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Editor’s Note

Typically, this issue would include a myriad of photos from the recent MLA conference and a preview of all of the upcoming summer reading programs around the state. Alas, we know that this year is different—with a postponed conference, and many library branches just opening or considering opening their doors back to the public after the coronavirus public health emergency.

The one thing that we can always count on, even in the most unexpected of times, is the resiliency of the Maryland Library Association and Maryland’s libraries when faced with even the toughest of challenges. One phrase that I’ve heard recently in attending the MLA Leadership Orientation in my advisory capacity as Crab editor and by attending the weekly MLA Conversations series (article on page 9) is: “don’t let a good pandemic go to waste.”

And MLA and Maryland libraries have done just that, quickly coming up with virtual programming and services for the MLA membership and for the public, and adapting not to a “new normal,” but to the “current reality” (again, I’m stealing a phrase I heard in an MLA Leadership Orientation just today, as of this writing). In this issue of the Crab, you will see only a small sampling of how MLA and Maryland libraries have risen above and innovated in ways never even imagined before—but were always right there at our collective fingertips.

A particular favorite program offering of mine, the MLA Leadership Development Division’s “Leading from Home” series of talks, got me through some tough times and helped to inspire me in my new “at-home” work environment; you can read more about this innovative and engaging series on page 11.

I hope that this issue gives you a bit of respite from the daily grind, your “current reality,” and helps to inspire you to “not let a good pandemic go to waste”...but also to hope that we’ll be out of the woods soon, but even if we aren’t, we know that we’ll be in good hands in MLA and the Maryland library community!

Annette Haldeman, MLA Crab Editor; Department of Legislative Services Library
I always wondered if that was truly the case. Maybe it is not always so, but for this last year, I would have to agree. Our world and our libraries parts in that world have gone through a number of major shifts. Had we known last fall what we know now, I think many of us would have looked for some kind of sabbatical, or perhaps at least good place to hide.

All kidding aside, as we have seen numerous times over the last 12 months, we have had to recreate the practices or polices of our libraries, learn new skills, or try out new programs and the means to deliver them. What we have discovered is that, libraries have some flat out amazing people working in them. We said we knew that before, but truly, all doubts have been pushed aside. This is exemplified in the ability that those same people showed in shifting MLA programs and training online, moving all meetings online, and continuing to be not just productive but highly successful!

As I finish this year as President of MLA, and turn over the reins to my esteemed colleague, Morgan Miller, I want to say a heartfelt, “thank you.” Thank you for letting me have this front row seat to see the best people doing the best job possible in one crisis after another. Thank you for the opportunity to challenge preconceived notions and use those crises as opportunities to improve our organization. And thank you for the honor of speaking for a group of professionals who I consider rock stars, and who I am humbled to call my friends and colleagues. MLA is strong, and growing stronger due to the dedication and professionalism of these people. I applaud you all.
Library Capital Grant Program Awards Funds

*Renee Croft, Maryland State Library*

During its June meeting, the Maryland Board of Public Works approved $7,300,000 for the County Library Capital Grant Program in FY 2021. During discussion, both Comptroller Peter Franchot and Treasurer Nancy Kopp spoke very highly of Maryland public libraries’ innovative response to the current pandemic, stating that “Maryland’s libraries have been using their 3D printers to produce PPE. Libraries expanded access to e-books and digital materials, along with providing online adult and children’s programs and dial-a-story services. Additionally, libraries expanded Wi-Fi hotspots into their parking lots and other areas to provide internet access for families that do not have it at home. All libraries have offered virtual programming and are moving forward with Maryland’s annual summer reading program to be delivered in a virtual format.”

Author Glennor Shirley’s New Book Highlights Career as Prison Librarian

*Glennor Shirley*

Saturday, May 30 was a banner day for Glennor Shirley as she received the first copy of her recent book, *Journal of the Librarian Who Went to Prison for Money*, published by Dorrance Publishing.

The book discusses the positive transformation of prisoners who use prison libraries to educate themselves. It contains letters from and interactions with prisoners, showing their educational transformation after entering prison, their resilience, humor and deep respect for the prison library services.

Now retired, Shirley’s prison librarian experience is informative for libraries or librarians interested in providing services to prisoners. In addition to her career as a librarian, Shirley has been active in various roles with MLA for many years including serving as President from 2010 to 2011, and she is currently an honorary MLA member.

Anyone interested in ordering Shirley’s her book should contact the Dorrance Book Order Department at https://bookstore.dorrancepublishing.com/ or dorrordr@dorrancepublishing.com.
Blue Crab Young Reader Award Committee Seeks Members

Jill Hutchison, Secretary, Children’s Services Division, Maryland Library Association

The Children’s Services Division of the MLA Maryland Library Association is taking applications for the 2021 Maryland Blue Crab Young Reader Award Committee! To serve on the committee, you must be a member of either the Maryland Library Association or the Maryland Association of School Librarians. The committee will meet monthly from July 2020 through February 2021 on a schedule to be determined by the committee chair and members themselves. Most meetings will be virtual this year, except for the first meeting and last meeting, with locations TBD (to be determined).

On this committee you’ll read and analyze many, many early-reader and transitional-reader books throughout the year. MLA awards 30 CEU’s to committee members to recognize their many hours of work and study during the year. The work is worth it: you’ll become an expert on early and transitional books for young readers, make great friends, and make 16 authors really, really happy!

If this sounds good to you, apply to the committee by submitting the form at https://sites.google.com/view/mla-csd/maryland-blue-crab-young-reader-award/join-the-blue-crab-committee.
When most Maryland libraries closed their doors to the public in mid-March due to the COVID-19 outbreak, few of us had any sense of how long we’d be staying at home. Days turned into weeks. For many, the feeling of being disconnected from our colleagues at our own libraries and from friends across the state grew deeper.

When MLA’s Steering Committee held our first online meeting on April 15th, it quickly became clear that a few of us had already been thinking along the same lines. We knew that we needed a way to reconnect with each other across Maryland libraries, and MLA was in the perfect position to help. Even before the pandemic, I had been thinking about how many incredible people we have working across the Maryland library community who are accomplishing great things. I had been wanting to figure out a way to help bring these people further to the forefront and have them share their experience with the rest of us. These ideas quickly converged, and Morgan Miller and Naomi Keppler volunteered to be the first guests for Episode 1 on Friday, April 24th. Since then, we’ve managed to keep up with our weekly series of Friday afternoon MLA Conversations, which some of us have affectionately dubbed our weekly online “MLA happy hour.” We keep the format informal and do our best to make sure that our two guests each week need very little time to prepare. We simply rely on the knowledge and experience that each person brings. So far, we’ve also been successful at keeping each conversation to only an hour, in consideration of everyone’s time.

Guests have included MLA volunteer leaders, as well as individuals who are leading their own libraries through this period of great change. I have tried to be intentional about inviting a range of guests: those who are early in their career and those who are experienced leaders, representing different types of libraries, from all parts of the state, and reflective of different perspectives. In addition to Morgan and Naomi, we’ve met Jenny Bakos, Thomas Vose, Tonya Aikens, Andrea Berstler, Kimberly Miller, David Dahl, Sara Brown, Kelsey Hughes, Carrie Willson, Natalie Edington, Mary Anne Bowman, Tiffany Sutherland, Ashley Teagle, and Kenneth Wayne Thompson. Each of these individuals have willingly offered their time from their busy schedules to provide insights into how they arrived at their current job, special people who gave them encouragement along the way, and advice for all of us who may be interested in advancing in the library profession. There’s also time during each of these hours for the attendees to ask whatever questions are on their mind.

What have the attendees been saying about the MLA Conversations? Monica McAbee, Librarian III at Prince George’s County Memorial Library System’s Materials Management Department, offered these observations:
Watching the MLA Conversations has been a pleasure and an inspiration. I’ve attended every single one, as a way of learning about new colleagues and catching up with old ones. I’ve learned some cool things about people - ask Nay Keppler about her librarian origin story sometime. Did you know that Carrie Willson is “willing to make mistakes and have adventures”? (Of course you did. But it was fun to hear her say it.)

Each week, speakers shared nuggets of wisdom that are worth keeping in mind:

- **Putting perfectionism aside is freeing.**
- **We are resilient and agile, and we show up for each other.**
- **Remember your “why.”**
- **You’re capable of much more than you think you are.**
- **Say “I can,” then figure out how!**
- **Defy your impostor syndrome: you were chosen for a reason.**

Finally, over and over, speakers recommended joining the Conference Committee as a great introduction to MLA. I concur! Or join a committee that has particular interest to you, which is how I got involved (Intellectual Freedom Panel)…let’s keep the conversation going!

Plans are in the works to keep the series going, and guests scheduled for the rest of June will be sharing their perspectives on topics ranging from Readers Advisory to advocacy tips from the officers of Citizens for Maryland Libraries. We are incredibly lucky to have such a deep bench of individuals who are innovating and responding to difficult challenges across Maryland libraries. Thankfully, these people are also willing to talk about it. I have a list of people I’m planning on asking to participate over the summer (and you might already be on it!). If you know someone who you think might be a great guest for a future conversation, please send me a note at jthompson@carr.org.
MLA’s Leadership Development Division (LDD) Presents:

“Leading from Home”

While most of us had ideas of how 2020 might go for us professionally and personally, COVID-19 had different ideas…
During the April MLA steering committee meeting, it was discussed that MLA needed to find a way to keep members engaged during library closures and continue to provide learning opportunities and benefits of membership. After that meeting the Leadership Development Division (LDD) president Naomi Keppler reached out to Martha Zimmerman, Chair of the Professional Development Panel (PDP). Naomi asked her to consult with PDP to create some guidelines for virtual programming and let her know that LDD would be happy to be a guinea pig. PDP gave MLA guidance to move forward so divisions could be responsive to the new “normal.”

Zoom became the go-to tool to connect with our families and friends, but it also proved to be an important piece in creating a new program for library workers across the state. While previously LDD has favored in-person trainings, this was LDD’s first online offering that took the concept of 15 minutes or shorter “Ignite Sessions” and brought them under the umbrella of working from home. Leadership and teamwork is difficult enough to continue to grow in, but the division found that staff were looking for how to translate this growth when staff or customers could not be interacted with in person. Now that Zoom was identified as the favorable platform for trainings, LDD received help from Kate Monagan in the MLA office to make each session possible.

The current LDD leadership team of Krista Regester, Naomi Keppler, and Anita Crawford came together and hammered out some details, leaning first on Naomi’s amazing library connections and networking skills to connect with several library workers within the state to present the a four-part series titled “Leading from Home.” The first session was called “Keeping It Together.” The very first topic was presented by Kim Day of Enoch Pratt Free Library and centered around using online technology to reach customers. Something she said during her introduction really encapsulates the entire intention behind this series of programs. She said, “I want to also acknowledge all of the stress and grief that staff are dealing with and this is not a presentation meant to compare what other libraries are doing and add pressure. It’s more to show what is possible with what we are mentally able to provide right now and offer some inspiration.” Fatigue from online meetings and dealing with the news was heavy on everyone’s minds, but this statement really helps bring home the idea that it’s not about what we can’t do anymore, it’s about what we can do now.

LDD was very encouraged by the response and attendance of the first “Leading from Home” session and moved right into the second session: “Checking In”. This session focused on the importance of remaining alert to changing situations and how they may impact library staff. This included a presentation titled “COVID-19 Contact Tracing” by Bryan Nell Jones of Nashville Public Library. He brought into focus how the world would be impacted by contact tracing as far as civil and privacy rights are concerned. One of the things Bryan mentioned was that it is voluntary to “ensure community trust,” but there may be people who wouldn’t trust this regardless. This session happened on May 7th prior to the Black Lives Matter movement and anti-racism efforts coming to the forefront of our social media feeds and news headlines, but folks can utilize this training to think about the concerns this sort of COVID tracking brings up for our customers, like Bryan mentioned, “I imagine many people of color don’t want to download a tracking app that automatically feeds information to the government.”

For the third session, “Turning the Page,” there was a focus on moving forward with some of the technology ideas learned from the “Keeping It Together” session. Kelley Keimig and Suzanne Terry of Frederick County Public Libraries presented on “Innovating in Isolation.” Kelley stressed the importance of personal relationships, “since a lot of us spend more time at work than anywhere else, or at least we used to, it’s important we feel connected and supported by our co-workers.” As spikes in online usage of platforms such as Overdrive, Kanopy, and CloudLibrary could...
be seen across libraries in America, during “What’s Up with eContent”, Baltimore County Public Library Collection Development Coordinator said, “I think the biggest thing that I want you to take away from this is, my gosh, nobody knows – it changes every day. Keep your flexibility and keep the conversations going with your Collection Development people.”

Through each “Leading from Home” session, the Leadership Development Division was able to remain responsive to the changes of the world through the talks that were provided. This was apparent in the fourth and final session, “Forward Motion,” where Krista Regester of Baltimore County Public Library spoke about resilience and acknowledgement. She acknowledged “There’s an unending amount of concerns and there is continual shift in what we used to think was our normal.”

All four sessions were successful, over 150 attendees at each, 240 at the peak. The program evaluations let us know that so many Maryland library staff were craving the discussion of innovative ideas, effectiveness of working from home, anxiety, and mindfulness, and all of these topics were touched on in this series.

While the Leadership Development Division started this journey with web-based trainings as a way to further connection, what the division has found is a path forward. The division is committed to remaining responsive to the world around us and the need for more hard conversations about mental wellness, racial bias, and playing a part in reflecting our communities so customers know that there is a place for them within the comforts of library buildings and from their homes. While we may be social distancing for some time, it does not mean that our growth and encouragement of leadership will be distant. The Leadership Development Division will continue to remain present, flexible, and alert to the leaders within Maryland libraries supervisors and staff leading from where they are and will continue to work and grow alongside you.
Curbside Service…
Lessons Learned in Garrett County

Photo courtesy Laurel Baker.
The Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County has been conducting curbside service since May 18. Aside from some early issues, things have generally gone smoothly, and the library has found a system that works. Four of the library’s five branches employ a contactless system in which staff put out materials in a disposable plastic bag on a table and the patron picks their items up after calling the library to let them know they are out front.

The fifth library, Grantsville, employs a drive-thru window that was constructed with the building. In all cases, only staff have access to the building, and the libraries are operating at a reduced staff level with essential employees only. All returns are put in the drop boxes and quarantined in-house for three days before being checked back in. However, there is a fine waiver in place and due dates will continue to be pushed back until patrons are allowed into the buildings again.

The library has been happy to see a very positive response from patrons and on social media to this service. A few comments stand out:

“Working great at the Accident Library...and so nice to see our Library friends again. Thank you for opening ♥”

“I. AM. SO. HAPPY!!!!”

“I’m more excited about this than anything!”

Additionally, several patrons have been coming to pick up materials on almost a daily basis which has been very heartwarming! While the number has varied heavily depending on location, the libraries have averaged 55 patrons per day picking up items systemwide during May.

Of course, the libraries run into their share of issues, too. The holds lists have been significantly higher in the mornings, and in the early part of this effort, holds had to be gathered multiple times a day at the Main Library. On the first day, issues were encountered with the phones that were doubly frustrating due to how necessary they were for the process. Fortunately, things have gone smoothly since then. Based on the hours that people tend to pick up, the libraries will likely adjust their service hours somewhat (for example, late afternoons are very slow). Additionally, locating appropriate quarantine space for the smaller branches was a bit of a challenge, the challenge seems to have been well met.

Meanwhile, the libraries have been using the time that they are closed to the public to prepare the buildings for reopening by installing sneeze guards, creating social distancing efforts and directional signage, weeding the collections and conducting some minor remodeling at the Main Library. The libraries are very much looking forward to seeing their patrons in person once again!
NASA’s latest Mars rover, Perseverance, is launching in just a few days! This amazing robot explorer will scout the surface of Mars for possible signs of ancient life and collect soil samples for return to Earth by future missions. It will even carry the first off-planet helicopter: Integrity. Not coincidentally, Perseverance will be on its way to the red planet just as Mars dramatically increases in brightness and visibility to eager stargazers as our planets race towards their closest approach in October of this year.

Perseverance’s engineers built upon the success of its engineering cousin, Curiosity, and its design features many unique upgrades for a new science mission! In February of 2021, Perseverance will land at the site of an ancient river delta inside of Jezero Crater and ready its suite of seven primary scientific instruments. The rover will search for traces of past life, including possible Martian fossils, with WATSON and SHERLOC, two advanced cameras capable of seeing tiny details. The rover also carries an amazing instrument, SuperCam, to blast rocks and soil outside of the rover’s reach with lasers to determine their chemical makeup with its onboard suite of cameras and spectrometers. Perseverance will also take core samples of some of the most promising rocks and soil, storing them for later study with its unique caching system. Future missions will retrieve these samples from the rover and return them for detailed study by scientists on Earth. Perseverance also carries two microphones so we can hear the sounds of
Mars and the noises of its instruments at work. It will even launch a small helicopter (INGENUITY) into the Martian atmosphere as a trial for future aerial exploration!

Would you like to contribute to Mars mission science? You can help NASA’s rover drivers safely navigate the Martian surface by contributing to the AI4Mars project! Use this tool to label terrain features on photos taken of the Martian surface by NASA missions to help train an artificial intelligence algorithm to better read their surrounding landscape: https://www.zooniverse.org/projects/hiro-ono/ai4mars.

The launch of Mars Perseverance is, as of this writing, scheduled for July 20, 2020 at 9:15 am EDT. More details, updates, and livestreams of the event are available on NASA’s official launch page: https://mars.nasa.gov/mars2020/timeline/launch/. Dig deep into the science of the Mars 2020 mission and the Perseverance rover at: https://mars.nasa.gov/mars2020/. Find out even more about past, present, and future Mars missions at https://www.nasa.gov.

This article is distributed by NASA Night Sky Network

The Night Sky Network program supports astronomy clubs across the USA dedicated to astronomy outreach. Visit nightsky.jpl.nasa.org to find local clubs, events, and more!

Observe Mars yourself over the next few months! Mars can be found in early morning skies throughout July, and by the end of the month will rise before midnight. Mars gradually brightens every night until the close approach of Mars in October. The pre-dawn skies of July 17 present an especially nice view, as the waning crescent Moon will appear near Venus and Aldebaran.
Montgomery College Library Welcomes Suzette Spencer!

*Josephine Trawick, Montgomery College*

Suzette Spencer accepted the position of Director of Library and Information Services at Montgomery College Library and began her tenure April 6, 2020.

Ms. Spencer brings 24 years of library experience to Montgomery College, having worked across four library systems before joining MC, including the New York Public Library and Temple University Libraries. She has supervisory experience in both public and academic libraries, including partnership locations. She has experience in facilities, budgeting, library renovation projects, and integrated library systems. In addition, Ms. Spencer brings strategic planning and project management expertise to the library. She has served on various national and regional library boards.

Ms. Spencer earned a Master of Information and Library Science from the Pratt Institute in New York and a Bachelor of Science in Human Resource Management and Finance from Temple University. She comes to Montgomery College from Broward College in Florida, where she served most recently as the Interim Associate Dean of Library Access and Discovery. She also served as the Associate Dean of Public Services in the Broward library.

Please join us in welcoming Ms. Spencer to Montgomery College. She can be reached at suzette.spencer@montgomerycollege.edu.