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May | June 2008

Feed the Ponies!

by Dave Ferland, Bookmobile/Delivery Specialist, WMRLS

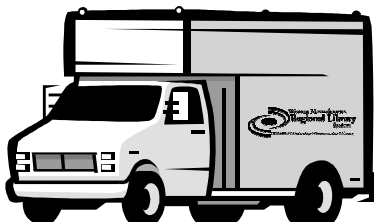
“Feed the ponies!” the driving instructor encouraged, meaning, “Give it more gas!” In February, WMRLS delivery drivers attended Advanced Driver Training at the Central Massachusetts Chapter of the National Safety Council in West Boylston. The instructor wanted the driver to pick up speed on the driving course in order to slam on the brakes, skid out of control, and practice regaining control of the vehicle. These are certainly skills that can’t be practiced intentionally out on the roads of western Massachusetts. But, as head of the school Gerry Bowman said, “When do accidents happen? RIGHT NOW!” Preparation and avoidance are the keys to avoiding crashes in the “war zone” of America’s highways. We learned about the “legalized insanity” of driving 70-75 mph (the average speed on the Mass Pike) at a following distance of 40-50 feet (average following distance on the Mass Pike). Needless to say, this combination of speed, distance, and heavy machines does not allow much time to react and avoid unexpected situations. Of course, WMRLS drivers are among the safest on the road, but the point was well taken.

One simple safety measure that can be taken by all drivers, whether professional or not: two hands on the steering wheel. This precaution was demonstrated by the “Cell Phone Drill” in which a driver steered out of a skid with two hands and then attempted the same maneuver, steering with one hand, while talking on a cell phone pressed to his ear. The result?---a decline in control with one hand on the steering wheel, not to mention the reduced alertness and reaction time in real-life situations.

The class was divided into two parts, a classroom session followed by the test track. The class session stressed the everyday danger of driving on America’s roads and the alertness necessary in avoiding crashes. There was a review of some traffic laws we all take for granted like, “What are you supposed to do at a stop sign?” Answer (paraphrasing Massachusetts general law): “Come to a full stop until it is safe to proceed.” Think about that next time you witness someone or, heaven forbid, you yourself roll through that stop sign at the end of your street. Of course, the importance of seat belts was also demonstrated. The outside, and more exciting, portion of the course took place on the track where we got to drive the “snake” (a slalom), practice tight cornering, hard stopping, and the aforementioned skids. The track was wet down, icy, and snowy in spots so skidding was not a problem. In fact, the track was a great simulator for the chronic iciness of the roads experienced this long winter!

In short, Advanced Driver Training was an eye-opener for WMRLS delivery drivers. And a lot of fun!

Editor’s note: WMRLS has enjoyed a 10% reduction in vehicle insurance costs because all drivers took the advanced driver training course.



In This Issue:

<i>A Boot Camp for Library Directors</i>	2
<i>Goodbye Anne; Welcome Damaris!</i>	3
<i>Delivery Down, but Really Up!</i>	3
<i>The Hollywood Librarian Comes to STCC</i>	3
<i>Hatfield Public Library Blog</i>	3
<i>Bookmobile Fundraiser</i>	4
<i>Dinner with Friends</i>	4
<i>Delivery Bundling/Sorting Resolution</i>	4
<i>National Poem in Your Pocket Day</i>	4
<i>Movies & More at West Springfield Public Library</i>	5
<i>Greenfield Middle School Library to Host Great Stories CLUB</i>	5
<i>Massachusetts Legislative Day</i>	6
<i>Microsoft Software Grant Awarded to UMass Libraries</i>	6
<i>South Hadley Reads!</i>	6
<i>WMRLS Poetry Slam Grand Finale</i>	7
<i>WMRLS CE Updates</i>	7

Plus
 WMRLS
 Summer 2008
 Continuing Education Calendar

A Boot Camp for Library Directors: Director's Essentials

by Jan Resnick, Assistant Regional Administrator, WMRLS

We didn't have uniforms, bedrolls or rifles, but on May 20, 65 school, public, academic and special librarians (13 from western Massachusetts) gathered for a day long session on learning and emphasizing basic skills for new library directors. It was a gorgeous day at Tower Hill Botanical Gardens in Boylston. Inspirational kick-off speaker Nancy Hunter-Denny urged us to put Zing! in our professionalism. We need to live fully, lead faithfully and leave a legacy for our communities. We must believe that what we do matters and that we can make a difference on a daily basis.

In the area of Leadership, Advocacy and Managing Change, Krista McLeod, director of the Nevins Memorial Library in Methuen, recognized that directors live in a process of continuous change and continuous challenge. We need to live with our own values and recognize leaders in our organizations, community and in support organizations like our Friends. We also need to learn to advocate well and inspire staff and supporters. Susan Watkins, director of the Nease Library at Eastern Nazarene College, advised that academics be an active part of the faculty and develop a good relationship with campus IT staff. Not everyone will be happy with what you do, but don't let that stop you from making changes and trying improvements. Remember to delegate and that staff perform best in an atmosphere of trust. Accept that you are not going to be perfect at everything.

After this inspiration and advice, participants were introduced to the early stages of the Director's Essentials website. We practiced strategies in a round robin of case studies in management issues initiated by attending directors. We broke for lunch and swung into talk tables on a range of topics: time management, statistics, advocacy and networking, assessment and accreditation, emerging technologies, grants, information literacy, facilities, and budgets. (Notes from these sessions are being posted on <http://directoressentials.pbwiki.com/>)

The frosting on the cake came from Elizabeth Thomsen, Member Services Manager for NOBLE. Elizabeth offered her library pet peeves in a 'teaching moment' we all learned from. Pet Peeve (PP) #1: Private 'office' conversations in public spaces – wear your professional face and treat our library public space as a special place. PP#2: Information and communication are our mission...but you'd never know it from our use of patron comments internally. We listen but don't record the comments of library users ("I meant to...but I couldn't find a parking space." "I'd love Sunday hours.") We throw away these comments and then pay for focus groups or surveys. PP#3: Spoon wars. We leave each other notes about spoons in the sink. How can we talk about major service enhancements if we can't even talk about spoons in the sink? PP#4: Treat people the way they want to be treated. Is conference attendance a treat or a chore? Is an office space a reward or a confining, isolating atmosphere? What do staff really want and what will they appreciate? PP#5: Skeet shooting. Shooting down new ideas kills them and kills creativity. A skeet shooting atmosphere destroys ideas that just might work. And above all, remember the example of Uncle Mac: "I need your help..." (something specific and not too big.) People will respond positively to this request and it literally helps them invest in the library.

Live long and prosper.

Visit the WMRLS-One-Blog

<http://wmrls.blogspot.com/>

WMRLS has an LSTA grant that has allowed us to book some great Reader's Advisory (RA) speakers, buy materials for our Professional Collection and genre material for the Bookmobile, and support our participating libraries attendance at conferences like PLA and MLA. Visit the WMRLS-One-Blog to read reports of the RA programs we attended at the recent 2008 MLA Annual Conference. ~ *Jan Resnick, Assistant Regional Administrator, WMRLS*

Goodbye, Anne; Welcome Damaris!

by John Ramsay, Regional Administrator, WMRLS

Damaris Hernandez-Vega is serving as acting Business Manager of the Western Massachusetts Regional Library System (WMRLS). Anne Thibault, former WMRLS Business Manager, resigned after almost 30 years of excellent service to WMRLS in several capacities. Anne's efficiency in handling the business operations of the nonprofit corporation, coordinating the statewide MARLS purchasing cooperative for library materials and supplies, and tracking the expenditures of several grants and other activities was a major asset to WMRLS and its member libraries. We wish her and her family all the best in her future pursuits.

Damaris (pronounced dah-mahr-ees) comes to us through the Accounting Now! Agency in Easthampton. She is a native of Puerto Rico, where she worked as an accounting clerk, an accounting technician, a production planner scheduler, and a tax information coordinator. Most recently, she was a tax associate in New York City. She now lives in the Florence section of Northampton. She has a Bachelor in Business Administration with a major in Accounting from the University of Puerto Rico. She is currently pursuing her CPA License.

So, when you have a question about the business side of WMRLS, the purchasing cooperative, or other matters, you may very well have an opportunity to speak with Damaris. We think you will appreciate her people skills and her competence. Her extension is 129, and her email is dhernandez-vega@wmrls.org.

Delivery Down, but Really Up

by John Ramsay, Regional Administrator, WMRLS

We all know that the number of items moving between libraries through the WMRLS delivery system has been rising dramatically for the past several years.

For FY08 (this year) there is a new process in place for how WMRLS staff count items being placed into delivery from our headquarters in Whately. This change results in what looks like a decrease in delivery. Believe us, this is not the case!

The FY08 total is now 1,578,772 items compared with last year's 2,007,824. If we adjust last year's count by using the same procedures in place for this year, the net effect is that delivery has risen by 4.5%.

Once we get past this year or two and have assimilated the counting change, the numbers will attest that resource sharing across Western Massachusetts – indeed, across the State – is alive and well, and continuing to rise every year.

The Hollywood Librarian Comes to STCC

by Kim Noel, Circulation Manager, Springfield Technical Community College (STCC)

The Library at Springfield Technical Community College will be hosting an exclusive western Massachusetts showing of Ann Seidl's **The Hollywood Librarian: A Look at Librarians in Film** on Thursday, June 26. We hope you will join us as we celebrate the smart, funny and dedicated librarians in the film and in our own communities Showtime - 7:00 p.m. Scibelli Hall Theatre/Building 2.

For information about the film please visit <http://www.hollywoodlibrarian.com>; rsvp to knoel@stcc.edu

Hope to see you there!

Hatfield Public Library Blog

by Dodie Gaudet, Library Trustee, Hatfield Public Library

The Library Facilities Needs Assessment Committee of the Hatfield Public Library is using a blog to keep town residents informed of their progress. The blog is available to read at <http://www.hatfieldfnac.blogspot.com/>



Visit the Friends of WMRLS website

<http://friends.wmrls.org/>

Bookmobile Fundraiser

by Mary King, Regional Librarian, WMRLS

The New Marlborough Town Library held a fundraiser during April and raised \$125 to benefit the WMRLS bookmobile collection! Patrons paid a dollar for a blue bookmobile card which they could endorse, and each card became part of a display entitled National Library Week ~ Celebrate the Bookmobile. We thank Deb O'Brien, Director of the New Marlborough Town Library, and all of the patrons who are helping WMRLS have more new books and audio-visuals on the bookmobile.

“Dinner with Friends” Another Fundraising Success

by Leslie Schaler, Communication Assistant, UMass Amherst Libraries

The UMass Amherst Libraries’ Sixth Annual “Dinner with Friends” was held on Saturday, April 5 in the Learning Commons at the W.E.B. Du Bois Library. This year’s guest authors were Carole O’Malley Gaunt, Ed Klekowski, and Jane Yolen. The event featured a champagne and hors d’oeuvre reception, a gourmet dinner, music by Septre, a book sale by the Jeffery Amherst Bookshop, and a book signing. The event raised over \$32,000 for the Libraries. Attendance reached an all time high of 120 guests. The goal of the event is to raise awareness of and support for the UMass Amherst Libraries. Event proceeds will go toward the 21st Century Library Technology Fund for technological initiatives.

Delivery Bundling/Sorting Resolution

The following Delivery Bundling/Sorting Resolution was developed and approved by the Resource Sharing Advisory Committee and recommended for action to the WMRLS Executive Board. The Board unanimously approved the resolution.

All libraries receiving delivery from WMRLS are encouraged to bundle materials going to the same library in packs of 5” for ease of handling, and to secure each bundle with sturdy rubber bands and one routing slip. Libraries that have two or more large delivery bins going out every delivery day are required to bundle materials going to a single library, in order to save the time of the delivery drivers sorting materials at each library, and to allow for greater efficiency in the service.

National Poem in Your Pocket Day

by Robin Shtulman, Librarian, Greenfield Middle School

We held a very successful first National Poem in Your Pocket Day on April 17th! Kids and staff alike copied down their favorite poems to carry around in their pockets and share. Our 5th & 8th grade library helpers combed through poetry books (mostly borrowed from WMRLS!) to choose fun poems to give to those who did not already have a favorite.

Poems from pockets were unfolded throughout the day, with kids reading aloud to one another all day long. Hundreds of poems were read enthusiastically (and voluntarily!) by Greenfield Middle Schoolers of every age.

If you would like to see some pictures, visit our blog: <http://www.gmsl.blogspot.com>

Movies, Quiz Night and a new Teen Space at West Springfield Public Library

by Mia Cabana, Assistant Youth Librarian, West Springfield Public Library

West Springfield Public Library has recently created new programming and new space to reach out to our young adult population. Thanks to the hard work of the Ruth M. Peck Internship students, we are also pleased to launch a monthly movie night starting in June. The interns, Susan Hua and Katherine Kukharchuk, are juniors at West Springfield High School and were selected from a competitive applicant pool. The interns chose movie night to be their final project for the internship in hopes that it will bring teens into the library, recognizing that often library participation is sacrificed to busy schedules. In addition to planning and publicity, the interns helped to obtain a viewing license so that studio movies can be shown without violating copyright law. The Ruth M. Peck Internship program aims to give its participants a deeper understanding of the functions of the library, and create life-long library advocates.

Quiz Night is a monthly program for 8th grade to 12th grade students to come participate in live-action trivia. Teams of up to five people compete in four rounds of general knowledge that encompass everything from Anime to Zoology. Two bonus rounds consist of a single question each that is deemed too obscure to be general knowledge, and for these questions teams are given three minutes to use the library's reference section to find the answers. So far we have had great enthusiasm, growing numbers of participants, and an undefeated team that will have to work hard to hold their title in the upcoming event on June 17th!

Finally, West Springfield's Youth Room now has a new teen space. The space includes a booth from a local restaurant that was renovating, and will be named and decorated with teen participation and suggestions. By giving teens a space in the library that is uniquely their own, we hope to encourage them to spend time in our library for recreation as well as academics, and draw a growing population in for our expanding young adult programs.

Greenfield Middle School Library Selected to Host "Great Stories CLUB" Book Discussion Program

by Robin Shtulman, Librarian, Greenfield Middle School

The Greenfield Middle School Library has been selected to host a reading and discussion series called the "Great Stories CLUB." The library is one of 173 libraries nationwide receiving a grant from the American Library Association (ALA) to host this series, developed by the ALA Public Programs Office and Young Adult Library Services Association. Funding was provided for this program by Oprah's Angel Network.

The Great Stories CLUB (Connecting Libraries, Underserved teens and Books) is a book discussion program created to provide at-risk teens with an opportunity to read and discuss three theme-related books. Each title selected for the program focuses on a character who struggles with a serious challenge. As a recipient of this grant from ALA, the Greenfield Middle School Library will receive programming resources as well as copies of three books for distribution to participants.

The first book to be explored is "Hole in My Life" by Jack Gantos. All discussions will be held in the school library, as a partnership between the library and the Bridges program. Bridges is a regular education alternative program designed to help students who struggle academically, with the goal of returning them to mainstream classes.

Participants have already been selected. In fact, the students who will be participating had a role in crafting part of the grant proposal. "The students are excited about the books! This is a great opportunity to learn to love books and reading," said Linda Singer, classroom teacher for the Bridges program. "To read is to succeed!" declared Kris Quiles, a student.

"We are thrilled that our students will have this unique chance to read, discuss and own books that are relevant to the challenges in their lives," said Robin Shtulman, Greenfield Middle School librarian.

For more information about the Great Stories Club at Greenfield Middle School, visit <http://www.gmsl.blogspot.com>. For information about the Great Stories CLUB national initiative, visit <http://www.ala.org/greatstories>.

Massachusetts Legislative Day 2008

by Jan Resnick, Assistant Regional Administrator, WMRLS

On Wednesday April 2, intrepid WMRLS member librarians hit the bus for the State House. On the way, we picked up another contingent from the Central Massachusetts Regional Library System. The bus was organized and underwritten by the Friends of WMRLS. North Adams Representative Dan Bosley generously provided donuts for the journey.

Legislative Day is sponsored by the Massachusetts Library Association (MLA) and this year, for the first time, MLA joined forces with the Massachusetts School Library Association (MSLA). The drill for the day is pretty straightforward for those of you who haven't joined us before. A few weeks before Legislative Day, attendees contact their Senator and Representative to alert them to the event and invite them to attend the program and lunch, usually as this year, held in the Great Hall of Flags.

Let your legislators know you are coming and will be stopping by their office. If several of you from a particular district are attending, it's a good idea to make an appointment. (The bus usually arrives between 10 - 10:30, lunch is usually at 12; the bus leaves at 2 or 2:30.)

When we arrive at the State House, the bus driver drops us off and reminds us of the departure time. We proceed to the General Hooker entrance of the building and go through security (usually to comments like 'the librarians are here.'). At the Hall of Flags MLA/MSLA volunteers staff a sign-in desk where we pick up information packets and carnations for legislators. There are one or two briefing sessions conducted by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners to review the legislative agenda. The briefings are generally at 10 and 11. If you've attended a legislative breakfast you will have seen the packet before and may not need to go to the briefing.

It is now time to go to see your legislators. You'll have a list of legislators and office numbers in your packet, and there are plenty of people and signs to help you find your way. Your reps and senators will be pleased to see you. You'll have a few minutes to make a couple of key points on the value of state funding for libraries and to ask for their support. If they or an aide are not available, drop off a business card if you have one, a packet and a short note. These notes and your presence are very important. We'll hope to see you on the bus next year.

A summary of the day is available at <http://www.masslib.org/legislative/legday2008.html>.

Microsoft Software Grant Awarded to Libraries

by Leslie Schaler, Communication Assistant, UMass Amherst Libraries

The UMass Amherst Libraries received a second large software grant from Microsoft (the first was in 2006) through the Microsoft Unlimited Potential program. The grant has a value of over \$780,000. Microsoft noted that they "are proud sponsors of the UMass Amherst Libraries, a critical community resource."

South Hadley Reads ...The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time by Mark Haddon

by Criss Quigley, Director, Gaylord Library, South Hadley

In a partnership with Odyssey Bookshop and South Hadley Council on Aging, South Hadley's libraries presented a series of events and book discussions for all ages. In addition to book discussions, the movie "Molly", which portrays a young woman with autism, was shown. Lic. Ed. psychologist Kathleen Salomone discussed her experience with children who have autism spectrum disorders, Detective McClair Mailhott discussed modern Crime Scene Investigation, author John Elder Robison spoke about his recent memoir, "Look Me in the Eye". Kids got to try out finger printing, pH testing, composite sketches and more in order to try to solve the mystery of the missing book. The events were informative and fun. PeoplesBank was our major sponsor.

WMRLS Grand Finale Poetry Slam Results

by Janet Eckert, Library Consultant, WMRLS

As a result of last winter's WMRLS Poetry Slam Information Roundtables conducted by librarian Adam Novitt, nine participating libraries conducted very successful Poetry Slams and 22 of the winning library poets came together on Sunday, May 25 at The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art to compete in the WMRLS Grand Finale. Including our guest poets, we had over 75 people attend this inspiring event.

All 22 poets competed in the first round; the top ten winners of the first round competed in round two; and the top five winners of the second round competed in round three. The final tally of first, second, and third place winners are as follows:

First Place: Jacob Snow representing the North Adams Public Library

Second Place: Shariff Butler representing the Springfield City Library

Third Place: Seth Brown representing the North Adams Public Library

Thank you to:

- The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art for hosting this wonderful event
- Poet librarian, Vanessa Vargas for serving as our Poetry Slam emcee
- Each and every guest poet for sharing and performing their unique and thought-provoking poetry
- Our enthusiastic audience for encouraging and supporting our guest poets
- The following WMRLS member libraries that participated in our "Poet Slam" Series: Forbes Library (Northampton), Milne Library (Williamstown), Monterey Library, North Adams Public Library, Springfield City Library, Stockbridge Library Association, West Stockbridge Public Library, Wheeler Memorial Library (Orange), and Worthington Library.



WMRLS Continuing Education Updates

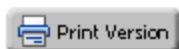
by Shirley MacLean, Sheila Savoie, and Janet Eckert, Continuing Education Department, WMRLS

With the goal of automating our Continuing Education (CE) Registration Process, WMRLS is now using the EventKeeper Calendar software. Our new WMRLS CE webpage - <http://www.eventkeeper.com/code/events.cfm?curOrg=WMRLS> - includes the following special features:

AUTOMATED REGISTRATION: Beginning with our July workshops, staff of all WMRLS member libraries who complete the online registration form will receive *immediate website notification* of workshop status. Email reminders will also follow.

MY CLASSES: All WMRLS members who register for a workshop can create a password and access a history of all class registrations and workshops attended.

DROP DOWN MENUS: The new WMRLS CE Calendar includes drop down menus to enable staff to search for workshops by topic, presentation type (computer lab, conference room, offsite), and date.



WEB BUTTONS: Web buttons (like those pictured at left) provide an abundance of options like sending event reminders, printing events by date and/or topic, and alerting colleagues of workshops.

Continuing Education Calendar

Summer 2008

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

Tuesday July 15, 2008 ~ 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Seen any Joint Replacement Videos Lately?

Join us for a 2 hour overview of recent changes and additions to the statewide databases. Enhancements to the Infotrac multimedia offerings include more podcasts of your favorite NPR radio shows, video of over 120 common medical procedures and much more. We'll also explore Literary Reference Center among other databases. C'mon, you know you want to listen to an interview with Chinua Achebe while watching a knee replacement. Don'tcha? Your patrons might! Location: WMRLS Computer Lab

Wednesday July 16, 2008 ~ 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Reference Roundtable

The WMRLS Reference Advisory Committee (RAC) invites you to help present a potpourri of online resources that member libraries subscribe to. This is a chance to demo any reference resources that you offer your patrons other than the statewide electronic databases provided by the MBLC. Show us the online resources that you love---we'll have a vendor demo without the salespeople! Karen Demers, RAC chair and Adult Services Librarian in Wilbraham, is the facilitator of this event. Location: Wilbraham Public Library

Tuesday July 22, 2008 ~ 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Navigating the Stacks: Reading Maps and Whole Collection RA

The Learning Objectives of the workshop include: understanding the expanding nature of appeal; understanding how the whole collection can be used when making suggestions to readers; exploring the use of reading maps and read-arounds in RA work; and, being better able to make connections between areas of the collection. Our presenter is Neal Wyatt, author of *The Readers' Advisory Guide to Nonfiction* (ALA, 2007). Location: WMRLS Conference Room

Tuesday July 29, 2008 ~ 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Online Collaboration with Wikis

Using PBwiki as our model, participants of this workshop will work together to create a wiki, discuss the how's and why's of effective wiki collaboration, review best practices, and preview Wiki How-To Guides, Videos, and PowerPoint presentations. Janet Eckert is the workshop leader. Location: WMRLS Computer Lab

Tuesday August 5, 2008 ~ 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Blogging for Beginners


This workshop will focus on how to create a library website using free blogging software. Janet Eckert, Continuing Education Coordinator, WMRLS, will lead this workshop and is the contact person for this program. Location: WMRLS Computer Lab

**Western Massachusetts Regional
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Visit the WMRLS Summer Reading Program Website for complete information
<http://www.wmrls.org/sum/>

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 June 27, 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/wrapperjuly2008>

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