

American Library Association
Fall 2010 Executive Board Meeting
October 22-24, 2010
Report of President-elect Molly Raphael

Orientation

I just completed two days of orientation on October 19th and 20th, followed by orientation to parliamentary procedure with Eli Mina on October 21st. I have been looking forward to the opportunity to meet with ALA staff so that I can build my knowledge of the breadth and depth of ALA work. I am grateful that I have served on both Council (1997-2006) and the Executive Board (2000-03) relatively recently as well as president of one the ALA divisions (LLAMA, 2008-09). While I have a good grasp of much of the organization, I know that I have much to learn. The two days provided opportunities to refresh my memory and to learn of new activities and initiatives. I am eager to build collaborations with ALA divisions and other units so that I can build on work that has been done or is ongoing.

Presidential Initiatives

The two areas that I am focusing on for my presidential initiatives are advocacy and diversity.

- Advocacy. The tentative name for this initiative is “**Communities stand up for libraries!**” Patty Wong and Barbara Stripling have agreed to be co-chairs. (In addition, Marci Merola, Sally Reed, and Emily Sheketoff have been contributing to our discussions, as well as Denise Davis before she left ALA at the end of September.) We will build on the advocacy work of recent ALA presidents, focusing on two areas. First, **research**: we want to build on research results on the value of libraries and efforts to measure outcomes for all types of libraries. For example, there are some useful studies such as OCLC's *From Awareness to Funding* and also studies such as the one just release by ACRL, *The Value of Academic Libraries*. Our efforts will focus on translating research results into language that is easily understandable and usable by our library users. Second, **advocacy by our users**: we will focus on an initiative that helps our users advocate for libraries of all types, using research results as well as personal stories. One additional element to be addressed is how do we get our users to be advocates year in and year out, not just when we have tough economic times. We want our users to talk about the value of libraries and their transformative power regularly. We want to move libraries to be seen as essential for learning and essential for life. A small group of us will meet in Chicago on November 19th to better define our plan.

- Diversity. I am working with the Spectrum Presidential Initiative Team. In addition, I am looking at how ALA might take some additional steps in this strategic priority. I have been talking with a number of members as well as ALA staff about how we might take some next steps to connect our diversity recruitment efforts to retention and leadership development. These discussions are still in the formative phase.

Media Training

I am scheduled to receive media training on November 17th. I have received media training in both my public library director positions and have spent more than a decade interacting with the media. Nevertheless, I always learn something new in each media training session I have attended and look forward to the opportunity next month to improve my skills.

Committee on Committees (CoC) and Executive Board Nominations

In August, I sent a message to the Council list inviting Councilors who were interested in serving on the Executive Board to let us know of their interest. (I was told by ALA staff that they did not think that this had been done before.) We were pleased to receive about a dozen responses. In addition, members of the CoC also identified other Councilors whom we should consider. With the assistance of Lois Ann Gregory-Wood, we had a conference call to discuss the candidates and selected six Councilors and six alternates. In our deliberations, I asked the CoC members to consider who would be remaining on the Executive Board after July 2011 so that we could look to build the overall diversity of the Board. The names of the candidates will be published shortly.

Committee on Appointments (CoA) and the Nominating Committee

The CoA (the 11 presidents-elect of the divisions) has been communicating over the past few months. In addition to the recommendations for the Nominating Committee described above, we have also prepared ourselves for the work around committee appointments that will begin next month. I have been very pleased by the level of participation.

Travel and Speaking Engagements

- IFLA. I was pleased to be able to attend IFLA in August in Gothenburg, Sweden. I had the opportunity to meet many librarians from a variety of countries and also to observe how IFLA functioned. I agree with President Roberta Stevens' recommendation from a year ago and echo her recommendation to future ALA presidents-elect to attend IFLA if possible. (August 10-15)
- Ohio Visit. I was invited to kick off the first "Big Read" program in Oberlin, OH, sponsored jointly by Oberlin College (my alma mater), the Oberlin Public Library, and Oberlin High School. I took advantage of the invitation to meet with undergraduates who were interested in careers in libraries (about 12 attended including several from diverse backgrounds). I also visited with the Kent State SLIS including a session with students and a reception with faculty and KSU Library staff. I was pleased to be able to accept an invitation to be the keynote speaker for the KSU SLIS annual alumni dinner on the same day. I plan to visit with students in LIS programs and ALA Student Chapters whenever I am near campuses during my travels over the next couple of years to try to

encourage them to stay involved in ALA. I want to learn what they expect from their professional association so that I can build on some of the recent work of ALA leadership, e.g. Camila Alire's Young Librarians Working Group. (October 2-4)

- Deschutes Public Library (Bend, OR) and Central Oregon Libraries Staff Development Day. I delivered the keynote for the 120 Deschutes staff plus others who had been invited from surrounding libraries, including one of the public school systems. (October 17)
- Freedom to Read Foundation Retreat. I attended the retreat on October 5th along with several other FTRF trustees. (October 5)
- Stanley, Idaho. On personal travel, I had the opportunity to visit the Stanley Community Library, serving a town of 100 residents in the Sawtooth Mountains. In times when we are reading about so many cutbacks, I was inspired by this tiny town's library which was open 6 days a week, provided 24/7 wi-fi access, and offered a range of programs and resources for its residents and many summer visitors. This library served as my communications hub for about two weeks in September, and I plan to write about it for PLA soon.

I want to thank JoAnne Kempf, Director of the Governance Office, and her staff for the terrific assistance they have provided me during the past several months. I look forward to working with them in the future. I also am greatly appreciative of the guidance I have received from Keith Fiels and ALA senior staff. In addition, ALA's current leadership and many past presidents have been invaluable in their offers of advice and assistance.

October 20, 2010