

Spring 2000

Vol. 7 No. 1

Legislative Day Activities Held

The Nebraska Library Association (NLA) Legislative Day Luncheon was held in February in Lincoln.

One hundred and nine people attended, with twenty-nine legislative districts represented by senators or senators' representatives. Nebraska's nominees to the National Advocacy Honor Roll were recognized at the luncheon (see related story on page nine).

A seminar on *Future Funding of Public Libraries*, exploring the roles of private and public sources in funding public library services, was presented at the Library Commission by Lyn Wallin Ziegenbein of the Peter Kiewit Foundation and Ken Winston, NLA Legislative Liaison. More than seventy participants were challenged to explore what local advocates can do to ensure that Nebraska residents receive quality library services now and in the future.



In an open letter, NLA Legislative Committee Chair Brenda Ealey speaks movingly about the importance of activities like Legislative Day, "We must accentuate why we're here and why we must be a part of our communities now and in the future. Our customers must speak on behalf of our needs, so that it's not just librarians furthering their own cause, but a mandate from the people we serve." To read the

entire letter, see Libraries and Beyond on the Library Commission home page Announcements at www.nlc.state.ne.us. For more information, contact Brenda Ealey at 402-467-6188, 800-288-6063, e-mail: bealey@cornhusker.net. Also see the NLA Legislative Committee home page at nol.org/home/NLA/legcomm.html. ▲

▲ In this Issue:

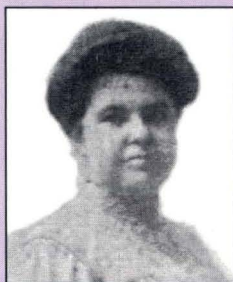
From the
Director:
"LSTA Helps
Libraries Become
Web-Wise"
page 2

LAMA Institutes
Scheduled
page 3

A Nebraska
Librarian Speaks
Out about E-books
page 7

News of Nebraska
Libraries and
People
page 11

Centennial Snapshot: Nellie Williams



Nellie Williams served as Executive Secretary of the Nebraska Public Library Commission from 1919 through 1931. A crusade for improvement in the quality of children's book collections was mounted in 1923, exhibiting children's books with the query, "Are we building on firm foundation?" At the Library Institute in Lincoln in 1923, she presented a paper on the subject. She also spoke at the American Library Association

(ALA) convention in Seattle, but the books were not displayed since publishers might object to her categorization of their books as unsuitable.

She was diligent in her support of libraries for state institutions. One essay on institutional libraries written for the *Eighth Biennial Report of the Nebraska Public Library Commission* was published in *The Modern Hospital*, v. 8, 1917. During the 1928-29 budget crunch, she requested support for Commission services to institutional libraries. Users of those libraries sent many enthusiastic letters of support. Williams resigned September 1, 1931. ▲

From the Director

"LSTA Helps Libraries Become Web-Wise"

The Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) is best known for providing federal funding to state library agencies to support statewide programs and library grant projects. However, the LSTA also sets aside funds, administered at the national level by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, for competitive grants. Since 1998, the Institute of Museum and Library Services has provided grants to state library agencies and individual libraries for research, digitization, and management of digital resources.

I did not fully appreciate the value of the national leadership grants program until I attended a recent conference titled, **Web-Wise: A Conference on Libraries and Museums in the Digital World**, sponsored by The Institute of Museum and Library Services and the University of Missouri-Columbia. The Web-Wise conference included a diverse group of presenters and participants. Many of the presenters were affiliated with projects funded through the LSTA national grants program. The focus of the presentations was the creation of digital libraries. I'm not sure I left the conference "Web-wise" but I did gain a greater appreciation for the possibilities and potential of digital libraries.

Digital projects like the State of Washington's Find-It and the Colorado Digitization Project were especially interesting. Presentations demonstrated focused approaches to providing online access to database records, images, audio, video, and hypermedia from archival, library, and museum collections. A University of Maryland project developing graphical interfaces to enhance children's use of digital libraries is equally interesting. These projects offer examples of best practices and illustrate the progress toward development of standards for identifying, describing, and finding Web-accessible resources.

The Web-Wise conference discussed new partnerships among libraries, museums, archives, and other organizations. The conference also addressed standards for description of Web-accessible resources. The challenges of developing standards in the library community are well known, but the challenge of developing standards in projects that involve the very different cultures of the museum, archival, and arts communities is a whole new puzzle. Each of these communities has long established approaches to classifying and describing items. Even so, progress is being made.

There is need for (as well as opportunity and interest in) digital library projects. Web technology has long passed the point of being a novelty. It is now at the center of educational, business, and government functions. A purpose of the LSTA national grants is to fund new and innovative approaches to library services. The projects presented at the Web-Wise conference offer new knowledge and experience in developing Web-based services. The potential for digital libraries is without limit. The challenge will be to create digital libraries that are focused, useful, creative, easy to use, and compelling.

Rod Wagner

Special Report....

Residency Requirement Explored

Every once in a while the following question (or variation thereof) is posed to us at the Nebraska Library Commission, "Must public library board members reside in the community where the library is located?" Surprisingly, state statutes related to libraries do not directly address this question, making it difficult to answer simply. But the library laws appear to imply an answer. This implication, taken in conjunction with other state statutes not directly related to libraries, does provide an answer to the question. Review of library-related statutes, statutes relating to other government entities, and election laws helps to arrive at an answer to this complicated question.

The conclusions reached, in consultation with Gary Krumland, attorney for the League of Nebraska Municipalities, are:

- ▲ Municipal libraries are clearly designed for people who live within the city, town, or village.
- ▲ State statutes require residency for members of the

various elected boards and district bodies. Since there is a provision in state law to elect library board members for library governing boards, it is unlikely that this process and these boards would follow different standards.

- ▲ Representation from outside the library district would only appear to be allowed in the case of some formal, legal arrangement extending service beyond the original district. Such representation would need to be spelled out in the written agreement between the affected bodies.

The preponderance of state law appears to indicate that board members should be residents of the library district that the board governs, despite the lack of a specific statement to that effect in library statutes. Short of a court test of the above, these are our best conclusions, based on what is currently known. For more information on how these conclusions were drawn, see the Library Commission home page at www.nlc.state.ne.us, search on Residency Requirement.

Richard Miller

NCompass

Spring 2000 • Vol. 7 No. 1

NCompass is a quarterly publication of the **Nebraska Library Commission**, The Atrium, 1200 N Street, Suite 120, Lincoln, NE 68508-2023. Phone: 402-471-2045 or 800-307-2665 (in Nebraska only). Fax: 402-471-2083. ISSN: 1075-9719.

Director: Rod Wagner

Editor: Mary Jo Ryan

Design and Production:

Valerie Dayton

Proofreaders: Mary Geibel, Janet Greser, Jacqueline Crocker

Home Page: www.nlc.state.ne.us
Nebraska Library

Commissioners: **Karen Warner**, Norfolk, term expires 2000; **Robert King**, Holdrege, term expires 2000; **Wally Seiler**, Alliance, term expires 2001; **Richard Jussel**, Kearney, term expires 2001; **Velma Sims**, Fremont, term expires 2001; **Kristen Rogge**, Johnson, term expires 2002.

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

Preparation of this newsletter was supported in part by funds allocated through the Library Services and Technology Act administered by the United States Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Special Report: Copyright, Libraries and the Public, part three

In this third installment of the *NCompass* series examining the principles of copyright law, we discuss copyright education.

The American Library Association (ALA) Office for Information Technology Policy (OITP) recently launched a new service called the Copyright Education Program. The program provides the library community with authoritative information about copyright. A Web site at copyright.ala.org/home.html offers an educational and communications medium for all librarians from all types of libraries. The Web site includes ALA copyright principles, copyright basics, copyright fair use, copyright and the library, copyright and learning, and information about the Copyright Education Program. One goal of the program is to encourage librarians to provide feedback regarding the Copyright Principles

and discuss current and anticipated copyright practices in all types of libraries. The Copyright Education Program addresses the purpose of the copyright law, fair use, public domain, the librarian's role in educating the public about copyright, and the librarian's role in representing the public's right to information. The program helps librarians address complex copyright questions and gain confidence and expertise in dealing with copyright issues.

In addition to the Web site, the Copyright Education Program includes an e-mail tutorial taught by a leading expert in copyright and libraries, copyright presentations and workshops designed for library institutional needs, print publications (including fact sheets and easy-to-use copyright guides), principles for librarians to help guide their response and action when faced with a copyright issue,

analyses of pending copyright legislation and court decisions written by legal experts, and "train-the-trainer" type programs to build local expertise.

For more information about the ALA Copyright Education Program, contact Carrie Russell, OITP copyright specialist at 800-941-8478, e-mail: copyright@alawash.org or copyright.ala.org. For more copyright information see the Library Commission home page, search on Copyright. For the full text of the *Copyright Handbook: a Guide for Nebraska Libraries*, search on Copyright Handbook or contact Mary Geibel, 402-471-2045, 800-307-2665, e-mail: mgeibel@neon.nlc.state.ne.us. Send comments or suggestions for this series to Ellen Van Waart, 402-471-4004, 800-307-2665, e-mail: evanwaart@neon.nlc.state.ne.us. ▲

LAMA Institutes Scheduled

LAMA (Library Administration and Management Association of the American Library Association) Institutes are planned for this spring. The Nebraska Library Commission, Nebraska's Regional Library Systems, the Public Library Resource Group, and the University of Nebraska Council of Libraries sponsor these regional institutes to explore broad issues of current importance to librarianship:

Leadership Survival Kit on April 27 at the Sandhills Convention Center in North Platte. Abigail Hubbard of the

Department of Management, University of Houston, explores leadership and decision-making; communications strategies; conflict management; creativity; and power and politics.

Libraries in the Digital Age: Visions for the Future and Road Maps for Change on May 22 at the Embassy Suites in Lincoln. Jan A. Baltzer, Director of Technology Planning at Mesa (AZ) Community College and a partner in the information technology consulting firm of Baltzer-Sutton Associates, will address the impact

of digital age technology on the role and services of libraries and librarians.

Contact: Ellen Van Waart 402-471-4004, 800-307-2665, e-mail: evanwaart@neon.nlc.state.ne.us, Fax: 402-471-2083. To register, see the Library Commission home page at www.nlc.state.ne.us, search on LAMA Registration. Send registration fees of \$20 per person per Institute to Sue Biltoft, Nebraska Library Commission, 1200 N Street, Suite 120, Lincoln, NE 68508-2023. ▲

Commission Sponsors Campfire Chats

In January, more than 65 people at 14 sites across the state attended Library Commission-sponsored videoconferences to present basic information about the Commission's database project. Since its beginning four years ago, the database project has grown from 78 participating

libraries to more than 650 this year. The database project initially included one information provider and ten databases. Now the project includes more than a dozen information providers and approximately 35 databases, and it continues to grow. The goal of the Campfire Chat

videoconferences is to build a foundation of understanding and knowledge for all interested librarians. Videoconference handouts and the Questions and Answers are posted to the Nebraska Library Commission homepage, see www.nlc.state.ne.us, search on Campfire Chat. ▲

Janet Troubleshoots Computers

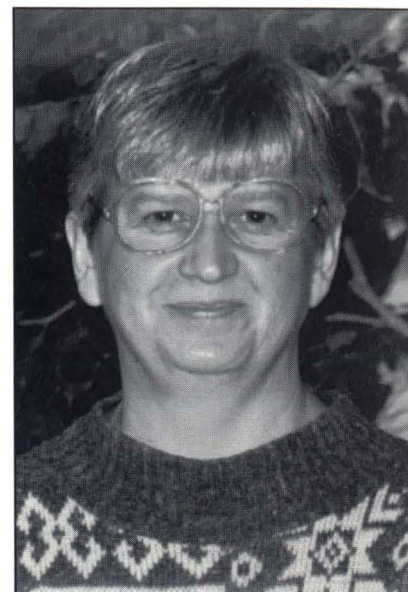
Meet Janet Greser, the Library Commission's computer troubleshooter. Since Janet is the first line of assistance for any computer mishap for all the people who work at the Library

Janet is excited by the prospect of e-commerce...

Commission, she is always busy. Janet is a graduate of Fremont High School and holds an Associate Degree in Accounting from McComb County Community College in Mt. Clemens, MI. Additionally, she earned a Bachelor's Degree in MIS (Management Information Systems) from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Janet has always been interested in computing since the first time she saw key punch cards in a high school class. Janet says she is excited by the prospect of e-commerce and the wide availability of e-mail. Her

favorite Website at work is the Nebraska Library Commission Website <www.nlc.state.ne.us>.

Janet recently retired from the Nebraska Army National Guard after 23 years of service. She is wife to Craig Heier and mother to Lisa, 19 and Amanda, 7. She also shares her home with a mixed breed dog named Bear. The best thing about Nebraska living according to Janet is the proximity to family. In her personal time, Janet enjoys Rock and Roll music, dancing, sunrises and sunsets, and reading books that help her be a better person. ▲



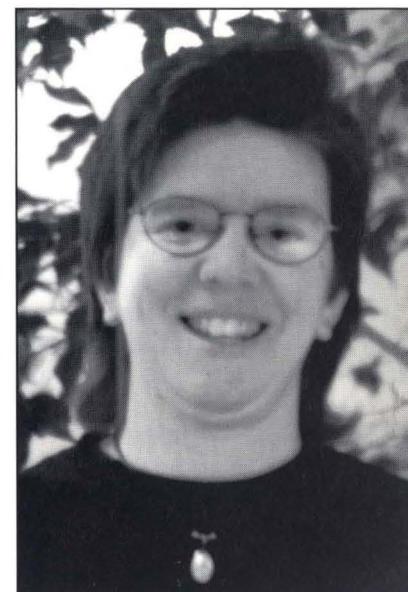
Pam Assists with E-Rate

Pam Scott recently joined the staff at the Nebraska Library Commission as a Library Consultant by way of the Panhandle Library System Office where she was the administrator for nearly

Pam enjoys information at her fingertips...

three years. In her current position, Pam assists librarians with a variety of topics including strategic planning, board education, technology, public services, and the e-rate program. Pam is also working temporarily as the Volunteer Services Coordinator for the Talking Book and Braille Service. Pam is a native of Virginia but moved to Nebraska at a young age. She is a graduate of Norfolk High School and earned her Bachelor's Degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and her Library Degree from the University of Illinois-Urbana/Champaign. She was lured into the library world by a love of books and fostering that same love of reading for others in Nebraska. She enjoys reading a variety of titles including both adult and children's books.

As an Internet user, Pam says she dislikes that there is so much information to navigate but enjoys the opportunity to have an abundance of information at her fingertips anytime of the night or day. Her favorite Websites include <www.amazon.com>, <www.disney.go.com>, <www.outer-banks.com>, and <onlinecityguide.com>. Pam says some of the best things about Nebraska living are being near friends, the beautiful and expansive sunrises and sunsets, and the varied and colorful landscape. Pam shares her home with her sixteen-pound black cat named Vinny. If Pam could choose another profession, she would become a traveling photographer. ▲



Sarah Is New Readers' Advisor



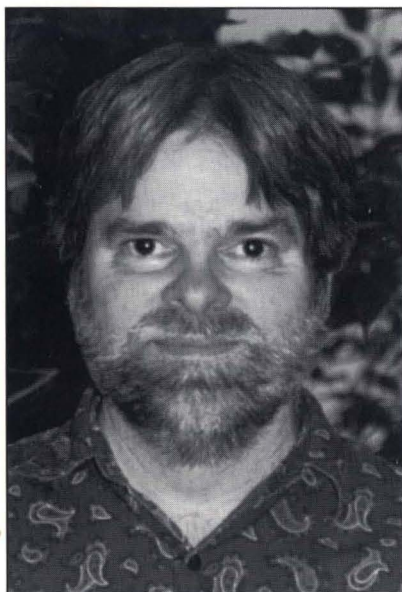
Sarah Labrie has been with the Talking Book and Braille Service at the Nebraska Library Commission for more than 6 months. Sarah is a graduate of Giltner Public Schools where she attended kindergarten

through her senior year all in the same building. She recently earned her Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Sarah serves as a Readers Advisor. She contacts new borrowers, updates borrower files, selects books for borrowers, processes new books, and performs other duties to help customers get the materials they need and want. Sarah enjoys reading books by Amy Carmichael, Hudson Taylor, C.S. Lewis, and John Piper. She also enjoys reading historical fiction and books about Chinese history.

Sarah worked at Love Library at University of NE-Lincoln for three years. She shelved books and worked in the periodical room maintaining journals and newspapers. In her free time, Sarah enjoys meeting and learning from international college students. She is primarily interested in China, has begun to exchange cultural information with students from that country, and is working to learn Chinese. She hopes to become involved in missions and has taken a mission trip to Mexico. ▲

Sarah helps customers get the materials they need and want...

Vern Directs Computer Services



Vern Buis is not a new name to anyone in Nebraska libraries. He has served in many capacities at the Library Commission from the Film Library, to working in the Publications Clearinghouse, to his current

position of Computing Services Director. Vern is a graduate of Lincoln Southeast High School and holds a Bachelor's Degree in Liberal Arts including minors in Library Science, Political Science and Journalism from Ball State University. Vern's career in the library world started as a page for his college library. From there he also worked in technical services, periodicals, and the bindery. He spent many summers filing cards in the card catalog, specializing in the dreaded "United States. Dept. of ..." sections. Not surprisingly, Vern's most-visited Website is <Microsoft.com> as he meets the challenges of maintaining the

Library Commission's computer services and systems.

If Vern could change anything about his current job, it would be to depoliticize the world of technology. His wish for the library profession would be to upgrade the status of librarians to increase the level of respect and the amount of their salaries. Vern is married to Paula and has a son John who is 16. Also in the Buis household are three cats, two dogs, and a rabbit. Vern's favorite foods are spaghetti and lasagna. In his spare time, Vern loves tornado chasing and "saving valuable resources from the landfill." ▲

Vern would like to depoliticize the world of technology...

E-Rate Support Reported

Seventy-one Nebraska public libraries and the Nebraska Library Commission received e-rate discounts for the second year of the program. The total discounts of \$144,883.22 will help public libraries provide more effective services to customers by improving technology access available in libraries. Most libraries received discounts for Internet access or telecommunications access. Libraries used the support for improving internal connections and telephone service.

Discount levels for e-rate are based on the percentage of students in each local school district eligible for subsidized lunch programs. In Nebraska, the public library discounts range from 25% to 80%. Libraries across Nebraska received discounts that ranged from \$122.04 to \$20,549.97. A few representative examples illustrate the range:

- ▲ **Ceresco Public Library:** \$614.40 for Internet and telecommunications access, based on a 40% discount rate.
- ▲ **Ponca Public Library:** \$659.70 for telecommunications access, based on a 50% discount rate.
- ▲ **Gibbon Township Library:** \$3,600.88 to improve internal connections, based on a 60% discount rate.
- ▲ **Omaha Public Library:** \$20,549.97 for telecommunications access, based on a 63% discount rate.
- ▲ **Gordon Public Library:** \$1,412.04 for Internet and telecommunications access, based on a 70% discount rate.
- ▲ **Beatrice Public Library:** \$5,018.16 for telecommunications access, based on a 58% discount rate.
- ▲ **Nebraska Library Commission:** \$4,871.52, based on a 51% discount rate.
- ▲ **Grand Island Public Library:** \$8,649.60 for telecommunications access, based on a 68% discount rate.
- ▲ **Axtell Public Library:** \$554.05, based on a 60% discount.

See the Library Commission home page at <www.nlc.state.ne.us>, search on E-Rate 1999 Recipients for a complete list of all Nebraska Public Libraries receiving 1999 discounts. The application process for year three of the e-rate program is currently underway. Contact Pam Scott, Library Development Consultant at 402-471-2694, Fax: 402-471-2083, e-mail: <pscott@neon.nlc.state.ne.us> for information about the process and deadlines.

Newsline Expands To Statewide Access

As of December 20, 1999, visually and physically impaired individuals who live anywhere in Nebraska can read *The Omaha World Herald* through Newsline, a service that uses phone lines to access newspapers through synthetic speech. Qualifying individuals with touch-tone telephones can call a toll-free number to select various sections of the paper. Other choices include *The Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, and *USA Today*. In addition to newspapers, Newsline offers a listing of phone numbers for other Newsline service centers across the United States to benefit subscribers while they are traveling. To use Newsline, subscribers need to enter a security code and personal ID number. Currently 300 Nebraskans subscribe to this free service. To subscribe, contact the Talking Book and Braille Service at 402-471-4038, 800-742-7691, e-mail: <readadv@neon.nlc.state.ne.us> or Nebraska Rehabilitation Services for the Visually Impaired at 402-471-2891, 877-809-2419. Individuals who qualify for the Library Commission's talking book service also qualify for Newsline. ▲

Libraries and the Internet Toolkit: Tips and guidance for managing and communicating about the Internet is now available on the American Library Association Web page at <www.ala.org/internettoolkit>.

Usted Necesita Algo Traducido?

Do you need something translated? The free translation services on the Web that translate text from one language to another might be useful to librarians and their customers. These resources can be used to translate Web pages, journal articles, or other text for customers who do not read English. Translation services can also be useful for people doing genealogy research who need to translate Web pages or documents.

There are a number of sites that provide translation services. The following sample sites allow entry of specific text or a complete URL for translation:

- ▲ **AltaVista Translations** is located at <babelfish.altavista.com>. It translates text from English to Spanish, French, Portuguese, German, or Italian, or vice versa.
- ▲ **InterTran** at <www.tranexp.com:2000/InterTran> offers a wide variety of languages. It translates to and from Brazilian Portuguese, Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, European Spanish, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Icelandic, Italian, Japanese, Latin American Spanish, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Serbian, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish, and Welsh.

It is important to keep in mind that since a computer does the translation with limited words and phrases in its dictionary, the best possible translation may not be produced. Slang and misspelled words can decrease the accuracy of the translations. However, these services seem to work well enough to convey the meaning of the text.

A Nebraska Librarian Speaks Out about the Rocket eBook™

Several months ago, the Library Commission purchased a Rocket eBook™, to use with the Collection Development Basic Skills class throughout the state.

The Rocket eBook™ is a compact, handheld electronic reader, weighing just twenty-two ounces. Just as e-mail has, for much of our correspondence, replaced the paper mail we used to receive from friends and family, e-books have the potential to replace some of the printed books, magazines, newspapers, and catalogs we currently read.

Commission staff loaned the Rocket eBook to staff at various libraries to learn to use this new tool and give us their feedback on potential library uses. Sara Aden, Assistant Director of the North Platte Public Library, shares the following:

"Thanks to Commission staff, I was fortunate to be able to play with this new device called a Rocket eBook. I have a Palm Pilot III, a hand held organizer, expense tracker, calculator, note pad, and gaming unit. I thought a Rocket eBook was about the same thing. I was wrong. It is a completely different concept altogether. The eBook can house several books of information and provides an interface to navigate through the books. Right away I thought, *If this can hold a book, what else can it store for me?*"

How did you get started using the Rocket eBook?

"I downloaded Rocket Librarian from the Website at <www.rocketebook.com/enter.html>. Rocket Librarian is software that runs on a PC and allows you to download information to the eBook for use. The Rocket eBook connects to the PC by serial connection to a cradle. A book is downloaded from a Web resource to your PC, then stored in the eBook. Rocket Librarian has an Internet browser built into the

software. You can use the browser to access a Web site and download the Web content to the eBook, as well. The Rocket eBook site also has an eNewstand that provides subscriptions to newspapers and magazines that can also be downloaded to the eBook."

I know, Sara, that your technology skills are exceptional. Does someone have to be a "techie" in order to use this?

"Over the holidays, I went to my parents' and brought this new toy with me, loaded with a few of the classic books such as *Alice in Wonderland* and *Treasure Island*. My Mom is entering her sixties and has rheumatoid arthritis. She finds that her hands do not do detailed work well, including turning pages, and that things are difficult for her to grasp or lift. I put the eBook in her hands and showed her how to load *Alice in Wonderland*. She was amazed. I explained that this device contained the entire book, including illustrations. She had a hard time believing that this actually held several entire books. I had her read the first page and then she said, *Now what? How do I see what's next?* I explained there were two up and down buttons on the device and she pressed the down button and the screen changed to the next page. She exclaimed, *Well, for heaven's sakes! That's neat*. When I asked if she could ever get used to reading a book like this she thought for a moment and said, *Oh yeah, I probably could. It's not hard and the words are so big and bright*."

So you think this type of device has some appeal, other than just convenience?

"Yes, as librarians we face people everyday who don't read books because of physical challenges, so we give them a tape cassette or a large print book. Librarians need to continually challenge themselves to find better ways to meet the needs of those we serve."

What might be the "library" future for devices like the Rocket eBook?

"I see libraries offering eBooks (the books, not the devices) for people to download into their own personal eBooks (the device). I also see libraries using the eBook as a tool for outreach by loaning an eBook device with several books on it to homebound or institutionalized individuals. Entire populations currently served by expensive bookmobiles could be served by a more economical mini-van or car. I can foresee libraries sending an eBook home with a kid, loaded with a variety of content from magazine articles, books, and pertinent Web sites for an entire research subject."

What are some of the issues involved in making these changes happen?

"For these visions to happen the device needs to come down in price and weight, but not size or screen quality. Copyright laws need to recognize the differences between a paper world that is costly and requires resources to duplicate and an electronic world where duplication is seamless and immediate. And finally, the people we serve need to be aware of the technology and what it can do for them."

Libraries are part of an evolving and adapting culture, thanks in part to the onset of the information age and the digital revolution. Librarians should embrace these new challenges as opportunities. How well we adapt to the new technologies and the increasing demand for information will determine whether libraries grow or die. I can't wait until that customer walks in and says, *I'm not from around here, but can I download the latest edition of the Wall Street Journal and the newest Stephen King book to read?* and in return I can say, *Sure*, without the worry of whether or how the book will return to us or worse yet, denying service." ▲

Special Report...

Public Librarian Certification Evolves

Since 1998, the Nebraska Library Commission has worked with a task force to review the Public Librarian Certification program. In Fall 1998, the task force began work with an independent consultant on a formal evaluation designed to examine the certification program and basic skills courses. Key data sources for the study included Library Commission staff, Regional Library System directors, certified librarians, board presidents, and print documentation from the program. The primary focus of the study was the public library community. The task force developed eight questions to guide the evaluation process and defined desired outcomes for certification, along with measurable or observable indicators of evidence of these outcomes.

The independent consultant designed questionnaires for certified library directors, certified library staff, and board presidents. The return rate was 74% for certified library directors, 71.6% for certified staff, and 75.9% for library board presidents. Library directors reported reasons for being certified as: public library accreditation requirement, job skill development, and professional commitment. One out of two librarians felt that service to patrons had improved as a result of certification and nine out of ten directors are planning to be recertified.

Certified library staff reported that the certification program helped them improve their library skills and two out of three reported a change in their own attitudes since certification. Nearly three-quarters of the board presidents expected some changes because of the certification of the director. The primary change was a more knowledgeable and up-to-date director. Three out of four boards require the library director to be certified.

The questionnaires were designed to compare findings across all groups. When comparing the reasons for certification, the influence of the Library Commission is very clear, especially among directors and trustees. Increased knowledge and improved skills were the primary expectations from certification in all three groups. Benefits were seen in job performance, duties, opportunities, and attitudes toward library work. The biggest changes were in their own attitudes about work and in job performance.

Six focus groups were held across the state to gather information to supplement the findings from the questionnaires. Personal accomplishment was a perceived effect from certification. There were no reports of being unable to meet the 45 hour requirement for recertification, although participants reported barriers to attending workshops including time away from work, travel, and topics not related to their work. Focus group participants wanted an advanced level of basic skills, better sequencing of courses, Web-based instruction as a supplement or lead-in to a basic skills course, and a "quick-start" class just for new directors. The value of attending workshops was "learning from each other" or the "informal learning." Technology needs were expressed although participants had difficulty defining specifics.

Nearly 50 percent of library directors had no suggestions for changing the certification program or Basic Skills courses. Ideas for improvements to the program included: always use an "onsite" instructor, offer a refresher course, and schedule the courses more frequently. The primary information desired was "more technology." Comments made about the use of videotapes as a course medium tended to be negative. Across all groups, the networking with other library workers is an important outcome of the basic skills courses.

The study concluded with a series of recommendations. The complete report along with the recommendations can be found on the Nebraska Library Commission homepage at <www.nlc.state.ne.us>, search on Continuing Education Evaluation or call Mary Geibel at 402-471-2045, 800-307-2665, e-mail: <mgeibel@neon.nlc.state.ne.us> for a paper copy.

City Officials Value Public Libraries

The word is getting out! Librarians aren't the only people who think libraries are a good thing. Local city officials also think libraries are essential to the well being of the community. Local officials from the Omaha-Council Bluffs and surrounding area made unsolicited comments about the impact of the public library in the *Omaha World Herald Metro Guide* 1999.

- ▲ **Elkhorn** Mayor Phil Klein, said the most scenic view in Elkhorn was looking east from the lawn of the **Bess Johnson Public Library**, "Here you can see a blend of Americana in the corn and bean fields, the Old Lincoln Highway, and the Union Pacific railroad tracks."
- ▲ **Ralston** Mayor Donald Groesser, said the favorite place to show out-of-towners is the new **Baright Library**, "It's beautifully decorated in a tree theme to represent Ralston's status as a 'Tree City' by the National Arbor Day Foundation."
- ▲ **LaVista** Mayor Harold "Andy" Anderson, said the most exciting improvement or change on the horizon is the **LaVista Public Library/Metropolitan Community College Sarpy Center**. It's a \$9.1 million building with 68,200 square feet.
- ▲ **Springfield** Mayor Duane Neitzel said the most exciting community improvement on the horizon is a new library, "We have the site. All we need is the contractor."

What would your mayor say is the most exciting improvement or change on the horizon for your community? Would a local official in your community think that the library is a valuable asset and partner in community development? What information do local officials need so they understand the impact and importance of the public library in their community?

Ellen Van Waart

netLibrary Advisory Team Formed

An advisory team of librarians has been formed by the Library Commission to select titles from the netLibrary collection of digital books for inclusion in a statewide group purchase.

The team includes **Tom Boyle**, Library Director, Midland Lutheran College; **Ann Stephens**, Director, Keene Memorial Library; **Jane O'Brien**, Director, Creighton Prep School Library; **Suzan Connell**, Coordinator of Library Resources, Lincoln City Libraries; **Chris LeBeau**, Librarian and Electronic Resources Coordinator, Creighton University, Reinert/Alumni Memorial Library; and **Mike Boettcher**, Director, Link Library, Concordia University. For more information, see <www.nlc.state.ne.us/netserv/archives/n3jf00.html> or contact Jo Budler, 402-471-4031, 800-307-2665, e-mail: <jbudler@neon.nlc.state.ne.us>.

Just Say "Thank You!"

The American Library Association asked library advocates to participate in *Thank You Day*, a new nationwide event to highlight and celebrate library programs and "success stories" made possible through the support of elected officials and federal and state dollars. The American Library Association urges library advocates to generate media attention by thanking the supporters who make our libraries possible.

Library representatives are encouraged to invite elected officials, the community, the media, and library supporters and users to an event to meet people who have benefited from library programs and services. The event is intended to demonstrate support for library programs and encourage funding support, educate elected officials about the importance of libraries, illustrate the use of technology, and demonstrate that the e-rate program has helped libraries and library users.

Thank You Day materials are available through the American Library Association online and in PDF format at <www.ala.org/washoff/thankyou.html>.

Libraries for the 21st Century Initiative: What difference does it make?

The Libraries for the 21st Century initiative resulted in an increase in state funds for library services in Nebraska. An additional \$150,000 in state aid funding was appropriated by the legislature for this fiscal year. Of this amount, the six regional library systems received an additional \$22,500 (\$3,750 for

each system). Of the remaining \$127,500, the Commissioners directed that \$75,000 be added to existing aid funds for direct state aid to public libraries.

As a result of this additional funding, the distribution formula for direct state aid was adjusted. The new formula provides for an increase in the base grant amount from \$600 to \$750 for libraries serving populations of less than 5,000 and a per capita payment of eighteen cents (\$.18). For libraries serving populations of 5,000 and above, the state aid payment is twenty-four cents (\$.24) per capita. Nearly every eligible public library will receive a funding increase. Also, all public libraries that receive funding from a public entity other than their main funding source receive an incentive payment of 1% of that additional funding. The average state aid per capita rose from \$.25 to \$.34 per capita.

One hundred sixty-four eligible public libraries received state aid applications in November 1999 and state aid payments are currently being made to those applicants. For many of these libraries, the increased aid amount will have a significant impact on the programs and services they will be able to offer. Library directors will be surveyed about the impact of the increased state aid.

This year the additional state aid funding was also used to support Training and Continuing Education Grants to increase the skills of Nebraska library personnel, ensuring that every public library in

Nebraska has skilled and knowledgeable information specialists to serve the citizens' information needs. Application packets were widely distributed in late

February. To access a packet on the Library Commission home page, see <www.nlc.state.ne.us>, search on Training and Continuing

Education Grants. Contact Ellen Van Waart, 402-471-4004, 800-307-2665, or e-mail: <evan-waart@neon.nlc.state.ne.us> for more information.

Honor Roll Named

The American Library Association's Association for Library Trustees and Advocates (ALA/ALTA) instituted the National Advocacy Honor Roll to identify and celebrate individuals and groups who actively supported and strengthened library services at the local, state, or national levels over the last 100 years. Honorees will be recognized at a celebration banquet to be held at the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago in July. The Nebraska Library Commission and the Nebraska Library Association (NLA) nominated the following individuals and groups to represent Nebraska:

- ▲ Senator LaVon Crosby
- ▲ Lauren Riedesel, Beatrice Public Library Director
- ▲ Maggie Harding, NLA Director and Coordinator, Libraries for the 21st Century Coalition
- ▲ Libraries for the 21st Century Initiative Coalition
- ▲ South Sioux City Public Library Planning Group
- ▲ Jane Geske, former Library Commission Director and founding member, Nebraska Center for the Book, posthumously

The noteworthy accomplishments of these Nebraskans provide models for others who wish to expand advocacy efforts. These advocates were also honored at the recent NLA Legislative Day luncheon (see related story on page one).



**Senator
LaVon Crosby**

**Libraries
for the
21st
Century**

Special Report...

Library Funding Success Stories, part one

What elements contribute to the successful outcome of efforts by libraries to reach new financial goals? Are there common, identifiable factors that lead to success?

These and other questions are often asked when a library is facing a need to find resources beyond those in its current budget. This new *NCompass* series will feature public libraries throughout Nebraska that have succeeded in their efforts to acquire additional funding, particularly in the face of difficult or complicated fiscal situations. This first column features South Sioux City, a community that persisted in spite of two fairly recent defeats of tax issues.

South Sioux City tried in 1995 and 1997 to pass its first sales tax. Both times the measures were defeated by narrow margins. In the 1997 initiative, according to Library Director William Kendra, local supporters of the library were in favor of a new library, but the ballot's packaging of this effort with attempts to revitalize the downtown apparently doomed it to defeat. How did South Sioux City overcome this reluctance on the part of local voters? They put together a more palatable package that passed by a nearly 2 to 1 margin:

- ▲ 1/2 cent sales tax on each dollar for street repair and maintenance
- ▲ 1/4 cent sales tax on each dollar for capital improvements (the library is top priority)
- ▲ 1/4 cent sales tax on each dollar for property tax reductions

The latter two issues were joined on the ballot, and both had to pass in order for that ballot issue to be approved. Kendra says that the capital improvements tax is expected to generate approximately \$250,000 per year.

When asked to speculate on why the vote was so successful this time, Kendra noted the following contributing factors:

- ▲ The formation of a Tax Increment Financing district in January 1999 to work toward revitalizing the downtown business area.
- ▲ The efforts of long-time board president Diane Boyd and other board members.
- ▲ The identification of a tentative location for the "new" library.
- ▲ The Libraries for the Future Community Library Advocacy Program, which Kendra said, "Kept the issue in the public eye while some other things went on behind the scenes."
- ▲ The overall combination of efforts and circumstances, which "dovetailed" during this effort to result in success.

Some conclusions that might be drawn are:

- ▲ Any library hoping to improve its circumstances significantly will need to marshal local support from influential segments of the population and coalitions.
- ▲ Any tax or ballot issue will need to be carefully thought out in terms of acceptability to the electorate and "if at first you don't succeed—try, try again."
- ▲ People seem to respond more positively to specifics, rather than generalities.

Richard Miller

We invite you to share your library success stories. To share your experience in acquiring additional funding, contact Richard Miller, 402-471-3175, 800-307-2665, Fax: 402-471-2083 or e-mail: <rmiller@neon.nlc.state.ne.us>.

Create Bookmark Lists for Customers

The article below was excerpted from George Strassler's *What A Tangled Web* column in the December 1999 edition of *Straight-Talk from the Northeast Library System*:

Instead of reviewing a lot of URLs this month I am going to give you a creative idea that I swiped from Mary Jo Ryan and Kit Keller at the Nebraska Library Commission and from Jesse Berst's *Anchor Desk* column at <www.zdnet.com/anchordesk>.

Scenario: Mr. Snake assigns a biology class project on reptiles. You, the information specialist, know where to find the material they need on the Web. Try this: Bookmark the sites you have selected on your browser. Then use one of the online bookmark storage sites to store bookmarks at a central Web location from which you, or anyone, can access them from anywhere. Try:

▲ **Clickmarks** at <www.clickmarks.com>

▲ **MURL** at <murl.com>

▲ **BaBoo** at <www.baboo.com>

Give the patron the URL of the storage site and they can reach all the bookmarks from the library, home, or school. Think what you can do for businessmen, investors, or farmers. The possibilities are endless, and you and your library come off as heroes.

You can also store your own bookmarks as a backup. Password them if you don't want others to access them. I tried BaBoo and Clickmarks and while BaBoo was a bit easier to use, it was slower than sludge. Clickmarks is a bit nerdier, but fast and really quite easy. As an example of these storage sites, see the URLs in this column at <www.clickmarks.com/click/gstras/?VN=0>.

Dr. Geo. Strassler, <gstras@bloomnet.com> ▲



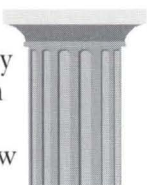
South Sioux City Public Library Board plan for their successful bond issue with Library Director William Kendra (far right).

News of Nebraska Libraries and People

▲ This January, the library board and staff of the **Scottsbluff Public Library** honored **Shirley Flack** on her retirement after thirty-one years as Library Director.

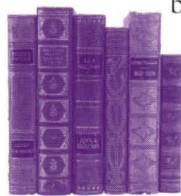
▲ **Jim Soester**, Chadron State College Coordinator of Library Services, was recently appointed to the OCLC Reference Services Advisory Committee.

▲ **Stromsburg** residents voted, "Yes" by a two to one margin to support the construction of a new library. Bids will be let soon, with groundbreaking planned for late spring/early summer.



▲ The **Nebraska Library Association (NLA)** Citations Committee invites nominations for the **2000 Meritorious Service and Mari Sandoz Awards**. Nominations and letters of support must be received by Verne Haselwood, Chair, NLA Citations Committee, 9919 Pasadena Ave., Omaha, NE 68124, <hasel@alltel.net> by June 30. For more information, see the Commission home page Announcements.

▲ The Nebraska Center for the Book **Nebraska Book Awards** program will recognize books written by Nebraska authors, published by Nebraska publishers, set in Nebraska, or relating to Nebraska. For more information, see the Commission home page, <www.nlc.state.ne.us>, search on Book Awards. Deadline for entries is May 15.



▲ **Panhandle Library System Board** hired **Susan Baird** as the new System Administrator. She formerly worked with Panhandle Community Services in Gering and Gering Public Library.

▲ The thirteenth annual statewide exhibition, *Food for Thought*, from the **Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery and Sculpture Garden, University of Nebraska-Lincoln**, was hosted by the **Holdrege Public Library System** this spring.

▲ The **Bloomfield Library** celebrated the move into a new location, with a winter Open House. More than 100 people visited the new facility.

▲ \$88,400 in grants from the **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation** will provide new computers, increased Internet access, and a training facility for the **Omaha Public Library**. The grant-funded equipment will be available for use by the public in June.

▲ **Kit Keller** recently assumed new responsibilities as Library Commission **Library Data Services** Coordinator. She will have responsibility for development of an Intranet, a Knowledge Management Plan, and educational components related to agency data collection and storage.

▲ The NE Department of Economic Development recently recognized the **Creighton Library Foundation** for their new public library and the community of **Alliance** for their new joint public library and community college facility.

▲ The **Kearney Public Library and Information Center** recently launched a new home page. The new address is <www.kearneylib.org>.

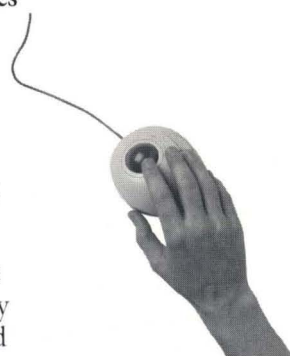
▲ The Library Commission recently awarded grants for **Excellence in Children's Library Services**. These grants help achieve the Commission Long Range Plan, *Libraries for the 21st Century*, Goal 5c: "...develop, maintain, and support library services to children and young adults." For more information, see the Commission home page, <www.nlc.state.ne.us>, search on 2000 Children's.

▲ The Nebraska Library Commission recently hired **Evelyn Kubert**, currently the librarian at the Media Center for Churches, to serve as Interlibrary Loan/Back-up Reference staff.

▲ **Lisa Kelly**, Nebraska Library Commission **Reference Services** Coordinator, developed a Web page for new librarians in Nebraska at the Commission's Electronic Library. See the Commission home page at <www.nlc.state.ne.us>, search on New Librarian.

▲ The **Talking Book and Braille Service** at the Nebraska Library Commission recently promoted **Sarah Labrie** to Reader's Advisor.

▲ New library directors include: Bruning Public Library, **Cathy Otto**; Butler Memorial Library in Cambridge, **Debra Young**; Carleton Public Library, **Marguerite McBride**; Hooker County Library in Mullen, **Julie Pfeiffer**; Mary Lanning Memorial Hospital Library, Hastings, **Ella Rathod**; Minatare Public Library, **Lillian Covalt**; Panhandle Library System, **Susan Baird**; Pilger Public Library, **Anne Taylor**; and Valparaiso Public Library, **Mary Rittenburg**. ▲



New on Our Home Page:

See <www.nlc.state.ne.us>

- ▲ Nominations Sought for Meritorious Service and Mari Sandoz Awards
- ▲ Spanish Language Titles Recommended for Library Purchase
- ▲ Summer Reading Videos Available for Reservations
- ▲ Web Page for New Librarians Available
- ▲ NCB 2000 Book Award Nominations Sought
- ▲ Nebraska Libraries Receive Support for Information Technology

Resource Sharing Facilitated

There are a variety of reasons for creating a shared library catalog. The first to come to mind is facilitating resource sharing. Resource sharing is cost-effective, allowing for greater use of material across the state, and efficient, allowing for librarians and library customers to search across the collections of libraries across the state.

The Library Commission facilitates this through our statewide union catalog within FirstSearch's WorldCat. Through our statewide FirstSearch contract, this catalog is available (at no charge to the library) to all libraries regardless of type and to all Nebraskans through remote patron access outside the library. When a librarian or library user searches WorldCat for material, if a Nebraska library owns that material, that library's or those libraries' symbols are first to appear.

Now, more than one hundred Nebraska libraries are adding their holdings to the statewide union catalog. Forty-three of these are using CatExpress, a Web-based product allowing small libraries to add their holdings and to download MARC records for their local catalogs. For more information about CatExpress, contact Devra Dragos at <devra@neon.nlc.state.ne.us>, 402-471-4021, 800-307-2665. ▲

Nebraska Library Commission



The Atrium • 1200 N St. • Suite 120
Lincoln NE 68508-2023
34-00-00

PRESRT STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Lincoln, NE
Permit No. 212

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

