EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S NOTE

I'm pleased to bring you the 2019-20 Annual Report for LibraryReads, covering our activities from July 2019 through June 30, 2020.

Like most organizations (and the whole world, really!) our work was affected this year by the COVID-19 crisis. However, we are in the fortunate position that it did not affect what we offer—support for books, authors, and readers' advisory—just the ways that we are able to offer it.

As an organization without a physical location and with Board members across the country, not too much else had to change drastically for us, thank goodness. In order to maintain some consistency in such inconsistent times, our board did not turn over in the spring of 2020 as we would have expected.

A few highlights from this year: in the fall of 2019, we refreshed our website; and in 2020 we began working on new online events, beginning with changing our long-standing and popular in-person author events to recorded interviews.

We are very grateful that we continue to be able to rely on the support we receive from our publisher partners. LibraryReads would not exist without their backing, and we are always thrilled to be able to work with them and promote all of the exciting remote offerings they have pivoted to this year.

If you have any questions about the information in this report (or about LibraryReads in general!), please don’t hesitate to contact me at rebecca@libraryreads.org.

Best,

Rebecca Vnuk, Executive Director, Chicago

Allison Escoto, Administrative Assistant, NYC
ABOUT LIBRARYREADS

LibraryReads creates the monthly nationwide library staff picks list for adult fiction and non-fiction. Our goal is to help connect librarians’ favorite books to as many readers as possible, while drawing upon the incredible power that public library staff has in helping to build word-of-mouth for new books, and the important role that libraries play in creating audiences for all kinds of authors.

LibraryReads is unique in that the list is not trying to pick “the best” of anything, and there are no judges or juries. The monthly list is the collective favorites of the library staff who have voted — the books we loved reading and cannot wait to share! Participation is open to everyone who works in a public library, both senior staff and new arrivals, no matter which area of the library they work in. The more the merrier—LibraryReads is designed to be inclusive, representing a broad range of reading tastes and showcasing a variety of new titles, including buzzed-about debuts, genre favorites, bestselling authors, and midlist titles that public library staff are raving about.

Each month, LibraryReads is announced via e-mail, social media, and on our website. Our list is also featured in a range of media outlets such as Booklist, Library Journal, Shelf Awareness, and the NoveList database.

MISSION

LibraryReads puts in list form what library staff do with patrons every day at the desk, in the community, and online: connecting readers with books, suggesting titles that will generate lively conversation among readers, and encouraging staff and readers to share further within their own reading network. LibraryReads is dedicated to celebrating reading and encouraging a sense of delight and discovery for readers of adult books.
Recognizing the deep commitment Board members have made and respecting the wealth of information and assistance they represent, former members of the LibraryReads Steering Committee (2013-2018) have been invited to join us as Advisory Council members.

Current Advisory Council members:
OUR REACH

LibraryReads picks are seen by thousands of library workers and library patrons each month via our outreach efforts and social media channels. When the list is published on our website each month, it is picked up and publicized by a number of media outlets and hundreds of public libraries. Purchasing lists are immediately made available to librarians via OverDrive, Ingram, Baker & Taylor, Bibliotheca and Midwest Tape.

Our users are engaged and listening: the LibraryReads email newsletter currently has over 9,000 subscribers; and our open rate averages a robust 47%.

We regularly see interaction online with general readers, in addition to library staffers.

Just spent my lunch cruising Library Reads archives for gift ideas for my not-quite-mother-in-law. Being out of the public library game really hampers my reading recommendations, and I saw so many things I want to add to my own to-read list. Thanks Rebecca Vnuk Stephanie Anderson and the whole team!
USERS

We conducted an online user survey in January 2020. Highlights from 400 respondents:
They are majority white (which reflects the profession) and highest number of respondents were from “East N Central (Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin)”, but not a large percentage (27%). The fewest respondents were “East S Central (Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi)” with only 3%.

They use the list for personal reading choices as well as selection. 83% indicated they would be interested in LibraryReads as a resource for continuing readers' advisory education and training opportunities.

If you have not voted in the past year, why not?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edelweiss is too complicated</td>
<td>6.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netgalley is too complicated</td>
<td>3.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LibraryReads’ nominating process is too complicated</td>
<td>6.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I read in print and don’t know how to nominate</td>
<td>28.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t like writing annotations</td>
<td>12.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not work in a public library and am not eligible to vote</td>
<td>3.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>49.47%</td>
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Several responses indicated they were new to LibraryReads or didn’t know they were eligible/how to vote.

“I read too slowly and can never finish a new book in time to do a review”
“I read print arcs more often.”
“I’m behind in my reading and don’t always get to pre pub titles”

Where do you get ARCs/Galleys?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Netgalley</td>
<td>48.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edelweiss</td>
<td>44.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I receive print copies in the mail/ at my library/ at a conference</td>
<td>66.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not read pre-publication</td>
<td>18.45%</td>
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How do you use LibraryReads?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As a selection tool</td>
<td>63.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To create library displays</td>
<td>40.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To create shelftalkers/sticker books</td>
<td>9.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programming/use with book clubs</td>
<td>19.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share with patrons through print material (newsletters, bookmarks)</td>
<td>38.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share with patrons through email/website</td>
<td>12.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share on library’s social media</td>
<td>18.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct reading suggestions to individual patrons</td>
<td>53.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal reading choices</td>
<td>71.24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments:
Share on Friends of the Library Facebook
We have a shelf in the new fiction area dedicated to LibraryReads titles. We purchase every title on the list. To know where there is interest to help me keep an eye on upcoming releases, especially those outside genres I personally prefer but that are of high interest to patrons To keep up to date on new titles to supplement my ordering, be sure I have not missed anything new
NUMBERS

TOTAL VOTES, JULY 2019-JUNE 2020

Highest Month: June 2020, with 5791 votes

SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS

Facebook: 9995 followers
Twitter: 7135 followers
Instagram: 3105 followers

46,081

20,235
We continue to see great reach via our social media channels. Many libraries post our list for their patrons and followers throughout the month.

<< We love seeing authors get traction from sharing our posts!

@LibraryReads99 has thoughtfully created a list of upcoming books by Black authors here: libraryaware.com/2960/Posts/View...

If any of these books look interesting to you, head to the Suggest a Purchase tab on the Barrington website and tell us you want it!

8:00 AM · Jun 10, 2020 · TweetDeck

Laura Hankin
@LauraHankin

This feels like being at an awards show while the noms are being read - camera pans to @csittenfeld & @emmastraub & @jenniferweiner smiling serenely, then cuts to me and I’m just weeping and sweaty, awed to be in their company. Thanks so much @LibraryReads99!
Publishers do a wonderful job utilizing social media to promote LibraryReads and to help engage their followers by featuring their eligible titles.
Fall 2019:
Adult Reading Roundtable ARRTCon 2019, Naperville, IL; Rebecca Vnuk presented the keynote, "Librarians As Influencers"; Board members Steven Sposato and Annabelle Mortensen presented "LibraryReads 101/Writing Annotations"

Winter 2020:
"We Love Book Clubs" Live Event for the Glen Ellyn (IL) Public Library: Live event for 75 book group leaders, showcasing past LibraryReads titles.

ALA Midwinter, Philadelphia: "2020 Debut Author Panel" and "2020 Author Breakfast"

PLA Conference, Nashville: “Your Evening is Booked” Author Panel

Spring 2020: THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC PIVOT
With the cancellation of in-person conferences, LibraryReads still found ways to engage users and promote readers' advisory and authors. Several Board members, along with Rebecca, participated in a virtual program for BookExpo America: "A Novel Re-Opening: Readers' Advisory After Coronavirus" (photo, top). We also changed our usual in-person meal events into two hour-long videos featuring nine author interviews. These can be viewed at any time on our new YouTube channel, youtube.com/c/libraryreads.
We continued our very successful webinar partnership with NoveList this year, offering a crash course in popular genres, designed to give librarians a sense of why readers are drawn to the genre; some tips for talking with fans; key books in the genre to know; sub-genres and crossover titles to keep in mind; and more. These 1-hour sessions are offered at no cost to attendees, and consist of a full hour of training.

Over 7,600 people registered for the three webinars we held in this period—Horror, Graphic Novels, and Historical Fiction, and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

It has been a delight to work with the staff at NoveList and the response has been tremendous. Each session brings together some of LibraryReads’ top readers’ advisors currently working in public libraries with the book specialists at NoveList—a winning combination.

At the fall 2019 Board Retreat, it was decided that the UnConference model, while a wonderful in-person opportunity, is not fiscally sound. We will shift our training focus to piggybacking on existing opportunities, from offering LibraryReads programs to library systems, state libraries, and consortia; doing programs at state/local conferences, and sponsoring pre-conference programs.

2019 UNCONFERENCE
In October 2018, 50 library staffers from Southern California joined our board for a day of readers’ advisory training. The morning consisted of “RA 101” taught by Board members, and the afternoon was a lively discussion of current readers’ advisory topics.

WEBINARS
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In the fall of 2019, we completed an overhaul of our website, adding additional pages for Events and FAQ; making it easier to see what is new; linking to a sortable master list; and giving the Hall of Fame a more polished look and navigation.
NEW FOR 2020: TRAVEL GRANT

To broaden public library staff participation in continuing education events, particularly those with a readers’ advisory element, LibraryReads has developed a travel grant program to help defray costs and encourage attendance for those who might not otherwise be able to attend such events. Eligible applicants must be employed, in any job title, at a public library in the US, have an interest in readers’ advisory for adults, and must have actively participated in LibraryReads voting in the 3 month period prior to application.

Three $1,000 grants were awarded in 2020:
Midwinter: Jessica C. Williams, Information Services Librarian, Tiffin-Seneca Public Library, OH

PLA: Vickie Bartz, County Librarian, Big Stone County, MN and Marianne Ramirez, Sayville Library, Long Island, NY

We plan to offer additional grants when in-person conferences resume, and will also consider giving grants for eligible online conferences.

WHAT’S AHEAD: 2020-2021

While the COVID-19 pandemic certainly changed some of our plans this year, LibraryReads is committed to furthering our reach in the readers’ advisory continuing education space, planning more webinars, online conversations, and author panels. We look forward to working with our publisher and vendor partners to accomplish this in the year ahead!
Thank you to our supporters

LibraryReads benefits from strong partnerships and collaborative relationships with a wide variety of organizations and companies.

Special thanks goes to those who help promote LibraryReads: our voting partners, Edelweiss and NetGalley; media outlets including Booklist, Library Journal, BookPage, BookReporter, EarlyWord, and RA For All; and vendors such as Ingram, Baker & Taylor, Midwest Tape, NoveList, and OverDrive.

Finally, we must thank the many staff members from public libraries across the country who read, vote, and share the list with their patrons.

Our list would not be possible without the support of the publishers featured in our monthly lists, as well as the support of NoveList, Edelweiss, NetGalley, and the Adult Library Marketing Association.

The following publishers provided support to LibraryReads in this reporting period.

Our founding publisher partners:
• Hachette Book Group • HarperCollins • Macmillan • Other Press • Penguin Group (USA) • Quercus Publishing
• Random House, Inc. • Simon & Schuster • Workman Publishing • W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.