

*The News-to-use-Letter of the Maine Library Association*

## Spring! (and libraries)

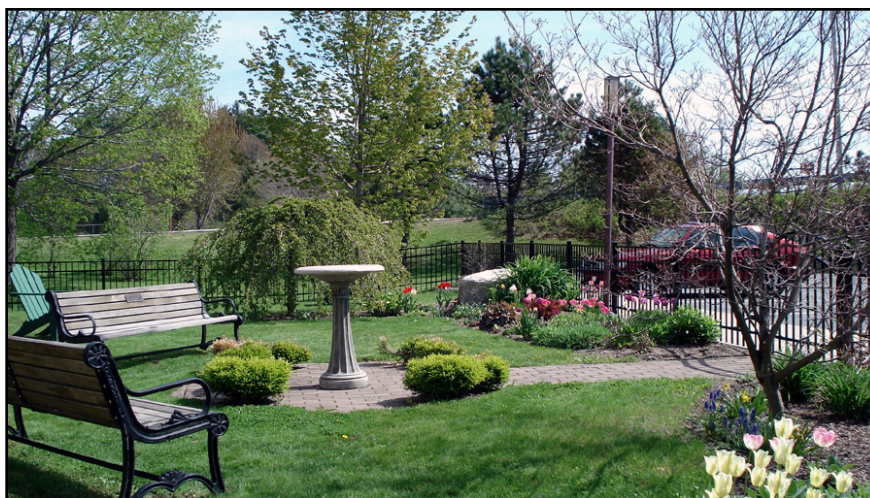
Although summer is coming fast, this is still considered our Spring Issue of MLA to Z. That stated, Jim and I, the editorial and layout department of the newsletter, respectively thought “well, what better theme for this issue than, well, Spring!”

But how does one relate the season of Spring, to libraries... in Maine? Spring is a short season here. So, I thought it might be good to make this issue short, too. “What’s the lead story?” Jim keeps asking me. Not sure – and I’ve got writer’s block now. Great.

Theme connection? Spring and libraries?

Weeding perhaps? We all have to weed our collections, right? Weeding equals gardening equals a springtime activity. Weeding, now that’s a hot library topic. Well, ok, maybe not.

How about new beginnings? You know, rototilling the garden, planting seeds, baby birds, that new spring in your step because the sun is shining and flowers are blossoming?



*A springtime photo by Melissa Madigan, Merrill Memorial Library.*

New beginnings it is!

And what is more fitting in an article about new beginnings and spring than renewal of another sort? If you’ve just renewed or joined MLA, now is a great time to start thinking about just which MLA committee and/or interest group you would like to join.

Committees and Interest Groups? What does MLA need committees and interest groups for?

They are actually the backbone of the association. Committees and Interest Groups are made up of fellow MLAer’s who aren’t afraid of a “little” time commitment, the opportunity to deal with

new situations, build teams with other Maine librarians, and be exposed to other ways of thinking about and viewing our profession. Here are descriptions of Interest Groups within MLA.

### *Archives & Special Collections Interest Group:*

This interest group was begun for special collections librarians, archivists, and librarians responsible for manu-

scripts, rare books, and other

"special" collections, or those who are interested in such materials. One of the group’s goals is to connect librarians who deal with such issues – but who may not have formal training – with experts who can help them. The group also plans workshops and presentations for the group and for conference.

### *Youth Services Section Interest Group:*

This is a group for children’s librarians and other interested librarians. Not only does YSS present at conference, this group also presents the Beg, Borrow, and Steal statewide yearly event. YSS has an executive board and several committees that may interest librarians who serve our libraries’ youth.

### *New Member Interest Group:*

Here's an obvious one for all you MLA newcomers. If you are new to MLA and want to join other newbies, check out this group.

And then, there are the MLA committees: Conference and Continuing Education, Membership, Standards, Budget and Finance, Intellectual Freedom, Nominations, Communications, Legislative News & Advocacy, and Scholarship and Loan. You'll need more details than I can provide here, so check them out at <http://mainelibraries.org>. and, hey, for some real fun, what about the MLA Executive Board?



There's plenty of space in the Maine Library Association for anyone who wants to become involved and make a difference. Yeah, yeah, I know – it's a cliché. But who says clichés can't be true?

Everyone has a passion, spread a little of yours around this planting time of year. Who knows what will grow?

*Andi Jackson-Darling is Assistant Director of the Falmouth Memorial Library and editor of MLAtoZ.*

### **Scholarship Awarded!**

The Scholarship and Loan Committee of the Maine Library Association is pleased to announce that the recipient of the Phyllis E. Ainsworth Scholarship for 2009 is Rebecca D. Bushby, Assistant Librarian at the Freeport Middle School Library.

Rebecca is a student in the Master of Library and Information Science program at Drexel University.

Congratulations, Rebecca!

### **Farewell From Molly...**

"When eating a fruit, think of the person who planted the tree." - Vietnamese Proverb



I love that quote. I have placed it in a couple of places on the library website to acknowledge the generosity of those who support the library, but the words and meaning of the quote carry over in other areas of my life, both personal and professional.

My term as the president of the Maine Library Association will end on June 30. As this date approaches, it is a natural time of reflection.

Recently, I was talking with a community member I had worked with on a major event and we were reflecting on the experience of working in groups and the joys and frustrations of that kind of work. She shared these memorable words with me: "Molly, you have to love the process." I thought about that for a long time.

Sometimes it can be frustrating working in groups when you want things to move along faster or things might not go exactly as you planned, or when there is disagreement on "how" something should be done. At other times, it can be the most rewarding undertaking imaginable. I am learning that it isn't always about the end result but how we got there, what we learned along the way, and the people who shared in the experience.

I am so grateful to everyone on the MLA Board (past and current members) for their support during the last couple of years. I have learned from each of you. I have chosen not to acknowledge individuals for fear of leaving someone out but you know who you are. Maybe you were a member of one of the various committees that helped with nominations, membership, or the bylaws.

Perhaps you played a part in the Maine Libraries Conference 2008, or maybe you took a call from me and helped with some problem-solving. Maybe you were a sounding board, or helped me field a question from the media. I know this much is true: nothing would get done without the wisdom, generosity, and dedication of my colleagues in the Maine Library Association.

It is an interesting and challenging time to work in libraries. On one hand, we're experiencing a sort of renaissance of appreciation from our communities and in the media, and on the other hand, we're facing serious economic challenges that hinder us from providing needed services due to budget cuts, decreased giving, and loss of endowments.

If you are wondering what you can do in these challenging times, I can tell you that now is a great time to get involved in your professional organization. There are many levels of commitment and I bet you will be able to find something that suits you and your schedule and skill set.

I recommend you start with membership on a committee to get to know how the organization works and the people involved. After gaining some experience, consider trying for a leadership role. We need your skills, ideas, insight, enthusiasm, and passion for the profession.

Working for the organization has been a great experience and it is in these moments of reflection I think about the people "who planted the tree." I am deeply grateful for their contributions.

*Molly Larson is Director of Rockport Public Library and the outgoing MLA President.*

### **MLA 2.0!**

MLA is on Twitter (see page 5) at: [www.twitter.com/MaineLibraries](http://www.twitter.com/MaineLibraries), and on Facebook at: [www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=39104320008&ref=ts](http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=39104320008&ref=ts). There are 233 Facebook Group members, and 422 Twitter followers as of MLAtoZ's publication date. Join in!

## ...and Hello From Sonja

As Vice President/President Elect of the Maine Library Association, I'm pleased to say that this year has been a productive one for the entire Executive Board.

Under the kind and patient leadership of our President, Molly Larson, MLA strengthened advocacy for libraries and created a firm foundation not only among individuals on the Executive Board, but also with the committees and teams of organizations the Board deals with. Molly has also inspired strong community relationships that will sustain the Association into the distant future.

Maine libraries and librarians share many challenges and successes with our counterparts worldwide, but we also face unique challenges such as rural isolation. From our annual conference to working committees to exploring our Bylaws and legislative work, we are constantly looking for ways to provide mutual support, share information, and bring new ideas and innovations to our members to meet those challenges with practical solutions.

The Maine Library Association is over 118 years old. We know this from one of the original documents—a *Handbook for the Association* dated 1915 and now housed at the Maine State Library in which two themes are presented—fiscal efficiency and “stimulating interest.” Many moons later in present day, the Executive Board still keeps these two themes at the forefront of what we do as we advocate for libraries, collaborate, and add value to your library and personal memberships.

We have better tools to communicate with one another from State to State with the global library community, for example through online social networking tools. *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *LinkedIn*, *Plurk*, *MySpace*, instant chat applications, and virtual meeting spaces are popular and extremely useful applications today.

What tools may be used in the future remains to be seen, but through the 118

years of MLA's history, one thing remains constant—the Association's devotion to effective communication to help mitigate rural isolation, express ways to be more efficient, and keeping membership interested in the MLA community.



In July of 2009, I step into the MLA Presidency and hope to continue the fine work of the many MLA Presidents who have preceded me. Some things that seem important for sustainability are a Strategic Plan, engaging membership in meetings and real time communication with the use of online tools to address, in part, rural isolation, and an investment in one of your greatest sources of MLA value, our conference.

I look forward to learning from you, talking with you, and moving the Maine Library Association into the next phase of challenges and solutions.

*Sonja Plummer-Morgan is Director of the Mark and Emily Turner Memorial Library and will become President of MLA on July 1, 2009.*

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## Maine Student Book Award: And the Winner Is...

The 2008-2009 Maine Student Book Award (MSBA) winner was announced to a crowd of enthusiastic school and public librarians at the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Reading Round-Up of Children's and Young Adult Literature Conference in April.

4,110 students from around Maine cast their votes by the April 1<sup>st</sup> deadline.

1,031 choose Jeff Kinney's *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Greg Heffley's Journal* as their favorite book from the MSBA list. This humorous, quirky novel records Greg Heffley experience as he navigates sixth grade. The inclusion of graphics

throughout the book has made this a big hit with even the most reluctant readers, both girls and boys.

Second place went to *The Invention of Hugo Cabret: A Novel in Words and Pictures* by Brian Selznick.

Although the total number of participating libraries (both school and public) fluctuates from year-to-year, the award has maintained strong support throughout its 20 years.

If you are looking for ways to build collaboration, MSBA can be a terrific program to do with your school or public library. In addition to book displays in both libraries, public librarians can booktalk the list in classrooms.

Or how about a teacher/public librarian led book discussion group. There is even an opportunity to partner-up for a Voting Party each year.

If you need some suggestions, contact a member of the MSBA Committee. The Committee members would be happy to help you promote this wonderful program that encourages students to expand their literary horizons. If you have successfully used MSBA in your community, please send the Maine Student Book Award Committee an email with details. We'd love to hear from you.

The committee is made up of twelve librarians and teachers from all over the State of Maine who are passionate about children's literature. Appointments are for a four-year term with the option of serving another four years. Members are expected to keep up with reading over 200 new titles published throughout the year, but we also welcome reviews from students, teachers, librarians, and parents.

For more information about how MSBA works, to obtain the current and past book lists, and to print off a copy of the review form visit our web site hosted by past committee member Laurel Parker on the Windham Public Library's web site: [www.windham.lib.me.us/msba.htm](http://www.windham.lib.me.us/msba.htm).

*Louise Capizzo is Children's Librarian at the Falmouth Memorial Library.*

## Sometimes a Feather Duster Isn't the Weapon of Choice

At our last library board meeting, I waited for a pause before new business and asked, "Anyone married to the hedge?"

After a round of blank looks, I proceeded to explain. "We pay \$175 per year to trim the hedge on two sides of the building. While the front looks ok, the side is really scruffy, provides a place for people to toss trash, makes it impossible to clean the windows which were egged last fall, and we have occasional water leaking in on that side when we have a downpour." Once I laid out my reasoning, there was a unanimous vote to have me kill the hedge.



It took half an hour with my new power pruner and the assistance of a couple local teens to cut it down. Three trips to the transfer station later, the library looked completely different.

As soon as the town crew finishes digging out the stumps, I'll be hauling in composted cow manure donated by a patron so I can fill in the holes. Patrons are lining up to offer flowers and small shrubs to landscape the area. The broken glass has been removed from the window where someone attempted to break in last fall and we'll soon be scraping and painting the trim. Patron response to the hedge's demise has been overwhelmingly positive.

We've made numerous changes inside, too, ones a feather duster wouldn't come

close to accomplishing. The storage room I referred to as our prize closet has been filled with new shelving and is now our VHS video room. At a time when most libraries are discarding VHS, I'm adding them and for a number of reasons.

First, there's still a big demand for them in Hartland. Second, several other libraries are sending their weeded ones via the delivery service so we have a heck of a selection. Third, I'm doing it as part of what I see as the eventual collaborative collection development effort. Since we're on the van delivery route, my having a big VHS collection preserves access for everyone in Maine and frees up shelf space for other libraries.

This same mindset allows me to weed other areas of the library more aggressively. If I have a hardcover fiction title which goes out every couple years and there are 5 other copies in MaineCat, I'm killing that puppy so I can add a book which nobody else has. Our patrons still have reasonable access to the weeded title and everyone else in Maine has another new book to enjoy.

If you stop and consider what makes certain stores your favorites, I suspect you'll find it comes down to a combination of customer service and product selection/access.

I try to run the Hartland Public Library the same way. Nobody gets excited when they spot a package of dusty ten-year old washers in the plumbing section at Aubuchon, but something they just read a review of in their favorite craft or hobby magazine will get their juices flowing. I think the same principle works well in a public library.

Take a look at your spring cleaning agenda. What will be your tool of choice this year?

*John Clark is a librarian who dabbles in magic, and believes in alternate worlds and liberal doses of humor. He writes fantasy and lives in Hartland.*

## Opening a Can of Worms

After pondering what to write for this issue of MLA to Z, I decided it was time to start a regular column.

Well, at least start with a column title so I don't have to come up with a title every issue for whatever it is I am writing about. The content will change with every issue, but the title will remain the same, "Opening a Can of Worms."

I chose this title because I went fishing with my nephew a while ago. He fishes with worms. He asked me what "opening a can of worms" meant. Good question.

He knows I'm a librarian and that asking me questions sends me off in all directions to find an answer. That means he gets left alone to do things that twelve-year olds like to do and he doesn't have to listen to his crazy librarian aunt.

Although I've never seen a can of worms available for sale, I thought I understood what the phrase meant. Still, I did a little research just to be sure.

It would appear that "opening a can of worms" is a phrase from the 1920's. It refers to the opening of a can of bait to find a tangle of worms, a tangle you were not expecting to find, and one which is much more complicated to unravel than expected. All you wanted to do was fish, not spend hours trying to extricate worms from each other! But you've got to untangle things before you can get to work on your real intended project, in this case, fishing.

So, there are quite a few "cans of worms" in life, and in this respect, libraries are certainly like life in general.

Got a can of worms you'd like to open? Let me know and we can explore the issue together. I'm thinking about privacy and confidentiality these days. Tell me what you're thinking about at [MLAtoZnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:MLAtoZnewsletter@gmail.com) and we'll see what we can untangle together.

*Andi Jackson-Darling is Assistant Director of the Falmouth Memorial Library and editor of MLAtoZ.*

## The Census Bureau Wants You!

As most of you know, the 2010 Census is fast approaching. In order to guarantee a complete and accurate Census, the Census Bureau has created an outreach program aimed at increasing local cooperation and participation. We are approaching local governments, schools, health care providers, churches, businesses, and libraries asking for their help in informing their residents about how important the 2010 Census is to their community.

The US Constitution mandates that a Census of all residents be conducted every ten years for the purpose of reapportioning the House of Representatives.

Over the years the final census data has become the benchmark number used in awarding all federal grant and program funds. This "snapshot" of America is vital for planning for everything from schools to nursing homes and everything in between.

When you become a Census Partner you are helping your entire community. Libraries can sponsor a poster contest, include Census in the Schools material (available free of charge) in their preschool reading hours, create a local history board based on local Census data, conduct a genealogy workshop. We know that it isn't the size of the reminder...it's the number of reminders that matter.

If you think that your library might like to participate in this important effort, please contact me for more information. As we say at Census, it's easy...it's safe...and it's important! Contact information: Gail M. Driscoll, Maine Partnership Specialist: [gail.m.driscoll@census.gov](mailto:gail.m.driscoll@census.gov). 207-450-7823(cell).



## WEB 2.0 in Your Library

As a library worker, how many times have you fielded any of the following types of questions:

Is school closing early today?

Do you have any new books in, and what are they?

How do I (get rid of the latest virus on my computer/edit a PDF document/open this attachment in my e-mail)?

Furthermore, how often have you:

Had an exciting program coming up and want to spread the word without breaking your advertising budget?

Been featured on the news for an event or service and want to share it?

Wondered what your favorite author is up to right this minute?

And wouldn't it be really cool to be able to:

Get real-time updates from scientists (including astronauts on actual space missions);

Get the latest and best information on health warnings from the CDC;

Know if there is a traffic, weather or law enforcement alert in your area;

Get information about computer applications, meetings, events, or even view live newsworthy events that you might not have even known about?

As we all know, there are some questions that a trip to the card catalog just won't answer.

Libraries today are very fortunate to have so many more options for gathering, using, and sharing information than ever before, and those options are based on the most primitive of human behaviors: social contact, more commonly referred to these days as Social Networking.

Whatever the name, the principle remains the same: I know or have learned about something interesting, and I share it with you - my contacts. You can share it with your contacts. Conversely, you have an idea or an answer to a question or problem that I and many others have; you share it one time, and we all benefit.

*Photo at left by Melissa Madigan.*

This is nothing new. All that has changed is the medium, and the speed of dissemination. Rather than calling Betty, who calls Ralph, who calls Wanda, etc., or even rather than posting it on a website that you HOPE someone will find one way or another, your information, event or idea can be written one time and shared across a vast network with [pardon the analogy] viral speed.

Two of the most popular social networking sites used by libraries at this writing are Facebook ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)) and Twitter ([www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)).

Facebook is a social networking site where you can build a community of contacts simply by being there, and those contacts can view real-time updates of activities at your organization. Facebook allows you to post pictures, fund raising pages, updates, and even to link into social applications where you can type in the name of a new book your library just purchased, and you get not just a line that says "We have James Patterson's newest book in!" but also the cover art and a place to comment. The applications available on Facebook are growing exponentially every day, as are the users.

Twitter is what is called a microblogging site. Blogs are merely web logs that allow the writers to share thoughts, information, ideas, etc. But honestly, how many do you have time to really read and follow every day? Twitter allows its users 140 characters at a time in which to post an update or share a link. Twitter's user base is exploding. You have the option of following whomever is on there of interest: YA author John Green, Astrophysicist Neil Degrasse Tyson, NASA astronaut Mike Massimino, the Centers for Disease Control, your local newspaper, fellow libraries, tech savvy gurus - you name it, and there they are.

Once set up, you can post updates for your own followers ("Closing early today due to storm;" "Accident on Route 26 tying up traffic;" "Latest from James Patterson just arrived;" "James Patterson appearing at our library!").

The biggest investment of your time will be the initial set-up of your accounts; the ROI will more than offset that time.

In considering whether to join these networking sites, ask yourself:

- How much time do I currently spend making telephone calls, writing letters or e-mails, or designing ads to promote my events and programs?
- How much time do I currently spend waiting for a webmaster to update information on our traditional website?
- How many of my past, current, and future patrons are already on these sites who could be seeing what's new at my library and making contributions to it?

For more information about social networking possibilities for your library, please visit us on Facebook ("Presque Isle Library") or on Twitter (@PresqueIsleLib). I also welcome questions at [lisashaw@presqueisle.lib.me.us](mailto:lisashaw@presqueisle.lib.me.us).

*Lisa Shaw is Reference Librarian at the Mark and Emily Shaw memorial Library in Presque Isle and the new Chair of the MLA Communication Committee.*

## Fall Conference?

As you may have heard, there will be no joint MASL/MLA Conference this fall. Instead, MLA is helping to sponsor *How to Build a Neighborhood/Community One Hello at a Time* with Pat Wagner at the October 30<sup>th</sup> Fall Council Meeting with CMLD, NMLD and SMLD.

While there won't be the typical auditorium full of vendors, there will be a great presentation on networking and community building. Pat's presentation applies to public, school and academic libraries. All staff at all levels will come away with some great strategies on building coalitions among institutions, how to reach out to underserved populations, how to participate in reinforcing community values and an exploration of what community means.

Pat Wagner has worked with Pattern Research, Inc., and its predecessor the Office for Open Network, since 1977. She is an educator, trainer, writer and consultant, focusing on personnel, leadership, management, marketing, career,

and strategic planning issues. She has special interests in conflict management, project management, community outreach, and future studies.

Most of her current clients work with and for libraries of all kinds, plus library boards, foundations, Friends groups, and national, state and regional library organizations. Pat also works for innovators in universities, schools, nonprofits, local government and professional, business and trade organizations, as well as medical, scientific and research institutions.

What else will be happening? Keep checking the MLA website <http://mainelibraries.org> for additional information. Registration will be available through the events and workshop calendar on the Maine Library website.

*Andi Jackson-Darling is Assistant Director of the Falmouth Memorial Library, editor of MLAtoz., and outgoing Chair of the MLA Communication Committee.*

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## Maine Library Association

*Promoting and enhancing the value of libraries and librarianship*

<p>Council Meetings: The MLA Council meets every other month. All meetings are open to the membership. Meetings are generally on Fridays, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted. Dates are posted on the MLA website at: <a href="http://mainelibraries.org">mainelibraries.org</a>.</p> <p>Contact information for all officers is available on the "Contact Us" page.</p>	<p>Molly Larson, <i>President</i> Rockport Public Library</p> <p>Sonia Plummer-Morgan, <i>Vice President/President Elect</i> Mark &amp; Emily Turner Memorial Library</p> <p>Rich Boulet, <i>Past President</i> Blue Hill Public Library</p> <p>Alisia Revitt, <i>Treasurer</i> Maine InfoNet</p>	<p>Carrie Rossiter, <i>Secretary</i> Camden Public Library</p> <p>Andi Jackson Darling, <i>Member-at-Large</i> Falmouth Memorial Library</p> <p><i>MLA-to-Z</i> is a publication of the Maine Library Association. Inquiries should be sent to <i>MLA-to-Z</i> at <a href="mailto:mlatoznewsletter@gmail.com">mlatoznewsletter@gmail.com</a>.</p>
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