



MLA to Z

The Newsletter of the Maine Library Association

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Library Snapshot Week

Libraries across Maine advocate for themselves

by Savannah Sessions and Amy Stone

MLA Legislative Advocacy Committee advocacy@mainelibraries.org

Libraries across America participated in a Library Snapshot Day in September, and in Maine, we extended it to an entire week. The event was organized by the Legislative Advocacy Committee of the Maine Library Association. Forty-seven Maine libraries took part by snapping photos of their libraries – of library staff at work, of patrons using the space and materials, of staff and patrons interacting – plus collecting stories and statistics, and sharing them with the Legislative Committee and via social media with the hashtag #librarylegislativeday2022. The result is a “day in the life” document representative of all the positive things happening at any given time in any library in America. This nationwide snapshot of our hard work and good deeds shows how we contribute to the happy, functioning, and successful society we all want to live in. The aggregation of all the tiny snapshots across the state and across the country demonstrates our worth to our specific communities and to our society in general. We can use what we collect during Library Snapshot Week to advocate for ourselves.

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Snapshot

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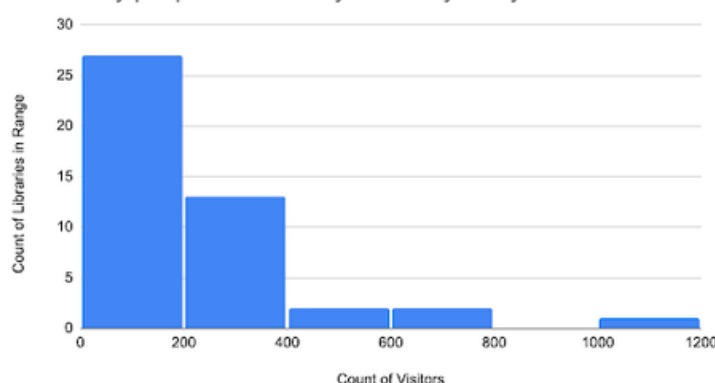
Falling on the heels of Banned Book Week (also known as Freedom to Read Week), Library Snapshot Week is a new addition to the month-long celebration of books, reading, curiosity, education, freedom, and democracy that is September, starting with children going back to school and followed by Labor Day and Constitution Day. This has been an unusually zesty September as challenges to the Freedom to Read continue to mount in schools and libraries around the country, lately concerning stories with LGBTQ themes. We defy those challenges, and we celebrate the variety of readers in our midsts and the breadth of their reading habits. To quote S.R. Ranganathan (not the only time in this issue of MLA to Z), “Every person his or her book; every book its reader.”

Library Snapshot Week is part of MLA’s efforts to advocate and to help library workers advocate for themselves and their libraries. Another part is a storybanking project inspired by national efforts from the American Library Association and Public Library Association. Amy Stone of the Bridgton Public Library and MLA’s Legislative and Communications Committees hopes “we can collect examples of our successes and impacts, [so] we will be able to better answer the most essential question of why libraries of all kinds are the foundation of strong communities. Storybanking is simply a repository that can be used for reporting, marketing, and advocacy.”

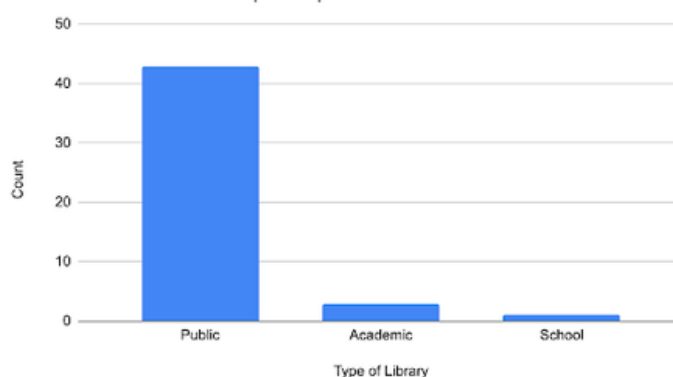
MLA will be gathering stories from individual members, libraries, and other community partners on the impact that we have on our communities throughout Maine. Library workers do some amazing things, and we should share the good things about the places where we live and work as well as the challenges we could all use help with. Our power is not only local – we are stronger when we work together; as a sector, we touch the lives of all Maine residents whether or not they use their local libraries. We will send out a notice about this when we are ready to start collecting stories, so stay tuned.

Library Snapshot Day originated in New Jersey in 2009. Its success prompted the ALA to take over. Now states, state library associations, and individual communities have

How many people came in to your library today?



What kinds of libraries participated?



organized Snapshot Days on their own. Maine last participated in 2012, and we look forward to continuing the project. Savannah Sessions, Chair of the MLA Legislative Committee, and Amy Stone will compile snapshots into an album they can share with legislators during Library Legislative Week (February 2023). You can submit your snapshots until December 31; [please use this form](#). 📖



“There were nine BIO104 library labs with a total of 195 students taught over three days.

The students became familiar with Library resources by finding six reputable sources (from webpages, books, ebooks, magazine articles, and scholarly journal articles) and citing each of them in Council of Science Editors (CSE) style.”



Things are busy, as usual, for the MLA board. Here is my update on some of what we've been up to lately.

The MLA board met for our annual planning meeting in August, which is an all-day session. This is an opportunity for new and existing board members to get to know each other a little and to set our goals and priorities for the coming year. We had a productive day in Brunswick (we met at Curtis Library) with breakout sessions to discuss strategic planning, membership, communications and marketing, fundraising and sustainability, legislative and intellectual freedom advocacy, and programming. As the board has continuous turnover, this annual session not only gives us time together outside of the conference and our monthly board meetings to get work done, but it gives us a chance to pass knowledge on to newer board members, since institutional memory is such an important factor for our volunteer-run organization.

The Wage Study Committee (led by Kate Wing and including Sonya Durney, Steve Norman, Lee Koenigs, Michelle Conners, and myself) met several times and developed a draft RFP which was recently sent to several consultants. We hope to have news in the coming weeks as to next steps in this process.

As a volunteer-run organization, we have lacked a strategic plan for some time, mostly due to the time and effort required to craft one. A major goal of mine for this year is to craft a 2-year strategic plan, and to develop a simple process that the board can follow in the future to update the plan every other year. Two years seems short, I know, but it will work well with our two-year Presidential term cycle and continuous board turnover.

This way, the President would lead the process in their second year, with the help of a committee and possibly an outside facilitator. Our first meeting in this process was held on October 4th; I hope to have a plan completed early in 2023.

Coffee Chats have resumed after a summer break! These popular 1-hour chat sessions are organized by our Membership Chair, Sarah Skawinski. These are free for members and are a nice informal way to discuss topics and ideas. Have an idea and want to host one? Contact Sarah at membership@mainelibraries.org

Finally, I am really heartened by the excellent coverage that has been given to the issues of intellectual freedom and fighting censorship in recent weeks. Our Intellectual Freedom Chair Samantha Duckworth had a letter published in the Sun Journal, the President of MASL (Maine Association of School Libraries) Heather Perkinson had a letter published in the Portland Press Herald, I gave quotes to all four TV stations and three newspapers during Banned Books Week, and there have been several other articles and letters published on these topics recently.

Conference planning for 2023 will begin soon, so save the date (May 22-23) and stay tuned!



"We have a traveling guitar available for check out. A patron who was at the outside Nature Printing Program today heard about the guitar during a conversation at the workshop. He entered the library, tuned the guitar, then began playing it for some families who were at the library for story time and nature printing. It was a pop-up mini concert in the art exhibit room!"

The Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization Decision

Some thoughts on the implications on privacy and intellectual freedom for libraries, library workers, and library patrons

by Jim Campbell, former Chair of the MLA Intellectual Freedom Committee

Samuel Alito wrote in the majority Dobbs v Jackson Women's Health Organization Decision that the fact that the word "abortion" does not appear in the text of the Constitution is one of the main reasons that there is no federal Constitutional right to abortion.

There are all sorts of "what ifs" floating around in the wake of the Dobbs decision, including some that could affect privacy in everything from the bedroom to the web. At this point, these "what ifs" are still "what ifs". However, given the decisions of the current supreme court, things could change, and we are wise to pay good attention and prepare.

The same can be said about the word "privacy."

In addition to Samuel Alito's majority opinion, there were three concurrences and a dissent from other members of the court. There is clearly not unanimity among the current court members on the issue of whether other currently accepted rights that depend on Roe will be challenged. Clarence Thomas, in his concurring opinion, asserted that several other cases that are based on the reasoning in Roe v Wade are therefore also wrong and should be

what might be decided. The repercussions from the reasoning in the Dobbs decision and the assorted concurrences in the case are far from over.

So, what does this mean for library workers and their patrons? From a Constitutional perspective, it is too early to tell. From a disciplinary and ethical perspective, however, we do know, and we need to remember:

Library workers adhere to the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights and the Interpretations of those rights.

Among those Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights is this one — an assertion of our commitment to our patrons, not an assertion of any federal or state Constitutional right:

Privacy: All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. The American Library Association affirms that rights of privacy are necessary for intellectual freedom and are fundamental to the ethical practice of librarianship. (Amended 2019)

That is our pledge. That is our work. That is our brand.

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As we do so, library workers should keep foremost in our minds that our commitments to our patrons do not depend on nine people in Washington. They depend on us, on our values, and on living out our values in service to our patrons and our country. Library workers work daily to ensure privacy and to safeguard the rights of library users, work that is at the heart of MLA's Intellectual Freedom Committee's endeavors, and central to all of our work in Maine's libraries.



overturned, including the right to access birth control technology, the right to intimate same sex relations, and the right to same sex marriage.

The current court could also review whether there is a Constitutional right to privacy, and there is no way to say

Scarborough Public Library


Two Domestic Violence Awareness programs, plus expansion news

by Lucy Jackson Norvell, Coordinator of Programming and Communications (SPL)

In recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October, the Scarborough Public Library is hosting a photo exhibit portraying the faces and voices of 43 Maine survivors of domestic violence. Finding Our Voices, a survivor-powered grassroots nonprofit that provides sister-support and breaks the silence of domestic abuse, provided the exhibit, which will remain on display throughout the month of October. Patrisha McLean, the founder and president of Finding Our Voices, shot the

author and survivor Rebekah Lowell October 19. SPL has been including bookmarks from Finding Our Voices and Through These Doors with checkouts. We encourage other libraries to help as well. Consider hosting the exhibit from Finding Our Voices. We would be happy to help put you in touch with these organizations.

EXPANSION UPDATE: The Scarborough Town Council has voted in favor of putting the expansion on November's ballot, and private fundraising has been underway for more than a year. SPL Director Nancy Crowell and SPL Board President Bill Donovan expressed the need for more space in the following statement:

We cannot emphasize enough the expansion project is not about more books and more stacks. It is about making the collection more accessible and expanding spaces for individuals and groups of all types. It's about enhancing connection and collaboration in person and online. The expansion is about adequate work, study and computer space for adults, children and staff, room for confidential consultations with staff, and separate child and teen spaces. The additional meeting rooms of various sizes will enable the library to host MORE. More programming. More events. More meetings. More collaborations with community partners. With our current space limitations, we are forced to do less. The Scarborough Public Library has been encouraging and inspiring life-long learning and curiosity for more than a century. The expansion will carry on this tradition for the next 30 years, supporting the future for learners of all ages from toddlers to seniors. Please visit [the expansion website](#) to learn more about the space plans. 



Governor Janet T. Mills, flanked by Scarborough Library's Teen Advisory Board members Reed and Claire Shaw

photos, each of which is a portrait of a survivor aged 18-82 with a quotation referencing the abuse she transcended. Scarborough High School students, including members of the Library's Teen Advisory Board, hung the exhibit with the assistance of a few survivors featured on the posters, including Governor Janet T. Mills.

SPL Youth Services Manager Deanna McNamara has collaborated with local domestic violence awareness and prevention organization Through These Doors to have professionals on hand for a Hands Are Not for Hitting Story Time for young children and a discussion of the 2022 novel *The Road to After* for older children with



"Having a two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning author speak about the greatest American Athlete of all Time: Jim Thorpe!"

Bangor Public Library

Social work intern assesses, advises BPL community and staff


The Bangor Public Library is very fortunate to be able to host a graduate student from the University of Maine School of Social Work. A first-year MSW candidate, Lauren is working first on a community needs assessment. This involves working with library staff, library patrons, and multiple nodes of the service network in Bangor. A node in that network could be anything from a transit center with a public bathroom to a social service agency to the police department to the public health department.

The winter of 2022 was particularly difficult for Bangor and for its public library. Staff dealt daily with the behaviors of people who were in an abject state. Throughout the summer, Bangor saw an increase in the number of people with untreated mental health disorders, substance use disorder, and unstable housing. Library director Ben Treat adds, “Ranganathan tells us that the library is a growing organism, and Lauren’s work will help us know how to respond to the changed reality of America in the 2020s. Libraries are always central to community problem-solving.” Programs exist which provide typical library services to people in crisis, but the library may also be able to network effectively with service providers.

Lauren will also be attentive to the needs of staff. Working with people in crisis can be traumatic, and much of the library literature in our era tells us that library workers in urban settings deal frequently with vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue. Library staff may need training to recognize and respond to the moral injury that can arise from witnessing others’ trauma or suffering. Lauren can draw upon her contacts with staff and her coursework to advise library leadership on the most relevant types of training.

The library also has sought grant funding to improve security camera systems, safety staffing, and to hire a full-time social worker for a period of two years. With a full-time social worker, the library can better participate in the coordinated entry systems being put in place by the city of Bangor and the state of Maine. Whether that grant application is successful or not, the work of the

University of Maine social work intern at the Bangor Public Library will benefit BPL and Maine libraries for years to come.

For further reading on library/social-work partnerships, consider Zettervall & Nienow (2019) *Whole Person Librarianship* as an introduction, as well as their website (<https://wholepersonlibrarianship.com/>). Professor Sarah Johnson's website *Social Work Students & Public Libraries* (<https://swlibraryinterns.com/>) is also an excellent source. 

Freeport Community Library


Freeport library is fine-ally fine-free!

by Meghan Fogg, Adult Services Librarian (FCL)

Most FCL patrons have noticed our suspension of late fines since the pandemic began. Shutdowns and quarantine requirements made the assessment and collection of fines impractical, and no library wanted its users to worry about late fees when we all faced such uncertainty.

Throughout the pandemic, we have seen old accounts reactivated and observed a general feeling of goodwill and support for this change from the community. Research has also shown that, contrary to providing an incentive to return items, fines present a serious barrier to service for families and low-income individuals by causing financial hardship, stress, and embarrassment.

We have personally observed that fines discourage patrons from returning to the library altogether, which is inconsistent with FCL's mission to provide the public with access to information, knowledge, and personal enrichment.

Now we have moved to make this change permanent with the unanimous support of the Freeport Town Council. It is our hope that by eliminating fines we will inspire former users to come back, support existing patrons, and attract new users to all we have to offer. 

Book Buddy Kids & Teens Emergency Dept. Book Cart Project


by Janet S. Bolduc, Medical Education Librarian, MaineGeneral Library & Resource Center

In the spring of 2022, MaineGeneral Emergency Department physician Dr. Timothy Pieh approached me with the idea to create a book collection for the children and teens awaiting mental health and social services at the Alford Center for Health (ACH) Emergency Department in Augusta. Depending on the services needed, some of these youth patients are housed in the ED for weeks to months at a time.

MaineGeneral Library is on the state van delivery system. If you are making a donation, please be sure to choose the correct van delivery label: MaineGeneral (Alford Center for Health) Library and Resource Center in Augusta.



I sought the advice of Deb Clark at the Maine State Library who had the wonderful idea to solicit donations from public libraries throughout the state. Thanks to their generous contributions, we created a sizable collection of age and literacy-appropriate resources Book Buddy Children and Teens Book Collection. A stipend from MaineGeneral's Behavioral Health services will help us procure reading materials that highlight topics such as dealing with adversity and increasing resilience, with title recommendations from Lithgow Public Library Director Sarah Schultz-Nielsen.

The Book Buddy collection is housed in the MaineGeneral Health Medical Library & Resource Center. A rolling cart located in the Emergency Department allows the ED staff to bring a variety of books from this collection to the children and teens so they can choose something to use during their stay and take it with them to keep at no charge when they leave. The cart is routinely replenished from the collection in the library by a library volunteer. Donations are still welcomed. If you are interested in contributing books to the collection, please send donations to Janet Bolduc, Medical Education Librarian at the MaineGeneral Alford Center for Health Medical Library & Resource Center in Augusta, Maine. 



"Alex helped a patron who had been locked out of her cellphone and could not get it to turn on. He troubleshooted technical issues, checked all of her settings, and then patiently waited on hold with Verizon until they could get the situation rectified. It lasted over an hour! It's only one of the many people we helped today, but we saved this patron from a very frustrating day, which made all the time spent worth it!"



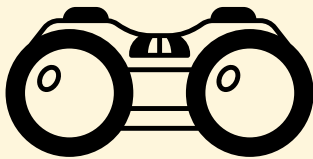
"There were nine BIO104 library labs with a total of 195 students taught over three days. The students became familiar with Library resources by finding six reputable sources (from webpages, books, ebooks, magazine articles, and scholarly journal articles) and citing each of them in Council of Science Editors (CSE) style."

York Public Library celebrates its centennial!

by Michelle Sampson, Executive Director (YPL)

The York Public Library Association (YPLA) was incorporated on May 29, 1922 and to mark the centennial, the library held events and programs throughout the year.

The celebration was kicked off by a one-of-a-kind linocut created by Town Manager Steve Burns in honor of our birthday.



A LOOK AHEAD

November is:

National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo)
&
National Native American Month

NELA Intellectual Freedom Committee Meetup
Free Speech and Why You Should Give a Damn
with Author **Jonathan Zimmerman**

buff.ly/3f6nG2H

November 3 at 7 p.m.

Daylight Savings ends: November 6

Election Day: November 8

Veterans Day: November 11

MLA Coffee Chat, DESIGN THINKING: November 17

Thanksgiving: November 24

December is:

National Handwashing Month
&
Read a New Book Month

National Computer Literacy Day: December 2

Dewey Decimal System Day: December 10

**MLA Coffee Chat, DIGITAL MAINE LIBRARY
RESOURCES:** December 15

National Maine Day (since 2017): December 21

Winter Solstice: December 21

MLA Coffee Chat TBA: January 19

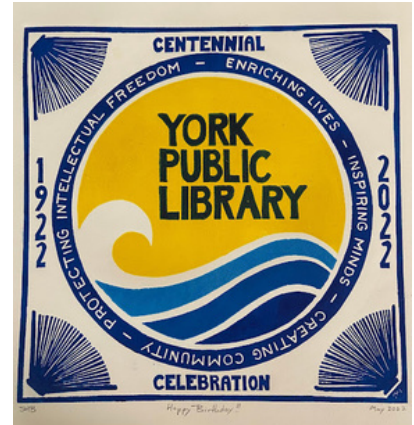
In June we held our 2nd Annual Online Auction, followed by an outdoor birthday party in July.

Festivities included food trucks, lawn games, live music, prizes, and a presentation by Maine Secretary of State Shenna Bellows.

In September, our Centennial Community Quilt was unveiled. A number of local textile artists and quilters collaborated with needle worker and Library Trustee Julie Steedman, who conceived of and coordinated the project, and Betsey Telford-Goodwin of York's Rocky Mountain Quilts donated 100 year old fabrics from her collection. Each square contains a symbol that represents our community or our library. The quilt will be on permanent display.

In just a few weeks, we'll be having a Roaring '20s Gala at Clay Hill Farm in Cape Neddick, ME. There will be live music (Charleston, anyone?), cocktails, and canapes. All proceeds will benefit the YPLA. Also in the coming weeks, SoMe Brewing will reveal a limited edition brew in honor of our 100th. There was a contest held for the name: and it shall be known as BOOKSMAHT BREW.

YPL has also held workshops to show residents how to convert their own memories into digital files. Patrons can use our equipment to digitize photos and documents; convert 35mm negatives and slides, 8mm and Super 8 movies, and VHS tapes; and even record and share oral histories.



An idea came up in a book

I have been reading, *American Colossus : the Triumph of Capitalism, 1865-1900* by H.W. Brands (Doubleday, 2010). It is not an original idea, but a passage of this book reminded me that while both democracy and capitalism can exist in a society like ours, there is tension between the tendency of capitalism to create wealth inequality and the goal of democracy to distribute political power. Both institutions were on the rise in the late 1800s. (Arguably all of human history is about fights over power and money.) Then as well as now, signs indicate peaking tension. The next time you have some time to ponder, think about how libraries are situated within that tension. We stand for equality and equity, but we also depend on industries that operate in markets. When those industries demand too much, we can act in solidarity to push back. In a democracy, WE, the *demos*, are supposed to decide how much influence capital should have.


Tension between dearly held values came up in something else I read recently: the evolution of how we think about the right to privacy and the right of the public to be informed – two values that are not written into the Constitution but which we depend on and which guide library service – is the subject of *Seek and Hide: the Tangled History of the Right to Privacy* by Amy Gajda (Viking, 2022). However, whereas a librarian might not see tension between the right to privacy and the right to know, the book explored these rights from a reverse angle: the discretion of publishers to inform readers of events simply because they are true, regardless of whether there is any public value in reportage, and the expectation of the subjects of such reportage to keep details of their lives private, even when those subjects are public figures. As Jeannie Suk Gerson succinctly sums up in her review of the book in the *New Yorker*, “Too much deference to privacy serves male entitlement, on the one hand, and insufficient deference to privacy serves white supremacy, on the other.” Gajda’s prose was not bogged down in abstract concepts and legalese, rather it was very readable, even entertaining, and informative.

I heard a recommendation for another book on privacy: *The Fight for Privacy: Protecting Dignity, Identity, and Love in the Digital Age* by Danielle Keats Citron (Norton, 2022). I have not read it, it just came out. So my recommendation would be for some library in Maine to buy a copy.

I recommend you pay attention to these court cases:

- NetChoice v Paxton
- Gonzalez v Google (and Twitter v. Taamneh)
- Warhol v Goldsmith

The outcomes of these cases, which are currently in various stages of the judicial process, could shape the future of issues that librarians tend to care about, like fair use, copyright, free speech on the internet, content moderation on social media sites, and the recommendation algorithms behind a lot of the internet as we know it. I learned about them from recent episodes of [On the Media](#) from WNYC, [On Point](#) from WBUR, and the [Lawfare Podcast](#) (which covered Section 230 again on [an even more recent episode](#) that I have not heard). I also recommend following the [Center for Internet and Society](#) and the [Cyber Policy Center](#) (both at Stanford University Law School – I don’t know how many other internet/law centers Stanford may have and what their separate roles might be), and the [CPC’s weekly webinar series](#).

Finally, if you like to eat chicken, I recommend this [slow cooker recipe](#). My sister made it when I visited her a few weeks ago, and it was so good that I made it myself the following week .



“A family-new-to-Maine 6th grader got her library card and found some favorite authors and some new ones she’s excited to try. She also got to make some cool art at our After-School Creativity Zone. A positive visit to a new library in a new state!”

Write to us.

MLAtoZeditor@gmail.com

Tell us what's happening at your library. New programs.
Innovative ideas. Letters to the editor. Photos.
Long articles. Short shoutouts.
We want to hear from you.

