

Newsletter

Rhode Island Coalition of Library Advocates

January 2009

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**COLA**

**The Rhode Island Coalition of  
Library Advocates**

**Annual Meeting  
and Reception**

**Tuesday, February 10, 2009**

**5:00-7:00 pm**

**Rhode Island State House**

**Guest Speaker**

**Scott Molloy Jr.**

**Professor, URI Labor Research Center**

**Researching the Rank and File:**

**19th Century Irish Immigrants to Rhode Island**

**Sweetheart of the Year**

**Melody Allen**

**Past OLIS Children's Services Librarian**

**URI/GSLIS Scholarships**

**Library Friends Groups Awards**

**My Library of the Future Awards**

To cite Charles Dickens, for libraries 2008 has been the best of times, and the worst of times.

The plunging Dow brought the grim times. Facing lower revenues, governments were looking to retrench. Ironically, even while unemployment drove more patrons to libraries, seeking help with job-searches, libraries were under pressure to curtail services.

As for the good times, the state Office of Library Services launched AskRI: now any Rhode Islander, from home or office, can log onto a vast expanse of data bases, including on-line home-work help. Knowledge has always been the coinage of progress, and in this new technological age, libraries remain the portal.

So in 2009, when technology has reshaped the operation of libraries, yet governments are forced to re-think budgetary allotments, COLA's mission is both more important and more difficult. As a statewide coalition of people passionate about libraries, COLA remains dedicated to keeping open those portals of knowledge – indeed, to opening them wider.

#### E-Mail Addresses Needed

Periodically COLA sends e-mail announcements to its membership. But our three year-old listings are out-of-date. Please send your name and new e-mail address to:

Cola.rhodeisland@gmail.com

We do not share e-mail addresses with other organizations.

Thank you.

**Get ready... We'll be calling on you to support library funding both nationally and locally in the coming budget cycles. Remember, libraries shine in tough economic times.** Listen to the National Public Radio broadcast on this topic at <[www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=93041368](http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=93041368)>. From CBS Station WJZ-TV: “These tough economic times have many turning to less expensive forms of job hunting and entertainment. Libraries across the country are seeing an increase in visitors, and consumers are learning that libraries have much more to offer than just books. **Libraries are economical destinations that offer several free services, all of which are becoming invaluable in a tight economy...**”

#### COLA awards



#### COLA's sweetheart for 2008 is Melody Allen, children's library services and literature specialist extraordinaire.

Who ya gonna call, when you need advice? Children's librarians need look no farther than Melody Allen, who retired from her position at the Office of Library and Information Services in September. Melody brought them all together with an online message list for questions and shared expertise. Working cooperatively with Melody's leadership, children's librarians planned and carried out wonderful summer reading programs for children, brought “Mother Goose” programming to Rhode Island for preschool children, created and distributed *Getting Ready for Kindergarten* calendars (in English and Spanish) to parents, and established the Rhode Island Children's Book Award (voted annually by kids statewide through their libraries). This is only a small sample of her many achievements and participation in cooperative efforts over the past 30 years, which also included RI Kids Count, Leap Into Literature (with the Old Stone Bank), and the Rhode Island Festival of Children's Books and Authors, to name but a few.

Her many honors also tell the story of her leadership—locally, regionally and nationally. Melody served on the national Caldecott Award Committee and the Globe-Horn Book Awards Committee. In 2008 she received the Emerson Greenaway Award from the New England Library Association, and a Life-Time Achievement Award from the Rhode Island Library Association. This is not the end of the story, however. Melody remains active in library education, teaching at the Graduate School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Rhode Island. Join us in congratulating Melody at our Annual Meeting on February 10th.

## Library of the Future: Essay Contest for Students in Grades 6-12:

This year COLA launched an essay contest, asking students to envision the library of the future. What would it look like? What kinds of technological wizardry did they foresee? Ninety-three middle school students and 14 high school students responded. Contest judges were Betty Cotter, managing editor of the South County Independent and author of the recently-published *Roberta's Woods*, and MaryBeth McGreen, English teacher at Chariho High School and writer. You can read their essays on our website at <[www.bodees.com/COLA/Contest/COLAContest.htm](http://www.bodees.com/COLA/Contest/COLAContest.htm)>.

### High school

winner: **Timothy Clarkin**, home-schooled, from Coventry, RI  
runner-up: **Hayley Hutchins**, home-schooled, from Hope, RI

### Middle School

winner: **Victoria D'Agostino**, Scituate Middle School  
runner-up: **Ryan Connor**, Pegasus Program at LaSalle Academy

A sample, from Victoria D'Agostino's essay:

"In the future, school and business will be conducted online. This will ...have a negative affect on people's socializing. It will be hard for them to meet new people and stay in touch. The solution is a place where everyone feels comfortable being social. The library will be a great place. People will find it a perfect place to hang with friends. There will be rooms or areas for different age groups filled with toys, games, and a variety of media for different learning styles. Friends can pop down on comfortable chairs or couches with the books they discover together. Velvety soft stuffed animals with charming expressions and features will perch atop bookshelves, tables, and desks. The library will be filled with whispering, chuckles, and pleasant voices..."

## Annual memorial scholarships, URI Graduate School of Library and Information Studies students

The Linda Aldrich scholarship, for a graduate student planning a career in school library media services, goes to Marilyn Hines:

"A Brown University graduate, I am a native Rhode Islander and life-long lover of libraries. I live in Greene, a mere one-mile walk—on a lovely dirt road—from the Tyler Free Library, where I served on the Board of Directors in the 1990s. I pushed a rather large stroller to and from that library several times each week when my twins and their only-slightly-older big sister were little. I have led story-hours at the Greene Library, and for the past four years have worked as a paraprofessional at the Coventry Public Library. Recently, I accepted that library's newly-created position of Youth Services Librarian, serving tweens and teens and creating Saturday programming for families. I am also undertaking a graduate school practicum at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP), an alternative public middle school in Providence. I hope to obtain a position as a School Library Media Specialist beginning in September, 2009."

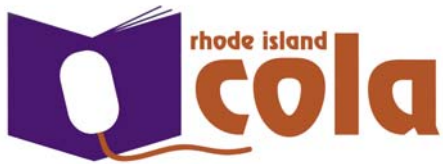
The William Bergeron Award, for a student interested in working in a public library, goes to Lexi Henshel:

"I was born in Johannesburg, South Africa ,but grew up in South County and now live in an almost 200 year old house in Kingston. I earned a BA in History at the University of Rhode Island. After graduating, I worked as a floral designer at Schartner Farms. I loved that, but gradually realized that my love of literature made library and information science a perfect field for me. I worked a year and a half as the Young Adult Librarian at the West Warwick Public Library before moving to the North Kingston Free Library, a library I have always loved. I used to come here as a child and can hardly believe I work here now - I feel I have my dream job. I am currently on the Rhode Island Teen Book Award Committee for a 2nd year and a dream of mine is to create an adult-level statewide book award with a rating system that would allow assigning points for local appeal. Rhode Island has such a unique flavor that it serves as almost a character in many books, and who better than Rhode Islanders to know when it is represented accurately and well?"

### William E. Reeves Friends Award

COLA will be presenting the William Reeves awards to Friends groups for outstanding programs and service at the February annual meeting.

**Congratulations to all our award winners !**



Rhode Island Coalition of Library Advocates

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## *Public libraries and the Economic Stimulus Package*

From the American Library Association's proposal "*Library Funding to Help Get America Back on Track*"

".... Funding for libraries included in an economic stimulus package could help ensure our libraries are able to sustain current activities and even expand critical efforts to help people from every walk of life deal with our current economic situation. In particular, funds could be used to:

- ◆ Reinstatement or supplement evening and weekend hours of operation at libraries to provide greater access to services.
- ◆ Expand critical employment activities and services such as résumé development, job bank web searches, and workshops on career information.
- ◆ Promote financial literacy, housing counseling, and small business development activities.
- ◆ Acquire additional resources and materials to help keep up with increased demand for services and make them available nationwide. "

COLA is a statewide, grass-roots library support group. COLA's work includes legislative advocacy, community education, public awareness, and support for library Friends groups. "

[www.bodees.com/COLA/COLA.htm](http://www.bodees.com/COLA/COLA.htm)

Email: [cola.rhodeisland@gmail.com](mailto:cola.rhodeisland@gmail.com)

### *Library Quotables...*

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."*

*~Margaret Mead*