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Date Event

May is National Get Caught Reading Month

May 2-9	National Reading is Fun Week
May 11-12	OCLC Training - MSU Bozeman
May 21	NRIS Seminar - Helena
May 25-17	OCLC Training - MSU Bozeman
June 7-11	Summer Institute - MSU Bozeman
June 9	Commission Meeting - Helena
June 18	NRIS Seminar - Helena

For more details: http://msl.state.mt.us/calendar.html

BIG SKY LIBRARIES

Number 87 April/May, 2004

Gates Staying Connected Grant Monies Awarded

By Sue Jackson, MSL Federal Grants/Continuing Education Consultant

The Montana State Library received 60 applications from public and branch libraries for the Gates Staying Connected Grant Program. This program, which is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, is designed to help public libraries purchase new public access computer equipment and fund Internet connectivity upgrades.

The applications received, which requested nearly $280,000 for projects at 67 libraries, were screened by four members of the Networking Task Force. The review committee members were: Heidi Sue Adams, Kalispell Regional Medical Center (representing special libraries); Mary Anne Hansen, Montana State University (representing academic libraries); Lyn McKinney, Billings Senior High School (representing school libraries); and Karen Strege, Montana State Library (representing public libraries).

The committee recommended funding a total amount of $171,370 for 57 libraries, including five connectivity upgrades and a total of 115 new computers – 107 to replace outdated equipment and eight to place additional public access computers in libraries. The recommendation was presented to the State Library Commission at its April meeting. Commissioners approved the following funding to:

Anaconda	$10,035	Froid	$2,371	St. Regis	$1,701
Baker	$1,331	Hamilton	$2,340	Scobey	$1,845
Belgrade	$1,139	Harlowton	$2,700	Sheridan	$3,123
Belt	$2,538	Havre	$5,408	Sidney	$2,943
Broadus	$2,250	Hot Springs	$2,932	Stanford	$3,550
Butte	$3,305	Joliet	$2,952	Stevensville	$932
Cascade	$2,021	Jordan	$2,895	Superior	$1,588
Chester	$3,143	Lewistown	$7,092	Thompson Falls	$1,800
Choteau	$3,337	Malta	$3,047	Three Forks	$2,700
Conrad	$3,730	Manhattan	$900	Troy	$4,275
Culbertson	$1,431	Missoula +		Twin Bridges	$1,800
Cut Bank + Browning		2 branches	$8,570	Valier	$3,019
Branch	$12,418	Philipsburg	$1,620	West Yellowstone	$2,115
Darby	$7,796	Plains	$3,556	White Sulphur	
Deer Lodge	$1,273	Plentywood	$2,776	Springs	$5,422
Denton	$2,679	Polson	$3,451	Whitehall	$1,800
Dillon	$3,880	Poplar	$2,616	Wibaux	$3,487
Dutton	$1,044	Ronan	$1,242	Winnett	$1,341
Forsyth	$3,333	Roundup	$1,176	Wolf Point	$3,602

MSL Commissioners recommended holding a balance of $2,350 in the event that unexpected expenses arise. Commissioners also recommended Big Timber as the first alternate project to be funded if money becomes available.

For more information about the Gates grants, contact Sue Jackson (sujackson@state.mt.us or 1-800-338-5087) at MSL.

A Message from the State Librarian

Karen Strege, Ph.D.

As most of you know, our Federation funding took a hit during the last legislative session. To look at mitigating the reduction, the MSL Commission asked us to review the federation structure and see if any improvements could be realized by making changes.

To carry out the review, we formed the Federation Futures Task Force, composed of three public library trustees, a member from each of the six federations, the federation coordinators, and an MSL commissioner. During the past seven months, the task force met via conference calls to research and discuss a number of proposals. A majority of the committee agreed upon two ideas:

The first proposal is for MSL to distribute federation funds to member libraries. The plan of service, adopted by the membership, would continue to drive the allocation of state funding, but instead of the federation headquarters library dispersing the funds, the State Library would do so. This change would relieve the accounting duties of the headquarters libraries and encourage the federations to plan their activities at the spring meeting.

The approval process of the plans of service remains the same - the Commission will review the plans at its June meeting. However, the plans will contain a detailed budget sheet which will state which member libraries will receive funding. After the new fiscal year begins, as soon as funds are received, MSL will send the checks to member libraries.

To authorize the changes in procedure, MSdL has changed its administrative rules. A hearing for the change was held April 19.

The second proposal is that the Commission would establish federations. Currently, the Commission only establishes federation boundaries and appoints the headquarters. The establishment of the federation is accomplished through contracts between member libraries and the headquarters library's board of trustees. This proposal would authorize the Commission to establish federations, thereby eliminating the requirements for headquarters libraries and contracts.

In addition, this change would allow the federation coordinator to be, if members wished, a person from any federation library, thereby allowing this leadership role to be shared among members. MSL and the committee hope that many members would consider the position to be an opportunity not only to contribute to the federation, but as a chance to build leadership skills.

This change can only happen if the legislature changes federation law. The Commission decide to make this recommendation to the Governor by April 30.

The Commission and I would like to hear your comments about these proposals. Please feel free to comment either by e-mail or phone.

Summer Reading Program 2004

By Sue Jackson, MSL Federal Grants/Continuing Education Consultant

The 2004 theme for the Collaborative Summer Reading Program many Montana libraries participate in is: "Discover New Trails @ Your Library." Perfect for those of us in Lewis and Clark country!

The 519-page manual created for this year's theme features planning and promotional materials, program and project ideas, lists of resources, and a special chapter devoted to hosting successful YA programs. If your library has not purchased a copy of this year's manual, MSL has two copies of the manual available through interlibrary loan.

For more information, contact Sue Jackson (sujackson@state.mt.us or 1-800-338-5087) at MSL.

Librarian of Congress Dr. James Billington visited the State Library on March 30. Dr. Billington was in Helena to attend the 2004 Youth Heritage Festival, which celebrated the work of teachers and students on Montana Heritage Projects.

While at MSL, Dr. Billington spoke with Montana library workers and supporters. This informal conversation was followed by a reception in his honor, also at MSL. He is pictured here with State Librarian Karen Strege. Photo by Anastasia Burton.

Commission Report: Dangerous Libraries

By Bruce Morton, Montana State Library Commissioner

Bruce Morton

Public libraries and academic libraries are and have always been inherently dangerous places. Something to keep in mind as the 2004 political season and 2005 legislative session approaches.

Libraries themselves do not scare people; what is in them does. Books or film or music scores, records, CDs are packages or delivery systems; the library itself is a delivery system. It is what is in the packages or is being delivered that is dangerous -- and that is ideas or knowledge. History is replete with instances of attempts to squelch independent thought -- i.e., the personal engagement of ideas or knowledge. Decision makers and influence brokers, whether they be clergy, public officials, civic-minded citizens, or parents, usually have become advocates of censorship, in reaction to perceived political incorrectness, religious heresy or blasphemy, disrespect, different taste, poor taste -- or worse -- tastelessness. In this context, thinking for oneself, so long as it conforms to someone else's notion of what is appropriate, usually wins the approbation of the censorious.

We librarians prefer to think of the library as a haven in the storm, a welcoming and nurturing place; libraries are certainly that, too. We are fortunate to live in a society where thinking for oneself is generally viewed as a good thing. For from independent thought is derived inspiration, creativity, invention, and entrepreneurship. From independent thought is also derived challenge, iconoclasm, reform, and rebellion. Should we forgo the former for fear of the latter? Our society's establishment of and support for public libraries suggests not.

Nevertheless, we should understand the apprehension that parents or other members of the community may have about libraries -- they are inherently dangerous. We do not normally think of life in the library as living on the edge, but it is. One never knows when there will be an encounter with the inspirational, the depressing, the comical, the reprehensible, the frightening, the beautiful, the ugly, the exciting, the titillating, or the just plain thought provoking. It is a good thing to aspire to build a collection that will satisfy most and offend some; who constitutes the some and the most will change depending on the topic. Libraries embody and help actualize the notion that in this country we are able and encouraged to think each our own thoughts, read each our own book or view each our own web site of choice.

Folklife Materials Free to Libaries

By Alex Swaney, Montana Arts Council

The Montana Arts Council, a state agency, is pleased to announce three new products from its folklife program for free distribution to Montana's libraries. If you're interested in receiving these products, please send an email to **aswaney@state.mt.us.**

Pat Kennedy/Starr School Singers~OCLC No.: 54117491 compact disc ~ Live recording of Montana Chippewa Cree elder, powwow singer, and composer Pat Kennedy, with biography, Montana powwow history, and twelve of Mr. Kennedy's original songs recorded with singers from Browning, Rocky Boy, and Great Falls at the Last Chance Community Powwow in Helena. Produced with funds from the Challenge America Program of the National Endowment for the Arts. 2003.

Dick and Lisa Barrett /At the Fiddler's Knee~OCLC No.: 51252624 compact disc ~ Texas-style fiddlers Dick and Lisa Barrett, now living in Rapelje, Montana, recorded with their North Dakota apprentices Preston Schmidt and John Owen Lardinois, Jr. Presented here in 29 tracks, this deeply rooted music is intertwined with interviews that illustrate how the fiddle tradition and the master fiddler's life have shaped one another. Produced with funding from the North Dakota Council on the Arts, the Montana Arts Council, and the National Endowment for the Arts. 2002.

Photography, an image of each other, a cross-cultural youth photo program~OCLC No.: 52906563 ~ This 56-page publication of black and white photography and text describes a project carried out by photographer and artist Well-Off-Man in Havre and on the Rocky Boy Reservation. Working with students from both communities, he taught them black and white photography technique through having each group of students document each other's communities. With informative and thoughtful text by art historian Manuela Well-Off-Man, this booklet gives us rare, intimate, and beautiful glimpses into communities and lives not often recorded. Published with support from the Montana Committee for the Humanities, the Montana Arts Council, and the National Endowment for the Arts. 2003

The Montana folklife program is the oldest in the country. Its purposes are: 1) to celebrate arts and artists which are a vital part of Montana's heritages; 2) to support the cultural activities of traditional communities in which such artists flourish; and 3) to make these vibrant heritages available to the wider public. For more information, visit www.art.state.mt.us.

Montana Selects OCLC's Group Catalog

By Bruce Newell, Montana Library Network Director

Montana has selected a new statewide contract option from OCLC that includes unlimited cataloging, unlimited interlibrary loan, a statewide union catalog, and access to WorldCat using OCLC's FirstSearch interface. Next year's $454,422 statewide OCLC contract goes into effect July 1, 2004; the union catalog, upgrading the current Montana Library Network Gateway, will be available in September 2004.

Prices will go up 20 - 29% for the majority of libraries using OCLC's CatExpress and Web ILL services, while still remaining a bargain and significantly below market rate. To the best of our knowledge, these are the lowest prices for OCLC services available anywhere. A 4% annual cost increase, regardless of use, is part of our agreement with OCLC.

Most of Montana's 20 full cataloging libraries will see prices remain about the same or decrease slightly. OCLC charges full cataloging libraries differently, and typically considerably more, than they do copy cataloging libraries. OCLC's audit of full cataloging libraries' access statistics resulted, for most, in reduced costs. As is the case for copy cataloging libraries, full cataloging libraries' costs will increase 4% per year, regardless of use.

Approximately 61% of total contract costs come from full cataloging libraries; copy cataloging libraries contribute about 26%. The Networking Task Force has echoed Montana librarians in recognizing these OCLC services are essential tools. Accordingly, the State Library Commission has budgeted $57,749 of LSTA this year's funds, or about 13% of the statewide contract cost, to help keep libraries' costs affordable.

Your library's enrollment form was mailed mid-April; contact Bruce, Darlene, Bob, Suzanne, or Tracy at the State Library if you have questions.

For more information:

State Library contacts: http://msl.state.mt.us/MSLStaff.htm
Group Catalog: http://www.oclc.org/groupservices/default.htm
FirstSearch: http://www.oclc.org/firstsearch/default.htm
CatExpress: http://www.oclc.org/catexpress/default.htm
ILL Web: http://www.oclc.org/ill/about/features/web/
WorldCat: http://www.oclc.org/worldcat/default.htm

Coming Soon: Fall Workshop 2004

By Sue Jackson, MSL Federal Grants/Continuing Education Consultant

At its March meeting, the Montana State Library Commission approved use of Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant funds for the 6th Annual Fall Workshop. The workshop will be held on September 24 and 25 in Great Falls at the Hampton Inn.

As always, the Fall Workshop will be open to librarians from all types of libraries and there is no registration fee. Training topics will be posted at the State Library web page as soon as the schedule is finalized. Watch Wired-mt for details.

Speaking of OCLC

Bruce Newell, Montana Library Network
Montana State Library

We all knew it was going to happen. Eventually. And it has.

OCLC has announced that June 2005 will be the last edition of LaserCat. I think many of us will miss it, and, at the same time, perhaps breathe a sigh of relief; LaserCat is wonderful, but CatExpress and ILL Web are wonderfuller.

Money-wise, except for training costs, the transition from LaserCat to CatExpress and ILL Web will be a wash for Montana libraries. LaserCat has been included in our statewide contract with OCLC, so LaserCat libraries already have had and will have access to OCLC's CatExpress and ILL Web at no additional cost.

Planning is underway at OCLC to assist Montana LaserCat libraries make a graceful transition to CatExpress and Web ILL; this will likely involve a mixture of live and Web-based instruction. We are starting to plan for next year's training with an eye toward making it an easy transition for Montana's LaserCat-only libraries. LaserCat-only libraries may want to budget some of their training time and money, next fiscal year, toward coming up to snuff with CatExpress (half-a-day class) and Web ILL (day-and-a-half class).

Without question, CatExpress and Web ILL are sharper tools than is LaserCat. CatExpress has a database of 52 million titles, LaserCat has about 5.5 million. Web ILL is considerably faster and easier than paper-based ILL; Web ILL saves libraries time and money, and gets materials into patrons' hands faster than paper-based interlibrary loan.

Still...many of us were working in Montana libraries when LaserCat came and replaced homegrown cataloging with quality copy cataloging tools. We rejoiced in LaserCat's doorway into the world of resource sharing. And, for lots of us, our LaserCat microcomputer was the first PC to darken our doorstep. LaserCat gave us better local catalogs, but most of all, LaserCat made us feel technically savvy and connected, and we'll miss it.

The cooperative spirit that originally brought LaserCat into Montana, and kept it useful, lives on. LaserCat's days are numbered, but Montana libraries are alive, kicking, and more collaborative than ever!

National Conferences Worthwhile for Sidney Book Luster

By Renee Goss, Sidney Public Library Director

"Hi, Renee from Alabama!" I said. And she said, "Hi, Renee from Montana!" as we introduced ourselves. Renee from Alabama asked if Sidney was anywhere near Miles City. Her mother was from Miles City and her dad from Billings and they had attended college in Montana. Thus began the camaraderie of a group of librarians gathered together in Seattle recently by the Gates Foundation to discuss sustainability in rural public access computing.

With an average service population of less than 10,000, 109 library staff and 26 State library staff from 44 states discussed barriers to public access computing. The Gates Foundation is making a shift in its commitment to support public access computing. In the past, it has granted computers to libraries. Now, it will be working to help libraries find ways to keep their computers working, as well as find support and funding to ensure that libraries are able to sustain and grow public access.

State Technology Coordinator Suzanne Reymer and Honore Bray of the Hearst Free Library in Anaconda and I were immersed in brainstorming sessions led by Sandra Nelson. She's a dynamite facilitator who will be leading the Summer Institute in June. Participants shared ideas on how to overcome sustainability barriers and discussed ways our state libraries could better help to support our libraries. What a tremendous opportunity to work alongside colleagues from across the country who are wrestling with similar issues! Take a look at www.webjunction.org to learn more.

Along with the Sustaining workshop, the Gates Foundation sent participants to the Public Library Association (PLA) Conference. I was like a "kid in a candy store" at my first PLA meeting. Getting your picture taken with Elvis, the smell of fresh baked cookies, and trying a key in a treasure chest were some of the enticements to a bazillion vendor's booths. It was a real treat to visit with company reps face-to-face.

Choosing sessions out of the 100 plus workshops was difficult. On top of that, numerous talk tables (forums for small group discussion) were offered each day. From the opening session with Pulitzer-prize winning novelist Anna Quindlen and William H. Gates Senior, to the closing session with poet, writer, and film producer Sherman Alexie, I was mesmerized.

Attending PLA gave me further insight into "the bigger picture" of libraries across the U.S. But it wasn't from attending workshops such as "Marketing for Dollars and Sense," or "It's All About the Customer" or seeing the bazillion vendors. Don't get me wrong -- I gathered a ton of ideas I would like to implement. Yet the conversations and discussions with librarians from New York, Florida, etc. over lunch, coffee, at receptions and at the workshops were priceless.

Presenter Nancy Pearl's explanation of how the title of her book, *Book Lust,* came about sums it up. A publicist made a comment about the way Nancy was holding a book as if she was lusting after it. Large, small, from Philadelphia or Montana, we are all book lusters working to impart a deep desire for books, freedom of information, and knowledge.

Summer Institute 2004 for Public Libraries

By Sue Jackson, MSL Federal Grants/Continuing Education Consultant

Registration materials have been mailed to all public library directors for the 2004 Library Leadership Summer Institute. The Institute is scheduled on the MSU-Bozeman campus for the week of June 7.

Sandra Nelson, nationally known library consultant and author, will be this year's trainer. Sandra is a leader in the development of planning and management tools for public librarians and is the author/co-author of four books published by the American Library Association for the Public Library Association.

An outline syllabus for the Summer Institute is available at the MSL web site: http://msl.state.mt.us/ldd/Training/SummerInstitute/SITrainingOutline.pdf. Deadline for registration is May 3, 2004. Funding for this event is through a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant received from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

For more information, contact Sue Jackson (sujackson@state.mt.us or 1-800-338-5087) at MSL.

PEEL Scholarships and Library Stipends Update

By Sue Jackson, MSL Federal Grants/Continuing Education Consultant

The first phase of Montana State Library's PEEL (Professional Education and Employment for Librarians) grant is nearing completion. The Advisory Committee met on April 7 to review 28 applications for PEEL scholarship funds to attend graduate library school. The pool of applicants was very strong; the Committee had a difficult job narrowing the field.

After discussion and deliberation, the Committee asked that updated information be requested from eight applicants to aid in the process. Because only one of the eight candidates had been notified of acceptance into a library program, the PEEL Committee recommended to the State Library Commission that the final decision on awarding the scholarships be delayed. The Commission approved this recommendation and the announcement of scholarships will be made after the admission status of all the candidates is known, probably in mid-May.

A total of $120,000 is available for scholarships. The Advisory Committee discussed the possibility of reserving some of the scholarship funds for another competitive application process next year, but no decision was reached.

The next phase of the grant is to secure professional employment for some of our new library school graduates. To this end, the PEEL grant will make possible stipends to two libraries to assist with funding a professional level position for two years. All public libraries, public school libraries, and tribal college libraries are eligible to apply for these stipends, which total $60,000. Libraries receiving the stipends will be responsible for 50% of the position's salary and will be expected to make every effort to extend the position beyond the grant period. Application details and materials will be available soon.

For more information, contact Sue Jackson (sujackson@state.mt.us or 1-800-338-5087) at MSL. Or, visit the PEEL A Great Career! @ your library website (http://msl.state.mt.us/greatcareer/index.html). The PEEL grant is funded by the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) "Recruiting and Educating Librarians for the 21st Century" program.

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