

ALA Councilor from Wyoming Report
Midwinter, 2010, Boston, January 15-19

Patty's Notes:

It was almost too overwhelming. I knew my meeting schedule was fairly full before I left for Boston, but I did not know how much time would be required of me. It was all day long for four days with meetings starting at 8:00 a.m. continued through evening meetings or get-acquainted receptions. I did my best, but still I missed things or wound up in the wrong place.

Still I'm fascinated by the "bureaucracy" of ALA. It is a huge corporation with dozens, hundreds?, of break-out groups, committees, alternatives. I've been puzzling over what to report to you— what do we care about in Wyoming ? – and how much of it was housekeeping minutia?

Patriot Act: Even before the meeting there was a flurry of emails urging all the chapters (WY) to develop a resolution to address the changes in the Patriot Act. Jamie Markus helped fulfill that obligation for our state, and WLA Executive Board adopted its resolution, Nov. 13, 2009

Library Advocacy Day: Participation in the Washington, D.C. day and visits to legislative offices is encouraged for Tuesday, June 29, 2010, 11:00 a.m. Upper Senate Park. Be there or be square. Lesley Boughton is the state contact for this event.

Event Planner: This was a hot topic. Evidently it is an on-going issue, but the idea is to help attendees create their own schedule on line. Almost everyone I talked to said they had found alternative ways, personal calendars, other software, that did a better job than the ALA planner currently does. I think they should drop the effort – ALA has suffered from staff cuts and funding issues, just like the rest of the world. Why are they beating a dead horse? Nevertheless the Director of ALA accepted the responsibility of curing the problems rather than letting the effort be dropped. In addition ALA Connect, part of the over all e-participation effort, will include a Conference Planner. I can hardly wait.

Spectrum: The scholarship program for diversity has had spectacular results, and there is a Presidential Initiative to increase the number of scholarships by increasing the endowment to a million dollars. This effort really touched me – we too are struggling for endowments in our libraries. So I will be donating. <http://spectrum.ala.org/>

Strategic Discussion: Throughout the meetings there were discussions about "member satisfaction." How does ALA meet the needs of the members? How can electronic communication improve member participation and communication? How can we increase the use of ALA resources by members? This actually reminded me of WLA discussions. ALA has long been one of the places I go when I want professional information: pros and cons on library services, intellectual freedom training, and much more. It occurred to me that they were equally seeking information from us – the state chapters and the 186 representatives that are elected by the 60,000 members. Right back to that old problem of communication – sending messages back and forth. So I guess I need conversation from you to take to ALA.

Universal Health Care: This topic is treated seriously because so many library workers do not have health care. ALA has tried to keep members aware of the national issues which could affect library employees at all levels.

Resolutions: I think there were 19 resolutions presented, and I lost count on how many were passed. Some of them are memorials or acclamations to honor fellow librarians. There was a Resolution on Rebuilding Libraries and Archives Damaged or Destroyed by the Earthquake in Haiti. ALA and Boston Convention Center combined donations to send a significant check to Haiti, and the ALA website offers library suggestions:

<http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/iro/iroactivities/haitirelieffund.cfm>

There was enough discussion on a couple of resolutions that they were dropped for the time being – tempest in a teapot.

Other business matters: Midwinter is busy with election opportunities, speeches by candidates, petitions for nominations, and hand-outs. It is the end of the budget year, and there were detailed end of the year reports and budget reports from the Finance and Audit Committee, the Auditor, and the Endowment Trustees. It was a business meeting after all.

LLAMA: As a library director, I joined Library Leadership and Management Assoc at my first ALA because I was so impressed with the workshop opportunities I attended. Now I am a member of their membership committee, but that is one of the meetings I missed in Boston. If you are a director, branch manager, assistant to a director, you might like to look into LLAMA activities and join them too.

Since ALA there has been information released on the EBSCO contract and copyright issues. When I learn more, I'll send information to WLA and Wyoming librarians as a whole.

Submitted by Patty Myers, February 2010