



REFORMA DE FLORIDA

NOTICIAS DEL MES/NEWS OF THE MONTH

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Dear REFORMA Florida family,

As I write my very first Editor's Note, I find myself reflecting on how unexpectedly beautiful this journey has been. I am deeply grateful for every opportunity that has brought me here, including the honor of serving as the new Editor-in-Chief of this newsletter.

Personally, I thank God for opening doors I never imagined possible. At the same time, I recognize that each of us walks a different path of faith, hope, or personal belief, and I simply hope we can all share one thing: compassion.

Because today, there is something far more important I want to talk about.

Venezuela.

As a Venezuelan and a proud Latina, my heart aches for the families affected by the devastating earthquakes of June 24. So many have lost their homes, and far too many have lost loved ones.

This is not about politics. It is about people.

If you are able, I encourage you to support the humanitarian efforts assisting those affected. Every act of kindness, no matter how small, can bring hope to someone facing unimaginable loss.

I had hoped my first Editor's Note would celebrate a new beginning. Instead, I hope it reminds us that our greatest strength as a Latino community is standing together when one of us needs it most.

With gratitude,
Gaby Gomez

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

TIME TO STEP OUT AND STEP UP

by: Alma Ramos-McDermott



There comes a time when we must **step out** of our comfort level and **step up** when there's a need. I never thought I'd be President of any organization yet, here I am – starting my term as your 2026-2027 President.

I want to begin my Presidential year by thanking those who went before me. Thank you, *Lucia*, for **stepping out** and **up** when we needed a Vice-President, and for your work as President. Thank you, Past-President *Maria Vega*, for **stepping out** and **up** to serve two years as President when we didn't have a VP at the end of your first year. Thank you, *Mari Serrano*, for **stepping out** and **up** as 2022 President and **stepping up** again as Secretary. Thank you, **Eric Gomez**, for **stepping out** and **up** to run for the office of Vice-President/President-Elect, and to *Isabel Castro* for **stepping out** and **up** to give us continuity as Treasurer. Thank you, *Gaby Gomez*, for **stepping out** and **up** to become our new Newsletter Editor. Finally, thank you, *Ximena Valdivia*, for being the first to **step out** and **up** to take on the role of Southern Region Delegate.

A way you could **step out** and **up** for *ReDeFL* is to become our first Northern or Central Region Delegate. Region Delegates communicate with members in their region to plan social activities, share upcoming events, discuss how/when/where to share professional knowledge, fundraise for activities/events (working with the Treasurer to keep funds in the region), and anything else you could think of to benefit and help your region's members. Members in each region get to know one another, grow professionally, and grow in numbers by inviting others to join the chapter. (All members should feel free to travel to all three regions to socialize and learn too.) It's a simple equation: Members who learn + grow + have fun + share membership opportunities = make our chapter stronger.

Think about it. Without members **stepping out** and **up** to lead REFORMA de Florida in various roles, and participate in chapter events, where would we be? Think about where you can **step out** and **step up** to help us grow.

How will you **step out** and **step up** for *ReDeFL*? [Email me](#) and let me know. ¡Juntos Podemos!

Until next month,
Alma



PURA BELPRÉ HONORED AT THE ACURIL 2026 CONFERENCE IN PUERTO RICO

by: Ximena Valdivia

The Association of Caribbean University, Research and Institutional Libraries (ACURIL) honored Puerto Rican librarian, author, and storyteller Pura Belpré (1899–1982) at its 55th Annual Conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico. During the conference, the Puerto Rico chapter invited Belpre's niece to accept the award on her behalf.

Pura Belpré was a pioneer who became the first Puerto Rican librarian at the New York Public Library. After moving to New York City in 1920, she helped make libraries more accessible to Spanish-speaking communities by introducing bilingual storytelling, expanding Spanish-language collections, and creating culturally relevant programs. Her work transformed library branches in Harlem into important cultural centers for Latino residents.

Belpré was also a celebrated children's author who adapted and translated Puerto Rican folktales, including Pérez and Martina and Juan Bobo and the Queen's Necklace (1962), helping preserve and share Puerto Rican cultural traditions with new generations.

In recognition of her contributions, the Pura Belpré Award was established in 1996. Presented annually by REFORMA and the American Library Association, the award honors Latinx authors and illustrators whose children's books authentically portray and celebrate Latino cultural experiences.



BIBLIOTELE

July Highlights: Too Hot Outside? Stay for One More Episode

Your summer binge-watch starts here

by: **Javier Hidalgo, Bibliotele**

When temperatures rise, there's nothing better than finding a series you can't stop watching. This month's selection includes **true crime investigations, laugh-out-loud comedies, eye-opening documentaries, and thrilling dramas** designed to celebrate the pleasure of getting immersed in a story and not wanting it to end.

The only challenge? Deciding which one to start first.



Locked Up (Vis a Vis)

Series · Drama · Spain

After entering a women's prison for a financial crime, Macarena must quickly learn the rules of a world governed by alliances, rivalries, and survival. **One of the most successful Spanish series of recent years**, *Locked Up* combines suspense, action, and emotional drama while building a remarkable ensemble of female characters whose stories challenge stereotypes and reveal the complex realities of life behind bars.



Lifeline (Pulsaciones)

Series · Drama/Thriller · Spain

Series · Drama/Thriller · Spain When a renowned neurosurgeon begins experiencing memories and emotions that seem to belong to his heart donor, he becomes obsessed with uncovering the truth behind the man's death. Mixing medical mystery, psychological suspense, and questions about identity, *Lifeline* turns a provocative premise into **an addictive thriller that keeps viewers questioning what makes us who we are**.



One Way or Another (Por H o por B)

Series · Comedy · Spain

Two lifelong friends from the Madrid suburb of Parla reunite after moving to the trendy neighborhood of Malasaña, where they find themselves navigating unfamiliar social codes, shifting identities, and the pressures of fitting in. **Sharp, irreverent, and surprisingly insightful**, *One Way or Another* uses comedy to explore class, belonging, and the changing face of contemporary urban life.



One of the Boys

Series · Drama · Denmark

A weekend trip meant to reinforce traditional ideas of masculinity takes an unexpected turn when Lau, a shy and uncertain young man, begins developing feelings for another member of the group. Told with sensitivity and restraint, this coming-of-age drama offers **a thoughtful exploration of identity, desire, and the pressures that often shape how young men see themselves and each other**.

All these titles — and many more — are available on Bibliotele, supporting libraries in their cultural programming, community conversations, and seasonal outreach initiatives throughout May.

BIBLIOTELE

July Highlights: Too Hot Outside? Stay for One More Episode



Female Killers (Asesinas)

Documentary Miniseries · True Crime · Spain

This gripping true-crime series revisits six murder cases committed by women in Spain, drawing on police investigations, forensic analysis, and firsthand testimony. Beyond the crimes themselves, *Female Killers* examines how gender influences public perceptions of violence, offering a fresh perspective on a genre often dominated by very different narratives.



Plastic Sea (Mar de plástico)

Series · Thriller · Spain

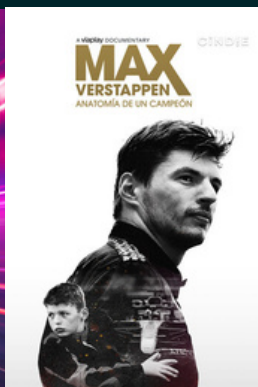
The murder of a mayor's daughter shakes a farming town in southern Spain where communities from many different countries live side by side. As the investigation unfolds, hidden tensions, rivalries, and long-buried secrets emerge, turning almost every resident into a potential suspect. Set against the striking landscape of Almería's vast greenhouse region, *Plastic Sea* combines a gripping crime story with a sharp look at immigration, cultural coexistence, and social inequality.



Velvet

Series · Drama/Romance · Spain

Two lifelong friends from the Madrid suburb of Parla reunite after moving to the trendy neighborhood of Malasaña, where they find themselves navigating unfamiliar social codes, shifting identities, and the pressures of fitting in. Sharp, irreverent, and surprisingly insightful, *One Way or Another* uses comedy to explore class, belonging, and the changing face of contemporary urban life.



Verstappen: Lion Unleashed / Max Verstappen: Anatomy of a Champion

Documentary Series · Netherlands, United Kingdom

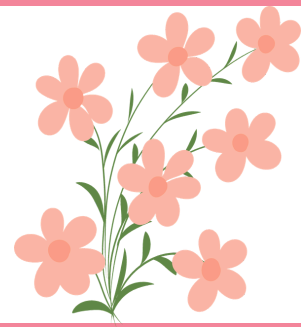
These two documentary series offer an in-depth look at the remarkable rise of Formula 1 champion Max Verstappen, combining exclusive footage, expert analysis, archival material, and behind-the-scenes access to reveal the discipline, strategy, and mental resilience behind his success. Following his journey from emerging talent to dominant world champion, they explore not only the world of elite motorsport but also broader themes such as leadership, teamwork, decision-making under pressure, and the relentless pursuit of excellence.

All these titles — and many more — are available on Bibliotele, supporting libraries in their cultural programming, community conversations, and seasonal outreach initiatives throughout May.



DEAR FUTURE LIBRARIAN

by: *Gaby Gomez*



Sometimes Life Puts the Book on Hold...

Hello, future librarians.

I know... it's been a little while.

Life has given me "**más vueltas que un trompo.**" Sometimes we carefully organize our lives like perfectly cataloged shelves, only to discover that life has absolutely no respect for our classification system. Between graduate school, work, personal challenges, and simply trying to be a functioning human being, I needed to step away for a moment.

One thing library school has taught me is that it's okay to pause. We often feel pressured to always be productive, always be learning, always be accomplishing the next big thing. But sometimes, growth happens quietly while we're catching our breath.

As I'm writing this, I'm sipping a **sugar-free Virgin Mojito Tea** while "**It's a Sin**" by **Pet Shop Boys** is playing in the background. Somehow, that combination perfectly summarizes my current mood: a little nostalgic, a little dramatic, but ultimately hopeful. Music has always been one of the ways I reset my mind before diving back into research papers, discussion boards, and the never-ending adventure that is librarianship.

And speaking of adventures...

One of my favorite parts of writing Dear Future Librarian has been meeting incredible people who remind me why I fell in love with this profession in the first place. Every future librarian has a different story, a different path, and a different reason for choosing this field; and every single one deserves to be heard.

This month, I'm excited to introduce Matthieu Castillo, an MLIS student whose journey began as a work-study student at Florida International University and eventually led him to pursue academic librarianship. Today, Matthieu is not only balancing graduate school and multiple jobs, but also serving as an ALA Spectrum Scholar, advocating for greater diversity in our profession while proving that representation truly matters.

From discussing ADHD-friendly organization systems and the realities of online learning to reflecting on why librarians continue to make a difference every single day, Matthieu reminds us that librarianship is so much more than books; it's about people, community, curiosity, and creating spaces where everyone belongs.

So grab your favorite drink, get comfortable, and let's get to know one more future librarian who's helping shape the future of our profession.





INTERVIEW WITH MATTHIEU CASTILLO

by: Gaby Gomez

1. What originally pulled you toward library and information science, and when did you realize, “Oh... this is actually my thing”?

I started my library journey as a work-study student at FIU. I was interested in teaching and loved working with students, helping them find information using the library's resources. But I was still unsure what “librarians” did. A former supervisor, and close friend, was a student at USF pursuing her MLIS at the time, and she showed me her homework assignment and that is when I knew this was for me! Next thing I knew, I was applying to graduate programs and pursuing academic librarianship.

2. As an MLIS student and graduate assistant, what has surprised you the most about working in libraries so far?

I am finding resources I wish I had known as a student, like online databases, employment opportunities, and information engines. It is amazing to learn how many resources are available at your nearest library and that the list is growing. It has also been a journey to see the distinctions between public and academic spaces firsthand, having worked in both and getting to know the delight of aiding people in diverse settings! It makes this librarianship journey worthwhile.

3. How has being an ALA Spectrum Scholar shaped the way you see librarianship, representation, and your place in the profession?

I entered the field fully understanding that it was primarily made up of white women. This statistic motivated me to pursue an MLIS. My dedication for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) inspired me to join, wanting to contribute to the small number of librarians of color, while [hopefully] encouraging future librarians to do so too. I want others who resemble me to be appreciated and acknowledged in libraries and to realize that they too can work as librarians. I am forever honored to represent this growing community, while still representing USF, the ALA, and my South Miami community.

4. What skills do you think MLIS programs do not hype enough, but suddenly become very important once you're actually working in libraries?

MLIS programs do not always highlight how important self-reflection, creativity, and relationship-building become once you are working in libraries. Assignments and my portfolio gave me the space to learn my strengths and weaknesses while encouraging me to think creatively and apply what I was learning in meaningful ways. The opportunity to connect with professors and classmates was equally important, as those relationships helped me begin building a professional network within the field. Relearning computer and information skills, and being able to apply them in person, prepared me for the realities of working in libraries too.





INTERVIEW WITH MATTHIEU CASTILLO

by: *Gaby Gomez*

5. What has been one of the tougher parts of library school for you, and what's helped you get through it without losing your mind?

I work full-time, part-time, and manage a full-time course load! It's been tough! However, prioritizing my self-care was so important, along with figuring out what works best for me. I made sure to submit my accommodation and really prioritize scheduling. Taking advantage of a physical calendar helped a lot. I used two separate ones and a digital one, very much an ADHD life, and made sure to give myself time to complete assignments while also leaving time to explore life and continue growing professionally.

I also found being in an online program to be difficult, but I pushed myself to make connections with my peers. I joined our student ALA chapter (SOLIS), contacted professors, and became incredibly involved with chapters like REFORMA to build meaningful connections and not feel isolated.

6. Finally, when you imagine “future you” as a librarian, what values do you hope you’ll never lose, even on the busiest or hardest days?

I hope I never lose my passion for learning and teaching! Although lately it has been easy to feel like the word you and I do does not matter, it does. Librarians truly do make a difference. I also hope I never forget that there is always someone to help, whether it is a patron, a student, or a colleague, and that even small moments of support can have a meaningful impact. Librarians are important!

P.S. I'm still on the lookout for MLIS students to interview! If you'd like to be featured in the next Dear Future Librarian, [*email me*](#)

Until next time, stay weird, stay bookish, and never underestimate the power of a snack and a playlist.

Gaby





LO-QUE-LEO

by: Lucia Gonzalez

FOR ADULTS:

Los Golpistas by Jaime Bayly. Editorial Galaxia Gutenberg. Available only in Spanish and distributed by Spanish Publishers, LLC.

Historical fiction differs from fictionalized history in more than one way. Historical fiction strives for accuracy in its historical context and facts, while the need for historical accuracy does not bind fictionalized history. In fictionalized history, the author freely represents and reinvents possible situations, dialogues, and more. *Los Golpistas* is a fictionalized historical story: the rise to power of Hugo Chavez in Venezuela and his loss of power through another military coup, and eventually illness. Through entertaining, at times satirical, dialogues, Jaime Bayly takes readers behind the scenes in conversations between Chávez and Fidel, as well as through the events of the 2002 coup, including arrests and execution orders. This book will be of interest to so many of Jaime Bayly's fans as well as to those interested in these controversial historical figures.

FOR YOUTH:

Queso, Just in Time by Ernesto Cisneros. Quill Tree Books, 2026.

I am not a big fantasy reader, except when it involves time travel to the past, in the style of *Back to the Future*. And this book totally hooked me! The main character in this middle-grade time-travel novel by Ernesto Cisneros travels back to 1985 and meets his father as a 12-year-old. The 1980s seem so close, but it really is a whole different world. Quetzalcóatl "Queso" Castillo has just lost his father, and in the midst of his grief and great loss, he falls asleep in his tree house only to wake up in 1985. It is a fun read and a moving story!

CORPORATE MEMBERS OF REFORMA DE FLORIDA

Corporate members are an important part of our chapter. Thank you, *Bibliotele, Cinco Books, MakeMake, Penguin Random House, The Shelf Media*, and *Spanish Publishers* for being part of our chapter!

WHAT'S HAPPENING?: NORTHERN, CENTRAL, OR SOUTHERN REGIONS

✨ **YOUR LIBRARY DESERVES THE SPOTLIGHT!** ✨

Programs, celebrations, community partnerships, innovative services, staff achievements; if it's making a difference, it's worth sharing. Email us your name, title, library, region, a brief summary, and photos to be featured in an upcoming issue.

WERE YOU FORWARDED THIS NEWSLETTER BUT ARE NOT YET A MEMBER OF THE FLORIDA CHAPTER OR REFORMA NATIONAL?

To join, go to REFORMA National's Membership page and make sure REFORMA de Florida becomes your local chapter by checking "Florida." We'd love to have you join our familia.

IS YOUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRING?! ARE YOU A MEMBER-AT-LARGE?

If you're not sure if your membership is expiring, email us. If you're a REFORMA National **Member-at-large** (not associated with any chapter) and you live in Florida, **join the REFORMA de Florida chapter**. Log into your membership account, and check "Florida." That's it! Once you check "Florida," you'll become a member of our familia. It's as easy as that!