



20 April 2018

**TO: RAILS Board of Directors**

**FROM: Deirdre Brennan**

**SUBJECT: Executive Director Report – April 2018**

### Updating the RAILS Strategic Plan

We are winding up data gathering for our strategic plan update process. We have completed our listening tour session; a total of seven were held. We used “Go to Meeting” for the last three so that we could engage with special, academic and school librarians across our area and really delve into their specific needs. I was very pleased with the turnout. Also, Jacob Roskovensky, the current president of ISLMA who is at the Charleston schools, attended our school session to provide input.

Our needs assessment is currently open and responses are due back by April 20. At the time of this writing, we have heard from 350 members from all types of libraries and are getting good feedback. Next steps: we will analyze the data gathered as well as other relevant information (for example, trends and issues we have identified through industry literature, conferences, etc.) and organize the results into broad categories that will eventually become goals or strategic initiatives. I hope to have something for the board to look at in May.

### RAILS Board Election

The RAILS Board election process is in full swing. The election officially runs from April 30 through May 18. The nominating committee met on April 18 to review the nominations and approve the ballot. There are three candidates for three open public library trustee seats and eleven candidates for two open at large seats. The nominating committee will meet again after the election ends to confirm the winners and discuss the slate of officers for FY 19.

### Veronda Pitchford wins ASCLA Cathleen Bourdon Service Award

I am thrilled and proud to announce that Veronda has been awarded the ASCLA Cathleen Bourdon Service Award. The Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA)

is a division of the American Library Association. This award is given to an ASCLA member who displays “sustained leadership and exceptional service through participation in activities which have enhanced the stature, reputation, and overall strength of ASCLA; and representation of ASCLA to other appropriate organizations, institutions, or governmental agencies.”

To quote from the nomination letter, written by Michael Blackwell, Director of the St. Mary’s County Public Library in Maryland, “Veronda works not only nationally but extensively in Illinois to forge collaborations and partnerships to improve access through a simplified and better digital experience. Her name is, in short, synonymous with innovation, community and collaboration, and using ASCLA’s reach to engage and excite. She is an eminently worthy nominee for the Cathleen Bourdon Service Award, and I hope that you will give her the consideration that ever-so-many librarians believe she has earned.”

As you know, our e-strategy is to do many of the things that Veronda is cited for in this award nomination; work with partners on access issues, improve the user experience with digital resources, position RAILS as a leader and help libraries generally to get more content for their users. The award ceremony will be held in New Orleans at the ALA annual conference on Saturday, June 23 at 8:30 am.

#### Newt and Jo Minow debate series: Preserve net neutrality: all data is created equal

I attended this debate last evening at Northwestern University Law School. There were two teams of two debaters: for the motion to preserve net neutrality were Tom Wheeler, former Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission and Mitchell Baker, Chairwoman of Mozilla Foundation and Mozilla Corporation. Against the motion were Nick Gillespie of *Reason*, a libertarian magazine and Michael Katz, a professor of economics at University of California, Berkeley.

The main points on each side beginning with support for net neutrality:

There is real danger that content will be blocked or slowed by companies (ISP providers) in the absence of rules to ensure net neutrality. Companies might dislike the content or might be in competition with the provider of the content. It is in the public interest to regulate the internet just as cable companies and utilities are regulated.

Against net neutrality: net neutrality is a solution that doesn’t work for a problem that doesn’t exist. The public is not experiencing any problems getting internet service, ISPs are not discriminating against or blocking content. Net neutrality is bad for innovation and therefore bad for customers.

#### SPARKS podcast on unsheltered residents

Our latest podcast featured Megan Millen, Executive Director of the Joliet Public Library and Denise Zielinski, Community Engagement Manager. They talked about the partnerships they

have formed in the community to help serve unsheltered residents. Their projects and successes are great examples for other libraries that cannot afford to hire social workers. As they pointed out, the library staff is now part of the solution. It's not possible to have social workers on duty at all times so it's important to engage the library staff in working with experts to serve all the residents of the community.

Looking ahead to May:

Approval of the Area and Per Capita Grant Application  
Preview of broad categories for strategic plan  
Results of board election

## [Latest RAILS Project News](#)

### Certification Success Story

The Illinois State Library's (ISL) annual [online certification](#) process began on January 2 and ended on March 31, 2018. All RAILS members were required to complete this process to remain eligible for system services (delivery, continuing education, etc.) and ISL grants (public and school library per capita grants, public library construction grants, etc.).

For the first time in the six years that certification has been a membership requirement, all RAILS members successfully certified! Thanks to all RAILS Board members who helped us spread the word about the certification process and encouraged RAILS members to certify.

### E-Resources

#### New Popup Picks Collection

Through RAILS' partnership with Bibliolabs, any Illinois resident has access to thousands of e-resources free of charge and without needing a login or library card. One of these resources is [Popup Picks](#), a mobile e-book service that features collections curated by librarians and book industry experts. Popup Picks collections change quarterly and include award-winning sci-fi, travel, humor, self-help, graphic novels, and other e-books.

The latest collection features titles from Publishers Weekly's "Summer Reading List." Collections from the Chicago Children's Museum and Shout Mouse Press are also featured in this round of Popup Picks, as well as 2017 Indie Book Award winners and the winning entries from the 2015 and 2017 Soon To Be Famous Illinois Author contest.

All RAILS Board members are encouraged to investigate the new Popup Picks collection (and other BiblioBoard collections) and to spread the word about this tremendous opportunity to other RAILS members. RAILS' BiblioBoard e-resources include something for everyone!

#### Spreading the Word about BiblioBoard

RAILS is anxious to spread the word about the many BiblioBoard e-resources available to all Illinois residents through RAILS' partnership with Bibliolabs. To help with this effort, Veronda Pitchford, RAILS Director of Membership Development and Resource Sharing, participated in Ela Area Public Library's podcast series, Three Books (Episode 6, "Yours in Library Love"). Veronda discussed unique titles for children and parents available through the BiblioBoard platform as well as her three favorite books. [Listen here!](#)

## Find More Illinois

[Find More Illinois](#) has the potential to greatly expand resource sharing in Illinois by connecting the catalogs of consortia and standalone libraries that choose to participate. It may also serve as an online catalog for libraries unable to join existing consortia for financial or other reasons, and as a lower-cost alternative to OCLC.

The 21 libraries participating in our Find More Illinois pilot project have completed initial setup and two days of training. They are very excited about the possibilities that lay ahead and can't wait to get started on this great adventure! They began placing and filling staff-mediated interlibrary loan requests in April and are expected to introduce the program to their patrons sometime in May. (Timing of the May rollout will be up to each individual library.)

The pilot program will continue through the summer. Everyone will be able to search the Find More Illinois union catalog during this period. Only patrons and staff from the 21 pilot libraries will be able to place interlibrary loan requests. After the pilot, any interested library of any type (academic, public, school, and special) will be able to participate.

## Other Highlights

### Continuing Education (CE)

#### Latest RAILS CE Grant Awardees

To expand CE offerings for our member libraries, RAILS offers grants to fund CE events made available to all RAILS member libraries and of interest to a wide range of library staff. Individual libraries, networking groups, and library consortia may apply for these grants.

RAILS awarded three grants in March. All three of these events will be open to all RAILS members:

- Library OnConference, an annual, virtual CE event organized by Oakton Community College. This year's speaker will cover career development and how libraries can successfully reach entrepreneurs in their communities. Anticipated date: May 2018.
- SLEDD (Small Library Education Development Day), a day-long CE conference organized by the West of 47 networking group. This year's topics include website development, active shooter training, and serving patrons with special needs. Anticipated date: 5/17/18.
- "SWANstraveganza, a day-long event organized by the SWAN library consortium. The day will offer a variety of networking and training opportunities. RAILS will also have a table at this event to talk with attendees about our programs and services. Anticipated date: 8/17/18.

The next deadline for applying for a RAILS CE grant is May 31, 2018. Members can find more information on the RAILS website at [railslibraries.info/services/ce-grant](http://railslibraries.info/services/ce-grant).

## RAILS CE Highlights

A common need expressed by RAILS member libraries of all types during our strategic plan revision process thus far is for help telling their library's story. RAILS held a very popular CE program in March to help with this effort, "Guerilla Branding: Making Your Library Indispensable" with David Vinjamuri. The program was held at Naperville Public Library for over 50 participants and focused on how libraries can use branding strategies to build closer ties to their community of users. (Many in Illinois libraries know David as the inspiration behind the [Soon To Be Famous Illinois Author Project](#).)

Registration for this event filled quickly and several people were not able to attend due to registration limits. RAILS plans to offer a similar event on marketing/outreach during FY2019.

Upcoming May RAILS CE events include:

- Three in-person customer workshops the week of May 7 presented by Andrew Sanderbeck. Andrew has been developing/conducting library training seminars and web-based programs for over 15 years and is the author of two books and over 50 webinars. The workshops will be held at Peoria Public Library, Moline Public Library, and Palatine Public Library.
- A workshop on motivating employees, May 17, presented by Management Association staff. This event will be held in-person at the RAILS Burr Ridge service center and via videoconference at several locations.
- A workshop on developing shareable metadata for the [Digital Public Library of America](#) (DPLA), May 22, presented by Hannah Stitzlein, Visiting Metadata Services Specialist for the Illinois Digital Heritage Hub at the University of Illinois.

More information about these and other CE events can be found in the Library Learning (L2) calendar at [www.librarylearning.info](http://www.librarylearning.info).

## Member Engagement

### New RAILS Member Engagement Manager

Dan Bostrom joined the RAILS team as our new Member Engagement Manager on April 9. Dan most recently worked as the Member Engagement Manager at the Financial Managers Society (FMS) in Chicago. While there, he created and implemented a membership development plan which included strategies for onboarding and member retention.

Before that, Dan served as the Marketing Manager, Membership at the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), a division of the American Library Association (ALA). While there, he coordinated the creation of a new member satisfaction measurement tool and established a mentoring program. He was also very heavily involved in using social media and other online tools to engage members.

Dan will be based at Burr Ridge, though he will be traveling heavily throughout the RAILS area to engage all of our members from all types of libraries. Board members attending the April RAILS Board meeting at East Peoria will have an opportunity to meet Dan in person.

### Upcoming Member Engagement Opportunities

RAILS schedules several board meetings a year in different areas of the system to familiarize the board with our entire 27,000 square mile area. We also schedule networking events prior to these meetings to give the board a chance to meet members from different areas of the system. All board members attending the April 27 RAILS Board meeting in East Peoria are encouraged to join us for a networking lunch beforehand at 11:30 a.m. at the East Peoria service center.

One of the ways RAILS engages a number of our members in one place is by exhibiting at as many library-related conferences as possible throughout the year. We will exhibit at two conferences in May:

- Reaching Forward, May 4, at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, in Rosemont
- Reaching Forward South, May 11, at Southern Illinois University, in Edwardsville

RAILS Board members attending either one of these conferences are encouraged to stop by the RAILS exhibit booth to say hello. Please encourage any RAILS members you know who are attending these conferences to stop by to see us as well to find out what programs and services RAILS offers especially for them.

# Consortial Reports

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## CARLI/I-Share

- No report

## Cooperative Computer Services (CCS)

- No report

## Library Integrated Network Consortium (LINC)

- No report

## LINKin

- Poplar Creek Public Library District (in Streamwood and Hanover Park) has joined LINKin.

## Multitype Automation Group in Cooperation (MAGIC)

- No report

## Northern Illinois Cooperative (NIC)

- No report

## Pinnacle Library Cooperative (PLC)

- Pinnacle has entered into an agreement with My Library Rewards—a reading incentive program that allows patrons to earn points for each item checked out at any of our libraries. Patrons can then redeem those points on discounts from businesses in the area. MLR contacts all the nearby businesses to secure available offers. They also provide a website and app for patrons to redeem their rewards. Our first group of libraries is set to go live in the middle of April, with the rest of our libraries following in the weeks after.

## PrairieCat

- PrairieCat is moving ahead with staff independence planning, with a deadline of July 1, 2018 for removing staff from RAILS and rehiring under PrairieCat for FY2019. We are currently seeking a part-time, temporary HR and finance assistant to help Carolyn Coulter set up the payroll system, etc. This position, based out of the RAILS Coal Valley facility, will be transferred to a regular part-time position under PrairieCat after independence.
- Work continues on bringing Marseilles Public Library into the consortium. This should be completed sometime within the next few months.
- Planning for PrairieCat User Group (PUG) Day 2018 is underway. This year, PUG Day will be held on September 28 at TaxSlayer Center in Moline.
- Our biannual member update meetings are planned for the week of April 16. We will visit seven member libraries in our “zones” to pass along information from our standing committees and Administrative Council. We will also hold brief focus groups at these meetings for our support website project. Our support website is being redesigned with the help of Brian Smith at RAILS.
- Three staff from PrairieCat will attend the annual Innovative User’s Group conference in April.
- Planning is also beginning for a Resource Sharing member summit in August. This will be held August 17 at Kishwaukee College and will address resource sharing questions and issues in the consortium. All levels of member library staff are encouraged to attend.



## Resource Sharing Alliance NFP (RSA-NFP)

- RSA moved from running Symphony on RSA servers to SirsiDynix's SaaS hosting on Jan 24, 2018. (SaaS stands for Software as a Service.) RSA now has production, test, and training servers all running in SirsiDynix's SaaS facilities, and all of RSA's production environment now runs in SaaS. RSA still has Director's Station and Web Reporter, as well as a document server, running on our locally hosted infrastructure. Directors Station and Web Reporter are being phased out and will eventually be removed once BLUEcloud Analytics has been fully fleshed out.
- After the SaaS upgrade, RSA had some odd network issues with random drops of services to individual clients. We have had no overall drops. After about a month of troubleshooting, we determined that our NAT (Network Address Translation) rules needed tweaking from static to dynamic NAT rules. Once we did this and flushed the caches, all our drop issues were fixed. Now we are just dealing with the typical Internet "just-cos" drops.
- RSA is back on the upgrade cycle after a year of adding new libraries and cleaning up from a bad database deduplication. We've scheduled upgrades to the newest versions of Symphony and Enterprise/Portfolio in late April. We restarted our OPAC tweaking campaign and are working on various experiments to the search displays.
- RSA held its annual RSA Day in March and had approximately 130 people attend. That was the largest turnout yet. Miguel Figueroa from ALA spoke on "The Library of the Future."
- RSA's cataloging department has caught up from six months of being half-staffed. Thousands of outstanding cataloging requests have been completed, and we are back on our normal turnaround schedule. Our catalogers have resumed working with libraries for cleanup of brief records and other database cleanup projects.
- RSA revised its bylaws to double the size of the board of directors from six members to twelve members. We will fill the new positions in May. This ensures we have a larger representation of our membership as we begin the hard process of completely reworking our membership levels, feature sets, and pricing. We expect to lose libraries over this rework and need as many points of view as possible for the process.
- Normal Public Library and Bloomington Public Library issued a joint RFP for an ILS system. Normal Public Library is RSA's second largest library; Bloomington pulled out of RSA in 2006. RSA has responded to the RFP with a proposal to add Bloomington back into RSA. They expect to have a decision on what each library will do in late May. The RFP had many options, including individual standalone systems, a shared system, or disregarding all submissions and standing pat. Bloomington would become RSA's second largest library if it joins RSA.

## Rock River Library Consortium (RRLC)

- No report

## System Wide Automated Network (SWAN)

- SWAN is in its final weeks of preparation for the New 19 migration, which will occur on May 1. The final New 19 Q&A meeting was held on April 4, and so far, things are going smoothly. We anticipate that SWAN staff will be "all hands on deck" for the weeks of April 23 and April 30 to facilitate this major milestone. Training for our new libraries also continues this month. Site visits to deliver PR Welcome Kit materials for the migration and beyond were made to all the new libraries in late March. These materials were created via a joint effort of the SWAN staff, MAGIC, and LINC library staff.
- All SWAN libraries will be down on Monday, April 30, as part of the data reindexing required with the addition of the 19 libraries.

- As part of the New 19 migration and planned downtime, we have developed a web-based patron lookup tool that utilizes SirsiDynix Web Services. This lookup web page will allow library staff to verify whether or not a patron is in good standing. This is only available to SWAN members through the SWAN support site. Chicago Public Library offers a similar patron lookup tool.
- SWAN has also begun preparation for our annual conference, which will be held on Friday, August 17 at Moraine Valley Community College. With the addition of our 19 new libraries, we are hoping to have up to 400 library staff in attendance at this year's event. Our theme of "Come Together" will highlight the importance of collaboration and community from state, local, consortial, library, and staff perspectives. All are welcome to attend, as we hope to have a broad offering of speakers and sessions that will apply to everyone, not just SWAN libraries.
- SWAN is just beginning work on its strategic planning process by issuing an RFP for facilitators. We have thus far received eight responses to our RFP, which has a deadline of Monday, April 9. Our initial meeting to review these responses will be held immediately after the SWAN board meeting on April 20.
- The Enterprise 5.0 upgrade was completed on March 21, and current library Enterprise themes were updated in preparation for that change. Our User Experience Manager, Tara Wood, continues her hard work on refining our catalog profiles and offering new options for our libraries.