

REPORT TO THE COUNCIL AND EXECUTIVE BOARD
OF THE
AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Carla D. Hayden
President, 2003-2004

My activities during the second half of my term were varied and a great deal of my attention was directed toward preparation for the Annual conference with “Equity of Access” initiative programming as a primary focus.

After the Midwinter Meeting in San Diego, I also traveled extensively and represented the association in national and international settings. I attended chapter conferences, student chapter meetings, as well as conferences on such diverse topics as Brown vs. Board of Education, educational programming for children, and medical information in the electronic age. I continued to conduct numerous media interviews in multiple formats on a variety of subjects (see complete listing of media interviews in this report) that demonstrated increased public interest in library related topics, particularly the Patriot Act and funding. The following report gives an overview of my activities in addition to other speaking engagements and meetings, regular Board and executive committee meetings, discussions with staff and members, and planning efforts.

Conferences

The President’s Program at the Midwinter Meeting in Dan Diego,” Living in a Post-CIPA World,” was very well received by the 450 plus attendees in the audience. The theme of the program tied the issue of equity to a very real environment that has the potential to impose inequities in access in many communities due to the Supreme Court’s decision. Attendees listened to keynote speaker Omar Wasow and a panel of experts from various sectors outline the implications and opportunities of the decision. The program is available via the ALA website.

At this Annual conference, the President's Program will address another aspect of equity in light of the national 50th anniversary commemoration of the historic Supreme Court decision, Brown vs. the Board of Education. At the program entitled, "Equity: Are we there yet?" attendees will hear from Pulitzer Prize winner Taylor Branch, Cheryl Brown Henderson, commentator Ray Suarez, and Professor E.J. Josey.

At the Public Library Association Conference in Seattle I participated in a news conference to highlight the release of the Gates Foundation report on the role of the library in the digital divide, conducted media interviews, and sponsored a Spectrum Scholar and New Members reception. I also gave keynote addresses at the Delaware and New Jersey library association meetings, the Virginia Paraprofessionals Forum, the National Library of Medicine conference on health information for African Americans, the seventh annual Sankofa Education Conference at the Gary Public Library, and the Chester County (PA) Legislative Day. The Freedom Foundation's annual conference brought together many attendees interested in intellectual freedom issues and I was honored to present ALA's Madison award to David Sobel.

Student Chapters

During my visits to universities and conferences I was heartened to see the vitality and interest of graduate students in the field. Many of the ALA student chapters planned all of the activities for my visits and I was very impressed by their professionalism and commitment. One highlight took place at the University of Pittsburgh, where the students combined my keynote presentation with an unveiling ceremony of a plaque for the first African American library school student in the country, Virginia Florence Proctor. At each session with students, I emphasized ALA's strategic planning effort and solicited suggestions from them, which included the need for more coordination of job opportunities, more public awareness regarding copyright issues, and more information on recent proposed legislation on restricting the use of "facts" in databases. Some common themes among the students groups were the need for more cooperation between graduate schools and the profession, concern about the employment market, how to balance personal and professional values, and how to "move up" within ALA.

Presentations and Meetings

This area of activity covered a wide range of topics and occasions, such as the Queens Public Library Page Graduation, the IMLS Awards Ceremony at the White House, ALA Legislative Day, and the Executive Board meetings in Chicago. I had the opportunity to make a presentation at the Annual Meeting of the American Library in Paris, and represent ALA in meetings at the Senate Library of France at the Luxembourg Palace and the Biblioteque Nationale. A very inspiring event was the installation ceremony for the San Mateo Public Library's Wall of Fame. This fundraising program was sponsored by the library's African American Committee to raise funds for a study room in the new central library and featured honorees Lynn Swann , Barry Bonds, and other notables from the community.

Initiative: "Equity of Access"

My presidential advisory committee has worked very diligently on programming and planning for the promotion of equity in library services. The fifth brochure in the ALA2005 key action area series on "Equity of Access" was completed and distributed in the June 2004 issue of American Libraries as well as on the ALA website and at the President's Program during the annual conference. The brochure includes an equity "checklist" that forms the basis of an invitational Equity Preconference I am sponsoring at this conference. Another aspect of the preconference will be a celebration of the publication of "From Outreach to Equity: Innovative Models of Library Service and Practice, published by ALA and sponsored as part of my presidential initiative. In order to finalize aspects of initiative, I am appointing a special six-month working group from my advisory committee that will address two items, enhancement of the equity presence on the ALA website and the preparation of a document outlining the status of ALA's equity efforts for the 2010 Strategic Planning process.

Media

In addition to print opportunities such as letters to the editor and commentaries, the following media interviews were conducted:

NBC Weekend Morning Show, San Diego, CA: Patriot Act, CIPA, general library issues
Fox Morning Show, San Diego, CA: Youth Book Awards
News Observer, NC: Libraries as spurs for community development
Ann Arbor News (MI): Filtering, Patriot Act
NPR, Ann Arbor: Unattended children
KPSI radio (ABC), Palm Beach, CA: Patriot Act
Mini Page syndicated column: Dr. Seuss
WMAL Radio: Unattended children in libraries
Philadelphia Inquirer: Unattended children
Seattle Times: Library Funding
Lexington Herald, KY: Shortage of black librarians
Essence Magazine: Patriot Act
MSNBC: Dr. Seuss
Chattanooga Times: Unattended children
Kansas City Star: Public access computing
Book Industry Group's "Annual Trend Survey"
Pittsburgh Post Gazette: Funding
Arizona Daily Star: Filtering
Better Homes and Garden Magazine: The "re-invented" library
Bloomberg Radio: National Library Week
WJOB Radio, Hammond, IN: Patriot Act
Marty Kaplan Show, Air America Radio: Patriot Act
Marketplace, NPR: Economics of libraries
"State of Nevada Show", KNPR: National Library Week
Raleigh News Observer: fundraising in libraries
Seattle Post-Intelligencer: New central library
Diane Rehm Show, NPR: Library issues, Patriot Act
WAMO Radio, Pittsburgh: Library funding, digital divide
Chronicle of Philanthropy: Impact of Gates Foundation
Dallas Morning News: Demographic shifts in library users
San Antonio Express News: Library funding
Chicago Tribune: "Big city" libraries
Orlando Times: Equity in libraries
Tavis Smiley Presents, CSPAN, "Unfinished Agenda; Brown v Board of Education"
Washington City Paper: Budget Issues
Arizona Republic: Internet safety for children
WEAA Radio, Baltimore: National library issues
Florida Radio Network: Health information initiative; conference highlights

Appreciation

Finally, as my term ends I want to extend my deepest appreciation to the membership for allowing me to represent the association. The experiences of this year in particular have reinforced my belief in the value of libraries and reaffirmed my commitment to ensuring every person's right to equitable information services.