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Mountain Plains Board Report  
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North Dakota

Iris Dockter Swedlund was awarded NDLA's 2003 Librarian of the Year at the state conference in Bismarck this past September. She promotes the love of reading to second and third generations at the Velva (ND) School and Public Library. During her 34 years in the library profession, she has secured funds to build a new library despite rural economic hardships, made sure that the Velva library has up to date technology, and through her years of experience, has understood the conditions that effect delivery of library service to her small community. Iris has vigorously promoted library service through local and state-wide media and lobbied for effective legislation during the state session. Congratulations, Iris!

For most of us, "library school" conjures up images of earning an MLS degree. But for many Mandan students, "library school" means spending out-of-school suspension time at the Mandan Public Library, which provides a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere ideal of tutoring and learning. The Mandan Police Department's Youth Services Division started the grant-funded program a year ago. The focus is on keeping students caught up on their homework and not rewarding them for bad behavior. Instead of sitting home and doing nothing, students who receive out-of-school suspension are doing schoolwork with tutors. Although there are still some bugs to work out, teachers, parents, library staff, and students have been receptive and supportive.

Big things are on the horizon at the Dickinson Public Library with plans to create a 13,000 square foot addition. The proposed addition will feature open spaces suitable for a variety of uses, including more space for materials that are currently in storage, informal seating areas, technology areas, an expanded staff work space, a Friends of the Library bookstore, a small coffee shop, and garage space for the bookmobile. The Library Foundation plans to fund the project with endowment funds.

The new Lake Region Public Library opened its doors on December 23 after being closed for about a month for the big move to the new facility. Director Jim Chattin says the new Carnegie Library furnishings and other needs were made possible by contributions from many local organizations.

The Fargo Public Library and Job Service of North Dakota have teamed up to offer a popular series of free computer classes for adults. Job Service provides instructors to teach three-hour classes in the library's computer lab. Classes are geared toward new computer users and cover computer terminology, basic commands, mouse maneuvers and more. The partnership since August has proved successful.

Beginning computer class instruction of the online catalog, subscription databases, internet searching, and email usage has been conducted at the Minot Public Library two days a week since last summer. Director Jerry Kaup announced that the library has been awarded a \$14,900 grant for a computer lab that will aid in the instruction. A classroom setting will enhance the program and aid the students in more effective learning. Plans are being made to have the lab in place by February class time.

A first-ever teen Open Mic Night and Poetry Slam was hosted by the Fargo Public Library in late October. The slam was held in conjunction with the library's Teen Read Week celebration. The library also teamed up with local poet Kevin Zepper to offer a Performance Poetry Workshop for teens. Three dozen people attended the event.

The Valley City Barnes County Public Library officially celebrated its 100th anniversary with an open house and tours on Sunday, October 5. The library got its start with the Tuesday Club formed an alliance to build a public library. The library fund began with 10 cents in April 1898. The library building is listed in the National Historic Register.

Al Peterson, Head of Public Services and Training at the North Dakota State Library, and Jeanne Narum, Circulation Supervisor at Minot Public Library, were selected to attend the MPLA Leadership Institute at Ghost

Ranch, New Mexico in November. In cooperation with EBSCO Information Services, and MPLA, NDLA awarded Peterson and Narum funding to attend through the Mike Jaugstetter Leadership Grant Fund.

Congratulations to Rhonda Schwartz, Assistant Director and Head of Public Services at Thormodsgard Law Library, who recently completed her doctoral degree in Educational Leadership with an emphasis on higher education at UND. She teaches Advanced Legal Research at the School of Law.

North Dakotans Kathy Vander Vorst, Bismarck Public Library, Charlene Weis, United Tribes Technical College Library, and Kelly Steckler, Mandan Public Library received MLS degrees from the University of North Texas School of Library and Information Sciences. They were the second cohort to graduate from the distance education program which provides structure and community.

The ODIN (Online Dakota Information Network) migration to new library system software from Ex Libris USA Inc. called ALEPH is well underway. In late October the ODIN staff began the process of contacting all ODIN libraries to begin work on conversion. Planning for training ODIN libraries is beginning and user groups can expect to play an important role in preparing for training in the use of ODIN's ALEPH software. Training should start early in 2004 and the actual change from using the current PALS system to using the new ALEPH software is scheduled to happen in July 2004.