



# LA COUNTY LIBRARY FOUNDATION

February 2024

Hi Library Champion,

Happy Leap Day!

February 29 feels magical, a gift every four years of a bonus day. A quick search of "Leap Day" in the Library's catalog brought up 294 titles.

Definitely a hot topic, or at least a good story, and spanning a range of materials and genres. Your Library has something for pretty much everyone.

That's been on my mind a lot lately, amplified by the upcoming elections, competing voices, and all too frequent attempts to stifle our right to read (including recently, a move to ban dictionaries from school libraries).

That's why your Library stands strong as a cornerstone of society, a trusted place, a source where you can access a range of books, ideas, information, and other resources.

It's also a place where you can find out about local and national politics and the how-tos of voting. Plus, you can drop off your ballot, day or night from now

through March 5 at 8 pm, at any of 48 [Vote By Mail Ballot Drop Box library locations](#). Make your voice heard!

While only the oldest will have the opportunity to cast a ballot in this upcoming election, teens have a lot to say. And your Library is committed to giving them the chance to read widely, explore, and learn about a range of ideas, people, and experiences so they can develop informed opinions.

That's the basis of [Books Unbanned, a Foundation-supported program](#) giving *any* teen (13-18 years) *anywhere in California* free access to the Library's entire collection of ebooks and e-audiobooks with a Books Unbanned Card.

In the few months since its launch, hundreds of teens have shared their reason for getting a Books Unbanned Card. This month's *My Library Story* shares a few of those.

I hope you're enjoying the varied programs, booklists, and activities your Library is sharing in celebration of Black History Month. There are plenty more on the docket.

If you haven't been there yet, you're in for a treat with a visit to the Library's Black Resource Center. That's where we're heading with this month's *Virtual Field Trip*.

And if you want to find out why the President of the United States stopped by the Library earlier this month, read on, or scroll to the end of this newsletter.

Thank you for standing strong for the freedom to read, learn, and explore!

With best wishes,

Andrea

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P.S. [You make an impact with your gift](#). **Thank you!**

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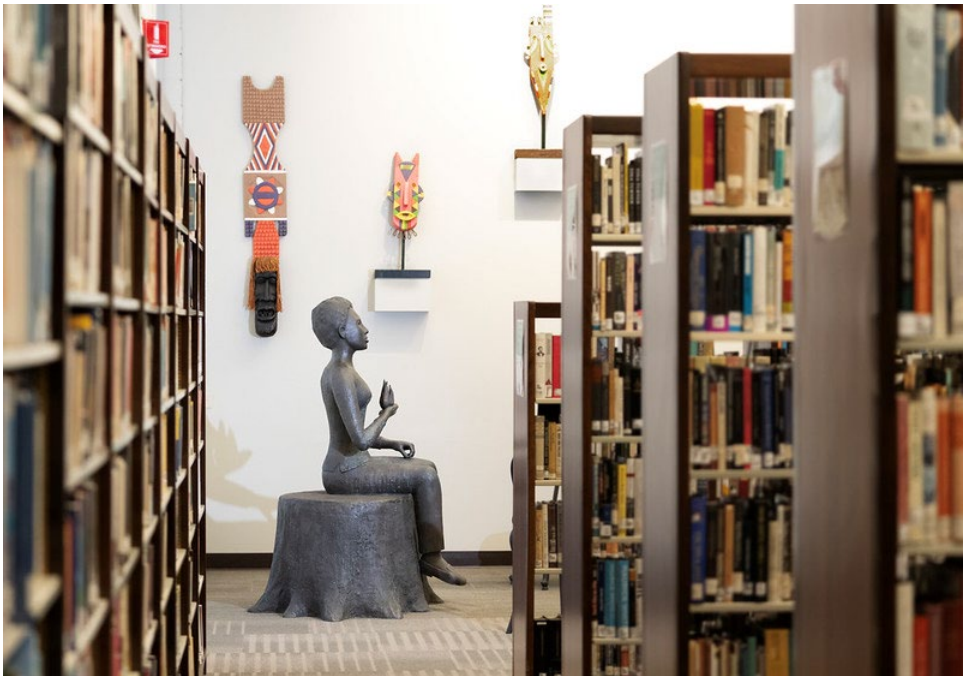


Image: Mayra B. Vasquez/LA County Library. Lorraine Hansberry art installation at A C Bilbrew Library.

*A C Bilbrew Library, host to the [Black Resource Center](#), houses a marvelous collection of art, as well as rotating exhibits like the installation above by Lorraine Hansbury (a partial view).*

*The sculptures on the walls, by a local artist inspired in part by his research at the library, are just some of the artworks (paintings, fabric works, prints, photographs, and other sculptures) you'll encounter throughout this vibrant space.*

*They're from the acclaimed Golden State Mutual Life Insurance art collection -- a collection of African American art amassed by what was once the largest African American owned business in the West.*

*There's a lot more to this intriguing story....If you love history and the stories behind objects or organizations like this, the Black Resource Center is a treasure trove of information.*

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# Virtual Field Trip: Black Resource Center at A C Bilbrew Library

Black History Month, like other celebratory periods, doesn't stop with February at your Library. In addition to programs, books, movies, and other materials available throughout the year at your local library, you've got a gem with the Library's [Black Resource Center](#).

Housed at A C Bilbrew Library (in an unincorporated area west of the city of Compton), the Black Resource Center (BRC) has a wealth of resources by and about Black and African Americans, the Black and African American experience, and the African Diaspora.

It's filled with stories, information, and art. You can learn about remarkable people and events who've shaped our community - like its host library's namesake, Madame A C Bilbrew.

Madame Bilbrew, an internationally recognized musician, poet, and choral director, was the first Black person to have a radio show. She was also a community leader and deputy to former Los Angeles County Supervisor Kenneth Hahn.

Curious about Biddy Mason, born enslaved and later one of Los Angeles's first prominent citizens and landowners in the 1850s and 1860s, as well as founder of the First African Methodist Episcopal Church in Los Angeles?

The BRC has stories for you -- told with photographs, newspaper clippings, and historical documents and papers. This is a place beloved by academics, school children, and community members.

You'll find local and national newspaper archives, including the Los Angeles *Sentinel*, California *Eagle*, Chicago *Defender*, New York *Amsterdam News*, and hundreds of others.

*Slave Narratives* from the Federal Writers Project 1936-1938, *Papers of the NAACP*, and other historical materials are also available on microform.

Check out [African American Living Legends](#), a series that honored leaders and visionaries from the African American community from 1980 to 2008.

Curious about the people, places, and communities of today? The BRC is there for you. Here's just a sampling: [booklists](#) for all ages, YouTube videos including a dynamic series [Power in Poetry](#), activity ideas like [A History of Hip Hop](#), and a Teen Culture Club that meets monthly ([sign up here](#) if you want to learn to crochet).

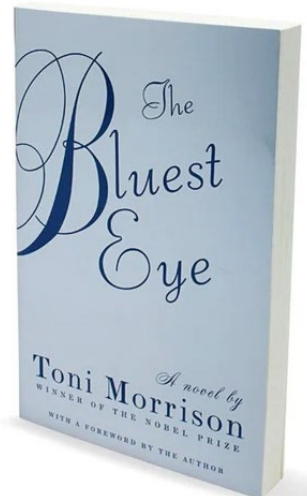
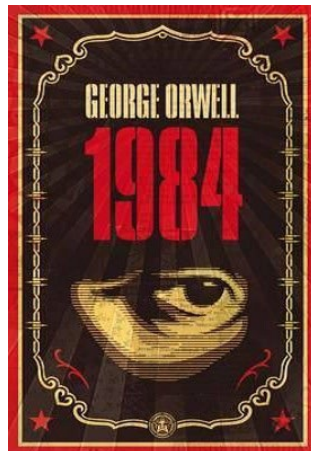
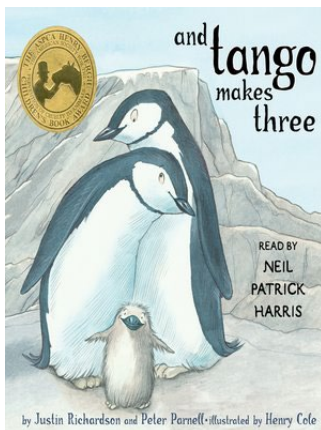
Teens and adults ages 60 and up are invited to participate in The Generations Project on March 9. In this intergenerational conversation, teens will interview elders about life in LA County and beyond. You can [register here](#).

Can't make it to A C Bilbrew Library and the BRC? Not a problem. Many of the materials will travel to you - find them in the Library's catalog, place a hold, and pick them up at your library of choice.

Plus, remember, you're got access to lots of treats, 24/7, with [ebooks and audiobooks](#). Have fun!

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## My Library Story: Teens on why a Books Unbanned Card matters



*The American Library Association's list of the country's most banned books includes: And Tango Makes Three by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell, 1984 by George Orwell, and The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison. The majority of book challenges target teens and titles by or about Black or LGBTQIA+ persons.*

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Your Library launched Books Unbanned last fall, an opportunity for any teen *anywhere* in California to [get a free LA County Library Books Unbanned Card](#) and have access to *any and every* ebook and e-audiobook in the Library's collection.

Young people from more than two dozen counties in California have signed up for a card, and hundreds have shared their reasons why. Read on for just a few:

*“My school banned a book I wanted to read.”*

*“This card is important to me so that I can read the books with representation of the queer community.”*

*“Sometimes it’s hard to get to the library and then I can’t even get the book I want. Who knows when I can get a ride again, so I’ll be stuck with no way to get the books I need.”*

*“I like listening to audiobooks, but they are expensive, and my library has a limited supply of audiobooks.”*

*“This library card is important to me because it allows me to...read all sides of an argument, opinion, or perspective.”*

Thank you, Library Champion, for standing strong to give young people the freedom to read, explore, and learn about a range of ideas and information.

## **What's your Library Story?**

[We want to know.](#)

[Read more Library stories here.](#)

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## A big announcement about education? Head to your Library!

“Folks, I’m happy to have been able to forgive these loans because when we ... relieve Americans of student debt, they are free to chase their dreams.”

That was President Joseph Biden making an historic announcement earlier this month about canceling student debt. And he made those remarks in a surprise visit to a County Library, the Culver City Julian Dixon Library.

Watch the recording here:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/d0ah3yDzqiE?feature=shared&t=2528>

**Thank you, Library Champion!**  
**You make a difference.**

**[Give Today](#)**



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