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ALA 2019 Annual Conference: Council Meetings Report

ALA’s 2019 Annual Conference was held close to home in Washington, D.C. this past June and kicked off with a great “Welcome to ALA” event put together by MLA and other nearby organizations, including the DC Public Library, the District of Columbia Library Association, and the Delaware Library Association. ALA Councilor for Maryland, David Dahl, reports on Council Activities at ALA 2019.

The Leadership Development Division Presents: the Leaders Who Library Book Club

Reading for pleasure is cherished by library workers during their days off, lounging at home or sneaking in a few pages during a break at work. Perhaps you have found reading for professional development a bit harder to fit into an ever growing “to-read” pile. While it’s always tempting to pick up a page-turner like Ruth Ware’s The Turn of the Key, the Leadership Development Division (LDD) has been asking its members to pursue professional-development reading through the Leaders Who Library Book Club.

Night Sky Network: Find Strange Uranus in Aries

Most of the planets in our solar system are bright and easily spotted in our night skies. The exceptions are the ice giant planets: Uranus and Neptune. These worlds are so distant and dim that binoculars or telescopes are almost always needed to see them. A great time to search for Uranus is during its opposition on October 28, since the planet is up almost the entire night and at its brightest for the year.
Editor’s Note

Welcome, Crab readers, to the fall season and to a new MLA year. In looking through the articles for this issue, I saw the common thread of leadership and innovation. In this issue, we welcome Andrea Berstler, new MLA President for the 2019-2020 MLA year. In her first President’s message, Andrea speaks about the role of libraries as a leader in providing equity in access (see page 5).

The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Maryland Chapter reports on its trailblazing activities, both literally and figuratively, as the group embarked on a new networking event, a hike in Patapsco Valley State Park this summer (see page 6).

As well, the Leadership Development Division’s Leaders Who Library Book Club has seen great success in creating a book club that fosters leadership, networking, and professional development in a friendly and welcoming environment (see page 10).

Fall can sometimes be seen as a time of reflection and lamenting the demise of summer, but after reading this issue, I find myself inspired to take initiative and try something new, both in my personal and professional life. Check back with me in the Editor’s Note for the Winter issue to see what I’ve accomplished.

Annette Haldeman, MLA Crab Editor; Department of Legislative Services Library
ONE OF THE KEYSTONES OF ANY LIBRARY is its calling to provide and protect equity in access. It is the very tenet upon which the original free library was built, and is one of the continued themes of all libraries; no matter who you are, the library is here to provide you access to the same content and quality of information as others in your community. After all this time, we would think that is not only obvious to library staff and customers, but to the public, as well, but it seems that this is not the case. It is 2019 and once again, libraries face a challenge to the standard of free access for all.

Recently, multiple publishers have decided that the rules should change when one enters the digital platform. Their changes in policies for selling to libraries have created a situation where access is restricted for those who most need and can least afford to pay; in other words, it is those people who need and use libraries the most. This access to information is vital to the health and growth of a democratic society. As Public Library Association (PLA) President Ramiro Salazar stated, “Access to digital content in libraries is more than a financial issue: it is an equity issue. We encourage Macmillan Publishers to reverse course before libraries and the people they serve are harmed.”

The Maryland Library Association understands the vital role equity and access play in a free society. As professionals who spend every day working to connect people with the information they need to learn, work, explore, discover and invent; we are keenly aware of the effect that restricting information can have on a community.


“Access to digital content in libraries is more than a financial issue: it is an equity issue”
Trailblazing Collaboration…
Social Networking in Nature

Sean Hogan, University of Baltimore, Robert L. Bogomolny Library

On the morning of Saturday July 20, 2019, several members of the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL), Maryland chapter, met for a unique networking event—a hike through Patapsco Valley State Park.

Participation for this event was hampered by the steamy, high temperature weather, which hit 100 degrees Fahrenheit. But a handful of hearty MLA’ers and family attended and hiked 5 kilometers of the Cascade Trail at the park.

While hiking, ACRL MD members chatted about libraries, library schools, professional experiences, and got to know each other on a more personal level. They only missed one trail blaze and ended up getting turned around, but ended the hike successfully at Cascade Falls. After dipping their feet in the cooling water of the falls, these resilient MLA’ers finished the event with well-deserved food and libations at the new Guinness Brewery in Halethorpe, Maryland.

Overall, this networking day was a great success. Though the next time ACRL MD decides to network in nature, they will probably choose a cooler time of the year!

(from left to right)
Finn Hogan, Catherine Johnson, Alison Jennings-Roche, Stephen “Mike” Kiel, Michael Shochet, and Sean Hogan
MLA Educational Grants:
Tips for a Successful Application

Martha Zimmerman, Salisbury University

The Professional Development Panel Educational Grants Subcommittee awards grants based on established review criteria and according to funding approved yearly by the MLA Executive Board. Grants of up to $100 are available for workshops, conferences and pre-conferences. Scholarship grants for library science courses and undergraduate courses at all levels qualify for awards up to $500, based on available funds and the number of applications. Non-credit bearing courses that are approved for certification renewal are also eligible.

The fundamentals of the application process were detailed in the Crab’s Winter 2019 issue. This article explores the ways in which you can maximize your chances for success.

Please keep in mind that the application form is the only tool at your disposal to communicate with the subcommittee. There are no performance evaluations, letters of reference or any other documents to support your application. Use the application as a means of letting the subcommittee know who you are, your professional goals, and why you are deserving of funding.

At the very least, your application should be typed. Effective at the January 2020 review cycle, the subcommittee will no longer review hand-written applications.

Please be thorough and detailed in providing all of the information requested on the application form. “Public Service 101” does not really tell us very much about the course you would like to take. The subcommittee needs a complete description so that it can assess the value of what you are proposing to do. Do not forget the sponsoring organization, as this will help the subcommittee in its decision making.

Take the time to think through your response to the “value or return on investment” that will accrue to you or your organization if you participate in the activity or take the course. “Help me in my job” is really not the best way to answer this question! Framing your response in terms of your professional growth, or how the course or training will help you to address specific issues in your organization, is what we are looking for.

Your current and previous involvement in MLA is also important. You must be a member for at least six months for your application to be considered. Membership, however, is a minimum requirement. You are, after all, asking the organization for something. What are you giving in return? MLA is a nonprofit organization. Without everyone’s participation, there is no MLA. Are you a Division or Interest Group member? Good! Have you attended meetings or programs sponsored by that Division or Interest Group? Even better! You don’t have to hold a leadership position to secure an award, but you should be able to show that you are an actively engaged member.

Membership in Divisions and Interest Groups is free, as are their meetings. Many meetings are now held virtually, and most feature a discussion or educational event of some kind.

The subcommittee does its best to ensure that available funding goes to the most deserving applicants. If you have any questions, please contact one of the members of the Subcommittee:

Danielle Johnson (dwhren@loyola.edu)
Regina Rose (rgrose513@verizon.net)
John Venditta (john@esrl.org)
Martha Zimmerman (mczimmerman@salisbury.edu)

Quick Reminder

The application is available from the MLA Forms webpage: http://www.mdlib.org/content.asp?contentid=292. Look for:

General > Educational Grants - Word
ALA 2019 Annual Conference: Council Meetings Report

David Dahl, ALA Councilor for Maryland

ALA’S 2019 ANNUAL CONFERENCE was held close to home in Washington, D.C. this past June and kicked off with a great “Welcome to ALA” event put together by MLA and other nearby organizations, including the DC Public Library, the District of Columbia Library Association and the Delaware Library Association. Kudos to all involved; it sounds like another great event is in the works for the 2020 Midwinter Meeting in Philadelphia!

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Prior to ALA and as a follow-up to concerns and issues arising at the 2019 Midwinter Meeting, Council members were invited to participate in two webinars addressing equity, diversity and inclusion within ALA. These webinars were followed by a workshop facilitated by DeEtta Jones during Council I at Annual. All three opportunities were a new way to bring Council members together, allowing for personal engagement in the group. These opportunities gave Council members a chance to reflect on and improve upon systems and structures in Council and throughout ALA, striving to improve our values to be an equitable, diverse, and inclusive association. The workshop was a welcome departure from Council’s normal mode of operation and seemed to have a positive impact on the level of civility, respect, and openness during the course of the Council’s business.

Council Actions

Resolutions passed:
- Resolution on Renaming the Melvil Dewey Medal
- Resolution on Library Service for Children in Detention at Migrant Detention Centers
- Resolution on eBook Pricing for Libraries
- Several revisions to Library Bill of Rights Interpretations were passed:
  - Education and Information Literacy
  - Economic Barriers to Information Access

User-Initiated Exhibits, Displays and Bulletin Boards
- Access to Digital Resources and Services
- Evaluating Library Collections
- Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors
- Rating Systems
- Library-Initiated Programs and Displays as a Resource
- Diverse Collections
- Minors and Online Activity
- Privacy
- User-Generated Content in Library Discovery Systems

Memorials:
- Dr. Donald B. Cleveland
- Nicolette Warisse Sosulski
- Anne J. Hofmann
- Patricia Meyer Battin
- Dr. Catherine Patricia Riesenman
- Dr. Lucille Cole Thomas

Tributes:
- Dr. Ann Carlson Weeks
- Christine Lind Hage
- Prue Adler

Steering Committee on Organizational Effectiveness

Much of the conversation at ALA Annual this year focused on a new four-letter word—actually an acronym—SCOE which stands for Steering Committee on Organizational Effectiveness. This committee is charged with designing “a modern association for a modern profession”. During Council II, SCOE shared their preliminary recommendations, stressing that these were, indeed, preliminary.
The preliminary recommendations include the following elements of organization governance:

- a redesigned 17-person Executive Board that includes eight at-large members elected directly by the membership;
- three supporting committees, including the Policy Development Committee, the Finance & Audit Committee and the Nominating & Leadership Development Committee;
- leadership assemblies, including a Chapter Leadership Assembly, among others;
- Volunteer Engagement Groups including working groups, communities of interest, and advisory communities

The Chapter Leadership Assembly, which has purposely few details at this point, offers MLA and other ALA chapters an opportunity to define the manner in which we wish to engage in ALA governance. This element of ALA governance is especially important given the lack of a governance body similar to Council, which includes chapter representation, in this new model.

I applaud SCOE on what I have observed to be a very open, inclusive and thoughtful process. Final recommendations are scheduled to be shared at Midwinter 2020, with Council votes needed at both Annual 2020 and Annual 2021. Stay tuned!

**ALA Executive Director Search**

At Council I, an update was given on the search for ALA’s next Executive Director. The committee is working with the search firm Isaacson, Miller. The firm will present candidates to the search committee, who will conduct a candidate leadership assessment and then schedule virtual interviews. Finalists will have face-to-face interviews with the Executive Board. The new Executive Director is expected to be named after the October Executive Board meeting and will start in January 2020.

**Financials**

Council was presented a report of projections for ALA’s FY 2020 budget. The ALA fiscal year begins in September so actual FY2019 numbers and FY 2020 projections will not be finalized until after the fiscal year closeout. The FY 2020 budget was labeled an “Investment Budget” by ALA Treasurer Susan Hildreth because of a $2.9 million planned deficit, with $2.3 million of that deficit due to allocations for capital investments in information technology, advocacy, and development. This is the second of three years of capital investments in these three areas, with the three year total expenditure projected at $8.8 million. ALA is developing key performance metrics in order to assess return on investment in these key areas.

Both ALA’s FY 2019 balance sheet and endowment were described as strong. Net assets (i.e. what ALA has after accounting for all financial liabilities) is $36.3 million or 45.5% of total assets. The endowment has a closing balance of $45.5 million as of May 2019 and outperformed its peer endowments.

![An overview diagram of the preliminarily recommended ALA governance model, demonstrating the channels for input to/from the Executive Board.](image)
Reading for pleasure is cherished by library workers during their days off, lounging at home or sneaking in a few pages during a break at work. Perhaps you have found reading for professional development a bit harder to fit into an ever growing “to-read” pile. While it’s always tempting to pick up a page-turner like Ruth Ware’s *The Turn of the Key*, the Leadership Development Division (LDD) has been asking its members to pursue professional-development reading through the Leaders Who Library Book Club.

Though many library workers eagerly attend trainings and conferences to expand their professional development, including a book-club read during your off-work time is a hard sell for some. The idea started as a way for LDD member Beth Heltebridle to connect with her co-workers in leadership and to elevate her enjoyment of reading professional-development books. Over a year later, LDD has been able to expand the Leaders Who Library Book Club, and it’s evolved into a new way to make connections among its members.

At the beginning, under the leadership of then-president Tyler Wolfe and then-vice president Naomi Keppler, LDD was able to develop a new format for its meetings. Now, LDD still has the valuable conversations that are required to provide trainings and conference programs, but the group is also dedicating time to having lengthy discussions about each book and connecting the book with a presentation for the members.

LDD is very active on its Facebook page, sharing articles to encourage additional discussion. LDD has also been asking folks to share where they are doing their reading for the Leaders Who Library Book Club, which naturally includes reading with pets!

The books that have been selected have been about leading with vulnerability and recognizing that inclusion and diversity play as much a part in customer service as they do in hiring processes.

In September, book club members took the conversations they had surrounding *Dare to Lead* by Brené Brown and connected them to *No Hard Feelings* by Liz Fosslien and Mollie West Duffy. With this reading and the accompanying presentation, the group wanted to examine how emotions have a place at work. When leaders are able to recognize and discuss their emotions and the emotions of others, it will bring their leadership and team to the next level. While vulnerability at work is a challenge, *No Hard Feelings* is something that our Maryland leaders can
hold onto as a guide to assist in that journey of vulnerabil-
ity to increase connection with the people they supervise.

As LDD moves into FY 2020, the division is excited to see how it can continue to engage its members through the Leaders Who Library Book Club. Please consider joining the group. You can also pick up the books that the Leaders Who Library Book Club has read so far (see below). LDD welcomes you to grow and follow your curiosity by taking part in the discussions in the club’s Goodreads group!

- Radical Candor: Be a Kick-Ass Boss Without Losing Your Humanity, by Kim Scott
- The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization, by Peter M. Senge
- Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts, by Brené Brown
- The Coaching Habit: Say Less, Ask More & Change the Way You Lead Forever, by Michael Bungay Stanier
- Talk Like TED: The 9 Public-Speaking Secrets of the World’s Top Minds, by Carmine Gallo
- White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism, by Robin DiAngelo
- No Hard Feelings: The Secret Power of Embracing Emotions at Work, by Liz Fosslien and Mollie West Duffy

Members of the Leadership Development Division wishing their Facebook readers and friends a happy Valentine’s day.
MOST OF THE PLANETS IN OUR SOLAR SYSTEM are bright and easily spotted in our night skies. The exceptions are the ice giant planets: Uranus and Neptune. These worlds are so distant and dim that binoculars or telescopes are almost always needed to see them. A great time to search for Uranus is during its opposition on October 28, since the planet is up almost the entire night and at its brightest for the year.

Search for Uranus in the space beneath the stars of Aries the Ram and above Cetus the Whale. These constellations are found west of more prominent Taurus the Bull and Pleiades star cluster. You can also use the Moon as a guide! Uranus was just a few degrees north of the Moon the night of October 14, close enough to fit both objects into the same binocular field of view. However, it will be much easier to see dim Uranus by moving the bright Moon just out of sight. If you’re using a telescope, zoom in as much as possible once you find Uranus; 100x magnification and greater will reveal its small greenish disc, while background stars will remain points.

Try this observing trick from a dark sky location. Find Uranus with your telescope or binoculars, then look with your unaided eyes at the patch of sky where your equipment is aimed. Do you see a faint star where Uranus should be? That’s not a star; you’re actually seeing Uranus with your naked eye! The ice giant is just bright enough near opposition - magnitude 5.7 - to be visible to observers under clear dark skies. It’s easier to see this ghostly planet unaided after first using an instrument to spot it, sort of like “training wheels” for your eyes. Try this technique with other objects as you observe, and you’ll be amazed at what your eyes can pick out.

By the way, you’ve spotted the first planet discovered in the modern era! William Herschel discovered Uranus via telescope in 1781, and Johan Bode confirmed its status as a planet two years later. NASA’s Voyager 2 is the only spacecraft to visit this strange world, with a brief flyby in 1986.

It revealed a strange, severely tilted planetary system possessing faint dark rings, dozens of moons, and eerily featureless cloud tops. Subsequent observations of Uranus from powerful telescopes like Hubble and Keck showed its blank face was temporary, as powerful storms were spotted, caused by dramatic seasonal changes during its 84-year orbit. Uranus’s wildly variable seasons result from a massive collision billions of years ago that tipped the planet to its side.

Discover more about NASA’s current and future missions of exploration of the distant solar system and beyond at nasa.gov

The path of Uranus in October is indicated by an arrow; its position on October 14 is circled in red. The wide dashed circle approximates the field of view from binoculars or a finderscope. Image created with assistance from Stellarium.