PALS UPDATE

PALS

PALS HIGHLIGHTS

Welcome back to another social distance semester. I hope you have been able to enjoy and relax during this pandemic summer. The PALS staff got some stuff done, personally, and in planning for the next year. Here are some highlights:

• User Groups Fall 2020 – will be divided into two online days. October 23 reserved for discussion purposes, October 30, for voting purposes. There will be no concurrent session, giving libraries with fewer staff members an opportunity to attend all the business meetings of their choice.

• Key Resource webpage – the PALS Support Staff created an easy to find a webpage with all of our Alma/Primo documentation. The goal is to make our documents easier to find, organizing the page by functional area. Note that the documentation links to the Support Center. Some documentation may require logging in to the Support Center. From www.mnpals.org, click on SUPPORT and choose Key Resources from the dropdown.

• Are you looking for minutes or agendas? We created a PALS Repository for our official business documents, using, of course, Islandora. Check it out here! Or navigate to http://www.mnpals.org click on MNPALS CONSORTIUM and choose MnPALS Repository from the dropdown.

• This semester we are trying something new with our training. We will conduct one training per functional area and one "show and tell" per functional area throughout the semester. See the MnPALS Calendar for scheduled events throughout the semester. Due to security concerns, we are no longer able to publish Zoom links and passwords on the website. Watch the MnPALS Discuss and the MnPALS Alma/Primo list for Zoom links and passwords. In addition, you will have the opportunity to register for our events. With every registration, you will receive a confirmation email, including a link to move the zoom information to the calendar. No one wants to get zoom bombed!

• We will continue the Meeting of Minds, regularly scheduled for Wednesdays at 1:30 pm. Also, PALS staff will facilitate smaller discussion groups based on library size and staffing levels. The smaller group discussions are another venue for you to connect with your colleagues across the state. Talk about any issues, concerns, and successes. We will get organized during the Meeting of Minds on September 16.

• The CLiC migration began this summer with some preliminary meetings between the CLiC migration team, PALS, and Ex Libris. On the PALS side, Johnna and Dani are attending twice-monthly migration meetings with CLiC folks. Currently, we are working on timelines and basic workflow questions. CLiC libraries will migrate to MnPALS Alma/Primo in June 2021.

- We are looking ahead to the spring semester. We have something new planned for Workdays. We are moving Workdays online and expanding it to an overarching online conference, scheduled for the first week in April. Watch your email for a call for a proposal. Consider presenting; we have learned so much throughout, and after the migration, share your wisdom with your colleagues. The conference theme will be Flexibility in Library Services: Rediscovering our Work.
- We are also exploring replacement software for the Support Center. To facilitate a smooth transition, you will be asked to identify users no longer associated with your institution, details to come later in the semester.

In-Depth

We have multiple ways to make our voices heard at Ex Libris. One avenue is via the NERS enhancement process. Your institution needs to be an ELUNA member to vote in the NERS enhancement cycle. Institution membership is about $250.00 per year. The NERS voting cycle for 2020 ended this summer. Ex Libris commits to developing the top votes within one year.

Alma 2020 top three votes are:

- Provide the ability to identify broken links to electronic and digital resources.
- Improve repository search functionality with free text options for MARC tags and subfields in the advanced search.
- Resource sharing: updates to due dates of borrowing request loads to be reflected in resource sharing and fulfillment.

Primo 2020 Top votes:

- Add journal coverage dates to the brief results page.
- Create a spinner or indicator for the GetIt frame to indicate the content is loading.

The good news is beyond the NERS enhancement, individual users can create and vote on the Ex Libris Idea Exchange. All you need is an email address. Each account has a total of 25 points to use, support ideas by giving 1,2 or 3 votes. If an idea is adopted, the votes are returned to your account, use the votes on a different idea.

The idea exchange includes hundreds of votable ideas. Here is a sampling of ideas:

- Create a better display for summary holdings in Primo: https://ideas.exlibrisgroup.com/forums/308176-primo/suggestions/35043796-summary-holdings-display-primo-ve
- Include Government Documents in CDI: https://ideas.exlibrisgroup.com/forums/574345-content/suggestions/32919835-marcive-gpo-database
- Improve display logic rules for Primo: https://ideas.exlibrisgroup.com/forums/308173-alma/suggestions/19010704-display-logic-shared-nz-choices-in-iz
- Improve locates for electronic borrowing requests: https://ideas.exlibrisgroup.com/forums/308173-alma/suggestions/40424683-resource-sharing-electronic-locate-for-borrowing-a

Member Highlight, Simon Mai
PALS Office

1. What is your current position, how long have you been at your current position? *I'm an Information System Developer working at PALS for about 8 years.*

2. How do you help to make Alma better?
   I am working with API projects to improve Alma functionality and features. For example, web-based booking, lending slip, scan'n'toss.

3. What do you want to learn next?
   I want to learn more about Artificial Intelligence Technology. Programming the system, or any machines to perform the intelligent functions of a human. Develop artificial intelligence to find solutions independently to problems, to make their own decisions. Some of my homemade "just-for-fun" projects are: auto driven RC car and auto security cameras.

4. What are you currently reading or listening to?
   Harry Potter complete collection set (UK version). Same story, some different phrases, and words. Lots of fun.

5. What is your favorite snack?
   Cheetos Hot Snack. You can't eat a CHEETOS snacks without licking the "cheetle" off your fingertips, they are hot spicy, just the way I like it.

Book a Consultation with PALS Support

Do you have Alma topics you would like to discuss? Etta, Carrie, and Dani are offering consultation times to talk through workflow scenarios, how to use the software to its full potential, functionality, or follow-up on a ticket.

Book a session:

Etta - scroll down to Course Reserve or Fulfillment)

Carrie - see Acquisition and ERM sections)

Dani - let's talk about anything Resource Management related)

What did the PALS staff get accomplished this summer? You may remember in the May newsletter, we shared what we were going to do this summer. Find out now if we accomplished what they set out to do.

Alex Kent, Support Team: Summer plans - Cleaning up and refurbishing an old library card catalog cabinet and brushing up on art/painting skills, such as acrylics and landscapes. When safe again, vacationing in Door County, Wisconsin.

I did manage to clean up that old card catalog and am using it to organize and store my sports card collection. Explored painting some, but focused more on creative writing instead and nearing completion of a large project.

Alex Lazar, Tech Team: This summer, I hope to complete my GameCube and PlayStation 2 retro gaming setups and maybe even add a Sega CD and Famicom Disk System to the mix if I can find what I'm looking for. We also have many game titles that we want to add to our gaming collection. Who knows, maybe an Xbox is also in the cards.

I ended up picking up a US and Japanese PlayStation 2, a brand new Sega Saturn Japan, a brand new Sega Dreamcast US, and a like-new GameCube Japan. I wasn't able to get a US GameCube in the condition I wanted. I also ended up picking up a PAL (Europe) TurboGrafx 16. Xbox was always on the back burner and still there, maybe sometime later. With the retro market, availability is never predictable. Besides collecting, I was able to spend time playing some of my favorite Sega Genesis games.

Carrie Curie, Support Team: Summer plans - I will be finding new and inventive ways to procrastinate weeding my book hoard of 10 boxes. The garage can always use a clean-up as well.

I cleaned the garage, but am going the wrong direction with the number of books.

Dani Kroon, Support Team - Has big plans to dig up all the buckthorn (an invasive plant) on my wooded property this summer. When not digging up buckthorn, I plan to read lots of books, mostly mystery and historical fiction.

My finished basement flooded in June, so instead of buckthorn and reading, I did a lot of painting of walls and basement clean-up.

Etta Thornburg, Support Team - I'm hoping to get some of my quilts finished and to have some time hiking with my niece and nephew.

While not much progress was made on the quilt front, I got a couple of lap blankets knitted and was able to spend a fair amount of time hanging out with my niece and nephew. Watching their personalities develop is always a treat.

Fan Zhang, Tech Team – this is the year to start a small vegetable garden in the backyard. I am hoping to get outside more as a family in general.

We did not plant a vegetable garden, but we have been thinking about traveling to China. Now that has become increasingly impractical. As a result, we watched a lot of documentaries about food and travel in China. Some of the places will be a good candidate for a future trip.

Gretchen Cords, Administration – will be tending to my vegetable and flower gardens. I love growing goods for fresh eating and canning/freezing. We have some Honduran friends that we are giving some land to utilize for their garden, and I look forward to learning about their specialty crops and food. A not-so-fun project is to clean and paint the foundation portion of our house on the outside. We shall see if it comes to fruition, or if I can put it off for another year.

We have had a successful growing season in our vegetable garden. So far, we have frozen sweet corn, canned sauerkraut, pickled asparagus, and green beans. Jalapeno poppers and BLT's have been a dietary staple the past couple of weeks. Soon we will be brewing up some tomato sauce, stewed tomatoes, and salsa. Our house foundation project will be completed by a hired hand, yay!! I did, however, scrape off the popcorn ceiling in our bathroom, yuck! A fresh coat of paint, an update of fixtures and shower curtain have really livened up the space. A fishing trip up north in the open waters yielded some yummy packages in the freezer. I am looking forward to the color changes and cooler temps of fall!

Jill Holman, Support & Tech Teams – planning to follow up on a new genealogical lead that might get her past the brick wall she has had for years for the Holman family. She might descend from Solomon Holman 1671-1753, who lived in England before moving to Massachusetts, but it needs more research and verification.

I did work on my Holman research, and I do think Solomon is my ancestor, though I haven't got it all written up yet. I had a couple of fun finds for other parts of my family. I found a picture of my great-great-great-grandmother. This is a big deal because I had never seen her before, and she is the whole reason I started doing genealogy. I discovered an apprentice document from 1742 for my great-great-great-great-great-great-great grandfather.

Johnna Horton, Administration – not so fun project to replace the weed barrier beneath the rocks around the house, and getting rid of wasps swarming the house. Fun project to installing a screen patio tent to provide shade on the back patio to enjoy the great outdoors.

I did an excellent job of avoiding the weed barrier, and it is still a mess. The wasps don't seem to be a problem this year, but I didn't do anything to mediate that! We did buy and set up a screened patio tent, and it is lovely. Not very sturdy, but lovely.

Perry Madden, Support Team - not surprisingly, my summer plans revolve around golf. I usually set a goal each year for the number of different golf courses I want to play. This year, my goal is to play 20 different courses, with at least 5 of them being brand new to me.

As of the end of August, while I have golfed on average two 9-hole rounds each week since the middle of May, I have only played 12 different golf courses. One of them was not exactly new, but I had not played it in over 15 years. I still have September and (hopefully) most of October to golf, so hitting 20 courses may be a long shot, but here's to giving it a try!

Rod Bruce, Tech Team – Rod will be tackling several yard projects: creating a cozy fire pit area, leveling an area for a volleyball court and, and, if we get really ambitious, making progress on our planned screened-in gazebo.

I used a week off at the beginning of June to add a paver patio with a cozy fire pit area next to our garden. I have also been using a technique called topdressing to level an area of our lawn for volleyball. Topdressing involves spreading a sand-soil mixture across the area you want to level, adding a little bit at a time, and letting it settle before repeating. The area is a little more level, but I plan to do it several times a summer as well as overseeding the area in the fall. We have set up our volleyball net a few times, nobody twisted an ankle so the leveling seems to be working.
We have put the screened-in gazebo on hold for this summer.

Simon Mai, Tech Team – updating the outside fire ring, decorating the patio, in general, making the backyard a great place to hang out for the family.

Yes, we've done what we planned for our backyard.
We've ordered a new fire ring, installed the fire ring, adding patio pavers and stone round the ring. It's worked out really well, and the building was very easy. We already used the grilling rack to make burgers, and they turned out great. Then we figured it couldn't hurt to set up the tent along with it. Soon, the tent was decorated with pictures and stuffed animals allowing my son to enjoy s'mores and reading books by flashlight. We sure have been enjoying the backyard.

Sonja Eilertson, Support Team – plans on enjoying the summer because summers go by too quickly, and someone needs to paint the backyard fence.

No one painted the fence, so the fence remains on the to-do list for next year. I enjoyed the summer, going for walks and working in the garden.

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Support Center

Resources

Ex Libris Knowledge Center
Alma Release Notes
Primo VE Release Notes
Alma/Primo Idea Exchange