

ALA Wyoming Chapter Councilor Report
ALA Midwinter 2007, Seattle, Washington, January 20-24, 2007

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments.
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If you are at all interested in ALA governance, you might want to plan to attend at least one Council meeting the next time you are at an ALA conference. The Council meetings are open to the public and observers are welcome. The ALA Councilors also serve as the governing board for the ALA-APA (American Library Association – Allied Professional Association), and those meetings are open as well. The meetings occur in a large room with the Councilors seated at tables in the front and about 300 seats set up behind them, so there is plenty of room for you to come and observe.

For background documentation on actions taken at the meetings and complete agendas, please go to the 2007 Midwinter conference section on the following page:

<http://www.ala.org/ala/ourassociation/governance/council/councilagendas/councilagendas.htm>

Note that the 2007 conference actions and agendas have not yet been posted, but this link will get you to them when they are posted in a few weeks.

Below are some highlights of the actions and activities.

ALA-APA

The Certified Public Library Administrator Program is gaining momentum. For information on the program please go to: <http://www.ala-apa.org/> and click on the heading with that title.

Note that National Library Workers Day is April 17, 2007. Go to the ALA-APA website to “Submit a Star,” someone whose library work you appreciate.

The financial situation of this fledgling organization continues to improve, and the funds loaned from the ALA coffers will be repaid. The first Non-MLS Salary Survey and the annual Librarian Salary Survey were published and are generating income for this organization. A web-based database of the salary information will be made available for a fee.

ALA-APA presented its first resolution, concerning a non-binding minimum salary for professional librarians. After a discussion about the definition of a “professional librarian” and expressions of concerns about some of the wording in the resolution, there were no amendments and the item was approved as written.

ALA Council

There was a good Hot Topic Discussion on the subject, “Creating a Buzz about Council.” As with many volunteer organizations, it is becoming more and more difficult to get members to serve on committees, including the ALA Council. The timing of the Midwinter Meeting presents a hurdle for school librarians in particular, and the costs of attending meetings in far-flung locales keep many potential participants from doing so. The Wyoming Library Association provides generous financial support in comparison to other state chapters.

Work of the Budget Analysis and Review Committee (BARC) Task Force on Graduated Dues Structure has been extended by 6 months to enable the task force to present a well-thought-out

proposal at the 2007 Annual Conference for studying the pros and cons of changing to a graduated dues structure.

Several resolutions came to the ALA Council floor during this conference, and although none of them were directly related to libraries, in my opinion, the fact that we spent quite a bit of time discussing them led to some really interesting conclusions about the nature of the ALA Council. The contentious resolutions included one about ending funding for the Iraq war, one about impeaching George W. Bush, and one about the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). The Iraq war resolution was defeated on a vote of 98 opposed and 34 in favor, and the BSA resolution was referred to a committee to review the content on their website and remove references to advocating support of the BSA. The Resolution on Impeachment of President George W. Bush caused a furor of parliamentary procedure when one Councilor rose on a point of order that the resolution's subject was not germane. After the ALA president called for a vote and the council voted not to discuss the resolution, several councilors protested and we ended up discussing it after all. One Councilor commented that such a resolution sends a signal to our library patrons that the ALA is not supportive of providing information on both sides of issues to enable patrons to make up their minds for themselves. The resolution was eventually put to a vote and failed by a wide margin. The next day, Eli Mina, ALA's professional parliamentarian, presented a report analyzing the effectiveness of our Council sessions. Aspects affecting the effectiveness of an organization include its purpose, structure, and culture. Mina felt that ALA's permissiveness, in allowing extensive discussion of resolutions that some councilors think are not germane to the business of the organization, is in keeping with ALA's core value of encouraging free expression of varying points of view. I plan to keep this explanation in mind during whatever off-the-wall discussions occur in future council sessions during my term as your chapter councilor.

In reference to this report, I did not provide a lot of detail on the individual actions, because that information is readily available on the ALA website. If you would like background on anything related to ALA Council, please feel free to contact me.