

New Addition to Our Staff

Amos Thomas has been hired as the new Desktop Support Specialist. He started on March 14 and is based in our Northampton office and working with Brian Podesta our IT Coordinator. Welcome Amos!

Executive Board News

- The Board has approved resolutions to **dissolve WMRLS** as planned now that the sale of WMRLS' Whately Facility is complete. The USDA forgave a large portion of mortgage debt in the short sale to the Town of Whately and there was an expectation that the corporation would not continue. Once the dissolution is complete it will simplify MLS bookkeeping and audits. The process is expected to take a few months. This does not change our commitment to provide statewide services and maintain our Northampton office.
- **Rachel Alter**, Reference & Instruction Librarian at Bay Path University's Hatch Library in Longmeadow, was appointed as a new member of the Board to fill an unexpected vacancy.
- The **Listening Tour** continues as part of Strategic Plan Implementation. Next stop: **April 25 at Milton Public Library (10:30-12:30) - Libraries & Advocacy - [RSVP](#)**
The first two listening tour events focused on Fake News and Libraries. A new [MLSGuide](#) has been launched to provide information and resources about this phenomenon, including listening tour notes. We thank the many members who joined us for this important conversation.

Fy2018 Budget

The Governor's budget boosted all library lines by 1%. This will not be sufficient to head off the service reductions required to balance the budget (see fy2018 Budget handout and Legislative Caucus slides below). In addition, concerns have been raised about the President's proposal to eliminate the Institute for Museum and Library Services. Cutbacks in LSTA funding would affect MLS directly in connection with Commonwealth eBook Collections grants; statewide database funding from MBLC; and grants to support the Summer Library Program. Indirect effects are also possible and could be far reaching if severe reductions are made.

Project SET 2017 Applications Open

Our [application form](#) is available until April 14, 2017. The purpose of this program is to develop a learning community guided by members of the Mass. Library System's Consultanting team. Project participants will engage in activities and discussions designed to develop their leadership skills as a trainer in the library community. Project SET has been established in order to cultivate new talent amongst the library community of Massachusetts and provide the support and encouragement to build participants confidence and strengthen their career paths.

Bibliotemps Update March 2017

We've had six new placements started and 12 placements on going and conducted six candidate interviews and 27 new candidates joined the BT pool since January 1. We have had a few inquiries from library directors about the new temp to perm and direct hire services and both candidates and clients seem excited about it. Bibliotemps will be at the Library & Information Science Career & Networking Fair at Simmons College on April 12.

Announcing: New Community Engagement Success Story Blog

We are pleased to announce the [MLS Community Engagement Blog](#). This blog will feature creative library/community partnerships that have made a powerful impact on people's lives and generated mutual benefit for both the library and community partner. Stay tuned for monthly or bi-monthly posts. If your library has a success story that you would like shared with the Massachusetts library community, please reach out to Michelle Eberle michelle@masslibsystem.org or (508) 357-2121 x305.

Upcoming Events

- Working with patrons. Please join us on April 12 in Marlborough or Northampton for a group viewing of the ALA Webinar "**Dealing with Challenging Patrons**". On May 3, we are thrilled to welcome **Gene Ambaum**, creator of the renowned comic strip Unshelved, who will deliver two talks on customer service at the U/Mass Medical School in Worcester. [Info & RSVP](#)
- **Library Director Forum (Open Topic)** April 14 at Sturgis Lib. - [RSVP](#)
- **Library Director Forum (RFID and AMHS)** May 5 at Newton PL - [RSVP](#)

Listening Tour Stops:

- Milton Public Library (10:30-12:30) - **Libraries & Advocacy** - [RSVP](#) - April 25
- Mass. School Library Association Conference, Hyannis, May 7
- Mass. Library Association, Hyannis, May 22

Massachusetts Library System (MLS) FY2018 Budget Update

The MLS supports the fy2018 Library Legislative Agenda and all of the interlocking pieces of resource sharing and support that make libraries successful.

At the MLS we have been using appropriations prudently over the past three years to continue delivering all of our services despite major cost increases for delivery service.

We are striving to keep our children's school libraries, our public libraries that serve everyone from toddlers to seniors, and academic libraries for higher education on the front lines of digital literacy to support education and lifelong learning and to combat "fake news." We support library access to trustworthy information resources through physical and electronic delivery and education and training for library staff members.

Our budget has increased by 2% since fy2015, which in most people's eyes is very little. At the same time our costs for physical delivery service have increased by 39%, chiefly due to the state mandated increases in minimum wages. We like this income boost for those most in need and improvement for the overall economy. The fact is that after the state government mandated this change; employers had to fulfill it. We are doing that by paying for cost increases with our delivery contractor who employees 60 for our program.

We discussed this at length with the Executive Board and have found a solution that calls for spending reductions for physical delivery, electronic content, training, and consulting services to balance the budget in fy2018 without totally eliminating any of our services.

The cutbacks we are facing on July 1, 2017:

1. Reduce spending for statewide databases by \$600,000 or 60%. These trusted, vetted, scholarly resources are critical tools in building digital literacy and education (STEM and more). They are used widely in k-12, higher education, and public libraries. Statewide access creates equity in every town and city in the Commonwealth.
2. Eliminate 5,000 delivery stops per year (which will cause delayed delivery for about 800,000 patron requests over the year). This service is a partnership with each library, the shared online library systems, and MLS. The specific reductions are to eliminate Saturday delivery for 75 libraries and to eliminate 25 other stops saving about \$200,000.
3. Cut back by 20% (about \$200,000) in training and consulting services for libraries. Very few libraries have funds to replace these services that have been funded by state appropriations. MLS is the go-to place for training and consulting and these critical services will be missed.

For further information contact:
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Massachusetts Library System



- Delivery filling 7.5 million requests
- Supporting homework assignments and information requests with 7.4 million downloads – journals, etc.
- Training 3,000 library staff



What's at Risk?



- Eliminate 5,000 stops/year—resulting in 800,000 delayed deliveries
- 2.2 million fewer article downloads in K-12, higher education, and public libraries
- 600 fewer training participants

