

President's Report to the Wyoming Library Association  
Executive Board Meeting Wednesday September 30, 2009  
8:00 p.m. Hilton Garden Inn

Crossroads Taskforce—this term is purposeful. I believe and have sensed for several years that the Wyoming Library Association is truly at a crossroads. Its future as a meaningful, professional association is in the balance. How can we foster a high level of vitality, responsiveness, relevancy, and growth? That is the charge that was laid on my heart as I took on the Presidency of WLA.

A unique planning process began in February 2009 with nineteen members representing a cross section of WLA. Members of this group are: Jamie Markus, Brian Greene, Meg Martin, Peggy Jording, Dail Barbour, Rod Girmus, Erin Kinney, Mary Gillis, Carey Hartmann, Mary Rhoads, Kirk Hissam, Jill Rourke, Sukey Hohl, Betsy Moore, Shari Haskins, Lesley Lipska, Jerry Krois, Katie Lynn and I. At this meeting three areas of concern were identified and ad hoc groups were formed. Jamie Markus is the chair of "management models"; Katie Lynn is chair of "survey data gathering and interpretation"; Jill Rourke is chair of "structure—committees and sections vs. interest groups". In August all of the pieces came together and we were then ready to spend a work day with Laura Isenstein and Kim Cullen of Providence Associates out of Arizona. Laura has over 30 years of public library experience, the last 19 in administrative and leadership positions in large systems. Kim has been a librarian for 15 years with administrative experience in New York State libraries. We met in Casper on September 11. We came away from that meeting with 10 action items to lead us forward in planning WLA's future.

1. Rethink the types of and organization of the sections
2. Better market and promote WLA to professional members and non members
3. Reach out to library staff at all levels and positions
4. Consider revamping the conference structure
5. Increase marketing efforts to college students, young librarians and nonmembers
6. Revamp the WLA website to be more clear in content as well as more 2.0 or 3.0 in its interactivity
7. Enhance Continuing Education opportunities
8. Evaluate WLA staffing situation
9. Consider a change in leadership process and opportunities
10. Measure how WLA's members are benefiting from WLA. This means measuring **member benefits and impact** as opposed to solely relying on measuring the number of activities, attendees, new members

Six current members of the Taskforce plus the incoming vice-chair will start working on this immediately. They are Jamie Markus, Lesley Lipska, Dail Barbour, Carey Hartmann, Kirk Hissam, and I. **We welcome your ideas and thoughts as this process goes forward. The working documents will be available on the WLA website.**

I want to publicly thank all the members of the Crossroads Taskforce. I appreciate the time, effort and commitment that went into this project. A special thank you goes to Katie Lynn and Jill Rourke who did a masterful job of gathering, compiling and interpreting the data that gave us the unique information about how WLA members perceive their Association.

## WLA Budget

On June 8 six leaders (past, present and future) of WLA met at the Natrona County Library to consider the current WLA budget and strategize methods in which to increase income and decrease expenses. Members of the group were Ara Anderson, Sandy Barstow, Debbie Iverson, Jamie Markus, Laura Grott and I. As we considered the seriousness of keeping WLA financially sound, we realized that **NO ASPECT** of WLA could be untouchable. There were no sacred cows in this discussion.

WLA generates income on just two ways—conference and membership dues. In recent years decisions have been made to increase conference offerings by bringing in recognized speakers and presenters; to support special programs and participate in the larger world of Library Associations such as MPLA and ALA. These steps have been necessary to support and serve the membership and grown the Association. But when conferences are not lucrative, reserve account funds have made up the balance. WLA is reaping the results of this practice and it cannot continue. WLA leadership must bring our budget back into balance.

Some ideas for increasing income were:

1. Increase the dues base rate from \$15 to \$20 for 2010. This is the most obvious first step to take in light of the fact that dues have not been raised for over 25 YEARS!
2. Implementing a nominal raise of \$5 on conference registration in 2010.
3. Resurrecting and implementing the **Institutional Membership**. WLA currently offers institutional memberships for a very small fee, but very few libraries actually pay this. The budget group's proposal was to set this membership at \$250. If all county libraries, community colleges and the University of Wyoming Libraries would support this we could generate as much as \$7500 income. This pot of money would be used to fund the activities of the Legislative Committee. The 31 representative libraries have reaped the benefits of WLA's lobbying power in the past and will continue to do so in the future. This would be a way for them to contribute to the WLA general fund, so that a high quality of lobbying can continue. The goal will be for the Legislative Committee to be able to build up a reserve account. In years where there is a critical legislative issue, more money would be available to support more lobbying.

Some ideas for reduction of expenses were:

1. Elimination of travel to the ALA National Convention for the WLA President. The ALA Councilor will already be in attendance and can go to the chapter training.
2. Fund one person to attend CSLP. A second person will be paid for by CSLP. The Children's Section or an individual library could pay for a third attendee.
3. WLA loses a certain percentage of income to the Visa Credit Card Company when members use their credit cards to pay dues or convention registration. This service could continue, but with the disclaimer that the credit card user agrees to a \$5 service fee.
4. Establish funding for the ALA Councilor at \$3000 per year.
5. Form an ad hoc "Audit Committee" that would use the form currently used by accountants for an "agreed upon procedures" audit. WLA would still utilize an accountant for the income tax preparation.
6. The Legislative Committee budget would be set at \$7000 for 2010 and would be further reduced as the **Institutional Membership** account grows to the point that it can pay for ½ of the Legislative Committee budget.

Additional budget considerations:

1. Establish reserve accounts for administration, programming, sections, etc
2. Review and update WLA's Investment Policy

**NO BUDGET DECISIONS WILL BE MADE FOR 2010 UNTIL WLA LEADERSHIP KNOWS HOW WE HAVE FARED FINANCIALLY WITH THIS CONFERENCE. THIS INCLUDES CONTRACTS FOR THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY AND THE WLA LOBBYIST.**

### **Wyoming Library Leadership Institute**

WLLI began in 2001 and was initially funded with LSTA money. The Carol McMurry Foundation underwrote it for several years. These sources of funding are at an end for this program. The need for leadership training in Wyoming is undeniable. The word **leadership** in all its facets came up over and over at the Crossroads Taskforce work session. The act of leadership is essential to sustaining and growing this Association. So, what can we do to make that happen?

Fifteen Wyoming librarians met in Lander on July 15 and 16 under the direction of Chris Van Burgh and Jon Kanengeiter to strategize for the future of the Wyoming Library Leadership Institute and to consider the role WLA can play in the nurturing of Association leaders. These people came to Lander on their own time and money, an indication of their commitment to leadership training. The testimonials of every attendee about what WLLI has fostered in their personal and professional lives, confirmed the group's desire to continue this worthy program. I am **PASSIONATE** about this leadership opportunity. I know what a defining moment it was in my own leadership capabilities, courage and devotion. I **STRONGLY** believe that WLA should seek ways to incorporate WLLI into its structure as benefit to WLA members, as an enticement to non-members, as an incentive to young, potential leaders. Many WLLI grads have shown their support by personally giving donations that have gone into the WLA budget as seed money for WLLI in 2010. In a special meeting in late July the Executive Board passed a motion to allow the creation of a "leadership" interest group in WLA. I will be asking the Executive Board to allow for a donation opportunity "line" to be added to the annual dues form. (there are currently other donation lines—Leg. Reception, Nora Van Burgh, WY Youth Book fund, etc). WLLI Grads have created a Facebook site to enhance out networking opportunities. There is a fundraising "basket raffle" in place with the proceeds helping to make WLLI 2010 a reality. You have witnessed a more visible presence and representation of WLLI at this convention. If you are interested in attending in 2010 you should talk to Chris Van Burgh and get your name on the leadership interest group sign up sheet. Your participation and support will send a message to WLA leadership. The need is present; let's work to provide WLA members the chance to broaden their leadership skills.

At this time there are two goals for WLLI:

1. To continue leadership training and education within Wyoming libraries
2. To secure sustainable, long term funding

Thank you for the opportunity to be WLA President. It has been a year of getting to know more of you, better—and I've been so blessed by that; a year of going places and doing things I probably wouldn't have otherwise; a year of getting to meet and work with amazing people; a year of knowing that when I put out the call for help, you were always there. You are an awesome group of people. I am honored to have been your leader.