

## 2009-2010 DLA PRESIDENT'S REPORT



At the 2009 DLA Conference the table talk question posed was “How can we use this financial crisis as an opportunity?” Being committed to excellent service and moving forward, we have all struggled to meet the needs of our patrons in a fiscally challenging time. Creative librarians throughout the state have had to put a positive spin on the word *challenge* as budgets, hours, and personnel were curtailed. We have all re-grouped and tried to look at things through new lenses. DLA has also struggled to serve while facing significant fiscal restraints.

Finances are a troublesome issue for DLA, and we must attend to the issue with long term vision. Planning a conference without sufficient money to back it is fiscally irresponsible, and we’ve been doing it for several years. The conference chair has to cross his/her fingers that sufficient people attend to cover all costs which have risen substantially while registration fees have not risen commensurately. We need to find a way to build our treasury to cover the cost of one year’s conference so that the money coming in from the conference will be to support the following year’s conference. Must we raise dues? Must we raise the cost of the conference? Are there other fund-raising ideas that don’t unduly task people already trying to raise money for their own institutions? Ideas are welcomed as this topic will be discussed at a leadership transition workshop to be held June 3.

After long discussions the DLA Executive Board voted to move all the scholarship monies to the Delaware Community Foundation where the Helen Bennett scholarship has long been located. The invested monies will be managed by the Delaware Community Foundation, but DLA retains all control over the recipients.

Our organization has been going through transitions which are common, but the bylaws by which DLA operates are woefully outdated. They are in the process of being updated, but we need volunteers to continue this work. DLA needs a workable structure within which to operate in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Look for a draft to be sent to you within the year with the hope that they will be voted on next spring.

Keeping with the theme of change was this year’s Legislative Day. Kathy Wojewodzki, long time chair of the Legislative Action Committee, has passed the reins to Jim McClosky. An advocacy workshop began the day in The Old State House followed by a luncheon in Legislative Hall prior to visiting legislators. Keeping libraries’ value in front of our legislators is an ongoing process.

Technology continues to change as we race to keep ahead of the rolling boulder. The DLA Executive Board hosted two of our regularly scheduled meetings (November and January) via Elluminate, thanks to the Department of Education. While this saved travel time and enabled broader participation, we still found technological stumbling blocks with some libraries being blocked from access.

Communicating with all state librarians must be a high priority of DLA, and the Executive Board is always looking for ways to improve. Four venues are currently used to inform our membership:

- DLA web site (with many thanks to web master, Rebecca Knight, and our host, the University of Delaware Library: <http://www2.lib.udel.edu/dla/>)
- DLA List Serve ([dla-l@listserv.lib.de.us](mailto:dla-l@listserv.lib.de.us))
- *DLA Bulletin*, our electronic newsletter (great job, Beth-Ann)
- Our four divisions' contact networks (CSD, CRLD, DSLMA, & PLA)

At the recommendation of the Long Range Planning Committee, a new DLA Directory is in the planning stages. Once in place, this electronic directory will give you quick access to all the libraries and librarians in the state in one site. Jane Stewart is chairing this task force and will be happy to have assistance.

One way of encouraging new leadership in the profession is an ALA program called "Emerging Leaders." Locally we put forward some funding and choose a recipient from local candidates. The Delaware awardee then joins a cadre of future leaders from across the USA for special training and projects with ALA. Delaware's awardee this year was Monifa Carter who is returning some leadership to us by editing the *DLA Bulletin* this coming year. If DLA's finances permit us to continue to sponsor the program, do encourage librarians new to the profession to apply.

If you cannot attend the entire ALA conference in Washington this June, come for the day on Sunday, June 27 when DLA will sponsor a bus. Timing has been arranged so that the group can cheer on the Delaware Book Cart team.

Your input, participation, and activities on behalf of DLA are the ingredients which will determine this organization's effectiveness. We've done good things in the past, and we seem re-energized to be an even stronger organization in the future. Cheers to DLA!

Peggy Dillner  
2009-2010 DLA President