



# Montana Library Association

*From the Mountains to the Prairies*

## **MLA BOARD REPORTS**

Office held/Chair of: President

Reported By: Mary Anne Hansen

Date: April 24, 2020

### **Progress or Successes Since Our Last Meeting:**

What an unexpected, unprecedented, scary time. I'm wishing everyone the best as I draft this report for 2019-2020 in this role.

The biggest issues the MLA Board had to tackle this past year include the bitter disappointment of having to cancel MLA 2020 in Missoula because of Covid-19 pandemic. On behalf of the board, Executive Director Debbi Kramer is coordinating with Jo Flic, Montana State Library, to facilitate online professional development programs, potentially some of whom may be presenters from the now-cancelled MLA 2020 face to face conference. Programs accepted for MLA 2020 will be put to the top of the list for programs for MLA 2021, if presenters so desire. Kudos to Deb Kramer for coordinating this carryover, among so many other details that she has attended to in the wake of our MLA 2020 cancellation.

Our heartfelt appreciation to Lisa Mecklenberg-Jackson for taking the lead in drafting a Statement on Covid-19 on behalf of the Executive Board.

Another important action that the Board took this year was to accept Debbi Kramer's offer to continue as ED for another year, as well as Conference Planner with Doug Kramer through MLA 2021. This offer was enthusiastically approved by the board in the wake of the pandemic.

We held three successful retreats this year: The school library division retreat in Bozeman in August, the fall retreat at Chico, and the Offline retreat in Helena in February – with the ever-popular Mark Sheehan attending as keynote, once again. Polson has offered to host Offline in 2021, but it should be considered tentative in light of the recommendation and subsequent discussions to combine Offline with the Fall Retreat (See "Board Action Requested," below).

The Leadership Retreat set for June 2020 at the Montana Learning Center on Canyon Ferry Reservoir has been cancelled because there's only one new board member coming on, in addition to the need to cancel because of the Coronavirus. Debbi Kramer has offered to provide a face-to-face orientation for Danielle Bueller when she's in Lewistown this summer visiting family.

A big disappointment to the Board and many members this year is the impending cancellation of our MLA specialty plates due to a new regulation requiring organizations to have a minimum

of 400 members purchase their specific specialty plate. This will be phased out over two years and will cost MLA about \$4400 in lost revenue once the MLA plates are phased out. The membership approved three minor bylaws changes suggested by the Bylaws Committee; this was done via an online vote. These changes include the following:

- ARTICLE II PURPOSE OF THE ASSOCIATION – language was amended to better reflect MLA’s purpose and to be more aligned with ALA bylaws language.
- ARTICLE XIV, Section 3. Clarifies that election ballots shall be sent electronically.
- New section was added to ARTICLE XV ACTION WITHOUT MEETING, which allows some flexibility in that action can be taken by the membership at times other than the annual meeting, provided certain conditions are met.

**New Issues:**

Figuring out a new normal in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic and being prepared for future meeting cancellations. We should keep in mind that we may have to suspend all face-to-face meetings through 2020, depending on waves of outbreaks.

**Board Action Requested:**

Continue discussions about combining Fall Retreat with Offline, which tentatively has been scheduled for Polson in February 2021. This issue is perhaps more pressing with the loss of revenue from the cancellation of MLA 2020.

**Other Comments:**

My heartfelt gratitude to all who contribute so much to MLA to keep it thriving.

Be well, everyone!