



ELAN

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Ex Libris Association Newsletter

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Disaster Planning for Libraries Webinar

By Leslie McGrath

On June 18, 2024, ELA hosted a fascinating webinar, A Disaster Planner Considers the Future for Libraries, presented by ELA member Guy Robertson. This informed wake-up call about known and emerging risks to libraries is available for attendees and new viewers to watch on this recording (<https://exlibris.ca/doku.php?id=activities:news>). Hearing an expert's inside views about the flaws of current disaster planning is illuminating. Too many libraries copy each other's disaster plans without sufficient modifications; too much attention is devoted to comfortably improbable risks from earthquakes and volcanoes, and too little care is paid to preparing for cyberattacks and disasters driven by climate change. Guy offered valuable advice about concerns related to natural, human-caused, and technological disasters, and he has kindly agreed to provide written notes to supplement the recording. Perhaps the most important takeaway is Guy's encouragement to librarians to re-engage with their staff, collections, physical facilities, and surroundings in analyzing and addressing disaster planning and risk management. The exemplary disaster management practised in Japan, Guy noted, results from everyone knowing their role and acting in a measured, effective manner, without panic or confusion. The North American trend toward silos of responsibility defeats such orderly conduct in crises. Whether by sharing catalogue data among libraries (a "cheap and cheerful" protection against cyberattacks) or by ruining the creases in one's trousers by actually falling to the floor as

requested during disaster rehearsals, Guy's presentation reminded us that everyone can and should take part in reducing risks we all face.

Leslie McGrath worked at Toronto PL as a children's librarian and a branch head for 10 years, then as senior department head for 23 years, Osborne Collection of Early Children's Books. ■

ELA Event

A tour of the spectacular newly renovated Albert Campbell branch of Toronto PL was held in late September 2024. Watch for the report in the Spring 2025 issue of ELAN!

Save the Date!

The Ex Libris Association AGM will be held Tuesday, March 4, 2025, at 10 a.m. Pacific / 11 a.m. Mountain / noon Central / 1 p.m. Eastern / 2 p.m. Atlantic / 2:30 p.m. Newfoundland. The AGM will be accompanied by a short presentation (topic TBA).

President's Report

By Deb Thomas



At a recent ELA board meeting, we discussed the value that our association can bring to the library community. As well as keeping our members engaged and

informed on current library issues in various ways — and preserving some of our history through biographies of individuals who have contributed to the library and archival communities in Canada — we recognize the importance of our members as individuals with both experience and perspective from long careers and often leadership roles in libraries and archives. In an increasingly fraught landscape for libraries in all sectors, our voices are especially critical.

We offer the time to reflect on our professions, to read about them, to debate them, and to act in response to them — time not always afforded in busy working lives. We offer an independent view, as our members are not representing any specific institution. And we offer the wisdom gained from years of watching various trends come and go.

As well, ELA remains firm in its commitment to promoting the fundamental values of librarianship, among them the importance of intellectual freedom. Recently, the board affirmed its support of the CFLA-FCAB's statement

on **Intellectual Freedom and Libraries**. A **Library Advocacy page** on the ELA website states: "ELA considers it essential that libraries and archives engage in the development of policies, collections, displays, programs, and promotional activities that ensure the communities they serve are defended against infringements to intellectual freedom, the right to free and confidential access to information, and the right to privacy protection."

Some of our ongoing activities include:

Tours and presentations

- Webinars and in-person presentations are offered roughly twice per year. We are currently looking for topics for a presentation this fall. In-person and virtual tours are being planned for the fall and winter. Watch for details about presentations and tours on the ELA listserv. (We are always open to suggestions for tours, webinars or in-person presentations. Contact **Deb Thomas** about webinars or in-person presentations and **Vivienne James** about tours.)

Preserving ELA and library history

- On our website, our **Biography page** holds biographies of more than 150 Canadian librarians and archivists, and more are continually being added. The **Remembering our former library colleagues** section provides a place for sharing the memories, life stories, and milestones

that celebrate the lives of those who have worked in libraries and information settings.

- We are preparing to hire a co-op student in the University of Toronto's Library and Information Sciences program to help us organize and digitize ELA's print archives.

Support for the library and archival communities

- The next biannual **W. Kaye Lamb Award** for excellence in services to seniors will be awarded in 2025. The current deadline for entries is October 2, 2025. (See the announcement by Christina Wilson in this issue, page 4.)
- We continue to fundraise for ELA's **Indigenous-Student Bursary** in our efforts to encourage more Indigenous voices in the future of work in libraries and archives. (See the bursary report by me in this issue, page 5, for more details.)

And, in uncertain financial times, ELA membership is very affordable at only \$35 a year. Tell your friends and former colleagues to consider joining!

Go to our website for a list of **board members**.

Deb Thomas recently retired from a 40-plus year career in libraries, 30 years of which were in public management. ■

Canadian Federation of Library Associations/

Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques (CFLA-FCAB)

By Todd Kyle



As part of the first year of its new **Strategic Plan**, CFLA-FCAB's executive has spent a great deal of effort on a series of consultations

with member organizations, other key stakeholders, and its own

strategic committees. The purpose was to help CFLA-FCAB identify consensus priorities for action, explore the strategic and fiscal viability of the organization, and strengthen its engagement and communications with the library community. As a result, three priority actions were identified for 2024:

- a Communication and Member Engagement Strategy, for which a request for proposals was issued

and awarded to Anne Bailey Communications & Strategy, to enable work to continue through the balance of the year;

- an Advocacy Strategy, which CFLA-FCAB has worked on with its government relations consultant, Impact Public Affairs, and which focusses on the need for federal funding for libraries as key components of social

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- infrastructure, and,
- a governance review about how best to structure its board of directors, membership, committee nominations, and voting rights, for which CFLA-FCAB has struck a committee with its board and member associations.

CFLA-FCAB's committees have also been busy.

- The Indigenous Matters Committee completed the compilation *Steps to Reconciliation*, a summary of actions taken by libraries in implementing CFLA-FCAB's Truth and Reconciliation Report.
- The Copyright Committee finalized its *Crown Copyright Code of Best Practices*.
- CFLA-FCAB also collaborated with Canadian School Libraries on the creation of a *Position Statement on the Status of School Libraries in Canada*.

Finally, it was announced that the next national forum will be held as part of the OLA Super Conference in early 2025.

ELA is a **CFLA-FCAB** member.

Todd Kyle is CEO, Brampton Public Library. He was 2021 CFLA-FCAB chair. ■

ELA Education Committee

By Deb Thomas

On June 18 Guy Robertson presented a webinar, entitled *A Disaster Planner Considers the Future for Libraries* (see the article by Leslie McGrath on the cover of this issue).

A link to an audio recording of his lecture can be found **on the ELA website**, along with links to video recordings of previous webinars.

While we are attempting to have

recordings of all webinars available for viewing after the live presentation (with the presenters' permission), we encourage members to attend the live presentations, as these provide opportunities to engage with the presenters not available through the recordings.

The Education Committee members are Deb Thomas (chair) and Todd Kyle. ■

Welcome to New ELA Members

We're proud to welcome these new ELA members:

Cheryl Buchwald, Toronto
 Donna Chan, Mississauga ON
 Gillian Clinton, Toronto
 Murray McCabe, Milgrove, ON
 Victoria Owen, Toronto
 Brighton PL, Brighton, ON
 Hamilton PL, Hamilton, ON
 Innisfil idea-LAB & Library, Innisfil, ON
 Oakville PL, Oakville, ON
 West Vancouver Memorial Library

Notice to Members

Help us keep our email listserv current. If you and/or someone you know are/is not receiving our emails, send your new email address to Bob Henderson at **bob.exlibris@gmail.com**.

The names of potential new members may also be sent to Bob Henderson at the same address.

And please submit any outstanding membership dues.

CFLA-FCAB Intellectual Freedom Committee (IFC)

By Dick Ellis

The 2023 report of **challenged titles, programs and policies** — based on data from both the CFLA-FCAB Challenges Survey and the Canadian Library Challenges Database (CLCD) — has been published. Future reports will be derived nearly entirely from the CLCD. The 2023 report is notable for the substantial number of titles reported multiple times, for the 400 percent increase in drag story-hour complaints, and for the predominance of works that are LBGTQ2S+ on the list.

The process of replicating past reports from the CFLA-FCAB

Challenges Database with the Canadian Library Challenges Database is now fully underway, with permissions to transfer data received from major contributing libraries.

The IFC has completed work on a policy regarding **labeling** in libraries and it is now on the CFLA-FCAB **website**.

In addition, the CFLA-FCAB board has approved a statement on the Intellectual Freedom Rights of Children.

At the time of writing, the IFC, the CFLA-FCAB board, and the Prison Libraries Network are reviewing the existing statement on **Prisoners' Right**

to Read inherited from the CLA's last days. The board reviews its statements on a regular basis.

While not essentially IFC proposals, the CFLA-FCAB board has approved a statement on the **status of school libraries**, in conjunction with Canadian School Libraries.

And, finally, the CFLA-FCAB board has approved a statement on **public lending rights**, arguing that the funding for such a program ought not to come from library budgets.

Dick Ellis is Librarian Emeritus at Memorial University. ■

ELA Website Update

By Lorne Bruce

The ELA website continues to evolve and expand, with more information. This spring and summer, two important additions have been made — separate sections on advocacy and ELA presentations. The advocacy section contains ELA's executive decision to endorse the CFLA-FCAB statement on intellectual freedom. The page also includes additional links to other intellectual-freedom e-resources such as:

- the ALA Library Bill of Rights, adopted in 1939 and most-recently amended in 2019,
- the CFLA-FCAB statement on Third Party Use of Publicly Funded Library Meeting Rooms and Facilities,
- the Canadian Association of Research Libraries Freedom of Expression and Inclusive Libraries statement, adopted in April 2022,
- the International Federation of Library Association's Libraries and Intellectual Freedom statement, adopted in January 2007, and
- the website for the Centre for Free Expression at Toronto Metropolitan University, an important non-partisan Canadian organization focused on freedom of expression.

You can find all of this at exlibris.ca/activities/advocacy.

The second section gathers presentations, pdfs, html pages, and videos of people who ELA has recorded over the years. Most of these addresses

were recorded at in-person ELA annual meetings, but — in the Zoom age — members will become more familiar with ELA-hosted webinars in the near future. The new section includes links and pages for:

- 2002 Panel discussion: Is Librarianship Headed for Oblivion? This is the printed version of the session held on the deprofessionalization of librarianship and featured Roma Harris (Western University), who has written extensively on the topic.
- 2010 ELA's four YouTube videos:
 - Storytelling and Children's Library Work: Ken Setterington spoke about his career as a children's librarian at Toronto PL and his passion for storytelling. Also, Mariella Bertelli, a children's librarian with Toronto PL, spoke about her career and the importance of reaching children through stories.
 - Shirley Lewis spoke about the Older Women's Network in Toronto as well as her volunteer work in Ethiopia that ELA helped fund.
 - Jean Weihs discussed working after retirement and the possibilities for temporary paid employment such as teaching, writing, indexing, cataloguing small collections, and acting as a consultant.
- 2022 Archives and Truth and Reconciliation: Lisa Glandt (University of British Columbia) provided a Zoom talk about how archives are responding to Truth and Reconciliation calls to action, in relation to archival practice in British Columbia.
- 2022 Censorship Threats in Canadian School Libraries: Richard Beaudry spoke to the ELA annual meeting, via Zoom and now available on YouTube, about material censorship in Canadian libraries and current threats to intellectual freedom.
- 2023 The State of Intellectual Freedom and Canadian Libraries: ELA's Richard Ellis (Librarian Emeritus at Memorial University) spoke via Zoom about the current situation libraries face on the intellectual-freedom front in Canada.
- 2023 Kayla Lar-Son spoke on Indigenous data, knowledge, and cultural sovereignty related to libraries.
- 2024 Guy Robertson gave a 45-minute webinar, A Disaster Planner Considers the Future for Libraries, which covered many risks and highlighted the need for planning to mitigate problems. Links to all of these presentations are on the new navigation page at the [ELA website](https://exlibris.ca/), so it's not necessary to visit YouTube for the video and Zoom files.

Lorne Bruce was a librarian at the University of Guelph until retiring in 2012. He previously worked in two smaller Ontario PLs. ■

W. Kaye Lamb Award for Service to Seniors

By Christina Wilson

We ask our members to help the W. Kaye Lamb Award Committee seek out great candidates among the libraries you visit! The next award will be given out in the Fall of 2026. The call for applicants will be issued in the spring of 2025.

Named for Canada's first National Librarian, the **W. Kaye Lamb Award** — co-sponsored by ELA and CFLA-FCAB — recognizes outstanding innovative and excellent library service to seniors. Open to any Canadian library — private, public, governmental, special or postsecondary — it is awarded biennially when merited. Recipients receive an award plaque and a \$500 cash prize.

For more information, contact Committee Chair [Christina Wilson](#) or visit our [website](#).

Christina Wilson, recently retired as CEO, Red Deer PL, has worked for public libraries in Ontario and Alberta. ■

ELA Indigenous-Student Bursary

By Deb Thomas



Our 2023 bursary, as reported in *ELAN* No. 75/Spring 2024, was awarded to William Fayant who is taking Library Technician courses. We are looking forward to providing another Indigenous student enrolled in library or archival studies with financial assistance in 2024. We are close to meeting our 2024 fundraising goal but welcome additional donations. Library Bound has continued with its generous support with another \$500 for this year's award. If you are

interested in donating to the bursary, please contact our treasurer, **Bob Henderson**. Interested and qualified students can apply for financial assistance, which may include our bursary, with **Indspire**.

*Committee members are Deb Thomas (chair), Tom Eadie, Bob Henderson, and Lorisia MacLeod. If you have questions about any aspect of the bursary, please contact **Deb Thomas**.* ■

Technology Unmasked! Artificial Intelligence (AI)

By Stan Orlov



For quite some time, AI has been part of our lives. Everyday examples include smartphone maps, voice assistants, facial recognition, Netflix recommendations, and more. Libraries also put AI to good use. With the help of AI tools, librarians are automating cataloging and metadata creation, offering personalized book-and-resource suggestions to patrons, and providing 24/7 assistance to common queries. Libraries also use AI techniques for faster and deeper analyses, indexing, and classification of collections. The **Bibliothèque nationale de Luxembourg**, for instance, analyzed 600,000 illustrations in digitized newspapers published from 1844 through 2007 to determine the type and content of the images, making them keyword searchable. It also used AI to identify subjects in 3.5 million newspaper articles, which allowed it to group them by categories.

AI became a much more discussed topic, since November 30, 2022, when OpenAI announced its free-to-use ChatGPT “Chat Generative Pre-trained Transformer” chatbot. Other companies — Meta with Llama, Microsoft with Bing, Google with Bard (later Gemini) — followed suit with their large language models. This

explosive growth in AI capabilities brought advanced natural language processing with more accurate and context-aware responses to user queries, more engaging and effective interactions with librarians and patrons in many languages, and the ability to provide detailed answers and personalized recommendations based on behaviour and preferences. AI can also improve accessibility by converting text to speech, providing visual descriptions, and creating accessible formats for users with disabilities — all in real time. And it will handle more complex tasks and automate a broader range of library services, reducing the workload on library staff.

While AI technology has many merits, some ethical concerns — such as data privacy, bias, transparency, potential of job displacement, and accuracy of AI-generated information — need to be addressed. In 2023, the International Federation of Library Association and Institutions published a report, **Developing a library strategic response to Artificial Intelligence**, outlining AI's present and future in libraries, including a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis that I recommend to everyone interested in a deeper insight into this important and timely topic.

*Please send your questions and comments to stan.orlov@msvu.ca. **Stanislav Orlov** is Systems Librarian at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax.* ■

ELAN in Electronic Format

For members who wish to receive future *ELAN* issues in an electronic format, please contact Bob Henderson at bob.exlibris@gmail.com.

Why I became a Librarian

By Ross Gordon

I have to say that being a librarian was not my first choice for a career. Or second. I always liked visiting libraries and studying in them, but it never occurred to me that this was a career path for me. In fact, I didn't really notice the librarians when I was looking through the stacks, or even when they helped me. It was as though that world existed apart from the everyday and the people there were, just, there.

When I went to university, I spent an enormous amount of time and energy working toward becoming a professor of history, before realizing that it was not my dream so much as something that would make my mother very happy. Looking at the professors in our department I foresaw an uneven path filled with infighting and disappointment (I later realized that applies to other careers as well, but I was young).

I thought about other roads into the future: journalism, law, and even the Armed Forces (but — being half blind — I was only offered a position in HR, not a dream scenario).

The thing about reading a lot as a kid is that every kind of life looks interesting and every place on earth deserves a visit. I still haven't gotten past that.

When I wasn't at university, I did some travelling, held a string of jobs as

a barman or security guard, here and in Europe, and it seemed like I did not have to settle on anything too concrete for the time being. I figured I'd land on something if my career in history collapsed.

Then, one day, maybe not too soon, things got serious. I was engaged and suddenly had the desire to find a

looked very interesting, and I could use the grad courses I had already finished. I had never heard of such a program and, since my fiancée was from Quebec, I thought Montreal could be a good place to live. I didn't know that the University of Alberta, my alma mater, offered the same degree (and, interesting to note, McGill sent me

to be interviewed in Calgary by an alumnus who never once mentioned the program up the road).

Now again, Mr. Indecisive, I thought I could graduate, get a job in Library World, then go back and do a PhD part-time. It did not occur to me that the MLIS would lead me to a life of complete satisfaction and success in a professional milieu. (Later, I did try a PhD part-time, while working at the Library of Parliament, but there comes a time in life where one wonders: to what purpose?)

Library work, frankly, was a perfect fit. Not just the job, which had its ups and downs, but I met people that I truly liked, who were funny and eccentric, and — I don't know if this does them

justice — they were really good people. Renaissance people to put a label on it. I remember an old fellow at the Library of Parliament (he must have been in his forties!) sitting with me at coffee and



Ross and friends, Library of Parliament
Photo credit: Robert Leriche

career and a need to ground my life in something solid. Lo and behold, in a library in Edmonton I found a brochure about the McGill MLIS degree that

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saying, “Nobody ever started out in life wanting to be a librarian.” (Note: This statement has since been proven to me to be wrong.) I had found my people.

I started off as a replacement at the Jewish General Hospital in Montreal, but jobs in that town were rare in those days, so when the Library of Parliament advertised for a term position it was ideal. History and beauty were merged. I spent 12 years there until moving to the National Archives to run the staff library. This segued into work in the new Library and Archives Canada,

working on the Consortium of Federal Libraries, then into a stint at the RCMP at the Canadian Police College. I went on to become the director of Information Management, at Environment Canada, until retirement. A lovely place to work, a department filled with idealists. I taught part-time, at McGill, Algonquin College, and the University of Ottawa, I wrote some articles, and I got to feel what it might have been like to be a professor.

Maybe being a lawyer would have been fun, I suppose, but my old lawyer

acquaintances didn’t stick with it long or turned out to be less content. I used to go home to Calgary and joke that, if I’d gone to law school, I’d be on my second divorce and third heart attack, by now. Not so in the world of libraries, where fidelity and a calm nature are assets.

My library career was good and, to be frank, it paid well. I recommend the degree as a solid grounding for any career, to any young person who asks. It can lead you anywhere. ■

Library Treasures of Britain: The Wren Library at Trinity College, Cambridge

By Guy Robertson

We hesitate to call anything “the very best” or “the most beautiful,” because superlatives are difficult, if not impossible, to prove. Our value judgements may sound stirring, but often lead us nowhere. One exception stands out — the Wren Library. Upon entering, visitors frequently utter series of superlatives regarding the beauty of the library and the importance of its collections, and go on to enrich their understanding of any number of subject areas.



Rear facade of library
Photo credit: Guy Robertson



Wren interior
Photo credit: Guy Robertson

“There’s nothing like this anywhere in the information world,” says a retired archivist from Calgary. “I might not go

to heaven when I die, but I wouldn’t complain if my ghost could haunt this library. I’ve seen many magnificent libraries and archives in Europe and North America, and none of them come close to this. It’s sublime, beyond anything I could imagine.”

Trinity College is an appropriate setting for the library. Founded in 1546 by Henry VIII, the college has had many students and faculty members who became famous for their achievements. Scientists and mathematicians predominate on a list that includes Isaac Newton, James Clerk Maxwell, Francis Galton, J. J. Thomson, and Ernest Rutherford. But the college has also supported noteworthy classical scholars and philosophers such as Sir James Frazer, A. E. Housman, Bertrand Russell, and Ludwig Wittgenstein. Poets and prime

ministers add lustre to the college’s history.

Occasionally, Trinity students demonstrate *joie de vivre* that has little to do with scholarship. While an undergraduate residing in rooms near the library, Lord Byron acquired a tame bear for a pet. When college authorities asked what he intended to do with it, he replied that the bear should “sit for a fellowship.” The authorities were not amused. Byron was forced to keep the bear in a stable outside the college, but Byron otherwise enjoyed a wild social life as a student, receiving an MA in 1808.

Byron’s statue, carved by the Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen, stands at the far end of the library. Originally intended for Poets’ Corner in Westminster Abbey, the statue was rejected by abbatial authorities, because of Byron’s perceived immorality.

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Workstation
Photo credit: Guy Robertson

What first strikes the visitor to the library is Christopher Wren's overall plan. Designed in 1675, the building was completed by 1695. Its rectangular exterior is dignified by four rooftop statues representing Mathematics, Physics, Law, and Divinity, subjects for which the university is famous. On one side of the building is Nevile's Court; on the other, the River Cam. Wisely, Wren laid out the library on the first floor (that is, above the ground floor) to protect it

from floods that might occur near the river.

Wren also planned the library's interior — the shelves, the sturdy stools, and the tables that are still in use. He hired Grinling Gibbons, the brilliant woodcarver and sculptor, to produce the limewood carvings on the ends of the bookcases, the heraldic pieces above the doors, and the floral swags in the vestibules.

Trinity developed its collection of books and manuscripts over centuries, amassing more than 80,000 items in the library, with another 40,000 in storage. It has the largest Oxbridge college collection, including approximately 1,250 medieval manuscripts and more than 750 incunabula. The oldest item is a copy of the *Epistles of St. Paul*, created in a Northumbrian monastery

around 730 AD. The library also holds four editions of Shakespeare's Folio and a large part of Isaac Newton's personal library, including his annotated first-edition copy of *Principia Mathematica*.

Material exhibited in display cases changes regularly, but lucky visitors might find themselves looking at the manuscripts of A. A. Milne's *Winnie-the Pooh* and *The House at Pooh Corner*, alongside the notebooks of Alfred, Lord Tennyson and Ludwig Wittgenstein.

"I've always wanted to see a

Wittgenstein notebook," says an academic librarian from Vancouver. "I must admit, however, that his notebook scribble is as impenetrable as his printed works. Still, it leaves me speechless, and perhaps in a century or two, somebody will be able to figure out what the old boy was saying. Undoubtedly the Wren Library will still be in operation, and that notebook will remain available for interpretation."

The **Wren Digital Library** provides online access to many valuable items, including manuscripts by John Milton and Isaac Newton. These are well worth your attention, but why not visit Cambridge and spend time in the most beautiful library in the world? That is a superlative that could lead you to a place that you would never forget.

Find more information at <https://www.trin.cam.ac.uk>.

Guy Robertson, senior instructor at Langara College, teaches library history, reference and readers' advisory services, and records management, and is an instructor in information security and risk management at the Justice Institute of B.C. He is a consultant to organizations across North America, and has provided advice and services to libraries, archives, records centres, and museums in Europe and Asia. A regular ELAN contributor, Guy is noted for his research into book and manuscript theft, data loss and protection, and financial fraud and forgery.

Guy is the author of five books on library and archival topics. ■

Write for ELAN

The Newsletter Committee welcomes contributions from our members. We are seeking articles, news items, and ideas that you think would be of interest to ELA members for publication in *ELAN*. Please submit your articles on items of interest to our members, including your memoirs of early days or important figures in librarianship, library history, your own career, and your current activities in the field. We especially need contributions to our regular feature, "Why I Became a Librarian." For submission information, see the back page.

Donate to ELA

Would you like us to extend our programming? A donation or bequest to ELA helps us broaden and increase our activities. All donations are tax deductible. To enhance recruitment, we offer a GIFT MEMBERSHIP option, whereby a current member can make a \$10 tax-deductible donation for each individual and, in return, be able to invite someone to join ELA for a one-year free trial membership. You can use this donation/gift option as often as you like.

Options for donations include cheque, CanadaHelps, and e-transfer. Please mail your cheque to Bob Henderson, 66 Walkerton Drive, Markham ON L3P 1H8. If you prefer to donate through e-transfer, please email Bob at bob.exlibris@gmail.com.

Dangerous Books

By Leslie McGrath

Part I: Avoid Sudden Movements

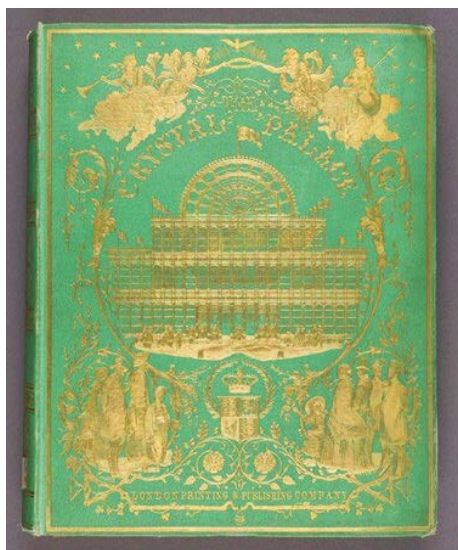
During the “Great Book Scare” that spanned the late 1800s to the 1920s unhealthy conditions in cities brought epidemics of scarlet fever, smallpox, and tuberculosis, and reports of books transmitting diseases caused suspicion of circulating libraries (Hayes). Two studies with conflicting results had exposed laboratory animals to germy book parts. In the first study, the subject monkeys lived, leading the British journal *Library* editor to conclude that “no danger exists to the ordinary library user, but ... anyone who moistens fingers to turn book pages might well be infected—and deservedly so!” (Greenberg, 283). In the second, all 40 subject guinea pigs died (Hayes). Rigorous contemporary methods of disinfecting library books included the use of formaldehyde, sulphur, gasoline, and heated carbolic crystal fumes, no doubt creating new risks (Greenberg). With improved public health, most fears of book-borne infection subsided, though bioterrorism is a concern, because anthrax spores can survive indefinitely on paper (CDC).

Experts also warn that the dust on books holds chemicals, heavy metals, and biohazards that air currents send “directly to your nose” (Bolourchi). These currents are “likely emitted by sudden activities, such as ... quickly browsing a book, or removing a book from a shelf,” leading to the recommendation that librarians “increase their care in sudden movements” (Baldelli et al). Delicate handling may also avoid papercuts and infection leading, in one rare case, to flesh-eating disease (New York Post).

Many early book inks and pigments are harmful, especially if dissolved on the tongue. Orpiment (yellow), lead-based white and red, and vermilion are poison (Baker). Handling books bound around 1840 to 1860 in shades of the popular “Paris Green” may expose readers to arsenic, warns an international project listing known arsenical titles (Winterthur). Poisonous lead was long used in type and inks, causing some countries to limit the selling of old



19th-century arsenical book covers
Photo credit: Winterthur Library, Printed Book and Periodical Collection



Green bookcloth on an 1852 imprint
Photo credit: Winterthur Library, Printed Book and Periodical Collection



Burned Fingers
Photo credit: Wellcome. Detail, arsenic poisoning. *Annales d'hygiène publique et de médecine légale*. Paris: J.-B. Baillière et fils, 1829–1922

children's books to prevent exposures (Stillman). Tobacco adds new hazards: a recent study found high levels of harmful chemicals on paperbacks read by smokers (Lavalley et al).

Books may pose hazards because of their weight. One extreme hoarder reported the origins of her disorder as working in a bookshop with a good employee discount. Endangered by toppling piles of books and other memorabilia, “Tiffany” had to abandon her home and enter therapy (Hoarders). In 2008 the owner of the Green Text Book Store in Hong Kong was killed when 20 boxes of books fell onto him; his body wasn't found for 10 days (Chow).

The ritual of “kissing the book” spans most major religions. This may be unhygienic, but actually ingesting a book, whether through force-feeding, a suicidal impulse, or an exercise in religious ecstasy, can be deadly: in 1987 a man died at East Toronto Detention Centre from choking on a miniature Gideon Bible (Toronto Star). Few books, indeed, are meant to be consumed in entirety (Bacon). Yet, all these physical dangers are no more a deterrent to reading than the intellectual and moral risks books pose. Forewarned is forearmed: books are essential, even those that “affect us like a disaster” (Kafka).

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Part II: Wear Protective Clothing

At the Bibliothèque nationale du France, visitors who wish to study Marie Curie's notebooks and cookbooks must sign a waiver and "wear protective gear," because "the items are contaminated with radium 226, which has a half-life of about 1,600 years ... it will take another 1,500 years until they are half as radioactive as they are now" (Tasch, 2015). More commonly, books have been exposed to gamma rays (to control mould and insect infestations) after major conservation emergencies such as floods. Given the urgency of the situations, attention to



Marie Curie's radioactive notebook
Photo credit: Wellcome Collection object.
Photo courtesy of Aurora Health Physics Services

hazardous outcomes has focused on the effects on the books (degradation of the paper) rather than on the unintended

consequences for subsequent readers, but more research is needed to measure the risks. The coating on paper used in many magazines to create shiny surfaces is composed of kaolin clay, which contains traces of uranium and thorium, and is a mildly radioactive substance. At least, the danger in this case is considered minimal, as studies have shown that glossy magazines, like *Playboy*, expose their readers to less radiation than they would get from eating a banana (Inglis-Arkell, 2011).

The deliberate weaponization of books, however, is more than just a literary metaphor. Books have recently been carved into symbolic paper guns by American artist Robert The, but hollowed books containing actual firearms are known to have existed since the 17th century. Francesco Morosini, Doge of Venice (1688–1694) owned a prayer book containing a buttless gun that could be fired without the book being opened, simply by pulling on a silk bookmark; its binding, incidentally, is described as "stunning" and may have distracted the victims (The Archaeologist, 2022).

Books are also convenient receptacles for miniature pipe bombs and explosive devices. In 1980 the president of United Airlines was injured by a bomb concealed in a book sent through the mail (Dispatch, 1980). In a less dangerous variation, James Patterson's unusual "self-destructing book," *Private Vegas*,



Doge Francesco Morosini's prayer book with pistol, Venezia, Museo Correr, inv. CL. XIV n. 1515
Photo credit: Photo courtesy of Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia

disappeared from readers' ebook devices in a virtual puff of smoke, after their allotted 1,000 hours of reading expired — except in the case of the \$300,000 single paper copy, burned on camera by

a bomb squad, when its owner's time was up, though he was kept at a safe distance from the flames (Patterson, 2015).

As commonplace objects, easily overlooked, books have naturally been employed for espionage. Whole books were turned into cameras, or used to conceal miniature cameras, while exposed film could be easily transported in a book. The "Microdot camera" was "developed on the Minox's abilities to scan paper documents, photographing a whole page with a camera the size of a full stop" — one that could be embedded in the print of a coin or book (Mudd). More commonly, books concealing cameras have been used illegally for voyeuristic purposes (Dillon, 2006).

The rectangular shape and solid construction of a book also make it easy to hollow out for hiding illicit goods. Smugglers have mailed books filled with guns and drugs across borders and into prisons; in one instance, the yellow marker highlights in a book were found to contain methamphetamine (D.E.A., 2007). A specialty service in Tennessee listed on Amazon will "custom fit book safes for flasks and handguns" (Bookmods, 2024); generic "flask books" are also readily available. Small but valuable items of cultural property have been concealed in books for illegal removal from home countries (Bridges for Peace, 2005). In another instance, the contraband was a large amount of stolen cryptocurrency to be transported for laundering (Farivar and Jeans, 2022).

Readers themselves can add hazards to books because, as every librarian has observed, readers will use *anything* to mark their place, and as one expert puts it, "why would you buy a bookmark when there are dozens of things within reach that could do the job for free?" (Royle, 2024). Highly private letters and photos, herbs and flowers, foodstuffs, messages to strangers ... these have inspired articles, blogs, and books, but not all inserts are benign: one librarian found a circular saw blade tucked into *Inside Every Woman*; another came across a six-inch shard of glass in a paperback copy of *Gunsmoke* (Bolton, 2017). Scarlet fever was once apparently transmitted by the strips of peeled

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skin a patient had used as bookmarks (**Atenstaedt**, 2006), while other reported inserts include “scissors, knives, a cheese slicer [wrapped single cheese slices are also popular], and even a small hatchet” (**Zeitlin**, 2022). Despite the hazards, nothing will stop these dedicated professionals from handling books. They may not use full protective clothing, but it should be no surprise that, at least on their jobs, many librarians still prefer to wear gloves.

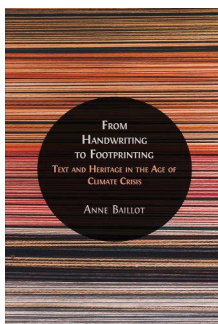
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Book Reviews



From Handwriting to Footprinting: Text and Heritage in the Age of Climate Crisis
 By Anne Baillot
 Open Book, 2023

Reviewed by J. A. Forrester

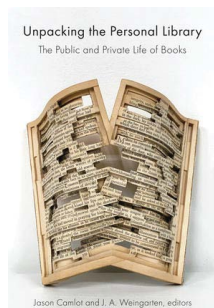
This is a slim anthology of previous articles by European academic Anne Baillot who works at Centre Marc Bloch, Berlin. She has reworked and expanded her research into the effects of digitization and climate change on access to materials in library and archival collections. The first section covers the institutionalization and digital transformation of physical items, as well as contemporary digital files. The second outlines the transformation of the publishing industry and emphasizes the importance of the Open Access concept. The concluding statement explores the implications of climate change and the costs of preserving archival collections into the future. In the third section the author focuses on the impact of the climate crisis on her vocation in textual studies and what the future direction might be. She concludes, “In this book, I wanted to show that philology, Open Access, and environmental evolutions are intimately

intertwined.”

She states that “in the context of IT technologies, 10 years is a long time.” Digital formats and operating systems come and go. How many of us have floppy disks which are no longer recognized by the OS, assuming you kept a drive of the appropriate size?

This publication will interest those working in archival repositories and researchers studying climate change on public texts new and old.

James Forrester is a fellow of Trail College (Trent) and president of the Peterborough Historical Society. He has an active interest in photo research and the use of photos in all media formats.



Unpacking the Personal Library: The Public and Private Life of Books
 By Jason Camlot and J. A. Weingarten (eds.)
 Wilfrid Laurier University, 2022

Reviewed by Peter F. McNally

Personal libraries are a much-overlooked aspect of Canadian

Anglophone library history. Correcting this lacuna may have begun with this collection of essays, edited by two English-literature professors. Between their introductory and concluding contributions, 11 essays are organized under the headings Private Libraries Made Public (publicly accessible private collections) and The Personal Library as a Field of Interpretation (private collections as a source for analyzing the creative process). The libraries of Sir William Osler and Prime Minister Mackenzie King are among those considered in the first category, and the collections of Al Purdy and Sheila and Wilfred Watson are among the second.

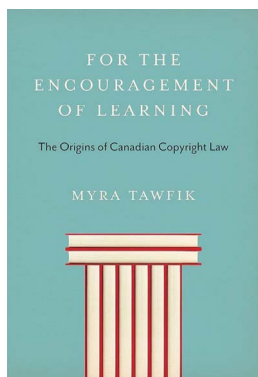
Several features of this collection deserve mention. First, the focus is international, with the libraries of Virginia Woolf and Robert Duncan receiving chapters. Second, the volume's definition of private collections is elastic, including books housed in Canadian embassies and high commissions, books housed in a Spanish protest encampment, and fugitive small-press publications found in a bookstore. Third is the reliance on formal literary theory, with philosophers such as Jacques

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Derrida and Michel Foucault being cited. Most of the articles treat libraries as a methodological approach to literary criticism. In “Serious House: on the Future of Library Print Collections,” Andrew Stauffer’s skepticism about digital texts and electronic libraries being able to replace “redundant duplicate texts” will resonate with many.

The volume is footnoted with a full bibliography, is well edited and indexed, but is without illustrations. The articles are written by qualified scholars and will appeal particularly to literary professionals.



For the Encouragement of Learning: The Origins of Canadian Copyright Law
By Myra Tawfik
University of Toronto, 2023

Reviewed by Victoria Owen

Myra Tawfik’s book on Canadian copyright history will transform our understanding of copyright law and policy. It reads like a legal and social adventure, yet has the heft of a textbook and the citations of a scholarly work. Tawfik’s years of piecing together this gripping legal history contextualizes a rich backstory that illuminates the law and informs Canadians of who we are and why we are this way.

Professor Tawfik (University of Windsor) is a well-respected legal academic whose scholarly work the Supreme Court of Canada cited in the 2021 case *York University v Canadian Copyright Licensing Agency (Access Copyright)*. She has turned her considerable talent to illuminate the origins of copyright law in Canada. Her masterful, detailed history exhaustively researches legislative records, provincial and national archives,

and scholarly literature. Many Canadians dismiss the complex and nuanced history of Canadian copyright law with a brief — and, as we learn, uninformed — statement that our copyright regime descended from the British statutes. Canada’s copyright story is far richer and more closely aligned with this country’s complicated history as a British colony that includes a ceded French territory with a linguistic majority, common law and civil law systems, a behemoth neighbour in the United States, and a complete absence of reference to Indigenous laws.

Professor Tawfik teases out Canada’s copyright story following those strands. With a small population, Upper and Lower Canada strained to support a printing and publishing industry tailored to educational materials that reflected the local environment. They could not compete with Britain or the U.S. in scale or volume. The situation was aggravated by a distant, imperious colonial master whose publishing lobby and self interest dictated that Britain favour the American book market, one that produced school books with a staunchly republican perspective, and British reprints that violated copyright.

The many letters from the Canadian government to London, articulating the harms to Canada’s cultural identity and literature, and its printing and publishing trade, were ignored, and Canada was forced to acquiesce. London treated Canada in a dismissive and secondary manner, favouring the U.S. book market over that of its own colony.

Myra Tawfik’s seminal work transports us to a deeper understanding of copyright’s original purpose, the advancement of learning, and to our own Canadian history, complexity, and character.

Victoria Owen is information-policy scholar-practitioner in the Faculty of Information at U of T and special advisor to the dean on information

accessibility at UT Scarborough. Her background is library administration in academic, special, and public libraries. Her special interest is intellectual property. ■

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Corrections to ELAN

Starting with ELAN No. 71/Spring 2022, any corrections have been/will be made to the digital issues on our website.

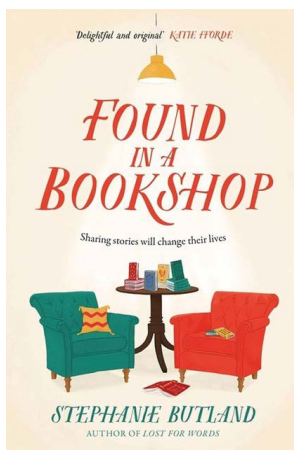


Good Reads

By Judy Dunn

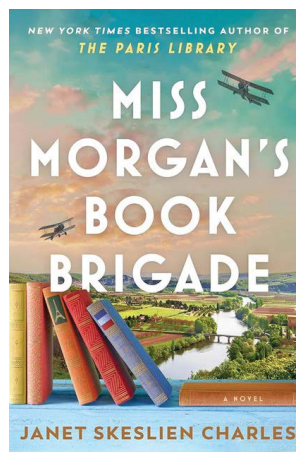
Judy Dunn retired in 2011 after six years as assistant dean, Academic, Faculty of Information at U of T, and 15 years as program co-ordinator, School of Information Management at Dalhousie University.

Find a **compilation** of Good Reads on the ELA website.



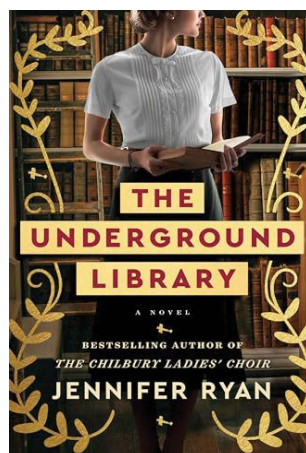
Found in a Bookshop By Stephanie Butland Headline, 2023

A sequel to *The Lost for Words Bookshop*, this story is set during COVID at a little bookshop in York, England, where the new owner keeps the shop open to prescribe books as a remedy for isolation and difficult times.



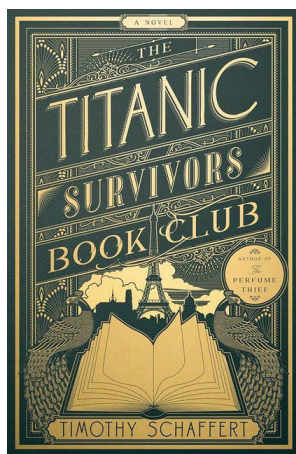
Miss Morgan's Book Brigade By Janet Skeslien Charles Simon & Schuster, 2024

This celebration of strong women making their mark on history is based on the true story of Jessie Carson. In 1918 this librarian leaves the New York Public Library to go to France and work for the American Committee for Devastated France.



The Underground Library By Jennifer Ryan Ballantine, 2024

This novel is based on the true-life underground library at London's Bethnal Green tube station during the Second World War (see *The Little Wartime Library*, "Good Reads," *ELAN* No. 74/Fall 2023, page 11). Three women's paths cross and their story explores the power of books, hope, and friendship.



The Titanic Survivors Book Club: a Novel By Timothy Schaffert Doubleday, 2024

A *Titanic* librarian survives by not boarding the doomed ocean liner. After opening a book shop in Paris, he meets a small group of similar survivors and forms a book club where they discover second chances and the life-changing nature of books.

British Columbia News

By Guy Robertson



In April the **University of British Columbia Library** announced that faculty, staff members, and students will have access to digital newspaper archives from Canada, Asia, and

Europe. The database of *The Montreal Gazette*, the only English-language daily newspaper in Quebec, will allow users

to conduct comprehensive research in issues published between 1867 and 2010. The database of *Le Monde*, a widely circulated newspaper founded at the request of **Charles de Gaulle**, contains issues from 1944 to 2000. Of particular interest to Asian history scholars is *The Chinese Newspaper Collection*, a database containing more than 20 historical English-language newspapers and other publications that appeared

from 1832 to 1953. Over the past decade, the library has increased access to many newspaper archives, including local publications such as *The Vancouver Sun* and *The Province*.

From May to August at **Simon Fraser University Belzberg Library**, patrons enjoyed *Destroying Tradition: Movements in Vancouver Punk Rock*, an exhibition featuring handbills, photos, performance posters, t-shirts, and rare

vinyl records by legendary bands such as D.O.A. The library's extensive collection of punk material attracts researchers from North America, the U.K., and Europe.

In June the **BC Summer Reading Club** (SRC) began its annual activities by declaring its goals, which included engaging children in programs that support literacy, connecting young readers with materials that suit their interests, and distributing bookmarks and stickers to help them track their reading. The British Columbia Library Association, the Public Libraries Branch of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, and CUPE BC sponsor SRC.

In June Pride Month at the **University of Northern British Columbia Geoffrey R. Weller Library** included the promotion of LGBTQIA2S+ books in its collection. These included *Love Beyond Body, Space, and Time: An Indigenous LGBT sci-fi anthology*, edited by Hope Nicholson, Kara Keeling's *Queer Times, Black Futures*, and Billy Ray Belcourt's *A History of My Brief Body*. The works in various genres demonstrate the creativity of the LGBTQIAQ2S+ community.

Island Health provides health-care services to Vancouver Island and neighbouring islands and communities. In December 2023 it supported the installation of 10 motion-detection sensors in the washroom stalls of the **Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) Nanaimo Harbourfront** branch. This June Island Health gave VIRL \$50,000 for the installation of more sensors; these will detect medical emergencies including toxic drug overdoses. Dubbed **Brave Branches**, the project supports library staff and enhances patron safety during a time of increasingly unregulated drug distribution.

In July and August the **Vancouver Public Library (VPL)** mounted its **Adult Summer Challenge**, which included a series of "adventures" to enhance public awareness of the library's facilities and services. Adventure No. 1 encouraged people to "walk, bike, roll, or stroll" to all of VPL's 21 libraries. Each location gave

participants a stamp to verify their visit. Adventure No. 2 involved taking a selfie with a book and a reading buddy — a person, a pet, a toy, or any other object beside which one liked to read — at a favourite place such as a café or beach. Participants posted their photos on Facebook or X. VPL's website included riddles and clues for participants, who searched for hidden treasures in Adventure No. 3. Most popular with many dedicated readers was Adventure No. 4, appropriately called *Book Bingo*. Participants checked off squares on a grid — under headings such as Set in the Pacific Northwest, Book you loved as a kid, and Book by an author with a disability — describing books they had read during the summer. Participants completed a line — horizontal, vertical, or diagonal — to win prizes. Staff at circulation counters reported hearing "Bingo!" in public seating areas. The grand prize for completing any of the adventures was a private screening for the winner and 20 friends at **VPL's Central Library**.

Prairies News

By Alvin M. Schrader



Last January, with temperatures hovering at -48°C , **Airdrie Public Library** stayed open around the clock as a warming shelter facility. In the absence of a 24-

hour emergency shelter or other social housing programs, that city of about 85,000 has commissioned a homelessness study to determine a more comprehensive understanding of **the vulnerable and unsheltered population** in the community, and future options.

In the same month, **Airdrie Public Library** signed a certificate of partnership commemoration with the Knights of Rizal Airdrie Chapter to award naming rights for a room in the new library facility. The Philippine Consul General and Dr. José Rizal (the

Knights of Rizal founder) presented books on the Philippines in both English and Tagalog.

Calgary Public Library reported that several LGBTQ2S+-themed books were returned to the **Crowfoot Branch** "with significant damage," mid-February. The incident was referred to the Calgary Police Service, which asked its Hate Crime Prevention Team for review.

Edmonton Public Library (EPL) is participating in a pilot program at the downtown **Stanley Milner Branch**, under the city's Downtown Vibrancy Strategy, to deal with the increase in overdoses and security incidents in recent years. Tabatha Plesuk, an overdose-prevention-and-response nurse for Boyle Street Community Services, responds to mental-health crises and opioid poisonings. Equipped with naloxone, she works alongside outreach worker Blake Loates at the branch. Plesuk also provides health support and clean supplies to vulnerable people. EPL first brought in social workers in 2011; other public libraries, including **Halifax and Calgary PLs**, have brought in support staff and **social workers** to respond to the needs of a broad population. Since COVID, the homeless population of Edmonton has doubled.

EPL now brings parents and tots to seniors' homes in a program that supports older adults and leverages EPL's expertise in early childhood education, storytime, sing, sign, lap, and learn, to help everyone to connect them. The pairing is mutually beneficial, combats social isolation, and supports memory and recall. At the same time, it helps babies' development.

February 18 to 24, **Battleford Public Library, Sask.** celebrated the 40th anniversary of Freedom to Read Week with a display of challenged books and a "mugshot station," where patrons could get a mugshot snapped of themselves and their banned book. Some of the books on display included *Fifty Shades of Gray*, *The Hunger Games*, and *Fahrenheit 451*.

Regina Public Library (RPL) has requested \$340,000 in additional

security costs estimated for 2025, after a report saying public library workers face an increase in violent incidents they have personally experienced or witnessed. The downtown branch was temporarily closed, in June 2023, after a stabbing. **RPL** has worked with outreach workers for a five-month pilot through Family Service Regina, reporting that library calls to police went down by a third.

In late 2023 the **Steinbach Public Library board** decided to use stickers to label every LGBTQ2S+-related juvenile picture book in the easy and board sections. A patron had requested to remove or separate children's books with LGBTQ2S+ books, with many others emailing similar complaints. **Chrystie Kroeker Boggs** left the position of library director before the board meeting at which the stickering decision was made. Stickers on Christian books were already in place.

Manitoba Legislative Library has provided a permanent home for more than a century's worth of archival copies of the **Brandon Sun**. Issues date back to the late 1800s. The library's mandate includes the preservation of Manitoba's publishing history, and more than 800 newspaper titles are currently in the collection. The library already had a Brandon newspaper microfilm collection, but did not have original print copies.

Hailey McCullough was appointed director of the **Grande Prairie Public Library (GPPL)**, effective January 1, 2024. Prior to joining **GPPL** in 2018, she was at the College of the North Atlantic.

Last February **Emma Hill Kepron** picked up her buzzer to compete for a wild-card spot — and for cash and bragging rights — in the annual Tournament of Champions on *Jeopardy!* Emma, who has been watching *Jeopardy!* since she was a teen, trained by practising ringing in with a clicker pen, and studied categories such as state capitals and the periodic table. She placed second and won \$28,000 US. She is associate dean, **University of Winnipeg Library**.

Alvin M. Schrader is Professor

Emeritus at the University of Alberta, School of Library & Information Studies.

Ontario News

By Vivienne James



The 10th OCULA Annual Symposium, Fostering Collaboration and Knowledge Exchange in Digital Learning, is planned for November or December 2024. It offers discussions, presentations, and hands-on workshops related to e-learning in library environments.

During Indigenous History Month (June), **Guelph University Library** highlighted Exploring Indigenous Narratives and Worldviews, a collection uplifting First Nations, Inuit, and Métis voices through research and storytelling.

McMaster University's Vivian Lewis, who reopened two campus libraries during the pandemic, continues as associate vice-president and university librarian. July's virtual event, One Love and Venceremos: Celebrating the Correspondence of Austin Clarke and Andrew Salkey, brought together scholars from McMaster (holding Clarke's papers) and the **British Library** (holding Salkey's papers) to discuss these Caribbean diasporic writers, kicking off a week-long series of readings and discussions marking Clarke's 90th birthday. A conference — Austin Clarke, Black Studies and Black Diasporic Memory — is scheduled for September at **McMaster and Toronto Metropolitan universities**.

Western University Library's (WUL) new vice-provost and chief librarian is **Geoffrey Little**, who replaces Catherine Reeves. The library received a \$2 million gift from the estate of Halina and James (Rus) Russell Robinson, enhancing access to military and veterans' history resources. **WUL** is now an associate member of the Digital Preservation

Coalition (DPC), supporting digital preservation and training globally.

Queen's University Bracken Health Sciences Library hosted the National Library of Medicine-produced **Renaissance Science, Magic, and Medicine in Harry Potter's World** in July, exploring influences of Renaissance thinkers on Western science, through the lens of the Harry Potter series.

Casita Azul, York University's library in Costa Rica is a community-education hub providing Internet access, books, and computers. **York University Library** has also shifted its Open Access Author Fund to focus on nationally negotiated agreements for article-processing charge (APC) discounts.

Nicole Nolan, with her strong background in academic librarianship, has been appointed **Brock University Library's next University Librarian**.

Toronto Public Library (TPL) continues to shine with its Special Collections exhibit, **Centuries of Treasures, 1500s to 2022**. **TPL** also participated in Pride Toronto Community Connect, celebrated the opening of and broke ground for its 101st branch in the Etobicoke Civic Centre. **TPL** is the only North American library system in the top 10 of the **2024 IFLA PressReader International Marketing Award**. In May **TPL** hosted a virtual Innovation Symposium on the future of libraries. **TPL's Gerrard/Ashdale branch** turned 100 in May, and all 100 branches hosted Customer Appreciation Day, in gratitude for support during a cybersecurity incident.

Guelph Public Library received a \$13.5 million federal investment for the construction of a new central library to the Canada Green Building Council's Zero Carbon Building-Design standard.

The 4,000-square-foot **Sarnia's Clearwater Library** is now open, offering a hub for knowledge, creativity, and community connection.

Ottawa Public Library launched its first system-wide adult summer program, **Stories of Summer: Adult Library Challenge**, with bingo cards and book lists, awarding prizes by

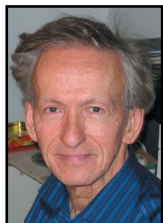
September 30.

Barrie Public Library and **Richmond Hill PL** each received a **2024 John Cotton Dana Library Public Relations Award**. The Ontario Library Association awarded the 2024 **Library Architectural and Design Transformation Award** at the OLA Annual Institute in June to **TPL, Albert Campbell Branch** and **Western University, D. B Weldon Library – Eastside branch** with an honorary mention to **TPL, Wychwood branch**.

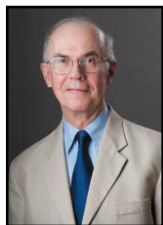
Vivienne James worked at TPL for more than 25 years, was branch head of Queen Saulter, St. Lawrence and Spadina Rd. Libraries and was responsible for adult-collection development for the Black and Caribbean Heritage Collection (Parkdale) until retiring.

Quebec News

By Pierre Guilmette and Peter F. McNally



Can You Hear Me?/M'entendez-vous? was the theme of the Association des bibliothécaires du Québec/ Library Association's Annual Conference in May. Opening and closing keynote addresses were delivered by Dr. Marina Doucerain, UQAM, and Annabelle Laliberté (Montreal), respectively.



The 2024/25 ABQLA co-presidents are Melissa Rivosecchi and Aeron MacHattie, Concordia University.

The Anne Galler Award to an individual who has enriched librarianship in Quebec was awarded to **Pat Riva**, Associate University Librarian, Concordia University.

Due to funding issues with the Quebec government, McGill University is re-evaluating the Fiat Lux project for rebuilding the **McLennan-Redpath Library** complex.

Employees of the **Bibliothèque**

de Québec network began strike action March 1, 2024, coinciding with festivities to celebrate the reopening of the **Gabrielle-Roy Library** after a major renovation. On June 14, 52 percent of the 240 employees accepted a new contract, **ending the 106-day strike**. The **Pierre-Georges Roy Library in Lévis** closed this summer for a \$10 million restoration. Originally a chapel, it was built in 1891 to meet the religious needs of the Collège de Lévis. During the restoration construction, library users are invited to visit the system's nine other libraries.

Pierre Guilmette is a retired librarian, Université Laval.

Peter F. McNally is Professor Emeritus at McGill University, School of Information Studies.

Maritimes News

By Tanja Harrison



Nova Scotia's Cumberland Regional Public Libraries

system has reinstated the hours cut in the spring. The towns of Amherst and Oxford

provided one-time bridge funding to restore the hours to all locations. One can only hope that the support of countless citizens, staff, and local leaders has demonstrated the need for sustainable core library services, which increasingly include food-security initiatives. Libraries are using a \$53,000 grant to collaborate with local organizations, such as the YMCA of Cumberland and the Cumberland Adult Network for Upgrading (CANU), that are already doing food-security work. Snacks are available at all seven branches, with a food pantry at the **Amherst PL**.

Thanks to funding from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, newcomers can practice conversational English and connect with community members at multiple branches of **Cape Breton Regional Library (CBRL)** through programming that encourages sharing

cultural traditions and celebrations, and offers guest speakers on topics related to living, working, and playing in their new home. To promote health and wellness, YMCA locations in Sydney and Membertou First Nations communities now have free five-day guest passes, including bus tickets, available via **CBRL** branches.

Funded by the Rotary Club of Charlottetown, the **Charlottetown Library Learning Centre now offers a 'comfort cabinet'** with items such as general hygiene products, clothing, and diapers that's accessible by anyone with or without a library card and restocked daily. It's located in an unmonitored area to ensure discretion for patrons in need.

The **PEI Public Library Service** has extended its hours and added open days at all French branches — **Bibliothèque publique d'Abram-Village, Bibliothèque publique Dr.-J.-Edmond-Arsenault (Charlottetown) and Bibliothèque publique J.-Henri-Blanchard (Summerside)** — to expand access to French-language books and resources for islanders and visitors alike. "This is beneficial to the growing Acadian and francophone community," says provincial Minister for Acadia and Francophone Affairs Gilles Arsenault.

The **University of New Brunswick (Fredericton) Engineering and Computer Science Library** has become an integral resource, lending an expanding tool library that includes hand tools, power drills, sanders, and other essential equipment, as well as devices for academic and personal projects. Recently librarians have used Google Lens — a powerful image recognition-technology combined with AI — to identify a tool's name, function, and usage. Particularly helpful for new or international students, Google Lens quickly finds user manuals, video tutorials, and safety guidelines, and also aids in inventory management. By scanning barcodes and QR codes, staff can access tool records, loan status, and condition data to determine the need for maintenance or replacement. The app can also stimulate research and innovation, by helping users to

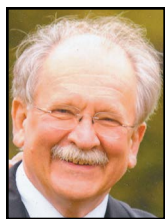
brainstorm and develop new project ideas. For visually impaired patrons, Google Lens also provides audio descriptions and features.

Jeannie Bail became university librarian at **Mount Saint Vincent University Library**, effective August 12, 2024. She has held various positions, most recently with the University of New Brunswick as a liaison librarian and the director of Learning and Research Services.

Tanja Harrison, former University Librarian, Mount Saint Vincent University, is currently on leave.

Newfoundland & Labrador News

By Dick Ellis



Not a great deal has happened on the library scene in Newfoundland and Labrador in the past few months, save the passing of Pearce Penney, which is covered elsewhere.

It is safe to say the one-time supplement to the province's library system has been spent or committed. As noted in *ELAN's* last issue, this was the first increase since 2015. For an evening's entertainment, take out a pencil and calculate on the back of this issue the real value of \$600,000 in 2015 dollars. My calculation makes it about \$250,000, the amount that was cut in 2015.

Well there is an election coming up in a year or so, and the current Liberal government is ramping up the good news. There is time enough to address the long-term problems in the library system, as part of the good news.

Oh yes, **Memorial University Education Library**, primarily a collection of curricular materials, held a Drag Storytime on July 24. Apparently 50 people showed up "from across campus." Gives one pause for thought.

Dick Ellis is Librarian Emeritus at Memorial University.

News from the North

By Julie Ourom



In a new venture, **Whitehorse PL (WPL)** partnered with Yukon University's Youth Moving Mountains summer camp, with an Expedition Engineers theme geared to ages 8 through 12. The library introduced two **pods** available for one- or two-person use for study, work, or taking calls. WPL also held a co-operative event on growing microgreens, to launch their deck garden and "write Fridays by the river," promoting WPL's prime location on the Yukon River, while talks at **Dawson City Community Library** promoted gardening in the midnight sun.

Special guests joined the **Iqaluit Centennial Library** for an interactive throat singing and Inuit drumming program.

A coffee-and-Islam session in the **Yellowknife PL (YPL)** encouraged understanding and inclusivity. To expand accessibility, YPL is now lending **sensory support kits** for autism, ADHD, and other conditions. YPL's updated **website** offers information on events and services.

Hay River PL invited seniors to enjoy movie matinees.

The Yukon Writers' Festival returned with a gala in Whitehorse at the local indie cinema, followed by a tour of community libraries and the Yukon Young Authors' Conference in Whitehorse. The **Northwords Writers Festival** returned for its 19th year, across the Northwest Territories. Year-round kids' programs continued throughout the North, including the TD Summer Reading Club.

Library pets are not uncommon, but they don't always make the **national news**; one, in Fort Smith's **Mary Kaeser Library**, did.

Julie Ourom was director, Yukon Public Libraries (1990–2014). She previously worked at public libraries in

B.C. (including Kitimat and Richmond) and in Moose Jaw, Sask.

News from Canadian Library/Information Studies Schools



Compiled by Judy Dunn

University of British Columbia iSchool, Library, Archival and Information Studies (SLAIS)
By Guy Robertson

Earlier this year, the School of Information announced the winners of the 2024 **iSchool Bookmark Design Contest**. **Danielle Osakwe**, an MLIS candidate, produced a colourful bookmark with images that illustrate the historical relationship between physical and digital formats. MASLIS candidate **Lilly Liu** included an iris — a symbol of knowledge — in her design. For her bookmark, **Nobu Kawaguchi**, a 2024 MLIS graduate, mixed images from different cultures, languages, and eras, to demonstrate iSchool students' diverse backgrounds. The 2023/2024 UBC **Killam Research Prize** recipients include iSchool Professor **Heather O'Brien**. She specializes in information seeking, retrieval, and access, and is involved in the **STOREE project**, which will facilitate access to research for non-academic individuals and organizations. During four afternoons from April to August, the iSchool encouraged students to participate in the **School of Information Great Canadian Beach and Park Cleanup Party**. Students picked up rubbish in Vancouver's heavily used public areas, and those who picked up the most won prizes. A minimum of sunburn was reported.

University of Alberta, School of Library and Information Studies (SLIS)

By the SLIS Administration; edited by Kenneth Gariepy

SLIS extends warmest congratulation: to the 60 MLIS graduates who convoked on June 19, 2024, in the Universiade Pavillion (Butterdome).

Mikaela LeBlanc and **Myles Shingoose** received the 2023/24 **COPPUL Indigenous-Student Awards** valued at \$22,000 each, and Myles also received the Saskatchewan Library Association's \$5,000 **Indigenous-Student MLIS Education Bursary**. SLIS received a record 331 applications for the fall of 2024 and 93 students began their studies in September, demonstrating the continuing high demand for, and competitiveness of, the accredited program. Two incoming students were awarded entrance scholarships valued at \$17,000 each. Esteemed professor Dr. **Toni Samek** has been named **Scholar-in-Residence 2024–2025** at Toronto Metropolitan University's Centre for Free Expression. SLIS is also pleased to announce the re-appointment of academic adjunct colleagues Dr. **Kathleen DeLong**, **Gail de Vos**, and **Pilar Martinez**, along with the new appointment of Dr. **Margaret Law**.

Western University, Faculty of Information and Media Studies (FIMS)
By Becky Blue

FIMS was pleased to host American Library Association president **Emily Drabinski** to speak at Museum London, on April 9, 2024. Professor **Melissa Adler** invited Drabinski to present an open-to-the-public keynote lecture, Libraries Do Good Work, for a graduate student research conference. With leadership change afoot, FIMS Graduate Library Director **Melanie Mills** was named acting associate chief librarian for Western Libraries, a one-year appointment effective May 15. While she is reassigned, FIMS has appointed **Erin Bourgard** as acting director of the FIMS Graduate Library. A graduate of our MLIS program, Bourgard was a metadata management librarian at Western Libraries. We wish Melanie a successful term and welcome Erin back to our FIMS community.

University of Toronto, Faculty of Information (FI, iSchool)

By Ann Brocklehurst

The University of Toronto selected Alison Brooks Architects, working in collaboration with Executive Architects Adamson Associates, to revitalize the **Claude T. Bissell Building**, home to FI. This landmark project will support FI's growth and overall mission to leverage technology for human good, as well as to make knowledge, information platforms, and systems equitable and accessible to all. The commission includes a comprehensive reimagining of the Bissell Building's social, teaching, and research spaces to modernize FI's identity and create a new front door to the St. George Campus. FI has hired seven new professors: Professor **Ebrahim Bagheri**, Associate Professor **Eric P. S. Baumer**, Assistant Professor **Huili Chen**, Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream **Gustavo Ferreira**, Assistant Professor **Jessica Lapp**, Associate Professor **Evan Light**, and Assistant Professor **Michel Mersereau**. In addition, Assistant Professors **Joel Alleyne** and **Jennifer Orpana** are taking up contractually limited term appointments.

McGill University, School of Information Studies

By Peter F. McNally

In early February, an informal tea/coffee/cookie chat session was held for students and faculty to meet and socialize. Later in the month, SMPTE Montréal (Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers) invited students to join them in a discussion of research touching all aspects of audio/video technology. On March 9, MIST students held an international potluck supper followed by a subtitled Chinese movie. On April 6 the school participated with the Schulich School of Music and other McGill academic units in a CIRMMT RA2 WORKSHOP - GLAM-MIR to foster interdisciplinary collaboration on information storage and retrieval among libraries, archives, galleries, museums, and musicians. The school's Master's students shared their research results at a research seminar on April 6.

Université de Montreal, École de bibliothéconomie et des sciences de l'information (EBSI)

By Isabelle Bourgey and Martin Bélanger

This winter, EBSI opened a new teaching lab dedicated to support students in Professor **Guillaume Boutard's** Curation and Digital Archaeology course. This lab can read and transfer obsolete digital media (5¼-inch and 3½-inch floppy disks). It is also equipped with a write blocker to access stored content without compromising its integrity. April 8 saw the launch of **L'archiviste humaniste: rôles et positionnement institutionnel et sociétal**. *Mélanges offerts à Louise Gagnon-Arguin*, edited by professors **Sabine Mas** and **Dominique Maurel**. It honours Professor **Louise Gagnon-Arguin** and highlights her contributions to Quebec archival science. **Arnaud d'Alayer**, head of the Computing Laboratories, received the innovation category Dean's Award, which recognizes his exemplary contribution to numerous academic development projects for EBSI and Université de Montréal. In June students and professionals took a study trip to Germany, Switzerland, and France, under the direction of professor **Jean-Sébastien Sauvé**, offering an opportunity to discover the services and layouts of 20 specialized, university, and public libraries.

Dalhousie University, Faculty of Management, Department of Information Science

By Sandra Toze

Congratulations to our recent Master of Information (MI) and Master of Information Management (MIM) graduates. Our students continue to have impact, including **Rebecca Marjoram** (MI candidate) who won a **Coalition Publica Scholarship**, and combined MI/Master of Resource and Environmental Management student **Alexandre Legault** who won a best-poster award at the Atlantic Canada Coastal and Estuarine Science Society & Bay of Fundy Ecosystem Partnership Joint Conference.

During the past year, we modified our MI degree to provide more flexibility and align with changes in the professional landscape. We reduced overall credits

to 15, decreased the number of core courses, and added an Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility, and Decolonization requirement. Our PhD Information proposal is at the final stages of approval; we plan to welcome students in January 2025.

Congratulations to Dr. **Philippe**

Mongeon the new DIS Chair, who was awarded a Faculty of Management (FOM) Teaching Excellence Award. Dr. **Stacy Allison-Cassin** with **Camille Callison**, university librarian at University of the Fraser Valley, received a \$1.8-million Mellon Foundation grant for their work to overhaul harmful terminology. **Stacy**

Allison-Cassin was the 2024 recipient of the FOM Research Impact Award (Emerging Scholar). Congratulations also to Dr. **Colin Conrad**, who was awarded tenure and promotion.

Milestones



Obituaries

Compiled by Frances Davidson-Arnott and Bob Henderson

Folarin Obaro Olaitan Ayinde Agbaje died May 16, 2024, age 34, in Toronto. MLIS (U of T, '17). He was diversity director and customer-information specialist, Oakville PL (2019–2024).

Ferne May Allen died April 28, 2024, age 91, in Collingwood, ON. She was a long-time librarian and an active member of the Stayner Heritage Society.

Anne Ball (née Paul) died April 5, 2024, age 88, in Parksville, BC. Library Sciences, UBC.

Gordon William Brandstadt died June 22, 2024, age 83, in Pembroke, ON. He was a decades-long librarian, working in central Ontario PLs, finally returning to Pembroke PL.

Dr. Irene Audrey Busterd died March 26, 2024, age 96, in Collins Bay, ON. BA '47, MA '69, PhD '76 (Queen's); BLS (U of T, '48). She was a cataloguer at Trent U Library (1966–1968) then spent the rest of her career at Kingston PL, retiring as branch librarian, Calvin Park Library.

Lorraine Church died April 29, 2024, age 97, in Ottawa. BLS (U of Ottawa). She was a professional librarian at the Ottawa Board of Education for 20 years.

Krystyna Cienska died March 10, 2024, age 97, in Montreal. She obtained a

library studies degree from Concordia, and worked at the McGill Library until retirement.

Helen Caroline Nielsen Craig died August 16, 2024, age 90, in Fredericton. BLS (U of T, '65). After teaching in New Brunswick, she earned her BLS and became a librarian at UNB.

Charlotte Isabelle Curtis (néé Boddy) died age 90, in Ajax, ON. She enjoyed a long career as a librarian in London, Brockville, and Ajax/ Pickering.

Joan Margaret Dodsworth Ware died May 17, 2024, age 96, in Kanata, ON. Library technician diploma (Algonquin College). Joan was Kanata's first librarian in 1968. During her tenure as chief librarian, a one-room library in the Beaverbrook Community Centre grew into the Kanata PL (with two locations), an early adopter of an automated circulation program and interlibrary loans.

Elda Dunham died July 27, 2024, age 92, in Mississauga, ON. After working as a registered nurse throughout Canada, she oversaw the Sheridan College School of Nursing library for 25 years.

Wilhelm (Willy) Erich Eisenbichler died April 12, age 72, in London, ON. MLIS (Western, '77). He worked at the

Sault Ste. Marie PL for 29 years, CEO (1993–2009) and was awarded the 2009 W. J. Robertson Medallion, Librarian of the Year, by the Ontario Library Boards' Association. He served on the Historic Sites Board, the Municipal Heritage Committee, and Heritage Sault Ste. Marie, Inc.

Marilyn Francis Elkin died June 13, 2024, age 76, in Orangeville, ON. MLIS (Western, '89). She worked for several law libraries in Ontario's Peel and Dufferin regions.

Alexandra (Sandra) Borys Fraser died June 21, 2024, age 96, in Calgary. BLS (U of T, '52). A librarian at several institutions, including the *Calgary Herald*, Chevron Standard Ltd., and U of Calgary's Education Library, she retired in 1990.

Joan Ellis-Hill died June 5, 2024, age 87, in Kingston, NS. MLS (McGill, '86). She was a librarian in the U of Saskatoon Medical Sciences Library.

Jennifer Mae Everett died February 17, 2024, age 79, in Santa Barbara, CA. She attended Lakehead U, where she was an assistant librarian, graduating in library science. She was assistant librarian at Confederation College, Thunder Bay, ON, until 1969.

Mary Ellen Gilliss died June 5, 2024, age 72, in Halifax. MLS (Dalhousie). She was Halifax County Regional Library chief librarian for many years.

Carol Yvonne Graham died June 15, 2024, age 84, in Langley, BC. MLS (UBC, '88). After a career as a school librarian, she earned a degree in library science.

Ann Gross (née Cohen) died March 8, 2024, age 84, in Toronto. MLS (McGill,

'77). She was head librarian at Centennial Academy and worked with the City of Westmount in cataloguing and IT. She assembled, catalogued, and managed the collection of literature and information for the Québec Association for Children with Learning Disabilities, cataloguing this collection using a system she had developed. The collection was absorbed into McGill's library collection, with her unique classification markings still in place. Ann was an ELA member.

Merry Harper died July 18, 2024, age 74, in Victoria. MLS (Western). She was Saskatchewan provincial librarian, responsible for province-wide library-book sharing. In Winnipeg she became a lawyer. Later, she became a law professor at U of Windsor.

Lesley Ellen Harris died April 13, 2024, age 63, in Annapolis, MD. A lawyer, she started her career as a copyright policy advisor to the Canadian government, where she delved into domestic and international copyright laws affecting libraries, archives, museums, and educational institutions. She founded copyrightlaws.com, wrote 10 books and numerous articles about copyright, taught about copyright, and, in partnership with the Special Libraries Association and the American Library Association, developed and taught Copyright Management Certification programs in the United States and Canada.

Anna Henshaw died June 1, 2024, age 90, in Windsor, ON. RN ('55), BScN (Windsor U, '74). A nurse educator, she became librarian at Grace Hospital in Windsor (1966–1993) where she planned and oversaw the construction of Grace's new library. She was head librarian at Hospice of Windsor (2007–2014) where she established the library, provided services for staff and visitors, and self-published a booklet on how to establish a library for hospice organizations. She was also active in health-library association activities.

Barbara Alice Hope Hicks died August 11, 2024, age 91, in Ottawa. After training as a librarian in England, she came to Canada for a job in a Canadian university library. Her library career included posts at the Advisory Council on the Status of Women,

the National Library of Canada and, finally, as chief librarian at St. Paul U. After retiring, she was a Friends of Library and Archives Canada board member.

May Lily Isaac died April 25, 2024, age 90, in Oakville, ON. Library Techniques (Sheridan College, '80), BA (McMaster, '81). She worked in the business libraries of Abitibi-Price, Shell Canada, and CIBC, retiring in the late 1990s.

Marion Elizabeth Jarman (née Ziehlke) died June 4, 2024, age 98 years, in Calgary. BLS (McGill, '50).

Penelope Helen Kamichaitis (née Yates) died February 2, 2024, age 86, in Montreal. Library Science (U of Ottawa, '66). After graduating, she worked at Air Canada, then ran the Monenco library, retiring in 1997.

Susannah Ketchum died May 3, 2024, age 83, in Toronto. A teacher-librarian at Bishop Strachan School, she served as chair of the Southern Ontario Library Services Board and on the Ontario Library Association's Red Maple Selection Committee.

Elizabeth Howard Killing died May 16, 2024, age 100, in Midland, ON. She was a librarian at London Central Secondary School and London PL.

Donna Kincade died August 11, 2024, age 71, in Brantford, ON. MLS (UBC). She was a librarian at Wheatland Regional Library, Saskatoon PL, SaskPower, and Ontario Hydro Research Division, before establishing her information business, Accessible Information Retrieval.

Rebecca Larocque died June 25, 2024, age 48, in St. Catharines, ON. MLS (Dalhousie, '01). She worked at North Bay PL (2006–2024), lastly as head of Information Services.

Helen Larose died April 11, 2024, age 94, in Edmonton. She worked at the John Walter Museum, Edmonton, as historical sites custodian — undertaking research for the construction of Fort Edmonton, cataloguing artifacts, and planning the first pioneer programs at the museum. She

served as manager of the City of Edmonton Archives and later as city archivist. Helen was an active member of the Historical Society of Alberta, the Archives Society of Alberta, the Edmonton Historical Board, and the Association of Records Managers and Administrators. Her many awards included the Historical Society of Alberta's Award for Outstanding Contributions to Alberta History, Edmontonian of the Century for her contributions to the preservation of history, Institute of Public Administrators of Canada for her management excellence, and the Commemorative Medal for the 125th Anniversary of Confederation.

Alexander Liros died March 7, 2024, age 80, in Toronto. BLS (U of T, '69). He was a librarian at Carleton, then worked part-time for North York PL. He was an artist and, with others, formed the gay art collective, JAC (1981–1988).

Mary Elizabeth "Beth" Martin (née Kneen) died June 8, 2024, age 77, in Mississauga, ON. BLS (U of T, '70). She began her career in the Toronto Reference Library. Moving to the Mississauga Central Library, she was manager of the Business and Government Documents Department.

William "Bill" Frederick Masselink died May 20, 2024, age 86, in Charlottetown. He was a Prince Edward Island librarian and public servant for many years. Active in APLA, he was vice-president P.E.I. and Copyright Committee convenor.

Margaret McGrath died April 23, 2024, age 98, in Niagara Falls, ON. A graduate of Niagara College, she was the librarian at Greater Niagara General Hospital, retiring in 1987.

Diane MacQuarrie died June 3, 2024, age 87, in New Glasgow, NS. BLS (U of T, '60), MLS (U of T, '73). She started as a bookmobile librarian in Scarborough and Halifax, before moving into leadership roles in the Halifax County Regional Library and the Nova Scotia Provincial Library. The Halifax City Regional Library chief librarian for 21 years, she held executive roles at Canadian Library Association and was on the National Library Advisory Board. She was awarded the Queen's Silver

Jubilee Medal in 1977.

James Edwin Mayor died June 28, 2024, age 82, in Toronto. He attended U of T (BA) and worked for more than 30 years at U of T's Robarts Library.

Carmen Miriam Moore died June 12, 2024, age 98, in Willis Point, BC. While studying library sciences at Sir George Williams College (now Concordia University, '51 BA), she worked at McGill Library. She owned Carmen Moore Books (1962–1977), then ran a book-ordering business until 1981. Carmen was part-time librarian/archivist at Butchart Gardens until 2005, cataloguing the resource library, and sorting a vast collection of memorabilia and documents to create the garden archives.

Geoffrey Scott Moyer died July 2, 2024, age 55, in Brantford, ON. He worked at Brantford PL for more than 24 years. Specializing in local history and digital archiving, he was lauded for his knowledge of Brantford's history.

Ian C. Nelson died January 22, 2024, age 82, in Saskatoon. MLS (McGill, '69) after a career at the U of Saskatchewan libraries. He was credentialed as an expert book examiner and became Librarian Emeritus upon retirement.

Maria Anna "Maryna" Nowosielski died June 15, 2024, age 87, in Ottawa. MLS (McGill, '74). She worked at the McGill McLennan and Polish libraries. In 1977 she moved to the former National Library of Canada (NLC), where she became head of Technical Services and Automation (1980–1991). In 1992 she became acting director of the Employment and Immigration Canada Library, receiving a gold medal in 1993 for leadership and innovation in the use of IT as part of the federal awards program. Maryna ended her public service career as director of acquisitions, back at NLC.

Edward Joseph Pantone died May 1, 2024, age 88, in Hamilton, ON. He worked in Mills Memorial Library before completing his MLS at Western.

Pearce John Penney died June 7, 2024, age 96, in St. John's. MLS (Syracuse U,

'68). His career began at Memorial U and continued at U of Guelph, before he returned to Newfoundland in 1972 as the provincial director for Public Library Services. He was president of the Newfoundland and Labrador Library Association (1973–1974), president of APLA (1975–1976), and president of CLA (1983). He was a longtime **ELA member**.

Oksana "Ksenia" Piaseckyj died April 5, 2024, age 80, in Ottawa. MLS (Western, '72). A librarian at U of Ottawa for 35 years, she headed the library's Slavic Department. She compiled *Bibliography of Ukrainian Literature in English and French: Translations and Critical Works (1950–1986)*.

Barbara Ellen Robinson died April 16, 2024, age 66, in Kamloops, BC. She worked as a librarian for 17 years at Kamloops PL, after being a teacher in several Kamloops elementary schools.

Steve Sachaschik died January 18, 2024, age 84, in Edmonton. BLS (U of T, '62). He worked for many years at Edmonton PL.

Dawn Sills died June 5, 2024, age 69, in Ottawa. She worked in the IT Branch, Library and Archives Canada.

Anne deBlois Smart died May 17, 2024, age 88, in Saskatoon. She was educated at Smith College, Queen's, Concordia, and Western. She worked at Saskatoon PL under the direction of Frances Morrison and was New Democratic Party MLA for the Saskatoon Centre constituency (1986–1991).

Judith Stonehewer died June 7, 2024, age 73, in Montreal. MLS (McGill, '76) At Vanier College she was in charge of the Snowdon Campus Library and Snowdon AV Department (1980–1986). Judith left Vanier in the late 1980s to become co-ordinator of Library Services at Marianopolis College.

Annabelle Rose Taylor died July 14, 2024, age 89, in Halifax. BLS (U of T, '64). She was a research librarian with the National Research Council in London, ON, Ottawa, and Halifax.

Shelagh Sally Telford died July 1, 2024, age 88, in Cobourg, ON. MLS (U of T, '85) Despite being a non-believer, Sally enjoyed

a long career as the head librarian at the Centre for Christian Studies.

Judy Thompson died November 18, 2023, age 82 in Victoria. MLS (UBC, '81). Her career as an election consultant began as deputy chief election officer for Manitoba. She worked internationally for more than a decade, organizing elections in new democracies including Cambodia, Kosovo, Bosnia, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, Papua New Guinea, Palestine, South Africa, and Ukraine. She moved to Victoria in 2003 and, in semi-retirement, applied her talents in the archives and libraries of the Maritime Museum of B.C., the Victoria Art Gallery, and Ballet Victoria.

Audrey Grace Wellwood died May 19, 2024, age 88, in Kentville, NS. BA (Acadia), master's degree in librarian services (U of Maine, '72). She was a teacher and teacher-librarian, and a member of NSSLA and the CSLA.

Robert (Bob) Wilson died March 25, 2024, in Sudbury, ON. Graduate degree at U of Ottawa. He was a university librarian, enjoying a 39-year career at Laurentian U.

*Obituaries are brief, due to space constraints. You can access a published obituary for each person by visiting the online issue of ELAN, then clicking on the name (shown in green). The **ELA website**, provides more information celebrating the lives of our members.*



Retirements

Compiled by
Suzette Giles

Isabelle Cramp, library director, and staff member **Margaret Meetsma** at Morinville Community Library, Alta., retired this past summer. They joined the library within a day of each other in 2003. Isabelle played an active role in the library's extensive renovations in 2012 and worked to ensure the staff had good work-life balance. Margaret filled many roles through the years and will especially miss the many patrons she helped. The library is seeking a new director.

Dorothy Martens retired after 33 years at Morden South Central Regional Library, Alta., where she had responsibility for many programs including Storytime Lady and the Lego Club. She particularly enjoyed searching out information and books on challenging topics.

Rosemary Rae, CEO of Espanola PL, Ont., retired May 31, 2024. Rosemary studied at Mohawk College and the University of Waterloo. Her career spanned 35 years in libraries across Ontario, with the final eight as CEO, Espanola Public Library. Laura Luopa is

the new CEO.

Kelley Potter retired March 22, 2024, after nearly 30 years at Caledon PL, Ont., as public service director for almost the last five years. A graduate of Mohawk College Library Studies program, '05, Kelly is also a certified life-cycle celebrant. She was a library page at Caledon PL in high school and returned to a full-time position in 1995. Her various roles included Youth Services co-ordinator, Youth Services manager, manager of Lending Services, and, in 2014, Public Services manager. Her noteworthy projects include the Young Reels Film Festival, the writing

contest created in Elizabeth Scavetta's memory, renovations and new buildings, and management of the pandemic. Leah Rucchetto is the new Public Service director.

Joanne Wicker retired after 16 years at the Stuart MacPherson Library, Lac La Biche County, Alta. A retirement party was held in June to recognize her many years of dedication as children's programmer.

***Suzette Giles** held a number of different positions at Ryerson University Library from 1975 to 2010, and was the data librarian at retirement.*

Awards to ELA Members

At an alumni reunion last May, **Helen Katz** was awarded a University of Toronto Faculty of Information Alumni Association Outstanding Alumni Award for her significant contribution to the information profession. She was also a **2013 Arbor Award** recipient.

In July 2024 **Donald W. McLeod**, FRHistS, Librarian Emeritus, University of Toronto Library, was elected a Fellow of the **Royal Historical Society**, London, for his contribution to historical scholarship.

On January 16, 2024, **Wendy Newman** received a **2023 Arbor Award**, University of Toronto, for her work on the Faculty of Information's Public Library Leadership program. Wendy is an active ELA member (previously on the board) and sits on the *ELAN* committee.

Norma Gibson-MacDonald and **Christina Wilson** each received a **Volunteer Appreciation Award** recognizing Burlington, Ont., volunteers and presented by MP Karina Gould, on April 24, 2024. Norma was recognized for her work with Karina Gould's Community Volunteer Income Tax Clinic; Christina was nominated by the Burlington Tennis Club.

Appointments

Christine Ivory (BA [Honours] University of Manitoba '98, MA Queen's '99) was appointed Parliamentary Librarian, effective October 21, 2024. "In this role, Ms. Ivory will oversee the management of the Library of Parliament, whose collection

and services support the activities and decisions of Parliament and parliamentarians. She will report to the Speakers of the Senate and the House of Commons." In 2023 Christine was appointed Assistant Deputy Minister, Collections Sector, at Library and Archives Canada, and

was part of the Library of Parliament's management team for more than 15 years, including as director general of Information and Document Resource Services and as senior director of Economics, Resources, and International Affairs.

An Historical Overview of Co-operation Among British Columbia PLs

By Deb Thomas

"Our recommended objective, or 'vision' ... is to encourage the development of a strong library in each community and a co-operative approach amongst all libraries." — New Approaches Ministerial Task Force on Public Libraries, British Columbia's Libraries: A New Approach (1988).

Introduction

Working together is one way public libraries have traditionally improved services, stretched scarce dollars, and shared resources. For more than a hundred years, British Columbia has shared a vision with its public librarians — providing library service to every resident, regardless of place of residence — and this would be done most effectively through co-operation between public libraries in the form of associations, regional systems, and federations.

Provincially sponsored co-operation has taken many forms — from a provincial interlibrary loan system to the creation and distribution of audio-books for the visually impaired. Since parliament proclaimed the first *Public Libraries Act*, in 1919, this co-operation's primary facilitator is the Public Library Commission — now the Public Libraries Branch.

At its height, the Public Library Commission had five branches that offered consortium book purchasing and cataloguing for libraries with populations under 10,000, as well as books by mail for British Columbians not served by a library. The branch also offered funding for author tours

and secondments to assist with major projects such as new buildings and library referenda. In the 1990s it played major roles in internet training and upgrading libraries to automated systems.

Co-operative models

A 1927 province-wide commission survey of public libraries identified a clear need for co-operation among rural libraries. The "union library district" was created and resulted in the establishment of three big regional systems. (Morrison, C.K. "Regional Library Development in British Columbia" in *British Columbia Libraries: Historical Profiles*, 59). From 1930 to 1936, union library districts were created in the **Fraser Valley**, the **Okanagan**, and on **Vancouver Island**. These three co-operative units still exist today as regional libraries.

The Thompson-Nicola Library System was established in 1974. The Cariboo region joined the system, in 1975, to form the Cariboo-Thompson Nicola Library System (Morrison, 68–69). The two regions separated in 1994 to form the **Cariboo Regional District Library** and the **Thompson-Nicola Regional District Library System**.

The North Central Co-operative Library (1949) and the Peace River Co-operative Library (1952) were established in partnership with Public Library Commission branches in Prince George and Dawson Creek.

The Greater Vancouver Library Federation (GVLF) was established in 1975, with seven Lower Mainland libraries. The GVLF became **Public**

Library InterLINK (1994) and now boasts a membership of 18 libraries. In 2004 the branch undertook an extensive strategic planning exercise, called Libraries Without Walls, resulting in goals to "encourage library federations" and "support partnerships between multi-type libraries."

Between 2006 and 2008, five additional library federations were formed: **Kootenay, North Central, Northwest, North East**, and **IslandLink**.

Conclusion

The regional library systems and federations work together to provide many of the Public Libraries Branch's former functions — now significantly reduced in size — with provincial financial support, but not the hands-on work previously done by branch staff.

In addition to annual grants, the **Public Libraries Branch** provides strategic leadership, professional advice, and co-ordination of province-wide programs and shared services.

Public library directors and boards will continue to position libraries as accessible, community-based institutions that facilitate access to a world of information, promote culture and a diversity of ideas, and improve levels of literacy. And much of this will be achieved through the enhanced levels of collaboration possible today.

*For a more in-depth article on this topic, see **BCLA Perspectives**, May 2023. ■*

Laughing in the Library

Bad Chatbots by Leslie McGrath

Businesses' live customer-service chat lines have been increasingly replaced with AI chatbots that provide soothing but utterly useless generic information to consumers. One customer notes that the AI chatbot could not resolve her complaint, but could be told to write a poem about "how terrible they are as a company." The AI chatbot quickly produced the poem, but, the customer notes, "it also swore at me."



Memorial Park Library. Donated by Andrew Carnegie, Calgary's Central Park Library, now known as Memorial Park Library, was Alberta's first public library, opening on January 2, 1912.
Photo courtesy of **Calgary PL**

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