

# NJLA NEWSLETTER

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW JERSEY LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

April 2023

Vol. 21 Issue 2

## Important Dates

### NJLA Executive Board Meetings

Tuesday, April 18, 10 a.m.

Tuesday, May 16, 8 p.m.

Tuesday, June 20, 10 a.m.

### ALA Annual Conference

Thursday, April 22 - Sunday, April 25

### NJLA Annual Conference

Wednesday, May 31 - Friday, June 2

View the [NJLA Events Calendar](#) for all meetings and events.

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NEW JERSEY  
**NJLA**  
LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



by **JESSICA TRUJILLO**

Spring, in spite of incessant allergies, is my favorite season. The blooming flowers set my mind towards endless possibilities and optimism. This is the year that I am definitely not going to forget to water my outdoor plants and I am going to eat so many vegetables that I have grown myself (because I definitely did not forget to water my plants). For NJLA, the spring brings elections for our Executive Board and Section Boards, Committee appointments, and a new Executive Director, Brett Bonfield.

With each new group of NJLA leaders, fresh ideas and energy are introduced into the organization, helping us to respond to the interests and needs of our members. As a grassroots, member-led organization, the direction of NJLA is dependent on the engagement of our members who are willing to serve as volunteers and active participants in our sections. While my Ph.D. research interests lie in leadership positions, my most meaningful experiences with colleagues occur in the everyday expressions of leadership, from colleagues freely sharing their knowledge with one another, to folks taking the time to be fully present at board meetings to support intellectual freedom. Even when taking on formal leadership roles is not possible, it is important to celebrate the myriad ways that library workers make a difference everyday.

As my tenure as NJLA President enters the last quarter, I am focused on contributing to the improvement of our members' experiences with NJLA and finding new ways in which NJLA can support each member and member organization. I look forward to seeing what new ideas and experiences our newly elected board members and new Executive Director will bring to NJLA so we may all grow together.

See "People and Places" on page 14 for the 2023-24 newly elected NJLA Executive Board.

Yours in solidarity,  
Jessica

**Jessica Trujillo is the current NJLA president and enrolled in a Ph.D. program at Emporia State University's School of Library and Information Management because why wait for life to impose changes on you when you can do it yourself? Her research focus is on EDI, leadership, and education. Email her at [president@njlamembers.org](mailto:president@njlamembers.org).**

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# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

by **BRETT BONFIELD**

I am thrilled to serve as your Executive Director, and to be given a chance to write to you through NJLA's superb newsletter. Like most of the work that NJLA does, this newsletter is by the members and for the members, and it is a microcosm of what I loved most about NJLA when I was a member and volunteer. You'll find me in every newsletter and I hope my appreciation for the newsletter team and for all of our members is always evident. Your dedication makes NJLA valuable and necessary, and makes our libraries some of the best in the world.



As NJ residents and library workers, we have the potential to realize our power in many ways. We have the 11th largest population in the country and we're the most densely populated state. Our population is spread relatively evenly: our largest city, Newark, is only the 66th most populous city in the country (coincidentally, it's just behind Cincinnati, where I lived the last four years). Even with our shores and wooded and rural areas, you're never far from amenities, including one of our many outstanding public libraries, colleges, museums, and other cultural centers.

We're an educational, economical, and cultural powerhouse. We have the 9th largest economy among U.S. states, and we invest a relatively high amount of our public funds in schools and libraries, contributing to the 7th highest literacy rate in the nation. We are also one of the most diverse states in the country (roughly 5th) and that diversity is one of our greatest strengths and most appealing aspects.

We have the ingredients and the potential. There are many positive trends, including NJLA's recent membership growth and your outstanding, newly elected Board members.

We also have a lot of work to do. We can serve our communities better with additional funding. We can be more inclusive, equitable, and welcoming. We can work together to ensure that our profession reflects the diversity of our communities and demonstrates that the fight for literacy is inextricably linked to the fight against censorship and bigotry. We can address our work, each other, and our challenges with joy and love.

Thank you for inviting me to lead our association. It feels good to be home.

**Brett Bonfield is NJLA Executive Director as of March 20, 2023. He has worked in libraries since 2006, including 11 years as the director of two public libraries in NJ. Most recently, Brett served as the Chief Operating Officer at the Cincinnati & Hamilton County Public Library. Brett has held leadership positions in nonprofits and library organizations including NJLA, the American Library Association, Public Library Association, Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati, and OhioNet. Brett received his MS in Library and Information Science from Drexel University. [Click here for NJLA's official announcement.](#)**



## NJLA Newsletter

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### **Executive Director**

Brett Bonfield

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## **OTHER NJLA NEWSLETTERS:**

**Use these links to access the latest newsletters from other NJLA Sections.**

[Professional Development](#)

[College and University](#)

[History and Preservation](#)

## INTERESTED IN CONTRIBUTING?

For all inquires please contact

**[newsletter\\_editorenjlamembers.org](mailto:newsletter_editorenjlamembers.org)**

Proposals for the Summer 2023 issue are due on MAY 22ND

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## NJASL UPDATE: JOURNEY TO INFORMATION LITERACY BECOMING NJ STUDENT LEARNING STANDARD

by **MARY MOYER STUBBS**

The journey to pass legislation stressing the importance of School Library Media Specialists (SLMS) in New Jersey has been a long one. It started in 2016, when NJLA Executive Director Pat Tumulty approached Mary Moyer Stubbs, the new legislative consultant for the New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL), about an idea for a series of legislative bills that would support school libraries. One bill would require a certain number of School Library Media Specialists (SLMS) per district and another would require that the Department of Education create an information literacy curriculum.

The need for the bills was a product of a joint survey done by NJASL and NJLA to determine the status of school librarians in New Jersey. Key findings are included below, and the full report can be accessed here: [School Libraries: Programs in NJ, April 2016](#).

- Approximately 20% fewer School Library Media Specialists (SLMS) than in 2007–2008
- Over 20% of high schools had no certified School Library Media Specialist
- Over 150 School Library Media Specialists covered more than one school
- 91 school districts had no School Library Media Specialists (excludes charter schools)
- 33 districts had no School Library Media Specialists at the elementary Level
- Over 280 elementary level schools were without a certified SLMS
- In the nearly 100 charter schools, there were fewer than 10 SLMS

Collaboration between NJLA and NJASL continued with a document created by the academic groups, VALE, ACRL–NJ and NJLA–CUS, promoting the need for information literacy ([VALE Document](#)). Additionally a joint article was written from the perspective of an academic librarian (Cara Berg), school librarian (Darby Malvey), and public librarian (Maureen Donohue). That document can be found [here](#).

NJLA and NJASL created a joint task force, where dedicated public and school librarians discussed ways to move these bills forward. Eventually NJASL, under President Beth Thomas, began to work with [EveryLibrary](#), which assisted NJLA in: creating petitions, drafting emails for members to send to their legislators, and determining the best ways to advance the bills.

During the 2020–2021 legislative session, efforts led by the NJASL advocacy chair Tricina Strong–Beebe and her advocacy team, met virtually with legislators. Senator Michael Testa

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expressed interest in sponsoring the information literacy bill during the 2020–21 legislative session. His involvement was key to gaining bipartisan support. Additional meetings over the summer with various legislators proved successful in garnering more sponsors for the bill.

NJASL created an [NJASL white paper](#) that was used to consolidate research on the need for the legislative bills and for an easy way to communicate with legislators and other stakeholders. The first big success for the bill was in November 2021 when it was moved favorably out of the Senate Education Committee. Unfortunately, the bill did not go any further by the end of the legislative session.

2022 proved to be the year for the ultimate success of S588, the latest number for the information literacy bill. The suggestion was made by NJEA's Fran Pfeffer to ask to have the bill amended to require that information literacy become a New Jersey Learning Standard. This decision was key to garnering the support of the other major education organizations. In June 2022, S588 was favorably moved out of the Senate Education Committee and unanimously approved by the full Senate. After being reviewed and amended by the Assembly Education Committee, Assembly Science, Innovation, and Technology Committee, and Governor Murphy's office in October 2022, the bill was approved by the full Assembly. After one final vote by the full Senate, bill S588 was approved on November 28, 2022. Governor Murphy signed the bill on January 4, 2023, and it became [P.L.2022, c.138](#).

The process of moving a bill from its inception to its final passage was a lesson in perseverance and collaboration. This would not have been possible without the support of the entire New Jersey library community. NJASL is currently working with the NJ Department of Education in the initial stages of creating the Information Literacy Standard, which will then receive final approval of the NJ State Board of Education. NJASL looks forward to continuing to work with NJLA in this process and will continue to update NJLA on the progress of the standard, as well as any support that may be needed to get this over the finish line as an official NJ Student Learning Standard.

For all relevant information, names of key personnel, and a full history, please view this [Information Literacy Historical View Document](#).

**Mary Moyer Stubbs, a retired School Library Media Specialist, currently serves as the legislative consultant for the New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL). She is also the chair of the Cumberland County Library Commission and is a former NJASL President.**

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# 2023 SNAPSHOT MONTH RECAP

by **JESSICA BIELEN**

Did you know that **3,717,344** New Jerseyans have library cards? Or that **15,218,150** people visited public libraries in 2021? We love to see what New Jersey libraries are up to, and that is why we were very excited for the 2023 NJLA PR Committee's annual 2023 NJ Library Snapshot Month, which took place this past February. During Snapshot Month, New Jersey libraries were encouraged to register on the I Love NJ Libraries website ([www.ilovenjlibraries.org](http://www.ilovenjlibraries.org)), and participated by sharing photos all month long, using the hashtag **#NJLibrariesSnapShot** on their own social media channels.

64 New Jersey libraries participated in SnapShot Month this year. Photos showcased patrons using library services by attending library programs, borrowing books, and more! Many of these photos also showed an inside glimpse to behind-the-scenes daily library operations. Photos using the hashtag were reshared across the I Love NJ Libraries [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

You can continue to share photos with the PR Committee all year long **#ILoveNJLibraries**. We love to see what you are doing!



Chilly days at the Livingston Public Library are best spent indoors! Check out their community puzzle in the Activity Corner!



Matawan-Aberdeen Public Library's Story Tales Live patrons enjoying the bubble time at the end of the program... yes, they ARE adorable.

**Jessica Bielen is the co-chair of the NJLA Public Relations Committee. She holds a Master's Degree in Library and Information Science from Rutgers University and a Bachelor's Degree in English and Creative Writing from Montclair State University. She currently works as the Head of Adult Services & Acquisitions at the Livingston Public Library.**

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# ALA 2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

## Registration, exhibits, and options to attend virtually!

On behalf of the ALA Conference Committee, we hope this letter finds you well. ALA is excited to host the ALA 2023 Annual Conference & Exhibition in Chicago, June 22–27, 2023 and it will be BIGGER than EVER! This year's conference will focus on the knowledge, resources, networking, and support that library professionals want and need. The onsite conference will include more than 200 education sessions created and curated by library professionals, and will feature celebrity speakers and thought leaders, who will motivate and challenge attendees to think boldly. Take some time to view the Preliminary Program, with education sessions, ticketed events, President & Chair programs, and exhibitors.

In the Library Marketplace, attendees can hear from more than 300 new and established authors of various genres on nine LIVE stages, and visit with more than 550 exhibitors, who want to help libraries offer innovation to their communities. We're also looking forward to popular favorites like, Meet the Authors, the Autographing Area, multi-media resources like the Live at the 25 Podcast, free advanced reading copies (ARCs), and so much more.

Although we're looking forward to seeing library professionals gather together in Chicago, we're aware that some may prefer to attend in a virtual setting. The Digital Experience is an opportunity to view a selection of main-stage speakers, and specially curated education and News You Can Use sessions. Registration is open now and registrants will get the best savings when they register through March 31, 2023. No matter which way you participate, all registrations will include on-demand access to sessions through August 31, 2023.





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# FEATURED NJLA SECTION: SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE

by **MARY CATHERINE SUDIAK**

Last Spring, prior to the NJLA Conference, the idea to start a Sustainability and Resilience Section was proposed and it has come to fruition! It was a fortuitous happenstance that the 2022- 2023 theme for NJLA is "Sustainably Forward." This also led to the strong partnership with Sustainable Libraries, which has been instrumental to the section.

While efforts so far have focused on getting the Section set up, the Section will be working on sharing ideas and providing support to libraries and the communities they serve with sustainability and resilience programs and initiatives. Excellent efforts have already been made statewide, including:

- Ridgewood Public Library, which helped to start the Ridgewood Repair Café in 2018, enabling items that were not working in some manner to be repaired and to continue to be able to be used instead of being tossed in the trash
- Summit Public Library's Community Garden, which focuses on educating and growing the future leaders who will help to innovate solutions to solve both the sustainability and environmental problems facing our communities, as well as providing community education in such areas as water safety, nutrition, conservation, and sustainability
- The State Library of New Jersey's Deputy State Librarian Michele Stricker authored, and is the project manager for, the Disaster Preparedness & Community Resiliency Toolkit, a unique resource created by both librarians and emergency responders
- Cranford Public Library's Native Seed Catalog, which has packets of native seeds that are able to be taken and planted, and is complemented by talks, given by experts in the field, throughout the year

This brief list is a snapshot of the multitude of programs and initiatives that are taking place across the state. It is important to note that many programs are funded through grants and community resources and not directly through the library's budget.

Partnerships with the local towns' Environmental Commissions, corporation grants, as well as Sustainable Jersey can make providing for the implementation of an idea a reality. While there are amazing efforts going on in New Jersey, there is also a national effort called the

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Sustainable Libraries Initiative. This is a similar concept to Sustainable Jersey, with a focus on libraries and what they can do as part of their operations and for the community at large. After following specific guidelines, libraries can become certified as Sustainable by SLI.

There will be several presentations at the NJLA Conference this year: Sustainable Thinking Simplified on Wednesday, May 31, from 2:00pm to 5:00pm; Community Partners for Sustainability and Resiliency and Toss It? No Way! Fix It at a Library Repair Café, both on Thursday, June 1, from 4:10 pm to 5:00 pm. These are all great topics that will be focusing on Sustainability efforts at libraries.

If you want to learn more, please contact Mary Catherine Sudiak at [MSudiak@mxac.org](mailto:MSudiak@mxac.org). New Section members are welcomed!

**Mary Catherine Sudiak, founder of the Sustainability and Resilience Section, is a Reference Librarian at the Cranford Public Library. She is a Certified Environmental Steward through Rutgers, has trained through The Cloud Institute for Sustainability Education, and has served as a member of the Cranford Environmental Commission and the Cranford Green Team.**



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## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: LILLIANA VILLALOBOS



Lilliana Villalobos currently works at the Summit Public Library as a Youth Services Library Associate. She runs the Spanish story time for ages 6 months to 5 years, as well as teen programs! Lilliana is finishing her second semester at Rutgers University, where she has learned more about collections, digital libraries, and coding. Lilliana aspires to become a teen librarian—to be a friendly face in a safe space—and to be able to share resources the community might need. As a 2022 recipient of the NJLA Equity scholarship, Lilliana has been able to have peace of mind to focus on her studies, instead of worrying about paying for school.

Lilliana is looking forward to joining some NJLA committees, possibly some that focus on teens and the Latino community. She has attended some meet-ups (via Zoom); they have been super helpful in learning about topics related to libraries. Lilliana is very thankful to be able to have so many resources such as the meet-ups through NJLA. She looks forward to growing within NJLA as well as through school, and being able to help others in the future.

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## PUBLIC LIBRARY ASSOCIATION: Call for proposals for 2024!

by **MELISSA KR HOZIK**

The Public Library Association [PLA] seeks proposals and speakers for its 2024 conference. The number one reason people attend PLA Conference is for the high-quality educational programming that is both practical and relevant to their work.

The PLA Conference offers over 100 educational sessions—curated by public libraries for public libraries—that foster innovation, inclusion, and collaboration.

Want to be a part of this can't-miss event? Submit a proposal to share your idea for a 60-minute program session or a 2-3 hour workshop. The deadline for submitting proposals is May 1, 2023, at 11:59 PM Eastern.

The PLA 2024 Conference will be hosted in-person in Columbus, OH, and virtually, April 3-5. The Virtual Conference incorporates elements of the live conference but is considered a separate event, with programs presented specially for the virtual audience.

To submit a proposal, visit [here](#).

**Melissa KR Hozik is the Adult Programming Librarian at the East Brunswick Public Library & a PLA 2024 Program Subcommittee Member.**

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# FEATURED PARTNER: MENTOR NJ

by **DARBY MALVEY**

If you're searching for a place to find mentorship, provide mentoring, or just have a safe space to meet and chat with your colleagues, the MentorNJ initiative is a resource that's here for you! Available to all NJ library staff, MentorNJ began as an initiative of LibraryLinkNJ, NJLA, and the New Jersey State Library. Now managed by LibraryLinkNJ and supported by a volunteer Task Force representing all types of libraries, MentorNJ is a chance to connect with library staff across the state and in your local area.

Take a look at two of the great opportunities available to you, free of charge, from MentorNJ:

- **The Mentor Directory:** The MentorNJ Mentor Directory is an online index of profiles created by NJ library staff who are willing to provide mentorship to their colleagues.
  - Browse the directory to see what areas of expertise your colleagues are willing to share about, and reach out to them to seek help, advice, and support!
  - Join the directory by creating your mentor profile! List your experience and skills, and support your colleagues by serving as a mentor to share what you know. No matter how new you are to the field, everyone has something to share!
- **Mentor Meetups:** MentorNJ's Online Meetups are virtual, online meetings designed for library staff with a specific interest or background to gather and talk! Discuss something specific to your meetup topic, seek help and advice, or simply chat, vent, and bond!
  - Current meetup topics include Admin, Latino Library Staff, API, School Libraries, Tech, and more! Visit the Meetup calendar to see what's available.
  - Don't see a Meetup for you? Reach out to our Task Force to start your own!

Library staff in all positions from all library types are welcome to participate in MentorNJ! We hope to see you soon!

Questions about MentorNJ can be directed to the MentorNJ Task Force Chair, Darby Malvey: [darby@librarylinknj.org](mailto:darby@librarylinknj.org)



**Darby Malvey is a Programming & Outreach Specialist at LibraryLinkNJ. She holds an MLIS from Rutgers University. Darby is a former public librarian as well as a former Certified School Library Media Specialist.**

# NJLA CONFERENCE: REGISTER NOW!

by **MARYJEAN RIOU**

Conference registration is now open! The Conference Committee and the NJLA office have been working hard to set up a new online registration experience. Visit [HERE](#) for more information on how to register. Once registered, attendees will receive a link to download the mobile app and login. This app will allow attendees to view the most up to date conference schedule, information about exhibitors, and more. The Conference Committee is very excited to be making steps towards a more sustainable conference.

We are also excited to announce our new networking lunch during Workshop Wednesday. Participants who attend both a morning and afternoon workshop may attend the lunch for free and have the opportunity to network and connect with colleagues. In addition to the workshops, the Conference Committee along with NJLA President, Jessica Trujillo, have worked to develop an enriching Wednesday evening program. Attendees, regardless of their participation in workshops, are encouraged to attend an evening conversation between ALA President-Elect Emily Drabinski and NJASL President Ewa Dziedic-Elliott. Attendees are then invited to join game hosts for an opportunity to network and learn to play a wide variety of games, including board, card, and video games, accompanied by refreshments and a cash bar.

Thursday and Friday promises to engage attendees in a diverse array of sessions along with two impactful keynote presentations. On Thursday, Rebekah Smith-Aldrich, co-founder of the Sustainable Libraries Initiative, will focus on climate change and community resiliency, followed by Akil Kumarasamy, author of *Meet Us Roaring By the Sea*, on Friday morning.

**For more information on all that the 2023 annual conference has to offer and for instructions for booking a hotel room, please visit the conference website, [njlaconference.info](http://njlaconference.info).**

NEW JERSEY LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

**SUSTAINABLY**  
FORWARD

**Maryjean Riou is a teen librarian at Hunterdon County Library. She has been working in libraries for 10 years and is happy to be serving her first year as a conference committee co-chair.**

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## PEOPLE AND PLACES

Congratulations to our newly elected 2023–24 NJLA Executive Board members!

### **1st Vice President/President-Elect**

Jeff Cupo

Head of Information & Adult Services, Elizabeth Public Library

### **Second Vice President**

Will Porter

Director, Sussex County Library System

### **Secretary**

Rosy Wagner

Lifelong Learning Manager, Burlington County Library System

### **Members-at-Large (3-year term):**

Cara Berg

Co-Coordinator of User Education & Business Librarian, William Paterson University

John Wallace

Systems & Emerging Technologies Librarian, Ocean County College

Emily Witkowski

Head of Teen Services, Hunterdon County Library System

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Beginning in April 2023, Bernadette Yannacci of the Matawan–Aberdeen Public Library will be moving into a full-time role as a Youth Services Librarian.

Have a job change, retirement, or announcement to share?

Email [newsletter\\_editorenjlamembers.org](mailto:newsletter_editorenjlamembers.org)  
to have it included in our next issue!