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UNLEASH YOUR SUPERPOWER!

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Calling all superheroes! The 2018 Florida Library Association Annual Conference is almost here.

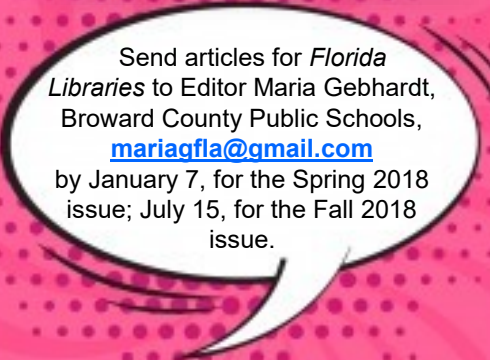
Attendee registration opens in January 2018. More than sixty engaging breakout sessions will occur at this year’s conference.

Unleash your superpower and attend this year’s conference. Check out these links for additional information:

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Send articles for *Florida Libraries* to Editor Maria Gebhardt, Broward County Public Schools, mariagfla@gmail.com by January 7, for the Spring 2018 issue; July 15, for the Fall 2018 issue.



Message from the President Unleash Your Superpower!

I am constantly amazed by the creativity of the people who work and volunteer in libraries. I love that libraries attract staff with diverse backgrounds and talents, and it is a pleasure to see those talents used to educate and inspire our patrons. I chose the theme "Unleash Your Superpower!" to highlight and celebrate the special talents that enhance library services, transform lives, and strengthen communities.

Libraries provide educational opportunities for the people we serve. We help people learn, create and explore. In a world where people spend an increasing amount of time living in virtual communities, libraries provide in-person opportunities for discussion and discovery. We prepare children for school, encourage students to read and think and make their own informed decisions, and provide all citizens with access to information and opportunities for lifelong learning. We use our special talents everyday to make our communities a better place to live.

Each of us, no matter what our role in the library, has the power to make positive change every day. We have the research skills to identify and address community needs. We have the opportunity to make each interaction with the library memorable. We have the creativity to design experiences that make visitors say "Wow!" Through continual reinvention and

reinvigoration of services, libraries are able to connect people with information, with each other, and with current technologies. And when we are passionate about the subject we are teaching, our enthusiasm has a tendency to inspire others.

So what are you passionate about? Books, movies, sewing, art, music, gaming, gardening, videography, coding? Teach a class or lead a group. Chances are if you love it, others will love it too. Give people who don't use the library a reason to visit. Consider the goals of your organization and devise a plan that uses your ideas and talents to address a need or give new life to an old, but important, service.

Let this be the year when you propose a new class, club or teaching method using your superpower. Let this be the year you identify groups that do not use the library and create a program that appeals to them. Don't be content to do your work the same way it has been done in the past. It does not matter who you are or what you do in the library, bring your idea forward. Share your passion and use your superpower to enrich and improve the lives of the people in your community. The time is now to **Unleash Your Superpower!**

Robin Shader
President
Florida Library Association

Unleash Your Superpower and Nominate Someone for a FLA Award!

Do you know someone who should be recognized for the exceptional role he or she takes on each day? Do you know someone who is making a difference in a library? Unleash your superpower and help someone shine by nominating that person for a Florida Library Association (FLA) award!

Not only would winning be a major career accomplishment, a FLA award provides the opportunity to showcase the award-winner with FLA members and library professionals throughout the entire state!

Put on your cape and visit the FLA Web site, www.flalib.org/fla-awards-page, to fill out the online application. Remember to include any supporting documentation with your submission.

The nomination form and all supporting documentation is due by February 28, 2018.

The wide range of award categories includes outstanding new librarian to outstanding business/media partner. See below for an entire list of categories and take the time to nominate someone you know for a FLA award today!

FLA Award Categories:

- FLA Leader of the Year
- Librarian of the Year
- Lifetime Achievement
- Library of the Year
- Outstanding New Librarian
- Outstanding Paraprofessional
- Embodiment of Values and Ideals
- Intellectual Freedom
- Library Innovation
- Maria Chavez-Hernandez "Libraries Change Peoples' Lives"
- Excellence in a Field of Endeavor
- Library Web Presence
- Exemplary Instructional Programs or Service
- Library Research
- Libraries Mean Business
- Betty Davis Miller Youth Services Award
- Excellence in Marketing and Public Relations
- Outstanding Citizen
- Friends, Foundations and Boards Outstanding Member
- Outstanding Business/Media Partner





The Alachua County Library District's "Heal Vets Craft Program" Celebrates Veterans

By Alicia A. Antone and Patricia E. Carr

When planning for spring programs leading up to Memorial Day, staff at the High Springs Branch of the Alachua County Library District sought to increase public awareness of the important role veterans play in all our lives. Staff members brainstormed ideas to find a way to accomplish this within the program budget. In early February, Alicia Antone, branch manager for the High Springs Branch, was approached by a patron, Edward Whelan, who mentioned the Help Heal Veterans (HEAL VETS) organization. The California-based non-profit provides free therapeutic craft kits to hospitalized or homebound veterans. After conducting research about HEAL VETS, Antone submitted a letter of inquiry proposing to bring the arts and crafts kit program to a public library setting which would potentially serve more veterans. The idea was met with great interest by the regional coordinator of HEAL VETS, Robert Croskey. After a face-to-face meeting with him, Antone and her staff were excited about scheduling a four-week Heal Vets Craft Program geared towards veterans and their families. Sixty-five veterans along with family members and friends attended the four-week program, which was free and open to the public. An additional twenty-five homebound veterans were served when fellow vets delivered craft kits to their homes.

Antone partnered with three agencies, HEAL VETS, the New Century Woman's Club of High Springs (a division of the General Federation of Woman's Clubs) and the Alachua County Veteran Services to help local veterans. When word spread about the program, however, veterans drove in from the rural communities



Clockwise from bottom left: Wiley Crawford, John Durr, William Lee, Jeremiah Eang, and Elaine Gudbrandsen.

of Alachua, Columbia, Gilchrist, and Union Counties specifically for this program. "All are welcome," Antone said.

Her first step was to contact the HEAL VETS organization. Their mission is to provide craft kits to hospitalized and homebound veterans, but their goal is to allow all military and veteran patients access to its therapeutic arts and crafts kits, to work on at community-based arts and crafts centers or even at home. Their only stipulation is for veterans to write a thank you note to the donor of each kit, but Antone said the organization makes compliance easy: a pre-addressed postage-paid notecard is included inside every kit, and vets are eager to write a note of thanks.

The library received an abundant supply of paint-by-

number, leathercraft, woodworking and model-building kits. “The Heal Vets Craft Program is a new concept in a public library setting,” Antone said.

“The program models a clinic atmosphere by utilizing the library meeting room as a space for veterans to gather, meet others, share stories and heal.”

“Thank you for remembering us,” said William Lee, a Vietnam veteran, staff sergeant and medic, who served in the 11th Airborne A Troop. “It takes people like you to help us heal and move ahead in life.”

His comment reminds one of the Wounded Warrior Project’s motto: “The greatest casualty is being forgotten.”¹

Library staff member, Jeremiah Eang, himself a veteran of the United States Army, enjoyed meeting all of the other servicemen and women who attended the program. He noticed the veterans bonding with each other as they worked on their craft projects, and he made friends with everyone too. “The leathercraft and woodworking kits seem to be the most popular,” he said, “and it is all therapeutic in a way. Veterans get bombarded with life problems like the rest of us, and I think it is great to make something for yourself and talk to the people who understand your past on a more personal level.”

Charles Massa, a Vietnam veteran who served in the United States Marine Corps, expressed his gratitude, saying, “All love and thank you so much for donating this clock for the healing vets. God bless you and keep you always free and happy.”

Antone’s second step was to partner with the Woman’s Club, so she gave a presentation to the group. Afterwards, Club President Carole Tate asked members if they could get involved by volunteering with the program. Not only did members agree to help vets with the craft kits, but they expressed a desire to thank them for their service by cooking and hosting a barbecue luncheon at the library on May 25, 2017, right before Memorial Day. When some of the vets learned that the four-week program would culminate with a special barbecue luncheon for them provided by the Woman’s Club, it brought tears to their eyes. Several of the Vietnam vets had said they had not received a



Clockwise from bottom left: Rupert F. Danyow, Steve Godwin, Bruce A. Borders, and Ted Barber.

hero’s welcome when they returned stateside.

“One day,” Antone said, “Staff Sergeant William Lee, a veteran who had served in the Army from 1968 to 1985, came in to the library to show me his uniform. I gasped when I saw more than twenty bars and not one, but two purple hearts. A woman approached us and thanked him for his service. She said her father had served in the Vietnam War, but she had never had a chance to talk with him about it. She asked Mr. Lee if she could talk with him then asked if she could give him a hug. He said, ‘Yes.’ The two embraced. Mr. Lee began to sob and said he felt he had never received a genuine Welcome Home.”

Libraries provide safe spaces where people can meet, connect, and find common ground. Libraries transform lives.

Research studies highlight the important relationships between having a sense of meaning in life and psychological adjustment. According to Steger, Owens, and Park, for example, “having veterans increase their engagement in activities that help them feel that their life has a sense of purpose and is fulfilling may also positively affect symptoms such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), lowering its severity.”²

That’s the idea behind the craft kits too. Since 1971, HEAL VETS has provided free therapeutic craft kits to hospitalized and homebound vets. According to their [Web site](#), they have “helped traumatized veterans improve their motor skills, while also developing better

feelings of self-esteem and self-worth.” Their motto: “The things we build can help rebuild us.”³

When plans for the luncheon were set, Antone contacted Director of Alachua County Veteran Services Kim Smith Davis and invited her to come as a guest speaker. Davis readily agreed and said she had been looking for ways to reach out to veterans in the outlying, rural areas. Library staff worked on a marketing plan, creating posters, fliers, handbills, a blog, and a Web slide, and Davis agreed to send a poster via email to her contacts too – to let people know about the upcoming program. According to Davis, the mission of Alachua County Veteran Services is to “provide professional assistance and advocacy to the veterans of Alachua County, their eligible dependents and survivors in securing all entitled or eligible veterans’ benefits earned through honorable military service.” When the big day arrived, Davis came to the luncheon, spoke at length with the veterans, answered questions, and followed up by scheduling appointments with many of them at the High Springs Branch Library.

“The vets can use our new study rooms to meet privately with a representative of Alachua County Veteran Services,” Antone told her staff. In fact, immediately after the luncheon, the phones started ringing, and library staff members began reserving study rooms on a regular basis for caseworkers and local vets. The demand for the Heal Vets Craft Program and the study rooms will most likely continue.

The three partnerships that Antone established with HEAL VETS, the Woman’s Club, and Alachua County Veteran Services, proved to be a wonderful collaboration between agencies, and the success of the Heal Vets Craft Program underscores the library’s mission, which is to give patrons opportunities to discover, participate, and connect.

What’s so great about the Heal Vets Craft Program? Librarian Patricia Carr said, “I think it has been very successful, because veterans, spouses, and their families have found that they are not alone.”

Library Specialist Mary Gay agrees. She suggested a photo display. Staff asked vets to bring in photos of themselves or veterans in their families. Copies of the

original photos were very popular, and the display ran for about six weeks.

Curious patrons asked, “What’s going on in the meeting room?” When they heard about the Heal Vets program, which was free and open to the public, many people went in to thank the vets.

Antone said the impact of the Heal Vets Craft Program was phenomenal for both veterans and staff. For example, staff observed a number of veterans helping other vets, some of whom did not have the physical or cognitive ability to read directions or put craft pieces together.

Veterans, young and old alike from different divisions of the U. S. Armed Forces who had served in different wars were represented, but a good number of them had served in the Vietnam War. Overall, everyone seemed to enjoy the camaraderie, easy banter, and laughter that emanated from the meeting room, but, during the four-week program, there were some serious conversations too.

For example, according to one recent study, “Men who served in the Vietnam War had a war-zone related PTSD prevalence of four-and-a-half percent; when factoring in vets who met some of the criteria that number climbed to almost eleven percent. For women veterans, those prevalences were about six percent and nine percent, respectively.”⁴

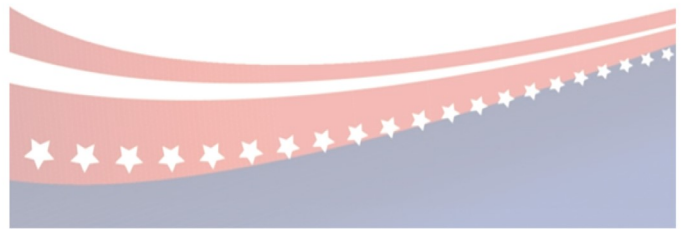
Another report says, “There continues to be an increase in the number of Vietnam-era veterans receiving a diagnosis of PTSD in the Veterans Health Administration, nearly four decades after Vietnam.”



Clockwise from bottom left: Winchester H. Keys, Gary Blythe, Wiley Crawford, Jeremiah Eang, and Harold Goode.

NOTES

- 1 - Wounded Warrior Project, woundedwarriorproject.org.
- 2 - Steger, Michael F., Gina P. Owens, and Crystal L. Park. 2015. "Violations of War: Testing the Meaning- Making Model Among Vietnam Veterans." *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, vol. 71, no. 1: 105 – 116.
- 3 - Help Heal Veterans (HEAL VETS), healvets.org.
- 4 - Oaklander, Mandy. 2015. "More Than 200,000 Vietnam Vets Still Have PTSD." Time.Com. time.com/3967590/vietnam-veterans-ptsd/
- 5 - Desai, Miraj, Anthony Pavlo, Larry Davison, Ilan Harpaz- Rotem, and Robert Rosenheck. 2016. "I Want to Come Home': Vietnam-Era Veterans' Presenting for Mental Health Care, Roughly 40 Years After Vietnam." *Psychiatric Quarterly*, vol. 87, no. 2: 229 – 239.



The findings suggest the need to build stronger bridges between the VA and veterans' community supports, who greatly influenced veterans' care seeking. Further efforts to welcome Vietnam-era veterans home, validate their experiences of rejection and abandonment, and respectfully process their ensuing pain and anger are warranted.⁵

"I like to tell patrons, we are here for you," Carr says. "I want our veterans to know that we are grateful to them. We care. The vets appreciate the program so much, and it gave us a chance to get to know them."

Gary Blythe, a Vietnam veteran who served in the United States Navy from 1967 to 1973, expressed his gratitude for the library program while sharing a painful memory. He explained, "Thank you! I had four brothers all in the United States Navy, one was lost M.I.A. (Missing in Action)."

His comment was not lost on library staff. It gave them pause to think.

"The library serves as a safe place where veterans can gather, talk, share, support each other, and bond. The arts and crafts time at the library provided a venue for the veterans to get together, to work on a craft, and to make friends," Antone said.

The Heal Vets Craft Program was well-attended and well-received.

So much so, in looking ahead, the Heal Vets Craft Program will be held at not one, but two branch libraries this year: Cone Park and High Springs. A variety of therapeutic craft kits will be available to veterans thanks to the generosity of Robert Croskey, the local coordinator of the HEAL VETS organization.

As a result of their involvement in the program, four members of the Woman's Club have made a commitment to the library by signing up to volunteer on a regular basis. So, they plan to help with the Heal Vets Craft Program again this fall.

The library's ongoing partnership with Alachua County Veteran Services will continue, through this program, to serve as a bridge for veterans and their caseworkers, transforming lives, establishing vital community links, enriching the social lives of veterans, and providing comfortable meeting spaces and private study rooms where caseworkers can better address veterans' needs.

About the Authors

Alicia A. Antone, MLIS, MPA, CFRM, is the manager of the High Springs Branch of the Alachua County Library District. During her career, Antone has worked in academic, military, special, and public libraries.

Patricia E. Carr, MLIS, is a librarian for youth and outreach services at the Tower Road Branch of the Alachua County Library District, and she serves as the coordinator for their Conversational English Program. She has also been working at the High Springs Branch.

Unleash Your Mentoring Power:

The FLA Mentoring Pilot Program 2016 - Present



By John Abresch, Erin Arnold, Rachel Cooke, Mary “Peggy” M. Glatthaar, Jaime Goldman, Renaine Julian, and Leah Plocharczyk

In Summer 2016, three Florida Library Association (FLA) committees, including the Career Development, Leadership Development and Membership committees developed a mentoring program for FLA members. A FLA membership offers a number of benefits to librarians and library staff on both a personal and professional level. Library staff take advantage of opportunities to find jobs, develop professional talents and to connect with other library professionals. For these reasons, it seemed that newly hired librarians and seasoned librarians would want an opportunity to learn from one another and share their professional expertise. An FLA-sponsored mentoring program would give FLA members an opportunity to connect on a more personal level and provide an added value for FLA membership. In this article, the planners and coordinators of the pilot FLA mentoring program share the process of starting a mentoring program, the learning outcomes at the end of year one, and future steps. A literature review of mentoring best-practices provides further guidance for library professionals who want to mentor a single colleague or start a mentoring program with many participants.

The FLA Mentoring Program initially was born as a “what if” idea in a Career Development Committee meeting in January 2016. The idea sparked so much excitement that the planning was completed in six months. The committee, then chaired by Leah Plocharczyk, presented the idea to the 2016-2017 FLA President, Elana Karshmer at the FLA annual conference in March 2016. Together they agreed that the first year cohort should be kept small (ten mentors and ten mentees), and that the committee would match the mentors and mentees who volunteered to participate. In addition, it was discussed that some type of assessment was needed to make future improvements.

At the 2016 annual FLA conference, the Leadership Development and Membership Committees joined the project. Rachel Cooke (Career Development Committee Chair), Renaine Julian (Leadership Development Chair), Erin Arnold (Membership Committee Chair) met with Plocharczyk to create a proposal to present to the FLA board in June 2016. The proposal included a description of the program, a detailed timeline, and requirements for participation.

Perhaps the greatest challenges in the planning stages, was determining the demand for the program and how much support

would be expected. One concern was to not duplicate the efforts of a successful state-wide mentoring program already in place and open to all library staff in Florida, the Sunshine State Library Leadership Institute (SLLI). SLLI is very structured and intense, with monthly meetings and assignments which culminate in a final high-impact leadership project. In SLLI, each participant chooses their own mentor and works closely with them to develop their final project. Most of the planning team had completed the one-year institute and regarded it as a critical milestone of their professional development.

Instead of competing with the SLLI program, though, the goal was to create a different program, one that was free of cost, required no travel, and was self-directed. Participants could work closely with their mentors on an individual basis to create a customized mentoring strategy that would be beneficial to both. The flexible design would allow the mentors to tailor their coaching and skill-building techniques to meet the unique needs of the mentee. Another key benefit to the program was that all of the mentee applicants were accepted until the maximum number of mentees ten was reached. The only eligibility requirement was an FLA membership.

After the proposal was approved by the Board, the new program team members (Cooke, Julian, Arnold, and Plocharczyk) still had to create the application and evaluation forms, and guidelines in a matter of weeks. There was uncertainty about the process as this was the first attempt at a multi-committee initiative. Fortunately, the unique talents of each member complemented one another well. Julian used his technology skills to organize all of the documents in Google Docs, create a wireframe of the Website and to convert the application and evaluation forms to the Qualtrics software hosted on the Florida State University Website. Plocharczyk was the writer on the team, and she drafted the mentoring guidelines and early drafts of the application and evaluation forms. Leah was also the FLA Board Fellow at the time, so was able to guide the team with procedure and process. Arnold, the membership chair, was the marketing expert and sent out emails to the FLA Listserve and co-wrote all of the documentation. Cooke wrote the initial FLA board proposal and generally became the team’s communication person, providing final edits, keeping everyone on track, and forwarding updates and progress to FLA staff members and the FLA board liaison.

Members from the three committees (Career, Leadership, and Membership) were informed of all developments and contributed individual feedback. Keeping the committee members well informed was a crucial step as many of them will likely coordinate the program in future years. Committee members posted their contact information on an “Expert List” which featured the members’ unique skill sets and experiences. Although it was ultimately not used, the Expert List idea was established so that incoming questions from mentors or mentees could be answered accordingly.

After the Web site was up and running in August 2016, it was time to recruit applicants. The only requirement for mentees was to be an FLA member. Mentors had to be FLA members, who had earned a Master of Library Science degree (or equivalent), and have five years of experience as a professional librarian. The mentee and mentor could not be from the same library or library system. Arnold sent out the initial email and then the team waited. After about two weeks, there were six mentee applicants and a slightly larger number of mentors who were interested in participating, so the team decided to close applications. Initially the maximum number of participants was ten, but deadlines for matching were approaching and the team was concerned that mentees would outnumber mentors in the pool. Arnold, Julian, and Plocharczyk did the matching, which took about a week. It is important to note that, mentee-mentor pairs did not always match up in terms of library type (special/academic/public). The team considered that one advantage of the program was that mentees and mentors could learn new perspectives if working with someone from a different type of library. Mentoring pairs were encouraged to focus on skill building such as professional development, time management and project management which are applicable to all library work environments. Once the mentoring pairs were established the program ran fairly smoothly for the next nine months (September to May 2016). Each month Cooke would remind participants to fill out the mentoring check-in forms designed to let the team know how things were going and if any mentoring support was needed. Cooke also sent out a recommended “mentoring boost,” which could include a TED talk or free Florida Library Webinar, for mentoring pairs to consider viewing or reading.

Evaluations of the program included a monthly survey filled in by both the mentor and mentee as well as a mid-point survey in (January 2017) and a final evaluation survey (May 2017). Plocharczyk led an online meeting for mentors in January to informally discuss how the program was going and if the mentors had suggestions for improvement for the upcoming year. The data was reviewed internally by the committees and some minor changes were made to the 2016-2017 program.

Because of the short time line and the rapid development of the program in year one, the team did not apply for internal review board approval for using this anonymized survey data for publication, but that may be a future possibility.

Overall the project was a success, with positive feedback from all participants. Six of the seven mentoring pairs completed the entire year and one pair dropped out only because the mentee took a position out-of-state. The team learned a few

things from the pilot program. For example, participants expressed a desire to meet in-person and so geographic proximity may be a factor to consider during the matching process. The mentors also enjoyed sharing their experiences with others in the online January meeting. Certain high-impact activities were suggested for the future including how to conduct article peer-reviews, resume reviewing, and live Skype interview practicing. The team met with the incoming chairs in July 2017 to “pass the baton” and share what they had learned.

Having the succession planning in-place paid off. Cooke, Julian and Arnold made sure that the FLA staff, committee vice-chairs, board liaisons and all committee members were copied on most of the communications and that everyone was informed during the year.

Looking Towards Year Two: The 2017-2018 Program

The 2017-2018 mentoring program is being led by the new coordinators, Jaime Goldman, Library Career Development Committee Chair, Gene Coppola, Leadership Development Committee Chair, and Portia McQueen Membership Committee Chair. Renaine continues to manage the forms on Qualtrics, which makes the process much easier for everyone. The new team is in place and at the time of this publication, was accepting all new mentee applications until twelve (the maximum number) apply. Mentors can apply to the mentoring pool, and ideally, twenty-four applicants are desired. For those interested in becoming a mentee or a mentor, please visit the FLA Website, <https://fla.memberclicks.net/mentorship-program>. The page requires an FLA membership log-in to view, and includes information on the application process, guidelines, application form, evaluation forms, etc.

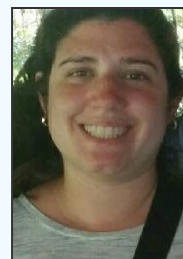
Meet Two of the 2016 - 2017 Mentoring Participants

Doris Van Kampen-Breit Saint Leo University (Mentor)



“The mentoring program was an opportunity to really connect and become close colleagues with someone from another institution, and a wonderful way to encourage and foster our FLA community and each other.”

Raquel Mendelow Rein, Librarian Consultant/Researcher (Mentee)



“This mentoring program helped me grow considerably in my career as a librarian and as a person too.”

Check Out These Items for Further Reading Date. 2017 . No.

For librarians interested in serving as a mentor or who may want to start a mentoring program of their own, there is an abundance of literature available on best-practices.

Below is a sample list:

Bradshaw, A. K. (2014.). Contrasting Professional Development and Continuing Education Opportunities for Library Professionals: Offerings Both within and Outside the Profession. In *Revolutionizing the Development of Library and Information Professionals: Planning for the Future* (pp. 144-162). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.

Freedman, S. (2009). Effective Mentoring. *IFLA Journal*, 35(2), 171-182.

Goldman, C. (2014). The benefits of local involvement: Professional development through state and regional library associations. *Practical Academic Librarianship: The International Journal of the SLA Academic Division*, 4(2), I-xi.
<https://journals.tdl.org/pal/index.php/pal/article/view/6311>.

Long, S. (2002). Mentoring: A Personal Reflection. *New Library World*, 103(3), 94-97.

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FLORIDIANA WITH A TWIST:

Human Remains in Florida Date Back More Than 14,000 Years!

By Nancy Pike

News Flash: Hurricane Devastates Settlement!

We might assume such words refer to current events, when, in fact, the first European settlement in the continental United States was destroyed by a hurricane on September 19, 1559, along with seven ships from the fleet that brought the settlers to Florida, near present day Pensacola. <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/uncovering-the-luna-colony-a-lost-remnant-of-spanish-florida>

A thousand colonists on eleven ships sailed with Don Tristan de Luna y Arellano to create a Spanish settlement in the new world. Florida Bureau of Archaeological Research found the first remains of the vessels in 1992. Another two were found by University of West Florida divers, one in 2007, and the other in 2016. <http://uwf.edu/cassh/departments/anthropology-and-archaeology/luna-settlement/>

So who is in charge of this sort of discovery? It depends. This year is the fiftieth anniversary of the Florida Archives and History Act that established the Division of Historical Resources, the Museum of Florida History, and the State Archives of Florida. Their mission is to preserve, promote and protect Florida history.

Artifacts collected on state lands and waters are curated at the Bureau of Archaeological Research on the grounds of Mission San Luis in Tallahassee.

<http://dos.myflorida.com/historical/archaeology/collections-and-conservation/state-of-florida-archaeological-collections/>

However, items on private lands are handled differently. Under the provisions of Section 267.11 of the *Florida Statutes*, the Division of Historical Resources can designate archaeological resources on private property as an Archaeological Landmark or Landmark Zone to recognize the significance and increase legal protection of privately owned archaeological sites under state law. There are tax incentives to encourage protecting cultural resources on private lands.

Florida has more important historical and pre-historical sites than most people realize. For example, at Windover Pond near Titusville in Brevard County, 168 well-preserved skeletons were found in an underwater cemetery created by ancient people between 7,000 and 8,000 years ago, more than 2,000 years before the Great Pyramids in Egypt. It was apparently used over an extended period of about 1,000 years, according to radiocarbon data. Because of the oxygen-free conditions, the remains were so well preserved that 91 of the skulls still contain actual brain matter.

Brevard Museum of History and Natural Science in Cocoa, Florida, offers a Windover exhibit. Their

Website features an informational video of a panel discussion about the significance of the discoveries. Rachel K. Wentz, the author of *Life and Death at Windover* (The Florida Historical Society Press, 2012), is a participant.

<https://myfloridahistory.org/brevardmuseum/exhibit/windover-archaeological-site>

Even older evidence of human activity was found at the Page-Ladson Archaeological Site in the Big Bend area of Florida where artifacts show that people lived in the area about 14,000 years ago.

<http://advances.sciencemag.org/content/2/5/e1600375.full>

Further evidence of ancient man in Florida is being examined in Vero Beach where Florida Atlantic University is leading one of the oldest digs in North America, The Old Man Vero Site. Scientists say that people were in Vero Beach over 14,000 years ago. Construction of a drainage ditch in 1915 unearthed human remains along with Pleistocene Epoch materials, leading to further investigation: <http://www.fau.edu/newsdesk/articles/ancient-bison-vero.php>

Little Salt Springs, a sinkhole in Sarasota County, recently closed twenty-one years of exploration under the ownership of the University of Miami. Their researchers brought out items that have given archaeologists insight into human life in Florida before Stonehenge.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/02/03/little-salt-spring-closed_n_2610930.html



Many more archaeological sites in Florida are equally intriguing but too numerous to discuss in a short article. For one summary, see this from Wikipedia:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Archaeological sites in Florida](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Archaeological_sites_in_Florida); and another: <http://www.exploresouthernhistory.com/florida.html>; and finally, hikes to archaeological sites are listed here: <http://floridahikes.com/tag/archaeological-sites/>.

Nancy Pike is a former Director of the Sarasota County Library System and a former President of the Florida Library Association.



Citrus County Library System Unleashes the Power of Technology Training, and Increases Attendance and Engagement

By Adam Chang

The Citrus County Library System, in north central Florida, recently revised its technology class offerings; with new curriculum, the library was able to increase attendance, engagement, and outreach opportunities. The strategies used in curriculum development can be easily replicated in libraries across Florida, especially in small, rural, or underfunded libraries.

The Citrus County Library System, like many libraries, has offered a range of technology classes for many years. These classes teach basic computer skills with an emphasis on workforce recovery. Class attendance over the years has remained stable, but we noticed a slow decline in attendance over recent years. The potential for technology class growth under our old model (requiring a dedicated computer lab) was quite small. Our primary method of driving growth was the creation of new classes. Creating new computer lab classes is difficult because new classes often require an entire class set of new software and require specialized training in that particular software for an instructor. New classes were being created, but very slowly and they focused on the Microsoft Office suite.

Our library system has five branches; two branches have a dedicated computer lab for instruction. Library staff were aware of the interest in technology instruction at branch libraries without a dedicated computer lab, but found it difficult to respond to this interest. Under a traditional

technology class approach, cost and space were limiting factors. It is difficult enough to allocate funding to develop a new computer lab for multiple library locations, but in addition space was prohibitive. As is the case with many libraries, our oldest buildings were built prior to the digital age. Even if funding and space were not an issue, many modern library leaders are creating a flexible space approach as a way to future proof their libraries in the wake of the continued shift of public needs and demands on libraries.

About a year ago, we decided to offer a trial class at one of our branches without a dedicated lab. The first class we offered was entitled “Getting Started with Your Smartphone.” The idea behind this class was to answer common questions about the technology our patrons have in their homes. The class focused on how to answer a phone call, how to send a text message, how to add a contact, connect to Wi-Fi, and take and view pictures from your phone. Our average attendance for traditional classes is around eight, so we were very surprised that our first class had an attendance of more than forty. The response from this class helped lead to a shift in how we present our technology classes as well and lead to scheduling and creating mobile device classes.

After the first mobile device class I learned a lot of valuable information. The first thing I learned (as the instructor of this class) was that registration was critical. While forty-plus in attendance to every class

would be a great statistic, it just isn't practical. Class size needs to be limited to ensure that everyone feels they have time to ask questions and the pace of the class can be adjusted to address the needs of the class. I also needed to make clear that entry level classes are device specific.

Shortly after the first class, we offered an additional two new classes, one on eBay and one on tablets, with similar attendance results. From our initial offerings, it was clear that a demand existed for this format of class. We even took our worst attended computer lab class, "Online Safety" and offered it as a lecture and found attendance nearly tripled.

In order to create a similar program in your library system, we recommend a three-pronged approach:

- 1) Getting buy-in from key stakeholders
- 2) Developing curriculum tailored to the needs of your system and
- 3) Testing classes and adjusting them based on staff and patron feedback.

Getting buy-in from stakeholders is essential. In our case, that included library administration, our IT department, and our more traditional staff members. The IT department had concerns about device security—we had to assure them that patron's personal devices would not be connected to the county network. In addition, they were concerned about the surge in bandwidth usage during the classes. In order to ensure that bandwidth would not be a problem, we examined the charts of bandwidth usage and held classes during times with lower average bandwidth usage. In addition, we made sure that the majority of our classes did not require the use of Wi-Fi. Administration had concerns about cost (both in staff time and in financial costs) of development, and we were able to demonstrate that the programs used free software and the patrons own devices and did not involve any financial commitment. Staff time was needed, but only in the context of curriculum development, which was already a responsibility of our instruction and research team. Lastly, we had to get buy-in from traditional staff members. In traditional classes,



The Citrus County Libraries online calendar shows new classes in December including mobile device classes on December 6 and 13, and buying and selling merchandise on eBay.

equipment is all standardized and traditional staffers expressed concern that allowing patrons to bring in their own devices would increase the difficulty of teaching classes. However, we addressed their concerns by emphasizing the patron's perspective—if we simplify the classes and standardize the equipment, patrons will not have the experience necessary to use their own devices successfully. Patrons benefit greatly from physically using their own device during class and being able to ask specific questions about their device and taking it home to practice.

After achieving buy-in, librarians can start the process of curriculum development for their system. A best practice is to choose topics based on local interest, tailored to your community. Some of our classes include: iPhone Getting Started, iPhone Advanced, Android Phones Getting Started, Understanding Apps, All About YouTube, Alternatives to Cable TV, Healthy Living Apps, and Organizational Apps, and we continue to add additional classes as they are developed. Often, front-line staff, including circulation and reference staff, will have feedback on the interests of local patrons.

Our approach to content presented in our technology classes has adapted to demonstrate more practical uses for technology. Existing classes have been rewritten in an effort to eliminate the age-old question "when am I going to use this?" We want patrons to understand that technology can make their lives easier, help them connect with the world, and just generally be fun to learn about. We removed most of the theory behind how a computer works and the inner workings of the Internet and replaced them with exercise driven lessons. One of our more popular examples is teaching patrons how to make a garage sale flier.

Lastly, after creating the classes, it is important to adjust the classes based on staff and patron feedback. For example, in one class, sharing and transferring digital photos, we determined that the class contained far more content than patrons could get through in the time allotted. In order for

the class to be successful, we had to simplify and remove portions of the class so that patrons could comfortably get through all of the material without feeling overwhelmed. Feedback can be formal, through class evaluation forms, or informal, by having conversations with patrons and instructors.

What we have found over the last year is that our attendance has steadily increased. Technology classes that require registration are often at capacity and have a waiting list. Technology classes that we offer as a lecture-style frequently have attendance of twenty people or more.

Increased collaboration and an increase of technology class topics has been another welcome benefit. Prior to offering classes outside of our traditional computer labs the creation of new classes was very limited. By expanding our scope to include mobile devices a further twelve classes have been created, with nearly an average of a class a month on a range of topics.

The wide range of mobile device classes has had a positive impact in our libraries. Traditional computer class attendance is improving as patrons are becoming more engaged with technology and feel more confident using different devices. In addition, our success with mobile device classes has highlighted the library's technology offerings to other organizations within our county and this has led to the library offering technology classes to county employees on popular topics like Microsoft Excel and Word. Developing classes that do not require a computer lab also opens up opportunities for outreach and community development, which we hope to pursue in the future.

Developing new technology curriculum utilizing patron's own devices and equipment has sparked our community's interest in learning about new technology topics. Unleash your superpower and develop new curriculum for your system to increase both engagement and attendance in your technology classes!

Adam Chang, MLIS, is an Instruction & Research librarian at the Citrus County Library System; he is interested in digital literacy and bridging the digital divide. He is one of the American Library Association's Emerging Leaders of 2018.

Serving Florida's Forgotten Patron Group: How Programming Can Reconnect Persons with Dementia to Their Local Library

By Leanna Fitzgerald

We all grow old, but nobody “ages” out of the library. The public library can and should remain a lifelong source of entertainment, leisure and enrichment for all Floridians. Age and illness such as dementia should not isolate patrons from their local library. Nearly everyone knows someone who is directly or indirectly affected by dementia. As of October, 2016, there were 4.9 million seniors who called Florida home.¹ With almost five million residents age 60 and over, Florida leads the nation with highest population of seniors and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.² In Florida there are an estimated 510,000 individuals living with some form of dementia.

“Dementia” is a term used to describe a decline in cognitive function and it represents a broad spectrum of disease. This article, the term is used to loosely encompass all forms of dementia, including those related to Alzheimer’s. By 2025, it is anticipated that 720,000 Floridians will be living with some dementia. As of 2016, nearly twelve percent of Florida’s senior population had been diagnosed with some form of dementia.³ It is possible that these figures are even higher since dementia is often underreported due to the stigma surrounding the disease. Many Alzheimer’s and dementia patients require care twenty-four hours a day, especially in the late stages of the disease.⁴

Chances are you have served a patron affected by dementia or who is a caregiver for a person with dementia. At the reference desk at DeGroodt Library in Brevard County, I have helped patrons locate Power of Attorney forms and books on dealing with stress only to later realize that the issue driving them to seek these resources was in fact dementia. They needed a Power of Attorney form because a loved one had been diagnosed with dementia and they were a principal caregiver, or they needed books on techniques for dealing with stress because they were feeling the strain of providing care for a person with dementia. These patrons were not forthcoming in revealing to me that dealing with dementia drove them to find answers at the library. One patron asked if there was anything going on at the library that she could bring her mother to. This woman was the primary caregiver for her mother who had dementia and she was seeking variety in their routine. I invited her to attend our weekly adult coloring class held on Thursday

evenings, and then I sat back and pondered the lack of creative programming for patrons with dementia.

Florida’s public libraries are important stakeholders in the dementia crisis that affects many Floridians. It is fully within the purview of a library’s mission to provide lifelong learning services for all and to provide the highest level of service to all library users, including persons with dementia.⁵ How can libraries serve this patron group? Library programs and outreach can reconnect dementia sufferers with their local library and help alleviate the burden and strain that caregivers experience by providing some level of meaningful entertainment and intellectual stimulation for persons with dementia.

To accomplish this, Florida librarians need a toolkit of resources for dementia sufferers. Librarians can be most helpful when they know about local programs and where to find relevant online resources.

A valuable part of a librarian’s dementia toolkit is knowledge of appropriate standards for programs for persons with dementia. Library services for persons with dementia is a relatively new trend that is picking up steam both nationally and internationally. In 2007 the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), the international body representing the interests of library and information services, published a series of guidelines providing practical recommendations on how to provide mental stimulation using books and other materials. IFLA’s guidelines also explained how to design library services for dementia sufferers. IFLA’s publications helped to raise awareness in libraries and among dementia care givers and public policy makers that libraries can provide meaningful entertainment and pleasure for persons with dementia. Hands-on programs that take the dementia sufferer out of his or her typical daily routine can help stimulate memory and provide a therapeutic benefit. The studies mentioned in IFLA’s publication were mostly from public libraries in Denmark where the use of “memory kits” for memory stimulation was first implemented.⁶ A memory kit can include an illustrated book and tangible items related to the book’s theme.⁷ There are many different versions of memory kits or “reminiscence kits” as some libraries call them.

The U.S. response to IFLA’s publications happened in 2013 when the Association of Specialized and

Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA), a division of the American Library Association (ALA), created the Alzheimer's and Related Dementias Interest Group (IGARD). IGARD has helped consolidate library efforts across the country to serve persons with dementia and raise awareness. Mary Beth Riedner, Chair of IGARD and Linda Gorman, Director of the Harrison Library of Johns Hopkins Medical Center, presented a paper titled "Reconnecting Persons with Dementia to their Libraries: Using Library Materials to Improve the Quality of Life for People Living with Alzheimer's and Other Dementias" at a poster session at the IFLA Annual Congress in 2016. Their presentation featured five different library programs in the U.S. that used books, music, video and technology to stimulate and engage patrons with dementia. This session prompted a discussion among librarians about how library programs could make a positive difference by serving those affected by dementia.⁸

IGARD is currently developing standards for library services for patrons with dementia in the United States. IGARD Guidelines Subcommittee is in the process of reviewing the following seven library standards:

- International Federation of Library Association (IFLA) Guidelines for Library Services to Persons with Dementia – 2007⁹
- Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA) - Guidelines for Library and Information Services for the American Deaf Community – 1996; available only in print¹⁰
- Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) Guidelines for Library and Information Services to Older Adults – 2008¹¹
- RUSA Financial Literacy Education in Libraries: Guidelines and Best Practices for Service – 2014¹²
- American Library Association (ALA) Office of Literacy and Outreach Services (OLOS) Keys to Engaging Older Adults @ your library – 2010¹³
- Public Library Association (PLA) Public Library Standards¹⁴
- Medical Library Association (MLA) Interactive Benchmarking & Statistics Subscriptions - 2007-08.¹⁵

A review of these standards reveals that library programs for dementia sufferers are most successful when they include the use of illustrated books, books appropriate for reading aloud, local history books, audio books, music, and reminiscence kits. Persons with dementia usually enjoy a reading from a book with big, bright, colorful photographs. When selecting a book for reading aloud you will want to make sure that the



narrative is not overly complicated. Fairy tales and short stories are usually good genres. Audio-books read at a slow pace for persons with aphasia, a language disorder that impacts the ability to comprehend and formulate language, or dementia. Since verbal abilities are often affected by dementia, music is a great medium for interaction for patrons with advanced dementia since it does not require mental processing and stimulates positive interactions.

Computer training for older adults can be effective in promoting their ability to find health information on the Internet. The National Institute of Health's research found that regularly scheduled computer classes for the elderly were particularly helpful in fostering a sense of independence and control over health issues.¹⁶

Reminiscence kits are an effective and creative tool. Each reminiscence kit contains items based on a theme such as cooking, music, or a profession, or even a specific period of time. The idea is that you open the kit to help spark a discussion.¹⁷ The kits stimulate memories and are a great resource to take on an outreach visit. Some libraries make these kits available for checkout. At Franklin T. DeGroot Memorial Library, we are developing two reminiscence kits and planning a Memory Café.

Memory Café are special programs for dementia sufferers, and their friends and family. Individuals who experience forms of cognitive impairment and other intellectual impairments are also encouraged to attend. Memory Café sessions can focus on sharing, on a hands-on activity, or a story time utilizing reminiscence kits. I am currently working with the South Brevard Historical Society to develop a local history-themed reminiscence kit for our Memory Café program.

Partnering with local organizations may enhance the quality of resources for your kit and also provide an opportunity to promote library services to a larger audience.

NOTES

Elsewhere there are exciting and innovative programs for this patron group. A great example is the “Tales and Travels” memory program created by academic librarian Mary Beth Riedner. Tales and Travels received an American Library Association Carnegie-Whitney grant in 2013 and a National Network of Libraries of Medicine for the Greater Midwest Region Target Project Award in 2015.¹⁸ If you are interested in bringing this program to your library perhaps you could apply for a grant such as the Library Services Technology Act Grant to fund resources for Tales & Travels.¹⁹ Another great example is West Florida Public Library’s “Loopy Loomers” that allows participants to make what they call “twiddlemuffs.” A group of “loopy loomers” meet at the library and creates twiddlemuffs to donate to local adult day-cares.²⁰ People with Alzheimer’s and dementia, who may have restless hands, can use these twiddlemuffs assist with visual, tactile, and sensory stimulation.

For additional information, a recording of the Webinar, “Florida Resources for Dementia Sufferers and Their Families” that I presented in January 2017, is archived at FloridaLibraryWebinars.org.

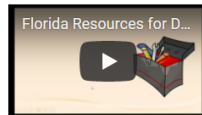
Florida Resources for Dementia Sufferers and their Families

Public Services

Dementia is a common illness that has affected numerous individuals, families, and businesses. A dementia diagnosis results in a host of personal, professional, and legal issues. Leanna Fitzgerald, Head of Reference at Franklin T. DeGroot Memorial Library, will explain how librarians can help by connecting patrons with valuable local resources.

In this hour long webinar Leanna will explain common legal issues that arise from a dementia diagnosis and where families and caregivers of dementia sufferers can find support. Come and join this interactive webinar and discuss this common disease that has affected many Floridians and their families. Learn how librarians can help!

Original broadcast January 10, 2017



Consider your patron base and whether your library is furthering the mission of providing lifelong learning services to all. After all, for librarians there is no more rewarding experience than connecting patrons with what they need and enjoy.

Leanna Fitzgerald has her MLS and Juris Doctor. Leanna has worked in both law libraries and public libraries. Leanna is Head of Reference at Franklin T. DeGroot Library. As a Brevard County native Leanna is happy to bring innovative programs to Brevard that serve the residents of her hometown. In Fall 2017, Leanna developed and hosted Brevard County's first Memory Café. The program was a success and brought together both young and old. Leanna looks forward to hosting additional Memory Café events in the spring.

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2017 *Days in the District* Update

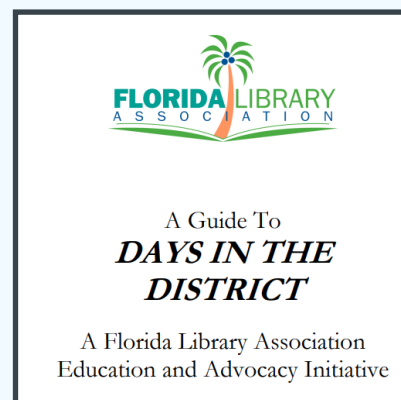
- The ***Days in the District*** initiative highlighted the importance of library supporters meeting with their legislators while they are in their home districts. The need to do this is certainly not a new idea, but *Days in the District* serves as a reminder for supporters to build these activities into their schedules each year. Visits with legislators should be done throughout the year, and especially prior to session, to keep elected officials aware of library issues and keep libraries on their mind as they begin pre-session committee meetings. The importance of developing a positive relationship with your legislators cannot be stressed enough. It will be easier for them to support increased funding for library initiatives if they know their local librarians and have some knowledge of the critical and innovative services being provided throughout the state. It will also be harder to cut library funding if that relationship exists. Legislators who know nothing of the value of libraries will not fight for library funding.
 - ◆ Continue inviting elected officials to events in your library and if they attend – get some photos and share them on social media!
- **Tell a story!** Nothing new here, we all know that telling a story gives elected officials something to prompt their memory. Gather stories about individuals who have been positively impacted by the library to share during meetings and chance encounters.
- Advocates are encouraged to **use social media** to connect with elected officials. Post photos and very brief videos that help tell what modern libraries do. Feedback from some legislators indicates that they are interested in innovative programming in libraries. Let's show them what we are up to! Twitter is the most widely used with legislators.
- The Marketing Committee is working on an initiative called ***Faces of Florida***. This campaign will combine “tell a story” with effective use of social media. We'll share more about this initiative.
- **Visibility at the Capitol** can be an important part of involving FLA members in advocacy efforts and bringing the FLA message to legislators. Our lobbying firm can assist in scheduling appointments with legislators for visiting FLA members. (Tuesdays and Wednesdays are the best days to visit.) The Multitype Library Cooperatives (MLC) have set up a Library Day on January 17, 2018. If you are interested in being part of this day, contact your MLC.
 - ◆ “Quirky Visibility” at the Capitol can also have a significant impact. (Think back to “The Library Guy.”) If you are interested in spending a day (or a few hours) at the Capitol please let me know. We can highlight different programs with each visit, and our lobbying firm can help schedule meetings with legislators while we are there.
 - ◆ FLA is investigating coordinating with FSU and USF for a day when library students visit the Capitol, have a tour, and meet with the FLA lobbyist.
- Good **libraries are a draw for businesses** looking for locations, and for the families that will move to the area. Partner with the Chamber of Commerce and Real Estate Associations.

Robin Shader
President
Florida Library Association

[Click here to view the Days in the District PowerPoint Presentation](#)



[Click here to view the Days in the District Guide](#)



Intellectual Freedom: Dixie District Schools

By Lindsey Whittington

According to the American Library Association, *Intellectual Freedom* is defined as “the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. It provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause, or movement may be explored.” In September, a directive was issued by the Superintendent of Dixie County, Florida that threatened the very nature of intellectual freedom. The words of the directive are as follows: “As of September 8, 2017, no instructional materials (textbooks, library books, classroom novels, etc.) purchased and/or used by the school district shall contain any profanity, cursing, or inappropriate subject matter. This directive reflects the values of the Superintendent, School Board, and the community.” This directive essentially banned the reading and even housing of library books, textbooks, and other instructional materials that are currently being used in Dixie District Schools.

As you know, the importance of reading is that one can learn about the past in order to not repeat the same mistakes in the future. Much of history isn't pleasant; it is wrought with racism, gender inequality, and violence. You will be hard pressed to find a single textbook, novel, or work of classical literature that doesn't touch on one of these sensitive topics. However, isn't the point of education to teach students how to think, not what to think? If we shy away from subjects that are uncomfortable or censor texts that may use offensive language that are historically accurate, we are doing a disservice to our students because we are not doing our jobs to prepare them for the real world. In order to be subordinate to this directive, the district would have to remove all of Shakespeare, anything dealing with the Holocaust, classics dealing with racism such as *To Kill A Mockingbird* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and even must remove the Bible, because it uses instances of adultery, murder, and deceit in order to convey its moral lessons. Ironically, this directive was issued just weeks before “Banned Books Week” which is celebrated by the American Library Association's Office of Intellectual Freedom and supported by schools and libraries across the country. This week stresses the importance of exposing students to challenging materials in order to engage them in meaningful conversations, teach them moral lessons, and ultimately empower students with the ability to think for themselves. The solution here is not to ban these books, but rather to use

these books properly in order to do our jobs as teachers and raise the next generation of independent thinkers.

In this case, Dixie School District violated their own challenged materials policy. There was no public hearing regarding the challenged text in question. There was a committee that met and unanimously decided to continue teaching the book *A Lesson Before Dying* that initially prompted the challenge; however, the result of this unanimous decision was that the directive was issued the following day. As library media specialist, English department head, and president of Dixie County's teachers' union, I fought against this draconian directive. Courageous students and I spoke out at the school board meeting and passionately asked that he rescind this policy. A “literary blitz” ensued in which the school board members and superintendent were bombarded with letters by organizations from across the country, including one by former FAME President Elizabeth Zdrodowski who stated, “If we expect students to grow into well-rounded, empathetic, intelligent, and creative adults who can contribute to our society in healthy ways, we must not smother their exposure to great literature, diverse ideas, and various forms of expression.” The union filed a grievance for the violation of academic freedom and the failure to comply with existing school board policy. The superintendent denied the grievance so the union then filed a cease a desist to the policy. The superintendent responded and agreed to work with the union to create a committee that will oversee curriculum materials. On November 1, the school board members shot down the superintendent's proposal to modify the existing challenge and instructional materials policies and instead took the power of creating the curriculum committee away from the superintendent. This is a victory for not only intellectual freedom, but also for the students and teachers of Dixie County. This incident has prompted the school board members to take a more active role in not simply passing the superintendent's policies, but instead to carefully studying proposed documents and consider their potential ramifications for students before they are voted into effect.

Lindsey Whittington is currently the Library Media Specialist and Advanced Placement English Language teacher at her alma mater, Dixie County High School located in Cross City, Florida. She is currently pursuing an additional degree from the University of West Florida and will graduate in 2018 with a Master's degree in Educational Leadership and Administration.

Check Out Florida Authors

By Maria Gebhardt

When most people think of Florida, endless beaches and vacations come to mind. In the midst of that, sometimes unrealized by many, is the fact that numerous famous authors live in our land of sun. Open up books from Florida authors and you will find fascinating mysteries, hilarious capers, and stories that will pique any reader's interest—and many of the plots are situated in Florida or about Florida. The Sunshine State has incredible connections to literary works and you will find some great reads from people who call Florida home.

Dave Barry and Carl Hiaasen are two beloved writers who spent decades working together at the *Miami Herald* writing anticipated weekly columns for South Florida readers. Barry and Hiaasen each authored a collection of Florida-themed books that showcase the unique and exciting world of the southernmost state.

Barry, a Pulitzer Prize winner, shares his thoughts of Florida in his latest book, *Best. State. Ever.*, and lets readers know that no matter what, Florida is not a boring place to live in. An earlier book, *Live Right & Find Happiness*, provides insight about this great state that he would share with future generations, including his grandchildren.

Carl Hiaasen, a native of Plantation, Florida, released his latest book, *Razor Girl*, in 2016. Filled with complicated characters and witty humor, this edition adds to his collection of more than twenty books, including *Chomp* and *Star Island*.

Tim Dorsey and Randy Wayne White are two other Florida novelists with a national readership. Dorsey grew up in Riviera Beach, Florida, and was a former *Tampa Tribune* reporter. *Clownfish Blues* is part of Dorsey's Florida fiction series. The main character Serge A. Storm shares an intriguing tale about filming the Route 66 series in a new light—even if Route 66 did not pass through Florida—all while people are trying to win big by fixing the lottery. Other books of his include *Tiger Shrimp Tango*, *Pineapple Grenade*, and *Nuclear Jellyfish*.

Randy Wayne White calls Sanibel Island home and is the author of the Doc Ford series of strange cases. In the latest book, *Mangrove Lightning*, ghosts from a 1925 murder stalk Ford, a marine biologist that resides on the Gulf Coast.

Connie May Fowler graduated from the University of Tampa and is a Florida writer. Her fiction works include *Before Women Had Wings* that was turned into a television movie and won the Southern Book Critics Circle Award. Her latest book, a memoir, *A Million Fragile Bones*, shares her story of the tremendous impact along the Gulf Coast of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

Elizabeth Dewberry resides outside of Tallahassee and is known for her psychological fiction thrillers including *His Lovely Wife* and *Sacrament of Lies*. The main character in *His Lovely Wife*, Ellen Baxter, is not only mistaken for Princess Diana, but sees similarities in her life with the royal figure. The book describes an intriguing comparison of the lives of these two women and their struggles.

C.S. Challinor resides in Florida and writes her Rex Graves mystery series, *Murder Comes Calling* and *Judgment of Murder*, based in familiar parts of the state. The series has a total of nine works.

Lisa Unger, a Tampa resident, has written fifteen novels including *The Red Hunter* and *Ink and Bone*. Unger keeps readers in suspense with her psychological thrillers.

Brenda Jackson was born and still resides in Jacksonville. Her contemporary romance novels of the Madaris Family & Friends Series include *Taste of Passion* and *Slow Burn*.

Chris Kuzeneski is a Tampa resident and author of a suspense series including *Death Relic* and *Secret Crown*. *The Prisoner's Gold* won the 2016 Thriller Award for Ebook of the Year by the International Thriller Writers.

Set in Fort Lauderdale, The Dead-End Job Mystery Series by Elaine Viets, showcases the intriguing stories of a private investigator Helen Hawthorne. *The Act of Murder* is Viets' fifteenth book.

Mary Kay Andrews was born in St. Petersburg and has published twenty-four novels. *The High Tide Club* will be released in 2018 and takes readers on a journey through romance, friendship and a secret past.

The list goes on. Judy Blume, Janet Evanovich, James Patterson, Stuart Woods, Brad Meltzer, and so many other authors enjoy Florida either as permanent residents or snowbirds. And let's not forget the authors who lived in Florida and left their legacy in years past: Elmore Leonard, Ernest Hemingway, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, Zora Neale Hurston, Marjory Stoneman Douglas, and many more who are now part of Florida's history.

Florida authors are a great way to share stories, local settings, and urban legends that make the fifth largest state in the nation with more than twenty million residents unique and unforgettable. Their books are definitely worth checking out.

Maria Gebhardt holds a MSLIS from Florida State University and a MBA from Florida Atlantic University. She is the editor of *Florida Libraries* and is a Manager, Integrated Marketing Communications & Social Media at Broward County Public Schools.