



WRapper Newsletter

WMRLS Services are provided through state funds administered by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC)

Broadband Push

by John Ramsay, Administrator, WMRLS

On February 14, an important hearing took place at the State House in front of the Joint Committee on Bonding. At issue was the Governor's Broadband Institute (H.4311), the first serious attempt to address the lack of high speed access, especially in many Western Massachusetts communities.

Speaking on behalf of this proposed \$25 million effort were many legislators from this area, including Senator Ben Downing (Pittsfield) and Representatives Dan Bosley (North Adams), Smitty Pignatelli (Lenox), Denis Guyer (Dalton) and Stephen Kulik (South Deerfield).

WMRLS weighed in on this issue as well, with a letter of support from Regional Administrator John Ramsay. In his written testimony, Ramsay said it is "infuriating to understand how the development of the State's technology infrastructure has left behind so many communities and their taxpayers. Massachusetts, allegedly one of the most high-tech, best-educated states, has permitted, through inactivity or denial, so many communities and businesses to remain out in the cold, unable to compete in today's marketplace, so much of which is dependent on broadband, a "given," except in our area."

WMRLS, out of sheer desperation confronting this situation, has used State and Federal funds administered by the MBLC, along with its own funds and contributions from private sources, to bring high speed Internet access, wireless connections and new computers to 25 libraries that previously had inadequate access.

The hope is that this Broadband effort will move forward and soon start bringing speedy and inexpensive Internet access to Western Massachusetts that is so prevalent elsewhere in the Commonwealth.

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And More!

Plus
WMRLS
MAY
Continuing Education
Calendar

Mass.gov/libraries

Today's Libraries Have Something for Everyone!

Seeking to increase awareness that today's libraries offer everything from Internet access to music, movies, and 24/7 access to online resources, the MBLC is launching a new advertising campaign and website. Visit the MBLC Public Awareness Campaign website for complete information:

<http://mbc.state.ma.us/advisory/public-relations/campaign/index.php>

Delivery Satisfaction Survey Results

by Mary King, Regional Librarian, WMRLS

Libraries love Delivery! The Delivery Satisfaction Survey that 105 libraries responded to in February asked member librarians to rate WMRLS Delivery on 8 standards such as courtesy, accuracy of sorting, communication and reliability. A high majority of ratings were Excellent, most of the remaining were Good, and there was a smattering of the rating Acceptable in the categories of Sorting Accuracy and Sufficiency of Bins Available for delivery.

Librarians commented on the importance of delivery and how well WMRLS staff members provide it. The words “speed and response time to our requests is excellent” are a tribute to drivers and to the Interlibrary Loan staff who place holds for some libraries, fill requests from regional collections, and sort many of the materials that cross into delivery bins. Another librarian gave credit to the Delivery Department for providing “a miracle of effectiveness” day in and day out.

Thirty-three surveys included responses to the question “What would you change if you could improve anything?” Some suggestions:

- More frequent delivery (8 libraries)
- Delivery at a different time (6 libraries)
- More money for delivery/better trucks/more drivers (6 libraries)
- Better consistency in the time of day that libraries receive service (2 libraries)
- Keep audiovisual cases from breaking under the weight of materials---maybe lidded bins? (2 libraries)
- Cover bins in rain and snow to protect materials

At least four libraries commented that they are trying to improve their delivery areas, or designate more staff to do better bundling of materials going to one location, and one small library that’s not in a network would like to share more materials with patrons of other libraries.

The Delivery Department and the WMRLS Resource Sharing Advisory Committee will review the survey responses, and we’ll do all that we can to act on your suggestions. Thank you so much!

End of an Era

by Jan Resnick, Assistant Regional Administrator, WMRLS

On yet another function, we are ending an era. Many of you remember the multi-part Interlibrary Loan (ILL) forms we used to use. Most of our libraries have made the transition to our online forms and have developed several tricks and techniques to make the process work quickly and easily for them. If you haven’t made the transition, we have only a few boxes of the forms left. We will not be reordering them. When they’re gone, they’re gone. It’s time to begin using the online forms: <http://forms.wmrls.org/index.html> If you need any help getting started, contact the WMRLS ILL Department at 800/282-7755 ext. 107. Any of us will be happy to help.



Join the Friends of WMRLS Online

You can now join or renew your Friends of WMRLS membership online by going to <http://friends.wmrls.org> The Friends website is equipped to process membership payments with your credit card or Pay Pal account. If you prefer you can still print out your membership and mail it in with a check. Besides membership options, you will also find minutes of past meetings and contact information for the board on the website. Your support of WMRLS is now only a click away.



Circuit Riders, Ho!

by Becky Marconi, Thrive Grant Project Coordinator

The LSTA “Together We Thrive” grant is off and running! We have hired the first round of circuit riders to go to public libraries serving populations of fewer than 2500. The circuit riders will initially help libraries to weed their collections, and eventually perform any number of tasks from cataloging to conversion.

Applications are still being accepted for future circuit rider positions. You can find a full job description and meet some of our new circuit riders at <http://www.wmrls.org/lsta/thrive/>

Middlefield, Colrain, Windsor, Pelham, Charlemont, Otis, Tyringham and Gilbertville will be among the first libraries to receive help, and many others will follow during the two-year grant period.

If you have questions about the “Together We Thrive” grant, please contact Becky Marconi at bmarconi@wmrls.org or call at 800/282-7755 ext. 123.



Wild Reads at your library

Sponsored by your local Massachusetts Library, the Massachusetts Regional Library Systems, and the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.

Visit our WMRLS Summer Reading Program Website

<http://www.wmrls.org/sum/>

Subscriptions – Another Way to Fund the Bookmobile Collection

by John Ramsay, Administrator, WMRLS and Mary King, Regional Librarian, WMRLS

In recognition of the severe budgetary challenges to the bookmobile service, the Small Library Study of 2006 had this recommendation, “... instead of all of the local collection development funding going toward the purchase of books that will be locally owned, libraries need to pool a portion of their materials budgets to purchase materials that will be jointly held. This would serve to rebuild the bookmobile collection and WMRLS could continue to perform the role of being the distributor of these materials among the libraries.”

At the Bookmobile Roundtables in February 2008, people from small libraries began planning how to make this recommendation a reality. Many enthusiastically rallied around the idea of paying for subscriptions for bookmobile service. The amount each small library contributes would enable WMRLS to purchase new materials that could be circulated to all the libraries.

A major issue for small libraries is limited space for collections. After a relatively short period of time, local readers of certain types of materials have already borrowed the books the library has purchased, and these shelf-sitters take up precious space. Librarians at the roundtable wished these books could be made available to other libraries.

Another factor in favor of this subscription approach is that the MBLC has determined that funds donated to WMRLS by a library (not by its Friends group) for the purchase of materials can be counted toward meeting the materials expenditure percentage required by the current State Aid to Public Libraries program. So, generosity toward a shared bookmobile collection can also help a small library meet its State Aid requirement!

If your library would like to contribute funds for new materials for the bookmobile program, feel free to request a subscription invoice from the WMRLS Business Office. You can fill in the amount your library wishes to contribute and send along your check to WMRLS. If you have questions about this approach, please contact Mary King at mking@wmrls.org or call at 800/282-7755 ext. 117.

New Titles Provided By The Humphry Fund

by N. Janeen Resnick, Assistant Regional Administrator, WMRLS

The Western Massachusetts Library Club (WMLC) maintains a memorial fund for John Humphry, former director of the Springfield City Library and President of Forest Press. The Humphry Fund has encouraged professional development in the Western Region for many years. Each year the WMLC donates the proceeds from the Fund to the Western Region to purchase materials for the Professional Collection. The Professional Collection is housed in the Regional Headquarters in Whately and supports the Region's Advisory Service and Continuing Education programs for member libraries.

This year the Humphry fund and a generous gift from a WMLC member allowed WMRLS to add several titles to the Professional Collection: **Complete Copyright: An Everyday Guide for Librarians** by Carrie Russell and **Banned Books: 2007 Resource Book** by Robert P. Doyle. We have also ordered **Managing Your Library Construction Project: A Step-by-Step Guide** by Richard C. McCarthy, AIA, and the **Multimedia Field Guide to Emergency Response** published by the Heritage Foundation. All four titles reflect the complexity of issues libraries face: copyright in the digital age, censorship, construction, and disaster planning. These titles will certainly allow us to improve our service to member libraries. These donations have always been important to the development of our collection, but in our current poor funding cycle, they are more important than ever.

Materials in the Region's Professional Collection emphasize professional skills and development and are available through Interlibrary Loan to librarians and trustees in western Massachusetts as well as throughout the country. For a list of recently acquired titles, check the WMRLS Professional Materials Collection at <http://www.wmrls.org/wrapper/newprof.html>

New Business Center at the Southwick Public Library

by Anne Murray, Director, Southwick Public Library

The Southwick Public Library recently created a Business Center within its walls to meet the needs of those seeking career based information, and to further provide informational resources for the business community. The center features books, CD books, DVDs and magazines which deal with careers, business and finance, instructional and leadership information, and biographies.

In addition, the library has a variety of business reference materials and boasts LearningExpress, a test prep website, which can be accessed through the library's link on the town's website: <http://www.southwickma.org>. The center was an outgrowth of the library's new Five-Year Plan. Focus groups that assembled for a needs assessment evaluation revealed the need which became a service response within the plan. The focus groups felt a stronger business area within the library was called for to support the growth community Southwick had become. The accompanying budgetary increases that the plan necessitated were incorporated into the library's subsequent budget.

UMass Amherst Library Hosts VISUAL Exhibit

by Leslie Schaler, Communications Assistant, UMass Amherst Library

The Library is hosting "Images from VISUAL" through April 29 in the Integrated Sciences and Engineering Library, Lederle Graduate Research Center Lowrise, Floor 2, UMass Amherst. The exhibit features images selected from VISUAL's collection, each one captured during research at UMass Amherst. VISUAL is based on the premise that the visual arts can serve as an effective means to educate the general public and students of all ages on the importance of scientific research in our everyday lives. Each captivating image is a direct experimental result from research conducted on the Amherst campus. By building on synergy between art and science, VISUAL provides a unique avenue by which both disciplines can be promoted, appreciated and encouraged.

Westfield Athenaeum's 140th Anniversary Celebratory Year

by Ralph Melnick, Assistant Director, Westfield Athenaeum

The Westfield Athenaeum is celebrating its 140th anniversary with a yearlong calendar of events. To mark its opening day on January 1, 1868, a birthday party was held. Congratulatory words from Governor Deval Patrick, U.S. Congressman John Olver, State Senator Michael Knapik, State Representative Donald Humason, Jr., and Westfield Mayor Michael Boulanger were received by Athenaeum staff outfitted in Victorian clothing from the institution's extensive museum collection. The celebration continued last month with a larger than usual "I Love My Library" Valentine's Day event, complete with book shaped cakes in the adult and children's areas, pink lemonade, and paper hearts on which patrons could publicly express what they most loved about the Athenaeum. Following a Community Craft Night in March, during which highly skilled local artisans will display and discuss their craft, April will see an illustrated talk by the Athenaeum's director, Christopher Lindquist, concerning the early history of the Athenaeum and its founders. The month of May will witness the presentation of the first annual Carol Otis Hurst Children's Book Prize (the recipient soon to be announced), named for the highly regarded children's author and Westfield resident. After a busy summer, we hope to unveil the Athenaeum's Westfield History Mural, a community effort being realized in our Information Services Room by the nationally recognized muralist David Fichter (<http://www.davidfichter.com>). His work includes the Amherst mural that overlooks the cemetery in which Emily Dickinson is buried. A second community effort will bring the exhibit, *Nuestras Abuelas (Our Grandmothers)*, to the Athenaeum in October as we help to celebrate a portion of the great ethnic diversity that characterizes the city of Westfield. November will then inaugurate the annual Edwin Smith Family Distinguished Speakers program, to the accompaniment of an exhibit of the Athenaeum's artistic and antique treasures in its Jasper Rand Art Museum, and December's Dickens Days, an annual event made more significant this year by the Athenaeum's Victorian origins, will cap off a year that will also see a host of musical performances, readings and lectures, and the visual joy of month-long art exhibits. Please check our website—<http://www.westath.org>—for dates, times, and other details.

Friends of the UMass Amherst Libraries Host Dinner Fundraiser

by Leslie Schaler, Communications Assistant, UMass Amherst Library

On Saturday, April 5 at 6:30 p.m., the Friends of the UMass Amherst Libraries will host the sixth annual "Dinner with Friends" in the Learning Commons at the W.E.B. Du Bois Library on the UMass Amherst campus. The event features talks by three notable speakers—author Carole O'Malley Gaunt, filmmaker Edward Klekowski, and author Jane Yolen, a champagne and hors d'oeuvre reception with the Kurian/Nix duo, and a gourmet dinner. For more information and to make reservations, contact Emily Silverman at 545-0995, friends@library.umass.edu, or <http://www.library.umass.edu/dinner/>

Stockbridge Library Hosts "African Americans and the Revolutionary War"

by Barbara Allen, Curator, Stockbridge Library

The Stockbridge Library, in collaboration with the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, will host "African Americans and the Revolutionary War" on Sunday May 4 at 1 p.m. in the library's reading room. Dr. Gary B. Nash and Dr. Graham R. Hodges will present readings and discussion of their new book, **Friends of Liberty: A Tale of Three Patriots, Two Revolutions, and the Betrayal that Divided a Nation: Thomas Jefferson, Thaddeus Kosciuszko, and Agrippa Hull**. Research for the book included materials from the Stockbridge Library's historical collection concerning Agrippa Hull, a free black, who was a resident of the town.

The event is free but seating is limited. For more information or reservations contact Barbara Allen at ballen@cwmar.org or 413 298-5501. If you are interested in PDPs or graduate credit contact Professor Frances Jones-Sneed, MCLA, 413 662-5541 or f.jones-sneed@mcla.edu

Library Displays OR Everything Old is New Again!

by Brian Tabor, Circulation Supervisor, Forbes Library, Northampton

Tackling the issue of maintaining book circulation in this world of media is always a challenge. One of the ways we at Forbes Library are trying to highlight the wonderful selection of books from our older collection is to have thematic displays which rotate on a monthly basis. We have a 3-tiered shelving unit near our front circulation desk that we locally call 'the wedding cake' due to its shape. This unit contains the revolving subject matter of older book selections that the Forbes has always been known for. In the past, we have had themes on banned books, the Massachusetts Book Award Winners, cooking, and birds. This past January was the 75th anniversary of the death of Calvin Coolidge, and with his connection to Northampton, we thought some Coolidge books would be very appropriate. In February we had a very well received selection of books on Black History. In March, we have books on libraries and librarians, and in April we shall have books dealing with Shakespeare. Much of this focus is due to Circulation staffer Christopher 'Tex' Teghtsoonian, who is wonderfully illustrating what one can do to promote an older collection, just by placing a display unit in a prominent place. Now that CWMARS has instituted the new 'display' shelf status, it is easier than ever to locate any item. Browsers are now drawn to the unit to see what is new each month – or should I say 'what is old is new again?'

Berkshire Athenaeum Renovates Local History & Reference Departments

by Ron Latham, Director, Berkshire Athenaeum

The long awaited, much anticipated renovations to the Local History and Reference Departments at the Berkshire Athenaeum began on February 28. Without altering the library footprint, the two departments will offer expanded technology to visitors and staff, including a laptop computer lab, new microfilm scanners, a new LAN for Local History resources and new Internet workstations. Collection growth will be accommodated with compact shelving in three Local History Department locations: the public service area, vault and basement storage. Other enhancements include climate control in the vault, video and collections security systems, more efficient microformat storage, and new service desks and office space for both departments. This \$800,000 project is funded through a combination of trust (\$541,000), local (\$150,000), Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund (\$84,000), and Friends of the Berkshire Athenaeum (\$25,000). The Local History Department has temporarily moved to the balcony level of the library. It is expected the renovations will be completed by July 1, with minimal disruption of service and no loss of hours for the library as a whole.

Palmer Public Library Publishes Book on Railroads, Past, Present & Never Were!

by Mary J. Bernat, Reference Librarian, Palmer Public Library

The Palmer Public Library and its Railroad Advisory Board are pleased to present to readers everywhere, "One Town & Seven Railroads: The Railroads of Palmer, Massachusetts Past, Present and Never Were." This book was created and written by the members of our railroad advisory board and this is the first book ever published by the Palmer Public Library.

Palmer is known across the country as the "Town of Seven Railroads" and now has its first history written in over a century summarizing our intriguing railroad development. Fourteen chapters, 175 photos and highly detailed maps chronicle the rich & complex railroad heritage of our town in this 128 page soft cover volume. Proceeds from book sales will be used to fund programs and activities for the community at the library. The book retails for \$29.95 and is available at the Palmer Library and our used bookstore known as The Library Loft. For more details about this fascinating local history publication and how you can get a copy, visit our website: [http:// www.palmer.lib.ma.us](http://www.palmer.lib.ma.us).

Western Massachusetts Library Poetry Slam Championship



This spring, WMRLS is sponsoring the first ever Western Massachusetts Poetry Slam Championship Series. Poets will compete, live and on stage for:

Fame, Glory and Prizes

Library venues and dates for upcoming *Library Poetry Slams* are listed below. If you're not a poet, come and witness the amazing talent lurking just below the surface in western Massachusetts!

- ⇒ **Worthington Library** - April 10 - 7PM
- ⇒ **Springfield City Library** - April 12 - 1 PM
- ⇒ **Stockbridge Library Association** - April 22 - 6PM
- ⇒ **North Adams Public Library** - April 22 - 6PM
- ⇒ **Wheeler Memorial Library**, Orange - April 26 - 2PM
- ⇒ **Milne Library, Williamstown** - April 26 - 1PM
- ⇒ **Chicopee Public Library** - April 30 - 6PM
- ⇒ **Monterey Library** - May 10 - 7PM
- ⇒ **Forbes Library, Northampton** – May 17 – 1:30PM

Winners of each of the above Library Poetry Slams
will be invited to compete in the
GRAND FINALE POETRY SLAM on Sunday, May 25 from 3 to 5
Hosted by the **Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art**

Many thanks to Adam Novitt and Vanessa Vargas for coordinating this event.

**Western Massachusetts Regional
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WMRLS-One-Blog
Many Voices ~ One Blog
<http://wmrls.blogspot.com/>

WMRLS-One-Blog is the online meeting space for all proud members of the Western Massachusetts Regional Library System to come together to communicate, cooperate, and share.

WRapper is distributed to our entire mailing list which includes library directors, trustees, legislators, and the governor.

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 May 16, 2008. 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/wrappermay2008>

WRapper Staff: Wes Hamilton, Dan Jarvis, Shirley Keech, Mary King, Shirley MacLean, Becky Marconi, John Ramsay, Jan Resnick, Sheila Savoie, and Janet Eckert (Editor).

WMRLS Continuing Education Calendar

May Plus

For complete information and registration instructions visit the WMRLS Continuing Education website
<http://www.wmrls.org/ce/index.html>

- ⇒ **Practicing Successful Interpersonal Skills** ~ 9 to 4, Thursday, May 1 ~ WMRLS
- ⇒ **WebJunction's Basic Budgeting** ~ This self paced 1 ½ hour online course will be available online for registered participants from May 1 through July 1
- ⇒ **WebJunction's Become an Effective Trustee** ~ This self paced 1 ½ hour online course will be available online for registered participants from May 1 through July 1
- ⇒ **Welcome Aboard! A participatory workshop for library trustees and directors** ~ 6 to 8:30 (evening) ~ Monday, May 5, Forbes Library, Northampton
- ⇒ **Middle and High School Librarians Roundtable** ~ 9:30 to 12:30, Tuesday, May 6 ~ WMRLS
- ⇒ **Genrefluency: Providing Readers' Advisory to Genre Readers** ~ 9:30 - 12:30 ~ Wednesday, May 14, WMRLS
- ⇒ **Speculative Fiction: Providing Readers' Advisory with Thrills, Chills, and Imagination** ~ 1:30 - 4:30 ~ Wednesday, May 14, WMRLS
- ⇒ **Treasures in the Attic: The Care and Feeding of Local History Collections** ~ 10 to 2:30 ~ Friday, May 16, WMRLS
- ⇒ **The Not-So-Extreme Library Makeover: Making the Most of Existing Space** ~ 9 to Noon ~ Wednesday, May 21, Dalton Free Public Library
- ⇒ **Fundraising for your Library Construction Project --- a Roundtable** ~ 10 to 12:30 ~ Friday May 30, WMRLS
- ⇒ **Basic Computer Skills All Library Staff Should Master** ~ 1 to 4, Thursday June 12 ~ WMRLS