

ALA Councilor Report – 6

ALA Councilor Report for ALA Midwinter, Jan. 2007 in Seattle, WA submitted by Shelby E. Harken

EPA: A hot topic was the closure of several major elements of the Environmental Protection Agency's library network. EPA sent several high-ranking officials to Seattle. Their position is that no materials were being lost, that much was being digitized and that the closures were based on library staff analysis of how best to meet challenges of delivering more information faster, increasing reliance on electronic resources and coping with limited resources and space.

PRESIDENT PLANS: Leslie Burger, President of ALA. President Burger is working on a National Agenda for Libraries to clarify and codify ALA's positions on a wide variety of issues in discussions with policy makers and funders at national, state and local levels. ALA President-Elect Loriene Roy is gathering examples of library anniversary events that will occur during her presidential year, June 27, 2007 to July 2, 2008.

PRESIDENT'S PROGRAM: Deena Ebbert, a motivational speaker, presented her FISH! Philosophy to hundreds of attendees. With enhanced customer service as the ultimate objective, the "Fish! Philosophy" consists of four steps: 1) Be There, 2) Play, 3) Make someone's day, and 4) Choose your attitude and how you come to work. Seattle's Pike's Place fishmonger shop provided the inspiration for this concept – where a grueling workplace can become a positive environment for employees and customers alike.

ALA-APA COUNCIL:

APA's projects are beginning to come to fruition. Two salary surveys have been conducted. The survey of non-MLS positions went into 3 printings. One indicated a range from the Federal minimum wage to \$142,000. The librarian survey found that the median increased by more than 4% to \$56,000, with a range of \$22,000 to \$253,000. The web-based database will launch this month. A nonbinding resolution on the endorsement of a minimum salary of \$40,000 for professional librarians* was passed unanimously at this session.* It is hoped that the ALA-APA will become self sustaining within the next few years. However, in the Treasurer's Report for ALA-APA delivered to Council on January 21, two of the weaknesses noted about the ALA-APA was "low awareness among ALA members" and "confusion about relationship with ALA".

Committee on Organization presented a proposed change: To provide training and information, recommend standards, suggest strategies, and undertake research to improve the salaries and status of all library employees and encourage career development for all library employees. To promote and advocate pay equity and equity in the workplace as it affects all library employees by: acting as a resource on the pay equity issue for the American Library Association; maintaining an active network and database of resources in support of these issues; and supporting equal employment for all library employees, all in support of and promoting the larger goals of the American Library Association-Allied Professional Association.

* Be it resolved:

That the American Library Association-Allied Professional Association endorses a minimum salary for professional librarians of not less than \$40,000 per year;
That the details for this endorsement shall be published and otherwise disseminated by the Director of the ALA Allied Professional Association as appropriate.

COUNCIL I and INFORMATION SESSIONS:

- Budget: Patty Wong (Chair of BARC – Budget Analysis and Review Committee) gave a positive budget assessment with total revenue for the Association proved to be almost \$1 million over budget projections with a budgetary ceiling of \$56,540,976 for fiscal year 2007.

- Endowment Trustees report: For the last 12 months our investments increased by \$3.6 million. \$1 million was in contributions and the rest by active management of the funds.
- Diversity Counts: ALA recently released a comprehensive study of gender, race and age in the profession, analyzing US Census data from 1990 and 2000 to provide a demographic picture of our profession. The study found that the nearly 110,000 credentialed librarians were predominantly ages 45-54, female and white with a growth of 33% for that group, so old people are staying in their jobs. The number of racial and ethnic minorities receiving accredited master's degrees grew from 9 percent to 13 percent, and the percentage of males decreased 4.6%. The Spectrum scholarship program had a strong effect, which President Burger hopes to build upon with the Emerging Leaders institute and other efforts.
- Emerging Leaders: The goal is to have 100 new librarians ready to participate in leadership in the Association, one of its divisions or state chapters. More information is available at <http://wikis.ala.org/emergingleaders>
- Dues: Dues have increased but not enough to fully carry out the ambitious action goals identified last year. The task force studying graduated dues structure needs more time to operate, and was granted until Midwinter 2008.
- Vice-president's report issues:
 - Supporting LIS Education through Practice Task Force is working in collaboration with ALISE and ALA's Committee on Education to continue the Education Forums to take place on Friday afternoons at ALA.
 - Workplace Wellness Task Force has held a conference call and is planning a Wellness Fair for 2008 ALA in Anaheim.
 - Circle of Literacy Task Force will participate in a conference call to work on supporting the "We Shall Remain" American Experience series – hoping to be able to offer community programming grants to libraries planning events around the series content.
 - Progress is being made on a calendar of events online to coincide with the anniversary of ALA events.
 - Three taskforces are based on circles of activity: Events Planning Circle, Student Action Circle, Envisioning Circle.
 - Events will be infused with both international and indigenous presence.
- Executive Director's report addressed EPA closing, LC decisions, new web page to be released soon, working on 2nd campaign for American libraries, his report will be sent out more broadly, including directly to division presidents and roundtables.

COUNCIL II: The Budget Analysis and Review Committee (BARC) was granted an extension of six months to study the ramifications of establishing a graduated dues structure for ALA. Three resolutions were brought forward and debated for nearly two hours. Two of them were defeated by a very large majority vote of Council: "Resolution to Advocate Ending Funding for the Iraq War" and "Resolution on Impeachment of President George W. Bush". A third Resolution called for ALA to "suspend all affiliation with the Boy Scouts of America National Council until such time as the Boy Scouts of America ends its exclusionary policy on the basis of a person's religious beliefs or sexual orientation..." Gays and atheists are currently prevented from joining BSA. This resolution was referred to ALSC (Association for Library Service to Children) for clarification on that division's position on this issue. There was much sentiment on the part of Councilors during this session to reject resolutions that were not precisely related to Library issues such as intellectual freedom, privacy rights, funding for libraries, preventing access to information, etc. The Freedom to Read Foundation reported on continuing struggles with the government on National Security letters under the USAPATRIOT Act.

COUNCIL FORUM: A discussion involving about 75 members of Council discussed two pending resolutions. One concerned establishing requirements for Libraries (especially those outsourcing

web site development) to insure handicapped accessibility to sites and digital collections. The other resolution called for broader access to library services for all patrons (including immigrants).

CHAPTER COUNCILOR FORUM: Discussion focused on the confusing nature of orientation and difficulty in understanding the "ALA Council culture". Discussed the several political resolutions ALA voted on at the Council II meeting. The opinion is that many academic librarians tend to be liberal whereas most school and small library librarians tend to be conservative. Representatives at Council tend to be from the academic or large libraries with a greater tendency to liberal views. So when we "vote our conscience" are we really representing all librarians?

COUNCIL III: Past-President Michael Gorman was honored by the California Library Association and by the Council for his long service to the profession and congratulated upon his recent retirement. Veteran Councilors Larry Romans and Charles E. Kratz, Jr. were elected from among a slate of six candidates to serve for a three year term (2007-2010) on the Executive Board of ALA. I voted for Larry Romans and Audra Kaplan who was a YALSA member and now administrator and with ALA experience with finances, the Emerging Leader committee, etc. to get a balance in background and represent issues of concern in North Dakota. The Committee on Organization (COO) included a preliminary report from the Subcommittee on E-Participation exploring the possibilities and implications of full electronic participation on committees and decision making bodies. [Discussion following the meeting shows significant resistance to electronic communications]

Nominating Committee: This year's nominating committee stated that for each candidate who agreed to run, four turned down the idea. For President-Elect they chose: Nancy Davenport and James Rettig, for Treasurer: Rod Hersberger and Joann Pinder. Polls will open March 15 and close April 24, with results reported in May.

Resolutions at COUNCIL II and III.

- A resolution passed encouraging Congress to "amend the Copyright Act to facilitate the use of 'orphan works' if the user has made a reasonably diligent, good faith search to locate the owner of the work, but was unable to find the owner."
- Also passed was a Resolution in Support of Immigrant Rights: "Resolved, that ALA strongly supports the protection of each person's civil liberties regardless of that individual's nationality, residency, or status; and be it further resolved that ALA opposes any legislation that infringes on the rights of anyone in the USA (citizens or otherwise) to use library resources on national, state, and local levels." I voted against a wording change and have some reservations about this resolution. The presenter emphasized we were voting for the "spirit" of assisting patrons, recognizing libraries often have policies so we voted in favor of "service to all". The resolution came to be because "foreign" people have been denied service. However most libraries have policies about who their primary patrons are and who they check books out to, etc. so I see a problem if this resolution were used to challenge a library. "Residency" to me, is the problem.
- Approved was a "Resolution Affirming the Role of Libraries in Providing E-Government and Emergency Services."
- A resolution empowering the Executive Director to make grammatical and punctuation corrections on resolutions was passed unanimously.
- The International Relations Committee presented an action item calling for the appointment of an ALA representative to serve on the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield (USCBS). Council passed this measure. The USCBS was established in January 2006 with the mission of urging the protection of cultural property during armed conflict.
- The "Accessible Digitization Projects Resolution" was brought before Council "that the ALA strongly encourages all libraries engaging in digitization projects to create versions

of all materials that are accessible to persons using screen-reader or other assistive technologies, based on Section 508." Council favored the spirit behind this resolution. However, it was referred to the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA) for clarification and more specific direction for Council at ALA Annual.