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BIG SKY LIBRARIES

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Governor Appoints Three New MSL Commissioners

Story by Anastasia Burton; photos by Duane Lund

Governor Judy Martz appointed three new members to the Montana State Library Commission in May. The new members replace two departing commissioners whose terms expired and one who moved out of state.

Donald Allen of Billings has served as Chair of the Parmly Billings Library Board for the past two years, and has been a member of Board for the last five years. Prior to his involvement on the Parmly Billings Library Board, Mr. Allen was President of the Parmly Billings Library Foundation; he has been a member of that organization since 1994. Mr. Allen, a CPA, replaces David Johnson of Billings, whose term on the MSL Commission expired this month.



Donald Allen



Toni Broadbent

Helena businesswoman **Toni Broadbent** serves on several local and state organizations. Ms. Broadbent has had a life-long interest in libraries and the arts, and looks forward to helping the Commission develop successful strategies for the State Library's internal reorganization later this year. Ms. Broadbent replaces Rosemary Garvey of Butte, whose term on the MSL Commission expired this month.

Caroline Bitz of Box Elder served as a trustee/board member of the Havre-Hill County Library from 1990 - 2000. From 1998 - 2000, Ms. Bitz served as Chair of the Pathfinder Federation region of the Montana Federation of Libraries. Ms. Bitz, a rancher, replaces Ralph Atchley of Malta, who resigned from the Commission after accepting a position in Wyoming.



Caroline Bitz

"Libraries are among the most valuable resources local communities offer their citizens," said Governor Martz. "Each of the new commissioners has shown a strong interest in supporting the excellent work of Montana's library professionals. Their expertise and enthusiasm will be great assets as our libraries work toward meeting the changing information needs of a new Montana."

The seven-member State Library Commission establishes policies and procedures for the Montana State Library and also gives assistance and advice to all public libraries in Montana. Members of the State Library Commission also include: Chair Al Randall, Troy; and Gail Staffanson, Sidney; who are appointed by the Governor; as well as Bruce Morton, appointed by the Commissioner of Higher Education; and Linda McCulloch, Superintendent of Public Instruction.

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Date Event

July 4	Independence Day
July 25	NRIS Seminar-Helena
August 13	MSL Commission Meeting-Helena
August 22	NRIS Seminar-Helena



Karen Strege, State Librarian

A Message from the State Librarian

Montana Digital Library Planning Underway

What is the Montana State Digital Library (MSdL)? Approved by the MSL Commission, the Governor, and the Legislature, the MSdL

is the result of a merger of our Natural Resource Information System (NRIS) and our Library and Information Services Department at the State Library. The merger was spurred by the realization that two of MSL's major departments were fundamentally in the same business ~ delivering information to clients, primarily, but not exclusively, in electronic formats. And that, if merged, the two departments could build new services based on the expertise of a unified department staff.

So what will the MSdL look like? For the first year, we will move slowly into the merger during a "getting to know you" period, in which staff will discover each other's skills through joint projects, such as designing MSdL web pages. These projects will be designed to use the unique strengths of database administrators, GIS analysts, and librarians. The goal will be richer, easier to use information resources available via the Web for our patrons. While adopting new projects, we will continue to build and promote the use of our unique collection of State publications and carry on our award-winning distribution of natural resource information.

As a part of the transition, we are writing a new mission statement, identifying shared values and common visions. One possible mission statement under consideration is: "The MSdL is a reliable, easily accessible, and comprehensive source for Montana-related information produced by government and related information needed by Montana's

decision-makers and citizens."

The merged departments will keep their own goals and objectives; but again, over time, will develop new ones together. We know that transitions can be difficult and unsettling, but also believe that change can lead to creative ideas and a renewal of commitments.

One certainty is that our focus on our clients will not change. In fact, we are changing because users' needs have changed. Most of our clients want high-quality, easy-to-find and use information via the Web. Many State employees who use the State Library want information available to them at their desktops. We have been happy to oblige. Our clients are pleased and heavily use our electronic services. For example, in April, NRIS Web pages received an average of 1,945 sessions per day, average length 13.5 minutes...almost 438 hours of cumulative use per day. That equates to 6,655 continuous "days" of use per calendar year!

Of course, some administrative changes were necessary to best manage the merged program. Jim Hill, the current director of NRIS, will be the director of the MSdL. Darlene Staffeldt, former director of the Library and Information Services Department, will continue to adeptly manage the Library Development Department, which includes the Montana Library Network and the Talking Book Library. We also are investigating the use of our office space in the hope that MSdL staff can work in proximity and that all staff can have sufficient and pleasant work areas.

What is the Montana State Digital Library? That question might best be answered by watching our evolution over the next year. Right now, we are somewhere between dream and reality, but confident that our new department will mean better service to our clients.

Legislative Wrap-Up

By Karen Strege

The difficult nature of the 2003 legislative session is well known. Legislators struggled with each other and interested parties as they made difficult choices to balance the State's budget.

MSL's budget hearing was scheduled for the second day of committee meetings, only one day after the House rolled back starting budgets to the 2000 base budget. This early hearing was a disadvantage, as legislators were just beginning to understand the rollback implications. After the committee closed its hearing in February, they had backfilled MSL's general fund reduction with coal severance tax revenues, leaving MSL about 10% in reductions for the 2004-2005 period.

The agency and the Montana Library Association communicated legislative decisions and their possible impacts to the library community without being overly reactive or exaggerating. The library community responded by contacting legislators when requested.

An action not included in the list of bills below was a proposed amendment to HB2, offered by Senator Tom Zook (R) of Miles City. This amendment would have eliminated MSL's NRIS program. Apparently, Senator Zook disagreed with the necessity of Natural Heritage Program studies, such as studying the use of

highway bridges by bat colonies, which was funded by the Montana

Department of Transportation. Fortunately, Senator Zook changed his amendment to require that NRIS report to the interim Legislative Finance Committee during the next two years. We look forward to doing so. This action took place in the Senate Finance and Claims Committee during the first week of April.

The reversion to the 2000 base, which meant a 27% reduction in all funds to the agency, the various bills that would have halved or eliminated the coal severance tax for the agency, along with declining revenue projections, combined to make a very stressful session for all involved. The dynamics of the session required careful monitoring and much impromptu strategizing.

Perhaps because of concern with the budget, only one bill was introduced that affected library law. For the second session, a legislator attempted to modify the Library Records Confidentiality Act to allow parents to view their children's library records. Fortunately, our hearing was in front of the State Administration Committee, whose members did not understand the need for such legislation and tabled the bill.

Budget Impacts	2004	2005		2004	2005
Reductions in grants & programs for libraries			Reductions in MSL operations		
Federation support	-79,217	-79,217	Two FTE	-53,162	-53,070
Interlibrary loan reimbursement	-127,000	-127,000	Materials	-44,152	-44,152
Per capita/per square mile	-12,675	-7,282	Administration	-10,081	-10,081
Potential budget for grants & programs for libraries			NRIS/Heritage	-37,500	-37,500
Federation support	100,000	100,000			
Interlibrary loan reimbursements	172,635	172,635			
Per capita/per square mile	102,831	108,206			
Periodical database project	219,000	219,000			

Bills of interest during the 2003 Legislative Session:

HB 177, which would have reduced our share of the coal severance tax by half, was tabled in Appropriations on March 12.

HB 491, which would have made TSEP monies available to fund natural resource information projects at MSL, was tabled in Appropriations on February 17.

HB 593, which would have revised coal severance

tax allocations by earmarking part of the shared accounts to "coal" counties, was tabled in Appropriations on March 26.

HB 694, which would have changed Library Records Confidentially Law, missed the transmittal deadline.

Senator Walter McNutt (R)- Sidney, sponsor of SB 142, withdrew the bill, which would have changed the public record access law.

TBL Installs Digital Recording System

Story and photo by Christie Briggs

On April 22, the Montana Talking Book Library became the first regional library in the nation to install a low complexity mastering (LCM) digital audio recording system in its Helena recording studio.

This system, designed and developed by the National Library Service (NLS) audio production staff, meets their requirements for digital recordings. The greatest benefit we have found is the superb sound quality the system produces. The finished format for patrons will continue to be copied to cassette for the next several years until NLS reaches a final decision for patron listening format. The LCM is a remarkable system that prepares the Montana Talking Book Library recording studio for whatever is chosen for the final format. The purchase of this system was made possible through donations from dedicated patrons and their families.

This is the second month of full production. Staff and volunteers are impressed with the LCM and volunteer monitors, narrators, and reviewers are having fun operating the system. Recording Studio Director Diane Gunderson performed most of the training, with the assistance of volunteers Phyllis Herbert, Lea Blunn, and Giles Walker. Diane is impressed by how quickly and easily the staff and volunteers and have learned the LCM system.

The LCM offers many more options in the recording process than the previous analog system. This includes



TBL's first digital audio book has been completed. "Six Gun Syndicate" by Norman Fox was narrated by John Holbrook (above) and monitored by Ed Canty. After a final review, the book will be available to patrons.

such audio text functions as editing, adding, deleting, marking, indexing and maneuvering throughout entire book files. The narrator now has the benefit of hearing a section of the previous recording session to get a flavor for the sound levels and rhythm in order to continue with a seamless weekly recording. It saves time and work, and we thank Bill West, National Library Service Audio Production Specialist, for his expertise and guidance.

Montana Represented During National Library Legislative Day

Story by Darlene Staffeldt; photo by Al Randall

Four members of Montana's library delegation: Bernadine Abbott Hoduski, Lois Fitzpatrick, Darlene Staffeldt, and Debbie Schlesinger meet with Amy Astin, Legislative Assistant for Congressman Denny Rehberg.



A group of Montana librarians joined hundreds of their colleagues on Capitol Hill last month to encourage congressional support of our nation's libraries.

Montana's concerns were relayed by group leader Al Randall of Troy, Chair of the Montana State Library Commission; Lois Fitzpatrick of Carroll College, Helena; Bernadine Abbott Hoduski, Chair of the American Library Association (ALA) Committee on Legislation, Helena; Debbie Schlesinger, Director of Lewis and Clark Public Library, Helena; and Darlene Staffeldt, Director of Statewide Library Resources at the Montana State Library in Helena.

Members of Montana's group met with legislative assistants from the offices of Representative Denny Rehberg and Senators Max Baucus and

Conrad Burns. Each staffer made a commitment to monitor future legislation for the interests of Montana's libraries

The group also attended informational sessions on a variety of issues, including: The Library Services and Technology Act, the Improving Literacy Through School Libraries Program, E-rate telecommunications discounts, copyright laws in the digital age, and protection of the freedom to read.

Montana's delegation also attended a reception for the launch of WebJunction, an on-line community dedicated to public access computing. Many library-related groups are in support of using technology as a tangible way to enhance and improve the lives of individuals.

For more information about National Library Legislative Day, visit ALA's Web site at www.ala.org.

Topofinder II Part of a New Breed of Web Mapping

By Jon Nehring

The Montana State Library has provided maps and data through Web browser-based applications for several years. While those applications have been useful and have gone a long way toward sharing information, they have been limited. Web browsers and HTML were never intended to provide the kind of rich, graphical experience that users expect from desktop applications.

MSL and many users have always hoped for applications that were more like the tools we use on our own computers to work with this information. Users wanted to be able to navigate through maps, select objects and even draw on them - all in ways similar to those used in ArcView and other GIS software. Topofinder II is one of the first of a new generation of applications that allow you to do just that.

You can toggle between topographic maps or black and white aerial photography of Montana. Two other layers show highways and township and range. Topofinder II also has several search tools. If you want to find all the arches in Montana, there's a simple search for that. It's also easy to find a single topo quad by name. High-resolution topos can be selected and downloaded or you can print the current view from within the browser.

Topofinder II and its underlying technology are continually being enhanced. We've gotten good suggestions from users and a few notions of our own that will be rolled

into this and other applications. Some of them include allowing users to upload GPS waypoint files to view them or to create a waypoint file that can be downloaded for use with a GPS. We're also working on more powerful queries, along the lines of "Select only the topos that overlap I-15 in Beaverhead County."

Give Topofinder II a try and let us know what you think. There's a handy feedback link to send e-mail. The application will only run in Windows Internet Explorer and requires a download of Adobe's SVG Viewer plug-in (similar to Acrobat Reader). The best place to start is

<http://nris.state.mt.us/topofinder2/topofinderIntro.htm>.



Fall Workshop Planned for September

By Sue Jackson

Montana State Library's fifth annual Fall Workshop will be held in Lewistown at the Yogo Inn. Many librarians have requested that we take this two-day event back to the center of the state, so we decided to return to the site where it all started in 1999.

Dates for this year's Fall Workshop are Friday and Saturday, September 26-27. The workshop is open to all Montana librarians and trustees and there is no registration fee. Sessions and presenters are still being

finalized, but topics being considered now include virtual reference, using the statewide periodical database, writing library policies, contracting for and evaluating technical support, and details on the new statewide library marketing campaign.

Registration materials will be available this summer. For more information, contact Sue Jackson (406) 444-5350 or sujackson@state.mt.us.

New Gates Summer Institute Announced

By Sue Jackson

The Montana State Library is excited to announce two new Gates Summer Institutes for 2003. 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 in Billings on the MSU-B 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. This objective will be accomplished in two ways: First, specialists in using resources related to specific subject areas - medicine, genealogy, law, business, employment, etc. - will

provide librarians with hands-on experience locating valuable electronic materials on these subjects. Second, librarians will learn how to plan successful training programs and use proven adult education techniques so they can return to their communities and teach patrons how to utilize subject-related electronic resources on their own.

Funding for this training comes from a Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Training Program Grant for State Libraries. For more information, visit the MSL Web site: <http://msl.state.mt.us/1dd/Gates/2003GatesSI.pdf> or contact Sue Jackson at (406) 444-5350 or sujackson@state.mt.us.



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