



An Interview with LISAA Honourary Member Dianne Oberg

Dr. Dianne Oberg was presented with an Honourary Membership in the Library and Information Studies Alumni Association at the Annual General Meeting on May 14th, 1993. Dianne completed her MLS in 1984, and her Ph.D. in Library and Information Studies in 1992. She is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta, and is involved in teaching and researching in the area of school librarianship. Earlier this month, I had the opportunity to talk with Dianne about her background, her career and her view on librarianship.

Dianne jokes that she is a "true prairie rose" as both she and her parents were born in Alberta and were raised in rural areas. She describes her family as "very much a reading family and a talking family" with her Scandinavian heritage providing "lots of respect for and enjoyment of oral poetry, and story telling, and speechifying of all sorts".

Although Dianne grew up in a rural area, she says that she "always had her eyes on the city lights". After completing high school she moved to Edmonton, and took her B.Ed. degree at the University of Alberta in Secondary Social

Studies. She then began her teaching career with Edmonton Public Schools. Dianne has always been interested in books and libraries, and in the early 1970's she followed this interest by enrolling in the Diploma Program in School Libraries at the University of Alberta. She took the program on a part-time basis, and once she had completed it, accepted a position as a full-time teacher-librarian. Dianne says about this first position "I really thought I had died and gone to heaven. It was the most wonderful introduction to teacher-librarianship". She realized at this point that she needed more training in the field and took a leave of absence from her position to begin working on her MLS at the University of Alberta.

Dianne was working as a high school teacher-librarian when she accepted (on a secondment basis) a one year position with the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta. After the year was over she applied for and obtained the position. She thanks "the people in Education who believed that I would be able to take on the job, develop the program and do my Ph.D., and who were willing to give me the support to do it". She also considers herself lucky to have had John Wright come in and "stick

handle the program" for the times when she could not be at the Faculty on a full-time basis.

Dianne took an independent Ph.D. through the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alberta. She jokingly describes the program as being "good for somebody who's old and mature!" On a more serious note, she states that "it would not be a good program for someone who was coming new into the field, and who had to come up with a research topic, and didn't have his or her community of learners". Although an independent Ph.D. can be a lonely experience, Dianne received a great deal of support from the faculty members of the School of Library and Information Studies, as well as from her close colleagues in other departments and the school library community in Alberta.

Dianne describes her Ph.D., "Adoption of a School Library Program by Sherwood Park Catholic Separate School District: A Promising Beginning", as "a look at the decision making process that a district went through as a district to change their libraries...it was really a study in planned change, and my

case study focused on that initial planning and decision making up to the point where they decided by policy that they would have an instructional program in libraries and it would be run by teachers and the focus would not be on literature promotion, but on research, using a research model". The most enjoyable as well as the most difficult part of Dianne's research was the fieldwork. She says that she "really liked the fieldwork, out there observing and collecting data...but the very difficult part of collecting and analyzing the data for me was trying to keep a rein on myself as an advocate, a library promoter; To recognize that 'yes, I'm doing qualitative research and it doesn't require that the researcher take that objective stance, but it still requires that you recognize and deal with some of your preconceptions and assumptions', (and that is hard work!)"

Teachers' use of libraries is the topic of Dianne's current research. She enjoys the life of an academic, and finds it "nice to have the opportunity to follow your loves, and that is one of the joys of being in an academic position - you do have a lot more freedom to establish your own agenda, and to work in the area that you are interested in". However, it is also possible to feel guilty at the same time "as there are so many aspects of librarianship that you could research, how do you choose one - you have to not choose a whole lot of other things".

One would be hard pressed to find a more enthusiastic and positive person than Dianne. She stresses the importance of believing in yourself and in the work that you are doing. As well, she looks for the positive things in her life, her students and her work. She says that while she did not start out as an optimistic person, a lifetime's experience has shown her that while "being a pessimist may be more realistic, it doesn't get you a whole distance, (and it is not much fun!)". Dianne stresses the importance of self knowledge for potential teacher-librarians, and considers it essential that they have a public service orientation. She advises students to recognize that school librarianship is "a hard job and it is going to be hard to get a job in the field, but if you love it, it is the most rewarding thing that you can possibly do".

I enjoyed talking with Dianne, and thank her for making time in her busy schedule for our interview. A self proclaimed "organization junkie", Dianne was on her way to the Learned Society's conference in Ottawa, then on to the CLA conference in Hamilton. Aside from being an active member of the library community, Dianne's other interests include theatre (particularly The Fringe), travel, and her eight nieces and nephews. Congratulations on your Honourary Membership, Dianne!

-Kerri Calvert

An Archivist/Librarian in London Town

Edmonton, May 14th - The eighteen attendees at the LISAA Annual General Meeting held at Henderson Hall, University of Alberta, received a rare treat. Native Albertan Archivist/Librarian Brian Owens, who is currently living and studying in London, England, gave a talk entitled "An Archivist/Librarian in London Town" following the brief AGM. Brian was in town to teach the spring session Records Management course at the School of Library and Information Studies. Brian's informal lecture wove together elements of life in London (complete with bomb scares and Virginia Woolf), with information about his research into British and Canadian First World War society. Brian toured us through some of London's great research facilities: the British Library, the Bodleian Library, British Government Records, Public Records Office, the Wellcome Institute, and he explained his search for clues to British and Canadian society through the documents of the army and medical corps and through hospital records. At the end of Brian's talk, former Provincial Archivist and LISAA Honourary Member, Alan Ridge, shared some of his memories of London and of his own studies at the University of London. A wonderful evening that awakened the historian, armchair Ph.D. student/traveller in all of us!

From the President's Desk ...

Greetings from your new President!

This year promises to be an exciting one as the School of Library and Information Studies celebrates its 25th Anniversary. To commemorate the School's 25th Anniversary, the Library and Information Studies Alumni Association is offering its alumni a special membership fee of only \$10.00. So ... watch for your membership renewal forms in the fall.

Last year was a year of accomplishments for the Library and Information Studies Alumni Association. A scholarship fund survey was conducted, receptions were held, the constitution was amended, and an honorary membership was awarded to Dianne Oberg!

Outgoing executive, as well as the Scholarship Committee, deserve our thanks for a job well done.

Our new executive includes:

President Pilar Martinez ('90)
Vice President Kerri Calvert ('91)
Treasurer Elaine Jones ('91)
Secretary Lisa-Jane Watson ('89)
Past President Maureen Beristain ('85)
SLIS Rep. Dr. Sheila Bertram
Continuing Student Rep. Susan Colp

Several other alumni have graciously volunteered to participate on various ad hoc committees:

Calgary Liaisons Allison Inglis ('90),
Helen Lee Robertson ('91)
Membership Richard Thornley ('93)
Newsletter Sandy Stift ('92)
Social Committee Ilona Storie ('91)

The 1993/94 Executive got off to a flying start at its first meeting on May 31st. We decided to begin the new term *immediately* by compiling a summer newsletter. Many exciting events are being planned for the upcoming year. (The 2nd Annual Calgary Reception on September 25th, the 25th Anniversary Open House on October 2nd, to name a few). We want to keep you aware of the upcoming

activities so you will get the most from your Association. Share our motto and "*continue the experience...*"!

I look forward to serving as your President. If you have any comments or suggestions, please call or write me at:

Yellowhead Regional Library
Box 400, 433 King Street
Spruce Grove, AB T7X 2Y1

962-2003 (w); 451-2723 (h)

Stay tuned for the Fall newsletter featuring detailed bios of all executive and committee members.

-Pilar Martinez

Welcome to the Profession Reception

Edmonton, March 26 - Following the School of Library and Information Studies annual Professional Development Day a reception welcoming the 1993 graduates to the profession was held in Henderson Hall, University of Alberta. Not only was there great food and hobnobbing *par excellence*, but NAIT librarian and LISAA member, Alison Nussbaumer, also warmly and humorously provided the official welcoming address to the new graduates. Our thanks to Alison and once again welcome to the new grads!

Upcoming Activities ...

2nd Annual Calgary Wine and Cheese Reception, September 25th, 1993, Nosehill Branch, Calgary Public Library. We are assured that this is soon to become one of the première social functions of the year in Cow Town. Watch for more information in the mail, or contact Allison Inglis at:

#613, 1320 - 16 Avenue S.W.
Calgary, AB T3C 3S6

244-0247 (h); 260-2671 (w)

25th Anniversary Open House, Reunion Weekend, October 2, 1993, Henderson Hall, 3-5 p.m. Sponsored by the SLIS 25th Anniversary Committee and LISAA. Join us in kicking off the 25th Anniversary year of the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alberta; meet some old friends and make some new ones.

Who's doing what:

Rick Liebrecht ('91) - Rick was married in May 1992 and he and his wife Doris now make their home in north Edmonton. Rick is a Financial Services Broker with Pro Fund.

Sigrid Johnson ('66) - In November 1992, Sigrid Johnson, Head of the Icelandic Collection in the Elizabeth Defoe Library at the University of Manitoba, received an Outreach Award for her active contribution in the area of outreach services at the university. Congratulations, Sigrid!

Gwen Creelman ('66) - Mt. Allison librarian Gwen Creelman gave the keynote address at a recent CAUT conference.

Suzie Levesque ('91) - Suzie and husband Max are expecting another baby in 1994. Suzie is working full time for IGW on a temporary basis and has just taken on the Vice Presidency of the Calgary Chapter of CASLIS.

Donna Samcoe ('90) - Donna is recently back from another exotic holiday - this time to Tibet and Nepal.

Roman Harrison ('89) - Roman is enrolled in a Ph.D. program at the University of Calgary in Physical Anthropology (or was that Archaeology?).

Helen Lee Robertson ('91) - Helen is the librarian at the Kerby Centre in Calgary and is busy planning house renovations and a trip to England in the early fall.

Cathy Gleason ('92) and **Michael Lesyk** ('91) have been married for almost a year. Cathy is teaching in the Catholic School System in Calgary and Michael works for TransAlta Utilities in an information/research capacity.

Leslie Handford ('91) - Leslie also works for TransAlta Utilities in Calgary as an Administrative Assistant.

Rick Leech ('92) - Rick is working in a

contract position for the City of Calgary Law Department Library.

Elaine Kaga - Elaine is a librarian with ESSO in Calgary.

News from the School ...

Former School of Library and Information Studies professor **Shirley Wright** recently received an Achievement Award at Edmonton's 42nd Annual Salute to Excellence. Shirley was commended for her commitment to the well-being of children through her involvement with the Edmonton Women's Shelter Society; the Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation; Children's Services Subcommittee; Qualifications, Equivalency and Certification Committee; Edmonton Community and Family Services Advisory Committee.

Library Acronym of the Year

Have you heard of CATAPULT? CATAPULT stands for the Calgary Association of Tragically and Pathetically Underemployed Library Types. CATAPULT members meet monthly at local Calgary watering holes and eateries to keep in touch, lend each other an ear, share information, etc. Sounds like a great idea to me!

Thanks to our Calgary Correspondents for news from down south. We would sure like to hear what is happening to alumni in the rest of the province. Please drop us a line and let us know what you or your former classmates are doing.

NEWS is the official newsletter of the University of Alberta Library and Information Studies Alumni Association. The mandate for NEWS includes reporting activities of LISAA and highlighting the accomplishments of members and individuals of interest to LISAA. Submissions to NEWS can be forwarded to Elaine Jones, c/o Yellowhead Regional Library, Box 400, 433 King Street, Spruce Grove, AB T7X 2Y1 (FAX 962-2770).