

Against the Grain

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And They Were There- Reports of Meetings- Reports of Meetings – JCLC 2018 and NMLA 2018

Ramue K. Kubilius

Sever Bordeianu

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And They Were There

Reports of Meetings — JCLC 2018 and NMLA 2018

Column Editor: **Sever Bordeianu** (Head, Print Resources Section, University Libraries, MSC05 3020, 1 University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001; Phone: 505-277-2645; Fax: 505-277-9813) <sbordeia@unm.edu>

Joint Conference of Librarians of Color Meeting — *Gathering all Peoples: Embracing Culture & Community* — September 26-30, 2018 — Albuquerque, NM

Reported by **Sarah Kostelecky** (Education Librarian, University of New Mexico and JCLC Steering Committee member)

The 3rd national **Joint Conference of Librarians of Color (JCLC)** was held in Albuquerque, NM in September. The conference is sponsored by the five associations of ethnic librarians within the **American Librarian Association** which are the: **American Indian Library Association (AILA)**, **Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association (APALA)**, **Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA)**, **Chinese American Librarians Association (CALA)**, and the **National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking (REFORMA)**.

Each **JCLC** aims to bring together a diverse group of people who work in libraries to “share successes, opportunities, and challenges while networking and attending cutting-edge programs on pressing issues affecting both librarians and communities of color.” The conference was open to all those interested in supporting the diverse communities libraries serve and which librarians are a part of. The conference is volunteer run by librarians from around the country serving the non-profit **JCLC Inc.**, which was formed in 2015.

The structure of the conference was similar to others with an opening and closing session with keynote speakers, over 100 presentations, 30 poster sessions, pre-conferences and exhibitors, but was unique in the content shared which was focused on diversity and representation in libraries. Session tracks included: bridge building, intersectionality and inclusion; advocacy, outreach and collaboration; technology and innovation; collections, programs and services; and leadership, management and organizational development. Over 1,000 attendees made this the largest of the three conferences held so far, indicating an increasing interest in such a unique gathering.

Albuquerque was an apropos host city for the conference as it is located within a majority-minority state with Hispanics/Latinos being the majority as well as having a sizeable Native American population. The opening keynote speaker Thursday morning, PEN/Faulkner award winning author **Benjamin Alire Sáenz**, brought many attendees to tears as he shared stories of the importance of literature in his own life and how readers have seen their own experiences reflected in his writings.

Fitting into the overall theme of **JCLC**, the opening of the exhibits included remarks from Miss Indian UNM, **Sarah Dennison**, a Navajo student who spoke about the importance of valuing cultural traditions such as language and traditional dress and urging attendees to be proud of their own culture and to become role models for the next generation.

Attendees had to make difficult decisions regarding which sessions to attend as there were between seven to nine sessions to choose from during each time period. Sessions reaching room capacity included the session by **Nicola Andrews (NCSU Libraries)** and **Sunny Kim (The Seattle Public Library)** titled: “*Cultural Humility for Library Workers*”; “*Challenges of Managing Inter-generational staff: who does it best, Baby Boomers, Generation X or Millennials?*” by **Eboni M. Henry (DC Public Library)**, **Jahala Simuel (Howard University)** — Louis Stokes Health Sciences Library), **Ray Pun (California State University)**, and **Sara Dallas (Southern Adirondack Library System)**; and **Alyse Minter (Towson University)** and **Genevia Chamblee-Smith’s “This is a Marathon, Not a Sprint: Self-care and Women of Color in LIS.”**

Sessions represented a variety of library settings including academic, public and archives as well as discussions around LIS education and recruitment and retention within the profession. A sampling of these are: “*Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy: Strengthening the LIS Response to Diverse Populations In Our Classrooms*” by **Kellee Warren (University of Illinois at Chicago)**; “*Decolonizing Library Research with Indigenous Methodologies*” presented by **Danielle Cooper (Ithaka S+R)**, **Deborah Lee (University of Saskatchewan)** and **Anthony Sanchez (University of Arizona)**; and from the **Pima County Public Library**, **Marissa Alcorta** and **Paulina Aguirre-Clinch’s** session “*¿Y ahora quién podrá ayudarnos? Building community, strengthening nuestras raíces.*” For those interested in seeing slides or handouts from speakers who made them available, the **JCLC** app has links; find the app info at <http://www.eventscribe.com/2018/JCLC>.

Because **JCLC** has not been held at regular intervals, special events were part of the conference as an opportunity to catch up with friends

and meet new colleagues. One event was a gathering of ethnic affiliate members on Thursday night with hearty appetizers and cultural performances from each ethnic caucus group. The Friday night event was a ticketed awards dinner recognizing winners from each affiliate group in the following categories: **JCLC Advocacy Awards**, **JCLC Distinguished Service Awards**, and **JCLC Author Awards**. Those recognized included author **Toni Morrison** (not in attendance) and **Dr. Lee Francis**, founder of the **Indigenous**

ComicCon and CEO of **Native Realities Press** which publishes Native American comic books and stories.

On Friday attendees could attend one of two ticketed author lunches. The Youth Author lunch featured authors who are members of **We Need Diverse Books (WNDB)**, the non-profit, grassroots organization. The Adult Author lunch featured authors **Ron Querry**, **MaryLouise Patterson** and **David Bowles** who each shared their paths to becoming published writers and the inspirations for their works.

The closing keynote speaker was writer and literary activist **E. Ethelbert Miller**. Author of several collections of poems and memoirs, he discussed the issues facing librarians of color and how important libraries can be to individuals and communities. Ending his talk with two of his poems gave attendees food for thought as the conference ended but we recognized there is much work to do in our profession and individual organizations when it comes to diversity and inclusion.

Finally, it was announced that the next **JCLC** will happen in 2022, location to be determined. Based on conversations at the conference and comments about **JCLC** on Twitter and Facebook, the 2022 gathering will be as popular, fulfilling and fun as the 2018 conference!

New Mexico Library Association Annual Meeting — October 31-November 2, 2018 — Albuquerque, NM

Reported by **Glenn Koelling** (University of New Mexico) and **Alyssa Russo** (University of New Mexico)

The **2018 Annual New Mexico Library Association Conference** was held in Albuquerque, New Mexico at the Marriott Pyramid Hotel, October 31-November 2, 2018. The three-day conference gathered information professionals from around the state of New Mexico and

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beyond. The conference officially began on Wednesday, October 31, with pre-conference workshops, and sessions continued through Friday afternoon. Sessions were fifty minutes long and the eight-hour day was broken up into five panels.

Pre-Conference and Keynote

Brian Leaf and Sarah Miles, from the **National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NNLM)**, taught a half-day grant and proposal writing workshop intended for beginners. **Leaf** and **Miles** review grants in their roles at the NNLM, and they shared their insights about common mistakes that applicants make. They cited obvious mistakes like poor writing and inaccurate costs in the budget, but they also reflected on faulty assumptions that applicants make. For example, applicants often assume that the grant reviewers are experts, so they craft an application full of buzzwords, jargon, and acronyms that result in a confusing and unrelatable reading experience for the reviewer. The workshop provided an overview of the major sections and steps involved in the grant writing process, and there was time for the participants to practice with a handy Program Planning Exercise worksheet. A lot of work goes into preparing for the application — in fact, “Only 20% of your time will be spent writing the proposal. The other 80% of your time will be spent developing and planning your program.” Thankfully, the NNLM’s website (<https://nnlm.gov/funding/support>) contains supportive resources.

The keynote address was given by **Jim Neal**, University Librarian Emeritus at **Columbia**, and Immediate Past President of **ALA**. **Neal** addressed the issues facing libraries in the 21st century and what they need to do in order to stay relevant. **Neal** started the talk with a very poignant question: “Do the skills we learned in the 20th century still matter?” The answer is that strategies and skills of the 20th century are no longer sufficient, or even appropriate for the modern library. The talk focused on highlighting where the major changes are taking place and the new role of libraries as consumer intermediaries, publishers, educators, entrepreneurs, and R&D organizations. **Neal** did not just give generic answers such as “Innovation” or “Move to Radical Collaboration” but gave specific examples of what that means. For example, Innovation means creating new methods, ideas, production application of knowledge, and creating market value. Radical Collaboration means creating Centers of Excellence, Mass Production, New Infrastructures, and New Initiatives. **Neal** shattered some of the old-fashioned strategies that have clearly failed such as a slavish adherence to ROI (Return on Investment) and debunked the notion of Strategic Planning, calling it a waste of time and resources. He asked libraries to ask themselves, “How do we know we’re essential?” (by interacting with users anytime, anywhere, anyhow) and not to lose focus of that goal.

Conference Sessions

All kinds of libraries and issues were represented this year. **Christy Ruby** from **Eastern New Mexico University** presented “**Social Media and the Library**.” She discussed the platforms she uses (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat) and gave concrete tips on best practices. **Ruby** recommended using Snapchat to appeal to teens but to make sure to keep the tone playful rather than instructive. Facebook’s target audience is generally older, which makes it a great tool for outreach to the public and alumni. She recommended keeping track of post interactions to identify trends and then capitalize on that information. For example, she noticed that 11 AM was a great time to post and that images do better than text only.

Adrienne Warner, from the **University of New Mexico**, presented “**Minding Our Ps & Qs: Building and Bolstering a Frequently Asked Questions Knowledgebase**” that focused on providing a highly responsive FAQ platform. This project required a large group effort to strategically collect data and assess the analytics to maintain a sustainable and accurate Knowledgebase to help patrons make informed decisions about library resources and services. One point she emphasized was that maintenance of the FAQs is good practice. For her team, this process includes a yearly review of all FAQs to ensure accuracy. Underused FAQs are deleted since this is a time intensive process. In some cases, they were able to preemptively update FAQs when significant changes were happening at the library — switching databases for example.

Eli Guinee, from the **New Mexico State Library**, **Julia Kelso**, from the **Vista Grande Public Library**, and **Carol Hoover**, from the **Los Alamos National Laboratory**, presented “**Libraries Transform Update on Funding Sources, Taskforces, and Regional Workshops**.” **Libraries Transform** is an initiative of the **American Libraries Association** that strives to demonstrate the relevance of libraries today. The campaign goal is to educate and engage stakeholders in order to advocate for library funding. In New Mexico, three taskforces were recently created to address declined budgets and inadequate staffing issues. Updates on local advocacy progress included the passage of the **Library Broadband Infrastructure Fund**. The taskforces also facilitate communication between libraries across the state so that they can come together with a unified voice.

Anne Lefkofsky, from the **Albuquerque Bernalillo County Public Library**, presented “**Wikipedia – Truth or Dare?!**” This lively session considered how Wikipedia could be used as a tool to teach information literacy and to engage with the community. Many participants’ hands flew up throughout the session with comments and questions, which highlighted Wikipedia’s contentious status and also made for excellent discussion about the merits and constraints of this platform. Two librarians (who are also Wikipedians) were in attendance, and they shared their experiences collaborating with library users on Wikipedia-related projects to share knowledge in the spirit of public interest.

Joe Sabatini, a retired librarian and an active NMLA member, presented “**Albuquerque Indian School – Origins and Communities**.” Based on the **Indian Pueblo Cultural Center’s** archives, **Sabatini** researched the history of the **Albuquerque Indian School**, an institution infamous for carrying out cultural genocide. From the founding of the institution that was designed to stamp out Native American culture, through the school’s slow decline, **Sabatini** presented photographs of various structures on campus, uniforms, activities, and more that the children experienced. By the beginning of the 21st century, Building 232 was the only structure left in the school, and in 2013 it was renovated and the **Native American Community Academy** began using the space.

Val Nye, from the **Santa Fe Community College**, and **Kathy Barco**, a retired librarian and an active member of NMLA, presented “**What’s New in Intellectual Freedom: Librarians Team Up**.” This interactive session featured the Cephalonian Method, where questions are planted in the audience to generate a back-and-forth dialog. Additionally, the session employed Jeopardy-style questions and charades to talk about specific titles that have been banned. **Nye** and **Barco** refreshed the audience about the large underpinning goals in intellectual freedom: how it leads to peace and how locking up information creates unrest. The questions planted in the audience generated interesting conversations that considered the reality of practicing intellectual freedom in the age of the #MeToo Movement with specific mention of **Bill Cosby** and **Sherman Alexie**. At one point one of the presenters brought out some props they used in their banned books display. It was a length of crime scene tape which, she said, was scavenged from an old, abandoned crime scene (this delighted the audience).

Sarah Kostelecky and **Kevin Comerford** of the **University of New Mexico** highlighted a unique digital collection of Zuni language teaching materials produced at **UNM**. This project digitized a large number of documents including books and posters produced by the **Zuni Public School District’s** bilingual education department. The talk described the process of acquiring and digitizing the collection, which is now freely available from **UNM’s** Digital Collections portal (GOTO.UNM.EDU/ZUNILANGUAGE). Titled “**Digitizing Vital Native American Collections**,” the presentation described how the materials were acquired and digitized. One important aspect of working with Native American materials is cultural sensitivity. The Zuni community has complete control on what gets published, including the removal of materials if they are deemed culturally sensitive. This project is only the beginning of a much larger effort to digitize other Native American materials in the state of New Mexico and beyond.

Christine Peterson of **Amigos Library Services** presented two sessions on the services offered by this former regional **OCLC** affiliate. Independent since 2009, **Amigos** now offers its own library services

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Booklover — Picking Blackberries

Column Editor: **Donna Jacobs** (Retired, Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston, SC 29425)
<donna.jacobs55@gmail.com>

Disappointment. The appropriate sentiment upon learning that the 2018 **Nobel Prize** in Literature would not be awarded due to a scandal involving allegations of sexual misconduct by the husband of a seated academy member. (It caused quite a stir — Google it and read.) I look forward to all the **Nobel Prize** announcements each year, and writing about the current Literature Laureate has been a staple in the *Booklover* series for *Against the Grain*. Time to pull out the **Nobel** Literature Laureate List and pick another author.

Seamus Heaney won the 1995 **Nobel Prize** in Literature “for works of lyrical beauty and ethical depth, which exalt everyday miracles and the living past.” “Blackberry-Picking” was my random choice from a list entitled “10 of the Best **Seamus Heaney** Poems Everyone Should Read” found on *interestingliterature.com*. Sidebar: still getting my head around the whole digital reading experience. The site gave the following brief description:

“This classic **Heaney** poem, published in his first published volume, the 1966 book *Death of a Naturalist*, is simultaneously about picking blackberries in August and, on another level, about a loss of youthful innocence and a growing awareness of disappointment as we grow up. It’s undoubtedly one of **Heaney’s** best-known poems, and remains widely studied in schools.”

Seems I’ve made a fine choice. Blackberry picking should be part of everyone’s youthful summer experience and disappointment is what got us here to this poem.

I would usually share a few lines from my reading experience to accentuate the impact of the word craft; however, the following caution on the website where I found the poem gave me pause. “Caution: Users are warned that this work is protected under copyright laws and downloading is strictly prohibited. The right to reproduce or transfer the work via any medium must be secured with **Farrar, Straus and Giroux, LLC**.” I might suggest another Google search and read.

The family farmhouse called Mossbawn in Northern Ireland is the birthplace of **Seamus Heaney**. Maybe the bucolic setting of his youth influenced the poetic metaphor of blackberry picking for this Irish lad. While studying English Language and Literature at the **Queen’s University of Belfast**, he read **Ted Hughes’** “Lupercal” and was pricked by the poetry thorn. He also pursued training in the teaching field and thus a career path of education and poetry was launched. He lectured in many educational



settings including **Harvard University** where he served both as the Bolyston Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory from 1985-1997 and the **Ralph Waldo Emerson** Poet in Residence from 1998-2006. Honorary degrees and literature accolades filled up the professional “jam-pot” of the man that **Robert Lowell** called “the most important Irish poet since **Yeats**.” His poetry is well loved, studied and popular. Book sales alone were tallied at two-thirds of the sales of the other living poets of the United Kingdom. In 2013, **Heaney** passed and was buried in the countryside of his youth. His obituary included one verse that seems to get a lot of exposure as it expressed in three lines and 16 words his strong sense of

Irish identity over British nationality:

“Be advised, my passport’s green
No glass of ours was ever raised
To toast the Queen.” 🌿

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such as subscription discounts, technical assistance, and discounts on the purchase of supplies. One of their newest efforts is *SimplyE*, an eBook platform developed with the **New York Public Library**, which simplifies identifying and using eBooks and is platform neutral. The results are encouraging and the service will move into audio and other formats. **Amigos** is offering an impressive number of services to its member libraries which explains why it is only one of two former **OCLC** affiliates still in existence.

Glenn Koelling and **Alyssa Russo** of the **University of New Mexico** presented an innovative way to provide library instruction. Titled, “*What’s in Your Junk Closet? The Making of a Mystery Room*,” the presentation described the major components of the Mystery Room workshop they created, loosely based on escape rooms. They also discussed their experience devising clues which students have to solve in the process of learning about information formats commonly used in college-level research. The major learning outcome of the Mystery Room workshop is related to the “process” frame from the **ACRL** framework. The program was well received by the audience with many indicating that they would like to take part in the exercise.



Of course, there were many more sessions dealing with important issues, such as “*Caring for the Mind: Providing Mental Health Information at Your Library*,” presented by **Sarah Miles**, from the **National Network of Libraries of Medicine**; “*Magic Wand the All of Us Grant*,” presented by **Linda Morgan Davis** and **Katherine Spotswook**, from the Public Library, Albuquerque and Bernalillo County (a program designed to help researchers understand why people get sick or stay healthy); “*Including Diversity in our Planning and Assessment: Towards Increased Social Justice through Promoting and Assessing Diversity Efforts*,” presented by **Karen Nelson**, **Eastern New Mexico University**; and “*Cataloging and NM Academic Libraries during the Amigos OCLC years*,” presented by **New Mexico State Library’s Bradley Carrington**, which gave a fascinating history of New Mexico librarians implementing and working with **OCLC’s** cataloging services.

Next year will be a joint conference of **NMLA** and **Mountain Plains Library Association** that will be held in the historic Old Town of Albuquerque, NM, which is very popular with conference attendees. 🌿