Celebrating the National Park Service Centennial: A Public Library and National Park Partnership
To celebrate the 100th anniversary of the “Organic Act,” Frederick County Public Libraries is partnering with several of Frederick County’s National Park Service sites for a yearlong celebration of events, unique programs and informational displays.

Small Libraries, Big Impacts: Our Experience at the Association of Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL) Conference
Andrea Buntz Neiman, Erin Gambrill, Beth Heinlein, Ashley Teagle, and Megan Timmens write about their experiences at the ARSL Conference.

Bringing Back the Kitchen Table: Wicomico Public Libraries’ Homework Help Center
In early 2015, the idea of a Homework Help Center began to gain traction at Wicomico Public Libraries. The vision—to create an atmosphere similar to the 1960’s and 1970’s Kitchen Table—where children would sit and do homework after school, supervised by adults and with all the supplies they needed at their fingertips.

Prince George’s County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) and the National Institute of Neurological Disorders (NINDS) Promote Brain STEM for Area Youth
The Prince George’s County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) partnered with the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke/NIH (NINDS) to present programs promoting neuroscience education and awareness to students in Prince George’s County.

Gravitational Wave Astronomy Will Be the Next Great Scientific Frontier
Imagine a world very different from our own: permanently shrouded in clouds, where the sky was never seen. Never had anyone see the Sun, the Moon, the stars or planets, until one night, a single bright object shone through. Imagine that you saw not only a bright point of light against a dark backdrop of sky, but that you could see a banded structure, a ringed system around it and perhaps even a bright satellite: a moon. That’s the magnitude of what LIGO (the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatory) saw, when it directly detected gravitational waves for the first time.
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Editor’s Note

Spring is in full bloom (with a little help of a lot of warm weather in the winter months) and so too are the things happenings in Maryland libraries and with our Maryland library colleagues.

In this issue, you’ll learn about a great partnership between Frederick County Public Libraries and the National Park Service to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the “Organic Act,” signed by President Woodrow Wilson. What is the “Organic Act,” you say? See page 9 to read about this unique and beneficial partnership in Frederick County, celebrating 100 years of National Parks.

As well, you can learn about activities that Maryland librarians have been involved with in their travels, with ALA Councilor Lucy Holman’s report on ALA Midwinter in Boston (page 6) and find out all about the experiences of Division of Library Development and Services’ (DLDS) scholarship recipients Andrea Buntz Neiman, Erin Gambrill, Beth Heinlein, Ashley Teagle, and Megan Timmens at the Association of Rural and Small Libraries Conference held in in Little Rock, Arkansas (page 14).

Lastly, remember that it’s not too late to sign up for the Annual MLA/DLA Conference! Andrea Berstler, MLA Conference Director, provides you with all the reasoning you need to attend the conference in Ocean City on May 4-6, and hopes that you will “unlock your potential” in her conference article this issue (page 7).

Happy Spring, loyal Crab readers!

Annette Haldeman, MLA Crab Editor
Department of Legislative Services Library
IN EARLY MARCH, I attended the first discussion of the Pulitzer series presented by the Maryland Humanities Council and The Baltimore Sun. The series commemorates 100 years of the Pulitzer Prizes, the top awards in the field of journalism. The first panel discussion featured three Pulitzer Prize winning journalists who discussed the background and work that went into writing long narrative stories on difficult issues, including corruption in the United States Government’s Indian housing program, the death of foster children under the care of Washington, D.C.’s Social Services, and immigrant teens at Patterson High School in Baltimore City. The theme of the first discussion was appropriately titled “Voice for the Powerless,” and the four-part series focuses on raising awareness of the effectiveness of investigative journalism in the lives of those who may not have a way for their voices to be heard. To learn more about the Pulitzer Prize series, check out the Maryland Humanities Council website at mdhc.org.

While listening to the incredible stories shared by the three journalists, it occurred to me that often libraries and library staff provide opportunity to those who do not have voices. Through workforce development, early childhood education, economic development, health research and more, libraries are the critical lifeline to opportunity and change. We may not be recipients of Pulitzer Prizes, but the services and resources we provide are life changers and community game-changers!

This is an exciting time to be a Maryland librarian! Congratulations to Dr. Carla Hayden for her nomination by President Obama to be the Librarian of Congress. She is the perfect choice and will bring so much experience and knowledge to the position.

As well, the MLA/DLA 2016 Conference is rapidly approaching! The Conference Committee has planned an amazing conference and the theme, “Unlocking Potential,” gets right to the heart of libraries. There is something for everyone, including a visit from NASA’s hyperwall, promoting play in the Library, serving targeted customers, and a scavenger hunt. As the Conference Committee notes … it is the perfect opportunity to discover ways to unlock the hidden potential of your library, your staff, and yourself!
**Highlights from ALA Council’s 2016 Midwinter Meeting in Boston**

*Lucy Holman, ALA Councilor*

While lacking blizzards or a national parade, the 2016 ALA Annual Midwinter Meeting still had an energized crowd and productive set of sessions in early January. The conference was held January 8-12 in Boston’s Convention & Exhibition Center near the Seaport World Trade Center with 7,185 registrants and 3,622 exhibitors, for a total attendance of 10,805. This number just barely surpassed Chicago’s 2015 Midwinter attendance of 10,637. The weather was cold, windy and rainy but still more cooperative than the Chicago weather during the 2015 Midwinter.

Marylanders and friends kicked off the conference on Thursday evening with a fundraising reception at the world-famous Cheers bar and restaurant near Faneuil Hall. The event featured singer-songwriter Cheryl Wheeler, who provided the audience with wonderful music and stories.

The ALA Council began its work on Saturday, January 9. President Sari Feldman, in the opening Council Executive session, discussed her media campaign initiative, “Libraries Transform.” Feldman previewed a video produced for the campaign and shared other media materials and activities occurring across the country. Treasurer Mario Gonzalez updated the Council on ALA’s 2015 budget, which ended September 30, with a net revenue of almost $221,000. While the organization had a positive year overall, the ratio of revenues to expenses was smaller this year than 2014, due to higher expenses for the annual conference in San Francisco and revenues from only one division conference (ACRL). Both PLA and AASL had conferences with net incomes in 2014 and both divisions have conferences planned again in 2016. Still, ALA remains financially strong, with almost $32 million in assets. In Council meeting 1, the Council approved the following programmatic priorities that will drive ALA activities and expenses in the FY2016 fiscal year:

- **Diversity;**
- **Equitable access to information and library services;**
- **Education and lifelong learning;**
- **Intellectual freedom;**
- **Advocacy for libraries and the profession;**
- **Literacy;**
- **Organizational excellence; and**
- **Transforming libraries**

Each Midwinter, Council members run for two positions on ALA’s Executive Council. This year a third position was available, to fill the remaining 18 months of a vacant position. Council elected John DeSantis (Dartmouth College) for the 18-month-term, and Andrew Pace (OCLC) and Karen Downing (University of Michigan) for the full three-year terms.

Council also passed several resolutions during the conference:

- to change the ALA Policy manual to insert new language into the ALA policy manual concerning labeling and rating systems (considering them value-neutral, directional aids rather than value-based, suggestive labels and ratings);
- to recognize the Joint Council of Librarians of Color as an affiliate of ALA;
- to change the name, charge and membership of the Office of Literacy & Outreach Services Advisory Committee to the Office of Diversity, Literacy & Outreach Services Advisory Committee;
- to urge the Library of Congress to change its subject heading from “illegal aliens” to “undocumented immigrants;”
- to honor James H. Billington as Librarian of Congress Emeritus; and
- to create a task force to study the accessibility of ALA events and make recommendations to the Association no later than the 2017 Annual Conference.

Since the Council action in early January, ALA President Sari Feldman has appointed a Conference Accessibility Task Force to investigate accessibility concerns at conference venues, establish a process for addressing accessibility concerns, draft guidelines for ALA staff in reviewing conference-related contracts and make a final recommendation to Council at Annual in 2017 to improve overall accessibility for future ALA events and programming. A survey was recently sent to the Marylib listserv, asking for input.

Besides the resolutions that were passed, there was considerable discussion among the state chapter councilors in meetings and in general Council sessions concerning the relationship between the national staff and Executive Board and the state chapters. The discussion centered on how the groups can work more effectively to build relationships, share resources and complement each other’s work at the state and national levels. The chapter councilors hope to bring one or more resolutions to the annual conference in Orlando, recommending concrete efforts to accomplish these goals. If you have ideas or thoughts on these matters, please contact Lucy Holman before the Annual Conference.

In other Chapter Councilor news, please keep May 2, National Library Legislative Day (NLLD) on your calendar and participate in MLA’s delegation to Capitol Hill on NLLD. Information about NLLD and other ALA news will be shared on the Marylib listserv. If you have comments and concerns about ALA, please feel free to contact Lucy Holman, ALA Councilor.
Holman, your ALA Councilor, at lholman@ubalt.edu

2016 MLA/DLA Conference—Unlocking Potential

Andrea Berstler, MLA Conference Director

If you enjoy a good mystery, find yourself irresistibly drawn into a puzzle or cannot resist the temptation to unlock an enigma, than pack your bags for this year’s MLA/DLA Conference, May 4 to May 6 at the Clarion Resort Hotel, Ocean City, MD. The theme, “Unlocking Potential” is only the first clue that you are in for three days of discovery.

Beginning with Wednesday’s preconferences, “Behind the Curtain: Revealing the Power of Google Analytics” and “Unleashing your Power: Basic Training for Library Services Staff,” conference goers will discover clues to hidden potential within themselves and their library, as well as tools that are in their grasp every day.

Wednesday evening’s keynote, Patrick D Weadon, is the curator of the National Security Agency’s Cryptologic Museum. He will share the story of the Enigma machine, featured in the movie “Imitation Game,” and how math and science helped end World War II.

Thursday is full of great workshops, including “Game On!: Life Sized Games at your Library,” and discussions on the future of reference and librarianship. The Maryland Humanities Council will show you how to unlock grant funding for programs at your library, while the professionals from Baltimore County share their keys to succession planning.

At lunch, participants will hear from award winning author Dan Fesperman, author of thriller and spy novels such as The Prisoner of Guantanamo, winner of the Dashiell Hammett Award, and Unmanned, on the timely subject of drones. NASA returns to present a second year of the hyperwall and we look to other professions to share “Lessons from Non-Library Conferences.”

Thursday’s banquet features author Michael Tougias, co-author of The Finest Hours, which was recently released as a Disney motion picture. He will share his insights on “Resiliency, Leadership and Decision-making from those who have Survived Against All Odds.” And don’t forget to plan for the 10th Annual Pub Quiz! Who knows what wonderful prizes you might win?

Friday begins with the business meeting and award presentations. Then, learn how to hold a “Storywalk” to unlock the potential of your community or town, how to de-stress with desk yoga, or how to use “Media Mentorship in Libraries Serving Youth.”

The 2016 Conference concludes with lunch with Siobhan Reardon, President and Director of the Philadelphia Free Library and the 2015 ALA Librarian of the Year, who will discuss how she is turning her system to a more outward focused relationship with its community.

All of the time-honored conference traditions will also be on hand, including the ice cream break, Thursday evening reception and cash bar, and the silent auction. There will also be a few new things in store, such as the conference scavenger hunt.

The MLA/DLA Conference Committee has been hard at work to make this year’s conference one that helps you discover something new and exciting. The committee hopes that you will join in on the adventure. Go to www.mdlib.org for more information and to register.

Freedom First Fridays

Monica McAbee, Prince George’s County Memorial Library System; MLA Intellectual Freedom Officer

Celebrate Banned Books Week all year long! MLA’s Intellectual Freedom Advisory Panel (IFAP) has instituted “Freedom First Fridays” on its Facebook page. On the first Friday of each month, IFAP will feature a banned or challenged book, video, music album, play, or other item, with thoughts about the work’s merits and a brief description of why it was challenged. You will find these posts by following this link: MLA Intellectual Freedom Advisory Panel (IFAP).
WHAT A GREAT IDEA!

Come check out your colleagues’ exciting projects, explorations, and innovations at the 2016 MLA/DLA conference **Poster Sessions**

When: Thursday, May 5th from 8AM to 4PM

Where: Room 5

Why: Great ideas are worth spreading!

Questions: Email Megan Jones at mjones@somd.lib.md.us
Celebrating the National Park Service Centennial

Catoctin Mountain Park Ranger Peggie Gaul expands the storytime experience to the three dimensional outdoors during “Find Your Storytime.” These programs will occur throughout the year at Catoctin, Monocacy National Battlefield, and the C&O Canal Towpath.
A Public Library and National Park Partnership

Mary K. Mannix, Frederick County Public Libraries

On August 25, 1916, President Woodrow Wilson signed the “Organic Act.” This oddly though aptly named Act created the National Park Service (NPS) and changed the management of natural and historic resources throughout the United States. It had far reaching ramifications which continue to impact 6,815,195 park visitors a year in Maryland alone. Even individuals who have never visited a park, if such people do exist, are impacted by the tourism dollars that are derived from NPS sites in their communities. In 1916, there were 35 parks and monuments under NPS jurisdiction; today, there are over 400. They are located on over 84 million acres of land throughout our fifty states, along with the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, Saipan, and the Virgin Islands. Maryland is home to sixteen of these national parks.

To celebrate the 100th anniversary of this momentous Act, Frederick County Public Libraries (FCPL) is partnering with several of Frederick County’s NPS sites for a
yearlong celebration of events, unique programs and informational displays. There are five parks in Frederick County. Two—Catoctin Mountain and Monocacy National Battlefield—are contained completely within the County. Catoctin, located near Thurmont in the northern section of Frederick, arose from the Works Progress Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps of the Great Depression. Monocacy, located just to the south of Frederick City, is the site of a significant Civil War battle. The affiliated National Park Service Training Center is located in downtown Frederick. The other three parks travel through Frederick County, proving once again that Frederick is “The Cross Roads of History.” The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal follows the Potomac River through Frederick County. Forty of the 2,185 miles of the Appalachian Trail run through Maryland and cut through Frederick County. Finally, the NPS Potomac

The story of the Blue Blazes Whiskey Still is one of the more unusual aspects of the history of Catoctin Park. Shown here are images and artifacts that interpret the history of regional moonshine. On the right is copper tubing for a still. Copper was preferred because other metals are very dangerous to use in the distilling process and can poison. Copper also removes sulfur-based compounds from the alcohol that can ruin the taste of the whiskey (Frederick County Public Libraries).
Heritage Trail, which follows the early career of George Washington, proves that George really did sleep here.

FCPL’s Thurmont Regional Library, Urbana Regional Library, and the Maryland Room located at the C. Burr Artz Library have long histories of working closely with rangers at Catoctin and Monocacy. The 2016 venture will build upon those relationships, develop new friendships with other parks, and strengthen the ties between the Frederick County’s NPS community and FCPL staff in all of its branches. Programming for all ages is under development at all eight FCPL branches. Activities will also occur at the parks as it is hoped that there will be a cross-pollination of FCPL patrons and NPS park visitors. Many of these events will involve park staff and volunteers, along with experts in subjects relevant to the history and activities of the parks. Topics to be explored include a general history of the Park Service, Catoctin Mountain folklore, bears, hiking the Appalachian Trail, search and rescue dogs, moonshining, and the Battle of Monocacy’s “Special Order 191.” Maryland culinary historian and genealogist Michael Twitty will present on African-American foodways and family history. These are just the starting points as we attempt to represent the broad range of topics pertinent to the parks.

Children’s programming will find FCPL staff hitting the road and sharing their story-time expertise at the parks. NPS mascots Franklin and Eleanor Bison will be putting in appearances at Frederick libraries. A program for teens will discuss gaining experience at the national parks and career possibilities. Events began in January and have continued throughout the year.

NPS staff will be featured throughout the year in the FCPL newsletter “Bookmarks.” Displays will promote the parks and make easily accessible NPS promotional literature. Exhibits will capitalize on the work of NPS employees who live in our community. Over 25 programs were organized for the Spring Season (March, April, and May); they are taking place at four different branches and three parks. Partnerships are expanded as a Wilderness First Aid Program is held at the Trail House, downtown Frederick’s outdoor gear shop. Curious Iguana, Frederick’s independent bookstore, will be cosponsoring an author and book signing. The first adult program, a discussion of morel mushrooms and other foraged food, held at the Thurmont Regional Library, had 100 people in attendance. Thurmont is a community known for their mushroom hunting activities. This program, put on by a park naturalist from Catoctin, will also be held at the library in downtown Frederick. Some programs will be repeated through the county due to their popularity and to spread regional appeal.
As dates, times, and locations are finalized, information will be shared on the FCPL webpage, through social media venues, and through Marylib. In this birthday year, FCPL hopes to share its passions and expertise with NPS colleagues in gratitude for all that the parks have given us over these last 100 years. FCPL hopes that library visitors who may not be aware of the parks right in their own back yards will take advantage of their incredible good fortune. FCPL also hopes that the visibility of FCPL will increase among park staff, volunteers, and attendees as celebration continues throughout 2016.

For further information, please contact Erin Dingle, Branch Administrator, Thurmont Regional Library and Centennial Co-Coordinator, at edingle@frederickcountymd.gov or Mary Mannix, Maryland Room Manager and Centennial Co-Coordinator, at mmannix@frederickcountymd.gov.

(photo of map) Frederick County Public Schools used Camp Greentop as the site of a week-long Outdoor School program during the fall and spring months for 6th graders from 1957-1996. This map is the work of Alma Quill, who attended the Outdoor School in 1960 (McLuckie, Schade, and Quill Family Papers, Maryland Room, C. Burr Artz Public Library, Frederick County Public Libraries).

Catoctin Mountain National Park includes Camp Greentop, which opened in the summer of 1937. It was closed during WWII, but reopened after the war and was used by the Baltimore League for Crippled Children and Adults. The League, now known as the League for People With Disabilities, continues to operate a camp each summer. It was originally intended as a camp for children with polio. Disabilities of campers today include attention-deficit disorder as well as physical ailments. These three images are from the collection of Hattie "Anne" Hill.

Anne was a Junior Counselor at Greentop from 1953-1955. She can be seen on the left in the back row of the bottom photograph. (The Personal Papers of Hattie "Anne" Hill, Junior Counselor at Camp Greentop, Thurmont Center for Agricultural History, Thurmont Regional Library, Frederick County Public Libraries).
Our Experience at the Association of Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL) Conference

Andrea Buntz Neiman, Kent County Public Library
Erin Gambrill, Carroll County Public Library
Beth Heinlein, Harford County Public Library
Ashley Teagle, Charles County Public Library
Megan Timmens, Calvert Library

What do you think of when you think of Little Rock, Arkansas? Friendly people, profound history, award-winning food, an outstanding music scene and a walkable downtown with a large public waterfront space were some of the personal highlights of our visit. Thanks to generous scholarships from the Division of Library Development and Services (DLDS), we were able to travel to Little Rock for the Association of Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL) Conference. In the shadows of Little Rock Central High School, we were inspired to think deeply about how we deliver library services to our patrons and communities. We came away from the conference with renewed passion and many ideas about how to improve service and how to leverage our small size as an asset.

Some of us had never been to a professional conference and others were conference veterans, but all of us were first time attendees at ARSL. We were thrilled to be at a conference scaled to our specific situations. We heard presentations and networked with colleagues from all over the nation who understood the particular challenges—and joys—of working for small and rural libraries.
The smaller conference size allowed for a real exchange of ideas, and the conference organizers did a great job setting up lunches, dine-arounds, and other extracurricular activities to encourage further networking and discussion. The ideas we took from the presentations were presented by colleagues who faced the same staff, budgetary, and population issues that we do and, therefore, felt actually do-able in our own libraries. Being able to hear from comparable libraries was a unique feature of ARSL and incredibly helpful, particularly to those of us who had been overwhelmed by the grand ideas found in larger conferences.

Several months later, what we remember most are ideas tied to our communities and our ability to provide personal service. Each of us has unique community profiles and community needs, but we all can take advantage of our smaller size and greater flexibility to make sure we are effectively meeting these needs. We need to talk to our communities and, more importantly, listen to them. Some communities have deeper areas of entrenched poverty and joblessness—how can we reevaluate the “traditional” library model to make sure we’re reaching these groups? There were multiple sessions on effective community partnerships: how to identify groups with shared goals in your community, how to reach out to them, and how to make sure you’re reaching the people who need you the most. Some of the successful ideas that were shared included intensive GED and ESL classes, reconsideration of fine and fee structures, thinking outside the book in terms of circulating collections, and partnering with local job centers to provide resume and job-search assistance.

Another theme that emerged was “Create a culture of YES!” As small organizations, we have a huge advantage in how fast we can change—but this change is only possible if staff is empowered to build relationships with the community and bring the community’s ideas back to the library. Our small size means we have a great ability to provide a personal level of service to our patrons. Since ARSL, several of us have revisited and revised policies and procedures that were less patron-friendly than they could be. We have taken to heart that we as libraries should be more about the people and less about the things—or as one presenter put it, “I’d rather lose a book than a patron.” One of our Maryland attendees will be leading a training session in her system based on two customer service themes: the culture of yes, and delighting your patrons. Another one is creating a “No to Yes” log to track the ways they can better serve patrons.

Of course, none of these patrons will be able to be served and delighted by their libraries if we are not effective at marketing ourselves and telling our stories. Too often we focus solely on reporting numbers instead of outcomes. There were several presentations about “Telling Your Library’s Story”—some focused on the specifics of how to measure outcomes, others talked about creatively presenting information in narrative or infographic form, and still others discussed the ways in which social media can be more effectively used. Social media can be a way to engage customers in new ways, and we heard from libraries that are using social media (including Facebook, Twitter, and Goodreads) to market services and programs, provide reader’s advisory, and answer reference questions. Infographics and storytelling can spice up those annual reports and provide context for data. Measuring “How did we help?” instead of—or in addition to—“How many?” can provide libraries with powerful stories of positive change to be shared with funders and stakeholders.

Finally, again and again, we heard personal stories from our colleagues, presenters, and keynote speakers. These stories spoke about how libraries have touched lives and transformed communities in ways big and small—whether by providing a welcoming place of refuge in a troubled community or by stepping outside of walls and comfort zones to meet the broader needs of a community, it was powerful to hear stories of small libraries making positive impacts all across the country. As one presenter, quoting Kurt Vonnegut, put it, “The America I love still exists at the front desk of our public libraries.” We left energized and inspired to make our own positive changes and impacts, and being able to attend ARSL was a valuable experience that we all will continue to draw on as we bring library services to our communities.
Thursday, May 4th
9 - 10am
Asset Development for Teens
Sponsored by: TIG (Teen Interest Group)
Presented by: Tiffany Sutherland

This workshop will introduce you to ideas on how each of us can contribute to the health and well-being of all our youth. You will learn:

📍 About what contributes to the healthy development of our young people.
📍 How you can be an active player in building these skills, experiences, and opportunities.
📍 Ways to join forces with other community members to make your community a place where young people THRIVE!
Over the past several years, the Youth Services Department began to note a growing trend. Children were coming into the library to complete homework that required resources they did not own. Assignments were given to create PowerPoint slides, but the students had no computers. Students were required to make a poster, but they did not have markers or poster board. Reports that required color pictures to get an ‘A’ were also on the list of assignments, but students didn’t have a printer at home. This went beyond the digital divide, and included using tape, glue, markers and construction paper as well as computers, printers and online resources. Initially, Wicomico County Public Library staff simply waived any fees for such items and made certain that these children had what they needed to complete their homework successfully. After all, helping individuals learn is what libraries do.

With the continued growth of this need, discussions began with the Youth Services Manager, Barb Graham, and Adult Services Manager, Scott Mahler, on how we could provide a more structured service. Certainly, if these children were coming in the library for help, there were more that did not know that they could also get such assistance. How many children, we wondered, were struggling in school, not because of a learning issue but because of a lack of school supplies and a place to work?
In early 2015, the idea of the Homework Help Center began to gain traction. The vision was to create an atmosphere similar to the 1960’s and 1970’s kitchen table, where children would sit and do homework after school, supervised by adults, and with all the supplies they needed at their fingertips.

Supported by an initial grant from the Friends of the Library, and by restructuring an open part-time position, the library drew up a job description for the individual who would oversee this work. The Job Search Center was moved to a new space, and Events and Community Engagement Coordinator Paula Mitchell began work on this new volunteer-driven project.

The space was structured to provide work areas for several children. Five laptop computers and small desks were placed in an office, all connected to a color printer. School supply lists from local elementary and middle schools were compiled to create a master list. A work table and some additional mobile shelving was added and a retired teacher hired as the Homework Help Coordinator. A corps of volunteers were recruited.

In late September 2015, the library held an open house and welcomed officials from the local Board of Education, as well as the County and City Councils. Each was impressed with not only the space and supplies, but the commitment of individuals from the community who signed up to volunteer to help these children.

Initial concerns were that children would be dropped off as if this were an after-school daycare. There were also questions about whether or not teachers would encourage students to use the service.

Both of those concerns were unfounded. For the majority of students, the parents stay nearby and some even sit with their students to learn alongside them. Parents who are not native English speakers find help learning English along with their child. Parents who struggle with Common Core instruction find help to solve math and science problems.

Each day, the Center serves about ten students. The ages range from pre-K to high school seniors. Students find a caring adult, access to supplies and equipment, online services from both their school and the library as well as a quiet place to work away from distractions.

For one parent, this was truly helpful. Frustrated in dealing with the trouble her son was having with school, she found every evening’s homework time difficult and his grades showed the struggle. Having brought her son into the Center for several weeks, she was as proud as her son when they shared his report card with Tracey Conaway, the Center Coordinator. His grades in every subject had improved. Additionally, now that he had a time and place for homework, she could also return to her studies. She is now in school studying nursing. This is one of a number of success stories from this project.
Community support has been very good. Local news stations have covered it in the evening news, local schools have held supply drives to help keep a full supply inventory, and opportunities for engagement by Salisbury University students has grown. The Wicomico County Board of Education will be assisting in promoting the service at the beginning of the coming school year, for both instructional staff as well as the Parent Teacher Organizations.

This service, grown from a recognized need, has found a place in the heart of our community. It seems that the library staff weren’t the only ones who missed the kitchen table.
Prince George’s County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) and the National Institute of Neurological Disorders (NINDS) Promote Brain STEM for Area Youth

Donna Scott-Martin, Prince George’s County Memorial Library System

The Prince George’s County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) partnered with the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke/NIH (NINDS) to present programs promoting neuroscience education and awareness to students in Prince George’s County. Brain STEM NINDS-NIH Library events were packed with students eager to learn more about what’s going on inside one’s head. Participating branches to date include Bowie, Largo-Kettering, Oxon Hill and Spauldings.

Two brain-centric topics, recommended for ages 9-14, were covered on separate occasions with the first presentation focusing on neurons (brain cells). The related craft consisted of making neurons out of marshmallows, pretzels and candy. Exploring concussions was the topic of the second presentation. Students were challenged to protect their “egg-brains” from injury during the hands-on activity. More than 300 students have attended the Library’s Brain STEM events so far.

NINDS representatives included David A. Jett, PhD, Michelle D. Jones-London, PhD, Lauren Ullrich, PhD, and Samantha L. White, PhD. Dr. Jett emphasized the importance of wearing bike helmets while bike riding with the youth at the Largo-Kettering Branch as part of his presentation. When students were asked by Dr. Jett if they wore their helmets when riding their bikes, the response was a unanimous “no.” As Dr. Jett pointed out on his colorful bar chart, more concussions occurred in the sport of cycling than any other sport. Football was the second leading sport with concussion injuries. Dr. Jones-London encouraged these potential future scientists to look at the statistics and wear their bicycle helmets. To reiterate this message, the students made helmets to protect their “egg-brains.”

“The partnership with NINDS and PGCMLS has been a rewarding experience. An important goal that NINDS and NIH seek is to grow the pool of diverse scientific researchers. This is vital to our science enterprise and the NIH research mission—we need the brightest minds and best talent from all groups. As we have seen the level of curiosity, engagement and just excitement during the scientific talks and experiments, I think we may have met some future neuroscientists during these visits,” Dr. Jones-London said.

It is still not too late to get in on the Brain STEM action. The second Brain STEM program in this series was held at the Hyattsville Branch Library in February. You can take advantage of free NIH/NINDS brain resources such the ones handed out during this series: Know Your Brain and Brain Facts, available for parents, students, and teachers at http://www.ninds.nih.gov/education/.
Imagine a world very different from our own: permanently shrouded in clouds, where the sky was never seen. Never had anyone see the Sun, the Moon, the stars or planets, until one night, a single bright object shone through. Imagine that you saw not only a bright point of light against a dark backdrop of sky, but that you could see a banded structure, a ringed system around it and perhaps even a bright satellite: a moon. That’s the magnitude of what LIGO (the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatory) saw, when it directly detected gravitational waves for the first time.

An unavoidable prediction of Einstein’s General Relativity, gravitational waves emerge whenever a mass gets accelerated. For most systems -- like Earth orbiting the Sun -- the waves are so weak that it would take many times the age of the Universe to notice. But when very massive objects orbit at very short distances, the orbits decay noticeably and rapidly, producing potentially observable gravitational waves. Systems such as the binary pulsar PSR B1913+16 [the subtlety here is that binary pulsars may contain a single neutron star, so it’s best to be specific], where two neutron stars orbit one another at very short distances, had previously shown this phenomenon of orbital decay, but gravitational waves had never been directly detected until now.

When a gravitational wave passes through an objects, it simultaneously stretches and compresses space along mutually perpendicular directions: first horizontally, then vertically, in an oscillating fashion. The LIGO detectors work by splitting a laser beam into perpendicular “arms,” letting the beams reflect back and forth in each arm hundreds of times (for an effective path lengths of hundreds of km), and then recombing them at a photodetector. The interference pattern seen there will shift, predictably, if gravitational waves pass through and change the effective path lengths of the arms. Over a span of 20 milliseconds on September 14, 2015, both LIGO detectors (in Louisiana and Washington) saw identical stretching-and-compressing patterns. From that tiny amount of data, scientists were able to conclude that two black holes, of 36 and 29 solar masses apiece, merged together, emitting 5% of their total mass into gravitational wave energy, via Einstein’s $E = mc^2$.

During that event, more energy was emitted in gravitational waves than by all the stars in the observable Universe combined. The entire Earth was compressed by less than the width of a proton during this event, yet thanks to LIGO’s incredible precision, we were able to detect it. At least a handful of these events are expected every year. In the future, different observatories, such as NANOGrav (which uses radiotelescopes to the delay caused by gravitational waves on pulsar radiation) and the space mission LISA will detect gravitational waves from supermassive black holes and many other sources. We’ve just seen our first event using a new type of astronomy, and can now test black holes and gravity like never before.

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Technical Services Division

Technical Services Division (TSD) of MLA to Host Four Events during the 2016 MLA/DLA Conference

Mary Elizabeth Murtha, University of Baltimore Law Library

TSD will be hosting four events during the upcoming MLA/DLA Conference this May. The programming will kick off with a preconference on Wednesday, May 4 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. with “Basic Cataloging with RDA” (Resource Description and Access). Vicki Sipe from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) will conduct an introduction to hands-on cataloging with RDA. Participants will be able to create RDA records on their own, starting with basic principles in FRBR (Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records), which shapes RDA. Attendees will look at how RDA handles the description of monographic resources, highlighting the variations from descriptions created using AACR2, and there will be an opportunity for hands-on exercises! Participants will create MARC encoded bibliographic descriptions using RDA as our content standard. Those interested in attending should have prior cataloging experience using MARC bibliographic formats and AACR2. This program is worth three contact hours of continuing education.

TSD is joining forces with the Government Information Interest Group (GIIG) to host what is bound to be a very exciting regular conference program: “Energizing Science Journal Collections: Scientific and Technical Information” on Thursday, May 5 from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Federal government agencies with greater than $100 million in research and development funding have plans to make their publications available to the public. The Department of Energy (DOE) has long been a leader in increasing access to the federal government’s vast stores of reports, studies and scientific publications. Joanna Martin, DOE Office of Scientific and Technical Information, will introduce the Office’s wealth of freely available online resources, and discuss the Office’s products, services and initiatives intended to help libraries import and integrate DOE publications and resources into their own library catalogs and databases. This program is worth one contact hour of continuing education.

On Thursday May 5, from 1:45 to 2:45 p.m., TSD will host a program on Digital Maryland and Digital Partnerships. Join us to learn how a partnership with Digital Maryland can help get your library’s unique or rare collections visible on the web. Linda Tompkins-Baldwin, Digital Maryland Coordinator, will share the goals of Digital Maryland, a Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) Hub, and the services it provides to Maryland libraries. Mary Mannix, Frederick County Maryland Room Manager and Kristen Welzenbach, Digital Systems and Services Librarian at Goucher College, will share their experiences partnering with Digital Maryland to digitize and host collections of a wide variety of materials. Participants will learn the basic steps needed to build a digital collection as well as how to develop and nurture collaborative relationships. This program is worth one contact hour of continuing education.

To wrap up on Thursday afternoon, TSD will be holding its business meeting from 3 to 4 p.m., for a conversation about technical services in Maryland. It is your participation at meetings, discussions and programs that allows TSD and MLA to continue to bring library staff from all over the state together to network and learn. Join TSD at this meeting to learn more about TSD, to brainstorm programs and discussions, and network with like-minded folks.

The Technical Services Division has lined up some really exciting and informative programs this year for MLA. Please come and support your Technical Services Division of MLA!
You’ve got great ideas, and made them realities. You’ve bombed, and you know why. You have library colleagues all around the state your colleagues should know. You know what’s going on.

Send us your newsletters, press releases, articles you’re publishing, snippets, pictures and videos. Anything and everything about MLA and Maryland libraries: we’ve got the space for you.

Help us Share the Knowledge!
Keep up with MLA/ALA events…Share job openings…
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