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ADVICE FROM THE FRONTLINES

Patty Birch -Library Media Specialist ,North Platte High School

In your capacity as a professional librarian, what aspects of your job bring you the most joy?

Teaching is one aspect that brings me joy in my job. It may be teaching the students at North Platte High School how to find resources for their assignments, or fellow teachers in the North Platte School District how to locate that perfect article review for their graduate class. Whether it is teaching undergraduate students in an online class for the Library Technical Assistant program, or simply helping fellow teachers in their classrooms, it is teaching that brings me the most joy.

I began my teaching journey when I received my undergraduate degree from Nebraska Wesleyan University in Speech Education. I taught speech and drama classes at a junior high

in Lincoln Nebraska. After moving to North Platte, it took a few years to return to a teaching environment, but my first opportunity arrived when I began working at Mid Plains Community College in the Learning Resource Center. It was the early nineties, and teachers and students had to be instructed how to use the Internet and email. Some fifteen years later, I’m still teaching. Now, however, it is often how to integrate technology into the classroom, and how to access credible information online.

Last winter, during inservice days, I offered sessions on PowerMediaPlus. All teachers were given logins so they could begin using streaming video in their classrooms. Some teachers started creating Power Points that included streaming video segments but were having trouble getting everything to work. Working with teachers, and explaining a few things so that they

were able to complete their lecture was very gratifying. In many ways, running a school media center is like running a small business. We welcome all who enter and are there to help, each and every day.

Another aspect that brings me great joy is that I am in a profession that provides me the opportunity to learn every day. It truly is the best environment in which to promote life-long learning, as that is what you’re doing every day!

Please discuss one personal characteristic that you feel has contributed to your success as an information Professional. Perhaps “determined” is one way to describe the manner in which I have pursued my career. After moving to North Platte, I was determined to return to the world of education after working in the business world. It was a life goal of mine to obtain a Master of Library Science



“Autumn, the year’s

goal of mine to obtain a Master of Library Science degree, which I completed in 1999. I am determined to do the very best I am able to do, and work hard to achieve that goal. That isn't to say that I don't think having a sense of humor along the path of life is not important. To be motivated and enthusiastic, one has to let their sense of humor come through.

I don't always know what I need to know, but I'll persevere to obtain the knowledge needed until I understand, or I'll direct you to someone who does know the answer.

What one issue should future librarian be prepared to address in the workplace?

Change is the issue I believe any future librarian should be prepared to address in the workplace. The library work I was doing fifteen years ago is not what I'm doing today. Resources change, databases change and technology tools change. It is imperative to keep up with facets of your profession by reading professional journals, networking, and attending conventions and workshops. Change is something that will continue to dominate our profession, and it is our responsibility to embrace change and assume a role of leadership in order to assist others with the many changes ahead.

In our coursework we often discuss the importance of collaboration. Can you share an instance of successful collabora-

tion. Can you share an instance of successful collaboration with a group?

In a school media center, so much of what you do revolves about collaboration. Whether it is the World History teacher bringing the students to the media center for an activity, the Biology teacher bringing students to research various diseases, or the Food and Consumer Science teacher with her class exploring different types of foods, it all revolves around collaboration. Some of my most successful collaborations with teachers have involved work with the teachers in the Language Arts Department. As all 1300 students are enrolled in language arts classes, they all come to the media center to gather resources for a project during some part of the school year. The freshman are the first to have orientation, so that they are familiar with the resources available to them, at school and from home. The freshman English teacher and I collaborated on a project for the students from an idea written in Cruising Through Research. Being familiar with the resources available to them (reference books, online databases, etc.) students each drew from a hat the topics they would be researching: an author, a disease, and a country. They then, had to create a letter and Power Point from the perspective of the author, and describe that they had contracted the given disease while they were traveling in the specific country, including as much information as they could.

5. On a lighter note: When the work day is over, what do you

read?

On the lighter note, this summer I read Nora Ephron's I Feel Bad About My Neck: And Other Thoughts On Being a Woman, which I thoroughly enjoyed. . Generally, though, I read biographies and non-fiction. I finished The Emperors of Chocolate: Inside the Secret World of Hershey & Mars, which was very interesting, and I just started reading Barack O'Bama's first book, Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance. Next I want to read Cokie Roberts book, Founding Mothers: The Women Who Raised Our Nation, and Locust: The Devastating Rise and Mysterious Disappearance of the Insect That Shaped the American Frontier, by Jeffrey Lockwood.

"Change is the issue I believe any future librarian should be prepared to address in the workplace."

Thank you for sharing your experiences and expertise with us, Patty!

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Dorothy Thompson -Library Media Specialist -Logan Fontenelle Middle School, Bellevue, NE

What is your education/library/professional background?

This is my 14th year as the library media specialist at Logan Fontenelle Middle School in Bellevue. Since I already had a media endorsement before beginning the MLS program, I concentrated on taking classes outside my area as much as possible to broaden my knowledge of libraries and information science. It was very interesting to note the similarities and differences.

What is on your reading list? What are your favorites/your recommended/your want to read lists?

I'm a very eclectic reader and love all types of fiction. Right now I'm reading this year's YA Golden Sower nominees. Next on my adult reading list is "Water for Elephants" by Sara Gruen, a book recommended by a friend. And I always have an audio book going in the car.

What professional journal or article have you read and would recommend? Why?

I'm a member of ALA and AASL and like to

scan the contents of "American Libraries Direct" sent to my email as an easy way to keep abreast of what's happening in the library field.

What do you do in your "down time"? Your hobbies/recreation, how do you relax?

There never seems to be much "down time," but in addition to reading, I like to crochet, cross-stitch and bake.

What deep dark secret would you like to share?

There's a lot about the typical librarian stereotype that fits me. I like quiet. I like order. And I'm happiest making lists and creating databases. However, I realize that patrons are the center of our profession and so I encourage the noise, interactions, activity, and disorder that accompany a well-used library program.

Name one of your personal or professional qualities that make you, or will make you, a leader in 21st century library and information cen-

ters.

I'm very service oriented and will help in whatever way I can. I strive to be part of the solution rather than someone who adds to other's problems and stresses. I'm also very flexible and enjoy adapting to the changing needs of our profession.

What advice do you have for current Graduate Students?

Hang in there! I could only manage a course at a time and hence took 6 years to finish the MLA program. On the plus side, I got to meet more people this way!

What do you see as key future trends and challenges in LIS?

I think the biggest challenge is to get people to be more critical users of information on the Internet. The Internet is a wonderful informational resource that we all rely upon, but too many people accept everything they find as accurate and worthwhile information.

What do you think will be your legacy in this profession?

While I'm not a big mover and shaker, I hope that I make an impact on the students and staff in my building. Hopefully, I share

with them a love of reading and of discovery and help them be more effective users of information.

Any Last Words?

I miss the interaction with fellow library professionals and the stimulating discussions, both in face-to-face classes and online that the MLS program provided. However, I'm very glad to be done with tests and papers!

Thank you, Dorothy, for your encouragement and your wonderful work!



Student Spotlight -Todd Schlecte -Assistant Director, Gretna Public Library

What is your education/library/ professional background?

I have been working since last February at Gretna Public Library as the Adult Services Librarian and the Assistant Library Director. I am also currently progressing (one course at a time) through the Master of Library Science program, which I began in the Fall of 2006.

I graduated from college with a B.A. in German and went straight to seminary. I did that not so much because I felt a “calling,” but because of my own spiritual questioning. I did serve as a pastor in two parishes, and in addition I worked in Germany teaching English to classes of professionals who had to communicate in English to customers, suppliers, or trainees from Brazil, China, England, America, Mexico, Spain, France, the Czech Republic, etc. During that time I met the most focused man I have ever known; he was a German CEO preparing his company for an IPO.

What is on your reading list? What are your favorites/your recommended/your want to read lists?

Right now I am listening to a series of audiobooks during my commute called “The No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency” by Alexander McCall Smith. Set in Botswana, they are not complicated in plotting, but present a simpler, different, less complicated world, and they are full of tidbits of wisdom and gentle humor. I am also reading *James Madison and the Struggle for the Bill of Rights* by Richard Labunski. As soon as I can get a hold of one of our copies of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*, I would like to read that series, which I haven’t done yet. After that, I will read some Sci-Fi books (partly for fun and partly to familiarize myself with this genre for collection development and reader’s advisory purposes). Books which I can recommend from my reading in the past year are Brian Greene’s *The Fabric of the Cosmos: Space, Time, and the Texture of Reality* as well as Jared Diamond’s books *Guns, Germs, and Steel* and *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*.

What professional journal or article have you read and would recommend? Why?

At this point in time, I am more of an information seeker in the field of library sci-

ence than a browser. That means I tremendously enjoy the access to databases I receive as a graduate student. My favorite is Ebsco Academic Search Premier, because of its relative ease of use and the huge number of journals included. When I connect to it via the University of Missouri libraries, their “Find it at MU” feature often links me to another database in the case that Ebsco has only provided an abstract.

That said, I find the professional journals our public library receives very useful: *Booklist*, *Library Journal*, and *American Libraries*.

I also subscribe to a number of library and information technology blogs, but right now I can’t seem to find the time to actually read them.

What do you do in your “down time”? Your hobbies/recreation, how do you relax?

I garden, read, watch an occasional film. During the winter, my wife and I like to use our sauna about once a week. If I’m not reading a good book, I particularly like to read *The Economist*, snippets of *The New York Times* (online version) and *Der Spiegel* (online). Occasionally, I will hook up the computer to the stereo and listen to a radio station from Hessen, Germany or the BBC. I also like to listen to the *Prairie Home Companion* (another very occasional occurrence). I spend time with my daughter and wife—taking a bike ride to the park, playing a game, or reading to my daughter. I really like to hike, and I wish there were some mountains closer to Lincoln.

What deep dark secret would you like to share?

I am not patriotic in the sense that I am particularly proud of America or think that it is the greatest nation on earth. I used to, but that was before I learned another language and spent substantial time abroad. I want the best for America, but I think that we are a long way from achieving our potential. Other countries, at least in some ways, are further along in the development of information literacy, democratic participation, environmental policies, effective health care as measured by life span, and even the development and implementation of technology. I am an internationalist, and I think that we need a strong, central, democratic world government, although I know that this may

take several hundred years to achieve.

Name one of your personal or professional qualities that make you, or will make you, a leader in 21st century library and information centers.

Dedication.

What advice do you have for current Graduate Students?

Enjoy the program! If you find you aren’t enjoying it, think carefully about why not and make whatever changes you need to. It shouldn’t be about just jumping through the required hoops. If you don’t currently have a library job, think about seeking one. I am very lucky to have a position where I can learn both on the job and in class, and the result is a much more meaningful experience.

What do you see as key future trends and challenges in LIS?

I am going to address just one key challenge.

Our library is fortunate to have a wonderful partner in the Nebraska Library Commission, which not only makes available some pretty good databases, but also allows us to purchase e-books (and in October downloadable audiobooks) at greatly reduced prices.

Due to the NLC, using these digital formats is affordable. The main challenge is introducing patrons to them. As libraries evolve, I think one challenge will be to help patrons effectively use the newer tools that libraries offer and get users hooked on them.

What do you think will be your legacy in this profession?

I haven’t the faintest idea. I want to be good at what I do and enjoy what I do. We’ll see where that takes me and what legacy that leaves behind.

Any Last Words?

No. I’ve probably said too much already.

Thank you for your sincerity and hard work, Todd. Best of luck in your educational journey!

Announcements!!!!

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

There is funding available for students pursuing library studies. Please take advantage of these opportunities. These scholarships are waiting to be snapped up by deserving students like you. Please make the decision to apply. Your educational journey is worthwhile, but it's not free. Let NLC, NLA and NEMA help!

Nebraska Library Commission:

21st Century Librarian Scholarships - The NLC offers \$1000.00 for students pursuing their Bachelor's in Library Science and \$2500.00 for students pursuing a Master's in Library Science. See <http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/libdev/scholarship.htm> for more information concerning the application process as well as various deadlines. Get busy! The next deadline will be here before you know it.

Nebraska Library Association:

Louise A. Nixon Scholarship

This \$1000.00 scholarship is available to any Nebraska student in pursuit of a Master's Degree in Library Science. (Deadline: April 15, 2008)

Duane Munson Scholarship

This \$250.00 scholarship is available to help practicing librarians pay for continuing education. (Deadline: April 15, 2008)

See <http://www.nebraskalibraries.org/scholarship.html> for more information.

Nebraska Educational Media Association:

Continuing Education Scholarship

NEMA awards two \$800.00 scholarships to practicing school library media specialists and paraprofessionals each year. (Deadline: March 15, 2008)

Duane Munson Scholarship

This \$250.00 scholarship is available to help practicing school library media specialists pay for continuing education. (Deadline: August 15, 2008)

See http://nema.k12.ne.us/mem.dir/award_scholar.html for more information.

DON'T FORGET MIZZOU!

As Missouri students you are eligible to apply for a Missouri Graduate Scholarship. The application deadline is March 1, 2007. For more information and to download the application form access <http://sislt.missouri.edu/documents.php>.

Acquiring a Mizzou ID Card

Student ID cards come in handy for many reasons: an extra form of ID, library privileges, and cheaper rates at the movies to name a few.

If you need a student ID card from Mizzou, follow the steps below. Students can go to the MU Direct website and fill out an online form. Here is the link: https://mudirect.missouri.edu/studresc/_IDcards.asp

Sandy in student services office will get the ID cards and mail them to the students. Turn around is usually pretty quick; two or three days.

PROFESSOR ADKINS TO GO ON SABBATICAL.

Beginning next semester, Professor Denice Adkins will be on sabbatical. She has received a Fulbright grant to teach at a library school in Honduras from February through October 2008. If Professor Adkins is your advisor please be sure to follow the following steps as provided by Professor Adkins in an email.

IF YOU ARE GRADUATING IN MAY, AUGUST, OR DECEMBER 2008:

- File a revised Program of Study this semester if necessary.
- Make contact with another faculty member to act as your advisor. This person will sign your paperwork during those two critical semesters when I'll be out of the country. (Or if you prefer, SISLT will assign you to a faculty member to sign your paperwork.)
- Advise the Student Coordinator's office of your anticipated graduation date, so they can enroll you in the right Comps section.

IF YOU ARE GRADUATING IN MAY 2009 OR LATER:

- Make contact with another faculty member to act as your advisor. This person will sign your paperwork during those two critical semesters when I'll be out of the country. (Or if you prefer, SISLT will assign you to a faculty member to sign your paperwork.)
- You can stay with your "new" advisor or come back to me after October 2008, depending on your preference.

IF YOU WERE ADMITTED RECENTLY:

- Make sure you have submitted your Program of Study, which is due your second semester of enrollment.
- Make an appointment with me to discuss future course offerings if necessary. I am available in person or by phone, e-mail, or Skype.
- Make contact with another faculty member to act as your advisor. If you prefer, SISLT will assign you to a faculty member.
- You can stay with your "new" advisor or come back to me after October 2008, depending on your preference.

Forms I've mentioned:

Revised Program of Study form:

http://sislt.missouri.edu/Documents/substitution_form.pdf

Program of Study form:

http://sislt.missouri.edu/Documents/M-1_MLS.pdf

CHECK IT OUT!!!

GREAT NEW RESOURCES FOR LIBRARY STUDENTS COURTESY OF UNO'S CRISS LIBRARY.

See the following memo from John Reidelbach.

Over the summer, hundreds of electronic journals were added to the Locate Journals Service available at the Dr. C.C. and Mabel L. Criss Library (<http://library.unomaha.edu/>). Readers of *NEMO News* may be interested in knowing about the following recent additions:

Educators' Spotlight Digest. "The *Educators' Spotlight Digest* is an online publication of S.O.S. for Information Literacy, a project of Syracuse University's Center for Digital Literacy in collaboration with the American Association of School Librarians." Issues of the publication are available from Fall 1993 to present.

S.O.S. for Information Literacy. Accessible via the *Educators' Spotlight Digest*, or directly by going to <http://www.informationliteracy.org/>, this site is a "dynamic web-based multimedia resource that includes lesson plans, hand-outs, presentations, videos and other resources to enhance the teaching of information literacy."

College librarians may wish to check ***Focus on the Center for Research Libraries.*** Issues are available from May/June 1998 to present and feature "critical resources for research and teaching in the humanities, sciences, and social sciences."

Of particular value to those involved in the fascinating, and as the same time frustrating, world of serials is the ***NASIG Newsletter.*** Published 4-5 times a year by the North American Serials Interest Group the *Newsletter* "includes the minutes of the Executive Board meetings and Committee Annual Reports." While I am well aware that meeting and committee reports can be dreadfully dull reading, I encourage you to browse several issues to learn more about the serials realm while reading profiles of NASIG members, as well as discovering how to volunteer for a NASIG committee or task force, etc. Issues are accessible from January 1986 to date.

Catalogers in the *NEMO News* readership likely know about this next resource, but just in case you haven't heard about it, look into the ***OLAC Newsletter (The Internet and AV Media Catalogers Network)***. Not to be outdone by the serials folks, the catalogers have their own newsletter featuring content varying from issue to issue, often including president and treasurer reports, news & announcements, meeting minutes, conference reports, book reviews and liaison reports. Also available at the newsletter site is a link which I imagine is an extremely valuable tool for those in this field, "Useful Websites for AV Catalogers" (last updated 04/30/07).

The final journal I wanted to let you all know about is the ***Library Student Journal.*** This new publication, begun in 2006, is a "peer-reviewed student publication of the University of Buffalo Department of Library and Information Studies."

The journal is an open access publication I learned of earlier this year via a listserv to which I subscribe. I was curious to find out whether the new journal was available via the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) web site at <http://www.doaj.org/>. It was not. Well, the journal definitely met the selection criteria enumerated for inclusion in the service so I completed the "suggest a new title" form at the site and eventually received a response that the title was added to this ever expanding resource which currently numbers more than 2,800 freely accessible full-text scholarly journals.

Finally, those interested in keeping up-to-date with the latest additions to the journal holdings at the Criss Library, are invited to periodically visit my blog called **Focus On Online** which is available at <http://focusonline.blogspot.com/>.

Sincerely,

John Reidelbach

Licensing and Electronic Resources Access Librarian

University of Nebraska at Omaha

E-mail: jreidelb@mail.unomaha.edu

Announcements continued...

ANNOUNCING THE NEMO STUDENT BLOG!!

nemolibrarystudent.blogspot.com

All right, here's the deal: this blog is YOUR spot to get some stuff off your chest. This blog has been created so that all NEMO students have a place to post their announcements, questions, experiences, frustrations, joys and whatever else tickles your fancy! Check out nemolibrarystudent.blogspot.com and post a hello to your fellow classmates. Your friendly Grad Assistant will be monitoring the blog and updating the discussion topics weekly-ish. But don't feel limited to my chitty-chat. Feel free to post anything that's on your mind. This week's discussion opener: what did you do on your summer vacation?!?!

This is just one more avenue to help us get to know each other and keep in touch. See you on the blog!

PRACTICUM DETAILS

All NEMO students are expected to do a practicum in the final 9 hours of their program. Practicum waivers for any reason are STRONGLY FROWNED upon by the Nebraska Library Community who hire NEMO candidates as these directors want to ensure candidates gain a more inclusive picture of "life on the front lines" via the practicum.

You'll gain much from a practicum no matter how long you've worked in a library (in fact - the longer you've worked in a library - the more important it is for you to do a practicum to widen your perspective, develop skills in areas outside your "box" in your own organization, etc.). Practicums have often turned into job offers, put lines on a resume that one can't achieve where they currently work, allow you to meet colleagues with services and skills you need in your educational and employment pursuits, and set you up for a current letter of reference from a well-respected Nebraska library professional.

Now that's the way to complete your program!!! Students MUST contact Dr. Pasco the semester before they intend to do their practicum to set up a meeting to brainstorm what genre of library and what kinds of activities they want to pursue in their practicum. Dr. Pasco will contact the library director, talk to the library director about what positive and proactive mentoring means for a library science student, and will work with students develop strong learning plans that will move them towards their career or other professional goals. If you intend to do a Fall 2007 or Spring 2008 practicum, contact Dr. Pasco soon for a good discussion of your career goals and a practicum placement that will help get you there!

DO YOU NEED TO TAKE THE GRE? SEE NEBRASKA TEST INFORMATION BELOW.

Test Locations:

- Columbus
- Grand Island
- Kearney
- Lincoln
- Omaha

Most locations offer the test multiple times per week. For more information on test preparation, registration, and scheduling a test visit the GRE website at www.ets.org/.

Once on the site select GRE and then REGISTER FOR TEST. This will provide you with information on locations and test times. The site also contains information about acquiring practice materials, as well as links to practice tests (see Test Takers –Prepare for the Test-GRE-GRE Practice General Test).

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

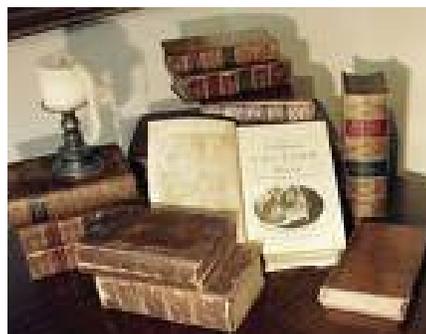
Its important for all of our students to keep up with the current library job postings. You never know when your "perfect" job might come along. We regularly send out an email with the current postings. Please read these! Even if you're not looking for a job, you may see something that you want to pass on to a classmate or colleague. In addition to reading these emails, take the initiative to check the website periodically. We only send out Nebraska postings, but you can view regional postings by accessing the website. So set aside 5 minutes every week to visit

<http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/nowhiring/jobsandcareers.asp> and check out who is looking to hire here in Nebraska and in other states as well.

Directions: Once you access this link, select "view by location", pick your state and then hit "GO". This site provides access to postings in Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, South Dakota and Wyoming.

Dr. R. J. (Becky) Pasco
Associate Professor, College of Education
Coordinator, Library Science Education
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Kayser Hall 514G

Phone: 402-554-2119
E-mail: rpasco@mail.unomaha.edu



Erica Rose –NEMO Graduate Assistant

nemogradassistant@gmail.com

Memoirs of a Grad Student in Washington, DC...

Does anyone else find the notion of thousands upon thousands of giddy librarians congregated together in one place a slightly bizarre phenomenon? Let me assure you it is a sight to be behold. Welcome to the annual ALA conference. And yes, I was one of those giddy librarians at this year's conference, wandering about Washington DC with bright eyes and a rapidly flashing camera. And if you ever have the opportunity to attend the annual ALA conference, I dare any one of you to feign nonchalance in the face of all of that wonderful knowledge, the encouragement, and well, free stuff, at your fingertips.

The 2007 annual ALA conference was held last June in our nation's dignified capital and I can not think of a more fitting place to have experienced this event. Approximately 30,000 librarians from across the country filled the city's hotels and subways in order to find inspiration for the coming year and to rub elbows with their kindred spirits -fellow librarians. Whether these men and women traveled 50 or 1000 miles to get there, I am certain they all felt that it was well worth the effort.

It struck me that ALA is not dissimilar to our very own special MLS program. The similarity lies in the fact that it holds value for every type of librarian from law librarians to children's librarians and everything in between. It is a melting pot for librarians of all walks of life. This makes it particularly valuable for graduate students like ourselves who may be undecided as to the

direction we hope our information careers to take.

I'd like to share just a bit about my favorite experiences at ALA. My personal library interests bounce back and forth between Youth Services and Administration so I was thrilled with the selection of programs that catered to each of these areas. I spent a very emotional 50 minutes in a huge ballroom wiping tears off my face as beloved author Judy Blume described her journey as a writer. She humbled us all with her gentle spirit and her display of gratitude for the mission that we librarians fight to promote. I sat awestruck as I listened to Cornelia Funke perform dramatic readings from her own work in a program entitled "Nurturing a love of books through reader's theatre". When I heard the characters of "Theif Lord" breathed into life through the voice of their creator, reading aloud suddenly meant something entirely different. I was deeply touched by all of the author sessions that I attended. Every one of them bared a bit of their soul as they expressed their commitment to their readers, their absolute love of their work, and their awareness of the power that they hold to influence young minds.

I attended a session entitled "Communicating up and down -the yo yo effect" which was a brilliant discussion that focused on effective ways for management and staff to communicate with one another.

And thousands of miles away I could practically hear all of my professors sighing happily as I drank in the leadership development communicated in the program "To change your library -change your mind!"

Above all, the most important thing that I gathered from my time at ALA was the feeling of being a part of something that is very special and very important. The ALA conference represents the vitality and excitement that are truly unique to our profession. Every day and through every action, we have the power to touch a life, to serve a good cause, and to make a change for the better. I met so many people who have dedicated their lives to this profession and who have accomplished tremendous things because of their dedication and their willingness to walk a different path. Learning from and socializing with these people allowed me to glimpse the talent and spirit that has driven the profession forward and that makes it such a beautiful blend of service and professionalism.

I'm sure you can all think of a million reasons not to go to ALA -money, travel, time, personal conflicts etc. But I promise you that they will all fade away once you get there and discover that the heart of our profession beats within the wonderful people you will meet at ALA. Maybe, just maybe, I'll see you all there next year...

~Erica Rose, MU Graduate Student