

Director's Report April 2025

Respectfully Presented by Nikki Ericksen, Library Director

Programming

Ladies' Tea: The first monthly program will be on May 7th. Patrons are excited and want to help! I have received donated boxes of tea, a 10-place porcelain tea service, cloth napkins and vases. Several ladies were emotional when I gave them an invitation. The thought of an evening to enjoy with nothing asked in return seemed too good to be true.

Story Time: Moving storytime to Wednesdays has indeed increased attendance. On April 23, we broke our old record with 22 attendees. Denise Montgomery (volunteer) continues to do a superb job of engaging with the kids, providing enriching stories and activities, and taking this important task off of my plate.

Fundraising

The Bookin' It 5K and Fun Run: So far, we have received sponsorships from Valley Bank, Clark Fork Valley Hospital, Colleens, and MT West Dentist. The largest donation came from Quinn's in the amount of \$1,000. Ace's Coffee and Plains Drug Store will donate gift certificates and items to use as prizes for the drawings after the race. Crowley Designs will give us a \$100 discount on race T-shirts for their sponsorship. We are investigating the possibility of having Ace's coffee move out to the fields on the day of the race to provide hot drinks to everyone.

Friends of the Library: An informational meeting was held on April 21. There were three interested parties in attendance. According to Cindy, who will act as the board's secretary, all three attendees were motivated to begin a Friends of the Library group and will move forward on May 6th at 6:00pm at the library. They will be establishing bylaws and electing officers at this meeting. We will continue to recruit more members for this board and the larger fundraising group of the future.

Building

Lawn: Our outdoor space will be getting a big makeover. Cory from the City Parks and Rec department began trimming our trees and will begin waging war on our thistles. She is seeking grant money to help with improving the town's green spaces. If she gets it, she will remove the grass completely and reseed. Look for some big improvements over the next few weeks.

Events and Meetings

Montana State Library: There are changes going on at MSL due to an executive order signed by President Trump on March 14 that reduced the size and cut the funding for the Institute of Museums and Library Services, calling for it to be “eliminated to the fullest extent of the law”. IMLS awards grant funding to museums and libraries all over the country.

Several state libraries around the country, including Washington State Library, have received emails informing them of the discontinuation of federal grant money to their institutions effective immediately. On April 2, Humanities Montana received notice that federal grants would be discontinued. These grant dollars made up 90% of their budget.

While at the time of this writing, Montana State Library has not received this notice, State Librarian Jenn Stapp is cutting costs as a preventative measure. One of those costs is staff hours and staff travel. State Library staff will not be present at this weekend’s Tamarack Federation meeting but will be sending prerecorded presentations.

The Montana State Library receives around \$1.4 million dollars in federal grant money per year. This amount represents about 15% of the Montana State Library’s budget. If the MSL does lose this funding, the cost to Plains Library would include loss of our state entitlement funds (\$6,500) and it will mean an increase to us in the cost of resource sharing such as the Partners program and MontanaLibrary2Go. We will need to consider such costs as we enter our budgeting cycle.

Estimated cost increase should MSL lose federal grant dollars

MontanaLibrary2Go	3% potential increase
OCLC	26% potential increase
Montana Shared Catalog	25% potential increase

The Governor’s Office has publicly stated that they are working on plans to address federal funding shortfalls, and the Legislature has stated they anticipate that they will have to come back in a special session to address these challenges.

Strategic Planning Session: Due to the above changes that Montana State Library has made in their staffing, we will not be able to secure a facilitator for our community planning session until further notice. We could try to find a facilitator outside the MSL but we would have to cover fees and travel costs. This topic will be discussed at April board meeting.

Tamarack: The Tamarack Federation Retreat is on April 25th and 26th. Brandon Wilson (trustee) and I will be traveling to Polson to attend. There will be trainings for trustees and roundtable discussions for directors. We will have the Spring Business meeting and then dinner with the other attendees.

March Statistics

CD	6
CHAPTER	34
DISPLAY	33
DVD	224
EASY	228
EASY-NF	14
FICTION	136
JUV-BIO	8
JUV-FICT	117
JUV-NF	52
MONTANA	16
MYSTERY	53
NEW-BOOK	73
NON FICTION	115
SCI-FI	6
STACKS	220
WESTERN	19
YA	32
Total	1,454

Programming Attendance

Story Time	54
Book Club	7
Pinochle	25
Chess Club	22
Chess Tournament	24

New Patrons	7
Computer Users	69
Reference Questions	6
Volunteer Hours	17
Crates to Missoula	19
Crates from Missoula	20