

**Presentation by Douglas B. Maitland
on the occasion of NEEMA's 90th Birthday Party, Spring 2008**

When you think of birthdays, two things come to mind—parties and gifts or presents. You are attending NEEMA's birthday party. So—what are you going to give NEEMA, the New England Educational Media Association, as a birthday gift to help celebrate her 90th birthday? We will get back to that question later. First of all, a little bit about NEEMA's history.

On a snowy night in April of 1918, a small group of visionary leaders interested in the welfare of school libraries and school librarians met in the Children's Room of the Brookline Massachusetts Public Library and decided to form a New England regional association comprised of school librarians for the express purpose of improving school libraries.

On May 18, 1918, at Simmons College in Boston, the first formal meeting of the New England School Library Association—as NEEMA was then called—was held.

While we are talking about birthdays and birthday gifts, what does NEEMA give or do for you?

NEEMA is your voice at the national level. NEEMA is an affiliate of the American Association of School Librarians (AASL). NEEMA helps your voice be heard by the AASL Board through its Affiliate Assembly.

NEEMA is your connection with technology educators by membership to the Affiliate Council of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT). NEEMA's annual Leadership Conference has its roots in its collaboration with AECT.

NEEMA is your voice on the local level throughout New England by working very closely with our accreditors, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, by pushing our White Paper entitled, *The Place of the School Library Program in the Accreditation Process of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges*. In that paper NEEMA defends school librarianship as an integral part of teaching and learning rather than as a support service. NEEMA also works very closely with state organizations in our region by advocating for school library media programs at the local level.

NEEMA provides professional development and networking opportunities to the region at a very reasonable cost through its annual Leadership Conference. Also, NEEMA keeps you informed through its quarterly publication, NEEMA Views, and through the NEEMA web site.

There is no counterpart to NEEMA in other regions of the United States. We are unique. Past, present, and future – all three ingredients are needed for an understanding of the whole. Forethought, planning, and vision must direct NEEMA on the tough road to her 100th birthday. For "Where there is no vision, the people (or organization) will perish." As an educational leader attending this conference, please give NEEMA a gift for her birthday in the form of your time, expertise, or experience. Please join the NEEMA Board and help NEEMA on its mission of improving school libraries and school librarians for better student achievement. Help NEEMA navigate that tough road ahead to reach her 100th birthday. If you want to join the NEEMA Board, please see our NEEMA President, Susan Ballard, or our Membership Chair, Merlyn Miller, at this Conference. Remember, NEEMA needs you! Happy 90th birthday, NEEMA! I don't know about you, but I can't wait for NEEMA's century celebration.