



# WRapper Newsletter

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

## Better Times Ahead for Regions?

by John Ramsay, Regional Administrator, WMRLS

There are indications that the time has finally come to reverse the downward spiral in Regional funding. In October, Governor Deval Patrick signed off on a supplemental State budget for FY08 that included an increase for the six Regional Library Systems in MBLC account 7000-9401.

This action was a “make up” originating in the Legislature for the fact that the Regional account (7000-9401) included an increase this year for the Boston Public Library as Library of Last Recourse, but actually resulted in a decrease for the Regions that share that line item. The increase for WMRLS will be \$62,933. Unfortunately, this increase is to be considered a one-year occurrence, so the FY09 budget that was approved at the Annual Meeting had to be based on the original budget for FY08, which is 17% less than the amount WMRLS operated with in FY02!

The hope is that the Governor’s budget, which is released in late January, will include an increase for the Regional account. The MBLC Legislative Agenda, which is still being developed, seeks anywhere from statutory funding for the Regions to an amount that reflects inflation since FY02, the previous high point in funding for the Regions.

Also, the MBLC was requested by the Administration to hold a public hearing on the FY09 budget that it was to present to the Executive Office for Administration and Finance, which had a cap of 1.5% over FY08. Over 100 people attended. Then, a total of 183 people wrote impassioned letters opposing this limit, since library funding has not recovered while other budgets have, and the need is so great for library services. All the written testimony was assembled into binders and sent to the Administration.

Another positive sign was the appearance of Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray at the October 27 Annual Joint Conference of the Massachusetts Library Trustees Association and Massachusetts Friends of Libraries. The Lieutenant Governor, a former library trustee, expressed his support of library funding and indicated that he will do everything he can to ensure a positive outcome in the FY09 State budget process.

We hope the library community will take heart in these optimistic developments and will, throughout the State budget process, advocate strongly for funding for libraries, beginning with the Governor’s budget, then the House Ways and Means and Senate Ways and Means budgets. The time is long overdue for library accounts to recover from the devastation of the early 2000’s, so we can get on with the important business of providing top flight services to the libraries and people of Massachusetts.

November | December 2007

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## **Twenty Thousand Patrons Used ReadsInMA**

*by Maureen Ambrosino, Youth Services Consultant, Central Massachusetts Regional Library System*

In the spring of 2007, Massachusetts became the first state to license Summer Reader software from Evanced Solutions for every public library in the state. The web interface, [www.ReadsinMA.org](http://www.ReadsinMA.org), debuted just in time for the launch of the Massachusetts Statewide Summer Reading Program, "Catch the Beat at Your Library," with 175 libraries across the Commonwealth utilizing the software. ReadsInMA.org allowed patrons to register for the summer reading program at any participating library through an easy-to-use online form. Once registered, patrons could then log their reading through an electronic reading log, write reviews, and be notified when it was time to go to the library to claim prizes.

Close to 20,000 library patrons used the system during the past summer to track everything from book titles to hours, minutes and pages read. Some libraries included the "Review" feature so their readers could include comments about their books. Many librarians reported that it was very popular with teen readers, who are a difficult group to attract for traditional summer reading programs.

Librarians across the state also reported that the program made summer reading more enjoyable for children and library staff who then had more time to work with their patrons on other interests and programs instead of filling out paperwork and crunching numbers.

Patrons' reactions were also very positive. Many enjoyed the freedom it gave their children to participate in the program while they were on vacation or unable to get to the library. And, in towns where libraries have had to reduce hours of operation during the summer months, the software was an invaluable resource that allowed participants to log books and reviews from home at any time. Still more comments came that parents were very happy with the skills their children learned while using the program, as their technology and writing skills were practiced during the summer months with this online program.

ReadsinMA is funded for three years by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners through a Library Services and Technology grant with funding from the Institute of Museums and Library Services, an independent federal agency that grows and sustains a Nation of Learners because lifelong learning is critical to success. For more information about ReadsInMA.org, visit <http://www.readsinma.org/info>

**Editor's Note:** WMRLS extends our sincere appreciation to Maureen Ambrosino who serves as the statewide liaison for our ReadsInMA online reading program.

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## **City-wide Reading Grant: Pittsfield Generations READ!**

*by Meredith G. Cochran, Taconic High School Librarian, Pittsfield*

The Taconic High School Library has received an LSTA On the Same Page grant for a city-wide reading project; the book that the City of Pittsfield will be reading is Bill Bryson's **A Walk In the Woods**. The grant expressly brings together high school students from Taconic High School, Pittsfield High School, Miss Hall's School and St. Joseph's High School, with adult members of Berkshire Community College, Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Pittsfield's Senior Center and the Berkshire Athenaeum.

The librarians of all the participating institutions, as well as Norma Lyn Powers of RSVP, are planning readings, discussions, lectures, hikes and walks to take place around the city. The kick-off celebration is scheduled for January 12, 2008 at the Berkshire Athenaeum, and will be led by Lori Innes, a Taconic teacher who just completed the Appalachian Trail with her husband. After Christmas, there will be announcements of additional events on the radio, perhaps on-air interviews with the Taconic librarian, and ads for the project on the local public TV station. The librarians are also planning to publicize the project using posters with photos of Pittsfield personalities, including teachers, politicians, business owners, fire fighters, policemen and other citizens of Pittsfield reading Bryson's book. Pittsfield's Cultural Council has joined to help us with our marketing efforts and outreach to local businesses. We're all quite excited!

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*Many readers may have read a recent news story\* about a lost wedding ring found with the help of a local library.*

*What follows is the story from the librarian's point of view.*

## **Making Connections @ Your Library**

*by Sara Woodbury, Director, Tilton Library, South Deerfield*

As any librarian will attest, the phrase "get connected at your library" is more than ALA's Teen Tech Week slogan. Every day, libraries connect people to information, knowledge, good books, bad books, museum passes, email, newspapers, and story time. We're a roof in the rain and sometimes the only public bathroom for miles. We provide meeting, art exhibit and home-work space. At budget time, we attempt to quantify these connections.

John Carney of Deerfield knows that libraries make connections. It was his first choice of a go-to place when he found an inscribed wedding ring at the local landfill and wanted to reunite it with its owner. "I've always been someone who goes into a library. My wife and I know it's a source of local information and I enjoy the atmosphere."

When Carney found the name of the ring's owner in the vital statistics of the annual town report in the library's reference section and was able to contact him, a good story was born. The Associated Press picked up the story from the local newspapers. Good Morning America called. The phrase, "with the help of librarians", appeared in every version of the story.

As we remind our funding sources of the numerous connections we make, we can all use this feel-good story as an illustration of what takes place in libraries every day. Because Carney was familiar with the library's resources, he could have easily found this information on his own. Instead, a librarian standing nearby asked him if he needed help and it became a shared mission. We all know that many people find much information without our help and without being quantified in statistical form. Luckily, for libraries, it didn't happen this way and a well deserved, though somewhat overshadowed, fifteen minutes of fame came our collective way.

\* The news story "Lost wedding band returned to Deerfield man -- twice" by Mackenzie Issler [ Originally published in **The Recorder** on: Monday, October 08, 2007 ] [http://www.recorder.com/story.cfm?id\\_no=4538908](http://www.recorder.com/story.cfm?id_no=4538908)

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## **New Book Underway on Franklin County Libraries**

*by John Ramsay, Regional Administrator, WMRLS*

Jeri Moran and Hope Schneider, two local librarians, are beginning work on a photo/history project about Franklin County public libraries 'then and now'. They are likely to be in touch with these libraries in the coming months. They would love to see any historical photographs (they will have a camera with them for current photos), and hear any information you have about your library's history; they are also checking out the websites of these libraries/communities. You may want to do a little digging or contact your 'expert' who may have some details to provide. WMRLS encourages Franklin County libraries to help Jeri and Hope in this effort to showcase some of the wonderful libraries in Franklin County.

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## **LitGraphic: The World of the Graphic Novel**

This comprehensive exhibition which will run through May 26, 2008, explores the history and diverse artistry of the graphic novel, featuring personal commentary and artworks by celebrated historic and contemporary practitioners. Original book pages and studies, sketchbooks, and video interviews provide insights into an evolving and exciting art form.

From: Norman Rockwell Museum website: <http://www.nrm.org/page60>

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## **Friends of WMRLS Annual Meeting**

*by Lisa Downing, President, Friends of WMRLS; and Assistant Director, Forbes Library, Northampton*

On Friday, October 19<sup>th</sup> the Friends of WMRLS held their annual meeting at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in Pittsfield. The morning started off with a brief business meeting including reports on membership, fundraising, and advocacy efforts. So far this year, the Friends have donated over \$10,000 to WMRLS. An election of officers was held and Sara Woodbury was elected President and Susan Crowther was elected Vice-President. Toni Golinski-Foisy and Lisa Wenner were elected as the newest members of the board. For a complete list of officers, including contact information, please visit the Friends website <http://friends.wmrls.org>. After the business meeting, Jean Nudd, Director of NARA presented an informative workshop entitled, "Finding Your Immigrant Ancestors" in which she detailed how to use census records and other information available at NARA to conduct basic genealogical research. The program was very well received.



## **Join the Friends of WMRLS Online**

*by Lisa Downing, President, Friends of WMRLS; and Assistant Director, Forbes Library, Northampton*

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.

## **Tolland Public Library Raises Funds for WMRLS**

*by John Ramsay, Administrator, WMRLS*

WMRLS extends our sincere thanks to the Tolland Public Library staff and patrons for their generous donation of \$203.52 which will be spent on materials for our WMRLS bookmobile. Library Director Jessica Kelmelis reports that the money was raised through ice-cream sales to all patrons (children received a 50% discount if they were checking out books) and Saturday morning coffee and pastry sales.

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## **Valiant Effort to Return Bookmobile Material**

*by Dan Jarvis, Bookmobile/Delivery Specialist, WMRLS*

We serve patrons directly with the bookmobile in the tiny Berkshire community of Alford because the town has no operational library. Lois Milligan volunteers to contact local patrons when we are coming, and also keeps track of what they borrow to assure everything is returned. Lois realized one of the Alford borrowers died with books still out. Lois learned the family had contracted with someone to clean out the house which was in trust for some other relatives. The person who emptied the house did so with the provision he could sell the entire contents at flea markets. Lois went to him and offered to buy him and his wife breakfast in exchange for any bookmobile items still unsold. The couple and Lois went through the household goods, which by then had been mixed with rooms full of stuff from several other estate clean outs. All the outstanding bookmobile material was recovered and then the three went out and had a nice breakfast.

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## **Local Business and School Working Together**

by Robin Shtulman, Librarian, Greenfield Middle School Library

The Greenfield Middle School Library has entered into a fabulous partnership with local bookseller, World Eye Bookshop. Ms. Ann Smith, the owner of World Eye, has agreed to help put new, current books in the hands of our town's middle schoolers. In these times of diminishing school budgets and wide student interests, this partnership is a real gift to our children.

Ms. Smith of World Eye has agreed to post a list of books Greenfield Middle School (GMS) students have been requesting for the school library.

Any interested community member who would like to foster literacy in our local public schools may visit World Eye and ask to see the GMS wish list. He or she may then select titles to purchase for the school. World Eye will offer a discount on any books purchased for the GMS school library. Individuals may donate anonymously or leave their names. Those who leave their names will be publicly recognized via a commemorative book plate inside the front cover of the book.

We are so grateful to World Eye for trying this experiment with us. There is a wealth of new, wonderful literature out there and we hope this will be a way of helping our students gain access to it. Even better, our money stays local, and we all win.

If you would like more information, please contact Robin Shtulman, GMS Librarian, at 772-1360, extension 221. World Eye is located at 156 Main Street in downtown Greenfield, 413-772-2186.

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## **Basic Library Techniques: Selection 2007**

by Jan Resnick, Assistant Regional Administrator, WMRLS

Thirty-three member library staff just completed a four session workshop on Materials Selection and Library Collection Development. This Basic Library Techniques (BLT) course introduces participants to the basic concepts of selection for youth and adults, ethical and policy issues, budgeting, censorship, reader's advisory skills, merchandizing and weeding. We also try to cram in as many tips, tricks and traps as each 3-hour session allows.

The workshop was presented at the WMRLS Headquarter in Whately and the Lee Library Association. Library participants represented public and school libraries from the Western as well as the Central Regions.

The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners requires library directors in towns of under 10,000 population to complete training in basic library techniques in order for the library to be eligible for state aid and other financial support. The Selection BLT series is one of four courses offered by WMRLS to help library directors meet this requirement.

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## **Attitudes Towards Use Of Library Services In Massachusetts**

The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) continues to increase public awareness of the value of libraries as community resources, the role that it serves as an advocate for libraries and improved library services to the residents of the Commonwealth.

As part of its three year Marketing Plan for Libraries (FY08 to FY10), the MBLC selected Buyer Advertising to conduct focus groups to clarify and solidify marketing messages targeted to the College-Educated 20-Somethings market.

On October 22, Buyer Advertising's presented their findings to the MBLC. The document titled *Final Report on Focus Groups Studying Attitudes Towards Use of Library Services in Massachusetts* by Buyer Advertising and Charleen Kress, Kress & Associates, is now featured on the MBLC's website at <http://mblc.state.ma.us/advisory/public-relations/prac/focusGroupReport.pdf>

The above information was taken directly from the MBLC website: <http://mblc.state.ma.us/advisory/public-relations/prac/>

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# WMRLS One Blog

*Many Voices ~ One Blog*

<http://wmrls.blogspot.com>

This is the one blog for all proud members of the Western Massachusetts Regional Library System to come together to communicate, cooperate, and share. Tell us a story about your library. Share your library news! Review a book, DVD, CD, or website. Do you have seats available at an upcoming library event? If so, invite your western Massachusetts library colleagues to attend.

Join our western Massachusetts virtual library community. Email your library news item to:  
[janet.eckert.wmrls@blogger.com](mailto:janet.eckert.wmrls@blogger.com)

**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 January 8, 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/wrapperjanuary2008>

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

# WMRLS Continuing Education Calendar

## Winter 2007/08

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

- ⇒ **Web Page Design in the Library 2.0 World** ~ 9 to noon, Thursday, December 6 ~ WMRLS
  - ⇒ **What Should I Know About Social Networking Sites** ~ 1 to 4, Thursday, December 6 ~ WMRLS
  - ⇒ **Gale Powersearch Infotrac Update and Training** ~ 10 to noon, Monday, December 10 ~ WMRLS
  - ⇒ **Gale Powersearch Infotrac Update EBSCO's Literary Reference Center Training** ~ 2 to 5, Monday, December 10 ~ Palmer Public Library
  - ⇒ **Young Adult Roundtable: Focus on Programming** ~ 10 to 1, Friday, December 14 ~ Children's & Teen Book Review Center, Springfield City Library
  - ⇒ **Dealing with Difficult People**, WMRLS self-paced online course, December 15 through March 15
  - ⇒ **RSS: Benefits for You and Your Library**, WMRLS self-paced online course, December 15 through April 15
  - ⇒ **Leadership**, WMRLS self-paced online video course, January 1 through April 15
  - ⇒ **Is Multitasking Making You Stupid? Time Management in the 21st Century** ~ 10 to noon, Thursday, January 10 ~ WMRLS
  - ⇒ **Clear Your Path: Organizing With Intention** ~ 1:30 to 3:30, Thursday, January 10 ~ WMRLS
  - ⇒ **RA Interview II: Exploring the Reader's Path (aka Connecting the Dots)** ~ 10 to 12:30, Monday, January 14 ~ WMRLS
  - ⇒ **Online Reference Sources** ~ 10 to 12:30, Wednesday, January 16 ~ WMRLS
  - ⇒ **UMass Amherst Libraries: Get the Most out of the Resources and Services** ~ 10 to noon, Wednesday, January 23 ~ All-Staff Area, Learning Commons, Lower Level, W.E.B. Du Bois Library
  - ⇒ **Assistant Directors Roundtable: The Wobbly Job Description or 'Other Duties as Required/Assigned/Whatever'** ~ 10 to noon, Thursday, January 31 ~ WMRLS
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