Maryland Libraries Passport User Group Visits the Washington, D.C. Passport Agency

Maryland Association of Counties Summer Conference
FEATURE ARTICLES

Lunch at the Library: A Partnership Success Story
St. Mary’s County Library partnered with St. Mary’s County schools to provide lunch to students in need over the extended summer break.

Maryland Association of Counties Summer Conference
The Library community was well represented at the MACo Summer Conference held August 16-19 in Ocean City, Maryland. Representatives from Maryland public libraries, schools, Maryland Association of Public Library Administrators, Maryland Library Association and Citizens for Maryland Libraries shared their stories of success and economic contribution to more than 2,000 local government officials, county staff-decision makers, legislators, business representatives and more.

Maryland Libraries Passport User Group Visits the Washington, D.C. Passport Agency
On the morning of June 15, 2017, the Maryland Libraries Passport User Group went to the U.S. State Department’s Washington DC Passport Agency. Close to 25 public librarians from around the state made the trip.

Cassini Says Goodbye
On September 15th, the Cassini spacecraft was to have its final mission: In a dive into the planet Saturn, gathering information and sending it back to Earth for as long as possible. As it dives, it will burn up in the atmosphere, much like a meteor. Cassini’s original mission was supposed to last four years, but it has now been orbiting Saturn for more than 13 years!
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Don’t forget: In addition to these Contents pages, you can use Bookmarks to navigate through your Digital Magazine!
Editor’s Note

Welcome to the Fall 2017 issue of the Crab! With our Fall issue, you’ll find a recap of all of the great programs in Maryland’s libraries, MLA members gaining valuable training experience, and an informative message from incoming MLA President Denise Davis that details the history and establishment of Maryland libraries as powerful organizations throughout the state, which continues on to the present day.

MLA President Denise Davis’ column for this issue (see page ___) details the statutory structure in the Maryland Annotated Code that is the strong foundation for Maryland’s libraries, as well as a recent change in Code to establish a State Library Board and with it, a State Librarian, providing libraries in Maryland with better footing on an already strong system of support.

A prime example of the strength of Maryland’s librarians and libraries was illustrated by MLA’s and other library organizations’ presence at the annual Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) conference in August, which is described on page ___. Maryland libraries were able to showcase their importance and relevance to a multitude of conference attendees, which included both state and county officials.

I also encourage you to read about the inspiring summer program put on by St. Mary’s County Library’s Lexington Park branch, which provided lunch for children at the library and helped to fill the gap in providing meals to students on an extended summer break. This program cultivated interest, awareness, and new partnerships for the library. It was a success for participants involved in all levels of the program, from participants, to volunteers, to library staff alike, a true example of the power of libraries in our State.

I hope that as you read this issue, you will feel as empowered and as proud to work in libraries throughout our state. Together, we can make a difference and show our communities the inherent value of libraries.

Annette Haldeman, MLA Crab Editor  
Department of Legislative Services Library
Critical factor in the quality of Maryland’s Libraries is the set of talented librarians, library staff, directors and deans who have, for generations, thought and worked very hard to build our libraries into outstanding civic institutions offering excellent services, collections, and facilities for our communities. Without a strong statewide statutory foundation, however, these impressive personnel and their accomplishments would be extremely vulnerable to periods of financial or political stress, and it is unlikely that they could have been sustained over generations to give us the excellent libraries we have today. Maryland, however, has an exceptional and exemplary foundation for libraries in its Annotated Code provisions related to public libraries. Although these provisions are focused primarily on public libraries, this foundation supports excellence for all types of Maryland libraries by setting the bar high for this large set of libraries and library staff across the state. Some highly consequential features are described below.

Along with public schools and colleges, Maryland’s libraries and library personnel are governed under Maryland state education law. Being part of the state’s system of education has many benefits. State education law strives to assure that Maryland’s public librarians and staff, as well as its public school teachers and staff, are well-qualified for their roles as educators. For example, public librarians must be Certified Educators by the State Board of Education and must meet the educational requirements necessary to achieve certification. Strong educational requirements also support compensation commensurate with educational attainment and the commitment typical of Maryland’s library staff. The impact on funding being part of the state’s system of public education is also powerful. Consider that during the great recession, the most severe threat to public funding in generations, then Governor O’Malley made state public education funding—including public library funding—his top budget priority.

And our Maryland state library law just got better. After many years of advocacy by librarians and library supporters around the state, on July 1, 2017, Maryland’s state library law was revised to create a Maryland State Library Board (MSLB) and place this governing board right alongside the Maryland Board of Education and the Commission on Higher Education in the Education Article of the Annotated Code. The Maryland State Librarian, which is now finally the official name for the state’s top librarian (previously titled the Assistant State Superintendent for Libraries), reports directly to the MSLB. This change elevates the position and influence of our state library operations and leadership within the state’s education community and the state government. For more information on the governance structure, visit this portion of the Maryland Manual: [http://msa.maryland.gov/msa/mdmanual/25ind/html/50library.html](http://msa.maryland.gov/msa/mdmanual/25ind/html/50library.html)
Maryland state library law provides for county-wide public library systems overseen by citizen library boards and operated by professional librarians who report directly to the library board. When Maryland leaders wrote our state’s public library enabling legislation in the 1930s and 1940s, Maryland’s libraries ranged from the already impressive Enoch Pratt Free Library (established in 1882) to emerging county library systems and small town libraries. The legislation provided incentives to Maryland counties to create professional quality county-wide public library systems and provided a legal authorization and strong structure for their operation. Under the law, the county-wide libraries are governed by a library board composed of citizens of the county. Board members serve five-year terms and cannot be removed without good cause, buffering the board (and the library) from the politics of the moment. The law also provides that the library director in every county must be a professionally trained librarian. These provisions create a governance team that includes expertise in libraries and commitment to libraries and library values. The structure has withstood the test of time. Today, all but one of Maryland’s public libraries are county-wide, and all but one county public library is governed by a citizen library board.

Core values of librarianship such as equity and “access for all” are built into several provisions of Maryland’s state library laws and go a long way to assuring that Marylanders throughout the state receive high quality library services. While most of Maryland’s public library funding comes from county governments, the state makes significant annual budgetary contributions and adjusts its contribution to each county based on the population and the wealth of the county. Thus, lower wealth counties receive somewhat more state funding per capita since their local finances are more limited. In another example, Maryland’s three state-funded regional libraries (or resource centers) provide essential services and technical support for small rural county library systems that they could simply not support on their own. As well, the State Library Resource Center at the Enoch Pratt Free Library provides services from highly experienced staff and delivers materials from its expansive collections to citizens statewide, further assuring that no matter where you live in Maryland, you will have access to the educational and learning opportunities that quality libraries provide, without an unnecessary duplication of resources.

To the great benefit of all our libraries as well as our users and communities, and consistent with our library law’s emphasis on equity and access for all, collaboration is deeply engrained in Maryland library history and culture, having long been fostered by Maryland state library leadership. The legendary first Maryland state librarian, Nettie B. Taylor, established statewide library borrowing privileges, allowing citizens of every county to check out and return books and materials wherever they may travel in the state. Today, the tradition of collaboration continues, and I am happy to say, is actively promoted by the Maryland Library Association.

So when we consider what makes Maryland’s libraries exceptionally strong, there is real value in studying and supporting our Maryland state library law and appreciating its importance to our past and future success.
ALA Councilor’s Report—ALA Annual Conference

Lucy Holman, ALA Councilor

With the largest attendance in the last four years (22,289), ALA held its annual conference June 22 to 26 at the McCormick Place Convention Center in Chicago, Illinois. Keynote speakers included Sarah Jessica Parker, Ron Chernow and Hillary Clinton. The conference did not disappoint in the number of great programs, speakers and activities!

General News

Executive Director Keith Michael Fiels reported on the state of the association and the profession to Council and interested members at Saturday’s general membership meeting. Membership is down by 4% this year, which reflects a general downward trend in professional librarians, where there has been a loss of approximately 60,000 jobs following the recent recession. Membership shows a higher percentage of current graduate students. Graduate school enrollments had dropped by approximately ¼ between 2008 and 2011. All the ALA divisions have lost members, with the exception of the Association of Libraries Serving Children (ALSC) and United for Libraries (trustees division). On the positive side, 16 roundtables have increased membership in the last year.

ALA Treasurer Susan Hildreth presented an overview of the FY 2017 budget (which ends September 30, 2017) at the membership meeting. Hildreth provided illustrations showing the breakdown of ALA revenue and expenses. Revenues come from membership dues (17%), conferences (24%), publishing (36%), grants (4%), investment interest (4%), and other (9%). Expenditures divide primarily into professional development (38%); member services (23%); advocacy (14%); information policy and intellectual freedom (13%); and literacy, diversity and access equity (12%).

FY 2018 will continue to operate under the four strategic directions of advocacy; professional and leadership development; equity, diversity and inclusion; and information policy. Hildreth presented Council with a total FY 2018 budget of $51.5 million, including a $45.9 million operating budget, capital projects of $1.8 million, grants and awards of $4.6 million and the ALA Endowment of $1.1 million.

The operating budget includes a 2% salary increase for staff, a $436,000 increase in publishing revenue, increases in division allocations and increases in budgets for the Office of Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services (ODLOS), the Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF), Human Resource Development and Recruitment (HRDR), the Office for Library Advocacy (OLA) and the Center for the Future of Libraries.

Council approved an FY 2018 budgetary ceiling to $66,674,000. This includes higher budgetary ceilings for division and round tables, which have existing assets; the general fund ceiling roughly matches the $29.7 million in anticipated revenues.

Executive Director Search

Long-standing ALA Executive Director Keith Michael Fiels retires this summer. The search for a new ALA Executive Director is well underway. The search committee is working with the search firm Isaacson Miller, who will present candidates to the committee in August. The search committee will conduct Skype interviews with the first round of candidates in mid-September, followed by off-site interviews in late September/early October and then final interviews will be conducted with the search committee, Executive Board, and staff in late October. The hope is to hire the new Executive Director in time for the 2018 Midwinter conference.

Advocacy

The Office of Government Relations (OGR) in ALA’s Washington Office has been extremely busy and productive in rallying librarians across the country in support of protecting IMLS and funding LSTA. A new website http://ala.org/fight-for-libraries and the social media campaign #savemLS led to more than 42,000 emails from librarians to the House of Representatives finding support for continued funding in the federal FY 2017 budget.

In addition to advocacy by librarians, a group of 26 library vendors created an advocacy group, the Corporate Committee for Library Investment (CCLI) to reach out to the Senate to represent the economic impact libraries have on the publishing and vendor community. The group continues to grow, now representing more than 100 library vendors.

Council Actions

Council passed three major resolutions during its regular sessions. The first resolution called for libraries to preserve and provide access to scientific data from both governmental and private sources relating to climate change.

Secondly, Council approved a resolution encouraging libraries to consider themselves responsible spaces by adopting and enforcing user behavior policies that protect patrons and staff from harassment while maintaining their historic support for the freedom of speech, to sponsor programs that create opportunities for meaningful dialogue among diverse groups, and to build partnerships with underrepresented community members.

Lastly, Council approved two interpretations for the Library Bill of Rights; one illustrates how each article in the bill of rights addresses equity, diversity and inclusion. The second emphasizes the role libraries play in
fostering community discussions around political issues and providing access to varying viewpoints on such issues.

Visit the following links for the full text these resolutions:

Chapter Relations

At the 2016 Annual conference, ALA created a Chapter Relationships Committee (CRC) subcommittee to examine the relationship between ALA and its chapters. The Task Force, with representatives from several chapters, released its report and made recommendations to improve communication between ALA and its chapters, including…

- the development of an ALA welcome packet for newly elected President-Elects,
- the creation of a new chapter leader orientation webinar (first offered June 8),
- renewal of a chapter councilor webinar (scheduled for October),
- two programs at ALA Annual 2017,
- development of a more collaborative relationship between chapters and the Office of Library Advocacy, the Chapter Relations Office and the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), and
- to retain the working subcommittee as a standing subcommittee of CRC.

Enjoying Waterways with a Little Help from the Library!

Jennifer Adams, Manager, Mountain Road Community Library, Anne Arundel County Public Library

The anglers of Anne Arundel County were very happy this summer. That is because the Mountain Road Community Library offered a new service to its water loving customers…fishing poles! Thanks to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), with whom the library partnered to offer fishing poles and extra supplies, Mountain Road’s customers were able to enjoy a day on the water catching fish.

The library started the service in May and have seen the eight rods and reels check out over 100 times. Customers can check them out like a book and are able to have the items for two weeks. There is a fine if the items are returned late and a charge to replace the rod and reel if lost. MDE has been more than accommodating with getting this pilot project off the ground. There was no cost to the library and MDE supplied everything needed.

Staff are not required to repair rods if they come back damaged. The library asked a local sports fishing group to volunteer and repair them as needed. The group jumped at the opportunity as these anglers wanted to share their love of fishing.

One mother came in to share with staff that this was the first time in a long time she can remember that her boys spent hours away from electronics and didn’t fight with one another. Another mother came in and borrowed all eight rods and reels, as her extended family was coming into town and they were all going fishing.

“The mission of the Anne Arundel County Public Library is to educate, enrich and inspire our customers,” said Hampton “Skip” Auld, the Library CEO. “Given this county’s extensive shoreline and interest in water activities, we feel like this program is a good fit.”

The Mountain Road Library encourages everyone to get out there and enjoy the water and catch the big one that got away. You just need some worms and patience.

And some music (click the poster! >)

Henry Thomas, Fishing Blues
Chicago, June 13, 1928, Vocalion 1249.
“Changing Spaces, Changing Places”

Using Archives and Artifacts to Tell Regional Stories: A Technical Services Division Program Recap

Robert Krzanowski, Carroll Community College

This summer, MLA’s Technical Services Division (TSD) sponsored the program “Changing Spaces, Changing Places: Using Archives and Artifacts to Tell Regional Stories” at Salisbury University.

The program detailed the movement of Salisbury University’s Edward H. Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture to the university’s Patricia R. Guerrieri Academic Commons, a building that houses the university library. The Nabb Research Center endeavors to advance research and understanding of the Delmarva region through the collection and provision of records, artifacts, and research assistance to students, staff, and other interested parties. Attendees were provided with a history of the center and the recent move, details on the movement and merger of multiple collections, and a tour of the facility, including the archives and various exhibit spaces.

Presenters Ian Post, Leslie Van Veen McRoberts, Janie Kreines, and Dr. Creston Long then discussed digitization efforts, collection and preservation of local historical records, and exhibits. The program was extremely well-received, and TSD offers a special thanks to the presenters for their outstanding work!

More information about the Salisbury University Libraries and the Nabb Research Center can be found at http://www.salisbury.edu/library/about/locations.html

Highlights from the Innovative Library Classroom 2017

Monique K. Clark, University of Baltimore

Each May, around 100 librarians converge on southwestern Virginia to share their latest instruction ideas, practices, and lessons learned at the Innovative Library Classroom (TILC), an annual regional conference at Radford University focused on teaching and learning within libraries. Topics included were engaging students during instruction, incorporating design thinking within libraries, and embracing our expertise as librarians. Although most participants are librarians who provide instruction within a collegiate setting, librarians who teach in public libraries, K-12 schools, and other environments could adjust the strategies and techniques to fit their respective situations.

This year’s TILC theme was “Teaching, Learning, and Leading.” In her insightful keynote speech, Rebecca K. Miller reminded librarians that we have skills that transfer outside of library instruction to situations such as leading meetings and collaborating with other departments within our organizations. These skills include communication, reading an audience, flexibility, getting organizational buy-in, and creating engagement. Additionally, we can incorporate teaching practices into interactions outside of the classroom, such as using critical thinking techniques to advocate for resources and encourage participation in decision-making.

Some of the other highlights of TILC included the following programs:

“Dust off those Encyclopedias: Using Reference Sources to Teach the ACRL (Association of College and Research Libraries) Framework for Information Literacy.”

In this presentation, Kristin Green of Pennsylvania State University reminded participants that students usually skip the exploration steps of the research process. Librarians can encourage students to use reference sources to read about their topic, write down the questions they have after reading, and then find answers in the literature.

“Urban Legend or Practical Pedagogy: Are You a Teaching Ninja?”

In this session, Candice Benjes-Small and Jennifer Resor-Whicker of Radford University used fun game to discuss evidence-based learning theories. Many of the learning theories that we are familiar with (learning styles, attention spans, and use of mnemonic devices) were in the “urban legend” category. However, using conversational language, chunking lessons into smaller segments, and contacting students before class has proven to be effective for learning and student engagement.

“The Struggle is Real: Facilitating Information Literacy Learning by Being Leaders of Failure.”

In this lightning talk, Liz Bellamy, also of Radford University, urged participants to “can the canned search” and show students that searching isn’t going to be easy or perfect. We can do this by talking about times when our searches failed, by using student topics to do a real time search, and by asking reflective questions.

Other topics, slides and handouts discussed at the 2017 TILC and content from previous years can be accessed at http://theinnovativelibraryclassroom.weebly.com/presentations-and-handouts.html
We’ve been seeing these kids for a few years now—you know, the ones who show up when the doors open and stay until dinnertime. They never bring a lunch and they don’t have a grownup. In a walkable neighborhood like Lexington Park, kids can get to the library on their own and are encouraged by parents to be there, where there are other kids and responsible adults.

We know these kids are hungry. It only stands to reason, when they have nothing to eat until they go home, it shows in how they respond to other kids and events at the library. All four Title I schools in St. Mary’s County are in the Lexington Park branch’s service area. The Library’s youth coordinator, Jill Hutchison, asked the school superintendent a difficult question early in the school year—how are the schools preparing to help kids who live in poverty over the new extra-long summer that ends after Labor Day?

Together with St. Mary’s County Public Schools (SMCPS), the Lexington Park library formed a plan to provide lunch for kids and their families over the summer break. SMCPS already had a Monday through Thursday lunch program for six weeks of the summer break. Due to the longer summer, they were able to extend the program an additional two weeks to make it an eight-week program. The library stepped in to provide a safe space to serve lunch on Fridays during this eight-week program. The problem of the first and last two weeks of summer, which were not part of the original program, was solved by having Monday through Friday lunch provided at the library. Through the partnership of the SMCPS and the library, we were able to provide lunches Monday through Friday for all twelve weeks of summer break.

Here’s how it worked—SMCPS used their cafeteria staff and facilities to prepare bag lunches that were up to USDA summer meal standards and delivered them to the library. SMCPS handled all the finances, getting food, and reimbursement from the USDA summer lunch program for children’s lunches. The Department of Social Services and local charitable donations covered the cost of adult family members’ lunches, so that families could sit down to have a meal together. The library booked its meeting room, stored the food in the meeting room fridge, and recruited volunteers to help set up, help kids get their lunches, and to clean up afterward.

A library staff person did the paperwork required by USDA, such as counting lunches as they were distributed and making sure guidelines of the program were followed.

Over the 28 days that lunch was served at the library, 633 meals were served to children and 133 were served to their grownups so that they could have a meal together, for a total of 766 meals served. The library had at least three volunteers a day for approximately an hour and a half. That’s 126 volunteer hours! Some volunteers just showed up because they heard about the lunch program, and then the library had extra helpers on hand that day.

There will be some changes for next year, based on the experiences from this year. Lunch was available for one half hour, and that was too short of a window for people traveling to the library by bus. Grant funding will be needed to pay some part-time staff extra hours, since the program took staff away from serving in their typical library roles. Easy educational programming will be planned for the purpose of attracting kids to the lunches as well, since that is the format that the schools use.

However, there were many benefits to the library beyond satisfying the childrens’ hunger. One benefit was a huge decrease in the number of behavior problems with children at the library. Having lunch consistently was key in helping them function better in the library. The library also had new children come in and use the library as word of mouth about the program spread. The library gained some new volunteers, some of whom may be interested in additional library volunteer projects. The library also garnered terrific publicity for this new effort, with local papers coming to do stories, and new organizations reaching out to partner with the library after hearing about the lunch program.

Through partnerships and a little ingenuity, the library extended its mission for the betterment of the community, and really, isn’t that the goal? Children who attended the program were more successful library users and will remember the library as a safe haven throughout their lives, so we the library is looking forward to putting on an even better lunch program next year.
The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) Summer Conference

Mary Hastler, CEO, Harford County Public Library

Check out the #MACoCon Twitter feed for a recap of the 2017 MACo Summer Conference!

The library community was well represented at the MACo Summer Conference held August 16-19 in Ocean City, Maryland. Representatives from Maryland public libraries, Maryland schools, the Maryland Association of Public Library Administrators, the Maryland Library Association and Citizens for Maryland Libraries shared their stories of success and economic contribution to more than 2,000 local government officials, county staff-decision makers, legislators, business representatives, and others. It was a terrific opportunity to thank those who have been instrumental in ensuring the success of library-related legislative priorities while demonstrating some of the unique and critical resources, services, and opportunities offered through Maryland’s amazing libraries. On display during Wednesday’s Tech Expo was Harford County Public Library’s Osmos, featuring spatial relationship skill building through Tangram and Calvert Library’s Bloxels, demonstrating how to build your own video game platform, and Primo teaching coding for preschoolers.

A two-day highlight was the latest technology on display courtesy of Carroll County Public Library featuring a laser cutter with items on display and an Oculus Virtual Reality headset and game. The Maryland Libraries booth was the epicenter for requests for eclipse glasses and the very popular eclipse-themed card-size metal plates created by the laser cutter provided by Carroll County Public Library.

The favorite activity for all attendees was having their picture taken with the lovable library mascot, Sneaks, wearing this year’s summer reading t-shirt!
United States Senator from Maryland, Ben Cardin, stops to talk near the MLA and CML booths at MACo.

Senator Cardin tests out some new library technology.

Senator Cardin chats with Maryland librarians as Sneaks looks on.

Sneaks poses with Maryland State Senator Adelaide Eckhardt.
Sneaks poses with a friend from the Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Golf Resort and Spa as well as a photo of another loveable cat.

Sneaks poses with Stuart Ragland.

Sneaks poses with a young friend.

Sneaks finds his way to the corner of Cat Alley and Dog Way.
Sneaks poses with officers from the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services.

Sneaks poses with another young friend.
Passport Services and Public Libraries

Daniel Ramirez, Anne Arundel County Public Library

Did you know that 12 libraries in Maryland offer United States Passport processing? In an era when many libraries are finding that revenues collected from library fines are decreasing, the addition of value-added services like U.S. Passports is a great way for libraries to utilize expert staff and address an important community need.

On the morning of June 15, 2017, the Maryland Libraries Passport User Group (known as PUG) went to the U.S. State Department’s Washington, D.C. Passport Agency. The purpose of the trip was twofold. Library staff wanted to learn firsthand how the Agency conducted passport operations at their facility and also wanted to ask State Department staff questions about issues they have encountered with processing passports at their libraries. Close to 25 public librarians from around the state made the trip to D.C. and travelled from Baltimore County, Carroll County, Frederick County, Harford County, Howard County, Prince George’s County, and Washington County.

Darrell Robertson, branch manager at the Carroll County Public Library’s North Carroll branch, helped create PUG in 2016. The group primarily meets to share information, news, and tips about how passport operations at the various Maryland public libraries. After much effort to coordinate schedules, Robertson was able to secure a meeting for PUG at the Washington, D.C. Passport Agency.

After going through State Department security, PUG members were greeted by Mildred Lewis, Phillip Jones, and Velma Bush, members of the State Department’s Customer Service Assistance department. The first topic of discussion centered on holding a statewide passport acceptance day on a Saturday. The vision centered on passport services being offered throughout Maryland public libraries. The brainstorming session explored having just one library location for the passport fair, at all library locations currently offering passports, or at certain library locations in selected geographic areas of the state. Some of the ideas suggested to promote the endeavor included using MLA flyers, Marylib...
listserv announcements, a press release from WBAL, and even the State Department itself through its Newsletter forum.

Following the brainstorming session, conversation focused on recognition as a group within MLA, holding a passport discussion forum on best practices at ALA and/or PLA, and possibly even holding a pop-up passport acceptance facility at the MLA/DLM Conference 2018 and/or the 2019 ALA Annual Conference in Washington, D.C.

One point of common humor between the library staff and State Department staff involved the respective organizations’ penchant for using an “alphabet soup” of abbreviations and acronyms. When citing the library abbreviations, PUG members found themselves being asked by the State Department staff to translate the librarian lingo. By 11 a.m., it was time to take a tour of the Passport Agency. Given the confidential nature of the work involved, PUG members were not allowed to bring cell phones while on the tour. This same security measure is required of all staff of the D.C. Passport Agency, who must leave their phones, tablets and other electronic devices in specially designed storage lockers.

Stops on the Passport Agency tour featured a behind the scenes look at the tremendously busy customer service department. Numerous people were waiting in line for assistance to file their passport applications after going through State Department security. At the height of a typical day, applicants can experience a two to three hour wait. The building closes to new applicants at 3 p.m., but State Department staff ends the workday at 6 p.m., working with customers who arrived before 3 p.m. These customers are often traveling in the immediate future, so there is a clear sense of urgency one feels in the department. State Department employee Phillip Jones described the hectic pace as “off-the-chain,” given that with the end of the school year many families are planning to travel. In this same department, attendees were also shown the area where couriers drop off passport applications for expedited service. Additionally, PUG members got to see the Washington, D.C. Passport Agency’s call center where applications requiring additional information are handled.

Another stop on the tour featured the fraud department, where PUG members got a chance to learn about the importance of having an applicant’s social security number on the passport application as well as various types of fraud of which they should be aware.

An expanded fraud training will be part of the new in-person passport training for librarians.

At the last stop, those touring got a chance to see the department where the actual passport booklets are made. Here, the State Department staff work in a temperature controlled facility, making sure that the booklets match the information on the passport applications. In the event that a passport photo does not meet specifications, the application can be rejected and the applicant is informed that another photo must be provided.

Coming back from the tour, PUG members were invited to ask questions of the State Department’s Customer Service Assistants. Attendees learned that a refund takes 10 weeks to come from the Treasury, however, the State Department keeps any over-payment of $5 or less. During normal hours, the U.S. State Department’s Washington, D.C. Passport Agency does take credit cards. This is different from the passport services offered by libraries, where only a check or money order is acceptable payment. A volley of detailed questions came from PUG members with detailed responses from the State Department staff. In the end, when in doubt, acceptance agents should file the passport application with the State Department, but should inform the patron prior to doing so that the State Department may send them a letter asking for more information.

State Department staff expressed great praise for the way in which library staff perform their role as passport acceptance agents. The seriousness with which library staff perform this work is impressive. Also, the ambiance of a library allows patrons to read books or engage in other enriching activities while their passport acceptance is being processed. Having this meeting at the Passport facility in Washington, D.C. provided an excellent opportunity for staff from both the Maryland libraries and State Department to learn from each other and further enhance a great relationship.

If you would like to find out more about the Maryland Libraries Passport User Group, contact Darrell Robertson at drobertson@carr.org or Dan Ramirez at dramirez@aacpl.net
Cassini Says “Goodbye”

Teagan Wall

On September 15th, the Cassini spacecraft will have its final mission. It will dive into the planet Saturn, gathering information and sending it back to Earth for as long as possible. As it dives, it will burn up in the atmosphere, much like a meteor. Cassini’s original mission was supposed to last four years, but it has now been orbiting Saturn for more than 13 years!

The spacecraft has seen and discovered so many things in that time. In 2010, Cassini saw a massive storm in Saturn’s northern hemisphere. During this storm, scientists learned that Saturn’s atmosphere has water vapor, which rose to the surface. Cassini also looked at the giant storm at Saturn’s north pole. This storm is shaped like a hexagon. NASA used pictures and other data from Cassini to learn how the storm got its six-sided shape.

Cassini also looked at some of Saturn’s moons, such as Titan and Enceladus. Titan is Saturn’s largest moon. Cassini carried a lander to Titan. The lander, called Huygens, parachuted from Cassini down to the surface of the moon. It turns out, Titan is quite an exciting place! It has seas, rivers, lakes and rain. This means that in some ways, Titan’s landscape looks a bit like Earth. However, its seas and rivers aren’t made of water—they’re made of a chemical called methane.

Cassini also helped us learn that Saturn’s moon Enceladus is covered in ice. Underneath the ice is a giant liquid ocean that covers the whole moon. Tall geysers from this ocean spray out of cracks in the ice and into space, like a giant sneeze. Cassini flew through one of these geysers. We learned that the ocean is made of very salty water, along with some of the chemicals that living things need.

If there is life on Enceladus, NASA scientists don’t want life from Earth getting mixed in. Tiny living things may have hitched a ride on Cassini when it left Earth. If these germs are still alive, and they land on Enceladus, they could grow and spread. We want to protect Enceladus, so that if we find life, we can be sure it didn’t come from Earth. This idea is called planetary protection.

Scientists worried that when Cassini runs out of fuel, it could crash into Titan or Enceladus. So years ago, they came up with a plan to prevent that from happening. Cassini will complete its exploration by diving into Saturn—on purpose. The spacecraft will burn up and become part of the planet it explored. During its final plunge, Cassini will tell us more about Saturn’s atmosphere, and protect the moons at the same time. What an exciting way to say goodbye!


To learn more about Saturn, check out NASA Space Place:
https://spaceplace.nasa.gov/all-about-saturn
Prince George’s County Memorial Library System Names Interim co-CEOs

Andrew Aldrich, Prince George’s County Memorial Library System

Prince George’s County Memorial Library System named Michael Gannon and Michelle Hamiel interim co-CEOs in August. In addition, both will continue to serve as chief operating officers for the Prince George’s County Memorial Library System. They bring more than 45 years of combined experience in public library leadership.

Michael Gannon is the chief operating officer for support services for Prince George’s County Memorial Library System, where he serves on the senior executive team, supervises library operations, leads branch redevelopment projects and makes budget decisions. Previously, he was head of administrative and borrower services for Anne Arundel County Public Library and also held the positions of branch manager and librarian.

He is also a past president of the Maryland Library Association and part of the American Library Association, Library Leadership and Management Association, and the Public Library Association. He holds a Master of Library Science from the University of Maryland, a Master of Arts from Loyola University of Maryland and a Bachelor of Arts from Johns Hopkins University.

Michelle Hamiel is the chief operating officer for public services for Prince George’s County Memorial Library System, where she serves on the senior executive team, supervises library branch operations in 19 branches and Prince George’s County Detention Center, and makes budget decisions. She also directs LINK, a program providing library access to all county public school students, Books from Birth and early literacy centers in branches, and other services in the library system. Hamiel is also an adjunct professor for the University of Maryland, College Park. Previously, she held various library managerial positions in the Baltimore County Public Library system.

Ms. Hamiel is a member of and has directed conferences for the Maryland Library Association. She is also part of the American Library Association, the Public Library Association and the Young Adult Library Services Association. She holds a Master of Library Science from the University of Maryland, College Park, and a Bachelor of Business Administration from Towson University.

Prince George’s County Memorial Library System is seeking a permanent CEO. The application deadline for the position was October 6.
MLA’s Technical Services Division Welcomes New Leadership

Robert Krzanowski, Carroll Community College

MLA’s Technical Services Division welcomes the new President and Vice President for the 2017-18 fiscal year. President Robert Krzanowski is the Technical Services Librarian at Carroll Community College in Westminster, Maryland. He previously worked as a cataloger for five years at Slippery Rock University in Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania, and as a reference librarian and library assistant at Adams Memorial Library in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. He received a Bachelor of Science degree from Saint Vincent College (Latrobe, PA), a MLS from Clarion University of Pennsylvania, and Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree from California University of Pennsylvania. Robert is looking forward to working with other MLA divisions this year!

Sharon Reidt is the cataloging librarian at the Southern Maryland Regional Library Association (SMRLA). Prior to arriving at SMRLA in January 2014, she worked at the Rice-Aron Library at Marlboro College, Marlboro, Vermont, and at the Brooks Memorial Library in Brattleboro, Vermont. She received her MLS from the University of Alabama in August 2010. She is excited to serve as Vice President of TSD this year.

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