

From the President

Editor's Note: Each biennium NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARIES uses the President's column to introduce the Association's new president to the membership. This year we used the wonders and convenience of technology to pose questions to President Dave Fergusson through Internet e-mail access. What ensues is basically an unedited correspondence between Fergusson and editor Frances Bradburn.

Question 1: *How did you decide to become a librarian in the first place?*

I guess it's the tired, trite old story: I really did enjoy books, reading and libraries. I spent a good deal of time in libraries during my stint at Wake Forest and really loved the public library in my home town of Hudson, Ohio. After college, I spent some time at home working in a couple of factories, mulling over careers. During this time the library's collection kept me sane. Tom Vince, the librarian and a friend, certainly had a lot to do with my choice of a career.

Question 2: *We know that you are associate director of Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Public Library. What other positions have you held in this or other libraries since graduation (from UNC?)?*

For what its worth, I am the "Assistant Director, Headquarters" of the F.C.P.L. (with Mary McAfee being Ass't. Dir., Extensions), and more importantly, I received my library degree from FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY, not Carolina. Now really, Frances.

Prior to employment with Forsyth County, I was the Library Director of the Davie County Public Library in Mocksville. That was my first job out of F.S.U. I remember attending the State Library's training for new directors in the fall of 1974 with Patsy Hansel, then Director in Soul City, and I am sure that my legacy contributed greatly to the soon-to-follow state regulations changes which mandated that librarians have at least two years experience before becoming a director. I did have the opportunity to know and work with State Librarian Phil Ogilvie at that time.

Davie County was a small, good county library and I learned a lot fast. As everyone knows, one does a bit of everything in a position such as that. Six years later I had a chance which is rare in our profession: to change jobs and make more money without moving, so I took it.

Question 3: *If you were trying to sell NCLA to librarians across the state, what would be the main advantages of membership that you would highlight?*

The thing I enjoy most is taking advantage of the many opportunities to accomplish the things that we all believe in: giving all kinds of people opportunities to realize the most from their lives. We have the opportunity to be an equalizing force in an inequitable society.

Since the same could probably be said of social work as a profession or reaching Tae Kwan Do, naturally the nature of the profession — information, knowledge, learning — makes it very interesting to me.

The least enjoyable aspect is, I am sure, also shared by ministers, nutritionists and educators (maybe everyone except those in the popular media): the belief that so many people are not reaching their potential because they do not take advantage of the great things we have to offer.

Next...

Question 4: *Association members would probably like to know a little about your personal life — those things you feel comfortable sharing.*

About my personal life ... I grew up in Ohio, in a little town named Hudson which is sort of between Akron and Cleveland. I used to go see Indians games then at Municipal Stadium, and was most thrilled when I got Minnie Minoso's autograph. Of course, then they traded Rocky Colavito, everybody's favorite player, mine included, and labored in the depths of baseball obscurity until last year. I have several very close friends from high school whom I still see with some regularity.

Went to Wake Forest, during which time it became a UNIVERSITY. Not being a Greek, I led a life of sobriety and quiet desperation, but again made several wonderful friends and graduated with a history degree.

During my time in library school shortly thereafter, I became sort of a tennis playing nut and have tried to play and improve ever since. Having my elbow operated upon four years ago has made this possible.

I lived as a married man in Mocksville for about 18 years, and helped raise a daughter, who is now a fully employed grownup. Not being successful in this marriage thing, I moved to W-S alone about four years ago, and have been enjoying life ever since.

I now spend a lot of time with a wonderful woman who is an assistant fire marshall for the city of W-S. I continue to read mysteries (James Lee Burke et al.) and view motion pictures of some quality. (These days, THAT shouldn't take a lot of time.)

I read magazine articles to stay abreast of current events and am getting more and more of my national news via public tv and radio because the network stuff really seems to be a cross between marketing and fiction.

I enjoy athletics, although I have turned down several contract offers from major league sports teams because the amounts of money are simply unconscionable.

I have one brother who lives in Boise, Idaho and one who lives in Sanford, NC (Rob) who is conquering library school at Central one course at a time.

Question 5: *What is your vision of NCLA?*

(A tough one — thanks.)

To generalize, I envision the Association as THE organization responsible for keeping libraries in the minds of our citizens, beyond the good work that is done by each individual library or media center.

We now enter a period during which libraries, for a variety of reasons, could be considered an endangered species. I do not think that will happen, but whether one considers pinched government and academic funding, private information systems which will bypass libraries, or attacks on collections from different political quarters, the threat is there.

We all know that our libraries are doing great things, but the Association is in the position to see that the connection that exists among them is understood by our patrons and taxpayers. This really is not anyone else's job in North Carolina, and we can get it going. I believe that our Publications (read: Marketing) Committee will be able to take off, perhaps in the spirit of the old ACC spots run by the State Library and NCLA.

Obviously, NCLA does much more, and most of it contributes to our combined effectiveness. We do many things very well because of the hard work and devotion of our members. I have been discussing an area about which we have much potential to fulfill. We all work hard to market services. All of us now need to keep our focus on marketing libraries.

After all, Libraries Link Lives.

Question 6: *If you could make one change in the Association during your term as president, what would it be?*

I do not know what specific change it would take, but I hope that after two years we continue to act as one association when we need to, rather than as a number of separate entities. We are not too far from this goal, but without effective efforts, in time, we could be worse off. A friend used the term "balkanized" recently, and I hope we can eliminate such references in the future regarding the whole association.

You know, I think I have made it through this whole interview without using the term "internet" once. How about that.



NCLA Executive Board 1995 - 1997: Seated (left to right): Steve Sumerford, Beverley Gass, David Fergusson, Wanda Brown Cason, Jackie Beach, Barbara Akinwale. First row (left to right): Frances Bradburn, Janet Flowers, Cheryl McLean, Gwen Jackson, Martha Davis, Beth Hutchison, Sheila Core, Sheila Johnson. Second row: Sue Ann Cody, Carol Freeman, Kathy Crowe, Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin, Karen Perry, Robert Burgin, Janet Freeman, Nancy Fogarty, Clifton Metcalf, Renee Pridgen.