

President's Update - December 19, 2019

The end of the calendar year always makes me pause and reflect on the many things that happened over the year, both good and not so good. As 2019 comes to an end, I am reflective on the accomplishments of the Michigan Library Association. It has been a productive and active year for MLA with new staff coming onboard including Executive Director, Debbie Mikula, Program and Event Director Amber Sheerin and Administrative Assistant Lisa Buttigieg; the passing of the Narcan bill; adoption of the diversity statement; a successful Spring Institute and Annual Conference; and the start of the development of a new strategic plan for the organization. My sincerest thanks goes to the MLA staff, Board, committees and work groups who made all these great projects and events, and so much more, happen for Michigan libraries.



Today as I walked around the library, I heard teens learning how to play the song “Up on the Rooftop” on ukuleles; children reading *Llama, Llama Red Pajama* to each other; kids explaining the intricacies of new dances; staff conversing about book recommendations; and a group of adults gathered in our cyber café discussing the latest happenings in Washington, D.C. and around the world. All this activity warmed my heart on this cold, gray December day. It is these eclectic happenings that make libraries essential to our communities, whether those communities are schools, university campuses, organizations, businesses or cities and towns.

A library patron and friend of mine recently shared with me a quote by Kurt Vonnegut, “So the America I loved still exists, if not in the White House or the Supreme Court or the Senate or the House of Representatives or the media. The America I love still exists at the front desks of our public libraries.” Vonnegut wrote this quote when talking about book burnings in *A Man Without a Country*

published in 2005. I smiled when I read it and swelled with pride to be a librarian who works in an institution which is open to all and provides a welcoming environment to the thousands of patrons and visitors we greet every year like so many libraries, of all types, in Michigan and around the world. Thank you to all the library staff throughout Michigan, who by opening your doors, transform lives.

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