's vinyl collection had already been removed from circulation. Most other public libraries in the country had done the same thing.

A search in WorldCat, which contains more than 425 million bibliographic records, reveals less than 90 new vinyl albums per year were added to catalogs between 1989 and 2011.

Meanwhile, Van Dorn transitioned to professional librarianship, earning his M.S.L.I.S. at the Pratt Institute in 2010. As a music enthusiast, he began collecting vinyl records and noticed the format was starting to enjoy a gradual revival, with music stores selling newly manufactured vinyl records, including reissues of older albums and new releases.

He wasn't wrong. Data from Nielsen and the Recording Industry Association of America show sales of new vinyl albums have increased every year from 2007 to 2017. During this period, unit sales increased from one million to 14.3 million albums, and sales revenue increased from \$26.9 million to \$394.6 million. According to *Music Trades*, more than 770,000 new turntables were sold in the United States between 2005 and 2017, an average of more than 59,000 each year.

Van Dorn experienced something of an epiphany about vinyl's resiliency following a visit to one of New Jersey's largest independent record stores "I discovered the Princeton Record Exchange online and went with my wife, and we instantly loved it. Going there and seeing all those amazing vinyl records made me think it would be great if we could somehow reintroduce this format to the patrons at Nutley. I love the artwork on all the different

album covers. I love the whole procedure of using a vinyl record, taking it out of the



### **SPOTLIGHT:**

by Richard Kearney, Electronic Resources Librarian, William Paterson University.

sleeve, cleaning it off, putting the stylus on it," he explains.

Van Dorn notes that the annual "Record Store Day" event, an increasingly popular promotional opportunity for

record sellers that has been running since 2008, has also helped to stoke renewed interest in vinyl. More than 40 independent record stores in New Jersey participated in the event on April 21, 2018.

Inspired by vinyl's surprising comeback, Van Dorn drafted a proposal to establish a new vinyl collection at Nutley PL in early 2017, initially presenting it at a staff meeting where "everyone was very supportive of the idea." From there the proposal went to Nutley PL's Friends of the Library, which agreed to provide funding for the initial purchases, and the first set of albums, about 20, were made available for circulation in April 2017, the same month as Record Store Day.

The library organized a kickoff program to introduce the new collection called "Get Into the Groove." Van Dorn described it as "a listening celebration where people would come in and bring some of their favorite record albums and they shared some anecdotes about their

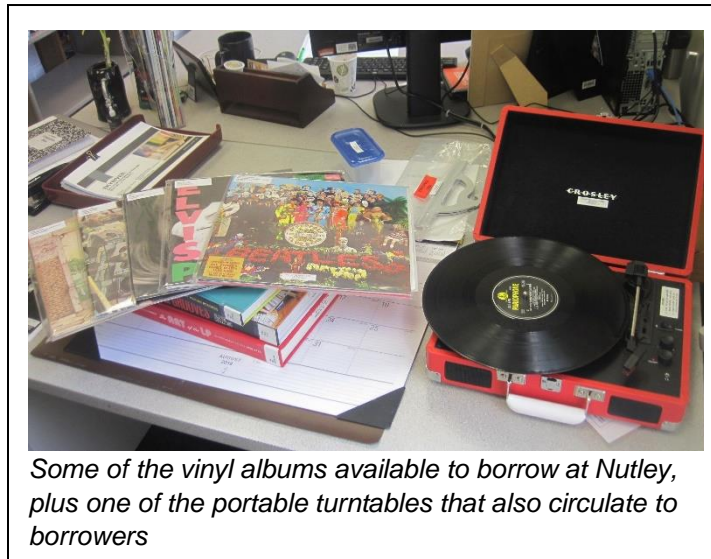
favorite records, and they were also able to listen to some of the recent acquisitions we purchased. It was a great event. A few patrons even borrowed some albums that day." Five months later the library sponsored another program featuring Princeton Record Exchange owner Jon Lambert.

Additional funds from the Friends organization have supported the purchase of several dozen additional albums, and the collection

now stands at approximately 70 titles, all of which reside on a shelving unit near the library's main entrance that supports the display of several album covers.

The library has sought to balance the collection between reissues and newer, contemporary releases, purchasing recent albums by Taylor Swift, Adele, Ed Sheeran, and Bruno Mars. Reissues include albums by the Beatles, David Bowie, Jimi Hendrix, ABBA, and Prince. In addition to pop and rock music, the collection includes country, jazz, film soundtracks, and reggae. Van Dorn notes, "We try to have a very eclectic collection with newer and established artists, and all kinds of genres."

Since launch, the user response has been very positive, with some 250 circulations. Van Dorn has observed that all age groups have borrowed albums. With a copy of "The Lego Batman Movie: Original Motion Picture



*Some of the vinyl albums available to borrow at Nutley, plus one of the portable turntables that also circulate to borrowers*

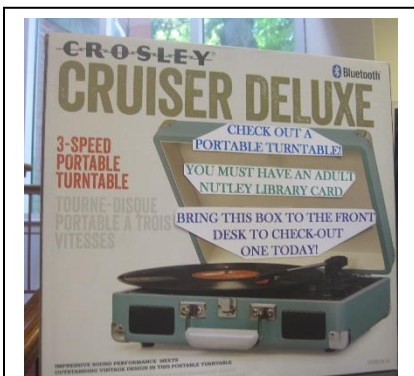


Soundtrack” in the collection, even younger children have gotten interested.

Van Dorn emphasizes that his aims for the collection have been modest: “Our main goal is to introduce, or reintroduce, patrons to the format.” Nevertheless, he does have some ideas about the resurgence of vinyl and why the format merits a place in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century library despite the wide availability of digital and streaming audio.

“I believe the main appeal of vinyl for users is twofold. First, there is the listening experience, and I think that’s what it has over digital and streaming. You really have to invest time in selecting what album you’re going to listen to, because you’re going to be listening to that side of the album for at least 20 minutes. So in that sense, you are more invested in a vinyl album as compared with digital formats where you often switch songs at random. With vinyl you get a better understanding of the artist’s true vision by listening to an album because you really do invest in it.

“Second, there is the cover art. There’s really no comparison to the visual accessories you get with streaming audio or even a compact disc, which is so much smaller than a vinyl album. With albums, you can display the cover art on a wall or on your bookshelf. They advertise themselves. We have a bookshelf in the front of the library with six albums on face-out display, so when people walk in, one of the first things they see are these album covers, and it draws them in, so it has that kind of built-in marketing quality you don’t get with streaming services.”



A turntable available for borrowers to use

To make the collection easier to use, the library acquired three all-in-one portable turntables in January 2018 and these also circulate, with 33 checkouts since they were made available. Van Dorn’s view is that these items, which contribute to a diverse “library of

things,” helps people “to change their perceptions about what libraries are and what they do. It’s another way to work with the community and meet their needs.”

It remains to be seen whether other libraries will join Nutley PL in adding new vinyl records to their collections.

If they do, this will likely provide further support for the rebirth of the format, which accounts for only about six percent of current music sales. For now, however, Van Dorn is pleased with the public response to the collection, and he doesn’t worry about the wear and tear that might result from increased use.

“We understand the records may not come back in pristine condition, and that’s okay. If one comes back a little scratched, that’s fine.” As BBC Radio Disc Jockey John Peel once said, “Life has surface noise, too.”

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*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).*

## Nominate Your Fellow Librarians and Library Supporters!

### From the NJLA Honors & Awards Subcommittee

Nominations for the 2019 NJLA Honors & Awards remain open until March 25. We encourage all NJLA members to nominate your fellow librarians and library supporters in one of several categories, including Rising Star, Library Champion, and the prestigious Librarian of the Year.

Anyone who provides support for our libraries is eligible for an award: volunteers, trustees, Friends groups, journalists who have provided great coverage of libraries and library issues, and local businesses or organizations who partner with your library.

Awards are also available for public librarians who collaborate with a school library (NJLA/NJASL Amy Job Partnership Award) and librarians who are on the front lines of intellectual freedom and historical preservation. Academic librarians are also represented with four awards administered by the College & University section.

Any NJLA member can submit a nomination; self-nominations are welcome. These awards will be presented at the annual reception at the NJLA Conference on May 30.

Please visit [www.njla.org/awards](http://www.njla.org/awards) for a full list of the award criteria and the submission form. Any questions? Contact committee chair Lynnette Fucci at [lfucci@monroetwplibrary.org](mailto:lfucci@monroetwplibrary.org).

# President's Message

## Engage & Inspire!



The first question everyone asks when you become NJLA president is, "Have you thought about your theme?" Well, yes, I had thought long and hard about it, but it's not easy to encapsulate what you feel about a profession as varied and impactful as librarianship. I've been fortunate to work in a profession that provides countless opportunities to grow and to meet innovative and interesting people. My involvement in NJLA has provided me this opportunity many times over, and I wanted the 2019 theme to highlight NJLA's role.

Below is an excerpt from my inaugural speech that I hope clarifies how I came to focus on our profession and the incredible things we do every single day that make a difference.

"...For me, NJLA has played a fundamental role in my career as a librarian. My involvement has not only benefited me personally but has impacted my library immensely.

As I have sat through many NJLA meetings recently, I've noticed a recurring theme. What does NJLA mean to you? What is the value of being a member of NJLA? I used to think the answer to this was easy, but as I stop and think about my involvement in NJLA and what it means to me, it becomes a little more complex. There is the obvious benefit of professional development and networking. For me, it is much, much more. NJLA has allowed me to grow in ways I would never fathom. Being a member of NJLA has provided me the opportunity to grow professionally, to dabble in other areas of interest, and to make friends and to find mentors, many of whom are in this room today. As a committee chair, committee member, section president, and executive board member, I have been able to develop the skills I would need to be the assistant director of the Monroe Library.

The one word that comes to mind is *inspired*. I have been inspired by many of the people I have met and worked with in this organization. I've been inspired by the many people I meet in my own library. I've been inspired to do well, to provide excellent service, to provide places for creativity and inspiration. And for all of these reasons and more I have chosen the theme 'Engage & Inspire.'

I selected this theme not only to be about the libraries I have worked in but also about the New Jersey Library

Association. NJLA is about its members and member libraries, and when you bring people together, creative thoughts begin to flow and amazing things can happen.

So what inspires you? I know what inspires me: my daughter's artistic talent, my son's tenacity, thousands of young people marching for what they strongly believe in, and a child learning to read. Is there someone on your staff who inspires you? If so, share them with us! Is there an idea that inspires you? Share that, too! I started this speech with 'What does NJLA mean to you?' For me, it is to engage and inspire and be inspired.

Years ago, when Pat Hannon, a previous NJLA president, asked me if I had thought about running for NJLA president, my response was a resounding NO! She told me to think about it because it was good to stretch yourself. She was right, and I'm glad I did take her advice."

Remember, it is good to stretch yourself. This year meet new people, exchange ideas, and inspire and be inspired.

**Leah Wagner**

## People & Places Around the State

### Appointments & Elections

**Laverne Mann**, director the Cherry Hill Public Library, was elected to the NJLA Executive Board in December's special election.

### Celebrations

**Verona Public Library** celebrated the reopening of their restored and enhanced Carnegie building on January 24, 2019 with a New Year, New Library gala.

**Warren County Library** celebrated the grand opening of their new **Southwest Branch** on Sept. 22, 2018.

### In Memoriam

**Bob Fortenbaugh**, retired consultant from the NJ State Library, recently passed away. He was living in South Carolina.

***New position? Won an award? Retirement?***

***Tell us your news!***

**Email [newsletter\\_editor@njlamembers.org](mailto:newsletter_editor@njlamembers.org)**

# Rethinking Library Space

## A “Basement Show” in the Library’s Basement

By Caroline Safreed, Bridgeton Free Public Library

With ever shrinking municipal budgets, public libraries often have to defend their relevancy, reiterating their role as more than just a building that holds books. Libraries are versatile spaces, and librarians can better serve their communities by thinking of new ways to utilize that space. At the Bridgeton Free Public Library, our activity room has been the site for punk-rock “basement shows”, effectively filling a need for a free and safe space for Bridgeton’s teen and young adult nightlife.

The first show happened to coincide with the end of our summer reading program in August 2018. A month prior, Luis Vera, a member of the band CorporatedreamBoat and a Bridgeton resident, approached me about the possibility of doing a show. As it turned out, Luis had performed at the library before as the entertainment for a teen program. After seeing a flyer for a jazz concert the Friends of the Library had held as a fundraiser, he figured the library would be open to hosting a punk band. Since then, the library has hosted Corporate Dreamboat, Mikita, Teenage Stepdad, Odd Summer, Apollo, Pizzle and the Sizzle Sisters, FRND CRCL, Transfer Post, Alton, Pale Shade, and Ornamental.



*The band Odd Summer performing for a crowd at the Bridgeton Free Public Library*

With each show, Luis and I adapt and improve the logistics of organizing a concert, but the general framework remains the same. We figure out a date, typically a Friday or a Saturday, that works for the library. Then Luis will reach out to bands in the area to work out a lineup. Once

a date and a lineup are settled, it’s time to design a flyer. In addition to distributing hard copies, the library posts a digital version of the flyer to our social media. The library staff creates a Facebook event and, after an initial post to Instagram, posts reminders via Instagram stories. The bands normally post the flyer to their social media as well. The day of the show includes decorating the library’s activity room to match the theme and setting out

small refreshments. All of the sound equipment and drum kit is provided and set up by the bands. The library does not charge for entry or refreshments.

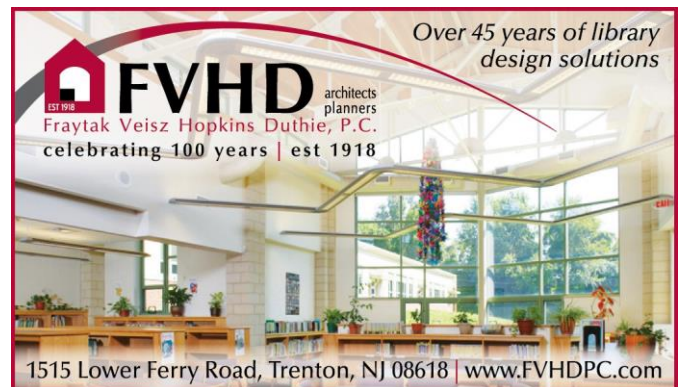
Overall, the shows have been a great success, benefitting all involved. They are bringing in people who otherwise would never visit the library, with some signing up for library cards between sets. Additionally, our teen group has grown, most new teen attendees citing the basement shows

as their favorite program. The bands, many of whom are college students, have access to a free venue to promote and share their music.

**Caroline Safreed** is a library associate at the Bridgeton Free Public Library. She holds a B.A. from Rutgers University–New Brunswick. Her email is [carolinesa@bridgetonlibrary.org](mailto:carolinesa@bridgetonlibrary.org).



*Flyer created by Luis Vera for a basement show in October*







# Letter from the Executive Director

## Embracing Engagement

“Engage and Inspire,” the theme that NJLA president Leah Wagner has chosen for this year’s conference, couldn’t be more timely. The reports from the recent Snapshot Day activities are filled with tremendous photos and stories of the inspirational work library staff are doing in communities throughout New Jersey. Engagement is the key to future support for libraries here in New Jersey and nationally. Engagement is not a passive activity. By definition, *engagement* means “being actively involved with those around you.”

A recent article in the *National Civic Review* entitled “Libraries and Community: From Informing to Engaging” also makes the point that the traditional role of the library as the “guardian” of information is no longer needed in a community. Information sources are ubiquitous. The rows and rows of reference materials that we so carefully selected are now superseded by a quick Google search. We can no longer serve our communities by merely being warehouses of books.

The authors of the book *Transforming Libraries, Building Communities* state, “Libraries need to look beyond just providing access to information to focus on the ways in which library services create and expand community, and that in repositioning themselves as the centers of an active and vibrant community life, libraries will be in the best position to demonstrate their worth in a more compelling way.”

Embracing this change will not be easy for libraries or for our communities. Assumptions of the traditional role and value of a library must change if we are to have a viable place in the future.

Libraries that choose this new path will face many challenges. Engagement is not easy. We often can’t predict the outcome of a specific activity. That is difficult for many of us who are used to a more structured work environment. It will mean establishing new relationships. We will have to develop new skills. Listen to our communities more. Engagement is a two-way street.

I predict that libraries that embrace this new role will ultimately find success and support in their communities. As Leah’s theme suggests, engagement will lead to inspiration and from inspiration to a wide variety of new programs and services we can’t even begin to imagine now.

**Patricia Tumulty**



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## Watch this Space

### Updated I Love NJ Libraries Website Relaunching on February 14th

The public relations committee of the New Jersey Library Association is excited to announce the relaunch of the I Love NJ Libraries website, [ilovenjlibraries.org](http://ilovenjlibraries.org). This website is a public-facing site to showcase libraries across the state and the important work they do. The primary goals of I Love NJ Libraries are to: provide information regarding access, events, materials and services available at libraries in New Jersey; connect residents and library advocates with statistics and stories that support their efforts to advocate on behalf of New Jersey libraries; and inform residents of the key issues affecting New Jersey libraries.

The redesigned site will debut on February 14th, 2019, the perfect date to reassert our love for our libraries! We will promote the site through our Instagram account

(@ilovenjlibraries) and Twitter (@njlibraries). We also ask that libraries assist with promotion through their own social media and websites. A press kit will be sent with promotional materials.

The public relations committee will create some content for the site, but we want this to be a statewide collaboration! If you have an idea for an article or would like to showcase an unconventional or useful service your library offers, please use the "Submit a Press Release" form on our website.

We are also looking for more "Snapshot Stories," which we began collecting in October 2018 as a part of Snapshot Day. We encourage you to think about your patrons who have felt the significant impact of the library in their lives. Submit any information you have to the PR committee, who will then write a "Snapshot Story:" a profile of the patron in the style of "Humans of New York." More information and the appropriate release forms can be found at [snapshotdaynj.org](http://snapshotdaynj.org).



For more information, visit [ilovenjlibraries.org](http://ilovenjlibraries.org)

