

NJLA NEWSLETTER

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW JERSEY LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

September 2021

Vol. 19 Issue 2



Photo via the NJ State Library Talking Book and Braille Center: A National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS) patron listens to an audiobook via the BARD Mobile App on their smartphone. **Learn more on page 4!**

*Embracing
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: New Beginnings, Fresh Opportunities

by KATE JAGGERS

It has been humbling and inspiring to watch new initiatives, developing projects, and fresh brainstorming take hold during what often appears to be “summer lull” in NJLA. Traditionally, many of our committees and sections lay low until September, at which time the fiscal year seems to really kick into gear. But this 2021-22 year, you have already announced a brand new, tremendous BIPOC scholarship opportunity in connection with ALA’s Spectrum Scholarship Program. You have escalated the Access Navigators Program, building bridges to increased access to workforce, life-skill, and digital development. You have supported our partners to create the Information Equity Conference, filled with presenters from across our state, that showcase different levels of library workers and highlight our multilayered communities and talents. You have embraced learning about NJLA, solidifying your investment in its future through Strategic Planning, understanding bylaws and codes, and forging pathways for new library leaders.

NJLA is you, and you should be so proud. I can’t wait to see how you continue to embrace our Association and all of the opportunities for growth and improvement that lay ahead. As we walk into this new year with determination and open minds, I look forward to being a part of a community that supports, challenges, and celebrates each other and our work.

Kate Jagers is the Director at the Highland Park Public Library. She is also the 2021-2022 NJLA President.



NJLA Newsletter

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

[Professional Development](#)

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[History and Preservation](#)

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

by **JULIET MACHIE**

Greetings NJLA family. I hope you had a great summer in spite of the many storms that blew our way. Resilience defines New Jersey's libraries. No matter the weather, we always find our way to sunshine. I commend you for your service this summer, as beacons of light in your communities.

So much has happened at NJLA since our June 2021 Newsletter.

Thanks to NJLA's advocacy efforts, Per Capita State Aid (PCSA) to libraries received a \$1 million increase in the State of New Jersey's FY22 Budget. This is the first time that the PCSA has received a positive adjustment in over 10 years!

On July 20, 2021, the Executive Board of NJLA, approved \$20,000 in funding to provide two American Library Association (ALA) Spectrum Scholarships for New Jersey residents, and to support equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), recruitment, and retention training. Moving forward, support for the NJLA Spectrum Scholarship will be included in NJLA's annual budgets.

NJLA has launched an Access Navigators Pilot Program, thanks to a \$250,000 grant from the New Jersey State Library (NJSL). The Access Navigators Program is funded through the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) funds, received by NJSL, through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The Access Navigators Program will establish a cohort of skilled trainers, who will rotate around New Jersey's public libraries, to provide individualized assistance and group training to library customers, to mitigate identified gaps in their life skills.

Thank you again for your service to your library communities. NJLA is invested in you and working hard to support and encourage you. We will continue to amplify your voices, in representing the issues that impact the work that you do. We will continue to rise to the challenge as we renew our energies, in service to New Jersey's libraries.

Juliet Machie, Ed.D., is the Executive Director of the New Jersey Library Association.



Important Dates this Fall

Joint YASS & CUS Meeting

Friday, October 15, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Children's Services Section Meeting

Friday, October 22, 9:45 a.m.

Information Equity Conference

Monday, October 25 - 8 a.m.

Readers Advisory Section Meetings

Monday, October 25, 2 p.m.

Monday, December 6, 2 p.m.

Joint CSS & YASS Meeting

Friday, November 19, 9:45 a.m.

NJASL Fall Conference 2021

December 5 - 7

View the [**NJLA Events Calendar**](#) for all Section & Committee Meetings.

INTERESTED IN CONTRIBUTING?

For all inquires please contact [**newsletter_editorenjlamembers.org**](mailto:newsletter_editorenjlamembers.org).
Proposals for the Winter 2021 issue are due on NOVEMBER 15TH.

MEET THE NEW NJLA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

There are three new members to the NJLA Executive Board this year. Meet them below!

Carina Gonzalez



Carina Gonzalez is a Senior Adult Services Librarian at Piscataway Public Library.

Carina is a new member-at-large on the NJLA Executive Board. She decided to run for a leadership position because she is a change agent excited about making a difference. Sustainable change needs administrative support coupled with grassroots motivation, so she is here to listen and represent. Carina also seems to legitimately enjoy strategic planning, spreadsheets, discussing the minutia of by-laws, and color-coding; all of which makes her perfect for turning plans into action. Before joining the NJLA Executive Board, Carina was President of the Diversity & Outreach Section, and looks forward to many more years of helping NJLA in any capacity that she can.

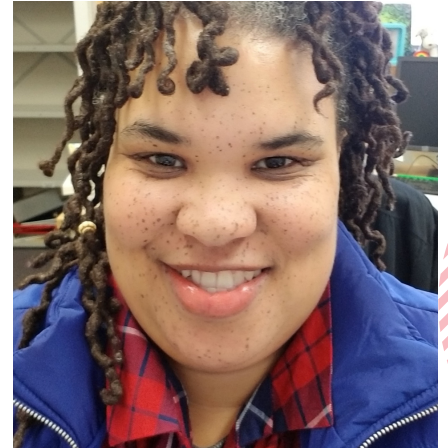
Keisha M. Miller



Keisha M. Miller's position as Teen Librarian & Volunteer Coordinator at South Orange Public Library

spans beyond teen services, affording her an opportunity to grow professionally in ways she hadn't imagined. In her new role as Member-at-Large for the NJLA Executive Board, Keisha is looking forward to using her voice to engage current and future members on the benefit and importance of professional development and networking. "Knowledge is free at the library, just bring your own container" - this holds true in all capacities if we seek to teach, learn and ultimately advance ourselves. As NJLA 2021 Librarian of the Year, Keisha's goal is to emphasize this to not only NJLA members; but also library patrons and partners across the state so they are aware of the plethora of library services available to them. Keisha looks forward to working with the Executive Board and NJLA members during her term.

Joy Robinson



Joy Robinson is a Senior Adult Services Librarian at Piscataway Public Library.

Joy started her library career as a circulation clerk, and then began studying for her MLIS at Rutgers University, while later serving as a library assistant. After graduation, Joy worked as a Children's and Youth Services librarian and also served as a part-time academic reference librarian. Joy is a member of the NJLA Library Workers of Color Roundtable, the NJLA Reader's Advisory Section, Co-Chair of the NJLA Honors & Awards Committee, and was recently elected to the NJLA Executive Board as a Member-at-Large.

MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP LIBRARY CENTENNIAL AND TIME CAPSULE

by JENNA O'DONNELL



The recently opened copper time capsule from 1971 stands next to the 2021 time capsule, which will be opened in 2071.

As the Middletown community gathered in early June to kick off the 100th year since the Middletown Township Public Library's (MTPL's) 1921 founding, two time capsules forged a link between the library's past and its future.

One was a newly commissioned white vinyl cylinder bearing MTPL's new logo, which would hold mementos from 2021 such as facemasks, library flyers and letters to future patrons in 2071. The other, a slightly corroded copper container buried in 1971, was opened to reveal artifacts assembled by MTPL's past caretakers: bestseller lists, packs of gum and mints, magazines, old photographs, and a number of articles about the grand opening of a new library building on New Monmouth Road — MTPL's current address.

MTPL has evolved since its rural beginnings a century ago. A community of fewer than 6,000 residents has grown to more than 68,000. In 1921, innovative librarians brought library services to far flung patrons via bookmobile, driving a repurposed Ford Model T that was the first mobile library in the state. In 2021, faced with new challenges, the Library has

continued to innovate, launching virtual programming, a mobile app and curbside services to reach its patrons in the midst of a pandemic.

Messages from the Library's past have surprising echoes in its present. In 1921, MTPL was founded as the nation was emerging from a war and a devastating global pandemic. In 1971, notes from the time capsule reveal a community feeling the effects of another divisive foreign war, filled with curiosity about whether there had yet been a black president of the United States in 2021, and concerned for the future of books and libraries in the advent of new technologies.

The new time capsule focuses on a sense of hope for 2071. Through all of the challenges and changes of the last 100 years, MTPL has remained a steady and dynamic gathering place. This community, and others like it, still treasure libraries and all that they offer, books included.

Jenna O'Donnell is the Public Information Officer at Middletown Township Public Library in Middletown, NJ. She holds English and Journalism degrees from Providence College and Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at CUNY. Before joining MTPL, Jenna spent several years covering Middletown and its surrounding communities for local newspapers, including the Two River Times. Her email address is jdonnell@mtpl.org.



An aerial view of the Middletown Township Public Library in June of 2021.

The Fly Guys Photography L.L.C (Joe Strbo)

NJLA SECTION SPOTLIGHT

CHILDRENS SERVICES SECTION

by LYNETTE FUCCI

I hope all of my fellow Children's Librarians survived another busy and amazing summer of reading and learning.

You may not realize it, but the Children's Services Section is the second largest in the New Jersey Library Association and one of the most active. The Section provides important services and workshops for Children's Librarians in the state, including the Youth Services Forum, Performer's Showcase, Garden State Book Awards (GSBA), and the Summer Reading Committee. If you are an NJLA member working in the Children's Department of your library, it is free and easy to join our section! Working on CSS committees offers professional development and networking opportunities you may not otherwise get in your workplace. Consider volunteering your time and experience. We need you! And, since most meetings will be held virtually this year, it's easy to join in and network with colleagues.

CSS is starting the year off with our first meeting on Friday, September 24th at 9:45 a.m. If you are interested in joining us and not already a CSS member, please email me at lfucci@monroetwplibrary.org & I will send you the link to join us. ALL are welcome!

I look forward to working with you!

Lynette Fucci is the Head of Youth Services at the Monroe Township Public Library, and the CSS President 2021-2022.



BARD Mobile App

Elizabeth Burns is the Head of Reader Services at the NJSL Talking Book and Braille Center in Trenton. She holds an MLIS from Rutgers. Liz has worked at TBBC for over 14 years. She has presented at ALA, PLA, YALSA, and state library programs.

Jennifer Apgar is the Youth Services Librarian at the NJSL Talking Book & Braille Center in Trenton. She holds an MLIS from San Jose State University in CA. Jen has worked at TBBC for over 12 years and has presented about TBBC's services at numerous local and statewide conferences.

Recent Federal Changes Streamline Access for Services from the NJ State Library Talking Book & Braille Center

by JENNIFER APGAR and ELIZABETH BURNS

The [NJSL Talking Book & Braille Center](#) is excited to announce that it's easier than ever for NJ residents with a print disability (blind, low vision, physical disability, reading disability) to sign up for TBBC services.

TBBC's no cost accessible library is for all ages and provides access to audiobooks, braille books, a mobile app, as well as large print books for children and teens.

TBBC doesn't require medical records or documents. Instead, a "certifying authority," that is, someone who is familiar with the potential patron, signs the application verifying that the person qualifies for services.

The list of who is a "certifying authority" has expanded to include certified reading specialists, educators, school psychologists, and librarians. They may certify an application for anyone who qualifies for TBBC services, including those with reading disabilities. Prior to this change, only medical doctors and doctors of osteopathy could certify that a person with a reading disability qualified for services. This was often a huge hurdle.

With this change, it is now an equal playing field for everyone, now making it significantly easier for those with reading disabilities to receive TBBC services. TBBC is thrilled to share this exciting news. If you, or someone you know, is interested in signing up for services, would like more information, or has any questions, please contact us at TBBCenjstatelib.org or 800-792-8322.

NJLA LAUNCHES 2 ALA SPECTRUM SCHOLARSHIPS

by **KEISHA M. MILLER** and **JOHN WALLACE**

On July 20, 2021, the NJLA Executive Board took a tangible step forward in supporting aspiring library workers of color when it approved \$20,000 in funding to provide two American Library Association (ALA) Spectrum Scholarships for New Jersey residents for the 2022 and 2023 cycle. These funds will also directly support equity, diversity and inclusion recruitment and retention training for NJLA as a whole. Moreover, beginning in FY24, NJLA will now include \$8,500 in its Operating Budget to support an annual New Jersey ALA Spectrum Scholarship.



Beyond financial support, the New Jersey Spectrum Scholarship recipients will also have access to the ALA Leadership Institute, a network of over 1,500 ALA Spectrum Scholars, and additional NJLA benefits and supports that include free NJLA membership, free Conference registration, and organizational mentors.

In the past, NJLA has offered some level of diversity scholarships; but the criteria, support, and overall consistency has waned through the years. Recognizing the need for a more substantial and robust scholarship award, the NJLA Scholarship Subcommittee began discussions on how the Association could offer a new award framework that might better address racial inequalities in our profession and association. These talks eventually went beyond committee and included stakeholders both within and outside NJLA. The pivotal moment that guided this project to success was the idea to partner with ALA through their already established Spectrum Scholarship program. The inclusion of Betty Turok, Past President and Honorary Member of ALA, and co-creator of the original ALA Spectrum Scholarship Initiative, to the planning team provided invaluable guidance and know-how for steering the project to a successful end. Furthermore, soliciting feedback from members of ALA, including past Spectrum Scholars, enhanced the proposal and allowed it to become more responsive to the future needs of our scholarship recipients.

These scholarships represent a first-of-its-kind commitment from a state association to the Spectrum Scholarship program, where NJLA is leading on an issue of critical importance and making clear that supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion is a priority.

But now let's consider Rita Dove, US Poet Laureate (1993-1995), who once said "The library is an arena of possibility, opening both a window into the soul and a door onto the world."

In addition to the financial boost provided by scholarship, fulfilling a commitment to continuously diversify the library profession for organizations and the communities we serve across the state is essential. As NJLA Executive Board members, it was beyond humbling to be a part of such a monumental moment in approving funding for two Spectrum Scholarships over the next two years. And in FY24, it is our hope that NJLA continues to uphold the commitment towards recruitment and retention for library workers of color in New Jersey.

Regardless of our library environment, no one day is the same. From our public, academic, or school settings, we have taken the necessary steps to demystify the stereotypical world of libraries by taking our advocacy to new heights. In doing so, we work towards portraying that libraries are more than books; they are places that provide escape for anyone who wants to imagine, grow, and learn. For the people who work in libraries, the same holds true—we are in a profession that constantly challenges each other in the name of excellence, and democracy—from our programming to our collection development. Earlier this year, Amanda Gorman addressed the nation with her inaugural poem, "The Hill We Climb." In an interview with the New York Times, she says, "We have to confront these realities if we're going to move forward." It is imperative that our profession moves forward and makes space for more people of color in librarianship while simultaneously supporting us in our studies; having this NJLA Spectrum Scholarship symbolizes just that for graduate and fellowship studies. Libraries may be one of the few democratic spaces remaining; and Rita Dove and Amanda Gorman are certainly onto something for libraries and our world. We, as library workers, should mobilize efforts to welcome change while holding ourselves responsible and accountable.

We reference Dove and Gorman the same way we stand in awe of those library workers who preceded us—their sacrifice, and activism towards librarianship will never go unspoken. We employ all of our colleagues to roll up their sleeves and rise to the occasion in amplifying the need for spaces and platforms for library workers of color, better positioning us for the future of libraries and the communities we serve.

Keisha M. Miller is the Teen Librarian & Volunteer Coordinator at South Orange Public Library. She is also the NJLA 2021 Librarian of the year and a Member-at-Large on the NJLA Executive Board.

John Wallace is the Emerging Technologies & Systems Librarian at Ocean County College. He also serves as a Member-at-Large on the NJLA Executive Board and as the Chair of the NJLA Scholarship Subcommittee.

NJLA SECTION SPOTLIGHT

READERS ADVISORY SECTION

by **C.L. QUILLEN**

The Readers' Advisory (RA) Section of NJLA has always held a very special place in my heart. For me, it actually started with the South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative when I moved back to NJ in 2001. There wasn't a Section or a Roundtable through NJLA back then, but Pete Bromberg (then at SJRLC) was very supportive of this new librarian's efforts to connect with others interested in readers' advisory around the state. Then in 2004, a petition was circulated to create a Roundtable.

Unlike reference, RA isn't usually the focus of library school classes. Many librarians don't get much experience with it until they start working in libraries. RA also doesn't have a right or wrong answer— it is about creating connections. Those connections can be between the reader and the book, or the reader and the librarian. This work can feel more personal, because you may be revealing something of yourself when you make title suggestions. And even with years of experience in readers' advisory, I still get those moments when I can't remember a single book that I've ever read.

The RA Section has been fortunate to have so many fabulous speakers since the Roundtable (now Section) was formed. We've had Duncan Smith of NovelList, Joyce Saricks, Roz Reisner, Kaite Stover, Barry Trott, David Carr, and Rebecca Vnuk just to name a few. We've been the co-sponsor of the "Best Graphic Novels of ..." program every year since its inception. We even once had a publisher bring Karin Slaughter to a program.

If you're interested in readers' advisory, please join us! Our next two meetings are Monday, October 25 and Monday, December 6th at 2 pm. And if you can't make our meetings, please let us know what you would like to see covered at next year's conference and beyond. Happy Reading!

C.L. Quillen is the Director at the Spotswood Public Library. She is currently reading *The Final Girls Support Group* by Grady Hendrix and listening to *The Highland Fling* by Meghan Quinn.



FEATURED PARTNER

NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL LIBRARIANS

by **LISA STRAUBINGER**

The New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL) exists to support the state's school library media specialists (SLMS) as they strive to provide equity of access to resources, technology, and instruction for all students.

During the last two years as schools were closed or struggled to juggle hybrid learning, SLMS acted quickly to connect the school community and create both dynamic physical spaces and digital learning environments. As an example, NJASL partnered with NJLA to create "The Library Is Open"—a virtual library focused on serving the needs of K-12 students, educators, administrators, and parents. This portal provided users with a variety of curated resources, as well as live chats with both public and school librarians.

Despite the demonstrable value of school library programs, school districts continue to eliminate SLMS positions. We need your support. The New Jersey Department of Education's regulations about school libraries and SLMS are vague and inconsistently enforced. NJASL is working with state legislators on two bills to help ensure that every student in New Jersey has access to school library resources and instruction provided by a full-time, certified SLMS. A248/S3464 requires instruction on information literacy in the curriculum of K-12 students. A5782/S3464 requires a reasonable ratio of school library media specialists to students. Please ask legislators to support these bills by visiting our [website](#).

Membership in NJASL is open to anyone interested in supporting school librarianship. You are welcome to join. Please attend our conference on December 5-7, 2021 at Hard Rock Hotel, Atlantic City. More information is available at our [Conference webpage](#).

Lisa Straubinger is the current President of NJASL and school library media specialist at T. Baldwin Demarest School in Old Tappan. She can be reached at president@njasl.org.

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Ralph Bingham is the new Executive Director of LibraryLinkNJ, the New Jersey library cooperative. He began leading LLNJ on July 6, 2021.



Ralph Bingham

Michael Bobish is the Assistant Director at the East Brunswick Public Library, effective January 30, 2021.

Erica Deb is the new Head of Youth Services at the Matawan Aberdeen Public Library.



Erica Deb

Maryanne Fegan, Library Director, retired on May 31, 2021 after 25 years of service at Taylor Memorial Library at Centenary University. Instructional Services Librarian **Sara Lauren Purifoy** and Electronic Resources Librarian **Amy Hayes** will act as Library Co-Directors in the interim between June 1 and December 31, 2021.



Maryanne Fegan

Jenna Ingham is Senior Librarian, Head of Youth Services at Verona Public Library, effective August 23, 2021.

Allen McGinley is the new Director at the Westfield Memorial Library.

Gerry McMahan has retired from the Franklin Lakes Public Library after almost 40 years of service to the Borough.

Kerri Wallace is the new Director of the Franklin Lakes Public Library.

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

Email newsletter_editor@njlamembers.org to have it included in our next issue!

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