

**PLA President’s Report, 2011 ALA Annual Conference  
Audra Caplan, 2010-2011**

It has been an honor to serve as president of the Public Library Association (PLA) and help lead an organization that I have been a member of for 24 years. It’s no surprise that the past year was full of challenges for public libraries—from debilitating budget cuts to pervasive questions (and doubts) about the future of libraries—but it was also filled with many wins as we heard story after story of libraries, with the support of their communities, rallying to stay open. PLA has remained dedicated to doing what it can to strengthen public libraries—developing new programming, publications, and events to help its members prepare for the challenges and the wins.

I’d like to thank the PLA officers, our committee chairs, task force chairs, community of practice members, and all the members who have worked so effectively during this past year to make a contribution to the field as well as the association. Thanks also to Barb Macikas, executive director of PLA and the PLA staff for their hard work on our behalf. I look forward to representing and serving PLA next year as past-president.

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## PLA Professional Development

In the past year, PLA continued to offer its premier level of professional development, but with a new level of online engagement that included “Public Libraries at Work,” a monthly webinar series, and the first-ever Virtual Spring Symposium.

### **Leadership Development**

In 2008, PLA began a leadership initiative that has continued to grow. The ideas behind PLA’s leadership model are to give members the tools to:

- Understand the major forces that are driving change in public libraries
- Learn how they can effectively respond to these forces
- Begin to navigate the local environment using PLA’s leadership assets

PLA has presented leadership education programs online and at conferences, sponsored an executive leadership scholarship program, and made leadership a priority goal of the 2010 PLA Strategic Plan, ensuring a future of transformative leadership education and resources for members.

### **2011 PLA Virtual Spring Symposium**

Through the years the PLA’s Spring Symposia have built a reputation of being premier education events for public library staff. This year, PLA brought that same level of professional development and inspiration right into the library with the Virtual Spring Symposium, creating a more convenient and affordable event for members.

On March 30, more than 675 online attendees joined PLA for a full-day of public library education. Eight programs highlighted topics in technology, youth services, administration/leadership, and adult services. Individual registrants were able to switch between simultaneous tracks to find what suited them best, while registered groups streamed simultaneous tracks at the same time (on two computers) to help their team get the most out of the day.

Special programs of the day included a lunchtime interview with author Diane Ackerman (*A Natural History of the Senses, The Zookeepers Wife*) led by *Booklist* editor Donna Seaman, and a lively closing session, “The Sustainable Library,” with George Needham and Joan Frye Williams.

The Virtual Spring Symposium also allowed for interactivity. Participants sent videos and photos that were shown during breaks, and they contributed throughout the day by writing messages in the onscreen chat window, tweeting, and asking questions of presenters.

### “Public Libraries at Work” Webinar Series

In an effort to offer more professional development opportunities throughout the year, PLA developed a webinar series, “Public Libraries at Work” in the fall of 2010. The series is designed to offer practical education and innovative ideas that help participants make a difference in their library.

2010-2011 webinars included:

- “Transforming Our Image” – Presented by Valerie Gross, Valerie Gross, President & CEO, Howard County (Md.) Library
- “Nancy Pearl Presents: Gifts that Make Great Gifts” – Presented by Nancy Pearl
- “Right on the Money: Financial Literacy @ your library” – Presented by Project Read Staff, South San Francisco Public Library
- “Creating a User-Friendly Website for Your Library” – Presented by Nate Hill, web librarian at the San Jose (Calif.) Public Library
- “Cracking QR Codes: What Are They and How Can They Help Your Library, Carson Block, IT director of the Poudre River (Colo.) Public Library District

## Online Course – “Accidental Public Library Technology Trainer”

Registration for the first offering of the “Accidental Public Library Technology Trainer” online course filled up fast! This sold-out, four-week blended learning course was designed for library professionals who have unexpectedly found themselves responsible for technology training at their library.

Librarian, author and trainer Stephanie Gerding guided participants through a highly interactive combination of live webinars, independent assignments, and online discussions.

PLA will offer the course a second time in August of 2011.

## PLA-Sponsored Library Management Workshops

This year, PLA continued to offer public library management workshops that provide in-depth education and interactive opportunities for library professionals. The courses, developed and led by nationally known trainers, can be taken individually or used cumulatively as credit toward the Certified Public Library Administrator (CPLA) program. The two-day workshops are offered in every region of the country and tackle valuable topics like *Budget and Finance*, *Fundraising*, *Marketing*, *Serving Diverse Populations*, and *Planning and Management of Buildings*.

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## PLA Publications

PLA offers a wide range of resources for career advancement, problem-solving, continuing education, and library information for public library professionals. In the last year, PLA released three new publications.

### *Time Flies...But Where? Time Management Tips and Tools*

In October 2010 PLA released *Time Flies...But Where? Time Management Tips and Tools*, its fourth downloadable training program for public library staff. The training will help participants

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evaluate the balance between their work life and personal life and understand their time management choices and challenges. The program will culminate in a personal plan outlining steps and tools for better time management for each participant.

Authored by Sandra Nelson, *Time Flies...But Where?* (ISBN: 978-0-8389-8563-2, \$45, ALA Online Store) includes all the materials needed to present a day-long (4-4.5 hour) training program. The materials include formal learning objectives, a detailed agenda, an engaging Power Point and companion script, guidelines for leading discussion, an implementation plan for attendees and a final evaluation form.

### *2010 PLDS Statistical Report*

Published annually since 1988, PLA's Public Library Data Service (PLDS) Statistical Report presents timely and topical data to assist public library administrators in making informed management decisions. The report is compiled from voluntary surveys submitted by public libraries across the United States and Canada.

In the 2010 edition, 987 public libraries shared their data on finances, library resources, annual use figures, technology, and more. The 2010 report also features a special section on children's services in public libraries. This section details populations, materials holdings, material expenditures and fines, annual counts, literacy programming, borrowing policy, and technology in children's departments throughout North America.

PLA publishes the report both in print and digital format. The digital database offers greater flexibility, allowing users to search, filter and customize their dataset. A subscription to the PLDS Database provides unlimited Web access for one year to all data and reports from 2006.

### *Every Child Ready to Read® @ your library®, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*

The eagerly anticipated *Every Child Ready to Read® @ your library 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* will be available in late June 2011.

The 2nd Edition is a toolkit of resources that enables public libraries and other early literacy centers to present workshops that help prepare parents/caregivers for their critical role as their

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child's first teacher. The workshops demonstrate how parents, grandparents, childcare providers, and preschool teachers can use five simple research-based practices—talking, singing, reading, writing, and playing—to develop language and pre-reading skills in children from birth to age five.

The toolkit includes early literacy research, customizable PowerPoint presentations, participant handouts, reading lists, brochures, posters, and bookmarks. Every Child Ready to Read is a project of PLA and The Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC).

For more details, visit [www.everychildreadytoread.org](http://www.everychildreadytoread.org).

### ***Public Libraries Turns 50!***

In January 2011, PLA released the 50<sup>th</sup> issue of *Public Libraries*. In honor of this occasion, we redesigned the magazine to give it a more contemporary look and feel. In addition to creating a new masthead, our editor and designers also developed a new layout for stories and columns inside. PLA looks forward to 50 more great issues of this peer-written and peer-reviewed journal.

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### **PLA @ Conferences**

Whether it's at PLA Conference or ALA Annual Conference, PLA has a reputation for providing the best in programming for public library professionals.

#### **PLA @ ALA Midwinter Meeting**

Preceding the ALA Midwinter Meeting in San Diego, California, PLA hosted a day-long institute, "Public Libraries Survive and Thrive in the 21st Century." A panel of top library administrators and consultants offered bright ideas to help public libraries weather the current economic environment and grow strong into the future. Topics highlighted were: budget decisions, fundraising, technology, facilities, staffing, community collaborations, and customer service.

## PLA @ ALA Annual Conference

This year, PLA is offering 23 educational programs dedicated to public library professionals at the 2011 ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana. Topics include digital literacy, diverse communities, unique programming, and library management.

The PLA President's Program and Award's Presentation will recognize the PLA 2011 award winners and host keynote speakers writer-producer David Simon and mystery author Laura Lippman.

In addition, PLA will host its first-ever Mega Issue discussion during the PLA All-Committee Meeting. The discussion will be an interactive event led by a facilitator and designed to offer public library professionals an opportunity to meet in person and provide input on the topics of leadership development and membership engagement for PLA.

For the second time at ALA Annual, PLA will co-sponsor, "Consultants Giving Back," an opportunity for attendees to meet one-on-one with nationally-recognized library consultants for complimentary half hour sessions. More than 15 consultants plan to participate.

## PLA 2012 Conference

PLA and its National Conference committees continue to plan for PLA Conference, March 13-17, 2012 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. PLA Conference has a reputation for excellence and offers attendees nearly two hundred high-quality educational programs, world-class speakers, a bustling exhibits hall, and countless networking opportunities and social events.

## Member Engagement

PLA continually looks for new ways to involve and recognize members.

### **New and Improved PLA Communities of Practice**

In the summer of 2010 PLA introduced restructured Communities of Practice (CoPs) to offer a more engaging and rewarding way for members to become involved in the association. The CoP enhancements were designed to strengthen member opportunities for networking, sharing best practices, engaging in discussion, and developing new ideas. There are more than 20 active CoPs.

- Branch Libraries
- Building and Facility
- Cataloging
- Collection Development
- Continuing Education
- Digital Librarianship
- Intellectual Freedom
- International Relations
- Library Management
- Marketing Public Libraries
- Public Library Services for Children
- Public Library Systems
- Readers' Advisory
- Reference
- Rural Libraries
- Services for Spanish Speakers
- Small and Medium Libraries
- Staffing Issues
- Strategy for Public Libraries
- Technology
- Urban Libraries
- Volunteers

### **PLA 2011 Awards**

PLA is pleased to offer annual awards honoring the best in public library service and innovation. In 2011, awards were given to twelve recipients.

**Allie Beth Martin Award, sponsored by Baker & Taylor:** Angelina Benedetti, Cluster Manager, King County (Wash.) Library System



**Baker & Taylor Entertainment Audio Music/Video Product Award:** Huntsville (Texas) Public Library

**DEMCO New Leaders Travel Grant:** Anna Bates, assistant director/children, Stuttgart (Ark.) Public Library; Rebecca Clarke, reference librarian, Springfield-Greene County (Mo.) Library District; and Jenna Hecker, technology and reference librarian, Morrill Memorial Library, Norwood, Mass.

**EBSCO Excellence in Small and/or Rural Public Library Service Award:** Independence (Kan.) Public Library

**Gordon M. Conable Award, sponsored by Library Systems & Services LLC:** Melanie Miller, former director of the Hays (Kan.) Public Library

**The Highsmith Library Innovation Award:** Noble County (Ind.) Public Library

**The Polaris Innovation in Technology John Iliff Award:** David Newyear, adult information services manager of the Mentor (Ohio) Public Library

**The Romance Writers of America Library Grant:** Costa Mesa (Calif.)/Donald Dugan Library

**2011 Public Libraries Feature Article Contest:**

Co-authors Paula Brehm-Heeger, Central Region Library services manager, Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County (Ohio), and Greg Edwards, library services director, Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County (Ohio), "Remaking One of the Nation's Busiest Main Libraries," (September/October 2010 issue)

Robert Rua, assistant marketing director, Cuyahoga County (Ohio) Public Library, "Reconnecting With Reading," (January/February 2010 issue)

### **PLA Member Update Webinar**

On March 2, 2011, PLA held its first-ever Member Update Webinar. The 45-minute, free webinar was developed to inform and encourage member engagement within the organization and throughout the field of public libraries.

A variety of panelists presented on topics relevant to PLA Members:

- **2011 PLA Elections and proposed dues increase**, Audra Caplan, PLA President,
- **Participating in PLA Communities of Practice**, Jay Turner, Gwinnett County (Ga.) Public Library
- **Engaging in public library advocacy**, Kathleen Reif, director, St. Mary's County (Md.) Library
- **Preview of 2011 Virtual Spring Symposium**, Larry Neal, Clinton-Macomb (Mich.) Public Library

PLA anticipates holding future member update webinars as a way to connect with members and offer interactive opportunities outside of conferences.

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## PLA and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

In 2011, PLA was fortunate to renew its partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and move forward on two projects—*Turning the Page 2.0* and the Public Access Technology Benchmarks initiative.

### **Turning the Page 2.0**

*Turning the Page 2.0* is the next generation of the popular and successful *Turning the Page: Building Your Library Community* program previously offered by PLA. Free to all participants, the 2.0 training addresses the same core issues of advocacy, communications, and relationship building—this time in a convenient blended-learning format.

In this six-week, facilitated online course, library staff and supporters learn how to create and tell their library's story, deliver effective presentations, develop a compelling case for support, and build and sustain partnerships along the way. Participants choose an advocacy goal for their library and are guided through the creation of an advocacy work plan.

*Turning the Page 2.0* will be offered six times through 2011 and 2012. Each session of *Turning the Page 2.0* consists of:

- In-person kick-off (Attendance is not required but is suggested.)
- Weekly interactive one-hour webinars with PLA-trained facilitators
- Independent assignments to advance Advocacy Work Plan (1-2 hours/week)
- Personalized facilitator feedback

By the end of six weeks, participants will have a road map for making a tangible difference at their library.

### **Public Access Technology Benchmarks Initiative**

Spring 2011 also saw the start to a groundbreaking coalition and project funded by the Gates Foundation—the Public Access Technology Benchmarks initiative. PLA joined 11 organizations, including ALA’s Office for Information Technology Policy, in an effort to develop, pilot, and promote the adoption of public access technology benchmarks for public libraries.

The primary goals of the initiative are to create benchmarks that motivate local re-investment and inspire continuous improvement in public access technology at public libraries, ensuring they are meeting their communities’ needs. Libraries will be able to use the benchmarks as tools to evaluate and plan for their technology needs.

PLA, specifically, will lead development of a training program for libraries and library trainers in order to encourage adoption and implementation of the benchmarks.

Beta benchmarks are scheduled to be announced in September of 2011 and pilot-tested through December, with a national launch anticipated for April 2012.

## More Partnerships

### **Merck Pharmaceuticals and KidsHealth.org**

In partnership with Merck Pharmaceuticals and KidsHealth.org, PLA distributed “back-to-school” health brochures to 300 libraries during summer 2010. Over 800 people replied for the 300 slots! The participating libraries received a display unit and 300 *Fresh New School Year!* brochures covering such topics as smart snacks, calming first day jitters, staying safe online, and questions to ask your child’s doctor. Libraries were asked to have the brochures available at the circulation desk and at any programs for parents of 11-14 year olds. Each participating library received a \$50 honorarium.

### **Federal Trade Commission**

The Division of Consumer and Business Education from the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has numerous resources aimed at helping consumers protect themselves from identity theft, fraud, debt, and much more. There are materials ranging from bookmarks to online games customized for adults and children. The FTC reached out to PLA as a potential distributor/promoter of the information to public libraries.

### **Public Insight Network at American Public Media**

PLA and the ALA Office for Library Advocacy partnered with Public Insight Network at American Public Media (APM) to promote an exciting new initiative, LibrariUS.

LibrariUS is a journalism project in collaboration with libraries. Its goal is to explore the information, social, and civic needs of communities through the lens of local libraries. Through an interactive website, the LibrariUS program collects details from people using the library. Their responses, along with their first name, last initial and location, are displayed on a dynamic map, updated in real time. Contact information is also requested for possible media follow-up.

LibrariUS is designed to easily capture stories from patrons and/or library staff. A simple widget, installed on a library's website, links patrons to the LibrariUS website and enables them to share why they're visiting the library or using the library’s website.

## 2011 Elections and Dues Increase

2011 was an unprecedented year for PLA elections. Not only were eight officer and board positions filled, the voting membership also overwhelmingly approved a dues increase effective September 2011.

Congratulations to Eva Poole, director of libraries for the Denton (Texas) Public Library and the 2012-2013 president of PLA. Poole will become PLA president-elect at the conclusion of the 2011 ALA Annual Conference this June and will assume the PLA presidency in June 2012 for one year.

Poole has held leadership positions in public and community college library settings over the past 30 years. She has been a member of PLA and ALA since 1991, serving on numerous PLA, Library Leadership and Management Association (LLAMA) and ALA committees, including the PLA board of directors and the LLAMA board of directors, and is currently serving as an ALA councilor at-large. In addition, Poole served as president of the Texas Library Association from 2003–2004.

Additional election results are:

- ALA Division Councilor - **Christine Lind Hage**
- Directors At-Large (One-Year Terms) - 1st position: **Gary Shaffer**; 2nd position: **Carol Simmons**
- Directors At-Large (Two-Year Terms) - 1st position: **Tom Fortin**; 2nd position: **Vailey Oehlke**
- Directors At-Large (Three-Year Terms) - 1st position: **Portia Latalladi**; 2nd position: **Georgia Lomax**

PLA membership also voted (71.4 percent) to approve a dues increase. In September 2011, personal and student member dues shall increase gradually at \$5 per year for four years, retired member dues shall be set at \$60 and organizational and corporate member dues shall be set at \$100.

Two additional ballot items, a future dues schedule and an update to the PLA bylaws regarding ALTA were approved.

## PLA Partners

### **Platinum**

Baker & Taylor  
Integrated Technology Group  
Gale Cengage Learning  
Midwest Tape  
OverDrive  
ProQuest

### **Gold**

BBC Audiobooks America  
BookPage  
Brainfuse  
Brodart  
BWI  
Demco  
Ebsco  
Highsmith  
Ingram Library Services  
Innovative Interfaces  
JanWay  
Library Journal  
Mango Languages  
Morningstar

### **OCLC**

Playaway  
Polaris Library Systems  
Queens Library  
Romance Writers of America  
SirsiDynix  
Useful

### **Silver**

America Reads Spanish  
Audio Publishers Association  
Books On Tape  
CIVICTechnologies  
Hachette Book Group  
HarperCollins  
LSSI  
Macmillan Audio  
Simon & Schuster  
World Book

### **Bronze**

LibraryConsultants.org