

row," Desmond said. "At least I don't have to give things away to have friends."

"I do not give away library books," Horace said. "I lend them. And now I suddenly understand why your books are so overdue."

Parquet put her arm around Desmond's shoulders. "That's okay, Desmond. Return your books and for your fine buy the first round at our next gathering."

"It's good to be back," Horace said.

"Sure," said Amelia. "But I bet you already know when the next conference will be."

"June 22nd to June 26th the ALA Annual Conference in Washington, DC."

Everyone laughed. "From the Seattle hills to Capitol Hill," Parquet said.

"Say 'Hi' to Ted Kennedy for me," Desmond said.

"I just might. I'll be lobbying Congress with the ALA on the twenty-sixth. The odds that I talk to our Senior Senator are better than

the odds I hit the jackpot in Reno."

"I'm afraid to ask," said Parquet. "But here goes, how does Reno come into this?"

"The AASL biannual conference will be in Reno for five days this October. It is different from the ALA conferences. AASL has no meetings, nothing about running the organization. We take care of that at ALA. AASL is all school library programs, school library exhibits and school librarian parties – ahh, that is, events. Many children's book and young adult book authors attend and join in."

Parquet glared. Amelia's mouth flew open. Desmond started banging his head on the table in a graphic display of the 'physicalization of meaning' concept that he taught to his acting class students.

"Reno has 300 sunny days each year," Horace continued. Desmond stopped his assault on the table and looked up. "Kayaking on the Truckee River right through the middle of town. Enough shows . . ."

Desmond started attacking the table again with his forehead.

"You break this table, Desmond, and you own it," Parquet said. "Then you can take it home and start a collection of Doyle's furniture in your den. Call it torment motif. It's sure to be a twenty-first century classic."

"I'm okay," Desmond said lifting his head from the table. "In October I'll be enjoying my annual new theatre season weekend in New York -- three Broadway shows in two days."

"That's great." Said Amelia, "But all of us can do that. Can you skip school for Reno like Horace?"

"Heading the table didn't help," added Parquet. "There's no way you can hide the envy in your eyes."

"There might be one way," Amelia amended. "What do you think, Desmond -- can I help with your library school application?"

Robert Roth

PDPs For Writing Articles

By Paula Byrne



Do you enjoy writing? Are you beginning to collect PDPs for the next round of Teacher Licensure? Here is a free opportunity for you.

The Massachusetts School Library Association is offering PDPs for all articles that are published in the Media Forum Online. For each published article of 800 – 1,000 words, the author will be awarded 2.5 PDPs.

We will also definitely consider any article that is of interest to the MSLA members and supports our mission. Tell us about your library media program, best practices, special projects, etc. Many of us are the only person in the position of Library Teacher at our school. By writing an article, you can share your successes with colleagues who understand and support the profession.

Please send your articles and questions me at: byrnep@comcast.net

Paula Byrne
Co-Editor, MSLA Forum
Wilmington High School

MSLA-SIG Mini-Conference

(Reprinted from Forum, Summer, 2007)

By Alison Cody, Simmons College, GSLIS

The Simmons Student Interest Group of the Massachusetts School Library Association aims to provide support to students with an interest in school libraries and to serve as a liaison between future librarians and the MSLA. This year, the MSLA-SIG fulfilled this mission with a bang. On March 24, 2007, they held their first-ever conference, a day-long affair aimed at connecting students and new professionals. Co-chairs Anna Schneider and Susanna Paterson (both MLS '07) were behind most of the development and planning of the conference. Here, they explain how the conference developed and share tips on planning this sort of event.

From small beginnings

Originally, the two planned to keep the conference small and aimed squarely at GSLIS students. They brought the idea up at a board meeting, and it was met with more enthusiasm than they expected.

"The board suggested that we open the conference to young professionals, because they often feel isolated and lost during their first few years," Schneider said. "That's where the theme—Get Connected—came from: getting connected to make the transition from student to professional more comfortable."

Paterson and Schneider adopted several other ideas posed by the board and also took advantage of their expertise as school library teachers—more than half of the speakers were members of the MSLA board, and most of the rest were MSLA members. The board also offered administrative support for issues such as collecting payments and offering continuing education credits.

Rounding up speakers

Eleven speakers presented nine different sessions, excluding the lunchtime panel. Sessions ranged from using storytelling and bookmarking in the school library to presentations on collaborating with teachers and principals.

"I have to say that we were thrilled to get all the responses that we received," Paterson said. "There was such enthusiasm coming from the speakers that it made me feel more confident that it would all work out. I was especially excited to see new professionals presenting their practical advice and knowledge."

I was impressed with the expertise that they were able to convey after only a few years in the field, as well as their ability to remember what it was like to be a student and connect with students at the conference."

The devil is in the details

Paterson and Schneider both agree that organizing an entire conference is a task not undertaken lightly — and not by just two people! "If next year's officers decide to host another conference — and we hope they do — I would recommend implementing a conference committee," Schneider said.

"The money was difficult to deal with, though," Paterson said. "We were using our group budget funds for some expenses and spending our own money on others. It was important to us to keep the registration fees to a minimum. Conferences are expensive, and officers that want to put one on should make sure they request enough money for their budget."

Their most important piece of advice? Don't wait until the last minute. "There were definitely some things that we forgot to do, because we tried to do too much at the last minute," Paterson said.

Moving forward

"From the evaluation forms that speakers and attendees completed, we've already gotten some great ideas and suggestions for the future," Paterson said. "Everyone who returned an evaluation said that they would be interested in coming to another conference next year, so I consider that a success!"

The conference has boosted the presence of the MSLA Student SIG in the region and presented GSLIS students with an easy, convenient way to learn more about what it's like out in school libraries. Schneider and Paterson were able to attend sessions and soak up the experience of those currently working in school libraries. But they also benefited from the planning itself.

"It was an exciting, creative and scary process," Paterson noted. "I think the thrill in creating something from scratch was apparent. I think the whole process has made me a more focused and confident person."

"To be quite honest, I enjoyed the adrenaline rush of planning this," Schneider said. "I learned a lot."

How to get involved

If you want more information about the MSLA Student SIG, check out their wiki at http://gslis.simmons.edu/mw/msla_sig. There you'll find posts about upcoming meetings and links to the MSLA parent organization, awards, and other useful information for school library teachers. Also, keep an eye on your e-mail! Soon it will be time to elect new officers to follow in the footsteps of this year's ambitious leaders.

Alison Cody wrote this article for the April 2007 issue of the Simmons College GSLIS InfoLink. For past issues, please see <http://my.simmons.edu/gslis/infolink>

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A Moment With: Diane Libbey

By Lara Gross/News Correspondent

Thursday, March 08, 2007 - Updated: 03:57 PM EST

WESTBOROUGH - The peace and hush of the library is a misleading representation of Westborough High School librarian Diane Libbey's day-to-day schedule.

The 30-year educator's favorite part of being a librarian is working with students. She explains, "No day is ever the same. I am always helping people and facing new challenges." She loves handing a student a book and hearing their thoughts on it. But that's only half of what she does.

Libbey received her bachelor's degree from Bates College, and a masters degree at the University of Maryland at College Park.

In 2003, Libbey was elected to serve on the Executive Board of the Massachusetts School Library Association. Her role as the Central Area Co-Director has caused her to not only focus her attention on the high school library but also reach out to all high school libraries in both the district and state.

The MSLA is an organization that represents all Massachusetts school librarians and is broken up into six districts: Central, Boston, Metrowest, Western, Northeast and Southeast. As a member of the MSLA Executive Board, Libbey is responsible for addressing any issues that the Central District may have. She attends monthly meetings with MSLA Co-Director Pat Fontes, the former librarian at Gibbons Middle School and current librarian of Nashoba Regional High School.

How long have you worked as a librarian?

This is my twenty-seventh consecutive year working for Westborough High School, but I left a year in between to raise my children. Before Westborough, I worked at Holy Cross for two and a half years and at the Auburn Public Library in Auburn, Maine for one year. I grew up in Rockville, Maryland, which had an intern program that encouraged people to become involved in the development of the county.

I worked for the library, and I loved it. I also worked for the library in my college.

What are some of your favorite books and how often do you read?

When I was a teenager, my favorite book was "Jane Eyre," by Charlotte Bronte. Among some of the recent books that I've read and enjoyed are "The Kite Runner" and "The Bone People." I read a lot professionally: I belong to both the book group within the school and a book group outside of school. When I don't have time to read, I listen to books on tape...it's a good thing to do when trying to get two things done at once.

Why did you want to be elected to the MSLA Executive Board?

Every librarian is a part of the Massachusetts School Library Association, but because I've been a librarian for so long I thought it was my time to step up. Elections are held every two years and I wanted to represent the district.

In your opinion, what is the importance of the MSLA?

School librarians hold very different responsibilities than public or academic librarians. The MSLA is an opportunity for school librarians to get together and talk about what's going on in their libraries. It's basically a bigger voice than what we would normally have.

There is also usually only one librarian per school, and this association allows librarians to come together and talk about anything that needs to be talked about. We give each other advice. Schools with librarians also do better on standardized tests as a whole, so it's important that librarians are well informed.

Once a month, Libbey attends a meeting with the MSLA. These meetings are held after school from about 3:30-6 p.m., and are an opportunity for "librarians to help librarians." Questions such as what kind of books each library should carry are addressed and answered.



The MSLA also meets once a year at a statewide conference to listen to speakers from across the country talk about new books, technologies, and applications. It holds a "Legislative Day," which is when a committee within the MSLA talks to senators and representatives about laws and how well the libraries are being funded. This year, "Legislative Day" is being held at the State House in Boston.

Do you help to organize any events within the MSLA?

The MSLA does things such as sponsor library workshops. We also sponsor a bookmark contest that encourages kids to read, where students create art pieces that are judged in exchange for a bookmark. On March 16, I'm sponsoring a Legislative Breakfast here at the high school from 8-9 a.m.

Two senators and five representatives are expected, and the MSLA is going to encourage them to support bills that fund the school libraries. The funding is contributed towards things such as the state database, which I think is very important to have within the school system.

George Peterson, the minority whip, promised me he'd go!

On March 15 and 29, the Central Massachusetts Regional Library System is also going to be working in the high school library with me to sponsor a workshop, which is another opportunity for librarian training and discussion.

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Adventures in my School Library

(Reprinted from Forum, Summer, 2007)

By Maria P. D'Orsi

Brooks Elementary School, Medford

Welcome, summer!! I know it's here because the air conditioning is now off in my school building. It is assumed that staff and faculty, along with all the students, have gone home to enjoy a much-needed vacation and that the custodians and secretaries who are here all summer do not sweat. Bah, humbug! I'm still here!! Why? Because I get very little done when school is in session...other than teaching, that is. I love the quiet library of vacation weeks and summer break almost as much as I love the busy, multifunctional, frenetic pace of school days. I envy the school librarians who are paid to work for several extra weeks after school lets out. It pains me to stop all circulation while school is very much in session in order to be done on the last day. Well, despite my best effort, I was not done. So here I am... sweating!

I am amused when non-teaching friends who call me to go out and have some of this "summer fun" are surprised when they hear that I am still working. Granted, I did not arrive this morning until I finished the ENTIRE pot of coffee. And, I cannot stay beyond 3:00 PM because summer hours are now in place. But it reminds me once again that only another dedicated school library teacher/media specialist/librarian will understand what I'm doing here... and why.

My community built beautiful new school libraries (my building opened in 2003) when we qualified for new construction grant money. Since there wasn't an elementary or middle school library program in place (only the one in our high school, which had to be there for the high school to be credentialed) not only were the buildings new but so also were all new school library staff. As a result, we six librarians (who all work alone - no surprise there) have not only been busy building our collections but also our programs. As we finish year four we are in pretty good shape I would say, but the student bodies of more than 600 students in each building require a lot of work!

In my library the last few weeks have been a flurry of activity, and I am as proud as I am

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I am amused when non-teaching friends who call me to go out and have some of this "summer fun" are surprised when they hear that I am still working.



relieved that all the hard work and collaborating ad nauseum is paying off - this library is functioning more and more like the hub of the school. The teachers have discovered what you all know, that we are not trying to make more work for them but rather be their teaching partners. The more some teachers have "used me" the more others jump on board. During the last month students were busy signing in and out to use computers, do research, complete and display final projects, etcetera, etcetera, and it was exhilarating to behold. Even my ever-supportive principal was thrilled. This year was an exciting ride as we watched the program blossom.

Finally we came down to the last few days. The projects are finished and it's two days left- then one more day. After sending many notices and stopping teachers in the corridors in an effort to track down missing paraphernalia there's still plenty of A.V. equipment unaccounted for, plus closing technology support (who knew backing up personal files could cause so much consternation!), and those late and lost books that we all deal with at the end. You know.

As I sit at my computer right now (five days after school closed) I am looking at a sea of equipment, some returned and some re-

tried...overheads, listening centers, cassette and CD players, TV/VCR/DVD players, video cameras, book binding machines, etc. Many teachers do not understand why I ask for it to be sent back to the library...there're only going to sign it out in September again anyway. I feel like responding much like my Dad would have when asked an irritating question..."because I said so!" But instead I model the picture of patience and tell everyone that I make sure the equipment is cleaned (I know they don't have time, but the dust!), checked for missing pieces, cords and burned out bulbs, and restored as near as possible to its original condition. Then I order what I need to get started in the fall, record that the items still exist, and hunt down what did not get sent back. This is where all the good will I built up with the custodial staff pays off...they will wash down the equipment, although it is not technically part of their job, because I feed them and give them gifts. "Shameless self-promotion" as Kathy Lowe would say. I do whatever I can to build library goodwill. Joe Angelo, former President of both the MSLMA and Cambridge College's Library Teacher program, would agree. He truly believes in the power of food!

The next project for the (unpaid) summer is to redo my filing system. I think this is sort of like redoing picture albums...a project that desperately needs to be done but remains on the to-do list in perpetuity. I still haven't decided if it is better to keep lesson plans in binders or in files. As a result I have both. Please, if you have an opinion on this let me know. I like the files because I can easily add student work without having to punch holes. Binders are easier to work with and can be moved around with out spilling out the contents or other dangers associated with loose pages. Binders or files... binders or files...

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Adventures in my School Library

(Reprinted from Forum, Spring, 2007)

By Maria P. D'Orsi

Brooks Elementary School, Medford

I'm Nobody! Who are you?
Are you Nobody too?
Then there's a pair of us!

I hope there's more than a pair reading this article! Since it is April – poetry month - I thought I'd begin with a few words from Emily Dickinson, which speaks to me of the times when I feel overworked and under appreciated. I'll bet there are more than a few of you important nobodies out there as well! As Hillary Clinton said of her new presidential campaign, I'd like to begin a "conversation" with my colleagues, especially those of you who work alone or who got a late start like me, beginning with my journey and life as a school librarian, and maybe my unique perspective and experiences will resonate, or at least amuse, some of you.

I am a library teacher in an elementary school, a second career that began when I volunteered in my own children's school library in the early nineties. I did not come from an education background, but I'm certainly one of those "detail oriented" types as well as a voracious reader, prerequisites for librarianship! I never entertained the idea of being a teacher, but being an involved parent (in fact, a P.T.O. president), and an active supporter of education, I volunteered to run my children's school library and thought, "this is for me!!" I moved on to a paid position as library coordinator, and after a few years my community qualified for a grant to build new schools, which promised professionally staffed school libraries. My principal, who knew how much I loved the position, advised me to get my licensure or I would lose my job to a certified library media specialist.

Well, I really hated to spend the money!! And the time!! And especially, how long it would take to pay off the loan on a new teacher's salary. But I truly loved the children, the books, the organization, and my colleagues as well, and decided to go for it. After the shock of discovering most of the credits from my incomplete 1970s undergrad program wouldn't transfer, I "bit the bullet" for four years to finish my undergrad and master's degrees and teaching certification, and the good news is the loan will be paid just five years after I retire!

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*Now I proudly call myself a teacher
and still feel a thrill when I get a
chance to state my occupation.*
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I loved my undergrad program at Cambridge College and what a joy it has been to go to school as an adult. There were times when I wished I could make my career as a student! Then I began the library teacher coursework, and past MSLA president Dr. Joseph (Joe) Angelo, director of the Library Teacher program at that time, taught my very first course, "Overview of the School Library". He talked about print resources vs. online, fixed schedules vs. flexible, collaboration and frameworks and standardized testing. He warned us about the dangers of being warehouseers, keepers of the books, professional organizers. Joe also stated emphatically that the job of a library teacher was to be a teacher first. Library Teacher? Who changed the name? I wanted to be a library media specialist. I never wanted to be a teacher.

I have always believed that teaching is the hardest job in the world; trying to keep 20 or 25 kids busily engaged and well-behaved, self esteem intact, parents placated, curriculum covered, room attractive, etc., etc. I just signed my loan (did I mention it will be paid five years after I retire?) and now I find out I have to let someone else do the cataloging and organizing and covering (I LOVE covering books), and all the wonderful things we bibliophiles do. I have to write lesson plans? What's this curriculum mapping? When am I going to have time to read the Follett catalog, my professional magazines, or order books? What was I getting myself into? The more Joe talked, the more depressed I became. Well, after a few deep breaths, I decided to finish my first semester coursework that was already paid by loan anyway, and then reevaluate.

I also completed Children's Literature, References Resources, and Evaluation, Selection and Management that summer and in time came to realize I was exactly where I belonged. It also occurred to me that teaching was what I had

been doing all along and the skills Joe taught were the guideposts that gave my position as a library teacher meaning and value. It made me a professional. I had been so respectful and even intimidated by the wonderful teachers I had known that I felt unsure of myself, as if I couldn't measure up to their level of expertise. Now I proudly call myself a teacher and still feel a thrill when I get a chance to state my occupation. On occasion I cover books and love it when I'm asked to solve a cataloging dilemma, and once in a while I'll even go to the shelves and straighten and fuss, checking the call numbers and copyright dates and the condition of well-used materials...and get it out of my system.

Several months ago I had the opportunity to have lunch with the staff of this newsletter and was pleased that (now past) MSLA President, Kathy Lowe, would be joining us. She is every bit the powerhouse and wealth of information I suspected by the numerous articles she has written and the wonderful job she did representing us nationally. Even her lunch contribution wowed me...a delicious bleu cheese salad! I asked many questions and hung on her every word, and when the subject came up about the professional name change to library teacher and how I was confused at first, Kathy said she goes by...librarian. Librarian??? She stopped fighting it a long time ago. No matter how important we are, or what we call ourselves, in the school library we go with the flow!!

Little Gem: Chalk this one up to too much TV. One of my first graders is a very well behaved, bright, and caring little boy. One day a student asked for a dinosaur book and A.J., who was beside the boy, turned and said, "I'll show him, Mrs. D'Orsi." He said to his classmate, "Follow me. The dinosaur books are in the erectile section."

Got a little gem to share? A comment? Email me at mdorsi@medford.k12.ma.us

See you next issue!