



## ILA Annual Conference Report: October 4-7, 2006

I was asked to be the 2006 conference chair in the summer of 2004. To prepare for this responsibility, I served as the local arrangements chair for the 2005 conference, which was held in Pocatello. I attended the ILA Executive Board meetings in October 2005 and April 2006 to update the board about plans and discuss theme, workshop ideas, and general planning issues. I had planned on attending the January meeting, however a nasty blizzard changed my driving plans.

### Conference Committee

I was assisted greatly by several committee members. From the start, Ruth Funabiki and Barbara Greever were co-chairs for the Local Arrangements, which meant mostly dealing with the conference facility staff at the University Inn, and taking care of hospitality issues for speakers and attendees. Linnea Marshall continued in her role as Exhibits/Vendors chair that she did for the 2004 and 2005 conferences. In August 2006, Ruth was able to persuade Tom Ivie of the UI Law Library to be Equipment chair. Cathy recruited Leslie Twitchell who graciously provided Graphics for the name badges, registration form, and conference booklet. Sandi Pratt had negotiated the conference contract with the University Inn in 2004, per the normal ILA practice. As ILA treasurer, Pam Bradshaw took care of registration and name badges for all.

When Barbara, Ruth and I met briefly at ILA in October 2005, we agreed that I would develop the schedule, contact speakers and negotiate any contractual issues, such as honorariums, lodging and meals for speakers. Of course, as things developed, we kept in contact via e-mail, and occasionally talked by phone.

### Conference Facilities

I went to Moscow in July to become familiar with the University Inn, meet the conference staff, and generally meet with Ruth and Barbara about conference issues. However, the conference staff were busy and Ruth was on vacation, so Barbara and I confirmed speakers for a few remaining workshop time slots, and made other conference arrangements.

The week before I was in Moscow, there was a fire which began in some of the bushes outside the University Inn that caused minor damage to several rooms on that side of the building. This caused some concern, but the hotel staff were confident the rooms would be ready in plenty of time for the conference.

On May 31, Ruth notified me that UI's Homecoming Week is the same as the ILA conference, and immediately all were concerned that lodging for those coming from out of town for ILA may be extremely limited. We added a line about hotel/motel reservations on the ILA reservation form, and during August and September posted notices several times on LibIdaho to contact Ruth for lodging suggestions. We were

rather concerned the registration for the conference may decline due to the anticipated problem. The block of rooms reserved for ILA members at the University Inn was maintained, although the less expensive motels in the area had limited rooms available. Despite all our worries, Pam reported that 177 people registered for the conference (including seven on-site), bringing in \$36,884.50, and 25 vendors registered for 28 tables, bringing in another \$9925. YEAH!

The University Inn was sufficient in many ways as the conference center. There is a large banquet room, which was divided into three meeting rooms (Idaho, Washington, and Palouse), and the Silver room was used for no-conflict events, including lunches, banquet, business meetings and the legislative panel. The Internet Café was set up in the Gold room, and monitored by Tom. The Exhibits were set up in the University and Empire rooms at the end of a hall, and although a more central location would have been ideal, it worked out fine.

Tom Ivie and I worked together to assign rooms for each of the workshops, roundtables, meals, etc. With five workshops scheduled for each time slot during most of the conference, it was workable. The biggest concern was that the Centennial room has a sunroof and the Latah room has several windows so getting those rooms dark enough to project a PowerPoint presentation would be difficult. The roundtable discussion groups were difficult to assign rooms, because there were 12 of them. With two discussion groups in each of the meeting rooms, and the Regents and Pantry areas of the restaurant sectioned off, we were able to accommodate them all.

Tom recruited several people from the UI Law Library staff to help with equipment for the speakers. The original bid was about \$2063, and by borrowing computers and projectors from UI, and the Idaho Commission for Libraries providing projectors and computers for their staff to use, Tom's last estimate was that the bill should be just under \$800. However, I never saw the final bill to confirm that. Tom did a great job with the equipment and kept the speakers happy.

### Workshops & Programs

When planning the conference, my first goal (since the date and place were already set) was to decide on a theme. I suggested several to Barbara and Ruth, and chose "Libraries...and All That Jazz". After receiving suggestions from each of the division chairs, we talked about having workshops on various media types, such as websites, movies, music, podcasts, etc. At the November board meeting I asked for suggestions for keynote speakers about how libraries need to embrace new technologies and media formats. Joe Jaynes of the University of Washington Information School was suggested, but he was unavailable. Jenny Levine was also suggested, but she didn't respond to my e-mails. Stephen Abram was suggested and available, and provided a great keynote address, "Libraries 2010", focusing on the future of libraries, and the importance of being connected with patrons.

After the theme and keynote speaker were confirmed, developing the rest of the schedule was fairly simple. I developed a chart with five tracks: public libraries, academic libraries, trustees/directors, school libraries, and technology for all libraries. My goal was to have one workshop per time slot for each track. However, as I began to contact speakers, some had conflicts, so adjustments were made, although I tried to maintain a balance of workshops for each track.

When scheduling the workshops, I became strongly aware of when the “preferred” times were and the “not-preferred” times. Thursday workshops were eagerly attended, but the Friday afternoon workshops needed to be worth staying for. Also, most of the workshops geared for trustees needed to be on Friday, on the same day as the legislative panel. Working out all the quirks, and then finding a room that could accommodate the equipment the speaker needed and the anticipated audience became quite a task.

Technology Time was coordinated by Gaila Butikofer and Kathy Watson, and it was fairly successful this year. Linnea included a question on the exhibitor’s registration form asking them if they would be interested in participating in the Technology time, and seven responded that they were interested. However, air travel out of Moscow is fairly limited, and as a result only a couple were able to stay. The ICFL assisted greatly by answering questions and demonstrating podcasting, IPODs, and other computer-based media. The representative from World Book had internet problems, but was there to demonstrate the web-based version of the encyclopedia. Overall, participants found it valuable, but wished it was earlier in the conference. Once again, Friday afternoon is not the “preferred” time.

Throughout the conference, small gifts of appreciation were given to speakers that are not ILA members. However, Ruth and Barbara noted a section in the ILA by-laws that ILA members should not be compensated for presenting at ILA conferences, so no gifts were given to them. This bothered many, both presenters and attendees, and was discussed at the Executive Board meeting on Saturday following the conference. I sent thank you letters to all presenters, with the compiled evaluation results, and Ruth provided small gifts for the equipment crew. Barbara gave thank you notes to those who assisted with local arrangements.

### Summary

Overall, the conference was a great success, and I would love the opportunity to work on a conference committee again. Hopefully that next conference will be closer to where I live, and the committee will have opportunities to meet regularly to generate ideas, provide support and develop as a team.

Submitted by Catherine Gray