**Notes from Small and Rural Libraries Information Session**

**MLA Annual Conference /Oct. 2 & 3, 2017**

“Interest Group” needs identified “Goals” and a liaison to the conference committee (other interest groups are technology, youth services, genealogy, reference)

Lisa Neal Shaw @ the State Library is the specialist – her role is catching the ‘knuckle ball’ and dealing with library buildings and librarian resources.

**Obligations of Group**: deal with relevant issues - group is part of MLA Board - set goals - elect officers - by-laws? Awards? - representative attend Association for Rural and Small Libraries meeting (national) - set up google drive - set up facebook page

**There are 228 public libraries in Maine**

**Collected group email addresses**

Bylaws – Helen Fogler from Thompson Free Library in Dover-Foxcroft volunteered to work on bylaws and Nick from Hartland Public Library offered to help --- it was suggested that they ‘steal’ the bylaws from other groups and make them relevant.

Liason to MLA Board and leadership roles – Lee Koenigs from Libby Memorial in Old Orchard Beach volunteered to co-chair with Louise Capizzo from Scarborough Public Library and work as liason.

**Issues Discussed:** MLS degreed librarians versus para-professional library positions –Lee mentioned that while at the ALA conference she realized that of all the libraries represented (University, public, schools) she was the only member who has total autonomy over her library, and she does not have the MLS degree.

Mentorship is key for rural librarians – there is a need to compile a list of “Who -What – Where” of small rural libraries and FIND SUPPORT for these librarians. Support would include mentoring (all agreed). Find out what is needed from the rural librarians and create workshops and trainings that can serve their professional needs.

Jenny (Maine State Library) can compile a list of the small and rural librarians in Maine and contact them about this group.

There is a National list serve for small and rural librarians that is very helpful.

Communication?

Facebook / google group / list serve. Do we want an open or closed group? There is a Facebook the was created by Lisa Shaw that could be shared.

Jenna Davis, MLA Board has a membership list

Other ideas:

* Awards?
* Graphic Design for Group (Helen Fogler suggested a pine tree with a little library beside it)?
* Budget?
* One Meeting per year needed?

Librarians (staff) Libraries (buildings) support maker space prof. development maintenance education bldg. staffing

Forum needed to share thoughts and ideas

* Google Groups
* Face Book

i.e. Louise shared that her first job was at the Peaks Island Library and she had NO degrees, but she ran the small library. There was also a discussion of the ‘social implications’ and stresses of the librarians who don’t have the master’s degree. The MLA courses that are available to library staff were mentioned … these are FREE courses and offer continuing education opportunities for library staff who are interested. LIBRARY STANDARDS were mentioned and the issue that there should be two people staffing Maine libraries is impossible in many communities. BANDWIDTH is an issue for MANY rural libraries.

This group adjourned with enthusiasm, comradery, high-fives, and a degree of excitement about what this group could offer to small and rural libraries and librarians in Maine.

Notes submitted by Jayne Lello