

MONTANA LIBRARY FOCUS

MONTANA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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Message from the President

I have written the first line of this article at least 30 times. What can I tell you that will get you fired up for a new, amazing year of Montana Library Association? Those that came before me were polished, confident, intellectual, suave, savvy, and impressive in so many other ways. What can I contribute to MLA that is unique and can help move our organization forward? That unique quality remains to be seen. However, I vow to stretch my leadership muscles to new gains so that we can propel into this year with a POW!

Our theme this year is Find Your Inner Superhero: Protect! Empower! Inspire! A few years ago we were in dark times in library land. Library professionals were losing their jobs; libraries were closing; and naysayers were saying that this is the end of books. It certainly seemed like we needed a hero.

Time has passed and the storm has calmed, but we are still uncertain of the future of libraries. Libraries and librarians are knocking themselves out to show that they are relevant. Many libraries have increased their programming, activities, hours, and changed their overall look to entice our patrons back to us. The masses love that librarians are wearing more hats, but budgets and pay checks have not increased with duties. Others have taken pay cuts since the downsizing and now are stuck with lower pay. Some librarians have felt pressure to “volunteer” their expertise and to not be compensated for all the duties they perform for their community. I know that I am a big offender of this crime of under-selling and underestimating myself. We need to believe first that we are valuable. We are relevant. We are worthwhile. We do have that special something that our communities would be lost without. WE are AMAZING! WE can do it!

We collectively need to recognize that we have worth and value. We need to stand up for ourselves and our profession and let the world know that we are indispensable. We shouldn't have to “mandatory” volunteer. We deserve to be compensated for what we do. When we give away our expertise for free; those in our community may associate that with little or no value. We all know however, that what we have to give is priceless.

One of the reasons I absolutely LOVE my career is that there is no other occupation that I have held that has given me this sense of purpose. My patrons look to me for many things: to find their desired material, assist with technology, provide entertainment, provide a shoulder to cry on, to be a cheerleader when they get that job or the A+ on their paper, to listen to how their day went, and so many other things that might seem small and insignificant at the time, but we are changing lives. We are confidants, mentors, guardians, dreamers; we are part of the foundation that makes our community successful. Our community cannot do it without us. We must inspire our future community leaders to dream for the best communities that they can be. Dreams are the building blocks to the permanent future of a better tomorrow. The people who build these better tomorrows are real life superheroes. We have the opportunity to be those heroes.

(Continued Next Page)



Dawn Kingstad, MLA President



Montana Library Association

Montana's Libraries from the Mountains to Plains

Get ready to put on your cape and mask for the annual MLA conference that will be April 6 through April 9, 2016 in Missoula at the Hilton Garden Inn. I felt so blessed and in awe with the overwhelming response I received for volunteers in assisting with the conference planning. This superhero assembly is co-led by Mitchell Grady and Samantha Hines. I can foresee an action-packed and spectacular outcome from the group. Start thinking about what superhero ability you would like to demonstrate at conference this year. We would love to have you as a presenter. Remember that you are the only one that can be the best you!

The words of Dr. Seuss are particularly relevant to librarians today: "Today you are YOU, that is truer than true. There is no one alive who is youer than you," and "Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not."

Protect! Empower! Inspire!

Dawn Kingstad, President

MPLA Updates

By Eileen Wright,
MPLA Representative



MPLA president Annie Epperson, who is from Colorado, picked the *perfect* April week to visit the MLA conference. She was a bit nervous that she may see snow still, but she had a great time visiting with MLA librarians, attending sessions, and then capping it off at the membership meeting drawing names for the ten new MPLA memberships. She leaves grateful for a wonderful time and great weather only to arrive home to a bunch of snow. Her next conference takes her to Oklahoma, and this time the concern was the tornados. Once again it was a great conference and good weather, and now the tornado hits close to home, a funnel cloud back home in *Colorado!*?

She wanted to express the following, "My gratitude for the lovely visit earlier this month. I so enjoyed the chance to get to know a few people, attend some sessions, and share the goodness of Association membership."

Welcome new MPLA Members! The following is the list of folks who won a free one year membership to MPLA from the MLA 2015 conference:

- Denise Ard
- Linda Blomquist
- Janis Bruwelheidi
- Pam Carlton
- Jackie Crepeau
- Jessica Ketola
- Deanna King
- Todd Knispel
- Sonja Mann
- Hannah McKelvey



Annie Epperson, MPLA President, working on the loom from Imagine If Libraries at MLA.

Do you 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/quick-links/grants.html>.

Save the date for the upcoming MPLA/WLA joint conference is at Little America Resort in Cheyenne, Wyoming: September 23- 25, 2015.

PNLA Updates

By Della Dubbe,
Outgoing PNLA Representative



Welcome to Carmen Clark, your new PNLA Representative! Her email address is cclark@bozeman.net.

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>.

Important Conference Dates:

Early Registration deadline: July 3

Regular registration deadline: July 31

Go to the PNLA conference website to find info about keynote speakers. More information will be available as we get closer: <http://pnla.memberclicks.net/conference-2015>

Join PNLA to attend the conference at a reduced rate, <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, \$150 for institutional membership.

School Library Division Report

By Niki Keuch,
MLA School Library Division co-chair

It's been about a year since I was elected as SLD co-chair. Over the past year Dana Carmichael, the outgoing co-chair, Colet Bartow, and I have spent many hours reviewing how the SLD can best serve teacher-librarians around the state. The number of paid SLD members had dropped quite dramatically over the years, so our number one goal became to increase membership by gathering information on teacher-librarians' needs and thoughts through a survey.

Sixty-eight teacher-librarians responded. The survey revealed that teacher-librarians across the state would like to pull together, form partnerships, and have more "face-to-face" teacher-librarian professional development.

In order to achieve this, we came up with several goals to grow the SLD: offer a SLD Retreat, place MLA membership sign up on the online MEA-MFT Conference form, and have a larger presence at the MEA-MFT and MLA Conferences. They are big goals, but we believe they are achievable. Joining the team to help get this all organized is the new SLD co-chair Lynde Roberts, a teacher-librarian at Sandstone Elementary in Billings.

SLD Retreat in Bozeman - Get Energized for the School Year

Save the date for the SLD Retreat in Bozeman on August 11. This is the perfect opportunity for teacher-librarians to get energized and focused for another school year. Survey responses indicated that teacher-librarians wanted to have a one-day workshop, meet in the fall, and in person so that is what we will do!

We also tailored the one-day retreat to the professional development requested in the survey. Participants will enjoy sessions on library advocacy, information literacy instruction, digital citizenship, reading programs, collection development, and popular reads. Sheila Bonnard and Ann Eubank from MSU Bozeman have already volunteered to help with portions of this retreat. The workshop will take place at Chief Joseph Middle School Library, and tours of Meadowlark Elementary Library and Bozeman High School Library are planned for the end of the day. CEU's will be available for participants.

(Continued Next Page)

A reception with refreshments will be held at the historic Martin-Campeau home on Monday evening from 6:00-8:00 p.m. Take this opportunity to meet one another before Tuesday's workshops.

Go to the MLA website to sign up for the retreat and look at the program. It's a terrific deal at only \$20 for MLA members.

MLA Membership Now Available on the 2015 MEA-MFT Online Conference Form

At the April MLA Board meeting, the MLA Board approved a fixed rate membership of \$40 for SLD members who pay their dues through the MEA-MFT online conference registration form that is sent to all educators across the state in the fall. We are hoping that this format, timing, and price will increase the SLD membership.

MEA-MFT 2015 Conference

On May 9, I attended the MEA-MFT Conference Scheduling session in Billings along with 22 other curriculum chairs. I am pleased to report that there were a total of 11 presentations submitted under the MLA division for the conference, double the number from last year. Thanks to all of you who took the time to develop workshops focused on librarianship.

I asked several curriculum chairs about strategies they use to grow membership and partnerships during the conference. Several groups reserve a block of rooms at a hotel for a discounted rate so they are in close proximity with their colleagues for those casual but worthwhile conversations. If members would like a block of rooms reserved, just let me know and I will look into it.

During the round table meetings, some curricular groups have lunch. I scheduled the SLD round table meeting from 11:00-1:00 on Friday. Teacher-librarians could bring their own lunch while we discuss a variety of topics, or we could all pool together for pizza to be delivered.

Shuttling Stories

By Mary O'Brien,
Administrative Assistant
North Lake County Public Library

North Lake County Public Library in Polson has a new Story Shuttle.

Last fall, the Library Board of Trustees agreed that the library's very old van had seen better days. They authorized the purchase of a Ford Transit Connect wagon, a smaller, more sure-footed vehicle to take its place.

With a colorful vinyl wrap created by Polson graphic designer Daniel Smith and applied by Sign Pro, the new shuttle is eye-catching and already in high use. It serves primarily as an outreach vehicle for Youth Services Librarian Kendra Mullison on her many "story stops" at daycare and child care facilities. Public Services Librarian Jery Walker drives it, too, as she continually restocks the nine popular Book Nooks around town. Soon it will be pressed into service to help monitor our four Little Free Libraries, which will be scattered through the outlying Polson area.

"My favorite aspect of the new Story Shuttle is the response from kids," says Kendra Mullison. "Sometimes I'll see their faces pressed to the windows at their daycare facilities, watching it arrive and waiting for the stories it brings."

Library Director Marilyn Trosper has this to say, "The new Story Shuttle is drawing all kinds of attention. It's a great tool for public awareness and outreach, not to mention essential transportation in all kinds of weather. Already, it's becoming a familiar sight around Polson, focusing people's attention on the library and its services."

"And it's just darn cute!" adds Jery Walker.

The staff is grateful for the many opportunities it provides.



North Lake County Public Library's new Story Shuttle. Photo by Kendra Mullison, youth services librarian.

ImagineIF Library Foundation Welcomes New Executive Director

By April Vomfell,
Public Services Librarian
ImagineIF Libraries

ImagineIF Libraries were recently selected to receive one of the most coveted national library awards, the John Cotton Dana Library Public Relations Award. From 77 entries, ImagineIF was chosen as one of only eight winners nationwide.

ImagineIF was selected for the award based on the library's rebranding and new model of library service, programming and community involvement. The awards committee recognized the risk required to rebrand completely to reflect a new generation of libraries. The award also highlights how ImagineIF Libraries have been able to make a big impact in our communities with very limited resources.

"This award is a testament to the amazing transformation our libraries have seen over the past few years. Coupled with the Montana Library of the Year Award, we are honored to be recognized nationally as a 21st century library," ImagineIF Libraries Director Kim Crowley said.

ImagineIF will receive the John Cotton Dana Award, along with a \$10,000 cash award provided by EBSCO and the H.W. Wilson Foundation, at a celebratory reception at the American Library Association's Annual Conference this June in San Francisco.

All the winning entries can be viewed online at <https://johncottondana.nonprofitcms.org/a>.



ImagineIF staff celebrates its recent acknowledgement as MLA's 2015 Montana Library of the Year.

New Partnership Brings "Kids Table" to Missoula Public Library

By Mary Drew Powers,
Public Relations/Reference Librarian
Missoula Public Library

Missoula Public Library's new partnership with the Missoula Food Bank means that the library will be a host site for the Kids Table program this summer.

Kids Table at Missoula Public Library will provide sack lunches on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays at noon beginning on June 16th. Volunteers will hand out lunches for those aged 18 and younger in the library's large meeting room.

"We're really excited about this partnership," said Honore Bray, MPL Director. "Learning and nutrition go hand-in-hand, so hosting Kids Table for the Food Bank is a perfect fit for the library."

The Missoula Food Bank website notes that "During the summer months, many families struggle to find the extra resources to replace nutrition that kids receive when they are in school." Kids Table is the Food Bank's answer to that need and has provided lunches for summer children's programs in the Missoula Community since 2001, said Program Services Coordinator Jessy Lee. She noted that this is the first time Missoula Food Bank will serve lunch for children in an open community setting, rather than one in which children must be enrolled. "This is so exciting," she enthused.

(Continued Next Page)



Readers of MPL's Sunday Missoulian column "Shelf Life" have already called to ask if they can help, after reading about the host site in the May 17 paper. Those wishing to volunteer may contact Jessie Lee, Missoula Food Bank Program Services Coordinator, at (406)549-0543.

The Thompson-Hickman Library's New Digs

By Jack Albrecht,
Library Director
Thompson-Hickman Library

In mid-May, the Thompson-Hickman Madison County Library opened a new chapter in its near-one hundred-year history of serving its community. Situated in the county seat, the original building was a gift of copper magnate William Boyce Thompson to the community. Construction on the dual-purpose building—there is a museum on the lower floor—began in 1918. The library has been in operation in the same space since 1923.

The county outgrew the current space of approximately 800 square feet many years ago. Former director, Joanne Erdall, a succession of library board of trustees, commissioners, and community members worked tirelessly to make the dream of a new space for the library and its Dick Pace Archives. In May 2013, a one-time mill levy was approved by the voters of Madison County.

Thanks to the mill levy, a generous matching grant from the Kendeda Foundation, the tireless fund raising efforts of grant writers Nondi Harrington and Jim Jarvis, the leadership of library board chair Janet Doornbos, the guidance of former Madison County Commissioner Dan Happel, the inspiration of architect Dave Grigsby, and the enthusiasm and perseverance of Assistant Librarian Christina Koch, the library has become a reality. Also, an anonymous donor contributed \$20,000 to have cabinetmakers Javier Ramirez and Tom Strasser replicate wood shelving for the new space, mimicking the in-built wood shelving in the original library. The original space has become the Thompson-Hickman Reading Room and houses the library's adult fiction, non-fiction, and audio books.

Contractors Gary, Jacob, and Andrew Housman of G & G Housing, Whitehall, began construction on the new space October 1, 2014. Seven months later, to the day, construction was finished, leaving the community with a facility expanded by over two hundred percent! Included in the new space is the new home of the Dick Pace Archives. The new community room is up and running, but the library is still looking for funds to purchase a 70-inch HD smart TV for presentations—and Movie Night!

Library staff and board members are currently trying to raise funds for pricey compact shelving for the space. There are also plans afoot to participate in the Montana Memory Project, so the library is seeking out ways to fund scanning of documents that go back as far as the beginnings of Virginia City.

Library staff moved into the building mid-May and are still pinching themselves that this beautiful new structure is their home. Plans are also in development to restore and upgrade the original building—all it takes is money, imagination, and perseverance. This whole process has encouraged Thompson-Hickman Library to dream big!



The new and old spaces at the Thompson-Hickman Library joined together.



Jack Albrecht shelving Montana history books.

