

# Library Lines

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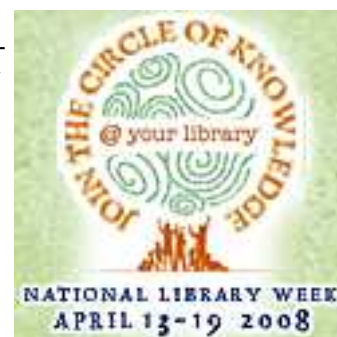
Mary Livermore Library

March 2008

## National Library Week Celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

by Anne H. Coleman and Jean Sexton

This year, 2008, marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of National Library Week. In 1957, a joint committee, comprised of the National Book Committee and the American Library Association, recommended the creation of a national library week. Subsequently, the first National Library Week was observed May 16-22, 1958. The theme for the first commemoration was "Wake Up and Read." One reason for establishing this initiative, it is said, was to counteract the emerging pervasiveness of television viewing during evening hours. This practice was threatening the dominance of reading as a favorite family activity following the dinner hour. The celebration of National Library Week has continued in libraries around the country since 1958. The American Library Association (ALA) became the sole sponsor of the event in 1974. ALA continues in 2008 as the sponsor of National Library Week.



The idea of devoting a week to celebrating libraries had been around for some time. States like Hawaii and California have celebrated National Library Week since 1940. These early supporters decided to select a central theme each year for the celebration. In Hawaii, the 1940 theme was "The Nation's Pacific Outpost Salutes the Nation's Libraries and Honors Our Own Library of Hawaii." Metered mail at this time served as a marvelous venue for advertising National Library Week. The annual slogans were printed on meter stamps and advertised through mail distribution.

Over the years, the slogans have been thought provoking, motivating, and highly supportive of reading. "Wake Up and Read" was used in 1958 and 1959. In 1961, the slogan was "For a Richer, Fuller Life, Read." Other slogans include 1963's "Read – the Fifth Freedom, Enjoy It" and 1983's "Go for It! Use Your Library."

The UNCP Library has joined in the national celebration of National Library Week for many years. Some library staff members can remember various activities from past celebrations. **Jean Sexton**, Coordinator of Cataloging Services, can remember a raffle being held during the week. Each time a student checked out a book, his/her name was entered in the raffle. At the end of the week, the names were drawn and prizes were awarded to the chosen students. **Lillian Brewington**, Special Collections Librarian, can remember library staff bringing in pot-luck dishes and celebrating and feasting together. Of course they all had to discuss the latest books during the feasting. Campus authors have been honored during National Library Week for over two decades.

The first issue of *Library Lines*, published in 1992, reported on the very first annual banquet held during National Library Week at UNCP. A hot dog sale was also used as a fundraiser. One of the more memorable events was held in 1998. That year, catalog cards were sent to authors for signatures, and those that were returned were auctioned off to raise money for the Friends of the Library.

**Dr. Elinor Foster**, who first joined the library staff as Director in 1989, says that National Library Week has been celebrated each year during her administration. Dr. Foster says, "Libraries are vitally important because every day libraries in big cities and small towns, in colleges and universities, in schools, and in businesses, help sustain and invigorate their communities. At the Mary Livermore Library, people of all backgrounds come together for meetings, lectures, and programs; to do research with the assistance of trained professionals; or to get help with class assignments and other needs. All of these activities make the Library a place with a presence that is valued like no other on the UNCP campus."

(National Library Week continued from cover)

**June Power**, Access Services/Reference Librarian, says, "People are hungry for information but are often overwhelmed with the amount of information they find." She further states, "Librarians are ideally suited to teach people how to find, analyze, and use information. In libraries, patrons have access to experts who can help them navigate the information overload. The expertise of librarians is a resource you can't buy anywhere else, and at the Library, it's available free of charge."

In 2008, National Library Week will be celebrated April 13-19, and the national theme is "Join the Circle of Knowledge @ Your Library." National Library Week is a time to celebrate the contributions of libraries, librarians, and library workers nationwide. It is also a perfect time to consider how you can join the circle of knowledge at your local library.

The Mary Livermore Library, in 2008, as in years past, will be celebrating National Library Week by sponsoring a Poetry/Short Prose Contest and a book sale. The contest provides an opportunity for UNCP students, faculty, and staff; local high school students; and community members to share their original compositions. Winners receive monetary prizes, certificates, and the publication of their winning entries. The money for the prizes is provided by the UNCP Friends of the Library and Kiwanis of Robeson. The Kiwanis organization has co-sponsored the contest for several years, usually donating the prize money for the first place winner in the high school category. This year, however, Kiwanis of Robeson is donating \$450 to cover the prizes for all of the high school winners. The contest runs through the month of February and prizes are awarded to contest winners during National Library Week.

For more information about the contest, visit the Library or check the Library's website at [www.uncp.edu/library](http://www.uncp.edu/library). A book sale will also be held in the Library April 14-18, 2008. The sale is open to UNCP faculty, staff, students, and Friends of the Library (FOL) members.

We invite you to "Join Us in the Circle of knowledge @ the Mary Livermore Library" any time.