

## VETERAN LIBRARIAN HONORED WITH 2011 PEGGY MAY AWARD

At the 2011 Awards Ceremony of the Mississippi Library Association at the Marriott Hotel in Jackson, Mississippi Library Commission's (MLC) Senior Consultant Kathy Buntin received the prestigious Peggy May Award. The award is bestowed annually and recognizes an individual who exemplifies outstanding achievement in library development and/or recruitment of personnel into the library field.

The nomination came from a former co-worker, Dr. Melissa Wright, who praised Buntin for being a mentor to her during her early employment as a consultant at the Mississippi Library Commission. "I finished my Master of Library and Information Science degree and got my first job at MLC. I was



Left to right: Peggy May Award recipient Kathy Buntin and Dr. Melissa Wright.

well grounded in the basic library principles, but otherwise clueless! While my library science coursework gave me a good foundation, Buntin made me a librarian. She took me under her wing, answered my questions, introduced me to people around the state and helped me hone my library skills," Wright said.

A veteran librarian in the state, Buntin first served as director of the Tallahatchie County Library from 1994-1999, before she was hired as the Special Project Officer in the Grants Services Department at MLC in 1999. Following a restructuring of the agency in 2002, she became a Library Consultant.

Buntin currently serves as Senior Consultant in the Development Services Bureau where she works on the statewide summer reading program, organizes the bi-annual children's librarians' conference, participates in Librarianship 101, conducts workshops such as "Easy Weeding," and works with librarians around the state to improve public library services in Mississippi.



Buntin

"When I saw my parents, I knew something big and important was going to happen," said Buntin who was totally surprised. Accepting the award, she went on to say, "I am honored to be the 2011 recipient of the Peggy May Award and so thankful that my parents and friends

are able to share this moment with me. I never envisioned myself as a member of this group of librarians who I have admired as role models in my profession and to be nominated for inclusion in this group by a peer, former co-worker and friend is humbling. Being a librarian is more than a job, it is my career and an integral part of how I see myself and it is hard to imagine that I was given this award for doing something that I love. The support of my family and friends has been crucial in my professional development and I hope that I am able to continue to serve the State of Mississippi and especially Mississippi libraries for many years to come."

*The Packet* received the Public Relations Award for "The Best Newsletter Submitted by a Library Group" at 2011 Mississippi Library Association Awards Ceremony.

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## Notes . . . from the desk of the Executive Director



Sharman Bridges Smith

**December 2011**

The library is uniquely important to each individual user and each community. Below are a few beautiful, astounding, and heartwarming stories of how libraries make a difference.

*Place for Families* – Bolivar County Library System – A young Hispanic mother brings her three (3) preteens and two (2) younger children to the library’s “Gaming for Families” program on Saturday mornings expressing her gratitude for *providing something she can do with her children that doesn’t cost anything*.

*Belonging* – Carnegie Library of Clarksdale and Coahoma County – “The library is a great place to go; the staff is like *a warm family you can always ask for help*. Since moving from Nashville, the library, with its *comfortable, welcoming atmosphere*, has been my home away from home. I wouldn’t know what to do or where to start in my new community without this library.”

*Early Learning* – First Regional Library – An adopted two-year-old child from Russia *experiences reading and books for the first time* at a library story hour.

*Life Changing* – Hancock County Library System – With Katrina’s devastation, high unemployment, and no high school diploma, opportunities in this isolated, low-income community are very limited. The library-sponsored GED classes *offer hope for a better future and better jobs*.

*Strengthening the Local Economy* – Jackson George Regional Library System – Using library cookbooks and magazines to select recipes and participating in (and winning several times) the library’s annual “Cooking Contest,” gave a library user the *confidence to start her own local bakery*.

*Passing It Forward* – Northeast Regional Library – A man could not read when he first came to the library. After being tutored at the library for three (3) years, the man now has *become a literacy tutor teaching others*.

Libraries welcome everyone. The role of the library is to meet each person’s unique needs regardless of personal circumstance. And, as evidenced above, libraries are making a difference in the lives of individuals and communities.

*Sharman Bridges Smith*

## MLC HOLDS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, STAFF RECOGNITION

MLC staff, added with a little holiday cheer and camaraderie, was the perfect mixture that filled the Mississippi Library Commission's (MLC) meeting room for the Wednesday, December 7, 2011 professional development and staff recognition day. Executive Director Sharman Smith opened the meeting promptly at 9 a.m. with a welcome and an overview of the day's agenda.

Staff gave brief introductions and narratives of their jobs and explanations of how their jobs correspond with the agency's mission. This appeared to be quite an informative session, as staff learned interesting and unknown facts about fellow co-workers and the jobs they perform.

The Employee Service Recognition followed with Executive Director Smith and Human Resources Officer Robin Hedrick recognizing twelve staff members. Before the recognition began, Smith thanked the entire MLC staff for a job well done. Recognition of service ranged from five (5) to 35 years of service at MLC; however, Stanley Perry and Mary Snell were recognized for 15 years of state service. Veteran employees or employees with the highest number of service years were Martha Wright, 35 years, Glenda Tilson, 34 years and Gloria J. Washington with 29 years.

Staff then chose from one of two classes: *Generations th(A) Work*, Pamela Confer, presenter or *Presenting Yourself Professionally*, Sharon Bridges, presenter.



Pictured from left to right are: Margaret Smitherman, Elisabeth Scott, Demetra Hayes, Smith, Bonita Seals, Glenda Tilson, and Martha Wright. Back row: Mary Snell, Lawrence Smith and Stanley Perry. Not pictured: Ethel Dunn, Jerry Roberts and Gloria J. Washington.

## ACCLAIMED ARTIST; WOOD ARTISAN SHARE LOCAL SPOTLIGHT

The Library Commission hosted a reception for nationally acclaimed visual artist Rick Anderson and local wood artisan Bill Bannister, whose works are currently featured in the Commission's gallery. The two-month exhibit opened Tuesday, November 1, and will continue thru Wednesday, December 28, 2011.

Anderson, a Clarksdale, Mississippi native, expresses a passion of visual achievement through images, symbols, compositions and elements stemming from experiences, which can be personal, social, political and environmental. This passion of artistic creation began at a very early age and has never faded. When he paints, his work changes, and evolves. Anderson's vision is to create art that makes a strong, unique visual statement.



Anderson and guests discuss a particular piece of artwork.

His paintings include elements of nature, trees, sky, and parts of structures combined with non-objective elements of design that can be classified in the category of painting or two-dimensional mixed media.

Jackson resident and wood artisan Bill Bannister



Bannister (l), explains his line of wooden toys to guest V.A. Patterson.

is sharing the venue with Anderson. Bannister began his career years ago, after watching *The New Yankee Workshop* on television. He became interested in wood, bought a couple of tools and made a table, some shelves and a vanity. His interest grew even deeper as he and his son built a log cabin.

When the grandchildren came along, wooden toys became Bannister's special gift to them. He finds that whether it is toys, clocks, or pieces of furniture, woodworking gives him an outlet to express himself, make something that he can be proud of and get the satisfaction of seeing others enjoy his creativity.

## MLC HOSTS DIRECTORS' SYMPOSIUM

A two-day Directors' Symposium, sponsored by the Mississippi Library Commission for all public library directors, was held at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Ridgeland, November 1-4, 2011.

Dr. Gustave F. Sison, Jr. of Long Beach, Mississippi opened the two-day training with his presentation of "Essentials of Supervisory Leadership." In order to make the training specifically helpful to the directors, Dr. Sison sent a questionnaire to participants prior to the symposium.



Sison

During the training, a Supervisory Skills test along with a Myers-Briggs Type Assessment was administered. Utilizing the results of these tests to divide participants into groups resulted in some very active and interesting interactions and insights. Through it all, Dr. Sison kept the focus on "How does this apply to my library?"

Library Consultant Joan Frye Williams of California presented the final training. The titles of her presentations were "Information is Not Enough" and "Future-Proofing Mississippi Libraries." Frye offered many insights into what the future might bring for libraries. She focused on how changes affect library usage.



Frye

Frye emphasized that with change, we must preserve the value of libraries to our communities by remaining relevant to those communities.

Comments from the evaluations indicated that the directors received insight into a number of ways in which they could change and improve their supervisory roles.

## TRUSTEE INFO!

Unable to attend the Mississippi Library Association's Pre-Conference on Advocacy - "BHAG (Big Hairy Audacious Goal)" with Jamie LaRue from Douglas County (CO) Library? Below are some suggestions:

Jamie LaRue stated that advocacy is a continuous process, and features four simple, short, succinct, and repeatable community-based messages:

- Libraries change lives
- Libraries are serious
- Libraries build communities
- Libraries are a smart investment

LaRue also recommends creating your own message and to develop a speaker's network of supporters that can bring these statements about the library's economic and social value to a community or statewide.

In the 21st century, whether in rural, urban or suburban communities, support for libraries is essential whether as a community bookstore, technology center or meeting destination. Ask yourself, how can I, as a trustee, be involved in this process? How can we, as trustees, build an effective resource of advocates to tell our message?

The American Library Association (ALA) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, through a grant to WebJunction, will be sponsoring webinars that will be archived and accessible through the Internet for trustees, library supporters and directors to learn how to develop their skills as local, state, and national advocates.

- "A Small But Powerful Webinar for Winning Big Support for your Rural Library" Wednesday, December 14, 2011
- "Data Visualization for Advocacy" Tuesday, December 20, 2011. Understand how to selectively use statistics to tell a compelling story
- "Organizational Storytelling for Librarians (Trustees): Using Stories for Leadership, Community, and Advocacy" Tuesday, January 10, 2012

All webinars are FREE and can be used at anytime. Registration is required; visit the website at <http://www.webjunction.org/events/webinars/>

## PROJECT COMPASS HOLDS WORKSHOP AT MLA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Zola Maddison, Project Compass Coordinator for OCLC, presented a pre-conference workshop at the Mississippi Library Association (MLA) Annual Conference. The Mississippi Library Commission, on behalf of OCLC, awarded five (5) scholarships in selected counties to public library staff to attend the pre-conference and the Annual Conference. The counties were selected by OCLC based on their unemployment statistics; this tied in with the conference's theme "Workforce Recovery Resources."

Listed below are the scholarship winners and excerpts from their reports. Complete reports are available, if requested, from Barbara Price at [bprice@mlc.lib.ms.us](mailto:bprice@mlc.lib.ms.us).

**Patsy Brewer** utilized the scholarship to benefit both herself and Public Relations Coordinator Toni Wright. Both spoke about the experience of their library as an E-Win Job Center in partnership with the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES). They spoke of the training received from MDES and the great benefit of having this service available to the community.

**Heather Pohl** reported on the importance of the library responding to the needs of the community in today's changing world. She stressed the importance of collaboration, cooperation and networking in helping the community learn the necessary 21st century skills.

**Jennifer Stephenson** emphasized the need for the library to provide necessary access and training for individuals within the community. She also discussed the importance of building community connections. "I look forward to implementing many of the ideas presented during this workshop," Jennifer stated.

**Annette McGregor** pointed out, "The library is no longer a separate entity in the community. Today's library is embedded in the community as a vital part." She stressed partnerships and the importance of libraries to utilize and pursue them locally.

**Linda Kern** reported that the meeting was very informative and she looked forward to sharing the information with her staff. She was especially excited to learn about the resources available on the WebJunction site that relate to workforce recovery.

## BILOXI LIBRARY CELEBRATES GRAND OPENING

Almost two years after breaking ground and six years after the destruction of Hurricane Katrina, the new Biloxi Library and Civic Center opened its doors to the public. The complex, which totals about 82,000 square feet, consists of two buildings, the library and civic center, joined by a central open-air plaza. The architectural firm of Dale Partners Architects P.A.

designed and Yates Construction built the approximately eighteen million-dollar facility. The design, a Spanish colonial look, takes as its inspiration the grand hotels built in Biloxi in the 1920s and subsequently lost to Hurricanes Camille and Katrina.

The Biloxi Library celebrated its own grand opening and more than 600 members of the Gulf Coast community turned out for a celebration feted by Biloxi Mayor A. J. Holloway and MLC's own Sharman Smith. Entertainment was provided by a gospel choir from a nearby neighborhood church.

Local foods such as Pusherata, pralines, French breads, and jambalaya were made by the local community and donated to the library for the celebration.



*An exterior view of the Biloxi Library.*



*An interior view of the library.*

## COLUMBUS-LOWNDES COUNTY LIBRARY RECEIVES CAPERS AWARD

The Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) presented the Capers Award to the Columbus-Lowndes Public Library Local History Department at a luncheon on the campus of Mississippi University for Women. The library is the inaugural recipient of the award recognizing excellence in the preservation and interpretation of Mississippi history.



Left to right: MDAH President of the Board of Trustees J. Kane Ditto, Vance and MDAH Director Hank T. Holmes

The Capers Award, which memorializes longtime MDAH director Charlotte Capers, recognizes smaller institutions or organizations whose mission is to acquire, preserve, and provide access to materials of enduring historical value.

The Columbus-Lowndes Public Library was recognized for outstanding archival achievement and a strong commitment to the preservation of local history. The library's extensive outreach services include local workshops on preservation. The library also partners with the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science on their annual "Tales from the Crypt" project.

Archivist of the Local History Department Mona Vance said, "At the Local History Department we strive to preserve the history and culture of Lowndes County and we are thrilled to receive recognition of our work with such honors from the State Archives."

Established in 2010 and presented biennially as merited, The Capers Award carries a \$300 cash prize.

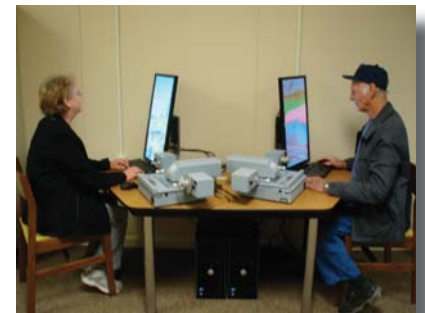
## NEW MICROFILM READERS FOR LAUREL-JONES COUNTY LIBRARIES

Researchers visiting the Laurel-Jones County Library System's Genealogy Department received new tools to aid in their search for family history. Two ST Viewscans, microfilm/microfiche readers, were purchased courtesy of a \$20,000 Library Services and Technology Act grant provided by the Institute of Museum and Library Services administered by the Mississippi Library Commission. The new machines provide a much clearer view of microfilmed images, especially old newspapers, with a user-friendly operating format.

Genealogist Susan Blakeney is thrilled with the new additions to the department. "These machines cut down on bleed through and can darken, lighten or enlarge sections as needed. This really makes it easy to maintain the proper records to document family research."

In operation since early November, the machines are drawing raves from researchers as well.

Amateur genealogist R o y Hammond said, "This is a terrific addition to the services provided by the Genealogy Department. These machines make accessing information so much easier."



Shown are patrons utilizing the two new microfilm/microfiche readers.

The two machines are accompanied by computers with 24" screens and offer patrons the opportunity to print their work or save it in a variety of formats including Portable Document Format (pdf) and Joint Photographic Experts Group (jpeg).

"We are so thankful for these additions to our Genealogy Department," said Director Mary Louise Breland. "These machines really improve the service we can provide to researchers."

## GULFPORT LIBRARY REOPENS



*An exterior view of the Gulfport Library*

Gulfport Library Children's/Youth Services Librarian Geoff Conwill is very excited about the future of the library, especially the children's department.

"Despite the country's financial woes, in particular those of libraries throughout the United States, this wonderful new facility demonstrates that people really believe in educating children and exposing them to literature, history, art, science, knowledge and all the other amazing things that can be found in library books and services are important to everybody's future.

"After four long years in a trailer, generously donated by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, just to have a children's library within the building is amazing, especially when you consider the fact that this section alone is about as large as the trailer was," said Conwill.

The floor plan was one of the reasons for Mr. Conwill's initial excitement, because it featured a specially designed reading area, which includes two stage-like steps.

"The area reminds me of an ancient Greek or Roman theater, with the actor down below. However, to actually see it, wow! It just begs for story telling," Conwill added.

The rest of the building is just as impressive. A wide open, two-story wooden ceiling with neo-modern lights and floor-to-ceiling windows creates a light, airy feel. Rich color schemes—not to mention a brand new collection of books and computers—are a cause for many smiles from patrons that enter the new building.

"I know one thing for sure, the children love it and I do, too! I can't wait for Summer Reading and all those happy faces," said Conwill.



*A young patron enjoys reading in the new children's department.*

## COLUMBUS-LOWNDES PUBLIC LIBRARY RECEIVES GRANTS

The Columbus-Lowndes Public Library received a \$5,000 grant from the Weyerhaeuser Giving Fund and a \$2,000 grant from Microtek for the renovation of the children's area.

Funds will also be used to purchase items that help create an inviting, attractive and functional early childhood library space. The theme for the children's area is a tree house.

"We are going to create a tree house environment that has separate areas for pre-schoolers and school age children. The tree house will not actually be a raised structure, but will have a tree effect built above it to give the illusion of a tree house," stated Columbus-Lowndes County Public Library Director Alice Shands.

The goals of the new tree house themed children's area are to support language and early literacy development, provide opportunities for children to learn and practice literacy skills, and provide a print rich environment that encourages reading, language and the enjoyment of literature.

Comments and suggestions are welcomed.

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## MLC NEWS

The Mississippi Library Commission welcomes a new staff member.:



**Justin Walker**  
Systems Administrator I

### Best Wishes . . .

The Library Commission extends best wishes to the following staff members who recently left the agency: Michael Whities and William Hartley.



**Mississippi Library Commission**  
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The PACKET

## CALENDAR

### DECEMBER 2011

ARTISTS - RICK ANDERSON; BILL BANNISTER

23 MLC CLOSED

26 Christmas Day Observance – MLC CLOSED

30 MLC CLOSED

### JANUARY 2012

ARTISTS – RICHARD MCKEY; CASEY PARSONS

2 New Year's Day Observance – MLC CLOSED

16 Martin L. King/Robert E. Lee Birthday–MLC  
CLOSED

18 WORKSHOP – *E-Rate for Newbies* – MLC

19-20 WORKSHOP – *E-Rate* – MLC

24 Board of Commissioners Meeting

### FEBRUARY 2012

ARTISTS – RICHARD MCKEY; CASEY PARSONS

16 WORKSHOP – CIPA: 10 Years Later, Mary Minnow –  
WEBINAR

21-23 MLA Annual Conference–USM, Hattiesburg

23 WORKSHOP - *Trustee Training at MLA - Hattiesburg*

### MARCH 2012

ARTISTS – AIA ARCHITECTS

6 WORKSHOP - *SLP FOR TEENS* - FOREST

7 WORKSHOP - *USING PUPPETS* - BILOXI (ST. MARTIN)

8 WORKSHOP - *USING PUPPETS* - BROOKHAVEN

9 WORKSHOP - *USING PUPPETS* - MLC

13 MLC CAPITOL EXHIBIT - JACKSON

14 MLC CAPITOL EXHIBIT - JACKSON

20 WORKSHOP - *SLP FOR TEENS* - GRENADA

21 WORKSHOP - *USING PUPPETS* - GREENWOOD

22 WORKSHOP - *USING PUPPETS* - NEW ALBANY

23 WORKSHOP - *USING PUPPETS* - COLUMBUS

27 BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

28 WORKSHOP - *SLP FOR ADULTS* - MLC

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