



International Association of School Librarianship

PRESIDENTIAL POINTS

Do you ever have song lyrics stuck in your head?

My brain is repeating this oldie: “Time keeps on slippin’ slippin’ slippin’ into the future” (Fly Like an Eagle, by the Steve Miller Band).

For humans, time runs strictly in one direction, from now to the future. We try to stop time by grabbing moments to fix them in our memories, but we can’t reverse time (except in science fiction).

Moments noted in this Newsletter issue help us take time to remember IASL Board members whom we’ve lost this year, meet new colleagues, and highlight our time together at the IASL2021 Conference.

Reuniting with our global family at the IASL2021 Conference sparked so much joy for me - hearing your voices, seeing familiar and new faces, and learning so much - together. Thank you again, Conference Team!

Folks outside the Western hemisphere time-shifted to be awake during Texas daytime for IASL2021 Conference meetings and presentations. Soon after, folks in the Western hemisphere time-shifted to watch the Tokyo2020 Olympics events live.

In 2021, the International Olympic Committee updated the Olympic Motto to “Faster, Higher, Stronger - Together” (“Citius, Altius, Fortius - Communiter” in Latin), recognizing what we IASL members have always known: we can do so much more together than we can accomplish alone.



Katy Manck at her son's wedding (2021)

Our own professions reflect the very first time-shifting technology – writing. Whether cave drawings or pictographs or words, the invention of writing allowed someone to finally know another person’s thoughts without being with them in the same time and place.

These days, we can use the time-shifting tech and media in our libraries, homes, and devices to visit the past (no time-travel paradox) or be with folks on the other side of the world (in real time). How far time has taken us from the 1970s when our Association’s founders relied on postal letters!

As we continue to celebrate IASL’s 50th birthday, I hope you’ll take time to stay connected for our future together.

Yours in school librarianship,
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Professional Learning Communities for Growth, Social Action, and Camaraderie

BY HEERU BHOJWANI INFORMATION CURATOR & COACH - AMERICAN SCHOOL OF BOMBAY, INDIA, ALAN JACQUES, K-12 LIBRARIAN - GEMS WORLD ACADEMY, DUBAI



Different kinds of book clubs for different groups.

School Librarians spend much of their day teaching 21st Century skills to students, but it's also important that we keep our own skills in tune. Joining a Professional Learning Community (PLC) helps us to keep abreast with current practices, build skills and knowledge, and maintain a growth mindset. Liferarian Association (<https://liferarian.com/>) is one such community of librarians in India that started six years ago with only ten members, and has grown into a community of over a hundred enterprising librarians.

Professional Growth Community:

Liferarians supports growth in many ways; they share resources, coach each other, run one-off expert workshops, and also longer structured courses. Trainings typically include best pedagogical practices and technology tools for 21st-century skills, but more than that is the daily presence of like-minded peers to help answer questions or discuss a tricky concept.

The pandemic has changed the way librarians teach and support learning. Books were suddenly not available, our facilities lay fallow, and resources were considered too dangerous or difficult to circulate. Nevertheless, it did not stop



Spicing up Class with engaging Digital Resources

librarians from reaching out to students and providing the teaching community with the right resources. Librarians diligently learned new ways to curate and share resources while also being vigilant about copyright infringement and fair use to maintain academic integrity.

Liferarian Association members shared ideas and engaged in conversations to help the tribe think and grow (and read!) while practising new skills. Expert coaching sessions this pandemic year included, Peardeck, Padlet, Canva, Quizziz and other tools to engage student learning. Simultaneously, Liferarian blog posts give asynchronous support and provide opportunities for group members to share ideas and best practices.

To ensure that technology tools are not just bells & whistles but have academic rigour, the Liferarian team members engage in smaller PLCs within the association. During these sessions, topics range widely depending on need; from authentic passion projects, to identifying fake news, to literacy enhancement ideas, to reading strategies, to teaching information & media literacy.

Social Responsibility:

Apart from upskilling librarians, the Liferarian Association is committed to social responsibility and feels obligated to serve the local community. Inspired by UNESCO's SDG 4 of Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all, the Liferarian Association has used crowd-funding to kickstart several projects. A partnership with Pratham Books delivered mother tongue book packages to rural schools in India to support literacy in local languages.

Another project created sustainable libraries in four underfunded schools by providing infrastructure and staff training. Read Bloom Books Fest (<https://bit.ly/3fRBSxg>) is a reading-writing literary fest for children by children. At their virtual lit fest, the keynote speakers, panellists, workshop presenters and participants are all children, empowering children's voice and choice.

Finally, learning communities thrive on trust and camaraderie:

A recent Liferarians workshop Using tech tools creatively to deepen literacy and learning, initiated a deep post-workshop conversation about student learning. It was compelling listening as members from diverse backgrounds, Mohammad Wahid from Bangladesh, Kuntal Bhandare from India, Samira Ezzo from Lebanon, and others all engaged in sharing experiences about their respective countries, cultures, and communities. Sharing professional advice, but also anecdotes, smiles, and cheer. It validated that the Liferarian Association has grown into a close-knit group based on both professionalism and developing friendships, which enables members to converse with emotion and take risks with trust and confidence.