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Office of the Chief Information Officer

A technical products team confers about the Enterprise Copyright System last March. Team members pictured here are Robert Shirley (from left), Francis League, Artem Kharats, David Neil, KanKan Yu and Praveen Misra.

Software Team Sustains Operations and Outreach

New customized digital tools and continuous updates support Library staff and patrons.

BY SAHAR KAZMI

In December, the Library launched its newest public application, the Copyright Public Records System (<https://go.usa.gov/xAhtD>). It was developed from the ground up to provide a modern user experience, improved searching of copyright records and mobile support for accessing records. Drawing on extensive user feedback, the portal was built to integrate with the customized Enterprise Copyright System (ECS) that is being developed to reimagine how the Copyright Office uses technology.

For most other federal agencies,

the launch would have been managed by a private IT development company. But for the Library, it was simply another day at the office for the Software Engineering team.

Located in the IT Design and Development Directorate of the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO), the team's 60 IT development experts are responsible for overseeing the creation and continuous modernization of the websites, applications and IT systems that fuel public engagement with the Library and sustain internal operations across the institution.

SOFTWARE, CONTINUED ON 7

NOTICES

DONATED TIME

The following employees have satisfied eligibility requirements to receive leave donations from other staff members. Contact Lisa Davis at lidav@loc.gov.

Muriel Bellamy
Paul Sayers

Eric Wolfson

COVID-19 UPDATE

The Health Services Division (HSD) continues to monitor Library staff members with symptoms, clinical diagnoses or positive test results associated with COVID-19. On Feb. 4, HSD announced that it had received 12 new reports of symptoms of COVID-19 or confirmed cases since its previous COVID-19 announcement on Jan. 21. Most employees reporting symptoms are not diagnosed with COVID-19, but, out of caution, the Library is monitoring all reports of symptoms.

HSD is communicating with all staff members who become ill. In cases in which ill individuals were present in Library buildings, HSD is also notifying their close work contacts and cleaning and disinfecting the areas affected.

More information on the Library's pandemic response: <https://go.usa.gov/xdtV5> (intranet) or <https://go.usa.gov/xdtVQ> (public-facing staff webpage)

BUILDING ACCESS AND CHECKPOINTS

The U.S. Capitol Police (USCP) has made changes to the checkpoints that provide access to the Library's Capitol Hill campus buildings for pedestrians.

The pedestrian checkpoint at First and C streets, SE, is open from 5 a.m. to 11 p.m., Monday through Friday. It is closed on Saturdays and Sundays until further notice. Badged Library staff and contractors should use the 24-hour pedestrian checkpoint at New Jersey Avenue and D Street, SE.

For vehicle traffic, the Madison Building garage is available from 4 a.m. until 11 p.m., seven days a week, to employees authorized to park on-site.

Pedestrians walking to the Capitol Hill complex from Union Station can access the security perimeter at Columbus Circle and D Street, NE, a 24-hour pedestrian checkpoint.

For questions or issues at the access checkpoints, contact USCP at (202) 707-5144.

USER DATA COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Feb. 17, 2 to 3 p.m.
<http://bit.ly/3ti6Dkg>

At the next meeting of the Library's User Data Community of Practice, Paulette Hasler, chief of the Geography and Map Division, will discuss her team's work identifying actionable user data, and Wendy Stengel of the User Experience Design team in the Office of the Chief Information Officer will share her work with the Law Library to make its website more user friendly. All staff are welcome to attend.

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

GAZETTE

LIBRARY
OF CONGRESS

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.

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. 26 Gazette is Wednesday, Feb. 17.

Email editorial copy and letters to the editor to mhartsell@loc.gov and wmal@loc.gov.

To promote events through the Library's online calendar (www.loc.gov/loc/events) and the Gazette Calendar, email event and contact information to 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 and wmal@loc.gov.

Resident Innovator to Enable Annotation of Collections

A new tool will allow students to use mark-making as an active form of inquiry.

BY JAIME MEARS

The strike-throughs, underlines, doodles and marginalia made by historical figures in their personal papers at the Library give researchers a more intimate sense of who they were. Sometimes, the markings also shed light on the story of how a work was made or received.

Inspired by this tradition of mark-making, the Library's 2021 innovator in residence, Courtney McClellan, aims to create an application for students and teachers to visually annotate and engage with a curated selection of free-to-use items from the Library's collection.

Titled Speculative Annotation, her project draws on her rich background in visual arts and education. With just a web browser, Speculative Annotation will present items from Library collections for students, teachers or any other users to annotate through captions, drawings, stamps and other types of mark-making. McClellan got started on the project last fall.

"Speculative Annotation intends to offer students a way to delve into the Library's vast collection and respond to what they discover," McClellan said. "I want to create an opportunity for students to use mark-making and note-taking as an active form of inquiry."

Speculative Annotation will also provide supporting materials for educators, such as lesson plans and annotations of select items by Library subject matter experts.

Working with Library curators, grade-school students and teachers in the classroom, McClellan is studying the types of conversations students and educators want to have with historical objects and

bringing her findings to the tool's development. To create an aesthetic design and mark-making tools, McClellan is also studying the history of annotation represented in the Library's collections.

"I'm excited by the examples I've seen so far from divisions like Rare Books, Prints and Photographs, Law and Manuscripts," McClellan said. "I am going straight to the print-making shop to try things out."

McClellan is a research-based artist who lives in Atlanta. With a subject focus on speech and civic engagement, she works in media including sculpture, performance, photography and writing. She has served as studio art faculty at Virginia Commonwealth University, the University of Georgia and Georgia State University. In 2019–20, she was the Roman J. Witt Artist in Residence at the University of Michigan, and she is now a featured artist in the exhibition "Of Care and Destruction: 2021 Atlanta Biennial" (<http://bit.ly/3pANnMq>).

McClellan developed the idea for Speculative Annotation through her own work and through that of other artists such as Wendy Red Star, Tony Cokes and Laura Owens. The project will be available this summer (<https://go.usa.gov/xAzaC>).

Established in 2017, the Innovator in Residence program invites



Courtney McClellan

creative people to work with the LC Labs team and subject matter experts across the Library to develop research concepts and experiments using digital collections. The goal of these experiments is to test possibilities for public engagement with the Library's treasure chest in new ways. Previous innovators include data artist Jer Thorp (<https://go.usa.gov/xAza5>), computer scientist and visual artist Brian Foo (<https://go.usa.gov/xAzad>) and machine-learning expert Benjamin Lee (<https://go.usa.gov/xAzaA>).

To learn more, subscribe to LC Labs' monthly newsletter at labs.loc.gov. ■

Copyrightoffice
PRESENTS

The Enduring Copyright Legacy of
**JUSTICE RUTH
BADER GINSBURG**

Wednesday | February 17, 2021
1:00 – 2:30 P.M. ET

An Online Event
Register at [copyright.gov/events/
ruth-bader-ginsburg/](https://copyright.gov/events/ruth-bader-ginsburg/)

Bobbitt Poetry Prize Awarded to Hayes, Trethewey

The Library in December awarded the 2020 Rebekah Johnson Bobbitt National Prize for Poetry to Terrance Hayes for his book “American Sonnets for My Past and Future Assassin” and to former U.S. poet laureate Natasha Trethewey for lifetime achievement.

The biennial Bobbitt Prize, which carries a \$10,000 award, recognizes a book of poetry written by an American and published during the preceding two years or the lifetime achievement of an American poet, or both.

The poets received their honors during a virtual ceremony on Dec. 10 (<https://go.usa.gov/xscRv>).

Hayes’ book was published in 2018. Trethewey is the author of five poetry collections, most recently “Monument: Poems New and Selected,” also published in 2018.

“We are thrilled by the news that Terrance Hayes and Natasha Trethewey have won the 2020 Rebekah Johnson Bobbitt National Prize for Poetry,” said Philip Bobbitt, son of Rebekah. “We congratulate not only the gifted winners but also the dedicated jurors.”

The panel of jurors for this year’s prize included Elise Paschen, former executive director of the Poetry Society of America, selected by the current U.S. poet laureate, Joy Harjo; Adrian Matejka, former Indiana poet laureate, selected by Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden; and scholar Betty Sue Flowers, selected by the Bobbitt family.

The Bobbitt jury noted that Hayes’ volume “transforms the classic sonnet into a startling, American version” and that he “navigates America’s political history, art and poetics in unexpected and timely ways that transform our understanding of both our history and ourselves.”

A recipient of the National Book Award, Hayes has published six collections of poetry. “American Sonnets for My Past and Future Assassin” received the 2019 Hur-



Natasha Trethewey and Terrance Hayes converse with Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden on Dec. 10 during an event in which the poets received the Bobbitt Prize and read from their works.

ston/Wright Foundation Legacy Award for poetry and was a finalist for numerous prizes. Hayes’ other honors include a Whiting Writers Award, an NAACP Image Award for Poetry and a Pegasus Award for Poetry Criticism, as well as fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Guggenheim Foundation.

In 2014, Hayes received a MacArthur Fellowship. Hayes was elected a chancellor of the Academy of American Poets in 2017 and serves as an ex officio member of the academy’s board of directors. He is currently a professor of English at New York University.

Trethewey is the author of five collections of poetry and two books of nonfiction. She served two terms as the 19th U.S. poet laureate (2012–14), during which she launched her signature project, “Where Poetry Lives,” with the PBS NewsHour. Through the project, Trethewey explored societal issues through poetry in locations across the country. Her latest book is “Memorial Drive: A Daughter’s Memoir.”

The Bobbitt jury noted that “Monument” reveals “the arc of her poems as a poignant and compelling new narrative. The collection illuminates her far-reaching range while also serving as a testament to the integrity of her poetic vision.”

Trethewey has also served as the state poet laureate of Mississippi, and she is a recipient of many fellowships, including from the Academy of American Poets, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Guggenheim and Rockefeller foundations. Trethewey is currently the Board Trustees Professor of English at Northwestern University.

The Bobbitt Prize is donated by the family of Rebekah Johnson Bobbitt of Austin, Texas, in her memory and awarded at the Library. Bobbitt was President Lyndon B. Johnson’s sister. She met O.P. Bobbitt in the 1930s when both worked in the cataloging department of the Library. They married and returned to Texas.

View past winners of the Bobbitt Prize: <https://go.usa.gov/xscQ7>. ■

QUESTION & ANSWER



Alison Guillory

Alison Guillory is a library inventory technician in the Collections Management Division.

Tell us a little about your background.

I am a native Californian but was raised mostly in Belmont, Massachusetts – a small town outside of Boston. Growing up, I played a lot of sports, including field hockey and track, and was a frequent visitor to the town library. After high school, I was ready to leave New England, so I moved to the San Francisco Bay Area a few days after graduation.

Once I got to the Bay Area, I began taking classes at the local college while also working at an independent video rental store in Berkeley. During one of my weekly trips to the public library, I was excited to see that the city was offering the library civil service exam. I took the test and landed a job as an aide at Berkeley Public Library. This was the first of several public library jobs that I would eventually have.

After a few years in the Bay Area, I moved to Atlanta and later finished my bachelor's degree in history at Georgia State University. While in

school, I worked at a small branch of the Atlanta–Fulton Public Library, and I continued to work there after graduation. I also worked at the local National Public Radio affiliate as a news photographer.

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

I first came to Washington, D.C., in 2017 to do an internship at the Smithsonian Channel. I am interested in documentary storytelling and library work, so it was a great place to explore both interests.

After my internship, I wanted to stay in D.C., so I found a (tiny) apartment and a job working at the D.C. Public Library. When a position at the Library of Congress opened, I saw it as an opportunity to work in a different kind of library.

I am an inventory technician in the Collections Management Division. We do a lot of work that you would see at a local public library, such as setting up library accounts and charging and discharging books. Materials are constantly in motion, so a lot of the work is tracking where materials are on their journey through the Library.

Since the pandemic broke out, I have continued to do many of the basic duties that I did beforehand; however, the way we do them has changed immensely. For example, the process to check out material to staff has been modified to allow for more social distancing. There are also new telework opportunities. Like everyone else, we have had to adjust.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

I love that there are so many opportunities to learn, whether it's going to a copyright trivia event or watching Native American hoop dancers during a lunch break. I have also enjoyed going to acquisitions fairs and learning more about what the Library has in its vast collections. Being able to take advantage of professional development like FutureBridge and the Career Development Program has also been helpful.

What do you like to do outside work?

I like to travel, read, visit national parks, snorkel and watch documentaries. I recently moved to Silver Spring, so I have been busy getting to know my new neighborhood. A while ago, a friend mailed me a few jigsaw puzzles, so that should keep me busy for a while.

What is something your co-workers may not know about you?

I love exchanging handwritten letters! One of the bright spots during quarantine has been receiving letters in the mail. My box of letters is one of the few things that has survived all my moves.

When I was a kid, I wrote my first-grade teacher after I left Los Angeles and moved to Massachusetts. Twenty years later, she sent a copy of a letter I wrote to her. It was fun to read it and remember what it was like to be a 7-year-old in a new school and a new town. And I was touched that she had kept it after so many years. ■

*APR=Annual Percentage Rate. Sweet Deal Loan Special **ENDS 2/28/21** and may be withdrawn without notice. Refinancing of existing LCFCU loans is not permitted. No Discounts apply to the Sweet Deal Loan Special rate. Subject to credit approval and other restrictions may apply, contact us or visit LCFCU.org for details.

Librarian Advises Staff to Safeguard Their Well-Being

Reflecting on the disruptions of the past year, Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden urged staff to take care of themselves in a video address on Monday (<https://bit.ly/2LvLx0w>).

It is hard to believe, she said, that it has been almost 12 months “since we were routinely together in Library of Congress buildings.” The Library introduced maximum telework in March 2020 to help stop the spread of COVID-19 and is now in phase two of a three-phase

plan to restore on-site operations.

The Library is “very aware” of what staff have been going through in their personal lives and the challenges they face in fulfilling the Library’s mission, she said.

To ensure that Library buildings, collections and, most important, staff members remain safe and secure, the Library has been working closely with the U.S. Capitol Police.

“I would encourage you to take

time to decompress and process what’s going on, because maintaining your mental and emotional health during this time is important,” she said.

Hayden reminded staff of the Employee Assistance Program – the free and confidential counseling service is available 24 hours a day at (800) 869-0276 – and she said options may be available for leave regardless of leave balances.

“We’re in this together,” she concluded. ■

OBITUARY

Edward Redmond

Ed Redmond, a member of the Geography and Map Division (G&M) staff for more than 30 years, died at his home in Virginia last week following a long-term illness.

“It is always a sad moment when we lose one of our Library colleagues, but there are not many who had his deep passion for maps,” longtime G&M colleague John Hessler said. “Obsessed with the cartographic creations of George Washington and with the Enlightenment spirit of the Founding Fathers, he embodied what the early creators of the map collections of the Library wanted them to be.”

Redmond started his career at the Library as a technician, learning G&M’s idiosyncratic filing system for maps and the depth of the collections firsthand. The thousands of map drawers became his work world, as he wandered the stacks always thinking about the history that surrounded him and that became his lifelong passion.

The early mapping of the Americas was Redmond’s primary scholarly pursuit. He understood the importance of maps to historical research, the legacy of human interaction with the planet and efforts to come to terms with



Ed Redmond gives a gallery talk about early urban mapping.

the history of the Americas, their promises and their shortcomings.

As curator of G&M’s vault, he was involved in many of the Library’s acquisitions and exhibits, including “Rivers, Edens and Empires: Lewis and Clark and the Revealing of America” and “Mapping a New Nation: Abel Buell’s Map of the United States.”

Known affectionately to many of his G&M colleagues as Dr. Redmond, he was also popular with school groups and the public. “To hear him explain L’Enfant’s plan of Washington, D.C., or the importance of Lewis and Clarke’s manuscripts to the legacy of the U.S. was to hear what history is about, not just factually but spiritually,”

Hessler said. “It was to see how, when properly brought to life, the humanities can make a difference in the world.”

A member and former president of the Washington Map Society, Redmond was a longtime fixture in cartographic circles.

“To understand Ed is to understand what the Library is all about, a place where people and collections meet,” Hessler said. “But as with everything and everyone at the Library, his legacy will live on in our purpose.”

He will be missed by all who knew him, added Paulette Hasier, G&M’s chief. “Ed embodied the best of G&M.” ■

SOFTWARE, CONTINUED FROM 1

If you've noticed the user-focused design or improved navigation of loc.gov, congress.gov, CONAN (<https://go.usa.gov/xs3AX>) or Stacks (<https://go.usa.gov/xscNP>) lately, you've seen other recent examples of the team's work in action.

"From Henriette Avram and the MARC format to the development of some of the first government websites, the Library has a long history of technical innovation," Barry Priest, development operations supervisor, said. An early programmer, Avram came to the Library in 1965 and oversaw establishment of a machine-readable cataloging system for creating and disseminating bibliographic records by computer. It is still in use today.

Like most other organizations now, Priest said, the Library is constantly working to deliver more online experiences to its audiences. "But because of our unique mission and unparalleled scale, we've continued that strong tradition of building custom solutions to meet our distinct technology needs."

At its heart, software serves as an interface between a computer system and the people who use it – a digital version of the things we do on paper. For decades, software has helped the Library manage its operations and connect with the public, from simple administrative tools that supported payroll to first-generation Library websites – like the THOMAS legislative information platform and the American Memory Project's digitized primary sources.

However, as technology and data have evolved over the years, simple machine coding has given way to complex, mission-specific software applications built with distinct end users in mind.

"We've come a long way from the early days of trial and error for making technology work for the Library," Mike Nibeck, OCIO Soft-

ware Engineering Division chief, said. "As software engineering has become more of a well-researched science in the last 15 years, the Library has professionalized and standardized how we do this work."

Gone are the days of designers, developers and testers all working separately to complete their portion of a product. As both the commercial software development field and the public have become ever more sophisticated, the Software Engineering team has adopted industry best practices like agile development methodologies that break up large-scale development efforts into smaller, incremental tasks. Another such practice, known as DevSecOps, integrates development, IT operations and IT security practices to streamline efforts and achieve the most successful outcomes for Library technology.

"We've made a strong push in the last several years to shift the Library's culture and our pool of resources to match the rapid evolution of software technology out in the world," Nibeck said. "We have a small and nimble team. By operating under a model of continuous development and committing to consistently maintaining and modernizing Library software, we're working hard to keep pace with our users and the scale of the Library's collections."

Rather than enhancing software in one large stroke, continuous development ensures improvements are made regularly in small iterative ways to keep applications fresh and responsive to users' needs. This methodology provides the diverse OCIO staff who work together to build these tools – from engineers and project managers to user experience designers and IT security experts – more opportunities to give each other regular feedback and support.

That feedback loop is especially valuable given the Software Engineering team's focus on the concept of "micro-services," or customized software systems

that serve a specific function and can be updated more quickly and easily.

To do this, the team deploys both bespoke software creations, such as the ECS, and commercial software like ServiceNow, the online portal for the OCIO service desk, which can be modified to meet the Library's needs.

"It's a balancing act. We work with service units closely and conduct a lot of research to determine whether a Library need can be met by software that's readily available in the marketplace, or whether our staff need to develop something entirely custom," Nibeck said.

Some tools, like those used by Congressional Research Service or the Copyright Office, serve specialized functions and require dedicated effort to engineer. Others, like the template for the Project One platform designed to present digital collections on loc.gov, are created by leveraging the insights of the open source software engineering community.

"Working with publicly accessible code and the open source community has been critical in allowing us to explore what others are doing in this field and to experiment with new frameworks. We can take the best of what the industry has to offer and then tailor it to fit the Library's unique needs," said Priest.

With its special mission and treasures, the Library has attracted dedicated and user-focused software engineers and developers to support this ongoing work. In addition to their technical expertise, the most important skill they all share is a commitment to taking a long view of the Library's progress.

"The Library will outlast anything we develop," Nibeck said. "Our goal in the meantime is to build smart, sustainable tools that can evolve naturally with the institution, Congress and our patrons." ■