

## **ALA Councilor Report-6**

### **March 7, 2005**

**Since the Midwinter meeting the Council listserv has seen a great deal of activity regarding the greater use of electronic or virtual meeting to accomplish more Council business. A couple of individuals have been forced to resign from the Council in recent months due to the cost of attending two meetings a year. For those who don't have institutional support this can amount to a considerable burden. Therefore there has been considerable discussion about how these costs could be lessened. I will keep you posted if there are further developments in this area.**

**At the request of the conference chair I have arranged for Michael Gorman to be our banquet speaker at the centennial conference this fall. Michael is currently serving as ALA President and will be Past President at the time he addresses us. Tentatively he is scheduled to speak on the topic of "Building a New Library". I don't know how many of you have had the opportunity to hear him speak but he is quite an accomplished public speaker and I am looking forward to hearing him.**

**In other news, I have continued to serve as a conduit for information about the doings of ALA and where appropriate to relay that information to our membership. For review purposes I am attaching a copy of my midwinter report which was sent to the entire NDLA membership. That is all for now.**

## ALA Midwinter Report-2006

### By Charles Pace-ALA Councilor

The American Library Association held its annual Midwinter meeting in San Antonio from January 20-25. The first couple of days saw some rainy weather but after that, conditions improved and we had temperatures in the 60's. The ALA Council held meetings on Sunday, Tuesday, and Wednesday and debated a number of issues of interest to the profession. The most significant piece of business was a proposal for a dues increase to be phased in over three years.

Initially, I opposed the dues increase but after talking with the ALA Executive Director and members of the Executive Board and listening to the various debates around the issue I changed my mind and decided to go ahead and support the increase. The increase was approved by the Council and will be on the ALA ballot in the spring. I would encourage all of you who are members of ALA to vote in favor of this increase when it comes before you. I am attaching the press release from ALA regarding the Council action below:

### **ALA Council approves dues increase proposal**

(CHICAGO) The American Library Association (ALA) Council voted to place a proposal to increase personal membership dues on the ALA spring ballot during the Midwinter Meeting in San Antonio.

“It’s been 11 years since the last dues increase. Then, as now, we had a mandate from membership to implement an ambitious strategic plan,” said ALA President Michael Gorman. “The dues increase is needed to keep ALA moving forward.”

ALA Executive Director Keith Michael Fiels explained the increase will support the association’s new strategic plan ALA Ahead to 2010. Developed with input from more than 20,000 members, the plan has a special focus on advocacy, including building public awareness of the value of libraries and librarians, research to document the value of libraries, legislative advocacy at the national level and support for grassroots advocacy at the state and local levels. It also calls for the association to strengthen its efforts in key areas such as in core areas such as intellectual freedom, literacy, diversity, equitable

access to information and continuing education.

Noting that the ALA budget has been flat for five years, ALA Treasurer Terri Switzer said, "We have reached our financial limit. It's imperative that we pass the dues increase. ALA cannot be all the things we want it to be if we don't step up to the plate."

The ALA Executive Board approved the recommendation from the Budget Analysis and Review Committee (BARC) in October. The proposal calls for an increase of \$10 per year over a three-year period for ALA regular members. Members paying \$35 or \$45 would see an increase of approximately \$10 over three years. The salary threshold for a lower dues rate also would be increased from \$20,000 to \$25,000. If approved by members, the changes would go into effect in September 2006. ALA also will provide an option for installment payments by credit card.

For more information, please visit [www.ala.org/alaahead](http://www.ala.org/alaahead).

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Please note that you can obtain additional information using the link listed above. Over the past 11 years roughly 30 percent of the purchasing power of dues revenue has been eroded by inflation. ALA has been forced to keep a number of positions open for the past couple of years and budgets have been essentially flat for the past five years. One of ALA's major initiatives involves supporting rural librarianship; progress on this goal has been limited due to budgetary constraints. I feel that this goal is of significant importance to those of us in North Dakota. Please feel free to send me any questions you may have about the proposed increase and if I don't know the answer I will get the information for you.

Other issues debated by the Council included the rights of librarians to travel overseas to conferences and to confer with colleagues in countries with which the United States may not have relations. The Council also passed a

resolution opposing the confirmation of Judge Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court as well as a number of resolutions related to the Patriot Act and various intellectual freedom issues. The Council also decided to postpone until the 2006 Annual Conference any action on a proposed study of a graduated dues structure. The Council wanted to allow time for the Budget Committee to review the financial implications of the proposed study. Copies of Council resolutions as well as the voting records of individual Councilors will be posted on the ALA website over the next few weeks. I encourage all of you to review this information and to educate yourselves regarding actions taken by the Council.

In summary, I found it to be a very interesting and informative Midwinter session and also very interesting to see how the governance of ALA is handled. If anyone has any issues that they would like me to bring before the Council in a future session please feel free to email them to me. My role is to serve the members of NDLA and to make sure our voice is heard in ALA deliberations. I would also encourage any of you who may be interested to consider running for a position as Councilor-At-Large. One of the issues we discussed was the lack of representation from states west of the Mississippi, Shelby Harken has already answered the call and is running for a Council seat and we welcome more candidates from our part of the country. Thank you all for giving me this opportunity to represent you on the ALA Council.