



WRapper Newsletter

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Best of the West ~ 2007

This issue of **WRapper** welcomes the new year by celebrating our WMRLS Motto :

Libraries: Cooperating, Communicating, Sharing!

We thank the staff and trustees of all of our member libraries who answered our call for Best Library Programs & Services of 2007.

Hi-Tech for Everyone ~ The Wilbraham Public Library offered a four-part series on new technologies including downloadable audiobooks, blogs and RSS, podcasts and vodcasts, and downloadable video. As a result of the series, several participants purchased MP3 players to listen to audiobooks. Others created accounts with Bloglines to manage their feeds and even receive updates on new library purchases. ~ *Karen Demers, Adult Services Librarian, Wilbraham Public Library*

A Night at the Library: Where History Comes Alive ~ Current residents of Stockbridge and their friends had a chance to meet ten former residents at "A Night at the Library: Where History Comes Alive" on Sunday, October 28. Volunteers, dressed in period costumes and steeped in historical information, wandered the rooms of the library, talking to each other and to the modern day visitors. Among the spirits were the first minister's wife, Cyrus Field of transAtlantic cable fame, authors Catharine Sedgwick and Rachel Field, the founder of the library, and even 'The Gentleman Burglar' of 1893. The program was a wonderful way to present local history while portraying real people from the past. The intergenerational audience could converse with the ghosts or just step back and watch. It was hard to determine if the visitors or the spirits were having more fun. ~ *Barbara Allen, Curator, Stockbridge Library*

A Year of Bests at UMass Amherst Library ~ The Friends of the UMass Amherst Libraries held their 9th Annual Donor Appreciation Reception in September. Kenneth Gloss, proprietor of the nationally known Brattle Book Shop in Boston, gave an exciting talk entitled, "Treasures in Your Attic: Old and Rare Books." Political activist, Tom Hayden, gave a talk "Fifty Years of Radical Activism: An Evening with Tom Hayden" as part of the Third Annual Colloquium on Social Change sponsored by the UMass Amherst Libraries' Department of Special Collections and University Archives. The colloquium included a panel discussion, "The Sixties: The Way We Really Were." The UMass Amherst Library's Interlibrary Loan Department was named the top NELINET lender for the second year in a row, lending out 21,796 items. Harvard was second with 21,196 and Yale in sixth place with 12,626. New services for 2007: multifunctional scanning, saving, and printing equipment for microforms; laptops and digital camcorders available for loan; and a reading room with current issues of 80 popular magazines and newspapers. ~ *Leslie Schaler, Communication Assistant, UMass Amherst Library*

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The World Cafe ~ The Wilbraham Public Library hosted a three-part series of small group discussions on the environment, political awareness, and philosophy and ethics. Each session was facilitated by a guest speaker with expertise in the topic. Participants commented that they enjoyed sharing their viewpoints on timely subjects and meeting other members of the community with similar interests. ~ *Karen Demers, Adult Services Librarian, Wilbraham Public Library*

School/Public Library Cooperative Projects ~ With funding provided by a variety of grants (LCC, FEE, PTO, Friends of Library), we created a strong liaison with the local elementary school by bringing to students guest artists and writers, in particular Margot Apple and Ann Turner, Margot brought a number of books she's illustrated, read them to first and second graders, and helped the students begin a quilt which incorporated haikus and drawings. Ann's historical fiction became the foundation for older students (grades 3-6) to conduct research, engage in creative writing, and work with Ann on revision and her process of gathering historically accurate information for her novels. ~ *Chris Johnston, Director, Robertson Memorial Library, Leyden*

International Film Festival ~ The South Hadley Public Library hosted a Summer International Film Festival in July. Participants screened films from Canada, Norway, Spain, and Cuba while enjoying complimentary popcorn and soda in our air-conditioned room. Note: Our subscription to the Film Movement series from Recorded Books gives the library a one-time public performance license. ~ *Joseph Rodio, Library Director, South Hadley Public Library*

Book to Movie Fantasy Reading Club ~ This fall, I started the Book-to-Movie Fantasy Reading Club. When I went to **Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix** last summer, the theater showed previews of **The Seeker: The Dark Is Rising** and **The Golden Compass** and I knew from visiting the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art that there were big plans for **The Spiderwick Chronicles**. I had learned from our director that we had increased circulation in all material types in our library with the exception of young adult. In our library as in many, that collection represents kids ages 9 to 13. Thus was born the Book-to-Movie Fantasy Reading Club, geared for exactly that group. For the Susan Cooper and Philip Pullman books, I actually purchased paperbacks enough for a group of 10, and asked our Friends group to subsidize movie tickets. The Greenfield Garden Cinemas are across the street from our library, and owner George Gohl was very happy to cordon off a section of the theater on opening night of each movie for our discussion group. We distribute books a month before the film opens; hold a book discussion on the Monday night of the opening week; go to the opening as a group; and meet after the film to talk about the book and the movie. Our plans for Spiderwick are more elaborate and include a tour of the "Spiderwick: from Page to Screen" exhibit. We have borrowed copies of the five books from other libraries (hooray for the network!) so that ten kids can read all the books and come to five discussion meetings, one for each title. Future titles include **Prince Caspian** in May and **Inkheart** when that release date is announced. I highly recommend doing this. It has helped me bond with this age group more than ever and it's a great way to show kids how Hollywood changes books, for good or ill, to adapt them to film. ~ *Kay Lyons, Children's Librarian, Greenfield Public Library, Greenfield*

Pittsfield Reads! Citywide Reading Project ~ Our citywide reading project: Pittsfield READS! is due to kick off on January 12 at the Berkshire Athenaeum. We have received an additional grant from the Berkshire Bank, which we have used to have a professional artist design a project logo, and pay for the large print books. Berkshire Bank is also providing billboard advertising, and has been very helpful steering this now enormous project. Megan Whilden from the Mayor's Office of Cultural Pittsfield has provided amazing publicity, press releases, and contacts, and Patricia Douillet, Pittsfield High School Librarian, has facilitated free printing for our Pittsfield Personalities (everyone is holding **A Walk In the Woods** and smiling!) We are ready to go! ~ *Meredith G. Cochran, Librarian, Taconic High School Library, Pittsfield*

YouTube and Libraries: It Could be a Beautiful Relationship ~ Congratulations to the Williams College Library whose YouTube library orientation productions are featured within the American Library Association of College and Research Libraries publication **YouTube and libraries: It could be a beautiful relationship** by Paula L. Webb [C&RL News, June 2007, Vol. 68, No. 6] ~ *WMRLS-One-Blog Posting, November 26, 2007*

Lending Laptop Program ~ Forbes Library has started offering a lending laptop program. Patrons check the laptops out for in-library use for up to two hours and connect via our wireless internet connection. This service has been very popular and has significantly increased computer access for patrons. We have solicited donations from the community and have been receiving a slow but steady stream of them. We have set a minimum standard that includes the ability to run Windows XP or better and offer the donor a receipt for tax purposes. The hard drive is reformatted before they are offered to the public. We have developed a brochure with guidelines about the program that are posted on our public service desks. We would be happy to share this brochure with you and answer questions about this successful program. ~ *Lisa Downing, Assistant Director, Forbes Library, Northampton*

Music and Movement for Young Children ~ Music and Movement for Young Children is coordinated by our Children's Librarian, Linda Hickman. The performers, Tom Carroll and Laurie Davidson, Montague residents, provide song and movement for many young children. This program rotates between our three libraries and is held on a weekly basis. Attendance at this fun, interactive program is so large that our performance spaces literally bulge at the seams. This program is funded by the Gill-Montague Family Network, thanks to the efforts of Linda, who is very good at getting grants for programs the library cannot afford. ~ *Susan SanSoucie, Library Director, Montague Public Libraries*

WMRLS One-Blog: Many Voices One Blog ~ On Halloween Day, WMRLS featured a Blogging for Beginners Continuing Education Workshop. Prior to the workshop, librarian participants were required to post a spooky library story or joke to our new blog. Our blogging adventure was such fun that we decided to open it to all WMRLS member libraries as a communication vehicle to share stories about one's library, review books, DVDs, CDs, and websites, and promote seats at upcoming library events. At this writing, staff of WMRLS member libraries have posted over 100 messages to our blog. Also featured on the WMRLS One Blog are links to the blogs that our beginning bloggers created at this workshop (see Leroy's Blog posted below). Be sure to join our western Massachusetts virtual library community by emailing your news item to janet.eckert.wmrls@blogger.com ~ *Janet Eckert, WMRLS*

Blogging at the East Longmeadow Public Library ~ Check out Leroy's Blog! Leroy, the library dragon and ultimate reading buddy at the East Longmeadow Public Library, has a new blog to keep parents and children up to date about all the great things happening in the Children's Department. To access Leroy's blog, just go to <http://www.libraryleroy.blogspot.com> Leroy will keep families informed weekly (sometimes daily!) about special events, workshops, and story times, as well as dispensing his dragon-brand of wisdom about favorite books, activities, and holidays. Be sure to visit the blog and give him some feedback! In an attempt to reach out to area teens who like to read, the library has also created a Teen Reading Blog. Each week the teen blog will highlight new editions to the teen fiction collection. We will post reviews and we invite teens to post their reviews. It is clear to us that area teens are reading and are excited to see new editions to the collection. What we want is for teens to share their views with us and other teens. Let's face it, teens like to read what other teens recommend. So let's get started! To access the teen blog go to <http://www.ellibraryteens.blogspot.com/> ~ *Sharon Bellenoit, Reference Assistant, East Longmeadow Public Library*

Green Efforts ~ In an effort to help save the planet, Forbes Library promoted a campaign to help library patrons become more environmentally friendly this past holiday season. Some of our "green efforts" included an eco friendly display of books, a bibliography of "green resources" and links from the Forbes Library wiki subject guides to environmentally friendly websites and books in the library catalog. A workshop was held on recycling an old sweater into a scarf or a hat. Patrons were encouraged to share their green tips by posting them on the "Go Green for the Holidays" bulletin board. We reminded everyone that borrowing books, DVD's, CD's, magazines, newspapers and other information from the library is considered a form of recycling! The Library is the ultimate green machine! ~ *Jennifer Ditkoff, Information Services, Forbes Library, Northampton*

Graphic Novel Discussion Series ~ Our graphic novel discussion series, Modern Marvels, was a huge success! This grant funded program, part of the Let's Talk About It, ALA series was thought provoking, engaging and incredibly enjoyable. Between 30 and 40 people attended each of the five sessions. ~ *Beth Girshman, Adult Services Librarian, Jones Library, Amherst*

Tales by Mail ~ Tales by Mail invites readers to record a favorite storybook, in their own voice, to share with loved ones who are far away. These recordings are perfect for bedtimes and car trips. We have had an enthusiastic response from grandparents. Personally, I have created a number of recordings for my 3-year-old nephew in Florida. I included copies of the books as gifts. One patron recorded some favorite original bedtime stories; this CD will be saved in a hope chest to share with future generations. Another grandparent recorded a Judy Blume chapter book for family in Hawaii. Additionally, Tales by Mail promotes awareness for Tech-Teens. Tech-Teens are an already established volunteer group whose members commit one hour a week, sitting with a laptop, offering one-to-one computer tutoring. Staff schedule the recording time. Tech-Teens record & burn the audio CD. ~ *Helene O'Connor, Information Systems Librarian, Palmer Public Library*

2007 Read Across America. ~ At Muddy Brook School, we take Read Across America literally. Each year the school library coordinates a school wide program with an American tie-in; a place (or time in our history) that would be fun for an in-depth visit. In 2007 we took the school to Alaska. I spent some seed money on an armload of Alaskan stories, folktales and non-fiction. The team of Specialists treated the entire school (k-4) to a week of grade level appropriate Alaskan readings and activities. Classroom teachers participated during the week as time allowed but definitely had fun on the actual day with Alaskan themed stories and activities. Even our cafeteria director joined in making a week of Arctic lunch menus. We do pay homage to Dr. Seuss, who I believe would have loved the enthusiasm with which we celebrate his birthday! ~ *Patty Melville, School Library Media Specialist, Muddy Brook Regional Elementary School Library, Great Barrington*

Friends of Forbes Community Room ~ Last year with the help of our Friends, we renovated a space on the ground level called the Friends of Forbes Community Room. This room has functional lightweight tables and chairs, AV equipment and a small kitchenette. The library uses the room for library programs and staff meetings and we have also opened it up for the public to use for various group gatherings. This service has really taken off this year! On a regular basis it now hosts several parenting groups, a brain injury support group, and a chess club just to name a few. All of these programs are free and open to the public. We are so pleased to be able to offer this space to the community. It falls squarely into our long range plan objective of becoming a true community center. ~ *Lisa Downing, Assistant Director, Forbes Library, Northampton*

Family Music Night ~ When in 2001, the Massachusetts Regional Library Systems Statewide Summer Reading Program focused on "firsts", I started a Family Music Night where about 40 people came and performed the first song they learned on an instrument. We had keyboards, trombones, clarinets, and violins play. We found out almost everyone knew Ode to Joy and they all played it together. It was amazing to see an eight-year-old play violin with a semi professional on the same song. We kept it up each summer but it fell flat after a few years. But then in 2007 there was Catch the Beat at your library. By this point I had knowledge of who played in town and I created a lineup of nine weeks of music called *Make it in for Music on Mondays*. One night we had a teenaged harper playing in the background of the adult section and a preteen rock band on the back lawn. One pair played standards of the 30's and 40's on keyboard and mandolin in our lobby. On a blistering hot night we had a devoted pair play lively, fast paced Celtic music. Our Teen Night focused on local teen acoustic talent who are very happy to have a chance to perform as there aren't many places for them to play. Having it be every Monday made it easy to publicize and people got into the routine of coming to the library. ~ *Julie Cavacco, Children's Librarian, Tilton Library, Deerfield*

Wicked Wednesdays-Mystery Book Club ~ Wicked Wednesdays-Mystery Book Club meets on the first Wednesday evening of each month at the Palmer Public Library. This informal adult discussion group was launched in October and anyone interested in the mystery genre was invited. The first title read was Kathy Reich's **Break No Bones**. Other titles discussed were **Still Life** by Louise Penny and **Dreaming of the Bones** (participant recommendation) by Deborah Crombie. The public response has been awesome! Originally "Wicked Wednesdays" was scheduled from October through March; however, the participants want to continue to compare notes through June! (And since there are so many good mysteries out there, I am positive "Wicked Wednesdays" will resume in the fall.) ~ *Mary Bernat, Reference Librarian, Palmer Public Library*

2007 a Magical Year for New Reader Series ~ In a library's Children's Room certain books make a year memorable. This year **Rainbow Magic Fairies**, an extensive series of short, simple fairy stories prompted many young girls to begin reading on their own. The stories are also short to hold attention as an at-home read aloud, and the catchy illustrations peppered throughout the books provide alluring visuals. There are also the **Jewel Fairies**, the **Weather Fairies**, the **Pet Keeper Fairies**, and the **Party Fun Fairies**, many currently only available in the UK. We had to order several from England to keep up with the demand. Daisy Meadows is a pseudonym for the four writers of the **Rainbow Magic** books for younger children. Visit the official website for book titles, and activity downloads at <http://www.rainbowmagic.co.uk/books.html> A very successful "Rainbow Magic Fairies" party was held in early summer. We are ready for an encore in 2008! Party details, crafts and a list of 2007 great new- readers books for boys and girls will be posted on the WMRLS Reads! Youth Service blog <http://wmrlsreads.blogspot.com/>. Boys and girls in the four to seven year-old age group were drawn in by many other new reader series that burst onto the scene this year, the year 2007 was abundant in books for new readers! What is more exciting than watching a child grow into a reader? ~ *Janice McArdle, Youth Service Librarian, Granby Public Library*

Middle & High School Community Read ~ Lenox Memorial Middle & High School conducted its first Community Read with all middle school students, staff, and teachers including our new superintendent reading Paul Fleischman's **Seedfolks**. Teachers planned various learning activities in grades 6, 7, and 8 while the library created a series of READFOLKS posters using digital photos of students and a favorite book. Sixth graders will end the year with a field trip to a working community garden. Building on the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners/Massachusetts Regional Library Systems ReadsInMA online program, students in grades 6, 7, 8, and 9 are reading and posting reviews to their own reading site throughout the school year. All 6th graders have been participating in the Massachusetts Children's Book Award program while grades 7, 8, and 9 are reading and writing reviews as part of their English assignment. The online reading program has provided a great way to encourage reading and further enhance the library classroom connection. Visits the Lenox Memorial Middle & High School Library's ReadsInMA website: <http://www.readsinma.org/lenoxschools/> ~ *Brenda Durrin, Librarian, Lenox Memorial Middle & High School Library*

READ Public Relations Campaign! ~ Using READ software purchased from the American Library Association, the staff of the Wilbraham Public Library decided to start a new public relations campaign featuring community leaders and other local "celebrities" on bookmarks and a few large posters. We particularly wanted to have local faces that are recognizable to Wilbraham's children, so our choices included a pediatrician, a preschool teacher, the Police Chief, a firefighter, elementary school teachers, a priest, a YMCA coach and our Teens group. We had a great response from 15 men, women and students who came to the library in February to pose for a photo, which we later integrated into the software's backgrounds. After considerable use of Photoshop, we were ready to take these 15 jobs to the printer, making 100 bookmarks and 2 posters of each person. One poster was given to the local leader, to be placed in their workplace, and we kept one poster to be posted here in the library. We had a Big Reveal at an open house in May, with most celebrities and their families in attendance, which kicked off our READ public relations campaign. The Children's Department also highlighted this campaign with displays of "Our Town" and puzzles featuring these community leaders. Using this READ software from the American Library Association, the library staff was able to feature various recognizable Wilbraham professionals on large posters which are seen around town. ~ *Elaine Wrubel, Head of Children's Services, Wilbraham Public Library*

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, 24/7 on-line access to resources and databases, the MBLC is launching a new advertising campaign and website. Visit the MBLC Public Awareness Campaign website for complete information:

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

Jitterbugs: Childcare/Public Library Collaborations ~ We have had a growing relationship with Jitterbugs Child Care Center and this year we were able to offer many exciting programs for young children because of the Mother Goose on the Loose LSTA grant we received. Nicole Bennis, the director of Jitterbugs, and I decided to celebrate the Week of the Young Child together and it was a fabulous event. We invited all the families from Jitterbugs to come to the library on a Thursday evening for a MGOL program in the children's room and then everyone came up to the main floor of the library for a special art night. The teachers had done a wonderful job displaying the children's art work along with a picture of each child that was taken while they were creating their work. We unveiled their art and the children proudly showed everyone their work while socializing over fruit and cheese. Twenty families (out of 23) participated, and five new library cards were issued that night. It occurred during open hours so many people commented on how much fun it looked like everyone was having. We decided it will be an annual event. ~ *Jennifer Whitehead, Head of Children's Services, Clapp Memorial Library, Belchertown*

Paws To Read ~ Forbes Library reading ambassadors, Tessa Rose and Lily spend several hours a week helping new readers hone their skills by being good listeners. These therapy dogs welcome children and families to the library daily and help to make it a warm and inviting place to visit. They live with Children's Librarian Jude McGowan. ~ *Jude McGowan, Youth Services Librarian, Forbes Library, Northampton*

Teen Advisory Board ~ This year our Teen Advisory Board (T.A.B.) did a great job providing fun activities for the Palmer community. In April, they held a large "Spring Egg Coloring Event"! Using proceeds from a bake sale, T.A.B. provided egg coloring kits and any help that our local kids needed to make beautiful eggs! In October, T.A.B. created an amazing "Fall Festival", making all the games such as ring toss, prize tub and bean bag toss! They created signs, painted faces, helped kids color pumpkins, and baked goodies for kids and parents to buy. With 50 people attending, it was a great success. But the biggest success of 2007 had to be the Gingerbread house workshop. Over 90 people came to make their houses out of gingerbread, royal icing and candy! T.A.B members helped plan and execute an amazing event that kicked off the holiday season for Palmer! ~ *Krista Navin, Young Adult Librarian/Volunteer Coordinator, Palmer Public Library*

Drop In and Discover School Year Reading Program ~ A few years back I was called upon to create a school year reading program as a result of donations on behalf of a community member who had passed away. I called it Drop in and Discover. The money has been used up but I am continuing this ongoing program. I have a table set up in the Children's Room that always has something happening. I rely on the seasons for inspiration and I vary the amount of involvement from me that is necessary. Sometimes it's "make your own wrapping paper" or it's just a table of puzzles. It works for this community and my patrons' varied schedules. I know it succeeds when I have a family drop in because "Julie always has something going on at the library." ~ *Julie Cavacco, Children's Librarian, Tilton Library, Deerfield*

A Tale for the Seven Towns ~ The town libraries of Deerfield, Leverett, Montague, New Salem, Shutesbury, Sunderland, and Wendell have joined together to sponsor a community reading program this winter entitled "A Tale for Seven Towns." The seven towns are neighbors in the Southeast corner of Franklin County. The library directors together chose the National Book Award winning book, **The Worst Hard Time: The Untold Story of Those Who Survived the Great American Dust Bowl**, by Timothy Egan. Each of the seven libraries is responsible for organizing and funding its own events, which range from book discussions, the showing of films about the dust bowl, children's activities, and a community dance, to speakers on topics including climate change and ecological land use. The libraries will be publicizing all of the events together to the media and in flyers. All events will be free and open to the public. Registration is January 14 - February 2, and the program will run from February 4 - March 31. ~ *Linda Wentworth, Director, Leverett Library*

Open Mic Series ~ Our monthly Open Mic series, hosted by Crystal Senter Brown, attracts at least 30 people a session, with new faces and "first-time" readers every month. ~ *Anna Brandenburg, Program Coordinator, Springfield City Library*

Honor Someone Special ~ Buy a Children's Book for the Bookmobile

by Louise Kanus, Secretary/Clerk, Friends of WMRLS

The public's response to the Friends of WMRLS' "Honor Someone Special" bookmobile project has been generous. In November, information packets with a supply of donation forms went out to every WMRLS public library. The public has responded using the donation forms found on libraries' circulation desks. The project got a further boost when a splendid feature article appeared in the December 7 issue of Springfield's **The Republican**. On January 18, the **Daily Hampshire Gazette** also published an excellent article on the bookmobile and other services of WMRLS. Almost \$3400 has been donated as of this writing, and more is anticipated as the project continues into the new year. The funds will be used to purchase children's books for the bookmobile, which now serves 76 towns and villages throughout western Massachusetts.

So far, the 58 contributors (four from out-of-state) represent 24 different western Massachusetts cities and towns. Of these, 14 are towns that receive bookmobile service. As the project continues, we hope to see this number increase. We are pleased to note the number of contributors from towns and cities that do not benefit from bookmobile service but appreciate its value nevertheless.

Contributions have ranged from \$260 from the Friends of the East Longmeadow Public Library to \$200 from Anonymous (Bless you!) to \$20, which is the more typical donation. It is really gratifying to see this kind of support, and touching to see people so ready to honor, celebrate and remember friends and loved ones in this way. Five librarians were among the honorees, by the way!

The Hatfield branch of the Bank of Western Massachusetts is also to be congratulated and thanked for inviting Friends of WMRLS to set up an "Honor Someone Special" display table (with donation forms) during the holidays to increase public awareness of the bookmobile project. It was a nice example of partnership and of opportunities to get the word out into other venues in our local communities.

Please remember – this project is ongoing. Keep those pink donation forms on the circulation desks and, where possible, place them at other sites in the community. For the love of your bookmobile!



For complete information about the
Honor Someone Special ~ Buy a Children's Book for the Bookmobile Fundraising Campaign
Visit the Friends of WMRLS website ~ <http://friends.wmrls.org/>

Friends of WMRLS ~ Legislative Breakfasts Updates!

In February and March, the Friends will be working with five Pioneer Valley library hosts to plan breakfasts while the Berkshire Breakfast Committee is planning an event at the North Adams Public Library. The breakfasts bring together state legislators, local officials, library staff and supporters, and representatives from the MBLC, C/W MARS, and WMRLS to advocate for the annual library legislative agenda. Your attendance at the breakfasts is a valuable way to stay informed and to show your support. Legislative breakfasts are as follows:

Senator Michael Knapik ~ Friday, February 29 ~ 8:30 am - Holyoke Public Library

Senator Benjamin Downing ~ Friday, March 7 ~ 8:00 am - North Adams Public Library

Senator Gale Candaras ~ Friday, March 7 ~ 7:30 am - Hampden Public Library

Senator Stephen Buoniconti ~ Friday, March 14 ~ 7:30 am - Chicopee Comprehensive High School Library

Senator Stephen Brewer ~ Friday, March 14 ~ 7:30 am - Palmer Public Library

Senator Stanley Rosenberg ~ Friday, March 21 ~ 7:30 am ~ Jones Library, Amherst

To register to attend a western Massachusetts Legislative Breakfast, visit the WMRLS website ~ <http://www.wmrls.org/wmrls/legislativebf.html>

Remembering Doris Abramson

by John Ramsay, Regional Administrator, WMRLS

Doris Abramson, a longtime WMRLS supporter, passed away on January 7. Doris was a poet, dramatist, professor emeritus in theatre at UMass-Amherst and a pioneering scholar of black theatre. For many years she and Dorothy Johnson, her partner of 40 years, owned the Common Reader Bookshop in New Salem.

With such literary credentials, it should be no surprise that Doris was also a champion for WMRLS. She and Dorothy were frequent borrowers of bookmobile materials loaned to the New Salem Public Library and also relied on ILL support for several projects. Doris' mother was good friends with Rena Durkan, and two decades ago Doris and Dorothy suggested to Ms. Durkan that she might consider bequeathing part of her estate toward library materials at WMRLS. Who would have expected that in 1997 WMRLS would receive some \$250,000 from Rena Durkan's estate! It is with these funds as well as monies raised by the Friends of WMRLS that the bookmobile program is still surviving despite debilitating budget cuts.

I had the pleasure of meeting Doris and Dorothy several times over the past few years, including at the groundbreaking and grand opening ceremony for the New Salem Public Library, which formerly housed their bookshop. They participated in similar events for WMRLS, and Dorothy is currently a library trustee in New Salem.

All of us at WMRLS will miss the support and company of Doris Abramson. Our member libraries have benefited from her interest and passion for books and literature. The Durkan Fund that has brought reading matter to so many residents of Western Massachusetts over the past several years is a fitting tribute to the memory of this inspirational woman whose life touched so many.

In This Corner...Bar Code Label Placement

by Jan Resnick, Assistant Regional Administrator, WMRLS

There are a lot of places to stick a circulation label, and Regional member libraries use most of them. As we look for ways to curb delivery costs which may someday involve scanning/sorting equipment, and as patrons try to find circulation labels for self-checkout, all this variety isn't such a helpful thing. Consequently, the WMRLS Executive Board adopted the following recommendations for Barcode Label Placement at its December 5 meeting:

- Place barcode circulation labels on the front of all new materials, in the upper left corner, parallel to the top of the item. (This location is also the best for scanning items for inventory.).
- Begin labeling new materials in this location immediately.
- Do not change barcode locations retrospectively.

If you would like a copy of the Barcode Label Placement recommendation, please contact me by phone at 413/665-9898 or 800/282-7755 or email me at jresnick@wmrls.org.

Digital Commonwealth Meeting on March 5 at HCC

by Julie H. Bartlett, Archivist, Holyoke Community College

The Digital Commonwealth (www.digitalcommonwealth.org) is having membership meetings across the state this spring. The March 5 session will be at Holyoke Community College's Kittredge Center from one to three p.m. Members and prospective members are invited to come and share with other libraries their current and future projects and discuss their needs and challenges. For additional information or to register for this session, contact President Vivien Goldman at viviengoldman@comcast.net

Annual Meeting Features Optimism

by John Ramsay, Regional Administrator, WMRLS

Over 50 people enjoyed the Annual Meeting of the WMRLS Council of Members on November 19 at the fascinating Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art in Amherst. Aside from having an opportunity to tour the Museum and its many interesting exhibits, member librarians passed a Regional budget and Plan of Service for FY2009 and elected an Executive Board, which is now comprised of Christine Bergquist, Wilbraham Public Library, Clerk; Judith Clini, Agawam Public Library, President; Catherine Doyle, Westfield State College; Lee Fogarty, Springfield City Library; Betty Johnson, Griswold Memorial Library, Colrain, Past President; Lauren Cunniffe, Stoneleigh-Burnham School, Greenfield; Priscilla Perkins, Western New England College; Susan Peterson, East Longmeadow Public Library; Eric Poulin, Greenfield Community College, Vice President/President-Elect; Joan Powers, Undermountain Elementary School, Sheffield; Susan SanSoucie, Montague Libraries, Treasurer; Martha Santoro, Franklin Law Library; and Faith White, Sunderland.

The most encouraging message of the day was delivered by Rob Maier, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. He feels there are indications from various levels of State government that FY2009 may witness a reversal of bad fortune for libraries since the devastating reductions that took place in the early years of this century. With the six Regional Systems still operating with 17% less money than they had in FY2002, services need a "shot in the arm" to get things moving back in a more positive direction.

Unfortunately, Governor Patrick's version of the FY09 State budget, released on January 23, contained very few increases for library accounts. It is therefore especially important that all library supporters attend one of the six Legislative Breakfasts throughout the Western Region and travel on the Friends of WMRLS bus for Library Legislative Day at the State House on April 2. Our State Senators and Representatives need to be encouraged to make increases for library funding a priority for FY2009.

Thank You, Brooke

by John Ramsay, Regional Administrator, WMRLS

Brooke Johnson has resigned as Director of the Hinsdale Public Library and President of the Executive Board of WMRLS. Facilitating the Annual Council Meeting on November 19 was her last official duty as President.

We will miss her simple self-introductions at meetings: "I'm Brooke from Hinsdale." We will miss the energy and enthusiasm she exhibited in all her endeavors, which were many, over the past couple of years. She ran excellent Board meetings, and even brought refreshments from time to time. She was always looking for new ideas and ways to promote awareness of WMRLS to member libraries, the MBLC, and the legislature. She was also the inspiration for several attempts at grants and fundraising, some of which are still "in the hopper." She lent tremendous assistance to the Small Library Committee's desire to have something tangible emerge from the Himmel & Wilson Study of June 2006. Once roundtables with small libraries had identified priorities, the Committee decided to "go for broke" and apply for a 2 year grant to accomplish as much benefit as possible. Brooke helped immeasurably, drafting language and approaches to translate the concepts into words.

Brooke's hands-on assistance and "rolling up the sleeves" approach was invaluable. She was also able to secure a meeting with Berkshire Senator Benjamin Downing that has resulted in some newfound support for libraries and WMRLS. Brooke even drafted a request to US Congressman John Olver to consider Federal funding to replace some older delivery trucks and the venerable WMRLS bookmobile.

Rarely have we come across an active and bright individual as Brooke Johnson who is willing to throw herself into the fray, take risks and get her hands dirty on behalf of WMRLS and its member libraries. We all owe her a great deal of thanks and appreciation.

2007: Delivery Challenges and Successes

by Mary King, Regional Librarian, WMRLS

The WMRLS Delivery Service has been busy this year!

- In March we noted that delivery handles 2 million items annually, work done by WMRLS' 8 drivers and 5 trucks plus the HILC (Five College) and CLGS (Cooperating Libraries of Greater Springfield) couriers.
- At a Delivery Awards Roundtable in August we acknowledged several library buildings where space allotted to delivery is exemplary. Sixteen libraries that do great bin preparation and bundling of materials were also recognized.
- In September we increased our number of routes to 21 a week in order to be able to carry all of the resources that are being shared across WMRLS territory.
- In the fall we hired Bo Trow, who drives delivery on Thursdays and Fridays.
- Green Van, bought in 1998 and the third oldest of our fleet of 5 delivery trucks, presented us with six harrowing months of stall-outs on the highway and intermittent refusals to start. After multiple visits to garages in western Massachusetts, Green is now fixed and running well.
- Blue Van, purchased in 1994, joined Tan Van in the Half-Million Road Mile Club; Tan was purchased in 1986 and is still in use at over 635,000 on-road miles.
- Our great C/WMARS network accounts for a lot of the increase in delivery loads, and more small libraries are becoming members of C/WMARS. Thankfully for our driving staff, libraries continue to improve their delivery practices which help Delivery Specialists keep up with the huge loads. A few examples:
 - Though South Hadley Public Library's building is too small for its very high level of activity, staff members there are finding ways to bundle more materials --- thank you so much!
 - Ludlow's public library staff viewed the Delivery Guidelines Slide Show (<http://www.wmrls.org/services/awards/index.htm>) and is now preparing great bins for drivers to pick up; an organized bin helps drivers sort the contents quickly and accurately once they are back on the delivery vehicle.
 - Williamsburg is a small community with a very busy library. Meekins' staff members have organized their space to allow for bundling, and they go out of their way to make delivery to their building a pleasant experience for the drivers.

We know that many of our libraries are doing a lot to make delivery more efficient. Thank you all---we couldn't do it without you.

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 March 7, 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/wrappermarch2008>

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

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Circuit Riders ~ There IS Something for FREE!



by Becky Marconi, Project Coordinator, Together We Thrive

Is your library running out of room on its shelves? Are the new books circulating, but many haven't gone out in years? Do you wonder when you will ever find time to weed the collection? If you are in a library serving a population under 2500, help is on the way.

WMRLS was awarded a FY2008 LSTA grant for "Together We Thrive: Small Town Libraries Work as One". This grant was written in response to recommendations in the Himmel & Wilson Small Library Study to work towards "transforming the small libraries into a network of service outlets." Thrivability, not just survivability or viability, is the goal. The Together We Thrive grant will support a team of Circuit Riders "to travel to small libraries to help with weeding collections and to foster approaches to cooperation" including public relations, programming, collection sharing and development.

We will be discussing this grant in more detail at the Bookmobile Roundtables scheduled for February 13 at WMRLS and February 14 at the Lee Library Association. Go to <http://www.wmrls.org/ce/main.html> for program details and registration information.

If you are interested in having a Circuit Rider come to your library for FREE, please attend the Bookmobile Roundtable or contact Becky Marconi, Together We Thrive Project Coordinator by phone at 413/665-9898 ext. 112; or by email at bmarconi@wmrls.org

In addition, if you have experience or expertise in collection maintenance, IT, cataloging or other aspects of library work and you are interested in being a paid member of the grant team, please visit <http://www.wmrls.org/wmrls/job2.html> for the Circuit Rider job posting.

Visit the Together We Thrive Website
<http://www.wmrls.org/lsta/thrive/>

WMRLS Continuing Education Calendar

February/March

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

- ⇒ **Explore, Discover & Learn With Boston Public Library Schoolrooms** ~ 3:30 to 5:30, Thursday, February 7 ~ Bellamy Middle School, Chicopee
- ⇒ **Bookmobile Roundtables**
 - ⇒ 10 to noon, Wednesday, February 13 ~ WMRLS
 - ⇒ 10 to noon, Thursday, February 14 ~ Lee Library Association
- ⇒ **Online Collaboration with Wikis** ~ 10 to 1, Thursday, February 21 ~ WMRLS
- ⇒ **You Can't Always Get What You Want, But ... You Can Budget for What You Need!** ~ 10 to 1, Tuesday, February 26 ~ WMRLS
- ⇒ **Video Gaming in the Library** ~ 10:30 to 1:30, Friday, February 29 ~ Agawam Public Library
- ⇒ **WebJunction's Fundraising for Libraries**, online course from March 1, 2008 through February 28, 2009
- ⇒ **YA Roundtable: Focus on Programming** ~ 10 to 1, Tuesday, March 4 ~ Community Room Springfield City Library
- ⇒ **Copyright Issues in the Classroom and Library Roundtable** ~ 10 to noon, Thursday, March 6 ~ Forbes Library, Northampton
- ⇒ **Developing Online Information Tutorials** ~ 9:30 to 3:30, Wednesday, March 12 ~ Ely Library, Westfield State College
- ⇒ **Making Presentations To Public Boards** ~ 9 to 4, Wednesday, March 26 ~ WMRLS