



Staff members of the Hart County Library are (from left) Desk Assistant Katina Tate, Desk Assistant April Adams, Senior Desk Assistant Carrie

Mewborn, Assistant Director Jean Mead, Director Richard Sanders, Children's Librarian Pam Kohl and Desk Assistant Sara Ringer.

## Annual Georgia library awards honor Hart County, Lautzenheiser and Slaughter

On Jan. 7, Georgia Public Library Service celebrated the Hart County Library as Georgia's Public Library of the Year. The award is one of three annual Georgia Public Library Awards, honoring the outstanding service and achievements of Georgia's public libraries, librarians and advocates during the past year.

GPLS also honored Jennifer Lautzenheiser, director of the Middle Georgia Regional Library System, as Public Librarian of the Year on Jan. 12 and New York Times-best-selling author **Karin Slaughter** as Public Library Champion of the Year on Jan. 19.

"We are so pleased to bring this well-deserved recognition to our

colleagues throughout the state who have worked tirelessly to serve their communities and play a vital role in creating a more educated, enlightened Georgia," said State Librarian **Julie Walker**.

"Georgia's library awards program debuted in 2015 and proved to be a remarkable success," she said. "Community leaders, local and state elected officials, and countless library users celebrated the inaugural winners, creating tremendous awareness, goodwill and renewed support for public libraries across Georgia."

The Public Library of the Year award is presented to the library whose staff best exemplifies the

qualities needed to positively impact the lives of residents in the communities it serves.

"I couldn't be prouder for Hart County Library to be the recipient of this award," said Director **Richard Sanders**. "We're not a big place, but we have people working here who enjoy what they do, who genuinely enjoy working together and who enjoy doing their best to serve our community every day. We're grateful to our always-supportive library board and to our local funding agencies and elected officials who support the library and want to keep it going and continuing to provide more and better services.

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Staff



Walker (right) presents Lautzenheiser with the Georgia Public Librarian of the Year award.

Staff



Sanders accepts the Hart County Library's Georgia Public Library of the Year award.

Arthur Ratliff



Slaughter (holding award) is congratulated by Jill Joplin, executive director of the DeKalb Library Foundation; Walker; and Alison Weissinger, director of the DeKalb County Public Library.

Staff



Representatives from seven nearby library systems attended the Macon ceremony to offer their congratulations to Lautzenheiser. From left are Kathy Pillatzki, assistant director and head of collection development and reference services at the Henry County Library System; Natalie Marshall, executive director of the Flint River Regional Library System; J. Sara Paulk, director of the Houston County Public Library System; Stephen Houser, director of the Twin Lakes Library System; Lautzenheiser; Anne Isbell, director of the Lake Blackshear Regional Library; Claire Leavy, director of the Lee County Library System; and Billy Tripp, director of Peach Public Libraries.

## Awards

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"And I'd like to extend a very sincere thank-you to the folks who believed in us enough to nominate us, to write letters for us and to recommend us for this award."

The Public Librarian of the Year award recognizes a full-time and professionally licensed public librarian whose innovative and creative talents are instrumental in the delivery of outstanding library service to his or her library and to the communities it serves. Lautzenheiser received the award at an afternoon ceremony and reception at the Middle Georgia Regional Library in Macon.

"What an incredible surprise and honor this is," said Lautzenheiser. "As a new library director, it is quite unexpected but greatly appreciated."

"Our library system is dedicated to connecting community members with the information necessary to improve their lives, whether that is through access to credible information, technology literacy, cultural heritage or recreation," she explained. "Change can be hard, and we've seen a lot of it in our community and in our library system. We appreciate the flexibility and patience given to us by so many residents as we strive to redefine library service to Middle Georgia and provide a sustainable effort of dedicated service and community building in the years to come."

Georgia's Public Library Champion of the Year award is presented to an outstanding advocate who was not employed in any capacity by a public library but whose support significantly raised the profile of libraries and improved services during the year. The award

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# Public libraries mark another year of gains, transitions

For Georgia's public libraries, 2016 was a year of small gains, impressive leaps and continued transitions.

"Our tracking numbers are moving in positive directions, confirming the ongoing need for public library services," said State Librarian **Julie Walker**. "For the second consecutive year, our libraries have been able to restore some of the public service hours that were lost during the economic downturn that began in 2008.

"The total number of open hours rose to 831,537 this year," she noted. "Although that 2 percent increase leaves the number of open hours well below prerecession levels, it is a very positive step. I commend those state and local government officials who are so keenly aware of the importance of libraries in our communities and who have demonstrated their commitment and willingness to begin restoring library funding to the best of their abilities. We greatly appreciate their recognition that public libraries continue to play a vital role in workforce development and educational support for Georgians."

The number of public library facilities across the state grew by five, to 409 last year, as systems added, or replaced/consolidated antiquated buildings in favor of, new facilities capable of meeting the needs of their respective communities.

At the close of the year's legislative session, the Georgia General Assembly added, and **Gov. Nathan Deal** approved, a 25 cents per capita allocation for library materials — the first such specified apportionment in nearly a decade.

"We expect to see the impact of that materials money in the coming

year," Walker said. "The trends in this year's statistical data confirm that, when library doors are open and funds are available to provide current materials and public computers with internet access, Georgians in every county will value and use those services.

"The demand for library services across our state has never faltered."

Proof that Georgia libraries are popular places is evident in the number of people who visited them and who attended programs offered by them. Nearly 28 million people spent time at a Georgia public library in FY2016. More than 9.6 million more paid virtual visits via library websites. While the number of educational programs offered by libraries held steady at about

80,000, attendance increased by almost 5 percent to more than 2.4 million.

E-book loans are up a whopping 23 percent over the previous year, rising to almost 1.3 million circulations. "More people are discovering that libraries have the e-books they want to read, and libraries are working to meet the demand," said **Wendy Cornelisen**, assistant state librarian for library innovation and collaboration.

"The cost of e-books is higher than traditional print books, however, and it's a complicated process to loan e-books, due to the limitations providers place on borrowing them," she said. "GPLS is investigating ways to make it easier

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Chad Alexander Smith



## A laudable launch

*Troup-Harris Regional Library Director Keith Schuermann welcomed community leaders and residents to the new Hogansville Public Library on Dec. 13. The 11,200-square-foot facility, nearly four times the size of the library it replaces, is equipped with self-checkout, a 3-D printer and far more public-access computer stations than were previously available in the old building. From left are Troup County Manager Tod Tentler; Rep. Robert Trammell (D-Luthersville); library trustees Carol Todd and Kay Durand; Schuermann; GPLS's Director of Planning and Construction Nathan Rall; Sen. Joshua McKoon (R-Columbus); Hogansville Mayor William Stankiewicz; Troup County Commission Chair Patrick Crews; Rep. Randy Nix (R-LaGrange); Troup County Commissioner Lewis Davis; and library trustee Joyce Morgan Young.*

# Governor continues support of libraries in FY2018 budget

**Gov. Nathan Deal** once again recognized the importance of public libraries on Jan. 11, when he presented his \$25 billion spending plan for Fiscal Year 2018 to the General Assembly.

Although the governor's budget proposal represents a second consecutive high-water mark for state spending in a single year, Deal stated that the appropriations included in this budget reflect conservative fiscal principles and the solid economic growth Georgia continues to enjoy.

"By focusing on key priorities such as cybersecurity, education and public safety, we are taking necessary steps to protect our citizens and ensure that our fiscal responsibility translates into sustained economic growth across the state," he said.

"I look forward to working with the General Assembly to turn these recommendations into a budget

that will serve the needs of Georgians while promoting the long-term economic health of the state."

The governor included \$1 million for major repair and renovation (MRR) projects at public libraries, along with \$1 million for computer replacement.

"We are very grateful that Gov. Deal has included these essential infrastructure expenditures for the state's public libraries," said State Librarian **Julie Walker**. "The MRR funds will help ensure that we can continue to care for the state's investment in library facilities, while the technology funds will contribute to the provision of the broadband network infrastructure that provides free public computing at libraries in every county in Georgia."

The General Assembly will use the recommendations as a starting point to develop and pass the budget, which the governor will then sign or veto. ■

## Statistics

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and more cost-effective for libraries to provide this service."

Other downloadable circulation, such as movies, music and audiobooks, is also up by double digits — about 31 percent — this year, Cornelisen said, and GALILEO searches via public libraries increased by more than 15 percent. "This year's statistics really show the value of these high-quality resources," she said. "GALILEO now includes Mango Languages, which lets Georgians learn to speak different languages, and Tumblebooks, an animated online story collection for our youngest readers."

**Emily Almond**, GPLS's director of information technology, points out that public libraries know how to stretch the public's dollars too. "Over the past few years, thanks to MRR funding," she said, "53 of Georgia's 63 public library systems have invested in cloud computers. Thanks in part to their lower cost, there are now more than 9,350 public-access

computers available at the state's public libraries — an increase of 29 percent in the last five years."

**Jessica Everingham**, assistant state librarian for library development and support, is pleased to see the number of state-certified librarians increasing from 577 to 617. "Librarianship is an interesting profession, and the demand for it is growing," she said. "Our state-certified librarians are skilled information specialists with master's degrees and continuing education training requirements. Even when most of us carry a computer in our pocket, Georgia's librarians answered almost 8 million reference questions last year, and they are experts at fighting misinformation. Librarians teach Georgians the digital literacy skills they need to separate the credible from the counterfeit."

More than two dozen libraries around the state now offer makerspaces — centers where people can gather to create, network, share resources and learn using a variety of

tools that might not otherwise be available or affordable to them. For those libraries not yet so equipped, GPLS now offers four Tech Loaner Kits that give library staff and often residents from across the state the chance to learn and test for themselves a wide variety of tools, including tablets, Chrome devices, wireless routers, security cameras, Makey Makey kits and more.

"The kits are incredibly popular," Almond said. "More than half the library systems checked out at least one kit last year, and our four kits were checked out for a total of 88 weeks during the fiscal year. We'll be adding more kits in the coming year, including 3-D printing, virtual reality, and educational kits that tie into many of our partnership programs."

Partnership programs, such as those GPLS enjoys with Zoo Atlanta, Georgia State Parks & Historic Sites, the Atlanta Hawks, the Atlanta Braves, the Center for Puppetry Arts, the Go Fish Education Center and the

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## Athens Regional's Pinewoods branch reopens in larger space

Pinewoods Library and Learning Center, a branch of Athens Regional Library System (ARLS), celebrated the grand opening of its new facility Dec. 8.

Located in a residential mobile home park, the branch serves a neighborhood of 1,000 people, most of whom speak Spanish. Latino immigrants from outside the neighborhood also make use of its services. Originally funded through an Institute of Museum and Library Services grant in 2006, the library worked out of a 1,680-square foot, double-wide trailer for 10 years. The new facility expands the square footage to 2,592, allowing for additional programming and services.

ARLS received a \$15,000 Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership (LEAP) grant from Better World Books for the project. Additional funds were contributed

by the Athens-Clarke County Library board of trustees and the Friends of Athens-Clarke County Libraries.

Pinewoods was a finalist for the Best Small Library in America, sponsored by *Library Journal*, in 2009. Its staff is fully bilingual and includes a full-time branch manager, **Aida Quiñones**, and two part-time assistants, **Virginia Ricome** and **Jeannette Molina**. The branch location serves to weave it into the fabric of this community. Residents not only benefit, but are compelled to offer up their own contributions, creating a true partnership. The Pinewoods branch is well-known in the Athens community and works closely with other agencies.

"The best thing about the new location is that it features two community meeting rooms, which will be used for programs and gatherings. We will now be able to offer two or more programs at the same time," says Quiñones.

Already staff are organizing sewing classes, a chess club, yoga, an adult-reading program, English-as-a-second-language classes, computer training classes and more. Teens and children have their own designated areas within the branch, and the new space allows for an expanded collection of library materials. Twelve computers are available for public use, along with multiple outlets for laptop users who want to access the library's free Wi-Fi. Front double doors and a wide ramp also make the branch more accessible to those with strollers or wheelchairs.

In conjunction with the new location, a community garden offers fresh produce, an outdoor classroom and gathering spot and a cob oven. Built of mudbrick in the traditional Mexican style, residents use the oven to bake bread. **Dr. Sungkyung Lee**, a University of Georgia landscape architecture professor, used the garden as a training ground for her students this past semester. ■

Athens Regional Library System



Quiñones prepares to cut the ribbon at the new Pinewoods branch. From left are Ricome, Molina, Athens Regional Library System Director Valerie Bell, Quiñones and board chair Wally Eberhard.

## Statistics

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Michael C. Carlos Museum, have educated and entertained thousands of Georgia residents while saving more than \$13 million in direct expenditures and providing hundreds of hours of free programming for public libraries.

According to Walker, if a family of four together borrows two books and two DVDs each month, attends one program per quarter and annually takes advantage of the museum and attraction passes available at every

public library in the state, that family would save more than \$1,670 every year over the cost of buying those materials and tickets individually.

"And this doesn't include the value of public-access internet, job skills training, homework help and the dozens of other services that Georgia libraries routinely provide free of charge," she said. "You can always depend on the public library to be one of the greatest benefits to every community." ■

## NEWS IN BRIEF

**Abigail Lloyd** is the new LSTA manager for GPLS. She joins GPLS from the Technical College System of Georgia. She previously served in the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget as a budget analyst for multiple state agencies, including GPLS. Lloyd earned her master's degree in public administration and policy from the University of Georgia.



Lloyd

**Myers Scott** has joined GPLS as information technology support specialist. He will manage desktop support for libraries and provide



Scott

project backup for helpdesk tickets, as well as maintenance for Tech Loaner Kits and Chrome-based computers. Scott comes to GPLS from the Intercontinental Exchange, where

he was an operation support analyst. He was previously a senior technical support engineer for the Clayton County Water Authority. Scott holds an associate's degree in computer software applications and a bachelor's degree in information technology security from American Intercontinental University.

Connecting Henry, the Henry County branch of the nonprofit Georgia Family Connection Partnership, presented a 2016 Community Service Award to **Carolyn Fuller**, director of the Henry County Library System, for her work in support of the health and well-being of families and communities. Fuller

was recognized at the inaugural "A Celebration of Hope" benefit luncheon in McDonough on Nov. 19.

Peach Public Libraries (PPL) has received a \$4,000 grant from the Dorothy Louise Kyler Foundation of Holland, Ohio, a not-for-profit organization that focuses its support on the provision of education and human services across the U.S. The grant will enable PPL to purchase books, CDs, DVDs and other materials to enhance its circulating collection of children's materials.

The University System of Georgia (USG) has named **Julie Walker**, assistant vice chancellor and state

librarian, as a scholar in its 2017 Accelerated Leadership Academy. The systemwide leadership program is designed to prepare USG Executive Leadership Institute alumni to excel in executive leadership roles and align their long-term professional goals with organizational opportunities.

Library IT employees will want to mark their calendars for GPLS's annual Tech Boot Camp, coming April 25-27. The 2017 edition at the Unicoi State Park and Lodge in Helen promises to be another touchstone meeting where professionals can come together to share expertise in technology implementation, strategy and management. ■

Diana New/The Herald Gazette



### Energetic earthmovers

The Flint River Regional Library System (FRRLS) held a groundbreaking ceremony for the renovation and expansion of the Barnesville-Lamar County Public Library on Jan. 30. When complete in 2018, the upgraded facility will be a full-service library that better meets the educational, recreational and informational needs of the community. The project consists of a renovation to the current 9,000-square-foot library and construction of a 4,000-square-foot addition that will provide larger children's and staff work areas and a multipurpose community room that will serve the community now and in the future. The project is partially funded by a 2015 Georgia Capital Outlay Grant. Turning ground are (from left) Nate Rall, director of library planning and construction for GPLS; Natalie Marshall, executive director of FRRLS; Kelly Hughes, branch manager; and library staff members Catina Carter, Jessica Merritt and Jessica Farr. Not pictured is staff member Sunday Long.

## Awards

*Continued from page 2*

was presented to Slaughter, whose 16 novels have sold more than 35 million copies across the globe, at a Jan. 19 reception at the Decatur library.

“Libraries are the backbone of our educational infrastructure, and I want more people to realize they are necessities, not luxuries,” Slaughter stated. “As a writer and a reader, I feel it is my duty to support our public libraries, so I am very humbled to be recognized as a library champion.”

A tireless advocate for public libraries, Slaughter is the founder of Save the Libraries and has devoted her time and talent to support the DeKalb County Public Library, the Cobb County Public Library System, the Griffin-Spalding County Library and the Georgia Center For the Book. She has hosted fundraisers — enlisting the help of Grammy Award-winning folk-rock duo the Indigo Girls

for one such event — and donated her own time and money to support the causes of both the Georgia Center For the Book and the DeKalb Library Foundation. Through her leadership and shining example, she also raised awareness and funds for the Save the Libraries movement across the state and country.

Nominations for this year’s GPLS-sponsored awards were submitted from library directors and trustees, members of recognized Friends of the Library groups and GPLS staff members. Collectively, GPLS received more than three dozen nominations from every corner of the state.

In addition to the individual presentation events, this year’s winners will be recognized at a public ceremony during the Georgia Council for Public Libraries’ annual Public Library Day at the Capitol on Feb. 8. ■

## New program makes textbooks more affordable

It’s the time of year when high school students across Georgia start planning for their future education — and worrying about the costs of college tuition and textbooks.

Affordable Learning Georgia (ALG), a University System of Georgia initiative that promotes student success by providing affordable textbook alternatives, is a new resource that can help ease some of those concerns.

Last year, more than 35,000 college students in the state used open textbooks, saving students an estimated \$3.5 million. GALILEO Open Learning Materials is a key component of bringing together these freely available educational resources, including open textbooks and supporting materials, which are available online through your local public library and through the Georgia Knowledge Repository at [www.gaknowledge.org](http://www.gaknowledge.org).

“There’s only a three-month gap between high school seniors and college freshmen,” said **Wendy Cornelisen**, assistant state librarian for library innovation and collaboration. “Public libraries are a great place to get a head start in planning for the future, and we want to make sure students and parents know about these resources and how to use them.”

GALILEO, Georgia’s virtual library, is an online portal to authoritative, subscription-only information that is not available through free search engines. Every public library in Georgia is a member of GALILEO. ■

Staff



## Welcoming Belarus

As part of the U.S. Department of State’s International Visitor Leadership Program, Graduate School USA, a private nonprofit educational institution in Washington, D.C., arranged for six librarians from the Republic of Belarus to visit Atlanta in January to learn about rural libraries serving at-risk youth populations and to participate in the American Library Association’s Annual Midwinter Meeting. Seven state librarians, including Georgia’s Julie Walker, welcomed the contingent to the Decatur library for a tour and hourlong question-and-answer session on Jan. 19. From left are Karen Mellor of Rhode Island; Mary Soucie of North Dakota; Maryna Pshybytko, head of the Library Science Department at the National Library of Belarus; Mikalai Yatsevich, information and document communication department dean of the Belarusian State University of Culture and Arts; Maryia Liatsiaha, director of the Molodechno Central District Library; Michael Scott of Iowa; Sandra Treadway of Virginia; Kurt Kiefer of Wisconsin; Larysa Lotysh, head of the Foreign Literature Department at E. Karski Grodno Regional Scientific Library; Pavel Ustinov, chief librarian of the Republican Scientific and Technical Library of Belarus; Volha Yakubovich, librarian at the Baranovich Central City Library; and Kendall Wiggin of Connecticut.



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Shawn Miller/Library of Congress



### Honorary librarian

*Impressed by the reading skills of 4-year-old Daliyah Arana of Gainesville, Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden gave the young reader an opportunity to shadow her as "librarian for the day" on Jan. 10 at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. Daliyah has her own library card and is a regular at the Hall County Library, where mom Haleema Arana introduced her to the GPLS-sponsored 1,000 Books B4 Kindergarten program early last year. Daliyah met the program's 1,000-book goal in less than a year and plans to reach 1,500 by the time she enters kindergarten this fall. She will also be recognized as Georgia's 2017 Junior State Librarian as part of Public Library Day at the Capitol on Feb. 8.*