

BCALA NEWS

Black Caucus of the American Library Association Inc.



Kelsa Bartley, a student at Florida State University, won the 2018 Smiley Travel Award to attend the Joint Conference of Librarians of Color in New Mexico. We congratulate Ms. Bartley, and give you plenty of other great content to read, in this edition of BCALA News!

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PARTIAL CONTENTS

NEWS06

- 07
- Kelsa Bartley Of Florida State University Wins Smiley Student Travel Award
- 08
- BCALA Executive Board Meeting Minutes from ALA Annual 2018
- 11
- Reading Is Grand! Celebrating Grand-Families Telling Our Stories @ Your Library

FEATURED14

- 15
- Colorado Librarian honored at PLA Awards Breakfast at ALA Conference in New Orleans
- 16
- RECENT BOOK RELEASED FEATURING BCALA MEMBERS: “Asian American Librarians and Library Services: Activism, Collaborations and Strategies” (Rowman and Littlefield, 2017)
- 17
- Hot Buttered Books: Selected Recent Titles on Cooking and Food
- 18
- BCALA Member Julius Jefferson Challenges Werner for ALA Presidency
- 19
- Quinby Street Resource Center Library Director Recognized as Community Champion

OP-ED20

- 21
- “I DIDN’T KNOW THAT PEOPLE OF COLOR WRITING SCIENCE FICTION WAS A THING”: The Influence of Librarians on Black Girls’ Access to Science Fiction
- 25
- Get the Most out of a Post
- 26
- Book Review: Daddy’s Big Secret: Jordan Learns the Truth
- 27
- Book Review: “Set the World on Fire” by Keisha Blain, PhD

Message from the BCALA President

GREETINGS COLLEAGUES,

I am proud and humbled to be the president of BCALA. When I assumed the office of the president on June 24 2018, I climbed on the shoulders of five decades of service and 26 past presidents from E.J. Josey to Denyvetta Davis.

As a child, I read extensively about Louie Armstrong and New Orleans. I fell in love with all I had read about this magical place. Throughout my life, I had many opportunities to visit New Orleans. I turned down each opportunity. I would say, “God has something for me in New Orleans and I will know when the time is right and then I will go to New Orleans.” When I learned I had won the BCALA presidential election and would be taking office in New Orleans, I knew it was God! We will continue our services, dedication and social responsibility to the library community at large.

MISSION STATEMENT

BCALA serves as the civil and human rights advocate for the development, promotion, and improvement of library and other information services and resources to the nation's

African American community.

It also provides leadership for the recruitment and professional development of African American librarians and other information service providers and advocates.

VISION STATEMENT

BCALA is the pre-eminent organization serving African American librarians.

CORE VALUES

These core values are the intrinsic guiding standards and principles that collectively define and determine the character of BCALA.

- BCALA values
- Advocacy
- Collaboration
- Excellence
- Inclusiveness
- Integrity and Transparency
- Stewardship of Resources

We have a strong and talented executive board, executive committee, committee chairs, co-chairs and members to help shape the course of the Caucus as we prepare for the next 50 years and beyond.



Vice President Simpson will have a visible role as vice president during my term as President. We will work as a team along with the Caucus leadership and membership. Employing transparency and inclusiveness as our measuring stick for success.

OUR THEME: STEP UP... AND GET INVOLVED

We invite each and every one of you to choose a committee or ad hoc committee and get involved. Our conference, NCAAL XI is in less than two years away; step up and get involved! Members are asking for a mentorship/partnership program... step up and get involved. We will

be hosting a yearlong 50th anniversary celebration for BCALA...Step up and get involved.

Midterm elections are coming up... are you registered to vote? We should be on the front lines of voters registration drives.. Step up and get involved! Members are not being promoted at work, passed over for leadership roles, evaluated unfairly. Enhance the professional network offered to members of the library world: academic librarians, public librarians, school librarians, etc. Addressing issues and concerns regarding equity, inclusion, and diversity in a timely manner.

We will be asking questions of the policy makers and library associations... Step up and get involved

- *Digitization of archives*
- *Emphasize the importance of transparency through my tenure as your president*
- *Reduce Caucus footprint during Midwinter*
- *Increase programs and workshops during annual conference*
- *Increase membership by accepting additional affiliate organizations*

A) Creating school media specialist ad hoc committee to examine needs of the school media librarian, develop workshops, webinars, professional development opportunities

B) Recruiting library support staff

- *Collaboration on projects with other ethnic caucuses*

We encourage members to share their concerns and suggestions for a strengthened BCALA. We advocate the need for diverse collections and dialogue related to diversity in literature. We would like to strengthen professional and leadership opportunities for BCALA members.

BCALA can only be as effective as we are informed and engaged...

STEP UP...GET INVOLVED

Former BCALA President Wanda Brown Elected ALA President

By Macey Morales, ALA



CHICAGO – Wanda Brown, Director of Library Services at the C.G. O’Kelly Library, Winston-Salem State University, Winston-Salem, N.C., has been elected president-elect of the American Library Association.

Brown received 6,066 votes, while her opponent, Peter Hepburn, Head Librarian, College of the Canyons, Santa Clarita, Calif., received 4,066 votes.

As ALA president, Brown will be the chief elected officer for the oldest and largest library association in the world. She will serve as president-elect for one year before

stepping into her role as president at the close of the 2019 ALA Annual Conference in Washington, D.C.

Upon learning the outcome of the election, Brown remarked, “It is truly an honor to be elected as the next ALA president. I thank you for the opportunity to lead. I look forward to working closely with the membership in advocating for libraries, fostering diversity and inclusion and demonstrating our profession’s value.”

An ALA member for 30 years, Brown is an active member of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), the Association for Libraries Collections & Technical Services (ALCTS), and the Library Leadership and Management Association (LLAMA). She has held multiple leadership positions within each division.

Brown has held numerous positions with the Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA) including her current service as treasurer (2016-2018) and service as president (2014-16), treasurer (1992-96) and two terms as an Executive Board member

(2001-03, 2014-16). She was the 2011-13 president of the North Carolina Library Association and has held various other positions with NCLA, including treasurer (1991-98) and the 2005-09 chair of the Finance Committee.

She is the 2015 recipient of the DEMCO/ALA Black Caucus Award for Excellence, the 2013 BCALA Leadership Award, and the 2012 BCALA Distinguished Service Award. In 2009, she received University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) Kovacs Award for Outstanding Alumni Achievement, and in 2013, UNCG awarded Brown with the School of Education Outstanding Alumni Achievement Award.

Brown holds a BA in English, with a minor in psychology from Winston-Salem State University, and an MLS from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

For more election results, including those for Council, divisions, and round tables, watch for updates on the ALA website <http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/alaelection>.

NEWS

- 7 *Kelsa Bartley Of Florida State University Wins Smiley Student Travel Award*
- 8 *BCALA Executive Board Meeting Minutes from ALA Annual 2018*
- 11 *Reading Is Grand! Celebrating Grand-Families Telling Our Stories @ Your Library*

NEWS



KELSA BARTLEY OF FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY WINS SMILEY STUDENT TRAVEL AWARD

Press Release
For Immediate Release
August 21, 2018

Contact: *Gladys Bell*
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Ms. Kelsa Bartley, a student in the Master of Science in Information program (MSI’18) at Florida State University, is the winner of the 2018 Smiley Travel Award, sponsored by the Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA). The award gives Bartley a \$500 stipend to attend the 3rd National Joint Conference of Librarians of Color (JCLC), September 26-30, 2018, Albuquerque, NM. The winner is chosen via an essay contest, and essays are judged by a review committee within BCALA.

Kelsa wrote a brief essay on the theme “Gathering all Peoples: Embracing Culture & Community.” She will be formally introduced at the Awards event in Albuquerque.

BCALA is a nonprofit organization for different areas of librarianship, including school, public, academic, and special, with national and international membership. It also provides game-changing leadership for the recruitment and development of African American education and information professionals. It is one of five ALA ethnic affiliates and advocates for promoting and improving library services to diverse populations and communities of color. In addition, BCALA has sponsored literary awards for African American authors since 1994 and is also a sponsor of the prestigious Coretta Scott King Book Awards.

Learn more about BCALA at www.bcala.org

BCALA Executive Board Meeting from ALA Annual 2018

By Kirby McCurtis, BCALA Secretary

ATTENDEES: Fannie Cox, Fayrene Muhammad, Cyndee Landrum, Jina Duvernay (new board member), Nichelle Hayes (new board member), Valerie Carter (new board member), Denyvetta Davis, Kelvin Watson, Richard Ashby, Bradley Kuykendall, Tiffeni Fontno, Jerrod Moore, Rudolph Clay, Brian Hart, Jos Holman, Shauntee Burns-Simpson, Vivian Bourdeaux, Kim McNeil-Capers, Tiki Love, Sharon Mahaffey (budget and finance), Gerald Holmes, Sylvia Sprinkle Hamlin, John Page, Cherese McKnight, Eboni Henry, Jasmine Harris, Em Claire Knowles, Alicia Garcia, Andrew “Sekou” Jackson, Kirby McCurtis.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Bradley moved to approve the agenda as written, Nichelle seconded.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Richard moved to approve the minutes, Fannie seconded.

VICE PRESIDENT’S REPORT: committee met on the phone. Pushing to have more money for the affiliates. Day of service cancelled because library “was not ready for us.” Childcare centers also not ready. Still want to do it for annual conference in future. \$5000 Baker and Taylor; \$2000 Ingram to sponsor the party on Sunday night.

PRESIDENTS REPORT: Attended IFLA as representative of BCALA. Did global visioning for the strategic plan (North American workshop). Invited to attend Special Library Association conference. Will share more information in final report.

TREASURERS REPORT: Not here because of her new position as president-elect of ALA. Denyvetta shared a paper copy of the report. Highlighted a few things that Wanda wanted to be shared. Included a column for actual budget. Calling your attention to online ads: \$67,609.49--doing quite well. Once we have the website it will be even better. In essence the ads paid for web upgrade. Reflected next fiscal year because of the cycle, might warrant greater discussion. Jos says we need to ask Wanda about her totals to the right; many are represented like negatives. Kelvin had questions about the fundraising committee; did they actually bring that in or send that in? Kelvin is not comfortable voting on it until the actual budget is accurate and clear. Jos was concerned about the organizational consultant number--looks like it is overspent. It is actually accurate because the past consultant did not submit her receipts in a timely manner. Wanda said she is still not sure what goes where so that is why the budget looks not correct. She is working with Stanton to better understand the budgeting process. Wanda suggested we need to figure out a way to capture all the knowledge Stanton has about the budgeting process for BCALA; we need to have something in writing. Jos moves to table the report until corrections are made, Fay seconded.

ELECTION RESULTS: Kelvin read the results

VICE-PRESIDENT/PRESIDENT-ELECT

Shauntee Burns-Simpson - 65

SECRETARY

Elisa A. Garcia - 68

TREASURER

Cherese McKnight - 67

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Donald Peebles - 64

Fayrene Johnson-Muhammad - 61

Valerie Carter - 60

Jina DuVernay - 59

Elizabeth Brumfield - 58

Nichelle Hayes - 54

Tatanisha Love - 54

Jasmine Simmons - 54

Tammi Lawson - 53

Sophia Sotiello - 36

Richard motions election votes accepted, Brian seconded.

SHARON MAHAFFEY: reported on behalf of Stanton. Talked about the amendment made (sent via email). Richard makes a motion that \$2000 for the website be approved, Jerrod seconds. Jos comments and had concerns about overspending. Denyvetta clarified. Motion passes.

PRESIDENT: Strategic Directions Action Plan Progress Report, 2016-2018. Asked for comments. Fannie said she needs list of affiliates, Denyvetta said check with Andrew.

NCAAL TASK FORCE REPORT: Gerald presented report and opened it up for questions.

WEBINAR: Fannie Cox presented. Will start with webinars being free will eventually charge. Assessment tool connected to the webinars. Jerrod asked what the impetus for charging is. Fannie said because we had to create plugins. Discussion ensued about funding for the webinars. Kelvin brought up potential partnerships with other associations, divisions, or ethnic affiliates. Denyvetta said she did reach out to LLAMA. Fannie pushed back at the free. Kelvin brought up the need to show the value of being a member of BCALA and the importance of attracting the broadest audience possible to join the organization. Richard sees this as a twofold opportunity: marketing and education. Vivian asked if the committee has a list of what are the goals for 2, 5, 10 years. Needs sustainable support for the goals. Vivian also asked about criteria for potential presenters. Jerrod brought up the generational difference with acceptance of charges. Brian agreed and brought up LLAMA’s free webinars and how this should be about visibility. Tier conversation ensued--tiered by topic. What is the goal, what are we trying to accomplish with the webinars? This needs to be laid out in the proposal to the board. We need to try it, invest in it.

EJ Josey papers and archives: Sent an email with this information including pictures. Bradley asked if he could be a part of the conversation, his institution is trying to gather more repository and papers. Loretta at Clark Atlanta is also interested. This started when Carolyn Thompson with VP; ongoing for long time. Dean of NCCU is busy; not his priority. Goal is 2020 for papers digitized. Two issues one is getting it digitized,

EM CLAIR KNOWLES: JCLC early bird registration open until July. Looking for financial sponsorship.

AWARDS: Jos Holman distinguished service, advocacy Kim McNeil-Capers, Stanton Biddle for legacy, Tiffany Duck for rising leader, Toni Morrison author. JCLC fundraiser on Saturday.

ODLOS REPORT: received report from Jody Gray

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE: Rudolph reported that we are still in the membership recruitment phase, 1000 by 2020. 606 members. Each person charged with recruiting one member per year. If you have other ideas about recruiting members, please let the committee know via email. Can we send you a reminder email about renewing membership? Rudolph says it does come four weeks out. With the website enhancement, will probably get a new vendor for membership.

EJ JOSEY SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE: Need new members. Next year’s theme will be emailed soon.

ORGANIZATIONAL DIRECTOR: Been in the role since December. Posting lots of jobs. Did comprehensive membership survey. Working on website redesign in the discovery phase, almost complete. Next moving into the design phase. All emails moved to the google nonprofit. Working on e-signatures. Transition the list serv to the google platform. Trying to make it a seamless process when people join for them to join the list serv. Also spent time implementing google analytics.

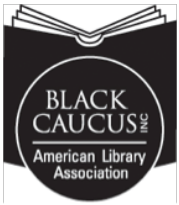
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE: Vivian shared that the group would love to be able to organize a trip to Jamaica. Reach out to Vivian and Ebony with contacts in the region.

MARCELLUS TURNER: report from the JCLC board of directors. Focusing on the conference; hopeful BCALA will have a booth at the conference. Also looking for sponsorship opportunities. Sponsorship opportunities: programs, meetings, tables, refreshments. Jos asked if that is in the budget for this year. Jos move, Richard seconds.

JCLC: we want to sponsor something--this is something we should do. Jos suggests take it from National Conference Investment line. Jos move that BCALA be the sponsor for the mobile app for JCLC up to \$6500; Brian seconded. 7 in favor, 5 oppose; motion passes. Jos volunteered to talk to Em Claire Knowles. Richard makes a motion to approve \$3000 to host a reception at JCLC; Fannie seconded. Richard is willing to sponsor from the President’s budget. Passed.

Denyvetta read a thank you letter from Kyra Marie Spinrack.

Motion to adjourn Richard, seconded Kelvin.



READING IS GRAND! CELEBRATING GRAND-FAMILIES TELLING OUR STORIES @ YOUR LIBRARY

Press Release
For Immediate Release
August 21, 2018

Contact: *Gladys Bell*
Email: *gladys.bell@hamptonu.edu*
Tel: 757-727-5185

BCALA announces Reading is Grand! Celebrating Grand-Families Telling Our Stories @ Your Library grant winners

NEW ORLEANS - During the ALA conference in June, Karen Lemmons, chair of the 2018 Reading is Grand! Celebrating Grand-Families Telling Our Stories @ Your Library selection committee announced four libraries will receive the 2018 Reading is Grand! Grant. Reading is Grand! is a celebration of the important role African American grandparents and older adults play in the lives of children. It is through their infinite wisdom and experience that children learn the unique cultural and familial values that help them grow into valuable contributors to the community.

THE GRANT-WINNING LIBRARIES — Broward County Library, Fort Lauderdale, FL; Kinard Elementary School, Clover, SC; Middle College High School, Memphis, TN; and Uniondale Public Library, Uniondale, NY— were selected based on the level of creativity and originality of program criteria, action plans, level of involvement of grandparents in the activities, and impact of the program on the community.

The four winning programs are as follows:

BROWARD COUNTY LIBRARY, FORT LAUDERDALE, FL.

The theme, “Cooking with Carver Ranches: History, Literacy, and Love @ the Library” is a several months long new initiative of the Carver Ranches Library in partnership with the City of West Park. The first phase of this initiative will take place during the month of September in celebration of Grand Families and Grandparents Day. Beginning September 4, and for the next three weeks, pre-school age children and grandparents will read books together. Grandparents will share stories of growing up in the Carver Ranches Community as well as share a favorite recipe from their childhood that has a special memory for them. This interaction will continue throughout the second phase, in which the grandparents and youth together will prepare the grandparents’ recipes. The recipes and stories will be compiled into a story/cookbook.

KINARD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, CLOVER, SC.

The theme, “Mawmaw & Pawpaw, You’re Telling Me a Story!”, begins September 10, with the Mayor of Clover, issuing a proclamation declaring Grandparents Week at Kinard Elementary School. During that week, elementary students will use iMovie to introduce their Mawmaws and Pawpaws’ sharing life stories. Other activities include a grandparents’ read-a-thon in the library; Mawmaw’s favorite recipe day, in which students will produce a Mawmaw’s Memories Cookbook. The culminating activity will be breakfast with the grandparents.

MIDDLE COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL, MEMPHIS, TN

The theme, “March On! Memphis! (Remembering the 1968 Sanitation Strike), begins in August. All the students from Middle College High School will read the book, “Memphis, Martin, and the Mountaintop—the Sanitation Strike of 1968”. After reading the book, students will write a personal literary response to the book. In September, during a school-wide assembly, students will hear a guest panel of five grandparents and one Memphis sanitation worker discuss their memories of the Memphis strike, the personal impact of Dr. King’s Mountaintop speech and his assassination. Questions and answers will follow the presentation and students will present their written reflections on the 1968 strike and Dr. King.

UNIONDALE PUBLIC LIBRARY, UNIONDALE, NY.

Reading is Grand: Bridging the Generations to celebrate African American Heritage is a three-part series which will bring together grandchildren and their grandparents so that these children can learn about and document their family history, culture and traditions. The first part will be an intergenerational fundamental genealogy workshop. The second part will be a Freedom Quilt craft workshop in which grandparents will work with their grandchildren to make “no sew” freedom quilts. The culminating activity will be a food heritage celebration and intergenerational dialogue in which grandparents and their grandchildren will discuss the importance of knowing one’s heritage, while participating in a communal dining experience.

The 2018 Reading is Grand Celebrating Grand-Families @ Your Library selection committee includes, Chair Karen Lemmons, Library Media Specialist, Detroit School of Arts, Detroit, MI; Denyvetta Davis, President, BCALA, Roland Barksdale-Hall, Library Director, Quinby Street Resource Center, and Kirby McCurtis, Administrator, North Portland Library, Multnomah County Library, Portland Oregon.

Contact Person:
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BCALANEWS

Black Caucus of the American Library Association Inc.

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F E A T U R E D

- 15 *Colorado Librarian honored at PLA Awards Breakfast at ALA Conference in New Orleans*
- 16 *RECENT BOOK RELEASED FEATURING BCALA MEMBERS: “Asian American Librarians and Library Services: Activism, Collaborations and Strategies” (Rowman and Littlefield, 2017)*
- 17 *Hot Buttered Books: Selected Recent Titles on Cooking and Food*
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Colorado Librarian honored at PLA Awards Breakfast at ALA Conference in New Orleans



Librarian Kyra Hahn, from Douglas County Libraries in Castle Rock, CO, won an honorable mention award for Public Libraries Magazine’s feature article contest. Her feature article appeared in the July/August 2017 issue of “Public Libraries Magazine.” The article, titled “Public Service Loan Forgiveness: The Struggle to Qualify is Real,” covers the timely topic of the student loan

forgiveness program offered by the U.S. Department of Education and public library staff’s eligibility for program participation. The Dept. of Education program was created through legislation in 2007, targets employees working full-time in the public service sector to be eligible for student loan forgiveness after working 10 years, and making payments on qualified repayment plans beginning October 2007 to

present. The earliest eligibility for student loan forgiveness was set to begin in October 2017 and Hahn reports on challenges to qualify within the program.

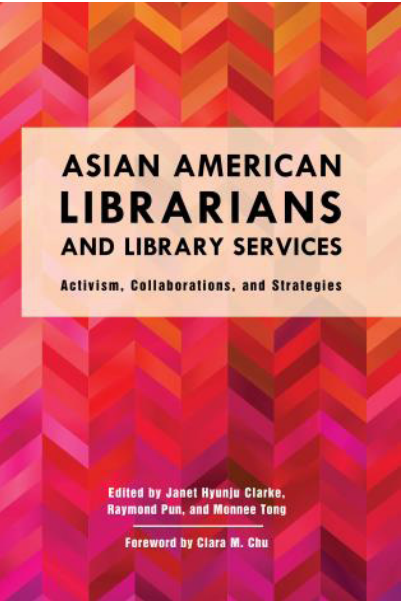
Additionally, Hahn did a complementary podcast for PLA’s “Public Libraries Online” in November 2017 in conjunction with this award-winning article. Her advocacy work in relation to student loan policy continued to ramp up in 2018 with a presentation at PLA 2018 in Philadelphia and a few recent webinars including one for the U.S. Government Publishing Office’s FDLP Academy on the topic. Her goal is to raise awareness of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program among all library staff, to aid with making program enrollment easy to navigate and ease the burden of student loan debt on your wallet!

Hahn is a member of BCALA, APALA – Asian Pacific American Librarian Association, and is working with colleagues to establish a state chapter of BCALA for Colorado.

RECENT BOOK RELEASED FEATURING BCALA MEMBERS:

“*Asian American Librarians and Library Services: Activism, Collaborations and Strategies*”
(Rowman and Littlefield, 2017)

By Ray Pun



This new edited volume features the experiences of Asian-Pacific American librarians working in many types of libraries to promote outreach, diversity and inclusivity in their communities. BCALA members such as Elizabeth Jean Brumfield, Patty Wong, Ray Pun and others have contributed case studies, narratives and experiences in strategizing diversity initiatives and partnerships. For example, Wong shares her leadership experiences and advice to readers who are interested in learning how to cultivate diversity in the workplace and in library leadership. Brumfield co-wrote a chapter with Sato Hutchison on exploring the experiences of an Asian American librarian working in an HBCU; Ray Pun co-edited the book with Janet H. Clarke (Past President

of APALA), and Monnee Tong (APALA member). The contributions demonstrate the importance of outreach services, collaborations and community engagements to cultivate diversity and inclusivity in our profession today. It is also the first book to cover the experiences and perspectives of Asian Pacific American librarians and their collaborations with allies and advocates to foster understandings and breakthroughs to support the API colleagues and communities at large. To purchase, visit <https://www.amazon.com/Asian-American-Librarians-Library-Services/dp/1442274921>.

Hot Buttered Books: Selected Recent Titles on Cooking and Food

By Kathleen E. Bethel, Northwestern University Libraries

Booker, Jennifer H. Dinner Déjà Vu: *Southern Tonight, French Tomorrow.* Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Company, 2017.

Campbell, Darren M, and Francine T. Jenkins. Gullah Recipes. North Charleston, SC: The Simone Club/[CreateSpace], 2017.

Claiborne, Jenné. Sweet Potato Soul: *100 Easy Vegan Recipes for the Southern Flavors of Smoke, Sugar, Spice, and Soul.* NY: Harmony Books, [2018].

Darden, Norma J., and Carole Darden. Spoonbread and Strawberry Wine: *Recipes and Reminiscences of a Family.* 2nd ed. NY: Harlem Moon, Broadway Books, 2017, Ó2003.

Deppe, Martin L. Operation Breadbasket: *An Untold Story of Civil Rights in Chicago, 1966-1971.* Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2017.

Deetz, Kelley Fanto. Bound to the Fire: *How Virginia's Enslaved Cooks Helped Invent American Cuisine.* Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2017.

Edge, John T. The Potlikker Papers: *A Food History of the Modern South.* NY: Penguin Press, 2017.

Fisher, Abby. What Mrs. Fisher Knows About Old Southern Cooking, Soups, Pickles, Preserves, Etc.: *In Facsimile with Historical Notes.* Bedford, MA: Applewood Books, 2017, Ó1881.

Franklin, Sara B. Edna Lewis: *At the Table with an American Original.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018.

Gay, Roxane. Hunger: *A Memoir of (My) Body.* NY: Harper, 2017.

Gennari, John. Flavor and Soul: *Italian America at Its African American Edge.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017.

Guy, Jerrelle. Black Girl Baking: *Wholesome Recipes Inspired by a Soulful Upbringing.* Salem, MA: Page Street Publishing, 2018.

Harris, Jessica B. Iron Pots and Wooden Spoons: *Africa's Gifts to New World Cooking.* NY: Simon & Schuster, 2017, Ó1999.

Harris, Jessica B. My Soul Looks Back: *A Memoir.* NY: Scribner, 2017.

Hatch, Anthony Ryan. Blood Sugar: *Racial Pharmacology and Food Justice in Black America.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016.

Humphery, Audrey. Mrs. Humphery's Delightful Foods & Desserts: *Soul Food Kitchen Cookbook.* [US]: [A. Humphery], 2017.

Jenkins, Malachi and Roberto Smith. Trap Kitchen: *Bangin' Recipes from Compton.* Brooklyn, NY: Vodka & Milk, 2017.

Johnson, J. J. Between Harlem and Heaven: *Afro-Asian-American Cooking for Big Nights, Weeknights, & Every Day.* NY: Flatiron Books, 2018.

Jou, Chin. Supersizing Urban America: *How Inner Cities Got Fast Food with Government Help.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017.

LaBelle, Patti. Desserts Labelle: *Soulful Sweets to Sing About.* NY: Grand Central Life & Style, 2017.

Miller, Adrian. The President's Kitchen Cabinet: *The Story of the African Americans Who Have Fed Our First Families, From the Washingtons to the Obamas.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, [2017].

Opie, Frederick D. Southern Food and Civil Rights: *Feeding the Revolution.* Charleston, SC: American Palate, a division of the History Press, 2017.

Richards, Todd. Soul: *A Chef's Culinary Evolution in 150 recipes.* NY: Oxmoor House, 2018.

Steele, Sonia. 30 Days Vegan: *A Cookbook for the Vegan Soul.* Columbia, SC: Dreamwriter Communications & Publishing, 2017.

Strobel, Pamela. Princess Pamela's Soul Food Cookbook: *A Mouth-watering Treasury of Afro-American Recipes: The Beloved Classic Now Back in Print After 45 Years.* NY: Rizzoli International, 2017, Ó1969.

Twitty, Michael W. Cooking Gene: *A Journey through African-American Culinary History in the Old South.* New York: Amistad, 2017,Ó1969.

Williams, Justine M, and Eric Holt-Giménez. Land Justice: *Re-imagining Land, Food, and the Commons in the United States.* Oakland, CA: Food First Books/Institute for Food and Development Policy, 2017.

BCALA Member Julius Jefferson Challenges Werner for ALA Presidency

By BCALA Publications Committee



BCALA member Julius Jefferson will seek the 2020-21 presidency of the American Library Association. Jefferson faces Lance Werner, executive director of Kent District Library in Michigan. BCALA confirmed with Werner that he is not currently a BCALA member.

The following information about Jefferson is from a press release, available at <http://www.ala.org/news/member-news/2018/08/jefferson-werner-seek-2020-21-ala-presidency>.

“An active member of ALA for 15 years, Jefferson currently serves on and has been a member of the ALA Council since 2011, and most recently completed a 3-year term on the ALA Executive Board (2015-18). He has also served on a number of critical committees, including the Finance and Audit Committee (2017-18),

the Budget Analysis and Review Committee (2014-18), the Intellectual Freedom Committee (2010-14) serving as the 2010-11 chair, and is currently chair of the Chapter Relations Committee, as well as on numerous other committees and task forces of the association.

Jefferson is an active member of a number of ALA-affiliated entities, including the Library Leadership and Management Association (LLAMA), the Intellectual Freedom Round Table, the Federal and Armed Forces Libraries Round Table (which will become part of the Association of Specialized, Government and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASGCLA) effective Sept. 1), International Relations Round Table, the Black Caucus of ALA (BCALA) and the Asian/Pacific Librarians Association (APALA).

In addition to his service to the American Library Association, Jefferson has held a seat on the board of the Freedom to Read Foundation (2012-16) serving as the 2013-16 president; served as president of the DC Library Association (2015); and served on the board of the BCALA (2007-09). He is the recipient of several awards, including BCALA Outstanding Contribution to

Publishing Award (2013), BCALA Appreciation Award (2010), and Congressional Research Service Special Achievement Award (2010).

An often called upon authority/speaker on issues of importance to library workers, Jefferson has appeared on a number of media outlets, including National Public Radio. He is co-editor of ‘The 21st-Century Black Librarian in America: Issues and Challenges’ and is often sought as a speaker on library-related issues such as diversity, leadership and professional development.

“It is an honor to stand as a candidate for ALA President,” said Jefferson. “I look forward to being a champion for library workers who should be recognized and celebrated for the value they bring to the communities they serve. I am also enthusiastic about advocating for a healthy library economy, creating strong financial support for libraries. The significance of ALA is the instrumental role our members perform in our communities. As ALA President I will seek to ensure that all voices are valued so together we can transform lives.”

Jefferson holds a BA in History from Howard University and an MLS from the University of Maryland.”

Quinby Street Resource Center Library Director Recognized as Community Champion

By Roland Barksdale-Hall, Quinby Street Resource Center



Roland Barksdale-Hall, library director, recognized as a HUD Community Champion for work strengthening and empowering families, developed the 2018 Life Empowerment Workshop to address issues and provide vital life-empowering skills in an underserved community. A combination of news items, interviews with focus groups and government data were used to identify critical community issues.

Residents along with consumers from service agencies enrolled in an intensive six-week training.

Classes met once a week for two hours sessions at the Quinby Street Resource Center. Sessions included Ending the Silence about the Opioid Epidemic, Avoiding Fraud and Scams, Budgeting to Paying Utility Bills, Repairing Damaged Credit, Domestic Violence and Building Healthy Relationships. Graduates received a \$125.00 grant toward a life sustaining bill and a plaque for successful program completion.

The 2018 Life Empowerment Workshop program was one of several initiatives between the

Authority and community partners. His chapter, “Collaboration Fits the Bill for Best Practices in Programming for Public Housing Residents” provides a case study and was selected for inclusion in “The Library’s Role in Supporting Financial Literacy for Patrons” (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).

Barksdale-Hall noted the Life Empowerment promoted respect and changed lives. Program assessments supported financial literacy goals and looked “promising.” He thanked Shenango Valley Foundation, Winner Foundation and Prince of Peace Awesome for ongoing financial support.

Photo caption: *Pictured community partners at 2018 Life Empowerment Workshop (l-r) include Madison Weimer, intern; Bonnie Dickson, health educator, Denise M. Jarrett, keynote speaker and bank assistant vice president Scott DeJulia, housing counselor, and Roland Barksdale-Hall, library director.*

O P - E D

21 “I DIDN’T KNOW THAT PEOPLE OF COLOR WRITING SCIENCE FICTION WAS A THING”: The Influence of Librarians on Black Girls’ Access to Science Fiction

25 Get the Most out of a Post

26 Book Review: Daddy’s Big Secret: Jordan Learns the Truth

27 Book Review: “Set the World on Fire” by Keisha Blain, PhD



“I DIDN’T KNOW THAT PEOPLE OF COLOR WRITING SCIENCE FICTION WAS A THING”: The Influence of Librarians on Black Girls’ Access to Science Fiction

By S.R. Toliver, University of Georgia

I have loved speculative fiction my entire reading life, but science fiction (SF) has always been my favorite subgenre. There was something freeing about envisioning a future wrought with undiscovered possibilities; understanding a universe beyond the immediate realm of my real-life experience; and imagining innovations that could impact how the current world shifts and changes. However, even though I loved reading SF, I kept my love for the subgenre secret in middle and high school because, according to most of the people I knew, SF was not written or created for Black girls.

At the time, the idea that I was not allowed to enjoy SF because I was Black and because I was a girl baffled me. I did not understand why people wanted to put my reading options into a box. However, I soon

discovered why so many people were in disbelief: there weren’t that many SF books written by Black authors and published through traditional publishing houses, and there weren’t that many SF books with Black protagonists, female or male. Therefore, how could SF be written for Black girls if we weren’t writing them and we weren’t included in them? Instead of attempting to answer this question as a young girl, I read whatever SF books I could find, kept my preferences to myself, and continued to wonder when I would see a mirror of myself in a SF story.

Sadly, it was not until college that I learned about the existence of Octavia Butler, a Black female SF author who won Hugo and Nebula awards and was the first SF writer to receive a MacArthur Fellowship. I stumbled across “Parable of the

Sower”, and I was amazed at the ways in which Butler’s main character, Lauren, spoke to me. Yet, I was introduced to her work in the mid 2000s, while the book was published in 1993. It was at that point that I realized the limited access I had to the wonderful SF books written by and about Black women and girls during my younger years. I also realized that prior to that reading, the only futures I had access to were the ones in which white characters thrived and Black characters were erased, silenced, or metaphorically inserted as aliens.

My journey with SF has impacted my current research, and it led me to writing an article in Research on Diversity in Youth Literature (RDYL) about the need to imagine new hopescapes (Hamilton, 1986) in order to expand Black girls’ mirrors

and windows (Bishop, 1990). The purpose of the article was to address the need for literacy stakeholders to broaden the mirrors and windows used to represent Black girlhood. Specifically, I wanted to highlight the importance of introducing books that represented strong, Black girls beyond contemporary realistic and historical fiction texts that often center around Civil Rights, slavery, poverty, struggle, and death. What I found was that although Black women were pushing the boundaries of SF in young adult and middle grades literature, publishing was impacting which books were more prominent in educational spaces.

This led me to question how Black women accessed SF books when they were younger and whether or not their access to SF books written by and about Black women and girls were limited. To find out more, I conducted a survey study on Black women’s SF reading histories. Academically, I wanted to know how Black women came to know about SF, what attracted them to SF, and what specifics helped them to continue reading SF. Personally, I wanted to know if there were other Black women like me who had long histories with the subgenre. I wondered about the stories they read and their access to diverse futures that included Black women and girls.

For the survey, I expected approximately fifty to one-hundred responses because I had narrowed the criteria to only include Black

women who were at least 18 and who were avid readers of SF books. In other words, I limited the survey by race, age, type of narrative, and number of books read. Yet, I received over 350 responses to the survey within the three weeks that the survey was open. Even after culling the responses to eliminate respondents under 18, respondents who read less than one book per year, and trolls who submitted racist remarks, I still had over 300 responses to examine. I was pleasantly surprised.

What I found in my initial analysis was nothing short of amazing. Of the respondents, approximately 93% had been reading SF for six or more years, 81% had been reading SF for at least 10 years, and 60% had been reading SF for 20 years or more. Additionally, although only 46% of respondents said they were assigned a SF book as part of a middle or high school assignment, 80% of respondents stated that they read SF on their own during their secondary school years. Essentially, the respondents represented a group of Black women SF bibliophiles who read SF as young people even though it was a genre that supposedly wasn’t written or created for Black girls.

Although this data is important, one aspect of the data is greatly important for librarians and media specialists to know: how Black girls gained access to SF books in middle and high school. Specifically, I asked respondents who or what

introduced them to SF, and the top three responses were family members (33%), film/television (23%), and libraries/librarians (18%). I also asked respondents how they found SF books to read outside of the classroom when they were in middle and high school, and the top three responses were libraries/librarians (35%), family members (16%), and friends (14%). Basically, the library is a place where Black girls are introduced to SF and a place where they can obtain recommendations for reading outside of the classroom. This makes the library a major resource in assisting Black girls to find, read, and engage with SF texts. It makes the library another transportation device that can ensure Black girls have access to futuristic worlds.

Even though the library provided necessary introductions and recommendations, however, I noticed another trend that was slightly disheartening. The books that the women remembered reading, in and outside of middle and high school, were mostly books written by white authors and included white protagonists. They recalled reading “Fahrenheit 451”, “1984”, “Frankenstein”, “Uglies”, “The Hunger Games”, “Animorphs”, and “Slaughterhouse Five”, among numerous others. Only a small percentage had read authors like Octavia Butler or Samuel Delaney during their secondary years. Yet, 68% of the Black women who responded to the survey noted that

their racial and gendered identities influenced how they selected SF books, and many stated that they wished to see more diversity in the subgenre. Thus, although they loved reading many books within the subgenre of SF, they also wanted to see diverse characters, including protagonists who were Black women and girls. This made me think of my own SF reading history, and how the books mentioned in the survey were the same ones I had read. It also made me wonder how libraries, as sites of SF introduction and recommendation, can offset the dominant narratives by introducing Black girls to Black female SF authors before they become adults.

Of course, the number of diverse SF books distributed in the United States is not solely a library issue, as the publishing arena has systematically excluded people of color from publishing, especially in the speculative fiction genres. This has created what Myers (2014) calls the apartheid of literature in which characters of color are often relegated “to the townships of occasional historical books that concern themselves with the legacies of civil rights and slavery but are never given a pass card to traverse the lands of adventure, curiosity, imagination or personal growth” (para. 7). Due to the apartheid of literature, comments such as, “I didn’t know that people of color writing science fiction was a thing,” are not surprising. Access to all imaginative books, including

SF stories, is often shut off for Black girls, so it makes sense that many Black women did not know that there were Black female authors writing SF stories.

This is where libraries, librarians, and media specialists can assist. As I mentioned in the RYDL article, publishing houses often participate in “a systemic cycle that affects every literacy stakeholder involved, and it excludes any reader whose choices may not align with conventional, realistic stories. Those who choose to go against the cycle... must rely on other methods to select their novels (Toliver, 2018, p. 15). Libraries/ librarians can be one of those methods because, as the survey shows, they are a major resource for Black girls looking for SF texts. With the influx of diverse young adult SF by Black authors (Hood, 2009), it is possible to ensure that Black girls are not forced to wait until adulthood to learn that there are Black women who are writing SF with them in mind.

This will take some work on the part of all literacy stakeholders because publishing is still a major gatekeeper in the printing and distribution of children’s and young adult texts. However, because over half of the respondents noted the primacy of race and gender in their SF text selection, it is essential that Black girls have access to SF books by Black authors. It is especially important for them to have access to Black female authors to show Black girls that the

subgenre is being written and created by, for, and about them, too. Authors like Malorie Blackman, Constance Burris, Zetta Elliott, Justina Ireland, Nnedi Okorafor, Maiya Williams, and many others are adding to the corpus of SF literature and creating new hopescapes through which Black girls can envision futures and broaden their realities.

Yet, Octavia Butler, Virginia Hamilton, Nalo Hopkinson, and Tananarive Due were doing the same thing decades ago, and Black girls like me and the women in the survey still did not have adequate access to their stories. Thus, there needs to be a concerted effort to ensure that modern Black girls have access to these stories. The girls may want to read them, or they may want to read more stories written by Ray Bradbury or Suzanne Collins, but the important thing is that they have a way to find these stories if that is their preference.

Libraries and librarians are influential in this respect, as they are one of the main spaces through which many Black women found their SF books. As the gates of literature have often been closed to Black girls looking for SF stories, libraries and librarians can be the locksmiths who can ensure that Black girls will always have a key.

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Get the Most out of a Post

By Jina DuVernay, Alabama State University



and Archivists”, “Future Ready Librarians” and “We Here” just to name a few.

In my second year as a librarian, I graduated from learning the lay of the land at my library to seeking out ways in which I can grow professionally. It was by joining several of these Facebook groups and following other libraries and librarians on Twitter that I became aware of opportunities to not only network with other librarians but to become involved in meaningful and exciting collaborations.

For instance, it was through a social media post that I learned about a travel grant prospect that resulted in an opportunity to give my first presentation as a professional librarian.

Likewise, I have been selected to have a seat at the table on projects that I would not have known even existed had I not been a member of numerous Facebook groups or followed an array of people and organizations on Twitter and Instagram.

Often what will separate you from the people that are experiencing growth opportunities is the simple fact that you did not apply; you did not fill out

that application or upload your letter of interest, etc. However, if you will take the time to do so, you just may find yourself learning new aspects of the library profession as well as allow yourself the chance to meet wonderful colleagues.

This was my experience when I took advantage of an opportunity that I saw posted about ALA’s New Member Round Table Mentoring Program. Based on the information that I provided, I was paired with a mentee who turned out to be an awesome, knowledgeable library director who was easy to talk to. He even put me in touch with another librarian who agreed to meet with me when I attend my very first ALA Conference in New Orleans. So you see, one connection led to another and the more opportunities and people that you know, the more you will grow.

These experiences have truly enriched me and I look forward to taking advantage of more such opportunities. I encourage you to do the same.

Jina DuVernay is the special collections librarian at Alabama State University where she manages the library’s African American resources collection and library’s blog <http://mylwc.blogspot.com/>.

Book Review: Daddy’s Big Secret: Jordan Learns the Truth

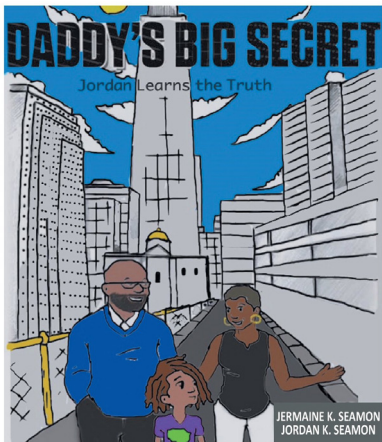
By Ursula Jacobs-Guidry



Photo: Jordan & Jermaine Seamon)

Daddy’s Big Secret: Jordan Learns the Truth; 2018

Author: Jermaine and Jordan Seamon
Pages: 20
ISBN 13: 978-1457559891



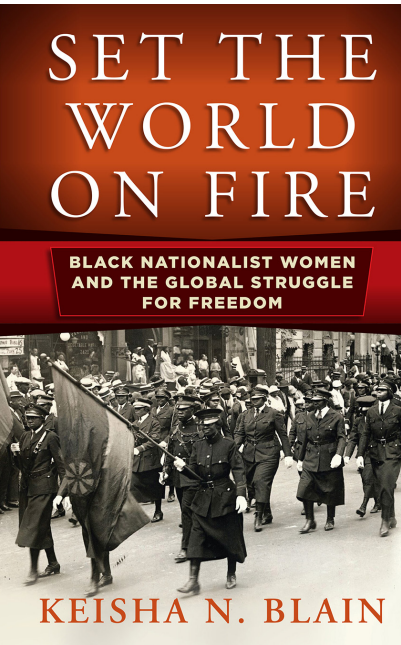
Jermaine and Jordan Seamon have written a heartwarming story about a father who secretly struggled with a disability. His daughter discovered that many children learn differently and of course, she had many questions. As a result of her sincere care and concerns for others, her father revealed his secret and shared his daily struggles and triumphs.

As an educator and librarian, I strongly recommend “Daddy’s Big Secret” as a learning resource to provide instruction in social and emotional learning. Also, it would be an excellent tool for parents to have an open discussion about embracing differences and overcoming adversities. For more information on Jordan Seamon, visit: <https://www.jordanseamon.com/>.

Book Review: “Set the World on Fire” by Keisha Blain, PhD

By Nicholas Grant, reprinted in accordance with Creative Commons permissions

(Editor’s note: The original post is linked here: <https://networks.h-net.org/node/28443/reviews/2368386/grant-blain-set-world-fire-Black-Nationalist-women-and-global>)



In 1937, the Black Nationalist activist Celia Jane Allen packed her bags and headed from Chicago to Mississippi. Working for the Peace Movement of Ethiopia (PME), she traveled against the tide of the Great Migration with the specific aim of promoting Black emigration to West Africa. Allen addressed Black audiences throughout Mississippi, disseminating letters and articles from PME founder Mittie Maude Lena Gordon, establishing new local chapters, and even collaborating with prominent white supremacist senator Theodore Bilbo. Over six years, she risked her life to promote the Black Nationalist values of race pride, political self-determination, and economic independence in the Jim Crow South. Insisting that Black men and women had no future in the United States, she noted that during this chapter of her life, “I tried very hard to make my people see that our time is winding up in the Western World” (p. 91).

Set the World on Fire
Author: Keisha Blain, PhD
Pages: 264
ISBN 13: 978-0812249880

Allen is just one of several absorbing and multidimensional figures that Keisha N. Blain explores in her new book “*Set the World on Fire: Black Nationalist Women and the*

Global Struggle for Freedom”. In a remarkable act of historical recovery, Blain expertly traces the vital role women played in shaping Black Nationalist politics between the 1920s and 1960s. Challenging historical narratives that often emphasize the decline of Black Nationalism following the deportation of Marcus Garvey from the United States, she demonstrates how a diverse group of Black women—operating in the US, the Caribbean, and Europe—worked to keep this political vision alive. Always attuned to the gender dynamics that shaped their politics, Blain has produced a landmark study that challenges us to think more deeply about Black Nationalism both as a political ideology and transnational activist program in the twentieth century.

“*Set the World on Fire*” is centered on a broad cast of historical actors, many of whom have been neglected by scholars and largely forgotten in popular memory. Expertly weaving together personal narratives with local, national, and global histories, Blain primarily focuses on Amy Ashwood Garvey, Amy Jacques

Garvey, Ethel Collins, Maymie Leona Turpeau De Mena, Mittie Maude Lena Gordon, and Ethel Waddell. However, around every corner readers are introduced to new and often equally intriguing characters—particularly grassroots organizers, writers, and journalists—all of whom contributed to the development of Black Nationalist thought during this period. Indeed, the very title of the book is drawn from an article written by Josephine Moody, a Cleveland-based United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) member who, up until now, has been absent from the historical record[1].

The varied and diverse voices that animate the book are testament to Blain’s skill as a historian, as well as her diligent mining of neglected Black Nationalist publications, personal correspondence, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) files, and census records. These painstaking efforts to recover and do justice to the actions and ideas of these women provides vital historical context in terms of thinking about the range and dynamism of Black Nationalist organizing, while also providing a real sense of the forces, tensions, and ideologies that animated the movement. The book embeds these women’s lives as activists within the longer history of Black Nationalism, while also tracing how the Great Depression, New Deal, Second World War, and anticolonial movements around the world influenced their global outlook. This makes “*Set the World on Fire*” a clear and eminently readable book, ensuring that it will be accessible to broader public audiences at the same time as it breaks new

scholarly ground. For me though, “*Set the World on Fire*” is particularly invaluable for the insights it offers on the gendered politics of Black Nationalism/internationalism, as well as the chronology and character of Black resistance in the first half of the twentieth century.

Building on work by Barbara Bair, Ula Yvette Taylor, and others, Blain documents how women simultaneously embraced and subverted masculinist articulations of Black Nationalism[2]. While these activists often endorsed Black male authority, they continued to insist that their central position at the heart of the Black family and community entitled them to a public political platform. Throughout the book, Blain refers to this stance as a form of “proto-feminism,” which “challenged sexism and sought to empower Black women globally but walked a fine line between advancing women’s opportunities and simultaneously supporting Black men’s leadership” (p. 142).

This is perhaps most thoroughly explored in chapter 1, which examines the role of women within the UNIA. Blain documents the crucial role that Marcus Garvey’s two wives, Amy Ashwood and Amy Jacques, played in the practical and ideological development of the organization. She also demonstrates the key leadership contributions of Henrietta Vinton Davis, Mayme De Mena, Irene M. Blackstone, Ethel Maude Collins, Adelaide Casely Hayford, and Laura Adoker Kofey. These individuals forged prominent roles for themselves within the Garvey movement at

various times, and in the process, were at the forefront of forging Black Nationalist networks throughout the Atlantic world. While aspects of this story have been told before, “*Set the World on Fire*” moves beyond existing scholarship that explores the gender politics of Garveyism by tracing how these formative experiences continued to shape Black Nationalist politics beyond the 1920s, long after the fragmentation of the UNIA. As Blain argues, “Black women found a sense of empowerment in the UNIA, and the organization functioned as a political incubator in which many Black women became politicized and trained for future leadership” (p. 20). While many women were influenced by Marcus Garvey’s Pan-African vision, they did not simply take his ideas forward unchanged. Instead they developed their own structures and initiatives that dramatically expanded Black Nationalism in subsequent decades. As Blain states in her introduction: “The Black Nationalist women chronicled in this book created spaces of their own in which to experiment with various strategies and ideologies” (p. 2).

In extending the chronology of Black Nationalism, “*Set the World on Fire*” also makes a valuable contribution to how historians think about and represent resistance. Shunning narrow questions concerning success/failure, the book instead documents how activist networks were forged and maintained, as well as how ideas spanned generations and national borders. The ways in which Black women engaged with grassroots organizing, theorized Black Nationalism in print, and established

strategic/pragmatic alliances all appear as central parts of this story.

The skill and persistence of Black Nationalist women as grassroots activists is apparent throughout the text. The organizational life of PME provides a telling example of this. Founded by former UNIA member Gordon in Chicago in 1932, the organization attracted an estimated three hundred thousand predominantly working-class supporters around the country, while PME activists (including Allen) traveled to the Jim Crow South working to recruit sharecroppers and tenant farmers to the Black Nationalist cause. As Blain summarizes, “During this era of global economic instability and political turmoil a large segment of the Black working class in the United States embraced Black Nationalism—especially the core tenets of Black capitalism, political self-determination, and emigration—as viable solutions to achieve universal Black liberation” (pp. 48-49). The extent to which groups like the PME fostered a global political vision among the working class is particularly significant, providing a timely reminder that the politics of Black internationalism resonated with everyday working people as well as prominent “race leaders.”

Black Nationalist women also collectively resisted global white supremacy in print. Writing from the US, the Caribbean, and Europe, such figures as Ashwood Garvey, Jacques Garvey, Collins, Amy Bailey, and Una Marson used their journalism and creative writing to set out a political

vision that would unite African people throughout the diaspora. Promoting Pan-African unity as a powerful response to European colonialism, these women once again insisted that the struggle against white supremacy needed to be global in scope. This is particularly apparent in chapter 5, where Blain outlines how Black women fostered race pride and imaginatively constructed a shared race consciousness across national borders. As Jacques Garvey wrote in the Universal Ethiopian Students Association’s (UESA) newspaper “The African”, “the ties of blood that bind us transcends all national boundaries. The differences of languages and dialects are being overcome as all of us are learning the language of freedom” (p. 162). In this regard, “*Set the World on Fire*” joins a growing number of important works that examine the gender politics of Black diaspora and the role that women played in mobilizing people of African descent in the struggle against global white supremacy.[3]

Finally, it is impossible to read this book and not to be struck by the resourcefulness and pragmatism of Black Nationalist organizers. Blain details how women lobbied for African emigration throughout the 1920s-50s, organizing petitions, writing editorials, delivering speeches, and supporting legislation—most notably, Senator Bilbo’s Greater Liberia Bill in the late 1930s that asked for federal funding to relocate African Americans to Liberia. Positioning this activism within the longer history of Black emigration initiatives of Henry McNeal Turner and others in the nineteenth century, it is clear that the

call to return to Africa continued to offer an appealing alternative to the violent forms of colonial and white supremacist power for people of African descent well into the twentieth century.

The efforts of Gordon, Allen, Jacques Garvey, and others to keep their African dreams alive further illuminate the pressures, strains, compromises, and negotiations that are central to understanding the Black freedom struggle. Indeed, the strategic alliances that Black Nationalist women established with Senator Bilbo and other prominent white supremacists, such as Ernest Sevier Cox, that are explored in the text might initially appear to be reactionary and ultimately misguided. However, as Blain makes clear, Black Nationalist women always viewed these alliances as “a means to an end” (p. 119). As Gordon privately commented to a fellow PME organizer who had reservations about working with the senator from Mississippi: “When we have to depend on the crocodile to cross the stream ... we must pat him on the back until we get to the other side” (p. 124). Black Nationalist women were acutely aware of the scale of the task they faced and worked to harness every resource they possibly could to achieve the right to self-determination.

This is not to say that the tensions and shortcomings of Black Nationalist politics are overlooked in the book. Blain is particularly critical of the “civilizationist” outlook of many of the women featured in her study, who often advanced narratives of African primitivism and assumed

that it was the duty of the “New Negro” in the US, the Caribbean, and Europe to uplift their brothers and sisters on the other side of the Atlantic. While pride in one’s heritage and the celebration of ancient African civilizations were certainly key features of Black Nationalist thought, many activists continued to buy into colonial narratives about the supposed backwardness of the “Dark Continent.” As I was reading these sections, I found myself thinking what Africans themselves thought of these Black Nationalist efforts. African connections feature throughout this study, as we learn about how Hayford spread Garveyism in Sierra Leone, how PME delegations traveled to Liberia, and what role

African activists played in shaping Ashwood’s Black Nationalism in London and in Africa. However, I was still left wondering about the extent to which African anticolonial leaders were able to engage with the global outlook of Black Nationalist women? Did they challenge or correct their civilizationist language, for example? While this is beyond the scope of what is already an incredibly broad and impressive study, these questions perhaps remind us of the continued need to bring more African voices and perspectives into histories of Black internationalism.

Ultimately, “*Set the World on Fire*” represents a landmark intervention in the thriving field of

Black international history. Indeed, more broadly, I would argue that it essential reading to anyone wanting to better understand the history of race, empire, and imperialism in the twentieth century. Perhaps most important though, Blain provides us with a timely reminder of the militancy and tenacity of the women who were at the heart of Black Nationalist politics. While they would not live to see the realization of their political visions, these women created the ideological and practical tools for future generations of activists to take up the global struggle against white supremacy.

Should Librarians Also Champion the Freedom to Not Read?

By Jason Alston, University of Missouri

So. All of us know that librarians champion the freedom of people to read. ALA has a statement on this (<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement>). The Freedom to Read Foundation (<https://www.ftrf.org/page/About>) is an organization affiliated with ALA that “protects and defends the First Amendment to the Constitution and supports the right of libraries to collect - and individuals to access - information.”

What I am struggling with right now is whether our support of freedom to read means that we must support the inverse: the freedom of individuals to not read things they do not want to read.

Earlier this year, the Duluth Public Schools district in Minnesota removed two critically acclaimed works of fiction – “To Kill a Mockingbird” and “The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn” – from the district curriculum. While school libraries in the Duluth district will thankfully still have copies of these works available for students, reading these works for class will no longer be required.

Initially, press coverage seemed to suggest that the Duluth branch of the NAACP led efforts to have these two books removed from the curriculum. The Duluth NAACP, in turn, released a

statement that clarified their position on and activity regarding the issue (<http://duluthnaacp.org/2018/02/12/statement-duluth-branch-naacp-regarding-isd709s-decision-remove-books-kill-mockingbird-adventures-huckleberry-finn-curriculum/>). While others in the community had reportedly gone before Duluth’s school board to request these books be removed from Duluth’s curriculum, the Duluth NAACP maintains it never did this. The Duluth NAACP states that it did not want these titles removed from school libraries, but did support replacing these books as “classroom requirements” because the books, “confound the painful history of racism in the United States and provoke negative behavior (such as hate speech) towards African Heritage youth.”

I was glad to learn that the Duluth NAACP hadn’t advocated for the books’ removal from the curriculum based on racial slurs, which is what some initial reporting seemed to suggest. But I was still disappointed that the Duluth NAACP stated that these works provoke negative behavior and confound the nation’s racist history. I’d guess that fictional depictions of Black youth in contemporary entertainment provoke negative behavior toward Black youth far more than these two particular

titles, which actually seem to me to be criticisms of racism.

I read both titles in high school and believe them to be important literary works that compliment and color the at-times watered down depictions of racism in K-12 history texts. Because I want all students to understand the sheer ugliness of historical American racism and what people are capable of, I opposed the removal of these works from the curriculum. I think when students learn about racism only through watered-down history texts and “safe” literature, they don’t gain an understanding of how venomous racism can potentially be.

So the fuddy duddy in me believes Duluth schools did their students and this society a disservice by removing these works from the curriculum. What I don’t know is if the librarian in me who champions the freedom to read, should also champion the freedom to not read. In general, I’m sure librarians would never vocally encourage people to not read. But should librarians advocate for those who feel compelled to not read a particular work? I’m not there right now. Particularly, when it comes to children, I’m sure doing so could lead to some children vying to not have to read anything at all.

NOTES:

[1]. Josephine Moody, “We Want to Set the World on Fire,” *New Negro World*, January 1942.

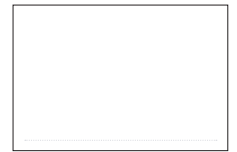
[2]. Barbara Bair, “True Women, Real Men: Gender Ideology and Social Roles in the Garvey Movement,” in “Gendered Domains: Rethinking Public and Private in Women’s History: Essays from the Seventh Berkshire Conference on the History of Women”, ed. Dorothy O. Helly and Susan Reverby (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992); Ula Yvette Taylor, “The Veiled Garvey: The Life and Times of Amy Jacques Garvey” (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002); and Asia Leeds, “Toward the ‘Higher Type of Womanhood’: The Gendered Contours of Garveyism and the Making of Redemptive Geographies in Costa Rica, 1922-1941,” “Palimpsest: A Journal on Women, Gender, and the Black International 2”, no. 1 (2013): 1-27.

[3]. For recent landmark studies in this field, see Carole Boyce Davies, “Left of Karl Marx: The Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones” (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008); Ashley D. Farmer, “Remaking Black Power: How Black Women Transformed an Era” (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017); Dayo F. Gore, “Radicalism at the Crossroads: African American Women Activists in the Cold War”, repr. ed. (New York: New York University Press, 2012); Cheryl Higashida, “Black Internationalist Feminism: Women Writers of the Black Left”, 1945-1995 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013); Erik S. McDuffie, “Sojourning for Freedom: Black Women, American Communism, and the Making of Black Left Feminism” (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); Imaobong D. Umoren, “Race Women Internationalists: Activist-Intellectuals and Global Freedom Struggles” (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018); Tracy Denean Sharpley-Whiting, “Bricktop’s Paris: African American Women in Paris between the Two World Wars” (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2015); and Bianca C. Williams, “The Pursuit of Happiness: Black Women, Diasporic Dreams, and the Politics of Emotional Transnationalism” (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018).

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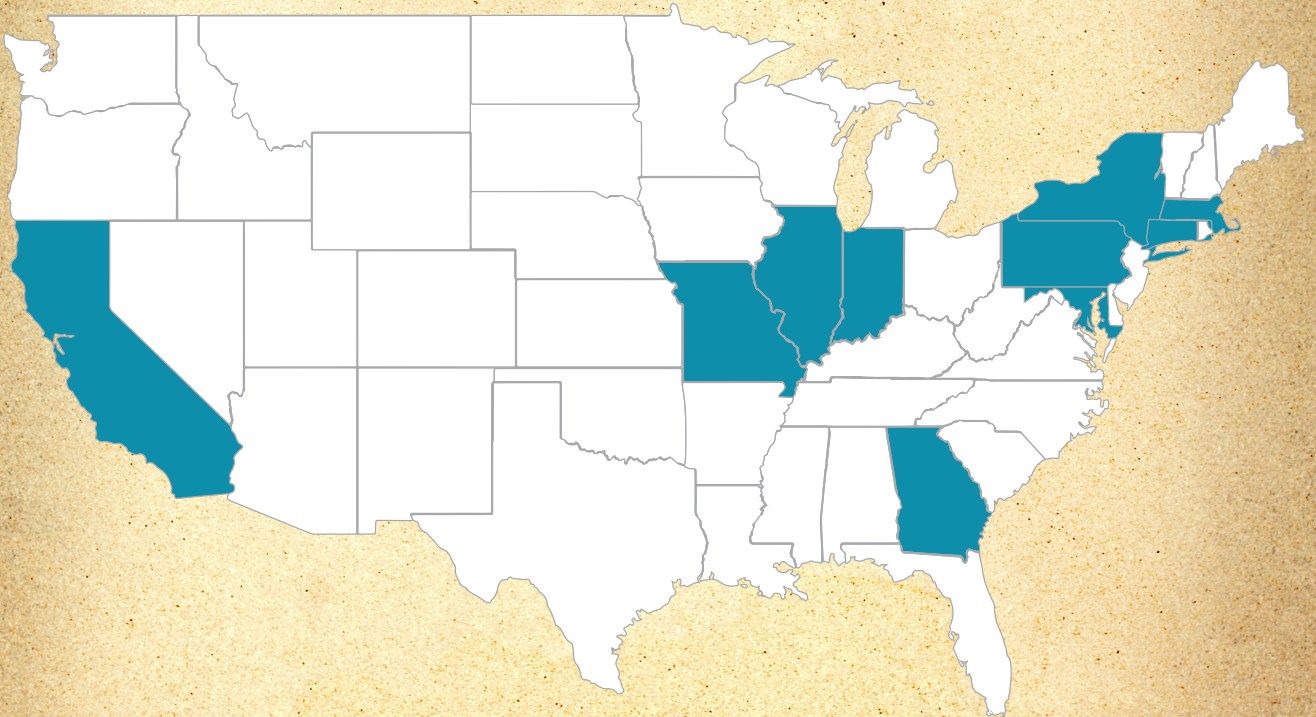
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