

The CRAB

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Winter, 2009



Kathleen Kennedy Townsend Speaks

Donna L. Seibly, Secretary, Maryland Library Association

The 2008 Annual Conference of the Maryland Library Trustees and Citizens for Maryland Libraries (CML) was held on November 8, 2008, at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture in Baltimore. Members had an opportunity to report on this past year's accomplishments, usher in new leadership, and celebrate, if a bit belatedly, the 25th anniversary of CML, which was founded in 1982. The conference began with a delicious brunch, food to nourish the body, and concluded with a speech by guest speaker Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, who provided food for the mind and soul.

Townsend focused on advocacy, after noting that during these past several years, when Americans' civil liberties were compromised, it was libraries that stood up to injustice, fighting for our citizens' right to seek information without fear. She congratulated librarians for taking this initiative.

Townsend's major focus, however, was on how library administrators, trustees, and concerned citizens can advocate for increased funding in tough financial times. Her pointers were practical and sometimes surprising. For example, she pointed out that having controversy sometimes helps in focusing people to support an institution or a movement. She used her own student volunteer initiative as an example, describing how the controversy that resulted when she first unveiled her plan helped to crystallize the purpose of her project. High school students became galvanized in their support when others raised obstacles to her efforts. With a clearer vision of the project and with the support of students and other citizens, she was able to effect a change in the Maryland high school curriculum, implementing a service requirement for students.

Townsend also outlined steps to consider in building advocacy. First of all, citizens need to know why libraries are important, and one way to reveal that is through the stories of the good that libraries do for people. The Division of Library Development and Services (DLDS) and

the Maryland Library Association are already capturing stories for publication in the "Libraries Change Lives in Maryland" initiative, but Townsend reminded the audience that telling the right story to the right person can make all the difference.

Beyond stories, Townsend pointed out that providing statistics of library use is particularly important for federal funding, even though people may not necessarily be moved by the facts so much as by the heart. That is all the more reason to have those good stories on hand. In addition, organizing supporters is important to form a kind of lobby of citizens to tell the stories, provide the facts, and show support for libraries. Townsend also noted that libraries may want to consider partnerships with other organizations such as social services or public health agencies to secure funds for special projects.

In seeking money from foundations, Townsend urged audience members to ask the all-important question: "Why would this foundation give money to our institution?" Foundations are known for their generosity towards hospitals, churches and universities, but what about libraries? Finding the right donor for the library is essential.

Fundraisers are another funding source, but those planning a fundraiser need to have a firm sense of who they are, that is, just what it is that they are capable of doing successfully in order to raise money. Townsend reminded members of the audience that for fundraising, they need to consider what they like to do and that they should allow the event to reflect that. For example, her own mother enjoyed many activities and therefore tended to organize fundraisers that revolved around those activities. Fundraising is hard work, so the event should at least reflect something that is fun and enjoyable for the organizers.

Kathleen Kennedy Townsend concluded with a question and answer session that focused mostly on her book, *Failing America's Faithful: How Today's Churches Are Mixing God with Politics and Losing Their Way*. Copies of the book were on sale at the conference.

Editor's Note

The last issue of the Crab contained several articles highlighting the importance of advocating for libraries. In the coming year, Maryland libraries may be facing tighter budgets. In this tough economic climate, the importance of advocating for your library becomes even more crucial. This issue contains several articles on the value of library advocacy and informing the public and government officials about the very positive impact that libraries have on people's lives. Articles relating to advocacy include the President's column and the article on p.6 about maintaining library funding. In this New Year, consider making a new year's resolution to advocate for your library!

With this issue of the Crab, I would also like to highlight a new column called "Tech Bytes" which will cover technical issues and topics that effect libraries.

I would like to thank all of those who have written articles for the Crab in the last year including MLA division members and the Crab's regular columnists: Darrell Batson, Denise Davis, Natalie Edington, Mary K. Mannix, and Elizabeth Rafferty as well as Donna L. Seibly for providing MLA executive board meeting highlights. Thank you also goes to Derek Buker, Margaret Carty, Bucky Edgett, Kate Monagan, Ruth Schaefer and the Crab editors for all of their assistance

Dana Newman, Anne Arundel County Public Library, Crab Editor

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President's Column



However devastating the economy may be, with repercussions affecting all of our libraries, this era presents unique opportunities we may not see again for many years. At press time for this publication, one of the proposals unfolding to jump-start the economy is a massive improvement to our infra-

structure, introduced recently by President-Elect Barack Obama.

On December 6, Obama gave a brief but important statement, in which he mentions the tremendous value of modernizing libraries. This sentiment is not buried in a 1,000 page report, but rather in a five-minute sweeping speech highlighting his vision to help resolve our economic crisis. I took note that the media covering his statement reported his intention to update roads, schools and hospitals. Even though Obama included libraries, the media apparently forgot about us.

This is our time to make sure we are not forgotten. Speak up on behalf of your libraries and patrons. If someone pays you a compliment about your products, services or staff, thank them nicely and ask them to tell their elected officials. This is our opportunity and our responsibility.

Highlights of Obama's comments from last month include:

"We will create millions of new jobs by making the single largest new investment in our national infrastructure, since the creation of the federal highway system in the 1950's. We'll invest your precious tax dollars in new and smarter ways, and we'll set a simple rule: use it or lose it. If a state doesn't act quickly to invest in roads and bridges in our communities, they'll lose the money."

"As we renew our schools and highways, we'll also renew our information superhighway. It is unacceptable that the United States ranks 15th in the world in broadband adoption. Here, in the country that invented the internet, every child should have the chance to get online, and they'll get that chance when I'm President, because that's how we'll strengthen America's competitiveness in the world. In addition to connecting our libraries and schools, to the internet, we must ensure that our hospitals are connected to each other through the internet."

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State and Local Partnership to Unveil Public Awareness Campaign

Paula Isett, Maryland State Department of Education

The Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Library Development and Services, along with Carroll County's public schools and public library system, unveiled a month-long series of public awareness activities focusing on career technology education (CTE) in Carroll County Public Schools at the Eldersburg Branch Library.

State Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick, and Carroll County Public Schools Superintendent, Dr. Charles I. Ecker, participated in the event, "Career and Technology Education: Don't Go To College Without It!" The event included presentations by former and current Carroll County Technology Center students who shared the importance of their experience participating in a CTE program of study. Students presenting were as follows:

Winter Beckles, former South Carroll High School student, Class of 2007 graduate in Allied Health Careers at the Carroll County Career and Technical Center and current student at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

Cassey Crone, current

Westminster High School student enrolled in the Teacher Academy of Maryland; Andy Levy, current North Carroll High School student enrolled in the National Academy Foundation (NAF) Finance Academy at Westminster High School; and Karl Shuey, current Westminster High School student enrolled in the Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Engineering Program at Carroll County Career and Technical Center.

"Career Technology Education and libraries are wonderful resources for students and exemplify the model of collaboration both from the state and local level through this initiative," said Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools.



Dr. Grasmick, State Superintendent embraces the Career Technology students from Carroll County Public Schools at the Kickoff of a public awareness campaign at the Carroll County Public Library.

According to Lynn Wheeler, Director of the Carroll County Public Library, "Carroll County Public Library is an excellent place to showcase the innovative courses available through Career and Technology Education at our public schools."

For more information, check out www.maryland-publicschools.org and <http://www.carrollk12.org/instruction/instruction/secondary/cte/default.asp>.

Howard County's Buzz About Books

Howard County Library's adult summer reading game attracts thousands of adults each year. Introduced in 2003 as a pilot project at one branch, its popularity prompted Howard County to expand it to all branches. This year's theme, "Buzz About Books," was an extension of the youth games, "Catch the Reading Bug" and "Metamorphosis." Chaired by Adult Curriculum Specialist Jean Salkeld, the adult game consisted of double-sided entry forms that collected customer contact information on one side and an optional book review on the other. Customers could enter as many forms as they wished. Patrons were enticed by the possibility of winning a portable DVD player and monthly prizes, including tote bags full of books and gift certificates to local restaurants. The result was almost 5,000 entries submitted at six branches during June, July

and August 2008, an increase of 30% over 2007.

The theme of the adult game in previous years has been "Why Should Kids Have All the Fun," a sentiment echoed by readers such as Lisa Yanguas, the grand prize winner who's winning form was entered at the Miller branch. Another customer thanked the Library for promoting reading in her family, since the adult won a restaurant gift certificate and her stepson won a similar prize in the online auction for teens, part of the Metamorphosis game.

The promotion of reading, increased circulation, closer ties with the local business community, interesting customer book reviews and happy winners were just a few of the positive outcomes of Howard County's Buzz About Books 2008.

Alexa Leinaweaver, Prince George's County Memorial Library System; Soup Editor

How We Read Now: 2008 Young Adult Literature Symposium

Naomi Butler, Western Maryland Regional Libraries

What a roaring success! The first conference for devoted teen staff and other interested members was held November 7-9 at the Millennium Maxwell House Hotel in Nashville, Tennessee. About 200 participants were expected, but around 600 attended!

The preconference on Friday was a Young Adult Symposium, "Picturing the Story: Teens Get Graphic @ your library." Saturday's agenda was full of good program choices. I attended "Never Enough Nonfiction," with participation of both author and publishers, which I found extremely interesting. "Reading: It's Not Just About

Books Anymore" drew me in on Saturday and I learned a lot about technology pieces and websites. The Genre Luncheon gave us a chance to meet many authors and purchase their books. I learned a lot in the "Fandom, Fan Life, and Participatory Culture" session. The author Terry Trueman kept us in stitches during the "Inside Authors' Studios: Printz Award Winners" session. We learned much from the "Teen Reader's Advisory: How Research Informs Practice." These sessions were only my choices; there were many others available.

Publishers had huge numbers of Teen books available free for the taking. Food was plentiful and it was easy to connect with friends, acquaintances and new contacts.

Watch for the second symposium in Albuquerque, New Mexico, to take place on November 5-7, 2010! Visit the YALSA website for more information at: <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa>.

Recent Staff Hiring and Promotions

B. Parker Hamilton, Director, Montgomery County Public Libraries

Montgomery County Public Libraries was impacted by the 2008 Retirement Incentive Program, offered to County employees as a consequence of the economic downturn facing the nation. Twenty-one library employees opted to retire.

After restructuring, the newly created Division of Collection and Technology Management consists of three units: Collection Management, Technology Management and the Virtual Services Branch. The Chief of this new division, Linda Mielke, brings more than 30 years' experience in library management to the position. As chief executive officer of Indianapolis Marion County Library, she oversaw 22 branches and a fleet of bookmobiles. She was associate administrator in Anne Arundel County where she oversaw 14 public libraries. Mielke directed public library systems in Carroll County, MD and Clearwater, FL.

Heading the Collection Management Unit is Kathie Meizner, who served as acting chief of the division during the transition period and was the former agency manager at the Chevy Chase Library. The unit is responsible for acquiring, organizing and providing access to a wide variety of information, materials and services for our residents.

Suzanne Carbone is Manager of the newly created Virtual Services Branch that will develop, implement and distribute virtual interactive and innovative resources, services and technologies. Carbone was formerly head of the Ask-a-Librarian Unit.

MCPL has several new Agency Managers, including two newcomers: Ed Trever, at the Aspen Hill Branch and Sue Koronowski at the Kensington Park Branch. Trever was previously the library director for the Gaston Lincoln Regional Library in Gastonia, NC. Koronowski served as director of the Lynnfield Public Library in Lynnfield, Massachusetts since 1997.

The following MCPL staff members have been named Agency Managers:

Rita Tull at the Davis Branch; Linda Gimourginas at the Gaithersburg Branch; Cindy Guthrie at the Marilyn J. Praisner Branch; Lindsey Hundt at the Potomac Branch and Margaret Goodbody at the Correctional Facility Library.

Maryland Librarian Published Internationally

Glennor Shirley, Library Coordinator for the Maryland Correctional Education Libraries (MCEL), recently published an article in a library magazine in France. The *Bulletin Des Bibliotheque de France* printed Shirley's submission, "Les Bibliotheques de Prison du Maryland (Etats-Unis)" in their December, 2008 issue as one of three articles about prison libraries.

MCEL provides resources to the 24,000 people currently imprisoned in Maryland in order to meet their personal, recreational and informational needs. Learn more about MCEL at: <http://www.ce.msde.state.md.us/library/library.htm>.

MLA Executive Board Matters

Donna L. Seibly, Secretary, Maryland Library Association

The MLA Executive Board met twice in the fall, on September 15, and again on November 19, 2008. Highlights from the September 15th meeting include the following:

MLA has two new committee chairs. Linda Frydl will head up the Reader's Advisory Interest Group (RAIG) and Todd Krueger will chair the Maryland Author Award Committee.

Jim Klima, investment advisor for MLA, gave his annual update on MLA's investments.

Treasurer Susan Waxter reported that overall, the budget looks good and that the Budget and Finance Committee is fully formed.

President Darrell Batson noted that MLA is in its kick-off time, beginning a new administrative year. He urged MLA Executive Committee members to be acutely aware of the budget shortfall this year and to watch expenses.

Margaret Carty noted the success of the *Lion King* excursion and reminded committee members of the cruise to Bermuda in early October. Margaret was also preparing for the Baltimore Book Festival.

The mileage reimbursement rate has been raised to \$.50 per mile.

Work Plans for 2008-2009 are complete and available for review.

Highlights from the November 19, 2008 meeting include the following:

Despite the economic downturn, MLA's finances are in good shape, with programming participation and membership both up.

The MLA Legislative Day will be held on February 4, 2009, in Annapolis, with a reception at 5:30 p.m..

The MLA Conference is moving along smoothly, with guest speakers being confirmed, programs planned and sponsors secured.

The MLA Bermuda cruise was a success.

Changes to the CSD Bylaws, relating to the Blue Crab Award, were approved unanimously.

Please keep in mind that the fully approved minutes will be posted on the MLA Webpage under the "About MLA" section. Click "More..." and then you can read the minutes by clicking on the heading for "Executive Board Minutes."

President's Column

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Those of you who attended the ALA Convention in Chicago in 2005 remember that Obama was a strong library supporter back then, too. Excerpts of his remarks include:

"More than a building that houses books and data, the library represents a window to a larger world, the place where we've always come to discover big ideas and profound concepts that help move the American story forward and the human story forward..."

"We are a religious people; Americans are, as am I. But one of the innovations, the genius of America, is recognizing that our faith is not in contradiction with fact and that our liberty depends upon our ability to access the truth. That's what libraries are about..."

"At the moment that we persuade a child, any child, to cross that threshold, that magic threshold into a library, we change their lives forever, for the better. It's an enormous force for good..."

"Libraries have a special role to play in our knowledge economy. Your institutions have been and should be a place where parents and children come to read together and learn together. We should take our kids there more. We should make sure our politicians aren't closing libraries down because they had to spend a few extra bucks on tax cuts for folks who don't need them and weren't even asking for them..."

"At the dawn of the 21st century, where knowledge is literally power, where it unlocks the gates of opportunity and success, we all have responsibilities as parents, as librarians, as educators, as politicians and as citizens to instill in our children a love of reading so that we can give them a chance to fulfill their dreams. That's what all of you do each and every day, and for that, I am grateful."

If, in fact, we do embark on an explosion of public works enhancements and redevelopment to pull the national and global economy out of its crisis, we must make sure libraries are not forgotten. As guardians and caretakers of our libraries, we are the only ones who can prevent libraries from being taken for granted.

Like the proverbial surfer who waits all day for the perfect curl to take the ride of a lifetime, we are seeing the whitecap form. Let's all hang ten!

Darrell Batson, MLA President

***Save the Date!* MLA 2009 Conference, May 13-15, 2009**

Planning for 2010

*Jim DeArme*y, Maryland Library Leadership Committee
Chair

After an extremely successful 2008 Maryland Library Leadership Institute, the planning committee is in the process of preparing for 2010. Planning the Institute requires enthusiasm, commitment and great attention to detail. Thanks to the work of previous committees, some of the decisions have been streamlined. For example, the committee hopes to use the Riverfront Conference Center at the Donaldson Brown estate for as long as it is available. It is centrally located in the state and provides a beautiful and very functional setting. The same also applies to the selection of our facilitators. Becky Schreiber and John Shannon have conducted the Institute since it began in 1998. The response from Institute participants has been overwhelmingly positive. We are glad to have had such a long and successful partnership with Becky and John.

Some parts of the planning process aren't quite as easy. Most committee members would agree that the most difficult task is reviewing the applications that have been submitted by potential participants. While it is very satisfying to see such strong, well-written, and carefully composed applications, the sad truth is that the committee cannot

accept everyone. The selection subcommittee works long and hard at this task and the decisions are difficult. The result, however, is worth it - a strong group of potential future leaders for Maryland libraries.

One surprising difficulty that the committee faced this year was scheduling. The Institute includes participants from academic, public, school and special libraries. When considering the various schedules for conferences, school years, holidays and other events on an annual calendar, mid-July proves to be the only time that has worked consistently well. In 2009, the ALA's Annual Conference will be held in July. This would likely overload the calendars of the Institute's participants, facilitators and mentors. The committee has decided to forego the 2009 Institute and to begin planning in earnest for the 2010 Institute. Part of that planning will be fundraising. With declining funding sources, the committee wants to be sure that the Institute is not a casualty of these difficult economic times. Technology, rapid change and dramatic economic developments make this an exciting and challenging time for Maryland's libraries. The Maryland Library Leadership Institute Committee is working to provide the awareness and training that our future leaders will certainly need.

The View from State Circle and Capitol Hill...

This Issue: Library Advocacy

The Budget Crunch: How You Can Help Maintain Library Funding

Denise Davis, MLA Legislative Officer and Natalie Edington, MLA Assistant Legislative Officer

The view from any perspective certainly includes tight budgets at every level of government. Elected officials and government executives are desperately trying to position their counties to withstand a future with great uncertainty. They are implementing freezes, cuts and considering any options that might preserve "essential services". They need your help in setting the course for their counties and the state during this difficult time. Each of us has a role to play in demonstrating that libraries are an essential service, especially in the effort to overcome the current economic crisis. Protecting library budgets makes sense as a cost-effective strategy for recovery.

Speak out about what your library is doing every day to help people during this economic downturn such as providing free Internet access to enable the unemployed to search and apply for jobs online; offering assistance and resources on finding jobs, writing effective resumes

and learning how to manage and consolidate debt; and answering questions on improving business marketing or working out of the home, it goes on and on. These services are accessible on nights and weekends, and 24/7 via the web. Your public library is likely the only county service that routinely reaches the majority of county residents. The image elected officials have of libraries is too often formed in the mid-twentieth century. It is critical that our advocacy efforts increase awareness of libraries' valuable resources and services by educating our elected officials.

Make the time to explain to your elected officials how your library is a good investment to help us through the economic crisis. Capwiz provides an easy way to contact elected officials. Simply go to the MLA website, www.mdlib.org, and click on Capwiz on the left side of the site. Click on "Search Local Government" to contact your local officials. Enter your ZIP code to see a list of your state and federal officials. To contact a state legislator, use the

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Moving to Technical Services

Applying Outside your Comfort Zone

Carrie Willson-Plymire, Western Maryland Regional Library

In late spring, our Head of Technical Services, David Wolf, announced his retirement. I didn't think about it any further than, "gosh, he's so good, we'll really miss him." So, when Dave arrived in my office and asked if I had considered applying for his job, my first reaction was, "No!" I also had an internal response of, "are you kidding, why would I want to do that?" As a public services librarian, I was perfectly happy helping patrons at the desk, working on reader's advisory and helping with the Washington County Free Library web redesign. However, the more I thought about it and learned more about what technical services entailed, the more fascinated I was by the possibilities. Long story short, here I am, working for the Western Maryland Regional Library as the head of technical services and having more fun than I would ever have expected.

Instead of helping patrons find specific books in the catalog, I spend time figuring out how the catalog can be made more intuitive for users. Instead of putting reserves for borrowers on items that are in technical processing, I am working with the Washington County Technical Services (TS) staff to find ways to speed up processing and cut down the backlog so that those titles get onto the public shelves more quickly. Instead of having discussions with other staff about technology that does not work in the way that it should, I am encouraging staff to let me know about specific problems. This is so that we can think through ways to fix the problems that need to be fixed, work around the problems that cannot be fixed and look to the future to see what form our next upgrade or migration should take. I spend time thinking about big picture questions such as, "Will there be a Western Maryland regional catalog someday?" Stay tuned for the answer. Essentially, I had no idea that a seemingly "dry" position would be so dynamic and challenging.

So, the next time that a position at your library opens up, don't dismiss it without thinking critically about whether or not it matches your skills and interests. When I decided to apply for the Head of Technical Services position, I found that my previous experiences translated into technical services skills more readily than I had initially thought. For instance, my experience working for an organic seed company and in using the software that the company used to manage financial information, inven-

tory and customer service information suddenly became useful in looking at our Integrated Library System from the back end. In short, even if your first instinct is to say, "Not for me," look again. It is possible that an opening could be a better match for your skill set and interests than you realize. Also, as I have learned, a new position in areas outside of your comfort zone will provide you with an opportunity to cultivate your skills and provide your library system with a fresh perspective.

As a "newbie" to TS, I look forward to reading what other members of TSD will be sharing in this space. Stay tuned for more installments from the world of technical services.

2009 MLA Annual Conference: Generation Why Not

The conference committee has started to put together some exciting programs for your education as well as your entertainment. The conference will take place May 13-15, 2009 at the Clarion Hotel in Ocean City, MD. Thursday, join us for the general session with Paul Holdengrader. Have you ever wanted to move reference beyond the desk? Come to a program with this name and learn about this statewide pilot program and the practical implications.

Other conference programs will focus on health websites that provide quality information, library advocacy, encouraging reluctant readers and the process of obtaining an ALA grant, communicating and negotiating with volunteers, and how is PECHA KUCHA related to Web 2.0? Make sure you visit the vendors between 3:15 and 4:00 pm because you don't want to miss the ice cream break. The all conference reception area will occur in the vendor area and will be followed by a dinner featuring Ken Davis as speaker. Come join us for some fun at the 3rd annual Pub Quiz. Conference registration information will be mailed out to MLA members in February and will soon be available on the MLA website.

The Budget Crunch

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Maryland Action Alert entitled "Support Funding for Libraries". For the federal level, select a legislator, click on "Contact" and select "Compose Your Own Letter." Please also consider changing the federal outlook for libraries by visiting incoming President Obama's website, www.change.gov. Click on "American Moment" and share your story to let the new administration know what matters to America's future. With these simple acts, you will encourage elected officials to keep libraries in mind as a sound investment that is part of the solution and worthy of continued funding.

AskUsNow!

On the Cutting Edge of Marketing

Julie Strange, Statewide Coordinator, Maryland AskUsNow!

We all know that without customers, libraries have no business. Sometimes we forget that in order to have customers, we need to have excellent people (which Maryland Libraries have a lot of) providing needed services (A+ again for MD libraries) and remember to *promote ourselves*.

Promoting ourselves is something all of us struggle with. There is only so much money to go around, so you need to come up with creative ways to let people know about what you do.

AskUsNow! is currently working the Web 2.0 circuit. We are connecting with customers as well as fellow librarians and libraries on MySpace (myspace.com/askusnow), Facebook (tinyurl.com/askusnow), Twitter (twitter.com/askusnow) and Flickr (flickr.com/askusnow). On our MySpace and Facebook pages, fans and friends of AskUsNow! saw a list of resources put together by AskUsNow! on various Thanksgiving related questions including, "What do I do with this Turkey?" "How do I send my thanks to our military?" and "I need to entertain these kids. Help!" To see all of the questions and resources, check out the AskUsNow! staff blog at <http://marylandaskusnow.blogspot.com>.

While doing a little preemptive reference, we wanted to remind people that AskUsNow! was a resource for them.

Must-have AskUsNow! merchandise



The Facebook message seemed to catch on fire, a lot of people were sharing it with their friends and family on Facebook!

New to the AskUsNow! family of promotions is our new store! We are using CaféPress to host a store where people can buy at base prices, no profit to us. Interested in an AskUsNow! polo? How about an AskUsNow! doggie bowl? We have got you covered. Check out the store at cafepress.com/mdaskusnow and get all your holiday shopping done in one shot and be on the lookout for more designs including "I answer questions in my pajamas!" and other fun slogans!

AskUsNow! is a live online interactive service available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week that uses the expertise of librarians to provide answers to questions, research guidance and help navigating the internet. AskUsNow! is a cooperative service of Maryland libraries. For more information check out <http://www.askusnow.info/>. If you are a library that is interested in providing this service, check out askusnow.info/join.

Maryland AskUsNow! is a project of the Division of Library Development and Services, Maryland State Department of Education. It is funded through a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.



Children's Services Division Blue Crab Committee Announces Awards

Susan Modak, Montgomery County Public Libraries

Every October, there's excitement in the air as the Maryland Library Association's Blue Crab Committee prepares to announce the winning titles for best Children's beginning and transitional literature. The 2008 committee presented the winners and honors of the Maryland Blue Crab Award for Beginner Readers at the "Kids Are Customers Too" conference held this year on October 16th in Ellicott City, Maryland.

The purpose of the award is to call attention to the need for quality literature for very young readers, by honoring authors who produce exceptional books for that age group. The committee works tirelessly evaluating hundreds of books for beginner readers. They choose winners and honor books for fiction and nonfiction books in two categories - beginning reader and transitional reader.

This year the top honors for fiction and non-fiction beginner readers go to Mo Willems for *My Friend is Sad*, a gentle and funny story of a Piggie who tries to cheer up his friend Elephant, and Roberta Edwards for *Best Friends: The*

True Story of Owen and Mzee, the tale of an unlikely friendship between an orphaned hippopotamus and an ancient tortoise. The winning fiction and non-fiction transitional titles are *Abracadabra! Magic with Mouse and Mole*, by Wong Herbert Yee, and *Who Likes Rain?* by Etta Kaner.

The books considered for the Blue Crab Young Reader Awards are characterized by simple vocabulary, short sentences and ample white space on each page. The challenge for the Blue Crab committee is to find excellent examples in each category.

Any Maryland librarian or media specialist is welcome to serve. The committee meets several times during the year, participates in the presentation of winners at the "Kids Are Customers, Too" conference in the fall and welcomes one of the authors at the MLA Conference held the following May.

If you are interested in serving on a future Blue Crab committee, contact the Children's Services Division of the Maryland Library Association. For more information, go to: <http://www.mdlib.org/divisions/csd/default.asp>.



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CSD Sets Record with 2008 *Kids Are Customers, Too*

Irva Nachlas-Gabin, Howard County Library

Children's Services Division set a record this year by attracting the largest attendance to Kids Are Customers, Too in the twelve-year history of the fall conference. One hundred fifty-six librarians attended the conference in October at the Turf Valley Resort. CSD sponsors a full-day conference every fall for librarians from systems around the state to share best practices and ideas for improving library service to children. This year, for the first time, CSD joined the Maryland Association of School Librarians (MASL) to mount a joint conference. The two organizations worked together to share a venue and allow their members to attend each other's sessions. In addition, MASL's conference featured a vendor room, where attendees could view new children's materials.

Also new this year, several public librarians and media specialists served on a panel to discuss Library / School cooperation. Nancy Cadigan (BCPL), Robyn Lukow (FCPL) and Sue Gibbs (StMCL) joined Nancy Braveman and Sharon Grimes from the Baltimore County Public School system to talk about public library / school partnerships to promote the Summer Reading Game, the Black-Eyed Susan Awards and other cooperative programming.

The Kids Are Customers program proved to be a draw also. This year's speakers offered an eclectic collection of practices to augment storytimes, enhance booktalks and develop interesting programs for elementary-aged children. Presenters from several library systems around the state demonstrated their skills and shared ideas for new and improved programming for children.

The Keynote speaker, Newbery-honor author Jennifer Holm, delivered a humorous presentation about the development of her popular graphic novel series, Babymouse. She explained the popularity of graphic novels, their uses in tempting reluctant readers and answered questions about the creative process and collaboration that resulted in the Babymouse books. She ended her entertaining talk by inviting two volunteers to try their hand at drawing Babymouse.

One of the highlights of the day was the announcement of the winners of the Maryland Blue Crab Award for Young Readers. Susan Modak (MCPL), the 2008 Chair of the Awards Committee, explained the purpose of the award – to recognize authors of outstanding literature for beginning and transitional readers. Every year, the Blue Crab committee chooses beginner fiction and non-fiction and transitional fiction and non-fiction titles to receive the awards. After Susan described the criteria for choosing the winners, the committee members used props and humor to introduce the winning and honor titles. As a grand climax, Julie Tobiasson and Kim Preis treated the audience to a dramatic reading of *My Friend is Sad* by Mo Willems, the easy reading fiction winner.

As part of the program, Gloria Bartas (EPFL) demonstrated Storytime Transitions, techniques for tying together books during pre-school programs. Jill Hutchison from St. Mary's County, offered advice for dealing with active children in her Wiggle Giggle Storytime presentation. In other sessions, Betsy Diamant-Cohen (EPFL) presented Booktalk Bonanza, Jeannine Finton (HCPL) described Harford County's science outreach initiative, Project LEAP (Learn, Explore and Play), and The Art Box Committee from Howard County Library, April Curnow, Kim Ha, Anne Trent and Kathleen Woolley, discussed art classes and programs for pre-school and elementary-aged children.

Two poster sessions provided attendees with a glimpse of important and useful resources in the state. Deborah Magolis from the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped explained this valuable service. Paige Painter-Boyer from St. Mary's County Library showed the successful Side-By-Side Reading project that she spearheaded in her county.

With the unparalleled success of the 2008 Kids are Customers, Too, CSD is looking forward to partnering with MASL again for the 2009 conference and continuing a relationship that will provide learning opportunities for all library staff who work with children.

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Is Gaming Good or Bad for Libraries?

Elizabeth Rafferty, Baltimore County Public Libraries

Lately, there has been much discussion in the library world about video gaming and its relative merits and detriments. Video games are often described as brain-rotting, couch-potato producers by parents, teachers and other concerned adults. At the same time, it seems like many libraries are embracing gaming as a standard teen program. There has been some research on the effects of video gaming in recent years and the results are not as simple as one might think.

Video games are often discussed as a catalyst for school shootings. The Secret Service did a study of school shootings between 1974 and 2000 and found that during that time period there were 37 school shooting incidents. Of these incidents, only one-eighth of these attackers exhibited any interest in violent video games, less than half of the amount of attackers who exhibited interest in violent movies or books. There is no one particular profile of a school shooter, nor is there any detectable correlation between video games and school shootings.

Video games have also been blamed as a cause of social isolation. In reality, video games can help teens develop social relationships with others. A survey by the Pew Research Center showed that 76% of teens who play games do so with others, and 65% play games with others in the room. In a library setting, teens will play video games in a meeting room full of other teens playing video games. When you enter a video gaming program at a library, you may see up to four kids playing the Wii, up to four kids playing Rock Band and two kids playing Dance Dance Revolution (DDR). The kids playing Rock Band have to communicate and cooperate with each other in order to get more points, so they can't play in isolation. In addition, you will see kids sitting around the players, watching them play the games and shouting out advice and instructions. Teens can discuss video games with others and it can be an icebreaker with teens they don't know.

In short, video games are not evil and they are not the answer to the future either. They are just another form of entertainment, like movies, or music, or even books and magazines. Video games, like all of these other things, will be fine if used in moderation.

Children's Services Division Bridges the Bay

Irva Nachlas-Gabin, Howard County Library

With tight budgets and fluctuating gas prices, it is increasingly difficult for outlying counties to send their staff to far-flung trainings. Children's Services Division is working to solve the problem, by bringing children's service trainings to both the Eastern Shore and Western Maryland.

For the last few years, CSD has sponsored an annual training in Western Maryland for library staff who find it difficult to travel to Ocean City for the Annual Conference. The half-day workshop, usually held in Hagerstown, often repeats a topic from the previous year's annual MLA Conference or provides a basic training for new children's librarians. Last year, the Eastern Shore libraries requested a similar training. CSD stepped up to the plate and planned a half-day workshop on services for children with disabilities, presented at the Denton Library in January and repeated in Hagerstown in April.

So successful was this formula that CSD will repeat it

this year with a new topic to be presented at the Denton Library on January 26, 2009 and the Frederick C. Burr Artz Library on April 20, 2009. By offering the same program in two venues, CSD hopes to serve a larger audience and provide quality training throughout the state.

The program, "Tots, Tunes and Tweens," will extend timely advice on preparing action-packed programs for pre-schoolers and attracting that most-difficult age, the Tweens. Joe Stover from Charles County Library will present his favorite 50 books for storytimes, plus the 'greatest hits' of fingerplays and songs to get kids up and moving. Elizabeth Rafferty from Baltimore County Public Library will explain how Tweens needs are unique and share homemade kits for Tween programming, along with demonstrations of successful programs that will bring Tweens into the library. To register for either date, please use the registration form in the back of Happenings or call the MLA office for more information.

Children's Services Division Presents: *Tunes, Tots & Tweens, Oh, My!*

Monday, January 26, 2009, 1 p.m.-4:15 p.m.; Denton Library, Denton, MD, *or*

Monday, April 20, 2009, 1 p.m.-4:15 p.m.; C Burr Artz Library, Frederick, MD

JHU Expansion to Honor Bill and Wendy Brody

Tracey Reeves, John Hopkins University

Johns Hopkins University will build a library expansion at its Homewood campus, a state-of-the-art building designed for technology-driven, collaborative learning and named the Brody Learning Commons, in honor of retiring President William R. Brody and his wife, Wendy.

The university's trustees announced the decision to honor the Brodys at a dinner for them over the weekend. They presented the couple with a framed artist's conception of the six-and-a-half story building. The learning commons and the existing library will be separated above ground by a walkway and will connect below ground.

Pamela P. Flaherty, chair of the board of trustees, said that the naming of the building is a tribute to the work the Brodys have done to strengthen community and reinvigorate student life on the Homewood campus. By greeting entering students and their families each fall, inviting them into their home, attending student events and by presiding over the creation of new programs and facilities to enhance the undergraduate experience, the Brodys have enriched students' academic and social lives, Flaherty said.

"When Bill and Wendy announced their plans to leave Johns Hopkins, we were presented with a uniquely appropriate opportunity to honor their legacy of leadership," she said.

The Brody Learning Commons will cost roughly \$30 million, all of which is coming from private donations and most of which has already been raised. The expansion, which university officials hope to complete by 2012, will be the first new-construction project on the Homewood campus to pursue LEED certification as a "green" building.

Winston Tabb, Sheridan Dean of University Libraries and Museums, said that the new building will not be quiet like traditional libraries. Rather, it will be a place where faculty, students and staff will be able to talk or even socialize openly. In essence, it will be a place that reflects the social way in which today's students and faculty learn, teach, network and interact, he said.

"It's gratifying to know that at last the library expansion will move from dream to reality," said Steven Nichols, chair of the German and Romance Languages and Literatures Department in the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences. "Today's undergraduates were not yet born when folk realized the need for expansion. In the long run, though, we benefited from the wait because today we will be able to incorporate advanced technology that did

not exist in the 1970s and '80s."

Zachary Epstein-Peterson, a junior classics major and a member of the libraries' student advisory council, said he is excited about the many uses of the planned building. "Given the recent upsurge in library usage by both undergraduates and graduates, as well as the technological nature of modern learning, the new learning commons should adapt to both of these changes, and this is a big part of why we are working on this project," Epstein-Peterson said. "Already we have discussed what we want to see incorporated, namely, natural light, big open rooms, multimedia/technology-based spaces and collections, an expanded cafe, group study space and others."

The expansion will be a collaborative learning space beyond the classroom and a focal point on campus. The building will be framed by large windows and feature a "library-like" exterior. It will include space to display artwork, rare books and sculpture.

University officials said the "high-tech, high-touch" feel of the extension's interior will set it apart from Homewood's existing library. The expansion plans call for the design to include such spaces as booths with chalkboard tables; project, video conferencing and interactive media rooms; a 3-D visualization room; a special collections classroom and performance art space.

"The Brody Learning Commons provides an opportunity to build much-needed, imaginative new space to foster learning and advance the academic excellence for which the university is renowned," Tabb said. "With its premiere print and digital collections, the Eisenhower Library is well-established as an intellectual nexus on campus."

"The Brody Learning Commons will offer a new library environment, transformed by new technologies and comfortable spaces that support the flexible, collaborative learning experiences needed by students and faculty in the 21st century. My vision for the new library building is that it will enable the Sheridan Libraries to provide the best library and information services at any university in America, the kind of library our faculty and students want and deserve."

The new structure will augment the existing library, a 185,000-square-foot facility built in 1964. Officials said they proposed the facility, which is on the Homewood master plan that was completed in 2000, largely because the existing library is overcrowded and does not provide enough space for students and faculty to collaborate. In addition, officials said that Johns Hopkins students have expressed a strong desire for light-filled and flexible spaces that cater to their diverse styles of learning.

Candidates for Maryland Library Association Office

Official Slate for 2009-2010

Executive Officers

Vice President/President Elect

Glennor Shirley; Library Coordinator, Maryland State Department of Education, Correctional Education Libraries

Larry Wilt; Director, Albin O. Kuhn Library & Gallery, University of Maryland Baltimore County

Treasurer

Amy Ford; St. Mary's County Library
Sydney McCoy; Frederick County Public Libraries
Carrie Willson-Plymire; Western Maryland Regional Library

Divisions

Associates, Paraprofessionals and Library Support Staff (APLSS)

Vice President/President Elect

Brandi Miner; Baltimore County Public Library

Secretary

Tammy Taylor; University of Baltimore

Academic and Research Libraries Division (ARLD)

Vice President/President Elect

Danielle Whren Johnson; Loyola Notre Dame Library

Secretary

David Dahl; Albert S. Cook Library, Towson University

Children's Services Division (CSD)

Vice President/President Elect

Carol Dean; Anne Arundel County Public Library

Secretary

Karen Hoffman; Enoch Pratt Free Library

Government Information Division (GID)

Vice President/President Elect

No candidate

Secretary

No candidate

Library Management Division (LMD)

Vice President/President Elect

Dianne Whitaker; Montgomery County Public Library

Secretary

Robert Maranto; Baltimore County Public Library

Public Services Division (PSD)

Vice President/President Elect

Sandra Meyers; Anne Arundel County Public Library

Secretary

Alexa Leinaweaver; Prince George's County Memorial Library System

Technical Services Division (TSD)

Vice President/President Elect

Michelle Flinchbaugh; Albin O. Kuhn Library & Gallery, University of Maryland Baltimore County

Secretary

Ann Wheeler; Carter Library and Information Resource Center, Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Trustees

Vice President/President Elect

Joseph B. Bush; Trustee, St. Mary's County Library

Secretary

Simmona Simmons; Trustee, Anne Arundel County Public Library

In addition to the slate, nominations can be submitted to the Chair of the Nominations and Elections Committee. A Candidate Acceptance form must be submitted with ten (10) signatures supporting the nomination. Nominations must be received

no later than January 23, 2009. They can be mailed to Mary Baykan, Washington County Free Library, 100 S. Potomac Street, Hagerstown, MD 21740 or sent via e-mail to baykanm@washcolibrary.org.

Thurmont Center for Agricultural History

Mary K. Mannix, Frederick County Public Libraries

This past August saw the opening of the Thurmont Center for Agricultural History, located in the new Thurmont Regional Library of Frederick County Public Libraries. The purpose of the Thurmont Center is to collect materials that document the agricultural history of Frederick County and the surrounding region. The center strives to provide researchers with the necessary tools to guide their agriculture related research, whether it pertains to family history, house or property research, the history of rural voluntary organizations or a scholarly study of farming. The center is a partnership between Frederick County Public Libraries' Thurmont Regional Library and its Maryland Room, located in the C. Burr Artz Library. The Maryland Room oversees the accessioning, archival processing and long range curatorial care of the collection. The Thurmont staff handles book processing, access and daily curatorship.

Frederick County is a very appropriate place to locate such a center, as it has a significant agricultural heritage. The German population which was instrumental in the 18th century settlement of Frederick County, which at that time included today's Montgomery County, a portion of Carroll County and all of the state to the west, brought with them a way of farming which transformed agricultural practice in Maryland. Simply put, diversified family farms replaced the slave driven tobacco "plantations" as our state's primary means of agriculture.

The center's collection includes both primary and secondary sources. At the time of its opening, it held 11 archival and manuscript collections. These include the records of five different granges. The National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry is a nineteenth century fraternal organization. The grange developed during a time, after the Civil War, when agriculture was

undergoing rapid change. There was no other organized entity to speak for the farming community. The Grange's mission as they describe it on their webpage "provides opportunities for individuals and families to develop to their highest potential in order to build stronger communities and states, as well as a stronger nation."

The grange has a standard hierarchical structure. There is the national grange, state granges, county granges, known as Pomona, and community granges (the subordinates). The Thurmont Center for Agricultural History has the records of the Frederick County Pomona Grange, material from the Maryland State Grange and collections from three of Frederick County's subordinate granges. The center seeks to acquire material from all of the county's granges in order to present as complete a picture as possible of these pivotal organizations' work in the community. Due to the grange's dedication to service and their political activities, these collections present more than simply the group's rudimentary membership activities. These collections also provide a great deal of information on the Great Frederick Fair, the county fair.

From the beginning of the Grange, both men and women played important roles in the organization. Agricultural women, however, were also involved in other agricultural voluntary organizations, the most famous



being “The Homemakers.” The Homemakers developed out of the County Extension Office, as did 4-H for children and young adults. The Thurmont Center holds three collections relating to county Homemakers groups. These collections include a variety of print media, such as photographs, newspaper clippings, and scrapbooks. This coverage is twentieth century based.

One of the room’s largest collections and the one which offers the deepest information about the county’s history are the annual reports of the Frederick County Cooperative Extension and Homemaker Agents. The Cooperative Extension has its basis in a variety of federal laws. The first, the Morrill Act, which passed in 1862, established land grant colleges in every state. These colleges would be to the “Benefit of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts.” This act is one of the 100 milestone documents on the National Archives’ “Our Documents” website, <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/content.php?page=milestone>. In 1914, the Smith-Lever Act provided funds for the information gleaned from the research at these schools to be taken out to farmers. This was a cooperative effort between the US Department of Agriculture and the schools. Today, every state has a central office and a variety of local representatives. Maryland has 29 offices. Further information can be found at <http://extension.umd.edu>.

The Extension Service Collection was acquired by the Maryland Room in 1989 and was the beginning of the development of the center’s holdings. It contains reports extending back to 1917. They are mixed media and heavily illustrated with newspaper clippings, printed ephemera, hand-drawn maps and photographs. A finding aid to the over 1,000 photographs, based on the report captions, will soon be available on the Center’s webpage. A finding aid based on the newspaper headlines of the clippings has begun. These reports truly present an overview of the County’s history during a significant portion of the twentieth century. They are a window into a way of life that is rapidly disappearing as Frederick becomes a Washington, DC bedroom community.

Of potential interest to researchers outside the Frederick region is the collection of Department of Agriculture *Farmers’ Bulletins*. It consists of 381 individual titles published in the early and mid-twentieth century. Titles run the gamut from *Alfalfa on Corn-Belt Farms* to *Business Records for Poultry Keepers*, from *Fitting, Showing and Judging Hogs* to *Shall I Buy a Combine?* These thin paperback publications provide an overview of the science of

The center provides research opportunities in agricultural history, land use, environmental studies, women’s history and family history.

agriculture. They are not yet in the on-line catalog and are treated as a manuscript collection. An inventory can be found online.

The book collection consists of over 90 titles, all located on the FCPL online catalog. The entire listing can be seen by using the “Thurmont Center for Agricultural History” selection in the location choice under

the Power Search option on the catalog. While most of these titles are agriculture related, the center also serves as the permanent rare book repository for local authors, local history and genealogy. The bulk of the collection is from the private library of David Eigenbrode, a Frederick County career extension professional, now retired. Titles in this collection go back to 1881, such as the *Illustrated Stock Doctor & Livestock Encyclopedia*. The collection consists of textbooks, manuals and government documents from both the state and federal levels.

The Maryland Room has been actively collecting agricultural materials for ten years. The archival and book holdings of the Thurmont Center for Agricultural History were rehoused and processed under the guidance of the Maryland Room. It took over two years to complete and at various times included the efforts of ten FCPL staff members, two library school students, two college interns, ten high school volunteers and several other volunteers. The rehousing of the collection was supported by a National Endowment of Humanities Preservation Assistance Grant to Small Institutions.

The center provides research opportunities not only in agricultural history, but also in land use, environmental studies, women’s history and family history. It also serves as documentation of the twentieth century, a time period only now being documented.

It is open seven days a week and can be accessed through the adult services reference desk. Researchers are asked to follow basic special collection guidelines including using pencil only, locking up personal possessions and photocopying by staff intervention. It is recommended, however, that patrons call ahead so that the staff can be ready to more effectively assist them. Parking at the building is free and plentiful.

For further information about the center please call 301-600-7212 to speak to Erin Dingle, the Thurmont Regional Branch Administrator or Melissa Snyder, the librarian with special responsibility for the center. The FCPL Maryland Room can be reached at 301-600-1368. The Center’s webpage can be accessed at <http://www.fcpl.org/information/branches/thurmont>.



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