



A Quarterly Publication

LETTERS ABOUT LITERATURE STATE WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Nine students across Mississippi won awards in this year's Mississippi Letters About Literature writing contest. Approximately 50,000 young readers across the country participated in this year's Letters About Literature competition, a reading promotion program of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. The Friends of Mississippi Libraries were a partner on the state level.

To enter, young readers write personal letters to authors, explaining how their work changed their view of the world or themselves. Readers can select authors from any genre—fiction or nonfiction, contemporary or classic. The contest theme encourages a young reader to explore his or her personal response to a book, then express that response in a creative, original way.

In Mississippi, approximately 600 students competed across all three competition levels; only 50 letters advanced to state semifinals. From those, 26 were selected to advance as state finalists for judging.

The Mississippi Library Commission hosted an awards ceremony and reception on May 5 to honor state semifinalists, finalists, and winners. After a welcome and remarks by Mississippi Center for the Book Coordinator Tracy Carr, the nine state winners were invited to read their letters aloud. The students then received their awards.



Pictured are the 2014-15 Letters About Literature winners with their medals and certificates.

The first place state finalist for competition Level I (grades 4 through 6) was Micaiah Pugh of Newton for her letter to Christopher Paul Curtis. The first place state finalist for Level II (grades 7 and 8) was Kyndall Hardeman of Canton, who wrote a letter to Russell Freedman. Katie Martin of Vicksburg was the first place state finalist for competition Level III (grades 9-12) for her letter to Kathryn Lasky. Mississippi first-place finalists each receive a \$100 cash prize and their letters move on to the national competition. State winner Kyndall Hardeman's letter also moved on to the national semifinals.

Other state winners include: Will Martin of Brandon (second place, Level I); Alexis Stacks of Guntown (second place, Level II); Muriel Collins of Union (second place, Level III); Mallory Grace Koegel of Brandon (third place, Level I); Jada Flores (third place, Level II); and Marie Graham of Conehatta (third place, Level III). Second-place winners receive a \$75 cash prize and third-place winners receive a \$50 cash prize. All state winners receive a medal inscribed with their name and ranking; all state semifinalists receive a certificate of achievement.

Ashley Donnell, a teacher at Pass Christian Middle School, won the Educator of the Year award for encouraging the most students to submit letters.

The Mississippi Center for the Book is one of 50 state affiliates of the Center for the Book at the Library of Congress. The Center's mission is to promote books, reading, libraries and literacy in society. The Center for the Book was established in 1977 as a public-private partnership to use the resources of the Library of Congress to stimulate public interest in books and reading. More specifically, Mississippi's Center for the Book is devoted to promoting and exploring Mississippi's rich literary heritage through statewide activities.

For more information, contact Mississippi Center for the Book Coordinator Tracy Carr at tcarr@mlc.lib.ms.us or visit www.lettersaboutliterature.org.

In This Issue: MLC NEWS LIBRARY NEWS CALENDAR

Notes . . . from the desk of the Executive Director

June 2015

Observing our legislative session is exhausting, but fascinating! Each year, the legislative session begins with thousands of bills being introduced by legislators. This year proved to be no different with more than three thousand (3,000) bills being introduced and less than one thousand (1,000) being signed into law! The subject of bills introduced ranges from appropriations to cosmetology, from nominations to recognitions, and from wildlife to everything in between. During the session, the list of bills is reduced through committees, deadlines, and legislative action.



Susan S. Cassagne
Executive Director

MLC monitors bills that have been introduced to check for any implications for the agency and/or libraries (however slight the implication may seem). Generally, the most critical legislation for libraries is MLC's appropriations bill. Included in our appropriation is state funding for local public libraries (Personnel Incentive Grant Program and Health/Life Insurance Program for Public Librarians), MAGNOLIA, and the agency's programs/services. Additionally – and very importantly – the bill includes authority for the agency to receive and spend other sources of funding (federal, grants, etc.).

The 2015 appropriations process actually began in the summer of 2014 with the agency's preparation/submission of the Fiscal Year 2015 budget request. Many librarians and library supporters appeared at House Speaker Philip Gunn's "Ideas Tour." In August, 2014, we appeared before the Joint Legislative Budget Committee to discuss the needs identified in our budget request. This year the budget request included additional funding (\$1.345 million) that would have enabled MLC to assume the responsibility for broadband costs and E-rate filings for all public library systems on the state network. This proposed funding had the potential to positively impact all communities served by a public library by installing fiber to all public library buildings and increasing internet bandwidth to sufficient levels, regardless of size or the economy of the local area. Funding for the project was included in the original House appropriation bill, but removed by the end of conference weekend.

Ultimately, MLC received (basically) level funding, as follows:

State General Funds	\$11,555,484
State Educational Enhancement Funds	\$ 493,847
<u>(Authority for) Special Funds (primarily federal)</u>	<u>\$ 4,977,885</u>
Total	\$17,027,216

Lump sum authority for all categories (with some restrictions)
48 permanent, full-time positions

With FY16 about to begin, we are already thinking ahead to FY17. Our statewide network project is too important to give up on and we have spent the past few months preparing our "game plan" for the next budget request. Stay tuned.....

The past few months have brought several staff changes. Some have moved on to other positions, some have reached the enviable position of retirement. We wish them all well! We have filled some openings and look forward to the bright, new ideas these staff will bring!

One last note.... As our public library systems begin their busy summers with the invasion of children of all ages, teens, and adults for Summer Library Programs, we wish them well and hope all their programs are exciting and well-attended!

Comments and suggestions are welcomed.

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“OLD FRIENDS/NEW FRIENDS” EXHIBIT OPENS AT LIBRARY COMMISSION

The Mississippi Library Commission is hosting a two-month exhibition by Mississippi Artists Mary Lane Reed, Steven Moppert, Laura Tarbutton and Jackie Messer. The exhibit, entitled “Old Friends/New Friends,” opened Monday, May 4, and continues through Monday, June 29, 2015.

An opening reception was held Thursday, May 28, at the Library Commission with approximately forty guests in attendance. Light refreshments were served while guests mingled and discussed the exhibit.

Old friends Mary Lane Reed, Steve Moppert and Laura Tarbutton met at Art Supply Headquarters in the 1980s. New friend Jackie Messer joined the friendship eight years ago.

Portrait artist Mary Lane Reed’s approach to the creation of art is direct and intuitive. Smitten by art at the age of five, she feels the tone of the painting should be determined by the personality of the subject.



Guests view and discuss, with Reed her “At Seventeen” portrait of her mother.



Pictured are art enthusiasts conversing over Moppert’s “Russian Girl” portrait.

Steve Moppert, also a portrait artist and winner of the National Portrait Competition Grand Prize for Best in Show in 1981, has successfully balanced an active career as a portrait artist with one as a painter of landscapes, still lifes, and figurative works for more than 45 years. Always holding himself to the highest standards both in the polishing of his skills and production of his work, he consistently attains distinction in the mastery of his art.

Laura Tarbutton and Jackie Messer’s works complement each other. “I love to create beautiful and unique jewelry from various forms of metal,” said Tarbutton. It gives her an outlet to express herself through the design and creation of her own jewelry. Messer began chaining in 2007. “The shine of the silver got me hooked! I love how putting on one ring at a time can make such beautiful accessories!” she said.

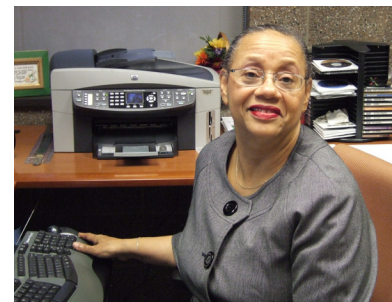


Shown are guests admiring Tarbutton and Messer’s jewelry display.

SO LONG, FAREWELL, GOODBYE!

It is with mixed emotions that I put together my final issue of *The Packet*.

I began my employment at the Mississippi Library Commission (MLC) on March 22, 1982. During my 34 years of employment I worked under the administration of five (5) executive directors and three (3) interim directors and each had a different view of the role of public relations. I had some amazing experiences and I learned a lot along the way. On February 1, 1996, I was promoted to Public Relations Director and editor of *The Packet* was one of my duties.



Gloria J. Washington

For almost 20 years I’ve served as editor of *The Packet* and had the task of publicizing MLC, public libraries and the Mississippi Library Association’s (MLA) news and activities. I worked with MLA on a number of projects and, for a number of years, was responsible for National Library Week registration (manually) and taking photos during special events co-sponsored with MLC. I have worn a lot of hats while employed at MLC.

As Public Relations Director, my travels took me out-of-state to the National Library Legislative Day, Washington, D.C.; American Library Association Annual Conference, New York and New Orleans; Center for the Book: Family Literacy Workshop, Atlanta to name a few and to several libraries and library events where I took photos and notes for *Packet* articles. I also met new people many of who I now call friend.

In addition to meeting new people I also had some life changing experiences; visiting public libraries in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina on the Mississippi Gulf Coast was one of them. A crew of four from MLC took supplies to the libraries about two weeks after Katrina. Once again, I took photos and notes; I also listened with a sympathetic ear as each library director or staff member told their story. I remember saying, “This (the Coast) looks like something out of a sci-fi movie.” The entire fall 2005 issue of *The Packet* was dedicated to the libraries affected by Katrina. The most recent life changing experience was my graduation from the State’s Certified Public Manager Program (CPM). Although this took place two (2) years ago this month; I am still excited about the achievement. I was the first MLC employee to graduate from the program.

Finally, I will miss my morning coffee with the girls and conversation over lunch with my “lunch buddies”. These are among my most cherished MLC memories.

The farewell song in the movie *The Sound of Music* says it best, So Long, Farewell, Goodbye....

STARKVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY RECEIVES “READ” SCULPTURE



Pictured is the “READ” sculpture designed for the Starkville Public Library by Mississippi State University senior landscape architecture student Travis Crabtree.

Starkville Public Library is the proud owner of an exceptional sculpture, READ, created by landscape architecture student Travis Crabtree with guidance from his major professor, Cory Gallo. The sculpture was dedicated on March 31, 2015 with a celebration and unveiling by Starkville Mayor Parker Wiseman, members of the Boards of Aldermen, Supervisors of Oktibbeha County, other community leaders, library patrons, Friends and Starkville-Oktibbeha County Public Library System Director Ginny Holtcamp and staff.

Crabtree sought to highlight the importance of literacy. The sculpture is a landmark for the library, making the building much more identifiable as to its purpose. It features lighting at night, which makes it equally outstanding in the evening. This project demonstrates how partnerships between the city of Starkville and Mississippi State University can benefit the entire community by providing a unique learning opportunity for students and the community.

“The impact of this project on our community has been wonderful. It can be seen at a great distance. The library has received many, many compliments on this project,” stated Holtcamp.

CHECK OUT THE BILOXI PUBLIC LIBRARY’S LOCAL HISTORY AND GENEALOGY DEPARTMENT

Interesting and unusual displays welcome visitors of the Local History and Genealogy Department of the Biloxi Public Library, a branch of the Harrison County Library System. Patrons enjoy visiting the book and microfilm collection, as well as the visual approach which encourages the collection of family history. The following are two current exhibits:

TREASURES IN GRANDMA’S ATTIC

Local History & Genealogy developed a special genealogy program which not only teaches genealogy research, but also encourages collecting genealogy artifacts within families. Basically “Treasures in Grandma’s Attic” presents what can be found, why items are important, and how to save them. In essence, it is a recycling program for attic treasures. When invited to speak to organizations and groups, grandma’s old suitcase is packed with samples of documents, images, archival supplies, books, and inventory forms. Upon opening the suitcase, each treasure is shown and genealogical features are pointed out. A favorite part of the program is the “What’s This” segment, whereby ziplock bags of mystery items are passed around and attendees try to guess what each item is and what they might be used for. This fun activity stirs up many fond family memories and guarantees an alert audience throughout the program.



The purpose of this unique technique is not only to show the importance of family genealogical treasures, but also to encourage donations to our collection. A second purpose is to highlight our library as a special research center whereby patrons are prompted to visit our department for a variety of research topics: cemetery research, census research, newspaper research, history research, and house histories.

APRONS: TIES THAT BIND OUR PAST

A recent display of “Aprons: Ties and Bind Our Past” presents a visual approach to connecting the art of sewing to the history of fashion and family traditions. This colorful display is exhibited in two parts: a display case featuring older sewing books, sewing notions, and an authentic metal iron; and, an assortment of aprons suspended from a real clothesline.



Thus, the library’s goal is to promote frequent visitors to the genealogy department to show them various entertaining alternatives to historical and genealogical research.

JUNE 2015

ARTISTS – MARY LANE REED, STEVEN MOPPERT & LAURA TARBUTTON
25 - 30 ALA ANNUAL CONFERENCE - SAN FRANCISCO, CA

JULY 2015

ARTISTS – TOM HARMON & JENNIFER THOMAS
3 INDEPENDENCE DAY – **STATE HOLIDAY – AGENCY CLOSED**
28 BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING – MLC

AUGUST 2015

ARTISTS – TOM HARMON & JENNIFER THOMAS
13 TALKING BOOK ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING – MLC
20-21 PUBLIC LIBRARY DIRECTORS MEETING – MLC

SEPTEMBER 2015

ARTISTS – JEFF & WANDA MONK
7 LABOR DAY – **STATE HOLIDAY – AGENCY CLOSED**
22 BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING



Angela Tramble
Receptionist



Daniel Warren
Advisor, Large Print Direct



Ally Watkins
Library Consultant

Best Wishes . . .

The Library Commission extends best wishes to the following staff members who recently left the agency: Nia Bass, Jody Perkins and Gloria J. Washington.

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