



Valerie Diggs brought five of her Chelmsford students to the State House

Legislation Day 2009: MSLA Goes to Beacon Hill

by Judi Paradis & Pat Fontes, Advocacy Co-Chairs

Thursday, April 2, was **The Second Annual Joint MLA-MSLA Library Legislative Day**. More than 400 library supporters gathered under the Golden Dome of the State House to promote and lobby for Massachusetts libraries. MSLA was well represented by 50 members and supporters and an additional 45 Bookmark Contest winners and their families. MSLA members attended the presentation of awards in the 2009 Bookmark Contest and a Legislative Briefing by Rob Maier, Director of the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners and Judi Paradis and Patricia Fontes, MSLA Advocacy Co-Chairs.

Sporting bright green stickers announcing that "Libraries Are an Instrument of Recovery," MSLA members and their supporters fanned out across the State House to visit the offices of their Representatives and Senators. The message was simple: Please ask the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to add a person in the BESE who would be responsible for monitoring and promoting school libraries in Commonwealth's schools.

During the lunch break in the Hall of Flags, attendees and their guest legislators heard a rousing call for support of all Massachusetts libraries from Rep. Mark Falzone, Chair of the legislature's Library Caucus. The Massachusetts Library Association's President, Richard Callaghan, and our own MSLA president Sandy Kelly addressed attendees. The highlight of the lunch, though, was the heartfelt endorsement of school libraries by Valerie Diggs's enthusiastic and talented students from Chelmsford High School. After sharing their experiences with the new Chelmsford H.S. Learning Commons, several students entertained the crowd with an enthusiastic *cappella* rendition of "Rockin' Robin!"

Thank you to everyone who took the time to participate in Library Legislative Day. The contacts that you made at the State House are valuable and they will pay dividends for the future of school libraries in Massachusetts.

Judi Paradis is the Library Teacher in Waltham at the Plympton Elementary School and Pat Fontes is the Library Teacher at the Nashoba Regional High School.

Fall into Some Great Reads

by Pat Keogh



... a few new titles you may want to look for in book stores and libraries this fall.

Patricia Hubbell continues her series on transportation for the very young, *Boats: Speeding! Sailing! Cruising*. A sure-fire hit for young readers is *DinoTrux* by **Chris Gall**. Meet Dozerotops, Cementosaurus and other wild truck/dino combinations. I just met *Saxby Smart, Private Detective*, a smart-talking young detective who lets readers help solve his cases. **Richard Peck** has a new episodic novel, *A Season of Gifts*, about Grandma Dowdel (*A Long Way from Chicago*) and a preacher's family who move in next door. It's amusing and poignant chapters are written in elegant prose. **Harry Bliss** ventured into graphic novels with *Luke on the Loose*, a city boy on the hunt for pigeons, for early readers. **Aaron Reynolds'** *Joey Fly, Private Eye* is a graphic mystery for middle graders.

So much great non-fiction this year! *Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice* is the remarkable story of a girl who integrated the buses of Montgomery, months before Rosa Parks. **Philip Hoose's** book brings so much hidden history to light. I haven't read **Steve Sheinkin's** earlier book about history but every page of *Which Way to the Wild West?* holds a thrill, a tragedy (many) or a wild adventure.

At ALA in July, I saw my friend **Ashley Bryan** receive the Wilder Award at the Newbery-Caldecott banquet. His new autobiography, *Ashley Bryan: Words to My Life's Song*, shouts joy and celebration throughout his remarkable life. A great read aloud is *Countdown to Summer: A Poem for Every Day of the School Year* by **J. Patrick Lewis**. The countdown is on from the first page, 180 to the last, 1.