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University of Nebraska at Omaha

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Welcome to the Spring 2015 Semester

Happy New Year, and welcome to the Spring 2015 semester! Whether you are beginning your library school adventure, are in the middle of your journey, or are taking comprehensive exams this spring, your NEMO liaison, Laura England-Biggs, and graduate assistant, Liz Lorang, are here to support you. Please don't hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns (see final page for contact info).

There are several dates you should put on your calendars now. If you are enrolled in courses that meet at UNO, class weekends are January 17-18, March 7-8, April 10-11, and May 2-3. In December, you should have received intro letters for courses that meet at UNO. Read these letters carefully! They include information on required materials and assignments for the first class meeting. If you have not received your course letter(s), contact Laura immediately.

For those of you intending to complete your comprehensive exams in the spring, plan to attend a comps review session with Laura on Tuesday, January 27, at 6:00 p.m. in Roskens 308 on the UNO campus. Watch the NEMO listserv for more information. Comps week is March 7-15, 2015.

Finally, make sure to save the date for our graduation celebration! Everyone is invited, and we’ll celebrate our Summer ’14, Winter ’14, and Spring ’15 graduates. The event will be held Sunday, May 17, 2015, from noon-3:00 p.m. We’re working on a location and other details now. Look for more information in the next newsletter.
**Student Spotlight: Lori Juhlin**

**What is your education / library / professional background?**

I grew up in libraries, and by middle school thought I had my life all figured out, go to college, major in English, then go on and get a masters in library science, but after a few detours, and twists in the path, it didn't happen the way I imagined. In early 2005 I heard about a new Associates program in Library Science and thought I would give it a try, since I had most of my gen. ed's complete, I only was a few semesters away from completing an Associates degree. In 2006 I was one of the first graduates of the Library Technical Assistant program through the joint effort of the Community Colleges in Nebraska, what is now the LIS program through Central Community College, later that year I took my first full-time library job as the Children's Librarian in Lexington, NE. After a couple years I changed positions and became somewhat of a jack-of-all-trades, doing cataloging, technology help, reference, readers advisory, customer service, social media, promotions and the occasional children's program. In 2009 I went back to school to pursue a Bachelors in Psychology (at that point, not sure if I wanted to stick with libraries) which I completed in December of 2011 through Peru State College. After that I started looking for jobs closer to my mom and brother who lived in Norfolk where I was born and raised. I landed a part-time job at the Columbus Public Library in December 2012 as the office assistant to the Director, which showed me a new side to libraries that I hadn't experienced, and gave me the realization that I was meant to be in libraries. On the weekends I can be found at the Norfolk Hobby Lobby serving customers in the fabric dept., and doing what needs done around the store. I hope to eventually just have one full-time job, but for now, I enjoy my two very different jobs, and sometimes the craziness that is my life.

**What is on your personal reading list?**

I like a lot of different genres so the list is varied at this point. Right now on my nightstand: Thomas Kinkade’s Cape Light: All is Bright by Katherine Spencer, The Job by Janet Evanovich & Lee Goldberg, Shopaholic to the Stars by Sophie Kinsella, and finally Blood of Olympus by Rick Riordan. Hoping to finish them all before school starts again.

**What is on your professional reading list?**

Right now, I'm taking a break from these books, but last semester I really enjoyed reading leadership books for the management class, which included Leadership Simple, Shackleton's Way, and The Innovators. I have a few more to try on my list, and hope to fit them in around reading for classes. I also read publications like American Libraries, and stumble upon of articles about libraries in various places. One of the best sources of all things library is the Facebook Group ALA Think Tank, it is not associated with American Library Association but is a large group (over 10,000 members) of people that work in libraries, it's not always the most serious, and topics can range from funny to informative.
The Know-Nothing, or: How to be a Library Novice

By Ally Blumenfeld

The Reference Desk can be an intimidating place when you know nothing.

Three weeks into my first semester of library school, I started working at a public library. I knew for a few months about my hire and had been working for two years in the same city. I felt somewhat prepared in that sense: I was familiar with the population to an extent, and with library school on my radar for over a year, I thought I had a fairly realistic sense of what to expect at the Reference Desk. Of course, this wouldn’t be very helpful if I had been right.

I was a know-nothing. I found myself coming into a world of establishments and ritual. After only three days I knew names, faces, and preferred computers and newspapers: nearly everyone in Reference was a regular. I was the new face in the room, and what’s more, I was the only woman and the youngest staff member working in the department. Whatever is the opposite of a triple-threat — that was me.

With only three weeks of schooling and no previous library experience, I felt like I knew way less than I should about the way reference and libraries work in general. It was easy to become discouraged and shut down. But who was I helping that way? What was I learning?

Now my first semester is almost over, and this week was my two month-anniversary with the library! And here is what I’ve learned so far:

1. I should never say “I don’t know.” There is an answer to every question, no matter how strange or difficult, and I’m going to find it! This is insanely motivating for me, and also puts it all into perspective. Sometimes finding the answer means looking it up, remembering from past experience, taking a chance, making an educated guess, or asking for help. I continue to learn more and more every day, and it’s not by pretending like I know it all. I learn by observing, trying, and asking. Most of the time, I learn by finding answers. I have made a commitment to be the best damn reference associate I can be. I do that by challenging myself to never say “I don’t know.”

2. However, my job is not to know everything. There is so much that happens in and around the Reference Department and focusing too much on the one area in which I feel least adequate is not doing anybody any favors. My job is to listen to our patrons, respect them, and help them. My job is to process inter-library loans. My job is to be reliable, willing, and enthusiastic. My job involves stamping and shelving newspapers. My job is to make sure our patrons have the best library experience possible. Sometimes my job is to re-shelve books. My job is not to be a human encyclopedia. My job is to provide information and resources to library-goers. In fact, my job has a lot more to do with other people than it does with me. And that was an important lesson to learn.

3. All experience is valuable. So, someone obtaining their MLIS after ten years as a paraprofessional in a library probably has more valuable experience than a twenty-two year old fresh out of college. Yet however less, that twenty-two year old's experience can still be meaningful and translatable. I think the incredible thing about library school is that it's somewhat of an equalizer. We are all here to learn the same material and leave with the same degree, regardless of background, experience, age, or any other qualifying factor. We all have something to bring to the proverbial table, even if it’s just curiosity.
**Carrie Kimbrough Receives Mayor's Award of Excellence**

Carrie Kimbrough of Lincoln City Libraries in Lincoln, Nebraska was selected as the recipient of the Mayor’s Award of Excellence for November 2014. Carrie’s quick thinking and research skills helped save a patron at the Bennett Martin Public Library on September 3, 2014.

When the patron approached the service desk, Carrie noticed that one side of his face was sagging and that he also appeared to be using only one side of his body. Carrie researched stroke symptoms and realized that the patron exhibited most of them. She alerted a supervisor and emergency services were called, very likely saving the patron’s life.

According to Carrie, even though "library school does prepare you for a lot of things this was still quite the shock." Carried said that due to her reference training, she "knew exactly where to look online for signs of a stroke. He was a regular patron so I could tell something was off when he approached the desk." She also says that the incident shows "libraries are more than just brick walls. We really do our best to help people, sometimes that means more than just looking up a book or tracking down a phone number."

**The Know-Nothing (continued from page 3)**

**4. IT’S OKAY.** I’m one of those people who has to be told this on a near-daily basis. So, here it is. I say this to anyone beginning library school, beginning a library job, beginning anything — it’s okay. You wouldn’t be there if somebody didn’t think you were qualified. But more importantly if you didn’t think you were qualified.

Not too long after I started working, my incredible co-worker Andy Luck came to speak about serving the homeless population in my Planning Outreach Services class. He said something to the effect of: “When you begin to know it all, that’s when you hit a road block. When you don’t know everything, you leave room for potential.”

Mistakes will slip in slow motion from your outstretched hands. Cluelessness will begin to feel like a state of being. A perpetual laugh track will play in the most self-damning parts of your mind. There will be doubt, frustration, and, if you’re dopey like me, plenty of humiliation. But it’ll get better. You’ll learn, by barraging your tireless supervisor with more questions than your patrons. You’ll learn, by seeing what needs to be done right as it makes itself known in the gap left by what was done wrong. You’ll learn, because you are meant to learn; that’s why you made the admirable decision to go back to school, why you made the courageous choice to embark on a new career.

We are not know-nothings. We are potential.

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Student Spotlight: Lori Juhlin (continued from page 2)

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

I would probably have to say my ability to look at a problem logically, and from various points of view in order to achieve the best possible outcome. When faced with a problem I’m the one that asks all the questions like, have you looked at it this way, or, what if we tried this instead. I thrive on figuring out the best way to do things. In my current job I had to find new ways to do things, largely because my position didn’t exist before me, and I have been able to find more efficient ways of tracking expenditures, donations, and statistics.

What idea / experience / topic / speaker in your library science education journey has impacted your practice or thinking?

Since I’m only at the end of my first semester, and only two classes under my belt, I don’t have much to draw on, but there are a few things that have impacted my way of thinking, one is a quote I found in “The Innovators” by Walter Isaacson: “Visions without execution are hallucinations.” In the management class we talked a lot about leaders versus managers, and need to be able to do both. Great leaders are often visionaries, able to see the steps ahead and know where to go, whereas managers take care of the day-to-day. The quote emphasizes the importance of both the leader and the manager.

What advice do you have for your fellow graduate students?

I think the biggest thing is learning to balance and have some fun throughout this journey. School can be really stressful, and balancing work, school, and in some cases a family can be difficult. I always find time to have a little fun, whether it’s going to see a movie, a concert, or even just curling up with a good book once in while can ease the stress considerably. Take it one semester at a time, and before you know it, graduation will have arrived, and another chapter complete.

What deep dark secret would you like to share?

I don’t have too many secrets, aside from the fact that I am not the best at returning my library materials by their due date. I do try to get them back on time, especially if there are people waiting for the item, but do fall short at times. I know I’m not the only one, as this seems to be a common theme, at least among the library folks I talk to.

Any Last Words?

Work hard, have fun, and do the best you can, but most of all, enjoy this chapter in your life. It has been a great first semester in the program, and I can’t wait to enjoy the next set of classes with everyone!
Scholarships!

Spring is scholarship season! The American Library Association (ALA) has more than $300,000 for students who are studying library science or school librarianship at the master's degree level. Scholarships typically range from $1,500 to $7,000 per student per year. The scholarship process is open every year from September through March 1. Application materials, including reference forms, are available online and must be submitted online during this period. For more information on the range of scholarships available and how to apply, visit the scholarships website, call the ALA Scholarship Clearinghouse (800-5445-2433, ext. 4279), or email scholarships@ala.org.

The Mizzou College of Education has also announced their annual scholarship competition. Scholarships are available for both new and continuing students. More information is available here.

Also keep an eye on the website of the Nebraska Library Association, which has an annual scholarship competition. As soon as details are available from the NLA, we will send them out on the NEMO listserv.

Summer 2015 Class Dates for UNO

Class dates for summer 2015 courses meetings at UNO have been scheduled. ISLT 7312 (Cataloging) and ISLT 7314 (Reference) will meet for two Saturdays only: Saturday, May 16, and Saturday, June 20. ISLT 7314 will meet from 9 a.m. until 1:00 p.m., and ISLT 7312 will meet from 2-6:00 p.m. Attendance at both sessions is mandatory for everyone enrolled in the courses. Questions? Contact Laura (info below).

Employment Opportunities

It's 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.

Visit http://nowhiringatyourlibrary.nebraska.gov/JobsAndCareers.asp and check out who is looking to hire 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.

NEMO News

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