



**May/June 1998**

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## **Wyoming library community sets priorities at retreat**

Described as a historical event, representatives from libraries across the state met in Casper last month for a planning retreat. This marked the first time library trustees, directors, State Library Board and staff and Wyoming Library Association (WLA ) officers have gathered all at once to discuss the future of Wyoming public libraries.

Of the 23 county libraries, 21 directors were present, along with representatives from 17 county library boards.

Helen Fitch, State Library Board Chair, said, "The fact that trustees and librarians from nearly every county attended, I think evidenced real interest and real concern for equity and funding issues and how we can continue the operation of libraries fo r the 21st century."

After welcoming remarks from Fitch and Jerry Krois, acting state librarian, the retreat was facilitated by Rhonda Shipp, University of Wyoming extension educator.

A full agenda included discussions on revenue sources, library values, visioning for the 21st century and future revenue sources and initiatives.

Working together, attendees developed vision and mission statements for public libraries. The vision statement is "Wyoming Libraries--the first place to go when you want to know," and the mission reads: "Wyoming public libraries provide access to the universe of information and literature. They serve the intellectual, entertainment, cultural and economic needs of residents and communities."

The retreat involved a lengthy process of identifying actions to strengthen public libraries and revenue options for their growth. After a day and a half of discussions, outcomes were determined through the use of prioritizing grids. The outcomes were prioritized in the following order:

1. Pursuing state aid initiatives.
2. Communicating library revenue concerns to the Tax Reform 2000.
3. Strengthening library foundations to help generate more dollars.
4. Developing partnerships, such as those created through WYLD, task forces, WLA, and economic development initiatives.
5. Strengthening Friends groups by offering them support for local fundraising efforts.
6. Reviewing fees for services to determine new revenue options for local libraries.

Before the retreat adjourned, a small task force was formed to work with the WLA Legislative Committee to research possibilities of securing state aid.

There was a discussion about library districts, and attendees agreed that popular support for districts did not exist at this time.

After the two-day meeting, Fitch said, "We were able to reach consensus through the healthy exchange of ideas, and I think it's important that all of us are now focusing on the same outcomes as we prioritized them." She explained how this same kind of consensus throughout the library community was the catalyst for getting the State Library's supplemental budget request passed during the last legislative session.

The Wyoming State Library plans to issue a full report on the retreat later this month.

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## Search for new state librarian begins

In conjunction with the Wyoming Libraries Retreat, the State Library Board met in Casper to discuss the search and selection process for a new state librarian. (See related story on former state librarian, [\[Meadors leaves State Library\]](#).)

Under the direction of Art Ellis, director for the Department of Administration and Information (A&I), the board will identify a 10- to 12-member search/selection team. The team will include representation from the Board, public libraries, academic libraries, school and special libraries, WYLD and the Resource Sharing Council, A&I, and State Library staff.

Responsibilities of the team include defining position requirements and the criteria for reviewing written applications. The team will also compose questions and request written responses from qualified applicants and define questions and criteria for telephone interviews.

The position for state librarian will be advertised statewide, regionally and nationally this summer. Interviewing will begin sometime in the fall, depending on the closing date, which has not yet been set.

Ellis appointed a three-member team to fill the state librarian position during the transition. Jerry Krois was named acting state librarian and will be assisted by Corky Walters, LASSO office manager, and Venice Beske, manager of statewide information services.

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## **Meadors leaves State Library**

Wyoming's state librarian, Helen Meadors, was fired on April 27, 1998 over confidential personnel matters.

Art Ellis, director of the Department of Administration and Information, said to comply with state law and to preserve the reputation of the former state librarian, specific reasons for the firing could be not revealed.

Meadors served as state librarian for four years. During her tenure the State Library increased awareness of libraries in the state through networking, marketing and partnerships with other agencies and associations. She was responsible for development and expansion of library and information services throughout the state and oversaw management of the integrated online statewide system, which uses state-of-the-art telecommunications and library technologies.

Under her leadership, the Wyoming State Library obtained \$2.4 million in supplemental state funding for libraries; the Wyoming Libraries Database (WYLD) network was implemented; she initiated governance contracts between the State Library and WYLD consortium members; staff positions were reclassified, resulting in upgrades and pay increases; and State Library facilities and equipment were upgraded.

Meadors immediate plans were to return to her family home in Arizona.

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## **WSL receives award**

The Wyoming State Library recently received an award from the Wyoming Public Health Association for "creating a partnership in diabetes information accessibility and public awareness." The State Library was nominated by Kaetz Beartusk, Diabetes Control Program Manager of the Wyoming Health Department, with whom the library partnered.

During the last year, the State Library endorsed the project to library directors, facilitated the ordering of books and videos, provided cataloging records to the libraries, prepared news releases and conducted periodic process and outcome evaluations .

The project provided updated diabetes information to the seven community college libraries and 23 county libraries. All materials were included in the WYLD CAT, an online database connecting libraries throughout the state.

"Congratulations Wyoming State Library," wrote Beartusk. "This is proving to be the most effective way to disseminate information to a state who ranks fourth in the nation on annual public library use."

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## **WSL web site gets a makeover**

The Wyoming State Library (WSL) Home Page has a brand new look! The contemporary design features the new WSL logo and presents a more organized, user-friendly format. Users will find all the same links they're familiar with, along with a few new ones.

Check it out at <http://will.state.wy.us>. Comments may be directed to Desiree Sallee or Linn Rounds .

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## **Meeting of WYLD minds: WYLD council holds annual meeting in Casper**

A low level of angst and an overall calm and confident attitude characterized the WYLD Network annual meeting held recently in Casper. In summary, "the meeting brought to a close a

year of growth and maturity for the present WYLD system," said Corky Walters, manager of the State Library's Library Automation Systems and Services Office (LASSO).

The network group concluded communication and training needs are being better met by the regional council structure put into place last year. The regional council report reflected this benefit, recognizing that "regional council members are the best, most personal link to individual staff members and libraries and are the communication link for all."

Representatives from WYLD member libraries who attended the meeting's "sharing sessions," which were held on interlibrary loan/circulation, serials and technical processing, offered to each other tips on procedures that help in using the various DRA classic modules. These sessions offered members a "fine tuning" of products and services, rather than the overall general training needed at previous years' sessions, Walters noted.

A consensus was reached on the selection of Database productions and the need to provide more patron-friendly sharing of materials: to create a WYLD card program, which would allow Wyoming residents to use their local library cards at any WYLD library.

Debbie Iverson, president of the WYLD Network Governing Board, summarized: "The WYLD Annual meeting culminates a year filled with success within the Network we've written and then used new bylaws, prepared new contracts for member libraries, lobbied for and received the funds necessary to migrate to more patron-friendly software, expanded the resources available to Wyoming library patrons with new database products and extended the services available to those who use a WYLD card. We've accomplished all that with the support of the LASSO group at the Wyoming State Library, but we've depended on the volunteer efforts of library staff from every member library in the state."

The members also discussed planning for upgrades and enhancements to the system, including the implementation of DRA's new PAC module and WEB2, and the creation of the PAC Interface screens, which would include the cooperation between a WYLD Network ad hoc committee and LASSO.

In conclusion, Iverson noted: "The most rewarding part of the annual meeting for me was the recognition of the many people who have contributed to the WYLD Network. Each and every one of those current and past committee, council and board members deserves our thanks and appreciation."

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## State phone card problems explained

Several users of the Wyoming State Library U S WEST phone card have reported acceptance problems when making calls while traveling.

Apparently other long-distance companies have been refusing to honor the card. To avoid this problem, the state telecommunications office and U S WEST recommend that users dial 1-800-4-USWEST first, and then follow the instructions given. This method also saves the state money.

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## National Library Week: Wyoming libraries make the connection!

**Big Horn County Library** celebrated National Library Week (NLW) by honoring long-time volunteer Marjorie Creech at a special luncheon. Betty Winterholler, assistant director at the library, said Creech not only works at the circulation desk, "She helps patrons with the computers and shelves books. Any little thing that needs to be done at this library--she does it." Creech enjoys volunteering at the library and an added benefit she says, "I like to play with computers, so this give me a chance to do that." Other NLW activities included story telling by Keith Cottam, director of University of Wyoming libraries, and an afterschool children's program involving stories and crafts.

Children were invited to the **Campbell County Public Library** to create their own bookmark in honor of NLW. Also, each day the library featured unusual pets, such as a chinchilla, a tokay gecko or a boa constrictor.

Thanks to sponsorship by the Bank of Commerce in Rawlins, activity packets were handed out to children at libraries in the **Carbon County Library System**. Designed with the theme "Books Thrill Me," the packets contained a library activity bookmark, a reading log, stickers and a 'visit to the library' activity book.

Fines were waived during the week at the **Converse County Library** in Douglas and the **Glenrock Branch Library**. They also celebrated by giving away bookmarks, book bags and popcorn. The Glenrock Branch Library presented "Bringing in the Sheaves: Women Missionaries in the West," a first-person portrayal of a woman missionary in Wyoming by Lynne Swanson of Cheyenne. **Converse County schools** participated, too. Douglas high school students donated time during NLW to read to Douglas Primary School students.

Library patrons were invited to stop by and register for door prizes during NLW at the **Moorcroft Library** in Crook County. Prizes included t-shirts and book bags. Children who checked out books during the week received a poster, card or bookmark of their choice.

The **Fremont County Library System** enjoyed extensive local news coverage as the county commissioners proclaimed April 19-25 as National Library Week in Fremont County. The commissioners also volunteered as "librarians-for-a-day" in Riverton and Lander. County residents were asked to wear blue ribbons in support of NLW. The Dubois Branch Library served refreshments and held a drawing for prizes each day of the week.

It was a busy week at the **Hot Springs County Library**! Patrons were treated to a series of daily events: On Monday, the first 40 patrons received a free copy of the Diary of Anne Frank; A Journal Writing program was presented on Tuesday; Wednesday was Patron Appreciation Day and WYLD CAT training sessions were offered; On Thursday, Friends of the Library hosted a program on Washakie, Chief of the Shoshone; and a drawing for books was held on Friday.

Refreshments were served to patrons of the **Johnson County Library** in conjunction with the Friends of the Library's book sale during NLW.

In honor of NLW, the **Laramie County Library System** invited Sam Salas, illustrator and writer for the comic book Great Galaxies to the library. He presented a Comic Book Arts program and helped children draw their favorite super heroes. Barbara Mechels from the **Pine Bluffs Branch Library** demonstrated the Health Reference Index at the community Health Fair, and the Burns Branch Library offered basic Internet training sessions.

**Lincoln County Library System** celebrated NLW by waiving all fines on overdue library materials returned during that week. A local news release encouraged county residents to visit any of the four libraries to sign up for a library card and pick up a free bookmark. The **Cokeville Branch Library** gave away book bags.

A book sale, a bake sale, and several children's programs highlighted NLW at the **Powell Branch Library**. The children's programs included story times, craft projects and a guest storyteller. The **Platte County Public Library** hosted an after-school puppet show by Sigrid See, a professional puppeteer who has performed in places such as Guam, Japan and Indonesia.

**Sheridan County Fulmer Public Library** celebrated all week long with library tours, WYLD CAT training, refreshments, Patron Appreciation Day on Wednesday and a special "Celebrate Books" children's program on Thursday.

Librarians at the **Big Piney Library** in Sublette County carried out the NLW theme "Reading is Out of This World" by building a space ship, and students from Big Piney Elementary school created images of what they thought might be found inside a space ship. Their creations were displayed at the library.

The **Pinedale Library** and Sublette County Headstart teamed up to celebrate NLW and the Week of the Young Child. The library displayed drawings by parents and their children who are enrolled in Head Start. The library also sponsored a "Teddy Bear and Pajama Party" for children and their parents on Wednesday, featuring old fashioned story tellers, guest reader and puppeteers.

NLW was a community event for the **Sweetwater County Library System**. Recreation centers in Green River and Rock Springs allowed free admission to anyone who presented their library card at the door, and local radio stations aired "Library Question of the Day." During the week, library patrons had the chance to pay off overdue library fines with food, which was donated to the food banks in Rock Springs and Green River. Other activities included "random checkout" prizes and special children's programs.



A newborn even got in on the act in Washakie County. **Friends of the Worland Library** presented a "Born to Read" t-shirt to a baby born during NLW.

Using the NLW theme, "Connect @ Your Library," the **Laramie County Community College Instructional Resources Center** displayed photographs of staff and student workers with captions about how they help students connect to information and services.

The **Central Wyoming College Library** took on a festive look during NLW. The entranceway was decorated with small white lights that highlighted several promotional library posters, leading to an impressive lighted archway into the library. In honor of NLW and National Poetry Month, the library and campus activities department sponsored a poetry reading by Wyoming's Poet Laureate, Robert Roripaugh. He related how important libraries have been to his life. There were several extra strawberry pies left over from the event, so the next day Carol Deering, library director, delivered the pies around campus in honor of poetry and libraries. Yum!

The **Midwest School Library Media Center** in Midwest "flipped out" over NLW. The week's activities revolved around the theme "Flip Over Books," and included a contest to find things in the library that had been flipped, such as posters and signs. On Tuesday patrons were asked to guess how many fish crackers were in a fish bowl. On Wednesday there were fish-shaped treats for everyone, and Thursday was a day for trivia. The week ended on Friday when patrons were asked to write the name of their favorite book on a paper fish, which was displayed in the library. In addition, every person who checked out a book during the week was entered into a prize drawing.

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## Batenhorst retires, new director named

After 25 years with the Big Horn County Library, Sylvia Batenhorst retired last month. She started at the library in 1973 and has been director of the library for the past 18 years.

"We're really going to miss her," said Betty Winterholler, assistant director, who worked with Batenhorst for 13 years. "I enjoyed every minute of it," she added.

An open house honoring Batenhorst was held at the library from 3:30 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. on May 22. Afterwards, the staff and board members took her out for dinner and "roasted" her with pictures from her past. She was also presented with an intricate laser art design on steel. The design illustrated a western scene, which incorporated the brand used on her father's ranch. Winterholler said the former director was very moved by the gift.

Batenhorst plans to play a lot of golf and go for plenty of leisurely walks during her retirement.

The new director, Sandra Munger is from Colorado Springs, Colo. For the past 10 years she has worked in the insurance business, and recently updated her MLS from Texas Women's University. Munger said she took mostly computer-oriented classes, because she knew that was the area in which libraries were changing the most.



Currently in her fourth week as director, Munger said the library is in the middle of a major construction project--a new air conditioning system is being installed. "We're trying to work around the construction, which has provided us with a good opportunity for housecleaning," she noted.

Munger said she is considering some minor changes, but most things are working "just fine," and she doesn't have any plans for major changes at this time.

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## News Briefs

A **new report** showing that more Americans are connecting to the Internet at libraries is "great but not surprising news," according to William Gordon, executive director of the **American Library Association** (ALA). The study released April 15 by MCI found a 100 percent increase in the number of Americans accessing the World Wide Web since 1996 and a 500 percent increase in the number of people using Internet connections at libraries. Gordon noted the number of public libraries offering public access to the Internet has more than doubled in the last two years to 60 percent. The number is even higher for libraries serving populations of 100,000 or more. The study was based on a random telephone survey of U.S. and Canadian residents asking 3,241 Internet users where they log on to the Internet. Percentages of respondents accessing the Internet break down as follows: Home, 69 percent; Work, 49 percent; School, 29 percent; Alternative Points, 16 percent. Forty-five percent of respondents accessing the Internet from other locations named the public library as their point of access. **Nancy M. Bolt**, director of the **Colorado State Library**, will receive the 1998 ASCLA leadership Achievement Award presented by the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies, a division of ALA. The citation is presented to recognize leadership and achievement in consulting, multitype library cooperation and state library development. The award will be presented during the ASCLA President's Program on Sunday, June 28, at 9 a.m. during the ALA Annual Conference in Washington, D. C.

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## Personel-ly Speaking

The State Library's Public Programs, Publications and Marketing (P3M) Office is in transition. **Cecilia Moats**, the "afternoon" part-time publications technician, said farewell on May 22. She will serve as the office manager for the Wyoming Press Association, which recently relocated to Cheyenne from Laramie. She was employed at the State Library since August 1997. **Julie Hurd**, the "morning" part-time publications technician, will spend her last day at the State Library on June 30. She will become the public relations specialist for the Laramie County Library System,

where she has temporarily filled the position since February. Julie has been employed part-time at the State Library since October 1996 and served as the publications technician full-time from August 1993-March 1996. WSL welcomes **Lesley Collins**, who accepted a part-time position with the P3M Office. Leslie is a graduate from University of Northern Colorado with a bachelor's degree in journalism. Her writing talents will benefit the Outrider and other publications produced by this office.

Last month, five State Library staff attended the Mountain Plains Library Association's (MPLA) annual conference in Salt Lake City. **Venice Beske, Emily Sieger, Judy Yeo, Brian Greene** and **Bobbi Thorpe** attended the regional meeting. Brian serves as the Wyoming Library Association's representative to MPLA.

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## Winners of state writing contest announced

Wyoming Center for the Book (WCB) has announced the winners for "Letters About Literature '98," a national writing contest sponsored by WCB, the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, and the Weekly Reader Corporation. WCB is administered through the Wyoming State Library.

The winners in Level I, grades 4-7, are Vanessa Vaziri, Buffalo, first; Sasha Robeson, Lander, second; and Nicole Romero, Rock Springs, third.

In Level II, grades 8-12, the winners are Sarah Felton, Torrington, first; Harmony Honaker, Rock Springs, second; and Danny DeTavernier, Sheridan, third. Honaker also placed in the top five in the national contest.

Wyoming Center for the Book awarded the winners \$100, \$50 and \$25 respectively for first, second and third.

Students were invited to write a letter to an author--living or dead--explaining how his or her book changed the student's way of thinking about the world. National judges commented that although Wyoming had fewer entries than other states, the quality of the essays was high. Entries from Wyoming totaled 227, 111 in Level I and 116 in Level II.

Judges for the state contest were WCB board members Ron Franscell, publisher/editor of the Gillette News-Record; Eva Knight from Cheyenne, a retired bank vice president and secretary to the board who also serves as the White House Conference on Libraries and Information Services national coordinator of state representatives and the Task Force on Rural Libraries; and Allen Wyatt, president of Discovery Computing Inc., a computer and publishing services company in Sundance.

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