American Library Association

Fall 2012 Executive Board Meeting

Report of President-Elect, Barbara Stripling

Sustained ALA Leadership Focus

Molly Raphael and Maureen Sullivan have made a concerted effort to include me in their thinking and planning, so that we have a sustained leadership effort that carries through from one president to the next seamlessly. I want to express my deep appreciation for their inclusiveness.

Orientation

I visited the Chicago office in mid-September for my orientation to the complex and robust work being done by ALA divisions and offices. I thought I knew a lot of what is being accomplished by our association, but, honestly, I had no idea. I enjoyed getting to know the division executive directors during dinner one night, had a full day of media training (that was an eye-opener!), and then met with the directors of ALA offices for a day and a half. It was a good orientation, but I still have lots to learn.

Orientation to Washington Office

I also had the opportunity to spend a day at the Washington Office for my orientation to the two main aspects of the work in that office: governance and technology policy. I enjoyed my conversations with the dedicated staff members there and have a better understanding of the complexity of their work.

The Washington Office helped me get appointments to meet with the Chief Academic Officer of the Washington, DC, Public Schools about the crisis in their school libraries (the district cut a large number of positions this fall). I have been appointed to co-chair a School Library Task Force for DCPS and we have an aggressive timeline to present recommendations to the Chancellor by early December. I was also able to meet with a staff member of Councilman Jack Evans, who is considering legislation about school libraries in DC. I spent the session providing background information about quality school library programs. And finally, I had the opportunity to speak with some staff members at the DC Public Library about ALA and our transforming libraries/transforming communities efforts and my presidential initiative ideas.

Digital Content
Maureen appointed me as a liaison to the Digital Content Working Group co-chaired by Bob Wolven and Sari Feldman. This is a dynamite task force that is actively investigating and addressing the myriad digital content issues that libraries of all types are facing.

As a part of ALA's focus on the critical issues of digital content, I joined a delegation of Maureen Sullivan, Molly Raphael, Alan Inouye (OITP), and Bob Wolven in New York to meet with a few publishers individually and for Maureen to facilitate a conversation with a large group at AAP. Maureen has issued a report and we are actively pursuing next steps.

Committee on Committees

The Committee met by conference call to identify the slate for election to the Executive Board. Lois Ann Gregory-Wood contacted the nominees to verify willingness to stand for election. The slate was announced to the Council list on October 6: Daniel Berdaner, Peter Hepburn, Sara Kelly Johns, and James Neal. Kerri Price guided this committee through an orientation to our work to identify members for appointment to committees in another conference call on October 9. It is a privilege to work with the members of this committee – Rocco Staino, Em Claire Knowles, Terri Kirk, and Sol Gomez.

Committee on Appointments

This committee, comprised of the presidents-elect of the eleven divisions, is in the process of identifying the slate for the ALA Nominating Committee. Once we can find a time for an additional conference call, Kerri Price will conduct an orientation to our workbook and the process to be followed to develop rosters for each of the committees for which we have responsibility.

Continuing ALA Presidential Initiatives

As a part of the commitment by Molly and Maureen to the model of sustained ALA leadership, I have been involved in planning meetings for two continuing initiatives: the ALA School Library Task Force and collaboration with the Harwood Institute for Public Innovation. The School Library Task Force meeting was held at the Washington Office to strategize about the next steps for the Task Force. A small group of ALA leadership and staff attended the Harwood Summit in South Carolina for two days of networking and conversation.

Presidential Initiatives

For the focus of my 2013-2014 presidential term, I plan to build on and continue ALA's support for transforming libraries with a special emphasis on library practices in two areas (literacy and innovation) that enable all librarians to empower the voices of their community. For planning purposes, I am calling it "Empowering Community Voices Through Libraries" to capture the umbrella concepts. I believe that this focus will enable us to connect to and continue ALA's efforts to support local libraries and librarians as they transform their library programs and services to meet the priorities of
the communities they serve. I think that these two areas of focus will connect to professional development and community services for every type of library and will highlight initiatives that are already in place (e.g., Digital Literacy work by OITP; information literacy of AASL and ACRL; family literacy programs of the ethnic caucuses). As a part of developing background for this work, I will be attending the National Literacy Funders Network meeting in Pittsburgh on October 11.

I have formed an advisory committee and it will be co-chaired by Patty Wong and Maribel Castro. Our first advisory committee meeting will take place in Chicago on December 13 and 14.

Travel and Speaking Engagements

I attended the Harwood Institute Summit in Hilton Head, South Carolina, on August 2-5, with a small delegation from ALA that included Molly Raphael, Maureen Sullivan, Keith Fiels, Mary Ghikas, and others. It was a valuable opportunity to deepen my understanding of the Harwood Institute and how its strategies are being implemented in various organizations throughout the country. It was especially valuable to have time away from the hustle and bustle of an ALA conference to talk as a leadership team.

I attended the IFLA Conference in Helsinki, Finland, on August 10-16. It was my first time to attend an IFLA conference and I was both impressed and heartened to hear the concerns, issues, and opportunities that we confront in American libraries echoed in this international arena. I actually had a chance to re-connect with colleagues from around the world whom I have not seen for years. I especially enjoyed the opportunity to share the experience and productive conversations with Maureen Sullivan, Molly Raphael, and Keith Fiels.

Six years in the planning, the second JCLC conference was held in Kansas City on September 20-23. I could not attend the first conference, but was pleased to be able to join my colleagues at this conference with the theme, Gathering at the Waters: Celebrating Stories, Embracing Communities. Every general and concurrent session I attended was powerful and thought provoking. All attendees became part of a warm community dedicated to increasing diversity in our library field.

Upcoming Travel and Speaking Engagements

October and early November are packed with travel and speaking. From October 11-16, I will go to the National Literacy Funders Network meeting in Pittsburgh, the AASL Forum on Transliteracy in Greenville, South Carolina, and the Arkansas Library Association (ArLA) conference in Springdale, Arkansas. I will deliver a keynote and conduct three town hall meetings at ArLA.

On October 19, 29, and 30, I will deliver 3 keynotes and facilitate 6 concurrent sessions for conferences held by different school library systems in New York. The sessions will focus on libraries and the Common Core, school librarian leadership, and assessment.
I will be going to Washington, DC, to co-chair four DC school library task force meetings in October and November.

On November 2, I will deliver the keynote address at the Cornucopia of Rhode Island conference focusing on closing the achievement gap for minority students.

I will travel to Mexico City on November 6-10 to participate as part of a panel on library education at an international conference sponsored by the University in Mexico City.

During Thanksgiving, I will be traveling to Arkansas to meet my first grandbaby, due the first week of November (I know, that’s not ALA business, but it’s important).

I believe the last traveling I will do in 2012 is to Chicago for a meeting of my presidential advisory committee on December 13-14.

Final Thoughts

I have been extremely gratified by the helpfulness and careful guidance given to me during the past few months by the ALA staff, including JoAnne Kempf, Lois Ann Gregory-Woods, Kerri Price, and Keith Fiels. They have helped me understand the intricacies of ALA, provided humor and tips, and fed me the information I need to fulfill my responsibilities. I also have been warmly supported by members of the Executive Committee and several ALA past presidents.