Editors' note—We welcome contributions by NMLA members describing research, special projects, or other issues affecting libraries. The editors reserve the right to edit contributions. In this issue we will run the third and final installment of a detailed story describing the social and political issues facing Albuquerque’s Main Library.

McClellan’s Army Invades Main Library: Part Three

A Lurid Saga of Politics, Social Policy and Journalism by Joe Sabatini, Head of Main Library, Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Library System

Parts 1 and 2 described the vagrancy crisis experienced by Main Library in the Winter of 1996-97; and the press coverage in January 1997 which resulted in City Security Officers being assigned to restore order.

By the beginning of February, a measure of normality was returning to Main Library. Two Security Officers from the Cultural and Recreational Services (C&RS) Security Division patrolled the building during its open hours, along with one contract security guard. The Downtown Bike Patrol of the Albuquerque Police Department was based in a former study room, and their patrol cruisers were often visible parked alongside the building. Many of the habitual offenders had been identified and warned. Some had been given Criminal Trespass Notices, which could result in 90 day jail terms if they returned to the building. Front line staff was heartened to see known troublemakers approach the entrance, see the C&RS officers, turn around and leave. Meanwhile, Library management was working with the C&RS Security Division Director, Frank Barela, to design a plan for deploying their forces.

Mr. Barela also attended a Main Library staff meeting to introduce himself and answer questions. On February 11th, Ida Mazzoni, Assistant Head of Main, presented the draft of detailed new Rules of Conduct to the Library Advisory Board. The Board adopted these rules with one minor change, and forwarded them to the City Legal Department for final approval. The new rules identified specific unacceptable conduct which staff and security personnel could sanction. Meanwhile, the Mayor’s Task Force on Homelessness continued to meet in the Library’s meeting room, struggling to reach consensus on measures to relieve the impact of vagrancy in Albuquerque.

(See McClellan’s page 13)

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NMLA deadlines

October 24  NMLA Board Meeting
November 14  Newsletter Submissions (e-mail)
November 14  Winnebago Award Entries
November 17  NMLA Award Nominations
February 1   Marion Dorroh Scholarship
NMLA officers & more

President: Betty Long, Roswell Public Library Phone: 505/622-3400 Fax: 505/622-7107 betty@roslib.state.nm.us
Vice President: Ellanie Sampson, Tor C Public Library Phone: 505/894-3037 Fax: 505/894-2068 torcpl@nm-us.campus.mci.net
Secretary: Beverly McFarland, Socorro Public Library Phone: 505/835-1956 Fax: 505/835-1182 library@sdc.org
Treasurer: Earl Phillips, Las Cruces School District Phone: 505/527-6065 Fax: 505/526-1941 ephillips@lcps.k12.nm.us
ALA Councilor: Susie Sonfieth, sonfieth@cf.santa-fe.nm.us

The SLA Rio Grande Chapter proudly presents a course on Benchmarking
This course is an introduction to the concept of benchmarking, designed specifically for librarians.

Held at the University of New Mexico Centennial Science and Engineering Library November 14, 1997

Cost: $70
Presenter: Jerry Speight, who assisted the benchmarking project at Los Alamos National Laboratories Library contact: Mary Francis Campana (INTEL) tel. 505/893-6670
mary_f_campana@ccm.rr.intel.com

ALA Councilor: Drew Harrington, harrington@aa.edu
Member at Large: Carol Brey, Thomas Branigan Memorial Library Phone: 505/529-5432 Fax: 505/529-4030 carobrey@lib.nmsu.edu
Member at Large: Jeanne Howard, Gadsden High School, Anthony Phone: 505/882-6322 Fax: jhoward@lib.nmsu.edu
Member at Large: Steve Rollins, UNM Library Phone: 505/277-6401 Fax: 505/277-6019 srollins@unm.edu
Administrative Svc.: Linda O'Connell, Phone: 800/898-6652 or 505/899-3516 Fax: 505/899-7600 nmla@nmsu.edu
NMLA homepage: http://lib.nmsu.edu/nmla
NMLA listserv: nmla@nmsu.edu

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New Mexico Library Association Newsletter

PAGE ONE

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SW CORNER OF MONTGOMERY & JUAN TABO
from the president’s pen

For many of us it seems like NMLA has "always" given awards and has "always" had an Awards Banquet.
Actually, the first Awards Banquet was held in 1970 when four awards were given. Dorothy Jennings Watkins was honored with having a Dorothy Jennings Watkins Day at the Annual Conference and was also presented an HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP. Ms. Watkins was honored as she retired from her position as the New Mexico State Librarian.

Helen Field Redman, head librarian at Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory was named LIBRARIAN OF THE YEAR. A quote from her honor says "This person has given service of mind and heart to New Mexico librarianship. She has given value to what we call professional."

Florence Martinez was honored as TRUSTEE OF THE YEAR for her efforts in presenting the need for continued Federal funding of library programs to Senators and Congressmen in Washington, D.C.

A SPECIAL FRIEND OF NEW MEXICO LIBRARIANS’ Award was given to Bernard W. Jester.

The current awards committee is working to continue the tradition started 27 years ago and they need your help. Please review the awards categories and criteria outlined in this issue and if you know someone who meets the criteria, nominate them. Your nominations are to be mailed no later than Friday, November 19, 1997 to: Karen Stabler, Awards Committee Chair, PO Box 3516, UPB, Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003.

Betty Long

leaving New Mexico

Having received an offer only a fool could refuse (and I didn’t), to join Hewlett Packard as an Information Research Analyst (reference librarian) in their Corvallis, Oregon technical library, I will be leaving New Mexico on October 2nd. While I’m looking forward to life in a college town (Oregon State) and to exploring the Pacific Northwest, I will miss New Mexico and all of you that I’ve been fortunate to meet, either in-person or on-line! Since I’ll be in “temporary quarters” for a month, I plan to keep my Calsbad “caverns.com” e-mail and web addresses active for a while.

It’s been an honor and a privilege to co-edit the NMLA newsletter with Jackie Shane for the past year. And, since I’m still a member, I’ll look forward to getting future issues to remind me of the Land of Enchantment. Bueno bye!

Nora Stoecker
NMLA members on the web

In the workplace, librarians often find themselves responsible for building and maintaining internal or external world wide web home pages. It's not at all unusual for these same people (and many others) to place personal home pages up on the web, sometimes hosted by their employers but often hosted by the internet service providers they use from home.

Following is a "webliography" of some NMLA members' web pages - some personal, some workplace. Take a look! It's fun to see how different pages are set up, and you'll find links to all kinds of information!

Miriam Bobkoff, Santa Fe Public Library
mbobkoff@ci.santa-fe.nm.us

Santa Fe Public Library: http://www.ci.santa-fe.nm.us/sfpl/
My own page: http://www.rt66.com/~mbobkoff/

"I created and keep the Santa Fe Public Library's page. My own page [is] noticeably the same style :-) but very cobwebby right now: if I have HTML energy I put it into the library page. The big news here is our catalog is now internet-accessible: http://catalog.ci.santa-fe.nm.us"

Cori Caputo, NMSUA at Alamogordo
cori@nmsua.nmsu.edu

Library home page: http://abcc.nmsu.edu/library/library.html
Personal home page: http://abcc.nmsu.edu/~ccaputo

"I actually have two home pages that I work with since one of my duties [at work] is webmaster. The Alamogordo Branch Community College page was completely redone recently by me. I also have a personal home page that I use to learn web authoring with and have done many revisions. I like what I am using now though it will continue to improve as my skills improve. It's theme is traditional/old time recipes from family, friends, and myself with a hint of "kitty cat" tones. It works together really well. I also use my home website as a teaching tool for students and staff to learn from."

Gwen Gregory, New Mexico State University
ggregory@lib.nmsu.edu

Work page: http://lib.nmsu.edu:80/aboutlib/detinfo/depts/techsvs/postcal/
"Fun" page: http://rever.nmsu.edu/~gggregory/

"I have a work page and a "fun" page. The work page talks about my unit at the NMSU Library and what we do. It also has a work-type bio of me, my resume, publications list, etc. The "fun" page is a light-hearted page with links to interesting and wacky stuff, including a bunch of the funniest things I have gotten over email. I started it when I was first learning to write HTML 2 years ago, and have just kept it around since then."

Linnea Hendrickson, University of New Mexico
lhendr@unm.edu

Personal home page: http://www.unm.edu/~lhendr
“You might want to list my "home page" which has nothing on it but the 1987 bibliography of criticism of children's literature: Children's Literature: A Guide to the Criticism, which although it is now dated can still be very useful.”

Mary Lee Smith, Lovington Public Library
lovingtonpl@nm-us.campus.mci.net (work) ; megsmith@carlsbadnm.com (home)

Lovington Economic Development http://lovington.leaco.net
Lovington Lodger's Tax http://visitus.leaco.net
Lovington Public Library http://lovington.leaco.net/plhome.htm

“Thanks in part to New Mexico State Library's project to connect New Mexico's libraries and to an AMIGOS workshop on Web Publishing, I was able to persuade both the Lovington Economic Development Committee and the Lodger's Tax Board to fund home pages. I co-authored both of these pages, and was able to post my library’s home page free of charge, in exchange for the work I did on the Economic Development pages.”

Nora K. Stoecker, Sandia National Laboratories
nksinfo@caverns.com

My page: http://www.caverns.com/~nksinfo/nksinfo.htm

“I created a home page, in part to develop HTML skills and in part for fun. It has links to some things I’ve written, and to subjects that interest me. I’ve been wanting to start a list of Librarian protagonists in mystery novels -- email me your favorites and that might get me started!”

And from New Mexico Tech ...

“Here are the homepages of all librarians at New Mexico Tech Library. Some are NMLA members, some are not...” [well but they should be, so we'll list 'em --ed.]

http://www.nmt.edu/~breynold/ --Betty Reynolds, Library Director
http://www.nmt.edu/~kkrehbie/ --Kay Krehbiel, Public Services Librarian ;
http://www.nmt.edu/~mjonas/ --Martha Jonas, Circulation Librarian
http://www.nmt.edu/~joy/ --Joy Thompson, Acquisitions/Automation Librarian ;
http://www.nmt.edu/~telles/ --Tony Telles, Periodicals Librarian
http://www.nmt.edu/~ldano/ --Louise Dano, Government Publications Librarian ;
http://www.nmt.edu/~sscott/ --Sharon Scott, Government Publications Assistant ;
http://www.nmt.edu/~fhsu/ --Flora Hsu, Cataloging Librarian ;
http://www.nmt.edu/~nmllib/ILL/jbaca/ --Jeannette Baca, Interlibrary Loan Librarian

Nor should we overlook the New Mexico Library Association, hosted by New Mexico State University. For information about the association go to http://lib.nmsu.edu/nmla.

And if you missed the e-mail request for information about the home page(s) you’ve developed, perhaps you aren’t subscribed to the NMLA listserv. This listserv provides a place to share or request information of interest to librarians and libraries in New Mexico. NMLA announcements are also posted here, as are job openings. To subscribe, send a message to listproc@nmsu.edu. Do not include a "subject" header. In the body of the message type SUB nmla yourfirstname yourlastname That's it! Once subscribed, send messages to the list at nmla@nmsu.edu.
14th Annual Mini-Conference Offers a Variety of Opportunities for Learning

The theme for the 1997 Mini-Conference, "People @ Libraries: Literacy, Learning & Logging On" reflects the wide variety of programs and information that will be available to all who attend. The Mini-Conference is scheduled for Friday, November 14, 1997 from 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. at Western New Mexico University in Silver City. The program for the day is:

8:30 - 9:00 a.m. Registration & Refreshments
Light Hall (see map)

9:00 - 10:00 a.m. Opening Session, Welcome
Remarks by Lana Porter, President
Ameritech Library Services

10:00 - 10:45 a.m. Tours of WNMU Library

11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Break-out Sessions:

1. Project L.I.F.T.: Literacy Involves Families Together
   Project LIFT is a family literacy program of the Tucson-Pima Public Library targeting teenage parents in Pima County, Arizona.

2. Searching Medline for Free via the Web: PubMed and Internet Grateful Med
   In June 1997, the National Library of Medicine announced that it will make its databases available, without charge, through its two Web applications—PubMed and Grateful Med. Both of these applications for searching MEDLINE will be demonstrated and discussed.

3. Cornucopia of Library Ideas
   Harvest a variety of stories, games and activities appropriate for use in an elementary or public library setting. Walk away with handouts and ideas to renew your children's library program.

4. Resource Sharing: ILL Issues in the 90's
   Interlibrary loan policies and procedures, as with everything else in libraries, are changing rapidly. Join us in a discussion of what's working and what's not working in ILL, from the individual library to statewide practices.

12:30 - 2:00 p.m. Lunch with Don Kurtz, author of South of the Big Four

Don Kurtz was born in Urbana, Illinois and raised in the farm country of Illinois and Indiana. His novel, South of the Big Four, was published by Chronicle Books in 1995 and is now available in paperback from Avon. He has recently finished a collection of short fiction, and has stories forthcoming in Esquire and Epoch magazines. He is a recipient of a Fellowship in Creative Writing from the National Endowment for the Arts, and has taught at NMSU since 1981.

2:00 - 3:00 p.m. Break-out Sessions:

1. Project L.I.F.T.: Literacy Involves Families Together Repeat of the morning session

2. Native American Health History Database: How It Happened and How to Use It

3. Parchment to Paper to PC: Learning Format Transitions Throughout the Ages
   This presentation is a two-part discussion comparing historic transitions in writing media.

4. Let's All Get On The Same Page!: America Reads and Other Initiatives for Kids and Reading
   Brief presentations of national and state reading initiatives, as well as programs available for library and reading advocacy.

3:30 - 4:00 p.m. Special Interest Group (SIG) meetings
Registration Form

“People @ Libraries: Literacy, Learning & Logging On”

Friday, November 14, 1997
8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Western New Mexico State University
Silver City, New Mexico

Registration is $25.00 for NMLA members and $35.00 for non-members*, and includes the conference, morning and afternoon refreshments, and a buffet lunch.

Please pre-register by Friday, October 31, 1997!

Name________________________________________
Address_____________________________________

Telephone______________________E-mail______________________

NMLA Member: yes____ no____ Amount enclosed:_____________________

Vegetarian meal preferred? _____ (check here)

Return this form to: NMLA
Box 26074
Albuquerque, NM 87125

If you have questions, contact Carol Brey at (505)-528-4032 or carobrey@lib.nmsu.edu

Hotels and motels in Silver City (Please contact hotel directly):

Bear Creek Motel & Cabins Ltd. Co. /Pinos Altos (505)-388-4501
(6-10 miles north of Silver City on Hwy. 15)
Bear Mountain Guest Ranch Cottage San Rd. (505)-538-2538
The Carter House B&B Inn 101 N. Cooper St. (505)-388-3000
The Cottages (guest houses) 1037 Cottage San Rd. (505)-388-3000
Cooper Manor Motel Hwy. 180 E. (800)-938-3001
(505)-538-5392
Drifter Motel Hwy. 180 E. (505)-538-2916
(800)-853-2916
Econo-Lodge Hwy. 180 E. (505)-534-1111
Holiday Motor Hotel 3420 E. Hwy. 180 (505)-538-3711
Palace Hotel 106 W. Broadway (505)-388-1811
Super 8 Motel 1040 E. Hwy. 180 (505)-388-1983
The 1998 New Mexico Library Association conference is in the works, and is looking good! Tentatively scheduled speakers include Lois Lowry, recipient of the Land of Enchantment Book Award, Pat Wagner of Pattern Research, and Barbara Ford, President of the American Library Association. There will be an ALA/NMLA forum, uninterrupted time with exhibitors, and tours.

Program ideas are still welcome; see the "Call for Papers" below. Special Interest Groups are encouraged to submit program or presentation ideas to Ellanie Sampson as soon as possible. Please include your SIG contact person information, the presenter name, the program title and length, and a brief description of the program. If the presenter is willing to the program twice, or more than program, include that information as well. Send your ideas to: Ellanie Sampson, Truth or Consequences Public Library, 325 Library Lane, Truth or Consequences, NM, 87901-2375. Fax: 505/894-2068; email:torcpl@nm­us.campus.mci.net.

New Mexico Library Association 75th Annual Conference
Albuquerque, New Mexico
April 22-24, 1998

Call for Papers

If you have an interesting and informative presentation, you may submit an application for consideration. Special Interest Groups are encouraged to submit proposals. The following program topics are of special interest, although other topics are also welcome: children and youth services, services to small libraries, technology and the internet, strategic planning or other library management techniques, and predictions on the future of libraries.

Presenter(s) names and titles:

Contact person: Phone:
Address: email:

Sponsoring SIG:

Program title:

Length of program:

Program description:
Active Learning in Library Instruction
Submitted by Kay Krehbiel

Want to improve your library instruction sessions? Learn how active learning can enhance your classes. Learn about activity types commonly used in library instruction and examples of activities already tested in the classroom.

New Mexico Academic and Research Librarians (NMARL) is sponsoring a pre-conference affiliated with the NMARL/CHECS Annual Fall Conference, October 23-24, 1997 in Las Vegas, N.M. at New Mexico Highlands University. The pre-conference will be Wednesday, Oct. 22, 1997, 1:30 - 4:00 pm, and registration is limited to 20.

The fee to register for only the pre-conference is $25. If you wish to attend both pre-conference and the conference sessions, the fee is $50 which also covers continental breakfast on Thursday and Friday and lunch and dinner on Thursday.

NMARL and the Council of Higher Education Computer/Communications Services (CHECS) have jointly sponsored a fall conference since 1994.

scholarships & awards

Scholarship Funds Available

The NMLA Education Committee invites applicants for the following scholarships:

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

GRANT: Recipients will receive up to $500.00 per semester. Candidates may reapply once for a total of $1000.00 in scholarship funds.

QUALIFICATIONS: To qualify, applicants must be a resident of New Mexico and must be accepted or currently enrolled in either an undergraduate college program culminating in an associate's degree in library science leading to certification or undergraduate or graduate study towards school librarian certifications.

To register contact: Pam Mirabal,
CHECS conference registration including pre-conference
UNM-CIRT, 2701 Campus Blvd. NE,
Albuquerque, NM 87131
pmiraba@unm.edu

Pre-conference participants are invited and encouraged to send in one or more active learning techniques and/or activities which will be compiled and distributed at the pre-conference. Please include the following information and send your contribution to Norice Lee: by e-mail (preferred) nlee@lib.nmsu.edu or by regular mail, Norice Lee, Dona Ana Community College Library, MSC-3DA, NMSU, P.O.Box 30001, Las Cruces, NM 88003-8001 before Oct. 10, 1997.

Your name, library, address, e-mail, type/level of class or course, time required, course objective, procedure, and materials used.

CRITERIA: Primary consideration in selecting recipients will be scholarship and potential contribution to librarianship, especially in New Mexico. Preference will be given to those currently employed in a New Mexico library and to members of the New Mexico Library Association.

APPLICATIONS: The committee chair must receive the following items: application form; resume; statement of professional goals, not to exceed one page; proof of acceptance in a college program; or, in the case of an applicant who has completed college courses, an official transcript direct from college(s).

DEADLINES: February 1st for summer and fall term grants and October 1st for spring term grants.
CONTINUING EDUCATION GRANTS:

NMLA awards these grants to promote professional development and support requests to attend workshops, conferences, and related activities.

GRANT: Any amount up to $200.00

APPLICATION: Applicants must be a member of NMLA. To facilitate speed in decision making, applications can be made by electronic mail, with a written request to follow. Applications cannot be made after a particular event. The application should include written documentation of costs. A copy of the workshop brochure or registration form should accompany a completed application.

Submit all applications to:

Nancy Turner, NMLA Education Committee Chair
Thomas Branigan Memorial Library
200 East Picacho Avenue
Las Cruces, NM 88001
Phone: 505.528.4034
E-mail: nturner@lib.nmsu.edu

Apply for the progressive school library media award
by Kate Clarke

To all school librarians/media specialists:

Winnebago Software Company and NMLA are sponsoring a $400 cash award for the best implementation of innovative ideas by librarians/media specialists to enhance the lifelong learning of students.

The award must be used to purchase technology that will give students greater access to information, such as on-line public access catalogs, CD-ROMs, etc. It is up to the recipient to select the type and brand of technology he/she feels will be most beneficial.

NMLA will ask the winner to write a letter to Winnebago Software Co. indicating how the cash award was used and how it benefited the library. Winnebago will be allowed to write a follow-up feature article highlighting the winner, to be published in the NMLA Newsletter as well as Winnebago newsletters, after the announcement of the award.

The NMLA Awards Committee will select the winner who will receive the $400 and a plaque at the NMLA Annual Conference in April.

Entry deadline is Nov. 14, 1997. All entries must be received by this date. The winner will be selected by Dec. 12. An application form follows. Send completed applications to:

Karen Stabler
NMSU Library Reference Dept.
P.O. Box 30006, Dept. 3475
Las Cruces, NM 88003
505-646-6172
kstabler@lib.nmsu.edu
PROGRESSIVE SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA AWARD

Date ____________________

Librarian/Media Specialist ____________________________________________

School ____________________ Grades ________ Enrollment ________

Principal ____________________________ ____________________________

School address ______________________________________________________

1. Project summary (title and purpose of project, what are the goals).

2. Program narrative (describe how the project corresponds to the objective, what actions are required to implement the goals).

3. When will the actions take place (timeline)?

4. Who will be responsible for these actions (qualifications of personnel)?

5. How will these actions enhance the lifelong learning skills of students?

6. How will these actions increase student access to information?

7. What are the indicators for success?

Signatures

Librarian/Media Specialist ____________________________ Date __________

Principal ____________________________ Date __________

Send completed applications to:

Karen Stabler
NMSU Library Reference Dept.
P.O. Box 30006, Dept. 3475
Las Cruces, NM 88003
One sign of the new mood was a follow-up story in the Albuquerque Journal. David Steinberg, the Arts Editor, visited Main Library on February 5th. He interviewed several patrons, other staff members and me. This story, illustrated with pictures of two patrons using reference materials, ran on the Books page (C-12) of the Sunday, February 16th Journal. Under the headline, “Library welcomes "street scholars””, Steinberg described positive utilization of the library by retirees, the unemployed and street people who regularly used the building.

Even though the environment inside the building was more secure, we were still having incidents outside the building. A set of benches surrounding the flagpole near the building entrance became a gathering point for public drinking, panhandling and littering. This was brought home in an extraordinary way on Friday, March 14th. As the building opened at 9:00 a.m. that day, Albuquerque Mayor Martin Chavez and an associate were seen picking up trash around the flagpole and putting it into a plastic sack. They then entered the building and requested to see the Director. Mr. Clark was not in the building, so Mayor Chavez asked Assistant Director Wayne Bower to locate him to meet with him directly. He emphatically suggested that we needed to do a better job keeping the Library clean, and left the trash sack to illustrate his point. (A pair of jeans was the most notable item among the more predictable cups and bottles.)

When Mr. Clark returned from the Mayor's Office, he asked me to arrange for our contract custodial company to provide a regular groundskeeper. When Clark, Bower, Ida Mazzoni and I met later to discuss the incident, we sought new ways to change the entire culture of building usage inside and outside. It was clear that our maintenance crew was outnumbered by the litterbugs, "the same people who would not walk fifty feet to use our restroom would not walk five or ten feet to use the litter barrel." The flagpole bench was one of five sets of benches around Main, but it was on the most heavily traveled path to the Library entrance. I proposed removal of the flagpole benches. We consulted with Suntran, the City's Bus company, and determined there would be no impact on bus riders. When we removed the benches we heard from regular patrons who appreciated not having to walk a gauntlet while entering the building.

As the weeks went on C&RS Security was unable to sustain the double coverage they had provided during January crisis. By March, they often could only post one officer, often on mandatory overtime. With fewer City officers, the remaining contract security guards were more visible and no more effective than before. In order for Main Library to be a permanent post for C&RS Security, positions were needed in a line item in the City budget. When the Mayor's FY 1997-98 Budget proposal was submitted to the City Council on April 1st, the Library staff was amazed and angered to learn that no new funding for Main Library security was included. Several avenues of protest were employed. Georgia Simeri, the Library steward for the City's clerical union, put out a statement and requested support from union officials. Ida Mazzoni prepared a letter to C&RS Director Kathryn Harris Tijerina, signed by 45 Main Library staff members, deploring the omission of security funding and requesting that Mrs. Tijerina meet with staff. The Library's management and paraprofessional staff association committee met and determined to send out a letter to fellow library workers and Library Friends.

On Saturday, April 5th, incidents at Main emphasized the need for effective security. On a cold and stormy day when C&RS was unable to provide coverage beyond a half-hour visit by one sergeant, vagrants returned, undeterred by an elderly contract security guard. When one staff member told a man to put away and remove the picnic lunch he was eating in the Serials Reading Room, his vile replies earned him an eviction, which she had to accomplish by herself. She later took advantage of the City's Internet capabilities to describe this incident to the Mayor and other public officials, criticizing the failure to fund security. The Mayor forwarded this message to Mrs. Tijerina, who replied that she was working with Mr. Barela about the staffing gap and suggested that library staff should have additional training in utilizing available security staff. The picnic incident was observed by Mrs. Sue Callaway, a patron who then had the misfortune to be harassed by two gang members as she...
walked down the stairs, following which she came upon a smelly man with a bedroll using the public telephone. She left a letter deplored the lack of security for patrons and female employees of Main Library.

During the week of April 7th Pat Haber, Elaine Shannon and I worked on a communiqué for the Staff Association. A collection among staff members raised almost $300.00 to pay for printing and mailing costs for a letter asking fellow librarians to contact their City Councilors before the budget hearing on April 24th. Twenty-two Main and branch staff attended a work party on Sunday, April 13th, to prepare 600 copies of this letter. I did a personal letter to each councilor, which included Mrs. Callaway's note and Ida's petition. On April 16th, Ida and I asked the Board of the Friends for the Library for support. The Board decided to contact Councilors individually and have their President represent them at the budget hearing.

Ida Mazzoni called Mrs. Tijerina's office several times to arrange a meeting, emphasizing the importance of having her meet with staff before the budget hearing. This meeting was held on Tuesday, April 22nd, attended by 35 staff. Mrs. Tijerina described the political environment in which she worked. She stated that she had been a strong advocate for the library's security enhancement during the development of the budget. She reminded us that when a City Administration made its final choices, she and her Division heads were obliged to support it publicly. She acknowledged that any employee could exercise their right to communicate with elected officials, and hoped that we would give accurate information if we did so. She maintained that the Department was committed to provide some level of security staffing at the Main Library regardless of the budget outcome. Many staff members asked questions and made comments about the situation. Staff came away with a better understanding of the budget process, and Mrs. Tijerina was impressed with the level of staff concern on the issue.

The pressures on Council during the budget process are intense, and several major issues were in the spotlight. It was apparent that Councilors were receiving significant numbers of comments on library security as a result of our information campaign. The Staff Association, the Friends, and several individual patrons were ready to make public statements to the Council meeting on April 24th. At 2:00 p.m., with the Council scheduled to begin at 5:00 p.m., Ida and I were summoned to Mr. Clark's office to meet with Mrs. Tijerina. She told us that the Mayor had reconsidered, and would now support an amendment to his budget which included funding for two C&RS security officers for Main Library. She suggested that we might want to inform our colleagues and supporters of this decision in advance of the Council meeting, which we did. At the meeting Pat Haber made a brief statement on behalf of the Staff Association, expressing appreciation that Main security was being funded. No other public comments were made on the subject. When the budget amendment came up, several Councilors commented on its necessity.

During a break in the Council meeting I was approached by KOAT-TV political reporter Karen McDaniel, who asked how things were going at Main Library. I commented that it was just like a real library again, and noted that our security concerns were being addressed in the budget. Circumspection was the order of the day, just as great detail had been essential in January. The original press coverage put the City Administration in the awkward position of having to deal immediately with an unanticipated crisis. Without the budget amendment, the press coverage would probably have been very different. Instead of managers working within the system to remedy the situation, the press would have been featuring front line staff protesting their abandonment and denouncing those responsible.

What lessons did we learn from our venture into political activism? During the crisis, we tried to maintain communications with all the participants, to focus on solutions rather than personalities. By maintaining a respectful and positive attitude towards elected and appointed officials, we avoided the kind of confrontational politics which could damage our long term support. Even though C&RS Security got only two new security officers (really needing four and eventually seven), this provided the basis for restoring the Main Library to its rightful users. We should be...
ready to acknowledge and give political credit to those officials who came to our assistance, however modestly or belatedly. It was a sign of our desperation that we welcomed the press spotlighting the lurid aspects of our crisis. The Library staff is glad to have our building more secure and our credibility with the public improved. Yet the problems of social deterioration represented by McClellan's Army remain on our streets. Winter will come again, with no obvious solution either nationally or locally to reduce homelessness or vagrancy.

NMLA newsletter contributions sought

Your editor wants to hear from you! Please send in news of interest to NMLA. Good ideas, interest groups, research, updates ... be creative and don't be shy. The deadline for the December/January 1997 issue is November 14, 1997, firm. That issue should arrive in your mailboxes by mid-December. Send submissions to Jackie Shane (UNM) at jshane@unm.edu; fax 505/277-0702; phone 505/277-5410. Electronic submissions (e-mail or disk) are preferred.

New Mexico Library Association newsletter

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