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Montana Report to MPLA
Spring 2005

The Montana Library Association has many very active interest groups and divisions that hold retreats or workshops during the year. These retreat/ workshops combined with the Library Federation meetings, the State Library's Fall Workshop and Summer Institutes and the Montana Library Association's Conference provide a wide range of library training to Montana librarians. The Montana Shared Catalog and the Montana Virtual Reference project also provide specific training. Montana librarians are and are becoming fine examples of what cooperative efforts can accomplish to help with library professional training.

In 2004, Montana State Library awarded scholarships to five Montanans to attend graduate library school as part of the Professional Education and Employment for Librarians (PEEL) grant received from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Because scholarship funds are still available in the PEEL grant, two additional awards for \$18,000 each will be made in 2005. All Montana residents are eligible to apply. Scholarship recipients may pursue the Master of Library Science degree at any ALA-accredited school through either a resident or distance-learning program.

Greg Mortenson of the Central Asia Institute received the Jeannette Rankin Peace award from Rocky Mountain College. Greg was the keynote speaker at last year's MLA conference. He is building schools in Central Asia. The Montana Library Association has taken on his efforts as a project and has encouraged Montana libraries to help out the project, "Pennies for Peace". More information can be found at this website www.ikat.org The Big Horn Public Library has collected over \$140 for the program. The Junior Honor Society in Columbus, MT ran a campaign in February offering Krispy Kremes to any homeroom that reaches \$25.00 and planned a pizza party for the homeroom class that collected the most money. So far about \$1000 has been raised for the Central Asia schools. For more information contact Norma Glock, MLA Central Asia Institute Task Force at nglock@cablemt.net

At the 2005 Legislature @ Montana Libraries there was the co-mingling of some 63 legislators and about 100 librarians. Most, if not all, of the interactions were positive with many legislators and librarians fueled by catered beans, wine, and beer, and conversation accompanied by a pickin' and grinin' local bluegrass band. As we face improved budgetary prospects, the legislature does not appear to have libraries in its sights for cuts. In fact, most previous cuts to the State Library budget have been headed for restoration. Thank you Montana Legislators!

The Montana Library Association is looking for a new Executive Officer. Karen Thatcher, our most excellent Director has retired to spend time with her cute grandchildren. The position of Executive Director is going to be advertised with conference planning skills for the annual conferences as well.

The Montana Library Association will be held April 23 - 26 in beautiful Billings! MPLA is co-sponsoring a pre-conference workshop entitled Transformation with Limited Funds and the Future of Library Design by Michael Brendle of Denver. For more information about the conference go to www.mtlib.org/conf