

MSLA Forum: January 2011

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President's Message

The Image that Counts

by MSLA President, Gerri Fegan

During the past season, I have had the opportunity to work with the Executive Board to plan some very interesting events for 2011. Very shortly, our members will be invited to attend the MSLA 2011 Anti-Bullying Summit, a collaborative seminar that combines the talents of school librarians, educational technologists, guidance counselors, and reading specialists in a unified spotlight of support for the new Massachusetts Anti-Bullying Law. MassCUE, Massachusetts Reading Association, and the Massachusetts Guidance Counselors Association leaders have agreed to join us to discuss ways in which we can all work together to make our students safer. Our Executive Board has been brainstorming ways to be the forerunner in anti-bullying efforts and the personal stories that have emerged indicate that we have always been sensitive to the needs of students who not only seek out school librarians for educational purposes, but for personal and confidential guidance. Nancy Everhardt's speech at the 2009 Annual Conference dinner enlightened us all about the non-assessed ways we encourage our students to be strong. The school library seems to be the "safe" place for so many who are being bullied. It makes sense that we lead the way to bring support teams to work together for the good of our school communities.

Planning this event has led members of the board to initiate an examination of our goals as an organization and how best to showcase all the good that we do. We often preach to each other, the choir, albeit a diverse audience, and yet others outside our library profession still question us about our purpose: "Yes, we value you, but what is it that you DO? You should tell your story so everyone knows!" Well, I don't know about you, but I'm tired of hearing that. My immediate sarcastic response is usually, "Well, take the earplugs out and turn up the volume on your hearing aids! You should listen more! We've been telling our stories for years!" I was beginning to think that we could not yell any louder. Our members did not let me down – because of you, we were able to secure a meeting with the state's largest teacher's union. Thank you, Leslie Lomasson and others, who reached out once again to the Massachusetts Teachers Association to insist we get a chance to yell. At the end of December, Legislative Chair Julie Farrell met with MTA President Paul Toner at his office in Boston to find out whether or not our largest teacher's union was going to listen to our story.

Toner welcomed us warmly to discuss our concerns: job loss, the economy, volunteers replacing school librarians, and our public persona. We are in agreement that there has been no unified effort to assist us with job loss or representation in advocacy efforts. The reason for that was quite logical when Toner explained that, currently, district representation is guided by district contracts which, in turn, drive grievances and other processes. (It is no wonder

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that every town or city has different realities with the union and school libraries.) He recommended that MSLA create a common job description agreed upon by our membership. This job description can then be endorsed by the MTA. In this way, a pursuant common standard of action can be taken by all districts when school libraries are threatened or librarians replaced by parent volunteers. The MTA and MSLA will have established expectations upon which to act. Therefore, both organizations are now in the process of developing common language across the state so that all districts can be guided in their efforts to support school libraries.

We are fortunate that AASL has created such a [job description in the Learning 4 Life initiative](#) and we intend to use this as a base for our work. When the job description has been passed by the MSLA Board, we will work with Nora Todd from the Center for Education Policy and Practice to refine the document before presenting to the MTA Board for approval. Massachusetts school librarians will then have a unified voice in the MTA. We hope to pursue comparable discussion and representation from the Mass. Federation of Teachers. Your help is needed. If you would like to work with Julie Farrell to prepare this document for the MSLA Board, or help us work with MFT, please contact her as soon as possible. This is proactive work that could use a few more volunteers.

Our meeting with MTA president Toner and several meetings that Kathy Lowe, Valerie Diggs, and I have had recently with marketing strategists, have brought attention to the fact that the image of "school librarian" needs changing. This may be a little uncomfortable, but bear with me. I'm not talking about the book-sniffing, head-patting, technology-hating stereotype that has been battered about in the tabloids and tweets. I'm talking about the image that school librarians have two different roles in their libraries: teacher of information and clerical circulation staff. Parents, students, and administrators see us as having two separately distinct roles that are not interwoven in our jobs as teachers. This misconception is what needs to be erased immediately if we are to succeed in changing our image. If you have ever described your job formally (or informally) as having teaching and non-teaching duties within the library as classroom, you may be perpetuating a dangerous myth.

School administrators, when inquiring about tasks performed by volunteers, often note that they are performing duties that do not require a teacher. These "non-teaching duties" that make us replaceable are the perception that school librarians do not teach when they circulate materials, shelve books, or process newly purchased materials. These tasks have been labeled as "non-teaching duties." Administrators have conveniently used this as a rationale for replacing school librarians with volunteers. The immediate rebuttal – "every moment in my classroom is a teaching moment" may lack evidentiary support if the perception is that volunteers are independently working successfully with students. How can we actively demonstrate that maintaining the collection, circulating materials, and cataloguing are also the ways we teach?

Please visit the [L4L Job Description](#), read it carefully, and ask yourself these questions, "If someone were to take photos of what I do throughout the day, what would they see?" (Be honest – these photos capture your image.)

- Would these photos show you teaching students when you are at the circulation desk?
- Would they show you preparing lessons while you shelve?
- Would they show you promoting literacy while you place stickers on spines?
- Would these photos show that these "non-teaching" duties can easily be done by someone else?
- Will these photos exemplify your duties as a teacher or demonstrate that you are replaceable?
- Would the stakeholders, the ones who will vote for school budget cuts in your community, recognize the difference?

Is it time to step behind the camera to take the pictures you want everyone to see, to change the image of your job by removing some tasks from volunteers and making "non-teaching duties" genuinely visible educational

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opportunities?

When you find yourself saying (as I often do), "I couldn't do everything I need to do without my volunteers," are you giving administrators the perception that volunteers are performing a service that doesn't need a teacher?

In 2011, the MSLA board is going to work diligently to support school librarians in Massachusetts and our organization's image is vital. Organizational liaisons have been invaluable in their collaborative efforts and we look forward to being part of a larger family of stakeholders in our children's academic successes. We will continue to clarify our roles in education, lead collaborative events to support state initiatives, and strategically plan to present ourselves as an invaluable resource for our communities. We will be asking you for comments and opinions as we move forward.

I wish you hope and joy in all that you do in 2011, and the rewards that you so richly deserve.

Resolutions & Beginnings



From the Forum Editor, [Ann Perham](#)

What's YOUR New Year's Resolution? What will be YOUR Beginnings?

School Librarians are so lucky because our year has TWO **beginnings**. September is filled with the excitement of new classes, new students and new staff. January is a bit more mellow, with the calm that follows the holidays and introspection of the New Year. When we start back to school, it's not the start of a term (for most of us) and we return to the same students, schedules and staff. It's an ideal time to make some **resolutions** that will improve us, our programs, and our profession

This Winter Forum has some new beginnings. I'm excited to introduce our new features and columns:

- *My Turn*: Ever want to get up on a soapbox and share a few thoughts? Brian Tata is our lead-off batter with his thoughtful article, "To Make a Permanent Impression." Each Forum issue will offer the mic to a member, so step right up!
- *The PULSE: News in the School Library World* promises to cover a range of celebrations, contests, developments and personalities across the nation. (Note....help wanted ... we are looking for an editor for this feature. This would be a great way to participate in MSLA.)
- *MLS: Making the Connection* with editor, Susan Babb makes its debut. Look for a steady stream of info to help us improve our programs.
- *Working SMARTER* with Leslie Schoenherr in the editor spot. What an amazing collection of tips from our members. It's been said already, but it's true: don't work harder, work smarter! Sharing is what school librarians do best. [Be sure to send Leslie your best practices](#) .

I've got some resolutions for the Forum future, too. Our February issue will add more features:

- *Hot Button Issues* will be exactly what it sounds like, with "Volunteers...A Two-Edged Sword" as our kick-off topic. I'm looking for an editor, so please don't be shy. The Forum will be best with the input of many members and I know that we have some very capable folks looking for an opportunity to contribute.
- *Member News* will be a new column...a chance to SHOUT for MSLA members. Nancy Stenberg will be editing

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this feature and inviting your submissions. It's time for some good news, and sharing of our successes so please **let Nancy hear about your news** .

- *Students Tell Our Stories* is still in my plan....perhaps not for February, but soon. This will be an advocacy feature that highlights the impact of school libraries, from students' perspective. The feature was actually a suggestion of Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan made at a meeting with AASL in June 2010. This is another way that you could fulfill your resolution to contribute to your chosen profession. **Let me know if you are interested.**

My professional resolutions are wide-ranging:

- Exporting my Delicious bookmarks to Google Bookmarks (after hearing that Delicious is "for sale"....it makes me nervous!)
- Reading *Knowledge Quest* cover-to-cover when it first arrives. Honestly, KQ is an amazing publication – a huge benefit of membership in AASL.If you aren't already a member, consider joining for the good of our chosen profession.
- Registering for the AASL conference, October 21-27 in Minneapolis. This is THE most amazing professional opportunity for school librarians. My first AASL conference was in 2003 (Kansas City) and I have attended every one since. It's 100% focused on school librarians, 100% terrific.
- Giving myself permission to stop reading a book that is less than terrific. I read a lot (it's my secret for weight loss) and I need a book that engages and grips me.
- Familiarizing myself with more of the AASL 25 Best Websites
- Nominating deserving colleagues for awards. It was JFK who said, "A Nation reveals itself not only by the individuals it produces, but by those it honors." What better way to SHOUT about the great things that happen in the "Nation" of School Libraries? I plan on writing some letters of nomination for some terrific school librarians.

I sincerely wish for you the gift of Exciting Beginnings and Fulfilled Resolutions.

Keynote: Linda Nathan

Literacy as a Democratic Right: What are the Hardest Questions Librarians Might Ask?

Keynote Address, MSLA Annual Conference, October 3, 2010

Linda Nathan is the Headmaster at the Boston Arts Academy and author of The Hardest Questions Aren't on the Test. Nathan was the keynote speaker at the Sunday evening Awards Banquet. These were her remarks, reproduced with permission.

I love librarians almost as much as I love teachers... Thank you to Kathy Lowe and Debbie Froggatt... two of the best librarians I know! As you listen today, I'm hoping that my words and experiences will provoke your questions and connections. While my comments are focused on literacy, I see librarians as the holders or the change agents for healthy literacy programs in schools. Consider closely where you as librarians fit into your school's teaching and learning or instructional leadership team. Are you the one asking the hard questions about your school's literacy programs? And of whom are you asking those questions? To steal Obama's words "Are you the change we believe it?"



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I grew up surrounded by books. As a young girl, nothing pleased me more than traveling to different parts of the world in my chair. I loved visits to libraries.

In 4th grade I read every novel I could about young people growing up fighting for civil rights. Later *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *A Member of the Wedding*, consumed me. Even today I can still feel that aching loneliness that Frankie speaks of when she wishes for the “we of me.” In 6th grade the Holocaust and Anne Frank’s *Diary of a Young Girl* fascinated me. The *Witch of Blackbird Pond* sent me on a search to Salem to understand everything I could about the witch trials. And John Brown kept me reading books about slave uprisings. I became a teacher in large part because of my love of reading. Books had opened whole worlds to me, and I wanted the chance to do the same for others.

In the San Juan Public Schools, where I began my teaching career, I found no library. My students had no experience with reading books merely for pleasure or discovery. Everything was done in workbooks or on mimeo sheets. When I decided to actually make books with my 4th grade students, other teachers thought I was wasting my time. If my students could create their own worlds with their own words they might begin to care about reading. Fortunately, the project was a great success. Students borrowed one another’s books and we created our own makeshift library.

Literacy is about “owning the word,” as Paulo Freire wrote so eloquently in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. In Freirian terms, an understanding of power and access—who has it and who does not—is crucial for the development of a truly literate society. So, if a student owns the word, she begins to feel truly empowered to act on or in the world. This is often referred to as critical literacy. This is also the way we can be sure that our students are engaged in their studies. If they “own” their work—see it connect to their lives and help them make a difference in their own communities – then the desire to achieve and reach high standards comes from within the student rather than imposed externally.

Sadly, our current educational policies have created a very different notion of schooling —one narrowly defined by scores on standardized tests or single mode multiple choice tests where the one right answer is the only thing that counts. This testing frenzy is cloaked in language about equality and access, but nothing could be further from the truth. All that counts in today’s public schools is that which can be easily and inexpensively measured.

Literature rich schools with libraries and librarians or classrooms with book corners and comfortable chairs may exist in some elementary schools, but reading for pleasure or reading to make sense of the world or reading to expand one’s horizons or experiences have gone by the wayside in most secondary schools. We have succumbed to a steady diet of reading in order to answer questions on easily scored multiple choice tests. For many students, even in Massachusetts where supposedly we live the MCAS miracle, reading is now taught in order to raise test scores.

What would classrooms look like and how would students talk about school if literacy, in the broadest sense of the term, was the norm?

For once I would like to see schools where music literacy, for example, was a requirement. Where every student was taught to read music and either sang in the choir or played in the band. Imagine classrooms where Shakespearean actors and teachers worked with students so that the language of the Bard would be something playful. All high school students would “own” those seemingly arcane “street” terms like “how now” “whither thou goest” and “wherefore art thou”? When language is fun and seen in a cultural context, students realize the valuable construction of a time and place and not something just set down in textbooks.

Returning to my initial experiences with book authoring, imagine how students might talk and feel about reading and

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writing if every month brought a different author in to give a book talk?

Last year author Reyna Grande of *Across a Hundred Mountains*, visited our school. A lively conversation between readers and author ensued. Sozi still talks about her experiences. "I'm a Vietnamese immigrant and I so identified with Reyna's characters. I can't wait to read her next book! I have signed up to read it but someone else has already checked it out from our school library!" In Sozi's senior year she will have the opportunity to lead a literature circle of this book with other students and adults. Michael McDonald recently came in and read parts of his memoir about growing up in South Boston. Even with only a few Irish-American students in the audience, everyone could identify with the themes of family and community and being an insider/outsider. Students asked many questions about the author's life experiences as they made connections to their own. That visit spawned another literacy practice that has recently taken off. We call it Lunch Time Literature.

One recent week, Advisory 11 (we have 40 advisories in our school) hosted Lunch Time Lit, a time for students and advisors to share their poetry or spoken word or poetry from other writers. These monthly events have caught on and advisories are clamoring to host the next Lunch Time Lit event. They are truly "owning" their words, something with immensely practical results. The librarian, I'm proud to say, is the energy and organizer behind all of this.

When we opened Boston Arts Academy in 1998, one of our first decisions was to establish a literacy block for all students at the same time. In this way, our students, many of whom enter high school sometimes reading 4 to 6 years below grade level would all be working on writing and reading. All teachers were part of this effort whether we taught dance or Spanish or math or music. We felt tremendous power in all of us reading and writing memoirs together or in all of us learning to write a haiku or a persuasive essay.

From our first plunges altogether as a new faculty into the world of literacy, we began to learn what we needed to do this well for our students:

- We needed professional development – all of us. (Only two of us were certified English teachers.) Professional development must be ongoing (i.e. not just this year's flavor of the day) and also differentiated since some teachers move more quickly than others (no different than the ways we talk about teaching and learning for kids).
- We team taught our literacy block and tried to combine more experienced teachers in writing and reading with those less experienced.
- We brought in experts to teach all of us about learning disabilities and English as a second language issues.
- We learned how to determine the readability of a text and to diagnose whether a text was or was not matched with a student's skill level.
- We began to use a diagnostic reading test for all incoming students to screen for reading vulnerabilities before beginning 9th grade and again at the end of 10th grade to assess growth. These were tests that meant something to students.
- We taught students the meanings of these reading scores so they could share our pride when they advanced in reading levels.
- We developed a summer reading program for students reading two or more years below grade level and we trained our teachers with an expert reading specialist. (Now, over four years later, students request to be in the program because they have seen how much it helps their peers. What students do you know who ASK to be in summer school?)
- We developed a firm expectation that all faculty would become students of reading and writing and have opportunities to think about our own learning.
- All of our teachers must write regularly: professional development goals, mid-year and end-of-year reflections

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of those goals, observations of teachers both in and outside the school. We share those writings with one another.

- We agree on books to read each summer for all adults and students. In the fall we all form literature groups to discuss those books. Students lead some of the groups.

Perhaps the most important ingredient working for us is the opportunity to see our students as successful. Just recently I struggled with Antonio as he read a passage of Elie Wiesel's *Night*. He doesn't like the book. "I don't like to read about awful things. It makes me too sad." I couldn't get him to engage in the language either. "Listen to this phrase!" I said to him. "Hear it as music." Antonio is a trumpeter. "'The dregs of darkness....' Hear that alliteration," I suggested. "You can see the darkness of the sky. You can feel the apathy he feels in the cattle car." Antonio didn't respond. His eyes looked as dull as the narrator's in *Night*. As other students read aloud I watched him struggle to stay awake and focused. He kept putting his head down on the desk. I would gently poke him upright. But I felt I was losing the battle. Inside, I felt angry. How could he not like this book? I wondered whether too many words were above his reading level. I wondered if he'd ever actually read a book from cover to cover?

Later that week I saw Antonio in his music class. He was leading the brass section. He was completely animated and responsive. Seeing him in this environment—where he was totally in charge and willing to struggle with learning hard notes or lines-- made me realize I needed to have another chance to engage him. We are not there yet, but I won't give up. Perhaps I'll catch him on the next text. I know he loves jazz and I'm going to have him look up Wynton Marsalis. He has to learn to read what he doesn't like, but we have time for that. He's a 9th grader after all. I have to take the long view. Reading can't be a timed test. It has to be part of life's goals. I also realize that I need to work with the teacher to ensure that Antonio is in a reading group at his level. He may be out of focus because he knows he is reading and comprehending at a slower pace than other students at his table.

For our students truly to be critical readers, we need to set a goal of reading at least 20 books a year. I know that is a large number, but recently I was in another urban school where each student has to read 4,000 pages during their senior year. And they all do it! I want students to crunch up their books and stuff them in their back pockets. I want them to write all over the text—to be text masters, questioners, illustrators, connectors of the words they read. I want them to see novels or histories or scientific studies as living documents not as precious books that speak some far away truth. They need to question, discuss, and see where the books lead them.

Part of what we do is to give students repeated opportunities to describe their own strengths and challenges with reading. There is no shame in needing Kurtzweil (computer software like books on tape) or other computer-aided learning tools. There is no shame in needing more time. No shame in starting somewhere lower than your classmate as long as you, too, are moving upwards.

Owning the world means owning the word. To own the word means time spent in reading. This kind of open orientation to learning is key for a healthy literacy program that promotes literacy for democracy not literacy for test taking.

Let me return to my initial question: Are you leading the literacy programs in your schools? Do you send out surveys annually to ask faculty and students how the services of the library and media center might be better utilized? Do you send out annual reports about library usage? By department? By grade level? Do you meet regularly with all teams? And do you publish the kind of research questions that students explore in the library so that everyone knows about the depth of research going on in your building? Most important, are you the vision keeper and communicator for being a passionate reader and do you share that passion all the time with students, faculty, parents and caregivers?

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To close, I paraphrase from a wonderful piece by Joan Wickersham published this summer in the Boston Globe called "A Library Tells a story of its own" (July 23, 2010, Opinions,): A library is not just a physical place, but many places, with many stories, many meanings and many possibilities for the future, she says. And I agree. How can we insure that our school libraries are both the cultural and literary center of our schools? We would do well to ask: what is the story this place, this library, tells and for whom? I hope our answers remind us that the "for whom" are the children, the teachers and family members of our school. And finally, I hope that as librarians, with all your extraordinary talent, wisdom and skill that you will continue to take the lead in your schools and ask the hard questions to encourage more young people and adults to become fully literate. Thank you.

I Love Librarians!

Linda Nathan posted on her blog this entry on October 14, 2010, following her keynote address at the MSLA Annual Conference:

I recently had the privilege of being a featured author and key note presenter at a conference for the [Massachusetts School Librarians Association](#) (MSLA). I happen to admire librarians as much as I admire teachers. We are VERY fortunate at BAA to have a world-class, award-winning [library](#), and attending the conference were current Library Director, Ms. Deborah Froggat, AND founding BAA Library Director and current Executive Director of the MSLA, Ms. Kathy Lowe.



With Deborah Froggatt (L) and Kathy Lowe (R), Librarians Extraordinaire!

My talk, "Literacy for Democracy: What are the Hardest Questions that Librarians Might Ask?" posed a series of questions for school librarians. Among some of the questions I asked this amazing group of educators were: "Are you leading the literacy programs in your schools?" and "Are you the vision keeper and communicator for the importance of being a passionate reader?"

I also shared some of the literacy practices developed at [BAA](#) over the years (some of which I describe in chapter four of my book), and discussed how so often our librarians have been the ones to articulate probing questions about our literacy programs. At BAA, our librarians' questions have ranged from "How can we improve our students' exposure to and excitement with literature?" and "How can our students be more competent users of technology and the web?" to "What do lunch-time Literature Circles look like?" and "How have students come to vie for this time to share spoken word and poetry?"

Always asking the hard questions!

At BAA, we feel very fortunate to have had such extraordinary librarians. But I must say, I left this conference feeling that the members of this Library Association were an impressive group altogether!

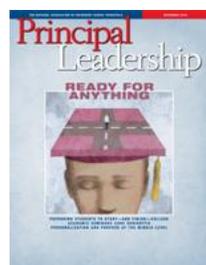
The PULSE: News in the School Library World

Note: HELP WANTED! Are you interested in being the Editor for this column? Please contact Forum Editor, [Ann Perham](#).

A Nation Without School Librarians

This map marks the cities, towns, communities, and states that have made the decision to either eliminate certified school library positions (indicated in blue) or require one school librarian to work with two (2) or more school library programs throughout the week (indicated in red).

This project was started by Shonda Brisco, Assistant Professor and Curriculum Materials Librarian at Oklahoma State University. "Let's compare the student achievement scores without a school librarian in a year or so to discover what thousands of library supporters already knew." [LEARN how to add a MARKER and view cuts across the nation.](#)



Sue Ballard is well-known by MSLA members for her spirited presentations at our conferences; she is Director of Libraries and Technology in Londonderry NH. It has been a busy fall for her as a writer, having been published in two professional journals.

Sue Ballard and Kristin Fontichiaro authored "When Pretty Good Isn't Good Enough: Research Skills and Dispositions for College Success and Lifelong Learning" has been published in the December edition of Principal Leadership magazine. [link is not available for non-members].



"Creation of a Research Community in a K-12 School System Using Action Research and Evidence Based Practice" by Susan Ballard, Gail March and Jean Sand was published in the [eJournal, Evidence Based Library and Information Practice](#)

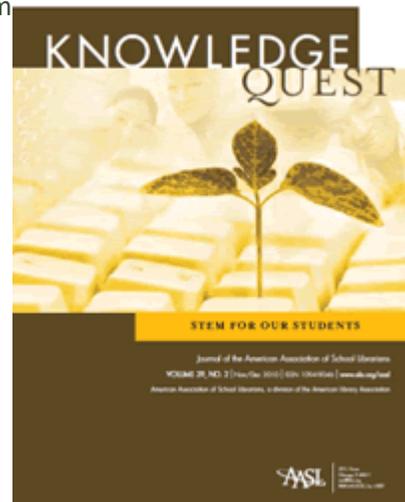
Subversive children's books What do these nine books have in common: *Goodnight Moon*; *Where the Wild Things Are*; *The Red Balloon*; *Little Engine that Could*; *The Story of Ferdinand*; *The Lorax*; *Yertle the Turtle*; *Madeline*; *Curious George*; *Click Clack Moo: Cows that Type*. These children's classics were all promoted by legendary editor, Ursula Nordstrom whose vision was to publish "good books for bad children," teaching them to think for themselves. [Read the complete story.](#)

National Ed-Tech Plan Released

The U.S. Department Office of Educational Technology has released the National Educational Technology plan, purported to transform American education through technology. The plan presents a model with goals in five areas: learning, assessment, teaching, infrastructure, and productivity. [Read more about the plan.](#)

Knowledge Quest Now Available Online

The November/December 2010 Knowledge Quest issue, "Stem for Our Students" features articles on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)



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education. [Members of AASL can access all issues registering on the AASL site](#) .

Booking to the future The Library Research Service, part of the Colorado State Library, recently conducted a survey of library professionals to get a prediction on the future of the paper book. It's probably no surprise that respondents thought the trend would be toward electronic formats. Almost two-thirds of the respondents predicted that paper books would never disappear." ...[Read more](#) on the ALA website.

AASL opens registration for its 2011 conference

Register for the AASL National Conference, "Turning the Page," October 27–30, 2011, in Minneapolis.



Advance [registration](#) offers early bird AASL members a \$100 discount.

StoryTubes 2011

Students in grades K–12 are challenged to enter the videos contest, StoryTubes 2011. In a two minute video, students can promote a book or a book series featuring the same character. Entries can be submitted between January 19 and February 28, 2011. [More Information](#)



AASL Student Video Contest



An initiative of the American Association of School Librarians

The American Association of School Librarians, SchoolTube, and Cisco are challenging students to create videos detailing how their school library and technology empower them to be Learners4Life. Entries will be uploaded to SchoolTube.com. The window for entering is January 4 to March 18, 2011. One student winner will be chosen from 3 divisions: elementary, middle, and high school. Individual student winners receive a Flip™ video camera and their school library receives a prize as well. For more information, contest rules and guidelines, check out the [Learning4Life in My School Library contest](#).

Philadelphia Teacher Union Advocate for School Libraries Making the case that school libraries promote student achievement and that prisons have better library facilities than schools, the president of the Philly Teacher Union presented a proposal that school libraries be mandated instead of optional decisions left up to principals. "There are many ways to spend limited education dollars, but a library is one of the best investments." [Read more](#)

My Turn: Brian Tata
To Make a Permanent Impression



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expectations and integrity of our customers. As change of expectation of any kind is often times met with uncertainty and fear, we must consistently seize every opportunity to demonstrate empathy, compassion and understanding while maintaining our commitment to high standards that our profession has always had. Our “value-add” to the profession and to our customers cannot be overstated. Infusing technology has revolutionized our career of choice. This has continually helped our customers’ ability to access and share information. We truly are Revolutionaries and will remain that way by connecting with our communities through serving on committees, volunteering and striving to collaboratively and permanently communicate with each other; to make an impression.

So what do we do? How do we do it? WHY do we do it? The answer is easy (!) We remember the past, seize the present and change the future through improving the education of our customers and our chosen career path.

MSLA

Author/Illustrator Wiki 

by Christine Steinhauser

<http://maauthors-msla.wikispaces.com/>

Something very cool happened the other day. I opened up my email and had a message. Someone had commented on my library blog. This is not unusual as often a student has made a comment about a book I have talked about or some topic of their choice. The message did not come from a student however- it was from an author. It seems that I posted about his book, giving it a good review and encouraging students to “Come check it out!” He somehow found my blog and posted a comment, thanking me for the review and giving us his contact information. Since then we have been in contact in he may visit our school in the future.



So, this was amazing to me for two reasons. First, someone is actually reading my blog! Second, there are authors who are looking to come and visit us. They are out there looking for us out and all we need to do is find them.

If you are looking to have an author visit your school, you are in luck. The MSLA has started an Author Database Wiki <http://maauthors-msla.wikispaces.com/> It contains a list of local authors who do school visits and their contact information. It also includes a local librarian who has hosted the author and their contact information for any questions you may have. Other helpful resources can be found on the Links page. These include organizations of authors and illustrators, Skyping authors, and more.

This wiki is a living document. As authors are added, it will become an invaluable resource for all of us. We do need your help however. If you have recently had an author visit your school, please consider visiting the wiki and sharing your information. This is easily done by completing a simple form. Together we can make this a great resource!

Uxbridge B&N Bookfair

by Kristen Fournier
Uxbridge High School

On Sunday, December 5, 2010, the Uxbridge Public Schools held a book fair at the Millbury Barnes and Noble store. The book fair came just in time for holiday shopping and helped us raise money for a new, district-wide, web-based library catalog. All in all, it was a great day. We had several student and staff volunteers there supporting the Uxbridge Public Schools and helping to coordinate various events. Students in our Family and Consumer Sciences classes baked dozens (and dozens!) of scrumptious and complimentary cookies for customers to enjoy while doing their holiday shopping. We also had high school student and staff volunteers conducting story-time readings in the children's department throughout the day for young children shopping with their parents. Story-time readings included coloring activities as well.



In addition, we had local young adult author [David Yoo](http://www.daveyoo.com/html/index.html) on hand signing copies of his latest young adult novel, *Stop Me if You've Heard This One Before*. I recommend Yoo for any library event you might be planning for your teens – he was extremely personable, funny, and got along great with our students. Uxbridge Public School supporters enjoyed chatting with him and he was instrumental in helping to make the day a success! Our Uxbridge High School Book Club students are excited to be reading his novel for our next discussion meeting.

As for what a new, web-based library catalog would mean for our district - the benefits are numerous. Right now, students and staff are only able to access the library catalog while they are physically in the library at the school they attend. A web-based catalog would give them access from home or any other computer lab in the building. For instance, if a student or staff member is interested in a particular book, they can search the catalog from home, find the item, reserve it, and then pick it up the next day at the library. A web-based catalog will also allow students to create individual student accounts where they can manage their search histories, rate or post reviews of books they've read, create book trailers if they want to get creative, etc. We will also be able to link to all of the online research databases we subscribe to through this web-based catalog so in essence it will be "one-stop shopping."

Another great feature of a web-based library catalog is that it will allow all of the school libraries in the district to communicate. We will be able to see each other's catalogs and implement an interlibrary loan feature for the district. There are a lot of materials these days that seem to have mass appeal; having an interlibrary loan feature would give a student or staff member access to any item in the district. For instance, there is often times a lot of crossover between those grades on the cusp; a 4th and 5th grader or an 8th and 9th grader could have very similar reading interests. Having this interlibrary loan feature would really expand the list of materials students would have access to. They wouldn't be restricted to just those materials located at their own school library. From a management perspective, a new catalog would offer more sophisticated reporting capabilities. We'd be better able to analyze and develop our existing collections based on circulation statistics, search histories, status of materials, etc.



The Uxbridge Public School district is in the process of planning a new high school. With a new high school slated to be

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built, comes a new library media center. It's the perfect time to be upgrading our district catalogs. We've got some great stuff at each of the school libraries in the district; a new web-based catalog will not only increase people's awareness of what is available to them but it will also provide them with easier access to those materials.

Although we still have a ways to go in our fundraising efforts for a new catalog, the proceeds from the book fair will make a nice dent in the amount needed to purchase such a catalog. For those of you looking for minimal effort fundraising opportunities with the potential for a nice chunk of change, a Barnes and Noble book fair is a great option. If you can coordinate your fair around a seasonal event like the winter holidays or say spring graduation, even better. And for those schools in the Central MA area, I highly recommend Diane Abramson, Community Relations Manager at the Millbury Barnes and Noble store. Her knowledge and suggestions for running a successful book fair were invaluable. I see many more book fairs in our future!

MassBroadband 123 by Julie Farrell

MSLA Legislation Chairperson
Overlook Middle School, Ashburnham



MassBroadband 123 is an initiative by the Massachusetts Broadband Institute www.massbroadband.org to bridge the digital divide in Massachusetts. Many cities and towns in Massachusetts do not have access to broadband, a high speed fiber optic network for Internet access. MassBroadband 123 will bridge the digital divide by creating a 1,300 mile fiber optic network to bring broadband to 123 underserved cities and towns in Massachusetts.

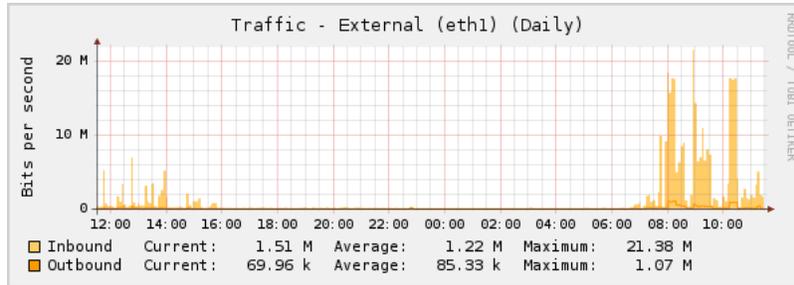
MassBroadband 123 will connect up to 1,400 public safety facilities, schools, libraries, (school libraries!!), community colleges, hospitals and town halls. These facilities are identified as community anchor institutions (CAI). This project is considered a "middle-mile" project; to create a backbone of fiber optic network throughout the north central and western part of the state.

Benefits Many benefits are associated with broadband connectivity: economic, healthcare ; public safety and education. Access to reliable high speed Internet will benefit commercial growth to enable communications services similar to those found in large urban environments. Healthcare sectors will benefit by the possibility of remote consultation and electronic health records. Municipalities and public safety agencies will benefit by support of cross agency communications and simplified access to community services. Educational institutions will benefit by enhanced distance learning opportunities and virtual classes.

School Libraries Public schools within the project area will be designated as community anchor institutions and eligible for broadband access. I am currently employed as a school librarian at Overlook Middle School in Ashburnham, Massachusetts. Our school has 600 students and 67 staff members.

The diagram below is a chart of a day in life of our network activity:

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This is a snapshot of one day's network activity. Overlook Middle School's network is at or above capacity on most weekdays from 9:45 a.m. through 11:30 a.m.

Our school has access to Discovery Education which is an online library of educational media. Many of our teachers use this resource in their instruction and stream videos during their classes. Added to that network load, are teachers streaming CNN and YouTube videos. Creating more of a bottleneck in connectivity are the library resources which I access for my classes. As more and more electronic resources add more and more multimedia features, this bottleneck will worsen. Broadband can help alleviate this situation.

What you can do Access the Massachusetts Broadband Institute www.massbroadband.org website to determine if your community is included. Contact your community representative to ensure that your school and thus your school library are included as an anchor institution. MassBroadband 123 is a project that is expected to take thirty-six months to complete. It would be in our best interest, as librarians, to stay informed of this initiative.

SLJ Summit 2010

by Sandy Kelly, Lynn Weeks and Kathleen Porter

With thanks to our association and the event sponsors, we traveled to Chicago to attend the School Library Journal Leadership Summit October 21st-23rd 2010. We were beyond excited for the conference despite having mixed feelings about what the future of reading holds. For newbies on the national conference scene like Lynn & Kathleen, the summit was "school-librarian heaven". What an experience to participate in a conference being led and attended by the very same school librarians and technology experts whose books, blogs, and websites we follow for ideas and inspiration! The days and night were jam-packed with presentations on changes taking place in reading — from graphic novels to the Internet to hand-held reading devices and other emerging technologies. Here are some highlights of what we covered:

Changes in literacy and skills used when moving from a print book, hand-held reading device, to scanning an article on the Internet. "Skim-reading" vs. "diving in" .

Changes in the text-books as they move from traditional printed books, to more digital & mobile formats.

The need for professional development and support as we move from primarily print-based resources to increasingly more digital resources. The need for all teachers at all subjects and levels to be literacy coaches too, and the changing (but essential!) role of librarians in this changing landscape.

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The first annual School Library Journal "Trailer Awards" - the ceremony announced awards to book trailers and encouraged us begin using trailers with students to excite them about reading

Author Patrick Carman shared how he is using technology to create interactive books, while Caldecott-winning illustrator Paul O. Zelinsky shared how he uses technology to create his artwork.

Need for new e-readers to share some core features such as text-to-speech, presentation control (ability to change colors, size, etc.), interactive dictionary, highlighting and annotation capabilities, bookmarks and indexing, and Internet connectivity.

There was so much more covered in this summit! The format was intense with keynote presentations that were an hour to two hours in length, but the majority of sessions were scheduled rapid fire, TED-style, back-to-back every fifteen minutes. We took in a lot of information, but the summit also raised a lot of questions about "the future of reading" and what it will mean for schools, libraries, educators and our students. What will the dominant e-reader technology be and when will it emerge? Should we be investing in these technologies now, or waiting for the "dust to settle"? How will this be funded?

None of us come home ready to do a drastic "Cushing Academy move" and start ditching most of our books in an effort to move rapidly to the digital world, but we did come back excited about the possibilities that emerging technologies have for reading, differentiation, our students, ourselves and our colleagues. See our individual school library websites, wikis, Facebook pages, and blogs for some new ideas and websites as we "test the digital waters". There's much to explore in the integration of multimedia with print books, and of course we added e-readers or iPads to our Christmas lists!

One notable panel discussion was about the latest Carnegie Foundation report, "Time to Act." The [Carnegie Corporation of New York](#), a nonprofit organization that promotes knowledge and understanding. The panel consisted of Andrés Henríquez, Program Officer, National Program, Carnegie Corporation of New York, Dr. Catherine Snow, Professor from Harvard University, Gina Biancarosa, Assistant Professor from the University of Oregon and Dale Lipschultz, Literacy Officer of the American Library Association.

Anyone with a vested interest in literacy and would benefit from looking at the Carnegie Foundation's report. (<http://tinyurl.com/yl75o3g>) Time to Act is the capstone report of Carnegie Council for Advancing Adolescent Literacy. Dr. Snow, who led much of the research, said all teachers must be able to support literacy development. She said, "It is important to teach students to read like a scientist and write like a historian." The research shows that content teachers do not see themselves as literacy teachers. As a result adolescent literacy is lagging and many students enter college with need for remediation programs. Dr Snow sees developing all [teachers as teachers](#) of literacy is a key solution to alleviating adolescent reading problems. She stated "writing a summary is not comprehension, we need to go beyond summaries to critique, evaluate, and synthesize. Literacy skills are complex."

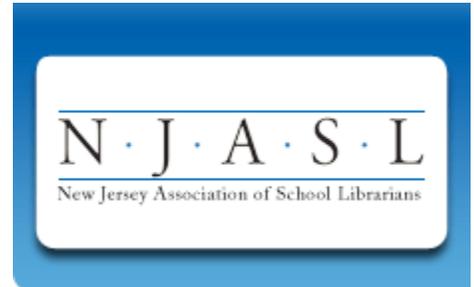
The work of the foundation is definitely full of interesting research and needless to say school librarians recognize the importance of teaching how to "critique, evaluate and synthesize." But the report has a major flaw in the eyes of SLJ attendees. There is a complete absence of the data supporting the impact school libraries have on student achievement. They did not include libraries, librarians or technology which even panelist Professor Gina Biancarosa, said was "really stupid."

Dr. Ross Todd, and Carol Gordon who has also done much research on reading literacy, were in the audience. Ross

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told the panel that the teaching focus of school libraries is inquiry, critical thinking, problem solving, and the transformation of information into knowledge. Both he and Carol offered to work with the Carnegie Foundation members, providing research and support for the final revision of this report.

We recommend that if copies of Time to Act were being passed around your school (and many have been distributed in MA) that you supplement that reading with Scholastic's School Libraries Work. Let others know that it was pointed out to the Carnegie Foundation that the importance of libraries was overlooked and will be included in the final report.



NJASL Announces CISSL Statewide Study of NJ School Libraries

December 3, 2010

Study reveals contributions to intellectual development of students, inequities in available resources

- Given the economic challenges facing the Nation and the state, today's poor economic climate creates both challenges and opportunities for schools. The [Center for International Scholarship in School Libraries](#) (CISSL) has published findings from Phase 1 of its study [One Common Goal: Student Learning](#), which shows New Jersey school library programs staffed by certified school librarian media specialists are cost-effective in helping students achieve higher standards and critical for the intellectual, social, and cultural development of students.

"School librarians have known for a long time that we contribute to student learning. An already large body of research shows a strong positive correlation between student achievement on standardized tests and well-funded school library programs provided by certified school library media specialists." said Judith Everitt, President of NJASL. "Our challenge is to change the incorrect public perception of a school library as a warehouse of books to a more accurate understanding of the school library program as an active teaching and learning environment."

The study surveyed the status of school library programs in New Jersey schools in the spring of 2009, concluding Phase I in July. The study found that school librarians help students to:

- Master content knowledge;
- Develop the ability to manage inquiry and research processes;
- Become competent in deriving information from a range of resources;
- Develop the critical thinking processes of analyzing, organizing, and synthesizing information and representing the resulting knowledge in a variety of ways;
- Develop positive and ethical values about working with information and with each other; and enjoy reading more, more widely, and with more discrimination.

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CISSL also examined school library budgets, and the size and age of library collections. The survey revealed that most school libraries in New Jersey have a large percentage of age sensitive materials that have copyright dates older than the recommended three to five years. In analyzing the number of books in school libraries' collections as well as the age of the books, by District Factor Group (DFG), the study revealed that due to disparities in local school library budgets, students in communities of lower socioeconomic status depend on both smaller and older school library collections than their peers in more affluent communities.

CISSL Director, Ross Todd, noted that "school library budget inequities affect the most vulnerable socioeconomic populations, for whom school libraries may be the only access to the world of reading, by providing them with fewer books from which to choose, and a greater percentage of books with outdated information."

Phase II of the CISSL study is presently underway. It will assess in greater depth the ways in which a school library program contributes to student learning and ensures that today's students become responsible, ethical users of information and are prepared to meet the challenges of higher education and the workplace.

To access Phase 1 of the CISSL survey, visit http://cissl.rutgers.edu/docs/NJASL_Phase_1.pdf

ABOUT NJASL

New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL) is the professional organization for school librarians in the state of New Jersey. NJASL advocates high standards for librarianship and library media programs in the public, private, and parochial schools in New Jersey to ensure that students and staff become effective users of information. Learn more about New Jersey Association of School Librarians, visit www.njasl.org and join the conversation on Facebook and Twitter.

ABOUT CISSL

The Center for International Scholarship in School Libraries (CISSL) is the leading international research organization based at Rutgers the State University of New Jersey. CISSL's mission is to produce and share rigorous research on the dynamics of school libraries and student learning.

Zilonis Lifetime Award



Simmons Press Release

Massachusetts School Library Association Awards Simmons School Library Teacher Program Director Lifetime Achievement Honor

BOSTON (November 10, 2010) – Fran Zilonis, director of the School Library Teacher Program at the Simmons Graduate School of Library and Information Science (GSLIS), has been awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Massachusetts School Library Association (MSLA).

The Lifetime Achievement Award is given to a MSLA member who has contributed to the



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profession of school librarianship during at least a decade-long span in the profession. According to the MSLA website, "the honoree has demonstrated an exemplary commitment to the service of students and 21st century learning and the advancement of school libraries."

Zilonis was appointed the director of the School Library Teacher Program at Simmons in August of 2010. Previously an adjunct professor, she joined the faculty as a visiting professor in the fall of 2009. Zilonis has more than 30 years of library experience in Massachusetts schools, having been a school library media specialist, high school administrator, educational consultant, college professor, and college administrator, information technology administrator, and author. She is a recognized authority on school librarianship, and in 2002 was awarded the Mass CUE Pathfinder Award for her leadership in integrating technology in schools.

Simmons GSLIS has been ranked among the top ten programs in the area of Services for Children and Youth. Zilonis took over the SLT program following the retirement of Professor James Baughman, who directed the highly regarded program for over twenty years.

The nationally ranked Simmons College Graduate School of Library and Information Science is one of the oldest and largest library and information science programs in the nation. Founded in 1899, Simmons College (www.simmons.edu) is a nationally recognized university located in the heart of Boston that includes an undergraduate college for women, and graduate programs for women and men in management, social work, health sciences, and library and information science.