



Your guide
to the
Nebraska
Library
Commission

N_EW S L E T T E R

Compass

Fall 1997

Vol. 4 No. 3

Interstate Enrichment through Children's Service

Eighty children's librarians and media specialist attended the

Library Commission's Children's Services Share

Fairs in Ogallala and Lincoln. Participants were also presenters, presenting and learning about such diverse topics as *Scenario Thinking*, *Partnership IDEAS*, *Family Literacy*, *Kids as Authors* and *Web Sites for Children*. They browsed displays, won prizes and heard Storyteller Nancy Duncan's tales showcasing the magic of libraries. In addition, participants had an opportunity to interact and exchange experiences with other Nebraska librarians and Iowa youth librarians. Roy Kenagy, Iowa State Library Children's Consultant, brought five Iowa librarians to the Lincoln Share Fair.

This spring four Nebraska librarians traveled with Commission Children's Services Coordinator Mary Jackson to Des Moines to the Kids First Conference. Judy Andrews, Bellevue Public Library; Joan Chesley, Fremont Public Library; Vickie Perrie, Superior Public Library; and Marci Retzlaff, Norfolk Public Library, heard Jim Scheppke describe a public library future. In this future, the Golden Age of Libraries is peaking, a future



▲ Nationally known storyteller Nancy Duncan spinning a tale for children's librarians and media specialists at the Share Fair in Lincoln this fall.

in which libraries need to move aggressively to develop outreach services for children at-risk and school readiness activities for preschoolers. Nebraska librarians also became aware of differences in the way libraries are funded from state to state. Nebraska and Iowa continue to make special efforts to cooperatively develop continuing education opportunities for children's librarians and to give librarians opportunities to compare and contrast issues and practices.

The 1999 Summer Reading Program manual, *Treasure Your Library*, is in process. Art and materials will be finalized in March 1998. To see and offer feedback on the art, request specific items, or contribute ideas for the 1999 manual, contact Mary Jackson, 402-

471-4006, 800-307-2665, e-mail: <mjackson@neon.nlc.state.ne.us> by February 1, 1998.

The seven state cooperative consortium decides on the theme and slogan for 2000 at an April 1998 meeting in Omaha. Nebraska representatives are Karen Drevo, Norfolk and Delores Feekin, Crete. The Nebraska Youth Advisory Board will recommend Nebraska's theme preference at their January meeting. Themes are listed on the Commission home page at <http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/news/content/336.html>. To suggest a new theme or indicate a preference, contact the folks listed above or Youth Advisory Board representatives (see article on page 3). Contact Mary Jackson if interested in attending the Omaha meeting of the Cooperative to observe the process. ▲

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From the Director...

Telecommunications Discounts Imminent

Implementation of the universal service telecommunications discount program for schools and libraries has inched closer with the creation and staffing of the Schools and Libraries Corporation (SLC). This new non-profit corporation was created to administer the schools and libraries telecommunications discount program. Its mission is to make this program work as smoothly and as effectively as possible.

There are many unanswered questions concerning how the program will work. The two \$64 thousand dollar questions are: when will the application forms be official and available and when will the SLC begin accepting applications? The availability of application forms is imminent. Mid-January now appears to be the earliest date for applications to be submitted. The first-come, first-serve application process has been eased with the decision to establish a 75 day "window" to treat all applications received within this period as equal. This 75 day period will begin with the announced start date for accepting applications. Keep in mind that the application process includes the submission of descriptions of services sought followed by a second submission of services ordered. Between is a minimum four week posting of services for vendors to place bids. A third form will be required to confirm a service order and receipt of services.

January 1, 1998, is still the target effective date for discounts. With the later start date for applications, there will be a provision allowing for a retroactive start for service charges at discounted rates.

There is information galore on universal service. Check the Nebraska Library Commission's universal service Web site at <<http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/nsf/universal.html>>. This site, jointly sponsored with the Nebraska Department of Education and Nebraska Educational Service Units, has links to other related sources including the American Library Association, Education and Library Networks Coalition, Federal Communications Commission, and the National Exchange Carrier Association. ▲

Rod Wagner

Commissioners Appoint New Council

At their November meeting, the Nebraska Library

Commissioners made appointments to the State Advisory

Council on Libraries. They approved re-appointments for Sylvia Person, Media Specialist, Holdrege Public Schools; Troy Strom, City Administrator, Ashland; Kathy Tooker, Administrator, Eastern Library System; Richard Voeltz, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Love Library; Jeanne Saathoff, Director, Kearney Public Library and Information Center and new appointments for Jane Wall, Media Specialist, Grand Island High School; Wally Seiler, Alliance Public

Library Board member.

They also moved to permit Commission staff to move forward with negotiations to provide staff support and serve as host for the Nebraska Center for the Book and approved the Commission's Internet policy statement, *Access to Electronic Information, Service, and Networks: A Nebraska Library Commission Interpretation, March 1997*, see <<http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/freedom/elecaccess.html>>. For the full minutes of the Commission meeting, see <<http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/commis/commin.html>> or contact Elaine Miller, 402-471-4008, 800-307-2665, e-mail: <emiller@neon.nlc.state.ne.us> for a print copy. ▲

▼ The State Advisory Council on Libraries met in December at the Sump Memorial Library in Papillion. See <<http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/stadv/stadv.html>> for details.



NCompass

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Commissioners: Karen Warner, Norfolk, term expires 2000; Frances Lovell, Gering, term expires 1998; Ron Norman, Kearney, term expires 1998; Jean Sanders, Lincoln, term expires 1999; Katherine Fletcher, Omaha, term expires 1999; Robert King, Holdrege, term expires 2000. Commission meetings are held the second Friday of every other month, or as scheduled by public action of the board.

State Employees Offered Desktop Access

As part of the library service offered to state employees, Library Commission staff are training state employees to access FirstSearch databases at their desktops and at Commission public access computers. FirstSearch, an OCLC (Online Computer Library Center) reference service, includes more than 60 databases covering a wide range of subjects. With the use of federal funds, we offer seven of the databases to state agency staff. At the training sessions offered at the Commission during November, participants received specific directions for logging on and using this service. Additional sessions are



◀ Network Services Director Jo Budler with Gerry Oligmueller, State Budget Administrator, the first state employee to make a direct ILL request via FirstSearch.

planned for 1998. For more information, contact Jo Budler, 402-471-4031, 800-307-2665, e-mail: <jbudler@neon.nlc.state.ne.

us> or see <<http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/netserv/firstsearch.html>>. ▲

Library Commission Funds Systems

The recent award of \$1,259,771 in FY 97-99 library support grants will fund training and development assistance for Nebraska libraries through Nebraska's six Regional Library Systems.

Each of the six regional library systems submitted a *Plan for Library Service 1997-99* in April of this year.

The Library Commission approved these plans this summer and the new agreements represent a 6% increase over funding for the last biennium. The Library Systems partner with the Library Commission to create statewide relationships so that Nebraskans can get answers to questions and borrow books and other materials from anywhere, can have access to Information Technology including the Internet, and can learn about the services of libraries.

They also provide training and Continuing Education workshops for librarians and library board members. Library systems also help libraries improve Children's Services, as well as materials and programs for adults. This continuing partnership between the regional library systems and the Nebraska Library Commission has been in existence since 1985. ▲

Youth Advisory Board Meets

The Commission's Youth Advisory Board met in Lincoln this fall to review and finalize the Youth Improvement Plan, a plan for improving conditions and library services for Nebraska children to be implemented by the Library Commission. Six problems affecting children were identified and solutions for each were brainstormed. We invite Nebraska librarians to share comments and reactions to the draft by contacting any member of the Board or Mary Jackson. For a draft copy of the plan, see the Commis-

sion home page at <<http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/libdev/yip.html>> or contact Mary Jackson, 402-471-4006, 800-307-2665, e-mail: <mjackson@neon.nlc.state.ne.us>. Members of the 1997/98 board are: Deb Carlson, Karen Drevo, Sharon Wiegert, Mitzi Mueller and Delores Feekin (three years); Judy Andrews, Bernice Mason, Kathy Thomsen, Kathy Lake, Merry Von Seggern and Cindy Sowl (two years); Maxine Erpelding, Thomas Kelly, Nina Little, Kathy Wasserburger, Karla Wendelin and Karen Zaruba (first year). ▲

Bonnie Processes and Archives Nebraska State Publications

M eet Bonnie Henzel, our new State Documents Staff Assistant. Bonnie's responsibilities include processing and archiving Nebraska state publications

Bonnie came to the library profession by way of necessity and because her computer skills were needed to help automate the library at Peru State College.

and documents. She maintains the State Publications Online on the Library Commission and State Government home pages. She came to the library profession by way of necessity since her computer skills were needed to help automate the library at Peru State College. Bonnie is a graduate of Peru State College where she earned her degree in business administration. These skills came in handy during her nine years at the Peru State College Library as she worked with the automated acquisitions system to process orders and invoices. As a student at Peru,

she played volleyball and later coached for eight years.

Bonnie and Vince, her husband of eleven and a half years, are both from nine-sibling families. They are parents of Kayla and Alaina, two-and-a-half-year-old twin girls. Bonnie says the best thing about living in Nebraska is the proximity to family. When she is not busy parenting, Bonnie enjoys reading biographies and news-related novels. She has read almost everything on the Kennedy family and the Starkweather murders. She also enjoys cooking, sewing and singing. ▲



Maria Handles Quality Control

M aria Ford is the new Cassette Maintenance Clerk for the Talking Book and Braille Service. This is a part-time position rewinding and checking for

Her love for libraries and reading began as an eight-year-old when Maria's older sister routinely brought her to the Iowa library where she worked.

repairs in the daily circulation. On average, she rewinds and checks 300 titles each morning. Maria is a graduate of Lincoln East High School and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln where she earned a bachelor's degree in English with minors in ethnic studies and sociology. She also attended Emporia State University in Emporia where she earned her master's degree in library science. Formerly, she was the librarian at the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia.

Her love for libraries and reading began as an eight-year-old when

Maria's older sister routinely brought her to the Iowa library where she worked. Maria is a self-proclaimed lover of romances. Her favorite authors are LaVyrle Spencer and Jude Deveraux. She also reads just a little bit of everything else. Maria was recently married in June 1996. A week after the marriage, they acquired a Rottweiler named Choco (short for chocolate). In her spare time, Maria is a devoted letter writer, a collector of Beanie Babies and a fan of Monday Night Wrestling. She enjoys spending time with her husband, Herb, Choco, and her mother who lives in Lincoln. ▲



Devra Would Like a Universal Library Card



Devra Dragos is the Library Commission's new OCLC Member Services Coordinator. Devra's responsibilities include providing technical support and training

for libraries using OCLC products, answering support calls, traveling to libraries to provide training, writing OCLC articles and traveling to Dublin, OH for OCLC meetings and updates. She became a librarian after a professionally unsatisfying stint in the business world. Having worked in a library in Jr. and Sr. High School, she decided working in a library might be more satisfying due to her love of research and reading. She moved to Omaha to attend UN-O and enrolled in Library Science courses. She graduated with a BS in education and completed her MLS in Columbia at the University of Missouri. Formerly, Devra was the librarian at the

Beatrice State Development Center.

Of the Internet, Devra says there is a lot of valuable information to be found but it is a frustrating search environment due to lack of standardized subject headings. If Devra could make any change in the library world, she would like to see every Nebraskan pay taxes for library services and provide a universal library card for statewide services. Devra is an avid reader and a fan of mysteries. Her favorite authors are Dorothy Sayers, Josephine Tey and Charlotte MacLeod. Devra has lived in six states but has come back to Nebraska twice. In her free time, Devra enjoys travel and is learning how to play bridge. ▲

She became a librarian after a professionally unsatisfying stint in the business world.

Kandi Urges Libraries to Continually Re-evaluate



Kandi Gordon Thomas is the new Federal Documents Staff Assistant at the Library Commission. She describes her duties as maintaining, processing, checking

in, and filing federal documents. She also performs similar duties with Nebraska state documents. In addition to documents, Kandi works with Library Resource Center (LRC) statistics and helps cover the phone in the reception area during lunches. Kandi is a lifelong resident of Lincoln. She is a graduate of Lincoln High School and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln where she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English with a minor in art. An avid reader, Kandi particularly enjoys the genres of science fiction and psychological thrillers. Two of her favorite authors

are Herman Hesse and Torey Haden.

Kandi was attracted to the library profession because she felt that it was the perfect combination of English and science. Both areas appeal to her interests and skills. Kandi believes it is important for libraries to continually re-evaluate why they exist and to be wise stewards of the resources they are given. She is a sports enthusiast and an artist who enjoys all media but especially prefers illustration. In December, Kandi and her husband Jeff became parents of their first baby. Congratulations and welcome to Kandi. ▲

Kandi was attracted to the library profession because she felt that it was the perfect combination of English and science.

Special Report...

Keene Memorial Library Takes the Lead

This article begins a series of stories of Nebraska libraries. Further details about each "snapshot" of an interesting library service challenge or example of interesting solutions to community information needs is provided on the Library Commission home page at <http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/news/news.html>. For more information, contact the local contact person, in this case, Ann Stephens, 402-727-2694, stephens@keene.lib.ne.us. To respond to this story or to submit one for future publication, contact Mary Jo Ryan, 402-471-3434, 800-307-2665, e-mail: mjryan@neon.nlc.state.ne.us.

The Keene Memorial Library in Fremont has been involved in making community information accessible via technology for several years. With the Fremont Area Community Services Council, they create and continue to update a database of local information and directory of service agencies, available electronically at the library or on a dial-up basis. They also work with the Fremont Community Information Technology Committee on an ambitious project, *Connect Fremont*, to build a local area Intranet-based community information service connected to the Internet.

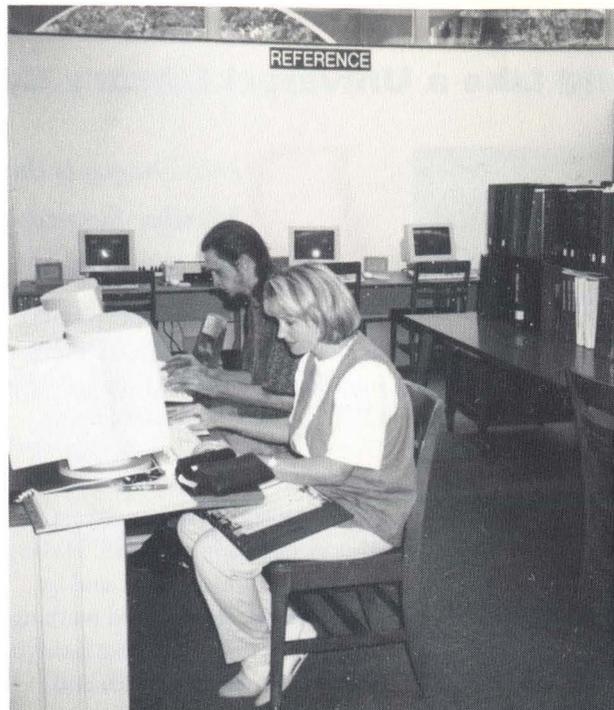
The vision for *Connect Fremont* is a non-profit Web site consolidating and linking all local resources, where organizations can put up their own home pages. It will include the community service directory, local job resources, and Fremont's Main Street business home pages. Ann Stephens, Library Director, reports that *Connect Fremont* has a modest budget of \$55,800, financed through a public/private partnership between the Nebraska Library Commission, The Fremont Friends of the Library, the local Internet Service Provider, and local support through KENO community betterment funds.

Local citizens can utilize Internet computer workstations at the library to access *Connect Fremont* and the Internet. Funds are also budgeted for training, publicity and consulting help for the library and community.

Several Information Technology Committee members and library staff will help train the public on how to use *Connect Fremont* and the Internet and will help create and update Web pages. Library policies for Internet use have been written.

Ann Stephens explains that *Connect Fremont* was conceived in an inclusive and homegrown environment. Ann recommends Douglas Shuler's book *New Community Networks: Wired for Change* for anyone interested in creating their own community network. She worries that technology will consume the library staff but recognizes the valuable role staff can play in keeping the information valuable and up-to-date. See *Connect Fremont* at <http://www.connectfremont.org/>. ▲

Amy Garwood



◀ Fremonters use two of the five terminals purchased by Connect Fremont to access the community network and the Internet.

Commission Distributes Publications

This fall, the Library Commission distributed multiple copies of the Nebraska Trustee Handbook and the Nebraska Laws Pertaining to Libraries and Library Operations to libraries and Library System Administrators. The *Trustee Handbook* was a collaborative effort between the

Commission and the Trustees, Users, and Friends section of the Nebraska Library Association. Additional copies can be ordered by contacting Mary Geibel, 402-471-2045 or 800-307-2665, e-mail: mgeibel@neon.nlc.state.ne.us. These publications will be accessible from the Commission home page in 1998, Search on the title at <http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/>. ▲

PLA Introduces Planning Process

The Public Library Association (PLA) will introduce a new planning process at its upcoming National Conference. *Planning and Role Setting for Public Libraries* and *Output Measures for Public Libraries* will be combined into a comprehensive planning program that promises to guide public libraries to new levels of library improvement. A preconference for public library staff members who will be using the new guide,

Planning for Results: A Library Transformation Process, in their local planning efforts will be held March 10-11, 1998 in Kansas City. Participants will be introduced to the *Planning for Results Guidebook and How-to Manual*. They will become familiar with library planning concepts including library vision statement, library service responses, resource allocation formulas, and simplified evaluation strategies. Commission staff plan to attend a session to assist them in providing training and consultation to librarians involved in planning efforts. ▲

Commission Goals Focus on Statewide Change

Long range plans are often received and then shuffled off to a pile with the good intent of having them handy for future reference, never to be looked at again. Nebraska Lieutenant Governor Kim Robak has referred to a large pile of reports she accumulated in her office and expressed the hope that information technology will eventually permit the elimination of these piles of paper and provide an easier and more efficient way to retrieve the information when it is needed. The new terminology for this is “knowledge management,” something libraries have been involved in for quite a while.

If you have seen and have set aside, or have never seen, the Nebraska Library Commission’s most recent long range plan, *Libraries for the 21st Century Nebraska Library Commission Library Services and Technology Act Five Year Plan, October 1, 1997-September 30, 2002.*, here’s a nutshell commentary. The complete document is available in electronic form at the Library Commission’s Web site: <<http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/about.html>>.

If we could attain all that is said in the statement “Affordable, reliable, progressive, and equitable library service for all Nebraskans regardless of their economic status and geographic location,” written last year following meetings among library supporters and librarians, we would have a significant achievement.

The long range plan goals are:

Goal 1: Nebraskans will have access to statewide library and information services regardless of format or location. Some will argue that this is already the case. It isn’t. There is great disparity across Nebraska in the kind and quality of library services. We can do a lot better. This goal challenges us to work toward a higher level of service, equally available to anyone, anywhere.

Goal 2: New and innovative library service arrangements will be encouraged to provide efficient access to library and information services for Nebraskans. Critics argue that this is jargon. The Nebraska Legislature has specifically challenged local governments to be “innovative.” This terminology comes right out of the Nebraska statutes. New and innovative implies an openness to considering different approaches to library service, if they offer better service. Innovation doesn’t mean throwing out things that work. We should ask: Are we providing the right services? What services are being performed well and need to be continued? What needs are not being met and how can we respond in an effective manner? Are there better ways to provide services? How can we demonstrate the value of what we do and make our best case to assure needed funding support?

Goal 3: Nebraskans will have access to information technology through library and information centers.

We have heard that there may be too much emphasis on technology. Books and periodical publications are the staple of libraries, and will be for a long while. But libraries must acquire and use technology to give the public access to the rapidly growing universe of information that is available in electronic form. This is the nature of the world we live in. For many people, libraries are the place to get access to these resources. Both the vision statement and the goals refer to “all” formats. This goal is about helping equip libraries to have and make effective use of technology for public benefit. This goal also addresses a primary focus of the new federal *Library Services and Technology Act*.

Goal 4: Nebraskans will be served by library staff with the knowledge and expertise to link them with the highest quality library and information services. This is another lofty goal. The critical ingredient in any library is the people who work in or on behalf of the library. Good, competent staff can overcome a lot of deficiencies. Given the range of educational needs, the variety of activity, the lack of time to participate, and the problem of distance to some educational sites, it is a tremendous challenge to educate library personnel. Low pay, overwork, and employee turnover rob libraries of the knowledge and talent needed to provide good library service. This goal challenges us all to retain qualified library personnel, find competent replacement staff, provide effective educational programs, and provide appropriate compensation.

Goal 5: All Nebraskans will have access to library and information services including persons with diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds; with disabilities; with limited functional literacy or information skills; having difficulty using a library; representing underserved urban and rural communities (including children from families with incomes below the poverty line). This goal is intended to tackle a major purpose of the *Library Services and Technology Act*, the “outreach” component, calling attention to the diversity of people living in Nebraska. This goal also calls attention to the need to assure that we are providing appropriate library services to “all” Nebraskans.

Progress toward these goals cannot be made without the help of many people and organizations. This is where another “jargon” term enters in—partners. Co-conspirator, collaborator, ally, partner organizations are those which have a mutual interest in effective library services in Nebraska communities and throughout Nebraska. We intend to make the long range plan more lively than static, to change it as time goes on and conditions change, and as progress is made. We invite all Nebraska library staff and supporters to work with us to help make this plan reality. ▲

Rod Wagner

Special Report...

Surveys Answer Burning Questions

File Facts is the Nebraska Library Commission's fast response survey used to gather facts when no existing information is available. It requires little effort from respondents and the results are compiled rapidly.

File Facts Survey #1 queried librarians about **fee collection and utilization**. It was sent to 279 public libraries with a 60% return. Of 160 libraries, only six libraries do not charge for any services and an additional 12 do not charge any overdue fees. The average service population for this group is 804. Forty-four percent of the libraries that collect fees do not turn the fees over to their funding source. The majority of libraries responding (76%) have no restrictions on spending money generated from fees. Those that do have restrictions, budget fees in the next fiscal year. A few use fees to pay the library's Interlibrary Loan bill. Some respondents indicate that they would prefer to charge fees in some cases, such as non-resident fees. Others

indicate that higher fees should be assessed for Interlibrary Loan. The monthly fees collected range from \$1 to \$19,000.

File Facts Survey #2 asked about **challenged materials** in Nebraska public libraries, materials that patrons complain about because of content or request removed from the collection. With a 46% return rate, 27% of respondents indicate that they consciously avoid making purchases of items which might be considered controversial or to which they might anticipate a challenge. Seventy-seven percent of those responding have a form for "Reconsideration of Library Materials" to use in facilitating the challenge process. Twenty-one percent of those responding do not have a collection development policy in place.

File Facts Survey #3 asked about Nebraska Librarian training needs and issues. Compilation is now available on the home page. If you have ideas for an upcoming survey, contact Kit Keller, 402-471-3216, 800-307-2665, e-mail: <kkeller@neon.nlc.state.ne.us>. For details see <<http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/libdev/Fasrespexpl.htm>> or contact Mary Geibel, 402-471-2045, 800-307-2665, e-mail: <mgeibel@neon.nlc.state.ne.us> for a print copy.

For more information about evaluation methods, request *The Tell It! Manual: The Complete Program for Evaluating Library Performance*, American Library Association, 1996, from Library Commission Information Services, 402-471-4016, 800-307-2665, e-mail: <ready@neon.nlc.state.ne.us>. ▲

Kit Keller

Statewide Conference in Omaha

The Fall 1997 Nebraska Library Association (NLA) Conference was held in Omaha in October and attended by more than 550 librarians and library supporters from across the state.

They attended three pre-conferences and more than 43 sessions, as well as exhibits by more than 100 vendors. The Association announced the winners of the following awards: The **Meritorious Service Award** given annually to a person, corporation or organization contributing to the improvement of library service in a local community; a county, region or state agency; or in library legislation was presented to **Kay Schmid**, Director of the Roman L. and Victoria E. Hruska Memorial Public Library in David City and to the **Capitol Campaign Committee** of the library. The **Mari Sandoz Award**, recognizing significant, enduring contribution to the Nebraska book world through writing, film production or related activity, was given to **Dr. Ron Hull**, Manager, station KUON-TV and Association General Manager, Nebraska ETV Network. The School, Children's, and Young People's Section (SCYP) of NLA awarded the **1997 Mad Hatter Youth Service Award** to **Becky Pasco**, Lincoln Public Schools Media Specialist and Instructor for Emporia State University's School of Library and Information Science. The Mad Hatter Award recognizes a

librarian who demonstrated outstanding service to children through innovative programming, service to the community and professional contributions to the field of librarianship. **New Members RoundTable (NMRT) Mentor of the Year** was also awarded to **Becky Pasco** for her significant impact on the professional development of librarians. The **NMRT Houchen Bindery Beginning Professional Award** went to **Diana Boone**, formerly with the Library Commission and currently at Creighton University. This award honors the individual making significant contributions toward the betterment of library and community relations, active in professional library organizations on a local, state or national level in the early years of their career. The **NMRT Friendliest Vendor Award** of conference attendees for their favorite or friendliest vendor was awarded to **Munson Book Sales**. **Dr. Sharon McCaslin**, Peru State College, received the **College and University Section Distinguished Service Award** for her active voice for intellectual freedom issues, establishing the Technical Services Roundtable and strong publishing record. **Myrna Vollbrecht** of Stanton was awarded the **Trustees Citation**. **Judy Grandstaff**, Director of the Blue Hill Public library won the **Excaliber Award** for exceptional public library service. **Vickie Beaver**, formerly of the Nebraska Library Commission, was named **Paraprofessional of the Year**. ▲

▼ Nancy Busch presents a "diploma" to Becky Pasco at the Mad Hatter luncheon.



A Fresh Look at the Library Bill of Rights, part seven

“A person’s right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.”

Article V of the Library Bill of Rights as adopted June 18, 1948 and amended February 2, 1961, June 27, 1967, and January 23, 1980 by the American Library Association Council and affirmed as *Nebraska Library Bill of Rights* April 3, 1981 by unanimous adoption of Nebraska Library Commission.

In this latest installment of the *NCompass* series examining applications of intellectual freedom and the Library Bill of Rights, we explore how librarians can stand up for the right to library service for all citizens.

Probably no librarian in Nebraska would deny materials access to someone of Spanish or Asian origin, nor would they take away the library card of a person of questionable background, say a father serving a jail sentence or parents who aren’t married. It is unlikely that anyone has ever been ejected from a library because they were a Democrat, a Republican, a conservative, a devout Baptist, a communist or even an American Nazi. Only one of the groups mentioned in Article V is systematically denied access to library materials and services, a group that is recognizable because of age. It isn’t always easy to recognize a Democrat or a Nazi, but children stand out. Some public librarians have traditionally assumed a protective parental role, denying children access to library materials. The availability of the Internet has added a difficult dimension to the librarian’s role in regard to children. It isn’t feasible or practical to monitor any patron’s use of the Internet (or books). Librarians who try, either through the use of filters or restrictive policies in regard to children, may

be more likely to be sued than librarians who support open access for all. Librarians must deal not only with their own discomfort about exposing children to “bad” materials, but also with political action groups whose concern about their own children extends to repression for all and library boards who feel the safest course is to avoid trouble and controversy.

If we look again at the Library Bill of Rights, one way out of this tangle of conflicting values and feelings is clear. No one is to be “denied access to library service because of age . . .” An appendix to the Bill of Rights goes on to specify that children are included under the Library Bill of Rights. Librarians who wish to observe the ethics of their profession can therefore stand up for children’s access to all library services and materials. Librarians can be a moral and resolute voice for intellectual freedom. Perhaps “stand up” is the operant phrase. They are not expected to fall down for it. When boards discuss passing repressive policies, the librarian’s obligation is to exercise the right to free speech, to quietly and logically speak on behalf of children’s need for information, to be a voice for the Bill of Rights. It is not their obligation to get fired or sued, only to speak up.

For more information see the Library Commission home page, <<http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/freedom/intelinfo.html>>. For the full text of the *Nebraska Intellectual Freedom Handbook*, see <<http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/freedom/intellectfree.html>> or contact Mary Geibel, 402-471-2045 or 800-307-2665, e-mail: <mgeibel@neon.nlc.state.ne.us>. Send comments to Mary Jackson, 402-471-4006 or 800-307-2665, e-mail: <mjackson@neon.nlc.state.ne.us>. ▲

Librarians who wish to observe the ethics of their profession can therefore stand up for children’s access to all library services and materials.

Commission Offers Database Trials and Discount Pricing

The Library Commission will make eleven databases available for online trial beginning in January 1998. For a detailed description and information on how to participate in the trials, see <<http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/netserv/trial.html>>.

Databases, Vendors and Trial Dates are listed below:

- African American Biographical Databases (Chadwyck-Healey) 1/15/98–2/28/98
- Congressional COMPASS (Congressional Information Service) 2/2/98–3/13/98
- Health Reference Center (Information Access Company [IAC]) 2/1/98–3/31/98
- Health Reference Center—Academic (IAC) 2/1/98–3/31/98
- Health Source Plus (EBSCO) 2/1/98–3/31/98
- ¡Informe! (IAC) 2/1/98–3/31/98
- International Index to Music Periodicals (Chadwyck-Healey) 3/1/98–4/30/98

- Literature Online (Chadwyck-Healey) 3/1/98–4/30/98
- PolicyFile (Chadwyck-Healey) 3/1/98–4/30/98
- SIRS Researcher (Social Issues Resource Series Inc.) 2/1/98–3/31/98
- TOPICsearch (EBSCO) 2/1/98–3/31/98.

The Library Commission is subsidizing library access to General Reference Center’s database, providing access to full text and image articles from general interest magazines, reference books and newspapers. It features indexing of 415 magazines and full text to 315 titles, plus a number of children’s magazines, Knight-Ridder/Tribune News Service articles, *The New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* (indexing only) and more than 15 reference books. This reduced price is available through June 1998. For more information, see <<http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/news/content/335.html>> or to subscribe, contact Jeannette Powell at 402-471-7740 or 800-307-2665, e-mail at <jpowell@neon.nlc.state.ne.us>. ▲

Special Report...

System Board Retreat Held

This summer the Library Commission sponsored a retreat in Kearney for regional library board members and administrators. The retreat included an orientation for new board members, a discussion of System Issues and Answers, and small group discussions of Library Commission goals and priorities. These small groups addressed how the systems and the Library Commission can work together to accomplish priority goal areas. The large group shared questions, strategies for implementation and evaluation models. Discussion focused on each of the Library Commission goals from the *Libraries for the 21st Century Nebraska Library Commission Library Services and Technology Act Five Year Plan, October 1, 1997-September 30, 2002*. * Highlights included:

Goal 1: Nebraskans will have access to statewide library and information services regardless of format or location. Ideas included publishing a public relations manual on the Internet, promoting a one-day statewide closing of libraries for Continuing Education and professional development, and conducting studies of a statewide reference center, Interlibrary Loan, and a statewide library card.

Goal 2: New and innovative library service arrangements will be encouraged to provide efficient access to library and information services for Nebraskans. Ideas included changing the way we offer training to a training centers model, raising public awareness of how libraries are changing, and revising how grants and other funding are awarded.

Goal 3: Nebraskans will have access to information technology through library and information centers. Ideas included broadening library service focus to the users' need for information via technology, empowering library staff and supporters to become vocal political advocates, and helping librarians to view "community" in a broader context.

Goal 4: Nebraskans will be served by library staff with the knowledge and expertise to link them with the highest quality library and information services. Ideas included promoting statutorily mandated standards for librarians, examining the formula for state funding, and working for legislative change.

Goal 5: All Nebraskans will have access to library and information services including persons with diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds; with disabilities, with limited functional literacy or information skills; having difficulty using a library; representing underserved urban and rural communities (including children from families with incomes below the poverty line). Ideas included changing attitudes toward special groups through awareness training, redefining "community," and creating a resource list of available materials.

*For the full text of the plan, see <<http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/about.html>>. ▲

Libraries Invited to Partner with Project Vote Smart

Project Vote Smart is the major program of the Center for National Independence in Politics, a national non-partisan, nonprofit organization providing citizens/voters with tools to insure public accountability by elected officials. Providing information about the political system, issues, candidates and elected officials, Project Vote Smart offers a Voter's Self-Defense System: factual, relevant, independent information. Resources include publications, a toll-free Hotline, and on-line computer access to information for tracking voting records, performance evaluations, campaign

finances and key legislation. Answers by the legislators themselves to a series of "no-wiggle room" questions can be found on their Web site under "Issue Positions." Public libraries can partner with Project Vote Smart by serving as an outlet for citizen access to these resources and providing feedback regarding the usefulness of this program. Sponsoring libraries can also promote and provide a site for the *Project Vote Smart On the Road Tour*, a traveling exhibit that will help train citizens and library staff on researching the issues and candidates. The exhibit is scheduled to go on the road during the 1998 election season. For more information, call 541-754-2746 or see <<http://www.vote-smart.org/>>. ▲

Governor Appoints Information Technology Commission

Governor Ben Nelson announced the creation of the Nebraska Information Technology Commission this fall.

Chaired by Lt. Governor Kim Robak, the commission is charged to provide information to the Governor, the Legislature and others making decisions on information system tools. The commission is one part of the Nebraska Technology Coordination Initiative, an element of Governor Nelson's Success 2000 effort. (See <<http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/news/content/337.html>> for Nebraska Library Action Steps for Success 2000). Three councils will be created to identify needs in the areas of education, government and communities. The Education Council will represent the K-12 and post-secondary communities. The

Government Council will represent all levels and branches of state government. The Community Council will represent local community, health care, library and economic development constituencies. "Whether it's the rancher using a computer to manage a herd, health professionals doing video consultations or a student using the Internet to do research, information technology is becoming an important part of our state's heritage. By seizing the opportunity to coordinate our efforts, we can make the best possible use of this tool to bridge the distances and bring together the people of this One Nebraska," Nelson commented in his weekly *One Nebraska Journal* article dated November 21, 1997. For more information, including a variety of Information Technology Reports, see <<http://www.nitc.state.ne.us/>>. ▲

News of Nebraska Libraries and People...

Governor Ben Nelson recently appointed **Robert King**, Holdrege, to the **Nebraska Library Commission**, term expiring in 2000. He replaces **Dr. Robert McPherson** whose term expired last June. ▲

The **Ralston Public Library** received a \$25,000 matching grant from the Weibe-Ralston Foundation for more computers and updated technology for the new library. ▲

The citizens of **Madison** recently voted to construct a new facility to house the public library as well as the city offices and the county historical museum at a projected cost of \$1.2 million. ▲

Brenda Ealey was recently hired as Administrator for the **Southeast Library System**. Brenda is a graduate of the Emporia State University Graduate School of Library and Information Science. She worked with Lincoln City Libraries since 1986. ▲

According to an MCI Library Link study released this summer the number of people who regularly access the Internet through points other than home, office or school has nearly tripled in the last year. Of respondents claiming to access the Internet from an alternate point, 36% access through public libraries. This growing phenomenon is mirrored in Nebraska. This summer more than fifty libraries responded to Lt. Governor Kim Robak's invitation to participate in a new Internet public access project for Nebraska families. **Partnership IDEAS Network** provides information and support on the Internet to foster families and families with children with special needs, as well as professionals who serve these families. For more information, call 402-472-9827 or see <<http://nncf.unl.edu/ideas/>>. ▲

New Library Directors include: DeWitt Public Library, **Eleanor Tietjen**; Ewing Public Library, **Idella Tuttle**; Milford, Webermeier Memorial Library, **Edna Riedl**; Norfolk, Nebraska Veterans Home Library, **Virginia Grim**; Offutt AFB, Thomas S. Power Base Library, **Becky Sims**; Omaha, Nebraska College of Business Library, **Bonnie Adams**; Scottsbluff, Western Nebraska Community College, **Valeta Schnedier**; Ruskin Public Library, **Amy Mrosco**; South Sioux City Public Library, **William Kendra**; Village of Verdon Library, **Debbie Jarred**. ▲

Panhandle Library System has a new toll-free number: 888-879-5303. ▲

Springfield Library Foundation recently received a \$25,000 grant from the Midlands Community Foundation for expansion of the library. ▲

The **Saunders County Library Partnership** won a special award from the Nebraska Community Improvement Program, administered by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. The six public libraries in the county have entered into an interlocal agreement to facilitate a planning process to explore innovative and creative methods of library service, addressing the issue of how to best provide library service to the citizens of Saunders County. For more information, see <<http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/news/content/331.html>>. ▲

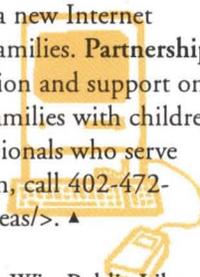
Northeast Community College is moving forward with plans to expand its Library/Resource Center. This summer, **Karen Warner**, Director of Library Services, presented a proposal for a 10,000 square foot addition for a centralized reference and circulation area, study and conference rooms for students and staff, computer center, college archival space, increased storage, and office area. ▲

Library Commission Information Resources Coordinator Burns Davis recently co-authored the publication, *Using the Conspectus Method, a Collection Assessment Handbook*, published by the Western Library Network (WLN) and available on loan from the Library Commission Information/Reference Services, 402-471-4016 800-307-2665 e-mail: <ready@neon.nlc.state.ne.us>. ▲

FirstSearch library subscribers are increasing. Since July, ten new subscribers have been added to the consortium sponsored by the **Library Commission**. Five new public, two K-12, and three academic libraries are using this interactive online information system to give their customers timely information about books, journal articles, films, computer software, and other material in a variety of subject areas, see <<http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/netserv/pricing.html#firstsearch>> for more details. ▲

Library Commission staff changes this fall included **Devra Dragos**, former librarian at the Beatrice Developmental Center, hired as OCLC Member Services Coordinator replacing **Diana Boone**; **Maria Ford**, previously with the Kansas Talking Book Library, hired in the Library Commission Talking Book and Braille Service replacing Oliver Magee; and **Kandi M. Gordon Thomas**, previously with Lincoln City Libraries, hired as staff assistant with the Commission's Publications Clearinghouse Service replacing **Theresa Thomssen**. ▲

Of the 65 libraries participating in the **Library Commission Fall Database Trials**, 69% of participants have expressed interest in subscribing to at least one of the products. New trials begin January 1998. ▲



New on our Home Page:

See "Announcements,"

<<http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/news/news.html>> for:

▲ Success 2000: Nebraska Library Action Steps to Help Create this Vision for Nebraska's Future

▲ Summer Reading: The New Order

▲ Wanted: Librarians To Access General Reference Center

See "Library Development Services," <<http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/libdev/ldserv.html>> for:

▲ Libraries Accredited 1997-2000

See "Children's Services,"

<<http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/libdev/child.html>> for:

▲ Youth Improvement Plan (YIP) Problems and Solutions

For a print copy contact Mary Geibel, 402-471-2045 or 800-307-2665, e-mail: <mgeibel@neon.nlc.state.ne.us>.

Nebraska Library Commission



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