



## The Paralibrarian Newsletter

### Paralibrarians Speak Out!

**Paralibrarians Speak Out!** was the heading of the card given to program attendees at the 2005 MLA Conference. There was no MLA Paralibrarian Section...yet. With the encouragement of several librarian mentors, I moderated a program titled: **Behind Every Great Librarian Is A Great Paraprofessional.** The room was packed. The panel consisted of library directors seated with the paralibrarians who supported and contributed to their work. As the Q&A began someone raised their hand. Suddenly one question followed another and a lively conversation included everyone in the room. Following the program, people rushed to turn in the **Paralibrarians Speak Out!** cards, asking "How can I get involved?" That was the beginning of the MLA Paralibrarian Section.

In the past twelve years the Paralibrarian Section Board has worked hard to advocate and network on behalf of paralibrarians. We present two Annual Awards to amazing library support staff and librarians for their contributions to librarianship. We developed the PARA Certification and grew it from a pilot program to a full statewide certification under the umbrella of the MBLC and MLA. Last year 13 paralibrarians received PARA Certifications and that number is growing for 2017. Look for "PARA Preferred" on job descriptions and learn how the Middleborough Library linked the PARA Certification to promotions and raises.

We bring exciting programs to every conference, of interest to all attendees. From Springfield College's innovative single service desk model to a historical tour of graveyards. Planned for the 2017 Conference is a Staff Development program and the video Book Cart Drill Team Competition that's all about marketing, branding, community spirit and team building.

Find us on the MLA Website, Facebook, Pinterest and Wordpress blog. Visit <http://masslib.org/paralibrarian> links to Awards nomination forms, and PARA Certification guidelines.

*Submitted by Paralibrarian Chairperson Allison Sloan*



### Paralibrarian And Advocate Awards

Do you have a fabulous paralibrarian at your library? The answer is yes! A paralibrarian is someone who works in your library that doesn't have a post graduate degree. Everyone without a master's degree in library science, at any of your public desks, in your technology department, answering your phones, coordinating with the public, or otherwise contributing to the success of your library, is a paralibrarian. Many libraries call paralibrarians "support staff." Whatever you call them, most of them are probably pretty fabulous. Did you know that the Massachusetts Library Association Paralibrarian Section honors those fabulous paralibrarians every year by awarding the Massachusetts Library Association Paralibrarian Section Award for the Outstanding Support Staff? We are looking for that paralibrarian who will impress even other fabulous paralibrarians with their commitment to the success and promotion of libraries all over the state and even nationally. If you think you have the most amazing paralibrarian in your library, please consider nominating them for this award. We want to hear about them, what they do for your library and community, in what ways they promote libraries within our state and across our country. <http://masslib.org/ParalibrarianAwardsWeb2016> to nominate your amazing paralibrarian.

Additionally, especially if you are one of those fabulous paralibrarians, consider if there is someone who has supported and promoted the paralibrarians in your library and beyond. If someone jumps into your mind, nominate them for the Massachusetts Library Association Paralibrarian Section Advocate of the Year Award. Without them, we couldn't be so fabulous!

*Winners will be announced at the Awards Gala at the MLA Conference on Tuesday, May 23, 2017.*

*Submitted by Gael Nappa*

### **A Different Perspective:**

Jail librarians all have a unique set of challenges, one of the biggest challenges a Jail or Prison librarian might face is a comparison to other libraries that do not have the restrictions on materials and resources that we face within Corrections. Similar to public libraries, our population that we serve, inmate's both Sentenced and those awaiting trial, are very interested in all types of reading materials, fiction and non-fiction, financial literacy, legal research to name a few. Strict policies and procedures on what can and cannot be included in our various collections must be followed for all types of materials.

I work for the Norfolk County Sheriff's Office at the Dedham House of Correction for Sheriff Michael G. Bellotti. Sheriff Bellotti has been a trailblazer in developing an [offender re-entry](#) program that reduces criminal recidivism by preparing inmates for a successful transition back into society. The Norfolk Sheriff's Office was one of 15 agencies nationwide to be recognized and chosen by the U.S. Justice Department for a major grant to further develop the re-entry program. This type of programming is aimed at assisting the inmate population with lifelong learning skills. Sheriff Bellotti, over the years, has emphasized innovation, collaboration and accountability as the keys to a positive facility and continued public safety within the community. The collaborations with various libraries within our county, relationships with multiple local higher education schools have set a standard of expectation for our jail library and its service delivery that are offered and in doing so make the library a focal point for the facility. The Dedham House of Correction library can, at times, lend a level of normalcy in a very structured and regulated environment as a place where individuals are free to make their own choices and follow their self-directed interests. Our library emulates materials and services comparable to various libraries in the community. I would like to think that the focus, in jail, is not always about punishment, but also lends guidance for education, rehabilitation, and constructive use of time.

***Submitted by Jim Graham Norfolk County Sheriff's Office Dedham House of Correction, Librarian***

### **NELA 2016 Imagining Tomorrow Annual Conference**

Gerry Deyermond, Assistant Circulation Supervisor (Andover) and Past Chair of the MLA Paralibrarian Section and Lori Salotto, Head of Technical Services (Middleboro) and Secretary of the MLA Paralibrarian Section, along with Heather Rainier, Director of the Hooksett Public Library in Hooksett, NH spoke at the New England Library Association (NELA) Annual Conference on October 17<sup>th</sup> in Danvers, MA about The Paralibrarian Recognition of Achievement Certification (PARA).

We had a small gathering and chose to arrange the chairs in a semi-circle to have a more intimate conversation. Gerry began by asking the audience, "What is a Paralibrarian." She then went on to provide historical background about the MLA Paralibrarian Section and about the certification process, emphasizing that we have a mentoring program and can be contacted at any time for help. Heather Rainier did not need to discuss the logistics of the NH program because it borrowed the MA program almost in its entirety, rather, she focused her discussion on why certification has a value. She talked about the value of Paralibrarians in her library and the value of providing time for her "*professional library staff without professional degrees*" to learn more to be a better staff person and make their working environment a better place to work and provide a better experience for the patron while visiting the library. Heather said "I believe the continuing education piece of the program is invaluable for creating stronger employees and stronger libraries. As my staff learn more about librarianship and libraries as a whole their concept and understanding of the field grows. I view the program as a staff retention tool. If my staff feel valued and supported in their continuing education efforts they are far more likely to stay with my library even when I can't pay them as much as say a competing library."

Lori Salotto ended the discussion by citing reasons why people would want to obtain a certification and went into more detail about the Section's ultimate hope that certification will parlay into salary increases. Lori then described how she, in conjunction with her director, co-workers and union representation was able to put an article in their 2014-2107 union contract that gave a pay grade increase for those paralibrarians who earned a level 3 or 4 PARA Certification with step increases. We have to discuss the value of certification at every opportunity. As we do so, the PARA can only get stronger.

***Lori Salotto, Secretary and PARA Review Board***

***Gerry Deyermond, Past Chairperson of MLA Paralibrarian Section***

## CERTIFICATION...Which one and why? *Karen Horn, Assistant Director, Sturgis Library, Barnstable*

MLA PARA. MBLC BLTs. ALA LSSC. What do all of these acronyms stand for? Library support staff and non-degreed librarians in Massachusetts have several options available for professional certification. In an attempt to clarify any confusion regarding the distinctions between these options, the chart below outlines the differences.

|                               | MLA – PARA Cert.   | MBLC Librarian Certificate  | MBLC - BLTs   | ALA - LSSC  |
|-------------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| <b>for whom?</b>              | Library support staff and non-degreed librarians   | <u>Professional</u> : library directors with an MLS<br><u>Sub-professional</u> : library directors without an MLS | 4 courses intended for Non-MLS degreed public library directors who serve a population under 10,000 | Library support staff in positions that do not require an MLS   |
| <b>mandatory or optional?</b> | Optional   | Mandatory   | Mandatory   | Optional  |
| <b>purpose?</b>               | To recognize the professional accomplishments and career development of library support staff            | to receive state aid to public libraries  | Required to apply for MBLC subprofessional certification  | To recognize value and accomplishment of library support staff  |
| <b>details?</b>               | Maximum flexibility. Submission of portfolio documenting education, employment and continuing education. | Specific requirements. Submission of application.   | Specific courses. Completion of all 4 BLT courses.  | Specific competencies. Meet eligibility requirements. Complete 6 of 10 competency sets through approved courses or a portfolio. |
| <b>levels?</b>                | PARA 1-4 showing increased breadth and depth of library knowledge.                                       | Professional and Subprofessional  | No. A one-time certification.   | No. A one-time certification.   |
| <b>cost to apply?</b>         | For each level:<br>\$20 MLA member<br>\$50 non-MLA member  | \$35  | n/a   | \$325 ALA member<br>\$350 non-ALA member  |

### 2016-2017 Dates

Meeting Times are 10:00AM to 12:00 PM

January 19, 2017

February 16, 2017

March 16, 2017

April 13, 2017

June 8, 2017

<http://www.eventkeeper.com/code/events.cfm?>

**PARA Certification  
submission deadline is:  
February 17, 2017**

### *For More News!!*

*Join the Paralibrarian discussion list to receive news, events and other information!*

*<http://mblc.state.ma.us/sympa/info/paralibrarians>*

[MA Paralibrarians on Facebook](#)

[MA Paralibrarians on Twitter](#)

[MA Paralibrarians on Pinterest](#)

[MA Paralibrarian Blog](#)



## Book Cart Drill Team

Library staff is not only talented in locating materials and solving problems for patrons, but show talent in technology, videography and having fun! So let's put this talent to good use! The May 2017 conference will bring back the video book cart drill team! Get your thinking caps on! Of course there will be prizes involved! DEMCO has been generous in supporting this program and offers gift certificates and trophies to the top three teams and certificates to the teams with Best Costume, Cart Décor and WOW! Factor! Favorite teams are voted on by your peers at the awards night at conference using the Conference Capira App for speedy calculations and accuracy!!!

Please consider having some fun and video your amazing book cart drill team! This is a great opportunity for ALL staff to participate including Friends and Trustees! AND its great PR for your Library. Coming soon rules and guidelines on the MLA website Paralibrarian section. <http://www.masslib.org/paralibrarian>

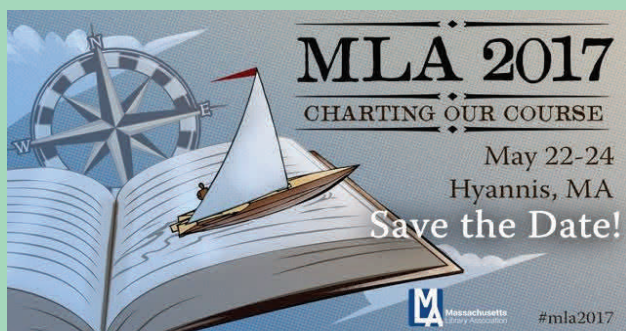
*Submitted by Gerry Deyermond  
Past Chair- Paralibrarian Section  
Book Cart Drill Team coordinator*



### Watch a drill team video

<https://mlaparalibrarian.wordpress.com/2016/05/16/2016-book-cart-drill-team-videos/>

### Massachusetts Library Association's



Annual Conference theme is Leading the Library Profession in Massachusetts for 100 years

Resort and Conference Center at Hyannis

**May 22- 24 2017**

For more information go to <http://www.masslib.org/>