



*Conferences are great opportunities to build networks of school librarians from all over the country that you can contact for ideas and help when needed.*

## What's So Important about a Theme?

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According to the AASL website, the first AASL National Conference & Exhibition was in 1980 in Louisville, Kentucky. The theme of **'80s and Beyond** was obviously quite insightful as we are now twenty-five years past that first conference, and AASL continues to provide professional development for school librarians.

This year, we will **Experience Education Evolution** in Columbus, Ohio, for AASL's 17th National Conference & Exhibition. We've taken the conference theme to heart for this issue of *Knowledge Quest*. Much has happened in the twenty-five years since AASL's first national conference and the almost sixty-five years since AASL was formed as a division of ALA. The articles in this issue take readers on a stroll down memory lane, while looking toward the future.

As I pondered this issue's editorial, I thought about the conference themes over the years. From personal experience, I know the conference committee spends a lot of time trying to come up with just the right theme that is relevant, engaging, and draws people to want to attend. Sometimes the theme is connected to the location or to current events in education; sometimes the theme is tied to a new program or initiative from AASL. However, one thing I noticed as I reviewed the seventeen themes used for the AASL national conferences: each one is as relevant today as it was during the conference year.

**A New Emphasis** (1982) comes along every few years. It seems that there are always new ideas and new initiatives to be implemented, such as the Common Core State

Standards (or now maybe the Uncommon Core?). There is always something down the road and the **Challenge: Mission Possible** (1984) is for school librarians to be at the forefront of determining how these new initiatives are going to impact the school library program.

**Our Focus: The Curriculum and You** (1986) has always been about how we help prepare students for their future. While the tools and resources are changing all the time, the **Access to Excellence** (1989) that we strive for in building quality school library programs has never wavered. School libraries are more critical than ever, and we have to help create those programs where administrators, parents, and decision-makers can clearly see the value. We constantly see **Challenges, Choices, Connections, and Change** (1992), but use each to our advantage as we **Shape the Vision** (1994) for the role school libraries play in the part of educating students. If we don't help determine that vision, someone else will do it for us. We have to take the lead in painting the picture of what the school libraries of today and the future will look like.

One of the benefits of professional development, such as the AASL national conference, is that as professionals we have to keep **Learning: Continue the Adventures** (1997). We cannot keep the status quo, but rather must constantly expand our knowledge so we can **Unleash the Power! Knowledge, Technology, and Diversity** (1999). When you come back from a conference, it is important to share what you learned with your faculty, your administrators, and your students. Show them you are constantly working to improve your school library program.

My personal journey in conferences and being involved with AASL began as we were **Coming Together as a Community of Learners** (2001). One of the things I value so much about being a part of AASL is the friends and colleagues I've met over the years. The **Information Matters** (2003) that I have learned from them has truly been something that I could take back to my school library and help **Every Student Succeed @ your library** (2005). Conferences are great opportunities to build networks of school librarians from all over the country that you can contact for ideas and help when needed.

I've always thought **The Future Begins @ your library** (2007). We have so much to offer students, faculty, parents, administrators, and our community as we **Rev Up Learning @ your library** (2009) to prepare students for the future. Whether we are **Turning the Page** (2011) or clicking through the online world, our school libraries are constantly at the forefront of bringing quality resources and instruction to our students and teachers.

**Rising to the Challenge** (2013) has never been more important to school libraries. Over the last several years we've seen budget cuts, lost positions, and stories about students who aren't getting the services they deserve. At the same time, the opportunities for what school librarians can do and the new tools and resources we have at our fingertips make what we do even more relevant than before.

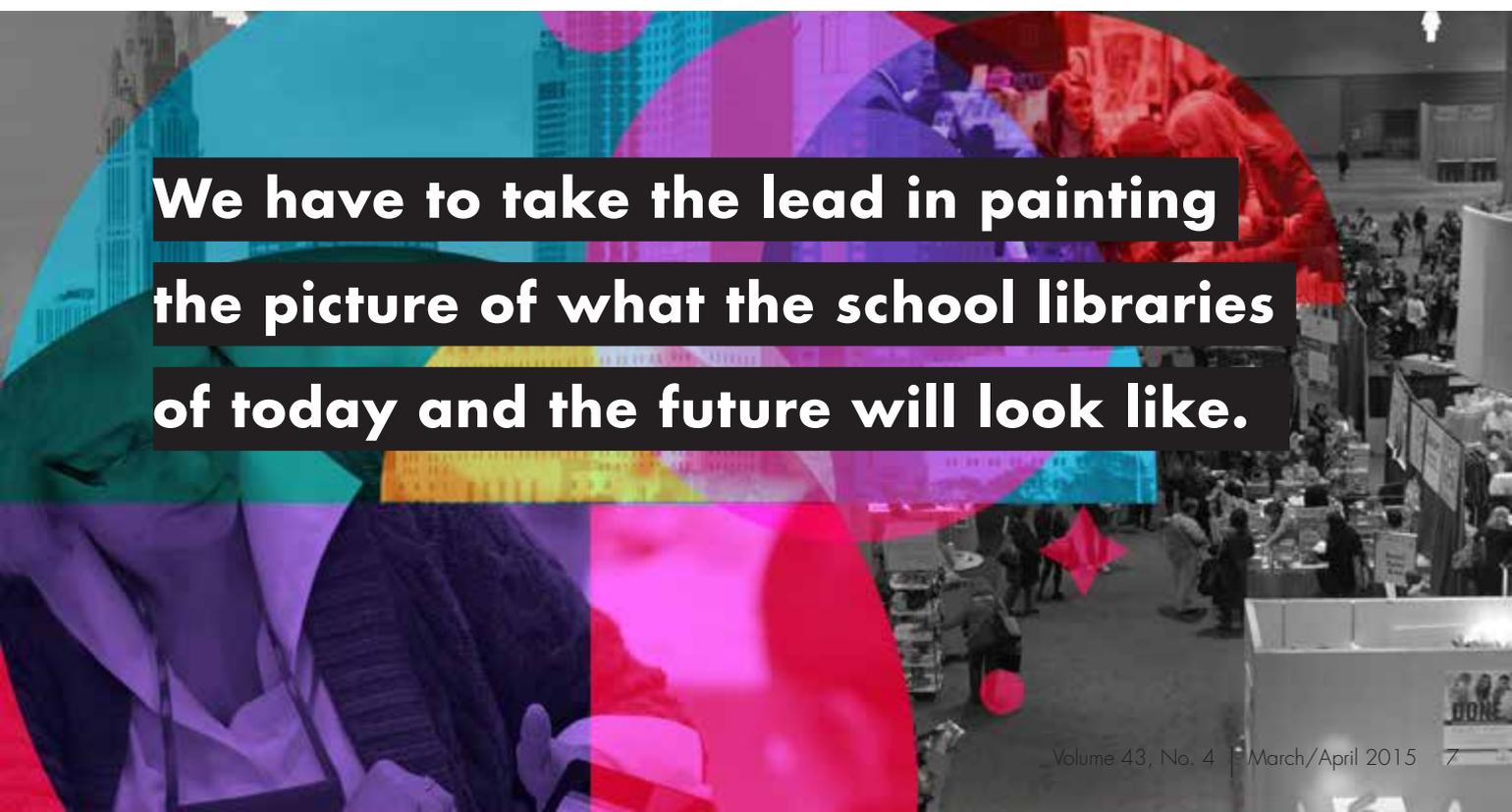
## In This Issue

Just as our conference committees spend time figuring out just the right theme, we always spend time carefully finding just the right authors to help get you in the right frame of mind for AASL 2015. Donald Adcock and Susan Ballard look at how AASL as a professional organization has evolved. Marge Cox focuses on the evolution of professional development. Cassandra Barnett helps us see how our standards have evolved over the years. Ann Martin and Suzanna Panter help us see that while much has changed, there are still core values to our profession. Jody Howard shares one of the ways educating future school libraries is evolving. Annette Lamb shows us how library resources have changed over the last one hundred years, and Gail Dickinson shares how as education evolves, so do libraries. And because we are always looking ahead, Helen Adams has a little article to whet your appetite for the September/October 2015 *KQ* issue on intellectual freedom.

So whether AASL 2015 will be your first or your seventeenth AASL conference, or like me somewhere in between, I'm sure you can see that we all **Experience Education Evolution**. I don't know about you, but I can't wait to see what is in store for us in Columbus and the many years of AASL conferences to come.

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