Winter 2021
News and Calendar

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President’s Note

I am delighted that this issue of the Library Foundation of Los Angeles newsletter is an opportunity to talk about my colleagues, whose dedicated work has done so much to articulate and inform the programs of the LAPL. Together, we have the pleasure and privilege of partnering with outstanding librarians, whose creativity and commitment to all Angelenos have made the Los Angeles Public Library a national model.

What is unique about the individuals highlighted in this issue reminds me of why it is that they, among many possibilities, chose to join the Library Foundation of Los Angeles staff. As we will read in this note, the creativity, originality, and empathy of my colleagues has contributed to public libraries being regarded as an example of democracy at its best.

What you might not know about my colleagues is that their love of music, commitment to environmental justice, passion for art and science, and joy at being a parent informs far from their thinking about what libraries can and should be. As members of the public, they have the pleasure and privilege of partnering with outstanding librarians, whose creativity and commitment to all Angelenos have made the Los Angeles Public Library a national model.

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Supporting Libraries Step by Step

When Young Literati Member Sean Detherton’s plan to run a popular marathon in 2020 came to a halt because of the pandemic, he didn’t slow down. Instead, he and his partner Darious Wolak came up with a new plan: they organized their own solo marathon to raise funds and awareness for the Los Angeles Public Library. Combining a passion for running with a passion for libraries, Sean was motivated to run 26.2 miles from downtown to the sea, visiting 12 library branches along the way. The “Maracarnie,” as these punners termed it, raised $10,174 for the Library Foundation. We checked in with Sean and Darius after the race to see what pushed them to the finish line.

How did your love of libraries inspire this idea for a marathon?

Sean: While I love library fans, we weren’t aware of the Young Literati until Covid hit, and we started researching ways we could help in our community. We reached out to the Library Foundation to learn more about how the pandemic was affecting libraries in our area and we learned so much. In-person fundraising is crucial for all public libraries, and we were very fortunate that our friends and family were so supportive and generous. We had friends from all across the country donate and send us messages about why libraries were important to them. It was so heartwarming to hear everyone’s stories and in some ways that made it easier to keep asking people for donations, so that others have the chance to have these experiences as well.

Darious: Sean and I don’t like asking people for money, and in a year like 2020, it was especially hard. But we knew this cause was an important one and it kept us going. We’re very fortunate that our friends and family were so supportive and generous. We had friends from all across the country donate and send us messages about why libraries were important to them. It was so heartwarming to hear everyone’s stories and in some ways that made it easier to keep asking people for donations, so that others have the chance to have these experiences as well.

What was it like ralying a community around your cause?

Sean: It was scary and vulnerable and awkward at times, but it was about the Los Angeles Public Library, which is universally beloved. It became a wonderful opportunity to teach other what we were learning about in terms of the role and value of libraries. Worth every minute.

Darious: What made it easier was the support of Young Literati and our new buddy Rebecca [Millers, Director of Young Literati]. The kindness and openness from every volunteer and employee of LAPL and the Library Foundation kept us going, and helped us reach new heights with the fundraising. If you have an idea for a fundraiser, no matter how ambitious or unusual, reach out and ask for their support! I think someone should lead an annual I’ll run for Young Literati, I’m putting that out into the universe and hope someone reading this will bring it to life. We will jog it!

As we kick off our New Year with many people making resolutions, do you have any advice about connecting personal goals to a larger mission?

Darious: Finding a cause or mission you really connect with is key because that’s what will keep you going. But unlike resolutions, goals, make a list of smaller goals that get you to the main one so that it’s not overwhelming. Don’t be afraid to ask for help! People want to see you succeed, and when you have that support system behind you, the sky’s the limit!

Behind-the-Scenes of the Library Foundation

A lot has changed since the stay-at-home orders hit last March, but our staff has remained hard at work continuing to raise awareness and support for the Los Angeles Public Library. Although our staff can’t gather with you for a Membership reception in the Getty Gallery or for an inspiring ALoud conversation in the Taper Auditorium, we want our community to stay connected. Until we see you again in-person, we hope you can get to know us better by hearing from some of the individuals behind-the-scenes of the Library Foundation about their love for life, libraries, and you.

My fondest memories are going to the AltaMama Public Library with my late grandmother. My mother and grandmother were both librarians in L.A. and Pasadena, so she would have celebrated her 95th birthday in November 2020. When I would go to libraries as a kid, I loved the art classes and browsing the stacks. As a teenager, I read a lot of Hip Hop magazines like The Source, Spin Paper, and Vibe. [Now] I make music for fun. I bought a portable toy record-maker that allows you to record straight to 7” vinyl. I’m a guest music selector for a radio show on 90.7 FM/KPFK. I like to maintain a little mystery, but the show airs from 2-4 a.m. on Sundays or Saturday night— if you will, I have a two to–he t—e a—and an artist. Lately, we watch The Regular Show on loop while we’re working from home, and we love calling books together. I’m interested in finding out what ideas will come out of this period of uncertainty in the world, and the Library is both a comfort and an escape for so many of us in our own way—whether it’s watching free movies, picking up a physical book, or joining a virtual program. Or, maybe it’s just the simple fact that the Library is still here, still in operation while so much of our lives has been uprooted—(that’s) enough reason to be grateful. If I were the Librarian in your life, I would always do my best to make it easier for you to get what you need. At the Library Foundation, I have the privilege to work with some of the kindest and most dedicated Library supporters (especially the Bibliophiles). The Bibliophiles are philanthropists who have decided to leave the Library in their estate plans. There is a high degree of selflessness in our planned giving donors; I think because the Library essentially ‘housed’ her for so many years while she worked to better her community. She gets it, and that is why it is so important to have public libraries for our collective well-being.

Sarah Charlton
Membership Director

“...in middle school, my best friend’s mother was our school librarian, so we often spent our lunch periods or extra time after class hanging out in the library. Libraries have felt like a sort of sanctuary to me ever since. I also was a library aid for two years in high school, where I was taught how to repair broken book spines and realized book hearing was in my future because I personally ‘nonchalantly’ almost all the books sent to the discard bin. I started at the Library Foundation as an intern in 2010! It has been such a privilege to see Library Foundation funded programs in action and how they have evolved over the past 10 years. I have been able to experience first-hand how much the community values. Adult Literacy Services, have spoken to adult graduates of LAPL’s Career High School program, and have personally learned so much from years of incredible ALoud programs. In my pre-pandemic role as a Central Library Director, I was able to talk to the public about the beauty of this space—the historic painted ceilings, the quotes on the building’s exterior, the gorgeous Zodiac chandelier, and the sphinx sculptures holding open books. What I love the most about my job is talking to people and hearing their library story. One that stands out is a former Member who had slowly brought herself out of homesickness and started donating to the Library Foundation after that because the Library essentially ‘housed’ her for so many years while she worked to better her community. I’d love to guess whatever she could because the Library was the only safe place she felt she could go.”
In the late 1960s, in the wake of the Civil Rights movement and rising criticism for the lack of diversity in California’s public university system, UCLA created an Ethnic Communications program to bring filmmakers of color into the school. For decades to come, vital filmmakers like Charles Burnett, Julie Dash, Haile Gerima, Billy Woodberry, and many others emerged. The group became known as the L.A. Rebellion, revolutionizing diverse representation in film and rewriting the language of cinema and liberation.

These Black filmmakers, along with Native American, Latino, and Chicano, and Asian American filmmakers, deeply influenced future generations of UCLA students who studied alongside this cinematic revolution in the making. Lost & Found at the Movies Curator John Nein is one of the UCLA directing alumni who was inspired by the groundbreaking work, but also shocked by the lack of awareness of this story outside of UCLA.

On January 23, Lost & Found at the Movies returned with a new virtual installment to collect on this and other stories of cinematic revolt where Nein talked to acclaimed filmmaker Billy Woodberry about the unheralded history of the L.A. Rebellion.

One reason that few are aware of this story unfolding in the backyard of Hollywood is that many of these films were not available through formal distribution and were incredibly difficult for the public to watch. Before the wider accessibility of DVDs and streaming, the films were often only screened at art house theatres for a week and then disappeared until they were revived years later.

Around 2010, a restoration project at UCLA helped to make some of the films more available and a few distributors also started releasing remastered or restored versions—including Milestone Films, Women Make Movies, and Cohen Media—while others continued to be handled by individual filmmakers—like Haile Gerima’s work. In the years since, these films began to find wider audiences and critical acclaim like Killer of Sheep, Bless Their Little Hearts, and Daughters of the Dust, which were added to the Library of Congress National Film Registry.

But according to Woodberry, one early champion of the L.A. Rebellion was public libraries. Countering an overall cultural slowdown to be open to these films, Woodberry credits the New York and Los Angeles public library systems for discovering the films.

“Sometimes one source of collectors of these films and the people who bought prints and made them available to the public were the librarians,” said Woodberry “The most loyal and open-minded and creative people were the librarians.”

On the occasion of the Lost & Found program, the Library Foundation has supported the acquisition of several essential L.A. Rebellion works for the Los Angeles Public Library that were not previously part of their collection. Library patrons can now read, watch, and learn more about this vibrant part of independent cinema history. Below are a few of these newly acquired works that will be accessible in 2021 at the Library.

Learn more about this Lost & Found program at lfla.org/rebels, or watch the program at vimeo.com/libraryfoundla.
This past fall, the Los Angeles Public Library played an essential role in California’s election process. Nearly 418,000 ballots were cast via the secure Ballot Boxes stationed outside of all 73 neighborhood library locations. Below, see a selection of notable Angelenos who shared a photo of themselves on Instagram voting at the Ballot Boxes.

Live From the Library: Ballot Box Edition

Refresh, Renew, Revive

It’s 2021 and it has never been more important to focus on self-care. The Library Store is committed to supplying you with a variety of wellness needs, from helping you stay calm in turbulent times, to inspiring you with nourishing meals, to encouraging connections, no matter how far away.

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

“The Self-Care Cookbook” $20

“Calm” Quartz Stone Box Set $10

“Peace Out” Loose-leaf Tea $17

“The Little Book of Friendship” $9.99

“Dream Decoder” card set $16.99

“I Miss You - Call Me Now!” Greeting Card $5.50

“Keep in Touch” Greeting Card $6.50

“Dream Decoder” card set $16.99

Actress Jenna Fischer

Choreographer and Drag Queen Laganja Estranja

Actor Zendaya

Actor John Cryer

Actor David Hasselhoff

Actor Ali Wong

Actor Rachel Bloom

Actor and Comedian Ali Wong

Actor and Comedian Rachel Bloom

Entertainer Weird “Al” Yankovic

Actor Sasheer Zamata

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