

From the President

Gwen Jackson, President

As I have pondered (and struggled with) this message to you, many thoughts have crowded my mind. First and foremost, with the biennium having reached the midpoint, it is time for a reality check. Your NCLA Executive Board spent a portion of the January Executive Board meeting assessing the status of the five work groups and answering the following questions.

- Has NCLA made progress in realizing the visions that were established at the beginning of the biennium? What were those visions?

Communications Issues: Libraries and librarians are recognized as the prime information source empowering the people of North Carolina to become lifelong learners.

Intellectual Freedom: North Carolina libraries and librarians are aware of the importance of safe-guarding the rights of library users in accordance with the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and the Library Bill of Rights as adopted by the American Library Association.

Organizational Issues: The North Carolina Library Association is the motivating force for unifying its diverse membership to achieve the purpose, goals and priorities of the organization.

Personnel: NCLA and the library profession will be represented by exemplary professionals including women and minorities at all levels of administration.

Technology: Libraries and librarians play a leadership role in the development of the North Carolina Information Highway (NCIH) and in the implementation and utilization of the Highway so that it extends to each library, with the necessary training and equipment for each citizen to have access.

- Does NCLA need to chart a new course or change direction to accomplish our goals?
- Do we as members of NCLA need to renew our commitment to NCLA and to the profession?

How would *you* rate NCLA in the realization of these goals? What do you view as the strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities facing our profession and our organization? What are your suggestions for meeting our goals? You have a direct line to me and the Executive Board via NCLA-L and e-mail (gjackson@unccecs.edu). We want to hear your ideas.

The new year has brought changes within NCLA! Martha Fonville, our first administrative assistant, departed at the end of December. With her knowledge and commitment to NCLA, Martha has provided an efficient, indispensable office. She has been our ready reference source for NCLA information including upcoming events, organizational policies and procedures, constitution/bylaws expertise, and membership information. **Christine Tomec** became our administrative assistant in mid-January and continues to provide an efficiently managed office. Do introduce yourself to Christine and welcome her to NCLA. She can be reached at 919/839-6252 (voice and fax) or via e-mail (SLLA.CLT@ncdcr.dcr.state.nc.us).

As this issue of *North Carolina Libraries* goes to press, those of us associated with state government (public libraries, public schools, community colleges, university system, state library) are also experiencing changes resulting from budget cuts and downsizing. These budget cuts will affect personnel, resources, facilities and programs in our respective work places. How will we meet the challenges that such extensive cuts will create? I offer several suggestions for your consideration.

Talk with the policy makers (legislators, county commissioners, trustees, school boards) that directly affect the funding for your programs.

- Invite them to participate in activities in your library that would give them an opportunity to view first-hand the variety of resources and programming you have.
- Participate in Legislative Day (Washington, DC — May 9; Raleigh — May 10).
- Write letters to your representatives thanking them for past work and requesting their continuing support.
- Provide specific examples of the effects budget cuts would cause — make your examples relevant to their "favorite" areas.

Volunteer to participate in Governmental Relations Committee activities

- Contact Chair Carol Southerland for specific ideas: 2809 Westbrooke Drive, Kinston, NC 28501. Telephone: 919/523-0819 (h) 919/568-6161 (w) Fax: 919/568-4074.
- Contact the committees within your sections and round tables.

Be a Library Advocate and encourage your friends to join you.

I encourage you to take a few minutes this spring to review your personal and professional goals. Respond to the above questions so that NCLA can and will be the best possible professional organization. Accept changes in good faith, continue to market the services of your library everyday and celebrate life every day!