

ST-4

Montana Library Association  
Working Smart for Montana Library Users  
24 July 2004

The Montana Library Association annual meeting was held in Bozeman, Montana April 26, 2004.

Membership: total 614; academic 104; public 356; school 155; other 24. On 6/30/2003 the total was 676. School memberships have dropped the most. Dues are being raised for the highest income category only (over \$40,000 per year) to \$45.

Suzanne Reymer gave an ALA report. Suzanne posts ALA news on Wired-MT and therefore wishes to give membership her personal feelings about her ALA Rep tenure. She felt it was a privilege to serve and especially to see the sense of diversity of the 60,000 members. ALA is made up of small groups and anyone can find their niche. She has heard a lot about what is wrong with ALA, but a rural libraries support resolution was passed at the 2002 MLA Membership Meeting and this resolution will be passed at the ALA Orlando meeting. ALA is listening. To become involved with ALA, volunteer at a round table or division level.

John Finn gave MPLA report, as Ken Kempcke has resigned. The incoming MPLA rep will continue to be on the strategic planning task force committee. The next MPLA meeting is October 21-24 in Denver. Alice Meister mentioned that Al Kesselheim, Bozeman Public Library Board of Trustees, won the MPLA Literary Contributions award.

PNLA report time was deferred by Representative Norma Glock to Mary Dewalt, PNLA President. YRCA (Young Reader's Choice Award) is the oldest, strongest, and most widely known children's book award. PNLA joins with WLA for a joint conference in Wenatchee, WA in 2004. Next year PNLA will be held in Sitka, AL. PNLA's 100th anniversary conference will be held in Montana in 2009. She stated that leadership institutes are very important, as 50% of current librarians will be retired by 2009. PNLA's institute will be held from October 24-30 at Dumas Bay on Puget Sound in Federal Way, WA with John Finn attending. Jamie Greco won the one-year PNLA membership.

Through the efforts of the Montana State Library and other far thinking MT librarians many new things are happening:

Ask a Montana Librarian is our new virtual reference project. Using Question Point software Montana librarians are scheduled to go live with the project statewide, September 7.

The Montana Shared Catalog project now in its third year has about 30 libraries involved. The MSC runs on Sirsi's Unicorn integrated library system, presenting a public interface called ibistro. Federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant funds are being used to assist MT libraries with start up costs to join the MSC.

Four Montana libraries, all members of the Montana Shared Catalog, with the help and encouragement of State Library staff, are paving the way for express resource sharing in the state. Bitterroot Public Library (Hamilton), Flathead County Library System, Hearst Free Library (Anaconda), and the Missoula Public Library, have begun sharing collections in a manner that is transparent to the user. "Partners" allows customers in any of the four Partner systems to see the holdings of all of the Partner Libraries when searching their hometown library catalog. Library customers in Anaconda can place holds just as if the Flathead County Library was a branch of the Hearst Free Library. "Partners" expands the individual library holdings to more than 506,000 books, videos, DVDs, and sound recordings! That means that residents of Missoula and the Flathead now have twice as many items at their disposal. Folks who live in Anaconda and Hamilton now have access to more than 14 times the resources they had before this program began. Customers across the region are thrilled when they see how quickly a hold comes in, or when they view the all the new materials in the catalog.

Greg Mortenson was the keynote address at this year's conference in Bozeman and he moved us all. He represents an educational group called the Central Asia Institute, in which they provide schools buildings and materials for schools for villages in central Asia. The Montana Library Association Board passed a resolution during the business meeting to do all that we could to help his mission in Central Asia, we decided to create a Task Force to look at ways that MLA can help CAI. You can learn more about the CAI at this website, [www.ikat.org](http://www.ikat.org)

Two workshops for public library trustees are being planned for fall. The one-day workshops are scheduled in two locations: Missoula on Saturday, October 2 and Billings on Saturday, November 6. All trustees and public library directors are invited to attend the most convenient workshop location. The workshops will emphasize the role of trustees as library advocates and will introduce trustees to important advocacy and communication techniques to use when working with members of the community, city/ county officials, or state representatives. These trustee workshops are funded by a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the Montana State Library Commission.

Montana State Library's 6th annual Fall Workshop is scheduled for September 24-25 in Great Falls. This year's workshop will include (tentatively) sessions on book mending, providing dazzling customer service, marketing electronic databases to patrons, enticing teachers to use the library's resources, exciting emergent literacy programs, fundraising schemes that work, telling a story with library statistics, using time management tools and skills, getting quality health information for patrons, and handling challenging situations (censorship, confidentiality, Patriot Act). The Fall Workshop is open to public library trustees and to librarians from all types of libraries.

Fifty-four Gates Staying Connected Grant projects totaling \$171,370 were approved for funding by the State Library Commission in April. These projects, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, will help fifty-seven public/branch libraries improve public access to electronic resources with new computers and Internet connectivity upgrades.

The Montana State Library's Summer Institute was a great success. Thirty-two Library Directors and Trustees spent a week with Sandra Nelson of the New Planning for Results series learning how to do just that. The week was rainy but a lot was learned. She is a terrific presenter and has a lot of good ideas for implementation of strategic plans. The workshop was funded by a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the Montana State Library Commission.

Submitted By Bridgett Johnson, MPLA Montana Representative