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COLA ANNUAL MEETING
THURSDAY, APRIL 13, 5 – 7 PM

KEYNOTE SPEAKER WILL BE
EMILY SHEKETOFF, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ALA
WASHINGTON OFFICE



This year COLA’s annual meeting matters more. As usual, we will convene in the State Reception Room of the RI State House to celebrate library advocacy. Libraries have been called “arsenals of democracy” and our trustees, Friends groups, and parent-teacher organizations are the committed citizens who keep them dynamic. They have been called “the poor man’s university.” We count on libraries for education, innovation, and community building.

So we will greet each other and exchange news over treats catered by Venda Ravioli. We will honor up-and-coming scholarship winners, amazing Friends groups, and our Sweetheart of the Year, Tom Viall. We will vote on a slate of officers and new board members. But above all, we will take a hard look at the issues that confront our libraries and the creative ways we can address them.

Emily Sheketoff’s keynote speech, “Advocacy is More Important Than Ever,” will inspire and inform us for the months ahead. As Executive Director of the American Library Association Washington Office, Sheketoff has long worked to ensure our right to a free and open information society, overseeing lobbying efforts before Congress and the Executive Branch and helping to shape ALA policy on key issues. She has government experience in both the Executive and the Legislative Branch, as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA and going back through the Clinton and Carter administrations clear to the Senate Watergate Committee.

2017 SWEETHEART OF THE YEAR: TOM VIALL



COLA’s webmaster Tom Viall is probably the only director of the old Bozo’s Kid’s Club ever to receive a Citation of Merit from the Rhode Island Library Association. After majoring in mass communications and film studies at Rhode Island College and creating more than 200 television commercials, he shifted to Internet content design in 1998 and soon became General Manager of The Ocean State Online (OSO.com), voted "Favorite Website" by *Rhode Island Monthly* readers for three years running. In 2003 he joined the team of RI.gov, the state’s official government website. As President and General Manager since 2005, he has overseen the successful development of dozens of online services to help RI citizens and businesses interact with State Government. He is a frequent speaker on the

social impact of the Internet as well as the efficiencies of eGovernment.

His close association with the Internet has made him a strong advocate of libraries. He firmly believes that the new information age we live in has made libraries even more relevant and necessary. Appointed by Governor Carcieri

to the Library Board of Rhode Island in 2008, he has chaired it since 2010—and served as an astute member of the COLA board since 2012. His 2016 RILA award was for advocacy, and so is this year’s COLA award. For patient, intelligent, and always constructive advocacy of Rhode Island libraries, we are proud to name Tom Viall as COLA’s Sweetheart of the Year.

A TELESCOPE FOR YOUR LIBRARY?

By Jim Hendrickson and Francine Jackson

Members of Skyscrapers, Inc., the Amateur Astronomical Society of Rhode Island



**ORION
STARBLAST 4.5**

One of the great advantages of a library is the ability to be able to take out, in addition to books, other assorted articles, perhaps something a person might like to purchase, but would like to experiment with first. Example: in spring 2016, the Cumberland Public Library added a table-top telescope to its circulating collection.

Director Celeste Dyer told us that the library’s experience has been positive. Inspired by “a blog post from the director of the Chelmsford Library,” Cumberland chose a telescope “that we felt would be very easy to use, the Orion StarBlast 4.5 Reflecting Telescope. It was very inexpensive, just a little over \$200.00, and had very few moving parts.”



Celeste Dyer, photographed by Jim Hendrickson.

The Friends of the Cumberland Public Library paid for the telescope, and members of Skyscrapers, Inc., Rhode Island’s Amateur Astronomical Society, provided a primer on its use. “With that, and with a couple easy sky manuals, we were ready to go,” said Dyer. “The telescopes are on loan for a week, and at present we have a waiting list of patrons wanting to use it.”

Aside from “one instance where a patron apparently couldn’t see what he was looking for, and decided to take it apart,” there have been few problems. Patrons are asked to come into the building to return the telescope, and so far, “No one has tried to stuff it in the book slot.” Dyer said Cumberland “might think about purchasing another” telescope if needed. “We are quite satisfied with the results of our telescope loan program,” she said.

After working with Dyer, the members of Skyscrapers, Inc., hope other Rhode Island libraries may follow suit. They are often asked for advice on telescope purchases, possibly for a child or as a family project. In partnership with libraries, the organization could introduce the public to telescopes and their use. In Cumberland, for instance, they had an afternoon program on some of the seasonal objects visible with the telescope, plus a short introduction to its use. Is your library interested in lending telescopes? Skyscrapers, Inc., is willing to work with you. For more about the organization, see <http://www.theskyscrapers.org/>.

APPLY FOR THE WILLIAM E. REEVES AWARD!

COLA wants to celebrate your advocacy achievements, so we urge you to use the enclosed entry form to nominate your Friends group for a William E. Reeves Award. Up to four awards may be given in 2017, in the categories of Fundraising, Outreach, Education, and/or Community Service. We know many of you have found creative ways to support your libraries. Please let us hear about them!

SCHOLARSHIPS TO BE AWARDED

This year's Bergeron Award in Public Librarianship will be presented to Karen Mueller, and the Aldrich Award in School Librarianship to Denise Phillips. Both are outstanding students at the University of Rhode Island's Graduate School of Library and Information Studies. We look forward to honoring them at the Annual Meeting, and to watching their contributions to Rhode Island libraries in the years ahead.

PROPOSED SLATE OF COLA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

The Nominating Committee submits the following slate for membership vote at our Annual Meeting on April 13:

- **Officers:** Chair, Cheryl McCarthy; Vice-Chair/Chair Elect, TBA; Secretary, Gale Eaton; Treasurer, Neeltje Henneman.
- **Incoming board members**, for a three-year term ending in 2020: Howard Boksenbaum, Monica Brennan, John Bucci, Ron Heroux, and Steven Porter.
- **Nominating Committee:** Chair, 2017 – 2018, Gale Eaton; members, Emilie Benoit, Patricia Raskin.

Continuing board members (with their term expiration dates) are Lisa Ashe (2019), Will Barbeau (2019), David Bates (2019), Emilie Benoit (2018), Jay Litman (2018), Marcus Mitchell (2019), Pnina Pressburger (2019), Monica Schaberg (2019), and Thomas Viall (2018). We say a regretful farewell to Hil Herbst (2017), Patricia Raskin (2018), and Alisson Walsh (2017).

COMMUNITY BUILDING & ENGAGEMENT: PARTNERSHIPS AT WORK



Save the date! Tuesday, April 4, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m., at the North Kingstown Public Library, COLA joins forces with the Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS) and the RI Library Association (RILA) to present a workshop for library trustees, directors, Friends groups, and other supporters. Consultant Deb Hoadley will lead an interactive program on the role of library trustees in building strategic partnerships and fostering community engagement.

Now serving her second term as President of the New England Library Association, Hoadley is a consultant and trainer who has played many roles, including library director, Trustee and Friends' President. Attendees will leave this workshop with a better understanding of how libraries can stay relevant by "turning outward" – and more tools for setting and measuring outcomes, building community engagement, and managing that "turn outward." Light refreshments will be provided. For more information see <http://www.olis.ri.gov/services/ce/individual.php?code=cbae0404>.

RESOURCE LIST FOR CHAIR'S MESSAGE

- Alvarez, Barbara. "Public Libraries in the Age of Fake News." *Public Libraries* 55, 6 (2016): 24 – 27. <http://publiclibrariesonline.org/2017/01/feature-public-libraries-in-the-age-of-fake-news/>
- Duca, Lauren. "Donald Trump Is Gaslighting America." teenvogue.com/story/donald-trump-is-gaslighting-america
- Rhode Island Library Association, Information Literacy Round Table. rila.wildapricot.org/RILA-Roundtables#ilart
- Zimdars, Melissa. "False, Misleading, Clickbait-y, and Satirical 'News' Sources." docs.google.com/document/d/10eA5-mCZLSS4MQY5QGb5ewC3VAL6pLkT53V_81ZyitM/mobilebasic

FROM THE CHAIR

What am I doing reading *Teen Vogue*? The political blog *Daily Kos* sent me there. . . . We librarians all, at some level, see ourselves as, if not the guardians of truth, at least guardians of the material and methods of finding truths. A couple of decades ago, when the Internet was young, I was fond of trotting out *Ten Infoethics Conundrums*, a framework for thinking about library principles in the age of the Network. Number 6 I called “the truth—the whole truth—damned lies and statistics.” Already, I was nervous about telling fact from fiction—illumination from gaslight—in the online world and was convinced that libraries and librarians would have to be at the forefront of the battle for truth. What we have come to call *information literacy* would have to be everywhere in schools and colleges as well as on the street; if not in the libraries there, where?

We have just inaugurated a man who, Lauren Duca tells us in her now viral December 10 *Teen Vogue* article, “won the Presidency by gas light.” That is, Trump won the election by so normalizing mendacity as to make our nation doubt our grasp of what truth is. Duca goes on to discuss how to check facts and recognize truth online, and she shares Merrimack College Professor Melissa Zimdars’ list of fake news sites and tips on identifying them.

We are indeed facing a time of increased need for the principles that drive us and our libraries, and that at a time when there are fewer of us (and fewer libraries in parent organizations such as schools and hospitals). What can we do? We must practice information literacy ourselves; provide our communities with resources, training, and safe spaces for civil discourse; and continue our advocacy work to ensure that our libraries and our principles persist in the lives of our students, our neighbors and our nation. (*See resource list inside.*)

Howard Boksenbaum, Chair