



MFOL NEWS

MASSACHUSETTS FRIENDS OF LIBRARIES

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Dick Luxner, Photographer

Rob Maier, Director, Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, at the November joint Trustee and Friends Conference, discussing the FY2012 Legislative Agenda.

Last year in Massachusetts 503,279 new library cards were issued. This number is just one indicator of the increased load placed on libraries by our patrons. Libraries have also experienced a surge of 50% in library visits during the past decade. During this period, library funding through the Massachusetts Board of Library commissioners (MBLC) has dropped by 39%. Inadequate funding is forcing libraries to reduce staff, hours and other services at a time when demand is at historic highs.

In an effort to convince the Legislator to provide adequate funding, MBLC has issued their legislative agenda in an easy to understand format which can be downloaded at <http://mblc.state.ma.us/mblc/publications/agenda2012.pdf>. In addition to explaining the needs and funding requests, the Legislative Agenda also talks about the efficiencies that have been achieved to save time and money throughout the state.

At the conference, Rob requested and received the unanimous approval of both organizations for the support of this agenda. But he made it clear that more than organizational support is necessary. It is critical that the

members of these organizations along with library trustees, friends, and patrons let their legislators know how important the library is to them. Legislative Breakfasts are scheduled to provide an opportunity for residents to talk directly to their legislators but you don't need to wait for them. Many legislators offer local meetings to allow residents to talk to them about issues of concern. You can also call or e-mail their offices to let them know why the library in your community is important and why you need them to support adequate funding.

This quote from **Lisa Wenner**, Library Director at Meekins Library in Williamsburg (and printed in the Legislative Agenda flyer) explains exactly why our libraries depend on state aid to continue to provide our important services.

"State Aid helps keep the doors open for the public at Meekins Library. Once upon a time we were able to treat it as money above and beyond operating funds. This has not been the case for many years. To lose State Aid is to lose everyday public programs and activities. Fewer books, shorter hours, less staff, fewer programs for kids. State Aid directly impacts what the public can access at Meekins Library. The public needs all the access we can give them especially now."

Legislative Breakfast and Events Schedule

March 28, 2011

**Massachusetts Library Legislative Day will be held at the State House.
RSVP not required.**

Local meetings are listed below with contact information to RSVP.

Friday, February 4, 2011
Mashpee Public Library at 8:00AM

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The Massachusetts Friends of Libraries and the Massachusetts Library Trustees Association held their 15th annual conference on Saturday, November 6 at the Worcester Technical High School. An overflow crowd attended a series of workshops and table talk discussions to share their problems, successes, and ideas with each other. Summaries of several of the sessions are below.

Security in Today's Library

A presentation by **Joel Wentworth**, Facilities Manager of the Worcester Public Library

Joel Wentworth, Facilities Manager, Worcester Public Library, was the very knowledgeable presenter for this program. He explained that managing the security issues is only a part of his job as Facilities Manager, but that it is very important to ensure the safety and comfort of patrons' library experiences. His presentation discussed both physical and electronic security measures, demonstrating how many of these measures work by projecting them on-screen. He showed camera locations and what the cameras catch on film, and demonstrated the two-way radios used for quick communication between library staffers and facilities people when there is a problem in the library so that problems can be handled quickly for the safety of all patrons. He emphasized the use of the staff home page online, with the forms and reports, policy listings, and safety manual for staff to refer to in handling most situations that arise. Normal patron complaints are handled by the library staff according to the policy manuals; such situation as assaults, drug use in bathrooms, violent behavior, problems with homeless people and other threatening situations are reported by staff and handled according to the proper procedures by facilities staff, or by calling police or fire officials as indicated.



Dick Luxner, Photographer

Joel Wentworth discussing security for libraries

Mr. Wentworth made clear that the best security measures are preventing problems before they occur by following the procedures in the manual and making sure that patrons are aware of the regulations and behaviors expected in the library. He also explored a number of ways that any library can take a proactive approach to creating procedures and using technology to maintain high levels of service and security while remaining unobtrusive to the patrons.



Dick Luxner, Photographer

Greg Pronovitz, New Director, Mass. Library System

During the past year as part of the effort to curtail costs, the six regional systems were consolidated to form the Massachusetts Library System. Greg Pronovitz was appointed Director and he attended the joint conference to give a report on the consolidation and talk about plans for the future.

Social Media Are Us

The MFOL's mission is to encourage and assist in the formation and continued growth of our state's Friends of Library groups.

To that end, MFOL just joined Facebook and Twitter, enabling us to more easily communicate with the hundreds of Friends of Library groups from Massachusetts libraries.

Please consider becoming a fan and/or follower! Our Facebook page is here: <http://tinyurl.com/2anlzk9>. Our Twitter page is here: <http://twitter.com/mfolnews>.

Via social media, we will provide you with:

- Fundraising ideas (including lots of real-life examples from Massachusetts libraries)
- Grant opportunity alerts
- Tips on increasing membership
- Strategies on recruiting and maintaining volunteers
- Examples of effective marketing & publicity
- Advocacy information
- Best board practices
- Relevant news from state, regional, and national library organizations
- Library-related inspirational quotes
- The occasional "funny" (Example: <http://tinyurl.com/5bou26>)

Also, please let your Friends of the Library group know about our venture into social media. Encourage them to fan/follow the MFOL!

WORKSHOP ON ROLE OF TRUSTEES VIS-À-VIS ROLE OF FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Elaine Melisi, Past President of MLTA and current Chair of the Board of Trustees of Whitman Public Library, and Donna Forand, MFOL Treasurer and Member of the Acushnet Friends of the Library, discussed the different roles of each group with relation to the library. The program was introduced by Maureen Killoran, formerly with the Board of Library Commissioners and now a member of the Mass. Friends of Libraries.

While both groups are deeply involved in advocacy for their libraries and promoting and publicizing the activities of the library, their roles are very different. Elaine Melisi focused on the major difference—that trustees are citizen volunteers to whom the governing of a public library is entrusted. They have specific legal responsibilities and are accountable to those who elected or appointed them, and to the citizens of their communities. She discussed the legal responsibilities with regard to record-keeping, the hiring of a director to whom the day-to-day operation of the library is delegated, the responsibilities related to the hiring, evaluation and termination processes, as well as responsibility for governance and policy making, planning and evaluation processes for the library's long-term and short-range plans, the financial responsibilities of trustees, staffing issues, and the need for continuing education for trustees. The financial responsibilities include not only participation with the director in budget preparation, but management of trust funds and judicious expenditure from those funds.

Donna Forand noted that the Friends play a role in raising funds to supplement library budgetary needs, but not to pay for things that the community should be including in its annual appropriations. She contrasted the much more casual nature of Friends groups, in that they are not required by law to post meetings and agendas, can meet when they wish and raise money for the things they would like to provide for the library. They generally work with the director's "wish list" in providing things like funding for summer reading programs, children's and adult programs, special events, refreshments and sponsorship for library celebrations, and other such "fun" activities. The Friends are often more visible in the community as a result of their activities, so they are often more visible advocates for libraries.



Donna Forand, Friends of Acushnet Public Library

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Elaine Melisi, Trustee, Whitman Public Library

Dick Luxner, Photographer

Both Donna and Elaine emphasized the need for trustees and friends to be active in advocacy for libraries and to understand the issues facing libraries, especially in the current economic times. Support for libraries needs to come from governmental commitments through appropriated funds, and from fundraising efforts for the library from the Friends groups. Advocacy also needs to be active through the efforts of both groups, working together in support of libraries.

Reported by Elaine Melisi

How do I recruit Friends members?

How do I hold onto them?

The first Table Talk session for Friends at the conference was co-chaired by MFOL President Alice Welch and Mass Board of Library Commissioners Liaison Brian Donoghue and featured a presentation on funding by John Tavares from the Acushnet Friends group. He then recapped his fund raising ideas at the ad hoc fund raising session - see page 7. Brian's focus was on recruiting and retaining Friends members. He emphasized three elements of a successful organization - visibility, communication and structure. Below are a few of his recommendations for these three elements.

Be sure that everyone knows that the Friends exist and is aware of their activities. Brochures in the library, signs at all Friends events, a Friends newsletter, a website that is kept up to date and participation in town activities are all way to increase Friends visibility in the community. Working with other community organizations provides not only additional visibility but opens up their membership to the Friends.

Staying in touch with the members of your group - an important element for success - requires careful record keeping. Make it easy to stay a member and be sure to send regular reminders when renewals



Dick Luxner, Photographer

Brian Donoghue, MBLC



Dick Luxner, Photographer

John Tavares, Friends of Acushnet Public Library

are due. Townwide mailings are a good way to recruit new members. Keeping the basic membership fee low but providing a graduated schedule of fees for those who want to give more makes it possible for everyone to join at a level they choose. Be sure to acknowledge all contributions - time, talent and money - promptly, enthusiastically and as publicly as possible.

Be sure that the structure of your organization is welcoming to new members and make it easy for them to get involved. This means subcommittees for specific projects, opportunities to do a variety of tasks, and convenient meeting times. Set up your organization so that leadership positions rotate through the organization.



Dick Luxner, Photographer

A special thanks to **Don & Teena Cherry**, Conference Registrars and Leicester P.L. Trustees who handled both pre-registration and check-in the day of the conference. Our thanks also to Ted Irvin and Stacy Whittier for their help at the registration desks.

Our gratitude also to **John Donohue**, President, Massachusetts

Library Trustee Association and the Conference Chair who not only was the overseer for all the details of the



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Conference but who made arrangements for us to use the beautiful Worcester Technical High School as the conference locale.

E-Books and Public Libraries

Presented by **Rick Levine**, Technical Specialist, Mass Library System



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Armed with a wide variety of e-book readers, Rick Levine introduced his audience to both the technology of e-readers (in their many varieties) and to their uses in public libraries.

Patrons can download titles to their readers, just like checking out a book. Some libraries are pushing the technology a bit more by offering sample e-readers for checkout or by having a selection of e-readers with pre-loaded titles that are available for check out.

There was a great deal of interest in the opportunities and questions that e-books offer to libraries and it was clear from the discussion that this is a new field for many libraries and their patrons.

Looking for programs for your library?

Check out Matchbook.org which lists performers that can be hired for library and other events.

Message from Alice Welch, President, MFOL

I would like to thank everyone who attended the MFOL/MLTA conference in November at the Worcester Technical High School. The event was a huge success with people from all areas of our commonwealth attending.

All of us need to be aware that libraries are more important than ever as they:

- Promote a literate society and provide lifetime learning.
- Play a vital role in early childhood development.
- Spur economic development and community revitalization.
- Are much more than books.

We all need to convince our legislators to provide adequate funding. It is critical for all friends and patrons of libraries let their legislators know how important the library is to them. Please either phone or email your local senators and representatives at their offices. Their addresses and emails can be found at mass.gov Attendance at a legislative breakfast in your area is also helpful.

I would like to wish everyone a happy and healthy new year.

Table Talk discussion on Social Networking with Robert Hayes and Dottie MacKeen

In talking about how to communicate with your patrons, Dottie reminded us to keep the library and its benefits (and needs) in their minds and that a request for contributions should never be the only time your patrons hear from you. She suggested that news that the library should communicate would include services that are less obvious, new programs & benefits, information about the staff (everyone should know their names), heads up on problems & opportunities, additions to the collections, upcoming events & reports on past events with photos, and successes (because they won't know how good you are unless you tell them). Dottie also listed some of the ways to communicate such as signs, newsletters, press releases, local access television, e-mails, websites, blogs, videos (You tube or local TV), meetings, presentations at community organizations, partnering with other organizations, and participation in community events (ie, fairs & parades). Her last topic was newsletters: who gets them, how often they go out, are they posted in the web-site, and do they include how people can become involved with the friends group.

Robert Hayes did a great presentation about Facebook. He listed the Massachusetts cities and towns that had friends groups with Facebook accounts. Robert explained that Friends Groups were using Facebook to promote book sales, promote other fundraisers, promote friends events, promote library events, share photos, share videos, distribute surveys, solicit feedback, answer questions from members, & non members, recruit & retain friends, recruit volunteers, thank supporters, be thanked by supporters, advocate for building projects, advocate for fair funding, share relevant news articles, share relevant pop culture articles, communicate with board members, and integrate with other social media. Robert provided

us with a great handout, *Print Resources Face book Booklist*, which made it easy to take notes.

Dottie MacKeen is an MFOL board member and MFOL Newsletter Editor. Robert Hayes is also an MFOL Board member and MFOL Website editor.

reported by Ted Irvin, MFOL secretary



Dick Luxner, Photographer

Robert Hayes demonstrating the uses that some libraries are making of FaceBook



Photo by Stacie Whittier

A few of the many attendees at the November joint conference



Photo by Stacie Whittier

An Impromptu session of fund raising ideas

Part way through the conference, feedback from attendees made it clear that they were hoping to hear more specific ideas for fund raising - both the most critical and often the

most challenging task facing Friends groups.

Alice Welch, President of the Massachusetts Friends of the Library and Donna Forand, MFOL Treasurer, put together a “spur of the moment” segment attended by about 35 MFOL members.

A few of the ideas discussed were:

Book sales, having no \$ limit on the levels of membership available for your friends group, sponsoring Garden Tours, and putting together a calendar (excellent fund raiser, however, very time and labor intensive. The same applies to the Garden Tours). Also mentioned as successful efforts were gala events held at the library, sales of baked goods, bridge tournaments, bingo, raffles, local talent shows, auctions, antique appraisals and plant and holiday greens sales.

Some ideas from John Tavares of Acushnet, repeated from his excellent presentation earlier in the day, included putting small envelopes inside the covers of DVD/video cases that ask for a \$.25 donation toward repair and/or replacement costs. which usually get more than the 25 cents; creating a calendar of local people; on-line book sales which net for one library an average of \$35.00 for a small box of books that were going to be discarded. He has successfully worked with Book Prospector, Abe Books.com and Empire Books. He also recommended volunteering to help another town non-profit organization - great PR for your group. His friends group volunteered 2 hours for a town road race that is a lot of fun and in return they have earned \$300.00. Other towns have sold baseball caps with their zip code on the cap - of course it helps if the Governor has a house there! Another group sells refreshments at town meetings. A third group sponsors an afternoon tea where different groups get to decorate a table with their own special china, linens, silver and crystal etc.



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continued from page 3 - Legislative Breakfasts

Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library (Dudley) at 8AM (RSVP: Matt Hall at mhall@cwmares.org or 508-949-8021)

Friday, February 4, 2011

Monson Free Library at 7:30AM (RSVP: kkrol@cwmares.org)

Friday, February 11, 2011

Adams Free Library (RSVP: L.Kaufmann@mcla.edu (preferred) or 413-662-5325)

Greenfield Community College at 8:00AM (Contact Eric Poulin pouline@gcc.mass.edu; [Click to RSVP](#))

Westfield Athenaeum at 8:15AM (RSVP: rmelnick@westath.org or 568-0638)

Wilson Middle School (Natick) at 8:00AM (RSVP: abloom@natickps.org or 508-647-6670 ext 1210)

Cambridge Public Library at 8:00 AM
449 Broadway, Cambridge 02139

Groton Public Library at 8:00AM (RSVP oshuman@gpl.org or 978-448-2652)

Friday, February 18, 2011

Forbush Memorial Library at 8:00AM (Westminster) (Contact Margaret Howe-Soper | RSVP: msoper@cwmares.org or 978-874-7416)

Springfield City Library at 8:00AM (RSVP: JRamsay@SpringfieldLibrary.org)

Turner Free Library at 8:00AM (Randolph)

March 4, 2011

Worcester Public Library at 8:00AM

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FIRST CLASS

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