

Charlotte, Queen City of the Southeast

A look at the site for ACRL's 2003 National Conference

by Barbara Tierney

What does a transplanted San Francisco Bay Area librarian have to reveal about Charlotte after a two-year "trial separation" from the West Coast?

Leaving the San Francisco Bay Area after a 25-year tenure is definitely a difficult lifestyle change. When the Bank of America/Nations Bank merger transferred my husband from San Francisco to Charlotte in 1999, I traded my position as a Bay Area public librarian for an academic position at the J. Murrey Atkins Library at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC).

Although the scenery, climate, and politics of my newly adopted city are quite different from San Francisco, I haven't looked back! I have found Charlotte to be a dynamic, beautiful city and I believe it to be an inspired choice for our 2003 ACRL National Conference.

Boom city of the Southeast

Charlotte is an up-and-coming, world-class destination, with a generous touch of sweetness and Southern charm . . . a true embodiment of the New South. A vital, booming banking and international business center, Charlotte boasts sophisticated restaurants,

luxury hotels, and a vibrant arts sector, as well as family-oriented cultural attractions.

Charlotte currently ranks second among the nation's top banking centers. Many other Fortune 500 companies either have their corporate headquarters here or make Charlotte their center for re-

search and development. Charlotte is also one of the nation's largest distribution hubs, serving as both a major rail and trucking center.

In the past decade, there has been a whirlwind of growth in Charlotte, with skyscrap-



Waterscapes taken from Charlotte's Marshall Park—with the First Union Bank Building (rounded top) in the background.

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About the author

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ers, a new convention center, a new football stadium, and a new performing arts center now accentuating the city's skyline. Hundreds of new neighborhoods have transformed the metropolitan area.

"Uptown" Charlotte

"Uptown" (Center-City) Charlotte, with its skyscraper banking headquarters, tree-canopied plazas and streets, decorative fountains, and public art attractions, is an exciting place to work or visit. Sophisticated outdoor cafés invite passersby to sit a spell, sip a glass of wine, and watch the lively metro scene. Residents and visitors hail from all parts of the world. It is commonplace to hear English spoken with a London, New York, or Boston twang or to catch fragments of Russian, Japanese, German, and Spanish while enjoying a night out on the town.

The heavy relocation of U.S. and international businesses to Charlotte in the past decade—combined with the ready availability of excellent colleges and housing—have contributed to an influx of diverse ethnicities and cultures here. (Out of a staff of ten reference librarians at UNCC, only two of my colleagues actually hail from the South—with the rest having relocated to Charlotte from California, Colorado, Indiana, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.)

Cultural sites

Bank of America and **First Union Bank** make Charlotte their corporate headquarters and compete with each other in their donations to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Arts and Science Council. Last year, Charlotte ranked first in the nation in workplace giving to the arts, with a whopping \$10 million donated to the council.

The big winners, however, are the arts-loving Charlotte citizens and visitors who

enjoy the beautiful Uptown **Blumenthal Performing Arts Center**, the new **Mint Museum of Craft and Design** (which showcases crafts in ceramics, glass, wood, metal, and fiber), the new **Tryon Center for Visual Art**, the **Spirit Square** educational arts center, the **Museum of the New South**, and the 140,000-square-foot, hands-on science museum **Discovery Place** (which offers an **Omnimax Theater** and a **Planetarium**). The award-winning **Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County** also has its Main Branch in Uptown at Tryon and Sixth Street.

Commercial art galleries are springing up in the Uptown and North Davidson districts of the city. Residents and visitors alike enjoy **First-Friday Gallery Crawls**, which display the work of exciting local artists in such whimsically named galleries as the **Blue Pony** and the **Center of the Earth Gallery**. Also popular are the **Joie Lassiter Galleries** and the **Afro-American Cultural Center Gallery**.

A taste of Charlotte . . . Uptown

It's a tough decision indeed to choose an Uptown dining destination with so many delicious possibilities.

Recommended headliners include: **Bistro 100** (100 N. Tryon in Founder's Hall), one of the city's premier dining establishments featuring wood-roasted preparations of chicken, beef, and seafood along with gourmet appetizers; the **Palomino** (525 N. Tryon), a romantic European bistro with fountain-side dining that specializes in Mediterranean cuisine; **Mimosa Grill** (First Union Plaza Atrium, 327 S. Tryon Street), a chic destination with both indoor and plaza dining featuring mouth-watering southern specialties; **LaVecchia's Seafood Grille** (225 E. Sixth Street); **Bijoux** (201 N. Tryon), an excellent choice for French

cuisine; **Sonoma** (129 W. Trade Street), a sophisticated café that boasts an excellent wine list; **Morton's of Chicago** (227 W. Trade Street), a renowned chain steakhouse; **Carpe Diem** (401 E. Trade Street), a local favorite with outstanding vegetarian options; and the

Quick facts

- Population (Census 2000) 540,828
- Avg. Daily Temperatures 60 Degrees (March–May)
- International Business Center 380 foreign-owned companies
- National Banking Center Bank of America, Union Bank Corporate Headquarters
- Charlotte/Douglas International Airport 14th busiest airport in the country

Ri Ra (208 N. Tryon Street), an authentic Irish pub.

Other Uptown places of interest

The **Charlotte Convention Center**—ACRL National Conference Headquarters (122 E. Stonewall Street, Center City between Tryon and College Streets)—completed in 1995, is a sparkling showplace conveniently located within easy walking distance of Uptown attractions.

An extension of the charming antique **Charlotte Trolley** line (once the mainstay of Charlotte public transportation) is currently under construction near the Convention Center and by 2003 should provide a 20-minute run from the Convention Center to South End Charlotte (a lively restaurant and specialty shopping area). <http://www.charlotteconventionctr.com/>.

Ericsson Stadium

Charlotte is the home of the NFL's Carolina Panthers, which began play in 1995. Gargantuan sculpted black panthers guard the entrance to the beautiful open-air Ericsson Stadium, which opened in Uptown Charlotte in 1996 with 73,000 seats, 13 stories, and a \$184 million price tag. Although its biggest attractions are Panther game days, the stadium complex is also a venue for exhibition games, religious crusades, and rock concerts. http://www.panthers.com/facility/index.cfm?cont_id=55164.

The Square (Trade and Tryon Streets)—For a public art display focusing on Charlotte's beginnings, visit the four symbolic sculptures erected at the intersection of Uptown's Trade and Tryon Streets. The huge sculptures include a gold miner, for Charlotte's commerce; a woman millworker, for Charlotte's textile heritage; an African American railroad builder, for Charlotte's importance as a transportation center; and a mother holding her baby aloft for the future.

Settler's Cemetery (corner of Fifth and Church Streets)—Strolling through the oldest city-owned graveyard provides a fascinating



Charlotte's landmark sculptures at the corner of Trade and Tryon Streets in Uptown. The goldminer represents Charlotte's early 1800s gold rush history and the mother and baby represent Charlotte's future.

history lesson. Here you will find gravestones marking the final resting places of Charlotte slaves, planters, soldiers, politicians, and children buried from 1776 to 1884.

Nearby excursions outside of Uptown

Charlotte Museum of History and Hezekiah Alexander Homesite (3500 Shamrock Drive) offers 18th-, 19th-, and 20th-century Charlotte history galleries and offers guided tours of the Revolutionary Era home of Charlotte blacksmith, Hezekiah Alexander. Built in 1774, the home is the oldest surviving structure in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. <http://www.charlottemuseum.org>.

Lowe's Motor Speedway is considered the center of motor sports and NASCAR in

Charlotte on the Web

- Charlotte Convention & Visitors Bureau (<http://www.charlottecvb.org>)
- Charlotte Chamber of Commerce (<http://www.charlottechamber.org>)
- The Charlotte Observer (<http://www.charlotte.com>)
- Charlotte's Web (<http://www.charweb.org>)
- N.C. Travel Guide (<http://www.visitnc.com>)

the Southeast. Tours include a behind-the-scenes look at the Speedway grounds; many race shops are located in the track vicinity. <http://www.lowesmotorspeedway.com/>.

Latta Plantation, the 1800 Catawba River home of merchant/planter James Latta, allows visitors a glimpse of 19th-century life in Charlotte. The house is original with antiques ranging from 1790 to 1840. <http://www.lattaplantation.org/>.

The Trolley Museum, located in Charlotte's South End, provides a fascinating glimpse into Charlotte's former main mode of public transportation. It's fun to take a 20-minute ride from the South End to the Stadium area on the newly renovated trolley line. <http://www.charlottetrolley.com/>.

Rosedale Plantation, once a 911-acre plantation, allows visitors to time travel back

to the 1800s. It includes an 1815 manor house and eight acres of beautiful grounds and gardens. <http://libweb.uncc.edu/archives/crhc/rosedale.htm>.

Mint Museum of Art (2730 Randolph Road) is one of the leading museums of the Southeast. It boasts holdings of American paintings, pre-Columbian art, regional crafts, historic costumes, and gold coins minted in Charlotte. <http://www.mintmuseum.org/>.

Historic neighborhoods abound throughout Charlotte, and an afternoon spent wandering through such beauties as **Myers Park** or **Fourth Ward** is well worth your shoe leather.

Nearby colleges and universities

North Carolina boasts a wealth of noteworthy colleges and universities of all sizes. Some fine institutions to visit include:

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Historical tidbits

- The Catawba Native Americans inhabited the Charlotte area in the 1600s and early 1700s. About 250 years ago, thousands of Scotch-Irish pioneers traveled the Great Wagon Road from Philadelphia to the North Carolina Piedmont area and settled at the crossroads of two Native American trading paths east of the Catawba River.

- Why is Charlotte called the "Queen City?" In 1768, the town of Charlotte was incorporated and named in honor of the wife of King George III, the reigning English monarch. Charlotte citizens further honored Queen Charlotte when they named their new county Mecklenburg after her German homeland.

- During the Revolutionary War, the majority of Charlotte residents supported the patriots. In 1780, Lord Cornwallis arrived in Charlotte but departed the area in a hurry when Carolina mountain men routed the British at the Battle of Kings Mountain.

- Presidents Andrew Jackson (served 1829–1837) and James K. Polk (served 1845–1849) were born in the greater Charlotte area.

- Gold Rush in North Carolina? Discovery of a 17-pound gold nugget east of Charlotte in 1799 set off a North Carolina gold

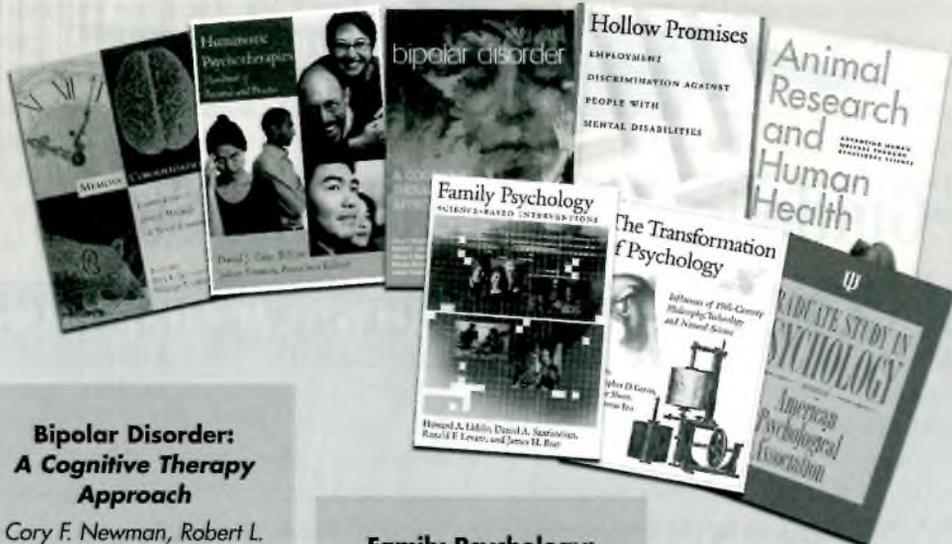
rush in the early 1800s. A Charlotte branch of the U.S. Mint was established here in 1837. The North Carolina Gold Boom was short-lived as gold-seekers left North Carolina for California a few years later.

- During the Civil War, Charlotteans backed the Confederacy. Although no battles were fought in Charlotte, the Confederate President Jefferson Davis held his last cabinet meeting in Charlotte in April 1865.

- The cotton industry dominated the Charlotte economy during the late 1800s and early 1900s—until the boll weevil devastated the cotton culture here.

- J. B. Duke, the tobacco giant, founded the Southern Power Co. (predecessor to Duke Power Co.) in 1904. He dammed the Catawba River to create Lake Wylie and hydroelectric energy generated there powered the textile industry. By 1920, Charlotte was home to textile mills, and machinery and processing plants.

- Since 1980, growth has been phenomenal, with airport expansion, new roads, office parks, a new coliseum, professional sports teams, a new convention center, a new football stadium, and hundreds of new neighborhoods.



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of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure.

8. Dismissal or nonreappointment.

The institution may dismiss a librarian during the contractual period only for just cause and through academic due process. Nonreappointment should involve adequate notice, peer review, and access to a grievance procedure.

9. Grievance. Librarians should have access to grievance procedures. These should include steps to be completed within specified time limits and effective safeguards against reprisal by the institution or abuse of the procedures by the grievant. They must be consistent with applicable institutional regulations and contracts.

Development and revision of the guidelines

In January 2000, the Standards and Accreditation Committee (SAC) referred two documents to the Committee on the Status of Academic Librarians for revision: "Standards for Faculty Status of College and University Librarians" and "Guidelines for Academic Status of College and University Libraries." SAC also asked that consideration be given to combining the two documents.

After much discussion, it was concluded that the documents should remain separate, primarily because: 1) they address entirely different issues and it would cause confusion to combine the concepts into a single document; 2) it would weaken the argument for improvement at those institutions that do award limited faculty status to librarians; and 3) librarians at institutions with no hope of faculty status would have no clear guidelines to support improvement within their status.

The "Standards for Faculty Status of College and University Librarians" went through the revision process, was approved at Midwinter 2001, and the final version was published in the March 2001 *C&RL News*.

The present "Guidelines for Academic Status of College and University Librarians," published in 1990, were revised at the committee's meeting in June 2001. The committee is seeking input on this draft through postings to electronic discussion lists, via e-mail to Bill Nelson (wnelson@aug.edu), and in a public forum.

The Committee on the Status of Academic Librarians will be conducting an open hearing at the upcoming ALA Midwinter Meeting in New Orleans to solicit input from the membership on these changes and to address your concerns with the guidelines.

Comments will be incorporated into the final document, which will be presented to SAC for recommendation of final approval by ACRL and ALA.

Committee members past and present who have worked on this document include: Navjit Brar, Martin Goldberg, Phillip Jones, Sharon McCaslin, Bill Nelson, Samson Soong, Anita Talar, and Glenda Thornton; and interns James Chervinko, Valerie Feinman, and Revil Veli. ■

("Charlotte . . ." continued from page 918)

• **Davidson College** (Davidson, North Carolina): <http://www.davidson.edu>

• **Duke University** (Durham, North Carolina): <http://www.duke.edu>

• **Furman University** (Greenville, South Carolina): <http://www.furman.edu>

• **Queen's College** (Charlotte, North Carolina): <http://www.queens.edu>

• **University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill** (Chapel Hill, North Carolina): <http://www.unc.edu>

• **University of North Carolina at Charlotte** (Charlotte, North Carolina): <http://www.uncc.edu>

• **Central Piedmont Community Col-**

lege (Charlotte, North Carolina): <http://www.cpcc.cc.nc.us>

Heading out of Charlotte

Charlotte enjoys excellent highway accessibility to attractions further afield. Interstates 77 and 85 intersect in Charlotte, linking the city with the Great Lakes Region, New England, and Florida. Interstate 40, running coast-to-coast across the United States, is only an hour north of Charlotte.

The Great Smoky Mountains are only two hours to the west of Charlotte, and the Atlantic Coast beaches are a bit over three hours to the east. Some of the world's best golf courses are only an hour's drive east of Charlotte. ■