

President-Elect First Quarter Report

American Library Association

December 9, 2025

Introduction

It is an honor to share with the Executive Board, Council, Membership and Staff my first quarter report as President-Elect of the American Library Association. This report outlines the activities I've undertaken to prepare for and complete my duties and responsibilities as President-Elect this quarter.

In preparation for my presidential term, I attended **orientation** April 28–30, 2025, with other new Executive Board members. Staff and outgoing board members presented an excellent overview of Board roles and responsibilities. I have a lot of gratitude for the warm welcome I received from ALA President 2024–2025 Cindy Hohl, experienced and new board members, the governance team, and other staff members. I also enjoyed attending the **ALA Annual Conference in Philadelphia** June 26–30, 2025, where I observed the Executive Board and Council meeting and attended the inauguration of President Sam Helmick and other incoming member leaders.

Learning and Appreciation

My work in July began with learning and thinking about ALA's new [strategic plan](#) and [ALA Forward](#), ALA's financial challenges, and the transition from Interim Executive Director Leslie Burger to our new Executive Director Dan Montgomery. I also learned where ALA and other library champions were on national advocacy during a challenging time when federal actions were threatening a shutdown of the Institute of Museum and Library Services and funding for libraries. I greatly appreciate the onboarding calls with ALA President 2025–2026 Sam Helmick and Treasurer Neal. I thank ALA Executive Board members, Council, member-leaders, and staff for their wisdom and collaboration. Thank you as well to Interim

Executive Director Leslie Burger and Deputy Director Melissa Walling for their leadership before Dan Montgomery began.

I also want to acknowledge all the tremendous support I've received from home including from City Manager Yi-An Huang and his team, Mayor E. Denise Simmons and the Cambridge City Council; Carson McGrath, Elizabeth Edwards, Joy Kim, Muna Kangsen and the truly awesome staff at the Cambridge Public Library; CPL Trustees, Foundation and Friends; and Micah John, Micah Woo, and Grace McCauley.

Executive Board

As an Executive Board member, I have attended several Board meetings between August 2025 and December 4, 2025, and participated in voting and discussion. Additionally, I am serving as liaison to the Board of United for Libraries and the ALA Affiliates Committee, and serve on the Finance & Audit Committee. In my President-Elect role, I have also presided when President Helmick was unavailable.

ALA Committee on Appointments and Committee on Committees

On August 28, 2025, there was a joint kick off-meeting for the ALA Committee on Appointments and Council Committee on Committees to orient each committee's work on the Association's appointment process. I am thankful to the President-Elects of the ALA Divisions for their wisdom and efforts on the **Committee on Appointments**: Dr. April Dawkins, American Association of School Librarians (AASL); Ariana Hussain, Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC); Dr. Alexia Hudson-Ward, Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL); Steve Kelley, Core: Leadership, Infrastructure, Futures; Jamar Rahming, Public Library Association (PLA); Rebecca Graffe, Reference Users Library Association (RUSA); Lauren Trujillo, United for Libraries; and Valerie Tagoe, Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA).

I am also grateful for the members of the **Committee on Committees (CoC)** for their advice on committee appointments: Bradley Kuykendall, Erika Long, Ana Elisa De Campos Salles and Joseph Thompson, with guidance from ALA staff members Sheryl Reyes and Yamile Madrigal. Members of CoC also hosted an [Executive Board Open House Webinar](#) held virtually on Thursday, November 13, 2025. Thank you to former Executive Board members who shared their Board experiences: Tamika Barnes, Ed Garcia, and Karen Schneider. Council members were encouraged to submit their names for consideration as candidates for the Executive Board. CoC members are in the process of finalizing a slate of candidates for two board vacancies, taking into account Board roles, responsibilities, skills and abilities of candidates, as well as representation of current Board members who will remain on the Board.

Spokesperson for the Association in the Absence of the President or When Asked

- On behalf of President Helmick, I attended the **World Library & Information Congress (WLIC)** in Astana, Kazakhstan, with librarians from around the world from August 18–22, 2025. It was a remarkable experience, and featured a rich knowledge and cultural exchange, and global goodwill. Highlights included the Management of Library Associations meeting, International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Green Awards, ALA International Relations Round Table (IRRT) dinner, the United States delegates meeting with Michael Dowling, and Kazakhstan’s cultural evening. I was honored to participate in Vicki McDonald’s Presidential program and accept the Best Green Award 3rd Place on behalf of Nashville Public Library, Tennessee, USA. I also toured the nearby Nazarbayev University Library, welcomed international ALA members at the ALA booth, and had many one-on-one and small group conversations over coffee or a meal. Congratulations to the conference and city hosts!

- It was meaningful to share welcome remarks and represent ALA at **REFORMA’s National Conference VIII** in Long Beach, California on September 19, 2025. I spoke about the importance of REFORMA’s work and how library workers open doors of

possibility. Thank you to President Ady Huertas, Cynthia Bautista, and Madeline Peña for their invitation and warm hosting.

- It was a pleasure to represent ALA at the **Association of Research Libraries** meeting in Oxon Hill, Maryland October 7–8, 2025, and hear about issues and trends in academic research libraries and adjacent institutions, including the scholarly research process, AI, and the public trust. I appreciated having a chance to engage in conversation with leading voices in the field. Congratulations to ARL President Rhea Ballard-Thrower and the ARL Board, its Program Planning Task Force, staff, and all the wonderful ARL Fellows.

- On behalf of President Helmick, I had the honor of keynoting at the **Korean Library Association’s 80th Anniversary meeting** in Suwon, Korea. My speech addressed challenges facing libraries worldwide, and provided an overview of library trends in the United States and ALA activities. I also gave welcome remarks to open the conference, and congratulated the Korean Library Association for 80 years of advancing library services and to the National Library in Seoul on its 80th anniversary. On October 23, 2025, I also delivered opening remarks, entitled “Libraries Connecting Climate Environment, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Knowledge, and the Future,” at the **Gyeonggi Library International Conference**, and extend my congratulations on the creation of the new visionary and sustainable Gyeonggi Library. I delivered one more talk at the Jungia Small Library, which is run by the Seongnam City Youth Foundation. Additionally, I thanked the Director and Deputy of the Sunkyong Library for providing a tour of this beautiful library set in the foothills of historic Suwon.

- On behalf of President Helmick, I was honored to attend the **Sharjah Book Fair** in the United Arab Emirates, November 7–10, 2025, and deliver the opening keynote at the **Sharjah International Library Conference** on behalf of ALA on November 9, 2025. Our hosts, Ahmed Al Ameri and the Sharjah Book Authority offered top-notch coordination from door to door, meal to meal, and the conference to cultural

excursion. Congratulations to Michael Dowling and Kimberly Redd for all their excellent coordination as well. I learned a lot about trends, outlooks, and best practices in libraries from outstanding speakers, including Dr. Sandy Hirsh, Louise Macleod, Delandrus Seales, Rebekah Cummings, Rebecca Miller Waltz, and Melissa Bowles-Terry. I enjoyed engaging with international librarians from the Philippines, Lebanon, Malaysia, Kuwait, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and the United States, among other countries. I also enjoyed our excursions including to the Sharjah Public Library and House of Wisdom Library. And what an inspiration to share a 4:30 a.m. taxi with L.A.-based author Ben Loory and jump into his fairy tale dream world on the plane home. I am grateful to have explored a region of the world I hadn't previously visited, and to connect with so many colleagues through the love of reading, ideas, and our shared humanity.

Legislative and Intellectual Freedom Advocacy

- On July 15, 2025, I **testified** at [a hearing on how changes to federal policy and cuts to federal funding affect the Commonwealth of Massachusetts](#), specifically the creative and tourism sectors. The hearing was held by the House Committee on Federal Funding, Policy and Accountability: ***"Libraries and their services are essential community resources and critical pillars of democracy that are endangered by targeted federal funding cuts."***

- On July 22, 2025, I **testified** at the Massachusetts State House in support of [S.2328/H.3594, An Act Regarding Freedom of Expression](#). This act protects the fundamental American right to free speech, free inquiry, and the right for Massachusetts residents to form and express their opinions, as specified in the First Amendment and the Massachusetts Constitution. In addition to protecting against viewpoint discrimination, the act prohibits retaliation and intimidation against library employees for performing their duties in a manner consistent with the First Amendment and state standards. Authors, publishers, readers, and library representatives from across Massachusetts convened to speak in support of the

freedom to read. In November, the Freedom to Read Act passed in the Senate and moved to the House!

- At the hearing on July 22, 2025 I also **testified** in support of [H.3595/S.2330](#), **An Act addressing challenges facing public libraries and digital resource collections:** *“Ebooks, audiobooks, and other digital resources enable older people, people with disabilities, and others who may find these resources more accessible and manageable than paper books to read.”*

- On November 12, 2025 I **testified** before the Joint Committee on Education, Massachusetts State Legislature in support of [H.4207/S.428](#), **An Act Relative to School Library Standards**, which promotes effective school libraries using the **American Association of School Library standards:** *“Effective school libraries are a critical resource for teaching students to navigate the modern information landscape. By adopting the most recent effective school library standards of the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), a division of the American Library Association, and Massachusetts School Library Association, school libraries will prepare students in Massachusetts to succeed at school and beyond.”*

- This fall, in between meetings in Maryland, I spent a day and a half working at the Public Policy and Advocacy office in Washington, DC. Thank you to Lisa Varga, Associate Executive Director and team for their invitation, and for the time they spent providing legislative and advocacy updates.

Media and Amplifying Messages

- On April 14, 2025, [WBUR](#), Boston’s NPR station, interviewed me about my election as 2026–2027 president of the American Library Association.

- [Trump is trying to dismantle America's libraries. Cambridge's McCauley has been elected to fight.](#) (May 4, 2025, *Cambridge Day*)
- I have shared ALA's posts on Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn and BlueSky, including sustainability news, advocacy updates, For Our Libraries campaigns, I Love My Librarian Awards, and Banned Book weeks.
- I've reposted and amplified work by [ALA affiliates](#) and the [Joint Council of Librarians of Color](#) (JCLC).

Member Engagement and Outreach

I appreciate the opportunities that I have had to attend library conferences and visit libraries, and the resulting meetings that fostered engagement and connections, and will help to encourage future membership and support. I also met separately with many members and heard their concerns and hopes for the Association.

- On July 17, 2025, I spoke at the **Westchester Library System's Public Library Directors Association (PLDA)** retreat in Chappaqua, New York. It was a wonderful day for connection, reflection, and strategic thinking. I also enjoyed member-leader Rebekkah Smith Aldrich's talk. I am thankful to Jennifer Coulter, President of PLDA, and Jennifer Daddio and the staff of the Chappaqua Library, for hosting and providing a lovely tour.

2025-2026 ALA CD#29
2025/2026 ALA Membership Info Session

- This summer, I visited: **Ocracoke Community Library** in North Carolina; **Annawan Library, Mineral Gold Library,** and **Sheffield Library** in Illinois; and **Newton Public Library** in Massachusetts. I toured the historic **Acton Memorial Library** in Massachusetts with Public Library Association Board member Maria Palacio, and this fall I attended the opening of the new makerspace at **Hopkinton Public Library** in Massachusetts.

- This fall the **Cambridge Public Library Foundation** hosted A Soirée Celebrating Libraries on September 12, 2025. Speakers included Foundation Board member Sheila Thimba, Cambridge Public Library Archivist Alyssa Pacy, and William Rawn Associates architect Cliff Gayley. The Foundation was generous in recognizing my national role, and their library celebration enabled me to spend time with several new ALA members.

- On September 22, 2025, 2007–2008 ALA President Loriene Roy and I co-presented at the **European Conference of Information Literacy** in Bamberg, Germany. It was great to hear several sessions that cited the [ACRL Framework for Information Literacy](#), and chilling to hear about censorship challenges being faced by some European libraries. I also toured the University of Bamberg library and a public library branch.

- On October 4, 2025, I kicked off **Banned Books Week** on a panel at the **Canton Public Library** in Massachusetts. My remarks centered on the Banned Books Week theme, “Censorship is So 1984,” and what it means to me. I enjoyed a robust conversation with other intellectual freedom advocates, including Liz Phipps-Soeiro, Rob Boston, Matthew Amory, Jen Varney, and Andrea Capone. The event featured [The New England Intellectual Freedom Hotline](#), [Let Freedom Read Day](#), and [Unite Against Book Bans](#).

2025-2026 ALA CD#29
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- I presented a keynote at the **New England Library Association Annual Convention** in Newport, Rhode Island, on October 26, 2025. I spoke on how to *Be a Force for Good: Lift People Up and Help Them to Soar*, and participated in opening ceremonies with Senator Jack Reed and Rhode Island Chief of Library Services, Karen Mellor. Thank you to Joanna Fuchs, Jennifer Gehly, and their colleagues. I also attended the wall breaking ceremony at the Middletown Library, Middletown, Rhode Island, on Oct. 27, 2025. Congratulations to Library Director Kimberly Usselman, her colleagues, and the library's trustees!

- On November 4, 2025, I participated in a Q&A discussion with **Emporia State University's Student Chapter** of the American Library Association.

- On November 5, 2025, I spoke via a recorded message for the **Massachusetts Library System Annual Council of Members** meeting, providing updates from ALA.

- I shared recorded opening remarks for the 2025 **Boston Globe - Horn Book Awards** on November 6, 2025, which were hosted at the Cambridge Public Library, Massachusetts.

- I gave a keynote at **Citizens for Maryland Libraries 2025 Annual Conference** entitled "Libraries as Lifelines: The Power of Partnerships to Pathways of Possibility." Fittingly, this event took place on October 11, Let Freedom Read Day, at the Anne Arundel County Public Library's Michael E. Busch Annapolis Library. Thank you to the organizers, co-presenters, hosts, and participants, including Skip Auld, Quiana Johnson, Tatanisha Love, Sophia Sotilleo, Joe Thompson, and Aaron Wilson, as well as Maryland State Librarian Morgan Miller. Toni Negro shared that she has been an ALA member for 61 years!

- It was a pleasure to give remarks and attend **Ed Garcia's Page Turner Award Celebration** given by the Rhode Island Center of the Book. The event took place in the beautiful William Hall Library in Cranston, Rhode Island, on November 13, 2025. Many of us spoke about the leadership that Ed has contributed to libraries locally and nationally, especially his advocacy and intellectual freedom efforts.
- On December 1 and 2, 2025, I visited **Lehigh University** in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and delivered a keynote on the State of America's Libraries. Thank you to Boaz Nadav Manes and colleagues for the warm welcome.

Freedom to Read Foundation

I attended my first virtual Freedom to Read Foundation (FTRF) meeting on November 10, 2025, and I am enjoying getting to know this board of intellectual freedom champions, led by Freedom to Read President Lesliediana Jones.

Challenges

- I have taken on the President-Elect role in a time of change and challenge for ALA and the library industry.
- The Association is facing major fiscal challenges and initiated a reduction in force and program reductions this fall, which was stressful for everyone, especially those whose positions were cut. I thank former and current staff members for their service to ALA.

- Libraries, including school, academic, and public, are facing many issues, including right to read challenges, budget cuts and economic uncertainty, concerns about access and equity, supporting information literacy in a time of misinformation, understanding AI, and recent federal actions.

- A lot of ALA Executive Board work is virtual, formal, and scheduled adjacent to local meetings. This means that board members have limited time to get to know each other informally and understand the perspective that each of us brings to our work.

- I am trying to listen to member concerns and share them with Board members and staff.

- I am balancing this amazing volunteer position with a full-time job and my commitment to my two children.

Opportunities

- I look forward to:
 - Continuing to get to know and work alongside the talented and dedicated Executive Board members, Council, member-leaders, and ALA Executive Director Dan Montgomery and his excellent team.
 - Deepening member connections across the Association and encouraging new and renewed membership through engagement and outreach activities.

2025-2026 ALA CD#29
2025/2026 ALA Membership Info Session

- Partnering and collaborating with other library organizations, champions, and affiliates.

- We all get to join in celebrating the victory for the coalition of advocates who have worked to save the **Institute of Museum and Library Services**. On November 21, 2025, the [U.S. District Court for the District of Rhode Island struck down attempts to dismantle the Institute of Museum and Library Services \(IMLS\)](#). I will continue to work with others to advance advocacy and funding requests, including at Library Legislative Day in Washington, DC, in February 2026.

- I have formed a **Presidential Advisory Committee!** I am thankful to members from across the Association who will advise me during my lead up and through my Presidency: Sonia Alcantara-Antoine, Tamika Barnes, Sabrina Bobadilla, Brett Bonfield, Chris Brown, Jaena Rae Cabrera, Becky Calzada, Dr. Nicole Cooke, Kate Flaim, Dr. Deborah Lang Froggatt, Ed Garcia, Loida Garcia-Febo, Mandi Goodsett, Jody Gray, Dr. Sandra Hirsh, Jason Homer, Dr. Aisha Johnson, Lesliediana Jones, Dr. Cynthia Landrum, Tatanisha Love, Bernice Meja, Ziba Pérez, Dr. Gary Shaffer, Rosalie Stewart, Margaret Sullivan, and Janice Welburn.

- I look forward to celebrating incoming member-leaders at the **inaugural celebration** on June 29, 2026. Please save the date!

Looking Ahead

This next quarter, I will work on committee appointments, ongoing Board and Council responsibilities, Freedom to Read Foundation business, continuing meetings and business of the Association, continuing presidential orientations, and the following engagements:

2025-2026 ALA CD#29
2025/2026 ALA Membership Info Session

- Lunch and Learn with the University of Southern California Student Chapter of ALA, January 13, 2026
- Speaking at the Simsbury Public Library, Connecticut, January 16, 2026
- Executive Board meeting in Chicago, January 23–25, 2026
- Youth Media Awards, Chicago, January 26, 2026
- Recharging in Challenging Times Virtual Event, February 10, 2026
- Library Legislative Breakfast at the Cambridge Public Library, February 6, 2026
- Library Legislative Day in Washington, DC, February 20, 2026

Conclusion

Thank you for this opportunity to share my first quarter report on activities and focus areas. I look forward to working together to support ALA's mission: *Empowering and advocating for libraries and library workers to ensure equitable access to information for all*. Libraries are beacons of learning, bridges of understanding, and sanctuaries of possibility because of the work that we do.

Sincerely yours,

Maria McCauley