



# Biblio-Notes

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## Notes from the Chair

As we welcome Spring with the warmth and rejuvenation it brings, we have much to look forward to in LES as 2018 progresses!

LES Executive Committee had a successful virtual Midwinter meeting in February: The highlights include the Membership Committee reporting an 18% increase in LES membership; and the newly appointed Research Competencies Task Force reported that they are beginning a draft as they engage in extensive discussion as well as information gathering from colleagues on the Standards and Frameworks Committee. The Reference discussion group, led by Alex Watson and Glenda Insua, and the Collections discussion group, led by Naomi Lederer and Leslie Madden, also ably organized and led virtual Midwinter meetings that addressed current issues that you face as librarians.



**Photo provided by  
Harriett Green**

LES committees and working groups also strive throughout the year to

engage and educate members: One recent and innovative example is the Virtual Participation Committee’s webinar in April on the Framework for Information Literacy and humanities librarianship, which featured a discussion with the authors of “23 Things About the Framework” and also a connected Twitter chat feed.

We have other notable collaborations in the works with other colleagues in ACRL that demonstrate the diversity of our expertise and collaborative interests. With the Digital Scholarship Section, we co-sponsored an Emerging Leader this year, who is Lindsay Inge Carpenter, the First Year Experience Librarian at the University of Maryland.

The LES Conference Planning Committee, led by Lydia Willoughby, worked with the European Studies Section (ESS) and the Zine Pavilion to successfully propose an ACRL conference program for the ALA Annual conference. It is quite an honor to be selected as an official ACRL program via their highly competitive application process! If you’ll be heading down to New Orleans for

Annual, then mark your calendars for Saturday, June 23rd at 9:00am to participate in the LES-sponsored ACRL

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program “Zine Cultures as Critical Resistance: A Hands-On Workshop to Build Community Engagement and Student Learning.”

There will be many other opportunities at ALA Annual to converse with your LES colleagues: I encourage you to join us at the Collections and Reference discussion groups, the Membership Forum, or visit the All-Committees meeting on Monday morning if you’re interested in learning more about the workings of LES committees. And all are welcome to eat, drink, and be merry with us at our informal LES Annual Social on June 23 at 6:00pm at [The Carousel Bar](#), immediately following the LES Membership Forum.

Looking to the future, I also am working with the Instruction Section chair Merinda Hensley to propose a new ACRL liaison representative co-sponsored by LES and IS to the Conference on College Composition and Communication. This would be our second collaborative liaison, in addition to our long-time co-sponsorship with ESS of the ACRL liaison to the Modern Language Association.

These are just some of the initiatives that LES is engaging in, and you can take part as well as a volunteer! If you are interested in volunteering on a LES committee, you can contact Vice-Chair Chris Ruotolo at [cjr2q@virginia.edu](mailto:cjr2q@virginia.edu) to find out if there are remaining slots to be filled or keep an eye for next year’s call for volunteers!

I’d like to close this column by taking a moment to remember one of the most active and generous members who gave much in service to LES: David Oberhelman, who passed away all too early this past January. David was one of the first to welcome me into LES over eight years ago, and I had the opportunity to get to know him through both LES and his extensive activities with the Modern Language Association’s Libraries and Research Forum. He was a thoughtful and highly collaborative colleague who led many committees and initiatives in LES, WESS (now ESS), IS, and MLA; and he made a major impact on the profession far beyond the state lines of Oklahoma. He leaves behind a rich legacy of what it means to be an information professional and cross-disciplinary scholar, and I would point any aspiring librarian to David’s work as a model of what it means to be an academic librarian today. LES has established an ACRL 2019 Conference Scholarship memorial fund in memory of David: Please feel free to contact me about the specifics, and you also can find more information on how to donate at <https://conference.acrl.org/scholarships/> .

I look forward to seeing some of you in New Orleans this summer, where I will pass the torch to Chris Ruotolo and incoming Vice-Chair Nancy Foasberg. Thanks to you all for your efforts to make LES the great section it is!

Best,

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## Teaching Tools for Research with the *MLA International Bibliography*

**New Modules Announced:** In January 2018, the Modern Language Association launched four new subject-area modules to accompany its online course *Understanding the MLA International Bibliography*. Each module focuses on searching the bibliography for scholarly publications in one of four disciplines: folklore, linguistics, film (including television, video, and other broadcast media), and rhetoric and composition. Students who complete the new modules can earn badges in each of these four subject areas. Visit [mla.moonami.com](http://mla.moonami.com) to access the course and new modules.

The main course, *Understanding the MLA International Bibliography*, consists of five units and covers basic and advanced database search techniques, peer review, publication types, and finding full-text publications using bibliography citations. Students should complete the main course before attempting the new subject-area modules.

The course and its accompanying modules are free and available for reuse and modification under a Creative Commons license, but students must have online access to the *MLA International Bibliography* through EBSCO. Designed to supplement information-literacy sessions and courses in humanities research methods, the main course usually takes ninety minutes or less to complete; each of the additional modules takes about twenty minutes to complete. For additional information, please contact [bibcourse@mla.org](mailto:bibcourse@mla.org).

**Seeking Submissions:** Do you have a favorite way to teach the *MLA International Bibliography*? If so, the MLA wants to showcase your lesson plans and assignments! Please join our group on *MLA Commons* to submit educational materials for inclusion in our online repository: [mla.hcommons.org/groups/bibliographic-instruction-materials-group/](http://mla.hcommons.org/groups/bibliographic-instruction-materials-group/).

Work submitted to *MLA Commons* can be published with or without a Creative Commons license and will be assigned a digital object identifier (DOI), which functions as a permanent record of authorship.



## A Letter to LES

While I intend to continue my membership in LES in the coming years, this short piece is to express my appreciation and gratitude for the years I've been a member of LES and enjoyed the community and camaraderie of my fellow LES librarians. I will retire in mid-August with mixed feelings—a sense of loss for a time, a career, and a set of colleagues I've enjoyed for decades and a sense of adventure as I move forward to a new phase of my life.

I participated actively in LES for many years—on committees (many with or under the leadership of David Oberhelman, whom I miss more than I can say); in email exchanges about everything from how we continue to help our institutions continue to value the humanities to the most esoteric questions that someone somewhere in LES knows how to answer; in wonderful programs that many enjoyed at ALA or virtually, in more recent years; and in social gatherings that offered me the pleasure of meeting old friends and making new ones.

Thank you for your many years of gifts.

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## Call for Reviewers —Choice/ACRL core bibliography

*Resources for College Libraries* (RCL), the Choice/ACRL bibliography of essential titles for undergraduate teaching and research, seeks experienced subject librarians to serve as peer reviewers in the RCL history and interdisciplinary studies disciplines, including the following subjects that may be of particular interest to LES members: African American Studies; American Studies; Asian American Studies; Film Studies; Gender Studies; GLBT Studies; Latino Studies; Medieval Studies; Native American Studies; Renaissance Studies; Urban Studies; and Victorian Studies.

If you are interested in serving as a peer reviewer, please submit a brief description of your relevant background, along with your CV to Anne Doherty ([adoherty@ala-choice.org](mailto:adoherty@ala-choice.org)), RCL Project Editor. Preference will be given to those who apply by June 1, 2018. Learn more about RCL at: <http://www.choice360.org/products/rcl>.



## ACRL/LES Working Group to Update the Research Competency Standards: Update

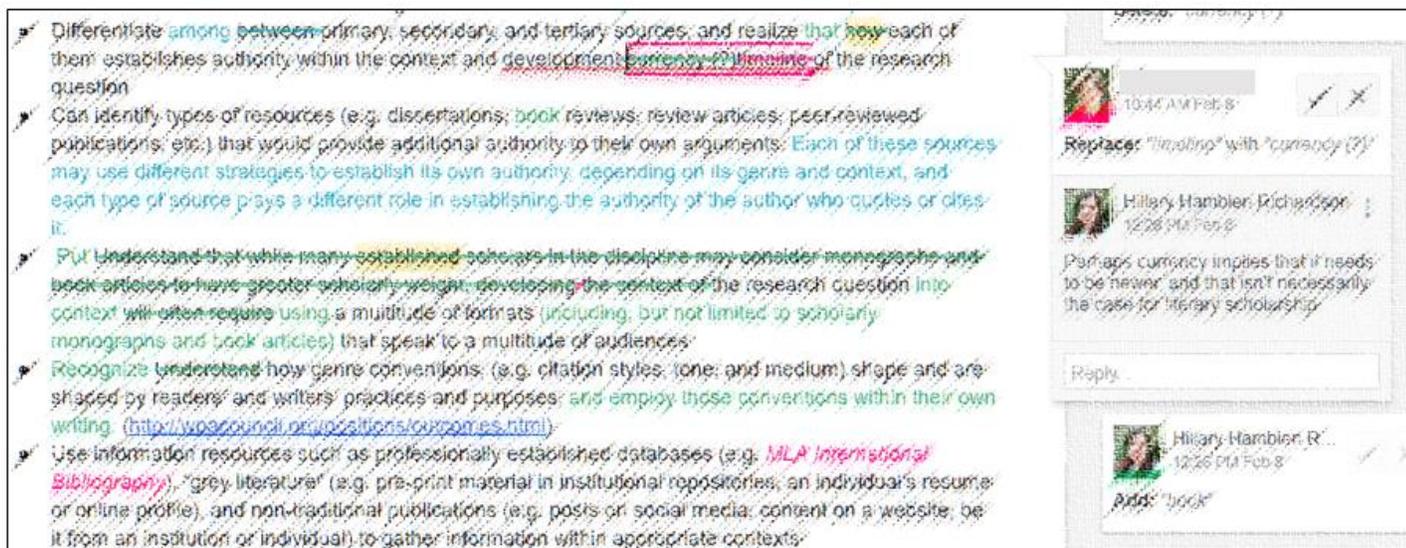
“Liminality” is a key concept embedded in the idea of threshold concepts, those ideas that are essential to the ever-present ACRL Framework for Information Literacy. Liminality, as the esteemed *Threshold Concept* authors Meyer and Land define it, equates to “a suspended state of partial understanding, or ‘stuck place’” (Meyer, Land, and Baillie, 2010). A liminal space itself is defined as a threshold: a space that does not fully occupy the encounter or the transformation, but an in-between, ambiguous space.

In 2016, LES created a working group (ACRL/LES, 2018) to examine and revise its 2007 “Research Competency Guidelines for Literatures in English,” which was based on the ACRL Information Literacy Standards. Even though these Standards were sunsetted, and the Framework for Information Literacy ostensibly took their place, the guidelines, and those that were tasked with revising them, also inhabited a liminal space between the still-relevant language of the Standards and the new conceptual (challenge to) structure of the Framework. Therefore, most of the early discussions within the working group took on a practical nature; how should we structure this new document? Do we keep the framing statements and swap out the middle for a structure that more resembles the new document? Do we take on a more narrative form? Or should we try something altogether new? Structure, for a period of time, became one of our “stuck places” in the early stages of re-thinking this document. One way we answered this question was to think about who the audience of the revised document would be. The 2007 document purports to be for librarians, students, and faculty; however, in listening to the conversations about learning objectives and assessment among our teaching librarian colleagues, we decided to think about how subject librarians would be interested in using the document to create curricula for information literacy instruction. This led us to the decision to mirror the frameworks’ structure of knowledge practices and dispositions, using language that would (hopefully) translate to curricular objectives.

The idea of liminality has played (and continues to play) a large part in the revision of the research competency guidelines, not just because we are still in a liminal space in our profession, but also because literary scholarship itself inhabits an ambiguous space between the printed text and the digital. As we draft the documents, we have to reexamine our own teaching practices and interactions with both students and faculty. What are the “stuck places” that come from inhabiting this in-between space? What are the obstacles to accessing, using, and creating information in this nebulous landscape of literary scholarship? Additionally, how do continually emerging schools of thought, such as scholarly communications, digital humanities, and non-traditional forums of publication, impact the way we navigate through this landscape? To help with this, we’ve been examining other disciplines with similar and overlapping foundations, namely journalism, creative writing, rhetoric and composition, and even history, to an extent. Using these resources, their guidelines (and documents about how those guidelines were formed), and our own reflections, we are crafting knowledge practices and dispositions that address each concept in the Information Literacy Standards. Furthermore, other librarians who are undergoing this process have already forged a path that we have gratefully been able to follow, creating resources and checklists that the Information Literacy Frameworks and Standards Committee have so thoughtfully collected in one place (ILFSC, 2018). To realize we are not alone in this intellectual process has been reassuring, if not key to our forward progress.

At the current moment, we are drafting and workshoping introductions, knowledge practices, and dispositions in meetings each month. Members of the working group have graciously volunteered to write and co-write one draft a month, and even more graciously allowed the rest of the group to make live edits (via Google Documents) to those drafts in front of them. Having ten committee members co-editing a document at once is a fun, albeit challenging, visual experience.

Figure 1: An obscured screenshot of our draft of Authority is Constructed and Contextual, complete with revisions and comments



As this academic year winds down to a close, we aim to have one draft per frame to rehash before eventually sharing with our colleagues in the Literatures in English Section for comment, and subsequently with instruction librarians and English faculty who have interacted in some way with the Information Literacy Framework. Here's to a productive year!

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## Remembering David Oberhelman

I attended David Oberhelman's funeral in January, just a few weeks after I'd been on a panel with him at MLA 2018 in New York City. It was a sad affair, and not only in the way that most funerals induce feelings of sorrow. The chapel was filled almost to capacity with friends and colleagues. There were many flowers, including a lovely bouquet sent by Kathleen Kluegel on behalf of LES and a huge wreath in Oklahoma State University orange. No, the service was sad because so few speakers seemed to know David. People knew things *about* him, but they didn't *know* him.

The pastor delivering the eulogy had exactly three things to say about David: he loved his parents and called them every night; he loved his cats; and he was kind. He himself had never met the deceased, but everyone said he was kind, loved cats, and called his dad every night. Oh, he loved those cats! And can you imagine, he called his dad *every* night! And he was so, so kind! In a different context I might have yelled at the guy to shut up already, if he was just going to say the same thing over and over.

David's father was too ill to travel, but his older (and only) brother was there. He spoke about the nine-year age gap between them, and how they weren't close. They didn't have anything in common. He only saw David at major holidays. He wished he'd gotten to know him better. So that was sad.

A couple of other people spoke who actually *were* close to David: an old roommate and a current friend. Their memories and stories about a shared love of opera, his thoughtful gifts, or his regular Saturday pop culture TV binge-watching date provided a bit more insight into David.

I've known David as long as I've been a librarian, I think, through LES. We worked on several committees together and shared a panel or two. He talked me down from a metaphorical ledge when I didn't know what to present in an MLA session. I talked him off one when he didn't think he could write a good chapter for the DH book.

When I was LES vice-chair and making committee appointments, I saw that David had volunteered for every committee. I'd have a two-Xanax-worthy meltdown over some committee issue; David would just make it work—without complaint. We had a pre-panel meeting at MLA in January on the coldest, nastiest, snowy NYC day, and David brought bagels from across town because he rarely said no to any request. And he always came through.

I'm not a part of the Mythopoeic Society/Tolkien/Popular Culture Association crowd, but from a mutual friend I can glean that he was just as involved with those groups as he was with LES, if not more so.

Apart from his association work, I know almost nothing about David. I know nothing about his childhood or his family, except that both parents taught Spanish. I don't know if he ever had any romantic involvement. I don't know what kind of car he drove. Apparently, he had some heart trouble; I didn't know about that, either. I do know the names of his two cats: Ginger and Nutmeg.

I think at his core David was a very reserved person. Whereas I never met a foul word I didn't like, I think I heard David curse once, during a conversation about the current president. I never heard him gossip. He always seemed reluctant to say something negative about anyone. I'd rant about my library admins and all of their dumb decisions, and he'd respond with a cautious, vague acknowledgment that similar nonsense was taking place at OSU. It took something special to get David to slag anyone or anything. I think he took that whole "if you can't say anything nice, don't say anything" business seriously.

So, I suppose, ultimately, I didn't know David much better than did that pastor. But I know it is fair to say that David loved his cats and his parents and that he was kind. And kindness is always in short supply, and in shorter supply without David.

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# RBMS 2018 CONVERGENCE JUNE 19-22 NEW ORLEANS, LA

**RBMS 2018 Conference – Early Bird deadline May 18!**

Convergence

New Orleans, LA

Tuesday, June 19, 2018 – Friday, June 22, 2018

New Orleans is a hotbed of convergences, ones so powerful that its lineage includes a dish as delightful as gumbo and a storm as destructive as Hurricane Katrina. This conference will focus on the idea of convergences including our field's preparedness for increasing environmental vulnerabilities, our readiness for the inclusion of different people and cultures in our outreach and leadership, and, finally, our willingness to democratize all of our materials. Early registration rates end May 18!

<http://conference.rbms.info/2018/>



## **Report from the 2018 Modern Language Association Convention**

On a cold January day in New York, with no hint of the storm to come, I arrived in Manhattan for the 2018 Modern Language Association Convention. That night, continuing into Thursday, the first day of the convention, was a major winter storm, stranding many and preventing a large number of members from attending the convention. People got creative. Not only were some papers (including a moderator's response) read by others but also some presenters Skyped in.

The program offered by the Libraries & Research Forum was similarly affected by the weather as only one set of speakers were able to present their collaboration introducing students to special collections at Harvard over the course of a summer-long internship-style program. The discussion was lively and both librarians and faculty in attendance asked the speakers and each other of ways that such programs could be adapted for other locations and circumstances. One of the interesting suggestions was that of a term-long class to give students credit for participating and to reward their work on projects with a grade.

The MLAIB team gave a session on the MLAIB, including the work that the MLA is doing with ORCID identifiers. There was also a presentation and discussion of the tutorials and subject-based modules that the MLA has put into place for individual learning or for faculty members to ask students to do outside of class. They may be

found at <http://mla.org/bibtutorials>. The four subject-based modules are on rhetoric and composition; linguistics; folklore; and film, television, and radio.

A related panel was “MLA International Bibliography as an Active Archive: Knowledge Creation for the Twenty-First Century.” David Oberhelman gave an excellent overview of the history of the MLAIB, from 1910 to the present day, and talked about some of the patterns that he saw in the MLA over time: a shift to more international coverage, a rise of related fields of study, and an emphasis on precision indexing. Liorah Golomb compared the MLAIB’s different interfaces and discussed how they contribute to one’s experience of using the database. Finally, Wendell Cox looked at how one can use the MLAIB as a corpus of data, using the term “Digital Humanities” as an example.

Another interesting panel was the presentation on the current state of Mellon-grant projects dealing with peer-reviewed humanities publishing, primarily monographs: Fulcrum, Manifold, Enhanced Networked Monograph Project, and Vega. Key points raised, in addition to specifics dealing with each project, were that these are projects meant to deal with static works capable (and desirable) of being preserved. Each has library partners as well as university press partners (Minnesota University Press is heavily invested, in more than one project) and I look forward to seeing the final results of these collaborations.

The primary theme I noticed this year at the conference had to do with reaching out to and into communities and how to become active partners within one’s communities – the plural is important as it was frequently noted that we are part of many communities and “going out into the community” is a dangerous concept. These thoughts resonated with me on many levels as speakers talked about needing to listen to communities when building programs so as to build programs that are wanted and needed, even if they aren’t initially the programs that the organization necessarily initially has in mind. Digital activism was a related and important topic, included in such panels is “Digital Humanism in Practice” and “Activism in the Humanities: Digital Projects for Public Engagement.”

The presidential theme for 2019 is “Textual Transactions” (<https://news.mla.hcommons.org/2017/12/28/2019-presidential-theme-textual-transactions/>).

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# Big Easy RoadShow Assessment in Action

## **ACRL Preconference at 2018 ALA Annual Conference: Big Easy RoadShow**

Join ACRL in New Orleans for the full-day preconference *Assessment in Action: Demonstrating and Communicating Library Contributions to Student Learning and Success*, an ACRL RoadShow offered in conjunction with the 2018 ALA Annual Conference on Friday, June 22, 2018.

Higher education institutions of all types are facing intensified attention to assessment and accountability issues. Academic libraries are increasingly connecting with colleagues and campus stakeholders to design and implement assessment that documents their contributions to institutional priorities. In this day-long preconference on strategic and sustainable assessment, participants will identify institutional priorities and campus partners, design an assessment project grounded in action research, and prepare a plan for communicating the project results. This preconference is based on the highly successful [ACRL Assessment in Action program](#) curriculum.

Complete details, including a full program description, learning outcomes, and registration materials, are available [online](#).



## Biblio-Throwback!

*[In the Fall 2009 issue of Biblio-Notes, David Oberhelman writes about LES's field trip to the University of Chicago during the 2009 ALA Conference and Exhibition. This passage communicates his deep passion for literature and is a reminder of just how sorely he will be missed:]*

*"We also got to see and even touch (!!) some of their treasures they have used in instruction ranging from a mid-fifteenth-century vellum codex of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, a 1667 first edition of Milton's Paradise Lost, a privately printed chapbook of Edgar Allen Poe's Tamerlane, the most expensive single acquisition in the history of the University of Chicago Library, the first British edition of Melville's Moby-Dick (which was actually published before the first American edition because of British copyright laws), typescripts of T. S. Eliot's 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,' important literary magazines such as Fire!!, the landmark publication from the Harlem Renaissance, and correspondence and other selections from the archives of Poetry magazine among many other rarities. Being literature librarians, we loved having time to examine these unique items and share ideas for how the items could be used in training sessions for our faculty and students back home."*



## Member News

**Laura Braunstein**, the Digital Humanities Librarian at Dartmouth College (and Past-Chairperson of LES) was the subject of a brief feature (titled "Who Made My Puzzle?: Laura Braunstein") in *The New York Times* about her foray into crossword puzzle authorship. The piece can be found here: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/19/crosswords/who-made-my-puzzle-laura-braunstein.html>.

**Mark Dahlquist** was hired as a Humanities and Social Sciences Librarian at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. An Assistant Librarian, he is liaison to the departments of English and Media, Journalism and Film.

**David Oberhelman**, the W.P. Wood Professor of Library Service at Oklahoma State University and former LES Secretary and Member-at-Large, passed away at the age of 52 on January 25,. David was the author of one book, *Dickens in Bedlam: Madness and Restraint in His Fiction* (1995, York Press), and the co-editor of another, *The Intersection of Fantasy and Native America: From H.P. Lovecraft to Leslie Marmon Silko* (2009, co-edited with Amy H. Sturgis, The Mythopoeic Press). More recently, he wrote or co-wrote two book chapters, "OkstateShakespeare: Bringing Special Collections and Digital Humanities into the Undergraduate Classroom" (2016, with Andrew Wadoski and Sarah Coates) and "Distant Reading, Computational Stylistics, and Corpus Linguistics: The Critical Theory of Digital Humanities for Literature Subject Librarians" (2015). His obituary can be read at <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/lubbockonline/obituary.aspx?n=david-dean-oberhelman&pid=188025050>.



## The End of the Ink: All Good Things Must Come to an End

Since the Fall 2015 issue, I have served as an editor of *Biblio-Notes*. In that first year, I co-edited the newsletter with Ashley Ireland, who is currently the Dean of Libraries at Murray State University. I have served as the sole editor since. The experience has been very rewarding and has given me first-hand access to the innovative projects and professional development work that humanities and literature librarians have been working on in colleges and universities across the United States for the last two-and-a-half years. The librarians who have appeared in the pages of the newsletter over that time are all-stars: Arthur “A.J.” Boston, Richard Bleiler, Laura Braunstein, Nancy Foasberg, John Glover, Liorah Golomb, Harriett Green, Arianne Hartsell-Gundy, Robin Imhof, Susannah Kopecky, Piper Martin, Mantra Roy, Amanda Rust, Emily Spunaugle, Erin Vonnahme, Sarah Wenzel, and Abby Yochelson. It has been a pleasure working with my peers on these pieces and getting to know a little bit more about what you do.

The previous editor, John Glover, started a column in *Biblio-Notes* which first appeared in the Spring 2014 issue (#63) titled “The End of the Ink” that closes out every issue. Ashley and I decided to keep this feature. Looking back at my contributions over the last couple of years, I’m struck by how they chart my growth as a librarian, as I was only two years out of library school when I took over the reigns of *Biblio-Notes*. I hope this doesn’t just seem interesting to me :)

This is the part of the piece where I solicit calls for a new editor of *Biblio-Notes*! It is a fun endeavor and will put you in touch with plenty of great librarians. If you have any interest, drop me a line. (My email address can be found below.)

I look forward to seeing everybody in New Orleans!

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### Editorial information

*Biblio-Notes* is a biannual electronic publication of the Literatures in English section of the Association of College & Research Libraries, a division of the American Library Association. To submit articles, photos, announcements or news items, please contact the newsletter editor, Brian Flota, at [flotabc@jmu.edu](mailto:flotabc@jmu.edu).

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