

ALA Council Meeting Notes Midwinter Meeting 2009

Committee on Library Advocacy (COLA)

- Created Advocacy University, a group of programs that include:
 - “Advocating in a Tough Economy” Toolkit – Has information on how to work w/ decision-makers and the media, talking points to help libraries articulate the role of libraries in times of economic downturn, return-on-investment (ROI) examples and a calculator, and link to recent media coverage of libraries relating to economic conditions.
 - “Add it Up: Libraries Make the Difference in Youth Development and Education” – a web-based resource filled with talking points and statistics making the case for libraries in the lives of children and teens.
- Building Statewide Coalitions for All Libraries during a Tough Economy
 - A program/panel-discussion that took place on January 24th during the MidWinter Meeting.

Council Transparency

- Related to the work of the Task Force on Electronic Member Participation.
- ALA staff currently working to attempt to create a master matrix that would look at the costs associated with various kinds of improved and increased access of electronic participation. That report is currently in process and staff expect to have a first draft to discuss with the Budget committee in May and additional finding and report for Council at the Annual meeting in 2009.

Resolution on the Connection Between the Recent Gaza Conflict and Libraries

- Resolved that the ALA
 - Calls for the protection of libraries and archives in Gaza, and urges the US Government to support the United States Committee of the Blue Shield in upholding the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, and
 - Calls on the US Government to strenuously work for an immediate permanent ceasefire, and
 - Calls on the US Government to work toward disarmament in the region, and
 - Transmits this resolution to the US President, US Secretary of State, all members of the US Congress, the US Committee of the Blue Shield, the library press, and other appropriate individuals and organizations.
- Motion to refer the matter to the International Relations Committee so they can discuss the resolution and provide input regarding it
 - The IRC has seen the resolution has a copy of the resolution, but their subgroups have not yet had a chance to meet and discuss it.
 - Council voted to refer the motion to the IRC

Freedom to Read Foundation

- Child Online Protect Act (COPA) overturned. The Act would have criminalized the transmission of materials “for commercial purposes” considered to be “harmful to minors” via the World Wide Web if those materials could be accessed by minors.
- Limitations on National Security Letters (NSLs). The legal decision places some limits on the government’s ability to impose a gag order when it uses NSLs to obtain information.
- *Big Hat Books v. Prosecutors* – A legal challenge to an Indiana statute that would have required booksellers and others selling books or other materials that are “harmful to minors” as defined by Indiana law to register with the state as an “adult” business, provide description of the materials for sale, and pay a \$250 registration fee. A federal district court in Indianapolis held the statute unconstitutional, ruling that while the government has a compelling interest in protecting minors, the registration law was too vague and not narrowly tailored to achieve that goal. The court held that the law would restrict adults’ ability to access protected expression and that there are existing Indiana criminal statutes that criminalize the dissemination to minors of materials deemed harmful to them.
- New Litigation:
 - FTRF joined the lawsuit, *Wilson v. McConnell*, challenging the CIA’s decision to prohibit former CIA operative Valerie Plame Wilson from mentioning in her memoir the pre-2000 dates of her service with the agency, notwithstanding the fact that those dates had been included in an unclassified letter to Ms. Wilson which was introduced at House hearing and read into the *Congressional Record*, and which is widely available on the Internet.

ALA Programmatic Priorities for FY 2010

- Council approved the following programmatic priorities for ALA’s 2010 fiscal year:
 - Diversity
 - Equitable Access to Information and Library Services
 - Education and Lifelong Learning
 - Intellectual Freedom
 - Advocacy for Libraries and the Profession
 - Literacy
 - Organizational Excellence

Library Education Task Force

- The Task Force was charged to bring the diverse stakeholders in library education together to create “actionable recommendations to ensure that library and information science education programs produce librarians who understand the core values of our profession and possess the core competencies of the profession needed to work in today’s libraries.”
- The Core Competencies drafted/revised address the areas of:
 - Foundations of the Profession
 - Information Resources
 - Organization of Recorded Knowledge and Information
 - Technological Knowledge and Skills

- Reference and User Services
- Research
- Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning
- Administration and Management
- The full details of the competencies (with sub-categories) are available at <http://www.ala.org/ala/educationcareers/careers/corecomp/index.cfm>
- The competencies were passed by Council with a number of amendments

Task Force on Electronic Member Participation

The Task Force, of which I am a member, has been working for over a year to determine how ALA might incorporate electronic member participation in its activities in a more official way. Some things have been going on for a long time, though unofficially.

Recommendation 1 – Encourage all units of the Association to engage in active experimentation with providing electronic access to non-governance activities. Non-governance activities include such things as conferences, pre-conference, programs, major addresses, awards ceremonies, and other sessions during which official Association business is not conducted. Experimentation should be with regard both to types of access provided, and to fiscal models for supporting such access. To assist in evaluation, information about participation, satisfaction, actual cost, overhead, etc. should be kept and analyzed, and shared with the Budget Analysis and Review Committee.

- Motion passes

Recommendation 2 – Adopt a new interpretation of Policy 7.4.4 (Open Meetings) to read as “All meetings of the American Library Association and its units are open to all members and to members of the press. Registration requirements apply. Closed meetings may be held only for the discussion of matters affecting the privacy of individuals or institutions.”

- Motion passes

Recommendation 3 – Adopt the policy addressing the openness of between-meeting activities of committees and boards.

- Motion passes

Recommendation 4 – Eliminate Policy 6.16 (Virtual Members). In its place, enable appointment of full committee members who may attend meetings virtually only.

- Motion passes

Recommendation 5 – Revise Policy 4.5, which addresses the requirements for committee service. The revisions make it possible for committee members to participate in the work of a group outside of the traditional 2 face-to-face meetings utilized by most ALA & units committees. It also makes it possible for a committee member to miss an in-person meeting and not be in violation of their committee service requirements.

- Motion passes

Recommendations 6-16

- Recommendation 6 – Requests the ALA Executive Director evaluate the ease, expense, and serviceability of various options to enable electronic participation in meetings.
 - Recommendation 7 – Requests implementation on an experimental basis some means of providing electronic access to Council activities in a timely manner.
 - Recommendation 8 – mirrors #1, but focuses on governance activities
 - Recommendation 9 – Requests that the ALA Executive Director investigate possible means by which Council members who are unable to attend Council meetings in person might participate in live discussion and vote electronically.
 - Recommendation 10 – addresses unfinished work of the first task force as some tools were not available (e.g. ALA Communities) during the span of the task force.
 - Recommendation 11 – Requests the ALA Executive Director investigate the feasibility of enabling votes of Council between Midwinter and Annual meetings.
 - Recommendation 12-13 – Address by-laws issues and are already being addressed by the appropriate ALA Committee
 - Recommendation 14 – Requests the Executive Director to devise and implement a plan whereby member volunteers can be effectively informed of ALA policies regarding the conduct of ALA business.
 - Recommendation 15 – Charges a new Task Force to survey membership and leadership regarding interest in electronic participation and to develop a framework for prioritization of efforts aimed at increasing electronic participation in Association governance and programming, and to report to Council, no later than the Annual Meeting, 2010
 - Recommendation 16 – Appoints a new Task Force to address the matters resulting from the work of the current task force
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- Council members discussed all the above recommendations as a group.
 - Moved to refer Recommendations 6-16 to Executive Board, to investigate general options for Council's consideration, soliciting input from the Executive Director, BARC, and such other bodies as the Executive Board deems necessary.
 - Motion to refer to Executive Board

Intellectual Freedom Committee

- Privacy and Confidentiality Issues: A Guide for Libraries and their Lawyers – A new publication by the Freedom to Read Foundation General Counsel Theresa Chmara. The publication discusses legal policy issues relating to patron privacy and confidentiality that often raise First Amendment questions. The publication addresses what First Amendment rights exist in libraries, How to create a library policy to best protect patrons' confidentiality and privacy, the appropriate responses to requests for patron records, how to deal with the nuances of Internet use privacy, and the role of the library as employer.
- National Conversation on Privacy – www.privacyrevolution.org – the website was just rolled out and serves as a hub to provide information and tools to help people think critically and make personal choices about their information privacy, while also allowing them to join a community, share their story, and add their voices to those of others who are passionate about privacy issues.

- Banned Books Week (September 27th – October 4th)
- Challenged Materials policy – new revision passed
- Restricted Access to Library Materials policy – new revision passed
- Services to Persons with Disabilities – new policy adopted

Committee on Legislation

- Resolution commending President Barack Obama on his commitment to openness and transparency in government. Resolved
 - That the ALA commends President Barack Obama for recognizing the importance of openness, transparency, and accountability in government by signing an executive order on President Records and presidential memoranda on the Freedom of Information Act and Transparency and Open Government on his first day in office and looks forward to continuing to work with the Administration to advance public access and the public's right to know.
 - Resolution passed.
- Resolution in support of the reauthorization of the Library Services and Technology Act. Resolved
 - That the ALA urges the U.S. Congress to reauthorize the Library Services and Technology Act in a timely manner.
 - Resolution passed.

International Relations Committee

- Guadalajara Book Fair – 160 ALA members participated in the ALA-FIL Free Pass Program to attend the Guadalajara Book Fair at the end of November 2008.
- U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield (USCBS) – The USCBS noted that the U.S. government passed the Hague Convention to protect cultural property. USCBS and other national Blue Shield Committees have established an International Association of the National Committees to improve coordination of activities and enhance the visibility and impact of the national committees. THE USCBS also continues its training of U.S. military personnel on the importance of protecting cultural property and cultural heritage.
- Resolution on the Connection Between the Recent Gaza Conflict and Libraries, Resolved that the ALA
 - Calls for the protection of libraries and archives in Gaza and Israel, and urges the US Government to support the United States Committee of the Blue Shield in upholding the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, and
 - Calls on the U.S. Government to work for a permanent peace in the region; and
 - Transmits this resolution to the U.S. President, U.S. Secretary of State, all members of the U.S. Congress, the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield, and other appropriate individuals and organization.
 - Motion passes

Resolution on Understanding Gaza

- Resolved that the ALA, in the spirit of fostering historical and cultural understanding of the situation in Gaza amongst its members:
 - Request the Membership Meeting Committee to establish an ALA reads working group, inviting representatives from the Diversity Council and the Social Responsibilities Round Table to work on the one conference, one book project,
 - Direct the working group to select for the Chicago 2009 annual conference a book highly regarded for its fair and accurate portrayal of the Palestinian people and their history for ALA members to read before annual, inviting the book's publisher to join the effort as a partner,
 - Set aside part of one ALA membership meeting at annual 2009 for a conversation on how libraries might best foster within our communities a more accurate understanding of the Palestinian people, their history and culture.
 - Promote this "Understanding Gaza – One Conference, One Book – ALA Reads" event throughout the membership of ALA via all print and electronic means at its disposal, and
 - Instruct the working group to evaluate the event and make recommendations by Midwinter 2010 for possible continuation.
- Discussion about the resolution:
 - Too political and too one-sided
 - Confusion over the intent of the resolution; is it to create a theme for the conference or to create a track within the conference?
 - There are other groups within ALA that could do this on their own – sponsor a program addressing the intent.
 - Movers suggest the point of the resolution is about education, bringing to our attention the Middle East as a major conflict area of the world, that most ppl don't know enough about it and this would bring education to us and our membership and, therefore, the greater society.
 - Notes that it is inappropriate for the membership meeting committee to be charged with this matter
- The motion failed

Resolution on Access for Physical Mobility Impaired Conference Attendees

- Resolved by ALA Council that
 - ALA adds the following paragraph to the end of Policy #7.1.3, Conference Arrangements for Participants with Disabilities: "Assistive devices for attendees with physical mobility impairments shall be made available by reservation. Devices not reserved in advance shall be made available on a first-come, first-served basis. Using whatever means necessary, these devices shall be located adjacent to the conference center's main entrance or to the primary registration area for pick-up and delivery."
 - ALA implements this policy in time for the July 2009 Annual Conference
- Opinion of the Idaho Chapter Councilor: The accessibility issue is, in my opinion, already addressed in policy. It seems to me the issue is whether or not the policy is being carried out by conference staff. I am hesitant to create such prescriptive policy. To me, it's along the lines of prescribing which shelf in the building a book should reside upon. I

choose to abstain from voting for those reasons, though I cannot bring myself to vote against an issue that would make services more easily accessible to those with disabilities.

- Motion passed.

Resolution on Accessible Computer Workstations at ALA Annual Conferences and Midwinter Meetings

- Resolved that the ALA affirms that
 - That accessible workstations shall always be identified by raised identifier flags extending from the monitors of those workstations, and
 - That accessible workstations shall always be placed in the first seat in the first row of computer clusters made available to event attendees, and
 - That these instructions shall be placed into ALA Policy #7.1.3
- Motion passed.

Resolution on High Speed Internet Wireless Access at Conference Hotels

- Resolved that
 - The ALA Council directs the ALA Executive Director to negotiate for wireless Internet connection at no additional charge for all hotels in the ALA Conference Hotel Block, and
 - That this be implemented as soon as practicable.
- Motion defeated