Message from the President

I hope you have noticed from all the activity on Wired lately that your library association is a very active one! MLA is working on a number of fronts on your behalf of you and that of Montana libraries.

What’s been happening?

Your volunteer MLA Board works year-round and also gets together either in person or online once a quarter for official meetings. The Board met last on Friday, January 16. This meeting included, among other things, a review of the current strategic plan to make sure the work of the organization is on track; updates about conference planning and legislative activities; making sure vacant offices are filled (hence the PLD election ballot); and plans to gear up for a by-laws review.

MLA’s spring activities include the very successful Library Legislative Day that was held on January 15, thanks to Judy Hart, the Government Affairs committee, and the State Library. This legislative work is probably the most important MLA takes on for Montana libraries. The Offline Technology conference meets this weekend in Billings—it provides a wonderful way to beat the winter doldrums and get re-energized (what can be better than learning something new while interacting with our amazing peers?). Planners are also hard at work on shaping a fabulous Annual Conference—I hope you are all planning on coming to beautiful Bozeman in April to participate.

The Professional Development committee is currently trying to find 15 MLA members to award with $150 professional development grants for conference attendance. The deadline to apply is March 1. More information can be found at http://mtlib.org/Handbook/grant_guidelines.asp or contact chair Samantha Hines.

One of my favorite occasions at the Annual Conference is the awards banquet. It is our chance as an organization to acknowledge and affirm the great work done both by other library professionals and by library supporters. The Awards Committee has been busy accepting nominations for a number of prestigious MLA awards. For more information on the awards, go to http://mtlib.org/Handbook/Standing_Committees/awahon.asp or contact co-chairs Debbi Kramer and Eva English.

How can you help?

This is just a sampling of what is happening in the MLA world. All of these activities are made possible because of your membership dues and your attendance at MLA conferences and retreats. Not sure if you are a current member? You can check the directory at http://mtlib.org/Directory to check on your status.

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If you are not current, please rejoin. It would be great if you could also encourage your colleagues to sign up and to join you at MLA events. Another way to support MLA is by purchasing an MLA license plate (go to http://mtlib.org/Information/licplates.aspx) or by participating in the Amazon Smile program, which provides a percentage of each Amazon purchase to MLA (go to http://mtlib.org to get started or contact Debbi Kramer with questions).

You can also help MLA efforts by getting involved and volunteering your time as a member of the Board, a committee or an interest group—or as an officer of one of the MLA Divisions. You can see many of the options at http://mtlib.org/Governance. Annual Conference is a great time to check these options personally. Is intellectual freedom an interest? Plan to attend the Intellectual Freedom Committee meeting. Are you involved in children’s services? Check out the Children & Youth Services Interest Group. Are you an MLA member? Please attend the annual membership meeting. If you are not sure where to start, please contact me (sbonnand@montana.edu) or any other Board member. We would love to answer your questions and share our passion for the organization. MLA is only as strong as its members—please consider strengthening it with your participation! Thanks, everyone, and see you at Annual.

**MPLA Updates**

By Eileen Wright, MPLA Representative

Save the date for next year’s joint conference in Cheyenne, Wyoming—*Changing Libraries in the New West*—September 23-25, 2015. Keynote speaker will be Scott Ginsberg of “Hello My Name is Scott.” Children’s author luncheon features Jack Gantos. Opening reception will take place at the Cheyenne Frontier Days Old West Museum: http://www.oldwestmuseum.org/

Need money to attend the MPLA conference or another professional conference, workshop, seminar, or training? Professional Development money is available for MPLA members, which can be used towards all of these. For full details, check out this link: http://www.mpla.us/forms/professional-development-grant.html

In order to foster stronger relationships within MPLA, the organization has decided to use an online meeting platform called Zoom. This will help bring together libraries and librarians across the vast mountains and plains region. In addition to professional development classes, MPLA will be offering times for people to just meet and discuss issues and joys within their region.

**MLA Professional Development Grant:** Happy new year! If you made a resolution to save money and/or attend this year’s MLA conference, has MLA got a deal for you. The association has fifteen $150 grants for conference attendance! For more information and to apply visit http://www.mtlib.org/Handbook/grant_guidelines.asp and click on MLA Conference Grants (the first link). Please contact Samantha Hines with questions at (406)243-7818 or samantha.hines@umontana.edu.
Save the date for the PNLA 2015 Annual Conference—*Pushing the Boundaries*—on August 5-7, 2015 in Vancouver, WA. The 2015 Conference hotel is the Hilton Vancouver. Please visit their site for more information or to place a reservation: [http://www.hilton.com/en/hi/groups/personalized/P/PDXVAHH-PNL-20150804/index.jhtml](http://www.hilton.com/en/hi/groups/personalized/P/PDXVAHH-PNL-20150804/index.jhtml).

**Important Conference Dates:**
- Registration opens: March 20
- Early Registration deadline: July 3
- Regular registration deadline: July 31

Go to the PNLA conference website to read about the keynote speakers. More information will be available as we get closer: [http://pnla.memberclicks.net/conference-2015](http://pnla.memberclicks.net/conference-2015).


Join PNLA to attend the conference at a reduced rate, [http://pnla.memberclicks.net/membership](http://pnla.memberclicks.net/membership), but remember that if your library has an institutional membership, they can send as many librarians as they would like. Yearly cost is $50 for individual membership or $150 for institutional membership.

As PNLA Representative, Della Dubbe will be attending the PNLA Retreat in Dumas Bay, Washington February 6 to 8. Let Della know if you have any questions or comments that you would like her to voice at the retreat.

Annie Alger is PNLA’s new treasurer, and Sarah Head is the new Alberta Representative. Congrats to both!

Della’s term as PNLA Representative expires this year in June. If you are interested in running to be MLA’s representative to PNLA, contact Beth Boyson, bboyson@bozeman.net. If you would like more information about the position, contact Della at eddubbe@gmail.com.

**A Special Invitation to MLA**

*By Carmen Clark, Conference Planning Committee*

We would LOVE LOVE LOVE to see you in Bozeman, April 8-11, 2015. With titles like these, who would even consider skipping this year’s conference?

- Who Let the Dogs In?
- Turning Dreams into Dollars!
- TLC for Books!
- The Power of Knowledge!
- An Entrepreneur Walks Into the Library!
- Cooking Up the Past!

It is going to be hard to decide which workshop to choose. We have selected a great slate of workshops for you this year. Also don’t forget our evening entertainment which includes a welcoming reception at the Bozeman Public Library, the Cates event and other fun get-togethers (some might have to do with beer…).

We are very excited about this conference and hope you can join us in April. Please go to [http://mtlib.org/2015Conference/](http://mtlib.org/2015Conference/) for more information.
Montana Shared Catalog News
By Ken Adams,
Shared Catalog Administrator

The MSC 2015 New Library Application is now available for download from the MSL web page at: [http://libraries.msl.mt.gov/Home/statewide_projects/montana_shared_catalog.aspx](http://libraries.msl.mt.gov/Home/statewide_projects/montana_shared_catalog.aspx). Links to the application plus an MSC description, members map, and FAQ are found at the bottom of the web page. The application deadline is February 20, 2015. This will be the only application period for 2015. LSTA funds will be made available to cover most, if not all, vendor startup costs. LSTA funding availability will depend upon the amount of the grant plus the number, type, and size of the libraries selected to join during this application period. Contact Ken Adams at the Montana State Library to obtain a cost estimate and to answer any questions.

Jemma Hazen returned to the MSC support staff last October after a 5-year hiatus during which she started a family and honed her public library skills at the Lewis and Clark Library in Helena. Jemma stepped into the recently created position of MSC Technical Services Analyst where her main task will be monitoring and maintaining the accuracy of the MSC bibliographic, item, and authority records. As many of you know, Melody Condron left Montana last September for warmer environs in Texas. Her departure left a vacancy that was filled by the then MSC Trainer, Amy Marchwick. The new MSC Trainer, Jessie Goodwin was hired and began work in January. Jessie graduated from UM in 2001 and received her master's degree in library and information science from San Jose State in 2007. She has worked at Missoula Public Library (library specialist), Coronado Public Library (tech services librarian), San Diego County Library (adult services librarian) and San Diego Public Library (branch manager). Jessie returned to Montana last spring and currently resides in Clancy. We are delighted to have the MSC staff back to full strength, especially with such experienced, knowledgeable, and dedicated employees.

School Library Division News
By Dana Carmichael,
MLA School Library Division co-chair

What a perfect time to be a school librarian. We have so many opportunities to be involved with curriculum, technology tools, and a golden age of children’s literature. Preparing lessons on information literacy and management, we can teach students and staff how to get what they want with the least amount of hassle.

At the fall 2014 MEA-MFT Conference, teacher-librarians from 13 different schools met to discuss the state of budgets, licensing, time, staffing, and weeding. Everyone participated in the slate of topics and the results were eerily similar around the state. A few rural schools currently have classroom certified teachers working toward a library endorsement. Luckily Ann Eubank from the MSU Library Certification program was on hand for our discussion. Of most concern to those present is the trend of assigning other duties to the teacher-librarian. Schools under 200 are being asked to teach classes such as reading, Spanish, journalism, and the Montana Virtual Academy. In a couple of instances, libraries are staffed with aides during this time, but in most cases the libraries are closed. One teacher-librarian was extremely concerned about two grade levels in the district who never see a certified librarian. Alternative Standards to meet Montana Accreditation may be too easily obtained to protect the MCA for school staffing.

Teacher-librarians feel somewhat divorced from district technology decisions in districts with dedicated Technology Coordinators. However, libraries are still being tasked with circulation and maintenance of laptops, chromebooks, iPads, and/or iPods. Likewise, librarians are purchasing and managing student access to ereaders, audiobooks (playaway or tapes and cds), and digital content.

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Colet Bartow, OPI Library Media Specialist, even mentioned one school’s purchase of Mifi devices so students may have internet access at home compliments of the school library. Discussion included the need for increased access points for WiFi, as districts rely more on portable devices for school. We briefly touched on the trend towards Chromebooks even though the use is narrow compared with laptops and iPads. For ebooks, several librarians talked about Overdrive’s new pricing structures. This vendor also manages MontanaLibrary2Go.

As the outgoing chair of the School Library Division, I am hopeful teacher-librarians will attend the MLA Conference in April and the MEA-MFT Conference in Billings in October. With shrinking budgets, minimal staffing, and other assigned duties squeezing school libraries, networking is a solid way to advocate for our students and districts.

**Library Journal** names Belgrade Community Library the 2015 Best Small Library in America

By Meredith Schwartz,
Senior Editor of Library Journal

Belgrade Community Library has been named the 2015 Best Small Library in America by Library Journal. This annual award, cosponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, was created in 2005 to showcase the exemplary work of public libraries serving populations under 25,000. BCL was chosen for its determination to surpass its resource challenges with partnerships to offer the service needed by its rapidly growing community.

“The success of the library comes from the people who believe in that library,” says BCL director Gale Bacon. “They give their time, they give their skills, they give their talent.” In addition to creating vibrant services to meet the contributions of the engaged local community, BCL partnered with the state and other local libraries on innovations such as courier delivery to get materials where they are needed; with the local university to offer free lifelong learning opportunities for adults, with a variety of organizations to support military families, and many more.

“What might seem like limitations to others seems to inspire the Belgrade team to try new things, make new partnerships, redefine services, and always keep community needs front of mind,” said Rebecca T. Miller, editorial director of Library Journal and School Library Journal. “And that community extends to libraries across the state, which have benefited from Belgrade’s leadership, and now the nation’s libraries. There’s much to be learned from Belgrade, and we are very proud to give them this award.”

Though this is BCL’s first turn on the national stage, it is not the first time the library’s extraordinary efforts have been honored. BCL was named the Montana Library Association’s Library of the Year in 2011, and awarded the Excellent Library Services Award by the Montana State Library in 2014.

Two finalists will also receive prizes. LJ proudly named California’s Mill Valley Public Library and New York’s Red Hook Public Library as the finalists for the 2015 Best Small Library in America. Both libraries feature the programs, tech savvy, and commitment to the community that signify the Best Small Library in America.

Belgrade Community Library will receive a $20,000 cash award to support its services and outreach to the community. The two finalist libraries will each receive a $10,000 cash award. The winner and finalists will also receive conference costs for two library representatives to attend the 2016 Public Library Association conference in and recognition at an award celebration.

Friends of MSU Library host Distinctive Dialogues
By Angela Tate,
Program Coordinator
Friends of MSU Library Liaison
Montana State University Library

The Friends of MSU Library will once again host their annual Distinctive Dialogues event on Tuesday, April 7 beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the Hilton Garden Inn in Bozeman. This event is a “friend-raiser” for the Friends of MSU Library with proceeds going to renovate library spaces.

This year’s event features 19 local experts hosting table conversations on their areas of expertise, ranging from wine to gardening, from bees to Brad Pitt, from chainsaw carving to coffee. Guests join a table of 5-7 others and have the chance to discuss anything and everything related to the table host’s topic. New this year is the “Serendipity Hour.” After the first hour of conversation, table hosts will rotate to another table. Guests will have the opportunity to hear from two local experts.

We would love for you to join us for this evening of light fare and lively conversation! Tickets are $25 and must be purchased in advance. For more information or to make a reservation, please call 994-3119 or email angela.tate@montana.edu. To learn more about the Friends of MSU Library, visit www.friendsofmsulibrary.com.

Remembering the Great War: World War I Lecture Series
By Cheryl Hoover,
Librarian
MSU Billings Library

To commemorate the centenary of the outbreak of World War I, the MSU Billings Library is hosting the second part of a series of lectures beginning Tuesday, February 10, 2015. These lectures are free and open to the public and feature the research of MSUB faculty in the fields of Native American studies, science, communication, history, and English.

There are five lectures in this series and a light reception follows each. The kick-off presentation is titled, “Into the Bloody Fray: Montanans’ Return to the Home Front in WWI” by Dr. Paul Milan Foster, Jr. All lectures begin at 6:30 pm and will be held on the university campus in the lecture hall LI 148. View the event website for a complete schedule: http://www.msubillings.edu/ww1/.

This series began last fall with six lectures. All presentations were well attended with over 200 guests per lecture. In support of the series, the Library received a small grant from Humanities Montana. If you have any questions, please contact the library at (406)657-1662.

From PR & Marketing: Did you know that MLA has a Facebook page? We post current happenings and MLA news of interest to the site. Become a friend of the Montana Library Association!
Capital Campaign heats up in Missoula
By Mary Drew Powers,
Public Relations/Reference Librarian
Missoula Public Library

The foundation is being laid for Missoula Public Library’s capital campaign, as MPL continues in the preparatory phase of the project to build a new library in downtown Missoula. Interested community members are taking the lead, and have been meeting to deliberate how best to achieve the goal of a new central library building. This “Library Action Team” is currently strategizing on three fronts:

Building Committee: this group was charged with putting together a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to help in identifying and selecting an architect to design Missoula’s new library. This team recently posted the RFQ. Respondents will be narrowed down to a few well-qualified candidates who will make public presentations this spring.

Speakers Bureau: the Speakers Bureau is educating local philanthropists and civic-minded groups on the needs and benefits of a 21st Century Library. The committee members are meeting one-on-one or presenting to groups. Call the Foundation for Missoula Public Library if you or your group would like more information on this exciting project—we will send someone out to meet with you!

Visioning Committee: this group is brainstorming on the classes, technology, collections and collaborations that will make our new library a community and cultural center for all to enjoy.

This is an exciting and challenging process. We are fortunate to have committed people throughout the community who are willing to dedicate their time, expertise, and passion to this project. Wish us luck!

Cates Silent Auction and Fundraising Bash
By Lisa Mecklenberg Jackson,
Cates Committee Chair

The MLA Conference is drawing near and you know what that means…Cates! Conference is the prime fundraising time for the Cates Committee scholarships and we have some fun planned for this year!

Cates Silent Auction

It is the time to start getting your donation baskets ready for the ever-popular Sheila Cates Silent Auction at conference. Put together a basket from your library or federation. Single items are welcome too. Anything you think librarians would bid on. We are so grateful for your support of the Cates Silent Auction. If you can contribute to the auction, please send an e-mail to Cates Committee Chair Lisa Mecklenberg Jackson to let her know: lisameckjack@gmail.com.

Beware the Ugly Sashes!

We are going to try something new at conference this year as a means of raising additional scholarship funds. Beware of the ugly sashes! You could be blissfully minding your own business at conference and the next thing you know, you could get ugly sashed! The only way to get rid of the ugly sash is to pay $5.00 to a Cates Committee member. We will take your money and award the ugly sash to the next lucky recipient. Once you have been “sashed,” you will get a sticker saying you have been sashed for Cates, so you do not have to keep paying (unless you want to!).

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Fundraising Bash

We’re working out the details on what promises to be another extraordinarily fun Cates fundraising event at conference. The event will take place Friday evening, April 10, 2015 at 8:00 after the membership dinner. Here’s a hint about what to expect at this year’s event just to pique your interest…Life-size game of checkers, anyone?

We raise funds in the name and memory of Sheila Cates, a long-time librarian who advocated for librarians throughout Montana. Funds raised through these fundraising efforts go to provide scholarships to Montana librarians seeking advanced library degrees or certifications.

Focus Publication Standards in Brief
By Rebekah Kamp,
MLA Focus Editor

Per the MLA bylaws, the Focus editor publishes the standards and guidelines for publication in brief once annually. You can view a complete copy online at http://mtlib.org/Handbook/focus_guidelines.asp.

Montana Library Focus is published six times a year in the months of February, April, June, August, October, and December. The deadline for submission falls on the 20th of the month preceding publication (e.g. January 20 for the February issue).

Submissions in electronic copy are preferred. In general, writing in the third person is preferred. Please include your name, address, affiliation, and phone number with all manuscripts.

Reports should cover the business of MLA committees, divisions, or interest groups. As a general guideline, keep reports to 700 words or less. News releases are brief announcements of interest to Montana librarians, but not related to official MLA business. News releases should be 500 words or less.