

MWMLA's Fourth Decade: 1977–86

Betty Olmsted submitted thirty years of history of the Midwest Chapter of the Music Library Association (MWMLA) published as a sixteen-page document on August 29, 1977. The project had been the suggestion of former Chair Lenore Coral, who supervised its typing and printing. It was a beautiful gift to those who were part of the organization at that time and to those of us who have come along since. Created with care and precision, “Music Library Association, Midwest Chapter: A Brief History” arrived enclosed within the spring 1979 *Newsletter*. This excellent document, densely packed with facts and the stories of our origins, should continue to be consulted as a guide and inspiration as we move forward in a more complicated age of music librarianship.

Money Matters and the Ad Hoc Committee

Many threads connect Betty's narrative of MWMLA's first thirty years to the present, and many of the traditions, practices, and debates that Betty described continue. One obvious thread, mentioned in one of the last paragraphs of the description relates to Chapter financial assets. Looking back, Betty described enormous fluctuation of the treasury balance, ranging from “below zero”—when Ada Berkey had to dip into her own money to save the day—through fiscally robust times. On the front page of the 1977 *Newsletter*, we encounter the lead sentence, “Dues are once again due and payable to the treasurer.” On the second page of the 1978 *Newsletter*, we see “Dues Dues Dues,” followed by “It is NOT too late to pay your dues . . .” The first page of the 1979 *Newsletter* grabs our attention with “The Treasury Needs You . . . It's not only Uncle Sam who has his problems. The Midwest Chapter's treasury is at a critically low level . . .” It was probably no surprise that among the Spring 1980 *Newsletter* notes from newly elected Chair David Fenske readers were told that an ad hoc committee had been formed to examine the Chapter's dues structure, evaluate the needs and resources of the Chapter, and to make recommendations at the 1980 Chapter business meeting. This committee, with Marianne Kozlowski, chair, Connie Nisbet, and Patsy Felch-Monokowski, presented a report, followed by a membership vote to raise the dues from \$3.00 to \$5.00. This seemed to solve the problem for a time and eliminate the cries of quiet desperation from several secretary-treasurers.

Chapter Structure – David Fenske

In the Spring 1980 *Newsletter*, Chair David Fenske delivered a somewhat stern mandate to the organization, emphasizing the need for greater long-range planning in the future. He hoped the upcoming fall 1980 Minneapolis program would provide opportunities for local color, a workshop, and some formal sessions, and encouraged the Program Committee to plan a “rather intense program involving two and one-half to three-hour morning and afternoon sessions.”

He continued by offering guidelines for future MWMLA leadership:

- If the meeting site and date had not been selected by April 1 of the year of the meeting, the organization had lost “viable options,” and indicated he wished to issue a call for invitations to meeting sites in 1981 and 1982.
- His successor as chair should follow suit and call for future meeting sites.

This determination to plan well into the future was in keeping with present MWMLA practice. Then and now, no one quarrels that it is best to work several years ahead.

Chapter Structure – Rick Jones

Another example of administrative foresight is found in the spring 1982 *Newsletter*, when newly elected Chair Richard (Rick) Jones revealed several plans for his term in office. He proposed:

- A “Post-Annual Meeting Issue” of the *Newsletter*, with summaries, abstracts, or full text of presentations from the previous Chapter meeting. In keeping with his wish to expand the *Newsletter* to report the annual meeting, the spring 1982 issue contained an excellent summary of the sessions and business covered at the fall 1981 Oberlin meeting and included several of the full-text papers presented at that meeting.
- The reinstatement of the Bylaws Committee, to be led by Gordon Rowley, in the re-examination of Chapter documents and operations to achieve greater efficiency of Chapter function. Rick asked that the Committee report to the Chapter with its findings by late spring 1982.
- The establishment of the “Music and Recordings Preservation Working Group,” to be chaired by Rosalinda (Linda) Hack. Rick indicated that the label “working group,” rather than “committee,” was an effort to allow the newly formed group flexibility as they worked out their charge and methods of operation.

Chapter Committees – The Bylaws Committee

A special edition of the Midwest Chapter *Newsletter* appeared in the summer of 1982. Published to enable the Bylaws Committee to report the mission with which they had been charged, this edition reported the revision of the 1970 Constitution and Bylaws. The Bylaws Committee consisted of Chair Gordon Rowley, David Fenske, Connie Nisbet Field, and Richard Jones (ex officio).

The revisions were accompanied by an explanatory message clarifying the amendments and amendment procedure. Changes and procedures included:

- Expansion of the position of chair from two to four years in order to include a year as vice-chair/chair-elect, two years as chair, and one year as past-chair.
- The formation of an Executive Committee and clarification of the roles and responsibilities for the Chapter committees.
- The ballot necessary for approval or disapproval of the proposed six categories of change was included within the *Newsletter*.

Approved by the Bylaws Committee at the 1982 business meeting, the revised Constitution and Bylaws were the subject of a report posted by the Bylaws Committee in the spring 1983 *Newsletter*, describing the Committee charge and work accomplished. The small committee led by Gordon Rowley was credited with handling a difficult and complicated mission well.

Consideration for current organizational structure was the mark of the newly revised Constitution and Bylaws. At the same time, there were energetic bursts to expand the structure that existed

and go in new and interesting directions. What follows are some descriptions of how the structure has evolved since 1977.

Chapter Committees – The Cataloging Committee

Discussions pertaining to the formation of a Chapter Cataloging Committee go back to the spring of 1978. *Newsletter* Editor Connie Nesbit reported then on Dena Epstein's inquiries about the National Cataloging Council and interest in forming a Chapter group. A call went out to those who might be interested in participating. The following *Newsletter* (spring 1979) indicates that the Cataloging Committee had become a reality at the 1978 Lexington meeting, when its first meeting took place. Charles Simpson served as Chair and members were Dean Corwin, Ann Hess, Ann Hess, Ralph Papakhian, Glenn Patton, Martha Powell, and Richard Smiraglia. This Committee seems to have sprung into action quickly. By 1980, the Cataloging Committee had developed:

- A collective response to the draft of the International Standard Bibliographic Description for Printed Music (ISBD)
- Requests to the Library of Congress (LC) to acquire and catalog publications of the American Musicological Society to implement MARC music format
- An extensive AACR2 workshop

In Indianapolis (fall 1982) the Committee presented the workshop, "Catalogs, Catalogs, Catalogs," beginning with a discussion of the impact of AACR2 on Music Libraries.

At a 1983 presentation, the Committee reviewed AACR2 rule interpretations and LC policies for analytics of sound records.

At the 1984 Cincinnati meeting, an all-day workshop considered subject access to music.

In 1986 (Evanston), the Cataloging Committee presented "Music in On-line Catalogs," which brought together presenters using ten different online systems and generated considerable interest and discussion.

Chapter Committees – The Bibliographic Instruction Committee

Like the Cataloging Committee, the formation of the Midwest Chapter Committee on Bibliographic Instruction (BI Committee) goes back to 1978, where its creation was discussed at the MWMLA business meeting in Lexington. The first meeting of the Chapter BI occurred at MLA (1979) in New Orleans. Designated BI Committee Chairs were Linda Fidler and Rick Jones. The first Committee project was a survey of academic institutions listed in the College Music Society handbook to learn current bibliographic instruction practices. There was early discussion of emerging as the nucleus of the National Reference Interest Group. The consensus of the BI Committee was to retain Chapter status in order to facilitate exchange of information when requested. Apropos to this role, the new Committee offered "Current Programs for Bibliographic Instruction" at the Minneapolis Chapter meeting in 1980. Presenters were Rick Jones, Linda Fidler, Beth Christensen, and Dorman Smith.

The BI Committee list of projects and programs is long. Here is a partial accounting of those activities:

- At the 1981 MLA meeting in New Haven, the Chapter BI Committee met several times to review the *Directory of Bibliographic Instruction Programs in Music*. The group was asked to serve in a consultant capacity to the National Steering Committee on Bibliographic Instruction, a subgroup of the Reference and Public Service Interest Group.
- At the 1982 Midwest Chapter meeting in Indianapolis, Dr. Sharon Rogers, the Associate Dean of Bowling Green State University Libraries, led the workshop “Instructional Combat: the Arena and the Event,” which offered an application of learning theories to library instruction. Committee Chair Rick Jones indicated that this was the first such workshop ever held in the MWMLA. A highlight of the workshop was a sample lesson taught by Beth Christensen of St. Olaf College (spring 1982 *Newsletter*).
- The spring 1982 Midwest Chapter *Newsletter* included “A Directory of Music Library Instruction Programs in the Midwest,” created by the Committee on Bibliographic Instruction.
- The 1983 Chapter meeting in Chicago included an instruction presentation “The Study on Teaching Music Bibliography” by Jaclyn Facinelli.
- The 1984 Chapter meeting in Cincinnati offered a panel discussion “Evaluation of Music Bibliographic Instructions Programs” led by Virginia Tiefel. The session included responses gathered from a March 1984 bibliographic instruction questionnaire centered upon evaluation.
- The March 1984 issue of *Notes* featured the article “Bibliographic Competencies for Music Students at the Undergraduate Level” submitted by the Midwest Chapter Bibliographic Instruction Committee.
- Music librarians and members of the Wisconsin Music Educators Conference met jointly in 1985 (Madison), which included an afternoon of the following sessions: “The Wisconsin Model: An Agenda for Statewide Service,” Arne Arneson, Music Librarian UW, Madison; “Life beyond ERIC: The Exploration of Information Sources,” Gail Sonnemann, George Mason University; “Succoring the Teacher,” Richard Colwell, Professor, Music Education, University of Illinois. Arne Arneson conducted a follow-up session.
- The 1986 Chapter meeting was a spectacular conference on Music Bibliography, held in conjunction with meetings of the Midwest chapters of the American Musicological Society and the Music Library Association. Presented in five sections, this joint conference extended over two days, with individual sessions for MLA on Thursday and AMS on Sunday.

Knowing that the 1986 joint conference was approaching, Rick Jones reported to the Chapter in 1985 that the Bibliographic Instruction Committee had been working to determine future goals and objectives since the most recent charge had been fulfilled. He announced that the Committee would become the Public Service Committee and would be concerned with the larger concept of library public services, which included bibliographic instruction.

Other Chapter Committees – The Publications and Membership Committees

David Fenske, chair of the newly created Publications Committee, appointed Dena Epstein and Michael Fling as members. The Committee's charge was to review all publications issued by the MWMLA. At the time of the Committee's formation, there was a need to review the *Directory of Bibliographic Instruction Programs in the Midwest*.

Around the same time, the creation of a new Membership Committee was also announced for the purpose of aiding recruitment and encouraging active involvement in the Chapter among existing members. Early projects of the Committee included compiling lists of individuals to contact regarding membership and creating a description of the Midwest Chapter.

Chapter Working Groups – The Music and Sound Recordings and Small Academic Libraries Working Groups

The Music and Sound Recordings Working Group, created about the same time, reported a draft list of objectives to the Chapter in the spring of 1983. Although participation was disappointing at first, in the spring of 1984 the Working Group suggested that it act as a clearinghouse, report on current trends, update preservation bibliographies, identify rare items held by member libraries, and identify responsibility for preservation of archival copies for the Chapter membership.

There is also a report in the spring 1983 *Newsletter* of the formation of the Small Academic Libraries Working Group, with Peter Eisenberg of Vandercook College serving as chair. In 1986, Robert Delvin reported on this group, indicating that eight small academic libraries were actively participating and that the size of the collections and numbers of staff were controlling factors in defining small libraries.

Emerging Technologies

The programs offered during the annual meetings of the Midwest Chapter have been amazingly interesting or varied. The Committees on Cataloging and Bibliographic Instruction offered programs pertinent to their subject areas. As Library jobs became more technical and the library world became increasingly technological, that increasing trend was reflected in our programs, even in the 1980s. Below is a partial list of some presentations reflecting an abrupt but inevitable change of direction:

- In 1980 in Minneapolis, Marianne Kozlowski presented "Automated Reference and Database Searching," which described some of the automatic systems in place and the information world of the future; Gordon Rowley explained the LCS online circulation systems which were to be implemented in Illinois; and Celia Ellingson and Jane Caldwell led a hands-on demonstration of online database systems.
- At the 1981 Chapter meeting in Oberlin, Ohio, Richard Smiraglia and Ralph Papakhian presented "Music in the Online Union OCLC Catalog: A Review;" Paul Gunther offered "Automating the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra Library;" and Richard LeSueur spoke about "A Personal Collection and Automation Experiences."

- During the 1983 meeting in Chicago, the theme was “Reports on the Mini-Computer: Use in Music Libraries.” John Druessedow reported on several useful programs and Richard Griscom discussed useful applications developed at Northwestern University. There was a lively discussion and a call suggested for a computer application clearinghouse to both avoid duplication and coordinate development of similar products.
- At the 1985 meeting in Madison, Carolyn Rabson (Oberlin College) and Eric Western (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee) reported on “A Standard for Machine-Readable Music Notations.” Both speakers were members of MLA’s Working Group on Machine-Readable Representation. Other presentations included "Music Information and Commercial Data Bases: A Status Report," offered by Gail Sonnemann (George Mason University) and Jeanine Thubauville (University of Wisconsin-Madison), and "The University of Wisconsin-Madison MLA (Network Library System)" presented by library staff.
- Part of a joint session with the Wisconsin Music Educators’ Conference at the 1985 conference was "Life beyond ERIC: The Exploration of Information Sources," offered by Gail Sonnemann (George Mason University), and "Hi-Tech Music Publishing," given by Gary Aamodt, President, A-R Editions, Madison.
- Sessions offered at the 1986 meeting in Evanston, IL included “Bibliography for Music Technical Services,” led by Laura Snyder (Oberlin College), and integrating comments related to library automatic audience and response was “Reference and Public Services,” offered by Kiyoy Suyematsu (Mankato State College). After a brief presentation of the PALS (Project for Automated Library Systems) online catalog at MSC plus an outline of bibliographic instruction for incoming students, there was energetic discussion about orienting faculty and students during transition from manual to electronic catalogs.
- Another important presentation at the 1986 meeting was led by Ralph Papakhian on behalf of the Cataloging Committee. “Music in On-Line Catalogs” introduced speakers representing 10 institutions, all of whom used different online systems.
- Finally, the Chapter made an effort to go online with MWMLA membership records around the time of the 1981 meeting. With the help of Beyond Words of Culver City, CA, the Association address list became part of a computerized word processor file in 1982, thus creating the first online directory. Chair Rick Jones commented, “At last, we may know who we are!”

Awareness of Other Organizations and Collections between 1977–1986

Secretary-Treasurer Connie Nisbet vowed to post forthcoming meetings of other Midwest organizations which might be of interest to MWMLA members. She carried through with the plan in the Spring 1978 *Newsletter* and thereafter. Some of the postings for upcoming gatherings in 1978 included:

- American Library Association
- The International Association of Music Libraries
- The Illinois Library Association Annual Conference
- Illinois Music Libraries
- American Musicological Society national meeting
- Society for Ethnomusicology/College Music Society meeting
- Workshop: “Effective Use of OCLC”

- The Sonneck Society/The Midcontinent American Studies Association/The Midwest Chapter of the American Musicological Society
- International Federation of Library Associations
- Chicago Area On-line Users Group meeting
- MLA Midwest Chapter meeting

The occasional double meetings which occurred in certain years may have provided inspiration for the following combined events:

- MWMLA joint session with Wisconsin Music Educators Conference at Madison, October 25, 1985
- Conference on Music Bibliography held in conjunction with Midwest chapters of the American Musicological Society and the Music Library Association, October 9–12, 1986
- MWMLA conference in Ann Arbor which overlapped with that of the Society for Ethnomusicology, October 5–7, 1987.

Midwest Chapter Music Library Association: Gazing inward, a bit

Another kind of overlap occurred when the Midwest Chapter meeting in Cincinnati (1984) dovetailed with a fall board meeting of the national Music Library Association. There was an opportunity for lunch together, and the skillful scheduling provided convenience for the strong Midwest representation to the MLA Board. Midwest Chapter members to the MLA Board at the time are listed below:

Karen Griffith, treasurer of MLA

Jean Geil, member-at-large; 1983–85

Gordon Rowley, member-at-large; 1983–85

Arne Arneson, member-at-large, 1984–86

Richard Jones, member-at-large, 1984–86

Kären Nagy, member-at-large, 1984–86

The spring 1978 issue of the *Newsletter* was also the first to offer a description of music libraries in the Midwest. This idea developed from a belief that there was incomplete information available about the holdings of Midwest music libraries. In this issue, the reader finds descriptions of the music libraries of the University of Kentucky by Adelle Dailey and the Chicago Public Library by Linda Hack. Related to these descriptions of Midwestern collections, and the many which were to follow, were the postings of music collections sporadically received by various libraries within the Chapter, such as the Blyler Collection (singing school books, shape-note songbooks, scores, and songsters) received in fall 1979 at Western Illinois University and the Chicago Lyric Opera donation to Northern Illinois University.

Friends and Benefactors between 1977–86

The only sponsor whose name is shown consistently as a corporate member of MWMLA in the late 1970s and early 1980s is Audio Buff, Inc., credited as sponsor of “an elegant patio

reception” during the 1984 meeting in Cincinnati. Owner Marty Rubin showed his friendship to our Chapter with his individual membership and work on behalf of the MWMLA Membership Committee. In addition, the Conference on Music Bibliography was made possible in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and gifts from Garland Publishing, The Instrumentalist, and The Selmer Company.

MLA Archives at the University of Maryland

An impassioned plea encouraging submissions to the MLA Archives came from Bruce Wilson, curator of the MLA Archives, and Gail Sonnemann, chair of the Joint Committee for the MLA Archives, in the spring 1985 issue of the *Newsletter*. Readers were strongly encouraged to submit papers no longer in active use but relating to committees or special projects. Included was a complete list of the eight members of the joint committee, including the Music Library Association and University of Maryland representatives.

Accommodating Outreach by Rick Jones – Let the People Be Heard

In 1981, during an open forum, Rick Jones requested feedback from the membership. He stated, “. . . I really wish to know what you think about our Chapter, our services to our members, our committees, and our meetings; let me know what is good, what is bad, and what is neither.” In the fall 1982 *Newsletter*, he attempted to summarize the many responses he had received and, along with the other members of the Local Arrangements Committee, to incorporate the suggestions into the 1982 meeting plans. According to President Rick Jones, the MWMLA meeting in Indianapolis in 1982 was expected to fulfill every user demand. The following is a summary of some of the feedback received and its impact on the plans for the fall 1982 meeting in Indianapolis:

Member comment: “. . . our meeting should be longer and cover more topics.”

Rick Jones’ response (RJ): An extra day to the meeting has been added.

Member comment: “Why don’t we meet with some other organizations: we could learn from them and get our ideas across to them?”

RJ: Indiana Library Association will meet concurrently, one block away, and exchange agendas.

Member comment: “The Open Forum occurs too late in our meetings: everyone is too tired by 11:00 a.m. on Saturday.”

RJ: The Open Forum will be held Friday, 11:15 a.m.

Member comment: “We should have more time for visiting, as individuals and as groups, and more social time as a Chapter.”

RJ: The meeting includes a banquet and a luncheon, three receptions and two meal times with nothing scheduled.

Member comment: “We ought to have more performances during the meetings: are we musicians or not?”

RJ: A dance group from Butler University will perform at a meeting dinner and the Indianapolis Symphony will offer performances the weekend of the meeting.

Member comment: "What are our committees doing, anyway? We almost never hear from them."

RJ: Three open committee meetings will be held.

Member comment: "Everyone comes on Thursday anyway; why don't we have something happening then?"

RJ: The meeting schedule is arranged so that you can have interesting events happening whenever you arrive . . .

Member comment: "We need some local workshops! After all, everyone can't go to those national ones."

RJ: Two such workshops are scheduled. The library teaching skills workshop is the first in the MLA.

Member comment: "Keep the price down!"

RJ: Registration is \$25.00.

Concluding Comments for the 1977–86 Decade

Let us close the decade by marking the fact that sixty individuals attended the 1986 Midwest Chapter meeting and Conference on Bibliography and that at the end of 1986, MWMLA boasted 197 members. More amazing yet, the checking account balance was \$2,221.95 on January 13, 1987!

Text by Lynne Weber with the assistance of the Publications Committee.
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Index of Individuals Mentioned (Alphabetically by Surname)

Aamodt, Gary

Arneson, Arne

Berkey, Ada

Caldwell, Jane

Christensen, Beth

Colwell, Richard

Coral, Lenore

Corwin, Dean

Dailey, Adelle

Delvin, Robert (Bob)

Druesedow, John

Eisenberg, Peter

Ellingson, Celia

Epstein, Dena

Facinelli, Jaclyn

Felch-Monokowski, Patsy

Fenske, David

Fidler, Linda

Field, Connie Nisbet

Fling, Michael

Geil, Jean

Griffith, Karen

Griscom, Richard

Gunther, Paul

Hack, Rosalinda (Linda)

Hess, Ann

Jones, Richard (Rick)

Kozlowski, Marianne

LeSueur, Richard

Nagy, Kären

Nisbet, Connie (See also Field, Connie Nisbet)

Olmsted, Betty

Papakhian, Ralph

Patton, Glenn

Powell, Martha

Rabson, Carolyn

Rogers, Sharon

Rowley, Gordon

Rubin, Martin (Marty)

Simpson, Charles

Smiraglia, Richard

Smith, Dorman

Snyder, Laura

Sonnemann, Gail

Suyematsu, Kiyō

Thubauville, Jeanine

Tiefel, Virginia

Weber, Lynne Nelson

Western, Eric

Wilson, Bruce

Index compiled by Kathleen Haefliger (October 29, 2020)