

**American Library Association
ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2022
Report of President, Patty Wong**

This Presidential year has been one of the best and yet one of the most difficult experiences in my career. It has been a pleasure and an honor to represent and serve my profession and my community. I have spent hundreds of hours and thousands of miles, talking with librarians and library workers across the country and lifting up their work. Our library community is one of the bravest, creative, and resilient people in the world. They continue to surprise and amaze and provide the strongest community-facing service to anyone who needs it. From the smallest, rural branch library to public libraries throughout the country, from the school library in the most geographically isolated region to the largest, to our community college libraries and academic center libraries, from our prison libraries, our tribal libraries, our state chapters and our local and regional library consortia – all continue to rise to the opportunity to serve.

As the first Asian American ALA President there is so much more to say and do for on behalf of the equity and social justice needs we have in this country and in our libraries. Many libraries are beginning the pro-people, equity work at the staff level and then sharing that work in developing opportunities for the community to engage. The work is far from over and some libraries and library workers need support in order to begin that effort. Some of our members may not agree with our focus on equity and social justice or may be weary of this focus.

I ask you to take a look around at our society today. There is civil unrest and terrorism in our smallest communities. We experienced an attack on our nation's capitol, the symbol of our commitment to democracy. The rise in book challenges is a continual reminder that the freedom to read is under constant scrutiny. And on a regular basis, we see aggressive behavior and intolerance in response to the growing diversity within our communities. The pandemic has also created a stressor on digital equity where the complexities of access grows more difficult.

These social inequities have resulted in protests against library programs on immigration rights and pride programs, school librarians who are under pressure to relinquish their professional roles in collection development and teaching, and many more open examples of civic erosion. Our staff continue to experience trauma about the loss of funding, the loss of colleagues and the difficulty in replacing critical positions, and the loss of familiar patterns that were pre-pandemic, often in isolation.

But we have more of an opportunity to make a change. What we know is that the majority of community feel a strong trust and investment in our libraries and in the right to read. But we need to mobilize. We have more of a need to provide the tools and training to our staffs to be able to develop a healing process, resiliency and support in communicating and creating programs and services that mirror our mission and vision and values and assist our communities to understand that as our Executive Director, Tracie Hall has challenged us: "Inclusion is an imperative."

I wanted to announce a national effort to provide critical training for our frontline staff from all libraries and our legal and community-based partners to assist us in creating strategies for social justice. This effort – we don't have a name for it quite yet - will begin late summer and continue throughout the year focusing on the immediate need in a call for action, using Train the Trainer models for our frontline staff and a partner engagement for community and legal support for libraries.

Thanks to the leadership of our Executive Director Tracie D. Hall, we have provided some extraordinary opportunities to elevate the work in small and rural libraries with "Transforming Our Communities," resulting in more than X \$million to be distributed over the next three years.

The American Library Association is also 145 years strong. In celebration of our 150th Anniversary we are planning an effort to capture the voices of our past presidents, beginning with interviews and filming, starting at Annual and progressing through these next few years. Kyle Cassidy, well-known photographer (This is What a Librarian Look Like) will be on hand for two days at Conference to capture the first part of this documentation.

With this Annual Conference we celebrate the 20 years of work with the exceptional Parliamentarian Eli Mina. Thank you , Eli for your wisdom, guidance, insight, advice, and your support for our work together to build a better American Library Association. You have seen us through our evolution to this point – we could not have done this without you. Your work has influenced our membership, our association and our respective library communities across the country. We recognize and applaud you and are honored to have been not only one of your clients but a trusted colleague and friend.

I would also like to introduce our new Parliamentarian Adrian Stratton. Adrian is an experienced parliamentarian from the NY metro area. He currently serves as President of the NY Association of Parliamentarians and is a member of the National Association of Parliamentarians and the American Institute of Parliamentarians. He has been working actively with Eli to ensure the seamless and successful transition in their roles, so you will see both of them actively engaged at Annual Conference. I encourage all of you to join us at the reception after Council III to recognize Eli Mina and to meet Adrian Stratton.

The role of Transforming ALA Governance is coming to a close. Their work to round out the conversation and decisions about improving the work of our governance and how Council and the Board can be more effective with stronger time management, better use of parliamentary tools, common sense, and perhaps more opportunities to meet. I thank the TAG group for their commendable efforts in engaging Council in deeper conversation about our next steps as a body. And I look forward to Council engagement in this work.

And again, thanks to the ALA staff at all levels of the organization for their exceptional work, commitment to our mission, and their courage to make a difference every day. A special thank you to Kathi Kromer, Director of the Public Policy and Advocacy Office and especially her team

for the data and support for my chapter visits to various states and to team members Ian Ware and Shawnda Hines for the Connectivity Corner support. A special thank you to Stephanie Hlywak, Marci Merola, and Larra Clark for their support crafting the strong messaging for so much of our work together. And always, many thanks to Cheryl Malden and Raymond Garcia and Sheryl Reyes for continuous support in keeping me organized and assistance in moving the organization forward. Lastly, we would not be here without the support of our Executive Director, Tracie D. Hall and the other members of the Executive Committee: President-Elect Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lozada, Past President Julius C. Jefferson, Jr. and Treasurer Maggie Farrell, and the good work of our Executive Board.

Libraries Connect Presidential Initiative

Connect Live: Small, Rural, and Tribal Libraries as Community Anchors, was featured on April 21, 2022, at <https://www.ala.org/membership/ala-connect-live-series> Cindy Hohl moderated this conversation with Jonna C. Paden (Acoma/Laguna Pueblo), the Librarian and Archivist at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center Library & Archives in Albuquerque, New Mexico and Allison Waukau (Menominee/Navajo) who resides in Minneapolis and works in community outreach for Hennepin County Library. Jonna and Allison brought insight and information on the diversity of the American Indian library community, the critical role that libraries play and the need for more American Indian librarians.

The final Connectivity Corner Instagram Live program took place on May 23, and featured Michael Bradley from Eugene Public Library. <https://www.instagram.com/p/Cd6b6eKsqZG/> Michael worked with funding from the Library's Foundation to match an existing hotspot lending program and partnered with nonprofits to provide hotspot needs directly to those agencies and their clients. The nonprofits used the hotspots to further their organizational goals and outreach. The Library devoted roughly 40% of their hotspots to this effort, impacting hundreds of community members they would not have been able to reach directly. They have many more nonprofits waiting for this incredible new kind of support.

A highlight on this quarter was the Workshop on Digital Equity and Broadband. Hosted by the American Library Association Public Policy and Advocacy team with sponsorship from The Mellon Foundation, this two-day conversation featured a keynote from Former Commissioner and Acting Chairwoman Mignon Clyburn and Patricia Hswe, Program Officer for Public Knowledge, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The event brought thought leaders from state agencies, public, school and academic libraries, library consortia, library consultants, LIS, IMLS, and key agencies working in Broadband arenas (SHLB, NDIA, to discuss how to move towards digital equity. Participants discussed digital literacy, telehealth, workforce development, language needs, racial and ethnic community needs, student needs, current best practices, funding opportunities, partnership potential and how we might activate as a national community. We look forward to similar convenings in the future, potentially at state and regional levels.

Annual Conference

You will see examples of how Libraries Connect and how equity, diversity and inclusion is integral to this work throughout Annual Conference.

The Annual Conference will feature:

The Opening General Session will feature a fireside chat on with FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel as part of our lift for the role of Digital Equity and the impact libraries can play.

The President's Program will focus on the exceptional work of some key Asian American authors, an Asian American publisher and Asian American advocate and their role in advancing literacy in an effort towards inclusion and making the world a better place.

The Closing Session will frame our work on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and connecting the work to social justice and will feature an interview with Dr. Nicole Cooke and author Luvvie Jones.

Many thanks to the outstanding members of my Presidential Advisory Committee, and their incredible work in elevating equity, diversity and inclusion as a Library imperative.

Stacey Aldrich
Lynn Silipigny Connaway
Ana Elisa de Campos Salles
Roberto Delgadillo
Cindy Hohl
Phillip Lee
Dr. Claudette McLinn
Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lozada
Alma Ramos-McDermott
Rebekkah Smith Aldrich
Kiera Vargas
Dr. Shali Zhang

Senior Advisors: Dr. Camila Alire and Dr. Kenneth A. Yamashita

Co-chairs Dr. Nicole Cooke and Miriam Tuliao

Speaking Engagements, Interviews and Invitations:

April 21, 2022 Connect Live: American Indian Libraries featuring Cindy Hohl, Jonna C. Paden and Allison Waukau

April 27, 2022 ALA/University of Maryland ischool lecture interview with Joseph Thompson

May 4-6, 2022 Maryland Library Association/Delaware Library Association, "Come as You Are," Cambridge, MD

May 10, 2022 SJSU iSchool AAPI Heritage Month

May 13, 2022 USC School of Management MMLIS Commencement Address

May 18-20,2022 Utah Library Association: "United in Diversity/Unida en la Diversidad" Davis Conference Center, Layton, UT, Equity Leadership Preconference, Keynote Address

May 20, 2022 SJSU iSchool Commencement Address

May 23, 2022 Connectivity Corner Instagram Live featuring Michael Bradley

May 23-24, 2022 Massachusetts Library Association Keynote "Turning the Tide"

June 1-2, 2022 Workshop on Digital Inclusion and Broadband, Hyatt at Capitol Hill, Washington, DC

June 4, 2022 California Library Association, Closing Address



