

Western Massachusetts Regional Library System

WRapper Newsletter

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WMRLS Grand Opening

by John Ramsay, Administrator, WMRLS

Friday the 13th didn't deter a great turnout for the Grand Opening of the new WMRLS Headquarters in Whately. Over 150 people participated in this event that celebrated WMRLS' proud traditions, its current services, and its future directions. It was also an opportunity to showcase how libraries of all types are working together to offer wonderful services.

WMRLS President Dianne Ryan began the day by welcoming everyone and noting that this event was not so much about a building but what it represents. She introduced Charlemont author William MacLeish, son of former Librarian of Congress Archibald MacLeish, who read documents recalling his father's crucial role in 1948, when he invited representatives from neighboring libraries to his home to consider ways to work together, to centralize some services, to obtain better discounts, and to avoid duplications of effort and expenditure. This meeting marked the start of the regional library system movement in Massachusetts. [Bill's speech is available online— <http://www.wmrls.org/macleish.html>]

This linking of WMRLS' past and present was further bolstered by the presence of Frank Taplin, our first Regional Administrator; Bruce Baker, who served as Administrator for 19 years; and current Regional Administrator, John Ramsay.

John Ramsay expressed WMRLS' appreciation to the many benefactors who helped make the new building possible, including: The Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts (represented by Nancy Reiche, Vice President for Programs) that contributed \$60,000 toward construction and two subsequent grants for bookmobile materials totaling \$25,000; the Frank Stanley Beveridge Foundation that donated \$25,000 to this project; Donna Augustus, retired WMRLS Operations Manager, who was a driving force behind the construction project; the Friends of WMRLS who conducted a shower to obtain donations for the building, and also presented a \$5,000 check toward bookmobile materials; the WMRLS Building Committee: Chair, Mark Contois, Richard Callaghan, Connie Clancy, Sally Caldwell, Tamson Ely, Alison Ernst, and Donna Guerin; WMRLS staff and all library supporters across western Massachusetts.

The day also featured a ribbon-cutting ceremony and displays of collaborations and award-winning services by WMRLS member libraries, including Mount Holyoke College, PALS (Palmer Affiliated Library Systems), Franklin Medical Center, Berkshire Legislative Breakfast Letters on Libraries, and Granby Public Library's "Gnomes Across Massachusetts" project.

A slide show developed by WMRLS staff depicted the building project from start to finish. Finally, wonderful refreshments and decorations were provided by WMRLS staff, with funds provided by the Friends of WMRLS.

A fine day was had by all. WMRLS looks forward to serving its member libraries for many years to come from this new accessible and flexible facility, and encourages member librarians to come visit for meetings and workshops.

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Massachusetts Library Association Reflections

by Anna Popp, Secretary, West Springfield Public Library

Looking back, I really can't tell you what I thought I would get out of going to the Massachusetts Library Association (MLA) Annual Conference. Networking in anticipation of my graduate degree? Insightful leads into the goings-ons of the library profession? Free stuff from the exhibit hall? Whatever I thought I would leave with...I came away with something else entirely.

The past few years' transition from PR professional to earning an MLS has been terribly challenging. Approaching my last semester of classes, I had come to question whether this change had been a wise decision. For three years I had been supporting a household and an education on the lean wages of a non-professional library position. Overqualified for the position when I accepted it, two years of MLS studies had not helped me grow more contented with the responsibilities of my job. During breakout sessions at MLA, and conversations with people I met, I came to realize that the anxieties I have about my future career are the same worries shared by library workers for decades. Attending MLA helped to alleviate my concerns. If I were making a mistake with this career change, I came to realize, I was in very good company.

Attending MLA also provided me with insight into the frame of mind of experienced library professionals. In one breakout session discussing the role of videos and DVDs in the library collection, a discussion arose questioning the need to purchase VHS formats. Some participants maintained a need to continue to purchase new titles in VHS. During this conversation, a library director contested the need for VHS purchasing. Of the opinion that the prices of DVD players have dropped significantly, he felt that \$40 is affordable enough for patrons to purchase one. I found myself wondering: For whom is \$40 affordable? The single mother of three surviving on welfare? Or the professional earning in excess of \$50,000? When I am no longer a fresh-faced graduate, but have been toiling in the public sector for a time, will I lose sight of the user community I serve? During the course of my studies, the moral prerogative to offer resources to patrons, regardless of staff preferences or beliefs, had been discussed ad infinitum. However, the subtle means by which this responsibility can be breached was not fully explored. This specific event also brought to mind the value of MLA to seasoned professionals. The benefits of the discussions and sharing of opinions found in the class environment can be replaced by attendance at functions such as MLA.

What I experienced at MLA provided me with insight into the person inside the Librarian. More than the illumination of the profession that I receive from my formal studies, the MLA Annual Conference offered me an opportunity to observe the field from a practical perspective. Hopes, goals, aspirations and flaws: MLA reminded me that being a librarian is not about the librarian. It's about being a part of the foundation of The Library.

Editor's Note: Congratulations to Anna who attended the MLA Annual Conference as a recipient of one of ten Kay Bader Scholarships

WMRLS extends congratulations to each of the following member libraries that were recognized for excellence in library public relations at the recent MLA Conference:

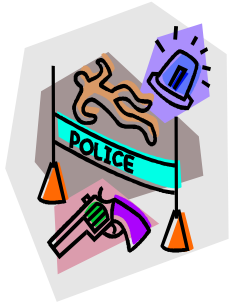
**Agawam Public Library | Jones Library, Amherst | Williston Library, Easthampton
Lee Library Association | Palmer Public Library | Westfield Athenaeum
Wilbraham Public Library | Milne Public Library, Williamstown**

*Visit the MLA website for complete information on the 2005 Library Public Relations Contest :
<http://www.masslib.org>*

A Library Display That Crosses The Line

by Jane Lyle-Jaworski, Dickinson Memorial Library, Northfield

We always find March a challenging month for display ideas, though I did enjoy the year we did the wind theme -- big kite overhead, all titles with reference to wind except one, when Breeze was the author. This year we felt we needed to focus on male patrons and we chose a police theme, gathered many books, audios, and videos and displayed them. What did this display need? Crime Scene tape! Our local police chief gave us a length and we posted it around the display. This has been the most noticed display we have ever put up! And so many patrons are ardent fans of police stories, the items have flown off the shelves to those who have been brave enough to cross the police line!



Spring Literacy Reading Series

by Janice Dore, Director of Library/Media Services, Frontier Regional School, Deerfield

A collaborative effort among the public libraries of Conway, Deerfield, Sunderland, and Whately and the Frontier Regional School Library provided a Spring Literacy Reading Series for the spring semester students in grades 9 and 10. Funded by the Cultural Councils of these four towns, five authors of varied genre were invited to read and to present workshops to these students and guests from the community. In addition, students were asked to read a work of one local author of their choosing and represent that work in a format suitable to include in a collection of Connecticut Valley Authors 2005.

The sharing of ideas and materials, advertising, and joint planning provided an opportunity to come together to create a product of which we are justifiably proud.

"...having these speakers was a great experience. I didn't know about any of these local authors.

It's nice to be read stories by someone, instead of just reading them yourself. I also liked the workshops because they help you to get to know the authors better and give you ideas and tips on becoming a good writer." –

Frontier student – grade 9

What's Buzzin' At The Agawam Public Library

by Joanne Gentry, Reference Librarian, Agawam Public Library

Each spring, the Agawam Pageturners Book Discussion Group goes on a field trip related to one of the books we discussed during the year. After reading **The Secret Life of Bees** by Sue Monk Kidd, our interest was so piqued in bees and beekeeping, 13 of us toured South Deerfield's beautiful Warm Colors Apiary Farm on June 1 to learn more about honeybees, the health benefits of honey, and about raising bees and producing honey. We also sampled their six different types of honey, and browsed through other products including beeswax candles, skin and lip creams, and bee pollen. Besides being informative and enjoyable, this trip gave us new insights to the book.



Free High-Speed Wireless Web Access at Holyoke Public Library

by Maria G. Pagan, Director, Holyoke Public Library

Through technical support provided by Holyoke Gas & Electric, Hi-Speed Wireless Internet access is now available at Holyoke Public Library. Unlike most other "Wi-Fi" (for "wireless fidelity") hotspots, the Library's access point is entirely free to the public. Patrons bringing in their battery-operated wireless-equipped laptops now have at their fingertips access to the Internet in addition to the entire range of full-text databases normally accessible from the Library's own computers, via the Library's homepage. The library's high-speed wireless connection is available at all times the library is open.

Medical Library Association Training At WMRLS

by Michelle Eberle, National Network of Libraries of Medicine/New England Region

WMRLS is now offering a series of Medical Library Association (MLA) continuing education workshops that qualify librarians to apply for the Consumer Health Information Specialization (CHIS). To qualify for the credential, librarians must earn at least 12 MLA credits. The credential is great for your resume and will help you gain specialized knowledge about consumer health librarianship. Information on the specifics of credentialing is available at: <http://mlanet.org/education/chc/index.html>.

Michelle Eberle, Consumer Health Information Coordinator, National Network of Libraries of Medicine/New England Region is the workshop instructor for each of the upcoming MLA computerlab training sessions at WMRLS:

- **No Comprendre: Spanish Health Information for English Speaking Librarians** - Tuesday, July 19
- **Beyond An Apple A Day** - Thursday, September 8
- **Caring for the Mind** - Thursday, October 6
- **RX For Librarians** – Tuesday, November 15

Complete information and registration instructions are available on the WMRLS Continuing Education Workshop Website - <http://www.wmrls.org/ce/index.html> Don't miss out on this unique opportunity for Medical Library Association accredited training at WMRLS!

WMRLS Bookmobile And Delivery Updates

by WMRLS Staff

- Thank you to the **Friends of WMRLS** for the recent check for \$5000 to buy materials for the bookmobile collection. We appreciate it so much!
- Though the **bookmobile collection** has been minimally funded for the last few years, the bookmobile circulated 105,652 items to small libraries in 2004, which has a value of \$3,169,560 to our members!
- If you think you are busier than ever, you probably are. The **regional delivery service** handled 29,191 items during the week of March 21-25, which means our member libraries are sharing 1,517,932 items a year using WMRLS delivery! WMRLS vehicles make 273 library stops a week on 19 separate delivery routes.
- **Jeff Chang**, who has been driving our delivery vans on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays since 2003, will be leaving WMRLS at the end of June. Jeff has provided a sense of humor and a gentle, steady influence even on the busiest delivery days. We will miss him, and wish him all the best!

Friends Of WMRLS Shower

by Rebecca Frank, President, Friends of WMRLS



THANK YOU to everyone who generously donated to the WMRLS "shower" fundraiser for the new building in Whately. To date, we've raised over \$3000 for furnishings, landscaping, and finishing touches -- and donations are still arriving! The Friends of WMRLS would like to extend a special thank you to the WMRLS shower committee for their organizing help: Pat Bombardier, Alberta Booth, Lynn Eaton, Bonnie Isman, and Kathy Lanza.

Would you like to purchase an item for the new building? Please contact Rebecca Frank for information: re.frank@gmail.com. Thank you!

 ★ Visit the Friends of WMRLS website ★
 ★ <http://www.wmrls.org/friends> ★
 ★ *****

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*Helping Libraries Do More For You Since
1961*



**GOING
places**
@ your library

101 WMRLS member libraries are participating in this year's
Massachusetts Regional Library Systems Statewide Summer Reading Program.
Visit our WMRLS Summer Reading Program Web Portal for
complete information ~ <http://www.wmrls.org/sum/>

WRapper is distributed to our entire mailing list which includes library directors, trustees, and legislators.
Please route this newsletter to your library staff. WRapper is also published on the WMRLS website—
<http://www.wmrls.org/wrapper/>

WRapper: the newsletter of the Western Massachusetts Regional Library System is published six times yearly. The deadline for the next issue of WRapper is August 10, 2005. Please note that submissions may need to be edited for space reasons. Articles may not fit in the issue for which they were submitted. WRapper Editorial Staff will notify you if publication of your article must be delayed. Please send submissions online at <http://surveys.wmrls.org/wrapperseptember2005>

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