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Freedom Middle School Media Center
Special Needs and Inclusive Services

The vision for the Freedom Middle School (FMS) Media Center is to be truly the heart of the school, a warm and welcoming place for every student, staff member, and parent every day. To achieve this vision, FMS Media Center added the Special Needs and Inclusive Library Services (SNAILS) to the robust list of programming for the 2019–2020 school year.

SNAILS gives all special education classrooms and the deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) student population the opportunity to come into the media center with minimal distractions to read or enjoy story time, participate in a literacy-themed craft, or even create and host programming for the FMS student body. The students also enjoy visits from Pet Partners reading dogs, Maya and Story.

Achievements for the inaugural year include: all special education students receiving a library card from the Dekalb County Public Library; two school-wide events hosted by the DHH students to share their language; all students who attended the SNAILS program completing 15 books and their correlating activities; and receiving a grant to further expand the programming for the 2020–2021 school year.

Fall 2020 will bring even more stimulating and inclusive programming for the fantastic students of Freedom. Follow the excitement at http://www.freedomms.dekalb.k12.ga.us/.
**Fulton County Library System**

**Innovation Stations**

Have you heard the word on the street? Fulton County Library System is now serving Fulton citizens on brand new wheels—14 of them. Two 24-foot techmobiles, aptly coined the Innovation Stations, and an electric Word on the Street bike have joined the system to provide innovative STEAM activities and curated book collections to metro Atlanta communities.

Unveiled in November 2019, the Innovation Stations spark creativity at pop-up libraries, such as festivals, schools, farmers markets, recreation centers, senior centers, co-working spaces, and more. STEAM-based learning equipment and book collections stock the built-in bookshelves and counters, including 3D printers, virtual reality, rockets, 3D pens, soldering kits, and more. The vehicles are equipped with state-of-the-art safety driving features, built-in library shelves, an alarm system, a retractable power awning to host additional outreach programs alongside the van, and LED lights lining the bottom.

One Innovation Station serves youth and educates children ages 0–18 at public and private educational institutions and community associations across the city of Atlanta and Fulton County. Recently, the youth Innovation Station engaged 150 students along with their families at the Roswell Library reopening. Students manipulated basic tactile shapes using Osmos and iPads, to create animals filled with anagrams.

The adult Innovation Station van travels to professional, community, and cultural events around metro Atlanta, many of them existing within book deserts—an area which has limited access to robust educational resources. The library strives to provide unique, hands-on opportunities for adult patrons to interact with the equipment for professional and cultural development.

Significantly smaller than the Innovation Stations, the Word on the Street library bike gives staff access to densely populated areas within metro Atlanta. Free library cards, books, and pop-up programs are always one pedal closer to potential patrons as staff ride through community spaces built for pedestrians. At Atlanta Streets Alive, a day of open streets and community retreats, the library bike always draws a crowd of cheering friends, several of whom apply for library cards on the spot.

"I am so pleased to be able to take our library services on the road and really meet our patrons where they live, work and play. The Innovation Stations and the Word on the Street library bike allow us to show everything the
library has to offer, outside the four walls of our buildings. We look forward to visiting every part of Fulton County, from Palmetto to Alpharetta, with these amazing resources," said Gayle Hunter Holloman, executive director of the Fulton County Library System.

The Innovation Stations and the Word on the Street bike draw from a strong, proud legacy of mobile outreach in metro Atlanta. The vehicles marry resources, including circulation, technological engagement, and community interaction, to create one teachable experience.

You can follow Fulton County Library System and the outreach team on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram at @fulcolibrary! For more information on the Fulton County Library outreach vehicles please visit the outreach team website at http://afpls.org/outreach-team or email Library.Outreach@FultonCountyGA.gov.
LaGrange College
Frank and Laura Lewis Library

The Frank and Laura Lewis Library at LaGrange College is located on the Hill in the center of campus. The Lewis Library seeks to not only fulfill the research needs of faculty, staff, and students, but to also provide activities to reduce stress, to relax, and to have fun. In addition to the 88,000 print materials, the library also offers a puzzle table, a Lego table, various coloring activities, and fun events that occur throughout the semester. The main floor has a browsing collection that includes DVDs and Blu-rays for popular movies and TV shows; audiobooks; and books for pleasure reading.

The Lewis Library faculty and staff are available to serve students in person, online via chat, or around campus through roving reference. The library faculty and staff interact with patrons on social media as well. They post pictures of new books; changes to the library; faculty and staff highlights; event photos, such as hosting therapy dogs for students to pet during finals; and more.

Throughout the year, the library hosts many cultural enrichment events, study halls, library instruction sessions, and classes. Whether it is a continuing education event on international travel, a GRE practice test, or a foreign film night, the Lewis Library has a space for most events. The Corn Auditorium seats 49 people, the Multimedia Classroom seats 24, the Seminar Room seats 12, the Media Lounge seats five, and there are also various study rooms that students can book online.

The Lewis Library is home to the Suber Archives, a repository of college and local historical materials. The Suber Archives Specialist, Felecia Moore, is currently working on an oral history project to interview alumni, faculty, staff, and others who have ties to LaGrange College. Felecia now has a podcast where visitors can listen to clips from some of the interviews.

To learn more about the Lewis Library, the Suber Archives, and other collections, visit the library website at www.lagrange.edu/library/
In this issue, you will meet the candidates for election for the Georgia Library Association (GLA) officers and divisions. Please read about the candidates and be sure to vote when you get your ballot link!

Oscar Gittemeier, who was serving as the 2020 vice president/president-elect, accepted a new position out of state. I am pleased to announce that Wendy Cornelisen, assistant state librarian at Georgia Public Library Services, assumed the vice president/president-elect position for the remainder of 2020 and will serve as GLA president in 2021.

Throughout this challenging COVID-19 public health crisis, Georgia libraries are supporting their patrons however they can, with virtual services, hotspots, and e-books. As Governor Kemp lifts shelter-in-place orders in Georgia, libraries are slowly working towards reopening, with curbside pickup services in many areas, reduced and reconfigured seating, enhanced cleaning, Plexiglass barriers, and other modifications to allow for distancing. Our colleagues and patrons are managing changing childcare schedules and school schedules, mask requirements, waiting periods, and other restrictions. Flexibility, ingenuity, good humor, and understanding are essential.

This year, anger at the endemic racism in our society exploded following the shocking murder of George Floyd, which followed an equally shocking murder of Ahmaud Arbery here in Georgia. Libraries shared reading lists to help us in our paths toward antiracism, and library associations issued statements. [https://gla.georgialibraries.org/georgia-library-association-statement-against-racism/](https://gla.georgialibraries.org/georgia-library-association-statement-against-racism/). A collection of library association statements condemning systemic racism is available at [http://www.ala.org/aboutala/ala-chapters-condemn-systemic-racism/](http://www.ala.org/aboutala/ala-chapters-condemn-systemic-racism/). The Georgia Library Association is convening a task force to seek ways to expand our educational and scholarship programs to support inclusivity and racial diversity in our profession.

Planning for the Georgia Libraries Virtual Conference is underway, and more details will be forthcoming. Our keynote speaker will be American Library Association President Wanda Kay Brown!

GLA has a new Instagram site. Follow it @GLAEmpowers.

Thank you for supporting each other, your communities, and your GLA president during what has been a genuinely extraordinary 2020!

Laura Burtle
President, Georgia Library Association 2020
lburtle@gsu.edu
At the very beginning of this year, I got super into the Marie Kondo method. I sat on the floor of my bedroom, staring up at Ms. Kondo on Netflix as she explained how to fold your t-shirts and pants into threes, how to respect your home, and how to thank the items for what they have given you and move on. And just like everyone else who watched the show, though, I got to that part. You know—that part. Where you’re supposed to do the same for your books. Just say goodbye! If they don’t spark joy!

The internet frothed at the mouth over the audacity, and I was with them. I’ve always imagined myself being that old, small lady who secretly has a Beauty and the Beast-esque library in her house. I already have the small part down—I’m five-foot, one-half inch tall. Now all I need is a Beast, a huge library, and those cool ladders that slide along library columns. However, that dream has been delayed. Ten months after I scoffed at the idea of picking and choosing which books immediately spark joy, I was faced with the challenge of taking my entire collection and condensing it down to three small boxes of my most cherished books.

Things were changing. I, my mother’s oldest daughter, was moving out of the house, and her youngest will be going off to college next fall. It was a transition that was both expected and sudden, and not everyone was handling it well—and by that, I mostly mean my mother.

When I told her that I was packing up my books, she gave me an unreadable look and poured each of us a cup of cold, strong sangria. I sipped it lightly as I went up the stairs and set it on the windowsill, once I got to my bedroom, planning on revisiting it as I sorted. That would not happen; instead, it would sit, warm and forgotten in the afternoon sun, as I touched book after book. This was different from letting go of old t-shirts and shoes.

In the beginning, when we first moved to this house, I ambitiously organized my books by color. That quickly devolved, leaving choices up to what caught the eye first. The Frog Princess by E. D. Baker, with its bright pink cover, jumped out at me immediately, along with Jean Ferris’s Once Upon a Marigold. They weren’t the only fairytale remakes that I hoarded; my favorite book, Gail Carson Levine’s Ella Enchanted, sat near them with a worn cover. I kept the witty, courageous, quirky girls in these titles as close to my chest as siblings, and even in my adult life they remind me that there are always possibilities, both good and bad. That’s what fairytales do.

Even beyond princeses and dragons, my young adult fiction is clear: Children of Blood and Bone, Tamora Pierce’s Wild Magic, and every Harry Potter book that I laid my hands on, painstakingly collected from thrift stores across Atlanta, went into my “keep” pile. Every time I look at a Harry Potter book, I feel a phantom
sugar high from the time when we raided Dollar Tree to make our own in-home Honeydukes.

If Harry Potter brought on a sugary taste, *Twilight*, my guilty pleasure, carried an undeniable feeling of teenage angst. T.S. Eliot’s *The Wasteland and Other Poems* brought on a different kind of moodiness though: the memory of being an exhausted college student, buying books that I didn’t really want to read, hunched over a keyboard in the dark, and trying to write a 10-page paper on poems that made as much sense as a hippo riding a scooter. *The Wasteland* belonged with other books in my collection, the ones that I kept on the shelves in hopes that, should a stranger waltz into my room, they would think that I was smart: Plato’s *Apology*, Rousseau’s *Basic Political Writings*, and Locke’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. They were the classics, and they went straight into the donation box. For one thing, I didn’t care what people thought of my reading materials anymore. For another, those books certainly did not spark any joy in me.

That’s not to say that there was no nonfiction. On the contrary, a well-beaten and annotated copy of Ron Chernow’s *Hamilton* went into my box, as well as Jon Meacham’s *American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House*—but only because I’m curious about what the book will entail. A signed copy of Anthony Ray Hinton’s *The Sun Does Shine: How I Found Life and Freedom on Death Row* goes in. I remember seeing the author with his big belly and jovial smile, despite the struggles that he’d experienced, and thinking: well, I can’t say no to that.

I also packed the things that simultaneously keep me going and threaten to drown me: my “to be read” books. The Lord of the Rings series, *If Beale Street Could Talk* by James Baldwin, Stephen King’s *Dolores Claiborne*, and most importantly *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem* by Maryse Condé, because who could ignore a book with a title like that? There were a whole host of others that I packed, carefully selected to ensure that I would actually read them during my next phase in life.

And then there were the children’s books: Dr. Seuss’s *Horton Hatches the Egg*, a classic about both selflessness and selfish people. *Toad Heaven* by Morris Gleitzman, one of the first chapter books that I ever read, which features Australian toads fighting not to get squashed flat by cars as they cross the road. And finally, *The Island of Skog* by Steven Kellogg, whose illustrations both terrified and thrilled me so much as a child that I never returned it to my elementary school class bookshelf.

As I sat, with the cold, solid cover of *The Island of Skog* in my hand, I had the sense that something important was ending. Ready or not, change was happening; and with every title that made it into a moving box, it marched ever closer. I didn’t feel Ms. Kondo’s joy; instead, there was a sense of evolution.

Sarah Rogers is Library Assistant at Oglethorpe University
In Mid-March of 2020, libraries across the United States began closing in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, sending employees home. To document this period in time, Georgia library employees contributed short essays on their experiences with working from home, including how they continued to provide library services and resources to their users.

Stephanie Bennett
Assistant Department Head of Access Services
Georgia Gwinnett College

“Does your email ever do the weird thing where it says you have email, but nothing is new in the inbox?” It was business day 41; well past the initial expectation of being out for two weeks remotely. My husband, whom I shared an office (correction: I now shared his office with him), grunted in the negative, IBM products didn’t do that. I rolled my eyes; I was about to throw my laptop with flaky Microsoft Outlook out the windows (see what I did there?).

Working remotely was nothing new for my husband; he had been doing so for the past 10 years. When SARS-COV-2 dropped, we were suddenly an entire family working and going to school from home. While we both worked, our first-grade daughter completed her digital learning content. Oddly enough, my husband was perhaps the most uprooted (quite literally) in all these changes. His normal workspace became mine, and his days of having the house totally to himself during the week were no more.

When it was announced that instruction would continue remotely through the summer, I really worried for our students. This once-a-century event had completely turned their lives upside down. The ones on the path to commencement were pushed back to an undisclosed date, and the number of them possibly now completely without a job was concerning. Thankfully, the urgency of the problem was not lost on my supervisor. After approval from our dean, we drafted a successful proposal for our students to work remotely.

Prior to the move to remote work, access services (circulation and information commons), reference, and the security students moved to a single service point. We were at a point where all parties could do the circulation duties, but teaching reference was a bit more time consuming. We were nowhere close to ready for students to begin providing reference services prior to the move to remote work. Through very fortunate kismet, my department head and I had fuel for our argument to keep our students working.
Our students were successfully able to work remotely by training them for the high impact practice of providing reference services. Some of their work thus far has included reviewing Credo for its usability for when we introduce it to the larger student body in the fall, and weekly meetings to discuss learned content. They wrote weekly reflections based off one of the guided reflection questions presented from IOWA Grow. Some of these reflections were even shared with our provost as students were able to explain how their current job working with us in the library prepared them with flexibility and remote skills in the workplace. This work has been very rewarding and groundbreaking.

The pandemic has forced so many to work outside of their comfort zone, and the need for flexibility and willingness to take on new tasks basically became inevitable for everyone regardless of job or employment status. Just like our students, the library staff also needed to adjust how they approached work.

I can see how a remote environment can be hard for the more extroverted of individuals. Working remotely is all about how you control it. Control your priorities, control your work life balance, and control your mental health. Set appropriate boundaries, and remote work is manageable by anyone, but that’s just my humble opinion. Control your remote experience; don’t let the remote control you!

Maxine Hines Chriszt  
Library Assistant  
Cobb County Public Library System

The Cobb County Public Library System (CCPLS) has multiple online resources for our patrons, and we consistently incorporate information about those services when interacting with our patrons. However, I am embarrassed to admit that prior to COVID-19, I had not taken advantage of many of those terrific tools. When the sheltering in place order closed our physical doors, I completed one online course in American Sign Language (ASL), and started ASL Level II, then used my new skills to help promote our online resources on social media by creating a short video in ASL!

My “second life” career as part-time staff in the children’s department at CCPLS Charles D. Switzer Library is my dream job. I love engaging our youngest patrons, assisting students and parents, working with dedicated staff who genuinely care about our community, and handling the day-to-day library responsibilities, including shelving, organizing, and maintaining materials; issuing or renewing library cards; and checking out resources for patrons. All of it is both gratifying and fulfilling to me. So, when COVID-19 required the closure of the libraries, my dream job as I knew it came to a halt. The challenge for all of us: what could we do from home that would honor the mission of the library system and benefit our patrons and communities?

Fortunately, CCPLS is directed by creative leaders who quickly identified concrete ways for staff to contribute to our mission. Leadership teams organized book review rotations, virtual story times, and workforce enrichment webinars. Staff were “loaned” to essential county services such as Elections and Meals on Wheels. And all staff were encouraged to be creative while working from home. At Switzer Library, several staff members are fluent in Spanish, and I have seen how beneficial it is for ESOL patrons to have
someone who speaks their native tongue when utilizing library services. I remembered the ASL GALE online course that had caught my attention earlier in the year and thought it might be beneficial for our library to have someone who could communicate with our deaf patrons. I was not sure if I had the necessary technical skills for an online class, since the last time I was a student George H. W. Bush, Sr. was president, but I hoped for the best and registered. And it was amazing! The instructor communicated regularly with the class, the online materials were engaging and concise, and the discussions section of the class allowed students to interact with each other easily. Before long, I was trying to translate commercials on TV and cajoling my 17-year-old to allow me to teach him so I could practice.

I wanted to share my positive experience, so I asked my supervisor if I could create a short video promoting the GALE resources using ASL. After getting the go ahead, I wrote a short script using the vocabulary I learned in Level I class and some additional resources on the internet with ASL terminology specific to library services. I recorded a first draft, which both my GALE online instructor and a CCPLS librarian who is fluent in ASL reviewed for errors, then made the necessary corrections and recorded the final version.

I am excited to say that after the video posted on the CCPLS Facebook page, several people reached out to me about taking a GALE class. I am proud of our system for offering these services and look forward to the day when I can promote these resources in person again, and with complete enthusiasm. To see the video, follow this link: https://www.facebook.com/cobbcountylibrary/videos/2741919542697607/

Jolene Cole
Instruction & Research Librarian, Associate Professor of Library Science
Georgia College and State University

The COVID-19 Pandemic is one of the handfuls of times in history that librarians have experienced such a drastic and sudden change to how they deliver their services. Each of our pandemic experiences is different; we are facing a world that has changed before our eyes and altered the very nature of our lives.

As the instruction coordinator for the Russell Library at Georgia College and State University, my job has shifted to 100% remote work. I’ve had to learn to manage my usual job duties, homeschool a kindergartner, keep an insanely wild toddler contained, and I may also have picked one of the worst times ever to go back for my doctorate. On top of everything else, I am married to a first responder, which means that our exposure to COVID-19 has been a constant strain on our family. We are continuously cleaning and disinfecting to keep our family safe, even at home. His physical safety is a more significant concern than usual, adding a great deal of stress to an already stressful situation.

However, at work, our instruction program was lucky enough to transition to a remote environment easily. During a regular semester, the majority of our work is conducting individual research consultations with students, which we typically do in person with very few exceptions being online. With the new model, we were able to use our scheduling system to smoothly transition the meeting location to a student’s preference for WebEx, Phone, or email. We continued our scheduled
consultations for the spring with minor to no interruptions. However, we did have a few in-person instruction sessions that were canceled or moved to WebEx.

Several librarians from our instruction team also took the time, during the pandemic, to create mini instructional videos from “evaluating information online” to “how to add students and faculty scholarship to our campus institutional repository.” These were short videos that we could pop into our social media accounts for easy access to students.

As we move forward, we will be encouraging faculty to schedule consultations in lieu of one-shot instruction for the fall semester. We will also be promoting our NimblyWise modules, which we can add to our learning management system. We are going to work on expanding our consultation program and continue to offer those services virtually to maintain social distancing. It will also provide us the opportunity to smoothly transition back to remote instruction if the need arises.

I will say transitioning my work environment to a work from home situation was probably the easiest part of this pandemic. The process of re-adjusting our family’s routine, managing the anxiety of possible layoffs and furloughs, the concern for our health (physical and mental), and the overall raised strain of the pandemic has been the real taxing part of this new normal. As the universities and public libraries weigh their options on re-opening, I hope that we can find a way forward safely with minimal interruptions for the sake of all of us and our students.

Marie Day, Systems Librarian/Librarian Assistant Professor
Chelsee Dickson, Scholarly Communications Librarian/Librarian Assistant Professor
Shannon Plummer, Liaison Coordinator/Liaison Assistant Professor
Judy Reardon, Reference Coordinator/Librarian Assistant Professor
Kennesaw State University

The authors started librarian positions at Kennesaw State University (KSU) just prior to and even during the pandemic shutdown. This collaborative essay reflects on their experiences as new hires during this time.

Chelsee Dickson sets the scene for us:

Think back to the very first day of your current job: the anticipation of meeting brand-new coworkers; the excitement of laying eyes on your desk; the tingle of nerves when shaking hands with your supervisor. Now, push those feelings aside and make way for the new normal: working from home. I began my employment as the scholarly communications librarian in the middle of the COVID-19 Pandemic in a completely virtual setting. I expected all of the aforementioned feelings associated with beginning a new position, but instead I’ve swapped human coworkers for barking canines, professional slacks and heels for sweatpants and slippers,
and my as-of-yet unseen office in Sturgis Library for a semi-secluded spot in my own home.

Starting a job virtually is certainly not the same as stepping into a new position in real life. It’s a bit awkward, surreal, and almost unheard of... prior to March 2020. I’ve been living in limbo on Microsoft Teams, attending virtual meetings and training sessions while wishing for normalcy in a sea of the uncertain. And now, to pivot again: returning to what was once considered a normal work environment while trying to recapture that feeling of wonder at the possibilities of all the untapped potential waiting for me in my new position.

Judy Reardon had two weeks on campus before returning home to telework:

A commonly used formula called the 70:20:10 model describes a practical training plan for new employees. It maintains that individuals learn 70% of useful job knowledge needed through on-the-job experience. Twenty percent comes from interaction with others and only 10% comes from studying, reading, and other educational events (such as webinars). This model makes sense to me, as I learn best by doing and collaborating.

Shifting to socially distant library services is an interruption, no matter how you view it. My primary assignment as reference coordinator involves daily management of reference services; however, all in-person reference was suspended. My training was limited to reading reference transaction logs, policies, and procedures. I found myself in the awkward position of trying to perform my job without the hands-on experiences or face-to-face interactions that I prefer. I was disconnected from acquiring the unwritten knowledge of this new culture, and its processes didn’t always make sense without context.

In a new workplace, even a veteran librarian such as myself can feel lost. Fortunately, colleagues anticipated the need to over-guide me as we moved forward in this new normal. Their patience in online communications has been a saving grace as I progressed beyond a sense of disorientation to one of familiarity and control.

Shannon Plummer was on campus for six weeks until COVID-19 interrupted daily life:

As a recent MLIS graduate, I was especially grateful for the opportunity to serve as the new liaison coordinator, effective February 1, 2020. My primary goal in this new position is to focus on building relationships by meeting with people and attending as many events as possible, to position myself (and the library) as an active listener within the KSU community. In July of 2019, the KSU Library implemented a new approach to their liaison program, creating collegiate teams tasked with evaluating our community’s needs. Creating more communication opportunities and promoting greater cohesion within the teams was my top priority. Six weeks in, the COVID-19 Pandemic made my new mission quite challenging.

To maintain interconnection within the collegiate teams while working remotely, I created many Microsoft Team channels for each college/department as well as specific to the roles of outreach, instruction, and selection liaisons. The channels include relevant research guides, college web pages, events, and most importantly, a place for support and collaboration. Despite the current restrictions, I am grateful I was able to find a way to address one of the challenges of the liaison program.

Despite all these interruptions and challenges, Marie Day found a balance within this social distance:

I have been fortunate that most of my work can be accomplished remotely, as long as I have a good internet connection. When I started as systems librarian and moved to live closer to the university, I had a few obstacles to overcome—such as a lack of home office space...
and internet connectivity. On the plus side, I’d had two weeks of time at the library, so when later using email or chat, I often knew who I was talking to on the other end. Although I feel a little behind the curve in getting to know my coworkers and the campuses, overall, I am still making progress in learning where I fit into the organization.

As the stay-at-home period lengthened, I grew to appreciate my colleagues’ reminders to step outside daily. I really enjoyed the nice weather, the break from so much screen time, and air that was fresher than usual due to a lack of air pollution. It underscored for me that the exciting work being done to reduce pollutants is a consideration for the good of our whole society. In comparison, libraries have always seen, acknowledged, and acted for the good of our communities. No matter where we are located, it’s good to be part of that work.

Like Marie, we’re all grateful to have jobs and be part of the Kennesaw State University Library System. We have bonded through this shared experience and now use an online cohort chat to connect, support, and grow as professionals together. We’re ready to return to campus and make it work.

Rachel Evans
Metadata Services & Special Collections Librarian
University of Georgia Law Library

In reviewing my own social media posts and photos, as well as professional blogging and inter-office communications since our library’s COVID-19 closure in mid-March, it was eye opening to look at my own timeline and the personal transformation that has taken place. The third week of March, I was organizing teleworking tools for my colleagues, giphy messaging them in real-time in Slack, and excitedly encouraging everyone around me to join in to the tune of “this isn’t so bad, it is actually quite fun!”

By April, I had set several major projects in motion to clean up tons of catalog and repository records, OCR hundreds of files from our earliest digitized special collections, and finish a massive harvesting of digital-born photos from our school website to archive. I was also submitting way too many proposals for articles I hoped to write or presentations to virtual conferences I hoped to attend. At this point, I was still feeling like teleworking was a blessing in disguise—giving me the time I always wanted, but never had until now, to focus on starting and finishing projects. I had less unplanned interruption from colleagues (they had to schedule with me in advance!) and less face-to-face meetings.

Then came May, and the looming threat of budget cuts coupled with the complete uncertainty of what fall 2020 would bring proved to be a bigger stress than I was prepared for. Less face-to-face meetings spiraled out of control fast, and translated to more Zoom hours than I thought was humanly possible. This left me drained, both mentally and physically. Home office interruptions proved far more frustrating as time wore on. I found myself searching for more ways to relax and trying to schedule that too. I experimented with more mindfulness techniques, reading as many books on these subjects as I could, and ultimately disconnecting from social media. It was the one part of my new fully online life that I could remove.
In June, several conferences and webinars started eating away at more and more of my work schedule. There were never enough hours in the day. I would spend several days in a row going from one Zoom room to the next, with occasional WebEx, GoToMeeting, or Skype's sprinkled in between. I live in the country, with shaky internet. The best solution for rural connection was hot spotting from my cell phone, eating up my family's data plan before the cycle finished every single month. Roaming around the house, my home-office sometimes moved several times in a day depending on the random spot with the best cell signal or the activity of family members.

Throughout the closure, I would go into the building one morning a week to change our catalog's physical backup tape and do some ILS work I could only access from the library. Over the months it was harder and harder to get it all done in a single morning, and before I knew it I was behind. What happened to the time? Where did it go? It felt like there was so much of it, and during the day it would drag on endlessly—yet here I am writing this essay and wondering how the past five months went by so fast. My energy is zapped, and although I am happy to have been very productive, I'm exhausted and more worried than ever. If there is one thing I have learned, it is that I need to practice pacing myself. This experience has shifted my professional perfectionists and personal priorities forever.

Karen Doster-Greenleaf  
Director of Research & Instructional Services  
Kennesaw State University

Amid the University System of Georgia (USG) university closures due to COVID-19, I received a career changing phone call. I was offered and accepted the position as director of Research and Instructional Services (RIS) at Kennesaw State University (KSU) Library System. I was thrilled by the offer, but my mind immediately started to race about what my transition would look like. I had just started to get a handle on what working from home entailed in my previous position. Now I’d be starting all over, in addition to transitioning into a management position without any of the familiar face-to-face onboarding and training experiences I’ve learned to lean on. I would have to get to know KSU, its staff, and my new team virtually.

To help me put my best foot forward, I sought advice from several colleagues of mine who had transitioned to managing their teams online due to the pandemic. Two pieces of advice that came up often were, one, become familiar with whatever meeting/communication platform KSU was using—and QUICK; and two, set realistic expectations for myself. They reminded me that everyone was in a state of flux, and no one is going to expect me to be sprinting out of the gate on day one. A friend also recommended reading The First 90 Days by Michael Watkins to help establish a game plan. While the book is geared towards individuals making transitions in the corporate world, the core message was still applicable to my new role. It provided insight on how to structure a learning plan and prioritize what information was essential, how to identify cultural norms, and how to build a strong team and new networks.

Utilizing Microsoft 365®, especially SharePoint and Teams, as much as possible has been key to meeting some of these goals. In a pre-pandemic transition, I would have sought out a colleague to answer institutional questions rather than look for it in a library policy or standing document. In the virtual world I now found myself in, this was not possible. Instead, I took advantage of the library’s repository of institutional knowledge via SharePoint, to build my knowledge base and get up to speed regarding library initiatives. This approach also afforded me the opportunity to take my time with the information, process it thoroughly, reflect, and determine new questions that would help me better understand my new team and library.
During my first month, establishing reliable lines of communication was vital. Thankfully, both the library and the RIS unit took full advantage of the multimodal Teams application. From using the Meeting Notes section to tracking weekly one-on-one meeting agendas, to having specialized Teams channels just for professional development suggestions, this robust usage helped make professional and personal connections possible. The RIS unit’s group project Teams channels also provided me with the opportunity to familiarize myself with the unit’s projects and their statuses without the need to set up time-consuming meetings.

While the process has seemed foreign and challenging at times, making this transition into my new role while working from home has pushed me to consider new ways of effectively operating and maintaining a library unit with minimal in-person contact. While not free from their own unique challenges, I believe that some of these adaptations can be used to make our work and our services better when I can finally return to campus.

**Susan Foster**  
Library Associate, Youth Services  
Cobb County Public Library System, Charles D. Switzer Library

Imagine Your Story. That is the 2020 theme for the library Summer Reading Program. Could any of us have imagined this story we are living? With much of the world shut down due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, many people have had to adjust to new ways of life and work. For the last five years, I have been blessed to work at a job I truly enjoy, with people I enjoy being around. When concerns over the dangers and spread of COVID-19 forced us to close our library doors and stay home, my head was spinning! This COVID closure was sudden and shocking and filled with uncertainties.

The first few days at home, unsure what was expected of me, I cleaned a few things around my house and began to attack some long-overdue projects. As work from home expectations crystallized, my coworkers and I carefully crept back into the library and grabbed books, puppets, and anything else we thought we might need for virtual story times and other programs.

With newfound direction and purpose, I was ready for the adventure of working from home. Email and virtual meetings enabled my coworkers and me to stay in touch and plan programming. In addition to assigned reading and book reviews, there was no shortage of webinars and learning opportunities to help fill each day with work-related tasks.

I enjoyed having my own workspace at home. Fortunately, one of the projects I worked on in those first few days resulted in a nice reading nook which became a great setting for virtual meetings and programs. Early on, I realized the importance of staying organized and focused to be productive. As one who is easily overwhelmed, I am grateful for tools to help me organize, plan, and conduct my work. The Google Suite services provided by the Georgia Public Library System were invaluable for working from home and have continued to be useful through the transition back to working in the library. In addition to G-Suite, here are some steps that helped me focus and find a good work/life balance:

- Each morning, I got dressed, down to the shoes, and had breakfast to start my day.
• I worked approximately the same hours I would have at the library.
• I took a lunch break.
• I kept a running list of tasks to complete.
• I listed all meetings attended, webinars viewed, and virtual programs produced while working from home.
• Each evening, I made a schedule for the following day.
• I kept a quiet workspace with all needed supplies nearby.
• The TV stayed off when I was working.
• When my workday was done, I logged off until the next morning.

Working from home was a challenge I gladly accepted. I found what worked for me and created a comfortable routine. During this time, I learned a lot from my coworkers and from people around the world through webinars, virtual presentations, and online meetings. I was thrilled to be able to produce virtual programs to reach some of our littlest library patrons online. I am grateful for the days I had at home, enjoying the quiet and having a little more control over my schedule. In spite of the chaos in the world around me, I found rest and peace as I prepared for the next adventure of gradually reopening the library.

**Sarah Grace Glover**  
*Reference Services Librarian*  
*University of North Georgia*

I finished my MLIS degree in January 2019 and started my first, full-time library position in August 2019 at the University of North Georgia (UNG). I had just started to feel settled in and confident in my position when COVID-19 struck and shut down our campuses. I’m a pretty extroverted person, so this experience has felt extremely isolating. I’ve become aware of how important seeing my coworkers and students daily is to me. A lot of my creativity comes from interactions in the library, which still happens thanks to all we can do virtually, but it’s just not the same as being in-person.

Before all this, I commuted to the Dahlonega and Gainesville UNG campuses. I taught classes, worked the reference desk, and had research consultations with students. Now, my commute is to my home office (kitchen table). I still teach classes, work reference chat shifts, and hold research consultations online—thank you technology! I usually take a break and put on my “work clothes” around lunch. My coffee intake has skyrocketed. Some bright spots are that through Microsoft Teams I’ve really gotten to know the librarians at other campuses much better through working on assignments that are not campus specific, and through our greatly anticipated weekly Tea Times.

Tea Times started as a daily workday break where all UNG Libraries’ staff got together and took turns presenting a hobby. Now that we have all become more settled in to working from home, the Tea Times are once a week. We’ve had great sessions where we learned and
played 30 Rails—a print and play game where you build your own railway network. We’ve had cooking and gardening lessons, quarantine art shows, home renovation updates, and virtual travel, where we shared stories and pictures from our favorite trips. I hosted a session on making mocktails—and how to make them cocktails after 5:00 p.m. In a time where I can’t physically work with my colleagues, I feel closer to them than ever.

Kristy Greene  
Assistant Director Materials Management  
West Georgia Regional Library System

In mid-March I left my office at the West Georgia Regional Library System’s (WGRLS) Administrative office with my laptop and an optimistic milk crate full of materials requiring original cataloging. A few weeks later, when there seemed no end in sight, I returned to the empty building for my dual monitors, Reese’s stash, and a peace lily a member of my team gave me when I first started in my position four months prior.

My days at home fell into a rhythm of a daily 9:30 a.m. COVID-19 status update meeting with our Admin team, catalog clean-up projects, materials orders, invoices, and suddenly pivoting to build up our digital collection. Our Cloud Library collection is my proudest accomplishment in my new role.

Meanwhile, my two teenage sons, tween daughter, and corporate trainer husband were all remotely learning and working from home as well. We soon discovered the new AT&T fiber wasn’t as reliable and fast as we hoped with five devices running at any one time. After seeing the workload my children were assigned as their teachers scrambled to come up with digital lessons, I wished my children Gods speed and told them to do what they could, not stress, and rest knowing they all had As and Bs that wouldn’t be lowered per our school system’s guidelines. I had no time, energy, or focus for their schooling; but, mercifully, my husband did for our child with ADHD who needed extra help to stay on track.

The perks of teleworking during a stressful global pandemic were staying in my pajamas if I wished, not wearing makeup, cutting out the two-hour roundtrip commute each day, and connecting digitally with my coworkers in our daily meetings. My husband and I began taking walks together each evening and sat on the patio for our lunch each day. During one such lunch, my husband asked if I noticed there were more birds this spring than usual. I replied that perhaps there have always been that many birds—we just never took the time to notice them. Online yoga classes helped my anxiety over the unknown future. This forced slowing down rejuvenated me individually and us as a family.

It also meant that sometimes the lines blurred between work and home. My eight-pound rat terrier, Pip, loved making appearances in our daily virtual meetings. He would come running from wherever he was in the house as soon as he heard the library director’s voice. My daughter also held me accountable to our quarantine work schedule of 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. One afternoon as I was engrossed with my work on the couch, my daughter cleared her voice and said in a stern voice, “it’s past four o’clock!” I turned to see her sitting at the kitchen table with a board game set up and her expectantly waiting for me to begin playing.
While I was able to do almost all my job remotely, I also learned to add margin to my days and engage more than ever with the people and space around me.

Karen J. Harris  
Branch Library Manager  
Gwinnett County Public Library

I live in my den/office. In addition to technological tools in this space, I have one of five sets of bookshelves each that have 100 or so titles totaling 510 volumes. This library collection serves as an autobiographical record of professional roads traveled during my 45-year career. Before COVID-19, I could not imagine working at home. I would hear colleagues speak about doing this and could not picture it as a workstyle for me. Boundaries are important and for most of my career the idea of a complete separation between my personal and professional life seemed like not only a good idea but one that would provide balance in both areas. Enter COVID 19; the change maker that has upended life as I have known it.

Gwinnett County Public Library (GCPL) quickly devised a plan for staff to work effectively during this two-month hiatus. Front-line managers were provided with clear expectations for keeping current with strategic expectations, professional development, and staff management. This was accomplished through an array of technological platforms that provide information and visual immediacy needed for staff support.

After the first two weeks, a system evolved that served staff across the organization. The Leadership Team had meetings several times a week to carve out directions for the system. The Training Team created a weekly digital course list designed for all staff to complete during the library closure. The weekly course list included technological topics, customer service review, and courses on how to use different platforms in Google Suite to create classes for staff. The management team had weekly Google Hangouts that provided system updates and served as a forum for discussion and team building at the frontline managerial level.

My experience working from home during the next weeks featured a slow but sure quieting of the mind. Managers are customer service providers for both external and internal customers, which focuses them outward most of the time. Having the worktime at home fostered creating thinking, planning time, and time for my own professional development. This envisioning time proved to be invaluable for me. The day began for me at 9:30 a.m. with a perusal of email from the day before and an updating of my professional log of activities accomplished daily. There was always a Training Team offering, a webinar, and a streaming meeting with the System Opening Task Force, library administration, or another core department in the library system. During my working from home time I was able to complete Lynda.com courses on Managing During Times of Changes and COVID-19 webinars and podcasts, with the most memorable being the
National Network of Libraries of Medicine
Leading with Compassion during COVID-19
Crisis webinar, now available via YouTube.

Weekly digital Hangouts with staff created a
dialogue that was important, providing system
updates, allowing everyone to report on
projects, and serving as a conclave to interact
with each other after the meeting. Keeping the
connections alive and fresh increased
investment in the success of each other.

While challenging in the extreme, COVID-19 has
introduced me to a new way of working that
has proven to be restorative and fulfilling to me
as a public library professional. It has also
forged a new appreciation for my vocation as a
librarian and provided me a zeal for an
energetic return to work that is meaningful and
adds value to Gwinnett County.

Austina Jordan
Head of Access Services
University of North Georgia

I took the GRE for the second time on January
24, 2020. The first time I sat for that exam was
back in May 2001, the Monday after I graduated
from college. I often tell people I went to
graduate school because I didn’t really know
what else to do after graduation. I entered
reluctantly, unsure if I could really handle the
work. It ended up being one of the best
educational decisions I made because it led me
into librarianship. Shortly before I took the GRE
this year, I set up a small little home office in
our newly converted guest bedroom. I figured if
I was going to start graduate school, I would
need a
designated space
to do my
schoolwork.

The home my
husband, David,
and I live in originally belonged to his
grandparents, and there are still a few pieces of
their furniture in the garage. I dug out his
grandmother Jewel’s writing desk, cleaned it
up, and we lugged it back into the house.

Less than two months after we set up my office,
COVID-19 turned my work life upside down.
Over the course of a few days it became
apparent that a health crisis was knocking on
the door of our state and things at work were
rapidly changing. I packed up some black flair
pens, my steno pad, Post-it Notes, and for some
reason, grabbed a webcam. I thought I’d be
back in a few weeks.

A few weeks turned into a few months. I’ve
started easing back into working at my library—
two days at the office and three days at my
home office. Over the course of the many
weeks at home, I struggled to find a routine
that made sense for me; I think the thing that
made it so difficult was not knowing how long
all of this would last. Eventually I let go of the
need to know when this would end, and things
felt more manageable, and my routine naturally
started taking shape.

After realizing that working in the guest
bedroom was too claustrophobic, I came up
with a plan to relocate my workspace into our
TV sitting room. The change is definitely a
better arrangement and feels more purposeful
than a little desk tucked in the corner of a guest
bedroom. As I think about my time working
from home, I realize how fortunate I am to have
designated office space. I can close my door for
meetings and close my door when the workday
is over. I
acknowledge not
many have had
the luxury. I’m
grateful, despite
the reason for
this work-from-
home season,
that I had the
opportunity to
give my home office a test run. Graduate school
begins the middle of August, and I can say with confidence that my home office is ready to go.

Gail Morton  
*Research Services Librarian  
Mercer University*

I take a deep breath and click “Join Meeting.” Our first Zoom meeting of the Age of COVID-19 will have about 15–20 coworkers depending on who can attend. I am here, but I don’t quite know how to interact. This won’t be a meeting that has an agenda, nor will it be an office party where slipping in and out of conversations and groups is the norm. It’s a way to keep in contact with one another during quarantine, so interaction with one another, though not mandatory, is probably expected. I am very comfortable with Zoom. I’ve taught library instruction classes with 20 or more students and am fine with handling the platform’s features. I have no anxiety about the video or the chat or doing both at the same time. However, those other times library instruction was the focus, and I was the librarian. This time the aim is socializing, something I don’t really know how to do through video and chat, especially with such a large group.

I think of my coworkers, and I know what I want to talk about. Some of them have pre-existing conditions, making it very dangerous for them to be out. Others have family who are vulnerable and alone due to social distancing. One of my coworkers had just bought a home at the beginning of the quarantine and will now be moving. I want to ask everyone: how are you? how is your family? are you eating well? do you have enough supplies? can I help you with the move? But a large Zoom meeting is not the place for that kind of conversation. So, I venture into the meeting somewhat reserved, thinking that I will just watch and learn, all the while hoping someone will need a research consultation soon, and I can gracefully decline the invitation.

No such luck. And even watching and learning prove difficult at first. It is hard to tell who is talking or whose turn it is next. Once in a while, someone’s audio stops working in the middle of a sentence. Other times, the whole platform freezes, making it hard to tell what is going on. A parade of pets, children, and spouses march through backgrounds. Still, conversations seem to flow, and there is a general feeling of comfort mixed with unease about the pandemic. Finally, my 30 seconds of fame come, as I talk and chat at the same time. For that brief moment, it all comes naturally. I converse about how others are doing, the foods we have been preparing, and the shows we have been binging (Tiger King seemed to be in vogue.) Just as my comfort level is rising, I am visibly interrupted by my son bringing me a casserole he has baked for my lunch. That innocent interruption makes it easy for me to bow out of the meeting with a “lucky me.”

Reflecting back, I realize that, while the Zoom session left me mentally exhausted, it was worth it. A new way to interact has begun, and I
think I can do this. At first what seemed to be chaos in the Zoom hang out turned into a tranquil symphony, the combined voices of all the people I work with almost every day. As the sounds became cohesive, the chat had its own flow, and it carried me long with it into this brave new world of teleworking.

Scott Pieper
Associate Department Head
Georgia State University Library, Decatur Campus

When I take a step back and think about how our response to COVID-19 has unfolded, the common theme that I keep dwelling upon is disconnection. In a time of crisis, I would look to my community for support and mutual aid. A big part of my community is my library. I miss students. I miss faculty. I miss my colleagues. I work with some very funny, dedicated, and thoughtful people. COVID-19 has robbed me of that shared experience. Zoom or Microsoft Teams or WebEx doesn’t cut it for me. I miss the hallway moments, the unexpected outbursts of laughter from an adjacent office, and cake in the breakroom. I miss the rhythm of the semester. I missed graduation and saying good-bye to students this spring. I missed the relief and smiles on students’ faces when they finish their last final. In a two-year institution, students might be there for just a semester or two, so it is especially tough to miss opportunities like that. We also had to say good-bye to a long-serving colleague who retired in April via WebEx.

With that said, I have adjusted somewhat to this new normal of working from home. I have a routine, for the most part. I have watched hours upon hours of webinars about working from home. My new colleagues are my family. I have a wonderful spouse and two young sons. The boys are learning that Dada is at work even though he’s home. With no commute, I have gained about two hours each day to exercise and spend time with them. I also give myself some grace to take a break and watch a cartoon or read a book or have a snack with them. As a manager, I think about my staff and their mental health a lot. I think about budget cuts and furloughs. I think about bringing folks back into an uncertain and changed environment. We’ve been working on return-to-work protocols and guidelines, which give me hope and focus some of my energy.

In addition to COVID-19, I can’t ignore the momentous events that have sparked nationwide protests against police violence aimed disproportionately at Black Americans. The murder of George Floyd has again exposed the depths our unequal justice system. And, again, I feel disconnected. I feel disconnected from people I know that can’t see their privilege and can’t see (or are unwilling to see) the systemic racism and white supremacy embedded in our culture. I am committed to using my expertise as a librarian to fight misinformation, disinformation, and mal-information used to confuse, obfuscate, and cast blame. As a white male who is increasingly aware of my privilege and my family’s
generational privilege, I am committed to learning, listening, teaching, and acting. I am ready to reconnect.

Sala Shierling
Part-Time Research Services Librarian
Georgia Gwinnett College

I have worked in the public services area of libraries my entire career and have enjoyed a variety of work experiences. However, until COVID-19, during a reference encounter, I had never glimpsed into a student's home and watched through topsy-turvy camera action as the student yelled, "you can't see my face!" Yes, I have been remoted! I can now add to my list of library experiences remote reference, instruction, and liaison service during a pandemic.

Initially, I was a bit doubtful about remote work. I thought I would feel isolated rather than part of a team. I assumed that reference and instruction would dwindle to nothing. Perhaps the deepest concern was whether there would be opportunities to make a difference in the lives of students and faculty. With the above thoughts in mind, my work plan was to update and create LibGuides during the down times, and if things were slow catch up on professional reading.

Something quite surprising happened. I not only liked remote work, I am loving it. Rather than causing the connection and service gulf to widen, remote work removes the restrictions brought on by the physical reference desk and allows the invisible fence to disappear. Four surprising outcomes arose.

Surprise 1: Meeting attendance. While monitoring chats in the quiet of my home, I can virtually attend meetings and have audio,
something that is not an option while sitting at the public reference desk. This has allowed me to attend Dean Chats, liaison meetings, and Research Services meetings.

Surprise 2: Connecting with colleagues. With options for internal chats, screen sharing, and voice and camera options, I am able to make quick connections with colleagues. (A "how's your mama, love your hair" comment is always good for networking!)

Surprise 3: Access to software and maker time. While not feasible during usual reference desk hours, as a remote reference librarian, I can easily create, record, and edit Camtasia modules for my LibGuides, liaison work, and instruction while simultaneously monitoring LibAnswers.

Surprise 4: Embedded librarianship. Since the building is closed, embedded librarianship is a measurable service option for both teaching faculty and librarians. In a class in which the professor advertised me as class librarian and embedded a LibGuide with Camtasia modules into his course site, students viewed the LibGuide more than 200 times within 14 days.

When I return to in-building work, I am hopeful that the positive outcomes during my season of remote reference service will continue. Perhaps in-building meetings should also be available virtually so that those juggling public service duties can attend. Perhaps all employees need to use Microsoft Teams so that even part-timers can chime in with a quick chat to a colleague. Perhaps public service employees (even part-timers) need scheduled "maker time" for completing projects. Lastly, I am hopeful that my successful experience as an embedded librarian can serve as an example as the library
continues to move forward with this initiative. While stately buildings and beautiful reading rooms inspire great thoughts and studious productivity, perhaps the walls of academic libraries should be permeable, and the invisible fence around the reference desk removed so that information can flow as quickly as the pandemic that started this brave new phase of librarianship.

Gail A Spears  
Cataloger  
NPS SERO Library, Contractor

This essay, is from a cataloger’s perspective, now teleworking. March, month and day of the 16th, to be remembered! A day seared in my brain as rumors had swirled about the potential closure of this government research library due to COVID-19. But we didn’t know when. Well, that Monday, somewhere around mid-morning, we were told to leave. With that, laptop and other needed resources were gathered up to be taken home for who knew how long. I sure didn’t. The following day, Tuesday, would be my first experience as a cataloger, teleworking. This would be fascinating and intriguing I thought to myself. It was a jarring first day. Reminder, no commute. Going to have to get used to that, though a once a week office visit would be in order.

First things first. How am I going to do this—I mean catalog at home? I had ideas such as copying or scanning title pages and versos if need be. But wait, I tried this trick before leaving, with a few titles. While a good try, I found this process painfully slow and inefficient. This wasn’t going to work. I had brought home an old shelflist of titles cataloged in the previous integrated library system (ILS), but no longer in the most recent ILS. Something horrific happened during the migration process. I’ll leave it at that. But, hang on, another idea seized my brain. We at our library are not completely automated and have no circulation system. However, we do still have those things called pocket cards or date due cards in the back of the book with pertinent information that can be utilized for cataloging purposes. Let’s just say we went full throttle with that! So, this thing called telework began to take hold. I began to settle in with this new work reality not knowing how long it would last.

Well, March went by quickly with me settling into the transition, continuing with once a week office visits to pluck cards from pockets for cataloging. Oh, I should say we began with an un-cataloged general collection. In case you are wondering, the collection was un-cataloged due to migrations issues some years back. April, and well, still teleworking. Thank goodness for those cards. Periodical titles posed a problem; the solution was to copy cover and/or title pages and write down pertinent information needed to add copy/items and heaven forbid actual cataloging of a periodical title. I’m settling in with this new work routine, though I miss seeing people face-to-face, office noises, meetings, and such, even though I consider myself an introvert. This thing called telework is growing on me. In the beginning, I was so much more productive. I’m not quite sure why, but I’ve slowed a bit; maybe it’s because I could feel myself burning out and realized I had to slow down. I have, thankfully. Besides I wouldn’t want to work my way to having nothing to do. No! I’ve tried to work on a more even keel if you will, taking short breaks, getting up for a bit of fresh air, and a bit more exercise to boot. Telework/work from home, I could get used to this, and a couple of days a week would work for me!

Stephanie Summers  
Library Associate  
Gwinnett County Public Library, Snellville Branch

In March 2020, I was in a state of transition. I had transferred to the Snellville branch of the Gwinnett County Public Library (GCPL) after two-and-a-half years of working as a part-time library associate at the Buford-Sugar Hill branch. On March 15, 2020, less than two months after I began work at Snellville, GCPL
announced it would close to the public due to COVID-19. Shortly after, we suspended all in-branch operations. For the next two months, I joined the legions of Americans working from home.

My homework (as I started calling it) during the shutdown consisted of online training and virtual meetings. I bargained with my parents for the home office computer so that I could complete Google classrooms and Lynda courses. Every Wednesday afternoon, I sat with my phone on the office bed in front of a mirror decorated like a window for staff meetings over Google Hangouts. Getting my hair, make-up, and outfit perfect for the camera became as normal as working in shorts.

I began to feel like a workaholic as the invisible boundary between work and home disappeared. Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at 3:00 p.m. are my work hours, I told my long-distance boyfriend (used to calling me whenever he wanted) so that he would not interrupt my meetings or my training. Make sure the dog doesn’t bother me, I told my parents, not wanting her to whine and scratch on the office door during Hangouts.

Finding a new work-life balance was not the only challenge of working from home. Video conferences and virtual classrooms are not the core of library work. Working with the public is. As the weeks went by, I began to worry that I would lose my customer service skills. I missed seeing faces, shaking hands, and learning names. I missed helping patrons at computers—playing amateur tech support. I also missed the social aspects of work. My life felt emptier now that I could not walk through the doors of my branch and greet my coworkers.

The good news, though, is that the time in isolation was productive. Our wonderful training department kept us busy with their weekly Online Learning Guide newsletter. Their efforts prepared me to help customers again. I reviewed Flipster and Pressreader so that I could introduce customers to digital magazines and newspapers. I learned about a resource that could help both students and job seekers (tutor.com). I refreshed my readers’ advisory skills (with Novelist) and found out how to host virtual programs (with a tutorial on Google Hangouts). Meanwhile, I was also able to take self-selected trainings on improving focus, organization, and time management. These were courses that had been impossible to fit into a part-time day when the system was operating under normal conditions.

Above all, I found that the bonds between librarians hold strong even across the distance. My supervisor was never too busy to send me emails thanking me for all my hard work. Snellville staff shared cute pictures and helpful resources through email. I kept in constant phone contact with a former coworker from Buford and helped her with training. And seeing my Snellville coworkers’ faces on my phone every week lifted my spirits. Meanwhile the administrative, business service, human resources, youth services, and IT departments worked together with branch staff to provide all
the customer service we could and worked on reopening the system.

The challenges as GCPL reopens seem endless, but so did the challenges during the shutdown. We got through that horrible time with teamwork and dedication to the library’s mission. I believe there are brighter days ahead.

Gina Viarruel  
Library Associate  
Gwinnett County Public Library

My job entails assisting customers daily with various information and technology needs, as well as offering opportunities to learn more. Hence, when all 15 of our branches at Gwinnett County Public Library (GCPL) closed until further notice on the same day, it was a shock. We didn’t close for all the reasons deemed normal for a library shutting down. No one started a fire in the stacks, we weren’t suddenly underfunded, and sewage wasn’t gushing from our pipes, flooding our floors. We closed to keep our library staff and patrons safe from a virus that was unpredictably spreading through our communities.

Our teleworking journey partially began on Tuesday, March 17, 2020. I will admit that during those first two weeks I did almost nothing traditionally considered productive. I read my work emails, listened to podcasts, read a lot of news, obsessively checked coronavirus statistics for the state of Georgia, listened to Georgia Peach Book Award audiobooks, and caught up on the kind of sleep I thought I’d only missed a lot of in college. As someone who considers themself to be an optimistic opportunist who had had enough therapy to understand the importance of self-care during a crisis, I knew that if my attention wasn’t immediately needed somewhere, this would have been my one and only time to rest and rejuvenate so that I’d be ready for whatever came next.

Two weeks later, our whole library system started to focus on continuing education and planning the details for the conversion of our summer programs to a virtual programming model. As I worked from home, I started to notice that my productivity shot through the roof, more than it seemed to on a normal workday. Of course, I was completing a lot more continuing education webinars in an effort to fill in for the time I usually spent interacting with customers, but I also found that I had all the time I needed to think and be the extreme night owl that I am. I was sometimes wide awake at 3:00 a.m. completing Lynda course after Lynda course while my partner slept in the next room of our tiny apartment. He would look at me incredulously when he’d wake up to (still) go to work the next morning and see me on the couch still wide awake and flying through three projects at once. It made me wonder if what I was doing was normal for me or if the combination of the disruption of my normal work routines and my introversion re-awoken by so much time alone somehow gave me superpowers.

Around the same time as discovering my new abilities, I picked up old and new hobbies so that I wasn’t all work and no play 24/7. I bought a pair of roller skates in anticipation that I’d be brave enough to step outside and skate around my neighborhood as my neighbors walked and jogged the same paths. I played classic Battleship and Ms. Monopoly with my partner; neither of us had played board games in years. I joined sewers around the country making cloth masks for local hospitals, family members, and friends. These activities took my mind off the crisis, and the tragedies that came with it. The shutdown of our library system was a new experience. We took steps towards reopening on May 18, 2020. Going back to work in a mask and keeping six feet apart has been another adjustment, but one that’s worth the livelihood of our employees and customers.
Georgia Libraries Respond to COVID-19 Pandemic

By Bettina Askew, Alicia Brown, Maranda Christy, Ali Gomez, Marquita Gooch, Josette Kubicki, Aspasia Luster, Dana Marseille, Samantha Paul, Lachelle Smith, Shafer Tharrington, Angela Thornton, Shannon Tyner, and Jason Wright; compiled by Sofia Slutskaya

In March 2020, many public and academic libraries temporarily closed their physical facilities to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in their communities. Even though physical building and physical facilities were largely unavailable to patrons, Georgia public and academic libraries did not stop offering digital content, online learning, and virtual programs. Public and academic librarians shared stories about their programs and activities with the Georgia Library Association (GLA).

Augusta University
Aspasia Luster, Bettina Askew, Maranda Christy, Ali Gomez, Josette Kubicki, Shafer Tharrington, and Lachelle Smith

At the end of every spring and fall semester, the Augusta University (AU) Libraries are busy providing free food, coffee, and relaxing activities to students preparing for exams. With both of our libraries—Greenblatt Library on the Health Sciences campus and Reese Library on the Summerville campus—closed for COVID-19, we were keen to find creative solutions to help students unwind and relax during these stressful times. This year we hosted a Virtual Finals Frenzy (April 27–May 8, 2020) by consistently posting on our social media, which pointed to a complementary online library guide (LibGuide). This virtual programming included photos of the libraries personnel’s cooking during quarantine, a relaxing Zen Zone, and library pet therapy (always a favorite!). Besides our social media posts, our LibGuide collected resources on at-home exercise and study skills for online learning to help our students get through the weirdest finals of their lives with lower stress levels and, hopefully, some smiles.

Since we were unable to offer our usual medley of nachos, pizza, assorted snacks, coffee, and tea, we converted our in-person culinary delights into a staff cooking challenge (using the libraries’ e-cookbook collection). We also featured bread and lentil soup cooking videos graciously provided by one of our university faculty members. For the Cafe section of the LibGuide we provided links to quarantine cooking themed videos on YouTube, links to resources on food facts and healthy eating, and links to popular cooking shows.

Recognizing that many students were, like us, cooped up inside without regular access to physical exercise and missing the communities offered to them by their regular gyms and fitness studios, we collected resources to help fill that void. We found local yoga studios and Zumba instructors live-streaming classes by tapping into our connections and by conducting web searches. Examples include the Georgia Aquarium’s Yoga by the Water series and the university’s campus recreation. For students who couldn’t attend live-streaming sessions, we also collected YouTube channels with at-home
workouts for individuals of all ability and fitness levels.

Traditionally, each library provides a space for students to escape and unwind during finals time. Such spaces include jigsaw and word puzzles, coloring sheets and bookmarks, origami, scrap paper for drawing, board games, and relaxing YouTube videos quietly playing in the background. We united our spaces in the webiverse by having a Zen Zone section in the LibGuide. It includes links to virtual coloring sites and apps, puzzles and games sites, and soothing background music. This semester, we expanded the Zen Zone to include links to self-care strategies, mindfulness and meditation exercises, and ASMR (autonomous sensory meridian response) videos. We sourced links from tried and tested recommendations from colleagues and by searching for open content from reputable sites.

We know that managing stress is crucial to thriving during finals. Since therapy dogs could not physically come to each of the AU Libraries, our libraries’ community decided to virtually share their fur-ever friends for students to enjoy and reduce the stress of finals. For the Pet Therapy section of the LibGuide, we uploaded photos of some AU Libraries adorable fur-ever friends, along with a description of each pet that was submitted with the photo.

While we live in a modern technological age where we rely upon the use of computers and online-based learning, it is often tricky when classes completely shift to an online-only course. Therefore, we collected several resources that assist students in this transition to fully online courses. We provided multiple links to Augusta University’s Writing Center, the Math Assistance Center, and our Academic Success Center. Similarly, we collected several YouTube videos that aim to assist the students with focusing and staying motivated, which can be very hard when suddenly required to be in front of a computer more than usual. Also, the University System of Georgia (USG) debuted its Keep Learning USG online webpage to support students with different checklists and resources to stay on top of their schoolwork.

You can visit the Augusta University’s LibGuide at https://guides.augusta.edu/VirtualFinalsFrenzy/home.

Clayton County Library System
Marquita Gooch

At Clayton County Library System, we’ve implemented a number of virtual programs in response to the library’s closure and the COVID-19 pandemic. We’ve done everything from story time to DIY crafts like Slow Cooker Play Dough, and our technology Assistant Director Marquita Gooch-Voyd, hosts live Friday Funday Trivia nights on YouTube. We also have electronic e-books, audiobooks, and magazines via RB Digital. If patrons are looking to start a new business, they can scope out the competition by searching through the ReferenceUSA database. Children and teens can find new reads via TumbleBooks, and the whole family can stream popular music via Freegal—all with their library card!

As an official Grow with Google partner, we have also facilitated digital skills classes virtually and are currently preparing for a series of entrepreneurship resource classes with a focus on veteran-owned businesses. We are also
going to implement 60-second book reviews during the Summer Reading months and host a series called From Book to Big Screen via Netflix Party where viewers can watch the movie and simultaneously chat about it all from the comfort of their homes. Each film will be based on a popular title and screening dates will be posted to our social media sites and weekly e-newsletter.

We’ve begun allowing patrons back into the building with limited services offered. For our senior patrons, it’s been wonderful for them to be able to physically come inside our buildings and update their accounts, browse for new library materials to check out and, of course, fellowship with their favorite staff member! This pandemic has truly shown us that human interaction is definitely needed, and we value our senior patrons for their patience with us as we continue to find ways to serve them safely.

Clayton County Library System
Dana Marseille

One program that we have done virtually is a meeting of our Graphic Novel Club. We saw this as a great opportunity to engage and stay connected to our patrons while still operating remotely from home. The meetings that took place via Google Meet were centered around the X-Men Universe and the villain/anti-heroine known as Catwoman.

Something fun and entertaining that Clayton County librarians were doing was a program known as Friday Fun-Day Trivia. Participants were able to view the stream on Google Meet from one device. They then had to go to the Kahoot website (kahoot.it) on a separate device to answer the trivia questions. This was a great opportunity to get everyone in the family involved and was a good way to relieve some stress during these unprecedented times.

All of Clayton County Library virtual events are advertised on our social media as well as in our e-newsletter that is sent out weekly. Check out our Instagram page at https://www.instagram.com/claytongalib/ to see additional scheduled virtual programs.

Cobb County Public Library System
Shannon Tyner

Our library system here in Cobb used social media to push our digital and online resources. The day we got word that we would be closing to the public, we created our Use the Library from Home! initiative. It included graphics to share on social media, a dedicated page on our website, and an article that was pushed out to
our subscribers. Use the Library from Home! promotes:

- Digital resources for all ages including e-books, e-audiobooks, digital magazines and newspapers, and streaming video.

- Online databases including Lynda, Mango Languages, Gale Courses, and LearningExpress Library.

- The Library PASS program. Library PASS is a partnership between us and Cobb County and Marietta City Schools in which all students can use their student number as a public library card.

- TutorATL. TutorATL provides on-demand, one-on-one tutoring services for free with a library card or Library PASS.

- The Early Learning page, which includes booklists and "storytime favorites" (nursery songs and fingerplays) videos for ages 0–5.

Cobb librarians have been posting Virtual Storytimes to Facebook and IGTV every weekday and plan to continue until our regular programs resume.

Since students were not able to go anywhere for spring break, we’ve created a Spring Break at Home series for social media. Each weekday, we shared an activity (one for school age, one for tweens and teens) for students to do at home.

**DeKalb County Public Library**
Alicia Brown

DeKalb County Public Library (DCPL) received the 2018 Georgia Public Library of the Year award for programming that embraced the county’s diverse community. This was evident through programs such as PRIME TIME Preschool, Fine Free Summer and the Human Library Project. However, during the current health pandemic known as COVID-19, DCPL had to come up with ways to continue to provide outstanding service to its patrons that are temporarily not able to visit the branches.

“We are turning lemons into lemonade” said Jonathon Myers, principle librarian at Hairston Crossing Library. Staff members at DCPL have been working together to provide fun and interactive programs that the whole family can
enjoy while being at home. The DeKalb Library Foundation is providing funding to support some of these offerings created by outside performers. Patrons have been able to watch live story times, DIY craft videos, magic shows, and more from the library’s Facebook page. Not only have these programs helped to keep patrons engaged, it also gives them an opportunity to connect with their local librarian virtually. “Should we pack our swimsuit?” one patron asked on the Facebook post about DCPL’s Explore More virtual spring break activities.

DCPL has also made it easy to obtain a temporary digital library card through their website or renew a current card to be able to checkout e-books, e-audio books, and more. During the temporary closure, patrons will not incur overdue fines. DCPL also is allowing patrons who checked out mobile hotspots to keep the devices until we reopen.

Partnerships have also been an integral part of the pandemic. DCPL is partnering with the American Red Cross to host several blood drives at various branches to help alleviate critical supply shortages. Although it has been a challenge to come up with ways to connect with patrons across DeKalb County during this difficult time, it has also been rewarding. This new normal has caused many staff members to think outside the box, thus developing programs that will more than likely become staples from now on. The Library’s motto is “Read more. Think more. Play more. Make more.” Patrons are doing just that through the efforts of DeKalb County Public Library.

**Georgia Tech**
Jason Wright

In response to the COVID-19 quarantine and subsequent shutdown of campus, the Georgia Tech Library adopted several online and in-person strategies to bring high-quality services and instruction to students, staff, and faculty.

Numerically, the most impactful has been moving all library-led workshops online. The library offers 20–30 classes a month in everything from data visualization, to multimedia instruction, to reference management. Typically, instructors see a maximum of 25 students per in-person workshop for subjects like Introduction to R Studio or Introduction to Python. However, since moving online, the cap for students has been lifted. Instructors are seeing more than 100 students per workshop.

A social media series featuring librarians introducing students and faculty to their favorite resources, plus those resources that have recently been expanded in response to the quarantine, is another innovation. The videos are posted on the library Instagram page. The resources include Overdrive, Red Shelf, Bloomsbury Databases, Films on Demand, and others, each two times a week.

In the early days of the quarantine, the library began loaning laptops to students in need so they could have the equipment to attend online classes. Faculty and staff expanded the program by using the inventory of lending laptops, plus Surface Pros earmarked for staff use. The program includes cleaning the machines and mailing them to students.

**Valdosta State University Odum Library**
Samantha Paul

At Valdosta State University’s (VSU) Odum Library, we used the extended spring break to identify ways that we could operate an essential campus component (and socialization hub) in a
way that could reduce risk for students, faculty, and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. Library staff worked on signage, reducing the capacity of our computer labs to facilitate social distancing, and removing extraneous shared spaces, like study rooms and additional computer labs. During these preparations, we realized that our traditional reference desk would make it difficult to maintain a 6-foot distance while assisting students at the reference desk. We were able to take advantage of our existing dual monitor setup and a web camera to create a virtual reference desk. This virtual reference desk was a group effort. The reference librarians were able to borrow a webcam from our New Media Center and collaborate with our library systems services coordinator to create a generic computer login that would have sufficient system privileges to support a webcam. It took two days to hammer out the logistics, but we are pleased with how it is working so far. This new virtual reference desk setup has been well-received by visitors to the building and has allowed us to provide research assistance beyond chat and phone.

West Georgia Regional Library System
Angela Thornton

West Georgia Regional Library System (WGRLS) has been doing a variety of things in our WGRLS locations to keep interacting with our patrons during quarantine and social distancing. First, we've added a lot of content to our CloudLibrary selections as many libraries have. People are really responding to that. Second, we've been on a learning curve to implement more interactive online programming. We've been conducting Facebook Live storyline, of course, but we've also been posting "how to" videos on things like crafts, art, or cooking. We've also had interactive sessions on FB Live for chats with library managers or teen tech talk sessions or Bingo with adults or book clubs. Third, we're looking ahead to changes we may want to make in future programming for all ages through virtual and online resources to retain some of our patrons who are finding these online interactions preferable to always having to come to one of our locations. It's been eye-opening for us all!
Georgia Library Association
Election Process Changes

Starting in 2020, the Georgia Library Association (GLA) will host two elections cycles. The first, which is held annually in September, will include the election of officers to the GLA Executive Board, Divisions, and Roundtables. The second cycle will occur in November and will include the election of interest group and caucus officers. The term of office for any officers elected in either of these election cycles will begin in January.

In addition to streamlining the elections process and moving the elections to an online platform where more GLA members may participate, one of the goals of this change is to increase the opportunity for the election of emerging leaders to leadership roles. Candidates who are not elected to a position in the September election will be eligible to be considered for interest group or caucus leadership positions in the November election.

While the Nominations and Elections Committee will coordinate the identification of candidates for open positions on the Executive Board, the responsibility for nominating a slate of candidates for the divisions, roundtables, caucuses, and interest groups will remain with each individual unit. These units will need to update their GLA Handbook entries to reflect this new election process.
Georgia Library Association
GLA Officer Candidates for 2021

First Vice-president / President Elect

Virginia Feher, University of North Georgia

Virginia (Ginny) Feher would be honored to have the opportunity to serve the association, its members, and Georgia librarians across the state as the Georgia Library Association’s (GLA) vice-president/president elect in 2021 and then president in 2022. Her goals for the association include establishing additional mechanisms to better support inclusivity within GLA through concrete actions and policies, striving to make the association a more welcoming organization for diverse groups. She would also continue to support and expand the work of GLA’s past presidents, such as ensuring that the Georgia Libraries Conference remains a premier event for Georgia and Southeastern library employees and affiliates.

Ginny has been involved in GLA since 2010, getting her start as the secretary of the Interlibrary Loan Interest Group. Since then, she has served on various interest groups and committees as a member or officer, including 2011/12 co-chair, Atlanta Emerging Librarians Planning Committee; 2012 chair, New Members Round Table; 2012 chair, Interlibrary Loan Interest Group; 2013 secretary, Government Information Interest Group; and 2013 chair, Interest Group Council. She has also been a member of the Academic Library Division and various interest groups. As both a voting and non-voting member of the GLA Executive Board since 2012, Ginny has actively participated in board discussions and decisions.

In 2012, Ginny joined the editorial board of GLA’s journal, the Georgia Library Quarterly (GLQ), as the associate editor and peer-review coordinator. In 2013, she moved into the editor position, leading a team of editors in publishing a vital resource for the field of library science and providing guidance to authors to help them publish high quality articles that inform and educate our readers. In addition, Ginny has contributed to the annual conference in multiple ways, serving on this year’s Conference Committee and in the past serving on the Programming Committee, acting as an Academic Library Division (ALD) papers presentation judge, as well as presenting at the annual conference regularly since 2009.

Ginny Feher has worked in academic libraries since 1987. She was the interlibrary loan borrowing supervisor at the University of Georgia until September 2012, when she accepted the government information librarian position at Augusta University after earning an MLIS in 2011 from Valdosta State University. In 2014, she joined the University of North Georgia (UNG) as a reference services librarian at...
the Gainesville campus, and in 2015 she moved to the Oconee campus as its head librarian. As a unit head, department head, and then head librarian, Ginny has extensive management and leadership experience, which she can apply to successfully lead the Georgia Library Association.

Ginny has lived in Athens, Georgia since moving there in 1982 to earn an MFA in painting. Her main guilty pleasure is binge-watching K-Drama (South Korean drama series), for which she would be happy to provide recommendations to anyone thinking of exploring the genre.

**Karen Manning, Georgia Institute of Technology**

Karen is a metadata specialist working with technology and curating digital collections and scholarship at Georgia Tech. In this role, Karen develops strategies and policies for building and maintaining digital collections to support instruction and new research streams. She began her library work at the Library of Congress and is knowledgeable about many facets of library work. This breadth of knowledge is demonstrated by the multidimensional roles that she has held in public and technical services and her current role in archives. Karen’s expertise and interests are in digital technologies, archival management, and rights management (copyright and other intellectual property). She holds an MLIS with a concentration in management and a BA in organizational leadership. Karen also received certification in Copyright for Educators and Librarians.

Karen’s leadership skills are exhibited in her service on various professional and library committees and project teams. She is a member of the Georgia Library Association (GLA), American Library Association (ALA), Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL), and Society of American Archivists (SAA). Karen has been actively involved in GLA since 2005 and has held leadership positions as second vice president/membership chair, Black Caucus chair, and the Paraprofessional Division chair. She has led efforts in the establishment of two GLA interest groups. Additionally, Karen chaired Georgia Tech Library’s mentoring and employee activities committees that fostered communication, teamwork, and increased morale among library employees. Together with the committee members, Karen planned, coordinated, and executed internal workshops and social activities.

Karen was the recipient of a GLA Paraprofessional Grant, the Nora Symmers Paraprofessional Award, and a Beard Scholarship. She twice received the Price’s Pride annual award that recognizes Georgia Tech Library employees. Karen also received an ACRL scholarship that provided professional development and interaction with other librarians.

Karen enjoys volunteering in school libraries as a book reader and providing general library assistance. Her outreach to children and youth promotes how libraries can contribute to achieving their aspirations, as well as providing continuing lifelong learning. She also loves to travel, visit museums, and the beach.

The Georgia Library Association is where collaborations, learning, and professional networking occur. Karen believes that the spirit of partnerships, possibilities, and participation can produce pathways towards innovation and progress. Karen understands the importance of having a clear direction in
navigating the future of GLA. Her leadership philosophy includes being open-minded, obtaining expertise, and facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives. Karen is inspired by the opportunity to serve as GLA’s vice president/president elect and looks forward to facilitating continuous enrichment of the library community.

**Vice-President for Marketing and Branding**

**Marquita Gooch, Clayton County Library System**

Marquita Gooch is a graduate of Florida State University, receiving her master’s in library and information science in 2011 with *cum laude* honors. A native of Atlanta, she began her career as a part-time library assistant senior for the Fulton County Library System (FCLS). She ended her tenure at FCLS as the social media and web page coordinator for the Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History (AARL).

She continued her library career by joining the DC Public Schools as a teacher librarian, where she developed community relationships and marketing campaigns to engage students and their parents. Those campaigns led to partnerships with DC Public Libraries, Howard University, the non-profit organization Critical Exposure, and several local bookstores and authors.

Currently, Marquita serves as the assistant director for technology and training for the Clayton County Library System (CCLS). In addition to her duties as an assistant director, Marquita also handles marketing for CCLS, including the website, all social media accounts, e-mail newsletters, and live-streamed events. She has created many virtual programs and marketing campaigns for CCLS, resulting in a 60% increase in engagement from patrons across the board.

**Micki Waldrop, Brenau University**

Micki Waldrop is a research and instruction librarian at Brenau’s Trustee Library in Gainesville, Georgia. She has over 12 years of experience in social media marketing, branded content creation, and outreach. Micki is part of a two-person marketing and outreach team that seeks to make the library a welcoming place for students, staff, and faculty.

Micki has been a member of the Georgia Library Association since 2014 for which she has been a member of the Social Media Committee in 2015, has served on the Georgia Library Conference Planning Committee as the chair of Local Arrangements for the 2016 COMO Conference, and she has served as chair of Catering since 2016. You may also remember her as the murder victim at the Georgia Libraries Conference Murder Mystery event in 2017.
Micki loves libraries and she wants everybody to love them as much as she does. Part of this love includes working to market library services, events, and opportunities in a way that connects with patrons. She believes a sure way to engage an audience is with a laugh, so she works to deliver the message of libraries with a good dose of humor.

Micki earned a bachelor of arts in history from Kennesaw State University, a master of arts in history from the University of Georgia, and a master’s in library and information science from Valdosta State University. Outside of the library, Micki can be found (literally) hanging around a trapeze studio, thinking about her next meal, or buying furniture to rehab.

**Secretary**

**Kelly Williams, Gwinnett County Public Library**

Kelly Williams is a library student and employee, and she is actively involved in the Georgia Library Association. She is currently finishing her MLIS at Valdosta State University. She works as a library associate for Gwinnett County Public Library, where she plans and runs programs, helps with staff training, and provides customer service with a smile.

Kelly is currently secretary of GLA’s New Member Round Table and plans to use her experience from that position to be an excellent secretary for GLA in 2021 if chosen. She’s detail-oriented, always looking for exciting things for libraries to do, and always volunteering to help out. Her goal with the position of secretary is to serve the library community.

**Jean Mead, Athens Regional Library System**

Having worked in public libraries for 10 years, Jean is experienced in multiple areas such as cataloging, multigenerational programming, collection development for children and young adults, administration, and outreach. Currently an assistant director at the Athens Regional Library System, she works as the liaison between the main library and 11 branches located in five counties. These very different tasks have honed her organizational skills, record keeping, and multitasking to a new level, as well as given her an appreciation of the multiple facets of librarianship.

Jean was a 2016 graduate of Georgia’s Pinnacle Leadership training, a participant of the Public Library Association (PLA) Leadership Academy in 2019, and the 2018–2019 vice chair/chair-elect for PACE, a GLA special interest group for professional and continuing education. She is a member of ALA, PLA, and GLA. Jean shows care, consideration, and loyalty to her colleagues. She is committed to making sure the board operates efficiently and is dedicated to empowering fellow librarians by being a force for ongoing improvement and innovation in the ever-changing field.
American Library Association (ALA) Councilor

Angela Glowcheski, Sequoyah Regional Library System

Angela Glowcheski is dedicated to leadership and creating results and is ready to serve as the GLA ALA Councilor. As Councilor, Angela will represent GLA’s interests and goals at the ALA Council and communicate regularly with the Executive Board and membership. Angela is currently the deputy director of the Sequoyah Regional Library System. She has been employed at Sequoyah for five years overseeing patron services and staff development and has worked in public libraries since 2008. In GLA, Angela currently serves as the Advocacy Committee chair as well as the Professional and Continuing Education chair. In ALA, Angela is an active member of the Learning Round Table (LearnRT) and is currently serving as the LearnRT immediate past chair.

Ashley Hoffman, Kennesaw State University

Ashley Hoffman is the elearning librarian at Kennesaw State University and has been an active member of GLA since 2013. She would be honored to serve as GLA's representative to the ALA Council because she strongly believes in the value of our professional library associations and in the power of organizational governance. She has experience with elected representative positions, including serving as division chair of GLA’s NMRT and more recently as chair of her university's Library Faculty Assembly. She is active in ACRL, where she has presented at the past two conferences and is currently serving on a committee in the Distance Learning Section. If elected to be your ALA Councilor, she is eager to represent your interests and concerns as ALA faces some serious organizational and fiscal challenges in the coming years.
Georgia Library Association
Division and Round Table Candidates for 2021

Academic Library Division

Vice Chair/Chair-Elect

• Catherine Manci, Georgia Institute of Technology, Public Programming & Community Engagement Specialist

• Emma Kate Morgan, Augusta University, Access Services Librarian

Secretary

• Kristina Lang, Georgia State University, Reference & Instruction Librarian

ACRL Council Rep

• Dr. Linda Marie Golian-Lui, Kennesaw State University (KSU), Associate Dean of KSU Library System

• Eli Arnold, Oglethorpe University, University Librarian and Director of the Philip Weltner Library

• Lamonica Sanford, Georgia College, Assessment Librarian

School Library Media Division

• No candidates at the time of publication

Georgia Library Trustees, Friends, and Advocates Division

Chair-Elect

• Brienné Coates

New Members Round Table

Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect

• Sarah Grace Glover, University of North Georgia, Reference Services Librarian

• Gina Viarruel, Gwinnett County Public Library, Library Associate

Secretary

• Kelly Williams, Gwinnett County Public Library, Library Associate

Paraprofessional Division

• No candidates at the time of publication

Public Library Division

Chair

• Angel Tuggle, Commerce Public Library

Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect

• Rosalind Lett, Clayton County Public Library
Secretary

- Bel Outwater, Commerce Public Library

Special Libraries and Information Services Division

Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect

- Stephen Sherman, Southeastern Council of Foundations

Secretary

- Shelia Devaney, University of Georgia Libraries
Over 130 Years of Atlanta Area African American Funeral Programs Now Freely Available Online

Over 11,500 pages of digitized African American funeral programs from Atlanta and the Southeast are now freely available in the Digital Library of Georgia (DLG) at https://dlg.usg.edu/collection/aarl_afpc. The digital collection of 3,348 individual programs dates between 1886–2019 and contains contributions from the Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History, a special library of the Fulton County Library System; the Wesley Chapel Genealogy Group; and the Atlanta Chapter of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society. Georgia HomePLACE, a program of the Georgia Public Library Service, funded digitization.

“Funerals are such an important space for African Americans,” said Auburn Avenue Research Library archivist and lead project contributor Derek Mosley. “The tradition of funerals is not reserved for the wealthy or privileged, but the community. It is that lasting document of someone’s life. In the program is the history, and throughout this collection you see the evolution of the stories people left for future generations. I was amazed at the one-pagers from the 1940s, and by the 2000s there was full color, multiple pages, and a ton of photographs highlighting the life and love shared by the families. This collection is public space for legacy.”

Funeral programs provide valuable social and genealogical information, typically including a photograph of the deceased, an obituary, a list of surviving relatives, and the order of service. Some programs provide more extensive details about the deceased, such as birth and death dates, maiden names, past residences, and place of burial. This data can otherwise be hard to find, particularly for marginalized populations. Records of these communities often were either destroyed, kept in private hands, or never created in the first place.

“The challenge for African American genealogy and family research continues to be the lack of free access to historical information that can enable us to tell the stories of those who have come before us,” said Tammy Ozier, president of the Atlanta Chapter of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society. “This monumental collection helps to close this gap, allowing family researchers to get closer to their clans, especially those in the metro Atlanta area, the state of Georgia, and even those outside of the state.”

The Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History began collecting funeral programs in 1994 with an initial donation by library staff. Since then, staff and the public have continued to add to the
collection with a focus on the city of Atlanta. Although the materials have been physically open for research for decades, patrons can now access them beyond the library’s walls. In 2012, the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society Atlanta Chapter began its funeral program collection project in partnership with the Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History and the Wesley Chapel Genealogy Group.

Fulton County Library System Director Gayle Holloman said, “funerals are filled, of course, with moments that allow expressions of great sorrow. However, for so many, especially in black communities, the funeral program is the written and preserved benediction to a life lived. It is my hope that the understanding of that fact will be treasured for generations to come.”

Anchoring the west end of the Sweet Auburn historic district, the Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History opened May 1994 in Atlanta. A special library of the Fulton County Library System (formerly the Atlanta Fulton Public Library System), it is the first public library in the Southeast to offer specialized reference and archival collections dedicated to the study and research of African American culture and history and of other peoples of African descent.

The Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society, Inc., Metro Atlanta Chapter was established in February 2000. It is one of 39 chapters of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society, Inc., a national nonprofit membership organization of diverse membership committed to the preservation of the history, genealogy, and culture of African-ancestrored populations of the local, national, and international communities.

Created in 2007 in response to a strong interest in genealogy in South DeKalb County, the Wesley Chapel Genealogy Group is a monthly discussion group that strives to support attendees in their genealogical endeavors. Expanding its roots from its home base at the Wesley Chapel Library, the group has served the DeKalb County Public Library and the communities it serves by providing several genealogy workshops in the hopes of helping others trace their familial roots. The funeral program project is one of its most successful endeavors to date.

**Church Record Book from Harris County Covering the Years 1828–1915 Now Available Online in the Digital Library of Georgia.**

A record book covering the years between 1828–1915 of the Sardis Church of Christ is now available in the Digital Library of Georgia (DLG). The Sardis Church of Christ, associated with the Primitive Baptist Church, was one of the first churches to be established in Harris County, in west-central Georgia. This resource belongs to the Chipley Historical Center of Pine Mountain, Georgia, and has been made available online thanks in part to the DLG’s Competitive Digitization grant program, a funding opportunity intended to broaden DLG partner participation for statewide historic digitization projects. The record book and descriptive information are available at: [dlg.galileo.usg.edu/id:chipley_scc_sard](dlg.galileo.usg.edu/id:chipley_scc_sard).

Harris County was established in 1827, carved from Muscogee and Troup Counties, and from lands ceded by the Creek Nation in the 1825...
Treaty of Indian Springs, and reaffirmed in the 1826 Treaty of Washington. A year later, in 1828, the Sardis Church of Christ was formed.

For the most part, the Sardis Baptist Church of Christ records follow a predictable format of when a meeting was held, who preached at the meeting, and that an invitation was given. The records also contain names of those that joined by declaration or by letter, and those that left by their own choice.

The Sardis Church also had African American members. Before the Civil War, these members were often listed only by their first names and are often denoted as “property of,” indicating their status as enslaved individuals. After the Civil War, the notations changed to “colored” or sometimes “freedman,” and their last name was often included. However, no matter what race, the church always referred to a member as Brother or Sister.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the church minutes in the record book became shorter and shorter for each meeting, and membership declined. This is probably due to the establishment of other churches nearby and the increased reliability of roads and transportation.

Although the Sardis Church no longer exists, the church record book is a valuable tool for both those researching Primitive Baptists in regions other than the wiregrass region of Georgia or for those researching very early Georgia churches.

Malinda Brooks, a member of the board of directors of the Chipley Historical Center, noted: “personally, I have used the Sardis minutes in preparation of two published family genealogy books...researchers are excited to find out when their family members entered and exited the Sardis membership, including the death dates of some members. These death dates, especially those that have not been found elsewhere, are treasures to researchers. Most recently, a woman researching her family for her Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) membership application was able to find ancestors in the Sardis record book which helped strengthen her DAR research, especially given that the DAR was unable to track the correct ancestor.”

**Digital Library of Georgia Awards Three Competitive Digitization Service Grants to Georgia Cultural Heritage Institutions Across the State**

Three institutions are recipients of the seventh set of service grants awarded in a program intended to broaden partner participation in the Digital Library of Georgia (DLG). The DLG solicited proposals for historic digitization projects in a statewide call, and applicants submitted proposals for projects with a cost of up to $7,500. DLG staff will provide free digitization, scanning, and hosting services so that more of Georgia’s diverse history can be
found online for free. The Georgia Historical Records Advisory Council (GHRAC) presented the 2018 Award for Excellence in Archival Program Development to this subgranting program. The recipients and their projects include:

**Lee County Library (Leesburg, Georgia)**

Digitization of the Lee County Library Local History Collection which contains print material dating from 1784–2000 that includes church histories, local Lee County history, and documentation of the 1994 Southwest Georgia flood.

**Saint Paul’s Church (Augusta, Georgia)**

Description and hosting of the handwritten vestry minutes, parish and marriage registers, and commemorative materials of Saint Paul’s Church, Augusta’s oldest congregation founded in 1750.

**Hargrett Library, University Archives**

Digitization of the University of Georgia's *Pandora* yearbooks dating from 1965–1974, which include the aftermath of desegregation, the beginnings of the Black student, the women's liberation, the gay liberation, and the campus free speech movements.

Preference in the selection process was given to proposals from institutions that had not yet collaborated with the DLG. Saint Paul’s Church and the Lee County Library are both new partners for the DLG. Sheila McAlister, director of the Digital Library of Georgia noted: "our latest slate of projects includes two new partners, a public library and a church archives. The projects document the history of Lee County, the activities of one of the oldest churches in Augusta, and student life at the University of Georgia during a period of enormous social change. With each new project, we’re able to illuminate more of the state’s history."

**Source Recognition Digital Certificates and Outstanding Use of the Digital Library of Georgia Resources Special Awards**

The Digital Library of Georgia (DLG) has awarded Source Recognition Digital Certificates and Outstanding Use of the Digital Library of Georgia Resources Special Awards to history students participating in National History Day Georgia.

The Digital Library of Georgia partnered with Georgia Humanities to create the special awards designed to engage students in historical research using DLG resources and to recognize the best examples of student work. Source recognition digital certificates were awarded to students who incorporated primary sources found in DLG’s portals in their projects. DLG staff conferred the Outstanding Use of the Digital Library of Georgia Resources special award on exceptional junior and senior individual, as well as group projects.

The certificates were distributed after the National History Day (NHD) Georgia 2020 held its virtual award ceremony on May 7, 2020.

Outstanding Use of Digital Library of Georgia Resources Special Award Winners include:

- **Junior—Individual Project Winner:** Ava Monger for "Roy Barnes; Breaking Barriers to Change the State Flag" (Project ID # 11008).
- **Junior—Group Project Winners:** Lillian Harper, Destiny Butts, and Tai-Leea Jones for "That Very Rich Negress" (Project ID # 12001).
- **Senior—Individual Project Winner:** Becky Dorminy for "Ivan Allen, Beacon of Change: Breaking the Barriers of Segregation in the New South" (Project ID # 25007).
Senior—Group Project Winners:
Brandon Leonard, Layla Burrell, Gabby King, and Jayden Jones for "Dividing a City 'Too Busy to Hate': Atlanta's Own 'Berlin Wall'' (Project ID # 24003).

National History Day (NHD) Georgia is a program of Georgia Humanities and LaGrange College. NHD encourages middle and high school students to engage more deeply in the historical process.

Over the course of the school year, students select a topic related to the year’s theme and develop their projects through extensive primary and secondary source research. The NHD theme for 2020 was Breaking Barriers in History.

Under the guidance of a sponsoring teacher, students choose both their subject matter and a vehicle to present their research within the following categories: documentary, exhibition, paper, performance, or website. NHD attracts thousands of participants each year.

Competitions occur at the regional, state, and national levels. The NHD Georgia State Contest host for 2020 was LaGrange College.

In this engaging and extensively researched local history, authors Stephen Hoy and William Smith detail the history of the plot of land located at the end of 7th Street in Macon, Georgia known as Camp Oglethorpe. Beginning with its origins as a muster and parade ground for central Georgia volunteer regiments, to its use as a prisoner-of-war camp for Union officers during the Civil War, to its ignominious burial under a rail yard in the years following the war, the authors uncover the story of Camp Oglethorpe through an impressive array of primary sources, including family papers, newspapers, prisoner-of-war accounts, congressional testimony, and others.

The bulk of the narrative concerns Camp Oglethorpe’s time as a prisoner-of-war camp for captured Union officers. While conditions at Camp Oglethorpe never descended into the grisly hellscape of her sister prison, Andersonville, the excerpts chosen from firsthand prisoner-of-war accounts make for harrowing reading. In the final chapters, the authors contend that the alacrity with which the Reconstruction-era government in Georgia sold off the land for railroad development, effectively erasing Camp Oglethorpe altogether, was an attempt at willful forgetting, which the authors seek to correct.

While the main narrative is a finely delivered slice of hyper-local history, the authors connect the local experience to the larger story of prisoner exchanges, Union and Confederate troop movements, and the larger progress of the war. Considerable time is spent on Stoneman’s raid, for example, in which the Union General Stoneman’s attempt to capture both Andersonville and Camp Oglethorpe to free the prisoners ultimately proved unsuccessful. Indeed, ironically, the officers involved in Stoneman’s raid were ultimately imprisoned at Camp Oglethorpe, while the enlisted men were sent on to Andersonville.

The book includes an extensive annotated bibliography, along with a list of prisoners circa 1864, as well as a (partial) list of those prisoners who died while at Camp Oglethorpe. Hoy and Smith have written a volume that is suitable for students of Civil War history, central Georgia history, and prisoner-of-war narratives. The annotated bibliography itself contains a wealth of information for students and researchers. The book would make a fine addition to Georgia history and Civil War collections for colleges and universities and is highly recommended.

Chandra Jackson is Electronic Resources and Serials Librarian at University of Georgia

Mushrooms of the Georgia Piedmont & Southern Appalachians is an excellent all-around book on North Georgia mushrooms. Written by Mary Woehrel, founder of the Mushroom Club of Georgia, and William Light, who holds a PhD in biology, the book covers mushroom species in the upper half of the state, from the foothills into the Appalachian Mountains of northwest Georgia. The authors write that this cannot be considered a comprehensive guide to the several thousand mushroom species in this area, but they have included most of the common species as well as a number of the less encountered ones.

The extensive introduction contains an overview of the history and classification of fungi and their reproduction. The discussion of their general role in different ecological systems is insightful and interesting. The book covers mushroom toxins and poisoning, a very important topic in mushroom collecting (as quoted in the book: “all mushrooms are edible, but some only once”), as well as their medicinal properties. Identification methods taught include field, chemical, and microscopic techniques. The casual, conversational tone makes complex topics like nomenclature a pleasure to study.

The extensive field guide sections span over 500 pages and are separated by species. Each entry includes excellent full-color photographs, well-documented species information, field identification information, edibility, and comments on similar species and other points of interest. A glossary of mycological terms, an index of common names, and an index of scientific names are also included.

Overall, this is a thorough, well-organized book that would serve as an excellent textbook or general resource for the study of fungi in Georgia. It is very useful for identification for field practitioners as well, although note that it is quite a heavy book. An essential resource for Georgia mycologists and highly recommended for both public and academic libraries.

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Road Through Midnight: A Civil Rights Memorial by Jessica Ingram (University of North Carolina Press, 2020: ISBN 9781469654232, $35.00)

Jessica Ingram’s *Road Through Midnight* has the heft and feel of an art book and the pleasing matte finish of an exhibition catalog, or a catalog raisonné, until you realize it’s not exactly that kind of book. Although this book includes Ingram’s award-winning photography, it is much more than her photographic art. The cover features a dark photograph of a vaguely familiar dirt road which is almost indistinguishable from its dark blue background. *Road Through Midnight* is a journey through a landscape of violence and resistance during the Jim Crow era in Mississippi, Louisiana, Georgia, and Alabama. Ingram’s book answers questions many of us ask: What happened on this piece of land? What does it look like now? What happened to the victims? What happened to the perpetrators?

The incidents detailed in *Road Through Midnight* are frozen in time, and yet they are also part of the continuation of a racist American history that began with the arrival of the first enslaved Africans on these shores. This racist history continued through a robust slave trade, Emancipation, Reconstruction, convict leasing and Jim Crow, the civil rights movement, and mass incarceration. Most of the events in *Road Through Midnight* took place in the 1960s but are nearly identical to many others in that historical arc.

Each account begins with Ingram’s photograph of a place followed by a shiny black page, which allows readers to gather their thoughts and emotions before continuing; the page is almost shiny enough to see yourself reflected on it. Next comes a brief account of what is known about what happened at that place—in some cases, we will never know, exactly. Each account is written in white text on a black background, with the victim’s name in bold white almost as a reminder of White-on-Black violence. This work has the feel of something holy.

Some of the victims of these violent acts are well known: Medgar Evers; Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner; and Emmett Till. Others are not as well known: Clinton Melton, Mattie Green, and Reverend George W. Lee. Incidentally, Reverend Lee’s widow insisted on an open casket several months before Mamie Till did the same for her son, Emmett. For each victim, the facts of their murder are stated, with details supplemented from newspaper accounts, other narratives, and ephemera. Interviews with surviving relatives and reporters—people with firsthand information—appear with Ingram’s photographs. If a case was reopened, and if the perpetrators were brought to justice, the reader also discovers that. Some victims are memorialized with roadside markers or monuments; for others, it seems, the memorial

https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/glq/vol57/iss3/1
is the retelling of their stories that connects their lives to the present.

Road Through Midnight contains a few brief texts that serve more as teaching tools than as retellings of violence. These texts touch on topics like the origins of the Ku Klux Klan; the second incarnation of the Ku Klux Klan and the Stone Mountain carving; and Koinonia Farm, an interracial community near Americus, Georgia, that exists today.

In the book’s afterword, the author says, “we must do the work of remembering.” Road Through Midnight is not an easy read, nor is it meant to be, but it is a powerful means for learning part of our shared history. Jessica Ingram spent more than a decade creating what she describes as “an interpretive and suggestive work rather than a scholarly one,” but one that—through her photographs, detailed research, and many personal interviews—will help readers connect the past to the present and with what still remains to be done. Highly recommended.

Susan Clay is Map Librarian at University of Georgia