

**Panhandle Library System Has A New Coordinator**

My name is Eric Green and I am the new Panhandle Library System Coordinator here in Scottsbluff. I come from Colorado and have been working for the Community Colleges as library director for seven years.

I'm the third son of a United Methodist Minister and was born in the small North eastern town of Scobey Montana. I also lived in Dillon Montana and we moved to Rifle Colorado when I was 5. When I was 11 we moved to Edgewater Colorado and I graduated from Jefferson High School in 1982. I attended Western State Colorado University from 1982-1986 and majored in Sociology .

In 1989-90 I served as a US Peace Corps Volunteer in Sierra Leone West Africa in community agriculture. In 1993 I attend American University in Washington DC and received a master in Sociology with an emphasis in International Development.

I have also worked in many types of libraries include Denver Public, Englewood Pl (Co) and the DC area for Smithsonian Libraries, World Bank and International Monetary Fund Joint Library and Federal Reserve Law Library. In 2000—2003 I attend Emporia State University SLIM program in Denver—Lowry with an emphasis in Academic libraries.

I look forward to working in the area and I'm conducting site visits. My schedule will be mostly traveling Monday to Thursdays by appointment and regular office hours Friday's 8 am – 5pm. PLS Office phone number 308-632-1350 and cell 308-225-0603. Thanks!

*Eric R Green MLS MA*

Eric R Green -Panhandle Systems Library Coordinator



*“Either write something worth reading or do something worth writing.”*  
*Benjamin Franklin*

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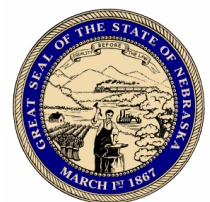
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Being given the opportunity, as a new director in the state of Nebraska, to attend the Tri-Conference in La Vista this past October 2012 was amazing. One of the biggest things that I took from attending the conference this past fall was that people are no longer “seeking” information like they used to. Like popular social media sites, libraries must find a way to push information to their library users. Through the use of social media tools like Facebook, Twitter and even Pinterest, libraries can continue to promote services and market programs to their communities by effectively pushing the information to their users.

With this in mind, I specifically went into sessions regarding open source circulation systems like Koha and sessions regarding collections and weeding looking for new ways to get information to my community of users and better serve the needs of a society inundated in technology. I also walked away feeling positive about the future of libraries. Libraries are adaptable and have the power to transform when needed to better serve their communities. Survival is not the challenge, how we modify and adapt will be what defines us in the future.

I found the conference experience and sessions I attended to be amazingly valuable, not only in the information I received, but also in the connections I made with Nebraska Library Commission staff, fellow library directors and other library staff across the state. I have since sought out their expertise and have found them to be a great resource when I have new ideas or decisions to make. Thanks to the Panhandle Library System for providing this “newbie” the opportunity to attend and make these connections. The support is greatly appreciated.

*Abigail Yellman -Library Director, Lied Scottsbluff Public Library*

**“A Note of Appreciation for a Memorable Experience”**

*By Martin McAndrew - Gering Public Schools Elementary Librarian*

I would like to thank the Panhandle Library System for the \$100 scholarship that enabled me to attend the 2011 NLA/NEMA conference in Lincoln. One of the outcomes of the conference has been a powerful collaboration between the school library and mainstream teachers that the ELL students in their classes.

I have always been interested in ELL and how, as a librarian, I can best support the students needing such services. I have learned that a truly collaborative approach between the school library and the mainstream teachers makes for a great educational experience. The session entitled “The Power of Collaboration” offered both vision and tips to make it possible at one of my schools in Gering.

When Cedar Canyon Elementary informed the staff at the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year that we needed a building coordinator of ELL services, I was eager to volunteer. We are finding the collaborative model for ELL instruction between the fourth grade teacher and the school library quite rewarding.

I attended the pre-conference entitled, “Librarians, Law and Lee Laurie.” Gregory Harms’ presentation on Lee Laurie’s work as a sculptor and the tour of the capital building highlighting his artwork gave me a heightened sense of pride in our state capital and its history.

The conference was a great opportunity to interact with other librarians across the state. I appreciate the knowledge I was able to glean on Google Docs, weeding collections, and up-to-date books and resources for the library. May God bless you all at the Panhandle System for the work you are doing for the librarians in the area such as myself.

DENVER POST guest commentary

## Would robot librarians do better?

By Eric Roger Green - Posted: 04/11/2008 01:00:00 AM MDT

As a director of a small college library in the Colorado Plains, I've often been challenged by what makes up a balanced library collection. When I started as library director four years ago in a small rural town, I found few up-to-date and diverse books in the aging collection. A few of these included religion, social sciences and human sexuality.

First, we must define what 'balanced' means when referring to a library collection. This 'balanced' collection concept can imply that there are only two sides to every argument, which is too dualistic.

A collection should contain multiple ideologies. There are not just conservative or liberal ideologies in society in part promoted by the mainstream media, but a largely unrepresented political spectrum in the middle.

As I tell my sociology students, in the United States, the political spectrums of the two major political parties, Republicans and Democrats, are not that far apart in ideology, structurally and financing compared to the all the political spectrums of the entire world. As for libraries, 'balancing' ideologies should include an honest attempt to offset opinions that are underrepresented.

Still patrons will challenge this reaching out to the underrepresented by asking to remove items they find offensive. A common response to these challenges is to remind patrons that librarians shouldn't discard items based on ideology. Turn the argument back on them and offer them a chance to 'add' an item to the collection that might represent their point of view.

In the same concept of representing the underrepresented, a library can go too far and not represent the majority of patrons. In a mostly conservative town, I assume my collection will represent more conservative views overall, which is acceptable as long as other ideologies have some representation.

There are user-centered techniques that generate reports on patron usage in a certain topics. Some of these are, percent of relative use formula, In-house use stat, Interlibrary loan subjects and patrons surveys. The only way to even go about implementing a truly balanced collection policy is to do a 'content analysis' of the entire collection, which could be extremely time-consuming.

A major problem with these types of analyses is they are subjective, limited qualitative observations. Even if the more statistical quantitative method is used, the process of labeling subject variables in the conceptionization stage is problematic in determining how these conservative, liberal and moderate variables would be labeled and who would decide this?

This also brings up the issue of librarian bias in this process. Some patrons ask how I keep my bias out of the collection development process. With a social science background, this question could be answered in part from the discussion I faced as a grad student at the American University in the Research Methods class.

The best response would be to imply deductive rather than inductive reasoning. Deductive reasoning deals with opening your mind to any possibilities based on the evidence of causation rather than making assumptions about an issue like that of inductive reasoning, which proceeds to find what evidence fits your predetermined theory.

Article cont.

Inductive reasoning goes against the whole concept of modern scientific research. Also, I remind patrons and my students I'm not a robot and I have opinions and bias like any human. . I reassure my patrons that I enjoy reading materials that I don't always agree with to further the concept of a liberal education, something I also try to instill in my Sociology students.

Another response I have to those who question any of my possible biases deals with patrons taking responsibility in the process. There is no way a librarian can be aware of all issues in a representative collection. It is the responsibility of the patrons to help. The library collection does not belong to the librarian but to all.

The patrons must not only inform the librarian of their opinions, but also must be active, well researching patrons. Many Librarians have faced a patrons' challenge to the collection only to find out the patron was misinformed about the library's content, when they didn't do any initial research on the issue. This seems to stem from our society's apparent need to react first before doing deductive research, again perpetuated by a low-attention- span-entrainment driven TV Media.

In conclusion, there is no proof that one can have a truly balanced library collection based on all the ambiguities involved. Librarians will continue to receive collection challenges, which they should. We need to communicate that there is no perfect system. Our patrons must also understand this as well. We can challenge our patrons to take responsibility for this process. We might achieve a respectable, but imperfect representative collection. Or would robot Librarians do better?



***“A person who won't read has no advantage over one who can't read” Mark Twain***

## **A Vision for Librarians — A personal view**

By Eric Roger Green MLS MA

A Librarian's policy should first uphold the ideas of a free and democratic society based on the individual rights and respect for others set forth by the founders of our country. These ideas include all areas of an individual's private and public life. In the ever expanding influence of technology in the world, the importance the human's place in the world and what it means to be human should be foremost in all library dealings.

Librarians must understand human diversity from not only from the organization level, but also at the state, country, and world levels and how these diverse concepts relate to the leaders' role in that world. Diversity in education with all its facets must also include the concepts of intellectual freedom, intellectual property, access and accuracy of information and must include inclusion for all, no matter the individual's station in life.

Furthermore, Librarians must promote a progressive vision of the future and understand social change not only in the workplace, but in society at large. They must also have the knowledge to implement this vision in a way that does not let current negative political and popular culture influences hinder the concepts of true change in the scholarly arena. They also must have the wisdom to understand the difference between change that is beneficial and change that is harmful to their situation and to others.

Lastly, Librarians must never abuse power for self interest. They must first serve the public interest for the common good as a civil servant. In a society that celebrates the individual, a Librarian must not lose focus of the common good for all and understands the personal sacrifice that is involved to truly further the concept of service to others which is enhanced by a free, just, and noble society.

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*“If this nation is to be wise as well as strong, if we are to achieve our destiny, then we need more new ideas for more wise men reading more good books in more public libraries. These libraries should be open to all—except the censor. We must know all the facts and hear all the alternatives and listen to all the criticisms. Let us welcome controversial books and controversial authors. For the Bill of Rights is the guardian of our security as well as our liberty.” John F. Kennedy*

### **EVENT FOR MARCH - PLS Summer Reading Program**

***“DIG INTO READING” Location : WNCC Sidney, 371 College Drive***

***9:30 am - 3:30 pm***

***Please call Debbie by Thursday March 7th @ 308-632-1350***



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