

ALA Councilor
Report to the Board
September 30, 2009

Despite difficult economic conditions facing libraries, the attendance at ALA Annual Conference in Chicago reached what could be a record high at 28,941. The prior three Annual Conference final attendance reports were 22,047 for Anaheim (2008), 28,499 for Washington (2007) and 16,784 New Orleans (2006). I attended Council Meetings, information sessions, and membership meetings beginning on July 11 through July 15.

Future Annual Conferences (June) will be held in Washington, D.C. (2010), New Orleans (2011), Anaheim (2012), Washington (2013) and Las Vegas (2014).

Future Mid Winter Meetings will be held in Boston (2010), San Diego (2011), Dallas (2012), Seattle (2013) and Philadelphia (2014).

ALA MEMBERSHIP MEETING I – July 11, 2009

The meeting featured discussions by Patty Wong (Director of the Yolo County Library in California) and Chris McClean who discussed how libraries can deal with the depressed economy and maintain service despite difficult conditions, and that political persuasion may be critical. Advocacy University on the ALA website was discussed as a rallying point for libraries faced with difficulties.

ALA President-elect, Camila Alire presented “Libraries: The Heart of ALL Communities” <http://www.camilaalire.com> as a viable theme from which to fight.

It was reported that ALA’s financial situation has been pressed by the state of the economy. Cost reduction measures such as wage freezes, furloughs, attrition and layoffs are underway already.

ALA COUNCIL/EXECUTIVE BOARD/MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION SESSION- July 12, 2009

James Neal from the Budget and Analysis Committee (BARC) reported that revenue was down, but that efforts by the ALA Staff to reduce expenditures actually exceeded the lower than expected revenue so that the Association will remain on a sound fiscal footing. Jim Neal acknowledged and praised the ALA staff as well as the administrations of divisions and round tables in dealing with difficult economic times.

Jim also indicated that ALA’s commitment to enhancing the accessibility and functionality of the ALA website would remain a central objective despite the fiscal limitations.

Jenny Levine gave a presentation on ALA Connect. She described the goals of ALA Connect to: providing a collaborative workspace, providing the opportunity for professional colleagues to link and also to enable them to for communities of common interest. Jenny indicated that 80 such communities currently exist.

COUNCIL I – July 12, 2009

Most discussion in this first session of Council involved responses to the presentation by ALA Executive Director Keith Michael Fiels about steps towards implementation of the Task Force on Electronic Member Participation (TFOEMP) recommendations. Much work has been accomplished during the past six months, but Mr. Fiels discouraged taking the steps needed to provide real time dissemination via streaming or broadcast of ALA Council deliberations so that those Councilors who could not attend in person would still be able to participate. His comments were based on cost factors: the cost of live audio taping to be \$11,000; the real time streaming to be \$55,000 per year; and voting remotely by Councilors who are not present at \$144,000 per year. Added to these costs, Mr. Fiels cited comments by ALA legal counsel about the possible threat of litigation if one or another of our Council Members decided to say something critical of someone while expounding from one of the microphones. Many councilors were in favor of pressing forward with electronic participation.

COUNCIL II – July 14, 2009

The ALA Policy Monitoring Committee action item calling for the elimination of the category of “Virtual Members” (6.16 in the ALA Policy Manual) passed.

The ALA Membership Committee Report sought and achieved a dues increase for organizational members of ALA in a measure to bring costs more in line with the levels existing for individual memberships.

The Committee on Professional Ethics (COPE) Resolution on Ethics Education failed, due to the Committee’s insistence on providing one firm – the Institute for Global Ethics (IGE) – with the task of providing Ethics Fitness Seminars to Members. Councilors preferred to have an RFP used to solicit proposals from a variety of organizations deemed qualified to undertake such training.

A “Resolution on Civil Marriage Equality Regardless of Sexual Orientation” passed with a near unanimous vote.

A “Resolution on Libraries and the Continuing Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan” failed by a very large vote with many Councilors expressing uneasiness at resolutions professing a particular foreign or military policy.

Judith Platt, Freedom to Read Foundation President reported that she will be succeeded by Kenton Oliver in that office. She recalled the great services provided by the late Judith Krug in fighting for intellectual freedom over many decades.

A case entitled U.S. v. Stevens is scheduled to be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court during its 2009-10 session in which entire categories of speech could be denied First Amendment protection if the perceived value of the speech is deemed to weigh against “compelling government interest.” These and many other court battles are being waged with FTRF fighting on behalf of intellectual freedom. ALA Members are encouraged to join the FTRF. <http://www.ftrf.org/joinftrf.html>

COUNCIL III – July 15, 2009

Constitution and Bylaws Committee action item that specified that votes by members of the Executive Board, Council, Committees and Task Forces may be taken by mail, electronically and via conference call was approved.

Committee on Legislation secured Council support for passage of a resolution requesting that the “...ALA President, with the advice of the Executive Board, convene an ALA wide representative group to continue to assess the proposed Google Book Search Settlement and its ongoing impact on ALA Members and member institutions and to make recommendations for action by the Association and its members.”

The Intellectual Freedom Committee (IFC) secured passage by Council on a number of action items, including one seeking the “sunset” of Section 215 of the Patriot Act.

Resolutions

A Resolution Promoting Sunday, October 4, 2009 as “Intergeneration Day Means Libraries” was passed unanimously.

Resolutions on accessibility of Library web sites and for accessibility of databases purchased by Libraries also passed.

A “Resolution Endorsing Legislative Proposals for Affordable, Universal Health Care” passed with near unanimous support. A “Resolution calling for an “Action Plan to Remedy the Current Library Budget Crisis” also passed.

A “Resolution to expand electronic participation“ that will make accessible over the ALA website the recording of the entire deliberations of ALA Council beginning with the next Mid Winter Meeting, Boston, January 2010 passed.

Memorial Resolutions:

Jane Belon Shaw, Director fo the Lisle Illinois Library District for 28 years

Kate McClelland, from Greenwich, CT, where she worked with children’s literacy programs at the public library

Kathleen Krasniewicz, from Greenwich, CT, where she worked with children’s literacy programs at the public library

James Joseph Michael, a pioneer of Z39.50 library automation

Dr. Judith Krug, the first Director of ALA’s Office for Intellectual Freedom and the Executive Director of the Freedom to Read Foundation

Margaret Taylor Lane, a pioneer in the establishment and administration of state documents depository systems

Minnie-Lou Chittick Lynch, a pioneer and leader for the cause of libraries and librarianship from Louisiana

Coleen Cole Salley, storyteller, professor of children’s literature, and accredited proponent of libraries and librarianship

Dr. E. J. Josey, former President of the American Library Association and founder of ALA’s Black Caucus founded in 1970

Marjorie Gray Wynne, co-founder of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section of the Association of College and research Libraries

Evan Farber, former President of the Association of College and Research Libraries

Connie Costantino, lifelong champion of information literacy, accessibility to knowledge and global exchange of knowledge, and international and multicultural library services

Virginia Saunders, who spend 64 years in federal service, beginning as a clerk typist at the Federal Bureau of Investigation and then spending 63 years at the Government Printing Office (GPO)

Tributes

Arts Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries, a division of the American Library Association (ALA), on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of Arts
100th Anniversary of the National Library of China
Commendation on the 40th Anniversary of the Freedom to Read Foundation

This report highlights a select list of all of the actions taken by Council during Annual Conference. Copies of the final wording of all resolutions and action items from Council Sessions are available on the ALA Web Site <http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/governance/council/councilactions/index.cfm> . Voting records of all councilors are also posted at his site.

I will be attending ALA Midwinter in Boston, January 15, 19, 2010. Worthy of note is that Council meetings will end on Tuesday rather than Wednesday to assist in budget constraints of all chapters.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carolyn Tassie

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ALA Councilor 2007-2010