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# NMRT to WELCOME NEW CONFERENCE ATTENDEES at NLA/NEMA 2001 CONFERENCE in KEARNEY

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# NMRT to WELCOME NEW CONFERENCE ATTENDEES at NLA/NEMA 2001 CONFERENCE in KEARNEY

By Charity K. Martin

In October 1997, I attended my first library conference, NLA/NEMA that was held in Omaha. I was a new librarian, fresh out of library school and on my first professional job for a total of three weeks. Not knowing what to expect and new to the state, I went to NLA/NEMA feeling confused and unsure of myself. I didn't know what to do, where to go or who anyone was. Finally, I found a face I knew and even though I couldn't remember the person's name, I latched on and began a conversation with relief.

In the three years since that first conference, I have found Nebraska, her people and especially her librarians to be kind, polite and good-natured. I have truly enjoyed living and working here. I enjoy attending NLA/NEMA conferences, meeting librarians and library workers from across the state. I go to NLA/NEMA to network, to visit with other librarians and talk about the issues in our field.

But other newcomers to our state may feel uncomfortable, perhaps even a little lost at their first conference. This is normal and understandable, but the New Members Round Table believes that it is not necessary. In order to help new members of NLA/NEMA

acclimate to the conference NMRT will be establishing *Conference Connections* this fall at the 2001 conference in Kearney. The purpose of this program is to help first and second time attendees to make contacts, and hopefully friends, with their colleagues in NLA/NEMA. Any NLA/NEMA member or conference attendee can participate in *Conference Connections*.

NMRT will provide attendees with two ways to accomplish this. The first, more formal way, will be through *Conference Colleagues*. Forms will be made available in future issues of NLA/NEMAQ and are available at the NMRT website for new members who would like to be matched up with a more experienced member of NLA/NEMA. A *Conference Colleague* will make arrangements to meet with the new member at NLA/NEMA and basically just show her/him some of the ropes, introduce them to people, explain some of what is going on, perhaps even attend a workshop or two together. However, to be a part of this program, the forms must be filled out by Oct. 1, 2001 so that arrangements can be made.

The less formal aspect of *Conference Connections* will be conducted at the NMRT booth and through some social activities. Beginning the

Wednesday night of the conference, NMRT members and officers will meet with anyone who would like to stop by and chat. We can answer questions about getting involved in NMRT or just introduce you to some friendly faces. Some NMRT members will be going out to dinner Wednesday night and perhaps to some evening entertainment. Also, at the NMRT booth will be a sign up sheet for people to arrange to meet in order to attend the various workshops together. NMRT as a group will be meeting right before the keynote speech and we will take a block of seats to sit together. A more detailed report of planned activities will be available in future issues of NLAQ.

Before the banquet and vendors reception on Thursday night, NMRT will host a mixer in which new conference attendees can mingle with one another and other NMRT members. During this time, NMRT will present its Mentor of the Year and New Beginning Professional awards. All NLA/NEMA members are invited to this event in order to welcome our newest colleagues to NLA/NEMA.

In order to make *Conference Connections* successful NMRT needs some assistance from seasoned NLA/NEMA members. First, we need to know about those people who are new to NLA/NEMA. If you are new, or know someone who is new, please let us know. This way, NMRT can be sure to welcome them to NLA/NEMA. Second, we need volunteers to be

NLA/NEMA *Conference Colleagues*. If you are willing to take someone under your wing for the conference, to just talk and help a person feel welcomed, we would dearly love to have you as a volunteer. We are especially looking for a wide variety of people, from all types of libraries and all types of jobs. NLA/NEMA is made up of people from public, academic, school and special libraries, people who work reference, cataloging, ILL, acquisitions as either professionals or para-professionals. As much as possible we would like to match people according to their areas of interest.

If you are interested in being a *Conference Colleague*, being matched with one, or would just like to know more about NMRT, please contact either Charity K. Martin or Sally Gibson at the following, or see the NMRT website at <http://www.nol.org/home/NLA/NMRT>.

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