



**LEADING THE WAY
SINCE 1891**

A MESSAGE FROM CLA PRESIDENT, SCOTT C. JARZOMBEK

All,

We are excited to assemble a quick version of CLA Today, the Connecticut Library Association's newsletter. We aim to keep members informed about the association's activities and invite your involvement.

As your new president, I am thrilled about CLA's future. We just concluded one of our most successful conferences in years, a testament to our collective efforts and your valuable contributions. Our volunteer board is working tirelessly to make the organization resilient and sustainable. We are building on multiple years of developing a legislative agenda and advocating at a state level for the benefit of all Connecticut library professionals. We have come so far, but need your help to move this work forward.

Below is information on our developing legislative agenda, a crucial bylaws vote that needs your participation, and some exciting details about next year's conference. We also have highlights of our most recent award winners, who have made significant contributions to our association.



**CLA 2023-2024 President, Sarah McCusker
passes the gavel to CLA 2024-2025 President,
Scott C. Jarzombek**

Don't hesitate to contact me or one of your region representatives if you have questions or concerns.

-Scott C. Jarzombek, CLA President.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES



Supporters Speak on behalf of CT Libraries during the 2024 Legislative Sessions

On June 25, representatives from across Connecticut libraries met for a half-day session to discuss the development of a legislative agenda, including strategic goals, specific initiatives for the upcoming legislative session, and long-term projects to improve CT libraries and their ability to serve residents.

So far, the group has identified four areas we will focus on in the next legislative session:

- Continue to work with lawmakers to address eBook pricing for libraries.
- Increase direct state aid for libraries and support agencies to be on par with other Northeastern states.
- Representation for school libraries at the CT Department of Education
- Explore legislation around policy requirements for school districts regarding library materials removal requests.

We are only at the beginning of this process. Regular communication with members about

progress, issues, and assistance needed is a priority. We will share details over the next few months as our agenda coalesces.

CLA IS BETTER TOGETHER



Library Supporters joined together in advocacy efforts this past Spring.

You all play an essential part in this, and your involvement in advocacy is critical for our libraries. Actions will include:

- Building relationships and speaking with your local representatives.
- Inform your stakeholders and ask them to get involved.
- Writing correspondence in support of this agenda.
- Testifying in Hartford.

More information is to come. Remember, we are strong when we work together, and your voice is not just important; it's crucial. Your voice matters, and it will be heard in our advocacy efforts.

BYLAWS VOTE: SEPTEMBER 19

We need your involvement on September 19th.

A committee formed by the CLA board has been dedicated to revising our bylaws over the past few months. The revisions were shared with the membership, and we invited comments both virtually and at the CLA Annual Meeting in April. We did not receive any comments or concerns, nor were any significant problems raised.

The notable changes include:

- Alterations to membership levels, particularly institutional, to ensure sustainability
- Clarification of the responsibilities and actions of sections
- Updates to the list of committees, including the removal of committees that no longer exist

In recent months, we have requested a vote from the membership twice and are still waiting for a sufficient response. The revised Bylaws must receive a yes vote from at least 2/3 of the membership to be approved. While the prior votes were unanimously in favor of the revised document, they did not meet the required threshold to pass. If we do not meet the threshold this time, it will delay the implementation of the bylaws, which is not in the best interest of our organization.

The CLA board has called a general membership meeting for September 19 at 9 a.m. via ZOOM (emailed to CLA members). The revised [bylaws](#) with markups are here.

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS AND FUTURE UPDATES

Planning has already begun for this coming year's conference. The committee is grateful for all the feedback we have received and is looking forward to this coming year. We can't wait to continue our goals of ensuring we make space at our table for everyone.

However, let's take a second to reflect on an incredible 2024 conference. In 2024 we saw the highest attendance in over ten years, bringing together colleagues across the state, meeting those new to our field,



and learning from one another. Our Keynote Speaker, Mychal Threats, invigorated all and incited a new shared excitement as he spoke about the joys of libraries and the work we do.

We will return to Mystic this year from April 27-29, 2025, and again in 2026. We have been listening to the feedback, and while both the membership and the conference planning committee are interested in holding it in another part of the state, with limited venue choices, our conference's size and budget and to keep the costs affordable for attendees at all levels, Mystic is by far the best choice for a venue in the near future.



Olivia R. Blake was honored as the first ever CLA Booster (Individual) Award Winner at the 2024 CLA Awards Ceremony

2024 Conference Keynote Speaker, Mychal Threats joined us at our President's Reception for a Meet and Greet

And the winners are...

At the CT Library Association meeting this past May, the awards ceremony was a joyful time to recognize so many of our CT library colleagues for their achievements this past year.

For example, Nancy Schwanda was recognized for her dedicated volunteer work processing books but also helping the Friends of the Stafford Library.

Kym Powe was recognized with a special achievement award for her work with the justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) section of CLA and the training she has provided to the CT library community on conducting diversity audits.

But the highlight of the awards ceremony was the presentation to Madhu Gupta of CLA's "Outstanding Librarian" award for 2024. Madhu has been the Executive Director of the Public Library of New London since 2013. Her nomination described Madhu as "skilled, compassionate, welcoming, dedicated," and more. We are lucky to have her part of the CT Library community.

To see the full list of 2024 CLA Award Winners, [go here](#).

CLA'S NEW STRATEGIC PLAN AND THE FUTURE AHEAD

You can find CLA's [2025-2028 Strategic Plan Here](#).

Over the past year, a dedicated team of CLA's past and present Board Members took on the task of creating a new Strategic Plan for the organization with the goal of setting up CLA for a better future. During that time, this volunteer committee received feedback from the membership as well as nonmembers in the CT Library community through surveys, as well as formal and informal conversations with individuals and groups. These propelled the Strategic Plan forward and highlighted the main goals that will be put at the forefront of the organization over the next three years.

Goals were set up for six critical categories: Membership, Leadership, Financial, Communication, Advocacy, and Accessibility. Within each of these goals, objectives and action items were established in order to assist CLA in navigating and paving a path to success.

The Strategic Planning committee would like to thank all those that participated in our surveys, conversations and discussions, gave essential feedback and aided us in creating this document. In August, the CLA Board voted to approve this plan and look forward to implementing it in the coming new year as we continue the important work set forth.

We hope you enjoyed this installment of our CLA Today Newsletter! For any questions, please contact CLA

President, Scott C. Jarzombek at president@ctlibraryassociation.org.