

NJLA NEWSLETTER

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW JERSEY LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

June 2024

Vol. 22 Issue 2

Important Dates



View the [NJLA Events Calendar](#) for all meetings and events.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by **CARINA GONZALEZ**

Well, I did it. I completed a year as President of the New Jersey Library Association, a milestone that is both gratifying and reflective. This experience was a blend of ease and challenge, shaped by the people around me and the tasks at hand.

At times, my role was straightforward. The past presidents provided a robust foundation, offering invaluable guidance and a wealth of historical documents. The drive filled with gigabytes of old minutes and agendas, were a treasure trove of information. Yet, there were moments when the role was anything but easy. The learning curve was steep, and the breadth of knowledge required about NJLA was immense. The job came with its share of conflicts and criticisms; disagreements and unpopular decisions were part of the territory. However, this year taught me valuable conflict management strategies that will serve me well beyond this role.

Over the past year, my email account was inundated with over 2,700 emails. I participated in nearly 200 meetings, excluding conferences, but the most rewarding aspect of the presidency was the immediate access and ability to address members' needs. This capability was a unique privilege, one I will miss greatly.

One of my motivations for sharing this is to demystify the NJLA presidency, which can seem daunting and, at times, intimidating. This perception often deters potential candidates. By offering a glimpse behind the scenes, I hope to encourage more members to consider this role.

Reflecting on this year, I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity to serve in this capacity. It has been a period of intense personal growth and an eye-opener to the incredible talent and dedication within NJLA. Our organization is a powerhouse of potential, and I am immensely proud to have been at its helm, even for a brief period.

For those contemplating a run for the NJLA presidency, rest assured that you will not be alone. The past presidents and I are always ready to offer our support. I am excited to see NJLA continue to evolve and thrive, and I encourage you to be a part of its dynamic future.

Carina Gonzalez (she/her) is a Library Media Specialist at Governor Livingston High School in Berkeley Heights and the current NJLA President. Her passions in librarianship include social justice, access, and intellectual freedom. She began her career as an Elementary School Library Media Specialist followed by being a High School Library Media Specialist. She then went on to become an Outreach Academic Librarian, and then five years as an Adult Services Public Librarian, before returning to school librarianship. Carina is an accomplished writer, professional web designer, and entrepreneur. You can learn more about her at www.librariancarina.com.

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

by **BRETT BONFIELD**

Most of us know people who volunteer and benefit from their work. Many of us are volunteers: based on US Census Bureau data, about a quarter to a third of Americans have formal volunteer roles. That percentage increases to over half of the US population when we include informal helping arrangements.



Without volunteers, statewide library associations, including NJLA, would cease to exist. Volunteers are NJLA's brains and heart, its muscles and bones, its blood and humors – everything from genome to soul. In this metaphor, staff are tools, selected by the volunteers to make their work more efficient. As loyal as I am to my phone, bicycle, and coffee pot, my plan is to find a new phone, bicycle, and coffee pot when the time is right, just as an organization that has provided invaluable service to New Jersey since 1890 will continue to thrive beyond its current staff members' tenure.

I understood all of that before I started working at NJLA 15 months ago. I had volunteered for NJLA and had a good understanding of what that entailed. What I failed to appreciate is the magnitude, breadth, and dedication of NJLA's volunteers. Everything I do relies on their hard work and expertise. There are far too many people involved in NJLA, doing far too many important tasks, to thank everyone adequately.

This has been especially evident over the past quarter. The 2024 NJLA Annual Conference was a smashing success, thanks to the Conference Committee, Honors and Awards, Fundraising, Member Services, the NJLA Store, everyone who sponsored or facilitated a program, and everyone who jumped in to help at the registration table or behind a desk or wherever else we needed someone smart, capable, and kind.

We are on the verge of expanding the scope of the 2026–28 conferences, thanks to Conference Futures and Conference Committees. We have approximately 45 Committees, Sections, and Task Forces, most of which are thriving, thanks to a collective of talented, dedicated leaders. We are making progress on a landmark Freedom to Read bill and working hard to restore Library Network Aid in the 2025 State Budget, thanks to our strong Public Policy and Intellectual Freedom committees, including fantastic

Article continues on next page.

advocates who gave thoughtful, moving testimony at the Assembly Education Committee meeting. We also have an incomparable group of former presidents and others, whose roles are no longer formal and whose contributions could not be more tangible. I hope you know how much I appreciate you.

Of course, it all starts with NJLA's Executive Board, the people you elected to serve as your proxies in NJLA's operational decisions. My thanks to everyone who is serving in the year ahead, starting with incoming President Jeff Cupo, and to the Executive Board members whose terms are ending: Jessica Trujillo, Will Porter, Keisha Miller, and Joy Robinson. Endless thanks to Carina Gonzalez as she transitions from President to Immediate Past President. She has been a magnificent president. I'm going to miss having her as my primary partner in all things NJLA.

Last and never least: my thanks to the Newsletter Committee. They are creative, talented, and patient. As NJLA Members, we all benefit from their work.

Brett Bonfield is NJLA Executive Director as of March 2023. He has worked in libraries since 2006, including 11 years as the director of two public libraries in NJ. Most recently, Brett served as the Chief Operating Officer at the Cincinnati & Hamilton County Public Library. Brett has held leadership positions in nonprofits and library organizations including NJLA, the American Library Association, Public Library Association, Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati, and OhioNet. Brett received his MS in Library and Information Science from Drexel University.



Photo courtesy of Corey Fleming, Patterson Free Public Library



NJLA Newsletter

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OTHER NJLA NEWSLETTERS:

Use these links to access the latest newsletters from other NJLA Sections.

[College and University](#)

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INTERESTED IN CONTRIBUTING?

For all inquiries, please contact

newsletter_editorenjlamembers.org

Proposals for the Fall 2024 issue are due on August 5th.

NJLA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2024

by ERICA DEB



The end of May means it's conference time for NJLA! The 2024 Annual Conference was an opportunity for library workers from around the state to network and attend sessions jam-packed with new ideas and concepts that they could bring back to their own buildings.

The conference provided some new experiences, like library-themed tattoos from Art N Soul Tattoo Studios, as well as some perennial favorites like the Garden State Book Awards and the Pool Party.

We look forward to a new year of NJLA and hope to see you all in 2025!



Past Presidents Luncheon



Empowering Hygiene Initiatives around the Garden State. Clockwise from top left: Jeff Cupo, Elizabeth Public Library, Emily Dalton, Hoboken Public Library, Jasmine Riel, Cherry Hill Public Library, and Laura Curry, Bound Brook Branch at Somerset County Library System of New Jersey

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*MentorNJ Latino Library Staff Meetup
Photo courtesy of Darby Malvey*



Garden State Book Awards. From left, Ellen Ryan, CSS, special guest author Stacy Nockowitz, and Melaina Squicciarini, YASS



*"Por Mi Gente"
by Hoboken Public Library
Photo courtesy of Jasmine Riel*



*"Creative Aging at the Library"
by Millburn Free Public Library
Photo courtesy of Jasmine Riel*



*"CHPL Teen Services on Twitch"
by Cherry Hill Public Library
Photo courtesy of Jasmine Riel*

Erica Deb is the Head of Youth Services at the Matawan Aberdeen Public Library. She is the Chair and Editor of the NJLA Newsletter, and an active member of the Young Adult Services Section. She holds an MLIS from Rutgers University. You can contact her at newsletter_editor@njlamembers.org.

THE REESTABLISHED KARMA FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

by **JENNIFER LARSEN**

As the 2023–24 chair of the NJLA Scholarship Subcommittee, I am proud to recognize the ten NJLA scholarship winners for 2024. For the past few years, NJLA has awarded two types of scholarships, the NJLA Course Scholarship and the NJLA Equity Scholarship. This year, we were excited to reestablish a third scholarship, sponsored by the Karma Foundation.

The subcommittee awarded two NJLA Course Scholarships of \$3750 each to LIS students who show academic achievement, vision, innovation, and the potential for leadership. Congratulations to Sloane Kazim and Rebecca Levin.

The subcommittee awarded seven NJLA Equity Scholarships of \$8500 each, thanks to generous funding from our partners at the State Library, Rutgers University, LibraryLinkNJ, and NJLA. Equity scholarships are available to New Jersey LIS students who identify as American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx, Middle Eastern, North African, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander. Awardees also receive NJLA membership and conference attendance for 2 years, as well as access to support and mentoring opportunities via MentorNJ and the NJLA Equity Mentorship Task Force. Congratulations to Nicole Blemur, Nicole Cabrera, Walter Clark, Vida Deleon, Indira Douglas, Kaitlyn Lopez, and Apoorva Pillay.

The Karma Foundation, a New Jersey based foundation established to support organizations engaged in activities and programs in Education & Literacy, re-established their scholarship of up to \$30,000 to assist one candidate receiving an LIS master's degree. This scholarship was awarded to an individual who demonstrates both academic and professional promise, as well as financial need. Congratulations to Sally Bender, who will begin the Rutgers University MI program this fall.

Breaking Barriers
INCLUSIVE COLLABORATION

UNIQUE LENDING

Fair Lawn's Wedding Gown Program

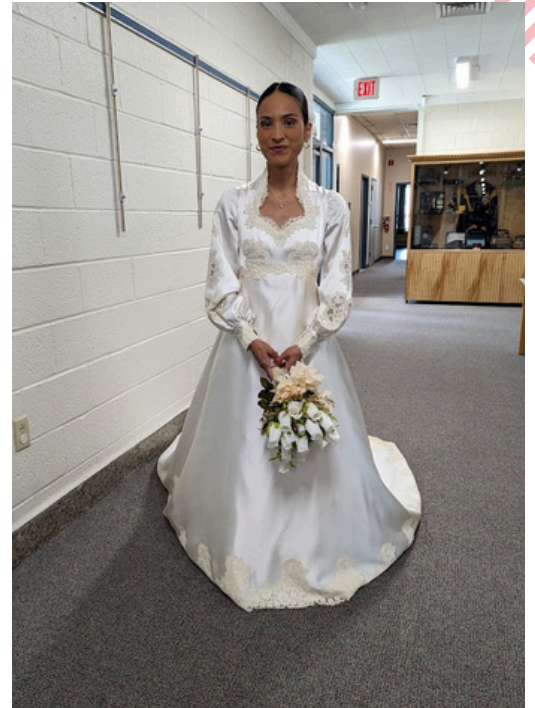
by ADELE PUCCIO

Unique lending collections at libraries often come about because of a need or a personal passion. In Fair Lawn, I started a wedding dress lending program because I've always had an interest in bridal fashion.

In 2000, I was working at the Bayonne Public Library and put together a wedding display. Staff members brought in their memorabilia and we filled all the display cases with photographs, wedding mementos and dresses. I picked up vintage wedding gowns via thrift stores and online auctions. The project grew and we held a vintage bridal show in August of that year. It was so popular that it ran on local access cable for over a year.

Since then, I probably gave away a couple dozen dresses, but this past year has eclipsed that figure. Two years ago, I joined Shared Dream Dresses on Facebook. I'd pick up dresses from Freecycle and list them. I also told local friends and colleagues that I had dresses here at the library that I'd give away. In May of 2023, Estefani Hernandez decided to get married at the New Milford Public Library and she chose a 1970s dress from my collection. It looked like it was made for her. In February of this year the Newark Star-Ledger ran a story about Fair Lawn's small collection of gowns, and things suddenly exploded. I don't think we were prepared for the number of items that we received.

Brides make an appointment via email and come in to try on dresses. Since January, I have given out over 60 dresses and I still have 75+ here in the office.



Estefani Hernandez Soler who was married at the New Milford Public Library in May, 2023. She is wearing a gown from the 1970s that was donated by a Fair Lawn patron.

Article continues on next page.



Samantha Sadkin trying on a 1980 House of Bianchi dress, back view of the train.

I tell brides who are requesting a specific size that if I don't have it, I will email them if something comes in. I am desperately in need of dresses larger than a 14.

What I love about this program is hearing people's stories. People who are donating often tell me about their dress, where it was bought and what made it special. One woman donated one of the limited edition copies of the wedding dress from the TV show *Rhoda*. I also love hearing from our brides about why they have chosen a specific dress. Today, a couple who has been married for 63 years brought in the wife's beautiful bridal gown, and designer Helen Morley donated 10 brand new samples! You never know what you'll find in my office.

You can find more information on our [website](#).

Adele Puccio is the director of the Maurice M. Pine Public Library in Fair Lawn, NJ. She holds an MLIS Rutgers University, 1994. Her email is puccio@fairlawn.bccls.org.

FEATURED PARTNER: New Jersey Makers Day 2024 Recap by Kate-Lynn Grimm

33,600
total estimated statewide attendance

\$9,807.76 in Mini-Grants
awarded to **14 sites**,
representing **12 New Jersey counties**

640 estimated activities across the state

212
total participating sites across 20 NJ counties

Save the Date! New Jersey Makers Day 2025 will be held March 21-23rd. Registration opens September 9th at njmakersday.org.

OUTSTANDING RESEARCH

Rutgers University-Camden Paul Robeson Library Undergraduate Research Award

by **SAMANTHA KANNEGISER**

The Paul Robeson Library at Rutgers University-Camden launched an Undergraduate Research Award in Spring 2021, recognizing outstanding undergraduate research projects that make use of library resources, collections, and services and show evidence of critical thinking, originality, and creativity.

Applicants submit an original paper or project completed for a semester-long, credit-bearing course, along with a bibliography and a short essay reflecting their research process and use of library resources.



Rutgers Camden Associate University Librarian Regina Koury (far right) joins librarians Zara Wilkinson and Samantha Kannegiser and the 2024 Undergraduate Research Award Recipients.

An evaluation committee, led by Student Success Librarian Samantha Kannegiser and Reference and Instruction Librarian Zara Wilkinson, brings together librarians and three disciplinary faculty to choose awardees, with cash prizes ranging from \$100 to \$1,000. The award cycle culminates in a reception, during which the students present their research in lightning talks, and their work is deposited in a digital collection accessible from the library's website.

This initiative has opened opportunities for the library to be even more involved on campus. Librarians are invited to serve on committees dedicated to undergraduate research, and are involved with the lightning talk reception included in the annual campuswide Research Week.

Now in its fourth year, the Undergraduate Research Award has reinforced the

Article continues on next page.

library as a major supporter of research on campus. The award also gives librarians an opportunity to collaborate with other faculty, and celebrates the exceptional work of our undergraduates.

For more information, visit the [award site](#).

Samantha Kannegiser is the Student Success Librarian for the Paul Robeson Library at Rutgers University-Camden, where she oversees student success initiatives such as the Personal Librarian Program, Library Student Advisory Board, and the Undergraduate Research Award. She received her MLIS from Rutgers University in 2016.

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ARE BORN**

when the library community gets together

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For over 85 years, the Library of Congress Federal Credit Union has proudly served America's library community. We're here to help you write your financial story. To get started, join the Credit Union that exclusively serves the library community.

The Library of Congress Federal Credit Union is a supporter of the NJLA Newsletter. More information can be found [here](#).

SECTION SPOTLIGHT

Small Libraries

by CHARLIE LECKENBY



R. David Lankes said it best, "Bad libraries build collections, good libraries build services, great libraries build communities." One of the things that small libraries are best at, in my opinion, is building community. Whether it's because we are more approachable physically (small building, usually centrally located), or because the people working in them are often from the community they serve, or because it's not as difficult to gauge what the community wants and needs, small libraries are often the places small communities count as indispensable. Just like their bigger neighbors, small libraries strive to build their communities up and make them better places to work and live.

Of New Jersey's 299 public libraries, a majority of them serve communities of 35,000 or fewer. Often consisting of only a handful of full-time and part-time staff, these libraries are still called upon to deal with the same demands and issues as large libraries. Staff often serve in multiple roles, and duties aren't nearly as delineated. Money is tighter and creativity is frequently required to fund programs and projects. Yet despite these challenges, the rewards are great: small libraries often play an outsized role in their towns. With buildings and resources that can serve people in ways that other governmental agencies can't, communities look upon libraries as vital.

We invite you to join the Small Libraries Section and be part of a mission: small but mighty, small libraries lead the way.

The Small Library Section meets virtually the second Tuesday of the month. Contact Charlie at cleckenby@lmxac.org for link to meeting.

Charlie Leckenby is the director at Milltown Public Library. He has worked in libraries in Colorado, Arizona, Brooklyn, NY, and Edison, NJ. He received his MLS from Emporia State University. Originally from Steamboat Springs, CO, he currently lives in Metuchen, NJ.

TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE (BUT NOT OF THE HEART) PARTY

at Cranbury Public Library

by LIZ BEGONIS

Like many libraries in the region, Cranbury Public Library celebrated the solar eclipse on April 8th. If you follow us on social media, you know that we're quite fond of wordplay, so naming our event "Total Solar Eclipse (But Not of the Heart) Party" was an easy decision.

My colleague Laura Bonds and I viewed the eclipse (safely, through approved glasses, of course) as a great opportunity for our entire community to come together for a shared experience. Our building opened a year and a half ago, and this would be the first event of this magnitude to be held on our exterior grounds. Thankfully, our new patio furniture arrived just days earlier!



A junior patron offered a friend a lift up for a closer view of the eclipse



Cranbury Public Library director, Brooke Basista, demonstrates proper solar eclipse viewing with approved glasses.

We had 125 solar eclipse glasses to allocate to those who registered, and quickly reached our limit before finding ourselves fielding dozens of calls a day asking if we had more (a common experience, from what we've heard). A shortage of glasses didn't keep folks away though. The event brought in 225 people, with lawn chairs, giant pinhole cameras, and additional glasses in tow. We seized the chance for even more wordplay with themed snacks as attendees

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Party guests were able to enjoy celestial-themed snacks like Sun Chips and Moon Pies

happily munched on Moon Pies, Sun Chips, Capri Suns, and black and white cookies. The eclipse may not have reached totality here, but our party was a total success.

And yes, Bonnie Tyler's ballad was included on the celestial-themed playlist (other notables included "Moondance", "Ain't No Sunshine", and "Bad Moon Rising").

Liz Begonis (she/her) is the Youth Services Assistant at Cranbury Public Library. She is responsible for tween & teen services. She studied film at NYU, which comes in handy when filming silly videos in her role as the social media specialist and content creator ([click here!](#)). Liz is currently curating CPL's first Pride Month display and encouraging library staff from around the world to start pen pal programs over at the Worldwide Library Pen Pal Connections group on Facebook. Her email address is begonis@cranburypubliclibrary.org.

A MESSAGE FROM PORZIO GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

by BARBARA DeMARCO, VP



The goals for the New Jersey Library Association's governmental affairs/public policy efforts for New Jersey's spring legislative session are twofold:

- Restoration of Library Network Funding in the Governor's Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Proposal to Fiscal Year 2024 levels (and)
- Advancing "Freedom to Read" through the legislative process and on to the Governor's desk for signature.

As it relates to Restoration of Library Network Funding, Porzio Governmental Affairs implemented a strategic plan that is customary among professional lobbyists that

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included formalizing the request in the form of a position paper, presenting it to the board for approval, securing sponsors in each house of the Legislature for sponsorship of budget resolutions that would restore the funding, speaking with relevant staff representing both the majority and minority parties in both houses, and securing support from legislative leadership. As of mid-June, decisions have not been rendered as to whether library network funding will be restored as negotiations between the Legislature and Governor's office are on-going. The PGA team continues to advocate for NJLA while the membership engages in grassroots advocacy with legislators with the hope that New Jersey's public libraries will be kept whole from a state funding perspective. It is important to note that this is not an easy lift. The State has a \$1 billion dollar structural deficit in a difficult economy. However, we are hopeful that the Governor and the Legislature see the wisdom of this ask, given the important role libraries play for individuals with limited incomes completely reliant on libraries for internet access, reading and research material, and community resources.

The other big issue for NJLA is the passage of the "Freedom to Read Act." This is one of the most controversial issues before the Legislature presently. For Porzio Governmental Affairs, this is not a win or lose issue. Rather, our goal is to have the best bill possible given the wide range of views and beliefs. This is an issue where we need to ensure that any new law protects librarians from harassment, intimidation, and harm, while advocating that libraries adhere to the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, which emphasizes libraries as bastions of free information and ideas.

With these fundamentals driving our strategy, the Porzio Governmental Affairs team ushered A3446 through the Assembly Education Committee, where it received 7 yes votes, 1 no vote, and 1 abstention. The Assembly version of the bill is on second reading. The Senate version of the bill (S2421) has yet to move in the upper house. We are looking forward to a vote in the Senate Education Committee in the near future.

In its current amended form, in addition to a model policy on the removal of books from a library, the bill would ensure that only local community stakeholders could challenge a book, and that a committee of local stakeholders could review it to make a final determination on the book.

PGA remains committed to advocating for sensible policies that benefit communities statewide and supporting NJLA's mission to promote literacy and defend intellectual freedom.



ALL ABOUT YOUR STATE'S ACCESSIBLE LIBRARY

The New Jersey State Library Talking Book & Braille Center

by **JENNIFER APGAR**

The NJ State Library Talking Book & Braille Center (TBBC) is the NJ network library for the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled, Library of Congress (NLS). We are part of a nationwide program, and residents can find a library like ours in every state.

TBBC provides no-cost audio and braille books and magazines to NJ residents of any age with a print disability. A person with a "print disability" includes anyone who may be blind; has a visual impairment where the print in the newspaper or standard print book is too tiny to read comfortably with glasses; has a physical disability which may prohibit them from holding a book or turning the pages of a book; or has a reading disability.

TBBC's audio and braille reading materials can be downloaded on most smartphones and tablets, with no waitlist or return date. If people do not want to use an app to listen to our audiobooks, audio and braille books, and magazines are also available in hard copies which can be mailed directly to people's homes.

TBBC's collection includes popular and best-selling books and authors, as well as books that are not commercially available in audio. If you have patrons looking for audiobooks that you cannot find anywhere, contact us! We may be able to help.

In addition to audiobooks and braille books, TBBC has large print books for its juvenile and teen patrons.

An application is needed to get services from TBBC. The application requires a signature from a certifying authority; that is, a professional familiar with the applicant who certifies that the applicant qualifies for services from TBBC. A librarian is one of



Jen Apgar with TBBC exhibit table at resource fair.

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the professionals who can certify our application. The full list of “certifying authorities” is listed on the application.

Information about TBBC, including the application for service, is at our [website](#). Information about NLS, how its collections work, and how to find network libraries in other states, is at their [website](#). For further information, or to invite TBBC to your library for events or presentations, contact us at 800-792-8322 or TBBC@njstatelib.org.

Jennifer Apgar is the Youth Services Librarian at the NJ State Library Talking Book & Braille Center in Trenton. She holds an MLIS from San Jose State University in CA. Jen has worked at TBBC for over 15 years and has presented about TBBC’s services at national, state, and local conferences. She recently co-authored an [article](#) on TBBC services for World Library, the National Library of Korea. Her email address is: japgar@njstatelib.org.

ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE CONFERENCE FUTURES COMMITTEE

by **KIMBERLY PAONE**

We are pleased to announce that the contracts are signed! NJLA and NJASL will be partnering to host joint conferences in 2026, 2027, and 2028. These conferences will take place at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Atlantic City in February of each of the three aforementioned years. (NJLA will remain at Harrah’s for one final year in May of 2025.)



ATLANTIC CITY

The members of the NJLA Conference Futures committee have been working with NJASL leadership, the NJLA office, and our conference consultant, Kim Lyons, to make this move a reality. Many thanks to all involved. We are certain that the change will be a great success on many levels.

The NJLA Conference Futures Committee is a group of former NJLA conference chairs and leaders who have come together to consider conference attendees’ concerns, weigh all options, and come to the best possible solutions for future conferences. Members have crunched numbers, worked diligently to evaluate alternative locations, formats, and dates, to arrive at a solution that will be cost effective for members and the organizations involved, while also taking into consideration our size, space and technology needs, and comfort.

Kimberly Paone, Director of the Matawan Aberdeen Public Library, is the incoming Chair of the NJLA Conference Futures committee, but the heavy lifting detailed above was led by outgoing Chair, Adriana Mamay, Reference and Instruction Librarian at Middlesex College, and Vice-Chair, Andrea Levandowski, Adult Services Specialist at the State Library.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CORNER

“Well, how did I get here?”

SELWA SHAMY, Assistant Director at the Montclair Public Library

I got my start in libraries by training public library workers in the first Middlesex County-wide automated circulation system. The year was 1989, and I was in my last semester of library school at Rutgers University, studying adult reference services. I had transferred to the library program from Sociology. I wanted to work in NYC to help people find the information they needed to empower themselves. I had job offers from the three library systems in the city and chose Brooklyn Public Library's



Social Sciences Division. I lived in Park Slope and walked to work - I loved the city and my job, but got laid off after six months due to a city-wide budget crisis. I spent the winter navigating the city's unemployment system and pursued another interest by taking film and video classes at the School of Visual Arts. After a few months, I got rehired in the Young Adult division.

After being laid off again, I decided to move back to NJ. I had a short stint in Elizabeth as an Adult Services Librarian, but eventually ended up as a part-time Children's Librarian in East Brunswick. I never thought I'd be a children's librarian, but East Brunswick had its own cable television station, so I took the job. I fell in love with picture books and serving children, and I volunteered at the TV station until they finally hired me part-time. I worked my way up to producing, directing, and editing a children's variety show called Just Kidding. At one point, I had four part-time jobs: two in the library, one as an editor for a local TV show, and the last delivering futons. After a few years, I wanted a change and was hired as a part-time system administrator, which led me to start massage school. I wanted to get as far away from computers as possible.

For eight years, I pursued a career in the healing arts and never thought I'd work in a library again. The reality was, in 2005 after being forced to leave a business I

Article continues on next page.

co-owned, I ended up in debt and needed to fall back on my library degree. I was miraculously hired as a full-time Young Adult Librarian at the Bridgewater Public Library. I spent over 13 years at the Somerset County Library System in various roles, including over three years in administration in a job that doesn't exist anymore.

It became clear to me that my skills, talents and experience would be more effective in a smaller environment. Luckily, I was hired as Assistant Director at the Montclair Public Library, where I've been for over five years now. I can say that I use everything I've ever learned in every position – administration, collection development, movement therapy and massage, teen volunteer management, videography, public service for all ages, and even lugging futons (outreach and event setups!).

What I've learned is that nothing you do is wasted, variety keeps you sharp and curious, and never say never.

Library Career Paths Series

Are you interested in learning more about librarianship, and the various careers within this profession that you may not be aware of? Then the Library Career Paths series is for you! Whether you are a seasoned librarian or a newcomer to the profession, you will learn from our interviews with librarians in a wide variety of positions. Interviews will be posted biweekly to the NJLA Youtube Channel, so please like this video and subscribe to the channel to follow our Library Career Paths series!

This series is sponsored by the Professional Development Committee. If you have any questions, please email us.

Special thanks to Jessica Trujillo, former NJLA President, for suggesting this program to the Professional Development Committee.



Click [here](#) to view our first interview with Katie Salerno of the Somerset County Library System.

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Barbara Espenschied is celebrating her retirement! The long-time cataloger worked for LMxAC since February 1992. Congrats Barbara!

Library of the Chathams is pleased to announce that **Laurie Feistammel** will join the staff as Assistant Director on July 1st.

As of April 8, 2024, **Hope Holroyd** is the Public Relations & Marketing Coordinator at the Cherry Hill Public Library.

Bonnie Lafazan has been appointed as the next Director of the Springfield Free Public Library, effective August 1, 2024.

Dale Spindel will be retiring from Springfield Free Public Library as of July 17, 2024.

Congratulations to our Executive Board election winners:

- Vice President/President-Elect: John Wallace, Systems & Emerging Technologies Librarian, Ocean County College
- Second Vice President: Heather Kristian, Head of Youth Services, Pennsauken Free Public Library
- Secretary: Rosy Wagner, Manager of Reference and Lifelong Learning, Burlington County Library System
- Treasurer: Allan Kleiman, Library Director, Edison Public Library
- Member-at-Large (three 3-year seats 2024-2027):
 - Tanya Finney Estrada, Library Director, Pennsauken Free Public Library
 - Corey Fleming, Library Director, Paterson Free Public Library
 - Maryjean Riou, Teen Services Librarian, Hunterdon County Library System
- Member-at-Large (single-year seat 2024-2025): Eleni Glykis, Library Director, Red Bank Public Library

Have a job change, retirement, or announcement to share?

Email newsletter_editor@nlamembers.org
to have it included in our next issue!
