

**Idaho Library Association
Advocacy and Public Relations Meeting
August 30, 2005
9:00 in Boise, at the Flying M**

In attendance:

Linda Brilz, Boise Public Library
Steve Poppino, College of Southern Idaho
Anne Abrams, Idaho State Library
Joanne Hinkel, Boise Public Library
Jillian Subach, Meridian Library District

We began our meeting with coffee, snacks, and introductions, in which committee members shared something "interesting" about themselves. You'd have to be there to get that information!

Our next task was to examine the Advocacy and Public Relations charge, as approved by the ILA Board in April 2005. All members reviewed the charge prior to the meeting, and Jillian quickly covered the process of creating that charge. We talked briefly about a few things, related to the charge, that have taken place so far, such as training sessions at ILA conferences, information sent to the ILA Advocacy Page, and various other speaking events and media coverage. (A bulleted list of these events was provided, and the information in its entirety will appear in the report to the ILA Board due later in September. A copy of that report will be forwarded to all committee members.)

We began to explore possible jumping-off projects for our committee, based on several things:

- The committee work needed to be manageable and possible for all members
- The information that we gather, organize, and generate must be simple and meaningful to all Idaho librarians

The group consensus was that although many great advocacy projects and ideas are circulating both statewide and nationally, that librarians in Idaho have less infrastructure and funding to support them, and therefore, another such push for these programs could end up being shelved for simply being too lengthy, too wordy, and just plain too much. We believe that many librarians are already doing great advocacy work, but may not recognize it as

such. We agreed the more awareness about what advocacy "looks like" would bolster the confidence of librarians in our state.

We talked about the importance of having more information about the needs of academic, special, and school libraries in our state. The "Top Ten Advocacy Tips" bookmark really only addresses public libraries. Steve agreed to tweak the project to reflect academic libraries, and Linda and Jillian agreed to get in touch with school librarians to better reflect their needs as well. We hope to have several versions of the bookmark available in the near future. (No completion date was set for this.)

We briefly toyed with The Smartest Card campaign, talking about a few ideas that have worked nationally. Our concern was that this would be too overwhelming for the whole state to tackle right now - that it would be reminiscent of other national projects that haven't received adequate attention and support in Idaho, based on the factors mentioned earlier in this report. It makes sense to perhaps get some low-key, simple information sharing started, and work toward a project of that magnitude. We considered featuring the Smartest Card campaign in April, for National Library Week. Again, that would depend on the progress made up to that point. Overall, however, our group appreciates and supports that campaign, and will look to implementation at a later date.

Related to the Advocacy/PR charge, we decided to work toward having an advocacy program at each chapter meeting, in addition to the annual conference. Our committee agreed to present programs in our respective regions, and to recruit presenters for the other regions. The programs could be titled in exciting, non-threatening ways, and could possibly be scheduled alone, or at least not against something super popular. It was mentioned that a program saying "here's what we're doing" might give libraries a chance to tell their story, thereby building confidence and showing others how simple it can often be. A small educational piece could be built in as well. We decided to compile a list of contact people around the state, who would be willing to possibly share their speaking topics, notes, and ideas with others. The most important thing is - encourage each other with praise and support, and work to break barriers of fear and lack of communication. (Now THAT'S a lofty goal!)

Finally, we decided to have two regular updates to the Advocacy website. One will be a weekly "advocacy or public relations tip" - something short in length that can easily be implemented, or shared with customers and community members. Our committee will compile these "tips" and one person will submit them weekly to Michael (web host). The tips should be annotated. Secondly, we will post a monthly website in support of advocacy or public relations -anything from articles to interesting projects done by other libraries. We have one article so far, and Linda is compiling them at this point. It was agreed that all communication in the group should be shared - all emails will go to the entire group. (Again, no starting date has been set.)

So, the "assignments" are as follows:

Steve will work on the wording for an academic "Top Ten" bookmark, the wording for a postcard mailing to all ILA members related to our activities, and ask for support and information from librarians in the Magic Valley area.

Jillian will send notes from the meeting (YAY), contact school librarians for input, contact folks from other regions to recruit help and committee members, and assist with sending website links and weekly tips to Linda.

Linda will compile website links and weekly tips for the Advocacy site, contact school librarians for input, and help recruit any personal contacts to help with our project.

Did I get that right?

We will communicate via email for the next few weeks. Jillian and Linda can easily meet in person if needed, and Jillian and Steve will meet in Pocatello at the conference.