

American Libraries Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes 1-19-2021

Attendees: Crystal Chen, Helen Adams, Janie Hermann, Jason Alston, Lori Bryan, Susan Polos

Guest: Lessa Palayo-Lozada

Staff: Amy Carlton, Becky Lomax, Carrie Smith, Phil Morehart, Sallyann Price, Sanhita SinhaRoy, Terra Dankowski

Meeting Start at 2:30 p.m. CDT

Agenda:

- I. Welcome and introduction by Chair Susan Polos
- II. Statement from ALA Candidate for President
- III. Executive Board report by Maria McCauley
- IV. *American Libraries* Magazine: Comments on Jan/Feb 2021 and upcoming stories
- V. Americanlibraries.org and AL Direct
- VI. [Call Number with American Libraries](#)
- VII. FY21 Finance Report
- VIII. New business, hot topics, miscellaneous

1. Welcome/introductions

Approval of December minutes pending for next meeting.

2. Statement from ALA Candidate for President

Lessa Pelayo-Lozada gave a short statement to the committee in support of her candidacy.

3. ALA Executive Board Liaison report

Maria was unable to attend.

4. *American Libraries* Magazine: Comments on Jan/Feb 2021 and upcoming stories

Committee members had positive comments on the responsive and responsible care of Indigenous collections story, Year in Review, Remote Realities, junior ambassadors, and Making Time to Check In. Terra noted that the Tarnished Legacies feature—about presidential libraries questioning the legacy of their subjects—received good comments, as did the pull-out about the REALM study. She added that we will again be doing *Daily Scoop* as part of our Midwinter coverage. The March/April issue will focus on how libraries can improve online user experience and about accessibility from the perspective of people who aren't being served during COVID-19. The May issue will have two features on how the pandemic has affected job searches. June will feature ALA Annual Conference and social issues.

Amy noted that we debuted the Academic Insights column, which will run every other issue until Sept/Oct, at which point it will become a permanent column. It has received positive feedback on

social media. The column will have a different writer each time, and Amy asked for recommendations.

5. *Americanlibraries.org* and *AL Direct*

A chart about AL and social media is available on Connect. Amy noted that 2020 was a great year for web traffic, driven in part by people looking for info on COVID-19. Half of our top 10 stories since July were online exclusives, including the top four. We had five months with 100k+ sessions on the website, which used to happen only around conferences. Our Twitter and Facebook reach continues to grow.

Amy took over *AL Direct* in June after Senior Editor George Eberhart retired. The frequency has since been reduced to once a week. The top 10 stories since July are posted to Connect, and more than half of those were also COVID-related stories. We redesigned *AL Direct*, improving the look and making it is much easier to put together. We've had lots of positive feedback on that as well. Helen noted that she appreciated the story on curbside service versus delivery.

6. *Call Number with American Libraries*

The podcast stats are posted to Connect. Phil noted that we've been able to incorporate COVID-19 segments into recent episodes, and our listeners are tuning in for that coverage. The top five most-listened-to episodes have not changed in the past two years. The biggest update is the name change. Phil thanked everyone on the Advisory Committee, the AL staff, and the Publishing department for their input and support. The January episode includes an interview with OCLC about the REALM project and another interview with a library that installed UV lights and updated its HVAC air-filtration system. The February podcast will focus on black experiences in the US. In April we're looking at how school librarians have fared this past year.

7. FY21 Finance report

Sanhita noted that ALA went through some transitions with its accounting department. The outsourced group was terminated in November. The accounting and finance staff have been doing an amazing job trying to catch up, but our reports are based on our own data. We believe accounting should be caught up on reports in April, and hopefully by then we'll have a better sense of our actuals.

Gross advertising (display, online, *AL Direct*) is behind budget by \$28,000 year-to-date. We made the FY21 budget in February, right before the pandemic. We were invited to scale back our numbers in May, but no one knew then how much the slide would continue. Our classified ads (JobLIST) were scaled back with discussion with partner ACRL, and we're 15% above budget (\$9,000). There seem to be some promising signs that the job market, at least for JobLIST, is trending better. We've seen some positives with digital as well. Unfortunately, virtual events appear not to appeal to print advertisers. January/February was expected not to perform as well since advertisers have become increasingly disinterested in Midwinter over the past few years. Sanhita also asked the committee to suggest vendors that may be interested in advertising with *AL*.

8. New business, hot topics, miscellaneous.

Janie suggested covering how to evaluate virtual library programs.

Amy asked for feedback on the Noted and Quoted page. Helen said the title of the page didn't stand out, and that she thought it was part of Trends and Newsmaker. Lori enjoys the quotes from people outside the profession more because it makes her feel more visible.

9. Adjournment

Adjourned 3:28 p.m.