Finding full-time or even part-time work in public libraries can be challenging at times, so it isn’t uncommon for library staff to stay in one place for a long time when they do find employment. Sometimes though, the work that you find isn’t necessarily where you planned for your career to lead (ie. maybe you are in adult services and you always dreamed of children’s services); or maybe you are ready for a leadership role, but there are no opportunities for you to gain leadership experience with your current employer; or maybe you have no idea what your career goals are and you could really use some guidance. Regardless of your career aspirations, having the support and advice of a trusted mentor can be an invaluable resource.

Mentors are typically experienced professionals from your field of work who will not only be able to offer you objective feedback and advice based on years of experience, but they will also be able to: help you network, connecting you with other professionals who may share similar interests or career paths; help you build your skills, by helping you to identify your strengths and possible opportunities for growth; and help you see things from another perspective, sometimes we get set in our ways, and it is only through the eyes of a trusted mentor that we can see what may need to change. Mentors will be there to help you chart your course, support you through transitions, and celebrate your successes.

Sometimes people are lucky enough to find a mentor within their own organization, but other times this isn’t possible. This is when being a CLA member (shameless plug for CLA) can really benefit you. The Career Development Committee’s mentor program helps pair prospective mentees with mentors who can help them reach their goals. For more information about the mentor program contact the Career Development Committee at clacareercommittee@gmail.com.

By Laura Horn

Enjoy these reflections from CT library staff about their mentors.

From Laura Horn
Farmington Libraries
I have two mentors, Jay Johnston and Richard Conroy.
Thank you to these sponsors and exhibitors for their support:

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Registration opens Feb. 18.
Early bird pricing ends March 23.
Read more about our conference exhibitors

♥Florence Griswold Museum
Open the Museum’s doors to your community by joining the Library Partners Program. Libraries that participate in this program provide their patrons free general admission to the Florence Griswold Museum, while also supporting our high-quality exhibitions, educational programs, and activities for all ages. This has become an enduring partnership between the Museum and the Connecticut library community.

For the yearly fee of $150, Library Partners receive one pass that admits up to 2 adults and 2 children. This pass offers full access to the entire 12-acre campus – the restored boarding house, historic gardens, a renowned collection of American art, education and landscape centers, an artist’s studio, inspiring exhibitions in our modern riverfront gallery, and our new interpretive Artists’ Trail, featuring four different experiences across the Museum’s grounds. Your patrons will thank you for this opportunity!

♥Innovative Document Imaging
Innovative Document Imaging (IDI) company mission is to deliver the best service possible at reasonable cost for the digital conversion of paper documents, newspapers, maps, books, bound materials, microfilm and microfiche. IDI balances price, quality, and speed in order to provide clients digital assets at the specifications and with the necessary tools to meet their requirements, where possible we can exceed their expectations. In addition to data conversion, IDI prides itself on its ability to go the extra step and fulfill metadata, data archiving, or enterprise content management/hosting needs as they arise. IDI maintains an 7,500 state-of-the-art digital conversion facility in Shelton, Connecticut and a 8,500 square facility in East Brunswick, New Jersey.

♥Overdrive
Reading matters, and in 2020 we want to help you foster a love of reading in your community. Learn about OverDrive features that will help you reach and delight more users this year and turn them into lifelong readers.

♥Purple Umbrella Jewelry
Purple Umbrella Jewelry represents approximately 40 different artists from around the world, including unique jewelry made by domestic, international and fair trade artisans.
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Servicestar is the Authorized Reseller for ST Imaging ViewScan microform scanners. The ViewScan 4 is the most robust, highest pixel count image sensor, and easiest to use microfilm scanner available today. With a ViewScan 4 patrons can view, scan, save, print and easily share (email, Family Search, Google Drive, Drop Box, etc) roll film (35 and 16 mm), fiche aperture cards, jackets, color slides, and color 35 mm film negatives all as either positive or negative images and all from within the ViewScan program. Roll film movement is controlled by icons on screen and by familiar buttons on the scanner.

♥URI LIS
The University of Rhode Island's Graduate School of Library and Information Studies offers online classes, a flexible curriculum, and regional tuition tailored to your needs. Come by and ask us about being in the 1st Cohort of our Accelerated Online Program in 2021, at a reduced tuition rate!
Message from the President

Conference Registration is open! I hope you’ll join us April 26-28 in Mystic as we’re setting our sights on success, though as planning has unfolded I feel a more appropriate theme would be Libraries: Where Everyone is Welcome. We’ve got some new things planned this year which include the 3-day Storytime School intensive workshop for those new to children’s programming or hoping to enhance their programming skills, a happy hour mini golf tournament to raise funds for CLA, and a silent auction.

Keynotes
Monday morning:
Lance Werner, Executive Director of the Kent Library District
Better Libraries and Stronger Communities through Kindness, Empathy and Love

Monday lunch:
Nancy Pearl will share from her upcoming book, The Writer’s Library, a collection of conversations with today’s living legends.

Tuesday morning:
Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, Executive Director of the Mid-Hudson Library System
What the World Needs Now
Thank you to FLAG (Fairfield County Library Administrators Group) for sponsoring the Tuesday keynote

Congratulations to Stacey Burt, children’s librarian at the Ledyard Public Libraries, who will be joining us as the first time conference attendee scholarship winner! This scholarship was made possible with donations to the CLA legacy fund. Thank you to all who contributed.

Early bird registration ends March 23.
Hope to see you in Mystic!♦

Lisa Karim is the director of the Simsbury Public Library

2020 SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Applications are now being accepted for scholarships valued at up to $1,000. Scholarships will be awarded at the annual meeting, which will be held on Tuesday, April 28, at the Mystic Marriott.

Full information and requirements
2020 application form

All materials must be submitted by 5:00PM on Monday, March 2, 2020.

Report from our ALA Chapter Councillor, Erin Shea, of the Ferguson Library:

The three main themes of the midwinter meeting were: Macmillan’s eBook embargo, ALA’s recommendations for a reimagined governance model called “Forward Together,” and what to do about significant unplanned deficits in ALA’s operational budget.

Macmillan CEO John Sargent met with librarians at the beginning of midwinter, and unfortunately we remain at an impasse. There is great coverage of the meeting in American Libraries and Publishers Weekly but the meeting ended with him agreeing to look again at their lending policy.

ALA’s Steering Committee on Organizational Effectiveness has come out with preliminary recommendations for changing the way ALA is governed.

Those recommendations can be found at forwardtogether.ala.org.

It proposes changing the governing body of ALA Council to a number of “assemblies” to act as advisory bodies to a board of directors.

In the weeks leading up to this conference, information emerged that identified significant unplanned deficits in ALA’s operational budget. ALA has three main sources of revenue -- publishing, conferences, and membership. These three revenue streams have been declining over the past decade.

This, combined with an overspend on our IT services, has ALA dealing with a serious budget issue. ALA is zeroing out reserves from its divisions to make up for the difference.♦
Legislative Committee Update

By Beth Crowley, Co-Chair CLA Legislative Committee

It is hard to believe that we are more than halfway through the 2019-20 Connecticut Library Association year. During the last six months, I have enjoyed working with the legislative committee and our lobbyists, Gallo and Robinson, and wanted to give the library community a brief update of our activities to date and our plans for the rest of the CLA year.

We began the year with a difficult decision regarding the upcoming renewal of Gallo and Robinson’s contract. This was driven by the fiscal realities of the CLA budget and the real need to reduce our administrative costs. Having worked with Gallo and Robinson in the past as CLA president, I knew how valuable this service was to the organization so eliminating the lobbyist was not something I thought we should consider at this time.

However, Kate Robinson was willing to work with us to provide a tiered level of service and we were able to agree on a contract that cut our costs in half while retaining a good level of support from the firm. While talking with library staff during the town hall meetings, I discovered there is a misperception that the lobbyists are the ones talking to the legislators for us, but the reality is their job is to help guide our advocacy efforts, keep us apprised of issues relevant to our work, and set up meetings with key legislators so members of the library community can speak with them. While the volunteers on the legislative committee might be able to do some of this work, it would be much more difficult and time-consuming to coordinate CLA’s advocacy efforts without the help of the lobbyists.

In response to some pushback the committee received last year regarding the legislative agenda, I set up town hall-style meetings in each of the six CLA regions to see what the library community felt were the most pressing issues and what they would like to see as priorities for advocacy. The summary of those meetings can be found here. This report will be provided to the new state librarian as an overview of the state of Connecticut libraries. I personally found the meetings to be energizing and inspiring. While there are some difficult challenges we must address, it was wonderful hearing from so many different members of the library community and seeing all the great work going on in our organizations.

In November, Brian Coughlin from Gallo and Robinson alerted us to two important issues that will affect libraries: the funding for the 2020 Census and a new ePardon proposal. A small group including library directors from Haddam, Middletown and New London met with Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz to see how libraries could access money set aside for census work. Through this conversation we discovered the local community foundations may be the best way to access additional funding.

A new paperless EPardon Portal process raised concerns among Connecticut legal services lawyers who drafted a letter to

CONTINUED ON P. 8
Jay taught me to be fearless in the face of change and challenged me to learn new things. Every opportunity for advancement I’ve had in public libraries came from Jay, and while I certainly worked hard to get where I am, it wouldn’t have been possible without his support, advice, and feedback along the way.

That being said, I worked in Farmington for my entire library career, so building a network of other librarians to share ideas with and learn from was really important to me. I met Richard Conroy at one of the annual CLA leadership institutes a few years ago when I approached him to ask if he could use another person on the career development committee. Richard welcomed me to the committee, encouraged me to present at conferences (which I was terrified of doing, but turned out to be a lot of fun and very rewarding), and, when the time came, he supported me as I took over as chair of the career development committee. Even as Richard began to prepare for his retirement, he was always available whether I needed someone to bounce ideas off of, or someone to help me prepare for an interview. What I am most grateful for though, is that Richard was a wonderful listener who always responded to any questions or concerns I had with thoughtful and supportive guidance and feedback. Everyone could use someone like Richard in their corner!

**From Ann Smith**
**Russell Library in Middletown**

For over twenty years Laura Larsen has been single-minded in her determination to be the best children’s librarian she can be, and she is utterly devoted to the families she serves. Her professional skill and commitment, along with her broad experience and her complete lack of pretense, combine to cement her position as ‘a person to admire’ among CT library personnel. And in addition to her professional excellence, she is a lovely person--kind, loyal, supportive, straightforward, honest, and sincere. Without a doubt, Laura is one of the best mentors anyone could hope to find.

When I started working at the Russell Library as a page many years ago, I was already ‘of a certain age,’ older than Laura. I once unknowingly hurt her feelings in a meeting, completely innocently and unintentionally. Instead of letting the incident fester or resorting to bad-mouthing me behind my back to our colleagues, Laura calmly questioned me about what I had said. I was horrified to learn I had hurt her feelings, but Laura listened to my explanation, accepted my apology, and forgave me. My deep respect for Laura began in earnest that day, and I have never had any reason to feel that respect was misplaced or underserved.

Besides being such an admirable professional colleague, Laura is a dear and true friend to many. I know from experience that her meatloaf and mashed potatoes have medicinal qualities, and I also know that if a friend is too sick to do their own laundry, Laura will pick up and deliver their laundry as well.

Russell Library has more than its share of really great staff, truly, but Laura is absolutely one of the best. As I always say, ‘When I grow up, I want to be just like Laura.’ We should all be so lucky.

**From Lynn Zaffino,**
**Easton Public Library**

I have always considered Beth Crowley a mentor. I first met Beth when I stepped into her position as one of the two CLA children’s section representatives about 10 years ago. Since she had also been a children’s librarian, I felt an instant kinship with her. Beth eventually became director of the Scranton Library in Madison. Soon afterward, she formed the new directors’ roundtable, which she continued to chair for many years. When I became director of the Easton Public Library in 2017, I joined the roundtable and attended as many meetings as I could. Over the years, I have admired Beth’s professionalism, diplomacy, extensive knowledge, and her advocacy and involvement in the library world, including serving as CLA president. Throughout my career, Beth has been a role model for me, and I have sought out her advice on several occasions. The field of librarianship is truly lucky to count Beth among its members.

**From Shelley Holley**
**Southington Library**

My mentor is Kimberly Farrington, head of access services for Burritt Library at CCSU. I met Kim in 2001 when I became one of her university assistants in interlibrary loan. Previously I worked as a customer service supervisor and the chance to work in a library was a dream come true. Kim was patient and knowledgeable as she taught me things that we all take for granted now like cutting and pasting and looking up ISBNs on Amazon. She trained me to search library databases effectively, fulfill loans and help students. She always found time to help and advise her many student workers, library assistants and colleagues. I didn’t know librarians had masters, but while observing Kim I understood the importance. My small part was the most fulfilling job I ever had and I loved it. In 2004, I made the difficult decision to leave and take a position at Southington Public Library. Soon after I applied for the MLS program at SCSU. After being out of college since 1987, I worried if I could get through it along with family and work. Kim was there to encourage me all the way. She urged me
to join CLA and be a part of the library community. I observed her speaking at CLA and serving on numerous committees. After graduating in 2009 I was able to become a MLS librarian at Southington Library. In 2015 I became a department head hoping I could emulate her. Kim always told me that as librarians, “We teach.” That phrase has stayed with me in every part of my library career. That is just one of the many things I learned from her. She is not only a superior librarian; Kim is kindness and professionalism personified.

From Maria Bernier
Connecticut State Library
One of my early library mentors was Paul O’Pecko, who was then director of the G.W. Blunt White Library at Mystic Seaport, where I worked for 12 years at the beginning of my career.

From Erin Shea
The Ferguson Library, Stamford
My first library gig was a part-time help desk position and I learned so much about helping patrons who were uncomfortable using computers from watching Judith Sgambaro, who is now head of circulation services at Pretty Rot Memorial Library. I found her patience with helping patrons to be really inspiring and I learned so much from watching her. She encouraged me to go for a full-time position that ended up jump-starting my library career.

From Leah Farrell
Farmington Libraries
I was at the very beginning of my professional career when Jennifer Keohan came on board as the executive director of the Connecticut Library Consortium. I had NO idea what I was doing--I was disorganized, meek, insecure, and didn’t know where I wanted to go with my career. Jennifer’s energy, creativity, drive, and insistence that I was capable of more than I believed shook up my world.

“Think big picture, but plan down to the smallest detail.” “This is great, but can it be even better?” “Gather all of the information before making a decision.” She pushed me and challenged me, which was not something I was used to. It was hard, and sometimes I pushed back. Instead of getting upset or shutting me down, she would talk through it with me so that I could see her perspective and she could see mine.

I left CLC a focused, organized, and skilled professional, who knew how to admit when she was wrong and to speak up when she felt strongly about something. She would say that I’m the one to credit for my growth, but I believe it would have been a much longer and harder journey if she hadn’t given me the foundation.

Jennifer continues to be someone I go to when I need honest and thoughtful advice about my career and personal life, and I consider myself extremely blessed to have her as a mentor and dear friend.

From Vince Juliano, retired
While I never had an actual mentor, I was fortunate to know many librarians who taught me a great deal early in my career. Here are only a handful of those folks who younger librarians may not have known. My first CT boss was Danbury’s Marianne Woolfe. She was supportive of me as a newcomer and encouraged my participation in CLA. I commuted to Hartford for six months with David Weill of the Southwest Connecticut Library Council and the New England Library Board. He was a thinking person whose views sometimes ran contrary to the “common wisdom” of the time. David introduced me to methods to analyze library services and to look beyond what appeared on the surface. He also educated me about the potential benefits of regional cooperation. Dency Sargent actually demonstrated the power of cooperation at the Capital Region Library Council through her leadership and people skills. Dency taught me ways to better communicate and work with colleagues, co-workers, and legislators. Ginny Dowell of New Britain and I were, at times, on opposite sides of issues. However, whether we agreed or not, I greatly respected her uncanny ability to anticipate when a group consensus was starting to emerge. She then expressed that consensus clearly for everyone so that a
From Kate Byroade  
Cragin Memorial Library

I’ve been really lucky in my career to have really supportive bosses who encouraged me to grow professionally, but the mentor whose advice I continually draw on is Laurel Goodgion, now retired. I worked for her for three years before I went to graduate school when she was the director of the Portland Library. Laurel was meticulous in her orientation and training, providing new staff with clear expectations for the customer service they would provide and a thorough introduction to the library’s operations, policies, and procedures. Her philosophy of library service was generous and forward-thinking. She read the professional literature thoroughly, constantly implementing ideas that had worked well in other libraries. She provided an exemplar of thoughtful innovation, not merely change for change’s sake.

But over and above her professionalism, she was (and continues to be) a kind, generous, and thoughtful mentor. She encouraged me from day one to go to graduate school and has given me solid career advice ever since. While her example of professional excellence stays with me to this day, she always provided me with the space to develop my own professional style. From the beginning she offered me mutual respect and listened to my ideas, while insisting that I flesh them out and consider operational realities. She made me a better librarian, and I’m deeply grateful.

the CT Board of Pardon and Paroles. They posited that the exclusive online process might be difficult for their clients to access and the suggestion that they could be helped at local libraries might not be realistic. Brian reached out to me to see if I agreed with their assertions and while I thought they were overstated, I did think it was important for libraries to be included in the conversation going forward. I was thrilled to discover that a new advisory committee formed to address these concerns was looking for a member of the library community to join. I was even more thrilled with the immediate response I received to my late Friday afternoon plea for a volunteer and I would like to thank Mara Whitman, adult and youth services librarian, from the Bloomfield Public Library for being our representative on this committee.

Usually this is time of year when the legislative committee publishes the legislative agenda and asks the Connecticut library community to reach out to your legislators to advocate for the issues listed. An important part of this effort centers on support for the Connecticut State Library budget which has been reduced by about 40% over the last 10 years. In the beginning of February, Governor Lamont announced reductions to the current budget but fortunately there were no cuts to the state library lines. While we still think it is important to work towards restoring lost funds in future budgets, at this time we are not asking the library community to provide testimony regarding current funding.

However, we will be focusing our advocacy effort on another annual event, the CLA display at the legislative office building. The display will be up the week of April 20th to coincide with National Library Week. The legislative committee is working with the publicity and communications committee to provide advocacy materials and handouts for the table around issues such as net neutrality, the Macmillan eBook issue, the need for qualified school librarians in all schools, and state-wide resource sharing among others. We will be putting out a call shortly for volunteers to help staff the table. You don’t need to be part of the legislative committee to volunteer. We will also be posting talking points regarding these issues so anyone can advocate to their local politicians and legislators.

As always we encourage libraries to maintain good relationships with their local legislators, invite them to your libraries, show off a new program or service, and be sure to tell them the wonderful stories of how Connecticut libraries are making a difference in the lives of their constituents. The legislative committee and CLA is always here to help libraries with these efforts so please reach out to us or your region representatives if you need support.
At the **New Haven Free Public Library**, **John Jessen** has been selected as the next city librarian. Jessen lives in New Haven and is the first person promoted from within the library staff to its top job since Lindsey Brown in 1929. Jessen has been deputy director of the NHFPL since 2017 and has served as acting director following Martha Brogan’s retirement Oct 31, 2019.

**Melissa Canham-Clyne** is the new director of the **Hamden Public Library**. She comes to Hamden after 7 years as director at the Clark Memorial Library in Bethany.

**Sue Griffiths** is the new director of the **North Haven Memorial Library**.

**Diane Deedy** is the new director of the **Preston Public Library**.

**Francine Aloisa** has been appointed interim director of the **Kent Memorial Library** in Suffield.

**Stacey Burt** is the new children’s librarian at the **Ledyard Public Libraries**.

**Wallingford Public Library** is delighted to announce that **Julie Rio** has accepted the appointment as assistant director. Since 2017, Julie has been the adult programming and community services librarian. Prior to joining the library staff in Wallingford, Julie worked in various capacities at the Southington Public Library, the John P. Webster Library at First Church in West Hartford, and the New Haven Free Public Library.

**Elise Montes**, children’s specialist at the **Avon Library** has accepted a position with the Boston Public Library. She will begin this spring as their new early literacy librarian in the Copley Square Library in downtown Boston. Congratulations Elise!

**Kristine Oulman** is the new youth services librarian at the **Easton Public Library**. She was promoted from the youth services programming assistant position.

At the **Sherman Library**, the new children’s services coordinator is **Cheryl Mandracchia**.

**Marilou Overson**, manager of acquisitions at the **East Hampton Public Library** has retired after 26 years of service. **Samuel Bolton** has been promoted to head of circulation and technical services.

At the **Lucy Robbins Welles Library** in Newington, **Jeanette Francini** has semi-retired as of Jan 4. **Sue Schneider** is the new head of circulation & collection management.

**Obituary**

**Ann Juknis** passed away on Jan. 27. She worked for the State of Connecticut for 10 years before accepting a position as a librarian at the Russell Library in Middletown for twenty years until her retirement.
Take Your Child to the Library Day 2020

At the Ledyard Public Libraries, we were amazed by Mr. Magic and his amazing tricks and we had tons of fun creating in our Jr. Lego® Maker Lab.

Iris makes a bookmark at the Easton Public Library.

Despite limited space due to the current renovation in the children's department of Milford Public Library, kids still had a great time with lots of fun activities and a photo booth! Kids were invited to "Take their Grown-ups to the Library," so that their grown-ups could get cards, as well!

A musical celebration at the Weston Public Library.

Magical mermaids and their families were invited to don their beautiful tails and joined us for a seaside adventure at the Fairfield Public Library! Author/illustrator Jessica Love read her Stonewall award-winning picture book Julián is a Mermaid. She instructed the children in how to draw mermaid tails, and joined them in a mermaid parade! Pictured: on the left: author and illustrator Jessica Love. On the right: author and illustrator Mary Jo Scott.

Gunn Memorial Library
Ushering in the “20s”

To ring in the "20's," Joe Russo, library assistant at the John Gray Park '28 Library at the Kent School, created this amazing flapper outfit composed entirely from pages of 3 used books. According to Joe, the whole ensemble took about 2 weeks off and on to complete (about 12-15 hours). The boa itself took about 5 hours to make.

Connecticut's professional organization of librarians, library staff, friends, and trustees working together: to improve library service to Connecticut, to advance the interests of librarians, library staff, and librarianship, and to increase public awareness of libraries and library services.

CLA Today is the newsletter of the Connecticut Library Association. Published every other month, it is posted to the CLA website. Please send submissions for future issues to editor Jennifer Datum at editor@ctlibrarians.org.

www.ctlibraryassociation.org

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