

19 October 2018

TO: RAILS Board of Directors

FROM: Deirdre Brennan

SUBJECT: Executive Director Report – October 2018

Illinois Library Association Annual Conference in Peoria

Along with other staff members and many board members, I attended ILA October 15 through 18 in Peoria. It was a fantastic conference with very diverse programming, lots of opportunities to network with members in the exhibit hall and at social events, and an exciting array of vendors displaying and explaining their products.

I was a facilitator for the Elevate leadership program on Monday. This program was the product of a partnership between RAILS, Heartland, ILA and the Illinois state library. I heard excellent reviews from many attendees.

Our reception on Tuesday night, in partnership with Autographics, was a great success. We had well over one hundred enthusiastic attendees.

Our booth was again in a great spot, thanks to Mary Witt, and was a very popular destination thanks to our “question wheel” and many handouts and giveaways. The giveaways are actually a remarkably inexpensive way to advertise and remind members about the many services and resources we offer to them.

Please see a full report on ILA in This Month at RAILS report.

Census Complete Count Commission

The 2020 census will be here before we know it. Libraries always play an important role in the census by offering education and information for residents and meeting places and outreach assistance for census volunteers and managers. There will be many changes to how the census is conducted in 2020 including an online component. We are already working with the Complete Count Commission in Illinois to help get the information out to libraries and through libraries to residents and potential census workers. We had a conference call with the state library and IHLS to discuss the potential impact of unserved residents using libraries to complete the census and how to remove any possible barriers.

The census is important for many reasons, not least of which is that the distribution of federal funds is calculated on the basis of state populations. Federal funding to libraries – specifically LSTA – depends on a complete count of Illinois residents. It is in all of our best interests to work to make the census successful and accurate.

Member engagement activities

I am continuing to meet with Calumet Park board members to assist in getting their new board trained, their financial documents in order and their bylaws and policies updated appropriately. The library has also joined HR Source using the RAILS subsidized membership.

I visited the Elk Grove Village Public Library District on October 18 and met with Debra Nelson, director.

I visited the Park Ridge Public Library on October 17 to meet with Heidi Smith, their new director. They are in the midst of a three-phase renovation project that is providing additional study space, expanded space for kids and bringing infrastructure up to code.

Federal legislation and funding update

Included in this report are two articles related to funding and advocacy.

The federal budget includes some important funding increases for the Institute of Museum and Library Services and other departments that will be very beneficial to libraries. Below is from the ILA E-News:

On the Federal level, we are continuing to advocate for more Senators and Representatives to co-sponsor the **Museum and Library Services Act**. Right now it has 17 Senate co-sponsors and 4 House co-sponsors, but NONE yet from Illinois! We urge everyone to **contact Senators Duckworth and Durbin, and your Representative**, to ask them to co-sponsor [S3530](#) and [HR6988](#), respectively. The MLSA has bipartisan support so far, which is reflective of libraries' importance to both sides of the aisle, but more co-sponsors are needed if MLSA is to advance in Congress this session. It is important to reauthorize MLSA in order to insulate IMLS and LSTA from future funding cuts, and codify Federal support for libraries. Please contact [the Senators](#) and [your Representative](#) TODAY!

ALA recently held a summit on the needs of school libraries that informs our discussion of how to help school libraries.

Below is a press release from ALA:

CHICAGO – An executive summary released by the American Library Association (ALA) identifies systematic ways ALA, its divisions and offices, and the field of librarianship can support the nation’s school libraries. The strategies were developed by school, public and academic library leaders from across the country during the “Fight for School Libraries” summit convened by 2017-2018 ALA President Jim Neal.

The summary calls for ALA members and ALA staff, including all divisions, to demonstrate support for school libraries as possibilities arise within the association. Strategies include collecting quality data on standards and policies regarding school library staffing, funding and accreditation; developing compelling stories and messages for national and local community audiences; strengthening partnerships with public and academic libraries to further build support; and implementing support for school libraries consistently into political advocacy work.

Recognizing the need for urgent action to combat cuts in school library funding, staffing and programming, Neal tasked participants of the May 2018 summit with creating an ALA-wide strategy to support school libraries, school library workers, the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), and the learners and communities school libraries serve.

“The summit brought together expertise and diverse experience from across the school library community to engage with academic, public and state library colleagues on strategies for community-wide advocacy for school library recognition and support,” explained Neal.

Participants reviewed the present state of the nation’s school libraries, identified future opportunities, and examined the impact of school libraries on the work of public and academic libraries. Using this information, the group then outlined the essential responsibilities of ALA and the library profession for supporting school libraries as unique and essential parts of the learning community.

“The ‘Fight for School Libraries’ summit was a serendipitous intersection of two presidential initiatives,” said AASL Immediate Past President Steven Yates. “Going into my presidential year, my goal was to strengthen, build, and explore coalitions across ALA by meeting with

divisions, roundtables, and other groups. We need our colleagues across ALA to help us celebrate the unique skill set of today's school librarians while developing stronger partnerships for advocacy. AASL truly appreciates ALA President Jim Neal convening the summit and building this concerted advocacy effort that stands to positively impact the future of all libraries for decades to come."

System membership standards

I will provide an update on the system membership standards at the meeting. We are getting ready to begin data collection.

Federal Budget Includes Big Gains for Libraries

#FundLibraries advocacy succeeds at protecting vital programs

By [Loida Garcia-Febo](#) | September 28, 2018



On September 28 the president signed legislation for fiscal year 2019 that includes level or increased funding for many library programs. Once again #FundLibraries advocates have achieved resounding success.

When the new fiscal year begins on October 1, the **Institute of Museum and Library Services** (IMLS) will have an additional \$2 million to improve administration of library state-formula grant programs and research. Grants funded through the **Library Services and Technology Act** will continue to receive level funding, enabling libraries to continue offering a range of innovative services to their communities.

Libraries will also benefit from programs administered by the Department of Education, many of which received increases that will open doors to new funding for school libraries. Thanks to the American Library Association's (ALA) advocacy as a member of the [Committee for Education Funding](#), Title IV Part A has an additional \$70 million for state grants under the **Every Student Succeeds Act** to support school programs, and school libraries are eligible to participate. Another \$70 million for **Perkins Career and Technical Education** (CTE) state grants will provide more low-interest loans for nontraditional learners in schools and libraries.

Also in the education budget is the **Innovative Approaches to Literacy** program, which received level funding to continue supporting literacy-based programs in high-need schools and school libraries. In addition to IMLS and education funding, the **National Library of Medicine** (NLM), part of the National Institutes of Health, received an increase of more than \$13 million. [More details about FY2019 funding for library-related programs are available in this chart, compiled by ALA.](#)

A successful campaign

What all these programs have in common, with the exception of NLM and Perkins CTE, is that both the FY2018 and 2019 White House budget proposals severely cut or eliminated them entirely. And for the second year in a row, advocates around the country shared their library stories and demonstrated to elected leaders how libraries identify and address the unique needs of their communities. Because of these advocacy efforts, Congress saw that Libraries = Strong Communities and retained or increased federal funding for libraries.

In addition to the success of ALA's #FundLibraries advocacy, the Association is celebrating other accomplishments this week. After a decade of negotiations with representatives of the content industry, this week the full House [passed](#) the **Marrakesh Treaty Implementation Act**. When the president signs the treaty, likely in October, it will immediately increase the availability of accessible reading materials to Americans and people around the world with print disabilities.

Year-round advocacy

I applaud the perseverance of ALA members, staff members, and other library advocates. I encourage you to join me in thanking your US senators and representative. You'll find a prepared sample letter at ala.org/fundlibraries. Keeping libraries as a priority for elected leaders requires [year-round advocacy](#), and there's nothing like a sincere "thank you" to increase good will toward libraries. Thanking elected leaders also opens the door to educate them on the services libraries offer their communities—services that many decision makers may simply not be aware of. Think of your thank-you note as a chance to get libraries a place at the table.

There will be many opportunities to ask for the support of your elected leaders on many issues, starting with our upcoming FY2020 #FundLibraries campaign. Regardless of the outcomes of the November elections, we fully expect the administration to again call for the elimination of federal funding for library programs. Following up to thank your leaders right now is not only a pleasantry—it's a positive place to start before saying "please" next year.

Latest RAILS Project News

E-Resources

As we reported in July, the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies' Consortial E-Book Interest Group hosted a national E-Book Summit at the 2018 American Library Association conference. Deirdre Brennan and Veronda Pitchford, RAILS Director of Membership Development and Resource Sharing, co-founded this interest group and Veronda co-chaired the summit.

The summit successfully brought together representatives from libraries, e-book publishers and distributors, and other stakeholders and was the first cross-industry event of its kind. The benefits of the summit continue to reverberate throughout the library world and publishing industry as witnessed by a recent [Library Journal article](#): "Librarians React to New Penguin Random House Ebook Terms." Both Deirdre and Veronda are quoted in the article.

Find More Illinois

The [Find More Illinois](#) expansion is off to a good start. The sign-up period for the first of three planned cohorts closed on October 1. RAILS expects seven libraries to be in the first cohort, assuming the timely receipt of participation agreements and other data from the libraries. These include three RSA libraries, three PrairieCat libraries, and one library with a standalone Polaris system. One-day training sessions are scheduled for November 13 (RAILS East Peoria), November 14 (RAILS Coal Valley), and November 15 (RAILS Coal Valley). Libraries will go live as soon as they complete training.

The sign-up period for the second cohort opened on October 2 and runs through November 23. Three PrairieCat libraries have already signed up for this cohort.

The Illinois Library Association conference gave us the opportunity to talk with library staff interested in learning more about Find More Illinois and with staff working in the pilot libraries. (See more details in the Member Engagement section below.) We look forward to connecting with school librarians at the AISLE (Association of Illinois School Library Educators) conference in Tinley Park, November 2–3.

Find More Illinois demonstrations also continue, with in-person presentations on October 19 in Quincy, October 22 in Barrington, October 23 in Burr Ridge, and October 29 in Bloomington. Webinars are planned for November 8 and December 11. The schedule of remaining demonstrations in 2018 is available at <https://www.librarylearning.info/tags/?FMIdemo>.

Other Highlights

Consortia News

FY2019 RAILS LLSAP Support

An LLSAP (Local Library System Automation Program) is a shared catalog system that is supported in part by an Illinois library system. In addition to providing a mix of financial and in-kind support to the historical RAILS LLSAPs (PrairieCat, RSA, and SWAN), RAILS offered “core services only” LLSAP support to other RAILS consortia for FY2019, including the use of RAILS meeting rooms, support for communication and collaboration (including a conference calling account), and the opportunity for prospective new member libraries to apply for LLSAP membership grants (see next item). Cooperative Computer Services (CCS), Pinnacle Library Cooperative, and Rock River Library Consortium applied, were accepted, and have each signed a FY2019 LLSAP agreement with RAILS.

FY2019 RAILS Catalog Membership Grants

After a hiatus in FY2018, RAILS is again offering catalog (LLSAP) membership grants in FY2019. There will be two formal award periods. Application deadlines are October 17, 2018 and April 17, 2019. In addition, RAILS has awarded grants to support the migration of the eight NIC (Northern Illinois Cooperative) libraries into PrairieCat. Six libraries (Cherry Valley Public Library District, Harvard Diggins Library, Ida Public Library in Belvidere, Nippersink Public Library District, North Suburban Public Library District in Loves Park and Roscoe, and Talcott Free Library District in Rockton), and PrairieCat applied for and received a total of \$182,955.10 in grant funding.

Consortial Staff In-service Day

The 2018 (3rd annual!) in-service day for consortial staff will be held on Friday, November 2, at Joliet Junior College. The day will focus on topical discussions and presentations of projects of specific interest to consortial staff in Illinois.

Continuing Education (CE)

Recent RAILS CE Program Highlight

During September, RAILS offered two mental health first aid trainings at Chillicothe Public Library and Niles-Maine Public Library. A total of 41 RAILS members attended these full-day workshops and we received many positive reviews. RAILS held this training in response to a member suggestion and input received during our strategic plan listening tours.

The workshop taught skills to help someone developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. Participants learned a five-step strategy to assess risk, how

to respectfully listen to and support an individual in crisis, and methods to identify appropriate professional help and other support.

Upcoming RAILS CE Highlights

Upcoming CE programs include:

- Succession planning workshop, October 30
- Webinar on grant writing, November 7
- Webinar on developing diverse children's and young adult collections, November 13

RAILS Board members are welcome to attend these and other RAILS CE events. Find out more and register at librarylearning.info.

Member Engagement

RAILS Member Update October 18

Approximately 100 members attended the October 18 RAILS Member Update at a RAILS videoconference location or via one-way streaming video (RAILS Live). Topics included RAILS' new strategic plan and logo, and updates on system membership standards and Find More Illinois (including reports from two libraries that participated in the pilot program).

Sharon Ruda, Director of the Illinois State Library's Talking Book and Braille Service, talked about available services for any Illinois resident unable to read standard print due to a permanent or temporary visual or physical disability. (RAILS used to provide talking book services for our members. Due to the disappearance of grant funding to systems to provide these services, we transitioned them to the Illinois State Library in August 2017. It is very important that our members know that these services are still available for their patrons.)

We also provided information at the update about our new partnership grants (formerly multitype collaborative grants). Based on feedback we received during our strategic plan revision process, we expanded the grants to include partnerships with outside agencies/organizations to encourage more libraries of all types to participate.

The next RAILS Member Update is scheduled for January 17, 2019. All RAILS Board members are welcome to attend at an available videoconference location or via RAILS Live. Stay tuned for more details in the weekly *RAILS E-News*.

RAILS Offers Two Academic Networking Events with IACRL

During our strategic plan revision process, RAILS heard from our academic, school, and special library members that they would like more opportunities to network with each other. As a result, we are planning more networking activities for each of these library types.

In November, RAILS is co-sponsoring two networking events with the Illinois Association of College and Research Libraries (IACRL). On Tuesday, November 6, RAILS will co-host an event at Northwestern University in Evanston to give academic library staff an opportunity to discuss common issues. On Monday, November 12, RAILS will co-host a similar event at Prairie State College in Chicago Heights. Anyone with an interest in academic libraries, including RAILS Board members, is welcome to attend. Register at librarylearning.info.

SLA Illinois Chapter and RAILS to Co-Host Networking Event at Caterpillar

RAILS and the Special Library Association Illinois chapter will co-host a networking event at Caterpillar, Inc. on Thursday, November 15. Laura Turner and Kristin Petersheim from Caterpillar are helping to plan this event which will include a tour of Caterpillar. Participants will also have a chance to discuss issues facing special libraries. Anyone with an interest in special libraries is encouraged to register at librarylearning.info. RAILS Board members are welcome!

SLA Illinois Chapter Webinar on RAILS Services

On Thursday, September 20, RAILS presented a webinar for the Special Library Association Illinois chapter on “10 Ways RAILS Can Help Your Special Library Succeed.” The webinar included information on how special libraries can participate in RAILS continuing education, delivery, group discounts, support for shared catalog services, and more.

RAILS Hosts Member Meetups in Palos Hills and Elgin

RAILS hosted two member meetups recently. At the Green Hills Public Library in Palos Hill on September 25, participants engaged in a discussion of disability services and took a tour of the library. At the Gail Borden Public Library in Elgin on October 16, attendees broke into groups and discussed obstacles they face at their libraries. This event also included a library tour. The next meetup will take place in the Moline area in early December and all board members are invited. Stay tuned for details coming soon in the weekly *RAILS E-News*.

RAILS Member Visits to Peoria and Rockford Regions

In late September and early October, RAILS visited a number of libraries in the Peoria and Rockford areas. Highlights include learning about Woodstock School District 200’s video game design group, viewing a completely redesigned high school library at Winnebago School District 323, and learning about Morrison & Mary Wiley Public Library’s (Elmwood, IL) PBS Great American Read contest.

Member Engagement at Illinois Library Association (ILA) Conference

Since ILA has over 3,000 members, including staff from all types of libraries (academic, public, school, and special) as well as library trustees, the ILA annual conference provides the perfect opportunity for RAILS to engage with a number of our members all in one place. The following are highlights of our engagement activities at the conference.

RAILS Exhibit Booth

Approximately 425 Illinois library staff members and trustees visited the RAILS booth to learn more about our programs/services and to spin our prize wheel to test their knowledge of RAILS. We were also very pleased to see the many RAILS Board members who stopped by the booth!



Several RAILS staff members took a turn at booth and the Find More Illinois team was on hand to give demos and answer questions. (Approximately 27 booth visitors had extensive conversations about Find More Illinois.) Some booth workers chose to wear Sherlock Holmes hats to promote Find More and our booth theme, “Discover What’s New at RAILS.”

We received many positive comments about the new RAILS logo from booth visitors as well as comments about our “great RAILS swag,” which included Find More Illinois tote bags provided by Auto-Graphics.

We received many positive comments about the new RAILS logo from booth



RAILS/Find More Illinois Reception at ILA

RAILS Communications staff worked with Auto-Graphics, our Find More Illinois vendor, to plan/host a reception on October 9. Auto-Graphics sponsored the event and paid for all refreshments. RAILS spread the word via our weekly *RAILS E-News* and word-of-mouth marketing, including distributing business cards with information about the event at the conference itself.

Approximately 100 people attended to network with colleagues and relax after a heavy day of conference going. A computer was also set up in the room for those wishing to become more familiar with Find More Illinois. Thanks to all RAILS Board members who attended the event!

RAILS Pub Stroll

RAILS sponsored a stop on ILA’s popular pub stroll. Each stop featured different food and drink specials and the opportunity to network with library colleagues. Approximately 40 people visited the RAILS stop to chat with our staff and to pick up a copy of our programs/services brochure and some swag.

Member Engagement at Other Conferences/Events

Health Science Librarians of Illinois (HSLI) Conference, September 26-28

RAILS had a booth at the HSLI conference in Rockford and most of the 50 conference attendees stopped by. Dan Bostrom, RAILS Member Engagement Manager, also provided an update at the conference on what RAILS has to offer of special interest to health science library staff.

PrairieCat Users Group Conference (PUG Day), September 28

RAILS had a booth at PUG Day and 66 visitors stopped by to find out more about RAILS programs/services and to take the RAILS or PrairieCat challenge. As previously mentioned, LLSAP (shared catalog) members are often confused about which services come from RAILS and which come from their LLSAP. Events like this one give us a chance to clarify these issues. Several RAILS staff members also presented sessions at PUG Day.

RAILS Staff News

RAILS Cataloging Services Coordinator

Nincy George will start as RAILS Cataloging Services Coordinator on November 7 at our Burr Ridge service center. Nincy has more than 10 years of cataloging experience in academic, public, and school libraries. She previously served as a cataloger at Orland Park Public Library. She will be responsible for assessing and implementing the recommendations of the Cataloging Working Group, including the development of an ongoing basic cataloging skills curriculum for library staff, and developing other cataloging services for RAILS members.

Consortial Reports

CARLI/I-Share

- No report

Cooperative Computer Services (CCS)

- No report

LINKin

- No report

Northern Illinois Cooperative (NIC)

- The NIC directors continue to work with PrairieCat staff to move the migration process along. An implementation team is being formed with representatives from the NIC libraries and PrairieCat staff.

Pinnacle Library Cooperative (PLC)

- Pinnacle has entered into an agreement with Unique Management to provide chat services to our patrons. Once implemented, the chat widget will appear on our PAC, our OverDrive page, and our libraries' individual websites. Unique Management staff will handle the interactions with patrons and answer many of the basic questions about our library policies, programs, and services. Anything that they cannot answer will be escalated to our library staff. We're looking to roll out the service on our PAC and OverDrive page in late November, with the websites to follow in the following months.
- Our consortium's OverDrive collection has reached one million circs! To celebrate the event, the patron who checked out the one millionth item in OverDrive won a Samsung Galaxy tablet. Pinnacle also provided gift cards to other patrons as additional prizes.

PrairieCat

- PrairieCat members held a Resource Sharing Summit at the DeKalb Public Library on August 17. Forty-three attendees representing 29 libraries met to discuss resource sharing topics and to build consensus for decision making by the Resource Sharing Committee. The summit was facilitated by Amanda Standerfer and by all accounts was very successful. PrairieCat will hold these summits annually from now on.
- PrairieCat just hired a new Training and Outreach Coordinator. Amanda Augsburger, who previously held the position of Community Engagement and Learning Supervisor at the Davenport Public Library, joined us on September 24. We currently have a job opening for our Senior Systems Specialist position, after the departure of Kacy Kelly in July.
- PrairieCat held our fifth annual PUG (PrairieCat User's Group) Day on September 28. The daylong miniconference included sessions on fundraising, community partnerships with police departments, library and patron law, youth services programming, author programming, services to autistic patrons, and cataloging local history and genealogy, among others. RAILS staff also presented sessions on Find More Illinois, Explore More Illinois, and our newly redesigned website. Our "Top Tech Trends" panel also returned this year.
- PrairieCat is currently working with NIC directors to build an implementation team and training schedule. All eight NIC libraries will join PrairieCat in the coming year. The project kicks off in November with a targeted go-live of mid-May 2019.

- PrairieCat will hold our biannual member updates from October 18 to November 1. These meetings are held at seven locations throughout our service area and are intended to enhance engagement and knowledge sharing among our staff and membership.

Resource Sharing Alliance NFP (RSA-NFP)

- RSA finished the migration of several new or upgrading members. We continue to work with those still in the process of migrating.
 - Valley District Library (in Fairview) is fully integrated.
 - Bushnell Public Library District is fully integrated.
 - Prairie Creek Public Library District (in Dwight) is circulating but not filling holds yet.
 - Neponset Public Library is circulating but not filling holds yet.
 - Ransom Memorial Public Library (in Altona) is cataloging.
 - Flanagan Public Library District is cataloging.
 - Williamsfield Public Library District is cataloging.
- This has been the summer of job interviews and hiring staff. RSA filled an open Member Services Specialist position and a Cataloging and Database Coordinator position. We just hired a new Member Services Specialist, who will have about two months of overlap with our current Member Services Specialist, who will retire at the end of the year. That person starts in mid-October. We have interviews for an open Cataloging and Database Specialist position in early October. RSA hopes to add two new staff members to our team if we can work out the budget lines.
- This has been the summer of catch-up, inbox cleaning, administrative work, and just plain old putting out fires. Being short-staffed over the summer vacation times has left us short of upgrades and behind in support. We did upgrade our online catalog with a small version bump and patched Symphony to fix some bugs. We've also contracted for, but not yet started work on, two new eRC (eResource Central) connections for e-stuff in our catalog and the new SirsiDynix Mobile app.
- RSA applied for the RAILS LLSAP support grant and spent some time gathering all the information required for that paperwork. Our school libraries are historically hard to get data from; their ideas of what a "collections' budget" is varied widely!

Rock River Library Consortium (RRLC)

- No report

System Wide Automated Network (SWAN)

- We continue to track support tickets to assess the post-New19 migration impact on our support structure. The downward trend in support tickets submitted post-migration is a welcome development. We hope to continue this trend through proactive site visits, training events, and updated documentation—all priorities through the end of the calendar year.
- This has been an especially difficult period for SWAN staff with the loss of Kate Boyle. Kate was a leader, mentor, friend, and family member to her SWAN colleagues. Staff appreciate the outpouring of support from our members.
- Post-migration, SWAN staff will be working with the membership to identify areas for improvement and efficiency. Coordination and reliance on feedback and leadership from our advisory and user groups are critical in our effort toward continuous progress.
- We have reached a stage of stability after the May 1 migration and the catalog deduplication. While support tickets continue at an elevated clip, many of these are due to new procedures and processes for the new members, replacement of reporting through BLUEcloud Analytics,

coordination with 3rd party vendors, and e-resource authentication via OpenAthens instead of EZproxy.

- The bibliographic deduplication was completed in July, getting our bibliographic database to 1.5 million records, which is close to where it should remain. The process brought its own cleanup demands in the areas of large print books, serial bibliographic and serial control records, and miscellaneous errors.
- Bibliographic Services exported our bibliographic database to MARCIVE, our vendor who tracks author, title, and subject headings and delivers authority records for local use. The July 4 bibliographic and authority database updates filled in the gaps in our authority processing from migration. We also took the opportunity to introduce processing on our bibliographic records, including subject and genre term normalization, heading updates, and RDA conversion to records cataloged using AACR2 and earlier standards.
- Our bibliographic records are now compliant with RDA standards, updated with Lexile and Accelerated Reader measures, and updated with name and subject access points per changes to the authority database that have taken place over the years. Our local authority database was also fully refreshed, and we have added records corresponding to genre and medical subject headings.
- We are very excited to officially have our new e-Resources Consultant in place, reporting to Tara Wood on the User Experience (UX) team. Robin Hofstetter joined us in a limited part-time capacity on August 1, working remotely on a few projects, and moved to full-time status on August 27. Robin previously served as e-Resources and Metadata Librarian for the University of Illinois at Chicago, where she also was an assistant professor. She is incredibly passionate about and talented with managing online tools, databases, and resources, as well as cataloging and authority control. She has also served as Head of Tech for Roosevelt University and has public library experience in serials, acquisitions, cataloging, and technology at the Public Library of Cincinnati. She has her MLIS degree from Kent State University. We very much look forward to what creative and innovative ideas she'll be bringing to our UX team.
- We conducted usability interviews with several SWAN member library staff in preparation for the SWAN support site redesign project. The official project kickoff meeting took place July 10, and we have set the redesigned site's launch date for December 4, 2018. Along the way, SWAN staff (in conjunction with Brian Smith of RAILS) will complete a full content weeding process, followed by a content refresh, in which we update and/or rewrite important documentation to new web publishing standards tailored to the new site.
- We have been working with EBSCO and OpenAthens to develop improvements to the OpenAthens and Articles Search setup process. Our goals include providing a clear outline to libraries of the steps they will need to take and a clear timeline, so members know how long the process will take when they request a new Articles search set up or "Athenized" links.
- St. Charles has transitioned to WorldCat Discovery/WorldShare ILL for patron-initiated ILL requests. We are using the process from this pilot to transition our entire membership to WorldCat Discovery for a more uniform solution across our membership. OCLC consulting is working with us to gather the credentials we need to set up the remaining libraries, and we will reach out to SWAN members when their WorldCat Discovery instance is ready. Once documented, we will share this solution with the entire membership through a webinar and will help in this configuration for a more uniform solution across our membership.
- We will do some baseline testing of the current catalog and some testing of prototypes of new features. These include a tabbed search interface with sections for physical items, downloads, and articles; changes to facets and facet labels; and StackMaps, a third-party application that

displays a map of libraries' collections in the catalog. We are currently finalizing prototypes and are on track for testing in late September and early October.

- SWAN IT continues to assess and improve the state of the Azure cloud infrastructure, working with SirsiDynix personnel to speed up nightly maintenance processes and report runtimes. We have scheduled the first step in the cloud migration—the Symphony 3.5.3 upgrade of our production environment—for October 10. The OS upgrade of SWAN's Symphony production ILS will take place this fall. The final move to Azure will be completed in January 2019.
- The annual SWAN event (SWANx) was a huge success. The final attendance was 350 and the survey feedback gave us high marks on the keynote speaker, the conference location at Moraine Valley Community College and Business Center, and improvements on our registration process.
- SWAN staff are evaluating SirsiDynix's BLUEcloud Mobile app for a potential SWAN-wide rollout.
- Green Hills Public Library District was admitted for full membership in SWAN, with a membership vote of 64 in favor, none opposed. (SWAN bylaws require 2/3 membership approval.) This project will be conducted with a small team of SWAN staff working tightly with Green Hills staff. The go-live is expected to be early February 2019.