



# Montana Library Association

**working smart for Montana library users**

Mountain Plains Library Association Report - July 12, 2003  
Submitted by Ken Kempcke, MPLA Representative

MLA membership is at 669 with 72 new members this year.

## **MLA Supports Livingston Librarian**

Last fall, the MLA board sent a resolution to the Livingston, Montana, School Board in support of Suzanne Goodman and the collection management policies in place at Park High School Library during a challenge to the library's subscription to *Rolling Stone* Magazine. The Board's efforts were not successful at restoring *Rolling Stone* to the library but they did have an effect as evidenced by Suzanne's remarks when she received the Pat Williams Intellectual Freedom Award at conference this year.

## **MLA Leadership Retreat**

The MLA Leadership Retreat will take place July 30-August 1 at Camp on the Boulder. The retreat agenda is not yet complete, but it generally consists of an evening and a day of introductions to the MLA organization and some type of leadership training/discussion. Since this is a non-legislative year (hopefully no sneaky special sessions will rear their heads!) we hope to focus the retreat on possible mentoring ideas for MLA.

## **Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Task Force**

The Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Task Force has reorganized with a number of new committee members. Current projects include posters available to libraries this fall at a nominal price designed with an open center space for advertising current Lewis & Clark events or resources. The Task Force is sending out information packets to all libraries with lists of Lewis & Clark resources, price lists for the posters and the Lewis & Clark Activity Books for Kids produced by the committee, and 25 of the MLA Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Passports which can be stamped at any public library in Montana. We also are starting some new projects including a Lewis & Clark Forum as a special password-controlled segment of our MLA listserv. The forum will offer answers to Lewis & Clark-related questions and needs. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed committing MLA and other library associations from "trail states" across the nation to support the National Park Service educational project "Corps of Discovery II". This

traveling exhibit, which will be on display in communities across the United States, includes both Expedition materials, materials for local activities, and the "Tent of Many Voices" for storytelling and sharing of all aspects of the Lewis & Clark story.

### **Offline**

Offline, MLA's annual technology meeting, was held February 20-22 at the Great Falls Public Library. Presentation topics included virtual reference, PC and server security, and new technologies for libraries.

### **MLA Conference**

The annual conference of the Montana Library Association was held in Butte, April 23-26, 2003. A resolution on the USA PATRIOT Act was passed at the Conference. The text of the resolution can be viewed at <http://www.mtlib.org/conf/resolutions/patriotresolution.html>. Michael Gorman, veteran of four decades of library service and a prolific writer, provided the keynote address. At the General Session on Thursday he spoke on "The Enduring Library." In his most recent book, *The Enduring Library: Technology, Tradition, and the Quest for Balance*, Gorman traces the transformations of contemporary libraries and writes a road map for achieving balance between the tradition of library service and ever-changing technology. Gorman also presented a workshop, titled "The Future of Cataloging." Other speakers included Jack Gladstone, Buff Hirko, Jerry O'Donnell, Cindy Mediavilla, and Dorothy Hinshaw.

### **Legislative Activity**

In January, the MLA Board authorized its library lobbyists to support money-generating bills appearing before the state legislature. The state's financial situation was severe enough that the suggested State Library budget would have destroyed many cooperative programs for libraries funded by the State Library. The board's efforts were not totally successful, but the willingness of librarians to testify in Helena and letters from librarians and library supporters throughout the state kept the damage level comparable with other state agencies.

### **Archivist Hired**

The William P. Sherman Library and Archives of the Lewis and Clark Heritage Foundation has hired a professional archivist and librarian to oversee its operations. The new Director of Library and Education Services, Jill Jackson, has experience as both an archivist and professional teacher. The Sherman Library and Archives, located in the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center at Great Falls, is one of the premier repositories for the study of the Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1803-1806. The facility is open to all researchers. The library has assisted nationally known authors, reporters, photographers, teachers, students, property owners, interpreters of the story, and many others with information, visuals and research into the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

### **Gates Summer Institutes 2003**

The Montana State Library announced two new Gates Summer Institutes for 2003. Funding for this training comes from a Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Training Program Grant for State Libraries. This year, one institute is planned for the western part of the state - June 24-25 in Helena on the Carroll College campus - and one for the eastern region - August 12-13 on the MSU-Billings campus. As stipulated by the Gates Foundation, this training is designed for public library directors and staff to promote and enhance public access to technology resources.

### **Missoula Public Library to Host Smithsonian Exhibit**

"Listening to the Prairie: Farming in Nature's Image" is the title of a traveling exhibit Missoula Public Library will be hosting this summer July 3 - August 14. Missoula Public is one of only 20 libraries in the United States selected to host this exhibition. The exhibit was organized by the Smithsonian's Forces of Change program, and the tour is coordinated by the American Library Association Public Programs Office. "Listening to the Prairie" explores the history of the vast grasslands of the North American Prairie.

### **Festival of the Book**

The fourth annual Montana Festival of the Book will be held September 18-20 in Missoula. As in past years, the festival will feature scores of the region's writers in a variety of readings, panels, exhibits, demonstrations, a literary contest, signings, entertainment, receptions, and satellite events. Authors already confirmed include Leif Enger, James Lee Burke (and his daughter Alafar Burke whose first novel will be published this summer), David Quammen, Ron Carlson, Stephanie Ambrose Tubbs, William Kittridge, Annick Smith, Robert Wrigley, Kim Barnes, Bharti Kirchner, Doug and Andrea Peacock, Diane Smith, Guy Vanderhaeghe, and Larry Watson.