



BAY STATE LIBRARIES

The Newsletter of the Massachusetts Library Association

www.masslib.org

MLA Focus Groups

A Message From President Jim Sutton

You may have recently seen my email message asking for volunteers to help The Massachusetts Library Association by participating in one of three focus groups. MLA is holding these sessions to gather data that will help us make changes, foster a stronger organization and encourage an increase in membership. The focus groups will be composed of librarians who have either never been members of MLA, or who were once members, but have let their memberships lapse. Betsy Like, a trained leader from NELINET, will be facilitating these sessions.

MLA's Executive Board decided to carry out this exercise after continuing discussions indicated a need to increase membership and to involve more Massachusetts librarians in MLA. By talking with people who have never belonged, and to people who once belonged but have left, the Board hopes to find out what MLA can do to revitalize our organization.

You can help in this process by asking your co-workers to consider attending one of the three sessions. Your personal interest in them and their thoughts about MLA will be crucial in encouraging their attendance. Though a number of volunteers have already

responded to the email message, we still need your help. We need 30 people to attend in all. Please ask those interested in attending to contact me at jsutton@mhl.org. The dates of the focus groups are as follow:

For Librarians Who Have Never Belonged to MLA (2 sessions):

Wednesday, January 9, 2002
11:00am - 2:00pm
Palmer Public Library, Palmer, MA

Thursday, January 10, 2002
11:00am - 2:00pm
Newton Free Library, Newton, MA

For Librarians Who Formerly Belonged to MLA (1 session):

January 16, 2002
11:00am - 2:00pm
NELINET, Inc., Southborough, MA

Lunch will be provided at all sessions.

We are especially thankful to Arnold Hirshon, Executive Director of NELINET, who is allowing the staff of NELINET to facilitate these sessions without any charge to MLA.

For more on these focus groups and their findings, watch for the March, 2002 issue of *Bay State Libraries*.

The 24/7 Project

Sometimes, regular library hours and methods of information delivery just don't satisfy patrons' needs. More and more, information seekers need reference service that is available at odd hours, is accessible remotely, and can get them an answer on the spot. Those needs are now being addressed by the 24/7 Reference project.

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January 2002**

The 24/7 Project

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24/7 Reference is a project of the Metropolitan Cooperative Library System (MCLS), supported by Federal LSTA funding and administered by the California State Library. MCLS is an association of 31 independent city and special district public libraries located in the greater Los Angeles area, which have agreed to cooperate in providing library service to the residents of all participating jurisdictions. The goal is to bring in libraries throughout the country, and eventually to cooperate with libraries all over the world.

"Patrons have been delighted to get an answer, or even just to get their question through, right at the moment they think of it."

Participating libraries use special software that allows patrons to chat online with librarians in real time. This software, a modified version of eGain, also allows librarians to "take over" a remote patron's Internet browser and show him relevant web pages. The librarian can then choose to simply find and send the answer, or to guide the patron through a search using the library's catalog, online electronic databases, or the web. After signing off, the patron receives a transcript of the reference transaction, including a list of any web sites visited.

Massachusetts is already getting involved in the project. Memorial Hall Library in Andover is the first library outside southern California to cooperate with MCLS to provide chat reference service. Memorial Hall Library kicked off its participation in mid-September, with seven trained librarians rotating to cover questions coming in from 8:00-10:00 am (5:00-

7:00 am Pacific Time). Inquiries have ranged from the simple catalog inquiries to more specific questions, such as "From what did Queen Victoria's son Albert die?" (The answer: a heart attack brought on by chronic bronchitis).

Memorial Hall librarians Glenda Schaake and Eleanor Sathan recently attended the third annual Virtual Reference Desk conference in Orlando, Florida. One thing that was stressed, they say, was that virtual reference service is only one new aspect of reference service. It isn't intended to replace regular reference service or even email reference, only to provide another avenue to reach patrons. That said, virtual reference service has been an incredibly popular addition to Memorial Hall Library's services. In November alone, the library fielded 48 questions from patrons all over the country, and even a few from England and France. The staff is already seeing repeat users, especially students and reporters. "Patrons have been delighted," says Schaake, "to get an answer, or even just to get their question through, right at the moment they think of it."

More Massachusetts libraries are getting into the act. The Boston Public Library began participation in the 24/7 program in October, and Boston College plans to begin service soon.

To read more about the project, visit visit the 24/7 project's web site at www.247ref.org. To talk with someone about getting involved in the project, contact Project Director Susan McGlamery at (310) 391-7444; email susan@247ref.org, or Director of Training Carol Bonnefil at (310) 397-2999; email carol@247ref.org.

To try out the service, visit Memorial Hall Library's web page at www.mhl.org/research/247/247.htm.

Ways & Means Day 2002

It's time again for those two important legislative events: Ways and Means Day and Legislative Day. We hope to see a strong showing of librarians, trustees, and friends at both events, making our needs known to our state legislators.

Ways and Means Day will be held on February 6, 2002 from 10:00am-12:00pm at the State House in Boston. Registration begins at 10:00, followed by a reception at the State Library from 10:00-11:00, and a legislative briefing at 11:00 in Room 222.

The Annual Legislative Day will be held on April 10, 2002 from 11:00am-1:00pm, also at the State House.

MLA urges you to take this opportunity to show your support for the library community.

Taking the Lead: the Youth Services Section

by YSS Chair Katie Baxter

Successful delivery of youth services depends on librarians' willingness to be dynamic and consistent leaders in the youth services field. MLA's Youth Services Section (YSS) counts on its members to communicate their needs and ideas to board members. By gathering models of successful programming and resource allocation, and helping members network with peers, YSS helps provide direction for youth services. In doing so, we hope to create something extraordinary for the children we serve.

When the Massachusetts Regional

Library Systems put out a call for support in implementing YSLead Institute, MLA's Youth Services Section did not hesitate to submit its letter of support. As one youth services librarian new to the field observed, children's librarians have not yet found the key to recruiting individuals to the profession who share a common purpose; or to communicating the big picture to key decision-makers and funding agencies.

YSS took action again in December of 2001, when members of its Executive Board met with members of the Massachusetts School Library Media Association Board to work on a joint statement on School and Public Library Collaboration. Still in its preliminary stages, the statement will complement the existing joint statements *A Common Purpose with Similarities and Differences and Collection Development*. Again, leaders came together to articulate common goals for youth services.

YSS also plans and implements both a program for the MLA conference, and an annual stand-alone program. This year's stand-alone program will focus on virtual reference service and how it can impact service to young patrons.

The Youth Services Section relies on individuals to commit to leadership roles. We need you to step forward, speak up, and help us make our vision for youth services in Massachusetts a reality. We ask you to identify your special qualities and specific talents and bring them to the YSS table. Apply to or nominate a peer for the YSLead Institute. Share your ideas and concerns with YSS members in your area.

For more on becoming a YSS member, visit the MLA web site at www.masslib.org/yss.htm. For more on YSLead, see the article "YSLead Update" in this issue.

Capture the Kids

The Youth Services Section of MLA invites you to "Capturing the Kids with Virtual Reference Services". This program will be held on Friday, March 22, 2002 from 9:30am-1:00pm at the Wrentham Public Library. Panelists will include:

Susan McGlamery, 24/7 Project Director for the Metropolitan Cooperative Library System, Los Angeles, CA, who will give an overview of the project and where it is heading.

Eleanor Sathan and Glenda Schaake, coordinators of the 24/7 project at Memorial Hall Library in Andover, who will talk about planning and implementing this project and give a demonstration of live reference chat.

Cindy Roach, Regional Administrator for the Southeastern Massachusetts Library System, who will discuss the region's role in this service and how SEMLS is implementing their own live chat project.

A representative from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, who will discuss grant opportunities in this area.

Registration brochures will be sent to YSS members and posted to Massyac and regional listservs in December.

For more information or to register for this program please visit the MLA website at www.masslib.org/yss.htm

YSLead Update

Application forms for YSLead Massachusetts, a youth services leadership institute for librarians, are now available online at

www.wmrls.org/YSLead or from your regional youth services consultant. The deadline for applications is January 14, 2002.

Join colleagues for two and a half days of collaborative training in leadership and mentoring at Endicott College in Beverly, MA from August 8-10, 2002. School or public librarians are invited to apply. Sixty participants will be selected to attend this institute tuition-free. To nominate a colleague or for additional information, please contact Doreen Metcalfe at dmetcalf@cwmar.org, or send a request for information to YSLead Massachusetts, Central Massachusetts Regional Library System, 8 Flagg Road, Shrewsbury, MA 01545.

NERTCL Wants You!

As if working with young people weren't terrific enough, in and of itself, youth services librarians in New England have their own special section of the New England Library Association. Joining the New England Round Table of Children's Librarians (NERTCL) is a great way to network with other librarians and share ideas on programming and other youth services issues. By joining, you'll receive announcements of all NELA and NERTCL programs, special events, and other activities. Members even get discounted admission fees. For details on joining NERTCL, see the NELA web site at www.nela.org.

And speaking of upcoming events, NERTCL is offering a program on March 22, 2002 in Derry, NH on fantasy & science fiction books for youth. Speakers will include authors Franny Billingsley (*Well-Wished, The Folk Keeper*) and William Sleator (*House of Stairs, Marco's Millions*).

Places & Faces

People in MA Library News

Congratulations to **Nancy Alcorn**, former Head of Circulation at the Newburyport Public Library. Ms. Alcorn recently received her MLS from the University of Rhode Island, and will serve as Newburyport's new Assistant Director.

The Bancroft Memorial Library in Hopedale welcomes new Director **Beth Hoffer**. Ms. Hoffer comes to Hopedale from the Ashland Public Library.

Karen Conway has joined the staff of the Abbot Public Library in Marblehead as Children's Librarian. Ms. Conway spent four years as Children's Librarian in Wenham, and worked for over 15 years in the Children's Department at the Salem

Public Library.

Gerri Guyote has joined the staff of the Peabody Institute Library in Peabody as Adult Services Librarian. Ms. Guyote comes to Peabody from the Levin Memorial Library at Curry College.

Salem State College welcomes two new staff members. **Frank Bridges III**, who recently received his M.S.L.S. from Simmons, is the new Library Associate for Instructional Services. **Douglas Warnock** has assumed the Library Technical Support position. Mr. Warnock has been a part-time employee at the Salem State College Library for the past four years.

Richard Welton, Reference and Community Services Librarian at the Winchester Public Library, died recently of accidental causes during a

whitewater rafting trip in Maine. Mr. Welton joined the Winchester Public Library in 1989. He worked previously at the Boston Public Library and the Somerville Public Library.

Bay State Libraries is published by the Massachusetts Library Association for its members. The deadline for each issue is the 1st of the previous month. Send all items for publication to Bethany Hinton, Memorial Hall Library, Elm Square, Andover, MA 01810; phone (978) 623-8401 ext. 34; fax (978) 623-8407; email bhinton@mhl.org. For information about MLA, contact Barry Blaisdell, Executive Secretary, at (978) 282-0415; fax (978) 282-1304; email info@masslib.org.



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