



Strengthening LA County Library with YOUR generous support.

February 2020

Dear Library Champion,

February is [Black History Month](#) and LA County Library has special events all month long.

Plus, all year long, the Library celebrates the history and contributions of African Americans.

The [Black Resource Center](#) (BRC), one of the Library's four cultural Resource Centers, provides information, cultural programming, and unique resources for community members, educators, artists, journalists, filmmakers, and countless others.

That's where you and I are heading.

The BRC is a place to feast your eyes...on paintings, prints, and sculptures by local African Americans.

It's a place to quench your thirst for knowledge...with books, posters, photographs, newspapers, movies, music, and events about Black history and culture.

And it's a welcoming place -- for asking questions, settling in for a good read, or borrowing from the collection.

Plus, the BRC's home, [AC Bilbrew Library](#) in Willowbrook, celebrates dynamic community leader Madame Bilbrew -- poet, musician, former Los

Angeles County deputy, and the first African American to have her own radio show in the U.S.

It's a good place to pay tribute to a champion of women's rights and children's literacy as we mark the 100th anniversary of the [19th amendment](#) and women obtaining the right to vote.

So, consider making a trip in person to AC Bilbrew Library and the Black Resource Center. You'll be glad you did!

If that's not in the cards, no worry. Visit your local library for a Black History event.

Rather stay at home? Download [an ebook](#) or stream a [movie or TV show](#). Like all Library resources, they're free with your Library card.

And, fittingly, as Valentine's Day approaches, **we're seeing a whole lotta love for libraries...**read on for some fun facts.

Let me know what you love about your Library. Drop me a line at acarroll@lacolibraryfoundation.org.

Thank you for [supporting the Library](#) through your LA County Library Foundation!

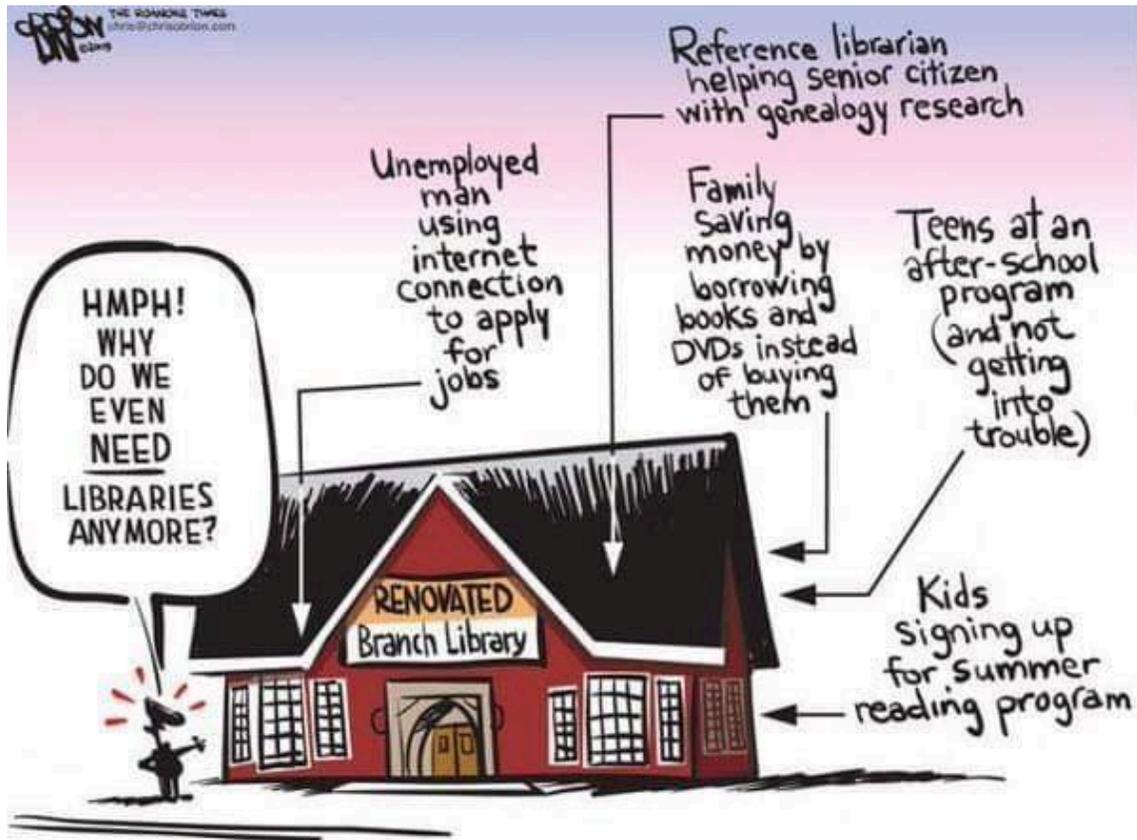
ANDREA

Andrea Carroll
Executive Director

P.S. Like what you're reading? Forward this newsletter and share the love!

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My Library Story:



Chris Obrion, Roanoke Times.

What do you love about your Library?

Tell us, in 150 words or less.

(or send us a drawing!)



Black Resource Center Librarian Rose Mitchell in front of masks by Emile Jordan and the Undesign the Redline exhibit at AC Bilbrew Library.

You've Got Places to Go: **Black Resource Center**

Rose Mitchell, Black Resource Center (BRC) Librarian, carefully pulls an aged black and white formal portrait from a long row of photo archives.

She points to a man, seated with his wife and children. "That's Alva Garrott. I'll never forget him."

And Rose tells me the story of the first question she received in 2002, as the BRC's new librarian: "I got a phone call. Who was the first African American dentist in Los Angeles?"

For Rose, a former aerospace librarian, that was the beginning of her

discovering, sharing, and connecting people with the history of Black Los Angeles and beyond.

The [Black Resource Center \(BRC\)](#) was established in 1978 to provide information and resources for African Americans and others in Los Angeles County.

Today, as then, **the Center supports research about the experiences and impact of African Americans and black people of the diaspora**, especially within metropolitan LA, one of the most culturally and ethnically diverse communities in the country.

Community members and researchers can borrow items from the collection, use reference materials, examine posters and photographs, and pore through years of microfilm from local, regional, and national newspapers focused on African-American communities.

Rose says she often shares a portrait of Bidley Mason, a former slave who became a wealthy local landowner, philanthropist, and founder of the First AME Church in Los Angeles.

That's because **she's eager to introduce young people to African Americans** who've shaped the community, yet who aren't as well known as someone like Harriet Tubman.

It's a way to spark curiosity and excitement about local history and an appreciation and understanding of this dynamic community.

People come from far and near for the Center's unique resources, Rose says, and tells me about two scholars working on dissertations: one from France who focused on Compton and the other, from England, who used the collection to zero in on Blaxploitation films of the 1970s.

Locally, educators from UCLA, Southwest Community College, and sometimes a middle school or high school, bring their classes to the Center because of the wealth of materials and easy access to them.

As an LA County Library card holder, you can request any circulating item and have it delivered, for free, to your community library.



Golden State Mutual Art Collection, AC Billbrew Library (credit: Los Angeles County Arts)

Rose points to the art on the walls in her office and tours me through the library, including the glassed-in Quiet Room for Adults, its walls alive with paintings, prints, and fiber art by local African American artists.

There's a story behind the works. They're from the Golden State Mutual Art Collection, what was once the largest collection in the U.S. of work by African American artists.

Rose believes in connecting the dots. So, when she heard a talk about a book by a WWII Buffalo Soldier (an all-Black unit stationed in Italy) who later led Golden State Mutual, she tracked Ivan Houston down and invited him to speak at the BRC.

He returned in 2017 when the library reopened after a remodel. The new (and current) design prominently displayed 40 or so artworks from the former Golden State Mutual Collection, including a painting in the BRC office by William Pajaud, curator of the original Collection.

Mr. Houston was delighted: the public could enjoy this remarkable and once private collection just as he had. In fact, he told Rose, he had three of the same prints hanging in his home.

Again, one event led to another -- after watching a documentary about Pajaud at the annual Pan African Film Festival, Rose screened the film at the BRC with a presentation by the filmmaker and with Pajaud's family in attendance.

The Black Resource Center is unique, and needed. It's a rarity -- a specialized research collection open to the community.

Rose points to the changing population of LA County and to the BRC's

programs, materials, and cross cultural resources. "It's so important to have places to go and learn about and from each other."

The BRC hosts genealogy workshops, a Kwanzaa Marketplace, and a Juneteenth celebration each year. This month, it's hosting a special event every Saturday. [Upcoming events include:](#)

- Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: Speeches and Songs;
- *May I Speak??* A Panel Discussion and Conversation;
- *Conversations with the Queen: Coretta Scott King*; and a
- Book Club discussion of *The New Urban Crisis* and the *Undesign the Redline* exhibit.

Heads-up: in April, Alison Rose Jefferson will talk about her book *Living the California Dream: African American Leisure Sites During The Jim Crow Era*. Dr. Jefferson did some of her research at the BRC, including about the history of Bruce's Beach in Manhattan Beach.

The BRC is a treasure. It's free, and welcoming, and waiting for you.

Curious? Visit the [Black Resource Center](#).

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Where do you want to go next?

Let us know!



Grannie's Wisdom by Karen Collins, 2010 (on display at the BRC). Ms. Collin's Greensboro Four shadow box was the January 30 Google doodle.

Library Events: Take Your Pick...

Black History Month is a time to recognize, celebrate, and honor the rich and diverse history and important contributions and achievements of African Americans.

Whether you want to sing, dance, talk, listen, read, or look, you'll find an event (or several!) you'll enjoy. *Here's a sampling:*

Songs, Dance & Stories

- Huntington Park Library and Alondra Library host [Talking Drums](#); there's an [African Djembe Drums workshop](#) at Acton Agua Dulce (for adults); and for kids, [Djembe Drumming](#) at Hacienda Heights, La Crescenta, Little Rock, Willowbrook, and Woodcrest libraries (search [Events](#) by library);
- [Jazz with Dr. Dawn Norfleet](#) at Diamond Bar Library;

- [Mr. Marcus' Soul Music Show!](#) at View Park Bebe Moore Campbell Library;
- [African Dance Rhythms](#) at Graham Library;
- [Ragtime Music Concert](#) at Chet Holifield Library;
- [Zomo the Trickster Rabbit](#) for babies, toddlers, kids, and their adult caregivers at Malibu Library; and at
- West Hollywood Library, a performance of [Dorothy and Otto: The Dorothy Dandridge Affair](#).
- Plus, [Kids Get the Blues, Too!](#) an interactive event of song, dance, and rhythm exercises at Lomita Library.

Quilt Codes & the Underground Railroad

You're invited to learn about quilt codes, a visual system that may have guided slaves along the Underground Railroad. You'll also create your own quilt square from colorful papers.

[25 locations are hosting workshops](#): find one at a library near you...or use it as a reason to explore a library that's new to you.

Book Clubs for Families, Kids & Adults

- The [Family Book Club for Ages 7-11](#) at Agoura Hills Library will enjoy a light dinner while talking about *Muddy* (Waters); and families in the [Raise Your Voice Book Club](#) at San Gabriel Library can take home a copy of the picture book *The Youngest Marcher: The Story of Audrey Faye Hendricks*;
- The [Book Munchers](#) at San Fernando Library (4th-7th grade) are reading *Biddy Mason Speaks Up*;
- The [Adult Book Club](#) at Norwood is reading *Underground Railroad*; and [Black History Book Club](#) at Little Rock Library will discuss *Men We Reaped: A Memoir* by Jesmyn Ward.

Full STEAM Ahead

[Mākmō for Teens: Galaxy Box](#) explores the solar system through the eyes of a slave -- [see what's happening at your library](#).

And there's more.... Author talks, Citizenship classes, Films, ESL and English Conversation, Cooking, Business Saturday, Genealogy and, revving up for tax season, Free Tax Prep. Plus, there's voting-related

programming for children, teens, and adults.

Search the [Library Events Calendar](#) to see what works for you...and remember, the events are *free*.

For Fun: **Fabulous Facts**

- **Looking for entertainment?** Head to your library! In 2019, adults in the U.S. visited the library more times than they went to the movies (or theme parks or museums) according to a recent [Gallup poll](#).

The poll had some other nuggets:

- **Women visit libraries** nearly twice as often as men. So, next time you head to the library, invite a guy along!
- **Adults in low-income households** visit libraries more often than adults in high-income households (though both groups go to theme parks and the zoo about equally).
- **18 to 29 year olds** visit libraries more often than older groups.
- And if you needed more stats about the lure of the library...in one year, **people visited public libraries more than one Billion times** according to the [Institute of Museum and Library Services](#)' newest *Public Libraries Survey Report*.

What's your favorite fabulous fact?

Send it our way!

You are a champion.

You're making the world a better place.

**Your gift to LA County Library Foundation
supports the Library.**

Thank you!

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**LOS ANGELES COUNTY
LIBRARY FOUNDATION**

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