

ST-4

Mountain Plains Library Association Report October 2004
Submitted by Bridgett Johnson, MPLA State Representative

MT State Librarian, Karen Strege, resigned from the MT State Library and is going into private consulting with Mary Bushing. Darlene Staffeldt has been appointed as the new Montana State Librarian. Karen has done an excellent job bringing training, technology and innovation to Montana Libraries, she will be greatly missed. Darlene has been instrumental in most of these projects so she will continue to be a great asset to our libraries.

The Montana Library Association passed a motion to: "direct MPLA and PNLA representatives from MLA to make a budget request of \$1,000 each year to cover costs of Montana librarians attending a leadership institute held by the sponsoring associations" and that "funds allocated to MPLA and PNLA leadership retreat attendees be limited to no more than \$500 per person."

Ask a Montana Librarian Using Question Point software, Montana librarians are answering questions daily both through email and with chat in a virtual reference project.

The Montana Shared Catalog project now has 56 libraries of various types 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. The libraries have formed a consortium to run the MSC through its membership.

Trustee Training: Workshops for public library trustees and directors are planned for this fall in two locations. Jeanne Goodrich, an independent consultant specializing in public library management from Portland, is presenting the workshop, entitled, Big Sky, Great Libraries, A Library Advocacy Workshop. 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.

Six Montana residents are pursuing graduate library degrees this fall with financial assistance from the Professional Education and Employment for Librarians (PEEL) scholarship program. The Montana State Library Commission granted the following scholarships: Honore Bray (Anaconda) will be attending the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (\$20,000), Kathryn Holt (Havre) - Drexel University (\$18,000), Judith Brown McKenna (Bozeman) - Texas Woman's University (\$18,000), Lauren McMullen (Big Timber) - University of North Texas (\$13,000), Frederick Noel (Polson) - University of North Texas (\$15,400), and Anne James (Kalispell) - The College of St. Catherine (\$18,000). The PEEL Advisory Committee is pleased to announce that at least one \$15,000 scholarship will be available next year as well. Montana's PEEL project is funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)'s Recruiting and Educating Librarians for the 21st Century grant program.