

# MONTANA LIBRARY FOCUS

MONTANA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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## Message from the President

Montana Library Community:

MLA kicked off the legislative season with Library Legislative Day, which culminated in a delightful and well-attended reception at the State Library! Many Legislators showed up to have their READ posters made, to enjoy dinner and music, and most importantly, to listen to us talk about library issues. Librarians from across the state attended to speak with their own Legislators and to make sure that no Legislator left the Library Legislative Day reception without all of the information that they need to go forward and support libraries!

This is a particularly exciting session for MLA. MLA always supports library interests, but this time we are actively proposing legislation as an organization. Our bill is House Bill No. 203. HB 203 would increase direct state aid to public libraries from about 10 cents per capita to 50 cents per capita. HB 203 was drafted by former Lewis and Clark Librarian Padraic McCracken and is being sponsored by Representative Christy Clark, a Republican from Choteau. Please follow the progress of our bill by going to Montana's online bill-tracker and entering HB 203.



In addition to tracking the bill, please monitor the Wired listserv. Judy Hart is MLA's Government Affairs Committee Chair and she regularly posts calls for action. She gives us all very specific instructions on what we should do right away to further the progress of our bill. Many of you have been to Helena to speak to groups or to individuals, but if you can't travel, you can make calls and write letters and Judy lets us all know what we need to do and when we need to do it! Be on alert for Judy's calls to action!

I'm pleased to announce that the MLA Board met prior to the Library Legislative Day events and passed a new balanced budget plan, which will allow MLA to move forward with a clearer and more strategic financial plan. Getting such a plan in place was my primary goal as MLA President and now that the plan is approved, I will work toward implementing it. The plan involves clarifying the budget timeline, assigning responsibilities to specific MLA positions, and putting measures in place to make it possible to budget more consistently from year-to-year so that it's possible to track and compare changes in revenue and spending. As dry as that sounds, it's a step that MLA needed to take to become more fiscally responsible and I'm proud of the Board for tackling this important issue.

On a much more exciting note, the annual conference is coming up April 17 – 20 in Missoula. There will be ample programming suitable for all types of Librarians and for Trustees and Friends! Mary Bushing will be featured as the Keynote Speaker and Mike Harmon will be speaking at the Author Luncheon. Sheryl Noethe, Montana's Poet Laureate, is also presenting as well as author Todd Wilkinson, and you will find many presentations by your favorite Montana librarians! The conference this year will feature more Continuing Education credits than before, so if it's CE you're looking for, you'll find it in abundance! Please visit the conference website and take advantage of early registration rates.

Anne Kish, President



## Montana Library Association

*Montana's Libraries from the Mountains to Plains*

## MT Library Legislative Day

By Joann Flick

Montana State Library

Nearly 40 librarians and trustees from around the state were in Helena to meet and greet legislators on Library Legislative Day. The Montana Library Association plans this event at the start of each biennial legislative session to remind legislators of the value of Montana's library system and the important role that state legislation and funding plays in promoting essential library services.

BBQ dinner was provided, along with music from the Growlers trio, wine, and locally brewed beer. More than 90 legislators attended the event.

A popular feature of Library Legislative Day is the READ photo booth. The Lewis and Clark library staff set up a photo studio in an office at the Montana State Library and photographed legislators holding a favorite book; a few even chose to be photographed holding their eReaders – a first for the READ poster project! From the photos, posters will be printed and distributed to local libraries across the state later this Spring.

The Montana Natural Heritage Program and the MT Association of Geographic Information Professionals co-hosted the event. EBSCO and a long list of contributing libraries and friends provided financial support.

This popular event seems to thrive amidst the hectic legislative season, owing no doubt to the READ posters and the good will and hard work of the broad coalition of people who work hard to present this program.

## Montana State Library Launches Online Learning Portal

By Joann Flick

Montana State Library

One of the six agency goals of the Montana State Library (MSL) is to provide *appropriate trainings and training resources*. To meet that goal, the MSL has launched a library learning website to facilitate access to useful and rigorous training experiences in all aspects of librarianship. All the trainers at MSL are contributing content to the Library Learning Portal. The portal will continually grow with ever expanding resources such as quick reference guides, materials to help librarians learn and conduct their own training, archived webinars, brief tutorials, and places where librarians can engage in peer-to-peer learning. The portal will facilitate searching for learning resources by continuing education category, by MSL program, or by topic. You'll find a list of upcoming training events and quick links to other library learning sites.

The learning portal project began at the MSL in late Winter 2012 with a series of planning meetings to define the outcomes for the project, outline the content, and draft the navigation system to guide the technology staff in selecting an appropriate Web design. The Web team selected Wordpress to provide the content management system that would meet the needs of the trainer team.

From there, the training team took several weeks for self-guided training using the Wordpress online tutorials before the team began to meet regularly online to begin developing and uploading content. The team met twice a week online for one hour each time, setting an informal agenda for working together on different types of content or on different tasks. The team used GoToMeeting so that we could share screens and work together to solve issues. At the same time, a Google doc was set up online to draft a style manual to promote some fluency and set parameters for content. Through this process, the team made specific recommendations to the MSL Web developer which resulted in some major revisions, including selecting a new theme for the site, and the selection of specific widgets that would best meet the needs of the library community we serve.

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This development process allowed for trainers to have support from peers as they were learning, and for the site to look fairly consistent even though a half dozen people were each creating and uploading their own content. The learning portal is a user-generated content system, so its success depends upon the contributors each having a baseline of competence while the team supports each other in getting everything on the site to work as a whole.

The portal reflects the input of all the trainers, even though each trainer has the responsibility for specific groups of content. Along the way, the trainers at MSL modeled an effective mode of learning as well – a professional learning community. This process does not rely on a single or even a few people achieving competence or mastery, but rather a broad, supportive community of learners/does who move toward mastery together - relying on each other by seeking and accepting help and input.

For more information, contact Joann Flick, Montana State Library [jflick@mt.gov](mailto:jflick@mt.gov)

## **Librarian Feud coming to Missoula!**

By Lisa Mecklenberg-Jackson, Chair  
Marketing and Public Relations Committee

Get your teams together and join us for Librarian Feud happening Thursday, April 18 from 8:30-10:00 p.m. at the MLA Conference in Missoula! Join host Richard Awesome as he leads contestants through a series of tricky questions, all to find the smartest librarians in the state (and raise money for the Sheila Cates Scholarship Fund.) In between rounds, we'll be playing a little Let's Make a Deal led by our handsome host Monty Doll. Sign up for the Cates event when you register for the conference or pay a little extra at the door. You don't want to miss what's sure to be a hilarious night of competition while helping to raise money for scholarships for librarians.

If you have any questions about Librarian Feud, contact Lisa Mecklenberg Jackson, Cates Committee Chair, at [lisameckjack@gmail.com](mailto:lisameckjack@gmail.com).



# Montana Shared Catalog News

By Ken Adams, Director  
Montana Shared Catalog

## ***Recent MSC “Go-Lives”***

New members include Absarokee Schools (two school libraries), Baker School District (three school libraries), Darby School District (2 school libraries), Missoula County Public School District (17 school libraries including the district library), Red Lodge Carnegie Library, Target Range School Library, Valier Public Library and Wibaux Public Library. The George McCone County Memorial Library in Circle is busy manually adding their records to the MSC database and will go live after they have 80% of their collection entered. A big thank you to Hannah Nash and Michelle Cunningham of Miles City Public Library, Dawn Kingstad of Glendive Public Library, Diane Anderson of MCPS District Library, Sarah Milligan and Jennifer Bruce of Stillwater County Library, Elizabeth Jonkel of Missoula Public Library, and Becky Mosbacher of Hellgate School District for helping MSC support staff with training and assisting this latest round of new libraries to begin using the MSC system.

## ***The MSC 2013 New Library Application Now Available***

Links to the application plus an MSC description, members map, and FAQ's are found on the right side of the MSC website. The application deadline is February 28, 2013. This will be the only application period for 2013. There are 2 potential implementation schedules, dependent on migration choices and library type. *School Librarians Please Note:* The State Library must put a temporary hold on adding school libraries until additional MSC support staff can be hired to meet the demand. The State Library is working with OPI and the MSC Executive Committee to investigate opportunities and options for hiring additional staff needed to meet the projected increase in MSC libraries, given the large interest on the part of schools. This decision will affect the FY2014 MSC new library application period. Interested school librarians should be encouraged to contact their administration as OPI is interested in working directly with school administrators to try to address this concern. 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 with questions and for a cost estimate.

## ***MSC Demographics and Statistics***

The MSC currently consists of 164 multi-type libraries and branches. There are 80 public libraries and branches, 67 school libraries, 12 special and 5 academic libraries serving 89 Montana communities. Of those communities, 62% are in Western Montana, 25% in Central Montana and along the Hi-Line and 13% in Eastern Montana. Take a moment to view a map of Montana showing the distribution and type of MSC member libraries.

The catalog currently contains 1million bibliographic records and more than 4 million items. During 2012, the system circulated nearly 5 million items to 412,000 registered patrons and students. There were 406,000 holds placed with 325,000 of them being filled. The online catalog was searched 16 million times which resulted in almost 1 billion total hits for potential display.

## ***Resource Sharing Groups***

With the addition of Darby Community Library, Fallon County Library and Plains District Library to the Partners Resource Sharing Group, the MSC now has a total of 48 libraries participating in four different sharing groups. These groups have “knocked down their walls” to freely share their collections and patrons amongst one another. The Partners Group is the largest with 27 member libraries. The other groups are the 4-Rivers group with 10 members, the BridgerNet group with 5 members and the Hi-Line group also with 5 members.

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## ***Symphony ILS and Directors Station Upgrade***

MSC support staff upgraded the MSC's "Symphony" integrated library system to version 3.4.1 (SP1) last August and then to SP2 in October. The upgrade contains several, anxiously awaited software enhancements and bug fixes. During the upgrade, staff also "segmented" the database to account for the growing number of bibliographic records (1 million plus) in the system. The old Directors Station Windows server required some firmware, operating system and database upgrades after it failed in early October. The server was placed back in operation in late November with its software upgraded to the latest Directors Station 4.9.1 version.

## **Fundraising Calendar Project**

By Lisa Mecklenberg-Jackson, Chair

Marketing and Public Relations Committee

Due to popular demand, your MLA Marketing and PR Committee is beginning work on another unique and eye-catching calendar as a fundraiser for MLA. This time, instead of featuring those attractive and daring Book Babes, we're going to be going with a slightly more subtle approach highlighting ... historic Montana libraries. Do you have photos of your old library (or even your current library if it's in a historic building) that we could feature in the calendar? We'll make room for all of them! Please send an e-mail to Lisa Mecklenberg Jackson at [lisameckjack@gmail.com](mailto:lisameckjack@gmail.com) if you have a library we can feature in the calendar. We'll need to get a high quality photo of the library and any historical detail possible. This could be a great way to feature some of Montana's cool old libraries and raise money for the association as well. Please contact Lisa so we can get the ball rolling on this 2014 calendar.

## **Looking to involve your community? Think about a writing contest**

By Mary Drew Powers, Chair

Professional Development Committee

Nothing proves a library is an integral part of the community better than an annual program involving all age groups; one that becomes more a part of the community each year. Such is the case with Missoula Public Library's Writing Contest.

The Writing Contest, nurtured by staff member Christine Hadlow and a committee of MPL staff, has grown since 2009 into a Missoula tradition that last year had 120 entries. Before success, however, came plenty of logistical work, according to Christine. Luckily, the Missoula program was modeled after Coeur d'Alene Public Library's long-running program. They shared their rules and procedures so MPL didn't have to reinvent the wheel.



Still, judges had to be found for four age groups, and for fiction and non-fiction categories. Rules and procedures were tweaked for the MPL community, to ensure a level playing field (i.e. no previously published works), and confidentiality. And of course, a reception for the chosen winners was included in the fun. The Friends of the Library sponsored the cash prizes the first year, but since then, gathering community sponsors has been added to the list of tasks.

Libraries wishing to start a Writing Contest might think this too complex and time-consuming. However, using a committee framework, involving volunteers, and delegating tasks so that no one person is too overloaded is the way to slowly build an ambitious project. Also, says Christine, ask a library that already has a successful writing contest, as she did. (She says she'll be happy to assist anyone calling about starting one.) It also helps to look at the strengths of those helping you. Is one person good at parties? There's your reception planner!

The Missoula community has come to embrace the Writing Contest. Judges call months ahead to ask if they can judge again, and sponsors return each year. It's the kind of tradition that brings a library into the heart of the community, where it belongs.

## **Mountain Plains Library Association News**

By Norma Glock

Columbus Middle/High School

It's not too early to start thinking about the 2013 MPLA/SDLA/NDLA Tri-conference, to be held September 25-27, 2013 in Sioux Falls, South Dakota at the Best Western Ramkota! Program proposals can be submitted online. The form is available at the MPLA website.

Other news from around the region: MPLA is continuing updating the procedures manual, in particular getting information on the Manual of Practice that discusses the responsibilities of the state representatives.

MPLA is looking to re-institute interest groups, some people fully supporting groups and others wondering if individuals will carry through on responsibilities to the groups they sign up with.

## **Whitefish Community Receives Grant to Expand Collection**

By Alison Pomerantz

Whitefish Community Library Board

In its second year independent of the Flathead County Library System, the Whitefish Community Library continues to grow through the generosity of its supporters. Last month, the WCL received a \$6,000 grant to purchase e-books, audio books, books on compact disc and DVDs from the Whitefish Community Foundation, an organization that has supported local nonprofit organizations in the Whitefish community with over \$3.5 million in funding since its inception in 2000.

"Last spring, this one area of our collection was noted to be rather lean, and was targeted as the focus of this grant application," said Jerry Hanson, president of the Whitefish Library Association and the key individual in applying for the grant. "Receipt of this grant will nicely serve to round out our electronic media collection a bit more."

Additionally, the WCL received a surprise \$500 gift from the John Kramer Family Fund that was transferred into the Whitefish Library Association endowment fund, where it will serve to support the WCL forever.

"Just looking around the auditorium at the Whitefish Community Foundation Annual Awards Event and listening to the many grants awarded, it was amazing to me to see how many people are associated with organizations whose main purpose and existence is to serve the needs of our community," said Joey Kositzky, director of the Whitefish Community Library. "What a wonderful community of very generous people!"

Continue to check out our website for details on news, events and volunteer opportunities at the Whitefish Community Library.

## **Sheila Cates Auction**

By Lisa Mecklenberg-Jackson, Chair

Marketing and Public Relations Committee

It's that wonderful time of year again where generously awesome librarians from around the state start pulling together their auction contributions for the annual Sheila Cates Silent Auction held each year at the MLA Conference. Themed baskets or individual goodies are very welcome. Money raised from the silent auction goes to support scholarships for future Montana librarians. This year, contributors to the Sheila Cates Silent Auction will receive special recognition on the MLA Website. If you wish to contribute to the auction, please e-mail Cates Committee Chair Lisa Mecklenberg Jackson at [lisameckjack@gmail.com](mailto:lisameckjack@gmail.com) with a description of the item(s). Thanks in advance for your continued support of the Sheila Cates Scholarship!

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