The onset of spring and the aftermath of another great AkLA conference always get me itching for action: What can I do to raise the bar professionally for myself and what can I do to make the Alaska Library Association stronger for all of us? Where are my strengths and interests needed most and how can I make a positive difference? As you may have gathered at our general membership meeting and from the flurry of emails from our tireless Advocacy Committee, we are standing at the edge of a rather tenuous time for our state, our association, and our libraries. Here are just a few ways that you help us build a stronger association and a stronger future:

* **Follow the Lead:** When you see those messages from the Advocacy Committee calling for action, don’t wait! The latest update from Juneau is that funding for Online with Libraries (OWL) still has not been added back into the state budget. We are collaborating with our champions in the House to get that funding written back into the budget either as a must-have priority for the Minority members or as a part of the capital budget.
(President's Letter - Cont. from pg. 1)

* **Step Up to the Plate:** There are several committees and roundtables that are still in need of leadership. If you have a passion for Social Media, Civic Engagement, Authors to Alaska, Collection Development, or the Young Reader’s Choice Award, we want to get you connected and involved! The Alaska Library Association offers a wide range of interesting and engaging services for libraries and librarians around the state, but if nobody steps up to keep these services vital and active they will go away. For more information take a look at the AkLA Handbook online at akla.org.

* **Boost the Signal:** Are you still riding the high of the last successful program you put on at your library? Is your committee, roundtable, or chapter undertaking a big project that you want more input on? Write an article about it for Newspoke! I know I’m not the only closet English major out there just looking for an excuse to write and use all the big words I know. Newspoke, the journal of the Alaska Library Association, is always in need of timely, thought-provoking articles.

* **Reach Out:** If there is an area where you really need more support from your in-state network of librarians, let us know! AkLA is a member-run organization that depends on feedback and interaction from its constituents to function effectively and efficiently. Tell us what’s on your mind! Email me. I really do want to know. ssaxton@ci.wasilla.ak.us

When we are all working together we all become smarter, stronger, and better able to navigate the changing landscape of our state and our profession.

Sara Saxton
AkLA President, 2016-2017
Youth Services Librarian
Wasilla Public Library

What was once known as building a library is now considered hoarding.

SEE THE NEW YORKER, SEPTEMBER 8, 2014 P 84
EARLY LITERACY BEGINS AT BIRTH

Early literacy consists of the skills a child needs to have acquired before he or she is ready to learn to read. They are vocabulary, print awareness, alphabet awareness, phonological awareness, and background knowledge. The best way for young children to get these skills is through reading, writing, singing, talking and playing every day. It’s never too early for adults and caregivers to begin these practices; in fact, they should begin at birth.

Between conception and age three, a child’s brain undergoes an impressive amount of change. At birth, it already has about all of the neurons it will ever have. It doubles in size in the first year, and by age three it has reached 80 percent of its adult volume. In year two, the most dramatic changes involve the brain’s language areas.

These changes correspond to the sudden spike in children’s language abilities—sometimes called the vocabulary explosion—that typically occurs during this period. Often a child’s vocabulary will quadruple between his first and second birthday.

This is a crucial period of growth, and the timing of the experiences of early literacy is crucial in the first three years. Babies are born with 100 billion neurons, but they are not connected. Connections, or synapses, are made through sensory experiences—seeing, smelling, hearing, touching, tasting. These synapses join together to form neural pathways.

Research shows that even before birth, babies respond to language—newborns are hardwired for language. In very early childhood, predictors for reading preparedness begin to show up. By 18 months, language gaps show up in developmental test scores based on socio-economic class. At 2 ½ years, experts can predict reading readiness that will be achieved at age 5. Children who fall behind in verbal-language and literacy-skills development in the years before formal schooling are less likely to be successful beginning readers; and their achievement lag often persists throughout the primary grades and beyond, even impacting high school graduation rates.

Encourage your patrons who are parents of babies and toddlers to read, write, sing, talk and play with their children every day. The sooner they start, the better prepared their children will be to begin reading when the time comes. For an extensive set of links about early literacy, check out: http://www.earlylit.net/handouts-and-activities/.

Linda Klein
Ready to Read Resource Center
kleinlm@muni.org
Cordova Celebrates Literature

Cordova had two successful literary events in April. First, the Cordova Public Library had a “Wonderland Family Fun Night” to celebrate the 150th anniversary of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. Our Education Room became a tea party with finger sandwiches, tea bag cookies, lots of bright decorations, and a doorway where you had to climb through the gossamer.

Our wonderful Mad Hatter helped children with croquet, which most had never tried before. There was also bowling with pins showing characters from the book. Children could make crowns to wear and White Rabbit pocket watches. Face painting was the busiest event, with Cheshire Cat grins being the most popular choice. Eight volunteers, including four teens, helped the staff make this event run smoothly.

“Poetry Night” was the second literary evening, and it was organized by the Friends of Cordova Public Library. It was held in the coffee shop run by a local church, where a stage with a microphone was set up for poets of all ages. People could read or recite their original work, bring a favorite poem, or pick poems from many different types of poetry collections that were available.

Twelve brave souls stood on the stage and interpreted poetry of all sorts. Several people came up numerous times, as they kept finding more gems to share. Since Cordova is a fishing town, many of the poems were about the life of fishermen and net menders.

This was the second “Poetry Night” put on by the Friends, and they plan to continue it every year. Sharing poetry is not something that is done too frequently anymore, but it is deeply satisfying for both the performer and the audience.

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*Face painting*

(Cont. on pg. 5)
The Mad Hatter plays Croquet

Poetry Night
Only one review was submitted this time. We know that a group of librarians must have read some interesting books within the last three months! Please send your 4 or 5 lines of thought to Larry Hibpshman (ILbombastico@yahoo.com) for inclusion in the next issue of *Newspoke*. Inquiring minds want to know!

_Villa Air-Bel. World War II._

_Villa Air-Bel_ throws the reader into dark, terrifying times of the Wehrmacht in France, 1940. Centered around a dilapidated villa outside Marseilles, a small group of Americans and others risked their own lives to help writers, artists, philosophers, critics (including Chagall, Ernst, Breton, Duchamp) on Hitler’s enemy list get out of Europe.

This little-known true story paints shockingly clear pictures of overwhelming challenges, government treachery, and what a few poorly funded individuals accomplished. Similarities to what happened then and various occurrences happening today become breath-takingly obvious.

_Christine Thorsrud_
_Kachemak Bay Campus, UA_

_Midnight Sun, Arctic Moon._
_Mapping the Wild Heart of Alaska. Mary Albanese._

This excellent book recounts Mary Albanese’s 10-year experience, first as a graduate student, then a working field geocartographer. She is the world authority on one set of Interior Alaskan pyroclasts, and her book provides insight on a field seldom engaged by historians. It covers a number of unusual topics, such as: Why anyone would chose to come to Alaska without previous knowledge or

*(Book Buzz - Cont. on pg. 7)*

Frank Nyman, an authority on water engineering systems, was a partner in Tryck Nyman Engineering, a major Anchorage firm that carried out significant construction projects throughout Alaska.

This is Mr. Nyman’s self-published account of his years in Alaska, 1950-2000. The book is more or less a year by year journal of professional and family activities and isn’t easy reading.

But it is rewarding for its detail and its honesty. The cover features a Gary Gantz painting, Two Old Coots, that shows Mr. Nyman clearing brush with a small, elderly tractor.

Experience? Spousal conflict about remaining here. The strength of cooperation and adaptability; conquering fear. Professional-bureaucratic infighting; geo-economics; high occupational mortality. Gender discrimination. Depression; suicide; loss of a child. Alaska is a complex place that affects people in many different ways. This book accepts and reflects that reality.
Newspoke Survey

A *Newspoke* committee member recently surveyed the Alaska Library Association, asking about improvement/changes in *Newspoke*, newsletter of the Alaska Library Assn.

As noted in the past, and survey confirms, *Newspoke* would certainly be improved by having someone “in the midst of librarial activities” gathering material or even a new editor with that qualification.

*Newspoke* survey:
Across all types of library workers, the top 15 most-preferred content types were:
1. Alaskan libraries or librarians in the news (83.0%)
2. Professional training: announcements of recommendations (57.4%)
3. Conference: Past conf. discussion/reports; upcoming conference discussion/publicity (46.8%)
4. Personnel changes: new hires, departures, transfers, retirements (42.6%)

Much of the above is already covered in the *Friday Bulletin* or AkLA Message List. I’ve hesitated to duplicate, but would welcome anything submitted…

It was suggested that the editor name specific subjects for upcoming issues, and write-ups on that topic could be submitted. That’s been tried in the past but generated little response. Larry Hibpshman, in this issue’s *Book Buzz*, page 6, has extended an invitation for submissions: “books that deal with individuals’ personal experiences that form their views of what Alaska is and why it’s worth living here.”

Which, of course, opens wide the portal: What’s happening in your library and you with it? The present, history, future? AkLA involvement? Why did you join AkLA? Why not?

Ending publication of *Newspoke* is an option. Some of the “oldies” folk would like to see it continue for the sake of “tradition” and history-keeping. If anyone is interested in taking over editorship, let me (Loretta aflma@gci.net) know (or Paul Adasiak pfadasiak@alaska.edu). Otherwise, *Newspoke* may continue along as is for a bit; without submissions, it will cease.
Bookends
Not accepted: paid advertising; material intended to “sell; make a profit” rather than to “inform.” Submissions viewed as advertisements, unless item is of particular interest to Alaska, Alaskan patrons, libraries, or is submitted by an AkLA member.

Accepted: Alaskana—books, book reviews, or articles relating to, or of interest to, Alaskan librarians and/or their patrons. Informative material related to libraries and librarianship, especially in regard to Alaska.

Most anything submitted by AkLA members—reasonably tasteful, of appropriate length, “decently” well-written; author is willing to submit to possible editorial changes. This may include length, perhaps spellings, downsizing of convoluted sentences... (Editor will make every effort to let the author know of, and pre-approve, any significant changes before the material is published in Newspoke.)

Other—determined on an individual basis by “the committee” (defined as a group of at least three AkLA members).

If the Newspoke editor, or the individual submitting, has questions or concerns about any submission, the matter will be sent on to the Newspoke Committee.
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CALENDAR

ALA Annual Conference, Orlando, FL  June 23-28, 2016
ALA Midwinter Meeting, Atlanta, GA  Jan. 20-24, 2017
ACRL At the Helm: Leading Transformation, Baltimore, MD  Mar. 22-25, 2017
Medical Library Assn., Seattle, WA  May 26–31, 2017
ALA Annual Conference, Chicago, IL  June 22-27, 2017