The Membership Committee met via Zoom on Thursday, October 6, 2017. Members present were Jon Giullian, Matt Upson, Whitney Vitale, Judy Zelenski, and Ellen Fockler. The principal item for discussion was the proposal for a new category of membership, designed for authors. The proposal is attached.

Prior to the meeting, I contacted State Representatives to ask whether there were State associations with a membership category similar to the one proposed. I also asked about special events, programs, or conference events connecting authors and libraries. While none of the state associations who replied have such a category, several representatives expressed interest. After reviewing some of the program connections between authors and libraries, including an Author Palooza in Kansas, the members of the committee discussed each of the sections of the proposed Author membership category. No substantial changes were made, although a question about the membership fee in comparison to other membership dues did cause some reconsideration and has resulted in a small change to the dues structure suggested. Instead of a flat fee of $100, I have suggested that dues be $90, equaling the $75 advertisement credit offered as a benefit of membership plus the lowest individual dues level (Retiree, Student, Trustee).

The Author Membership category proposal will be offered for discussion at the October Board meeting, to be held at the MPLA Cal/Con conference on October 19, 2017. If the proposal is approved, it will require an amendment to the Bylaws and a vote of the membership. It is hoped that the proposal can be approved and implemented by the beginning of the new membership year.

Respectfully submitted,
    Ellen Fockler
    Membership Committee chair

Proposal:
New membership category: Authors

Rationale
- A new membership category designed specifically for authors could increase MPLA membership by attracting a group of members who have not previously been invited to join. Added memberships mean additional funding for professional development grants and other association business.
- A partnership between libraries and writers is a natural link. A number of libraries include "local collections" which feature the work of local authors, and others offer programs that bring writers into the library. MPLA's Literary Contribution Award recognizes "an author whose published writings have successfully furthered an understanding and appreciation of the Mountain Plains region." Many libraries support writers by providing a space for writing through the NaNoWriMo (National Novel Writing Month) program. Most libraries, both public and school, sponsor visits and presentations by authors as part of their programming efforts.
- Many authors, including those who write for children and young adults, are interested in establishing a relationship with librarians and library associations. Such a relationship could be mutually beneficial, providing links that could result in interesting programming, an increased awareness of the availability of new books (particularly those published locally), and an active partnership with libraries in the twelve-state MPLA region.
- MPLA may have the opportunity to become a leader by establishing an author category, something that most library associations do not currently offer.

Terms
- A standard membership fee of $ 90 annually
- Membership would include a $75 credit which could be used toward any advertisement or combination of advertisements in the MPLA newsletter. The annual credit is not cumulative and must be used within the membership year. Advertising is subject to the guidelines as stated on the MPLA website: http://www.mpla.us/quick-links/newsletter.html.
- Membership would include a listing on the MPLA "Authors Supporting MPLA" section on the website. Such a listing would include the author's name, home state, and a link to a personal website.
- Memberclicks may not be used for promotional purposes.
- Members would be eligible for membership rates at joint MPLA / state conferences.
- The author category membership would be a voting membership.
- Members in this category would not be eligible for professional development grants, nor would they be eligible to run for office.

Logistics
- Added responsibilities for Executive Secretary:
  - Additional memberships would be a positive addition, not a burden.
  - Keeping track of the advertisement credit would be manageable, since all requests for advertisements will go through the Executive Secretary.

- o There would be some time required to design a new author-specific membership application form.
- o Based on membership forms submitted, the Executive Secretary would provide the author's name, home state, and a link to the author's website to the Webmaster.
- Added responsibilities for Webmaster:
  - o Create a section or page on the MPLA website, linked from the main page, where author information and links to the authors' websites can be posted.
  - o The proposed method of drawing necessary information from the membership application by the Executive Secretary will minimize the time and work involved in maintaining the page.
- Promotion of the new category would be handled through the Membership Committee, Communications Committee, and through news releases, social media, or emails via Memberclicks.
- Article III of our Association Bylaws will need to be updated to include this class of membership and will require a vote of the general membership in accordance with Article XII: http://www.mpla.us/documents/bylaws-and-manual-of-procedure/association-bylaws.pdf
- The MOP would require updates to include this membership category and its terms as well as the additional responsibilities of MPLA staff and committees.
- Authors will self-identify, eliminating the need to make a judgment about the quality or quantity of publications.

Precedence
- United for Libraries, a division of the American Library Association, has initiated a program to bring authors and libraries together called "Authors for Libraries" (http://www.ala.org/united/authors_for_libraries/authors-for-libraries). It includes a website where librarians can search for authors by zip code and link to the author's website. The intent is to make it possible for staff to find information relative to library book talks, book signings, and book group resources. United for Libraries also maintains a Listserv where authors and librarians can exchange ideas and information.
- Kansas:
  - o A conference and conversation for librarians and writers: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/librarians-supporting-librarians-supporting-writers-tickets-27026770799
  - o The Kansas State conference will hold an "Authorpalooza" with two events focusing on Kansas authors, including a kickoff event with author readings and an opportunity for authors to "pitch" their potential library programs.
- Arizona/ Nevada
  - o The Scottsdale Public Library supports authors with a local collection featuring the "emerging literary, musical, and filmmaking efforts" in the community.
  - o The library on the University of Nevada (Reno) campus has a similar collection, with an emphasis on books written by UNR faculty.

- The NaNoWriMo program, National Novel Writing Month, partners with many libraries in and out of the MPLA region as hosts in the "Come Write In" program, offering potential authors a space to write.

Marketing:

Appeal for Authors
- Membership provides an opportunity for networking with librarians.
- The "Supporting Authors" page would provide links to author websites and serve as an additional source of information for librarians as they plan purchases for the collection or seek opportunities for programming, readings, book signings, and similar events.
- The opportunity to make conference proposals to joint MPLA / state conferences as an MPLA member might also be a plus that would encourage authors to join.
- Eligibility for member discounts to conferences, particularly for those who are selected as presenters.