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PNLA President 2010-2012

2011 Annual Report
PNLA Conference – Spokane, WA

Much of the work done since the 2010 conference in Victoria, BC has revolved around the future of the Pacific Northwest Library Association. Anyone who regularly reads the postings to ALA's Chapter Relations list knows that we are not the only association dealing with such questions.

The Board feels strongly that PNLA had something to offer. However, we are faced with the reality that membership has been dwindling over the past number of years. PNLA continues to have the support of a number of "hardcore" members, but that number is shrinking. The Board expressed continued support for a number of PNLA initiatives: the conference, Leads, the *Quarterly* and YRCA were all identified as programs that provided value to the membership.

PNLA Leads provides a valuable learning experience for library staff looking to develop their leadership skills. The program's emphasis on leading from any position and welcoming para-professionals as participants are both strong points of the institute. I was honoured to take part as a mentor and learned as much as any of the participants. I witnessed first-hand both the value and the quality of PNLA Leads. The last year also saw the *Quarterly* move to being a peer-reviewed publication, which resulted in a number of positive comments. YRCA continues to be a strong presence on an increasingly crowded award landscape. Those programs would seem to signal a need for PNLA, but all require funding and support. If the traditional funding model of membership revenue is shrinking, that puts increasing pressure on the annual conference to serve as a revenue generator.

In order to gather feedback regarding the conference, a survey was developed and distributed. 302 people responded. In general, responses indicated that a fall conference was preferred as was moving the conference to different locations. There was not a great deal of support for developing a "niche" conference on specific topics (technology, leadership, etc.). With the results in, the Board moved to ensure that the conference was in a position to succeed. Beginning in 2013, the conference will move to a "Best of the Northwest" format, showcasing both the strength and diversity of the conferences in member states and provinces and providing an opportunity to bring the strongest programs together in one setting. The decision was also made to change the rotation of the PNLA conference to focus more on revenue generating conferences.

That model assumes certain things, namely that conferences held in Washington, Montana and Idaho will continue to be revenue generators. We will continue to monitor the veracity of that assumption and adjust accordingly. If our assumptions about the perceived value of the PNLA conference prove incorrect, it will be difficult to continue to support our core programs and services.

Over the past year I was able to represent PNLA at conferences in Victoria, Jasper and Juneau. All were excellent! I am a regular attendee at the BC and Alberta conferences, but the AkLA conference was a first. I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to attend and was made to feel right at home. I look forward to attending as many state and provincial association conferences as time and funding allow.

This next year will be a pivotal one for PNLA. In order to usher through the planned changes to the conference, the Board moved to extend the terms of the current Executive through 2012. Much will depend on the final report from the Spokane conference. I have been on the PNLA Board since 2005, serving as the representative from BC, then as VP and now President. I am one of those "hardcore" members I referenced earlier. I see much value in the programs and services provided by PNLA. I look forward to brighter times for the association.