

Member Profile: Jan Zauha

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With this issue we introduce a new feature where we profile a PNLA member. Please send suggestions for future profiles to the PNLA Quarterly Editor.

Professor Zauha graduated with her MLS from the University of Iowa in 1993. She also has an MA in English, and became involved in PNLA because she was looking for service opportunities. She joined PNLA in 2000, and served as a State/Provincial Representative in 2001 for Montana. She was elected as Vice President for the organization in 2003 and then served as president in 2004. The year that she was president, the annual conference was held in Sitka, Alaska, which she remembers was a beautiful venue to hold the conference.

When asked about her three highlights in her career in librarianship she mentioned that her top highlight was winning a Junior Fellowship at the Library of Congress as a graduate student. She likened the experience of working daily in the LOC's stacks as being a child in a candy shop. Her second highlight was a sabbatical that she took to England in 2011, in which she researched the impact of the electronic book while visiting seven literary festivals. Her third favorite highlight was working with a very special archive in 2015. The archive was of the writer Ivan Doig, and she discovered her love of history and archival work. After years of serving in the Instruction & Reference realm of librarianship, she discovered a passion for archives and outreach. She was involved in preparing a 1,600 sq. ft. outreach piece for the archive. She had an unexpected surprise to discover more exciting opportunities in librarianship with this new endeavor.

Her impressions of PNLA membership was that she found the membership friendly and willing to help one another, they were a lot of fun, and she learned so much from public librarians. What surprised her the most was what a great network PNLA has become for her. The membership encompasses such a large geographic area, that the opportunities to learn from one another are quite amazing. She believes that PNLA has positively influenced her librarianship, especially when she became president. This service position required that she work with several committees in which she co-chaired in order to organize conferences. She especially benefited from serving as a mentor in the PNLA LEADS Institute. This institute chooses six librarians a year to participate in the institute, and mentors are assigned to each participant. This institute was established the year she was president, and being a mentor for this institute is one of the most rewarding experiences she has had in PNLA service.

Her strongest beliefs of PNLA as an organization is that it offers many opportunities to share ideas. It is an important place to develop one's leadership skills by serving on committees and as an officer. This service will build skills by serving in the organization and being able to share ideas across borders.