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Library YouTube Channel

Tibetan Australian artist Tenzin Choegyal's American Folklife Center performance is among the videos that drove 2021 web engagement.

## Library's Web Engagement Continues to Soar

Video content in particular drew audiences to the Library last year.

BY SAHAR KAZMI

Over the course of a solid year of pandemic operations, staff pushed the Library's virtual programming in new directions in fiscal 2021. More avenues opened for innovation and connecting with the public, and the Library experienced its second highest year of web traffic – it hit its all-time record in fiscal 2020, when the pandemic forced dozens of programs online for the first time.

With video content driving growth on social media channels, fiscal 2021 proved that audiences around the country continue to

rely on the Library's resources as it deepens its virtual metamorphosis.

After the landmark transformation of 2020, the Library began fiscal 2021 with a head start. Many events and programs had already found new or enhanced homes on the web, while extensive IT modernization efforts by the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) improved the Library's ability to successfully deliver more services online than ever before.

Bill Kellum, deputy director for OCIO's IT Design and Development Directorate, emphasized the importance of recent technolog-

WEB METRICS, CONTINUED ON 7

# NOTICES

## CONKLIN TO ADDRESS WOMEN'S FORUM

Jan. 27, 2 p.m.  
Online

The [Women's Forum for Growth and Networking](#), part of the Library of Congress Professional Association (LCPA), invites staff to hear from a senior-level Library role model. Judith Conklin, the Library's chief information officer, will present "How I Use Positives and Negatives in My Career." Conklin will share her story and offer insights and advice that staff can apply to their own careers. All are welcome. Join Zoom meeting [here](#).

Questions? Send an email to [womensforumboard@loc.gov](mailto:womensforumboard@loc.gov).



**ARE YOU IN TOUCH WITH YOUR FORMER INTERNS?**

Questions or ideas? Contact [alumni@loc.gov](mailto:alumni@loc.gov)

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## OIG WOULD LIKE TO KNOW

Report suspected illegal activities, waste, fraud, abuse and mismanagement in Library of Congress administration and operations to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG). A link to all Library regulations is available on the staff intranet at <http://staff.loc.gov/sites/rules-and-regulations/>.

To make a report, contact OIG via the online form at [www.loc.gov/about/office-of-the-inspector-general/contact-us/](http://www.loc.gov/about/office-of-the-inspector-general/contact-us/) or report anonymously by mail to 101 Independence Ave., S.E., LM 630, Washington, D.C., 20540-1060.

# GAZETTE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

[loc.gov/staff/gazette](http://loc.gov/staff/gazette)

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### MISSION OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The Library's central mission is to engage, inspire and inform Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity.

### ABOUT THE GAZETTE

An official publication of the Library of Congress, The Gazette encourages Library managers and staff to submit articles and photographs of general interest. Submissions will be edited to convey the most necessary information.

Back issues of The Gazette in print are available in the Communications Office, LM 143. Electronic archived issues and a color PDF file of the current issue are available online at [loc.gov/staff/gazette](http://loc.gov/staff/gazette).

### GAZETTE WELCOMES LETTERS FROM STAFF

Staff members are invited to use the Gazette for lively and thoughtful debate relevant to Library issues. Letters must be signed by the author, whose place of work and telephone extension should be included so we can verify authorship. If a letter calls for management response, an explanation of a policy or actions or clarification of fact, we will ask for management response.—Ed.

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### GAZETTE DEADLINES

The deadline for editorial copy for the Feb. 4 Gazette is Wednesday, Jan. 26.

Email editorial copy and letters to the editor to [mhartsell@loc.gov](mailto:mhartsell@loc.gov) and [wmal@loc.gov](mailto:wmal@loc.gov).

To promote events through the Library's online calendar ([www.loc.gov/loc/events](http://www.loc.gov/loc/events)) and the Gazette Calendar, email event and contact information to [calendar@loc.gov](mailto:calendar@loc.gov) by 9 a.m. Monday of the week of publication.

Boxed announcements should be submitted electronically (text files) by 9 a.m. Monday the week of publication to [mhartsell@loc.gov](mailto:mhartsell@loc.gov) and [wmal@loc.gov](mailto:wmal@loc.gov).



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# Library Acquires Kitchen Sisters Archive

The radio and podcast producers amplify voices that are rarely heard from.

BY MARIA PEÑA

For more than 40 years, radio and podcast producers Davia Nelson and Nikki Silva, best known as The Kitchen Sisters, have chronicled the lives, rituals, triumphs and tribulations of people from all walks of life, weaving together a rich tapestry of America's cultural heritage. Now, the Library is acquiring their full body of work, including more than 7,000 hours of audio, photos, handwritten journals, podcasts and storybooks.

Known for their pioneering approach to storytelling, Nelson and Silva's award-winning public radio programs amplify the voices of people rarely covered in the news media, and they have helped raise awareness about myriad social causes. Their work is featured on NPR, PRX, the BBC, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, as well as at international festivals and in live and multimedia performances.

"The Kitchen Sisters have enlightened audiences for decades, unearthing unique stories about people and cultural traditions across the globe," said Elizabeth Peterson, director of the American Folklife Center, which will house the archive. "You learn about the impact of internment on Japanese American cooking, stories about the mythic Route 66 and the ways minority and immigrant communities shape the American soundscape. The Library is thrilled to receive this outstanding body of work."

The Kitchen Sisters archive includes approximately 146,400 mixed-material items from the 1970s to 2020, reflecting their collaborations with communities,

producers, archivists, musicians, farmers and others. For Nelson and Silva, having the collection at the Library is like coming full circle, since their early work to capture cultural and political movements often brought them from California to the nation's capital to do research at the Library.

"We are very moved that our archive is going to the Library of Congress, because we are saying to the public, 'Here's all this material we have gathered across decades. ... See if it enriches your classroom, your project, your book, your story, your podcast,'" Nelson said. "Being part of the public media community for decades, our mission has always been one of public storytelling, collaboration and access."

"We're proud to be part of the Library of Congress' legacy. So much of our work has been in collaboration with other independent producers, documentary makers, artists, grandmothers, NPR, PRX and others," said Silva.

Nelson and Silva credit radio with surfacing little-known stories and perspectives about human endeavors and the fight for civil rights and social justice. The pair's work has highlighted remarkable people and stories from the U.S. and the world, covering topics such as homelessness, mass incarceration, hunger, women's rights, racial tensions, the COVID-19 pandemic, the plight of immigrants and climate change.

Just as family conversations often begin and end in the kitchen, the California-based producers



Davia Nelson (left) and Nikki Silva have been doing radio programs since the 1970s.

American Folklife Center

wanted their programs to trigger dialogues in American homes around important issues of the day. Inspired by two eccentric brothers, Kenneth and Raymond Kitchen, who worked as stonemasons in Santa Cruz, California, in the 1940s, Nelson and Silva named themselves The Kitchen Sisters. Although they lack a bloodline, they explain, they share a sisterhood bound by a passion for poignant storytelling.

The team has won numerous awards, including two George Foster Peabody Awards; the DuPont-Columbia Award; two James Beard Awards; and two Webby Awards.

As pioneering broadcasters – their journey began in 1979, when few women had entered the field – Nelson and Silva perfected an intricate marriage of radio journalism and dynamic storytelling, which ushered in the development of today's podcasts. Their immersive style has been replicated by podcasters all over, with stories largely narrated by the interviewees.

[Read about the collection's highlights.](#) ■

# New Rules to Govern Post-Pandemic Telework

On Dec. 15, the Library announced the framework for its new telework program. While the Library continues to operate under the pandemic policy for enhanced telework and gradual return to operations, managers and employees are taking steps now to be ready to execute the new telework framework when regular operations are fully restored post-pandemic.

The framework, which was negotiated with the Library unions, is reflected in five new Library of Congress Regulations (LCRs) covering telework policy, regular telework, additional forms of telework, the telework site and work schedules; updates to collective bargaining agreements (CBAs); and an implementation memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees staff unions (locals 2910 and 2477). Negotiations between the Congressional Research Employees Association and the Congressional Research Service to update the “Side-Agreement on Telework” continue.

The new LCRs, CBA articles and MOU are available on the [Rules and Regulations website](#).

## New Framework

The new telework framework reflects the Library’s pandemic experience with remote work and the core understanding that the Library’s mission also requires in-person, on-site interaction with collections and deposits, patrons, clients and colleagues.

As a foundation for service to users, the Librarian of Congress determined that all employees must be regularly scheduled to work on-site at least two days per pay period. To reflect their unique missions, service units may add two days to this baseline.

Expanding on the old LCRs, employees will have more flexibility in their work hours (6 a.m. to 10 p.m.) and workdays (Monday

through Saturday). They will also be able to flex beyond midday to attend to personal business and make up the time later the same day.

Employees on approved absence (such as leave, holiday and official travel) that occurs when they are regularly scheduled to work on-site will not be required to make up an on-site day.

Employees will use a centralized online system to request regular telework annually. Regular telework remains voluntary and, as before, performance expectations are the same for telework and on-site work.

## Structured Approach

The new policy takes a structured approach to establishing regular telework schedules. Starting from a service unit’s baseline number of on-site days, directors and chiefs analyzed the encumbered position descriptions in their units to determine the minimum number of days each position should be regularly scheduled to be on-site. They considered, for example, job duties that require in-person contacts; access to collections, deposits or equipment available only on premises; work on facilities themselves; or a level of IT security not available remotely.

As reflected in the new telework request system, depending on

job duties, position assessments range from the service-unit minimum to 100 percent on-site. Days that are not reserved for on-site work are available for telework, complex or maxiflex.

Next, supervisors should consider performance plans, unit priorities, workload and staffing to determine if additional regular on-site days are necessary (bringing the unit perspective to common position descriptions). The final considerations for regular telework are an employee’s performance, conduct and ability to work independently.

## Initial Telework Period

Employees requested new regular telework schedules during an open season between Jan. 5 and 19. Over the next two weeks, the requests will be reviewed and approved by employees’ first and second-level supervisors.

The first “year” for the new regular telework schedules will run from the end of phase three of the Library’s restoration of operations to April 2023. During this time, employees are free to request changes to their approved schedules via the [Human Capital Directorate \(HCD\) portal](#).

Employees may also check their telework requests, consult system guides and ask questions about the new policies through the HCD portal. ■

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## REMINDER: REPORT COVID SYMPTOMS, EXPOSURE

All Library employees, including those working remotely, who have [experienced symptoms of COVID-19](#), received a positive COVID test result or had close contact with someone with COVID-19 are required to send a message to their supervisors and copy the Health Services Division (HSD) at [HSD-COVID-check-in@loc.gov](mailto:HSD-COVID-check-in@loc.gov).

The email to HSD should include the employee’s name in the subject line and a reachable email address and telephone number in the body of the message. HSD will follow up to ensure that affected employees remain off-site for the appropriate amount of time and confirm that contact tracing is not necessary.

**Your Employee Personal Page (EPP) is at  
[www.nfc.usda.gov/epps/](http://www.nfc.usda.gov/epps/)**



## QUESTION & ANSWER



### Shawn Miller

*Shawn Miller of the Office of Communications is the Library's official photographer.*

#### **Tell us about your background.**

I grew up in rural central Pennsylvania and graduated from Penn State University in 2007 with a B.A. in art with a concentration in photography. I got my professional start doing daily small-town news and sports at my hometown newspaper, the Williamsport Sun-Gazette.

I also served in the Army National Guard as a public affairs photographer with the 109th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment after enlisting during college. I spent a year deployed to northern Iraq from 2010 to 2011 near the end of the Iraq War. I embedded with units across our division to take photos and write stories about our mission there.

After I got home, I left the Army and started a master's program in photography at Syracuse University. I moved to Washington, D.C., in 2014.

#### **What brought you to the Library, and what do you do?**

I was working a temp position at the Navy Yard Public Affairs Office in 2014 while I was applying to

federal photographer jobs. I saw the opening for the position at the Library and thought it sounded incredible. I photograph a little bit of everything here, from poets to presidents to penguins; from book talks to behind-the-scenes staff work; from centuries-old books, artifacts and architecture to concerts, galas and just the little moments that happen here every day, whether it's a musician quietly warming up with one of our Stradivarius instruments backstage or an adorably precocious 4-year-old being "librarian for a day" with Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden.

I love the randomness of what I get to see and photograph every day and meeting interesting people along the way. Being the photographer for the whole institution, I get to work with most every division and see so many things.

One of my favorite parts of my job is printing the Madison Café photo gallery. It's a delightfully random assortment of moments each month, and you never know when a photo of you might show up there.

#### **What are some of your standout projects?**

Going on the road with Tracy K. Smith to document her poet laureate project was an incredible experience, especially our trip to

New Mexico, where we visited a Native American school and drove through the desert listening to Willie Nelson and talking about the mythology of the American West.

I love visiting the Conservation Division – I worked on multimedia projects with staff there for the [Howland Album restoration](#) and the [Omar Ibn Said collection](#) (which I presented along with other Library work for my master's project defense).

I also set up color-gelled lights and turned the hallway outside the Members' Room in the Jefferson Building into a break-dance floor with one of the Library's innovators in residence; that was a lot of fun. The Gershwin Prize concerts and the National Book Festival are also some of my biggest events each year. My very first assignment on my first day at the Library was documenting Billy Joel during his Gershwin Prize festivities, and it hasn't slowed down since.

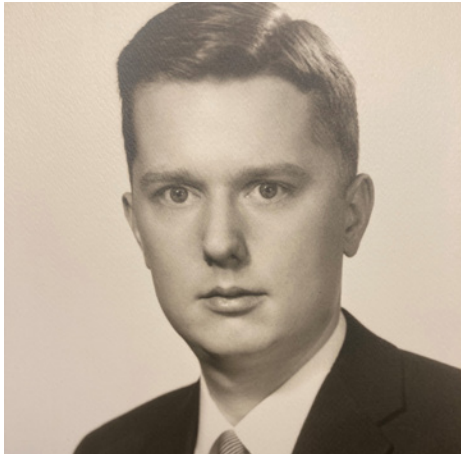
Outside of projects, there are too many amazing events to pick just a few – my favorite photo assignments are often what's coming up next.

#### **What do you enjoy doing outside work?**

I'm usually biking, hiking or wandering with my camera. I've been working on a landscape photo project in Pennsylvania doing large format film for a few years and spending a lot of time in the darkroom developing film and making prints.

I've also become the default photo archivist for my family, so I've been rescuing old photos from attic shoeboxes to digitize and file them. I have a huge treasure trove of film and prints, including late-19th-century tintypes, cartes de visite, my great-grandfather's World War I photos, 1950s Kodachromes from my grandparents and negatives in every format from 110 to 4 by 5. I have a few of my family's cameras as well, including my great-grandmother's Seneca Scout 2A box camera from around 1915. It still works! ■

Roswell Encina



## Charles Peterson

Charles “Charley” Peterson, an accomplished geographer, cartographer and librarian and an inveterate lover of maps of all kinds, died peacefully in his home in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, on Dec. 7 at age 85. He was a senior map cataloger in the Geography and Map Division (G&M) from 1974 until his retirement in 2019.

Born in Lancaster on Oct. 3, 1936, to Elsie Marie Peterson and Dr. Charles Buckley Peterson Jr., a much-loved local physician, Charley Peterson was soft-spoken,

gentle and kind. He was proud to be a direct descendant of John Hart, a delegate to the Continental Congress from New Jersey, signer of the Declaration of Independence and one of the original Founding Fathers.

Peterson was an avid reader from an early age, and he loved collecting books, stamps, coins and maps. He earned a B.A. in geography with a minor in Russian from Northwestern University and an M.A. in geography and a Ph.D. in historical geography from the University of Washington. Later, he earned a master’s degree in library science from Catholic University.

Peterson began his career as a geographic analyst for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in 1962, specializing in interpreting top-secret satellite imagery. In 1974, he found his calling as a senior map cataloger in G&M, where he cataloged, translated and transliterated maps from all over the world. Doing so required not only extensive expertise in cartography, but also the ability to translate from hundreds of different languages and dialects.

Peterson was a member of the American Library Association, the Association of American Geographers and the American Name Society. In 2000, he donated his personal collection of over 14,000 maps to the Library, which honored the donation by establishing the official Charles B. Peterson Road Map Collection.

For most of his adult life, Peterson lived in his beloved townhouse next to the C&O canal in Georgetown. He enjoyed going to restaurants with his close circle of friends, where conversation would often turn to current events, travel, languages and, inevitably, books and maps.

A lifelong bachelor, Peterson is survived by his sister, Sharon Peterson Spear, who cared for him in his last months of life; his nephew, John Edward Spear Jr. (Anders Nelson); his niece, Kristina Spear Bittner (Alexander Bittner); and the Bittners’ sons, Alexander and Ethan Hart. Most of the time, the family referred to Peterson fondly as “Uncle Buck,” which he good-naturedly tolerated. He will be greatly missed by all. ■

## Kluge Staff Fellowship Applications Invited

The John W. Kluge Center staff fellowship annually provides up to two highly qualified Library staff members with the chance to conduct independent research using the Library’s resources and collections. Fellows join influential senior scholars and promising national and international postdoctoral researchers in residency at the center. The application deadline is April 1.

### What are the terms of the appointment?

The staff fellow is detailed to the Kluge Center for six months, the duration of the fellowship.

### What topics can be researched?

Research projects can concentrate on any topic in the fields of human

sciences, such as humanities, social sciences or law. All projects must be supported by Library collections.

### Who is eligible?

All Library employees with permanent or indefinite status (excluding indefinites with not-to-exceed dates and Kluge Center staff) and five years of continuous service can apply. Staff can hold the fellowship only once in any seven-year period.

### Are salary and benefits maintained?

Yes. The fellow is compensated at the level equivalent to his or her current salary, and benefits and leave are maintained.

### Is a fellow’s current job retained?

Yes. Fellows maintain a lien on their present positions.

[Apply online.](#)

For more information, contact Michael Stratmoen at [mist@loc.gov](mailto:mist@loc.gov) ■

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## HCD SERVICES PORTAL

During this period of remote work, the [Human Capital Directorate \(HCD\) services portal](#) is there to help. Ask questions of HCD professionals; submit documents related to benefits, retirement and payroll matters; and track requests.

## WEB METRICS, CONTINUED FROM 1

ical progress in clearing the way for greater optimization of the Library’s web channels. Last year’s completion of the [Data Center Transformation](#) provided the robust and flexible IT infrastructure the Library needs to continue improving digital experiences for users, he said, adding, “Ongoing modernization and improved collaboration across OCIO are also helping us develop the systems we need to support the fast growth in demand for digital content and to improve user experience for our patrons.”

A steady flow of content helped the Library maintain strong online traffic throughout the year. The 2021 National Book Festival offered an array of virtual programming; 86 new or significantly enhanced digital collections were added to loc.gov; and Congress.gov had 17 new releases. In all, Library websites recorded just over 178 million visits in 2021, a 2 percent increase over fiscal 2020.

The Library also saw an increase in the number of visitors to the “national Library websites,” defined as all Library websites except Congress.gov and copyright.gov. Visitors to the national Library sites reached 89 million in fiscal 2021, an 8 percent increase over 2020 and a 54 percent increase over 2019.

Page views, on the other hand, experienced a downturn this past year, tallying 617 million compared to 805 million in 2020. Although page views were 19 percent above fiscal 2019 levels, the decline from 2020 demonstrates an atypical pattern in the public’s engagement with the Library.

Leah Ibraheem, analytics lead for the Library’s web metrics and analytics service, said the year-over-year fall in page views combined with the increase in unique visitors and website visits “means the Library saw more single-page visits and shorter visits in 2021 as compared to 2020.”

This downturn can be attributed

to search and user experience improvements on loc.gov that make it easier for visitors to find what they are looking for more quickly. In addition, two notable events in March 2020 contributed to an unexpected surge in page views: a tweet from the United Nations secretary-general promoting the World Digital Library and substantial use of Taiwanese and other Asian maps by users in those parts of the world. Such events went unmatched in 2021.

Other trends, however, ensured that broad engagement with the Library’s web resources continued to flourish. In particular, the conclusion of the 2020 U.S. presidential race and the inauguration of President Joe Biden in 2021 kick-started the year with a rise in public curiosity about these topics.

Blog posts about the election, content surrounding inaugural poet Amanda Gorman’s ties to the Library and a [clickable chronology of U.S. presidents featuring photographs](#) proved popular, as did Library resources for teachers.

Video views were an especially successful source of public connection in 2021, with the Library’s core video channels experiencing pronounced growth throughout the year. The Library YouTube channel saw its video views increase 118 percent over 2020 while recording a 70 percent increase in subscribers and 69 percent growth in video likes. Video views for the Copyright Office’s YouTube channel also grew 60 percent year-over-year.

“These trends are further evidence of the growing prominence of video as an engagement means for Library audiences, as well as the role of YouTube’s ‘suggested video’ tool in driving views of Library material,” Ibraheem said.

The Library’s many unique blogs similarly recorded notable traffic increases in fiscal 2021. Over-

all blog visits were up 34 percent year-over-year, with more than 4 million visits. OCIO development staff and Library subject matter experts collaborated to launch two new blogs in 2021: the Preservation Directorate’s [Guardians of Memory: Preserving the National Collection](#) and [Of the People: Widening the Path](#), which connects the Library more deeply with Black, Indigenous, Hispanic, Asian American/Pacific Islander and other communities of color whose stories have too often been undertold in our nation’s history and in the Library’s collections.

As the Library prepared to welcome in-person researchers and visitors in summer 2021, many Library channels saw growing interest in its opening status. OCIO’s development team partnered with the Visitor Engagement Office to launch a tool on loc.gov to provide patrons with information about visiting the Library. Public engagement through the Ask A Librarian platform also increased, and more than 110 research orientations, webinars and instructional presentations were made available online.

Kellum credits collaboration and stronger IT for the Library’s ability to continue meeting new expectations from increasingly digitally oriented audiences.

“OCIO staff have now spent years working in close coordination with subject matter experts from across curatorial units,” he said. “The strength of these relationships combined with our modern IT foundation means the Library can adapt more quickly to give users more of what they need online.”

Learn more about the Library’s web performance and social media engagement from OCIO’s [Web Metrics and Analytics Service](#). ■

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## HAVING TECHNICAL ISSUES?

The Office of the Chief Information Officer’s service desk is staffed around the clock with technicians ready to help. Contact [ocioservicedesk@loc.gov](mailto:ocioservicedesk@loc.gov) or (202) 707-7727.