

# N Compass

A Quarterly Publication of the Nebraska Library Commission

Vol. 1 No. 3 /Fall 1994



Janet Greser, the first point of contact for *Nebraska Online* information.

## New Staff at Library Commission

The Nebraska Library Commission has hired a new computer help-desk person. Janet Greser now serves as the first point of contact for *Nebraska Online* information.

Greser says her purpose is to guide users through *Nebraska Online* problems and enable them to utilize the system to its fullest. She says that questions come in from both new and experienced users. Greser's basic duties include mailing out *Nebraska Online* information, registering users, answering software communication problems, taking suggestions for improvements, and answering any general *Nebraska Online* questions. In the future Greser will be working to improve the *Nebraska Online* help screens and other documentation. She is a native Nebraskan who loves to travel in-state.

If you have concerns or questions, registered users can send e-mail to Janet Greser in *Nebraska Online* and non-registered users can send a message to "Comments to System Operators" on *Nebraska Online*. You can call her at 402-471-2045 or 800-307-2665. Anyone can log on and access information without advance registration. To become a registered user, you must be involved in an organization that promotes community and economic development in Nebraska, a library staff person, a library board member, a library system administrator, a member of a library-affiliated group, or a state government staff person.

## SBA Grant Supports *Nebraska Online*

The Nebraska Department of Economic Development recently received a \$680,000 grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration to aid in efforts to stimulate technology literacy among the state's small businesses. The grant which provides support for the Library Commission's *Nebraska Online* Service, was made possible by funds Senator Bob Kerrey worked to include in a law passed by Congress last year.

"Teleliteracy is the key to innovation, but our small-business owners often don't have the background, training or the opportunity to make use of the available information databases, computer programs, and telecommunications networks already in place," Kerrey said. "These resources, however, are being used by their competitors in other parts of the nation and the world. This grant will give rural and urban area Nebraskans the chance not only to catch up to the high-tech world of business, but also to become leaders in the use of technology to create good, high paying jobs."

The Nebraska Department of Economic Development has entered into agreement with the Nebraska Library Commission to enhance the electronic conference and publishing system on *Nebraska Online*, employing Cindi Hickey as the librarian to serve as an "electronic navigator" to extract relevant business and community information from thousands of electronic databases and to organize and disseminate that information electronically to Nebraskans. Nebraska citizens will also be encouraged to feed their experiences and "best practices" into the system for use by other communities.

This grant increases the number of call-in lines and the computer capacity, as well as helps fund programming support to add new features to *Nebraska Online*. *Nebraska Online* currently logs more than 3400 calls to the system each month seeking economic and census data, as well as information about meetings, seminars, news releases and announcements pertaining to economic development and community development programs.

## From The Director...

## Nebraska Libraries and the Information Superhighway

This past September, the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) invited representatives of several states and federal agencies to participate in a briefing on "Libraries and the Information Superhighway." The Commission scheduled the briefings to address questions that emerged from a July meeting with Vice President Al Gore. The Vice President called for "... a concerted effort to ask the questions and to inventory the challenges and to come up with the best answers ..." regarding libraries and the National Information Infrastructure (NII). Libraries have been identified among key entities to be connected to the NII by the year 2000.

I was among those invited to participate in the briefing. We were asked to provide a written statement and to make brief remarks before the Commission members. It was interesting and informative to hear about state and federal activities related to the NII. The following are recommendations that I presented:

- National initiatives must be sustained that recognize the significant role of libraries in the NII and the vital role that libraries perform in assuring that all Americans have access to information.
- Funding must be provided to support national goals for the NII and to assure that libraries are equipped and supported in their role as information access providers. Funding is needed to assure quality education for library and information professionals to manage and deliver effective networked information services.
- Policies must be determined that address privacy and security, intellectual property rights, fair use, and regulatory issues.
- Standards to enhance the ability to load, store, manage, and transmit digitized information need to be developed, adopted and applied.

Nebraska libraries are well positioned to participate in the NII. Many Nebraska libraries, large and small, have used networked services over a long period of time for information management and access. In the coming weeks and months Nebraska library representatives will be involved in determining how libraries will connect to the NII, what technologies are most appropriate to support the roles libraries wish to perform, what kinds of resources will be required to make that happen, what knowledge and skills will be necessary to make effective use of the available technologies, and what kinds of on-going support will be needed to sustain participation. The answers to these questions, and others, will help shape the plans and strategies for connecting Nebraska libraries to the emerging National Information Infrastructure.

**Rod Wagner**

## Internet Providers List Now Available

A list of internet providers has been compiled and is available on *Nebraska Online* in "News Services," under "Newsletter Articles." A paper copy of the list was sent to all the public libraries in Nebraska.

The list is divided into two sections; one section lists providers that offer dial-up connection to the Internet (Internet Access-Dial-up Access) and the other lists providers that offer direct connections to the Internet (Internet Providers-Direct Leased Line Connections).

If you would like a copy or would like to suggest a provider for the list, please call Annie Sternburg at 402-471-6277, 800-307-2665, or send her e-mail via *Nebraska Online* or Internet: [astern@neon.nlc.state.ne.us](mailto:astern@neon.nlc.state.ne.us).

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Commission meetings are held the second Friday of the month,  
or as scheduled by public action of the board.



Judy Winkler, Nebraska Library Commission Employee of the Year.

## Commission's Employee of the Year

Judy Winkler is the principal cataloger at the Nebraska Library Commission. She catalogs monographs, serials, state documents and videos. Winkler joined the Commission in March, 1993 and was formerly at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UN-L) libraries.

Winkler participates in the reference team and assists with some of the NEBASE training at the Library Commission. She also coordinates all of the Commission's special projects like United Way and Food Bank drives. She is currently secretary of the Nebraska Library Association (NLA) paraprofessional section, co-editor of the *Keynote*, and is on the proposed Technical Services Roundtable Planning Committee. She's a member of the Special and Institutional Section of NLA, as well as ALA and COLT (Council on Library/Media Technicians.)

In her "free time," Winkler goes to UN-L pursuing a double major in Latin and Great Plains studies. She'll graduate in December of 1995. Winkler has been married for 25 years and has two children. She loves to go to movies, and has a home collection of over 300 films.

## Technology Forum Held at Library Commission

Nebraskans had an opportunity to comment on a draft report issued by the Nebraska Information Technology Commission at a series of public forums scheduled across the state.

The Technology Commission, appointed by Governor Ben Nelson last year, is charged with developing a statewide strategy for the "Information Superhighway." A draft

report outlining that strategy has been released for public review and comment. The report is available in the Computer Files Collection section of *Nebraska Online*.

The Technology Commission continues to solicit comments about goals and strategies contained in the report, as well as information about projects and initiatives underway related to telecommunications and information technology.

The draft report builds upon information gathered at the Governor's Conference on Information Technology held last March. The final report, including recommendations for action, will be submitted to the Governor and the Legislature in January.

Five public forums were scheduled in September. More than thirty people attended the forum in the Library Commission's Crane Room.

## Meet our Manager of the Year

Vern Buis is the first person named Manager of the Year at the Nebraska Library Commission to have previously won Employee of the Year. Buis is the Computer Services Director. He coordinates computer-related activities, including: *Nebraska Online*, READS (the software used by Talking Book and Braille Staff), and in-house networks.

Buis has been at the Commission since 1973. He began as courier and eventually he graduated to full-time editor of the *Publications Checklist*. From there he became the head of the Nebraska Publications Clearinghouse, while still continuing as *Checklist* editor. As his involvement with computers and automation increased, he helped develop his current position.

Buis has minors in Library Science, Political Science and Journalism from Ball State. His family is ever-changing in size. The current census count is one son, one wife, one dog, three cats and some part-time felines.



Vern Buis, Manager of the Year at the Nebraska Library Commission.

## Commission Receives NSF Grant for Electronic Library Project

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has awarded a \$100,000 planning grant to the University of Nebraska to work in partnership with the Nebraska Library Commission to begin planning the state's Electronic Library.

Joan Giesecke, associate dean of University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries, and Nancy Busch, deputy director of the Nebraska Library Commission, are co-principal investigators for the project.

Giesecke said the grant will address two key issues in planning for the state's electronic library: What would be the most useful contents in the electronic library and what kinds of training programs will be necessary to help people use the resources within the electronic library?

"The electronic library is more than providing digitized information over the Internet," she said. "It also includes how that information will be organized and what types of search and retrieval software will be most useful for those using the library."

A number of groups will be involved in the planning efforts, Giesecke said. Among them are all libraries at institutions of higher education in Nebraska, public libraries, computing centers, Nebraska Educational Telecommunications, the Nebraska Department of Education, the Math and Science Coalition, the Nebraska Department of Economic Development and all Educational Service Units in the state.

Planning efforts will include a survey to identify types of resources that should be available and a system to prioritize the order in which these resources should become available.

Two options for improving network access will be explored as part of the process. Finally, a planning retreat with key stakeholders will occur next spring. Those at the retreat will make recommendations about the library's content, training needs, hardware/software solutions and implementation timetables.

"The planning that will go into this project will enable the State of Nebraska to assume a leadership role in the national agenda to establish electronic library systems," said Kent Hendrickson, dean of UN-L Libraries. "Personally, I am convinced that a long history of successful collaborative efforts among the institutional participants guarantees a quality product. We will then be positioned to build a truly statewide resource."

## NLA/NEMA Convention Awards

Vern Buis, Director of Computer Services at the Library Commission, was awarded the 1994 Meritorious Service Award from the Nebraska Library Association (NLA), at the annual NLA/Nebraska Educational Media Association (NEMA) Convention in October. This is the Association's highest honor, and was presented to Buis during the Awards Banquet, which he attended with his wife and son.

During his 21 years with the Nebraska Library Commission Buis has given libraries technology support. His early work focused on the development and implementation of the Nebraska Library Communication System (NeLCMS) which was used for many years by the library community for interlibrary loan and electronic mail. Recently, Buis has worked to develop, maintain, and improve *Nebraska Online*, the state-wide information network that provides computerized information and communication services supporting libraries and community development.

Roger Welsch, winner of the 1994 Mari Sandoz Award from the Nebraska Library Association, read from his most recent work at the Awards Banquet. Welsch is a published author, former university professor, television personality, folksinger, humorist, speaker, farmer, and founder of the Liars Hall of Fame.

The School, Children's and Young People's Section of the Nebraska Library Association awarded the 1994 Mad Hatter Youth Service Award to Delores Feeken, Children's Librarian at Crete Public Library. The Mad Hatter Award recognizes a librarian who has demonstrated outstanding service to children through innovative programming, service to the community and professional contributions to the field of librarianship.

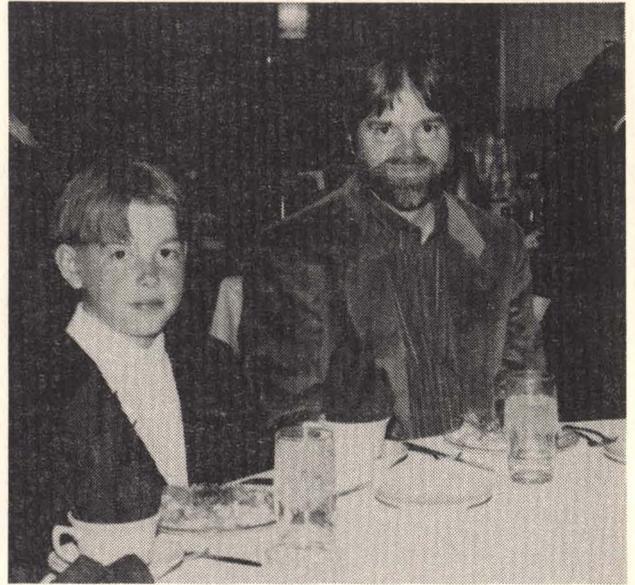
Maggie Harding, director of the Crete Public Library, was named Mentor of the Year for providing encouragement for professional growth in librarians. Becky Baker, Director of the Seward Public Library, won the Excaliber Award for exceptional service in the public library area. Kent Hendrickson, UN-L Dean of Libraries, received the NLA College and University Distinguished Service Award.

The NEMA Sound Off for Media Award was given to Arden Mohrman, Director of the Learning Resource Center at Southeast Community College-Milford, in recognition of demonstrated creative use of media. NEMA Presidential Awards were presented to Alan Wibbels, Media Specialist, Educational Service Unit 10, Arden Mohrman, Director of the Learning Resource Center at SCC-Milford, and to Betty Sample and Chris LeBeau, Co-Coordination of the 1994 NLA/NEMA Convention, given in recognition of their positive contribution to NEMA.

## Highlights of the 1994 NLA/NEMA Convention



Mary Jackson (left) drawing for prizes with Hardy Franklin (right) at the Nebraska Library Commission Reception honoring Hardy Franklin.



Vern Buis (right) with his son, John, at the Awards Banquet. Vern received the Meritorious Service Award from the Nebraska Library Association.



Lively discussion at the State Advisory Council on Libraries Talk Table.



Conference Keynote speaker Peter Young (left) pauses for a snapshot with honored guest Hardy Franklin.



Jo Budler of the Library Commission, Peter Young, Hardy Franklin and Rod Wagner, Library Commission Director, share a laugh at the Reception.



Annie Sternburg of the Library Commission (far right) gets inspired listening to host Tim Willett (left) at the Papillion Free-Net Talk Table.

## Special Report

### Grants Support Excellence (Part Two)

As reported in last quarter's N-Compass, in 1993 the Nebraska Library Commission offered the first set of grants for excellence in children's services. The grant program was intended to encourage public libraries to explore possibilities for new services they may have lacked resources to develop on their own and to nurture grant writing skills so that children's librarians in Nebraska would be able to write competitive proposals for national grants.

The five libraries awarded grants in 1993 recently completed a year of activity and evaluated their grant programs. Although degree of project completion varied, all libraries reported that their activities had impact and conferred increased visibility in their communities.

Kearney Public Library and Information Center established a young adult demonstration center where activities and environment could be developed and modeled for other Nebraska libraries. Program coordinator, Hallie Hagan reported that the junior library board, a special young adult area, a homework assistance center and additional age-appropriate multi-media materials have contributed to increased visits by this age group, as well as to a 100% increase in computer use and more school visits by classes in higher grades. An unexpected by-product is the favorable response to a series of programs for home-schoolers, drawing families as distant as Hastings and Litchfield. Future development includes planning for a part-time young adult librarian, state-wide promotion of programs and activities that could be adapted by other libraries, and a workshop to train other young adult advisory boards.

Alice M. Farr Public Library in Aurora developed an enrichment program for unattended children of Adult Basic Education (ABE) students. According to Project Coordinator, Janette Thomsen, the program benefits included increased familiarity with the library by ABE students and their children, better library usage, and library card registration by every family involved. Library staff feel that the library is perceived as a friendly and welcoming place by people who might otherwise be intimidated by the library atmosphere. The library plans to continue the program and anticipates growth as more people hear of it. In addition the idea has spread to South Dakota where Madison Public Library plans to replicate the Aurora program.

Holdrege Public Library developed "SAM's Boxes" collections of children's books that were placed in offices of health-care providers in September of 1993. Cindy Gitt,

Project Coordinator, says that public response has been overwhelmingly positive and there is potential for other collaborative relationships between library and community agencies. Evaluation of the program from children and parents indicate the children relate the books they have seen in the doctor's office with library materials and programs. One participant commented that the books are a "godsend." and Holdrege plans to continue the program.

According to Project Coordinator, Lois Jones, Chadron Public Library's storytelling training for children project led to many benefits for the twenty-six children involved. The children demonstrated an enhanced perspective of reading and stories, a sense of the qualities that make a story outstanding, and increased confidence and self-esteem. The library is not able to continue the program due to funding and staff limitations. However it is hoped that other community agencies will develop a similar program.

Lincoln City Libraries used grant funds to develop Treasure Bags. These kits of materials, accompanied by training, are used by day care personnel to present story programs in care centers. Project Coordinator Sandra Wallick reports that twenty Treasure Bags have been assembled, but training of personnel and circulation of the kits has not yet been launched. These activities are eagerly anticipated by day care staff and should occur this year. Plans are already being formulated for further kit themes.

*Mary Jackson*

The *N-Compass* is available on audiocassette tape upon request. To receive a copy, please contact **Brad Hauptman** at the Nebraska Library Commission, 402-471-6241 or 800-742-7691.

## Commission Participates in Telecommunication Planning

The United States Department of Commerce awarded Nebraska a technology infrastructure grant to help plan for statewide information technology. The \$212,455 planning grant was awarded under the Commerce Department's new Telecommunications and Information Infrastructure Assistance Program for FY 1994. The Nebraska Library Commission will serve as a major partner in developing a comprehensive plan to build a powerful, statewide telecommunications network equipped to carry voice, video and data communications across Nebraska.

Library Commission staff will solicit input from librarians, state employees, and other current and potential information technology users re: needs for telecommunication services. The planning process builds on information gathered during Governor Ben Nelson's conference on information technology in March and the "Challenge Nebraska" conference on educational technology sponsored by Sen. Bob Kerrey in May, as well as information communicated in the Draft Report of the NE Information Technology Commission (See related article on p. 3).

## Technology Center Opens in Library

Kearney Public Library and Information Center recently opened the Technology Learning Center. The Center is a cooperative community partnership between government, health education and private business. It is funded by a Community Development Block Grant and housed in the public library. The Center is free of charge and open to the public, targeted at home-based business and micro-enterprise owners. Much of the equipment has been loaned by local vendors who appreciate the opportunity to display their technology products to the public. The Center's coordinator is Julie Nelson. Students from the University of Nebraska at Kearney will teach workshops and provide one-on-one instruction.

## Public Library Laws Revision

The legislative bill introduced in January, 1994, to replace public library laws (LB 997) was not advanced by the Legislature. However, an Interim Study Resolution (LR 39) has continued the consideration of public library governance, funding, and access. Representatives of the Nebraska Library Commission, Nebraska Library Association, and the Nebraska League of Municipalities have met with

legislative staff to address concerns and issues raised during consideration of LB 997.

The Legislature's General Affairs Committee, Chaired by Senator Stan Schellpeper, convened a public hearing in November concerning public library issues. New legislation is expected to be introduced in 1995 to provide for the creation of county library federations and public library districts. Legislation is also expected to include provisions allowing citizens to initiate proposals re: including public library issues on municipal and county election ballots. These measures could extend public library service areas, broaden funding support, and provide services to all citizens of Nebraska.

## STAR Manual Available

The STAR (Statewide Training for Accurate Reference) Manual is now available from the Nebraska Library Commission. Nebraska Library Association members may purchase the manual for \$5, and non-NLA members for \$15. The 300-page loose-leaf manual was developed to assist librarians in meeting the needs of people in their communities. Chapters include the reference process and the ethics of reference, as well as chapters on special kinds of questions—legal, medical, arts, genealogy, business, etc...

The manual was a joint project of the Nebraska Library Association, the Nebraska Library Commission, and the Regional Library Systems. If you would like a copy, send a check for the correct amount payable to the Nebraska Library Association, along with name and mailing address to: STAR Reference Manual, c/o Nebraska Library Commission. Questions should be directed to Lisa Brawner at the Commission, 402-471-4015 or 800-307-2665.

## Nebraska Publications Database

A database containing more than 15,000 records for Nebraska state agencies' publications has been added to *Nebraska Online*. The database, located in the "Online Catalogs" section, lists all publications received at the Nebraska Library Commission since 1972. All of these publications are available for direct loan from the Commission by calling 402-471-4016 or 800-307-2665. Many of them are also available in microfiche format at the 14 state documents depositories across the state. The database is an online catalog searchable by call number, author, title, subject and keyword. It is continuously updated as new items are added to the collection of annual reports, directories, handbooks, cooperative extension pamphlets as well as University of Nebraska Press publications.

## Council Issues Challenge to Libraries

During their September meeting, the State Advisory Council on Libraries adopted the following statement:

*"The State Advisory Council on Libraries challenges Nebraska libraries to link every citizen of the state with information technologies by becoming a catalyst for community planning and aggressively obtaining funding. Libraries are challenged to partner to accomplish the goal of information access. Librarians are challenged to increase their knowledge and ability to use information technologies to service their communities."*

The State Advisory Council's purpose is to provide the Nebraska Library Commission with information about library activities and programs throughout the state and to make recommendations about library legislation, trends, projects, and planning initiatives.

Current members appointed by the Commission are:

Becky Baker, Seward Public Library  
Dr. Elmer Baker, York College  
Maureen Batistella, Wayne State College  
Brenda Behsman, North Platte Public Library  
Verda Bialac, Omaha Public Library  
Joan Birnie, Broken Bow Public Library  
Phyllis Brunken, Education Service Unit #7  
Dena Crews, Chadron Public Library  
Laura Cundiff, Clay Center Public Library  
Ella Epp, Henderson Community School  
Jeanne Leader, Western Nebraska Community College  
Sharon Mason, University of Nebraska at Kearney  
Guadalupe Mier, Bellevue Public Library  
Patricia Sheridan, Roman L. Hruska U.S. Meat Animal Research Center  
Carol Speicher, Northeast Library System  
Sharon Wiegert, Papillion Public Library  
Sally Wise, University of Nebraska, Lincoln

## NET Project

The Library Commission will partner with Nebraska Educational Telecommunications (NET) on a project funded by a \$114,000 grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) and the US West Foundation to develop and encourage free public access to statewide educational and informational on-line services. The project's goal is to provide universal access to a broad spectrum of on-line services. A gopher will point to census data, agricultural information and library holdings, and will eventually grow to include graphics and full-motion video. The communities of Cambridge, Chadron and Lincoln are

also included in the project as model community locations for development of a local community information system.

The communities will develop local information networks tailored specifically to their local needs. These pilot communities will work locally to identify what they want to access and how they will organize it, given their own particular situations.

One unique feature of the project is a math homework service. The service will have three components: 1) a homework "hotline" for K-12 students; 2) supplemental classroom material to complement distance learning courses; and 3) on-line discussion groups for both students and teachers.

The project, called NebraskaNet, proposes several services including viewer and listener comment forums for the Nebraska ETV and Public Radio networks, electronic program guides and listings services, a "Backyard Farmer" helpline to complement the long-running television series, and others.

## Unclaimed Property Information Available on Nebraska Online

Nebraskans now have one more way to find out if they have unclaimed funds owed them by the State because of a cooperative effort between the Nebraska Library Commission and the State Treasurer's Office.

In October, State Treasurer Dawn Rockey and Nebraska Library Commission Executive Director, Rod Wagner, traveled to libraries across the state to announce Nebraska's unclaimed property listing's availability to the public on the Library Commission's *Nebraska Online* service.

Librarians across the state report that local citizens are already beginning to find unclaimed property using the library's public access computers. Unclaimed Property includes forgotten bank accounts, uncashed wage checks, stock and stock dividends, gift certificates, overlooked utility deposits and estate proceeds. These unclaimed assets are turned over to the State Treasurer by businesses and governmental agencies. The State Treasurer then attempts to find the correct owners of the property and return it.

To view this information, select "Databases" from the main menu of *Nebraska Online* and "State Government Databases" from the next menu. *Nebraska Online* can be accessed through the Internet (telnet to: neon.nlc.state.ne.us) or by using a computer modem to dial 402-471-4020 (in Lincoln) or 800-392-7932 (in Nebraska only) — modem setting: VT-100 or VT-102, 1200/2400/9600 bps, 8, N, 1.

## Volunteer Narrators Help Talking Book and Braille Service

Volunteer narrators spend more than 100 hours a month in the two studios of the Nebraska Library Commission recording Talking Book and Braille Service books and magazines. People who, for medical reasons, have difficulty reading print borrow these tapes and playback equipment free of charge.

Audio Production Studio Manager Bill Ainsley says narrators are students, teachers, attorneys, hotel operators, television station programmers, hairdressers, coffee experts, and newspaper people. There's even one who examines examiners, and another who might give someone \$100,000 if they have the correct number. Some of the narrators might be considered, "retired." They are former business people and members of the clergy. Ainsley says they are not really retired because they are still working in the studios.

Some of the nearly 20 narrators have just started, others have been coming in for ten years or longer. Ainsley says they record about 20 magazines per month plus books of interest to Nebraskans. More narrators are always welcome. People interested in volunteering may contact Volunteer Coordinator Diane Greenlee at the Nebraska Library Commission, 402-471-4033 or 800-307-2665.

## Rural Information Center Publications

The Rural Information Center (RIC), located in the National Agriculture Library in Beltsville, MD, provides information and referral services to local, state and federal government officials, community organizations, health professionals, libraries, businesses, and rural citizens working to maintain the vitality of America's rural areas. Staff provide customized information products, answer information requests, perform brief literature searches, furnish bibliographies, identify USDA and DHHS research and Cooperative Extension programs on a topic, refer users to organizations or experts in the field, and provide interlibrary loan through your local library from the National Agriculture Library's extensive collection.

The Library Commission has available for loan a series of guides and bibliographies produced by RIC. Each publication covers one topic, and may include lists of books, articles, and audiovisuals available at RIC, names of contact persons, or guides to funding sources. Sample titles include *Downtown Revitalization*, *Rural Youth Employment*, *Innovative Approaches in Rural Education*, *Federal*

*Funding Sources for Rural Areas*, *A Guide to Funding Resources*, *The Value of Wetlands*, *Retirement Communities in Rural America*, and *Affordable Community Housing*. To borrow them call the Library Commission at 402-471-4016 or 800-307-2665. For more information about RIC services call the Rural Information Center at 800-633-7701 between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Eastern Time. Internet users may send an email message to RIC@NALUSDA.GOV.

The Rural Information Center also maintains a section on Agriculture Library Forum (ALF), the electronic bulletin board of the National Agriculture Library. To access ALF, modem dial 301-504-6510 or telnet fedworld.gov and select D for gateway, D for government systems, and 2 for ALF. *Electronic Access to Rural Information: User's Manual for the ALF Bulletin Board*, is available for loan from the Library Commission.

## Nebraska Information Network

Representatives of companies from Nebraska's telecommunications industry have formed the non-profit Nebraska Information Network (NIN). The NIN was formed to better coordinate activity between the telecommunications industry and Nebraska state government. NIN is an outgrowth of the industry's work over the past several years with the State of Nebraska in building a statewide telecommunications network. Governor Nelson has appointed state government representatives to a Communications Bridge Task Force to work with NIN in identifying needs and priorities. Rod Wagner, Library Commission Director, was appointed by Governor Nelson to serve on the Task Force.

## ALA Resources Available Online

ACRL-Forum, an unmoderated listserv, is now available for discussion of issues pertinent to the American Library Association's Association of College and Research Libraries (ALA-ACRL), academic librarianship and higher education.

To subscribe send the message "**Sub ACRL-FRM your name to 'listserv@uicvm'**" for bitnet users and "**'listserv@uicvm.uic.edu'**" for Internet users.

ACRL also contributes to ALA's gopher on the Internet. To access the ALA gopher, users can point their favorite gopher client to **gopher.uic.edu (port 70)**. Once users access the gopher at the University of Illinois at Chicago, the ALA gopher can be reached by selecting the "**library**" option on the main menu and then "**American Library Association**" on the submenu.

## Recipients of *NEON* Start-up Grants

The Library Commission recently announced the institutions receiving the latest *NEON* Start-up Grants through NEBASE. The recipients are:

Sutton Public School	Fairbury Jr./Sr. High School
Davenport School	Nebraska City Public Library
Cozad Public Library	Plattsmouth Public Library
Clarkson Public Library	Bridgeport Public Library
Tecumseh Public Library	Norfolk Senior High School
Syracuse School	Nebraska Indian Community College
Geneva High School/Elementary School	

*NEON* is the state-wide union catalog comprised of more than four million records from more than sixty public, academic, school and special libraries. This catalog is maintained online through Online Computer Library Center (OCLC), and allows libraries to conduct virtually all of their Interlibrary Loan activity online and thereby increase the speed, dependability, and flexibility of this service. "Start-up" grants to libraries allow for free use of *NEON* for approximately one year, after which the library takes over operating costs. These thirteen institutions join more than 60 existing *NEON* libraries, and will receive training from NEBASE staff early next year.

For more information about *NEON*, call Paul S. Hoffman 402-471-4021, Sara Martin 402-471-3217, or Ellen Van Waart 402-471-4004 or 800-307-2665 at the Nebraska Library Commission.

## Public Access now Offered to Talking Book Union Catalog

A new component to *Nebraska Online* offers public access to a catalog which includes the holdings of the Nebraska Library Commission Talking Book and Braille Service. CD-BLND contains on CD-ROM the union catalog of the Library of Congress/National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS/BPH). Books in recorded or braille formats are available to individuals or facilities certified as eligible.

CD-BLND, as a public access catalog, permits direct searches by Nebraska librarians, borrowers of the Talking Book and Braille Service or their family members, and the public. Further refinements are expected to enhance direct access for talking book borrowers by improving compatibility with assistive technology software, such as screen review programs used in conjunction with synthetic speech.

Currently, CD-BLND serves as the union catalog of over sixty holding agencies. In addition to NLS/BPH network libraries, other agencies, such as Recording for the Blind, may have their own procedures to certify eligibility. CD-BLND also contains materials produced by agencies in other English-speaking countries, such as Australia, Canada, Ireland and Great Britain. These materials may be interloaned through the Talking Book and Braille Service for any eligible borrower. Contact Readers' Services at 800-742-7691 for more information.

## 1995 Summer Reading Program Videos

For the summer of 1995, Nebraska Children's Librarians can create their own Summer Reading Program Video schedule. The Nebraska Library Commission will not offer pre-packaged summer video circuits and librarians are encouraged to choose videos that will work with their programs. Videos can be reserved starting January 1, 1995 for specific days. They may be scheduled as much as one year in advance, but scheduling should be completed by March to ensure the availability of specific choices.

A list of videos purchased specifically for "Adventure Begins at Camp Read-A-Lot," the 1995 summer reading program, is now available. To schedule videos, please call or write: Nebraska Library Commission, Information Services, 1200 N Street, Suite 120, Lincoln NE 68508-2023; 402-471-4024 or 800-307-2665; fax 402-471-6244.

In addition to these new videos, a number of bear and camp-related videos are available in the Library Commission collection. See the current *Nebraska Library Commission Video List* for other children's videos. If you have questions or comments, contact Lisa Brawner, 402-471-4015; Cecelia Kopp, 402-471-4032; or Mary Jackson, 402-471-4006; or 800-307-2665.

Video programs are likely to draw children who aren't confirmed readers to the library. When book and video media are compared and discussed as part of storytime, new dimensions are opened for the children in your audience.

The Library Commission videos are free of charge. Libraries must participate in the Motion Picture Licensing Corporation Agreement (MPLC) in order to borrow videos. If you would like more information about the MPLC Agreement plan, please contact your system administrator or Jim Minges, 402-471-3175 or 800-307-2665.

## Federal Documents Collection Update

The Library Commission is a selective depository for federal government publications, and has over 250,000 items in its collection. Thousands of new items are added each year, and the collection must be weeded regularly to keep it current and useful. To comply with federal regulations, all weeded items must be offered to the state regional depository and the other Nebraska depositories before they can be discarded. Federal documents staffers Lori Sailors and Theresa Dill have undertaken a large weeding project, and since July of 1992 have discarded nearly 70,000 items. The weeding project will also make space available for other staff and programs at the Commission.



Theresa Dill weeding federal documents.

## Douglas County increases library funds

The Douglas County Board of Commissioners has authorized a levy of \$1.5 million in its 1995 budget to provide library service through the six public libraries in Douglas County. This dramatic improvement in library services in the Omaha metropolitan area has occurred through the efforts of a broad coalition of city and county residents. The issue of county access to library services was brought to public attention during the past year due to the need of the Omaha Public Library to receive county funding in order to continue service to county residents. An advisory committee appointed by the Library Board of the Omaha Public Library studied the issue at length, in consultation with other libraries in Douglas County. The advisory committee recommended three phases in continuing and improving library services in the Omaha/Douglas County area:

- Allocation of funds by Douglas County to continue county library service on an interim basis.
- Development of a Douglas County Library, governed by an appointed library board.
- Creation of a multi-county library district serving the counties in the Omaha metropolitan area.

The allocation of funds by the Douglas County Commission to the Bennington, Elkhorn, Omaha, Ralston, Valley and Waterloo Public Libraries will be allocated according to a formula which includes the population and local tax support for libraries in those communities, and the level of use of the libraries by county residents. The second and third phases recommended by the advisory committee would require changes in state statutes.

## Papillion Electronic Bulletin Board

The city of Papillion now has a multi-user Electronic Bulletin Board System (BBS) known as the Papillion Community Link. The system allows local groups, clubs, organizations, churches, schools, etc. the ability to distribute information and schedules to area residents via computer and modem. The system also gives messaging capabilities (e-mail) to local government officials and any user or organization wishing to have an account on the system. Public interest forums on most subjects are allowed and may be developed on the BBS and groups or individuals will be able to gather information with online questionnaires or polls. The BBS also gives users access to the Papillion Public Library online catalog as well as access to CD-ROM based reference material. Complete Internet access will soon be available. An online teleconference is also available for users to have electronic discussions on scheduled subjects or with a guest such as the Mayor, City Council representative, or any other user on the system. For more information, contact Sally Payne or Tim Willett at the Papillion Public Library, 402-597-2050.

## NEBASE Annual Meeting Highlight

The highlight of the NEBASE annual meeting in October was a two-hour videoconference on "The Electronic Library." The keynote speech was given by Sidney Verba, Director of the Harvard University Library. Immediately following, a panel of speakers responded to questions from the videoconference audience. The questions were as varied as the locations from which they came, which included academic libraries in Europe and the U.S. and public libraries across the U.S. Two copies of the videoconference are available for circulation via Interlibrary Loan. A printed program accompanies each videotape. Call the information desk at the Library Commission, 402-471-4024 or 800-307-2665, and ask for the "International Videoconference on the Electronic Library."

# News of Nebraska Libraries And People

- **Bonnie Barley** is retiring as Director at the Arlington Public Library. Kay Stork will be assuming her duties temporarily. **Pat Peterson** is leaving Lincoln City Libraries to participate in post masters certificate programs in library science and historic preservation in Hawaii.
- The **Library Commission** has hired **Janet Greser** to serve as the first point of contact for *Nebraska Online* information, **Cindi Hickey**, starting on January 3 as *Nebraska Online* Librarian, and **Cathy Hatterman**, to start on December 12 as acquisitions assistant.
- The **Arnold Heights Branch of Lincoln City Libraries**, along with thousands of libraries around the country, encourages parents to give their children a "JumpStart" at the library with a new program directed to parents of first, second, and third-graders. The program, sponsored by The Prudential in cooperation with the American Library Association, promotes library card sign-up and use among children and gives parents fresh, practical information on reading and learning through newsletter distributed by Arnold School. When families come to the library they are entered in a contest with a chance to win a college scholarship, computers, or encyclopedias.
- An article, "Developing Behavioral Reference Desk Performance Standards," by **Carole Larson and Laura Dickson** (University of Nebraska-Omaha librarians) was published in the Spring 1994 issue of *RQ*, a national journal published by the American Library Association.
- **Library Commission staff** will be active in Nebraska Library Association activities this year. **Burns Davis** was appointed Executive Director and **Rod Wagner** elected President. In addition, **Kit Keller** and **Beth Goble** serve as Secretary for the Paraprofessional and Special and Institutional sections, respectively.
- In a recent "Omaha World Herald" poll, 83% of Omahans said they used the public library sometimes, 1% said they visited the library daily and 17% said they never set foot in one. This compares favorably with national statistics and helps to set the stage for increased library funding (see related article on p.11).
- New Library directors in the state include: **Jeanne Saathoff**, Kearney Public Library and Information Center; **Deb Kruse**, Hildruth Public Library; **Janet Kent**, Sidney Public Library; **Jill Catlett**, Bruning Public Library; and **Michael LaCroix**, Creighton Reinert/Alumni Library.
- **Mary Jackson** and **Beth Goble** of the **Library Commission** are participating in the Community Improvement Mentoring Program. Along with resource persons from the Nebraska Departments of Health, Economic Development and Water Resources and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, they provide online consultation to high school students working on a community improvement project sponsored by Dorothy Farr and Paul Ekberg of Educational Service Unit #10.
- **Edith Abbott Memorial Library** in Grand Island is one of eleven communities hosting a Sheldon Art Gallery exhibit entitled: "From statues to sculpture: selections from the collection of the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery and Sculpture Garden." The library hosted the exhibit during October.
- The **City of Alliance** voted to approve a sales and use tax to be applied to the construction of a library-technology center. The vote, which passed 61% to 31%, cleared the way to plan the building of a new library.
- Application materials are available for the 1995 American Library Association (ALA) **Carroll Preston Baber Grant**. The deadline is January 2, 1995. See *Nebraska Online* for further details.
- Competition has opened for the **1995 John Cotton Dana Library Public Relations Award** contest sponsored by The H.W. Wilson Company and the Library Administration and Management (LAMA), a division of the American Library Association. The deadline for entries in February 13, 1995. See *Nebraska Online* for further details.

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## Nebraska Library Commission



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