

**American Library Association  
2010 Fall Executive Board Meeting, Chicago, IL  
Report of Roberta Stevens, President**

All ALA presidents say their term just flies by. Well, it does! Hours seem like seconds and days like minutes. Below is a review of what has occurred since my inauguration on June 29, which feels as if it occurred just last week. I hope that you'll find it interesting!

**Council Initiated Task Forces**

As an outgrowth of a Council action, I appointed the **ALA Policy Manual Revision Task Force** charged with, among other responsibilities, matching policies with content, identifying obsolete parts or whole policies for deletion, verifying that policies reflect actual practice, renumbering to provide room for the expansion and a more logical ordering of the policies, and examining how or whether web capabilities can be used to enhance navigation through the Manual. John Moorman is heading up this team that will continue its work through the 2012 Annual Conference in Anaheim. I am grateful to John and his task force members, which include Diedre Conkling, Linda Sue Dobb, Aaron Dobbs, Sarah Pritchard and Barbara Stripling, for their willingness to look both at the Manual's "big picture" as well as the myriad of details that ensure we are keeping our policies up to date with the many changes occurring in this dynamic association. Lois Ann Gregory-Wood is ALA's liaison to the task force.

The **Equitable Access to Electronic Content Task Force** will be studying the challenges and potential solutions for improving electronic content access, distribution and preservation systems, and infrastructure in response to the creation and migration of materials from print to electronic access. With key assistance from ALA's Office of Information Technology Policy, the task force will identify relevant reports and projects that are completed, in-process or planned by ALA entities; conduct an environmental scan that includes relevant major initiatives outside of ALA; analyze and synthesize the information collected; identify and develop recommendations for action by ALA; and submit an interim report to ALA Council at the 2011 Midwinter Meeting with the final report at the Annual Conference. The call for task force members was widely distributed with an October 15 deadline date for responses. I will be moving rapidly after that date to appoint individuals to begin their work in coordination with ALA's liaison, Alan Inouye.

**Presidential Task Forces**

A **Chapter Relations Task Force** was formed with the charge of identifying how ALA and the chapters can help each other. The task force is also looking at the structure and operation of the Chapter Relations Committee with the aim of increasing the committee's effectiveness for the benefit of the many state chapters and their ALA members. Recommendations for moving the Chapter Relations Committee into a more active role, instead of its current focus on information sharing, is also a part of the Task

Force's work. Chaired by Annelle Huggins, the 2010-2011 chair of the Chapter Relations Committee, a former Chapter Councilor and the long-time executive director of the Tennessee Library Association, the task force team includes Kay Boies, Katie Chamberlain, Cynthia Czesak, Susan DiMattia, Ann Hamilton, Pamela Hickson-Stevenson, Holly Macriss and Elena Rosenfeld. Don Wood is the ALA liaison. The Chapter Relations Task Force's report and recommendations will be presented to the Executive Board and Council at the ALA Annual Conference.

A **Council Effectiveness Task Force** was recently appointed and charged with examining the Council's schedule, the structure of its sessions, Council's operation and modes of communication, and any other factors they believe would be helpful in the development of recommendations to make the governing body even more productive and responsive to the concerns of ALA's membership. The task force will recommend options for preparing Council "business" ahead of Midwinter Meetings and Annual Conferences; explore the timing, scheduling and content of Council sessions with the aim of making them as productive and worthwhile as possible; consider committee reports to Council and how committees can assist Council in being forward-thinking on issues that affect the profession in the future; examine the resolution process and how we can improve it and the relevancy of resolutions; and, finally, make any other useful recommendations on improving the way that Council conducts its business that surface during their discussions (virtually and in person). Jim Rettig, 2008-2009 ALA President, is chairing the team, which includes Robert Banks, Beth Bingham, Charles Forrest, Romina Gutierrez, Sara Kelly Johns, Patricia Wand and Liana Zhou. JoAnne Kempf and Lois Ann Gregory-Wood are serving as ALA's staff liaisons to the task force.

### **Presidential Initiatives**

The **Our Authors, Our Advocates** co-chairs, Maureen Sullivan and Peggy Barber, the Committee on Library Advocacy chair, Pat Tumulty, Marci Merola, Mark Gould, Macey Morales, Leonard Kniffel, JoAnne Kempf and I met to hammer out the basic premises of the initiative. This was followed by a very productive meeting with ALA's advocacy, public information and publications staff to develop the listing of authors to be solicited for participation in Our Authors, Our Advocates, the products to be generated and the timing of their issuance. The plan is to get ten to fifteen very visible and very popular authors as advocates during my presidential year; develop high-quality PSA's that libraries everywhere can include on their websites' home pages; produce an Our Authors, Our Advocates poster, featuring ten of them, for sale through ALA Graphics; distribute messages online ("Notable Quotes") from the authors for library advocacy efforts; and develop relationships with famous authors that can be drawn upon when critical situations require the voices of high-profile and respected individuals. A subsequent meeting, including Maureen, Peggy, Marci, Sally Gardner Reed and her staff, and I, focused on coordinating with ALTAFF on their author advocacy effort and merging Our Authors, Our Advocates into ALTAFF's program at the conclusion of my presidency.

On a separate track, the online toolkit "Cultivating Your Local Notables" is progressing quickly. Most of the text has been prepared and the next step is to develop the website for making available the information and strategies for enlisting local

celebrities to support libraries. A proposal for financial support for the toolkit is being prepared for submission to the Neal-Schuman Foundation.

ALA's key staff liaison for this initiative is Marci Merola.

**Frontline Fundraising**, which is being chaired by Peter Pearson, is moving forward rapidly with the development of an online toolkit for libraries. Many segments have already been drafted to cover 1) developing a fundraising plan and online giving, 2) raising funds using trustees, library staff and Friends groups, 3) establishing a planned giving program, 4) developing an honor and memorial bookplate program, 5) conducting an annual fund drive, and 6) moving donors "to the next level." Aimed at helping small and medium-sized libraries grow alternative sources of financial support, the toolkit's preliminary version will be ready for the ALA Midwinter Meeting. In addition to Peter as its leader, task force members include Donna Bero, Brett Bonfield, Maria Carpenter, Susan Gregory, Danny Hales, Penny Hummel, Ken Kozel, Andrea Lapsley and Rodney Lippard. Marci Merola, Kim Olsen-Clark and JoAnne Kempf are ALA's staff liaisons to the task force.

Paula Brehm-Heeger and Diane Chen are co-chairing the "**Why I Need My Library**" **Contest** targeted at developing a new generation of philanthropists. Initially, the contest's intention was to have kids from 8 to 12 participate in the contest, but the legal requirements arising from COPA caused us to shift to the 13 to 15 and 16 to 18 age groups. The prizes are substantial: \$3,000 for the first-place winners, \$2,000 for the second-place winners and \$1,000 for the third-place winners. However the prizes come with the stipulation that they be given to their school or local public library. "Why I Need My Library" will be launched at the Midwinter Meeting. Its task force includes Lana Adlawan, Gretchen Caserotti, Qi Chen, Michelle Chronister, Kelly Czarnecki, Robert Delgadillo, Jason Hyatt, Liana Juliano, Debra Kay Logan, Holly Okuhara, Monique Sendze, Ali Schilpp and Patricia Suellentrop. ALA's staff liaisons are Marci Merola and JoAnne Kempf.

### **President's Program at the 2011 Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference**

Sue Gardner, executive director of the Wikimedia Foundation, will be the featured speaker at the President's Program in New Orleans with a presentation on "Wikipedia: Past, Present and Future." With assistance from ALA staff, I am still working on the program for the Midwinter Meeting in San Diego. (Unfortunately, I wasn't able to line up Keith Richards to do an interview on his book "Life," though I tried mightily.)

### **Interviews**

Interviews with the print and nonprint media have occurred in some interesting places over the past few months, including on the way to airports and in airport waiting areas. It's been fun! Here's a listing of the media, interviewer, dates and topics:

Library Management Today with Bob Kieserman, June 28, on my presidential initiatives

Harper's Magazine with Wes Inenzinna, July 14, on library budget cuts

KVCR Radio (NPR) with Gina Diamante, July 22, on the privatization of libraries

Janet Jai for her book on “Saving Our Public Libraries,” July 26

NBC Universal with Sheila Conlin, July 29, on e-books

Santa Clarita Valley Signal with Corey Minderhout, August 2, on e-books

The News & Observer (Chapel Hill, North Carolina) with Katelyn Ferral, August 6, on e-books

Information Today with Jamie Babbitt, August 8, for a presidential profile

XM Sirius Radio with Bob Edwards, August 20, on the state of America’s libraries

Newsweek with David Graham, August 23, on the state of America’s libraries and especially the impact of budget cuts on libraries

The International Herald Tribune with Nicola Clark, September 7, on a library in a Netherland’s airport

WGVU Radio (NPR) with Patrick Center, September 20, on the advances and use of new technologies in libraries (in connection with the groundbreaking for the new state of the art library at Grand Valley State University in Michigan)

The Hour newspaper (in Connecticut) with Danielle Capalbo, September 22, on library e-books and technology trends

The Buffalo News with Charity Vogel, September 22, on developing alternative sources for funding libraries

WBIA Radio with Rebecca Miles, September 27, on the privatization of libraries

Atlanta Journal Constitution with Janelle Davis, October 1, on the impact of budget cuts on libraries

Wisconsin Public Radio live interview with Ben Merens, October 7, on the privatization of libraries

The Wall Street Journal with Jonelle Marte, October 8, on personal finance and investing resources available at libraries

Harper’s Magazine with Daoud Tyler-Ameen, October 8, on the privatization of libraries

American Spirit Magazine with Stacey Evers, October 18, on the state of America’s libraries

The Los Angeles Times with Steve Chawkins, October 18, on the privatization of libraries

### **Travel and Speaking Opportunities**

Presenter at the National Diversity in Libraries Conference, July 14-16, Princeton University

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions Conference in Gothenburg, Sweden, August 10-15

Presenter at the Kentucky Library Association/Kentucky School Media Association Conference in Louisville, September 16-17

Welcomed attendees and read from Jodi Picoult's book, *My Sister's Keeper*, for the Banned Books Week Read-out Event in Chicago, September 25

Freedom to Read Foundation Retreat in Chicago, October 5

Presenter at the Missouri Library Association Conference in Lake of the Ozarks, October 7-8

Presenter at the Colorado Association of Libraries Conference in Loveland, October 9

Presenter at the Georgia Council of Media Organizations Conference (Georgia Association of Instructional Technology, Georgia Library Media Association and Georgia Library Association) in Athens, October 13-15

Presenter at the South Carolina Library Association Conference in Myrtle Beach, October 20

The focus of my conference presentations has been on "21<sup>st</sup> Century Libraries: The Challenges and Opportunities," "Demystifying ALA" and ALA's diversity programs and initiatives.

### **Articles**

President's columns in American Libraries:  
"Advancing Advocacy: The Road to Sustaining Libraries in Communities Continues," August

"In Their Own Words: Authors Unite in Library Advocacy Effort," September

"Help from Our Friends: It's Time to Develop a New Mix of Knowledge," October

"There's Good News Out There Too: State Associations Play a Vital Role in Advocacy," November-December

Other articles:

“Yes, There Is Still Book Banning in the United States” for the Huffington Post website, September 24

“Healthy Communities Call for Strong Libraries” op ed for The Washington Post’s “Capital Business,” scheduled to run on October 25

Illuminea journal “Interview [with] Roberta Stevens” for the fall issue (Oxford University Press)

The September 26 New York Times article, “Anger as a Private Company Takes Over Libraries,” included an outrageous quote from Library Systems & Services chief executive, Frank Pezzanite, that cried out for a rebuttal: “You can go to a library for 35 years and never have to do anything and then have your retirement.” I am pleased that the Times ran my response on October 3, both in print and online.

**Finally, and most importantly...**

...Thank you to the wonderful staff of ALA, my assistant Jeff DiScala and the ALA members who have been so supportive of my work on behalf of the association. I am honored to be your president.