



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA LIBRARY AND INFORMATION STUDIES ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER
Winter 2013



Greetings from the President

Winter came quite early to Edmonton this year, so early in fact, that the first snow came not long after our Alumni Brunch in late September. With SLIS undergoing accreditation this year the LISAA executive has been doing our part to assist SLIS administrators, particularly in connecting alumni into the accreditation process. If you are in the Edmonton area, I encourage alumni to attend

our meet and mingle event at 12 noon on March 3rd in Henderson Hall so that the ALA External Review Panel can see what truly great alumni SLIS has produced. If you plan to attend please RSVP to Brianna Erban at berban@ualberta.ca

In addition to accreditation, there is much news to share with you: stories about our award winners, LISAA event recaps and the many great developments being made to the SLIS program. So in the interest of brevity, I will close by wishing SLIS alumni everywhere my warmest regards and a quick end to winter.

Hanne Pearce

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University of Alberta School of Library and Information Studies— SLIS

A Spring, 2013 Update by Ernie Ingles, Director

Since my last reporting to you in the early autumn of 2012 there has been much activity within the School—with that activity leading to numerous accomplishments.

Permit me with some considerable pride and excitement to bring you up-to-date as to the status of those initiatives underway. Early this New Year, after traversing the labyrinth that is the University of Alberta governance protocols, the two programs that I mentioned in my previous report, that is the online MLIS program, and the combined MLIS/MBA program, were approved by the University. The latter, with the possible exception of some special cases this year, will be offered to students entering the program for the first time in the fall of 2014; the former will begin its classes in September of this year. In terms of the online program, we will be recruiting our first cohort in February/March of 2013.

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I reported also that we had made a considerable investment in the teaching technologies within the School. All of our classrooms are now SMART, with enhancements as were previously reported. We are particularly excited to have a fully equipped SMART Board unit available to SLIS students in Henderson Hall. Our expectations for collaborative and group work have, thus, been considerably heightened.

Exciting also is the installation of our video-conferencing suite, which in addition to even greater SMART technologies, which have been incorporated, gives us exceptional capabilities. Soon we hope to be fully contributing partners in the RISE Network—the latter a “partnership of partnerships”. For those unfamiliar with RISE it is a “public library-based videoconferencing network” linking by way of 100 public library sites, including seven regional library systems, most of the province’s residents. 244 municipalities are engaged—an incredible feat! In this context, first—SLIS hopes to be in a position to bring its own programming to library colleagues and contribute to the development of library services in the Province. Second, we hope also to offer the service to our alumni and others who may similarly have competencies which could and should be shared by those reached by the network. Third, SLIS embraces and wishes to contribute to the vision and mission of the University of Alberta, which is stated best in the words of our founding President:

“The people demand that knowledge shall not alone be the concern of scholars. The uplifting of the whole people shall be its final goal.”—Henry Marshall Tory, First Convocation Address, 1908.

As such we will actively look for opportunities to share the richness of that which is the University of Alberta’s scholarship to Albertans by way of the public library network.

Finally, you are aware the School of Library and Information Studies is preparing for the re-accreditation of its MLIS program—an event that occurs in seven year cycles. As I write this report, our current focus is on the visit of the External Review Panel (ERP) of the American Library Association, Committee on Accreditation (COA). Seven individuals from locales throughout North America will be here for an intensive four day visit—March 3rd through

March 6th, 2013. The framework of the COA/ERP visit is built around what is termed the ‘Program Presentation’—essentially a self-study. Should you wish to view this document it is available via the SLIS Home Page—see ‘News’ and follow the link-- <http://www.slis.ualberta.ca/>

And also within the context of the accreditation process, many of you would have seen by way various listservs an invitation from myself and LISAA President, Hanne Pearce, to an event requested by the ERP to ‘meet and mingle’ with our alumni. Such an event would be quite informal. We are proud of you, our SLIS alumni, and we hope you are proud of SLIS. As such I entreat you to attend a luncheon with the ERP on Sunday, March 3rd, beginning at noon in Henderson Hall, Rutherford Library. While we very much appreciate that a Sunday date disturbs the tranquility of your weekend, this engagement is important. All alumni are welcome and, indeed you are encouraged to attend!

Thank you for your attention. SLIS is a dynamic School, with faculty and staff who truly care as to the health and well-being of their past, current and future students. They care also about library and information service in whatever form or guise that it might take. For me, it has been an honour and pleasure to serve as Director of the School for these past three years. My term will soon end, but I extend to you my best wishes on behalf of us all for your health, your happiness and your contribution to the “whole people” for it is for them that we enlisted to serve in the first instance.





Celebrating a Career of Service to Rural Libraries in Alberta

An Interview with Honourary Alumni Award Winner

Christine Nelson

By Katy Moore

When Christine Nelson moved to Peace River from Seattle in 1973, she had no idea she would end up traversing the roads of Alberta in her quest to serve and organize rural Alberta libraries on behalf of the provincial government. Having received her MLS degree from the University of Washington, Christine moved to northern Alberta when her then-husband was offered a job with Mental Health Alberta in Peace River. While the move was “a tad bit of a culture shock” for someone who had grown up in such an urban area, looking back, Christine knows the move was good for her as it provided her with the opportunity to grow more extroverted in the small town with a population of less than 5,000. She took a job in a Peace River K-9 school library, where she enlisted the help of grade 4 boys to do all her shelving for her. She also spent time at the local public library (which was located in the basement of the town hall), where she remembers, “I had never seen so many romance novels in the same place – I think ‘appalled’ would be the right word.”

Breaking “the library habit” was never an option for Christine, as she came from a very pro-library background; she made her first visit to the Seattle Public Library when she was three months old. By the time she was twelve, Christine knew she wanted to be a librarian. The

Alberta libraries in the mid-1970s were rather rustic and rudimentary: “It felt like the frontier or the Old West out there. The roads were unpaved, and lots of libraries didn’t even have telephones. Some still used oil-burning heaters in the middle of the room in winter.”

oversaturated librarian market in Seattle meant moving from her home state, but she quickly adopted a new lifestyle and ad hoc family in Alberta. This library-centered support network would prove to be her family over the course of her career, and continues to be so today.

After working in the school library for several months, Christine moved on to the job with Alberta Library Services, which was within the Culture, Youth, and Recreation department at the time. Christine worked with two other librarians and a secretary. Her job title was Library Consultant, and she offered insights on a wide range of issues facing rural Alberta libraries, including how to improve services, deal with personnel issues, adopting library policies where previously there were none, working with municipal councils, and providing educational opportunities for staff and boards regarding in-depth strategic planning (Christine notes most plans were previously quite simple: “Stay open.”) and the importance of transparency in public service.

Christine remembers that rural Alberta libraries in the mid-1970s were rather rustic and rudimentary: “It felt like the frontier or the Old West out there. The roads were unpaved, and lots of libraries didn’t even have telephones. Some still used oil-burning heaters in the middle of the room in winter.” At this time, many libraries did not receive any municipal funding (something Christine would assist in remedying later in her career), so many were organized by Women’s Institutes, funded by bake sales, and run with volunteer labor. Graduate librarians were found only in large cities and as regional heads. It wasn’t uncommon for library hours to be by appointment only. The library regulations at the time were a single page, and required only that the library have a sign, a catalog, and be open at least seven hours a week. Christine notes that even these simple rules were not always strictly adhered to. There was also no standard reporting structure, so the reported circulation and membership numbers were always rough estimates. Privacy, confidentiality, and the Dewey Decimal System were foreign concepts in many locations.

By the early 1980s, much-needed library development work was being undertaken across Alberta. A major hurdle in these initiatives was securing municipal support. This situation led to a lot of late-night volunteer steering committee meetings for Christine, who assisted such grassroots organizations in convincing councils to support

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the libraries—oftentimes this meant overcoming the perception of libraries as “an activity for wives and kids.” These steering committees tended to go through cycles of high interest followed by volunteer burnout, so Christine’s involvement was crucial in keeping the work on track and volunteers motivated. Her favorite project was establishing the Northern Lights Library System out of Elk Point. This project was undertaken as a prototype system intended to inspire the rest of the province to follow suit in organizing rural libraries into cohesive systems.

Library system establishment efforts translated to more meetings all over the province for Christine, who, while based in Edmonton, regularly flew to Grand Prairie, Fort McMurray, Red Deer, and Lethbridge. Everywhere else she drove (sometimes more than five hours a day), and she comments, “I learned to drive in any weather...usually the snow plow is behind you.” Luckily, she only slid off the road once, due to freezing rain. Although she couldn’t get back on the road for hours, she was able to experience the rural hospitality (in the form of dinner) of the farmer whose land she had slid into. She also experienced rural Alberta from other angles, such as strange hotels and bad food, although she says everything has gotten better in recent years—less fried food and paved highways are a great improvement.

Today Alberta is split into seven such library systems, and Christine notes how much has changed since she started working in Library Services in the mid-1970s: library use has skyrocketed, marginalized populations are being targeted with more inclusive programming, interlibrary loan services are more streamlined and accessible, and libraries have developed their own self-help networks, with the library systems often supporting the libraries more in a technological capacity. Many libraries have grown from small reading rooms to “actual functioning local research branches.” Christine also saw better staff training, more graduate librarians in rural libraries, and improved access to materials—in fact, she says, the small branches work really hard to get popular items, and users are much less likely to have to wait at rural branches than they are at the larger ones.

When asked about her favorite part of the work, Christine responds, “I loved it all. I never had to change jobs because the job changed on me.” She also comments on the “fabulous people” in rural areas: “The libraries owe them a great debt. There are some very dedicated individuals.” The

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variety and dynamic nature of the work kept Christine on the job for nearly 35 years. Since retiring in 2008, Christine has spent her time frequenting Edmonton Public Library at least once a week (she is currently reading Caleb Carr’s *Legend of Broken*, which she says is “supposedly fiction, but there are 75 pages of notes explaining Old German”) where she follows her whims of mostly non-fiction pursuits: “What you learn yourself, not told to learn, is what really sticks.” She also is busy with sewing projects, taking care of loved ones, and staying in touch with her adopted library family.

For librarians interested in following in Christine’s footsteps, she laments the fact that Library Services no longer hosts practicum students. Many of the skills necessary for this work are things that can’t be learned in library school—such as how to run a meeting, mediation skills, and working with difficult people (as Christine says, “Often the ‘problem patron’ is on the library board.”). She claims, “Nothing can replace a library meeting somewhere in the hinterland that goes until midnight because someone won’t shut up.” “Meeting the community is a good way to get immersed in the community – people are excellent, care a lot about their library, and will support you in any way you can. If you can get a job outside of the city, take it. It’s really, really worth it. Leave town. Learn to drive. Learn to drive in bad weather. And listen – because everyone has their library story. Even those who don’t think they have one do.”

Nominate Someone!

LISAA awards Distinguished and Honourary Alumni Awards annually.

More information on how to nominate at
<http://bit.ly/LISAAawards>

Send nominations for 2013 awards to
president@lisaa.ca





Class Notes



Sandy Campbell (1981)

SLIS Alumna Sandy Campbell of the University of Alberta's John W. Scott Health Sciences Library was awarded the 2012 Annual Librarian Recognition Award by the University of Alberta. Congratulations Sandy!

Bonnie Daley (2012)

Bonnie Daley is a recent graduate of SLIS. She has been happily working as a sessional librarian at MacEwan University in Edmonton since finishing her degree. Some of her responsibilities include teaching information literacy classes and working on collection management projects.

Anneliese Dalmoro (2011)

Since October 2011, Anneliese has been working in Calgary as an Information Research Specialist with Hatch, an engineering consulting company for the oil and gas industry. The company is based in Mississauga, Ontario and has offices in over 65 countries, including a network of 17 libraries. She began her position working part-time, but in January 2012 her contract was changed to full-time. She is now a happy solo librarian for the Calgary Hub. In Anneliese's position she is responsible for not just the Calgary branch, but the entire Western Canada region, including Saskatoon, Vancouver and Winnipeg. In 2012 she also received a recognition and

certificate of appreciation for going the extra mile in doing research and finding relevant materials for the company's engineers.

Rachel Cobb (2012)

Rachel Cobb has some good news to share with the SLIS Alumni community! After graduating from SLIS in August, Rachel began a one-year position as the Information Literacy Librarian at Yellowhead Tribal College in Edmonton. Rachel has also been busy in the larger library community; starting with the February 2013 issue, she will be *Felicitier's* copy editor for the next two years.

Nancy Goebel (1990), Jessica Knoch (2002) and Michelle Edwards Thomson (2005)

SLIS Alumni Nancy Goebel (Augustana Campus, University of Alberta), Jessica Knoch (MacEwan University), Michelle Edwards Thomson (Red Deer College) and colleague Sara Sharun (UBC alumni, 2010, a librarian at Mount Royal University) are partnering on an exciting information literacy assessment project. The Information Literacy Assessment Alberta Pilot (ILAAP) is a multi-phased research project investigating and working to further develop the IL skills of post-secondary students in Alberta. ILAAP is working to develop a robust model for promoting and

assessing information literacy skills required for student success in Alberta. The primary focus of ILAAP is the creation of a shared pool of assessment questions for post-IL instruction. The questions are mapped to the Association for College and Research Libraries' *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education*, making the assessment questions very relevant to learning about and reporting on student learning and development of IL skills. The pilot is expanding to include two new partners for the fall of 2013 and a broader invitation for partnership will be issued for the fall of 2014. The team can be contacted at ilaap.project@gmail.com – feel free to contact the team if you have any questions.

Tamara Van Biert (2006)

Tamara Van Biert (nee Guillaume) is very excited to announce that she has recently started a new position as the manager of the Castle Downs Branch of the Edmonton Public Library. Prior to starting her new position, Tamara worked for five years as the Director of the Stony Plain Public Library.

We are continuously collecting material for the next newsletter. If you have some news or accomplishments you would like to share with your fellow alumni please send it along to communications@lisaa.ca

Hockey Night in Libraryland

About twenty SLIS Alumni and their family and friends took in a University of Alberta Pandas hockey game on November 30, 2012 at the University of Alberta's Clare Drake Arena.

Thanks to the generosity of the Office of Alumni Relations, LISAA was given the use of the Bears Den Lounge along with free food and beverages for everyone to enjoy. Watching in the warmth and comfort of the lounge, alumni reminisced and reconnected as the Pandas beat the Manitoba Bison by a score of three to one.

If you would like to participate in future events for SLIS Alumni, follow us on Twitter @UAlbertaLISAA and/or keep an eye on our Facebook page, LISAA (U of A).

LISAA is now on Linked In

Connect with fellow SLIS alumni through LISAA's LinkedIn group page. Search for LISAA (U of A) and start networking with other information professionals and SLIS alumni.





Distinguished Alumna, Kathleen Pine

By Michael Calaresu

A few weeks ago, I had the unique pleasure of sitting down with Kathleen Pine over a cup of coffee. Even though I had been present at the ceremony in September when she was given the LISAA Distinguished Alumni Award, I frankly felt I knew little if nothing about her. I pictured the two of us meeting, running through a handful of dry, scripted questions, and then parting ways.

The trouble with the plan, however, was that I hadn't really anticipated just how inspiring Kathleen Pine would be in person. She is one of those rare individuals who somehow gracefully combines sophistication and intelligence with a sincere and almost palpable warmth for people. Within the first five minutes of our conversation, I gave up on trying to follow the script. It was only interfering in me listening to what she had to say.

Kathleen, by her own delighted admission, was born a bookworm. Between this and an aunt who happened to be a public librarian, she had a pretty good idea of what she wanted to do with her life from around the age of ten. She grew up in Saskatoon where she attended school until her second year of an English degree, then transferred to the University of Alberta where she completed her final year. She returned the following semester, and did a year of post-degree studies specifically centered on librarianship.

Kathleen began her career serving as the very first Children's Librarian for the Strathcona County Library, a position which she held for five years before taking a leave to complete her MLIS degree at UBC. She then returned to the position for another two years, before she and her

... for Kathleen, public libraries and all the crucial roles that they currently play in the world, are not something whose worth will diminish or fade over time.

husband, a professor of Physics, moved to the U.S.

In Rhode Island where her husband was working on his post-doc, Kathleen once again took on the role of a Children's Librarian. Within two years, she was asked to serve as a temporary acting director when the library's regular director left on maternity leave. A while later, when a permanent position was offered to her husband in Delaware, the couple left Rhode Island and moved on.

In the period that followed, the couple had two children together; a boy and a girl. When the kids were still little, Kathleen opted to focus her attentions on being a mom. By the time the youngest was five and the family had returned to Edmonton, Kathleen was back in libraries, this time working reference at a legal resource center for two years.

Although Kathleen's first post with the Edmonton Public Library was in Adult Services, it didn't take long until she found herself gravitating back to her original calling. She then spent a decade increasingly honing her craft as a Children's Librarian, before becoming manager of the Children's Library at the Stanley A. Milner Branch.

Kathleen took on the responsibility of coordinating youth and children services throughout the entire Edmonton Public Library System. She was involved in staff training, worked as a liaison between branches, and led numerous teams in analyzing the specific needs of toddlers, children, and teens in an effort to provide ever-greater levels of tailored programming. One of the more well-known fruits of her labors is EPL's widely popular and successful "Sing, Sign, Laugh and Learn" program, where families participate in group activities designed to assist toddlers in enhancing and developing their early communication skills.

In the course of speaking with Kathleen, I came to understand one thing clearly: Kathleen believes in public libraries. She believes in the role that they play in welcoming new immigrants and in the services they provide for children and their families. She believes in the spaces and in the people, and in the ways libraries open themselves up to everyone. She believes in the critical work that they do in promoting literacy and the ways in which they foster the love of learning in both communities and individuals. And for Kathleen, public libraries and all the crucial roles that they currently play in the world, are not something whose worth will diminish or fade over time.

She believes in public libraries and she loves them. She always has.



Join the LISAA Executive!

At the next Annual General Meeting, the LISAA membership will be electing individuals to serve on the LISAA Executive. This is a great opportunity for SLIS alumni to make connections and volunteer in the library community, all while building your resume or professional portfolio.

Please consider running for one of the following positions:

- Secretary/Treasurer
- Vice President

Send an email voicing your interest to serve to president@lisaa.ca

The **Annual General Meeting** will be held in May. More information will be forthcoming.

LISAA Membership

- Develop your professional network and help fund social events.
- Support outstanding students with donations to scholarships and special project funds.
- Exercise your vote at the Annual General Meeting.
- Honour colleagues with nominations for the Distinguished Alumni Award and Honourary Memberships.

In the past, alumni have been asked to make an annual donation of at least \$25.00 to be a member of good standing in LISAA. Now you may choose the newly adopted lifetime membership, for a one time low cost of \$75.00!

Please print off and complete the membership form at:

<http://bit.ly/LISAAmembership>

And send it with payment to:

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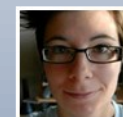
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SLIS Faculty Representative

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Find our Webpage at:

<http://www.slis.ualberta.ca/PeopleGroups/Alumni.aspx>



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