

ST-4

## MONTANA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION REPORT

MLA has little to report since the July meeting, which followed our MLA Board Retreat and planning session for the year. We will meet again November 1 to work on several projects. All Board members and chairs have been asked to update their job descriptions in our handbook, and a real effort is being made by President Coby Johnson to make sure that incoming people know about their positions and duties.

### LEGISLATIVE CONCERNS

Facing a large budget deficit, like many other state governments, the Montana Legislature met in special session, and representatives from Montana State Library and MLA fought hard to avoid major cuts which threatened both the State Library and the Federations across Montana. So far cuts have been bearable, but the regular session in 2003 promises to be a challenge which will require the support of all librarians to keep the programs and services of our State Library.

### STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Strategic Planning Task Force for MLA has spent six months designing survey instruments and getting data. They have done focus groups in each Federation across Montana and at some regional meetings, and also have sent out and collected surveys. They are now working with and analyzing the data to come up with a preliminary report to the MLA Board. Challenges include vision and mission statements to revise and recommendations for structural changes, priorities, services, and programs. Chairs of this committee are Debbie Schlesinger of Helena and Bette Ammon of Missoula, two award-winning librarians in MLA.

### MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

The Marketing and Public Relations Committee is having joint meetings with the State Library employee responsible for marketing at that level, and they are working on a statewide marketing campaign which will enhance libraries and public awareness at all levels. The "PR Hint of the Week" continues on our listserv, with hints from librarians in all types of libraries, with very positive feedback from "the field".

### LEWIS & CLARK BICENTENNIAL ACTIVITIES

The MLA Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Task Force is working on the children's activity booklet based on Lewis & Clark themes (rivers, Indians, etc.) which will be distributed to Montana libraries for their own use or sale to the public beginning in June 2003. The Children and Young Adult Interest Group of MLA is providing bibliographies on each theme for children in grades 2-8, and that will be a very positive part of the booklet, which also includes artwork to color, a variety of activities, and some narrative.

Other current projects include distributing MLA Lewis & Clark Bicentennial passports to the legislators at a special "Legislative Day" hosted by the Montana State Library in January and working on a publicity campaign of "It All Started in a Library".

Cheryl J. Heser, Montana Representative