

# From the President

Beverley Gass, President



**7**he muse of the president's column seems to be on vacation or maybe just not home. And what a good time to be vacationing. I myself have had the good fortune of spending several days in a wonderful shabbily elegant summer home sitting right on the Atlantic Ocean. Could be that the muse decided to stay there. Could be that the muse, who more often than not seems like a buzzing insect, was one of those roaches we smashed last Friday evening. Roaches or muses apparently have good taste and the good sense to prolong vacations any way possible. If that is the case (that the muse is dead) then we are surely in trouble. But perhaps we can hack out a few words here that are no more or less interesting than past columns. Try as I might not to have negative thoughts about my abilities, it is clear that I am a better librarian than I am a writer. At least, we pray that is the case. Then again, I suppose it goes without saying that if the president of NCLA were winning prizes with a demonstrated ability to write, then the president might not be president, but editor of *North Carolina Libraries*.

But of what then should I write? Maybe a bit of news of NCLA and the state of librarianship in North Carolina would be fitting. Maybe mine is not to inspire but inform. After all, providing information is what librarians do best.

Back in May, when the Interlibrary Cooperation Committee of the State Library Commission held its first meeting, it occurred to me that we might be in the midst of one of the most exciting times for North Carolina libraries and librarianship ever. Maybe all presidents of NCLA feel that their time is the best or most exciting, but it does seem that there is more change and more creative energy swirling than I can recall in my 25 years in North Carolina.

When you consider such projects as NC LIVE and the project underway through the work of the Interlibrary Cooperation Committee, we are making great leaps into a future that does appear to be very different from our past. Apparently, the Information Age really is here forcing us to reconsider how we do business in libraries. How can we take the resources of NC LIVE into the schools and homes of North Carolinians? Are we able to redefine interlibrary cooperation for the state in such a way that our entrance into 2001 is not a space odyssey but a well-planned cruise? Are not computers and telecommunications technologies forcing us to be better human beings? Seems ironic to me that we may have to work together in whole new ways so that we can harness the power of these very inanimate objects lest they consume us. It certainly is a joy for me to work with all that are involved with NC LIVE and also the Interlibrary Cooperation Committee. My hat is off to our State Librarian who may be the catalyst for these changes that North Carolina librarianship needed.

My hat is also tipped to congratulate three who are entering the field at this propitious time. Lynda Stewart of Wingate, North Carolina has just been named the 1998 recipient of the Query-Long Scholarship from NCLA. The Query-Long scholarship is given to a library school student who intends to work with children or young adults. Carrie McLean of Knightdale has been awarded the NCLA Memorial Scholarship for her continued studies. Congratulations are also in order to Charles Wiggins of Asheville as the recipient

of the 1998 McClendon Student Loan from NCLA. Thanks to Carol Truett, Professor of Library Science and Chair of the NCLA Scholarship Committee, and her committee for their work in making these awards happen again this year. Seems to me that supporting the education of members and potential members maybe one of the more important things we do in NCLA.

Another bit of exciting news is that the Public Library Association will hold its Ninth Annual Conference in Charlotte, March 28 – April 1, 2000. We have the opportunity as the state association where this national conference is being held to hold a preconference and take advantage of some special offers. The Association of College and Research Libraries appears to be considering North Carolina as the site for its 2001 conference. Keep watch for more news on these conferences. Having two such events in this state will make it possible for many of us to attend national conferences more easily and affordably than ever.

But before these conferences take place, be sure that you don't miss the upcoming NCASL conference scheduled for Winston-Salem September 16 – 18 at the Adam's Mark Hotel and the Benton Convention Center. Though you may think that this conference is only for school media folks, think again. Karen Gavigan, the conference chair and her committee have planned a program that nicely balances the virtues of technology and print and touches on such universally relevant issues as filtering, information literacy, storytelling, intellectual freedom, and keeping up-to-date with technology. Bet you think about these things no matter what type of library you work in.

And surely you are aware of the 2nd NCLA Leadership Institute that will take place very soon at Brown Summit, October 28 – November 1. Kem Ellis, Director of the High Point Public Library, is chairing the committee that has been planning this event scheduled for this popular retreat site here in Guilford County. Shreiber and Shannon of Snowbird fame (and the 1st Leadership Institute) will lead this widely acclaimed throughout North Carolina event for emerging library leaders.

Equally exciting for those of us in Guilford County is that the new and long-awaited main library of the Greensboro Public Library will be opening the same week of the Leadership Institute. It is fun to be a librarian in this county at this time and enjoy the warmth of the media rays that come the way of GPL. We may not be sitting on the Atlantic Ocean as the library staff of GPL is, but our tans aren't bad. Speaking of Greensboro, sounds like the NMRT Big Adventure tour of Greensboro libraries on July 16 was a success.

Other professional development opportunities coming our way include the TNT event set for December 3 at Guilford Technical Community College. Eleanor Cooke is putting this workshop together. Watch [ncla-l](http://ncla-l) for more news of this event and others. And do you know how to join [ncla-l](http://ncla-l)?

Speaking of listservs and electronic communication — I am particularly excited at the work of the Publications and Marketing Committee chaired by Carol Freeman of Forsyth Technical Community College. Carol and her committee held a workshop on August 14 at East Carolina University about the upcoming electronic NCLA newsletter (with a print version for those who need it). At the workshop, Carol established the groundrules for the newsletter.

So see, it is an exciting time and maybe the muse of the president's column did not stay at the beach.