

ALSCConnect

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Officially Speaking

ALSC Rewards

As my term as ALSC President comes to a close, I'd like to share some thoughts about what ALSC means to me. I joined ALA and ALSC in 1975 because I recognized that professional activity would help me become a better librarian and provide direct benefits to my library. Indeed, some of the best services and programs my library has developed have come from ideas gleaned from ALSC. Over the years I have continued my professional education at regional workshops, conference programs, ALSC institutes, and other ALSC-sponsored venues where topics might range from library management, creative use of space, and outcomes-based planning to family literacy, best books for children, and finding the best on the Web. In addition, the many ALSC publications—including our new *Children and Libraries* journal and *ALSCConnect* newsletter—and the member contributions to the various ALSC electronic discussion lists provide more source material for my work. I can swap ideas and discuss issues, problems, and solutions with colleagues, to mutual benefit.

Equally important is the opportunity that ALSC gives me to contribute to my profession, a responsibility I take seriously. Over my three-decades-long career I have been mentored by many talented librarians and have used so many ideas from articles, publications, programs, and seminars in my work that I feel compelled to offer the same to others. By serving on ALSC committees and contributing to programs and publications, I believe that I can make a difference in children's library service across the country.

Another significant benefit is that I have formed fast friendships, both professional and personal. I've met kindred spirits, people with whom I enjoy spending time and discussing issues, ideas, books, and more. These friendships have been long-lasting and are the most valuable personal benefit of my involvement in ALSC.

The very best part of my ALSC involvement throughout the years, but especially this year, has been working with all of you. You are the ones who share your passion for the profession as you recruit and mentor new librarians and enthusiastically provide source materials for their work. You are the ones who eagerly provide children with books, information, resources, programs, and activities. You are the ones with the skills and dedication to make connections with children, their families and caregivers, and the community at large. It has been an honor and a pleasure to work with such a great team of members and elected leaders. You serve ALSC well.

This year has been enormously rewarding for me. In my annual report and farewell address, published in *Children and Libraries* later this summer, I'll write about the year's activities, partnerships, new initiatives, and the ways we—ALSC members, elected leaders, and dedicated office staff—built on the work of our predecessors. Keeping this work moving far into the future requires a commitment of time from each of us. We can help ALSC build on its extraordinary legacy and become even more influential by recruiting new members, encouraging them to get involved and reap the benefits of ALSC membership.

We ALSC members receive great return on our dues dollars. Sometimes the benefits do not directly accrue to us, sometimes they accrue to others working in libraries not like our own, or to prospective members of the profession who will begin working long after we have retired. The more time, energy, and enthusiasm we invest, the more we earn in terms of ideas, education, networking opportunities, friendships, and better service to the children in our libraries. And that's what ALSC really means to me.—*Cynthia K. Richey, ALSC President*

Ready to Read

We were outraged! Margaret Mary Kimmel, Past-President of ALSC (1983), library educator and storyteller extraordinaire, had just emphatically advised an audience of children's librarians that if we thought that we could single-handedly, during a weekly half-hour storytime, affect a child's socialization or literacy development to any significant degree, we were sadly mistaken! Kimmel (Maggie, to most) emphasized that parents hold the key to all aspects of their children's development. If children's librarians didn't start involving parents in storytimes so they'd learn from our example, library storytimes were doomed to be nice, but educationally irrelevant experiences.

How could this be? Time-honored library tradition held that children must be developmentally able to participate in storytime without adult accompaniment. Parents got in our way! Their whispered conversations were disruptive. Children took their cues from Mom rather than from us, the professionals! Maggie had shaken the foundations of our specialty. Ultimately the audience calmed down, mulled over her advice, and began to discuss the implications. Many children's librarians recognized the wisdom of her words, and in some places gradual changes to involve parents and caregivers in library programs for preschoolers began to take place.

Now more than twenty years later, children's librarians are at another crossroad in service development. Educators, policy makers, elected officials, and entire communities agonize over many children's lack of school readiness. Brain development research in the last ten years has proliferated and the data is irrefutable: Children who don't have rich literacy and learning experiences before starting school will, in most cases, never be successful readers. The educational, social, and economic implications for the United States when children don't succeed in school are enormous. Yet it's been difficult for librarians to articulate our unique role in children's early literacy development as well as our role in teaching parents and caregivers how to incorporate literacy activities into children's daily routines. The hard data conventional wisdom demands to validate that role outside our profession simply hasn't been available.

The recent publication of the Public Library Association (PLA)/ALSC Every Child Ready to Read @ your library research provides preliminary data that bolsters libraries' place in the nation's early literacy development infrastructure. This research is groundbreaking, but the project's background is even more revolutionary. It was begun by Maryland librarians whose access to researchers at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development was as easy as a phone call and follow-up meeting with literacy guru, Reid Lyon. He was intrigued at the idea of librarians contributing to early literacy development, but cautioned that the lack of valid research on the outcomes of library programs was an impediment to libraries being taken seriously in school readiness initiatives.

The Maryland activists took the germ of a research proposal to the PLA board, which embraced it enthusiastically, but realized that any research related to children and libraries needed to be conducted in collaboration with ALSC. An equally enthusiastic ALSC board immediately agreed to the partnership. A joint PLA/ALSC task force with co-chairs representing each division was appointed, with both divisions contributing equal financial resources. The rest is history. Read all about it at www.ala.org/everychild.

What's so revolutionary about this? ALA is a wonderful organization. Its staff and members are passionately committed to the library profession. However, on occasion, divisions become internally focused. Organizational turf issues sometimes prevent developing effective interdivisional partnerships based on common priorities. Through Every Child Ready to Read @ your library, PLA and ALSC members and staff have transitioned into a new era of comfortable cooperation, sharing the goal to support valid research leading to the development of effective training materials for library staff throughout the country. This glorious revolution shows that ALA divisions working together can have an enormous impact on professional development that will lead to positive outcomes for children and the adults in their lives.— *Gretchen Wronka, ALSC Vice President*

Thanks, Friends

Many thanks to our new and continuing Friends of ALSC, and special thanks to all those who made donations in memory of William Morris, a true friend of children's librarians. Through your support, ALSC is able to continue and expand upon its programs and initiatives critical to children's librarians and their professional development.

The following list acknowledges Friends who have contributed since the last list was printed in the September 2003 ALSCConnect. For more information about the campaign, visit www.ala.org/alsc and click on the "Support ALSC" link at the top, right of the ALSC banner.

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Getting Together

Booklist Forum

The Booklist Forum will be held on Friday, June 25, 8–10 p.m. in Orlando. The subject is fantasy, and speakers include Nancy Farmer, Tamora Pierce, Jane Yolen, and Sharyn November. For more information, contact Stephanie Zvirin at atszvirin@ala.org.

Poetry Live!

Save the date and attend ALSC's very first ever Poetry Blast @ ALA Annual Conference in Orlando, Monday, June 28, 5:30–7:30 p.m.

Everyone who loves poetry agrees ... it's best to read great poetry aloud. And who better to read aloud poems for kids than the poets themselves? This year in Orlando you'll have the chance to hear more than a dozen great poets read old favorites and introduce their brand new work.

It will be a great opportunity to relax and listen to some truly wonderful poetry. And do we have a great lineup prepared for you! Our preliminary list of poets include Doug Florian, Helen Frost, Kristine O'Connell George, Nikki Grimes, Lee Bennett Hopkins, Paul Janeczko, Dan Kirk, George Ella Lyon, Tony Mitton, Walter Dean Myers, Willie Perdomo, Marilyn Singer, Charles R. Smith Jr., Allan Wolf, and Jane Yolen.

In addition, we will be introducing each poet and providing context for listeners who may be new to the poets and their work. We also will be developing a small toolkit that we hope to share electronically and in print. Publishers will also be displaying books or promotional materials prepared about the poetry books available as well as poets featured in this event. Hope to see you there!

Plan for Orlando

A complete schedule of ALSC meetings, programs, and other special events is available on the Web site at www.ala.org/alsc, click on "Events & Conferences," and in the spring issue of *Children and Libraries*, which mails in May.

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

Making News

Ilene Abramson, ALSC member and director of children's services at the Los Angeles Public Library, writes a monthly column on the Kids' Reading Room page of the *Los Angeles Times*. Through her articles, which focus on books, library services, and ways in which to use the library, Abramson is able to publicize libraries as fun places to go. She began the column in January with an article on the Newbery and Caldecott Awards.

Her work is featured on the Kids' Reading Room page on the first Thursday of every month. Visit the Los Angeles Times online at www.latimes.com.

Connections

Are you interested in a project that will connect low-income and new immigrant families with your local library? Are you working with children in early childhood programs that need to learn about the free services at their community libraries? Are you always looking for new ways to increase early literacy activities in your communities?

The King County Library System, in partnership with Puget Sound Educational Service District Head Start and the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program, has just completed a two-year project that connects low-income and new immigrant families with their local library, and brings information to these clients about the importance of early literacy activities.

We are excited about our successes: new families getting library cards and visiting their libraries; center staff becoming more aware of library services; interpreters becoming community advocates; many new books in world languages in community libraries; bilingual books in the hands of young children for at-home reading; informational brochures on libraries and early literacy translated into eleven languages; and strengthened partnerships between community agencies helping kids and families.

A manual, or toolkit, for use by child-serving agencies is now available. You will find a summary of the project; information on providing interpreted story times and on purchasing multilingual picture books; outlines for the various training workshops we presented; and text of our translated brochures in eleven languages.

Library and early childhood education staff are invited to review the entire toolkit at www.kcls.org/clc. Contact information for participating staff can be found in appendix A of the toolkit. This project was funded through the Washington State Library as a Library Services and Technology Act Early Learning Demonstration Grant.—Jill Olson, Children Outreach Librarian, King County (Wash.) Library System

Praising Poetry

The winner of the 2004 Lee Bennett Hopkins Poetry Award is Stephen Mitchell for *The Wishing Bone and Other Poems*, illustrated by Tom Pohrt (Candlewick). The award is presented annually to an American poet or anthologist for the most outstanding new book of poetry for children published in the previous year.

Honor awards were given to Diane Ackerman for *Animal Sense*, illustrated by Peter Sís (Knopf); Walter Dean Myers for *Blues Journey*, illustrated by Christopher Myers (Holiday House); Samuel Jay Keyser for *The Pond God and Other Stories*, illustrated by Robert Shetterly (Front Street); and Hope Anita Smith for *The Way a Door Closes*, illustrated by Shane W. Evans (Henry Holt). For more information about the award, visit www.pabook.libraries.psu.edu/activities/hopkins/.

Call for Suggestions

ALSC members are invited to participate in the Newbery Award selection process by submitting titles for consideration. As you read throughout the year, please be on the lookout for books published in 2004 that in your mind meet the Newbery Medal criteria. Award information, including terms, definitions, and criteria, is available on the ALSC Web at www.ala.org/alsc; click on "Awards and Scholarships" and "Literary and Related Awards."

Submit your suggestions, including bibliographic information (author, title, and publisher); a brief explanation as to why you think that the book meets the award criteria; and your name. Send your suggestions to Susan Faust, 49 Heather Ave., San Francisco, CA 94118.

Reading Programs

The fall 2003 issue of the *Journal of Children's Literature* focused on reading incentive programs, such as Accelerated Reader. The issue includes articles on the pros and cons of such programs in relation to the appreciation of children's literature, as well as editorials from librarians, teachers, and parents. Copies of the issue are available for \$5 plus \$2 postage and handling. To order a copy, send a check, payable to The Children's Literature Assembly, to Patricia Austin, University of New Orleans, Dept. of Curriculum and Instruction, New Orleans, LA 70148.

Committee Work

Are you on an ALSC Committee? Do you wonder why your function statement doesn't match what your committee actually does? You have the power to fix it. Make it match reality. The Organization and Bylaws Committee will help your committee do just that. For more information, ask your chairperson to contact O&B chairperson Lisa Falk.

Resource Available

The Stuttering Foundation of America offers a new brochure "Stuttering and the Bilingual Child," which explores the added dimensions of treating a bilingual child who stutters. How does bilingual learning affect fluency? Can adding a second or third language between the ages of three and five cause a child's stuttering to become more severe? Answers to such questions as well as "Ten Tips for Talking with Your Child" are included in the brochure. A free copy can be downloaded at www.stutteringhelp.org or requested from the foundation at 1-800-992-9392.

Bright Ideas

What's Poppin'?

Multnomah County Library, Portland, Oregon, exhibited original works by the modern master of paper engineering, Robert Sabuda. "Popping Up at the Library" ran February 19 through April 21 at the Central Library's Collins Gallery and was based on an exhibit that the library rented from the National Center for Children's Illustrated Literature in Abilene, Texas. The library offered special tours for school groups that included a story reading, authoritative information on paper engineering, and an art scavenger hunt. Each visiting school group received an educator guide prepared by library staff that extended the experience of viewing the artist's work and a complimentary copy of Sabuda's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* for their classroom. In addition, the library hosted Sabuda on Saturday, March 6. He spoke about his innovative art. At the reception that followed, pop-up lovers viewed the exhibit, purchased books, and had them signed. More information and copies of the educator guide are at www.multcolib.org/kids/exhibit/Sabuda.—Katie O'Dell, Reading Promotions Coordinator, Multnomah County Library

In January and March, librarians, staff, and teen volunteers at the Monroe County Library System in Rochester, New York, attended disability awareness training intended to help them understand and become more sensitive to this population's needs. The training is part of a \$24,150 grant recently awarded to the library system. The grant is funded by the Federal Library Services and Technology Act, awarded to the New York State Library by the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The goal of the Building Bridges project is to provide focused, age-appropriate

library services to children and youth with developmental disabilities. This is being accomplished in five ways: (1) by conducting age appropriate programming; (2) by including children in regular library programming; (3) by showing parents how storytimes and youth programming can reinforce literacy and language skills; (4) by providing librarians and library staff with disability awareness training; and (5) by strengthening collaborations between public libraries, advocacy agencies, and parent groups.

Under the grant, new programs are being developed at the town libraries of Fairport, Greece, Henrietta, and Webster. Each library will offer a Library Card Day, where children with disabilities can take the first step in becoming lifelong library users by signing up for a library card. Other events include Home Alone, where teens will learn the safety skills needed when home alone; a library treasure hunt to help teach the steps needed to check out a book; and Buddy Reading, which will allow children to help other children improve their reading skills. There will be twenty-four new programs developed and offered through Building Bridges.

In Rochester, disability awareness and sensitivity training is made possible through grant money received by The Advocacy Center, an organization that provides resources, support, and information to individuals with disabilities. Libraries do not have to work alone. Collaborating with area agencies, organizations, and parent groups can cut down training expenses and build community bonds.— *Rhonda Miga, Project Consultant, and Carolyn Schuler, Children's Services Consultant, Monroe County Library System/Rochester Public Library*

Star Search

The Los Angeles Public Library (LAPL) is situated in the heart of an entertainment capital. Almost every day, musicians, actors, storytellers, animal trainers, and magicians contact me with offers to work in the branches. My solution to becoming a Hollywood-style booking agent is to invite the entertainers to audition at the central library. Once a year the library hosts a performer showcase and invites entertainers to audition for members of the LAPL Children's Services Advisory Committee. The ten-member committee evaluates the guests to determine if they are suitable for employment. Librarians from all over southern California also are invited to preview performers for activities in their own systems.

The professionals who make the grade are invited back a week later to perform for all seventy LAPL children's librarians. A list of viable performers is then given to the librarians who can choose the people they want for their branch. Funding for these programs is determined through the Library Foundation.

A month after the performer showcase, the librarians are treated to an author and illustrator spotlight. Local authors and illustrators come to the meeting to provide a sample of the programs based on their books. The spotlight allows the librarians to learn about new books, meet talented writers and artists, and select the authors and illustrators that would be successful in their branch programs.— *Ilene Abramson, Director of Children's Services, LAPL*

Fresh Start

In May 2003, a cross-departmental committee at the Columbus Metropolitan Library (CML) met to discuss a membership drive. When research revealed 40 to 50 percent of customers, birth through age seventeen, couldn't use their library cards, the initiative shifted focus and the Fresh Start campaign was born. Rather than push for more library cardholders, CML wanted to help those with blocked cards to use them again.

The committee established a two-pronged approach: (1) put a program in place so youth could clear their cards; and (2) incorporate a prevention component for all new cardholders, including the newly unblocked cardholders.

During the 2003 Summer Reading Club, all CML locations experimented with programs to let youths read off their fines in-house. Staff removed \$8 worth of fines per hour of reading. Those experiences provided the basis for the system-wide Fresh Start campaign that was launched that fall.

After months of planning, the committee unveiled the details of the campaign to the staff. The children's services and circulation staff were trained on the Fresh Start procedure, and postcards were mailed to more than 40,000 homes of those youth with blocked cards. When the customers returned to their branch with their postcards, they were given Read-Off Agreements denoting the amount of reading time needed to remove fines. All overdue items had to be returned before the agreement could be finalized.

The campaign was thirteen weeks long, starting on September 22, 2003. A limited time period was created so that the committee could evaluate the success of the campaign as well as encourage procrastinators.

At this writing, the committee is just beginning the evaluation process. However, the prevention component is in place, complete with a brief video created for children about responsible library membership.— *Beth Riemenschneider, Librarian, Columbus Metropolitan Library*

Join the List

To stay informed, subscribe to the ALSC electronic discussion list. Send the following message to listproc@ala.org:
subscribe ALSC-L [firstname] [lastname]. Leave the subject area blank.

Change of address? Be sure to subscribe under your new e-mail address and unsubscribe from your old address. To unsubscribe, send the following message to listproc@ala.org: unsubscribe ALSC-L. Leave the subject area blank.

ALSC hosts numerous electronic discussion lists that address children's services issues, such as partnerships, preschool services, technology, collection development, and management. Learn more about our lists, including our new digest format, at www.ala.org/alsc. Click on the discussion lists graphic near the bottom of the home page.

Born to Read

ALSC will use its second Carnegie-Whitney Award funds to publish the new Born to Read brochure in Spanish. The brochure should be available by the end of the summer. Born to Read is a literacy project that builds partnerships between librarians and health care providers to reach out to new and expectant parents, and help them raise children who are "born to read." The Carnegie-Whitney Awards, administered by ALA's Publishing Committee, provide grants for the preparation and publication of popular or scholarly reading lists, indexes, and other guides to library resources that are useful to users in all types of libraries.

Literacy Training Kit

A research-based training kit produced by the Public Library Association (PLA) and ALSC as part of the Every Child Ready to Read @ your library project is now available. The kit provides everything a library needs to offer early literacy workshops for parents and caregivers. It includes: a DVD or video demonstrating three workshops (one for babies, toddlers, and preschoolers); four videos for use in the workshops that reinforce content; a Parent Guide to Early Literacy handouts; a poster of early literacy skills; cards for phonological awareness demonstration; a resource notebook; bookmarks; and scripts. For more information about the project or to download the order form, visit www.ala.org/everychild.

NASA @ your library

The NASA @ your library traveling exhibit schedule resumed in April. A total of forty-six libraries will have hosted the exhibit by the end of the tour in July 2005. The interactive exhibit features presentations on topics such as travel to and life in space, a laboratory in space, and the nation's future in space. Part of the program demonstrates the expertise of librarians in selecting excellent books and materials to help children and adults become excited about how space research affects their lives. The exhibit has been made available to libraries through a grant from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and through funding by Apple Computer.

ALSC Voices

ALSC Profile

Dudley Carlson
Retired
Former Manager of Youth Services

Princeton (N.J.) Public Library
ALSC Membership: thirty-five years

Where did you attend library school?

Rutgers University

What attracted you to library service to children?

A passion for books and children, and a fascination with making connections—book to book, book to child. In college, I was seriously ill; a doctor suggested that I forget about teaching and do something “less strenuous.” A wonderful academic librarian introduced the idea of librarianship and made it sound intriguing. From day one, I discovered that it required enormous energy and presented all the challenges of a classroom, with a completely different kind of freedom. I particularly loved the challenge of creating a climate in which all kinds of kids could feel comfortable enough to walk in the door every day because they wanted to be there.

Why did you join ALSC?

I was lucky in working for three libraries (Enoch Pratt, New York Public, and Princeton Public) whose leaders participated and encouraged staff to participate in professional organizations. All three libraries supported my involvement; and the children’s librarians and administrators in Baltimore and New York were great role models for active participation.

On which ALSC committees have you served over the years?

Too many to count. Most have been book evaluation committees. The first was what is now Quicklists Consulting, which gave me great experience gathering books around a theme, something I love. Newbery-Caldecott twice, when it was still one committee, and again chairing the Newbery; Notable Children’s Books, Arbuthnot, Wilder, Batchelder, Nominating, and Distinguished Service.

Which committee service did you enjoy most and why?

Chairing the Newbery Committee in 1985–86 was a very high point in my ALSC life. I love book discussion, and it doesn’t get more intense and articulate than on the awards committees. At that time New Jersey was training librarians in management skills, particularly group process, so I was primed. It was a tremendous learning opportunity for me, and the committee was a fantastic group of dedicated, hard-working people.

How many ALA conferences have you attended?

I skipped Las Vegas in 1973 in order to get married, and I’ve missed one or two others. Conference recharges my battery with the stimulation of new ideas and good programs and the delicious company of good friends.

Is there a particular Newbery/Caldecott Banquet that stands out in your memory?

There’s nothing like the warmth of that huge room full of people gathered to celebrate excellence and books for children. Most vivid for me was 1986, when Patricia MacLachlan won for Sarah, Plain and Tall, and I had chaired the committee. MacLachlan spoke with such warmth and passion about family and writing. I still remember her metaphor about the power of memory: Like the cork in a wine bottle, once taken out, it expands and is hard to put back.

Over the years since you joined, what is the biggest change you see in ALSC?

The greatest change in ALSC itself is that it has grown from a fairly small “sisterhood” into a much more diverse and sophisticated organization. We’re more involved in the wider world; we’re more open in the way we deal with issues such as commercialism and product development; we use research instead of relying on our convictions alone. Yet our fundamental goal is still bringing great books and media to children and helping them find what they need in order to learn and grow. At the same time, we’ve become a real bureaucracy. One of our challenges is to stay focused on our mission and not get lost in minutia.

Who/what is your favorite children’s author/book and why?

An impossible question; there are too many great ones to have favorites. This year I’ve loved Olive’s Ocean, by Kevin Henkes. He has a deep understanding of children’s emotional development, their fragility, and their great resilience. And he writes with enormous craftsmanship. I admire his felicitous choice of words, his ability to draw vivid verbal pictures with no waste, his power to convey a whole rainbow of emotions with great understanding of the child’s point of view. Olive’s Ocean is spare, but it resonates long after you’ve finished reading.

What three words best describe you?

Curious, patient, committed.

What are your hobbies?

Hiking, reading, birding, reading, cooking, reading. I'm learning to knit; unlike reading, it's something I can do while listening to chamber music, opera—or books on tape.

Dudley Carlson currently is Priority Group Consultant for Priority Group VI, Awards.

Welcome

The following new members joined ALSC in November, December, and January. Please welcome those from your area.

Louise Brown AL
Ann Bourne Henderson AL
Deborah Edmonds AR
Jean Elderwind AR
Mary V. Barber CA
Julius J. Bianchi CA
Mary E. Boyle CA
Margaret Brooks CA
Deborah D. Dalton CA
Sybil Finemel CA
Khristine Gamer CA
Silvia Guterrez CA
Aureole Johnstone CA
Jennifer Miel CA
Barbara Sutton CA
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Jody Lovaj MN
Nancy S. Smith MN
Jacob Harris MO
Daylan A. Stephens MS
Nancy L. Daniel NC
Molly E. Davis NC
Allison Hollifield NC
Constance Purcell NC
Edward Sheary NC
Maria Terrell NC
Karen L. Wallace NC
Thomas Eggers ND
Judy K. Jensen NE
Laureen F. Riedesel NE
Nancy Keane NH
Amy Richards NH
Agnes T. Richie NJ
Susan E. Unger NJ
Sandra Blackman NY
Richard K. Farley NY
Alison Follos NY
Kimberly A. Hazen NY
Elizabeth Hobson NY
Kendra Houas NY
Cary Meltzer NY
Charlene Muhr NY
Donna J. Murray NY
Charlene A. Noll NY
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Angela Perna NY
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Sharon Lane OH
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Sherry Quinones OH
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Michelle A. Burger OR
Glenda B. Claborne OR
Mary Raphael OR
Jaime Thoreson OR
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Sandra Howard PA
Timothy R. Williams PA
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