

LLAMA Voter's Guide, 2011

Modeled after the format used by the League of Women Voters, Associate Editor Beth Blakesley contacted the candidates for ALA President-elect and LLAMA President-elect to get their responses to some specific questions about the future of the organization as it relates to their candidacy. This feature provides insight into the candidates for each position by publishing their answers in their own words. LL&M does not seek to endorse one candidate over another but merely to impart information on each candidate to the voting public.

Candidates for ALA President



Sue Stroyan is Information Services Librarian at Illinois Wesleyan University and is former President of LLAMA. More information at: <http://www.suestroyan.com/>



Maureen Sullivan is an organizational development consultant and is former President of LLAMA. More information at: <http://maureensullivan.org/>

<p>1. How would you position ALA strategically to remain relevant in the future, including increasing membership and involvement, furthering the mission of the organization, and providing value to the profession?</p>	<p>Stroyan: To thrive, associations must meet the needs of their members. In the same way that ALA is the Go-To organization when a library or librarian faces an intellectual freedom challenge, we must make ALA the organization to which librarians turn when they face other equally daunting challenges - to their budgets, to their ability to keep up with changes in technology, in some cases, to their very survival in a community. The message must always be, "ALA is there for me," in large ways and small. Membership and involvement follow when there is some passion for the organization. We add value when we give librarians the tools that they need to succeed. I want to focus on the fundamentals that matter to librarians, library staff and trustees where they live.</p>	<p>Sullivan: I believe the 2011-2015 ALA Strategic Plan is just what ALA and its members need to ensure our relevance and success in the future. I will do all that I can to continue to engage ALA governance and the membership broadly to accomplish the goals and objectives in this plan. I will work with the elected leaders of all ALA units to identify current activities in support of the five goal areas: advocacy, building the profession, transforming libraries, member engagement and organizational excellence. I also will work with these elected leaders and ALA members generally to identify meaningful and sustainable future strategies in each of these areas. ALA is a large, diverse organization and I believe its members have the capacity to create the vision described in the plan: "ALA is recognized as leading and supporting a continuous transformation of libraries of all types in response to the changing needs, expectations, demographics, and technologies of the populations they serve. Libraries are perceived as vital to the communities they serve; connecting people and ideas to each other and to the world."</p> <p>In my work as a consultant I have had many opportunities to engage ALA members in this work for their own libraries, especially when the project is one directed at strategic planning or creating a new organizational structure. As ALA president, I will bring this experience to the challenge of doing this work for the large and complex organization that ALA is today. I will operate in what is now called a "distributed or shared leadership" model, i.e., I will</p>
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		endeavor to create and foster opportunities for leaders throughout ALA to contribute to this work.
<p>2. Please share your ideas for building collaboration opportunities for ALA to enhance services or find efficiencies.</p>	<p>Stroyan: All of us have joked about how ungainly the ALA bureaucracy can be, yet many of us also find the greatest value of ALA membership to be association in a particular division, roundtable or even a committee. This is a paradox that many previous ALA leaders have wrestled with, but the urgency to find ways to let members gravitate to their particular niche while somehow streamlining the underlying apparatus is even greater now than it has been in the past. The economic realities that all of us confront every day in our libraries are a reality for ALA also. I would suggest that we explore the opportunities that all the new social networking technologies provide for forming and maintaining communities. Another area we have not utilized fully is ALA-APA. This association has abilities to provide collaboration in some arenas for all members that ALA is legally not able to enter. And, I want to reach into the wealth of knowledge--toolkits, publications, awards, grants, etc.-- that is spread across the ALA organization. These outstanding resources that document our expertise should be easily available to all ALA members no matter their unit affiliation.</p>	<p>Sullivan: Throughout my career and involvement in ALA I have marveled at how effective many of us are when we cooperate. Most of us willingly work together when we see mutual gains and advantages. I would begin by identifying current and past collaborations that have worked and resulted in meaningful outcomes for members. Elected leaders and ALA staff are likely to have many good examples of this. I will invite them to suggest new opportunities. One possible initiative might be to create a financial incentive for proposals focused on collaboration among ALA units. This type of initiative also could focus on innovative approaches that would enhance services and result in greater efficiencies or better use of ALA resources.</p>
<p>3. What do you see as the primary purpose for members to attend the</p>	<p>Stroyan: The primary purpose for people to attend in person conferences is networking and learning about new library products. Beyond all the meetings and programs, it is those professional and personal ties that are made and renewed at conferences that keep people coming back. Some,</p>	<p>Sullivan: I think the primary purpose for most ALA members to attend conferences is to engage with other members from across the field to learn, explore professional issues and to build a network of professional colleagues. Both the Annual and Midwinter conferences now offer many avenues for</p>

<p>annual and midwinter conferences and how do you see traditional conference activities changing in the future?</p>	<p>but not all, of that networking can be done through social media. Of the other purposes—programs, exhibits, meetings—only the exhibits do not lend themselves to a virtual substitute. So, here’s what I would propose: scale back midwinter as an in-person conference. Keep the summer conference, because it’s good to reinforce virtual contact with seeing real people once a year, new products can be viewed in the exhibits, and some association business needs to be conducted in person. Think about providing regional ALA conferences or more divisional conferences in place of midwinter, and for many people, as a more affordable alternative to the summer conferences. Other associations (EDUCAUSE, for example) have followed this model successfully. This would require adjusting how we do business but may be more profitable because it is more affordable for the majority of our members.</p>	<p>this – programs, updates, discussion groups that serve as communities of practice, exhibits and the variety of formal meetings that occur to carry out ALA business.</p> <p>I agree with the findings in the recently released <i>White Paper on the ALA midwinter Meeting</i>, especially the conclusion that “the Midwinter must be ‘repositioned’ in our conversation ... to reflect current, not past, practice and a new understanding of the ‘business of the Association.’” I believe that we will continue to see the emergence of new activities as the preferences of members change. I expect to see an increased emphasis on activities that advance the professional development of members and a more streamlined approach to the organization for governance. To attract and retain new professionals to become members of ALA, ALA must be a member-focused, easy-to-navigate and responsive association. The <i>ALA Young Librarians Working Group Final Report and Recommendations</i> provides an excellent set of ideas for rethinking ALA as an organization and sets forth a number of specific changes, including an emphasis on virtual participation and a call for a comprehensive review of the ALA committee structure.</p>
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Candidates for LLAMA President



Pat Hawthorne is Director of Research and Learning Services at Texas State University in San Marcos, TX.



Eric C. Shoaf is Assistant Dean for Administration at University of Texas, San Antonio and former Editor of *Library Leadership & Management*.

1. How would you position ALA strategically to remain relevant in the future,

Hawthorne: Getting new librarians to join is essential to keeping both ALA and LLAMA vibrant and relevant. We must keep them beyond one or two years. I found LLAMA to be most welcoming even though I was not a director (yes, many new professionals mistakenly think LLAMA is for administrators although this is not true). I found much about LAMA interesting and helpful to my job.

Shoaf: ALA and LLAMA will both remain relevant, and are best positioned strategically as a key component in member's continuing education and professional development, in professional advocacy, and communication. Membership is stable and important to maintain as growth from entering librarians is not expected in the short to medium term. However, ALA and LLAMA can grow

<p>including increasing membership and involvement, furthering the mission of the organization, and providing value to the profession?</p>	<p>Yet I know if I had not gotten involved early on I might not have renewed my membership. Early involvement cemented my bond to LLAMA and provided me with a “home” in ALA. Getting members involved as early as possible is crucial to ensuring LLAMA’s growth and to having a strong cadre of member/leaders for the future. LLAMA needs to make a concerted effort to recruit in library schools around the country and at state and regional library associations and from initiatives like the Emerging Leaders program. I’d like to see LLAMA consider offering Emerging Leaders a discounted membership for two years and seek to get ELs appointed to positions in that period. We also need to continue to highlight our programs, publications, and continuing education offerings so that members understand the value we offer.</p>	<p>membership in new areas as libraries are hiring more professional and high-level staff that lack an ALA accredited master’s degree, but function in key decision-making roles. The association can provide them support, education, and networking opportunities to help them achieve success. This is a high-growth opportunity for ALA that will enhance revenue as well as provide a wider variety of fellow members. LLAMA’s areas of core expertise are key to greater member involvement as they provide support in assessment, facilities, fund raising, HR, PR, library systems and organizations. No other ALA division has such a wide variety of expertise in key areas of librarianship. Furthering the mission through quality programming and publications is important, the medium of delivery more so. ALA and LLAMA will enhance value by taking advantage of technologies to advance information delivery and learning opportunities so that access is widely available.</p>
<p>2. Please share your ideas for building collaboration opportunities for ALA to enhance services or find efficiencies.</p>	<p>Hawthorne: As long as I’ve been an ALA member, there have been efforts to foster more collaboration particularly in terms of conference program planning to eliminate redundancy and to capitalize on potential partnerships and to share increasingly limited resources. In recent years, this has begun to happen more with the introduction of conference tracks which make navigating the annual conference easier for our newest members as well as for continuing members. This initiative has also facilitated conference planning. I think that divisional boards need to continue to actively share their planning with other divisions and entities in ALA in order to find potential collaborations in terms</p>	<p>Shoaf: ALA and LLAMA can enhance services and identify efficiencies in a number of ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that social networking is a form of collaboration. Most view social networks as a source of information sharing, but an opportunity exists to leverage these networks into real-time collaborative sessions for members, committees, and discussion groups. Further, publicity for educational opportunities and publications can be improved and new paths to professional development created. • Explore outsourced support functions. ALA manages a large support bureaucracy that was

	<p>of programs, publications, and continuing education offerings. Two divisions joining together to plan and co-sponsor a program can reach more members, save resources, and highlight shared issues. At the same time, we need to be mindful that part of the richness of ALA is that multiple entities (divisions, round tables, discussion groups, etc.) provide something for everyone and are part of what many members value about the organization.</p>	<p>created over decades. Efficiencies can be gained by using more external vendors for IT, financial services, HR, and publications. Recently, the LLAMA's journal spun off part of the editorial function from ALA Publications saving several thousand dollars. This is only one example. Outsourcing can improve the bottom line in years ahead when revenue may not keep pace with costs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within ALA, LLAMA can collaborate more closely with other divisions. Now exists joint sponsorship of programs, but there can be a more entrepreneurial in approaching revenue-generating educational opportunities that utilize technology for delivery. For example, a partnership with LLAMA, LITA, and ACRL could produce a series of high margin fee-based workshops delivered via the web for certification purposes.
<p>3. What do you see as the primary purpose for members to attend the annual and midwinter conferences and how do you see traditional conference activities</p>	<p>Hawthorne: Given the current fiscal situation facing libraries and individuals, it is clear ALA/LLAMA members are making choices about involvement and conference attendance. Limited resources force prioritization. Those attending ALA Annual or ALA Midwinter often do so for multiple reasons – to keep up on professional trends and attend programs and discussions, to actively participate in committees and the work of the association, to keep up with and learn from colleagues, and to learn about vendor offerings. Both Annual and Midwinter meet member needs as attendance remains relatively strong. Knowing individuals may be forced to make choices about whether or not to attend national, state, or regional conferences, the</p>	<p>Shoaf: The semi-annual ALA conference has a number of purposes. For the association, in its stated mission to 'promote library service and librarianship,' it is an assembly of the rank and file, a revenue stream, a beacon for vendors, an opportunity to further the governance of the association. For members, the purpose of conference is somewhat different. Beyond popular opportunities for networking and educational programming, the ALA annual summer meeting lets colleagues keep in touch face to face (F2F). The midwinter meeting is more geared to committee work and the business of ALA, but the F2F component is important here as well. Value at conference meetings derives from intangibles not</p>

<p>changing in the future?</p>	<p>association needs to implement multiple strategies. We need to seek ways to use technology to make the some of the association's work more efficient and cost effective and explore alternative methods of meeting and getting some work done. We also need to continually assess the desires and of members and seek their input. The recent report on ALA Midwinter illustrates that ALA continually evolves to meet member needs and will continue to do so. We must be proactive in seeking input from members so we can make changes that will enhance our offerings.</p>	<p>possible using email, phone, webinar, or online social network. Programming is both popular and important for professional development. It dominates the summer meeting, and this will not change in the future. Necessity of the midwinter meeting has been questioned because of the economy, and bears close scrutiny. Committee business might be accomplished via online means. ALA has held virtual conferences for the past several years, and LLAMA has offered virtual membership on committees with success. However, as a value proposition, the ALA conference remains the summit of membership for the foreseeable future.</p>
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