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From the President

Here I am two years and eight columns later - trying to think what I can possibly write that will let you know the worth of our association. What are the things that make the North Carolina Library Association special?

The first thing that comes to mind is the diversity of the membership. Among the 2200 to 2600 members we report during a biennium, we have people who fill all kinds of jobs in libraries, trustees of public libraries, vendors, and friends of libraries. The interests of the membership vary from the types of libraries they work in every day to the defense of the freedom to read to literacy education to the special concerns of women and minorities in the profession to legislative activity that affects libraries. We also have a strong interest in recruiting individuals into the library and information services professions and in mentoring them during the first few years they work in libraries. We cannot forget the emphasis that some members give to special collections and to preservation. We are a multi-faceted, vital association.

The second thing that comes to mind is that we are an active membership. We don't just pay dues and wait for *North Carolina Libraries* to show up once a quarter. Twenty-six people are **active** members of the Executive Board. About 114 members serve on fourteen association-wide committees. Each of the ten Sections and five Round Tables has an active executive board that is made up of at least five people and usually more. There is no way I can estimate how many members are serving on committees of the Sections and Round Tables. And then there is the Editorial Board of *North Carolina Libraries* that puts in many hours each quarter to produce this high quality journal. It is amazing to think all of us are focusing so much attention on one organization and one profession.

The continuity and flexibility within the governing documents - the constitution and by-laws - of NCLA are another important element of the association. Goals and standing committees are provided for in the constitution. A new handbook has been produced during this biennium that provides further direction to the association. All of these things together give us a basic plan of governance and provide for responses to current issues.

Another important element of the association that comes to mind is our regional and national activities. We are affiliates of the Southeastern Library Association and the American Library Association. We have official liaisons to their governing bodies. We are respected because of the size of our membership and because of the way we do things. I am particularly proud of our participation in the national library legislative day held each April in Washington, DC.

We are a part of a large, diverse, active, and well-respected state library association that fosters interaction for discussion of library-related issues and for networking, professional growth, and research and publication. Each of us continues to have an important role to play.

These two years have been a time for me to think

... see *From The President* continued on page 164.

Research ... continued.

missing call number appropriate to their classification schemes.

The final question asked whether OCLC could run special programs to fix standardized problems in the database. Examples of successful programs are the name authority flip performed at the advent of AACR2 and the provision of default data in the fixed field which changed over 2.75 million records. The study concluded that indicator corrections and a carefully controlled program to update old subject headings based on the online authority file would be useful. Subjects, of course, could only be updated by a computer when the change was a "one-to-one" change. Periodic rerunning of the name authority flip would also correct many errors. Call numbers and series statements are two areas that receive much editing, but are not amenable to machine-generated fixes.

This study examined cataloging practices in five large ARL libraries. How OCLC records are edited may vary considerably in public, special, or smaller academic libraries. It would be useful for the study to be replicated with other libraries, testing the validity of the data gathered. Perhaps the most significant unasked question is, "How useful are the access points we place on bibliographic records?" Transaction logs of online public catalogs may yield an answer to this question and, thus, guide us in making intelligent decisions about how much time we invest in editing and correcting shared cataloging records. Until we know what practices are useful to our patrons, we can only continue to make our current practices more efficient.

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about, study, and synthesize library and information services issues. Let me take this opportunity to tell you what issues I would like to see studied further. There is no end to most library issues so I am sure we will have these to work on for many years to come. Literacy, the freedom to read, computer technologies, library service fees, recruitment to the library field of a diverse (in ethnic background as well as in specialized talents) cadre of workers, and preservations of all types of media are just a few of the issues. For NCLA, I see the challenge as one of fostering study and finding solutions through committees, public relations, subsidized research, or whatever means it takes. In order to find the means to study and solve the challenges, we must be flexible. We must manage the association in an efficient manner that will ease our entry into new and developing issues. We must support individuals within our association that are making a difference. We must share information with each other.

What a time for libraries and information services! The amount of information is increasing exponentially, important older materials are deteriorating faster than we can do anything about it, more and more individuals are realizing the position of libraries as storehouses of information on both the positive and negative sides, and new knowledge is needed to handle new technologies of information. Together we can meet these challenges. I look forward to continuing to work with you in other roles to make libraries in North Carolina all that they can be. Thank you for allowing me to serve as your President in 1989-1991.

See you in High Point November 12 through 15!

— Barbara Baker, President

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