

Christopher Stewart

We are thrilled to resume regular publication of *The Political Librarian* with Volume 4, Issue # 2. Our deepest gratitude to our authors and readers for your unwavering patience over the past several months. We had intended to resume publication in early spring of 2020. The disruption of Covid-19 changed our plans, as it has for everyone. We live of course in a dramatically different world since the last issue of *The Political Librarian* was published. While most of the articles presented in this issue were authored before the pandemic and the widespread social, cultural, and civil unrest that began in Minneapolis this spring, we believe that the work presented here provides a solid sampling of the type of content we will be providing in future issues. The lens will be further focused, however. We encourage research and commentary at the intersection of public library policy, practice, and the profound challenges currently faced by our society and our democracy.

Ilana Stonebreaker opens our current issue with a call to action for librarians to consider running for office by providing a summary of strategies she used for her successful campaign for a seat on the Tippecanoe County Council. Stonebreaker argues that the skillsets we already possess as librarians – namely, systems thinking, research, and advocacy – fill a deep toolbox of skills needed for effective public office. We agree.

Heather Elia's essay on the importance of documentation for library programs and services is particularly relevant at a time when library programming is and will continue to be reshaped in a pandemic and post-pandemic world. How are we measuring the impact of our response, and how will we use these measurements to support the library's critical work in what will undoubtedly be a challenging funding environment in the coming years?

Ndumu, Dickinson, and Jaeger outline the crucial role of the public library in ensuring public access and involvement in the 2020 US Census, with a focus on disenfranchised communities. The issues raised in this

engaging review are particularly poignant at a time when public trust in government has been so eroded by the very ones entrusted with it. Libraries, the authors argue, are uniquely “bi-partisan, factual, and judgement-free.” As institutions, libraries have the opportunity and responsibility to engage the public in the enormously important national count. Libraries unite us when little else does.

Susan Rhoad's use of the theoretical framework of Relationship Management Theory to explore one public library's public relations effectiveness over a ten-year period is an excellent example of scholarship that informs the practice. Rhoad provides us with a useful model for reviewing and revising practices, particularly those that involve synchronous communications.

Million and Bossaller seek to address gaps in the research on political activity and lobbying of state library associations. Their findings provide a compelling if somewhat unsettling picture of challenges faced by state library associations as they seek to influence often uninformed policy makers. Million and Bossaller's argument that state associations need to move from re-active to pro-active lobbying strategies is a compelling one.

At *The Political Librarian*, our job is to document and, in doing so, create shared knowledge on library advocacy and policy at all levels. We hope that we have accomplished that in these pages.

Enjoy the issue.