

What's in....

# The Stacks

November 2019

## A Message from Jack Martin

Dear PPL Conservators — With 2020 and PPL's Grand Reopening on the horizon, I wanted to reflect on the past six years. Little did I know what the future had in store when I arrived here (for the second time) in 2014!

What I did know was that the organization needed to immediately undertake a strategic planning process and that the 1953 building wasn't the most welcoming physical structure. When I visited for my interview, the door person at the Biltmore (now the Graduate) asked why I was in town. I replied that I was interviewing at Providence Public Library and they exclaimed, "Oh, that's the place that has all the great parties!" PPL was already known as an incredible event space thanks to our 2012 renovation and partnership with Russell Morin Catering & Events. But what of our mission? Who were we to our users, our partners, and our community at large?

One of the strategies that emerged during strategic planning that summer called for PPL to "become a place that represents transparency and innovation." This was the beginning of what would become the largest library renovation project in state history. Not what I thought I would be doing when I started, but what was needed in order for PPL to be a true hub of education, workforce development, and personal enrichment! It was time to reimagine the spaces inside our Empire Street wing so that PPL could enter a new era of service to all Rhode Islanders.

Nearly 6 years later, PPL is on the cusp of a truly inspiring transformation. Once our renovation is complete, our library will finally physically reflect our mission *to engage learners, inspire thinkers and connect diverse communities*. It is overwhelming to reflect on our progress since I arrived. And none of this would have been possible without you, our most passionate and dedicated supporters. You have been steadfast in your devotion. You have put your trust in me and PPL's staff to make a difference for every single person who seeks our help. And you understand that public libraries — our library — are more important now than ever. *Thank you, thank you, thank you* for all you do! You are the change makers, and I am more grateful for you all than I can possibly express.

*Happy holidays* to you and yours and cheers to a new year unlike any other for PPL!

## Conservator Society

## Did You Know...

*PPL founded its annual Creative Fellowship in 2014 as an opportunity for a local artist to create new work based upon, utilizing, or inspired by materials from our Special Collections. This year we are proud to have Kelly Eriksen, a Providence-based multimedia artist with a background in glass and an interest in "how the things that we interact with every day can be viewed as materials with which we can work and play." Kelly will do research and design a sound installation related to the topic of journalism as part of our 2020 Exhibition & Program series. We love that Kelly's work is both conceptual and interactive, and we're so excited to see what she creates!*

## Upcoming Events...

### Looking Ahead to the New Year — Please save these dates!

**Wednesday, March 25, 2020 | 6 — 8 pm**

Time Capsule Sealing & First Look Renovation Tour

**Monday, March 30, 2020 | 10 am**

THINK AGAIN Ribbon Cutting Event

**Wednesday, April 1, 2020 | 6 — 8 pm**

2020 Exhibition & Program Series Opening — This year's theme is Journalism!

**Saturday, April 4, 2020 | 10 am — 5 pm**

Grand Reopening OPEN HOUSE Celebration

**Friday, April 24, 2020 — Savor The Story 2020 - Grand Reopening Edition!** With over 100 tickets already sold, we're well on our way to selling out this event — which will have a Hollywood Red Carpet theme — and we want to be certain you all are there to celebrate with us! Please contact Erica at [ebusilloadams@provlib.org](mailto:ebusilloadams@provlib.org) or 455-8073 to reserve your sponsorship or tickets now.

## Program News and Events

**Want news about ours and other cultural programs in the community?** We invite you to subscribe to our new **Cultural Content** e-newsletter, which includes up-to-the minute messages from Christina Bevilacqua, our Programs & Exhibitions Director. To sign up, please visit [www.provlib.org/visit-us/connect-with-us/](http://www.provlib.org/visit-us/connect-with-us/) and use the form to select **PPL Cultural Content**.

**Special Invitation** — We have three **Teen Showcases** in December... These offer a great chance to see what our teens are learning and the impact of your giving in action!

**Rhode Coders 2.0** — Tuesday, December 17 — 4 - 5 pm and Wednesday, December 18 — 4 - 5 pm

**RINI Data Navigators** — Thursday, December 19 — 1:30 - 3 pm



# PPL Alum Spotlight

*Thanks to your generosity as a Conservator, individuals from all walks of life have experiences at PPL that exemplify the difference the Library makes in our community. We are thrilled to share these stories of achievement and to demonstrate the incredible impact you are making as a member of the Conservator Society. You make these alum stories possible!*

## For PPL Alum Luisa Murillo, Library is a Family Affair

I have many passions and interests and would definitely say I am a “lifelong learner!” I am also a true library lover from when I was a little girl! As a single parent of four, I have often turned to the Library and it has long been a phenomenal resource for our entire family...for us, the Library is a “family affair.” We have all taken part in such wonderful programs over many years. My 23-year-old son Luis, now a senior in college, was in the PPL’s first Cradle to Crayons program when he was just a one-year-old. My younger children have participated in various classes and family learning programs, from paper making, to culinary arts, to robotics and coding workshops. Personally, I can say that the three free library technology classes in coding and data analysis (Rhode Coders & Data Navigators) that I took two years ago gave me not only invaluable experience and skills, but also critical confidence and piqued my interest to pursue other courses and trainings that have enabled me to do so much more.



*“I’m a true library lover ... as a single parent of four, I have often turned to the Library and it has long been a phenomenal resource for our entire family.”*

After these classes, I began my current job as Director of Social Programs at Progreso Latino (where I had worked 20 years ago as Youth Program Director). Because of what I learned, I felt comfortable exploring and taking on the bulk of our communications activities in house – including development of a new website and various social media, as well as important information tracking – using an increasing number of tools. Since then, I have even been back to PPL for the Small Business Workshop series with RI SCORE. These classes have opened up a whole new world and led to other training opportunities!

I cannot stress how wonderfully committed the Library staff is to ensuring the advancement of the participants in their classes. They are supportive, responsive and highly professional. We are living in a time when basic expenses continue to increase, but not wages. These programs are part of an economic development solution to help families.

## Meet our Controller, Kasandra Larsen

Kasandra Larsen came to Providence in the winter of 2015, after 16 years down south, and started at PPL in 2016. She became the PPL’s Controller in July 2017.



Having previously worked for the New Orleans Public Library during college, she had her sights set on a position in library finance — so when a position opened up at PPL, she was thrilled! What she likes most about her job is making finance more understandable (and, hopefully, less intimidating) to management, staff, and the general public.

Kasandra is also a visual artist and a published, award-winning writer of poetry and flash fiction; when not in the office, she spends her time on projects involving both language and paint! You can learn more about Kasandra and her artistic pursuits here: <https://kasandra5247.wixsite.com/kasandralarsenpoetry>.

## Development Update...

We are thrilled to report that we have received a grant of \$750,000 from the Champlin Foundation this year in support of our THINK AGAIN Capital Campaign. This continued support of our building project brings Champlin’s total contribution to an incredible \$1,250,000! To all of you who have advocated for PPL in recent years, THANK YOU! This would not have been possible without you.

To date, our campaign has raised nearly \$18.5 million!

## Newspaper Grant: Have you heard?

We’re excited to let you know that, through the efforts of Sen. Jack Reed, PPL and Rhode Island Historical Society (RIHS) were awarded \$250,000 as part of the National Digital Newspaper Program — a partnership between the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Library of Congress — to create a national digital resource of historically significant newspapers published between 1690 and 1963 from all the U.S. states and territories for the first time in history. This grant funding will enable PPL and RIHS to publish a full inventory of the 314 Rhode Island newspaper titles that RIHS holds on master microfilm reels, digitize at least 100,000 pages, and promote the accessibility of these digital resources to the broader community. Work is under way!

## Welcome New Conservator!

Welcome to our newest Conservator: Nancy Fritz