

Responsibly Relating to a Professional Octopus

Almost two years ago Bill O'Shea appointed a slate of committees to carry on the work of the North Carolina Library Association. In the course of time since, some of these committees have met at least once, some more often. Some are like the Archives Committee, quietly carrying on the business of effectively preserving the history of the Association. Others, like the Intellectual Freedom Committee, have been busy evaluating and supporting librarians faced with censorship problems. One committee, the Goals and Objectives Committee, was asked to look at structure and organization for the Association. They have been working on their task, and may have some preliminary data by Spring Workshop, May 8-9, in Wilmington.

One area of librarianship in North Carolina which needs careful evaluation involves the role and function of NCLA, the proliferation of library oriented and/or library interest groups, and some attempt to develop some clear communication so that one side talks to the other with collegial rather than adversarial stances. To get at the central issue of this essay, stop reading, get a pen/pencil and piece of paper, and list the library organizations or library-related organizations in which you have membership. Then list those you know about, but in which you do not have membership. (If postal service permitted, I would have a series of blank lines here, to save you the trouble of looking for a piece of paper.)

All right. Look at the list you made. How many items are on it? Were you surprised by the number? In case you cannot stop reading long enough to look for writing equipment, below is a list of library related organizations currently functioning in North Carolina. The list is not meant to be exhaustive—after all it is the product of my own exercise of listing! (If your group is omitted, please advise me and I will provide an updated list in the next issue.)

1. North Carolina Library Association

a. Sections

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| 1. Children's Services | 6. College & University Libraries |
| 2. Documents Librarians | 7. Junior College Libraries |
| 3. Junior Members Roundtable | 8. N. C. Association of Library Trustees |
| 4. N. C. Association of School Librarians | 9. Public Libraries |
| 5. Reference & Adult Services | 10. Resources & Technical Services |

b. Committees

See page 63 for a notice of interest and desire to serve on an NCLA Committee for the 1981-83 biennium.

- ### c. Roundtable for Women in Librarianship, created January 15, 1981, at NCLA Executive Board Meeting, and officially organized March 20.

- d. Editorial Board of *NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARIES*
- 2. Friends of Public Libraries in North Carolina
- 3. North Carolina Public Libraries Directors Association
- 4. North Carolina SOLINET Users Group
- 5. North Carolina Online Users Group
- 6. State Library of North Carolina, and its special services
 - a. film library
 - b. handicapped services
 - c. other services
- 7. Friends of individual libraries
 - a. public
 - c. academic
- 8. Local Trustees, board, commissions, whose charge, power and responsibility vary
- 9. Area/Regional Library Groups, like
 - a. Loose Region
 - b. Capital Area Librarians Association
 - c. Metrolina Librarians Association
 - d. Durham County Library Association
 - e. Western Carolina . . .
- z. Librarians Association of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- 10. Special Library Association
- 11. Consortia, formal and informal
 - a. Cooperating Raleigh Colleges
 - b. Librarians of Baptist Educational Institutions
 - c. Librarians of State University system libraries
 - d. Heads of Library Education Programs
 - e. Northwest North Carolina Library Council
 - f. Librarians' Committee of North Carolina Center for Independent Higher Education (NCCIHE)
- 12. Learning Resources Association
- 13. State Department of Public Instruction, Division of Educational Media
- 14. Media Council
- 15. State Council for Social Legislation, and other lobby groups which include library or library related issues in their programs
- 16. PLAIN (Piedmont Librarians Acquisitions Information Network)
- 17. TRLN (Triangle Research Libraries Network)
- 18. TULCC (Triangle Universities Library Coordinating Committee)
- 19. Governing bodies of institutions, counties, cities, schools, and corporations

After being confronted by this list, several ideas have strayed through my head. First, I am a little overwhelmed by my own list, even knowing that it is incomplete. Second, this list points to a constituency, and even more realistically to several constituencies. Third, now that I have acknowledged all these

groups, there is a strong feeling of professional schizophrenia, best expressed in the question, "How do I responsibly relate to such an octopus?" Fourth, much of this proliferation of organization must certainly affect NCLA, whose structure and/or leadership has been unwilling or unable to perceive and/or respond to the needs of the profession. Fifth, does this phenomenon raise a question concerning professional parochialism and point to some of our "meeting mania"?

Because I dislike those kinds of essays which presume to analyze and raise questions, yet not offer some solutions, the following suggestions are submitted:

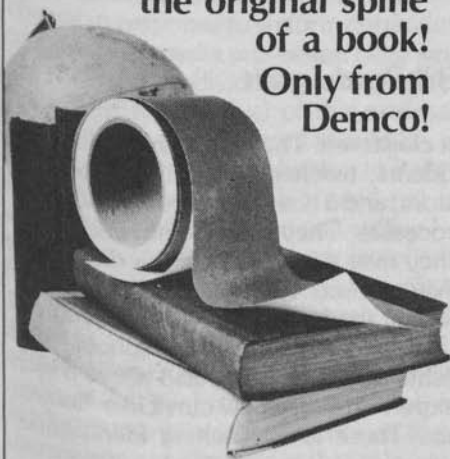
1. Beginning now and during the next biennium the NCLA leadership should look at effective means of strengthening its committee structure through broad membership.
2. Regular, scheduled meetings of all NCLA committees should occur in concert with regular, scheduled meetings of the Executive Board of NCLA.
3. Commitment of NCLA Sections to workshops for members in nonconvention years should be stressed.
4. Friends of Public Libraries in North Carolina and the NCLA Trustees section should join forces.
5. Librarians of North Carolina should take a long, hard look at the organizations and structures which affect libraries and the profession in North Carolina and seek immediate means of forming effective coalitions and confederations.
6. Begin the new era of library cooperation and resource sharing through providing effective means for librarians to interact on positive professional relationships.
7. Each librarian in North Carolina should assume personal and professional responsibility for knowing what is going on among librarians in the state and working to assure that we collectively provide the best library and information service in the nation.

Jonathan A. Lindsey, editor

This issue of *NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARIES* has five articles which provide insight into vital areas of librarianship in North Carolina. Other areas will be assayed in later issues. One of the goals of NCL is to provide some evaluations of the profession in North Carolina, and we will seek several means to accomplish this task.

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