

ALA Councilor
Report to the Board
March 7, 2009



ALA Elections—Polls close at 11:59 on April 24, 2009

Voting will take place exclusively via email.

Between March 17 and March 19, 2009, a broadcast e-mail (announcing that the election polls are open and stating member number, pass code and instructions) will be sent. When the mailing of the ALA election ballots begins, all members in good standing who have a validated e-mail address will receive a notice. Members without an email address, or whose email bounces, will receive a special letter providing all instructions and a unique password to vote online.

Kentucky has an opportunity to have additional representation on the ALA Council:

Judith Gibbons – Councilor-At-Large

Johan Koren – Councilor-At-Large

AASL

Terri Kirk for Reidland High School in Paducah

I attended a snowy and cold ALA Midwinter in Denver, Co. Jan. 23-28, 2009. Attendance at Midwinter, reported on Monday was 10,220, compared to 13,601 in Philadelphia in 2008 and 12,230 in Seattle in 2007.

Council Highlights

Electronic Member Participation: After 18 months of work the Task Force on Electronic Participation presented sixteen recommendations to Council II. Although supported in theory, the Task Force encountered some challenges in its presentations as councilors complained of insufficient time to examine the proposals and the accompanying background information. Support is from the principle of allowing electronic participation in association business because it promises to save a lot of time and energy now wasted in personal travel, but concerns were raised about problems of implementation including costs of technology and training. This does seem to be a “wave of the future” but a newly-formed caucus of younger councilors expressed frustration at the seemingly slow pace of change in ALA. The Task Force report is available online: <http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/governance/council/councilcommittees/tfoemp.cfm> Some of the sixteen items were approved during Council III with the last 10 being tabled until Annual conference.

ALA-APA: ALA’s Allied Professional Association carries out activities that ALA cannot do for various tax-related reasons. Since its establishment six years ago it has struggled financially but continues to carry out an effective program to certify public library administrators and is close to

establishing one to certify library support staff. ALA-APA's salary survey functions are being transferred to ALA's Office of Research. <http://www.ala-apa.org/>

Library Education: After ten years of work, the Library Education Task Force won Council's approval for a set of "Core Competencies for Librarianship", specifying a set of outcomes that "a person graduating from an ALA-Accredited masters program in library and information science should know and, where appropriate, be able to employ: Foundations of the Profession, Information Resources, Organization of Recorded Knowledge and Information, Technological Knowledge and Skills, Reference and User Services, Research, Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning, and Administration & Management." For more information, please see the following website: <http://www.ala.org/ala/educationcareers/careers/corecomp/index.cfm>

COUNCIL I: James Neal, Budget Analysis and Review Committee reported on the budgetary status of ALA. Despite dropping revenues, ALA Executives and Budget Officers have reduced expenses to the point where net assets of the Association remain stable and even somewhat higher than during 2007. However the Endowment fund fell from \$31.6 million one year ago to \$22.6 million.

The Library Advocacy Committee announced the development of "tool kits" to assist Library advocates with talking points and convincing arguments. "Advocating in a Tough Economy" (featuring ALA President Jim Rettig) <http://www.ala.org/ala/issuesadvocacy/advocacy/advocacyuniversity/toolkit/index.cfm> and "Add it Up: Libraries Make the Difference in Youth Development and Education" provide excellent guides in formulating strategies to tell our story. <http://www.ala.org/ala/issuesadvocacy/advocacy/advocacyuniversity/additup/about/index.cfm>

ALA-APA COUNCIL: Keith Fiels announced that bringing ALA-APA to fiscal viability was an immediate priority. ALA-APA ended 2008 with a net loss of \$19,098 and overall net assets for 2008 fell to a negative \$248,427 from the negative \$229,329 in 2007. Contributions to ALA-APA were \$10,475 below that of 2007. In response to a question, Fiels indicated that the number of contributors to ALA-APA from among the ALA Membership was only about 1 or 2%.

The enrollment in the Certified Public Library Administrator Program has been relatively modest in number, but testimonials from recent graduates were read and noted as a source of optimism for the future of this program.

COUNCIL II: Treasurer Rodney Herseberger noted that three of the larger revenue producers – publishing, meetings and conferences, and dues – have not been increasing at a significant enough rate. New approaches and business models may need to be examined. ALA will have to reduce expenditures if revenues decline as a result of the floundering economy and dropping attendance.

Council updated on the work being done by the Freedom to Read Foundation <http://www.ftrf.org> and its efforts to support litigation in defense of our liberties. FTRF President Judith Platt presented reports on recent victories in the battle to preserve intellectual freedom and privacy rights.

COUNCIL III: J. Douglas Archer, Intellectual Freedom Committee, submitted three new interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights – Challenged Materials, Restricted Access to Library Materials, and Service to Persons with Disabilities. All were passed by a near unanimous vote.

Resolutions:

Committee on Legislation Chair Ken Wiggin presented two Resolutions:

“Resolution Commending President Barack Obama on his Commitment to Openness and Transparency in Government” and “Resolution in Support of the Reauthorization of the Library Services and Technology Act.” Both passed by a near unanimous vote.

Beverly Lynch, Chair of the International Relations Committee, presented a “Resolution on the Connection between the Recent Gaza Conflict and Libraries.” After a lengthy debate, the resolution passed by a wide margin.

“Resolution on Understanding Gaza – One Conference, One Book, One Read” presented by Councilor Elaine Harger was defeated.

“Resolution on Access for Physical Mobility Impaired Conference Attendees” presented by June Pinnell-Stephens, passed overwhelmingly.

“Resolution on Accessible Computer Workstations at ALA Annual Conference and Midwinter Meetings” by Melora Ranney Norman passed.

“High Speed Internet Wireless Access at Conference Hotels” by Ria Newhouse was defeated.

Copies of the final wording of all resolutions and action items from Council Sessions are available on the ALA website

<http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/governance/council/councilactions/2009mwandannualactions/mwcouncilactions.pdf>

Aside from Council meetings and forums, I attended a reception/meeting of the chapter councilors at the Denver Public Library’s Central Library: It was nice to have the opportunity to meet with other chapter councilors and learn about the various state library associations. It was gratifying to hear that almost everyone I talked to had something nice to say about a Kentucky librarian.



National Library Worker’s Day is April 14, 2009.

Carolyn Tassie
ALA Councilor 2007-2010