

Executive Committee
Federal and Armed Forces Libraries Interest Group
Reference and User Services Association
American Library Association

Meeting Minutes
November 17, 2021

A full recording of this meeting is available at
https://ala-events.zoom.us/rec/share/RNt6i3_K-95nTilpM1IM7jXdoDztBoV-94DKUxhYxvJBTrF8BLerqAjf4T5wFZIX.RJJVGqnnOHik-yCW?startTime=1637192739000.

Location: Virtual ([on Zoom](#))

Attendees: Joan Blaylock (Chair), Ashley Evans (Chair-Elect), Adria Olmi (Armed Forces Representative), Ben Leubsdorf (Secretary), Ebony McDonald (Communications Committee Chair), Thomas Moss (Programming Committee Chair), Julius C. Jefferson Jr. (guest speaker), Heather Kiger, Stephen Perry, Pat Alderman, Cristina Horak, Maria-Elena Villarejo, Jenn Dawes, Edward "Ted" McClure, Erin Friel, Krista Pegnetter, Mary Martin, seven additional unidentified attendees.

The meeting began at 7:01 p.m. EST.

Chair's Report -- Joan Blaylock

Scheduling our meetings for 2022: January 26, March 23, May 25, and July 20. All at 7 p.m. ET.

We're looking for a guest speaker for our next meeting. Contact Programming Committee Chair Thomas Moss (thomas.g.moss.civ@mail.mil) with your suggestions.

The ALA annual conference is coming up, sooner than it seems. Let's think about ideas for programming, and discuss them at our next meeting in January. *[Edit: See also [minutes from the Executive Committee's meeting on September 22, 2021](#), when Immediate Past Chair Michael Steinmacher said he applied to hold an ALA Annual 2022 presentation on "A Day in the Life of a Military Librarian," and that the Libraries and Veterans National Forum had asked us to work with them to sponsor a program on their new toolkit.]*

Adria posted our vacancy announcement today for the Federal Representative position, on various listservs, and hopefully we'll have something solid by January.

FAFLIG Officer Comments/Updates

Armed Forces Representative Adria Olmi

Awards season is now open! Details about the awards and how to apply are available on the RUSA website.

RUSA is planning some events in the spring, and details should be available in their online calendar.

Committee Reports

Communications Committee -- Ebony McDonald

We have results from our FAFLIG Member Engagement Survey, with 30 responses -- a 15% response rate, among our 195 members.

A plurality, 43%, have been members less than one year. A majority have been members for more than one year, and 20% have been with us for more than 10 years. We have a lot of new members and so an opportunity to engage those members.

Some 66% are employed in federal and military libraries, split equally between the two categories. Others made up 24%, plus 10% retired.

How do people find out about our events? The majority, 70%, use ALA Connect, with 40% citing email lists and 7% citing social media.

The greatest benefits of FAFLIG membership, according to members:

- 67% say information sharing
- 43% say networking
- 38% general professional support.

A majority of members, 73%, said they would be interested in receiving a one-page PDF newsletter every quarter. Most-desired topics include information on tools/resources for librarians (93%), a story by and/or about members (59%), information on federal employment (59%), and a message from the Executive Committee (44%). One-third of respondents said they would be interested in contributing content to the newsletter.

Joan, Ashley, Heather, and Ben all thanked Ebony for her great work on the survey.

Guest Speaker: Julius Jefferson

Thomas introduced Julius Jefferson, immediate past president of the American Library Association and head of the Research and Library Services (RL) Section of the Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade (FDT) Division of the Congressional Research Service (CRS).

Julius thanked the members of the Executive Committee for their work keeping FAFLIG going, and noted he is a former member of the Federal and Armed Forces Libraries Round Table. He said that any views expressed in this presentation are his own and he is not here representing the Library of Congress or CRS.

He said he started at CRS as a high school work-study student, and rejoined as a librarian about 20 years ago. CRS is a service unit of the Library of Congress with the mission of providing information to the Congress, both Members and committees. It was founded in 1914 as the Legislative Reference Service, and reorganizations followed in 1946 and 1970. CRS aims to provide timely, objective, authoritative, unbiased, nonpartisan, and confidential research that contributes to an informed legislature. Analysts and attorneys provide policy analysis, while librarians provide information analysis. He is based in the FDT division.

Each research division at CRS (law, domestic social policy, etc.) has its own section of research librarians, who collaborate with the analysts across all sections within that division. Librarians become experts on their subject areas, and also work to provide analysts with information resources and provide training. The major part of the librarian's work is research and writing. "It's never a dull day, especially when you're covering the entire world."

Julius said this is a good time to look for federal employment, and that CRS is a great place to work. Ben mentioned that CRS currently has two librarian jobs posted. Joan asked how many people are involved in supporting the work of CRS. Julius said he's been talking about research but that CRS also has a robust infrastructure to support that work, for example, people who take in and triage congressional inquiries. Thomas asked if Julius has any interesting stories or topics that he's researched in his career. Julius said there have been many, CRS gets many interesting and fascinating requests, including ones that require them to reach out to other federal librarians for assistance. In some respects, CRS is the institutional memory of Congress as staffers and Members come and go.

Additional questions and discussion followed.

Joan said tonight's talk reminded her why she got into this profession, the excitement of doing research and learning on the job, and that Julius makes working at CRS sound very exciting. Julius said with retirements picking up, CRS is in the process of building a new generation of information professionals.

Additional questions and discussion followed. Joan thanked Julius for his inspiring words tonight and for sharing his time with us.

The meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m. EST. The Executive Committee will next meet on Wednesday, January 26, 2022 at 7 p.m. EST.