Anchorage Public Library (APL) was awarded a grant from the Space Science Institute’s (SSI) National Center for Interactive Learning (NCIL), in partnership with the University of Virginia (UVA) and the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), to develop and implement a two-year program, called Project BUILD (Building Using an Interactive Learning Design).

The project engages youth (grades 2-5), their families, librarians, and professional engineers in an informal learning environment with age-appropriate, technology-rich STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) learning experiences fundamental to the engineering design process.

Seeking to serve the underserved segments of the community, the overarching aim of the project is to provide experiences that expand young people’s learning preferences to include STEM-related careers as possible options.

Project BUILD also provides access to knowledgeable engineering professionals who participate in sessions and offer guidance through their insights and experiences. Project BUILD is part of NCIL’s ground-breaking STAR Library Network (STAR Net).

APL will host a Community Dialogue event to engage in conversations with representatives from
Make a commitment to kindergarten readiness by encouraging all preschool-aged children at your library to read 1,000 books before they enter kindergarten. A goal of reading 1,000 books can be challenging, but it is doable with dedication. Research suggests that caregivers and children read together for 10-20 minutes per day to increase the child’s reading readiness.

Caregivers can share two to three picture books with their children in 20 minutes, and, if done daily, that adds up to 1,000 books in one year. Even if children sign up at age three or four, they can still meet their goal before kindergarten. For those that finish, they have set the habit of daily reading in the home and the family can create a library routine that will last far beyond when they've reached their goal. A home life that includes positive experiences with reading and the library ensures positive attitudes for reading once in school.

Reasons why this program is awesome:

1. The children know that they’re a part of something. Whenever they finish 100 books, they come to turn in their sheet, waving it in the air and skipping. You can tell they're really proud.
2. Caregivers are conscious about their role in school readiness. Reading before school is not only a fun way to bond as a family, it actually does terrific stuff for the child’s developing brain.
3. It benefits us and it benefits them. Circulation numbers increase. The families have a successful, productive visit to the library. The kids feel good coming to the library.

Once it's set up and organized, staff time is minimal, with only some ongoing maintenance: making sure there is an inventory of book logs and awards and continuing to promote the program. There could be an increase in circulation of children's books and perhaps an increase in toddler and preschool story time attendance. It can strengthen the relationship between the library, local schools, and local child care providers, both center based and home based. Increased knowledge of the library and the services it provides benefits everyone.

However, in the case of a multi-year program like "1,000 Books", there needs to be a financial commitment so that children reaching "1,000 Books" four years from now will receive the same recognition as those completing the program in 18 months. There needs to be a time commitment made by the library that the staff will have the time necessary to actively promote the program, which could include annual letters to parents and visits to schools. Individual staff members will need to understand the importance of early literacy and feel comfortable in inviting parents and children to participate. Everyone needs to be on board!

The program itself is simple: Children receive logs to track how many books they read. No sign up is required on the part of caregivers or families. Simply hand out the first reading log to interested caregivers.

(Cont. on pg. 3)
and children. Then, the caregivers and children read books together and the child colors in a circle for every book they read or listen to. If they read a book multiple times, each reading counts toward finishing the log. After each 100 book log, the child brings their log into the library and receives the next one. You can do a special halfway prize after 500 books, such as providing a finger puppet or small plush toy.

When the child completes 1,000 books, celebrate their success! You can provide them with a free book of their choice, a certificate, or even an invitation to an annual “graduation” party for finishers. If their caregiver is willing, you could take some kind of completion photo or put their first name on a completion bulletin board in your library.

Drafts of all of the logs are available online for free at the Alaska State Library’s website: http://lam.alaska.gov/EarlyLit/1000B4K. Alaska libraries can use these materials for their own reading program.

Each reading log has sufficient space for you to label or stamp your library's name and address to personalize your logs.

Artwork for the program was made by Lee Post. Alaska Northwest Books and the Friends of the Anchorage Public Library are sponsors of the program, and Anchorage Public Library is providing the artwork free of charge to Alaska libraries.

Feel free to make this project your own and adapt it to the needs of your library users. Have fun reading!

Samantha Blanquart
Early Literacy Outreach Coordinator
Anchorage Public Library/Alaska State Library

(Public Library Grant - Cont. from pg. 1)

the local community, including ASCE volunteers, local business/industry, community organizations, Girl and Boy Scout leaders, 4-H, homeschool groups, caregivers, and teachers, with an emphasis on including representatives from groups currently underrepresented in STEM professions.

This grant will focus on learning experiences designed to help youth:

1) Solve challenge-focused (real or simulated) problems using an engineering design process and 2) Use age-appropriate technology to model how engineers build a better world and improve the local community.

Thanks to the $10,000 grant from SSI, APL will make STEM learning experiences available to patrons through dedicated spaces called Ready – Set – Create Learning Centers and creating circulating STEM kits.

Linda Klein
Youth Services Librarian
Anchorage Public Library
CONTINUING EDUCATION GRANTS ENHANCE CONFERENCE EXPERIENCE

The Alaska State Library has instituted a CE grant requirement that we believe will help disperse the learning that occurs during conferences. Individuals who have been awarded a CE grant are now required to write a short (up to 250 words) *Newspoke* article about their conference attendance to share what’s been learned with the larger library community. We hope this requirement will provide attendees with an opportunity to stop and reflect back on their conference experiences and personally apply what they’ve learned.

Julie Marie Niederhauser
Public Library Coordinator
Alaska State Library

Quite a number of these CE write-ups were received. Some will be published in the next issue of *Newspoke*. One came from “Robert Delgato rkdelda@gmail.com” and was labeled “Kim.odt” I was unable to open it or to contact him. Please resend in MSWord format.

Conference is a Time to Share Knowledge and Learn from Others

Spring is just around the corner, and it was time for Librarians from around the state to get together to share ideas, stories, and inspiration. It was time to get some relief from the short, dark days of winter, to relieve our Cabin Fever, and bring some fresh ideas and new enthusiasm back home to our libraries. At least that is what AkLA was for this Librarian. Attending the conference is a much needed chance to tout my successes and lament over my failures. It is a place to learn from others.

I learned many new tips and tricks to use in my children's programming. I hope to instill a love of books in children, and the new ideas will make my programming fresh and more appealing to the kids who participate. The more excitement I can bring to them is just that much more support I can receive from them. We can be encouragement for each other and learn as we go.

I will be sharing with my staff the information and tips that were presented to deal with disruptive behavior. We will be doing some more research and practice in these skills so as to engage with teens and children in a more productive manner. We want teens and children to participate in activities and visit the library, but we deal with a small space and we need to coexist with the other patrons and the adults of the community, and so learning to deal with difficult patrons and disruptive ones is essential to making everyone's library experience a pleasant and productive one.

(Cont. on pg. 5)
Attending AkLA is about renewing acquaintances with Librarians from around the State. It is a time to share our knowledge and a time to learn from others. It is a chance to make our lives and those around us better for everyone.

Jennie Earles
Trapper Creek Public Library

AkLA Conference Opened Many New Doors

My coworkers have often attended various library conferences to present ideas, hear from amazing speakers, and learn about the latest resources available for libraries. As they related some of what they experienced, I found myself thinking about how much I could learn by attending one of these conferences. Unfortunately, I knew that as a part-time employee, my library wouldn’t be able to justify the expense of sending me. Between the travel costs, hotels, registration, and more, it was a significant investment. My supervisor knew I was interested, and so this year she suggested I try applying for the AkLA Conference Regional Attendance Award Travel Grant, which would help defer the costs so I could attend a conference specifically for Alaskan libraries.

Being awarded the grant was a huge step for me. I was able to meet some phenomenal people with great insights into different programming and patron groups that I had never realized before. I was able to attend sessions on library technology, create a virtual tour of my own library, learn about innovative teen programming, get ideas about forming partnerships with local agencies, and so much more. The AkLA conference was able to open so many new doors for me. I know I can take my conference experiences, the people I met, and the things I learned, forward as I continue my career. The possibilities in life are endless, and with these new tools in my belt I know I’ll reach farther than ever before.

Bethany McMilin
Kenai Community Library

Dealing Compassionately with Problematic People

I am a library volunteer in Cooper Landing, and this year’s AkLA conference in Anchorage was the first one I was able to attend, thanks to the CE grant I was awarded. It was a bit overwhelming, even with the session dedicated to first-time attendees that was held at the beginning of the conference. I would have enjoyed more workshops that had attendees pairing up or working in teams. I think it would benefit all the different levels of education and experience had we been encouraged to interact more with one another. Many of the lectures did not apply to my small rural library, run entirely by volunteers and just a few steps behind the current technology enjoyed by other libraries.

My favorite session was with Ryan Dowd, and I am truly regretful I did not attend the full three hour

(Cont. on pg. 6)
training that was offered early in the conference. He spoke about dealing compassionately in the library with difficult people experiencing homelessness. While we do not have a homeless population in my town, I felt that one could entirely remove the word “homeless” and just learn more about dealing compassionately with problematic people in general. I felt his presentation was enjoyable, enlightening, and accessible to all.

Finally, I must mention, assuming that this may be viewed by future organizers of this event, that I was a bit disappointed by lack of diversity among the vendors. I thought it ironic that with so much time spent discussing diversity nearly all of the vendors were hawking Alaska books, primarily for young readers. I came hoping to see more, and was prepared to shop, but left without buying anything.

I am grateful for the opportunity to attend this event, and fully intend to continue following AkLA news. It was a pleasure being surrounded by such a passionate and intelligent group of people, all striving towards a similar goal.

Melissa Fish
Cooper Landing

Understanding the Need to Provide a "Listening" Ear

This year I had the pleasure of attending the AKLA 2018 conference in Anchorage, the theme of which was “Bridging the Gaps.” As a social justice advocate, I appreciated the number of workshops that addressed some of today’s most pressing issues: homelessness, fake news, disruptive behavior, and racism (literary citizenship with Brendan Kiely). With the proliferation of "fake news" appearing on social media, and the increase in social media as a news source, it is important that we keep patrons aware of news stories that may be misleading, inaccurate, or unreliable.

Our library will help to educate our patrons about "fake news" and its impact on our understanding of the world. We will help them to find legitimate news sources and teach them to identify stories and sites with misleading content. We will show them how to fact check stories through sites like snopes.com, factcheck.org, and politifact.com

Brendan Kiely’s presentation was fantastic, and I really enjoyed the interactive discussion on racism and toxic masculinity. The public library attracts patrons from all walks of life, all socioeconomic backgrounds, and all ethnicities. It is important that we, as librarians and citizens, engage with one another about these issues through inclusive civic dialogue. I truly enjoyed attending this conference, and I feel better prepared to deal with conflict in the library. I have a better understanding of the difficulties faced by some patrons and the need to provide a “listening” ear.

Valerie Ni hEideáin
Assistant Librarian
Irene Ingle Public Library
Wrangell, Alaska

(Cont. on pg. 7)
Librarians Partnering with Social Workers

This year I was able to attend the Alaska Library Association’s Conference “Bridging the Gaps” in Anchorage. As a first-time attendee I was not sure what to expect, but hopes were high and my eyes wide in excitement as I prepared for the conference.

The first day was brief but exciting. I made it to the orientation to meet fellow first timers and attended the opening reception. The next day was my first full conference day and I made the most of it by attending five sessions. My favorite was “Bringing Social Work Help to the Library.” I work in outreach at the Juneau Public Library, so I learned a lot about how social workers can help connect library patrons to services libraries don’t offer. I hope to make connections with social workers in my community and partner with them to see how we can help our patrons.

On a lighter note, “What’s Love Got To Do With It: Libraries and the Romance Genre” was a session I attended Saturday. As someone who does not read romance, I learned a lot and felt a bit ashamed of my preconceived notions of the romance genre. Finally, the last day ended with “History of the American Comic Book” and though exhausted at this point, I left with yet another reading list.

In all, I learned much about librarianship and myself, and I have many more books to read!

Felicite Toney
Community Outreach Assistant
Juneau Public Libraries

Libraries Developing Creative Programming

I recently became the new Public Services Librarian in Gustavus, Alaska, and felt very fortunate to be able to attend the 2018 AKLA Conference! I gained a lot of insight just from being around so many other librarians, and learned much from attending a variety of sessions with topics ranging from Fake News to Bibliotherapy.

Attending this AKLA conference, one thing that really stuck with me was learning how a great variety of different libraries (from large cities to very small, rural communities) are becoming inventive with their structure and programming to help best meet the needs of the patrons they serve. In the Red Hot Library Programming session, I loved learning about the creative programming that libraries are developing—such as community gardens and break-out boxes to help engage young people in new ways at the library.

(Cont. on pg. 8)
I was excited to hear from librarians who were so dedicated to developing unconventional programming that helped bring new community members into the library. Additionally, I gained a lot from attending sessions about best meeting the needs of patrons who are traditionally underserved in libraries, such as those experiencing homelessness. Attending this conference made me wonder who in our community does not feel comfortable accessing the library, and how we as librarians could help bridge that gap.

Jen Gardner
Gustavus Public Library

How Can Libraries Serve All People Equally

Rare is the conference that invites you to reexamine your work and life, to search for the tacit assumptions that govern your routine. But that was my experience at the 2018 AkLA conference in Anchorage, which I attended thanks to a continuing education grant from the Alaska Library Association. The theme “Bridging the Gaps” resonated through talks by keynote speakers Jennifer O’Neal and Jervette Ward, author Brendan Kiely, and endnote speaker Loida Garcia-Febo.

O’Neal noted the disconnect between the traditions of indigenous peoples and the operation of archives based in colonialism; she exhorted us to give power back to source communities and to do it now. Ward urged us to fight for social justice even through language, saying “our words have work to do, and our words have worth.”

To hold our institutions accountable for racism, Kiely reminded us to hold ourselves accountable first. And Garcia-Febo charged us to be bold, brave, and creative: each librarian is an advocate. These are poor summaries of what these speakers said so eloquently, but maybe they can prompt us as librarians to ask more questions, of ourselves and the diverse patrons we serve.

Perhaps I had come to Anchorage to learn book repair, gather tips for assisting patrons, and meet librarians from across Alaska. While I did do all those things (and it was fantastic to meet so many of you!), what I have reflected on most in the past two weeks has been this: How best can I effect the changes needed to make sure libraries serve all people equally, with the respect and dignity that we all deserve?

Jackie McDonough
Library Technician
Homer

(Cont. on pg. 9)
Thank You All for Your Wonderful Support of Libraries

The Samuel B. Foss Library is a small, rural library operated by the tribe. When I took the job of Library Director 3.5 years ago, my experience with libraries was limited to being a lifelong patron. It was immediately apparent that I would need some training. My first training was the School Public Collaborative Library Training in 2016 which was invaluable to library management.

There is an important requirement that Library Directors get training every two years, and I’ve always wanted to attend the AkLA Conference. It was great to put faces to the many people that have provided support for our library!

There were so many sessions to choose from! I chose sessions like Book Repair Seminar, Practical Skills for Difficult Patrons, E Rate and Wifi information. Alaskana is very important to our library, and the roundtable was useful. Best was seeing Barbara Atwater and getting a signed copy of her book *How Raven Got His Crooked Nose: An Alaskan Dena’ina Fable*. She is one of our tribal members, and we are very proud of her new work! I immediately read this book to my granddaughters, and they were captivated. It is interesting to note that our library was named after Barbara’s grandfather! Thank you all for your wonderful support of libraries all over the state of Alaska!

Beverly Cloud
Technical Program Specialist
Samuel B. Foss Library
Pedro Bay Village Council

Libraries Engage the Public With New and Varied Perspectives

As a “Libraries Build Communities Project VISTA” volunteer, new to Alaska and the library world, I was excited to meet librarians from across the state, hear about their wonderful work, and learn more about the mission of public and school libraries. While my work over the past year has given me some idea of the vast scope of services that libraries may provide, I was impressed by the dedication and innovation of Alaska librarians who transform unique, and often difficult, circumstances into opportunities.

 Appropriately for its title “Bridging the Gaps,” much of the conference focused on reaching out to new audiences and centering on the experiences of those marginalized. I began the conference with the striking keynote address by Jennifer O’Neal, who spoke about the revolutionary work done to reclaim Native Alaskan history and culture after generations of enforced silence. She challenged us all to reexamine our perspective and institutional traditions, and to engage personally in decolonization and meaningful dialogues.

(Cont. on pg. 10)
I closed the conference with the session on bibliotherapy for preschoolers, presented by Samantha Blanquart. A very different topic, to be sure, but these sessions, it seems to me, neatly bookend the scope of the “Bridging the Gaps” theme and libraries’ missions. How do we understand the world, and our place in it? More and more, libraries strive beyond that static image of a silent book/record repository to integrate with communities and individual patrons. From the newest readers discovering the world through stories to communities reclaiming traditional knowledge, libraries engage the public with new and varied perspectives as guides to histories, the modern world, and their own future.

Meagan Harris
VISTA volunteer
Craig Library

Much Information from Attendee Interaction

My first attendance at the AKLA Conference was a positive experience. I was a bit overwhelmed at the sheer number of people in attendance. I was glad to see the wide variety of sessions available, but honestly, I gleaned the most information from interaction with the other attendees.

I did find the E Rate session beneficial in helping to understand what E Rate is and how it is useful to my library. I’d liked to have seen more sessions dedicated to small libraries in smaller communities. I felt that much of the information I received was very valuable but didn’t necessarily apply to my situation.

I understand that SLIM (Small Library Institute of Management) is coming up, but I cannot attend both AkLA and SLIM due to having a full-time job outside of the library. My attendance was required at AkLA, but in the future I would like to see more dedication to the small libraries that are important parts of Alaska’s small communities.

Mandi Jacobs
Moose Pass Public Library

Exceptional Speakers and Programs

Thanks to a CE Grant, I attended the AkLA 2018 ‘Bridging the Gaps’ conference in Anchorage. Like many small public libraries, we do not have a big budget for travel and training. So this professional event within the State, in combination with a CE Grant, is invaluable.

All of the keynote speakers were exceptional! Each of their individual perspectives on ‘Bridging Gaps’ highlighted the amazing diversity and depth of experience waiting to be embraced, and the honored role as librarians that we play in collaborating, sharing, and bringing together these voices of diversity.

(Cont. on pg.11)
A highlight of this year’s conference: Ryan Dowd’s mini-training with practical skills for homeless patrons. This fifty minutes was so useful that I hope our library can follow up with his more-in-depth training.

Also special was the ‘Alaska Reads’ session promoting this fabulous program for getting talented authors around the state to share their voices with our patrons. A great program with a bright future. Another favorite session: ‘Alaskana for Your Library Collection,’ a topic near and dear to my heart, and a wonderful discussion of varied insights and vast experience.

As an island dweller, I have limited opportunities to meet face-to-face with colleagues, and one of my favorite opportunities at AkLA is meeting those librarians I work with electronically almost every day, and talking libraries with them!

Congratulations to AkLA for another great gathering!

Joanna Perensovich
Information Systems Librarian
Sitka Public Library

PLA in Philadelphia, 2018—Imagine the Possibilities!

Spending five days with over 7,000 people who work in Public Libraries—what an honor it is to participate in this profession!

This was my first time attending a large convention, so I prepared by exploring the conference website as thoroughly as I could prior to my travels. I live in a cabin in the woods. Big City, big crowds? Yikes. Upon arrival, I oriented myself to the conference facility, explored food options in the area, and got a good night’s sleep.

Sloppy wet snow started falling, fourth major storm of March was anticipated, and the city of Philadelphia officially shut down. Big, quiet city. Plans change. What to do then? Imagine the Possibilities.

My conference experience was filled with amazing people sharing their stories—many individuals, who in their own childhoods, found libraries safe, accessible, providing essential life resources. Over and over, this was the message. Turns out, we can make a difference for the good. Adz Kilcher was the exception. As a kid who was always kicked out of libraries for loud rude behavior, he’s so happy to have his book resident!

Still imagining possibilities, and beginning preparations for AkLA 2019 in Juneau.

MJ Grande
Youth Services Librarian
Juneau Public Libraries
Free Access to Information is a Human Right

Librarians never fail to impress me. Throughout my career, whenever presented with the opportunity to gather with my colleagues, I have come away with a feeling that I almost cannot express, but something akin to community, purposefulness, and like-mindedness. Aside from the fact that we all work in the same industry and do similar work, there is something deeper about the philosophy of this profession, and particularly the job of public librarian. It feels like a commitment to what is right. We are all here to help others, without prejudice or judgment. The core of our mission is to enable free access to information, which I learned in some sessions is a human right.

These conferences provide a brief moment in time where we can relax and feel easy about the fact that all those jointly gathered “get” what we are doing. We do not have to explain the basics. We do not have to defend our institutions nor their worth to society. We are afforded the gift, if even for a short time, to envision what our futures might look like in this common goal of equal footing for all humans in this life journey we are on. We share visions, ideas, and possibilities with one another. We exchange pleasantries and compare notes. We form bonds and friendships that carry us through the year. It is like a surge of energy and courage to try new things gifted to us that helps us make it until we meet again.

When someone asks me if these conferences are worth it, I don’t know where to begin.

 Melissa Harter
Director of Libraries
Fairbanks North Star Borough Libraries

Learning Ways to Improve Programs and Customer Service

I, like most of you, have fond memories of my child and adulthood libraries. I remember reading under the covers; being allowed to go into the “off-limits” places in the library, and how it often was the first place I went to when, as an adult, for seven years we moved often as I was (and still am) married to a military man. I home-schooled my children for many years, substituted at the local schools, and was involved in my local two-room library in Talkeetna, first as a volunteer and later as an on-call library aide, then Assistant Librarian, and am currently the librarian.

I attended the AkLA Conference in March. The sessions that were offered were diverse, and I wanted to attend all of them, but I knew I had to narrow it down. Looking back on my selections, I

(Cont. on pg. 13)
realize that most of the sessions I attended were about children and storytimes: Alaskan Reads, Bells and Whistles for Storytime, Bibliotherapy with Children, and Summer Reading Program.

But the one that stands out in my mind was Sensory Overload: Adapting Storytime for Children on the Autism Spectrum. I've been working with children for over 50 years in various capacities, I've been Miss Geri to several generations of children in Talkeetna, and I currently have a very active storytime group of 20 very pre-schoolers (infant to age 5). I notice that the parents are aware of and concerned about the quirks and differences in social skills and interactions in the group. They sometimes get upset that their children are not “behaving correctly” in public settings.

I am pretty good at storytelling, reading, and involving the kids in discussion, but I have made an effort these last two weeks to add singing and motion and breaks. The tips from the presenters can help with all children. The skills taught in this session were especially helpful in making me more aware and sensitive to different approaches to large group dynamics.

I would be remiss if I did not also mention the course taught by Anya Keen on book repair. I learned that there is more to book repair than just slapping on a ton of glue! But what was the most inspiring and refreshing was working with a person who is so passionate about her work. Her love of books and her ability to make them look new and get them back in the hands of the patrons was evident. And that was very inspiring to me.

The best part of the conference was chatting with other librarians and learning ways to improve programs and customer service. After bringing home the ideas to my staff, they were also excited about trying new things. It is evident that librarians love their jobs!

Geri Denkewalter
Librarian
Talkeetna Public Library

Learning Equality Versus Equity

When I attended PLA 2018, one of the most important concepts I took away was equality verses equity. Libraries are big on equality! We want all people to be able to access our services—for education, entertainment, or information. Equality means treating everyone the same; our books check out for the same length of time, people can take the same number of items, and people accrue the same amount of fines. We strive to be fair!

Several of the sessions I went to focused on equity, instead of equality. If equality means treating everyone the same, equity means giving everyone what they need to be successful. People come to us from different places in their lives; the rules we have set in place that treat everyone the same are
more harmful to some people! Equity means asking yourself and your staff: “What if we removed fines from children’s materials” or “What if we allowed people at the senior centers to check out movies twice as long as normal” or “Why do we only offer daytime story times?”

It means we might give more or different services to people who need more, and less or fewer services to people who have more. I like the idea of having an equity-driven service model, and I definitely need to dig in and do more research!

Andi Hirsh  
Electronic Services  
Community Outreach Librarian  
Juneau Public Libraries

This Conference Gives a Clearer Idea of What a Library Can Do

My name is Susan Baker and I attended the 2018 Akla Conference in Anchorage. I represented the Chiniak Public Library which burned down in August 2015 due to a wildfire. Even though our community and library are very small compared to most libraries across the state of Alaska, I gleaned much information from this conference that will be helpful as we will hopefully be in our new building this fall. The State Library Staff were available to me, and I was able to share what is going on with the progress of the new building.

We have received over the past two years many donated, good books from libraries across the state and from local Kodiak Island residents who have been downsizing their collections. The book repair session I attended will save some of those books that are set aside to repair that I couldn’t discard because they are classics and out of print.

The overall message of this conference was a good one and as it is the mission of every library to include all members of the community in which each library resides, and to have available the tools to help people help themselves to succeed in whatever good path they take. It made me reflect on how our community library has dealt with issues of homelessness, internet connection, and social activities that are vital to the health and well being of a community. I’m heartened to realize how special our community is in that respect.

Each time I attend this conference I come back with a clearer picture of what our library can and must do to make available all the resources that are available from the Alaska State Library, and even
the resources we have in our own community.

Our community and library staff are excited that we will have the new building, improved internet services, and community gatherings, and will never take for granted what we had and will have this fall. We look forward to the memories we will create for the kids and adults alike.

Susan Baker
Chiniak Public Library

Public Library Association Conference in a Snow Storm

I attended my first PLA conference in Philadelphia this past March which started in the midst of Toby, a four‘easter: that is, the fourth nor‘easter to hit the East Coast in a matter of weeks. Snow predictions for Philly were overblown, the flights of many attendees and presenters were cancelled, and I even stocked up on food and, er, beverages after watching The Weather Channel for far too long. The storm hit, but as evidenced by the photo of my coworker, Melissa Prince, and me, it was more a bit of rain and chill than snow.

As you can imagine, the conference was memorable for reasons other than Toby. To me, most notable were a few of the headline speakers. Daniel Pink discussed his new release, *When: The scientific secrets of perfect timing*, in which he weaves research from psychology, biology, neuroscience, and economics to help us make time our friend. Tim Wu, best known for coining the term *network neutrality*, seems as in awe of the work librarians do as librarians are of his work.

Finally, the closing session was a perfect ending on a high note with plenty of laughter from comedian and The Daily Show Correspondent, Hasan Minhaj.

I was pleased to meet a few other librarians from Alaska and look forward to working with them as the Fairbanks Public Libraries join the ALC in May.

Wendy M. Zimmerman
Collections Librarian
Noel Wien Public Library

This book changed my life, restoring a measure of sanity to today’s contentious political environment. The world would be a better place if everyone read it.

In recent years, not understanding how people could hold some views has frustrated me more than the views themselves. This book explains scientifically how different moral and ethical systems developed, how people make choices within those frame-works, and how people do (or don’t) change their minds.

Big takeaways: logic plays very little role in decision-making in most cases, regardless of political bent, and the only way to change people’s minds is to listen with an open heart and open mind, and then answer questions if they decide they trust you enough to ask. See http://righteousmind.com/ for more information and related resources.


Even adults will get caught up in the magic of this Aleutian relic quest! Written for young adults, this adventure brings two young people together on a wild journey through the folklore of the ancient peoples of the mysterious islands, the Unangan.

Volcano Woman, Real Raven, and a cast of characters based on real historical figures sweep the teenagers away from their familiar homes with a strange bookmark that transmutes time as they try to return a carved ivory amulet.

Set in the real-life Islands of Four Mountains, the untamed seas and volcanic rocks come to life in fantastic imagery.

Along their journey they resolve some of their own issues while attempting to save Unangan culture.

This is a delightful and sometimes darkly suspenseful tale drawn from the myths and legends of the Unangan. Ray Hudson received the Evangeline Atwood Award for Excellence from the Alaska Historical Society in 2017.
NOTE: This short note is abridged from a longer review, which readers of *Newspoke* are encouraged to read.  
[link](file:///C:/Users/Larry/Downloads/OpheimReview18%20(1).pdf)
GENERAL GUIDELINES TO PUBLISHING IN NEWSPOKE

Alaska Library Association
Newsletter

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 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.
ALASKA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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* Newspoke, Loretta Andress  aflma@gci.net

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CALENDAR

SLIM Workshop, Kashevaroff Building, Juneau, AK  May 21-25, 2018
PNLA Conference, Kalispell, MT  Aug. 1-3, 2018
Alaska Historical Society Annual Conf., Nome, AK  Sep. 2018
PNC/MLA Annual Meeting, Spokane, WA  Oct. 14-16 2018
ALA Midwinter Meeting, Seattle, WA  Jan. 25-29, 2019
Medical Library Assn. Conf., Chicago, IL  May 3-8, 2019
ALA Annual Conf., WA, DC:  Jun. 20-25, 2019