



Reference and User Services Association

Annual Report 2011-2012

Gary White, RUSA President

May 25, 2012

This has been a busy and productive year for RUSA. The RUSA leadership has devoted a great deal of effort toward strategic planning and positioning RUSA for continued success in the future. This annual report highlights many of the association's activities as well as plans for the future.

Strategic Planning

RUSA developed its new three-year strategic plan (attached) which was approved at the May 2012 RUSA Board meeting. The new strategic plan outlines RUSA's broad goals, which include increasing membership; better meeting user needs and interests; providing leadership and professional development opportunities; facilitating member participation and engagement; improving organizational efficiencies; and developing effective marketing and outreach strategies. RUSA leadership is confident that this plan will be an effective guide for our activities in the coming years.

Important components to our strategic planning were the second annual Virtual Town Hall meeting held during Midwinter for those members who could not attend conference in person. The RUSA Board also conducted a "Big Think" at midwinter to discuss the kind of organization that we would like RUSA to become in the future. Finally, each section of RUSA conducted a SWOT analysis of RUSA outlining its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The results of these analyses were presented at Midwinter to aid in strategic planning.

Reference & User Services Quarterly (RUSQ)

RUSQ, RUSA's core refereed journal, completed its move to a completely digital format, a change made to broaden access, to make the content available in a more timely manner, and to reduce expenses. *RUSQ* can be accessed at:

<http://rusa.metapress.com/home/main.mpx>. The most recent four issues are accessible only to RUSA members, while older issues are open access. Diane Zabel, former RUSA President and member of ALA Council, is completing a six year term as *RUSQ* editor. Barry Trott, also a past RUSA President, has been selected as the new editor beginning in July. Our thanks to Diane for many years of outstanding service and to Barry for stepping into this important role.

Awards

RUSA is extremely excited by two new awards sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation, the *Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence in Fiction and Nonfiction*. RUSA and *Booklist* are co-sponsoring and administering the awards. The first winners of these new annual literary prizes will be announced at the Awards Ceremony at the ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim (Sunday, June 24, 8:00-10:00 PM, Hilton Anaheim). The awards will be given to the author of the best book for adult readers in two categories—fiction and nonfiction— each year. Two additional authors will be shortlisted as finalists in each of the categories. Winning authors will receive a \$5,000 cash award, and finalists will each receive \$1,500. The list of finalists was announced in May. The awards are made possible by a grant from Carnegie Corporation of New York on the occasion of the foundation's centennial and in recognition of Andrew Carnegie, one of the greatest benefactors of libraries both in the United States and around the globe, who recognized libraries as indispensable to the progress of society. The 50 titles under consideration for the prize are being drawn from the annual *Booklist* Editors' Choice and RUSA CODES Notable Books lists.

The RUSA Board also approved two new awards this year. The BRASS Business Expert Press Award for Academic Librarians is a new \$1,250.00 cash award given to an academic librarian who is new to the field of business librarianship in order to support attendance to the ALA Annual Conference. The Gale Cengage History Research and Innovation Award is a new award for up to \$2500 to facilitate and further research in history and history librarianship and to encourage membership in the ALA RUSA History Section.

RUSA also held its annual Book and Media Awards Ceremony at ALA Midwinter. This is always a popular event where RUSA announces the titles selected for the Notable Books List, The Reading List, the Outstanding Reference Sources List, the Sophie Brody Medal for notable Jewish literature, and the Dartmouth Medal for outstanding reference work. This year's reception also included the inaugural winners of The Listen List, a new audiobook award. We also look forward to our popular RUSA Awards Ceremony at ALA Annual, where RUSA announces winners of its many RUSA and Section awards (Sunday, June 24, 5:00-6:30, Disney's Grand Californian Hotel).

FINRA Program

RUSA continues its role as administrator for the FINRA (Financial Industry Regulator Authority) Investor Education Foundation's program entitled *Smart investing @ your library*. This grant program, in place since 2007, funds public library efforts to provide library patrons with access to effective, unbiased financial education resources. To date, 64 grants have been awarded, totaling \$4,691,952. A FINRA reception was held on Friday evening at Midwinter.

Literary Tastes

RUSA CODE's annual Literary Tastes is a popular event at every annual conference. In response to the RUSA membership survey conducted last year, RUSA is now making this event free for members. "Literary Tastes: Celebrating the Best Reading of the Year" will be held Sunday, June 24, 8:00-10:00 AM (Anaheim Convention Center). For more information see: <http://www.ala.org/rusa/awards/literarytastes>.

RUSA Structure Taskforce

The RUSA Structure Taskforce, chaired by Kate Kosturski, was created last year to broadly examine RUSA's structure and procedures and to explore ways that RUSA can be more responsive and useful to members. The task force has completed its work and presented its recommendations to the RUSA Board at Midwinter. These include:

1. Attract more non-academic librarians to RUSA

2. Provide Suggestions and Guidelines for Divisions and Committees to Transition from In-Person to Virtual Meetings
3. Build and maintain support resources on the RUSA Website/ALA Connect to foster electronic participation
4. Explore joint programming and other collaborative efforts with other ALA divisions and roundtables
5. Increase efficiencies and eliminate duplication across RUSA divisions

The RUSA Board has addressed these recommendations in its forthcoming strategic plan. The full-report from the task force is available at:

<http://www.ala.org/rusa/contact/rosters/rusa/rus-structf>

Web Conferencing Software

The RUSA/ASCLA Web Conferencing Task Force, chaired by Liane Taylor, was charged with examining products and solutions to encourage more virtual participation and committee work via web conferencing. The task force completed its work in November 2011, recommending the acquisition of Blackboard Collaborate which has now been implemented.

Emerging Leader/Spectrum Scholar Intern

RUSA was fortunate to have two outstanding members join RUSA this year. Emily Kornak, Adult Services Librarian at Barrington Public Library in Barrington, IL, is RUSA's Spectrum Scholar intern for 2012-13. Emily Hamstra, Undergraduate Learning Librarian at the University of Michigan, is the member of ALA's 2012 class of Emerging Leaders who is sponsored by RUSA. Emily and Emily are providing outstanding contributions to RUSA in many different area. An exciting new blog is "Chasing Reference." This is an Emerging Leaders project sponsored by RUSA and available at: <http://www.chasingreference.com/>

New Initiatives

RUSA has several new initiatives under way to help achieve our strategic initiatives. First, RUSA leadership is in the process of putting together RUSA's new Resource Development Committee, which will be charged with exploring and facilitating fund raising opportunities and donor relations. Second, a new "Just Ask" campaign is in the works. This team will work on a campaign with the broad goal of highlighting and celebrating the important work of reference and user services librarians. Finally, Susan Hornung, RUSA Executive Director, has created a new presentation aimed at recruiting new members to RUSA. RUSA is also moving toward offering more webinars and virtual CD courses and away from in-person pre-conferences as a way of generating revenue. In the past few years, revenues from pre-conferences have declined dramatically, while revenue from online courses and programs has jumped.

The RUSA Membership Committee is offering "RUSA 101" to new and potential members to learn about what RUSA and its sections do, how to get involved, how to stay informed of RUSA activities, and to answer any RUSA-related questions. RUSA 101 is being offered as a series of virtual sessions as well as an in-person event on Friday, June 22, 3:00-4:00 PM, Hilton Anaheim, at the Annual Conference in Anaheim. For more information see: <http://rusa.ala.org/blog/index.php?s=rusa+101>

Future

RUSA is well-positioned for the future with the election of two future outstanding leaders: Mary Popp, who will assume the RUSA Presidency after ALA Annual, Kathleen Kern, recently elected to be RUSA Vice-President/President-elect, and the many other fine leaders who have been elected to RUSA and Section level positions. We are also energized by the creation of our new strategic plan which contains many ideas for engaging members and moving forward. Finally, we have an outstanding RUSA Executive Director and staff who are committed to our RUSA members and who continually seek ways to make RUSA a better organization.