



Dear PNLA members,

On behalf of the Board of the Pacific Northwest Library Association, thank you for your continuing support of our association. The term “our” is an apt one in this case, as we are all “owners” of PNLA and we all share an interest in it continuing as an strong organization that effectively serves the needs of its members.

As is true for many other library associations, PNLA finds itself struggling to remain relevant in the face of a tough economic picture. As has been the case for some time, PNLA is also working to carve out its identity in an increasingly crowded association landscape. PNLA continues to have a strong core of dedicated members who are committed to the association. For this the Board is very grateful. On the other hand, evidence gathered from our recent survey shows that PNLA is “down the list” when it comes to potential members spending their limited professional development money. At some point the number of members will trickle away. A strategy is needed to attract new interest in the association while not forgetting that we have a responsibility to fill the needs of the members we currently have.

The PNLA Board strongly feels that PNLA provides services that are of value to members of the library community in the states and provinces than comprise its membership. Specifically, the annual conference, the PNLA Leads leadership institute and the Young Readers Choice Awards continue to be seen as highly valuable.

Having identified our “niche”, the goal is to ensure the continued success of these programs. At its February meeting, the Board identified strategies to work towards this goal. The first is setting PNLA Leads on a strong footing. The 2010 Leads institute was highly successful. The institute draws participants from all PNLA member states and provinces and these are the staff who will be making a huge impact on the libraries for which they work. The PNLA Board strongly believes that the “leading from any position” approach that the Institute takes is of value and that encouraging participation from professionals and para-professionals alike makes for a highly rewarding and useful experience for a broad cross-section of the library community.

In order to provide the strong footing required, the PNLA needs revenue. As the PNLA conference is the association’s only significant source of income, the second strategy is to develop a “best of the Northwest” conference that will draw on the excellence of state and provincial conferences in Alaska, Alberta, British Columbia, Idaho, Montana and Washington. Our recent survey showed that in general, respondents continue to like the August dates and prefer the conference moves locations. PNLA will continue the tradition of a late summer conference, and will ensure that all states and provinces are able to host the conference, while focusing on those locations that are proven revenue generators. These changes will take effect beginning with the 2013 conference.

The third strategy will be the continued support for the YRCA program. The Pacific Northwest Library Association's Young Reader's Choice Award is the oldest children's choice award in the U.S. and Canada. The Board will provide the tools necessary for the awards continued relevance and the extremely high standard of quality that the program is known for.

The strategies are ambitious and will require a great deal of work. The PNLA Board discussed at length how best to accomplish the goals that have been set. High on the list was the need for continuity. In view of that, the Board, at its meeting in February, passed the following motion:

That the Board elections be suspended for 2011-2012 elections, which will add another year to executive board member terms, in order for the board to develop a plan of action to deal with sustainability.

The motion was approved.

We look forward to reporting to all our members on our progress. PNLA is very grateful to the continued support of our members and looks forward to providing you great value for your membership in the coming years.

Sincerely,

Michael Burris
PNLA President