Telling the Library Story

By State Librarian Mary Soucie

This week, I am joining my state librarian colleagues from across the country in Washington, D.C. The Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) meet twice a year, in the spring and fall. The focus of the spring meeting is professional development, networking, and information about the field from a national perspective.

I will be joined by Dylan Gonser from Grand Forks Public Library, who will represent the North Dakota Library Association, for the annual Voices for Libraries event. Dylan and I will meet with our federal legislators and their staff to thank them for voting yes to support libraries by approving the appropriation for the Institute of Museum and Library Services. We will share with the legislators and staff how the federal dollars impact North Dakota libraries and citizens. We will tell the library story.

It is so important to share your library story, repeatedly, and as often as possible. If you aren't shouting from the rooftops about the impact your library has on the community that you serve, no one else will. It is important to use both quantitative or statistical and qualitative or storytelling data to get your message across. Know your circulation data, how many cardholders you have, how many people attend programs. Look at usage of the Online Library Resources (or databases) and other digital resources that you provide. Share your #NDLibraryJoy with everyone you encounter. The official Library Joy week has ended but the impact you have hasn't. Keep gathering those stories from your community. Library Joy is not just one week a year.

Reach out to **ndslpa@nd.gov** for assistance with creating press releases, infographics, or other marketing materials to help you tell that library story.

Beanstack By The Numbers
By Tammy Kruger

Beanstack By The Numbers

Submitted by Tammy Kruger

Beanstack by the Numbers highlights how many minutes or books have been read for Beanstack challenges through North Dakota State Library. It also lists next month's challenge(s). Have fun reading and earning badges!

February 2026 Monthly Reading Challenge
Participants of *For the Love of Reading* completed 22,589 total minutes.

2026 Yearly Challenge
During the month of February, 243 books have been read for the *40 Books Reading Challenge.* Since January 1st, 530 books have been logged for this activity.

March 2026 Monthly Reading Challenge
March's Beanstack challenge is *Read Across America*. This task involves logging minutes as participants explore new stories and adventures from coast to coast.

April 2026 Monthly Reading Challenge
The upcoming challenge for April is *Spring into Reading*. This topic encourages readers to put some spring in their step and dive into reading! *Spring into Reading* tracks minutes read.

Beanstack Reading Challenges

Now Hiring: Grants and Data Coordinator
Closing Date: March 6

Are you organized, detail-oriented, and self-directed? Can you balance analytical skill, organization, and communication? North Dakota State Library is hiring a Grants and Data Coordinator to coordinate library grant programs, manage database and electronic resource subscriptions, and analyze statistical data for agency use.

Apply Today!

General Grants

Small Grant: $500 - $1,999
Large Grant: $2,000 - $10,000

Apply by: March 13, 2026
Award Date: April 1, 2026
Grant Period:
- Small Grant: April 2, 2026 - June 30, 2026
- Large Grant: April 2, 2026 - October 31, 2026

Click here for more information

ND250 Celebration

Submitted by State Librarian Mary Soucie

The ND250 Commission was created by legislation during the 2021 session to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. There have been several activities sponsored by the Commission including a statewide kickoff in November which also celebrated North Dakota Statehood.

The opening of the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum on July 3-4 in Medora, ND, will be a highlight of the celebration of America250 and ND250. More information on events being held across the state related to the commemoration can be found at **https://www.nd.gov/north-dakotas-celebration-americas-250th**. There is also information on the next round of grants related to the ND250 commemoration which are due on April 1, 2025.

The State Library is partnering with the ND250 Commission to offer libraries the opportunity to request ND250 stickers, pictured on the right, to share with their local community. Stickers can be requested by emailing BreAnne Meier at **ndslpa@nd.gov**. Please include library name and the number of stickers being requested. Sticker requests will be honored at the discretion of the ND250 Coordinator.

Libraries are invited to share information on any ND250 events that they are hosting with BreAnne at the same email.

Upcoming North Dakota State Library Webinars

The saying goes, "March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb," but here in North Dakota, we know the lion may have the last roar. If a spring snowstorm has you feeling discouraged, you can take some professional development courses offered by the North Dakota State Library staff, along with other continuing educational opportunities. They are a great way to take your mind off the weather and continue growing professionally.

WordPress Q&A
March 10 (1:00 PM -2:00 PM)

Professional Development Resources
March 24 (2:00 PM - 2:45 PM)

More Webinar Opportunities

PLS Changes: Onsite and Virtual Program Elements

Submitted by Monica Struck

Now we come to the changes that will improve your lives the most: the removal of the onsite and virtual program elements. To better explain this change, let's take a quick look at how things work currently.

Right now, we report all synchronous programming in two ways: by age and by location. This means that both categories need to be balanced. The totals of the programs by age and programs by location need to be equal upon penalty of critical edit checks. This brings us to the impending changes.

The rationale for removing onsite programming stems from the assumption that library programming not designated as offsite is naturally happening onsite. Onsite library programming is the norm. It is more valuable to collect exact numbers of programs not occurring in the library.

The rationale for removing the virtual programming elements is the same as removing the recorded program elements. Few libraries are providing virtual programming currently, and it doesn't make sense to continue specifically counting that type of program.

It is important to note that you will still be counting all your programming in the synchronous programming by age section (Questions 9.9 and 9.10 on our survey). However, you only need to report the programs that happen offsite on the programs by location (Questions 9.11 and 9.12 on our survey). Now, instead of needing to carefully balance totals, offsite programming will be treated as a subset of synchronous programming. There will be fewer edit checks and fewer headaches.

If you have concerns about removing these questions from our survey, please let me know (701.328.4680; **ndsl-ld@nd.gov**). We always have the option to retain these questions on the state level if you see continued value in the data.

More Information

Chester Fritz Library has acquired a 444-year-old book that was printed in Venice in 1582. *"Discorso del S. Guglielmo Choul gentilhuomo lionese, consigliero del re, & presidente delle montagne del Delfinato, sopra la castrametatione, & bagni antichi de i Greci & Romani"* is now the oldest printed text in the Department of Special Collections.

Social Emotional Learning in the Library

A May 2024 *Junior Library Guild* blog post highlights how books can help students build essential Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) skills that contribute to their growth and overall wellbeing. SEL skills include:

- Making responsible and caring decisions
- Feeling and showing empathy toward others
- Creating and maintaining healthy, supportive relationships
- Managing emotions
- Reaching personal and collective goals
- Learning and applying the knowledge, skills, and attitude necessary for healthy identities

Titles in this month's *Shelf Additions* may support your school library in meeting SEL standards by offering books that nurture these essential skills.

Continue Reading

Curated Video Tools for Middle School Math and SEL

I recently received an email from Common Sense Media highlighting a curated list of advisory videos for grades 6-8 that focus on math and social emotional learning. Some of you may already be familiar with this video library, but others may not.

Common Sense Media and YouTube have partnered together to create an extensive bundle of classroom-ready videos. Each video has been carefully assessed to ensure it is standards aligned, high-quality, and appropriate for grades 6-8 students. The selection criteria included:

- Content
- Purpose
- Age appropriateness
- Engagement

Continue Reading

Success Criterion 1.4.1: Use of Color

With the new ADA rules looming, it is important for libraries to ensure that they are accessible to everyone. This week, we will delve into Success Criterion 1.4.1 from the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

While color is an important aspect of design, you must ensure that you do not rely solely on it to communicate important information. When meaning depends only on color, critical information becomes invisible to many users. For example, a library event calendar that shows cancelled events only in red text-without any written label – or that distinguishes age groups using different colors (blue for teens, purple for adults, etc.) without providing any text or symbols to clarify the categories can create barriers to understanding.

For patrons who have low vision, color-vision deficiencies, rely on screen readers, or struggle with lighting conditions, these color-only categorizations become inaccessible. While Success Criterion 1.4.1 specifically applies to websites, this is a concept that should be used throughout the library building as well. For example, if you have color-coded stickers on books to indicate subject areas (such as blue for animals, green for science, etc.), be sure to include labels or symbols alongside the colors.

Please note that this criterion is not meant to discourage your use of color, and it does not apply to situations where color is purely decorative and not used to convey information, indicate an action, prompt a response, or distinguish a visual element. Test your labelling by removing the color(s) and seeing if the information is still there. If it isn't, it is not accessible.

In summary, make sure that you are not relying on color alone when labeling important information. Be sure to include words or symbols to convey the meaning.
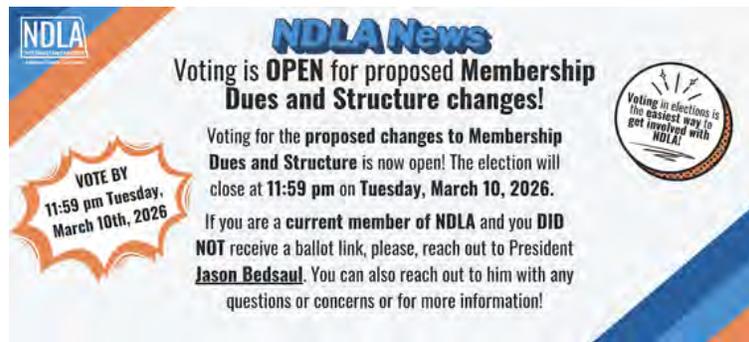
If you have any questions or would like to chat about accessibility, please contact BreAnne at **ndslpa@nd.gov** or 701.328.4656. For librarians who have WordPress websites, there will be a Q&A session on Tuesday, March 10, from 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM.

The WCAG has a lot of great information about how to make your websites accessible. We'll be going through more of the success criteria in the coming weeks.

Source:

Accessibility Guidelines Working Group (AG WG) Participants. "Understanding SC 1.4.1: Use of Color (Level a)." Understanding Success Criterion 1.4.1: Use of Color | WAI | W3C, September 16, 2025. https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG21/Understanding/use-of-color.html.

Learn More

NDLA News: Voting is Open for Proposed Membership Dues and Structure Changes

Voting for the proposed changes to membership dues and structure is now open! The election will close at 11:59 PM on Tuesday, March 10, 2026.

If you are a current member of NDLA and you did not receive a ballot link, please reach out to NDLA President Jason Bedsaul at **president@ndla.info**. You can reach out to him with any questions or concerns or for more information!
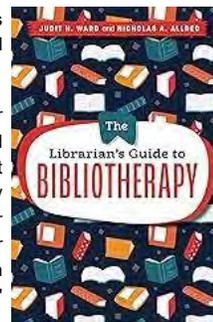
Vote by Tuesday, March 10

"The Librarian's Guide to Bibliotherapy"
by Judit H. Ward and Nicholas A. Allred

The bibliotherapy-informed practices, programs, and events outlined in this guide will help librarians support the mental health and personal growth of their patrons.

Bibliotherapy can be defined as the use of guided reading for therapeutic ends. And though you might not be a licensed mental health professional, you can--and do, even without knowing it--support mental health and personal growth by connecting patrons to books that heal. Regardless of your previous experience or existing skills, this guide will empower you to make "shelf help" a part of your library's relationship with its community. Drawing on Reading for Recovery, the authors' own Carnegie-Whitney grant-funded project, this guide

- begins with an overview of bibliotherapy, including its concepts and history, and sketches out how its various approaches can be adapted for library settings;
- explores the potential of bibliotherapy as an add-on to existing skills, services, practices, and collections;
- demonstrates how bibliotherapy-inspired initiatives can address the needs of diverse communities, thus advancing libraries' commitment to EDISJ (equity, diversity, inclusion and social justice);
- offers techniques for selecting reading material for your audience with bibliotherapy in mind;
- provides a range of possible programs, from group discussions and public events to book displays and reading lists, along with a step-by-step approach to planning and implementing them;
- shares outreach tips, tools, and branding ideas to make the most of your resources and effectively reach your audience;
- demonstrates how to use assessment tools to test and tweak your program at every stage to achieve the results you want; and
- inspires you to take your offerings into new directions, such as creative writing and visual art programs, that fit your library and community.

Reserve This Book

New Items Added to Digital Horizons

A highlight of the items added to the various digital collections of the North Dakota State Library.

North Dakota Memories

- Arnegard Baseball Club Minutes, 1915
- Arnegard Commercial Club minutes [1914-1932]
- Candidates for Burleigh County Sheriff, N.D., June 1934 [newspaper article, 1934]
- Check from Arnegard Commercial Club, 1928
- Mrs. E. Roulier of Velva, Poisons Little Daughter, Then Suicides [newspaper article, 1920]
- Nonpartisan League ticket, N.D., February 1924
- Proposed State Capitol Grounds [newspaper article, 1920]
- State Building is Damaged by Blaze [newspaper article, 1933]
- The Censorship Craze [newspaper article, 1927]

Political Prairie Fire

- Caught in the Trap [political cartoon, 1919
- Getting Rid of the Parasites [political cartoon, 1918]
- Governor Recommends That the Legislature Pass Necessary Appropriations and Adjourn [newspaper article, 1921]
- Independent Voters' Assn. is New Name [newspaper article, 1918]
- L. L. Twichell Now Speaker of House [newspaper article, 1921]
- New Warden to Assume Duties This Saturday [newspaper article, 1920]
- Report of the N.D. Industrial Commission, 1925

Digital Horizons