

digital scholarship librarian at Michigan State University Libraries; and Ken Varnum, senior program manager for discovery, delivery, and learning analytics at the University of Michigan (UM) Library.

Lent discussed his small library's decision to switch to open source (OS) software, including the Ubuntu Linux operating system. The library also moved from Microsoft Office to open source LibreOffice suite and launched a new website using the OS WordPress content management system.

Lent noted that OS programs and systems tend to have robust support communities online, and it is often easy to get quick responses by posting questions or problems on Twitter.

Hahn discussed the growth of location-based information services, such as indoor positioning systems to help patrons navigate the stacks, or Bluetooth beacons, which several libraries have begun using to send targeted, opt-in messages to the smartphones of patrons who visit specific areas of the library.

UM has been working on a campus-wide learning analytics program that protects student confidentiality and attempts to strike a balance between privacy and the collection of data that could help the university enhance the experience of its students, Varnum said.

The term *praxis*—which is defined as the practical application of a theory—has become popular among data scientists as a way to describe how insights gleaned

from data can translate into actionable ideas. Padilla is anticipating the emergence of what he described as “broad data praxis,” which is not confined to any specific disciplinary community.

Griffey discussed block chain technology—a permissionless, distributed database system that was originally developed to validate and record transactions in the bitcoin cryptocurrency network. This methodology reconciles millions of anonymous transactions in a true peer-to-peer environment that does not rely on any central authority, Griffey noted.

Hollier also discussed the growth of interoperability, with APIs (application programming interfaces) facilitating the transfer of data between programs or systems, along with efforts to standardize data formatting within specific industries.

Separately, software containers such as Docker are beginning to facilitate interoperability by making it possible for apps and software tools to overcome fundamental differences in infrastructure and language.

### Carnegie Medal winners

For the first time since the Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence in Fiction and Nonfiction were established in 2012, the winners were announced at the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) Book & Media Awards Ceremony & Reception, rather than at ALA annual.

The 2016 winners include Viet Thanh Nguyen's *The Sympathizer* (Grove), a visceral debut novel about a double agent in South Vietnam posted to America after Saigon's fall (also an *LJ* Best Book), and Sally Mann's *Hold Still: A Memoir with Photographs* (Little, Brown), the sometimes controversial photographer's incisive reflections on her family history.

Sponsored jointly by ALA's *Booklist*, RUSA, and the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Carnegie Medals are the first single-book awards for adult books given by ALA. The two winners, chosen from a six-title short list announced in October, will be present to receive their medals—and checks for \$5,000 each—at a ceremony on Saturday, June 25, at the ALA conference in Orlando, FL. Finalists, including Jim Shepard (*The Book of Aron*, Knopf) and Hanya Yanagihara (*A Little Life*, Doubleday) in fiction and Helen Macdonald (*H Is for Hawk*, Grove) and Andrea Wulf (*The Invention of Nature: Alexander von Humboldt's New World*, Knopf) in non-fiction will receive \$1,500.

Other key awards announced at the ceremony included the Notable Books List and the Reading List, the Dartmouth Medal for excellence in reference publishing, and ten titles named by CODES as Outstanding Reference Sources. For a full list of RUSA award winners and honorable-mention titles, see [ala.org/rusa](http://ala.org/rusa).—**Matt Enis, Barbara Hoffert, Lisa Peet, & Stephanie Sendaula**

## public

### EPFL Brings Law to the Library Baltimore library offers free legal consultation

Since late summer 2015, Baltimore's Enoch Pratt Free Library (EPFL) has offered its patrons a unique service: through the new Lawyer in the Library program, community members may receive free legal advice from Maryland Legal Aid (MLA) attorneys.

When the city of Baltimore erupted in protests in April 2015, following the death of Freddie Gray in police custody, the Pennsylvania Avenue branch of EPFL remained open and provided a safe

space for community members.

According to Benjamin Rosenberg, vice chair of the board of EPFL and former cochair of the Equal Justice Council (a private organization that raises funds for MLA), this demonstrated the positive role that the library could play in serving its community, setting the stage for the Lawyer in the Library program.

Shortly after the protests died down, Rosenberg received a phone call from Gustava Taler, chief operating officer

of MLA, proposing a program through which legal aid attorneys could offer their services to underserved patrons on site at EPFL. Rosenberg responded enthusiastically and immediately contacted Carla Hayden, chief executive officer of EPFL (and the 1995 *LJ* Librarian of the Year), who also embraced the idea.

Within weeks, a task force of EPFL and MLA staffers had been assembled, and the Lawyer in the Library program was implemented shortly thereafter.

The program started in July with three presentations led by MLA attorneys about civil legal issues relevant to the local community: housing and landlord/tenant law (eviction, foreclosure, habitability); government benefits (Social Security disability, medical benefits); and family law (divorce, child custody, child and spousal support). Attendees

had the opportunity to ask questions of the MLA presenters. One-on-one consultation sessions began on September 1.

Currently, every Tuesday from 1–3 p.m. MLA attorneys, paralegals, law students, and volunteer lawyers are present at the Pennsylvania Avenue branch. Five to six attorneys are available on any given afternoon to offer individual consultations on civil legal matters (patrons with criminal law questions will be referred to a legal service that can assist them). Appointments are not required, and patrons receive legal assistance on a first-come, first-served basis.

MLA staffers greet and conduct an initial intake interview of each attendee to determine and document their particular needs. The patron is then directed to the attorney who can best address those needs. According to Amy Petkovesk, MLA project manager for the Lawyer in the Library project, the most common legal concerns handled are child custody and public housing. The patron receives approximately 20 minutes of legal advice. If the patron's issue is not the type of case that MLA

## LIBRARY OF THE YEAR 2016

All libraries are good, some are great. *LJ* is looking for role model libraries to vie for the honor of 2016 *Library Journal*/Gale Library of the Year. The \$10,000 prize celebrates the library that most profoundly demonstrates service to the community; creativity and innovation in developing specific community programs or a dramatic increase in library usage; and leadership in creating programs that can be emulated by other libraries.

To the extent possible, please send submissions in electronic format such as a Word document or a PDF via email to [rmiller@mediasourceinc.com](mailto:rmiller@mediasourceinc.com). Mail nominations to: *LJ* Library of the Year Award, *Library Journal*, 123 William St., Suite 802, New York, NY 10038.



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would typically take, the consulting attorney will refer the patron to a legal service that can assist them. If it is a case that MLA can accept, the patron is directed to an intake station where they are assigned an attorney who will see their case through. Roughly 20 patrons receive legal assistance in an average week.

In addition, on one Saturday afternoon per month approximately 15 volunteer attorneys are present at the Pennsylvania Avenue branch for clinics to help attendees expunge court and police records—a process that permanently removes criminal records from public access. Patrons who are financially eligible for legal aid services may have their



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PEER TO PEER REVIEW BY BRIAN SULLIVAN, EVA SCLIPPA, &amp; TREVOR RILEY

## Librarians, the Gathering

In December 2013, librarians at Alfred University, NY, began discussing the possibility of creating a Personal Librarian Program. The librarian trading card programs of other libraries such as Penn State and the University of Rochester gave us the idea of creating unique cards and personas for each librarian. We decided to take the trading card idea, give it a fantasy role-playing spin, and use these new “Magic: The Gathering”-esque cards to help connect students to their librarians and publicize the idea. With this, “Librarians, the Gathering” was born.

### CHARACTER CREATION

One of the core elements of the concept was the personas: fantasy identities the librarians took on, which were then transformed into collectible cards. Each participating librarian worked with the team to write a description of their persona, translating their real-world abilities and skills into “powers,” “spells,” and other language appropriate to a fantasy world. An information literacy librarian, for instance, became a “Gnome Bibliomancer,” whose abilities included

“warding off the evils of information-illiteracy.”

Hero Machine, a free superhero creation tool, was used for the initial images of each librarian, providing them with costumes and attributes appropriate to their new fantastical identities. These images were then placed in customizable Photoshop card templates from the website GraphicRiver. Each librarian’s actual photo, title, and contact information were provided on the back of the card, giving students an easy way to recognize and contact their personal librarian.

### SPREADING THE WORD

In fall 2014, our 503 first-year undergrads were assigned their very own Personal Librarians to be their go-to person for all their research needs. Where possible, librarians were designated through students’ school/college and major.

First-year students received a packet at orientation or through campus mail for those we did not meet at orientation. It included:

- A letter introducing their librarian and explaining ways in which their librarian

can assist them

- An invitation to a dessert reception where they could meet their librarian
- A trading card with their librarian’s contact information, fantasy persona, and specialized skills
- A brochure of basic library information.

We also developed a LibGuide with more detail about the program, along with a link to a database where students could look up their Personal Librarian. Posters advertising the plan were put up around campus.

Although the dessert reception was not as well attended as we had hoped, it did provide an opportunity for us to engage in deep conversations with several dozen freshmen.

One immediate positive effect of the program was the tremendous buzz that it generated across the campus. It seemed that everyone, including faculty, staff, students, and administrators, was talking about our trading cards. Some people enthusiastically tried to collect them all, and a few attempted to devise a way to use the cards in a game. Our provost was particularly animated in his support and advocacy.

expungement petitions handled for free, and patrons over the legal aid income barrier will receive guidance on their eligibility and how to file a petition on their own.

The expungement program has “been taking off like wildfire,” said Pennsylvania Avenue branch manager Melanie Townsend-Diggs—the library has received phone calls from individuals wanting to participate from as far away as North Carolina.

The provision of free legal services at the branch also benefits patrons who might be unable to travel to the downtown Baltimore office of MLA. The Lawyer in the Library program, in effect, brings the attorneys to the clients.

The Lawyer in the Library program at EPFL is part of a trend: according to a recent report in the *American Bar Association Journal*, approximately a dozen public libraries host “Law in the Library” programs to offer accessible legal aid to underserved patrons. According to Petkovesk, MLA is currently “looking to do other clinics at other libraries around the state,” including one in western Maryland in April 2016.—Jennifer A. Dixon

## Alaska Shortfalls Threaten Hybrid Library

Faced with a massive budget cut expected to take effect this summer, Kuskokwim Consortium Library (KCL), Bethel, AK, director Cheri Boisvert Janz is brainstorming ways to maintain services in this remote western Alaska town, a community she said needs its library for a lot more than borrowing books or DVDs.

A town of about 6,000 perched on the Kuskokwim River, Bethel is located about 400 miles west of Anchorage, the hub city of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. Its library serves a population of about 26,000 spread out over territory roughly “the size of Oregon,” Janz said. KCL’s shelves are stocked with 36,042 volumes, according to Libraries.org. The library circulates more than 11,000 items per year, with about 7,500 computer users, Janz said. Recently, the facility gained access to ebooks.

There is not a single road connecting the more than 50 villages, and Bethel itself has only one paved street with no routes in or out of town. The town is accessible only by plane or by crossing

the tundra via snowmobile or all-terrain vehicle. Cars are prohibitively expensive to own, so most residents get around by walking or hiring one of the community’s many taxis.

KCL currently receives \$26,000—about 80 percent of its total budget—from the Kuskokwim Campus of the University of Alaska at Fairbanks. The remaining 20 percent comes from the city. But the Kuskokwim campus, pressured by impending statewide cuts, plans a 40 percent reduction in its library contribution for the fiscal year starting July 1.

That \$10,000 budget cut means KCL would be forced to eliminate one of its three full-time positions, Janz said, reducing its entire staff to herself and one other employee. The library is currently open five days a week from noon to 6 p.m. (closed Sundays and Mondays), but the loss of one employee will almost certainly force a reduction in hours and could endanger some existing programs, the library director told *LJ*.

Those programs include a children’s story time, a weekly chess night, a basic computer skills class (the library is one of the region’s few sources of reliable

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