



# MLA to Z

*The Newsletter of the Maine Library Association*

## *In This Issue*

**Letter from the President**  
page 4

**Calendar of Events**  
page 5

**A stellar lineup for this  
year's MLA Conference**  
page 5

**Award nominations &  
grant applications are due**  
page 7

**A conference checklist**  
page 9

**News from the  
Legislative Committee**  
page 11

## **Maine Library Association**

mainelibrary@gmail.com

55 Main Street, Unit 49

Belchertown, MA 01007

207.744.7919

mainelibraries.org

## **What's Happening at the Maine State Library?**

*An update from State Librarian Jamie Ritter*

The past two years have arguably been a blur for much of the world, and the same holds true for all of us at the Maine State Library. Having said that, so much has continued to happen – and in fact really wonderful things are happening! With the arrival of spring comes lots of exciting news to share.

To start, just in the last couple of weeks and months, we have hired some wonderfully talented people to the MSL team. Please welcome, Jenny Martinez Nocito (Librarian Generalist), Jonathan Roscoe (Core Services – Reference); Kelli Burnham (Core Services – Reference), and Jeff Eastman (Section Supervisor – Collections and Digital Initiatives). And while we welcomed Marijke Visser (Section Supervisor – Library Development) many months ago, she made her permanent move to Maine official in early April. We have finally reached a full complement of staff and trust me, we need all hands on deck.

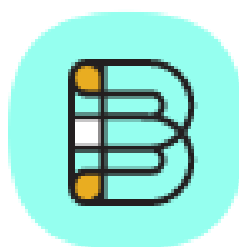
Some of the many things that are taking place are the following: Bendable Maine – this robust learning

*continued, next page*

# What's happening at Maine State Library?

*continued from page 1*

marketplace will offer all Mainers the opportunity to pursue lifelong learning through thousands of curated courses and will launch this August. We launched a statewide 'telehealth' pilot project through 10 participating Maine libraries, and this project will allow people to access their health care providers through secure and streamlined video technology set up in the library. The Library Development Continuing Education team is engaged in some initial work around diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and this will help inform our own internal policies, practices, and services, but also develop a framework that may help Maine libraries in their own DEI practices. Our Collections and Digital Initiatives team will be working through a holistic collection development effort that aims to strengthen our collection priorities, and our Public and Outreach Services team have begun the initial work to reimagine our Large Print collection and related services, as well as our Books by Mail program. All in all, so many important things are happening!



## **Bendable**



As if those things were not keeping us on our toes, I can share now that all of our initiatives in the Governor's supplemental budget request have passed! These include funds for rising database and van delivery costs, funding two positions – one for Maine InfoNet and one for a Director of Special Projects. This new 'special project' position will, in part, take on the role of getting the Imagination Library off the ground in Maine! The Imagination Library program, also funded through the Governor's budget, will help bring books to children ages birth to five years-old and will help to complement the work of Raising Readers.

This year as well, our 5-Year Library School and Technology Act (LSTA) Plan is due to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), so Janet McKenney has been working overtime to ensure that plan envisions MSL Library Development services over the next five years. And, speaking of Janet McKenney, it is bittersweet to share the news of her retirement this summer. Janet will be dearly missed at MSL for all of her leadership, yet I know how

*continued, next page*

# What's happening at Maine State Library?

*continued from page 2*

much she has earned a well-deserved retirement. Please be sure to wish her well and thank her for her years of library service in Maine.

MSL's mission is to help people, make Maine libraries stronger, and to transform information into knowledge. It's always a pleasure to work with all of you and all of your libraries, because together we do great things!



# Write to us.

**MLAtoZeditor@gmail.com**

Tell us what's happening at your library. New programs.  
Innovative ideas. Letters to the editor. Photos.  
Long articles. Short shoutouts.  
We want to hear from you.





# Letter from the President

Wynter Giddings

We currently have more than 650 active members, which is the highest number I have seen in my six years on the board! It's really a testament to your commitment to our profession, that you are all able to back the efforts of MLA by keeping your membership active. Your support is how we are able to fund work such as the future wage study, which we will use to advocate for better wages in libraries.

If you haven't attended one of our monthly Coffee Chats, I highly recommend it. This is one of the perks of MLA membership. There have been many good conversations around a wide variety of topics. If you have an idea for a chat you might like to help facilitate, please contact our Membership Chair, Sarah Skawinski at [membership@mainelibraries.org](mailto:membership@mainelibraries.org).

I recently co-facilitated a chat with Courtney Sparks, Director of Freeport Community Library. We discussed the intersection of bias and censorship with collection development, and challenged librarians to ask ourselves tough questions about our role in selecting materials, representing different points of view, and how we deal with the current information landscape, particularly in current events and social sciences.

Courtney and I spoke on this topic again during National Library Week, on a panel discussing collection development and reconsideration policies. My biggest takeaway from these discussions is that they are hard, that they are chock full o' gray areas, and that we need to keep talking and listening to each other about it.

Our Legislative Committee did a fantastic job organizing activities for National Library Week, which you can read more about on page 10.

Of course, the [MLA Annual Conference](#) is coming at the end of May, and our Conference Committee is busy filling the last few sessions of the schedule (view the schedule online on our conference webpage) and organizing some fun, too. We are hoping for a good turnout, and we are very excited to hear from our keynote speakers, Deborah Caldwell-Stone and Bill Roorbach.

I look forward to seeing many of you at Sunday River in May. Cheers!





# Mark Your Calendar

## Reading Roundup

Thursday, April 28

8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m., Virtual

## **Last day to apply for MLA Conference grants.**

Friday, April 29

## **Last day to nominate someone for an award.**

Friday, April 29

## Maine Association of School Libraries

### **one-day spring symposium at Bangor High School**

Saturday, May 14

MLA members can register for  
this event at MASL member prices.

## Maine Infonet Pre-Conference

Sunday, May 22 (Sunday River)

Register for the  
Pre-conference separately

## Annual MLA Conference

Monday, May 23 – Tuesday, May 24  
(Sunday River)

## **Academic Libraries Day**

University of Maine at Augusta  
and virtual. Stay tuned.

Thursday, June 16

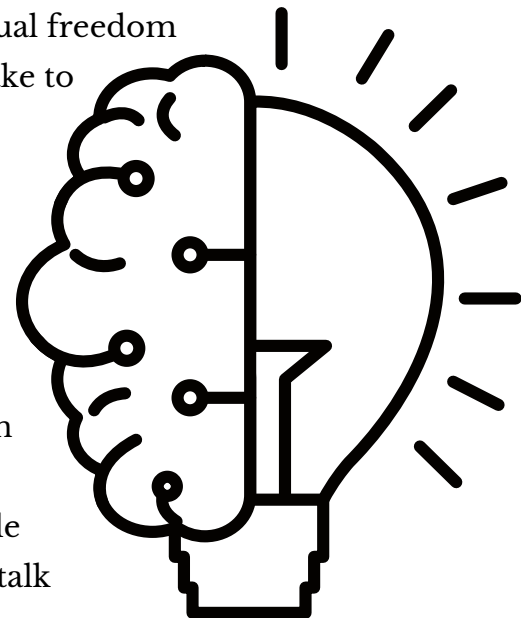
# Conference Committee

## A stellar lineup for this year's MLA Conference

*by Sonya Durney, Vice President*

I am the chair of the MLA Annual Conference Programming Subcommittee, and I admit I was nervous in January when we sent out a call for proposals. I was worried that librarians might not have the extra energy needed to put in a proposal to speak at a state-wide conference after a two-year ride on the pandemic roller coaster. You know what? I was wrong! I was so wrong. Maine librarians came through with many excellent program ideas. I realize now I should not have been worried. This is what we do...librarians come through.

We have a stellar line-up of programs for the conference. We will have lots of opportunities to talk about intellectual freedom and steps we can take to optimize library services in light of current challenges. The Maine State Library will have sessions to share Bendable Maine, an amazing resource that will be available in August. We will talk



*continued, next page*

## from the Conference Committee

*continued from previous page*

about books: teen books, adult books, diverse books, ALL OF THE BOOKS! We will look to the past as we discuss archives and look to the future with talks on open educational resources and artificial intelligence. Check out our conference webpage for the full roster. Please note we are still in the process of adding sessions.

Several organizations will be represented at the conference. ACLU will be on hand to talk about privacy, the League of Women Voters will share advocacy advice, the Finance Authority of Maine will school us on student loans, the Maine Humanities Council will discuss tackling tough topics in book groups, AARP will share tips on being age friendly, and the Gulf of Maine Research Institute will share their work on connected learning ecosystems. I am so thankful for the opportunity to network with the folks from these organizations, learn from what they are doing, and perhaps brainstorm some ideas on how we can collaborate.

This is all in addition to our keynote speakers Deborah Caldwell Stone and Bill Roorbach. Deborah Caldwell-Stone is the Director of ALA'S Office for Intellectual Freedom and Executive Director of the Freedom to Read Foundation. Bill Roorbach is a Maine author; author of *Lucky Turtle*, newly released by Algonquin Books and available for pre-order to pick up at the conference. See our conference webpage.

We are planning some extra-curricular fun as well. Start off Tuesday morning with a yoga class or a hike, lift a pint of beer or a cup of tea with a library friend at Camp (the hotel restaurant), and bring your competitive-librarian side to the trivia game Monday evening!

This is shaping up to be a memorable conference. I hope you will join us, and I hope you take as much away from this event as ever. 🌱





# Communications Committee

## Award nominations and grant applications are due

*by Jeff Eastman, Communications Committee Chair*

I love having a few minutes every year to give our undivided attention to our remarkable colleagues who have shone particularly brightly.

Not only do the awards recognize exemplary work, but they inspire the rest of us to shine just as brightly over the next year.

One of the highlights of the Annual Conference is awards. I love having a few minutes every year to give our undivided attention to our remarkable colleagues who have shone particularly brightly. Not only do the awards recognize exemplary work, but they inspire the rest of us to shine just as brightly over the next year.

As you have likely noticed, we are broadening the eligibility for awards this year. Whereas in the past we have given an award to a journalist who has amplified the voices of the library profession through print or broadcast, this year we have decided instead to recognize an Outstanding Library Advocate. There are so many people adjacent to libraries whose work is essential to our success. Whether they are teachers, administrators, lawmakers, fundraisers, volunteers, activists, etc., we rely on the work of countless individuals and organizations outside of the library profession for help in pursuing our mission. The Outstanding Library Advocate Award will allow us to show our gratitude to them.

Of course, we will still give an Outstanding Librarian Award to someone within the profession who has demonstrated first-class commitment to service, someone who leads by example, who has accomplished something noteworthy, or who makes you proud to be a librarian.

So please do your best to recognize the contributions of everyone around you, from your coworkers to board members, backers, boosters and boosters, partners,

*continued, next page*

*continued from previous page*

collaborators, and accomplices. Who stands out? Who do you appreciate? Who would inspire the rest of us to shine? Nominate them. I look forward to reading the nominations and getting to know the winners up at Sunday River next month.

**Nominations for awards are due April 29.**

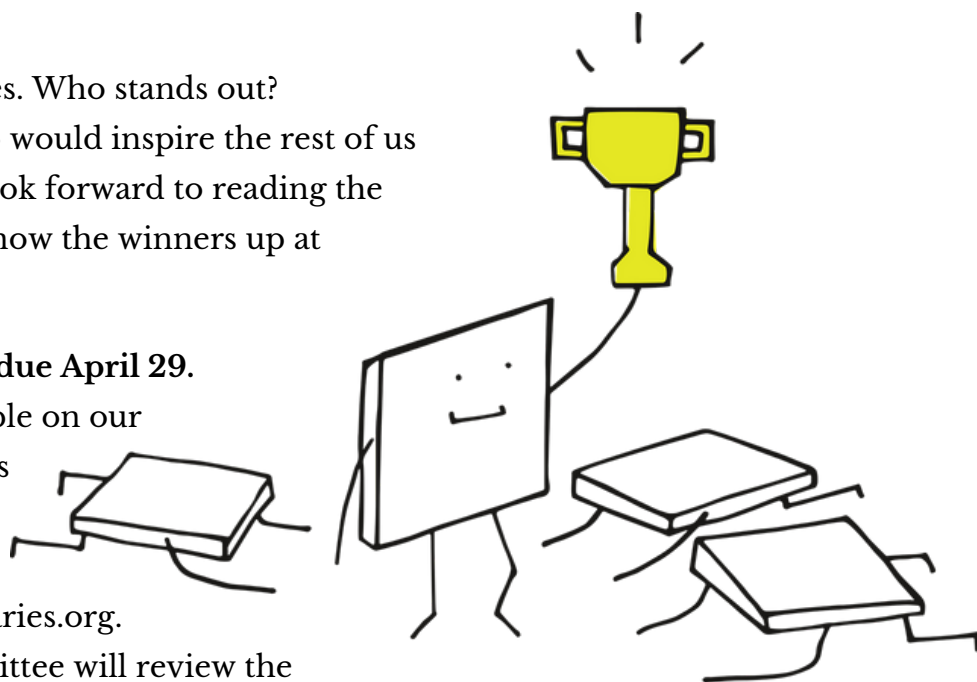
Nomination forms are available on our website. Please send the forms and any supporting materials to me at

[communications@mainelibraries.org](mailto:communications@mainelibraries.org).

The Communications Committee will review the nominations, choose winners, and announce them mid-day Tuesday at the conference.

**Also due April 29 are applications for grants to attend the conference.**

We want everyone who wants to attend the conference to be able to attend it, but we understand the cost of registration to be prohibitively high for some people. That is why we reserve funds for up to four attendees with financial need to attend at a discount. Conferences are an important part of professional life, and your presence at the MLA conference could be a crucial step in your career. Go to our grants page (<https://www.minelibraries.org/grants>) for information on how to apply.





# One more word about the Conference

## Proof of vaccination required.

### A last-minute conference checklist

Yoga pants optional

Don't leave home without

- Cash
- A smartphone or tablet, if you have one
- Proof of COVID vaccination
- A mask
- Yoga pants (*okay, not necessary, technically ... but a Tuesday morning yoga session is one bit of extra-curricular fun we have planned*).

We've got a Monday evening trivia game planned. Answers are submitted through a smartphone app, which is why you should bring your phone or tablet if you have one.

Also, we are cutting back on paper usage by using an app called Whova instead of printing programs. Whova will allow you to plan which sessions you will attend, read speaker bios, and connect with other people at the conference. Download the app for your [iOS](#) or [Android](#) devices.

We recommend bringing cash for the fundraisers we have planned. We will raffle a print by artist Larry Clifford of [Flyleaf Gallery](#) in Hampden, and there will be a wine toss, which is just like a ring toss except the prize is a bottle of wine. We might have an option to participate in these games with a credit card, but bring cash just in case.

While the threat of COVID is less than it has been, it is not completely behind us. The Conference Committee decided early on that we would need attendees to be vaccinated so that everyone knew we were doing our best to conduct a safe and healthy event. We also decided that we would follow current CDC guidelines regarding masks, which recommend wearing a mask in public places if there is a lot of COVID in your community and where there are a lot of people around. COVID rates are low in most of Maine, but not everywhere. While everyone at our conference will be vaccinated, we can't guarantee that the staff at Sunday River or anyone else you encounter will be, so we would still recommend wearing masks indoors.



## It's a wrap. Let's recap.

### Library Legislative Day and National Library Week in review

*by Savannah Sessions, MLA Legislative Committee Chair and  
Amy Stone, MLA Legislative Committee Vice-Chair*

The Legislative Committee of the Maine Library Association and the Maine State Library sponsored the annual Library Legislative Day in conjunction with National Library Week, April 3-9, 2022. We collected all the tools and resources our presenters shared using Padlet, a collaboration platform that came in handy.

The theme for National Library Week 2022 was “Connect with Your Library”, and it works on a few different levels. Most literally, libraries connect people technologically by being places where users can access computers, the internet, and other online resources, and they are often the only places in town to do so for free. Libraries offer opportunities to connect with ideas through books and other media, but also through programs, classes, and face-to-face interaction. Most importantly, libraries are sites of both intra-communal connection, where neighbors can see each other, take in a program together, and discuss ideas; and inter-communal connection, joined with other libraries and librarians through networks and organizations like MLA, MSL, NELA, and ALA. Libraries connect communities together. Lastly, the theme is an imperative call to action for communities to use, to advocate for, and to rally around their libraries.



MLA and MSL took that call to heart with seven days of programming around state and local library advocacy. On Sunday and Monday we focused on social media. We were joined on Monday for a lunch-and-learn with Ian Ware, Communication Associate for the American Library Association's Public Policy and Advocacy Office, where we learned some pro tips on connecting local stories with legislators (both local and national) through social media (hint: tag your legislators!!). A [recording of the session](#) is available on Vimeo.

*continued, next page*

## from the Legislative Committee

*continued from previous page*

On Tuesday and Thursday, we offered asynchronous, choose-your-own-adventure activities. Tuesday was focused on getting connected with advocacy opportunities and Thursday focused on finding out who your elected officials are at the town, state, and federal level. Remember, they all represent YOU, so find out who they are and get connected!

On Wednesday we hosted Courtney Sparks, Director of the Freeport Community Library; Marijke Vasser, Section Supervisor for Library Development at the Maine State Library; Kerrie Lattari, York Middle School Librarian; Michelle Sampson, York Public Library Director; and Wynter Giddings Manager of Adult Services & Technology at Curtis Memorial Library and MLA President for a discussion of library policies. Their perspectives on collection development, book challenge readiness, and diversity, equity, and inclusion, and provided attendees with lots of food for thought. A recording of the session is available on Vimeo.

Friday's lunch-and-learn focused on working with the media. Jeffrey Knox, Media Specialist for the Town of Gorham and Youth Services Assistant at Baxter Memorial Library; and Georgia Humphrey, Public Access TV Manager for the Town of Gorham gave us some excellent ideas for how to leverage your local public access TV station for library advocacy. Sonya Durney, Scholarly Communication Research & Teaching Librarian at the University of New England and MLA Vice-president demonstrated a media toolkit straight from her work as a part of the ALA Policy Corps. "The Message Triangle" is an especially effective technique for organizing your key points around a clear message and laying them out on a piece of paper in such a way that you can read them at a glance during an interview. Check it out on the Padlet.

Next year, we hope to be able to gather in the State House once again, and we are planning to host a library snapshot day in the fall, so be on the lookout for a save the date! Advocacy happens all year long.

Thank you for joining us, thank you to all of our presenters, thank you to MLA and MSL, and thank you to everyone who helped plan this week. Whether you came to one meeting or all of them, you played an integral role.



# SEE YOU SOON.

we hope...

