



# NSLA News

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## President's Message

As my time as President of the Nebraska School Librarians Association comes to an end, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has given of their time and expertise to support the vision and mission of NSLA. In particular, I would like to recognize the NSLA Board members who along with a handful of NSLA members rose to the challenge of providing additional professional development opportunities for all school librarians in our state.

As we continue to grapple with the question of how school libraries can best serve all students, it becomes even more crucial that we focus our energy on developing and honing best practices in our instruction. In that light, NSLA is thrilled to be able to offer school librarians the opportunity to attend Heartland 2013 which will be held August 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. ALA President, Dr. Stripling and Dr. Aronson from Rutgers are the keynote speakers. The theme of the conference is Common Core and the Inquiry Process.

Participants will spend time working in small groups and will come away from the conference with a deeper understanding and working knowledge of literacy skills such as point of view (bias), organizing and thinking skills, compare / contrast, and inference. Please make plans to join us for this opportunity to delve deep into the heart of instruction and learning. Additional information such as how to register for the conference can be found at [www.heartland2013.com](http://www.heartland2013.com) or by contacting me at [stacy.lickteig@ops.org](mailto:stacy.lickteig@ops.org)

Advocacy has also been the focus of NSLA this year. We have been very fortunate to have Deb Levitov who is a local expert on advocacy present on the topic for NSLA. With the support of the University of Nebraska at Kearney, Deb will be presenting Proactive Strategies for School Libraries as a pre-conference session at 2013 NLA / NSLA Conference on October 8, 2013. Participants will learn how to effectively communicate the strong link between libraries and



Stacy Lickteig  
NSLA President

learning. Additional information can be found at <http://nebraskalibraries.org/conf2013>

Thank you again for the opportunity to lead NSLA; it has been a great experience.

Sincerely,

Stacy Lickteig

## Special points of interest:

- Heartland Conference  
Aug. 2-3  
UNO

## NLA/NSLA Conference in Kearney, Oct. 9-11

The NLA/NSLA Conference planning is underway, and it looks like the conference is shaping up to be a fun and educational experience. The venue, the Younes Conference Center in Kearney, is brand spanking new and sports five upscale hotel facilities (Wingate by Wyndam, Holiday Inn, Holiday Inn Express, Hampton Inn, and Fairfield Inn), two of which are connected directly or by a walkway to the conference center

<http://www.younes.com/our-properties-2/kearney-ne/>.

The keynote speaker this year is Stephanie Vance, the

“Advocacy Guru.” Stephanie is the author of four books on advocacy, and has over 20 years of experience in Congressional affairs, having worked in a prominent DC law firm, lobbied for National Public Radio and worked in various Congressional offices, holding positions as Legislative Director and Staff



Director. Her work stems from a deep and abiding belief that government is effective only when citizens are active participants. Her work has been the subject of a variety of print media stories, including a column in The Washington Post. Both Robin Clark and I have heard her speak and found her to be very entertaining and stimulating.

Fun things to do at the conference will include a night at the legendary World Theater (eating popcorn and watching some famous librarian movie tbd), and other entertainment to be determined. The exhibits are

always fun and enlightening as well.

And of course, come to the conference to see and hear your colleagues share their latest tips and tricks for doing our job. What a great time for networking! The conference dates are Oct. 9-11, 2013. Registration will open in late May. Here's the URL:

<http://nebraskalibraries.org/conf2013/>

Dr. Sherry R. Crow  
NSLA President-Elect

## UNK School Librarian Program

February 25, 2013

*Dr. Ed Scantling*  
*UNK College of Education*  
*Dean, 308.865.8502*

The University of Nebraska Kearney announced today that the School Librarian Endorsement Program (housed in the College of Education, Department of Teacher Education) has been nationally recognized by the American Library Association/American Association of School Librarians (ALA/AASL) and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). This national recognition signifies that UNK's School Librarian Endorsement Program fully

meets all five of the ALA/AASL standards for initial preparation of school librarians: Teaching for Learning, Literacy and Reading, Information and Knowledge, Advocacy and Leadership, and Program Management.

UNK's School Librarian Endorsement Program, one of only a handful of university school librarian/media specialist preparation programs recognized this year, becomes part of an elite group of just 45 programs nationwide currently recognized for achieving this level of excellence. Only graduate-level programs are eligible.

“We are honored to have been recognized by ALA/AASL and NCATE. This distinction provides great motivation to continue our work,” said Dr. Sherry Crow, coordinator and primary professor of the program, which draws students from a wide national and international arena. “Well-prepared school librarians are essential to creating information-literate P-12 students able to access, evaluate, and use information intelligently, empowering them to succeed educationally. Our mission is to foster lifelong learners who grow to become informed, technologically savvy 21<sup>st</sup>

century citizens.” For more information on the UNK School Librarian Endorsement program, visit <http://www.unk.edu/academics/ecampus.aspx?id=6216>. For more information on the recognition of school librarian preparation programs, visit the ALA/AASL website at <http://www.ala.org/aasl/aasleducation/schoollibrary/nateaslreviewed> or the NCATE website at <http://www.ncate.org/tabid/165/Default.aspx>.

## AFCON

I remember my first professional encounter with censorship.

A parent emailed me to say that his son had checked out a completely unacceptable book from my library – *Whale Talk* by Chris Crutcher. I'll admit, I freaked out! What if he contacts my principal? What if he contacts the superintendent? The school board? How would I feel about *Whale Talk* being removed from my library? Should I give in or should I fight?

I decided to stand my ground. Yes, *Whale Talk* has some pretty vile and racist language in it, but that language is necessary in the context of the story. "Whale Talk" is an important, valid work of young adult fiction. Did that father have the right to have his son NOT read the book – of course. But did he have the right to not let *anyone's* child read the book – of course not!

Censorship is something most librarians face at one time or another. It's never pleasant and always makes us angry. As librarians we believe in academic freedom and the freedom to read. What that father tried to do is obvious censorship, but censorship comes in many forms – we even do it ourselves without a second thought. "Not me!" you say but think about your selection decisions. Do you sometimes decide not to purchase a book because of how you think parents might react? Think about

how you might steer an immature student away from a more mature book and into something you know his mom and dad will like better. Do you put that book about sex and reproduction behind the circulation desk? And do those actions *really* qualify as censorship?

AFCON, the Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska, in conjunction with NELAC, the Nebraska English Language Arts Council, is bringing author and educator ReLeah Lent to Lincoln on Saturday, September 28th. Ms. Lent will be delivering the keynote for AFCON's Annual Meeting and her topic will be censorship in K-12 education. She has written or co-written eight books on literacy and censorship, her latest being "*Keep Them Reading: An Anti-Censorship Handbook for Educators*", a book she co-authored with Gloria Pipkin.

Ms. Lent encountered censorship early in her career as an English teacher at a Junior High in Florida. Rather than re-write her biography, I'll quote from her website: "ReLeah began her teaching career in Panama City, Florida, as an English teacher at Mowat Junior High School. It was there that she met her future co-author, Gloria Pipkin, and discovered the magic of young adult literature. Although the English department was designated a Center of

Excellence by National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), a much-publicized censorship battle virtually destroyed the department. Gloria and ReLeah wrote about the amazing events surrounding this censorship battle in *At the Schoolhouse Gate: Lessons in Intellectual Freedom*: the superintendent's ban on over 60 books, a death threat, Robert Cormier's visit in an effort to help, the story being covered in depth by the *Washington Post*."

ReLeah again encountered censorship in her next job as a high school English teacher and sponsor of the school newspaper in that same town. This time it was her students' writing that was the target of censorship. Ms. Lent filed a Federal lawsuit on behalf of her students, creating case law that would protect journalism students across the country. Even so, Ms. Lent lost her position as sponsor of the newspaper.

Since then, Ms. Lent taught at another high school, then moved on to the University of Central Florida, where she and a team of literacy coordinators developed and provided state-wide professional development. She left the university in 2005 in order to become a full-time writer and consultant and has won intellectual freedom awards from both the American Library Association and NCTE/SLATE.

I urge everyone reading this to save the date, Saturday, September 28<sup>th</sup> and register for the AFCON Annual Conference. Expect some interesting censorship discussion and lots of information about dealing with censorship in your library and classroom. Plus, it's a great way to top off Banned Books Week, which this year fall on September 22 – 28<sup>th</sup>.

For more information please see the AFCON website [www.academicfreedomnebraska.org](http://www.academicfreedomnebraska.org) or contact Lora Leibbrandt, AFCON liaison to the NSLA Board at [lleibrandt@cox.net](mailto:lleibrandt@cox.net).

By the way, *Whale Talk* has never left the library, except in the hands of eager readers.

Lora Leibbrandt  
AFCON Liason

# Inquiry & The Common Core

## August 2 & 3, 2013

At the 2013 Heartland School Library Conference at UNO, you'll find yourself immersed in two days of learning about the inquiry process and the Common Core, national cross-curriculum standards that have already arrived in neighboring Heartland states. Each day will center around two revered keynote speakers -- Barbara Stripling, ALA President, will speak both Friday and Saturday; Marc Aronson of Rutgers University will speak Friday. Smaller group sessions will follow. Meetings take place at UNO's College of Public Affairs and Community Service.

An invaluable experience for an unbelievable price!

\$50 for NSLA Members

\$80 for non-NSLA Members

\$25 for students

Register now!

\*Funding assistance provided by Nebraska Library Commission

<http://www.heartland2013.com>



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Nebraska Library Association/  
Nebraska School Librarians Association

## Annual Conference

October 9-11, 2013  
Kearney, NE

<http://nebraskalibraries.org/conf2013/>