

# FLORIDA LIBRARIES

Fall 2023

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THE SEA

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SERVICE  
IDEAS

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THE DANGER  
OF TECHNOCRACY



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ABOUT  
GETTING  
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AN FLA PUBLICATION

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# FROM THE EDITOR

MARY DANIELS



Welcome to the Fall 2023 edition of *Florida Libraries*. When I first reached out to Jennifer Abdelnour, the Executive Director of FLA, about publishing an issue this year, I wasn't entirely sure we could pull it off. We were in the last quarter of the year, after all! But thanks to her help and guidance, the efforts and support of the *Florida Libraries* Editorial Board, and the excellent submissions we received from librarians across the state, I am pleased to present our Fall 2023 issue.

It's been an interesting time in libraries nationwide, but especially here in Florida. New disputes, different permutations of existing problems, and matters we never thought we'd face in our careers continue to loom over librarians in all fields. As evidenced by the contents of this issue, these concerns are at the forefront of many minds. As well they should be! We have reached a point here in the Sunshine State where we can no longer idly hope things will improve. Librarians have been taking action, making plans to help their respective populations, and continuing to find ways to serve their communities in spite of those who would have us stop, and for that, I commend all of you.

What makes these unsettling times bearable is the courage of our convictions—or rather, as Nietzsche said, “A very popular error: having the courage of one's convictions; rather it is a matter of having the courage for an attack on one's convictions!” Recent events have shown us this truth: our convictions are strong.

Librarians, library workers, volunteers, and library supporters have faced those attacks on their convictions. Both nationwide and in Florida, they have handled those conflicts with astonishing (but not at all surprising) dignity and grace. We are the readers of Orwell and Collins, the keepers of philosophers and poets. Did they really think we would “go gentle into that good night?”

I applaud each and every one of you—no matter if you work in the public, in a media center, in university libraries, in technical services, in special collections, or the myriad of other places librarians work—for having not only the courage of your convictions, but the courage to keep those convictions. In this season of thankfulness, I am grateful to the library workers who continue to inspire and elevate others. As the FLA President reminds us in his letter, keep in mind your *why*. Reach out to your coworkers, your colleagues in the field, and both give and gather support. We will continue to thrive, and we will do so together.

Gratefully,

MARY DANIELS, MLIS  
INTERIM EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

# FROM THE PRESIDENT

DOUGLAS CRANE



As we leave the hot, muggy summer weather behind and look forward to a cool holiday season, it's time to reflect on my first several months as FLA President.

It was a pleasure to meet many members across the state, not only through Zoom, but in-person at a pair of FLA meet-ups and through training classes that I conducted in association with our Library Cooperatives. It is great to see the many ways our state demonstrates how Florida Libraries are Fundamental to Freedom. That is only made possible by the impassioned work being done at all levels and types of libraries.

I'm delighted to share that the Association is as busy as ever with all our committees in high gear! Between conference planning, drafting the legislative platform, creating great activities, and planning to open our first online shop, our members are working hard. Thank you to everyone who is currently serving on a committee. Donating your time and talent is what makes our Association a success.

Unfortunately, the challenges that have faced libraries over the past few years are still with us. It can be exhausting to keep going with each new headline coming across our media feeds. However, it is vital to remember that what keeps us going is understanding the vital nature of library work. When times are hard, it can be helpful to return to our mission and vision for inspiration. Below are the statements we share on the FLA web site.

## Mission

The Florida Library Association is a statewide

organization that promotes excellence in Florida libraries by advocating strongly for libraries and providing high quality professional and leadership development for a diverse community of library staff, volunteers, and supporters.

## Vision

The Florida Library Association champions strong, indispensable, user-focused Florida libraries that exceed the expectations of the communities and constituents they serve.

Looking ahead we are entering another legislative session for which FLA stands as the voice of our library members and staff. Announcements on the wide variety of fun and engaging activities and events happening at the 2024 Conference will come out soon. Also, we will be asking for our next set of leaders to step forward for nomination and election to the FLA Board.

As a lifetime member of this great profession, I truly believe that Florida Libraries are Fundamental to Freedom. Let this truth carry forth in the service you provide to your community.

I wish you all a great holiday season.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Douglas Crane', written in a cursive style.

DOUGLAS CRANE  
FLA PRESIDENT 2023-2024

# FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

JENNIFER K. ABDELNOUR, CAE



## What makes a good volunteer?

In my experience, a good volunteer is someone with a strong interest in a profession, organization, or specific role; the aptitude to contribute in a constructive and meaningful way; and the time to devote to such service.

## Tell me more!

We know FLA members contribute every day through their paid positions.

But you may not realize that FLA runs on volunteers! In fact, volunteers are vital to any and every nonprofit organization. FLA is led by 17 volunteer Executive Board members, and nearly 140 dedicated FLA members power our eight active committees and 13 subcommittees. While FLA experience is a plus, you need only a commitment to FLA and a willingness to learn in order to volunteer as a committee member.

Our board and committees meet monthly to plan the events, programs, and initiatives of FLA. And these folks seriously put in the work. FLA's volunteers are some of the most dedicated and hardworking people who I have had the privilege to work with.

Look for the 2024-2025 Call for Board Member Nominations this fall and FLA Call for Committee Members in March 2024.

Other member opportunities include volunteering at Conference and assisting with Library Day preparation and logistics.

Sharing our diverse backgrounds and coming together to take important and impactful action are critical to good decision-making.

## What's in it for me?

Volunteering for FLA can help you expand your talents, collaborate with peers throughout the state, and contribute to your profession. Plus, you earn the bragging rights of a bonafide FLA champion. It isn't always easy work, but the rewards are lasting. So help drive the library profession forward. You don't need to be perfect to be the perfect FLA volunteer.

We appreciate all of our volunteers and thank them for serving the Florida Library Association! Thank you for all that you do.

I'd love to hear from you! Send any questions, suggestions, or concerns to [executivedirector@flalib.org](mailto:executivedirector@flalib.org).

Regards,

JJENNY ABDELNOUR, CAE  
FLA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# MEET THE EDITORIAL BOARD

## INTERIM EDITOR-IN CHIEF

Mary Daniels

Mary Daniels is the Collection Services Librarian at the Maitland Public Library, where she has worked since 2013. She graduated from USF with her MLIS, and has her Bachelors in English from UCF. She is passionate about writing, literacy, intellectual freedom, and the library field, and has served on the FLA Journal Editorial Board since 2020. She is looking forward to this exciting new chapter with the FLA Journal.



## COPY EDITOR

Sylvie Daubar-Sanjuan

Sylvie Daubar-San Juan holds an MLIS degree and an MA in Art History. She works as Gallery Director and Humanities Department Chairperson at Belen Jesuit Preparatory School in Miami, Florida. An article she wrote was published in the Fall/Winter 2022-2023 issue of Florida Libraries.



## FLA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jenny Abdelnour

Jenny Abdelnour is FLA's Executive Director. Her background includes more than 25 years of working in leadership development, public policy, public relations, communications, conference management, and association management. Jenny earned an M.A. in political science with a concentration in applied politics from American University's School of Public Affairs and a B.S. in Criminology from Florida State University. In addition, she earned and maintains the Certified Association Executive (CAE) credential from the American Society of Association Executives. Jenny is a member of the Florida Society of Association Executives.



## COPY EDITOR

Rebecca Greer

Rebecca Greer is currently a High School Library Media Specialist for Manatee School for the Arts. In her previous life, she was a Young Adult Librarian for almost ten years where she specialized in running large-scale programs, including Teen Lit Fest, an author festival in Tampa, FL. Rebecca writes book reviews for School Library Journal focusing on books for Young Adults, and several of her programs have been published in "Think Big!: A Resource Manual for Teen Library Programs That Attract Large Audiences".



## COPY EDITOR

Richard Hodges

Richard Hodges, Ed.D. is currently Assistant Vice President for Library Services at Florida Southwestern State College in Fort Myers. He holds a bachelor's degree in applied music from Wichita State University, a master's in applied music from the University of Mississippi, a master's of library and information science from Louisiana State University, and a doctorate in education policy, planning, and leadership from William & Mary. Dr. Hodges is a former member of the Editorial Board for the Virginia Community College System's journal Inquiry, and a former member of the international Expert Panel for the creation of the EDUCAUSE annual Horizon Report examining the impact of technology on higher education.



## JOURNAL DESIGN EDITOR

Sabrina Bernat

Sabrina Bernat is the past Chair of the Florida Library Association's Communications Committee and most recently served as the Executive Director of the Winter Park Library, overseeing the design, construction, and opening of an award-winning new library facility in December 2021.



## EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Kari Calicchio

Kari Calicchio is the Assistant Library Director at Dunedin Public Library and oversees reference, adult programs, and technical services. She has worked in Florida libraries since 2013 and is excited to further the sharing of ideas among library and information professionals throughout the state.





# FLORIDA MULTITYPE LIBRARY COOPERATIVES (MLCS)

BY SARA HACK



The Tampa Bay Library Consortium, Inc. (TBLC) is a community of libraries and the people who work in them committed to collaboration and bettering Floridians' lives through continuously improving library services. TBLC supports this community's success by providing essential services, connecting staff through active engagement, and creating an environment of continuous learning and innovation.

TBLC is a nonprofit Multitype Library Cooperative that assists and empowers over 120 libraries. All types of libraries – public, academic, school and specialized – are members.



SEFLIN (Southeast Florida Library Information Network), Inc. is one of the nation's largest multitype library cooperatives (MLC). SEFLIN member libraries/library systems represent more than 300 public, academic, and school libraries serving a culturally rich and diverse population of more than 6 million Floridians.

SEFLIN is known locally, regionally, and nationally as a leader in collaboratively planning and providing: a comprehensive continuing education program for library staff, the joint use of technology to expand library services, enhanced resource sharing opportunities between Southeast Florida libraries, administration and maintenance of the Florida Library Jobs website, and innovative projects such as social services in libraries and the Palace Project.



Southwest Florida Library Network (SWFLN) enhances and promotes library services in Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Hendry, and Lee counties through cooperative efforts, resource sharing, staff training and education, and exposure to emerging technologies.

SWFLN encourages interlibrary cooperation among all southwest Florida libraries, promotes professional networking and partnerships, monitors trends and innovations impacting libraries, assesses member needs, and designs learning opportunities to keep members informed and current. Programs and services include: staff development and training; Bits 'n Bytes to Borrow technology lending program; assistance with bibliographic maintenance; resource sharing support; professional network of library expertise.

# FLORIDA MULTITYPE LIBRARY COOPERATIVES



PLAN (Panhandle Library Access Network) provides training opportunities for library staff in the Florida Panhandle region and beyond. This training improves the ability of library staff to provide services to Floridians. Continuing Education events are available in multiple formats which include: Webinars, Workshops, Webinar recordings, Conferences (including the statewide ‘Florida Libraries Online Conference’ which all five MLCs combine to produce)

The PLAN Cooperative Purchasing Group provides participating libraries with significant cost-savings and access to a much larger collection of E-resources so library users enjoy a much larger selection of these resources than any individual library could afford on its own.

The Northeast Florida Library Information Network (NEFLIN) is a non-profit, multitype library cooperative. Established in 1992, NEFLIN’s members employ 2,720 staff at 550 public, academic, school and special libraries that serve over 4 million people.

Through grant funding and membership dues, NEFLIN provides members access to training, resource sharing, cooperative purchasing, research and development, partnerships for grant funding, leadership opportunities, and additional services through relationships with other organizations.

Visit [www.neflin.org](http://www.neflin.org) for more information about their programs and services.



# MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

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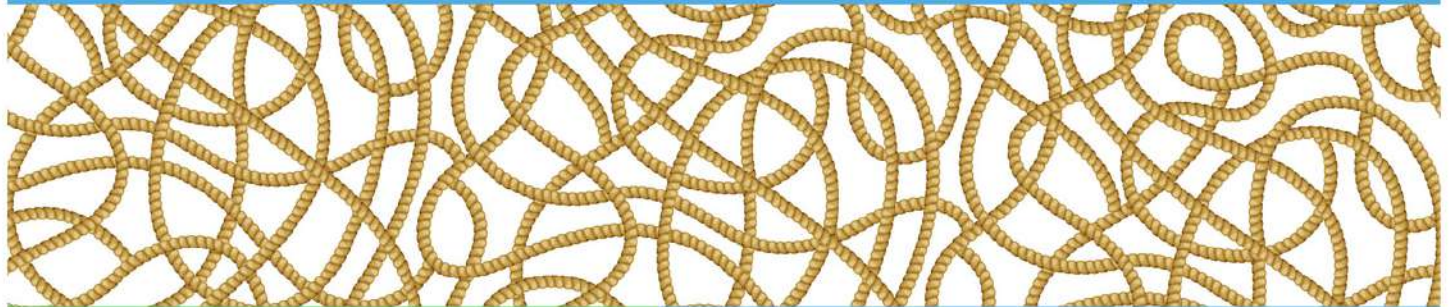
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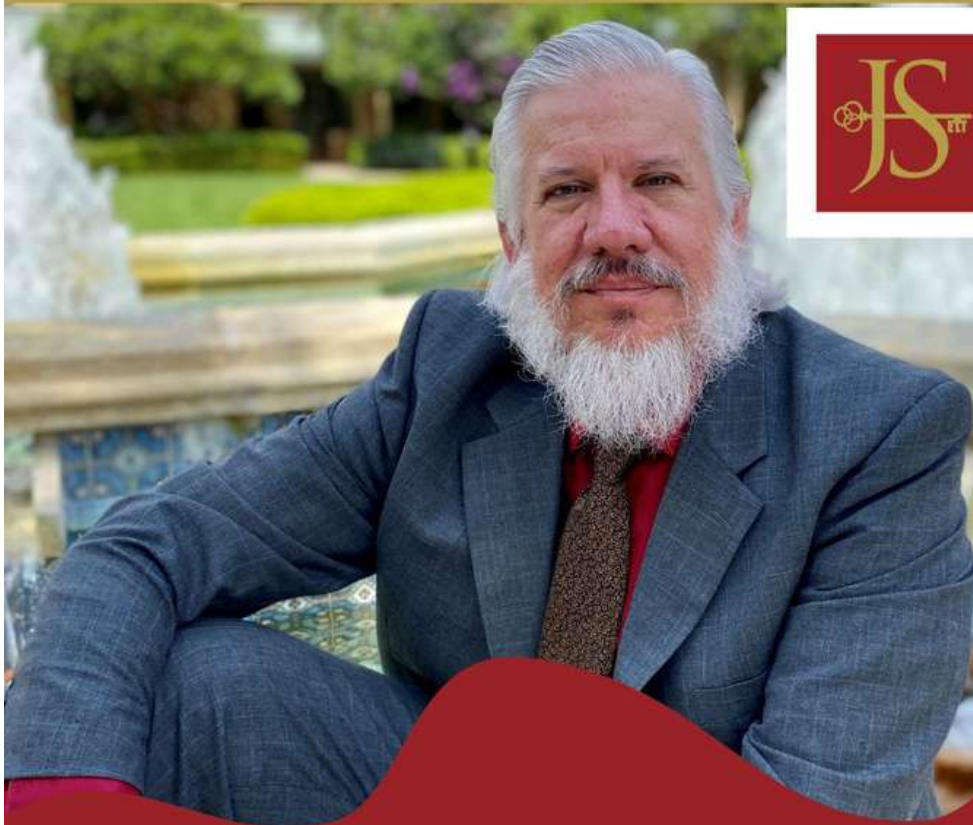
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Melissa Schneider, Executive Director  
at Winter Park Library



(Left) Gary Kirk, President, Tech Logic (Right) Melissa Schneider, Executive Director, Winter Park Library



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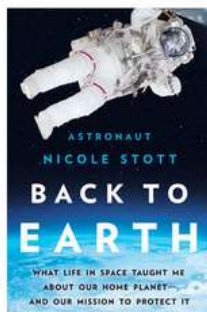
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Photo courtesy The Historical Society of Palm Beach County

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# PROMOTING THE COLLECTION...

## ONE TITLE AT A TIME



BY JESSICA DALY

The mission of the R.A. Williams Library is to support the educational programs and goals of AdventHealth University by providing instruction and resource materials that promote spiritual, professional, and personal development.

As the Head of Collections and Electronic Resources, it is my responsibility to further the mission of AdventHealth University and the library by providing access to resources which support and enrich our curriculum. An additional objective is providing spiritual, recreational, and general resources to the university community. Electronic resources are available equally to students who are on campus and those who are distance learners. I serve the campus in Orlando, Florida as well as a campus in Denver, Colorado. I also serve all AHU online students making sure each one, no matter their location, has access to all library resources and services.

Promoting these resources can often be a challenge for a librarian. My goal is for all AHU students to understand how to take full advantage of the resources within our very extensive collection. I am working to form relationships and collaborations with faculty so they can share the value of the library with students they teach. I promote the collection through AHU's social media by creating short

attention-grabbing videos, and designing interactive posters for each of our on-campus degree programs. I am working to promote the collection to the university community.

Social media is the means by which most of our students communicate, so it is imperative we utilize this to our utmost advantage in sharing our collection resources and services. I started by reaching out to the AHU social media team and requesting a virtual meeting to discuss how the library might contribute content. By the end of the meeting, it was decided I would create two posts each month for the next six months. Additionally, I would also be able to have special posts promoting events or new services within the library. This has been an easy and productive collaboration.

People use short informative videos for many purposes, including learning new skills and entertainment. Short videos grab the audience's attention and are a highly effective way of notifying students, faculty, and staff of available library resources, both in the physical space and online. The video series is shared within the weekly AHU online newsletter and is titled "Collection Connection." The short videos are narrated with catchy background music and raise student awareness of print and online titles, while also highlighting the library's services.

## PROMOTING THE COLLECTION...



While reaching students who are taking classes online or through our Denver campus is a top priority, I cannot forget our students who are on our physical campus in Florida. Promotional interactive posters have been created with these students in mind. Each month a poster promoting e-books for a specific department is displayed in the department's primary office and classrooms, preferably in high traffic areas.

Each e-book chosen for the poster relates directly to the department and contains QR codes, which students can use to instantly access books on their choice of device. People are accustomed to gaining the information

they desire with one click, so we aim to deliver that efficiency with e-books.

Without the support of my library director as well as the staff and faculty of AHU, none of these promotional ideas would have come to fruition. As a result of the collaboration within the university, more students, staff, and faculty will become active patrons of the R.A. Williams Library of AdventHealth University.

*Jessica Daly, B.S.Ed., MLA, is Head of Collections and Electronic Resources, Faculty Librarian, and Assistant Professor at the R.A. Williams Library of AdventHealth University in Orlando, Florida*

# ASTRONOMY FOR EVERYONE

The Story of *Look Up to the Stars*  
by Kevin Manning, Astronomer & Lecturer



The beauty and majesty of a starry sky is awe-inspiring to the beholder; one must simply look up to see and wonder at its splendor. The universe, with its untold mysteries in the depths of space, has always been my laboratory. The jewels of the night sky march across this panorama with smooth and gracious transitions as the earth spins without compromise. The mystery and beauty of the universe creates an ideal topic to spark students' and library patrons' interest. To capture their attention, I use an array of photos as we tour these galaxies, learn of their origins, and contemplate what scientists are on the verge of discovering.

To help build awe-inspiring astronomy education, I founded Look Up to the Stars in 2004. Our mission is to generate interest and foster scientific literacy nationwide through the delivery of educational and entertaining astronomy programs.

This mission aligns with the goals of many libraries to make educational opportunities available and accessible to their communities, whether they are public libraries, academic libraries, or school media centers.

Since 2009, the International Year of Astronomy (IYA), I have offered our Star Tour Across America to individuals, families, schools, libraries, civic organizations, retirement communities, corporations, and churches. In 2009, IYA celebrated the 400th anniversary of Galileo Galilei and the first telescope with 100 nations around the world.



## ASTRONOMY FOR EVERYONE

### Learning from Astronomy

As CEI Executive Director Christine Mason indicated in a recent blog for CEI (Mason, 2021), I follow a few basic principles when teaching children and adults. Whether your patrons participate in one of my programs, you work with local astronomers, or you host your own S.T.E.M. events, you can incorporate these strategies into your library programming:

1. Sophisticated subject matter can be shared with audiences of all ages. Astronomy is not only for high school or college students.
2. Hands-on activities help to make complex learning more concrete; many children and adults learn faster and remember more with an added kinesthetic component. When I work with youth, I often use kits so that they can build their own telescopes.
3. Tell stories and use metaphors or similes to compare the unknown to something knowable. For example, I compare black holes to water going down the drain. As you do this, let your own intrigue show – help students see that you are excited about this subject.
4. Use interesting videos or photos. My presentations give attendees a closer look at stars that are light years away.
5. Involve the community. Check out local astronomy clubs; members are often available to speak with classes or share lessons online.
6. Invite families to learn together. I offer classes not only for youth, but also for families, providing a forum for families to explore space together.
7. Take advantage of remarkable online resources. I use NASA's microobservatory to help students to take images of planets, galaxies, and nebulae.

### Inspiration

Just as many have been inspired by Einstein's extensive discoveries, other scientists can serve as role models for all of us, including your patrons. While I have been inspired by several giants in the field, a celebratory symposium honoring [Dr. Vera Rubin](#) at the Carnegie Institute in Washington, DC, stands out as a moment in time that made a significant difference in my life.

Vera is a world premier astrophysicist who developed a procedure for identifying dark matter throughout the universe (Rubin, 1997). In a field dominated by male astronomers, Vera faced much criticism and opposition from her male counterparts as she battled to gain credibility. In fact, many feel that she was deprived of winning a well-deserved Nobel Prize.

Vera encouraged girls who were interested in investigating the universe to pursue their dreams, and was a force for greater recognition of women in the sciences and for scientific literacy. Role models like Vera can help challenge stereotypes and provide motivation when students are developing an interest in the field.



### Going Virtual

While I have traveled the country for many years sharing my insights and love of astronomy, with the onset of Covid-19, I created a virtual astronomy experience for Look Up to the Stars.

This virtual experience includes fun hands-on activities, classes, programs, and camps about our awesome universe using Zoom, including:

- Virtual Astronomy & Space Academy
- Family Virtual Astronomy Programs
- Summer Astronomy Camp
- Individual, S.T.E.M.-based, hands-on activities

## ASTRONOMY FOR EVERYONE

One of the most popular all-ages family programs is Astronomy for Everyone: Size & Scale of the Universe. In this program, I explore different aspects of the universe from the very small subatomic particles to the very large superclusters of galaxies. It's a virtual journey throughout the cosmos describing celestial objects and how they were formed. Truly exciting images and video segments are used to illustrate the differences in their relative sizes. When this program is offered in person, participants also go outdoors to view celestial objects in the night sky through a powerful hand-crafted telescope, weather permitting. They can see wonders such as the ice crystal rings of Saturn or craters on the Moon. Participants who take the program in the daytime use a solar filter, like the one NASA uses, to view sunspots on the sun.

### Making Cosmic Quilts: Using KWL and NASA's Microobservatory

As part of my work in astronomy education, I have been involved with creating professional development for teachers of varying grade levels and disciplines. In these workshops, I use an interdisciplinary approach, working with teachers on various skills from creating thematic units, to using alternative assessment strategies, such as rubrics and checklists, to facilitating collaborative learning for students. The following are some recommendations for activities from those workshops that can be adapted to a library setting:

- **K-W-L Charts:** Have students take ownership of their learning by filling in a K-W-L chart with "What they know" before the lesson, "What they want to know", and "What they learned" after the lesson.
- **NASA's MicroObservatory:** Students can use this online program to access robotic telescopes, take photographs of planets, galaxies, and nebulae and use image processing tools to bring out detail in these photos the same way that professional astronomers do.
- **Cosmic Quilts:** Your class can make a cosmic quilt by gathering images of a selected celestial object from different views and adding these to a quilt block. All students' blocks can be joined to form a cyber cosmic quilt. You can even make a physical quilt by printing the images onto fabric and sewing them together.

### A Cosmic Quilt from 1876

Years after I began my workshops on building cosmic quilts, I discovered the story of a teacher from 1876 who handcrafted her own Solar System Quilt which she used when teaching astronomy to her class. Ellen Harding Baker spent up to seven years embroidering the whole solar system onto a quilt, and then used it as a visual aid during her lectures.

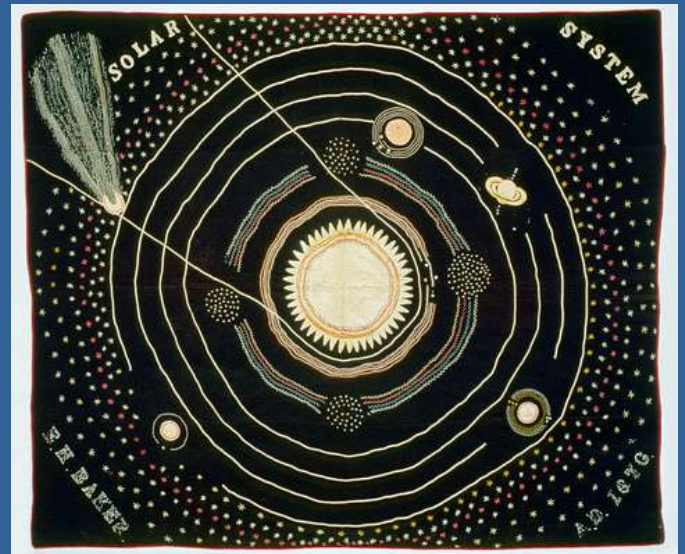


Photo courtesy the Smithsonian National Museum of American History.

The large black woolen quilt had a colorful wool-fabric appliqué and silk embroidery. It was nearly 7 ½ by 9 feet in size. The quilt was very detailed and included our Moon and other moons such as the moons orbiting Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune, and the Galilean satellites of Jupiter. Even solar system debris such as asteroids and a comet are illustrated, and distant stars are shown as small, stitched dots. The Smithsonian National Museum of American History now houses this famous teacher's tool.

### Telescopes

The telescope is the primary tool of the astronomer. It's a window to the stars. The New Hampshire Astronomical Society founded the Library Telescope program, first starting with two telescopes in 2008 and expanding nationally and internationally to provide hundreds of telescopes throughout public libraries. According to [librarytelescope.org](http://librarytelescope.org), nine libraries in Florida offer telescopes to their patrons.

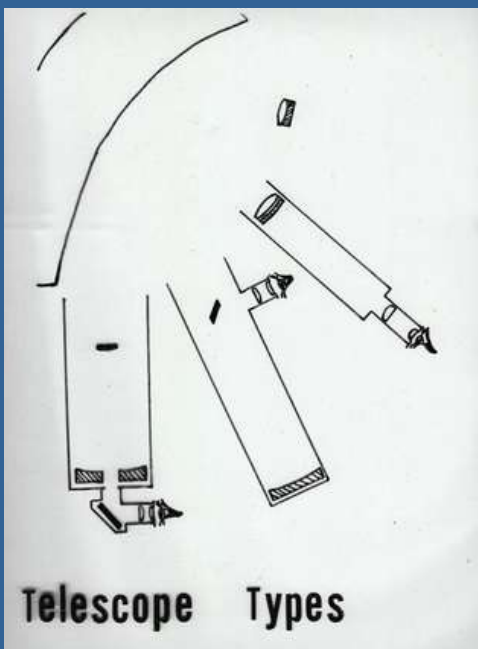
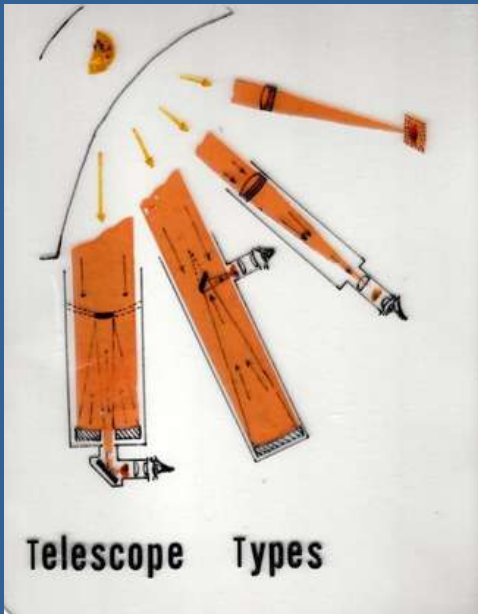


# ASTRONOMY FOR EVERYONE

An effective telescope serves five basic functions:

- It gathers sufficient light
- It sharpens the resolution
- It provides a good definition of the objects being studied
- It magnifies
- It provides a "field of view."

There are two basic types of optical telescopes: refractors, which use a lens, and reflectors, which use a mirror.



The larger a telescope is, the more light it can gather, allowing us to see even deeper into space. With large telescopes we can view amazing sights such as remote star clusters with distinction through their core, and distant suns with evidence of both their birthplace and deathbed in ghostly swaths of gas and dust, the colors of these telling of their chemical composition. We can see very far-away "island universes" called galaxies which come in a variety of shapes and sizes within gigantic clusters themselves, each containing hundreds of billions of stars, gas, and dust. That we can build such an instrument which can take us there without even leaving the ground is a joy unspeakable.

## Constructing a Telescope

Even if your library's budget is tight, patrons can still learn the science and history of telescopes. One of the most popular hands-on activities we complete at the Look Up to the Stars: Camp Universe is constructing a telescope. At the camp, we make our telescopes [from a kit](#).

During our camps, students build a small refractor telescope called the Galileoscope. Created as a project for the International Year of Astronomy in 2009, science educators, optical engineers, and astronomers came together to make this high-quality educational telescope kit. The Galileoscope is suitable for both optics' education and celestial observation.

### Components:

- The heart of the Galileoscope is a refractor which uses a glass crown and flint objective lens. The lens has been ground and polished to become a high-performance tool of an astronomer. This heart provides the primary light-collecting objective, allowing for the optics of the telescope.
- The rest of the telescope includes the tube and mounting which support and point the "heart" somewhere in the night sky.

## ASTRONOMY FOR EVERYONE



Building a telescope can be one of the most engaging activities for aspiring astronomers.

### Being a Discoverer

Astronomy is truly an incredible experience for the young and old alike. Astronomy puts us into the role of a discoverer, seeking out places never seen before, and enables us to venture into realms we can never go, all from our own backyard. Making astronomy accessible to patrons is just one more way librarians can achieve their ongoing mission to bring information and literacy to their communities.

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# LIGHTHOUSE Libraries

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**As connected as we all are today, it is difficult to imagine the extreme unconnectedness of lighthouse keepers a little over a hundred years ago.**

Of course, we realize those late nineteenth century keepers did not have cell phones, wifi, or Internet of any stripe, but there was also a time when they did not have telephones, television, or even radio. A keeper might be joined by assistant keepers or perhaps by a wife and children, but it could be a very lonely, relatively uneventful existence.

The solitude of the profession did not get past the United States Lighthouse Service (USLHS).

Yaquina Lighthouse  
Photo courtesy Bureau of Land Management, Oregon & Washington

## LIGHTHOUSE LIBRARIES

After observing the hunger and appreciation that lighthouse keepers had for reading materials such as books and magazines, the “Lighthouse Board, which had no funds under its control from which it could buy books, found that book-cases could be properly paid for as furniture ... [I]t being understood that the books to fill them were to be provided by private funds.”<sup>1</sup> The resulting “book-cases” were essentially wooden boxes designed to travel between lighthouses.



*U.S. Lighthouse Library Bookcase 739, courtesy of the Milwaukee County Historical Society.*

Solidly made of varnished pine, 24” x 26” x 10”, the boxes had two shelves of different heights to accommodate books and bound magazines. Equipped with brass handles for ease of carry, the library boxes also had double doors that could open out. When the boxes were open and upright in the keeper’s residence, they made a neat little bookcase. Tacked to the inside of the left door was a list of all the books included in that particular box and on the right door was a sheet for recording the lighthouses the box had visited.

A small blank book was included with the box to record the individual book “check outs,” a means of tracking the books while at the lighthouse and recording circulation statistics.

Early boxes were filled with donations from whatever quarter they could get them: “All was fish which

came into the net, and the first twenty-five cases were filled with a mixture of theology, science, mathematics, novels, and odd magazines, and each case was sent to a lighthouse as soon as it was filled.”<sup>2</sup> Congress was eventually persuaded that reading material might make light keepers more content in their jobs, and so a line item was added to the Lighthouse Service’s budget for books, with the caveat of not exceeding \$1000.00 for book purchases.

This was still not a lot of money, considering there were 755 lighthouses and twenty-two lightships in service. The program started with the idea that the most isolated lighthouses, lightships and lighthouse tenders would have priority, but the boxes did make their way to most of the lighthouses on whatever body of water they might be—the Atlantic, the Pacific, the Gulf of Mexico, the Great Lakes, and the major rivers.

The program started in 1876 with fifty boxes, but by 1885, 402 libraries were in circulation and in 1893, approximately 700 were making the rounds.<sup>3</sup> The boxes were intended to rotate every six months, but they soon settled into a three-month schedule. Each box held approximately forty books, with the directive that “except in the cases of unusually desirable works no more than one copy of a book should be purchased in a district in order to insure a new set of books when libraries are transferred.”<sup>4</sup>

The boxes and their contents were examined during the Lighthouse Inspector’s quarterly examinations and books that were lost or damaged had to be replaced by the offending reader. The Lighthouse Board kept records of the boxes, their contents and length of stays and the most popular books in the collections. Books were discarded (or gifted to a deserving keeper) when they became too worn out and were replaced by books kept in reserve.

The books included were mainly geared for men. The keepers and their assistants were primarily men, but there were also books for families and children, recognizing the importance and pleasure of reading for everyone.



## LIGHTHOUSE LIBRARIES



*U.S. Lighthouse Library Bookcase 739, courtesy of the Milwaukee County Historical Society.*

The North Point Lighthouse in Milwaukee has an almost intact library box.<sup>5</sup> The listing tacked to the door records the books within, with titles including *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel DeFoe, *Popular Fairy Tales* by The Brothers Grimm, and *Stories from Homer* by Alfred John Church. The resulting list is a mix of fiction, poetry, history, science and technical books.

Arnold B. Johnson, chief clerk of the U.S. Lighthouse Board, wrote an article on the Lighthouse Libraries for January 29, 1885 *The Christian Union* (a version of this article also appeared in the February 1885 issue of *The Library Journal*) in which he said, “The average light-keeper is on a plane, as to taste, education, and culture, with the average mechanic. The books provided for him are not always the best for the purpose, but they are the best that could be had under the circumstances ....”<sup>6</sup>

The libraries continued in circulation at least through 1923, but perhaps longer. Today, the boxes can be seen on display at many lighthouses, including the Pensacola, St. Augustine and Tybee Island

lighthouses. Sadly, while many boxes have survived, they often no longer contain their original books.

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[2] Johnson, 9.

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[4] Department of Commerce. *Lighthouse Service, Regulation for the United States Lighthouse Service* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1918), 131.

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[6] Johnson, 9.

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# REPRODUCTIVE CARE REFERENCE IN POST-ROE FLORIDA

by Angeleen Neely-Sardon, Reference Librarian/Assistant Professor  
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## **Florida's college students and library users will need help accessing information about reproductive care in the state's ever-changing and politically charged post-Roe landscape.**

Unplanned pregnancy is a common reason, if not the primary reason, that college students drop out or otherwise fail to graduate. Women aged 18-24 have the highest rates of unintended pregnancy. This is also the traditional college age. Prior to the summer of 2022, Florida had been something of a haven for abortion care in the southeastern U.S. as a state with relatively few legal restrictions and fifty-five clinics. Floridians and Florida's courts are processing both the June 24, 2022 *Dobbs v. Jackson's Women's Health Organization* decision, which overturns the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* basis for abortion rights, and Florida's HB 5 law, effective July 1, 2022, which prohibits abortions after a gestational age of fifteen weeks. Pregnant Floridians need current and trustworthy information they can use to make their healthcare decisions quickly. Students have long chosen abortion as a topic for their research papers and argumentative essays, but the question of "should abortion be legal?" is no longer a theoretical academic exercise for our library users. Access to safe abortion has become a matter of existential concern to many of Florida's college students and public library users.

## **A Reproductive Care Information Crisis**

Several factors contribute to a looming information crisis that librarians and libraries are best positioned to assist with. First, newly pregnant people are often young and in a state of panic. They may not have an understanding parent or a support network they can turn to for information.

Florida does not mandate any sexual education in its public schools, and schools that do provide sexual education must, by law, promote abstinence first and foremost. These educational policies, the general stigma surrounding abortion, opposition to

contraception and abortion by influential churches and religious figures, and an outdated medical understanding of abortion dating pre-Roe, have left many Floridians unaware of the current medical and legal realities of reproductive care. As public-serving librarians, we need to be sure we have the latest information and are ready to link our students and patrons with quality resources.

## **Criminalization of Reproductive Care**

Now that abortion is illegal in Florida after fifteen weeks of gestation, Floridians who find a way to access care, and even those who miscarry, beyond fifteen weeks could face criminal prosecution. Texas, Oklahoma, and Idaho have already passed laws to incentivize ordinary citizens to report people suspected of having, performing, or "aiding and abetting" abortions to the authorities in exchange for a bounty. Soon, search and browser histories, e-mails, texts, social media accounts, period and fertility apps, and targeted ads may be used as evidence against pregnant Floridians and their allies in the oncoming criminalization of reproductive care.

When searching for information about abortion online, "crisis pregnancy centers" often show up at the top of the search results. These centers are not actual clinics. They masquerade as women's clinics, but do not provide contraception or abortions, are not licensed, and generally are not staffed by medical professionals. Crisis pregnancy centers are religious organizations that pressure pregnant people into considering alternatives to abortion, typically delaying patients so that they run out of time to access actual medical care. As if the constantly changing and state-by-state legal status of abortion was not difficult enough to contend with, people searching for answers online must also avoid misleading information from anti-choice groups, especially about the safety of abortion and its psychological aftermath.

## REPRODUCTIVE CARE REFERENCE IN POST-ROE FLORIDA

### Current Florida Law

As of this writing, abortion is legal in Florida up to fifteen weeks of gestation. Special exemptions are possible beyond fifteen weeks if “two physicians certify in writing that, in reasonable medical judgment, the termination of the pregnancy is necessary to save the pregnant woman’s life or avert a serious risk of substantial and irreversible physical impairment of a major bodily function of the pregnant woman other than a psychological condition” (one physician is sufficient if a second is not available) and “the fetus has not achieved viability.” It is not illegal for a pregnant Floridian to travel out of the state to receive abortion care, but access to abortion is expected to continue to be restricted as new laws take effect in neighboring states, making it even more complicated for an information seeker to make informed decisions and timely arrangements.

Medication abortions are a crucial medical advancement, especially for people living in states with abortion bans and restrictions. Medication abortions, also called abortion with pills, are legal in Florida but with restrictions. Currently, more than 54 percent of abortions nationwide are completed with pills. This is a safe and common abortion method using two FDA-approved medications: mifepristone and misoprostol. The medications cause cramping and bleeding as the uterus is emptied, much like a spontaneous miscarriage. Follow-up care is not medically necessary unless there are complications or the signs of pregnancy do not discontinue after two weeks. Abortion with pills is not recommended for pregnancies beyond eleven weeks as their effectiveness decreases and the chance of complications increases in more advanced stages of pregnancy. Florida does not allow telehealth abortion appointments. Floridians seeking an abortion with pills can obtain a prescription or the pills themselves from an abortion provider in Florida in person. Telehealth and online pharmacies based in other jurisdictions can mail abortion pills to patients in Florida and other states with bans, but this comes with potential legal risk for the patient.

### How Librarians and Libraries Can Help

Librarians are experts in evaluating information, vetting sources, and linking users with services. This combined with our dedication to patron privacy and confidentiality makes us the first line for trusted reproductive care information. College students and public library users can access information on library computers and can rest assured that librarians will not relinquish their searches, access, or checkout

history to the authorities. As with all other medical and legal reference questions, librarians must take care not to give medical or legal advice, but instead to guide library users to trusted sources, assist in evaluating information, and provide an infrastructure (policies, technology, and guidance) to enable library users to keep their information searches confidential. To best assist library users, we need a general understanding of the reproductive care options medically available and Florida’s legal restrictions, which are changing daily currently. Libraries can and should ensure our print and online collections relating to pregnancy, contraception, and abortion are up to date and helpful.

Protecting library users’ rights to free inquiry, privacy, and confidentiality are core professional values of librarianship. The USA PATRIOT Act, enacted in the wake of 9/11, prompted outrage and action from librarians nationwide. In response, the American Library Association passed a resolution stating it “opposes any use of governmental power to suppress the free and open exchange of knowledge and information or to intimidate exercising free inquiry.” American librarians resisted this infringement on their users’ rights by updating policies and procedures to retain as little patron information as possible, posting signs informing their patrons of the gag order that prohibited libraries from letting individual users know a federal agent has asked for their library records, shredding documents regularly, and lobbying and petitioning their legislators. The Dobbs decision is another excellent impetus for recommitting to these values and examining our user privacy and confidentiality policies, practices, and technologies. Using the Internet to search for information is arguably more dangerous today due to our increased reliance on Google and smartphones, which can track everything including location, and the potential use of dragnet keyword warrants that impel search engine companies to turn over a list of users who have searched for specific, criminalized keywords to the authorities. Libraries offering programming, signage, LibGuides, and handouts on online privacy and safety could consider adding new guidance with the criminalization of reproductive care in mind. Digital security and abortion rights groups are advising activists and patients to use a VPN, among other measures. Providing information seekers with a guest pass to use a library computer without ties to their library account is a precaution we can offer.

America’s division and lack of trust in our government and its institutions continue to increase. However, libraries are an exception as “78 percent of

## REPRODUCTIVE CARE REFERENCE IN POST-ROE FLORIDA

Americans trust libraries or librarians as sources of news and information.” Just as a patron can come to their local library for help putting together a résumé or to find out how to contact the community women’s shelter, librarians need to be ready to assist with this sensitive information need. As librarians “we distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources” as stated in the ALA Code of Ethics. Librarians can link their patrons with a real clinic, an established abortion fund (abortion funds are typically volunteer-led, mutual aid organizations that have been helping patients pay for procedures and with practical considerations like travel and childcare for years), or, at the very least, a reliable website where they can begin their search anonymously.

### Resources for Librarians

#### Clinic and Abortion Pill Finders

Abortion Finder <https://abortionfinder.org>  
 ineedana.com <https://ineedana.com>  
 Plan C Pills <https://plancpills.org>

#### Abortion Funds

National Network of Abortion Funds  
<https://abortionfunds.org>  
 Florida Access Network <https://flaaccessnetwork.org>.  
 Tampa Bay Abortion Fund <https://tbafund.com>

#### Legal Resources

Repro Legal Helpline  
 844-868-2812;  
<https://www.reprolegalhelpline.org/sma-contact-the-helpline/>  
 National Advocates for Pregnant Women  
<https://www.nationaladvocatesforpregnantwomen.org/issues/abortion/>

#### Privacy and Confidentiality

Electronic Frontier Foundation  
<https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2022/06/security-and-privacy-tips-people-seeking-abortion>  
 Digital Defense Fund  
<https://digitaldefensefund.org/ddf-guides/abortion-privacy>

#### Other Great Resources

The M+A Hotline Call or text: 833-246-2632  
 r/abortion on Reddit is staffed by [OARS](#) volunteers  
<https://reddit.com/r/abortion>  
 Safe2Choose [www.safe2choose.org](http://www.safe2choose.org)

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# THE TREBLE WITH TECHNOCRACY: RECONSIDERING PATRON INTERACTIONS WITH STREAMING MUSIC

**BY ADAM ERIC BERKOWITZ**

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Libraries serve as the foreground for public exposure to new technologies, especially within disadvantaged communities, for instance, by making Internet computers available, hosting robotics programs, and introducing immersive reality (i.e., augmented reality and virtual reality). Libraries have also incorporated a variety of automated technologies to benefit library services. Integrated library systems (ILS) track circulation and use of public resources. Linked data further defines controlled vocabularies and improves information discovery. Radio frequency identification (RFID) chips streamline circulation and reinforce asset security. Artificial intelligence (AI) identifies metadata, automates item descriptions, provides real time distribution plans for floating collections, and enhances search engines for online catalogs.<sup>1</sup> Amazon Echoes, powered by algorithmic natural language processing, help manage patron accounts and provide reference services.<sup>2</sup>

Despite how they may enhance patron experiences, technologies dependent upon the use of personal information raise questions about the ethics

of recording user behaviors. For example, RFID chips were alleged to track and profile customers,<sup>3</sup> and ILS was thought to surveil information access and computer usage, piquing the public's concern when the Patriot Act was enacted.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, Amazon's Alexa can "read aloud in a deceased loved one's voice,"<sup>5</sup> which suggests that Alexa devices, like the Echo, are retaining voice samples of users on Amazon's servers, and headsets used to interface with the Metaverse, an online social environment based in virtual reality, track eye movements and facial expressions in order to leverage human neurology, thought processes, and other biometrics.<sup>6</sup>

Former American Library Association President Loida Garcia-Febo's call to action stated that librarians should be prioritizing AI in scholarly and professional communications.<sup>7</sup> Library patrons routinely encounter AI programs online, operating in the background of websites and mobile apps such as YouTube, Facebook, and Spotify among others. As information specialists, librarians are in a unique position to debate the impacts of AI, as this profession is among



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the few that specializes in the conscientious implementation of information technologies. The following discusses the ethics of employing automated digital rights management and customer relationship management systems on social media and music streaming platforms.

### The Early Days of Rights Management

During the late 1990's, peer-to-peer (P2P) networks like Napster, LimeWire, and Kazaa surprised media critics and shook the music industry as they were rapidly adopted by consumers. The music industry was predicated upon the production and sale of physical iterations of music, and it had not occurred to record labels and retailers that customers would opt for downloading music from the Internet.

In response to sharing copyrighted media en masse, the Federal government was lobbied to pass the Telecommunications Act (1996), the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (1998), and the Sonny Bono Copyright Term Extension Act (1998), which outlined the repercussions for violating intellectual property rights.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, the music industry sought to independently control the flow of content separate from the legal system in the way of digital rights management.

Digital rights management (DRM) dictates terms of use while monitoring customer adherence to said agreement by

encoding an ordered failsafe into digital files. DRM code is inserted into music files during the production of songs and albums, remaining in effect throughout the lifecycle of the product and regulates the playback of music.<sup>9</sup>

Watermarking, for example, embeds information regarding the ownership of the content and the systems from where the songs originated,<sup>10</sup> allowing for positive identification to combat bootlegging and digital piracy. While DRM and copyright law address the unauthorized reproduction, sale, and distribution of physical and digital media, the proliferation of music on social networking and other user-driven streaming sites was an unforeseen obstacle.

### Employing Artificial Intelligence for Digital Rights Management

After succeeding in shutting down P2P networks for abusing copyright restrictions, the music industry began to focus on social media, often finding infringing content on YouTube and other video sharing platforms. Court rulings, though, determined that for such companies to be held accountable for the content they host, they must first know the point of origin of the files uploaded to their websites. Because the entire upload process is automated and therefore does not meet the criteria for knowingly posting infringing material, these companies are able to claim Safe Harbor under the Digital

Millennium Copyright Act. This protects them from liability but still requires them to remove infringing content upon request.<sup>11</sup>

YouTube, however, took it upon itself to develop a (semi)autonomous system in order to more readily comply with the music industry's demands and the requirements of copyright law.<sup>12</sup> It launched its automated copyright enforcement system, Content ID, which is based on a combination of perceptual hashing and artificial neural networks.<sup>13</sup> Perceptual hashing extracts hash data from an uploaded file and compares them to samples collected from copyright owners.<sup>14</sup> This method allows YouTube to identify exact copies and variations of the original work such as live performances, covers, and remixes.<sup>15</sup> Artificial neural networks are made up of several layers of linked nodes which simulate the organic neural networks of animals and humans.<sup>16</sup> Their complex makeup and training regimen make them suited to solving complicated, stochastic problems in real time, enabling them to instantaneously recognize musical similarities.<sup>17</sup> In 2018, Google reported that Content ID handled nearly 98 percent of all copyright issues,<sup>18</sup> indicating minimal human involvement.

Once Facebook began allowing users to upload videos, the company was inundated with complaints from record labels

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due to users infringing copyright.<sup>19</sup> In response, Facebook signed licensing deals with Universal, Sony, and Warner, which gave users permission to include music in their videos.<sup>20</sup> Facebook eventually deployed its own automated copyright enforcement system, Rights Manager, which operates like YouTube's Content ID, in order to streamline compliance with takedown requests and copyright law.<sup>21</sup>

Both Content ID and Rights Manager constantly monitor YouTube and Facebook respectively. When livestreams with infringing content are detected by their neural networks, the feeds are interrupted with copyright notices delivered to both copyright owners and users. When processing recordings, the systems extract hash data and compare them to samples provided by copyright owners. When matches are identified, both copyright owners and uploaders receive notifications.

Responses are typically preset by the copyright owner's DRM profile and most often results in embedding ads in the video to establish income for the copyright owner. This reflects how YouTube automatically monetizes 95 percent of claims, resulting in user uploads producing 50 percent of revenue generated by YouTube on behalf of the music industry.<sup>22</sup> Controlling nearly half the market,<sup>23</sup> YouTube is the most prevalent music streaming

service with much of its content being produced by the average uploader.<sup>24</sup> Music also accompanies a wide array of entertainment such as dance videos, movies, tv shows, and videogames, which suggests that the music industry can claim a broad spectrum of material.

### Customer Relationship Management

In addition to DRM, virtual platforms utilize another set of algorithmic programming called customer relationship management (CRM). This AI's purpose is to understand consumer preferences through which it encourages brand loyalty by providing a custom-tailored experience. The more often clients engage with content, the more accurately the system can judge what selections they will enjoy. This information is constantly tracked, and user profiles are compiled based on a variety of customer interactions such as likes, dislikes, skips, play-throughs, ratings, reviews, and comments.<sup>25</sup>

Algorithms sort through a library of music, classifying each title based on degrees of similarity to songs preferred by listeners as indicated by their profiles. As the system procures additional titles, users repeatedly interact with selected content which further enhances the AI's ability to generate agreeable suggestions.<sup>26</sup> The more listeners who engage with the system, the more information it retains to analyze collective musical tastes and base suggestions on songs

enjoyed by others. If it finds a group of profiles with similar preferences to the user in question, it begins to recommend songs to that user based on the collective preferences indicated by the group of profiles.<sup>27</sup>

Platforms also categorize music utilizing listening machines. These autonomous programs perform waveform analysis to evaluate a song's melody, harmony, tempo, timbre, and density, giving CRM the ability to recommend selections consistent with musical similarities among songs, albums, and genres. Such characteristics also facilitate the classification of music according to style, mood, and activities which allows the system to recommend entire playlists based on an array of dispositions and emotions.<sup>28</sup>

### Responding to Ethical Concerns

Both DRM and CRM raise concerns over limiting rights to privacy, freedom of expression, and fair use. AI is often thought of as being objective because they are machines, but because these systems are designed by people, they are subject to human error. Oversights in their framework often lead to unexpected consequences, some more serious than others. As such, it is important that as information specialists, librarians recognize these shortcomings and educate their stakeholders accordingly.

DRM has shown great promise

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for protecting copyrighted content; however, these systems are not as accurate at identifying infringement as their developers claim. Zhang et al. (2018) demonstrated YouTube's failure to identify 26 percent of copyright infringing livestreams while also mistakenly interrupting 22 percent of non-infringing broadcasts.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, these systems, as mentioned previously, are designed to recognize renditions of musical works as exact matches of the copyrighted material which means that Content ID and Rights Manager will not make allowances for fair use and reproductions of works from the public domain. Berkowitz (2022) compiled a series of instances where both Facebook and YouTube mistook individual performances of classical music for copyrighted content,<sup>30</sup> and preliminary results of an experiment being conducted by the author of this article show that of Beethoven's thirty-two piano sonatas, Facebook and YouTube each misidentified 28 percent of recordings for copyright infringement.

These studies suggest that uploaders are systematically targeted for copyright infringement to control the value and scarcity of public domain music and by profiting from the efforts of unaffiliated musicians, social media and music corporations repeatedly capitalize on free labor.<sup>31</sup> Although dispute processes exist for both Facebook and YouTube, they require

knowledge of copyright law, and because recourse is handled at their discretion, these companies can leverage their systems to enforce constraints and elicit compliance.<sup>32</sup> This effectively establishes a technocracy where DRM autonomously governs the distribution, usage, protection, value, and tracking of content beyond what copyright law intends,<sup>33</sup> ignoring freedoms of expression and fair use while privatizing the public domain.

CRM has demonstrated success in predicting what customers will enjoy, but combined with desperate content creators, they facilitate an environment where click farms propagate and exploit impoverished populations. CRM values music based partially on popularity (i.e., level of customer interaction). Songs with higher streaming metrics are often at the top of recommendation lists which creates obstacles for small labels and emerging artists to generate revenue and fame, a dilemma in its own right. In response, some musicians will pay click farms to artificially inflate the metrics of their music. These sweatshops located throughout developing countries pay poverty wages for people to repeatedly interact with online content, manufacturing demand for artists who have yet to find their audiences.<sup>34</sup>

As mentioned before, CRM continuously runs in the background of streaming platforms, engaging in

dataveillance as they build customer profiles based on listening habits. Usage data collected from audiences playing functional background music (i.e., songs meant to accompany activities) reveal intimate details about a user's daily routine such as the setting, duration, frequency, and nature of regular tasks. This information along with customer-volunteered demographic data are then sold to commercial advertisers who use this information to improve market penetration for products and services.<sup>35</sup> In doing so, people are reduced to metadata, perpetuating a technocracy where people's rights to privacy are subservient to their roles as consumers.<sup>36</sup>

Librarians were among the first professional groups to advocate for freedom of expression and fair use as these rights were being limited by stricter copyright legislation and DRM.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, librarians quickly took notice of public preferences for streaming media as circulation of virtual materials steadily outpaced physical mediums.<sup>38</sup> Libraries have been and still are at the forefront of these issues, and librarians should consider how they will portray these services to the public and protect their patrons from exploitation.

Berkowitz (2022) outlines how libraries can implement instruction to cover topics such as copyright law, the public domain, fair use, and automated copyright enforcement. He also

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explains how copyright dispute processes work on social media and suggests conducting help sessions to assist users. Libraries facilitating significant law collections and music assets are encouraged to take the first step in implementing these programs.<sup>39</sup> Libraries, as experts in patron privacy, can also educate the public on how data is collected, utilized, and sold to raise awareness of how their information is being commercialized. Those libraries employing the use of automated voice assistants are likely already well equipped to discuss the issue of dataveillance in their communities.

Furthermore, libraries can advocate for technological solutions and government oversight that would improve services and provide protections for individual rights. Content ID and Rights Manager could start by incorporating linked data to assist in recognizing works from the Public Domain, and after confirming identification, they could utilize waveform analysis to distinguish uploaded material from copyrighted content. Also, if dataveillance continues to expand, technocracy will eventually define the economy. Government agencies should prevent this from happening by either heavily regulating or banning the sale of personal data. Otherwise, corporations will persist in profiting from free labor, or for the sake of transparency, companies may be mandated to regularly report on the usage, market value, and

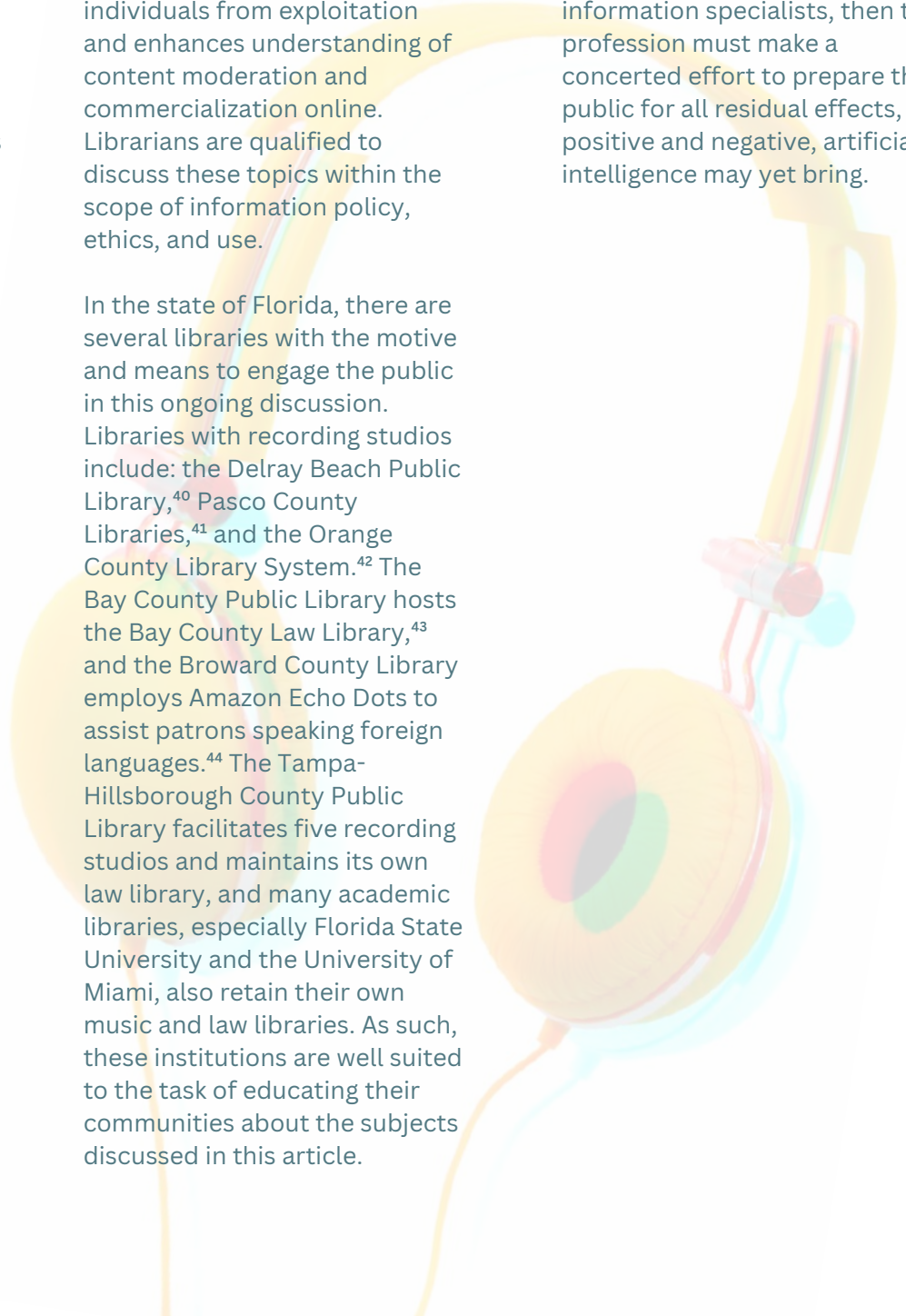
transaction history of people's information. This possibility raises serious concerns that go beyond the scope of this discussion but perhaps should be covered in a future article.

### Conclusion

Artificial intelligence may enrich human life, but it can also impede creativity and infringe on basic freedoms. Investing in AI literacy helps to protect individuals from exploitation and enhances understanding of content moderation and commercialization online. Librarians are qualified to discuss these topics within the scope of information policy, ethics, and use.

In the state of Florida, there are several libraries with the motive and means to engage the public in this ongoing discussion. Libraries with recording studios include: the Delray Beach Public Library,<sup>40</sup> Pasco County Libraries,<sup>41</sup> and the Orange County Library System.<sup>42</sup> The Bay County Public Library hosts the Bay County Law Library,<sup>43</sup> and the Broward County Library employs Amazon Echo Dots to assist patrons speaking foreign languages.<sup>44</sup> The Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library facilitates five recording studios and maintains its own law library, and many academic libraries, especially Florida State University and the University of Miami, also retain their own music and law libraries. As such, these institutions are well suited to the task of educating their communities about the subjects discussed in this article.

Both public education and advocacy will be required to influence how library patrons will continue to interact with current and emergent technologies, and as technology advances, rights to privacy and expression will remain in question. It is important that librarians persist in their understanding of these technologies. If librarians are to continue donning the mantle of information specialists, then the profession must make a concerted effort to prepare the public for all residual effects, positive and negative, artificial intelligence may yet bring.



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# WELLNESS INITIATIVES FOR THE ACADEMIC LIBRARY:


## ACADEMIC SUCCESS FOR THE WHOLE-STUDENT

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### Background

It is no secret that college students face mental health challenges. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, colleges and universities were scrambling to assist their students with managing the difficulties of student life and clinical diagnoses. In 2019, right before the onslaught of the pandemic, the American Psychological Association reported that 80 percent of college presidents said that student mental health had become a greater priority on their campuses than it was three years prior. Not only were college presidents acknowledging these mental health challenges, but they were also acting on them. Seventy-two percent of the college presidents surveyed by the APA in 2019 had also reallocated or identified funds to address mental health issues on their campuses compared to three years prior.

This survey preceded the earth-shattering effects of COVID-19, a pandemic that left people around the globe reeling from traumas such as death, extended hospitalization, separation of family, and loss of careers. In addition to these struggles, college students had to readjust to the new landscape of higher education or give it up entirely. With declining enrollment in the years following the pandemic, institutions facing financial obstacles may not have been able to support students' mental health. While institutions of higher learning continue to recover from the pandemic, the obstacles faced by college students continue to pile up.



Throughout the United States, there have been promising strides within higher education to support students' mental health needs since the start of the pandemic. The U.S. Department of Education released new resources on supporting student social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health during the COVID-19 era. These resources include real-world examples of actions taken by educators and practitioners across the country. U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona stated, "Amid the pandemic, we know that our students have experienced so much. We cannot unlock students' potential unless we also address the needs they bring with them to the classroom each day. As educators, it's our responsibility to ensure that we are helping to provide students with a strong social and emotional foundation so that they can excel academically." This sentiment was already in play at St. Johns River State College's libraries before the pandemic.

With a smaller student body of about ten thousand students in its yearly unduplicated headcount, St. Johns River State College lands on the lower end of enrollment compared to other institutions in the



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Florida College System. Furthermore, while increasing enrollment is always the goal, there can be advantages to working with fewer students. The St. Johns River State College Learning Resources Department, which consists of the library, tutoring, and distance learning, took the initiative early to support the “whole student.” The library and tutoring staff have been instrumental in the work to aid student success academically and beyond. The department embraces a whole student approach to education which means working to meet the needs of students holistically, extending beyond academics. The whole student could include but is not limited to helping fulfill basic needs such as food and hygiene, assisting with mental health obstacles, offering opportunities for students to improve their physical health, and promoting healthy social interaction among students.

Of course, everything the library is traditionally known for, like instruction, reference, collection development, and programming, supports college student success. Studies have shown that libraries impact positive connections with student retention improvement, add value to long-term student academic experience, and improve student academic rapport and engagement. Moreover, while many campus libraries have the status of the “heart of the university,” it does not hurt to look for ways to solidify or grow that status. With the future of our institution and the well-being of students in mind, the SJR State Learning Resources Department has developed resources and strategies to assist the “whole student” in achieving academic success.

The student-centered resources and services at St. Johns River State College result from practitioner knowledge accumulated by a department culture that values user experience (UX), observational data, and user feedback. The St. Johns River State College Library received a Northeast Florida Library Information Network (NEFLIN) grant for UX training in 2016 that provided training and professional consultation in UX design for libraries. Thanks to that experience, our department has adopted a culture that embraces UX and uses observational data and patron feedback to guide our decisions and practices to improve user experience in our libraries and digital spaces.

It is important to note that, like most institutions, there is no funding for most projects that fall outside of traditional services and resources. Many of the services and resources discussed in this article are made possible either by staff creativity or the

generosity of our college community, and result from successful partnerships between Learning Resources and other departments. These solutions result from Learning Resources staff observing students’ challenges and working to help where they can. The services and resources discussed in this article are whole student guided and are part of an ongoing wellness initiative.

### Wellness Services and Resources

#### The Viking Exchange

Food insecurity is an issue for students at our institution. We know this because of information gathered from other departments at the institution, observation, and because students have shared their experiences. The Viking Exchange (VE) food and supply pantry was created as a partnership between several college departments to support students’ basic needs. Each campus library has a conveniently located pantry that students can access without staff assistance. There is also a pantry at the Palatka Campus location in the Advising Department. The St. Johns River State College Foundation funded the start-up. The funding purchased shelving units for each VE location and an initial stock of food items.

Donation drives at each campus several times yearly replenish the VE. In addition to the drives facilitated by the Learning Resources Department, some student clubs on campus also host drives throughout the year. Each campus library location also has donation boxes in public areas to collect donations year-round.

Each pantry has various food items, mainly “easy to prepare” foods and snack items. Since the inception of this project, the Dean of Learning Resources has carefully tracked what items need restocking most often, so that replenishment efforts are focused on those items. In addition to food, the VE has general hygiene items like shampoo, body wash, and deodorant. Basic school supplies are also available at the VE, including notebooks, paper, and pencils.

As an extension of the VE, the bathrooms at each library provide hygiene products, including tampons, maxi-pads, and panty liners. Requests for hygiene products are included in restocking drives. These products are also available at the VE locations.

#### Online Wellness Resources

During the work-from-home period of the pandemic, the librarians focused on creating online help resources for students. Health and wellness were trending topics, so a wellness resources collection was added to the department web page. Upon initial

## WELLNESS INITIATIVES FOR THE ACADEMIC LIBRARY

creation, the resources mainly included an accumulation of online resources carefully cultivated for student use.

The project evolved into an ongoing partnership between the librarians and the college's mental health counselor. Through this partnership, various "crash courses" have been created for students. These recorded webinars focus on whole-student education and tackle issues such as overcoming procrastination, communicating with professors, test anxiety, mindset, and goal setting. The collection of online wellness resources continues to grow.

### Referrals

The partnership between the Learning Resources Department and the mental health counselor has also resulted in a mutual referral system between the two departments. Library and tutoring staff will refer students in mental or emotional distress to the counselor for assistance. The counselor's business cards are readily available at our service points for referrals. The counselor refers students needing academic support services to the library and tutoring. As an additional service, the counselor often brings the student to service points and introduces the student to the appropriate staff. The librarian and counselor will then consult the student together to suggest appropriate services and resources to facilitate the student's success.

### Wellness-Focused Professional Development

Learning Resources staff are encouraged to pursue professional development opportunities focused on wellness, whole-student education, social and emotional learning, and other related topics. These professional development opportunities may include live webinars, conferences, books, and training opportunities from vendors. Learning Resources staff also provide professional development opportunities at our institution for others wanting to learn more about how to support students. Learning resources employees have presented on these issues at our annual St. Johns River State College Professional Development Institute. In-house professional development is an excellent avenue for promoting wellness initiatives to other departments on campus and has been the catalyst for new partnerships and opportunities to grow the project's reach.

### Future Growth

As an extension of the services and resources discussed, new ideas for further whole student-

centered help are in the works. With the transition back to on-campus programming and events, the librarians and the counselor developed a series of workshops focused on anxiety. This workshop series includes a speaking portion hosted by the counselor and a librarian. The partnership will allow the students to learn anxiety coping strategies from a mental health and an academic perspective. Plans for these workshops include an activity portion, where students will participate in meaningful discussions with their peers.

The online wellness resources continue to grow. There have been requests for future content development. The academic success course at the institution is already well saturated with whole-student content as part of the wellness initiative, and more requested content is in the works.

### Encouragement and Recommendations

Starting a whole-student-centered wellness initiative can seem like a daunting task. Here are reflections from a wellness project in progress.

- 1. Listen to Students.** Staff does not have to be well trained in UX practices to listen and observe students. Pursuing UX training is encouraged and worth the time, but a whole-student mindset can be embraced informally. Librarians can begin by observing how students interact with staff and use facilities. Additionally, learn about student struggles through friendly chats at service points or during reference interactions, and ask students directly what they need via surveys or focus groups. A more structured approach could include consulting a UX professional to design a user experience study for the institution.
- 2. Create Partnerships.** The Learning Resources Department has worked campus-wide to make this project a success. The Foundation helped to start the VE pantries. Faculty, staff, administrators, board members, and students help maintain a well-stocked *Viking Exchange* for the students that need it most. The care counselor, who works among the three campuses, uses the library and tutoring staff to fill gaps for students. Staff in other departments bring struggling students to the library for support.
- 3. Prioritize.** After collecting information and analyzing needs, it may be tempting to jump headfirst into a wellness initiative that tackles all issues at the institution. Having too many irons in the fire may inhibit the ability to be effective. Instead, list goals in order of priority. How priority is determined may be influenced by funding, the potential for partnerships,

## WELLNESS INITIATIVES FOR THE ACADEMIC LIBRARY

or the severity of need. As the project progresses, it may evolve, and new opportunities may become available.

4. **Focus on Essentials.** Never forget that sometimes the most effective solution may also be the simplest. The library can be a safe place for a student to break from a challenging class or a difficult home life. Greet students with a smile. Treat them with respect. Know what resources are available at the institution and within the community for issues that may arise. Be willing to listen during interactions with students. Introduce students to other people on campus that can help them. Small actions of support can be significant.

The dedicated staff at St. Johns River State College Learning Resources Department are always looking to learn and grow. The wellness initiative is ever evolving. The resources and services will continue to grow as we learn, gather data, and create new partnerships.

### Acknowledgements

Thank you to Dr. Christina Will, Dean of Learning Resources, at St. Johns River State College for embracing a whole-student approach to student success for our department.

*Dr. Fisher has served in her current role as a faculty librarian at St. Johns River State College since 2012. She is also an adjunct instructor for St. Johns River State College and the University of West Florida. Professionally, she is active with the Association for Educational Communications and Technology, the Florida Library Association, the American Library Association, and the Association of Colleges and Research Libraries.*



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# FLORIDA LIBRARIES Fundamental *to* FREEDOM

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## Conference Highlights

- Keynote Address by Kris McGuigan  
Break Free From Fear—Making Brave  
Decisions in the Face of Disruption
- Preconference Sessions
- Over 35 breakout sessions
- President's Reception featuring a  
"Hamilton themed" event
- NEW! Scavenger Hunt for Exhibit Hall  
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- NEW! Networking Lounge
- After Hours Bowling activity
- Poster Sessions and Lightning Rounds
- Wine Toss! to support FLA  
Scholarships
- More networking time with library  
vendors at our Exhibit Hall &  
Tradeshow in conjunction with  
refreshment breaks, concession  
lunches and receptions
- Closing Lunch Session with Awards  
and Board Induction Ceremony



# A TIMELY PROFILE IN COURAGE:

NOT RETIRED LIBRARIAN  
GERALD NOTARO'S FIRST TIME  
AT THE GAY RODEO

by Aaron Drake, Library Assistant, Manatee Libraries

Book banning seems to occur cyclically. The latest challenges to LGBTQ+ book titles, due to Florida's HB 1557—commonly called the “Don't Say Gay” law—comes as no surprise to gay retired librarian Gerald Notaro.

“Here we are all these years later, and we seem to be in the same situation as we were then,” Notaro says.<sup>1</sup>

Notaro, who is an emeritus faculty member of the University of South Florida St. Petersburg, remembers being an active library advocate during the Hillsborough County, Florida, ban on public library displays that promoted Gay and Lesbian Pride Month in 2005. At that time, Hillsborough County Commissioner Ronda Storms pushed for a ban that the Commission successfully passed after West Gate Regional Library took down their display in response to complaints from patrons about the displays there. Hillsborough County's refusal to participate in Pride may have been an impetus for the Florida Library Association's (FLA) passage of a resolution that the association would not host any meetings or activities in Hillsborough County until the ban was rescinded.

Notaro goes on to add it hasn't always been just LGBTQ+ titles on banned books lists. “They didn't even want us to have books about dinosaurs. We had complaints about books about dinosaurs because of religious concerns.”

“ They didn't even want us to have books about dinosaurs. We had complaints about books about dinosaurs because of religious concerns. ”



## A TIMELY PROFILE IN COURAGE

Though the ban was lifted in 2013, it led to the birth of St. Pete Pride in 2003 - now Florida's largest Pride celebration with more than 300,000 attendees flooding the streets of Downtown St. Pete each June for their yearly parade. "You never saw people coming over from Tampa to St. Pete for anything; of course, that's reversed now," Notaro shares. "All of my friends that still live in Tampa come over here for everything."

Notaro, who served on the board of St. Pete Pride, was a historian and an archivist for the organization, as well. He used the incident in Hillsborough County as a catalyst to launch a Florida Library Association committee for library employees serving LGBTQ+ patrons. The committee is currently inactive.\* Times may be changing, but an LGBTQ+ services organization seems to be something that is still needed.<sup>2</sup> Notaro recalls:

"I remember another first, it sounds commonplace now, but twenty-one years ago it wasn't. We invited a transgender librarian [to speak to USFSP library staff]. The whole focus of the program that we had was using the right pronouns, how to treat trans[gender] patrons, how to treat trans[gender] employees, and that was a whole foreign world twenty-one years ago. This was long before the topic was talked about as much as it is on RuPaul's Drag Race now, where half the cast are coming out as trans. I learned a lot and I was an activist. It was just one of the things we did to help the patrons."

Notaro went on to assist with the creation of Gulfport Public Library's award-winning LGBTQ+ collection. He started a film series and brought in the Tampa Bay Gay Men's Chorus to perform a Christmas concert in Gulfport, which they still do and is the number one attended event for the library each year.

"I was one of the few out librarians and I had started writing reviews early on in my career and I would request materials," Notaro says. "All of a sudden I got this huge collection at USF that people were always wanting to borrow from because, for free, I had built up this incredible

collection [of materials] sent to me to review and I would put them in. I saw there was a need to find authoritative, nondiscriminating, and inclusive materials and reviews on materials and sources from those materials," he says. "A lot of times there weren't a lot of those materials available."

According to Notaro, librarians were the "first interest group in any profession devoted to securing gay and lesbian rights," Notaro said, with librarians joining the American Library Association's Task Force on Gay Liberation in the early days of the civil rights battle for queer rights in 1971. The group put together a "Hug-a-Homosexual" booth at the annual ALA meeting held that year. This was during the time when 49 states still had anti-sodomy laws on the books and employment discrimination was allowed. Continues Notaro, "[T]he legal system rendered gay people effectively invisible through loitering, disorderly conduct, solicitation, and anti-sodomy laws. Major religious denominations categorized gays as sinners even as the medical profession branded homosexuality pathological."<sup>3</sup> (Poole, 2020).

Taking on prejudice from its start, ALA's Task Force on Gay Liberation worked on "the creation of bibliographies, revision of library classification schemes and subject headings, building and improving access to collections, and fighting job discrimination."<sup>4</sup> Specifically, in the library profession it became about battling discrimination for employees, changing classification and subject headings that were offensive, sharing relevant and current information with those who needed it, including those resources in collection development, and ultimately supporting other marginalized groups.

"I knew library directors that I would see out at the clubs, at Parliament House... they couldn't even be out at work and couldn't join the group because they were afraid," Notaro reminisces. "Some of them have gone on to become library directors in huge systems, and to think that 20 [to] 25 years ago they couldn't even be out in their job is just unbelievable, but that is the way it was. Up until 2010, 2011, I knew library directors in Florida that were extremely closeted because they were in areas [where] they thought

## A TIMELY PROFILE IN COURAGE

[their sexual orientation] would affect their jobs.”

Times may be changing again as illustrated recently by libraries censoring themselves. For example, the case of Smithtown, N.Y., whose library trustee board voted to ban LGBTQ+ book displays and remove children’s books portraying LGBTQ+ characters from the shelves, only to be reversed days later after an emergency meeting.<sup>5</sup> But the challenge is still there and it’s a call to the profession of librarianship to step up.

“There are parents out there who are seeking librarians’ advice on these books,” Notaro states. “And you are doing a disservice by refusing to even publicize the fact that you have the books or have the knowledge of which one of the books to recommend.”

Notaro shares about the time when FLA invited Lesléa Newman, author of *Heather Has Two Mommies*, to speak:

We had librarians who told me that they couldn’t... come to the program because they were afraid their commissioners or taxpayers or boards would be furious with them for even coming to listen to Lesléa speak. I understood and felt bad for them. I told them, ‘You can’t let that stop you from doing what you think is the right thing for your patrons. Not for yourself, but for your patrons.’

Notaro adds, “[Librarians] need to also understand they are in a profession where they’re going to have to make some brave decisions even if they’re ultimately admonished for them or have boards that come and outvote what they think is the right thing to do.”

[1] Gerald Notaro, telephonic interview with Aaron Drake, July 7, 2022.

[2] “The group is currently inactive. FLA requires both someone to agree to chair the group, plus four other FLA members willing to help start it back up. Then it would require FLA Executive Board approval.” -FLA Executive Director, Jennifer Abdelnour

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Gerald “Jerry” Notaro, Emeritus University Librarian at University of South Florida, St. Petersburg

**\*Editor’s Note:** While the original LGBTQ Member Group established by Greg Notaro is inactive, FLA’s Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Committee is doing important work. To learn more or to get involved, contact Jenny Abdelnour at [executivedirector@flalib.org](mailto:executivedirector@flalib.org).

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