Greetings Montana library community!

Spring is finally in the air, as evidenced by the disappearance of snow and the appearance of geese flying overhead. It was a long winter but we now have a full calendar of spring events to tend to.

First of all, Ofline was a great success! Dee Ann, Suzanne and everyone else involved with the planning deserves a round of applause, which I heartily offer. The two days were filled with tons of great information and everyone went home with new ideas.

Annual Conference is just a few days away and the conference planning team is working overtime to make this a great conference for everyone. I want to draw your attention to a few events. Dr. Loriene Roy is our keynote speaker on Thursday, Dr. Jack Hornner is our featured speaker on Friday, and Christopher Paolini is our author’s luncheon speaker on Saturday.

Be sure to join us for the Cates Event on Thursday! It is sure to be an unforgettable evening so come by yourself or put a team together to join in on the fun. Also remember the ongoing basket auction to help support this worthwhile cause.

Everyone is invited to the membership meeting which will be held at 8:30 AM on Friday, April 9. You will get to meet the current and future leadership as well as join the discussion on current issues facing the association. One item on our agenda is a discussion on future conference sites.

As my time to “pass the torch” draws near, I want to remind everyone of the importance of volunteerism within our organization. MLA is only as good as each one of us makes it. It relies on your active participation. If you want to become more involved, there are many opportunities, including the various divisions, interest groups and committees. Check out the MLA website for more information. If you are interested in any of these contact myself or any of the board members and we will get you signed up. If you live in the Billings area and would like to help out with next year’s conference you may contact Sami Piersen, Vice President/President Elect and she will put you in touch with the conference co-chairs.

In the spirit of this year’s conference theme, open your mind and help expand the horizons of libraries in this state - volunteer!

Until next time,

Eva English
MLA President
Fort Belknap College Library Director
The American Library Association’s Allied Professional Association (ALA-APA) is accepting applications from potential Candidates interested in achieving the Library Support Staff Certification (LSSC). The LSSC Program opened January 24, 2010 and is the first national, voluntary certification program for library support staff.

The LSSC Program is open to any library support staff person with a high-school diploma or its equivalent and at least one year of full-time experience in a library with the last five years. Applicants do not have to be a member of ALA. The application fee is $325 for ALA members and $350 for non-ALA members. Candidates who choose to take an approved course may have to pay a fee set by the course provider. There is no cost for submitting portfolios. Candidates have four years to complete the program.

The LSSC Program website, www.ala-apa.org/lssc, has complete information about the competency sets, approved courses, and how to develop a portfolio. The Program has adopted ten competencies sets; Candidates are required to show achievement of three sets -- Foundations of Library Service, Communication and Teamwork, and Technology – and must choose three additional sets from Access Services, Adult Readers’ Advisory Services, Cataloging and Classification, Collection Management, Reference and Information Services, Supervision and Management, and Youth Services.

The LSSC offers Candidates two ways to demonstrate achievement. The first is through completing approved courses from library education providers across the county. These providers set the course’s fee, schedule, and requirements. Candidates can also develop portfolios that demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and experience in a competency set. The LSSC Program offers help to Candidates who wish to develop and submit portfolios. Librarians with expertise in the competency set will evaluate portfolios and the Program is seeking more librarians who wish to do so. Candidates may wish to complete courses in some competency sets and submit portfolios in others.

The LSSC Program was inspired by many years of discussion and by needs assessments with library support staff. In 2007, the American Library Association received a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program to fund the development of such a national certification program.
State Library News

By Sue Jackson, Montana State Library

Certification Program – New Tutorial on Tracking CE Credits
The Montana Certification Program for Library Directors, Staff, and Trustees is in full swing. The State Library has been working to get word out about certification changes with handouts, presentations, and now an online tutorial. The new 5-minute tutorial – produced by MSL’s Tracy Cook – explains step-by-step how to track your CE credits until you are ready to apply for certification. Check it out at: www.msl.mt.gov/For_Librarians/Training/Certification/Tutorial/ctracking_demo.htm

The new certification program manual with all of the requirements, application process, and tracking forms is on the State Library webpage at: www.msl.mt.gov/For_Librarians/Training/certification/default.asp.

SWIM Scholarship Program
The application process for the SWIM scholarship program is now finished. Montana State Library received 48 complete applications from Montana residents: 14 applications for the Library Media Endorsement program and 34 applications for the University of North Texas MLIS program. These applications will be considered by the Montana Scholarship Committee at their April 7 meeting at the Bozeman Public Library. The Committee will award 4 Endorsement scholarships and 6 MLIS scholarships, as well as make a recommendation of Montana applicants to be considered for at-large scholarships. The SWIM Advisory Council will meet on April 22nd to review applications recommended by each SWIM state (SD, WY, ID, MT) and award 10 at-large scholarships. All scholarship applicants will be notified of their status by April 30, 2010.

Congratulations to the 2009 Collection Management Honor Roll Libraries
The Montana State Library Commission is proud to announce the 2009 Collection Management Honor Roll. This year, 86 Montana libraries are recognized for their commitment to sharing resources. The Honor Roll will be announced at the MLA awards luncheon on April 8th and listed in the conference booklet. The list is also posted on the State Library website at: www.msl.mt.gov/For_Librarians/For_All_Librarians/Collection_Management/CMHR2009.doc. Congratulations to all 86 libraries!

Fall Workshop 2010
Montana State Library hopes you are planning to attend this year’s Fall Workshop. It is scheduled for September 24-25 in Great Falls. Registration will begin in late summer. More details soon!

Connecting To Collections Grant
The Montana State Library and Montana Historical Society have applied for an IMLS Connecting To Collections grant. If selected for funding, the project will develop an online survey to collect data about historical materials held by Montana’s cultural institutions. Libraries, museums, historical societies, county records offices, and tribal governments will be asked to provide collection information to be used to develop statewide preservation strategies and educate legislators and other funding sources about the state’s preservation needs. The project will also host a series of preservation workshops across the state during fall 2010. Notification about the grant is expected from IMLS by March 31st!
By Marjorie Doyle, Reference Librarian  
Missoula Public Library

Greeting MLA members and supporters. I’d like to offer a recap of the year’s work from the Professional Development committee. MLA was able to sponsor our own Sarah Daviau from Libby as an Emerging Leader with ALA and award her $1000 to support her development (travel and expenses etc.) this year. We were able to award members a total of $1600 in Professional Development grants to attend programs that covered nearly the entire alphabet including LOEX, PLA, ALA, PNLA/WLA. Pamela Arroues will be receiving $450 to cover her costs to attend the 7th MPLA Leadership Institute facilitated by nationally known organizational development consultant Maureen Sullivan. And for those of you that applied for travel grants to MLA in Bozeman, it looks like we were able to give out all 15 of our $150 grants; thanks for that second wave, and I do mean wave, of applications.

Many thanks to our outgoing members Molly Ledermann, Ann Kish and Liz Barnea for all their input and insight.

If you are interested in serving on this committee, drop me an email at mdoyle@missoula.lib.mt.us with your statement of interest. We will need to have representatives from PLD, ASLD and SLMD to fill in after they are finished with their terms. And remember that these grants are just one of many benefits of MLA membership.

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By Debbi Kramer, Executive Assistant  
Montana Library Association

Have you ever wondered why a library card is important? Of course, you can use it to check out books, but have you ever really thought about how a library card can save you? It can happen!

A young patron from my library lost her wallet while visiting friends in another city. The only identification in the wallet was her library card. The people who found her wallet mailed it back the Three Forks library. I was able to scan her card, find a phone number to reach her and return her wallet with all her money still inside.

A patron came into the library with a set of keys she found in the library parking lot. Of course neither of us has any idea to whom they belonged, but on the key ring is a Bozeman library mini card. I was able to look up the patron number, call her and let her know that we had found her keys. She was so excited because she had looked everywhere for those keys.

I get a phone call from an out of state police department. An officer identifies himself and asks if the library has a certain patron. I ask him why he wants to know. He explains that a wallet has been turned into the police station. The patron’s credit cards, driver’s license and other forms of identification are inside, but so is her library card. He has used the phone number on her library card to call. I thank the officer and let him know I will contact the patron. The patron has her cell phone as a contact number and I am able to call her and let her know what has happened. She doesn’t even know she has lost her wallet, but is only about an hour away from James-town and is able to turn around and retrieve her wallet.

In each of these instances a library card has saved the day! Makes me glad I carry my library card. You never know when you may need it for more than checking out books.
Two Popular Programs Missoula Public Library

By Joyce Doyle
Missoula Public Library

Missoulians Have the Write Stuff
Missoula Public Library’s writing contest is more popular than ever. We had a 20 percent increase in entries, with a total of 96 making it into the library before the deadline.

The contest is broken into a variety of age divisions from 6-10, 11-14, 15-18, and 19 plus. Our most contested category this year is ages 6-10. Participants could submit one fiction entry and one non-fiction entry, with submissions being no longer than 2,000 words and not previously published. We weren’t accepting poetry.

Now comes the hard part – picking winners. The library thanks our local judges who represent professional writers, editors, teachers, and book sellers. We can’t wait to get the results. Judges, writers and fans are invited to the awards ceremony planned for Sunday, May 16, where we’ll distribute the first place prize of $100, second place prize of $50, and third place prize of $25 for each age group. The library plans to create a book of all entries received so everybody can enjoy our local talent.

Winter Reading Warms Missoula
Missoula Public Library’s second annual Winter Reading program just completed and with more than 125 participants at the main library, Seeley Lake Branch, and Frenchtown Branch, it was a giant success.

From January to March, readers ages 18 and older had an opportunity to submit a short review in exchange for freebies and raffle prizes. And boy did the reviews come in! A total of 597 reviews, to be exact. That’s a lot of reading.

Our Adult Story Time events drew crowds to hear short stories read by local celebrities including Mayor John Engen, KECI’s Mark Heyka, MTPR’s Zed, Garden City Harvest’s Josh Slotnick, KPAX’s Angela Marshall, and the Missoulian’s Lori Grannis. The readings were so popular, you can expect to see more next year.

Loud at the Library

Kim Crowley, Director
Flathead County Library System

More than 250 people got LOUD at the LIBRARY on Thursday, March 18th at a fundraiser for the Flathead County Library Foundation. Called Loud at the Library, the event featured live music with The Can’t Hardly Playboys; copious amounts of food, wine, and beer; nineteen gift baskets for raffle; and a live auction of custom painted library chairs and tables. There was even some dancing that went on! Comments from attendees included: “I love being LOUD in the library!” “Even though I don’t check out materials, I always support my library!” “The food is great, the music is great; this is just a GREAT evening.” “When are you going to do this again?” Foundation officials estimate that they made about $6,000 over and above the evening’s expenses. The Flathead County Library Foundation funds special programs not included in the Library’s operating budget.
Over the years, Michael Ober, Flathead Valley Community College Library Director, Montana historian and long-time seasonal ranger at Glacier National Park (GNP), has collected hundreds of black and white photos of GNP’s earliest years. The images, largely taken by ordinary park visitors, capture roughly the first 40 years of the Park. Most of the images have never been seen or published before…until now.

As GNP celebrates its 100th anniversary this year, Ober believed this would be an ideal time to present the photos to the public; providing them with a intimate look at the earliest years of the Park.

“The first 40 years were the Park’s biggest years,” said Ober. “They laid down the foundation of what the Park is today.”

To honor GNP’s anniversary, Ober compiled the photos he collected from photo archives at GNP, the Minnesota Historical Society, the University of Montana and the Montana Historical Society archives; and combined them with captions and narrative to produce the photo-documentary Glacier Album: Historic Photographs of Glacier National Park.

“Part of the pleasure in producing such a title comes in the tangential discovery of hundreds of photographs taken by ordinary park visitors,” said Ober. “I cling to the belief that humans still like to look at pictures of other humans doing human things.” The images and stories found in the book represent the early development years of the Park from its establishment on May 11, 1910 to the post-World War II boom in automobile travel. According to Ober, it worked well to concentrate on the history of Glacier’s earliest years just after the close of the second World War when a robust American traveling public was beginning to embrace color film to record their journeys.

“The end of the war meant the end of black and white,” he said. Ober notes the photographs, have immediate interpretive value and yield endless opportunities for the imagination.

“A historic photo halts everything: the clothing, equipment, time of day, the season, weather and the lingering faces of people who age no more.”

Perhaps it couldn’t be better said by summer tourist Igna Westfall who inscribed the following on the back of her 1921 snapshot photo: “I packed my brave little camera and ample films as I was determined to record the smiles of our children amid the high peaks…”

For more information, contact Ober at 406-756-3853 or at mober@fvcc.edu.
Young Readers Choice Award (YRCA)
The Pacific Northwest Library Association’s Young Reader’s Choice Award is the oldest children’s choice
award in the U.S. and Canada. The award was established in 1940 by a Seattle bookseller, the late Harry Hartman, who believed every student should have an opportunity to select
a book that gives him or her pleasure. Nominations are taken only from children, teachers, parents and librarians in the Pacific Northwest
~ Alaska, Alberta, British Columbia, Idaho, Montana and Washington. Nominations will not be accepted from publishers. Nominations of books that are
a sequel in a series will not be considered. Nominations may include fiction, non-fiction, graphic novels, animae and manga.

Don’t forget to vote for the 2009 YRCA Award winners between March 15 and April 15th.

Renew your PNLA membership
Forms are now available on line @ http://www.pnla.org/membership/index.htm. Update your membership information.

The conference will be held at the Holiday Inn and Best Western GranTree Inn, Bozeman. The hotels are located adjacent to one another just off highway 90 on 7th Avenue (exit 306).
Great Falls Festival of the Book: History & Mystery

By Jude Smith, Public Relations Officer
Great Falls Public Library

Spring brings flowers, greenery, and the Great Falls Festival of the Book, (March 25 – 27), three days of fun, an eclectic blend of music and writing, writing workshops, readings, travel films, meeting Montana mystery writers and more. All events, which were sponsored by the Great Falls Public Library Foundation and Humanities Montana, were free and open to the public, with the exception of the two writing workshops that had a nominal registration fee.

This three-day extravaganza began on Thursday, March 25, 7:00 pm with the second annual Great Falls Grand Word Meisters of the Year contest. Last year was so much fun; we had to do it again. Three-member teams from eight local organizations including the Great Falls Tribune, The History Museum, The University of Great Falls, KFBB, Channel 5, Central MT. Radio Network, KGPR Public Radio, and The GFPL Foundation, competed by displaying word savvy and generous donations to the GF Community Food Bank. Even though words framed the evening, community and fun were its spirit.

On Friday, March 26, 7:00 pm, the interactive performance of “Crossing Boundaries: Musings on Bach in the Backcountry” was presented. This collaborative performance piece featured professional violist, Jennifer Smith, and writer, Scott Friskics and was the product of a two-week artists’ residency in the Bob Marshall Wilderness as part of the Artist*Wilderness*Connection Program. Approximately one hour in length, the performance reflects the performers’ experiences as participants in an intensive three-way conversation between music, words and wild nature. Through the shared artistic lenses of creative writing and viola performance, they explored the meaning of wilderness in contemporary society, while, at the same time, raised broader questions concerning the relationships between wilderness and civilization, nature and culture, work and play, emptiness and fullness, sound and silence, and other long-standing dualisms embedded in Western culture. By engaging in an intensive exploration of the bound-

ary zones where these contrasting elements meet, Jenny and Scott highlighted the permeability of these boundaries and offered a glimpse of the ways in which wilderness and civilization give definition and meaning to one another through their mutual interaction.

Saturday, March 27 offered a full day of book festival events beginning with The Ins and Outs of Getting Published with Carol Bradley. Carol Bradley is an award-winning former newspaper reporter who studied Animal Law as a 2004 Nieman Fellow at Harvard. Her first book Saving Grace chronicles one of the largest puppy mill busts in U.S. history, a dog, Gracie, and how she changed the life of the woman that saved her. Bradley’s book was recently reviewed in People Magazine, earning a five-star salute.

Other book festival events included Shadows, Spooks, Spiders, Spectsr, & Spirited Places with Ellen Baumler; Poetry Demystified and Down to Earth with Montana’s Poet Laureate Henry Real Bird; Montana Mystery Writers Reading with Neil McMahon, Peter Bowen and Lise McClendon; Writing Demystified: Two Writing Workshops on the University of Great Falls campus with Aaron Parrett leading a flash fiction session and Joe Simonsen, professor at the University of Great Falls working with poetry; Borneo and Back with adventurer Brian McNamee of Helena; and The Nudist Series Fully Clothed in Plot with Byron & Kay McAllister, former mathematics professors at MSU.