Massachusetts Library Association (MLA)

Reference User Services Section (RUSS)

September 24, 2015

Worcester Public Library

In attendance: **In person:**  Pingsheng Chen (Chair, Worcester Public Library), Laura Bernheim (Secretary, Waltham Public Library), Anna Popp (Massachusetts Library System (MLS) Representative), Lorraine Barry (Reading Public Library), Cynthia Bermudez (Worcester Public Library), Paula Korstvedt (Worcester Public Library), Cara Young (Worcester Public Library), Molly Riportella (Westwood Public Library), Joanne Szelag (Palmer Public Library) **On the Phone:** Gianna Gifford (Boston Public Library), Xuan Pang (University of Massachusetts/Boston), Karen Delorey (Massachusetts Bay Community College)

1. **Introductions**
   1. Chair, Pingsheng Chen, called the meeting to order, and attendees introduced themselves.

**II. Goals for the Section**

1. Anna Popp led a discussion asking attendees what they would like the association to accomplish.
2. Opportunity to Share and Network
   1. This would present an opportunity to hear from libraries dealing with similar situations.
   2. Hear from libraries such as Boston Public Library about what they have to offer, such as online resources. They also are forming a Homelessness Working Group and working on a resource guide for other libraries.
   3. Xuan Pang mentioned that she would like to seek collaboration and partnership on projects.
   4. Karen Delorey mentioned that there was an opportunity to help each other deliver access.
   5. Collaboration between public and academic libraries is important when it comes to working with distance learning students.
   6. Members would like to see more exploration of new trends in libraries.

2. Increase visibility of reference and user librarians.

1. Increased education to library staff members and patrons alike about the changing role of reference librarians.
2. Increased advocacy.
3. How to improve marketing and public relations regarding reference and user services.

3. Maintain an ongoing discussion with fellow reference librarians.

1. More awareness of what public, special, and academic librarians can learn from each other.
2. Ping is going to ask the MLA Executive Board if someone can set up a discussion listserv for members of the section in order to maintain a discussion.

4. Training Opportunities

1. Anna mentioned the opportunity for members to view and/or attend demonstrations either by vendors or librarian users.
2. There was a request for more customer service training.
3. Members would like to see demonstrations of public either from the vendors or, preferably, from librarians who are using the products.
4. There was a request for training on how to providing better resources for those who are learning English, taking the citizenship examination, preparing for the HiSet examination.
5. There is a need for how to provide training for staff and better staff support, overall.
6. Boston Public Library has several online guides for several topics.
7. Cross training with school librarians was another topic that was addressed. This could open up an opportunity to work with the MLA/Youth Services Section (YSS) or the Massachusetts School Library Association (MSLA).

B. Meetings, Prerequisites for Members

1. According to the association bylaws, in order to be considered a full fledged member of the section, someone must be a member of the [Massachusetts Library Association](http://masslib.org/joinmla) (MLA).
2. Ping will ask the MLA executive board about membership requirements for networking and professional development opportunities. Most likely, non-members will have to pay a fee or higher fee for stand alone programs.
3. Meetings
   1. Anna asked if members would prefer in-person or virtual meetings. There seemed to be a consensus for both in person meetings and virtual opportunities. Participating by speaker phone is always an option.
   2. Anna will look into availability of a meeting room at the Massachusetts Library System (MLS) site in Marlboro. (note -- as of the sending of these minutes, the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 19 at 10:00 am.

C. Role of the Reference/User Services Librarian

1. Cara mentioned that reference services should as patron centered as possible.
2. Training for staff and the public was largely emphasized. Molly mentioned that her library is closing for 11 weeks which is a great opportunity for staff training.
3. Sensitivity between groups in the library, whether it’s sensitivity between departments, age groups, or full and part time status, is important.
4. What is the culture of reference?
5. Attendees all shared their job titles, emphasizing how different reference services are perceived in different libraries. The titles were “Adult Services Librarian”, “Information Services”, “Community Services”, “Adult/Outreach and Programming Manager”, “Public Services Coordinator”, “Reference Services”, and “Head of Reference”.

D. Mission/Vision of the Section

1. Meeting attendees shared their views of the proposed mission for the section.
2. Paula: “Promoting reference services within the community”
3. Lorraine: “Advocacy, Networking, Education”
4. Joanne: “Sharing ideas with other librarians”
5. Molly: “Support”
6. Ping: “Sharing”
7. Cynthia: “User services”
8. Cara: “Welcoming Atmosphere”
9. Laura: “Professional Development”
10. Ping: “21st Century Reference Service”

**III. Conference**

1. The MLA Conference will be held on May 16-18 in Hyannis, Massachusetts.
2. The section will be looking for shepherds to help with the section sponsored conference programs.
3. As of the writing of these minutes, the following programs sponsored by section will be presented at conference:
4. Providing Assistive Technology is Not Enough
5. Is the Data Massage Worth the Cost? (about Data Driven Collections and software)
6. Simplifying Reference/One Desk Plan (the One Desk solution at the Cary (Lexington) and Millis Libraries)
7. Reference in the Digital Age
8. Legal Reference Questions at the Reference Desk
9. Staff Readers’ Advisory Book Groups
10. Digital Impact on Library Services
11. Getting Down to Business (Business Reference)
12. Lightning Round Outreach Presentation (which features Joanne Szelag talking about Palmer’s Veterans’ Program)

**IV. Old Business**

1. Officers
2. Ping is the Chair
3. Demetri Kryiakis (Morse Institute Library/Natick) is the Co-Chair
4. Laura is the secretary
5. Discussions will be made on officers for next year, or whether to keep the current officers for another year.

B. Bylaws

1. Every MLA section needs to have bylaws (which includes provisions for officers)
2. Bylaws for other sections will serve as models for bylaws:
   1. [Technical Services Section](http://masslib.org/Resources/Documents/TSSBylawsApril2013.pdf)
   2. [Youth Services Section](http://masslib.org/Resources/Documents/YSS%20bylaws%202012.pdf)
   3. [Paralibrarian Section](http://masslib.org/Resources/Documents/ParalibrarianBylaws2009.pdf)

The meeting was adjourned at 12:06 pm.

Next meeting, November 19, 2015 at 10:00 am at the Massachusetts Library System Offices in Marlborough.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Bernheim

Secretary