AkLA MEMBERSHIP

With our new membership website, renewing your Alaska Library Association (AkLA) membership or joining for the first time is easier than ever. Now the hardest part is parting with your dues. Spending $30 or $60 or $90 on an AkLA membership may strike some as an act of philanthropy. I think this is the wrong way to look at it. Instead, you should regard membership in AkLA as a shrewd investment in the future of your library and your job.

AkLA is on the forefront of the fight for Alaska libraries. Without AkLA, our positions as library workers or library users would be much worse. If you enjoy professional development for yourself, or for the colleagues you work with day in and day out, it's worth supporting AkLA. AkLA puts on an annual conference, organizes and sponsors regular training activities, and maintains set of active email lists. If you have patrons who enjoy SLED or Live Homework Help, thank AkLA, which mobilized its members very effectively to help defend funding for these resources and libraries generally. And if you value cooperation between librarians, AkLA is your friend. AkLA's various roundtables and chapters bring together librarians based on location or interest; there are roundtables devoted to youth services, public libraries, academic libraries, intellectual freedom, Alaska Native issues, cataloging, and so on.

All of these things benefit you whether or not you join AkLA. But here's the thing. They benefit you more if you join AkLA. I don't think of AkLA as a feel-good social club. I like to think of AkLA as a fighting organization. It needs money and it needs members if it is going to keep advocating for libraries.

(Cont. on pg. 2)
I write this on Election Day, a day when our nation celebrates the power and the value of each individual voice. We are making a decision together and submitting our choices to a national conversation about the direction in which we want our country to move. It is a great day.

I have to tell you, truthfully, that in many ways my feelings about the Alaska Library Association mirror my feelings about Election Day. Every library worker in Alaska has a voice and something important to contribute to the present and future state of our profession. As the current leader of this association it is my earnest wish to continue to bring more voices into our statewide conversation. We really are so much stronger together, and we are constantly working toward providing the best possible services to each of you.

At its September meeting the Executive Council of the Alaska Library Association began laying the foundation for a new set of strategic initiatives. While the final draft is still undergoing edits, I want to share some of our ideas with you.

Our Mission Statement: Bringing the Alaska library community together through learning, advocacy, and collaborative action.

Guided by this Mission Statement, we are striving to build our community of practice, diversify development opportunities for the workforce of Alaska, grow our group of library advocates, and set the national standard for culturally responsive library services.

If these are ideals that you can get behind, I urge you to consider joining the Alaska Library Association or renewing your membership. Help us to unite these voices and make Alaska’s library community dynamic, inclusive, and essential.

With gravity, determination, and hope for our profession, 

Sara Saxton
ssaxton@ci.wasilla.ak.us

(Membership - Cont. from pg. 1)

Some of the things that make AkLA such a special organization is that it is relatively small, it is egalitarian, and it is driven almost entirely by volunteers. Each person has an opportunity to steer the ship. To that end, if you're still not sure if AkLA is the organization for you or your colleagues, please contact me — the chair of the Membership Committee — and let me know what you would like to see AkLA do for its members. We will do what we can. Please do the same!

Micah Muer, Chair
AkLA Membership Committee
mwmuer@alaska.edu
SCHOOL LIBRARIES AND LIBRARIANS ARE ESSENTIAL TO ALASKA'S STUDENT LEARNING

This spring, the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (AK DEED) will submit its plans for implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This new federal education legislation, which was passed in December 2015, includes (for the first time in over 20 years) the role of effective school library programs.

Many readers will recall school libraries with a sense of nostalgia, a place where a beloved book was discovered or a favorite topic explored. Some will recall the stereotypical shushing librarian. Either way, the school library of the past has been revitalized. Although reading and literacy are still the heart of a school library program, today’s school libraries are so much more than just books. According to the American Association of School Librarians, effective school library programs “are dynamic learning environments that bridge the gap between access and opportunity for all K-12 learners.”

Today’s students are developing a sense of what it means to engage ethically and competently in today’s information society. Under the leadership of a certified school librarian, a school library program provides students access to resources and technology that enable them to link academic knowledge with deep, personalized learning. The expanded learning environment of the school library, which includes online resources for 24/7 access, ensures that each student’s individual needs and interests are met. In short, effective school library programs support effective instruction to prepare students for college, career, and community.

Unfortunately in Alaska, state law does not require certified school librarians or school library programs. As of 2015-2016, less than 20% of Alaska’s schools were supported by a certified librarian. Additionally, the Alaska State Library lost funding for the full-time State School Library Coordinator and replaced it with a part-time contracted position with no funding for in-person training to help rural educators leverage existing state resources.

Children in Alaska deserve access to resources and staffing that drive student success. The Every Student Succeeds Act has the potential to provide federal funding for Alaska to adopt the most recent standards for information literacy (our current standards are from 1999); provide recommendations and assistance to local educational agencies in developing effective school library programs; define “effective school library programs” in state law; apply for and use USDOE funding under the Innovative Approaches to Literacy program to improve school library service in eligible schools across the state; and authorize the state and local educational agencies to use a portion of federal funds to support instructional services provided by effective school library programs.

Here’s how you can help:

• Speak up and ask! Drop the words “library,” “librarian,” and “library programs” to everyone. Say it out loud and ask

(Cont. on pg.4)
out loud. Remind people that you care about libraries in your schools.

- Learn about ESSA and become a partner with us in helping shape state and local implementation by visiting the AK DEED ESSA webpage (http://education.alaska.gov/akessa) and the Alaska Association of School Librarians (AkASL) ESSA webpage (http://akasl.org/essa).

- Talk with your school principals, school boards, and school district administrators and ask them how they are supporting libraries within the framework of the new federal law.

- It’s important that your legislators know why your school library is important to you and your Alaska kids. Please take the time to write, email, phone, and/or tweet your elected officials. Tell them how your school library benefits your student. Visit the AkASL ESSA webpage for tips on how to write to your legislative officials and what to say.

- Ask the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development to define effective school library programs, seek federal funding to develop effective school library programs throughout the state, and encourage local educational agencies to use their ESSA funds to support school libraries.

- EveryLibrary is a national library advocacy group. Sign their petition for school libraries to help encourage Alaska and other states to fund school libraries with school librarians at http://action.everylibrary.org/school-librarianpetition

When you talk to you legislator, school administrator, or friends, don’t forget to tell them every kid deserves a school library and libraries transform lives.


Deborah Rinio
Secretary & Past-President (2015-16)
Alaska Association of School Librarians
CONGRATULATIONS
TO SARAH PRESKITT—AWESOME ANCHORAGE PUBLIC LIBRARY EMPLOYEE AWARD WINNER!

Sarah Preskitt, Adult Services Librarian at Loussac Library, earned the Awesome Public Library Employee Award for her constant, inspiring enthusiasm, her continuing courage to innovate and take risks, and her ability to gracefully manage criticism and obstacles while doing so. She was the mastermind behind the purchase of the “Library A-Go-Go” e-bike, which she graciously shared with other locations throughout the summer season.

She also initiated APL’s partnership with UAA and DHHS to provide a social worker intern at the Loussac Library. This assists in our efforts to provide a lifeline to our most vulnerable patrons and provides a learning opportunity for a UAA graduate student.

Sarah received the award on October 14, 2016, at Loussac Library, along with a small token of appreciation and a letter from Acting Library Director Sherri Douglas. She will display the award at Loussac through December 2016.

The Awesome Anchorage Public Library Employee Award was created following the October 2015 Staff “Construction” Day to recognize staff who go above and beyond by taking risks and pursuing innovative ideas to improve our service. Whether an idea or a project succeeds or fails, it’s important to get creative and try new things, no matter your position at APL.

Annie Reeves
Community Relations Coordinator
Anchorage Public Library
The 26th Polar Libraries Colloquy (PLC) held its biennial conference, July 10–15, 2016, at the Wedgewood Resort, hosted by the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

The conference opened with the Pavva Iñupiaq Dancers performing three traditional dances, followed by official UAF welcomes from Interim Library Dean Suzan Hahn, Interim Chancellor Mike Powers, and Vice Chancellor for University and Student Advance ment Mike Sfraga.

Over the following five days, Colloquy members gave presentations related to the conference theme, Mapping Change, or in Athabascan, Chitduug Gha Nen’ Ch’etnet’edz. Topics ranged from publishing patterns in polar research and developing collections of primary sources for a Northern Studies collection, to working in Antarctica through the British Antarctic Survey Archives and establishing a digital library service for the Inuvialuit Settlement region.

Guest speakers from the UAF faculty gave invited talks on books in early libraries in Alaska and the Yukon, how hibernation affects animal organs, as well as researching Alaska Native place names, just to name a few. A morning film festival, an afternoon workshop on oral history, tours of buildings on the UAF campus, and a choice of field trips to Fairbanks highlights rounded out the conference.

Attendance was down from past years, but that did not dampen the enthusiasm of the group. Twenty-five librarians, professionals, and specialists were officially registered, representing 20 libraries, research centers, institutes, or other entities from five countries.

PLC provides an international forum through which librarians and others concerned with the collection, preservation, and dissemination of information dealing with the Arctic and Antarctic regions discuss issues of mutual interest and promote initiatives leading to improved collections and services.

Meeting every other year, the conference traditionally alternates between Europe and North America, and maintains a website, an email discussion list, and a weblog.

Now, it’s on to 2018 PLC in Rovaniemi, Finland!

Link to the PLC webpage: https://polarlibrariescolloquy.com/

Daria O. Carle
UAA/APU Consortium Library
University of Alaska Anchorage
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**BOOK BUZZ**

Compiled by Larry Hibpshman

**Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End**, Atul Gawande


We all are aging. We also know people who are in “assisted” living situations, how that happened, and generally what it entails. But it is important to know options, what you want, who will see that your wishes are carried out, and how to maintain your independence with or without extra help.

Gawande gives many different scenarios throughout the book which help the reader to understand how and why certain results occur.

Often it is the family that makes the final decision as to where one ends up living as one's health declines and more and more assistance is needed.

Consider too that 90 or 100 years old isn't that uncommon anymore. What we all want in the end, as Tolstoy recognized with Ivan Ilyich’s failing health, is “comfort and companionship.” Keren Brown Wilson is still “trying to work out how ordinary people can age without having to choose between neglect and institutionalization. It remains among the most uncomfortable questions we face.”

Preparing for the future is not an easy task, but we all need to address it sooner rather than later. This is not an easy read, but a necessary one.

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A novelization drawn from Douglas Adams’ shooting script for the Tom Baker Dr. Who episode *City of Death*, involving Paris, time travel, and aliens. Does a decent and humorous job of painting a multidimensional villain and those who serve him.

It also provides a believable interior life for the Doctor and his Timelord companion Romana, something simply not achievable in television.

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Daniel Cornwall of the Alaska State Library in Juneau contributed all four of the following notes. (And what about the rest of you!? Hasn’t anyone read something worth telling us about!?)

Submissions are welcome any time. Send them to Larry -- **ILbombastico@yahoo.com**.

Daniel Cornwall
Alaska State Library, Juneau

(Cont. on pg. 8)
An examination of a world where privacy is physically impossible and one can see to the far reaches of the galaxy or into the depths of time.

Plausible descriptions of how we and our entire society might change when faced with bare facts of what really happened. Also a story of how the most noble gifts to the world can result from base motivations.

The technology, especially means of tracking a specific person in history, is not especially believable, but worth the social commentary.

Daniel Cornwall
Alaska State Library
Juneau


A former NASA scientist and current writer of the xkcd.com web comic uses estimation and current scientific theories to answer questions as weird as “Could the crew of an atomic submarine survive being transported into orbit?” and “What would happen if you could throw a baseball at the speed of light?” Munroe always shows his work, usually in a humorous way.

Drawn from primary sources, an examination of dreams and harsh reality about North America’s Northwest Passage.

Illustrates the tragic results of following maps drawn by armchair geographers driven by wishful thinking. Shows the usefulness of archives by comparing relatively rosy published voyage books to the deeply pessimistic source journals. This book provides plenty of folly, wisdom, arrogance, and bravery to chew on.

Daniel Cornwall
Alaska State Library
Juneau

(Cont. on pg. 9)
SPECIAL LIBRARIES ROUNDTABLE

For those of you who are not familiar with this roundtable, we are made up of institutions that are not public, academic, or school libraries. Our collections tend to specialize in certain topics.

For instance, I work at a special collections library and archives at the Anchorage Museum. There are those that work at law libraries, special collections libraries, patent libraries, etc.

Our roundtable meets annually at the AkLA Conference, where we also have a few sessions that we hope will interest not only those in our roundtable but all librarians as a whole.

Last year we had two excellent sessions, one on legal issues in unpublished and digital materials, and another on privacy and access.

Our roundtable also has a member participate in the Governor’s Advisory Council on Libraries. This council reviews and assists in creating the LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act) Alaska State Plan. If you are interested in becoming part of this roundtable, go to http://akla.org/join/mailing-lists/ to sign up.

Teressa Williams, Chair
Special Libraries Roundtable

(ALASKAN EXPERIENCE CORNER)

Two picture books about Native life: [Submitted by Larry Hibpshman Book Buzz Manager (Kenai).]


This children’s book, written in the voice of a 10-year-old member of the Shark Clan, Eagle Moiety, provides much useful information about Tlingit life, experience, and ceremonies.

Along the way, it illustrates life in Southeast Alaska—not merely Juneau, but remote, more often overlooked, communities: Hoonah, Excursion Inlet, and Gutavus. Ms. Belarde-Lewis includes valuable essays about her own dual Zuni-Tlingit identity and the Tlingit perception of the passage of the year. Mr. Harrington’s photos of Lydia and matters that are important to her complete the beauty of this work of art.


Larry Hibpshman, Kenai
Book Buzz Manager
ILbombastico@yahoo.com

(Cont. on pg. 10)
SCHOLARSHIPS FOR MLS STUDENTS

For the past 25 years the Alaska Library Association has been offering scholarships for MLS students with the stated purpose to provide financial assistance to worthy students pursuing graduate studies leading to a Master’s Degree in Library and Information Studies and to encourage graduates to return to Alaska to work in professional library positions.

Scholarships may be awarded for both on-campus and/or distance education programs. Preference will be given to an individual meeting the federal definition of Alaska Native ethnicity.

An applicant must be an Alaskan resident who:

* is eligible for acceptance, is currently enrolled, or will be a student in a graduate school library media specialist certificate program during the academic year, semester, or academic quarter for which the scholarship is received.

* makes a commitment to work in an Alaska library for a minimum of one year after graduation as a paid employee or a volunteer, or for two semesters for one semester’s financial assistance.

A scholarship recipient who fails to fulfill this commitment will be expected to repay the money received. Candidates awarded the scholarship must supply proof of admission to an accredited program before the scholarship is disbursed.

Amount for the next academic year will be $4,000.

An individual will be selected by a Scholarship Committee of AkLA based on the following criteria:

* Financial need
* Demonstrated scholastic ability and writing skills

* Applicant’s response to an essay question regarding his/her professional goals and objectives in pursuing a library career

* Strength of references. Three Applicant Reference Evaluation Forms are required, at least one of which must be from a librarian. References may include additional comments or letters.

Completed application and reference forms must be received by January 15 of the award year. The recipient is announced at the annual spring AkLA conference.

Julie Marie Niederhauser
Public Library Coordinator
Alaska State Library
(907) 465-2916 or within Alaska, (888) 820-4525

(Book Buzz - Cont. from pg. 9)

I discovered as I read this book that it isn’t about Alaska, but its beauty and the feelings it evokes were too good to pass up. Mr. Rasmussen, a Danish-Inupiat explorer, collected these poems from Hudson Bay and northern Canada. They’re drawn from his 1921-24 Re-

(Book Buzz  - Cont. from pg. 9)

port of the 5th Thule Expedition. Strangely, the compiler-editor’s name is never given. The poems are impressive and gorgeous, as are Father Mary-Rousselière’s photographs.

I arise from rest with movements swift
As the beat of the raven’s wings

I arise
To meet the day.
My face is turned from the dark of night
To gaze at the dawn of day,
Now whitening in the sky.

Larry Hibpshman, Kenai
Book Buzz Manager
ILbombastico@yahoo.com
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 News poke.)

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

If the News poke editor, or the individual submitting, has questions or concerns about any submission, the matter will be sent on to the News poke Committee.
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CALENDAR
ALA Midwinter Meeting, Atlanta, GA
Jan. 20-24, 2017
AkLA Conference, Ketchikan, AK
Feb. 23-26, 2017
PLA Leadership Academy, Portland, OR
Mar. 20-24, 2017
ACRL at the Helm: Leading Transformation, Baltimore, MD
Mar. 22-25, 2017
Medical Library Assn., Seattle, WA
May 26-31, 2017
ALA Annual Conf., Chicago, IL
Jun. 22-27, 2017