

Report on 2005 Annual Conference

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Whew! A lot went on and IFRT was part of much of it. In addition to three ALA Council sessions and one APA Council session, there were two official Membership meetings. I need to report on Membership meetings because resolutions passed there go to Council.

Membership I

Resolutions were passed on creating access to materials in non-roman alphabets; decreasing division dues for retired members; and withdrawing troops from Iraq.

Council I

SRRT worked with IFC on the Workplace Speech resolution that had been referred to IFC at Midwinter. The resulting version passed with minor tweaking. "Resolved: Libraries should encourage discussion among library workers including library administration of non-confidential professional and policy matters about the operation of the library and matters of public concern within the framework of applicable laws." This will probably become policy 54.21 of ALA. This resolution started a pattern of editing resolutions to use the phrase "library workers" in a spirit of inclusion.

A resolution on creating an "Endangered Libraries" list was referred to the Budget Analysis and Review Committee (BARC). The "non-roman" resolution was referred back to Membership for clarification. I requested that IFRT's resolution on threats to gay materials be postponed to Council III since we were still editing it.

APA Council

We only got half-way through the agenda. The process of setting up post-graduate certification got hung up on the question of whether certification would be revoked for ethical lapses. This was resolved by deleting the statement that it would not do so.

Membership II

"Non-roman" was tweaked and sent back to Council. A resolution asking the Ex. Board to work on increasing participation in Membership Meetings failed — the total votes on both sides of that were 65, so the President was going to declare a lack of a quorum, but people shouted that abstentions had not been counted, so she declared it failed instead. A request to report vote counts for Membership resolutions was voted down. This grew out of the new quorum of 75 for Membership Meetings. Note that if the vote counting request had passed, it would have applied only to this meeting. For a permanent change to list Membership vote numbers, there would have to be a bylaws change.

Council II

The new Public and Cultural Programs Advisory Committee urgently seeks donations for a matching NEH grant. The HRDR Advisory Committee's resolution on Mutual Respect for Support Staff Members passed — this was the spirit behind the “library workers” wording in other resolutions. BARC reported its response to the “Endangered Libraries” list, but got shot down for including political as well as financial considerations. The Ahead to 2010 Strategic Plan passed after considerable amending. The Treasurer's Report was fairly gloomy but the budget passed. Recommendations of the Task Force on Library School closings passed.

BARC having reported, the Endangered Libraries list was reconsidered and failed. There were concerns about unintended consequences of such a list. The revised “non-roman” resolution was also voted down because at this point it called for a report from every ALA unit on what was being done to advance this cause. Yes, IFRT would have needed to report on this!

Council III

Constitution and Bylaws proposed *not* offering ALA Affiliate status to the Catholic Library Association because CLA's stated “Object” is the promotion of Catholic principles. The discussion was fascinating in view of IFRT's program on IF and religion. In the end C&B was asked to talk further with CLA to see if there was common ground.

IFC reported but did not include its resolution on Biometrics because it needed more work, especially with LITA.

The Committee on Legislation passed two resolutions, one to Congress to continue efforts to restrain the USA PATRIOT Act, and one on communities' right to Internet broadband.

The International Relations Committee proposed a resolution on the right of US librarians to travel for professional reasons to other countries including those in disfavor with the US. Council felt it was not broad enough and should include library workers and travel of foreign library workers to the US, so it was referred back to IRC.

The Committee on Organization finally got passage of its proposed separation of scholarships and awards into separate committees. Perhaps IFRT should consider setting up a scholarship?

IFRT's “Resolution on Threats to Library Materials Related to Sex, Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation” passed after 45 minutes of debate (and hours of negotiating and redrafting!) I am very grateful to Martin Garner, Karen Schneider, K. R. Roberto, Michael Miller and Diedre Conklin who drafted the resolution, and to IFC and the chapter councilors who helped us understand their concerns. And thanks to Nanette Perez and Beverly Becker of OIF who made us look competent at Council. I also learned from this experience to involve everyone with a stake and to define that stake as broadly as possible!

The Membership resolution on decreasing division dues for Retired Members passed after amendment, so IFRT may want to think about this too.

The Membership resolution on "The Connection between the Iraq War and Libraries" passed after "immediate and unconditional" was removed from withdrawal of military forces. There were other amendments and considerable debate. The final version also urges the government to shift budget priorities to domestic programs, including libraries, and to provide assistance through the UN for rebuilding Iraq's libraries and cultural resources.

The Resolution on Disinformation, Media Manipulation, and the Destruction of Public Information passed with a friendly amendment from me to split its second resolved clause into two, one to nurture 21st century information literacy and the other to seek alternative news sources.

Councilors from REFORMA brought a revised "Resolution in Support of Immigrants' Rights to Free Public Library Services" which then passed.

And unbelievably, we finished all business on time! I have not included all Council business in this report, but I wanted to give you the flavor of what went on and alert you to actions that could impact IFRT.