

ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

REPORTER

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The Illinois Library Association Reporter

is a forum for those who are improving and reinventing Illinois libraries, with articles that seek to: explore new ideas and practices from all types of libraries and library systems; examine the challenges facing the profession; and inform the library community and its supporters with news and comment about important issues. The *ILA Reporter* is produced and circulated with the purpose of enhancing and supporting the value of libraries, which provide free and equal access to information. This access is essential for an open democratic society, an informed electorate, and the advancement of knowledge for all people.



ON THE COVER

This detail of workers on a chessboard is taken from *History of the Packinghouse Worker*, a 1971 mural painted by William Walker at 49th and Wabash in Chicago. Walker was a pioneer in using public art to call attention to social issues. He was one of twenty-one artists who created *The Wall of Respect*, one of Chicago's lost landmark murals featuring portraits of fifty notable African Americans. *The Wall* is highlighted in *The Freedom Principle*, a powerful exhibit currently at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago and recreated in a website developed by the Block Museum at Northwestern University. (www.blockmuseum.northwestern.edu/wallofrespect/). Walker has been described as the Diego Rivera of the United States, and preservationists are currently working to save *All of Mankind*, one of Walker's three remaining murals in Chicago.

The Illinois Library Association is the voice for Illinois libraries and the millions who depend on them. It provides leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library services in Illinois and for the library community in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all. It is the eighth oldest library association in the world and the third largest state association in the United States, with members in academic, public, school, government, and special libraries. Its 3,200 members are primarily librarians and library staff, but also trustees, publishers, and other supporters.

The Illinois Library Association has four full-time staff members. It is governed by a sixteen-member executive board, made up of elected officers. The association employs the services of Strategic Advocacy Group for legislative advocacy. ILA is a 501(c) (3) charitable and educational organization.

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See ILA calendar for submission deadlines for the *ILA Reporter*. Copy should be submitted by e-mail to ila@ila.org. You are encouraged to include digital or film photos (black/white or color) and graphics (on disk or camera-ready) with your articles, which will be included on a space-available basis.

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The Frontlines of Democracy: Compassionate Community Engagement

Remember the dress? It was all over the Internet last winter, and you either thought it was blue and black, or gold and white. I thought it was gold. It wasn't. It was blue. I was wrong. We're usually pretty sure that things are as we see them, but given the chance to zoom out to a bigger picture, another perspective, it might all look different. If I was blind to the black and blue of that dress, then what else have I failed to see, and then, hopefully, begun to see? As it turns out: a lot.

CLARIFYING OUR VISION

A year ago, Ferguson, Missouri, right across the river, made national news when contentious social justice issues, smoldering for years, caught fire and flared to light. That light was cast on the entire nation, and kept shining, sometimes painfully, throughout a nonstop, year-long, national conversation about race, inequality, white privilege, freedom of assembly, media bias, and policing. I'll admit, I've learned a lot in this past year, which is to say that a year ago there were things I did not see.

My vision was clarified by my community, and my library. I learned by consuming media, but more importantly, I learned by processing that media, and the issues themselves in honest discussions at library programs. Those programs began prior to, and continued past, the events of Ferguson, giving me a foundation to better understand those events and the very serious issues surrounding them.

In fact, in the past year, my perspectives on race, poverty, homelessness, police, even veterans, have been shaped by library programs. I attended documentary screenings, author visits,

large group conversations, and one-on-one talks with "Living Books" at a "Human Library." The library was always involved. The programs were either at the library or elsewhere in the community—bolstered by the library's involvement or co-facilitation of community initiatives, because libraries are *turning outward*. None of these programs were pulled off by the library alone. They all required partnerships with individuals and organizations in the community.

You can learn about turning outward at the 2015 Illinois Libraries conference. At "Turning Outward: Community Engagement and Strategic Planning," librarians from three Illinois libraries will present their experiences with listening to the aspirations of their own communities and turning those aspirations into meaningful strategic action. David Seleb, executive director of the Oak Park Public Library, and four of his staff have attended the Harwood Institute for Public Innovation, encouraged by the American Library Association. That training helped them to host community conversations over the last two years. They learned what kind of community people want to live in and developed a strategic plan to meet those aspirations. Their community wants learning opportunities, dialogues, opportunities to come together to solve problems, and good stewardship of resources. Seleb says that if libraries are looking for a way to have meaningful conversations, Harwood is a great resource.

Such resources are vital because those conversations, if they are to be meaningful, are sometimes hard. The problems people want to solve are not easy. They often broach issues of "social justice," a hot button phrase for some, as if by dealing with "social justice" issues, we may be telling people what to think. On the contrary, the point of discussing issues such as race, poverty, and equality in libraries is not to tell, but to listen. Libraries are a place to hear free speech, to provide access to local voices, and to all available

[continued on page 6]

“Our toes are
on the frontlines
of democracy.”



information. Like any great educational service, we provide those we serve with opportunities, not to develop and further our thoughts, but to develop and further their own.

Gail Bush is a professor emeritus at National Louis University, and a former ILA president. She has edited more than one book with “social justice” in the title, and when asked about the role libraries play in social justice issues, she said, “There is no role. They *are* social justice.” Bush explains that if you have equity and access at the core of what you do, you are creating communities with a disposition toward open-mindedness and fairness. She is emphatic: “Our toes are on the frontlines of democracy.”

BACK TO BLUE

Getting back to the color of that dress, Kevin Loria published an article in *Business Insider* last February: “No one could see the color blue until modern times.” Apart from Egypt, other ancient cultures had no word for blue, and it is scientifically plausible that, without language to describe the color, they could not see it. Without language, without story and description, we cannot accurately see things. When we provide opportunities for people to tell their stories, our communities expand their vision.

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Films can serve as common ground to elicit local stories and issues-oriented conversations. Community Cinema grants feature free screenings and resources for discussions of Independent Lens documentaries. A panel of local experts can serve as discussion facilitators. Gathering those facilitators strengthens new and existing partnerships. When the grant is written with a local public radio and/or television station, the programs are promoted by the station, ensuring a substantial audience. Libraries can also host PBS *POV* documentary screenings and discussions, or explore TEDx in libraries, locally organized events based on the TED Talks model.

There are many ways to engage a community in conversation. Look up “community engagement,” and you’ll find hundreds of ideas. Attend a presentation on “Voices of Race: Bringing Communities Together” at the 2015 Illinois Libraries conference, and you’ll learn how Skokie and Niles Township libraries have done this on a community-wide scale with sixty-six programs on topics of race.

The Carbondale Public Library has worked through a group called Nonviolent Carbondale to lead community-wide initiatives called “11 Days.” Starting with “11 Days for Peace,” reflecting on the ten-year anniversary of September 11, the library has now co-facilitated five “11 Days” initiatives. In 2012, “11 Days for Compassion” was funded by a grant from the American Library Association (ALA) and the Fetzer Institute as part of an initiative called Building Common Ground: Discussions of Community, Civility and Compassion. That effort won the library the 2013 ALA Excellence in Library Programming Award of \$5,000, which is being used for further compassionate programming, with the ultimate goal of officially becoming a Compassionate City. The value of partnership cannot be understated. The most recent “11 Days for Compassion” brought together thirty-six organizations to host forty programs in twenty locations.

The Gail Borden Public Library District in Elgin also received a Building Common Ground grant for a series of programs called “An Opportunity to Seek Common Ground Around Gangs and Violence: From Turfs to Common Ground.” Project Director Miriam Lytle reports that the project “was a springboard for Elgin becoming a United Nations City of Peace.” Lytle says this is a “powerful movement taking place, with lots of social justice issues beyond gang involvement.”

Libraries can play a vital role in local problem solving initiatives. Through involvement with the Sparrow Coalition, a local effort to find real solutions to poverty and homelessness, the Carbondale Public Library is partnering with Southern Illinois University (SIU) to bring a student from their master’s of social work program into the library for a nine-month internship. The student will study local issues and resources, improve the library staff’s knowledge and the library’s presentation of resource information, help patrons to access resources, develop a model for social work access in the library, and help the Sparrow Coalition to identify, understand, and alleviate service gaps.

EXPONENTIAL PROGRESS

Even if hundreds, or thousands, attend compassionate solutions-oriented programs, we can't reach everyone. Then again, maybe we can. In his blog post, "The Lazy Way to an Awesome Life: 3 Secrets Backed by Research," Eric Barker examines research from author and Yale University professor Nicholas Christakis, and other sources, showing that our attitudes are deeply affected by our friends, their friends, and their friends—people we don't even know. Every person we reach will affect many others, potentially thousands of others, ultimately shaping the attitudes and behaviors of entire communities.

Compassionate community engagement doesn't have to be huge. You don't have to initiate a slew of community-wide programs, hire a social worker, or try to become a Compassionate City. You don't have to open an emergency school in your public library while your community breaks into protest on national news—although I hope we could all be as courageously responsive as Scott Bonner at the Ferguson Public Library—and, by the way, he'll be at the Illinois Libraries conference, too!

You can take small, meaningful steps. For example, you can gather donated prom dresses from young women who'll never wear them again, and distribute those dresses to young women who don't have a lot of money to spend on prom. As young adult librarian Becca Boland explains, the Hinsdale and Forest Park public libraries did this, together creating delightful programs for the teen volunteers who collected and sorted the dresses, and the teens who chose one to wear. You can organize a cross-language book discussion group, each person reading the same book, each in their language of choice, as the Albany Park Branch of the Chicago Public Library did. You can simply collect non-perishable food donations at library programs to be delivered to a local food pantry or shelter.

SEEING THE UNSEEN

Whatever we do, it should be something that's right for our own communities. To promote true learning from one another, we need to listen to local voices and local stories. Those words will shed light on the unseen. To stay relevant, we need to listen to our communities' aspirations and concerns. We need to ask: what do you want to see in our community? There may be difficult issues, unseen tensions, so we must also ask the people in our community: what do you want our community to see? **ILA**

References and Resources

Libraries Transforming Communities: Communities have challenges. Libraries can help.

www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/libraries-transforming-communities. Learn more about the national Turning Outward initiative. The site's "related resources" links to the Harwood Institute for Public Innovation, as well as several other community engagement models. The site includes the free "Step-by-Step Guide to 'Turning Outward' to Your Community."

ALA Ethnic Materials Information Exchange

Task Force (EMIERT) provides a great list of resources for meeting the needs of diverse populations:

www.ala.org/emiert/usefullinks/links

ALA Social Responsibilities Round Table

www.ala.org/srrt

Find library programs on community engagement and more:

www.programminglibrarian.org/

Coming Together in Skokie & Niles Township

<http://comingtogether.in/>. Be sure to check out their tool kit and resources for exploring issues of race.

Nonviolent Carbondale's 11 Days Initiatives on Peace and Compassion

with the Carbondale Public Library, dozens of community partners, and the entire Carbondale community: www.nonviolentcarbondale.org

Charter for Compassion: International Campaign for Compassionate Communities:

<http://charterforcompassion.org/cities>

International Cities of Peace:

www.internationalcitiesofpeace.org

Community Cinema

communitycinema.org "By igniting conversations around issues that affect us all, Community Cinema creates real and lasting change — both at home and around the world."

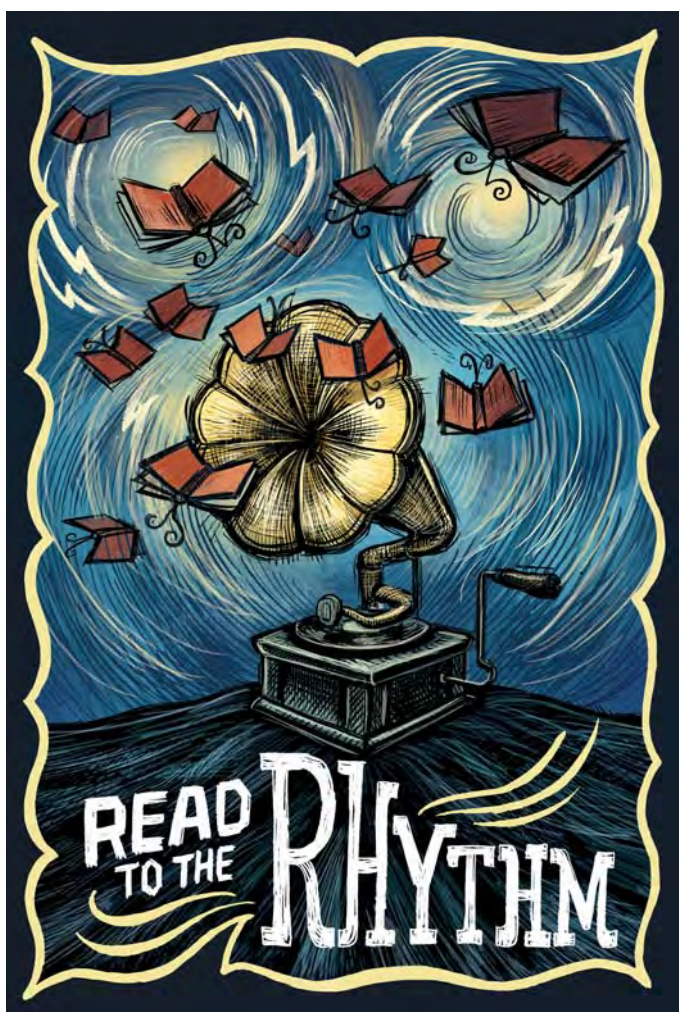
"The Lazy Way to an Awesome Life: 3 Secrets Backed by Research," by Eric Barker.

www.bakadesuyo.com/2015/07/awesome-life

TEDx is a model based on the original TED Talks, "ideas worth spreading." It supports independent organizers who want to create a TED-like event in their own community. www.ted.com/about/programs-initiatives/tedx-program

Summer's Over: Here's What Happened

A quick survey via the ILA website and *ILA E-Newsletter* turned up some interesting stats about who, what, and how much got read in summer reading programs at Illinois libraries. Whether or not you were one of the 85 percent that used the iREAD Read to the Rhythm theme, we hope you'll check out the 2016 theme, READ—for the Win at www.ireadprogram.org.



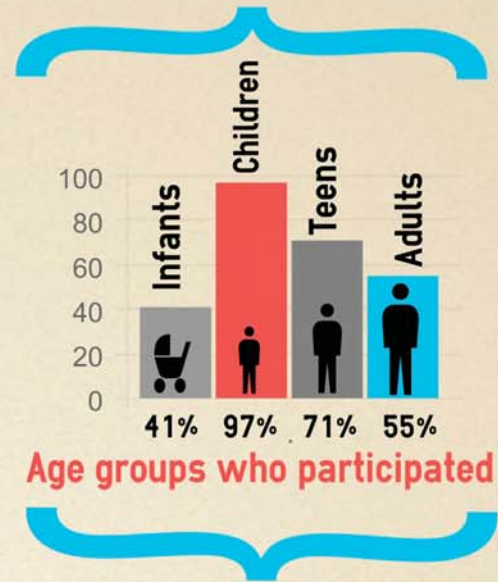
Illinois 2015 Summer Reading Programs

Libraries were busy this summer promoting summer reading. See what your counterparts reported and how we fared as a state.

99% 

Gave incentives, prizes or rewards for reading

Used the "Read to the Rhythm" theme



60%



Felt their reading program budget was adequate



87%

Collaborated with local schools or businesses



Provided online logging to their patrons



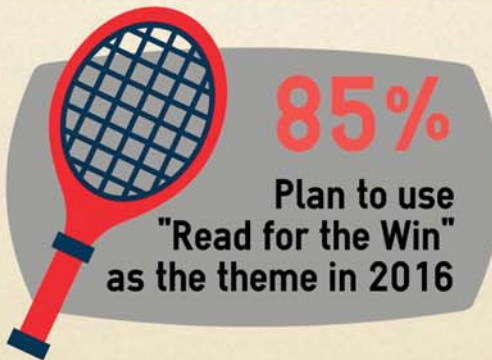
Reported circulation increase



Reading incentives



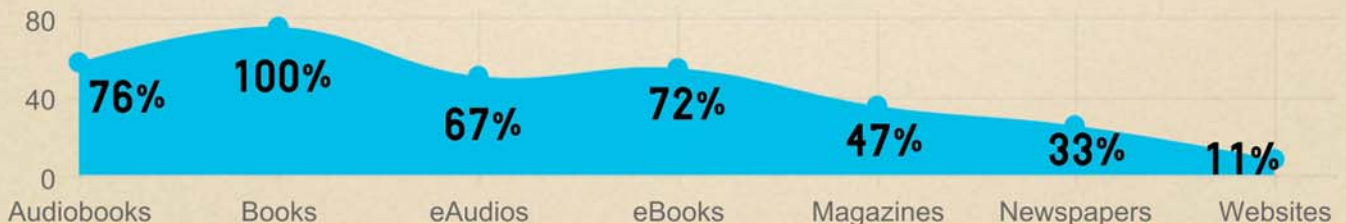
Books
Stickers
Giftcards
iREAD product
Small toys
Bookmarks



Of libraries reported that over 2,000 patrons participated



Types of materials that libraries allowed patrons to count toward the reading program



ILA Welcomes New Members

We would love to welcome your friends and colleagues, too. By sponsoring a new member, you share the benefits of membership with others ... and help create a stronger and more effective voice to promote the highest quality library services for all people in Illinois.

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Poplar Creek Public Library District - Sonya Crawshaw Branch Library



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You're invited to

PECKAPALOOZA!

Join the party by adding a stop at your library to the growing list of appearances by Michael Alan Peck, winner of the 2015 Soon to be Famous Illinois Author contest.

To schedule Michael for a book signing, an author appearance, video conference or to lead a book discussion at your library, contact him at 773-961-4940 or mpeck@michaelalanpeck.com.

Michael is scheduled to make appearances at the following places.

2015

- September 16 Indian Prairie Public Library 7PM
- September 21 Elmhurst Public Library 7PM
- September 26 Author Festival, Morris Area Public Library
- October 8 Fountaindale Public Library 7PM
- October 15 Gail Borden Public Library 7PM
- October 23 Illinois Libraries Conference Panel
- November 2 Lincolnwood Public Library 7PM
- November 9 Clarendon Hills Public Library 7PM

2016

- January 16 Author Fair, Galena Public Library
- March 2 Joliet Public Library 7PM
- March 19 Helen Plum Public Library 2PM
- April 5 PLA – Denver, CO

Amazon reviews of Michael's book *The Commons* are in full agreement with Soon to be Famous librarian judges that this novel is not to be missed.



"This book was pretty magical, to be honest... The plot was a lovely mixture of contemporary and fantasy. There were even hints of steampunk/sci-fi thrown in at one point..."

"At bottom, this is a thrilling adventure, a bit of a head trip, and a fantasy with some heft. Character conversations often have real depth and occasional insight, but the book never goes touchy-feely or artsy..."

"... The characters are well developed and the imagery is first rate. I found myself immersed in a world where nothing is as it seems and I LOVED IT!"



soon to be famous™ Illinois Author Project



John Cotton Dana 2015 Winner

Year three is coming! Nominations for the 2016 Soon to be Famous Illinois Author project will be accepted from October 12, 2015 through January 4, 2016. Check soontobefamous.info for details.



Come meet us at the 2015 ILA Annual Conference in Peoria on Friday, Oct. 23 from 10-11 am for Soon to be Famous Turns Tremendous Two.

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◀ MY TURN ▶

| Amita Lonial, Skokie Public Library |

Challenging Ourselves to Talk About Race

Over a year ago most of us had never heard of Ferguson, Missouri. While police brutality and the systematic persecution of black bodies is not new, the deaths of Trayvon Martin, Mike Brown, Eric Garner, Freddie Gray, and Sandra Bland have ignited a national conversation and movement for racial justice that has become impossible to ignore.

In these times it is our instinct as librarians to turn outward and create opportunities to nurture and educate our communities. I think we all have tremendous respect for how Ferguson Public Library responded in the days, weeks, and months following Brown's shooting death. (If you haven't read any of the interviews with Ferguson director Scott Bonner you should do it now). I'm also impressed by how libraries and museums across the country have been showing support for the Black Lives Matter movement by creating curricula, reading guides, public forums, and programs.

At Skokie Public Library, we created a six-week series called "Voices of Race" in partnership with our area schools, nonprofits, and community leaders to examine the issues of race and racism locally. We used a variety of mechanisms to get patrons of all ages engaged. Public events included book discussions, family storytimes, performances, and lectures. We also created knapsacks for patrons to take home that included conversation starters and visual tools for patrons of all ages to express their experiences of race and identity. Designing this series was daunting, exhausting, and exhilarating. But it was a worthwhile first step to get people in our community talking and thinking about these issues, from their dinner tables to our meeting rooms.

I think the harder work for all of us, individually and institutionally, lies in turning inward. On an individual level it is difficult and painful to confront ways in which we may be contributing to inequality. Though seemingly inconsequential, things like asking questions of staff or coworkers such as "where are you really from" or saying "when I look at you, I don't see

color or race" inform a complicated tapestry of privilege that upholds systemic inequality. It's challenging because most of us found ourselves in this profession because of our passion for democracy, community, and justice. It's also hard because I believe we are all good people doing the best with what we've been given. And talking about race can make us feel like we're not good people. But we have to get over that emotional hurdle if we want to proactively create safe and just spaces in our libraries.

I know that our professional associations work hard to encourage diversity among our ranks and leaders. Despite these efforts we are still an overwhelmingly white profession. I'd love to see more conversation about white privilege and how that informs our operations. How does white privilege impact our collection development practices? Or our behavior management expectations, policies, and practices? How can we develop anti-racist practices and benchmarks to combat those tendencies? Are we doing all we can to be transparent and accountable to communities of color? These are bigger questions I don't have the answer to, but I'm interested to see what can happen if we start talking about them.

For many, turning inward feels inaccessible and overwhelming. Many of us believe we don't have the knowledge or tools to take on these conversations—that we need to hire somebody to teach us. But we're librarians! We do have the tools all around us. I'd like to challenge all of us to commit to doing one thing to promote an antiracist culture among our staff, volunteers, or board members. Read and discuss Peggy McIntosh's essay, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," with members of your department or team. Or have a staff lunchtime book discussion about the new Ta-Nehisi Coates book, *Between the World and Me*. Talk with your community partners and leaders about how we can continue to be better. These are small steps individually but they are integral as part of a larger commitment to equality and equity so valued by libraries. ■

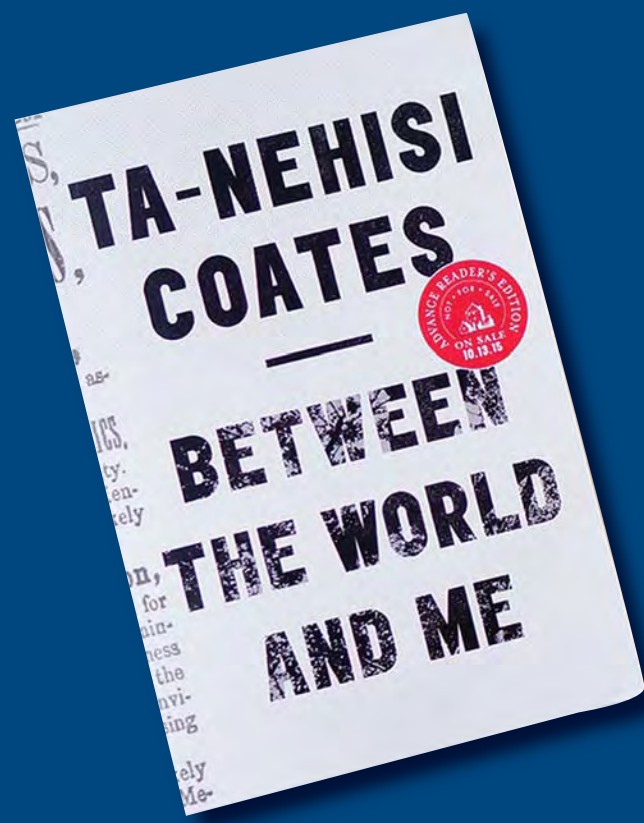
Six conversation prompts from Skokie Public Library's "Voices of Race" series

- In what ways were you aware of your racial/ethnic background when you were growing up? How would you describe your background?
- How has race affected your life? Can you think of specific, tangible examples?
- Name three feelings that come up when you hear the word racism.
- When and how have you challenged racism?
- When and how have you failed to challenge racism?
- What can we do as a community to stand up against racism?

Ground rules for keeping the dialogue responsible and safe

- No single speaker should dominate the conversation. All participants should have the opportunity to participate.
- Refrain from making generalizations about groups of people, for example: "All Latinos..." Instead share personal perspectives and experiences.
- Listen to the perspectives and experiences of others, and recognize that they are valid, regardless of whether you agree. All people have a right to their own truth.
- If you become uncomfortable, ask yourself: What about a particular statement or idea causes you discomfort? Challenge yourself to see the idea from a perspective other than your own.

Amita Lonial is the Learning Experiences Manager at Skokie Public Library. Prior to joining the library world she spent eight years in the nonprofit world fighting for racial and economic justice. Her other passions/obsessions include karaoke, Craigslist missed connections, and finding awesome diverse picture books for her new baby.

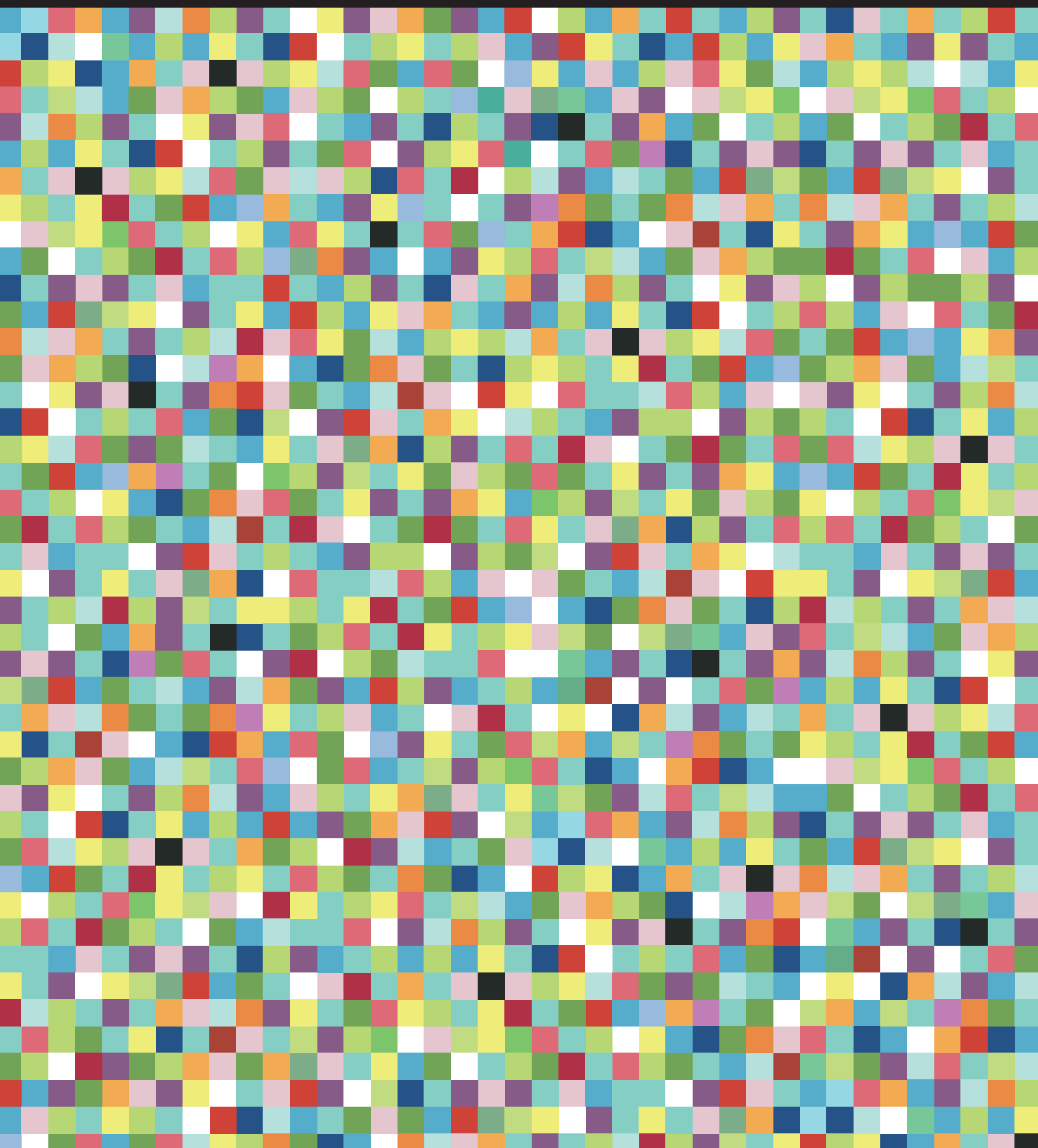


Between the World and Me

Ta-Nehisi Coates
2015, Spiegel & Grau, 152 pages

This recently published book takes the form of an open letter from the author, a national columnist for *The Atlantic*, to his fifteen-year-old son in the wake of recent shootings of young black men at the hands of police. Some reviews have compared it to James Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time*, though *New York Times* reviewer Michelle Alexander sees it as "written on the opposite side of the same coin." She explains that on her first reading, she had difficulty with Coates's apparently bleak view of the possibility for positive change. But on re-reading, she finds something else: "The second time around I could see that maybe, just maybe, this is what is most needed right now—a book that offers no answers but instead challenges us to wrestle with the questions on our own."

Weaving Our Web





Dear ILA Members and Friends,

We kickstarted the year with a conference committee of fifteen enthusiastic, dynamic ILA members, who planned a great conference with the theme “Kickstarting: Connections, Creativity, Community.” I was thrilled to be able to meet and greet conference attendees, from the ribbon cutting at the exhibits opening to drawing the prize winners at the closing session. It felt great to kick off my presidential year with such a strong start.

In 2014 the ILA Executive Board adopted a new strategic goal to inspire and guide us in the next five years. Dubbed “The Big Idea,” the goal is to “increase and expand our membership and influence by 2020.” Figuring out how to make that happen led to selecting three areas of focus:

- The first was updating not only our web presence, but all of the online functions members rely on. A customized Content Management System (CMS) and redesigned websites for both ILA and iREAD® were the first steps.
- Next, we sought to provide additional support and structure for member networking. We asked for input through surveys, developed guidelines and expectations, and did some “weeding”—some member groups have sunsetted for now, and others have new communication channels to employ.
- Finally, we’re taking a close look at membership structure to make it meaningful and productive for individuals, institutions, and the association. I’m pleased to be a member of an ad hoc membership task force created by the ILA Executive Board that will begin work in September 2015 and make its recommendations by April 2016.

A big part of the presidential year is devoted to advocating for libraries by meeting with legislators in Springfield, Washington, DC, and around the state. ILA’s Legislative Meet-Ups bring library advocates and legislators together at four locations, three in surrounding Chicago suburbs and one near St. Louis for the southern part of the state. We surpassed our 2014 attendance figures and have plans to keep expanding this signature program.

Leading the Illinois delegation to Washington, DC, in May as part of the American Library Association’s National Library Legislative Day was another milestone; and in June, I had the opportunity to speak on behalf of Illinois libraries on the floor of the Senate in Springfield. With the help of ILA’s legislative counsel, Kip Kolkmeier, I was able to share some compelling testimony and give answers to some hardball questions on the impact of a proposed property tax freeze on library budgets.

Over the past two years, I’ve met librarians and library staff, trustees, legislators, and legislative aides. I’ve visited libraries and congressional offices. At the start of my term as president-elect, a few past presidents gave me some great advice. Above all, they said, have fun! It was a great mindset to have, and it has, indeed, been incredibly fun and rewarding work.

Sincerely,



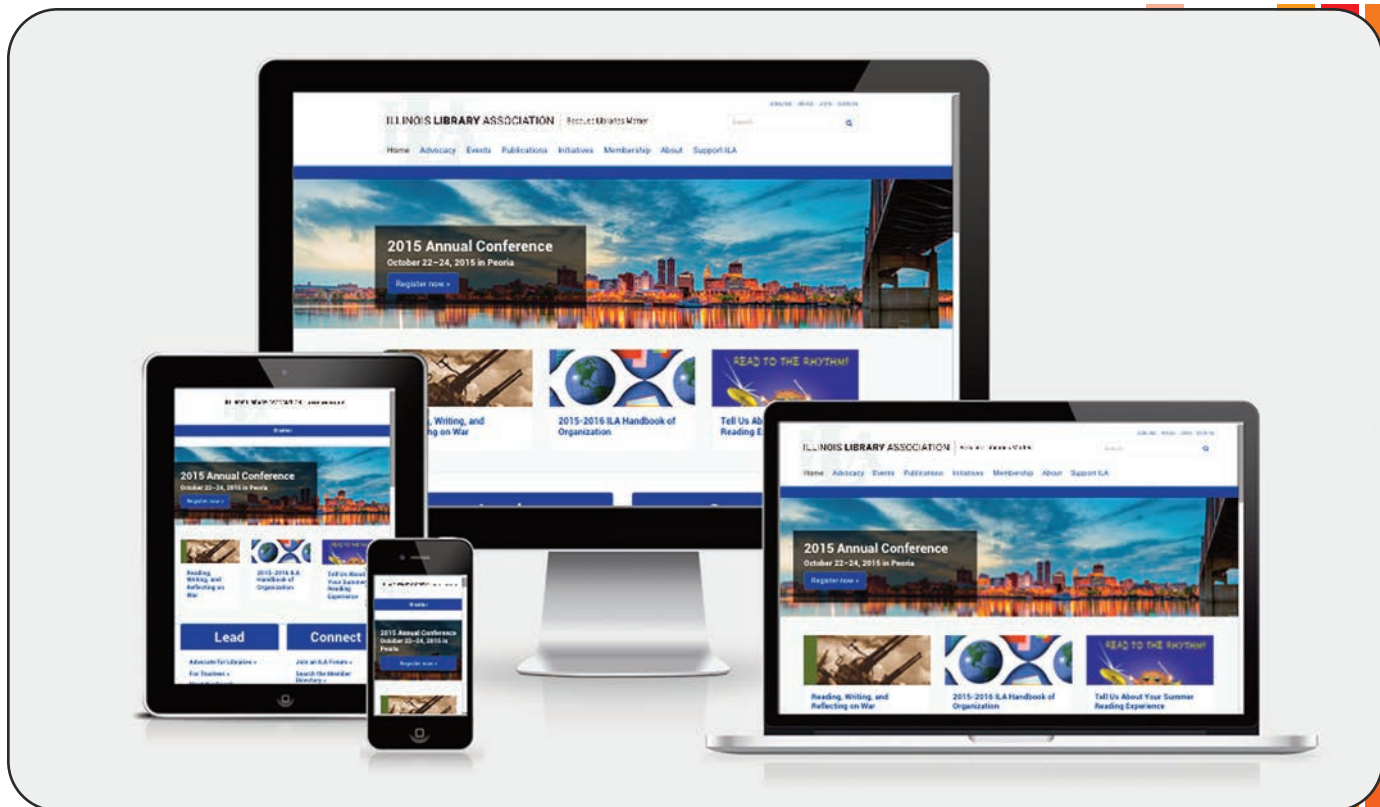
Jeannie Dilger
ILA President, 2014–2015

Weaving Our Web

2014–2015 was a year of major developments in ILA's web presence, and while the results are just coming into view, the behind-the-scenes work is a major investment in our future. Three new sites were launched:

- The new look for ila.org is much more than a facelift and is the product of over a year's worth of work by Webitects and ILA staff and members. A custom database for member information, including event registration and all other transactions, was created and built from scratch, reducing the need for many hands-on manual steps by both members and staff. A proprietary CMS and content editor make the site's content more engaging, timely, and easier to navigate.
- Librariesillinois.org is the home for the 2015 Illinois Academic, Public, School and Special Libraries Conference — the first of its kind — to be held in October 2015. This collaboration between IACRL, ILA, ISLMA, and SLA Illinois will bring all types of libraries together. The work began more than three years ago and this year brought it all to life on its very own website.
- Finally, the new iREAD® site is scheduled to launch in time for the 2016 summer theme, Read...for the Win! The site will have a wealth of new features and a new interface that will improve both back-office functions and the user experience.

The work of the association continued on many fronts while these new developments were taking place. Our strong advocacy presence in Springfield kept libraries from feeling the brunt of any major changes from the executive/legislative gridlock that currently exists, and the 2014 ILA Annual Conference and 2015 iREAD summer reading program results are reported in the following pages. We invite you to review the year just passed, and welcome you to join us for new adventures in the one to come.



Thundering Political Storms and Lingering Fog

As usual, ILA found itself deeply involved in public policy advocacy in both Springfield and Washington, DC. Not so typical is that the 2015 Illinois Spring legislative session never ended! Illinois State government is embroiled in perhaps the most contested struggle between the two political parties in our state's history.

Newly-elected Governor Bruce Rauner has proposed a series of changes to state statutes and the Illinois Constitution that would freeze local property taxes, reduce workers compensation costs, change state and local pension systems, limit civil tort litigation, remove major issues from union collective bargaining, modify school funding, alter the way legislative districts are drawn, and impose term limits on constitutional officers and legislators. A majority of state legislators in both chambers oppose the governor's agenda.

Instead of passing a negotiated state budget and adjourning at the end of May, the two parties reached an impasse and forced the Illinois General Assembly into the longest overtime session ever. While a comprehensive state budget was not approved, most funding for K-12 schools was enacted, and through a series of Executive Orders and court decisions, much of state government continues to function. However, a budget disaster in the coming months likely cannot be averted. The state is on a pace to spend almost \$6 billion more in fiscal 2016 than anticipated revenues of \$32 billion. Without massive spending cuts or significant tax increases, the State of Illinois will simply run out of money early in 2016.

Throughout the turmoil of the last year, ILA has continued to alert, educate, and mobilize our members on key issues. For the second year in a row, advocacy started early with four successful Legislative Meet-Ups in the winter. These events brought our members face to face with both state and federal elected officials. These events build relationships, allow us to explain our concerns to our public officials, and lay out our public policy agenda.

The dialog with elected officials continued throughout the spring as ILA took positions on a wide variety of bills and pushed for continued library, system, and school grant funding. Unfortunately, with the state budget unresolved, we cannot say with certainty what state grant funds may be available in this fiscal year.

One of the most important issues for our local public libraries is the threat of a property tax freeze. The original proposal from Governor Rauner was a permanent freeze on the property tax levy of every school district and every unit of local government. The current proposal is a two-year freeze, but even this more limited freeze could be devastating for local public libraries and schools.

This issue is of such importance to our association that ILA President Jeannie Dilger presented testimony on June 9 to the full Illinois Senate opposing property tax proposals that would limit local library and school funding. Dilger was one of only three local government representatives to address the entire Illinois Senate. Her testimony was powerful and effective.

As with any year, there were hundreds of other bills affecting our members, and there were a number of important successes. For example, the nineteenth attempt to impose statewide mandatory Internet filters was defeated. ILA also proposed, and succeeded, in enacting legislation that would encourage additional public access to governmental records on the Internet, thus making a formal Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request unnecessary. House Bill 3796 became Public Act 98-1129 when the Illinois General Assembly overrode Governor's Quinn's veto. The law limits voluminous FOIA requests and specifically allows public bodies to post records online and refer FOIA requesters to the online version. This new law, effective December 2014, is intended to reduce the number and frequency of FOIA requests designed to harass public bodies and public employees.

In this most unusual year, however, these two examples pale beside the larger unresolved issues of the budget, pension reform, limits on local property taxes, and the balance of power between employers and employees in both the private and public sectors.

Illinois library advocates also gathered in Washington, DC, for National Library Legislative Day in early May. As in past years, they made the rounds of the Illinois congressional delegation, reminding them of the importance of their support for the Institute for Museum and Library Services, which directly supports several grant programs of the Illinois State Library, among other national programs. Another of this past year's federal legislative priorities was reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, including a bipartisan amendment that requires support for school libraries.

Most years it is easy to acknowledge lessons learned and boast of goals achieved. This is not one of those years. Funding priorities and policy issues remain in a sort of political limbo. ILA members have risen to this challenge by staying focused on our core messages. We hope that we will soon be able to report more definitive and favorable news.

Kickstarting: Learning and Leadership

The 2014 ILA Annual Conference saw librarians gather in Springfield for the first time since 2007. The beautiful landmarks of the Old State Capitol and the historic downtown set the stage for three days of exhibits, programs, speakers, and events.

The conference drew nearly 1,100 attendees and featured 131 exhibit booths, and a major uptick in sponsors, including Dewberry, LIRA, Sikich, TBS, and Trane, all at the highest Platinum level. Featured speakers included author and Detroit entrepreneur Josh Linker who opened the conference, and closing session speaker Peter Heller, journalist, adventurer, and author of two recent novels, *The Dog Stars* and *The Painter*.

Throughout the rest of the year, events for trustees, youth services librarians, and library support staff provided targeted continuing education and inspiration. The Trustee Forum workshop in Oak Brook gave a warm welcome to attendees and speakers including Britt Islay and Julie Tappendorf from Ancel Glink, Monica Harris from the Schaumburg Township District Library, ILA Legislative Consultant Kip Kolkmeier, and attorney Phil Lenzini.

ILA's first ever Youth Services Unconference was held in August at Dominican University, introducing innovations and experimentation in youth services in an informal, full-day event. At the other end of the spectrum, Reaching Forward marked its twenty-sixth year as ILA's long-standing conference for library support staff in May at the Rosemont Convention Center.

Incoming ILA leadership, including President-Elect **Pattie Piotrowski** of the Illinois Institute of Technology along with other newly elected executive board members **Christine Barr**, Fabyan Elementary School, Geneva; **Dennis Krieb**, Lewis & Clark Community College, Godfrey; **Nancy Maloney**, Deere & Company, Moline; **Richard Kong**, Skokie Public Library; and ALA Councilor **Allen Lanham**, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, met in July at Illinois State University to kick off their year. They were joined by the rest of the executive board, committee chairs/members, and forum managers for a full day of orientation and networking. This opportunity for committees to set their agendas and get acquainted is a valuable one, as many committees conduct their meetings remotely throughout the year and welcome this day of face-to-face time.



Programs and Initiatives: Still Reading After All These Years

Whether it's on a screen or on a page, reading is still at the center of many of our activities. From our ever-expanding summer reading program, iREAD, to the recently launched Soon to be Famous Illinois Author project, books and their readers took the stage.

The 2015 iREAD theme READ to the Rhythm engaged children, teens, and adults at libraries throughout the United States and around the world. Statewide programs in Illinois, California, Minnesota, and Virginia have all adopted iREAD, and individual libraries in many other states participate as well. And iREAD remains the official summer reading program of the U.S. Department of Defense libraries on military bases worldwide.

In its second year, the Soon to Be Famous Illinois Author project drew submissions from authors around the state, each sponsored by a local librarian. The field of forty-three entrants was narrowed to three finalists and Michael Alan Peck was named the winner for his novel, *The Commons Book 1: The Journeyman*, in an event at ILA headquarters on April 16.

Readers and National Book Award-winning writer Phil Klay gathered at libraries in Carbondale and Urbana and at the Old State Capitol in Springfield in a series of programs co-sponsored by ILA and Illinois Humanities. Klay read from his collection of short stories, *Redeployment*, documenting and commenting on his tour of duty in Iraq.

The six issues of the *ILA Reporter*—from August 2014 through June 2015—reported on orchestral librarians, storytelling, library architecture, e-book access, prison libraries, human libraries, and much more. The association's electronic newsletter, *ILA E-Newsletter*, kept members up to date on legislation, events, and library issues in the media. Advance orders for the latest edition of *Illinois Library Laws and Rules in Effect April 2015* prompted an increase in the print run to meet demand.

**"We are writers,
but we are readers, too.
And librarians are readers.
You're just dying to find the book
that you can't put down—where,
when you're doing something else,
you're thinking about that character
and what happens to them next.
So it's the validation of the reader
that counts for everything
as well."**

—Michael Alan Peck

Honors, Awards, and Affinity Programs

One of the highlights of the Annual Awards Luncheon was the presentation of the Intellectual Freedom Award to the Orland Park Public Library Board of Library Trustees who held firm during a difficult series of meetings with protestors opposing the library's policies of open access to information. The trustees received a standing ovation for their efforts. The full slate of winners of the fifteen awards presents a cross section of excellence in everything from youth and reference services to advocacy and public relations.

Five new Illinois Library Luminaries—Nancy Giffillan, Lee A. Logan, Mary Dempsey, Hugh Atkinson, and Joyce Saricks—were added last year. This honor roll for Illinois librarians serves the dual purpose of recognizing outstanding voices in the library community while creating a legacy through the ILA Endowment to continue their important work.

Both the Fund for Illinois Libraries and the Libraries of Illinois Risk Agency (LIRA) make it possible for ILA institutional members to realize substantial benefits. The first allows them to receive charitable contributions without establishing their own non-profit status and the second, created in 2014, established a group self-insurance pool for property, casualty, and workers' compensation coverage for libraries.

By the Numbers: July 2014–June 2015



13,172

Number of Bills Introduced in the 99th Illinois General Assembly



9,252

Number of Bills Introduced in the 113th U.S. Congress



14.2%

Percent of ILA's Budget Spent on Salaries, Payroll Taxes, and Benefits



568 versus 427

pages in the 2015 iREAD Resource Guide versus the 2014 Resource Guide



9%

ILA's Income from Membership Dues



21.17%

Increase in Users with the New Website



142%

Increase in Pageviews

ILA Fiscal Report Year Ended June 30, 2015

Revenue

General Operations	\$ 70,016
Membership	\$ 311,901
Conference	\$ 296,351
Publications	\$ 2,234,229
Public Policy	\$ 4,000
Awards	\$ 6,865
Endowment	\$ 10,645
Workshops/Projects	\$ 35,248
Reaching Forward	\$ 120,915
Total Revenue	\$ 3,090,170

Expenses (before allocation of staff salaries, taxes, and benefits to functional areas)

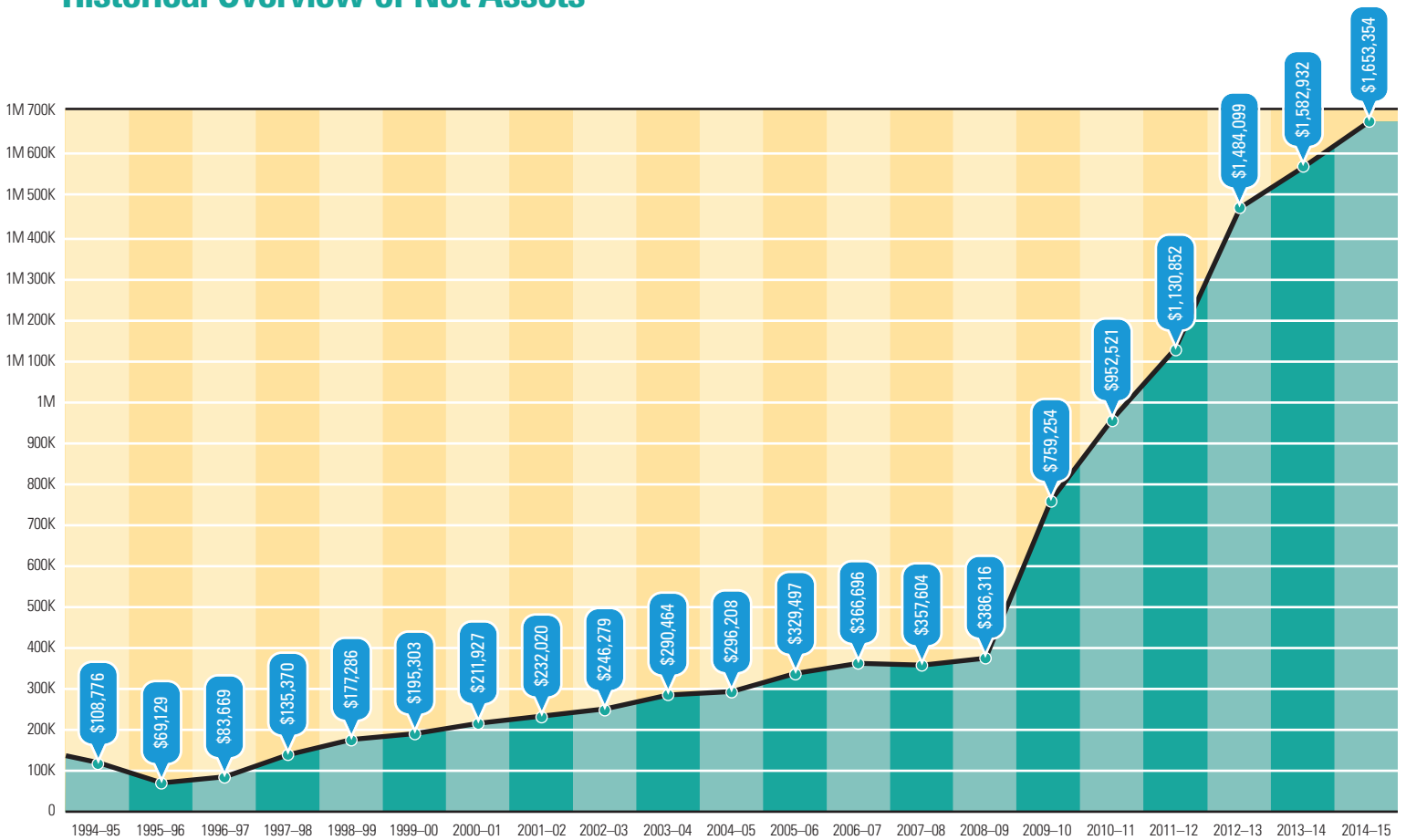
General Operations	\$ 671,053
Membership/Directoy/Reporter	\$ 90,320
Conference	\$ 220,620
Board/Committee	\$ 13,826
Publications	\$ 1,790,270
Public Policy	\$ 70,174
Awards	\$ 11,036
Workshops/Projects	\$ 36,554
Forums	\$ 6,506
Reaching Forward	\$ 119,076
Total Expenses	\$ 3,029,435

Net Income before Gain (Loss) on Long-term Investments	\$ 60,735
Loss on Long-term Investments	\$ 9,687
Net Income	\$ 70,422
Net Assets at end of FY 2014	\$ 1,582,932
Net Assets at end of FY 2015	\$ 1,653,354

Net Assets Comprise:

Unrestricted Net Assets	\$ 1,533,913
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	\$ 11,440
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atkinson Memorial Award (\$3,042) • deLafayette Reid Fund for Continuing Education (\$4,283) • Robert R. McClarren Award Fund for Legislative Development (\$420) • Sylvia Murphy Williams Fund (\$3,057) • Legal Defense Fund (\$620) • Preiser Award (\$18) 	
Permanently Restricted Net Assets	\$ 108,001
Total Net Assets at end of FY 2015	\$ 1,653,354

Historical Overview of Net Assets



Cumulative Surplus

The growth in ILA’s net assets has been a conscious strategy over the past nineteen years, with the goal of producing an annual budget surplus.

From 2009 to 2013, annual budget surpluses were largely used to build an operating reserve equivalent to 50% of ILA’s annual budget, a directive from the executive board. Once that milestone was reached, the board redirected resources to updating and building infrastructure to support future growth and stability.

The strategies that have contributed to realizing these goals include a focus on earned income projects, such as summer reading and a new group insurance program, and also on operating with a small staff and holding overhead and other costs down.

Professional associations have typically faced declines in their traditional sources of revenue—membership, conference, and publications—over this same period, and the need for innovation and entrepreneurial efforts is as strong as ever.

2014–2015	\$ 70,422
2013–2014	\$ 98,833
2012–2013	\$ 353,247
2011–2012	\$ 178,331
2010–2011	\$ 193,267
2009–2010	\$ 372,938
2008–2009	\$ 28,712
2007–2008	\$ -9,092
2006–2007	\$ 37,199
2005–2006	\$ 33,289
2004–2005	\$ 5,744
2003–2004	\$ 44,185
2002–2003	\$ 14,259
2001–2002	\$ 20,093
2000–2001	\$ 16,624
1999–2000	\$ 18,017
1998–1999	\$ 41,916
1997–1998	\$ 51,701
1996–1997	\$ 14,540
Total	\$1,584,225

Mission Statement

The Illinois Library Association is the voice for Illinois libraries and the millions who depend on them. It provides leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library services in Illinois and for the library community in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all. This access is essential for an open democratic society, an informed electorate, and the advancement of knowledge for all people. Its primary goals are:

Advocating for the Public Interest

- develop and promote strong public policy related to libraries, literacy, and lifelong learning;
- defend intellectual freedom and access to information; and
- increase public awareness of the value of libraries to society.

Promoting Excellence and Innovation

- provide outstanding programs of continuing education and leadership development;
- support the recruitment, retention, and professional development of a culturally and racially diverse workforce for libraries;
- produce high-quality publications and communications; and
- celebrate the achievement of excellence and innovation on behalf of the membership.

Managing the Present to Prepare for the Future

In order to achieve these goals, ILA will use its resources wisely and maintain a flexible structure that promotes the diverse interests and broad participation of members.

Vision Statement

The Illinois Library Association is indispensable in leading efforts in library advocacy and collaboration, and serving as a springboard to innovation and excellence in library services.



2014–2015 Executive Board

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Jeannie Dilger, La Grange Public Library

Vice President/President-Elect

Betsy Adamowski, Wheaton Public Library

Immediate Past President

Su Erickson, Robert Morris University

Treasurer

Leora Siegel, Chicago Botanic Garden

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Veronica DeFazio, Plainfield Public Library District

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Rick McCarthy, StudioGC

Rob Morrison, National Louis University

Carol E. Reid, Heartland Community College Library

Becky Robinson, Illinois School Library Media Association

Amanda E. Standerfer, The Lumpkin Family Foundation

Christina Stoll, Indian Trails Public Library District

Susan L. Westgate, Carol Stream Public Library

ALA Councilor

Denise Zielinski, Joliet Public Library

Ex Officio

Anne B. Craig, Illinois State Library

Robert P. Doyle, Illinois Library Association

2014–2015 ILA Staff

Robert P. Doyle, Executive Director

Cynthia M. Robinson, Conference and Continuing Education Manager

Tina Koleva, Member Services Manager

Linda Bostrom, Administrative Coordinator

Jon Daniels, Controller

Library Jobline of Illinois



<http://www.ila.org/jobline>

Positions for Librarians and Support Staff

All employer job openings are listed on the ILA website (www.ila.org/jobline) for 30 days and the cost is \$100.



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Waukegan, Illinois

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