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Cover Photo Credit: Some of the new ukuleles at the Gretna Public Library. Photo by Rebecca Brooks.
Editor’s Message

Welcome dear readers to the first issue of the second volume of *Nebraska Libraries*! Can you believe we have been in print for a whole year now? Time does go by so fast.

We have a number of interesting special features this month. Take some time to learn about the group of librarians at the Gretna Public Library who have started a ukulele band (which the kids just adore), get some tips on how to improve (or start your own) library newsletter, learn a bit about the Common Core all school librarians are talking about, and look into the history of the Omaha and Council Bluffs Librarians Club (and laugh quietly to yourself when you read such fun tidbits as people fretting over a $5 membership fee!).

We also have some new columns this year! Everyone give a big welcome to our Special & Institutional Libraries section that has written its first column for *Nebraska Libraries*. We also have a new “From the Archives” column in which Martha Grenzeback shares some kooky bits of information about Nebraska libraries’ histories.

In regards to the journal itself, hopefully this year you will see the beginning of some new changes. We have been publishing for a year now, getting our feet of the ground, so it is now time to start looking at some new angles with which to take the journal. In the upcoming months you might see some changes, including a new logo for the journal and the journal being created with some fancier software (goodbye Word documents that always mess up my pagination no matter what I do!).

As I mentioned in our previous issues, I can only make *Nebraska Libraries* great with your help! I’m looking for articles about anything related to libraries and about successful (or not as successful as we can learn from those too) programs your library has done recently. What programs have your libraries being doing during these past snowy months? Read a good book lately? Send in a review! Please don’t hesitate to contact me your ideas for articles and columns.

Our next issue will be published in May so get me your submissions by April 1st!

Let’s make *Nebraska Libraries* a quality publication that showcases the great things that Nebraskan libraries and librarians do!

You can reach me at: nlaeditor@nebraskalibraries.org

Lindsey Tomsu
Editor, *Nebraska Libraries*
Ukuleles @ Our Library
By Rebecca Brooks

The desk chair that I sat in could have sunk into the earth and I would have happily gone with it. I had tried, unsuccessfully for several weeks, to find someone who would play the piano at a family sing-along storytime we were having in December.

My mind wandered a bit, and I began to think back on all of my elementary school music classes. I could vividly remember two teachers: one who banged on a piano (and scared most of the children), and a lady who played the autoharp (whom we all loved). A crazy idea struck: Why don’t I try playing the autoharp? I’m rather musical and it’d be a fun thing to learn. An online search a minute later revealed that it would be *extremely* cost-prohibitive.

I continued down this thought of “what can I do?” when I did another search, but for “music instrument storytime.” I found Tess Golswater’s article on the ALSC Blog entitled, “Music and Libraries: A Natural Combination.” The article’s main image is an adorable blue ukulele, and the wonderful article extolled the positive aspects of music when featured in storytimes. What lit a fire in me was how cheap, easy, and fun the ukulele seemed to be.

After a little more research, I decided to order a ukulele and give it a try. I placed my order, and quite excitedly told a coworker, “Hey Mary! I just bought a ukulele.” What happened next took me by surprise. Without missing a beat, Mary exclaimed, “I want to play the ukulele!” I shot out of my chair so fast and went out to see if she was serious. She was. Maybe other people on our staff would like to learn the ukulele? They did. Did our Library Director support the idea of putting together a staff ukulele band? She did. Would our Friends group buy us a set of ukuleles and other ukulele-related items? They did.

And that’s how our library’s ukulele band formed. If you’re feeling a bit stunned at how quickly things escalated then know that I’m right there with you. And that was just the genesis. We built the January theme for our children’s library around music: “Jamuary”. We gave our winter storytime sessions a musical theme as well: “Story Jam”. Our new Winter Reading Program? We’re calling it “Reading Rocks”. One of our local papers has already done an article about our group.

Besides all the virtues that Tess Golswater’s ALSC article mentioned, we’re also embracing all of the other things our ukulele band will lead to, including outreach at senior centers, schools, and more. It’s been an incredibly fun and creative way to team-build. It also frees us from having to find or pay for musical accompaniment for storytimes or other events (monthly music jams at the library, perhaps?). We may even offer classes or workshops on ukulele playing for both adults and children. The possibilities are endless!

If you would like to know more, then don’t hesitate to contact me at gretna.library@gmail.com. I can tell you that yes, it is indeed cheap, incredibly fun, and easy. The toughest part has been coming up with a band name (we still don’t have one, and suggestions are appreciated).

Reference

Six Tips for Writing an Effective Library Newsletter
By Rachel Zill

1. Find a template that works

At Baird Holm, we use the Constant Contact web-based email marketing software. Our marketing team swears by it, so we had them assist us in creating a library newsletter template. The interface is easy-to-use with drag and drop editing. Formatting glides into place with a pre-designed template. Templates are easily customizable. Users create contact lists and can send emails at a specific time or right away. The end result is hassle-free, professional, and mobile-friendly. Emails can be shared on social media networks and basic statistics are kept. The one major flaw is that there is no free subscription option. Users pay a minimum of $15 per month. Extra fees are assessed for additional data use, such as carrying over 500 contacts or storing over five images in the image library. Constant Contact is perfect for a library that outputs a lot of marketing emails, and they are cheaper in comparison to other priced options.

However, smaller libraries with a tight budget are looking for free might consider MailChimp. MailChimp is the ideal web-based software with a free subscription option. The interface is complete with drag and drop formatting, a built-in photo editor, a desktop and mobile preview, and the ability to collaborate with team members via a multi-user account and a collaborative chatbox. Users can create custom email sign-up forms to be displayed on their website or create contact lists of their own. There’s even an offline, mobile version of MailChimp for the iPad. Analytics include A/B Testing that will examine the most effective email subject or time of day to send. Basic statistics are also kept and can be organized into graph displays. A subscription is free with up to 2,000 subscribers and 12,000 emails per month. Information professionals who do not wish to use a template and are technically adept will appreciate the option to code one’s own template in HTML using MailChimp’s email template reference guide.

2. Consider your readers

It is most important to consider one’s readers when creating a library newsletter. Who are your readers? At Baird Holm, readers of our newsletter are primarily attorneys, paralegals, and administrative staff. They are very busy throughout the work day, have a plethora of emails in their inbox, and appreciate pertinent content that can be easily skimmed. In this case, the newsletter should be as concise as possible with one to three paragraphs per article. It should have a captivating design to set itself apart from the other emails cluttering their inboxes. It should be scrollable with supporting images, bold-faced terms, and headings that reveal the content of the article.

Whether you are writing your newsletter for library staff, patrons, or liaison departments, consider their needs and expectations. What is the mission of this newsletter?

3. Input concise, current, and accurate material

After selecting a template and determining the newsletter’s mission to its readers, it is time to fill in the blank spaces. Determine what material will be covered in your publication. At Baird Holm, there are several items that appear in every newsletter. A print resource,
innovative web-based tool, and tips for utilizing common resources are almost always featured. On the sidebar, we include a calendar of upcoming Continuing Legal Education (CLE) webcasts and teleconferences that will be streamed at the office and a rolling list of missing library materials. We have also included articles regarding staff changes, material relocations, frequently asked reference questions, attorney CLE transcript deadlines, and the upcoming Nebraska Unicameral session.

Write concise articles by consolidating all important information in the first few sentences. Then, reveal the juicy details that are useful to your readers. Keep things current by only including new library resources or by featuring resources that would aid in popular research at that time (i.e., featuring healthcare resources useful in applying for Affordable Healthcare Act benefits). Be certain that all information is accurate. Ask your colleagues to proofread your final draft. Verify event dates, deadlines, call numbers, event locations, etc.

4. Use a professional, but conversational writing style

When writing a newsletter, it is important to be professional but enticing in your language style. Each topic should be researched thoroughly. Look over any reviews available. If it is a usable resource, take it for a test drive. Consult opinions of other professionals. When one is knowledgeable in the subject, it is easier to write as though it is a discussion with a close colleague. Remain familiar but informative. Reading the article aloud may be helpful to establish a conversational style. Consulting journal articles may assist in staying professional.

5. Spruce it up with visuals

The final touch to any well-written article is an accompanying image. Find the perfect ratio of text and visuals for your newsletter. This could be as simple as placing a cover image next to a featured print resource. When explaining database tips, include screenshots of the actions you perform. Utilize staff photos when discussing upcoming retirements or new hires. Use clear, edited, and simple images. Regard the overall layout of the newsletter as a whole, making certain that there is effective use of text, visuals, and white space.

6. Supply opportunity for reader interaction

Lastly, when your newsletter is well-established, include some reader interaction. Ask readers’ opinions of their favorite resource, a past program, or the effectiveness of the newsletter by inserting a survey. There are many web-based survey generators, including SurveyMonkey and Zoho, which are free and compatible with HTML newsletters. You may even wish to enter participants’ names into a prize drawing as an incentive. This establishes a relationship between the library and readers of the newsletter that surpasses a typical one-way interaction. Readers will be more interested in subsequent issues when their opinion is consulted.

About the Author

Rachel Zill is a Library Assistant at Clarkson College’s academic nursing library and at the Baird Holm private law library, where she writes the monthly newsletter. She is a graduate of UNO with a bachelor’s in library science. She is currently working towards her master’s in library science from the University of Missouri-Columbia, while interning at the Union Pacific Railroad Museum in Council Bluffs.
Golden Threads Quilting Club is happy to announce the coming home to roost of the Omaha Public Library’s 140th Anniversary Quilt to the Charles B. Washington Branch Library. The Club held a reception and honored Evance Soash for her many hours of hard work on the quilt. Also, there was a presentation of five lap quilts to My Sister’s Keepers, a support group for African American breast cancer survivors. The quilt was on display until December 28th, and then headed to the Willa Cather Branch where it stayed until January 30th. It can currently be seen at the Main Library until February 28th, after which it will then go into storage. Master quilters, Janie York, Evance Soash, Joyce Moore, and Tara Evans worked diligently to bring together this beautiful quilt which helps to celebrate Omaha Public Library’s 140 years in the community.

Evance Soash created 11 of the 12 blocks representing each of the Omaha Public Library branch libraries as well as the banners. Joyce Moore made the Main Library branch block, embroidered the banners with all the lettering, and pieced together the entire quilt. The quilters from Saddlebrook Branch, Ruth Korte, Deb Weger, and Judi Gustufson, all created the photo blocks of the libraries and assisted with construction of the quilt. Linda Kaup created the open book blocks and stacks of books on the sides. GiGi DesRosiers, of Quilt Works in Ralston, was the machine quilter.

We are so proud to see this beautiful quilt at the library. It brings back so many wonderful memories of working together to bring this quilt into existence. Not only did we work together as one to bring this community quilt into being, we are still quilting the community together in many ways. It shows how each community has differences, yet we all come together as one when coming to the library. We celebrate diversity with this quilt.

We invite you to join Golden Threads Quilting Club which meets every Tuesday from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Charles B. Washington Branch Library. We are such a wonderful group of quilters; we welcome people from all walks of life. Our major project is making quilts for seniors. We will help you make a quilt for a senior and then a quilt for yourself. Materials are provided and there are no fees. The current project helped Omaha’s homeless by donating 50 quilts to the Salvation Army Winter Night Watch. Our hotline number for more information is 402-909-0015.
Three Libraries, Four Humors
By Chris Carmichael and Mary Nash

Recently, the three Creighton University Libraries in Omaha hosted the National Library of Medicine’s traveling exhibition called “And There’s the Humor of It: Shakespeare and the Four Humors,” from September 17th through October 27th. The collaboration included the Reinert-Alumni Library, the Health Sciences Library/LRC, and the Klutznick Law Library, with a planning team and funding from all three institutions.

In conjunction with the NLM exhibit, the Creighton Libraries also arranged a panel discussion of “Shakespeare and the Four Humors” on September 26th, 2013, in the ballroom of the student center. More than 150 students, faculty, and staff came to hear Dr. Richard O’Brien, professor emeritus in the School of Medicine; Dr. Kathy Rettig, Department of English; and Professors Alan Klem and Michael McCandless, Department of Fine and Performing Arts. The panelists discussed the four bodily humors of ancient Greek origin, and how they define and shape Shakespeare’s characters both as literature and in theatrical performance.

The panel was followed by a renaissance-themed reception, kicked off by an authentic Maypole dance choreographed by Creighton’s Patrick Roddy. The reception included renaissance music, refreshments, a media display, fortune teller, and photo op with a cardboard cutout of Shakespeare. The ambiance was complete with library staff dressed in period costume. The exhibition and reception left all participants with a renewed appreciation of Shakespeare’s timeless works, as well as the Creighton Libraries.
The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) initiative came about as a state-led effort by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers. They recognized that while most students graduated from high school and were college-eligible, many were not college-ready as evidenced by the number who needed to take remedial coursework before being allowed to enroll in credit-bearing coursework. The final standards were released in mid-2010, and 46 states have since adopted the standards that provide benchmarks for college and career-readiness. Nebraska is one of the few states that have not signed on. I believe there are a number of factors which contribute to our state’s reluctance to get on board.

The first is that Nebraska has a strong history of independence and belief in local control when it comes to education. After No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation was adopted in 2001 mandating reporting of student achievement to the federal government, Nebraska resisted adopting state assessments and successfully argued that the locally developed tests were sufficient. But when state assessments finally replaced the local, the relatively recent monetary investment in the development of these Nebraska state standards and assessments played a part in the decision to reject the pressure to adopt the Common Core. Politics has also played a role in Nebraska’s decision not to adopt the standards. Although the federal government played no role in creating the standards, the CCSS have been championed by the U.S. Department of Education under the Obama administration. Opposition to the standards has grown in many states that previously adopted the standards as those who believe in less government control have become vocal opponents. When the Nebraska State Board of Education addressed a study comparing Nebraska standards to the Common Core last year, bus loads of opponents showed up at the meeting demanding to make their objections to Common Core heard. A consequence of non-adoption is that Nebraska is ineligible to receive waivers from the federal government for not meeting NCLB achievement goals. This will result in more Nebraska schools being labeled as failing as 100% of students are now expected to be proficient in the tested subjects.

Whether or not Nebraska adopts the Common Core standards, it is important for school librarians to become familiar with the standards. The standards in math and English/language arts are skill standards which are more cognitively demanding. They position the school library program in a good way as they focus on critical reading and deep research. English teachers alone cannot be responsible for teaching all of the reading and writing skills. There must be shared responsibility for teaching the standards in all content areas, and the school librarian is just the person who can help teachers design learning experiences that fulfill the requirements of the standards. Learning new ways of teaching isn’t easy, so the school librarian must be ready to collaborate with school leaders and classroom teachers to ensure that students are prepared for success.

A joint action brief, “Implementing the Common Core State Standards: The Role of the School Librarian,” was released in November 2013, by the American Association of School Librarians and Achieve. The document outlines six instructional shifts in English/language arts:

1. Balancing informational and literary text (PK-5): At least 50% of what our youngest students read should be informational.
2. Building knowledge in the disciplines (6-12): Content area teachers outside the English classroom must emphasize literacy in their planning and instruction.
3. Staircase of complexity: Students must read grade-appropriate text even if they are struggling readers, and teachers must create the necessary scaffolding and support to make them successful in comprehending the text.
4. Text-based answers: Students must learn to have conversations and make arguments that use evidence from the text for support.
5. Writing from sources: Writing assignments should focus less on narrative and more on the use of evidence to inform or make an argument.
6. Academic vocabulary: By focusing strategically on the comprehension of key conceptual terms, teachers build students’ ability to comprehend more complex texts.

The action brief goes on to outline ten recommended initiatives on which school librarians can take action. The free document, cited below, provides concrete examples of what a school librarian can do.

In the accountability-focused world of education today, school librarians must move away from the traditional warehousing of materials to adopting an active role in student learning. The responsibility for student learning must be shared by the school librarian, and the excellent suggestions found in this new publication may be the toolkit needed to help make this happen.
Reference


About the Author

Gail Formanack is currently the executive director of the Eastern Library System. She previously was supervisor of the library program and director of secondary curriculum for Omaha Public Schools. Feel free to contact her at gformanack@windstream.net if you have questions about this topic.
Author Visits at Louisville Public Schools: 1988 to 2013
By Pat Coshow

Louisville Public Schools has had the opportunity over the past 25 years to host author visits from eight different authors. This has been an amazing chance for our student body (which covers kindergarten through twelfth grade and has a current enrollment of around 500 to 550 students) to interact with authors they love.

An author visit is great for students because they get to see the author, then buy the book and watch the author autograph it! While some may not be aware, a wide network of resources exists for helping aid you in getting an author to visit your school. Check out the various funds to support an author visit that are available from a variety of sources. Four of the authors that have visited us over the years were Omaha residents and there are more out there who would love to speak with your students. Today, such technology like Skype enables students to see and visit with authors at an even less expensive fee.

The authors we have had include:

In 1991, Helen Lester, author of *Tacky the Penguin*, a Golden Sower Award winner, came to Nebraska to receive the award at the fall NLA Conference. The author visited schools in area of conference site. When Golden Sower winners visit Nebraska, it is usually their publishers that pay for transportation costs, while NLA and SCYP pays for lodging, and the school pays for any daily speaking fee.

In 1994, we welcomed Caroline Cooney, author of *Flight #116 is Down*, among many other titles, and another Golden Sower Award winner.

In 1995, Ben Mikelsen, author of *Rescue Josh McGuire* and Golden Sower Award winner, came for an all day visit. He visited elementary and middle school assemblies and also visited a high school English writing class. We were able to welcome him because a school in the Omaha area wrote a grant to have an author visit and asked if other schools wanted to pay a day’s fees for a visit. We were able to pay the fee by a combination of funds from the school, PTO, and Louisville Schools’ Foundation.

In 1998, James Solheim, author of *It’s Disgusting and We Ate It!*, an Omaha native, came to speak during an elementary Scholastic Book Fair. He was here one evening and there was no fee.

In 2004, we had David Nieves, author of *Reptiles Up Close*, visit and he brought real reptiles! He is from Bellevue, and his fee of $300 was paid for by the PTO.

In 2005, we welcomed adult author, Alex Kava, author of *One False Move*, which was based on a real event near Louisville. She splits her time between Nebraska and Florida. Her visit came during the process of a book writing project which LPS participated in, including the theme of changing careers (quitting a job to become a writer). She spoke at the high school with no fee as it was part of the One Book, One Nebraska tour that year.

In 2009, we welcomed Ellen Klages, author of *The Green Glass Sea*, and she spoke to the middle school students. The author fee was paid for by a Nebraska Library Commission grant I applied for.

Lastly, in 2013, Jeff Kurrus, author of *Have You Seen Mary?*, came to visit us all the way from his hometown of Gretna! He visited the elementary schools as part of Celebrate Learning Day, which had a reading theme. There was no fee in exchange for selling 40 of his books (we sold 42!) that he provided.
Contact and Association Help Writers

By Gina M. Barlean

A founding member of The Nebraska Writers Guild in 1925, Bess Street Aldrich has been quoted as having said, “I am in favor of the open door policy, including anyone who actually writes. Contact and association help struggling writers and such assistance should be given them.” Ms. Aldrich was referring to the benefits writers gain when belonging to a writing group—contact and association for struggling writers, as she put it, is a positive thing. We at the Nebraska Writers Guild could not agree more.

Rubbing shoulders with Ms. Aldrich as founders of our organization were the likes of Willa Cather, Mari Sandoz, and John G. Neihardt, among other prominent writers. We are proud of our history, but 2014’s progressive board of directors is also focused on the future. It’s a twenty-first century world, and for the many young writers in our state that means we must provide a tech-savvy organization. And we do.

The Nebraska Writers Guild has an updated and well-maintained website. You may access our website at http://www.nebraskawriters.org and enjoy learning about the many benefits we provide our members. Please read our member’s biographies and visit their websites and blogs. You can locate members who are available to speak and the topics they present on.

Learn about our upcoming events, such as the NWG Spring Conference to be held at Mahoney State Park on April 11th and 12th, 2014. Our website also provides links to a variety of writing resources, the opportunity to join or renew membership online, and access to our blog, which offers insight and inspiration from our members.

We haven’t stopped there! The Nebraska Writers Guild has a Facebook page, a Write Across Nebraska group page on Facebook, and a Yahoo email group. Technology is provided, but we also keep our traditions intact. The Nebraska Writers Guild boasts members from students to lifetime members—writers who have paid membership to the Guild for 30 years or more. We publish The Broadside, our quarterly newsletter, and The Bulletin, an annual catalogue that includes Guild member activities and a membership directory. Both of these publications are available via email, or in print, depending on member’s preference.

Annual dues for The Nebraska Writers Guild are very reasonable: $35 dollars a year for members and associate members or $20 for students. The Guild has members across the state and provides two annual conferences, one taking place at Mahoney State Park while the other takes place further west for the benefit of members at that end of the state.

The Nebraska Writers Guild would like to take a bigger role in promoting what Nebraska’s local libraries are doing for readers and writers. We hope our libraries will update us about their wonderful events and speakers, and we encourage Nebraska libraries to seek out our members to give presentations; lead book discussions, book clubs or writing groups; or teach classes about editing, publishing, writing, and so much more. We have many experts in our association.

Ms. Aldrich’s words were very true. Contact and association help struggling writers. An open line of communication between Nebraska libraries and the Nebraska Writers Guild will benefit us all.

About the Author

Gina M. Barlean is the Membership Chair of the Nebraska Writers Guild.
Nebraska Writers Guild
SPRING CONFERENCE
April 11-12, 2014

Join us at Mahoney State Park for learning, networking, and fun!
Visit nebraskawriters.org to register

Friday, April 11
6-9 pm
Registration and Readings
Free to the public to attend, must be an NWG member to read

Saturday, April 12
8 am-6 pm
Registration, four Speakers, lunch on your own, and pitch appointments with HarperCollins’ Agent, Kelly O’Connor.
NWG Members will be allowed to schedule appointments to pitch to Kelly in the genres of Sci-Fi, Fantasy, and Horror

Members: $65
Non-Members: $85
(both include parking)

Pilar Alassandra
Screen writing consultant

C. Hope Clark
Author, Founder Funds for Writers

Kelly O’Connor
HarperCollins Editor

Harley Jane Kozak
Author, Actress
The Omaha and Council Bluffs Librarians Club:  
Gender and Continuing Education, 1925-1999  
By Oliver B. Pollak

The Metropolitan Area Librarian’s Club collection (1925-1989) at the Douglas County Historical Society breathes life into librarians’ after hours activities revealing gendered leadership, continuing education, professional and political outreach, and camaraderie. (It should be noted that the “The Librarians’ Club” had several subsequent names: Librarians Club (1925-1931), Librarians Club of Omaha and Council Bluffs (1932-1939), Omaha and Council Bluffs Librarians Club (1952), Omaha Metropolitan Area Librarians’ Club (1974), and Metropolitan Area Librarians’ Club (1983-1999). The apostrophe’s use has been inconsistent.)

On Friday evening, February 27th, 1925, 37 Omaha and Council Bluffs librarians met in the Omaha Public Library Children’s Room at 1823 Harney Street, a beacon for women’s clubs, businessmen, and Central High School, Creighton, and Omaha University students. Downtown Omaha had two bookstores, Matthews (1900-1985) and Kieser’s (1903-1999), and several newsstands. The Omaha public library system included the downtown library, South Omaha Carnegie Library (1904), North Omaha (1921), Benson, and Florence (1923). The Council Bluffs Carnegie Library opened in 1903.

Women organized social, professional, educational, and philanthropic groups to share their experience, issues, and advice. The Librarians Club provided intellectual companionship, group cohesion, and sympathy at turning points in members’ lives. Gender issues, economic constraints, and technological change reflect an evolving profession. They acted in a spirit of cooperation and united mission.

The American Library Association established in 1876 fostered a profession initially dominated by men. According to the 1880 census, 52 percent of the 636 librarians were male. By 1930 males had declined to 8 percent. In 1880 one third of the librarians were married. By 1920 it had declined to one in ten. Sixty-two percent of librarians were married in 2009 (Beveridge, 2011). In 1940 the number of librarians completing at least four years of college stood at 45 percent, in 2009 it stood at 86 percent.

From 1877 to 1957, the Omaha Public Library had five women and two male directors who respectively served 70 and 10 years. The 55 years since 1957 saw gender reversal, with five male directors and two women with tenures of 44 and 11 years. Librarians Club presidents served for only one year. From its 1925 founding to 1940 all were women. About 65 women and 15 men, 13 of them between 1941 and 1981, served as president. Forty-one of the 128 presidents of the American Library Association have been women, 22 in the last 30 years.

The Club did not discourage male members, the nature of the profession did. The 1938 winter meeting committee included Robert F. Lane of Omaha University who completed his doctorate, “The Place of American University Presses in Publishing,” at the University of Chicago in 1939. He became president in 1941 and then joined the Navy in 1942. Philip Moe, University of Nebraska Medical College librarian in 1940, joined the Club. About three years later, Donald Fitch at the UNMC Library joined, bringing male membership to two. Frank Gibson, Omaha Public Library Director (1953-1983), who oversaw the construction of four new libraries and the rebuilding of two, became the only director elected Club president in 1957.

Edith Tobitt (1868-1939) started at the Omaha Public Library in 1887 and served as director from 1898 to 1936. She took a two-year correspondence course in English from the University of Chicago and spent one year at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York. She served two terms as the president of the Nebraska Library Association (1901-1902), belonged to the American Library Association, and in 1925 served as president of the Nebraska State Library Commission. Tobitt, one of the few women in Who’s Who in Nebraska, 1940, belonged to the Librarians Club and the Omaha Social Workers Club.

Reference librarian Bertha Baumer (1875-1951) was president of the Nebraska Library Association in 1925. She attended Columbia University and did postgraduate work in German and French. She started at the Omaha Public Library in 1897. Baumer succeeded Tobitt as director in 1934 and retired in 1950.

During that first meeting, Tobitt nominated Council Bluffs librarian Eva Canon as temporary chairman. The goal was to “give all librarians an opportunity to become acquainted with the resources of all the libraries of the two cities.” It was an “educational organization . . . rather than a social club.” Meetings were “preceded by a dinner so that the members might visit with one another and become better acquainted.” Tobitt’s resolution that “a club of the librarians of Omaha and Council Bluffs and vicinity be formed,” was seconded and carried. They appointed a Constitution Committee.

The Constitution, presented at the second meeting on March 20th, stated that “the object of this Club shall be for professional improvement, mutual acquaintance, and to promote literary interests.” The bylaws provided for three meetings a year and 25 cent annual dues. Members needed six months professional library training or “actual library experience on full-time of a period of at least
six months.” Tobitt and Baumer were not officers but served on and chaired several committees in the first ten years, including membership, programs, hospitality, reception, and publicity. The Club occasionally amended the constitution.


The minutes thank the Omaha World-Herald for announcing their meetings. On February 4th, 1928 publicity committee chairman moved “that this committee keep a scrapbook of the newspaper notices of the club. This motion was seconded and passed.” In 1956 Helen Oeschger, president, said that “the Club was in dire need of a scrapbook in which to keep a copy of the Constitution and other material relating to the activities.”

Dining in libraries, school cafeterias, parks, and restaurants fostered camaraderie. The Club patronized Omaha Ad-Sell, Elks Club, Northrup-Jones, Fontenelle Hotel Mayfair Lounge, Blackstone, Castle, Regis, Paxton and Wellington Hotels, Old English Inn, Athletic Club, Happy Hollow Club, Hill-Top House, Jade Room in Rome Hotel, Fireside Restaurant, Conant Hotel Frontier Room, Gourmet, Town House Patio Room, Gorat’s, Al Green’s Skyroom, Indian Hills Inn, Mr. C’s Steakhouse, Bohemian Café, Ross’ Steak House, Firehouse Dinner Theatre, Western Sizzlin Steak House, Johnny’s Café, Marchio’s Italian Restaurant, Cascio’s, Safari Club, La Strada, Greek Islands, Maria’s Mexican Restaurant, YWCA, and Knights of Columbus. Council Bluffs venues included the Chieftain Hotel Corn Room, the Ogden Hotel, Girl Scout Lodge, and Fairmont Park.


Kountze and Spring Lake Park hosted spring picnics. The 1928 Elmwood Park picnic had “red-faced cooks,” bacon and eggs, coffee, rolls, marmalade, jam, and fruit, and, in 1931, strawberries, rolls, eggs, bacon, marmalade, and coffee in “great quantity” for only 30 cents.

The 1936 Chieftain Hotel dinner cost 70 cents. The 1945 Wellington Hotel repast included grapefruit, Canadian bacon, scrambled eggs, hot rolls and plenty of coffee for 75 cent including tip. They dined at Mister C’s in 1960 and 1972 for only $4.15, and again many years later in 1996 when entrees ran $12.25 to $14.75.

Hotels, restaurants, and tea rooms comprise a social and culinary history. Few still exist today. Survivors include the Omaha’s second and third oldest restaurants, Nebraska beef stockyards standard bearer, Johnny’s Café (1922), the Bohemian Café (1924), and more recently Greek Islands and Maria’s.

There were about 200 programs held during the Club’s 75-year life. Topics gravitated around professional development, international affairs, literary culture, summer travels, and reports on state and national conventions, workshops, and institutes. Speakers included members, Creighton and Omaha University faculty, community, and visitors.


Following the 1927 dinner at South High, Dr. Moese and Dr. Jenison of U.S. Bureau of Animal Industries gave a presentation. The South Omaha stockyards, Swift, Armour and Cudahy, were close by. The Livestock Exchange Building opened in 1926.

The Club surveyed its members in 1928 to identify programs members wanted. They preferred literary or professional subjects, outside speakers, social events combined with dramatic or musical stunts, and “not too many papers by members of club.”

Professor Charvat, Creighton University, presented “The Charm of Paris,” Juliet Griffin, Central High School Librarian, “ Impressions of Ireland,” and Dr. Harold Gifford spoke on his African travels. Europe, Mexico, and other world tours were also featured.

Club members also enjoyed the theatre. In 1929, Bernie Szold, Community Playhouse director, presented “The Talkies versus the Legitimate Drama,” in the wake of The Jazz Singer, starring Al Jolson. Film featured significantly in library conversations. James W. Taylor, university director of audio-visual instruction in 1947, “predicted that library patrons soon may borrow records and films as well as books . . .” This would supplement teachers “not replace them” (“Audio-Visual,” 1947). In 1954 Jack France at South Branch presented the film “Freedom to Learn” dealing with teaching controversial issues in public schools.
Students and librarians put on musical evenings and plays. In 1932 a group from the College Club under the leadership of Mrs. Jewell gave a short play concerning conditions in Russia with dialogue written by Mrs. Leon Smith. Technical High School student Emil Sodoro, a future Omaha attorney, gave a piano accordion performance in 1944. In 1950 Omaha Community Playhouse director Kendrick Wilson reported on his trip to New York. The Club visited the Firehouse Dinner Theatre in 1974 to see “My Three Angels” and “Best of Friends” in 1978.

Tobitt herself presented on many subjects. She spoke of her visit to the Morgan Library in New York City, and of the value of knowing about and collecting fine examples of the art of book making. In 1926 she talked about copyright issues. In 1933 she offered information on ALA insurance provided by Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. The Depression made financial security for single women an even more tenuous subject then.

In 1930 Margaret Demchevsky, Bulgaria’s sole trained librarian, visited Omaha on her way to the west coast. She is reported as giving “a most illuminating talk upon the history of Bulgaria and the development of Bulgaria’s library system.” She took her librarianship training at the University of London writing a thesis, “The Library of Congress as it Reflects the Character of the American Nation.” She thanked her hosts: “Let me say that the thing that struck me most in Omaha was the fine spirit shown by the librarians themselves” (“Bulgarian,” 1930). Arundel Esdaile of the British Museum, secretary of the British Library Association, author of A Student’s Manual of Bibliography (1932) and The British Museum Library: Short History and Survey (1946), also spoke in 1942.

Two members distinguished themselves bibliographically. Bertha Baumer in 1931 prepared a 21-page mimeographed compilation, Nebraska: Material in the Omaha Public Library. At a Nebraska Library Association conference in Omaha the World-Herald reported: “Miss Bertha Baumer of Omaha told of the wealth of reference material on Nebraska and how to use it” (“Say,” 1931). In 1934, Alice G. Harvey, South High faculty member, “told most interestingly of her experiences in gathering material for her recently published book on Nebraska authors.” The book, Nebraska Writers, appeared in 1934; a new edition was released in 1964.

The Joslyn Memorial opened in 1931. In 1932 40 members toured the Joslyn and heard an illustrated lecture, “The German Woman in Art,” by Frau Emmy Bockman, from the Philadelphia’s Schurz Memorial Foundation, followed by a concert.

In September 1931 Edith Tobitt hosted a dinner at the Blackstone for Nellie Williams, executive secretary of the Nebraska Public Library Commission (1919-1931) of Lincoln as she was in route to Chicago.

Hazel Crandall of Central High worried that the financial crash and the Depression jeopardized a January 1931 party. Lillian Gates assured her that with dues, donations, and careful use of funds “we have little to worry about in having the treasury low.” The Depression cut into state and local budgets and jeopardized the Traveling Library (“Gentle,” 1931; “Say,” 1931; “An Omaha,” 1933; “Omaha Lags,” 1934). The Wilson Bulletin awarded Margaret P. Coleman a prize for her essay indicating that while poor business conditions and unemployment prevailed, libraries were experiencing increased demand.

Presentations encompassed world affairs and communism. The United States did not recognize the Soviet Union until 1933. The year 1935 presented contrasting topics. Reverend Edwin H. Berger, pastor of St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, spoke of “The Growth of the Radical Spirit.” The discussion “proved most interesting.” He received a $5 honorarium and $1.30 for dinner and flowers at the Tea Room. Two meetings later Secret Service agent Mr. Harry Cooper gave a talk.

In October 1936 Dr. Christopher Espinosa, Municipal University of Omaha Spanish professor, talked on “Spain as a Spaniard Sees It.” Spain had descended into Civil War a few months earlier. In 1937 Dr. P. Raymond Nielson, Creighton University, spoke on “Conditions in Europe Today,” and in 1947 he talked about communism and Pan-Americanism.

In 1938 Fay Southwell of North High School spoke on poetry. A 1924 UNL graduate she recited Beowulf by heart in the late 1970s (Pollak, 198_). Literary evenings included the works of E. E. Milne, Dr. Johnson, Horace Walpole, Somerset Maugham, John Neihardt, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and much poetry.

Professional subjects included Mary Woodbridge speaking on the Union Catalog in 1938. She served as president of the Nebraska Library Association in 1933 and Club president in 1937. In 1939 Sarah Jones of Lincoln “gave a most interesting talk on County Library Service in Nebraska, W.P.A. project.” Des Moines Librarian Forrest Spaulding in 1940 presented “Future Possibilities of Public Libraries.” All “present enjoyed the talk very much and felt he had been given help and encouragement to each one.” In 1957 a panel discussed “How the Omaha-Council Bluffs Area Plans to Meet the Demands for Library Service in a Rapidly Expanding Community.”

In 1941, the Club was happy to have Hannah Logasa of Chicago come and speak. She “gave us a very inspiring talk on ‘Income, Earned, Real and Psychic.’” Edith Tobitt had mentored Logasa (1879-1967). She earned a bachelor’s degree at the University of Chicago and became a pioneering high school librarian at the University of Chicago High School. She published The High School Library: Its Function in Education (1928), The Study Hall in Junior and Senior High Schools (1938), and several other works on school library book selection. Although she retired in 1939, she gave many lectures and workshops around the nation and moved back
to Omaha. In 1945 she co-chaired a Club committee. In November 1953, as a consultant in Council Bluffs, she presented a workshop and discussion of children’s reading (Pollak, 2003).

The American Library Association and state library organizations promoted morale and literacy in the First World War (Pollak, 2006). In 1943 Emma Baker who had been a librarian in Honolulu on December 7th, 1941, talked about her experiences as a “one woman morale squad.” Sadly, “The Effect of the War on Our Local Libraries,” scheduled at Omaha University for November 8th, 1943, included Bertha Baumer, OU Librarian; Ellen Lord; Sybil Tubbs, librarian of the Seventh Service Command headquartered in Omaha; and Philip Moe, University of Nebraska College of Medicine librarian, had to be rescheduled due to weather (“Library Club’s,” 1943); “Libraries Snowed,” (1943).

In 1945 Captain Beatrice Baird, Athletic and Recreation Branch WAC Liaison officer, talked on “Information, Orientation and Education Program of the Army.” Atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6th and 9th, 1945. Omaha University Chemistry Professor William K. Noyce worked on the bomb during the war and drove almost a thousand miles from October 1946 to January 1947 giving presentations about the work to over 41 groups, including the Club in November (“Many,” 1946).

In 1946 Mr. J. D. Tyson, prisoner of the Japanese at Santo Tomas Prison, spoke of his experiences and the Philippine’s future. Ray Clark spoke on “Ticket to Tokyo” at theYWCA. Katherine Ragen, OU history professor, spoke on Canada.

In 1947, Kermit Hansen, the OWH youth director, gave a very stimulating talk about his work guiding youth recreation activities in Omaha and received a $10 honorarium. He later served as a University of Nebraska regent.

The Club met at Chieftain Hotel Corn Room in June 1945 to hear Gunnar Horn present “A Teacher with a Camera in Denmark.” In addition to the smorgasbord dinner, Scandinavian decorations included flags, Viking ships, and place settings of Swedish queen flower cups containing spring flowers. Horn taught English and Journalism at Benson High School from 1937 to 1977. The Treasurer reported that Gunnar’s dinner cost $1.50, the waitress tip $5, and decorations $1.90. Horn was 1975 Nebraska Teacher of the Year; a scholarship preserves his memory today.

Ethnic diversity issues emerged slowly. On September 27th, 1942, the library presented Mexican movies, songs, and dances by the South Omaha Social Settlement Mexican youth group. In March 1951 Arthur H. Parsons, Jr., OPL Director (1950-1957), presided over a panel discussing layman expectations from the library, including Joseph Kauffman, Regional Director of the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith. Kauffman, a World War II veteran, earned a doctorate at Boston University, become assistant to the President and Dean of Students at Brandeis University, and was involved in early Peace Corp Training.

On November 20th, 1951, Bernice H. Hetzner, University of Nebraska Medical Center Librarian, preparing for a multinational multiracial program, wrote Council Bluffs Librarian Germaine Krettek, 1952 Iowa Library Association President, “I would appreciate it . . . if you will secure assurance of the hotel that there will be no objection to serving members of the East Indian race or the negro race. Two of the speakers are of the first group, while a member of the Omaha Public Library staff is of the latter category. It seems best to avoid any misunderstanding.” Hetzner responded on November 30th: “I’ve checked with the Manager of the Chieftain Hotel and he tells me there will be no discrimination in the serving of guests at our Library Club meeting.” The panel guests came from China, India, Turkey, and Trinidad. Krettek went to work for the American Library Association in Washington and helped pass a $76 million dollar library construction act in 1956. She retired in 1972, returned to Council Bluffs, spoke to the Club in 1974, and died the same year.

In 1964 Wilda Stephenson showed slides and told of her work in Africa with Operation Crossroad. A UNO Goodrich Program internship was named in her honor.

In November 1955 OU History professor Thomas Bonner presented, “Observations and Impression of a Fulbright Scholar while in Germany.” He ran as a democrat for congress in 1962 and lost to the republican incumbent, Glenn Cunningham. He became president of Union College in New Hampshire and Wayne State University in Michigan. He wrote several books on medical history and Iconoclast: Abraham Flexner and a Life in Learning (2002).

Members also traveled to tour new libraries. In 1942, over 100 members and guests enjoyed a survey of Omaha’s newest library building in Benson. In 1956, they visited the new Gene Eppley Library. Omaha University President Milo Bail acknowledged a $10 gift of flowers. In 1978, they toured the new W. Dale Clark Library.

Iowa Radio Free Europe, thanked the club for their “generous contribution of $20.00 . . . to combat Communism behind the Iron Curtain.” In 1963 Mrs. Jose Angel of Carson, Iowa, a native of Cuba, spoke on her country’s past and present. Castro had taken over Cuba in 1959 and the Cuban Missile Crisis culminated in October 1962.

In 1959, Mrs. Victor P. Haas, spouse of the Omaha World-Herald book reviewer, talked at the Town House Patio Room on “Behind the Bookman” (Haas, 1972). In 1962, Dr. Ralph Wardle, Omaha Public Library Board member and OU English professor, whose works included Mary Wollstonecraft (1951) and Oliver Goldsmith (1957), presented “Americans’ Reading Habits.” In 1962, Mildred Goosman, associate Joslyn curator, discussed its newly acquired Bodmer Collection of Western Americana donated by Northern Natural Gas.

Helen Oeschger discussed the potential of automation in 1958. She sponsored the Omaha Students Librarians Club for student assistants in school libraries. They met at South High—60 of 90 present were South High students. The officers came from Benson, North, Central, and Tech High. In December 1967 and 1968 the North High School members wrote Christmas cards to NHS graduates and relatives in the military as their service project.

The Librarians Club ceased activities in the late 1960s. There were no officers in 1969, 1970, and 1971. The minutes reflect: “October, 1971: Meetings resume after a 3½-year lapse.” The revived Club took a new name, Omaha Metropolitan Area Librarians’ Club, revised the constitution in 1973, and reduced meetings from three to two a year. The Club met at Mr. C’s Steakhouse in 1972 and toured the new North Branch Library at 29th and Ames.


In 1986 the Club visited the new Boys Town Hall of History. Beverly P. Sloan, president, wrote Director Jacqueline A. McGlade: “We had 58 people in attendance which was our largest meeting ever.” In 1989 Mary Jo Ryan of the Nebraska Library Commission presented, “Are You on Target for Your Target Market.”

The minutes stop in 1989, but the Club continued until 1999. Karen Berry, Swanson branch Children’s Librarian and Club president in 1996, preserved some documents from the mid-1980s to 1999. (K. Tooker, personal communication, July, 2, 2012.) Events included a tour in 1994 of the UNMC medical library with dinner at the Greek Islands; dinner at Deveres Pastry Shop and Tea Room on Pacific followed by a tour of the College of St. Mary Library in 1995; Maria’s Mexican Restaurant in Ralston and a visit to El Museo Latino; and a third visit to Mister C’s Steak House accompanied by a tour of the Great Plains Black Museum in 1996. The final recorded event occurred in 1999—a visit to the new Council Bluffs Library with an $8 dinner provided by Margarite’s Catering.

In 1936 the Club paid $5 to affiliate with the American Library Association. The ALA lobbied for legislation favorable to the profession. In 1944 the secretary wrote to the ALA: “Mrs. Catherine Blanchard, our new President has some communication concerning a $25.00 membership. This is far out of our range” and “We would like to continue our affiliation with the national group if possible.”

In May 1938 members were urged to write their Congressmen to support the Harrison-Thomas-Fletcher Bill for Federal aid to education, including free rural library services. The secretary wrote on May 6th, 1938 to Nebraska Senator Edward R. Burke, Iowa Senator Guy M. Gillette, and representatives Charles F. McLaughlin (Nebraska) and Otha D. Wearin (Iowa): “The members of the Librarians’ Club of Omaha and Council Bluffs beg you to give your support to the passage of the Harrison-Thomas-Fletcher bill (S.419) for Federal aid for education, including libraries . . .” Burke and McLaughlin responded. Burke was “watching developments closely” and McLaughlin “will study it carefully.” Similar bills were “repeatedly introduced and defeated” owing to objections that schools must remain a state responsibility” (Compton, 1938; New York, 2009).

The Club contributed to occasional requests for funds. In 1945 the ALA introduced the Library Development Fund and asked for donations: “Contributions to the Library Development fund are an investment in your own future and the future of your profession.” Nebraska met its assessed goal of $980 and $150 for Omaha. They listed 22 individual contributors and the amount donated. The report also identified seven people who “when approached, said that they did not want to contribute.”

In 1953 the Club donated $5 to the Deaf-Blind Division of the Iowa School for the Deaf; $10 went to support a Juvenile Court Amendment in 1962; and $20 to Fort Atkinson Foundation following Dr. MacQuiddy presentation, “The Story of Fort Atkinson.”

In 1960 Frank Gibson, Omaha Public Library Director, made a motion to purchase three film shorts for distribution to Omaha’s three TV stations for showing during National Library Week. In 1961 the Club paid for two television announcements. The same year
members were reminded “of the postal increase pending before the Congress” and “urged members to contact their representatives of their opposition to the increases.” First class postage went from three cents in 1958 to four cents in 1959 and to five cents in 1963.

Omaha and Lincoln are fifty miles apart. During the 117-year existence of the Nebraska Library Association, 1895 to 2012, a Lincoln librarian held the presidency for 38 years and Omaha for 20 years. In January 1945 Mrs. Elbert Blanchard, president, announced the next dinner meeting would include presentations by Clara Johnson, Secretary of the Nebraska Public Library Commission; Margaret Rutledge, President of NLA; Frank Lundy, director of the University of Nebraska libraries; and Stewart Smith, librarian of the Lincoln City Library (“‘Librarians’,” 1945).

Paul Knapp, chairman of the Lincoln ALA Chapter, wrote on February 11th, 1949 about a joint meeting in Omaha or Lincoln: “The fellowship between the two chapters would be valuable” and “would provide an opportunity to bring a speaker . . . which neither could afford alone.” Omaha’s members thought a vote necessary and thus the event could not occur until fall. In October 1949 John B. White, UN Serials Librarian, suggested “some more or less tangible objective. One hesitates to ask fifty or sixty people to drive fifty miles or less unless one really has something to offer.” It was a favorite idea of Knapp “and it is unfortunate that he is no longer here to push it.”

On March 11th, 1950 President Elizabeth A. F. Averil invited Lincoln colleagues to a dinner at the Benson Branch to hear Mr. Parson, the new Omaha librarian. Frank A. Lundy, President of the Nebraska Library Association and Director of University Libraries, replied, “I know of none at this moment who are planning to make the trip . . . The weather is uncertain; in addition to the expense of the trip. The two dollar dinner is a little high; and the Lincoln Chapter of the American Library Association is holding its own spring meeting next Friday evening.”

International, national, regional, and state conventions facilitated wider communications. Members reported on ALA and Iowa conventions. In 1958 Helen Oeschger spoke about the Mid-Pacific Library Conference in Hawaii. In 1959 Frank Gibson and Mildred Smock spoke about the mid-winter ALA meeting in Chicago.

Membership required a recommendation from the Membership Committee and a two-thirds vote from members, most votes were unanimous. Club membership qualifications were reduced. Initially the Constitution provided “any person actively interested in the objectives of the club” was eligible for membership. Amendment to the Constitution in 1950 met with “. . . some disagreement over the parts on Membership . . .” The new provision provided “any librarian or paraprofessional actively interested in the purposes of the club may become a member upon payment of dues.” In February 1960 “it was emphasized that membership is open to all who are engaged in library work.”

Dues went from 25 cents per year to 50 cents in May 1937, a dollar in 1950, $2 in 1982, $4 for 1984, and $5 in 1985. The Executive Committee in 1932 “decided to notify those members of the Club who have not paid dues to do so before any action should be taken to consider them active or members of the Club.”

Attendance at meetings varied from 15 to 40 people, and sometimes as many as a hundred including guests. The membership committee recruited likely members. As many as 20 new members were inducted a year, most were members of short duration. One minute book entry in February 1931 suggests post-meeting conviviality: “After the business meeting, several tables of bridge were formed, and a purely social evening followed.”

The club noted births, retirements, illnesses, and deaths. In 1935 “Miss Osborne made the happy announcement of the arrival of a baby boy to Mrs. Catherine Blanchard. Everyone thought the news very exciting as he is really the first ‘Library baby’.” Treasurer’s records reveal $2.10 spent on a “Mother Goose” book. Blanchard returned to the library and presided as Club president 1944-45. As Portia M. Simms Trulove, a 1946 Central High graduate said, “I liked Catherine Blanchard in the library. She was very pleasant and helpful.” Some early 1960s recollections described her as a strict study hall disciplinarian.

In 1949 five retirees, Helen Anderson, Lila Bowen, Bertha Baumer, Blanche Hammond, and Anna McCague, were honored at the Joslyn where “dinner will be served for the first time at the Joslyn Art Museum” (“First,” 1949). In 1955 charter member Miss Taylor spoke briefly as she retired after 34 years with OPL. In 1956 Ellen Lord asked what was to be done for Iva Winterfield who had retired. They decided the membership committee would notify the retiring member of her gift of a lifetime membership. She would be a guest at some future dinner meeting. Revisions to the Constitution provided that “life members are those persons who have been members for at least 10 years, and who have retired from active library work.” Life members paid no dues. At the 1983 spring meeting at the Dodge House retirees Frank Gibson, OPL; Marion Playfoot, UNO; Leona Anderson, CBPS; and Mildred Smock, CB; received hand lettered certificates. The following year a meeting honored Francis Thompson’s retirement from OPS.

Clubs typically have flower funds. In 1944 the Club sent ailing Philip Moe, the UNMC librarian, a carton of cigarettes costing $1.50. Moe died in 1948. The College of Medicine Alumni Association raised funds to create the Philip Moe Memorial Room to be furnished and equipped with cultural and recreational reading matter. In February 1948 Miss Baumer expressed her gratitude for the plant she had received. In 1952 the hat was passed raising $9.55 to buy Miss Winterfield flowers.
Meetings included moments for remembrance of deceased members and contributions to a memorial book funds. Following Edith Tobitt’s death in 1939 the Club added Chinese Gardens for $3.75 by Dorothy Graham (1938) to the OPL Tobitt Memorial Collection “as a tribute to Miss Edith Tobitt, one of the founders of the club.” Bertha Baumer died in 1951 and the club donated $10 to the Memorial Book Fund to purchase art and Catholic books. In 1960 donations were made in memory of South High librarian Inez Sherman.

The secretary wrote thank you, sympathy, and condolence letters and invitations to members to accept chairs and nominations to office. The treasurer paid expenses, such as postage, stationery, envelopes, place cards, flowers, corsages, centerpieces, decorations, refreshments, paper plates and napkins, cookies, candy, cakes, accessories, candles, baby gifts, taxi and carfare, and occasional honorariums for speakers. Costs included a 1927 10-cent phone call to Council Bluffs, an 11-cent money order in 1939, and tips for waiters, such as in 1932: “Tip to waitresses June 28 breakfast.” In 1931, five members contributed $.35 and Edith Tobitt $1 to defray expenses of the state meeting.

Highly trained, credentialed, and networked information specialists served youth to gerontocracy, schools, government, and private industry. Gender roles and technology evolved. In 1936 the Librarians Club had 71 members representing 24 libraries, including eight special libraries: Nebraska Power Company, advertising firm Bozell & Jacobs, Douglas County Law Library, Joslyn, WOW Radio Station, Veterans Hospital, Offutt Air Force Base, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The 1944 list of 65 librarians in the Omaha-Council Bluff area included one male, fifty single women, and fifteen married women.


Librarians’ accomplishments and contributions to learning are reflected in the professional commitment of Edith Tobitt, Bertha Baumer, Hannah Logasa, and Germaine Krettek. The bonds of profession and friendship kept the group active from 1925 to 1969. The Club revived in 1971 and endured to 1999, when technology, changing lifestyles, competing professional affiliations, and the Internet took its toll.

Social, intellectual, and professional engagement provided an “awesome” opportunity for public and school librarians to exchange ideas, a forum to share ideas, to learn the strengths of the different area libraries, to learn about each other, and to better serve the public. A member from the 60s to the 80s said, “It was a great thing to get so many of us from different libraries together” (K. Berry, personal communication, June 27, 2012; E.J. Bailey, personal communication, June 29, 2012).

The author would like to thank the following people for their help in researching this article: Gary Rosenberg, Mary Nash, the Nebraska Library Commission, Mary Jo Ryan, Beth Goebel, Mary Stultz, Ella Jane Bailey, Joanne Ferguson Cavanaugh, Christine Walsh, Denise Ballesteros, Karen Berry, Barbara Peterson, Les Valentine, Jane Boyer, Kathleen Tooker, Mary Carpenter, Meredith McGowan, Lynn Sullivan, and Martha Grenzeback.

References


Bulgarian library head has praise for Omahans. (1930, May 24). Omaha World-Herald, p. 3.


Library Club’s fall meeting tonight. (1943, Nov. 8). *Omaha World-Herald*, p. 18.

Many groups hear of atomic energy.” (1946, April 1). *Gateway*, p. 4.


# 2013 Nebraska Library Association
## Year-End Treasurer’s Report

By Barbara Hegr

<table>
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<th>Nebraska Library Association Budget</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sales Tax from sections</td>
<td>$250.00</td>
<td>$173.75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$173.75</td>
<td>69.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Income/ALA bus trip.</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$350.00</td>
<td>$1,193.00</td>
<td>$5,090.00</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$6,633.00</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money market/Leadership Institute</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$1,000.00</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,000.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>$43,750.00</td>
<td>$34,332.89</td>
<td>$8,885.27</td>
<td>$7,308.32</td>
<td>$3,843.71</td>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Funds Received</th>
<th></th>
<th>Jan-Mar</th>
<th>Apr-Jun</th>
<th>Jul-Sep</th>
<th>Oct-Dec</th>
<th>Yr to Date</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nixon Scholarship Fund</td>
<td>$3,000.00</td>
<td>$10.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$940.28</td>
<td>$1,450.28</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLA Legacy Fund</td>
<td>$1,200.00</td>
<td>$15.00</td>
<td>$500.00</td>
<td>$200.00</td>
<td>$715.00</td>
<td>$2,915.00</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska Advocacy Day</td>
<td>$2,000.00</td>
<td>$2,580.00</td>
<td>$500.00</td>
<td>$200.00</td>
<td>$715.00</td>
<td>$2,580.00</td>
<td>129.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEMA funds/Conference Exec Sec'y</td>
<td>$1,000.00</td>
<td>$1,000.00</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$1,140.28</td>
<td>$5,745.28</td>
<td>$5,913.69</td>
<td>117.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship Grant</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>$7,200.00</td>
<td>$3,605.00</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$1,000.00</td>
<td>$1,140.28</td>
<td>$5,745.28</td>
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<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
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<td>$37,937.89</td>
<td>$8,885.27</td>
<td>$8,100.32</td>
<td>$4,983.99</td>
<td>$59,913.69</td>
<td>117.59%</td>
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<td>Expenses</td>
<td>2013 Budget</td>
<td>Jan-Mar</td>
<td>Apr-Jun</td>
<td>Jul-Sep</td>
<td>Oct-Dec</td>
<td>Yr to Date</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
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<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section Allocations</td>
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<td>$5,254.74</td>
<td>$562.50</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$5,907.24</td>
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<td>Contingency/ASRL/2016 Conf. Deposit</td>
<td>$1,500.00</td>
<td>$50.00</td>
<td>$1,000.00</td>
<td>$1,050.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>70.00%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money Market/leadership Institute</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALA bus trip</td>
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<td>$1,323.10</td>
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<td>Insurance</td>
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<td>Bank Charges</td>
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<td>$21.50</td>
<td>$30.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>$51.50</td>
<td></td>
<td>171.67%</td>
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<td>Nebraska Community Foundation Fees</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web Site Hosting</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memberclicks Service</td>
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<td>$459.00</td>
<td>$459.00</td>
<td>$459.00</td>
<td>$1,835.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memberclicks Fees</td>
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<td>$294.79</td>
<td>$684.14</td>
<td>$246.60</td>
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<td>65.30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sales Tax (for sections)</td>
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<td>$248.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>99.44%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post Office Box Rental</td>
<td>$90.00</td>
<td>$88.00</td>
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<td>97.80%</td>
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<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
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<td>$1,054.29</td>
<td>$11,629.36</td>
<td>$3,198.74</td>
<td>$2,507.60</td>
<td>$18,389.99</td>
<td>147.17%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Funds Disbursed                              |             |         |         |         |         |            |      |
| Nixon Scholarship Fund                       | $2,000.00   | $210.00 | $800.00 | $500.00 | $874.47 | $2,484.47 | 124.22% |
| NLA Legacy Fund                              | $2,000.00   | $15.00  | $500.00 | $200.00 | $715.00 |            | 35.75% |
| Nebraska Advocacy Day                        | $3,500.00   | $2,450.82 | $300.48 |         |         | $2,751.30 | 78.61% |
| National Legislative Day                    | $1,800.00   |         |         |         |         | $992.28   |      |
| Internship Grant                             | $0.00       |         |         |         |         |            |      |
| **Subtotal**                                 | $9,300.00   | $2,675.82 | $2,032.76 | $1,000.00 | $1,074.47 | $5,883.05 | 74.01% |

| Contracted Services                          |             |         |         |         |         |            |      |
| Executive Director                           | $10,800.00  | $2,600.00 | $2,700.00 | $2,700.00 | $10,700.00 | $99.07%   |      |
| Supplies and Expenses                        | $1,000.00   | $36.68  | $478.25 | $488.09 | $0.00 | $1,003.02 | 100.30% |
| Lobbyist                                     | $4,320.00   | $1,080.00 | $1,080.00 | $1,080.00 | $1,080.00 | $4,320.00 | 100.00% |
| Legislative Monitoring                       | $4,320.00   | $1,080.00 | $1,080.00 | $1,080.00 | $1,080.00 | $4,320.00 | 100.00% |
| Expenses                                     | $350.00     | $200.00 | $64.50  | $264.50 |         |            | 75.57% |
| Internet Site Coordinator                    | $1,800.00   | $450.00 | $450.00 | $450.00 | $1,800.00 | 100.00%   |      |
| Internet Site Coordinator bonus              | $1,000.00   |         |         |         |         |            | 0.00%    |
| Publication Editor                           | $2,400.00   | $600.00 | $600.00 | $600.00 | $2,400.00 | 100.00%   |      |
| Accountant                                   | $800.00     |         |         |         |         | $550.00   | 68.75%   |
| **Subtotal**                                 | $26,790.00  | $5,846.68 | $6,588.25 | $6,398.09 | $6,524.50 | $25,357.52 | 94.65% |

| Obligations                                  |             |         |         |         |         |            |      |
| Dues Paid or Refunded                        | $80.00      |         |         |         |         |            |      |
| Filing non-profit biennial report            | $20.00      | $20.00  |         | $20.00  |         |            | 100.00% |
| MPLA Membership                              | $100.00     | $100.00 | $100.00 |         |         |            | 100.00% |
| ALA Membership                               | $180.00     | $180.00 |         |         |         |            | 100.00% |
| Freedom to Read Foundation                   | $100.00     |         |         | $100.00 |         |            | 100.00% |
| ACFLON Membership                            | $120.00     |         |         | $120.00 |         |            | 100.00% |
| National Legislative Day                    | $100.00     |         |         |         |         |            | 0.00%    |
| One Book, One Nebraska                       | $0.00       |         |         |         |         |            |      |
| Nebraska Library Leadership support          | $2,000.00   | $2,000.00 | $2,000.00 |         |         | $2,000.00 | 100.00% |
| MPLA Leadership Conference stipends          | $1,000.00   | $499.84 | $500.00 |         | $999.84 |            | 99.98% |
| Emerging Leaders Stipend                     | $1,000.00   |         |         |         |         | $3,499.84 | 95.10% |
| **Subtotal**                                 | $3,680.00   | $519.84 | $160.00 | $2,500.00 | $320.00 | $3,499.84 |      |
### Officers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Jan-Mar</th>
<th>Apr-Jun</th>
<th>Jul-Sep</th>
<th>Oct-Dec</th>
<th>Yr to Date</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President - WJji/ALA bus Trip</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
<td>$54.00</td>
<td>$80.26</td>
<td>$134.26</td>
<td>134.26%</td>
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<td>Vice-President</td>
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<td>$1,818.62</td>
<td>$1,818.62</td>
<td>$1,818.62</td>
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<td>Secretary</td>
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<td>$39.16</td>
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<td>$94.16</td>
<td>$45.00</td>
<td>$140.16</td>
<td>93.44%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Directors</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td></td>
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<td>MPLA Representative</td>
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<td>$704.42</td>
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<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
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<td>$2,963.59</td>
<td>$54.00</td>
<td>$1,629.28</td>
<td>$846.10</td>
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### Committees

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<th>Apr-Jun</th>
<th>Jul-Sep</th>
<th>Oct-Dec</th>
<th>Yr to Date</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Advocacy</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.00%</td>
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</tr>
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<td>League of Municipalities Meeting Booth</td>
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<td>$187.50</td>
<td></td>
<td>$187.50</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auditing</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.00%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>By-laws</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing Education</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.00%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominating</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.00%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarships</td>
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<td>$126.10</td>
<td>$46.38</td>
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<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
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<td>$126.10</td>
<td>$46.38</td>
<td>$359.98</td>
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<td>$14,852.21</td>
<td>$11,319.05</td>
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</table>

### Total Net

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<th>Jan-Mar</th>
<th>Apr-Jun</th>
<th>Jul-Sep</th>
<th>Oct-Dec</th>
<th>Yr to Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-$8,653.50</td>
<td>$24,690.17</td>
<td>$14,579.10</td>
<td>$6,751.89</td>
<td>$6,335.06</td>
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This month’s topic is an introduction to health literacy in five simple steps!

Step 1: Understanding Health Literacy; or, “What the heck is it?”

According to an Institute of Medicine report, health literacy is defined as “the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.” Whew! Health literacy is basically this giant umbrella term that covers everything from knowing how to seek medical care to making complicated multi-layered treatment decisions.

Step 2: Health literacy is important; or, “Why should I care?”

As a medical librarian, I believe the best medical decision is a well-informed one. As informational professionals, I hope everyone strives for a well-informed patron. However, beyond the humanist aspects of health literacy and wanting the best outcomes for patients, as they say, nine out of ten questions starting with “why” have the answer of “money.” In this case, money is a big, giant, billion dollar reason to care. Low health literacy is linked to more ER visits, hospitalizations (having to stay overnight at a hospital), longer recovery times, and a slew of other poor health outcomes. Practically speaking, if you don't know how to take your medication, and thus it doesn't work right, you’ll have to make a second trip to the doctor’s office and then buy another prescription. Imagine all of the money spent to treat you twice, and take that times millions of Americans. There are billions of reasons to care about health literacy.

Step 3: Understanding obstacles; or, “Why can’t these people get it together?”

Long gone are the simple instructions of “Take two and call me in the morning.” Instead these have been replaced by patients taking multiple medications, all with different instructions, so patients are figuring out if they can “take with food three times a day” while at the same time take another medication “twice daily on an empty stomach.” Patients are left with conflicting information and don't know what to do. Additionally, patients are increasingly asked to make medical decisions when they have no medical training or research skills. If someone asked me what was the best actuator valve on an oil rig, I wouldn't know and I wouldn't know how to start answering that question. This is the case for patients being asked which surgery or treatment option they want. They don’t know and they lack the skills to be able to make a well-informed decision.

Step 4: Valuable resources; or, “Can’t I just Google it?”

The National Library of Medicine (NLM) has multiple resources for patients (and librarians!) to use. All of the information on these websites has been vetted and can be trusted as reliable sources of health information. These websites are totally free, are not supported by ads, and are not selling any kind of cure-all or any other product. They are paid for by tax dollars, so visit them and get your money’s worth! A few examples include:

MedlinePlus - www.medlineplus.gov - Learn about the latest treatments, look up information on a drug or supplement, find out the meanings of words, or view medical videos or illustrations

NIH Senior Health - www.NIHseniorhealth.gov - Can help seniors (anyone age 60 and above) find answers to their medical questions. Includes special senior topics, such as exercising as a senior, long-term care, balancing, and falls.

Step 5: Organizations; orm “Who can I ask for help?”

Beyond the websites mentioned above, the NLM also supports health literacy through their outreach arm, the National Network of Libraries of Medicine and offers a webpage here: http://nnlm.gov/outreach/consumer/hlthlit.html

Additionally, many states have local programs. Health Literacy Nebraska is ours and offers informational webinars and showcases community health literacy efforts, as well as opportunities to get involved! Their website is: http://www.healthliteracyne.org/

About the Author

Monica Rogers, MLIS, is a Health Information Literacy Coordinator for the MidContinental region of the NN/LM and can be reached at monicarogers@creighton.edu
From the Archives . . .

By Martha Grenzeback

When Omaha Public Library was celebrating their 140th anniversary, I sent out to staff some snippets from OPL’s old annual reports, library rules from 1877, etc., and everyone loved it! I’m thinking some other libraries probably have some old interesting materials to share too. One thing that was striking is how over 100 years later we are still dealing with some of the same issues in our libraries! For my first addition of “From the Archives” I thought I would share the following gems.

On the Value of Librarians

The reference room is not only a storehouse of books, but it is the place where the public comes for information. It is quite as difficult a matter to discover just exactly what the public is looking for as it is to find the information of the desired subject. People are not explicit in making their wants known and to answer one question by asking another is quite legitimate in reference work.

The reference room might also aptly be termed a “suggestion room,” as there isn’t a day when the imagination of the attendant isn’t called on to play a part. Many of the High School literary programs, the outlines for club workers, games for sociables, are the outgrowth of suggestion. Original letters of condolence, notes of thanks are asked for, expected, and received.

To do this necessitates a personal contact with the public, this means work, work is trouble, trouble is sympathy, and sympathy is the keynote of success in Library work.

--Monthly report for August 29th, 1913 to the Board of Directors, Omaha Public Library

Salaries

This subject would not be alluded to were it not that during the past year one or two gentlemen, not now members of your body, have seen fit to characterize the expenditure of this board for the services of its librarians as wasteful and inexcusable extravagance. Standing behind a railing, it was said, and handing our books to those who inquire for them, are occupations for which suitable persons could easily be obtained at wages of a dollar a day. It is believed that these and similar criticisms will never be made by those who have at all examined the workings of our library system. As well might it be claimed that meeting one or two evenings a week, and voting on a few ordinances or resolutions, would be amply paid by the same amount. The members of a city council are selected because they are men of experience, integrity and sound common sense. These are qualifications which must be paid for. The duties of a competent librarian are by no means confined to the distribution of books. He [sic] must be able to tell without reference to the catalogues what books are in the library; what books treat of any given subject, and what course of reading would be appropriate to a person seeking such information. He must be a shrewd and careful buyer. He must have moral force enough to preserve order and quiet among a rough and lawless set of boys whom it is above all things desirable to attract to our reading room. He must be thoroughly acquainted with current periodical literature. He must be a competent cataloguer. He must be affable, patient and good tempered. And, above all, his honesty and integrity must be absolutely spotless. When all these things are considered, and when, moreover, it is understood that the expense of distributing the books in the Omaha Public Library is less than that of any city of its size which has come under the notice of this board, we feel sure that the charges alluded to will hardly be regarded as sustained.

In This Together:
A New C&U Column
By Jon Ritterbush

Many Americans still describe libraries as an important place for meeting information needs. In a recent poll, 80% of Americans described public libraries’ books and media collections as very or somewhat important. Nearly as many applied these values to having librarians’ help in finding information and in describing libraries as a “quiet, safe place” to spend time (Pew Internet, 2013). These sentiments may help explain why public library circulation climbed 38% and physical visits rose 32.7% from 2001 to 2010, according to the IMLS (2013).

In spite of these statistics, TechCrunch and other blogs have given voice to “The End of the Library” meme, citing technology as the cause for libraries’ demise (Siegler, 2013). Yahoo! Education recently cited a career coach who labeled librarians as a “dying occupation” and “dead-end job,” suggesting one should consider work as a nutritionist instead (Duchon, 2013). Usage figures at academic libraries might support such pessimism. Median circulation statistics at academic libraries have dropped 22% and median reference transactions have dropped 54% between 2002 and 2011, according to ARL surveys (Association of Research Libraries, n.d.). How are academic libraries responding to the changing landscape? As it turns out, in many of the same ways as public libraries:

- UNK’s Ryan Library has opened a learning commons in its library to provide tutoring services and supplemental instruction to students, while Doane College’s Perkins Library is beginning construction on its own learning commons in January 2014. These resemble the homework help services and adult learning centers being established in some public libraries, such as Brooklyn, New York’s Central Library.
- UNO’s Criss Library has reconfigured some group study rooms with workstations and software to facilitate collaboration and multimedia production. This resembles Cleveland, Ohio’s main public library which was aiming to open a “MakerSpace” in January 2014, featuring 3-D printers, music production tools, and other technology assets.
- The libraries at UNL and Creighton University both maintain institutional digital repositories, helping scholars share their intellectual works with the world. The Huffington Post recently featured the Los Gatos, California Public Library and its efforts to support local authors’ distribution of ebooks on a library-sponsored portal (Coker, 2013).

Many readers will fervently disagree with the premise that libraries are going away, but few will deny that libraries—public, academic, and others—all face significant opportunities and challenges from external forces in the next decade. Many libraries are adapting, but at what point might they cease to be libraries? Is it the physical collections, the access to paywalled electronic resources, staff research expertise, or some amalgam that defines libraries?

Whatever the future answer might be, it will be imperative for librarians to remain connected, sharing ideas and experiences with each other across library types to navigate these changes. NLA annual conferences and section meetings provide a wonderful opportunity to do just that, as was evidenced during the 2013 conference presentations delivered in Kearney. On May 16, 2014, the College & University section will be co-hosting a meeting with the Special & Institutional section at the University of Nebraska-Omaha’s Criss Library. On behalf of Annette Parde, the 2013-14 S&I section chair, I would like to extend an invitation to employees of all library types to attend this meeting. This spring meeting will feature presentations on special collections, new technologies, and user services at academic and special libraries, but these may inspire and inform similar programs in public or school libraries. Likewise, academic and special libraries could learn from our colleagues’ experiences in public and school libraries, and our meeting program includes time for these “Table Talks” conversations.

I hope you will consider joining us this May at UNO! As the C&U’s Past-Chair, Marcia Dority Baker, noted last year, “We are all in this together”—regardless of library type—to educate, advocate, and innovate on behalf of our libraries’ users.

References


About the Author

Jon Ritterbush is the E-Resources and Serials Librarian at the University of Nebraska-Kearney’s Calvin T. Ryan Library, and is the 2013-14 Chair of the C&U Section.
What a great annual conference we had in Kearney last year! TSRT sponsored four very interesting and entertaining programs.

- Thursday, 8:00-8:50 - "Migrating to a New ILS" by Andrew Sherman
- Thursday, 9:00-9:50 - "Government Documents in a NextGen Catalog" by James Shaw
- Thursday, 11:00-11:50 - "Breaking the Rules" by Deirdre Routt, Jake Rundle and Laura England Biggs
- Friday, 8:00-8:50 - "Confluence of Upheavals: Shifting Workflows with Library System Migrations and Other Sea Changes," a panel discussion with Casey Kralik, Billie Cotterman, Robin Clark, and Angela Kroeger

I certainly learned something from each speaker. The Board is starting to work on the TSRT Spring meeting and hopes to update everyone soon as to our plans.

In other news, I do not always get to read new articles, etc., when they first are published. Many articles I save for when I have a few minutes, so of course the holiday break was a good time for me to catch up on some reading. I recently read the NASIG Core Competencies for Electronic Resources Librarians (available at the webpage below), which were adopted in July 2013. If you have not read the document and you deal with electronic resources in any way you should read this nine page report. It will help you explain to everyone why managing electronic resources takes up most your time, if not all.

My favorite part is on personal qualities in section seven. Of course, the qualities speak of being flexible, open minded, and able to function in a dynamic ever-changing environment. But subsections “7.2 A high level of tolerance for complexity and ambiguity“ and “7.3 Unrelenting customer service focus and dogged persistence in the service of users“ may be the two most important subsections from the section. As managers of electronic resources we know we must be ever vigilant, troubleshooting problems of all kinds, and managing the full lifecycle of an electronic resource. Figure 1 on page three demonstrates the complexity of the lifecycle of an electronic resource.

As our role in the management of electronic resources develops and changes, the Core Competencies document would be helpful in updating job descriptions, etc.

Reference

Customer Service Success Story

Customer service is probably the most important aspect of working in a public library. Every once in awhile something happens in the library that demonstrates excellent customer service, above what is done on a daily basis. I am enclosing an example of something that happened at the Willa Cather Branch of the Omaha Public Library.

An opportunity to provide excellent customer service was displayed by Willa Cather staff on the morning of October 18th, 2013 before our regular opening time. The parents of a past library teen user came in earlier in the week asking for the use of our computer to view their son’s graduation from Navy Basic training. It was in Chicago and the graduation time was set to occur before we opened to the public. Tony Carter was a frequent library user, and his parents did not have access to a computer nor could they travel to see the ceremony.

As the library manager, I told them to come early and we would set them up with a computer so they could watch the live streaming ceremony and listen to the audio as well. The parents were thrilled and very appreciative of the library making this possible for them. They took pictures and enjoyed seeing their son as he marched across the stage.

I think it is important to celebrate these events. Often we focus on the negative stories and forget the positive experiences. While the negative events are important to learn from, the positive experiences can help morale and can help motivate staff to continue to provide excellent customer service.
News from the Special & Institutional Section
By Annette Parde

Discover more about NLA's Special & Institutional (S&I) Section at two events this spring!

On Friday, March 14, 2014 at 10 a.m., we will meet at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln’s Confucius Institute in order to learn about the institute and tour its library. Its mission is to “promote and teach Chinese language and culture in Lincoln and the State of Nebraska” (learn more at http://confuciusinstitute.unl.edu/). S&I is inviting the Nebraska Chapter of the Special Libraries Association to join us. If you're interested in attending, please email me at aparde2@nebrwesleyan.edu, or better yet, join the S&I section and receive updates via Memberclicks! (Shameless plug #1!) There is no cost to the event, but we do have a limited number of spaces.

Two months after that, on May 16, 2014, we are co-sponsoring the Spring Meeting with C&U at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. The theme is “Discovering Uniqueness—Sharing Commonalities.” Is there a better phrase to summarize the mission of S&I? The program has not been set yet but look for more information as the event gets closer. Another great incentive to join S&I! (Shameless plug #2!)

S&I has members from many types of special libraries—law, medical, music, correctional, government—just to name a few. Part of the beauty of this section is its diversity of institutions and subjects and, with that, the many wonderful places we can visit. We hope you join us this spring as we visit two places with intriguing collections. If these go well, I hope for more field trips, mainly so I have a good excuse to visit the varied collections of special libraries throughout Nebraska. I look forward to seeing you this spring!
Welcome to the New Members Round Table

By Matt Kovar

Membership in NMRT is open to anyone who:

1. Is a member of the Nebraska Library Association (NLA)
2. Has been a member of NLA for 10 years or less
   OR Has received an MLS or other library degree in the last 10 years or less
   OR Has been in Nebraska as a professional for 10 years or less

Are you a new member of NLA? Guess what? You are automatically a member of NMRT for your first year! This is a great time to attend meetings to see if NMRT is a good fit for you. Following your first year, membership in NMRT is only $5. This small investment is a great way to become an active participant in the Nebraska Library Association.

Spring Meeting 2014: Nebraska State Penitentiary Library Tour

Our spring meeting will be held on Monday, March 24, 2014, in Lincoln. We will be touring the Nebraska State Penitentiary Library, which is a great opportunity to see how libraries function within a correctional facility. Following our tour, we will also have our business meeting at a location close to the Penitentiary that is still to be determined. The tour will begin at 12:30 p.m. at the Nebraska State Penitentiary, which is located at 4201 S. 14th Street in Lincoln, Nebraska. We have a limit of 25 people for our tour, so please sign up as soon as possible. You must sign up to attend this meeting, as we need a list of attendees to be allowed into the facility. The registration deadline for the spring meeting is Friday, March 14th. To sign up, please email mkovar@kearneygov.org and include your name and contact information in the email.

Are you not yet an NMRT member? Attending one of our meetings is a great way to see what our group is all about. You can also contact me with any other questions you may have about NMRT.

We are currently planning our remaining meetings for 2014. Do you work in a library that you feel is unique? Do you have a topic that you think would make a great meeting idea? Let us know! We are always looking for new meeting ideas.

To keep up with what is happening in NMRT, be sure to follow us on Facebook at http://facebook.com/NMRTNebraska and on Twitter under the handle @NMRT_NLA. We also have a blog where you can find announcements, meeting minutes, officer information, ways to get involved, and more at http://nebraskalibraries.org/NMRT/.

2013/2014 NMRT Officers

Matt Kovar —Chair
Holli Duggan—Vice Chair
Bethany Grabow—Past Chair
Aimee Owen—Secretary
How I ‘Roll’
By Emily McIllece

“How I ‘Roll’” is a column of highly recommended blogs that all librarians should check out! We also want to know which blogs you carve time out of your busy day to read. What do you look forward to in your blogroll? What blogger tickles your brain? Share with us your favorites and they could be featured in a future issue of Nebraska Libraries.

As part of their coursework, library science students at the University of Nebraska at Omaha explored blogs written by other library professionals. The exercise gave them a glimpse of “real world” librarianship and all its different flavors. Below are excerpts from volunteered student reports.

The Library Guy - http://boysbookblog.wordpress.com/

The Books for Boys blog, subtitled “Stuff Guys Will Want to Read—From a Guy Who Reads”, is a resource for parents and boys of all ages. The Library Guy reviews any and all children’s books that he feels may be of interest to boys. He addresses the repeated situations and questions that come up in the course of his work from “How can reading ANYTHING possibly be any fun?” to “Do you have any books to help a child deal with loss?” As someone who works in the field daily, the Library Guy draws from his experience and wisdom to provide book reviews that are fun, light-hearted, and easy to read. Sometimes library patrons (children or their parents) don’t know where to even begin searching for a good read, so having a blog like this is a great starting point.

—Molly Bullard

Mighty Little Librarian - http://www.mightylittlelibrarian.com

This blog is a fantastic use of reference for school libraries, or even public libraries that are trying to get younger students/citizens interested in the library again. One particular post that caught my attention was about holding a speed dating session with books, where the librarian had a timer set for each table and during that time the young person went through a box of four to five books and selected one they were interested in. At the end of the time, they were to rate the book and write why they liked it. If they really liked it they could hold onto it to check out after the session was completely over. The author also is very honest about her feelings, and has a post on her “back to school blues” and how to cope with starting a fresh year in the library and what to do with all the old textbooks that aren’t in use anymore, or simply getting them all organized.

—Samantha Beaman

Free Range Librarian - http://freerangelibrarian.com/

Free Range Librarian is, as quoted from the website, a blog of the “public, oft-daily mumblings and grumblings of one K.G. Schneider”, a writer and librarian who’s published over 100 articles and two books. This blog’s intended audience is centered on students, other librarians (especially public librarians), and everybody else in between! Every blog entry is written by Schneider and these entries range from updates of her career to ALA news and from latest technology to her views on societal issues.

—Mary Jo Pittman


A notable post is “Tree octopuses, hate sites, Agatha Ann Cunningham: The ‘Oh, C’MON!’ menagerie of information literacy,” which is geared towards fellow librarians and anyone in the education system. The post details how this librarian, Ingrid, has noticed that even with children growing up in this age of Internet, they have not figured out how to weed out the erroneous sites and find good, unbiased, accurate informational sites. She also divulges how she gives presentations to various students regarding information literacy and no one has ever commented on the fake site she shows: Save the Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus. She also explains that a journalist interviewed three different librarians about a ghost at the NYC public library and until the last librarian said the ghost wasn’t real, the journalist believed there was one.

—Jaime Kline
Mr. Library Dude - http://mrlibrarydude.wordpress.com

This blog is mainly directed toward librarians and future librarians and has great tips for how to build your resume when applying for a librarian position. The blog also has a category about how to nail your interview for a library job. This includes categories such as questions that you will be most likely asked in the interview. Also what questions you as an interviewee should ask during your interview. This blog also has great references for technology in libraries and how it is changing.

—Natalie Fisher

The Ubiquitous Librarian - http://chronicle.com/blognetwork/theubiquitouslibrarian

The Ubiquitous Librarian is a blog with an intended audience for academic librarians. The blog covers ground on many subjects, such as technology offered for students, advocacy for funding, outreach for students and faculty to become more supportive of their library, creating diverse collections, etc. Overall, the main focus of this blog is to get academic librarians to think more about making their collections and services user-sensitive.

—Abbie West

How I ‘Roll Submissions

Wish to submit your own blogroll suggestion? Email Emily at em.mcillece@gmail.com and include “How I Roll” in the subject line. Submissions should include links to your recommended blogs, a brief description of what you enjoy about each blog, and a short personal profile. Blogs do not necessarily need to be library-oriented, i.e., a DIY blog might inspire programming for your library or a webcomic that gets you in a good mood for the work day.

About the Author

Emily McIllece is a reference associate at the University of Omaha’s Criss Library and will complete her MLIS from the University of Missouri-Columbia in May 2013. Prior career aspirations included being a jockey and a published-well-enough-to-eat author. Now the dream is to sell the house, buy a boat in the Caribbean, and become The Sailing Librarian!
Book Bites
Book Reviews (and More!)

The Ocean at the End of the Lane by Neil Gaiman
William Morrow, 2013

A forty-something-year-old man returns to the small English countryside town where he grew up to attend his father's funeral. He wanders down an old path to a pond down the road where he remembers meeting nine-year-old Lettie Hempstock 33 years before. Now flashback to the time when our seven-year-old narrator was a shy, bookish child until he meets the Hempstock women: young Lettie, her mother, and grandmother. Our narrator discovers that these three women are immortal and that portals exist nearby to other worlds in which the young boy unleashes a creature of immense destruction. Our narrator must summon his bravery and with the help of the strong Hempstock women, fight to save not only himself and his family but a piece of their world.

Neil Gaiman is an amazing fantasy storyteller and he doesn't disappoint here, delving into fairy rings, other portal worlds, and immortality. The descriptions of the setting and the fantastical elements of this novel really jump out and make the characters memorable even after the last page is read. The mythical forces in this book are both whimsical and scary and the portrayal of the Hempstock women make you wish you could meet them in real life. Pick this wonderful fantasy novel up today.

--Samantha DuPree, Baird Holm LLP library

The Art Forger by B.A. Shapiro
Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2012
Hardcover, $23.95, ISBN: 9781616201326

B.A. Shapiro delivers an engrossing tale and a gripping plot-twister honed from delicate research. Gallery owner Aiden Markel offers blackballed artist Claire Roth $50,000 with the guarantee of a one-woman art show if she agrees to forge Degas’ After the Bath. The painting is one of thirteen priceless works stolen in the unsolved 1990 Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum heist. Claire’s morals battle with her need to redeem her tainted art career. Desperate to justify her actions, she investigates the likelihood of the painting to be a forgery itself. Shapiro takes the reader for a ride through Boston’s art world, shuttling between present day and three years earlier when Claire first straddled the line between copying and fraud. Toward the end, letters from Gardner to a beloved niece dominate the suspense by revealing the origination of the stolen Degas. The three plots twist together in an overarching message of love, betrayal, authenticity, and the lengths one would go to safeguard reputation. This book met instant popularity and has acquired several awards since its publication. It is a worthwhile read for those intrigued by mystery, historical fiction, or merely interested in a good page-turner.

--Rachel Zill, Baird Holm LLP and Clarkson College libraries

The Butler Did It by Paul Pender
Mainstream Publishing, 2013
$19.95, ISBN: 9781780575612

Paul Pender, then a BBC script editor, receives in 1993 a phone call from a man that introduces himself as “Britain’s top jewel thief and confidence trickster.” The man is Roy Fontaine, a Scottish prisoner convicted of murdering five people while in the service of various members of the British aristocracy. Fontaine wishes for Pender to write his life story, believing that he is the only one who can reveal the humor in his work. During their interviews at Full Sutton Prison, Fontaine is charming, cunning, and a great storyteller. When rehashing the events of his murders, however, his true mania bleeds through.
This confessional is full of excitement and hilarity, with asides regarding the Old Testament, Nietzsche, Roy Rogers, and the art of butting. A unique work of nonfiction full of Scottish humor, Pender delivers a surprisingly funny book about a serial killer. Readers will begin to sympathize with the unruly, bisexual, and crazed killer butler from Scotland. Do not feel ashamed to laugh.

--Rachel Zill, Baird Holm LLP and Clarkson College libraries

**The Outcasts by Kathleen Kent**  
Little, Brown and Company, 2013  
$26.00, ISBN: 9780316206129

Kathleen Kent takes readers on a thrilling adventure involving a manhunt, pirate’s treasure, and a woman determined to make a new life for herself in the west. It is the 19th century in the Gulf Coast, where lawlessness runs rampant. Lucinda Carter heads for Middle Bayou after escaping the Texas brothel that imprisoned her. She is employed as a school teacher while awaiting her lover, rumors of buried treasure on both their minds. Interwoven is the story of Nate Cannon, a young Texas policeman with a talent for horses. On his first assignment, he is commissioned to ride with two experienced rangers, George Deerling and his long-time partner Tom Goddard, to find a ruthless killer named McGill. When Lucinda and Nate’s stories converge, violence ensues. Kent delivers an unforgettable portrait of a woman who will stop at nothing to make a new life for herself.

The novel effortlessly switches between the two narrators until readers discover their connection. Kent is careful to develop her characters, leaving readers’ intrigue to dwindle until the very last page. She is apt in exploring the further reaches of the human psyche. In doing so, readers’ perceptions change throughout the book, blurring the line between good and bad. This is a great read for lovers of westerns or those new to the genre, with a lean toward female readers.

--Rachel Zill, Baird Holm LLP and Clarkson College libraries
Nebraska Libraries Editorial Policy

(Updated January 2013)

Mission

Nebraska Libraries is the official journal of the Nebraska Library Association. It strives to inform its members and subscribers of NLA’s activities and represent the broad scope of issues and news that affect all Nebraska libraries. To encourage the sharing of knowledge and inspiration throughout the state, Nebraska Libraries is an inclusive, flexible journal that publishes feature articles, editorials, white papers, news, and reports from libraries, conferences, and NLA.

Content

Nebraska Libraries welcomes content from volunteer authors, including feature articles, news briefs, columns and opinion pieces, and photographs and artwork. Content is also provided by overseeing NLA Communications Committee members. The Nebraska Libraries Editor and the Communications Committee have the responsibility to publish accurate information regarding NLA and its activities and provide a balanced spectrum of coverage for all Nebraska libraries and members. Content is accepted or rejected at the discretion of the Editor and is subject to editing for clarity and grammar.

Editor’s Rights

The Editor is responsible for each journal issue providing a balanced mixture of relevant and thoughtful articles and features on the interests, responsibilities, problems, and concerns of the varied library professionals throughout the state of Nebraska. The Editor is responsible for determining the strategic direction for the practitioner journal and developing editorial policies and submission standards, actively soliciting manuscripts from various NLA library professionals, conducting manuscript revision and editing, and serving as a primary liaison with authors. By submitting an item to this publication, an Author is implicitly granting the Editor permission to make minor editorial changes, such as correcting grammar, punctuation and spelling, and making layout and formatting changes as needed to speed along the publication process.

Author’s Rights

An Author agrees upon the stipulations of the Submission Policy when submitting an article to the Editor. Upon submitting works to the Editor, the Author will receive a copyedited version of their work and be given a one-week deadline to contest or make any changes. If the Editor does not hear from the Author within that deadline the article, as per the Editor’s rights, will be published as the Editor sees fit in order to speed along the publication process. Authors should explicitly note when a submission is a creative work, such as poem or story, where such changes would negatively impact the Author’s intent.

The Author shall, without limitation, have the non-exclusive right to use, reproduce, distribute, and create derivative works, including update, perform, and display publicly, the article in electronic, digital or print form in connection with the Author’s teaching, conference presentations, lectures, other scholarly works, and for all of Author’s academic and professional activities.

After a period of six (6) months from the date of publication of the article, the Author shall also have all the non-exclusive rights necessary to make, or to authorize others to make, the final published version of the Article available in digital form over the Internet including, but not limited to, a website under the control of the Author or the Author’s employer or through other digital repositories.

NLA Communications Committee Purpose

The NLA Communications Committee assists the NLA Editor with the direction, publication, and distribution of Nebraska Libraries and ensures that the journal meets the needs of the Nebraska library community. The committee aids the Editor in developing Nebraska Libraries’ policies and procedures and its members contribute to the journal as well as solicit content from the broader library community.

Disclaimer

The statements, comments, or opinions expressed in Nebraska Libraries contributors are those of their respective authors and do not represent the views the Nebraska Library Association.


Nebraska Libraries Submission Policy

(Updated January 2013)

Who Can Submit

Nebraska Libraries will publish various articles and creative content from all authors actively involved in the library world within the State of Nebraska. If you are unsure of whether or not your piece would fit with our publication, please query the editor at nlaeditor@nebraskalibraries.org

Editor & Author Review

Authors are asked to review their edited submissions within one week of being sent the final Editor-approved draft. If the Editor does not hear back from the Author within that week, the submission will be published as the Editor deems fit in order to not stall publication.

Submission Guidelines

- Nebraska Libraries will start publication as a quarterly practitioner’s journal. If interest is high, bi-monthly publication could occur in the future. Submissions for quarterly issues are due as follows:
  - February Issue = Due January 1
  - May Issue = Due April 1
  - August Issue = Due July 1
  - November Issue = Due October 1
- Any submissions received after a due date will be held and considered for the following issue.
- Please send all submissions in Word .doc or .rtf forms. Please no PDFs.
- Please send all photos saved as high quality JPEG files. Please send all photos and artwork as separate files not embedded in the Word document.
- If your article has sidebars or any special items that need to be formatted a certain way please clearly state this in the submission.
- Since we are publishing on Digital Commons there is no strict length minimum or maximum for submissions. Please be logical; i.e., a news brief should not be longer than a featured article.
- Nebraska Libraries is a practitioner journal and not a peer-reviewed scholarly journal. Therefore, citations are not necessary. If you would like to include them in your article the citation style used by Nebraska Libraries is APA.
- Please send all articles, ideas for articles, and other queries and communications to the Editor at nlaeditor@nebraskalibraries.org

Items Eligible for Publication

- We are looking for the following items or columns but we are open to submissions of all kinds:
  - Feature articles about anything library related
  - Articles about what is going on at your library (successful programs, etc.)
  - Short columns in each issue by members of the sections and round tables
  - News briefs—what has happened at your library, what is going to happen?
  - Spotlights on new NLA members
  - Member announcements (jobs, births, marriages, retirements, deaths, publications, etc.)
  - Suggestions for future columns, article ideas, etc.
  - Opinion pieces about hot topics in the library profession
  - Recommendations for the “How I ‘Roll” column (recommended blogs)
  - Recommendations for the “Beyond the Stacks” column (interviews with interesting people who work in libraries)
  - Recommendations for “My Own Private Library” column (share your book collection with NLA)
  - Recommendations for the “What Makes Your Library Special?” column (a spotlight on a specific Nebraska library)
  - Answers, comments, and potential questions for the “Question” column (favorite library moment, favorite book, etc.)
  - Creative works—short stories, poems, art, etc.
  - Book reviews
  - White papers (not sought but will be considered for publication)