Our past president, Laura Pietsch, began her term with a reflective look on “the evolution of our organization since its inception in 1969.” She shared how our roles have vastly changed and how our walls are “virtually non-existent” today. She shared the vast innovations she sees in our programs. Our librarians “embrace” this change and she urged us to be a participant. She wasn’t being nostalgic, but rather looking forward to what was yet to be. The theme for this year’s combined NLA/NSLA Conference in October is Libraries Transform™ and it is with great excitement that I ask you to define how the role of the school librarian is being transformed. It is with a sense of urgency, as well, because we are the ones who should be sharing how our role is changing and how we are embracing that change, rather than waiting for others to define and change it for us.

Feeling nostalgic for a simpler time or are you anxious to forge ahead? I recently read an article in Curriculum Inquiry by Jessica Hochman entitled “School Library Nostalgias” about reform and the effect of nostalgia on educational policy. She asserts that librarians are more essential than ever, yet the trend does not indicate this shift. She writes of the impact studies that show the importance of a school librarian and strong library programs, “yet in spite of these positive impact studies and advocacy efforts, school librarians’ jobs are disappearing in the U.S. and elsewhere” (Hochman, 2016). She attributes part of this problem to the lack of knowledge
administrators and other policy makers have about the work of librarians. They remember the library or librarian of their own school days quite fondly, but have no idea what a librarian of today brings to the educational setting. Based on nostalgia, and the work we often do behind the scenes that others do not see, she proposes that principals and others who hold the reins do not see the current relevance of today’s librarian.

This is where you enter the picture. The purpose of the Nebraska School Librarians Association is to advocate for school library programs, provide professional development opportunities for school librarians, and develop leaders in the school library field. However, it is your voice that will guide the continuation of our profession. Show others what you are doing, share your vision, and create the transformation in your library. Be a part of it; tweet it, share it, show it, and tell about it!

Paula McClung
NSLA President

We all know that weeding a library collection can be controversial. With weeding scandals sometimes popping up in the local news, “the root of the problem is that the majority of people see most books as permanently valuable, and for many that is true” (Berry, 2013). Because this sorting out can be a controversial process, it is imperative that we use solid criteria for the process. A recent Library Journal article entitled “The Weeding War” states, “low circulation or infrequent use numbers are not enough evidence to scrap a book. Publication or acquisition dates prove nothing about a book’s value” (Berry, 2013). Thankfully, there are guidelines to help all librarians successfully complete this “controversial” and oft-challenging process. Even if weeding can be fraught with difficulty, it IS necessary, especially when it comes to weeding nonfiction material. In this case, “an up-to-date collection, even if small, is better than one filled with outdated or worn material” (Ford, 2015).

Another article, “To Weed or Not to Weed” (published in School Library Journal) reminds us that there are guidelines we can follow to walk us through this process, especially the first time we weed. The CREW (Continuous Review, Evaluation, & Wedding) Method is a great addition to my future library best practices. Created by the Texas State Library and Archive Commission, this tool utilizes three criteria to consider when weeding nonfiction collections: the copyright date the book was printed, the last time the book was used, and the book’s condition. This appears to be a bit simplistic, so to further help with weeding, MUSTIE provides more detailed criteria to help in determining if a...
Membership Has Its Rewards

In a tight economy, every dollar counts. Is belonging to your state association really worth the cost? You bet it is! The Nebraska School Librarians Association exists to support, educate and provide resources for school librarians throughout the state. In fact, it is the only state professional organization whose sole purpose is to support school librarians.

So what does that support look like?

Networking: As a school librarian, you are oftentimes the only person in your building who does what you do. It can be scary to reach out to strangers and ask for help with your job. As a member of NSLA, that difficulty is eased through conferences, professional development opportunities and a listserv where networking is actively encouraged.

Scholarships: Did you know that NSLA offers scholarship opportunities for its members? We do! From continuing education, to presenters, to first time conference attendees, there are a variety of scholarship opportunities available for our members. Now there is a membership perk you can really take advantage of!

Advocacy: We will stand with you and for you! That’s right! NSLA supports and advocates for its membership whether that is keeping abreast of what is happening in the state legislature and the Nebraska Department of Education in order to support school librarians or providing links to advocacy resources via our website, we work to ensure that our members have the tools to support advocate for themselves and the support of the organization to advocate for all its members.

All in all, your membership is a fabulous deal! Join or renew today by visiting us at neschoollibrarians.org

Laura Pietsch
NSLA Past-President

The Controversy of Weeding, cont.

title should be tossed. The shorthand version of MUSTIE is as follows: Misleading, Ugly, Superseded by new/better book, Trivial, Irrelevant, Elsewhere (Ford, 2015). These are great resources to tuck away for those times we must weed the library! Because it can be controversial, it’s crucial to utilize a tried and true and tested method for doing this professionally. CREW and MUSTIE are invaluable tools.

References


- Elizabeth Walker, recipient of the Karla Wendelin and the NSLA Continuing Education Scholarships
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