



# THE CITIZEN

The Newsletter of Citizens for Maryland Libraries

1100 Green Valley Road, New Windsor, MD 21776

Number 58 • Autumn 2023

## Legislative Committee Update

The Maryland Library Association's (MLA) mission is to protect, promote, and strengthen Maryland Libraries. A vital part of this mission is to monitor legislation impacting libraries at both the Federal and State Level. This role is given to the MLA's Legislative Panel which is headed by its Legislative Officers. The panel is made up of representatives from public, school, academic, and special libraries including Citizens for Maryland Libraries. Our Legislative officers keep close watch on all legislation, both the good and the bad, and recommend to the MLA Board, MLA membership, and to other respective organizations to either support or oppose.

Each year, Maryland's General Assembly meets for ninety days starting in January and ending in April. The 2023 session kept our Legislative Panel Officer, Andrea Bershtler, and her team very busy concerning the amount of legislation that focused on public libraries. Not opposed to public library workers having the right to enter into union negotiations, MAPLA (Maryland Association of Public Library Administrators) and MLA tried to work in a very positive manner with union representatives to draft a balanced bill. The bill, as introduced, remained flawed and was rejected by the Legislature. A bill that restructured board membership for Regional Libraries passed with both MLA's and MAPLA's support. Unfortunately, bills that would have increased capital funding for public libraries and increased funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC) failed to pass.

The upcoming 2024 General Session will be on us before we know it. Already it is shaping up to be a very challenging session for libraries and Maryland as a whole. First, 2024 is a major election year, the outcome of which can have a severe impact on libraries at the Federal level. In Maryland, there is a major structural deficit looming which will pose a challenge for our continued fight to increase both capital and operational funding that is most needed to replace outdated public facilities in all twenty-four jurisdictions and to meet the needs for 21st century library users. MLA/MAPLA will also work hard next session to reintroduce and gain passage for a bill that



will provide a much needed increase in funding for our State Library Resource Center (SLRC.)

Finally, and most important, libraries in this country are under attack from extremist groups who seek to ban and remove books from library

shelves. A state-wide coalition of public, academic, and school library leaders as well as a representative from Penguin Random House and national advocates from the American Library Association, PEN America, and EveryLibrary working with MAPLA and MLA will be introducing legislation, Maryland's Freedom to Read Act, to protect Maryland's public, school, and academic libraries. This legislation seeks to:

- Protect library collections, ensuring that all individuals find reading materials to educate, enrich, and expand their understanding of the world.
- Protect library staff, allowing them a safe working environment, free from fear of criminal prosecution for simply doing their job.
- Protect library funding, by not allowing special interest groups to defund libraries when they disagree with library policies or decisions.

There is a vital role Citizens for Maryland Libraries must play in supporting legislation that positively impacts and protects our libraries. Our president, or their designee, is our liaison and serves on the Legislative Panel. Expect to be hearing more about the coming session as it gets closer.

*Mary Baykam,  
Chair of Legislative Committee,  
Citizens for Maryland Libraries*



MARYLAND  
LIBRARY  
ASSOCIATION

YEARS  
1923 - 2023

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### SHARE YOUR STORY!

Do you have a story suggestion for the next issue of *The Citizen*? Does your library have an event or activity you would like *The Citizen* to cover? If so, please email your ideas to [cml@citizensformarylandlibraries.org](mailto:cml@citizensformarylandlibraries.org).

### THE CITIZEN

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## Message from the CML President

*Susan Sherman  
President, Citizens  
for Maryland  
Libraries*



Welcome to the Fall edition of the Citizens for Maryland Libraries semi-annual newsletter. To all of our members, thank you for your support. Advocacy for libraries is increasingly important as we face new challenges related to book banning and as library staff learn to manage and address the issues surrounding those challenges. CML is committed to ensuring that patrons are able to select the materials and resources they value, without judgment. In February, CML members, library staff and board members attended the annual legislative day in Annapolis and spoke with our representatives, communicating the importance of everyone's freedom to read, without

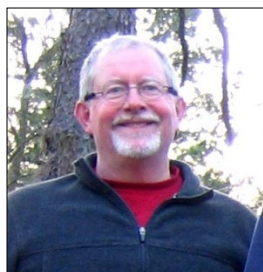
judgment. Your ongoing support and advocacy are vital to sustaining this right.

Our annual meeting, scheduled for October 21, at the Bowie Branch Library in Prince George's County, will feature children's author Ellen Oh, founder of the non-profit We Need Diverse Books. Ms. Oh will speak on the importance of diversity in children's literature. There is no charge for this meeting. We're looking forward to a large turnout of library advocates – citizens who value and support our libraries and all that they have to offer.

Libraries are community hubs. They connect people to information, are safe havens for children and offer a myriad of resources, programs and services, from computers, to job-seeking assistance to games and socialization. And all for free! Please help us ensure their future!

## Message from the Executive Director

*Jim DeArmey  
Executive Director,  
Citizens for  
Maryland Libraries*



My love of libraries began at birth! My mother was an avid reader and library user. When she was left a young widow with four children to raise, the library was an excellent source for all of us in the family. Books, entertainment and information – all for free. I began working at the Baltimore County Public Library in high school. That grew into a career that lasted nearly 40 years working in public, technical and university libraries. Since retirement I spent several years on the board of Citizens for Maryland Libraries and now serve as the organization's Executive Director.

Throughout my life I have had the chance to see all the good that libraries bring. They offer knowledge,

opportunity, community, support and wonder to those who use them.

Libraries today are under threat with an astonishing number of efforts to remove books from their collections. I believe that libraries promote a strong society by serving everyone equally and providing access to a wide range of information and opinions. "Democracy Dies in Darkness" is the slogan of the Washington Post. I believe that. I also believe that libraries bring light.

Many people do not know that public libraries are uncommon in many places across the world. It is easy to take them for granted. Maryland has always had a strong and cooperative group of libraries. Citizens for Maryland Libraries advocates for favorable legislation and funding to make sure that our tradition of excellence continues. I'm proud to be a part of that.



View photos from MLA/DLA at *The Crab*, the official quarterly publication of the Maryland Library Association. Visit: <https://www.mdlib.org/> and go to **newsletters** to view and download your copy. Or scan the QR code!



## Message from the Maryland State Librarian



As the Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) begins its seventh year as an independent agency, we want to thank CML members for their advocacy during the 2023 session of the General Assembly.

Together, our accomplishments included the passage of three bills:

- The Young Readers Matching Grant Program builds on county and local efforts to mail a book every month to any child, birth to five. The main program, the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, costs approximately \$26 per year, per child. Just imagine the thrill of receiving your own book in the mail every month! And, as we know, early access to books fosters a love of reading and learning. Currently, there are programs in 18 counties serving 37,000 children under the age of 5. Sadly, these books now reach only 10 percent eligible children. Beginning in October, MSLA will provide over \$200,000 in matching funds to support the statewide expansion of this program. This will enable the participation of an additional 16,000 children; increasing total state-

wide participation from 10 percent to 15 percent. This amount is slated to increase to \$350,000 in 2025. Future plans are to grow the funding for this program so that every Maryland child receives this opportunity.

- Updates to the Regional Resource Center legislation to reflect Maryland's adaptive regional libraries whose trustees' valued skill sets directly contribute to mission accomplishment and to the libraries' prominence in their region.
- Updates to Maryland's Confidentiality of Library Records law to more effectively prohibit inspection, use, or disclosure of a circulation record of a public, school or academic library or any other item, collection, or grouping of information about an individual. During these uncertain times, this legislation will help to ensure that library records remain confidential unless certain standards are met.

Maryland libraries continue to thrive and find opportunities amid the challenges our communities face. With your help, the Maryland State Library Agency can continue to provide essential services, resources, and funding to inspire library innovation.

*Irene Padilla*  
*Maryland State Librarian*

## Making a Case for Advocacy



This past July, I ended my year as President of the Maryland Association of School Librarians and concluded my time as chair for the MASL Advocacy Committee.

During the last few years, MASL learned that having an increased number of supporters can help make a difference. Whether it was a letter to a school board or a request for a citation to recognize School Library Month, each effort was done with the hope that the great work in school libraries would be highlighted throughout the state of Maryland.

A term used for proactive steps needed for advocacy, "PROadvocacy" was developed to provide basic steps that anyone can do to highlight the positives associated with librarianship.

None of the ideas were "new ideas." These best practices were collected and shared with MASL members. Each PROadvocacy moment was with the hope of increasing the number of library advocates within school libraries.

Whether we think of it as a maneuver to "get ahead" of an issue or a way to highlight the positives associated with an issue close to our hearts, PROadvocacy in the library world is needed today more than ever. For continued PROadvocacy to work and be effective, MASL needs your help.

Together, we can read statements of support for school libraries to a school board in our community. Together, we can write letters to the editor of a local newspaper. Together, we can attend protests and decry any efforts to ban books. Each moment will help brighten the positive awareness of school librarians and their vital role in education.

No one will know the value of school librarians if we all do not stand up, speak up, and show up.

Stand up to share the value of reading. Speak up to demand equal access to reading for Maryland students. Show up to share positive examples associated with school libraries and school librarians.

Remember, together we are stronger.

*Tiki Love*  
*Library Media Specialist,*  
*Baltimore County Public Schools*

## Marion Satterthwaite Award

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Kathie Smarick

CML's Marion Satterthwaite Award recognizes outstanding achievement in library advocacy in Maryland.

Kathie joined the Friends of Queen Anne's County Library in 2015. Her enthusiasm for libraries combined with her talents for marketing and promotion quickly became apparent and she served as president of its board from 2017 to 2021.

Kathie cultivated sponsorships for Library programs from the local business community. Kathie also developed the Friends' digital presence. She created social media accounts, designed the website, and established an email address. She also wrote press releases and, under her guidance, the Friends took on the Library's annual appeal, their system's largest fundraiser.

In 2021, Kathie left the Friends board to focus her energies on the Library's capital campaign to expand the Kent Island Branch. The Library hired her soon after to manage the overall process and she became the driving force for the dynamic, if inexperienced, team.

Like her work with the Friends, Kathie's creativity and communication skills proved invaluable. She ensured each member of the capital campaign committee was

### Kathie Smarick

Queen Anne's County Library

prepared to meet potential donors with their most effective appeal. She also worked with Queen Anne's marketing coordinator to develop a multi-channel publicity plan to reach as many people as possible. She targeted businesses that might contribute and personally met with them to persuade them to support the future of the Kent Island branch and their community.

The capital campaign to renovate and expand the Kent Island Branch was a huge success. Throughout the process, Kathie met every challenge with a positive attitude and creative problem solving. Her momentum was instrumental in keeping the project going.

Her enthusiasm for libraries inspires others. Regardless of obstacles from pandemics to growing a new Friends organization, Kathie never wavers from her commitment to a vital and successful library.

## CML Recognizes Outstanding Employees

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CML is pleased to announce the Outstanding Employee Awards for 2023

These awardees epitomize the dedicated staff working hard to re-imagine library service to meet the evolving needs of the communities in Maryland.



Untia Bigelow

Throughout the year, Untia Bigelow is responsible for coordinating approximately 100 volunteers. The volunteers are of a wide variety of ages and backgrounds, and Bigelow assigns the right person to each particular task. She manages their hours, and provides Library orientation sessions that emphasize appropriate patron interaction. She follows up with managers to ensure that the behavior while volunteering is suitable for the task assigned.

A significant component of her role is providing support for the Friends of Wicomico Libraries and their fund-raising activities, such as: periodic Book Sales, special events, e.g., Light of Literacy, and their Book Store (open 6 days per week). For all these activities, Bigelow provides sup-

### Untia Bigelow

Wicomico Public Library

plemental volunteer support, as needed. The Friends group relies on her event planning skills ranging from creative decorations, room/table design, and efficient registration of attendees.

Throughout her efforts, Untia is energetic, creative, positive. She displays flexibility in her work hours and plans; especially important, and very much appreciated, when dealing with public events!

Although often on the "back stage", Untia's skills and performance are key elements in presenting the Library as a positive and vibrant organization in the community.



# CML Recognizes Outstanding Employees

Suzanne has served the community of Oakland for twenty years and it is due to her leadership and dedication that the Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County has such an amazing reputation for customer service. As one of their system's primary trainers, she instills and reinforces positivity and kindness in their frontline staff as well as Integrated Library System proficiency. She also encourages staff to develop and implement their creative

Nalani Devendra consistently works to help make the Rockville Memorial and MCPL a better place for customers. She pivots from activity to activity with aplomb and works flawlessly with any team lead and team of which she is a member.

Nalani emphasizes customer service. The library has received several customer comments highlighting her positivity and desire to ensure that they get what they want. One customer wrote, "Nalani Devendra assisted me with navigating the MCPL website. She was very helpful and insightful. She let me know about the tons of resources that MCPL offers. She was energetic and very kind." Another customer stated, "I was lucky enough to

During the COVID pandemic, all businesses and public institutions faced great challenges. This was particularly true for the Dorchester County Public Library. As a small library system, Dorchester County faced challenges when even one staff member was unavailable. Due to the pandemic and other issues, the library experienced a 50 percent staff turnover. This required great resilience and teamwork from all remaining staff members. The staff and management team of the library did all that was necessary to continue operations including supervision, training, scheduling, collection development, program-

Catherine Jellison's work at the Crofton Library over the last 20 years has been extraordinary. She has made the library look brighter and smell fresher with plants she brings in and cares for. Those plants also provide a wonderful opportunity for a conversation with customers. Not an hour goes by on the desk where someone doesn't comment on them. Catherine makes sure that there is always a curious plant at the Information Desk. She displayed a sensory collection that included a sensitive plant whose leaves close when touched, a rabbit foot fern, and an air plant so that customers could experience them on different levels. Children, in particular, loved this.

In October Catherine made a spooky fairy garden with a list of things for people to find hidden in it. She even

## Suzanne Bonser

Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County

ideas through special projects, decorations and displays.

Suzanne also takes an oversized role assisting with crafting policies that are patron-friendly and that uphold Library values.



Suzanne Bonser

## Nalani Devendra

Montgomery County Public Libraries

be connected with Nalan...she is truly a civil servant and willing to take the extra mile to help. This was an incredible experience." Customers are drawn to Nalani because she has an observable passion for helping them to make the most of their library experience.

Nalani serves as an excellent library advocate. Additionally, she is a great teammate. She volunteers to assist with programs, both in her home branch and systemwide. Her beaming smile and enthusiasm for the work that she does uplift both customers and her colleagues.



Nalani Devendra

## Staff and Management Team

Dorchester County Public Library

ming and community outreach, they achieved all of this while continuing to provide information, respond to customer inquiries, and provide outstanding customer service. From working with customers, to performing behind the scenes work, to taking out the trash, all stepped in when necessary. They did all of this with grace, humility and strong teamwork.



Julie Kennedy  
Representing DCPL

## Catherine Jellison

Anne Arundel County Public Library

has a propagation station. The entire project promotes science learning for customers of all ages. Books from the collection are on display with the plants and are checked out regularly. Catherine has presented a Houseplants 101 program at the library. There are now over a dozen plants in the building which are tagged with scanable QR codes, whose links offer more information about each plant. Catherine has taken a personal interest area and turned it into an enriching, educational experience for library customers.



Catherine Jellison

## CML Recognizes Outstanding Employees

The Maryland Library Association supports the statewide cooperation and learning that allows us to call our state “library heaven.” Monagan has been the backbone of MLA for many years. She stays behind the scenes, never asking for recognition or accolades, all the while working to make sure that staff members statewide get the support and information that they need to be successful. This was especially apparent in recent years when MLA experienced the loss of an Executive Director. Monagan quietly and efficiently saw to it that service to MLA members continued without interruption while making sure that the new Executive Director had the information and support necessary to succeed.

The joint conference between the Maryland Library Association and the Delaware Library Association is an exceptionally important time for colleagues to share knowledge and experience while building important

### Kate Monagan

Maryland Library Association

relationships. Ms. Monagan makes that happen in several ways, including overseeing registrations, ensuring that speakers and program sponsors have what they need and managing the conference vendor hall.

Finally, whenever an MLA member has a question or concern Ms. Monagan treats everyone with calm courtesy and respect. This is the case even during the frantic days when the annual conference is taking place.

One of the reasons that Maryland is “library heaven” is that we have a strong library association. One of the reasons we have a strong library association is that we have Kate Monagan.



Kate Monagan

## Ellen Oh, Author and Keynote Speaker

Ellen Oh is an award-winning author of the middle grade novels *Haru Zombie Dog Hero*, *Finding Junie Kim*, *Dragon Egg Princess*, *The Spirit Hunters* trilogy, and the Young Adult fantasy trilogy *The Prophecy Series: Prophecy, Warrior, and King*. She is the editor and contributor of *You Are Here: Connecting Flights*, a collection of interwoven stories, and editor of the middle grade anthology *Flying Lessons and Other Stories*, and the YA anthology *A Thousand Beginnings and Endings*.



Ellen lives in Rockville, Maryland with her husband, three human children, and two dog children.

Oh is a founding member of We Need Diverse Books, a non-profit organization whose

mission is “Putting more books featuring diverse characters into the hands of readers” and their vision to create “a world where everyone can find themselves in the pages of a book.”

Ellen will speak at our annual meeting on October 21.



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Susie James Photography



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## Got Your Back

Late last spring, we at Prince George's County Memorial Library System had our annual Staff Appreciation Night celebration immediately following our PGCMLS Foundation Board meeting. At the board meeting, members elected a new Secretary, approved an amendment to the bylaws and discussed an investment policy.

Midway through, our Acting Co-CEO made an impassioned plea to include an \$8000 discretionary fund to be used throughout the year when our top library leaders caught an employee doing something right and wanted to reward them. Immediately.

At the appreciation event 30 minutes later, I sat and listened as several of our Employee of the Year winners were cited for regularly saying "I've got your back" to those they supervise, and then making good on their promise by actually having their employees' backs; no matter the situation, no matter the difficulty; no matter the number of times they needed to do it.

A week later, the month of May had begun and we progressed quickly from Right to Read Day to National Library Day to National Library Outreach Day. As May sped past, I thought about my tendency to sometimes focus on the why, what, where, when and how of what our libraries provide, and gloss over who actually delivers all of these things to our customers.

Nothing that happens in our libraries does so in a vacuum; they all happened because of people.

Our own mission of the Prince George's County Memorial Library System Foundation states, "The Foundation provides critical philanthropic support to the Prince George's County Memorial Library System. It strengthens the Library's capacity to innovate, adapt to change, and ensure our libraries remain a vital resource for all in Prince George's County now and in the future."

Fine, I suppose, if not also somewhat sanctimonious.

A far clearer, more people-centered definition would be the "the Foundation supports and facilitates our staff's ability to innovate, adapt to change and ensure our libraries remain a vital resource for all in Prince George's County now and in the future."

Citizens for Maryland Libraries also stresses advocacy for public, school, and academic libraries, and we do so by making certain that employees of our institutions have, and feel the support of our Friends, Foundations, and our affiliated support groups.

It's important that when we use the word "library", it is always meant to transcend the mere building and refer also to those who make it what it is.

Yes, we support our libraries. Yes, we support strong financing for those institutions. And yes, we advocate for intellectual freedom and an ongoing commitment to literacy. But deep down, we support all who work in our libraries.

We want them to know it. We want them to feel that our very, very concise mission is "we've got your back."

**John Pfeifer**

*Donor Engagement & Grants Officer,  
Prince George's  
County Memorial  
Library System*

*CML Board Member*

*Editor, The Citizen*



On Thursday, May 11, CML offered the program, "Libraries Build Business: Cultivating a Thriving Local Economy with Library Programming and Services" at the 2023 MLA/DLA Conference in Cambridge, MD. Megan Janicki, Director of Strategic Initiatives at the American Library Association, and Julie Brophy, Adult & Community Engagement Manager at Baltimore County Public Library, described the impacts and lessons learned from ALA's Libraries Build Business initiative and BCPL's Entrepreneur Academy.



Online Registration: [mdlib.org/](https://mdlib.org/)

**Save the Date!**

MLA Centennial  
Carnival Celebration

3 November 2023  
6:30–9:30 PM

Michael E. Busch  
Annapolis Library

1410 West St.,  
Annapolis, MD

## One Maryland One Book

Libraries are more than just places to get books (and many other resources), they are spaces for communities to gather, converse, and connect over the meaningful topics and issues of the day. If you've participated in One Maryland One Book (OMOB), you know this too well. A program of the Maryland Humanities and the Maryland Center for the Book, OMOB turns the entire state into one big reading community.

Since 2008 this program, dubbed "the state's biggest book club," has celebrated our need to connect over a great book, and using literature to expand the idea of whose stories are Maryland's stories.

We partner with libraries, schools, colleges, incarceration centers, and other community gathering spaces to distribute thousands of copies of our chosen book – for free. Then, readers are invited to join book discussions and other thoughtful and innovative programs to unpack and engage its themes, characters, and questions about our world.

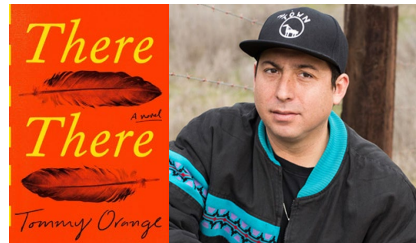
Our 2023 selection is Tommy Orange's *There There*, which follows twelve interconnected characters from across generational lines, as they converge toward the Big Oakland Powwow. Together, the stories give a riveting portrait of the urban Indian experience. *There There* was one of *The New York Times* Book Review's 10 Best Books of the Year, and won the Center for Fiction's First Novel Prize, as well as the PEN/Hemingway Award. Fitting for the year's theme of *Connections*,

readers from all walks of life can reflect on its topics of Native American culture and history, substance abuse and mental health, adoption and atypical family structures, and more.

From September to November (also Native American Heritage Month), libraries across the state will hold book discussions and other related programs such as cultural performances, informative talks, guest speakers, and workshops. To top it off, Tommy Orange will appear at two events, a virtual launch event on September 7 via Zoom, and an in-person author talk on October 12 at Salisbury University in Wicomico County.

If you've never participated in One Maryland One Book before, there's no better time to start than this year. Visit your nearest library, grab a copy of the book, and then join in on one of our exciting programs. If you'd like to learn more, visit [onemarylandonebook.org](http://onemarylandonebook.org).

Aditya Desai  
Program Officer,  
Maryland Humanities



Tommy Orange - Credit: ©Elena Seibert



## Membership Application

Yes, I want to join Citizens for Maryland Libraries (CML) and continue to work for the best possible library service for all the people of Maryland.

Fill out and mail this form, or scan the QR code to submit online.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ FAX \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

### Annual Memberships:

- ☐ Individual \$25
- ☐ Benefactor \$100
- ☐ Friends Group \$50

### I would like to contribute \$\_\_\_\_\_ to support:

- ☐ Mary Lou Dewey Library Advocacy Fund
- ☐ James Partridge Award
- ☐ Nettie B. Taylor Leadership Fund

### Mail to:

Citizens for Maryland Libraries  
1100 Green Valley Road  
New Windsor, MD 21776

CML is a 501c3 organization. Membership dues are tax deductible. Checks should be made payable to CML.

<https://citizensformarylandlibraries.org>