

ALA Midwinter Conference, Denver, CO, January 23-28, 2009
Report from Wyoming Chapter Councilor, Sandy Barstow

As the ALA Chapter Councilor representing WLA, I attended meetings of the ALA Council, ALA-APA Council, and a workshop of interest to the Wyoming Library Association chapter of ALA. All Council documents will be posted to the ALA website at some point, but in view of the short time between Midwinter and the WLA Executive Board meeting on February 5th, I kept some of the more interesting handouts to bring to our meeting in case anybody would like to see them.

Please note that there is a **discussion item** related to the workshop I attended (see the narrative at the end of this report).

Meeting highlights:

ALA Council/Executive Board/Membership Information Session, January 25th: We learned that ALA's economic situation, while not as dire as some sectors of the economy, has felt the effects of the current downturn. The endowment, which had been over \$30 million, ended 2008 at about \$23.4 million. The Endowment Trustees are looking at alternative investments such as convertible bonds and emerging markets. I have the report which indicates which investments performed less poorly.

ALA-APA Information Session, January 25th: We received a briefing on the Library Support Staff Certification Program (LSSCP) for discussion. With funding from an IMLS grant, the LSSCP Advisory Committee has been working on this program since 2007, and the implementation of the program has been pushed forward by a year, to start in January 2010. This program will be directed at non MLS-holding individuals working in libraries, and will allow them to receive credit for competencies gained either through coursework or through experience. Assuming the program is approved at Annual in Chicago in July, the third year of the IMLS grant funding will be used to ramp up the program.

ALA Council I, January 25th: This meeting was devoted to housekeeping issues such as approving minutes of the meetings from Annual in Anaheim. Some resolutions were put on the floor, but were referred to the Resolutions Committee for review prior to being discussed at Council III (about which more later in this report).

ALA-APA Council meeting, January 26th: We heard a report on the ALA-APA Certified Public Library Administration Program, which has been in existence for a couple of years. There are currently over 300 people participating in this program, which requires an MLS and three years of management experience for admission to the program. For more information on the program see <http://www.ala-apa.org/certification/>

The ALA-APA Standing Committee on the Salaries and Status of Library Workers reminded us that **National Library Workers Day is April 14, 2009** and that **Equal Pay Day is April 29, 2009**. The chair of the committee also commented on the Paycheck Fairness Act (S.182).

ALA Council II, January 27th: This meeting ran long (from 9:15 until after 1 p.m.) and we were unable to complete the business on the agenda by the time we adjourned, so some items were moved to the Council III agenda. The first meaty topic was the ALA's Core Competences of Librarianship (CD#10), which "defines the basic knowledge to be possessed by all persons graduating from an ALA-accredited master's program in library and information studies." Several councilors who happen to be professors at library schools expressed concerns about some of the competences, and several division councilors offered amendments after discussing the document in their division board meetings (I seconded the amendment brought forward by the LLAMA councilor, and it was approved by the Council). I have a copy of the document as amended, and will be happy to share it with anyone who is interested.

The ALA Task Force on Electronic Member Participation Final Report (CD#35), an impressive 65 page document written with great clarity (in my opinion) by Janet Swan Hill, included 16 recommendations which required individual votes. The Council worked through the first three recommendations fairly quickly, but we crashed and burned when we got to recommendation 4, concerning elimination of the ALA Policy 6.16 related to Virtual Members. There are currently Virtual Members (who participate in

committee work electronically but who do not vote) on ALA committees, as well as committees of some of the divisions of ALA, and there was concern that eliminating the category without replacing it with something (presumably something better) would cause problems in the committees. There were many, many attempts to rewrite the recommendation on the floor of Council, and the session closed (due to other meetings scheduled to occur at 1:30 p.m.) with a vote to approve the wording of the resolution that included a delay in its implementation until the close of Annual Conference in July 2009.

Another item of note: **National Library Legislative Day(s) 2009 will take place May 11-12, 2009**, in Washington D.C. There will also be a Virtual Library Legislative Day for those who cannot make it to Washington D. C. in person. For more information see: <http://www.ala.org/nlld>

ALA Council III, January 28th: There were quite a few reports from ALA/Council Committees, some of which required votes on action items, and this portion of the meeting went very smoothly. Once we arrived at the continuation of the agenda from Council II, namely the ALA Task Force on Electronic Member Participation Final Report, the pace slowed again. Eli Mena, ALA's excellent professional parliamentarian, had given some thought as to how to proceed with this report, in the interests of being able to adjourn Council III sometime before the end of February. Since there was still considerable concern about Recommendation 4, although it had been approved by Council at the end of Council II, he suggested that we vote to reconsider that recommendation, particularly as it relates to Recommendation 5 (which revises the Requirements for Committee Service in ALA Policy 4.5). Following approval (or not) of these two recommendations, Mena proposed that Council discuss the remaining 11 recommendations as a group, followed by adopting a motion to refer the entire document to the ALA Executive Board, and to get input from the ALA Executive Director and BARC. This plan was carried out and worked very well, in that the meeting was able to adjourn by (12:45 p.m., only 15 minutes late). The only item that really worried me was Recommendation 11, which asked the Executive Director to "investigate the feasibility of enabling votes of Council between Midwinter and Annual meetings." I could envision Council activities growing to take up full-time effort on the part of Councilors if this recommendation were to result in a change of policy. I'm happy to report that many other councilors rose to express the same concerns about this item, so I did not feel the need to speak to the group on the subject. The document, of which I have a copy of the 65 page draft, will return for consideration by Council at Annual in July 2009. Meanwhile, I would be happy to share this report with anyone who is interested.

CAPWIZ Workshop:

I attended a workshop put on by the ALA Chapter Relations Office (CRO) Executive Director, Michael Dowling, and his assistant, Don Wood, related to CAPWIZ. This software is being provided through CRO for the chapters to use as a legislative advocacy tool. ALA-CRO and the ALA Washington Office have begun to populate the system with the contact information of the ALA membership as well as with that of the federal governmental contacts including Congress and regulatory agencies. The individual chapters (generally state associations such as WLA) can add our state government contacts and our state association membership contact information. We can "brand" our state's space, and we can customize our sorting criteria for use in sending messages about legislation to our members (and anyone else we think might advocate for us, which is pretty wide open), asking them to contact our legislators directly.

A few states, notably California and Florida, have used the CAPWIZ software enough to give the rest of us something "real" to look at. In addition, the company that provides the software (and which also maintains a server so the information isn't on our individual state association servers) provides online training. Michael Dowling is also going to look into a hands-on preconference training session at Annual in Chicago.

Discussion Item: As the Wyoming Chapter Councilor, I am currently the designated administrator for this software, but the Board might want to designate someone else, such as the webmaster or someone on the WLA Legislative Committee. I am happy to continue working with this project if it is the Board's desire, but I'm unsure if the ALA Chapter Councilor position is the correct home for this responsibility.