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Welcome to the inaugural edition of NSALT News! Quoting NSALT President, Erica Smith, "these are exciting times for Library Technicians in Nova Scotia". The formation of NSALT provides us with a voice within the library community and, with this newsletter, we hope to make our voice and our community even stronger! Here, you'll find association and library news, special interest columns, profiles of working library technicians and LT students, and much more. We also invite your letters, articles, and commentary, which we will happily publish.

In this issue we'll feature a report on the first Annual General Meeting. You will also meet our newly elected Executive. And we'll profile Kimberley Ross, Library Technician with the Nova Scotia Department of Education Library, and Katherine McQueen, student at the NSCC Library and Information Technology program.

We look forward to 'meeting' many of you through this forum. Please send any comments, or suggestions for our next edition to nsaltnews@gmail.com.

Roxanne MacMillan – newsletter editor

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Executive of the Nova Scotia Association of Library Technicians is pleased to present the inaugural issue of the NSALT Newsletter. It is our hope that this newsletter will become an effective communication tool for Library Technicians in Nova Scotia. I would like to thank Roxanne Macmillan for all her hard work getting this first issue put together.

NSALT has begun its existence with an interesting Annual General Meeting and information session (see article on page 2. I am pleased to say that both were very well attended.

Continued page 2

Annual General Meeting - Report

The first NSALT Annual General Meeting was held on Monday, March 12, 2007, in Halifax. The event was well attended by Library Technicians from around the province, and working in a variety of positions.

Orders of business included nominations of the executive, all of which were subsequently won by acclamation; presentation and acceptance of the NSALT's by-laws ; and a resolution encouraging cooperation among NSALT and the other provincial library associations.

Following the meeting, there was an informal discussion amongst attendees, which touched on topics such as advocacy for Library Technicians, the feeling that we are often not regarded as "professionals" within the library community, the direction which NSALT hopes to take, the need for LTs to stay "current" with new technology and trends, and the desire for professional development opportunities.

For more details on the agenda, minutes, and reports, please visit the AGM page of the NSALT website <http://users.eastlink.ca/~ericasmith/agminformation.html>

From the President (continued from page 1)

As your President, I am committed to listening to Library Technicians across Nova Scotia. The Executive wants to open a dialogue, among Library Technicians, that will allow NSALT to be a vehicle for change.

Over the next few months we will undertake a major membership drive. During this time we will approach Library Technicians, across the province, and ask you to describe a typical day at work. With this information, NSALT will begin work on a public relations campaign. Our goal is to use local media to show the public and employers, who, what, and where are the Library Technicians in Nova Scotia.

NSALT will also work toward providing Library Technicians with regular and applicable professional development opportunities. This is a large undertaking, and will require a lot of time and effort. We hope to have opportunities available by the end of our first year. If you know of a great professional development idea or speaker, please forward the information to the Executive.

If you wish to contact any member of the NSALT Executive, please email us at NSALTmail@gmail.com. I can be reached directly, at ericasmith@eastlink.ca. To keep abreast of NSALT news, visit the website at <http://users.eastlink.ca/~ericasmith>.

Welcome to NSALT! I look forward to working with the great Library Technicians in Nova Scotia.

Erica Smith, President

President - Erica Smith

Erica began working in libraries in 1988 as a junior high student. Her very first job was shelving books at the public library.

In 1997, Erica graduated from the NSCC Library Technician diploma program. While a student, she held library positions at the NSCC Institute of Technology, the QEII Health Sciences Centre, and the Museum of Natural History. Upon graduating, she began working at the QEII Health Sciences Library, first as a library clerk, and, eventually, as a Library Assistant.

In September, 2004, Erica took a position as a Library Support Specialist, with Tantallon Junior High, now Five Bridges Junior High.

Erica has been involved with a number of library associations, over the years, including APLA, NSLA, and the Maritime Health Libraries Association. Within NSLA, she held several positions, including President, By-Laws Convener, Membership Convener, School Libraries and Library Technician Interest Group Convener, and chair of the Dr. Norman Horrocks Award committee.

On a personal note, she is the mother of two wonderful children, ages three and eight. She loves reading, gardening and hockey.

Vice President - Erin Purcell

Erin started attending the pre-veterinary medicine program at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College, but took a year off when her first son was born. Re-thinking the long hours, huge work load, and enormous expense finishing vet school would take, she started looking for something else. She discovered the LIT program at NSCC by accident and was so happy to find it. She had spent hours and hours in the old Dartmouth Public Library growing up, and thought how amazing it would be to get paid to work there. She started the program full-time in 1995 (it wasn't free but it was still pretty cheap back then) and worked for the Dartmouth Heritage Museum as a student. Before even graduating in 1997, she had a full-time position with the Colchester-East Hants Regional Library. After maternity leave, when her second son was born, she went to work for the Nova Scotia Agricultural College Library. In 2001, wanting more time at home with her growing children, Erin took a part-time position with Mount Saint Vincent University. In 2003, she accepted another part time position at Beaverbank-Monarch Dr. Elementary School. When she got a full-time position with Sackville High School in 2004, she gave up the part-time work for the Mount.

Vice President - Erin Purcell (cont.)

Unfortunately she was bumped from Sackville High in 2006 but found a position at Sir John A Macdonald High. She has since moved to a circuit position in

Lower Sackville to be closer to her new home. Erin has been involved with APLA, and NSLA. With NSLA she has held the positions of Nominations Convener and Finance and Fundraising Convener, and has been a conference presenter. Erin is also currently working with a group to start a Nova Scotia teen book award.

When she's not running a taxi service for two pre-teen boys, Erin loves to read, work on the house and cook.

Treasurer - Jo-Ann Johnson

Jo-Ann has been the Library Technician at a senior high school - Forest Heights Community School, in Chester Grant - since 1997. Previously, she worked in the Public Library system, and she also, currently maintains a church library. Her other interests include gardening, tole painting, and reading (of course!). Her favourite genre is mystery.

Secretary - Patricia Madden

During her formative years, Patricia was an avid reader though it was quantity rather than quality: Bobbsey Twins, Nancy Drew, Gold Key comics, the back of cereal boxes... Then, in her early teens, she discovered the public library and a whole new world opened up to her.

Her mother thought her daughter would be a librarian but what did she know? Patricia wanted to be a music teacher, specifically a band teacher. She went to university where she earned degrees in music and in education. After graduation, she taught for a year in Goose Bay, Labrador, and then moved to Newfoundland where she continued to teach classroom music and band for about 8 years. She even had a choir make it to the Concert of the Stars at the Kiwanis Music Festival one year.

In 1989, Patricia decided to leave Newfoundland and moved to Halifax to start a new career. NSCC was offering an 18-month Library Technician course and, at that time, believe it or not, there was no tuition! Seemed like a match made in heaven! She graduated with her LT diploma in 1992, got married and started a new job, all in the same month!

Patricia started working in the old Dartmouth board in 1993. She has spent most of her school library career in junior high libraries in Dartmouth and Fall River. Last year her position was cut from 100% to 70% (it was later upped to 80%). When an opportunity for a 100% position arose at the Halifax Teachers' Centre, she took advantage of it and that's where you'll find her these days...when she's not playing clarinet with the Sackville and Halifax concert bands.

LTs at Work Kimberley Ross

Kimberley Ross is the Library Assistant at the Nova Scotia Department of Education Library. She chatted with NSALT News about work, education, and balancing family and career.

NN : Thanks for speaking with us Kimberley. We're interested to know how long you've been working in libraries, and what drew you to the field.

KR: I actually began my work in libraries in 1994 while I was attending the NSCC program. I worked part-time at the South East Asian Collection at Dalhousie University, and also at the Department of Education for a 6 week term. As for what drew me to libraries, growing up, we spent a lot of time at the library. I was drawn in by the quiet, peaceful feeling that I always had when I entered a library. This I find rather ironic now, because I am not a quiet, peaceful person, nor are libraries a quiet, peaceful career choice. However the truth is that I ended up in the LT program because I wandered into Dalhousie's career center one day. I was not enjoying university life, at the time, and just happened to see a brochure for NSCC, talking about the library technician program. Next thing I knew, I was sitting in a classroom learning descriptive cataloguing, and wondering who in the world this Dewey guy was, and why he was important.

NN: How long have you worked with the Nova Scotia Department of Education Library? Can you describe a typical work day.

KR: I've been at the Department of Education since May, 1999. I am independently responsible for a wide range of services associated with the daily operation and technical support of the Departmental library. My position has basically five major areas of responsibility: 1. acquisitions, invoicing and cataloguing 2. information services 3. Authorized Learning Collection 4. daily operations (interlibrary loans, etc...) and 5. supervising. More specifically, I order all materials required for internal patrons for the Department. It is my responsibility to purchase items and handle all the paperwork in regards to payment. I also keep track of the library budget. The Authorized Learning Collection is a reference collection of the materials authorized for instructional use in NS schools. I maintain this collection to keep it current and instruct staff, teachers, and the public on its use. I supervise and train student assistants and work experience students. I also work with DB/TextWorks and Genie software, as well as troubleshoot this software, which is used both in the library and by administrative staff for correspondence tracking.

NN: How does your job differ from that of your librarian/manager?

Basically the difference is that my Librarian, Lynn Duquette, deals with the big picture, and I handle the details. Lynn also takes care of all the in-depth reference questions, copyright issues, legal, and legislative issues. I'm responsible for the actual daily running of the library. We have recognized that our positions actually compliment each other, rather than overlap. For example, our recent software purchase required both our efforts. Lynn's responsibility was to "sell it" to supervisors and departmental administration, and then convince the section to help finance the purchase. My job was to work closely with the vendor, purchase, install, and implement the actual software. I worked with the company to convert our old database to the new software. Next I'll train all the departmental users on the new system.

NN: You're a busy mom of young twins... how do you balance work and home life?

When I went on maternity leave I fully intended to come back to full time work. However, 4 months prior to my return, I realized that for a true work/life balance, I would only be able to return to part-time work. Financially (child care costs) and in the interest of my children, I requested that I return at only 50% of my position, until my children are in school. My workplace has been very supportive, although we have still not been able to replace the other half of the position. The Dept. of Education is new to this type of arrangement, and we are still ironing out some issues. The provincial government is making progressive steps to allow for alternative work arrangements for all employees. Being the first to try something new is never easy, but I am fortunate to have the support of my division's management team. The situation works well for me, and I am able to feel like a productive employee, and yet still be the kind of mother I have always wanted to be.

NN: What advice would you have for library technicians just entering the field?

My one bit of advice would be to get as much work experience as you can, while you are still in school. The library world is one of networks, and it makes a huge difference if your name is out there. Also, try to work in different types of libraries so that you really get a feeling for where you would like to end up.

LTs at School
Katherine McQueen

Katherine McQueen is a 2007 graduate of NSCC's Library and Information Technology Program.

NN: Tell us a little about your background. What about it prepared you for, and drew you to, a career in libraries?

KM: I have a BA in History from Dalhousie University so, I spent a lot of time in the library over the duration of my degree. I have worked in retail sales since the age of 18 and knew working a job that focused on money was not for me. I always took pleasure in books and sharing reading/learning experiences with others. With my combination of passion for reading, research and serving the community, being an LT seemed the perfect fit.

NN: You're about to graduate from the NSCC program. Where do you want to go, from here? Any job offers yet?

KM: This past year has been an amazing experience for me. I had a great job last summer working at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic as an assistant curator. This position fitted perfectly to my skill set and I loved working with the incredible staff at the MMA.

Currently, I have just finished 2 contracts, one at NSCC and one at the Alderney Gate Library. I am working in the LT department at NSCC cataloguing books and readying them for transport to the new Dartmouth Waterfront Campus. It is a busy time and I am applying for jobs like crazy and trying to finish up my courses.

NN: Is the role of a library technician what you expected it would be, two years ago?

KM: I was drawn to the part of the program description where you get to read to children. I never expected to have the work experiences I have had in all aspects of library work. In the past 2 years I have worked in Academic, public and special libraries. I have discovered a talent for records management and best of all I have had a great experience working on teams with the different people in my program. I have learned not to fear technology but, to embrace it. I certainly never expected to be designing web pages and comprehending database design the way I do today. I think LT's have a very important role in the changing face of libraries.

NN: Many graduates seem to find work in related fields, outside the traditional library sphere? Do you think the program prepares you for this?

KM: I do. I think the most important skill people can learn is how to make their skills transferrable. In the program we have done a lot of work in groups to develop our strengths and recognize where improvements can be made. Whether you want to be a full time cataloguer or work in records management, I think both the course and especially the guidance of the instructors, have prepared us to delve into any part of Library Technicianship.

NN: What would your advice be to anyone considering a career as a Library Technician?

KM: Do it! If you think you want to work in libraries or have an interest in records management and computers this program could be just what you need. It will open up doors you never imagined you wanted to walk through.

NN: And, just because it's fun to ask, what's your favourite book, of all time, and why?

KM: I always find this one tough. I am going to say *The Lovely Bones*. It is written from the most interesting perspective and it made me cry. If I cry over a book I can respect the author that much more because they have pushed open the window to my soul.

Editor's Bookshelf
~ What's in a Name? ~

During my 17 year library career, I've been given many titles.... Library Technician, Library Assistant, Librarian, Miss, Ma'am, Hey you!, and most recently, Library Support Specialist and Library Teacher (as in "Hey, there's our Library Teacher coming out of the Liquor Store"... but that's a story for another day).

When I first began working in libraries, I would correct people, especially those who called me "Librarian", and attempt to explain the reasons why I couldn't use that title. After several years, and more than a few blank looks, I stopped explaining. It was easier to accept that, for Joe Public, anyone who worked behind a library desk, and had intimate knowledge of the Dewey Decimal system, was a Librarian. Period.

For various reasons, I have recently taken to correcting people again. Perhaps I've grown obstinate, in my advancing years. Perhaps I enjoy beating my head against the brick wall of public misconceptions. Perhaps I take perverse pleasure in the blank looks (particularly from my 12-15 year old clientele, who, in all truth, probably couldn't care less if I were a Library Technician or a zookeeper - and, some days, I feel more like the latter).

All of the above notwithstanding, the real reason I now make the distinction is the nagging feeling that, unless we all do the same, our profession will never get the credit it deserves.

Given this, I was very excited to hear about the NSALT Executive's planned PR campaign. Never has there been a better opportunity to make the public (and the library community) aware of Library Technicians... of our skills, training, and the important role we play. I recently read a quote which said something to the effect that "Librarians think of what has to be done, and Library Technicians actually do it". Though I grudgingly admit to having done a certain amount of thinking, over the years, I'd have to say that is actually a pretty decent summary. We are the "doers" of the library world. And, in doing, we can also accomplish more than a fair bit of moving and shaking.

We are Library Technicians. Hear us roar... but not in the library, of course.

Roxanne MacMillan - 04/07

CIBC Run For The Cure

NSALT members will be Running for the Cure on Sunday, September 30, 2007! Join your fellow Library Technicians as we help to raise money for Breast Cancer research, education, and awareness!

Contact NSALT team captain Trina Greenwood at 457 6426, or Trina.Greenwood@msvu.ca, or NSALT president Erica Smith at esmith@staff.ednet.ns.ca, for more information.

Or you can sign on as a team member, or make a donation, at <https://www.cibcrunfortheure.com/html/login.asp?error=cookies>

Breast cancer touches all of us!
Let's do what we can to help.



BECOME AN NSALT MEMBER!

Add your support and your voice to the organization that represents Library Technicians across Nova Scotia!

Membership gives you voting rights at our Annual General meeting, discounts on continuing education opportunities, and access to NSALT News.

Complete the membership form at <http://users.eastlink.ca/~ericasmith/nsaltmembershipform.htm> and mail, with your payment, to:

Jo-Ann Johnson
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We would like to thank all who have joined, to date, and, in particular our Institutional Members

MOUNT SAINT VINCENT UNIVERSITY
NOVA SCOTIA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT & LABOUR LIBRARY
NOVA SCOTIA HOSPITAL



NSALT EXECUTIVE

Standing: Treasurer Jo-Ann Johnson, Vice President Erin Purcell
Seated: President Erica Smith, Secretary Patricia Madden