
Libraries . . . Spread the News

NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

From the President

This is my last president's column for *North Carolina Libraries*, and I have real news to report: State Librarian McGinn has received approval to have the North Carolina Library Association establish its permanent home at the North Carolina State Library. The details are yet to be worked out, but what we know for certain is that NCLA will have a permanent address (the State Library's) and probably, for the first time, paid staff.

NCLA is the fourth- or fifth-largest state library association in the country. All of the associations our size or larger, and almost all of the smaller ones, have at least some paid staff. At a meeting of the Southeastern Library Association that I attended last year, the statement was made that "you cannot run a state library association with only volunteers." I told them that NCLA did. The response was a repeat of the statement "you cannot run a state library association with only volunteers." Apparently, they didn't believe me. And it is hard for others to believe that an association as large and active as ours has been able to function and function well with no permanent paid staff. The reason, of course, is simple: we have people who are willing to spend huge amounts of time working on NCLA activities. Some of this is time donated by their library systems, because people who run libraries realize that their libraries benefit from what NCLA does; and they know that working in NCLA gives their staff people opportunities to learn and grow that they could not get simply by staying home and minding the store.

The rest of the time is morning, evening, and weekend work that many of you volunteer year after year. All of this has resulted in one of the finest state library associations in the country, but it was inevitable that we eventually would grow to the point that there would be more administrative work in this association than the volunteer market could bear. That would have occurred earlier except for one extraordinary volunteer—Nancy Clark Fogarty, our treasurer since 1985.

However, calling Nancy Fogarty NCLA's treasurer is like calling Toulouse-Lautrec a sign painter—she is so much more. Nancy writes the checks and invests the money and keeps track of how much everybody spends and for what; she also processes all the membership renewals, and handles all requests for mailing labels, and makes sure that all bulk mailings for all the sections and round tables as well as NCLA-wide communications get done. She is, in effect, NCLA's executive director, and she's been an excellent one—she just never got paid. If we had paid for Nancy's labor over the past four years, NCLA would probably be around \$100,000 poorer. Instead, Nancy is leaving NCLA in its best financial position ever and thus, as she is ending her term, NCLA is ready to start paying somebody to do at least part of her job.

Nancy, of course, couldn't be happier. For the first time in four years, she'll have only one job to do—the one she gets paid for at UNCG; and she leaves NCLA with the one thing she has felt the organization needed more than anything else—a permanent address.

In establishing a permanent office, NCLA is making the first step into paid, as opposed to volunteer, management of the organization. Handing over administrative details to a paid staff person who will have only NCLA duties to handle should make for more efficient day-to-day operations. However, except for the treasurer, most people active in NCLA will still be just as busy. It is from the creativity and energy of its members that NCLA draws its strength. Every time I attend a meeting of the NCLA Executive Board and hear reports of what the round tables and sections and committees are doing, I am impressed, and I am proud. I am proud to have had the honor of serving this organization as president for the past two years. I have no doubt that NCLA is a very important factor in helping people who work in libraries in this state provide the best possible library service to the people of this state. It's been fun and rewarding being a part of that.

Patsy J. Hansel, President