

Rhode Island Coalition of Library Advocates

NEWSLETTER
January 2015

Coalition of Library Advocates Annual Meeting

Tuesday, February 10, 2015, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Rhode Island State House
Governor's State Room

OFFICERS

Chair: Gale Eaton

Vice-Chair: Jessica Barry

Secretary-Treasurer:
Neeltje Henneman

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Stuart Blazer
Howard Boksenbaum
Susan Escherich
Hildburg Herbst
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Thomas Viall
Alisson Walsh

Harold Gadon,
Honorary Member

Joan Ress Reeves,
Chair Emerita
Rose Ellen Reynolds,
Chair Emerita

*You are cordially invited to join COLA
in celebrating and supporting Rhode Island libraries*

Guest Speaker: Brian C. Jones, "Rhode Island's Evolving Libraries:
Resiliency and Innovation in the Age of Digital Disruption"

Awards:

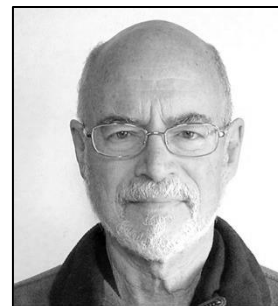
- Sweetheart of the Year: Robert Aspri
- William Bergeron Award: Kyle Litscher
- Linda Aldrich Award: Jennifer Grant
- William E. Reeves Friends Recognition Awards

Business Meeting:

- Election of Officers and Board
- Other Business

Refreshments catered by Venda Ravioli

Guest Speaker Brian C. Jones, a professional journalist and long-time reporter for *The Providence Journal*, co-founded *The Library Report* to provide an online forum for information about Rhode Island's libraries: <http://www.rhodeislandlibraryreport.org/>. The project website covers everything from State House budget battles to new trends in library service. (A recent article profiles the Warwick Public Library's innovations in technology and learning support.) Jones is the author of *The Miriam Hospital: A Gift to the City*.



Sweetheart of the Year Robert Aspri, Executive Director of the HELIN Library Consortium, has long been a positive force in the development of Rhode Island libraries. "I'm just doing my job," he says; the mission of HELIN is to "continually develop and sustain cooperative initiatives to enhance library resources, systems and services for all member institutions."

COLA Scholarships: Each year, COLA awards the William Bergeron Public Library Award and the Linda Aldrich School Library Award to honor students whose work in URI's Graduate School of Library and Information Studies promises to keep our Rhode Island libraries vital. Originally drawn from COLA operating funds, the awards are now augmented by interest from the RI Coalition of Library Advocates Scholarship Endowment, established by Herman H. Rose (our 2004 Sweetheart of the Year) and administered by the URI Foundation. (Anybody may contribute to this fund.) This year's scholars are both actively committed to libraries as educational resources for their communities.

Aldrich Scholar **Jennifer Grant** has been an archaeologist, an associate at Research International Cambridge, and – as a full-time mom – the organizer of many book fairs, reading weeks, and literacy events. A researcher who loves teaching and interacting with people as much as critical thinking, she looks forward to running a school library program that will engage students, teachers, parents, and the community at large. Her professors say, "Jennie is an amazing student who confront challenges head-on and doesn't let herself get stymied by obstacles or difficult tasks."

Bergeron Scholar **Kyle Litscher** brings technology skills and creativity to library work. He has worked everywhere from the reference desk to technical services, and as an intern at the North Kingstown Free Library he devised, organized, and implemented a League of Legends club for teens and a Minecraft club for children. The GSLIS faculty recommend him as "an outstanding student" with a "forward-thinking attitude," strongly dedicated to "public service in a public library setting."

Winners of the **William E. Reeves Friends Awards** will be announced at the meeting. Any Friends group with a paid-up COLA membership is eligible to apply for an award. For more information, visit colari.org or e-mail us: cola.rhodeisland@gmail.com. The deadline is January 29.

PROPOSED SLATE OF COLA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

The Nominating Committee will post a slate of officers and board members to our website, colari.org, by January 30. We will also notify members of the slate by e-mail. Not on our e-mail list? Sign up at colari.org for that, too.

NATIONAL LIBRARY LEGISLATIVE DAY: MAY 4-5

In May each year, hundreds of library supporters, leaders and patrons gather for a two-day advocacy event in Washington, D.C. to meet with their members of Congress and champion national library issues. The 2014 Rhode Island delegation included several active members of the COLA Board: Joan Ress Reeves and Tom Viall (both also members of the Library Board of RI); Karen Mellor (as Acting Chief Library Officer of the RI Office of Library and Information Services, an *ex officio* member of the Board) and Jane Perry (President and COLA liaison of the School Librarians of RI). On May 5, the group was briefed on major library issues, from library funding (through the Library Services and Technology Act, the Innovative Approaches to Literacy Program, the Library of Congress, and the Workforce Investment Act) to support for open access to information through measures such as the Fair Access to Science and Technology Research

Act, the USA Freedom Act, and the E-rate (respectively helping to protect access to taxpayer-funded research, consumers' privacy, and library Internet connections). They witnessed the giving of an award to Senator Patrick Leahy (for his work on the USA Freedom Act) and the White House Conference on Library and Information Services Taskforce (WHCLIST) Award to Mary Lynn Collins, who founded Kentucky's statewide library advocacy organization. To the RI delegation's surprise and delight, Senator Jack Reed joined them at the reception that ended the day, bringing his six-year-old daughter Emily.

On May 6, the group marched back and forth across the mall to visit Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, Representative David Cicilline, and extremely knowledgeable staffers in the offices of Senator Reed and Representative James Langevin. Our advocates all agree: Rhode Island's congressional support for libraries is outstanding.



A recent Rhode Island delegation, shown meeting with RI Senator Jack Reed: Donna DiMichele, Mark McKenney, RoseEllen Reynolds, Reed, Joan Ress Reeves, Eileen Dyer, Ed Garcia, Tom Viall, and Phyllis Humphrey.

National Library Legislative Day 2015 falls on May 4 (for briefings) and 5 (the actual legislative day). There is also a virtual advocacy component for library supporters who cannot attend the Washington meetings—advocates have the option to work remotely to connect with legislators via phone calls, text messages, emails and social media platforms.

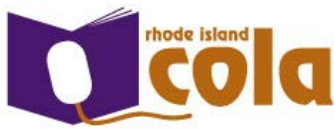
For information on NLLD, see <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/advleg/nlld>. For updates on today's national advocacy issues, see <http://www.districtdispatch.org/>.

RHODE ISLAND LIBRARY LEGISLATIVE AWARENESS DAY: FEBRUARY 10, 2015, 2 – 4 PM

You can also show your support for libraries closer to home. The Rhode Island Library Association (RILA) sponsors RI Library Legislative Awareness Day in Providence. Come to the State House Rotunda February 10 to shake hands with your legislators and let them know all the great things your library is doing in your community. Call or e-mail ahead to let them know you'll be looking for them that day! And stick around afterward for the COLA Annual Meeting.

Non-Profit Organization

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**Rhode Island Coalition of Library Advocates
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Cranston, RI 02910**

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UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR

COLA had a busy November. At a special November 5 meeting in Barrington, Howard Boksenbaum led the Board in hammering out a new Strategic Plan, building on the one we'd been following since 2008. You will find the 2015 version at our website, colari.org.

On November 13 we cohosted "Exploring the New Normal," a program on trends in library services aimed especially at Trustees and Friends. Our partners in advocacy were OLIS (the Rhode Island Office for Library and Information Service) and RILA (the Rhode Island Library Association), and the event was graciously hosted by the Cranston Public Library. There were short, snappy presentations on innovations already being carried out in RI libraries, from makerspaces (where community members can experiment with 3D printers and other fun technologies) to the constructive online game, Minecraft. (Three days after our event, the Providence Community Library team – 13-year-old Catherine Brunzos and 12-year-old Elijah Caldwell – won the International Games Day Minecraft Hunger Games.)

Stay tuned. On March 26 we plan to collaborate on a program about fundraising – something to interest all library advocates.

And stay engaged. It's always better with your input. E-mail us at cola.rhodeisland@gmail.com.

Gale Eaton, Chair