

ALA Annual Conference Report
Anaheim, CA, June 27-July 2, 2008
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Presented October 1, 2008 to the WLA Board

As the ALA Chapter Councilor representing the Wyoming Library Association, I attended various meetings at which the ALA Council and ALA-APA Council conducted the business of the organizations. For a summary of the actions of the ALA Council at the Annual Conference in Anaheim, please go to <http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/governance/council/actions/index.cfm> and click on the Annual Conference link under 2008. (Note: as this report was being written, the link did not point to the correct conference but I've reported it and hope it will be fixed soon.) For a summary of the actions of the ALA-APA Council, go to <http://www.ala-apa.org/about/2007-2008ACCouncilactions.html> I will be happy to provide my interpretation of specific items in this record upon request. In this report, I am providing information that I feel is most relevant to the WLA constituency.

At the ALA-APA Council meeting on Monday, June 30th, the Council was asked to approve the budgetary ceiling of \$265,027 for 2009; unusually, the action was deferred and a mini-meeting of ALA-APA Council was appended to the beginning of ALA Council II, to give the councilors time to peruse a current budget for ALA-APA to compare it to the FY2009 request. This step was taken because ALA-APA ended FY2008 in the red, and there was some concern about whether the repayment would be delayed on the loan that enabled this organization to come into existence. At the mini-meeting on July 1, the FY2009 budget ceiling was approved. The other action of interest was to adopt "Endorsement of a Living Wage For All Library Employees And A Minimum Salary For Professional Librarians." This document is non-binding on employers but it demonstrates ALA-APA's dedication to improving the financial situation of library workers.

At the ALA Council sessions, actions of note included passage of a resolution on "expanding Council transparency" (which referred to providing electronic means of observing and participating in Council activities); this effort, if successful, would make it easier for Wyoming librarians to find out what is going on at ALA meetings without actually having to be there in person. A resolution on "improving the Federal Depository Library Program" was deferred to the midwinter conference. Efforts are ongoing to make Council meetings, and ALA conferences in general, more accessible to people with various disabilities. Another movement which will help all Councilors is the review of the conference meeting schedule. Currently Councilors must remain at ALA until Wednesday, even though the conference is officially completed by Tuesday. A task force is looking at ways to compress the Council schedule without making the resolution approval process more complicated. Currently resolutions brought forward at Council II (on Monday) are reviewed by ALA committees and divisions and recommendations are brought back at Council III (on Wednesday). If it is possible to provide time for everybody to review proposed resolutions while scheduling the Council III session on Tuesday, it will be less expensive for the Councilors who then might not have to stay over an extra night. If it can be accomplished, it is my understanding that the change in schedule will take effect with the Midwinter Conference in 2010. Since ALA schedules meeting rooms several years in advance, it may not be possible to change the schedule by 2010.

For me, the most interesting action at any ALA Council session during this conference was approval of a resolution honoring Lois Ann Gregory-Wood, ALA Council Secretariat, for 40 years of service to ALA. I was stunned to learn that she had been there that long, and it's no wonder that she's an amazing fount of information about the organization. (We all agreed that she must have started working there as an infant, since she definitely does not look old enough to have been in the work force for 40 years.)

Prior to the conference, I had received some information on the Council listserv about a resolution relating to the "Cuban librarians' situation," which I interpreted to mean it would have had something to do with the imprisoned Cuban librarians I had read about in the news a while back; but when Council met this resolution did not appear anywhere in the action items addressed at the various sessions. I later read that this resolution was actually "an attempt by anti-Castro elements to encourage ALA Councilors to join a propaganda war against the current regime in Cuba." I would have supported a resolution that would

have led to freedom for Cuban librarians, but this situation has been muddied by the political stance that seems to be prevalent in the ALA elite, and I don't really know what to make of it.

You may recall that the WLA membership, at our annual meeting in 2007, approved a change to the succession process for the WLA ALA Chapter Councilor position. During this fall's WLA election cycle, a new chapter councilor-elect will be elected, to provide an orderly transition from the current councilor, whose term will end at the conclusion of ALA Annual Conference 2009, to the new councilor, whose formal term of office will begin immediately following ALA Annual Conference 2009. The new councilor will be assisted by the outgoing councilor in such activities as preparing the ALA display at the WLA conference in Laramie in September 2009, and the new councilor will represent WLA at Council starting at Midwinter in January 2010. The new councilor-elect should plan to attend some of the council meetings as a member of the audience in 2009, and should be recognized by ALA as a councilor-elect so that he or she will be added to the council listservs and will receive information in advance of the first ALA meeting at which he or she represents WLA. To begin the process of training my successor, I saved the key handouts from the ALA and ALA-APA Council sessions and will be going over them with the person elected to take on this interesting role after the Annual Conference in Chicago next summer. I will also serve as a mentor to the councilor-elect at the upcoming Midwinter Conference (in Denver) and Annual (in Chicago) if that person attends both conferences. I recommended that the WLA budget for calendar year 2009 include funding to cover the costs for the councilor-elect to attend at least one ALA conference prior to formally taking over the WLA Chapter Councilor position.