

**American Library Association  
2011 Midwinter Meeting, San Diego, CA  
Report of Roberta Stevens, President**

It's hard to believe that six months have already passed since my inauguration! I'm hoping for some time after the Midwinter Meeting to catch my breath, reflect on what's occurred and get energized for the last half of my term.

Below are updates to the task forces and presidential initiatives described in the President's Report for the Fall Executive Board Meeting and subsequently emailed to Council on October 27. In addition, I have included full listings of travel and interviews. The latter, in particular, provides a sense of the themes and topics that get media attention. This is useful information for strategically approaching how to get media involved in highlighting the important role libraries play in their communities and why we need skilled and well-paid library staff.

**Council Initiated Task Forces**

The **ALA Policy Manual Revision Task Force**, under John Moorman's leadership, is moving forward with ensuring ALA's policies are keeping pace with actual practices and exploring opportunities for web access. John's team will continue their efforts through the 2012 Annual Conference in Anaheim. (Task force members and ALA's liaison to the Policy Manual Revision Task Force were identified in the October 27 emailed report.)

The **Equitable Access to Electronic Content Task Force** is finally in place with co-chairs Linda Crowe and Michael Porter. There was a tremendous response to the request for nominees, making the final selection of task force participants a challenging one. Thank you to the ALA officers and members who identified so many talented and knowledgeable members who will study the challenges and potential solutions for improving electronic content access, distribution and preservation systems, and the infrastructure needed to respond to the creation and migration of materials from print to electronic access. The task force will be convening by phone and virtually, as would be expected. However, ALA has also set aside funding to hold an intensive working session in Washington.

In addition to the co-chairs, task force members include Char Booth, Paul Courant, Kristine Ferry, Rod Gauvin, Christopher Harris, Peggy Johnson, James LaRue, Monique le Conge, Clifford Lynch, Robert Maier, Barbara Mates, Cynthia Orr, Floyd Pentlin, Jacqueline Rafferty, Axel Schmetzke, Mark Stoffan, Heather Wicht and Bob Wolven. The staff liaisons from ALA's Office of Information Technology Policy are Carrie Russell and Marijke Visser.

**Presidential Task Forces**

The **Chapter Relations Task Force** charged with identifying how ALA and the chapters can help each other and increasing the effectiveness of the Chapter Relations Committee, has been convening virtually and by phone. Led by Annelle Huggins, the 2010-2011 chair of the Chapter Relations Committee, the task force will present its report and recommendations to the Executive Board and Council at the Annual Conference in New Orleans. (Task force members and ALA's liaison to the Chapters Relation Task Force were identified in the October 27 emailed report.)

Former ALA President, Jim Rettig, is heading up a **Council Effectiveness Task Force** that is examining the Council's schedule, the structure of its sessions, Council's operation and modes of communication, and other factors that will help them develop recommendations for making the governing body even more productive and responsive to the concerns of ALA's membership. An ambitious set of issues has already been identified for the task force's consideration. (Task force members and ALA's liaisons to the Council Effectiveness Task Force were identified in the October 27 emailed report.)

Shortly before the Midwinter Meeting, the **ALA Future Perfect Presidential Task Force: Envisioning ALA's Governance in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century** was formed to undertake a "blue sky" approach to envisioning a governing body of the future. Chaired by Brett Bonfield, this group includes Kawanna Bright, Margaux DelGuidice, Heather Devine, Candace Mack, Ross Singer, Rachel Van Noord, Leigh Anne Vrabel and ALA liaison JoAnne Kempf. The following question was posed to them: "If there was no governing body in place, what structure would you envision to reflect ALA's goal of an engaged and collaborative membership, the effective use of technologies and changes in the outlook and expectations of a new generation of people working in libraries?"

While the Council Effectiveness Task Force will make recommendations for action by Council, the Future Perfect Task Force will issue an "idea paper" intended to begin the discussion of potential alternatives for the governance of ALA in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The draft paper is scheduled for release in the spring, so that there is sufficient time for review and conversation by the Executive Board and Council, the divisions and roundtables, and any interested ALA members prior to the Annual Conference.

### **Presidential Initiatives**

To date, the **Our Authors, Our Advocates** initiative has enlisted the following well-known and beloved authors to speak out for libraries through video and audio PSAs and quotes: Laurie Halse Anderson, M.T. Anderson, David Baldacci, Holly Black, Carmen Agra Deedy, Tony DiTerlizzi, Sharon Draper, Richard Dreyfuss, Neil Gaiman, Brad Meltzer, Sara Paretsky, Kathy Reichs, Scott Turow and Mo Willems. More have been contacted and are expected to confirm their participation. Visit [www.ilovelibraries.org/ourauthorsouradvocates](http://www.ilovelibraries.org/ourauthorsouradvocates) for more information.

A "virtual postcard" featuring the PSAs will be emailed to ALA members on January 11. The postcard gives libraries the opportunity to help spread the word virally, either via Facebook, Twitter, e-mail or downloading on their library websites. In addition, ALA's Graphics will be producing a poster with author photos and quotes for sale and display in libraries that will be available later this spring. (Task force members and ALA's staff involved in "Our Authors, Our Advocates" were identified in the October 27 emailed report.)

A newly updated database of quotations about libraries that advocates can be accessed at [www.ilovelibraries.org](http://www.ilovelibraries.org). It includes 400 quotes from authors, politicians, historical figures, celebrities, and journalists. Quotes originated from *American Libraries*, ALA's Libraries Change Lives initiative, FOLUSA/ALTAFF and other sources.

The "Cultivating Your Local Notables" online toolkit is now available through the Advocacy University at [www.ala.org/localnotables](http://www.ala.org/localnotables). Neal-Schuman Foundation generously provided financial support for the toolkit's development. Patricia Schuman and Toni Tucker (of the Milner Library at Illinois State University) were both toolkit reviewers. Cultivating Your Local Notables contains information and strategies for enlisting local celebrities to support libraries.

**Frontline Fundraising**, chaired by Peter Pearson, will be reviewing the final draft of the online toolkit at Midwinter. Scheduled for launch in February, Frontline Fundraising covers 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,” the web site’s launch is scheduled for February 1. (Task force members and ALA’s liaison to Frontline Fundraising were identified in the October 27 emailed report.)

The “**Why I Need My Library**” Contest, co-chaired by Paula Brehm-Heeger and Diane Chen, will be “soft-launched” at Midwinter. There are two participant categories, 13 to 15 and 16 to 18, with substantial prizes for each: \$3,000 for first-place winners, \$2,000 for second-place winners and \$1,000 for third-place winners. However the prizes come with the stipulation that they be donated to their school or local public library. (The winners will also receive \$50 gift cards to an online bookseller.) Submission forms, contest details and a list of resources to get started in making a video will be available at [www.ilovelibraries.org/whyneedmylibrary](http://www.ilovelibraries.org/whyneedmylibrary). (Task force members and ALA’s liaison to the “Why I Need My Library” Contest were identified in the October 27 emailed report.)

PLA and YALSA are currently contest cosponsors and the Executive Boards of AASL and ALSC will be reviewing the opportunity to be cosponsors at Midwinter.

### **President’s Programs at the 2011 Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference**

Ted Danson, who has combined a successful thirty-year career in film and television with his activism on behalf of ocean conservation, will be featured at the Midwinter Meeting’s President’s Program on January 9, 3:30 p.m., in Ballroom C of the Convention Center.

Sue Gardner, executive director of the Wikimedia Foundation, will be the featured speaker at the Annual Conference’s President’s Program on June 26.

### **Interviews**

The following is a comprehensive listing of interviews with print and nonprint media.

#### *Presidential Initiatives:*

- Library Management Today with Bob Kieserman, June 28
- Information Today with Jamie Babbitt, August 8

#### *The State of America’s Libraries (Including How Budget Cuts Are Affecting Libraries Nationwide):*

- Harper’s Magazine with Wes Inenzinna, July 14
- Janet Jai for her book on “Saving Our Public Libraries,” July 26
- XM Sirius Radio with Bob Edwards, August 20
- Newsweek with David Graham, August 20
- Atlanta Journal Constitution with Janelle Davis, October 1
- American Spirit Magazine with Stacey Evers, October 18
- The Book Report radio show with Elaine Pasekoff, November 18

#### *The Privatization of Libraries:*

- KVCN Radio (NPR) with Gina Diamante, July 22
- WBIA Radio with Rebecca Miles, September 27
- Wisconsin Public Radio live interview with Ben Merens, October 8
- Harper’s Magazine with Daoud Tyler-Ameen, October 8
- The Los Angeles Times with Steve Chawkins, October 18
- MSN Money with Karen Aho, October 21
- The Dallas Morning News with Dianne Solis, November 8

*E-Books:*

- NBC Universal with Sheila Conlin, July 29
- Santa Clarita Valley Signal with Cory Minderhout, August 2
- The News & Observer (Chapel Hill, North Carolina) with Katelyn Ferral, August 5
- The Hour newspaper (in Connecticut) with Danielle Capalbo, September 22

*Library Services and Other News:*

- The International Herald Tribune with Nicola Clark, September 7 (a library in Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport)
- The Wall Street Journal with Jonelle Marte, October 8 (free personal finance and investing resources available at libraries)
- Associated Press with Hillel Italie, October 28 (the Stonewall Children and Young Adult Literature Award...this interview received extensive national coverage)
- CBS Radio Network with Sharon Bennett, November 12 (National Gaming Day @ your library)

*Future Trends:*

- WGVU Radio (NPR) with Patrick Center, September 20 (on the advances and use of new technologies in libraries in connection with Michigan's Grand Valley State University groundbreaking for their new state of the art library)
- The Buffalo News with Charity Vogel, September 22 (developing alternative sources for funding libraries)
- Republican American newspaper with Mike Patrick, November 24 (the changing role and value of libraries)
- This Week in Libraries webcast, December 9, with interviewer Erik Boekesteijn and Bas Savenije, the Director General of the National Library of the Netherlands (the future of libraries and library advocacy)

**Travel and Speaking Opportunities**

Presented at the:

- National Diversity in Libraries Conference, Princeton University, July 14-16
- Kentucky Library Association/Kentucky School Media Association Conference in Louisville, September 16-17
- Missouri Library Association Conference in Lake of the Ozarks, October 7-8
- Colorado Association of Libraries Conference in Loveland, October 9
- Georgia Council of Media Organizations Conference (Georgia Association of Instructional Technology, Georgia Library Media Association and Georgia Library Association) in Athens, October 13-15
- South Carolina Library Association Conference in Myrtle Beach, October 20
- New York Library Association Conference in Saratoga Springs, November 3-6
- California Library Association and California School Library Association Conference in Sacramento, November 12-16
- Guadalajara Book Fair in Mexico, November 27-December 1
- Netherlands Public Library Association in Maastricht, December 9

Conference presentations focused on the challenges and opportunities of 21<sup>st</sup> century libraries (future trends), libraries protecting cultural heritage, fundraising and endowments, demystifying ALA and ALA's diversity programs and initiatives.

Participated in the:

- International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions Conference in Gothenburg, Sweden, August 10-15
- Freedom to Read Foundation Retreat in Chicago, October 5
- The Dartmouth Conference on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Russia-U.S. relationship, October 26
- The Aspen Institute Communications and Society Roundtable on the launch of Renee Hobbs' white paper "Digital and Media Literacy: A Plan of Action," November 10 (This roundtable was an outgrowth of the Knight Commission's October 2009 report "Informing Communities: Sustaining Democracy in a Digital Age.")

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

### Articles

President's columns in American Libraries included:

- "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
- "The Privatization Debate: Turning a Negative into a Positive," January-February

Other articles and op eds:

- "Yes, There Is Still Book Banning in the United States" for the Huffington Post website, September 24
- "Interview [with] Roberta Stevens" for the October issue of the Oxford University Press journal, *Illuminea: News and Features from OUP for the Academic Library and Information Community*
- "Technological and Economic Shifts Have Only Made Libraries More Valuable" op ed for The Washington Post's "Capital Business," November 8

Sent responses to:

- A quote in the September 26 New York Times article, "Anger as a Private Company Takes Over Libraries" (response ran on October 3, both in print and online)
- The October 25 Wall Street Journal article, "New Library Technologies Dispense with Librarians" (response ran on November 4 online)
- The October 25 Charlie Rose interview with Fareed Zakaria, including a segment on how technology makes libraries unnecessary (response sent on November 1)
- The November 24 Newsday article, "What Cuomo Can Do to Improve Schools" (joint response with AASL President Nancy Everhart)

### The Spectrum Presidential Initiative

The Spectrum Presidential Initiative remains a centerpiece of ALA's fundraising with \$568,000 in contributions and pledges so far. In addition to encouraging members to make a donation and/or host dinners for potential donors, support from corporations and foundations is actively being pursued. Making a planned gift (bequest) is another option for helping ALA reach the goal of \$1 million for Spectrum scholarships.

**Most Importantly**

Without the commitment and work of ALA's staff and members, progress on my presidential initiatives and my ability to use media opportunities to highlight libraries and the people who work in them would not have been possible. Space precludes my recognizing each and every individual, but they have my sincerest thanks for their patience and support.

Special thanks go to Jeff DiScala, my assistant, who will be leaving this position at the end of January to work exclusively on completing his doctoral studies. Jeff's calm and steady demeanor and attention to detail enabled me to keep up a busy travel schedule and respond to an avalanche of email messages. I will miss him terribly.

Warm wishes to everyone for a happy, healthy and successful New Year!