

## Wonderful Servant

by Hulen E. Bivins, Executive Director

Robert Greenleaf, the man who coined the term “servant leadership,” is often quoted as saying that servant leadership begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve. Servant leadership is intuitively appealing and has what researchers have called “face validity.” So, the question becomes who in the nonprofit sector doesn’t come to their work wanting to serve? Certainly, those who choose to work in the world of public libraries are, unabashedly, leaders that put others first, share control with followers, and embrace their growth. It is just what public libraries do!

A wonderful testing of the premise of servant leadership may be found in Frank Capra’s movie *It’s a Wonderful Life*. In the movie, at least three types of servant leadership are illustrated.

One type of servant leadership as illustrated in the movie examines whether those whom you have served in life do indeed themselves grow as people. On the morning of Christmas Eve, Uncle Billy (George’s less than competent finance guy) loses a payment due to be paid to crusty old man Potter’s bank (Potter is really the thief). In the three possible variables explored in the movie, George must either personally pay up the total of the lost funds, allow the Home Loan to go under and in default due to nonpayment, or he must kill himself to reap the life insurance money which can be used to pay off the loss. But thanks to his altruism over the years, George’s community of customers at the Home Loan and his town friends jointly take it on themselves to cover the loss as everyone sings “Auld Lang Syne,” and the movie ends.

The second test of servant leadership illustrated is whether those individuals who are served become servants themselves. This is the servant leadership rule: “Do unto others as you would have others do unto others.” During the 1932 banking crisis shown in the movie, Tom (George’s grumpy customer) leads a rebellion to sell George out to old man Potter. However, on Christmas Eve, Tom is among the first to open his wallet to help pay back the missing funds.

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The last test of servant leadership, illustrated in the movie, is the effect on the least privileged, which in the movie, is clearly substantial. What would Bedford Falls (George's hometown) be like had George not been born? It would have been Pottersville: a tawdry place populated by down-on-their luck people, including Mr. Gower, the town drunk castigated and ridiculed for accidentally poisoning a customer. But George was born, and none of those Pottersville life possibilities happened.

When we as public librarians look back upon our lives, will we really spend time remembering the deficits or surpluses we encountered? Probably not. Rather, what we shall know, before that time of "looking back" shall occur, is that our best efforts have achieved success in the test of servant leadership. As public librarians we will have helped others grow, encouraged others to serve, and, most especially, we will have uplifted the least privileged. That's something to remember --- because that's a wonderful life!



## MLC's Introduces New Podcast Stacks and Stories

MLC is proud to introduce the agency's new podcast...Stacks and Stories! Hosted by members of the staff appropriately called the "Pod Squad," the show features all sorts of fun and informative episodes that include visits with librarians, author talks, book debates, and other topics for book and library lovers. The show can be found on iTunes Podcast app, on Spotify, Google Podcasts and on the agency website. Listeners can also tune in on [www.stacksandstories.libsyn.com](http://www.stacksandstories.libsyn.com). We hope you will check it out!





# Union County Library System Takes Patrons for a Ride!

The Union County Library System in New Albany has been checking out bicycles since June 2019. The library sits at the head of the Tanglefoot Trail, a Rails to Trails project that runs from New Albany to Houston, Mississippi. As a community partner, the library's goal for the project was to offer patrons bicycles to check out just like library books. The library currently has 31 bicycles available for patrons to choose from: bikes for children, adults, and even one with a carrier behind it for smaller kids. There is no charge to check out the bicycles -- all that is needed is a library card!

The best part about this program is it was totally funded by the community. New bicycles were donated, helmets were donated by the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services in Jackson, and even a portable air compressor was donated! There is a volunteer from the community who checks in with the library each week to make any repairs, such as flat tires, handlebar adjustments, and other needs.

The community recently came through once again by completely funding a special garage for the bicycles. The cost of the building was approximately \$14,000 and it was 100% funded by businesses and individuals in the community. It currently has two bays for bikes and there is room for expansion. The library extends a special "thank you" to the area's newly elected state representative, Sam Creekmore IV, for building the garage and for his donation! The residents of New Albany are wonderful, giving community members!



# Library Advocacy 2020 Legislative Session



Mark your calendars now with two very important dates for library advocacy during the upcoming legislative session!

- **Mississippi Library Association's Capitol Day - February 5th**
- **Mississippi Library Commission's Capitol Day - March 10th**

These two days will allow library supporters from across the state to talk to their lawmakers and encourage them to properly fund libraries for the coming budget year. This is the beginning of new leadership for the state, so participation is vital.

MLA's Legislative Chair, Tonja Johnson and MLC are diligently working to ensure that libraries are front and center each week during the session. We hope to see you there!

## Library Directors' Symposium November 6 – 8, 2019

Library Directors from across Mississippi gathered together recently to learn more about themselves and the patrons they serve. The Directors' Symposium, a three-day continuing education offering, featured a Myers-Briggs personality assessment, important information about disability etiquette in the library, and a session on trauma-informed library service. These library leaders were also able to network with each other to learn best practices from their peers.



In the nonstop tsunami of global information, librarians provide us with floaties and teach us to swim.  
–Linton Weeks

## Opportunities For Libraries

### MLC WEBINARS AND WEBJUNCTION OPPORTUNITIES

There are a wealth of training opportunities available on MLC's YouTube channel! Broken up into categories, these short sessions can help you in the areas of administration and management, summer reading programs, and collection development.

There is interesting and informative content available on WebJunction that is archived for easy access. *Doing the Work Externally and Internally: Race, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion* on December 5 looked at how a library responds to a community in deep crisis around race and social justice. Be sure to visit their website to find all the offerings available at <https://learn.webjunction.org/>

### ALA LIBRARIES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES: FACILITATION SKILLS FOR SMALL AND RURAL LIBRARIES

Deadline: January 20, 2020

ALA has announced a new opportunity — including funding to attend a workshop at the 2020 Annual Conference — to help small & rural library workers develop the communication skills they need to thrive. Twenty-five library workers will be selected to be part of *Libraries Transforming Communities: Facilitation Skills for Small and Rural Libraries*. Participants will complete a five-part online course, participate in virtual coaching sessions, and attend an in-person workshop — free of charge and with travel funding provided — specially designed to address the community engagement needs of small and rural libraries.

The opportunity is open to library employees who work in small or rural communities with a legal service area population of 25,000 or less, in accordance with the Institute of Museum and Library Service (IMLS) definition. All library types (e.g., public, tribal, college/academic, K-12) are welcome, and no facilitation or community engagement experience is necessary. Learn more and apply online. <http://librarygrants.blogspot.com/2019/11/ala-libraries-transforming-communities.html>

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## FREE BOOKS

Contact either of the State of Mississippi's US Senators, Cindy Hyde-Smith or Roger Wicker, with a request to receive new books acquired as publisher's copies by the U.S. Library of Congress. With your request, note a preference of fiction or non-fiction, desired subject matter category, and favored reading level. No deadline.

## INSPIRE COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT GRANT (AASL)

This grant allows an existing public, middle, or high school (grades 5-12) to extend, update, and diversify the book, online, subscription and/or software collections in their library in order to realize sustainable improvement in student achievement at their school. At least four grants of up to \$5,000 will be awarded. The grant is awarded to individual schools, not to districts; and preference is given to schools that have 85% or more of its student population qualified for Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL) program. DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 1.

For more information and to apply: <http://www.ala.org/aasl/awards/inspire/collection>

## WALMART LOCAL COMMUNITY GRANTS

Walmart's Local Community grants provide funding directly from Walmart and Sam's Club facilities to local organizations. Local Community grants range from \$250 to \$5,000. Applicants must be a recognized government entity (state, county, or city); be a K-12 public or nonprofit private school, a community/junior college, or a state/private college or university; or have a 501(c)(3) status. See:

<https://philanthropynewsdigest.org/rfps/rfp9692-walmart-foundation-accepting-applications-for-community-grant-program> DEADLINE: DECEMBER 31

## SHELL OIL

Shell considers charitable contributions to eligible nonprofit organizations with priority given to organizations serving in or near US communities where Shell has a major presence. They seek to fund community, education, and/or environment-focused projects and organizations. They have a focus on civic and human needs in the community, promoting healthy lifestyles, and projects that promote access to underserved students and communities. They also focus on energy awareness, increasing interest in technical careers among students (STEM), and professional development in science and math among educators. They support K-12 programs that boost math and science skills, as well as university programs that aid engineering and geoscience students and departments. See:

<https://www.shell.us/sustainability/request-for-a-grant-from-shell.html>

# mla 2019 Annual Conference



Keynote Speaker, Malcolm White, Director of the MS Arts Commission

The 2019 MLA Conference was a tremendous success at the Westin in downtown Jackson!

The attendees heard some outstanding speakers, caught up with old friends, talked with First Lady of Jackson, Ebony Lumumba, and learned a great deal about how to better serve their communities!

Congratulations MLA!



Lindsay Fitts, MMRLS, Meredith Wickham, First Regional & Erin Busbea, Columbus-Lowndes Public Library



A couple of library fans!

First Lady of Jackson, Ebony Lumumba (L) and MLC folks



MLC's Shellie Zeigler & Sissy Bullock, Union County Library System

## \$150 Million Available through USDA to Assist Rural Communities Affected by Natural Disasters

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Housing Service Administrator Bruce Lammers stated that the USDA is offering \$150 million in grants to assist rural communities to continue recovery from devastating effects of natural disasters such as hurricanes, and fires. Any natural disaster where the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) declares a Major Disaster Declaration and relief is requested qualifies.

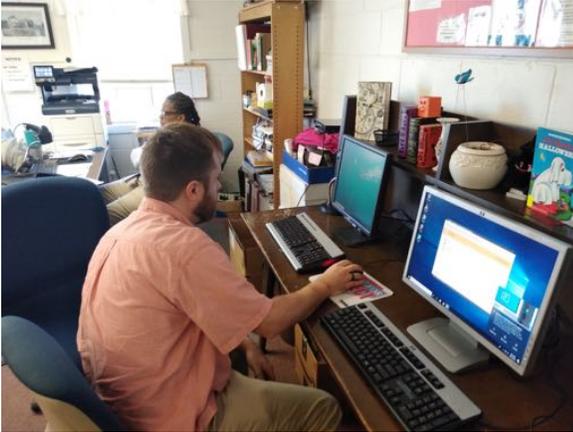
Grants will be received at the USDA state office until all funds are expended. The graduate scale includes smaller communities with the lowest median household income being eligible for a higher proportion of funds. Over 100 types of projects will be selected for funding. Only rural areas with a population of 20,000 or less will be eligible. This innovative plan supports infrastructure improvements, business development housing, and community facilities.

For additional information, visit [www.rd.usda.gov](http://www.rd.usda.gov)

# Inside the Commission

## News from Technology Services

### Technology Team Visits Copiah-Jefferson Regional Library System



Staff checks out the computers at the Wesson Library



The Wesson Library

MLC Technology staff recently traveled to Copiah-Jefferson Regional Library System to assist with the installation of Microsoft Office and Symantec Security software on their staff and patron computers.

The team also repaired a WiFi issue they were experiencing at the Wesson branch and connected more of their patron computers to their network at the Crystal Springs branch.

## News from Library Development



### Congratulations to MLC's Mac Buntin

During the Mississippi Library Association's Annual Conference in October, awards were presented in a variety of categories to members who have worked hard to benefit libraries across Mississippi.

MLC's own Library Consultant, Mac Buntin was presented the *Outstanding Achievement Award*.

Mac was nominated by Jennifer Smith who wrote in the nomination, "Mac was born to be a librarian because he lives and breathes the tenets of librarianship every day whether he is at work or not."

Congratulations Mac! Thank you for your dedicated service to Mississippi's libraries.

Mac Buntin at the awards ceremony with his proud mother and father.

# News from the Reference Department



Alex Brower, MLC Reference Manager

## Challenge Accepted (and Reported)!

By Alex Brower, MLC Reference Manager

Modern libraries are havens of intellectual freedom. They uphold the spirit of the First Amendment by providing access to all sorts of information and allowing anyone to come in and learn. However, librarians can face pushback from members of their communities about some of the material in their collections. This pushback usually comes in the form of a challenge, where someone disagrees with the content or ideas of a piece of material and would like it to be removed from the shelf. These challenges happen every day, and I'm hoping to better understand challenges and censorship in Mississippi by growing the Mississippi Challenged Book Index.

Recently, I was given the opportunity to present a poster about the MCBI at MLA, and it was such a great opportunity! I got to talk to a lot of people about the MCBI, and I was so proud to see an increase in participation. I'm hoping to keep raising awareness so that we get more and more participation and the index continues to grow. I'm excited to be able to do my part to gather information about challenges in Mississippi so that people can study it, and we can have a better understanding of censorship in our state.

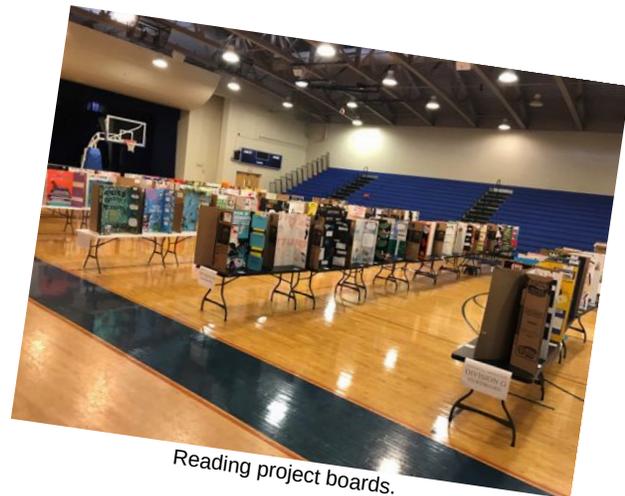
*Taken from a post on MLC's blog. To read the complete article visit [www.mlcref.blogspot.com](http://www.mlcref.blogspot.com).*

*To see a list of challenged books, visit <https://mlc.lib.ms.us/ms-libraries/mcbi/>*



MLC's Elisabeth Scott and Charlie Simpkins with Kimberly Smith from JPS

## Here Come the Judges!



Reading project boards.

MLC reference staff Charlie Simpkins and Elisabeth Scott recently served as judges for the Jackson Public Schools District Reading Fair. Pictured with fellow judge Kimberly Smith, MYP Coordinator at Northwest Jackson IB Middle School, they joined a great cast of volunteers from the library and education fields. They were all amazed by the number of fantastic reading project boards presented. They had their work cut out for them!

# News from Talking Book Services



## TBS Goes Back to School

Talking Book Services director, Mary Rodgers Beal, recently visited students at Olde Towne Middle School in Ridgeland, MS. She introduced 8th grade students there to alternative ways to read, including braille and audiobooks, which are provided to eligible patrons in the state of Mississippi through the Talking Book Services. For more information or to have Mary Rodgers visit your library or school, email her at [mrbeal@mlc.lib.ms.us](mailto:mrbeal@mlc.lib.ms.us)

## Good News for MLC

Recently, MLC hosted representatives from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) as they conducted a “Grants to States” federal program site visit. Following the visit, IMLS issued a final report indicating that the federal grant funds program, as administered by MLC, was a program that is extremely well-organized and fulfilled all federal governmental mandates.

As reported by IMLS, MLC provides a comprehensive approach to assist the subgrantee public libraries of Mississippi and offers to those libraries strong support, helping to assure positive results of all actions undertaken using federally provided funding. With “no findings” of any misuse, the MLC was commended for the attention to detail MLC provided regarding federal funding requirements and best practices.

Additionally, the Library Commission recently received a report from the Mississippi Office of the State Auditor (OSA). This report was issued after OSA performed an internal control and compliance review audit of MLC operations for FY18. OSA found no deficiencies in MLC’s internal controls that indicated any “material weakness or a significant deficiency.” In addition, there were no instances of noncompliance with state laws that required the attention of management.

It is extremely rare that a state agency receive “no findings” in an audit performed in an OSA review. Combined with the “no findings” review of IMLS regarding federal funds received, the Mississippi Library Commission strives to set a standard regionally and nationally that other similar agencies might emulate.

These recent reports demonstrate the commitment of MLC to ensure that all funds provided are used in a manner consistent with both federal and state requirements. These accomplishments would not have been possible without the day to day dedication of MLC’s Administrative Services Bureau and the continued support provided by the MLC Board of Commissioners, as well as the work of MLC’s employees.



# HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

From the Board of  
Commissioners and Staff of the  
Mississippi Library Commission

## MLC Calendar

### December

12 STEM/STEAM Panel - MLC  
23-25 Agency Closed - State Holiday

### January

1 Agency Closed - State Holiday  
17 Small Grant Resources Workshop-MLC  
20 Agency Closed - State Holiday  
22 Summer Library Program for Early  
Literacy - MLC  
28 Board of Commissioner's Meeting-MLC

### February

5 Summer Library Program for Children -  
MLC  
MLA's Library Day at the Capitol

## About MLC

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Connect with the Mississippi Library Commission



Susan Liles

Editor - *On the Same Page*



The Mississippi Library Commission was established in 1926 to ensure that all Mississippians have access to quality library services in order to achieve their greatest potential, participate in a global society, and enrich their daily lives.

MLC strives to strengthen and enhance library services for all Mississippians.

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