



BAY STATE LIBRARIES

Newsletter of the Massachusetts Library Association www.masslib.org

The Value of Membership

Susan R. McAlister, President

In a recent survey conducted by the Association, nearly 75 % of respondents answered that advocacy and promoting libraries are the most important things MLA should be doing. Advocacy has been a cornerstone of the Association's mission and I would like to update you on some of the ways that MLA has been fulfilling this role.

In August, Governor Patrick signed a supplemental budget bill that provided an increase of \$500,000 over the FY2010 budget he originally signed. This didn't happen by accident. It took many people working together and here are some of the things that helped.

It starts with MLA members working together to arrange for and attend Legislative Breakfasts around the Commonwealth in February and March. These breakfasts provide an opportunity for directors, staff, trustees, friends and local officials to talk with members of the Legislature about their libraries, the impact of state funding, and what library service means to the residents of their communities. The basic message this year... Libraries are instruments of recovery. About half of all legislators attend or send aides to these breakfasts. If you've not attended one, look for the opportunity this year. This is where we build the relationship that leads to budget success.

In April, MLA Legislative Day brings 300-400 people to the State House (and there's room for more) to visit legislators in their house. We rally for briefings on the issues, gather for lunch and speeches in the Great Hall, and visit our legislators in their offices. Many legislators also join us for

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Stepping Back to Move Forward

Elizabeth Hacala, MLA Executive Manager

When I began working with MLA, my very first event was an all day off-site meeting to create a strategic plan. Barbara Flaherty arranged to have a facilitator come in and help us define our goals as part of the visioning process.

During that meeting we spent the day coming up with four specific goals for MLA. These goals became the foundation of our strategic plan:

- 1) MLA creates a positive image for the Association, librarians, and library staff.
- 2) MLA advocates successfully for funding that benefits Massachusetts libraries, librarians, and library staff.
- 3) MLA strengthens the inclusiveness, effectiveness, and vitality of the organization to add value to the membership.
- 4) MLA is a leader in the state in providing education resources and guidance to libraries, librarians, and library staff involving First Amendment rights.

Armed with these four goals and the results of the recent survey, the MLA Executive Board will spend its October board meeting reviewing and revising our strategic plan.

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**Volume 96 Number 4
Fall 2009**

School Libraries: Now More Than Ever

Linda Picceri, MSLA Public Relations Co-Chair

The school year has begun and Massachusetts school librarians were geared up for our annual conference. This year's theme "Now More Than Ever" emphasized the fundamental need for school library programs in 21st Century learning. The conference took place on Sunday and Monday October 4th and 5th at the Sturbridge Host Hotel. Conference sessions examined numerous topics relevant to administrators and teachers in school library programs. Theoretical and practical knowledge was be shared to enhance student performance, promote literacy, and explore new technology.

An Author Fest took place in the Exhibit Hall featuring authors representing various grade levels and interests. There was a President's Reception in the Exhibit Hall followed by the optional Dinner Buffet and Sunday Dinner Honorees, Mitchell Chester, MA Commissioner of Education and Janet Allison, Deputy Director of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. The evening will conclude with job-alike sessions.

On Monday, the Keynote was be given by Dr. Ross Todd, Associate Professor in the School of Communi-

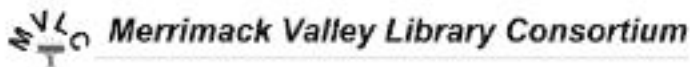
cation, Information and Library Studies at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. Photographs from the conference will be posted on Flickr with the tag msla2009. For those of you who missed this year's conference we hope to see you next year.

Stepping Back to Move Forward (cont)

We are living through some very difficult times in the Commonwealth. The news is full of reports of further state cuts and reduced tax revenues. These challenging times are just one more reason for us to step back, take stock, and move forward as an Association.

We are committed to making sure the MLA strategic plan stays a vital and living document which serves to capture our accomplishments as well as focus us on our goals.

Please join us in thanking our Leadership Partner members for their generous support of MLA!



MLA Public Relations Committee and Hall of Fame Awards

The Massachusetts Library Association Public Relations committee is seeking new members. The PR committee presents the Bi-Annual MLA Public Relations awards on odd years, and the Massachusetts Library Association Hall of Fame awards on even years. The 2010 MLA Hall of Fame awards will be presented at the MLA business meeting during the annual conference in Hyannis next April.

If you would like to become active in the PR Committee you can contact the co-chairs:

Greg Pronevitz, NMRLS
Phone: (978) 762-4433 ext.15
Email: greg@nmrls.org

or

Laurie Lessner, SAILS Library Network
Phone: 508-946-8600 x214
Email: llessner@sailsinc.org

The nomination form for MLA's 2010 Hall of Fame is available on the MLA web site.

Inductees to the Hall of Fame are practicing or retiring librarians who have made a substantial, sustained contribution to advancing the cause of Massachusetts librarians or librarianship over a career of at least ten years. Inductees' contributions may be in the fields of public service, education, service to the profession, or other areas.

You can access the 2010 nomination form and view previous inductees at:
<http://www.masslib.org/halloffame/index.html>



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Blue Robin is pleased to support the Massachusetts Library Association.

We genuinely appreciate the value that libraries provide to all of our communities, which is part of why we have a tradition of donating a portion of our services to the libraries we serve.

Blue Robin is the developer of **WebLibrary™**, a comprehensive web-portal content management system designed to be easy to use, yet powerful enough to provide all of the features and functions libraries need to fully support the needs of their constituents and patrons.

To learn more about how Blue Robin or WebLibrary™ could help you, please contact:

Nick Allen, CMO of Blue Robin Tel: 781-577-6015 or email: nick@bluerobin.com

PARA: What great work you do!!!

Maybe a beautiful "Notice of Appreciation" displayed on the wall near your desk would be yummy? Like you baked the best cake, and everyone wants to share the recipe?

Well the recipe is posted, with how to directions and the ingredients list. It's a project of the Massachusetts Library Association Paralibrarian Section called the PARA or the PARalibrarian Recognition of Achievement.

Visit <http://www.masslib.org/PARAProgram/> for more information, to download forms and to sign up for a mentor to help you step by step through the process. Dig into that folder with all your certificates of attendance and notes of congratulations for a great project, and education and trainings you took just to keep your brain moving in the right direction. You'll surprise yourself to see how many PARA points you rack up and how proud you are of what you have

contributed to the library community, as a non-MLS degreed Library Staffer.

Even the American Library Association (ALA) is proposing a national certification program for Library Support Staff. The PARA is a Massachusetts state wide opportunity to record, recognize and standardize the accomplishments of Paralibrarians. Are you a Paralibrarian too? Recognize your value to the library and discover a tool to sweeten your career.

PARA notices are presented at the MLA Annual Conference (April 28, 2010) and accompanied by cheers, applause and congratulations. Questions on how to get started, or why a PARA? Contact Debbie Pennino, Chair of the Career Development Committee and PARA Review Board, and Metadata Specialist at Northeastern University Snell Library (d.pennino@neu.edu 617-373-7722).

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What can MLA do for You? (cont)

lunch and listen as library users tell their stories of how libraries and librarians have changed their lives. Through this event, we are again building the relationships. I have heard time and time again from legislators that they welcome the opportunity to meet with their constituents.

Maryanne Lewis, now in her third year as MLA's legislative liaison, has cultivated a very productive relationship with Representative Mark Falzone (D-Saugus). Representative Falzone founded the Legislative Library Caucus two years ago to give legislators another way to express their support for libraries. As leader of the caucus, Rep. Falzone often communicates with the House and Senate leadership to advocate for library funding. In July, he submitted a caucus letter to the leadership to support an override of the Governor's veto of regional funding that set the stage for success in the supplemental budget bill. He garnered 113 signatures of House members on this letter in a matter of days. That's 113 of 160 representatives! Numbers like those have impact.

Maryanne Lewis carried the letter from office to office in support of this effort. Maryanne knows all of the legislators and most of their staffers. Her role is

to get the library message to those who can best influence the outcomes for libraries at the right time. Our job is to keep telling our legislators the stories of what libraries mean to our users on a daily basis and Maryanne's job is to take the cumulative impact of those stories and develop leadership support for MLA's initiatives.

Due to your support of the Association through member fees and volunteerism, we continue to do this critical work in support of libraries and librarians across the Commonwealth. When you receive your membership renewal letter this year, please make it a priority. There are a number of professional associations that you can join. It is the Massachusetts Library Association that is working with you to advocate for libraries and supporting the important work we do. Even in the worst budget year in memory, when we all work together we can succeed. Getting the regional library systems a \$500,000 increase over the original budget is a victory that keeps critical regional services flowing for another year. As we approach an even more difficult budget year, it will take all of our efforts to continue the success in making libraries a priority in the Legislature. When everyone works together we succeed.

Unveiling the New MLA Web Site

The Massachusetts Library Association selected Blue Robin to help us create our a new MLA website.

During the month of October, MLA will be unveiling our new web site. Shortly after the initial launch we will be adding the ability update verify your membership and to update your contact information on line.

We hope you enjoy the new web site. As we unveil the web site if you have comments or questions, please feel free to contact me at the MLA office at: mloffice@masslib.org.



IFC: Convenience or Privacy

By Jennifer Inglis

At a recent meeting, it was suggested that the privacy protections put in place by my library somehow lead to bad customer service. In short, having policies in place that restrict borrowing materials to only the card holder (or another person with said card) create problems for family members or neighbors who want to do someone a favor, or for parents who want to pick up stuff for their kids. I recognize these issues, but I disagree that requiring a library card is somehow improper, inappropriate, or unfriendly. “My” library, like many others, provides outstanding personal service at the desk, during programs, and in collection development. We do all this while requiring patrons to carry the appropriate identification. I think it’s a fair trade.

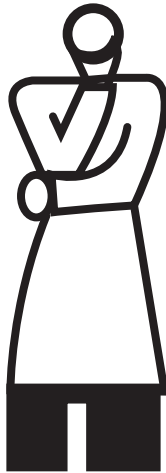
When the issue of patron privacy is raised, it is often seen as a tangent or a hassle, something that doesn’t really jive with the realities of public library service. Does it really matter if we let a husband check out the books his spouse requested? Shouldn’t parents be able to see what their kids are reading? Why should our front line staff, many of whom have not been trained in the library tenets of freedom of information and the right to privacy, deal with angry patrons who did not bring the appropriate library card? Isn’t it better to let the patron get what she wants, rather than explaining the state statutes about public records (and the fact that a library record is not one)?

Perhaps this is the only issue for some: patrons leaving with what they want. In a perfect world, this is a perfect result. However, there are many times that this isn’t possible, as much as we’d like it to be. Sometimes our computers are broken, the internet is fussy, the books are checked out, or the DVDs are scratched. We don’t always say “yes” all the time. We don’t provide tax help, even when people plead for us to do so. We often charge fines for overdue materials. We limit the number of attendees at

programs. We require identification to get a library card. At my library, we require a library card to pick up materials or check a patron record. When confronted with a patron who is dissatisfied, we have two things to back us up: our helpful demeanor (hopefully with a smile) and our policies (developed with thought and care).

Public libraries serve our public, but we also serve our towns and our state. With often precarious funding situations, we need to demonstrate that we are stewards of our community resources and that we follow the guidelines, regulations, and statutes set by the state. We need to do all this while providing increasing numbers of people the best experience possible with diminished budgets. It’s not easy, but we manage to balance our popularity with our responsibility. One way we do so is by requiring library cards, which show the patrons that they are stakeholders in the community; that they are trusted to take care of community resources.

Given that our town or city governments trust us with our budgets, the state trusts us to follow the laws, and we trust our patrons to take care of our collections, we should be protecting our patrons whenever possible. Much ado has been made over police requests for computers, and we’re all (hopefully) trained to ask for subpoenas to protect our computer users from unnecessary violations of their personal affairs. Why can’t we take as much care with our patron reading records? It’s simple: request a library card, with a smile and an explanation, of course. It’s so simple, but it’s also the law.



The deadline for the next *Bay State Libraries* is December 15th. The Winter issue will reach members in early January. If you have news you would like to share with the MLA community, please send it to newsletter@masslb.org.

Public Relations Awards: One Libraries Experience

Felicia Cheney, Edgartown Free Public Library

At the 2009 gathering of the Massachusetts Library Association in Springfield this May, the little Edgartown Public Library from Martha's Vineyard walked away with five prizes in the MLA's biennial Public Relations Awards. The library took honorable mentions for its website and newsletter, and first-place prizes for its logo design and for Edgartown 101, a six-week public literacy program designed to teach citizens about their town government. Finally, the Edgartown Library received the "PR for Pennies Award," given to the library that reaches out to its community most effectively at the least expense.

"If I'd known I was making so many trips to the podium, I'd have worn more comfortable shoes," says Felicia Cheney, director of the library, who attended the awards ceremony on May 7. "Librarians from across the state were asking, 'Edgartown? Who are you guys?'"

The story of the Edgartown Library's success goes back to June of 2006, when it hired Nis Kildegaard, a longtime community newspaper editor, freelance writer and designer, as its reference librarian. When Ms. Cheney learned that he was fluent in Adobe In-Design and Photoshop, the software used by major magazines and newspapers, she bought the library a discount copy from Techsoup, an online service which connects nonprofits with donors of computer supplies and applications.

"Very few library job postings look specifically for design and communication skills," says Ms. Cheney, "but I think public libraries could help themselves immensely if they considered these more when they're hiring. So much of our outreach into the community, from the posters we hang around town to the press releases we send to local newspapers, can benefit from having someone with this skill set. Our library logo, our newsletter and our website not only convey information – they say something about the professionalism of the library, and we've found that people do notice when we present these things in a more intelligent and polished way."

Partnering with organizations and businesses that do their work well has also contributed to the Edgar-

town Library's success, Ms. Cheney says. The library presented its winning program, Edgartown 101, in conjunction with the Martha's Vineyard chapter of the League of Women Voters, and arranged with the local public access station, MVTV, to record and broadcast the one hour-long programs on the workings of town government. "We know from the public response that many more people saw this library program at home," Ms. Cheney says, "than attended the live sessions. The programs ran on the public channel for weeks, and we got lots of positive comment."

The Edgartown Library was able to build its website on a tight budget, says Ms. Cheney, largely because so much of the design work was done in advance, by library staff. "We spent many hours exploring other library sites," she says, "and we didn't hesitate to incorporate features we liked." She adds that the simple interface provided by the site's builder, Heather Goff of Goffgrafix.com, makes maintenance of the site a snap for her library staff. "If you don't spend the money up front on a good administrative interface," she says, "you'll just find excuses for letting your website go stale. No amount of good design will make up for content that just sits there and never changes."

Congratulations to Edgartown Library on
their Public Relations Awards.

Get Ready, Get Set, Advocate!

As part of our ongoing mission to educate legislators about the important role of libraries in the commonwealth, MLA will be holding Library Legislative Day again in April 2010. Further details on the Legislative Day will be in our Winter newsletter.

Remember, you are the best one to educate your local legislator on the vital role libraries play in our communities.





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ISSN: 1549-0998
Published four times a year

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being an MLA
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**Volume 96 Number 4
Fall 2009**

The MLA 2010 Annual Conference

From Meek to Mighty: Reinventing Libraries in Challenging Times

Don't miss the 2010 MLA Annual Conference in beautiful Hyannis, Massachusetts.

This year's conference will be held April 28th - 30th at the Hyannis Resort and Conference Center.

The conference will begin mid-day on Wednesday and will feature great sessions along with many of your conference favorites, including the Trivia and the Auction!



The exhibit hall is part of what makes our conference a success. Do you have a favorite vendor who comes to conference? Please thank them and let them know you notice. Have a favorite vendor who is not attending conference? Encourage them to exhibit. They can contact the office at: mloffice@masslib.org and we will send them the 2010 exhibitor information packet.