

**Recent Activities**

Montana Library Association had a particularly fine Convention in Great Falls at the end of April. Notable events included a Quiz Bowl evening, loaded with laughter, which along with a quilt raffle, a silent auction, and other events in between Quiz Bowl rounds, netted over \$4,000 for our Sheila Cates Scholarship Committee, which finances scholarships for further library education.

Also notable at the convention were Keynote Speaker John Nichols dealing, as he did in Library Journal, with the future of libraries; Joe Raiola, Senior Editor at Mad Magazine, with a performance of social satire; children's author Suzanne Williams; and Dr. Hal Stearns with a great pre-conference session on Lewis & Clark and a workshop on implementing Lewis & Clark Bicentennial related things in libraries.

Finally, several workshops focused on business, with an emphasis on business centers in libraries and business resources. Montana's newly appointed chair for implementing the Governor's economic development plans was part of a panel of librarians dealing with business – a wonderful opportunity for libraries to get “noticed” in the new plans for our state.

**New Leadership and Focus for 2002-2003**

Coby Johnson, Catalog Librarian at the University of Montana in Missoula, is the new President of MLA, and she will lead a retreat at the end of July covering such topics as library advocacy to boards, the legislature's coming session and community political entities, and leadership training. The remainder of the retreat at a remote camp in south central Montana will be used to familiarize Board members and committee chairmen with the organization and their duties and charges for the coming year. Coby is a weaving enthusiast, and her 2003 conference theme is Libraries Woven Together: Collaboration + Cooperation = Strength.

**Leadership Training**

Montana Library Association has a particular concern with leadership training to enhance the work of the association as well as to increase the strength of library awareness throughout the state. We are one of the states most concerned about lack of leadership training, particularly for paraprofessionals since such a large portion of our librarians do not have MLS degrees. MLA will be taking a look at the MPLA and PNLA Leadership Institutes now in their beginning stages and will discuss Montana's needs, possibly considering a leadership training course of our own.

**Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Task Force**

With the Bicentennial fast approaching, the Task Force is recruiting members and designing projects for the benefit of Montana's libraries and patrons as well as visitors during 2003-2006. A principal project of the chairman is the partnership with the National Park Service Corps of Discovery II, which will bring a major education exhibit and activities to Montana towns as well as towns in the many “trail states”. Other projects include Montana Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Passports with places for stamps and sticker from libraries, and a children's activity book for the Bicentennial.