

**American Library Association  
2010 Midwinter Meeting, Boston, Massachusetts  
President-elect's Report  
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Welcome to Boston! It is wonderful to be back here again for ALA's Midwinter Meeting! The following is my report of President-elect activities during the fall, including work with the Committee on Appointments on the ALA committee appointments and with the Committee on Committees on the Council committee appointments. In addition, I am providing a summary of progress made on my presidential initiatives as well as an update on speaking engagements, interviews and ALA-related travel.

**COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS**

As ALA's president-elect, I have had the privilege of working with two appointment committees – the Committee on Appointments (COA), comprised of the divisions' presidents-elect, and the Committee on Committees (COC), comprised of the four members elected from and by the ALA Council. The COA provided terrific recommendations for the Nominating Committee's members and the COC were similarly dedicated in their quest for strong ALA Executive Board candidates.

Committee on Appointments (COA):

The COA and I first tackled recommendations for the Nominating Committee to meet our deadline of presenting this information at the ALA Executive Board's Fall Meeting. The nine-member Nominating Committee for the 2011 Election plays a very important role in ALA as the group responsible for preparing the slate of candidates for the ALA Council and president.

In requesting names from COA for committee consideration, I encouraged them to help me put together a roster of committee members and alternates that would be representative of diversity in the broadest sense: the division and units of ALA and a variety of types of libraries and areas of the country. They identified ALA members for the committee that were gender, age, and ethnically and racially diverse as well. Our recommendations for the Nominating Committee were accepted by the Executive Board at the Fall Meeting.

The Nominating Committee for the 2011 Election will be chaired by Robert Newlen and includes members representing the following groups within ALA: AASL, ACRL, ALCTS, ALSC, ASCLA, ALCTS, GLBTRT, LLAMA, PLA, RUSA, SORT, SRRT, YALSA, Emerging Leaders, Spectrum Scholars and two ethnic caucuses.

The Committee, with five females and four males, represents all regions of the country and come from the following states: California, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania. Among the committee are ALA members from a library cooperative, regional library, city library, school library, three universities, and a nonprofit membership, computer library service and research organization.

Committee on Committees (COC):

Email messages and a very productive conference call led to the determination of the slate of candidates for the ALA Executive Board. We began with four candidates and nine alternates in priority order. One of the four declined to run and the first of the alternates was included among the nominees. On November 4, 2009, I sent an email to the ALA Council announcing the 2010 candidates and providing information about the number (two) to be elected to the Board's three-year term; the date, time and location of the Executive Board Candidates Forum (January 18, 12:30 p.m., in the Council Room of the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center), and availability of the ballots.

**OVERALL COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT PROCESS**

COA and COC's charge is to advise the president-elect on names for various committee appointments in the overall appointment process. Although the news release for committee volunteers was first issued in August, I reached out a second time in early November with another news release that was widely distributed through AL Direct and the divisions and round tables. In the news release I reiterated the pledge I made to ALA's members when I ran for ALA president: I will provide members who want to play a meaningful role in ALA the opportunity to do so. The news release emphasized that I was seeking members who represent racial and ethnic diversity and a variety of types and sizes of libraries, areas of the country, and work experience. In addition, I encouraged newer

members, members previously not active in ALA, and active members who had never been formally appointed to serve on committees, to fill out an online volunteer form. I specifically asked ALA's member-leaders to forward the names of people they knew who are new to ALA and the profession and who would be good choices for appointment. I want to express my appreciation to all who did so.

The deadline date for ALA's members to complete the online committee volunteer form was December 4, 2009. Electronic listings of members interested in the ALA and Council committees were compiled by the ALA Office of Governance. These included both the individuals who completed the online volunteer form and names emailed to me by the member-leaders. Both COA (responsible for 23 ALA committees) and COC (responsible for 17 Council committees) received these listings, which included information such as education, experience, reasons for interest in the committee, etc.

The following were all factors in preparing the rosters of committee chairs and the new committee members:

- Receipt of a recommendation from an ALA member;
- Submission of an online form indicating interest in serving on a committee;
- Request for reappointment to a committee;
- Ethnic and racial diversity and representation of a variety of types and sizes of libraries, areas of the country, and work experience (as described above);
- Knowledge and experience that would bring specific leadership and expertise to the committee;
- Past experience on ALA and division committees;
- Background as an Emerging Leader and/or Spectrum scholar;
- Recommendation by ALA staff.

I was pleased to see that there were many newer members and members who had been active primarily at the state, regional and division level in the listings received.

After obtaining the first round of names, both the COA and COC were provided the opportunity for further input before finalizing the recommended appointments to be presented to the ALA Executive Board at the 2010 Midwinter Meeting.

#### Data on Volunteers and Appointments

The following is a summary of information on the committee openings and the members who applied using the online volunteer form.

- There were 79 ALA committee slots and 19 ALA committee intern slots available to fill.
- There were 66 Council committee slots and 12 Council committee intern slots available to fill.
- The total number of committee slots available was 176.
- 364 members completed the online volunteer form.
- In spite of a redoubled effort to encourage members to apply for assignment to an ALA or Council committee, there was a decrease from the number (542) in Camila Alire's Midwinter Meeting report. However, the number tracked close to Jim Rettig's (372) and Lorie Roy's (356) online applicants.

#### **Data on Members Completing the Volunteer Form**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Academic	147	40
Agency (State/Federal)	10	3
County	13	4
Public	74	20
Retired	11	3
Special	4	1
School	21	6
Student	32	9
Unknown	32	9
Other*	20	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>100</b>

\* Institutions, associations, vendors, consultants, etc.

#### **Data on All Committee Appointees (Including Interns)**

Category	Number	Percent
Administration	92	25
Adult Services	6	2
Literacy	1	0
Automation and Systems	3	1
Circulation	3	1
Instruction	11	3
Reference, Information	44	12
Serials	2	1
Technical Services	5	1
Youth Services	17	5
Acquisitions and Collections Development	4	1
Cataloging and Classification	13	4
Extension and Outreach	4	1
Consultant	6	2
Library Media Specialist	16	4
Preservation	1	0
Trustee	1	0
Library School Faculty	24	7
Library School Student	33	9
Government Documents	2	1
Rare Books, Manuscripts, Special Collections	2	1
Not Currently Employed	3	1
Other, Library Work	24	7
Retired	10	3
Other, Non-Library Work	3	1
None Reported	26	7
More Than One Checked Off	8	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>102*</b>

\* A slight skewing upward occurs due to the rounding off of percentages.

Members from 44 states completed the volunteer form with the greatest interest (more than 25) coming from members in California, Illinois and New York. There was a “mid-range” level of interest (10 to 24 members) from members in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia and Washington. Per the report received from ALA’s Member Services, there were no volunteer requests from Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota and South Dakota.

All of the divisions were represented with the greatest number coming from ACRL (123) followed by PLA (84) and LLAMA (75). All of the round tables were represented with the exception of CLENERT. The greatest number of round table requests for a committee assignment came from NMRT (52).

#### Observations/Recommendations

Although I very much hoped to see greater representation from school librarians on the committees, the number who requested a committee assignment was disappointing. I am aware that there are mitigating factors, including their active roles in AASL, issues with the scheduling of ALA’s Midwinter Meeting in particular, and limitations on financial support for meeting attendance. Nevertheless, I recommend a concerted effort in 2011 to engage this sector of our membership in applying for ALA and Council committee assignments. For this year, I made every effort to accommodate the school librarians who asked to be on a committee.

While a database was used to prepare the information, it was in a web spreadsheet rather than an Excel spreadsheet format. It proved challenging to use and required reworking into Excel. I recommend that the

spreadsheet format prepared by my assistant, Jeff DiScala, be used by the 2011-2012 president-elect and next year's COA and COC. I will ensure that the format he developed is shared with ALA to facilitate the review of the new committee assignment requests later this year.

In addition, I received email messages and phone calls from potential committee volunteers about problems accessing the online application form. Lois Ann Gregory-Wood and I both checked out these concerns and occasionally (though not consistently) experienced problems ourselves. For the next "go round" of committee requests, ALA will ensure that there is an email address and/or person/phone number identified to troubleshoot difficulties in getting to the online form.

I agree with President Camila Alire's observation in her report to the ALA Council in 2009 that there is no reason why the deadline for submission of online application forms cannot be set for early November. Given the deadline of December 4 for submitting applications and the amount of time required to transfer the data onto spreadsheets, review of the requests occurs the week just before Christmas and during the holidays. Using the holidays for this purpose along with the pressure to complete this task in a very compressed time frame for the upcoming ALA Midwinter Meeting would be unnecessary, if we trimmed the current four-month time frame allotted for its submission.

Finally, our awareness of the financial constraints on travel to professional meetings argues for reexamining the committees and a renewed focus on using virtual participation wherever feasible.

## **PRESIDENTIAL INITIATIVES**

My presidential initiatives advisory team is age, gender, ethnically and racially diverse. They represent a variety of types of libraries, divisions of ALA and include a member with deep roots in the chapter segment of the association.

On November 9 and 10, we met to discuss the key elements of my campaign platform and to strategize the most effective ways to make those promises a reality. I stressed the importance of building on the successes of my predecessors as ALA president, while responding to the evolving needs of the association's members.

Two key areas will be emphasized during my presidency: frontline fundraising and using popular authors as advocates for libraries. With shrinking budgets at libraries throughout the nation, the frontline fundraising initiative will provide tools that can be used by everyone, regardless of the size and type of library, who needs to supplement the budget from their jurisdiction or institution with additional support.

I have personal experience with authors as articulate spokespeople for libraries and am committed to working with our membership and ALA's staff to tap these natural allies to highlight the key role libraries and librarian play in the economic, social and educational fabric of our nation. "Our Authors, Our Advocates" will be developed over the next six months and launched after the ALA Annual Conference in Washington.

Along with the advisory team, I am aware of the enormous potential inherent in the rapidly expanding world of Web 2.0 social networking. At the ALA Midwinter Meeting, we will be sounding out members, especially in AASL and YALSA, about an idea for using young people to communicate why libraries are needed now more than ever. The objectives are to add to the arsenal of techniques for frontline advocacy and to engage a new constituency in supporting libraries.

My term as president coincides with the finalization of the ALA strategic plan. Transformation of the association is sure to be a key element in the plan. During my year as president, a number of task forces will be exploring potential changes in ALA that would reflect the transformations already underway in how we communicate and "do business." Their work would add to the association-wide conversations about the 21<sup>st</sup> century ALA.

Late on December 14, Jeff and I flew to Chicago for a day of intensive meetings with ALA staff to discuss the ideas generated during the November presidential initiatives advisory team's sessions. I want to express my deepest thanks to JoAnne Kempf for organizing a very productive experience and to ALA's staff for their responsiveness to my questions and proposals.

## **SPEAKING INVITATIONS, INTERVIEWS AND TRAVEL**

On September 9, I joined a panel, along with Jim Neal and Carla Hayden, at Goucher College for the opening of their new library/student commons, the Athenaeum. In spite of its traditional-sounding name, the facility reflects how students engage in the learning process and access information today. Fifty years ago, Goucher College opened its then new library with a panel addressing the subject "The College Library in a Changing World." Fittingly, the panel for their new library 50 years later once again addressed the same subject. I spoke about the "future of the library," especially the outreach opportunities presented by social media and its viral capabilities.

I was delighted to fill in for Camila Alire once again as a member of the Panel on Access to Information and Skills for the launch of Knight Commission Report “Informing Communities: Sustaining Democracy in the Digital Age.” Held at the Newseum in Washington, DC, on October 2, and streamed live over the Internet, the launch featured an impressive cast of participants, among them the current Chairman of the FCC Julius Genachowski, former FCC heads, the CEO of National Public Radio (Vivian Schiller), the Chairman of the Board for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (Ernest Wilson) and Aneesh Chopra, Chief Technology Officer of the U.S. Government. The Knight Foundation announced a \$3.3 million gift to eight libraries at the event.

ALA’s past president, Jim Rettig, and I shared the honor of presenting the “I Love My Librarian” award at a ceremony hosted by The New York Times at TheTimesCenter in Manhattan on December 3. Each of the 10 award winners received \$5,000 and was recognized for their “day-to-day, roll-up-the-sleeves, everyday work” supporting our values of literacy, equity of access, lifelong learning, diversity and intellectual freedom. The award is a collaborative program of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, The New York Times and ALA.

Segments from my taped interview with Fox Television on the effect of budget cuts on libraries aired on January 2 as part of the story “States Closing The Book On Public Libraries.”

It’s been many years since I attended an IFLA Conference. I used the opportunity to participate in the 2009 IFLA to get up-to-date on the association and its activities in preparation for my presidential year.

On October 19, I joined a People-to-People delegation to South Africa with visits to libraries in Soweto, Mamelodi and Cape Town and to the libraries at the University of Pretoria, Stellenbosch University and the largest distance-learning university on the African continent, the University of South Africa (280,000 students). Our visit and tour of South Africa’s new National Library in Pretoria was the highlight of the trip for me. The National Librarian, John Tsebe, and his staff embodied the can-do spirit and enthusiasm for the mission of libraries that we encountered everywhere we went. I wanted to “bottle up” and bring home the thirst for libraries and learning the delegation experienced there. We are so lucky in our country, but not necessarily appreciative of the rich opportunities and resources we have.

On November 17, I was the keynote speaker at the International Summit on Public Libraries held at the Shenzhen Library in Shenzhen, China. PLA’s president, Sari Feldman, and ALA’s past president, Beverly Lynch, were among the summit’s presenters.

I reprised my Shenzhen speech on the challenges and opportunities of 21<sup>st</sup> century libraries the following day in Shanghai as part of the CALA 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarian Seminar Project at Donghau University. I joined Qi Chen of Argosy University, Raymond Wang of the Community College of Baltimore County and Hanrong Wang of Jacksonville State University in two full days of presentations for more than a hundred librarians from throughout China. Following the keynote speech, I made a lengthy presentation on ALA’s role in providing leadership for the development, promotion and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship. In particular, the association’s emphasis on advocacy for libraries and the many ways to build support were explored as well as how to effectively “deliver the message” to legislators, administrators and any other individuals who control the library’s budget. My presentation also covered successful fundraising for libraries, creating customer-driven libraries, how to determine whether you are accomplishing your goals and objectives, the accreditation of library programs and the reasons it is important to have accredited librarians, and the competencies for librarianship today and in the future.

## **WITH APPRECIATION ...**

... to Jeff DiScala, my outstanding assistant, and the wonderful staff at ALA who have been an unfailing source of support and helpful information over the past months. In particular, I want to acknowledge Lois Ann Gregory-Wood and Delores Yates for undertaking the enormous task of compiling the committee volunteer requests with great competence, a superlative spirit of professionalism and a neverending sense of humor (in spite of my hundreds of phone calls and emails with questions). You are indeed “the best!”