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REPORT  
MONTANA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION  
AUGUST 4, 2001

CONVENTION

Montana Library Association held their annual convention in Kalispell, Montana, at the end of April, with excellent attendance at an outstanding group of workshops for three days, preceded by pre-conference workshops on marketing, storytelling, and accounting for librarians. Out of state speakers and presenters continue to respond well to invitations from Montana, and the Awards Banquet was one of the finest in years, with some outstanding recipients.

MLA is currently considering a number of options for their annual convention, spurred mostly by the limited number of sites in Montana which meet all of the criteria for a convention, all the way from airports to adequate facilities. Direct Internet access is more and more in demand, although the number of convention centers offering adequate access is limited, and MLA members from those communities feel burdened with hosting conventions and doing all of the local arrangements so frequently. Consideration is being given to meeting where there are college campuses, including junior colleges in some of the smaller towns, but problems have already emerged with changing times of year for convention and not excluding some groups like school librarians.

RECENT ACTIONS

Montana Library Association voted at their April board meeting to contribute \$1,000 to the legal fund concerning CIPA, and the organization will contribute an additional \$1,000 this year, also. Our Intellectual Freedom Committee has been very busy, and most librarians in Montana seem united in their concern about CIPA and yet also concerned about public worries about inappropriate material on the Internet, particularly for minors. Some public libraries are considering filtering, while others are solidly against it and many more are waiting to see what happens with the legislation.

MLA has worked with the State Library to encourage state contracts for some library services, notably InfoTrac at very reasonable rates to all subscribing libraries. The association continues to consider close collaboration with the State Library to be extremely important.

CURRENT PLANS

A Strategic Planning Task Force has been appointed to study the entire Montana Library Association structure and function and to make recommendations for change over the next two years. Five members, including public, academic, school, and special library personnel, will work with the Board and each other, with solid input from the membership, to determine changes and new directions for the association. An emphasis for this coming year will be on leadership training for association members to increase the pool of people who can serve as directors and chairs of divisions, committees, and interest groups.

STATEWIDE PUBLIC RELATIONS / LEWIS & CLARK BICENTENNIAL

The Marketing and Public Relations Committee for MLA has been extremely busy with a number of projects, including public relations training for all types of librarians and creating public relations opportunities. Special emphasis has been on preparation for the coming Lewis & Clark Bicentennial observance and statewide library participation in state and nationwide celebrations and projects, including MLA Passports.