

From the President

Janet Freeman, President

*When you see a turtle on top of a fence post,
you know it didn't get there by itself.*

Being on top of a fence post is a heady thing for a turtle. Not every turtle achieves that position. There are many benefits. It's a better view than many turtles ever have. There's a breeze, and the turtle gets lots of attention from passers-by.

It's true. Ask any turtle who's been lucky enough to be there.

Oh. You don't think you can find a turtle who'll talk? Okay. Ask anyone who's been elected to an office or appointed to a position of responsibility. It's an experience similar to the turtle's.

Being "on top of a fence post," one has the opportunity to see the big picture. It's a great view. It gets breezy at times, and there's certainly no lack of attention.

But let's go on to the second part of that saying about the turtle. "You know it didn't get there by itself." That's the important part. No turtle ... or office holder ... achieved that position on his or her own. (Close your eyes and try to imagine a turtle shinnying up a fence post.)

A lot of people made it possible for me to be on the NCLA fence post for the last two years, and I want to express my sincere appreciation to a few of them.

Since the day four years ago when I received the phone call that let me know you'd given me the privilege of serving as your President-Elect, I've thought about what I wanted to include in this, my final column. There are many thank you's to be said and some challenges to be issued.

First to the thank you's.
Thank you ...

... to those librarians in my past who encouraged me and provided me with the very best role models anyone in this profession has ever had:

Katherine Reid at the Carnegie Library in Winston-Salem, Sayde Penry at Ardmore Elementary, Mary Martin McBayer at Dalton Junior High, the Elizabeths (Sink and Stroup) at Reynolds High, Marjorie Hood at UNC-G, and Anna Loe Russell at George Peabody College;

... to the staff of the Carlyle Campbell Library at Meredith College who held the fort while I was at yet another NCLA meeting or on the phone;

... to my dean, boss, and friend, Dr. Allen Burris, who encouraged me to accept nomination for this position and made all the time away possible;

... to my family and friends who were patient with my not coming to visit as often; and

... to perfect Martha Fonville, NCLA's ace Administrative Assistant, who makes everyone look good.

Finally, to the members of the 1991-93 NCLA Executive Board, an extra special thank you. You put up with many things during the past two years ... from recreating the state of North Carolina at our retreat at Caraway to the two-minute timer for reports; from starting meetings on time (whether everyone was there or not) to looking at those now-worn newsprint sheets listing our biennium's goals. We've sung along with Jim's mandolin and Alice's banjo. We've walked Capitol Hill telling congressmen of the needs of North Carolina libraries.

We have debated, agreed, disagreed, and decided on many items of business and policy for the North Carolina Library Association. Many were tough decisions, the results of which will be felt for many years. Through it all you showed unfailing good humor, perspec-

tive, tolerance, respect for each other, and good judgment, and I thank you.

Now for my challenges to you, the membership ...

- Get involved in NCLA. This association is only as good as the people actively participating in it.

- Go to and pay attention at section, committee, and round table business meetings. You'll be surprised at how interesting they are, and you'll be able to get to know some of the association's turtles currently on fence posts. Talk to them. Find out what you can do.

- Take advantage of the opportunities to learn that NCLA offers you. Each year I am impressed by the variety of workshops, seminars, and conferences our association sponsors.

- Make suggestions to your leadership. Let them know you are out there and what you need from the association.

- Don't be afraid to speak up. You may be surprised by how much weight your opinion carries.

- Read *North Carolina Libraries*. You do know, don't you, that last year it was judged the best library journal in the United States? It's yours.

The North Carolina Library Association is one of (if not THE) finest state library associations in the country. Our membership includes talented, imaginative people who are leading the way in library service.

Thank you for giving me the privilege of serving as your president this biennium. As Gwen Jackson begins her turn on the NCLA fence post, I wish for her the same kind of support and good will ... and yes, the breezes and the challenges ... that I have experienced these past two years.