Summer 2021
News and Calendar
Note from the President

In a recent Los Angeles Times podcast by Gustavo Arellano, in conversation with Patt Morrison, I heard them reference several of the milestones that I have seen at the Library in the past decade. While listening to them, I reflected on the passing of Measure L, which increased library access for all Angelenos, the creation of the Octavia Lab at Central Library that allows library patrons to engage with the latest technology in a state-of-the-art makerpace, and watching the Library provide a platform to upcoming talent like Amanda Gorman, who has gone on to not only impress Los Angeles, but the entire country.

Most library systems are intellectual epicenters but the Los Angeles Public Library is more than that. It stands out in communities across Los Angeles through a dynamic endowed fellowship program that will bring some of the most brilliant and creative individuals and communities to share their talents with the public in our libraries across our city. Our upcoming club and society exhibitions is scheduled for the spring and will further explores how we connect with one another and what we have learned about ourselves during this past year of isolation. We are stepping up on our long-term commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion and I am very proud of the work that is being done. Our Teens Leading Change (Democracy Scholars) project through the Getty Foundation that will focus on art and science. As always, the Library Foundation of Los Angeles is supporting the Library through our fundraising efforts but also through complementary programming that I believe can be transformative for both individuals and communities.

I am grateful for the tsunami of letters and calls from Members of the Foundation in September. It has been my pleasure to work for an organization as remarkable as the Library Foundation of Los Angeles in partnership with the Los Angeles Public Library’s greatest assets. Similarly, as a private Foundation that works in partnership and in support of the LAPL, we believe that having a diverse array of perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds is immensely beneficial to our organization, our mission, and our work.

We acknowledge that the experiences of marginalized communities are still marked by biases, prejudices, and in the worst cases, illegal action. We are responsible for our own learning and growth in matters of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. This means being open minded and willing to engage in honest and respectful conversations.

We commit to setting and reinforcing values that uphold justice and equity in the workplace. We further commit to ensuring these values inform strategic plans and goal-setting across our organization to promote equitable practices and alignment with our vision and our mission to those we serve. We understand that there is much more work to be done, but we commit to always being on the forward path to growth.

Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

With tremendous excitement, the Library Foundation of Los Angeles in partnership with the Los Angeles Public Library is pleased to announce the creation of a new interdisciplinary fellowship program. This program will cultivate the creative power found in communities across Los Angeles through a dynamic endowed fellowship program that has been generously jump-started with a major gift from the Lenore H. and Bernard A. Greenberg Fund, with thanks also to the support of Kitty Greenberg.

Slated to launch before the Fall of 2021, this fellowship program is envisioned to elevate the work of a diverse array of practitioners, including artists, writers, thinkers, makers, performers, podcasters, entrepreneurs, researchers, composers, organizers, scientists, master gardeners, generalists, storytellers, programmers, and other creative specialists. The fellows will deeply interconnect with the collections and services of LAPL branches across the city, and their unique perspectives and creative processes will be leveraged to augment and reimagine the Library’s offerings, transforming the library experience for teens, youth, adults, and families. The purpose of the fellowship is to engage, inspire, and benefit the communities that the Library serves for years to come, as we reimagine the Library of tomorrow.

LFLA is immensely grateful for this transformative gift, which will build a program that is unique to one of the most important cultural and educational institutions of our city—the Los Angeles Public Library. We look forward to sharing more in the coming months as the fellows are announced and begin their groundbreaking, progressive work.
Los Angeles Public Library News

Rolling Out a Grand Reopening

“We are excited to be starting this new chapter, and we know Angelenos Libraries are the civic and cultural heartbeats of our communities, and an extraordinary resource for Angelenos looking to fire up their imaginations and pursue their dreams,” said Mayor Eric Garcetti. In early May, the Los Angeles Public Library launched its gradual reopening, following the closures of all libraries last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. “Our next phase in reopening our library doors marks the next step toward reimagining this critical entry point for learning, literacy, and literature back into the everyday lives of our residents—and another crucial marker on our road to recovery,” added the Mayor.

As the library continues its rolling reopening, it is offering select services at libraries across the city, while focusing on creating safe and welcoming spaces for everyone. Services include quick browsing, checking out of materials inside libraries, computer access, pick up of holds and mobile printing orders, and libraries to showcase services and resources.

Many Angelenos who are excited to return to their neighborhood library have also been sharing their gratitude for the online services they depend on during the closures last year. Silver Lake Branch Library is one branch that reopened in early June, and a patron named Amy recently posted her gratitude on the Silver Lake Branch Facebook page:

“Thank you for being a lifeline during the pandemic. My five year old doesn’t want to play with toys anymore because she gets so absorbed in the books we get from your branch every week. You have helped inspire the next generation of voracious readers.”

From downloading e-books to online homework help and research tools for remote students and learners of all ages, the Library’s online services will continue to be available. But whether in person or online, the Library remains a cornerstone of the community that everyone can depend on to stay connected, informed, and inspired.

For a complete list of open libraries and services, visit lapl.org/reopening or #LAPLreopen on social media for updates.

Los Angeles Public Library News

Honk if You Love Libraries! Toyota Helps to Mobilize the Los Angeles Public Library

In May, the Southern California Toyota Dealers Association (TDA) through LFLA, donated a new 2021 Toyota Sienna to support community outreach, outdoor programming, and delivering of materials to and from the 73 libraries throughout Los Angeles. “We’re so excited to have a safe, environmentally-friendly, 21st century vehicle to help us get the word out about all of the wonderful resources that the Library has to offer teens, children, their parents, caregivers, and educators!” said Candice Mack, the managing librarian of Teen Services.

The van has been essential to supporting outreach for programs like Teens Leading Change and Read Baby Read. With the city covering 450 square miles and young patrons who may have access and mobility issues, the new hybrid van will help to expand services for youth and their parents and caregivers. “One of our goals has always been to be embedded in the community and to meet our patrons where they are so that we can better collaborate with each other. The new van makes it possible for us to do that more effectively and with more flexibility,” said Mack.

As the Library continues to expand its reopenings of locations across the city, the timing of the new van hitting the pavement is perfect to raise awareness for the wide-ranging educational and cultural programs and services. This summer, look for the Toyota Sienna rolling through your neighborhood as librarians welcome families back through mobile story walks, pop-up storytimes, and more fun interactive outdoor programs.

Teens Demonstrate Democracy Now

Libraries have long been leaders in their communities, and the Democracy Project - Teens Leading Change (TLC) program empowers young people to get engaged as well. This past May, the Los Angeles Public Library and the Library Foundation of Los Angeles hosted a special Zoom celebration to showcase the visionary work of this past school year’s teen leaders.

Kicking off the event, Magistrate Judge Karen Stevenson, who also serves on the LFLA board, reflected on the meaning of democracy. “Democracy is the idea that the citizens of a country should take an active role,” said Judge Stevenson. “It’s not some distant and distant activity you do when you are finally old enough to vote. No, you are demonstrating democracy right now.” Judge Stevenson applauded the teens for taking on some of the most challenging problems that our community is currently facing like education equity, food insecurity, and mental health.

Many of this cycle’s projects directly confronted issues that were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Topics included: inequalities in education that worsened due to remote learning; focusing on mental health struggles during the pandemic; inequities in access to technology and the internet; social justice in relationship to the school-to-prison pipeline; and urban food insecurities. Although the school year has ended, the teens will continue to work on their passion projects.
“No matter how much the odds are stacked against you, and no matter how many times you are beaten down and belittled and told, no, you can’t be here…you know who you are. You know your worth, you know that you have an entire community and entire family that will back you up,” reflected Cindy Yan, a UCLA student who grew up in Chinatown and received a scholarship from the Friends of the Chinatown Library.

Chinatown’s Multi-Layered History Comes to Life

When you visit Chinatown, you might get a sense that the area has a rich and unique history, not to mention the beautiful architecture and great food. But what you don’t see is the remarkable tenacity and communal effort required to build this during a time when racist, exclusionary policies were the law of the land,” said Todd Lee, Director of Special Projects for LFLA and one of the co-curators for this exhibition. Los Angeles’ Chinatown was the first in North America to be planned and owned by people of Chinese descent. The story of Los Angeles’ New Chinatown began in 1938, after the demolition of Old Chinatown to make way for Union Station.

When you first started?

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“By capturing the stories of people with deep ties to the neighborhood in their own words, it really provides context and deeper insight for the visitors,” Lee added. “Stories and Voices from L.A. Chinatown” "By capturing the stories of people with deep ties to the neighborhood in their own words, it really provides context and deeper insight for the visitors,” Lee added. “Stories and Voices from L.A. Chinatown”

The Huntington Library, Roger S. Hong Collection.

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Maybe you’re tech-savvy, but are having an unbelievable glitch downloading an e-book, or maybe you’re setting up an email account for the very first time—whatever the tech scenario, the Los Angeles Public Library’s Cybertuans are here to save your day. This LFLA-supported initiative was established to address digital equity and literacy by employing, training, and placing computer aides in libraries across the city to provide hands-on computer and technical assistance and training to all patrons.

The in-person component was a big part of your jobs. How did things change when you worked to relaunch the services virtually?

We checked in with two Cybertuans from the digital frontlines who harnessed their own tech expertise to help relaunch the program virtually in January 2021. Lana Lin has been a Cybertua for the past three years at the Arroyo Seco Branch. She is now a Cybertuan Cues Manager who is working on her masters in Library and Information Science. Nancy Herrera has been a Cybertuan at Central Library since 2018 and she is also a graduate student at Harvard’s Extension School. This dedicated team spoke about their efforts to ensure Angelenos have access to critical services when the Library was closed and now as it reopens.

Herrera: I loved the environment [at Central] because it was so huge. I worked with a diverse group of people. I would help people with their resumes, uploading documents, scanning, and printing. People would also bring in their computers and we’d help set them up. We’d help aspiring YouTube users and aspiring filmmakers edit their videos. It was always fun.

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Lind, I know you when I pick up I’m going to speak to you...I grew up in downtown LA, where I had gotten to know who is a Spanish or English speaker. At Central, I was the only person who spoke Spanish, and it was a little dance of everyone trying to find the one Spanish speaker. But now the line is direct to a Spanish speaker, so [the patrons] know when I pick up I’m going to speak in Spanish and they’re not going to struggle. They’ve been so grateful because before they couldn’t talk about technology [in a language they don’t speak] and they felt ashamed. Teaching them about the language of technology has been so helpful to them.

Connect with a Cybertuan today lapl.org/cybertuans.

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Building rendering by Yiu Chung Hong by Eric Webster and Adam Wilson, architecture p. 1975.

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Council President Ela Jhaveri Rises to the Challenge

In February of 2020 when Ela Jhaveri accepted the position to become the next president of The Council, she had no idea that the world would begin to close down because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council, which has become renowned for its premiere fundraising events, would not be able to gather in person, yet supporting the Los Angeles Public Library during this challenging time remained critical.

Jhaveri credits past Council Presidents Betty Applebum and Kelly Anderson and the Library Foundation of Los Angeles team for guiding her along the way. “During the pandemic year, we had many new Members join The Council to support our work,” she said, “the group’s growing momentum.” More than ever, the Library programs are needed because [so many] children were learning remotely and the Library was available to support them in every way.” Jhaveri also credits how The Council’s tight-knit community forged ahead through their shared love for libraries. “Our Members have been extremely supportive during this period.”

Jhaveri first became connected to The Council in 1997 when she attended a Literary Feast and immediately knew that she had found a mission she could get behind. She was really excited about supporting programs of the Los Angeles Public Library as well as the opportunity to become friends with like-minded people she wouldn’t have otherwise met. She also fondly remembers vivid conversations with authors like Viet Thanh Nguyen, Salman Rushdie, and Erwin Chemistinsky.

Over the last few months, The Council turned to Zoom to host online events. Although Jhaveri missed in-person gatherings, she saw some benefits, “We got famous international authors who we would not have had access to like Maggie O’Farrell joined us live from Scotland,” she said. Opening access to international voices is especially important to Jhaveri, who grew up in India until she was a teenager. Her family moved to Beirut, Lebanon, and then she attended university in England. She went back to India, where she met her husband. In 1976, they moved to America and have been active in the Los Angeles community for over 45 years.

The couple owns a business in the jewelry district, so they’ve witnessed the dramatic transformation of downtown L.A. Pre-pandemic, they loved being able to go out after work and walk to plays at Mark Taper, musicals at Ahmanson, music at Disney, museums, events at the California Club, and of course all of the special Council events at Central Library. But Jhaveri understands the Los Angeles Public Library’s reach extends well beyond downtown.

“Our library system in L.A. is spread over so many different communities. What the Library has been able to do in terms of offering guidance and educational programs to all different age groups—that’s been really important for The Council to support that. We’ve seen over the years how the Library and the Foundation have brought in new programs like recently the Cybernauts, which during the pandemic has helped older adults learn how to send emails or download programs.”

Jhaveri looks forward to The Council reconnecting in-person soon to continue their advocacy work that always rises to the challenge. “The Library is always ahead of what the community needs at the moment. Whatever program is needed, our fundraising will continue to support.”

Elizabeth Toms, Director of Council Relations

“We were an Air Force family during the Vietnam War. My mom often had all four kids (at one point all under seven years old) to entertain by herself and the local libraries were our destination. I have a distinct memory of the basement of a charming old library building in Merced where the children’s department was. I can’t tell you how many times I read Island of the Blue Dolphins. I’ve done many jobs—from working at a newspaper to Musical Theater. When my children were born, I was fortunate to be able to stay home with them and like so many of our Council Members, ran Parent Associations and was on several Boards as a volunteer—at one point, I was on five! When it came time to get back into the workforce, all these volunteer skills transferred beautifully. I was excited to assist an organization that had a real impact on our community on a large scale like The Council. While the social aspect of the group is fun—I remember a few years ago, we had Michael Feinstein and Leslie Bricusse for a December Council Event at the California Club. One of the surprise guests that Michael invited was Lisa Minnelli. Lisa arrived later and her driver was sent over to Library parking. I went and found them—Lisa rolled down her window, smoke billowed out, and she said, ‘Oh honey, you’re coming to rescue me, climb in.’ She was so delightful and everyone enjoyed her appearance— but The Council goes way beyond this fun. Our Members want to hear about further. Lastly, I miss getting able to see all of our fabulous donors interact with each other, LFLA staff, and the author. Each event is always such a positive atmosphere and everyone was always so happy to see each other. It is always interesting to see what parts of the book or what parts of the speech Members want to hear about further. Lastly, I miss seeing everyone’s outfits. Our Council Members are the best dressed group in Los Angeles!”

Ally Gonzalez, Coordinator of Council Relations

“I went to college at Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama. I majored in History and thus spent many hours in our college library reading and writing my thesis. After I graduated, I went on to intern for the Smithsonian at the National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C. My first love was museums, which led to a natural love for libraries. I love the idea that libraries and museums serve as a place for communities to gather, learn more about their shared history, and plan for the future as well. Once I moved back home to Los Angeles, I worked for the Getty Museum in the front lines of museums and events. This job enforced that I wanted to work directly with the public. My job at the Council helps me carry all these loves of working in public spaces, working with the public, and assisting with our many events. My grandmother was a school librarian, so libraries and books were always a part of my childhood. I was fortunate to be surrounded by many passionate readers growing up in my family. Now, The Council is a great group to meet fellow library lovers. It really is a community of people that are eager to discuss their love of libraries and books. They are also very interested in the specific achievements of LFLA and the LAPL. Their passion is infectious and can be felt at any Council event. Our Jon Meacham event was quite memorable — our Members were so excited to hear him speak. His talk kept Members enchanted in every word. I miss getting able to see all of our fabulous donors interact with each other, LFLA staff, and the author. Each event is always such a positive atmosphere and everyone was always so happy to see each other. It is always interesting to see what parts of the book or what parts of the speech Members want to hear about further. Lastly, I miss seeing everyone’s outfits. Our Council Members are the best dressed group in Los Angeles!”
THURSDAY, JULY 29 @ 5:00 PM PST
Notes From the Bathroom Line: Humor, Art, and Low-grade Panic from 150 of the Funniest Women in Comedy with Amy Solomon
featuring Karen Chee and Emily V. Gordon
In this "much-needed dose of delight," Amy Solomon, a producer of the hit HBO shows Silicon Valley and Barry, shares from her new collection of humor pieces, including curated essays, satire, short stories, poetry, cartoons, and artwork from more than 150 of the biggest female comedians today. Notes from the Bathroom Line highlights the work of women continuing to smash the comedy glass ceiling in this long male-dominated field. Listen in as these comedians prove there are no limits to how funny, bad-ass, and revolutionary women can—and continue—to be.

THURSDAY, JULY 8 @ 5:00 PM PST
Erosion: Essays Of Undoing
Terry Tempest Williams
In Conversation with Jessica Strand
"Each of us finds our identity within the communities we call home," writes Terry Tempest Williams in Erosion, a galvanizing new collection of essays that navigates the emotional, geographical, and communal territories of home. Sizing up the assaults on America's public lands and the erosion of our commitment to the open spaces of democracy, Williams fiercely examines the many forms of erosion we face—of democracy, science, compassion, and trust. From the gutting of sacred lands to Native Peoples of the American Southwest to the undermining of the Endangered Species Act, Williams testifies about the harsh reality of the climate crisis and how our earth—our home—is being torn apart.

Media Archive
Need more ALOUD?
Visit the LFLA’s Media Archive to listen to podcasts and watch recordings of hundreds of past ALOUD programs, old and new lfla.org/archive

A Note About In-Person Programming
As of June 15, 2021, the Los Angeles Public Library has reopened its physical doors and is offering select in-person services at 70 libraries across the city. Services may include quick browsing, computer access, pick up of holds, or checking out of materials.

During this phase of reopening, in-person programs and classes are not yet available. Many programs are still available virtually.

Programs produced by the Library Foundation of Los Angeles, including ALOUD, will continue to be hosted virtually, with in-person events anticipated to return in Fall 2021.

The Library Foundation thanks its generous sponsors
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The Los Angeles Public Library Foundation

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The Young Literati 12th Annual Toast took place on Saturday, June 26, marking the LFLA’s first in-person event in over a year. The drive-in style event was held on the roof of the Peterson Automotive Museum.

Guests lounged in their vehicles while enjoying catered boxed meals, mocktails, and performances from Host Whitney Cummings, Sterling K. Brown and Ryan Bathe, Billy Eichner, Ron Funches, Ginnifer Goodwin, Regina King, and Dolly Parton.

Funds raised from this year’s event will enhance the digital offerings and infrastructure of the Library and the LFLA, leveling the playing field for children, offering support for those learning a new skill, providing enlightening cultural programming, and much more.

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Let’s Get Outside

It's summer, and the time is right to opt outdoors! The Library Store will be reopening to in-person shopping in July. The digital shop is always open, with a $5 flat rate for shipping in the continental U.S. Proceeds from all sales support the Los Angeles Public Library, and Library Foundation Members receive discounts on all purchases.

213.228.7550
shop.lfla.org
librarystore@lfla.org
@TheLibraryStore

We're bursting with the news of our upcoming reopening on Monday, July 19!

We can't wait to see you in person, but don't worry if you’ve gotten used to curbside pickup; we're happy to continue offering this convenient service for our customers. Stay tuned for details!