

Federal and Armed Forces Libraries Interest Group

Reference and User Services Association
American Library Association



Annual Report 2021

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Message from the Chair

If 2020 and 2021 (so far) seems to be a blur for you, blame it on COVID-19. The challenges that COVID-19 has presented for libraries, including those at the federal and armed forces level, have made it extremely challenging (to say the least) to serve patrons. That said, the Pandemic has opened up some opportunities for professional development and networking.

After a number of challenging years, FAFLIG is, I believe, now poised to focus on the mission of promoting the library and information service profession in the federal and armed forces communities. As part of that focus, and trying to broaden access to those interested in these career paths of librarianship, we're trying to engage people differently, all the while trying to discern the needs of professionals and prepare them for the future.

As libraries emerge from the fog of COVID-19, the industry is entering a rebuilding phase. Organizations like FAFLIG are vital in helping those who are doing the building to be more effective. Professional relationships give us strength and our combined strength is what will help carry the day as we chart the course for libraries in the new world COVID-19 has created.



Michael Steinmacher
Chair of FAFLIG, 2020-2021
Director of Barr Memorial Library at Fort Knox

About FAFLIG

The Federal and Armed Forces Libraries Interest Group (FAFLIG) is an interest group of the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA), which is a division of the American Library Association (ALA). Membership in FAFLIG is open to any interested member of RUSA.

Our Mission

The mission of FAFLIG is to promote the library and information service profession in the federal and armed forces communities, providing a common forum and professional network for library staff supporting their current needs and preparing them for the future.

Our History

FAFLIG can trace its history to World War II, when the ALA's Division of Public Libraries established a Service Librarians Section.

That section became known as the Armed Forces Librarians Section until 1990, when it was reorganized as the Armed Forces Libraries Round Table. Meanwhile, in 1972, the ALA formed a Federal Librarians Round Table.

The two groups merged in 2001 to form the Federal and Armed Forces Libraries Round Table (FAFLRT). While we are no longer an independent round table within the ALA, FAFLIG serves the same community of federal and military library personnel as did FAFLRT.

FAFLRT merged in 2018 with the Association of Specialized Government and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASGCLA). Two separate interest groups, the Federal Libraries Interest Group and the Armed Forces Libraries Interest Group, merged in 2020 to form the Federal and Armed Forces Libraries Interest Group (FAFLIG). When ASGCLA dissolved later that year, FAFLIG moved to the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) as an interest group.

In November 2020, FAFLIG members approved a new governing document -- the FAFLIG Manual -- and elected an initial slate of Executive Committee officers to lead the organization. This annual report represents the work of that team, and the hardworking volunteers who led the organization through its transitional period.

FAFLIG's Leadership

Executive Committee, 2020-2021

Michael Steinmacher, Chair

Joan Blaylock, Chair-Elect

Lee Lipscomb, Immediate Past Chair and Elections Committee chair

Vicky Crone, Federal Representative

Ben Leubsdorf, Secretary

Adria Olmi, Armed Forces Representative and Awards Committee chair

Phil Quinones, Advocacy Committee chair (non-voting)

Heather Kiger, Communications Committee chair (non-voting)

Ashley Evans, Community Committee chair (non-voting)

Rachel Arizaga, Programming Committee chair (non-voting)

Committees, 2020-2021

Advocacy Committee

Phil Quinones, Chair

Awards Committee

Adria Olmi, Chair

Communications Committee

Heather Kiger, Chair

Community Committee

Ashley Evans, Chair

Elections Committee

Lee Lipscomb, Chair

Rebecca Ramos

Lance Wiscamb

Programming Committee

Rachel Arizaga, Chair

FAFLIG Highlights from 2020-2021

January 2020: ASGCLA's Board approves the merger of the Federal Libraries Interest Group and the Armed Forces Libraries Interest Group into the Federal and Armed Forces Libraries Interest Group (FAFLIG). FAFLIG holds a meeting at ALA Midwinter 2020 for members.

March 2020: FAFLIG establishes working groups for Advocacy, Awards, Communications, Community, and Programming; an Administration working group will be added later. FAFLIG holds a virtual meeting for members as the COVID-19 pandemic shuts many libraries.

May 2020: FAFLIG holds a virtual meeting for members to discuss the group's future.

June 2020: The ALA Council votes to dissolve ASGCLA, effective September 1. FAFLIG leaders meet with RUSA leaders and agree that becoming a RUSA interest group is the best path forward for both organizations.

July 2020: FAFLIG holds a virtual annual meeting. Karl Debus-Lopez (Library of Congress) and Nancy Faget (Army Research Laboratory) win the Federal Achievement Award for 2020.

September 2020: FAFLIG officially joins RUSA. FAFLIG holds a virtual meeting for members

October 2020: FAFLIG hosts a "How to Get a Federal Library Job" online webinar featuring Barbara P. Ferry of Smithsonian Libraries, Lee Lipscomb of the Federal Judicial Center, Jennifer Manning of the Congressional Research Service, Kate McNamara of the Census Bureau, and Amanda Wilson of the National Library of Medicine. It is well attended and well received.

November 2020: FAFLIG holds a virtual meeting, where members ratify the FAFLIG Manual as a new governing document and elect initial officers to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee formally establishes six committees as successors to the working groups: Advocacy, Awards, Communications, Community, Elections, and Programming.

January 2021: FAFLIG hosts a virtual social/networking session for members during the virtual ALA Midwinter 2021, as well as a virtual Executive Committee meeting open to all members.

February 2021: RUSA highlights FAFLIG at a town hall for its new interest groups, along with the Physical Delivery interest group and the Accessibility Assembly.

March 2021: FAFLIG holds a virtual Executive Committee meeting open to all members and discusses events planned for ALA Annual 2021, which will again be virtual this year.

May 2021: FAFLIG holds a virtual Executive Committee meeting open to all members featuring guest speaker Gloria Miller, Command Librarian at Army Futures Command.

June 26, 2021: FAFLIG holds its 2021 annual meeting (2:45 p.m. to 3:45 p.m. CDT).

FAFLIG Awards

The Federal Achievement Award and the Federal Rising Stars Initiative are intended to honor those who work in federal and armed forces libraries. As of 2021, RUSA administers both awards.

Federal Achievement Award

The award recognizes an individual for achievement in the promotion of library and information service and the information profession in the Federal community.

No award given for 2021.

Federal Rising Stars Initiative

The award highlights the achievements of those new to the profession. Rising Stars are those people who display a passion for the profession, both at work and via volunteer or association activities.

Mariah Antoinette Lovick was awarded the 2021 RUSA Federal Rising Stars Initiative for her impeccable and conscientious customer service, and her dedication and commitment to upholding library standards and enthusiastically adapting them in ways that not only encourage participation in library activities but that also provide enhanced services to meet new challenges.

Ms. Lovick began her career as a Library Aide ten years ago. In the past ten years, she has worked in all areas in the Thomas Lee Hall Library, from circulation, technical services, cataloging, acquisitions, and public services. She completed her MLS in 2019. Ms. Lovick has provided a model of conscientious and exemplary customer service in her FMWR (Family Morale, Welfare and Recreation) Library. FMWR libraries are the “public libraries” of the Department of Defense. In these libraries, the staff serve a variety of patrons: Service members, civilians, family members, and veteran populations.

Ms. Lovick most recently focused on creating a new system of labeling youth literature to enhance the use of the materials and to encourage participation in reading and library activities. Ms. Lovick’s energy and enthusiasm provide an example of dedication to public services and commitment to her customers.

(Source: [RUSA announcement](#))