

UTAH LIBRARIES

UTAH LIBRARY ASSOCIATION | FEBRUARY 2023





Utah Library Association



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ABOUT

The Utah Library Association advocates for libraries and cultivates leadership development to promote library excellence for the Utah library community.

We hope you find the Utah Library Association to be an organization that makes a difference for you, for Utah librarians, for Utah Libraries, and for the citizens of Utah.

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President's Message

The time of year that we tend to think most about our growth and intentions is at the beginning of a new year. It is a beautiful time to reflect on the previous year. I took some time in January to contemplate the strides I made last year and the opportunities and small miracles that occurred because of it.

One of my favorite things I did last year was co-curate a photography exhibit to be installed in my library. The exhibit features the Huntington-Bagley Studio, a photography duo from the turn-of-the-century in Springville, Utah.



Hilda Hall, pictured right.

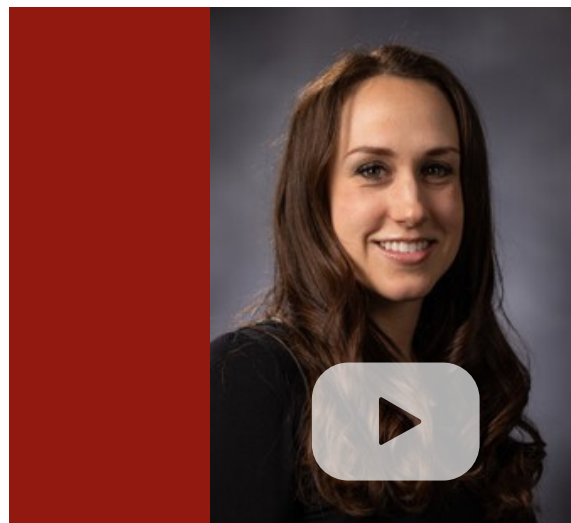
When I was perusing the 4,000+ photos that had been digitized of their work, I serendipitously found a photograph of my paternal great-grandmother. Many things had to occur for me to find this photograph.

The studio happened to travel to Hurricane, Utah; my great-grandmother decided to have her portrait taken by this studio; the image was retained for one hundred years on a glass plate negative, was accessioned, and preserved by BYU, and then happened to be part of the one-third of the collection that was digitized. Many photos in the collection were unnamed, but her name was documented and included in the metadata. Lastly, I happened to choose this photography studio for the exhibit and notice her name and photo during my research.

I count it as a small miracle that all those circumstances occurred, and I was able to see the photograph. My father died a few months before I saw this photo of his grandmother. That added extra poignancy to the moment when I found it.

As we put in the work and effort to achieve our goals, little miracles can happen along the way. Sometimes, they will be personal, unplanned for moments of delight. They can also be the feelings of self-satisfaction at our growth. Indeed, the growth we experience is a miracle.

I hope that you can encounter little miracles through your service and involvement in ULA. You could learn of the perfect thing that will round out a service you are working on for your library or perhaps meet a colleague who has feedback that will help you with a thorny work problem. If you take advantage of opportunities in work, life, and ULA, you will have some miraculous moments.



Marissa Bischoff

ULA President

Harold B. Lee Library

ULA Annual Conference

May 17-19, 2023
Layton, UT



Tracie Hall
ALA Executive Director



GROW
WITH INTENTION

ULA 2022-2023



Carmen Agra Deedy
Author and Storyteller

Librarian Spotlight

Azra Basic

This time I had the opportunity to talk to Azra Basic, ULA Programming Vice Chair and the Assistant Manager at the West Jordan Library.



What are some of your favorite things?

That depends on the context. Some of my favorite things are, talking to people, watching and reading the news, singing, hosting parties, humor, talking to my kids, and discussing books and politics.

How did you become a librarian?

By accident. When I moved to Utah I was looking for a flexible part-time job that will allow me to interact with people and complement my outgoing personality. I got my first job as a shelver at the City Library and loved it. My coworkers were kind, we shared lots of similar interests and I was good at what I was doing. I moved pretty quickly from a shelver to a full-time associate position. In that period, I embraced every learning opportunity that I was given and was fully committed to the library. Soon after I got my MLS degree and the rest is history.

What are some highlights from your library experience?

My favorite highlight would have to be attending my first ALA Conference. This was a turning point for me in how I view this profession. I remember being overwhelmed in the best possible way by everything that I have seen, heard, and learned at that conference. Authors, book signings, special speakers, and hundreds of librarians

rushing to attend their sessions with too many buttons attached to their name tags indicating committees or causes they feel passionate about. I could sense excitement and urgency in the air. I started believing that WE, THE LIBRARIANS, can truly make a difference in people's lives. Now that I am a little older and less impressionable, I can say that I have romanticized this experience, however that feeling that we can do so much good never left me.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

Seeing people I hired or mentored succeed and thrive. That brings me immense joy. I love getting to know my coworkers, discovering their special skills, and finding tasks and projects that will help them grow. I also love playing daily WORDLE with my staff and judging romance novels by their covers.

What projects are you most proud of?

I am proud of projects that I have found to be impactful, innovative, and meaningful to not just me but to larger circles of people. Projects that have pushed me to think outside of the box and have resulted in measurable results. Currently, I am spearheading a Community Assessment Workgroup, in which we are trying to establish metrics and identify trends to better address public library needs, and to respond to any surprises along the way. I am also in the process of planning the ULA Conference for 2024 as a Programming Chair. I already feel a great sense of ownership and responsibility to make it a success. As a librarian, I worked on a lot of projects that I am very proud of. You can find some of them [here](#).

What do you love about libraries?

We might not be doing this one big thing that everyone is amazed by. But we certainly do so many small things daily that have a tremendous impact on the world. Most

importantly we help toward leveling the playing field for everyone. It is easy to forget that not everyone can purchase a book with one tap on their phone or afford an after-school snack, or download an app, or put their child in daycare. Those financial and literacy discrepancies have become more apparent during the pandemic. We were there to welcome all of those folks with a smile.

Libraries also bring together people from different backgrounds and cultures, providing a place to meet, share experiences, and learn from one another. What's not to like?

What impact do you want to have on the world with your work?

My legacy is to do my best to make sure that the future of libraries is secured. We can achieve that by always looking at the big picture and embracing changes when needed. But also by continuing to provide a welcoming and stimulating environment for our staff.

What are some of your favorite things?

I enjoy the outdoors, particularly with my wife and our five kids. I like the feel and smell of working with textiles and raw materials – this has led me to dabbling with leather working, woodworking, bookbinding, jewelry making, and blacksmithing, though I'm not a master of any of them. I use spreadsheets recreationally and I've also picked up some web coding, statistics.

How has your ULA membership and participation been valuable to you?

The ULA membership provides me with an opportunity to become involved in causes that I care about. I am also showing a commitment to our profession by being a contributing member. I met some great people through ULA and I learned a lot about libraries in my region.

What are some books you'd like more opportunities to discuss?

"Hillbilly Elegy" by J. D. Vance – Living in Bosnia I have faced similar difficulties as the author of Hillbilly Elegy. And while I empathize with the hardships he had to face, I have strong opinions on how poor and rural people have been portrayed in this book.

"Becoming" by Michelle Obama – Michelle is such an inspirational role model and her openness about her personal life, decisions and struggles is so relatable and to many.

Anything else you want to tell us?

It's a cliché but be brave, push yourself, and say yes to the things that scare you.



Azra's originally from Bosnia and Herzegovina, where she grew up and lived for 22 years before moving to Utah. She has a journalism degree from the University of Sarajevo and an MLIS from Emporia State University. She worked for the Salt Lake City Public Library for over a dozen years and has spent the last two years with Salt Lake County Public Libraries.

Would you share a few things you have done that required you to be brave or leave your comfort zone?

Applied for a competitive job with a different library system. Took on a leadership role in a project involving multiple stakeholders. Run for a ULA position!

Thanks Azra. Hopefully a few people will take you up on discussing your favorite books when they see you at a ULA event!

Patrick Hoecherl
President-Elect
Salt Lake City Public Library



The Far-Reaching Consequences of HB374: Sensitive Materials in Schools

The Utah Library Association (ULA) was recently contacted by a community member who has publicly expressed concern about the so-called “continuous problem of ‘porn’ in books within school libraries.” In an email to ULA, this person suggested that in light of the passage of the Sensitive Materials in Schools Law (HB374), the “Miller Test” does not apply to books in school libraries, and we should therefore revise or recall our statement on the removal of 52 books at the Alpine School District.

ULA stands behind our statement and will continue to oppose book bans that violate local school policies, state law, and established federal first amendment law. Neither local school districts nor our state legislature has the power to override constitutional law, or permit the removal of materials without applying the Miller Test and evaluating the materials “taken as a whole” for serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value. (AKA the “SLAPS” standard.) Abiding by these long-established legal standards, while allowing professional librarians to build collections in accordance with local policies, will ensure that all Utah students will have the opportunity to read and learn from the best age-appropriate books possible.

The request to retract our previous statement on the Alpine School District’s decision reflects the good deal of misunderstanding and misinformation that is being shared regarding HB374. This misunderstanding has been exacerbated by the revocation of a clear guidance memo about the law from the Utah Attorney General’s Office, followed by its replacement with a new guidance memo written in such a way as to encourage cherry-picking of excerpts used by those who want to justify removing materials from school libraries in violation of first amendment law. In fact, the original May 4, 2022 guidance memo was crystal clear on the legal requirement to evaluate materials “as a whole.” Even the second memo, which is clearly written to be more favorable towards the removal of books, acknowledges that failure to apply the Miller Test opens up the school district to first amendment challenges in federal court.

AMERICAN ATTITUDES TOWARD BOOK BANNING: MAJORITY OPPOSITION TO CENSORSHIP

Before we get into the law itself, it is helpful to contextualize our analysis by looking at American public opinion regarding book banning as reflected in two major national polls: The [American Family Survey](#) (BYU/Deseret News), and [Voter Perceptions of Book Bans the United States](#) (EveryLibrary). According to the Deseret News article on the American Family survey, “just 12% of Americans agree that books should be removed from libraries if a parent objects. Moreover... only 16% believe public school libraries include inappropriate books on their shelves.” One of the lead investigators of the survey, Jeremy C. Pope, professor of political science at Brigham Young University, summarized the data saying, “The public really doesn’t like book banning.”



“The public really doesn’t like book banning” – Jeremy C. Pope, professor of political science at Brigham Young University and lead investigator, American Family Survey 2022 (BYU/Deseret News)

The EveryLibrary poll found that only 8% of voters believe “there are many books that are inappropriate and should be banned.” The poll also found that librarians are held in high regard and voters view librarians twice as favorably as politicians and political parties. In short, the poll revealed that voters want to make their own choices about what to read; that most voters oppose banning books; that voters oppose legislation that bans books, and that voters are also likely to consider their opposition to book banning when deciding who to vote for at the ballot box.

A recent [story by KUTV](#) suggests that Utahns are no more fond of book banning than the most Americans, and that there is only a small fringe of activists in Utah who are behind the vast majority of book challenges. KUTV’s investigation discovered that “less than three dozen people, most of them affiliated with one Utah parents group, are behind the [hundreds of] complaints” in an effort to “restrict certain books so your children cannot read them in school.” In Granite School District for example, one married couple is responsible for 199 out of 205 challenges. In other words, the vast majority of Americans and Utahns do not support or instigate book bans.

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HB374 ONLY POINTS TO EXISTING STATE LAWS (SO WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?)

When HB374 was first filed it had many problematic elements and it was strongly opposed by many organizations including ULA, UEA, and UELMA. After many revisions, the final version, while still based on a faulty premise that there are obscene materials on school shelves, did nothing more than point to existing state definitions of obscenity and “harmful to minors.” These definitions basically matched the federal definitions because while states can protect more rights than the federal government, they cannot protect fewer rights. Thus, the SLAPS standard of the Miller Test is a minimum floor for all state obscenity and harmful to minors laws, which is why all states have laws that closely mirror the SLAPS language.

The final version of HB374 was innocuous enough that UEA and ULA withdrew our objections to the bill. The issuance of the May 4 AG guidance memo confirmed our belief that the new law, while perhaps offering a symbolic win for those seeking to ban books, did not fundamentally change the high legal bar required for government entities in proving that materials are obscene and therefore not entitled to first amendment protection.

So if the law didn't change anything, why are we seeing so many books being banned or restricted in our school libraries? That brings us to the second AG Memo.

THE JUNE 1st AG MEMO: LESS CLARITY AND GREATER JEOPARDY FOR LEAs

Nearly one month after the issuance of the May 4th AG guidance memo on HB374, the Attorney General took the seemingly unprecedented step of rescinding the memo and issuing a new one on June 1st. This unusual action was reportedly taken in response to complaints from state legislators who were unhappy that the May 4th guidance stated clearly that HB374 in no way superseded existing state and federal obscenity laws. The new memo, however, was much less clear. It provided a number of sentences that when taken out of context could be read as allowing or even requiring the removal of materials under HB374.

The perspective taken by the AG in the June 1 memo was that, according to HB374, the definition of “indecent public displays” in Utah Code 76-10-1227 (1)(a)(i-iii) should be applied not only to public displays and performances, but to library books. This interpretation is problematic for a number of reasons — reasons that the memo actually points out. Nevertheless, the way the memo is written permits those who wish to ban books to take selected excerpts out of context and use them to justify aggressively pulling books from library shelves. These cherry-picked selections are separated from other sections of the memo which make clear that this “bright line” application of the “indecent public display” definition in 76-10-1227 does not pass constitutional muster.

Other parts of the memo that caution against any “bright line” reliance on the obscenity test in section 1227 (a standard much lower than the SLAPS standard of the Miller Test), include these statements:

- “Section 1227 is generally meant to apply to indecent public displays. The First Amendment’s obscenity analysis for public displays may differ from its obscenity analysis for library materials.”
- “A cardinal rule of statutory interpretation is that when a statute is susceptible to two plausible interpretations, it should be interpreted to avoid the constitutional conflict.”

A cardinal rule of statutory interpretation is that when a statute is susceptible to two plausible interpretations, it should be interpreted to avoid the constitutional conflict.

In spite of some legislators' and school board members' stated opinions that the "bright line" interpretation requires them to pull books from shelves, the June 1 memo specifically allows for LEAs ("local educational authorities" or school districts) to conduct an analysis as to any overall value of the materials clearly stating that engaging in such an analysis "significantly increases the likelihood of overcoming a legal challenge to the removal of the book." Indeed, even sections of the memo that are written to suggest that schools can solely rely on the "public displays" obscenity definition in 1227 make sure to leaven those suggestions with cautions such as these:

- "For example, removing a school library book because it contains a sole description or depiction of an act of "sexual intercourse" or "fondling" (or other forbidden depiction specified under Section 1227) may be subject to increased risk of legal challenge if the book would not otherwise be removed under Sections 1201 or 1203, or 1227 (iv), when taken as a whole."
- "[I]f the material is specifically listed in subsections (i), (ii), and (iii), the decision-maker may consider independently analyzing whether such material has serious value for minors under 1227(2)(b). And, to further validate the removal decision under federal law, decision-makers may consider assessing the materials as a whole" when analyzing materials under Section 1227."
- "A federal court might plausibly read Section 1227(2)(c) not as a bright line rule, but as a rebuttable presumption. That is, descriptions or depictions of things set forth in 1227(1)(a)(i), (ii), and (iii) presumably have no serious value for minors, unless the school proactively determines that such materials have serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value. "
- "Even when removal of library books meets strict compliance with HB374 and related state statutes, a legal challenge will invite application of federal First Amendment jurisprudence, a body of cases which have not favored bright line rules in obscenity cases."

It's not difficult to understand why a court would have concerns about using an obscenity definition that applies to public displays and performances to justify the banning of library books. We have different standards of obscenity for public displays and performances than we do for books because the private experience of reading a scene that contains sexual content is fundamentally different than putting on a public performance of live sex, or putting a billboard up on I-15 showing people engaged in sexual activity. In other words, we all understand that reading about people engaging in sexual activity on the front lawn is protected, but engaging in sexual activity in public is NOT protected by the first amendment.

THE IMPACT AND AFTERMATH OF HB374: BANNED BOOKS, SOFT CENSORSHIP, LIBRARIANS UNDER ATTACK

Before diving deeper into a discussion of the impact of HB374 and the second AG memo it is worth looking a little more closely at the use of the term "bright line" rule. Many legislators, school board members, and supporters of book banning are regularly using the term "bright line" rule when referring to the obscenity definition of 76-10-1227(1)(a)(i-iii). In their usage, the "bright line" means that any books, regardless of a Miller Test analysis, have no value for minors and MUST be pulled from the shelves if there is even one sentence that violates the 1227 (1)(a)(i-iii) "public display" standard of obscenity. As we've already seen, however, other parts of the memo make clear that following this interpretation is likely to put schools at odds with the first amendment. This creates, in essence, a no-win situation for schools who must now decide whether they will violate state law or federal law. Of course good state law, or any official guidance/interpretation thereof, would align with federal law and not create a constitutional conflict. Furthermore, a true "bright line" rule doesn't have plausible competing interpretations. A true "bright line" rule provides crystal clarity regarding what is legal and what is illegal. One can easily discern the lawful from the unlawful and thus choose to stay on the right side of the line and be protected from any threat of civil or criminal penalties. Yet, school district leaders are clear that the AG memo has created a blurry gray line, or worse. They are now in jeopardy whichever side of the line they are on.



A true “bright line” rule provides crystal clarity regarding what is legal and what is illegal. One can easily discern the lawful from the unlawful and thus choose to stay on the right side of the line and be protected from any threat of civil or criminal penalties. Yet, school district leaders are clear that the AG memo has created a blurry gray line, or worse. They are now in jeopardy whichever side of the line they are on.

Michael Curtis, Managing Associate General Counsel, Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel, clearly established the untenable predicament the AG memo’s “bright line” interpretation has created for LEAs when he said in the October Interim Education Committee meeting, “What lawsuit does the LEA want to defend, because that’s kind of what they are choosing now.” Later in the meeting Curtis reiterated this point saying, “The dynamic that LEAs are in right now is sort of pick a lawsuit to defend.” Of course, “picking a lawsuit to defend” is literally the opposite effect of a “bright line” rule, and the use of the is rather Orwellian. [See video of committee meeting, timestamps 1:13:37 and 1:14:10 for Curtis’ comments]

One of the impacts of HB374 and the second AG memo has therefore been to put LEAs and taxpayers at legal and financial risk of unnecessary litigation; a risk that flows directly from a clearly problematic interpretation of the law. Beyond that, the memo has emboldened (if not encouraged) a number of school districts to write and execute policies that err on the side of compliance with state law over compliance with first amendment law. Some districts, like Canyons, have tried to split the difference by temporarily pulling any books off the shelf if they are challenged for having “sensitive” content under 76-10-1227, while still affording books a fuller evaluation process that involves a committee applying the full Miller Test analysis. However, the pulling of any book that is challenged, even if temporarily, is still a first amendment violation. And the fact that any parent can make up to 10 sensitive materials challenges per year, and that each challenge requires the librarian to fully read the book at an estimated time of 4-5 hours per book, still leads to a situation where books are off the shelf for long periods of time even if they are eventually deemed to be of value. As bad as this is, other school districts refuse to even evaluate a book for SLAPS value if there is any content in the book that violates 76-10-1227.

Which brings us to the next significant impact of HB374: it is requiring inordinate amounts of time from school librarians, as well as administrators, and school board members. Coming back to the Canyons example, one parent making 10 sensitive materials challenges could take up 40-50 hours of a librarian’s time just reading the books. That doesn’t even include the time it takes to form committees for the deeper evaluations that are required in each challenge, and all of the administrative time involved in documenting and reporting on these activities. And of course every hour spent dealing with a challenge is an hour not spent helping students improve their literacy, expand their vocabulary, develop critical thinking skills, learn digital citizenship, how to safely navigate the Internet, or any of the other vital ways in which school librarians prepare Utah students for a lifetime of success and prosperity.

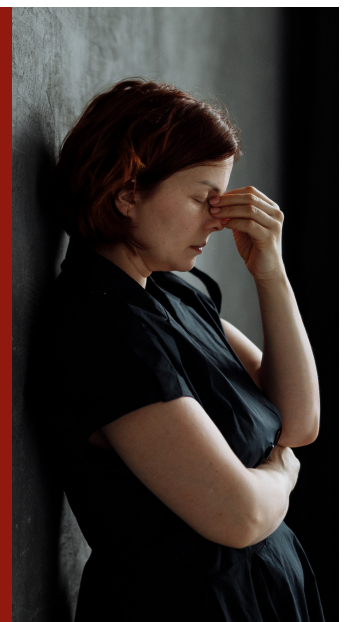
The Comic Book Legal Defense Fund, reporting on the situation in Utah, writes that, “Lawsuits notwithstanding, the bill has already impacted resources in the school districts. One district said the recent challenges have already cost 500 hours of labor and \$20,000 of funds.”

“Lawsuits notwithstanding, the bill [HB374] has already impacted resources in the school districts. One district said the recent challenges have already cost 500 hours of labor and \$20,000 of funds.” – Comic Book Legal Defense Fund (CBLDF)

It was eye-opening to hear Dr. Mark Clement, President of the Alpine School Board, testify at the November, 2022 Interim Education Committee meeting on the impact of HB374. He said that prior to the passage of the law, Alpine had a process that worked well. He noted that Alpine’s school librarians are trained professionals who support student learning by recommending books to them based on their unique values and needs. Parents always had the right and the ability to restrict access to books for their own children by contacting librarians. Dr. Clement went on to note that since the passage of HB374, Alpine has had to deal with police showing up at the school library because a parent complained of porn in the library. He shared that the experience of having police show up was frightening to school librarians and, not surprisingly, made them less effective. At one high school in the Alpine district, English teachers brought books to the principal’s office and left them there saying that they would not be teaching them any more under threat of prosecution. In short, Clement testified that the bill has been largely negative; that teachers and librarians are labeled as untrustworthy or pushing porn when they are just trying to help children.

The final, but highly significant, impact of HB374? The mental and emotional toll it is taking on teachers and librarians as they simply try to do their jobs. Many librarians are experiencing chronic stress as they are being attacked in public meetings and on social media, sometimes by name. Given the recent attack on Paul Pelosi in the privacy of his own home, the hateful political rhetoric spewing forth daily on the national level, and, more locally, police reports being filed, and comments by a Utah State School Board member suggesting that death is the appropriate punishment for people who put “soul destroying materials” in the hands of kids, it is understandable that librarians and teachers have legitimate fears for their safety and the safety of their families. No one, least of all those who devote their lives to the betterment of children and society, deserve to be targeted and to work under such hostile conditions.

Many librarians are experiencing chronic stress as they are being attacked in public meetings and on social media, sometimes by name. Given the recent attack on Paul Pelosi in the privacy of his own home and comments by a Utah State School Board member suggesting that death is the appropriate punishment for people who put “soul destroying materials” in the hands of kids, it is understandable that librarians and teachers have legitimate fears for their safety and the safety of their families.



WHAT'S NEXT AND WHAT CAN WE DO?

Based on comments by legislators during Interim Education Committee meetings, as well as comments on social media, we expect to see legislation in the upcoming session that attempts to:

- Restrict collection development policies in school libraries, possibly requiring parental approval for new items in the collection. (Note that Davis County School District is already doing this.)
- Require challenged books to be pulled from the shelf immediately, rather than staying on the shelf while the materials are being reviewed. (Note that Canyons and possibly other Districts are already doing this.)
- Be more aggressive in bringing criminal or civil charges against librarians and teachers. (Note there is already an uptick nationwide of police involvement and legislative attempts to expose librarians to criminal and civil penalties.)
- Institute the requirement of a book rating system created by pro-censorship political activists.

There are, of course, legitimate policy goals in protecting children from harm, and as librarians we know that many of the books that some people claim are harmful have in fact been of great value to many people. We know that books help people protect themselves and their family members by helping them recognize, address, and/or prevent abusive situations. These books have also helped people feel a sense of self-worth, feel less alone, and otherwise help them deal with depression or suicidal ideation. Certainly many librarians have entered the profession due to our direct experience of the life-saving and life-enhancing power of literature, coupled with the professional, non-judgmental attention given by a caring librarian.



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Because we recognize the very real policy goals of advancing the protection and well-being of all children, ULA will continue to work proactively and in good faith with legislators to address all legitimate concerns. In coalition with organizational partners, we will seek to advance and shape policy that supports student success, and preserves and protects the professional input and judgment of librarians in an educational setting. Likewise, we will work to preserve and protect the rights of all parents and students, while opposing any attempts to use the power of the state and overly restrictive or unconstitutional government regulations to impose the personal opinions of the few into public education, thereby usurping student's rights to an excellent education, and the rights of all parents to parent and guide their own children's learning according to their family's values and beliefs.

SEE ALSO: Advocacy Resources for ULA Members

- [Book Ban/Censorship Messaging for Library Supporters](#)
- [Deeper Dive into the AG Memo: What it says, what it doesn't](#)
- [Utah AG Publishes Clear Guidance Protecting School Libraries](#): EveryLibrary Institute analysis of the May 4, 2021 AG memo, with 9/16/22 update discussing the June 1 AG memo.
- [Free EveryLibrary Webinar](#): Best Practices Fighting Book Banning in a Polarized World (also presented ALA Core Forum)
- [Find Your Your Elected Officials](#) [Reach out directly to state legislators and school board members to develop a constituent relationship.]

SEE ALSO: Materials You Can Share on Your Personal Social Media Platforms

- [Utah Libraries: Keystone of Healthy Democracy, Student Success, and Prosperous Communities](#) [Free ebook published by Utah Library Advocates]
- [I Support Utah Libraries](#) [Shareable petition to help Utahns who support libraries to self-identify]
- [Don't Ban Books in Utah](#) [Shareable petition from Utah Families First to help Utahns who oppose censorship to self-identify]
- [Join Let Utah Read](#) [An Action Platform – in Beta – to support coordinated action such as petitions, events, discussions, sharing of resources, among those who support the Freedom to Read in Utah]

Peter Bromberg
Advocacy Co-Chair
EveryLibrary

Rebekah Cummings
Advocacy Co-Chair
Marriott Library



Q&A About MPLA

If you are new to library world, or even if you have been around for a while, you may not know much about the Mountain Plains Library association. Hopefully, this article can answer some of your unasked questions.

Q. What is MPLA?

A. The Mountain Plains Library Association (MPLA) is a twelve state association of librarians, library paraprofessionals and friends of libraries in Arizona, Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming. Its purpose is to promote the development of librarians and libraries by providing significant educational and networking opportunities. The Association meets annually in joint conferences with member states on a rotational basis, and is governed by an elected board of representatives from each member state and a number of committees. In addition to its board and its officers, MPLA activities are carried out by a number of committees and an executive secretary.

Q. How is Utah involved in MPLA?

A. In addition to our state's current members, Utah has a long history of involvement in MPLA. In fact, Ms. Ruth V. Tyler, the Head Librarian of the Salt Lake County Library System from 1938 to 1971 was one of 6 members of the original conference planning committee that led to the establishment of MPLA. She was also elected as the first vice president/president elect of the association. It was Ms. Tyler who made the motion that "this conference resolve itself into a regional association and that the chairman appoint a Committee on Constitution and By-Laws and such other committees as he might see fit" (*A History of MPLA: The Founding by Blaine H. Hall*). In addition to Ms. Tyler, the first conference was also attended by Ms. Virginia Hanson, director of the Cache County Library from 1944 – 1973 (now Logan Library), who described the experience like this: "The Estes Park (Colorado) gathering was most satisfactory. It was really wonderful to be on the spot all the time; with no cabs to hail, no traffic to struggle through, no shopping and sightseeing tours to leave one frustrated and breathless; and time to become acquainted with the interesting new people from Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming and Nebraska (four of the seven founding states)."

Board of Directors — 1959



Left to right: Mr. Marlon S. Bateman (Sandy), term expires July 1, 1961; Dr. O. C. England, Vice President (East Mill Creek), term expires July 1, 1962; Ruth V. Tyler, County Librarian; Mr. Henry Beckstead, President (Mayor of Midvale), term of office; Dr. Calvin S. Smith, Secretary (Bennion), term expires July 1, 1960; Mr. William G. Larson, County Commissioner (Magna), term of office.

Q. What can MPLA offer me?

A. In addition to a regional job listing and a quarterly newsletter updates. MPLA offers great professional development opportunities such as serving on action and administrative committees and attendance at the annual regional conference which, this year, will be held in Oklahoma on March 8-10. You can register [HERE](#).

But MPLA is probably best known for its widely reputed MPLA Leadership Institute held bi-annually in Estes Park Colorado which is located in the heart of Rocky Mountain National Park. The institute is led by past ALA president and nationally recognized organizational development trainer, Maureen Sullivan. The institute not only provides five days of intensive leadership and organizational training, but also provides small group mentors chosen from proven leaders in the library field who attend with you and offer their own support and insight. If you would like to learn more about this outstanding opportunity, click [HERE](#).



Virginia Hansen,
Early Director of the
Logan Public Library.

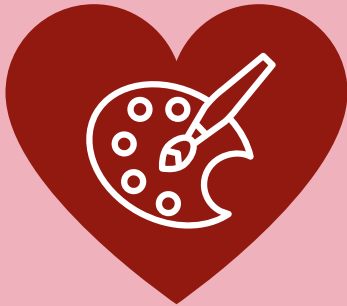
The more I learn about MPLA as I serve as ULA's representative to the board, the more I am convinced that MPLA is a great avenue to help you reach your professional library goals.

Sherrie Mortensen
MPLA Representative
Wasatch County Library

FEBRUARY 2023

LIBRARY LOVERS' MONTH

HOW LIBRARIES ARE LOVED



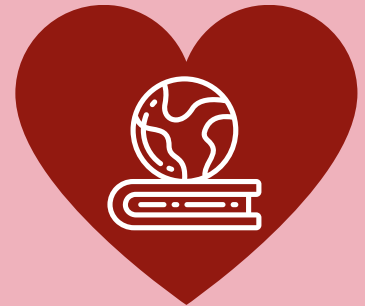
THE ARTS

Visual and performing arts exhibits and programs: painting, sculpture, photography, design, digital, fiber, music, dance, and acting.



LEARNING SPACES

Study space, homework help, creative labs, and collaborative learning.



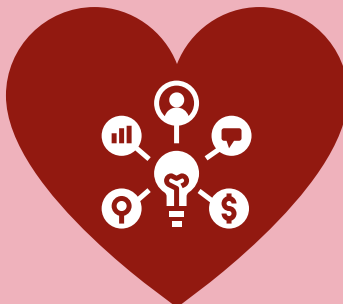
LITERACY

Early literacy skills, digital resources, test prep, coding instruction, and life-long learning opportunities.



DIGITAL ACCESS

Broadband, wireless internet, mobile hot spots, public computing, and technology hubs.




WORKFORCE AND SMALL BUSINESS

Workforce skills development, career planning programs, job-search assistance, research and resources to support small business creation.



SOCIAL HUB

Health information, social services, financial assistance, and nonprofit resources.



UTAH LIBRARY AWARDS

The **Utah Library Awards** are back again! These awards offer the opportunity to recognize and highlight the outstanding work that has been ongoing in Utah libraries. To nominate an outstanding individual or group for an award, please complete the ULA Nominations Form by **Monday, Feb. 6.**


Examples of exemplary work can include, but aren't limited to, outstanding service in the areas of:

- Diversity and Inclusion
- Outreach to users
- Library advocacy
- Access to technology and collections
- Serving the needs of people who are vulnerable and underserved
- Providing innovative ways to deliver services and materials

For more information on individual awards and eligibility, please visit:

<https://ula.org/organization/committees/awards/ula-awards-definitions/>

Questions? Contact Alli Parker at agparker@slcolibrary.org



Save the Date!

YSRT Winter Workshop



**February 24, 2023
at the
Park City Library**

Virtual and in person options available



NOW IS THE TIME



EMPORIA STATE UNIVERSITY

School of LIBRARY & INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Earn your Master of Library Science

A graduate degree in Library and Information Management complements previous education, offers prospects for increased earnings and provides flexible skills for the future.

Learn more at emporia.edu/slim.



Library News

University of Utah Libraries Announces New Dean of Libraries

Sarah Shreeves has been selected to join the University of Utah as the new dean of libraries. She will begin in June. Current Dean of Libraries Alberta Comer will continue in her position until that time.

Shreeves is currently the vice dean of libraries at University of Arizona, where she serves as chief operating officer, providing leadership and support to the departments of Access and Information Services, Special Collections, Technology Strategy and Services and Research Engagement. She received a bachelor's degree in medieval studies from Bryn Mawr College, and master's degrees in children's literature from Simmons College and library and information science from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Shreeves was selected from a competitive pool of candidates that was narrowed down by a search committee chaired by Catherine Soehner, director of the Eccles Health Sciences Library and associate dean for research and Sylvia Torti, dean of the Honors College.

"I am grateful to the committee for their hard work," said Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Mitzi Montoya. "The dean of libraries plays a vital role in advancing research and I'm excited to welcome Sarah to the University of Utah."

Before joining the University of Arizona, Shreeves served as associate dean for digital strategies and faculty affairs at University of Miami Libraries, co-coordinator of the Scholarly Commons and associate professor of library administration at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Libraries, and project manager for integrated library system migration at



Massachusetts Institute of Technology Libraries. She serves on multiple national and international advisory boards and steering committees, including the APTrust Governing Board and U.S. Repository Network Steering Group.

"As someone who has long appreciated the power of research in finding solutions for the problems of our time and believes in the role of public universities to provide opportunities for all, I am thrilled to join the University of Utah as the dean of libraries," Shreeves said. "I am humbled and eager to begin collaborating with the campus community."

After serving for nearly a decade at the U, Comer will continue as dean over the J. Willard Marriott Library for several months to assist Shreeves in transitioning to her new role.

Link to [Library Blogpost](#).



Allie McCormack Has Been Awarded a Faculty Grant from the University of Utah's Digital Matters Lab

Allie McCormack has been awarded a Faculty Grant from the University of Utah's Digital Matters Lab to examine Marriot Library archival records of materials by and/or about BIPOC and religious minority groups. This grant funds the hiring of a student assistant to remediate controlled vocabulary terms and free-text descriptions in finding aids and collection-level catalog records, allowing patrons easier access to these materials. The remediated metadata will also generate data visualizations that patrons and library staff can use to analyze and better understand the collections. Allie and the student worker, Emma Fox, will present about their project and its findings at the upcoming ULA conference.

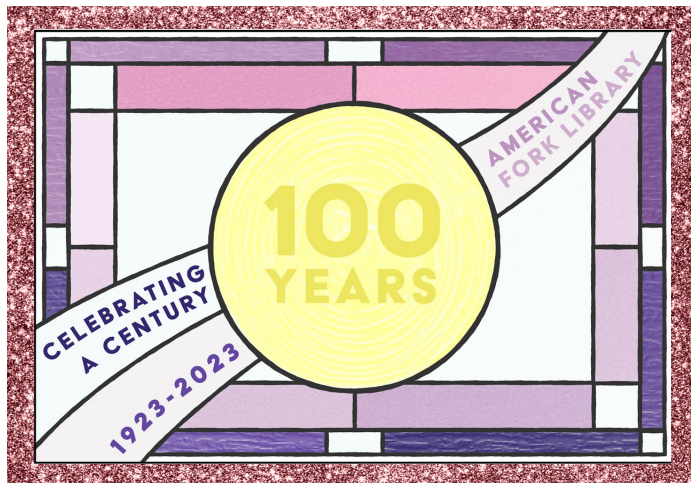


A Parent and Child Having a Quiet Moment at the Wasatch County Library

Wasatch County consists of roughly 1,200 square miles, centered on the Heber Valley, which is close to Utah's major metropolitan areas, yet it strives to retain its rural beginnings.

VISION: Wasatch County Library strives to be the cornerstone of our community's civic and cultural life. We include all residents, engage them in constructive dialogue, and elevate the quality of life.

MISSION: We enrich the lives of Wasatch County residents by providing resources and experiences that build community, spark the imagination, and support lifelong learning.



Celebrating a Century with the American Fork Library

By Casandria Crane
American Fork Library Director

In January 1923, American Fork Library held an open house to dedicate the new library building. This month, we will celebrate that occasion with another open house on January 23 from 6 to 8 pm. We have provided a century of library service to the American Fork community and we look forward to another 100 years!

As we prepare for this event, I have truly enjoyed the opportunity to learn about the visionary people who made it possible for American Fork to build a library.

Here are just a handful of them: Andrew Carnegie believed in the power of libraries and his legacy is seen in the thousands of buildings he financed through special library grants. To receive a grant, each town agreed to make the library a free public institution, provide land for the building, and prove they would maintain the library through taxes. 23 Carnegie libraries were built in Utah. American Fork was the last when it was

granted \$10,000 in 1919. Miss Mary E. Downey visited American Fork in May 1914 in her capacity as Utah State Library Organizer. At that time, there was a petition circulating to apply for a Carnegie Library grant. She spoke at the 2nd Ward meetinghouse one Monday evening and her speech convinced the community to apply.

An American Fork Citizen reporter described her talk: "No community is educationally complete without a public library. It is the people's college. It fills the gap that now exists in our educational system, offering to both children and parents a chance to continue their education when they are out of school. It reinforces the school, the home, and the church in their efforts to uplift humanity. It is the best kind of substitute for the saloon and the street corner."

Dr. P.M. Kelly served as Chairman of the Library Board in the 1910's. He showed up at every City Council meeting he could to advocate for the



library. He helped gather signatures, find support, apply for the Carnegie grant, and secure land. Dr. Kelly loved books and helped the library director choose titles for the American Fork Library at book sales in Salt Lake. He wrote a newspaper article about the history of the library and his pride in being able to contribute to the construction of a library here.

Mrs. Emily Forbes Foster served as American Fork Library Director before, during, and after the completion of the library building. For decades, the Library had consisted of 500+ books that were continually relocated to various homes and schools.

Mrs. Foster was instrumental in applying for the grant and establishing the collection in the new Carnegie Library. Under her leadership, the number of library books increased to over 14,000 when she resigned in 1932.

It is a privilege to follow in the footsteps of these forerunners from over a century ago. In 2023, we have 87,078 books on our shelves and 343,000+ downloadable books for check out. Online, a library card allows access to local newspapers, learn a language, watch documentaries, take practice driving tests, interact with animated stories, and more. We offer classes in mental health, English language, writing, computer programming, budgeting, gardening, cooking, crafts, yoga, and others. We host concerts,



performances, writing conferences, health fairs, and art shows. Library staff programs include storytimes, service clubs, reading challenges, Dungeons & Dragons, suicide prevention, tutoring, karaoke, movie nights, trivia games, book clubs, with more creative ideas to come.

We held a joyus Open House on January 23, 2023, Celebrating a Century to see how the library began and ways we continue the founders' inspiring vision today!



STRATEGIC PLANNING

February Strategic Plan Update

This month I really struggled with the Strategic Plan update (and not just because I forgot the deadline), but mostly because there were so many things I wanted to highlight. In the end, I chose to leave the editing pen on my desk and share everything. Enjoy!



Organizational Health Goal 2

ULA Enables Their Leadership With Tools and Support for Effective Governance

BYLAWS: (Organizational Health)

- Recruit members to help with the revision of the Policies and Procedures manual to match the updated ULA Bylaws.
 - **December Update:** See update below.
- Work with committee members and unit leaders to update procedures that address their work.
 - **December Update:** See update below.
- Present Policies and Procedures manual for Board approval. Re-write according to Board feedback.
 - **December Update:** See update below.
- Update document on ULA website and distribute to ULA leadership.
 - **December Update:** The policies and procedures ad hoc committee has met and a revision draft has been submitted to Marissa Bischoff for discussion at our December meeting. We also have some questions to ask the board about policies that need their input. There is a large intellectual freedom policy that will be reviewed by the IF and Advocacy committees later after the legislative session calms. Once it is all approved we will update the document on the website and distribute it to the ULA leadership. I'm hopeful this can be accomplished by the summer of 2023.

Education & Leadership Goal 1

Utah Library Staff Members Have the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Needed for Job Success

BURT

- Programming for Annual Conference and Fall Workshop Business librarian related, but inclusive of public librarians who get business questions.
 - **December Update:** Lety and Maggie presented at both annual and fall sessions – they have also submitted a session proposal for next annual.
- “Focus on the public library's role as an essential resource for local entrepreneurs?”
 - **December Update:** The creation of the Free Business Database is be shared with public librarians – <https://guides.lib.byu.edu/freebusinessresources>
- Business reference as advocacy.
 - **December Update:** No report.
- For the Fall workshop and Annual Conference, BURT will sponsor programming that will empower business librarians to offer additional training and support in their local communities, demonstrating the value of business reference assistance to the public.
 - **December Update:** BURT will sponsor Lety & Maggie's session at the upcoming annual.

LAMART

- Conduct survey of interests to identify learning needs for library managers, supervisors, and administrators during May-June 2022.
 - **December Update:** Done!
- Conduct 2 training sessions a year for managers to discuss key topics of management, supervision. One at Fall Workshop, another at the ULA Annual Conference.
 - **December Update:** We did present this panel at the ULA Fall Workshop. It was highly attended and really helpful.
- At ULA Fall Workshop and Annual Conference, set up round table discussions and networking events (2 total).
 - **December Update:** We met right after the panel and had a great discussion in small groups.
- Organize a format to regularly check in on LAMART members, share ideas, collaborate, and problem-solve.
 - **December Update:** We are in the process of setting up a listserv in the next couple of weeks.

LIRT

- Survey our members about their instructional roles (academic, public, school, etc.) to get an idea of our membership makeup.
 - **December Update:** We are planning to do our survey in the spring with a plan to share those results hopefully at ULA where we plan to have a LIRT meeting with current and interested roundtable members.
- Plan a monthly instruction/teaching topic to discuss. For example: Data literacy, Ungrading, Info-lit fellows, Student success initiatives.
 - **December Update:**
 - September: We held our monthly Zoom discussion on 9/20 @2PM and discussed Student Success Initiatives. We had 8 attendees.
 - October: We held our monthly Zoom discussion on 10/25 @2PM and discussed Standardizing Library and Information Literacy Instruction. We had 4 attendees.
 - November: We held our monthly Zoom discussion on 11/15 @2PM and discussed Ungrading. We had 4 attendees.
 - December: TBA
- Update roundtable website to include links to resources discussed and shared.
 - **December Update:** I've emailed one of our LIRT committee members about the Sept & Oct minutes and am waiting to hear back. Once I receive those I'll be able to add minutes to the LIRT roundtable website which will include links to resources we discussed.

Thank you to everyone for your contributions!

Patrick Hoecherl

President-Elect

Committee Chair



Utah Library Association

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 - 2025

MISSION: ULA Cultivates professional development, connections, and inclusivity to promote strong Utah libraries.

VISION: We are the heart of our profession, circulating knowledge and creating connections.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS



ADVOCACY

- People who care about libraries are equipped for advocacy work.
- Decision-makers, partners, and residents understand the value of libraries.



OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

- ULA has extended reach throughout the state by engaging new members.
- Current members feel deeply connected to other members and increasingly engaged with ULA.



EDUCATION & LEADERSHIP

- Utah library staff members have the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for job success.
- Utah residents and students look to their libraries for innovation and leadership.



EQUITY, DIVERSITY, & INCLUSION

- ULA has diverse membership and leadership.
- Utah libraries are equitable and inclusive.



ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

- ULA has appropriate staffing, membership, and funding to achieve our mission.
- ULA enables their leadership with tools and support for effective governance.

GOALS



STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS



ADVOCACY

- Empowered library professionals and patrons, greater local and state funding for libraries, better public understanding of the value of libraries.
- Stakeholders seek more ways to support libraries, either through advocacy, funding, volunteering, or usage.



OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

- A larger community of passionate members who are growing together as professionals.
- Idea-sharing, collaborations, friendships, and innovations.



EDUCATION & LEADERSHIP

- Confident library professionals enjoying their work and making an impact in their communities.
- Libraries evolve to meet emerging needs in their communities and bring fresh ideas to their stakeholders.



EQUITY, DIVERSITY, & INCLUSION

- A ULA community that boasts many cultures and perspectives and strives for equitable opportunities.
- Libraries committed to breaking down barriers between community members and library services.



ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

- Success means ULA has robust operations through growth of staff, funding, members, and services.
- All facets of the organization are aligned and efficient, leading to easier staff on-boarding and decision-making.

SUCCESS MEANS

Welcome, New ULA Members!

The ULA community, Executive Board, and staff are pleased to welcome our newest ULA members. We are looking forward to seeing what new ideas and contributions you bring to ULA and hope you thrive here.

Susan Barnett
Lacy Echeverria
Brian Gregory
Janalee Jeffery
Sarah Laursen

DaNae Leu
Kathy Lister
Caroline Macfarlane
Caitlyn Towne-Anderson
Allison Turner-Kamp

Grey McLean
Camisha Reed
Elaine Street
Glen Taylor
Ryan Thalman

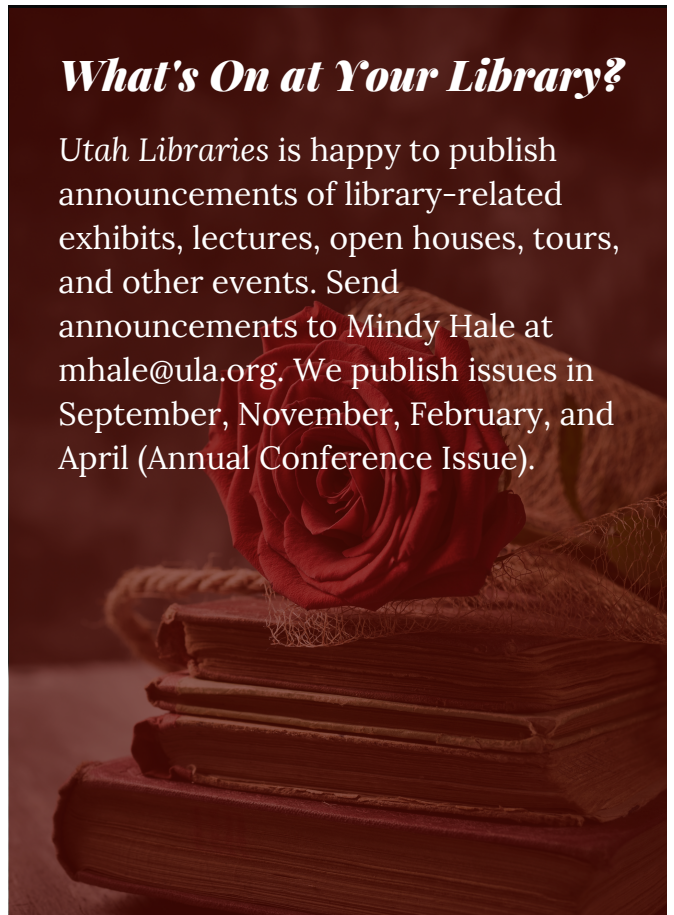
Renew Your Membership

Remember you can renew and pay for your ULA Membership renewal online by logging in to ula.wildapricot.org.

Click on "Join Us", then select your Membership Category. Your receipt will be sent to the email you list in your membership.

What's On at Your Library?

Utah Libraries is happy to publish announcements of library-related exhibits, lectures, open houses, tours, and other events. Send announcements to Mindy Hale at mhale@ula.org. We publish issues in September, November, February, and April (Annual Conference Issue).



Support ULA



Support ULA. Purchase items that include our 2023 Grow with Intention logo. [Shop now!](#)



AmazonSmile is an easy way for you to support ULA. Shop at smile.amazon.com!

#FReadomUT



Join other Utahns in expressing your support for our First Amendment Rights and our Freedom to Read. Share your support by using **#FReadomUT** on social media.

Library Love

WORDS BY RUDOLFO ANAYA

“A library is also a place where love begins.”