

## **President-Elect's Report to ALA Council Midwinter, 2002**

The period since the last report was a relative lull. The bulk of my time has been spent with *e-mail* correspondence—a task that has become entirely too daunting, conference calls, and a few meetings. To my family's surprise and relief the only travel was to New York City, and a brief 4-day vacation with my wife in California. The future will not be like the past.

Fortunately, most of the months of November, December, and January, I was able to concentrate on the work of the Westchester Library System, my employer, and the ALA benefactor that has chosen to permit me to spend the amounts of time I do on ALA business. I am happy to report that the Westchester Library System, a New York State agency, was able to get the full budget increase it requested from Westchester County—the County has no obligation whatsoever to fund WLS—a wonderful achievement. The increase was rare in the County budget, which was holding the line in most areas as well as cutting in others. This is a tribute to the County Executive and its Board of Legislators, and proof that despite these difficult financial times, the essential role that libraries play in, and their value to, the community can be recognized by enlightened government officials.

The three areas of ALA activity that have engaged my time as ALA President-Elect since my Fall Report have been:

1. Administrative discussions regarding the ALA and its operations
2. The work of the Task Force on Better Salaries and Pay Equity
3. The ALA public awareness campaign and related issues
4. Committee Appointments

### **1. Administrative Discussions**

The discussions and activity to do with ALA and its operations involved the conduct and activities of the ALA search for an Executive Director, the establishment of a 501(c)6 association and the various issues surrounding it, some other issues, and budget related matters, budget related matters, and budget related matters. Residual action or information concerning these activities will come up as part of the agenda for the Midwinter meeting.

Simply, I would offer the following. The Association is facing more difficult financial times, but we must be sure to keep our focus on what is most important to the members and the continuation or initiation of critical programs. How this is accomplished—especially since everyone is well-intended and believes that what they will be advocating is what is needed—is going to be a difficult challenge which we must all face.

Lastly, I also have prepared and submitted my first budget to BARC and the Executive Board.

## **2. The Task Force on Better Salaries and Pay Equity**

I am thrilled to report that the Task Force has had its first meeting in November, and that it is off and running. The energy and work of the Task Force and the various subcommittees that have been formed has been unprecedented according to some of the older ALA hands who have observed the incredible flow of e-mail and work underway.

A complete roster of members (as of today), and virtual members (those who can participate on the listserv) is listed as Appendix 1. Appendix 2 has the list of Subcommittees and their rosters. Appendix 2 includes people who are not on the Task Force but have been recruited to work on the subcommittees. Other material relating to the TF's work is appended as well.

The Task Force includes a variety of people with quite different backgrounds. There are union veterans, there are administrators, and there are people who pioneered in the pay equity fights for library staff. All of the members are vitally interested in the issues that define the TF's work. They're committed to improving the compensation of library workers and I trust that the Association will give them the support that they need. Should all of the work of the Task Force come to fruition as planned, there should be significant benefits to the Association in terms of its membership, and to its members because of the empowerment tools and resources that will become available to them in their pursuit of equitable compensation and fair pay.

Already in its early stages, the work of the Task Force has attracted interest beyond the scope of the American Library Association—The Library Association (Great Britain) and the Australian Library and Information Association have become virtual members as participants on the TF listserv. Both associations are actively involved in promoting better salaries and pay equity for their respective members, and have been making great strides toward that goal. Their postings and documents are rich with valuable information.

Which gets me to the last point. The ALA Intern, Jill Uncyk, has done an outstanding job developing the President-Elect web site ([www.mjfreedman.org](http://www.mjfreedman.org).) Detailed information about the Task Force and its activities are available on the web site, as well as other information related to my presidency.

### **3. Public Awareness Campaign**

Along with President Berry and Past-President Kranich, I have been participating with members of ALA Communications and Patricia Glass Schuman, chair of the Public Awareness Committee on discussions and plans for the Campaign for America's Libraries. It is critical that all of our public relations initiatives have our support along with at least a modicum of success. Libraries must be seen as essential in these troubled financial times.

### **5. Committee Appointments**

I want to thank the members of the Committee on Committees for the hard work that they have done and will do, and the Committee on Appointments for the hard work it will do. This is not the most glamorous part of the presidency of ALA, but it is one of the very most important. The work of the Association, in addition to the toil of the ALA staff, is done by the various ALA committees and other units. The selection process is complicated by the problem of finding qualified people who are willing to serve—the qualified part is not that difficult, but getting them to be able to sacrifice the time and energy from their paid positions is always the appointing authorities' challenge.

On behalf of both committees, we have and will do our utmost to get the most qualified people nominated and appointed to the vacant slots.

I wish all of you well, and hope that this New Year brings health, happiness, and peace to everyone. Our challenge is great. Let's face it in the best spirit of collegiality and courage possible.

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President-Elect, American Library Association  
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