

Councilor's Report for ALA Annual Conference, Toronto 2003

Pam Klipsch, IFRT Councilor

Conference in Toronto was certainly different. The smaller attendance made it feel more like a Midwinter. Council was also different. Although Council was never in any danger of losing its quorum, there were some Councilors whose absence was noticeable.

There was considerable discussion both before Conference on the Council list, and at the Council meetings, about the deficiencies of and widespread dissatisfaction with the redesigned ALA web site. As a result, Council directed that the charge of the Web Site Advisory Committee be modified to give the committee a more proactive role in guiding the design and organization of the web site, and that the ALA Executive Director keep members informed of what is being done to repair the problems with the site and any future changes that may be proposed. In addition, Council approved a resolution proposed by Karen Schneider, directing the Executive Board to implement the existing policy on archiving of electronic publications, and as a temporary measure, to reactivate the old ALA web site that was shut down after the April 7 migration, so that many documents that did not migrate to the new site will be available electronically again. This is a temporary solution, Schneider stressed, until an electronic archive can be established, and a process designed for selecting and transferring documents to the archives.

Michael Golrick, speaking on behalf of the Core Values Taskforce II, proposed that the life of the task force be extended through Midwinter 2004, in order to complete its work of gathering and analyzing information, and that the task force facilitate a discussion of core values during the Council/Executive Board/Membership Information Session at Midwinter 2004. Instead, Council approved an amended resolution, thanking the task force for its work, and asking it to present a final statement of core values for review and approval by Council at Annual 2004.

Council unanimously adopted IFLA's Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services and Intellectual Freedom. <<http://tinyurl.com/34vpy>>

Council adopted a resolution opposing the new FCC rules on media concentration, and supporting Congressional legislation to void the FCC regulatory action. <<http://tinyurl.com/2tova>>

Council adopted a resolution requesting Congress to reaffirm its commitment to GPO Access and the Federal Depository Library Program by fully funding the GPO and Superintendent of Documents appropriation for FY 2004 at \$30.3 million as requested by the Public Printer.

Council adopted a resolution urging the Department of Education to continue to support and fund the ERIC database.

Council unanimously adopted a resolution, commending members of Congress who support civil liberties by sponsoring various pieces of legislation designed to exempt libraries and bookstores from provisions of the USA Patriot Act and to assert Congressional oversight of the enforcement of the act.

Council adopted a resolution urging Congress to take action to terminate the so-called Terrorism Awareness Program, and to require the Defense Advanced Research Projects Administration (DARPA) to comply with privacy laws.

Council approved a resolution urging the Department of Homeland Security to formulate its rules regarding Critical Infrastructure Information (CII) and Sensitive Homeland Security Information (SHSI) within the legislative intent of Congress, with adequate public notice and input, and with strong oversight by the appropriate Congressional committees and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Council approved a Resolution on Libraries and Cultural Resources in Iraq. An earlier version of this resolution was posted on the Council list prior to conference by Councilor Michael Gorman. The International Relations Committee prepared a subsequent resolution, which was presented at Council III. The IRC resolution was amended from the floor to strengthen the language and to add a transmission clause, directing the Executive Director to send copies of the resolution to the President, the Secretaries of State and Defense, and to member of Congress.

The IRC also presented a resolution on Access to Information in Cuba, in response to the ongoing controversy over the so-called "independent librarians" in Cuba. The IRC had spent some time before and at conference listening to the claims of various parties to this issue. A delegation from the Association of Cuban Libraries, taking advantage of the conference's location in Canada, traveled to the conference to meet with the IRC and to participate in a program on this issue. Council spent 30 minutes on an informal discussion of the resolution. In the end, Council voted to refer the resolution back to the IRC and the IFC, and asked them to jointly investigate the matter and return a recommendation to Council.

Council voted to amend the policy on guidelines for the preparation of Council Resolutions. Currently, resolutions from individual councilors must be submitted to the Resolutions Committee before coming to Council. Any resolution that has fiscal implications, must go from the Resolutions Committee to the Executive Director and to the Budget Analysis and Review Committee (BARC) at least 24 hours before it appears on the agenda of Council, so that BARC can provide fiscal information as required by Policy 5.2. Council has now amended the policy to require resolutions and action items from standing committees of ALA and Council committees, which have fiscal implications, also to be submitted 24 hours in advance to the Executive Director and BARC.

This is my last report as IFRT's Councilor. I would like to thank the members of the IFRT Executive Committee for their willingness to engage in debate on Council issues and provide direction for my efforts to represent the views of IFRT in Council. It has been an honor to serve as IFRT's first Councilor, and by extension, as the one person specifically charged to represent the IF community. To be the voice of intellectual freedom in the debates of Council is an amazing and humbling experience.

Our new Councilor, Carolyn Caywood, brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the position, and a voice more eloquent than I could ever hope mine to be. I hope that she finds, as I did, that though the demands of the job are great, the satisfactions are greater still.