

# REPORTER

ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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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

Libraries and other cultural institutions all over the country are celebrating Shakespeare 400, the anniversary of the bard's death in 1616. A sampling of programs, exhibitions, and collections at libraries in Illinois appears on pages 4–7, including an inscription in Abraham Lincoln's own hand in a volume held by Knox College's Seymour Library. As the *New York Times* recently headlined an article on the year's celebrations, "Dead 400 Years, But Still Very Much Alive."

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](mailto: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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# Four Hundred Years Later: Shakespeare's First Folio

*To be or not to be*—why is Shakespeare's First Folio such a big deal?

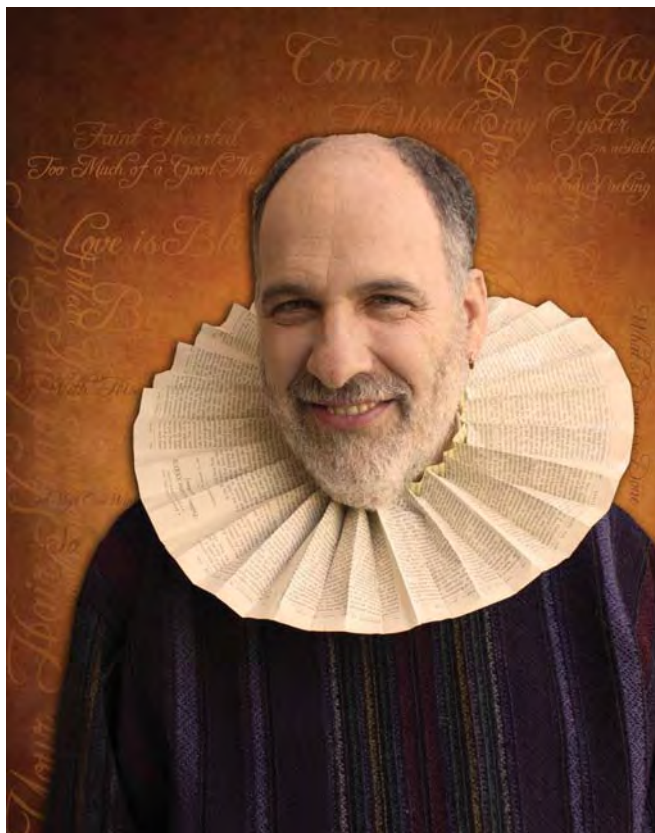
**T**his first collected edition of Shakespeare's plays wasn't published until seven years after his death in 1616. Many of the plays had been written only for theatrical performance and were unpublished during his lifetime. Without the First Folio, eighteen of the thirty-eight plays—including *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Tempest*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *The Comedy of Errors*, and *As You Like It*—may have been lost.

Of the approximately 750 copies of the First Folio originally printed, 233 are known to exist. Eighty-two of those copies are in the collections of the Folger Shakespeare Library. Copies have been sold for as much as \$6.2 million. This amazing book is currently touring all fifty states in an exhibition organized by the Folger and the Public Programs Office of the American Library Association.

Its February stopover in Illinois was hosted by the Lake County Discovery Museum and prompted a series of programs at neighboring Lake Villa District Library (LVDL), including an appearance by Andrea Mays, author of *The Millionaire and the Bard*. Mays' book, which tells the story of Henry Folger's lifelong obsession with the First Folio, is their One Book selection. The library foundation's annual fund-raiser took on a Shakespearian theme—*Much Ado About Something*—with sponsorships ranging from *Sonnet and Bard* (\$50–\$100) to *Elizabethan and Folio* (\$500–\$1,000). Another brilliant piece of programming was challenging patrons to learn at least one new fact about Shakespeare, with each fact translating into a donation to a local food pantry. Assistant Director Paul Kaplan got into the act by posing as a ruffled William (see photo at the left) for the cover of the library's newsletter.

Libraries all over Illinois are getting into the act of celebrating this 400th anniversary—it's not too late, the celebrations will continue all year long!

[continued on page 6]



"When Mr. Shakespeare Comes to Town," 1905. From the Newberry Library's James Francis Driscoll Collection of Historical American Sheet Music.

**WHEN  
MR SHAKESPEARE  
COMES TO TOWN**



**POLKA**

ON

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*Printed by H. G. BANKS.*



A few of the foreign language translations of Shakespeare's work held by the University of Chicago Library.

[continued from page 4]

## EXHIBITIONS AND MORE: SHAKESPEARE 400 CHICAGO

A must-see exhibit for every Shakespeare fan, Chicago's Newberry Library is planning a blockbuster for this fall, September 23–December 31, 2016. *Creating Shakespeare* features more than one hundred items, including treasures from the Newberry Library and other distinguished collections. Through artifacts, manuscripts, printed books, artwork, music, and more, the exhibition examines both Shakespeare's own creativity as well as how his works have been reimagined and recreated throughout the centuries. In addition to the exhibition, a series of public programs will be held at the Newberry throughout the fall of 2016, including lectures and curator-led tours of the galleries. Admission is free, and the exhibition is part of a major citywide celebration, [www.shakespeare400chicago.com](http://www.shakespeare400chicago.com), which includes theaters, museums, libraries, and all sorts of cultural and educational organizations.

Chicago Public Library is offering yearlong programming, including screenings of Shakespeare and Shakespeare-inspired films; a Shakespeare Read-Aloud Book Club, featuring *Richard*

*III, Romeo and Juliet*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; and monthly peeks into its theater collection for interesting artifacts of fellow Chicagoans performing, reading, and engaging with Shakespeare throughout our city's history. Online resources offer historical information about Shakespeare and his works, words he created, and even a chance to learn to talk like Shakespeare through the Mango Languages database, all accessible from anywhere in the world. The library and branches will prominently feature their extensive collections of Shakespeare's plays and huge variety of books, films, audiobooks, musical scores, and other works that he has inspired.

The Pritzker Military Museum & Library is involved in the Shakespeare 400 Chicago festival by providing access to Shakespeare for Chicago's active and retired military personnel. They are also participating in an emerging video series, entitled "Shakespeare and the Citizen Soldier," which will be recorded by international artists converging in the city for the festival. The videos will feature Shakespeare's legendary monologues illuminating the personal impact of war and be available to military bases around the world.

## TREADING THE BOARDS AT LIBRARIES

The Shakespeare Project of Chicago has been bringing Shakespeare into public libraries and other educational venues since 1995. The 2015–2016 calendar includes free theatrical readings of *The Winter's Tale*, *Julius Caesar*, *Cymbeline*, and *Cardenio* at the Newberry Library, Niles Public Library, Highland Park Public Library, Mount Prospect Public Library, Vernon Area Public Library, and Wilmette Public Library. Their fee-based production of *50-Minute Hamlet* is also being presented at Ela Area Library, La Grange Park Public Library, and Morton Grove Public Library. Contact outreach@shakespeareprojectchicago.org for pricing and performance availability.

Carol Morency of Mount Prospect Public Library reports, "The January 19 performance of *The Winter's Tale* was well attended and the audience raved about and appreciated it." The theatrical readings feature professional actors with books in hand, but still making entrances and exits and moving across the stage as they would in a full production. With no sets, props, or costumes to distract, these readings focus on the language and may be the best way to experience Shakespeare's words. An interview with the Shakespeare Project's director is posted at [www.mtpl.org/videos/library-life-episode-172](http://www.mtpl.org/videos/library-life-episode-172).

Evergreen Park Public Library presented a jam-packed lineup for audiences of all ages in January, ranging from a Shakespeare Costume Design Contest for teens; *Kenneth Branagh's Shakespeare* and family Shakespeare movie nights; a Twelfth Night Festival and Elizabethan Crafts for Kids in the Children's Department; a juggling workshop to bring out your inner jester; book club discussions of *Hamlet* and Jennifer Lee Carrell's *Interred with Their Bones*; a painting party based on *The Winter's Tale*; and a presentation on music in Shakespeare's plays. Whew!

Photo credit: Special Collections and Archives, Knox College Library.

## NOT LOST IN TRANSLATION

In case you think Shakespeare is limited to the English-speaking world, the University of Chicago Library reports that it has 224 translations of Shakespeare, with German being the most popular by far. Chinese and French tie for second place, with Hungarian, Russian and Hebrew falling into third. The oldest and most recent translations in their holdings are French, with the oldest being a twenty-volume 1776 *Shakespeare; traduit de l'anglois, dedie au roi*.

Shakespeare's speeches were favored by other famous orators, such as Illinois' own Abraham Lincoln. At Knox College's Seymour Library, the Donna Workman Collection of texts read by Lincoln includes a small 1836 edition of Shakespeare, typical of the one-volume editions that were popular in nineteenth-century America. A similar copy is part of a permanent exhibit on Lincoln as a reader in Knox's Old Main, the site of one of the seven Lincoln-Douglas debates in 1858. Lincoln read his favorite plays by Shakespeare over and over again and saw many theatrical productions of them; he favored Shakespeare's tragedies and histories, and famously remarked that "nothing equals Macbeth."

Shakespeare offers unlimited connections to other themes and topics, a natural bridge to a wide range of programs. In addition to its One Book and First Folio programs, Lake Villa District Library presented programs on European Art in the Time of Shakespeare, a look at Shakespeare's People (characters and contemporaries); an exploration of what makes a "rare book" rare; and a hands-on program to create art with famous quotations.

Continue to send us your programming and collection highlights for this 400th anniversary year, and we'll feature them in the ILA E-Newsletter and at [www.ila.org](http://www.ila.org). ■

"I think nothing equals Macbeth;  
It is wonderful." Abraham Lincoln

### MACBETH.

#### Persons represented.

DUNCAN, King of Scotland.	SIWARD, Earl of Northumberland, General of the English forces.
MALCOLM, DONALDIN, } his sons.	Young SIWARD, his son.
MACBETH, BANQUO, } Generals of the King's army.	SEYTON, an officer attending on Macbeth.
MACDUFF, LENOX, } noblemen of Scotland.	Son to Macduff.
ROSS, ROSS, } noblemen of Scotland.	An English Doctor. A Scotch Doctor.
MENTETH, ANDUS, } noblemen of Scotland.	A Soldier. A Porter. An old Man.
CATHNESS, FLEANCE, son to Banquo.	Lady MACBETH.
	Lady MACDUFF.
	Gentlewoman, attending on Lady Macbeth.
	Hecate, and three Witches.

Lords, Gentlemen, Officers, Soldiers, Murderers, Attendants, and Messengers; the Ghost of Banquo, and several other Apparitions.

Scene,—in the end of the fourth act, lies in England; through the rest of the play, in Scotland; and, chiefly, at Macbeth's castle.

#### ACT I.

SCENE I. An open Place. Thunder and Lightning.

Enter three Witches.

Do swarm upon him,) from the western isles  
Of Kernes and Gallowglasses is supplied;  
And fortune, on his (drum) and

### MACBETH.

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#### Scene II.]

Doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe:  
Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds,  
Or memorize another Golgotha\*,  
I cannot tell:—  
But I am faint, my gashes cry for help.  
Dun. So well thy words become thee, as  
thy wounds;  
They smack of honour both:—Go, get him  
surgeons. *[Exit Soldier attended.*  
*Enter Rosse.*

Who comes here?  
Mal. The worthy thane of Rosse.  
Len. What a haste looks through his eyes!  
So should he look,  
That seems to speak things strange.  
Rosse. God save the king!  
Dun. Whence camest thou, worthy thane?  
Rosse. From Fife, great king,  
Where the Norwegian banners flout the sky,  
And fan our people cold.  
Norway himself, with terrible numbers,  
Assisted by that most disloyal traitor  
The thane of Cawdor, 'gan a dismal conflict:  
Till that Bellona's bridegroom, lapp'd in proofs,  
Confronted him with self-comparisons,  
Point against point rebellious, arm 'gainst arm,  
Curbing his lavish spirit:—And, to conclude,  
The victory fell on us:—  
Dun. Great happiness!  
Rosse. That now  
Sveno, the Norways' king, craves composition;  
Nor would we deign him burial of his men,  
Till he disburs'd, at Saint Colmes' inch,  
Sleep shall, neither night nor day,  
Hang upon his pent-house lid;  
He shall live a man forbid;  
Weary sev'n nights, nine times nine,  
Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine:  
Though his bark cannot be lost,  
Yet it shall be tempest-toss'd.  
Look what I have.  
2 Witch. Show me, show me.  
1 Witch. Here I have a pilot's thumb,  
Wreck'd as he did homeward come.  
3 Witch. A drum, a drum:  
Macbeth doth come.  
All. The weird sisters, hand in hand,  
Posters of the sea and land,  
Thus do go about, about;  
Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,  
And thrice again, to make up nine:  
Peace!—the charm's wound up.  
Enter MACBETH and BANQUO.  
Macb. So foul and fair a day I have not  
seen. *[are these,*  
Ban. How far is't call'd to Fores?—What  
So wither'd and so wild in their attire;  
That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth,  
And yet are on't? Live you? or are you aught  
That man may question? You seem to understand me,  
By each at once her choppy finger laying  
Upon her skinny lips:—You should be women,  
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret  
That you are so.

# Talk Among Yourselves: Jump Starting Your Readers' Advisory

Talking about and suggesting leisure reading to patrons brings every library worker back to the reasons they first considered working in a library in the first place—a love of books. A stereotype, but one firmly based in fact. Every library worker, no matter his place on the organizational chart or her current job duties, has an origin story that can be traced back to a specific book [or books] that produced pure joy. I prey on this inherent love of reading and the desire to share the books we love when I train library workers to improve their RA skills and service.

Under the surface, every library worker has it in them to be able to help leisure readers. Those feelings of euphoria, the ones we all felt deeply enough at some point to dedicate our working lives to libraries, need to be brought to the surface. This is the magic that will inspire staff to help match patrons with a great read. There is true power in this simple act—power for the library worker, who has a moment to remember why they got into this whole library business in the first place; power to administrators; and power in the satisfaction patrons feel when they are given something they didn't even know they would love without our help. That is an experience those happy patrons will pass on to their friends, who will pass it on to their friends, and soon, you have a community which treasures and loves its library. Fairy tale library? Read on.

## MAKE SPACE FOR CONVERSATION

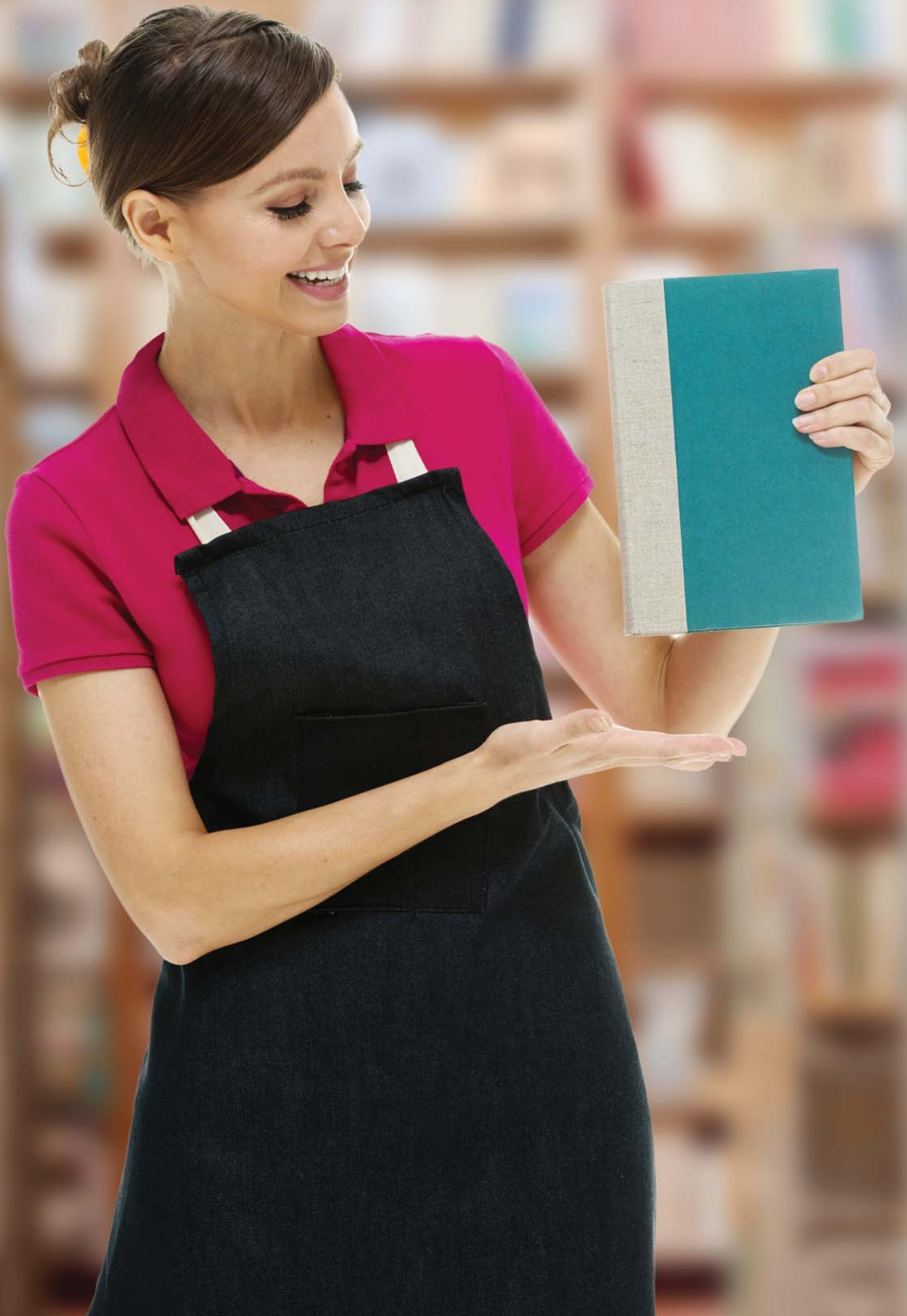
Thankfully this is the type of space that can be carved out for free; no need for architects or building plans here. Rather what you do is create an atmosphere where booktalking—all over the library—is encouraged, promoted, and celebrated. But this is easier said than done. I all too frequently come across libraries that do not encourage staff to talk to each other about what they are reading and watching while at the desk. These libraries argue that it is a waste of time and not appropriate. Well, it is time for that attitude to be adjusted, and I am here to tell you why and how.

If you want your staff to be proactive in matching patrons with leisure reading/viewing items, you need to let them practice so that their skills and confidence can grow. Allow staff to chat at their desks. Better yet, encourage them to walk over to other service desks throughout the library and start talking about the last good movie they watched or book they read. Yes, that's right, let your staff wander the building to talk with each other about what they are enjoying in their free time. Sound radical?

Here is how it works in practice. One of the most difficult rules for new practitioners of RA is to learn that you cannot simply suggest your personal favorites to the patrons in front of you. Rather, you need to use what they like and enjoy as a springboard to find them a book that is suited for them. Making this leap—from recommending books you like to suggesting ones you may not have even read but are fairly confident that the patron in front of you would enjoy—is hard. And you cannot get there without having the chance to practice talking about books in the first place.

[continued on page 10]





## FIGURING IT OUT

Talk to each other about what you are reading or watching. What did you like most about it? Or, if it wasn't so good, that's okay too. Talk about why you did not enjoy it; there is just as much value in this conversation. Then start talking about what other books, movies, or TV shows it reminded you of—focus on the “WHY.” All of this is both fun and educational. You are conversing with co-workers about things you did in your free time, but each conversation builds your RA skills. You become more comfortable articulating the appeal of what you like, or think someone else may like.

Getting up and moving between service desks to booktalk also ensures that all this chatting does not get stale. Switch up who you are talking to, learn their likes and dislikes, and gather a larger variety of perspectives in order to build your skills. It also serves as an inexpensive but very effective team-building exercise. Staff will be building connections across departments as they seek each other out to share their last good read. You now have a library culture where talking about leisure reading and watching is encouraged, and staff have been exposed to more titles because they have heard someone share their love for it passionately. One day that title one staff member shared with another could be passed on to an appreciative patron.

“Those feelings of euphoria, the ones we all felt deeply enough at some point to dedicate our working lives to libraries, need to be brought to the surface.”

## MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE (OR EAR)

The magic starts to happen because not only is the staff building their skills, but patrons are hearing them actively and passionately sharing their leisure reading and watching choices. This serves as an advertisement for your staff's expertise and willingness to match patrons with similar items. Despite the fact that we carry and circulate thousands of books and DVDs that patrons are reading and watching for fun, these same patrons do not think we want to or can help them find more things they may enjoy. They don't think a leisure request is “important” enough. Well, when they hear staff chat at the desk, you are making it clear that it is important. Patrons begin to join the conversation, which leads to more RA conversations, and wasn't that our goal at the start of this article? I have even been lucky enough to be a part of a library where this atmosphere of book sharing was so pervasive that during RA transactions at the service desk, another patron would interrupt the patron I was helping in order to offer her own suggestions.

## FAIRY TALES DO COME TRUE

I can train staff on the mechanics behind matching a patron with the right book for them. I can introduce them to my Ten Rules of Basic RA Service ([raforall.blogspot.com/p/beckys-ten-rules-of-basic-ra-service.html](http://raforall.blogspot.com/p/beckys-ten-rules-of-basic-ra-service.html)). I can walk them through specific exercises to improve their skills, but if the staff isn't allowed to practice by talking with each other at the service desks—both to improve their skills and to advertise their willingness to engage in these conversations in general—all the good gained by any training will be lost.

Talking about books with each other is the first step. Matching items with patrons comes next. When the staff is engaged in the process and inspired by their own joy over the books they love, they will seek out connections with patrons. As they have more positive experiences and feel the rush from a great RA conversation, they will begin to seek out more information and more training, which again leads to helping more patrons.

It all begins with space to talk. By encouraging staff to talk about books, you help them gain the confidence they need to succeed, and now you have a library where the staff are constantly striving to improve their RA skills. I have seen this happen. It is not a dream. Fairy tale library, here you come. **■**

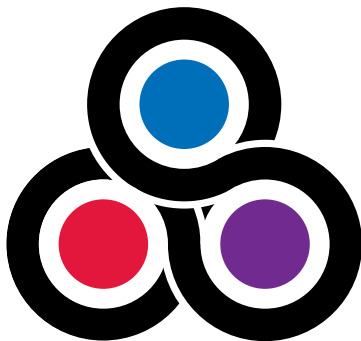
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October 18–20, 2016

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# Q&A on RA

ILA Reporter Advisory Committee Chair Kara Kohn quizzes Becky Spratford on best and worst RA experiences and how to help staff become better and more comfortable helping patrons find what they really want.

**Kohn:** *What advice do you give to a staff member who is uncomfortable talking about books?*

**Spratford:** First I remind everyone, no matter their comfort level, that booktalking is an art—there is no right way to do it. Letting people know that they are free to “talk” about books in whatever form works for them and then cultivating their own style and patter often eases many people’s fears. That said, some will never be comfortable talking face-to-face about books with patrons, I get that. But that does not mean they cannot “talk” about books. There are other ways to participate in this conversation culture.

- *Want to talk about books but get nervous if a person is in front of you?* Record yourself (audio or video) booktalking and then post to the library’s website.
- *Prefer writing down your booktalks?* Great. Make annotated lists or write book reviews to be posted in the library, on the shelf near the book itself, on Facebook, the website, etc. You can “talk” all you want on the page.
- *Not confident in your communication skills on paper or with words?* Express yourself in a display. It doesn’t have to be fancy. Just grab some books you want to promote and put them together. As Joyce Saricks taught me, patrons always appreciate being offered a smaller universe of books.

These different ways of defining “talking” not only honor the skills and preferences of staff, but also appeal to patrons who might not want to engage in the one-on-one interaction.

**Kohn:** *What is the most challenging RA question you have had and how did you respond?*

**Spratford:** People who have seen my “RA for All” program know this story. It’s an oldie but a goodie. A woman came in demanding [not asking] to read the book James Patterson wrote that won the Nobel Prize. Okay, while my first instincts were to assure her that James Patterson had never and would never win the Nobel Prize and to remind her that you don’t win the Nobel Prize for one book, but for a body of work, that would not have helped her, me, or my library in any way. So, the first thing I actually did was take a deep breath and dive in to figure out exactly what it was that she DID want. I am not going to lie, we went back and forth for awhile (around thirty minutes), with me trying to verify if it was even a Patterson book she wanted. In the end, I sent her home with Patterson’s first novel, *The Thomas Berryman Number*, which won the Edgar for best first novel in 1977. She was very happy and felt like she got the book she came for—it was James Patterson and it had won an award. The point here was that I needed to find her a book that she wanted to take home, even if it was impossible for it to be the book she asked for. I won that woman over to the library forever after that day. She was a regular—even if never very friendly—visitor.

**Kohn:** *What exercises can staff do to improve their RA skill set other than conversing with other staff?*

**Spratford:** The Get Booked podcast ([www.bookriot.com](http://www.bookriot.com)) is your perfect RA practice tool, a weekly show of customized book recommendations. People write in, tell the hosts what kind of books they like and/or what they are looking to read next, and then the hosts suggest titles. You can listen to any episode, although I am partial to Episode 4, where I was the guest host! Listening to Get Booked is a great way to see the range of reading tastes that are out there, and just listening to the hosts come up with suggestions and hear their “why” statements is useful. But you can also use Get Booked as an active training tool. Here’s how to do it:

1. Play the podcast and listen to the first query.
2. Write down what the reader is looking for.
3. Hit pause BEFORE the hosts give suggestions.
4. Use your favorite RA tools to identify some suggestions and include notes as to why you chose the titles you did.
5. Listen to what the hosts suggested.
6. Compare not only the titles, but also the “whys.”
7. Repeat for the rest of the episode.

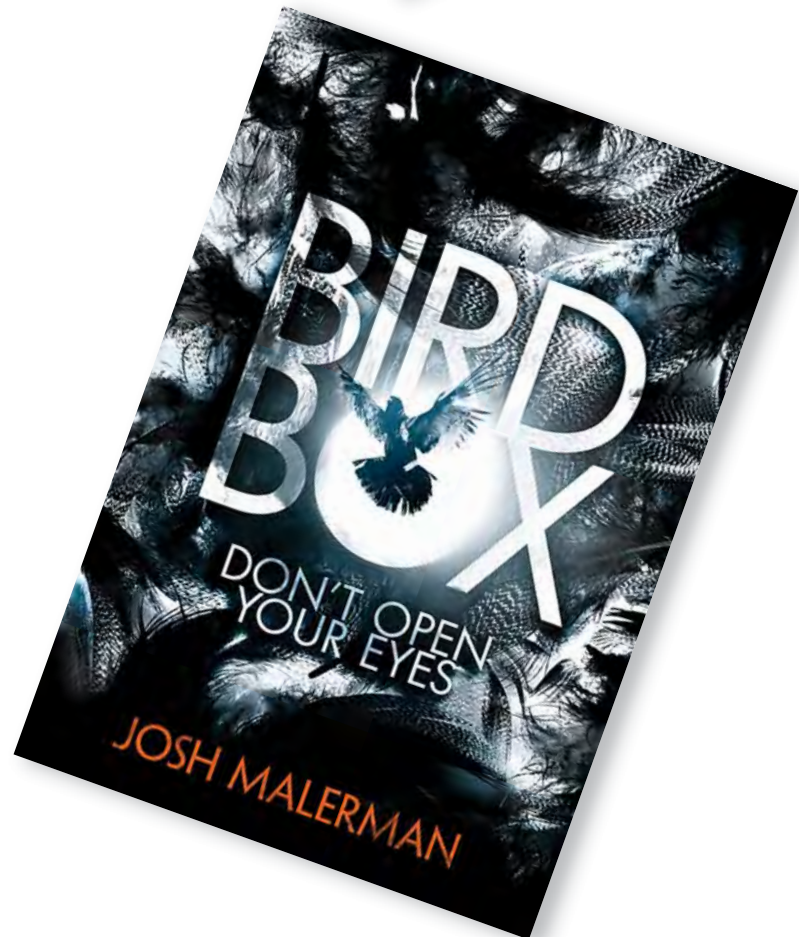
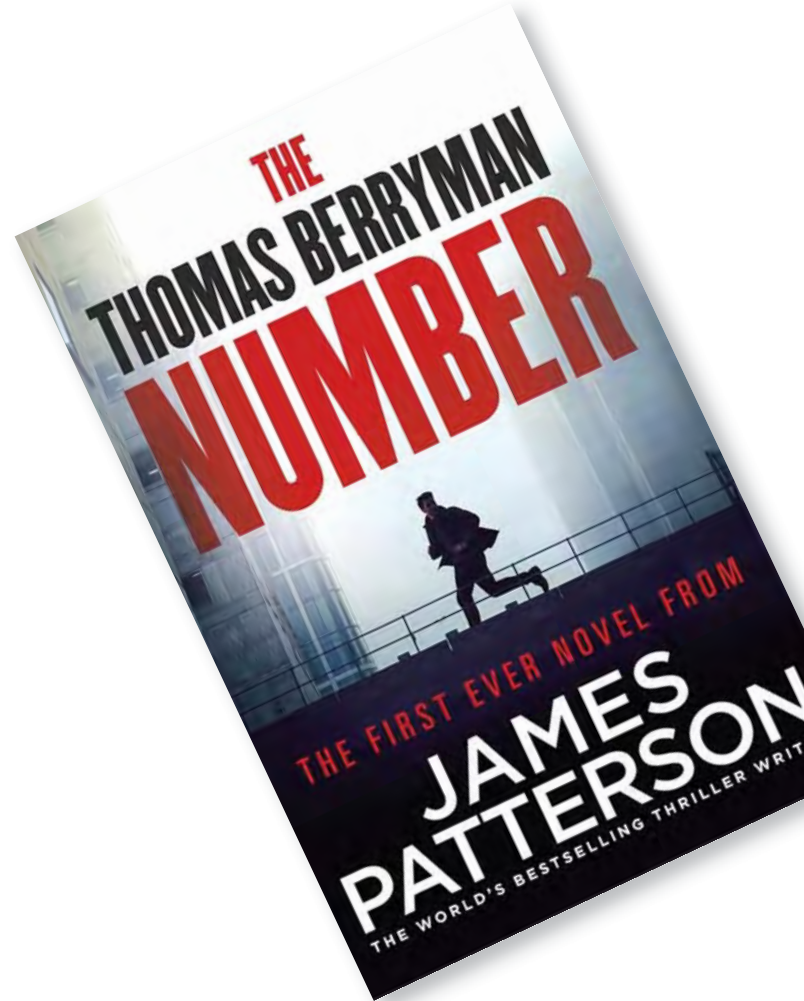
In this active practice mode, you are not only providing RA in a simulated real time atmosphere, but you are also able to compare your ideas and suggestions with two other people, immediately.

**Kobm:** *Is providing viewing/movie recommendations different than providing book recommendations?*

**Spratford:** Helping readers make connections with viewing vs. reading options has gotten much easier over the years, and not just because so much content is crossing over between formats. Even when someone is looking for a book, asking about TV shows and movies they like is a great way to get a sense of the type of story they most enjoy. The more ways you can engage a patron in talking about what they like, about the content they are choosing to spend their free time consuming, the better off you both are. In fact, I try to offer suggestions across formats indiscriminately. In terms of differences, it is important to note that some limiters like sex and violence can be tolerated at different levels when viewing vs. reading.

**Kobm:** *Share an example of a recent RA transaction you had either with a friend, colleague, or patron. What was the person looking for, and what did you recommend?*

**Spratford:** I was helping a friend who was in a “reading rut.” She had been reading too many memoirs and WWII historical fiction novels for her book club and wanted something “fantastic.” I told her I needed a little more than that to go on. After talking for a bit, I found that she wanted a story that would grab her and move quickly, but not so quickly that it was mindless. She wanted a thought-provoking angle, too. I asked her if a darker and scarier tone were okay. She said yes as long as there wasn’t a lot of violence. No zombies or serial killers, please. I suggested *Bird Box* by Josh Malerman to her. I have a full review on my blog, but here is a teaser from that post: “*Bird Box* is a terrifying story set in a world where an unknown threat has killed off almost every person on earth. We don’t know what the threat is though because everyone who sees it kills themselves. So, the only way to protect yourself is to never open your eyes. EVER. Not even a peek, people.” The verdict—she loved it, but now she wants more. Our work is never done. Thankfully, there are plenty of books to suggest. 📖



# Real Time RA

Patron Mike (fake name for privacy) likes urban fantasy and his favorite author is Jim Butcher, who wrote *The Dresden Files*, a series of contemporary fantasy/mystery novels. I suggested Simon R. Green's *Nightside* series. Mike loved them so much he got through the series quickly and was back for more.

Next I thought I would try Kevin J. Anderson's Dan Shamble Zombie PI series. In addition to a solid mystery featuring a throng of supernatural beings, I thought he might get a kick out of the quirky characters, especially since Butcher's *Dresden Files* features a talking, sarcastic skull named Bob. Seems like a slam dunk, right?



Mike finished Anderson's *Death Warmed Over* but reported back that he really didn't enjoy it; he felt it was too silly. I had only read book one of Mike's beloved *Dresden Files*, so my next step was to read book two to get a better feel for the series to see what he likes.

After finishing *Fool Moon*, Mike and I chatted in detail. I explained how I was disappointed that there was so much action and fighting, and that was the biggest turnoff for me. His response: "Exactly! That's what I love about it!"

This brief discussion about *Fool Moon* was so eye-opening. I had a much better grasp of what he liked. So even though there have been a few duds along the way, I know exactly what he does and doesn't like now. Since our last conversation, he has really enjoyed my recommendations of Rob Thurman's *Cal Leandros* series, Richard Kadey's *Sandman Slim*, and Gregory Lamberson's *Jake Helman* series. Even with the occasional false step, I am much more attuned to what makes him tick as a reader.

Mike continues to surprise me. On his own he picked up Kim Harrison's *Hollows* series. I have read and enjoyed this series but was reluctant to recommend it since he had mentioned in the past he really doesn't like female authors because he doesn't want any elements of romance, and in his experience female authors tend to do so. In Harrison's series, there are a few potential love interests for the main character Rachel Morgan in all the books.

Hallelujah! I am now excited to be able to suggest Patricia Briggs's Mercedes Thompson series and Carrie Vaughn's Kitty Norville series! Working with Mike has been a great opportunity to fine-tune my RA skills and I have learned just as much from him as he did from me.

*Send us some of your favorite RA examples—what someone asked for and what you eventually suggested—and we'll share them. Or, if you have suggestions for "Mike" or other types of readers, feel free to send us those, too. **ILA***

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**Nominations for all ILA Awards are due May 15, 2016.**

# Rising to the Occasion: Legislative Meet-Ups Move into Central Illinois

**W**hen planning an inaugural event, one can feel some pressure. This is especially true when adding to a successful roster of events that have been taking place for years. The ILA Legislative Meet-Ups have been held for the last few years in the Chicago suburbs and Edwardsville with much success. Here's how a team of librarians in central Illinois planned and held a first-time legislative luncheon in our part of the state.

## FIND INSPIRATION

As a new member of the ILA Advocacy Committee, I attended the Legislative Meet-Up in Oak Brook in 2014. As I talked to trustees and fellow librarians at my table, I was impressed by the number and variety of people who attended. These individuals were committed to building relationships with their local legislators to spread the word of the power of libraries. The legislators themselves made the greatest impression. They talked passionately about their support of libraries, and they clearly loved libraries since many spoke of the role books and librarians played in their lives and the lives of their children. When I left that event, my thoughts were focused on how to bring such an event to central Illinois where I live and work as a librarian. Prior efforts to host such an event had not gained momentum, but at a time when state funding was at an all-time low, a legislative meet-up for the central part of the state was crucial.

## LEARN FROM THE PROS

At the July 2015 ILA Orientation Session, the Advocacy Committee made the decision to move forward with a central Illinois event. When it was decided to hold the meet-up in Bloomington-Normal as a central location, I was asked to coordinate with the assistance of fellow committee member Celeste Choate of the Urbana Free Library. Luckily, other members of the Advocacy Committee had strong experience coordinating events in the Chicago suburbs and Edwardsville; Betsy Adamowski, Jim Deiters, and Denise Raleigh graciously offered significant guidance and encouragement based on their experience. Their first words of advice? Put together a strong team of library and legislative recruiters.

## IT'S ALL IN THE RECRUITING

Our goal was to have team members from all major towns in central Illinois, including Bloomington-Normal, Urbana-Champaign, Peoria, Springfield, and Decatur. We drew the legislative map for the event to extend over a large geographic area, and we needed individuals with local connections to their legislators and fellow librarians. One reason for the lack of a central Illinois event previously was the challenge of attracting attendees from such a sprawling geography; the metropolitan meet-ups had the advantage of more libraries and more legislators in greater concentrations.



Another goal was to create a team made up of public, academic, and school librarians. Even though we sometimes think of public libraries as the main beneficiaries of state-level library legislation, this year's budget impasse has brought it home that all types of libraries are affected by actions of the Illinois General Assembly. In addition to public libraries, university budgets and local school districts are feeling the pinch as well, and it's important to make legislators aware of all our issues. To that end, we recruited a variety of librarians including Jane Bradbury (Midstate College), Genna Buhr (Fondulac District Library), Jeanne Hamilton (Charleston Carnegie Public Library), Robin Helenthal (Peoria Public Library), Nicole Helregel (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), Lou Ann Jacobs (retired, Pontiac Township High School), Don Pippin (Philo Public Library), and Rick Meyer (Decatur Public Library).

Over a two-month period, the group worked together to promote the event to librarians, library supporters, and legislators. As recruiters, we sent out listserv messages, e-mailed librarians and legislators, called legislative offices, and publicized the importance of the luncheon. Due to the tremendous efforts of the team, the number of registrants grew steadily. As the event approached, additional colleagues joined the team. Since Milner Library was the host institution, Illinois State University librarians Magdalena Casper-Shipp, Danielle Futoran, and Anne Shelley volunteered to assist in various ways, including local publicity, photography, setup, and registration.

## NO EMPTY SEATS

When the day arrived, the room was filled to capacity with librarians, trustees, library supporters, and others eager to meet with their legislative representatives. We even had to move to a larger room than originally planned in order to accommodate everyone—an event planner's dream! Many conversations could be heard throughout the room, especially related to the property tax freeze, FOIA requests, and the state budget impasse. Attendees were eager to find solutions and especially keen to hear from their legislators.

During a buffet meal, participants talked informally with colleagues and legislators. After lunch, the program began. ILA was well represented with a welcome and introduction by ILA President Betsy Adamowski as well as presentations by Derek Blaida, ILA's legislative counsel and Robert Doyle, ILA executive director.

As happens with many first-time events, we were unable to meet every goal. Unfortunately only three state legislators were able to attend this year. However, when Sen. Scott Bennett (D-52nd District), Sen. David Koehler (D-46th District), and Rep. Dan Brady (R-105th District) stood to speak, all eyes were on them. Koehler in particular spoke forcefully about the budget standstill. All three spoke about the importance of libraries in their communities and the roles they personally play in supporting referendums, building projects, and serving as trustees in the past.

The event was a success—such a success that it will return on the docket of meet-ups for 2017. Next year's event will be even more successful. And we've also learned that these are not one-day-only events. As the rest of this year's legislative session unfolds, all of us who attended will follow the action—and inaction—with more attention than ever. If there's a need to contact a legislator about a particular bill, or provide testimony before a committee, or explain an issue to one of our patrons, we're all better prepared to do so. If your area of the state isn't involved in one of the existing meet-ups, I encourage you to give it a try.

## BY THE NUMBERS

### Legislative Breakfast, South Suburban, Tinley Park, 12 Feb. 2016

2016 Attendees: 66	Legislators: 11 (8 elected and 3 staff) out of 40 or 28%
2015 Attendees: 48	Legislators: 7 (3 elected and 4 staff) out of 40 or 18%
2014 Attendees: 37	Legislators: 4 out of 42 or 9% (Lockport)

### Legislative Lunch, West Suburban, Oak Brook, 12 Feb. 2016

2016 Attendees: 105	Legislators: 13 (11 elected and 2 staff) out of 29 or 45%
2015 Attendees: 76	Legislators: 17 (13 elected and 4 staff) out of 29 or 59%
2014 Attendees: 85	Legislators: 13 out of 29 or 45%

### Legislative Breakfast, North Suburban, Buffalo Grove, 15 Feb. 2016

2016 Attendees: 138	Legislators: 10 (8 elected and 2 staff) out of 41 or 24%
2015 Attendees: 124	Legislators: 17 (13 elected and 4 staff) out of 41 or 41%
2014 Attendees: 156	Legislators: 13 out of 47 or 27%
2013 Attendees: 150	Legislators: 17 out of 50 or 34%
2012 Attendees: 145	Legislators: 20 out of 50 or 40%
2011 Attendees: 147	Legislators: 23 out of 50 or 46%

*This was the 26th North Suburban Library Legislative Breakfast*

### Legislative Breakfast, Metro East, Edwardsville, 19 Feb. 2016

2016 Attendees: 58	Legislators: 5 (2 elected and 3 staff) out of 16 or 31%
2015 Attendees: 59	Legislators: 6 (3 elected and 3 staff) out of 16 or 38%
2014 Attendees: 54	Legislators: 5 out of 17 or 29%

### Legislative Lunch, Central Illinois, Bloomington-Normal, 19 Feb. 2016

2016 Attendees: 51	Legislators: 4 (3 elected and 1 staff) out of 22 or 18%
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*This was the first meet-up at this location*



# Book Genie Grants

## Your Reading Wishes

### HOW BOOK GENIE CAME TO BE

In the fall of 2013, the Downers Grove Public Library embarked on the challenge of updating our library website. We were also working toward fulfilling a major strategy of our 2012–2014 Strategic Plan, “to maintain a focus on books and reading.” As a result, we transitioned from a lengthy online readers’ advisory form that saw minimal use to an interactive process that provides customers with instant suggestions. We developed Book Genie, a readers’ advisory quiz for kids, teens, and adults. You will find it at [www.dglibrary.org/genie](http://www.dglibrary.org/genie).

Launched in February 2014, Book Genie provides advice to readers in a flexible web format. Resembling an online quiz, it helps construct individualized reading recommendations. As the reader clicks through a series of book covers, Book Genie generates instant suggestions responding to the reader’s expressed interests and preferences. These suggestions link directly to the library’s catalog, providing what every good genie aspires to—immediate wish-fulfillment! Staff librarians choose all Book Genie books, and organize them in comprehensive categories, beginning with children, teens, and adults. Visitors who do not find something interesting among the Book Genie suggestions can fill out a form that librarians respond to via e-mail with further reading ideas.

### RELEASING THE GENIE

To introduce this exciting new service, Book Genie was heavily publicized as part of the new website launch. In addition to social media, library staff actively promoted Book Genie at school visits, teacher in-service trainings, farmers’ markets, and in-house. On Book Genie’s first birthday, we did a library-wide, month-long promotional push. We purchased three custom Book Genie cardboard standees for display throughout the library, gave away mints branded with the Book Genie logo, and featured Book Genie on the library’s homepage, newsletter, and social media outlets.

Service desks also handed out evaluation forms asking a few simple questions about Book Genie. Survey responses ran the gamut from patrons responding that they had not heard of Book Genie to patrons who loved it and wanted to see more categories. These responses helped readers discover the new tool, informed future updates to Book Genie, and allowed staff to assess the impact of an interactive digital readers’ advisory service. We found that the majority of our customers enjoyed this fun approach. As one library user wrote, “It’s a great start to finding new books. Brings up suggestions I would never have seen!”

[continued on page 21]

“It’s a great start to finding new books.  
Brings up suggestions I would never have seen!”



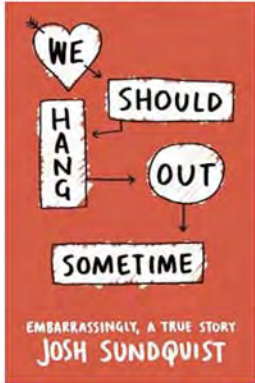
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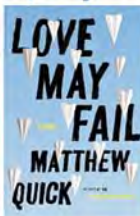
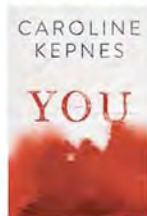
Not sure what to read next? Book Genie can help! Start by telling Genie which type of book you want to read by selecting a cover below. [Take me right to the recommendation form!](#)



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[Home](#) > [Book Genie](#)

## Based on your selections, try one of these!



### Want more suggestions?

Your Name \*

Your Email \*

Preferred Age Range \*

- Kids
- Teens
- Adult



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## IT'S NOT ALL MAGIC


Book Genie is a custom Drupal module developed by web developer Sean Fitzpatrick of Proof Studio, in conjunction with our digital librarian. Built using Drupal's taxonomy structure, genres and titles are organized in a hierarchical tree. The templates render each taxonomy term to display the associated cover image and title. To keep its content fresh, Book Genie categories and titles are updated at least three times a year. Children's titles are listed by genre and arranged by grade level, including picture books, easy chapter books, and chapter books. Children's staff select titles throughout the year. As new book carts come to the department, staff identify books that fit into nine Book Genie categories, keeping track in a Google doc. When the deadline for new titles looms, we look at the doc and decide what areas need attention and assign staff to fill in any holes. By making Book Genie an on-going assignment using a working document, staff have integrated Book Genie into their weekly workflow.

Teen and adult titles are delineated by fiction and nonfiction, breaking out into genres and subjects. Adult and Teen Services (ATS) staff spend three weeks compiling titles into a Google doc. We started by assigning a team of three to four staff to complete each Book Genie update, but recently we have included all ATS staff to assist in each update. Once titles are selected, PR and IT staff spend an additional two weeks updating the website with new selections.

## EVALUATING BOOK GENIE

Now in its third year, Book Genie continues to be popular, with over 7,800 page views in 2015! Library staff utilize Google Analytics to understand how patrons are using Book Genie and to adapt to meet patron interests by reviewing category popularity. Before each Book Genie update, staff review which categories to remove and select ones to feature. Popular topics include historical fiction, book club favorites, memoirs and biographies, teen dystopian, kids fantasy, and librarian picks. Over the last two years, staff have adjusted the quiz structure and added more read-alike categories such as "If you liked NPR's *Serial*..." During Academy Awards season, we developed a spin-off called Movie Genie, and to support our "League of Super Heroes" summer reading club theme, a Super Genie option was offered. Both proved popular with customers.

Since its inception, Book Genie has granted over 3,500 book wishes. Not only does Book Genie provide instant book suggestions to patrons, but it also enhances a reading-focused strategic plan. Staff enjoy selecting titles and patrons are able to interact with an engaging book service.

May all your reading wishes be granted! 

"Since its inception, Book Genie has granted over 3,500 book wishes."



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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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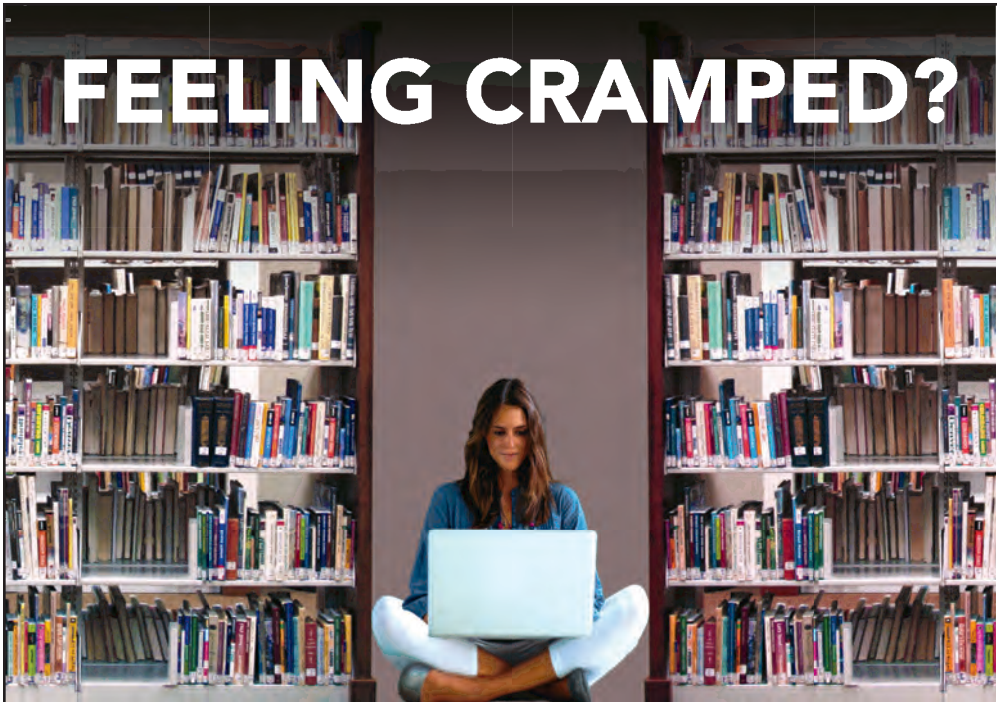


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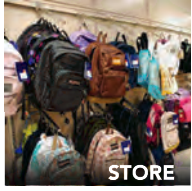
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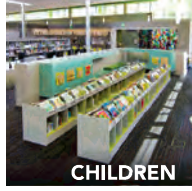
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