

American Library Association

2012 Midwinter Meeting

Report of President-Elect Maureen Sullivan

Orientation

My orientation included three visits to headquarters. I completed the first visit to meet with key staff on September 15 and visited again on November 8. All were very informative and enjoyable. I was able to renew relationships with several staff and found each session to be very helpful and a source of some new ideas. I met with almost all of the division executive directors during lunch on November 8. The one exception is Sally Reed of ALTAFF. I hope to meet with her and the ALTAFF staff in their offices in Philadelphia in February. I returned to headquarters on December 19 for media training and yet another opportunity for informal sessions with staff. Jenny Levine provided a short session on social media training.

I had two very productive days with the Washington Office staff, one in November and a second in late December. Eli Mina and I will meet during the afternoon on Friday, January 20, for my orientation to parliamentary procedure.

ALA Committee Appointments

1. Committee on Committees

The Committee met several times by conference call to identify the slate for election to the Executive Board. The slate of six candidates is ready for action at the 2012 Midwinter Meeting. It has been a privilege to work with the members of this committee. The Committee will review the rosters of proposed members for each of the committees before Executive Board action at the Midwinter Meeting.

2. Committee on Appointments

This committee, comprised of the presidents-elect of the eleven divisions, identified the slate for the ALA Nominating Committee. This slate was approved by the Executive Board at the Fall Meeting. Delores Yates has provided an orientation to the Committee's work. Rosters of proposed members for each of the committees are complete and ready for action at the Midwinter Meeting.

Presidential Initiatives

1. The Promise of Libraries in Transforming Communities

ALA will convene a summit in early Fall 2012 to bring together a diverse set of leaders from outside of the library field (local and state government, education, and cultural agencies) and strong leaders from within the library field to engage in meaningful dialog. The outcome will be an agenda for action, including commitments to collaborate to achieve meaningful results. The summit will be designed to build upon and continue the work accomplished by President Raphael's initiatives on civic engagement. It also will build upon the thought leaders meeting planned in May 2012. This initiative supports the first goal area in **ALA 2015**, *Advocacy, Funding and Public Policy*. I will work with ALA staff and a small group of members to plan and convene this summit. I hope to include a virtual component to enable ALA members to participate.

2. Leadership Development

Leadership in the Digital Age (Fall 2012)

I have been working with the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) to design and offer a 2 ½ day leadership institute for administrators and managers in libraries of all types to learn how to lead effectively in the face of the new challenges of the Digital Age. I have been meeting with Joseph Zolner, Senior Director of the Harvard Institutes for Higher Education (HIHE); John Collins, Director of the HGSE Library (and ALA member); and John Palfrey, Vice Dean, Library and Information Resources, Harvard Law School. The cost to ALA for this will be minimal because Joe Zolner and HIHE have an established structure and process for its programs. We are addressing the need for financial aid, especially for applicants who work in libraries that may not have the resources to attend. This initiative supports the goal areas of *Building the Profession* and *Transforming Libraries*.

President's Program, Midwinter 2013

The Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) will be launched in April 2013. The 2013 Midwinter Conference President's Program will include a panel of speakers to introduce our members to the DPLA.

Leadership Development Program for ALA

There are many leadership development programs at the state and regional level. ALA divisions and chapters offer a variety of leadership programs and activities. Executive Director Keith Fiels and other headquarters staff have begun to identify current activities and membership needs. I will appoint a task force charged to develop a comprehensive plan for a sustainable association-wide leadership program, one based upon research and best practice. I will ask this task force to build upon current activities; to identify needs and gaps; and to propose a program that includes a range of learning and development experiences, including webinars and self-directed activities. I will launch the work of this task force by facilitating a planning session shortly after the 2012 Annual Conference, in July 2012. The result of this session will be a proposed curriculum and an action plan with a timetable.

3. Rethinking ALA: Ensuring That ALA Is the Most Effective Organization It Can Be

Several factors have persuaded me that it is time to give serious consideration to restructuring ALA. Among these factors are: several recent ALA presidential initiatives and their respective reports (including the *Future Perfect Presidential Task Force Report*, the *Report of the Presidential Task Force for Improving the Effectiveness of ALA's Council*, and the *ALA Young Librarians Working Group*); the current and prospective budget situation; the ambitious goals set forth in *ALA 2015*; forces for change in the larger context in which our members live and work; and numerous conversations I have had with ALA members and staff. Any plan to do this requires careful consideration of feasibility, desirability and complexity of such an undertaking. I will convene a group to engage in this careful consideration and to recommend appropriate action.

I very much want to build upon the strengths and accomplishments of those who have served before me. I am committed to advancing the work outlined in *ALA 2015* and to engaging more members in the work of the association. I also will work closely with ALA staff and members throughout the association.

Travel and Speaking Engagements

I attended the IFLA Conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico, on August 13-17. It proved to be an excellent opportunity to meet librarians in other countries who share my strong interest in leadership development. A highlight was the chance for Keith Fiels, Molly Raphael, Roberta Stevens and me to spend some very productive time together.

On September 27, 2011, I was the keynote speaker at the Northeast Ohio Regional Library System (NEO-RLS) Fall Luncheon and discussed *Libraries Working Together: A Formula for Future Success*. The next day I facilitated the *1st Annual Futures' Dialogue*, an interactive discussion of *Tomorrow's Library: Collaboration, Shared Leadership and Service*, convened in partnership with the Kent State University SLIS. Twenty of the seventy participants were SLIS students.

On October 17, 2011, I gave the keynote speech, *Libraries in the Larger Information Ecosystem: Anticipating Challenges and Seizing Opportunities*, at the annual meeting of the Metropolitan New York Library Council.

Other Activities

On October 5, 2011, Executive Director Keith Fiels and I joined several others at NEH in Washington, D.C., to begin planning for a meeting of thought leaders to explore ways to strengthen the library's role in informing and transforming communities. At this meeting were: NEH Chairman James Leach; IMLS Executive Director Susan Hildreth; several members of their respective senior staffs; President Molly Raphael (via telephone); and Kim Olsen-Clark, Director of the ALA Development Office. Planning is well underway to hold this meeting on May 4, 2012, in Washington, D.C.

I accepted an invitation to serve on the Governance work stream of the Digital Public Library of America and attended the first plenary DPLA meeting in Washington, D.C., on October 20-21. I will participate in a second face-to-face meeting on February 15, 2012.

At President Molly Raphael's request, I attended AASL's 16th National Conference in Minneapolis on October 27-29. It was a privilege to participate and to have the honor of bringing her greetings on behalf of ALA.

Herb Biblo, the Executive Director of the Long Island Library Resources Council (LILRC), invited me to be the guest speaker at LILRC's annual membership meeting. This was a nice opportunity for me to share some of plans for my year as President and to engage ALA members in the audience in a conversation about the future of ALA.

I have been invited to participate in an international symposium on library management in Shanghai, China, on April 25-27, 2012. This symposium will be hosted by Tongji University and CALA is a co-organizer.

Catholic University's SLIS invited me to be on a panel as part of their Centennial Celebration on October 20, 2011. The focus of the panel discussion was the future of libraries. I will return to SLIS on January 27, 2012, to participate in the school's 2012 Bridging the Spectrum Symposium.

On November 9 and 10, I represented ALA and President Molly Raphael at the Fifth Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Culture and Highest Appropriate Authorities held at Organization of American States Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

I attended the annual *I Love My Librarian* awards celebration in New York City on December 7 and the Coalition for Networked Information meeting in Arlington, Virginia, on December 12-13, 2011.

I have begun to develop plans for the 2012 inaugural event at the Annual Conference in Anaheim. I was delighted to discover that Mary Ghikas and her colleagues in Conference Services were thinking about changes that were very much in line with my ideas. The Inaugural Brunch promises to be a fun event at a lower cost and one that we hope will be attended by more members.

Every interaction I have had with an ALA staff member in these first few months has been productive; all the staff have been very helpful. I am especially grateful for the ongoing support I receive from JoAnne Kempf, Lois Ann Gregory-Wood, Delores Yates and Mary Ghikas. I continue to value the support and guidance I receive from Keith Fiels, members of the Executive Committee and the several ALA past presidents who continue to reach out to me as I embark upon this wonderful endeavor.