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## Kansas City Library Network, Inc.

August 1986 was the 10th anniversary of a successful local libraries' venture—the Kansas City Library Network (KCLN). This library network evolved out of a need for improved document delivery among health science libraries in the Kansas City area. The Health Science Library Group of Greater Kansas City (known locally as "Greater Group") undertook the development and implementation of KCLN in June 1972. This work culminated on August 13, 1976 with the signing of the incorporation documents. Following is a short history of the group, its accomplishments and its future possibilities.

### *Historical Development*

On June 23, 1972, a workshop on library service networking was attended by 50 librarians and hospital librarians of Kansas City. Overall need for a network was established, but no mechanism seemed possible. On May 18, 1973, Gertrude Lamb (UMKC Medical Library) presented Greater Group a report on the possibility of a local health science union list of periodicals. However, by September 18, 1974, it was the Health Science Audio-Visual Union List which had been completed, and a new proposal for a Union List of Serials for the Health Sciences came from Eric Case, Richard Dalton and Sulveiga Unger (all from Clendening Library, KU Medical Center) on September 20, 1974.

It seemed that progress was being made when Sara Hill (St. Luke's Hospital Library), president of Greater Group, met with a newly formed Hospital Administrators Group to

consider the possibility of developing a courier service for hospital librarians. While a library representative was appointed to this group, the group was not productive in terms of a library network as the hospital administrators had other concerns more relevant to them at that time.

On January 24, 1975, Sara Hill appointed a Courier Committee of Greater Group (Jim Tchobanoff, Ann Marie Corry, Cami Loucks, Bonnie Kruse and Sara Hill). The charge of this committee was to write a proposal to facilitate document delivery among members. The Courier Committee worked very hard to delineate ways to improve the document delivery system between various health science libraries in the city. Every way considered took money and time. National Library of Medicine grant applications were considered along with proposals of other successful networking ventures.

It became clear that a wide base of institutional support was needed. To improve the possibility of institutional support, it was necessary to incorporate into a separate entity with institutional membership rather than individual membership. By the summer of 1976, the Articles of Incorporation were written (with some financial support from Greater Group) and submitted to interested institutions for approval. D.A. Thomas (Clendening Library, KU Medical Center) was the president of Greater Group at this time. To broaden the base, academic and special libraries were contacted in addition to health science libraries. The resulting Articles of Incorporation

tion of the Kansas City Library Network were signed by the members of the "Courier Committee" on August 13, 1976. There were 25 charter institutions listed on the incorporation document: 13 hospital, six health science, three special, and three academic libraries:

American Nurses Association  
Avila College  
Baptist Memorial Hospital  
Bethany Medical Center  
Children's Mercy Hospital  
Independence Sanitarium and Hospital  
Johnson County Mental Health Center  
Lakeside Osteopathic Hospital  
Marion Laboratories, Inc.  
Menorah Medical Center  
Midwest Research Institute  
Park College  
Providence-St. Margaret Health Center  
Research Medical Center  
St. Joseph Hospital  
St. Luke's Hospital  
St. Mary's Hospital  
Trinity Lutheran Hospital  
University of Kansas Medical Center  
University of Missouri-Kansas City, Dental  
University of Missouri-Kansas City, Medical  
Western Missouri Mental Health Center  
William Jewell College

Things moved quickly after the incorporation was approved by the State of Missouri. There was an organizational meeting at St. Luke's on October 6, 1976. There followed two other such meetings to develop by-laws. A meeting was held on December 3, 1976 to elect officers and to approve the by-laws. The original officers were Ann Marie Corry (UMKC Dental), chair; Sara Hill (St. Luke's), vice chair; Marilyn DeGues (KC College of Osteopathic Medicine), secretary; Gary Byrd (UMKC Medical), treasurer; John Young (William Jewell), immediate past president; and Earl Farley (KU Medical Center), Bonnie Kruse (Baptist), and Bernice Wood (Trinity) as executive committee

representatives. The by-laws were approved; however, they were destined to be written and rewritten many times over the succeeding 10 years.

The by-laws called for quarterly meeting, and the first annual meeting was held on January 28, 1977 at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, School of Dentistry.

#### *Purpose Statement*

The stated purpose of KCLN has changed over time in its wording but not in terms of philosophical intent.

The purpose of KCLN as stated in the incorporation document was as follows: "The Corporation is formed for the purpose of forming a cooperative of information services with the intent of providing assistance for improved patient care, a base of interaction among these information services for improved patient care, a base of interaction among these information services for determining existing resources and a mechanism for planning and strengthening these resources and services and is formed exclusively for scientific, literary and educational purposes."

The purpose statement of the first by-laws accurately reflected that of the incorporation document:

A. To form a cooperative of information services with the intent of assisting in improved patient care;

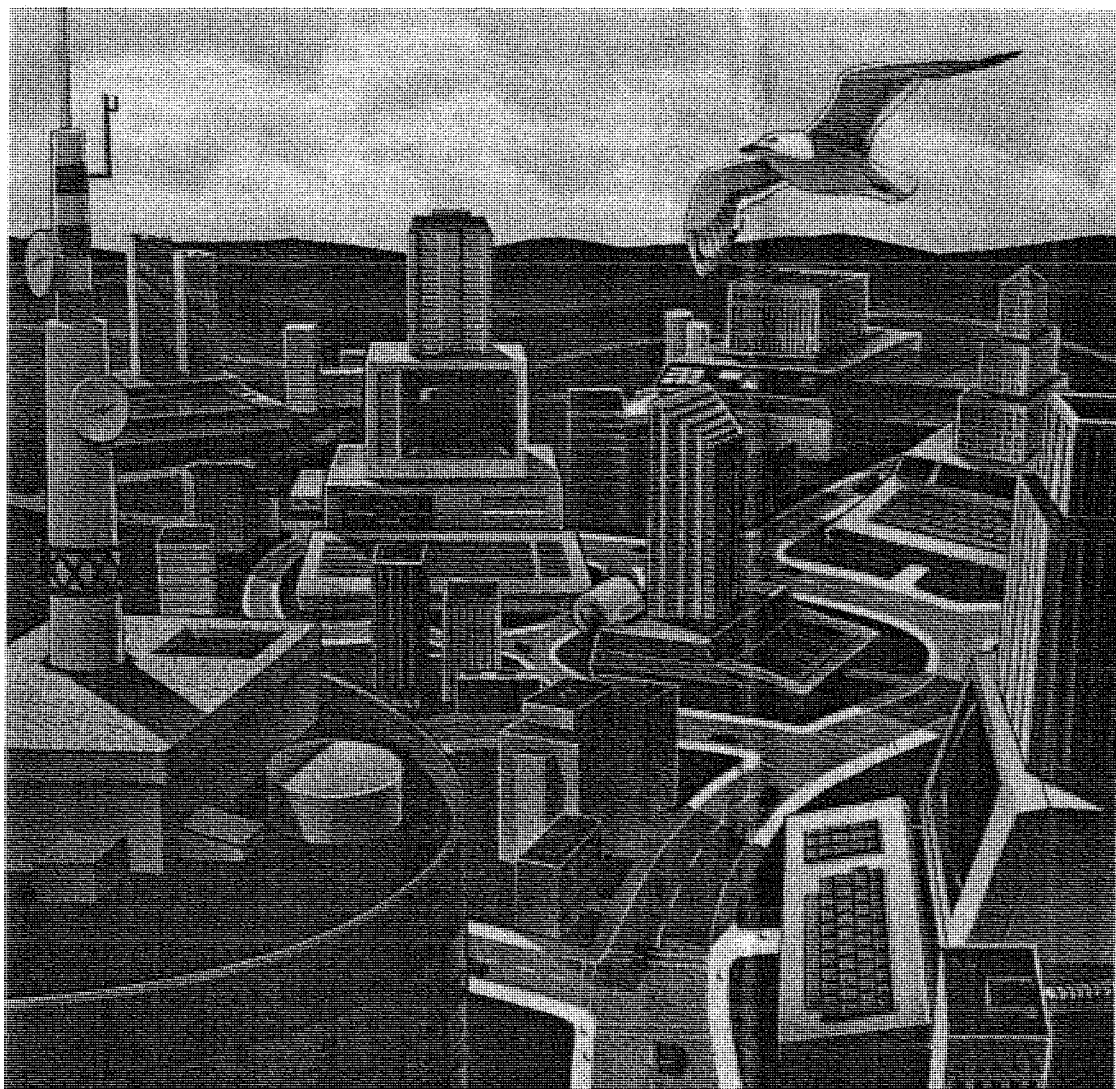
B. To provide a base of interaction among those information services for determining existing resources;

C. To provide a mechanism for planning and strengthening these resources and services; and

D. To explore additional means of cooperation.

While more condensed, the current by-laws (June 1985) still reflect these original concepts:

1. To support health education and health welfare in the Kansas City metro-



politan area by means of cooperative networking activities;

2. To determine existing informational resources and to provide ways and means for strengthening and utilizing these resources; and

3. To determine additional avenues of cooperation.

#### *Courier System*

The network's first project was a courier system. By June 1977, the KCLN Courier Committee had begun work and established a

trial courier system, supported by monthly payments from interested institutions. The trial system worked, and the KCLN Courier has been working continuously since the summer of 1977. It is worth noting that KCLN was functioning prior to the publication of the Missouri library network document, which was adopted on September 30, 1977, and the subsequent development of the Kansas City Metropolitan Library Network, which began organizational meetings in October 1977.

Currently, the KCLN Courier makes 30

stops per day in Missouri and Kansas. Two statistical studies have been done by KCLN. One was done in the early stages of the courier system to determine usage and flow. The most recent was completed in April 1983 and revealed that 12,637 items were handled during a period from August 1982 to January 1983.

The development of a courier system in 1977 established the working basis which has made the Kansas City Library Network so successful. Funding of projects had been a conceptual problem from the beginning. The solution was to have a base membership fee for all network participants with all projects undertaken to be funded by the participants in each specific project. Therefore, the courier system was (and still is) funded by those who use it. This concept, which was very difficult to develop in the beginning, clarified the fact that every member institution did not have to participate in every activity sponsored by the network as a whole. It was possible to belong to KCLN and not "buy into" the courier system. As the network grew and sponsored more activities, this concept became more evident as the most workable solution to many problems.

#### *Union List of Serials*

The second major project of the Kansas City Library Network was the development of a union list of serials of those member institutions. The first completed union list was published in 1977 by the Greater Group. St. Luke's Hospital graciously allowed the network to use its mainframe computer to store, manipulate and print the union list holdings.

After the first union list was published, Greater Group voted to turn this project over to KCLN, and all subsequent updates have been published by KCLN. Participation in the union list was voluntary as was participation in the updates; however, there has been a printing/publication fee with all of

the editions published. Extra copies have been printed and sold to other interested libraries.

In the beginning, inputting the data for the union list was done voluntarily by members of the St. Luke's Hospital Library staff and members of KCLN. After a time, it became clear that this was not a practical solution to the update problem. For the most recent update in January 1983, an individual was hired with network funds to input the necessary additions and changes. However, even this became a problem when the mainframe at St. Luke's was upgraded.

In April 1985, Anne Palmer (North Kansas City Memorial), the chair of the Union List Committee, began investigations for other means to produce the list. While other possibilities were also considered, she discovered that it would be possible for the network to participate in PHILSOM (Periodical Holdings in Libraries of School of Medicine based at Washington University, St. Louis) but that using the PHILSOM database would be expensive.

After much discussion and comparison of costs, it was proposed to the board of directors by the Union List Committee that the Kansas City Library Network Union List holdings be included in the PHILSOM database to expedite the update process. While the proposal was approved by the board of directors, in order for the proposal to work, it was necessary that the network obtain written institutional support to "buy into" this new concept. Since the union list serves as a vital support to the courier system, most members had agreed to the increased charges by the fall of 1986, and the next union list will be produced via PHILSOM.

#### *Cooperative Purchasing Project*

A third attempt at cooperative interaction by KCLN was not so successful as the first two. A committee was formed in July 1979 to explore the possibilities of coopera-

tive purchasing of library supplies, with Judy Vermillion (Children's Mercy) as chair. Not enough members found this concept workable, and the committee was dissolved in April 1982.

#### *Cooperative Use of MLNC*

In the spring of 1986, another opportunity for cooperative effort was explored—network membership in MLNC (Missouri Library Network Corporation), a computer database vendor. A representative of MLNC addressed a meeting of the KCLN board of directors and presented the various options available for network participation. It was discovered that KCLN did not really need to have a full MLNC membership to obtain the services it needed—primarily access to BRS. Thus, a mechanism was devised so that interested KCLN members could use BRS on their own password but be billed via the Kansas City Library Network at a cost less than they would pay as individual subscribers.

#### *Future Plans*

The Kansas City Library Network has established a Strategic Long-Range Planning Committee to develop a workable plan for future development. Thus far, KCLN has been financially supported entirely by its membership. It may now be time to think of obtaining some form of grant support in order to develop more ambitious projects. There have been tentative discussions on the purchase or rental of a van for the KCLN courier. Discussions have also been held on the possibility of hiring a full-time coordinator to perform much of the work which is currently done on a volunteer basis: overseeing of statistical record keeping, union list updates, financial affairs, coordination

of the courier system, and possibly grant-writing.

#### *Conclusions*

While it has not always been easy, the Kansas City Library Network, Inc. has functioned and succeeded primarily on the basis of volunteer labor, dedication and cooperative effort for the first 10 years of its existence. Institutions have joined, left and rejoined as their needs or financial circumstances have changed. Individuals have moved into or out of Kansas City or from one institution to another and have participated in KCLN as often as possible.

The list of those who have given of their time and effort in support of KCLN could go on for pages. To mention only a few: Gertrude Lamb, Sara Hill, Cami Loucks, Bonnie and Gerald Kruse, Jim Tchobanoff, Harold Smith, John Young, Marilyn DeGues, Bernice Wood, Earl Farley, Karen (Horst) Weideraeders, Gary Byrd, Mary Evans, Ty Webb, Anne Palmer, Pat Gibson, Grace Ebling, Judy Vermillion, and many, many others. And the list would not be complete without the names of those who have served as the KCLN courier: Herb Rowland, Harvey Sargent, Wayne Hucke (who served the longest) and Charles Lowe.

The Kansas City Library Network has maintained ties with its roots in Greater Group and expanded its cooperative efforts to include the Kansas City Metropolitan Library Network and other library organizations in the area. KCLN is a positive force in the Kansas City library community and, with expanded cooperative efforts, it will continue to provide library support for health education and information services in Kansas City.

CREDITS: p. 9—Rob Hill, *Hannibal Courier-Post*; p. 10—Hannibal Public Library; pp. 17, 18, & 19—Daniel T. Magidson, St. Louis; p. 24—Charles W. Schwartz from *Wild Mammals of Missouri*; p. 29—Robert LaRouche, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*; p. 33—Government Printing Office; p. 36—Frank Stack, Columbia.