Message from the President

Greeting Montana Librarians!

I hope you are all having a great early spring. I recently returned from a much anticipated vacation to New Orleans. I had never even considered visiting that city until I watched Spike Lee's film, *When the Levees Broke*, and became interested in the multicultural urban landscape of Louisiana.

I continued my interest with Lee's second post-Katrina film, *If God is Willing and da Creek Don't Rise*, and then the HBO series *Treme*. By then I was hooked, and planned a trip with seven of my most entertaining family members. In preparation, I read every book I could find that was related to New Orleans, including: *The Last Madam* (from the Miles City Public Library), *A Confederacy of Dunces* (from Hearst Free Library), *Nine Lives: Death and Life in New Orleans* (that came by way of the North Valley Public Library), and a couple of Dave Robicheux novels I downloaded from MTLib2go.

What I learned on my visit is that though New Orleans is one of the most poor and crime-ridden cities in our country, it's the most prosperous city in the Caribbean (how many residents like to look at it). The Catholic and African/Caribbean cultures are intertwined and ever-present. And the food and music are incomparable! I want to continue to learn everything I can about this great city.

What is also amazing is that I would never even have visited one of the most fascinating cities in the United States if it hadn't been for materials I found through our amazing community of libraries in Montana. Libraries can take us places we have never been; and if we are fortunate, we'll even be able to visit there some day. The way we share resources—from EBSCO and OCLC to the Montana Shared Catalog and Partners—all residents of this state equal access to an incredible wealth of materials. We have great libraries in this state and we have every reason to be proud of all of them! I certainly am.

I'm looking forward to seeing many of you in Big Sky in April. Here's to networking, sharing ideas, and learning with and from each of you. Sláinte!

Kim Crowley, President
School Readiness Backpacks Take Learning Home
By Becky Hayes
Sidney-Richland County Library

In September, the Sidney-Richland County Library partnered with the Richland County Family Resource Center to make an innovative addition to our collection, a set of 7 school-readiness backpacks to help families get their kids ready for kindergarten. In a community without a Head Start or extensive preschool program, the backpacks present a unique and much-needed resource for families with young children. The backpack themes include alphabet, numbers, colors, animals, healthy habits, and nutrition, and include puzzles, games, books which are designed to foster parent-child interaction. Each of the activities are proven to help with cognitive development, hand-eye coordination, sensory perception, language development and fine motor skills.

In coordination with the FRC, the Library offers the backpacks on a two-week check-out at our front desk. Parents are real fans of the idea, and several regular story time Moms proudly announced that their kids were finally learning their colors or numbers after spending a week playing with the backpacks. The kids are excited too, because how cool is it to get to check out toys from the library? It’s just one more reason for families to come to the Library, and they rarely leave without a few books or movies as well. In addition to the backpacks, the Family Resource Center has also provided the library with a selection of brand new chunky puzzles, perfect for little hands while the adults browse for books, or work on the computer. The Family Resource Center has also helped the library acquire books, DVDs and books on tape about all kinds of topics affecting families, from ideas for a family fun night, to how to help everyone cope with loss or changes.

The FRC was inspired by a similar set of backpacks offered by the Glendive Nurturing Tree. The FRC further collaborated with the Library to make them a permanent part of the collection, to take advantage of the Library’s existing connections with parents and collections management. The backpacks include about $1400 of materials and were funded through a local fundraiser, the Parade of Trees, and have been well worth the investment.
Your Lewis & Clark Library Goes Mobile…via Your Smartphone!
By Patricia Spencer, Public Information Officer
Lewis and Clark Library

The oldest library in the State of Montana and the first library in the State to digitize its catalog, is proud to offer a mobile app for all mobile platforms.

Network Services Manager, Matt Beckstrom, announced this week that the app is now available in the appstores and can be accessed using iPhone, iPad, Android, Blackberry, PalmOS, and Windows Mobile. “Once the app is downloaded to their device, patrons have the ability to search our catalog; place reservations; renew books; browse our upcoming events calendar; locate our branch library information; access Library general information, such as hours and phone numbers; see our press releases; and visit links to our social media.”

A current Library card and a mobile device is all that is needed to begin accessing the Lewis & Clark mobile app. From the appstore, patrons need to search for “Lewis & Clark” and follow the simple download instructions. Once the mobile app is downloaded, patrons will find an icon of the Library’s buffalo on their mobile device’s app menu. With the introduction of this mobile app, Lewis & Clark Library patrons now have 24 hour, 7 day a week access to their Library. “They will be able to renew books, place holds on titles they wish to read, as well as browse our catalog.

“This is an exciting service that we are proud to be able to provide to our patrons,” explained Lewis & Clark Library Director Judy Hart. “It is just one more example of how we are striving to fulfill our mission while staying relevant with current technology.”

For more information log onto www.lewisandclarklibrary.org and remember, There’s Always Something New and Innovative Going on @ Your Lewis & Clark Library!

* * * * *

While you’re at the MLA conference be sure to stop by and check out the fine and unique items offered at the Sheila Cates Silent Auction. All proceeds go to scholarships for future librarians. And if you’re looking for a fun and wild time Thursday night at conference, come to the Cates event! Decorate a cool cake, kick butt in charades, and wow everyone with your great literacy costume. Prizes! You don’t want to miss it!

Be sure to stop by the MLA table in the vendor area at conference and get your cool MLA freebie. And come to the first-ever Librarian Cinema event on Wednesday, April 11 at 8:00 in the Big Sky Hotel Ampitheatre. Drinks, snacks, and a great movie about a librarian. Kick off the conference right!
By Dawn Kingstad
MLA Director-at-Large, East

I took two days off this week for mental health days. I know as any good librarian (workaholic) would tell you: mental health days are bad, but I needed to regroup badly. I was starting to get a little short with our patrons and co-workers, and work just didn’t have its usual “sparkle.”

In our profession it is engrained in us to work harder with limited resources, with a looming mill levy, more programming, and more tasks piling up and not taking time to smell the “pixel roses” on my screen saver.

So what does this have to with being a member of the Montana Library Association? MLA helps me recharge my professional batteries so to speak. It gives me new ideas, new tools, and a much needed morale-booster that gets me excited to go back to my library and get waist deep in new library programming. The amazing keynote speakers have been a great reminder for what we do for our communities. Libraries and the people who are dedicated to them are amazing. We are the hubs of communities, the life force that keeps the community thriving and strong.

So, in honor of one of my favorite authors, F. Scott Fitzgerald, I am going to bare my professional soul and be vague at the same time. This month, an article in The American Scholar examines Fitzgerald’s collection of essays, Crack-up. Critics have ridiculed this collection and his peers have openly despised these works. His essays were criticized as bearing too much of the writer’s soul and displaying a crack in his professional façade, but where the contemporary literati of the time saw fault, the common man saw authenticity. I’ve told you everything and nothing at all.

Like Fitzgerald’s writing, MLA is an opportunity for all of us to engage on a professional level while meeting with kindred spirits who understand the day-to-day struggles we all face as librarians. MLA is what you make it. It can be a morale-booster, a professional step-ladder, sharing a cup of coffee with friends, certification credits, etc... Use MLA to become that librarian you know in your heart you can be. Me? Which one am I? I guess you have to come to the New Member Breakfast to find out!

New Website
By Jude Smith, Public Relations
Great Falls Public Library

Great Falls Public Library has a new website. The site was re-designed by local business Shortgrass Web Development and funded by the Great Falls Public Library Foundation.

“The new site is not only visually appealing, but ensures the community can more easily locate the wealth of information the library offers online,” said Kathy Mora, Library Director. “You will find everything from our catalog to look up materials in the library to links to download audio and ebooks from several sources to information on all of our programs and services.” Check out the new site and discover how much your library has to offer!
Quilt Show at the Library
By Cheryl Hoover
Montana State University Billings Library

If the saying “a bed without a quilt is like a sky without stars” can be transferred to a library setting, staff and visitors to the MSUB Library sure enjoyed a sky full of stars earlier this year.

No one can remember when the first quilt show began but for many years the annual show has provided color, beauty, and warmth to the library during cold winter months. Former Library Director Jane Howell developed the concept of the non-competitive show and Library employee and quilting enthusiast, Kathy Gurney, took off with the idea.

With the help of Eileen Wright and Megan Thomas, the Library is transformed into a sky of quilts from mid-January through the end of February every year.

Initially, the displays came from MSUB staff, faculty, and students who provided a wonderful variety of the patchwork artistry, ranging from family heirlooms to modern creations. The show quickly expanded to become a community event with non-campus people donating quilts for display.

A short video of this year’s quilt show can be seen at: http://www.msubillings.edu/videos/quilts/index.htm
News from the Montana State Library

Montana Certification Program for Library Directors, Staff & Trustees
By Sue Jackson
Montana State Library

If you’re interested in the certification program, the details and forms are on the MSL website: http://msl.mt.gov/For_Librarians/Training/certification/default.asp. With the master ce list and the online tracking form, it’s easy to participate.

Library Finances Training for Trustees
By Sue Jackson
Montana State Library

Montana State Library is hosting Library Finances: Funding, Sources, Accounting Reports, and What It All Means clinics for trustees at six locations during April-June. Tracy Cook, MSL consultant, and Fiscal Accounting Officers from the state’s Local Government Services Bureau will present information about funding and revenue sources available to libraries and how these work; budget laws that impact the library including Title 7 of the MCA, Governmental Accounting Standards; BARS (Budgetary Accounting and Reporting System) and how to read the reports the city or county sends to the library; Library Depreciation Funds and how these benefit the library; and some quick and easy budgeting tips.

Clinics are scheduled 9:30-3:00 at each location:
Kalispell -- Thursday, April 26 -- Museum at Central School
Butte -- Saturday, April 28th -- Butte Silver Bow Public Library
Glendive, Thursday, May 10th -- Glendive Public Library
Billings -- Saturday, May 12th -- Parmly Billings Library
Lewistown -- Thursday, May 24th -- Lewistown Public Library
Havre -- Saturday, June 2nd -- Havre Hill County Library

As always, there is no registration fee and a light lunch is provided. Online registration is now available at: http://msl.mt.gov/trusteeclinic/. Contact Sue Jackson (sujackson@mt.gov or 406-444-5350) for more information.

Montana State Library Summer Institute 2012
By Joann Flick
Montana State Library

The Montana State Library will once again host a Summer Institute June 5-8. Public Library Directors and School Community Library Directors are invited to attend at no charge; most meals will be provided as will rooms in the new dorm at Carroll. The focus will be on leadership development in the digital age as we take the time to understand the complex digital ecosystem now engulfing library services. This extended time frame permits plenty of opportunity to develop relationships so that we can build our professional community and support each other.

The MSL Summer Institute is not planned for Summer 2013 as funding is not in place. It is hoped that the session will return periodically, but don’t put off attending this year in hopes of a 2013 session – the next institute is likely to be down the road a bit.

Registration will be limited on a first-come, first served basis and opens April 15th. Attendees must commit to attending the full slate of sessions as the institute is developed upon a planned succession of activities over the 3 day period. Watch for more information on MT WIRED, or contact Jo Flick, MSL Trainer jflick@mt.gov.
Let the learning begin:

slisweb.sjsu.edu/mla

Preparing Future Librarians to Serve Our Diverse Communities

Our nation’s libraries serve increasingly diverse communities. Often, librarians need to offer resources in multiple languages and create programs and services to meet the lifelong learning needs of patrons from a variety of cultural and linguistic groups.

Future librarians enrolled in the fully online, ALA-accredited Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) program at the San José State University School of Library and Information Science (SLIS) have a unique opportunity to study cultures and languages as they prepare to serve diverse communities.

In partnership with the Department of World Languages and Literatures at San José State University (SJSU), SLIS is launching a new, fully online Chinese language and culture course in Fall 2012. The Chinese course builds upon a pilot project launched last year, when the two SJSU departments partnered to introduce interdisciplinary, online courses in Spanish and French for SLIS students.

“We are delighted to offer these courses, which help students understand how to communicate cross-culturally, how to develop a collection of library resources to serve non-English speaking patrons, and how to develop library services that meet local needs,” said Dr. Linda Main, SLIS associate director.

The Chinese, Spanish, and French courses complement the robust curriculum that prepares SLIS students for numerous exciting career pathways. More than 200 course sections are available each semester, providing students with a wealth of options when choosing electives.

The School will continue offering other elective courses aimed at learning to serve diverse communities, including a new intercultural communication course, as well as scholarship programs for individuals from traditionally underserved communities.

The San José State University School of Library and Information Science offers two fully online master’s degrees, a fully online certificate program, and a doctoral program: Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS), Master of Archives and Records Administration (MARA), Post-Master’s Certificate in Library and Information Science, and the San José Gateway PhD Program.
EBSCO Onsite Training Tour
By Joann Flick
Montana State Library

Master the new EBSCO search tool “Discover It,” customize your library’s iteration of the search tool or any of the database interfaces, collect stats and schedule regular reports.

May 7th 11-3 Salish-Kootenai College, Pablo
May 9th 11-3 Fort Peck Annex, Wolf Point
May 11th 11 – 2:30 Montana State Library, Helena

MSL trainer Jo Flick and EBSCO trainer Lisa Dennis will conduct these hands-on 4 hr workshops across the state during the week of May 7-11. Attendees are encouraged to bring specific projects for customization or requests for reports with them and the workshop will allow time for actual work. The presentation portion of these sessions will include information about best practices for using the “Discover It!” integrated search tool, how to find resources on the MT Library Directory to cut and paste the search tool box onto a library’s Web site, information about customizing the search tool and database interfaces, and a demonstration on how to set up a scheduled statistical report.

Space is limited; please register in advance by emailing Jo Flick jflick@mt.gov.

Montana State Library Fall Workshop 2012
By Joann Flick
Montana State Library

September 16 and 17 (Sunday-Monday) at the Holiday Inn Grand Montana Hotel in Billings. This year’s Fall Workshop will feature lots of information on the eBook tsunami Montana libraries are encountering, programming ideas for working with young adults, managing technology, and a presentation by incoming ALA president Maureen Sullivan. As always, ANY librarian, volunteer, trustee or any person interested in libraries may attend at no charge. Lunch will be provided both days. Registration opens August 17th. Plan to register early to obtain your choice of sessions; some sessions fill up very quickly.

Update on MPLA Leadership Institute
By Norma Glock, Librarian
Columbus Middle/High School Library

Kristen Bryson, MSU Great Falls College of Technology Weaver, Library is representing Montana at the May 6-11, 2012 Leadership Institute in Estes Park, Colorado. The program is being facilitated by Maureen Sullivan, American Library Association president elect for 2012-2013.
Flathead County Library Foundation Donates $115,000, Including $15,000 for Ebooks and Audiobooks
By April Szuch, Public Services Librarian
Flathead County Library System

In March, the Flathead County Library Foundation donated $15,000 to the Flathead County Library System (FCLS) for ebooks and downloadable audiobooks. The funds will be used to purchase materials for MontanaLibrary2Go, particularly new and popular titles.

This donation is part of a larger donation of $115,000 given to the Flathead County Library System. The rest of the funds will be used for improvements to the spaces at several FCLS locations, public seating upgrades, teen furniture, early learning computers and toys for children’s areas, and a new library website.

FLCS is appreciative for the Foundation’s continuing support and for donations like this, which help us provide our library customers with an increased selection of popular materials and welcoming spaces in each of our locations. Ebooks continue to be popular with FCLS customers.

“We are so grateful to our Library Foundation for this amazing gift,” Library Director Kim Crowley said. “These upgrades will help us to meet, and in some cases exceed, our strategic plan goals.”

The mission of the Flathead County Library Foundation, Inc., a nonprofit organization, is to enhance and support the programs, facilities and patron services of the Flathead County Library System through fundraising and acceptance of charitable gifts.

Third Annual Loud at the Library Celebration in Kalispell a Success
By April Szuch, Public Services Librarian
Flathead County Library System

On March 22, the Flathead County Library Foundation held the third annual Loud at the Library fundraiser in Kalispell. The evening was filled with the sounds of music, laughter, and conversation.

The event, attended by approximately 300 people, included live music from The Bad Larrys, a sumptuous food buffet, beer from Tamarack Brewing Company, locally donated wine, 17 unique raffle baskets, a door prize, and a live auction.

The auction was led by auctioneer Marc Vessar and featured items uniquely painted by local artists, including five oak chairs, two children's chairs, a tabletop dictionary stand, and a 24-drawer card catalog.

The event raises money to help support FCLS programs and events. This year’s event raised nearly $13,000 for the Flathead County Library System.
Old Wine in New Wineskins: New Access to Old MLA Publications

By Jim Kammerer, Chair
Academic and Special Library Division

Just four years ago Volume One, Number One of the Montana State Library Association Bulletin, dated July-August, 1939, made its modest bid for the attention and interest of Montana librarians. Its size was limited to a single page; its contents carried no pretensions to wit or wisdom; its appearance laid no claim to beauty. It was an example of strict factual reporting, plain and unpretentious. The project of putting out a bi-monthly bulletin was proposed as a means of communication among the members of MSLA, whose contact previously had (with the exception of occasional meetings and discussions by a few individuals) been limited to the yearly meeting of the Association.


So marked the fourth anniversary in 1943 of the Montana State Library Association Bulletin. Over the next 69 years the official MLA publication underwent several name changes including the Montana Library Quarterly, Montana Library Newsletter to the current Montana Library Focus. The name of our professional organization of Montana librarians, as you know, also evolved to Montana Library Association. You can trace this history and the development of MLA and its publications by visiting the Archives link http://www.mtlia.org/Archives/default.asp on the Montana Library Association website.

Here you will find all the MLA publications to date that have been scanned from the print collection housed at the Montana State Library. Missing issues and better preserved copies are added as the digitization project progresses.

This scanning is part of a larger project of an estimated 37,000 historic state publications of which 15,160 have been converted from analog to digital. Interestingly, this conversion shows the historic MLA publications just as they are in print “warts and all.” Time has not always been kind to some of the publications. Users see the MLA publications just as if they held the same newsletter in their own hands. Our understanding of conservation best practices, paper quality, and of course, publishing technology has improved since volume one, issue one. And so 21st century users should not be too surprised to see some faded print, yellow paper, ink bleeding, askance date stamps marking when a publication was received, and tight gutter margins as multiples issues were bound together in volumes.
But back to the positive...students of rhetoric, social-political events in Montana, and library science historians will enjoy plenty in this digital archive. Reading these historic MLA newsletters has increased my admiration of the work done by my predecessors, their professional challenges, and their pioneer spirit.

And so I end this brief article composed on a Dell XPS 13 with a 2nd Gen Intel Core processor, 6 GB RAM, one terabyte hard drive, with another historic MLA article excerpt possibly composed on an Olivetti, M40 typewriter from the same MLA newsletter vol.1, no. 1 that is as timeless and true when it was written 69 years ago:

And this Bulletin which has proved a successful cooperative project is in itself no small achievement. It has demonstrated that we can work together as a group; it has served as a means of informing the membership on matters of policy and on pending legislation; and it has brought the librarians of Montana together in clearer understanding of professional problems, in unity of effort toward their solution, and in closer personal acquaintanceship, bridging the long, long miles which Montana counts in hundreds.


Experiences of Your ALA Representative at ALA Midwinter
By Suzanne Goodman
ALA Representative

While conducting business for Montana libraries via involvement in the ALA Council consumed most of my time in Dallas, I did enjoy the benefits of that analog networking librarians love to do when they gather. I had the good fortune of meeting a retired librarian from Dallas who is not on Council but who was able to attend the ALA Midwinter Meeting and take advantage of all the speakers and educational opportunities she desired. She was able to hear John Green (author of YA novel Looking for Alaska, and several other YA novels). Other librarians on council had heard him speak before and the overall reaction is, “If you ever need a speaker for Intellectual Freedom, John Green is top notch.”

I did get to hear Rich Harwood speak and was a little disappointed in his presentation. Although I was unable to attend Susan Cain’s presentation, I was intrigued by the topic of her talk. The one speaker that positively blew me away was Jamal Joseph. He touched on so many topics near and dear to many a librarian’s heart: power of literacy, importance of intellectual freedom, the ability of the arts and the humanities to transform society. I was able to speak to him briefly after his presentation. We exchanged cards and he would be willing to come to Montana to talk to us if we were so inclined.

For more information on the speakers, follow the Dallas Midwinter link. There were 6,236 attendees at this year’s event, as well as 3,693 exhibitors. Just to put it in perspective, more people attended ALA than live in my home town of Livingston!

A More Personal Look at ALA Midwinter Meeting 2012
By Suzanne Goodman
ALA Representative

My first bit of culture shock came in the shuttle ride from the Dallas/Fort Worth airport to my hotel. True to form, the librarians on board immediately found each other (never having met before and all coming from diverse points in the US). As the conversation rolled around and one woman contributed the results of her research on a site we had just passed another one marveled, “What was life like before Smart Phones!” And they all wondered aloud while I was grateful for the shadows that hid my look of dismay......I’ve long dreamed of having a Smartphone.....what would life be like with one?

If life in the city ever acts as a looking glass into the future of life in Montana, I think that the peek at the iniquitousness of smart phones in cities is a clear indication of the future. Absolutely everyone had one (remember that in other parts of the US, Billings is considered a small town). That being said, consider for a moment the hot topic of the future of libraries in this digital age.

(SEE ALA REP on p. 11)
Cates Fundraising Event
at the MLA Conference
Thursday, April 12, 8:30-10:00 p.m.
This is one event you won’t want to miss!

Feisty team book charades! Prizes!

Dress as your favorite literary character!
Prizes!

Charades!
Cakes!
Costumes!

all for Cates

Cake decorating not for the faint of heart. Prizes!
(ALA REP from p. 9)

I was particularly struck by a brief report of what a library in California is doing to promote library services by using QR codes to connect patrons to downloadable e-books, audiobooks, readers advisory tools, and more. It seems simply ingenious to me and something we might consider adapting for Montana someday in the near future.

At meetings with other state representatives the most interesting piece of news was the employment picture for new librarians. It seems there are jobs out there, but the geographical distribution is spotty. State reps from Alaska, Florida and Washington state reported that there are library jobs in the US, but folks have to be willing to relocate or to live in smaller (remember, this is a national audience,) towns and not necessarily in university towns. There is a group of librarians seeking to consolidate this information for new recruits to librarianship.

The hot bit of ALA business that was news was the recent acquisition of Neal Schuman Publishing. This imprint will now become a part of ALA’s publishing arm known as ALA Editions. ALA leadership hopes to improve revenue streams with this new acquisition.

While on the subject of new jobs in libraries, I was surprised at the types of library positions out there in the bigger world. I’d never heard of a copyright librarian before. One of the women in the shuttle with me has a law degree, an MLS and is now going back to school to become a copyright librarian. Given the current climate, that sure seems like a “hot career” in librarianship. The afternoon after the last council meeting I was able to enjoy the Dallas Museum of Art. There on the second floor I stumbled upon......yes.....a library! A whole library with full-time MLS employed! I guess the big city does have some positive aspects.

Thank you all for allowing me this opportunity to serve Montana librarians. For those of you green with envy at these great experiences, I’d recommend that you immediately volunteer to be nominated for a position within MLA. Committee work is a great way to start. If you are ready for more, consider asking to be nominated for one of the MLA open positions. A working knowledge of MLA is crucial to serving as ALA Representative. The benefits are huge, both for you and for Montana’s libraries. If you are interested, contact President Kim Crowley (kcrowley@flathead.mt.gov) to find out what is needed. My term ends in 2013.