Sometimes as we work in libraries all across our wide state, we may feel more alone than we really are. The AkLA Conference 2015 in Juneau was a great chance to connect with librarians from as far north as Barrow, as far south as Ketchikan, and as far west as the Aleutian Islands. When librarians meet, exchange ideas, and get inspired, it can cause changes all across Alaska.

The keynote speaker, Michael Stephens, was off-the-charts inspiring. His insight and stories were not only thought-provoking and encouraging, but he gave specific, concrete examples of programs and ways of doing things that we can take and use in our libraries.

He told about the Butchers and Books in Kansas, a program where the best butchers in the town showed their techniques at the library on a side of cattle with a big tarp under a table and a packed audience. He shared about the technology petting zoos, where people can try out different technology like Kindles and iPads and tablets at libraries, so they can learn how to learn with these things. He said that the connections people make using technology can be real, and in fact, he lives in Michigan but
can be real, and in fact, he lives in Michigan but teaches out of a university in California that is totally online. He encouraged us to be open-minded about the good that can come from MOOCs (classes taught online).

His big encouragement to all of us was that libraries are not going to be extinct; instead they are more and more becoming community gathering places. Libraries are not just warehouses of books; libraries and librarians are important in helping people navigate the increasing amount of information available in the world.

Marissa Meyer was the author who spoke at the Authors-to-Alaska luncheon, and she was not only entertaining, but very educational. When I found out she was going to be the author speaking, I read her *Cinder* series and loved it. She told about her process of becoming a writer, starting as a high school freshman who planned to write a bestselling novel by the time she graduated, and finally graduating from college, still not having published a first novel.

After she got involved with the November writer’s competition to see who could write the most words in a month, she had the first two novels in the *Cinder* series complete and the third book one-third done in that 30 days, and, amazingly, she still wasn’t the winner of the most words written! But she did get her series published, so, as she said, “After 20 years of writing, I was an overnight success!” Meyer’s books are well worth reading, and she is a speaker teens and adults will thoroughly enjoy.

While we were in Juneau at the librarians’ conference, we learned that the funding for OWL (Online With Libraries) was being cut, and many librarians wrote, called, or talked to the legislators to urge them to keep OWL in the budget.

Thanks in part to that effort, the OWL funding was reinstated, making a difference for library patrons all over Alaska.

I look forward to seeing people from all over the state again next year, at the Fairbanks AkLA 2016 conference. ★
Dear AkLA members and Alaska library community:

Time has passed quickly since we all met in Juneau to experience great sessions, inspiring speakers, interesting exhibits, and much needed library networking. Chances for conversation and learning were abundant.

Conference 2015 also gave us an opportunity to meet with our legislators about library services crucial to our communities and the state, particularly to inform them of our need for continuing support for OWL, Live Homework Help, and Best Beginnings.

Following the elimination of the paid lobbyist position from the AkLA budget, our very active Advocacy Committee stepped up to educate us about our organization’s needs and keep us informed on legislative budget issues and concerns.

As a result, the Alaska library community rallied in support of funding for OWL, Live Homework Help, Best Beginnings and early literacy. Following the House Finance Committee meeting, I received an email that stated over 100 emails and phone calls were received from people concerned about these issues.

We also heard several librarians and individuals throughout the state give wonderful testimony. At that time, both OWL and LHH were put back in the budget. Later, the funding was cut from the Senate Finance Committee budget. Letters and calls followed.

Most recently, we heard that the Conference Committee is recommending full funding for OWL and Live Homework Help, but as of this writing, we wait. As Steve Rollins pointed out, “It’s not over until it’s over.”

During the past year, AkLA has been actively working on building membership, listing reasons why it is good for you and your library. The pro-active, informative way we have all received news of legislative budget issues is one more reason why joining AkLA is good for your library. This organization works for you, and it is all of us working together that will make things happen.

I am still learning my role as your new AkLA President. I’d like to thank Karen Jensen and Mary Jo Joiner for helping me along the way. Many thanks to our Advocacy Committee members and all of you who testified, wrote emails or called to voice opinions on legislative budget issues.

Also, thanks go to our 2015 Conference Committee planners and organizers for a successful AkLA conference where we indeed learned to Channel Our Voices. ★
The House of Gryffindor. The House of Hufflepuff was the spot for making Pygmy Puffs.

At the House of Ravenclaw, a Quidditch Tournament was held with balloons aimed towards sparkling hoops. The winning House was treated to chocolate frogs.

Most young wizards had their pictures taken, which instantly created wanted posters warning others of their magical powers.

To keep all well-nourished, there were Polyjuice Potion Squares, Troll Toenails, Hagrid’s Carrot Harvest, Licorice Vines, Pumpkin Juice Muffins, and Whomping Willow Branches.

At the end of the evening, the wizards and muggles were given Bertie Bott’s Beans, which include flavors not suitable for print. It was indeed a magical evening for all.

P.S. If any other library would like to do a similar Harry Potter event, we would be happy to give you ideas. We were very pleased with how smoothly it went, and how happy our patrons were.

Miriam Dunbar
Cordova Public Library
(Chapters - Cont. from pg. 4)

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS WIZARD?

Any information leading to his arrest will be fully rewarded.
Notify immediately by text.

(Cont. on pg. 6)
HAINES BOROUGH PUBLIC LIBRARY CELEBRATES NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK: UNLIMITED POSSIBILITIES @ YOUR LIBRARY

What a busy and fun-filled week at the library! Celebrating National Library Week in Haines included many new events and all the old favorites, too.

New things included the following:
• Monday’s Mobile Device Night, where educational coordinator Jessie Morgan answered questions about iPads, iPods, and the library’s six new tablets for check-out, preloaded with educational kid games from AWE.
• Wednesday’s Scrabble tournament organized by volunteer Janine Allen
• Friday’s debut of the new puppet stage and puzzle corner in the children’s room, thanks to the Alaska State Library’s Early Literacy Grant
• Friday’s field trip to the local disc golf course
• Friday’s movie and popcorn: Wall-E
• Friday’s library t-shirt catapulting every hour with candy and shirts
• Saturday’s poetry reading

Old favorites included the following:
• Sunday through Saturday Music in the Stacks, with local musicians bringing live music to the library with harp, guitar, piano, ukulele, and vocal music
• Tuesday’s Friends of the Library Annual Meeting and membership recruitment
• Thursday’s Game Lab for kids
• Friday’s Bird Walk with Jedediah
• Friday’s Future Engineers of America build with LEGOS, thanks to the LEGOS we received from the LEGO Foundation, the ALA, and the Alaska State Library
• Friday’s Fine Forgiveness Day with cookies, tea, and coffee all day

Special thanks goes to Rebecca Heaton for decorating the library with all the beautiful tissue paper flowers. It was exciting to have 2100 visits during National Library Week, especially when our entire population is only 2500 people.

Holly Davis
Haines Borough Public Library

New puzzle corner with new carpet, thanks to the Alaska State Library’s Early Literacy Grant.
Scrabble tournament at library during National Library Week organized by volunteer Janine Allen.

New puppet stage in children’s room, thanks to the Early Literacy Grant from the Alaska State Library.

(Cont. on pg. 8)
Kids doing their best to catch the t-shirts and candy from the catapult

Catapult made by the kids, about to launch candy and yellow library t-shirts that say “One World, Many Stories” in the field behind the library with technology coordinator Erik Stevens at the catapult controls

Kids doing their best to catch the t-shirts and candy from the catapult
Below is a photo of the intrepid Northern Chapter members of AkLA who drove down from Fairbanks and North Pole all the way to the end of the Alaska Highway for the annual Delta Community Library Open House and Basket of Books Silent Auction on Saturday, April 26.

Basket of Books is sponsored by the Delta Library Association and proceeds support everything from Summer Readers and Story Hours to author visits and concerts. More than 300 people came out to place bids and enjoy the lively atmosphere in their community library.

The final tally was not available by press time; the event usually nets more than $5,000.

Joyce McCombs  
Delta Community Library

Left to right:

**Sherry Vogel** - Reference Librarian, Noel Wien Library
**Chris Osciak** - Librarian, North Pole Middle School
**Flora Grabowska** - Director, Keith Mather Library, Geophysical Institute, UAF
**Elsie Eckman** - Archivist, Ted Stevens Papers Project, Rasmuson Library, UAF
**Karen Jensen** - Collection Development Officer, Rasmuson Library, UAF
**Georgine Olson** - Outreach Services Manager, FNSB Public Libraries

(Cont. on pg. 10.)
I thought I’d post a quick trip report from our April 26 chapter field trip to Delta Junction and the lovely Delta Community Library. Other attendees can chime in if they feel inclined.

Elsie Eckman drove with passengers Flora Grabowska, Karen Jensen, and Georgine Olson, and Chris Osciak drove with Sherry Vogel riding along. We had a beautiful sunny day, and an interesting informational session from Joyce McCombs in which we learned all about the new library and its patrons and services, as well as about its art collection.

I learned that the controversial print of “September Morn” will be hung in the library in September - another field trip?! Joyce McCombs gave us the nutshell history of this work’s presence in the Delta community—very interesting, perhaps more so than the painting.

The library is outfitted nicely in wood shelving with tasteful memorial panels, a comfortable sitting area, and a children’s section with low tables, chairs and play mat. I was especially impressed with the bathroom— it’s the little things that count! - which has a coat rack (so important in Alaska!), Dixie cups for getting water to drink, and a toddler stepstool so the little ones can wash their hands.

This is the way to make your patrons feel welcome, especially the young ones who will be your future clientele!

We enjoyed the goodies provided, as well as the silent auction and raffles. I did my best to raise bids on anything alcoholic, as well as a cat-sized pink garden snail with pearl necklace, but I didn’t win anything.

Lunch at Taste of Europe was quite good; I had bypassed this place for years thinking it wouldn’t be much, but now it’s a must-stop when traveling through Delta.

Lots of fun to visit a library further afield. Thanks, Joyce, for hosting us! and of course to Georgine for getting us organized. ⭐

Karen Jensen
Delta Community Library
April 12-18—National Library Week this year. It seems a good time to write my long-overdue love letter to librarians.

Dear Librarians,

First, thank you for helping my mother and father become readers. Second, thank you for helping me discover the power of words. My parents and older sisters read to me from the time I was a baby, and many of our books were library books.

I recall my first local library at Fort Richardson (now JBER), Alaska. The children’s books section was to the right of the main door, and I loved scanning the shelves and choosing books to take home. The librarian often recommended books once she saw what my tastes were.

And when I grew old enough, the entire library was at my reach. When I was done with my browsing and waiting for my family members to choose their books, I would often go see the huge Earth and constellations globes, just another reminder that there was a whole universe to explore out there. Wow.

At school, my mother volunteered at the library so I got to know the librarians there more than most kids, some long enough to remember their names. Molly Bynum at Ursa Minor Elementary and Kelly Christenson, Leah Hoffman, Carol Pryor, and Virginia Rehder at Bartlett-Begich Junior-Senior High School gave me tons of books and a safe place to be when I needed it.

In high school, the library was my hangout before school. A bunch of us nerdy girls talked and read at our regular table every day. And Leah Hoffman became my mentor in stage makeup class and beyond. Her kind words and easy laugh are still a comfort to me.

When I became an English teacher, I often found the librarians to be kindred spirits. They all helped me and my students with many book recommendations and research presentations.

Some of my teaching friends later became librarians, and one, Jim Curran, is now the teen librarian at my local library. I enjoy watching him interact with the teens and have had the opportunity to work with him on a couple of projects. And another local librarian, Charlotte Pendleton, has been invaluable arranging author events.

For every librarian I have named, there are a handful I didn’t. And for every librarian I’ve known, there are thousands I don’t know. All of you help young people and old, rich and poor, find solace and adventure and themselves in books. You provide other services too, enriching our lives in so many ways. Thanks for all you’ve done and will do. I love you. Happy National Library Week. ★

Sincerely,

Lynn Lovegreen
The Alaskana Award was established in 1994 to honor outstanding adult fiction and nonfiction works about Alaska published in any format. Works that will be considered make a significant contribution to the understanding of Alaska; exhibit originality, depth of research and knowledge of Alaska; and have been published in the calendar year preceding the Alaska Library Association conference at which the award will be presented.

The author is not required to be an Alaskan resident.

These are the nominations received this year:

- Old Iditarod Gang. *Iditarod: The First Ten Years* (Old Iditarod Gang, LLC, 2014)
- Unger, Suanné. *Qaqamiigux: Traditional Foods and Recipes from the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands* (Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association, 2014)
- Upper One Games, LLC. *Never Alone* [video game] (2014)

We’d hoped to have reviews of all five by Newspoke “press time,” but below are three of them.

*A Dangerous Idea: The Alaska Native Brotherhood and the Struggle for Indigenous Rights*

By: Peter Metcalfe with Kathy Ruddy

Metcalfé and Ruddy trace the Alaska Native Brotherhood’s participation in issues of Native sovereignty and land rights during the decades leading up to the Alaska Statehood Act and eventually the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. The book explores the historical forces which threatened to deny any claim of land ownership or self determination to Alaskan Natives.

In it, we meet many of the forceful personalities and examine the sometimes fierce struggles for recognition of indigenous rights in Alaska. School librarians and history teachers should consider this well-documented text, which will certainly become a classic of Alaskan history. Both informative and entertaining, *A Dangerous Idea* should be required reading for all Alaskans.

Jim Simard,
Alaska State Library

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By: Charles Caldwell Hawley

The author, an Alaska economic geologist with over 50 years of experience, has set out to tell the story of the history of the Kennecott Copper Corporation. In this expert and thorough new history, he recounts how Kennecott, at one time the largest copper producer in the world, was “formed [in 1915] from the merger of three mining operations (one in Alaska, one in Utah, and one in Chile), how it led the way in mining technologies, and how it was affected by the

(Cont. on pg. 13)
The Kennecott [also known as the Kennecott Mines] in the Wrangell Mountains in Alaska “was the smallest of the three mines but by far the richest” (p. 20). The Kennecott Mines in Alaska operated from 1909 to 1938. The high-grade deposits were depleted and operations were no longer profitable due to the low price of copper during the Great Depression.

The Bingham Canyon Mine, a huge, low grade copper porphyry surface deposit in Utah, is the largest open pit mine in the world. The El Teniente is an extraordinarily rich underground porphyry copper deposit in central Chile.

Hawley begins the narrative by describing how the age of electricity created a demand for copper and markets ready to buy the mineral. He then describes the origins of KCC’s copper empire, the Kennecott Mines in the Wrangell Mountains, and the Beatson, in Prince William Sound.

In the next eight chapters, the narrative follows the careers of four mining engineers: Stephen Birch, Daniel Cowan Jackling, William Burford Braden, and E. Tappan Stannard, whose technological ingenuity led to the success of Kennecott Copper Corporation in Alaska, Utah, and Chile. Next, he devotes in five chapters considerable time to the development of mine infrastructure, such as mine railroads, improvements in mining techniques through shrinkage stopping, bulk underground mining by caving, and mining by surface (open-pit form mining), and other mining innovations.

Finally, in the remaining ten chapters (parts 4-6), he describes the corporate history of the Kennecott Copper Corporation from 1915 to 1997. In 1997, KCC was acquired by Rio Tinto plc, a British-Australian metals and mining corporation with headquarters in London, and lost its corporate independence.

The book is organized into six parts and within, into twenty-six chapters, on these topics: copper and electricity, men and their mines from 1887 to 1922, development of mine infrastructure and technology to World War II, capital payback, mining from 1923 to the Korean War, and the period from the Korean War to 1997.

The author used his lifetime of geologic experience, interactions with the mining community, reflections on mining’s role in the modern world, and consulting work to write a major work on mining history in the American West. Hawley succeeds in immersing the reader in the company’s development and impact into broader national and international events. In doing so he conveys the significance of how its technological innovations helped shape modern economic and industrial history.

For those interested in the Kennecott Mines story, the book provides a wealth of information for understanding the territory’s economic and political history during an obscure but important period. Hawley is a former U.S. Geological Survey geologist, private consultant, and mining company director. He is the emeritus director of the Alaska Mining Association and the author of *Wesley Earl Dunkle: Alaska’s Flying Miner* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2003).

Bruce Parham
Anchorage, Alaska

*Never Alone*, the video game

This year’s winner is the video game *Never Alone* (Kisima Ingitchuna), developed by Cook Inlet Tribal Council and Upper One Games who worked closely with Inupiat community members and elders. It brings the folklore of the Inupiat
people into a video game platform that children to adults can enjoy.

Played as either a single or two-person game, it centers on a young girl, Nuna, and her friend Fox as they research on how to stop the endless blizzard that is causing her people to suffer.

The game is set into eight chapters where Nuna and Fox must contend with the deadly environment, bad people, wild animals, and the “little people.” While playing the game, short documentaries pop up for you to watch to learn more.

If you’re not a gamer, that’s okay. According to one of the reviewers, any player at any skill level can beat this game!

Its great graphics, technical design, original story development and, most importantly, its molding of Inupiat oral traditions into today’s technology are what made it the clear winner of this year’s Alaskana Award.

Teressa Williams
Resource Center Manager / Librarian
Anchorage Museum
One of the most critical components of a child’s first five years is his or her development of early literacy skills. Early Literacy, everything children know about reading before they learn to read, has long been at the core of library services offered for children and caregivers.

The goal of LITtle ApPLes is to build an association for parents that Anchorage Public Library (APL) has special opportunities to grow their young ones into future readers. The brand aids this goal by bringing early literacy activities into the forefront while aligning efforts and fostering consistency between APL locations.

To establish the brand, APL has new templates for printed material such as program schedules, weekly early literacy tips, and event fliers. These templates help highlight APL’s growing number of special early literacy programs for children from birth to age five:

- Baby Builders: open block playtime
- STEM Storytime: preschool storytime that introduces Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math concepts
- Growing Readers Club: interactive storytime with a take home activity
- Wee Be Jammin’: music and movement program

The brand also includes a new LITtle ApPLes webpage (http://tinyurl.com/littleapples). Visitors will see a large variety of resources, including a rhyme of the week, literacy tip of the week, recommendations for books and special apps, links to early literacy resources, and YouTube videos featuring APL librarians sharing some of their favorite songs.

Parents, caregivers and others can also text LITTLEAPPLES to 888777 to receive a weekly early literacy tip and storytime updates!

LITtle ApPLes is the creation of two youth services librarians from APL, Lacey Hemming (Muldoon Library) and Stephanie Schott (Loussac Library), who hope to designate all early literacy programs, events, and original content under one brand.

The logo was created by APL Library Assistant Ingrid Bondarenko.
Naomi Gaede-Penner. *Prescription for Adventure*

Mrs. Gaede-Penner may be the best writer of personal experience tales in Alaska today. Her family experienced life and adventure in the Territory and State, over widely spaced distances, for six decades. Her Prescription for Adventure series is excellent; always good humored, always honest, with abundant detail, fact and critical thinking. Gaede-Penner tells her stories in her subjects’ voices, and seems to succeed in making them sound authentic. I can’t recommend any series more highly:

http://www.prescriptionforadventure.com/index.html


Areas of Discussion: Tanana, Valdez

This book chronicles the early Alaskan career of Anna Bortel Church, one of the unsung heroes of Alaskan living. Miss Bortel (although she married, most of this book involves her life as a single woman) was a long-term teacher in remote villages and elsewhere in Alaska. This volume covers her experience in Valdez and especially Tanana. Gaede-Penner tells the story with humor and in detail. It’s biographical writing at its best and the style is very good. I can’t fathom how Ms. Gaede-Penner managed to take Bortel’s voice so completely. Mrs. Church, who perhaps collaborated, died in December 2014.


Areas of Discussion: Anaktuvuk Pass, Anchorage, Tanana, Valdez

This is my favorite of the series. Gaede-Penner recounts Miss Bortel’s later career as the first teacher at the first school in Anaktuvuk Pass. Anaktuvuk residents were the last nomadic people in the United States; they didn’t settle until 1949 and had no school until 1960. Mrs. Church held several other significant Alaskan teaching jobs, most notably at the Anchorage Native Service Hospital.

(Cont. on pg. 17)

This is Dr. Elmer E. Gaede’s reminiscence of his long Alaska medical practice and aviation. This book recounts many incidents of Public Health Service and private medical practice, big game hunts, homesteading, friendship and family life, as well as two spectacular walk-away airplane crashes and a long, cold walk along the Bering Sea. With the possible exceptions of the Aleutian Chain and the Alexander Archipelago he visited pretty much all areas in the Territory and State. This book is full of excitement, humor, and at times, pathos.


This is the fourth (that I’ve read, anyway) of Naomi Gaede-Penner’s retelling of her Family’s and Anna Bortel’s Alaskan Experience. It’s her most personal, written in her own voice. Like the other three volumes in her series, Kansas Wheat fields is excellent. It combines both fact and adventure, but there is also an undercurrent of ambivalence working itself out as wisdom. Anyone would probably enjoy this story and many might profit from it.


This is Laura and Norris Porter’s reminiscence of their two years as territorial school teachers in Flat, 1938-1940. It’s an excellent primary source, an evocation of Bush Life between the World Wars. It’s amazing if Mrs. Porter wrote it near the copyright date, since she was about 80 years old. The book describes by name many people who lived in the Iditarod District just before World War II. It’s well written; mostly funny, sometimes ribald and at times very sad. There are two negative elements: 1) Porter recites non-Native contempt for Alaska Natives and other minorities, with little comment; 2) Apparently no copy is available in any Alaskan library or historical collection. The nearest copy seems to be at the University of Oregon! ★
The Writer’s Block Bookstore & Café is set to be Anchorage, Alaska’s newest (and only) independent bookstore focusing on new books and Alaska-based authors. The Writer’s Block will blend the best of two worlds by coupling a truly unique bookstore with a café that serves up delicious homemade food made from locally available farms and suppliers.

The big picture is to have a space that will be a venue for writers, readers, artists, musicians and families... weekly events, monthly art shows and regular book signings, readings and live music performances will be posted on the events page of the website (currently under construction).
Not accepted: paid advertising; material intended to “sell; make a profit” rather than to “inform.” Submissions viewed as advertisements, unless item is of particular interest to Alaska, Alaskan patrons, libraries, or is submitted by an AkLA member.

Accepted: Alaskana—books, book reviews, or articles relating to, or of interest to, Alaskan librarians and/or their patrons. Informative material related to libraries and librarianship, especially in regard to Alaska.

Most anything submitted by AkLA members—reasonably tasteful, of appropriate length, “decently” well-written; author is willing to submit to possible editorial changes. This may include length, perhaps spellings, downsizing of convoluted sentences... (Editor will make every effort to let the author know of, and pre-approve, any significant changes before the material is published in Newspoke.)

Other—determined on an individual basis by “the committee” (defined as a group of at least three people, composed of AkLA members).

If the Newspoke editor, or the individual submitting, has questions or concerns about any submission, the matter will be sent on to the Newspoke Committee.
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PNLA Annual Conference, Hilton Hotel, Vancouver, WA  Aug. 5-7, 2015
ALA Midwinter Meeting, Boston, MA  Jan. 8-12, 2016
AkLA Annual Conference, Westmark Hotel, Fairbanks, AK  Mar. 10-13, 2016